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Sommario

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Linguistica

L-Vocalisation in London English

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Abstract   Linguists argued that the Cockney dialect, in London, is expected to be replaced by *Multicultural London English* in the years to come. However, this does not imply that Cockney is dead, as recent research revealed that it just moved to Essex. This paper aims at examining whether (l) vocalisation, a common feature of Cockney, is still present in the London district of Bermondsey. Ten working-class English speakers, stratified by age and sex, have been recorded by means of sociolinguistic interviews. The results, discussed both quantitively and qualitatively, show that: (a) (l) vocalisation is present in all age cohorts, with young speakers favouring the non-standard feature; (b) preceding long vowels trigger (l) vocalisation.

Keywords   (l) vocalisation. Sociolinguistics. Phonology. Language variation. London English.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Description of (l) Vocalisation. – 3 Diachronic Development of (l) Vocalisation and Previous Studies . – 4 The Present Study . – 5 Results and Discussion. – 6 Conclusions.

1 Introduction

London, besides being the political capital of England, is also an important linguistic centre of gravity (Wells 1982). Even though the upper-class speech of this city laid the basis for Standard English (SE), the working-class accent of London is deemed the "most influential source of phonological innovation in England and perhaps in the whole English-speaking world" (Wells 1982, 301). The most famous working-class dialect of London used to be Cockney.

Traditionally, the term Cockney was associated to the dialect spoken by the working-class Londoners of the suburbs of East London, known as the East End (Fox 2015). In the late 20th century, however, linguists noted the emergence of a new, mixed, multicultural dialect – a sociolect which is mainly spoken by young, working-class speakers in multicultural areas (Cheshire et al. 2011). While the media and the press refer to this phenomenon as *Jafaican*,[1] linguists have labelled it 'Multicultural London English' (MLE), suggesting it is an emerging multiethnolect (Kerswill, Torgersen 2017) which is expected to replace the Cockney accent in London in the years to come. This multiethnolect, as well as those present in a number of north-western European cities, stem from the intense immigration in the past 30 years (Kerswill et al. 2013). Today, the East End of London has become a multi-ethnic and socio-economic area of diversity, which appears to have contributed to the Cockney diaspora (Cole 2021). This paper (a) provides a geographical overview of the traditional East End, (b) briefly reviews the main reasons as to why the Cockneys moved out of the East End, (c) provides a brief diachronic background of (l) vocalisation, (d) examines whether (l) vocalisation – a common phonological feature of Cockney – continues to exist in the speech communities of Bermondsey, where no previous systematic investigation has been carried out.

1.1 The traditional East End and its Geographical Boundaries

The traditional East End used to be delimited by the medieval walled City of London to the west, from the River Thames to the south and from the River Lea to the east (Booth 1889). Over the last years, the East End has extended to a wider geographical area due to historical factors (e.g. the mass exodus of the working-class population). However, Bermondsey, located in the south of Whitechapel, has remained the only Cockney area where the local working-class has not completely extinguished.

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1 *Jafaican* is used with the meaning of 'fake Jamaican' simply implying that immigrants came from Jamaica and the Caribbean.

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1.2 Decentralisation of Cockneys

The two World Wars had an impact on the decentralisation of Cockneys: people lost their lives, others were evacuated, others moved out during the wars and chose not to go back to their homeland. The 'slum-clearance' programme, designated for the redevelopment of areas after the First and Second World War represents one of the reasons which brought about the Cockneys diaspora. A significant part of the East End population was moved to the new estates of Dagenham and Harold Hill, and to the New Towns of Harlow and Basildon, in the Essex County. The uncontrolled London's population growth led to inner-urban difficulties such as overcrowding or lack of green spaces. To reduce both social and housing problems, planners attempted to decrease the number of people living in the East End. Between 1921 and 1932, owing to the lack of housing, over 186,000 Cockneys moved out to the easternmost outskirts of London, within Buckinghamshire and Essex, where over 25,000 houses were built (Abercrombie 1944). The 'Greater London Plan 1944' aimed at relocating the population beyond the outer green belt. Abercrombie suggested establishing four rings to structure the plan: the first ring includes the inner central area, the second ring circles London at around 12 miles from Charing Cross, the third was the 'Green Belt Ring', and the fourth the 'Outer Country Ring'. It is estimated that the East End lost approximately half of its population after the Second World War.

1.3 The London's Docklands

The second reason which brought about the Cockney diaspora is the failure of the Dock industry.

The beginning of the Docklands' decline started in 1889 after a strike, which extended to the whole Port of London. The Docklands suffered serious consequences with the advent of the First World War in 1914, after losing 430 employees and another indefinite number of people. In 1970s the high-level of unemployment brought about by the failure of the Dock industry, in the Tower Hamlets, and most of the population moved to the only enduring dock industry, situated in Tilbury. After 1981, the long-term decline was followed by a steady rising of the population, marked by a remarkable social change.

1.4 The Arrival of Immigrants

This social change was due to the innumerable immigrants who settled in the old-world area, which was once associated with the working-class Londoners (Bermant 1975). This has marked the 'point of arrival' of the East End (Bermant 1975). The immigrants started to settle in the East End of London since the 17th century, such as the

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Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews and the Bangladeshi, creating a multi-ethnic city. It is estimated that by mid-18th century around 15,000 Huguenots inhabited the East End (Bermant 1975). The Irish, originally, settled in Central London. Jewish refugees settled in London around the end of the 19th century, when Jews were persecuted in Russia and Poland (Bermant 1975). Many Bangladeshis came to London in 1962, when *The Immigration Act* allowed immigrants to move to Britain on condition that they all have a job to go to. A notable increase in the number of Bangladeshis living in the Tower Hamlets was registered with census 1981.[2]

So far, this paper has presented the multi-ethnic profile of the East End implying that seeking to examine Cockney in the East End of London raises methodological questions today. As mentioned earlier, the sole purpose of this paper is to examine whether (l) vocalisation is still present in one district of London: Bermondsey. Exploring points of contact between Cockney and the emergent Multicultural London English (MLE) is beyond the purpose of this study.

2 Description of (l) Vocalisation

In British English, and in other English varieties, the alveolar lateral approximant /l/ is realised with two allophones, namely clear [l] and dark [ɫ]. The former is realised by raising the soft palate and placing the blade of the tongue at the alveolar ridge (Cruttenden 2001); whilst the latter involves a retraction in its articulation (Sproat, Fujimura 1993). Clear [l] is commonly found in the following linguistic environments:

a. word-initial position: 'leave', 'let', 'look', 'late';
b. word-initial clusters: 'blow', 'glad';
c. word-medially: 'silly', 'yellow', 'foolish', 'allow', 'select';
d. word-final, before following vowels, and before following [j]: 'feel it', 'all over', 'will you'.

Whereas dark [ɫ] occurs in non-prevocalic position:

a. in word-final position, after a vowel: 'feel', 'fill', 'fell', 'oil', 'real';
b. after vowels, before consonants: 'help', 'milk', 'cold', 'film', 'self', 'illness';
c. when /l/ occurs in syllabic positions: 'table', 'middle', 'final', 'angle'.

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[2] For further historical details on immigration, cf. Fox 2015.

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While clear [l] tends not to vocalise, dark [ɫ] can be replaced by a back vocoid [ɤ] or its rounded counterpart [o] or the back rounded [ʊ] (e.g. 'well' [wɛʊ], 'fill' [fɪo] or [fɪɤ]. However, when /l/ is preceded by the low-mid rounded vowel /ɔː/, velarized [ɫ] is completely lost, as in 'Paul's' [pɔːz] (Hughes, Trudgill, Watt 2012). One of the basic premises for (l) vocalisation to occur is that a dialect must have both clear and dark /l/. Consonantal gestures tend to be stronger in onset environments and weaker in syllable final contexts, whereas vocalic gestures are deemed to be antithetical. This would entail that dark /l/ is a more appropriate rhyme segment than its clear counterpart. In terms of phonological necessity, a better rhyme segment must be composed of a vowel, meaning that when /l/ is vocalised it is less marked than dark [ɫ] – as only one gesture of the tongue is employed in the articulation, and it is less marked than clear [l].

The clear-dark /l/ dichotomy also exists in Received Pronunciation (RP) but does not occur in all English varieties. In Welsh English, Irish English, Yorkshire English, and Norfolk English /l/ is mostly clear (Johnson, Britain 2007), whereas, in the south-west, /l/ seems to be universally dark (Wakelin 1986) and variably dark in all linguistic environments in Leeds (Khattab 2022a). In General American English (GenAmE) /l/ appears to be darkish,[3] even in prevocalic position.

3 Diachronic Development of (l) Vocalisation and Previous Studies

(L) vocalisation has been noted in Southern British English for at least three decades, but the origin of this phenomenon was unclear for many years. Early evidence of (l) vocalisation, when followed by velars and labials or after the low back unrounded [ɑː] and the low-mid back rounded [ɔː], dates back to the 16th century (Johnson, Britain 2007). Vocalisation of /l/ was found in Yorkshire between the 17th and 19th century (Ihalainen 1994), in South Durham (Orton 1933), in West Yorkshire especially amongst old speakers (Petyt 1985). Since (l) vocalisation occurs in dialects where there is a marked distinction between clear [l] and dark [ɫ] and in dialects with a darkish /l/ in all environments, it would be unlikely to assume that the origin of vocalisation is rooted in the East of England, as the phoneme /l/, in East Anglia, was reported to be clear in all environments until the 20th century. In the Norfolk dialect, indeed, 'hill' is still articulated as [hil] in rural areas, at least amongst old speakers (Trudgill 1999).

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3 Halle, Mohanan (1985) attributed the feature [+back] to dark [ɫ], but this can be questionable since the [± back] traits are generally used to describe dorsals rather than coronals.
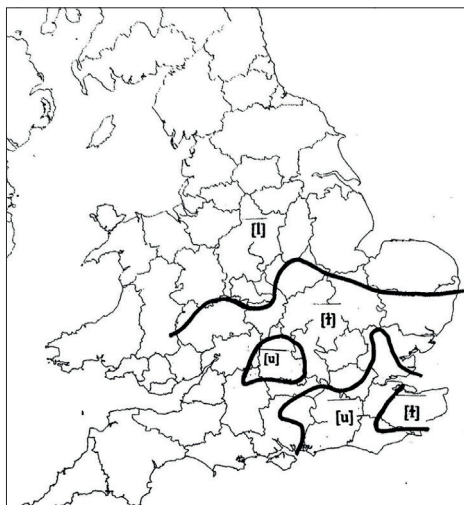
Before the mid-19th century, the allophonic distinction was briefly mentioned in the *Survey of English Dialects* (Ellis 1889). Clear and dark /l/ split emerged in mid-19th century (Trudgill 2004) due to the dialect contact with New Zealand English (Johnson, Britain 2007). Thus, dark [ɫ] spread across Southern England (see **[fig. 1]**), yet in West Midland, Norfolk and the North of England, clear [l] has been preserved. This postcolonial contact explains the implausibility of a non-clear /l/ to be exported from Britain, owing to the absence of this allophonic distinction.

(L) vocalisation has been explored in: London English (Cruttenden 1980), Cambridge (Wright 1989), Peterborough (Britain 1997), the West Midlands (Mathisen 1999), Essex and the Fens (Johnson, Britain 2007), Scotland (Scobbie, Pouplier 2010; Stuart-Smith et al. 2013), in Australian English (Borowsky 2001), in Philadelphia English (Purse 2020). It was found to be conditioned by phonological environments (Wells 1982), style (Wright 1988), and social factors (e.g. social practices) (Stuart-Smith et al. 2013). Most of the research conducted on (l) vocalisation deals with the degree of tongue tip weakening. Wright (1987) and Hardcastle, Barry (1989) electropalatography (EPG) studies report partial loss of alveolar contact in coda /l/ where there is a contact between the tip of the tongue and the alveolar ridge. The averaged tongue tracings in /l/ was examined by Turton (2014) in ultrasound data from Essex, in a variety of contexts constrained by prosodic and morphological features. Sproat, Fujimura (1993) carried out an X-ray microbeam finding that both dark and clear /l/ have a dorsal and an apical gesture.

Gick (1999) points out that both gestures are likely to be classified as consonantal and vocalic, Recasens (2016) argues that the two gestures are not identifiable in systems where dark /l/ is phonemic, whereas Strycharczuk, Scobbie (2015) found that, in Southern British English, both gestures can be measured, at least in certain vocalic environments. Tollfree (1999) suggests that the tongue tip gesture is audible in word-final pre-pausal /l/. However, Strycharczuk, Scobbie (2015) claim that gestural delay could become phonologised, and that increasing levels of such delay could lead to vocalisation even in pre-pausal position. Gick (1999) proposes a model according to which vocalization of final /r/ and /l/ are inherently due to the weakening of the consonant gesture in coda position – an account in which gestural delay does not seem to push vocalisation. Hudson, Holloway (1997) report that dark /l/ in the _C# context is mostly used by middle-class speakers, whilst in the speech of working-class members dark /l/ is more likely to undergo vocalisation, with males leading females. Przedlacka (2002), who analysed (l) vocalisation by participants within a 50-mile radius of Greater London, shows that neither males nor females were leading the change. However, among Inner Londoners, males were found to be leading females (Ashbay, Parry 2007).

4   The Present Study

Antilla (2002, 214) noted that "work on phonological variation has continued largely independently of phonological theory, often consciously emphasising its empirical character". It is claimed, indeed, that phonologists rely on sanitised data, whereas sociolinguists collect and work with real data by examining both linguistic and social factors (Johnson, Britain 2007, 294). This paper combines both systematic and theoretical analysis by bridging the gap between Sociolinguistics and Theoretical Phonology. The research questions of the present study are listed as follows:

I.   Considering the social and economic change that London has faced, and considering that with the Cockney diaspora Cockney speakers took their language forms with them, how much (l) vocalisation is there left in Bermondsey today?

II.   How does this linguistic variable behave in London English?

III.   How is this phonological feature socially and linguistically distributed in the speech community of Bermondsey?

4.1   Fieldwork and Methods

Fieldwork for this small-scale project was carried out for 4 months in Bermondsey. Ten native English speakers, stratified by age and sex, were recorded with a flash card recorder and a nonintrusive high-quality microphone by means of sociolinguistic interviews. To enter the community, I adopted the 'friend-of-a-friend' technique (Milroy 1980) – an approach which should be considered carefully as making contacts only with people who hold an official status could bias the data towards the standard speech style (Tagliamonte 2006). Before each interview was carried out, the ethical protocol was carefully followed. Each participant, prior to the recording session, was given a Consent Form as well as a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) to gain awareness of what is involved in taking part in a research study, also to become aware of their rights (e.g. the participant's rights to anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawal, etc.).

Sampling is a valued step that challenges any sociolinguistic researcher to guarantee representativeness. The latter defines the level of accuracy of a sample enabling researchers to draw conclusions on the larger population under investigation (Milroy, Gordon 2003). The present small-scale study examines (l) vocalisation only in one social class (as the 10 participants are all working class members), across three age cohorts (young, middle-aged, and old), and across sex (males vs. females), as illustrated in [tab. 1].

Table 1   Sample of the present study

10 Working-class Participants				
Age			**Sex**	
Young	Middle	Old	Females	Males
3	3	4	5	5

Labov (1984) suggests that a typical sociolinguistic interview should last at least one or two hours per speaker. In this study, the length of each one-to-one interview is about 50 minutes, even though, Milroy and Gordon (2003) point out that, sometimes, it can be onerous to be categorical about the interview length, claiming that phonological data can be gathered in 20 or 30 minutes.

I would usually meet with my participants a couple of hours before the actual interview started, as it seems that "even when interviewed by a stranger, speakers will settle down to a pattern approximating to their everyday interactional style after about the first hour" (Douglas-Cowie 1978, cited in Milroy, Gordon 2003, 58). The main goal of sociolinguists is to find out how people talk when they are not being observed to capture the 'vernacular' – "the style in which the minimum

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attention is paid to speech" (Labov 1972, 208).[4] However, recording activities might be subject to the 'observer's paradox'. Trudgill (1986) claims that the informants are now familiar with technology, and they tend not to be tense or anxious when being recorded, therefore, it is easy to have a high-quality of recordings and attain linguistic goals. To minimise the observer's paradox, I adopted a semi-structured sociolinguistic interview (Labov 1984). The topics which Labov (1984) describes as 'conversational networks' are selected based on (a) previous successful subjects which engaged the participants in the conversation, and (b) topics which may yield information on neighbourhood norms and on more general ones. Each module, in my interviews, began with general questions, such as "Did you go to one of the schools in the neighbourhood?" (Tagliamonte 2006, 38) to measure a participant's level of interest in that topic. Less controlled speech used to be typically elicited through the 'Danger of Death' question,[5] yet this is quite controversial nowadays as many linguists dispute the morality of forcing someone to recollect and describe this kind of trauma.

The interviews were then transcribed in ELAN, and the data was coded auditorily in an Excel Spreadsheet. The total number of tokens analysed is 743 (about 74 tokens per speaker). The script was also run in PRAAT and mixed-effects regression analysis was carried out to assess the influence of multiple predictors on the target linguistic variable. Mixed-effects models are useful to model both speaker and word as random intercepts, so that while the variance attributed to different levels is estimated, each level of the random-effects predictor is mapped onto this normal distribution (Gorman, Johnson 2013). The mixed-effects regression analysis was carried out in Rbrul (Johnson 2009) – a program which runs in R, and uses the *lme4* package as well as the *glmer* function. The type of analysis is binary: /l/ vs. vocalisation, with vocalisation as application value. The procedure employed in the logistic regression analysis follows Gorman, Johnson (2013, 222):

(i) predictors which turned out not to be statistically significant, but the factor weights went in the expected direction, were kept in the model;

(ii) non-statistically significant predictors whose estimate did not go in the expected direction, were removed from the model;

(iii) statistically significant predictors whose estimate went in the right direction, were kept in the model.

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4 This study is rooted in the Labovian framework and focuses on style-shifting in terms of attention paid to speech. However, it is worth mentioning that Bell (1994) proposed the sociolinguistic theory of audience design, which holds that linguistic style-shifting mostly happens in response to a speaker's audience.

5 Cf. Labov 1984.

The comparison of different nested models was carried out with the log-likelihood ratio test, which performs significant tests with mixed models by comparing the likelihood of one model to the likelihood of another model (Winter 2020).

The independent variables included in the model are listed as follows:

- Preceding phonological environment (long vowels, short vowels, syllabic /l/).
- Following phonological environment (consonants, vowels, pause).
- Social class (working-class).
- Age (young, middle-aged, old).
- Sex (females vs. males).

4.1.1 Sociolinguistic Theory

This section provides a brief overview of micro-sociolinguistics, which investigates how the social structure affects the way people talk and how patterns of use are influenced by social factors (e.g. social class, age, and sex). The importance of social class lies in the fact that internal differences of societies are reflected in speakers' language use (Trudgill 1995). In English-speaking countries social class has, in fact, been proven to be a prominent variable according to which language varies; indeed, most linguistic features have a 'social' origin (Patrick 1999). The treatment of this independent variable in sociolinguistics has followed a set of empirical approaches from sociology to determine the individual's class by employing indexes across scales which typically take into account: income, education and occupation.

Age stratification of linguistic variables mirrors change in the community throughout time and change in the speech of individuals in a critical period of their lives. The present study adopted an apparent time methodology according to which the notion of time is measured by comparing the speech of older informants with that of young speakers. The different linguistic behaviour between young and old informants is interpreted as a change which has taken place within the community, with younger speakers tending to favour innovative forms and older speakers tending to favour more conservative ones (Trudgill 1974).

The effect of speaker sex (Labov 1990) has long been accounted for in sociolinguistics starting from the early 1970s. Labov (1990) noted that, in stable sociolinguistic stratification, when examining sex at the intersection with social class, men tend to adopt a higher frequency of non-standard variants than women. In cases of linguistic change from above the level of awareness women are more likely to favour prestigious linguistic forms, whereas in cases of linguistic

change from below the level of awareness[6] women are more likely to use a higher frequency of the less-prestigious variant than men.[7] Numerous studies have demonstrated that within a community, males and females use phonological features in different ways. Given that gender roles differ more widely than socioeconomic classes in many communities, it has been argued that gender should be considered as having a higher influence on linguistic variety than class (Milroy, Milroy, Hartley 1994).

4.1.2 The Theoretical Approach

This section briefly describes the theoretical approach which has been employed. The phonological model selected is Optimality Theory (OT) which allows modelling for language variation and change. OT, proposed by Prince, Smolensky (1993; 2004) and discussed by Prince, McCarthy (1995) in the *Correspondence Theory*, is an output-based model of language where the input is retrieved in the output. The basic assumption of this theory is that language is governed by a set of violable constraints which can have more than one form. A violation is serious if the constraint is highly ranked, and the optimal candidate is the one which incurs a small number of serious violations. For any input there is a number of potential outputs, yet only the more logical ones are taken into account (e.g. [dɒg] as an input of /kæt/ would be illogical). By contrast, for any output, there could be an infinite set of possible inputs, potentially. A generator (GEN) produces a set of candidates (CAND) which are evaluated against parallel constraints by an evaluator (EVAL).

/input/	CON1	CON2	CON3
CAND1	*		*
CAND2		*	
☞ CAND3			**

The above table illustrates that both candidate 1 and candidate 2 incur two constraints violations, yet candidate 1 incurs the highest ranked and more serious constraint, thus it is excluded as a possible option. Candidate 2 only incurs one violation, but it is higher ranked

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6 The raised onset for SQUARE class words in Auckland is an example of change in progress below the level of social consciousness. Cf. Batterham (2000) for additional information.

7 For details related to linguistic variation and the social construct of gender which goes beyond than the binary category of biological sex, cf. Eckert (1989, 2000).

compared to constraint 3, so this candidate loses, leaving candidate 3 as the optimal candidate. The optimal candidate is the represented by the symbol ☞.

Constraints, within the OT framework, can be classified in two broad categories: 'Faithfulness' (phonemic contrast) constraints and 'Markedness' (structural) constraints (Prince, Smolensky 2004). Faithfulness prohibits any distinction between the input and the output, and the input is not altered in the surface form. McCarthy (2008) proposed two principal faithfulness restrictions, namely MAXIMAL-ITY[8] (MAX) and DEPENDENCY (DEP). MAX strictly entails any item in the input to have an equivalent in the output. DEP guards that an item present in the output must have a correspondent in the input. The notion of markedness was explored by Trubetzkoy (1939) and later reviewed by Jakobson (1941). The scholar argued that a less marked sound appears earlier in language acquisition by children, and its frequency is likely to unfold in the world's languages. This notion has also been considered by Stampe (1972) in the theory of 'Natural Phonology', where he suggested that the natural process, also known as 'unmarked', is due to an ease of articulation.[9] Markedness requires that segments in the input must be maximally expressed in the output, aiming at promoting the most 'natural' form in language, promoting surface forms which are the least marked. Even when obfuscated by faithfulness, the 'markedness' restrictions always tend to emerge in diachronic changes in the so-called emergence of the unmarked (McCarthy, Prince 1994).

5 Results and Discussion

This section presents results from the mixed-effects Rbrul regression analysis – which predicts the probability of (l) vocalisation based on the presence of predictors included in the model – and discusses the findings in relation to Optimality Theory.

Results from the multivariate analysis suggest that (l) vocalisation, in Bermondsey, seems to be conditioned by the preceding phonological environment and by the age of participants. The following phonological environment as well as sex did not reach statistical significance. The statistical information reported in the table below include: R^2 – a measure of the 'goodness of fit' (Winter 2020); log-odds, which reflect the strength of the relationship between a

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8 The MAX constraint is the analogous to the PARSE restriction of the 'Containment Theory'.

9 This study only examines language production and thus, does not provide an account on perception; cf. Ohala (1993) for related details.

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predictor and the response;[10] and factor weights – relative probabilities within the range of 0 – 1.00 which are related to log-odds.

Table 2   Mixed-effects regression analysis reporting statistically significant predictors. Note: *p<0.5; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Application value = vocalisation; Overall proportion = 0.673; R^2 = 0.161;					
Log-likelihood = -431.169; N = 743					
Contraints	Logodds	FW	%	N	*p*-value
Preceding phonological environment					***
Long vowels	0.711	0.67	80	289	
Short vowels	-0.225	0.44	59	360	
-C Syllabic /l/	-0.487	0.381	58	94	
Age					***
Young	0.952	0.72	87	173	
middle-aged	-0.467	0.38	61	232	
Old	-0.485	0.38	62	338	

In the preceding phonological context, only preceding long vowels (e.g. 'girl')[11] are marked as favouring predictors. Short vowels (e.g. 'well') as well as the effect of preceding consonants on syllabic /l/ (e.g. 'little') disfavour vocalisation. This result is in line with findings from Colchester and Southend (Spero 1996), the Fens (Johnson, Britain 2007), and Australia (Horvath, Horvath 1996). In the London area, long vowels preceded by vocalisation were also found to be frequently shortened (Bowyer 1973).

In terms of social significance, **[tab. 2]** suggests that (l) vocalisation is only conditioned by the age of speakers, with young participants favouring vocalisation at 0.72, whilst middle-aged and old participants disfavour it. In sociolinguistic theory, age stratification of linguistic variables is of prominent importance as it mirrors (a) change in the community throughout time, (b) change in the speech of individuals in a critical period of their lives. In line with previous sociolinguistic studies, the different linguistic behaviour between young and old informants, in Bermondsey, might be interpreted as a change which has taken place within the community, with younger speakers tending to favour the non-standard feature, whereas middle-aged and older speakers tend to favour the more conservative variant. (L) vocalisation has a history of being stigmatised, but it seems to be spreading to more formal styles (Johnson 2001). Crosstabulations between individuals' age and

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10   If log-odds are positive, there is a positive correlation between the variables, whereas if they are negative there is a negative correlation between them.

11   Tokens like 'girl' were coded on the phonetic surface. In this case, the token is non-rhotic.
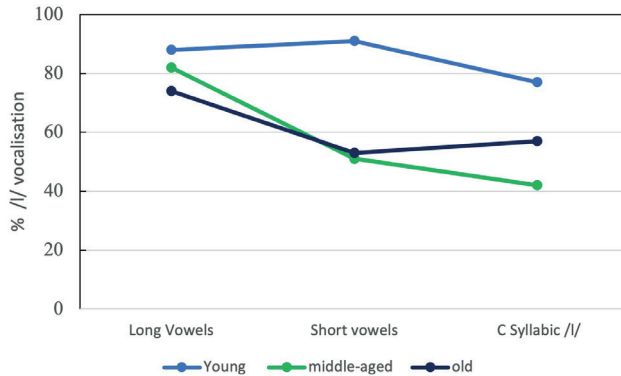
Figure 2 Interaction between preceding vowel length and speaker's age, p < 0.05

preceding vowel length suggest that young speakers lead in the use of vocalisation when /l/ is preceded by long vowels, short vowels, and when syllabic /l/ is preceded by consonants. All age groups indicate high levels of vocalisation after long vowels, with middle-aged speakers being slightly behind the young generation, and slightly ahead of old speakers. Both middle-aged and old speakers vocalise nearly at the same levels after short vowels, whereas when /l/ occurs in syllabic position preceded by consonants, old informants were found to vocalise a little bit more than middle-aged speakers.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the above mixed-effects regression analysis revealed that (l) vocalisation, in Bermondsey, appears to be conditioned by preceding vowel length, with preceding long vowels favouring the vocalisation of /l/. In line with phonological theory, long vowels foster the early and longer dorsal gesture, whereas a short vowel blocks it. But why do long vowels trigger (l) vocalisation? The vocalic dorsal gesture maximisation tends to minimise the coronal gesture, and vocalisation is more likely to occur when /l/ is preceded by long vowels (Sproat, Fujimura 1993). **[Fig. 3]** shows that vocalisation is inhibited when /l/ is preceded by short vowels owing to the very short timings between the two gestures. Thus, vocalisation is a result of the coronal gesture failure (Sproat, Fujimura 1993).

To account for the influence of preceding consonants on syllabic /l/, this paper follows Johnson, Britain (2007) in employing the *coronal[LAT]/rhyme constraint. The use of the $FAITH_{[COR]}$ (*GLOTTAL-l/*LABIAL-l >> *DORSAL-l >> *CORONAL-l) constraint, implies that $FAITH_{[COR]}$ prohibits vocalisation. Thus, if vocalisation is inhibited in the environment of following glottals or labials, it will be also blocked in the environments following dorsals and coronals. **[Tab. 3]** and **[tab. 4]** show that the ranking for *CORONAL-l and $FAITH_{[COR]}$
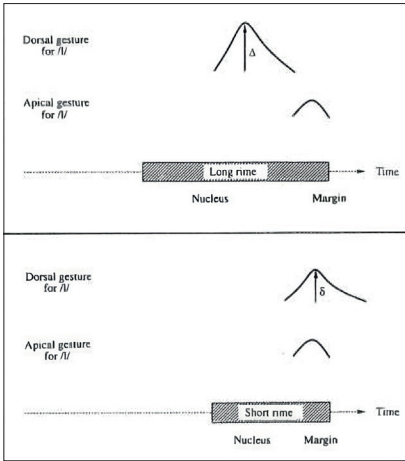
Figure 3
Representation of /l/ vocalisation
gestures, Sproat, Fujimura (1993)

yields two potential outputs. **[Tab. 3]** for instance, should be interpreted as follows: if vocalisation is possible after coronals, it is likely that it will occur after dorsals, glottals/labials. This outcome is also illustrated in **[tab. 5]**, where the glottal stop is the preceding phonetic segment.

Table 3 OT representation for /mʌdl/ (adapted from Johnson, Britain 2007)

/mʌdl/	*GLOTTAL-l/ *LABIAL-l	*DORSAL-l	*CORONAL-l	FAITH[COR]
☞mʌdu				*
mʌdl		*		

Table 4 OT representation for /mʌdl (adapted from Johnson, Britain 2007)

/mʌdl/	*GLOTTAL-l/ *LABIAL-l	*DORSAL-l	FAITH[COR]	*CORONAL-l
mʌdu			*	
☞mʌdl				*

Table 5 OT representation for /lɪʔl/ (adapted from Johnson & Britain 2007)

/lɪʔl/	*GLOTTAL-l/	*DORSAL-l	*CORONAL-l	FAITH[COR]
	*LABIAL-l			
lɪʔl	*!			
☞ lɪʔu			*	

Even though it is possible to provide an OT explanation for the effect of preceding consonants on syllabic /l/, statistically, at least in Bermondsey, this constraint does not appear to influence vocalisation. Cross-linguistic studies show evidence (l) vocalisation in Old French, Catalan, Modern Provençal, Serbo-Crotian, suggesting that this phonological feature is a natural phenomenon.[12] Whereas, studies carried out on child language acquisition show that the dichotomy clear-dark /l/ does not occur in children's speech. In language acquisition, children tend to downgrade markedness restrictions to obtain faithfulness to the acquiring system.

6 Conclusions

This small-scale study has examined (l) vocalisation in the under-documented speech community of Bermondsey to find out whether, despite the Cockney diaspora and despite the emergence of Multicultural London English, this phonological feature is still present in this London district. Results from the mixed-effects regression analysis suggest that (l) vocalisation continues to exist in Bermondsey as a change in progress led by young speakers. Preceding long vowels were marked as the most favouring environment for vocalisation to occur due to phonological necessity, and OT was employed to provide a theoretical explanation of the predictors which condition (l) vocalisation. Even though the findings seem to match previous research, the limitation of this study consists in the small number of participants.

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[12]   For an in-depth discussion on the naturalness of (l) vocalisation, cf. Johnson, Britain 2007.

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The Indirect Passive in Japanese is a Mono-clausal Phenomenon

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Abstract The so-called indirect passive, where the subject is not the argument of the underlying verb that bears the Theme/Patient role, is generally understood to be a bi-clausal phenomenon (cf. Kuno 1973; Shibatani 1978; Kuroda 1979). In other words, the passive morpheme *rare* is merged with a clause, and then the resulting item is combined with the subject. In this paper, however, we argue that the indirect passive is best understood as a mono-clausal phenomenon. We first point out that with some instances of the indirect passive, the passive morpheme *rare* is not understood as being combined with a verb or clause in syntax. Thus, we are led to assume that the lexicon contains numerous instances of the *Vrare* form. This implies that even when the passive morpheme *rare* is combined in syntax, it forms a constituent with the relevant verb; hence, the indirect passive is a mono-clausal phenomenon. We furthermore maintain that when the indirect passive involves the merging of *rare* with a verb in syntax, the verb must be a volitional verb, and demonstrate that this generalization, as well as the case particle alternation involved in the indirect passive, poses a challenge to the bi-clause analysis but not to the mono-clause analysis. Finally, we review one of the main arguments for analyzing the indirect passive to be a bi-clausal phenomenon, which concerns the antecedent of *zibun*. We show that it is inconclusive at best.

Keywords Japanese. Syntax. The indirect passive. Lexicon. The mono-clause analysis.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Indirect Passives being Mono-clausal Phenomena. – 3 The Mono-clause Analysis of Indirect Passives. – 4 Reconsidering Previous Arguments for the Bi-clause Analysis. – 5 A Summary and Further Remarks.

1 Introduction

Descriptively, passives are phenomena that involve a shift of the subject. The standard analysis of the English passive construction as in (1) states that the passive morpheme *-ed* is attached to a verb, which causes the external argument of the verb to get eliminated, and consequently the internal argument becomes unable to receive abstract Case in its original position, so moves to the subject position to receive the nominative case.[1]

(1)   Mary was chased by John.

Since the internal argument of a verb generally has the Theme/Patient theta role, this analysis captures the fact that the subject of the English passive bears the Theme/Patient role.

The study of Japanese follows in the footsteps of the study of the English passive and assumes that the construction of passives necessarily involves the passive morpheme merging with a relevant expression in the computational system. In other words, every instance of passive is assumed to involve the productive use of a passive morpheme.

Japanese passives are different from English passives in that the passive subject need not be the argument of the underlying verb that bears the Theme/Patient role; in fact, even an expression that is not an argument of the verb can serve as the subject; see (2).[2,3]

(2) a. Mary ga   John ni tonari de ne**rare**ta   rasii.
        Mary NOM John by next:to at sleep:PASS:PAST seem
        'Apparently, John dozed next to her, annoying Mary.'

     b. Mary wa   ame ni hur**are**te   bisyobisyoni nattesimatta.
         Mary TOP rain by pour:PASS soaked   become:finish:PAST
         'Rain poured on Mary, making her soaked.'

In what follows, adopting the standard practice, we term those passives – like the ones in (2) where the subject is not the argument of the underlying verb that bears the Theme/Patient role – the 'indirect

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[1] Cf. Jaeggli 1986; Burzio 1986

[2]   In this paper, we use the following abbreviations: NOM = nominative; ACC = accusative; DAT = dative; GEN = genitive; TOP = topic; PRES = present; PASS = passive; IMP = imperative; NEG = negation; COMP = complementizer; COP = copula.

[3]   The underlying form of the passive morpheme is /rare/; it appears as *rare* after vowel-ending verbs and *are* after consonant-ending verbs. Throughout the paper, the relevant passive morphemes in the example sentences are boldfaced.

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passive'.[4] The indirect passive typically expresses a situation where some animate entity is psychologically affected by an event (cf. Yamada 1908). To account for this, researchers generally assume that the passive morpheme *rare* in the indirect passive serves to introduce a new argument to the sentence (henceforth the Argument-adding *rare*); the added argument is realised as the subject bearing the Affectee theta role.[5] It is thus expected that the subject of the passive involving the Argument-adding *rare* is an animate entity, and for this reason the sentences in (3) are degraded in comparison with those in (2).

(3)   a.   (Takai 2009, no. [24], adapted)
      ??Beddo   ga   John   ni   ne**rare**ta   rasii.
      bed   NOM   John by   sleep:PASS:PAST   seem
      '(Lit.) Apparently, the bed got affected by John sleeping on it.'

    b.   (Takai 2009, no. [23], adapted)
      ??Soto   no   miti   wa   ame ni   hu**rare**te   bisyobisyoni
      outside   GEN road TOP rain by pour:PASS   soaked
      nattesimatta.
      become:finish:PAST
      'Rain poured on the road outside, making it soaked.'

There are also passives whose subject denotes an inanimate entity and many such cases are neutral in meaning, i.e. they do not add any additional meaning to their active sentence counterpart, cf. (4).

(4)   (Kuroda 1992, 206, no. [112])
    Fermat no   teiri   ga   John niyotte syoomei**sare**ta
    Fermat GEN theorem NOM John by   prove:PASS:PAST.
    'Fermat's Theorem was proved by John.'

Given such cases, researchers also assume that the passive morpheme *rare* may also function similarly to the English passive morpheme in that it eliminates the external argument of the verb to which it attaches (henceforth the Argument-reducing *rare*).[6] In sum, two types of passives are assumed: those involving the Argument-adding *rare* and those involving the Argument-reducing *rare*.

Standardly, passives involving the Argument-reducing *rare* are analysed as mono-clausal phenomena where the passive morpheme is directly attached to a given verb. But the indirect passive, which

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4 The 'indirect passive', as well as the 'direct passive', to be introduced later in § 4, is a term used purely for descriptive purposes without any theoretical commitment.

5 Cf. Kuno 1973; Shibatani 1978; Kuroda 1979/1992; Masuoka 1991; Kinsui 1993.

6 Cf. Kuno 1973; Kuroda 1979/1992; Saito 1982; Miyagawa 1989; Shibatani 1990.

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involves the Argument-adding *rare,* has been described as a bi-clausal phenomenon where the passive morpheme is attached to the clause headed by a given verb.[7] For example, the indirect passive in (5) is analysed as (6), where the clause to which the Argument-adding *rare* is attached is VP$_1$.

(5) Noriko   ga   inu ni kodomo o   kam**are**ta   (sooda).
     Noriko   NOM dog by child   ACC bite:PASS:PAST I:heard
     '(I heard) it occurred to Noriko that a dog bit her child.'

(6)
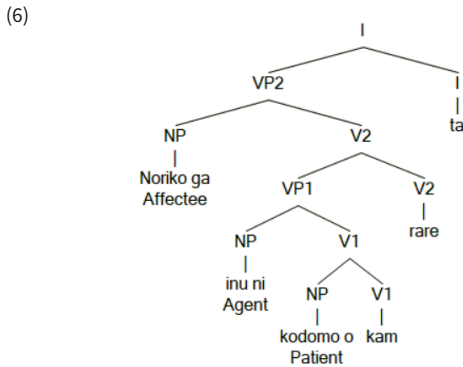
In this paper, we argue that the indirect passive is also best understood as a mono-clausal phenomenon. According to the analysis we will propose, (5) is analysed as (7) instead.

(7)

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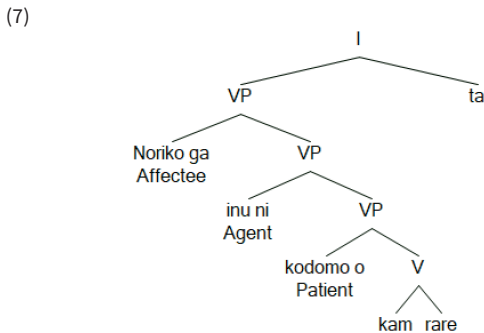
7 Cf. Kuroda 1965; Makino 1972; Kuno 1973; Inoue 1976; Shibatani 1978. In this paper, we use the term 'bi-clausal phenomena' to cover all the cases that are analysed in such a way that the Argument-adding *rare* is directly combined with a phrase that includes the underlying verb and its arguments, irrespective of what syntactic label the phrase has.

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In § 2, we first point out that to analyze the indirect passive to be a mono-clausal phenomenon is a possibility in view of the acquisition of the Argument-adding *rare*, and then present two sets of phenomena that are difficult for the bi-clause analysis to deal with. In § 3, we demonstrate that the mono-clause analysis does not encounter the same problems. For the demonstration, we use Ueyama's (2015) theoretical framework for practical reasons. Furthermore, § 4 reviews one of the major arguments for the bi-clause analysis, namely the one having to do with the antecedent of *zibun*, and shows that it is not valid. We conclude the paper in § 5 with a brief summary and further remarks.

2 Indirect Passives being Mono-clausal Phenomena

2.1 The Origin of the Argument-adding *rare*

As we noted above, the study of Japanese passives typically assumes that the construction of passives necessarily involves the productive use of a passive morpheme. In this section, we first point out that this assumption cannot be maintained, and then consider how the productive use of the Argument-adding *rare* is acquired. As we explain below, considering this leaves us the possibility that the Argument-adding *rare* forms a constituent with a verb stem, and thus the indirect passive is a mono-clausal phenomenon.

If every instance of the indirect passive were productively constructed in syntax through the merging process of a given verb and the Argument-adding *rare*, we would expect to find an active sentence serving as the base for each instance of the passive. However, there are a good number of passives that do not have an active sentence counterpart (cf. Muraki 1991, 195). For example, consider (8) through (10).

(8) Hayashishita, Takai, Ueyama 2020, nos. [81a] and [82a])
a. Kono ookazi de   ooku no   hito   ga   yakedas**are**ta.
   this   big:fire with many GEN person NOM burn:push:out:PASS:PAST
   'Many people were forced to evacuate because of this major fire.'

b. *Ooku no   hito   o   yakedasita.
   many   GEN person ACC burn:push:out:PAST
   'It made many people evacuate.'

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(9) a. Seihu   wa   Asahi Sinbun   no   syasetu   ni   konkai   no
         government TOP Asahi Newspaper GEN editorial by this:time GEN
         hutegiwa   o   tukkom**are**ta.
         mishandling ACC pick:on:PASS:PAST.
         'The government's recent mishandling of the matter was picked on by the
         Asahi Newspaper editorial.'

     b. *Asahi Sinbun   no   syasetu   ga   seihu   no   konkai
         Asahi   Newspaper   GEN   editorial NOM   government GEN this:time
         no   hutegiwa   o   tukkonda
         GEN   mishandling ACC   pick:on:PAST
         'The Asahi Newspaper editorial picked on the government's recent
         mishandling of the matter.'

(10) a. Ooku no   hito   ga   tunami   ni   ie   o
         many GEN person NOM   tsunami by house ACC
         nagas**are**ta   rasii.
         wash:away:PASS:PAST   seem.
         'Apparently, many people's houses were washed away by the tsunami.'

     b. *Tunami ga   ooku   no   hito   no   ie   o
         tsunami NOM many   GEN   person   GEN   house ACC
         nagasita   rasii.
         wash:away:PAST   seem.
         'Apparently, the tsunami washed away many people's houses.'

The a-examples in (8)-(10) are instances of the indirect passive, but
we cannot identify the active sentences serving as their base; in fact,
the b-examples are all unacceptable. Thus, the a-examples present
cases of the indirect passive that are not constructed in syntax. Fur-
thermore, we cannot consider the VP to be an idiom chunk with the
a-examples, as the word order can be shifted.

To explain the existence of the a-examples in (8)-(10), we must assume
that the verb stems involved – namely *yakedasare* 'burn:push:out:PASS',
tukkomare 'pick:on:PASS', *nagasare* 'wash:away:PASS' – are stored in
the lexicon as items consisting of multiple morphemes. In what fol-
lows, we refer to verb stems ending with *rare* as *Vrare*.[8]

Although this might be counterintuitive to those who hold the view
that the lexicon only includes single morpheme items, the lexicon of
the Japanese language actually includes many multiple morpheme
items. For instance, consider the pairs of intransitive and transitive
verbs in (11).

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8 *Vrare* is realized as *Vare* when *V* is consonant-ending.

(11) a. her 'to decrease——her**as** 'to make something decrease'

b. d**e** 'to exit' — d**as** 'to make something exit'

c. sas**ar** 'to pierce — sas 'to pierce something'

d. kim**ar** 'to be decided' — kim**e** 'to decide something

e. or**e** 'to get snapped' — or 'to snap something'

f. ak 'to open' — ak**e** 'to open something'

Each pair is morphologically related, but the placement of an extra morpheme is random. With the pairs in (11a) and (11c), only one item of the pair includes an extra morpheme. So if we focus on these instances alone, we get the impression that *as* converts an intransitive verb to a transitive verb, and *ar* changes a transitive verb to an intransitive verb. However, the pairs in (11b) and (11d) present cases where both sides include an extra morpheme, though one in each pair includes *as* or *ar*. The pairs in (11e) and (11f) are more idiosyncratic cases where the same extra morpheme sometimes appears with the intransitive verb but at other times with the transitive verb. Importantly, none of the extra morphemes seen in these cases can be used productively. We are therefore led to assume that all the intransitive and transitive verb stems in (11) are listed in the lexicon, including those whose root morpheme is an attested lexical item. Pairs of morphologically-related intransitive and transitive verbs thus highlight that the Japanese lexicon includes a good number of multiple morpheme items.

We have concluded above that the lexicon includes instances of *Vrare* whose *V* counterpart is not listed (e.g. *yakedasare*, *tukkomare*, *nagasare*). Given the observation that the Japanese lexicon also includes numerous stems consisting of multiple morphemes, nothing precludes the possibility that a given speaker's lexicon may also list instances of *Vrare* that have their *V* counterpart such as *taberare* 'eat:PASS', *nagurare* 'punch:PASS' and *sinare* 'die:PASS', along with those *V* counterparts, i.e. *tabe* 'to eat', *nagur* 'to punch' and *sin* 'to die'. As we explain below, this is likely in view of language acquisition.

When a child learns the Japanese language, what he/she hears is not the morpheme *rare* in isolation, but a cluster of instances of *Vrare* and their *V* counterparts if any. So, it is reasonable to assume that a given speaker's lexicon at some point may include items like those in (12).

(12) ..., V_1, V_1rare, V_2rare, V_3, V_3rare, V_4rare, V_5,...

Suppose that the speaker wishes to utter a sentence whose meaning corresponds to that of an indirect passive sentence, using V_5. In this situation, he/she isolates the meaning and function of *rare* by comparing relevant instances of *Vrare* and their *V* counterparts in his/her lexicon, and tries to use V_5 with *rare* being attached. If this attempt is successful and accepted by his/her language community, he/she

starts to use it with other verbs. In this way, we maintain, the Argument-adding *rare* gets included in his/her lexicon.[9]

We leave open the issue of what his/her lexicon looks like after the Argument-adding *rare* has been recorded independently. It is possible that it is simply added as in (13). Alternatively, we may think that many instances of *Vrare* have been removed, as in (14), for they can be reconstructed through the merge process in syntax.

(13) …, V_1, V_1rare, V_2rare, V_3, V_3rare, V_4rare, V_5, **rare** (Argument-adding **rare**),…

(14) …, V_1, V_2rare, V_3, V_4rare, V_5, **rare** (Argument-adding **rare**),…

As we see, either assumption allows us to account for the fact that the lexicon includes *Vrare* stems, especially those whose *V* counterpart is not listed.[10]

Once we view that the Argument-adding *rare* has originated from the *Vrare* stem, we cannot preclude the possibility that even when it is used productively, it forms a constituent with a given verb, making the indirect passive a mono-clausal structure. One might counter this, saying that how the Argument-adding *rare* has originated and how it should merge in syntax are independent issues. We point out, however, that those indirect passives that do not have an active sentence counterpart must be understood to be mono-clausal because they are built from *Vrare* stems in the lexicon. Thus, if we analysed

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9 Horiguchi's (1990) work may help us determine when the productive use of the Argument-adding *rare* became fully available. He reports that a certain type of the indirect passive, where the subject is not the possessor of the entity denoted by one of the underlying verb's arguments or is not in competition with the agent, is attested only after the early modern period. Thus, the instances of the indirect passive like (i) are of comparatively recent origin.
(i) Mary   ga   John   ni tonari de ne**rare**ta   rasii. (= (2a))
     Mary   NOM   John   by next:to at sleep:PASS:PAST seem
     'Apparently, John dozed next to her, annoying Mary.'
It is thus suggested that the productive use of the Argument-adding *rare* started rather late, though nothing precludes the possibility that the isolation process itself took place earlier.

10 We maintain that the Argument-reducing *rare* is included in the speaker's lexicon in a similar way. Many researchers assume that the so-called direct passive, where the subject is the argument of the underlying verb that bears the Theme/Patient role, involves the Argument-reducing *rare* (cf. McCawley 1972; Kuno 1973; Saito 1982; Miyagawa 1989; Shibatani 1990). In fact, there are instances of the direct passive for which we cannot identify an active sentence serving as their base; see (i).
(i)(Hayashishita, Takai, Ueyema 2020, [81c] and [82c])
   a.Takusan no   nimotu   ga   densya   ni yur**are**teiru.
     many   GEN   luggage   NOM   train   by toss:PASS:being:PRES
     'A lot of luggage was being tossed up and down inside the train.'
   b.*Densya   ga   takusan   no   nimotu   o   {yutteiru / yuteiru}.
     train   NOM   many   GEN   luggage   ACC   toss:being:PRES
     'The train is tossing a lot of luggage up and down.'

the indirect passive involving the productive use of *rare* as a bi-clausal phenomenon, we would end up assuming two types of indirect passives, those having the mono-clausal structure and those with the bi-clausal structure, though they are semantically indistinguishable. We find this to be unnatural. In the following sections, in pursuit of the mono-clause analysis, we will introduce two sets of phenomena, which the bi-clause analysis has difficulty accounting for.

2.2 Restriction on the Verb Type

It is not the case that the Argument-adding *rare* is compatible with any type of verbs. In particular, we maintain (15).

(15) The Argument-adding *rare* needs to occur with a volitional verb. (Cf. Mikami 1953; Masuoka 1991, 114, no. [54].)

For example, with (16a), the daughter started dating the man voluntarily, and we can construct the indirect passive based on it as in (16b).

(16) a. Musume ga ano otoko to tukiaidasite irai, iroiro yakkaina
daughter NOM that guy with date:start since various troublesome
koto ga okotteiru.
incident NOM occur:being:PRES

'Since my daughter started dating that guy, many troubles are happening.'

b. Musume ni ano otoko to tukiaw**are**dasite irai, iroiro yakkaina
daughter by that guy with date:PASS:start since various troublesome
koto ga okotteiru.
incident NOM occur:being:PRES.

'Since my daughter started dating that guy, many troubles that concern me are happening.'

By contrast, the daughter needing to live with diabetes in (17a) is not her choice, and as shown in (17b), the indirect passive constructed based on it is not acceptable.

(17) a. Musume ga toonyoobyoo to tukiaidasite irai, iroiro yakkaina
daughter NOM diabetes with cope:start since various troublesome
koto ga okotteiru.
incident NOM occur:being:PRES.

'Since my daughter started coping with diabetes, many troubles are happening.'

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b. *Musume   ni   toonyoobyoo   to   tukiaw**are**dasite   irai,   iroiro
   daughter   by   diabetes   with   cope:PASS:start   since   various
   yakkaina   koto   ga   okotteiru.
   troublesome   incident   NOM   occur:being:PRES
   'Since my daughter started coping with diabetes, many troubles that
   concern me are happening.'

Similarly, (18a) states Player A's voluntary action which caused the team to go downhill, and we can construct the indirect passive based on it; see (18b).

(18) a. A sensyu   ga   kozin   no   ketudan   de   pozisyon o
        A player   NOM   personal   GEN   decision   with   position   ACC
        kawatte   irai,   tiimu   wa   teimeisiteiru.
        change   since   team   TOP   go:down:being:PRES
        'Since Player A changed his position for personal reasons, the team has been going down.'

     b. A sensyu   ni   kozin   no   ketudan   de   pozisyon o
        A player   by   personal   GEN   decision   with   position   ACC
        kawar**are**te   irai,   tiimu   wa   teimeisiteiru.
        change:PASS   since   team   TOP   go:down:being:PRES
        'Player A changed his position for personal reasons, which negatively affected us, and our team has been going down.'

(19a), on the other hand, depicts the situation where the Head Coach needed to leave involuntarily due to the manager's decision, and as illustrated in (19b), the indirect passive cannot be constructed based on it.[11]

(19) a. Oonaa   no   ketudan   de   kantoku   ga   kawatte   irai,   tiimu
        owner   GEN   decision   with   director NOM   change   since   team
        wa   teimeisiteiru.
        TOP   go:down:being:PRES
        'Since the Head Coach was changed because of the owner's decision, the team has been going down.'

---

[11] The Argument-reducing *rare* need not occur with a volitional verb. For example, the acceptable passive sentence in (i-b) is based on (i-a), which involves a non-volitional verb.
   (i) a. Ano bas ziko   wa takusan no   wakamono   no inoti o ubatta.
           that bus accident TOP   many GEN young:person   GEN life ACC steal:PAST
           'That bus accident took away many young people's lives.'
        b. Takusan no wakamono   no   inoti ga ano basu ziko   niyotte ubaw**are**ta.
           many   GEN young:person GEN life NOM that bus accident by steal:PASS:PAST
           'Many young people's lives were taken away in that bus accident.'
It thus follows that we must postulate the Argument-adding *rare* independently of the Argument-reducing *rare*, contra Washio (1990), among others.

b. *Oonaa no   ketudan de   kantoku ni kawa**rare**te irai, tiimu
owner GEN decision with director by change:PASS since team
wa   teimeisiteiru.
TOP   go:down:being:PRES
'The Head Coach was changed because of the owner's decision, which negatively affected us, and our team has been going down.'

Admittedly, there are cases where the indirect passive includes a non-volitional verb; see (20).

(20) a. Kono   hei   wa,   donna   kyoohuu   ni huk**are**   temo
this   wall TOP   any   strong:wind by blow:PASS even:if
taorenai hei   desu.
fall:NEG wall COP
'This wall is a kind of wall that does not fall no matter how strong a wind blows on it.'

b. Kaerimiti,   yuudati   ni hur**are**te,   bisyonureni
returning:way late:afternoon:rain by pour:PASS   soaked
nattesimatta.
become:finish:PAST
'On the way back, the late afternoon rain poured on me, and I was soaked.'

But given the assumption that the lexicon includes instances of *Vrare* as discussed in section 2.1, nothing so far prevents us from assuming verbs like *hukare* 'blow:PASS' and *hurare* 'pour:PASS' are stored in the lexicon independently.

Although we do not know why the Argument-adding *rare* needs to occur with a volitional verb, this observation holds and thus needs to be incorporated in the analysis of the indirect passive. If we assumed the indirect passive to be a bi-clausal phenomenon, it would not be possible to incorporate this observation unless *ad hoc* assumptions are made. For example, we would need to say that the clause with which the Argument-adding *rare* merges inherits the feature [+volition] from the verb so that the Argument-adding *rare* can see [+volition] when it merges with the clause. We point out that [+volition] is to describe the meaning of a given verb; thus, it is a semantic feature. Thus, this move makes one commit to the view that semantic features may percolate up, which we think is not preferable in view of constructing a restricted theory of syntax.

2.3   The Case Particle Alternation

Even if the percolation of [+volition] is justified, the bi-clause analysis of the indirect passive still faces the problem of case particle assignment. This seems to have been acknowledged in the field but not

addressed explicitly. To illustrate this point, let us consider the example in (5), repeated as (21).

(21) Noriko   ga   inu   ni   kodomo   o   kam**are**ta   (sooda).
      Noriko   NOM   dog   by   child   ACC   bite:PASS:PAST   I:heard
      '(I heard) it occurred to Noriko that a dog bit her child.'

With the bi-clause analysis, the two-place predicate *kamu* 'to bite' first merges with the argument bearing the Patient role and then the argument with the Agent role as in (22).

(22)

```
              VP1
           /       \
        NP          V1
         |         /    \
      inu ga     NP      V1
      Agent      |        |
              kodomo o   kam
              Patient
```
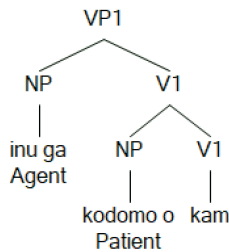
At this point, the case particle assignment has been already completed via the procedure applied to 'regular' non-passive sentences. The Argument-adding *rare* now merges with the resulting clause, as in (23).

(23)

```
                  V2
              /        \
           VP1          V2
          /    \         |
        NP      V1      rare
         |     /    \
      inu ga  NP     V1
      Agent   |       |
           kodomo o  kam
           Patient
```
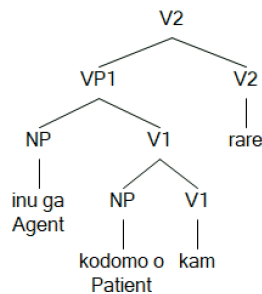
Notice that the Argument-adding *rare* cannot see the items inside the clause, so there is no way to change *ga* to *ni* at that point.

The argument against the bi-clause analysis outlined above assumes that the information of case particles is part of a given verb's lexical information. We think this assumption is reasonable, because the assignment of case particles is not predictable from theta roles. For example, (24) shows that the same verb may appear with a different set of case particles while retaining the same meaning.

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(24) a. Mati   ga   kuruma de   ahureteiru.
         town   NOM   car   with overflow:being
         'The town is overflowed with cars.'

   b. Mati   ni   kuruma ga   ahureteiru.
         town   DAT   car   NOM   overflow:being
         'The town is overflowed with cars.'

In this connection, we would like to mention Kuroda (1978), as it in effect illustrates that the case particle assignment is difficult to handle with the bi-clause analysis even if we decide to abandon the assumption that the information of case particles is part of a given verb's lexical information. To account for the case particle alternation, Kuroda devises two grammatical operations: 'Subject *ni*-Raising' and 'Counter-Equi NP Deletion'. However, realising that these two operations do not give us right results with some other grammatical constructions and also generate unwanted sentences, he supplements them with several *ad hoc* assumptions such as that case assignment might be cancelled after it has been performed, and that generated sentences need to be filtered out by the three canonical sentence patterns that he has postulated. These *ad hoc* assumptions are not only untenable but also incompatible with currently accepted theoretical frameworks.

It is clear from the above discussion that in order to describe the case particle alternation, we must analyse the indirect passive in such a way that the Argument-adding *rare* has access to the argument structure of the verb and can convert it so that the argument bearing the Agent role ends up having the particle *ni*. To achieve this within the current Merge-based syntactic theory, we must assume that the Argument-adding *rare* merges with a given verb as its sister; hence, the mono-clause analysis is needed.[12, 13]

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[12]   Washio (1990) analyses the indirect passive to be an instance of the impersonal passive, known to be found in German, plus an extra NP. We note that his analysis highlights the importance of the Argument-adding *rare* directly merging with the main verb. The sentence *Sensei ga gakusei ni kuruma o kerareta* 'Sadly to the teacher, his student kicked his car' (transl. by the Authors) is, for example, analysed as follows.
   (i) a. [$_{TP}$ [$_{VP}$ gakusei ni kuruma o ker**are**ta]] →
       b. [$_{TP}$ sensei ga [$_{TP}$ gakusei ni$_1$ [$_{VP}$ t$_1$ kuruma o ker**are**ta]]
First the lowest clause is constructed as in (i-a), which he considers to be an instance of the impersonal passive. Then the subject of *ker* 'to kick', already marked with *ni*, moves up and the passive subject *sensei ga* is added, as in (i-b). Notice that this analysis is possible only because the Argument-adding *rare* is first combined with the main verb and changes its Argument-structure in such a way that *ga* becomes *ni*.

[13]   Phrase structure rules give us the option of assuming the Argument-adding *rare* to be combined with a VP, i.e. an alternative mono-clause analysis. Gunji (1983) pursues this option based on examples like (i), and devises a set of phrase structure rules which allow the item that is combined with the VP to have the particle *ni*.

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3 The Mono-clause Analysis of Indirect Passives

In this section, we demonstrate that the mono-clause analysis can describe the observation that the Argument-adding *rare* needs to occur with a volitional verb, as well as the case particle alternation. For practical reasons, we adopt Ueyama's (2015) theoretical framework, which is understood to be a development of the Minimalist Program in Chomsky (1995) for the purpose of describing specific instances of natural language (as opposed to the properties of Universal Grammar).

3.1 Theoretical Framework: Ueyama (2015)

Like the Minimalist Program, Ueyama's (2015) framework assumes that the Numeration is formed, drawing a set of lexical items from the lexicon, and Merge, the operation of the computational system, combines them and yields as output a pair of semantic and phonological representations. Ueyama's (2015) theory also makes use of uninterpretable features to restrict the output of the computational system so as to define a set of well-formed sentences. To be able to describe specific instances of natural language (as opposed to the properties of Universal Grammar), however, Ueyama's (2015) theory modifies three aspects of those theories developed by Chomsky (1995) and his subsequent works. First, Merge has directionality; in other words, Merge determines precedence relation. Second, uninterpretable features come in a wider variety in order to describe specific grammatical constructions. Third, some aspects of sentence meaning, including theta-role assignment, are decided by the syntax, and to account for that, some uninterpretable features are added to semantic features. These three assumptions are necessary to describe the contribution of the computational system to word orders and sentence meanings.

(i) (Gunji 1983, 125 no. [37])
 Ken ga Naomi ni [$_{TVP}$ [$_{TVP}$ byookininar**are**] sosite [$_{TVP}$ sin**are**]] ta.
  ill:become:PASS and die:PASS PAST
 'Ken was adversely affected by Naomi's becoming ill and dying.'
Crucially, this approach does not necessitate the assumption that the information of case particles is part of a given verb's lexical information.
 We understand that those examples by Gunji argue against the bi-clause analysis but are compatible with the mono-clause analysis that we will pursue below in which the Argument-adding *rare* is combined with the verb directly. While Gunji's analysis is meritorious, we do not consider it here, for phrase structure rules are known to be inadequate in many areas and replaced by the Merge-based syntactic theory (cf. Chomsky 1995), and the distribution of case particles is so complex that it is not possible to describe all with phrase structure rules.

We now introduce our theoretical assumptions in concrete terms. First, we assume that the speaker's lexicon consists of lexical items where each lexical item is a bundle of syntactic, semantic and phonological features, in particular, we assume (25). We use the format in (26) to describe that.

(25) A lexical item is a bundle of (i), (ii), and (iii):
    (i) a set of syntactic features,
    (ii) a set of semantic features consisting of an id-slot and a set of properties where a property is a pair consisting of an attribute and a value, and
    (iii) a phonological form.

(26) [{syntactic features, …}, {<id-slot, {properties, …}>, …}, phonological form]

The Numeration is thus a set of feature bundles. The series of Merge operations determines the hierarchical and linear orders among them, from which semantic and phonological representations are read off. The semantic features are described as pairs of an index and a set of properties, and the 'id-slot' is a place to host an index. We will explain below how id-slots get filled. Since this paper is concerned with the structure and meaning of sentences, we leave out the details of phonological features; we simply write the sequence of sounds making up the item in alphabets.

We now explain how the semantic representation of a given sentence is created by the computational system. For example, in the theory we are adopting here, the semantic representation of the sentence in (27) turns out to be (28).[14]

(27) Inu   ga   kodomo   o   oikaketa
    dog   NOM   child   ACC   chase:PAST
    'The dog chased the child.'

(28) {<x1, {<dog, T>}>,
    <x3, {<child, T>}>,
    <x5, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, x3>, <Agent, x1>, <Time, perfect>}>}

In this theory, the semantic representation of sentences is a set of objects. (28), for example, consists of three objects, x1, x3 and x5, where x1 is a dog, x3 a child and x5 a chasing event whose Agent and Theme are x1 and x3, respectively. The speaker then 'understands' the meaning of the sentence in the context by identifying these objects with the objects in their Information Database.

---

14 T stands for 'True'.

We now consider how the semantic representation in (28) is generated. First, we understand that <x1, {<dog, T>}> comes from the lexical specification of *inu* 'a dog'. To capture this, we assume the lexical entry of *inu* 'a dog' to be (29a), which turns to be (29b) when it is selected for the Numeration.

(29) a. [{N}, <id, {<dog, T>}>, inu]
     b. <x1, [{N}, <x1, {<dog, T>}>, inu]>

Similarly, we assume that <x3, {<child, T>}> in (28) comes from the lexical entry of *kodomo* 'a child', i.e. (30a), which turns to be (30b) at the Numeration.

(30) a. [{N}, <id, {<child, T>}>, kodomo]
     b. <x3, [{N}, <x3, {<child, T>}>, kodomo]>

We wish to say that <x5, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, x3>, <Agent, x1>, <Time, perfect>}> obtains after the parts of the sentence are combined as in (31).

(31)
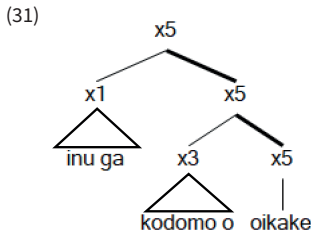
To achieve this, we assume the lexical specification of *oikake* 'to chase' to be (32a), which turns into (32b) at the Numeration, and the Merge operation, which combines *kodomo o* and *oikake*, and then *inu ga* and *kodomo o oikake*, is Right-headed Merge (= RH-Merge) in (33).

(32) a.   [{V}, <id, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, $\star_o$>, <Agent, $\star_{ga}$>}>, oikake]
     b.   <x5, [{V}, <x5, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, $\star_o$>, <Agent, $\star_{ga}$>}>, oikake]>

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(33) RH-Merge:[15]

$\langle xn$, [{syntactic features$_1$,...},{$\langle$id-slot$_1$, {properties$_1$, ...}$\rangle$, ...}, phonological form$_1$]$\rangle$
$\langle xm$,[{syntactic features$_2$,...},{$\langle$id-slot$_2$, {properties$_2$, ...}$\rangle$, ...}, phonological form$_2$]$\rangle$
$\Rightarrow$
$\langle xm$, [{syntactic features$_2$, ...},{$\langle$id-slot$_2$, {properties$_2$, ...}$\rangle$, ...}, $\langle$
   $\langle xn$,[{syntactic features$_1$,..},{$\langle$id-slot$_1$, {properties$_1$,...}$\rangle$, ...}, phonological form$_1$]$\rangle$,
   $\langle xm$, [φ,   φ,   , phonological form$_2$]$\rangle$
$\rangle$]$\rangle$
         I.e.

```
          xm
         /  \
       xn    xm
```
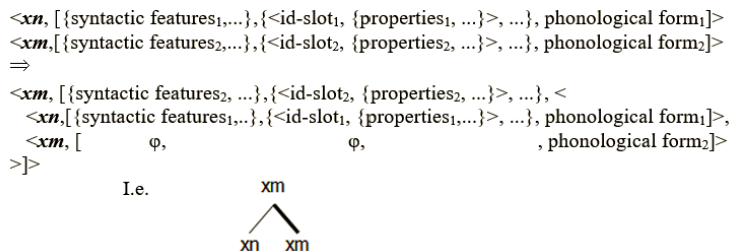
$\bigstar_o$ in (32) is an uninterpretable feature that is to be replaced with the index of the item with the *o* feature (i.e. the *o*-marked NP in this case) via Merge, and $\bigstar_{ga}$ an uninterpretable feature that is to be replaced with the index of the item with the *ga* feature (i.e. the *ga*-marked NP in this case) via Merge. Thus, they end up being replaced with the index of *kodomo o* (i.e. x3) and that of *inu ga* (i.e. x1), respectively.

$\langle$Time, perfect$\rangle$ of $\langle$x5, {$\langle$chasing, T$\rangle$, $\langle$Theme, x3$\rangle$, $\langle$Agent, x1$\rangle$, $\langle$Time, perfect$\rangle$}$\rangle$ comes from the lexical specification of the tense *ta*. We assume that its lexical specification is (34a), which turns to (34b) at the Numeration.

(34) a.   [{T, +V(right)(nonhead)}, $\langle\bigstar$, {$\langle$Time, perfect$\rangle$}$\rangle$, ta]
     b. $\langle$x6, [{T, +V(right)(nonhead)}, $\langle\bigstar$, {$\langle$Time, perfect$\rangle$}$\rangle$, ta]$\rangle$

Here $\bigstar$ is an uninterpretable feature that is to be replaced with the index of the item when the unit is merged with it. In the configuration of (35), $\bigstar$ in (34) becomes x5.

(35)

```
                   x5
                 /    \
               x5      x6
              /  \      |
            x1    x5    ta
            /\   /  \
       inu ga  x3    x5
              /\      |
       kodomo o    oikake
```
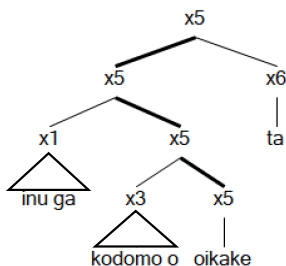
Bound morphemes must be combined with a certain syntactic category item. Depending on the item, it may be combined as the right- or left-hand item and serve as the head or non-head. In the case of

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15   φ is a 'trace' of feature percolation.

ta, it must be combined as the right-hand item with an item with the *V* feature, serving as the non-head. To achieve that, we assume that the syntactic features of *ta* include *+V(right)(nonhead)*.[16] The Merge operation involved in this situation is Left-headed Merge (LH-Merge), which is the mirror image of RH-Merge above. We consider RH-Merge and LH-Merge are two basic Merge operations in natural language.

Let us now consider how *inu* and *ga*, and *kodomo* and *o*, are combined. We use *kodomo* and *o* for illustration. Since the value of 'Theme' in (32) must be the index of *kodomo*, we assume that *kodomo* must be the head when it is combined with *o*, thus the Merge operation involved is LH-Merge. However, *komodo o* must carry the *o*-feature when it is combined with the verb to ensure the replacement of $\star_o$, and it should come from the particle *o*, so we assume that the *o*-feature percolates to its mother in the first instance of Merge. In sum, the lexical specification of the particle *o* is (36), and *kodomo* and *o* are combined as in (37).

(36) a. [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), o}, φ, o]

b. <x4, [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), o}, φ, o]>

(37)
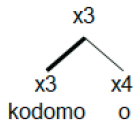
The particles like *ga* and *o* must be combined as the right-hand item with an item with the *N* feature, serving as the non-head. To ensure that, we assume that their syntactic features include *+N(right)(nonhead)*.

The overall procedure to generate the semantic representation in (28) is provided here. In the process of forming a Numeration, the two operations in (38) take place.

(38) a. Each selected lexical item is assigned an index.

b. If a lexical item has id in the id-slot, the assigned index replaces it.

Thus, if the lexical items mentioned above are chosen, the Numeration in (39) is formed.

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16   There is a viable analysis where the particle *ga* needs to relate to Tense. If we adopt such an analysis, we need to assume that when the VP merges with *T*, *T* is the head, so the lexical specification of *ta* must include *+V(right)(head)* in place of *+V(right)(nonhead)*.

(39) {<x1, [{N}, <x1, {<dog, T>}>, inu]>,
   <x2, [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), ga}, φ, ga]>,
   <x3, [{N}, <x3, {<child, T>}>, kodomo]>,
   <x4, [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), o}, φ, o]>,
   <x5, [{V}, <x5, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, ★$_o$>, <Agent, ★$_{ga}$>}>, oikake]>,
   <x6, [{T, +V(right)(nonhead)}, <★, {<Time, perfect>}>, ta]>}

To generate the sentence in (27), the items of the Numeration in (39) are combined through RH-Merge and LH-Merge, giving rise to the structure in (40).

(40)
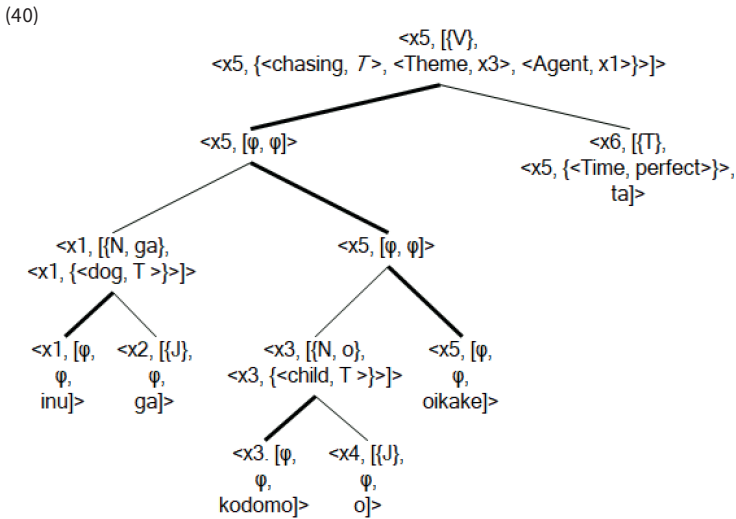
Then, all the semantic features are taken off as in (41) and rearranged according to the indexes, which result in the semantic representation in (28), repeated as (42) here.

(41) {<x5, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, x3>, <Agent, x1>}>,
   <x1, {<dog, T>}>,
   <x3, {<child, T>}>,
   <x5, {<Time, perfect>}>}

(42) {<x1, {<dog, T>}>,
   <x3. {<child, T>}>,
   <x5, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, x3>, <Agent, x1>, <Time, perfect>}>}

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3.2 The Argument-adding *rare*

We now introduce our mono-clause analysis of the indirect passive. We claim the lexical entry of the Argument-adding *rare* to be (43).

(43) (Cf. Ueyama 2015, 70 no. [45].)
[{V, +V[Argument-adding](right)(nonhead)}, <★, {<Affectee, ★$_{ga}$>}>, rare]

Since the Argument-adding *rare* is unique in that it changes the argument structure of the verb with which it is combined, we must assume that it employs a special instance of Merge, namely the Argument-adding Merge in (44). *+V[Argument-adding](right)(nonhead)* in (43) ensures that this item is combined via the Argument-adding Merge as the right item with an item having *V,* serving as the non-head.

(44) Argument-adding Merge:
<xn, [{V, syntactic features$_1$, …}, {<xn, {…, <Agent, ★$_{ga}$>, …}>, phonology$_1$]>
<xm, [{V, + V[argument-adding] (right) (nonhead)}, <★,{<Affectee, ★$_{ga}$>}>, rare]>
→
<xn, [{V, syntactic features$_1$, …}, {<xn, {…, <Agent, ★$_{ni}$>, <Affectee, ★$_{ga}$>, …}>, …} <
<xn, [{V}, ∅, phonology$_1$]>,
<xm, [{V}, ∅, rare]>
>]>
(Cf. Ueyama 2015, 70 no. [46])

The Argument-adding Merge ensures the Argument-adding *rare* merges with a volitional verb (i.e. a verb having an Agent property) and changes its particle from *ga* to *ni*.

We illustrate our analysis through the derivation of the sentence in (45).

(45) Mary ga inu ni kodomo o oikake**rare**ta
Mary NOM dog by child ACC chase:PASS:PAST
'Mary was affected, as the dog chased her child.'

First, the Numeration in (46) is formed.

(46) {<x1, [{N}, {<x1, {<Name, Mary>}>}, Mary]>,
<x2, [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), ga}, φ, ga]>,
<x3, [{N}, {<x3, {<dog, T>}>}, inu]>,
<x4, [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), ni}, φ, ni]>,
<x5, [{N}, {<x5, {<child, T>}>}, kodomo]>,
<x6, [{J, +N(right)(nonhead), o}, φ, o]>,
<x7, [{V}, <x7, {<chasing , T>, <Theme, ★$_o$>, <Agent, ★$_{ga}$>}, oikake]>,
<x8, [{V, +V[argument-adding](right)(nonhead)}, <★, {<Affectee, ★$_{ga}$>}>, rare]>,
<x9, [{T, +V(right)(nonhead)}, <★, {<Time, perfect>}>, ta]>}

Then the items in (46) are combined through Argument-adding Merge, RH-Merge and LH-Merge, resulting in the structure in (47).

(47)

<x7, [{V}, <x7, {<chasing, <Theme, x5>, <Agent, x3>, T >, <Affectee, x1>}>]>

<x7, [φ, φ]>

<x9, [{T}, <x7, {<Time, perfect>}>, ta]>

<x1, [{N, ga}, {<x1, {Name, Mary}>}]>

<x7, [φ, φ]>

<x1, [φ, φ, Mary]>   <x2, [{J}, φ, ga]>

<x3, [{N, ni}, <x3, {dog, T >}>]>

<x7, [φ, φ]>

<x3, [φ, φ, inu]>   <x4, [{J}, φ, ni]>

<x5, [{N, o}, <x5, {child, T >}>]>

<x7, [φ, φ]>

<x5, [φ, φ, kodomo]>   <x6, [{J}, φ, o]>   <x7, [φ, φ, oikake]>   <x8, [{V}, φ, rare]>
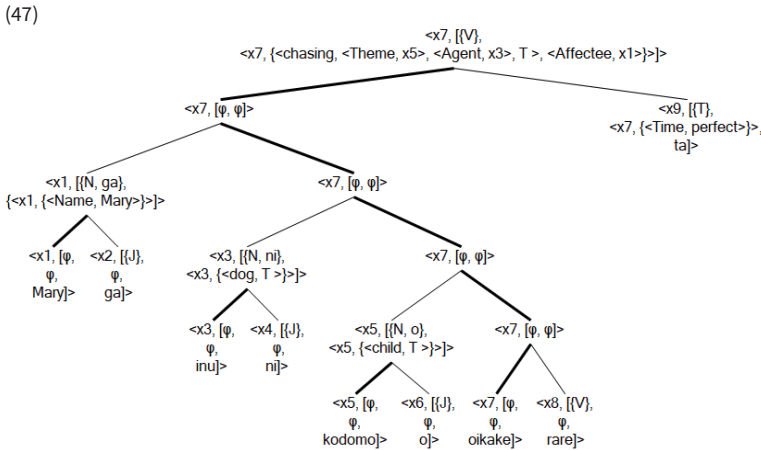
Finally, the semantic features are taken off from the resulting structure and rearranged according to the indexes, giving rise to the semantic representation in (48).

(48) {<x1, {<Name, Mary>}>,
      <x3, {<dog, T>}>
      <x5, {<child, T>}>,
      <x7, {<chasing, T>, <Theme, x5>, <Agent, x3>, <Affectee, x1>, <Time, perfect>}>}

4   Reconsidering Previous Arguments for the Bi-clause Analysis

One of the most celebrated arguments for assuming the indirect passive to be a bi-clausal phenomenon has to do with the antecedent of *zibun* 'self'.[17] This argument assumes that the direct passive (where the subject is the argument of the underlying verb that bears the Theme/Patient role) is, by contrast, a mono-clausal phenomenon, and draws on the contrast between the indirect passive and the direct passive.

It is said that *zibun* is different from the English anaphor (e.g. 'himself') in that its antecedent must be a syntactic subject, but it is not clause-bounded. In support of this assumption, a set of examples like those in (49)-(50) is often reported, where the items of the same index refer to the same entity.

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17 Cf. McCawley 1972; Kuno 1973.

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(49) a. Hanako$_1$ ga   Taroo ni   zibun$_1$ no   nooto   o   watasita
       Hanako NOM Taro DAT self   GEN   notebook ACC hand:PAST
       'Hanako handed her notebook to Taro.'

 b. ?*Hanako ga   Taroo$_1$ ni   zibun$_1$ no   nooto   o   kaesita
      Hanako NOM Taro   DAT self   GEN notebook ACC return:PAST
      'Hanako returned Taro his notebook.'

(50)   Hanako$_1$ ga   [zibun$_1$ ga   itiban hayakatta] to
       Hanako NOM self   NOM first   fast:PAST   COMP
       iihurasiteiru.
       say:to:people:being:PRES
       'Hanako keeps saying to people that she was the fastest.'

The contrast between (49a) and (49b) supports the view that the antecedent of *zibun* must be a syntactic subject. On the other hand, (50) shows that the antecedent of *zibun* need not be in the same clause.

Turning to passive examples, Kuno (1983), for example, compares the direct passive in (51) and the indirect passive in (52).

(51)   (Kuno 1983, 213 no. [71a])
       Hanako$_1$ wa   Taroo$_2$ ni   zibun$_{1/*2}$ no   heya ni tozikome**rare**ta.
       Hanako TOP Taro   by self   GEN   room at   lock:PASS:PAST
       'Hanako was locked in her room by Taro.'

(52)   (Kuno 1983, 213 no. [71b])
       Hanako$_1$ wa   Taroo$_2$ ni   zibun$_{1/2}$ no   heya ni roozyoos**are**ta.
       Hanako TOP Taro   by self   GEN room at   stay:PASS:PAST
       'Taro stayed in her/his room, annoying Hanako.'

Kuno's (1983) factual assessment is that the antecedent of *zibun* can only be *Hanako* in (51), but it can be either *Hanako* or *Taro* in (52). Those who advocate for the bi-clause analysis of the indirect passive claim that the reason why (52) allows the reference ambiguity is because the indirect passive is a bi-clausal phenomenon, i.e. (52) is analysed as (53), where there are two syntactic subjects.[18]

(53) (Kuno 1983:213 [71b])
    [$_S$ Hanako$_1$ wa [$_S$ Taro$_2$ ni zibun$_{1/2}$ no heya ni roozyos] **are**ta]

We, however, claim that this argument is not valid. Firstly, there are also cases of direct passives where the *ni*-marked agent phrase

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18 Cf. McCawley 1972 and Kuno 1973.

serves as the antecedent of *zibun*. For example, with (54a), the antecedent of *zibun* is best understood to be the passive subject, but the natural interpretation of (54b) is the one where the agent phrase *Kimura sensei ni* 'by Prof. Kimura' is the antecedent of *zibun*.

(54) a.

Ano	keiri	no	hito$_1$	wa	Kimura	sensei	ni	zibun$_1$	no
that	finance	GEN	person	TOP	Kimura	teacher	by	self	GEN
buka		no	mae	de	sikarituke**rare**ta		no	da.	
worker		GEN	front	at	scold:PASS:PAST		COMP	COP	

'That person$_1$ from the Finance Department was scolded by Prof. Kimura in front of his$_1$ workers.'

b.

Ano	keiri	no	hito	wa	Kimura		sensei$_1$	ni	zibun$_1$	no
that	finance	GEN	person	TOP	Kimura		teacher	by	self	GEN
puraido		no	tameni	sikarituke**rare**ta		no		da.		
pride		GEN	for	scold:PASS:PAST		COMP		COP.		

'That person from the Finance Department was scolded by Prof Kimura$_1$ in order to protect his$_1$ own pride.'

Second, the assumption that the antecedent of *zibun* must be a syntactic subject does not seem to be correct; examples where the antecedent of *zibun* is not a syntactic subject are often reported.[19] Those in (55) are among them.

(55) a. (McCawley 1976, 78 no. [109])

Zibun$_1$	ga	gan	de	nakatta	koto	ga	Hirosi$_1$	o
self	NOM	cancer	COP	NEG:PAST	COMP	NOM	Hiroshi	ACC
yorokobaseta.								
rejoice:CAUSE:PAST								

'(Lit.) That self$_1$ did not have cancer made Hiroshi$_1$ happy.'

b. (Kitagawa 1980, 437 no. [2])

Hayaku	Naomi$_1$	o	zibun$_1$	no	ie	e	kaesitesimai	nasai.
quickly	Naomi	o	self	GEN	house	to	send:back:finish	IMP

'Send back Naomi to her home quickly.'

Hence we conclude that the *zibun*-based argument for the indirect-passive being a bi-clausal phenomenon is not valid.

The issue of what can be the antecedent of *zibun* is complex and beyond the scope of the present paper, but we nevertheless would like

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[19] Cf. McCawley 1976; Kitagawa 1980; Saito, Hoji 1983.

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to comment on it briefly. Intuitively, examples like those in (54) and (55) seem to indicate that the *zibun*'s antecedent must be an entity from whose perspective the speaker can utter the sentence. Given this, one may wonder why *Taro* cannot be the antecedent of *zibun* in (51). In fact, we think the interpretation under discussion is not impossible. At the same time we acknowledge that with the direct passive, it can be more difficult to interpret the *ni*-marked agent phrase as the antecedent of *zibun* than it is with the indirect passive. The question we must address, therefore, is why this is the case.

As stated above, many researchers assume that the direct passive involves the Argument-reducing *rare*.[20] We also take the position that many such instances of the direct passive may involve the Argument-reducing *rare*. Because the Argument-reducing *rare* eliminates the relevant verb's external argument, we may understand that with many cases of the direct passive, the *ni*-marked agent phrase may be an adjunct. By contrast, the *ni*-marked agent phrase of the indirect passive is an argument since what is involved is the Argument-adding *rare*. To account for the tendency discussed above, we thus maintain (56).[21]

(56) Adjunct phrases cannot be the antecedent of *zibun*.

The following set of data supports this generalization. The sentences in (57) constitute a minimal pair. They only differ in the particles accompanying the causee Zyon 'John'; (57a) has *ni* but (57b) *kara*. We may understand both to mean that the speaker will arrange things so that John would convey his own intention directly to the hearer.

(57) a. Zyon$_1$ ni   tyokusetu kare$_1$ no   ikoo   o   tutaesaseru
         John   DAT directly   he   GEN intention ACC convey:CAUSE:PRES
         yooni simasu.
          such   do:PRES
         'I will make John convey his intention directly to you.'

      b. Zyon$_1$ kara tyokusetu kare$_1$ no   ikoo   o   tutaesaseru
         John   from directly   he   GEN intention ACC convey:CAUSE:PRES
         yooni simasu.
         such   do:PRES
         'I will make John convey his intention directly to you.'

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20 Cf. McCawley 1972; Kuno 1973; Saito 1982; Miyagawa 1989; Shibatani 1990.

21 An anonymous reviewer has noted that this thesis may follow from the obliqueness hierarchy in Pollard, Sag 1992.

However, if we change *kare* 'he' to *zibun* 'self', we see the difference between the two; the first one retains the interpretation under discussion, but the second does not. This is shown in (58).

(58) a. Zyon$_1$ ni tyokusetu zibun$_1$ no ikoo o tutaesaseru
      John DAT directly self GEN intention ACC convey:CAUSE:PRES
      yooni simasu.
      such do:PRES
      'I will make John convey his intention directly to you.'

   b. *Zyon$_1$ kara tyokusetu zibun$_1$ no ikoo o tutaesaseru
      John from directly self GEN intention ACC convey:CAUSE:PRES
      yooni simasu.
      such do:PRES
      'I will make John convey his intention directly to you.'

We thus understand that *Zyon* 'John' can be the antecedent of *zibun* 'self' in (58a), but not in (58b). Given that *Zyon* 'John' in (58a) is considered to be an argument while that in (58b) is an adjunct, this contrast supports the generalization in (56).

We thus conclude that the tendency that the agent phrase of the direct passive does not serve as the antecedent of *zibun* can be attributed to (56), and it is too far-fetched to use it to support the assumption that the indirect passive is a bi-clausal phenomenon.

5 A Summary and Further Remarks

In this paper, we have maintained the view that the indirect passive is best understood to be a mono-clausal phenomenon. In view of the acquisition of the Argument-adding *rare*, we may understand that the lexicon of a given speaker at some point included instances of *Vrare*, i.e. multiple morpheme items, and then the speaker isolated the Argument-adding *rare* through comparison between relevant instances of *Vrare* and their *V* counterparts. Given that the Argument-adding *rare* has originated from the *Vrare* stem, it is possible to assume that it forms a constituent with a given verb. We then put forward the generalisation that the Argument-adding *rare* needs to occur with a volitional verb, and argued that this generalisation, together with the case particle alternation involved in the indirect passive, poses a challenge to the bi-clause analysis. With an example of the mono-clause analysis we have also demonstrated that the mono-clause analysis can account for those two phenomena that are problematic to the bi-clause analysis.

Before closing the paper, we would like to briefly comment on passives involving the Argument-reducing *rare*. Researchers typically adopt the analysis of the English passive for them.[22] That is, the passive morpheme is attached to a verb, which causes the external argument of the verb to be eliminated, and consequently the internal argument becomes unable to receive abstract Case in its original position, so moves to the subject position to receive the nominative case. We are hesitant to endorse this approach for two reasons. First, as we have seen above, the Argument-reducing *rare* is also understood to have originated from the *Vrare* stem, the same as the Argument-adding *rare*. Thus, the most straightforward analysis is the one that mirrors the analysis of the indirect passive we have maintained above. That is, there is a special instance of Merge, by which the Argument-reducing *rare* is combined with a given verb, and as a result, the verb loses its external argument and the particle *ga* is assigned to the argument that bears the Theme/Patient role. Thus, no case-triggered movement is involved (cf. Hoji 2008). Second, the analysis of the English passive assumes that cases are structurally assigned, triggering movement. However, we are yet to be convinced that Japanese particles are assigned in the same way as English cases (cf. Kuroda 1978).

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22 Cf. Saito 1982; Miyagawa 1989.

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Causalness and the Encoding of the Causative/Anticausative Alternation in Italian Psych Verbs
Extending Heidinger's Corpus Research of French and Spanish Change-Of-State Verbs

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Abstract   Italian verbs participating in the causative/anticausative alternation encode the alternants in two ways. The causative and the anticausative alternant may have a marked or an unmarked variant depending on the verb type. The aim of this research is to extend to Italian Heidinger's (2015) corpus study, which shows that the encoding of the alternants is related to the causalness of the verbs, i.e. the quantitative relation between the causative and the anticausative use. Heidinger's research is based on a sample of 20 French and 20 Spanish verbs. The author states that, in both languages, verbs used more often as causatives than as anticausatives have a high degree of causalness, while verbs used more often as anticausatives than as causatives have a low degree of causalness. The present research assesses a sample of 22 Italian psych verbs which participate in the causative/anticausative alternation. I will show that Italian verbs with a high degree of causalness tend to form unmarked causatives and marked anticausatives,, while verbs with a low degree of causalness tend to form marked causatives and unmarked anticausatives.

Keywords   Causative/Anticausative. Alternation. Psych Verbs. Unmarked/Marked Causatives. Unmarked/Marked Anticausatives. Degree of Causalness.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Psych Verbs and the Causative/Anticausative Alternation .– 3 The Encoding of the Causative and Anticausative Alternants. – 4 The Corpus Study: Data and Method. – 5 Results. – 6 Comparisons. – 7 Conclusions. – 8 Annex.

1   Introduction

The causative/anticausative alternation is a widespread phenomenon across languages.[1] It refers to verbs such as 'break', which may appear in a transitive structure, as in (1), or an intransitive one, as in (2). I will adopt the definition of anticausative:

> all types of intransitive change-of-state verbs that have a causative counterpart, irrespectively of whether such an intransitive verb comes with or without special morphological marking. (Schäfer 2008, 1 footnote 2)[2]

(1)   John broke the window.

(2)   The window broke.

Languages differ in the morphological realisation of the causative and anticausative alternants. Haspelmath (1993) distinguishes five types of causative/anticausative encoding cross-linguistically:

- Causative, where the causative alternant is formally marked and derived from the anticausative, as in Georgian. Cf. e.g. *duɣ-s* 'cook' (intr.) and *a-duɣ-ebs* 'cook' (tr.).
- Anticausative, where only the anticausative alternant is marked, as in Russian. Cf. e.g. *rasplavit'-sja* 'melt' (intr.) and *rasplavit'* 'melt' (tr.).
- Labile, where no formal change occurs in the verb, as in English 'break' (tr. and intr.) in examples (1) and (2).
- Equipollent, where both the causative and the anticausative variant are marked, as in Japanese. Cf. e.g. *atum-aru* 'gather' (intr.) and *atum-eru* 'gather' (tr.).
- Suppletive, where different verb roots are used to express the causative and the anticausative alternants, as in Russian. Cf. e.g. *goret'* 'burn' (intr.) and *žeč'* 'burn' (tr.).

Languages may also differ in the verbs that alternate. For example, Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, Schäfer (2006) observe that the verbs 'kill' and 'destroy' do not have an intransitive alternant in English while their Greek counterparts *skotono* and *katastrefo* do.

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[1] Among others, cf. Nedyalkov, Silnitsky 1973; Rothemberg 1974; Zribi-Hertz 1987; Haspelmath 1993; Levin, Rappaport Hovav 1995; Folli 2001; Chierchia 2004; Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, Schäfer 2006 and 2015; Schäfer 2008 and 2009; Koontz-Garboden 2009; Legendre, Smolensky 2009; Rott, Verhoeven, Fritz-Huechante 2020.

[2] The phenomenon is also known as the 'causative/inchoative alternation' or the 'ergative alternation'. The term 'anticausative' originally referred only to the formally marked alternant (cf. Nedyalkov, Silnitsky 1973; Haspelmath 1993).

In the past decade, quantitative studies have been conducted in order to investigate the correlation between corpus frequencies and the causative/anticausative alternation.[3]

Samardžić and Merlo (2012) based their study on an English monolingual corpus and examines the link between corpus frequencies and verb meaning. Merlo (2016) claims that

> if the likelihood of external causation is high, then the causative alternants will be more frequent and the anticausative form will be the marked form of the pair […]. If the likelihood of external causation is low, the converse is observed. (Merlo 2016, 24)

The lexical property named 'likelihood of external causation' (inspired by the feature +c/-c in Reinhart 2002) is an underlying component of meaning and "expressing components of meaning of a verbal root as a probability or a gradient score" (Merlo 2016, 24). Samardzic and Merlo (2018, 895) conducted a quantitative study on a German-English parallel corpus whose aim is to explain why

> some verbs in some languages participate in the anticausative/causative alternation while their counterparts in other languages do not. (Samardžić, Merlo 2018, 895)

According to the authors the results suggest that this variation is due to the 'likelihood of external causation'.

Haspelmath et al. (2014) conducted a corpus study on seven languages (English, Japanese, Maltese, Romanian, Russian, Swahili and Turkish). The results of this study highlight that in verb pairs with a more 'spontaneous' core-event, such as 'dry', 'melt' and 'freeze', the noncausal member is more frequent, so that the causal member tends to be coded overtly (as causative). On the other hand, in verb pairs with a less 'spontaneous' core-event, such as 'break', 'open' and 'split', the causal member is more frequent, so that the noncausal member tends to be coded overtly (as anticausative). Haspelmath et al. (2014) state that

> in human languages, there are recurrent diachronic mechanisms which create patterns in which short forms are used for frequent meanings because of their predictability. (Haspelmath et al. 2014, 6)

Unmarked forms are more frequent than marked forms and the

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3 Cf. Samardžić, Merlo 2012 and 2018; Merlo 2016; Haspelmath et al. 2014; Heidinger 2015.

form-frequency correspondence gives rise to the most efficient information-conveying system.

Heidinger (2015) presents a corpus study on French and Spanish change-of-state verbs that participate in the causative/anticausative alternation, like *fermer-cerrar* 'close', *jaunir-amarillear* 'make/become yellow', and *augmenter-aumentar* 'increase'. In both languages the causative and the anticausative alternant may have a formally marked or unmarked variant. The unmarked causative variant corresponds to the plain lexical causative verb, while the marked causative variant is to be composed of the lexical causative verb and the verbs *faire-hacer* 'make' for French and Spanish, respectively. On the other hand, the unmarked anticausative verb corresponds to the intransitive verb, and the marked variant is formed with the verb and the clitic *se*, as in Italian which employs the clitic *si*. The author claims that there exists a strong correlation between causalness and the encoding of the alternation. 'Causalness' is defined as the quantitative relation between the causative and the anticausative use. This term refers to the dimension that distinguishes the French verbs *améliorer* 'improve' and *grandir* 'make/become big': *améliorer* 'improve' is used more often as a causative than as an anticausative, whereas *grandir* 'make/become big' is used more often as an anticausative than as a causative (cf. Heidinger 2015, 567). The results of the corpus study show that French and Spanish verbs with a higher degree of causalness display the tendency to have unmarked causatives and marked anticausatives. On the other hand, verbs with a low degree of causalness do not typically form marked anticausatives, but they form marked causatives more often than verbs with high causalness. Therefore, the correlation between causalness and encoding shows that in both languages "the percentage of marked anticausatives tends to increase with the degree of causalness" (Heidinger 2015, 577).

Although the alternation in Romance languages like French and Spanish has been extensively examined in the literature, Heidinger (2015) is an innovative study since it investigates the correlation between causalness and the encoding in two languages which exhibit a similar variation in the encoding of the causative and anticausative alternants.

The corpus study I present in this article extends Heidinger's (2015) analysis of the relation between encoding and causalness to Italian and to the subclass of Italian psych verbs that participate in the causative/anticausative alternation.

I refer to Heidinger (2015) for two main reasons. First, Italian is closely related to French and Spanish in the encoding of the causative/anticausative alternation. Secondly, rather than the more general issue of the correlation between frequency and markedness examined in Samardžić and Merlo (2012, 2018) and in Haspelmath et

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al. (2014), I investigate the more specific issue addressed by Heidinger (2015), who is interested in finding a predictor for the encoding of alternating French and Spanish verbs. Furthermore, the present study offers a punctual picture of the correlation between causalness and encoding as it assesses a class of Italian verbs that refer to a well-defined semantic domain and participate in the alternation, as well as those non-psych alternating verbs examined in Heidinger's (2015) study.

I will adopt Heidinger (2015, 567) to measure the degree of causalness of alternating verbs, which is calculated as in (3), where the causalness value represents the proportion between the causative and the anticausative uses of a verb:

(3) Causalness value: (causative uses X 100)
                          (causative uses + anticausative uses)

The number of a verb's causative uses multiplied by 100 is divided by the sum of its causative and anticausative uses. Furthermore, the number of a verb's causative uses is the sum of its unmarked and marked causative variants; the number of a verb's anticausative uses is the sum of its unmarked and marked anticausative variants.

Heidinger (2015, 568) tests the prediction in (4), which concerns the relation between causalness and the encoding of the causative and anticausative alternants. On the basis of (4), a co-variation between the 'Causalness variable' and the 'Encoding variable' is expected. I will test Heidinger's prediction on a sample of Italian psych verbs that participate in the alternation:

(4) **Prediction**
     (a) Causalness and encoding of anticausative:
          A positive correlation exists between causalness and the percentage of marked (as opposed to unmarked) anticausatives.
     (b) Causalness and encoding of causative:
          A negative correlation exists between causalness and the percentage of marked (as opposed to unmarked) causatives.

The paper is structured as follows. In § 2, I give an overview of the Italian psych verbs that exhibit the causative/anticausative alternation. In § 3, I examine the encoding of the causative and anticausative alternants. Furthermore, § 4 presents the data and the methodology adopted, while §§ 5 and 6 present the results of the corpus study and the comparisons among French, Spanish and Italian. Eventually, § 7 draws some conclusions. The Annex contains details on the frequency of causative and anticausative variants.

2 Psych Verbs and the Causative/Anticausative Alternation

The syntactic configuration and the aspectual properties of psych verbs have long been discussed in the literature since Belletti and Rizzi (1988). The authors claimed that Subject Experiencer verbs such as *temere* 'fear' in (5) are transitive, while Object Experiencer verbs such as *spaventare* 'frighten' in (6), and *piacere* 'appeal' in (7) have an unaccusative structure. The authors propose that the D-structure of both Object Experiencer verbs has two internal arguments, whereas the NP movement to the subject position allows the derivation of the S-structures (6)-(7).[4]

In this way, the three verb types – *temere* 'fear', *spaventare* 'frighten' and *piacere* 'appeal' – have an identical underlying structure in most aspects, and the same θ-grid. On the other hand, they show a different surface structure and 'Case-grid':

(5) Gianni $_{\text{Experiencer}}$ teme   quella   sfida $_{\text{Theme}}$
     Gianni   fear.PRS.3SG   that   challenge
     'Gianni fears that challenge'.

(6) Quella   sfida $_{\text{Theme}}$ spaventa   Gianni $_{\text{Experiencer}}$
     That   challenge   frighten.PRS.3SG   Gianni
     'That challenge frightens Gianni'.

(7) Quella   sfida $_{\text{Theme}}$ piace   a   Gianni $_{\text{Experiencer}}$
     That   challenge   appeal.PRS.3SG   to   Gianni
     'That challenge appeals to Gianni'.

Grimshaw (1990), Zaenen (1993) and Pesetsky (1995) point out that there is a significant difference between 'fear-type' verbs and 'frighten-type' verbs. Causation is entailed only in the semantics of 'frighten-type' verbs and, therefore, the subject of the Object Experiencer verbs has the role of Causer, while the object of Subject Experiencer verbs has the role of Target/Subject of Emotion.

Furthermore, as Belletti and Rizzi (1988, 296-7, footnote 2) briefly point out, Accusative Experiencer verbs such as *preoccupare* 'worry' in (8) have a pronominal form which has no reflexive interpretation. The pronominal verb in (8) is formed of the plain verb and the clitic *si* and, according to the authors, sentence (8) has an inchoative interpretation, although Belletti and Rizzi did not further develop this property (on this point, cf. Ruwet 1993):

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[4] Cf. Belletti, Rizzi 293, figures 5 and 6.

(8) Gianni   si   preoccupa
     Gianni   si   worry.PRS.3SG
     'Gianni worries'.

The aspectual properties of 'Object Experiencer verbs' have long been debated in the literature. Arad (1998) claims that 'Accusative Experiencer verbs' may be ambiguous, falling between a [± agentive] eventive reading and a stative reading. According to the author, *spaventare* 'frighten' in sentence (9) may receive a [+agentive] reading, according to which 'Gianni has intentionally frightened Maria' or a [-agentive] reading where 'Gianni has unintentionally frightened Maria'. On the other hand, *spaventare* 'frighten' has a stative reading in (10). The stative versus the eventive reading depends on the linguistic context, that is the presence of a definite subject and of particular moods, and the tense contributes to the stative reading:

(9) Gianni   ha   spaventato   Maria
     Gianni   have.PRS.3SG   frighten.PTCP   Maria
     'Gianni frightened Maria'.

(10) I   cambiamenti   spaventano   Maria
      The   changes   frighten.PRS.3PL   Maria
      'Changes frighten Maria'.

Arad (1998, 3-6) also claims that only in the [+agentive] reading is there a change in the Experiencer's mental state: the stative interpretation does not involve any agent or mental change. Thus, eventive causation differs from stative causation: only the latter entails no change of mental state. According to the author, Object Experiencer verbs receiving an agentive/eventive reading are transitive verbs and, therefore, all the properties that Belletti and Rizzi (1988) identify for the Object Experiencer occur only in the stative reading.

Furthermore, many studies claim that some psych verbs are purely stative, such as 'fascinate' and 'depress'.[5] The ambiguity between an agentive and a stative reading remains unresolved and continues to raise many questions. Grafmiller (2013) conducted a corpus study on 'Object Experiencer verbs' and claims that the variation between a stative and a non-stative reading is probabilistic and dependent on context and world knowledge.

Vietri (2024) states that numerous Italian 'Accusative Experiencer verbs' regularly undergo the alternation between the transitive structure (11) and the unaccusative pronominal structure in (12). The Accusative Object Experiencer in (11) appears as the Subject

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[5] Cf. Verhoeven 2010; Hartshorne et al. 2016; Alexiadou 2018.

Experiencer in (12), while the Causal Subject of (11) occurs as the NP in the prepositional phrase in (12):

(11) Le   minacce di   morte   hanno   spaventato   Gianni
     The   threats of   death   have.PRS.3PL frighten.PTCP Gianni
     'The death threats frightened Gianni'.

(12) Gianni   si   è   spaventato   (delle   +   per le)
     Gianni   si   be.PRS.3SG   frighten.PTCP (of the +   for the)
     minacce di   morte
     threats of   death
     'Gianni got frightened of the death threats'.

Psych verbs like *spaventare* 'frighten' undergo the causative/anticausative alternation in the same way as lexical causative verbs like *rompere* 'break' in (13) and (14). The direct object/Theme in (13) is the surface subject in (14), while the Causal Subject of the transitive structure (13) appears in the unaccusative pronominal sentence (14) as the NP in the prepositional phrase. The unaccusative sentence (14) denotes the change of state of an entity and alternates with the transitive sentence (13), whose subject denotes the entity that caused the change of state:

(13) (L' esplosione   +   il   forte   vento)   ha
     (The explosion   +   the   strong wind)   have.PRS.3SG
     rotto   le   finestre
     break.PTCP   the   windows
     'The (explosion + the strong wind) broke the windows'.

(14) Le   finestre   si   sono   rotte   (con   +   per)
     The   windows   si   be.PRS.3PL   break.PTCP   (with   +   for)
     (l'   esplosione +   il   forte   vento)
     (the   explosion   +   the   strong wind
     'The windows broke with the (explosion + strong wind)'.

The taxonomy of Italian (non-psych) lexical causative verbs that display the causative/anticausative alternation identifies several classes.[6] In the case of a verb like *rompere* 'break', the anticausative alternant is morphologically marked as in (14). On the other hand, causative transitive verbs like *seccare* 'dry up' can alternate either with an (unaccusative) anticausative marked variant – *seccarsi,* 'get

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6 Cf. Cennamo, Jezek 2011; Cennamo 2012; Vietri 2017.

dried up' –[7] or with an unmarked variant (*seccare*, 'dry up'), whereas verbs such as *aumentare* 'increase' are unmarked in both the causative and anticausative alternants.

Furthermore, a transitive verb like *bruciare* 'burn' displays both an anticausative marked variant (*bruciarsi* 'get burned') and an unmarked variant (*bruciare* 'burn'): the unmarked variant can be an unaccusative verb (auxiliary *essere* 'be') that has a telic reading or an ergative verb (auxiliary *avere* 'have') that has an atelic reading. However, not all Italian causative verbs alternate. As pointed out in Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, Schäfer (2006, 14), the verbs 'kill' and 'destroy' do not have an intransitive alternant in English, while their Greek counterparts *skotono* and *katastrefo* do. In Italian only the verb *distruggere* 'destroy' alternates. I refer the reader to the above-mentioned references for a more detailed description of the causative/anticausative alternation in Italian.

'Accusative Object Experiencer verbs' such as *spaventare* 'frighten' in (11) display an obligatorily marked anticausative alternant in (12). On the other hand, *sbalordire* 'astonish' and *allibire* 'appall' in (15) and (17) display an anticausative alternant which may be optionally marked, as in (16), or obligatorily unmarked, as in (18), respectively:

(15) Quella   notizia   sbalordì   i   ragazzi
      That   news   astonish.PST.3SG the   guys
      'That news astonished the guys'.

(16) I   ragazzi   (si)   sbalordirono   a   quella   notizia
      The   guys   (si)   astonish.PST.3PL   at   that   news
      'The guys were astonished at that terrible news'.

(17) Quella   notizia   allibì   i   ragazzi
      That   news   appall.PST.3PL   the   guys
      'That news appalled the guys'.

(18) I   ragazzi   allibirono   (a   +   per)   quella   notizia
      The   guys   appall.PST.3PL   (at +   for)   that   news
      'The guys were appalled at that news'.

The 'Accusative Object Experiencer verbs' participating in the causative/anticausative alternation, as in (11)-(12) and (15)-(18), can be regarded as transitive change-of-state verbs (cf. also Anagnostopoulou and Iatridou 2007). As in the case of non-psych verbs, not all 'Accusative Object Experiencer verbs' participate in the alternation: for

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[7] The clitic *si* is infinitive-final, i.e. attached to the verb in the infinitive.

example, the verbs *affascinare* 'fascinate' and *colpire* 'strike' do not display the causative/anticausative alternation.

Most 'Accusative Object Experiencer verbs' that undergo the causative/anticausative alternation display only the morphologically marked anticausative alternant: according to Vietri (2024) only 36 out of 200 verbs also have the unmarked anticausative variant, and just 2 verbs display the unmarked variant alone.

The literature on psych verbs and their participation in the causative/anticausative alternation across languages is extensive. For example, Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014) analyse the psych causative alternation in Greek and Romanian. Biały (2005) and Jurth (2017) examine the alternation in Polish and Hungarian, respectively, while Verhoeven (2015) takes into consideration alternating psych verbs in German. On the other hand, Rozwandowska and Bondaruk (2019) argue against the causative/anticausative alternation in Polish. Alexiadou (2016) analyses the diachronic reasons why this alternation is missing from English and points out that Pesetsky (1995) discusses a small number of psych verbs that participate in the causative/anticausative alternation.

3 The Encoding of the Causative and Anticausative Alternants

Heidinger (2015, 564) takes up Haspelmath (1993; 2014) to state that the causative/anticausative alternation often involves variation not only cross-linguistically but also within languages. The author considers the alternation of French and Spanish change-of-state verbs such as *augmenter-aumentar* 'increase', *améliorer-mejorar* 'improve', and *fermer-cerrar* 'close'.

In these two languages the causative and the anticausative alternant have a formally marked and a formally unmarked variant. In the case of the causative alternant, the French verb *améliorer* 'improve' is the unmarked variant while *faire améliorer* is the marked variant. In the case of the anticausative alternant, *améliorer* is the unmarked variant while *s'améliorer* is the marked variant.

In Italian, the plain lexical causative *rompere* 'break' in (19) can be embedded under the *fare*-construction,[8] as in (20), where *Gianni* is the Causer/Initiator[9] while *Paolo* is the Causee/Agent expressed by

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a prepositional phrase (Guasti 1993, 2006). However, sentence (19), where the [+human] subject intentionally or unintentionally causes the change of state, may be in a periphrastic relation with (21). Furthermore, if the subject of *rompere* 'break' is a natural force – the strong wind – or an event – the explosion – as in (22), the *fare*-construction (23) must be in a periphrastic relation with (22). Therefore, the plain lexical causative verb *rompere* 'break' in (19) and (22), and *fare rompere* 'make break' in (21) and (23) are the unmarked and the marked variant, respectively, of the causative alternant. On the other hand, the *fare*-construction exemplified in (20) is not relevant for the causative/anticausative alternation because there is no periphrastic relation with a causative sentence like (19). In the case of the anticausative, only the marked variant *rompersi* 'get broken' is available, as in (24):

(19) Gianni ruppe   la   vetrata
      Gianni break.PST.3SG the   window
      'Gianni broke the window'.

(20) Gianni fece   rompere la   vetrata (a+da) Paolo
      Gianni make.PST.3SG   break.INF the   window   (to+by) Paolo
      'Gianni made Paolo break the window'.

(21) Gianni fece   rompere   la   vetrata
      Gianni make.PST.3SG   break.INF the   window
      'Gianni broke the window'.

(22) (Il   forte   vento + l'   esplosione) ruppe
      (The   strong   wind   + the explosion)   break.PST.3SG
      la   vetrata
      the   window
      'The (strong wind + explosion) broke the window'.

(23) (Il   forte   vento   +   l'   esplosione) fece
      (The   strong wind   +   the   explosion)   make.PST.3SG
      rompere   la   vetrata
      break.INF the   window
      'The (strong wind + explosion) caused the window to break'.

change of state. On the other hand, *il forte vento* 'the strong wind' in (22) is a non-volitional causer (natural force).

(24)   La   vetrata   si   ruppe
       The   window   si   break.PST.3SG
       'The window broke'.

The Accusative Object Experiencer verbs undergoing the caus-
ative/anticausative alternation display the same behaviour as the
(non-psych) lexical causatives, of which *rompere* 'break' is a repre-
sentative. If sentence (25) is embedded under the *fare*-construction
(26), *Maria* is the Causer/Initiator while *Paolo* is the Causee/Agent
expressed by the prepositional phrase. As in the case of *rompere*
'break', sentence (25) may be in a periphrastic relation with (27).
If the subject of *spaventare* 'frighten' is a natural force or an event
as in (28), the *fare*-construction (29) must be in a periphrastic rela-
tion with (28):

(25)   Maria   spaventò   i   ragazzi
       Maria   frighten.PST.3SG   the   guys
       'Maria frightened the guys'.

(26)   Maria   fece   spaventare   i   ragazzi   (*a+da)   Paolo
       Maria   make.PST.3SG   frighten.INF   the   guys   (*to+by)   Paolo
       'Maria got Paolo to frighten the guys'.

(27)   Maria   fece   spaventare   i   ragazzi
       Maria   make.PST.3SG   frighten.INF   the   guys
       'Maria frightened the guys'.

(28)   (Il   forte   vento   +   l'   esplosione)   spaventò
       (The   strong   wind   +   the   explosion)   frighten.PST.3SG
       i   ragazzi
       the   guys
       'The (strong wind + explosion) frightened the guys'.

(29)   (Il   forte   vento   +   l'   esplosione)   fece
       (The   strong   wind   +   the   explosion)   make.PST.3SG
       spaventare   i   ragazzi
       frighten.INF   the   guys
       'The (strong wind + explosion) frightened the guys

Sentences (25) and (27) show two variants of the causative: *spaven-
tare* 'frighten' in (25) is a plain unmarked lexical causative, while *fa-
re spaventare* 'make frightened' in (27) is a marked (analytical or
syntactic) causative (cf. Heidinger 2015, footnote 3), just like *rompe-
re* 'break' in sentences (19) and (21). 'Accusative Object Experiencer
verbs' which undergo the causative/anticausative alternation allow

both the lexical and the syntactic (or analytical) causative.

In Italian, the unaccusative change-of-state verb *fiorire* 'flower' in (30) does not show the alternation with an unmarked causative construction as (31) is ungrammatical: the Cause can be expressed only by embedding this verb under the *fare*-construction, as in (32):

(30) Gli   alberi   fiorirono
     The   trees   flower.PST.3SG
     'The trees flowered'.

(31) *L'   alta   temperatura   fiorì   gli   alberi
     The   high   temperatura   flower.PST.3SG the   trees
     '*The high temperature flowered the trees'.

(32) L'   alta   temperatura   fece   fiorire   gli   alberi
     The   high   temperatura   make.PST.3SG   flower.INF   the   trees
     'The high temperature made the trees flower'.

Therefore, a verb like *fiorire* 'flower' is the morphologically unmarked anticausative, while the marked causative alternant is *fare fiorire* 'make flower'. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) claim that English verbs such as 'flower' are 'internally caused' change-of-state verbs,[10] while Haspelmath (1993) and Haspelmath et al. (2014) establish a spontaneity scale: verbs such as *flower* are considered to be highly spontaneous verbs.

As regards psych verbs, Subject Experiencer unergative verbs[11] such as *gioire* 'rejoice' in (33) is not related to an Object Experiencer transitive verb, since (34) is not grammatical, however the *fare*-construction in (35) is in a periphrastic relation with (33). The Experiencer alternates in the constructions (33) and (35) because it appears as a surface subject in (33) and as a surface object in (35). On the other hand, the indirect object in (33) and the subject in (35) express the Cause of the Emotion; the unmarked anticausative and the marked causative alternate in (33) and (35):

(33) Paola   ha   gioito   (di+per)   quella   bella   notizia
     Paola   have.   rejoice.PTCP   (of+for)   that   good   news
             PRS.3SG
     'Paola rejoiced at that good news'.

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10 For a revised hypothesis, cf. Rappaport Hovav 2014.

11 Unaccusative verbs select the auxiliary *essere* 'be' and allow *ne*-cliticisation, while unergative verbs select the auxiliary *avere* 'have' and disallow *ne*-cliticisation (Burzio 1986).

(34) *Quella   bella   notizia   ha   gioito   Paola
      That   good   news   have.PRS.3SG rejoice.PTCP Paola
      '*That news rejoiced Paola'.

(35) Quella   bella   notizia   ha   fatto   gioire   Paola
      That   good   news   have.PRS.3SG make.PTCP   rejoice.INF Paola
      'That good news made Paola rejoice'.

Similarly, the Subject Experiencer unaccusative verb *arrabbiarsi* 'get angry' in (36) is not related to any Object Experiencer transitive verb'since (37) is not grammatical, but it is periphrastically related to (38), i.e. the *fare*-construction:

(36) Gianni   si   arrabbiò   (di+ per) tutto   ciò
      Gianni   si   anger.PST.3SG (of+for)   all   this
      'Gianni was angry about all this'.

(37) *Tutto   ciò   arrabbiò   Gianni
      All   this   anger. PST.3SG   Gianni
      'All this angered Gianni'.

(38) Tutto   ciò   fece   arrabbiare   Gianni
      All   this   make.PST.3SG   anger.INF   Gianni
      'All this made Gianni angry'.

The data show that a set of Accusative Object Experiencer verbs'participate in the causative/anticausative alternation in exactly the same way as non-psych causative verbs. Accusative Object Experiencer verbs like *spaventare* 'frighten' display the unmarked and the marked causative (the *fare*-construction), while the anticausative is obligatorily marked (the pronominal form). A verb like *allibire* 'appall' shows the unmarked and marked causative while the anticausative is obligatorily unmarked. Verbs like *sbigottire* 'stun' show the marked and the unmarked causative and an optionally marked anticausative. Subject Experiencer verbs like *gioire* 'rejoice' and *arrabbiarsi* 'get angry' both show a marked causative: *gioire* 'rejoice' has an unmarked anticausative while *arrabbiarsi* 'get angry' shows a marked anticausative. [Tab. 1] reports all the possible encodings:

Table 1 The psych verb-types

Type	Unmarked causative	Marked causative	Unmarked anticausative	Marked anticausative
A	spaventare 'frighten'	fare spaventare 'make frightened'	-------------	spaventarsi 'frighten'
B	allibire 'appall'	fare allibire 'make appalled'	allibire 'appall'	-----------
C	sbigottire 'stun'	fare sbigottire 'make stun'	sbigottire 'stun'	sbigottirsi 'get stunned'
D	-------	fare gioire 'make rejoice'	gioire 'rejoice'	--------
E	-------	fare arrabbiare 'make angry'	-------	arrabbiarsi 'get angry'

The aim of this research is to show that the marked or unmarked encoding of the causative/anticausative alternation is related to the causalness of the verbs.

4 The Corpus Study: Data and Method

The psych verbs in the sample have been chosen on the basis of the variation they display regarding the encoding of the causative/anticausative alternation. Since the causalness value of a verb is calculated on the basis of the frequencies of the unmarked and marked variants – see (3) –, the main criterion adopted to compose the sample is that verbs must display an unmarked form for at least one member of the alternation: this excludes class E from the study.

According to prediction (4) made in Heidinger (2015), A-type verbs (only marked anticausative) are expected to show a higher degree of causalness than C-type verbs (unmarked/marked anticausative) which, in turn, show a higher degree of causalness than B- and D-type verbs (unmarked anticausative).

The corpus study includes a sample of 22 verbs. According to the taxonomy of psych verbs established in Vietri (2024), 200 Accusative Object Experiencer psych verbs participate in the causative/anticausative alternation. Most of them, i.e. 162 verbs, are of the A-type. The B-type includes only 2 verbs, i.e. *allibire* 'appall', and *orripilare* 'horrify',[12] while the C-type includes 36 verbs. The taxonomy

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12 De Mauro Italian dictionary lists *orripilare* 'horrify' as a transitive and an intransitive verb, while UTET-Grande dizionario della lingua italiana (`https://www.gdli.it/contesti/xxiii-240/1544943`) lists *orripilare* 'horrify' only as an intransitive verb. This verb is not present at all in the Devoto-Oli and Zingarelli dictionaries. A search in the Italian Web Corpus, accessible through the application Sketch Engine, does confirm the

shows that most alternating 'Accusative Object Experiencer verbs', i.e. 81% of the total, display only the morphologically marked anticausative alternant. Finally, there are more than 30 non-transitive 'Subject Experiencer verbs' that alternate.

Vietri (2024) defines the verb types on the basis of the morphosyntactic information contained in the literature, in the dictionaries (De Mauro; Treccani; Devoto-Oli; Zingarelli) and in the corpora (the Italian Web Corpus 2020 accessible through the application Sketch Engine, `www.sketchengine.eu`). In a few cases the dictionary information has been merged with other sources, as in the case of the verb *terrorizzare* 'terrorise' which, according to the dictionaries I consulted, does not display the anticausative alternation. However, a search in the Italian Web Corpus 2020 shows the occurrence of the marked anticausative variant: cf. **[tab. 2]**. In the same way, according to the dictionaries Devoto-Oli, Treccani and Zingarelli, the verb *atterrire* 'terrify' is likewise not a non-pronominal intransitive verb (i.e. the unmarked anticausative), while this form is present in the Italian Web Corpus 2020. Only the De Mauro dictionary considers this verb form.

Heidinger's (2015) corpus study relies on the existing literature on the causative/anticausative alternation only at the preparatory stage, since the systematic analysis of causalness is entirely based on the corpus data. This means that the marked/unmarked causative and anticausative variants were searched for independently of the existing literature, i.e. four searches were made for each verb. Unlike Heidinger's, the present study relies on the taxonomy of psych verbs constructed in Vietri (2024) not only at the preparatory stage, but throughout the corpus analysis. Therefore, I only searched for the causative and anticausative variants admitted for each verb type, as defined in the taxonomy of psychological verbs in Vietri (2024).

I used the application on the Sketch Engine website and the Italian Web Corpus 2020 therein (Kilgarriff, A. et al. 2004, 2014). Given the Corpus size of 12,451,734,885 words, I set up strict criteria regarding the tense patterns to search, in order to have the most reliable and least ambiguous results. I used the Sketch Engine's Concordance function and I took into account all the hits the search produced, which I then checked manually. I obtained a total of 245,897 causatives and 240,524 anticausatives. **[Tab. 5]** in the Annex provides the totals of the marked/unmarked causative and anticausative variants.

I searched the finite simple tenses (present, past, imperfective, future) in the Indicative, Subjunctive, Conditional, Imperative moods

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controversial nature of this verb. The search yields 22 results, 14 of which report the verb within the *fare*-construction, and 8 are in the infinitive form. I also searched the Leeds corpora (`http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/internet.html`) which also show 22 results. Besides the infinitive form under the *fare*-construction, the latter shows some finite simple and compound tenses.

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for the causative alternant, either unmarked (see for example: *io spaventai X* 'I frightened X') or marked (see for example: *io feci spaventare X* 'I made X frightened'). I searched the same finite tenses for the unmarked and marked anticausative alternants. In the marked anticausative, the verb form is preceded by the clitics *mi, ti, si, ci, vi* (see for example: *io mi spavento* 'I get scared'). The Annex presents more detailed information on the searched patterns.

[Tab. 2] shows the composition of the sample. The abbreviations **uC** – **uAC** – **mAC** stand for 'unmarked C̲ausative', 'unmarked A̲nti̲C̲ausative', and 'marked A̲nti̲C̲ausative', respectively. I omitted the 'marked Causative' since this variant is accepted by all verbs:

Table 2   The composition of the sample

A-type	uC-mAC
	annoiare 'bore'
	divertire 'amuse'
	entusiasmare 'thrill'
	esasperare 'exasperate'
	infastidire 'annoy'
	innervosire 'make angry'
	scoraggiare 'discourage'
	spaventare 'frighten'
B-type	uC-uAC
	allibire 'appall'
C-type	uC-uAC/mAC
	atterrire 'terrify'
	immalinconire 'sadden'
	impaurire frighten'
	inorridire 'horrify'
	inviperire 'get angry'
	ringalluzzire 'make bold'
	sbalordire 'astonish'
	strabiliare 'stun'
	sbigottire 'stun'
D-type	mC-uAC
	esultare 'exult'
	gioire 'rejoice'
	trasalire 'boggle'
	trasecolare 'dumbfound'

In composing the sample, I also took into consideration the morphological variety of verbs. Thus, I included prefixed denominal verbs, such as *immalinconire* 'sadden' and *scoraggiare* 'discourage', as well as a prefixed deadjectival verb like *innervosire* 'make angry'. In order to avoid ambiguous results, I excluded concrete verbs that have a figurative psychological use. For example a verb like *urtare* 'hit, irritate' may refer to a physical activity as in (39) or a psychological event, as in (40):

(39) Gianni   urtò   Paolo   con   il   gomito
      Gianni   strike. PST.3SG Paolo   with   the   elbow
      'Gianni struck Paolo with his elbow'.

(40) Gianni   urtò   Paolo   con   quel   discorso
      Gianni   irritate.PST.3SG Paolo   with   that   speech
      'Gianni irritated Paolo with that speech'.

In the same way I did not include those verbs like *preoccupare* 'worry', whose pronominal form *preoccuparsi* may have a psych meaning as in (41) and a non-psych meaning as in (42):

(41) Gianni   si   preoccupò   per   quella   notizia
      Gianni   si   worry.PST.3SG for   that   news
      'Gianni worried at that news'.

(42) Gianni   si   preoccupò   di   organizzare   l'   evento
      Gianni   si   worry.PST.3SG of   organise.INF   the   event
      Gianni took care of the organisation of the event'.

5   Results

[Tab. 3] presents the Causalness degree of the Italian psych verbs resulting from the present study. The verbs are listed in decreasing order of causalness. [Tab. 3] indicates the verb type (A through D) in the second column, and the value of Causalness in the third column. The fourth and fifth columns indicate the percentage of the marked anticausatives (%mAC) over the total of anticausative occurrences, and the percentage of the marked causatives (%mC) over the total of causative occurrences, respectively. The '0' contained in the fourth column (%mAC) means that no marked anticausatives were searched for in the corpus because these verbs do not have such variants. On the other hand, the '100' means that no unmarked tokens were searched for.

For example, the verb *entusiasmare* 'thrill' shows a causalness value of 97.69: 100% of its anticausative uses are marked, and 0.68% of its causative uses are marked. On the other hand, the verb *inorridire*

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'horrify' shows a causalness value of 30.79: 2.79% of its anticausative uses are marked, and 92.94% of its causative uses are formally marked.

The data confirm the expectations based on Heidinger's (2015) prediction (4). The A-type verbs like *spaventare* 'frighten' (marked anticausative) tend to display a higher degree of causalness than C-type verbs like *sbigottire* 'stun' (unmarked/marked anticausative), while D-type verbs like *gioire* 'rejoice' have the lowest causalness value.

[Tab. 3] shows the strong preference for the marked anticausative also in the case of C-type verbs which have both the marked and the unmarked anticausative variant: only 3 out of 9 verbs show a percentage of marked anticausatives (*strabiliare* 'amaze', *sbigottire* 'stun', and *inorridire* 'horrify') lower than the percentage of the unmarked causatives.

Table 3 Causalness and the encoding for Italian psych verbs

Verb	Type	Causalness	%mAC	%mC
entusiasmare 'thrill'	A	97.69	100	0.68
spaventare 'frighten'	A	96.84	100	0.57
atterrire 'terrify'	C	95.56	76.69	0.45
infastidire 'annoy'	A	93.67	100	0.086
sbalordire 'astonish'	C	90.65	50.45	1.99
scoraggiare 'discourage'	A	91.86	100	0.22
strabiliare 'amaze'	C	87.64	11.22	7.91
esasperare 'exasperate'	A	84.58	100	0.6
innervosire 'make angry'	A	83.71	100	15.73
impaurire 'frighten'	C	65.92	96.38	2.99
inviperire 'get very angry'	C	47.27	93.1	92.3
ringalluzzire 'make bold'	C	45.37	86.15	33.33
annoiare 'bore'	A	45.2	100	1.52
sbigottire 'stun'	C	43.88	39.31	15.3
immalinconire 'sadden'	C	41.33	94.15	1.58
inorridire 'horrify'	C	30.79	2.79	92.94
divertire 'amuse'	A	22.57	100	19.95
allibire 'appall'	B	21.96	0	28.57
trasalire 'boggle'	D	26.27	0	100
gioire 'rejoice'	D	5.83	0	100
trasecolare 'dumbfound'	D	5.78	0	100
esultare 'exult'	D	2.4	0	100

In order to analyse the correlation between causalness and the encoding of the anticausative alternant, the causalness value and the percentage of the marked anticausative uses given in **[tab. 3]** are set in relation and represented in **[fig. 1]**: each point stands for one of the 22 verbs. The graph shows that verbs with high causalness tend to form marked anticausatives, while verbs with low causalness form unmarked causatives.

I calculated the Spearman's rank correlation in order to analyse the correspondence of the Italian data with Heidinger's (2015, 568) prediction that causalness and the percentage of marked anticausatives correlate. Spearman's coefficient amounts to 0.556 – level of significance =.01 (one-sided) –, which indicates a robust correlation between causalness and the encoding of the anticausative in Italian psych verbs.

In order to analyse the correlation between causalness and the encoding of the causative alternant, the causalness value and the percentage of the marked causative uses, given in **[tab. 3]**, are set in relation, and represented in **[fig. 2]**. The graph shows that verbs with low causalness tend to form marked causatives, while verbs with high causalness form unmarked causatives:

Spearman's correlation confirms this co-variation since the calculated correlation coefficient amounts to -0.635 – level of significance =.01 (one-sided) –, which indicates a strong correlation between causalness and the encoding of causatives.

Both trendlines in Italian show that the correlation between causalness and the encoding is stronger in Italian than in French or Spanish. This may be due to the language and/or to the verbs belonging to a homogeneous semantic domain.

The results confirm Heidinger (2015), who claims that verbs

> used more often as causatives (compared to anticausatives) have a high degree of causalness, while verbs that are used more often as anticausatives (compared to causatives) have a low degree of causalness. (Heidinger 2015, 567)

To sum up, the encoding of the causative alternant is in correspondence with Heidinger's prediction: verbs with a low degree of causalness tend to mark the causative alternant more often than verbs with a high degree of causalness.

6 Comparisons

The results of the corpus study of Italian causative/anticausative psych verbs exhibit some features shared with the results of the corpus study of French and Spanish causative/anticausative (non-psych)

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verbs, but also certain differences.

Heidinger (2015) points out that in French and Spanish the encoding of the causative alternant differs from the anticausative: marked causatives are less frequent than marked anticausatives. The Italian corpus study shows the same results: the percentage of Italian marked causatives (6.58%, mC: 16,185 vs mAC: 229,637) is similar to French (7.5%, mC: 53 vs mAC: 701) and Spanish (6.48%, mC: 31 vs mAC: 478).

As regards the cut-off point for the encoding of the anticausatives, Heidinger (2015, 583) points out that French verbs with a causalness value ≥ 50 tend to form marked anticausatives only, Spanish verbs with a causalness value ≥ 40 display the tendency to form marked anticausatives only, while Italian does not display a real cut-off point. However, Italian verbs with a causalness value > 40 rarely form marked causatives.

Heidinger (2015) affirms that the results for Spanish and French are in line with the literature according to which French has a fairly high number of verbs which form unmarked anticausatives, while Spanish has a very small number of unmarked anticausatives. Italian shows a very low presence of alternating psych verbs which form unmarked anticausatives only: among 'Accusative Object Experiencer verbs', just two verbs display the unmarked anticausative only. This also regards Italian (non-psych) lexical causatives like *affondare* 'sink' and *aumentare* 'increase': according to Vietri (2017), the number of verbs which form the unmarked anticausative only is very low, specifically 3.89% (36 out of 924 verbs). Furthermore, the percentage of Italian unmarked anticausatives (23.68%, uAC = 56,968 vs mAC = 183,556) is much lower than French (62.63%, uAC = 1175 vs mAC = 701) and Spanish (54.77%, uAC = 579 vs mAC =478). Only 2 out of 9 C-type verbs show a higher percentage of unmarked anticausative than the marked anticausative, namely *strabiliare* 'amaze' and *sbigottire* 'stun'.

Heidinger (2015) points out that

> while the anticausative alternant is nearly always formally marked if the verb has a high degree of causalness, the causative is only rarely formally marked even if the verb has a very low degree of causalness. (Heidinger 2015, 583)

Unlike French and Spanish, the results of the corpus study on Italian verbs show the tendency to form a higher percentage of marked causatives as long as the verbs have a lower degree of causalness. Furthermore, all Italian verbs show a percentage of marked causatives, while the French and Spanish data show that a high number of verbs do not form any marked causatives.

As far as the Spearman's rank correlation is concerned, **[tab. 4]**

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shows the values for French and Spanish compared with Italian. The correlation rank between causalness and the marked anticausative in Italian is more similar to Spanish; this may be due to the lower presence of marked anticausatives in Spanish and Italian than in French. On the other hand, the correlation rank between causalness and the marked causative in Italian is the highest. This may be due to the high number of marked causatives.

Table 4 Correlation coefficients for causalness and marked encodings

Alternant	French	Spanish	Italian
Anticausative	0.675 (p <.01 (one-sided))	0.540 (p <.01 (one-sided))	0.556 (p <.01 (one-sided))
Causative	−0.607 (p <.01 (one-sided))	−0.470 (p <.05 (one-sided))	-0.635 (p <.01 (one-sided))

7 Conclusions

The present research has been inspired by Heidinger (2015), a corpus study based on a sample of 20 French and 20 Spanish causatives verbs such as *augmenter-aumentar* 'increase', *jaunir-amarillear* 'make/become yellow', and *fermer-cerrar* 'close', which participate in the causative/anticausative alternation. Heidinger claims that verbs with a high degree of causalness display the tendency to form unmarked causatives and marked anticausatives more often than verbs with a low degree of causalness. On the other hand, verbs with a low degree of causalness tend to form marked causatives and unmarked anticausatives more often than verbs with a high degree of causalness. Therefore, the encoding of the alternants is related to the causalness of the verbs, where causalness is calculated on the basis of the frequencies of the marked/unmarked causative and anticausative use.

The corpus study on Italian includes a sample of 22 psych verbs which participate in the causative/anticausative alternation, such as *spaventare* 'frighten', *sbigottire* 'stun', *allibire* 'appall', *gioire* 'rejoice'. The results of the study confirm the tendency observed in Heidinger (2015), and also show certain common features and differences between Italian on the one hand and French and Spanish on the other.

Marked causatives are less frequent than marked anticausatives in the three languages. However, in Italian, all verbs show a percentage of marked causatives, while in French and Spanish a high number of verbs do not show any marked causatives.

As regards the encoding of the anticausatives, the French data

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show that verbs have a higher tendency to form unmarked anticausatives than in Spanish. These results are in line with the literature according to which Spanish has a much smaller number of unmarked anticausatives than French. Similarly to Spanish, Italian shows a very low presence of Accusative Object Experiencer alternating psych verbs which also form unmarked anticausatives (about 36 verbs) and just two verbs which form only unmarked anticausatives.

Although the Italian study considers psych verbs and Heidinger's study regards non-psych verbs, the correlation between the encoding of alternants and the causalness degree is confirmed for Italian. Further research will examine and compare the French and Spanish sample to the equivalent Italian one.

8 Annex

[Tab. 5] shows the absolute frequencies of the causative and the anticausative variants and their totals, the causalness value, and the percentage of marked anticausatives and unmarked causatives.

As specified in § 4, I searched for the unmarked/marked causative and the marked anticausative in the case of A-type verbs, while I searched for the unmarked/marked causative and unmarked/marked anticausative in C-type verbs. On the other hand, with B-type verbs I searched for the unmarked/marked causative and the unmarked anticausative. As regards D-type verbs, I searched for the unmarked anticausative and the marked causative. Therefore, the '0' in [tab. 5] means that those sequences the '0' refers to were not searched for. I considered only the active forms.

With respect to the unmarked causative, i.e. the transitive use, all constructions with or without the direct object were taken into account, including those sequences where the direct object is pronominalised, mainly in the preverbal position. Furthermore, I considered those sequences where the subject surfaces in object positions (see for example: *sbalordisce l'arresto di Gianni* 'astonish the arrest of Gianni').

In order to perform searches that were as precise as possible, I used CQL (Corpus Query Language), especially when searching marked anticausatives. In this case, I searched for the sequences formed of the 'reflexive clitic+verb', taking into account the agreement between the clitic and the verb. For example, the sequence *mi spavento*, 'I get frightened' (both pronoun and verb are in the first person singular) is a marked anticausative while *mi spaventa*, 'it frightens me' (the pronoun is in the first person singular but the verb is in the third person singular) is an unmarked causative, where the clitic stands for the direct object. The clitic *si* followed by the verb in the third person may also refer to impersonal forms; these sequences

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were disregarded.

As far as marked causatives are concerned, pronominal sequences referring to the passive forms were disregarded: a sequence like *mi feci spaventare* 'I got frightened' (both pronoun and verb are in the first person singular) is a passive form, while a sequence like *mi fa spaventare* 'it frightens me' (the pronoun in the first person singular, the verb is in the third person singular) is a non-passive *fare*-construction that I took into account. With respect to the *fare*-constructions, the overall results show the strong periphrastic relation between analytical causatives and the unmarked causatives, as pointed out in § 3: examples (25) and (27)-(29).

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Table 5 Absolute frequencies of causative and anticausative variants.

Verb	Verb Type	Causal value	Unmarked Causatives	Marked Causatives	%mC	Total Caus	Unmarked Anticaus.	Marked Anticaus	Total Anticaus	%mAC	Total C + A
entusiasmare 'thrill'	A	97.69	24,412	169	0.68	24,581	0	580	580	100	25,161
spaventare 'frighten'	A	96.84	79,284	456	0.57	79,740	0	2,596	2,596	100	82,336
atterrire 'terrify'	C	95.56	2,856	13	0.45	2,869	31	102	133	76.69	3,002
infastidire 'annoy'	A	93.67	24,337	21	0.086	24,358	0	1,646	1,646	100	26,004
scoraggiare 'discourage'	A	91.86	24,180	54	0.22	24,234	0	2,146	2,146	100	26,380
sbalordire 'astonish'	C	90.65	3,147	64	1.99	3,211	164	167	331	50.45	3,542
strabiliare 'amaze'	C	87.64	640	55	7.91	695	87	11	98	11.22	793
esasperare 'exasperate'	A	84.58	6,285	38	0.60	6,323	0	1,152	1,152	100	7,475
innervosire 'make angry'	A	83.71	6,866	1,282	15.73	8,148	0	1,585	1,585	100	9,733
impaurire 'frighten'	C	65.92	1,815	56	2.99	1,871	35	932	967	96.38	2,838
inviperire 'get very angry'	C	47.27	4	48	92.30	52	4	54	58	93.10	110
ringalluzzire 'make bold'	C	45.37	36	18	33.33	54	9	56	65	86.15	119
annoiare 'bore'	A	45.2	21,195	329	1.52	21,524	0	26,089	26,089	100	47,613
sbigottire 'stun'	C	43.88	155	28	15.30	183	142	92	234	39.31	417
immalinconire 'sadden'	C	41.33	249	4	1.58	253	21	338	359	94.15	612
inorridire 'horrify'	C	30.79	137	1,804	92.94	1,941	4,239	122	4,361	2.79	6,302
trasalire 'boggle'	D	26.27	0	1,144	100	1,144	3,210	0	3,210	0	4,354
divertire 'amuse'	A	22.57	34,039	8,484	19.95	42,523	0	145,888	145,888	100	188,411
allibire 'appall'	B	21.96	75	30	28.57	105	373	0	373	0	478
giore 'rejoice'	D	5.83	0	1,393	100	1,393	22,492	0	22,492	0	23,885
trasecolare 'dumbfound'	D	5.78	0	86	100	86	1,401	0	1,401	0	1,487
esultare 'exult'	D	2.40	0	609	100	609	24,760	0	24,760	0	25,369
Total amount			229,637	16,185		245,897	56,968	183,556	240,524		486,421

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Instrument Syntactic Realization in Italian and LIS
A Cross-modal Comparative Study and Implications
for Interpreting Practice

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Abstract   This study compares how instruments are syntactically realized in Italian and LIS, using a cross-modal comparative approach. In Italian, Instruments are syntactically realized only when they are not recoverable from the verb. Three Instrument types are identified: shadow, default, and open. Only shadow Instruments are incorporated into the verbal root. As for LIS, our analysis reveals that shadow Instruments are preferred and finer-grained compared to Italian, probably due to visual modality. This has implications for Italian-to-LIS interpretation, as interpreters might make a wrong choice when Italian does not specify, but LIS requires a shadow Instrument.

Keywords   Instruments. Italian. Italian Sign Language. Semantic incorporation. Semantic recoverability.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Typological overview. – 3 Instruments in Italian. – 3.1 Syntactic Realization of Instruments. – 3.2 Shadow, Default, and Open: Accounting for Instrument Optionality. – 4 Syntactic Realization of Instrument in LIS. – 4.1 Methodology. – 4.2 Results. – 4.2.1 Instrument Realization in LIS. – 4.2.2 Comparative Analysis Between Italian and LIS. – 4.2.3 Instruments in Cross-modal Translation. – 5 General Discussion. – 6 Conclusions.

1   Introduction

An Instrument is defined as the semantic participant that somehow contributes to the realization of the event it is implied by, being manipulated by the Agent (Rissman 2013). Its syntactic realization has received much attention in both spoken and sign language linguistics, yet little or no studies exploit a cross-modal comparative approach. Our study aims to fill such a gap through the comparison of Instrument realization in Italian Sign Language (LIS) and Italian.

In Italian, Instrument realization is ruled by semantic recoverability, i.e., the less the Instrument is recoverable from the verb meaning, the more it is bound to be syntactically realized. Based on this observation, three types of Instruments are identified (Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming): shadow, default, and open Instruments, which are progressively less recoverable and more likely to be realized. As for LIS, no systematic investigation of the syntactic realization of Instrument has ever been performed.

In this paper, we present a preliminary study based on elicited data to determine: i) what syntactic strategy is used in LIS to realize Instruments and ii) whether the tripartition of Instruments proposed for Italian also holds for LIS. Once a clear understanding of Instrument realization in LIS is established, we propose a comparative analysis between LIS and Italian to investigate whether possible differences between the two languages impact cross-modal interpreting. So far, there has been little discussion about interpreting processes between Italian and LIS: hopefully, our study will inform professional translators and interpreters of possible challenges and solutions and prompt future research in this field.

The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2, a typological overview of Instrument realization in spoken and sign languages is sketched, while Section 3 focuses on Instruments in Italian. Section 4 is devoted to our study: first, the methodology is described; then, we focus on the results, highlighting similarities and differences between LIS and Italian and possible implications for interpreting practice. Section 5 is dedicated to the general discussion of the results: particular attention is devoted to the challenges that the realization of Instruments may pose for Italian-LIS interpreters, and possible solutions are put forth. Finally, preliminary conclusions are drawn in Section 6.

2 Typological overview

Little cross-linguistic variation is found across spoken languages with respect to Instrument realization: they tend to be "expressed in the least variable way" (Haspelmath 2014, 9).

Two strategies are found for the Instrument syntactic expression, i.e., case and adpositional marking (Van Hooste 2018): the former is found in languages that display a morphological case system, the latter in languages that do not. Instances of instrumental case marking are found in (the majority of) Slavic languages, Georgian (Kartvelian), Hungarian (Uralic), Lithuanian (Baltic), Turkish (Altaic), and Quechua (Quechua).[1] Romance and (the majority of) Germanic languages are among those that realize Instruments via prepositional marking, as well as, e.g., Bulgarian (Slavic), Irish (Celtic), Persian (Indo-Iranian), Hebrew (Semitic), and Modern Greek (Hellenic). Some languages, e.g., German, Icelandic (Germanic), Ukrainian, and Czech (Slavic) use a combination of the two strategies.

Some languages can additionally realize Instruments via Noun Incorporation (NI), defined as the combination of an N root with a V root to which N is thematically related, resulting in a derived V root used to indicate a unitary activity (Mithun 1984; Baker 1988; De Reuse 1994; Johns 2017; McKenzie 2018). An example of Instrument incorporation (Nahuatl, Uto-Atzecan) is given in (1).

(1) Ya⁷ ki-**kočillo**-tete⁷ki panci. (Mithun 1984, 861)
     He 3sS-knife-cut   bread
     'He cut the bread with a knife.'

Incorporation is never the only available strategy for the realization of Instruments in a language (Mithun 1984; Johns 2017). In other words, NI is displayed by languages that more frequently express Instruments via either adpositional or case marking. In Nahuatl, for instance, Instruments can be realized via NI and postpositional marking: *-ka* and *-ika* 'with' are used in Tetelcingo, Huasteca, and North Puebla Nahuatl (Tuggy 1979; Beller, Beller 1979; Brockway 1979). In Chukchi (Chukotko-Kamchatkan), Instruments are realized via NI and case marking (Dunn 1999), through the ergative/instrumental case.

In sign language linguistics, Instruments have received considerable attention and have been addressed in several studies on different sign languages (ISL, Israeli Sign Language: Meir 2001; NGT, Nederlandse Gebarentaal/Sign Language of the Netherlands: Zwitserlood

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1 Other languages use non-instrumental cases to syntactically realize Instruments, e.g., Basque (Isolated) and Estonian (Balto-Finnic) use the comitative case, Finnish (Uralic) uses the adessive case.

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2003; 2012; ASL, American Sign Language: Benedicto, Brentari 2004; TSL, Taiwan Sign Language: He 2011). Overall, sign languages also show little cross-linguistic variation in Instrument realization: in the visual modality, languages typically resort to incorporation, while case and adpositional marking are not recognized as options.

Looking more closely at sign language data, we see that Instruments are typically realized as classifier handshapes, i.e., particular configurations of the hand denoting a class of entities with some common properties.[2] Classifiers are generally considered to be morphemes with a non-specific meaning (Zwisterlood 2012). When handshapes are used as classifiers, they represent entities by denoting salient characteristics, such as i) the whole entity (e.g., a flat hand with extended fingers may be used to refer to a table or a car), ii) a body part (e.g., a fist may be used to refer to a head), iii) a physical property of the referent (e.g., two hands with extended index and thumb may be used to refer to the perimeter of a mirror), or iv) how the entity is held or manipulated (e.g., a fist may refer to the handling of a carafe). Specifically, the classifier types in i) and iv) may be used to realize Instruments; in this case, they simultaneously combine with a V root (i.e., a movement), forming a morphologically complex predicate. For illustrative purposes, (2) is an example from NGT showing a polymorphemic predicate with an incorporated Instrument. The handshape (closed G) is used as a handling classifier, since it represents how the Instrument (a fishing rod) is held. The classifier is combined with a backward movement (V root) to form a complex predicate meaning, 'to fish with a fishing rod'.[3]
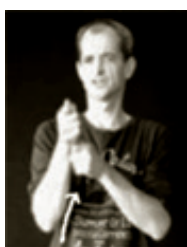
(2)   CL(closed G): 'fish with a fishing rod'. (Zwitserlood 2012, 169)

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2   More details on classifiers in sign languages are provided, e.g., in Benedicto, Brentari (2004).

3   In this paper, classifier predicates are presented following the annotation conventions commonly used in sign language linguistics. Namely, they are reported as follows: CL(handshape): 'meaning conveyed by the whole construction'.

Given the uniform pattern observed across different sign languages, LIS data are expected to align with it, realizing Instruments through classifier incorporation.

The brief typological overview sketched above shows that the two modalities mainly differ in that incorporation is the cross-linguistically rarest strategy for the realization of Instruments in spoken languages (and it is never the only available strategy), while it is the most frequent strategy in sign languages, where adpositional and case marking are not attested.

3 Instruments in Italian

In this section, an overview of Instruments in Italian is laid out: first, the main strategies used for their syntactic realization are presented (§ 3.1); then, a recent hypothesis aimed at accounting for their syntactic production/omission is described (§ 3.2).

3.1 Syntactic Realization of Instruments

In Italian, Instruments are most frequently realized via prepositional marking, i.e., they are the internal complements of the preposition *con* 'with', as in (3). In addition, they can be realized via the clitic pronoun *ci*, as in (4).

(3) Laura toglie la scheggia [$_{PP}$ con le pinzette].
'Laura removes the splinter [$_{PP}$ with tweezers].'

(4) (Con le pinzette$_i$,) Laura ci$_i$ toglie la scheggia.
(With tweezers$_i$,) Laura with.it$_i$=removes the splinter
'(With tweezers$_i$,) Laura removes the splinter with them$_i$.'

Instruments are always syntactically optional when realized via *con*-PPs (5a) and the instrumental *ci* (5b).

(5) a. Laura toglie la scheggia (con le pinzette).
'Laura removes the splinter (with tweezers).'

b. (Con le pinzette$_i$,) Laura (ci$_i$) toglie la scheggia.
(With tweezers$_i$,) Laura (with.it$_i$=)removes the splinter
'(With tweezers$_i$,) Laura removes the splinter (with them$_i$).'

Instruments can also be realized as the internal complement of the verb *usare* 'to use' (Lakoff 1968 for English), as in (6). They cannot be omitted in this position (7).

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(6) Laura usa [$_{DP}$ le pinzette] per togliere la scheggia.
    'Laura uses [$_{DP}$ tweezers] to remove the splinter.'

(7) Laura usa *(le pinzette) per togliere la scheggia.
    'Laura uses *(tweezers) to remove the splinter.'

We will not consider the *use*-structure in (6)-(7) for two reasons: first, the *con*-PP is the most prototypical way of realizing Instruments in Italian as well as cross-linguistically; second (and perhaps most importantly), the *use*-structure does not tell anything about the semantic and syntactic relation between a verb and the entailed Instrument: in *use*-structures, the Instrument is semantically entailed by the verb of the *to*-infinitival clause, despite being the syntactic complement of the verb *usare* 'to use'.

3.2 Shadow, Default, and Open: Accounting for Instrument Optionality

In Italian, unless they are realized via the *use*-structure, Instruments can always be omitted without the sentence being ungrammatical, as in (5). Because of their optionality, they have often been classified as adjuncts (Bresnan 1982; Dowty 1982; Rappaport-Hovav, Levin 1988; Jackendoff 1990; Rissman, Rawlins 2017). However, they are semantic arguments of verbs that semantically require them, e.g., *tagliare* 'to cut', *bucare* 'to pierce', etc. (Koenig, Mauner, Bienvenue 2003; Koenig et al. 2008; Barbu 2020 for English; Barbu 2020 for Turkish, Romanian, and Spanish; Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming for Italian). This is confirmed by psycholinguistic evidence (Schütze 1995; Barbu 2020) and by various syntactic diagnostics for argumenthood, according to which they behave as arguments or quasi-arguments/secondary complements (Ono 1992; Schütze 1995; Barbu 2020; Russo 2021 for English; Russo 2021 for Turkish; Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming for Italian).

Considering Instruments as pure adjuncts causes a mismatch between semantics and syntax, since this would be the only case where the semantic structure of a verb does not determine its syntactic behavior (Rissman 2013). Hence, it has been proposed that Instruments should be classified as arguments/quasi-arguments, and that their syntactic omission should be treated as an instance of argument omission, not as a proof of them being adjuncts (Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming for Italian).

Argument omission is ruled by semantic recoverability (Resnik 1993; Conklin, Koenig, Mauner 2004; Cappelli, Lenci 2020), i.e., an argument can be omitted only when the verb alone allows for it to be interpreted. Semantic recoverability relies on the amount of in-

formation that a verb provides about its arguments and *vice versa*: the more information a verb provides about an argument, the more the argument is recoverable from the verb alone (and the less it is informative with respect to it) and is likely to be syntactically omitted.

Capitalizing on Pustejovsky's (1995; Jezek 2017 for Italian) tripartition of arguments, based on the informativity of arguments with respect to the verb, three types of Instruments are identified in Italian: shadow, default, and open Instruments (Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming).

Shadow Instruments are semantically incorporated[4] into the verb meaning and root, completely recoverable from the verb meaning alone and interpreted as a single instrumental item. Examples of verbs entailing shadow Instruments (henceforth, shadow verbs) in Italian are reported in (8).

(8) a. spazzolare 'to brush'⟹ INST: spazzola 'brush'
     b. martellare 'to hammer'⟹ INST: martello 'hammer'
     c. segare 'to saw'⟹ INST: sega 'saw'
     d. avvelenare 'to poison'⟹ INST: veleno 'poison'

Since they are uninformative with respect to the verb, shadow Instruments are syntactically omitted if not further modified, in order to avoid redundancy (cf. *Non-Redundancy Constraint*, Fabrizio 2013), as shown below: (9a) is acceptable and the omitted shadow Instrument is interpreted as a single instrumental item, i.e., *martello* 'hammer', while (9b) is redundant; however, (9c) is acceptable again, since the shadow Instrument is modified by *più vecchio* 'oldest'.

(9) a. Luca martella il chiodo.
         'Luca hammers the nail.'
     b. ?? Luca martella il chiodo con il martello.
         'Luca hammers the nail with the hammer.'
     c. Luca martella il chiodo con il martello più vecchio.
         'Luca hammers the nail with the oldest hammer.'

Notably, shadow Instruments are syntactically realized when the speaker refers to a subtype of the instrumental item entailed by the verb, as in (10b): the shadow verb *pattinare* 'to skate' only allows for the shadow Instrument *pattini* 'skates' to be interpreted (10a), but does not provide enough information for any subtype to be interpreted. We claim that this is the maximum level of granularity reached by shadow verbs in Italian and that it is prone to cross-linguistic variation.

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[4] We only refer to 'semantic' incorporation, without entering the debate about the syntactic (Baker 1988) or morphological process that may underlie this kind of structure.

(10) a.   Luca pattina.
      'Luca is skating.'⟹ INST: pattini 'skates'

    b.   Luca pattina {con i pattini a rotelle/in linea/da ghiaccio}.
      'Luca is skating {with roller/in-line/ice skates}.'

Default Instruments are selected by the verb as a small and semantically coherent set of entities. They are recoverable from the verb alone and interpreted as the entire set; in this case, they are uninformative with respect to the verb. Examples of verbs entailing default Instruments (henceforth, default verbs) are given in (11).

(11) a.   tagliare 'to cut'⟹ INST: {cutting objects}
    b.   sparare 'to shoot'⟹ INST: {firearms}
    c.   mangiare 'to eat'⟹ INST: {cutlery}
    d.   disegnare 'to draw'⟹ INST: {tools for drawing}

As mentioned above, default Instruments are uninformative with respect to the verb when the speaker wants to refer to the entire class selected by the verb itself; in this case, their syntactic realization is redundant and, therefore, avoided. On the contrary, when the speaker wants to mention a single instrumental item belonging to the set, default Instruments become informative with respect to the verb and their syntactic realization is allowed. As an example, the verb *tagliare* 'to cut' can be considered, which entails the set of {cutting objects} (11a). The acceptability of (12a), where the entire set is syntactically realized, is degraded, while (12b), where a single instrumental item is mentioned, i.e., *coltello* 'knife', is completely acceptable.

    Default Instruments are occasionally shadowed by the co-composition between the verb and its internal argument, as in (12c), where the Instrument is interpreted as a single instrumental item and depends on the object of the verb *tagliare* 'to cut'. Thus, default Instruments are syntactically realized when a single instrumental item is mentioned, provided that they are not shadowed, as with *disegnare* 'to draw' (12d), where the default Instrument does not depend on what is being drawn.

(12) a.   ?*Taglia con gli oggetti per tagliare!
      'Cut with the cutting objects!'
    b.   Taglia con il coltello!
      'Cut with the knife!'
    c.   Luca taglia {$_1$il pane/$_2$il prato/$_3$i capelli a Sara}.
      'Luca cuts the bread/the lawn/Sara's hair.'
      ⟹ INST: {$_1$coltello 'knife'/$_2$tagliaerba 'lawn mower'/$_3$forbici 'scissors'}

    d.   Luca disegna {un cane/un gatto/una giraffa} con la matita.
          ‘Luca draws {a dog/a cat/a giraffe} with the pencil.’
          ⟹ INST: {tools for drawing}

Open Instruments are unrecoverable from the verb alone, which selects for a broader and not (always) semantically coherent set of entities, and, as such, they are maximally informative with respect to the verb itself. Examples of verbs entailing open Instruments (henceforth, open verbs) are given in (13).

(13) a.   rompere ‘to break’⟹ INST: {martello ‘hammer’, mazza ‘bat’, etc.}
      b.   giocare ‘to play’⟹ INST: {palla ‘ball’, bambola ‘doll’, etc.}
      c.   sporcare ‘to soil’⟹ INST: {cioccolato ‘chocolate’, fango ‘mud’, etc.}
      d.   andare ‘to go’ ⟹ INST: {treno ‘train’, aeroplano ‘airplane’, etc.}

Being unrecoverable from the verb (14a), open Instruments are more bound to be syntactically realized (14b) than shadow and default ones.[5]

(14) a.   Luca ha distrutto la parete.
          ‘Luca destroyed the wall.’
          ⟹ INST: {martello ‘hammer’, mazza ‘bat’, fuoco ‘fire’, etc.}
      b.   Luca ha distrutto la parete con la dinamite.
          ‘Luca destroyed the wall with dynamite.’

In Italian, the behavior of Instruments is represented by the pattern in (15).

(15) Semantic recoverability: Shadow > Default > Open
         ↓
     Syntactic omission: Shadow > Default > Open

Semantic recoverability and syntactic omission are maximal for shadow Instruments and decrease for default and open ones. This was confirmed by a comprehensive analysis conducted on two large corpora of spontaneous speech (Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming).

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5 A comprehensive corpus analysis, conducted on two corpora of spontaneous speech in Italian, showed (i) that Instruments are scarcely syntactically realized in spontaneous speech and (ii) that they tend to co-occur more frequently with open verbs than with shadow and default verbs (Suozzi, Cardinaletti, Lebani, forthcoming).

4   Syntactic Realization of Instrument in LIS

As mentioned above (§ 2), sign languages display a uniform pattern: Instruments are commonly realized as a classifier handshape incorporated into a polymorphemic predicate. This section presents a preliminary study on Instrument realization in LIS, which in principle is expected to resort to classifier incorporation, like other sign languages.

4.1   Methodology

This study is based on the data collected from two LIS informants: one is a deaf native signer from a deaf signing family, while the other is a deaf near-native signer, who has been exposed to LIS since the age of 4. At the time of data collection, they lived in the same region (Veneto) and had a similar age (40 and 41). Crucially for the aim of the study, they are bimodal bilinguals and use LIS and Italian on a daily basis.

Both informants participated in two elicitation sessions guided by one of the authors of this paper, who is a hearing fluent signer. To avoid memory bias, the two sessions were at least two weeks apart. The first session included two different tasks: a picture naming task aimed at eliciting 45 Instruments in LIS **[fig. 1]**, and an elicited translation task in which the informants were asked to translate into LIS a battery of 45 Italian verbs presented one by one in written form **[fig. 2]**.

Figure 1   Picture naming task (target: SMARTPHONE)
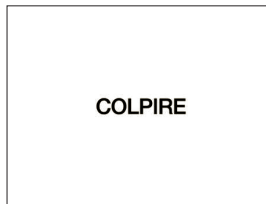
Figure 2   Elicited translation task (target: COLPIRE, 'to hit')

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The Italian verbs included in the second task were balanced for type: 15 shadow verbs (e.g., *segare* 'to saw', *pattinare* 'to skate'), 15 default verbs (e.g., *tagliare* 'to cut', *sparare* 'to shoot'), and 15 open verbs (e.g., *colpire* 'to hit', *accompagnare* 'to accompany').

For each verb, the informants were asked to provide the equivalent LIS sign(s). The translation itself only represented the starting point for an in-depth discussion in LIS between the informant and the researcher, in which the equivalent signs were tested in different contexts and with different Instruments. All the possible realizations coming from introspection were video-recorded and analyzed afterwards.

The second elicitation session also consisted of two different tasks. One was a semi-guided sentence production in which the informants were asked to produce 15 sentences built on 15 LIS verbs selected from the elicited translation task. Once the sentence was spontaneously produced by the informants, the researcher tested the possibility of overtly producing the instrumental lexical sign (e.g., SCISSORS) and sign order changes (e.g., PAPER SCISSORS CL: 'cut with scissors' vs SCISSORS PAPER CL: 'cut with scissors').

The other was a sentence-by-sentence translation task, with the aim to simulate possible challenges in the interpreting process. The informants were shown two connected sentences in written Italian, one after the other. After each sentence, they were required to provide the translation into LIS. For example, they were first shown the sentence in (16) including the Italian default verb *tagliare* 'to cut', and they were asked to translate it into LIS.

(16) Per favore, prova a tagliare questo nastro.
      'Please, try to cut this ribbon.'

Shortly afterwards, the task was repeated for the sentence in (17).

(17) Uffa, con il coltello è impossibile tagliarlo. Dobbiamo cercare le forbici.
      'Ugh, it's impossible to cut it with a knife. We need to look for scissors.'

Both the sentences include one of the verbs from the elicited translation task: overall, we selected 3 shadow verbs, 3 default verbs, 3 open verbs, and 3 fillers. Crucially, the Instrument is overtly expressed only in the second sentence (e.g., in (17), *coltello*, 'knife').

4.2   Results

In this section, we first present the linguistic strategies employed to express Instruments in the LIS data analyzed (§ 4.2.1). Then, we compare Instruments in Italian and LIS using a cross-linguistic and

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cross-modal approach (§ 4.2.2). In § 4.2.3, we examine whether cross-linguistic differences may impose difficulties in the process of meaning conversion from one language to the other, in particular from Italian to LIS.

4.2.1 Instrument Realization in LIS

The qualitative analysis conducted on the data from the four tasks described in § 4.1 shows that LIS aligns with other sign languages, since it does not resort to either adpositional or case marking. Instrument is generally realized as a classifier handshape, which is simultaneously combined with a V root to form a polymorphemic predicate. In such a construction, Instrument consists of a static handshape and is a bound morpheme: it cannot occur in isolation and must combine with a V root to become a well-formed sign.

Two types of classifiers were identified in our data. The handshape can either represent the general shape of the Instrument (whole-entity classifier), as in (18a), or how it is held (handling classifier), as in (18b).

(18) a. CL(L): 'dry one's hair with a hairdryer'   b. CL(closed 5): 'sweep with a broom'

As mentioned above, the informants were allowed to provide multiple renditions for the same item. In a few cases, the informants offered both a whole-entity classifier translation and a handling classifier translation for the same Instrument. For example, 'to saw' has two possible versions in LIS: a predicate including a whole-entity classifier (19a), or a handling classifier (19b). Further work needs to be carried out to establish whether these are cases of true optionality, or the choice of the classifier is driven by specific factors.

(19)   a. CL(B): 'saw'   b. CL(closed 5): 'saw'

In the aforementioned examples, a V root unspecified for the hand-shape is simultaneously combined with an affix, represented by the instrumental classifier handshape. Because the incorporated Instru-ment is a classifier, it selects a salient property of a class of entities. This class may vary in size: it could entail a single instrumental item, or more. Below, we show examples of different classifier handshapes referring to Instrument sets of different sizes. The first case is that of classifier handshapes entailing a single instrumental item. For exam-ple, the V handshape (extended index and middle fingers) combined with a 'cutting' V root only refers to scissors.

(20)   CL(V): 'cut with scissors' ⟹ INST: scissors

In this case, the classifier handshape and the corresponding Instru-ment (SCISSORS) display a very similar phonological form. When the classifier handshape clearly refers to a single instrumental item, the omission of the instrumental lexical sign is obligatory (21a), unless it is focalized or further specified (21b).

(21)   a.   IX$_3$ SHEET (*SCISSORS) CL(V): 'cut with scissors'
            'She cut the sheet of paper with scissors.'

       b.   IX$_3$ SHEET SCISSORS NEW CL(V): 'cut with scissors'
            'She cut the sheet of paper with the new scissors.'

A second case is that of classifier handshapes entailing a group of instrumental items that share inherent properties, thus forming a semantically coherent class of entities. For example, a closed 5 handshape combined with a 'cleaning' V root may entail different instrumental items, which share a common property (i.e., being cleaning tools), thus belonging to the same semantic domain.

(22) CL(closed 5): 'clean with a cleaning tool'
       ⟹ INST: {paper towel, sponge, dust cloth, soap, old piece of cloth, etc.}

When the classifier handshape refers to a semantically coherent set of instrumental items, the instrumental lexical sign is optional (23).

(23) IX$_3$ WALL (SPONGE) CL(closed 5): 'clean with a cleaning tool'
       'He is cleaning the wall (with a sponge).'

In the third and last case, the classifier handshape entails a group of instrumental items that do not constitute a semantically coherent set of entities. For example, the curved open 5 handshape combined with a 'hitting' V root may refer to different instrumental items, possibly belonging to different semantic domains (24).

(24) CL(curved 5): 'hit with a small object'
       INST: {smartphone, small toy, ornament, small box, cookie, etc.}

When the classifier handshape refers to a broader and not (always) semantically coherent set of instrumental items, the instrumental lex-

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ical sign is overtly produced, as in (25a). If it has already been mentioned and is salient in the discourse, it may be omitted, as in (25b).

(25) a. IX$_{3a}$ STATUE$_{3b}$ SMARTPHONE $_{3a}$CL(curved 5): 'hit with a small object'$_{3b}$
   b. IX$_{3a}$ STATUE$_{3b}$ $_{3a}$CL(curved 5): 'hit with a small object'$_{3b}$ (*Salient INST*: smartphone)

   'He hit the statue with a smartphone.'

Despite the homogenous syntactic realization, LIS data show that the semantic recoverability of Instruments varies depending on the classifier handshape. Namely, classifier handshapes may entail: i) a single instrumental item, and possibly subtypes of it (thus realizing a shadow Instrument), ii) a restricted and semantically coherent set of entities (thus realizing a default Instrument), or (iii) a set of entities that do not share inherent common properties (thus realizing an open Instrument). According to our informants' judgments, the degree of semantic recoverability of Instruments impacts the production of the instrumental lexical sign. The easier it is to recover, the more likely it is to be omitted.

4.2.2 Comparative Analysis Between Italian and LIS

Turning to the comparative analysis between Italian and LIS, for the sake of clarity, we consider each category (shadow, default, and open Instruments) separately.

As for shadow Instruments, Italian and LIS behave alike in most cases (12/15 shadow verbs): Instruments are maximally recoverable from the verb alone in both languages.[6]

Table 1 LIS counterparts of Italian shadow verbs (SV)

Verb	Italian	LIS	Verb	Italian	LIS
Evidenziare ('to highlight')	SV	SV	*Pettinare* ('to comb')	SV	SV
Incollare ('to glue')	SV	SV	*Insaponare* ('to soap')	SV	SV
Avvelenare ('to poison')	SV	-	*Incoronare* ('to crown')	SV	-
Colorare ('to color')	SV	SV	*Bastonare* ('to club')	SV	DV
Profumare ('to perfume')	SV	SV	*Ammanettare* ('to handcuff')	SV	SV
Salare ('to salt')	SV	SV	*Telefonare* ('to telephone')	SV	SV
Segare ('to saw')	SV	SV	*Pattinare* ('to skate')	SV	SV
Sciacquare ('to rinse')	SV	SV			

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6 For reasons of space, in the tables, we use the following acronyms: SV (Shadow Verbs), DV (Default Verbs), OV (Open Verbs).

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In one particular case, the two languages diverge: the equivalent of *bastonare* 'to club' in LIS seems to be a default verb, as it is compatible with a set of semantically coherent instrumental items (long-shaped tools that can be used to beat someone), e.g., a stick, a club, a bar, a baseball bat, a truncheon, etc.

Two verbs, *avvelenare* 'to poison' and *incoronare* 'to crown', were excluded from the analysis because the LIS counterparts seem to involve a regular object-verb combination (POISON GIVE and CROWN CL(curved open 5): 'move a round object'), rather than a construction including an Instrument.

Interestingly, in a few Italian and LIS verb pairs, the classification is the same (shadow verb), but the incorporated Instrument is different. For example, the Italian verb *sciacquare* 'to rinse' incorporates the substance with which the action is performed (*acqua*, 'water'), while the LIS counterparts, e.g., (26a) and (26b), incorporate the actual tool conveying the substance, which is not necessarily water.

(26) a. CL(closed G): 'rinse with a garden hose'
      b. CL(curved open 5): 'rinse with a faucet'

The same difference between the two languages is attested with *colorare* 'to color', *profumare* 'to perfume', *salare* 'to salt', and *insaponare* 'to soap'. Notably, in some cases LIS shows a finer-grained classification of Instruments. For example, *pattinare* 'to skate' in Italian does not specify the type of skates that are used to perform the action. In LIS, however, signers must specify this information by selecting the corresponding handshape classifier. A flat hand with extended fingers (B handshape) and a downward palm refers to roller skates (27a); the same handshape with the palm in a contralateral position refers to in-line skates (27b). This is an example of how the morphophonological features associated with the classifier may drive the Instrument realization.[7]

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[7] Other cues that may favor Instrument identification in LIS are the V root, mouth gestures, and world knowledge. A comprehensive review of all these elements is out of the scope of this paper.

(27) a. CL(B): 'skate with roller skates'   b. CL(B): 'skate with in-line skates'

Another similar case is *segare* 'to saw', for which LIS differentiates between hand-saw and chainsaw.

As for default Instruments, LIS and Italian diverge more significantly.

Table 2 LIS counterparts of Italian default verbs (DV)

Verb	Italian	LIS	Verb	Italian	LIS
Scrivere ('to write')	DV	SV	***Cucinare*** ('to cook')	DV	DV+SV
Chiamare ('to call')	DV	DV+SV	***Asciugare*** ('to dry')	DV	DV+SV
Ascoltare ('to listen to')	DV	SV	***Bucare*** ('to pierce')	DV	DV+SV
Mangiare ('to eat')	DV	DV+SV	***Cancellare*** ('to erase')	DV	DV+SV
Tagliare ('to cut')	DV	SV	***Saltare*** ('to jump')	DV	SV
Disegnare ('to draw')	DV	SV	***Sparare*** ('to shoot')	DV	SV
Lavare ('to wash')	DV	DV+SV	***Correre*** ('to run')	DV	SV
Pulire ('to clean')	DV	DV+SV			

As shown in Table 2, two main patterns emerge. In some cases, a category mismatch emerges between the two languages (7/15 default verbs): Italian opts for default verbs, while in LIS shadow verbs are obligatorily used. In these cases, signers need to specify the Instrument through a particular classifier handshape. For example, in Italian the default verb *sparare* 'to shoot' entails a restricted set of instrumental items (i.e., firearms), and the type of firearm is not specified in the verb. In LIS, however, a default option is not available: a specific classifier handshape needs to be chosen according to the firearm type (28).

(28) a. CL(U): 'shoot with a rifle'

b. CL(L): 'shoot with a gun'

c. CL(curved open 5): 'shoot with a bazooka'

d. CL(G): 'shoot with a cannon'

In other cases, Instruments in LIS may be expressed through a specific classifier handshape, but a default verb is also available (8/15 default verbs). For example, the verb EAT is a default verb, since it is compatible with all the instrumental items that can be used to eat. LIS signers could also opt for a shadow verb to express the Instrument in an explicit way (e.g., eating with the fork, with the spoon, with the hands, with chopsticks, etc.).

Similarly to default Instruments, open Instruments show several category mismatches between Italian and LIS.

Table 3   LIS counterparts of Italian open verbs (OV)

Verb	Italian	LIS	Verb	Italian	LIS
Prendere ('to take')	OV	OV+SV	*Colpire* ('to hit')	OV	OV+SV
Portare ('to carry')	OV	OV+SV	*Accompagnare*('to accompany')	OV	OV+SV
Seguire ('to follow')	OV	OV+SV	*Uccidere* ('to kill')	OV	OV+SV
Aprire ('to open')	OV	SV	*Rompere* ('to break')	OV	OV+SV
Guardare ('to look at')	OV	SV	*Sporcare* ('to soil')	OV	OV+SV
Lavorare ('to work')	OV	OV+SV	*Venire* ('to come')	OV	OV+SV
Raccogliere ('to collect')	OV	OV+SV	*Salire* ('to go up')	OV	SV
Chiudere ('to close')	OV	SV			

Table 3 shows two main patterns, as already observed with default verbs. On the one hand, a few open verbs in Italian correspond to shadow verbs in LIS (4/15 open verbs). This means that signers are required to choose among different classifier handshapes specifying the instrumental items. For example, the Italian open verb *salire* 'to go up' does not have an equivalent open verb in LIS. Signers must make explicit reference to the instrumental item used to go up (e.g., regular stairs, spiral stairs, escalator, elevator, car, bike, etc.), as in (29).

(29) a. CL(U): 'go up spiral stairs'   b. CL(B): 'go up by a four-wheel vehicle'

For other verbs, LIS offers two options (11/15 open verbs): signers can either use an open verb, as in Italian, or specify the Instrument through a particular classifier handshape (shadow realization). One such case is *venire* 'to come', which can be expressed in LIS by the lexical verb COME (open verb) (30a), or by several forms of incorporated Instruments, e.g., the equivalent of 'come on escalator' (shadow verb) (30b).

(30) a. COME   b. CL(curved open V): 'come on escalator'

4.2.3 Instruments in Cross-modal Translation

The sentence-by-sentence translation task was conceived to investigate possible implications for interpreting. We identified three conditions, with different predictions:

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1. if Instruments belong to the same category in the two languages (category match), translation is not challenging;
2. if Instruments belong to different categories in the two languages, i.e., default or open Instrument in Italian and shadow Instrument in LIS (category mismatch), translation is challenging;
3. if two options are available in LIS, i.e., default/open Instrument and shadow Instrument, the category mismatch is eluded, and the non-shadow realization is preferred.

In (31), we provide an example of the first condition, involving a shadow Instrument in both languages (*telefonare* 'to phone' in Italian/PHONE in LIS).

(31) a. La Rettrice ha **telefonato** alla Ministra.
'The Dean phoned the Minister.'

b. Durante la telefonata, all'improvviso, il **cellulare** della Rettrice si è spento perché era scarico.
'During the call, the Dean's mobile phone suddenly turned off because it ran out of power.'

The Instrument (mobile phone) only appears in the second sentence and falls in the scope of the verbs in the two languages. As expected, in the category match condition, we did not observe either a reaction of surprise or a reanalysis attempt after the disclosure of the Instrument.

In the second condition, the two languages diverge in that Italian does not require a shadow Instrument, while LIS does. The example in (32) includes the default verb *tagliare* 'to cut', which corresponds to several shadow verbs in LIS depending on the instrumental item used to cut.

(32) a. Per favore, prova a **tagliare** questo nastro.
'Please, try to cut this ribbon.'

b. Uffa, con il **coltello** è impossibile tagliarlo. Dobbiamo cercare le forbici.
'Ugh, it's impossible to cut it with a knife. We need to look for scissors.'

The Instrument (knife) is overtly expressed only in the second sentence. It falls in the scope of Italian *tagliare*, but crucially not in the scope of the LIS predicate initially chosen by our informants, meaning 'to cut with scissors'. After the disclosure of the Instrument, both informants had a surprised or puzzled reaction and had to reanalyze the first sentence and provide a different translation, including a clas-

sifier predicate meaning 'to cut with a knife'.[8]

The last condition (two options in LIS) is exemplified below. The Italian open verb *accompagnare* 'to accompany' may be translated into LIS with an open verb (ACCOMPANY) or a number of shadow verbs explicitly expressing the Instrument.

(33) a.   La nonna **ha accompagnato** il nipote a scuola.
'Grandma accompanied her grandson to his school.'

b.   Sono saliti insieme in **autobus** e hanno chiacchierato per tutto il viaggio.
'They got on the bus together and they chatted all the way through.'

Since the first sentence did not provide enough details to infer the Instrument, both informants opted for the open verb. As a consequence, no surprised reactions and no reanalysis attempts were observed after showing the second sentence, in which the Instrument (bus) was overtly expressed.

5   General Discussion

In this study, we showed that both Italian and LIS allow for Instruments to be semantically incorporated into predicates. While there is no agreement on the exact nature of incorporated Instruments in Italian (e.g., nouns, bare roots, etc.) or on the underlying process (e.g., syntactic or morphological operations), incorporated Instruments in LIS are classifiers (e.g., CL(curved 5) in the equivalent of 'to hit with a small object'). Focusing on LIS, classifiers select subsets of potential instrumental items that vary in size. Depending on the number and type of entailed instrumental items, the resulting polymorphemic predicates may correspond to shadow, default, or open verbs. The set of potential instrumental items can be restricted by pragmatic constraints, discourse prominence, or morpho-phonological features associated with the classifier. The results from the semi-guided sentence production task and the following discussion with informants suggest that the more restricted the set of potential instrumental items is, the less likely signers are to overtly produce the instrumental lexical sign.

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[8]   An anonymous reviewer suggests that the sign corresponding to 'cut with scissors' could be seen as evidence that this sign is an entry in the frozen lexicon meaning just 'cut'. If that were the case, a reanalysis and substitution (replacing the sign corresponding to 'cut with scissors' with that corresponding to 'to cut with a knife') would have not been necessary. In this task, however, both informants reported that the predicate included in their first attempt ('cut with scissors') was not correct given the full context, and a substitution was therefore necessary.

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Our analysis showed that the tripartition of Instruments proposed for Italian (§ 3.2) also holds for LIS, even though the classification of predicates is not always straightforward. For instance, there are predicates (e.g., *pattinare* 'to skate') that were classified as shadow verbs in both Italian and LIS, but the two languages show a different degree of specificity: while LIS differentiates the incorporated Instruments according to distinct subtypes of the same instrumental item (e.g., roller skates, in-line skates), Italian does not. To account for gradual nuances and unclear boundaries between categories, we suggest that shadow, default, and open Instruments are to be intended as prototypes to which Instruments may converge to different degrees.

Overall, the comparative analysis between Italian and LIS (§ 4.2) showed that shadow realizations are more frequent in LIS than in Italian. In the LIS data we analyzed, almost all of the items encode a shadow Instrument, and in many cases this is the only available option (23/45). Some recurrent comments from our informants were "There are many possible signs" and "It depends on the tool I am using".

We strongly believe that the preference for shadow Instruments in LIS is not accidental, therefore we propose two possible explanations to account for it. The first is a structural explanation: the two languages have different mechanisms to express Instruments. Although Italian has the possibility to semantically incorporate Instruments, the most frequent strategy used to realize them is prepositional marking (§ 3.1). LIS, on the other hand, is a language that always realizes Instruments through incorporation. The tendency for signers to use shadow-like mechanisms, where Italian opts for default and open Instruments, may be due to the fact that LIS relies on morpho-syntactic devices (such as classifiers) that do not exist in Italian. However, further studies are necessary to fully understand the association between shadow realizations and classifier constructions. The second explanation is linked to iconicity. Differently from spoken languages, sign languages show a dimensional continuity with gestures, actions, and crucially object manipulation (which is strictly connected with the concept of Instrument). Both signs and object manipulation share the same medium, namely the use of hands in space. Also, it is well known from literature that iconicity is an economic source for the creation of signs (a.o., Pietrandrea 2002), so it comes with no surprise that signers frequently select physical features of Instruments and encode them in polymorphemic predicates. According to Cuxac (2000), signers have the choice of telling without showing (*dire sans montrer*, i.e., using lexically stabilized forms, which are comparable to spoken languages' words) or telling by showing (*dire en montrant*, i.e., resorting to highly iconic structures such as classifiers, which are unique to the signed modality). As our data showed, in some cases both options are available. However, in other cases, the deliberate intent of show-

ing prevails, leading signers to produce shadow realizations. Therefore, such a difference may be explained as a modality effect.

Results from the sentence-by-sentence task (§ 4.2.3) demonstrate that the preference for shadow Instruments in LIS poses a major challenge for Italian-to-LIS interpreting. When Instruments are not recoverable from the verb meaning in the source language (Italian) but must be specified within the predicate in the target language (LIS), misinterpretations may occur. In this scenario, Italian-LIS interpreters risk choosing the wrong Instrument. They could consciously accept this risk producing one of the possible shadow Instruments, typically the most plausible one. If they later find out that the wrong choice was made, they may backtrack and provide the correct interpretation. A possible escape hatch consists in increasing the lag time between the source text and the target text (*décalage*) to extract as much information as possible in order to infer the Instrument. The drawback is that interpreters could get too far behind the speaker, possibly compromising the quality of the interpretation. However, interpreting techniques that may be effective are available: reformulations and three-sign lists. For instance, if the source text includes a sentence like "They played a sweet melody", in which the musical instruments are not specified, interpreters may reformulate it replacing the cause with the effect (e.g., "I heard a sweet melody coming from them"). Alternatively, interpreters may cope with Instrument underspecification in Italian by producing a list of three random instrumental items in LIS (e.g., PIANO, VIOLIN, FLUTE) with the purpose to activate a superordinate category, i.e., musical instruments.[9]

In the other interpreting direction, from LIS to Italian, no particular complication is expected, since the source language (LIS) is typically more informative with respect to the Instrument, therefore interpreters are not forced to make a blind choice selecting one instrumental item from a set of possible ones.

6 Conclusions

Our comparative analysis showed that the set of entities that can be encoded in predicates as Instruments may vary in size across different languages and modalities. Overall, LIS differs from Italian in that (almost) all of the tested items can encode shadow Instruments and, in many cases, this is the only available option. We accounted for the preference for shadow-like mechanisms in LIS suggesting it may be due to structural reasons or modality effects.

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[9] An overview of the formational strategies adopted by sign languages to realize hypernyms is provided, e.g., in Zeshan, Sagara 2016.

Through a specifically designed task, we demonstrated that asymmetries in Instrument realization between Italian and LIS pose a major challenge to interpreters, especially when they interpret from Italian to LIS, i.e., from the language with the lowest to the language with the highest degree of Instrument specification. Some of the strategies that interpreters could adopt to overcome category mismatches have been outlined.

Although contrastive linguistics and translation studies developed as distinct disciplines, they have several elements in common and can fruitfully interact (Vandepitte, De Sutter 2013). We believe that this study is an example of how these two fields may interact and fuel each other.

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An Accessibility Hierarchy Pattern for Resumptive Pronouns in Spoken French

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Abstract   On the basis of the results of a corpus study on Colloquial French, which show that the distribution of resumptive pronouns globally matches the Accessibility Hierarchy , we argue that resumptive pronouns in French relative clauses are not intrusive and that resumptive and gapped relatives involve different syntactic derivations belonging to different registers. We explain the lack of the highest subject restriction in Colloquial French, in contrast with (other) languages displaying regular resumptive relatives, by the special nature of French subject clitics as agreement markers. This conclusion and the distribution of subject clitics we found in the corpus reinforces the analysis of the relative complementizer *qui* as a grammaticalized form of *que*+obligatory resumption *il*.

Keywords   Resumptive pronouns. Spoken French. Relative clauses. Accessibility hierarchy. Corpus.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 The study. – 3 Discussion: RCS with RPS Are a Separate Strategy. – 4 Subject Resumptives and the *que-qui* Rule. – 5 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

The use of resumptive pronouns (RPs) in relative clauses is a robust phenomenon that is well attested crosslinguistically. Typologically, languages are standardly divided into two groups: those displaying 'true', i.e. productive RPs, either optional or obligatory in standard relatives (e.g. Hebrew, Modern Standard Arabic, Irish, Vata, etc.), and those displaying 'intrusive' RPs, only marginally surfacing in those relative clauses that involve complex (i.e. long) dependencies or island environments (Sells 1984). While the exact characterization and status of intrusive pronouns has been recently challenged experimentally (Ferreira, Swets 2005; Alexopoulou, Keller 2007; Heestand, Xiang, Polinsky 2011) and in corpus studies (Prince 1990; 1998), it is still part of received knowledge.

Romance languages are typically classified as languages with intrusive pronouns. Interestingly, while the distribution of RPs in islands and other difficult positions has been investigated, both in corpora and in experimental studies (Godard 1989; Sportiche 2018) very little is known about the distribution of resumptive pronouns in regular relatives, beyond the simple anecdotical observation that RPs are deemed ungrammatical in the standard language, but surface in spontaneous production. An example in French is given in (1).

(1) un monsieur que je lui ai vendu ça (Godard 1989, 55)
a man that I CL.DAT have sold this
'A man I sold this to'

The aim of this short paper is to have a look at the distribution of resumptive pronouns in spoken French by performing a corpus study, and to discuss the results at the light of the various analyses that have been proposed for resumptive pronouns, and their predictions, providing a contribution to the debate.

A strict intrusive-type analysis, where resumptive pronouns are analyzed as a last resort rescue strategy for structures that would be ungrammatical with a gap (Chao, Sells 1983; Sells 1984, among others) would predict that there should be no resumptive at all in normal relative clauses in French.

A weaker version of this approach, where resumptive pronouns are seen as a repair strategy for structures that are difficult to process (Shlonsky 1992; Pesetsky 1998; Asudeh 2012), predicts that their distribution follows a pattern which is directly opposite to that of the Accessibility hierarchy in (2) (Keenan, Comrie 1977): the less accessible a syntactic position, hence the more difficult to process, the more likely a speaker will be to resort to the intrusive strategy. We thus expect French RPs to be very rare (if ever present) in subject rela-

tives, a little more frequent in object relatives, and more and more used in positions that are further down the scale in (2).[1]

(2) Accessibility Hierarchy
     Subject > Direct Object > Indirect Object > Oblique > Genitive > Object of comparison

A radical alternative view would be to say that the French resumptive pronouns are 'regular' resumptives, namely simple reference tracking devices (McCloskey 1990; 2017; Heestand, Xiang, Polinsky 2011). Given this view gapped Relative clauses and RP Relative clauses in French would represent two independent relativization strategies, one involving a gap, one involving an anaphoric relation, available as primary strategies in different registers (Bianchi 2004; Sichel 2014). We would then expect both strategies to adhere independently to the Accessibility Hierarchy: so subject relative clauses are expected to be more frequent in both strategies, followed by object relatives of both kinds, and so on and so forth along the scale in (2).

A potential problem for this analysis is that this is not what is observed in languages that display 'regular' resumptive pronouns. These languages typically display what has been called the (highest) subject restriction, namely a ban on subject resumptives, either an absolute one (as in Serbo-Croatian) or only in the higher subject position (Hebrew, Irish). This restriction is illustrated in (3-4) and (5-6), for Serbo-Croatian and Hebrew, respectively.

(3) **Serbo-Croatian simple subject relative**
     čovjek [$_{RC}$ što je   (*on) sreo Petra] (Boškovic 2009, 82)
     Man C$_{REL}$ PRES.3SG he.NOM met Petar.ACC
     'the man that he met Petar'

(4) **Serbo-Croatian embedded subject relative**
     čovjek [$_{RC}$ što tvrdis [$_{RC}$ da je (??on)   sreo Petra]
     man C$_{REL}$ claim.2SG C PRES.3SG he.NOM met Petar.ACC
     'the man that you claim that (he) met Petar'

---

1 Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy is an implicational scale elaborated on the basis of approximately 50 languages on accessibility of their primary relativization strategy according to the grammatical function of the RC head. It captures the fact that while all 50 languages allow relativization over a subject, fewer languages display object relative clauses, and fewer and fewer languages allow relativization of further positions along the scale. Each step of the hierarchy implies the preceding steps, so that a relativization strategy available for a given step of the scale is necessarily available for all preceding steps. Keenan and Comrie make the hypothesis that this typological implication correlates with processing complexity, hence turning the Accessibility Hierarchy into a "predictor of psychological complexity" (61). Their hypothesis was first supported by Hawkins and Keenan (1974; 1987) study on language acquisition, and then confirmed again and again through an impressive number of studies (see Lau, Tanaka 2021 for a review).

(5) **Hebrew simple subject relatives**
     hine ha-iš   še (***hu**) nafal la-bor. (Shlonsky 1992)
     here the-man that he fell.3 MS into-the-pit
     'Here is the man that fell into the pit.'

(6) **Hebrew embedded subject clauses**
     hine ha-iš še xašavta   še (**hu**) nafal la-bor.
     here the-man that thought.2 MS that he fell.3MS into-the-pit
     'Here is the man that you thought that (he) fell into the pit.'

There are many possible interpretations of the Highest subject restriction (Cf. Erlewine 2020; Shlonsky 1992), which we will not discuss here given the scope of this paper (but see below, section 3). Be as it may, these data suggest that there are specific constraints associated with the distribution of 'normal' resumptive pronouns, that might interfere with the predictions of the Accesibility Hierarchy.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the study, discussing the Corpus that has been used, the search that has been performed, and some caveats on the absolute figures that were found. Section 3 presents the results of the study, and the relative distribution of RPs in relative clauses of various kind. Section 4 discusses the results. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2   The study

2.1   The Corpus

The corpus we studied is made of two Spoken corpora stemming from the project *Enquêtes sociolinguistiques à Orléans* collected in the city of Orleans, respectively between 1968 and 1971 (ESLO 1), and since 2008 (ESLO 2). Among the many diverse materials that are collected in the corpora, we selected the Interviews modules. We made this choice because interviews are both the largest section of the corpus (182.5 hours in ESLO1, 150 hours in ESLO 2), and are also likely to reflect spontaneous usage being face-to face-interactions. The fact that they involve systematically a researcher and an interviewee, in a clearly unbalanced situation in terms of status, prestige and empowerment, makes them also less than ideal. As we shall see, this might explain the relatively small number of relative clauses containing a resumptive that we found.

2.2 What We Counted: Few Resumptive Relative Clauses

We counted resumptive relative clauses introduced by *que* or *qu'* (a variant of *que* when it is followed by a word starting with a vowel) that do not contain any island nor any embedding. For every resumptive that we encountered in the corpus, we coded its grammatical function: subject, object, indirect object, oblique-ARG (including all positions where a preposition would be required), oblique-ADJ, genitive.[2] An example of each kind is given below.

The head of the relative clause and the resumptive pronoun are signaled in bold.

(7) Subject
   il y a le **voisin qu'il** habite au-dessus là (ESLO1_ENT_014C)
   there is the neighbor that he lives upstairs there
   'There is a neighbor who lives upstairs over there'

(8) Direct Object
   elle a **quelques collégiens** qu'elle **les** fait travailler (ESLO2_ENT_1045C)
   she has some students that she CL.ACC make work
   'She has some students who she supervises'

(9) Indirect object
   une **personne amie** que je veux **lui** offrir quelque chose (ESLO1_ENT_067C)
   a person friend that I want CL.DAT offer something
   'A friendly person I wanted to offer something to'

(10) Oblique-ARG
   une **réforme** de l'orthographe qu'on **en** a parlé y a un moment (ESLO1_ ENT_030_C)
   a reform of the ortography that we CL.IO talked it some time ago
   'A reform of the writing system that we talked about some time ago'

(11) Oblique-ADJ
   a. le premier **cœur de ville** qu'on **y** marche à pied (ESLO2_ENT_1084C)
      the first heart of town that we CL.LOC walk at foot
      'The first city center where you can walk'

---

2 This coding does not match entirely the categories included in the traditional Accessibility hierarchy in (2), but gives a more fine-grained classification of grammatical positions. In particular, while oblique is only defined as oblique "arguments of the main predicate" (Keenan, Comrie 1977, 66), we find in our corpus both obliques of the former kind (which we label Oblique-ARG) and obliques that are not selected by the predicate, as in the example (11) in the text. What we label Oblique-ADJ thus stands for resumptives with an oblique function not selected by the verb, such as locatives and other adjuncts.

    b.   les **lettres** que c'est toujours mes formules **là-dessus** (ESLO1_ENT_142_C)
the letters that it is always my expressions over there
'The letters containing my expressions'

(12) Genitive
y a **des enfants** que **leur** intelligence se développe plus tôt (ESLO1_ENT_023C)
there are some children that their intelligence it develops more early
'Some children have an earlier developing intelligence'

Overall, we counted 85 resumptive relative clauses of this kind in ESLO 1 and 36 in ESLO 2. These figures, and those concerning the total number of relative clauses introduced by *que* and *qu'*[3] are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1   Numbers of resumptive and total relative clauses introduced by que/qu'
in the corpus

Type of RC	ESLO 1	ESLO 2
Resumptive RCs	85	36
total RCs	1713	1132

A first apparent result displayed in Table 1 is that resumptive RCs represent a very tiny minority of the RCs attested in the corpus. These very small proportions of resumptive RCs could at first sight confirm the predictions of an intrusive analysis, as they appear to suggest that resumptive pronouns are at best very marginal in French in simple contexts. But we believe this conclusion is not granted and that this small proportion calls for another explanation. Remember that these data come from formal interviews between a researcher and the interviewee, that present a clearly unbalanced situation with respect to prestige, status and empowerment. This setting might play a role in artificially reducing the production of resumptives, which are strongly and explicitly stigmatized in France as not part of what we might call Standard French.

    Standard French is used here to mean the register of European French that is generally taught in school, employed in writing, and used in formal speech situations. As such, it is generally characterized as "good usage" (e.g., by Zribi-Hertz 1994). On the other hand, the register of French that is typically used in more familiar speech situations have received many names in the literature: "non-standard

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3 We excluded from the count so-called prepositionless indirect object relative clauses, such as *La fille que je te parle* (The girl that I talk), which involve both a gap and a missing preposition. We only included in the count regular gapped relatives and relatives with a matching resumptive.

French" (e.g. Lambrecht 1988), "conversational European French" (e.g. Waugh, Fonseca-Greber 2002), "colloquial French" (e.g. Roberge 1986; Auger 1994), "advanced French" (e.g., Zribi-Hertz 1994), "spoken French" (e.g. De Cat 2007; or *français parlé*, e.g. Blanche-Benveniste 1997), "vernacular French" (Larrivée, Skrovec 2019). A number of well-described features characterize the relevant register: the use of *ça* 'that' instead of Standard French *cela* 'that' and, *on* 'we' instead of Standard French *nous* 'we', higher deletion rates of the expletive pronoun *il* 'it' and the negative particle *ne* etc. It is rather clear that the examples listed above all belong to this register, that we shall call Colloquial French.

Numerous studies (De Cat 2007; Culbertson 2010, among others) have shown that most individual speakers have access to both registers and maintain grammars encoding both the Standard French and Colloquial French registers of their language, either of which may be drawn upon to produce (or comprehend) an utterance. The claim that speakers maintain more than a single grammar has been independently proposed many times to account for variation within and across populations of speakers (Croft 2000; Yang 2002; Zribi-Hertz 2006). If this is true, then it is possible to interpret the low rates of resumptive relatives in our small corpus as the byproduct of the formal setting, that led most speakers to unconsciously shift into Standard French. If this interpretation is on the right track, we can take the data we obtain concerning resumptive pronouns in RCs for what they are, a very small corpus of spontaneous data in Colloquial French, without drawing further conclusions concerning their status with respect to the standard form. What we shall do instead, is rather focus on the relative distribution of resumptive pronouns within that small corpus. While the small quantity of data does not allow to perform any statistical analysis on these results, we can draw some descriptive considerations that appear to point towards some clear directions.[4]

2.3 What We Found: Relative Distribution of Resumptives in the Various Positions

Tables 2 and 3 report the distribution of resumptive pronouns in the various positions that were coded: subject, object, indirect object, argumental oblique, adjoined oblique, genitive.[5]

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[4] We also looked at Multicultural Parisian French corpus (Gadet, Guerin 2016). Because of its smaller volume and its higher level of colloquiality, relative clauses are overall very rare and this very small scale did not allow for any interesting counting.

[5] Light headed relative clauses are not taken into account.

Table 2 Grammatical function of RPs in normal RCs in ESLO 1

Grammatical function	ESLO 1			
	Resumptive RCs	Percentage of total resumptive	Gapped RCs	Ratio RP/gapped
Subject	49	57.6	4693	1.04%
Direct object	21	24.7	1628	1.29%
Indirect object	6	7		
Oblique-ARG	4	4,7		
Oblique-ADJ	3	3.5		
Genitive	2	2.3		
Total	85	app. 100		

Table 3 Grammatical function of RPs in normal RCs in ESLO 2

Grammatical function	ESLO 2			
	Resumptive RCs	Percentage of total resumptive	Gapped RCs	Ratio RP/gapped
Subject	16	44.4	3409	0.47%
Direct object	11	30.5	1096	1.00%
Indirect object	1	2.7		
Oblique-ARG	5	13,8		
Oblique-ADJ	1	2,7		
Genitive	2	5.5		
Total	36	app. 100		

There are some differences between ESLO 1 and ESLO 2 concerning both absolute figures and relative distributions, that might be due to a number of independent and extralinguistic factors: they might be due to different coding strategies[6] or to differences concerning the format of the interview; the social status of participants (participants in ESLO2 are on average more elderly and more educated than those in ESLO1; in ESLO1, there are more participants who are workers, small traders or artisans) or that of interviewers (the team behind ESLO 1 was British while that responsible for ESLO 2 is locally based). Sticking to similarities, though, some clear asymmetries appear to emerge.

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6 Two different research groups collected and transcribed the interviews. Since in speech *qu'il* and *qui* are in many cases homophonous (/ki/), it is possible that some variation between the two is due to different decisions concerning this particular transcription. We cannot exclude on the other hand that some diachronic change might be also in place.

Subject resumptives are by far the most frequent: they account for, respectively, over 50 per cent and over 40 per cent of the total resumptive pronouns we found in relative clauses. (Direct) object resumptives follow (respectively, 25 per cent and 30 per cent), and then indirect objects and other PP arguments, followed by adjunct and genitive positions. Notice that this asymmetric distribution cannot be simply explained as the effect of the prevalence of subject relatives over other relatives, in general. If we analyze the ratio of resumptive pronouns with respect to gaps for the same grammatical function, we see that while these ratios are generally very low (see above), they are also relatively stable across grammatical functions, at least if we compare subject and object relatives. This means that the majority of subject RPs in our mini-corpus appears to go beyond a simple by-product of the fact that subject relative clauses are more frequent in general.

3 Discussion: RCS with RPS Are a Separate Strategy

The data presented in the preceding section, though very reduced in scope, are clear: resumptive pronouns in the French relative clauses we observed are not intrusive, neither in the strong nor in the weak sense: they can appear in simple relative clauses outside of islands and other complex embeddings that might be difficult to process. They do not pattern in their distribution as predicted by an analysis in terms of last resort, since they are more available and more frequent in accessible positions (including the subject) than in less accessible positions. In other words, they appear to follow the Accessibility Hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977) as a universal implicational scale for the relativizability of different grammatical functions. This suggests that resumptive pronouns in French relative clauses are not parasitic to gaps, but represent an alternative and separate strategy for relativization, that obeys as such unsurprisingly this universal scale. The next question is what strategy this is.

As suggested by some (Bianchi 2004; Sichel 2014), a possibility is to assume that gapped and RPs relative clauses correspond to two different derivations for externally headed relative clauses: raising and matching. In gapped relative clauses, the head raises from its RC-internal position to its edge, nominalizing the clause (Bianchi 1999; Donati, Cecchetto 2011; Cecchetto, Donati 2015), leaving a gap. In RP RCs, there is no raising of the head, which is externally merged, and the resumptive pronoun marks the obligatory anaphoric relation (matching) between the external nominal head and a position internal to the RC. These two analyses are sketched in (13) and (14) for an

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object relative clause corresponding to 'some students that she forces to work' without (13) and with (14) a resumptive.[7]

(13) N-Raising (Donati, Cecchetto 2011; Cecchetto, Donati 2015)

```
                    DP
                 ┌──┴──┐
                 D     NP
              quelques ┌──┴──┐
                       N      CP
                    collégiens ┌──┴──┐
                               C      TP
                              que      ┌──┴──┐
                                 elle fait travailler [_DP D collégiens]
```

(14) Matching

```
                    DP
                 ┌──┴──┐
                 D     NP
              quelques ┌──┴──┐
                       N_i    CP
                    collégiens ┌──┴──┐
                               C      TP
                              qu'      ┌──┴──┐
                                 elle les_i fait travailler
```
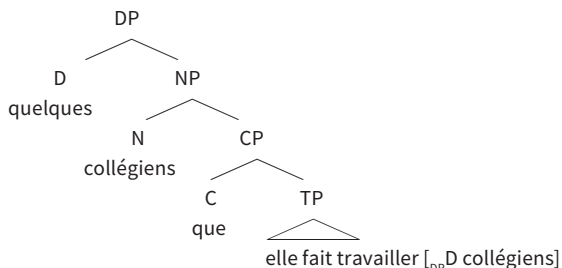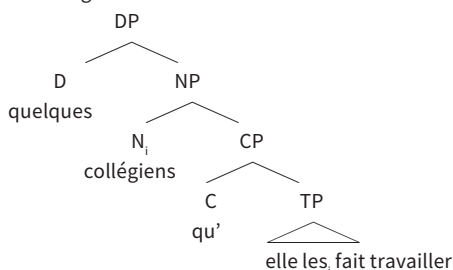
Erlewine (2020), following Demirdache (1997), goes further and assumes that the RP in relatives like (14) moves at LF into the edge of the clause, and explains the highest subject constraint observed in many languages involving regular resumptive RCs in these terms: the RP in subject position cannot move at LF for the same reason movement is generally excluded from the higher subject position in non-null subject languages. This is why RPs are banned from the (highest) subject position.

This part of the analysis cannot be extended to French given our data: as we saw, there is no ban on subject resumptives in French. There are two ways to go. Either Erlewine is wrong, and the ban on subject resumptives in many languages is not due to movement at LF of the RP but to some independent reason. Or French subject resumptives are special, and crucially different from subject RPs in these other languages, which explains why they are not restricted in their

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[7] In (14) there is of course a gap at the complement position of *travailler*, corresponding to the cliticized pronoun *les*. But unlike in (13), the head noun *collégiens* in (14) does not undergo raising from within the relative clause and has no trace in CP. This is what we mean when we describe (14) as gapless.

distribution as other subject RPs are. In the next section, we shall briefly argue in favor of the latter alternative.

4 Subject Resumptives and the *que-qui* Rule

It is a fact that subject doubling, where a nominal subject and a coreferential subject clitic co-occur (Marie$_i$ elle$_i$ mange 'Mary$_i$ she$_i$ eats'), is a common feature of Colloquial French well beyond relative clauses. Two families of analyses have been proposed to account for the structure. Researchers like Kayne (1991), Rizzi (1986), De Cat (2005) among others analyze it as a case of dislocation, where the NP subject is dislocated into a topic position in the left periphery, while the subject clitic is a syntactically argument-bearing pronoun merged in SpecTP phonologically cliticized to the verb. Other researchers, in particular Roberge (1986), Auger (1994), and more recently Culbertson (2010), Palasis (2015), Liang, Burnett, Donati (2023), argue that the subject clitic is an agreement marker base-generated in T. Evidence for this analysis includes: 1) in many corpus studies of spoken French, subject doubling is nearly categorical (over 70%), as is the absence of *ne* in negative sentences (*ne* is attested in under 5% of sentences); 2) regardless of whether it is followed by a subject clitic, no phonological or prosodic features single out the subject DP as being dislocated; and 3) the subject clitic is acceptable when the sentence is in broad-focus contexts, showing that DP subject is not necessarily interpreted as a topic (Culbertson 2010).

If this second type of analysis is on the right track, and subject resumptives in colloquial French are agreement markers rather than pronouns, subject 'resumptives' in relative clauses are not expected to ever move, nor even at LF. This might thus explain why subject resumptives do not obey the (highest) subject restriction in French. Colloquial French would thus be a type of null subject language similar to those Italo-Romance dialects that display obligatory agreement markers in the form of proclitics (Brandi, Cordin [1981] 1989; Rizzi 1986; Poletto 2000; Roberts 2014; Manzini, Savoia 2005; see also Cardinaletti, Repetti 2008 for an opposite view and Pescarini 2022 for a recent critical overview).

The data discussed in this paper showing that subject resumptives are way more frequent than any other resumptive pronoun in French relative clauses might also shed light on an old puzzle concerning French, namely the obligatory substitution of *que* with *qui* with subject gaps, the so-called *que-qui* rule, illustrated in (15).

(15) a.   J'ai acheté la chaise *que/qui était conseillée dans le catalogue.
            I-have bought the chair.FEM that was recommended.FEM in the catalogue
    b.   Quelle chaise. FEM crois-tu *que/qui était conseillée.FEM dans le catalogue?

Which chair think-you that was recommended in the catalogue?

The exact analysis to be given to this phenomenon has been and still is subject to a wide debate. Some (stemming from Kayne 1976) connect the impossibility of having *que* followed by a gap to the ban on having 'that' followed by a gap in English (the so-called 'that-trace' phenomenon), and give the two phenomena a unified treatment. For example, Erlewine reduces both to an anti-locality effect, prohibiting movement from a Spec (Spec, TP) to the closest c-commanding specifier, (Spec, CP). The two languages escape the constraint either deleting the complementizer ('that'), or by using a higher complementizer (*qui*) (see also Pesetsky 2016 for a similar proposal).

No matter the details of the analysis, there is one fact which is clearly at odds with this unification treatment, namely the fact that the 'that-trace' phenomenon does not hold in local relative clauses in English (16a, in contrast with questions, 16b) while the '*que*-trace' phenomenon does in French (see 15a and 15b).

(16) a. I bought the chair that/*ø was recommended in the catalogue.
      b. Which chair do you think *that/ ø was recommended in the catalogue?

Other influential analyses have suggested that *qui* is a contracted form *que+il* = *qui*, by reasonable epenthesis rules (Cf. Rooryck 2000; Taraldsen 2001; Rizzi, Shlonsky 2007). Interestingly, this analysis corresponds to a grammaticalized version of the non-grammaticalized data that we observe in our corpus. In both cases, the complementizer *que* is followed by a subject clitic. Our data, where we observe the systematic use of the subject resumptive, can be seen as a new indirect piece of evidence in favor of this family of analyses. Another interesting piece of evidence that goes in the same direction is the widespread insecurity that French speakers exhibit when it comes to writing the sound /*ki*/, not knowing in many cases whether it ought to be written *qui* or *qu'il*. Witness the many blogs, journal articles and normative recommendations on this issue.[8]

As for the anti-agreement effect that is entailed by this analysis of *qui* as *qu+il* (as in the example 15a, where there is a mismatch between the head noun, which is feminine, and the epenthetic subject clitic, which is *il*, the default), notice that similar effects are displayed in other Romance languages displaying clitic agreement markers. An example in Florentine is given in (17) (from Brandi, Cordin 1989).

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[8] A quick google search we launched while writing this paper returned are 125.000 hits for question "*qui* ou *qu'il*". This is insecurity might be due to various factors, cf. *Le bon usage* (2016, 1002-3). We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this reference to us.

(17) le ragazze [che {*le hanno/ gli ha parlato} ieri alla riunione]
The girls-FEM.PL that CL.FEM.PL have/CL.MASC.SING have spoken yesterday at the meeting

In (17), just like in (15a), the subject clitic is a default form that does not agree with the head noun. Going back to our corpus data, the vast majority of the subject resumptives attested do indeed correspond to *il* or *ils*, and are hence fully compatible with them being a non-epenthetic variant of invariable *qui*.[9] These relative clauses introduced by *qu'il*, as well as those introduced by the grammaticalized *qui*, can be derived as regular raising relative clauses (as 13), with the subject argument directly extracted from a postverbal position (as in Rizzi, Shlonsly 2007's criterial derivation). It is a well-known fact about French that postverbal subjects, whether in situ or moved, display anti-agreement effects and require the clitic *il*. The classical data are reproduced in (18) and (19).

(18) a.   Trois filles sont arrivées
           three girls are arrived.FEM.PL
      b.   Il est arrivé trois filles
           it is arrived three girls

(19) a.   *Combien de filles crois-tu que sont arrivées?
           how many of girls think.2SING-you that are arrived FEM.PL
      b.   Combien de filles crois-tu qu'il est arrivé?
           how many of girls think.2SING-you that it is arrived

As for those few cases in our corpus where the clitic does indeed carry unambiguous agreement features (as in the example 20 below), we are back to the matching derivation (14): no raising is involved and the clitic feature in T (*elle*) provides directly the anaphoric binding that yields the matching interpretation.

(20) Moi j'ai une fille qu'elle est dans le métier de charcutier (ESLO1_ENT_043_C)
      me I-have a girl that she is in the profession of butcher

If this is true, there would thus be two kinds of subject relatives in French: those involving anti-agreeing *il* (whether epenthetic or

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9   While the majority of the subject RPs are introduced by *qu'il/ils* in ESLO, it is also true that their head is mostly masculine and singular. Hence this distribution is only *compatible* with a non-epenthetic invariant *qui*, but does not provide 'positive' evidence for it. There is only one case of 'anti-agreement' in ESLO 2, where the head noun is a feminine noun *personne*:
(i) la personne […] qu'il est là en France
the person.FEM that he is here in France.

not), derived through raising of the relative head from a postverbal position; those involving an agreeing clitic, directly matching with an externally merged head and involving no raising at all. It would be interesting to investigate whether these differences concerning agreement of the subject marker correlate with differences in reconstruction facts, as predicted if reconstruction only correlates with raising (Cf. Sportiche 2006).

5 Conclusion

This paper provides a new piece of evidence against traditional rescue/repair analyses for 'intrusive' resumptive pronouns in Romance relative clauses. Our data from a colloquial French corpus show that resumptive pronouns, though marginally, indeed exist in simple relative clauses and their distribution follows the Accessibility Hierarchy. These results led us to suggest that gapped relatives and resumptive relatives are two independent relativization strategies in French: the former is derived by raising, the latter by matching.

Given the fact that unlike 'true' RPs, RPs in French do not obey the Higher Subject restriction, we argue that subject RPs, which are the most frequent in the corpus, are not pronouns, but agreement markers. Going back to the famous *que-qui* rule associated with subject extraction, we argue that subject relatives introduced by the invariant form *qu'il* represent a non-grammaticalized variant of those introduced by the epenthetic form *qui*, both corresponding to a derivation where the subject raises from a postverbal position.

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A Quantificational-Determiner Analysis of EST in Relative Superlatives

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Abstract   The goal of this paper is to reconcile the definite marking with the indefinite-like semantics of those superlatives that take a relative/comparative reading. Following Szabolcsi's and Heim's works, we will assume that the difference between absolute and relative readings of superlatives is represented at the syntactic level of semantic representation, LF (Logical Form). We will however depart from Heim's hypothesis that what raises at LF is the superlative operator itself (EST). We will instead assume a quantificational-determiner analysis of EST, which involves two raising operations at LF: EST-raising to Spec, DP and raising of the whole superlative DP (Determiner Phrase) to a scope position in the sentence. We will examine the relative readings of quality superlatives. The generalizations and the proposed analysis are not assumed to extend to quantity superlatives.

Keywords   Superlatives. Definiteness. Parasitic scope. Degree words. Comparison classe.

Summary   1 Relative Superlatives Have Indefinite-like Semantics. – 1.1 Testing (in)definiteness. – 1.2 Testing (in)determinacy. – 2 Previous Proposals. – 2.1 The LF-raising analysis . – 2.2 Accounting for the in the Raising Analysis: Krasikova (2012). – 2.3 Splitting Definiteness . – 2.4 What We Want to Preserve: LF Raising and Indeterminate Definiteness. – 3 Proposal . – 3.1 Parasitic Scope. – 3.2 Est Raises DP-internally and DP_{sup} Raises to a Parasitic-scope Position. – 3.3 EST as a Quantificational Determiner: The Semantic Composition. – 3.4 Vacuousness of THE and the issue of definiteness. – 3.5 Explaining the Syntactic Constraints on Relative Superlatives. – 3.6 No Need of Covert Comparison Classes. – 4 Note on the Upstairs De Dicto Reading. – 5 Conclusions.

1 Relative Superlatives Have Indefinite-like Semantics

Superlative DPs are ambiguous between an absolute and a relative reading.[1] The relative reading is facilitated by focal stress on *John*:

(1) John read the longest book.
    a. J read a book that was longer than any other out of a contextually given set of books.
    b. There was a book read by J that was longer than any other book that was read.

In this section we first present Szabolcsi's (1986) evidence in favor of the indefinite nature of relative superlatives and then we review Coppock and Beaver's (2014) arguments that the data point to indeterminate reference rather than to indefiniteness. These authors, as well as most of the other theorists of relative superlatives assume a uniform analysis of quality and quantity superlatives. We believe instead that these two types of superlatives should be kept distinct (see Dobrovie-Sorin 2021). The present paper is concerned only with quality superlatives. Unless explicitly mentioned, the descriptive generalizations as well as our proposal do not extend to quantity superlatives.

1.1 Testing (in)definiteness

Szabolcsi (1986) observed that relative superlatives pattern with indefinites with respect to several tests claimed to distinguish between definite and indefinite noun phrases.

Thus, whereas wh-extraction out of definite DPs is blocked in the general case, it is allowed out of superlative DPs:

(2) a. *Who did you take the picture of?
    b. Who did you take the best picture of?

There-sentences are another configuration in which indefinites are allowed, in contrast to definites. And again, superlatives behave on a par with indefinites:

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1 This reading is referred to as 'comparative' in Szabolcsi (1986), Heim (1999), Krasikova (2012), a.o. We use the term 'relative', which first appeared in the last part of Heim's (1999) seminal paper and is predominant in recent work (see, among others, Pancheva, Tomaszewicz 2012; Coppock, Beaver 2014; Bumford, Sharvit 2022). We avoid the term 'comparative' because all superlatives involve comparison and, moreover, this term could inappropriately be understood as referring to those superlatives that are morphosyntactically built on comparatives (Romance languages, Arabic, Celtic, among others).

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(3)   a. There were the fewest guests YESTERDAY.
       b. ??There were the guests yesterday.
       c. There was the largest box of chocolate on the table YESTERDAY.
       'There was a larger box of chocolate on the table yesterday than on any other day'.
       d. When was there the largest box of chocolate on the table?
       e. ??Yesterday there was the box of chocolate on the table.

Another indefiniteness context is the object position of I-level *have*, especially when it takes relational nouns:

(4)   a. Who has the smartest sister?
       b. *Who has the sister?
       c. Who has a sister?

1.2   Testing (in)determinacy

The aim of this section is to show that relative superlative DPs may benefit from an analysis in terms of indeterminacy of reference instead of indefiniteness.

   Coppock and Beaver (2014) propose an analysis of relative superlatives set against the background of their theory of definiteness, according to which definite DPs necessarily presuppose uniqueness but allow for either 'determinate' or 'indeterminate' reference:

(5)   a. Definite DPs presuppose uniqueness.
       b. Indeterminate reference: the DP does not presuppose existence, but denotes an existential generalized quantifier (type <e,et>) (as opposed to DPs with determinate reference, which introduce the iota operator) (179).
       c. Relative superlatives are definite (presuppose uniqueness) but indeterminate DPs.

Given this proposal, Szabolcsi's (1986) evidence is not evidence in favor of indefiniteness but rather evidence in favor of indeterminacy. Supporting evidence comes from Le Bruyn, de Swart, Zwarts (2013), who observed that relational *have* can co-occur with definite DPs built with *only*:

(6)   Mary has the only lazy sister.

Coppock and Beaver (2014) further observe that I-level *have* is compatible with other definite DPs:

(7)   a. Mary has the wrong boyfriend.
       b. Mary has the nicer car. (OK I-level – *have*)

b´. Mary has the car. (only S-level – 'use the car')

Coppock and Beaver also point out that relative superlatives in opaque contexts (e.g. in the scope of a modal) do not provide good antecedents for anaphoric pronouns (see (8)a) nor for appositive relatives (see (9)a), in contrast to absolute superlatives and other definite DPs (in the following examples, *out of*-phrases force a relative reading):

(8) a. #Perhaps Gloria climbed the highest mountain out of all of her friends. The-prize is a picture of it.
    b. Perhaps Sue climbed the highest/snow-capped mountains. I took a picture of them.

(9) a. #You win if **out of all the players**, you lift the heaviest weight, which is this one.
    b. You win if you lift the heaviest weight, which is this one.

The fact that relative superlatives in the scope of a modal do not introduce a particular referent is also shown in the following contrast involving VP-anaphoric *so*:

(10) a. Sue wanted to see the most famous marble statue **out of all of her friends**, and so did John. #Therefore Sue and John wanted to see the same statues.
    b. Sue wanted to see the most famous marble statue **in the city**, and so did John. Therefore Sue and John wanted to see the same statues.

In sum, Coppock and Beaver's main point is that Szabolcsi's evidence does not plead in favor of indefiniteness but rather in favor of a particular type of definite, an indeterminate definite.

2   Previous Proposals

2.1   The LF-raising analysis

According to Szabolcsi (1986),

(11) Relative superlative DPs
    a. are base-generated as indefinite DPs and
    b. can only be interpreted if EST takes scope over an open proposition.

The open proposition is obtained by raising another element (let's call it 'correlate', following Farkas, Kiss 2000), which is either focused or wh-moved. The open proposition resulting from LF-raising of the correlate specifies the relation (called 'frame of comparison' by

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Szabolcsi) between the compared entity and the correlate. Comparative readings thus vary depending on the focused/wh-moved element:

(12) a. Who$_i$ [e$_i$ gave the longest book to John]?
     b. To whom$_i$ did [Mary give the longest book e$_i$]?

In (12)a, the superlative needs to pick up the longest out of the books that various people gave to John, whereas in (12)b we need to consider the books that Mary gave to various people. In order to take scope over the open proposition, the superlative itself must raise at LF.

Going back to the assumption in (11)a, it is on the one hand needed in order to account for the grammaticality of examples such as (2) b (*wh*-movement is normally blocked out of definite DPs) and on the other hand motivated by the indefinite-like behavior of relative superlatives (see Section 1).

Szabolcsi's proposal is summarized in (13), corresponding to her (40):

(13) The derivation of the comparative reading involves LF-movement: the whole superlative NP, or the *the -est* part of it, is adjoined to INFL.

Szabolcsi does not formally implement the semantic part of her analysis, and she does not choose between the two possibilities that she envisages for the raised element. Nor does she justify adjunction to Infl (as opposed to S or VP). In this paper we will argue in favor of the LF-raising of the whole superlative DP, which has been largely ignored in the following literature.

Szabolcsi's scopal/raising analysis (the two labels are interchangeably used in the literature) has been implemented by Heim (1999) in her three-argument analysis:

(14) (Out of all of my friends), I offered **John** the most expensive book
     John$_1$ [[C-**EST$_2$**] [2 [1 [$_{IP}$I gave t$_1$ **A t$_2$-expensive book**]]]]
     'There is a d such that I gave John a d-expensive book and for all other y in C (where C is a contextual set comprising Mary), I did not give y a d-expensive book'
     [-EST] = $\lambda C_{<e,t>}.\lambda R_{<d,et>}\lambda x.\exists d[R(d)(x)\land\forall y[(y\in C\land y\neq x) \rightarrow \neg R(d)(y)]]$
     defined iff (i) $x\in C$ and (ii) $\forall y$ (y$\in$C $\rightarrow \exists d$ R(d)(y))

This LF differs from Szabolcsi's proposal in that (a) it is EST itself (rather than *the- est* or the overall DP) that raises at LF; (b) the definite article translates as an indefinite (see the A (for *a/an*) that precedes *d-expensive*); (c) EST takes a comparison class (C) as its first argument.

In the same paper Heim proposes a variant of the raising analysis in which EST raises above the correlate, adjoining to a <t>-type constituent, and C is a set of degree properties (an open degree

description) established via association with focus; this is a two-argument analysis (lacking the entity argument):

(15) (Out of all of my friends), I offered **John** the most expensive book
[C-EST$_1$] [1 [I gave [John]$_F$ **A t$_1$-expensive book**] ~C]
'There is a d such that I offered John a d-expensive book and for all degree properties D´ from a contextual set of the type 'I offered x a d-expensive book' such that D´ is distinct from 'I offered John a d-expensive book', d is not in D´ '
[-EST] = $\lambda C_{<d,dt>}.\lambda P_{<dt>}.\exists d[P(d) \wedge \forall Q[(Q \in C \wedge Q \neq P) \rightarrow \neg Q(d)]]$
defined iff (i) P∈C and (ii) $\exists Q \in C: Q \neq P$

Both proposals are problematic insofar as they substitute one of the elements of the initial 'numeration' (i.e., the elements to which Merge applies in minimalist theories), namely the definite article with another one, the indefinite article. Importantly, the use of the definite article is not a quirk of English but it is crosslinguistically overwhelmingly used in languages with definite articles. Given this crosslinguistic generalization, the most promising line of inquiry is one that would treat relative superlative DPs not as indefinites, but rather as indeterminate definites, as proposed by Coppock, Beaver 2014 (see § 1.2 and § 2.4). The challenge is, of course, to explain why and how that happens.

2.2 Accounting for THE in the Raising Analysis: Krasikova (2012)

Within the raising analysis, an attempt of solving the problem of *the*, envisaged by Szabolcsi (1986), was to consider it a part of the superlative (*the…-est*), rather than as a D. This proposal is formally implemented by Krasikova (2012), who adopts a variant of Heim's two-argument raising analysis (see (15)) for relative superlatives and proposes that THE is DegP-internal – see (16), corresponding to Krasikova's (19):

(16) [$_{NP}$ [$_{AP}$ [$_{DegP}$ the max C] highest] mountain]

According to this analysis, *max* roughly corresponds to EST in (15), characterizing the degree property P denoted by the clausal sister as the maximal element in the comparison set C, and *the* performs a uniqueness test on this property. The indefinite interpretation is explained as being due to the fact that D° is empty.

Krasikova's proposal makes wrong empirical predictions. For instance, in a language with postnominal superlatives we would expect to find *the* in D for the absolute reading and no *the* in D, but only a *the* before the adjective for the relative reading, but no language of

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this type has been documented. On the contrary, postnominal super-latives with relative readings still occur with a definite article be-fore the N, see e.g. Romance languages (Croitor, Giurgea 2016; Loc-cioni 2018):

(17) Chi ha scalato [**la** montagna [più alta]] / *(*una) montagna la più alta ? (It.)
       who has climbed the mountain highest   a mountain the highest
       'Who climbed the highest mountain?'

Interestingly, we do find languages in which THE can be shown to be DegP-internal but nevertheless must co-occur with [$_{D°}$THE] (Croitor, Giurgea 2016; Loccioni 2018; Dobrovie-Sorin 2021). French (as well as Romanian, not exemplified here) is a case in point, see (18). Note that THE preceding the comparative functions as a dedicated super-lative marker, which can have both relative and absolute readings:

(18) Qui a lu   [**le** livre [**le** plus long]]? (Fr.)   ✓ relative, ✓ absolute
       who has read the book the more long
       'Who read the longest book?'

Current work in formal semantics follows Szabolcsi and Heim in as-suming a uniform syntactic and semantic analysis for quantity and quality superlatives. But interestingly, in certain languages these two types show morpho-syntactic differences that suggest that Krasiko-va's proposal may be adequate for quantity superlatives, but crucial-ly not for quality superlatives. This point was made for French super-latives by Dobrovie-Sorin (2021):

(19) Qui a lu [$_{DP}$[$_{D°}$Ø] [$_{MeasP}$[$_{Spec,Meas}$le plus] [$_{Meas'}$[$_{Meas°}$Ø] [$_{NP}$de livres]]]] ?

The French *le plus* lit. 'the more', meaning 'the most', occurs in a pseudo-partitive configuration (on a par with *beaucoup* 'many, much'), in which [$_{D°}$THE] is normally absent. Hence it is natural to assume that the *le* preceding *plus* is part of the DegP.[2]

In the present paper we are only concerned with the relative read-ings of *quality* superlatives. We do not assume that the generaliza-tions and the proposed analysis extend to quantity superlatives.

Another interesting pattern can be observed in Swedish, where 'quasi-definite' superlatives are built with a strong form of THE pre-ceding the Adj, while the head N lacks the definite suffix. Such DPs have been argued by Coppock and Engdahl (2016) to be genuinely in-defnite DPs (the strong THE is not in D° but inside the AdjP) with an

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2 Wilson (2018) argues that even in English, *the* in the quantity superlative *the most (N)* does not sit in D, as opposed to *the* with quality superlatives.

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elative interpretation, see (20)a. But unlike what we would expect given Krasikova's proposal, the lack of the definite suffix is not allowed by relative superlatives preceded by a strong definite, see (20)b:

(20) a. Vi följer utvecklingen   med **det** *största intresse.*
    we follow development-the with the greatest interest
    'We are following the development with *the greatest interest.*'
    (Coppock, Engdahl 2016, ex. 2)
    b. Fredrik köpte **de** *dyraste vin**et***   (Coppock, Josefson 2015, ex. 29)
    Fredrik bought the expensive-est wine-the
    'Fredrik bought the most expensive wine' (relative reading possible)

Coppock and Josefson (2015) point out that both articles can be optionally dropped in relative superlatives, but not in absolute superlatives. This optionality in the definite marking of relative superlatives has also been observed in Bulgarian (Pancheva, Tomaszewicz 2012; Mostrov 2021) and Norwegian (Simonenko 2012), but it remains cross-linguistically rare.

Note that this type of superlative, in which THE is missing, is orthogonal to Krasikova's proposal, according to which a phonologically realized THE is DegP-internal in relative superlatives. The observations made above showed that DegP-internal THE's are found in certain superlative DPs that lack [$_{D°}$THE] (quantitatives in French or elatives in Swedish) but such configurations are crucially not found for relative quality superlatives. Our conclusion regarding crosslinguistic variation can be stated as follows:

(21) a. [$_{D°}$THE] is obligatory with adnominal *quality* Sup's regardless of relative vs absolute readings in most of the languages for which there is documentation on this distinction (English, German, Romance, Greek, Hungarian, Albanian, Arabic).
    b. In a rather small number of languages [$_{D°}$THE] is optional with relative superlatives but obligatory with absolute superlatives.

2.3   Splitting Definiteness

A different perspective on relative superlatives was adopted by Coppock and Beaver (2014) and Bumford (2017), who attribute their apparently paradoxical nature to general properties of definite articles.

According to Coppock and Beaver (2014) the defining property of definite articles is the uniqueness presupposition, which may but need not combine with determinate reference, yielding either determinate definites or indeterminate definites. Relative superlatives, as well as definites built with *only*, belong to the second type. As demonstrated by Coppock and Beaver themselves, their analysis of indeterminate definiteness is incompatible with a raising analysis, which

forced them to adopt an *in-situ* analysis. The problem of *in-situ* analyses is that they cannot capture the fact that the frame of comparison is obtained on the basis of the syntax[3] (as insisted upon by Szabolcsi (1986) and as seems obvious by just examining examples, in particular pairs such as (12)a-b). For instance, in Coppock and Beaver's (2014) analysis, the relation that associates book-receivers and books in (12)b and (14) is an argument of EST but does not correspond to an (overt) syntactic constituent, it is a free variable that receives a value in the context. It is not clear what principles forces this value to match the predicate of the clause. Further arguments in favor of the LF-raising analysis are given in § 2.4 below.

According to Bumford (2017), who proposes a dynamic-semantics analysis, definite articles allow for 'delayed uniqueness', which means that uniqueness is interpreted DP-externally, as a filter on variable assignments, which applies immediately above EST (which is likewise a filter); EST itself is DP-external (as in Szabolcsi's and Heim's analyses), and the DP is interpreted as an indefinite. In this analysis, it is not clear why the superlative *requires* the existence of this filter. It looks as though the uniqueness component of D and EST are connected somehow and forced to raise together (the former immediately above the latter).[4] Bumford (2017) proposes that THE and EST form a constituent, which is problematic given the data we have seen in § 2.2. However, the idea of a determiner+superlative complex comes close to our proposal, in which the superlative acts as the determiner of the DP. In Bumford and Sharvit (2022), the idea that the superlative and the determiner may raise together as a complex quantifier is mentioned as a possibility (but not formally implemented).

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[3] The in-situ proposal that comes closest to this desideratum seems to be the one suggested (and eventually discarded) in Heim (1999) and adopted by Pancheva and Tomaszewicz (2012): the comparison class argument (C) of EST would be restricted to the alternatives provided by focus, represented as a variable in the structure in the manner of Rooth (1992).

[4] Bumford (2017) provides independent evidence for delayed uniqueness checking, coming from the so-called 'Haddock sentences', see (i), acceptable in a context where there are several hats but only one of them contains a rabbit:
(i)   the rabbit in the hat.
However, in this case the uniqueness filter is not obligatory; (ii) is also acceptable in the very same context:
(ii)   the rabbit in a hat/one of the hats.
With relative superlatives, the definite article is obligatory.

2.4   What We Want to Preserve: LF Raising and Indeterminate Definiteness

The brief overview sketched above shows that none of the existing proposals is successful in providing a satisfying analysis of relative superlatives. Nevertheless, some clear desiderata for an adequate analysis emerge from this previous literature.

The first one is the necessity of LF-raising. In addition to the advantage of deriving the domain of comparison in a compositional way (see § 2.1), this analysis is supported by syntactic arguments. First, as pointed out by Szabolcsi, the correlate must be a co-argument of the superlative DP:

(22) a. Who$_i$ did you claim [**t**$_i$ got **the fewest letters**]?
      b. *****Who** said [that you got **the fewest letters**]? (Szabolcsi 1986, ex. 26a, c)

A further observation going in the same direction was made by Chacón and Wellwood (2012) and taken up by Bumford (2017). As illustrated below, relative readings are impossible with DP-initial possessors in English:

(23) a. Ty chose the tastiest cookies of Sue's (of all the cookies/of all the party guests).
      b. Ty chose Sue's tastiest cookies (of all the cookies/# of all the party guests).
      c. Ty ate the most cookies of Sue's.
      d. *Ty ate Sue's most cookies. (Chacon, Wellwood 2012, (11)-(14))

(24) a. the student who read Shakespeare's longest play (*relative)
      b. the student who read the longest Shakespeare play (✓ relative)
      c. the student who read the longest play of Shakespeare's (✓ relative)
      (Bumford 2017, 14)

Bumford (2017) uses this generalization as evidence in favor of his view that the 'delayed uniqueness' that characterizes relative superlatives is a property of THE itself: since THE is absent with DP-initial possessors, delayed uniqueness is impossible. An alternative explanation will be proposed after we have presented our own analysis. For the time being, the reason for invoking these examples is simply that they plead against *in-situ* analyses.

A further interesting generalization concerns Italian prenominal superlatives, which do not have relative readings, in contrast to postnominal superlatives (Cinque 2010; Loccioni 2018; for an example of relative postnominal superlative, see (17) above):

(25) Chi ha scalato la più alta montagna innevata?   ✓ absolute, * relative
      who has climbed the more high mountain snowy   (Cinque 2010, 12, ex. 23)
      "Who climbed the highest snowy mountain?' (= Who climbed Mt. Everest?)

Such syntactic constraints strongly suggest that the difference between absolute and relative superlatives needs to be represented at LF.

In view of these arguments, we will adopt an LF-raising analysis of relative superlatives. But we will revise Heim's implementation in order to get rid of the assumption that THE translates as A at LF. Superlative DPs will end up being analyzed as definite DPs (i.e., DPs that satisfy uniqueness) that are 'indeterminate' (assert rather than presuppose existence). This characterization is similar to Coppock and Beaver's (2014) definition of indeterminate definites. But our proposal will be crucially different, allowing us to reconcile indeterminate definiteness with raising. As acknowledged by Coppock and Beaver themselves, such a reconciliation is unfeasible within their own theory of indeterminate definiteness.

3 Proposal

Our proposal will rely on two LF raising operations: (i) inside its host DP, EST raises to Spec,DP; (ii) the whole of the DP_{sup} raises out of the IP (which had been envisaged by Szabolcsi 1986, but never pursued since) in order to take parasitic scope on the scope of the correlate, which in our analysis is an argument of EST. The semantics that is read off this syntactic representation treats the relative EST as a quantificational determiner, while THE itself is semantically vacuous.

Importantly, this analysis is meant for adnominal quality relative superlatives only. We leave aside quantity superlatives (both adnominal and DP-external), adverbial superlatives as well as quality superlatives in predicate positions. Given that in adverbial and predicate positions it is not embedded inside a DP, the relative EST can directly raise to a parasitic scope position (much like in Heim's analyses). Quantity superlatives, on the other hand, sit in Spec,MeasP (on a par with their positive counterparts, MANY/MUCH and LITTLE/FEW), a position from which they can raise (just like their positive counterparts).[5]

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[5] Certain phrases in SpecMeasP can raise in overt syntax in French (*beacuoup* 'many/much', *combien* 'how many/much'):
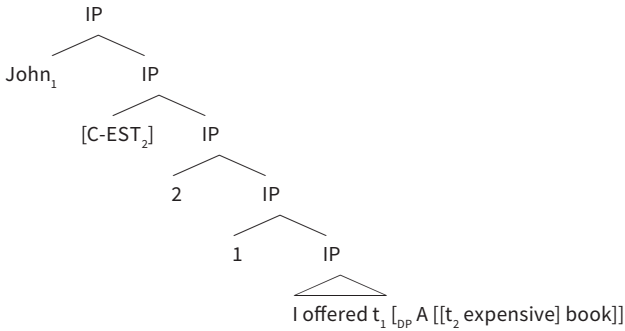(i) J'ai beaucoup$_i$ lu [t$_i$ de livres](Fr.)
     I have many read of books
     'I read many books.'

3.1 Parasitic Scope

On Heim's (1999) 3-argument analysis (see (14) repeated in (27) below) EST takes parasitic scope wrt the *correlate*: EST+C tucks in between the raised correlate and its scope:

(26) I offered **John** the most expensive book.

(27) $[_{IP}[John_1] [_{IP}[C\text{-}EST_2] [2 [1 [_{IP}I offered t_1 A t_2\text{-}expensive book]]]]]$

The notion of 'parasitic scope' was coined by Barker (2007) in his analysis of the so-called 'sentence-internal reading' of (*the) same*. The LF shown in (28)' is a bracketed and simplified version of Barker's representation (41), in which we have replaced Barker's labels for the adjunction nodes with IP (in order to bring out the comparison with Heim's analysis of the parasitic scope of C-EST):

(28) The same waiter served everyone.

(28)' $[everyone_1 [_{IP} same_2 [_{IP} 2[_{IP}1[_{IP}[the t_2 waiter][served t_1]]]]]]$

In this configuration, 'the scope target for *same* does not even exist until *everyone* has taken scope. The adjective then hijacks the scope of *everyone*, intervening between the quantifier and what would otherwise be its semantic argument' (Barker p. 21). Barker does not extend the parasitic-scope analysis to other phenomena, in particular he does not observe that relative superlatives also involve parasitic scope. We believe that outlining the relevance of parasitic scope is an important independent argument in favor of the LF raising analysis: the analysis is not specifically designed for the relative EST itself, but instead pertains to a larger group of phenomena, largely understudied.

3.2   Est Raises DP-internally and DP_{sup} Raises to a Parasitic-scope Position

As we have repeatedly observed in previous sections, the problematic part of the raising analysis is the replacement of THE with A (and the correlated indefinite analysis of the definite-marked DP_{sup}). The solution that we will propose below can be summarized as follows:

(29) a. EST raises, but only DP-internally (see the bolded part of the tree in (30)
    b. DP_{sup} raises to a parasitic-scope position
    $[_{IP}[John_1] [_{IP}[_{DP2} \text{ the most expensive book}] [2 [1 [_{IP} \text{I offered } t_1 \ t_2]]]]]$
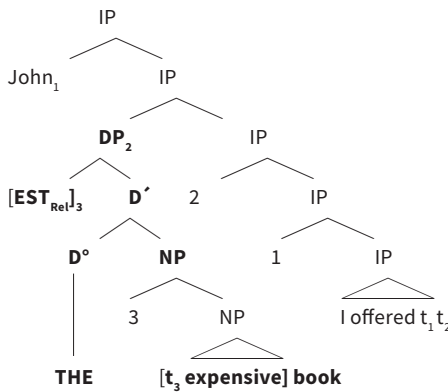
This revision of Heim's analysis is similar to Solomon's (2009) revision of Barker (2007). It is not *same* itself but the whole DP *the same N* that takes parasitic scope, as in (28)", which is our own rewriting of Solomon's analysis:

(28)" $[_{IP} \text{everyone}_1 [_{IP} \text{the-same-waiter}_2 [_{IP}2[_{IP}1[_{IP} t_2 [_{VP} \text{served } t_1]]]]]]$

3.3   EST as a Quantificational Determiner: The Semantic Composition

The LF analysis proposed above offers a non-stipulative syntactic basis for the compositional semantics. Thus, we do not need to assume a syntactically non-realized comparison-class argument, the role of which is played by a relation ($\lambda x \lambda y$ *I offered x* to *y*) that is obtained by abstracting over the traces of the two raised arguments (*John* and DP_{RelSup}). This relation (notated R below) functions as the first argument of the raised DP_{Sup}, the second argument of which is

an entity, the correlate (notated y), on which DP_{RelSup} takes parasitic scope. Hence, the denotation of DP_{RelSup} is (31):

(31) ⟦the most expensive book⟧ = $\lambda R_{<e,et>}.\lambda y.\exists x\ \exists d\ [book(x) \wedge R(y,x) \wedge$
expensive(d)(x) $\wedge\ \forall x´,y´,d´\ [[book(x')\wedge expensive(d´)(x')\wedge x'\neq x\wedge R(y´,x´)] \rightarrow d>d´]]$

From this denotation we can extract the denotation of EST itself. But note that (31) is the denotation of a relative superlative DP, which means that the EST on which it is built corresponds only to the relative reading, hence the notation EST_{Rel} adopted below:

(32) ⟦EST_{Rel}⟧ = $\lambda P_{<d,et>}.\lambda R_{<e,et>}.\lambda y.\ \exists x\ \exists d\ [R(y,x) \wedge P(d)(x) \wedge$
$\forall x´,y´,d´\ [[P(d´)(x´) \wedge x´\neq x \wedge R(y´,x´)] \rightarrow d>d´]]$

This is a quantificational-determiner denotation, which matches with the Spec,DP position that we proposed EST_{Rel} occupies at LF (see the internal structure of DP_2 in tree (30)).

By applying (32) to its first argument P (⟦t_{Deg} *expensive book*⟧) we get the denotation of [$_{DPsup}$ *the most expensive book*] given in (31) (see ⟦DP_2⟧ in tree (30)). The R and y arguments of (31) are then filled with *λx.λy.I offered x to y* and with *John*, yielding the meaning 'there is a book offered by me to John that is expensive to a degree d that is not attained by any book x´ that was offered by me to someone in the relevant situation'. By saturating the formula in (31) with the R-argument (*λxλy I offered x* to *y*) and with the y-argument (*John)* we get:

(33) $\exists x\exists d[$I offered x to y $\wedge$ book(x) $\wedge$ expensive(d)(x) $\wedge\ \forall x´,y´,d´\ [[book(x´) \wedge$
expensive(d´)(x´) $\wedge$ x'≠x $\wedge$ I offered x´ to y´] $\rightarrow$ d>d´]]

Below is the representation of the semantic composition in a tree-form (abstracting away from time and world/situation variables, for readability). For readability we have not inserted in the tree the denotations of DP_2 and EST, which we have signaled as (31) and (32), to be found above.[6] It should be observed that the denotation of EST_{rel} proposed here is in line with Szabolcsi's (1986) assumption that the relative and absolute EST's are distinct[7] (endorsed also by Krasikova 2012).

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[6] We have also not included D^0 in the tree, which is uninterpreted (see § 3.4). If all terminals need to be given a denotation in the tree, this uninterpretability can be represented by using an identity function: the denotation would be $\lambda R_{<d,et>}.R$.

[7] For absolute superlatives, we assume a modifier denotation; we will not decide here among the possible analyses (e.g., with separate AP and NP arguments or with EST taking scope over AP+NP, but below D). Most analyses propose a uniform denotation for relative and absolute EST. Heim's 3 argument analysis in (14)(i) explicitly covers both readings. For the 2-argument analysis in (14)(ii), Heim did not address absolute readings; Romero 2013 extended the 2 argument analysis to DP-internal -EST by assuming

(34) $\exists x \exists d$ [offer(Speaker,John,x) $\wedge$ book(x) $\wedge$ exp.(d)(x) $\wedge \forall x',y',d'$ [[book(x') $\wedge$ expensive (d')(x') $\wedge$ x'$\neq$x $\wedge$ offer(Speaker,y',x')] $\rightarrow$ d>d']]

IP

John$_1$ | IP λy. $\exists x \exists d$ [offer(Speaker,y,x) $\wedge$ book(x) $\wedge$ exp.(d)(x) $\wedge \forall x',y',d'$ [[book(x') $\wedge$ exp. (d')(x') $\wedge$ x'$\neq$x $\wedge$ offer(Speaker,y',x')] $\rightarrow$ d>d']]

DP$_2$: (31) | IP $\lambda z.\lambda y.$offer(Speaker, y,z)

-EST: (32) NP $\lambda d.\lambda x.$(book(x)$\wedge$exp.(d)(x)) | 2 | IP $\lambda y.$offer(Speaker,y,g(2))

3 | NP $\lambda x.$(book(x)$\wedge$exp.(g(3))(x)) | 1 | IP offer(Speaker,g(1),g(2))

t$_3$-expensive book | I offered t$_1$ t$_2$
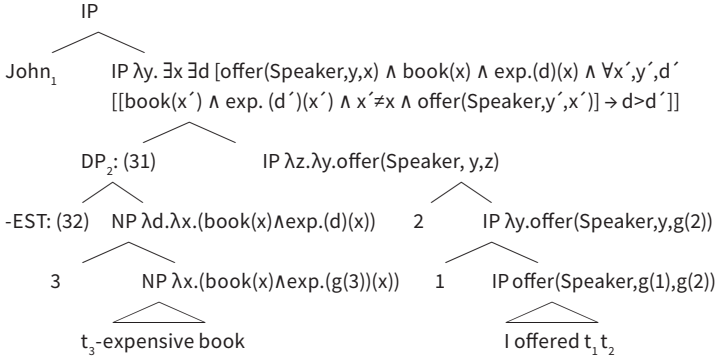
3.4 Vacuousness of THE and the issue of definiteness

In (30) [$_{D°}$THE] itself is semantically vacuous.[8] But why does D° surface as a definite article? We propose that D^0 carries a definiteness feature as a result of Spec-Head agreementbetween EST$_{Rel}$ and D. The [def] feature on EST$_{Rel}$ is justified by the fact that its denotation (see (32)) entails Russellian definiteness: the property 'be a book offered by me to John that is expensive to a degree d that is not attained by any book x' that was offered by me to someone in the relevant situation' *is satisfied by at most one book* (note that (31) compares the relevant book with books given to other people as well as with other books given by the speaker to John).

EST$_{Rel}$ however differs from run-of-the-mil definites by *asserting* rather than presupposing existence, which explains the indefinitelike behavior of relative superlatives.

Let us stress that under this proposal the indeterminacy of relative superlatives is not a property of THE, but is triggered by the raising of EST$_{Rel}$ to Spec,DP.

a reduced relative structure, with -EST attaching below the relative operator PRO, to a t-type constituent, and focus on the trace of the relative operator.

8   On the proposal that an operator in SpecDP is associated to a non-interpreted D, see Giusti (2002, 2015).

3.5 Explaining the Syntactic Constraints on Relative Superlatives

The relevance of the SpecDP position is visible in the syntactic constraints on relative superlatives. We have seen in § 2.4 that prenominal superlatives disallow the relative reading in Italian, see (25). However, in Romanian, a closely related language, this reading is allowed, see (35). This can be correlated to the fact that prenominal superlatives sit in SpecDP in Romanian (as shown by Giurgea 2013 with various tests, see e.g. the combination with cardinals in (36):

(35) Cine a urcat   [[cel mai înalt][[$_D$Ø] munte]]?
     who has climbed SUP more high mountain
     'Who climbed the highest mountain?'

(36) a. [cele mai bogate] două ţări (Ro.)
        SUP more rich   two countries
     b. i due [più ricchi] paesi (It.)
     the two more rich countries
     'the two richest countries'

For Italian, the ban on relative readings in prenominal positions can be explained by assuming that this is a DP-internal scope position (lower than Spec,DP).

Syrian Arabic resembles Italian insofar as superlatives surface as comparatives embedded in definite DPs. However, prenominal superlatives resort to a construct state construction, in which there is no overt D. This construction allows relative readings (see Hallman 2021), which can be explained if construct states instantiate (at least sometimes) a SpecDP + null D configuration. Interestingly, Syrian Arabic also allows an 'analytic' superlative in which only the EST head, identical to the word *most*, occurs in DP-initial position, see (37)b. This supports our structures in (30) in which only EST is interpreted in SpecDP (rather than the entire Deg+AP constituent).

(37) a. miːn ṭalaʕ ʕala aʕla ʒabal? (Hallman 2021, 79, ex. 21b-c)
     who climbed on highest mountain
     b. miːn ṭalaʕ ʕala aktar ʒabal ʕaːli?
     who climbed on most mountain high
     'Who climbed the highest mountain?'

Our proposal offers a straightforward account for the fact that DP-initial possessors block relative readings in English, see (23)-(24): DP-initial possessors sit in Spec,DP, which blocks EST-to-SpecDP.

3.6 No Need of Covert Comparison Classes

An important difference between our analysis in (32) and Heim's influential analyses in (14)-(15) is that we do not make use of covert comparison classes as arguments of relative superlatives. This is a welcome feature, because superlatives do not have any syntactic argument that corresponds to the postulated comparison-class semantic argument (except in very specific constructions, such as *possible* in modal superlatives, see Romero 2013, and degree relative clauses in examples such as *Mary sang the loudest [that any soprano ever sang]*, see Howard 2014)[9]. Krasikova (2012), a supporter of Heim's analysis for relative readings, abandoned the comparison-class argument for absolute superlatives and proposed instead that the first argument of EST/SUP is the set denoted by the NP. Under this view the domain restriction of the NP-set is an instantiation of a general phenomenon, which appears with all quantifiers (be they determiners or adverbials), and which is currently explained as being due to the presence of a situation argument that all predicates have (see Schwarz 2009, Heim 2011 and references therein).

In our analysis, which dispenses with comparison classes for relative readings as well, the domain-restriction can also be captured by resorting to the situation argument: the condition "book(x′) ∧ expensive(d′)(x′) ∧ x′≠x ∧ *I offered x′ to y′*" is relativized to a situation (not represented in (32) for simplicity), by virtue of the situation argument present on all predicates. Therefore, only individuals in the contextually relevant situation are compared. An entry that includes situations would look as follows:

(33)′ $[\![EST_{Rel}]\!] = \lambda P_{<d,et>}.\lambda R_{<e,et>}.\lambda y. \lambda s. \exists x \exists d [R(x)(y)(s) \wedge P(d)(x)(s) \wedge \forall x′,y′,d′ [[P(d′)(x′)(s) \wedge x′≠x \wedge R(x′)(y′)(s)] \rightarrow d>d′]]$

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[9] Our view is that EST takes a comparison-class argument only when this argument is overt, e.g., *possible*+CP or degree-CP: for such examples, a special entry of EST is to be assumed. Note that degree-relative arguments are language-specific (Romanian, for instance, lacks this type altogether), unlike relative readings of superlatives, which means that at least for languages such as Romanian we cannot use the existence of degree-CP arguments of EST to support the hypothesis of a covert comparison-class argument for superlatives at large.

Phrases of the type *out of...*, see *Out of all my students, she wrote the best essay*, seem to be licensed by focus, specifying the domain of variation of the focalized part, rather than by EST – see the following examples (found on Google) of this type of phrases in sentences without superlatives:

(i) Out of all the rumored contenders, I think this trio can do wonders on screen.
(ii) Out of all the Europeans only the British succeeded in establishing an empire in India.
(iii) Out of all the candidates, why should we hire you?

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In Heim's two-argument analysis (see (15)), the comparison class argument, besides providing contextual restrictions, plays a crucial role: it provides the characterizing property of the set of elements that are compared (which are degree properties; only by specifying C, via focus association, we know with which degree properties we compare the abstract over degrees created by raising of EST). In our analysis, the two roles played by Heim's comparison-class argument are separated: the relation R (the second argument of EST) accomplishes the characterizing-property role of Heim's comparative class, and the contextual-restriction role is played by situation-variables.

As observed by a reviewer, our analysis is more in line with minimalist approaches insofar as the syntactic derivation is not allowed to modify the initial numeration that serves as its input. Since arguably the numeration of sentences built with relative superlatives does not contain any element corresponding to the comparison class, a syntax-faithful semantic analysis should not make use of a comparison-class argument for the analysis of superlatives.

4   Note on the Upstairs De Dicto Reading

Another difference between our analysis and Heim's is that Heim's analyses allow EST and DP_{Sup} to have different scope positions. Heim (1999) argues that split scope is indeed attested for relative superlatives in examples such as (38), where John's and the others' wishes are not about specific mountains (therefore DP_{Sup} scopes below *want*) but about specific mountain heights (therefore EST scopes above *want*; this reading was called 'upstairs de dicto' by Sharvit, Stateva 2002):

(38) [Context: John wants to climb a mountain that should be 6000 m. high, Mary wants to climb a mountain that should be 4000 m. high, Bill wants to climb a mountain that should be 1000 m. high]
John wants to climb the highest mountain.
John λx **EST** λd [want λw [∃y. [y is a d-high mountain in w and x climbs y in w]]]

Our analysis, in which EST acts as the determiner of DP_{Sup}, does not allow the representation in (38). However, there is a possible analysis that does not involve split scope. We start from the observation that such readings are possible only in contexts that provide the information that the people under discussion have wishes about mountain heights (Heim herself says that this reading "may not be the most salient reading, but it is quite available in an appropriate context", and provides a scenario involving answers to the question *How high a mountain do you want to climb*?). We propose that in such a context a classification of mountains depending on height becomes

salient, and (38) compares these mountain types, rather than individual mountains. In other words, (38) is equivalent to *John wants to climb the highest mountain type*. The sentence is about specific mountain types, so DP_{Sup} scopes above *want*:

(39)   John λx [EST λd[d-high mountain-type]] λy. x wants to climb y

The interpretation of *climb y* in (39) involves a type-shifting from types (kinds) to tokens, via the realization relation, as in (40):

(40)   I climbed this kind of mountain before.

The fact that types are involved is supported by the possibility of using type-denoting DPs without superlatives in similar contexts, see the scenario in (41):

(41)   [Context: what type of car do they want? John wants a Toyota, Ruth wants a Mercedes, Alex wants a Ford]
       John wants the Asian car

Note that in this example, exactly as in (38), the characterization of the type wanted by John does not report his thoughts (he may not know that Toyotas are produced in Asia) – likewise, in (38) the comparison performed by EST is not part of John's wish.

Evidence that 'upstairs de dicto' readings involve de re comparison of types of objects rather than of degrees comes from examples with cardinals, such as (42). Like (38), this is not about particular essays, but only about types of essays characterized exclusively by length. But here Heim's analysis in (38) is inapplicable. The cardinal cannot be below *want* because the sentence does not compare sets of two essays (Peter, e.g., needs to write a single essay). Like for plural superlatives in general, the sentence is true if the objects in the plurality characterized as 'highest' are high (at least) to a degree not attained by any object that is not in that plurality.

(42)   [Context: John needs to write a 15 page essay for the literature class and a 10 page essay for the history class, Mary needs to write an 8 page essay for her literature class and a 6 page essay for her politics class, Peter needs to write a 7 page essay for his art class]
       John needs to write the two longest essays

But if the cardinal is interpreted above *want*, in Heim's analysis it should apply to the degree, because only degrees scope above *want* in her analysis. But cardinals are not used to count degrees. Therefore, Heim's analyses cannot apply to (42).

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5 Conclusions

The present paper aimed at proposing a solution for the contradiction between the definite marking of relative superlatives and their apparent indefiniteness. Our solution can be summarized as follows: (i) the indefinite article does not appear because D is not interpreted at all; (ii) The [def] feature is a defining property of $[EST]_{rel}$ and is simply repeated (via agreement) on D.

The compositional analysis that we propose is close to the syntax: (i) comparison classes are dispensed with, which is desirable, because the syntax does not give us any comparison class for relative superlatives; (ii) we use as arguments what the syntax gives us: a correlate and a relation between the correlate and the measured entity (external argument of the superlative). These two elements are what syntax provides, under the assumption that the relative DP tucks in below the correlate ("parasitic scope").

We have stressed the role of parasitic scope, which brings together elements (*same* and EST) that are similar in that their denotations depend on the scope of another element but nevertheless differ in their lexical properties, which specify the relevant type of relation: the identity relation (for *same*) or having the highest degree of a certain property (for superlatives).

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The Dark Sides
of an Intercultural-Based
Teaching of RFL:
A Critical Approach

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Abstract   This article aims to analyze the topic of culture and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in Russian as a foreign language (RFL) at an academic level. The work offers a critical overview of the main relevant studies in the Russian language on RFL and ICC from 2008 to 2022. The findings show that even the most recent research (in the wake of *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*) still leans on an ambiguous, essentialized, and nationalistic idea of 'culture'. Finally, through a critical reinterpretation of intercultural dialogue, the author provides a first insight into some new perspectives on RFL teaching.

Keywords   Teaching Russian as a foreign language. Culture. Intercultural communicative competence. Intercultural communication. Intercultural dialogue. Cultural studies. Linguoculturology. National culture.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 General Theoretical Framework of ICC. – 3 A Critical Overview of Russian-Language Studies on ICC in RFL, 2008-22. – 3.1 Definition of IC. – 3.2 Definition of ICC. – 3.3 Genealogical and Critical Observations. – 3.3.1 Culture and Nationalism. – 3.3.2 Tolerance. – 3.4 Conclusion. – 3.5 Pedagogical Implications. – 4 Conclusions: New Perspectives for an Intercultural-Based Teaching of RFL.

1 Introduction

Teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL) at the university level is fraught with challenges, the greatest of which is the need to introduce students to not only the Russian language but also the Russian culture, which plays a central role in the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

Theoretically, the present work is a line of research on intercultural linguistics education (among others, Kramsch 1993; Byram 1997; Liddicoat, Scarino 2013; Deardorff 2020).

There is no shortage of attention in the literature on Russian didactics paid toward the development of ICC for the purpose of language learning. Intercultural communication (IC), or *mezhkul'turnaya kommunikatsiya* (межкультурная коммуникация),[1] is the subject of most traditional research in the Russian language field (cf. Torresin 2022a, 24-5). Generally, recent research, from Dmitrenko (2010) and Berdichevskiy et al. (2011) to Amelina (2022) and Berdichevskiy, Giniatullin, Tareva (2020), takes into account the challenges of IC in the teaching of Russian and other languages.

This study provides a critical overview of Russian-language studies dedicated to ICC for university learners of RFL from an intercultural perspective. The present work involves an in-depth analysis and evaluation of qualitative data collected from a specific sample to generate new insights into RFL research.

The specific research goals of this article are as follows: 1) to critically examine the extent and characteristics of ICC-related scholarship within the RFL area produced between 2008 and 2022, with a particular emphasis on the university context, in order to gain a comprehensive picture of how intercultural RFL teaching is conceptualized at a theoretical level; and 2) to identify the pedagogical implications of such theoretical contributions for an intercultural model of RFL teaching.

I chose to consider the period 2008-22 because IC – which has been in the Russian-speaking scientific discourse since the 11th Congress of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (MAPRYAL) in 2007 – has become an indispensable concept in RFL since 2008. The sample of studies considered is a purposive sample selected on a non-probability basis by identifying keywords/search terms in Russian and English related to the research topic (e.g., IC and ICC as well as synonyms and related concepts, such as 'interculturalism', 'intercultural', 'intercultural di-

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[1] The term, in the wake of Edward T. Hall's research, entered the shared vocabulary of Russian glottodidactics after the 2000 release of works by Gudkov (2000) and Ter-Minasova (2000).

mension', 'intercultural dialogue', and 'intercultural education'). In other words, the sample represents a judgmental or authoritative sample that includes all the most relevant contributions that have shaped the concept of ICC in RFL.

The sample contains prestigious publications, including monographs and teaching textbooks printed by major Russian and Russian-language scientific publishers, articles from important Russian scientific journals, and significant conference/congress proceedings in the RFL field or related to the RFL field with references to the intercultural dimension.

Publications by well-known RFL publishers include monographs and teaching textbooks edited, for example, by Flinta, Russian Language. Courses, Zlatoust, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN), Belarusian State University, and Belarus State Economic University (among others, Passov, Kuzovleva 2010; Pugachëv 2011; Shibko 2011; Lebedinskiy, Gerbik 2011; Shchukin 2019; Berdichevskiy 2022). In collective monographs/teaching textbooks, single chapters with specific relevance to our investigation were also considered (e.g., Berdichevskiy 2020).

The RFL publications from scientific journals consist of articles dealing with ICC issued in Russian renowned scholarly journals, both specialized in issues related to RFL and foreign language teaching (*RUDN Journal of Language Education and Translingual Practices*) and general humanities topics (*Izvestia: Herzen University Journal of Humanities & Sciences*) (Shamsutdinova 2008; Vasilyuk 2010).

Contributions in the congress proceedings of MAPRYAL, along with materials from relevant conferences, were also analyzed due to their importance in (re)defining and/or legitimizing RFL theories and methods (e.g., Kharitonov 2013; Masyuk, Suvorova 2013; Varichenko 2015).

Moreover, it should be noted that leading experts in the RFL area were also examined, including Passov, Berdichevskiy, Shchukin, Shibko, Kryuchkova, Moshchinskaya, and Azimov. As most of these scholars are also authors of RFL textbooks (both for RFL teachers and learners), the sample includes research that has a concrete impact not only on RFL theories but also on RFL practices, that is, on RFL teaching as a whole.[2]

In addition to the aforementioned authors and important scholarly research, further sources were considered, including studies of lesser impact (appearing in less renowned venues and/or written by minor scholars), based on the recurrence and treatment of the keywords/search terms employed in the present investigation.

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[2] Further, the influence of the views of such studies on RFL teaching can be seen not only in the Russian RFL textbooks but also in the Italian ones (see Torresin 2022b).

After outlining the theoretical framework (§ 2), this article aims to provide a critical overview of the Russian-language studies dedicated to ICC for university learners in RFL from an intercultural perspective (§ 3). Starting from the definitions of IC and ICC, it will be seen that, in addition to an ambiguous use of the term 'intercultural communication' as a result of the influence of *lingvostranovedeniye* (лингвострановедение) and *lingvokul'turologiya* (лингвокультурология),[3] the concept of 'culture' at the base of these studies is poorly problematized, static, and linked to national dynamics. In RFL, all this translates into a vision of ICC (and therefore of IC) that is stereotyped, uncritical, and nationalistic, based on *tolerantnost'* (толерантность) 'tolerance' rather than on a real intercultural interaction.

The proposed review of studies and related considerations will finally lead us to question what issues affect RFL today and what new spaces have opened up for future university teaching (§ 4).

2 General Theoretical Framework of ICC

In RFL and in overall foreign language learning, the ICC – *mezhkul'turnaya kommunikativnaya kompetentsiya* in Russian (межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция) – of the interlocutors is linked to an awareness of the existence of culturally conditioned cognitive schemas (Knapp, Knapp-Potthoff 1990, 83). An accepted definition of ICC in RFL is the following:

> the ability of the individual to exist in a multicultural society, to be successfully understood by representatives of other cultures and representatives of one's own culture. (Azimov, Shchukin 2009, 134)[4]

This, however, is not the only meaning of ICC that is understood in the present study. The concept of ICC is linked to the 'pragmatic competences' identified by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe [CoE] 2001, 13, 123-6), which places 'intercultural skills' among the 'know-how'/'savoir-faire' skills, which imply

> the capacity to fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations. (105)

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3 For more on these RFL scientific disciplines, see Azimov and Shchukin (2009, 127-8).

4 Translations are by the Author.

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In other words, ICC can be explained as

> the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientation to the world. (Spitzberg, Changnon 2009, 7)

Defined in this way, ICC avoids risks such as "the promotion of an essentialist perspective on culture" (UNESCO 2013, 7).

If we think of 'culture' as the complex of spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional characteristics of a society or social group (UNESCO 2001) within a constructivist perspective (Georgescu 2018, 15-16), we must also conceive of cultures as 'multiple'. According to UNESCO,

> cultures are themselves multiple, so that to insiders, every group reveals itself not as homogeneous but rather a nested series of progressively smaller groups whose members are all too aware of distinctions between themselves. (UNESCO 2013, 10)

On the other hand, no one belongs to only a single culture – "everyone has multiple identities" (12), both "personal" and "social" (CoE 2018, 29). Furthermore, each individual will usually use only some of the resources available in their cultural group(s) and occupy "a unique cultural positioning", belonging to and participating in different cultures (30).

Moreover, culture itself can be seen as an ongoing process in which meanings and the boundaries between groups or communities are continuously renegotiated and redefined (Byram et al. 2009, 8). Thus, "cultural diversity" – which constitutes the spirit of ICC – is based on the principle that "each culture provides only one option among many possibilities" (UNESCO 2013, 11), which is also expressed in the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO 2001).

Probably the most comprehensive definition of ICC is that of the Council of Europe, which interprets ICC as

> the ability to mobilize and deploy relevant psychological resources in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by intercultural situations. (CoE 2018, 32)

More specifically, ICC, within the framework of the 'competences for democratic culture' model (CoE 2018), fits within the context of intercultural education, which plays a central role in democratic processes within culturally diverse societies.

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Intercultural dialogue arises when "an individual perceives another person (or group of people) as being culturally different from themselves" (31). Obviously, no cultural fundamentalism is tolerable because

> intercultural learning promotes the view that no culture is better or worse than the other, that there is no hierarchy of cultures. (Georgescu 2018, 17)

This is where ICC comes in, advocating a "combination of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding" that enables an individual to "understand and respect" the cultural differences between themselves and others establishing "positive and constructive relationships" with others (CoE 2018, 74).

After providing an overview of the theoretical framework of this research, the next section examines how key concepts of IC, ICC, culture, and identity are defined and addressed in Russian-language studies of RFL. The analysis investigates whether these concepts are problematized or essentialized and explores the theoretical foundations that shape the proposed visions of culture and identity.

This examination reveals that research on intercultural issues in the RFL field is embedded in a broader culturally hegemonic discourse.

By 'discourse', I refer to the rules and practices that shape knowledge and ideology in constructing subjectivity and identity, drawing from Foucault's (1980) conceptualization. According to Foucault, discourse is not only a form of power but also instrumental in producing "truth". In this way, each society has its own "regime of truth": that is,

> those who produce the discourse also have the power to make it true – i.e., to enforce its validity, its scientific status. (Hall, Gieben 1992, 295)

The following section employs a genealogical analysis of how the topic of ICC has been addressed in RFL research to demonstrate that the discourse commonly shared among RFL scholars is rooted in a nationalist and static conception of teaching/learning processes. Remarkably, the scholars themselves are unaware of this discourse, and they continue to unconsciously promote and propagate it as accepted "truth" (cf. also Torresin 2022c).

3 A Critical Overview of Russian-Language Studies on ICC in RFL, 2008-22

3.1 Definition of IC

Modern studies on the development of ICC in RFL remain linked to the definition of IC proposed in the 1970s by the founders of *lingvostranovedeniye*, Vereshchagin and Kostomarov, who understood *mezhkul'turnaya kommunikatsiya* as

> an adequate mutual understanding [*взаимопонимание*] of two participants of a communicative act who belong to different national cultures. (Vereshchagin, Kostomarov 1973, 43)

Since Vereshchagin and Kostomarov, Ter-Minasova has noted how:

> Every foreign language lesson is a crossroads of cultures [*перекрёсток культур*], is a practice of intercultural communication [*практика межкультурной коммуникации*] because every foreign word reflects a foreign world and a foreign culture: behind every word there is an idea of the world conditioned by national consciousness. (Ter-Minasova 2000, 24)

More recently, Shibko proposes a view of IC as

> the capacity for interaction [*взаимодействие*] between participants in the communicative act who belong to different national cultures. (Shibko 2011, 15, 90; cf. also Shibko 2014, 36, 197).

Similarly, Shchukin defines IC as follows:

> interaction [*взаимодействие*] between communication participants who belong to different national communities, in order to establish mutual understanding [*взаимопонимание*] and interaction [*взаимодействие*] in various situations of verbal activity. (Shchukin 2018, 153)

First, we can observe how the idea of IC, in the definitions we have examined, is built around two keywords: *vzaimoponimaniye* (взаимопонимание) 'mutual understanding' and *vzaimodeystviye* (взаимодействие) 'interaction'. The concept of 'culture' links them together (see more infra) because, as Ter-Minasova notes, it is in the exchange between cultures – the "crossroads of cultures" or *perekrëstok kul'tur* (перекрёсток культур) – that IC takes place.

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It is no coincidence that since Shchukin's systematization (2003, 125, 135-6; also, cf. Shchukin 2019, 193, 206 ff.), the designation IC is generally used in RFL to denote the object of 'acquisition' (*learning*) corresponding to the object of 'teaching' (*culture*). In fact, Shibko (2011, 14, 90; 2014, 34, 196) describes IC as the "object of acquisition", or *ob"yekt usvoyeniya* (объект усвоения) in reference to culture (which is, in turn, the "object of teaching", or *ob"yekt obucheniya* объект обучения; also, cf. Moskovkin, Shchukin 2012, 91, 93). Consequently, IC is identified with the "ability to communicate with the bearers of another culture" (Lebedinskiy, Gerbik 2011, 62).

3.2 Definition of ICC

Creating the possibilities for an IC is the ICC of the interlocutors, which can be seen as a set of "practical skills and abilities" that fosters "the development of the individual's ethnocultural sensitivity" (Pugachëv 2011, 34) in relation to other people and cultures.

According to scholars, ICC is directly related to the purposes of RFL teaching, which presupposes not only the acquisition of grammar, but also "knowledge of the culture of the country of the studied language" (Basova 2014, 49).

Since IC is a process of verbal and nonverbal communication between bearers of different languages and cultures (Kryuchkova, Moshchinskaya 2011, 54), ICC can be defined as

> the ability of the individual to exist in a multicultural society, to be successfully understood by representatives of other cultures and representatives of one's own culture. (Azimov, Shchukin 2009, 134)

For Berdichevskiy, this implies

> the ability to understand the limitations of one's own culture and language and the ability to switch when encountering another culture to other not only linguistic but also non-linguistic norms of behavior. (Berdichevskiy 2020, 9)

Thus, ICC is the *conditio sine qua non* for IC, as understanding the target culture allows participants in a linguistic act to accurately understand each other and its ultimate outcome since it fulfills the purpose of language learning (Pugachëv 2011, 28).

According to Kryuchkova and Moshchinskaya, ICC may be described as

> the ability to act as an intermediary between the representatives of one's own culture and those of the foreign culture and effec-

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tively eliminate misunderstandings and conflict situations generated by intercultural differences (Kryuchkova, Moshchinskaya 2011, 40).

3.3 Genealogical and Critical Observations

3.3.1 Culture and Nationalism

Generally speaking, Russian-language studies on ICC in the RFL field from 2008 to 2022 explicitly or implicitly refer to both *lingvostranovedeniye* (Vereshchagin, Kostomarov, and Prokhorov) and *lingvokul'turologiya* (Vorob'yëv, Shaklein, Stepanov, Teliya, Arutyunova, Krasnykh, and Maslova), which continue to dominate the treatment of IC in modern-day RFL (Shchukin 2019, 459 ff.). The former scientific discipline is based on the idea of IC discussed above and *dialog kul'tur* (диалог культур) 'dialogue between cultures', or, more generally, on the idea that the study of language should be accompanied by the study of the country in which that language is spoken. The latter is linked to the conception of the individual as *yazykovaya lichnost'* (языковая личность) 'linguistic personality', to the representation of language as the embodiment of cultural values and culture as the highest level of language, and to the idea of *yazykovaya kartina mira* (языковая картина мира) 'linguistic worldview' (Azimov, Shchukin 2009, 127-8).

Although ICC is clearly not neglected in today's RFL studies, an ambiguous and potentially equivocal use of the term 'culture' is generally observed.[5] This is evident in the definitions of ICC during the period 2008-22 considered here, which, in addition to relying on 'classical' cultural models (e.g., Tylor, Kroeber, and Hofstede), welcome influences and suggestions from *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*. At first glance, in the studies influenced by these disciplines, we note that the concept of 'culture' is often not even defined. Where defined, it is mostly simplistically identified with "a set of the experience of people whose language has become the object of study" (Moskovkin, Shchukin 2012, 93).

On closer examination, these studies seem to be based on a static idea of 'culture', which within the field of RFL could be a legacy of *lingvokul'turologiya*. For example, the primary theorist of *lingvokul'turologiya*, Vorob'yëv (2006, 15), describes the "fix-

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5 It must be said, however, that the concept of 'culture', due to its various contexts of use and varied shades of meaning that change from discipline to discipline, nevertheless remains one of the most complex and debated concepts in modern *kul'turologiya* (культурология, cf. Sadokhin 2014, 18-19).

ity" (*ustoychivost'*, устойчивость) and "stability" (*stabil'nost'*, стабильность) of culture, which would be guaranteed by its national character (see more infra). According to Lebedinskiy and Gerbik (2011, 62), the action of individuals within the same culture is "systematic". According to other scholars (e.g., Moskovkin, Shchukin 2012, 93), culture (including, e.g., values and traditions) would be transmitted unchanged from generation to generation. Even in Azimov and Shchukin's (2009, 117-8) lengthy definition of 'culture', with its recognition of its various declinations, there is no trace of the intrinsic complexity and dynamism of this concept.

This leads us to a third observation. Ultimately, 'culture' seems to be limited to the ethno-national context.[6] "Every culture is national [*национальна*] in content", write Passov and Kuzovleva (2010). It is important to recall that the prominence given to the national element in IC was already present in the definition used by Vereshchagin and Kostomarov (1973, 43) and was maintained by Ter-Minasova (2000, 24) with reference to 'national consciousness' (*natsional'noye soznaniye*, национальное сознание).

This view of IC is also found in more recent definitions that echo Vereshchagin and Kostomarov, which we have already mentioned. Shibko (2011, 15, 90; 2014, 36, 197), for example, reproposes an idea of IC constructed from 'national cultures' (*natsional'nyye kul'tury*, национальные культуры). Shchukin (2018, 153) considers IC an "interaction between communication participants who belong to different national communities". Similarly, for Berdichevskiy (2022, 35), RFL teaching is closely linked to national culture (*natsional'naya kul'tura*, национальная культура).

It is worth mentioning a few more significant examples. In the first research focused on the teaching of Russian in a foreign-language learning environment, Bykova (2011, 15), among the "internal factors" affecting RFL teaching/learning, mentions the 'national mentality' (*natsional'nyy mentalitet*, национальный менталитет), which has been defined as the "genetic memory of reason inherent in language" (Kharitonov 2013, 877). Pugachёv devotes an entire section of his monograph to a fixed 'national character' (*natsional'nyy kharakter*, национальный характер), understood as that "part of the mentality" he interprets as

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6   On the other hand, Russian is also spoken in the former Soviet republics and in various diaspora and emigration contexts, and thus becomes a conduit not only of the proper 'national' (Russian) culture but also acquires a 'transnational' character as it becomes an entry to other (Russophone) cultures.

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a specific combination of the stable character traits of the representatives of a concrete ethnic group, or as dominant values and orientations in a given society. (Pugachëv 2011, 46-9)

Vasil'yeva (2016, 88) emphasizes the importance for IC of *natsional'nyy mentalitet* and *natsional'nyy kharakter*. For their part, Kryuchkova and Moshchinskaya (2011, 55) argue that for the foreign learner to develop effective IC with natives, the learner must approach the native's 'national values' (*natsional'nyye tsennosti*, национальные ценности), 'national character' (*natsional'nyy kharakter*), and 'national culture' (*natsional'naya kul'tura*) as a "system of concepts that is transmitted from generation to generation".

This insistence on a 'national culture' (*natsional'naya kul'tura*) made up of a fixed and immutable combination of 'character' (*kharakter*, характер), 'mentality' (*mentalitet/mental'nost'*, менталитет/ментальность), 'values' (*tsennosti*, ценности), 'self-consciousness' (*samosoznaniye*, самосознание), and 'worldview' (*mirovozzreniye/kartina mira*, мировоззрение/картина мира) clearly shows the legacy of *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*. In fact, concerning *lingvostranovedeniye*, in the 1990s, Prokhorov (1995) was the first to interpret it as a methodological discipline in which the 'national culture' of learners plays a key role in the development of communicative competence. Similarly, according to Kryuchkova and Moshchinskaya (2011, 62), *lingvostranovedeniye* studies 'national-cultural specificity' (*natsional'no-kul'turnaya spetsifika,* национально-культурная специфика) and views language as a means of learning about 'national culture'. Turning to *lingvokul'turologiya*, its founders were fervent supporters of national discourse. For example, Vorob'yëv (1999, 125) believed that this new scientific orientation should analyze the 'national mentality' (*natsional'nyy mentalitet*) and identify the triad "language [язык] – nation (national personality) [нация (национальная личность)] – culture [культура]" as the core of *lingvokul'turologiya* (Vorob'yëv 2006, 13). Similarly, from Teliya's point of view, the main aim of *lingvokul'turologiya* is

the study of the means by which the material culture and mentality of an ethnic group are embodied in the living national language [национальный язык]. (Teliya 1996, 216)

The influence of *lingvokul'turologiya* and its foundational idea of *natsional'nyy kharakter*[7] can be found also in non-RFL-specific IC literature, where the latter is defined as

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[7] For an in-depth discussion of the topic, see Pomarolli (2019; 2023).

a set of specific physical and spiritual qualities, norms of behavior and activities typical of representatives of one or another nation. (Grushevitskaya, Popkov, Sadokhin 2003)

This static, essentialized idea of 'culture' and its correlation with the national dimension seems to suggest an uncritical, unproblematized resumption of the theoretical framework of both *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*, which is taken for granted and implicitly or explicitly shared by the research examined so far. Such a view, which is well integrated into Russian and Russian-speaking academic thought,[8] may also be found in the writing of Azimov and Shchukin, who reiterate the shared static nature of the concept of 'national culture', which they interpret as

the historical worldview by a people, which is realized in traditions, national relics and reflected in language. (Azimov, Shchukin 2009, 158)

It should be clear by now that we can find a common approach to culture in RFL studies dating from 2008 to 2022, and that is quite different from the approach delineated in § 2. Instead of a dynamic, complex, and problematic concept of culture in which individuals partake on many levels in different social groups of various dimensions, the idea of 'culture' that emerges from Russian-language studies of ICC in the RFL field is, by contrast, quite static, reductive, and 'ideologized'. As we have observed so far, in such research, culture is understood (in the wake of *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*) as an immutable factor, not subject to change, but hinged on stable traditions and firmly anchored to the national context.[9] The possibility that culture – as well as identity – can be 'multiple', change, renegotiate, and redefine its meanings and boundaries is not admitted.

In fact, if we agree that it is people (and not cultures) who meet or clash (Ghilardi 2012, 29), it will be recognized without difficulty that the very accentuation of the national (as well as supranational or universal) aspect of culture in RFL goes precisely to the detriment of the recognition of the variations and differentiations within the culture itself, whether of a geographical, sexual, social, or religious nature (see § 2).

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[8]   Suffice it to say that, since the 1990s, Mitrofanova and Kostomarov (1990, 126) have indicated precisely in the 'national culture' (*natsional'naya kul'tura*) "the indispensable condition for an adequate, full acquisition of the foreign (Russian) language".

[9]   This emphasis on the national aspect lends itself to any criticism directed at "methodological nationalism" (see, e.g., Chernilo 2011).

Thus, it will be agreed that the ICC promoted in RFL during the period 2008-22 is based on a *de facto* stereotyped conception – uncritical, granitic, and inflexible – of 'culture' (see also Torresin 2022a). For this reason, it does not seem rash to me to state that the ICC advocated in these more recent studies is partial and highly nationalized, continuing to rely on an image of 'Russianness', which is at least naïve, if not overtly nationalistic.[10] In fact, with very few exceptions, we are faced not with the welcoming of diversity, but with the leveling of difference. Presently, it is instead the dynamic articulation of cultural difference that creates "cultural hybridity" – where IC can take place and ICC is realized – as argued by Bhabha (1994, 2).[11]

On the contrary, in the Russian-language studies on ICC that we have analyzed, cultural difference is not exalted but completely annulled, thus removing the very possibility of creating a "third space" (in Bhabha's terminology) capable of overcoming the self-other dichotomy.

3.3.2 Tolerance

In these studies, more than ICC, it is the "tolerant and spiritually sensitive Russian culture" (Ikonnikova, Bol'shakov 2008, 248) that dominates the scene. The use of the adjective 'tolerant' (*tolerantnaya*, толерантная) does not seem coincidental in the context of these strongly nationally oriented studies. It is one of the most recurring terms, more than 'intercultural interaction', and, as has been argued (Mansouri, Arber 2017, 26), it is already ambiguous and questionable in itself, as it presupposes the passive acceptance of a minority's cultural diversity by the dominant group.[12]

It seems that the ultimate goal is, for the foreign learner, "the refinement […] of tolerance [*tolerantnost'*]" (Fomina 2018, 58). After all, according to Russian scholars, it would be precisely the RFL teacher's job to "realize the functions of intercultural tolerance [*межкультурная толерантность*]" (Bykova 2011, 36), conceived as a "pedagogical problem" (Shamsutdinova 2008).

The principle of *tolerantnost'* 'tolerance' – from Latin *tolerantia* meaning 'forbearance', which for Miloslavskaya (2001) constituted

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[10] I share Plamenatz's (1973, 23) opinion on 'nationalism', defined as "the desire to preserve or enhance a people's national or cultural identity".

[11] The idea – central to postcolonial studies – that all cultures are hybrid (according to Burke 2009, 102, "no culture is an island") and heterogeneous can also be found in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, Edward Said, and Peter Burke.

[12] In the context of *kul'turologiya* (культурология), Sadokhin (2014, 248) defines 'tolerance' as "an attitude of condescending indulgence toward the opinions, beliefs, behavior, customs, culture, feelings, and ideas of others".

the first step of IC – today remains the basis of ICC for Azimov and Shchukin (2009, 134), who describe it as

> an understanding and respect toward another culture, towards the differences of the representatives of another culture-ethnic, national, racial, religious, linguistic. (317)

In the research examined so far, *tolerantnost'*, which is interpreted as a core component of ICC, is simultaneously considered a principle to be observed and a competence to be achieved. This happens because *tolerantnost'* is ultimately identified, on the one hand, with IC and, on the other hand, with ICC, also linking itself to the traditional myth of the 'Russian soul' (*russkaya dusha*, русская душа), which is very present in *lingvokul'turologiya* (Pomarolli 2019, 388). Indeed, according to Afanas'yeva, one of the factors that paves the way for ICC is "the understanding and perception of the values and norms of Russian society, founded on the ideals of goodness, justice, honesty, and tolerance" (Afanas'yeva 2018, 204).

   This continuous re-proposition of the category of *tolerantnost'* in the examined RFL studies is informed by a recovery of the idea of the 'Russian soul'. This fact, in addition to reinforcing further an adherence to a stereotypical and nationalistic (self-) representation also delineates a paradoxical situation in which IC between two or more 'nations' should be based on a principal characteristic of only one of these 'nations'.

3.4   Conclusion

In the research conducted in Russian from 2008-22, ICC is based on highly ideologized, nationalistically conditioned, and monolithic self-representations and self-perceptions; on uncritical, unproblematized, partial, and homologated conceptions of 'culture'; and on a general attitude of 'tolerance' rather than 'interaction' with diversity.

   There is no critical rethinking of concepts, such as 'culture' and 'identity', which are taken for granted and used uncritically within the conceptual systems of *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*.

   Moreover, all the elements highlighted up to this point, i.e., the static idea of culture and denial of cultural hybridity, the references to *natsional'naya kul'tura*, and the appeal to the principle of *tolerantnost'*, seem to indicate that the RFL literature written in Russian on ICC from 2008-22 is firmly anchored in a culturally hegemonic type of discourse (see § 2). Such types of discourse, which constitute the dominant paradigm drawn from *lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*, produce significant knowledge that influences

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RFL's "regime of truth": that is, the types of discourse generally accepted and made to function as 'true'.

It follows that even the conception of 'interculture', from which these works claim to take their cue, should rather be identified with a 'multicultural' approach in which ICC is achieved through the promotion of *plyuralizm* (плюрализм) 'pluralism' and *lingvisticheskoye mnogoobraziye* (лингвистическое многообразие) 'linguistic variety' (Azimov, Shchukin 2009, 134). Not surprisingly, the "decrease of interethnic tension", as much as "education for tolerance in relations between representatives of different cultures" (149), is included in the goals of so-called 'multicultural education'. In short, what would be prefigured here is the peaceful coexistence of different cultures (typical of a 'multicultural' approach) and not a dynamic and flexible interaction between cultures (typical of an 'intercultural' approach).

In essence, even though the goals set for the development of ICC by Russian-speaking RFL scholars are embraceable, they are paradoxically 'betrayed' by conceptions of 'culture' that are still too anchored in essentialist and nationalist paradigms.

3.5 Pedagogical Implications

The prevailing conception of ICC found in the reviewed Russian-language research has significant pedagogical implications.

First, the RFL teaching model advocated in these studies reflects an ambiguous and limited understanding of 'culture' and ICC, which is closely tied to the national context. For example, Vasilyuk argues that RFL students should be exposed to

> the typical phenomena of Russia's socio-economic, cultural, and scientific life, as well as to the values associated with the lifestyle of the Russian people. (Vasilyuk 2010, 25)

This approach to intercultural education in RFL contradicts the supranational guidelines and reference frameworks put forth by the Council of Europe and UNESCO, which advocate for consideration of culture and identity as multifaceted and complex phenomena (see § 2). According to the Council of Europe, for instance, cultural groups "are always internally heterogeneous", and

> cultural affiliations are fluid and dynamic, with the subjective salience of social and cultural identities fluctuating as individuals move from one situation to another, with different affiliations – or different clusters of intersecting affiliations – being highlighted depending on the particular social context encountered. (CoE 2018, 30)

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UNESCO also speaks out against the idea that culture and identity are fixed and monolithic, predetermined by the nationality of individuals or cultural groups, and reminds us how even our own personal perceptions show us that the reality is quite different:

> everyone understands their own identity to be a more complex matter, with multiple identities relevant to different contexts: gender, class, age, ethnicity, region, history, nationality, occupation, each becoming relevant at different times in the same person's day. Identities change over time [...]. Recognition of the multiplicity and fluidity of identity complicates our understanding of cultural pluralism (implying that people cannot accurately be categorized as only members of one group). At the same time, these facts simplify intercultural dialogue: since everyone has had the experience of moving between contrasting identities, it makes sense to recognize others as members of multiple groups as well. (UNESCO 2013, 10)

Second, teaching Russian within an unproblematized and fixed view of culture and identity results in students' identities being reduced to their national affiliation, excluding their active and subjective engagement with multiple cultures and identities. This approach hinders the development of critical thinking in response to representations of other cultures.

In other words, this appears not to be a student-centered model, in which the student is an active protagonist of her/his own learning and is "getting involved with the information presented, really thinking about it" (King 1993, 31) rather than just passively receiving it, but rather a teacher-centered model,[13] in which the whole process of learning revolves around the teacher – "the one who has the knowledge" and transmits it to the students (30); the student, instead, is simply seen as an empty vessel to be filled with Russian national (timeless and essentialized) culture. To quote Masyuk and Suvorova, an RFL teacher is the one who initiates foreign learners into "Russian national-cultural traditions", bringing them into

> the study of the world of native speakers, their culture, lifestyle, character, and national mentality. (Masyuk, Suvorova 2013, 177, 179)

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13 For the distinction between student-centered and teacher-centered models (i.e., models implying, respectively, an active or passive involvement of learners), see Markina, Garcia Mollá (2022).

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The role of student is, therefore, configured as a passive one, since s/he "immerses herself/himself in the new linguistic environment and begins to acquire a new worldview" (Varichenko 2015, 201).

As a result, in this context, alternative ways of talking, thinking, or representing ICC in RFL are indeed necessary but equally difficult to propose.

4 Conclusions: New Perspectives for an Intercultural-Based Teaching of RFL

At this point, what should an intercultural-based approach to teaching RFL in the university context be today? In my opinion, such an approach should be built on the following theoretical assumptions:

1. Teaching RFL means promoting ICC in the meaning of the term 'culture' adopted here (see § 2).
2. Teaching RFL does not mean teaching a 'national' language and culture, but rather a 'transnational' Russophone one.
3. Teaching RFL means paying attention to the great risk of replacing stereotypes with other stereotypes (e.g., *russkaya dusha*).
4. Teaching RFL does not mean encouraging coexistence and tolerance between cultures, but rather interacting, exchanging, and changing.

From a practical angle, an intercultural approach to teaching RFL may be fostered by providing more information about culture (understood as we proposed in § 2) in textbooks.

When choosing and using teaching materials, it will not be sufficient to ensure avoidance of stereotypes. We have seen that for the purpose of effectively employing ICC, it is of little use to work on 'national-cultural specificity', as *lingvostranovedeniye* requires. In particular, typical ICC reading activities – *predtekstovyye* (предтекстовые), *pritekstovyye* (притекстовые), and *posletekstovyye zadaniya* (послетекстовые задания) – should not be aimed at simplistically making students understand the 'worldview' and 'concepts' of Russian 'mentality'.[14]

Intercultural learning activities should be based on the following principles:

1. Key terminology needs to be changed so as to include strictly 'Russian' and the wider 'Russophone culture', given that this is the target culture in RFL.

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[14] This, instead, is the opinion of literature (see, for example, Kryuchkova, Moshchinskaya 2011, 357-9, 383-4, 398-9).
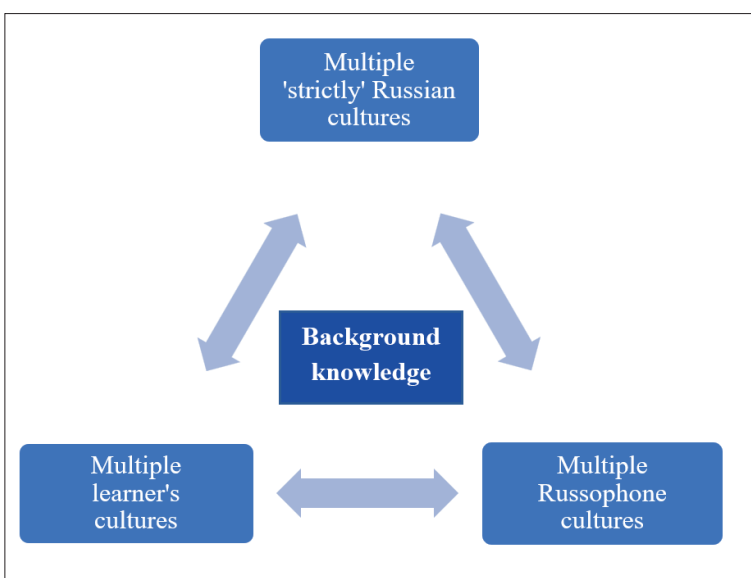
2.   The comparison between different cultures should be promoted, including learners' various background cultures, which enter into dialogue with multiple Russian and Russophone cultures; it is from this non-unilateral but rather multilateral interaction that the foundations are laid for 'background knowledge' (*fonovyye znaniya*, фоновые знания), which is continually redefined and reshaped by the relationships between all the cultures involved **[fig. 1]**.

In conclusion, to teach RFL from an intercultural perspective, it is important to provide learners with background knowledge that considers the complexity and non-essentiality of culture and does not revolve around dated, rigid, and ineffective multicultural models/approaches involving a nationalist hegemonic discourse (*lingvostranovedeniye* and *lingvokul'turologiya*), but rather focuses on new paradigms based on a critical understanding of 'culture'.

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Letteratura, cultura, storia

Det är nu det vänder: il gusto della malinconia e il dovere della felicità nel romanzo *En svensk kändis* di Alma Kirlić

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Abstract   Scandinavian second-generation writers provide evidence of the social impact of migration and multiethnicity. Yet the Swedish literary market seems preferably to target writers of African or Middle Eastern descent, perhaps benefiting from the rifts that the non-whiteness issue generates in people. On the other hand, the Yugoslav diaspora, nowadays celebrated as a model of positive integration, is often ignored in the literary context. In her novel, Alma Kirlić questions the supposedly happy outcome of the Yugoslavs' arrival in Sweden. Relying on the 'melancholic migrant' metaphor, this study aims to further explore Sweden's post-migrant condition by providing new points of reference.

Keywords   Post-migration. Happiness duty. Melancholic migrant. Yugoslav Diaspora. Swedish Contemporary Literature.

Sommario   1 Introduzione: *non-whiteness* nella Svezia della post-migrazione. – 2 Oggetti felici vs. soggetti infelici. – 3 La felicità della malinconia. – 4 La promessa della felicità. – 5 Conclusioni.

1 Introduzione: *non-whiteness* nella Svezia della post-migrazione

L'eterogeneità della popolazione svedese invita a un profondo ripensamento dei parametri con cui definire la cultura e l'identità nazionale. La ricerca di orizzonti alternativi per inquadrare il concetto di *svenskhet* 'svedesità' si è resa indispensabile negli ultimi trent'anni. Diversi scrittori di seconda generazione, nati o cresciuti in Svezia, hanno cercato di restituire nuova dignità al ruolo della migrazione,[1] presentando tale fenomeno come un aspetto fondativo della contemporaneità. In questo senso, anche la ricerca ha individuato spunti di analisi e prospettive di lettura utili. Il concetto di 'post-migrazione', coniato da Shermin Langhoff per descrivere la sua filosofia di teatro inclusivo, è rapidamente confluito nell'ambito accademico.[2] Tale concetto invita ad adottare una prospettiva di analisi sociale ed estetica che emerge dal punto di vista della migrazione, centrando l'attenzione su conflitti, alleanze e negoziazioni che fanno da sfondo alle dinamiche tipiche di una società post-migratoria. Ciò esorta a una lettura alternativa della migrazione come fenomeno sociale, molto diversa da quella che Regina Römhild descrive con il termine 'migrantologia' (2017).[3]

Molti di questi scrittori tentano da tempo di screditare la diffusione di etichette degradanti come 'letteratura degli immigrati' o 'scrittore immigrato' (Behschnitt, Mohnike 2007; Trotzig 2005; Nilsson 2010) utilizzando la propria voce per raccontare lo smarrimento identitario sofferto dalle nuove generazioni. Tuttavia, l'ecologia letteraria svedese sembra ancora favorire un certo grado di distinzione, dando maggiore risalto a individui di origine africana o mediorientale. È possibile ipotizzare che il mercato abbia sviluppato una predilezione per la questione conflittuale della *non-whiteness*, elevando l'immagine di autori accomunati da certi tratti fisionomici e da una memoria culturale riconducibili a quelle zone geografiche? Le motivazioni potrebbero variare da un più alto interesse etnografico, al contrasto estetico tra una minoranza di colore, simbolo di resistenza,

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1 Una prima generazione di artisti come Theodor Kallifatides in Svezia o Khalid Hussain in Norvegia suscitarono molto interesse, inaugurando la fase pionieristica del dibattito contemporaneo scandinavo tra migrazione, letteratura e società tra gli anni Settanta e Ottanta (Wendelius 2002; Gröndahl 2002; Kongslien 2006).

2 Shermin Langhoff evidenzia il bisogno di includere la migrazione come elemento identificativo della società tedesca dando maggiore spazio alle storie di giovani tedeschi di seconda generazione (cit. in Stewart 2017, 56).

3 Il termine migrantologia critica lo studio della migrazione in quanto ricerca sulla figura del migrante come categoria antropologica a sé stante. Ciò rafforza l'immagine di società parallele all'interno dello stesso spazio. Secondo Römhild, lo scopo della ricerca sulla migrazione dovrebbe essere quello di inquadrarne gli effetti a livello collettivo, di captarne le estetiche e studiare i conflitti generati dalla sua presenza.

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e una maggioranza bianca, simbolo di oppressione, o anche al disagio di natura islamofobica che la reminiscenza di certe aree genera nella cultura occidentale.[4] Il retaggio jugoslavo, in tal senso, è stato forse ignorato dalle logiche di consumo, nonostante l'impatto che ha determinato negli ultimi quarant'anni di immigrazione svedese. Per quanto la maggiore prossimità etnografica possa far apparire le storie di questo popolo come più ordinarie, esse non solo offrono un fedele spaccato sulla recente storia del paese scandinavo, ma anche angoli di lettura inesplorati sul tema della post-migrazione.

La migrazione jugoslava in Svezia conosce una svolta durante gli anni Ottanta, quando la politica svedese inizia a ridurre i permessi di soggiorno per i 'lavoratori ospiti' che avevano portato in Svezia flussi migratori dalla Finlandia e dall'Europa del sud. Il minor bisogno di manodopera non specializzata aprì le porte a profughi e richiedenti asilo, invertendo la rotta: «från arbetskraftsinvandring till flyktinginvandring» ('da un'immigrazione di manodopera a una umanitaria', Söderlind, Persson, Carlsson 2012, 6). I migranti provenivano soprattutto da Cile, Vietnam, Iraq e dai paesi dell'ex-Jugoslavia.[5] La ricezione di questi ultimi vide un inizio in salita dal punto di vista logistico e organizzativo.[6] Oggi, invece, diversi media celebrano la riuscita del loro percorso di integrazione, mostrando statistiche eccellenti per quanto riguarda l'inserimento nel mondo del lavoro e adducendo come ulteriore prova la grande popolarità ottenuta da alcuni di loro (Roden 2017). A posteriori, si è ipotizzato che ciò dipendesse dal livello di istruzione di partenza, ritenuto superiore rispetto ad altri gruppi etnici, e dalle radici culturali europee, più affini a quelle svedesi (de Lima Fagerlind 2015; Efendić 2016; Roden 2017).

In breve, la buona integrazione delle comunità jugoslave sembra fare capo a risultati quantificabili, che pur riflettendo parte della realtà, lasciano tuttavia alcuni punti interrogativi su cosa significhi 'buona integrazione'. In *En svensk kändis* (Una star svedese), romanzo di debutto di Alma Kirlić del 2015 (qui nell'edizione del 2018), svedese di origine bosniaca, l'autrice ripercorre il suo passato di profuga in Svezia. L'opera ci permette di individuare spunti per

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[4] Elaborando il concetto di 'esotismo etnico' sviluppato da Magnus Nilsson (2010), Maïmouna Jagne-Soreau afferma che la *non-whiteness* «became a capital in the Nordic literary market in the past fifteen years and is used by publishers as a selling hook» (2021, 162).

[5] La Svezia ha accolto più di centomila persone provenienti da quest'area, la maggior parte dall'odierna Bosnia-Erzegovina (*Migrationsverket Historik*, 11 Ottobre 2022. https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Pressrum/Vanliga-fragor-fran-journalister/Historik.html).

[6] I primi flussi migratori provenienti dalla ex-Jugoslavia si concentrarono nelle aree di Malmö e Göteborg, dove il livello di disoccupazione era già molto alto. L'arrivo di nuovi flussi bloccò ulteriormente il mercato del lavoro creando tensioni nel tessuto sociale (Efendić 2016; Roden 2017). Inoltre, molte risorse pubbliche vennero sperperate in alcuni corsi introduttivi giudicati a posteriori inutili dai diretti interessati (de Lima Fagerlind 2015).

problematizzare la riuscita dell'inserimento dei migrati jugoslavi e indagare temi come la *non-whiteness*, la felicità e il razzismo da una prospettiva leggermente diversa rispetto a quella di più noti scrittori della post-migrazione.[7]

2 Oggetti felici vs. soggetti infelici

Nel ricomporre la sua storia, costruita su due linee temporali, l'autrice intreccia episodi di varia lunghezza. La prima linea vede la protagonista giungere al teatro comunale di Uppsala per lavorare come: «sufflös» ('suggeritrice', Kirlić 2018, 6) nei primi anni Duemila. La seconda ripercorre gli eventi a partire dagli anni della guerra fino al trasferimento nella città svedese. Sfruttando il setting di una rappresentazione teatrale come ambientazione di fondo, Kirlić assottiglia il confine tra vissuto e finzione. L'autrice filtra il proprio materiale biografico attraverso il suo alter-ego, Alma, il cui ingresso nel teatro crea i giusti presupposti per rielaborare il passato in chiave critica e 'performativa' (Haarder 2007).[8]

Prima di passare al racconto, la voce narrante apre con un prologo in cui racconta i risvolti ironici di un premio vinto a diciotto anni:

> Jag fick välja mellan att träffa Michael Bolton som jag tyckte var en tönt och Björn Skifs som jag aldrig hade hört talas om. De sa att Björn Skifs var jättekänd i Sverige så jag valde honom. [...] När jag senare fick reda på att det var han som gjort ooga-chacka-ooga-ooga-låten, då var jag ganska nöjd och kände att nu, nu var det på väg att vända. Jag var inte bara invandrare, jag hade dessutom träffat Björn Skifs, en svensk kändis.
> (Kirlić 2018, 5)

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[7] Jonas Hassen Khemiri, Johannes Anyuru o Marjaneh Bakhtiari, rispettivamente di origine tunisina, ugandese e iraniana, rappresentano alcune delle voci più autorevoli in questo senso. Spesso, nelle loro opere, il colore della pelle rappresenta un marcatore etnico-sociale evidente, che diventa motivo di conflitto e odio. Alcuni critici, inoltre, sembrano raggruppare la prospettiva di individui di provenienza balcanica all'interno dell'ideale categoria della *non-whiteness*, allineando sullo stesso piano esperienze che forse non combaciano perfettamente (Hübinette 2019, 27; Gokieli 2017, 271).

[8] Jon Helt Haarder parla a tal proposito di un fenomeno sempre più frequente nella letteratura contemporanea, a cui assegna il nome di 'biografismo performativo'. Haarder sostiene che: «den biografiska referensen genom den performativa biografismen går från att vara en hemlighet bakom verket till att vara ett material eller en effekt på verkets yta», ovverosia «il riferimento biografico attraverso il biografismo performativo passa dall'essere un segreto dietro l'opera a essere un materiale o un effetto sulla superficie dell'opera» (2007, 78). In questo caso, l'effetto del riferimento biografico dell'autrice serve come un vero e proprio espediente letterario che si pone come scopo quello di osservare con sguardo critico il dilemma dell'integrazione svedese e non semplicemente di raccontare al lettore la propria storia.

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> Potevo scegliere se incontrare Michael Bolton che ritene-
> vo un ebete e Björn Skifs, di cui non avevo mai sentito parla-
> re. Mi dissero che Björn Skifs era molto famoso in Svezia quin-
> di scelsi lui. [...] Quando poi scoprii che era stato lui a cantare
> ooga-chacka-ooga-ooga, sentii con soddisfazione che adesso,
> adesso le cose stavano per cambiare. Non ero solo un'immigra-
> ta, avevo anche incontrato Björn Skifs, una star svedese.[9]

La speranza di dare una svolta alla sua carriera grazie all'incon-
tro con individui di origine svedese diventa la forza che anima il
personaggio di Alma: «Det är nu det vänder» ('Sono al punto di svol-
ta'; 6). Nella logica della protagonista, la vera felicità si costruisce
sul raggiungimento di una posizione stabile nello spazio del teatro
e della società svedese.[10] Tale senso di appagamento può essere
inquadrato secondo quanto scritto da Sara Ahmed in *The Prom-
ise of Happiness* (2010). Ahmed prende spunto dalla ricerca della
felicità individuale e collettiva, osservando con sguardo critico il
modo in cui essa viene concepita nella cultura occidentale. Il flusso
che unisce persone felici e mondi felici si costruisce, dice Ahmed,
su un ideale normativo che identifica in alcuni 'oggetti' predeter-
minati – come la famiglia, la nazione e ovviamente la cultura – un
punto imprescindibile del benessere collettivo (11). Rappresentan-
do metaforicamente una «technology for social description» (132),
la felicità verrà elargita solo a chi ne abbracci i simboli.[11] Ahmed
prende poi spunto da alcune figure che generano una frattura in
tale flusso, tra cui annovera il «melancholic migrant» (121). Nel deli-
cato equilibrio della comunità felice, il migrante forma un vettore
contrario, di infelicità, che potrà invertire l'inerzia «in return for
loyalty to the nation» (122), rendendolo «increasingly subject to [...]
the happiness duty» (130).

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[9] Tutte le traduzioni di questo contributo sono dell'Autore.

[10] Nonostante l'omonimia tra autrice e protagonista, il romanzo di Kirlić oltrepassa le
opposizioni tra fittizio e reale. Come afferma Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf una narrazione
che contamina allo stesso tempo realtà e finzione, non si oppone al genere autobiogra-
fico, ma costituisce una sua dimensione latente (2022, 24). L'opera di Kirlić, pertanto,
si avvicina più al genere dell'*autofiction* che a quello dell'autobiografia.

[11] Le politiche del welfare state svedese hanno consolidato nel corso del XX secolo un
forte senso di coesione tra stato e cittadino. Henrik Berggren e Lars Trägårdh (2015)
definiscono questo tipo di rapporto come uno *statsindividualism* 'individualismo stata-
le', ossia un contratto sociale su base collettiva che garantisce l'intervento dello stato
nella vita dell'individuo in sostituzione ad altre forme di dipendenza sociale.

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3   La felicità della malinconia

Il teatro di Uppsala rappresenta per la protagonista l'ennesimo tentativo di integrarsi in Svezia. Giunta di fronte all'ingresso, Alma ripensa all'inizio del proprio percorso, quando la guerra arriva alle porte di Bugojno, in Bosnia. I ricordi dell'allora quindicenne spaziano dalla quotidianità tra scuola e amici,[12] a eventi estremamente drammatici, come la fuga verso la Polonia e poi la Svezia con la madre, la sorellina e il fratellino, o la notizia della morte del padre, rimasto in patria. Giunta a Ystad, la famiglia viene smistata in diversi campi profughi, dove la natura avversa dell'ambiente circostante mostra subito i suoi effetti. I primi messaggi di ostilità arrivano da alcuni bambini svedesi, che si riferiscono al gruppo di profughi chiamandoli «jävla turkar» ('fottuti turchi'; Kirlić 2018, 34). Ingenuamente, Alma sembra incapace di pensare che gli insulti siano rivolti a lei o ai suoi familiari: «Vi var inte flyktingar, nej, vi var tre barn som lekte i snön med sin mamma» (43; 'Non eravamo profughi, no, eravamo tre bambini che giocavano nella neve con la mamma').

Nel febbraio del 1993, alla famiglia viene assegnato un appartamento popolare nella città di Karlstad.[13] Alma ha la possibilità di tornare a scuola, anche se il tutto viene rallentato da un programma introduttivo mal organizzato.[14] Questo punto segna uno spartiacque. La ragazza inizia a oscillare tra un opprimente senso di malinconia, che le impedisce di lasciarsi il passato alle spalle (Ahmed 2010, 139), e la consapevolezza di dover nascondere una parte di sé. L'ambiente della classe la spinge a rinegoziare la sua identità in relazione all'immagine che viene costruita su di lei in quanto profuga, ribaltando tutte le certezze sul suo mondo e sulla condizione del suo paese. Perfino la sua fede nel culto di Tito, manifestata nella reiterata ripetizione dello slogan «Broderskap och Enighet», ovvero «Fratellanza e Unità» (Kirlić 2018, 44), simbolo di antifascismo e di libertà, deve

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12   I paesi dell'ex Jugoslavia racchiudevano un insieme eterogeneo di popoli, che per molto tempo hanno coabitato pacificamente. Prima che la guerra civile sventrasse l'intera regione, la Jugoslavia di Tito ha rappresentato un modello di società multiculturale sostenibile, sebbene vincolata a un regime dittatoriale (Anderson 2018, 2). La stessa Alma, di fede musulmana, ricorda la sua amicizia sia con serbi sia con croati, di fede cristiana (19-20).

13   La descrizione di Alma fa chiaramente riferimento al cosiddetto *Miljonprogram* (Programma milione). Questo progetto urbanistico, concepito a partire dagli anni Sessanta, aveva lo scopo di costruire un milione di alloggi in circa dieci anni, al fine di garantire uno stile di vita dignitoso alla classe operaia svedese. Intorno agli anni Ottanta, per il fenomeno della gentrificazione, i sobborghi del Programma Milione accolsero sempre di più migranti arrivati nel paese scandinavo (Brochmann et. al. 2020, 57-69).

14   L'autrice ironizza sul contenuto di questi corsi introduttivi: «De första böckerna bestod av bilder på pojke, flicka, mor, far, barn, hund, katt, bil, buss, varg. Året innan hade jag läst *Stäppvargen*» ('I primi libri consistevano in immagini di ragazzi, ragazze, madre, padre, bambini, cani, gatti, macchine, autobus, lupi. L'anno prima avevo letto *Il Lupo della Steppa*', 2018, 65; corsivo nell'originale).

essere messa di fronte alla prospettiva storiografica insegnata nella nuova scuola: «När Jugoslavien hade fallit sa de att all den historia jag tidigare lärt mig och varit stolt över var förljugen» (93; 'Dopo la caduta della Jugoslavia dissero che tutta la storia che avevo imparato fino a quel momento e di cui andavo fiera era una bugia').[15]

Il senso di malinconia, dunque, trasforma la felicità della memoria di Alma in vergogna, costringendola a soffocare nel silenzio la propria identità. Rifugiandosi nell'anonimato, spera di sviare l'attenzione dal suo status di immigrata, adottando un atteggiamento che la rende insicura e competitiva. L'ostilità che avverte verso un'altra studentessa, ad esempio, viene giustificata dal fatto che: «hon vägrade nämna sin persiska bakgrund» (138), ovvero «si rifiutava di menzionare il suo background persiano». Nella logica della protagonista, ciò assicura alla sua compagna una posizione di vantaggio:

> Hon pratade värmländska med en skör röst och umgicks med svenskar som om de hade någonting gemensamt. Hennes bästis var blond, hade en isblå blick och hette Maria. (138)

> Parlava l'accento del Värmland con voce fioca e frequentava svedesi come se avessero qualcosa in comune. La sua migliore amica era bionda, aveva occhi azzurri come il ghiaccio e si chiamava Maria.

Al contrario, Alma è costretta a rivivere l'umiliazione della propria condizione quando un insegnante le chiede di raccontare la propria storia di fronte al resto della classe. Tale senso di sdoppiamento distorce anche la percezione dei rapporti di amicizia che tenta di stringere con persone etnicamente svedesi, trasformandole in un'unità di misura con cui calcolare il grado di integrazione raggiunto. Cresciuta sotto l'influenza dello star system, Alma si abitua fin da piccola ad adattare tratti della sua personalità ai personaggi dello spettacolo, specialmente quelli delle popolari sitcom americane del tempo. Al suo arrivo in Svezia, tale abitudine viene sistematicamente reindirizzata verso un nuovo target antropologico. Qui, tuttavia, interlocutori del tutto comuni vengono identificati come una moneta di scambio nell'economia del suo processo integrativo e trasformati in 'star' su cui modellare l'immagine. Applicando una logica di consumo alle relazioni interpersonali, l'atteggiamento di Alma può essere inquadrato secondo i dettami della *celebrity culture*, che descrive il processo di idealizzazione per cui lo status di celebrità, in quanto simbolo di successo personale, conferisce potere su più fronti. Di

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15   Solo in un caso, durante un'accesa discussione, Alma si arrabbia per l'arroganza dei suoi compagni che si vantano della democratica e civile Svezia, facendosi beffe del regime dittatoriale jugoslavo (Kirlić 2018, 120-1).

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fatto, un sistema capitalistico impone anche la percezione delle celebrità come prodotto che manipola il consumo, convertendo i coetanei di Alma: «into commodities by bestowing economic value on them» (Driessens 2013, 652).

La protagonista cerca più volte di stabilire un contatto genuino con persone etnicamente svedesi, modificando perfino il modo in cui si riferisce a loro. Durante una settimana scolastica di prova, a ciascuno studente del corso introduttivo viene assegnato un 'tutore' tra gli studenti della classe:

> Jag […] blev tilldelad en fadder, Kjell-Anders, som skulle umgås med mig under hela den veckan, inte bara på undervisningen utan också på rasterna. Det var hans uppdrag. (Kirlić 2018, 73)

> Mi […] venne assegnato un tutore, Kjell-Anders, che avrebbe dovuto passare il tempo con me nel corso di tutta quella settimana, non solo durante le lezioni ma anche nelle pause. Era il suo compito.

Alma lo osserva con ammirazione, ma questi non sembra molto interessato a fare amicizia. Tuttavia, la protagonista tenta di elevare il proprio status dicendo agli amici di aver stretto un legame con lui, mentre Kjell-Anders a mala pena la saluta in cortile.[16] Quando un altro ragazzo, Anders, mostra interesse nei suoi confronti, nuovamente si convince che il suo momento è arrivato: «Jag var hans utvalda. Han var min första svenska pojkvän» ('Ero la sua prescelta. Lui era il mio primo ragazzo svedese'; 91). Sentirsi la prescelta di uno svedese rappresenta la chiave per integrarsi, anche se la relazione non sembra coinvolgerla profondamente. Allo stesso modo, durante una gita a Uppsala, il casuale incontro con il cantante pop Dr. Alban viene interpretato nuovamente come un segno della provvidenza, che potrebbe trasformarla da semplice immigrata a un qualcuno che passa «igenom samma dörr som en svensk kändis», ovvero «dalla stessa porta di una star svedese» (148).

Nonostante queste sporadiche conferme, tuttavia, Alma è costretta a rivivere le stesse dinamiche alienanti. Dal momento che i suoi tratti fisionomici non consentono vere e proprie forme di discriminazione razziale, altri fattori, più subdoli e impliciti, rimarcano la distanza tra lei e il resto della società. Bisbigli, frasi ambigue e falsi complimenti caratterizzano le sue quotidiane interazioni con gli svedesi, costringendola a convivere con un paranoico senso di colpa, che la spinge da una parte ad attirare su di sé qualunque

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16 «Honom känner jag» ('Lui lo conosco', Kirlic 2018, 76). In virtù della sua posizione, l'enfasi è concentrata sul pronome personale 'Honom', qui all'accusativo, dando a questo una sfumatura di prominenza.

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responsabilità e dall'altra a barattare ogni briciolo di amor proprio con il compiacimento altrui. Di fatto, il movimento circolare di un loop che si distende e si contrae tra il pregiudizio e la promessa della felicità rappresenta l'unico spazio in cui la protagonista agisce.

4 La promessa della felicità

Felice di lavorare nel teatro insieme a un gruppo di svedesi, Alma deve fare i conti con una diversa realtà. Dal suo ruolo di suggeritrice, una figura che notoriamente sta in posizione nascosta, racconta la quotidianità di un ecosistema fortemente gerarchico. I suoi colleghi sono rappresentati come figure stereotipate del mondo dello spettacolo: gli attori vanitosi, il regista pieno di sé e perso in concetti astrusi, i collaboratori ruffiani. Come se non bastasse, la pièce, dal titolo *Här Är ditt Liv Gösta* (Ecco la tua Vita Gösta), si rivela un'accozzaglia di idee poco credibili, che tentano di fondere un vecchio programma di intrattenimento della *SVT* (Televisione di Svezia), *Här Är ditt Liv*,[17] e la *Gösta Berlings saga* (La saga di Gösta Berling), il famoso romanzo di Selma Lagerlöf:

> Regissören Roger berättar att han ska ta utsnitt ur pensionärernas liv, saxa dem med Gösta Berlings saga och på något sätt ska det hela bottna i *Här är ditt liv*. Men det ska förstås vara subtilt. Jag […] vänder mig mot Anni, som viskar att det är så man gör teater i Tyskland. Jag nickar, trots att hennes svar gjort mig ännu mer förvirrad. (47)

> Il regista Roger dice che prenderà alcuni episodi delle vite dei pensionati, li unirà alla Saga di Gösta Berling e in qualche modo il tutto confluirà in *Här är ditt liv*. Ma ovviamente in modo sottile. Io […] mi giro verso Anni, che sussurra che è così che si fa teatro in Germania. Annuisco, anche se la sua risposta mi confonde ancora di più.

Contrariamente alle aspettative, il microcosmo del teatro riflette le dinamiche già vissute dalla protagonista. Nuovamente, Alma si ritrova costretta a negoziare la sua presenza in un sistema poco tollerante, oltre che velatamente sessista.[18] La guida del regista rimane salda solo grazie alla sua arroganza, che obbliga i suoi collaboratori ad assecondare i suoi capricci. Priva di un ruolo ben definito, a

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[17] Il talk-show *Här är ditt liv* è andato in onda tra il 1980 e il 1991.

[18] La questione del genere inquadra altrettanto bene diversi episodi del romanzo. In un ricordo d'infanzia, Alma racconta di una recita scolastica che avrebbe dovuto riprodurre un film comico jugoslavo, *Audicija u Sarajevu* (Audizione a Sarajevo). La riproduzione prevedeva che alcuni ragazzi si travestissero da ragazze, ma la richiesta di Alma di interpretare un personaggio maschile viene negata dalla maestra (Kirlić 2018, 58-62).

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causa dei ritardi nella stesura del copione, Alma cerca di dimostrarsi amichevole verso i colleghi. Questi invece rispondono freddi e disinteressati, ma sempre nei limiti di un decoro che non sfocia mai in una palese manifestazione razzista. Così, i dubbi generati dalla confusione circostante restano inespressi, mentre la mancanza di compiti la spinge verso le ultime file della platea, al margine dello spettacolo:

> Oavsett vad som händer ska jag inte yttra ett ord till. Mina kommentarer är inte välkomna och jag skäms över att jag inte förstått det innan jag yttrat mig. (103)

> Qualunque cosa accada non dirò un'altra parola. I miei commenti non sono benvenuti e mi vergogno di non averlo capito prima di esprimermi.

 Il rispetto del dovere del migrante, come detto, impone alla protagonista di narrare la sua storia come buona e positiva, e di mantenere il silenzio sulle possibili implicazioni razziali: «*as a way of understanding the pain*» (Ahmed 2010, 158, corsivo nell'originale). Così, quando il regista le chiede di redigere alcuni monologhi per la stesura del copione, la sua reazione è una genuina esplosione di felicità:

> Det låter som ett fantastiskt arbete och det passar mig perfekt och tänk om mitt namn hamnar i programhäftet. Jag säger ja, ja, ja, självklart, självklart kan jag göra det. (Kirlić 2018, 120)

> Sembra un lavoro fantastico ed è perfetto per me e pensa se il mio nome finisce nel programma. Dico sì, sì, sì, certo, certo che lo posso fare.

Avendo convissuto per anni con una velata cultura della discriminazione, Alma è sicura di aver compiuto il proprio dovere.[19] La pubblicazione del programma sembra ufficializzare non solo la sua partecipazione allo spettacolo, ma anche il suo posto all'interno della società. Tenendolo in mano, Alma ne apprezza l'odore, la forma e il valore simbolico, ma una volta aperto, nota con rammarico che il merito della stesura del testo non le viene riconosciuto.

Dopo la prima, che si rivela un fiasco, il regista si complimenta personalmente con tutti i membri della compagnia, lodando ciascuno per lo specifico contributo apportato. Di fronte ad Alma, questi tuttavia si limita a ringraziarla per essere se stessa. Mascherandosi

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19   Come afferma Ahmed: «if racism is preserved only in migrants' memory and consciousness, then racism would 'go away' if only they would let it go away» (2010, 148; corsivo nell'originale).

dietro un commento apparentemente amichevole, il regista le assegna in realtà un ruolo ben preciso, quello di immigrata. Per quanto necessario si renda il suo lavoro, per quanto si sforzi di contribuire al funzionamento del tessuto sociale, il migrante dovrà comunque accettare il proprio confinamento nelle zone d'ombra dove agisce senza essere visto, come un bravo suggeritore deve fare. La fine non chiude il circolo vizioso di cui Alma pensava di essersi liberata. L'invito a ballare da parte di Roger, spinto dall'imbarazzo di averla ringraziata davanti a tutti in modo diverso, costituisce un ennesimo affronto per la protagonista. Nel momento della danza, Alma ritraccia il movimento del loop che la costringe a comportarsi come da lei ci si aspetta, lasciandosi guidare dal suo capo in «våldsamma snurrar» (183), ossia «giravolte brutali» a cui lei «lyder glatt», cioè «obbedisce allegra».

5   Conclusioni

«Vad är meningen med hennes medverkan?» (Qual è il senso del suo contributo?), si chiede Anna Jörgensdotter (2015) in una recensione al libro. La felicità di Alma prende corpo nell'attesa della promessa, e non nel suo mantenimento. La protagonista mostra volontà e spirito di iniziativa in ogni contesto in cui si ritrova. Tuttavia, lo stesso contesto non ammetterà mai di avere bisogno di lei. La snervante apprensione a cui viene sottoposta nella speranza di essere accettata si rivela solo un mezzo con cui guadagnarsi la sua perpetua lealtà, senza bisogno di dare nulla in cambio. La trappola appare ancora più meschina pensando al trattamento che le viene riservato. Le manifestazioni di discriminazione non emergono quasi mai in forma esplicita a differenza dei più evidenti episodi di razzismo con cui altri autori spesso, ma non sempre, segnalano il contrasto tra svedesi e minoranze di colore. Quanto ad Alma, false promesse mantengono vive le sue speranze. La sua etnia, paradossalmente, la condanna a un movimento oscillatorio tra il desiderio di trovare il suo posto e gli ostacoli che le vengono contrapposti.[20] Queste due dimensioni, tuttavia, formano nella loro interazione anche lo spazio che permette all'autrice di far sentire la propria voce.[21] Pur da una posizione subordinata, Kirlić fa

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[20]   Hübinette ricerca le cause dell'esclusione degli svedesi di etnia asiatica dalle varie modalità di narrazione sociale, giungendo a conclusioni non troppo diverse da quelle di questo contributo: «Asians appear to be more integrated than all other minority groups. However, proximity to white Swedes is not always regarded as something positive» (2021, 197).

[21]   Wagner-Egelhaaf utilizza la metafora del nastro di Möbius per descrivere l'intreccio estetico tra realtà e finzione nella letteratura autofictional: «the strip can be viewed as both subject and object, life and writing, twisting into each other, and thus as deconstructing the oppositions» (2022, 31).

emergere nuove sfumature di incoerenza che caratterizzano l'intricato quadro post-migratorio svedese. Non mostrandosi mai pienamente cosciente della propria diversità, l'autrice svela ironicamente le assurde contraddizioni di tale contesto. La sua è una risposta arguta a un problema di fondo che affligge le società post-migratorie, in cui un buonismo per così dire daltonico che cerca sistematicamente di negare la piaga del razzismo crudo e violento finisce solo per cedere il passo a un più subdolo razzismo strutturale, una forma discriminatoria che: «forbliver upåagtet og ukommenteret som en naturliggjort og bredt accepteret del af hverdagen» (Petersen, Schramm 2016, 195, 'rimane inosservata e non commentata come un aspetto della vita quotidiana naturalizzato e largamente accettato').

Così, l'immagine felice di un popolo perfettamente integrato viene leggermente ridimensionata, riportandoci al punto di partenza. L'esito positivo di un processo integrativo non può essere giustificato unicamente sulla base di un inserimento efficace nel mondo del lavoro. Il rischio è di limitare il concetto di integrazione a un processo monodirezionale, che prevede l'adattamento di una comunità in funzione di un'altra. Inoltre, sottolineare i successi di un unico gruppo etnico a discapito di altri meno integrati sposta di nuovo l'onere degli equilibri in una sola direzione, deresponsabilizzando la cultura svedese da ogni coinvolgimento in questo processo (Foroutan 2015).[22] L'opera di Kirlić dimostra come la discriminazione assuma diversi volti all'interno della società post-migratoria, a partire dalle scelte editoriali e dagli obiettivi promozionali fino alle più sottili espressioni di razzismo che ne descrivono l'anima conflittuale.

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[22] Secondo Foroutan, il concetto di integrazione deve essere sostenuto da un paradigma metanarrativo che coinvolga ogni aspetto della società, anche quello conflittuale e irrisolto della migrazione.

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Il corpo come spazio e la pratica della scrittura: *Die Weiber* (1987) di Wolfgang Hilbig

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Abstract The article aims to demonstrate the concept of *Zwischenraum* underlying Wolfgang Hilbig's short story *Die Weiber* (1987). The setting is to be identified with the social space of the DDR, structured not only through the panoptic control of the Stasi, but also according to rigid ideological norms that polarize the cultural field and produce a spatial gap, as understood by Henri Lefebvre. In the short story, the search for an interstitial space, capable of problematizing reality, is expressed metaphorically through the disappearance of all women: the correspondence between the polarized social space of the DDR and the gender division allows the centrality of the body and the interval of desire to emerge, in order to rhizomatically reconfigure the existing. In *Die Weiber*, this search is channelled through writing: according to Michel de Certeau, such practice can generate and appropriate new social space – a space in which, in Hilbig's view, the culturally repressed can be revealed and the relationship with the deliberately forgotten German history can be re-established.

Keywords Wolfgang Hilbig. Space. Body. Desire. Practice. Identity. Shoah.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 La DDR e le tecniche di potere. – 3 Lo scarto individuale. – 4 La resistenza al linguaggio e lo spazio liminare del corpo. – 5 Alterità, *Zwischenraum*, desiderio. – 6 Corpo, rizoma, pensiero. – 7 La tattica della scrittura. – 8 Il rapporto con la storia. – 9 Conclusioni.

1   Introduzione

Corpi massicci, carni sudate, arti poderosi, muscoli in trazione, movimenti vigorosi delle membra: con questa lunga, vertiginosa sequenza si apre il racconto *Die Weiber* (in italiano *Le femmine*), a cui Wolfgang Hilbig lavorò tra il 1982 e il 1987.[1] Si tratta di uno dei primi racconti lunghi dell'autore, scritto dopo gli esordi nella poesia e nella prosa breve che corsero paralleli al lavoro di fochista in varie fabbriche della DDR: una doppia esistenza costitutiva del suo pensiero anche dopo il 1979, quando si dedicò unicamente alla scrittura. Ci vollero cinque anni prima che *Die Weiber* vedesse la luce, vale a dire soltanto dopo che Hilbig ebbe oltrepassato, nel 1985, il confine che separava le due Germanie grazie a un permesso di espatrio temporaneo, in seguito prolungato finché il Muro non fu crollato. Pubblicato nella BRD, il racconto scaturisce dall'esperienza del socialismo reale nella DDR. La sua scrittura si realizza nella visceralità della percezione e nella veemenza con cui affligge il corpo: una scrittura fatta di fisicità in eruzione, di liquidi e di mucose, ma anche di pensieri labirintici, visioni incontenibili e di un'inarrestabile, nonostante tutto, ricerca di senso.

Il protagonista del racconto si chiama C., iniziale onnipresente nell'opera di Hilbig e che possiamo considerare il suo *alter ego*, esito della sintesi di due vite parallele che segnarono le vicende dell'autore di Meuselwitz – «un pretesto autobiografico sta alla base di quasi tutti i testi di Hilbig» (Opitz 2017, 15; trad. dell'Autrice):

> Mi sono sempre sentito come un uomo con due funzioni. Da un lato ero operaio, dall'altro scrittore, e sempre le due incarnazioni entravano in conflitto – così ho potuto esprimerlo direttamente. In realtà era pressoché impossibile che una di queste persone esistesse per intero. In realtà erano A e B e a un certo punto mi immaginai che si combinassero nel personaggio C. Questa è la sua origine. Una cosa proprio semplice. (Hilbig 1993 cit. in Opitz 2017, 15; trad. dell'Autrice)

Nelle prime pagine di *Die Weiber* incontriamo dunque C., un operaio affetto da una straziante malattia della pelle che lo ricopre di desquamazioni fetenti. C. viene licenziato dalla fabbrica metallurgica[2] in cui lavora, facendo la spola tra le città di M. e di A.,[3] a causa dei suoi comportamenti osceni e di una scarsa attitudine al lavoro.

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[1] Cf. Hosemann 2010, 347.

[2] L'ambientazione corrisponde alle *Hochfrequenzwerkstätten* di Meuselwitz, dove Hilbig lavorò nel 1963-66: cf. Hanisch, s.d.

[3] Meuselwitz e Altenburg: cf. Stillmark 2009, 144.

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Mentre nella fabbrica, nascosto nello scantinato («Formenkeller», Hilbig 2010, 7) a riordinare gli stampi dei pezzi meccanici, poteva spiare le donne all'interno del reparto presse attraverso una grata nel soffitto, in seguito al licenziamento C. riappare in città e scopre che le donne, lì, sono scomparse:

> Era successa una cosa terribile, la peggiore da quando avevo imparato a contemplare la vita dall'esterno, da quando avevo imparato a usare la vita per confezionare descrizioni che mi consentissero una vita interiore. (Hilbig 2019, 20)[4]

L'uomo non si dà pace. Si chiede se la causa sia da ricercare nel suo «ritorno alla vita esterna» (un'«offesa mostruosa»), se quindi la sua persona costituisca l'«antimateria per la loro materia», oppure se non le può vedere «perché ero lontano, inesistente, divorato e nascosto nelle budella delle mie stesse piattole che non potevano annidarsi nella fredda purezza delle femmine. Oppure ero nascosto nelle budella di mia madre…» (24).

Le donne diventano un'ossessione: in un flusso di pensieri e ricordi, C. ripercorre i momenti in cui si è trovato più vicino a loro, dai colloqui con i donnoni granitici dell'Ufficio d'Indirizzamento al Lavoro fino ai viaggi in pullman per recarsi in fabbrica.[5] Il loro ricordo diventa così allucinazione, in cui «colossali balle di capelli infeltriti» (30) inondano il paesaggio e traboccano dai bidoni dell'immondizia dove C. finisce per cercarle – dentro bidoni rivestiti di mucose umide, secernenti secrezioni umane, dalla forma uterina. Il peggio è che, insieme alle donne, C. ha perso di vista anche qualcos'altro:

> La quantità di cose che andavo perdendo cresceva: era evidente che avevo perso anche il mio nome, sì, non sapevo più chi ero, il mio nome era posseduto da un personaggio che mi era estraneo, solo per quello lui era con le femmine, e loro non sospettavano niente. Il mio nome era perduto, proprio come lo erano tutti quei capelli fluenti, fruscianti… perduti perché mi era proibito toccarli, ah, non c'era speranza. (29)

A C. il nome serve per difendersi, dopo il licenziamento, davanti al Tribunale del Lavoro e allo Stato intero. L'unico modo per recuperar-

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4   Si è deciso di citare i passaggi di *Die Weiber* nella versione italiana di Riccardo Cravero, pubblicata con il titolo *Le femmine* insieme a *Vecchio scorticatoio* (*Alte Abdeckerei*, trad. di Roberta Gado) per Keller Editore nel 2019.

5   Sul cui sfondo svettano le discariche, tòpos che ritorna più volte in questo e altri racconti: per un approfondimento del rapporto tra spazzatura, storia e memoria in Hilbig cf. Pye 2008; 2012.

lo, «per legare la mia identità al discorso che dovevo tenere all'Ufficio del Lavoro» (29), è ritrovare un racconto scritto in gioventù, un osceno racconto pornografico finito nell'immondizia: «non arriverò al focolaio della mia malattia se non mi metto completamente a nudo, visto che è evidente che la mia schizofrenia della parola è iniziata già allora» (38).

2 La DDR e le tecniche di potere

L'invisibilità delle donne sembra impedire al protagonista di vedere anche se stesso: per questo arriva disgraziatamente a sperare che la madre con cui ancora convive, partita da più di un mese per visitare la sorella in Germania Ovest lasciandolo alla deriva domestica, torni a casa e riprenda a disprezzarlo, a vergognarsi di lui: «mi avrebbe costretto a diventare l'altro, quello che poteva pensare a se stesso dall'interno, e perciò poteva guardare all'esterno senza limitazioni. Così forse avrebbe avuto un'opportunità... l'altro...» (87).

'Diventare l'altro': così il protagonista percepisce l'imperativo di costruire una precisa identità, il momento finale delle tecniche di potere che hanno dominato un preciso luogo e una precisa epoca – la DDR –, supportato dallo sguardo della polizia segreta, e che rimanda al modello del *panopticon*: quella tipologia di carcere, progettata da Jeremy Bentham alla fine del Settecento, la cui forma consente di sottoporre i prigionieri a un'osservazione costante senza che questi sappiano di essere sorvegliati o meno, e che Michel Foucault prese in seguito a metafora dell'ordine disciplinare organizzato dal potere moderno, tanto invisibile quanto pervasivo ed efficace.[6]

È attraverso i dispositivi – «qualunque cosa abbia in qualche modo la capacità di catturare, orientare, determinare, intercettare, modellare, controllare e assicurare i gesti, le condotte, le opinioni e i discorsi degli esseri viventi» (Agamben 2006, 21)[7] –, e in particolare attraverso il dispositivo del linguaggio, che questa forma di potere opera al fine di produrre il tipo di soggettivazione desiderato, ovvero un soggetto docile e governabile, e così regolare il *bios*.[8] Più volte nel racconto incontriamo i momenti in cui i dispositivi della DDR agiscono: ad esempio quando C. ricorda di essere stato interrogato da bambino da parte della polizia – a causa di alcuni disegni pornografici in realtà non suoi, ma che lo segnano indelebilmente –, quando viene chiamato a colloquio dall'Ufficio d'Indirizzamento al Lavo-

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[6] Cf. in particolare Foucault 2014.

[7] Per una definizione di Foucault si rimanda all'intervista del 1977 con Alain Grosrichard pubblicata in Foucault 1994, 299-300.

[8] Per un approfondimento cf. Coglitore 2016, 163-4.

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ro per motivare la mancanza di impiego regolare, quando tenta di prepararsi al discorso-arringa da tenere al Tribunale per difendere la sua intera esistenza di uomo. Momenti in cui sempre fallisce, deludendo le aspettative riposte in lui dal Padre Stato – immaginato nell'atto di copulare con la madre, propaggine dello Stato all'interno del nucleo famigliare –, e sempre più si allontana dalle forme prestabilite di identità, perdendo anche se stesso.

3 Lo scarto individuale

Da un lato lo spazio controllato dal potere, dall'altro il corpo su cui il potere viene esercitato, a sua volta rappresentato come spazio tensivo e campo di battaglia: tanto pervasivo è lo sguardo della Stasi quanto permeante è la malattia di C.

La prossimità tra spazio e corpo si fa evidente se si prende in considerazione la natura dello spazio sociale. Lo spazio sullo sfondo del racconto, lo spazio angusto disegnato dal potere attraverso precise strategie per renderlo controllabile, è da intendersi come lo spazio sociale in cui si muovevano i cittadini della DDR: «Per capire lo spazio sociale nei suoi tre momenti, bisogna tornare ai corpi», scrive Henri Lefebvre (1974, 60) gettando le basi per la 'svolta spaziale' che ha interessato le scienze umane a partire dagli anni Novanta.[9] La triplicità in questione si riferisce alle diverse dimensioni insite in tale spazio – percepito, pensato, vissuto – generate rispettivamente dalla pratica spaziale, attraverso cui l'individuo produce e si appropria del 'suo' spazio sociale, dalla rappresentazione dello spazio, organizzato dal potere imponendo un preciso ordine ai rapporti di produzione, al sapere, ai codici, al discorso, e infine dallo spazio di rappresentazione, occupato dall'immaginazione «attraverso le immagini e i simboli che l'accompagnano» (59) e che non sono semplicemente 'imposti' dall'alto, ma anche subiti dalla storia di un popolo o di un individuo, «legati all'aspetto clandestino e sotterraneo della vita sociale» oppure all'arte (55):

> La pratica sociale considerata globalmente suppone un uso del corpo: l'impiego delle mani, delle membra, degli organi sensoriali, i gesti del lavoro e quelli delle attività esterne al lavoro. È il *percepito* (base pratica della percezione del mondo esterno, nel senso proprio della psicologia). Le *rappresentazioni del corpo* de-

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9 Vale a dire a partire da *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) di Edward W. Soja. La bibliografia sullo *spatial turn* è vasta; per un approfondimento cf. ad esempio Dünne, Günzel 2018; Döring, Thielmann 2008; Hallet, Neumann 2009; Schlitte et al. 2014; Tally 2012; Warf, Arias 2009.

rivano da un miscuglio di acquisizione scientifica e di ideologie: l'anatomia, la psicologia, le malattie e i rimedi, i rapporti del corpo umano con la natura, i suoi dintorni e l''ambiente'. Il 'vissuto' corporale raggiunge esso stesso un alto grado di complessità ed estraneità, perché la 'cultura' vi interviene, come illusione dell'immediatezza, nella simbologia e nella lunga tradizione giudaico-cristiana, di cui la psicanalisi svela alcuni aspetti. Il 'cuore' vissuto (fino ai disturbi e alle malattie) è stranamente diverso dal cuore pensato e percepito. E più ancora il sesso. Le localizzazioni non sono per niente facili, e il corpo 'vissuto', sotto la pressione della morale, arriva a estraniarsi in un corpo senza organi, castrato e castigato. (60-1)

Catalizzatore e amplificatore dello spazio sociale, il corpo si conferma dunque come la sede in cui viene vissuto lo scollamento tra il percepito, il pensato e il vissuto, lo scarto tra esperienza individuale e strategie del potere, l'estraneità dello spazio disegnato da una cultura lontana dalle necessità dei suoi utenti. La coesione dei tre momenti è invece indispensabile «in modo che il 'soggetto', il membro di un determinato gruppo sociale, possa passare dall'uno all'altro senza perdervisi. [...] Certamente deve esistere un linguaggio comune, un consenso, un codice» (61); quando la coesione manca, come nel caso dello spazio sociale in *Die Weiber*, al suo utente non restano che gli interstizi – dello spazio, del corpo, del linguaggio.

4 La resistenza al linguaggio e lo spazio liminare del corpo

Nel racconto di Hilbig la battaglia per la riconquista dell'io non può che avere luogo sul corpo, inteso come dimensione in cui lo scarto delle dimensioni sociali si fa – dolorosamente – percepibile. Il corpo del protagonista appare sì irrimediabilmente compromesso dalla malattia e dalla sofferenza, ma soltanto perlustrandolo, esaminando tutte le possibilità registrate e le connessioni invisibili alla ricerca di nuove semiotizzazioni, C. può tentare di opporre resistenza, e così di porre se stesso, per fare fronte al dispositivo per eccellenza dell'autorità. Resistere al linguaggio significa resistere al discorso che fissa i rapporti di potere – la sua stessa malattia è del resto «una malattia della parola» (Hilbig 2019, 38), che non compromette soltanto ricordi e pensieri, perché «il corpo *vissuto*, sotto la pressione della morale, arriva a estraniarsi in un corpo senza organi, castrato e castigato» (Lefebvre 1976, 61).

L'intromissione dello Stato nella vita del protagonista gli impedisce infatti di conoscere se stesso, lasciando campo libero alla decadenza fisica e psicologica:

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> Ogniqualvolta percepivo in me la forza insospettata per esami-
> narmi, addirittura per conoscermi, e dunque magari per estir-
> pare da me il germe della malattia, dovevo prendere atto che lo
> Stato mi strappava di mano i mezzi per farlo […] dovevo esistere
> io stesso necessariamente come forma di realtà annientata. (Hil-
> big 2019, 54)

L'identità non si è mai formata perché illegittima nel mondo in cui
vive, di qui la dicotomia (la dissociazione?) alla base del racconto,
per cui il protagonista può esistere solo in due modi: o come cittadi-
no dello Stato socialista, involucro vuoto di se stesso, oppure come
emarginato in uno spazio creato dalla sua stessa scrittura in cui non
esiste nulla all'infuori della propria persona.

Il corpo di C. è corrotto, la sua identità è rimasta in potenza per-
ché a essere corrotta è, in prima istanza, la lingua: la parola è impri-
gionata nelle maglie del discorso ufficiale dello Stato, che ha ripulito
il linguaggio di tutto ciò che potrebbe deviare e disperdere le ener-
gie del singolo, delle 'oscenità' che lo trattengono dal contribuire al-
la realizzazione del socialismo e del bene pubblico. Lasciarsi anda-
re alla dimensione sessuale – e con essa a tutta la natura pulsionale
dell'uomo – è infatti «roba da capitalisti»:

> Così, secondo un metodo molto educativo, presero a separarmi dal-
> la coscienza del mio cazzo, coscienza che fu presa in mano dall'e-
> ducazione sessuale stessa, poiché andava tutelata la pulizia dei
> miei sentimenti. […] a un certo punto mi misi in testa che la divi-
> sione del Paese stesse avvenendo a partire dalla cintola delle fem-
> mine, con tanta accortezza che loro nemmeno se ne rendevano
> conto… e la parte inferiore del corpo delle femmine, la loro profu-
> mata raffinatezza, così credevo di poter evincere dallo stufato po-
> lemico che davano da mangiare al mio cervello, andava dall'altra
> parte del muro, andava nel campo dei reazionari, dove si diceva
> le imbottissero di soldi. La cosa naturalmente doveva disgustar-
> mi. […] Con mio orrore a un certo punto constatai che il mio caz-
> zo – il quale mi dava noie da un bel po' – mirava anche lui a pas-
> sare dall'altra parte del muro […]. (59-63)

È la parodia di uno schematismo istituito dalla DDR stessa, che per
definire la propria identità di nazione si contrappose all''altra', a un
'al di là', istituendo una modalità di pensiero dicotomica e un cor-
tocircuito semiotico che C. sperimenta sul proprio corpo. A Ovest i
corpi, a Est le teste; il Muro percorre non soltanto lo spazio, ma an-
che gli esseri umani. Est e Ovest compongono così una ben precisa
'geografia immaginata', mentre uomini e donne diventano territo-
ri occupati e «colonizzati» (Cazzola 2021), sui quali hanno luogo le
battaglie per l'identità culturale, intesa come una costruzione di-

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pendente dal momento storico in cui è situata[10] – e non soltanto, si vedrà, in prospettiva postcoloniale.

5 Alterità, *Zwischenraum*, desiderio

La dissociazione, di natura linguistica, nel racconto prende dunque «plastische Gestalt» (Cazzola 1994, 155) attraverso il corpo del protagonista fino a distorcersi per mezzo della visione e dell'allucinazione, da cui C. cerca senza sosta una via di fuga, nel tentativo di risanare la propria identità scomposta, attraverso il corpo stesso – inteso non soltanto come la dimensione in cui lo scarto del sociale si fa percepibile, ma anche come dimensione liminare in cui indugiare per rifondare il senso. Tale ricerca è infatti condizionata dall'ossessione per le donne, l'ossessione per l'Altro che permette di approdare *ex negativo* all'individuazione e con cui si può entrare in contatto nello spazio liminare dell'incontro, a un tempo astratto e fisico: lo *Zwischenraum* di Luce Irigaray, il luogo dell'elementare e del fluido (Doetsch 2018, 203-5), che non soltanto riunisce in sé differenza e contatto, ma che significa anche il passaggio da un corpo a un altro, nel materiale primario di cui le soglie dei corpi sono fatte. Alterità come punto di partenza per ripensare l'identità, a maggior ragione quando essa manca: in tale tipologia di soglie il protagonista di *Die Weiber* sembra in effetti indugiare – nelle mucose, nei liquidi, nelle secrezioni, «saliva, sperma, merda... sangue, forfora, squame, croste, sudore, sporcizia» (Hilbig 2019, 109), che nella malattia C. dissemina intorno a sé, disperdendo anche i confini della propria persona, ma che d'altra parte costituiscono l'unica materia, l'unico mezzo rimasto all'individuazione.

Il corpo stesso si trasforma nel racconto in uno *Zwischenraum*, in uno spazio liminare su cui si gioca la battaglia per l'identità, tra lampi di dolore che recidono le relazioni con il mondo:

> il pensiero di quel che ero realmente mi infliggeva continue frustate che subito mi infiammavano i sensi... avevo tutte le membra intorpidite, incapaci di resistere, eppure la mia coscienza desta ardeva come una fiaccola, ero io stesso l'essere infernale che si era accecato, io che non ero capace di percepire altra persona reale al di fuori di me. (87)

La tensione strutturale tra maschile e femminile costituisce lo spazio psicologico in cui si sviluppa tale ricerca nonché l'intera trama: es-

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[10] Per un'applicazione delle teorie postcoloniali di Stuart Hall e Edward Said all'opera di Hilbig cf. Loescher 2011; 2013.

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sa rappresenta una forza di attrazione irresistibile per la mente del protagonista, che innerva la dimensione dell'esperienza e offre alle reti neuronali materia cui aggrapparsi. La sua insuperabile natura dicotomica è costitutiva del concetto di intervallo che in *Etica della differenza sessuale* Irigaray riconosce non soltanto tra uomo e donna, ma anche tra soggetto e oggetto, forma e materia, potenza e atto, che esiste dunque tra due poli opposti e interdipendenti, irriducibile e costitutivo, che divide e unisce, il cui limite viene tracciato diversamente in ogni epoca. Si tratta di uno spazio specifico di ciascuna forma di cultura e che si cerca continuamente di comprimere e riplasmare, perché a occuparlo è il desiderio e «desiderare richiede un'attrazione: la modificazione dell'intervallo, lo spostamento del soggetto o dell'oggetto» (Irigaray 1985, 13).

Tale approccio femminista risulta ormai lontano rispetto alle questioni sul genere al centro del dibattito più recente: Irigaray si concentra infatti sul pensiero della differenza sessuale e ridefinisce la 'soglia' tra i generi senza mai superarla, senza mettere in discussione i rispettivi ruoli e funzioni in quanto 'costruzioni' sociali.[11] Nel racconto di Hilbig, che di certo non intende collocarsi all'interno del dibattito femminista,[12] la differenza di genere viene piuttosto presa a metafora per rappresentare un altro tipo di costruzione sociale, di scissione insuperabile e costitutiva, che dalla condizione politica e sociale del mondo esterno si è imposta ed è penetrata nei meandri dell'inconscio individuale: anche l'intimo di C. è caratterizzato da una dicotomia strutturale e profonda, specchio della frattura politica che dal 1961 ha attraversato lo spazio geografico tedesco, influenzando a sua volta il sistema politico, sociale e culturale della DDR e la vita dei suoi abitanti. Un intervallo percorre l'opera di Hilbig: uno spazio psicologico in cui corpo e realtà si fondono, attraversato da tensioni e forze di attrazione incanalate nello sguardo,[13] nelle sensazioni, nei pensieri che perennemente tendono a un 'al di là', che desiderano qualcos'altro, e che trova forma attraverso la parola e la scrittura; uno spazio 'di nessuno' venuto a crearsi tra due poli in opposizione eppure interdipendenti fra loro, che non possono esistere senza l'altro – il maschile e il femminile, ma anche, soprattutto, l'individuo e la sua patria, l'Est e l'Ovest –; un intervallo che è dunque spazio interstiziale e che nei testi dell'autore diventa lo spazio di azione al cui interno i suoi protagonisti-*alter ego* vivono la propria condizione di incompletezza e di impotenza.

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[11] Si rimanda ad esempio alle teorizzazioni di Judith Butler (2014; 2023). Per un approfondimento cf. Cavarero, Restaino 2002.

[12] Falsata è a sua volta la lettura 'antifemminista' dell'autore in Niedzviegienë 2007.

[13] Cf. Hell 2002.

6   Corpo, rizoma, pensiero

Il disorientamento esistenziale del protagonista prende forma nel campo di energie di tale *Zwischenraum*. A muovere l'intera narrazione è la sua ricerca delle donne, che con la loro scomparsa sembrano invece aver annullato la loro 'carica di attrazione' e depolarizzato il campo, ora occupato da un individuo solipsistico, isolato dal mondo angusto in cui è inserito. La sua pulsionalità si fa di conseguenza ancora più pervasiva, e il suo desiderio irraggia la materia secondo un movimento rizomatico e reticolare in cui tutto è connesso, in cui tutto rimanda in qualche modo a tutto, come «un tubero che agglomera atti molto diversi, linguistici, ma anche percettivi, mimici, gestuali, cogitativi» (Deleuze, Guattari 2003, 40), perché «è sempre per rizoma che il desiderio si muove e produce» (48).

Estremamente critico nei confronti della ricezione passiva delle mode 'neostrutturaliste' – così le definisce in *'Ich'* – tra gli ambienti intellettuali della DDR, resisi complici della paradossale *Aufklärung* operata discorsivamente dalla Stasi per trasfigurare il reale nella realtà desiderata,[14] in *Die Weiber* Hilbig sembra tuttavia compiere un'effettiva *Gegenaufklärung* del potere nel tentativo di evadere dalle linee di forza attraverso cui il suo linguaggio pervade l'esistente, lo spazio come il corpo. Nel racconto il principio di associazione eterogenea e di iperconnessione che organizza la scrittura si àncora alla dimensione fisica e corporea, perché è in essa che lo scarto della trialettica spaziale si fa percepibile, percorrendola parallelamente ai lampi della sofferenza personale alla ricerca di un senso al di là del precostruito. Muovendosi rizomaticamente tra gli interstizi del corpo e del linguaggio, attraverso le sensazioni corporee e, a un tempo, la scrittura, Hilbig va a sabotare non soltanto i dispositivi, ma anche tutte le dicotomie, gli stretti confini e le rigide norme dell'epoca in cui è vissuto, a «drammatizzare l'evento della parola/scrittura e liberare le dimensioni sessuali/linguistiche represse in quanto possibile *linea di fuga* dall'ordine simbolico» della lingua-potere (Eckart 1996, 116; trad. dell'Autrice).[15]

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[14] Cf. Rosso 2023, cap. 3.5.3.

[15] Diversi critici, da Gabriele Eckart (1996) a Marie-Hélène Quéval (2009), hanno letto l'intera opera di Hilbig in prospettiva post-strutturalista. Si discorda tuttavia da tale interpretazione: la figura del rizoma risulta certo utile per spiegare la sovrapposizione tra corpo e linguaggio (in Deleuze infatti «[o]gni cosa è corpo: il pensiero, i segni, le parole sono corpi, immersi in un piano privo di qualsiasi trascendenza. Tutto si muove, si scontra, entra in risonanza, si compone e si scompone sul volto dell'immanenza. Un nuovo pensiero, radicalmente empirista, fa esplodere l'essere e l'Idea, disseminandoli su tutta la superficie della vita e sui movimenti contingenti e caotici dei corpi», Rizzo 2012, 39) volta a scardinare, in prose come *Die Weiber*, le verità precostruite della realtà socialista; tuttavia il pensiero rizomatico non rappresenta per Hilbig un punto di

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Così anche il corpo rappresentato in *Die Weiber* diventa un tutt'uno con lo spazio, un corpo crocevia attraversato da linee di forza da rifrangere e deviare, provenienti dall'interno («sentivo uno strappo da qualche parte, un dolore reumatico, come se qualcuno mi passasse dentro la carne dei fili sudici e sfibrati», Hilbig 2019, 92) e dall'esterno, ovvero dai centri di controllo del potere e delle istituzioni che strutturano le tappe della vita umana per plasmare precisi soggetti, la cui sorveglianza viene percepita in ogni fibra del corpo di C. Ma si tratta anche di un corpo che genera a sua volta spazio: uno spazio, né reale né onirico, vomitato da un pensiero «ipertrofico» (Cazzola 2021) e «libero dalla realtà» (Hilbig 2019, 48) che eccede le possibilità di cui dispone nel quotidiano per conquistarsi un qualcosa di suo. È lo spazio in cui si muove dunque un soggetto in esilio dal mondo, in «esilio nei desideri illeciti» (42), *vissuto* attraverso la scrittura.

7 La tattica della scrittura

«Alla radice di ogni dispositivo sta dunque un fin troppo umano desiderio di felicità e la cattura e la soggettivazione di questo desiderio in una sfera separata costituisce la potenza specifica del dispositivo», continua Agamben (2006, 26); C. non è allora capace di lasciarsi catturare dai dispositivi del potere perché la sua unica felicità consiste nella pratica 'privata' della scrittura: «nello scrivere mi percepivo come soggetto», mentre «[p]er la funzionaria il mio io non era nemmeno da considerare» (Hilbig 2019, 34).

Così mal visti dalle donne e in particolare dalla madre, dal momento che essi «avrebbero potuto spingermi a smettere di perseguire anche solo uno degli obiettivi ideali, vuoi di natura ideologica vuoi igienica, che la famiglia, la scuola e il mondo mi proponevano» (70), i tentativi letterari sono tanto travagliati quanto necessari. Prima di trovare forma nel linguaggio, la scrittura di C. nasce da un desiderio viscerale e impellente; ma poiché i suoi desideri sono difformi, allora anche la scrittura va nascosta, negata, insieme all'identità che su essa si fonda. Come in un circolo vizioso, non trovare un'identità vuol dire a sua volta non trovare le parole, ammalarsi, trasformarsi in un mostro ributtante, che nella sua anormalità riconferma la norma in quanto tale:

> Fuori il mio corpo correva nella notte, del tutto insensibile, mentre dentro di me la parola era immersa nel miasma stantio, diffuso

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arrivo, bensì un mezzo per recuperare, come si vedrà, la memoria storica falsata dal potere. Cf. Rosso 2023, cap. 3.5.9.

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e tuttavia tenace di un'angoscia vecchia e impenetrabile, i vocaboli si dibattevano imprigionati in reti nebulose, e più i guizzi di terrore laceravano fili e maglie, più quelle si tendevano fitte e sottili. Che cosa ci facevano le mie parole in mezzo a quel groviglio, mi domandavo: forse cercavano di accoppiarsi e non ci riuscivano; va' via, su vieni, resta qui… erano parole guastate dalla diffidenza verso il luogo in cui venivano pronunciate. – Mi sembrava di ricordare di aver immerso anche l'io di quel vecchio testo pornografico in una sostanza somigliante a un groviglio umido e marcescente. (39)

Possiamo accostare la pratica della scrittura raffigurata nel racconto a tutte quelle microattività (camminare, leggere, abitare, parlare, cucinare) che Michel de Certeau esamina in *L'invenzione del quotidiano*: attività che il singolo individuo realizza attraverso il *corpo*, intese come processo semiotico attraverso il quale riorganizzare le relazioni di senso in cui si trova immerso e così creare uno spazio sociale di cui appropriarsi e da abitare. Se qui è in particolare attraverso la pratica del camminare che il corpo e i suoi movimenti tracciano «scritture mute» (Cervelli 2012, 79) attraverso cui rendere proprio o familiare uno spazio disegnato da qualcun altro – una forma di «bracconaggio» sul territorio della cultura (Certeau 2001, 6) –, il personaggio di Hilbig, attraverso il corpo, vive piuttosto la scrittura stessa; la costruzione del senso prelinguistico, prodotto dall'individuo certiano attraverso i gesti delle pratiche quotidiane, in Hilbig si attua invece per mezzo di una lingua dalla consistenza fisica, imprigionata nel corpo, tanto vergognosa quanto ricercata, e nell'intimo costantemente praticata. Si tratta di parole talmente vive, di una necessità di scrivere così impellente da diventare a tutti gli effetti una tattica del quotidiano: la scrittura è infatti, anche per Hilbig, l'unica pratica a consentire un'identità che davvero gli appartenga. Una simile tattica di sopravvivenza sta alla base dell'impulso alla scrittura del personaggio di C., alienato non soltanto dal proprio ambiente lavorativo, ma dall'intera realtà in cui è cresciuto – con il paradosso che l'unico spazio sociale che C. riesce ad abitare è quello immaginario, prodotto dalla scrittura stessa.

Mentre il corpo compromesso diventa spazio tensivo e terreno di lotta, soltanto resistendo al linguaggio e muovendosi rizomaticamente attraverso la pratica della scrittura C. riesce d'altro canto a rifondare il legame di senso con il reale, primo passo per la riconquista dell'io, recuperando il passato dimenticato, la tragica storia tedesca della prima metà del Novecento da cui lo Stato socialista, con il suo mito di fondazione come erede dell'antifascismo,[16] ha redento se stesso.[17]

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16 Cf. Sabrow 2004.

17 Cf. anche Pasqualini 2018, 540-1.

8   Il rapporto con la storia

La precisa costellazione di norme e valore forgiata dall'*Aufbau* del socialismo era sì volta a fondare un'alternativa politica, economica e sociale al modello capitalista, ma ha implicato d'altra parte l'inibizione di quella parte della natura umana considerata potenzialmente pericolosa per la Ricostruzione stessa: il desiderio. Se è vero che, come ricorda Cazzola (1994, 161), anche l'Occidente ha fatto ricorso alla 'desublimazione repressiva', alla concessione di forme di piacere e di libertà superficiali per così imporre i rapporti di produzione capitalistici (Marcuse 1974), in Germania (Est) si può rintracciare l'origine di tale modello repressivo fin nel guglielminismo, il cui modello autoritario ha continuato a esistere, interiorizzato, anche dopo il nazionalsocialismo e la Seconda guerra mondiale (Cazzola 1994, 165).

Incapace di regolare un *bios* umano desessualizzato, la natura castrante della DDR ha prodotto una tecnica di potere compensativa, penetrante discorsivamente ogni anfratto dell'intimo dove l'occhio della polizia segreta non può arrivare. Il protagonista tenta così di eludere lo sguardo panottico del potere attraverso il proprio, uno sguardo visionario e sotterraneo, che con desiderio guarda la vita 'vera' dal basso – così come i corpi virulenti delle donne attraverso la grata nello scantinato della fabbrica, il cui ferreo reticolato si imprime indelebilmente sulla sua retina – e che penetra talmente in profondità nel reale da indurre una perdita di realtà: «Dovevo affidarmi alle *allucinazioni* per riuscire a trovare il mondo e le possibilità di viverci» (Hilbig 2019, 55).

C. ha già intravisto cosa si nasconde dietro la superficie della realtà socialista, cosa il socialismo ha cercato di superare e dimenticare: l'ha visto da bambino, quando andava a giocare nelle baracche dei lager, dove fantasie di sangue e di morte si impressero nella sua mente e si legarono ai «primi desideri erotici infantili» (40), trasformandolo in un pornografo senza speranza di riscatto. È dal ricordo delle baracche, dall'immagine dei cumuli di capelli rasati che deriva l'appellativo 'femmine' (*Weiber*): così venivano chiamate le prigioniere nei campi di concentramento per distinguerle dalle donne guardie. «[E] quando, là fuori davanti alla mia città, cercavo di ricordare me stesso, mi venivano in mente quelle lunghe file di femmine» (111), scrive Hilbig nel finale; 'femmine' diventa allora un nome onorifico, attraverso cui riconnettersi alla vera natura delle cose:

> Il mio linguaggio era pieno di capelli, nel fiume di parole che facevo fluire da me si agitavano e frusciavano capelli, in autunno gli alberi malati e spogli al di là della discarica indossavano parrucche di crini e fumo, i camion della nettezza urbana li gettavano al vento sulle pendici delle miniere abbandonate. Capelli che già sospettavo dentro i bidoni dell'immondizia sui bordi delle vie.

> Capelli a cui ero destinato in quanto rifiuto umano [...] Capel-
> li che non era possibile salvare se non li accoglievo nella mia lin-
> gua. (Hilbig 2019, 42)[18]

Il rapporto di Hilbig con il passato nazionalsocialista tedesco e la
shoah fu sempre sofferto e tormentoso. «Hilbig era convinto che fu
soltanto per un capriccio della storia se, nascendo tardi, non si rese
colpevole dei crimini commessi dai tedeschi durante la guerra. E non-
dimeno nutriva sensi di colpa, perché suo padre, da soldato, era sta-
to dalla parte dei colpevoli», precisa Opitz (2017, 27; trad. dell'Autri-
ce) ricordando il testo che l'autore di Meuselwitz pubblicò nel 2002
sulla *F.A.Z.* in risposta alla celebre *Lettera di Lord Chandos* (1902)
in cui Hugo von Hofmannsthal tematizzò la crisi del linguaggio di
inizio Novecento:

> Un giorno di quell'anno funesto venni alla luce, come si suol di-
> re, urlando. – Vivo tuttora sotto quella luce: sono diventato un uo-
> mo gentile e bisognoso d'affetto, che dal punto di vista linguistico
> non è del tutto impotente, ma mi chiedo come mettere in relazio-
> ne questa luce che mi illumina, anche se è la luce di notti inson-
> ni, con me stesso. Se la provvidenza, che si serve di ogni sorta di
> imponderabilità, mi avesse portato al mondo soltanto vent'anni
> prima, sarei probabilmente diventato uno di quegli uomini belli,
> biondi e con gli occhi azzurri che, coperti di sangue, sghignazzan-
> ti e sbronzi, presero parte a crimini da loro in seguito negati con
> fermezza, e che tutt'oggi si stenta fin troppo spesso a riconosce-
> re. Parlo in una lingua che consente le più svariate possibilità per
> esprimere quella stessa negazione, e per casualità non posso ac-
> cusarmene. (Hilbig 2021, 132-3; trad. dell'Autrice)

Mentre a Lord Chandos le parole si sfacevano in bocca come fun-
ghi marciti, l'eredità della Seconda guerra mondiale tolse del tutto
la capacità di parlare, e non soltanto a Hilbig – si pensi alla radica-
lizzazione della crisi del linguaggio che indusse alla celebre affer-
mazione del 1949 di Theodor W. Adorno, in seguito rivista, secondo
cui scrivere una poesia dopo la frattura nella storia della civiltà che
fu Auschwitz era «un atto di barbarie» (1972, 22). Ritrovare le paro-
le, rievocare il rumore degli zoccoli delle detenute del lager (Opitz
2017, 101-2),[19] recuperare la memoria è per Hilbig il compito più pro-
prio della letteratura.

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18 Traduzione leggermente modificata.

19 Anche in questo caso si tratta di un motivo autobiografico e storico: a Meuselwitz
il lager femminile era situato nella Nordstraße, vicino alla casa di Hilbig nella Rudolf-
Breitscheid-Straße.

Soltanto attraverso la tattica eversiva della scrittura il protagonista del racconto può sottrarsi al discorso ufficiale e rievocare la storia tedesca caduta forzatamente nella dimenticanza, può rievocare *le femmine*, fatte della stessa materia esalata dal suo corpo in decomposizione; «che altro erano se non terra?» (Hilbig 2019, 109), si chiede infatti C. nel finale, suggerendo tuttavia che unicamente la scrittura, con le sue metafore, può forse restituirne anche l'anima:

> In caso di necessità potevo elargire loro le mie unghie, i miei denti, eppure la loro anima doveva essere diversa dalla mia. Per ottenere l'anima bisognava probabilmente pregare la loro divinità femminile, e questa era Gaia, la Terra. [...] La loro anima però andava descritta in maniera magari simile ai loro capelli. Fluente e morbida, un torrente che iniziava a scurire sotto la pioggia. (Hilbig 2019, 109-10)

9 Conclusioni

Nonostante il senso di colpa, la sofferenza e l'estraneità, nelle opere di Hilbig permane un legame con la DDR, non ideologico ma viscerale, una relazione simbiotica con la violenza che plasma – anche nelle resistenze di un soggetto che tenta di sfuggirvi per cercare se stesso altrove –, la stessa violenza strutturale che perpetua il potere e da cui il socialismo applicato non fu dispensato, come l'Hilbig fochista al servizio dello Stato operaio sperimentò in prima persona.

In *Die Weiber* è in particolare nella dimensione del corpo – un corpo vivo fino all'estremo, in cui i pensieri e le parole assumono una consistenza fisica e dolorosa – che viene vissuta la soggettività, in questo caso un'identità inaudita e mancata, che mai si realizza nel mondo degli uomini e che sempre viene cercata attraverso la pratica della scrittura.

Nel corso di una potente crisi del linguaggio il corpo senza identità diventa un luogo di nessuno, campo di battaglia delle politiche culturali, teatro di forze violente, *Zwischenraum* da riplasmare. Un corpo che sintetizza istanze eterogenee, che può soltanto ingurgitare e rivomitare pezzi di mondo, smembrando i discorsi ufficiali alla ricerca della propria voce con una lingua rizomatica, che attraverso un gioco di infinite analogie si rimodella nella visionarietà, come da lezione espressionista e ancor prima romantica.[20] Un corpo pri-

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20 Fin da giovane Hilbig fu un grande lettore dei Romantici, in particolare di Hoffmann, Tieck, Eichendorff, Novalis, mentre già nel 1956, con il primo stipendio come apprendista alesatore nella *Maschinenfabrik* del paese, acquistò l'opera completa di E.T.A. Hoffmann (Opitz 2017, 144). Sul rapporto tra Hilbig e il Romanticismo cf. inol-

vato del senso e mosso da un desiderio pervasivo, quello delle 'femmine', alla tragica ricerca di un'alterità che lo riporti in connessione non soltanto con la storia, così collocando Hilbig nella *Ostmoderne*,[21] ma anche con il proprio io:

> Nessuna risposta, nessuna eco. [...] Lo sapevo, non mi era riuscito di descrivere le femmine; restavano assenti, assenti in questa città, assenti nella mia descrizione. Assenti come la luce e la vita in queste strade... (Hilbig 2019, 118)

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21   Cf. la «Einleitung» e il capitolo «Die späte Moderne des Ostens» in Böttiger 2004, 7-20; 85-157; cf. inoltre Rosso 2023, 96, 118-22, 139-40, 167, 213.

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Saint-Domingue : un paradis perdu ?

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Abstract   The apparent decay into which Haiti had fallen since its independence was used by French anti-abolitionists as a proof of the alleged inability of Black people to rule over the prosperous Haitian land. However, was the island as prosperous as they affirmed during French colonization? Based on the testimonies of the members of the Leclerc expedition, this article attempts to answer this question by focusing on their description of the state of the colony at the time of their arrival on the island.

Keywords   Haitian Revolution. General Leclerc. Haitian Representations. Nineteenth Century Haiti. Exoticism.

Sommaire   1 Introduction. – 2 Saint-Domingue après les Troubles de 1791. – 3 L'expédition Leclerc (1801-1803). – 4 Conclusion.

1   Introduction

Après plus de dix ans de révolution, le 1er janvier 1804 la partie oc-
cidentale de l'île de Saint-Domingue, colonie française depuis 1697,
se proclame indépendante de la France. Deuxième état du continent
américain à se libérer du joug de l'ancienne métropole et première
République noire à voir le jour au niveau mondial, Haïti paya très
cher son indépendance. Si à l'époque coloniale, l'île constituait la
principale ressource financière de l'Empire français[1] et représentait
le centre culturel de référence pour la Caraïbe francophone,[2] après
1804 elle fut condamnée à un isolement aussi bien politique qu'éco-
nomique par les grandes puissances mondiales. D'un côté, la France
et l'Angleterre – qui augmenteront et renforceront leurs empires au
XIXe siècle – ne pouvaient permettre aux idéaux révolutionnaires qui
avaient guidé la révolution haïtienne de se répandre dans le reste de
leurs colonies ; de l'autre, les États-Unis, qui auraient pu faire d'Haï-
ti un allié potentiel, n'étaient pas prêts, au début du siècle, à accep-
ter un pays fondé par des Noirs ayant aboli l'esclavage. Pour contre-
carrer cette menace venant de la Caraïbe, une véritable campagne
de délégitimation culturelle d'Haïti avait été lancée dans la presse
européenne et américaine, le résultat de cette infériorisation systé-
matique de l'Autre étant la vision partagée d'une île jadis considé-
rée comme un paradis terrestre, maintenant à la merci d'un peuple
barbare incapable de s'autogouverner.[3]

   Encouragé par le goût pour l'exotisme de l'époque, le portrait idyl-
lique d'Haïti – issu d'une longue tradition de récits de voyage euro-
péens remontant jusqu'au XVe siècle[4] – s'inscrit ainsi dans les enjeux
d'une rhétorique raciste et esclavagiste axée autour de l'inaptitude

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[1]   « On a peine à imaginer aujourd'hui ce qu'a pu représenter au XVIIIe siècle la par-
tie française de l'Île de Saint-Domingue [...] pour le commerce colonial français. Jamais
colonie ne fut aussi prospère et aucune n'égalera par la suite la Reine des Antilles qui
fournissait à elle seule les ¾ de la production mondiale de sucre » affirme Jacques de
Cauna dans son étude séminale sur les habitations coloniales (2003, 11).

[2]   Au XVIIIe siècle, les théâtres de Saint-Domingue accueillaient régulièrement des
acteurs venus de la Métropole (Clay 2013, 195 sqq. ; pour un aperçu général sur le
théâtre colonial à Saint-Domingue, voir aussi Fouchard 1955). Dans sa description de
l'île, Ducœurjoly identifie « quatre salles de spectacle assez jolies ; la première est au
Cap-Français, la seconde au Port-au-Prince, la troisième à Saint-Marc, et la quatrième
aux Cayes. Les troupes de comédiens y sont assez bonnes » (1802, 80), alors que Jean
Fouchard en cite huit : au Cap-Français (1955, 11 sqq.), à Port-au-Prince (39 sqq.), à
Saint-Marc (69 sqq.), à Léogâne (79 sqq.), aux Cayes (87 sqq.), à Jérémie (95 sqq.), au
Petit-Goâve et à Jacmel (101-2).

[3]   Pour un approfondissement sur la représentation de la Révolution haïtienne dans
les récits métropolitain, cf. Cousseau 2022.

[4]   L'île d'Hispaniola est décrite comme un véritable paradis terrestre dans la lettre
sur la découverte du Nouveau-Monde que Christophe Colomb envoie aux Rois d'Es-
pagne (De Rosny 1865, 27-8).

endémique des Noirs à profiter des dons que la prospère terre haï-
tienne dévoilait en abondance sous la domination française. Or, cette
rhétorique que nous pourrions qualifier « de la Chute » ou « du Para-
dis perdu », était-elle représentative de la réalité de l'île à la fin de
la colonisation européenne ?

Axé autour des témoignages des principaux acteurs de la guerre
d'indépendance haïtienne, notamment des membres de l'expédition
Leclerc (1801-1803) et de leurs interlocuteurs locaux, cet article es-
sayera de répondre à cette question en se concentrant en particu-
lier sur la description de l'état de la colonie à l'arrivée de l'armée
napoléonienne. Il s'agira dans un premier temps d'examiner un cor-
pus choisi de rapports et de mémoires concernant la situation de
Saint-Domingue après le commencement des Troubles (1791). Rédi-
gés par les colons exilés à Paris comme par les représentants fran-
çais à Saint-Domingue, ces témoignages hétéroclites et souvent anti-
thétiques porteront Napoléon Bonaparte à se prononcer sur l'envoi de
l'armée à Saint-Domingue, en confiant le sort de la campagne à son
beau-frère, le général Leclerc. Dans un deuxième temps, nous nous
concentrerons sur l'analyse des témoignages de trois membres de
l'expédition Leclerc en essayant de dresser un portrait réaliste de la
situation de Saint-Domingue à l'époque de la guerre d'indépendance.

2 Saint-Domingue après les Troubles de 1791

Après l'adoption par les Blancs de Saint-Domingue d'une Constitu-
tion particulière qui refuse explicitement les droits politiques aus-
si bien aux gens de couleur libres qu'aux esclaves, en 1791 Vincent
Ogé et Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, appuyés par la Société des Amis des
Noirs, réclament l'application du décret du 15 mai par lequel l'As-
semblée nationale leur avait accordé l'égalité et le droit de repré-
sentation. Responsables du soulèvement des affranchis, Ogé et Cha-
vannes seront capturés et roués vifs sur la place d'armes du Cap, ce
qui déclenchera la révolte des esclaves dans les ateliers du nord de
l'île (Hoffmann 1995, 29). Dès lors, Saint-Domingue sera le théâtre
de violentes insurrections qui menaceront la stabilité du système de
plantation, rendant compliqué pour la France la gestion administra-
tive et politique du pays pendant plus d'une décennie.

Dans ce contexte historique troublé, le foisonnement de publica-
tions sur l'importance économique de la colonie et sur la nécessité d'y
maintenir l'esclavage n'est pas étonnant. Principalement rédigés par
des colons (Barbé de Marbois 1796 ; Cormier 1792 ; Ducœurjoly 1802)
et par des membres de l'administration coloniale (Chabanon 1791), les
ouvrages dont nous proposons ici un échantillon représentatif pré-
sentent un large éventail de méthodes et de stratégies que la France
pouvait adopter pour reprendre le contrôle de l'île. La diversité des

positions politiques – souvent contradictoires – exprimées dans ces écrits reflète non seulement la complexité de la question raciale et coloniale après la Révolution française, mais aussi les intérêts personnels qui informent les relations des auteurs sur l'état du pays.[5]

Espérant rallier l'opinion publique et le gouvernement de la Métropole à leur cause, les planteurs publient des rapports idylliques sur l'état de la colonie, dont ils prisent la richesse du sol, la beauté du paysage et le pittoresque des habitations :

> c'est une vraie jouissance que d'y voir les jardins des habitations ; ils sont toujours des mieux peignés, et parfaitement entretenus. On y voit en tout temps, feuilles, fleurs et fruits ; l'odeur qu'on respire est des plus suaves, attendu que les haies vives qui ceignent les habitations, sont faites de citronniers ou de bois de campêche, et que la terre y produit beaucoup d'aromates. (Ducœurjoly 1802, 81)

Ces descriptions plus ou moins biaisées s'érigent, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, en véritable paradigme esthétique, continuant d'exercer au XIXe siècle une influence majeure sur la perception européenne de l'administration coloniale française dans la Caraïbe.[6]

Nous ne saurons nier les signes évidents de l'enrichissement et de l'opulence des habitants de Saint-Domingue dont les archives coloniales gardent la trace (de Cauna 2003, 197). Il importe cependant de souligner que la vision idéalisée de la terre évoquée dans les écrits des colons entraîne une série de criticités dont la non-conformité à l'état réel du pays constitue sans doute l'aspect le moins problématique. Visant à endiguer la diffusion des idéaux révolutionnaires ainsi qu'à calmer les critiques exprimées contre le traitement violent et abusif des maîtres à l'encontre des esclaves, ces témoignages s'attachent à fournir une image édulcorée du système de plantation qui se construit, d'un côté, sur la magnification de la vie dans la colonie,[7] de l'autre, sur la disqualification des dénonciations faites par

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5   Sur la diversité des positions souvent antinomiques adoptées dans ces témoignages, voir notamment Girard 2011. Pour un aperçu plus général, nous renvoyons à Benot 2004 ; Cottias 2003 ; Cousseau 2022.

6   Nous pouvons citer à titre d'exemple les propos du géographe Castonnet des Fosses qui à la fin du XIXe siècle rappelle, non sans nostalgie, la richesse comme la splendeur de l'ancienne colonie sous la domination française : « Au moment où la Révolution éclata et vint bouleverser l'ancien monde, la colonie de Saint-Domingue était des plus prospères et des plus florissantes. C'était une petite France. Partout l'on vantait le luxe et l'élégance de ses habitants qui avaient su réunir les charmes de la vie créole à l'urbanité de la vieille Europe ; aussi le nom de notre possession était-il devenu synonyme de splendeur et de richesse. Partout l'on parlait avec admiration de cette île, appelée à juste titre la Reine des Antilles » (1893, 1).

7   D'ailleurs, cette vision s'imposera, donnant lieu à des représentations exagérées, voire fallacieuses de Saint-Domingue avant la Révolution : « La voirie ne laissait rien à

les abolitionnistes. Les propos du colon Barbé de Marbois sont en ce sens emblématiques :

> D'ailleurs comment s'intéresser à des maux sur lesquels l'opinion est en suspends [sic] ? Comment cette opinion si souvent *trompée* sur les faits qui se passent presque sous ses yeux, ne serait-elle pas *égarée* par des rapports *mensongers*, par des récits *absurdes* et *emphatiques*, et par l'*affectation* avec laquelle on peint, comme un peuple guerrier, laborieux et fidèle une *poignée de brigands* insoucians pour tout, excepté le désordre et le pillage, et dont les hauts faits *consistent à avoir converti la plus florissante colonie de l'univers en un vaste tombeau* où sont engloutis ses habitans et les espérances de la France. (Barbé de Marbois 1796, 107 ; italique ajouté)

Déplorant le déclin du pays, passé d'un prétendu état de grâce existant lors de l'hégémonie des planteurs à un état de déchéance, Barbé de Marbois voit dans le choix du gouvernement français de confier les rênes de Saint-Domingue à Toussaint Louverture un autre motif d'inquiétude pour le sort de l'île : « Saint-Domingue n'est plus qu'un monceau de cendres et de ruines : la France, quoiqu'en disent les charlatans politiques, n'a plus de colonies, plus de commerce, plus de marine commerciale ni militaire, et la paix,[8] ne fera que l'éclairer davantage sur sa misère, et ajouter à l'horreur de son dénuement » (1796, 113).[9]

Le style hyperbolique comme le ton fataliste du colon, dont le but est de convaincre Napoléon Bonaparte d'envoyer l'armée à Saint-Domingue afin de remettre le pouvoir politique et économique du pays à l'administration coloniale, s'appuient sur les préjugés racistes de l'époque relatifs à l'incapacité des Noirs à gouverner efficacement la fertile terre haïtienne dont la dégradation subite ne serait que la preuve la plus évidente. S'il est vrai que les luttes incessantes ont causé d'importants dégâts aussi bien aux plantations qu'aux centres urbains, force est de constater que les descriptions contenues dans

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désirer, et les différents points de la colonie étaient reliés entre eux par de belles routes, plantées d'orangers, de citronniers et de palmiers. Des ponts en maçonnerie avaient été construits sur les rivières. Des digues protégeaient les campagnes contre les inondations et des écluses facilitaient les irrigations. Des diligences ou des messageries à cheval assuraient aux villes les moyens de communiquer facilement entre elles. Dans la plupart des paroisses, il y avait un bureau de poste, et le départ du courrier pour l'Europe, avait lieu deux fois par semaine. En un mot, *rien ne manquait à notre colonie* » (Castonnet des Fosses 1893, 6 ; italique ajouté).

8 Il se réfère ici à la guerre contre les Anglais qui avaient envahi la colonie à l'époque où Barbé de Marbois écrit. Le pays sortira du conflit seulement deux ans après, quand les Anglais négocieront avec Toussaint Louverture l'armistice du 30 mars 1798.

9 Sur la représentation de Toussaint Louverture aussi bien dans les récits historiques locaux que dans les récits historiques métropolitains, cf. Cousseau 2022.

les documents produits par les colons et par les Français installés à Saint-Domingue manifestent la partialité de leurs auteurs, dont les intérêts sont strictement liés à l'économie de plantation et à l'esclavage.

Le recoupement de ces descriptions avec celles des récits de voyage de la même période montre en outre que l'image de la terre généreuse et fertile tant vantée par les colons ne correspondait pas à la réalité des choses. Au XVIIIe siècle, les voyageurs européens dénonçaient en fait un progressif appauvrissement du sol haïtien dû à des siècles de culture intensive de la canne à sucre et du café.[10] Le gain immédiat l'emportant sur la gestion durable des terrains, l'« assolement, au sens habituel de rotation des cultures, n'était pas pratiqué à Saint-Domingue. [...] Ce n'est que lorsque le rendement baisse, au bout d'une quinzaine d'années par exemple, qu'on fait deux ou trois ans de vivres avant de replanter les cannes » remarque Jacques de Cauna (2003, 158). Les conséquences néfastes de cette surexploitation – non seulement d'un point de vue environnemental, mais aussi d'un point de vue économique – étaient d'ailleurs visibles bien avant le commencement des Troubles, comme en témoigne la description des plantations caribéennes faite par Girod de Chantrans :

Si l'extrême fécondité du sol d'Amérique supplée à l'industrie de nos agronomes d'Europe, comme elle n'est cependant pas inépuisable, le temps arrive enfin où les récoltes diminuent ; et le colon voit ce changement sans s'occuper des moyens de rappeller [*sic*] une fertilité qui n'est plus au sein de son héritage.

Déjà la Martinique est épuisée et ne se soutient que par le commerce des isles voisines, dont elle est l'entrepôt. Ces isles elles-mêmes ont aussi dégéneré [*sic*]. S. Domingue enfin, la plus riche

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et la plus étendue de toutes les possessions françoises d'outre-mer, n'est plus ce qu'il étoit il y a trente ans. Ses meilleurs terres ont diminué de bonté, et les médiocres seront bientôt épuisées, à moins que l'industrie ne les régénere [*sic*]. (Girod de Chantrans 1785, 251-2)

Sans doute ignorant des conditions agricoles de l'île, mais fort conscient du danger croissant que représentent Louverture et son intention de déclarer l'indépendance, Bonaparte se laisse convaincre par les « nombreux rapports envoyés par les hauts représentants de la France aux Grandes Antilles, dont l'influence auprès du gouvernement français était bien supérieure à celle de la foule de colons sans le sou vivotant en exil » (Girard 2011, 13), d'envoyer l'armée à Saint-Domingue. En décembre 1801, la flotte commandée par le général Leclerc quitte les ports français et arrive presque deux mois après au Cap. Quand les Français débarquent à Saint-Domingue, le pays qui les accueille est loin d'être le paradis terrestre décrit dans les récits européens. Dans une lettre du 27 septembre 1802 adressée au Premier Consul, Leclerc ne peut s'empêcher de constater l'impréparation de ses troupes face aux épreuves qui les attendent dans les mois à venir : « On a en Europe une fausse idée et du pays dans lequel nous faisons la guerre et des hommes que nous avons à combattre » (Roussier 1937, 215).

3   L'expédition Leclerc (1801-03)

Leclerc voit dans le manque d'information et dans le caractère contradictoire de la documentation disponible – d'ailleurs, peu nombreuse – des facteurs déterminants qui ont empêché Bonaparte de bien gérer la crise politique de la colonie : « Le premier consul n'a pas pu, dans sa sagesse, faire un code pour régir un pays qu'il ne connaissait pas, et sur lequel il avait des rapports contradictoires » écrit-il au général Christophe le 24 avril 1802 (Chanlatte 1824, 115). L'opacité des récits de et sur Saint-Domingue est un élément qui revient dans tous les témoignages des membres de l'expédition et de leurs interlocuteurs locaux ici analysés (les lettres des généraux Leclerc et Hardy et les mémoires de Debord et de Louverture).[11] Cette insistance serait révélatrice d'un décalage évident entre les

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11   Au milieu du XIXᵉ siècle, Debord justifie en ces termes la parution de ses mémoires : « Récits inédits que je viens, quoiqu'un peu tard, faire paraître, *pour remplir le vide et accomplir les souvenirs rétroactifs* de l'époque des circonstances de mes campagnes à l'armée de l'expédition de Saint-Domingue, aujourd'hui Haïti, d'où alors, étant hors Europe, on ne pouvait pas obtenir avec sûreté des résultats de renseignements positifs *qui furent* PEU CONNU [*sic*] *en France* » (1858, 3 ; italique et lettres majuscules dans l'original).

représentations européennes de la colonie et la situation véritable de Saint-Domingue pendant la guerre.

Parmi les problèmes majeurs que Leclerc dénonce dans ses missives à Bonaparte, l'absence importante d'infrastructures constitue sans doute l'obstacle d'ordre logistique le plus difficile à surmonter. Le général envoie à plusieurs reprises des demandes d'équipement « pour les hôpitaux, l'artillerie et l'habillement », en s'excusant de leurs nombres comme de leurs coûts élevés par le fait que la « colonie [...] manque de tout » (Roussier 1937, 58). Les descriptions des deux villes principales de l'île insérées dans le récit de Debord confirment l'état de délabrement du pays. L'auteur prise le système de drainage adopté par les Espagnols dans la partie orientale de l'île – où une partie de l'armée française trouvera refuge après la défaite de 1803 – en l'opposant à l'inadéquation du réseau d'assainissement du Cap et de Port-au-Prince, « des villes ouvertes et destinées au commerce, *déjà détruites plusieurs fois* » (1858, 16 ; italique dans l'original).

Si le sous-développement infrastructurel de la partie occidentale doit être partiellement imputé aux ravages causés par les révoltes continuelles, les témoignages qui précèdent le commencement des Troubles dénoncent déjà la modestie des centres urbains de la colonie : « La construction des bâtimens est fort simple, attendu qu'on ne s'occupe que des distributions convenables pour se loger, sans employer ni l'ornement ni la décoration » (Ducœurjoly 1802, 67). Présent également dans les récits de voyage du XVIIIe siècle, ce portrait peu flatteur du pays dévoile des siècles de mauvaise gestion de la part des Blancs et prouve que l'accusation du déclin rapide de l'île qui sera imputé, après l'Indépendance, à l'incapacité des Noirs à s'autogouverner, est non seulement partiale, mais aussi injustifiée.[12]

Bien que prodigue, la terre haïtienne demande une attention particulière pour pouvoir prospérer, comme le remarque Girod de Chantrans : « les soins du maître et son intelligence influent tellement sur la prospérité de son attelier [*sic*], sur son travail et sur le produit qui en résulte, que c'est bien ici que l'on peut dire avec vérité, tant vaut l'homme, tant vaut la terre » (1785, 129-30 ; italique dans l'original). Répugnant à « témoigner d'un quelconque attachement au pays, ne

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[12]   La correspondance du général Leclerc semble suggérer que des doutes sur l'état réel de la colonie avaient déjà été exprimés avant son départ. Avant de quitter l'Europe, il demande au gouvernement l'aide financière et matérielle pour mener à bien une campagne dans un pays « où [l'armée] ne peut compter sur aucune ressource » (lettre au Premier Consul, le 8 décembre 1801, Roussier 1937, 55-6). Une fois à Saint-Domingue, les doutes du général s'avèrent exacts. Après s'être temporairement emparé du contrôle de l'île, Leclerc se penche sur l'administration locale se rendant bientôt compte de son inadéquation. Il écrit au gouvernement français pour l'institution d'infrastructures adéquates, notamment d'une chambre de commerce et d'hôpitaux, parce que ceux dont il dispose sont non seulement insuffisants, mais aussi remplis de soldats tombés victimes de la fièvre jaune.

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serait-ce que par le confort de son installation » (d'Ans 1987, 138), les planteurs n'investissent pas dans l'amélioration des services et des infrastructures de Saint-Domingue, qu'ils considèrent comme une « terre de passage » qu'ils quitteront pour « vivre plus tard noblement – ou tout au moins bourgeoisement – une retraite dorée en France » (de Cauna 2003, 59).[13] Cela expliquerait sans doute la passivité des colons face aux soulèvements des Noirs et des Mulâtres[14] comme l'avidité aveugle dont ils font preuve aussi bien pendant les Troubles que pendant la Révolution.[15]

S'il est vrai que l'« égoïsme forcené du système de plantations avait concentré tous ses investissements, et toute la technicité disponible à l'époque, au sein des seules 'habitations'» (d'Ans 1987, 169), il est vrai aussi que la prospérité de la terre vantée par les colons ne semble plus correspondre à la prodigalité exaltée par les premiers explorateurs. C'est d'un ton déconcerté que Leclerc remarque la ruine de la majorité des habitations :

> J'avais calculé, avant d'arriver à Saint-Domingue, comme une grande ressource, de tenir le plus longtemps possible sous le

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13 Ce détachement déconcerte les voyageurs européens qui se rendent à Saint-Domingue au XVIIIe siècle. En exemple parmi d'autres, le témoignage de Moreau de Saint-Mery qui remarque stupéfait : « En arrivant à Saint-Domingue, on est étranger à presque tous ceux qu'on y trouve. On ne les entretient le plus souvent que du projet qu'on a de les quitter ; car la manie générale est de parler de retour ou de passage en France. Chacun répète qu'il part *l'année prochaine*, et l'on ne se considère que comme des voyageurs, dans une terre où l'on trouve si souvent son dernier asile. Cette malheureuse idée est tellement familière, qu'on se refuse ces riens commodes qui donnent du charme à l'existence. Un habitant se regarde comme campé sur un bien de plusieurs millions ; sa demeure est celle d'un usufruitier déjà vieux ; son luxe, car il lui en faut, est en domestiques, en bonne chère, et l'on croirait qu'il n'est logé qu'en hôtel garni » (1797, 7 ; italique dans l'original).

14 Antoine Métral rappelle à ce sujet que quand les premières habitations avaient été incendiées, la majorité des colons « vouloient, dans le désespoir, abandonner la colonie aux esclaves conjurés. Tous laissoient voir à découvert une lâcheté, cachée par l'orgueil d'une prospérité qui n'étoit plus, et ils furent sans vertu dans l'adversité » (1818, 24).

15 Député de Saint-Domingue à l'Assemblée générale, Charles de Chabanon blâme l'« esprit privé » des colons pour la crise de la colonie : « N'hésitons point à attribuer à cette cause une partie des troubles qui ont régné dans la colonie depuis cette multiplication prodigieuse des assemblées. Le mot *municipalité* a retenti de France à S. Domingue ; on l'a embrassé comme des enfans embrassent leurs hochets. De-là, cet *esprit privé* poussé à l'excès ; de-là, ce choc de l'ambition qui veut dominer, et de la cupidité qui voit dans l'exercice de quelque branche d'administration la possibilité de s'enrichir. De-là, tous les résultats de la jalousie dont les grands propriétaires, même, ne seront jamais exempts, lorsqu'ils verront ce que l'on appelle les *Petits Blancs*, à Saint-Domingue, de niveau avec eux pour opiner. De-là, enfin, cette divergence d'opinions, égale à la divergence physique de ces individus rassemblés par hasard de tous les coins de la France, n'ayant entr'eux tous qu'un seul point central, lequel point central est un germe de division : tous vous diront, "je *viens ici faire fortune, et vîte, et vîte encore, puis m'en aller*". Quel esprit public, quel attachement au pays et au sol ! Quel patriotisme peut-on espérer de placer au milieu de ce bisarre [*sic*] rassemblement d'hommes » (1791, 1-6 ; italique dans l'original).

séquestre les propriétés. Cette ressource est presque nulle au-jourd'hui que la plupart des habitations sont ruinées, et que le Gouvernement est intéressé à remettre en jouissance tous les pro-priétaires, dont les propriétés sont dans un état de délabrement épouvantable. (Roussier 1937, 122)

Abandonnée par les planteurs aux premiers signes de danger,[16] lais-sée « sans bras, sans établissemens, sans animaux, sans instrumens, et généralement dépourvue de tous les objets de première nécessité » (Barbé de Marbois 1796, 119) et, plus généralement, épuisée par les cultures intensives, l'île semble récupérer lentement sa richesse d'an-tan grâce aux initiatives efficaces de Louverture : « Les champs, aban-donnés dans la guerre, se couvrirent de riches moissons que faisaient croître des hommes libres. L'agriculture fit fleurir le commerce et de toutes les parties du monde les vaisseaux arrivaient dans leurs ports. [...] tout marquait une prospérité croissante » (Métral 1825, 22). Les propos de Métral trouvent une correspondance dans les archives co-loniales qui prouvent une restauration effective de la production plan-tationnaire grâce aux politiques agricoles de Louverture (cf. de Cauna 2003, 211 sqq.). Axées sur la culture intensive de la terre, ces poli-tiques diffèrent cependant très peu de celles adoptées par les colons et ne résolvent pas la baisse de performance des terrains.[17] Si, d'un côté Louverture peut affirmer sans trop exagérer que « [l]a colonie de Saint-Domingue dont j'étais commandant, jouissait de la plus grande tranquillité, la culture et le commerce y fleurissaient, l'isle était parve-nue à un degré de splendeur où on ne l'avait pas encore vue et tout ce-la, j'ose le dire, était mon ouvrage » (1853, 311), de l'autre, cette splen-deur se réfère seulement au pouvoir commercial du pays.

Exploitée presque exclusivement pour l'exportation de la canne à sucre et du café, la terre haïtienne ne produit pas suffisamment de

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16 Barbé de Marbois déplore l'état de la colonie abandonnée par les colons qui fuient aussi bien les esclaves en révolte que les Anglais, alliés des insurgés jusqu'à l'armistice de 1798 : « De trois parties qui la composent, celle du nord, la plus riche de toutes, n'est plus qu'un désert inculte et abandonné : ses champs, que couvrait la canne à sucre, sont en friche, des halliers ont pris la place des vastes plantations de cafiers qui couronnaient ses mornes. Tout ce qui était maisons, manufactures, moulins à cannes et établisse-mens, a été généralement réduit en cendres, et offre à peine quelques décombres. [...] La partie de l'ouest déchirée, quoique moins violemment, par les mêmes convulsions, n'offre pas un aspect ni des ressources plus brillantes : dévastée, ruinée en grande par-tie, elle n'a conservé quelques lambeaux intacts, que pour voir les brigands les disputer avec fureur et acharnement aux Anglais, qui, depuis deux ans, les ont envahis. Dans le sud, enfin, livré comme les autres au brigandage des hordes soulevées qu'aucun frein ne retient plus, le quartier seul de Jérémie subsiste encore » (1796, 115-6).

17 Il est intéressant de noter que faute d'un profit immédiat venant des cultures, qui souffrent des luttes récentes, Leclerc proposera d'exploiter les forêts de l'île. Après l'In-dépendance, le déboisement sera, avec la continuation de la culture de plantation, l'une des causes principales de l'appauvrissement des sols haïtiens.

fruits et de légumes pour garantir la sécurité alimentaire de tous ses habitants, comme en témoignent les lettres nombreuses que Leclerc adresse au gouvernement français en demandant que l'on lui envoie des biscuits, le seul aliment disponible dans la colonie étant des bananes. La situation, déjà précaire à la fin du XVIIIe siècle,[18] s'aggrave pendant la guerre d'indépendance. Aux demandes d'aide que Leclerc réclame par écrit à Napoléon Bonaparte en lui demandant l'envoi d'une somme suffisante à « pourvoir aux besoins indispensables, dans toutes les guerres, d'une armée qui va dans un pays où elle ne peut compter sur aucune ressource » (Roussier 1937, 55-6) correspondent les plaintes du général Hardy qui décrit dans une lettre à sa femme les conditions pénibles dans lesquelles leurs troupes se sont retrouvées après le débarquement du 8 février 1802 :

> J'avais neuf grandes lieues à faire, avec des soldats qui n'avaient *rien à boire ni à manger*. [...]
>
> Je continuai ma marche à la lueur des incendies ; les habitations de la plaine et la ville du Cap flambaient. Vision horrible ! Je frémis encore en l'évoquant.
>
> Enfin, j'arrivai dans cette cité malheureuse à travers les cris, les hurlements, le feu et la fumée. La ville brûlait depuis trois jours ; *il ne reste pas une maison intacte*. À peine avons-nous trouvé, Leclerc et moi, un coin pour nous abriter. (Hardy de Périni 1901, 269 ; italique ajouté)

Ce qui ressort en général de ces témoignages est la pénurie d'une colonie ravagée par le feu et par la guerre, dans laquelle la menace constante de la fièvre jaune et le manque de moyens (Hardy de Périni 1901, 272) l'emportent sur la jouissance des sens propre à tout Éden. La beauté idyllique de la terre, chantée dans la plupart des descriptions européennes en mal d'exotisme, est absente de ces récits écrits par des militaires qui ont souvent payé de leur vie les visées coloniales de Bonaparte[19] et qui ne se réfèrent au paysage îlien que pour en souligner la dégradation.

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18   En 1792, Cormier dénonce déjà la dépendance alimentaire de la colonie vis-à-vis de l'extérieur : « Saint-Domingue qui pourroit peut-être fournir, par sa fécondité, à des cultures de nécessité première, est cependant consacrée spécialement à la culture du sucre et du café, objet de luxe, et dont la vente donne un bénéfice plus considérable. Un approvisionnement certain et suffisant des objets de première nécessité, est donc encore ce que la Colonie a besoin d'assurer » (53-4).

19   Sur la vision coloniale de Bonaparte et sur les raisons de la défaite de la campagne de Saint-Domingue, cf. Gainot ; Macé 2003.

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4   Conclusion

Diffusée déjà à partir du XVᵉ siècle, l'image exotique d'Haïti en tant que paradis naturel sera reprise dans les discours métropolitains du XIXᵉ siècle qui feront de la prétendue incapacité des anciens esclaves à exploiter la richesse et la prodigalité de l'île l'une des preuves les plus évidentes de leur « barbarie ». Trouvant son essor après la perte de la colonie en 1804, cette rhétorique du « Paradis perdu » a ses racines dans les bouleversements politiques de la fin du XVIIIᵉ siècle, principalement dans les plaidoyers contre l'abolition de l'esclavage et l'égalité des races publiés notamment par les colons et par les résidents français à Saint-Domingue. Le portrait idyllique de l'île propre à ce genre de récit se révèle cependant une mystification du bienfondé de la colonisation européenne : l'analyse des témoignages des acteurs principaux des événements qui ont marqué les dernières décennies de la domination française à Saint-Domingue a prouvé la valeur exclusivement rhétorique de cette idéalisation de la terre qui ne correspondait pas à l'état réel de la colonie à la veille de la Révolution. Il importe de souligner que, se construisant en parallèle de ce portrait biaisé, les représentations autochtones de la terre haïtienne, au lieu de le réfuter, s'approprieront le modèle descriptif employé par la presse étrangère pour en montrer l'artificialité. Investi d'une signification nouvelle, chez les écrivains haïtiens du XIXᵉ siècle le paradigme européen contribuera, d'un côté, à bâtir une vision d'Haïti contre-discursive et originale qui légitimera et illustrera la production littéraire locale ; de l'autre, ce portrait élogieux et apparemment exotique de la terre servira de prétexte pour dissimuler une réflexion attentive sur les plaies sociales accablant Haïti et son peuple.

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S'initier aux écrits littéraires du XVIᵉ siècle par le site *Tragiques Inventions* : une pédagogie du *hand-reading*

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Abstract   Designed as a paper reflecting on the editorial mediation of early modern French literary texts, this article maps the educational activities conducted on the *Tragiques Inventions* site since 2020. In particular, it delves into the procedures linked to documenting, generating and manipulating descriptive and analytical (meta)data. A new concept of 'hand-reading' is being developed – the possibility of using digital technology to prioritize human intervention in the construction of knowledge through textual editing. This concept will bring a fresh perspective on early modern literary texts.

Keywords   Editorialization. Digital critical publishing. Pedagogy. Collaborative project. Early Modern literature.

1   Introduction

En introduction au colloque *Lire un texte vieilli du Moyen Âge à nos jours* qui s'est tenu en 2009 au Collège de France, Michel Zink rappelle que

> lire un texte vieilli : c'est ce que fait tout lecteur, dès lors qu'il lit autre chose que le journal du jour ou un roman de l'année. La distance créée par le vieillissement du texte est la première cause qui fait de la littérature une expérience du temps et un arrachement à soi-même.

Et de poursuivre :

> Cette distance est à la fois subie et goûtée. Elle est subie, puisqu'elle est source d'incompréhension ou de malentendus. Elle est goûtée, car le vieillissement de la langue et le dépaysement du passé exercent en eux-mêmes un charme sur le lecteur, tout en accroissant le malentendu, puisque le texte n'est pas né vieux et qu'il a été écrit pour ses contemporains. (Zink 2009, § 1-2)

La réflexion soulève avec une acuité particulière la complexité de l'enseignement de la littérature de la Renaissance auprès des publics étudiants d'aujourd'hui : au XVIᵉ siècle, la littérature française commence à être majoritairement produite en langue vernaculaire et se diffuse sur de nouveaux supports, notamment imprimés, qui s'inventent avant de se normaliser progressivement à la fin du siècle (Martin 2000). Le geste d'inscription qui préside au fait littéraire est ainsi consubstantiel au procédé de communication à des publics singuliers, selon des modalités qui coexistent encore : les textes peuvent être lus à haute voix ou silencieusement, de manière collective ou individuelle, sous forme manuscrite ou imprimée. Ils sont en somme toujours contextualisés, ce dont témoignent les nombreux péritextes qui désignent des dédicataires, des amis de l'auteur, des instances juridiques qui accordent l'autorisation de publier.

  Cette omniprésence de la circonstance dans le dispositif de publication des écrits de la Renaissance constitue une opportunité significative de faire saisir aux étudiants les spécificités d'un tel régime textuel : l'accès à la littérature de cette période est indissociable du geste éditorial qui a contribué à son façonnage, aussi bien rédactionnel (sa mise en texte) que matériel (sa mise en livre) (Réach-Ngô 2013). Dès lors l'analyse littéraire gagne-t-elle à s'enrichir d'une pratique expérimentale de l'éditorialisation, selon la notion définie notamment par Bruno Bachimont, Marin Dacos et développée par la suite par Marcello Vitali-Rosati. « Processus consistant à enrôler des ressources pour les intégrer dans une nouvelle publication »

(Bachimont 2007, 315), geste de « valorisation d'un corpus par la sé-
lection des textes, par la mise en œuvre des collections, par l'établis-
sement d'index thématiques, par la mise en place régulière de focus
éditoriaux en fonction du type de public » (Dacos, Mounier 2010, 67),
l'éditorialisation « désigne l'ensemble des dynamiques qui produisent
et structurent l'espace numérique », à savoir « les interactions des ac-
tions individuelles et collectives avec un environnement numérique
particulier » (Vitali-Rosati 2020, § 40). En prenant comme objet d'ana-
lyse le site pédagogique *Tragiques Inventions*,[1] issu d'un échange
entre deux séminaires conjoints et successifs que nous avons dispen-
sés au Département d'études linguistiques et culturelles comparées
de l'Università Ca' Foscari (Venise), et ses développements au cours
des années 2020-23 avec d'autres enseignantes françaises,[2] nous vou-
drions proposer une réflexion sur la manière dont l'éditorialisation
peut conduire des enseignants à amener leurs étudiants à envisager
comment « lire un texte vieilli » – et le revivifier ainsi – par le geste
collectif de sa publication en ligne. Issu d'une réflexion commune en
matière de médiation éditoriale et accompagné d'une pratique péda-
gogique expérimentale partagée, cet article se propose également
comme un bilan d'étape, un temps de réflexion sur le travail engagé
depuis 2020 au sein d'un projet en cours de développement sur un
site destiné à s'enrichir et à accueillir de nouveaux participants et
de nouvelles perspectives.

Le projet *Tragiques Inventions* est né d'un double questionnement :
comment favoriser l'accès aux textes de la Renaissance à destination
d'étudiants de langue et littérature françaises qui ne sont pas néces-
sairement spécialistes de la période ? Et selon quelles modalités le
recours à l'outillage numérique peut-il constituer un mode de média-
tion participatif qui invite à une réflexion sur le processus commu-
nicationnel au cœur de l'identité de ces écrits littéraires ? En pre-
nant comme objet d'analyse le site *Tragiques Inventions*, nous nous

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[1] Né à l'occasion de la pandémie de Covid-19 en 2020, le site pédagogique *Tragiques
Inventions* (dir. Magda Campanini et Anne Réach-Ngô) propose à des enseignants fran-
cophones de philologie numérique, de littérature française et de littérature comparée
un espace d'éditorialisation où les étudiants peuvent expérimenter par eux-mêmes les
opérations scientifiques et techniques de la mise en ligne d'un texte de la première mo-
dernité. Le site participe à la plateforme EMAN hébergée par Huma-Num : https://
eman-archives.org/tragiques-inventions/.

[2] Nous remercions Véronique Lochert, Marine Parra, Marie-Claire Thomine et No-
ra Viet des échanges que leur collaboration à ce projet nous a permis d'avoir ces der-
nières années. Nos remerciements vont également aux membres du comité scientifique
qui ont enrichi les discussions, Jean-Claude Arnoud, Stefania Tesser et Romain We-
ber. Parmi les contributeurs de ce projet, nous voulons également mentionner le rôle
essentiel des étudiants des diverses promotions qui ont participé au projet, ainsi que
des stagiaires, Amadou Coulibaly et Yasmine Semcheddine en 2021, Gautier Almaleh
et Vittoria Carli en 2023, ainsi que la participation de Silvia Boraso, qui contribue au
projet depuis ses débuts.

demanderons selon quelles modalités l'éditorialisation peut aider à « lire un texte vieilli » et le revivifier par le geste collectif pédagogique de sa publication en ligne.

En revenant sur les partis-pris, méthodes et pratiques de la publication des données du site *Tragiques Inventions*, nous voudrions proposer une nouvelle notion, celle de *hand-reading*, à la suite des réflexions menées par James Sosnoski sur « l'*hyperreading* » (Sosnoski 1999, 161-77) par Franco Moretti sur le « *distant / close reading* » (Moretti 2008; 2016) ou encore par N. Katherine Hayles sur le « *machine reading* » (Hayles 2016).[3] En mettant au premier plan du dispositif la main active de l'enseignant, de l'étudiant, de l'éditeur numérique, le choix est fait d'un usage du numérique qui privilégie la médiation humaine dans la construction des savoirs. Il ne s'agit aucunement de préconiser un recours au numérique comme base de connaissances communes établie verticalement qui viendrait remplacer un enseignement traditionnel de la littérature, mais de l'intégrer au sein d'un enseignement de la littérature « en face-à-face », c'est-à-dire dans le cadre d'un cours régulier en présence (Combès 2008 ; Barbot, Jacquinot-Delaunay 2008). « Lire avec les mains », c'est favoriser la rencontre concrète des étudiants avec le livre en salle de réserve, les inviter à le manipuler en suivant les divers parcours suggérés par l'appareil péritextuel, les tables et index, les jeux d'échos, au-delà de la lecture linéaire que favorise l'étude en extraits. C'est aussi penser le processus de lecture comme une entreprise active qui vise à transmettre un texte pour le mettre à portée d'autres mains. Cela revient alors à engager le traitement de sa numérisation et assurer son référencement pour que le texte étudié puisse être compris par d'autres lecteurs : effectuer la description de la ressource documentaire, la transcription du texte, l'ajout de métadonnées analytiques et la mise en relation de la notice produite avec d'autres notices, en somme favoriser l'intertextualité et encourager à une lecture d'investigation. Enfin, « lire avec les mains », c'est contribuer à la construction effective de nouveaux savoirs par un travail d'édition critique qui concourt à l'élaboration d'index des données, d'analyses circonstanciées ou en réseaux, en invitant les utilisateurs du site à de nouveaux parcours au sein des extraits et dans leurs relations.

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3 Italiques des Auteurs. Voir également la synthèse que N. Katherine Hayles propose de l'articulation de ces différentes notions : « The crucial questions are these: how to convert the increased digital reading into increased reading ability and how to make effective bridges between digital reading and the literacy traditionally associated with print » (Hayles 2010, 62).

2   La bibliothèque numérique *Tragiques Inventions*, cadre pédagogique pour une lecture active des textes littéraires de la Renaissance

Le projet *Tragiques Inventions* s'inscrit dans un ensemble d'initiatives récentes relevant de pratiques pédagogiques instrumentées qui intègrent à l'étude des textes littéraires des exercices de transcription, d'édition critique ou de constitution de corpus, suivant diverses interfaces numériques.[4] Comme le formule très bien Arnaud Laborderie,

> en contexte numérique, c'est le dispositif technique, et plus spécifiquement ses interfaces, qui se trouvent en situation de médiateurs, avec une interaction qui change de nature puisque le médium lui-même est interactif. La médiation numérique suppose un accès en ligne au document, mais aussi un accès intellectuel qui rend le document intelligible et délivre un savoir, et un accès relationnel par la création d'expériences utilisant les ressources patrimoniales. (Laborderie 2020, § 3 ; Bideran 2015, 29-40).

Les démarches pédagogiques qui intègrent une participation active des étudiants, qualifié de « *learning by doing* » ou d'« *experiential learning* » bénéficient « des avantages de la pédagogie par projet, notamment un apprentissage plus actif et une pédagogie plus individualisée » (Gambette, Lechevrel, Trotot 2021, 159-76).

Dans le cadre du projet *Tragiques Inventions*, il s'agit de proposer un espace pédagogique où peuvent se rencontrer des enseignements de littérature française et comparée portant sur la première modernité, ainsi que des formations en humanités numériques et en sciences documentaires. Le projet accueille également des stagiaires désireux de s'initier à l'éditorialisation de ressources en sciences humaines ou plus précisément à l'édition critique savante dans un environnement qui facilite l'apprentissage en autonomie accompagnée. Intégré à la plateforme EMAN (Édition de Manuscrits et d'Archives Numériques) du CNRS, le site *Tragiques Inventions* adopte la forme d'une bibliothèque numérique structurée selon le modèle du logiciel Omeka classic à partir duquel sont développées les multiples fonctionnalités

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[4]   Nous renvoyons à quelques publications généralistes sur ce sujet, qui ont nourri notre réflexion, notamment Puimatto 2018 et, en ce qui concerne la question de la médiation numérique dans l'enseignement secondaire, Brunel 2018. Au sujet des relations avec les institutions patrimoniales, voir Chevallier 2020. En matière de retour d'expériences, voir à titre d'exemple l'enregistrement de la table ronde « Éditer et enseigner » lors de la journée d'étude EVEille 2021 consacrée à l'édition critique numérique : https://e-diffusion.uha.fr/eveille/journee-3-eveille-2021-editions-critiques-numeriques/video/3686-editer-et-enseigner-mars-2021/.

spécifiques de la plateforme EMAN.[5] Si la plateforme s'oriente majoritairement vers des usages dédiés à la recherche, elle s'inscrit également dans une réflexion sur l'édition et la valorisation de corpus suivant une logique documentaire propre au dispositif de la bibliothèque numérique, dont Fabrice Papy et Corinne Leblond rappellent avec force son lien étroit avec le monde professionnel de la bibliothéconomie (Papy, Leblond 2009, 37).

Les vives critiques émises au cours des années 2010 par les auteurs de l'article (Papy, Leblond, 2009) sur le dévoiement de l'appellation de « bibliothèque numérique » pour divers dispositifs de présentation de ressources numériques en collection offrent matière à réflexion dans le cadre du projet *Tragiques Inventions*. Il s'agit bien de s'attacher à développer un « processus de 'conception dans l'usage' que prônent les ergonomes pour confronter les réalisations techniques à l'usage effectif en cohérence avec les besoins exprimés, ou non, des usagers » (Papy, Leblond 2009, 49). Cette notion rejoint celle de *hand-reading* que nous proposons pour caractériser la lecture mise en œuvre par un enseignant et ses étudiants pour rendre active l'élaboration collective d'une bibliothèque numérique à visée pédagogique. En effet, l'adoption des principes de catégorisation relevant de l'approche bibliothéconomique implique le respect des standards qui garantissent un traitement méthodique des données et permettent la communication entre les systèmes informationnels suivant les principes d'interopérabilité et de réutilisabilité défendus par la Science Ouverte, afin de concourir à la construction collaborative des savoirs.[6]

Pourquoi accorder une telle place à la main (*hand-reading*) dans la pratique pédagogique que nous expérimentons sur le site *Tragiques Inventions*, qui se veut aussi, dans un cadre pédagogique, un exercice de lecture ? La première raison tient à la matérialité du livre à laquelle nous souhaitons ramener les étudiants, quand bien l'éditorialisation concerne une copie numérisée du livre ancien. La confrontation avec le document original en salle de réserve produit le plus souvent une émotion face à la fragilité, à la rareté, à l'expérience privilégiée de la rencontre avec 'l'œuvre littéraire' qui se présente alors comme un artefact que l'on peut tenir dans la main. Inciter les étudiants à toucher le livre – ce qu'ils n'osent généralement pas faire sans qu'on les y incite explicitement – concourt à replacer l'écrit

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5 Pour une présentation de la plateforme EMAN, voir le site générique `https://eman-archives.org/EMAN/`.

6 Voir, en France, le site « Ouvrir la science » du Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche (`https://www.ouvrirlascience.fr/accueil/`) et, en Italie, le « Programma Nazionale per la Scienza Aperta » (PNSA) 2021-2027 (Ministère de l'université et de la recherche), `https://www.mur.gov.it/sites/default/files/2022-06/Piano_Nazionale_per_la_Scienza_Aperta.pdf`

dans une relation concrète, circonstanciée, physique avec un texte dans sa présentation matérielle la plus complète. L'expérience de la perte de ce qui ne peut être restitué par le numérique permet aux étudiants de prendre la mesure de ce qu'opère tout fac-similé ou édition savante, papier ou numérique, aussi complets qu'ils soient : une re-présentation du livre inédite, selon des codes sémiotiques nouveaux.

Or la prise en main d'une technologie (l'imprimerie comme l'informatique) constitue le lieu d'exploration le plus approprié pour interroger comment la technique façonne cette re-présentation (Sennett 2010 ; Crawford 2010). L'appropriation par les étudiants de la matérialité du livre pour en produire une nouvelle mise en forme, dans l'environnement contraint et régulé d'un site numérique collaboratif à vocation pédagogique, nécessite dès lors qu'ils s'imprègnent d'abord du mode de fonctionnement du livre singulier dont ils procèdent à l'éditorialisation d'un extrait : ses composantes, leur agencement, les dispositifs mis en œuvre pour accompagner ses divers manipulations, les entraves éventuelles à une lecture linéaire ou à une lecture de consultation, les usages projetés et les formes d'émancipation possibles du lecteur, etc. La rencontre avec l'interface numérique pensée pour accueillir les extraits étudiés en cours – avec sa structuration logique, l'ergonomie de son tableau de bord, la nécessaire prise en compte de l'écosystème du site pour y intégrer une nouvelle pièce documentaire – relève d'une seconde expérience de la matière, celle d'un espace de publication également régi par des règles d'atelier. Ce retour à un artisanat de la publication constitue alors une expérience intellectuelle qui place au cœur du dispositif la main de l'étudiant, de l'enseignant, de l'ingénieur, et plus largement de la communauté scientifique. La participation au site *Tragiques Inventions* constitue ainsi une manière d'introduire les étudiants, en une forme de compagnonnage, dans les rouages les plus concrets de la production du champ littéraire (prise en compte de contraintes temporelles et financières pour mener à bien un projet d'édition, respect d'un cahier des charges, interactions entre les différents contributeurs, rôle de la documentation et de la valorisation pour justifier le projet, etc.).

Consacré aux écrits littéraires des XVIᵉ et XVIIᵉ siècles de registre tragique, le projet *Tragiques Inventions* met plus précisément l'accent sur le statut du texte des premiers siècles de l'imprimé, alors que les auteurs ne disposent pas encore d'un statut juridique affirmé (Schapira 2003, 59-67 ; Boujou 2016 ; Buron 2003) et que les textes poursuivent parfois leur genèse une fois leur première publication effectuée (Lebrave, Grésillon 2000). Ces particularités inhérentes au régime textuel de la première modernité nécessitent que la lecture des textes s'accompagne d'un travail de contextualisation, non pas seulement de la production d'un auteur ou d'une œuvre donnée, mais

aussi des modalités de production, de diffusion, de recomposition des écrits. Il s'agit notamment de tenir compte, dans le dispositif de présentation des œuvres, du rôle des transferts culturels européens qui se sont notamment manifestés à travers des pratiques d'emprunt, de traduction/adaptation et de circulation des textes particulièrement complexes. Le dossier consacré au *Décaméron* rassemble par exemple les deux corpus, en italien et en français, et met en évidence le rôle majeur de la traduction dans la transmission de l'ouvrage à destination des lecteurs francophones.[7] Aussi la collection « Decameron » est-elle structurée suivant ces deux aires linguistiques et favorise-t-elle des comparaison entre les différentes éditions.[8] En prenant comme clé d'entrée dans les écrits littéraires le processus de leur éditorialisation par des lecteurs d'aujourd'hui, le projet *Tragiques Inventions* vise ainsi à sensibiliser les étudiants à la complexité de la notion d'« œuvre » littéraire, au-delà de l'accès aux textes qui leur sont présentés sous une forme stabilisée dans les éditions critiques de référence. Par la place qu'il accorde au document initial – l'exemplaire singulier que les étudiants ont parfois pu consulter avec leurs enseignants en salle de réserve –, le projet favorise un accès aux textes par la matérialité des livres et invite les étudiants à réfléchir aux enjeux de la médiation imprimée et numérique.

3 Structuration documentaire et portée pédagogique : une perspective anthologique

Pour favoriser cette entrée dans la diversité des réalités textuelles de la Renaissance, le site *Tragiques Inventions* privilégie la forme anthologique. D'un point de vue pratique, la participation des enseignants au site peut se faire de manière plus aisée par le traitement de textes issus d'œuvres différentes, qu'ils traitent en cours suivant un parcours qui leur est propre. Les collections déjà rendues publiques à la fin de l'année universitaire 2023 (La *Châtelaine de Vergi*, Le *Décaméron*, Les *Contes amoureux*, l'*Heptaméron*, les *Histoires tragiques*, le *Trésor des histoires tragiques* et plusieurs canards sanglants du début du XVIIe siècle) rendent compte de l'intérêt porté au recueil narratif pour présenter aux étudiants un éventail significatif des pratiques d'écriture de registre tragique aux premiers siècles de l'imprimé. Un nouveau chantier d'ordre thématique, autour du viol de Lucrèce, témoigne de l'ouverture récente du site à des textes de théâtre, dont seules quelques scènes d'éditions des XVIe et XVIIe siècles font l'objet d'une étude approfondie au sein

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[7] https://eman-archives.org/tragiques-inventions/collections/show/21.

[8] Voir à ce sujet Viet 2012 et 2018 sur le *Caméron* de Boccace par Vérard.

d'un parcours intertextuel. Au-delà du caractère pragmatique de ce choix pédagogique, la place accordée à la pratique anthologique permet d'éclairer l'enjeu de la circulation des textes, des motifs et des formes d'écriture entre les recueils à cette époque. Suivant une telle perspective, la constitution même des ressources, sous la forme anthologique, devient un mode d'exploration des pratiques de présentation des textes à la Renaissance : le lecteur-éditeur se fait compositeur de nouveaux parcours de lecture où il procède lui-même à l'appropriation des textes avant de les mettre à son tour à disposition de la communauté des internautes.

Suivant une telle perspective, le projet s'inscrit au sein d'une réflexion sur les gestes de la publication numérique et la manière dont ils sont susceptibles de restituer les formes de la circulation des écrits de la première modernité. Dans le cadre du logiciel Omeka, les ressources numériques sont structurées en « collections » qui se composent d'« items ». Du côté des collections, il s'agit de produire des informations sur les « Œuvres », « Éditions » et « Exemplaires ». Le schéma de structuration des données (Œuvre > Édition > Exemplaire) permet de rappeler la diversité des modes de présentation éditoriaux d'une même œuvre au gré de son histoire éditoriale et le rôle des aléas dans l'accès aux éditions par le biais des exemplaires conservés. Les étudiants sont amenés à lire les textes à travers les différents supports à disposition à l'époque de leurs diverses rééditions avant d'en venir à l'édition critique de référence dont ils pourront alors mesurer les partis-pris.

Ce principe minimal d'ordonnancement des documents encourage les enseignants à une contextualisation éditoriale des textes étudiés d'un point de vue littéraire. Ainsi, si le site vise à engager avec les étudiants une lecture fine de quelques textes rassemblés pour les initier à un auteur (Boccace, Marguerite de Navarre, Bandello, Boaistuau, Belleforest, Jeanne Flore, etc.), à un genre (l'histoire tragique, la narration brève, le discours moral, l'anthologie didactique) ou à un type de textes (la dédicace, l'avis au lecteur, le sommaire, le récit tragique), il permet également de situer ces extraits dans le recueil ou l'œuvre intégrale qui les a vu paraître, en intégrant l'histoire éditoriale de l'œuvre qui a conditionné ses modes de diffusion et de réception ; c'est le cas, entre autres, de la parution des *Histoires des amants fortunés* avant l'*Heptaméron* ou de la *Pugnition de l'Amour contempné* avant les *Comptes amoureux* (Kemp 2004, 269-91). Le projet met aussi l'accent sur le rôle des traducteurs (Laurent de Premierfaict et Antoine Le Maçon pour le *Décaméron*), des adaptateurs et compilateurs (François de Belleforest pour les *Histoires tragiques* et le *Trésor des histoires tragiques*) ou encore des secrétaires-éditeurs scientifiques (Pierre Boaistuau pour les *Histoires des Amants fortunés*). Il souligne le rôle de certains imprimeurs et libraires qui ont concouru à la diffusion de ces textes dans différentes aires géographiques

et culturelles (le parisien Denis Janot pour l'édition imprimée de *La Châtelaine de Vergy*, les imprimeurs vénitiens de certaines éditions italiennes du *Décaméron*). Ce travail de structuration des informations (ou métadonnées) pour donner accès à la donnée centrale (le texte étudié et les pages numérisées qui le donnent à voir) permet ainsi, par la création des collections Œuvre, Édition, Exemplaire, de rappeler qu'un texte n'existe que parce qu'il a été transmis, concrètement, sous la forme de supports matériels, manuscrits et imprimés, qui nécessitent l'intervention d'autres acteurs que le seul auteur, mis en avant dans les études littéraires.

Les notices « Item », quant à elles, servent à mener des analyses plus précises centrées sur les textes littéraires proprement dits, qui peuvent dès lors faire l'objet de différents types d'éditorialisation. Lorsque l'exemplaire est numérisé dans son intégralité, il peut être consulté à partir de la notice « Texte intégral », qui ne fait pas l'objet d'une transcription détaillée, mais comprend des métadonnées descriptives et analytiques assez globales. Le site présente alors une « archive éditorialisée » d'un corpus de textes de registre tragique qui donne accès à un vaste corpus au sein duquel peuvent être lus des extraits dans leurs éditions d'origine. Les notices « Péritextes », « Textes » et « Extraits de texte » fournissent un accès aux pages numérisées suivant une structuration sémantique : le texte dont les étudiants procèdent à la transcription semi-diplomatique constitue une unité sémantique qui regroupe plusieurs unités documentaires, les pages correspondantes de l'exemplaire. Les textes se présentent alors sous la forme d'une « édition de lecture ». Celle-ci peut également s'accompagner d'un balisage en XML-TEI avec l'outil Transcript, dans le cadre d'un travail plus approfondi, comme c'est le cas du texte de l'édition parisienne de la *Châtelaine de Vergy* imprimée par Denis Janot vers 1540, qui fait l'objet d'un encodage minimal de la part d'une étudiante de master qui effectue une édition critique de ce récit.[9] Suivant cette perspective, le texte fait l'objet d'une « édition enrichie » qui pourra se prêter à une indexation fine des entités nommées (personnes, lieux, discours, etc.). Le travail mené au niveau des « items » permet ainsi d'introduire les étudiants aux enjeux de la transmission scientifique des textes, sous la forme d'extraits qui seront toujours contextualisés par leur appartenance à des collections. Ce deuxième niveau d'analyse témoigne de l'impact de la connaissance des modes de production et de diffusion des textes sur leur compréhension et la restitution de leur intelligibilité aux lecteurs d'aujourd'hui.

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[9] https://eman-archives.org/tragiques-inventions/collections/show/51.

**4   Structurer les collections du site *Tragiques Inventions* :
l'élaboration d'une dynamique intertextuelle**

Si la première étape d'appropriation de quelques textes littéraires réside dans un exercice de transcription au plus près du texte de l'époque, invitant l'étudiant à s'interroger sur les graphies, sur le sens des mots et sur l'organisation syntaxique des phrases, la mise en relation des notices, une fois celles-ci constituées, introduit l'utilisateur dans une nouvelle phase de construction des savoirs « en réseau ». Marine Riguet, dans « L'analyse de réseaux en littérature. De la visualisation à la modélisation d'une histoire relationnelle », insiste sur le rôle méthodologique et conceptuel de la mise en relation des données pour concourir à une « histoire empirique et relationnelle de la littérature, suivant les relations dialogiques tissées entre auteurs d'une époque » (Riguet 2022, 709-37). La démarche de *hand-reading* développée au sein du projet *Tragiques Inventions* s'organise en bonne part sur ce geste de mise en relation critique des textes, suivant une logique documentaire. En effet, les bibliothèques recourent à des modèles conceptuels de données bibliographiques comme FRBR, BIBO ou l'ontologie FOAF qui proposent des nomenclatures pour lier entre eux des documents, selon des relations préétablies : *est une partie de* / *est un exemplaire de* / *est une version abrégée de* / *suit* / *précède* / *est une adaptation de* / *résume* etc. Ce type de structures informationnelles renvoie non seulement à des réalités documentaires mais aussi à des phénomènes intellectuels et éditoriaux qui régissent la production littéraire, notamment à la Renaissance. Les textes publiés dans un contexte donné sont amenés à être repris, les histoires reformulées, les recueils réagencés, les volumes réduits ou au contraire augmentés. Toutes ces réalités font partie des modèles de la productivité littéraire au-delà de la rédaction première par un scripteur bien identifié ou non.

Pour introduire les étudiants à cette dimension de la littérature, le projet *Tragiques Inventions* a développé un troisième niveau de traitement des données, à la croisée des « collections » et des « items », des contextes matérialisés par les notices « Œuvres », « Éditions » et « Exemplaires » d'un côté, et des textes matérialisés par les notices « Péritextes », « Textes intégraux », « Textes » et « Extraits de texte » de l'autre. Il s'agit de l'entité « Récit » qui regroupe les différentes versions d'une même « histoire » / « nouvelle » / « conte » / « scène ». Ce niveau d'analyse constitue, d'un point de vue pédagogique, une entrée dans la médiation scientifique des écrits « vieillis », auxquels on accède par l'intermédiaire de l'inscription sur un support qui ne devient intelligible que par des phénomènes de contextualisation éditoriale. Dans l'arborescence du site, les collections et items « Récit » servent de carrefour où se trouvent associés les diverses notices « Textes » qui présentent les différentes versions du même texte au cours de ses

diverses rééditions. En cela, le lecteur-éditeur est à même de saisir que le texte se lit suivant un contexte typo-iconographique qui varie au cours du temps. Un module permet également de comparer deux à deux les différentes versions d'un même texte.

Pour illustrer ce propos, on présentera les premiers résultats obtenus sur deux collections, les *Histoires tragiques* de Pierre Boaistuau[10] et le *Trésor des histoires tragiques* de François de Belleforest (Réach-Ngô 2017, 69-84).[11] Précisons d'abord que le premier livre des *Histoires tragiques,* paru en 1559, présente la particularité d'être associé au nom de Pierre Boaistuau (Arnould 2017). Celui-ci a pris en charge la sélection de quelques textes issus des *Novelle* de Matteo Bandello pour en faire une traduction qui en est davantage, comme c'est souvent le cas à la Renaissance, une adaptation (Tortonese 1981, 461-70 ; Arnould 1986, 27-41 ; Campanini 2017, 102-20). Il a également procédé à la composition du recueil français en rassemblant les traductions qu'il avait entreprises. Pour rendre compte de ce phénomène de transfert culturel, la collection des *Histoires tragiques* a été subdivisée en deux grandes collections, l'une pour les éditions du texte-source, les *Novelle* de Bandello, l'autre pour les éditions du texte-cible, les *Histoires tragiques* de Boaistuau. Des étudiants italiens en master d'études françaises ont pris en charge l'éditorialisation de certaines éditions consultées à la bibliothèque Marciana, appartenant aux deux corpus, français et italien, afin d'étudier les formes de la réécriture dans l'opération de traduction d'une aire linguistique à l'autre. Les deux corpus sont associés par la relation « corpus français – est une traduction de – corpus italien ».

Le corpus des éditions françaises comprend également des ouvrages dont le périmètre varie considérablement. Si la première édition se compose de six histoires tragiques proposées par Pierre Boaistuau, une autre édition représentée sur le site, celle de 1567, signée du nom de François de Belleforest, se compose d'un grand nombre d'histoires, qui reprennent les six de Boaistuau et en proposent une continuation par l'insertion de nouvelles traductions issues des écrits de Bandello (Arnould 2011, 73-87). On peut donc signaler ce phénomène en indiquant une relation entre les différentes éditions : « édition de 1567 des *Histoires tragiques* – est une continuation de – l'édition de 1559 des *Histoires tragiques* ». On pourrait dès lors affiner les relations entre toutes les éditions, mais aussi entre toutes les histoires qui figurent dans ces éditions en regardant aussi si des variations éditoriales n'interviennent pas dans la transmission des textes, comme le fait une édition critique traditionnelle. Le travail de réactualisation éditoriale, d'une édition à l'autre, y compris à l'échelle

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10 https://eman-archives.org/tragiques-inventions/collections/show/22

11 https://eman-archives.org/tragiques-inventions/collections/show/40

de chaque histoire tragique, pourrait ainsi se traduire en relations, qui pourraient se manifester visuellement dans un graphe avec des flèches entre deux icones représentant les éditions ou les textes, mais aussi par du texte qui peut préciser la nature des relations pour chaque lien établi entre deux notices (du type *reproduit finalement* ou *modernise certaines graphies*, etc.). Pour rendre compte de la diversité des formes éditoriales, notamment typo-iconographiques, que peuvent prendre le traitement des histoires d'une édition à l'autre, on a recours à une dernière catégorie, celle des « Récits », qui désigne chaque histoire tragique (Récit 1, Récit 2, Récit 3). Cette notion renvoie au contenu de l'histoire tragique, quelle que soit la forme textuelle singulière qu'elle prend dans chaque édition imprimée. La collection des *Histoires tragiques* françaises se présente ainsi comme la somme de « Récits » qui réunit pour chaque histoire tragique ses différentes formes éditoriales. Chaque récit de chaque histoire tragique *a pour réalisation* les diverses formes que prend l'histoire en question dans ses diverses éditions.

L'ensemble de cette première collection, celle des *Histoires tragiques* en français, est apparentée par une relation structurelle à la collection du *Trésor des histoires tragiques* : « *Histoires tragiques* – a pour forme abrégée – *Trésor des Histoires tragiques* ». En effet, François de Belleforest a procédé en 1581 à la production d'un ouvrage qui rassemble certaines des histoires tragiques des éditions de Boaistuau et Belleforest, sous une forme anthologique. Le *Trésor des histoires tragiques* se compose d'un ensemble d'extraits des *Histoires tragiques*, qui constituent elles-mêmes déjà une sélection des *Novelle* de Bandello. Seuls les extraits qui correspondent à des discours (lettres, harangues, remontrances, etc.) ont été conservés dans ce recueil, afin de servir de modèle d'éloquence à des lecteurs qui voudraient s'exercer à les imiter. En reprenant la mise en relation des notices, entre « Récits » et « Textes » pour les *Histoires tragiques*, entre « Récits » et « Extraits de texte » pour le *Trésor des histoires tragiques*, la structure générale du site met en évidence le parallélisme entre les deux recueils, organisés tous les deux en une série d'histoires, complètes ou abrégées. Le phénomène d'anthologisation peut dès lors être appréhendé à l'échelle de chaque histoire, ce que rend manifeste la mise en relation des « Récits » respectifs des deux œuvres. Il devient alors possible de visualiser le nouvel agencement qui s'est opéré, histoire par histoire, lors de la conversion des narrations brèves en modèles rhétoriques. Les analyses insérées dans les notices « Récits » seront alors radicalement différentes d'une œuvre à l'autre : dans le cas des *Histoires tragiques*, une attention particulière sera apportée à l'analyse du cadre énonciatif, de l'intrigue, des personnages, lieux, thèmes et topoï au-delà des singularités d'éditions et d'exemplaires ; dans le cas du *Trésor des histoires tragiques*, seront examinés en priorité les types de textes, les

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locuteurs, les visées illocutoires et perlocutoires des discours, les procédés d'écriture, etc. Le recours à la visualisation par graphes éclaire ainsi des relations complexes propres à l'histoire des textes qui se manifestent simultanément au sein d'un même espace d'investigation. Chaque icône permet d'accéder directement à la notice concernée ou de consulter le graphe envisagé du point de vue de la notice considérée. À cet égard, la mise en relation des notices, déployée entre plusieurs œuvres, peut devenir un outil d'exploration des réseaux intertextuels, qui s'enrichira au fur et à mesure de la création de nouvelles relations entre les textes éditorialisés.

5   Dessiner des parcours dans les corpus du site *Tragiques Inventions* : l'éditeur numérique comme guide

Si l'on a jusqu'à présent examiné la constitution des notices et leur mise en relation comme un procédé de structuration des « Ressources » au sein d'une arborescence hiérarchisée en collections et items, on voudrait désormais mettre en valeur la manière dont le dispositif de la bibliothèque numérique autorise une navigation transversale dans les textes par le biais des « Parcours ». L'entrée dans le site se fait dans le menu selon deux onglets principaux : « Ressources », suivant une progression documentaire, sur le mode de l'inventaire méthodique des notices, et « Parcours », suivant une progression sélective, régie par un questionnement scientifique, thématique (le motif du cœur mangé, le motif du viol de Lucrèce) ou métadiscursif (péritextualités, traductions). La dynamique pédagogique consiste à montrer aux étudiants que la production des notices descriptives et analytiques qu'ils ont effectuée pour constituer un corpus éditorialisé peut être remobilisée dans un deuxième temps pour construire de nouveaux savoirs. Ainsi sera-t-il possible d'élaborer une réflexion sur les péritextes de diverses éditions d'œuvres déjà traitées sur le site en produisant une « page d'exposition » consacrée à cette question. On pourra alors réunir en une unique page des renvois aux divers items rangés dans la bibliothèque numérique par œuvre, édition, exemplaire, récit et les agencer autrement pour construire à propos de ce regroupement un nouveau discours critique. La démarche s'inspire des réflexions développées par Sonosky sur l'« *hyperreading* », qui nuance l'idée suivant laquelle la présence d'hyperliens ne fait que perturber la lecture et dégrader la capacité des lecteurs. Selon la conception de l'*hyperreading*, l'attention à la mise en réseau des ressources est susceptible de produire de nouvelles connaissances.

Dans le cas du projet *Tragiques Inventions*, la mise en relation des notices est présentée dès la constitution des premières notices

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comme l'une des finalités du projet. Il s'agit de mettre en œuvre une dynamique collaborative où le travail singulier d'un groupe d'étudiants est destiné à interagir avec d'autres travaux menés en parallèle ou précédemment. La démarche permet ainsi d'insister sur l'enjeu de l'interopérabilité et de la réutilisabilité des données qui caractérise la production des connaissances en environnement numérique. Le recours à une démarche collaborative fondée sur un partage des responsabilités modifie le statut du texte étudié, replacé dans un réseau d'autres textes amenés à interagir, tels que certaines références culturelles des lecteurs de l'époque pouvaient leur venir à l'esprit dans un même mouvement. On retrouve dès lors les vertus de la construction en réseau des savoirs, que défend Martin Grandjean dans son article « La connaissance est un réseau. Perspective sur l'organisation archivistique et encyclopédique » :

> Bien que cette opération ne soit pas toujours créatrice de nouveaux savoirs, elle offre à ces derniers une organisation qui permet une mobilisation plus efficace de leur contenu, à tel point qu'elle établit les conditions de création de nouvelles connaissances par le simple fait qu'elle les présente différemment à leur lecteur. C'est en effet dans la structure des liens qui composent cette nouvelle toile informationnelle qu'est par exemple une encyclopédie en ligne que réside la plus-value en termes de « contenu ». Non seulement l'information est rendue plus accessible, mais elle est également interrogeable en fonction de sa place dans la hiérarchie globale du réseau. (Grandjean 2014, 37-54)

Les enjeux de la mise en réseau des ressources éditorialisées émergent lors de la construction d'une exposition virtuelle. Cette fonctionnalité d'Omeka s'avère particulièrement efficace dans la phase de l'exploitation des textes traités et des notices crées précédemment : d'une part, la création d'expositions virtuelles permet la remobilisation du travail effectué au long terme, parfois par des groupes d'étudiants d'autres cours ; d'autre part, elle nécessite une appropriation des textes traités sous la forme de notices à une échelle plus large et notamment la mise en contexte des ressources élaborées, aussi bien dans leur rapport au cadre littéraire de production qu'à celui de la réception des ouvrages convoquées, explorées en fonction d'une entrée thématique donnée. C'est le cas de l'exposition virtuelle consacrée au motif littéraire du « cœur mangé » dans la tradition narrative franco-italienne, entendu comme un ressort du tragique.[12] Autour de cet axe d'analyse, les étudiants ont été amenés à approfondir l'étude

[12] Voir la page https://eman-archives.org/tragiques-inventions/exhibits/show/coeur-mange.

des ressources textuelles créées et à mettre en relation les analyses issues de celles-ci en examinant le traitement de ce motif et ses variations dans différents documents littéraires rangés dans les dossiers « Ressources socio-culturelles » et « Ressources iconographiques ». Ce type de démarche a comporté une première phase de recensement général du motif, entre tradition littéraire et iconographie, ainsi qu'une phase de présentation des œuvres du corpus où il apparaît (la tradition occitane des *vidas* des troubadours et des *razos*, le *Décaméron* et les *Comptes amoureux* pour la mort de Guilhem de Cabestany). Le travail s'est élargi par la suite à une opération d'analyse textuelle comparée visant l'élaboration d'un tableau synoptique des divers traitements narratologiques recensés. La troisième phase a amené les étudiants à développer une réflexion plus large sur la circulation, les variations et les réécritures de ce motif à partir de l'interrogation des ressources mises à disposition des internautes. Cette réflexion a nourri le commentaire analytique qui accompagne la grille de comparaison, commentée dans la page d'exposition. L'ensemble des ressources permet de déployer progressivement des parcours thématiques et intertextuels – structurant d'une manière particulière le tissu des *Comptes amoureux* – (Cappello 2004, 23-42 ; Campanini 2012) afin de restituer certaines dynamiques socio-culturelles du champ littéraire de l'époque, où les auteurs s'entretcitent et les textes se renvoient les uns aux autres.

La dimension des « Parcours » constitue un horizon essentiel du projet *Tragiques Inventions*. En effet, si les étudiants sont amenés dans un premier temps à produire des « Ressources » à partir de livres qu'ils ont eu le privilège de consulter en salle de réserve, en les éclairant de connaissances et d'analyses littéraires, l'objectif est aussi de leur apprendre à remobiliser ces premières expériences intellectuelles pour produire de nouveaux savoirs. Des « Ressources » aux « Parcours » s'opèrent ainsi une remobilisation des données, un passage de témoin, qui engage collaborativement une responsabilité intellectuelle.

Ainsi, qu'il s'agisse d'effectuer la transcription d'un récit médiéval réédité à la Renaissance (*La Chastelaine de Vergi*), de comparer des versions de textes qui ont circulé en italien et en français (Bandello traduit par Belleforest et Boaistuau), d'étudier le mécanisme d'anthologisation de recueils à succès (le *Trésor des histoires tragiques*) ou d'analyser un motif littéraire récurrent dans la littérature narrative des XVIᵉ et XVIIᵉ siècles (le « cœur mangé »), la démarche méthodologique est la même : il s'agit de convertir la numérisation initiale d'un texte ancien en une notice documentaire, de caractériser son identité littéraire, générique et socio-culturelle, pour l'apparenter à d'autres notices descriptives et analytiques et faire alors surgir progressivement, par morceaux, un paysage dynamique de la littérature de la Renaissance. La dimension collaborative du projet invite

alors les étudiants à s'inscrire dans la lignée des éditeurs de la Renaissance, en passeurs de textes, de main en main, à la lumière de la réflexion sur la structuration des connaissances que vient renouveler l'outillage numérique aujourd'hui.

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Incest as Form and the Identity Taboo according to Angela Carter

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Abstract This paper analyses Angela Carter's desecrating tendency to taboo-breaking in thematic and formal terms. By referring to her short-fiction production and focusing on "John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*", I intend to show how gender/patriarchal and genre/authorial taboos are similarly broken and transmuted into daringly subversive outcomes. In line with her feminist agenda and postmodern transformism, Carter superbly challenges, sabotages, violates, de- and re-constructs traditionally codified sexual and gender taboos by mimicking such reversals through new narrative solutions. If diversity, multiplicity and change guarantee the continuity of life, incest can easily metaphorise a taboo relationship based on repetition of the identical, sameness, and immobility, to be finally transformed, if not avoided. Consistent with many of her female characters' incestuous relationships with parents or siblings, Carter also establishes incest-like relationships with previous authors and narrative discourses, which she predatorily appropriates. Carter's resulting narrative testifies to the fact that taboos must be first experienced to be eventually broken. It is in the dialectic between rule and infraction, taboo and its violation that Carter's writing is rooted, constantly looking for borders to be crossed.

Keywords Angela Carter. John Ford. Incest. The Identical. Postmodern I-dentity. Code/Genre/Gender-Rewriting. Transformism.

Summary 1 Literary Incests: Introducing the Topic. – 2 Coupling with John Ford. – 3 Recodifying the Identical.

> Tell me, ye learned, [...] Shall we for ever make new
> books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pour-
> ing only out of one vessel into another? Are we for ev-
> er to be twisting, and untwisting the same rope? for
> ever in the same track – for ever at the same pace?
>
> (Laurence Sterne,
> *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*)

1   Literary Incests: Introducing the Topic

The universality of the incest taboo in human societies has been wide-
ly considered[1] and there is a wealth of scientific evidence that taboos
are "successful ecological practices that enhance biodiversity and
sustainable development" (Osei 2006, 42). Differentiation is central-
ly important to preserving life, and respecting the incest taboo is in-
tended to ensure (bio)diversity. In socio-anthropological terms, this
taboo marks a boundary between parents and descendants, partly in
order to accept the troubling extraneousness of the Other, or what lies
outside familial space. But one can also read the incest taboo in liter-
ary terms, since literature's ability to voice marginalized and aber-
rant discourses, implicitly and explicitly, makes it an "extraordinarily
privileged medium for the depiction and analysis of phenomena such
as taboo and transgression" (Horlacher 2010, 16).[2]

In her "Introduction" to *Shaking a Leg*, Cooke speaks of Angela
Carter's narratives as "taboo-breaking" (Cooke 2013, XVI), and in
her "Afterword" to *Fireworks* Carter herself (1996e, 549-50) consid-
ers incest and cannibalism[3] as the great themes of the Gothic tradition
of Poe, which is also her own. Yet in her writings, while cannibalism
is always condemned, incest may play different roles that variously
concern the concept of the identical.[4] This focus on sameness is also
voiced through the looking-glass motif (which frequently functions as
a kind of 'looking-gloss'), but incest is a constantly recurring trope.
The short stories dealing with the incest taboo include: "The Execu-

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1   Seminal early studies on the subject are: *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*
(1905) and *Totem and Taboo* (1913) by Sigmund Freud; *The Elementary Structures of
Kinship* by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1949).

2   Also cf. Miller, Leeson 2018. As concerns the relationship between taboo themes
and the fantastic, cf. Todorov 1973.

3   On incest and cannibalism as one of the principal Gothic features in Carter's short
fiction, cf. Mulvey-Roberts 2019, 1-16.

4   According to Snaith, when dealing with incest, Carter mainly adopts and exploits
a Western/Christian perspective, which differs from an Oriental and less deprecia-
tive one (2019, 204-22). Nevertheless, maybe due to Carter's two-and-a-half years in
Japan and her consequent contact with this Eastern perspective, in her writings she
also refers to the incest taboo in less tragic terms than we might expect as Chris-
tian Westerner readers, thus spurring us to cross Occidental cultural and ideologi-
cal boundaries.

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tioner's Beautiful Daughter" (featuring a double brother-sister and father-daughter relationship: an executioner beheads his own son for his incestuous relationship with his sister, but he himself commits the same crime against her and enjoys what the law prohibits: "only the executioner himself, because there is nobody to cut off his head, dare [...] upon his blood-bespattered block make love to his beautiful daughter"; Carter 1996a, 46);[5] "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" (two twins, brother and sister, discover individual differences through incestuous likeness: "this new awareness of one another's shapes [...] had made them less twinned, less indistinguishable from one another"; 1996b, 76);[6] "The Snow Child" (telling of a count's rape of his dead though fictive daughter: "Weeping, the Count got off his horse, unfastened his breeches and thrust his virile member into the dead girl"; 1996c, 230-1);[7] "The Cabinet of Edgar Allan Poe" (in which Carter hints at Poe's incestuous feelings for both his mother and his 13-year-old cousin-wife Virginia: "Imagine the sinless children lying in bed together! The pity of it! For did she not come to him stiffly armoured in taboos [...] ?"; 1996d, 322).[8] Among her novels, *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) features an incestuous sister-brother relationship that also signifies a rebellious act against patriarchal law, represented by Uncle Philip.[9] The radio play "Vampirella" (1976) similarly touches on this taboo ("our sons turned to our daughters and knew them and cast new coins from the old moulds"; 1997, 13), as does an essay entitled "Through a Text Backwards: The Resurrection of the House of Usher" (1988), in which Carter inverts Poe's story and hints at the twins' probable and deadly incestuous relationship, made worse by the fact that they are also identical ("A man and a woman are clasped together on the floor, [...] locked in what seems to be either the fatal embrace of a love suicide or else a post-coital slumber so profound it is as good as death [...] they are twins, each the fatal double of the other"; 2013b, 593-4).

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5 The short story belongs to the collection *Fireworks* (1974). Bijon reads this story by relating the concepts of the incest taboo and anamorphosis, and focuses on the paradoxical function of the mask worn by the executioner (2022, 173-86).

6 The short story is contained in *Fireworks*.

7 The short story is included in the collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) and recalls the version of *Snow White* as presented in the Grimm brothers' 1810 manuscript: the girl's mother is an evil queen who makes her pick up roses and abandons her in the forest, where she is rescued by her father instead of a prince, with no apparent suggestion of incest (cf. Grimm, Grimm 2015).

8 The short story comes from the collection *Black Venus* (1985).

9 Wiskers interprets this incestuous attitude as a way of fighting back against male patriarchal power (2019, 183-203). Regarding the relation between the incest taboo and the Gothic framework of *The Magic Toyshop*, cf. Butter, Eitelmann 2010.

In short, in her macrotext, Carter deals with incest in two ways:

1. as an abhorrent replication of what is alike that is to be avoided, recalling the belief of anthropologists that this taboo pursues the "'avoidance of the identical' […], that is 'the proscription of associating […] two terms that are in some crucial respect considered the same'"; (Héritier quoted in Horlacher 2010, 9)
2. as a potentially powerful tool to be wielded against patriarchal conventions, which also implies "yoking together opposites". (Wiskers 2006, 193)

Focusing on the former aspect and the short story "John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*" (1988),[10] I intend to show how gender(patriarchal) and genre(authorial) taboos are similarly first broken, then respected and transmuted into subversive outcomes, both thematically and formally. By revisiting and rewriting the Jacobean play, Carter superbly challenges and sabotages traditionally codified sexual and gender taboos in part by adopting new narrative solutions that formally mimic these fertile reversals. If diversity and change guarantee the continuity of biological life, then incest can function as an appropriate literary metaphor for a taboo relationship based on the repetition and reproduction of the identical. But sameness is deadly (as in Freud's concept of repetition as an inertial death-drive) and must ultimately be contaminated and transformed by otherness.[11] Mirroring many of her female characters' incestuous relationships, Carter herself establishes figuratively incestuous relationships with her literary fathers and their narrative discourses, with which her prose openly couples and which she cannibalizes and ultimately alchemizes. On the levels of both narrated content and narrating form, Carter's narrative often testifies to the fact that this taboo must first be violated so that it can ultimately be respected. Nonetheless, this short story peculiarly shows that her writing is rooted in a dialectic between rule and infraction, taboo and violation, constantly seeking borders to be crossed. Carter thus presents a postmodern concept of formation of both individual and aesthetic identity which reuses Western cultural and literary models in highly critical and parodic terms, situating herself, as Acosta states, at a "feminist/postmodern crossroad" (1999, 16), where criticism of patriarchy joins with that of representation, confronting issues of both gender and genre according to a transformative and deconstructive agenda.

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10 This short story was first published in the magazine *Granta* and then in the posthumous anthology *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* (1993).

11 Concerning the role of art in opposing sameness, cf. Connor's considerations on Deleuze's criticism of Freud's idea of repetition as the sheer replicability of the alike, and the claim that the French thinker "sees the lifting of servitude to the Same as a revolutionary liberation. Art has an important part to play in this liberation. Art depends upon repetitions of various kinds, but can never itself be reduced to mere repetition" (Connor 2006, 9).

2 Coupling with John Ford

My aim here is to narrow the focus, illustrating the strong bond between the thematized incest taboo and the parallel likeness taboo on the formal level, with its implied authorial and ideological issues. The short story "John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*"[12] permits of such a reading for its peculiarly exemplary nature. This text both thematizes the incest taboo and the connected issue of sameness related to the development of self-identity, or "I-dentity" (Neumeier 1996, 142), and simultaneously mimics that very issue in formal terms as it is itself grounded in the repetition of the alike in its replication of Ford's Jacobean theatrical brother-sister incest.[13] At the same time, it also entails diversification, which produces newness and transforms it into an intertextual mould as, through the very act of re-writing Ford's theatrical incest taboo, Carter attempts to free text and authorship from the yoke of similarity in terms of both genre and gender. She does so by using this specific sexual motif, for which Ford's play provides a highly appropriate source.

Carter's short story is a hybrid hypertext created through a complex intertextual and intermedial dynamics. It is based on a stratified hypotext consisting of the original 1633 tragedy by the playwright John Ford and an imagined film script attributed to the modern US director John Ford (henceforth F1 and F2 respectively). The result is a syncopated[14] "narrativized account" (Ryan-Sautour 2011 [online])[15] that also implies a shift from a seventeenth-century male authorship to a twentieth-century female one, and that can be defined, repeating Falzon's use of Pasolini's formula, as a "*sceno-testo*": a literary work that is autonomous despite its cinematic features (Falzon 2002, 112; italics in the original). Though brief, the short story forms a composite space in which, through contamination, variation and demythologizing practices,[16] Carter stresses the postmodern concept of iden-

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12   All quotations from this story are from Carter 1993, henceforth JFPW followed by the page number(s) after the quotations in the text.

13   For an analysis focusing on the tragedy's forbidden love and clandestine marriage in relation to contemporary political social and religious discourses, and considered in light of Ford's debt to, and revision of, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, cf. Cleland 2021, 134-42. On Carter's rewriting, cf. also Papetti 2000.

14   Cf. Houlahan 2007.

15   Also cf. Ryan-Sautour (2019) on applying the "screen idea", as conceived by Macdonald (2013), to JFPW's "stage idea", reading it as a deliberate experimentation by Carter.

16   Gass grounds Carter's demythologizing attitude and rejection of critical attempts to read her work as related to myth on the fact that the writer identified "myth with the rhetoric of oppression" (1994, 7). As concerns Carter's idea of myth, cf. also her own "Notes from the Front Line" (2013a, 45-53), Katsavos's interview (1994) and Ryan-Sautour's consideration on Carter's dismantling of the Hollywood myth by adopting "the ironic position of the film writer" from within a narrative structure (2011, 3).

tity as an open and changeable space contrasting with the notion of sameness as a *reductio ad unum*, effectively represented by incest. Carter's use of the incest taboo as a marker of alikeness is compelling because she develops it simultaneously on the levels of plot and form. She juxtaposes the incestuous act with the generative act of literary creation which, by contrast, counters the incest taboo by introducing diversity, thus avoiding the replication of the identical. Within the story, identity-sameness and difference-otherness are interwoven as features of both theme and text. Just as the development of the female protagonist's identity depends on abandoning incestuous similarity in favour of diversity, so Carter's narrative and authorship are grounded in exposure to difference and multiplicity. The character and the author recognize and detach themselves from the codified mystifications of patriarchal ideologies, so that the protagonist's metamorphosis parallels that of its author, albeit only partially. If, as Munford states, Carter's "textual investment [is] in male-centred frameworks" (2006, 12), one can also accept Davison's interpretation, namely that "she does not necessarily care for respectful, legitimate transmission or indeed acquiring the legitimating literary authority achieved by precise copying" (2016, 213).

To understand how likeness explodes into a "differential plurality" (Falzon 2002, 154; Author's transl.) implicating content, code and author, I will consider the levels of content and form separately.

2.1   Plotting with John Ford

The plot deals with alikeness under various guises: 1. the repetition of the same in the form of incest between siblings, leading to a maternity that epitomizes the reproduction of the identical; 2. the double and homonymous male authorship of the two John Fords; 3. the replication of a patriarchal perspective in that F1's play represents the woman as a passive object of male desire and action, while F2's movie script represents the Wild West colonial myth of conquering the land and the woman alike, implying a two-way colonization: Western historical colonialism (from Europe to America), Hollywood cultural-and-media colonialism (from America to Europe). The original incestuous plot of the play remains largely unchanged in the story, but Carter grafts some innovations onto it.

The spatio-temporal setting changes from seventeenth-century Old World Parma to the nineteenth-century New World American prairie. The number of protagonists is drastically reduced to two families: one consisting of father, brother and sister; the other of father, mother and son. Except when the short story faithfully reproduces the tragedy, the protagonists' names also change: Giovanni becomes Johnny and An-

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nabella Annie-Belle.[17] Carter introduces other characters such as the dying mother, the male personification of Death and the female personification of America, whose original linguistic plurality is reduced to English alone: "the language that silences the babble of this continent's multitude of tongues" (JFPW, 21), thus showing how the colonisers' tongue replicates itself and further confirming the yoke of the identical on another level, both linguistic and ideological.

The story's characters present slight differences with respect to their dramatic counterparts. Johnny lacks Giovanni's boldness and rhetorical ability but he, similarly, never repents for breaking the incest taboo. His firm belief in sameness leads him to identify with his sister: not to possess her is to not exist, so that he will ultimately decide to kill both her and himself. The Minister is the only representative of religion, in contrast to the two in the play of F1. His wife is Carter's invention and combines Soranzo's verbal and physical violence with the Cardinal's verbal aggressiveness. Although in the story (with the exception of the title) Carter never replicates the Cardinal's pronouncement that concludes the play ("'tis pity she's a whore", Ford 1997, 5.6.160), the concept is taken up through variations put into the mouth of the Minister's wife: "'Bitch! Whore!' said the Minister's wife and struck Annie-Belle a blow across the mouth that started her nose bleeding" (JFPW, 33); "his mother wanted to murder her and refused to get the breakfast for this prostitute" (36); "The repentant harlot" (40). The Minister's wife allows one to see Carter's different treatment of the male sphere, to which she ascribes gentleness. Conversely, in the hypotext, Annabella's authentic feelings reveal the extreme degradation of her social context and its patriarchal and religious authority; she submits to it, thus also remaining entangled in sameness, be it expressed by incest and the resulting pregnancy or by the repetition of a male, patriarchal ideology.

Maintaining only the incestuous storyline and isolating it in the space of the wide prairie allows Carter to justify the unavoidability of the siblings' centripetal and claustrophobic bond[18] while simultaneously stressing the possibility of an alternative and sincere relation-

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17   "In the old play, one John Ford called them Giovanni and Annabella; the other John Ford, in the movie, might call them Johnny and Annie-Belle" (JFPW, 21). The names of other characters, such as Annie-Belle's husband, are not given; he is generally called "young husband".

18   In both the play and the story, the condemnation of the incestuous act is somehow justified, albeit minimally: in the tragedy, the authenticity of the siblings' love compensates for the corruption of society; in the narrative it is the spatial, relational and emotional solitude that justifies the breaking of the taboo, which is the only possible form of love and tool for identity formation. Where no otherness can be known, the relationship with the identical is the only viable way: "we were alone together under the vast sky that made us scared and so we clung together and what happened, happened [...] the most natural love of all" (JFPW, 35-6).

ship with a different man, contrasting with the self-interest motivating Annabella's marriage to Soranzo. Unlike Annabella, and despite being similarly impregnated by her brother, Carter's Annie-Belle wants to interrupt the replication of similarity, and thus incest too, by behaving differently. This diversity and duplicity are inscribed in her very name, composed of two parts as if to represent two different forms of femininity. She starts as a traditional woman who cares for her menfolk, even to the point of sexually feeding Johnny. But then she begins to develop a new individual and social identity, rejecting incest by opening herself up to differentiation, namely to another man. Finally, Annie-Belle differs from Annabella because she develops an awareness of the dangers involved in replicating likeness and, indeed, admits that she has never really known a man because her brother was identical, not other. She tells her husband: "I never properly knowed no young man before", and thinks: "she did not consider her brother in this new category of 'young men', he was herself" (JFPW, 35). Through the taboo act and her repentance, she realizes that the development of self-identity can only begin from the encounter with otherness. Only in the distance implied by alterity are (self-)knowledge and renewal possible: "when she looked at her husband, she saw, not herself, but someone who might, in time, grow even more precious" (JFPW, 36); "she found out she had sinned only when he offered his forgiveness, and, from her repentance, a new Annie-Belle sprang up" (35). This awareness questions all previous issues of self-identity development related to the incest taboo, which is effectively signalled by the mirror motif: the siblings' first transgression is marked by the breaking of a mirror in whose fragments they do not see the possibility of differentiation but only the similarity of their faces, as if they were one: "their round, blond, innocent faces that, superimposed upon one another, would fit at every feature, their faces, all at once the same face" (JFPW, 24). Incest as replication of likeness is also strongly underlined by some textual symmetries, such as the lexical repetition of "log cabin", informing the reader of the siblings' sexual intercourse that takes place in a log cabin, under a quilt made with the very same log cabin technique by their own mother, further delimiting the action within an exclusively familial perimeter: "they [...] slept together in the log cabin under the patchwork quilt made in the 'log cabin' pattern by their mother" (JFPW, 27). At last, Annie-Belle deliberately decides to escape from this "entirely self-contained heaven of repetition, identicality, [...] seen as perverse by society and potentially dangerous for the self" (Wiskers 2006, 192) and, unlike Annabella, she will be able to oppose her brother's love explicitly: "'Never! It's wrong. It's a sin'. But, worse than that, she said: 'I don't want to', and she meant it, she knew she must not or else her new life [...] would be utterly destroyed" (JFPW, 40). Annie-Belle's husband also develops an awareness that differentiates him from both Soranzo and

the story's male figures inscribed by Carter in a negative paradigm (such as Johnny, his father, Death).

Annie-Belle and her husband realize that the only escape from sameness lies in differential distance, and therefore leave for California. But this new and positive distance, symbolized by the rails intended to take them away from alikeness, is nullified by the old and familiar distance that Johnny is simultaneously travelling by horse to reach them and shoot them and himself. Therefore, despite the variations with respect to the hypotext, the story ends with the victory of identicality, condemning Annie-Belle to remain imprisoned in the original incest taboo plot.

2.2   Reformulating John Ford

While Carter largely duplicates F1's plot, she definitively changes the form, opening up theatre to the narrative and cinematic codes. The story begins by replicating in its own title that of the play and by providing an extradiegetic explanatory note:

> John Ford (1586 *c.*-1639). English dramatist of the Jacobean period. His tragedy, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, was published in 1633. […]. John Ford (1895-1973). American film-maker. Filmography includes: *Stagecoach* (1938); *My Darling Clementine* (1946); *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949). (JFPW, 20)[19]

Hence, the beginning implies both similarity and difference since the title and the note establish a link with the dramatic hypotext while simultaneously modifying it: the identity of 'John Ford' provided by the title is split, by the note, into two – the dramatist and the director. This homonymy epitomizes the incest taboo interpreted as a reproduction of the alike. The siblings' perception of themselves as a single identity compares to that experienced by the reader in regard to the story's John Ford as a fusion of F1 and F2. Nevertheless, against the background of the seemingly parasitical sameness suggested by the title, diversity emerges and likeness is confronted by otherness. The dynamics between similarity and alterity is guaranteed as Carter develops the plot by interweaving the short story's narrative prose with F1's dramatic verse and F2's film script prose. The result is a palimpsest structure that combines: the F1 historical

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[19]   Carter also provides a final metamedial note, matching the initial one and focusing explicitly on the different medial requirements of the two Ford(s): "The Old World John ford made Giovanni cut out Annabella's heart and carry it on stage; […] The New World John Ford would have no means of representing this scene on celluloid" (JFPW, 44).

model, the F2 fictitious adaptation, and the re-write by Carter who ultimately defines her own authorship by re-inscribing it upon F1's and F2's authorships.

The inception of the story connects to the past as it recalls a conventional fairy-tale beginning, while also immediately presenting American otherness: "There was a rancher" (JFPW, 20). The reader soon faces an increasing heterogeneity of codes and genres, mixed in a way that is both explicit, when graphically signalled by portions of text signifying different codes and genres, and implicit, when such clues are lacking. The following quote exemplifies the mixture of narrative, theatrical and cinematic passages in a fourfold sequence related to a triple authorship (film script/F2, narrative/Carter, play/F1, narrative/Carter):

> Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska […] Oh, those enormous territories! That green vastness, in which anything is possible.
>
> EXTERIOR. PRAIRIE. DAY
> (Close up) Johnny and Annie-Belle kiss.
> "Love theme" up.
> Dissolve.
>
> No. It wasn't like that! Not in the least like that. He put out his hand and touch her wet hair. He was giddy.
>
> ANNABELLA Methinks you are not well.
> GIOVANNI Here's none but you and I. I think you love me, sister.
> ANNABELLA Yes, you know I do.
>
> And they thought, then, that they should kill themselves, together now, before they did it; they remember tumbling together in infancy, how their mother laughed to see their kisses, their embraces, when they were too young to know they should not do it. (JFPW, 24-5)

In its brevity, the story counters alikeness through its plurality of genres and codes, which similarly implies an enunciative multiplicity that breaks the canon by being simultaneously narrative, dramatic and cinematic. These three modalities alternate randomly, forcing readers to follow the plot by adapting their reading and interpretation to this unpredictability with respect to textual typologies and to the linguistic characteristics of the three levels. Besides, the protagonists' voices and thoughts interrelate and interrupt one another, often through an unexpected shift between the names given to them by F1 and F2. What contributes to uniting voices, events and codes

is the story's narrating voice which is omniscient, peculiar and intrusive.[20] This voice, readily comparable to the cinematographic voiceover, leads the reader through a metamedial isotopy and reflection[21] often by using cinematic terminology within the narrative portions to cement the connection between them: "in the movies" (JFPW, 26); "the second lead", "prairie scenario", "celluloid" (28-9); "played out", (43); "She wore a yellow ribbon" (40, which is the title of one of F2's movies cited in the initial note). Sometimes this narrative voice also opposes what is stated by one of the other codes, as when, after the incestuous kiss has been described in the film script mode, the voice affirms in its own narrative terms: "No. It wasn't like that! Not in the least like that" (24). This voice makes its presence, its generative and despotic role clear, raising the reader's (meta)textual and ideological awareness. It is Carter's use of intermedial potentialities and ability to cross medial borders, by also negotiating between them, which allows for "ventriloquial" exchanges between its "intertextual counterpart[s]" (Ryan-Sautour 2011, 5, 7), namely between the different cinematic, theatrical and narrative voices of the characters and the authors.[22]

3 Recodifying the Identical

Through a "schizoid text" (Acosta 1999, 16) which gives material expression to its own intertextual and composite identity, Carter's story ultimately counters its hypotext's reaffirmation of the dominant ideology and the persistence of alikeness which seems to be formally

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[20]   The occasional but authoritative use that the narrative voice makes of the first person stresses its presence and central position, thus equating it with the theatrical Giovanni, whose presence is expressed by performative devices such as pronouns and deictics. The story's first person also allows the narrative voice to create an ambiguous proximity to readers: it sometimes merges with the reader into 'we', sharing its doubts and ruminations, or gives the reader space for his/her questions but immediately answers them: "Did she [mother] die of the loneliness of the prairies? Or was it anguish that killed her [...] when she came to this emptiness? Neither. She did die of the pressure of that vast sky" (JFPW, 20); "I do not know what else she thought [...] I think she did not think so far" (23); "It is the boy [...] who is the most mysterious to me [...] I imagine him mute" (25). On this voice as a mark of Carter's stylistic "evolution" towards a "female narrator, presenting the world of the text from a female subject position" cf. Acosta 1999, 15.

[21]   Cf. Ryan-Sautour 2019.

[22]   Besides the dialogic and visual aspects associated with cinema and theatre respectively, Ryan-Sautour also considers the short story's commitment to radio in that "it points to potential images, and draws upon the reader to create the scene", thus testifying to the "three-dimensionality" (2011, 4) Carter herself associated with her radio plays. In her "Preface" to the collection of four radio plays, *Come Unto These Yellow Sands*, the writer states that "[i]t is this necessary open-endedness of the medium [...] that gives radio story-telling its real third dimension" (1985, 7).

attested by the fact that the very beginning and very end of the play echo each other through sonic repetition, as if they were two rhyming half-lines forming a single, regular iambic verse, despite the textual distance separating them: "Dispute no more" (Ford 1997, 1.1.1); "'tis pity she's a whore" (5.6.160). In JFPW, by contrast, on the formal and authorial levels, the development of self-identity is successful because form succeeds in disempowering sameness more palpably than content. This hybrid re-write counters and invalidates the plot's incestuous act of repetition of sameness through an "intersemiotic bricolage" (Falzon 2002, 114; Author's transl.)[23] that involves both genre and gender and entails a multiple metamorphosis: from theatre to a narrative that combines both theatre and cinema; from the hypotextual male authorship of both the dramatist and the film-maker John Fords to the hypertextual female authorship of Carter who simultaneously appropriates both by intertextually alchemising a traditionally male authorship. By assembling different codes, this short story posits the self-identity process as stretching between replication and difference in that, as Rushdie observes, Carter "opens an old story for us, like an egg, and finds the new story, the now-story"[24] (1996, XV). This is how she defamiliarizes at the expense of incestuous form: she couples with the alike (the patriarchal canon)[25] to subvert it in light of her "idea of embracing and performing – never-ending – change" (Pasolini 2016, 15), thus leading to the re-signification of genre, authorial and gender issues in postmodern and voraciously intertextual terms. Carter demolishes the replicability of sameness, as she herself has said, by "putting new wine in old bottles and, in some cases, old wine in new bottles" (2013a, 53). This is what this short story exemplifies through the incest taboo and this is how, in Atwood's words, Carter "opened imaginative doors and said, 'this is possible'" (2018).

If one considers that both Rushdie and Atwood stress openness when discussing Carter, and that for Carter herself whoredom is a metaphor for openness to vital diversity and renewal, then we could claim, in conclusion, "'Tis [not] Pity She's a Whore" ('she' being both character and author). This "vitality of otherness" (Webb 2016) will be greatly celebrated in *Wise Children* (1991), in keeping with the fact

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23 Carter herself uses this term when talking about her own writing: "I have always used a very wide number of references because of tending to regard all of western Europe as a great scrap-yard from which you can assemble all sorts of new vehicles ... *bricolage*" (quoted in Haffenden 1985, 92; ellipsis and italics in the original).

24 This reference to "egg" curiously and markedly contrasts with what the incestuous executioner of Carter's aforementioned story does ("The Executioner's Beautiful Daughter"): he opposes the renewal of life not only by violating his own daughter, but also by perversely eating "only [...] those eggs precisely on the point of blossoming into chicks" (1996a, 43).

25 Also cf. Davison 2016.

that in her last novel the incest taboo borders on a playful ambiguity because most legitimate familial ties are muddled. The result is a joyful celebration of pluralism closely related to the disappearance of fatherly responsibility, and to a strong presence of womanly creativity that further testifies to Carter's female[26] alchemic transformation of gender and genre by both violating and respecting the incest taboo.

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26   Carter's idea that language is (male)gendered implies, as she states in an interview, that "there is a bias of discourse which usually does presuppose the interest of the organizing gender" (Katsavos 1994, 17).

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Enchantment as a Subversive Force in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*

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Abstract   There is a substantial body of scholarship arguing for the relevance of magic realism to Toni Morrison's fictional production, with one exception being her last novel God Help the Child, which, in that respect, has been remarkably overlooked. The present paper intends to fill this scholarly gap by focusing on what Morrison called "enchantment", a powerful blend of magic and realism that she employed to represent a host of racial and ancestral issues of Blackness, often of a traumatic kind.

Keywords   Toni Morrison. God Help the Child. Magical realism. Enchantment. Colorism.

Summary   1 Magical Realism: an Ambiguous Expression. – 2 Toni Morrison and Magic Realism. – 3 Enchantment and *God Help the Child*. – 4 Conclusion.

1 Magical Realism: an Ambiguous Expression

Magical realism is an ambiguous mode, which has long been an object of controversy (Reeds 2006, 175). As Kenneth Reeds explains, the issue took front and center at a conference of Latin American scholars held at Michigan State University in 1973. In the keynote speech, Emil Rodriguez Monegal famously captured the spirit of the debate by referring to it as a "diálogo de sordos", i.e., by claiming that numerous critics had been using the same term with radically different connotations (Reeds 2006, 185). The primary goal of the conference was to work out a consensual definition but, after careful consideration, the attempt failed, so much that several participants, among which was Monegal himself, suggested that "because of lack of agreement, the term should be eliminated completely" (Menton 1983, 9).

Yet, despite the critical differences, not only did magical realism withstand the test of time (Reeds 2006, 192) but, especially, in recent years, great progress has been made at a definition of the concept.

The juxtaposition of the fantastic to realism that marks the genre has been conceptualized as a form of "resistance to the violence of official history" (Donadey quoted in Ngom 2020, 196) and as an attempt to battle representations of reality that have been encumbered by colonizing influences (Hart, Ouyang 2005, 6). Indeed, as Zamora and Faris note, "the most appealing aspect of magical realism" is the urge to "reestablish contact with traditions temporarily eclipsed by the mimetic constraints" of the well-known "nineteenth and twentieth-century realism" (Zamora, Faris 1995, 2), with the quintessential example of such a phenomenon being Chinua Achebe's groundbreaking novel *Things Fall Apart*.

At the heart of this line of reasoning lies the idea that, despite appearances, realism, with "its emphasis on the empirical, the familiar and the accumulation of everyday detail […] has no greater claim to truth than do modes that make space for the supernatural or the mythical" (Warnes, Sasser 2020, 3-4). On the contrary, realism's alleged mimetic power is but a rhetorical artifice, while magic – which is, in turn, often associated with illusion – is better suited to point the way to truth: in Warnes and Sasser's terms, "magical realism expands and subverts the limitations of literary realism" (Warnes, Sasser 2020, 4).

Despite having been promoted primarily as a Latin American experience, magical realism has swiftly traversed borders and can now be encountered in narratives from other parts of the world (Reeds 2006, 192). In that respect, as far as the United States are concerned, the first instances of magical realism appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, in the short fiction of Bernard Malamud and in novels such as Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, but their specificity was eclipsed

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by the irruption on the literary scene of equally innovative texts such as the postmodernist ones. Consequently, magical realism remained in the background of the national literary panorama until writers like Toni Morrison and Louise Erdrich began to utilize such a mode in their best-sellers *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* (Shroeder 2020, 166).

2 Toni Morrison and Magic Realism

As far as Toni Morrison is concerned, there is a substantial body of scholarship arguing for the relevance of magic realism to her fiction – particularly to *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon* – with one notable exception being her last novel *God Help the Child*, which, in that respect, has been remarkably overlooked. While it has mainly been read for the aesthetics of Blackness, the emphasis on motherhood and the building of identity in the face of childhood trauma, the rich magical realist dimension that characterizes *God Help the Child* has been tackled in a very limited number of contributions (Guo 2021; Ibarrola-Armendariz 2019; Princey, Purey 2019; Raynaud 2019) and not always in very convincing terms. Most of these pieces,[1] in fact, fail to acknowledge that not only did Toni Morrison not intentionally pursue magical realism within her literary work, but she also famously rejected any explicit association with such a label.

Morrison admitted to disliking having her fiction described as magical realist, an expression that she, most likely as a reaction to the sterile debate mentioned above, perceived as "evasive". More precisely, she felt that it had long been employed by critics as a "convenient" strategy to "skip the truth in the art of certain writers" (Davis 1994, 143), with the "truth", I argue, being the dimension of social commitment – namely, the often-radical political issues at the heart of much fiction. Morrison went on to expand her argument by explaining that, in the case of Black American writers, the popular usage of the term had been influenced by racism: having been referred to work authored by "discredited people", the expression had been reduced to a token of exoticism devoid of any real substance or clout, thus ending up becoming synonymous with "illiterate" (Caldwell 1987, 243). In a later interview, she further elaborated on her position, by explaining that she felt that the "magical realism" category – probably due to the aforementioned associations with Latin American history and culture, i.e. with a "non-black cultural legacy" (Peach 1995, 13) – eclipsed the cultural paradigms on which she had founded her literary production. Actually, the term that Morrison

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[1]   With one notable exception being Raynaud 2019.

preferred to describe her distinctive approach to the world was "enchantment" (Davis 1994, 144), a technique which she employed with a mimetic intent – i.e. to mirror the "(w)holistic reality" that characterizes her people's collective perception of the world" (Evans 1984, 489), a unique blend of "primitive, animistic beliefs" and "Western scientific positivism" (Simal Gonzàlez 1996, 314).

Simal Gonzàlez ascribes Morrison's position against magical realism to a "rather narrow" vision: the scholar, in fact, asserts that, far from being "just another evasive label", magic realism reflects, instead, a ground-breaking attitude, both from a linguistic and thematic viewpoint, in that "it stands up for the counterculture of imagination that creates new visions of the world" and "leaves no room for oppression and lack of freedom" (Simal Gonzàlez 1996, 317). Interestingly, Foreman affirms that, "unlike the fantastic or the surreal", magical realism posits that the individual is "historically constructed and connected" with "the traditions and the faith" of a community (Foreman 1995, 299). As a matter of fact, Langdon states that "magical realist narratives are often – if not always – anchored to an historical moment", and as such often tackle "violent and traumatic events […]". Besides, concludes the scholar, "the magical or un-real in these narratives […] often fulfills a subversive purpose, attempting to highlight the falsity or 'unreality' of dominant discourses and hegemonic representations of history" (Langdon 2011, 2).

In that respect, I argue that *God Help the Child* is a case in point. Morrison's clever use of enchantment in the novel fulfills the purpose of subverting the narratives of a "post-racial America" (Gras 2016, 1), whereby systemic structures of racism are believed to be a thing of the past, especially considering the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States in 2009. In dispelling this myth, the author engages a host of traumatic realities that she has made her lifelong mission to retrieve from oblivion, protect from the white esthetic and cultural supremacy, and hand down to future generations.

More precisely, the uncanny metamorphosis that characterizes the novel's protagonist, a Black beauty named Lula Ann/Bride – who is made to suffer a systematic disintegration of her much-admired body – can be construed as a metaphorical reflection of Morrison's conception of racial trauma as "the severe fragmentation of the self" (Morrison 1989, 16). Indeed, this phenomenon forces the main character to come to terms with harrowing experiences of discrimination, misogyny, and abuse, which she has desperately tried to put behind her throughout her life.

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3   Enchantment and *God Help the Child*

The dimension of enchantment in the novel opens with the protagonist's first remarkable bodily change. A few hours after her birth, Sweetness, her mother, notices the newborn's surprisingly dark skin color, for which she significantly denies blame: "It's not my fault. So you can't blame me" (Morrison 2016, 3). Yet, what might initially appear as the physiological emergence of recessive genes in the infant turns out to be an actual metamorphosis, which sees the baby turn blue-black right before her mother's eyes (Morrison 2016, 4-5). The reason behind this transformation is never addressed, thus proving it to be the very first of a series of changes that remain unexplained throughout the story. Thanks to Morrison's apt use of enchantment, these circumstances are presented in the novel as upsetting but not extraordinary, an oscillation between the realms of the real and the fantastic which, I argue, cleverly alerts the readers to the insidious dynamics of the transgenerational transmission of racial prejudices, all the while underlying the sad "ordinariness" of such situations in the existences of minoritarian subjects. In this case, Morrison tackles discriminatory prejudices that are held not only by the non-Blacks, but also by the African American community itself, especially skin color, "an important factor" by which the Blacks "measure themselves" (Jovovič 2019, 202). This phenomenon, commonly called colorism, by which "lighter skin tones, straight hair" [...] and more "Eurocentric facial features" are constantly preferred over "more stereotypically Afrocentric facial features" (Russell, Wilson, Hall 1992, 43), has taken on "a deeply structural character" and "persists across generations" (Monk 2021, 77) of African Americans.

As López Ramirez observes, the "internalization of negative racial stereotypes and images" damages relations within the Black community, as it "generates micro-aggressions" often causing serious emotional damage, a phenomenon that becomes "especially dramatic in childhood" (López Ramirez 2016, 180). In that respect, Sweetness is a case in point: her grandmother had such a light skin that she decided to pass for white, choosing assimilation into the white world over her own family. Upon becoming a mother herself, Sweetness fails to offer her daughter the support and affection that every child needs, since "she transfers the contempt she feels for her own race to her child" (López Ramirez 2016, 160). Indeed, the shock of the newborn's blue-black skin causes Sweetness to go "crazy for just a minute", to the point that "she held a blanket over her face and pressed"; eventually, she realized she "couldn't do that, no matter how much" she "wished she hadn't been born with that terrible color". She even thought of "giving her away to an orphanage someplace" but she was "scared to be one of those mothers who put their babies on church steps" (Morrison 2016, 5). The girl's color also turned out to be the

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main reason for the dissolution of her marriage to Louis, Bride's father, and for his ensuing desertion of the family. The man, in fact, is so outraged at the sight of the newborn that he treats her as "the non-human Other" (Gallego 2019, 307), i.e., in Morrison's terms, as if "she was a stranger – more than that, an enemy" (Morrison 2016, 5), and refuses to recognize her as his own, suspecting, instead, his wife's infidelity. Yet, while he, eventually, leaves without ever even having touched Lula Ann, her mother, in turn, stays, only to raise her without the slightest human – let alone motherly – warmth (Morrison 2016, 31). The woman's fear of society's inveterate racism runs so deep that she even tries to hide the fact that Lula is her own daughter (Morrison 2016, 6).

The pain of her father's desertion and of her mother's neglectful parenting style inflicts an "insidious trauma" (Brown 1995, 107) on the little girl, a psychic wound that she desperately tries to heal by repudiating her mother and fleeing her unhappy home in the attempt to build a better future for herself. Growing up, she blossoms into a strikingly beautiful woman – with her old "stigma" (Keita 2018, 51), her blue-black skin tone, eventually turning into her strong point – and becomes the founder and poster girl of a successful cosmetic line. As her designer friend Jeri tells her – thereby sanctioning the hegemony of a white-centered aesthetic paradigm that gives value to Blackness only for commercial and material reasons – "Black sells […] [it] is the hottest commodity in the civilized world" (Morrison 2016, 36). Having changed her name from Lula Ann to the more fashionable Bride, she starts wearing "all white all the time" so that, following a process of sexist objectification and commodification of her body, the people who saw her would think of, in her designer friend's words, "something classy the likes of whipped cream and chocolate soufflé" (Morrison 2016, 33). Unlike most "emotionally abused children", who often "grow up believing that they are deficient in some way", she finds in a glamorous public and social life an opportunity for a highly coveted "vengeance from her tormenting childhood ghosts" (López Ramirez 2019, 153). Eventually, she fabricates a new self, a "thrillingly successful corporate woman façade of complete control" (Morrison 2016, 134) – the epitome of the entrepreneurial spirit that embodies "Obama's 'Yes, We Can' spirit of the new Black", a new subjectivity which, in the years 2010s when the novel is set, "reaffirms upward mobility and success, […] the promise of the American dream" (Aktar 2019, 7).

A major turning point in her life is her encounter with Booker, a young man with whom she starts a passionate relationship. Unbeknownst to each other, they share a common past of "childhood trauma, and direct or indirect confrontations with accused child molesters" (Kakutani 2015). When Booker meets her, in fact, he is still "trying to comprehend the emotional levy exacted" by his older broth-

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er Adam's death at the hands of a pedophile serial killer (Strawn 2015). As he sets his eyes on Bride, though, her extraordinary beauty seems to have a healing effect on his post-traumatic dysphoria, to the point of initiating "the disintegration of the haunt and gloom" in which "Adam's murder had clouded him" (Morrison 2016, 132).

Bride, in turn, feels safe enough with him as to share every "fear, every hurt, every accomplishment, however small" (Morrison 2016, 53). Indeed, she confesses to him that, when she was six years old, she witnessed the rape of a boy from her window at the hands of their then-landlord, Mr. Leigh. Having noticed her, the man, with palpable hatred and disgust, called her obscenities, among which was the N-word. Shocked and distressed, she turned to Sweetness for comfort and advice, but her mother went into a fury, instead. Not only did she hit her daughter, but she also ordered her not to report the incident, for fear of an eviction from their reasonably priced and safely located apartment. Thus, the hideous abuse went unpunished (Morrison 2016, 55-6). To Bride's initial relief, Booker's reaction to her disclosure is one of understanding and compassion. Yet, the emotional connection she establishes with him triggers the resurfacing of her long-repressed traumatic memories – which start coming up "fresh as though she was seeing them for the first time" (Morrison 2016, 53) – and the malignant consequences of her desperate search for love, recognition and approval. Among these is the horrific echo of another child molestation episode, a scandal that rocked her school when she was only eight years old. Succumbing to the pressure of her then-peers and, above all, to her wish to win her mother's attention, Lula Ann falsely testified against a teacher, Sofia Huxley, causing her to be convicted to serve a twenty-five-year long sentence as an innocent woman (Morrison 2016, 31)

Thinking back about the trial, Bride wonders whether, deep inside, it had been Mr. Leigh's "nastiness" or, rather, "the curse" (Morrison 2016, 56) he launched at her, to trigger her into levelling accusations at her teacher, perhaps as a desperate attempt at rectifying her previous error – probably, a trauma-induced instance of psychological displacement. While she keeps her guilty secret to herself, she lets Booker know that she intends to meet her former teacher in person the day of her release to comfort her with gifts and cash. Not being privy to the whole story, he perceives her plan as a pathological urge to "suck up" to "a monster" (Morrison 2016, 153), a misplaced "good Samaritan" (Morrison 2016, 12) attitude that brings back to surface his repressed memories of Adam's murder. Unable to control the upsurge of pain and rage, he breaks up with her with no explanation, except for the laconically cruel words "You not the woman I want". Booker's resolution is first narrated, from Bride's perspective, as an incomprehensible act: "I can't have thoughts of my own? Do things he doesn't approve of?" (Morrison 2016, 8). Having "counted on her

looks for so long" to open every door for her after the marginalization she experienced during her childhood, the rejection shatters her fragile sense of self-worth, while reinforcing her old fears of not being "enough" (Morrison 2016, 8). The separation causes Bride "to unravel both physically and emotionally" (Anrig 2015), to the point that she ends up feeling "dismissed" and "erased" (Morrison 2016, 38).

This crisis is figuratively expressed by Morrison once again through the clever use of enchantment, by having Bride undergo several more corporeal transformations, which, on a par with the metamorphosis she underwent as a newborn, are presented as disturbing but not explicitly supernatural phenomena. As she is getting ready to drive to Decagon Women's Correctional Center to pick up her former teacher, Bride notes that "every bit" of her pubic hair is no longer there. Not "as in shaved or waxed, but gone as in erased, as in never having been there in the first place" (Morrison 2016, 12-13). This uncanny incident does not divert Bride from her incredibly shallow self-redeeming initiative, a tell-tale sign of her emotional naiveté which understandably backfires as soon as Sofia Huxley learns about the identity of her unexpected visitor. After her initial shock, Sofia attacks Bride with such a violence as to land her in hospital in need of facial reconstructive surgery. Bride's regression gradually extends to her armpits, where, as she finds out, there is no longer any hair left. To her utmost surprise, she then realizes that also her earlobes have gone back to her childhood, before she had them pierced as a gift from Sweetness for testifying against her teacher (Morrison 2016, 50). Bride's metamorphosis continues with her astonishing realization that "her magnificent breasts" are gone; "her chest" is "flat. Completely flat, with only the nipples to prove" it is "not her back" (Morrison 2016, 92).

Not being mature enough to understand that it was her repression of the past that drove Booker away, Bride resolves to track him down and confront him, "which was the same as confronting herself" (Morrison 2016, 98) to demand an explanation. As she sets out on a quest to find him, she is involved in a car accident which almost costs her life, leaving her with multiple injuries. Trapped in her wrecked Jaguar, she is rescued by a middle-aged hippie couple, who takes her in for a fortnight of convalescence. It is in their humble dwelling in the middle of nowhere, a world away from her glittering Californian milieu, that Bride's enchanted transformation culminates with a regression to the size of a young girl, an occurrence of which she becomes aware when the top of her fashionable outfit sags "as if instead of a size 2 she had purchased a 4 and just now noticed the difference" (Morrison 2016, 81).

As Bride's much-admired body ultimately returns to the shape of a preteen – a phenomenon that becomes naturalized to the point that nobody else, not even the doctors who treat her injuries, seems

to have noticed – she is ready to reconnect with her innermost self – "that scared little black girl" (Morrison 2016, 142) who, in her distorted perception, never deserved to be loved. It is then that she befriends Rain – her hosts' adopted daughter, a child that the couple rescued from the streets in Asia. Notably, her actual age is not known, as the girl's physical development arrested at prepubescence, probably as a traumatic consequence of protracted sexual abuse. Thanks to Morrison's use of enchantment, Bride and Rain are – figuratively speaking, at least – roughly the same age, both emotionally and physically, due to their shared past of childhood abuse. In this light, it is no wonder that together they experience "a companionship" which, rather unusually for Bride's competitive and superficial social circle, is "surprisingly free of envy. Like the closeness of schoolgirls" (Morrison 2016, 103). What is more, when Rain is threatened by local bullies with a bird-shooting gun pointed at her, Bride does not hesitate to risk her life and take a bullet for her. With this supremely selfless act, an evolution from the "identity of an abused child" toward the role of "maternal protector and nurturer of an abused child" (Wyatt 2017, 29) the last layer of her meticulously constructed self – in Morrison's words, the "shield" of vanity, self-absorption, and cynicism that has protected "her from any overly intense feeling" (Morrison 2016, 79) – is symbolically stripped down. Her regression, in fact ends, – "there were no more physical disappearances" (142) – and her psychological healing begins.

Bride's path to "self-forgiveness and self-definition" (Scholes 2015), receives her victim's blessing – if not in person, certainly in spirit. Sofia Huxley, in fact, realizes that with her apparently reckless initiative, "that black girl" did her "a favor": the minute she threw Bride out, she was finally able to cry. Her violent outburst, in fact, triggered the release "of tears unshed for fifteen years" (Morrison 2016, 70). Having finally been cured of her "inability to mourn the damage that was inflicted on her" (Wagner-Martin 2015, 250), Sofia is ready to forgive and move on with her life, by metaphorically putting Bride "back together, healing her, thanking her. For the release" (Morrison 2016, 77). It is then, and only then, that Bride feels ready to finally confront Booker. Upon meeting him after their abrupt separation, they start to fight and, as he vehemently demands to know why she paid homage to a convicted child molester, she eventually finds the strength to put words to her childhood trauma and let him in on her darkest secret. Having shaken off her traumatic burden, Bride's physique progressively regains its past splendor, and her metamorphosis comes full circle as she announces her pregnancy to Booker (Morrison 2016, 174-5).

4 Conclusion

It is my contention that the enchanted dimension in the novel clever-ly counters the myth of a post-racial society in 21st-century Ameri-ca, by proving that the racial order continues to play a major role in the social and political structure of the country. Thanks to the pro-tagonist's ordeal, in fact, Morrison forces her readers to confront not only the corrosive and persistent presence of racism in contempo-rary American life, but also the malignant transgenerational rever-berations of traumatic experiences of discrimination, oppression and abuse. The magical physical transformations and multiple injuries that Bride must suffer during her "literal and metaphorical" journey (Scholes 2015) towards psychological freedom symbolize the urgen-cy to reconnect with repressed psychic wounds, a painful but indis-pensable step towards breaking the chain of trauma that has deeply affected so many lives in the story. With this newly acquired aware-ness, Bride can look forward to the prospective arrival of a new gen-eration with faith and hope that the past will not repeat itself.

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Letteratura e carcere in America. Il caso Theo Padnos

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Abstract Theo Padnos published *My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun* in 2004, when Prison Studies were burgeoning and gaining academic attention globally. Neglected by critics, the book relates the author's experience as literature instructor in an American prison. Engaging methods of pedagogical research and reader-response criticism, the paper investigates the role of literature in the cultural activities of young male inmates in a medium security jail in Vermont. An original amalgam of crime reports, pedagogy of literature, and autobiographical criticism, Padnos' study for the first time confronts young criminals with a literary canon dripping with violence. The experiment sheds light on the reading activities of prisoners, on their and the author's social background, and on the power of American literature to speak to marginal groups.

Keywords Prison libraries. Violence. Huckleberry Finn. Pedagogy. Reader-response.

1 Testo e contesto

Nel 2004, mentre si imponevano nel mondo accademico i *prison studies* come emergente settore dell'americanistica, Theo Padnos pubblicava *My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun. Adolescents at the Apocalypse*, un testo passato virtualmente inosservato da parte della critica sia negli USA che altrove. Con uno stile improntato in parte al giornalismo classico di un James Agee, in parte riconducibile alla critica letteraria autobiografica, il volume racconta l'esperienza dell'autore in un carcere di media sicurezza del Vermont, dove aveva tenuto corsi di letteratura per i detenuti tra il 1999 e l'anno 2000.[1]

La questione carceraria, negli American Studies, è stata affrontata da vari punti di vista, dal saggio fotografico alla prospettiva giuridica, dal taglio storicizzante al documentaristico, dal sociologico al pedagogico, dai rapporti con la biblioterapia alla pratica di scrittura creativa di soggetti marginalizzati (James 2005), il tutto non scevro, in certi casi, da una morbosità voyeuristica (Cagliero 2019, 16-7). Questo articolo vuole affrontare le dimensioni socioculturali della lettura (letteraria) in uno specifico contesto detentivo, attraverso l'esperienza didattica di Padnos, attività pedagogica che non sarà solo tramite ma anche oggetto di interpretazione in quanto presuppone una selezione dal canone che risulta essere essa stessa un approccio critico motivato dall'ambientazione *site-specific*.

L'emergenza dei *prison studies* in ambito accademico si è legata, storicamente, alla drammatica situazione di sovraffollamento delle carceri negli Stati Uniti, che a sua volta ha causato una «industrializzazione» del sistema detentivo trasformato in fonte di lucro (Grande 2019), con una prevalenza di soggetti marginali, poveri, afroamericani o latini a popolare le prigioni. A rendere ancor più ingolfato e caotico il sistema contribuiscono alcuni fenomeni dovuti all'inasprimento di regole che condannano alla reclusione, per esempio, studenti indisciplinati o automobilisti scorretti. Nel primo caso, la cosiddetta *school-to-prison pipeline* è sotto accusa da anni perché svuota le aule dei college e riempie le celle (Mallett 2015; Heitzeg 2016), mentre nel secondo la rigidità delle regole della viabilità e del sistema assicurativo sembra colpire sempre con prospettive classiste e razziste (Livingstone 2022).

Parte integrante e al tempo stesso marginale di questo panorama,

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[1] Theo Padnos è un giornalista americano più noto, oggi, per esser stato rapito da un gruppo terroristico siriano legato ad Al Qaeda (Al Nusra) nel 2012 e rilasciato quasi due anni dopo. Solo recentemente ha raccontato la sua prigionia in un libro (Padnos 2021). Uno dei possibili motivi della scarsa disseminazione del suo primo lavoro potrebbe essere legato alla casa editrice che lo ha pubblicato, la Miramax, proprietà dell'imprenditore Harvey Weinstein, che la chiuse nel 2005, prima di essere denunciato e poi incarcerato per i noti reati sessuali.

il mondo con cui si confronta Padnos è quello di un carcere di media sicurezza popolato da una maggioranza di bianchi di estrazione medio-bassa in cui la sua attenzione si rivolge in particolare a un gruppo di giovani prevalentemente WASP, che scontano una pena o sono in attesa di giudizio per crimini violenti, spaccio, rapine o abusi sessuali. Sebbene i loro nomi non siano destinati a passare alla storia come è accaduto a Perry Edward Smith dalle pagine di *A sangue freddo* di Truman Capote, le loro identità si stagliano in maniera ben distinta sull'universo anonimo dei tanti detenuti nel piccolo carcere del Vermont. Ci sono Duane Bedell, accusato di violenza domestica, Joe Emmons, colpevole di aver infranto un ordine restrittivo nei confronti della sua ex compagna, Stephen Brooks, accusato di violenza sessuale, rapimento e detenzione illegale di armi, Will Emerson in carcere per rapina, Brian Argeros, il cui crimine è stato investire volutamente un vicino, e ancora un altro giovane colpevole di violenza sessuale, Mike Tobin.

Diversamente da altri esperimenti svolti in anni precedenti[2] e in anni successivi in strutture detentive (Sweeney 2010; Wiltse 2011), Padnos arriva al carcere del Vermont, la Woodstock Regional Correctional Facility, con poche cognizioni pedagogiche, molta dimestichezza con la letteratura americana ed europea (è dottorando in Letterature Comparate all'Amherst College) e motivazioni più personali che professionali. Con una autoanalisi che oscilla tra il romanzesco e l'ironico, infatti, dichiara di essere in quel limbo tra gioventù ed età adulta in cui cerca un ruolo per sé all'interno della società. Ma afferma anche qualcosa di più intimo, che rivelerà e spiegherà la sua crescente dedizione alle vite 'sbandate' dei suoi allievi in prigione, una attenzione che in alcuni momenti rasenterà l'ossessione. Richiamando il divorzio dei genitori avvenuto quando era adolescente, dichiara:

> Ero sfuggito al caos di una guerra matrimoniale e ne ero grato, ma a quel punto la mia natura era determinata. Dopo quei cinque o sei anni in una famiglia infelice, sapevo cosa mi piaceva. Sapevo dove potevo sentirmi a casa, come potevo essere utile e trovare un pubblico che apprezzasse le mie battute e i miei scherzi. Cercavo famiglie disagiate. Ci planavo sopra come un volatile. Quando non riuscivo a trovare una famiglia intera, facevo amicizia con gli avanzi delle famiglie, gli ultimi, i sopravvissuti sconvolti. (Padnos 2004, 26)[3]

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2 Esula da questo studio l'analisi e la storia ormai trentennale del CLTL, *Changing Lives Through Literature*, programma di biblioterapia carceraria iniziato nel Massachussetts nel 1991 e tuttora attivo in alcuni penitenziari americani.

3 Tutte le traduzioni dai testi citati, salvo diversa indicazione, sono di chi scrive.

1.1 Libri oltre le sbarre

Al suo arrivo all'interno della struttura detentiva, Padnos viene accolto dall'agente Jim, che gli presenta il primo carcerato, Duane, col quale viene invitato a visitare la biblioteca. Elemento tutt'altro che trascurabile, la posizione, la regolamentazione e il contenuto della biblioteca all'interno delle prigioni americane è oggetto di dibattito sin dai primi dell'Ottocento. Nel 1812 un certo dottor Benjamin Rush, membro della *Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons*, indicava come lettura più adatta al carcere la Bibbia, paragonandola alla «bottega del farmacista», con una medicina per ogni male (Sweeney 2010, 28). Tra queste iniziali argomentazioni e il caso che nel 2006 vede negare l'accesso di alcuni detenuti 'problematici' di un carcere della Pennsylvania alla lettura di ogni tipo di periodici (*Beard vs. Banks*, con la Corte Suprema che dà ragione al carcere), le storie delle biblioteche carcerarie e delle modalità con cui sono state regolamentate (il contenuto e l'accesso prima di tutto) sono virtualmente tante quanti sono i penitenziari americani.

In mancanza di una legislazione nazionale, gli stati e spesso anche le singole strutture hanno stabilito le proprie norme, tanto che già nel 1918 si discuteva sul ruolo determinante e di grande responsabilità di chi sceglie i libri da leggere in un carcere. Tra il decennio del 1870 (anno del primo *National Prison Congress* negli Stati Uniti) e gli anni Quaranta del Novecento vengono pubblicati svariati manuali per i bibliotecari del carcere, con una tendenza a censurare polizieschi e gialli, poiché il 'peccato' non doveva essere attraente, e proporre invece letture ritenute edificanti come Charles Dickens o romanzi d'avventura o di guerra. Questi ultimi, secondo la critica, sarebbero stati ideologicamente capaci di ribadire l'imperialismo americano a discapito di popolazioni più indifese, quali gli indiani o i messicani (Sweeney 2010, 28-31).

Per questo motivo, in mancanza di controlli censori nella struttura detentiva di Woodstock, Padnos si sente libero di organizzare il proprio *syllabus*. Prima di essere assunto, fantastica su un ipotetico programma che includerebbe testi ambientati in prigione o con detenuti come protagonisti, o in qualche modo in grado di riproporre la sensazione claustrofobica della cella. *Memorie dal sottosuolo* di Dostoevskij, *A porte chiuse* di Sartre e *Lo straniero* di Camus sono i primi titoli che gli vengono in mente, ma, facendo tesoro dell'esperienza precedente di insegnamento agli *undergraduate* del suo college, vira verso la letteratura degli Stati Uniti, anche per far sì che i lettori si trovino su territorio riconoscibile e si sentano invogliati a partecipare. Il giro di boa avviene con «Il blues di Sonny» di James Baldwin, un racconto breve in cui il narratore, fratello di Sonny, spera di poterlo redimere e salvare dalla droga e dal crimine tramite l'arte. Un afflato di libertà attraverso l'esperienza estetica (nel raccon-

to è la musica) è il bagaglio con cui Padnos decide di approcciarsi agli allievi detenuti.

Il suo primo impatto con i potenziali studenti è molto blando. Inizialmente si trova solo in compagnia di Duane Bedell, per familiarizzare col quale frequenta gli incontri di *current events*, momenti di discussione della cronaca quotidiana. Qui si unisce Joe Emmons, il cui livello culturale si palesa nel momento in cui, commentando l'abbigliamento femminile nell'America contemporanea, l'uomo trova immorale il modo in cui è vestita la bambola Barbie, immoralità che rifletterebbe lo stato in cui versa il mondo intero (Padnos 2014, 39). Considerando che Emmons aveva dimostrato interesse nei confronti del romanzo *Anna Karenina*, «ma non tutto il libro, solo la parte sulla moglie» perché si ritiene «dannatamente ossessionato» (41) dalla propria, Padnos si rende conto che la dimensione del racconto breve è la più adatta alla ridotta attenzione di persone non abituate alla pratica della lettura. Brevità, identificazione tematica e riconoscibilità culturale si impongono come criteri per la selezione e Padnos sceglie di iniziare la sua introduzione alla letteratura con uno dei racconti più spesso antologizzati dell'autrice americana spesso candidata al Nobel, Joyce Carol Oates, «Dove vai, dove sei stata?».

Nel frattempo, Joe viene messo in punizione per uno scontro con una guardia e al suo ritorno trova la popolazione della classe aumentata di qualche elemento. Padnos presenta la *short story* di Oates, ispirata a un criminoso fatto di cronaca, come un commento «sulla tossicità della cultura commerciale americana che la società getta in faccia a persone incapaci di reagire» (44), ma l'interesse di Emmons viene suscitato solo dalla tensione erotica che traspare dalla vulnerabilità di Connie, la protagonista minorenne minacciata da due sconosciuti. Quando appare necessario un aggiustamento del *syllabus*, la strada da percorrere la fornisce un nuovo allievo, Stephen Brooks, detto Slash.

2 Verso il lato oscuro

Con l'arrivo di Slash nelle ore di lezione di Padnos, si avvicinano anche altri allievi, attratti dalla sua figura carismatica. Più adulto della media (ha trentanove anni), colto, in grado di discutere di Michel Foucault e di Alexandre Dumas, Slash racconta di covare un odio profondo e desiderio di vendetta nei confronti della sua *parole officer*, l'agente che ha convinto i giudici a negargli la libertà vigilata. Il paragone che fa, per spiegare i propri intenti, è indicativo della cultura della violenza che trova a portata di mano e di cui può nutrirsi con molta facilità: quello che lui intende fare all'agente farebbe apparire gli adolescenti colpevoli della strage di Columbine (l'episodio era avvenuto poche settimane prima) come dei bambini dell'a-

silo. «Se devo farlo, sono pronto a entrare nel lato oscuro», dichiara (Padnos 2014, 46).

Padnos trova in questa affermazione la chiave di ingresso verso l'attenzione dei suoi studenti. Il lato oscuro può essere un luogo interessante, spiega. Ma non deve essere necessariamente un delirio di violenza, può essere un luogo da esplorare con lo studio e attraverso la fantasia. In questo modo si può arrivare al luogo oscuro e andare anche oltre, ma, ancor più importante, si può tornare indietro in qualsiasi momento.

Queste premesse fanno sì che, dopo qualche settimana di viavai con allievi che durano solo un'ora o un paio di lezioni, un gruppo fisso e ricorrente di prigionieri si aggreghi negli incontri con il nuovo docente. Oltre a Slash, Joe, Tobin e Duane arrivano Will Emerson e Brian Argeros, detto 'Rhino'. Franz Kafka e Dostoevskij si rivelano tentativi fallimentari: la *short story* conferma di essere la scelta più appropriata, tanto più se appartenente al canone nazionale. La tradizione del racconto breve americano è il repertorio perfetto per questioni di lunghezza e fruibilità (come teorizzava Edgar Allan Poe, la lettura che si esaurisce in una singola 'sessione'), ma anche per tematiche, così intrisa di violenza psicologica o fisica, di interni claustrofobici, di vite marginali.

Anche un testo come «Da dove sto chiamando» di un maestro moderno del racconto, Raymond Carver, però, non riesce a stimolare l'attenzione degli allievi, nonostante l'ambientazione così riconoscibile in una struttura di riabilitazione per alcolizzati, e nonostante un personaggio racconti di un vecchio incidente in cui era caduto in un pozzo tanto che «restare in fondo a quel pozzo lo aveva segnato per la vita» (Carver 1999, 313), chiara metafora dell'isolamento carcerario. Per questo motivo Padnos decide di provare ad ampliare il *parterre* di ascoltatori e rivolgersi a detenuti adolescenti o poco più, per i quali le scuole superiori sono un ricordo fresco e la pratica di lettura non altrettanto ostica quanto per i carcerati più maturi. Nel momento in cui riesce a portare nei suoi corsi un gruppo di giovani tra i diciassette e i ventuno anni, che sono obbligati, in altri orari, a seguire lezioni curricolari, propone loro lettura e analisi de «La zattera», un racconto di Stephen King del 1985.

La popolarità dell'autore fa sì che per la prima volta tutti gli studenti nella classe di Padnos, sia i più giovani che i più anziani, arrivino con il compito di lettura completato, segno che, indipendentemente dall'età dei detenuti, le scelte testuali in una situazione carceraria dovessero rispondere a dinamiche distinte rispetto a quelle che regolano l'insegnamento a persone libere. Nella struttura correttiva di Woodstock Stephen King, che riscuote grande successo anche in un carcere femminile (Sweeney 2010, 60), provoca con «La zattera» un dibattito su adolescenza ed età adulta, vita e morte, permessi e divieti.

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I quattro ragazzi protagonisti della storia, in un pomeriggio di fine estate, in una situazione bucolica, scavalcano un recinto che vieta di fare il bagno in un lago e verranno assaliti da una entità aliena che appare inizialmente come una chiazza di petrolio e che per alcuni di loro sarà fatale, mentre gli altri tenteranno di salvarsi sulla zattera. La maestria di King sta nel far emergere (qui nel vero senso della parola) l'*horror* in una ambientazione il più possibile idilliaca, con una tensione erotica tra adolescenti e un senso di libertà e spensieratezza che traspare dalle azioni e dai pensieri dei ragazzi. In quel limbo tra la gioventù e l'età adulta, persi tra ricordi ed emozioni immediate, i ragazzi fanno un tuffo nel passato e, al tempo stesso, nel proibito. E dall'abisso la macchia nera, il lato oscuro, li attira a sé e li punisce. Ciò che era stata l'idealizzazione della purezza e della bellezza della gioventù di una protagonista, Rachel («I capelli biondi come il grano maturo le ricoprivano come un velo la testa ben modellata»), diventa «il vuoto nei suoi occhi [che] si riempì di una straziante agonia» (King 2015, 264-6).

Se in molti partecipano alla discussione, specialmente quando si arriva a commentare la consapevolezza della morte imminente e la reazione che ciò susciterebbe in ognuno di loro, Will Emerson si rivela essere il più pronto alla lettura simbolica. Il colore bianco della zattera è, secondo lui, «il simbolo dell'incontaminata e incontaminabile sfera dell'infanzia», un luogo che avrebbero tutti, se non altro nei loro ricordi. La chiazza non può intaccare la zattera in sé, spiega, poiché la zattera è una specie di sfera sacra, immune ai pericoli che incombono alla sua periferia:

e se quel *blob* è ciò che aggredisce i ragazzi, se è la vita adulta o che so io [...] può attaccarli solo quando mettono i piedi in acqua, quando si allontanano dalla loro sfera. Quando erano bambini nuotavano in quell'acqua tutto il tempo. Tutto il lago era parte di quella sfera. Lo era tutto il mondo. Quindi la chiazza rispetta l'infanzia. Invece non rispetta le persone che continuano a cercare di tornarci quando sono ormai troppo cresciute per farlo. (Padnos 2014, 61)

2.1 Sottoterra e sopra l'acqua. Edgar Allan Poe e Mark Twain

Uno spacciatore di nome Matt, nuovo arrivo tra i banchi dell'aula carceraria, chiede che venga messo nella *reading list* qualche scritto di Edgar Allan Poe. Per quanto privo di scolarizzazione, difficilmente si troverebbe un americano che non conosca l'autore e non sia in grado di ricollegarlo ad atmosfere gotiche e di terrore psicologico. Padnos sceglie «Il barile di Amontillado», inserendolo in una serie di letture volte a discutere i rapporti famigliari disfunzionali, collegandosi così alle prime sensazioni che avevano motivato il suo avvicinamento alla realtà della struttura detentiva.

Il racconto rimanda a un'Italia tardo-settecentesca, in cui è in corso un carnevale mascherato, nonché a una faida tra il narratore, Montresor e il suo vecchio rivale, Fortunato. Montresor risucirà a portare quest'ultimo nelle catacombe di famiglia nel suo antico palazzo con la scusa di fargli provare un pregiato vino, appunto, l'Amontillado, ma con la vera intenzione, che riuscirà a portare a termine, di murarlo vivo dove nessuno potrà mai trovarlo. La lettura ha lo scopo di far lavorare gli studenti sul meccanismo del simbolo. Senza troppa guida da parte di Padnos, gli allievi dovevano «da soli capire che c'era un profondo simbolismo in quel viaggio tra le cripte di famiglia», notare

> l'umidità del posto, il modo in cui era cosparso di tesori di famiglia, ma anche, essendo una catacomba, di corpi essiccati. Volevo che vedessero come, letteralmente, in questo racconto, se ci si avventurava sotto la superficie della vita familiare, si inciampava nell'immenso impero del passato. [...] Le famiglie possono essere come delle prigioni. (Padnos 2004, 91)

A dispetto delle intenzioni del docente, l'efficacia della lezione su Poe è solo parziale. L'aula studio si trasforma in un ritrovo collettivo per detenuti che hanno poco o nullo interesse nella letteratura, e l'arrivo di un nuovo carcerato, Laird, catalizza l'arroganza e il bullismo dei veterani del carcere. Come in un libro di Edward Bunker (scrittore e criminale, più volte detenuto), osserva Padnos, il carcere è dominato dalla legge della sopravvivenza del più forte. Laird Stanard ha solo diciassette anni ed è accusato di aver ucciso la madre, azione che gli altri prigionieri non gli perdonano, per quanto non ci sia la certezza della colpa e quindi la sua non sia una condanna definitiva.

2.1.1   Questioni di metodo

Ma Laird, l'adolescente paffutello di buona, anzi ottima famiglia, con la sua apparente doppia personalità – lo studente modello e l'assassino matricida – ha provocato una reazione inattesa anche in Padnos. L'autore rivela inquietanti tracce di identificazione con il ragazzo (Padnos 2004, 75), comincia a essere ossessionato dai fantasmi delle vittime dei suoi allievi partendo proprio dalla madre di Laird, si illude di poter veramente redimere l'ultimo arrivato e segna il passo nella sua attività pedagogico-letteraria, sconfinando in un diario del carcere nel quale trascrive le sensazioni che prova e i cambiamenti che l'esperienza dietro le sbarre causa a lui piuttosto che agli studenti.

Per questo motivo il testo è riconducibile alla critica letteraria autobiografica, ovvero quell'approccio analitico a una o più opere attraverso il filtro della propria esperienza biografica – che in questo caso ha come *setting* un carcere. Ed è anche, con tutta probabilità,

la ragione per cui il suo lavoro ha suscitato meno interesse rispetto ad altri apporti ai *prison studies*, che negli anni successivi si sarebbero dotati di scopi e mezzi investigativi più scientifici. Il già citato volume di Megan Sweeney del 2010, significativamente intitolato *Reading Is My Window*, per esempio, ha un impianto molto rigoroso. Dopo aver ripercorso il ruolo della lettura nell'ambito delle pratiche educative nella storia penale americana, affronta le dimensioni materiali della lettura in carcere (quali e quanti libri sono ammessi, chi li sceglie e/o acquista, come sono fruibili dalle detenute – se in *open shelves* o su richiesta, con spazi aperti a sedere per poter socializzare o solo posti in piedi)[4] e fornisce un dettagliato resoconto della sua interazione con le lettrici carcerate, strutturato su questioni di genere, razza e classe.

Uso volutamente il termine 'interazione' poiché, laddove Padnos fa una vera e propria esperienza didattica e sceglie in prima persona i testi da far studiare, Sweeney raccoglie desideri, curiosità e reazioni di novantaquattro detenute in tre strutture detentive in Ohio, Pennsylvania e North Carolina, mettendo sé stessa in ombra rispetto all'oggetto della propria analisi. Chiaramente ciò distingue l'approccio scientifico di Sweeney da quello giornalistico di Padnos, un approccio che, anni dopo, avrebbe informato uno dei resoconti a oggi più noti della drammaticità della questione carceraria americana, ovvero *American Prison* di Shane Bauer, del 2018. L'enorme impatto culturale di questo lavoro, la cui analisi esula dal presente articolo, ma la cui menzione è imprescindibile, ha a che fare con la sua netta natura di denuncia del sistema delle carceri private, che a malapena si distingue dallo sfruttamento della schiavitù pre-guerra civile. Se nessuna delle strutture oggetto di studio di Padnos e Sweeney è privata, la differenza fra i tre resoconti è resa ancor più significativa dalla necessità di Bauer di entrare nel carcere di Winnfield, Louisiana, in incognito come guardia carceraria per poter testimoniare ciò che a nessun visitatore sarebbe stato permesso.[5]

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4 Particolarmente interessanti le informazioni relative alla censura operata nei confronti di alcuni libri: in un carcere del Texas è stato vietato *Paradise* di Toni Morrison per timore di conflitti razziali, mentre sulla scia dell'islamofobia scaturita dopo gli attentati dell'11 settembre, nel 2007 il Federal Bureau of Prisons vieta i libri religiosi di qualsiasi culto. Più recentemente, nel sistema penitenziario dell'Ohio, la scelta dei libri da acquistare è passata dal cappellano direttamente agli uffici legali per via delle numerose cause intentate dai detenuti in difesa del proprio diritto di avere libri a loro non concessi (Sweeney 2010, 44-5, 59).

5 C'è da notare che finanche in alcune strutture pubbliche le informazioni non sono sempre disponibili. La stessa Sweeney in alcuni casi è impossibilitata a conoscere le norme che regolano la gestione e l'uso delle biblioteche (2010, 281, nota 2).

2.2 Leggere Huck

Quando Padnos distoglie lo sguardo da sé stesso e torna a occuparsi degli studenti, ai suoi occhi il nuovo arrivato, Laird, appare effettivamente come la personificazione del «fucile carico» (Padnos 2004, 80) della poesia di Emily Dickinson che dà il titolo alla sua opera, ma l'utilità della poetessa di Amherst rimane nelle elucubrazioni culturali del docente poiché la sua poetica ellittica risulta inevitabilmente troppo lontana dalle sensibilità dei ragazzi. Se proprio c'è un'icona culturale del passato nazionale in grado di entusiasmarli, è quella dell'esploratore Daniel Boone (1734-1820): fucile in spalla, natura incontaminata, frequentazioni virili e autosufficienza con i prodotti della terra.

Padnos non ha difficoltà a trovare questi elementi nell'opera di un altro autore che nessun giovane americano può ignorare, ovvero nelle *Avventure di Huckleberry Finn* di Mark Twain. E Huck, orfano di madre e figlio di un padre violento e alcolizzato, rientra a pieno diritto anche nella prospettiva iniziale di studio dei testi letterari che raccontassero famiglie disfunzionali.

L'inserimento di questo classico nel *syllabus* coincide con l'arrivo, tra gli studenti, di un vero discendente di Huck, il diciannovenne Richard Darling. Incarcerato per una serie di ripetuti reati minori, Richard non ha mai avuto una famiglia propria e fino all'età di tredici anni è passato da una famiglia adottiva all'altra, per poi trovarsi a vivere negli istituti. Per un periodo ha vissuto all'aperto, sulle sponde del fiume Connecticut nei pressi di Windsor e, primo reato registrato, ha arpionato una tartaruga per mangiarsela, in quanto pativa la fame. Da bravo epigono di Huck, Richard non cede al tentativo di *sivilization* di Padnos e rifiuta di leggere il romanzo di Mark Twain. Diversamente da lui, gli altri detenuti, da Laird a Will a Slash, dichiarano di conoscere bene il testo. L'autore commenta:

> mi stupiva sempre come i detenuti sentissero la responsabilità di dover conoscere *Le avventure di Huckleberry Finn*; non si sentivano necessariamente responsabili per aver ucciso chi avevano ucciso o per aver derubato chi avevano derubato, ma sentivano un obbligo morale nei confronti di *Huckleberry Finn*. Huck era parte del loro patrimonio. (117)

La lettura che Padnos fa del romanzo vuole offrire agli studenti un senso del tempo e del luogo in cui Twain ha ambientato *Le avventure di Huckleberry Finn*. Scritto in Connecticut nel penultimo decennio dell'Ottocento, si svolge circa quaranta anni prima, in un'epoca antecedente alla Guerra Civile, prima della costruzione della ferrovia transcontinentale e prima che l'industrializzazione avesse il tempo di creare problemi urbani su grande scala. L'ambientazione è quella della gioventù dell'autore, il bacino del Mississippi, ma la scrittura rivela, secondo

Padnos, una consapevolezza del mistero di un nuovo continente, alcune delle sue iniziali promesse, un po' della sua innocenza. Padnos spiega:

> Tuttavia, il paradiso giovanile di Twain era anche pieno di minacce, così come lo era stato il vero stato del Missouri. Ho parlato [agli studenti] della frontiera occidentale negli anni Quaranta dell'Ottocento; di come la nazione si estendesse ad Ovest attraverso la valle dell'Ohio per poi esaurirsi, per ragioni pratiche, in una violenta palude mobile di fango, ovvero il fiume Mississippi. I viaggiatori ne scrivevano come se fosse il fiume ai confini dell'inferno. Si diceva pullulasse di serpenti e carcasse di animali e coccodrilli antropofagi. Veniva spesso descritto nei diari di viaggio di visitatori europei come una forza in grado di risucchiare intere foreste se ne aveva voglia e di inondare una regione grande quanto l'Irlanda in un solo mattino. C'era la convinzione che alle latitudini meridionali esalasse un ceppo mortale di malaria. E, dappertutto, aveva la tendenza a ingoiarsi chiunque fosse abbastanza sfortunato da caderci dentro: questo perché le onde erano ritenute le più grosse al mondo, fatte solo di limo. Avvolgevano i nuotatori nelle sabbie mobili e non li restituivano più. (118)

Questa descrizione aveva lo scopo di trasmettere agli studenti un senso di natura primordiale associato al fiume, presentarlo come una entità in grado di dominare gli esseri umani che si stabilivano lungo le sue rive. Ma al di là delle lontane sponde c'era il mitico «Territorio», la connessione col quale sarebbe, nella lettura di Padnos, alla base della forza e della resilienza di Huck. Anche l'incessante potere che la figura del ragazzo fuggiasco esercita sull'immaginario americano deriverebbe dal suo essere associato a questo panorama: alla sua vastità, ai suoi misteri, al suo eterno fluire.

Nel suo ruolo di «civilizzatore», Padnos chiede ai suoi allievi anche un paragone col processo educativo che le due vecchiette, Miss Watson e la vedova Douglas, tentano di imporre a Huck. Oltre alla severità nei confronti delle buone maniere durante i pasti, che è presente nella Saint Petersburg del romanzo e nella Woodstock del carcere, l'attenzione si concentra sull'istruzione. Slash è il primo a rispondere, dichiarando di «saper bene che effetto avesse il programma educativo del Dipartimento Correttivo del Vermont. Rovinava la vita delle persone. Faceva loro il lavaggio del cervello» (119).

2.2.1 Angeli della morte

Il giovane docente prova a toccare l'argomento «natura», al quale i detenuti sono particolarmente sensibili, sia per tradizione culturale, sia per la condizione di privazione in cui si trovano. Ed è infatti

la fuga verso Ovest e la convivenza con la *wilderness* a suscitare le maggiori reazioni negli studenti, dimostrando di essere un *topos* perfettamente vivo un secolo e mezzo dopo il suo apice storico. Ma non tutte le reazioni al romanzo si rivelano essere nella direzione desiderata da Padnos. Un esempio lo fornisce il commento alle prime pagine del libro, in cui Huck si ritira nella propria camera e, in preda a un momento di tristezza, aguzza l'udito nei confronti dei suoni della natura circostante.

> Poi mi sono seduto vicino alla finestra cercando di pensare a qualcosa di allegro, ma niente. Mi sentivo così solo che volevo soltanto morire. Le stelle brillavano e le foglie del bosco si lamentavano; poi ho sentito un gufo, lontano, che faceva uh-uh perché era morto qualcuno, e anche un succiacapre e un cane che piagnucolavano perché qualcuno stava per morire; il vento cercava di bisbigliarmi qualcosa ma io non capivo cosa e sentivo dei brividi freddi dappertutto. Poi, lontano nei boschi, ho sentito quel tipo di suono che fanno i fantasmi quando vogliono dirti qualcosa che hanno in mente ma non riescono a spiegarsi e così non possono starsene tranquilli nella fossa e devono andarsene in giro di notte a frignare. (Twain 2019, 9-10)

Nel momento in cui Padnos chiede agli studenti se le foreste avessero mai avuto su di loro un effetto simile, la prima risposta è di Tim, uno spacciatore da poco aggiuntosi alla classe, secondo il quale «senti fino all'ultimo minuscolo suono dopo un po' che sei nei boschi, specialmente quando hai la sensazione che in giro ci siano gli sbirri che ti cercano». Nonostante queste osservazioni tendano a una inconsapevole comicità, Padnos incalza lo studente chiedendogli se i boschi potessero essere veramente «interpretati» come faceva Huck. E il carcerato si fa serio, confessando che non solo i boschi ti raccontano un mucchio di cose, ma sicuramente «ti parlano più di quanto non facciano le persone qua dentro». (Padnos 2004, 120)

Le lezioni sul romanzo di Twain costituiscono il fulcro centrale dell'esperienza didattica raccontata in *My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun* e il suo punto di forza, rintracciabile in una lettura critica del canone americano nell'ottica della violenza, della fuga e del rapporto con spazio e tempo.

Padnos vuole comunicare come la vita di Huck dopo la fuga dalla casa della vedova Douglas non sia solo un idillio adolescenziale ma un viaggio verso la vita, verso la sua turbolenza, la sua violenza, la sua stranezza, in balia delle correnti del fiume. Huck per un po' è anche la personificazione di un nuovo Adamo, padrone del suo territorio, forte del suo fucile e degli ami da pesca sull'Isola di Jackson. Ma prima era stato in una situazione claustrofobica, nella capanna in cui lo chiude il padre, per di più in preda a un *delirium tremens* che gli

fa vedere il figlio come un Angelo della Morte. «La morte è dappertutto, in questo libro», spiega l'autore, «è un qualcosa che arde nella mente di tutti, anche in quella di Huck». (127)

L'attenzione dei detenuti sembra aumentare in occasione di queste osservazioni. E Padnos ne approfitta per andare più a fondo nella sua interpretazione, segnalando come in quella società ottocentesca ossessionata dallo spiritualismo e dalle armi da fuoco e con una riverenza religiosa nei confronti dei morti, gli innocenti, in particolare i bambini, potessero trovarsi facilmente trascinati verso la tomba. Nella percezione di Padnos, il ritmo quasi frenetico e ripetitivo che segna le azioni di Huck quando uccide il maiale per fingere la propria morte riesce a ipnotizzare gli studenti, tanto che egli è portato a pensare in termini di una voce interiore in Huck non dissimile dalla voce cui avevano recentemente ceduto i detenuti nel momento del loro crimine. *Mutatis mutandis*, anche i suoi allievi appaiono come angeli della morte, vittime non di un padre scriteriato e violento, bensì di sé stessi.

Segue una lettura che prende in considerazione altri elementi, più o meno noti, di questo grande classico: la resilienza di Huck, la sua capacità di costruirsi una vita alternativa nel momento in cui quella familiare non tiene, la sua «visione notturna», ovvero la sua capacità di navigare nell'oscurità come se avesse attivato un radar, le scene in cui è un novello Adamo nel suo Giardino dell'Eden compreso di serpente, i rapporti anomali che ha con tempo e spazio nella sua nuova vita senza costrizioni, nonché la relatività delle situazioni, secondo cui Huck è ricco dei pochi averi presi dalla capanna prima della fuga, mentre il padre sarà il povero derelitto ricercato e col destino segnato (129-33).

3   Deserto, follia e moltitudini

Le lezioni procedono per settimane, con l'alternarsi di studenti, detenuti in attesa di processo che vengono trasferiti, e qualche presenza fissa, come Laird, Will, Joe e Slash. Una delle caratteristiche che unirà i carcerati, dai più giovani ai più maturi, è il desiderio di emergere dall'anonimato. Leggere dei propri crimini sui quotidiani dà loro un brivido di notorietà che però non basta. Laird, il diciassettenne matricida, dichiara di amare la recitazione, e promette che la sua *performance* più memorabile sarà il suo processo. Will si entusiasma nell'apprendere che Theo sta scrivendo un libro sull'esperienza in carcere e vuole la conferma che il suo sarà un ruolo da protagonista. È inevitabile, per Padnos, il paragone con Perry Smith, l'omicida raccontato da Truman Capote in *A sangue freddo*. Smith vede sé stesso, nei suoi sogni, come un attore abbandonato dal proprio pubblico, che lo ha lasciato in un baratro di terrificante silenzio. Come il giovane Laird, che si proietta in un futuro sotto i riflettori, verso la fine del libro di Capote, mentre si avvicina il giorno della sua ese-

cuzione per impiccagione, Smith si immagina su un palcoscenico di Las Vegas a cantare *You Are My Sunshine*.

Il canone della letteratura americana offre a Padnos una grande quantità di testi in cui ci sono giovani in fuga, famiglie disfunzionali o violenze di ogni genere. Dai racconti di Ernest Hemingway e Paul Bowles a quelli di Flannery O'Connor, Denis Johnson e del già citato Raymond Carver, più sono espliciti, più hanno, sugli studenti, l'effetto ipnotico di una ninna nanna (183). In particolare, i drogati, i vagabondi e i derelitti che popolano i racconti di Johnson sono i più vicini alla popolazione carceraria che potrebbe approdare nelle classi di Padnos. Ma è inaspettatamente «Un episodio remoto» di Paul Bowles a operare il miracolo della comunicazione letteraria, dando seguito alle intenzioni pedagogiche di Padnos e fornendo un senso di sé e della propria situazione agli allievi.

Portato nel *syllabus* verso la fine dell'esperienza didattica nel carcere di Woodstock, il testo risponde esattamente alla percezione che ha il docente di ciò che possa essere in grado di toccare la sensibilità dei suoi allievi: la vulnerabilità, i rapporti di potere, nonché una condizione di perdita di controllo mentale e fisico. Il racconto di Bowles, scritto nel 1945 e pubblicato due anni più tardi sulla rivista *The Partisan Review*, narra di un professore di linguistica che visita il Marocco, dove cerca, per collezionarle, piccole scatole fatte con pelle di cammella. Affidandosi a un fornitore sconosciuto che lo porta nel deserto, finisce in un agguato in cui viene derubato, rapito e poi portato in prigionia da una violenta tribù autoctona. Torturato e mutilato (gli viene tagliata la lingua), sprofonda poco per volta in uno stato di demenza che lo avvicina alla condizione di un animale in gabbia e viene trattato come un fenomeno da baraccone per divertire le donne e i bambini della tribù.

Ciò che i detenuti vedono in questo breve racconto è il desiderio adrenalinico di esplorare luoghi sconosciuti – reali o metaforici (il proibito), nonché il pericolo della follia che può derivare dalla reclusione, quell'ingabbiamento così simile alla detenzione carceraria, che invece di salvare provoca un imbarbarimento. Senza ombra di dubbio, al ricovero psichiatrico, che vedono come destino tutt'altro che lontano e metaforico, sostengono di preferire la morte (180). Ma l'emozione, l'emotività, la reattività dei carcerati sono state attivate: negli ultimi momenti della lezione sul racconto di Bowles

> Will e Laird e Tim sono rimasti seduti immobili, con gli occhi lucidi, a leggere in silenzio e facendo lunghi, lenti respiri come se cercassero di medicarsi con le parole sulla pagina. [...] Le persone qui sono indifese quando qualcosa le tocca, praticamente cedono al minimo accenno di calore umano. Sono così sorpresi che non sanno cosa fare. (181)

Lo stesso effetto non riesce a perfezione con i versi tratti da *Sul ferry di Brooklyn* di Walt Whitman. Padnos spera di far riconoscere ai suoi allievi la relatività del tempo e delle singole identità leggendo le parole che il poeta rivolge ai suoi lettori futuri per ricordare di essere uno in una moltitudine di simili, nel bene e nel male:

> Non solamente su di voi cadono macchie di buio,
> Il buio gettò le sue macchie anche sopra di me,
> Quello che avevo fatto meglio mi sembrò scialbo e sospetto,
> I miei grandi pensieri, così li supponevo, non erano angusti in realtà?
> Non siete voi soli a conoscere cosa sia il male,
> Anch'io sono uno che seppe che cosa era il male,
> Anch'io ho lavorato a maglia l'antico nodo delle contraddizioni.
> (Whitman 1988, 69-70)

I versi del bardo ottocentesco suscitano reazioni negli allievi: chi smentisce di aver «conosciuto il male», chi commenta sul «nodo di contraddizioni» riportandolo nella sfera del disturbo oppositivo provocatorio, chi dichiara che è necessario saper operare sul proprio talento per poter «lavorare a maglia» il nodo delle contraddizioni. Tuttavia, secondo Padnos, in questo caso l'identificazione con la materia letteraria non avveniva. O, se avveniva, non era accolta in modo consapevole.

Gli studenti carcerati non rinunciano all'idea della propria unicità, corredata da velleità di successo, né alla sensazione che la loro condanna maggiore sia legata non tanto allo spazio – in un carcere di media sicurezza gli spostamenti sono relativamente più liberi che altrove – quanto all'impossibilità di percepire il tempo se non come pesante punizione, causa di vera e tragica immobilità.

4 Libertà per immersione

Alla luce di quanto è emerso in questa analisi del lavoro di Padnos, risulta chiaro che il suo intento fosse quello di sfruttare al massimo le potenzialità immersive della lettura letteraria. Consapevole che tempo e spazio sono gli elementi della narrativa che più si prestano a una interazione con i relativi mondi del lettore al livello percettivo, il docente auspicava quello «slittamento deittico» (Bernini, Caracciolo 2013, 32-8) che gli studiosi cognitivisti ritengono possibile nell'atto della lettura. Questo spostamento delle proprie coordinate spaziali dal mondo reale al mondo narrativo e viceversa conferirebbe un senso di libertà spazio-temporale particolarmente efficace e utile in una situazione carceraria.

Padnos si avvicina molto a questa possibilità grazie a *Huckleberry Finn*, il cui viaggio lungo il Mississippi fa scoprire al giovane eroe del

romanzo che esiste «un mondo a lui prossimo nel quale circolano forze rigenerative e stimolanti. Per contrastare la lenta morte imposta dalla civilizzazione, Twain e Huck consigliano un tuffo nel salvifico Mississippi». Ovviamente, per i detenuti non era possibile andarsi a tuffare nel fiume Ottaquechee, che scorre tra le colline verdeggianti del Vermont, visibile dalle finestre del carcere. Ma potevano, suggerisce l'autore, contrastare la monotonia spaziotemporale del carcere «con la vita imprevedibile di chi si perde nei libri» (Padnos 2004, 121).

Che egli ci sia riuscito o no è di relativa importanza: *My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun* si rivela un testo di giornalismo letterario in grado di offrire uno spaccato della vita culturale in un penitenziario americano, gettando luce sulla attività di lettura di un gruppo di detenuti per i quali i responsabili della strage di Columbine sono degli eroi. Non è semplicemente un excursus nel personale canone americano di Theo Padnos, bensì una valutazione teorica e pratica di quanto il canone ufficiale della letteratura degli Stati Uniti sia intriso di violenza, come indicano sia studi recenti (Schmid 2015), sia la classica trilogia di storia culturale americana di Richard Slotkin, e di quanto, al tempo stesso, fornisca un valido repertorio per affrontare e discutere, se non in qualche occasione finanche comprendere, le radici di quella violenza.

Pur non ponendosi l'obiettivo di studiare l'esperimento didattico dal punto di vista del genere, che in altri casi diventa la prospettiva analitica principale legandosi alla razza e alla classe (Sweeney 2010), Padnos non trascura di registrare le caratteristiche specifiche di una struttura carceraria monosessuale. Dalle tensioni omofobe che scaturiscono dalle dichiarazioni di Laird, bisessuale e paladino dei diritti civili, alle minacce provocatorie di Argeros, detto Rhino per un'ovvia allusione sessuale, allo slang maschilista improntato a immagini di abuso da parte di altri detenuti infastiditi dalla presenza del docente, il genere degli allievi pervade in filigrana tutto il libro. Che i due testi di maggior presa psicologica ed emotiva sugli studenti ritraggano un eroe e un antieroe maschio non è un caso, così come è indicativo che in un carcere femminile le preferenze delle detenute vadano in tutt'altra direzione, ovvero verso testi con figure femminili forti, casalinghe di successo o donne criminali, come le eroine della *urban fiction*, recente genere prodotto da autrici afroamericane (Sweeney 2010, 140-72).

Con obiettivi pedagogici non sempre raggiunti, ma significativi anche in fase teorica, il testo di Padnos si inserisce in una recente tendenza di studi di americanistica legati all'attività di lettura in carcere, rivelandosi come un costante amalgama di critica letteraria, cronaca nera locale e analisi delle motivazioni psicologiche dell'autore e dei detenuti: letteratura, cronaca e vite private qui si rispecchiano in modo illuminante.

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Imaginary Transatlantic Crossings
Textual Configurations of Domesticity and Foreingnood in Emily Dickinson's Italian Atlas

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Abstract   Basically intersecting transnational and spatial theoretical perspectives, this essay aims at a deeper understanding of Emily Dickinson's internationalism, by focusing on Dickinson's textual domestication of Italian-related images. Dickinson's imaginary transatlantic voyage testifies to a peculiar use of Italy which actually reshapes the conventional travel rhetoric and, in so doing, Dickinson significantly partakes in the aesthetic construction of the nineteenth-century American textual space.

Keywords   Emily Dickinson. Nineteenth-century American literature. Internationalism. Travel rhetoric. Italy.

Summary   1 Mapping Transatlantic Routes: Dickinson's Italy Within Nineteenth-Century American Literary Culture. – 2 From Foreignness to Domestication: Imagery and Rhetoric in Dickinson's Italian Geography.

1 Mapping Transatlantic Routes: Dickinson's Italy Within Nineteenth-Century American Literary Culture

In consideration of the literary context of nineteenth-century America, the critical approach of transnationalism helps throw some light on authors traditionally reckoned among the ones linked almost exclusively to their own national context. This is the case of the poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), whose work has undergone a significant critical revision under the lens of internationalism especially over the latest years.[1] But placing Dickinson in a global framework necessarily involves challenging reflections and reconsiderations on the construction of intellectual spaces. In this sense, an intersection with the so-called 'spatial turn' in literary studies leads to consider texts "as maps that are able to evoke mental cartographies" (Ljungberg 2017, 97). And the perspective of a mental cartography proves an apt tool to describe Dickinson's way of dealing with the different levels of space – textual and cultural, material and symbolic – in her writings: "I judge from my Geography", as Dickinson writes in F1691. Otherwise stated, the matter of geography emerging through Dickinson's writing crosses both transnational and spatial perspectives; Dickinson deals with geography in a way that leads her work to shift constantly between the local and the global, so that Dickinson's imagery testifies to a whole "transgeographical and transhistorical global connectedness" (Finnerty 2019, 189; cf. also Giles 2011). Based on these theoretical premises, the present essay seeks to delve into Dickinson's textual internationalism, through a discussion of the use of Italian imagery occurring in her poetry and prose, as well.

Clearly, a worthwhile analysis of Dickinson's internationalism should start from an introductory consideration of the interrelation between local and global factors. First, the main local features of Dickinson's writing engage with the peculiarities of nineteenth-century American context. Dickinson's response to her own literary culture tackles both textual and extratextual issues, which range from Dickinson's own way to produce a polyphonic poetic language to her fruition of periodicals and popular press (Ladin 2004; Loeffelholz 2008). As a prolific writer and fond reader, Dickinson may be viewed as a genuine founder of nineteenth-century literary culture: while constituting the core of household life, both reading and writing assure a cohesive social function and help strengthen the cardinal cultural role assigned to literature (Buckingham 1996; Steven-

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[1] A thorough overview of scholarship on Dickinson's internationalism is provided by Finnerty 2019. The multifaceted interrelations between Dickinson and foreign cultures have most recently been discussed at the Emily Dickinson International Society Conference titled *Dickinson and Foreignhood*, held at the University of Seville in July 2022, and where the paper that originated this article was originally presented.

son 2007). Combined in her being simultaneously a producer and consumer of literature, these acts of reading and writing also account for socio-cultural practices that help Dickinson in her process of restyling of literary traditions. Among the various traditions and conventions with which Dickinson sets a meaningful dialogue, travel writing is undoubtedly one of the most successful forms of literary entertainment in nineteenth-century America – a literary form whose social meaning encourages, at the same time, the development of a national identity even through the use of a kind of 'global' perspective derived from a close confrontation with the foreignness of the Old World.[2] Dickinson's imaginary transatlantic crossing falls into the background of this global perspective, since it reconfigures the visual imagery and rhetoric pertaining to travel writing, at a time when maps themselves are conceived as powerful "visual tools, uniquely capable of conveying complex ideas", whose use also fosters national unity (Schulten 2012, 3-8). Nor is this travel perspective limited to travel writing, in that it often stretches across genre boundaries. This is the case of a good number of literary masterpieces which, stemming from voyage experiences through Europe, can be considered halfway between travelogue and fiction – in a roster of authors and works ranging from Washington Irving's *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Bravo* (1831), to Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860) and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Agnes of Sorrento* (1862), up to Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881).

Nevertheless, Dickinson can be rather termed a virtual traveler, a typical 'armchair tourist', being among the few nineteenth-century American intellectuals (like the other 'national' poet of her time, Walt Whitman) who had never experienced the European Grand Tour (see Stowe 1994, 3-5); indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of Dickinson's biography consists in the fact that she spent a whole lifetime at her birthplace in Amherst, Massachusetts. Therefore, Dickinson's indirect knowledge of Italy relies on a variety of sources, testifying to her intense reading activity. For instance, she pored over commentaries on Italy (and on Anglo-American artists to some extent related to it, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Margaret Fuller) published on national leading literary periodicals like *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, or *Scribner's Monthly*, as well as non-fictional accounts on Italian art and architecture (like the works by John Ruskin, as an 1862 letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson recalls) (Capps 1966, 128-43; Finnerty 2009). Although in-

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2 For a detailed discussion on the socio-cultural function of Anglo-American travel writing during the nineteenth century, see especially Buzard 1993, and more recently Hamera, Bendixen 2009.

direct, Dickinson's personal treatment of Italy makes a case for her own way of domestication, deploying a literary fantasy which leads to the interiorization of Italy and its geography. Shaped into the form of literary objects as poems and letters, Dickinson's Italian space gets represented as an aesthetic object since, "in order to gain cultural meaning, physical space has to become mental space or, more precisely, imaginary space" (Fluck 2005, 25). As the selected passages from her writings will show, Dickinson's virtual voyage draws the borders of her unconventional Italian atlas, enabling a substantial process of domestication of foreign fragments embedded in the textual architecture of her poems and letters to close friends, all written between the 1850s and the 1880s.

2 From Foreignness to Domestication: Imagery and Rhetoric in Dickinson's Italian Geography

As previous criticism has widely underlined, part of Dickinson's Italian geography is centered on the representation of volcanoes, seen as a celebrated emblem of poetic creativity and individual freedom (Rich 1975; Barolini 1994; Reynolds 2002). Images of both Vesuvius and Etna occur in well-known poems like F165 ("I have never seen 'Volcanoes'", 1860), F517 ("A still – Volcano – Life", 1863), or F1691 ("Volcanoes be in Sicily", first published posthumously in 1914) – as well as in an 1861 letter to "Master": "Vesuvius dont [*sic*] talk – Etna – dont – [Thy] one of them – said a syllable – a thousand years ago, and Pompeii heard it, and hid forever" (Dickinson 1958, 2: 374). Yet, Dickinson's use of imagery connected to Italy goes beyond this much-debated image of volcanoes. Italy seems to stand for a more elaborated metaphor, disseminated through Dickinson's whole canon, and aimed at a radical reconfiguration of the traditional nineteenth-century travel rhetoric into a domestic realm. From a biographical point of view, the entire thirty-year time span when Dickinson's poems and letters of Italian subject originated, features a powerful creative output in the late 1850s, progressively yielding to a more elegiac tone in the early 1880s. This change in Dickinson's writing was determined by a personal turmoil which was caused, in turn, by ensuing family tensions (between her sister Lavinia and Susan, Dickinson's dearest friend and sister-in-law) as well as by the death of some of her fondest relatives (her eight-year-old nephew Gilbert died in the autumn of 1883, soon followed by her close friend Otis P. Lord in March 1884) (Dickinson 1958, 2: 314, 332; Dickinson 1958, 3: 654, 808). These biographical events by all means played a part in affecting Dickinson's own process of interiorization and domestication of the foreign. This process leads Dickinson to the development of a system of imagery and rhetoric dramatically parting from the traditional nineteenth-

century literary depiction of Italy, mainly consisting in picturesque descriptions of landscape and stereotyped views on art and culture often reflected in fictional and travel accounts. Indeed, Dickinson's geographic imagery involves Italy as a whole, its seas and mountains, and a wider movement of ocean crossing, recasting their meaning into three main semantic categories related to nature, subjectivity, and household rituals (see Patterson 1979, 169-74) – that is, three semantic layers which textually mirror Dickinson's own mental cartography, gradually drawing and expanding her internal map.

First, Dickinson's process of domestication involves an imagery connected to Italy in general and its sea. In this case, Dickinson uses this Italian imagery to describe natural elements referring to seasons and hours of the day: for instance, Dickinson's Italy addresses the spring atmosphere embracing her familiar surroundings. In a letter to John L. Graves (late April 1856) Dickinson writes about "skies on me fairer far than Italy, in blue eye look down" (Dickinson 1958, 2: 327), and, in another one to Otis P. Lord (30 April 1882), she states that "The Air is soft as Italy" (Dickinson 1958, 3: 728). Along with these fragmentary references through Dickinson's correspondence, her Italian imagery extends from the skies to the seas, and across literary genres, thus designing a more detailed and nuanced virtual map. The Mediterranean Sea occurs in the poem F589 (1863), depicting the colors that can be perceived at twilight:

> They called me to the Window, for
> "'Twas Sunset" – Some one said –
> I only saw a Sapphire Farm –
> And just a Single Herd –
>
> Of Opal Cattle – feeding far
> Opon [*sic*] so vain a Hill –
> As even while I looked – dissolved –
> Nor Cattle were – nor Soil –
>
> But in their Room – a Sea – displayed –
> And Ships – of such a size
> As Crew of Mountains – could afford –
> And Decks – to seat the Skies –
>
> This – too – the Showman rubbed away –
> And when I looked again –
> Nor Farm – nor Opal Herd – was there –
> Nor Mediterranean – (Dickinson 1998, 2: 585-6)

Similarly, in a shorter poem like F1295 (1873), reproducing the sound of the wind:

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I think that the Root of the Wind is Water –
It would not sound so deep
Were it a Firmamental Product –
Airs no Oceans keep –
Mediterranean intonations –
To a Current's Ear –
There is a maritime conviction
In the Atmosphere – (Dickinson 1998, 3: 1123)

Most interestingly, Dickinson stylistically develops the Italian imagery of all these descriptions of nature occurring in letters and poems alike. She crucially employs the rhetorical device of synesthesia into a multi-sensory textual pattern, weaving together the senses of touch (the comparative phrase "soft as Italy" in the letter to Lord is related to the air) and hearing (in F1295 the syntagma "Mediterranean intonations" is associated to the wind). Above all, Dickinson's use of synesthesia embraces the sense of sight – as in the colors "blue eye" in the 1856 letter, "Sapphire Farm", and "Opal Herd" in F589 to portray the iridescence of a deep-blue sky.[3] While associating foreign skies and seas to her domestic spaces, Dickinson's rhetorical strategy deepens the plain visual aspect of the depiction of the Italian landscape often conventionally rooted in the picturesque, which intertwines natural elements, art and history – as occurs, for example, in Stowe's description of the Gulf of Naples in her romance *Agnes of Sorrento*,[4] or in the jamesian Rome of *The Portrait of a Lady*.[5] In like manner, even a city like Venice, usually rich in picturesque and romantic associations derived from its great artworks and long history, in Dickinson's poetic fantasy is 'downsized' to what it seems a more desirable, humble, domestic proximity made up of plants and flowers, as in the following verses from F96 (1859): "Venice could not show a

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[3] For an in-depth discussion on the linguistic function of colors in Dickinson's poetry, see Mariani 1997, 118-26.

[4] "The old town of Sorrento is situated on an elevated plateau, which stretches into the sunny waters of the Mediterranean, guarded on all sides by a barrier of mountains which defend it from bleak winds and serve to it the purpose of walls to a garden. Here, groves of oranges and lemons, with their almost fabulous coincidence of fruitage with flowers, fill the air with perfume, which blends with that of roses and jessamines; and the fields are so starred and enamelled with flowers that they might have served as the type for those Elysian realms sung by ancient poets [...]. In the region about Sorrento one may be said to have found the land where beauty is the rule and not the exception" (Stowe 1862, 15).

[5] "The herd of re-echoing tourists had departed, and most of the solemn places had relapsed into solemnity. The sky was a blaze of blue, and the plash of the fountains, in their mossy niches, had lost its chill and doubled its music. On the corners of the warm, bright streets one stumbled upon bundles of flowers [...]. The sun had begun to sink, the air was filled with a golden haze, and the long shadows of broken column and formless pedestal were thrown across the field of ruin" (James 1882, 250-1).

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cheek | Of a tint more lustrous meek. | Never such an ambuscade | As of briar and leaf displayed | For my little damask maid" (Dickinson 1998, 1: 133-4). Here, the adjective "lustrous" is surprisingly associated by Dickinson to the "little damask maid" rather than to Venice, subverting the stereotyped Anglo-American view of the Italian city. In this regard, an effective example is provided by James Fenimore Cooper, who depicts a night view of Venice according to a standard set of conventions – whether in the concise opening lines of *The Bravo* ("The sun had disappeared behind the summits of the Tyrolean Alps, and the moon was already risen above the low barrier of the Lido"; Cooper 1831, 1: 1-2), or in his more elaborate travel account collected in *Gleanings in Europe* (1838).[6] Additionally, Dickinson's subversion is even more striking if compared to the description of Venice carried out by Irving in his *Tales of a Traveller*; neither Dickinson nor Irving visited Venice, but the latter's nocturnal portrait of it clearly evokes the fixed picturesque side of "this old mermaid of a city", "so brilliant and clear in the pure atmosphere of Italy. The moonbeams streamed on the tall tower of St. Mark, and lighted up the magnificent front and swelling domes of the cathedral" (Irving 1849, 73-5).[7]

However, Dickinson connects the Mediterranean also to the semantic field pertaining to subjectivity, along with its feelings and interpersonal relations. Here, Dickinson's own Italian cartography begins to slide more decidedly towards an extensive process of interiorization. In this voyage into subjectivity, in fact, Dickinson starts from the material space of her domestic surroundings to arrive at a more metaphysical, universal dimension. In a letter to Jane Humphrey (16 October 1855), for example, Dickinson comments on the physical distance separating her friend: "Distances *here* seem pretty long, but I confess, when it gets to that, that one crosses the Mediterranean, tis even *farther* off [...], nor can carriage take me" (Dickinson 1958, 2: 321). As the Mediterranean seems extremely distant to her, its barriers are still likened to what Dickinson describes as an insurmountable space between her and Jane. A further step towards a metaphysical journey, instead, is represented by the three poems F129 (1859), F203 (1861), and F580 (1863). These texts feature the

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6 "By this time it was evening; but a fine moon was shedding its light on the scene, rendering it fairy-like [...]. No other scene in a town ever struck me with so much surprise and pleasure. Three sides of this large area were surrounded by palaces, with arcades; and on the fourth stood a low ancient church, of an architecture so quaint, having oriental domes, and external ornaments so peculiar, that I felt as if transported to a scene in the Arabian Nights. The moon, with its mild delusive light, too, aided the deception; the forms rising beneath it still more fanciful and quaint. You will know at once, this was the church of St. Mark" (Cooper 1838, 2: 208-9).

7 For a detailed critical discussion on both Cooper's and Irving's Venice, see Mamoli Zorzi 1990.

occurrence of the Italian mountains to address the individual's inner life, as they also symbolize the imaginary barriers often perceived by the human mind. The Alps first occur in F129:

> Our lives are Swiss –
> So still – so cool –
> Till some odd afternoon
> The Alps neglect their curtains
> And we look further on.
> *Italy* stands the other side.
> While like a guard between –
> The solemn Alps –
> The siren Alps
> Forever intervene – (Dickinson 1998, 1: 169)

In Dickinson's poetic fantasy, the Alps are likened to barriers intervening inside the human mind; just as curtains do, these mountains can either hide or reveal what lies beyond – be it a fresh awareness or a new standpoint upon reality. Even a shorter poem like F203 is thematically and stylistically construed on a quite similar image, as "The thought beneath so slight a film – | Is more distinctly seen – | As laces just reveal the surge – | Or Mists – the Appennine [*sic*] –" (Dickinson 1998, 1: 235). In its conciseness, the poem revolves around the established equivalence between the image of the Italian mountains (here surrounded by mists) and any kind of hindrance that the mind might perceive. Accordingly, this symbolic use of the Apennines is expanded in F580:

> We see – Comparatively –
> The Thing so towering high
> We could not grasp it's segment
> Unaided – Yesterday –
>
> This Morning's finer Verdict
> Makes scarcely worth the toil –
> A furrow – Our Cordillera
> Our Appennine [*sic*] – a knoll –
>
> Perhaps 'tis kindly – done us –
> The Anguish – and the loss –
> The wrenching – for His Firmament
> The Thing belonged to us –
>
> To spare these striding spirits
> Some Morning of Chagrin –
> The waking in a Gnat's – embrace –
> Our Giants – further on – (Dickinson 1998, 2: 580)

From a strictly semantic viewpoint, Dickinson's vocabulary in these three poems underlines the tight affinity of both household items (such as "curtains" and "laces", in F129 and F203 respectively) and natural elements ("knoll" in F580) with common feelings and shared experiences, which are related to three antithetical pairings. These pairings are polarized around the notions of expectedness vs. unexpectedness ("Till [...] The Alps neglect their curtains"), exposure vs. secrecy ("As laces just reveal the surge"), and rationality vs. irrationality ("Unaided – Yesterday – | This morning's finer Verdict"). Furthermore, the field of subjectivity intersects with an image of domesticity which is connected not only to a whole private space, but also to a broader standpoint opened up by the value of travelling as a transcultural experience. In F129, indeed, Dickinson metaphorically follows the traditional route of the Grand Tour, which usually led foreign travelers through Italy southwards from the northern Alpine border ("*Italy* stands the other side").[8] In spite of this conventional element, however, Dickinson keeps on developing her own personal perspective on the Italian tour, as her imaginary voyage is increasingly headed to a metaphysical experience.

In fact, the overlapping images of domesticity and foreignness marking the abovementioned 'mountain' poems are further developed through the use of Italy in the third (and last) semantic category, which deals with typical household rituals. More specifically, Dickinson seems here to reach the Old World – and Italy as an integral part of it – by enacting a wider movement of ocean crossing. In so doing, Dickinson frames her internal (i.e. private) map within a socio-cultural (i.e. public) architecture characteristic of a nineteenth-century bias. At first, Dickinson starts this voyage to Italy by sticking to cultural stereotypes. Nineteenth-century Anglo-American writers often judged Italy as the "land of art" par excellence, casting its spell on any artist: for instance, Hawthorne defines Rome as "the favorite residence of artists – their ideal home which they sigh for in advance, and are so loth to migrate from, after once breathing its enchanted air" (Hawthorne 1860, 1: 168). Likewise, Dickinson's virtual ocean crossing becomes a literary pilgrimage and homage to poetry in F637 (1863), written in memory of Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "'Twas Short – to cross the Sea – | To look opon [*sic*] Her like – alive – | But turning back – 'twas slow –" (Dickinson 1998, 2: 626). In this sense, the metaphor of an imaginary voyage across the Atlantic

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8 An exception is marked by Ralph Waldo Emerson who, during his European journey, inverted this traditional route and reached Italy by sea from Malta (instead of continental Europe), travelling then from Sicily northwards. Once landed in Syracuse (on 23 February 1833), Emerson recorded in his journals the first impressions of Italy as follows: "Shall I count it like the Berber at Rome the greatest wonder of all to find myself here?" (Emerson 1964, 122).

stands as a viewpoint which recasts the idea of the foreign into household spaces and daily experiences – such as the parallel acts of reading and writing. Reading is the core idea in the 1873 poem F1286:

> There is no Frigate like a Book
> To take us Lands away
> Nor any Coursers like a Page
> Of prancing Poetry –
> This Travel may the poorest take
> Without offence of Toll –
> How frugal is the Chariot
> That bears the Human Soul – (Dickinson 1998, 2: 1117)

Accordingly, writing a letter feels like the most congenial counterpart to reading a book, since both actions lead their performers to overcome any obstacle through space, just as if a traveler would be able to cross the ocean ("To take us lands away", Dickinson's poem clearly states). The same imagery occurs in an early 1884 letter to Mrs. Elizabeth Carmichael that Dickinson wrote on the occasion of exchanging Christmas gifts: "Against the peril of ocean steamers I am sweetly provided, and am sure you had my safety in mind, in your lovely gifts. I have taken the passengers from the hold – passengers of honey – and the deck of silk is just promenaded by a bold fly, greedy for its sweets" (Dickinson 1958, 3: 809). Here, Dickinson exploits once again the domestic imagery related to both household items ("honey", "silk") and natural elements ("fly") already found in her three poems centered on the Italian Alps and Apennines. The letter to Mrs. Carmichael, however, further unfolds the thriving combination of imagery and rhetoric sustaining Dickinson's Italian writings: everybody can afford this virtual ocean crossing, even across the most ordinary spaces and by the easiest way of transportation – as the metaphorical images "passengers of honey" and "deck of silk" suggest, closely recalling the travel that "may the poorest take". Then, the travel rhetoric employed by Dickinson testifies to a process of displacement of the foreign Italian geography into a domestic setting, defined by Dickinson's New England environment and her own web of relations with close friends, acquaintances, and relatives.

These concluding examples show how the very acts of letter writing and book reading addressed by Dickinson represent central household rituals characterizing the life of middle-class families; most importantly, it is worth recalling that these activities hold a fundamental socio-cultural position in the development of nineteenth-century American literature. Dickinson herself participates to this process, and recasts the dichotomy foreignhood vs. domesticity in the textual representation of Italy. While dealing with conventional cultural practices related to the Grand Tour, such as the ones that

mark nineteenth-century American travelogues and fictional narratives on this subject, Dickinson builds upon the current American gaze by casting her own perspective on the Italian spaces, interiorizing the rhetorical and stylistic tropes usually belonging to the literary representation of the foreign. Nevertheless, Dickinson does not limit her experience of a virtual Italian tour to an exclusively private function. Instead, through the representation of her imaginary map as an aesthetic object, she actively partakes to the construction of the American literary space, endowing the idea of domesticity – both textual *and* contextual, private *and* public – with surprising aesthetic insights. In other words, as the comparison between Dickinson's writings and the works by such authors as Irving, Hawthorne, or Stowe, among others, has also underscored, the constitution of a distinctive American gaze towards the foreign identifies the social, cultural, and literary experience of the sophisticated nineteenth-century convergence between the Old World and the New. And Dickinson's personal contribution to this convergence results in a domestication of Italy as both an emotional quality and metaphysical device, thus applying her own reading to the textual reconfiguration of a transatlantic geography.

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Philip Hepburn, Stephen Freeman and the American Context of *Sylvia's Lovers*

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Abstract   *Sylvia's Lovers* is a novel about war. It is a historical novel set in the years 1793-1800 during the Napoleonic wars, and written by Elizabeth Gaskell in the years 1859-62 when the American Civil War broke out, in April 1861. Examining Gaskell's correspondence with Charles Eliot Norton in the years 1861-63 and the articles Norton wrote in support of the War and the anti-slavery cause, this paper explores the way in which the news coming from America and the debates on the contemporary events left a significant mark on the second part of the novel. The implied reference to the context of the American Civil War would shed new light on Gaskell's narrative choices concerning the plot and the main male character's development, which has been substantially overlooked.

Keywords   Elizabeth Gaskell. Sylvia's Lovers. Napoleonic Wars. Charles Eliot Norton. The Advantages of Defeat. American Civil War. Anti-Slavery movements.

Summary   1 "Fact and Fiction Clumsily Combined". – 2 An American Novel. – 3 War Settings. – 4 Romance Heroes. – 5 Stephen, the Freedman. – 6 Conclusion.

1   "Fact and Fiction Clumsily Combined"

Critics have generally expressed difficulties with regard to many aspects of Gaskell's historical novel and in particular its last part, where the dependable Quaker shopkeeper, deeply in love with Sylvia, leaves his wife and daughter in search of atoning for his sin, reappearing on the field of the battle of Acre under the assumed name of Stephen Freeman. There is a large consensus that this latter part of the novel is the weakest, flawed from a narrative point of view. Only recently has this 'flaw' been tentatively attributed to Gaskell's ideological resistance to war. But an analysis of the novel's *dénouement* is still lacking. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the 'heterogeneous' elements of which the final chapters were composed, and relate them to the historical context of the years during which they were composed: in so doing I hope to shed some light on the novel's 'awkward' turn away from realism.

It may be helpful to begin by mentioning some critical readings. Sharps (1970, 394) considers the historical material in chapter 38 as merely a "filler" that "might have been omitted with advantage", and claims that "on occasions the novelist's descriptions of historical events appear to be rendered externally, almost from a text-book point of view" (Sharp 1970, 385-6). He points to "a striking instance of fact and fiction being clumsily combined" in the episode at Acre, and wonders "*what sources is she relying on for these passages*", without seeming to take the question seriously or attempting to answer it (Sharp 1970, 386). Jenny Uglow attributes the final chapters' change in tone and mode to its "long gestation":

> *Sylvia's Lovers* had taken three years to write, years eroded by illness and travel, by family crises, by war in America and hardship at home. The long gestation of this novel partly explains the change of tone in each volume: the vital, energetic realism of the first volume, written rapidly in the spring 1860; the intensity of the second, full of death and loss, composed slowly during 1861; the *spiritual allegory* of the third, a desperate search for belief in a better world, written in the shadow of the cotton famine. (Uglow 1993, 504)

Uglow sees Gaskell's treatment of war as deliberately fictional: "the scenery is truly 'scenery', like the painted backdrop of a play or the fashionable panorama of the day, with the reader placed firmly outside the action and invited to 'look again'" (Uglow 1993, 525). Chapter 38, "The Recognition", is set on the battlefield of the 1799 siege of Acre where Stephen Freeman, an obscure and selfless soldier, rescues his rival in love. According to Uglow, the scene reveals Gaskell's ideological stance towards the war, her denial of "the worth of heroic

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violence, however justified the cause" (Uglow 1993, 524). Its lack of realism therefore betrays a response to the uncomfortable topic of war and military heroism. O'Gorman supports Uglow's reading and qualifies the change in chapter 38 as a genre shift in which novel gives way to romance, – "as *Sylvia's Lovers* deepens its dependence on facts, it reads more like a romance, […] plainly Philip's action in saving Kinraid from death is that of a romance hero (even if it is more a product of inertia and lifelessness than bravery)" (O'Gorman 2014, XXI-XXII). Genre switching would thus appear to be Gaskell's way of framing discourse on war by rejecting the language of realism, and foregrounding fictionality: "Reparation is achieved as a piece of theatre" (O'Gorman 2014, XXI-XXII). Schor qualifies the "tragic – morbid – overtones [that] take over" in the latter part of the novel as a feature of Gaskell's turning the domestic plot to melodrama:

> critics have raised this question to focus on the generic switch into melodrama at the novel's conclusion, when the two heroes find themselves at the Siege of Acre and – improbably – recognize each other. But this one melodrama of doubling – the moment when the heroes face unexpected similarities where they had previously perceived difference, and finally see each other as trapped by the same plot – is part of a larger pattern of doubling (formal and thematic) throughout the novel: plots that trap, confuse, and narrate their characters; plots that force on characters' unexpected returns. (Schor 1992, 157)

The genre switch from realism to melodrama Schor sees as occurring within "a larger pattern of character doubling in the novel". It is of course a feature typical of 19th-century novel that is worth reminding ourselves. For Peter Brooks the mode of representing human events in an overstated theatrical form, opens up a narrative space in which universal forces of good and evil clash, and class struggles take place (Brooks 1976).[1] One may recall that for Lukács melodrama encodes the grammar of the historical novel, where action is generated by incredible coincidences in which the world and chance are interwoven (Lukács 1963). Individual destinies depend on the larger history within which they are immersed, so that the novel stages "the exceptional character of the typical everyday situations", by representing historical conflicts through the lens of the characters' private struggles (Lukács 1970, 142).

Set in the Napoleonic Wars, *Sylvia's Lovers* features the 50-year displacement that Lukács pointed to as a typical time lapse of the 19th-century historical novel. In the first part of the novel, which is

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[1]   See also Mazzoni 2011, 275-84.

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set in Monkshaven, characters and events stage the historical conflict in a realist mode. But can we relate the genre switch that occurs in the second part to a melodramatic romance mode, which, in challenging the form of the domestic novel, implies a wider global setting? And do the hero's displacement to the Middle East, and the changes of name and features that alienate him from the reader's sympathies fit better within a more precise frame of reference provided by the historical context of the years 1860-63?

Building on Gaskell scholarship this paper makes sense of the genre switch to romance, seeing it as the outcome of an experimental search for a form that would ingrain the painfully felt issues involved in contemporary war discourse coming from America. It would thus attempt to provide an answer to a set of questions on the novel that are still to be adequately answered.

2 An American Novel

Gaskell began *Sylvia's Lovers* in December 1859. By the time the American Civil war broke out in April 1861, Gaskell had written a quarter of it, and had adopted the provisional title *The Specksioneer* (i.e. the whale hunter). Only a few months earlier, in December 1860, she still thought she would finish the book soon; in fact it took her two more years to conclude. The War had threatened to involve also Britain, having caused the 1862 famine in the industrial towns as a consequence of the stop in the supply of cotton from America, and Gaskell was directly involved in supporting Manchester working class families during this time (Whitehill 2013, 74). When her publisher George Smith enquired about the progress of the novel, she replied in terms that put writing subordinate to peace and social welfare: "I wish North & South would make friends, & let us have cotton, & then our poor people would get work, and then you should have as many novels as you liked to take, and we should not be killed with 'Poor on the Brain' as I expect we shall before the winter is over" (Chapple-Pollard 1997, 697-8). Clare Pettitt suggestively defines *Sylvia's Lovers* as Gaskell's "American novel", seeing the war as having hindred composition: "it would have appeared much sooner and would have lost some of its tragic resonance had Gaskell not written it during the American Civil War" (Pettitt 2012, 615). But there is another deeper sense in which one can see *Sylvia's Lovers*'s as an "American novel": if the Civil War had slowed down her writing, it had also become particularly relevant to a novel set during the Napoleonic Wars. The American conflict had brought the issue of war home, so to say, inducing Gaskell to think of it more broadly and deeply than she seems to have done at first.

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Some important clues to this change can be traced in Gaskell's correspondence with Charles Eliot Norton during the years of the novel's gestation. The dedicatee of the novel's American edition, Norton was in fact Gaskell's main source of information on the war. The correspondence has been called "a staple of Gaskell scholarship" (Shelston 2001, 55), testifying to mutual deep esteem and affection and provides precious insights into the two authors' views of life, art, literature, and contemporary politics. Not only does it demonstrate her "interest and affection for Americans" (Shelston 2001, 55), it also provides some important clues to the way the novel was to progress. In her article on Gaskell's transatlantic connections Pettitt defines the correspondence as "central to understanding her widening sense of a world beyond her own national and political horizons", and registers a change in "the structure of Gaskell's fiction […] in the late fifties and early sixties", which suggests "a global horizon that in her earlier work was present only through allusion" (Pettitt 2012, 600-1). More specifically, one can see how reports and reflections on the American Civil War reverberate on the novel's imagery and characters. The correspondence covers the years 1855-65, and is denser during the period 1861-65. These were the years of the American conflict, a topic that figures large in the letters. Norton was directly engaged in the Civil War as secretary to the New England Loyal Publication Society, a Northern propagandist body. Gaskell seldom writes about her work, but constantly fires at her American friend questions about the War and its purposes, about the composition of the armies, how victory could be attained, and peace restored, questions that provoke from Norton precise and extended answers. They often involve broader ethical issues: could any war be a just war? How does individual freedom relate to a citizen's duty towards his country? Gaskell's questions suggest doubts even scepticism. In her letter dated 10 June 1861 she avows her "puzzlement" and enquires about the "end proposed":

> I half determined to do what I am doing now – take myself and Meta for average specimens of English people, – *most* kindly disposed to you, our dear cousins, hating slavery intensely, but yet truly *puzzled by* what is now going on in America. I don't mind your thinking me dense or ignorant, and I think I can be sure you give me a quiet *unmetaphorical* statement of what is the end proposed in this war. (Whitehill 2013, 82; emphasis in the text)

She interrogates Norton on the composition of the Northern Army, and how people came to commit themselves to fight the South, and ultimately on the question of compulsory enrolment, which had just been reintroduced in the Union Army:

What are you going to do when you have conquered the South, as no one doubts that you will. [...] *Conquering* the South won't turn them into friends, or pre-dispose them to listen to reason or argument, or to yield to influence instead of to force. You must *compel* them then to what you want them to do. (And what *do* you want them to do? – abolish slavery? Return to their allegiance to the Union?). *Compelling* them implies the means of compulsion. You will have to hold them in subjection by force, i.e. by military occupation. At present your army is composed of volunteers, – but can they ever leave their business etc. for years of military occupation of a country peopled by those adverse to them? Shall you not have henceforward to keep a standing army? – If you were here I could go on multiplying questions of this kind, but I dare say you are already tired and think me very stupid. (Whitehill 2013, 84; emphasis in the text)

Such detailed questions on conscription bear a direct connection to the impressment motif in *Sylvia's Lovers*, where the first part of the plot is wholly centred on the military raids that overturn people's lives in Monkshaven. Through this correspondence, Gaskell's ideas on the American Civil War evolved and so did the shaping of her novel's narrative solutions.

3 War Settings

Set in the late 1790s at Monkshaven, an imaginary place name for the whaling town of Whitby, *Sylvia's Lovers* opens with an *ouverture* descriptive of this stretch of coast, where sea and land are tightly intertwined. In this scenery, with the fury of stormy waves, press-gangs break in and force young men to conscription, ripping them from their homes and affections. A climax is reached in chapter 18 with the scene of the impressment of Kinraid, Philip Hepburn's rival in love. At this stage press-gang raids represent all one sees of the war of the time. Straightforwardly and metonymically connoted as violence, injustice, helpless suffering, war will bring about a chain of tragic consequences: from Philip Hepburn's 'lie' about Kinraid's capture, to Daniel Robson's disproportionate death sentence, from Bell's quiet drifting into insanity, to Sylvia's marriage to Philip, and her life of mourning relieved only by Bella's birth.

In the first part of the novel, military power is represented as an external destructive force that jeopardizes the lives of ordinary citizens. It is "pervaded" by the widespread feeling against impressment in England in the 1790s (Sanders 1978, 204) and amplifies the motif of blind press-gang violence in George Crabbe's 1812 narrative poem "Ruth". From this the novel takes the narrative core of a

young woman, whose betrothed is dragged away, leaving the pregnant Ruth to end tragically by throwing herself into the waves. The leaden atmosphere of Crabbe's *Tale of the Hall* sets the tone for the first part of *Sylvia's Lovers*, where the love plot, adumbrated in the title Gaskell finally chose for the novel, unfolds. As in Crabbe's poem, the overimposing land- and seascape enact the perpetual struggle of men and women whose lives depend on the sea. For these descriptions Gaskell drew from her familiarity with Whitby, as well as with the documented sources and living witnesses (Sharp 1970), just as Crabbe drew inspiration from Aldeburgh, the fishing community on the Suffolk coastline where he lived and which he rendered with the topographical precision praised by E.M. Forster (1941). The presence of the sea is even more powerful in Gaskell's novel, where it conveys the violence of the irruption of the distant war with France. Sadness and sense of tragedy pervade the first part of the novel, anticipating Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, an opera directly inspired by "The Borough", another of Crabbe's sea poems. In chapter 18, when Philip Hepburn witnesses the impressment of Kinraid's, the landscape magnifies his psychological states and translates them into contrasting physical sensations. It is the murmur of the sea that charms Philip on his business expedition to London, allowing him to indulge into daydreaming, before this abruptly gives way to dark omen. The Monkshaven landscape has been rightly pointed to as "a major structural element of the story" as it is "on the littoral of high and low tide that a number of pivotal moments in the narrative occur" (Twinn 2001, 41). However, when Twinn points out that all the four capital moments are on the Whitby coast, she overlooks the major scene on the coast of Acre, where the military Philip Hepburn/ Stephen Freeman rescues Kinraid.[2] This confirms the tendency to obscure the Middle Eastern chapters as a rather incongruous symbolical parenthesis and focus on the British setting only. In my view, instead, chapters 18 and 38 are to be read as tightly related. There is a sense in which one can see the scene on the coast of Acre at chapter 38 as paralleling the Monkshaven one in chapter 18, just as the setting for Kinraid's rescue by Philip counterpoints the episode of his impressment. This produces a mirror effect that shows war under a different light and with different associations. It is, in other words, a reconfiguration of the early scene in chapter 18 endowing it with a new meaning and value, moving away from Philip's personal vicissitude. It would be therefore maintained what Andrew Sanders de-

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2 Twinn applies to *Sylvia's Lovers* the argument that "geography shapes the narrative", by Moretti 1998. The four capital moments are the arrival of the whaling fleet (ch. 1), Kinraid's impressment (ch. 18), Kinraid's return to Monkshaven (ch. 32), Bella's rescue from the waves by Philip (ch. 45).

nies, when he asserts that in *Sylvia's Lovers*:

> there is no attempt to interweave real people with fictional or to obliviously disguise a real place under a false name. In thus centering her tale almost exclusively in a fictional world, and in choosing her characters from humble stations of life, Mrs Gaskell moves her historical novel to an opposite extreme from the heroic mode [...]. (Sanders 1978, 204)

While in chapter 18 the haunting presence of war spreads through univocal signs in the British landscape, in chapter 38 the shore is that of the Holy Land, and the displacement in a romance mode generates multiple associations dense with Christian symbolism:

> In the clear eastern air, the different characters of the foliage that clothed the sides of that sea-washed mountain might be discerned from a long distance by the naked eye; the silver gray of the olive-trees near its summit; the heavy green and bossy forms of the sycamores lower down; broken here and there by a solitary terebinth or ilex tree, of a deeper green and a wider spread; till the eye fell below on the maritime plain, edged with the white seaboard and the sandy hillocks; with here and there feathery palm-trees, either isolated or in groups – motionless and distinct against the hot purple air. (Gaskell 2014, 368)

As in chapter 18 the narrator takes us from sea to coast, and the vegetation is identified precisely: the olive and terebinth trees, the Kishon river, *the river of slaughter* or *dismemberment*, the fig-tree. The scene, described as if through the eyes of a foreign observer familiar with Hebrew symbolism, will be the setting for the battle to come. As in the first part war was made present through the violence of conscription of civilians, in the pivotal chapter 38, "The Recognition", we are on the battlefield of Saint John of Acre with Stephen Freeman, the name assumed by Philip Hepburn, fighting alongside the British and the Turks to stop Napoleon's attempted conquest of Jerusalem. The ground, covered with dead and agonizing bodies of the French and the British, is charged with sacred signs, which overtly recall the Crusades. The setting is described as in a history book, and the scene of the battlefield as in a war report. Against this background there appears an unnamed figure, only identified as Philip by his act of rescue. The scene doubles that of Kinraid's capture by the press-gang, his begging Philip to rescue him, and deliver his message to Sylvia.

> One man left his fellows, and came running forwards, forwards in among the enemy's wounded, within range of their guns; he bent down over Kinraid; he seemed to understand without a word; he

lifted him up, carrying him like a child; and with the vehement energy that is more from the force of will than the strength of body, he bore him back to within the shelter of the ravelin – not without many shots being aimed at them, one of which hit Kinraid in the fleshy part of his arm. (Gaskell 2014, 373-4)

While in the Monkshaven impressment scene the two civilians, Philip Hepburn and Charley Kinraid had been both helpless victims of a blind and cruel war, here in St John of Acre they embody two different types of soldier. The unassuming honourable Stephen Freeman guards and protects, clearly contrasting with Charley Kinraid, who appears as the light-heated, offensive, commander of a band of soldiers, whose swearing and rough ways are repeatedly stressed as is his carelessness or ignorance of the sacredness of the place:

> His heart was like a war-horse, and said, Ha, ha! as the boat bounded over the waves that were to land him under the ancient machicolated walls where the Crusaders made their last stand in the Holy Land. *Not that Kinraid knew or cared one jot about those gallant knights of old:* all he knew was, that the French, under Boney, were trying to take the town from the Turks, and that his admiral said they must not, and so they should not. (Gaskell 2014, 370)

4 Romance Heroes

For her portrayal of these two types of soldier Gaskell seems to have drawn inspiration from Norton's writings. On 31 December 1861 Gaskell wrote to Norton thanking him for "that *beautiful* noble paper of yours on the Advantages of Defeat, – a paper that I have circulated far and wide among my friends, – and I only wish I had more of the same kind to show, – in order to make us English know you Americans better" (Whitehill 2013, 95). "The Advantages of Defeat" had appeared in the September 1861 issue of *The Atlantic* in the aftermath of the defeat of the Unionist army at Bull Run. The first major battle of the American Civil War had been fought near Manassas, Virginia, about thirty miles west-southwest of Washington D.C. on 21 July 1861, when two armies of each about 18,000 men, both poorly trained and poorly led, ended with the Union forces slow retreating in disarray. Writing to Gaskell on 12 August, Norton drew a lesson from that "disheartening" experience from the recent defeat:

> it had been on the whole of good effect. It has deepened the spirit of the North, and led the people to a juster estimate of the magnitude of the struggle, [...] to a firmer conviction of the value and principles for which we are contending [...] and expressed his conviction that

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the destruction of slavery would mark "the beginning of a most difficult but also inspiring period in our history". (Whitehill 2013, 90)

In *The Atlantic* article he was to examine the causes of the defeat, pointing to the soldiers' moral constitution: "a regiment of bullies and prize-fighters is not the best stuff to compose an army" (Norton 1861b, 362), and refuting a charge that the Unionist Army lacked "vindictiveness":

> "Your men are not vindictive enough", Mr. Russell[3] is reported to have said, as he watched the battle. It was the saying of a shrewd observer, but it expresses only an imperfect apprehension of the truth. Vindictiveness is not the spirit our men should have, but a resoluteness of determination, as much more to be relied upon than a vindictive passion as it is founded. […] The atrocities committed on our wounded and prisoners by the "chivalry" of the South may excite not only horror, but a wild fury of revenge. But our cause should not be stained with cruelty and crime, even in the name of vengeance. If the war is simply one in which brute force is to prevail, if we are fighting only for lust and pride and domination, then let us have our "Ellsworth Avengers", and let us slay the wounded of our enemy without mercy; let us burn their hospitals, let us justify their, as yet, false charges against us; […]. War must be always cruel; it is not to be waged on principles of tenderness; but a just, a religious war can be waged only mercifully, with no excess, with no circumstance of avoidable suffering. Our enemies are our outward consciences, and their reproaches may warn us of our dangers. (Norton 1861b, 362-3)

Norton sketches a profile of the Union's soldiers: "they are intelligent, independent, vigorous"; they possess sound motivation and "clear appreciation of the nature and grounds of the contest", but need to be animated by the "spiritual principles from which [life] gains its worth […]" (Norton 1861b, 363). Prominence is given to religion:

> to be successful war must be a religious war, […] not a war of violent excitement and passionate enthusiasm, not a war in which the crimes of cruel bigots are laid to the charge of divine impulse", but rather to be fought "with dignified and solemn strength, with clean hands and pure hearts,– a war calm and inevitable in its processes as the judgments of God". (Norton 1861b, 361)

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3 William H. Russell was special correspondent for *The Times* of London during the American Civil War; his reports on the crisis had such a strong impact on the whole American audience to force him to leave the country prematurely.

And "*Religion*" – Norton concludes – must be "the watchword for our great struggle for liberty and right", as it was the "watchword [...] when Cromwell's men won the victory at Winceby Fight".[4] The reference to Cromwell seems to mark a distance from Carlyle's model of heroism. The word "hero" in fact occurs only once in the article and refers to Medieval knights as models of military virtue. Legendary and historical figures from Lancelot and Sir Philip Sidney, to Chevalier de Bayard share the qualities of paragons of a chivalric code of honour.

> Though the science of war has in modern times changed the relations and the duties of men on the battle-field from what they were in the old days of knighthood, yet there is still room for the display of stainless valour and of manful virtue. *Honor* and *courage* are part of our religion; and the coward or the man careless of honour in our army of liberty should fall under heavier shame than ever rested on the disgraced soldier in former times. The sense of honour is finer than the common sense of the world. It counts no cost and reckons no sacrifice great. "Then the king wept, and dried his eyes, and said, 'Your courage had neere hand destroyed you, for I call it folly knights to abide when they be overmatched'. 'Nay', said Sir Lancelot and the other, 'for once shamed may never be recovered'". The examples of Bayard,[5] – *sans peur et sans reproche*, – of Sidney, of the heroes of old or recent days, are for our imitation. We are bound to be no less worthy of praise and remembrance than they. They did nothing too high for us to imitate. And in their glorious company we may hope that some of our names may yet be enrolled, to stand as the inspiring exemplars and the models for coming times. (Norton 1861b, 365; emphasis in the text)

The popularity in America of Pierre Terrail, better known as Chevalier de Bayard, had been consolidated by William Gilmore Simms's

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4 The reference to Cromwell in the context of a war discourse evokes Carlyle's electing the Puritan leader as the champion of transcendent heroism in the last lecture of his *Of Hero, and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*. Implied and unavoidable though the reference is, some remarkable difference is to be noticed. Firstly, Norton mentions Winceby Fight that is the first battle fought in 1643 by the parliamentarian forces, which were actually led by Lord Edward Montague, Cromwell's superior at the time. This is certainly due to the fact that Norton is referring to an early stage in the British Civil War as the American Civil War was. Secondly, Norton's letter is free from the emphatic prophetic tones of Carlyle, whose Cromwell was the embodiment of the philosophy of the Great Man, dominated by the dogma of the hero. See Campbell 2006.

5 An evidence of the popularity of Chevalier Bayard at the time is the presence of his portrait in the 1857 Manchester Exhibition (cat. n. 200), which Norton visited and reviewed when he first met Elizabeth Gaskell. The portrait was then attributed to Giorgione, now to Pietro della Vecchia (1603-1678).

The Life of Chevalier Bayard, first published in 1847, republished in a second edition in 1860 with the subtitle "The good knight, sans peur et sans reproche". Simms, a supporter of the Confederate cause and slavery, wrote extensively on the history of the southern states, and Norton's reference to Bayard and Lancelot would seem to implicitly allude to Simm's edition of the book and claim for the Union the models of chivalric heroism that he had advertised and identified with the Southern cause. According to Norton these values and principles were embodied by the figure of the modern knightly soldier fighting for a good cause.

As Philip Hepburn turns into Stephen Freeman, he seems to take on the qualities of Norton's religious soldier. His identification with a medieval knight is made explicit in chapter 52, when, back in Britain, Stephen is received by the Hospital of St Sepulchre as a bedesman: there one sleepless night, he picks up the *Seven Champions of Wisdom* and reads the life of Guy of Warwick. The story of the earl returning from the Crusades as a begging hermit to be recognized by his wife only on his deathbed, is a patent *mise en abyme* of the latter part of the plot in which Stephen Freeman returns to Monkshaven, and as he lies dying is forgiven by a finally loving Sylvia. The story of Guy of Warwick is not included in Richard Johnson's 1596 *Renowned History of the Seven Champions of Wisdom*, to which the shorter title mentioned in the novel seems to allude, nor to any other similar collection.[6] Gaskell's invented reference would seem to function as an intertextual marker alluding to Norton's essay on the civil war and also to the vehement medieval rhetoric and imagery in his essays and in his correspondence with Gaskell. A medieval imagery that was inspired by Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement established in America at the time of the Civil War (Dowling 2007, 59).[7] There Norton had also praised the Sanitary Commission established in 1861 to help the wounded and sick soldiers of the American Civil War and defined them as "the descendants of the medieval knights of St. Lazarus, the Hospitallers, or the Knights of the Teutonic Orders", the commission "was to the America of the nineteenth centu-

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[6] The legend had circulated widely until the 18th century, in Bishop Percy's *Reliques* and later in Thomas Warton's 1774 *History of English Poetry*. Ronald Crane reconstructs this tradition and maintains that Guy continued to appeal to the general reading public owing to the persistence of a long-established tradition, and yet as the legend saw the beginning of a scholarly interest it also saw almost the end of popular interest. A much greater success attended *The Noble and Renowned History of Guy Earl of Warwick*, which was published in 1706 as the work of GL. Of all the prose treatments of the legend this was destined to achieve perhaps the greatest popularity. It was reprinted at regular intervals well into the mid-nineteenth century (Crane 1915,184-5).

[7] Ruskin, who was on friendly terms with Norton, broke off the correspondence with him in 1864 until the war was over, as he thought the war "entirely horrible" (Dowling 2007, 80).

ry what the orders of chivalry were to Europe in their day" (Norton 1867; see also Dowling 2007, 55). The retreat in the Hospital of St Sepulchre seems to be a further allusion to this densely symbolical place for such a character as Stephen Freeman, whose chivalric cypher so closely leans towards the image of the unknown, self-effacing volunteer.

5   Stephen, the Freedman

Philip Hepburn's change of name when he joins the Royal Navy has gone substantially unexamined by critics. "Freeman" is either seen as related to his quest to free himself from his "sin of presumption" (Marroni 1987, 145), or to an attempt to (vainly) renew his life, as glossed by the narrator's own voice in chapter 34 – "with a new name, he began a new life. 'Alas! the old life lives forever!'" (Sanders 1978, 221). Yet, the context of the American Civil War that we have identified as a subtext to the novel activates obvious connections with the anti-slavery cause, for "Freeman" or more often "Freedman" is a noun that resonates strongly with the language of the Civil War. The referent of Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, the "Freedman" was the name of a social category constituted as early as 1848 (see Drake 1963, 176), one that was at the centre of social emancipation campaigns in the years 1861-71 which saw the birth of the Freedman's Aid Movement, and the Freedmen's educational Union. That the name "Freeman" was perceived as clearly connoted for an Anglo-American readership seems to be out of question, especially if attached to a *sui generis* war hero as a symbolic halo. Throughout the Norton-Gaskell correspondence, the abolitionist cause has a prominent place, as to Norton the Civil War was essentially an anti-slavery war – "to abolish slavery – to fight and die on the behalf of a powerless and despised people – was to regenerate the commonwealth at the deepest level of its founding principles" (Dowling 2007, 48). Norton frequently refers to the voluntary enrolment of black freemen soldiers, a controversial practice that he strenuously supported at the time. It occupies a central place in his letters to Gaskell well after the publication of *Sylvia's Lovers* until her sudden death two months after the end of the war, as in a long letter dated 16 January 1865 (Whitehill 2013, 119). It was one of the main topics of their exchanges, where Gaskell voiced the charges, perplexities, and objections that were circulating in Britain and that were addressed to her as a friend of Norton's. Her mediatory position is very clearly stated in a letter dated 4 July 1864:

> […] two people – I won't say *who*, attacked me, saying your letter was ASSERTION, but not *facts*. I tell you plain out, because I always

do want to have FACTS if I can, on which your opinions are based. I *fully* believe you, because I know you; but what *facts* am I to give in answer to such speeches as this. "It is a war forced by the Government on the people, the orders for enlistment are not readily or willingly responded to, and the army is principally composed of mercenaries – German for the most part. 2ndly, it is a war for territory; the pretext of slavery is *only a pretext* with a large majority; a few more enlightened have it really at heart". And then they refer to the Emancipation Proclamation only setting the slaves *rebels* free; [...] Again they ask me by what force – standing army or military government – the rebel provinces if once conquered, are to be held? I know that all these questions arise out of the wicked mis-statements of the "Times" – but that they are difficult to answer, unless I simply reassert my faith in what *will* be, sooner or later. And then very good people say no great evil was ever put down by violence – that they even doubt if the abolition of slavery is worth the immense blood and sacrifice of this war, as by the spread of opinion it was almost sure to have been put an end to before 50 years were over by the slaveholders themselves – to which I reply by the annexation, etc. (Whitehill 2013, 113-14; emphasis in the text)

The letter continues with this reporting of the "very good people's" objections and solicits from Norton evidence to be forwarded back to them: "They own that in the beginning the South was rebellious, and treacherous, but they say that those who *hesitated* once as to the Xtian lawfulness of holding slaves, must now have assumed that it is part of patriotism to uphold slavery, and that it is a war of extermination" (Whitehill 2013, 115). Gaskell here plays her role of intellectual mediator which she had assumed throughout her social-problem fiction, where she had raised her middle-class readership's awareness of the most heated issues of the time by introjecting their judgmental gaze within the novels. In *Mary Barton* and in *Ruth* Gaskell's protagonists are marginalized characters who are exposed to the middle class characters' condemnatory gaze, which the self-reflective spectacle of the novel reveals as intolerant and unacceptable. In a telling scene in *Sylvia's Lovers* we seem to catch this judgmental gaze cast on Stephen Freeman, in a complex cross-reflexion where Stephen is both the victim and the subject of social fear/hostility. After his rescue of Kinraid, Freeman's features are horribly "blackened and scarred" by an explosion. Far from being just a narrative ploy for his return home in disguise like Guy of Warwick, this seems to be part of the new character that Philip Hepburn has turned into. The scene in which Stephen Freeman sees in the mirror an alien Other is quite telling, as his own gaze embodies the scorn of his community as a whole:

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In the small oblong of looking-glass hung against the wall, Philip caught the reflection of his own face, and *laughted scornfully at the sight*. The thin hair lay upon his temples in the flakes that betoken long ill-health; his eyes were the same as ever, and they had always been considered the best feature in his face; but they were sunk in their orbits, and looked hollow and gloomy. As for the lower part of his face, blackened, contracted, drawn away from his teeth, the outline entirely changed by the breakage of his jaw-bone, he was indeed a fool if he thought himself fit to go forth to win back that love which Sylvia had forsworn. As a hermit and a beggar, he must return to Monkshaven, and fall perforce into the same position which Guy of Warwick had only assumed. (Gaskell 2014, 404)

In the reflected image the black man merges with the medieval knight. A few lines below the narrator describes the reflected image by pointing at the few distinctive features of a black man: "his gentle, wistful eyes, and the white and faultless teeth" – but seeing himself again through the hostile public gaze, he withdraws from taking even the outside position that he might just have been able to afford in the couch.

He had saved some money from his allowance as bedesman and from his pension, and might occasionally have taken an outside place on a coach, had it not been that he shrank from the first look of every stranger upon his disfigured face. Yet, the gentle, wistful eyes, and the white and faultless teeth always did away with the first impression as soon as people became little acquainted with his appearance. (Gaskell 2014, 405)

6 Conclusion

Norton's involvement in the American Civil War and his passionate defence of the Unionist cause and his drawing on a repertoire of chivalric values and a medieval imagery seems to have left a substantial mark on *Sylvia's Lovers*. Gaskell had begun the novel before the outbreak of the war as a historical tale of love in which the focus would have been on the adventurous figure of Kinraid, and the plot and setting of Crabbe's poem on the tragedies of common people caught in the great web of history. When the Civil War broke out Gaskell's work on the novel came to a halt, not only because of her active involvement in supporting the working class in its struggle during the great famine caused by the war, but because she started considering the war from a more complex perspective, one which involved the issue of individual freedom and the need to defend it. The dilemma Gaskell faced as a consequence is well expressed in the conver-

sation between Daniel Robson and Philip Hepburn in chapter 4. The letters between Norton and Gaskell record an intense exchange in which the American friend provides the English novelist with matter that was to be imaginatively transfigured in the novel, generating a symbolic overload which at once disorientates and attracts the reader. In bringing to light this substantial subtext to the novel, this reading provides supports to Shelston's statement that "America was always in her mind" and that Gaskell's critics should "examine the way her constructions of it played a part in her literary consciousness" (Shelston 2001, 62). A subtext that is implicitly but quite clearly evoked in Gaskell's dedication of the American edition of the novel to her "Northeners [*sic*] Friends, With the truest sympathy of an English Woman; and in an especial manner to my dear Friend CHARLES ELIOT NORTON, And to his Wife". This was also quite explicitly acknowledged by Norton who, after reading the book, recognized how much it owed to shared experiences, ideals and engagement:

> I have read it with such feeling as few other books have ever called out in me. It is impossible for me to say to you what I should like to say, – for the words do not convey when written the true impression of feeling. But Sylvia's Lovers will be henceforth to me and to my wife not so much a book that we have read, as a part of the experience of our lives, – happy & yet half sad, quickening all true sympathies, widening our charity, and making part of our united secret treasury of precious common memories & affections. (Whitehill 2013, 100)

Over the pages of the same long letter he updates his English friend on the progress of the War, "the good work" it was accomplishing, the rapid growth of nationality feeling, the anti-slavery sentiment spreading through Missouri, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky and Tennessee, and on the successful experiment of enlisting troops of "freed men" volunteers in South Carolina and Massachusetts (Whitehill 2013, 100-1). The letter, confidential but politically reserved in tone, is an interesting document both from a diplomatic point and from a literary one. It gives an idea of the exchanges between Norton and Gaskell and how the novelist became deeply involved with the American situation, as the direct addressee of Norton's regular and detailed reports.

And yet in the novel the "bright optimism" (Drake 1963, 703) that Norton expressed in his letters and in his articles on the Civil War dissolves into the atmosphere of Gaskell's "saddest Novel", whose pessimism and wretchedness surrounds the characters and radiates from Philip Hepburn-Stephen Freeman, the embodiment of so many allusions to Norton's ideal soldier. Thus the war atmosphere casts dark shadows on the love story: Stephen as soldier carries the heavy burden of a personal fate which represents the existential con-

dition of man in wartime, obsessively confronting a sense of mortality as both dark omen and present condition. When Philip returns to Monkshaven as an invalid, he confronts the idea of death – of his expectations, of the feared death of his beloved ones. And when, soon after he sees Sylvia and their child smiling and cheering the circus unaware of him and his disabled appearance, an image of loss is generated. This sense of death reverberates in the epigraph on the title-page of the novel, which quotes three lines from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. An opening that sets the tone in an elegiac key of grief and mourning:

> Oh for thy voice to soothe and bless!
> What hope of answer, or redress?
> Behind the veil! Behind the veil!

The epigraph omits the first line of the stanza – "Oh life as futile then, as frail" – thus attenuating the "most pessimistic stanza of the poem" (Shaw 2007, 87), which has been interpreted in relation to the framework of metaphysical doubt that was brought about by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Jenny Uglow sees the lines as voicing Gaskell's "despair in her attempt to fit the bewilderment of nature into the meliorist framework of history and a trust in divine providence" (Uglow 1993, 506).

However, the sense of mourning that the lines cast on the novel may be more precisely related to the tragedy and horror brought by the War that Gaskell had so closely experienced through Norton. Once again, the correspondence may shed some light on this. In the above-quoted letter to Norton dated 31 December 1861, where Gaskell refers to "The Advantages of Defeat", the essay that was to leave such a deep impression on the novel, she quotes a line from section ninety-seven of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* to express her painfully divided attitude towards the War: "Meta and I" – she says – "are very faithful Northerners: literally 'faithful' for when they quote New York reports of American public speeches quoting how you are determined to force us into war, our answer is something like that line of Tennyson's 'I cannot understand – I love'" (Whitehill 2013, 96). The epigraph to the novel would seem to be another implicit and yet clear reference to her correspondence with Norton, a reference that her American friend must have recognized. It is another intertextual marker of that passionately and painfully reconstructed account of the Civil War that had contributed to shape Gaskell's "tragic" book. Thus, romance is largely indebted to Norton's medievalism and, through an allegorical mode, to the American context and the racial question, which quite significantly would be taken up in *Wives and Daughters*, Gaskell's last unfinished novel.

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Rupsa Banerjee, Nathaniel Cadle
Rethinking Space
through Literary Form

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Recensione di Banerjee, R.; Cadle, N. (eds) (2022). *Rethinking Space through Literary Form*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 284 pp.

La riflessione teorica sul significato dello spazio in letteratura occupa una posizione prevalente nel dibattito critico degli ultimi anni. *Rethinking Space through Literary Form*, curato da Rupsa Banerjee e Nathaniel Cadle, interviene sul tema con una collazione di saggi di eterogenea ispirazione. Il testo si inserisce in una collana di ricerca incentrata sugli *spatial literary studies* e sulla geocritica.

La dialettica tra spazio e rappresentazione letteraria si è strutturata più organicamente come campo di ricerca a partire dalla riflessione geo-centrata di Martin Heidegger in *Essere e tempo* e ha acquisito una crescente rilevanza disciplinare per i contributi speculativi, tra gli altri, di Foucault, Lefebvre, e in tempi più recenti Bertrand Westphal e Robert Tally. Tale interesse sulle interazioni tra spazio, tempo e personaggi in letteratura si è concretizzato nello *spatial turn*, per cui gli studi teorici si sono caratterizzati per una prospettiva multidisciplinare multifocale, polisensoriale, stratigrafica, quale quella presentata nel volume seminale di Westphal, *Geocritica* (2009).

Il lavoro curato da Banerjee e Cadle si propone di includere nell'orizzonte critico propaggini letterarie poco esplorate (le isole Orkney per George Mackay Brown, l'Uganda di Dinaw Mengestu, il Bengali di Sulekha Sanyal, i territori anarchici di B. Traven, i Caraibi di Èdouard Glissant, per citarne alcuni). Nel realizzare questa operazione,

Banerjee e Cadle optano per un chiaro posizionamento critico, divergente rispetto alla posizione di Westphal: se, infatti, questi poneva come centrale l'analisi verticale del luogo attraverso le sue stratificazioni storiche, urbanistiche e letterarie, i curatori di *Rethinking Space* scelgono il punto di vista postcoloniale di Arjun Appadurai, secondo cui lo spazio è percorso orizzontalmente da contemporanei flussi di tradizioni diverse e complementari. Quivi non emerge altresì un valore predominante, ma una rete polisistemica di modelli di vita e pratiche spaziali ancorate a un molteplice e multidimensionale presente.

Il volume si divide in quattro parti: una prima indaga l'influenza dello spazio sulla letteratura; una seconda esplora l'importanza dello spazio sulla forma; una terza si concentra sulla riconfigurazione formale di regioni e nazioni; un'ultima sezione è dedicata alle città nella riscrittura letteraria.

Dal punto di vista teorico il volume presenta alcune significative peculiarità: se Westphal riteneva più rilevante la ricostruzione di una storia multidisciplinare della letteratura di una città piuttosto dell'analisi dello spazio nell'opera di un singolo autore, i saggi di *Rethinking Space* ritornano una impostazione monografica. Il capitolo su Newark e Philip Roth (scritto da Ivan L. Heister, 211-26), per esempio, pone l'accento sulla specificità dello scrittore, non su una prospettiva comparatistica sullo spazio del New Jersey in opere ulteriori. In altre parole, prevale l'*ingenium* dell'autore sullo *spiritus loci*. Qui si svela un obiettivo fondamentale: non indagare la natura dello spazio singolo, ma svelare come uno ne contenga molti, evocati e materializzati dalla letteratura. A questo alludono i versi del poeta Forrest Gander citati nell'incipit del saggio: «your words / situates you here / (here (here)» (2).

Tale concentrazione critica sul singolo (e contemporaneamente plurimo) luogo è coerente con una prospettiva globalista e postcoloniale:

> By focusing on narratives of places determining the cartographic mapping of the world rather than the other way around, this collection argues that prose and poetry offer representations of worlds that are plural, where the sense of a unitary spatial whole is already lost in the innate inclinations of texts to remain both disconnected and open to assimilation. (8)

Soppressa questa unità spaziale, i concetti di centro e periferia vengono meno, allineati in una contemporaneità che li dispone nel presente in assenza di ogni declinazione gerarchica o proto-coloniale.

Ne risulta un quadro inedito di autori significativi, collocati tuttavia al di fuori della mappa disegnata dal potere mediatore e centralizzante del canone occidentale: attraverso questo allargamento di orizzonte, lo sguardo del lettore si posa su esperienze e voci di grande novità.

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Federico Maria Sardelli
Il volto di Vivaldi

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Recensione di   Sardelli, F.M. (2021). *Il volto di Vivaldi*. Palermo: Sellerio, 294 pp. 130 illustrazioni a colore e in bianco e nero.

L'autore di questo libro non è un accademico – e tanto meglio per lui – ma una celebrità. Direttore d'orchestra e specialista di musica barocca, musicologo dunque musicista consapevole, ha all'attivo numerose edizioni critiche vivaldiane ed è inventore di quello che Michael Talbot, il patriarca degli studiosi vivaldiani, chiama per brevità il 'metodo Sardelli'. Un procedimento che consente non solo di datare, ma anche di confermare oppure escludere l'attribuzione di molta musica già ascritta al catalogo delle opere di Vivaldi, come che di quella appena scoperta e candidata ad esserlo.[1] Sardelli è oggi il severo custode dell'*Errevù* (*Ryom Verzeichnis der Werke Antonio Vivaldis,* Breitkopf und Härtel, 2019). RV seguita da un numero progressivo, è sigla che decreta ciò che è vivaldiano separandolo da ciò che non lo è, o che non è più possibile considerare tale. Non stupisce che uno così possa anche essere un compositore di successo. Più sorprende che sia anche romanziere e Premio Comisso con *L'affare Vivaldi* (Sellerio, 2015), e non nelle biografie storiche, ma proprio nella narrativa.

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1   Il metodo si appoggia su una poderosa sinossi delle autocitazioni vivaldiane, le ricorrenze tematiche musicali, (Sardelli, F.M., «Catalogo delle concordanze musicali vivaldiane». *Quaderni Vivaldiani*, 16. Firenze, Olschki, 2012), strumento di lavoro affinato da Sardelli nell'arco di un ventennio. Sul «Metodo Sardelli» cfr. Talbot, s.v. «Sardelli», *The Vivaldi Compendium*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011, 163.

Potrebbe bastare? Macché: Sardelli è anche pittore; fu per molti anni autore umoristico con all'attivo una decina di libri (*I Miracoli di Padrepìo*, *Trippa*, *Paperi in fiamme*, etc.) e disegnatore satirico. Tanti saperi pratici che convergono felicemente in questo *Volto di Vivaldi*, dove il versatile autore – ci ripromettiamo qui di non usare mai aggettivi come 'poliedrico', 'eclettico' o simili – s'incarica di un compito modesto solo in apparenza. Fare 'il punto della situazione' dell'iconografia vivaldiana. Verificare

> quanti e quali sono i ritratti di Vivaldi; quali quelli autentici, dubbi o mal attribuiti; di ciascuno analizzare il contesto storico, in relazione alla sua vicenda geografica, e vederne la tecnica esecutiva per valutarne le effettive capacità di trasmettere o meno il sembiante del compositore. (15)

Pare poco, eppure è tantissimo in quel territorio interdisciplinare come pochi altri lo sono, l'iconografia musicale, sospeso tra musicologia, storia dell'arte e storia sociale e della cultura e assai più trafficato di quanto non si creda, non sempre arato né seminato come si dovrebbe. Questo per dire che come terreno di coltura l'iconografia musicale sarebbe ottimo: ricco di nutrienti e anche, se ben sondato, di tesori ancora nascosti. Peccato che spesso venga curato male, usando gli attrezzi e le sementi sbagliate, a volte seminato a gramigna.

Rarità e laconicità delle immagini, scarsità dei documenti: presto o tardi arriva irresistibile, per chi fa iconografia musicale, la tentazione di buttarsi dal lato della prosa poetica; di doparsi con dosi massicce di psicanalisi, con teorie estetiche o sociologiche a buon mercato. Il recinto è grande ed è sempre aperto; il campo è gestito in accomandita da tre o quattro settori disciplinari. Nessuna autorità riconosciuta può cacciar via gli escursionisti e i campeggiatori della domenica, nemmeno quando pestano il seminato. Troppe le quote di proprietà, carente la sorveglianza, nessuno che possa chiamare i Carabinieri. Facile allora supplire all'archivio con accorate affabulazioni, facendosi scudo – ohibò! – degli statuti accreditati delle discipline accademiche a fondamento estetico. Stendere sull'oggetto della ricerca una spessa cortina di fumo, che non solamente non agevola una ben più modesta comprensione dei fatti storico-musicali, ma ne ostacola gravemente l'avanzamento, a volte per decenni, ingombrando il campo di macerie tossiche durissime da smaltire (230-9).

Da scettico e materialista impenitente, Sardelli è invece persuaso che ai fini dell'indagine iconografico-musicale «concetti come psiche, inconscio, super-io» siano utili più o meno quanto lo sono le pratiche divinatorie dell'astrologia e della cartomanzia per risolvere il dilemma ontologico. Si adopera fin da subito a far piazza pulita degli aspetti più nocivi e irritanti della moderna esegetica critico-artistica. Su tutti, l'*ekphrasis* a briglia sciolta, ispirata ma spesso sommini-

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strata a vanvera; la sindrome del rabdomante *faute de mieux*, vale a dire la presunzione di ricavare da un volto dipinto «informazioni sul carattere del personaggio, il suo mondo artistico e le sue idee» schivando in tal modo l'onere della prova (32). Già in apertura di saggio, Sardelli ci regala 45 auree paginette di metodo pratico, con numerosi esempi concreti di come non si deve fare mai (19-64). Un regesto spassoso e scoraggiante di aberrazioni esegetiche, forzature dei documenti e di attribuzioni erronee, a volte artatamente false, ottenute per sovrainterpretazione e sotto la spinta di irresistibili illuminazioni interiori. Una classifica degli orrori che raggiunge l'apice se solo ci si accosta ai due geni sommi, Mozart e Beethoven. La ricerca forzosa di tracce di sintomi patologici nel primo – le occhiaie: nefrite, di certo! – di un irresistibile carisma nel secondo – lo sguardo magnetico: roba da svenire, se lo incontravi. Il tutto cavato da testimonianze figurative perlopiù scadenti sul piano tecnico, inadatte a restituire sfumature fisionomiche significanti, figuriamoci se caratteriali o psicologiche.

L'acuta attenzione che l'autore del libro riserva ai saperi tecnici del caso illustra bene il carattere 'baconiano' del suo progetto esegetico; il ricorso costante ad un sapere artigianale, materiale e "dal basso", dunque 'specialistico' e filologico nella migliore accezione del termine. Come dovrebbe essere per qualsiasi indagine che, in carenza di documenti scritti, si fondasse su testimonianze visive superstiti non sempre affidabili, il più delle volte dubbie, da attribuire. Il rischio infatti è sempre quello, la sovrainterpretazione: vedere quello che non c'era allora e che quindi non ci può essere adesso. Premesse di metodo tanto più inderogabili quando si ha a che fare con un repertorio iconografico composito e disperso, magrissimo e privo di una vera tradizione come quello vivaldiano. Tra noi e Vivaldi passano infatti quasi due secoli di oblio del musicista e perciò di deserto iconografico.

Con uno stile brillante e scorrevole, inanellando una catena di capitoli brevissimi Sardelli arriva perciò a impartire una non comune lezione di metodo, rimettendo a posto gli affari dell'iconografia vivaldiana come meglio non si sarebbe potuto fare. Non depone mai una sottile vena umoristica, ma argomenta con rigore e non afferma mai niente che non sia in grado di dimostrare. Rifugge le inutili, funamboliche, temerarie digressioni e le acrobatiche sovraesposizioni ermeneutiche: sa bene che il pericolo è tutto lì, e non altrove.

Sarebbe davvero auspicabile che questo modo di procedere fosse applicato serialmente al resto dei repertori iconografici di qualsiasi musicista di epoca anteriore l'avvento della fotografia. La ricetta è nel libro: sapere tecnico del caso e piedi ben piantati per terra. A necessario collante, il metodo storico e la verifica sulle fonti pertinenti il caso il tempo e il luogo in esame. Non che serva esagerare: solo quel tanto che basta per evitare cantonate e tener fuori dal discorso illusioni ottiche e flagranti anacronismi.

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Certo, ci vorrebbe anche per gli altri casi qualcuno altrettanto capace di tenere insieme competenze tanto diverse. Che fosse ad un tempo compositore-strumentista, filologo musicale, pittore, incisore, disegnatore satirico, infine storico, e che fosse un pratico oltreché uno studioso. Ma soprattutto che da saggista fosse anch'egli scarsamente incline a lasciarsi fulminare delle proprie estemporanee 'illuminazioni' prendendole per vere.

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Diego Saglia
Modernità del Romanticismo Scrittura e cambiamento nella letteratura britannica 1780-1830

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Recensione di   Saglia, D. (2023). *Modernità del Romanticismo. Scrittura e cambiamento nella letteratura britannica 1780-1830*. Venezia: Marsilio, 223 pp.

Partendo dalla premessa che l'età romantica non debba essere intesa come un'estetica da contrapporre a quella neo-classica, vittoriana o modernista, ma come un periodo di mutamenti radicali in ambito storico, politico ed economico, Diego Saglia prende in rassegna una vasta campionatura di testi che a partire dagli inizi dell'Ottocento hanno contribuito a formare un vero lessico della modernità.

Il libro prende l'avvio con l'analisi di due opere teatrali di Charles Dibdin, *London; or Harlequin and Time* (1813) e *Life in London* (1821) appartenenti a quei generi minori affermatisi in Inghilterra in concomitanza con il declino della tragedia e della commedia. Centrale in questi lavori è la rappresentazione del tumultuoso processo di trasformazione di Londra che, da area incolta e primitiva, divenne la metropoli più avanzata del mondo, «nucleo pulsante e problematico della modernità» (33).

A Walter Scott, un autore sentito attualmente come polveroso, ma popolarissimo nell'Ottocento soprattutto per il ritmo epico della narrazione, Saglia riconosce caratteri di grande modernità

per aver saputo dare vita a un incontro felice tra storiografia e romanzo, per il suo nuovo modo di concepire il tempo e di restituire una realtà fluida e instabile. Nella grande serie dei romanzi di *Waverley*, centrali sono le trasformazioni, le rivoluzioni e le divisioni sociali e politiche esplicitate nel motivo della frontiera: quella geografica dei *borders* tra Inghilterra e Scozia e insieme quella dei contrasti tra tradizionalismo e progresso, nostalgia e cambiamento. Nonostante Scott eviti il gusto sensazionalistico caratteristico del gotico, in *The Bride of Lamermoor* (1819) affiorano motivi cari a quel genere. Nel romanzo, sullo sfondo di un paese preda di divisioni e di una giustizia regia deviata, Scott proietta una visione moderna d'instabilità e incertezza.

Recensendo *Emma* nel 1816, Scott già metteva in luce la precisione e la fedeltà al dettaglio caratteristici di Jane Austen, l'artefice del romanzo moderno grazie alla sostituzione di eventi improbabili con la rappresentazione della vita quotidiana e del mondo interiore dei personaggi, l'introduzione del discorso indiretto libero e l'uso innovativo della forma dialogica. Saglia si sofferma sulla sua scrittura limpida ed essenziale e sul suo particolare realismo che si nutre della presenza di un universo di cose appartenenti alla quotidianità domestica: abiti, accessori, libri e ritratti sono investiti da un'aura sentimentale ed emotiva in grado di determinare i rapporti tra i personaggi e i processi di formazione dell'identità singola e collettiva.

Lo stile classico di Jane Austen era lontanissimo dal torbido sensazionalismo del gotico tant'è che se ne prese elegantemente gioco nel romanzo *Northanger Abbey* (1817). Eppure questo genere, in cui viene vista una delle prime manifestazioni della letteratura di consumo, introduce da un lato il tema innovativo della folla come massa, che in *The Monk* (1796) di M.G. Lewis e in *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) di C.R. Maturin si trasforma in una macchina di morte, dall'altro quello distopico della fine del mondo, dell'apocalisse, della catastrofe ultima che trova il suo vertice in *The Last Man* (1826) di Mary Shelley e che si era già affacciato in *St Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* (1799) di William Godwin, padre della scrittrice.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1798) di Samuel Taylor Coleridge, collocata in apertura alle *Lyrical Ballads*, pubblicate in collaborazione con William Wordsworth, manifesto del romanticismo inglese, è interpretato come un testo chiave nella letteratura della globalizzazione. Il viaggio della nave oltre l'Equatore e l'uccisione dell'albatro al centro del celeberrimo poemetto, con i motivi della colpa e dell'espiazione, sono letti non più in chiave meramente simbolica, ma come la trascrizione degli orrori della tratta degli schiavi e delle conseguenze nefaste del colonialismo nei Tropici.

Uno scenario egualmente globale si affaccia in *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) di P.B. Shelley. L'ambientazione orientale di questo lungo

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poema narrativo oltrepassa le frontiere britanniche ed europee secondo una versione universalistica poi ripresa nel dramma *Hellas.* Poeta visionario, nemico di ogni forma di oppressione, già grande estimatore, ma poi anche detrattore, di Wordsworth, Shelley qui

> inverte la linearità provvidenziale e teleologica di *The Excursion* [...] per sostituirvi una struttura sinuosa che è il correlativo di un processo storico-politico non finito e, di certo, non sconfitto. (155)

Analogamente, nei primi due canti del *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18) che resero di colpo Lord Byron il poeta e l'uomo alla moda, gli orizzonti letterari si allargano per includere non solo i teatri della guerra napoleonica e il Mediterraneo, ma anche il Levante, l'Albania e la Turchia. Nel cosmopolitismo di Byron si afferma una nuova categoria filosofica ed esistenziale, quella dell'erranza che, inevitabilmente è anche sradicamento, smarrimento e perdita del sé. Harold, controfigura del poeta, è infatti un individuo modernamente tormentato e irrequieto, così come lo saranno i suoi epigoni, il Giaurro e il Corsaro dei racconti turchi.

Un altro capitolo di questo pregevole saggio verte su un gruppo di opere che ci interrogano su questioni di drammatica attualità come i mutamenti climatici, l'impatto dell'industrializzazione nel paesaggio e il rapporto tra umano e non-umano, a riprova di come la letteratura romantica fu cruciale per il formarsi della critica letteraria di stampo ambientalista alla fine del Novecento. Emblematici in tal senso il componimento narrativo confessionale *Nutting* di Wordsworth, esempio di poesia *green*; *The Mouse's Petition* di Anna Laetitia Aikin (poi Barbauld), uno dei numerosi componimenti dedicati agli animali nel canone ambientale ove è un topolino a implorare libertà e dignità; e il poemetto apocalittico *Darkness* di Byron in cui emerge una consapevolezza proto-antropocenica delle catastrofi ambientali; e infine *Frankenstein*.

Nata nel 1816, nell'anno senza sole in seguito alla spaventosa eruzione del vulcano indonesiano Tambora che causò carestie, epidemie e un radicale abbassamento della temperatura, la modernissima favola nera di Mary Shelley ruota attorno al progetto diabolico dello scienziato di sostituirsi a Dio nel mistero della creazione. Lo scellerato esperimento di dare alla luce un essere umano eludendo la funzione materna avrà conseguenze funeste ed egli non sfuggirà al castigo. La progenie si rivelerà maledetta, niente altro che un atto di potere, violenza e distruzione.

Espressione del ribellismo romantico e del gusto per la terribilità del sublime, il romanzo è anche attraversato da preoccupazioni geopolitiche. La minaccia rappresentata dall'infelice Creatura senza nome, l'archetipo dei replicanti e dei *cyborg,* diventa, da un lato l'occasione per una riflessione sui limiti della scienza, dall'altro

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l'espressione del terrore suscitato dalla possibilità di un'invasione e un contagio su scala globale. Quando infatti il mostro respinto da tutti, abbandonato a se stesso e dolorosamente consapevole della propria deformità, implora Frankenstein di creargli una compagna, egli riceve un netto rifiuto che, scrive Diego Saglia, «si ricollega all'incubo di una razza in grado di riprodursi a ritmi inarrestabili» e obliterare il genere umano (116).

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Robert Louis Stevenson
Diario degli ultimi anni nei mari del Sud

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Nel 1887, alla morte del padre, Robert Louis Stevenson già gravemente minato dalla tubercolosi di cui soffrì fin da bambino, lasciò per sempre l'Europa. Spinto dalla ricerca di un clima più favorevole per la salute, da un indomito spirito di avventura e da ragioni economiche (gli era stato offerto un contratto allettante per un reportage sui Mari del Sud), s'imbarcò a San Francisco. Dopo varie peregrinazioni nel Pacifico, si stabilì a Upolu, l'isola maggiore dell'arcipelago samoano, ultimo approdo di una vita quasi interamente nomade. Acquistò un appezzamento di terra a Vailima, a pochi chilometri dalla capitale, dove si fece costruire una grande casa a seicento metri sul livello del mare. Lì, circondato dal rispetto degli indigeni che lo veneravano come saggio consigliere chiamandolo *Tusitala*, il narratore di storie, Stevenson visse con la madre, la moglie americana Fanny, assieme ai figli di lei: Lloyd e Belle Osbourne che si rivelerà preziosa facendogli da amanuense.

Documento toccante degli ultimi anni di vita sono le lettere che dal novembre del 1890 fino all'ottobre del 1894 Stevenson inviò all'amico e consigliere editoriale Sidney Colvin, il quale nel 1895 le pubblicò con il titolo *Vailima Letters*, ora meritoriamente proposte dall'editore Corsiero nella bella traduzione di Michele Buzzi.

> Ora ti sto scrivendo sotto la zanzariera, accompagnato dal canto delle seghe, delle pialle e dei martelli e dai tonfi del legname al piano di sopra. È una splendida, luminosa giornata, un uccello cinguetta poco lontano e il paesaggio che scorgo attraverso la porta aperta è dominato da verdi distese erbose, , con due-tre grandi alberi che protendono i rami verso il cielo; in lontananza si vedono le pendici della montagna ricoperte dalla foresta e di lato uno scorcio delle acque azzurre del Pacifico. In Inghilterra è il gelido marzo e io sono coricato qui in camiciola e calzoni del pigiama. (61)

Così in una lettera datata 19 marzo 1891.

Recuperate le forze, immerso nell'incanto di una natura primigenia, un «mondo nuovo» (242) dove sui rami di baniani immensi risplendono felci e orchidee, ma sempre con lo sguardo volto alla natia Scozia, «quella terra benedetta e selvaggia» (278), Stevenson si lasciò trascinare da un giovanile entusiasmo e da un desiderio di rinnovamento: «Io adesso sono un vero dandy; ti avevo annunciato che sarei cambiato. Trasandato in gioventù, sia pure, ma non nella vecchiaia» (238).

Le sue giornate sono scandite, soprattutto all'inizio della permanenza nell'isola, da lavori manuali per la costruzione della casa nel mezzo della foresta e da numerose incombenze domestiche che da una parte lo riempiono di soddisfazione, dall'altra di sconforto perché sottraggono tempo ed energie alla scrittura. Dopo la sveglia alle prime luci dell'alba, con le mani doloranti, armato di coltello, e spesso immerso nel fango fino alla vita a causa delle piogge torrenziali, al pari di un novello Robinson, Stevenson traccia sentieri, disegna mappe, pianta semi di cacao, s'inoltra nel silenzio della foresta per estirpare piante «subdole come rettili» (28), attento a evitare «le feroci morsicature delle formiche» (58), mentre Fanny, da autentica pioniera, combatte con i maiali selvatici che devastano il raccolto.

Lo scrittore, che da ragazzo con grande scandalo si era rifiutato di seguire le orme paterne, ingegnere specializzato, come il nonno, nella costruzione di fari nei desolati mari del Nord, si trova a «discutere di mattoni e pietre, calce e idraulica, cemento e sabbia,tutte le cose che mi ero lasciato alle spalle vent'anni fa sfuggendo dall'ufficio di mio padre» (45).

Oltre a dar conto dei momenti di svago (partecipa a danze e feste, suona il flauto accompagnato al pianoforte da Belle), delle letture (Flaubert, Balzac, Montaigne e Zola) e di studio (prende lezioni di samoano e a sua volta insegna l'inglese ai *boys* che lavorano nella tenuta), l'epistolario testimonia il coinvolgimento di Stevenson nella realtà locale minacciata dalle potenze imperialiste. Se, come scrive Andrea Casoli nella puntuale introduzione, mancano informazioni sull'intervento tedesco e la rivalità con la Gran Bretagna e gli USA – Stevenson ne parla diffusamente in *A Footnote to History*:

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Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa (1892) – pure nelle lettere sono evocati lo spettro della guerra, i suoi incontri e tentativi di mediazione con il re, con i prigionieri politici, i consoli e gli ambasciatori. In una lettera del settembre 1891 scrive a Colvin che i poveri nativi, benché siano, «come tutti i popolani, abbastanza falsi e pigri, non sono né eroi né santi, ma solo persone comuni vergognosamente sfruttate» (83). Il mese successivo annota sconsolato: «Io odio la politica, ma non posso starmene inerte a guardare mentre qualcuno fa saltare per aria i nativi con la dinamite (90).

A dominare è un senso d'impotenza: «è orribile assistere giorno dopo giorno a questa danza di follia, ingiustizia e incosciente rapacità e non poter fare nulla» (81).

La vita di Stevenson ai Tropici è ricca di incontri, solitarie cavalcate al chiaro di luna nella foresta, ma è soprattutto una vita di strenuo lavoro creativo: corregge bozze, scrive e riscrive interi capitoli di libri, si confronta di continuo con l'amico Colvin sulla costruzione dei personaggi, sui possibili titoli e illustrazioni dei suoi libri, lamentando a tratti la fatica di mettere insieme una frase dopo l'altra (63) dopo essere stato benedetto da una prodigiosa facilità di scrittura. Sempre autocritico, raramente soddisfatto di sé, Stevenson lavora duramente per raggiungere «una vitalità piena, esuberante. Poi la liricità, se possibile, e il pittoresco, sempre con scene epiche, in modo che i personaggi rimangano nella mente del lettore per sempre» (211).

Pur tra mille difficoltà, preoccupazioni finanziarie e nonostante l'inesorabile peggioramento della salute – soffre di emicranie, pleuriti, febbre, coliti, attacchi di dispepsia ed emorragie polmonari – nei momenti di tregua riesce a portare a termine numerosi lavori: il romanzo *Il relitto*, *Catriona*, il volume di racconti *Intrattenimenti notturni dell'isola*, e *Il riflusso della marea*, l'ultima opera compiuta, un altro romanzo d'avventura in cui netta è la denuncia dei guasti del colonialismo. Inoltre, fra una crisi e l'altra, mette in cantiere *St Ives* e l'autobiografico *Records of a Family of Engineers* che usciranno postumi.

Come scrisse a Colvin, una sorta di suo Super-Io – «il tuo sguardo severo mi seguirà costantemente, mantenendomi sulla retta vita» – nel giugno del 1891: «nessuno potrà dire che mi sono risparmiato» (75). Un'affermazione che la dice lunga sulla tempra, il coraggio stoico di marca calvinista di un uomo mite e gentile, il quale fino alla morte seppe godere appieno della vita conservando intatti il candore e la modestia di ragazzo:

Tornando alla civiltà ho scoperto che la mia fama è molto aumentata. *Digito monstrari* è un'esperienza nuova; a Sydney la gente per strada si voltava a guardarmi, ed è una sensazione strana. Qui, naturalmente, per gli indigeni sono soltanto il capo bianco nella Grande Casa, e per i bianchi un alleato o un nemico. È una condizione molto più salutare. Se vivessi in un'atmosfera di adulazio-

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ne, finirei per perdere la testa. Oh, mia meravigliosa foresta, mia splendida casa luminosa e ventosa, che gioia ritrovarvi! Qui non corro il rischio di prendermi troppo sul serio. (241)

Sempre nel 1893 si chiedeva se mai avesse scritto qualcosa di buono:

In un tempo molto breve non esisterà neppure il ricordo di me, della lingua inglese, delle ossa dei miei discendenti: eppure, eppure… uno avrebbe il desiderio di lasciare un'immagine che resti per qualche anno nella mente degli uomini, così, giusto, per divertimento. (258)

Il 3 dicembre del 1894, mentre attendeva a *Wier of Hermiston*, tragico racconto del *border* scozzese e oggi ritenuto il suo incompiuto capolavoro, Stevenson, colpito da un'emorragia cerebrale, moriva a soli quarantaquattro anni. Fu una morte subitanea, come si era sempre augurato quando sperava di finire annegato, di perire per un colpo di pistola, per una caduta da cavallo o addirittura di essere impiccato, piuttosto che languire in una camera da letto. Almeno in questo il destino gli fu clemente. Belle, nel suo diario, scrisse che perse subito conoscenza mentre stava preparando la cena con Fanny nella sua casa in cui entrava l'aria profumata di gardenie e da cui, oltre la morbida linea di colline si vedeva l'oceano Pacifico. Venne sepolto, come era stato suo desiderio, sulla cima del monte Vaea, non lontano dalla propria dimora. L'anno prima aveva invitato Colvin a raggiungerlo:

Rifletti sulla mia recente proposta […] Così vedresti finalmente Vailima, cosa che mi *piacerebbe*, perché è meravigliosa, ed è così che devono essere la mia casa e la mia tomba, benché sia doloroso non essere in Scozia (non lo negherò mai)… Se solo potessi essere sepolto sulle colline, sotto l'erica, con una lapide tombale come i martiri dove piangono i chiurli e i pivieri! (278)

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