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**TRANSLATION OF THE *SICILIANITÀ*
IN THE FICTIONAL LANGUAGES OF
GIOVANNI VERGA AND ANDREA CAMILLERI**

By

Ellen McRae

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Abstract

This thesis aims to demonstrate how the translation of regional writing can provide insights into ‘other’ cultures. It suggests that when the foreignness of the text is highlighted, clarified and creatively rendered, it can serve as a valuable instrument of intercultural understanding. This premise is tested through an analysis of the translations into English of selected texts by two Sicilian writers, Giovanni Verga and Andrea Camilleri, which have a strong regional emphasis, with an abundance of ‘untranslatable’ cultural elements running through them. Verga, the founding father of literary *sicilianità*, or Sicianness, created a literary language composed of Italian vocabulary and dialectal syntax, while Camilleri has created a linguistic blend that, in an almost complete inversion, is suffused with dialect vocabulary but retains an Italian syntactic and grammatical system. My research draws on several translation theories: Lawrence Venuti’s championing of the visible translator, the links between translating and travel writing as discussed by Michael Cronin and Susan Bassnett, and the recent ‘creative turn’, as proposed by Loffredo and Perteghella, which foregrounds the creativity and subjectivity of the translator. My analysis considers the translators’ treatment of the four specific regional elements of dialect, idiom, metaphor and culturally specific items, and tests their accordance with these theories and with the translations’ effectiveness in rendering the *sicilianità* in the texts. The findings suggest that the translators who were most successful at providing their readers with insight into the source culture and language were those who had a strong paratextual presence, clearly articulated their strategies and the challenges of the text, interpreted and clarified the regionally specific elements for the reader, and retained and creatively rendered the original imagery and the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the text.

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*Un populu
mittitulu a catina
spugghiatulu
attuppatici a vucca,
è ancora libiru.*

*Livatici u travagghiu
u passaportu
a tavula unni mancia
u lettu unni dormi,
è ancora riccu.*

*Un populu,
diventa poviru e servu,
quannu ci arrobbanu a lingua
addutata di patri:
è persu pi sempri.*

*Diventu poviru e servu,
quannu i paroli non figghianu paroli
e si mancianu tra d'iddi.
Mi nn'addugnu ora,
mentri accordu a chitarra du dialettu
ca perdi na corda lu jornu.*

A nation:
chain it,
strip it,
gag it,
it is still free.

Take away its work,
its passport,
the table where it eats,
the bed where it sleeps,
it is still rich.

A nation
turns poor and servile,
when they steal its language,
handed down by its fathers:
it is lost forever.

It becomes poor and servile,
when words don't create words
and consume each other.
I notice it now,
as I am tuning the guitar of the dialect
which loses a string each day.

Ignazio Buttita, January 1970
From *Lingua e dialettu*,
(Translation by Hermann W. Haller)

The process of translating comprises in its essence the whole secret of human understanding of the world and of social communication.

Hans Georg Gadamer

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Chapter one: Introduction

As migration and global mobility increase, so too does the need for intercultural communication and understanding. A valuable tool for increasing understanding across cultural divides is regional literature, with its depictions and explorations of the peculiarities of specific regions. Regional literature can provide an insider's view of a place that would otherwise be inaccessible to those from another region and culture, and when translated into other languages, the access can also extend across linguistic barriers. However, readers' awareness and appreciation of cultural differences are lessened if the differences are flattened or erased in the translated text. The region's peculiarities need to be retained, acknowledged and, where appropriate, explained. Unfortunately, of the relatively few books that are translated from other languages into English, the majority undergo a process of acculturation or 'domestication'¹ because of the prevailing belief amongst Anglophone publishers and reviewers that readers are not interested in foreign writing. The peculiarities are not only smoothed out, but the texts are often presented to appear as if they were written originally in English. Like travel writers, translators can offer readers access to unfamiliar worlds and assist in the understanding of those worlds, but not if the alterity of the text is concealed (Cronin *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 93-94).

Despite the negative view of translations amongst the majority of Anglophone publishers, globalisation has led to an increased interest in regional stories amongst readers of literature (Griswold 1-2). It is precisely the peculiarities and differences of other cultures that readers have increasingly come to value when faced with the threat of cultural homogenisation through the media and advances in information technology. And, while readers of literature are a minority in any nation, the broader societal effects of their increased cross-cultural understanding can spread through their interactions with their families and communities. Yet, coupled with the constraints imposed by publishers are those imposed by the texts themselves.

¹ Lawrence Venuti coined the term 'domestication' to describe a translation strategy that involves "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to receiving cultural values", as opposed to a 'foreignising' translation, which involves "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text": Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008) 15.

Linguistic peculiarities and differences of regional literature are the elements that are most difficult to convey through translation. While local setting can be retained easily enough and methods can be found to explain cultural references, the way the story is told can present serious challenges to the translator (Aixelá 56). Non-standard linguistic forms such as dialect and regional language, code switching, experimentalism and hybridisation can be essential elements of regional literature. Such elements can represent the true voice of the region, offering insight into the people's history, customs, traditions and character, and into how the region differs from the rest of its nation. Yet, in order to be rendered, these forms require artistic creativity and experimentalism in the target language. The translators of such texts need creative writing skills, the time to implement those skills, and, at times, the will and strength to oppose the hegemonic attitudes of Anglophone publishers.

Through the analysis of translations into English of the works of two regional writers, Sicilians Giovanni Verga and Andrea Camilleri, this study aims to increase understanding of how the regional voice can be rendered in translation. In addition, it aims to increase recognition and appreciation of linguistic forms used to express regionalism in literature. More specifically, it seeks to contribute to the scholarly research on linguistic experimentalism in Sicilian literature.

My research draws on several translation theories: firstly, Lawrence Venuti's championing of the visible translator, secondly, the links between the translator and the travel writer as considered by scholars such as Susan Bassnett and Michael Cronin, and, finally, what Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella have dubbed the "creative turn" in translation studies (1-2).

In Chapter Two I examine these theories as well as explore the specific challenges that arise in the translation of regional literature. Venuti's theories promoting visibility of the translator and the act of translation provide the main framework for my analysis of the translations. In particular, I follow his contention that the visible translation can make a difference in intercultural relations, provided readers are aware that what they are reading is a translation and are able to recognise the linguistic and cultural differences of the text. Readers need to recognise how it differs from the target language and culture, but also how it departs from its own literary tradition.

Venuti has laid out a series of actions translators can take to work towards changing their largely invisible status. I focus on four of his recommendations in my analysis and consider to what extent the individual translators implement these practices: a) experiment with non-standard linguistic forms; b) present incisive rationales for innovative translation practices in prefaces, essays, lectures and interviews; c) are informed by theoretical considerations; and d) consider the impact of their work on readers.

The last recommendation, that translators consider the impact of their work on readers, links to the views put forth by Cronin and Bassnett regarding the connections between translation and travel writing. Both forms of writing can assist, and even shape, the reader's understanding of the alterity of a foreign culture. However, the reader will not 'travel' if the alterity is concealed. As Schleiermacher famously said, the translator needs to send the reader abroad to the author rather than make the foreign author travel to the reader. In my analysis, I consider the translators' efforts to assist the reader in 'travelling' to the locations of the source texts.

Venuti's first recommendation that translators experiment with non-standard linguistic forms relates to the approach of various translation scholars² who perceive translation as a creative and subjective process that is on a level playing field with original writing, and that the greater the formal constraints of a text, the greater the need for creativity by the translator. They point out that the hierarchy that now exists between 'original' writing and translation is a relatively recent phenomenon and that, in fact, no text can be considered original because it is impossible to avoid drawing on previous texts. Furthermore, a mutual dependence exists between author and translator, as the writing depends on the translation to live on and extend beyond its linguistic and cultural borders. For the translator, translation can teach or regenerate the craft of writing, and introduce new and interesting forms of writing to the target culture. The source texts in my analysis are composed of linguistic and literary innovations that demand creativity in the translations. Many of the translators in my

² In particular, see: Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella, eds., *Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies* (London: Continuum 2006), Jean Boase-Beier and Michael Holman, "Introduction: Writing, Rewriting and Translation Through Constraint to Creativity," *The Practices of Literary Translation: Constraints and Creativity*, eds. Jean Boase-Beier and Michael Holman (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999), and Peter Bush and Susan Bassnett, "Introduction," *Translator as Writer*, eds. Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush (London: Continuum, 2006).

study are poets and creative writers themselves. My analysis considers the creative input of the translators and gives special regard to their own status as creative writers.

Regional literature presents some specific problems for the translator. For the purposes of my analysis of the translations, I have identified four major categories of problem areas: dialect, idiom, metaphor and culturally specific items or references. In the second part of Chapter Two I provide an overview of the strategies available for addressing these problems and consider which of these accords most with the theoretical approaches of my study. Later, in my analyses of the translations in Chapters Five and Seven, I use this information to evaluate the theoretical stance of the individual translators.

Having established the theoretical foundations of my study, I move on in Chapter Three to the two Sicilian writers Giovanni Verga and Andrea Camilleri, whose texts are the subject of the translation analysis. Before examining the writers' backgrounds and their work, I seek to contextualise their innovative use of regional language through discussions of the history of the use of dialect in Italian literature and of the Sicilian literary tradition. I conclude this chapter with a comparative analysis of the two writers' responses to the debate in Italy at their respective times over language choices generally referred to as 'la questione della lingua'.

Verga (1840-1922) had a literary career that spanned fifty years, but this study focuses on the regional language he uses in the short stories and novels published between 1880 and 1889, which are all set in his native region in Sicily: *Vita dei campi* (1880), *I Malavoglia* (1881), *Novelle rusticane* (1883) and *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1889). Camilleri (1925-), a current bestselling author, published his first novel in 1978. He uses regional language in all his fiction, but because only books in his long-running Montalbano detective series have been translated into English, I focus on these. The first in the series, *La forma dell'acqua*, was published in 1994. The latest, *Il sorriso di Angelica*, published in 2010, is number seventeen.

As a means of situating their stories in their specific regions, both Verga and Camilleri created innovative literary languages that intertwine their regional dialect with the national Italian language and that contain many expressions, such as idioms

and proverbs, peculiar to those regions. Verga retains the rhythm and the syntax of his local dialect but uses very few actual dialect words, while Camilleri has created a hybridised language that is filled with dialect words.

The question of which language to use in literature has preoccupied Italian writers since the thirteenth century. Before the Risorgimento, only twenty years before the first of Verga's Sicilian stories was published, a spoken language common to all Italians seemed an impossible goal. The national language, based on the Tuscan dialect, was primarily a written variety, which had become increasingly estranged from the multiple regional variations and dialects spoken in real, everyday life. Dialect had always been a strong component of Italian literature, but until Verga introduced his blend of dialect and Italian, dialect works were marginalised from the national literature and considered minor works. It is because of Verga's literary innovations that he is viewed as the "mastro" and founding father of literary *sicilianità* (Guglielmino "Presenza e forme della narrativa siciliana" 484).

Sicilianità can be viewed as a way of describing characteristic traits or the collective consciousness of the Sicilian population, and as such, as a component or a theme of a literary text. But it can also be used in a *literary* sense to describe a text that contains certain characteristics that set it apart from the national literature—including the theme of *sicilianità* itself. Verga established some specific characteristics of the tradition that Sicilian writers have been following ever since. Of these, the only element that has been consistently retained by Sicilian writers is the trait of linguistic experimentalism (Guglielmino "Presenza e forme della narrativa siciliana" 504).

Verga's innovative linguistic expression is the praxis of the theories behind the literary school of *verismo* that he founded with his Sicilian friend and writer, Luigi Capuana. Along with a linguistic framework of Sicilian rhythm and syntax, and words chosen because they resemble a dialect one with a similar meaning, he uses imagery drawn from local surroundings, local proverbs and expressions, and the point of view of the villagers, at times collectively. His aim is to represent the speech of his lower-class characters so realistically that his own presence cannot be detected. Yet his decision not to use a dialect lexicon, apart from a few words, prevents him from realising his goal of creating speech that is true to life. As Richard Cavell so

eloquently puts it, the “immediacy” so essential to Verga’s principles is achieved only through skilful “mediacy” (141). The gap between real language and what readers are asked to accept as real language creates a tension in the text. However, the illusion of reality is so vivid that for the general reader the tension is largely overcome.

Verga chose not to use dialect because he was concerned about impeding comprehension. He also may have shared the prejudice against dialect of his contemporaries. The second author in my study, Andrea Camilleri, writing over a century later when such prejudices have largely been overcome, has rejected concerns about comprehension and taken literary *sicilianità* to new heights. In an almost complete inversion of Verga’s writing, Camilleri’s linguistic blend is suffused with dialect vocabulary but retains an Italian syntactic and grammatical system. Often the blending of Italian and dialect occurs within single words. Initially, the non-Sicilian Italian reader is confused by Camilleri’s invented language but, through context, repetition and other subtle means he has devised to assist the reader, it soon becomes an enjoyable game. Critics generally agree that his hybridised language is *the* reason for his huge fan base. It can even be argued that he is responsible for an increased appreciation for dialect, amongst both Sicilians and non-Sicilian Italians.

While the innovative linguistic expression of both Verga and Camilleri is the major reason for their literary success in the Italian context, it is also the most difficult element to render in translation. How their English-language translators have coped with the seemingly impossible task of carrying across the *sicilianità* in their writing is the subject of Chapters Five and Seven. The methodologies I use for analysing the translations of each author are necessarily quite different. Verga’s Sicilian works have been translated into English by a remarkably high number of translators over an extended period of time. Between 1890 and 2003, the works of fifteen different translators were published. On the other hand, English-language publications of Camilleri’s texts have been limited to the work of only one translator. Thus a comparative analysis is only possible with the Verga translations, although the large number of translations (twelve between 1994 and 2010) by Camilleri’s single translator, Stephen Sartarelli, enables us to explore how his strategies and solutions have developed over the years. For both authors, however, the specific issues I have identified as troublesome for translators of regional literature, namely, dialect, idiom,

metaphor and culturally specific items, form appropriate categories for analysis, and enable a comparison of treatments across all the translated texts in the concluding chapter.

Chapters Four and Five are devoted to the translation of Verga's work. In Chapter Four I first review the comments made by critics and by Verga himself regarding the difficulties presented by the texts, and then provide an overview of the rise and fall of the long-standing interest in Verga's works amongst English-language readers. Then, in a chronological journey through the complete roster of translators into English of Verga's Sicilian stories, I explore the various stages of interest in more detail. Over the last 130 years, the publication of translations into English of Verga's works has been remarkably constant. Gaps between publications of either new translations or reprints of earlier works are mostly of only two or three years' duration. However, three stages of more pronounced interest can be identified through the higher number of new translations and reviews or scholarly articles published in those time periods, and I consider the reasons for this.

My investigation of the full roster of translators focuses on what can be learned about them from the material surrounding their texts. Such material includes what has been written *about* them and what has been written *by* them, including other translations or original writing, prefaces to their translations, essays or interviews. Two of the translators, in particular, stand out in terms of their visibility, creativity and their awareness of their readers. The first, D. H. Lawrence, is the epitome of the visible and creative translator. The usual hierarchy of author and translator is turned on its head in his case. Rather than an invisible translator, in the marketing and reviews of his translations, Lawrence's name often eclipses the author's, and the creative writing skills he displays are a major focus of the critical discussion. The other, Giovanni Cecchetti, is of particular interest because he is one of the foremost Verga scholars and also has a well-developed theory of translation, which he has expressed extensively in essays and prefaces. Furthermore, he is a poet and creative writer himself. He is also an interesting figure because of the contradictory pronouncements he makes about creativity in translation and about Lawrence's translation strategies, which I explore in this chapter. I also delve into the lively critical debate stirred up by the translations of Lawrence and Cecchetti, and of another translator, G. H.

McWilliam, about their relative merits. The other twelve translators, some more interesting than others, are Alma Strettell, Nathan Haskell Dole, Frederic Taber Cooper, Archibald Colquhoun, Alfred Alexander, Harry Maddox, Stanley Appelbaum, J. G. Nichols, and the four translators of *I Malavoglia*, whose translations I will analyse in depth in Chapter Five.

While a detailed analysis of the work of all fifteen translators would yield a more comprehensive and productive result, it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study. Instead, in Chapter Five, I have limited the detailed comparative analysis to a manageable corpus of one chapter of four translations of Verga's novel *I Malavoglia*, a text that is particularly rich in traits of *sicilianità*.

My approach to the analysis of the four translations of *I Malavoglia* is to identify the specific challenges of the source text according to their classification within the four main categories of dialect, idiom, metaphor and culturally specific items, which are further broken down into ten subcategories. Through the examination and comparison of the responses of the four translators to these challenges, a picture emerges of which elements of *sicilianità* can be retained or recreated, and which elements are reduced or lost, but may be explained extratextually. I then proceed to consider the work of each translator individually in terms of the extent to which it accords with the theories of this study, taking into account their different historical positions. The first two translators, Mary A. Craig and Eric Mosbacher, whose translations were published in 1890 and 1950 respectively, had to deal with censorship issues, while the other two translators, Raymond Rosenthal and Judith Landry, whose versions were published in 1964 and 1985, benefited from resources that were not available to the first translators, including earlier translations, critical studies of Verga and his linguistic expression, and annotated source texts. However, Rosenthal and Landry prove to be at opposite ends of the scale in terms of rendering the *sicilianità*, while the theoretical stances of Craig and Mosbacher are not so clear-cut.

Chapters Six and Seven focus on the translation into English by Stephen Sartarelli of Camilleri's Montalbano series, but I begin in Chapter Six with a review of what translators into other languages have had to say about the challenges presented by Camilleri's hybridised language and how they have coped with them. While their

comments demonstrate the complexity involved and the interest the translation of Camilleri's texts provokes no matter what the target language, they also show that some languages have better resources to draw on than others in terms of, for example, registers and dialects.

Sartarelli is a very visible translator with respect to his self-presentations. He has written and spoken publicly in various forums about his role as the translator of the Montalbano series. He has been very open about his aims, strategies and the constraints imposed by his publishers and the American public, who he claims suffer from a resistance to the 'other' ("L'alterità linguistica di Camilleri in inglese" 214). He also discusses how the success of the series has increased his courage and his freedom to experiment linguistically. Before analysing his translations, I first test the reception of the alterity of the texts amongst British and American reviewers. I also consider the degree to which the translator's role is acknowledged in the reviews and whether the functions fulfilled by Camilleri's language in the original are also fulfilled in the translations.

As with the translations of Verga's texts, in my analysis of Sartarelli's translations in Chapter Seven I utilise a framework of four categories of specific issues that arise in the translation of regional literature: dialect, idiom, metaphor and cultural references. I consider an additional category that is particularly important in Camilleri's books: the 'otherness' of Sicilians with respect to the rest of Italy. My analysis provides evidence, through specific examples, that Sartarelli's positive response to Venuti's call to action is not limited to his self-presentations.

In the final chapter of my study I summarise my findings and offer some suggestions for further research into the translation of regional literature.

Chapter two: Theoretical Considerations

Before investigating the creativity and regional emphasis of the texts as they are manifested and received within the authors' own linguistic, literary and cultural contexts, I first examine the theories I use in my analysis of the translations: the (in)visibility of the translator in the modern publishing world, the translator as travel writer, and the translator as creative writer. I also explore the special issues involved in translating regional literature and consider how the theories discussed might relate to a translator's strategic choices.

2.1 The Visible Translator

Lawrence Venuti's role as one of the primary advocates of the visible translator—one whose intervention in the text is apparent to the reader—has brought him both acclaim and criticism. He has been charged with elitism, binary restriction, repackaging the same old terms with new ones, contradiction and hypocrisy—particularly with respect to the term “fluency”.³ As Dirk Delabastista says, the reception history of Venuti's book *The Translator's Invisibility* “would make a fascinating case study in intellectual history and, if it hasn't been done already, we can be sure that someone somewhere will soon write a dissertation about it” (“Histories and Utopias: On Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility*” 126). Much of the criticism centres on Venuti's aim to see translators implement a strategy of “abusive fidelity” or “foreignisation”, rather than the dominant submissive practice of “fluency” or “domestication”.

Submission assumes an ethics of domestication at work in the translation process, locating the same in a cultural other, pursuing a cultural narcissism that is imperialistic abroad and conservative, even reactionary, in maintaining cultural hierarchies in the receiving situation. Resistance assumes an ethics of foreignisation, locating the alien in a cultural other, pursuing cultural diversity, signalling linguistic and cultural differences and unsettling the hierarchies in

³ See, for example: Anthony Pym, “Venuti's Visibility,” *Target* 8.1 (1996), Anthony Pym, *Venuti's Scandals*, 1999, Available: <http://www.tinet.cat/~apym/on-line/reviews/venutireview.html>, 9 June 2010, Edwin Gentzler, “Translation, Postcolonial Studies, and the Americas,” *EnterText* 2.2 (2003), Douglas Robinson, *What is Translation?: Centrifugal Theories, Critical Interventions* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997) 97-112 and Michael Cronin, *Translating Ireland: Translation, Languages, Cultures* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996) 177-78.

the translating language. (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 266)

Traditionally, the terms 'faithfulness' or 'fidelity' in translation have been used as a kind of measuring tool of translation quality that describes the degree to which a translated text resembles the source text (Shuttleworth and Cowie 57). However, the criteria of resemblance have always been somewhat vague and emotive. Is the resemblance to the source text's meaning, or perhaps to its 'spirit', or to some kind of essential core? According to Venuti's theories, however, faithfulness and similar canons of accuracy are subject to variation depending on the historical and cultural circumstances in which a translation is read. Venuti contends that there is no essential core to which the translator can be faithful, and attempts to do so have resulted in distortions, with foreign ways of thinking and writing altered to conform to those of the target culture. Rather than trying to be faithful to an essential core, Venuti recommends practising 'abusive fidelity', a term he borrows from Philip E. Lewis.⁴ The translator should acknowledge the violence of translation and attempt to imitate in the target language whatever features of the source text resist dominant cultural values.⁵ Faithfulness should be to those aspects of the text that signal linguistic and cultural difference.

My main interest in Venuti's theories lies in his message that readers should be aware that what they are reading is a translation, and that they should recognise the linguistic and cultural differences of the text—not only as they differ from the target language and culture, but also as they differ within their own literary tradition. This should not, however, be at the expense of an interesting or pleasurable reading experience and I do not believe Venuti wants that, either. As he says, "Fluency need not be abandoned, but rather reinvented so as to create new kinds of readability that provide more sophisticated pleasures" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 273).

⁴ See Philip E. Lewis, "The Measure of Translation Effects," *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

⁵ It is important to note that, while foreignising strategies may be appropriate in dominant cultures, the same cannot be said for cultures that are already inundated with foreign culture and are trying to strengthen their own language and culture: Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007) 211.

The “visible” translation can “make a difference, not only at home, in the emergence of new cultural forms, but also abroad, in the emergence of new cultural relations” (*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 277). The “invisible” translation, however, marginalises the translator’s role, mystifies the translation process, and blots out the alien nature of the foreign text and the differences between the source and target cultures. Venuti points out that translators always have a choice regarding the degree and direction of the “violence” they practise. He cites German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, who stated in an 1813 lecture that there are only two “methods” of translation: “Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him”—the foreignising approach—“or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him”—the domesticating approach (Venuti *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 15).

Venuti believes that the tendency for translators to be invisible is partly their own fault. They tend to be self-effacing because they are following the prevailing belief held by Anglophone publishers, critics and readers that the best translation is one that reads fluently—as if it had originally been written in the target language. In order to achieve easy readability, they implement a fluent strategy of following current usage, maintaining continuous syntax and fixing a precise meaning (*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 1). However, a “fluent” translation, while it “masquerades as a true semantic equivalence”, is actually being interpreted through Anglophone values and reducing or even excluding the differences it is meant to convey (*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 16). Venuti contends that translator invisibility is also a result of the “individualistic conception of authorship” prevailing in British and American cultures, in which a text is viewed as an “original and transparent self-representation” with no complicating intervention of linguistic, cultural or social factors (*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 6-7). The implication of such a conception is that a translation is second-order, derivative—a false copy even. This idea is so pervasive amongst publishers, reviewers and readers that translators themselves tend to devalue their work and hide their presence. Venuti advocates a change in the way translators write translations and readers read translations so that they recognise the linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts. Instead of the homogeneity that characterises translations today, they

need to be studied and practised as a locus of difference (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 34).

Much of this aim for an illusion of transparency is due to what Camilleri's English-language translator, Stephen Sartarelli, has identified as a "resistance to the other"⁶ by North American and British publishers and readers. Although it is difficult to find reliable figures on what has been translated into and out of English—an indication, and a symptom, in itself of the poor status of translation in the English-language publishing world—there is no question that the current proportion of translations into English versus those out of English is extremely unbalanced. According to a 1999 study of translation by the National Endowment for the Arts, which gathered its figures from reviews published in all of the country's literary magazines, only 2% of all fiction and poetry published in the United States were translations, and this includes new translations of classic works (Allen 27). The current figure for books published in the United Kingdom that are literary translations translated from other languages is also 2%, according to English PEN. A comparison of the number of translated works published in the United States with those published in Italy gives an idea of the imbalance. In 2004, there were 4,982 translations available for sale in the United States (with a population of about 300 million), while there were 12,197 translations reported by Italy in 2002 (with a population of about 58 million) (Allen 24).

When publishers do translate foreign works, they often try to downplay their foreignness. Much of the translator's visibility depends on paratextual elements,⁷ such as the book cover, introductory matter and the exegetic devices of footnotes or endnotes. Does the translator's name appear on the cover? If so, how prominently? Is there a translator's introduction? If so, what information does it contain?

⁶ Sartarelli's comments regarding the constraints imposed on his translations of Camilleri's fiction by this resistance are discussed in Section 6.3.

⁷ The term "paratext" was first coined by Gérard Genette in Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982) and is the subject of his later book Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1987), translated into English as Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 'Paratext' is defined as the elements that surround a text, within and outside the book, that mediate between the book and its reader. Paratextual elements within the book he calls the 'peritext'. These include, for example, the title, the preface, annotations, dedications and epilogues. Paratextual elements outside the book are all the messages such as interviews and correspondence relating to the book. These are called the 'epitext'.

In 2003 Canadian publisher House of Anansi Press decided to stop carrying the translator's name on the cover of books that originate in French (Conlogue). According to editor Martha Sharpe: "It's an acknowledgement that it's hard to get a readership to embrace a book that's translated. The more we talked to reader and booksellers the more we realized that [translation] is a strike against the book in the marketplace" (qtd. in Conlogue). Canadian publishers have been printing translators' names on the cover since the 1970s when translators became militant on the issue, but there is no legal obligation to do so. Sharpe further explained that by removing the translator's name the readers will be more likely to glance at a book before finding out that it was not originally written in English. Otherwise they might dismiss the translated book, just as many moviegoers refuse to attend a subtitled film. The British publisher Faber also decided to remove the translator's name from their book covers, as did the publisher Orion with Carlos Ruiz Zafón's bestseller, *The Shadow of the Wind* (Ariaratnam). Faber's editorial director for fiction, Lee Brackstone, oddly enough claims that this marketing strategy would help to move away from "the sense of worthiness and staidness" that once characterised this market sector, despite the fact that it hides its foreignness (qtd. in Ariaratnam). Fiction buyer for the UK bookstore chain Waterstone's Rodney Troubridge believes that publishers do not want to acknowledge that books are translated. "They want people to assume that everything's written in English" (qtd. in Ariaratnam). Gary Pulsifer, publisher of Arcadia, agrees that there is an underlying discomfort with the book trade's current approach to foreign writing. He maintains that "[w]hilst there's more visibility nowadays, there's still a good deal of resistance [to works in translation]" (qtd. in Ariaratnam). Literary agent Toby Eady believes corporate publishers tend towards "repetition and safety", which makes it difficult for them to get enthusiastic about translations (qtd. in Ariaratnam).

However, as translator Edith Grossman points out (28-29), the insistence by publishers that English-language readers are put off by translations may not be the divine truth it is purported to be. Readership may well be limited because the market-driven publishing industry provides their readers with so few translations, rather than the limited readership being the reason so few are published.

Nevertheless, a recent article entitled “Transloosely Literated” in *The New York Times* “Sunday Book Review” (Alford) gives an indication of the degree to which American book reviewers support the publishing industry’s view that translation should be invisible. The article lists fifteen examples of translations that have not gone ‘smoothly’. The supreme award is given to the Chinese edition of *The Know-It-All* by A. J. Jacob, for the simple reason that the photograph and biography on the back cover are of the translator, Tianfan Jiang. This “tribute” to the translator means it “may be the ultimate bad translation” according to the article’s author, Henry Alford. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the attitudes towards translations of non-Anglophone publishers generally, but a brief look at other English-language texts translated into Chinese reveals that such paratextual foregrounding of the translator is not uncommon. For example, the photograph and biography of the Taiwanese translator of Stevan Eldred-Grigg’s *New Zealand: A Literary History* appear on the front cover flyleaf, and *Literary Theory: An Introduction* by Terry Eagleton lists the translator’s name above that of the original author on the front cover. Suggesting a more equal partnership, a photograph of author and translator standing together in front of a pub appears in the front matter. Far more extraordinary than the visibility of the translator of these texts, as such paratextual foregrounding should be common practice, is the American reviewer’s derision of it. Clearly, Anglophone culture places a different value on translators than other cultures do.

In a call to action (*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 265-77), Venuti specifies ways in which translators can work towards changing the invisibility of translations. Among his recommendations, I consider four in particular in my analysis of the translations into English of Verga and Camilleri:⁸

1. Translators should experiment with non-standard linguistic forms. Venuti stresses that fluency need not be abandoned—translators should stop short of parody or the incomprehensible—but rather reinvented so as to create new kinds of readability. By using a wide range of registers and dialects, styles and discourses from past and current literature states, they will expand their own repertoire as writers.

⁸ Venuti’s other recommendations concern contracts with publishers and the way in which translations are read, reviewed and taught.

2. Translators should present incisive rationales for innovative translation practices in prefaces, essays, lectures and interviews. This will allow them to show that the translation originates with the translator in a decisive way, but also that the translator is not its sole origin and that both the original text and the translated texts are derived from a cultural tradition at a specific historical moment.
3. Translators should be informed by theoretical concepts, so that they can develop discursive strategies for translating a particular text. In this way, they will be able to formulate problems precisely and make choices that take into account both the source and the target cultures and texts. A carefully developed theory of translation will also enable them to discuss their choices with intellectual rigour and practical effectiveness when interacting with members of the institutions that circulate the translations.
4. They should not overlook the impact of their work on readers, who come to the translations mainly because they cannot read the foreign texts.

While Venuti's main emphasis is on the use of visibility strategies within the text, in my opinion, textual visibility usually requires paratextual visibility in order to be effective in terms of highlighting or foregrounding the linguistic and cultural peculiarities and differences of the source text and culture. Unless the foreignising techniques in the text are pointed out and explained in a preface or through annotation, or the reader is the translator's 'ideal reader' and has carried out the same research that the translator did in preparing the translation, the reader may not notice the innovative practices or understand the reason for them. Paratextual visibility presents the translations as translations and invites the reader to read them as such and to think about the cultural and linguistic differences. Translators cannot anticipate or control their readers' responses, but they can work towards persuading their readers to be willing to learn something new.

2.2 The Translator as Travel Writer

The last suggestion regarding the impact of translations on readers leads to an important point. Like travel literature, translations, through a kind of vicarious

experience, can offer readers access to a particular construct of a culture by rendering the unknown and unfamiliar in known and familiar terms. Both travel writers and translators are writing their texts for a readership that presumably do not have the same access as they do to the culture being described (Bassnett and Lefevere *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* 33). Thus, for a long time they have played the role of cultural intermediaries (Polezzi “Mobility” 173), and this role will continue to be important in the future.

Translators as intercultural mediators have for centuries experienced the creative tension between travel, language and translation in the elaboration of culture and identity. Translators both contribute to and will be affected by present and future forms of nomadism as they impact on human cultures and languages. Their assistance, therefore, in understanding what happens when we cross the lines of language and culture on a multilingual planet is and will be invaluable. (Cronin *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 6)

However, various scholars have shown concern about the degree of manipulation involved in both processes, stressing that the assistance of translators and travel writers cannot be considered either innocent or transparent, and that it should be viewed critically. Both kinds of writers create works that are influenced by the norms and expectations of the target culture, and in fact belong to its system, both as texts and as processes (Polezzi *Translating Travel: Contemporary Travel Writing in English Translation* 82). These texts can shape and condition their readers’ attitudes to other cultures, while professing to be something else (Bassnett *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* 99). Bassnett points out that contemporary readings of travel accounts, informed by post-colonial scholarship, gender studies, cultural studies and post-modernist theory, have exposed subtexts that allow us to clearly see how the writers have constructed other cultures (Bassnett and Lefevere *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* 33). Cultural stereotypes present in the accounts and the writers’ reactions to what they experience can produce and reinforce those stereotypes in the target culture, along with prejudices and other negative perceptions of other cultures. In the same vein, the ‘cultural turn’ in

translation studies⁹ has led to a focus on the issues of power in society and the role translations play in cultural and identity formation (Gentzler *Contemporary Translation Theories* 193-94).

Because of the manipulative properties travel writing shares with translation, Agorni (91), Polezzi (*Translating Travel: Contemporary Travel Writing in English Translation* 108) and Bassnett (“Travelling and Translating” 73) have all argued that it would be appropriate, and productive, to include travel writing in André Lefevere’s wide category of “rewriting”, which includes translation as “the most obviously recognizable form”, along with “historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing” (*Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* 9). Lefevere maintains that such forms of rewriting “manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time” (*Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* 8). Furthermore, the representations of the source culture in translation and travel writing do not only affect the target culture and the perceptions and attitudes of the target text readers; negative or stereotypical images can also be eventually reabsorbed within the source culture itself (Polezzi *Translating Travel: Contemporary Travel Writing in English Translation* 100; *Mobility*” 174).

Yet, despite the manipulations and changes that occur at every level in the ‘rewriting’ of the journey and the text, both travel writers and translators give the impression that their texts are based on an authentic source. For the travel writer, the source is the journey and for the translator it is the original text. The assumption is that the writer is ‘faithfully’ reproducing the source. The reader needs to make a leap of faith and trust the writer; otherwise the translation would cease to be a translation and the travel account would become fiction. Writer and reader both depend on “collusion” to create and maintain the illusion of authenticity (Bassnett “Travelling and Translating” 66).

⁹ The ‘cultural turn’ in translation studies is a term coined by Mary Snell-Hornby and taken up by Bassnett and Lefevere in their 1990 collection of essays to describe the major shift in emphasis from formalism to broader issues of context, history and convention. They argued that translations should always be considered in relation to the cultural environment of both the source text and the target text. (Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Translation, History, and Culture* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990))

The reader must therefore engage in “a willing suspension of disbelief” (Cronin *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 108).¹⁰

However, the crucial role that translators and travel writers play in constructing cultures does not always need to be viewed in a negative light. Their focus might be on the positive aspects of a foreign culture, which can help to establish an ongoing dialogue between the source and target cultures, or introduce new and interesting practices to the target culture (Polezzi “Mobility” 174). Taking further Lefevere’s idea of rewriting as a phenomenon that “functions as reality” (*Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* 8) within the target culture, Agorni (91-92) suggests that travel writing and translations be viewed as partially autonomous texts that can actualise potentially new meanings that enrich the target culture, and also project back onto their source contexts, but without the negative stereotyping.

Additionally, the challenges that travel writing and translation share can result in positive outcomes. Both types of writers set themselves the difficult task of finding ways to reproduce an alterity, which may have little in common with what is familiar to the readers, and to do so using domestic materials and techniques (Agorni 94). The language must be familiar, yet at the same time capture the foreignness of the experience or of the source text. Furthermore, as Cronin points out (*Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 39), just like the largely invisible status of the translator and the processes involved in translation, evidence of the hard labour that goes into travel writing—the exhausting work of travelling through a foreign country in a foreign language—is also largely invisible. Yet the testing of the mind and vocabulary of the travel writer and the translator—as they search for the right word or expression to transmit a particular nuance or metaphor of the source language, or to convey the fullness of the experience—forces them to go beyond the limits of their normal expression (*Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 93), thus improving their writing skills.

¹⁰ On the other hand, Loredana Polezzi warns us not to deny the ‘common reader’ the ability to perform a critical reading of a translation, such as those operated by Bassnett and Venuti, that resists and does not collude with the writer (Loredana Polezzi, *Translating Travel: Contemporary Travel Writing in English Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) 86).

Like the translator, the travel writer can also choose between a domesticating strategy of maximum fluency and apparent transparency or a foreignising strategy that highlights the complexities involved in the communicative processes they describe in their accounts (Polezzi *Translating Travel: Contemporary Travel Writing in English Translation* 83). Cronin stresses that “the difficulty but also the promise of translation and travel is unexpectedness” (*Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 93). This holds true for both the translator/travel writer and for the reader. If a travel account is not unexpected or if a translation conceals the alterity of foreign texts and cultures, readers will not move away from the aesthetic assumptions of their own language and culture. They will not ‘travel’. The translations need to send the reader abroad to the author rather than make the foreign author travel abroad to the reader (Venuti *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 15). The translator’s task, and the travel writer’s, is to show readers unknown elements of other cultures—to provide readers with “a fresh reckoning of the world” (Claudio Magris qtd. in Cronin *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 94) that convinces them that the world is much richer and more interesting than they had thought. And this may also lead to discovery of unexplored territories within themselves.

2.3 The ‘Creative Turn’

In recent years, an interest in the creative processes involved in the act of literary translation, following on from Venuti’s advocacy of the ‘visible’ translator has led to talk of a ‘creative turn’ in the field of Translation Studies, with a shift towards subjectivity and the translator’s creative input in the process of ‘writing’ a translation (Loffredo and Perteghella 1-2). Instead of viewing translation as a secondary or derivative activity that reproduces an original creation, scholars in this area are promoting a fresh perspective of translators on a level field with writers, pointing out that, in literary texts, there are no origins and no closure—no fixed textual boundaries. Translation as a form of writing is already inherent in the source text because any text cannot avoid assimilating, borrowing and reworking pre-existing texts. In the words of Octavio Paz, “No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation—first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase” (154). Furthermore, a mutual dependence exists between the writer and translator, as

the writing depends on the translation to live on and to extend beyond its linguistic and cultural borders.

The conventional attitude is that the task of the translator is to transmit and preserve form and meaning at the same time. “It is precisely the disclosure of this impossible task,” Loffredo and Perteghella declare, “which provides the argument against the subordinate position of translation” (3). In fact, the greater the formal constraints, the more the translator is forced into creativity (Boase-Beier and Holman 7). Translator John Rutherford agrees that constraints stimulate rather than hamper artistic creativity (81). (I must point out, however, that the same cannot be said for external constraints such as the tendency of English-language publishers to favour translations that conform to the literary norms of their culture.) He even goes so far as to believe that translators can improve on the original because the target language is bound to offer expressive possibilities not available in the source language and because translators can concentrate all their imaginative and creative powers on the language, while the original writer has to use those powers for both the language and the creation of the fictional world (79).

Poetry, in particular, is often translated by poets. Translation and writing can complement each other: translation can be a means of learning the craft of writing, and for established writers it can be a regenerative force and a way of carrying on writing between their own original projects.

In a discussion on the teaching of literary translation, Newmark stresses the importance of creative writing and the study of poetry translations in translator training:

I believe the main feature of translators is that they are writers; they can write plainly, economically, gracefully, elegantly in a repertoire of registers, factual as well as emotional, popular as well as technical, official as well as slang. They respect language. [...] Given that literature is the broad base and storehouse of all varieties of language, the concrete manifestation of the imagination, and given that poetry—its most concentrated form is the only genre that makes use of all its resources and is technically the most difficult,

spare and demanding form of composition, [sic] the link between poetry and translation is deep and indissoluble. Only a poet can translate a poem, but the result is an object lesson for any translator. (Newmark *About Translation* 144)

As Bush and Bassnett (1) point out, the translator's role of rewriting a text written by someone else for an entirely new audience is not unlike the role of actors, directors and conductors in other media, in that they bring the text alive for a different public. Yet those decisive players are marketed and celebrated as such, while translators' roles tend to be concealed. Reviewers of translated texts generally avoid talking about the translators. They discuss the style and language of the texts as if they were discussing the language of the original writer, discounting completely the translators' work. "Do they think translations consist of a magical kind of tracing paper placed over the original text?" asks Grossman. "Are they really convinced that the contribution of the translator is a merely rote mechanical exercise on that miraculous tracing paper, like the wondrous interlinear translations of second-year language students?" (31) However, evidence that some reviewers' perceptions are evolving can be found in some recent reviews. For example, in the *Guardian Weekly* Jacqueline Rose describes the English-language version of Israeli novel *To the End of the Land* by David Grossman as "beautifully rendered in Jessica Cohen's translation" (Rose) and Boyd Tonkin comments in the *Independent Arts and Books Review* that the Turkish novel *Snow* by Orhan Pamuk "is further blessed by Maureen Freely's pacy, vigorous translation" (qtd. in Pattison 93-94).

Links between creative writing and literary translation have long been recognised. Since ancient times, authors have combined their original writing activities with translation, and until two hundred or so years ago, the hierarchical distinction between the two activities did not exist (Bassnett "Writing and Translating" 173). The Romans viewed translation as an exercise in improving verbal arts and believed that translating good writing would improve one's personal style (Lefevere "Translation: Art, Craft or Science?" 1409). This view of translation was put into practice in the Middle Ages and reinforced during the Renaissance, but the Romantic period brought a dramatic shift in attitude.

In the Medieval era, when a previously unparalleled number of translations from Latin and other European vernaculars into English were produced, translation was considered an important activity and writers frequently made translation an original part of their work (Ellis 96). A notable example is Geoffrey Chaucer, who throughout his writing career, worked on substantial translation projects concurrently with his other works, which themselves involved forms of translation. Furthermore, he gave a prominent place to his translation activity when he recollected his own publications (Windeatt 138). And an examination of the paratextual material provided by the translator William Caxton—better known as the first English printer and the first print editor of Chaucer and John Lydgate—reveals a stark contrast with the resistance to translation shown by British publishers today (Coldiron 162-68). His usual practice was to openly declare that the work was a translation and to provide the language of the original, its title and author, and sometimes the dates and circumstances of its commissioning or context of its composition. The high visibility of the translation served to enhance its saleability and status among English readers because its foreign context at that time was actually a known and desirable commodity. It also made explicit the genealogy of textual responsibility, placing the translator alongside the original author in the literary lineage.

During the Reformation and Renaissance periods, in general, the purpose of translation was to further eloquence and learning (Ellis and Oakley-Brown 350). Original English writing clearly reflected the influence of foreign literary forms such as the Italian sonnet (in Shakespeare's work, for example), the pastoral (Edmund Spenser), classical epics (Christopher Marlowe) and Greek and Roman drama (Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was the norm for translators to move between translation and original composition. Translator-poets, such as John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Christopher Smart and William Cowper, were often glorified as "Herculean cleansers or bringers of light out of darkness" and translators claimed "an affinity, spiritual kinship, or even equality with their originals" (P. Wilson 96). The extensive translation work of these major poets and other writers such as Henry Fielding, Oliver Goldsmith, Tobias Smollett and Samuel Johnson blurred the distinction that later come to exist between original writing and translation. Indeed,

the relationship between prose fiction and translation in the eighteenth century was extremely blurry and entangled—so much so that scholars of that period’s literature have a limited ability to discern and identify translations (McMurran 3-7). Fictional works were sometimes translated from an original, but then accidentally retranslated back into the original because the translator was unaware that it was already a translation. Such situations occurred particularly when French texts were involved because, as the most respected literary vernacular in Europe, French was commonly used as an intermediary language for translators (Weissbort and Eysteinson 195). It was also common for translators to alter text or add original work to it. Furthermore, ‘original’ works were often scattered with translation. McMurran contends that “examples of indirect pathways from source to target and translators’ refusals to disengage original writing from translating are sometimes cited as curiosities, but they are too numerous to be anomalies” (5).

The distinction between original writing and translation first came into existence during the Romantic period, bringing a shift in attitude that is still widespread today. The dominant view was that the translator’s work was inferior, as expressed by novelist—and translator—George Eliot: “a good translator is infinitely below the man who produces *good* original works” (1015), and that it should not be visible or creative, as expressed in this anonymous review:

Mr. Mangan’s mind is precisely of that plastic character which is indispensable for spirited and truthful translations. He possesses, in a high degree, the art of thoroughly divesting himself, in his capacity of translator, of every individuality of thought and of manner, and becoming, so to speak, the mere instrument of the author whom he translates. The moment he takes up his pen, he forgets himself altogether... (313)

Translator Edith Grossman wonders if today’s resistance and suspicion of publishers and reviewers stems, at least in part, from the Romantic period when “an unprecedented glorification of individualism and individual creativity held sway [...], an emphatic celebration of a narrowly interpreted uniqueness and originality that is still extremely prominent in our thinking today” (49). In the same vein, André Lefevre claims that the Romantic view that writing was “divine inspiration, which

would inspire the elect only, and by no means anyone,” led to a severe downgrading of translation—“since it was so derivative, anyone could do it”—which “still defines the layman’s conception of translation in our day” (“Translation: Art, Craft or Science?” 1409). Translator Serge Gavronsky blames a reign of authenticity stemming from the same period:

Readers always want—it’s a Romantic preoccupation, never existed before the nineteenth century—authenticity. They somehow believe that if someone signs a text, that text was secreted by that body. Cocteau has a lovely image: he says, “I shit my books.” In a wonderful way, that’s what readers want. They want to smell the feces of authenticity. So when a translator comes on, he appears to be an intercessor...because he didn’t write it. (qtd. in Wechsler 83)

Along with the Romantic conception as a reason for the writer/translator distinction, Bassnett includes the invention of printing and the accompanying complexities of copyright laws. In addition, she believes the steady increase in the numbers of people being educated and the use of translation as a pedagogic tool played a role in creating the idea of translation as less creative and less important than other forms of writing (“Writing and Translating” 173).

Of the fifteen different translators of Verga’s Sicilian works, several are also writers or poets themselves, including the illustrious D. H. Lawrence, whose ‘flawed’ but creative translations have inspired much critical debate and suggestions that they influenced his own writing. Stephen Sartarelli, the translator of Camilleri’s fiction, is also an accomplished poet. My analysis of the various responses of these translators to the challenges of Verga’s and Camilleri’s linguistic and literary innovations gives special regard to their creative input and their own status as creative writers.

2.4 The Translation of Regional Literature

Just as globalisation and heterogeneity in language have led to an increased interest in the local dialects within Italy,¹¹ globalisation and cultural homogenisation have led to

¹¹ See section 3.1.1.

a greater interest in local culture amongst “the reading class”¹² worldwide, claims sociology and comparative literature scholar Wendy Griswold (1-2). Cultural regionalism and regional literature are flourishing, not in spite of, but because of globalisation and information technology. According to Australian regional writer Tim Winton, it is precisely the regional flavours and particularities that we will value in literature as the world grows more homogeneous (Matthews 40). American literary scholar Charles L. Crow agrees, maintaining that “[i]n an age of corporate-produced mass culture, of identical shopping malls and fast-food restaurants, regionalism has staged a defiant comeback” (1). Similarly, Franco Manai suggests that the trend towards escalating globalisation has induced a flourishing of regional literature in Italy (1). Such interest reinforces the need for translators of regional literature, in particular, to be visible and creative, and for them to not seek to conceal the alterity of the source language and culture, but rather to raise awareness of it.

It is difficult to define regional writing generally as a genre, as its nature requires it to be considered in relation to its own individual cultural moment and location. For instance, both Britain and the United States have strong regional literature traditions, yet they are treated as distinct areas of research by scholars because of their discrete origins, development and traits.¹³ And in Italy, regional literature has always been closely intertwined with the questions surrounding language choice and, more specifically, with dialect literature,¹⁴ and, especially more recently, with regional versus national identity issues.¹⁵ Furthermore, contemporary regionalism has changed significantly since regional literature first emerged as a genre.¹⁶

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, I define regional literature as fiction in which the setting is “emphatically distinctive, manifestly central to the novel’s

¹² Griswold argues that a reading class has emerged from the general public, composed of habitual readers of print with a distinct demographic profile. While modest in size, the reading class has intense literary practices and cultural influences. She maintains that these readers are an elite group with a disproportionate amount of political, economic and cultural power.

¹³ See, for example: Paul E. Schellinger, Christopher Hudson and Marijke Rijsberman, *Encyclopedia of the Novel* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998) 1081-87.

¹⁴ See Section 3.1.1.

¹⁵ See, for example: Alfredo SgROI, “Regional Literature,” *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, ed. Gaetana Marrone, vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2007) and Franco Manai, “Italian Regional Literature: Language and Identity in Giulio Angioni,” *New Zealand and the EU: Perspectives on European Literature* 2.3 (2009).

¹⁶ See, for example: Stephanie Foote, “The Cultural Work of American Regionalism,” *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, ed. Charles L. Crow (Malden, MA: Blackwell 2003).

purpose, and determinative of its formal construction, rather than just informative or an aspect of its formal realism” (Kelly 1081). Regionalism in literature does not just concern surface detail, but explores in depth how particular regions have influenced the shaping of individual lives (Ricou), and it helps readers to understand the lives, ways of thinking and culture of the inhabitants of those regions.¹⁷

By its very nature and definition, regional literature should not be transposed to the target culture. It needs to remain in its original setting and to retain its cultural references. Doing so is not such a difficult task. After all, as Gutt points out (49), any literature can have context problems, whether translated or not, if set in a different time or place from the reader’s. The translator’s task is to show the readers unknown elements of the source culture and to act as the intercultural mediator. Various methods of exegesis are available. One of the most difficult problems the translator faces is judging the presuppositional knowledge of the target reader (P. Fawcett 120) and deciding what and what not to explain.¹⁸ Readers do need the materials to participate in the communicative process (Leppihalme *Culture Bumps: An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions* ix), and the translator should find it helpful to bear in mind that the reader approaches the text knowing it is a translation and is therefore willing to cooperate with the text and with the norms and expectations of the culture within which it exists and is accepted as a literary text (Malmkjaer 25). “The reader who reads a translation is engaged in a willing suspension of disbelief” (Cronin *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 108). In my opinion, it follows that when a text is openly presented as a translation, readers will be even more cooperative

¹⁷ More specifically, the most important literary expressions of the regional aesthetic that Griswold lists amongst those that are common to regionalist writing from anywhere in the world are helpful in describing regional writing. These characteristics can all be found in Verga’s and Camilleri’s texts: (1) rural or small town settings; (2) working class or rustic characters, depicted as tough, unyielding, traditional; (3) closely observed descriptions of land, weather, flora, fauna, folkways; (4) plots driven by conflict between insiders and outsiders; outsiders (often urban) are agents of change who threaten local way of life; (5) reference to the past, to simpler ways now disappearing; (6) tension over insider/outsider differences in reading, writing, education, intellectual sophistication. (Wendy Griswold, *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) 21).

¹⁸ A. K. Ramanujan dealt with this problem in an intriguing way when he translated the novel *Samskara* by Anantha Murthy. As a part of his endeavour to “translate a non-native reader into a native one” and in line with his call for “poetry [to] win without allowing scholarship to lose”, he used two sets of notes aimed at two different readerships: qtd. in Lakshmi Holmstrom, “Let Poetry Win: The Translator as Writer—An Indian Perspective,” *The Translator as Writer*, eds. Peter Bush and Susan Bassnett (London: Continuum, 2006) 32; 38.

and willing to perceive the translator as an authority on, or travel guide to, the source culture.

Retaining the setting and cultural references, then, is not a major problem in translation. Furthermore, the current trend is to retain them, in other words, for the translation to be read as “*the* original”. At the same time, however, there is a contradictory trend towards maximum acceptability on the linguistic and pragmatic level, or, “reading as *an* original” (Aixelá 56). Thus, cultural elements of a surface nature are rendered, but the elements that run through the text in *how* the story is told are not. In the case of Verga and Camilleri—and other writers who experiment linguistically or use literary devices such as code-switching—the way in which the story is told is an essential element. The “maximum acceptability” approach eradicates that element. Instead, if they want to send the reader abroad, translators need to respond as Venuti has recommended—by experimenting themselves with non-standard linguistic forms. Translations that bear prefaces can announce the reason for stylistic peculiarities and alert them to their presence (Venuti *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 24).

Another element that is usually lost in the translations of regional literature is how it differs from the literature of its own larger culture. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Sicilian literature is a distinct and separate entity within the greater Italian literary tradition, yet its ‘otherness’ is less evident to a non-Italian reader of a translated Sicilian text than it is to an Italian reader. In the words of Leonardo Sciascia in his introduction to Vitaliano Brancati’s collected works:

The difficulty is not merely one of means—dialect, dialectal construction of sentences, references to traditions and customs, to historical peculiarities; it is above all a difficulty of ‘sentiment’. This brings about the margin of untranslatability which, paradoxically, is narrowed (or may be narrowed) in translations into other languages, but increases in width for the Italian reader who has not passed, with both attention and affection, through Verga and Pirandello. (qtd. in Creagh 6)

The loss of both these elements—the cultural elements that run through the text in how the story is told and how the texts differ within their own larger literary context—is apparent, to varying degrees, in the translations of Verga’s and Camilleri’s works but, the more creative and visible the translator, the less loss is incurred. The translator is not only a guide to the source culture and language; as “the most penetrating reader and critic a work can have” (Grossman 73), he or she is also the reader’s guide to the text.

2.4.1 Specific Problems of Regional Literature Translation

2.4.1.1 Dialect

According to Hermann Haller, there is no satisfactory definition of dialect (*The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry* 36). Etymologically, it refers to the speech act as it derives from the Greek ‘to speak’ (*dialegonai*) or ‘discourse’ (*dialektos*). Indeed, dialect is primarily an oral form, which exists in a synecdochical relationship, i.e., in opposition to, the local standard language. It provides information about which geographical region or town speakers grew up or live in, through features of accent, lexis, syntax and sentence-formation that are characteristic of that region (Hervey et al. 108).¹⁹ However, the assessment of dialect boundaries is problematic. Linguistic borders do not usually coincide with political, religious or natural borders, such as a mountain range, and neighbouring towns may have distinctly different dialect varieties.

Sociolect, another form of speech that deviates from standard language, often overlaps with dialect and may be indistinguishable from it. While dialect is normally defined as how a group of people living in a certain region typically speaks, sociolect characterises groupings by age, social class, status, profession, and other class structure notions. The overlapping is common because in many countries dialects are usually spoken by lower classes; middle classes of the same region tend to adopt the national sociolect (P. D. Fawcett 117). Designating mixed sociolectal and regional variants may be more helpful in the recognition process (Hervey et al. 107).

¹⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter Three, both Verga and Camilleri did not feature all the dialect features listed here, but selected specific features for their own reasons and purposes.

Despite dictionary definitions that describe it as subordinate to the standard language, a dialect is neither inferior nor a sublanguage. In fact, the distinction between a language and a dialect is not linguistic but rather cultural, social and political (Lepschy, Lepschy and Voghera 70).

The translation of dialect is considered one of the most difficult tasks for the translator. Finding target-language equivalents for regional speech in the source language may be an unachievable goal, but there are ways to deal with the problem. Before exploring those methods, I will consider some factors regarding the source text that affect the translator's choice of method: the ability to recognise the dialectal elements, the sociolinguistic relationships between varieties in the source language, and the importance of the dialect to the overall effect of the text.

The first problem the translator faces when translating a text with dialectal elements is "recognising the peculiarities from which dialectal affiliation can be inferred" (Hervey, Higgins and Haywood 112). Often translators are not familiar enough with the source-language dialects to recognise the peculiarities, which can lead to "serious mistranslation", whether they attempt to find an equivalent dialect in the target language or they decide to neutralise the dialect in the target language (Sanchez 305). Recognition ability may be hampered by the inaccuracy of dialectal representation, as revealed by Sumner Ives:

Nearly all examples of literary dialect are deliberately incomplete; the author is an artist, not a linguist or a sociologist, and his purpose is literary rather than scientific. In working out his compromise between art and linguistics, each author has made his own decision as to how many of the peculiarities in his character's speech he can profitably represent; consequently, examples of literary dialect vary considerably in the extent to which they are 'dialectal', and no very definite rules can be given regarding what to consider in that category. Regardless of the inclusiveness of the term, however, every variation from the conventional system of writing the language is a problem for the linguist. (qtd. in Sanchez 304)

Representations can vary from an occasional spelling change to all the grammatical, lexical and phonetical peculiarities the writer has observed.

As will be shown in my analysis in Chapter Five, an inability to recognise and understand dialectal elements is clearly evident in some of the translations of Verga's texts, particularly in the earlier years before annotated source texts became available.

Having identified the dialect features, translators now need to examine the complex set of sociolinguistic relationships between varieties in the source language (Berthele 588-89). They need to ask themselves:

- What is the sociolinguistic relationship between the non-standard and the standard varieties in the source language?
- What does the author think about this relationship?
- How has the author rendered the relationship in the text, and what is his or her purpose and intention for using the non-standard variety?
- How important is the use of the non-standard variety to the overall effect of the text?

Source-culture connotations surrounding the dialect may be vital, particularly when there is dialectal variation within the text. Connotations can include the dialect's prestige (usually low) or in-group value. Or the dialect may have positive moral connotations that establish the speaker as sincere or without artifice (Berthele 590). The author may have chosen to use dialect as a stylistic device to establish authenticity of the setting and the characters—to provide local colour. Readers will add to the story's sociocultural context elements that they associate with the region. Differences in language use by the characters may provide important information about interpersonal relationships. The author can establish the characters' individuality through their dialect use. Unexpected turns of phrase or other deviations from standard speech can provide humour “from the inside, as it were” (Leppihalme “The Two Faces of Standardization: On the Translations of Regionalisms in Literary Dialogue” 257). Switching between varieties of language can convey important meanings. A careful balancing of dialectal and non-dialectal elements can create

effects of linguistic richness and individuality (Leppihalme “The Two Faces of Standardization: On the Translations of Regionalisms in Literary Dialogue” 247). On the other hand, the translator may decide that the dialectal features are only incidental and not important to the overall effect of the text. As will be shown in Chapter Three, in which I discuss the various functions of the dialectal features of Verga’s and Camilleri’s texts, there is no question that these elements are essential to the overall effects.

Taking into account the understanding they have reached about the source text, translators then need to decide how to deal with the problem. They have a choice of rendering the dialectal features with a target-language dialect, dropping the features and rendering the effects through compensation, or standardising the language.

Choosing to render the dialectal features of the source language by using target-language dialectal features can be a dangerous course (Hervey et al. 109) that leads to ridiculous-sounding results because the wrong geographical associations are evoked. How does one decide which target-language dialects correspond with the source-language dialects? A conceivable option is to attempt to match stereotypical assumptions or popular connotations associated with dialects, although it is difficult to find such matches as dialects stem from particular societies with their own sociolinguistic background (Sanchez 307). Sometimes a translator will create a composite rural speech that cannot be located. Here the danger is that the reader may get the impression, because it is not linked with a specific area, that this is a sociolect, and it may not have matching connotations (Schogt 1295). Another option, also difficult to achieve, is to try to reflect the phonetic representation of the dialectal sounds. We will see in the analyses that some of the translators have chosen this method, with varying results and reception.

A safer course is to drop the features and try to render the important source text effects through compensation. This can be achieved by the systematic direct transfer of key ‘exotic’ items or the occasional use of literal renderings that convey local colour and evoke foreignness (Leppihalme “The Two Faces of Standardization: On the Translations of Regionalisms in Literary Dialogue” 263). Some translators insert a metalinguistic comment such as “He said in dialect” or “She spoke in the dialect of

the region”. If the source-language dialectal features are closely associated with other features of language variety, a target-language sociolect or register might be used as compensation for lost dialectal features. These methods are all utilised by the translators of Verga and Camilleri.

An extreme, and rarely used, strategic option is to transplant the text entirely to a target-language environment, but this is more adaptation than translation (Hervey et al. 110).

The most widely used strategy, however, is standardisation—in other words, ignoring the dialectal features of the source text and replacing unusual source elements with more common and familiar target-language elements. The degree of loss incurred depends on the degree of the importance of the features in the source text, but standardisation will generally produce a flattened, simplified version of the original. My analysis will show that this method is also used in the translations of Verga and Camilleri.

Whichever strategy translators choose, they must be consistent in that choice. If they have chosen to use a particular target-language dialect, they must have a full grasp of that language variety so as to be accurate in their rendering (Hervey et al. 110).

Standardisation is by far the easiest option, and also the one that conflicts most with the theoretical approaches of visibility and creativity in translation. The first two methods, using target-language dialectal features and compensation, can be effective in building the reader’s awareness of linguistic and cultural differences, both between the source and target languages and cultures, and within the source culture. They can only lead to interesting, new kinds of readability. But even if translators would like to minimise the loss of dialectal features, other factors, mostly beyond their control, can dictate a standardising strategy (Leppihalme “The Two Faces of Standardization: On the Translations of Regionalisms in Literary Dialogue” 265-66). The editor or publisher may favour a domesticating strategy to conform with their assumptions of the general reading public: that potential buyers are either not interested in anything that is unfamiliar or that linguistic individuality is not a priority in their reading experience. Furthermore, the translator may not have the time or skill required to

create a literary work in the target language that adequately renders the details of the source-text language.

2.4.1.2 Idiom

The term 'idiom' is used to refer to a fixed expression or sequence of words that functions as a single unit. No meaning attaches to the individual words; nor may they be replaced with substitute words. Rather, all meaning attaches to the entire phrase, so that if it were to be translated word for word it would make no sense. As well as being semantically restricted, idioms are syntactically restricted: they often do not permit variation in form, although other items in a sentence that contains an idiom can be changed without destroying the idiomatic meaning (Cruse 70). Because they are frozen patterns of meaning with little flexibility, their meaning cannot be deduced from their original meanings, which results in their opacity. The constituents may be completely arbitrary, and it is likely a more logical or grammatical form of expression with the same meaning is available; however, in the words of Logan Pearsall Smith in *English Idioms*, S.P.E. Tract No. xii, these expressions are "the form of speech peculiar to a people or nation... and approved by its usage" (qtd. in Partridge 148). Therefore, if the translator's aim is to retain and draw attention to the regional flavours and peculiarities of a text, replacing them with target-culture idioms will have the opposite effect.

Mona Baker maintains that fixed expressions are as widespread as they are because they conjure up in the reader or hearer all the aspects of the experience that are associated with the contexts in which they are used. "They encapsulate all the stereotyped aspects of experience and therefore perform a stabilizing function in communication" (64). For non-native speakers, however, who already face particular difficulties with fixed expressions, since they cannot be understood by their literal meaning, these aspects will be conjured up to a lesser extent or not at all. Nor will the non-native speaker fully appreciate the poetic aspect of the idiom. As proclaimed by Smith (qtd. in Partridge 149): "[Idiom] may be regarded as the sister of poetry, for like poetry it retranslates our concepts of living experiences, and breathes that atmosphere of animal sensation which sustains the poet in his flights."

Culture-specific collocations such as idioms and other fixed expressions present a particular challenge to translators for several reasons. It has long been recognised that idioms cannot be translated word for word. In fact, the recognition of the difficulties of translating idioms led to the abandonment in language teaching of the Grammar-Translation method and the adoption of more contextually oriented approaches (Fernando and Flavell 81). A non-native speaker's competence in using them rarely matches a native speaker's, which is a good reason for translators to work into their native language (Baker 64). The translator faces difficulties in (a) recognising them, (b) interpreting them and (c) translating them effectively.

It is not until we attempt to translate a seemingly straightforward message that we become aware of how much of language is idiomatic or metaphorical, because the figurative strength is often well-concealed (Duff 89-90). The translator must exercise vigilance in order to recognise fixed expressions. Signs to alert the translator of their presence include phrases that violate truth conditions, those that seem ill-formed grammatically, and those that start with 'like' (or its equivalent in the source language) (Baker 65). The less the phrase makes sense in the context, the easier it is to recognise it as an idiom. If an idiom has both a literal and an idiomatic meaning, there is a danger of the translator not recognising it and then misinterpreting it.

Good reference works and monolingual dictionaries of idioms or the ability to consult a native speaker will help in the interpretation. However, the translator might misinterpret an idiom if it has a close counterpart in the target language on the surface but has a different meaning. (*Faux amis* can be found as much among idioms as in single lexical items (Fernando and Flavell 82-83).)

When it comes to translating fixed expressions, the degree of opaqueness may determine the degree of difficulty the translator encounters. Such difficulties can be broken down into the following areas (Baker 68-71):

1. There may be no equivalent expression in the target language because the expression is specific to the source culture. Its association with culture-specific contexts can make it difficult or impossible to translate.

2. A similar counterpart may exist in the target language but its context of use may be different from that of the source language.
3. An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time. Unless the target-language idiom corresponds to the source-language idiom in both form and meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced.
4. The convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target languages. In English they are a matter of style. (Some languages do not use them in written texts at all.) The translator must be highly sensitive to the rhetorical nuances in both languages (Fernando and Flavell 82-83).

Strategies available to the translator include the following (Baker 72-78; Fernando and Flavell 82-83):

1. Using a good match in both meaning and form. This strategy depends, of course, on whether such an idiom is available in the target language, as well as the stringency of the criteria applied. The foremost consideration should be semantic correlation, followed by syntax and lexical constituents.
2. Translation by paraphrase. This is by far the most common, and optimum, method when a match cannot be found or an idiom would be inappropriate. Unfortunately, many translators do not fight the strong, unconscious urge to search hard for an idiom in the target language, however inappropriate it may be, which has led to many bad translations. Just as graceless and misleading may be the results when the translator has rendered the idiom word for word.
3. Using an idiom of similar meaning but different form. Finding an idiom that is semantically close may be quite difficult, however, and may differ so much in areas of style, register or frequency of use that its use would be inappropriate.
4. Using an idiom of similar structure and/or lexical constituents. *Faux amis* are the concern here. Superficial similarities may not entail correlation of sense.
5. Translation by omission. This method might be used if no close match can be found, the meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.
6. Translation by compensation—omitting the idiom where it occurs in the source text and introducing a different idiom elsewhere in the target text.

When choosing the appropriate strategy, the translator needs to keep in mind the appropriateness of using idiomatic language in a given register in the target language and the significance of the specific lexical items in the idiom, for example, whether they are manipulated elsewhere in the source text.

Fernando and Flavell (84-85) believe that finding a good match for an idiom in both meaning and form can be easier than one might expect. They have come to the conclusion that similarities in idioms across languages are more striking than the differences. Their evidence is that idioms and proverbs generally use everyday objects common to particular areas and cultures as their source material, and all human beings have similar psychological attitudes. These sources spontaneously generate similar idioms. Cultures are shared through speakers of one language living in different areas and speakers of different languages living in the same area. Finally, inter-language borrowing of idioms is constantly occurring. They contend that idiom is a near-universal of language.

In the texts of Verga and Camilleri, however, the idiomatic expressions are generally quite regionally specific, rather than near-universal, and have been carefully chosen for their rich historical and cultural meaning. It is often the case that the translators are unable to match both form and meaning, and so they are faced with a contentious problem if they wish to use a visible translation approach. If they replace it with a target-language expression, even if it has a very similar meaning, they will be producing a network of target-culture references and associations. Antoine Berman, who was a major influence on Venuti, believed that replacing idioms with target-language “equivalents” is an “ethno-centrism” that “attacks the discourse of the foreign work” even if they have identical meaning (286-87). While I do not view the matter in such warlike terms, I do agree that by eradicating the original expression too much is sacrificed. All the aspects of the experience that are associated with the contexts in which they are used that are conjured up in the source-text reader are lost and replaced with associations that displace the reader. Furthermore, as Berman points out, such displacements in the translation of a novel must always be multiplied by five or six thousand. At times, it can be more important for translators to retain the literal wording of an expression, even if it makes no sense in the target language, and, in their travel writing role, provide an explanation. Moreover, Berman further points out,

explanation may not be required as often as one would expect: “The desire to replace ignores, furthermore, the existence in us of a *proverb consciousness* which immediately detects in a new proverb, the brother of an authentic one: the world of our proverbs is thus augmented and enriched” (287) .

2.4.1.3 Metaphor

A common lament amongst translation scholars is that not enough work has been done on the translation of metaphor, in contrast to the wide research into metaphor itself in other disciplines such as linguistics and philosophy. Metaphor has largely been ignored by translation scholars or treated as if it were merely a figurative expression, in which a word or phrase is changed from its literal reference to a new, often wider field of reference. As Edwin Gentzler has pointed out, metaphor and translation have an uneasy relationship because of the close relationship of the two terms’ etymologies (“Metaphor and Translation” 941). ‘Metaphor’ comes from the Greek word *metapherein*, which means to carry across a meaning from one word to another, while ‘translation’ derives from the Latin *translatus*, which means to carry across a meaning from one language to another. Michael Hanne has taken further the idea that metaphor and translation are analogous (209-10), arguing that both metaphor and translation are impossible because they both propose equivalence between semantic domains that have little in common, and both have partial and imperfect natures: no single translation and no single metaphor can be considered exhaustive or final. Gentzler (“Metaphor and Translation” 941) maintains that the complexity of carrying the double meanings or new creative usages across linguistic boundaries is particularly troublesome and is even viewed sometimes as antithetical to the definition of translation itself. As evidenced by investigations into translations, this has led to the common practice by translators of lessening the creative and cognitive functions of metaphors. Empirical studies have shown that translators tend to reduce the polyvalence and resonance of metaphors, sometimes to the point of omitting them altogether.

Investigations into the complex task of metaphor translation have been hindered by the division of translation scholarship into opposing camps (Gentzler “Metaphor and

Translation” 942): those who maintain they present no translation problem and those who maintain they present a problem for which there is no solution.

The ‘no problem’ school of thought is illustrated by the views of Rolf Klopfer (followed by Katerina Reiss), who argues that the bolder and more creative the metaphor, the easier it is to translate. All the translator needs to do is to render the metaphor word for word.

There is not only a “harmony of metaphorical fields” among the various European languages, there are concrete metaphorical fields common to all mankind, but there are also definite “structures of the imagination” on which they are based. (Klopfer qtd. in Snell-Hornby 57)

The ‘no solution’ school is represented by the views of Eugene Nida, who suggests translating metaphors by non-metaphors to avoid the problems. He is followed by Vinay and Darbelnet, who claim the target language does not allow literal translation of metaphors because of its structural incompatibility with the source language.

I would agree with Menachem Dagut, however, who believes the translatability of metaphor lies somewhere in between the two extremes, fluctuating “according to the complex of cultural and linguistic factors involved in each particular case” (34), and he criticises the Klopfer-Reiss view as an untenable, simplistic generalisation of a complex situation—the translating of “such a dynamic, creative, and still largely mysterious central component of language” (28). The translatability of a metaphor depends on how much the speakers of the source and target languages share the cultural experience of that particular metaphor and the semantic associations drawn from it, not, as Klopfer claims, because of how bold or inventive it is.

The function of the metaphor is important for the translator, according to Raymond van den Broeck (76), and can differ across texts, languages and cultures. First of all, to avoid the danger of overtranslating, the translator needs to distinguish functionally relevant metaphors from those that were used randomly or unconsciously by the writer. A functionally relevant metaphor will be used creatively or decoratively. If the metaphor is decorative, it can be easily replaced because it will not be used out of

necessity; but if creative, as is the case with literary language and, as we will see, particularly so in Verga's writing, it should be interpreted literally as there will be a deep necessary bond between the tenor and the vehicle.

Broeck distinguishes three modes of metaphor translation:

1. Translation *sensu stricto*.
2. Substitution.
3. Paraphrase.

In terms of Gideon Toury's initial norms theory, and we can also say in terms of Venuti's visibility theory, Broeck distinguishes the two polar alternatives the translator faces in metaphor translation (85):

1. If the translation adheres to the source-language norm, metaphors will be translated *sensu stricto*, which may result in deviant, or alienating and/or archaic, results.
2. If the translation adheres to the target-language norm, source-language metaphors will be replaced by corresponding target-language metaphors, leading to domestication and acceptability.

2.4.1.4 Culturally Specific Items

'Culturally specific items' are linguistically represented items that pose a problem in translation because they do not exist in the target culture or have a different value as a result of factors such as ideology, usage, frequency, and so on (Aixelá 57).

Aixelá breaks down the strategies available for translating these items into the two main categories of conservation and substitution, with subclassifications on a scale from a lesser to a greater degree of intercultural manipulation.

- Conservation:
 - Repetition. Keep as much as possible of the original reference.

- Orthographic adaptation (usually used when the original word is in a different alphabet).
- Linguistic (non-cultural) translation. Use a denotatively very close reference, but one that still belongs to the culture of the source text.
- Extra-textual gloss.
- Intra-textual gloss.
- Substitution:
 - Synonymy (usually used on stylistic grounds to avoid repetition).
 - Limited universalisation, i.e., a less specific reference.
 - Absolute universalisation, i.e., a neutral reference.
 - Naturalisation.
 - Deletion (usually for reasons of perceived irrelevance or unacceptability).
 - Autonomous creation of a non-existent cultural reference.

Cronin suggests that readers of translated texts, and of travel writing, can be translated into a foreign climate through the untranslated (or, in Aixelá's terminology, repetition) (*Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* 41). When a culture-specific item is left in its untranslated state in isolation, it operates as a "space of translation"—a palpable written trace of the foreign for the reader and an indicator that the text was written elsewhere, where the language and mores are different. Even though the word is invariably explained, its distinctness remains intact and can be made even more conspicuous by being italicised. And according to Aixelá, the resulting increased exoticism or archaism of the word reminds us of one of the paradoxes of translation and one of the great pitfalls of the traditional notion of equivalence: that something absolutely identical can be absolutely different in its collective reception (61).

The choice of strategy is guided by many different factors. In addition to variables beyond the text, such as the publisher's aims or readers' expectations, and variables surrounding the text, such as previous translations of the same genre, author or text, are various factors within the text, including the type and breadth of the intercultural gap, the function of the item in the source text and issues of coherence within the

target text. The crucial factor, however, according to Aixelá, in the degree of manipulation of culturally specific items is the extent to which the receiving pole decides to accept the restrictions posed by the source text (76-77).

Chapter three: The Source Texts

Before examining the translation of Verga's and Camilleri's writing, we need to consider the creativity and regional emphasis of the texts as they are manifested and received within the authors' own linguistic, literary and cultural contexts. This entails an overview of Italy's linguistic history, with an emphasis on the linguistic situation at the times in which Verga's and Camilleri's works were published, a brief description of Sicilian dialect and an exploration of the term *sicilianità*. A detailed investigation into the two authors' linguistic styles is followed by a comparison of their responses to the enduring Italian language question.

3.1 Regional Language in Italian Literature

3.1.1 La questione della lingua

The role of regional language in Verga's and Camilleri's texts needs to be analysed in relation to the writers' respective periods in history and the prevailing sociolinguistic relationships between dialect and the national literature. The unique political history of Italy, divided and decentralised as it was for 1500 years—from the fall of the Roman Empire until the unification of Italy—is mirrored in its complex linguistic history. Until Italy's disparate regions with individual dialects were unified, a common spoken language seemed an almost impossible goal, and a divergence grew between literary language and language as it is spoken in real, everyday life. The question of what language to use in literature itself—*la questione della lingua*—has been a constant preoccupation since the thirteenth century and remains so today. The question of dialect has often played a predominant role in this debate, rising and falling in importance in response to social and political situations. A prevailing opinion has been that the multiple regional variations and dialects may allow a more creative, true expression, rich in imagery and nuance, but only an 'ideal' common language can make literary texts accessible to all. Furthermore, an underlying negative attitude exists towards dialect in literature. A bias towards formality in written texts, stemming from Roman times, has led to a resistance amongst certain scholars and readers towards dialect in literature (Carroll 10). Nevertheless, dialect has always been a strong feature of Italian literature, more so than in any other

Western European literary tradition (Haller *The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry* 31). The literary critic and philologist Gianfranco Contini claims it is “substantially the only great national literature whose production in dialect constitutes a visceral and inseparable corpus with the rest of the patrimony” (qtd. in Sbragia 5). However, dialect and the national language were not always blended in ways such as we find in the works of Verga or Camilleri.

Ever since Pietro Bembo codified the Tuscan dialect in the sixteenth century with his treatise *Prose della volgar lingua*, writing in dialect has been a conscious choice, often used as a vehicle of rebellion against the official culture or for stylistic experimentation (Haller *The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry* 32). In the three hundred years leading up to the mid-nineteenth century, dialect literatures flourished, but discretely amongst themselves and separately to the national literature and, in the words of Mario Sansone, in a spirit of struggle, compromise, resistance and defence (804). Furthermore, all dialect works, from whatever region or genre, and of whatever quality, tended to be grouped together indiscriminately and often labelled ‘minor works’ (Carroll 10). In the years approaching unification, many writers and critics even considered dialects to be the enemy of standard language (Haller *The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry* 37). However, once the unification of nation and language were set in motion, a new, mutually enriching relationship between national and dialectal literatures began to emerge (Haller *The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry* 44). Once a separate counterpart to the literary tradition in standard Italian, since the Risorgimento, dialect has come to be recognised as a linguistic element within the Italian narrative (Anderson 1).

Generally speaking, writers who have drawn on dialect have done so because they have found traditional literary language unsatisfactory for their purposes. Although the reasons for their dissatisfaction have varied, the literature of dialectal writers shares an allusion, whether explicit or implicit, to the national literature (Hainsworth and Robey 189); dialect is the ‘other’, with its own separate history. While the Tuscan language was being established as the national literary language, because so few people spoke it, an aura of authority, conservatism and elitism grew to surround it. Despite being cut off from real, changing language use, it became the ‘beautiful’

language used to teach how to write ‘properly’ (Gordon 31). But running alongside and in tension with this estrangement from reality has been an openness in many writers to use dialect, with its wealth of regionally motivated synonyms, as a source of renewal and enrichment of the national language.

Dialect is essentially an oral variety of language (Haller *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect* 16-20), which makes it particularly suited to dialogue, and so it has been used most often in literature by poets and dramatists. It has also meant that writers have always faced a challenge when attempting to shape it into a literary form. But perhaps the most significant effect of dialect’s orality on literature is that writers have turned to it as a language of emotion—to express anger, social protest, humour, obscenity, human weakness, appreciation of natural beauty, and so on. Dialect is the maternal language. It holds sacred memories of a cultural heritage in danger of extinction—a heritage that differs from the national one and is closer to personal experience.

Italian, on the other hand, as a primarily written language variety, restricted to books read only by an educated elite, remained largely unchanged from the Middle Ages and became increasingly estranged from the quotidian reality. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, prior to unification, Alessandro Manzoni’s aim of producing a living language that could be spoken and written by all grew from his desire for political and linguistic unity. But while he transferred the immediacy and spontaneity of spoken, everyday language from dialect to his literary model (Sansone 805),²⁰ his chief concern was communication, and accordingly he dealt with the issue of dialect by translating into an impeccable literary language the language of his characters who, had they been real, would have spoken in dialect (Devoto 809). His characters are thus transfigured into artistic figures, where the spoken language of the common people is at the same level as that of the most elite, despite the social chasm that divides them.

²⁰Manzoni’s solution was itself a dialect—that of the Florentine upper classes, chosen because of its completeness and historical tradition in literature (Laurie Jane Anderson, *Challenging the Norm: The Dialect Question in the Works of Gadda and Pasolini* (Stanford, Calif.: Humanities Honors Program, Stanford University, 1977) 11) and because it was actually used by a living community. If he had invented a hybrid language that was grammatically identical to the literary language, but lexically open to all Italian languages and dialects, universal acceptance could not have been achieved, so an existing language was the better choice: Peter Brand and Lino Pertile, *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 436.

Although the Manzonian model appeared to be successful and was adopted as the norm in journals, popular literature, and historical and political essays, Italy's enduring, strong regional dialects and a high illiteracy rate prevented the adoption of the model as a widespread, common spoken language, despite the predictions of nationalists such as Tabarrini, who wrote the following prophesy in 1870:

Le mutate sorti d'Italia gioveranno senza fallo ad estendere l'uso della lingua commune; e questo rimescolarsi d'Italiani dall'Alpi all'Etna, che si guardano in viso per la prima volta, e si stringon la mano col sentimento d'appartenenza a una sola nazione, condurrà necessariamente a rendere sempre più ristretto l'uso dei dialetti, che sono marche di separazione, fatte più profonde da secolari isolamenti. Ma da questo gran fatto, si voglia o non si voglia, la lingua uscirà notabilmente modificata. (qtd. in De Mauro 323)

Nevertheless, Manzoni's novel, which became a sort of linguistic gospel during the years of unification, did succeed in narrowing the gap between written and spoken language (Haller *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect* 13).

A comparison of the linguistic situation in Verga's time with that of Camilleri shows a vast difference in the proportion of Italians familiar with the literary standard. In the late nineteenth century, despite unification, only a fraction of the population (2.5% according to De Mauro) spoke Tuscan fluently—a minority language amongst a nation of dialect speakers—and seventy-five per cent of the nation's population was illiterate. Through the century and more that divides Verga and Camilleri, enforced mandatory education, industrialisation and urbanisation, internal and external migrations and mass media have all contributed to the reduction of the illiteracy rate to one per cent and to the diffusion of standard Italian to the point that it has been firmly established as the first language of most Italians. Nearly half of all Italians now use the standard language exclusively, even in their own homes (Kinder 13), but it was not until after the Second World War that Italian stopped being perceived as the language of the affluent, dominant class and dialect as the domain of the socially subordinate and inferior classes (Pertile 11). The greatest influence for the drastic change in the relationship between standard language and dialect was popular entertainment (Hall 97-98). The use of dialect in neorealist films, with their portrayals

of everyday life and characters played by non-professional actors speaking the language they used in real life, spread to television through the broadcasting of films, but also in newscasts, documentaries and contests, and then to literature, in particular, in the works of Pier Paolo Pasolini and Carlo Emilia Gadda.

Alongside the national standard, dialect has survived, in defiance of the ongoing predictions of its demise, such as in the following prophecy written by Laurie Jane Anderson in the 1970s, a century after Tabarrini's prediction quoted above:

While the expressive capacities of the Italian language have been enhanced by [dialect's] addition to the linguistic repertoire, the viability of dialect as a communicative device is open to question. In the course of a few generations the dialects will no doubt weaken or disappear altogether from the spoken language of Italy, and with their passing the question of their use in literature will cease to occupy any serious attention. (Anderson 51)

Not only has it survived; there is now even talk of a dialect revival. Like the Sicilian writers who experiment linguistically, Italian speakers are increasingly drawing on both dialect and Italian in their daily lives. Although the exclusive use of dialect by speakers is now minimal, one-third of Italians now use both standard Italian and dialect with their families, and one-fifth use both with strangers (Kinder 14). In addition, a continuum of intermediate stages between archaic dialect and the literary standard can now be found amongst speakers, from Italianised dialects to the regional forms of Italian, *italiano medio*—which, unlike dialects, are mutually compatible and becoming ever more alike—to the average, everyday informal or semi-formal level, which is spoken, at times with different accents, and written everywhere.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence that dialect is going through a revival is that its use, most often in combination with Italian, is increasing amongst young people, especially males (Kinder 14-16). Furthermore, many of these young people have previously had only a passive competence in dialect or have grown up in families where its use was discouraged (Kinder 17). Paradoxically, it may be their increased confidence in their command of Italian that has given young people the confidence to use dialect (Kinder 16).

The revival may also be a reaction to several other societal changes. The media, and in particular, television and advertising, have been largely responsible for the diffusion of *italiano medio* and the convergence towards it of all levels of Italian. While some applaud the disappearance of language-related social connotations and the emergence of fluidity and informality on a national scale, others see this convergence as a reason for concern that the language is becoming ever more homogeneous and flat (Pertile 13).

Another threat to the heterogeneity of the Italian language and languages is the increasing use of English worldwide in the current climate of internationalisation and globalisation. More than eighty-five per cent of the world's organisations now use English as an official language (Allen 18). Despite the linguistic regime established by the European Union that ensures that members are free to choose the languages to be used, English and French have become the Union's *lingua franca*. Even more significant is the fact that over 100 million people, almost a third of the Union's population, now speak English as a second language. Furthermore, this figure is bound to increase, as evidenced by the fact that in 1994 ten per cent of Europeans over age fifty-five knew some English compared to fifty-five per cent of those between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four.

Internationalisation and globalisation have also spurred an interest in local identity generally and the desire to recover traditions in danger of being lost. In an ironic twist, the principal instrument of globalisation, the Internet, has lately become a tool of those who wish to assert and create local identities through their increasing use of dialect as "in-group" communication (Kinder 17).

To this point, we have only considered dialect use that has occurred naturally amongst speakers in reaction to societal changes, but other situations in which dialect is being used in new ways have been engineered by political forces, and are causing concern about the possible consequences.

One that has provoked much criticism is a proposal put forward by the political party the Lega Nord. The Lega Nord is known as a xenophobic party that stands for the issues of anti-immigration and anti-partyism, but it is also a regionalist movement that

supports federalism, secession and greater local autonomy for northern Italy (Gold 5). In 2009 the party proposed the introduction of the compulsory teaching of local regional dialects in schools. The party's president, Federico Bricolo, claims that such a measure would render "[i giovani] fieri e orgogliosi delle proprie radici" ("Lega Nord: «Lingue e dialetti nella scuola dell'obbligo»"). Another proposal put forward in the same year by Paola Goisis, the deputy of the party, was that teachers should have to pass a test of their knowledge of the history, culture, traditions and language of the region in which they wish to teach. The proposals are seen by the party's political opponents as yet another of the Lega Nord's moves to discriminate against southern Italians and to divide the nation.

Although critics ridicule the proposals as impractical and impossible to implement, particularly with respect to teaching dialect in schools, they still find them dangerous because of the Lega's political power. Luca Morino, a singer who is passionate about dialects and is working on a project for the 150th anniversary of Italian unification that is a kind of atlas of Italian dialects and music, sees the proposals as a wall to keep out those who are different. He says, "Siamo di fronte a una boutade politica diretta a chi ha paura del diverso senza capire che il diverso ce lo portiamo dentro, che è parte di noi" ("Luca Morino: 'Usano il dialetto per alzare muri'"). Italian literary critic and emeritus professor of Italian literature Alberto Asor Rosa sees the proposals as a step backwards to an Italy that never existed. Dialect has always been accompanied by Italian, he stresses. Without Italian as the framework, dialect becomes a matter of folklore, and that to think of using it on its own as an identity issue "è un fenomeno di crassa ignoranza, di volgare abbruttimento" (Lombardo). Camilleri agrees with Asor Rosa:

Il dialetto non è solo importante, è la linfa vitale della nostra lingua italiana. Ma in sé e per sé non ha senso, se non è dentro la lingua. Soprattutto l'insegnamento del dialetto a scuola è una proposta insensata. Vede, il rischio in Italia era la perdita del dialetto. Ma non si può andare all'opposto ed eleggere il dialetto a lingua. (Fantozzi)

Camilleri finds it repellent that such a divisive idea should arise on the occasion of the anniversary of unification and fears that the party's hold on Berlusconi could see it actually enacted.

The proposals of the Lega Nord, who for years has advocated the secession of the north from the rest of Italy, use language as a tool to further challenge the unity of Italy. They also contain the danger of insularity and closure to the world, particularly as dialect would replace English as the second language taught in schools.

John Kinder brings to our attention another situation in which dialect is being used by political forces. In 2008 the Italian Ministry for Labour, Health and Social policies launched an advertising campaign promoting the integration of immigrants. The campaign includes television clips, radio spots and posters in which immigrants from different countries sing songs and pronounce phrases in different dialects. Kinder argues that, since immigrants of the last three decades do not commonly use dialect, the government is using it in the campaign symbolically and ideologically rather than to reflect real world patterns of language choice. The target audience is the general Italian public as much as the immigrants, with the reassuring message that the Government is actively promoting integration of immigrants.

As Kinder concludes, the sociolinguistic changes in contemporary Italy require new analyses:

As the nature of Italian society changes, the linguistic codes that have been carriers of particular sets of values, beliefs and traditions are now part of a new cultural and linguistic universe. The use of these codes in the multi-layered web of mass communications allows them to carry multiple meanings intended for multiple audiences. (25)

3.1.2 The Sicilian Dialect

The history of the invasions of Sicily and its contacts with other nations is represented in the rich and varied Sicilian lexicon and grammar. Classed as an Italic-Romance language, influences include Greek, Latin, Arabic, Norman, Lombard, Provençal, German, Catalan, French and Spanish.

It is important to note that there is not one standard Sicilian language, but rather a complex collection of mutually intelligible dialects, which vary according to the speaker's specific location (geographical area, proximity to the coast, whether urban or rural), socio-economic level, and sex, age and education (Bonner 29-30). The differences between the varieties are mainly phonological, but also grammatical and syntactical. Within the three broad regions of Western, Central and Eastern Sicily, a further ten subgroupings of dialect can be found. Despite the multitude of varieties, the geographic isolation of Sicily has kept it free of influences from outside its borders. The result is a unique specificity and homogeneity amongst all the Sicilian varieties of dialect that is rarely seen in other Italian regions.

Every Italian dialect has its own sound that adds phonosymbolism and a musical effect to literature. Haller describes Sicilian dialects as “somber” and “melancholic” (*The Hidden Italy: A Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry* 45). In his essay “La lingua di Verga”, Luigi Russo identifies the repetition of the verb at the end of the sentence typical of Sicilian dialect as “la cantilena amara e triste e amorosa e violenta del discorrere dialettale di laggiù [...] in quella musica c'è tutto un sentire pregnante o dell'amarezza del vinto o dell'ardore avido del barbaro” (*Giovanni Verga* 326).

3.1.3 Literary *sicilianità*

Sicilian literature has always been recognised as a distinct and separate entity within the greater Italian literary tradition.²¹ However, it is the body of work written by

²¹ The Italian literary tradition actually began in Sicily with *la scuola siciliana*—a group of poets who came together at the imperial court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen in the first half of the thirteenth

Sicilian narrators in the last hundred and fifty years that critics generally agree forms more of a consistent and continuous narrative line (Neri and Segneri 91-92). The line begins with the work of “la grande triade”, Giovanni Verga, Luigi Capuana and Federico De Roberto (Guglielmino “Presenza e forme della narrativa siciliana” 484) and carries on through, among others, Luigi Pirandello, Elio Vittorini, Vitaliano Brancati, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Leonardo Sciascia, Gesualdo Bufalino, Vincenzo Consolo and, finally, Andrea Camilleri, and it is strengthened through intertextual markers and constant dialogue with predecessors (O’Connell “‘Zu Luigi’: Pirandello and the Sicilian Literary Tradition” 30). According to Guglielmino, “i narratori siciliani” can be defined by the presence in their work of “quei dati e di quelle componenti che si ritengono specifici della sensibilità e del modo di essere siciliani, di quella «sicilianità» o «sicilitudine» di cui negli ultimi decenni si è variamente discusso” (“Presenza e forme della narrativa siciliana” 483).

In addition to *sicilitudine* and *sicilianità*, another term that has been used to denote the essence of being Sicilian is *sicilianismo*. An overview of the discussions surrounding the three terms will explain why they are not interchangeable.

Sicilianismo was an ideology developed in the late nineteenth century by the Sicilian dominant classes in opposition to the accusations of backwardness by central and northern Italians. It has come to be viewed as a rather insidious term, denoting parochialism or exaggerated local pride—a specifically Sicilian form of *campanilismo* (O’Connell “‘Zu Luigi’: Pirandello and the Sicilian Literary Tradition” 30). An emblematic *sicilianista* was the nineteenth-century scholar Lionardo Vigo Calanna, the first collector of Sicilian folk songs, who considered Sicilians “gli uomini superiori a tutti in ogni campo” (Correnti “La memoria della ‘siciliania’”).

century. Most of the poets were Sicilian but some came from as far away as Tuscany. Writing in an elevated form of the Sicilian dialect, they mainly followed models established by Provençal troubadours, with love as the principal theme. The first to use the Italian vernacular in an organised way as a form of artistic expression, they compiled an influential and rich body of literature, and, since Dante praised them in *De vulgari eloquentia*, have been considered the originators of lyric poetry. (Christopher Kleinhenz, *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, eds. Gaetana Marrone, Paolo Puppa and Luca Somigli (New York: Routledge, 2007) 1752-54 and Christopher Kleinhenz, “Sicilian School,” *The Oxford Companion to Italian Literature*, eds. Peter Hainsworth and David Robey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 555.)

The term *sicilitudine* was modelled on the concept of *négritude*, which was a movement formed in the 1930s by Francophone African and Caribbean intellectuals, who found solidarity in their common black heredity in their fight against French racism and hegemony. Coined in 1961 by Palermitan poet and artist Crescenzo Cane, *sicilitudine* was later adopted by critics such as Natale Tedesco and writers such as Leonardo Sciascia in direct opposition to the negativity of *sicilianismo*. For Sciascia, *sicilitudine* was a positive form of literary identity as opposed to the civic identity of provincial and corrupt *sicilianismo* (O’Rawe 89). Sciascia’s *sicilitudine* celebrates the noble and universally relevant literature about the island, which is:

[...] non senza particolarismo e grettezza, qualche volta; ma più spesso studiando e rappresentando la realtà siciliana e la «sicilianità» (la «sicilitudine» dice uno scrittore siciliano d’avanguardia) con una forza, un vigore, una compiutezza che arrivano all’intelligenza e al destino dell’umanità tutta (Sciascia 16).

In an interview with Thomas Baldwin many years later, Sciascia stressed the literariness and worthiness of *sicilitudine* in contrast with the other two terms:

“[S]icilianità” è una specie di ideologia del ‘sicilianismo’ [...] la parte più deteriore del “sentirsi siciliano”, mentre la “sicilitudine” per me è il sentimento dell’essere siciliani, ma quasi trasporto in chiave letteraria [...] la parte migliore del sentirsi siciliano (qtd. in Mullen 6).

But *sicilitudine*, in its turn, was rejected by many Sicilian critics and writers, including Camilleri and Vincenzo Consolo, mainly because of its association with the term *isolitudine*—a conflation of *isola* and *solitudine*—spoken of by Bufalino²² and deriving from Pirandello’s views expressed in his “Discorso di Catania” of 1920 on the solitary, insular nature of Sicilians (O’Connell “‘Zu Luigi’: Pirandello and the Sicilian Literary Tradition” 40). In opposition to Sciascia’s view of the term as

²² Bufalino coined the term *isolitudine*, as a variant and in homage to Sciascia’s use of *sicilitudine*, to describe the historic condition of Sicilian spiritual insularity (Catherine O’Rawe, “Mapping Sicilian Literature: Place and Text in Bufalino and Consolo,” *Italian Studies* 62.1 (2007): 89): “Isole dentro l’isola: questo è appunto lo stemma della nostra solitudine, che vorrei con vocabolo inesistente definire ‘isolitudine’, con ciò intendendo il trasporto di complice sudditanza che avvince al suo scoglio ogni naufrago”: Gesualdo Bufalino, *Saldi d’autunno* (Milano: Bompiani, 1990) 17.

universally relevant,²³ Sicilian historian Santi Correnti claims that the concept of *sicilitudine* is narrow-minded and indicates a sort of spiritual isolationism, made up of recriminations and laments, placing Sicily in a world apart. He believes its application to Sicily is antihistorical, completely arbitrary, and has no basis in reality, because the island has always had a European voice in its culture. *Sicilianità*, on the other hand, is a cultural phenomenon that is both Sicilian and European, and thus extroverted and universalising.

Camilleri claims to have never viewed *sicilitudine* as a positive factor, just as, he believes, a black person would find the term *négritude* difficult (Sorgi and Camilleri 40), but he struggles to provide a concrete definition of the term:

Non amo parlare di sicilitudine perché in realtà non so cosa sia. Anzi ricordo di avere scritto sulle pagine siciliane di “Repubblica” un articolo per illustrare quelli che a mio avviso potranno essere i vantaggi di un eventuale ponte sullo stretto e concludevo che certamente il ponte avrebbe fatto scomparire la sicilitudine qualunque cosa essa fosse. Perché non mi piace? Perché sottintende (o postula) un sentimento, una cognizione di diversità. Francamente, mi secca molto sentirmi definire “scrittore siciliano”. Sono scrittore italiano nato in Sicilia. In quanto a cercare di definire la natura dei siciliani attraverso le mie opere, perché no? Ma con un’avvertenza. Le mie opere mostrano solo alcuni aspetti della prismatica composizione della natura dei siciliani. Natura, dicevo, complessa e piena di contraddizioni. (Demontis “Elogio dell’insularità”)

His disdain for the term, which he judges “a repository of clichés” (Pezzotti 248), is expressed in the Montalbano series when the inspector comments on the graffiti on the police station walls: “Figurarsi se in Sicilia, in una scritta offensiva, poteva mancare la parola cornuto! Quella parola era un marchio doc, un modo tipico d’espressione della cosiddetta sicilitudine” (*Il giro di boa* 14-15).

²³ For an interesting discussion of Sciascia’s *sicilitudine* and the trajectory of Sciascia’s intentions regarding the term, see Roberto Dainotto, “The Importance of Being Sicilian: Italian Cultural Studies, *Sicilitudine*, and *Je ne sais quoi*,” *Italian Cultural Studies*, eds. Ben Lawton and Graziella Parati (Boca Raton, Fl.: Bordighera, 2001).

Whatever the semantic differences or similarities of the three terms, the negative associations surrounding the terms *sicilianismo* and *sicilitudine* preclude their use for this study. The absence of negative connotations and the stated preference of Camilleri for the term *sicilianità*, not to mention the more felicitous sound of the word, indicate that it is the most appropriate choice. However, we are not done with terminology complications and imprecisions. *Sicilianità* can be viewed, in an or sociological sense, as a way of describing characteristic traits or the collective consciousness of the Sicilian population, and as such, a component or thematic concern of a literary text, but it can also be used in a literary sense to describe a text that contains certain characteristics, including the theme of *sicilianità* itself, that set it apart from the national literature. According to the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Battaglia), the first recorded use of the term in the sense of “il partecipare di peculiarità linguistiche, espressive e culturali della tradizione siciliana” was in the collection *Saggi Critici* by Riccardo Bachelli, published in 1962:

Fu indotto [il Verga] da nativo e gentilizio genio a rinnovare il semispento linguaggio dei suoi inizi nella potente e rigogliosa sicilianità italiana e italianità siciliana dell’opera sua, con chiara efficacia, e linguistica e poetica (30).

Così, dopo ch’ebbe fatto violenza grande e geniale alla lingua, al gusto, alla materia stessa di tradizione italiana, si riconfermò [Verga] per via sua propria italiano nella sua sicilianità. La sua non fu una secessione, ma una acquisto. (179)

As noted by Guglielmino (“Presenza e forme della narrativa siciliana” 484), Verga, the “mastro” and founding father of literary *sicilianità*, established some specific characteristics of the tradition that Sicilian writers have been following ever since.

Illustrations of both uses of the terms can be found in Barbara Pezzotti’s study of regional identity in Camilleri’s *gialli* (235-69). Of the various characteristics of *sicilianità* she identifies, we can distinguish between the term’s use as a thematic concern and its use to describe a type of text. Distinctive traits of *sicilianità* in Camilleri’s characters include:

- the comic theatricality of the *tragediatore*, used to escape embarrassing or difficult situations;
- the habit of communicating through stories, parables and proverbs and the ability to detect a hidden message in apparently casual conversations;
- attitudes reflecting the unresolved dialectics between north and south of Italy; and
- what Camilleri believes is the quintessence of being Sicilian—contradiction, as exemplified by another trait found in the novels, the kind of friendships that are instinctive and do not need explanations or requests, but that at the same time are exclusive and include the concept of unforgivable betrayal.

In terms of literary *sicilianità*, characteristics of the text that indicate Camilleri belongs to the line of ‘narratori siciliani’ include:

- the contraposition with the north of Italy;
- a network of intertextual references to the works of his Sicilian predecessors as well as to general literature; and
- the use of comic theatricality as a social criticism tool.

Of the various traits of literary *sicilianità* that Verga established, the most interesting as far as this study is concerned is linguistic experimentalism—a literary expression that stands out as peculiar with respect to the national literature. This experimentalism, closely linked with the canon of realism, was born from the problem that Verga faced, and that all Sicilian writers face, in finding a way to narrate a realistic Sicilian voice in a literary language. Their search has led to the creation of texts infused with dialects, archaisms and proverbs, not with the aim of speech mimesis but as literary art—an expression of a hybrid culture, with “Sicily as its focus” but “in dialogue with the wider Italian tradition” (O’Connell “Sicilian Literature and Vincenzo Consolo” 315). The intent is not “folkloric documentation” but rather the “narration of the memory of a specific territory” and the result is not a single, fixed style but a “continuous questioning of and experimenting with modes of creative writing” (Neri and Segneri 93). Furthermore, linguistic experimentalism is the only element that has remained a constant and common denominator of Sicilian

narrative production in the last few decades (Guglielmino “Presenza e forme della narrativa siciliana” 504). Changes in contemporary Sicilian society and attitudes have prompted a change in *sicilianità* and its representation by Sicilian writers. Camilleri’s writing is paradigmatic in its depiction of an “evolving *sicilianità*” (Pezzotti 263), with his abandonment of various traditional traits and ideas, but he has not only retained the trait of linguistic experimentalism, he has taken it to new heights.

3.2 Giovanni Verga and His Linguistic Style

Although Giovanni Verga’s writing career began in 1857 and carried on until 1905, this study focuses on his ‘Sicilian’ stories and novels, published between 1880 and 1889. His collection of short stories, *Vita dei campi*, was the first of these to be published, followed quickly in 1881 by the novel *I Malavoglia*. Another collection of short stories, *Novelle rusticane*, was published in 1883, and after an initial appearance in instalments in 1888, a rewritten edition of *Mastro-don Gesualdo* was published in 1889. All of these works are set within a specific region in Sicily—an area within a fifty-kilometre radius of Catania, where Verga was born and raised, and where he lived on and off throughout his adult life.²⁴

These four works are considered Verga’s masterpieces, and one of the foremost reasons for such praise is the innovative dialectal language in which they were written. His other great innovation lies in his use of free indirect style, whereby the voice of the narrator, individual characters and a mystic village chorus are intertwined. The narrator appears to be one with the chorus, partly because he uses the same dialectal language.

By the time Verga started publishing his Sicilian stories and novels in 1880 at the age of forty, Italy had been unified for over two decades. He had left Sicily in 1865, when he was twenty-five years old, to live in Florence, then the capital of the new nation

²⁴ Literary tourists who visit the locations of the stories can find the specific, signposted houses, churches, taverns, etc., that Verga used as models. Amongst the ‘literary park’ tours promoted by tourism boards are Paesaggio Culturale Italiano’s “Con Giovanni Verga a Vizzini”, the setting of “Cavalleria rusticana” and *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, and Sicily On Tour’s “Parco Letterario Giovanni Verga”, which visits Aci Trezza, the setting of *I Malavoglia*.

and its cultural centre, before moving to Milan in 1873, which by then had taken over as Italy's main centre of artistic and literary salons. During these years he had been writing sentimental, passion-ridden novels that pandered to the popular tastes of the time, but he was unsatisfied with the style of these excessively subjective society novels. As a young man, the Mazzinian-educated Verga had been a fervent patriot and unitarist (Russo "Verga, il poeta della povera gente" 207), but by the mid-1870s he, and the other members of the *verismo* movement, had come to realise that the promises of the Risorgimento had not come to pass. The process had been a diplomatic and military success, but a failure for the lower classes. Evidence of this is the fact that the proportion of the population allowed to vote in the general elections never rose above 9.5% during the nineteenth century (Dickie *Darkest Italy. The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*. 15). The divide between the lower classes and the State was widest in the southern end of the peninsula and in Sicily, where the peasants' dire conditions allowed no thought for the future (Mack Smith 469). In the 1880s Sicilian peasants had no stable labour contracts. Three-quarters of what they produced usually had to be given to the *gabellotto* (the leaseholder of the land on which the peasant worked casually). Families lived together in a single room, and they were considered wealthy if they had a pig to share that room with them. Bread was a luxury, while sugar and meat were unheard of. And malaria was rife, particularly in the south-east of Sicily, Verga's native region (Mack Smith 469-70).

The true conditions in Sicily were generally unknown at the time, but after a period following unification when interest in anything regional was considered unpatriotic, a new fascination with the south was beginning to emerge in the north. Italy was settling into its unified state and was beginning to allow itself the "luxury of regionalism" (Bergin 54). Journalists, artists, folklorists and writers were presenting images of the south as lyrical, picturesque, primitive and exotic (Moe 187). Concern that cultural and linguistic history would be lost if it were not gathered quickly was forming. Among other regionalist writers, one of Verga's compatriots, Giovanni Pitrè, had begun his opus on Sicilian folklore. The leading illustrated magazine of its day, *Illustrazione italiana*, first published in November 1875 by Emilio Treves, was a major proponent of the image of the south as picturesque. As John Dickie has argued, the magazine "displays a striking obsession with the picturesque"... "in even the most

obvious poverty” (“Stereotypes of the Italian South 1860-1900” 129). Living amongst the northern bourgeois and the Milan publishing milieu, a reader and contributor to *Illustrazione italiana*, Verga was well-aware of the fascination with the south.

Juxtaposed against this sentimental, nostalgic view of the south was another, very different perception: that of the *meridionalisti*, who saw the south as a place of poverty, brigandage and corruption, which was resisting the civilisation of the north. The ‘Southern Question’ was born in March 1875 with the publication of the positivist²⁵ Pasquale Villari’s four “southern letters” in the Rome newspaper *L’Opinione* (Dickie *Darkest Italy. The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*. 53-54). Villari’s aim to instil in his bourgeois readers a sense of national mission, based on a true image of the south, inspired other scholars and social reformers to take up the cause, including Giustino Fortunato, Leopoldo Franchetti and Sidney Sonnino—all positivists and supporters of the unified state (Gribaudo 91). Their intention was to understand the south, through scientific observation and analysis, to make others understand it, through their reports, and to show how the ruling class could intervene to make the changes necessary to improve the social conditions.

Meanwhile, literary developments in the rest of Europe, in particular, the works of Émile Zola and the French naturalist school, were stirring up interest in realistic regional literature in literary circles.

A combination of all these elements—Verga’s disillusionment with the failed promises of the Risorgimento, his dissatisfaction with his own literary output, his awareness of the northern bourgeois fascination with the south, and his interest in the literature of the French naturalists—led him to the development, with his friend Luigi Capuana, of the literary school of *verismo*. Their choice of regional, lower class

²⁵ Positivism was a philosophical system first developed by Auguste Comte in France in the 1830s and ‘40s, later spreading throughout Europe. Deriving from Enlightenment thought, it asserted that only empirically testable facts and their interrelations were valid objects of knowledge. The main aim was the universal brotherhood of free and equal human beings, to be obtained through the use of new scientific methods for increasing knowledge. In Italy, positivism had its greatest influence on historical and literary scholarship, including the *verismo* of Verga, which viewed the literary text as a means to document reality. (Robert S. Dombroski, “Positivism,” *The Oxford Companion to Italian Literature*, eds. Peter Hainsworth and David Robey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 478-79)

settings and the sceptical, pessimistic feel of their stories reflect their disillusionment and their lack of hope for the future (Anderson 13). Although they followed the aesthetic canons of the French naturalists, which placed objectivity and natural facts as the supreme elements in their literature, unlike the French, who were intent on implementing change, the *veristi*'s aims did not extend beyond raising awareness of their subjects' plight.

It is important to note that Verga created his innovative linguistic expression without an established narrative tradition behind him. The work of Manzoni, as the first and only great Italian novelist to precede him, was his only model. Because of Italy's socio-political situation, which resulted in a low literacy rate and the lack of an educated middle class, the elitist and literary nature of the national language, and the Latin cultural matrix, prose had traditionally been considered inferior to poetry. Manzoni had not only had to find a solution to the *questione della lingua*, but he also had no Italian formal models to guide him nor an understanding of whom he was writing for.

Most *veristi* remained faithful to the Manzonian norm and Verga himself adhered to the Tuscanised linguistic model in his choice of vocabulary, apart from the odd dialect word. His radical linguistic innovation lies in the framework in which he set his lexicon. In opposition to Manzoni, he created and perfected a language that used the idiom, proverbs, syntax and cadence of Sicilian peasants and fishermen, giving the sense and impression of the Sicilian dialect. Although he used many rare and unusual words because they resembled the dialect forms, almost every one could be found in an Italian dictionary. As Cecchetti has concluded, this rediscovery by Verga of the vitality of the Sicilian dialect occurred precisely through his contacts with the Florentines (*Giovanni Verga* 14). That he was fully aware and proud of the novelty of his writing is clear from the letter he wrote to his French translator, Louis-Edouard Rod, in April 1881 (Serianni 118):

Il mio è un tentativo nuovo sin qui da noi, e tuttora molto discusso, di rendere nettamente la fisionomia caratteristica di quei racconti siciliani nell'italiano; lasciando più che potevo l'impronta loro propria, e il loro accento di verità.
(*Lettere al suo traduttore* 29)

Verga set out to study the reality of everyday life in Sicily. In a letter to Capuana, dated 17 May 1878 (Verga, Capuana and Raya 93), Verga expressed his realist convictions with respect to a sketch he was drafting that would later develop into the novel *I Malavoglia*: “Pel *Padron 'Ntoni* penso d’andare a stare una settimana o due, a lavoro finito, ad Aci Trezza onde dare il *tono* locale.” In this letter he also asks Capuana if he could “indicarmi una raccolta di *Proverbi e Modi di dire siciliani*.” His aim was to reproduce the speech his characters would use so faithfully that the reader would not sense the presence of the author. Form and content were to be one and the same. The story needed to be told through the characters, and therefore the language used must be true to what the characters would actually think and say, and the manner in which they would say it: “colle medesime parole semplici e pittoresche della narrazione popolare” (Verga and Riccardi 203).

It would have been easier to tell his stories in dialect or by using occasional dialect words for local colour. Instead, he chose the more difficult task of using standard Italian, which entailed keeping constant track of the dividing line between Italian and his native tongue (Bergin 109). The Sicilian colour is maintained by using characteristics of the dialect. By arranging the words in Sicilian word order, the rhythm of the dialect is felt by the reader. Noted characteristics of dialect in Verga’s language include the following:

- Long sentences composed of clauses of unequal grammatical weight asyntactically and illogically linked together with the conjunction *e*: “...**e** se la prendeva con Garibaldi che metteva le tasse, **e** al giorno d’oggi non si poteva più vivere, **e** nessuno si maritava più...” (*I Malavoglia* 48).
- Verbs or parts of a phrase repeated at the end of the sentence: “Per voi **tirerei** su tutta la casa, **tirerei!**” (“Cavalleria rusticana” 192).
- The conjunction *che*, a translation of the Sicilian *ca*, used excessively and ambiguously (“il «che» verghiano” (Madrignani 53)): “...**che** [instead of *a cui*] non gliene andava bene più una...”, “...**che** fra poco ci fanno il pignoramento...” (“I galantuomini” 332).
- Frequent use of pleonasm: “già lui non **ci** ha colpa” (*I Malavoglia* 14), “**ci** avrete un risparmio di un tarì a salma” (*I Malavoglia* 17).

- Many rare and unusual words, and uncommon spellings of common words, chosen because they resemble the dialect word: “buscarsi” (*I Malavoglia* 14) to mean *guadagnarsi* because it brings to mind the Sicilian *vuscari*.
- The pronoun *gli* used for both masculine and feminine: “...il marito che **gli** pareva e piaceva...” (“Don Licciu Papa” 253).
- Technical words replaced by familiar or metaphorical expressions: “il naso” and “la schiena” for the prow and stern of a boat (Woolf xix-xxii): “La *Provvidenza* l’avevano rimorchiata a riva tutta sconquassata [...] col **naso** fra gli scogli, e la **schiena** in aria” (*I Malavoglia* 62).
- The *passato remoto* used in place of the *passato prossimo*: “Mastro Cola cadde gridando: – Mamma mia! m’**ammazzarono!**” (“Il mistero” 259).
- Frequent use of the imperfect tense.²⁶
- The use of the verb *volere* with the past participle instead of an object clause with a passive verb: “se volevano prestati anche gli attrezzi” (*I Malavoglia* 44).
- The verb appearing at the end of a clause, with the focalised element preceding it: “E la volontà di Dio **fu** che...” (“Cavalleria rusticana” 191).

The few dialect words he did use were necessitated by context and included economic terms, such as *tari*, *onza* and *cafisi*, and geographical terms, such as *sciara* and *sommacco*, or titles, such as *gna*, *zio*, *massaro* or *curatolo* (Serianni 119).

Verga’s language uniquely reflects the speech patterns of a specific culture and region. His imagery is drawn from the local surroundings. The expressions and proverbs in *I Malavoglia*, for example, a story set in the fishing village of Aci Trezza, are restricted to the elements, the sea, the land and the everyday objects of the peasant and fisherman (Lane xii). The social classes, occupations, home life, amusements, religion and superstitions, characteristic sayings and gestures of the people are

²⁶ Verga justified his persistent use of the imperfect in a letter to Filippo Filippi on 11 October 1880: “Il mio studio...è de fare eclissare allo possibile lo scrittore, di sostituire la rappresentazione all’osservazione, mettere per quanto si può l’autore fuori del campo d’azione, sicché il disegno acquisti tutto il rilievo e l’effetto da dar completa l’illusione della realtà.... A questo proposito ti dirò che tutti quei passati imperfetti che mi critichi, sono voluti, sono il risultato del mio modo di vedere per rendere completa l’illusione della realtà dell’opera d’arte”: G. Nencioni qtd. in Corrada Biazzo Curry, “Illusione del dialetto e ambivalenza semantica nei *Malavoglia*,” *Quaderni d’italianistica* XIII.1 (1992): 31.

revealed unobtrusively and skilfully (S. Appelbaum ix), just as they would be revealed to a newcomer to the area.

Proverbs and popular turns of phrase are used generously in *I Malavoglia* as a way of characterising the empirical wisdom of the poor (Oliva and Moretti 113). Proverbs are very appropriate in a book expressed in the language of the poorest class because proverbs state “common knowledge in common speech” (Woolf xx). Verga uses them to express the collective point of view of the characters without the need for further explanation. He selects them carefully according to the individual speakers’ mood and personality, thus developing their characters without authorial description.

Verga’s determination to remain true to the idiom and the perspective of his characters led to creative difficulties when it came to writing *Mastro-don Gesualdo*. The characters in *I Malavoglia* and in most of the short stories come from the same, impoverished social class, and so the language required was rather uniform, but in *Mastro-don Gesualdo* his characters are more complex and come from different levels of society: the common people, the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. The character Mastro-don Gesualdo has risen from the poorest class to a superior one. His speech is full of proverbial formulas, but in keeping with his new status, the proverbs are enunciated more allusively or fragmentarily than in *I Malavoglia* and the short stories, where they are generally set off by quotation marks. The noble characters speak a more civilised, Tuscan language, the doctors speak their “*latinorum*”, and the characters Bianca and her daughter have their own “*idioma romantico idillico*” (Zagari Marinzoli 33).

The effort required to reflect the different levels would have been tremendous and, according to Cecchetti (*Giovanni Verga* 72), explains why *Mastro-don Gesualdo* is not as “flawless” as *I Malavoglia*. The length of time it took him to complete the novel indicates how much he must have struggled: he started writing the novel in 1881 and was not satisfied with it until 1889, after he had completely revised it. Furthermore, critics claim that this problem of depicting the various idioms of a stratified society was the reason he never completed the other three novels in his projected series entitled *I Vinti*, of which *I Malavoglia* and *Mastro-don Gesualdo* were the first two: “If his lofty expressive goal was, at least to some extent,

responsible for the success of his masterpieces, it ultimately made it impossible for him to invent a language of social classes no longer appealing to him” (Cecchetti *Giovanni Verga* 72). Nor was he successful in his attempts to mix Milanese idiom with Florentine forms in *Per le vie* (1883), a collection of stories set in Milan, which, according to Cecchetti, resulted in an artificial language (*Giovanni Verga* 119).

In addition to his dialect-infused language, Verga’s innovation lies in his use of what has been variously called *discorso indiretto libero* (free indirect speech or free indirect style), “*racconto dialogato o [...] dialogo raccontato*” (Russo *Giovanni Verga* 127), *prosa dialogata* or *racconto narrato* (dialogued narration), or “an embryonic form of interior monologue” (Cecchetti *Giovanni Verga* 50). Free indirect style has none of the formal indicators of direct discourse, such as quotation marks, or of indirect discourse, where the words of the speaker are subordinated to a reporting verb in the main clause, for example: “He said that he wanted to come”. This narrative structure, rare in the early nineteenth century, spread in the second half and was favoured by the *veristi* because it respected the canon of impersonality (Serianni 120). The intention was to remove the division between narration and dialogue, and for the author to identify him/herself directly with the situation. Author and character were to merge into one.

Verga took the free indirect style a step further by often writing, particularly in *I Malavoglia*, from the perspective of not just one character but from that of a whole “mystic village chorus”—“un coro di parlanti popolari semi-reali” (Spitzer 20-21). His goal was to remove all the elements of conventional narrative in which the reader would sense the presence of the author because, he believed, such elements would result in an artificial situation, whereas in real life it is the observers who must make their own observations and draw their own conclusions (Woolf xiv). Verga’s characters speak directly to the reader, much like in a play. The minor characters, the local inhabitants, introduce and carry along the story. It is through the eyes and the colloquial idiom of this invisible chorus that the descriptive portions of the story are produced. The forms of address, nicknames and titles, used in the direct speech as well as in the narrative passages, reflect their voice (Ulrych 271). The effect on the reader is immediate, vivid and bewildering. The reader feels that he or she is a bystander, a stranger who has entered a world where everyone knows each other, and

who is expected to have the background knowledge to the events. Just as in real life, the reader becomes familiar with the characters and their concerns only by degrees as his or her reactions, and those of the other characters, become clear (Woolf xvi).

As the literary critic James Wood points out, free indirect style is at its most powerful when hardly visible or audible, when the reader is not entirely sure who ‘owns’ the words (*How Fiction Works* 10). This is frequently the case with Verga’s writing. For example, in the following passage, the reader is unsure who the words “affine di sentire le due campane” belong to—Padron ’Ntoni, the villagers or Verga the narrator.

Padron ’Ntoni andava di nascosto a farsi leggere la lettera dallo speziale, e poi da don Giammaria, che era del partito contrario, affine di sentire le due campane, e quando si persuadeva che era scritto proprio così... (*I Malavoglia* 15).

The Verghian *che*, described earlier as one of the dialectal characteristics, is also an effective device of his indirect style. With no preceding *verbum dicendi* and not identifiable as a causal *ché*, it keeps the discourse in an intermediate zone in which it is difficult to distinguish who the agent is—the protagonist, the villagers or the narrator (Madrignani 53).

The reader sees things through the characters’ partial eyes and language but, at the same time, through Verga’s omniscient perspective (despite his professed goal of authorial invisibility). While Verga closes the gap between himself and his characters, the reader is aware of the distance between them, and this, explains Wood, gives the text its authorial irony (*How Fiction Works* 11). However, a problem arises with free indirect style, as it can in all fiction, when the reader does not believe that the words used by the characters would be the words they might use if they were real. And herein lies the tension that Verga’s writing produces for the Italian reader.

Verga did recreate the speech of the peasants and fishermen of this specific corner of the world, but only up to a certain point. The peasants and fishermen of his stories would have spoken a regional dialect. Verga chose not to write in dialect (with the exception of a few titles and nicknames, and a very occasional quotation of a proverb

in Sicilian), despite this being a major objection of the critics at the time (Alexander *Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World* 91), most notably proclaimed in this article by the journalist and writer, Edoardo Scarfoglio:

Solamente in una cosa pecca il Verga, ed il peccato è grave: nella forma. [...]
[I]n Italia non si parla la lingua italiana, ma si parla il dialetto. Tranne i Toscani, tutti gl'Italiani quando si trovano a discorrere con persone che non siano del loro paese, traducono dal proprio dialetto, e il piú delle volte traducono male. Ho notato ultimamente questo fatto nella propria persona di Giovanni Verga. Noi parlammo un giorno lungamente insieme, e io notavo lo stento e l'imperfezione del suo italiano, com'egli, certamente, si scandolezzava della sconcezza del mio. Poi andammo a mangiare delle sardelle sopra una tartana messinese ancorata nel porto di Ripa Grande; e subito il Verga cominciò a parlar siciliano coi marinari con una cosí facile speditezza, che io dissi in me medesimo:
“Diavolo! E perché costui non fa parlar siciliano i Siciliani delle sue novelle?”
(96-99)

He had his reasons for avoiding dialect: he claimed that writing in pure dialect would require translation from the Italian in which he thought, and furthermore, he would be restricting his audience, as he explains in the following letter to Capuana written in 1911 (Verga, Capuana and Raya 215-16):

Precisamente voi, io, e tutti quanti scriviamo non facciamo che tradurre mentalmente il pensiero in siciliano, se vogliamo scrivere in dialetto; perché il pensiero nasce in italiano nella nostra mente *malata di letteratura*, secondo quello che dice *vossia*, e nessuno di noi, né voi, né io, né il Patriarca San Giuseppe riesce a tradurre in schietto dialetto la frase nata schietta in altra forma—meno qualche poeta nostra popolare—e anche quelli, a cominciare dal Meli, che sa non solo di letterario ma di umanista.

E poi, con qual costrutto? Per impicciolirci e dividerci da noi stessi? Per diminuirci in conclusione? Vedi se il Porta, ch'è il Porta, vale il Parini fuori di

Milano. Il colore e il sapore locale s'ì, in certi casi, come hai fatto tu da *maestru*, ed anch'io da *sculareddu*; ma pel resto i polmoni larghi.

Consequently, despite his ambition to create speech that was true to life, he actually invented a language that only appeared so. Verga's language did not exist in real life. As Giuseppe Petronio remarked, the language of *I Malavoglia* is a "lingua artificiale, tutta artificiale, come il maccheronico del Folegno, come il gergo dello Zola, come il volgare illustre di Dante" (qtd. in Cavell 138). For those who read his texts critically, this artificiality forms part of the argument that Verga has failed in his aim to merge with his characters. As Richard Cavell shows in his deconstructionist approach to the writing of *I Malavoglia*, its "immediacy", so essential to Verghian principles, is achieved only through skilful "mediacy" (141); its orality is necessarily predicated on its written form.

Furthermore, argues Corrado Biazzo Curry, the illusion of dialect collapses in the translations into Italian of Sicilian lexical items, proverbs and idioms:

...lo spettro interpretativo non risulta sempre chiaro e univoco ai lettori siciliani e non-siciliani, dal momento che la traduzione italiana spesso deferisce e disperde il nucleo significativo originale. In altre parole, sottoponendosi al lungo lavoro dell'impresa di rendere in italiano costrutti semantici e sintattici tipici della lingua siciliana, Verga si scontra con la problematica dell'ambiguità e dell'oscillazione interpretativa magistralmente analizzata da Jacques Derrida in una conferenza sulla traduzione, poi raccolta nel volume *L'Oreille de l'autre*. (35)

As with any translation, the original semantic richness of expressions and lexical items is reduced, and clarity is rendered ambiguous and open to various interpretive possibilities. An idiom that has a precise meaning in dialect often has an ambiguous meaning in Italian.

Various scholars, particularly in more recent years, have pointed out that Verga's 'dialectal' syntax actually contains many traits that can be found in the speech of Italians of any region. Some maintain that his literary language should be hailed, not

for its *sicilianità*, but for its status as a forerunner of the colloquial Italian of today, and as the “epicentro stilistico di numerose soluzioni del rapporto tra la scrittura letteraria e i livelli informali della lingua d’uso” (Testa 147). Linguist and dialectologist, Fulvio Leone, describes the *sicilianità* of *I Malavoglia* as having been greatly exaggerated too often and for too long, and based on “vaghe affermazioni, elegantemente formulate, che hanno la tendenza a perpetuarsi si direbbe quasi per forza d’inerzia” (13), rather than on the deep analysis and comparison with other literary works of the past necessary for a realistic interpretation of the dialectality of the text. He considers emblematic of this view of Verga’s literary language as Sicilian the “idealistic”, “groundless assertions” of Luigi Russo,²⁷ from which later Verga scholars were unable to free themselves (115).²⁸ He also attributes the origin and tenacity of this mistaken view to Verga’s own comments about his “stile siciliano”. His analysis of the text of *I Malavoglia* led him to conclude that Verga was the great initiator of pan-Italian colloquial Italian (122). Giovanni Nencioni, on the other hand, believes that the erroneous views on the dialectality of Verga’s “vera rivoluzione” were formed and retained because they were “mai descritta nelle grammatiche e solo di recente acquisita all’attenzione dei linguisti; e appunto perché mai descritta, ritenuta [...] sintassi dialettaleggiante, mentre è sintassi anzitutto italiana, di un vitalissimo registro dell’italiano” (qtd. in Testa 82).

Examples of Verghian syntactic traits that can be found in the Italian of a semi-educated person, or the informal speech of a well-educated person, from any region include the following (Serianni 119-20):

- The polyvalent *che*, used to mark a simple subordinate relationship, and not always ascribable to a precise syntactic relationship: “quando si trattava [...] di allare una paromella che [when/which] ci sarebbe voluto l’argano” (*I*

²⁷ Russo’s essay, the first monographic study of Verga, was published in 1919 (*Giovanni Verga*, Napoli: Ricciardi).

²⁸ An exception is Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, writing a few years after Russo’s study: “Lo stesso Luigi Russo, l’affettuoso biografo ed espositore di Verga, se non dice che scrive male dice che è scrittore dialettale. Scrittore dialettale in lingua italiana! Sarebbe un’orribile cosa, da giustificare ben altre indifferenze di pubblico e da esautorare ogni propoganda di critica. Verga non è scrittore né dialettale né cattivo.”: Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, “La fortuna del Verga,” *Verga: Guida storico-critica*, ed. Enrico Ghidetti (Rome: Riuniti, 1979) 199.

Malavoglia 13), “le aveva lasciato quella nidiata di figliuoli, che [and] Rocco, il più grandicello, non le arrivava alle ginocchia” (*I Malavoglia* 24).

- Pronominal redundancy—the presence of pronouns that refer to a preceding element (“Allo zio Crocifisso gli finiva sempre così, che...”(*I Malavoglia* 16)) or that anticipate an element to follow (“Un po’ di soldato gli farà bene a quel ragazzo” (*I Malavoglia* 13)).
- The use of *averci* for *avere* (and more rarely of other verbs combined with the same unstressed particle), where *ci* has a simple referential function and constitutes a fixed component of the verb: “già lui non ci ha colpa” (*I Malavoglia* 14), “ci avrete un risparmio di un tarì a salma” (*I Malavoglia* 17).
- The use of *ste* as the short form for *queste* (Weisstein 95).

Romano Luperini also contends that Verga’s language is “una sorta di italiano parlato”, which is “diverso tanto dal dialetto quanto dall’italiano letterario allora in uso”, but, unlike Leone, he restricts the category of possible users to “i siciliani dotati di una certa cultura” rather than to speakers throughout Italy (27).

However, for the general reader, the illusion of reality that Verga creates is so vivid and immediate that it largely overcomes the tensions of the text caused by the paradox of the orality being dependent on the written form and by the gap between real language and what the reader is being asked to accept as real language. And for the general reader of the translated text, who is unaware of the *questione della lingua* and Verga’s controversial response to it, or that the syntactic structure was not based on Sicilian dialect alone, such tension is lessened even more. Furthermore, the problems identified by Curry may even be reduced in the translation into English. When Verga has chosen an Italian word because it resembles the dialect word and the result is ambiguous and distorts the original dialect meaning, the translator into English is not restricted by lexical form and can choose a word that more closely resembles the dialect. But, of course, this is dependent on the translator having extensive and profound awareness and understanding of the dialect from which Verga has translated.

3.3 Andrea Camilleri and His Linguistic Style

Il Premio Chiara alla Carriera viene conferito ad Andrea Camilleri, per avere sedotto l'intero pianeta con la grazia inarrivabile delle sue storie, quintessenza di una Sicilia verissima e inventata. (2010)

Andrea Camilleri's literary success is unprecedented in Italy. His books sell so well that during the second half of the 1990s all of them, at the same time, were at the top of the bestseller list—a phenomenon that has never happened before to any other author in Italy (Pistelli 11). His books have been adapted into a popular television series,²⁹ and his fans have created an exhaustive and well-maintained website (www.vigata.org). In addition to their commercial success, his books have won him significant recognition in the form of honorary degrees,³⁰ various literary prizes,³¹ nominations and appointments to head artistic organisations, and innumerable requests to speak about his books, his life and his opinions. Furthermore, his books have created scholarly interest within universities and academic conferences worldwide. One of the most telling signs of the esteem in which he is held was the official renaming of Porto Empedocle—his home town and the model for the fictional town of Vigàta in his books—to Porto Empedocle Vigàta in 2003. Also in 2003, he was awarded the honour of *Grande Ufficiale dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana*. The readers of his books come from all age groups and all walks of life—from academics to those who believe the characters and events in his novels exist in real life (which is somewhat of a concern to Camilleri (Sorgi and Camilleri 77)). What makes his success so interesting is that his books are written in a language that mixes

²⁹ The first in the series *Il Commissario Montalbano* aired in 1999 and production has continued since then, with an eighth series due to air in 2010. Production of the televised episodes follows the publications of the books so closely that this latest series will include the sixteenth Montalbano book, released to the public only on 20 May 2010: Benedetta Perilli, *Non solo il libreria ma anche in tv Montalbano, quattro episodi in autunno*, 2010, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso Spa, Available: <http://canali.kataweb.it/kataweb-guardaconme/2010/05/19/non-solo-il-libreria-ma-anche-in-tv-montalbano-quattro-episodi-in-autunno/>, 21 May 2010. Rights to the telefilms have been sold to Germany, France, Sweden, Latin America, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain.

³⁰ He was awarded the *Laurea Honoris Causa in Lingue e Letterature Straniere* by the Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione IULM of Milan on 15 October 2002. On 26 May 2005 the University of Pisa awarded him the *laurea specialistica honoris causa in Sistemi e progetti di comunicazione*. On 3 May 2007 the Università degli Studi dell'Aquila awarded him the *Laurea Specialistica Honoris Causa in Psicologia Applicata, Clinica e della Salute (indirizzo Psicologia Applicata all'Analisi Criminale)*.

³¹ Literary prizes include the Premio Mondello 2002, the Premio Racalmare 2003, the Premio Letterario Boccaccio 2007, the Premio Elsa Morante 2009 alla Carriera and the Premio Chiara alla Carriera 2010.

Sicilian dialect with standard Italian—an aspect that many critics and readers consider to be the very reason for his success.

Camilleri came to writing fiction quite late in life. His first novel was published in 1978 when he was in his fifties. Two more novels were published in the following four years, but there then followed an eight-year gap, and it was not until he was nearly seventy that ‘il caso Camilleri’ and his bestselling status was born. His career until then had been spent directing theatre, radio and television, teaching, and writing plays and poetry.

Camilleri’s fictional works³² can be essentially divided into two main categories: historical and ‘civil’ novels based on real events that he has meticulously researched, and a series of detective novels featuring the police inspector Salvo Montalbano. Although books from both categories have been translated into other languages, only novels from the Montalbano series have been translated into English, and therefore they are the focus of this study. The twelve books in the series that have been translated into English so far include *La forma dell’acqua* (1994), *Il cane di terracotta* (1996), *Il ladro di merendine* (1996), *La voce del violino* (1997), *La gita a Tindari* (2000), *L’odore della notte* (2001), *Il giro di boa* (2003), *La pazienza del ragno* (2004), *La luna di carta* (2005), *La vampa d’agosto* (2006), *Le ali della sfinge* (2006) and *La pista di sabbia* (2007). Translations of the five additional books in the series, *Il campo del vasaio* (2008), *L’età del dubbio* (2008), *La danza del gabbiano* (2009), *La caccia al tesoro* (2010) and *Il sorriso di Angelica* (2010) have also been scheduled. The books are set in the present day in the imaginary Sicilian town of Vigàta, a fictionalised version of Camilleri’s hometown of Porto Empedocle.

Although Camilleri left Sicily to live in Rome in 1948 for work reasons, all his stories were born and live in Sicily. Every story is created from an actual event that he has heard or read about (Sorgi and Camilleri 80). The fictional world he has created is superimposed on the real world: places, distances and spatial relations correspond

³² Non-fiction works by Camilleri include *Un onorevole siciliano. Le interpellanze parlamentari di Leonardo Sciascia*, Milan: Bompiani, 2004, *Biografia del figlio cambiato*, Milan: Rizzoli, 2000 (a personalised biography of Pirandello) and various collections of articles and interviews that have already appeared in the press: *Racconti quotidiani*, Pistoia: Libreria dell’Orso, 2001, *Gocci di Sicilia*, Rome: Edizioni dell’Altana, 2001 and *Un inverno italiano. Cronache con rabbia 2008-2009*, Milan: Chiarelettere, 2009.

with actual places to the extent that readers can “rivivere in prima persona le storie, di scoprire passo dopo passo gli indizi, di arrivare assieme a Montalbano alla risoluzione del caso” (Clausi et al. 16).³³ Camilleri openly acknowledges his attachment to Sicily and its literary tradition:

Appartengo totalmente alla cultura della Sicilia e alla letteratura di Verga, Pirandello, De Roberto, Tomàsi di Lampedusa, Brancati, Sciascia, Bufalino e Consolo. Benché abiti a Roma da cinquant’anni, continuo a sentirmi vicino a questa tradizione, a cui mi sono sempre interessato. Per esempio al teatro, dove, oltre a tanto Pirandello, ho anche adattato la *Cavalleria rusticana* di Verga o *I Viceré* di De Roberto. Come scrittore poi le devo tantissimo, ed essa è presente nel mio lavoro perfino in certi dettagli, nelle citazioni più o meno nascoste. La passione per i dialetti per esempio mi è nata leggendo *La paura* di De Roberto. (qtd. in Pistelli 45)

Among the writers mentioned above, Camilleri has a particular connection with Pirandello and Sciascia. All three come from the province of Agrigento in southwestern Sicily, and all three use this specific region in their stories, not just as a background but as having a leading role (Pistelli 45).

The region has also given Camilleri the language with which to express himself. His “passione per i dialetti” is evident throughout his novels, but it initially took some time for him to realise he wanted to use it in his writing. The late start in his writing career at first was due to frustration at not finding his own mode of expression and then, once he had found it, the delay was furthered by the reluctance of publishers to accept his work precisely because of the dialectal language (Sorgi and Camilleri 63). Camilleri has explained how his linguistic expression was born:

³³ A burgeoning tourist trade has grown up around this fictional world. Independent devotees can trace Montalbano’s steps by consulting the guidebook Maurizio Clausi, Davide Leone, Giuseppe Lo Bocchiaro, Alice Pancucci Amaru and Daniela Ragusa, *I luoghi di Montalbano: Una guida*, 2nd ed. (Palermo: Sellerio, 2006). Alternatively, they can be escorted on guided tours such as *Tour ‘Sulle Tracce del commissario Montalbano’*, 2009, Available: <http://www.hermes-sicily.com/itinerari/montalbano.htm>, 9 September 2010 or *The Inspector Montalbano Tour. From Montelusa to Vigata*, 2010, Available: http://www.sicilytourguides.net/Montalbano_tour.htm, 9 September 2010 .

Il linguaggio è nato a casa mia. Era lo slang usato dai miei genitori fra loro e con noi figli: la parte dialettale del linguaggio corrispondeva alle emozioni, quella italiana ufficializzava il discorso. Scrivere in questo modo è stato un duro lavoro, molto difficile. Pirandello, comunque, l'aveva detto già alla fine del secolo scorso: "Di una data cosa la lingua esprime il concetto, della medesima cosa il dialetto esprime il sentimento". (qtd. in Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 18)

By way of example of Pirandello's distinction between Italian and dialect, Camilleri remembers his mother used to say: "*Beddu, cerca di non turnare tardu 'a notti, picchì mi fa' stari in pinseri* altrimenti dopo te la faccio vedere io" (qtd. in Capecchi 86). In Camilleri's view, Italian is the language to use for formal or bureaucratic communication. It lacks subtlety and personality. Dialect, on the other hand, is alive, pulsating, rich with allusion, the true "lingua madre" that is used for thinking and speaking most authentically (Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 27). Italian is inadequate to express the interior world of his characters (Pistelli 15). Only a continual mingling of dialect and Italian, the speech he used as a boy in his family environment, connects him directly with Sicily's mistrustful and prismatic nature. Italian is too abstract and neutral. Its tonality and rhythm are wrong. For Camilleri "il dialetto, meglio sarebbe dire i dialetti, sono l'essenza vera dei personaggi" (Sorgi and Camilleri 120). Language identifies our character, personality, thought, culture and social class ties (Capecchi 75): a person *is* how he or she speaks. Camilleri claims he needs to understand how his characters in his historical novels would have spoken in their own time. While trying to reach this understanding, the character begins to take shape, and "nasce, quasi, dalle parole che deve dire" (Sorgi and Camilleri 121). The character is constructed through his language.

Camilleri also emphasises that the differences between dialects are not just on the surface. He believes that Italians' temperaments and personalities differ according to their native region, and that these differences are reflected in their language. Thus, in order to express one's true feelings one must use one's own dialect.

Si scoprono delle differenze fortissime tra una lingua, un dialetto, e un altro. Il veneto, ad esempio, è una lingua naturalmente teatrale: pensa a Goldoni. Ed è

la ragione per cui, tra i registi, si suol dire che chiunque può fare “Arlecchino servitore di due padroni”. Lo stesso si può dire del milanese, ed infatti nei miei libri tu trovi figure di funzionari lombardi che parlano e ragionano con la forza e l’intensità di un siciliano. Prendi, invece, il genovese: è un’altra cosa. I genovesi sono castissimi: se studi la loro letteratura, per dire, un grande poeta come Edoardo Firpo è un lirico puro. Nei suoi scritti trovi solo cose raffinate. Allora, com’è successo a me di recente, puoi trovarti in difficoltà a far nascere un personaggio sanguigno, terrestre, come sono spesso i miei personaggi, e a farlo parlare in genovese. Superare una difficoltà del genere non è semplice: perché non voglio, questo è il problema, rivolgermi a uno che conosce il genovese, e dirgli, tieni, questo è il testo, traducimelo. Per me non ha senso. Ho bisogno di costruire il personaggio nel suo linguaggio. (Sorgi and Camilleri 121)

Once he made the decision to use dialect in his writing, he remained steadfast in his choice, despite the admonitions of certain editors, critics, and even Sciascia. Camilleri recalls giving Sciascia one of his books to read, *Un filo di fumo*.³⁴

[L]ui dopo un po’ mi diede il suo responso: “Bello, è bello” mi disse, e fu una grande soddisfazione, “ma ci metti certe parole!”. Obiettai che anche Pirandello, nella costruzione delle frasi, adoperava una struttura siciliana. Poi citai proprio un piccolo aneddoto pirandelliano: “Cosa fa un fiorentino quando incontra un siciliano? Pensano ognuno nel proprio dialetto, poi per parlare si mettono d’accordo e traducono. Ma quello che pensavano, nella parola tradotta si annacqua”. (Sorgi and Camilleri 117)

Sciascia was concerned that using too much dialect would impede the reader’s comprehension and prevent the transmission of Camilleri’s ideas. He was particularly troubled by dialect in the essay *La strage dimenticata*, remarking that: “Un romanzo è un romanzo, un saggio è un’altra cosa” (qtd. in Camilleri and Lodato 239). Taking

³⁴ *Un filo di fumo* is based on archival documents that Camilleri had previously gathered and shown to Sciascia. He had hoped that Sciascia would be the one to write about the events uncovered by the documents, but Sciascia convinced Camilleri to write it himself and promised to help him get it published by introducing him to Elvira Sellerio.

this difference into consideration, Camilleri did reduce the dialectal elements in his essay writing, but kept to his own style otherwise.

Elvira Sellerio, editor of most of Camilleri's novels, was initially perplexed by the writing, and Sciascia's criticism of his use of dialectal terms may have contributed to her concern about its reception by the reading public (Sorgi and Camilleri 71). She remembers when she read the manuscript of *La stagione della caccia* (which Sellerio published in 1992): "[R]estai terrorizzata: usava diffusamente il dialetto e mi sembrava destinato a pochi eletti... Poi una notte l'ho letto tutto di un fiato. Lo stampammo... Per me è stato un dono, dopo trent'anni ho capito che so fare bene questo mestiere" (qtd. in Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 19-20).

The language in Camilleri's writing immediately strikes the reader as peculiar with its mix of different language varieties and registers. The predominating language in the novels, which is used by many of the main characters as well as the narrator, is not a pure dialectal form, but rather a hybridisation of Italian and dialect³⁵—a new language that presents the immediacy of the spoken language but at the same time, with all its nuances, is enigmatic and mysterious (Pieri). Camilleri's invention of new words has led to an interesting paradox: "Capita una cosa ben strana e divertente: quelli della Sicilia orientale credono che certe parole inventate da me appartengono alla Sicilia occidentale...e viceversa...in realtà sono tantissime le parole inventate per assonanza..." (qtd. in Pistelli 22). He maintains he is not "un autore dialettale"; he writes in a style he calls an "italiano bastardo", using dialect when "mi sento di adoperarlo" (qtd. in Pistelli 23).

In almost a complete inversion of Verga's literary language composed of Italian vocabulary and dialectal syntax, Camilleri's linguistic blend is suffused with dialect

³⁵ A recent study involving a sociolinguistic analysis of the regional Italian of Sicily in Camilleri's collection of short stories *Un mese con Montalbano* revealed that Camilleri utilises three main types of language to regionalise his texts: Sicilian Italian regionalisms; phonological adaptations of Sicilian dialect terms; and hyperfrequent Italian words. Of these three types, the regional terms comprise 24.4%, the Italianisations of Sicilian dialect 40.4%, and 33.4% are standard Italian words probably chosen because of their similarity to equivalent Sicilian dialect terms: Traci Lee Andrighetti, "Setting a New Standard: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Regional Italian of Sicily in Andrea Camilleri's Commissario Montalbano Mystery Series," University of Texas, 2009.

vocabulary but retains an Italian syntactic and grammatical system, apart from a few vernacular concessions such as the use of the *passato remoto* and placing the verb at the end of the sentence (Pistelli 22) (“Culicchia sono, il commissario mi conosce. Lei mangiò?” (*Il ladro di merendine* 38)) or the inversion of nouns and adjectives (Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un’indagine sul caso Camilleri* 55) (“giornata bona” (bella giornata) (*Il ladro di merendine* 9)). Sometimes, the difference between Sicilian and standard Italian is confined to a single morpheme (Gutkowski 35), for example, the word *criato* formed from the Sicilian *criatu* and the Italian *creato*. The highlighting of all the dialect or dialect-infused words that appear in the opening paragraph of *La luna di carta* demonstrates how widespread the dialect is in the text:

La sveglia **sonò**, come tutte le **matine** da un anno a ’sta parti, alle **setti** e mezza. Ma lui si era **arrisbigliato** una frazione di **secunno** prima dello squillo, era abbastato lo scatto della molla che **mittiva** in moto la **soneria**. Ebbe perciò, prima di **satere** dal letto, il tempo di **girari** l’occhi alla finestra, dalla luce **accapì** che la **jornata** s’appresentava **bona**, senza **nuvoli**. **Doppo**, il tempo fu appena appena bastevole per **pripararisi** il **café**, **vivirisinni** una **cicarata**, andare a **fari** i **sò** bisogni, **farisi** la **varba** e la doccia, **vivirisi n’altra cicareta**, **addrumarisi** una **sicaretta**, **vistirisi**, **nesciri fora**, **mittirisi** in **machina**, **arrivari** alle **novi** in commissariato: il tutto con la velocità di una comica di Ridolini o di Charlot. (*La luna di carta* 9)

At first non-Sicilian readers may be bewildered, but they soon become involved in the linguistic game and become familiar enough with the language to feel part of a world they had initially thought closed to them (Pistelli 18-19; Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un’indagine sul caso Camilleri* 62). According to Camilleri, the dialect of Agrigento is nearer to Italian than any other dialect—a sort of primitive, primordial Italian language—which explains why, after initial difficulties, even readers from Bolzano come to understand it (Rosso 67-68). Readers derive great pleasure from their ability, even though they have no “competenze linguistiche specialistiche” (S. Guerriero qtd. in Arcangeli 207), to decipher what initially appears impenetrable. Their interest in the text is kept alive by the need to continually interpret its meaning, side by side with the urge to work out “whodunnit” (Mikula). The reader’s comprehension is made easier by a consistent nucleus of Sicilian terms, such as

“taliata” (*guardata*), “cataminare” (*smuovere*), “càmmara” (*camera*), “travagliu” (*lavoro*), “picciliddro” (*bambino*), “fìmmina” (*donna*), “gana” (*voglia*), “camurria” (*scocciatura*), “macari” (*anche*), “tanticchia” (*poco*), “babbare” (*scherzare*), “vossia” (*lei*), “accussi” (*così*), etc., and the repetition of proverbs, idioms and sayings (Longo 128). If the meaning of a Sicilian word cannot be easily deduced from the context, Camilleri, aware of the problem, has found a number of ways to explain it (Capecchi 95-96).

Sometimes, in the course of the story, the narrator will intervene by inserting an entry from an imaginary Sicilian-Italian dictionary:

«Ora mi metto a tambasiàre» pensò appena arrivato a casa. Tambasiàre era un verbo che gli piaceva, significava mettersi a girellare di stanza in stanza senza uno scopo preciso, anzi occupandosi di cose futili. (*La forma dell'acqua* 151)

More often, though, the explanation comes in more subtle forms, by repeating the Italian or Italianised word after the dialect one:

Mi scantai, mi vennero i sudori freddi (*Il cane di terracotta* 15).

In other instances, one speaker will use the Italian word after another speaker has used the dialect one:

«Una *gaddrina* mi tagliò la strata».
«Non ho mai visto una gallina traversare quando sta venendo una macchina. Vediamo il danno». (*La voce del violino* 12)

And then there are the numerous passages in which the explanation is given by the same character who has used the word in dialect and who responds to the request for an explanation by a non-Sicilian interlocutor:

«[...] Allora s'appagna».
«Prego?».
«Si spaventa, non capisce più niente». (*Il ladro di merendine* 216)

In this way, readers enrich their own personal vocabulary with words that in Italian would often need roundabout expressions, such as “tambasiare” instead of “girovagare senza un motivo specifico, allo scopo d’occupare il tempo” (Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un’indagine sul caso Camilleri* 19).

According to Simona Demontis, the dialect in Camilleri’s writing symbolises “una memoria storica arricchita da invenzioni prettamente familiari” (*I colori della letteratura: un’indagine sul caso Camilleri* 28), and she gives examples of expressions that stir up connotations and memories: “sfondapiedi” (a hole covered and camouflaged with branches to make a trap), “non è da spartirci il pane assieme”, “sentirsi pigliato dai turchi”, “ci hanno tolto il piacere di fottere” or “nottata (or nuttata) persa e figlia fimmina” (*I colori della letteratura: un’indagine sul caso Camilleri* 25).

The editors of his novels have not felt it necessary to include any additional aids for the non-Sicilian reader, although this has not always been the case. When Garzanti published *Un filo di fumo* in 1980, the editor asked Camilleri to add a glossary in an appendix. Camilleri initially complied, against his will, but grew to enjoy the idea (Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un’indagine sul caso Camilleri* 15). He then went on to produce *Il gioco della mosca*, a small volume of idiomatic expressions, maxims, sayings, proverbs, and so on, from Porto Empedocle, taking as his model the book Sciascia wrote about the language of Racalmuto called *Occhio di capra*. Since then, various ‘dictionaries’ of Camilleri’s language have been produced,³⁶ but since “there is not a single and uniform style, but multiple variations of the same recurrent traits” (Tomaiuolo), these can only be used as a guide.

Camilleri’s long experience in theatre is demonstrated by the fundamental role of the dialogue in his novels. There is little need to describe the characters because their language performs that function. Each character has his or her own language because each has an individual personality, which is why Camilleri creates his characters by

³⁶ See, for example: Gianni Bonfiglio, *Siciliano-italiano. Piccolo vocabolario ad uso e consumo dei lettori di Camilleri e dei siciliani di mare* (Rome: Fermento, 2002), Beppe Di Gregorio and Filippo Lupo, eds., *Dizionario vigatese-italiano delle parole e delle locuzioni che si trovano nel romanzo di Andrea Camilleri “Il cane di terracotta”* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2000), and on the “Camilleri Fans Club” website: Mario Genco, *Il Camilleri-linguaggio*, 2001, Camilleri Fans Clubs, Available: http://www.vigata.org/dizionario/camilleri_linguaggio.html, 17 December 2009 .

writing their dialogue before working out their personalities and behaviour (Capecchi 87).

Not all the characters in the Montalbano series use Camilleri's hybridised language. The State bureaucrats, who care about appearance rather than substance and have strong career aspirations (Capecchi 75, 123), use a language that is flat and homogenised, with no personal nuances or characteristics—an anonymous language made up of bureaucratic terms and platitudes.

[Spoken by Father Arcangelo Baldovino, secretary to His Excellency the bishop:]

«al fine d'impedire ignobili speculazioni e risparmiare alla già addolorata famiglia un ulteriore strazio» (*La forma dell'acqua* 42).

The language of the minor Sicilian characters establishes their socio-cultural level. A heavier dialect is used by members of lower levels—peasants, *mafiosi*, those who have a low level of education:

[Spoken by Signora Montaperto, a “vecchietta dall'aria guerriera”:]

«Signuri Montaperto? Ca quali signuri! Chiddri munnizzari vastasi sunnu!» (*La forma dell'acqua* 148).

Whereas those of the more educated classes speak with no trace of dialect:

[Spoken by Signora Clementina, a cultured, elegant and elderly retired schoolteacher:]

«Mia cugina Carmela si maritò giovanissima con Angelo Cosentino che era colto, gentile, disponibile. Ebbero solo una figlia, Mariastella. È stata mia allieva, aveva un carattere particolare». (*L'odore della notte* 201)

Dialect is also used for local cuisine, and Sicilian proverbs and sayings.

Another linguistic variation is the use of non-Sicilian dialect. In the following example, the meaning is explained in the text, first by Montalbano and then by the character who used the dialect. The origin of the dialect is also made clear in the text:

L'agente Balassone, malgrado il cognome piemontese, parlava Milanese e di suo aveva faccia stremata da due novembre [an allusion to the Milanese dialect poet Delio Tessa].

[...]

«De là del mur, c'è» disse sibillinamente Balassone che oltre ad essere malinconico era magari mutànghero.

«Mi vuoi dire per cortesia, se non ti è troppo di peso, che c'è oltre la parete?» spiò Montalbano diventado di una pericolosa gentilezza.

«On sit voeuij».

«Vuoi usarmi la cortesia di parlare italiano?».

[...]

«C'è un vuoto» disse [...]. (*Il cane di terracotta* 107-08)

Non-native speakers are often represented in a parodist manner. Camilleri is evidently aware that their speech sounds exaggerated, as Montalbano himself remarks on how much the different voices belonging to the ever-changing housekeepers of his Swedish friend, Ingrid, resemble parodies. Clearly Camilleri's intention is to produce a humorous effect.³⁷

Gli rispose una voce di donna che pareva la parodia del doppiaggio di una negra.

«Bronto? Chi balli? Chi balli tu?»

«Ma dove le vanno a raccattare le cameriere in casa Cardomone?» si domandò Montalbano.

«C'è la signora Ingrid?».

«Zì, ma chi balli?».

«Sono Salvo Montalbano».

³⁷ In a paper presented at the AATI/AAIS Convention, Taormina, 22-25 May 2008, entitled "Impegno da vendere: la politica del commissario Montalbano", Mark Chu argues that the effect is racist and negative rather than humorous. He points out the contrast between the neutral language of Ingrid, a Caucasian Northern European, and the parodic language of the dark-skinned maids.

«Tu speta».

Invece la voce di Ingrid era identicale a quella che la doppiatrice italiana aveva prestato a Greta Garbo, che del resto era magari lei svedese.

«Ciao, Salvo, come stai? È da tempo che non ci vediamo».

«Ingrid, ho bisogno del tuo aiuto. Sei libera stasera?».

«Veramente non lo sarei. Ma se è una cosa importante per te, mando tutto all'aria». (*Il cane di terracotta* 66-67)

An interesting characteristic of the novels is the narrator's voice. He generally uses the hybridised language (except for a few passages, such as when he is describing a television programme), instead of the standard language one might expect and, although he does not become directly involved in the plot, he describes the events without the usual omniscient narrator's detachment and neutrality (Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 14). In this way, Camilleri himself is present in the story, revealing his omniscient perspective through the use of irony (Santoro). The narrator often voices the thoughts of Montalbano, who may be ruminating about life:

Dove erano andate a finire [le scomparse mezze stagioni]? Travolte anch'esse dal ritmo sempre più veloce dell'esistenza dell'omo, si erano macari loro adeguate: avevano capito di rappresentare una pausa ed erano scomparse, perché oggi come oggi nisciuna pausa può essere concessa in questa sempre più delirante corsa che si nutra di verbi all'infinito: nascere, mangiare, studiare, scopare, produrre, zappingare, accattare, vendere, cacare e morire. Verbi all'infinito però dalla durata di un nanosecondo, un videri e svideri. Ma non c'era stato un tempo nel quale esistevano altri verbi? Pensare, meditare, ascoltare e, perché no?, bighellonare, sonnechiare, divagare? (*L'odore della notte* 9-10)

Or he may be reviewing the facts of his current investigation:

[...] la picciotta era stata catafottuta dai sò sequestratori dintra a una vasca di raccolta del mosto da tempo non utilizzata. Quindi allato, e in posizione sopraelevata, doviva macari esserci un palmento, il loco indovi la racina viene

pistiata. Perché non si erano preoccupati di livari il termometro? Forse non ci avivano fatto caso, troppo abituati erano a vidiri la vasca accussì come oramà s'appresentava. (*La pazienza del ragno* 169)

Montalbano uses different registers according to his interlocutors in order to put himself on the same plane. Normally he uses the hybridised language—“quell'impasto piccolo borghese (solo i principi parlano un siciliano puro) di italiano e lingua madre” (Camilleri qtd. in Capecchi 85), but for official communications, even when speaking to heavy dialect users, when talking to non-Sicilians, such as his Ligurian girlfriend, Livia, acquaintances of a similar intellectual level or superiors he respects, he uses Italian. However, from time to time he uses the odd dialect term with Livia, often in order to annoy her.

«Livia, non smurritiare!».

«Ti nascondi dietro il dialetto, eh?» (*La pazienza del ragno* 101)

With superiors he does not respect, he uses the dreaded bureaucratese, but with an insincerity that the interlocutor does not detect. Camilleri has a particular aversion to the language used by bureaucrats because he believes that, through history, its purpose has been to exclude and terrorise the citizen (Dellacasa). Here Montalbano's motive for using their language is not only to be understood or to enter their world, but also to ridicule them, safe in the knowledge that their lack of sense of humour will prevent them from noticing his provocative remarks, such as the following one based on the double entendre of *suppurtannu* (Capecchi 88). While the *commissario* asks Montalbano to 'support' him, Camilleri uses a Sicilianised *sopportare*, meaning 'to put up with', in his reply and the *commissario* remains blissfully unaware that he has been insulted.

«[...] Lei dovrà solamente supportare».

«E che sto facendo? Non la sto suppurtannu con santa pazienza?» (*La gita a Tindari* 16)

At times, however, his remarks are not subtle enough to pass unnoticed by his interlocutor and perhaps cause him (all such characters are male in Camilleri's fiction)

a moment's pause to wonder exactly what was intended, as in the following passage in which Montalbano immediately regrets his comment about the commissioner's nose:

«Montalbano, sono stato costretto purtroppo a mettere il naso su alcuni incartamenti che riguardano una sua maleodorante indagine di alcuni anni fa, quando io non ero ancora Questore di Montelusa».

«Lei ha il naso troppo sensibile per fare il mestiere che fa».

Il commento gli era scappato, non ce l'aveva fatta a tenercelo. (*L'odore della notte* 38-39)

Montalbano regularly professes his disdain for platitudes and clichés. He is particularly horrified when he finds himself using them. In fact, his continual ardency almost becomes tiresome, or even questionable (why is it so important to keep mentioning it?), so it is a relief when a cliché comes to his aid in solving a crime and he is able to laugh at himself.

Si sentì rassicurato, sorrise. E dopo il sorriso si cangiò in risata. La ragnatela! Non c'era luogo comune più usato e abusato di quello per dire di un piano tramato all'oscuro. Mai lui l'avrebbe adoperato. E il luogo comune si era voluto vendicare del suo disprezzo concretizzandosi e costringendolo a essiri pigliato in considerazione. (*La pazienza del ragno* 227)

With old school friends or his housekeeper, Adelina, his use of dialect terms increases. He even tries to adapt to the particularly unique macaronic language of the character Catarella—a mixture of bureaucratic and formal Italian, working class Italian and dialect—which is barely comprehensible and highly comical (Vizmuller-Zocco).

«Dottore, lei è di propio?».

«Catarè, io di propio sono. Ci sono state telefonate?».

«Sissi, dottori. Due per il dottori Augello, una per...».

«Catarè, me ne fotto delle telefonate degli altri!».

«Ma se propio lei me lo spiò ora ora!».

«Catarè, mi sono state fatte telefonate propio per me di me?».

Adeguandosi al linguaggio, forse avrebbe ottenuto qualche risposta sensata. (*Il ladro di merendine* 94)

Much of the humour in Catarella's language is based on word play or confusion, as Montalbano, and the reader, work out what he actually means to say when he mispronounces or distorts a word or a personal name, for example, the *scuola elementare* in 'catarellesco' language becomes *scola alimentari* (*La pazienza del ragno* 221), *incendio doloso* becomes *incentio doloroso* (*La gita a Tindari* 140), the town of *Fava* becomes the town of *Pisello* (*La gita a Tindari* 141), and the name *Aisha* becomes a lament (*ahi, ahi, scìa, scìa*) (*Il ladro di merendine* 94). This use of word play extends to other characters' speech, as well, for example, three pages of *La gita a Tindari* are spent building up the confusion caused by Montalbano mistaking the word *sposare* for *sparare*, and play on the name of the bureaucrat Lattes is ongoing throughout the series.

Distinct from the language of the characters' dialogue and the narrator's voice are the passages in which characters have written letters or notes. Characters who would normally use dialect when speaking try to write in more formal language, with varying results, such as in the notes written by Montalbano's housekeeper, Adelina:

Il prigattere Fassio mà dito chi ogghi vossia sini torna a la casa. Ci pighlio parti e cunsolazione. Il prigattere mà dito chi lo deve tiniri leggìo. Adellina. (*Il cane di terracotta* 187)

According to Demontis, Camilleri's intention is not to produce a comic effect (even if the result is partly comical), but rather to reflect the practice by many Sicilians of using the national language in their writing, out of respect for scholastic traditions (*I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 35-36). In the following letter written by the partner of Montalbano's father, the fact that the purpose of the letter is to deliver bad news about the father's health is an additional reason for using formal language.

Caro dottore, a mia non mi regge il cuore perché la notizia che vengo a darle con questa mia non è bella. Da quando la signora Giulia, la seconda moglie di suo padre, si ne è accianata in Cielo, quattro anni passati, il mio socio e amico non è stato più l'istesso. (*Il ladro di merendine* 201)

Demontis argues that Camilleri's style is *the* reason for his success and celebrity status. She cites the critics (*I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 19), who mostly maintain that the strength of the novels comes "in primis dall'invenzione di una lingua che avvolge il lettore come una soffice veste da camera facendolo sentire a suo agio dentro la storia"; the Sicilian author is "uno che ha il tocco, che sa come...maneggiare il suo curioso impasto di dialetti" (Corrado Augias); "in Camilleri l'impasto siculo-italiano non serve solo a verniciare le storie di colore locale", but it is a way to "infondere vigore e brio a una prosa che nei gialli è di solito inerte e convenzionale" (Stefano Malatesta); "una specie di superiore divertimento e un'irresistibile simpatia che viene dal piacere del testo...nasce dal linguaggio inventato in un italiano postunitario...approssimativo ma espressivo, per niente manieristico, anzi veristico e verosimile a un tempo e molto gustoso" (Raffaele La Capria). To this list I will add the learned opinion of the Italian scholar Charles Klopp, who included *La forma dell'acqua* in his list of the top ten Italian novels from 1980 to 2000, chosen because they "seem to have both defined the times in which they first appeared and are at the same time likely to become permanent features of the literary canon" (35). Camilleri's work is included in his list despite the plots, which he finds "repetitive, the solution always revealed on the work's last pages and order restored". It is the "material nature" of his texts, which "provides interesting and amusing local color otherwise inaccessible to non-Sicilians" (37), that makes them stand out as worthy. Demontis agrees: the plots, which are somewhat outworn, and the characters, which are rather prototypical, cannot account for the interest his books receive. Camilleri's way of telling is what makes his work special (*I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 61-62).

As we have seen, Camilleri has chosen to use dialect in his writing to perform various functions, most importantly, as a voice to express his own, very personal style. His Sicilian-Italian hybridisation pays homage to his homeland and carries on its literary tradition, while firmly locating his stories in their real and specific geographical

setting. Other important functions of the dialectal elements are to portray the characters' individuality in relation to others and to express their true emotions, which in Camilleri's opinion standard Italian cannot do. Finally, following on from his theatrical career, he uses his linguistic style to convey humour, in order to entertain his readers, and irony, to express his personal ideology.

3.4 Comparative Analysis of Verga's and Camilleri's Use of Regional Language

Although they are separated by over a century, the responses of Verga and Camilleri to the historical dilemma of what language to use in their writing present noteworthy analogies. Both were revolutionary in their use of dialect in their literary works, blending it with the national language in ways that provided unique and groundbreaking solutions. Verga, writing in a Sicilianised Italian, retained the rhythm and syntax of the dialect but used very few actual dialect words, while Camilleri, in more of an Italianised Sicilian, has created a hybridised language that is filled with dialect words.

It was Verga who initiated the tradition of blending the national and dialect literatures. In the words of Vincenzo Consolo, another Sicilian whose writing is highly marked by linguistic mixture, Verga's linguistic experimentation is the "unavoidable matrix" (Bouchard and Lollini 266) and "the most radical opponent" of Manzoni's "linguistic utopia" (Bouchard and Lollini 279). Camilleri, with his linguistic style described as "italiano bastardo" by one of his own characters (*Il cane di terracotta* 54) and confirmed as such by the author himself (qtd. in Pistelli 23), is one of the most recent dialect experimentalists and the first to appeal to mass audiences. While both writers are rebelling against the imposition of linguistic standardisation and domination, their use of dialect and the reception their works received were affected by their different cultural and temporal contexts, as the sociolinguistic relationship between dialect and the national language during the years after Italy's unification, when Verga was writing, is very different from what it has become in Camilleri's time, with the expanding European Union and the current climate of globalisation.

The contrast of the two writers' styles can be attributed to their respective cultural and temporal positions and the very different prevailing sociolinguistic relationships between dialect and standard Italian. Verga, writing at a time when the overwhelming majority of Italians did not speak the national language, chose not to use dialect vocabulary because he believed in the Manzonian ideal of a standard literary language. He was also concerned about being understood by his readers, a rather restricted literary elite, who were certainly not to be found amongst the Sicilian peasants and fishermen he depicted in his writing. But perhaps his most significant motive for shunning dialect was his own personal attitude towards it, associating it with illiteracy and a lack of culture, a prejudice held by many Southern Italians of his day.

Such prejudices have been overcome to a certain extent, and Camilleri's sustained effort has now overcome them even further. But, while he uses his regional language to fight impersonal standardisation, now that the national language has been firmly established as the first language of most Italians, additional forces of domination and homogeneity are entering from beyond Italy's borders.

Amongst the various analogies presented by the literature of Verga and Camilleri and their intentions behind their methods, is this dissatisfaction with traditional literary language. Both writers were aiming for a language of true expression, a language that would represent reality and be true to what their characters would really speak, and for both writers, the national language was unable to perform that function. And both, after migrating to big cities on the continent, intermittently returned to their homeland, and their personal memories, in search of that true language. Both were successful. Furthermore, they both claim to have struck upon their own unique linguistic style in a sudden eureka moment. Although critics have debated the degree to which his statement should be taken at face value,³⁸ Verga claims he discovered his unexpectedly when his eyes happened upon the writing in a sailor's logbook:

³⁸ In particular, Cecchetti argues that to speak of Verga having undergone a sudden transformation is to run "il rischio di cadere in un facile errore: il fare intendere che un uomo dopo un certo numero di romanzi tutt'a un tratto cambi e diventi un altro. L'evoluzione è sempre cosa lunga e lenta, nell'uomo come in natura", and he offers *Nedda* as evidence of the evolutionary process: Giovanni Cecchetti, *Il Verga maggiore: Sette studi* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1968) 5-6.

È una storia semplice. Avevo pubblicato qualcuno dei miei primi romanzi. Andavano: ne preparavo degli altri. Un giorno non so come, mi capita fra mano una specie di giornale di bordo, un manoscritto discretamente sgrammaticato e asintattico, in cui un capitano raccontava succintamente di certe peripezie, superate dal suo veliero. Da marinaio, senza una frase più del necessario, breve. Mi colpì e lo rilessi: era ciò che io cercavo, senza darmene conto distintamente. Alle volte, Lei sa, basta un segno, un punto. Fu un fascio di luce. (qtd. in Bergin 55)

While Camilleri suddenly realised one day when talking to his parents that he already had the perfect style—the language he had always used with his family:

Ecco, il problema è stato l'individuazione di una voce mia. E l'ho scoperta del tutto casualmente: raccontai a mio padre una cosa molto buffa che era accaduta in uno studio televisivo e mio padre rise molto. Poi tornò mia madre e mio padre le disse: "Andrea ha raccontato una cosa, guarda, che è successa oggi nello studio" e cominciò a raccontarla. Poi si fermò e disse: "Raccontagliela tu, perchè tu gliela racconti meglio di me"; e allora io gli chiesi: "In che senso gliela racconto meglio?". Così scoprii che per raccontare adoperavo senza saperlo parole italiane e parole in dialetto, e quando avevo bisogno di un grado superiore di espressività ricorrevo al dialetto. Tutta la mia scrittura che è venuta dopo è una elaborazione di questa elementare scoperta avvenuta allora. ("Linguaggio")

Once they had decided upon their styles, they both remained steadfast in their choices, despite the initial criticism they received, Camilleri for using dialect since it would impede his readers' comprehension and Verga for *not* using it. Many of the critics would have preferred him to use actual dialect, at least for his characters' direct speech; others thought the stories should have been written completely in dialect.

Camilleri claims that by using only Italian he would be watering down his true expression because he would have to translate it from the language in which he thought. Curiously, Verga also claimed that if he followed the suggestions of his critics, he would have to translate from the language in which he thought. What is

curious is that, despite his questionable command of Italian, he claimed it as the language in which he thought and dialect as the language in which he would have to translate.³⁹ He was also concerned with restricting his audience, but Camilleri did not bow to concerns that the dialect would impede comprehension. Instead he devised various methods to assist his readers to understand and retain the vocabulary. The result is a text that at first appears incomprehensible to the non-Sicilian Italian reader, but soon becomes an enjoyable linguistic game.

Another common point is the dialogic aspect of their texts. Dialect is essentially an oral variety of language (Haller *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect* 16), which makes it particularly suited to dialogue, and so it has been used most often in literature by poets and dramatists. Dialogue has a fundamental role in the texts of both Verga and Camilleri. The stories are told through their characters, with the dialogic qualities spreading into the narrative stream in intriguing ways. In Camilleri's writing the voice of the narrator describes the events without the usual narrator's detachment and neutrality, while Verga uses the eyes and the colloquial idiom of an invisible chorus for the descriptive portions of his story. In both cases, the dialect-infused languages thus flow naturally into the narrative stream.

Ideologically, Verga and Camilleri share a concern about the inequality between regions and classes, and both use dialect to draw attention to it. But their different social and temporal contexts and the different prevailing sociocultural relationships between dialect and the national language affected their linguistic choices and their intentions.

A comparison of the linguistic situation in Verga's time with that of Camilleri shows a vast difference in the proportion of Italians familiar with the literary standard.

The most significant difference between the texts of the two writers as a result of the change in the nation's linguistic situation is that Verga avoids Sicilian vocabulary,

³⁹ That Verga spoke Italian badly is commented on by Denis Mack Smith, *A History of Sicily: Modern Sicily After 1713* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968) 495 and Edoardo Scarfoglio, *Il libro di Don Chisciotte* (Naples: Liguori, 1990) 99. Also to be noted is a comment by Paolo Milano that Verga was the first Italian novelist "to *think* in dialect (in his case, the Sicilian) while *writing* in Italian; in other words, he transposed into literary Italian the expressions and metaphors, in which his vernacular was so fertile": Paolo Milano, "With a Patience Greater than Doom," *New York Times* 26 April (1953).

while Camilleri uses it wholeheartedly. Verga wanted to give the sense of dialect as a way of pointing to the reality of the linguistic situation, which was so revealing of the deep divisions between regions and classes, with the majority of the nation speaking regional dialects and only a small minority speaking the national language. But he was concerned about impeding comprehension and restricting his audience. He was already writing for a restricted audience, that of upper class non-Sicilians, and certainly not the Sicilian peasants and fishermen whose language he was representing in his writing. Furthermore, his own personal attitude probably coincided with that of other Southern Italians of the day that associated dialect with illiteracy and a lack of culture.

Camilleri, on the other hand, has not bowed to the concerns expressed by some early critics that dialect would impede comprehension of his writing. Instead, he has devised various methods to assist his readers to understand and retain the vocabulary.

Camilleri has successfully created a very natural-sounding hybridisation. But the naturalness of Verga's prose, despite his ambition to avoid a sense of artificiality—to create a language that is true to what his characters would actually think and say, and in the manner in which they would say it—is severely hampered by his shunning of dialect vocabulary. He has created a tension for his readers by asking them to believe that his characters are speaking as they would speak in real life, even though Italian readers would be well aware that such characters would speak in dialect.

Verga's intentions were not to raise the status of dialect. His aim was to represent, not change, reality, whereas Camilleri clearly intends to raise the status of dialect and works very hard at it—successfully, many would argue. Both writers are fighting against the social inequality that is revealed by language. In Verga's writing, class distinctions are made evident by dialect use. The characters who use it are all destined for a hopeless existence. The dialect in Camilleri's texts does represent education and class in certain characters, such as Montalbano's housekeeper, Adelina. And the pretentious, obfuscatory, cliché-ridden speech of characters in positions of bureaucratic power, who are often morally corrupt, serves to demonstrate how language is used to wield power. In this way, he demonstrates the existence of linguistic inequality. But at the same time, by clearly ridiculing such characters, not

restricting dialect to poor, uneducated characters and giving his protagonist Montalbano—a well-read, intelligent man—the ability to navigate amongst, and enjoy, all the various language varieties, Camilleri promotes social equality through language. He is declaring that the national language is not superior to dialect.

Verga's dialectal style did not meet with a very positive reception when it first appeared in print. Readers loved the picturesque elements of his stories, but shunned his strange language. One of the main criticisms was that Verga was “making a language of his own brand” (Alexander *Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World* 91). Nevertheless, with time his blended style came to be fully appreciated.

Camilleri's style, on the other hand, was readily embraced by his Italian readers, whether Sicilian or not, to such an extreme that his readers now use *camillerismi*—words from his novels that have spread into popular use. This appreciation of Camilleri's dialect is so widespread because he blends it so skilfully with other language varieties, and because he has created such an enjoyable linguistic game for his readers. Camilleri uses dialect in a way that crosses Italian linguistic and cultural divisions and thus increases inter-regional understanding. Such an endeavour contrasts sharply with the proposals by the Lega Nord that would use dialect to erect walls.

Another sharp contrast is the enormous difference between the vitality of both Verga's and Camilleri's dialectal languages—the result of their principal aims to create languages of true expression—and the government's use of dialect as a propaganda tool to promote integration of immigrants—a use that has no connection to real world language patterns.

Italian literature has Verga to thank for opening it up to a mutually enriching interaction between dialect and Italian. And now, Italian society can thank Camilleri for this, as well.

Chapter four: Translation of Verga's Works

This chapter begins with a general discussion of the challenges of translating Verga's works as noted by various commentators and by Verga himself, and the various stages of Anglophone interest in Verga's work. I analyse the translations of Verga's works on two different levels. At one level, I consider, in chronological order, the work of each of the fifteen English-language translators of Verga, through an investigation into their backgrounds and the paratextual elements of their translations. This section also looks more closely at the different stages of Anglophone interest in Verga and explores the critical debate that focuses on the work of three translators in particular. The other level of analysis, which follows in Chapter Five, is a more in-depth, comparative analysis of the four translations of the first chapter of *I Malavoglia*.

4.1 The Challenges of Translating Verga

The regional and idiomatic nature of Verga's language—one of the main reasons his works were considered masterpieces—not only made writing difficult but also rendered translating the works challenging. Before attempting his translations, D. H. Lawrence recognised the challenges he would face, as he revealed in a letter to his friend, Edward Garnett, dated November 1921:

[Verga] is *extraordinarily* good—peasant—quite modern—Homeric—and it would need someone who could absolutely handle English in the dialect, to translate him. He would be most awfully difficult to translate. That is what tempts me: though it is rather a waste of time, and probably I shall never do it. Though if I don't, I doubt if anyone else will—adequately, at least. (qtd. in Lawrence, Reeve and Worthen li)

Even an “adequate” translation may not have been up to the task of carrying over Verga's “extraordinary” qualities. Fifty years later, in the preface to his biography of Verga, Alfred Alexander (*Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World*) declared that: “Adequate translations of his main works have failed to make the impact they

deserve, probably because they lose too much of their flavour and character in the process; further translations are unlikely to remedy this.”

Ulrich Weisstein, in an essay entitled “Giovanni Verga’s ‘Cavalleria Rusticana’: A Translator’s Nightmare?”, identifies the stylistic and linguistic peculiarities as specific challenges for the translator (in addition to the challenge of rendering the text’s literal, metaphorical, and symbolic meaning). Somehow the translator needs to “find a way of reproducing or recreating the interplay between the lexical and syntactic Sicilianisms” and the “solid underpinning provided by standard literary Italian” (Weisstein 94).⁴⁰ How, he wonders, are translators to cope with the problem of seemingly random interweaving, if even non-Sicilian Italians find it hard to do so? Using standard language throughout “will hardly suffice”.

Verga’s letters to his French translator, Edouard Rod, provide evidence that he himself was concerned about the difficulty his unique style of writing presented to a translator. A lack of familiarity with or proximity to the region would impede the translator’s ability to give the stories the vividness and immediacy of the original.

Sarei molto soddisfatto se potessi sperare di darle coi bozzetti della *Vita dei campi* l’impressione netta e viva del carattere, del costume e del paesaggio siciliano, tanto lontani da Lei in tutti i modi (*Lettere al suo traduttore* 27).

However, since Verga had, in a certain sense, translated his stories from Sicilian into Italian, he was hopeful that the Sicilian “fisionomia” could, at least to a certain extent, be rendered into French, as well. He almost seems to expect his translator to be able to bypass his Italian text and reach all the way into its Sicilian foundation.

So bene la grande difficoltà che vi è a tradurre in un’altra lingua questi schizzi che hanno già una fisionomia tutta loro anche nell’italiano. [...] Per Lei, francese, le difficoltà saranno maggiori [...] Le mando come prova un tentativo che [...] non le sarà inutile per avere un’idea di quel che riuscirebbe il tentativo che le propongo lasciando più che è possibile allo scritto nella traduzione

⁴⁰ I take issue with Weisstein’s view of the “solid underpinning provided by standard literary Italian”. In my opinion, the underpinning is Sicilian, while the surface is standard Italian.

francese la sua fisionomia caratteristica siciliana, come io ho cercato di renderla nell'italiano. (*Lettere al suo traduttore* 28-30)

Verga offered assistance to Rod in dealing with problems presented by the Sicilian style:

Onde agevolare il suo compito io mi metto a sua disposizione per aiutarla in quelle parti della traduzione dove il carattere e l'indole dello stile siciliano sarebbero, non solo per lei straniero, ma anche per un italiano di una difficoltà insormontabile (*Lettere al suo traduttore* 38).

Not only did he help in matters of comprehension, he gave advice on translation strategies regarding regionally bound elements, favouring omission when such elements were “intraducibili”, or substitution with a target-language expression, rather than transferring the form and/or content.

Farete bene a sopprimere o a sostituire quei proverbi che sono intraducibili in francese, e quegli incidenti legati dal *che*, caratteristici in siciliano, ma che anche nell'italiano formarono la mia disperazione quando intrapresi questo tentativo arrischiato di lasciare più che potevo l'impronta del colore locale anche allo stile del mio libro (*Lettere al suo traduttore* 48-49).

Whether he was willing to extend assistance and advice to translators other than Rod is not known. We do know that he was so angry at the quality of a French translation of *Mastro-don Gesualdo* that he disowned it. In his opinion, not only did the translator have no knowledge or concern for anything that was not French, but her grasp of her own language fell woefully short of the task. Verga evidently understood the importance of the translator's creative writing skills. His comment in the following passage regarding “com-paternità” also indicates that, this case excepted, he generally viewed translators on a level field with authors.

...non ho più il coraggio d'andare avanti, e vi restituisco le bozze talis et qualis, e me ne lavo le mani. Se potessi restituendo il denaro all Casa Ollendorff disfare il contratto ne sarei contentissima: Mlle Laurent a furia di

tagliare e svisare ne ha fatto tal cosa grottesca del mio povero Don Gesualdo che io lo disconosco, lo ripudio, e non vorrei per tutto l'oro del mondo assumerne la com-paternità dinanzi al pubblico francese, per quanto egli sia incurante e ignorante di ogni cosa che non sia francese. [...] la traduttrice non conosca affatto l'indole e il valore dell'italiano non solo, ma quasi quasi direi che conosca poco anche il francese. La mia povera prosa poi—difettosa, tormentosa e tormentata, sia pure, per voler avere il suo colore—in mano di lei diventava una vera platitudo. [...] Io no voglio più saperne e lascio andare la cosa a va-l'eau, poiché non posso fare altrimenti. Ma non intendo assumerne la responsabilità letteraria e la traduttrice metta solo il suo nome alla traduzione, senz'altro. (*Lettere al suo traduttore* 141-42)

No evidence exists of communication between Verga and the three English-language translators—Mary A. Craig, Alma Strettell and Nathan H. Dole—whose versions were published during his lifetime. D. H. Lawrence, however, expressed his desire to meet with the writer soon after starting work on his first Verga translation and was disappointed that he just missed meeting him: “Poor old Verga went and died exactly as I was going to see him in Catania. But he was 82 years old.” (Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 186) It is our regret, too, as such a potentially fascinating meeting would have certainly been recorded by Lawrence through his practice of prolific letter-writing. Furthermore, had ongoing communication been possible, the comprehension flaws that mar Lawrence's translations might have been avoided.

4.2 Historical Overview of Translations into English of Verga's Works

The level of interest in Verga in the Anglophone world has tended to rise and fall over the last 130 years, with the publication of new translations occurring in stages. However, as can be seen in Appendix 1, which provides a complete history of publications of translations of Verga's works into English, including reprinted editions, we can see that production has been remarkably constant and long-standing. Most gaps between publications are of only two or three years, and there are ten years in which more than one new or reprinted publication appeared: 1893, 1925, 1950,

1953, 1962, 1973, 1975, 1982, 1989 and 2002. The only gaps of more than six years occurred between 1896 and 1907, 1907 and 1920, and 1938 and 1947.

The first stage of new translations—the 1890s—came soon after Verga’s work first found success in Italy. Thanks to the attention of French critics and realist writers, a trend towards interest amongst English-language readers in provincial life, as shown by the popularity of Thomas Hardy’s novels and American local colour fiction (Pite 258), and the huge success worldwide of the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* in 1890, his major works were translated very quickly into English. But these earliest translations were read more for anthropological than literary reasons (Severino 56) and did not stir up much interest (Rundle 1461). They include Mary A. Craig’s translations of *I Malavoglia* (1881) and *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1883); selections of stories from both *Vita dei campi* and *Novelle rusticane* translated by Alma Strettell (1893) and Nathan Haskell Dole (1896); and, the last of the early translations, Frederick Taber Cooper’s version of “Cavalleria rusticana” (1907).

The second stage, that of D. H. Lawrence as interpreter, occurred in the 1920s (Spiers). Real interest in Verga amongst English-language readers began with his translations, *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1923), *Little Novels of Sicily* (1925) and *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories* (1928). Many decades would pass before another translation was offered to readers, but at the time much was written in literary reviews on Lawrence’s relations with Italy and on his translations (Spiers 806-08).

In the 1950s translations and reissues began to multiply, bringing about the third stage of interest. Eric Mosbacher’s translation of *I Malavoglia* was published in 1950 and reissued in 1955; Giovanni Cecchetti produced a selection of short stories in 1958; Lawrence’s *Little Novels of Sicily* was reprinted in 1953 and 1958, and his *Mastro-don Gesualdo* in 1955 and 1958. A great many scholarly Verghian studies also began to appear at this stage, as part of the general rise at the time in the number of American university students specialising in Italian language and literature—a result of the many students of Italian origin who were overcoming their “inibizioni politiche (retaggio fascista), o complessi socio-economici (emigrazione)” (Severino 60). This interest has continued fairly steadily ever since, with new translations—the most recent in 2003—and reprints of earlier ones still appearing every decade, including

Raymond Rosenthal's (1964) and Judith Landry's (1985) versions of *I Malavoglia*, and selections of short stories by Alfred Alexander (1972), Harry Maddox (1996), G. H. McWilliam (1999), Christine Donougher (2002), Stanley Appelbaum (2002), and J. G. Nichols (2003).

Apart from a little-known, very early version⁴¹ of *Storia di una capinera*, until the 1990s, all translations into English were of Verga's Sicilian works, but since then there have been three publications from his earlier career: *Una peccatrice* (1866) translated by Iain Halliday (*A Mortal Sin*, London: Quartet, 1995); *Storia di una capinera* (1870-71) translated by Christine Donougher (*Sparrow: The Story of a Songbird*, Cambridgeshire: Dedalus, 1994) and by Lucy Gordon and Frances Frenaye (*The Sparrow*, New York: Italica Press, 1997).

4.3 Corpus of Analysis

While I would have liked to carry out an in-depth comparative analysis of the work of each of the fifteen translators of Verga into English, the large number makes such a task beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, I have narrowed the corpus for a detailed analysis to the four published translations of *I Malavoglia*, which follows in the next chapter. However, I also wanted to trace an outline of all the English-language translations of Verga. Who are the translators and what are their backgrounds? How were their translations received? What can we glean from the paratextual elements of their works regarding the theory and practice of their translations?⁴² With these questions in mind, but without analysing the texts in detail,

⁴¹ According to De Angeli, the first translations of works by Verga to appear in English were an anonymous translation "The Story of a Capinera", *Italia, A Monthly Magazine* (January-March 1888) and "Nedda" by Veneri Filippi, also in an 1888 issue of *Italia*: Paola De Angeli, "Primi contributi inglesi alla critica verghiana," *Collected Essays on Italian Language & Literature Presented to Kathleen Speight*, eds. Giovanni Aquilecchia, Stephen N. Cristea and Sheila Ralphs (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971).

⁴² In Gérard Genette's seminal work on paratext, he repeatedly emphasises that the most essential of the paratext's properties is functionality. The relevance he accords to the author's purpose is based "on the simple postulate that the author 'knows best' what we should think about his work": Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 408. And while Genette would consider the translator's preface as "allographic" rather than "authorial", meaning that the author of the preface is not the author of the text, I would argue that as the writer of the translated text, the translator also "knows best" what we should think about his or her work. Just as in Genette's description of the zone of paratext, the translator's preface is a locus of transition and transaction: "a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that [...] is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it": Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 2.

I investigate those who translated the short story “Cavalleria rusticana” from the *Vita dei campi* collection, thus taking into consideration the full roster of the fifteen translators into English of Verga’s Sicilian works. In order of publication of the translations, they are: Mary A. Craig (1890), Alma Strettell (1893), Nathan H. Dole (1896), Frederick Taber Cooper (1907), D. H. Lawrence (1928), Eric Mosbacher (1950), Giovanni Cecchetti (1958), Archibald Colquhoun (1961), Raymond Rosenthal (1964), Alfred Alexander (1972), Judith Landry (1985), Harry Maddox (1996), G. H. McWilliam (1999), Stanley Appelbaum (2002) and J. G. Nichols (2003). Of these, Craig, Mosbacher, Rosenthal and Landry translated *I Malavoglia* and the remaining eleven translated “Cavalleria rusticana”. These two texts were written almost contemporaneously by Verga and thus, according to Cecchetti “nella cronologia artistica del Verga van messi sullo stesso piano. [...] Anche la tecnica narrativa e lo stile rivelano una somiglianza che prova questa contemporaneità [...]; l’autore di opere come queste era stilisticamente maturo quanto l’autore de *I Malavoglia*” (“Aspetti della prosa di ‘Vita dei campi’” 30). Furthermore, “Cavalleria rusticana”, in early drafts, was originally an episode from *I Malavoglia*.

After Verga decided to remove “Cavalleria rusticana” from the novel, he had it published on its own in the 14 March 1880 edition of *Il Fanfulla della Domenica*, the weekly literary supplement to the Roman *Fanfulla* daily newspaper, and then, in slightly modified form, as part of the first edition of the collection *Vita dei campi* published by Treves in the same year, which forms the basis of all subsequent editions and translations (Weisstein 94). It was then reproduced in the Neapolitan weekly *Fortunio: Cronaca Illustrata della settimana* on 15 January 1891 (Tellini 113). The story gained new life as a one-act play, adapted by Verga in 1883, its success aided by the performance of the internationally renowned actress Eleonora Duse, for whom Verga wrote it. But the story’s worldwide notoriety, unbroken still today, is due to its reincarnation as an opera by Pietro Mascagni, with the libretto, based on Verga’s play, written by Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti and G. Menasci, without Verga’s knowledge or consent. He considered the opera a travesty of his work and sued for damages, for which he was finally awarded 143,000 lire in 1893 (White 88). Various film versions, as well as a ballet, have also been inspired by the story. Not only has it been adapted into various genres, but according to historical anecdote, Verga himself adapted it from real-life events that had occurred fifteen years previously.

Verga intended *I Malavoglia* to be the first in a series of five novels, to be called *I Vinti*. Only it and the second, *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1889), were ever completed. He started work on the series in 1878 and by the end of 1880 had completed *I Malavoglia*. In the January 1881 issue of the periodical *La nuova antologia*, an excerpt from the novel, entitled “Poveri pescatori”, appeared; Treves published the full novel the following month. Like “Cavalleria rusticana”, the story inspired adaptation. Luchino Visconti’s 1948 neorealist film *La terra trema*, loosely based on the novel, was filmed in Aci Trezza, the town in which Verga had set his story, using non-professional local people as actors. The dialogue is in Sicilian, with an Italian voice-over and subtitles.

4.4 Verga and the English Reader Prior to the First Translation

Prior to the publication of the first translation into English of a work by Verga, some interest in the Sicilian writer had already been stirred up amongst English readers through articles in periodicals, possibly as a result of the British interest in “all things Italian” that had been stimulated by the Risorgimento (France 490). However, readers of the first such article may well have decided to avoid Italian fiction entirely. In 1872, the Italian writer Angelo de Gubernatis wrote in the *Athenaeum* a scathing judgement of Italian romances and novels generally: “they all resemble each other in the slovenliness of their workmanship, in the poverty of their plots, and in the entire absence of good taste” (qtd. in De Angeli 304). The one exception he makes is Verga’s “La Storia di una Capinera”, which he claims is “both original and poetical and stands out from the mass of commonplace insipidity and rubbish calling themselves romances”.

Much more inviting was an article that appeared in 1881 in the *Fortnightly Review* by Frances Eleanor Trollope, a long-time resident of Italy (Chandler 260) and a novelist and translator of Italian. She notes that “of all contemporary continental literatures, the Italian is probably the least known to English readers” and that “the language is very little cultivated among us in comparison with French and German” (459). Trollope attributes the paucity of modern Italian literature in comparison with other European literatures to Italian writers’ localisation of their reputations due to the “still imperfect unification of the kingdom”. Verga, however, she believes, has risen above

this localisation through his “singular merit”, and although “studies of nature and fact”, Verga’s work differs intrinsically from the French realist novels of Zola and his school. Trollope considers that *I Malavoglia* demonstrates that Verga “has proved himself to possess powers of the very highest kind”, and she draws attention to how Verga has confronted the difficulties of the literary use of the Italian language, “which can hardly be estimated by a foreigner” (460). As De Angeli points out, Trollope’s article demonstrates extremely insightful observations on Verga’s language and narrative method when we consider that hers was one of the first critical essays on Verga’s art, not only in England, but also in Europe (304-05). Verga, himself, was gratified by Trollope’s grasp of his artistic intent, as he expressed to Rod in a letter of 7 December 1881: “mi fece piacere un articolo dell’ottobre scorso della Rivista bimensile di Londra che entrò perfettamente nelle mie idee e nel mio processo artistico, fortuna rara per chi scrive” (*Lettere al suo traduttore* 49).

Two years later, *Cornhill Magazine* published an article written by the author and translator Linda Villari, wife of the *meridionalista* Pasquale Villari, which praises Verga’s ability to “merge [...] himself in his subject, conceal[ing] the hand that guides his puppets, and allow[ing] them to tell their own tale in their own rustic speech”, but while Trollope identifies Verga’s unique qualities that differentiate him from Zola, Villari maintains that “as a disciple of the ultra-realistic school, Signor Verga declines to enliven his story by any imaginative or idyllic touches” and finds *I Malavoglia* “too crudely realistic” (715-16). Villari’s objection to the ‘crude realism’ is interesting in light of her husband’s role as the instigator of the ‘Southern Question’ and his aim for Italy to rediscover its true character by knowing itself (Dickie *Darkest Italy. The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*. 59).

Two more articles in British periodicals appeared in 1885. The first by Helen Zimmern, a German-British writer and translator, sets out to amend the “narrow-minded and erroneous” British perception that there is no such thing as a modern Italian literature by introducing four new novelists from a “virile and vigorous new school”, one of whom is Verga (72). She also berates British readers for their lack of interest over the previous years in studying “that liquid language”, grown unfashionable “for reasons only known to the fickle goddess of fashion”. The late blossoming of Italian novel-writing in comparison to “other cultured European States”

she attributes to the nation's new unity but also to the nature of the written language, which was not the language spoken by the people and "therefore ill adapted as a vehicle in which to convey a record of their doings". She is not alone in making the mistake of predicting the demise of dialect, which she believed was "of course a mere question of time, probably of but one generation" (73). However, she advises, until recently, writers, unless born in Tuscany, have often had poor command of Italian and hence "a certain stiffness and angularity of style", which is "peculiarly fatal when it appears in fictitious literature, whose mechanism, so to speak, should above all run smoothly and imperceptibly". Verga, she contends, is "a naturalist of the first water, though of the purest type" and she notes what a literary pioneer he has been: "He is an artist who has struck out his own paths in lieu of walking in those of others" (78). In a discussion of Verga's concise and intense style, she stresses that "under this reticence we feel the author's earnestness" and she likens him to "one of his own heroes, Alfio, who speaks tranquilly while he has a tempest raging in his breast" (80). She also mentions the special difficulties Verga had to overcome in dealing with the dialect of Sicilians. To get out of the dilemma of being understood beyond Sicily's borders, he made his people talk Tuscan, with which he "so happily blended [...] characteristic Sicilian expressions and terms, that the origin of his people is never forgotten, while their language is made comprehensible to all". And his success is "his best defence towards those who have blamed him for this step" (83).

The second article of that year, written by an Italian, discusses several examples of "our" recent realistic literature, in which "the English reader will not, perhaps, find much to envy; but a knowledge of some of their features may not be without interest or without use" (Boglietti 280). Verga, the last to be discussed in the article, is described as "another of our most fertile and agreeable story-tellers" with "a manner all of his own" (289). His writings, which resemble the Sicilians' "way of understanding each other almost without words; a look, a gesture, a slight movement of the lips, is all that is necessary", are painted "in swift touches" and spoken "in broken and imperfect phrases" (289-90).

4.5 The Translators

4.5.1 Mary A. Craig (?)

I Malavoglia, the first noteworthy translation of Verga's work to appear in English, was translated by Mary A. Craig and entitled *The House by the Medlar Tree*. It was published by the American firm Harper & Brothers in 1890, nine years after the original first appeared in Italy, and then issued the following year by the British publisher Osgood, McIlvaine & Co. The American edition is widely available through second-hand book dealers and in reprinted form by Kessinger Publishing (2003), an American company that specialises in reprinting rare books. Craig also translated *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, but it was published in Britain only (by Osgood, McIlvaine & Co in 1893), and its lack of current availability is not unexpected considering its poor critical reception.⁴³ After D. H. Lawrence had translated *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, but before he had found a publisher for his manuscript, he read Craig's *House by the Medlar Tree* and decided that Harper & Brothers could easily be persuaded to publish his translation, since it was so much better than hers, which "though good, lacks the real snap and flavour: too soft and pleasant, you know" (Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 219). Very little information about Craig is available beyond the fact that she also translated, from Italian, *Romanzo d'un maestro* by Edmondo De Amicis and the ghost story "Fioraccio" by Giovanni Magherini-Graziani.

The publication of Craig's translation in 1892 in Britain caused a renewed interest in Verga (Chandler 264). A review of the book that appeared in the *Academy* by the British literary critic, editor and writer William Sharp—who incidentally died and is buried in Sicily—commenced with the extolling of foreign writing, for "there is a charm in mere novelty, and nearly every intelligent reader is conscious of a peculiar interest in the perusal of a story in which alien people and strange ways of life and thought are depicted" (419). His comment about the translation that "it deserves all praise as a faithful and adequate rendering of a notable book" (420) indicates that he is familiar with the original text, unlike the anonymous reviewer in the *Observer* who

⁴³ The one review I have located advises that "most English readers, who are acquainted with the very high praises lavished on *Master Don Gesualdo* in the original, will be somewhat disappointed when they read it in Miss Craig's English or American version": George Saintsbury, "New Novels," *Academy* 43.13 May (1893).

suggests that the quality of the translation can be measured by “the fact that there is little suspicion on the part of the reader of the usual signs of a translation” of this novel, which is “quite out of the ordinary line” (“New Books” 8). In a similar vein, the *Manchester Guardian* found “the translation reads well” and expressed the hope “that more of Verga’s work will find its way into English, and that the public will recognise the vast superiority of a tale of this kind to the various descriptions of fustian that are popular” (“Rev. of *House by the Medlar Tree*, trans. Mary A. Craig”). Even a century later and after two other translations of *I Malavoglia* had been published, American Italianist Roberto Severino also found it an adequate translation, stating that, despite the cuts of “parti scabrose”, Craig’s English “scorre disinvolto e per un lettore ignaro delle parti mancanti o della rivoluzionaria forza poetica del linguaggio originale, gli aspetti negativi non sono subito apparenti” (56-57). Examples of the omitted “parti scabrose” include “Massaro Filippo è passato due volte dinanzi all’osteria, — pure, — e aspetta che la Santuzza gli faccia segno di andarla a raggiungere nella stalla, per dirsi insieme il santo rosario” (*I Malavoglia* 20) and almost half of Chapter X (*I Malavoglia* 164-80), which is filled with references to illicit affairs.

An article by Mary Hargrave in the *Gentleman’s Quarterly* that briefly discusses four Italian novelists, including Verga, laments the British neglect and ignorance of contemporary Italian literature and language, in contrast to that of the Germans and French, but puts the blame partially on the Italians’ concentration on her own people. In her mind, an appreciation of Italian literature required a particular interest in Italy, unlike the literature of other European countries that dealt with the problems of human life (Chandler 265). Nevertheless, Hargrave found Verga the foremost Italian novelist of his day, and suggested that he wrote with great depth.

Lamenting the omission of any judgement offered on the quality of Craig’s translations in *Bookman* reviews of 1892 and 1893, De Angeli, in her 1972 examination of the English contribution to Verga criticism, presented her own scathing review of *The House by the Medlar Tree*: “lascia molto a desiderare e che, lungi dal penetrare nello spirito dell’opera, la svisa (basti vedere il titolo) con tagli ed omissioni del tutto arbitrarie e con l’uso di un inglese da salotto borghese” (309-10). Whether or not De Angeli’s comments have merit, Craig’s choice of title is well-

established, having been recognised as worth retaining by all three translators who succeeded her. Certainly, her translation at the beginning of Chapter One of the name *Malavoglia* as “the ill-wills” would have been far more distorting.

In a later examination (1962) of “Verga’s Fortune in English Periodicals: 1881-1892”, the Italian scholar S. B. Chandler found that few British people were learning Italian and that there was no encouragement to read contemporary Italian authors, who were considered “local and self-centred and so of limited significance within the background of current literature in general” (265). Of particular note to Chandler is the fact that no renderings of the novels had been done by a British translator. The above articles give a similar impression—that interest in current Italian literature was limited amongst English-speaking readers—and it may well be that there would have been even less interest in Verga were it not for the great success of Mascagni’s opera *Cavalleria rusticana*, which had “made the title of Signor Verga’s tale [...] popular in England” (“Popular Literature of Modern Italy”). The opera premiered in 1891 in both Britain and the United States, the latter taking place after numerous battles between producers to be the first.⁴⁴ Adding to Verga’s international renown was the theatrical production, which he adapted himself, in which the acclaimed actress Eleonora Duse played the role of Santuzza.

Craig’s *House by the Medlar Tree* was prefaced by the American author, editor and critic W. D. Howells, whose status helped the book gain readership.⁴⁵ Howells’s introduction makes no mention whatsoever of the translation of the novel. Nor does he discuss the special character of Verga’s regional flavoured language, but focuses on the perfection of Verga’s writing within the “great modern movement towards reality” (iii) in his portrayal of the people of the “far South [...] whose passions are elemental and whose natures are simple” (iv). His advice to the reader “who comes to this book with the usual prejudices against the Southern Italians to know that such souls [are] like ourselves [...] in all that is truest in them” (iv-v) reveals that prejudice

⁴⁴ Mascagni’s opera continues to this day to surpass the popularity of Verga’s works, with regular performances by companies such as the New York Metropolitan Opera (March-April 2009) and the English National Opera (September-October 2008).

⁴⁵ Howells (1837-1920), a strong proponent of realistic literature, had an enormous influence on American literary taste through his position as assistant editor (1866-71) and then editor (1871-81) of the *Atlantic Monthly*: Donna M. Campbell, “About W. D. Howells,” *The William Dean Howells Society* (2001), 13 March 2009 <<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/howells/hbio.html>>. He was also familiar with Italy and the Italian language, having resided in Venice for almost four years serving as the American Consul to Venice from 1861.

against Southern Italy in the late nineteenth century reached as far as the United States.

I will come back to the issue of how Craig's translation practice accords with the theories presented in my study,⁴⁶ but I would like to point out here that, of the reviews of her translation mentioned above, those that came out shortly after publication correspond with Venuti's claim that reviews typically take "the form of a brief aside in which, more often than not, the fluency or transparency of the translation is gauged" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 7), with their comments of "faithful and adequate", "little suspicion [...] of the usual signs of a translation", "reads well". And while Lawrence and Severino were concerned that she had not captured the flavour or the spirit of the original, only the recent article by Severino mentions its revolutionary language, which in his view cannot be detected in the translation and therefore would not be missed.

4.5.2 Alma Strettell (1856-1939)

Only a few years after Craig's *The House by the Medlar Tree* (1890) and in the same year as her *Master Don Gesualdo* (1893) were published, a collection of stories selected from *Vita dei campi* and *Novelle rusticane* appeared, translated by the British Alma Strettell and published in London by T. Fisher Unwin, as part of its Pseudonym Library series, under the title *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Tales of Sicilian Peasant Life* (1893).⁴⁷

The Pseudonym Library series (1890-1896) was the new publisher Thomas Fisher Unwin's marketing solution to the problem of how to succeed in the changing British publishing scene of the 1880s and 1890s (Bassett 143-44). Lacking the prestige or capital to attract established authors and the connections to establish himself in the circulating library market, he decided to depart from the customary three-volume novels for the libraries and focus on publishing series of works by new or unknown authors in a single volume. The most successful series, marketed as works of "good, distinctive art", was the Pseudonym Library, so-called because the authors were required to use pen names, with the aim of producing an air of mystery. The books,

⁴⁶ See Section 5.2.1.

⁴⁷ The "other tales" are "Red-headed Malpélo" ("Rosso Malpelo"), "Gramigna's Mistress" ("L'amante di Gramigna"), "The Mystery" ("Il mistero"), "Nedda" and "War Between Saints" ("Guerra di santi").

sold through railway vendors, had a unique shape designed to fit into a woman's reticule or a man's coat pocket. Speculation about the authors' identity was naturally much discussed by readers and reviewers. In the case of Verga, the publishers decided that the fame of the opera *Cavalleria rusticana* made his anonymity impossible, but his inclusion in the series usually reserved for anonymous stories, number 29 in what was to be a total of 54 volumes, they claimed to be justified because the stories presented were otherwise unknown in Britain. The following note appears after the title page:

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giovanni Verga, the author of the celebrated "Cavalleria Rusticana" (on which tale Mascagni's opera is founded), is too well known to European fame as a writer on the peasant life of his native Sicily for the present selection from his tales to pass under a false signature: but the publisher, in apologising for breaking the rule, must plead in defence that as Verga's works have not hitherto been presented to the English public, the end in view in the present instance justifies the means in attaining it.

Everything I discovered about Strettell points to a skilled writer and translator, who was ahead of her time and was surrounded by creative figures. She was a folklorist, poet and translator of poetry, libretti and fiction from many languages, including German, Spanish, Rumanian, Ancient Greek, French and Italian. The constraints involved in the translation of libretti, with the stresses, cadences and syllables dictated by the music, coupled with the challenge of producing a fluent, graceful and stylistically coherent text (Irwin 1023-24) require distinctive and creative skills. And, within the field of literary translation, the problems involved in the translation of poetry are so complex that they have been investigated more than any other literary mode (Bassnett *Translation Studies* 83). Her close friendships with the artist John Singer Sargent, who painted her four times, and the writer Henry James, her marriage to another painter, L. A. "Peter" Harrison, and her sisterhood with Alice Carr, who designed Ellen Terry's costumes as Lady Macbeth, were indicative of her strong

connection with the London artistic and literary world. Furthermore, her role as a woman translator of the poetry of Emile Verhaeren is considered ground-breaking.⁴⁸

James Stanley Little's review of the collection in *The Academy* was highly favourable, offering "warm acknowledgments" to both the publisher and the translator. Although he gave high praise to the "powerfully written" and "uncompromisingly truthful" "Red-Headed Malpelo", the "even more artistic" "Gramigna's Mistress", the Boccaccio-like "The Mystery", and "Nedda"—the "high water mark" and "a great work of art", which is "vivid, vital: strong in its reticence, intense in its compassion, [...] pathetic in its reality and real in its pathos", he found "Cavalleria Rusticana" to be "a poor tale; in its translated form it has little or no point". He attributes its position at the beginning of the volume and its use as the title of the volume to the popularity of the opera.

No introductory remarks about Verga or the translation were included, apart from the above "Publisher's Note", although footnotes do appear in the text.

Thus, both in terms of paratext and critical reviews, only Little's acknowledgement saves Strettell from invisibility.

4.5.3 Nathan Haskell Dole (1852-1935)

The last of the nineteenth-century translations was, like that of Strettell, a collection of stories taken from *Vita dei campi* and *Novelle rusticane*.⁴⁹ Returning to the hands of an American translator, Nathan Haskell Dole, it was first published, with illustrations, in 1896 by the Joseph Knight Company of Boston with the title *Under the Shadow of Etna: Sicilian Stories from the Italian of Giovanni Verga* and then reprinted in 1898 as *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Sicilian Stories*. Initially a teacher, Dole moved on to a career in journalism as a literary editor, but devoted most of his later career to writing (prose and poetry), editing, translating and lecturing. He translated works from various different languages, most notably, Victor Hugo and almost all of

⁴⁸ See Jennifer Higgins, "French Poetry and Prose in Fin-de-Siècle England: How Women Translators Broke New Ground," *Translators, Interpreters, Mediators: Women Writers 1700-1900*, ed. Gillian Dow (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁴⁹ In addition to "Rustic Chivalry (*Cavalleria Rusticana*)", the collection includes "How Peppa Loved Gramigna" ("L'amante di Gramigna"), "Jeli, the Shepherd" ("Jeli il pastore"), "La Lupa", "The Story of St. Joseph's Ass" ("Storia dell'asino di S. Giuseppe"), and "The Bereaved" ("Gli orfani").

Tolstoy's works, as well as hundreds of song lyrics. Evidently a lively character, he was well-known for his irreverent punning and his position in Boston's literary and social circles, counting as friends such literary figures as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Walt Whitman and William Dean Howells (who introduced Craig's translation).

Dole's introduction to *Under the Shadow of Etna* discusses Verga's "literary creed" and the pathos of the "grim reality" of the world depicted in the stories. He explains that there are "dozens of others of Verga's short sketches which would repay translation" but that the collection he presents "well illustrate the author's genius at its best" (vii-x). Also included in the volume is a note on the translation in which he explains that he has retained some of the Italian titles because they are untranslatable and because their charm lies in their Sicilian flavour. The literal meaning and usage are given for terms that have been left untranslated: *compare* and *comare*, *gnà*, *babbo*, *massaro*, *compagni d'armi*, and *bersagliere*.

Although Dole's translation belongs to the same time period as the first two, he is the only one to use a preface to draw the reader's attention to the fact that what they are reading is a translation and to the linguistic and cultural differences between the source and target cultures.

4.5.4 Frederic Taber Cooper (1864-1937)

Apart from an anonymous essay in the *Quarterly Review* of 1902 ("The Novels of Giovanni Verga"), almost a decade passes before attention is turned again to Verga in the English-speaking world. Curiously, the 1902 article makes no mention of the existing English translations. The article's main concern is the "distinct quality" of Verga's realism and his theory of impartiality, which is judged to be incomplete because of his innate pessimism.

In 1907, a new translation of the novella "Cavalleria rusticana", by Frederic Taber Cooper, appeared in a collection of Italian and Scandinavian short stories. The collection, entitled *Short Story Classics (Foreign) Volume Two Italian and Scandinavian*, was part of a five-volume series published by the American publishing

firm P. F. Collier and Sons and edited by William Patten.⁵⁰ Cooper, along with several others, was commissioned to translate the stories especially for the collection. He also translated one of the other stories, “The End of Candia” by D’Annunzio. Cooper was an editor, author of several books on literature and the art of writing, and for some years an associate professor of Latin and Sanskrit at New York University.

The story is briefly introduced, presumably by the editor, who finds Verga’s style to be “singularly vigorous and sincere”, but adds that “his plots are often confusing and long drawn out”. “Cavalleria rusticana”, he points out, has been made into “one of the most popular, dramatic, concentrated one-act operas of the world” (Patten 345), which is undoubtedly the reason for its inclusion in the collection. No footnotes or other forms of exegesis appear in the text, but the title of the volume indicates that the editors’ aim was to introduce foreign literature to Americans.

Cooper’s translation of “Cavalleria rusticana” was later reprinted in *Atlantica*, XII (Mar. 1932) (Cecchetti “Verga and D. H. Lawrence’s Translations”) and then again, in 1950, in an illustrated volume entitled *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Narratives by Giovanni Verga*, a selection that included stories translated by D. H. Lawrence, Nathan Haskell Dole and Mary A. Craig. This volume contains information about who selected the stories and about the artist, along with an essay on Verga by Edward J. Fluck. Only by reading this essay located at the back of the book, does the reader learn, first of all, that the stories are translations, and, secondly, who the translators are. And even then, the reader remains ignorant of the identity of the translator of “The She-Wolf”, described as “uncertain”. The fact that the translators’ names did not appear next to the stories’ titles in the contents page, or at the beginning of the individual stories for which they were responsible, clearly shows that this publisher believed in the concept of the invisible translator.

4.5.5 David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930)

Apart from Cooper’s 1907 translation of a single novella, and the 1902 article mentioned above, English-language readers’ lack of interest in Verga during the first two decades of the twentieth century mirrored that of Italy’s. In Italy, interest was

⁵⁰ The other Italian authors represented are Enrico Castelnuovo, Antonio Fogazzaro, Edmondo de Amicis, Matilda Serao, Gabriele d’Annunzio, Luigi Pirandello and Grazia Deledda.

renewed with the publication of Luigi Russo's study in October 1919 (*Giovanni Verga*), the very first noteworthy monograph on Verga. The following year, 1920, witnessed a flurry of events honouring the writer, most importantly, the official celebrations of his eightieth birthday in September 1920, presided over by Luigi Pirandello, and Verga's appointment as a senator in October. His works were being reprinted and the *Illustrazione italiana* devoted the entire 29 August 1920 issue to him. Such a revival of interest, however, would probably not have extended to English-language readers if it were not for D. H. Lawrence and his translations of Verga: *Mastro-Don Gesualdo* (1923), *Little Novels of Sicily* (1925) and *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories* (1928).⁵¹

Certainly, his publishers' marketing of *Mastro-Don Gesualdo* focused on Lawrence as the translator—something that would be unheard of for any of the other translators of Verga. Consider this “Display Ad” copy: “That Mr. D. H. Lawrence should be so impressed with Verga's work as to consent to translate this book is sufficient testimony to its importance” (“Jonathan Cape Ltd.”).

Reviews of the translations also focused on Lawrence as the reason to read them, such as this one in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 5 March 1925:

...all honour to America, therefore, that one of her publishers should have secured Mr. D. H. Lawrence as the translator of Verga's second masterpiece. ... It is easy to see what it is in Verga's work that has attracted Mr. Lawrence and driven him to snatch from his own creative labours time for the exacting task he has so brilliantly fulfilled. (“*Mastro-don Gesualdo*”)

From the *Manchester Guardian* of 29 May 1925:

It is fortunate that so distinguished a translator as Mr. D. H. Lawrence has been found [...] gratitude is due for his fine translation of these little masterpieces” (M.).

⁵¹ The “other stories” in the latter collection include all the stories from *Vita dei campi*: “La Lupa”, “Caprice” (“Fantasticheria”), “Jeli the Herdsman” (“Jeli il pastore”), “Rosso Malpelo or The Red-Headed Brat”, “Gramigna's Lover” (“L'amante di Gramigna”), “War of Saints” (“Guerra di santi”), “Brothpot” (“Pentolaccia”) and “The How, When, and Wherefore” (“Il come, il quando ed il perché”). *Little Novels of Sicily* contains all the stories of *Novelle rusticate*.

From *Dial* of December 1925:

Mr. Lawrence's translation is good fortune for the reader no less than for the author" ("Book Review: *Little Novels of Sicily*").

And from the *Times Literary Supplement* of July 30 1925:

The main thing is that Mr. Lawrence, as one would expect, has caught the spirit.... The problem of the translator was to be neither too polished nor too uncouth, and Mr. Lawrence, with the insight of a very gifted writer, has solved it. ("Verga's Rustic Tales" 507)

For some English readers, Verga's name was so eclipsed by that of Lawrence that it was forgotten, even though the translations of his books were not. In his semi-fictional account of a bus tour through Sicily, *Sicilian Carousel*, Lawrence Durrell laments the lack of a "quirky guide" to the island such as Stendhal's guide to Rome, but acknowledges that there "would probably have been a good Sicilian candidate also, but our ignorance of the island's letters was abysmal. Yes, Pirandello and Lampedusa, and *someone that Lawrence translated successfully...*" (my italics) (88).

Lawrence first travelled to Italy in 1912, staying in Gargnano, Lake Garda, until March 1913. He returned to Italy in 1919, settling in Taormina, Sicily, until 1922. It was in between these visits, in 1916 while back in England, that he first became aware of Verga's work. However, his initial impression was anything but favourable, according to a letter he wrote in December of that year to his friend S. S. Koteliansky, who had lent him some Italian books: "We have read the *Cavalleria Rusticana*: a veritable blood-pudding of passion! It is not at all good, only, in some odd way, comical, as the portentous tragic Italian is always comical" (Boulton and Robertson 53). And then in March 1917, with further antipathy, when returning the collection of books that included "Cavalleria rusticana", he wrote: "Alas, I have wearied of passion and eroticism and sex perversions, so that though we have read through these books, I end with a feeling of weariness and a slight nausea against things Italian" (Boulton and Robertson 103).

Later letters, starting in 1921, showed a dramatic change of opinion, such as this one to Catherine Carswell:

I have only been reading Giovanni Verga lately. He exercises quite a fascination on me, and makes me feel quite sick at the end. But perhaps that is only if one knows Sicily.—Do you know if he is translated into English?—*I Malavoglia* or *Mastro-don Gesualdo*—or *Novelle Rusticane* or the other short stories. It would be fun to do him—his *language* is so fascinating. (Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 105-06).

And to Earl Brewster:

I have been reading Giovanni Verga's Sicilian novels and stories. Do you know them? When once one gets into his really rather difficult style (to me), he is very interesting. The only Italian who does interest me. (Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 109-10)

This change of opinion may very well have been influenced by Italy's renewed enthusiasm (De Angeli 314; Ceramella "D. H. Lawrence Translator of Verga: Challenge and Fascination" 20). Nevertheless, Lawrence was to remain a fervent admirer of Verga all his life.

Lawrence translated *Mastro-don Gesualdo* in the extremely short time span of January to March while travelling from Sicily to Ceylon in 1922. It was published by American firm Thomas Seltzer⁵² in October 1923. When Martin Secker, his English publisher, saw the book in September 1924, he turned it down because he felt "very dubious indeed about its prospects of appeal to the English public. It is only the slight Lawrence interest in his being associated as translator which would carry it, and that being so I do not think I could undertake to set it up in this country" (Boulton and Vasey 165). The first English edition was later published, in March 1925, by Jonathan Cape from the Seltzer sheets, and then again in Cape's *Traveller's Library* series in March 1928, with a longer introductory essay. *Little Novels of Sicily* was published in 1925 in New York by Seltzer and in England by Blackwell. *Cavalleria*

⁵² Seltzer, a prolific translator himself, was responsible for bringing Lawrence's works to the American public. His firm eventually went bankrupt from his efforts to fight censorship charges, with Lawrence's *Women in Love* having been the impetus for the charge.

Rusticana and Other Stories, which Lawrence had been partially working on since 1923, was published by Jonathan Cape in 1928, and later in the *Travellers' Library*, in 1932.

As to be expected of such a controversial figure as Lawrence, his translations and extended introductory essays provoked a great deal of criticism, as have Verga's influence on Lawrence's writing and links between the two writers.⁵³ The link between Verga and Lawrence is also recognised by editors. Stories by the two writers have appeared together in at least eleven different collections, published between 1944 and 2002.⁵⁴

Much of the criticism of Lawrence's translations focuses on inaccuracies in *Mastro-Don Gesualdo*, executed so hastily and haphazardly, without the benefit of reference works. His correspondence at the time gives the impression that he viewed his translation work as merely a pleasurable and non-taxing pastime, such as in the following letter to his American publisher Seltzer:

⁵³ For criticisms of Lawrence's translations, see Section 4.6.

Regarding Lawrence's critical appraisals of Verga, see Armin Arnold, "D. H. Lawrence, the Russians, and Giovanni Verga," *Comparative Literature Studies* 2.3 (1965), Luisetta Chomel, "Verga: A Note on Lawrence's Criticism," *The D. H. Lawrence Review* 13.3 (1980).

Regarding Lawrence's influence on Verga and links between the two writers, see Patrizio Rossi, "'The Fox' e 'La Lupa': D. H. Lawrence lettore di Verga," *English Miscellany: A Symposium of History Literature and the Arts* 24 (1973-1974), Judith G. Ruderman, "Lawrence's *The Fox* and Verga's 'The She-Wolf': Variations on the Theme of the 'Devouring Mother'," *MLN* 94.1 (1979) and Gregory L. Lucente, *The Narrative of Realism and Myth: Verga, Lawrence, Faulkner, Pavese* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

Regarding Lawrence's view of Sicily and Italy, see Barbara Bates Bonadeo, "D. H. Lawrence's View of the Italians," *English Miscellany: A Symposium of History Literature and the Arts* 24 (1973-74) and Carla Comellini, "Sicily in D. H. Lawrence's Imagery," *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage* 8 (2008).

⁵⁴ See *Bachelor's Quarters: Stories From Two Worlds*, ed. Norman Lockridge, New York: Biltmore, 1944, *A Treasury of Short Stories: Favorites of the Past Hundred Years from Turgenev to Thurber, from Balzac to Hemingway: With Biographical Sketches*, ed. Bernardine Kielty, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1947, *The Anchor Book of Stories*, ed. Randall Jarrell, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958, *Short Fiction of the Masters*, eds. Leo Hamdian and Frederick Robert Karl, New York: Putnam, 1963, *The Realm of Fiction: 61 Short Stories*, ed. James B. Hall, New York: McGraw Hill, 1965, 1970, *The Short Story: Classic and Contemporary*, ed. R. W. Lid, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966, *Microcosm: An Anthology of the Short Story*, eds. Donna Lorine Gerstenberger and Frederick Garber, *The World of the Short Story: Archetypes in Action*, eds. Oliver Wendell Evans and Harry Finstone, New York: Knopf, 1971, *Masterplots, Volume 2, BOU-CRI*, eds. Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Salem Press, *Short Shorts: An Anthology of the Shortest Stories*, eds. Irving Howe and Ilana Wiener Howe, Boston, Mass.: DR Godine, 1982, *The World Treasury of Love Stories*, eds. Lucy Rosenthal and Clifton Fadiman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, and *Randall Jarrell's Book of Stories: An Anthology*, ed. Randall Jarrell, New York: New York Review of Books, 2002.

But to amuse myself on shipboard and so on I shall probably go on with a translation of the Sicilian novel *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, by Giovanni Verga (Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 157).

Or in this one to his friend Koteliansky:

I spend the day talking small-talk with Australians on board—rather nice people—and translating *Mastro-don Gesualdo* and having meals—and time passes like a sleep (Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 208).

It is generally agreed, however, that the quality of Lawrence's translations progressively improved (Corsani 250; Hyde 51; Ceramella "Getting to Grips with D. H. Lawrence's Translation of Verga's 'La roba'" 34). His increased knowledge of Italian morphology and syntax, as well as dialect terms, and his command of the idiom, is evident when his first Verga translation, *Mastro Don Gesualdo*, is compared with the last, *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*. Furthermore, in the latter stage he had reached full artistic maturity and had studied the culture, life and social environment of various regions of Italy so that he had a more precise vision of the world depicted by Verga (Corsani 278).

Lawrence's prefaces to his translations ranged from the brief "Introductory Note" to the first publication of *Mastro-Don Gesualdo*, written in 1922, and the "Note on Giovanni Verga" in *Little Novels of Sicily*, written in 1923 or 1924, to a lengthy extended introduction to the reissue of *Mastro-Don Gesualdo*, written in 1927, and the "Translator's Preface" to *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*, written about the same time. Along with Verga's background and the point at which the accompanying text was situated in his career, Lawrence expounded on what the stories say about Verga, Sicilians and mankind in general, and how they relate to Lawrence's own philosophy. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss Lawrence's complex theories and his view of Italians,⁵⁵ but the prefaces also contain some remarks about Verga's linguistic style that are worthwhile considering, as they relate more directly to Lawrence's translation strategies.

⁵⁵ As per my previous note, see Bonadeo, "D. H. Lawrence's View of the Italians," and Comellini, "Sicily in D. H. Lawrence's Imagery," .

The first note refers to his style as ironic and “elliptical”, making him “too aristocratic a writer for the casual reader”, and explains that Verga wanted the style to be “unliterary, close to the spoken language” (Lawrence, Reeve and Worthen 140). The second note has no mention of his linguistic style. The rewritten introduction to *Mastro-Don Gesualdo* mentions that after he left the “fashionable world”, his works, which were “his best”, were no longer Italian, but Sicilian. “In his Italian style, he manages to get the rhythm of colloquial Sicilian, and Italy no longer exists” (147) and that “he deliberately made his style, ‘unliterary,’ trying to give it the impulsive, non-logical, broken rhythm of peasant speech” (159). Finally, in the last preface, he expands his views. While previously he gave the impression that he wholeheartedly approved of Verga’s style, here “one is now a little sceptical of their form” (170). Verga’s “grand idea of self-effacement” he finds “sad” and unoriginal, and the results, once he puts his theory into practice, produce the opposite effect from the one intended (171). The reader is far more aware of his interference and of his scissors. Too much has been clipped away and the transitions are too abrupt, particularly in the stories “Cavalleria Rusticana” and “La Lupa”. His linguistic style, which attempts to “follow the workings of the unsophisticated mind” and to “reproduce the pattern”, he finds most extreme in this volume (172).

More illuminating as far as this study of the translation of dialectal language is concerned is this record of a conversation Lawrence had with Elizabeth Mayer, an—at the time—novice translator from Italian into German. The conversation took place in 1927, after the publication of his translations *Mastro-Don Gesualdo* and *Little Novels of Sicily* and while he was working on *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*.

Roughly, Lawrence said that the major problem in handling dialect is how to avoid the two over-simple and absolutely wrong solutions: the first, to translate the dialect of the original into another dialect which is spoken in a geographically existent region (in my case it was Germany) and in a particular locality. For example, one must never have Sicilian fishermen talk like fishermen of the North or the Baltic Sea, or have Sicilian peasants express themselves in the equivalent German or Austrian country idiom. Every dialect has inevitable overtones of the landscape, the character of the people and their native customs, inherent to their special locality and radically different from

another and foreign region. Morals and manners, valid in Sicilian terms, would seem absurd when twisted into the sounds of a German way of life. On the other hand, it would be just as wrong to transplant the real Sicilian, together with his native peculiarities, in the German-speaking ambience and simply verbally reproduce his dialect: it would not ring true at all. Lawrence's advice, therefore, was to avoid both cheap solutions and to try to *invent* a new dialect, coined in German words but free from any reference, from any flavour of a special region, yet preserving the flavour of some sort of relaxed, uncultured, untutored mode of speaking. Of course, he did *not* suggest an artificial or synthetic dialect. (141-42)

Lawrence's appreciation of the cultural specificity of the linguistic style and his view that the translator should try to "invent a new dialect" that preserves the register and the naturalness of the original coincides perfectly with Venuti's recommendations. His introductions, particularly the later ones, emphasise to his readers the alterity of the original text and Sicilian culture. His strong views go well beyond a brief introduction to Sicilian culture. Although I have avoided a discussion of his theories about Sicilians as it is beyond the scope of this research, an example will suffice to convey how his potent words might shape his readers' conception of Sicilian people:

It is probably true that, since the extinction of the pagan gods, the countries of the Mediterranean have never been aware of the heroic impulse in themselves, and so it has died down very low, in them. In Sicily, even now, and in the remoter Italian villages, there is what we call a low level of life, appalling. Just a squalid, unimaginative, heavy, petty-fogging, grubby sort of existence, without light or flame. It is the absence of the heroic awareness, the heroic hope.

[...] the Sicilian doesn't have any soul. He can't be introspective, because his consciousness, so to speak, doesn't have any inside to it. He can't look inside himself, because he is, as it were, solid. (Lawrence, Reeve and Worthen 150-52)

As far as the links between translation and creative writing are concerned, Lawrence is the epitome of the subjective and creative translator. His creativity and skill as a

writer is without question, as stressed in these comments by Anthony Burgess in his introduction to *D. H. Lawrence and Italy: Twilight in Italy, Sea and Sardinia, Etruscan Places*:

But Lawrence's poetry is different from any other man's: it is not the result of the creative process, it is the creative process itself. We are always in the smithy, watching the verbal hammering. In his impatience to find the right phrase for his referent, Lawrence cannot be bothered to hide his false starts: nor can he trouble himself with well-balanced "literary" sentences. When he finds the mot juste he does not let it go; he invites us to walk round it and examine its justness. There is a sense of reading a private notebook; there is also a sense of hearing actual speech, complete with the fractured syntax, repetition, slang, facetiousness, buttonholing, even bullying. (Burgess xi-xii)

That Lawrence brought his creativity into play in his translations is illustrated by the strength of the critical debate and scholarly studies surrounding them. The usual hierarchy of a translation perceived as a derivative copy secondary in importance to the original is dispelled, as evidenced by the marketing campaigns and reviews. Lawrence's fame as a writer overshadowed the unknown Verga in the Anglophone world and was the main reason for Anglophone interest in Verga, not just when his translations were first issued—the connection between the two remains important today. Thus, they shared a mutual dependence. Furthermore, as argued by various scholars,⁵⁶ Verga's writing had an influence on Lawrence's own, although as indicated in Burgess's comment that Lawrence's writing gives a sense of hearing speech, complete with fractured syntax, the two writers already shared qualities before Lawrence undertook the translations.

4.5.6 Eric Mosbacher (1903-1998)

A full sixty years passed between the publication of Craig's rendering and the next English-language translation of *I Malavoglia*. Eric Mosbacher's version, bearing the same title as Craig's, was published in 1950 by the recently founded George

⁵⁶ As per my earlier note, see Rossi, "'The Fox' e 'La Lupa': D. H. Lawrence lettore di Verga," , Ruderman, "Lawrence's *The Fox* and Verga's 'The She-Wolf': Variations on the Theme of the 'Devouring Mother'," and Lucente, *The Narrative of Realism and Myth: Verga, Lawrence, Faulkner, Pavese* .

Weidenfeld & Nicolson (1949), a firm that developed a reputation for publishing controversial landmark titles. The avant-garde publisher Grove Press⁵⁷ published a new edition in 1953, and this was later reprinted by Greenwood Press (Westport, Connecticut) in 1975. Mosbacher translated not only from Italian but also from French and German, often collaborating with his wife, Gwenda David, who was also a translator. Other Italian translations he undertook include works by Ignazio Silone, Vasco Pratolini, Elio Vittorini, Luciano Bianciardi and Tonino Guerra. In 1963 he won the John Florio prize for his translation of *Hekura* by Fosco Maraini. A curious project he undertook, in 1966, was the “second-hand” translation of Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz’s *Cosmos*, not from the original Polish, but from two different translations—one into French and one into German—a process that provoked a certain amount of criticism (“Twice Removed”) and certainly raises questions as to why it was not translated directly from the original Polish.⁵⁸

The timing of the publication of Mosbacher’s version of *I Malavoglia* leads one to wonder if it was commissioned due to renewed interest in the novel raised by the Luchino Visconti’s film adaptation, *La terra trema*, released in Italy in 1948. Italian literary critic Paolo Milano, in an article in the *New York Times* about *I Malavoglia*, laments Verga’s limited reception by Americans. Despite his status as the “father of the Italian novel of our century”, a “cultivated American, if he does not happen to be a man of letters, may know nothing of Giovanni Verga, or very little” (1). A line in “one of those surveys of world literature” or an, erroneous, mention of his being the librettist of Mascagni’s “Cavalleria Rusticana” may be the sum of what the cultivated American has read or heard about Verga, despite two invitations so far (1). The first was William D. Howells’s invitation to discover him in Craig’s translation. Milano lays at least some of the blame for the lack of response this first time on Craig’s “largely incorrect and disastrously gentle” translation, which caused him to wonder if Howells, “who knew Italian very well, had omitted to read it altogether” (1). Another reason for the American lack of response, he contends, is that Verga, “in the heyday of naturalism” was not an Italian Zola (1). The second invitation came in the form of

⁵⁷ Grove Press published an unexpurgated version of D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in 1959. After the U. S. post office confiscated copies sent through the mail, Grove Press, through their lawyer, Charles Rembar, successfully sued the New York City postmaster.

⁵⁸ *Kosmos* has since been translated into English directly from the Polish. The translator, Danuta Borhardt, faced many dilemmas in the task, which she explains in a Translator’s Note: Gombrowicz, *Kosmos*, trans. Danuta Borhardt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

D. H. Lawrence's "excellent" translations (1), but again the Americans, and the British, failed to notice, probably, in Milano's opinion, because they found him too old-fashioned a realist.

The only reference to Mosbacher's act of translation in Milano's article is the affirmation that he has "done justice to the original". However, he does bring the reader's attention to Verga's revolutionary approach to style and the "question of language", and, interestingly, compares the difference between the American novelist's task and that of the Italian novelist, with respect to language. While the American's task is to "lend literary dignity to American colloquial speech, which is so ephemerally wealthy and so misleadingly alive", the Italian, whose predicament is almost the converse, must "inject new life into a literary language" which is "far removed from common speech". He believes Verga's solution, which was to think in dialect while writing in Italian, is the most fruitful course for an Italian novelist to follow.

The *Times Literary Supplement* ("Kings and Commoners") reviewer emphasises the timelessness of the novel yet contends that "those who knew the original may find a certain discrepancy between the nineteenth century Italian of Giovanni Verga and the fluent contemporary prose of Eric Mosbacher's translation", which suggests that the reviewer is familiar with the Italian text. In a review that appeared in *The New Statesman and Nation*, the noted writer and critic V. S. Pritchett compares Mosbacher's translation favourably to the, by then, out-of-print version by Craig, which he deems "good, although it inclined to be mild and smooth, where Verga was elliptical, hard and pungent" (19). Mosbacher achieves the necessary hardness, in Pritchett's opinion. Although he has no more to say about the translator or his rendering, his comments about the text and Verga's style, which he must have read only in translation as he did not speak Italian, would lead to the conclusion that Mosbacher succeeds in recreating the voice, or rather, voices, of the original:

From the moment we open *I Malavoglia* we are pitched into the squabble of village life, straight among the talk of the misers, the spies, the honourable, the wasters, the modest, the hypocrites, the officials, the skirling village shrews. Their voices deafen us, their quarrels confuse our ears, their calamities catch us, and we are subject also to those strange truces in the rancour of a

community when, for a day, a disaster will quieten it with a common emotion.
(20-21)

According to Pritchett, Verga's tone, "raw" and "stripped to the bone", devoid of the novelist's usual "colour print in view", was closer to the writers of his day than to writers of the nineteenth century. Severino found Mosbacher's version to be "qualitativamente migliore" to that of Craig, despite some errors of interpretation and occasional but consistent textual omissions caused, maybe, by it being based on Mondadori's scholastic edition of 1940 (57).

I will come back to my own analysis of Mosbacher's translation,⁵⁹ but would like to point out here the increased visibility of the translation act and acknowledgement of the linguistic differences between the source and target languages shown in the reviewers' comments in contrast to those of the translations prior to Lawrence's.

4.5.7 Giovanni Cecchetti (1922-1998)

Born in Tuscany, Cecchetti immigrated to the United States in 1948 at the age of 26, starting an illustrious academic career in Italian studies a few months later at Berkeley. His accomplishments and 'cecchettiana' presence earned him recognition among his peers as one of the pioneers of Italian culture in the United States—by his own definition, a "missionario culturale" (Betti)—evidenced by his development of programmes of Italian studies at four American universities (Berkeley, Tulane, Stanford and UCLA). In addition to his academic activity and his translations into English of Italian literature, in particular, the writing of Verga and Leopardi, Cecchetti was a writer of poetry—*Diario nomade*, *Impossibile scendere*, *Nel cammino dei monti*, and *Favole spente*—and prose—*Il villaggio degli inutili*, *Spuntature intermezzi*, *Danza nel deserto*. Critical essays on the first two collections of poetry (Freda Chiapelli on *Diario nomade* and Danilo Aguzzi Barbaglia on *Impossibile scendere*) identified the salient thematic elements in his work as "exile, memory, the inexorable passage of time, modern man's existential and spiritual battle among alienated and alienating landscapes and occurrences" (Giordano 234).

⁵⁹ See Section 5.2.2.

Cecchetti presented his views on translation at a conference in 1980 shortly after the publication of his translation of *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (“Osservazioni sul tradurre”). Translation, he emphasises, is an art, designated thus because “in verità non è altro che un’arte” (“Osservazioni sul tradurre” 86), that is both impossible and inevitable. He points out the problems that the translator faces: the idiomatic aspects that give evidence of deep cultural differences; objects, plants, animals, food and especially ideas that exist in the source culture but not in the target culture, impossible to transpose unless you resort to a mere linguistic sign as a form of abstraction; false friends; and the translator’s degree of knowledge of the source culture. The transposition of literary works from one culture to another will always be approximate, he maintains, not only because it is impossible to perceive them as they were when they were created, but also because they can only be understood within the parameters of the individual reader’s own experience. We listen to literature with *our* ears and with the ears of *our* language, with the result that horizons open up before our eyes that the author, and the reader, of the original text would never have dreamed of. Thus, he concludes, a work of art is a unique thing that cannot be transposed from one language to another because it is deeply rooted in a specific cultural context.

True translation is a mirage, he says, an unattainable aspiration. Literature is just as much a work of art as a painting or a symphony, but these mediums have the advantage of being able to communicate without words. With literature, translation is necessary, but often the result is limited to a “certa sostanza” or “contenuto” (“Osservazioni sul tradurre” 92). But what is this essence or gist, and where does it lie, he asks? If it lies only in the words, in their amalgam, and in their interior resonance—in their phonosymbolic meaning—which evoke infinite visions, then a transposition into expressive modules that are not its own, or into a foreign language, then the essence is no longer there. Instead something else, which has almost nothing in common with the original text, is offered. So we must make do with a resemblance—of an approximate translation—and this can be best met, in his opinion, by using two principal translation methods.

The first strategy he defines as “romantico” (“Osservazioni sul tradurre” 95). Here, the translator’s aim is to create a work of art of his or her own, in competition with the original. This method is often used in the translation of poetry and reflects the

personality of the translator, rather than that of the original author—a “rifacimento” (“Osservazioni sul tradurre” 95), or rewriting, rather than a translation. In the second method, the translator studies every expression with the utmost attention, and tries to transfer every image in all its nuances and with all its originality and interior resonances. Of course, he advises, this can only be an ideal, destined to remain as such, but is necessary as a goal for achieving, at the least, plausible results. Each of these two methods requires a great perceptive sensitivity, a great capacity for penetrating the text and a poetic spirit. However, the most satisfying method, he maintains, is a combination of the two: the ability to render the images in a new creation, and at the same time render them with the freshness that they had when they were presented the first time.

The rhythm of frequency is an important factor, he adds: a new word or image created by the author must be rendered with a new word or image created by the translator, while a very common expression—and it does not matter how rare it seems to ears that are used to a different language or culture—must be rendered with a correspondingly common expression. Otherwise the effect will have no relationship with what was intended in the original work. He refers to Verga’s as an example of texts that have an exotic flavour, which can sound almost translated, and thus “awkward”, that should produce the same effect in translation, just as a highly literary style (“Osservazioni sul tradurre” 97). The translator must invent the same varieties of tone and rhythm found in the original.

Cecchetti believes that a beautiful translation is one that is absolutely faithful to the original work—with a fidelity that reproduces, as much as possible, both the general design and the specific images, as well as the tone, of a work. The most faithful translator, having penetrated the original “per sorprenderne e coglierne il tremito” and then transmitted it, is “il nuovo artista anche collabora col vecchio” (“Osservazioni sul tradurre” 98).

Cecchetti not only translated Verga’s writing, he was also one of the foremost critics of his art. In addition to various volumes and essays of criticism, including *Il Verga maggiore: Sette studi* (1968) and *Giovanni Verga* (1978), his translations were always preceded by scholarly introductions. Furthermore, he wrote the introduction to Rosenthal’s translation of *I Malavoglia*. According to his own words, his experience

as a Verghian critic will have contributed to the sensitivity to the source text that is essential for a creative translator.

However, when we speak of the poetry of others, we are more or less transparently speaking of our own as well; only truly perceptive readers know this. I have written verses ever since I can remember, but I have also written literary criticism; and I have learned that criticism is not so much teaching, how to read, as Sainte-Beuve would have it, but, above all, *learning* how to read and thus knowing oneself better through reading: it is exchange and interaction. When we interact with the poetry of the past, we gain access to our own psychic vitality and discover its living substance; and when we write, we become immersed in the others' psychological structures at the very moment we manage to capture our own on paper. ("On Writing Poetry in a Foreign Land" 124)

Not only would his sensitivity to the source text be enhanced, his critical experience will have given rise to a dynamic and vital translation.

Cecchetti's description of the translation act as an "art" and his contention that the most satisfactory translations arise when the images are rendered in a new "creation" that offers the "freshness" of the original give us every reason to expect evidence of creativity in his translations. Combined with his experience as a poet in his own right and as a critic, and provided he put his own theories into practice, he would appear to be the perfect candidate for the task of translating Verga's writing into English. However, again looking to theories expressed by Cecchetti himself, it appears that this is not the case.

While he wrote much of his critical studies in his second language of English, his creative prose and his poetry were always written in his native Italian. Even the translations of his creative writing *Contrappunti/Counterpoints* and *Nomad Diary (Diario nomade)*, were done by others, both texts published in a bilingual format with English and Italian texts on facing pages. The former is a collection of reflections and stories, translated by Raymond Petrillo, and the latter is a poetry collection, translated by Roberta L. Payne. He explains in an essay, included in both collections, why he never wrote poetry in English:

And what about the language? It is the one we were born into, the language of our transfigured childhood, laden with meanings and rhythms that, at that time, would have been beyond our reach. Nobody can write poetry in another language—one which is superimposed, and thus artificial—which can never become a deeply personal language even if one is daily immersed in it. In this case, one can write verse, even good verse, but not poetry; for poetry cannot issue from the prison of linguistic artificiality. [...] Those of us who lived our childhood in Italy (and in certain ways our childhood also includes our adolescence) can write poetry only in Italian. For us, English is the language of prose.

It is undeniable that the experiences which make us what we are and which fill up our days are quite different from those we would have had in Italy. To have grappled with different languages and clashing cultures has enriched our lives, our awareness of the depth of humanity which runs through ourselves and others, whatever our nationality. It has also enriched our native tongue, bringing radically new meanings to every word we utter. But the matrix of this tongue cannot but remain the same, however much it is renewed or expanded in its meanings. (“On Writing Poetry in a Foreign Land” 126)

In light of these assertions, it is difficult to understand how Cecchetti allowed himself to translate Verga’s work into English—a language that for Cecchetti was “superimposed, and thus artificial” (“On Writing Poetry in a Foreign Land” 126)—when we know that he viewed Verga’s writing as poetry. Of *I Malavoglia*, he wrote:

But because of its language, because of the associational method applied in every page, and because of its extraordinary evocative power, *The House by the Medlar Tree* is also a work of poetry, as William Dean Howells asserted in 1890. As in a poem, certain recurring images run through the entire text and stay with the reader. (“Introduction” xxi)

And, although he found the literary qualities of “Cavalleria rusticana” to be inferior to much of his other work, he maintained that Verga was “able to present a common occurrence [...] in highly original and poetic terms” (*Giovanni Verga* 58). Does

Cecchetti consider it acceptable for such poetic writing as Verga's to be translated into a language that is "superimposed, and thus artificial"?

Cecchetti's translations of Verga include *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1979) and *The She-Wolf and Other Stories*. A first edition of the latter in 1958 contained only stories from *Vita dei campi* ("La Lupa", "Cavalleria rusticana", "Jeli il pastore", "Rosso Malpelo", "L'amante di Gramigna", "La guerra di santi" and "Pentolaccia"). A second edition in 1962 included an additional six stories from *Novelle rustiche* ("Malaria", "Gli orfani", "La roba", "Storia dell'asino di S. Giuseppe", "Pane nero" and "Libertà"). Finally, to a third edition in 1973 were added seven stories from various collections—what Cecchetti considered "Verga's best and most representative" ("A Note on the Translation" xxi): "X" from *Primavera e altri racconti*; "L'ultima giornata", "Conforti" and "Camerati" from *Per le vie*; "Tentazione" from *Drammi intimi*; "Nanni Volpe" from *Vagabondaggio*; and "Il peccato di donna Santa" from *Don Candeloro e C.*). As a scholarly edition, the stories are preceded by an introduction and a note on the translation. The introduction includes information on Verga's life, literary career, the recurring themes in his work and his principle of impersonality.

In his translation note Cecchetti gives a brief overview and critique of previous renderings, in justification of his new translation, opining that Strettell and Dole produced "commendable attempts to render Verga into English but they contain errors and, above all, they are outdated and consequently their English does not come alive to us" ("A Note on the Translation" xxi-xxii). Cecchetti's negative views on Lawrence's translations are well-aided in his article "Verga and D. H. Lawrence's Translations".⁶⁰ He summarises his argument that "on the whole they are rather unsatisfactory" and "full of oddities" due to Lawrence's lack of knowledge of Italian and the lack of time he gave to the project ("A Note on the Translation" xxii). He explains his own strategies and goal—an as literal as possible translation that "attempts to render the spirit as well as the letter of the original" ("A Note on the Translation" xxiii). The style and rhythm, the mix of "popular and semilearned language" and the "economy of words" are all elements he strives to preserve and convey ("A Note on the Translation" xxiii). The "very few liberties" he has taken are

⁶⁰ This article is discussed in Section 4.6.

detailed: the omission of certain titles (*compare*, *comare* and *gnà*), because he claims their only significance is musical, although *compare* is retained when it is not a prefix to a name. Other untranslated terms are explained, including *massaro*, *curatolo*, *maestro*, *don* and *donna*, *onza* and *tari* (“A Note on the Translation” xxiii).

Footnotes have been added to the text to explain untranslatable words that appear less often, local customs and beliefs and the location of important places.

In terms of Venuti’s recommendations, Cecchetti presents himself as a very visible translator, particularly with respect to his public discussions and essays on translation and his carefully developed theories. And although introductions and annotations are included in his translations because the texts were intended as critical studies, in addition to his rigorous scholarship, they render visible his translation work. These also point to his consideration of his readership and his role as a guide to the source language and culture. With respect to the issue of translation as creative writing, despite the contradictions discussed above, his comments clearly demonstrate that he views translation as a creative act. Furthermore, his central role in the critical debate surrounding the translations of Verga into English⁶¹ increases his status as a visible translator.

4.5.8 Archibald Colquhoun (1912-1964)

Archibald Colquhoun’s translation of “Cavalleria rusticana” appears in a collection of short stories by various authors and translators entitled *Italian Regional Tales of the Nineteenth Century* and published in 1961 by Oxford University Press. At the time, Colquhoun was also general editor of the Oxford Library of Italian Classics. All but one of the translations were done especially for the collection. Colquhoun was also involved in selecting and introducing the stories. The introduction, co-written by Neville Rogers, aims to provide the reader with an understanding of Italian regionalism. All the stories are also introduced by notes about the authors. Colquhoun explains in his note on Verga preceding “Cavalleria rusticana” that the story has been translated many times “and is given here only as a glimpse of a writer whose works should long ago have been in a collected edition in English” (87). This is an odd

⁶¹ See Section 4.6.

statement considering that four collections—those translated by Strettell, Dole, Lawrence and Cecchetti—had already been published by that time, unless he meant that all of his works should have been presented in English. He justifies his new effort, “well worth a try” because of “Verga’s pungent style, with its combination of tautness, lilt, and sometimes untranslatable dialect” (87).

Colquhoun was a prolific translator of Italian literature, with most of his work having been done in the two decades after the Second World War. He was brought up in England, where he attended the Royal College of Art, and began a career as a water-colour artist. Moving to Ischia in Italy before the war, he became acting director of the British Institute in Naples. During the war, he served as an intelligence officer in North Africa and Italy, and after the Italian surrender, as an interrogator and liaison officer. After the war, he served a brief stint as Director of the British Institute at Seville until he decided to concentrate on writing and translation. He died at the young age of fifty-one, leaving two uncompleted works: a novel and a history of the Risorgimento. His only completed original work is a biography of Manzoni (*Manzoni and His Times* 1954). According to his obituary, “like many painters he wrote a most vivid English, in a style not uninfluenced by Norman Douglas,⁶² whom he knew well” (“Mr. Archie Colquhoun: Anglo-Italian Relations”). However, it is his positive influence on relations between the English and the Italians that the obituarist most admires:

[He] played what often seemed a lone hand in changing our wartime attitude of contempt and hatred for Italy into the present lively interest. First as chief organizer of liaison between the Eighth Army and the civil population during the Italian campaign, then as an outstanding translator and interpreter of Italian literature, he was a central figure in relations between the two countries after the fall of Fascism. His influence was largely personal and unofficial, and it was all the stronger for that.

⁶² Norman Douglas, who spent most of his life in Florence and Capri, for three years was associate editor of the *English Review*, through which he met D. H. Lawrence. Their friendship ended in a notorious feud after Lawrence based his character James Argyle in *Aaron’s Rod* on Douglas. *Aaron’s Rod* was partly written in Sicily at the same time Lawrence was starting work on his translations of Verga.

Certainly, the quantity and quality of the Italian authors he translated supports the obituarist's claims: Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Italo Calvino, Alessandro Manzoni, Italo Svevo, Federico De Roberto, Leonardo Sciascia, Mario Rigoni Stern, Francesco Jovine, Mario Tobino, Mario Soldati, Ugo Pirro, Mario Pomilio and Renzo Rosso. He was awarded the very first PEN translation prize for *The Viceroy* by De Roberto in 1963 and the Society of Authors included two of his texts in their list of "50 outstanding translations from the last 50 years": *The Leopard* by Lampedusa (1961) and *Day of the Owl* by Sciascia (1963).

All in all, Colquhoun presents as a translator whose aim is to increase his readers' understanding of the source culture and to shape their perspective.

4.5.9 Raymond Rosenthal (1915-1995)

The third translation into English of *I Malavoglia*, by American Raymond Rosenthal, yet again entitled *The House by the Medlar Tree*, was first published in 1964 (fourteen years after the second translation) by the New American Library in New York, a company that mass-produced paperback reprints of classics and scholarly works, as well as popular, pulp, and 'hard-boiled' fiction. It was later reprinted in 1975 by the literary publisher Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, also from New York. In 1983 the University of California Press issued a new, scholarly edition with an introduction by Giovanni Cecchetti . Rosenthal specialised in the translation of twentieth-century Italian fiction. He also translated from French and was a literary critic. Of the more than forty books he translated during his lifetime,⁶³ he was most known for his translations of Primo Levi. His 1984 rendering of Levi's *Il sistema periodico* earned him the Present Tense Award and one of the two nominations he received for National Book Awards in translation. After serving in Italy during the war, and being wounded in Salerno, he returned to the United States with an enduring love for Italy (Mourges and Rosenthal). After working as an editor of a newspaper until 1949, he moved to Rome and continued to live there until the late 1950s.

Critic and scholar Matthew Reynolds found the translation to be "accurate and stylistically sensitive" (490). Severino claims it is the only text for English readers to

⁶³ His translations include works by Mario Soldati, Rodolfo Celletti, Giovanni Arpino, Giuseppe Cassieri, Vasco Pratolini, Mario Tobino, Piero Sanavio, Tommaso Landolfi, Mario Brelich, Aldo Busi, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Franco Ferrucci.

“accostarsi al capolavoro” (57), although it is unclear whether he includes Landry’s version in this statement as he makes no mention of it and it may not have yet been published when he wrote his essay.

While my analysis will show that I agree with Severino’s opinion of Rosenthal’s translation,⁶⁴ further evidence of his skill is the fact that Anglophone scholars generally use his translations when discussing Verga’s works.⁶⁵

4.5.10 Alfred Alexander (?)

Alfred Alexander’s first translation of “Cavalleria rusticana” was undertaken expressly for inclusion in his biography of Verga. *Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World*, published in 1972, fifty years after the writer’s death, is the first biography of Verga to have been written in English.⁶⁶ Although Alexander was able to interview Verga’s nephew and heir, also called Giovanni Verga, and he received access to Verga’s letters and photographs, as well as the assistance of the eminent Verga scholars Gino Raya and Giulio Cattaneo, the biography has been criticised for its lack of scholarship. Cecchetti, who produced the second and only other English-language biography of Verga six years later, included it in his bibliography but with the proviso that it “often appears to rest on gratuitous assumptions” (*Giovanni Verga* 164). In her review of Alexander’s book, Olga Ragusa warns the reader that this is the work of a “dilettante”, which contains “omissions and disproportions”, and expresses her concern “at the prospect of the misuse” of the author’s accounts “by naïve readers and students” (467-68). Other publications by Alexander include a collection of stories he translated by Luigi Capuana, Virgilio Titone, Luigi Pirandello, Vitaliano Brancati, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Carmelo Ciccio, Gino Raya, Danilo Dolci, Leonardo Sciascia and Verga (“Cavalleria Rusticana”, “The Wolf” and “Liberty”) entitled *Stories of Sicily*; and critical works on Capuana, including a translation of Capuana’s *Comparatico*, and on the production of opera. His interest and expertise in

⁶⁴ See Section 5.2.3.

⁶⁵ Some examples of scholars who use Rosenthal’s translations are: James Wood, *The Irresponsible Self: On Laughter and the Novel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), Sergio Pacifici, *The Modern Italian Novel* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), Gian-Paolo Biasin, *The Flavours of Modernity: Food and the Novel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), and Joseph Luzzi, “Romantic Allegory, Postwar Film, and the Question of Italy,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 68.1 (2007).

⁶⁶ The biography also contains a translation by Alexander of Verga’s story “Libertà” from the volume *Novelle rusticane*, in a chapter outlining the historical and cultural context in which Verga wrote.

opera is evident in his biography of Verga. Indeed, one of the main focuses of the book is “Cavalleria rusticana” and the redressing of injustices perpetrated against Verga by Pietro Mascagni and his opera, with four chapters, entitled “Cavalleria Rusticana”, “Cavalleria Urbana”, “Cavalleria Musicata” and “Cavalleria Litigata”, devoted to the novella and its adaptations. Alexander’s crusade includes redressing the problem of the “blighted” translations of the story, which led him to undertake his own:

Cavalleria rusticana has repeatedly been translated into English. The translations have all become affected by translation’s blight: its liability to date. Writing and translating are very different activities. Good writing is a work of art, and like all true art, remains timeless. Translating is not art; it is expert craftsmanship, and therefore echoes its own period and is bound to lose its flavour. Translations have to fulfill two different requirements: to render the original author’s sentiments clearly and correctly, and to be readable. These two requirements eventually conflict, and for this reason new translations become necessary from time to time. (*Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World* 100)

In his introduction to *Sicilian Stories*, he reiterated the above theory on the difference between translation and writing, and added:

Translations that deserve admiration for accuracy may be uninspiring to read, and some lines written by [Gotthold Ephraim] Lessing in another context can justly be applied to this conflict inherent in translation:

For Klopstock all show admiration
But do you ever read him? No!
We do not look for approbation;
We hope that you will read us, though.

The translator did not wish to sacrifice accuracy in order to improve the flow of his translated prose, and trusts that his resolve to adhere as closely as possible to the original texts will enhance rather than detract from the enjoyment of reading these little masterpieces. (*Alexander Stories of Sicily* 24)

These introductory remarks are a positive response to Venuti's call for explanatory prefaces and he clearly possesses the necessary translator's passion for his subject. However, according to the review of Alexander's biography of Verga by Italian scholar Andrew Wilkin, who was the editor of Penguin's 1973 edition of D. H. Lawrence's translation *Little Novels of Sicily*, his rendering of "Cavalleria rusticana" "suffer[s] from arbitrary omissions and mistranslations similar to those which have tainted previous versions" (13). It is also clear from his above comments regarding translation not being art that he does not consider translation to be a creative act. Accuracy must prevail where it conflicts with style. It would seem that his foremost goal is to bring the work to readers who are unable to read it in its original language.

However, had Wilkin read Alexander's new translation of the novella in *Stories of Sicily*, published three years after his rendition in the biography, he may have changed his negative opinion. Alexander took full advantage of the opportunity to improve his own published translation, an opportunity that many a translator would envy. In doing so, he offers the equally rare opportunity for scholars to examine two versions rendered by the same translator, giving a clear view into his thought processes, at times, quite creative, despite his stated views that translation is not a creative act. Although, his work is not one of the four translations I analyse in detail, I believe it worthwhile including one example of these creative moments in his translations. In his first version he reduces the highly emotional "Per la Madonna che ti mangerei come il pane!" ("Cavalleria rusticana" 193) to simply "I could eat you" (*Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World* 103). In his second version he adds the invocational exclamation and the bread metaphor, more closely matching the emotion and imagery of the original, and changes "eat you" to "gobble you up" to increase the idiomatic tone and imagery: "Holy Mary, I could gobble you up like a morsel of bread!" (*Stories of Sicily* 77).

4.5.11 Judith Landry (?)

The British translator Judith Landry is responsible for the fourth, and to date, final rendition of *I Malavoglia* into English, first published by the small, independent literary publisher and translation house Dedalus in 1985, two years after the University of California Press reissued Rosenthal's 1964 version. Dedalus reprinted Landry's version in 1991, 1998 and 2008. In a departure from the choice of title

common to all three previous translations, this version keeps the Italian title, with the translation following in parentheses (*I Malavoglia (The House by the Medlar Tree)*). A translator since 1988, Landry specialises in works of fiction, sociology, and art and architecture from Italian and French. The only other work of Italian fiction translated by Landry that I have been able to locate is a collection of stories by Dino Buzzati (*Catastrophe: The Strange Stories of Dino Buzzati* (1965) in collaboration with Cynthia Jolly).

Margaret Drabble included Landry's version in her 1986 list of "Books of the Year" in the *Observer*, emphasising the "formidable problems of dialect and peasant speech" Landry was presented with and which she "solved so unobtrusively" and wondering why "this moving and tragic tale is so little known in England". Although her review does emphasise the linguistic challenges, once again the translator's 'unobtrusiveness' is lauded.

I will come back to my own analysis of Landry's translation.⁶⁷

4.5.12 Harry Maddox (?-2008)

Harry Maddox, an English emigrant to Australia, was an academic but in a field unrelated to Italian literature or translation. His 1996 collection of six of Verga's novellas *The Defeated* is an aberration from his scholarly publications (*Theory of Knowledge and Its Dissemination* (Freshet Press, 1993), *How to Study* (Pan Books, 1980) and *Happiness, Lifestyle and Environment* (Freshet Press, 1982)) and his position as associate professor and director of the higher education research unit at the University of Newcastle. To add to his varied accomplishments and interests, he also published a gardening book (*Your Garden Soil* (David & Charles, 1974)). Artwork by his wife, Molly Maddox, often featured on the front covers of his books, as it does on *The Defeated*.

The stories are taken from *Vita dei campi* ("Cavalleria rusticana", "Rosso Malpelo", "La Lupa", "Jeli il pastore", "Nedda") and *Novelle rusticate* ("Pane nero"). Along with discussion of Verga's life and literature, his introduction displays a connection with his own book *Happiness, Lifestyle and Environment*, with much discussion of

⁶⁷ See Section 5.2.4.

human need and hardship, in both Verga's time and today in the "Third World", and might explain his interest in translating the stories.

His introduction also includes discussion of the translation. He mentions Lawrence's versions, stating that they are viewed by scholars as "rather loose and occasionally erroneous, but vivid and imaginative" (xvi). His own opinion is that "Lawrence had a sure instinct for the right word to convey the sense of Verga's subtle and ironic prose" (xvi) and explains that his own translation is more literal, following the word order of the original Italian more closely. He has not attempted to change metaphors to more colloquial English ones, if they can be understood, even if they might sound strange. Verga is a "prose poet" (xvii), he contends, thus his writing defies translation, relying as it does on nuance and allusion, and sounds and rhythms. Maddox stresses to the reader that, in contrast to what is acceptable in English writing, Verga's long sentences connected by simple connectives work to successfully build up a "cumulative sequence of emotive phrases" (xvii). Thanks are given to a colleague for his "expert assistance in unravelling the meaning of some of Verga's more puzzling sentences, and for much helpful advice" and blame is accepted for any inaccuracies caused by his shortcomings (xx). His comments suggest a foreignising approach in that he is more interested in sending the reader abroad to the author than making the author travel abroad to the reader. Finally, the fact that he discusses his translation strategy places him in the category of a visible translator.

4.5.13 G. H. McWilliam (1927-2001)

Penguin's publication in 1999 in their Classics series of a new collection of translations, by Emeritus Professor of Italian George Henry McWilliam, appears to have sparked renewed interest in Verga, as two more appeared within the following four years. Furthermore, McWilliam is a privileged member of a group of three that have elicited the most criticism out of the fifteen English-language translators of Verga, whether positive or negative (the other two are Lawrence and Cecchetti). Reader of Italian at the University of Kent for six years and Head of the Department of Italian at Leicester University for fifteen, his initial interest in Italian had been inspired while he was a student at the University of Leeds by the Italianist Frederick May, who is renowned for his promotion and translation of the works of another great

Sicilian writer, Luigi Pirandello. McWilliam is best known for his 1972 translation of Boccaccio's *Decameron* for the Penguin Classics series, which includes a preface that focuses on "the shortcomings (and occasional merits) of his numerous anglicizers" ("Preface to the Second Edition" xxiv). A second edition in 1995, with its long introduction—121 pages—and notes, is considered an important contribution to Boccaccio scholarship. In his obituary of McWilliam, the Italianist T. Gwynfor Griffith recalled that some time in the early sixties, Robert Baldick, then one of his colleagues at Oxford and editor of Penguin Classics, asked him to recommend a translator from Italian. Griffith suggested that McWilliam translate some Verga. Baldick offered *I Malavoglia*, but McWilliam pointed out that, since Verga had not died until 1922, an earlier author might present fewer copyright problems. Baldick suggested Boccaccio. McWilliam did not immediately accept because, he believed, no translator could ever hope to do full justice to the limitless variations and complexities of Boccaccio's style and language. Eventually, however, those difficulties proved too much of a temptation for McWilliam and he accepted the challenge. And, eventually, too, Griffith's recommendation that McWilliam translate Verga was fulfilled. He also translated the plays of Ugo Betti in a collection entitled *Three Plays on Justice* (1964).

McWilliam can claim the dubious distinction of being the author of a phrase included in a list of fifteen examples of "bad" translations published in the *New York Times* (Alford). The article, entitled "Transloosely Literated" and set out in the form of a quiz, aims to demonstrate the "perilous" journey a book travels from one language to another, giving the examples of "Above the Precipice in the Rye" as the back translation of the Russian title of *Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger and "Angry Raisins", the Japanese back translation of *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. The reader is invited to let the quiz be a guide as to whether "this bumpy road [has] gotten any smoother in recent years". The phrase that earned McWilliam his position on the list was "shifted in his movables" (174)—his translation of "vi trasportò le sue robe" from Verga's novella "Pane nero". Certainly, Lawrence's "carried his things across" (82) and Appelbaum's "brought in his belongings" (213) include more effective solutions for the perennial problem of translating *roba*. This same phrase is mentioned as an example of McWilliam's failure to find "a credible voice" (141) in

Tim Parks's essay⁶⁸ comparing McWilliam's version of the novella with that of Lawrence.

McWilliam's "Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories" includes translations of all the stories from *Vita dei campi*, eight stories from *Novelle rusticane*, "Primavera" from *Primavera e altri racconti*, and "La caccia al lupo" from *Racconti e bozzetti*. As befits a scholarly edition, the paratext renders visible the act of translation. The volume contains acknowledgements (including thanks to Andrew Wilkin, editor of D. H. Lawrence's translation *Little Novels of Sicily* for Penguin, for his "expert advice on Verga's Sicily"), an introduction with endnotes, a bibliography of critical studies and translations, a "Note on Sicilian Terms", maps of the stories' settings and endnotes to the stories. The introduction opens with a discussion of Lawrence's fascination with Verga, and mention of the inadequacy of his translations, followed by the usual biographical and literary background. Only the Verga translations by Lawrence, Cecchetti and Rosenthal were considered worthy of being included in the bibliography. The "Note on Sicilian Terms" explains the titles and monetary units in the text.

4.5.14 Stanley Appelbaum (?)

The seventh translation of "Cavalleria rusticana", by Stanley Appelbaum, appears in a collection entitled *Sicilian Stories/Novelle siciliane* published in 2002. Five other stories from *Vita dei Campi*, five stories from *Novelle rusticane* and "Nedda" are also included in the collection. Appelbaum is a prolific translator and editor of anthologies of children's and adults' fiction, non-fiction, art, photography, songs and poetry. The languages he translates from include Italian, French, Spanish, German and Medieval English. The 2000 Wolff Translator's Prize, administered by the Goethe-Institut Chicago, was awarded to him for his 1999 work *103 Great Poems/103 Meistergedichte* by Goethe. Among the Italian authors he has translated are Boccaccio, Dante and Pirandello. Since the 1960s a single book publisher, the American Dover Publications, appears to have provided him with full-time employment, having been responsible for issuing almost a hundred books that have

⁶⁸ See Section 4.6.

been edited or translated by him. Dover primarily publishes reissues, often in the public domain, with “historical interest”.

What is unique about most of their translated publications, and what makes Appelbaum’s translation of “Cavalleria rusticana” unique, is that they are “dual-language books” created especially for English-speaking students of foreign languages and literatures. This type of text is overtly foreignising, in the sense that it draws the reader close to the original, but the motivation for doing so is didactic rather than ethical or literary. The original and translated texts appear on facing pages, and a literal rendering—necessarily so under the circumstances—enables the Italian-language learner to make direct comparisons between the two. ‘Fluency’ in the target text is secondary to a word-for-word translation. Thus, the translator’s creativity is minimal but his visibility is extremely high, also with respect to the paratextual elements.

As would be expected in such a text, a translator’s introduction and footnotes are included. The introduction discusses Verga’s life and work, and some remarks about the stories in the collection, with both a general and an individual focus.

The general remarks (ix-xi) concern the contextual background, the style, the themes of the stories and the language, which, though containing “very little actual Sicilian dialect”, does hold “thoughts, proverbs, and turns of phrase that are translated or adapted from Sicilian”. Appelbaum warns that demands, “worth the trouble because the material is so rich and rewarding”, are made on the reader due to Verga’s use of “numerous rare and unusual words, and uncommon spellings of common words”. He then addresses his translation strategies for specific issues. He explains that all terms designating specific sums of money, and weights and measures, have been left in the original Italian form “for the sake of historical precision”, and that, in order to retain the flavour of the original, he has used “equivalents or near-equivalents” of “certain courtesy titles”. He provides the literal meaning, usage and the “equivalent” English-language term for those he has left untranslated: *compare* and *comare*, *zio* and *zia*, *gnà*, *massaro*, *curatolo*, *maestro*, *don* and *donna*.

He advises the reader of the Italian texts to pay close attention to the use of *tu* and *voi*, and explains the significance of their use in the stories—the “social and psychological underpinnings”.

His remarks about “Cavalleria rusticana” in the introduction’s section on the individual stories concern the story’s genesis in print, the real locations on which it is based, and its role as inspiration for further adaptations.

4.5.15 J. G. Nichols (1930-)

The most recent translator of Verga’s work is J. G. Nichols, whose version of “Cavalleria rusticana” forms part of a collection entitled *Life in the Country*, published in 2003 by the British publishing firm Hesperus Press. The volume includes translations of all the stories of *Vita dei campi*. Nichols is a poet, literary critic and translator of Italian prose and poetry. His translation of poems by Guido Gozzano, *The Colloquies of Guido Gozzano*, won the 1988 John Florio Prize for Italian Translation and in 2000 he was awarded the Monselice Prize for his translation of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*. He has also translated the poetry of Gabriele d’Annunzio and Giacomo Leopardi, and the fiction of Dante Alighieri, Ugo Foscolo, Giovanni Boccaccio, Giacomo Leopardi, Leonardo da Vinci, Luigi Pirandello and Giacomo Casanova. His own poetry collections include *The Flighty Horse* (Liverpool University Press, 1968) and *The Paradise Construction Company* (Hesperus Press, 2004).

Hesperus Press claim to be “independent publishers of neglected and translated classics” and “rangers extraordinaire”. One of their stated aims is to publish translated works which are “classics in other cultures but unknown and potentially alienating to the English-reading book-buying public, and to bring into the English literary consciousness contemporary European literature”, and they claim to have “a completely fresh editorial approach” (“Hesperus Press Blog”). Contrary to what might be expected from a publisher with such an approach, the cover of *Life in the Country* makes no mention of the translator. Instead, the words “Foreword by Paul Bailey” appears under the title (Verga’s name is shown above the title). Furthermore, on the back flap of the book cover, under the usual biographical information about the author

is a brief blurb about Paul Bailey, reviewer, critic and “leading literary critic since the 1960s”. It is not until the title page that the reader finds evidence that the book has been translated and by whom. And then, following Bailey’s foreword, which discusses and praises Verga’s art, an introduction by Nichols appears. He also discusses Verga’s art and what sets it apart, and makes no mention of the act of translation, apart from stating which Italian edition the translation is based on. The only exegesis in the entire text is found in nine brief notes covering all the stories located at the end of the book, only one of which is for “Cavalleria rusticana”.⁶⁹

In his review of the volume Italian scholar and translator Joseph Farrell found Nichols to be an excellent stylist but far too obliterating of the Sicilianness of the text:

J.G. Nichols succeeds magnificently in forging a style which has a lilt to it, allowing his prose to be as hard as flint when needed and to shine like the Sicilian sun for the rare lyrical passages. However, he does sweep all linguistic traces of Sicily aside, and occasionally, his aggressively up-to-the-minute idiomatic style becomes intrusive. Twice we are told that some peasant family had paid “an arm and a leg” for a service, and although the idiom may be contemporary, it jars in the context. Nichols prefers the total translation, where the name of the horse becomes Whitey rather than Bianca, and a Pulcinella-like fiasco becomes a Punch and Judy show. This is to make too English passages which could profitably retain their foreignness, but the narratives themselves are fluently conveyed.

This review and the invisibility of the translator’s role in the book’s paratextual material clearly point to a domesticating translation—one that makes the foreign author travel abroad to the reader.

⁶⁹ The footnote explains the expression “your wife has been decorating the house for you” (J. G. Nichols, trans., *Life in the Country. By Giovanni Verga* (London: Hesperus Press, 2003) 72) as meaning “decorated with horns” (Nichols, *Life in the Country. By Giovanni Verga* 107).

4.6 The Critical Debate

Critical debate has surrounded the translations by Lawrence and Cecchetti, much of it concerning their treatment of idiom. Cecchetti (“Verga and D. H. Lawrence’s Translations”) started the debate in 1957 with an article he wrote criticising Lawrence’s translations: he did not give the task the time and care required, relied on the dictionary too much and made far too many errors of comprehension. Cecchetti devotes six pages of the article to listing Lawrence’s errors. Conceding the “enthusiasm” of this work by “a man of genius” and that “occasionally he achieves some beautiful passages, powerful and impressive, worthy of the original”, “his satisfaction with a first, hasty draft” resulted in translations that “do not belong in the realm of art, but rather in that of commerce, where everything is temporary and provisional and what really counts is not the reproduction of a literary work, but the market” (“Verga and D. H. Lawrence’s Translations” 343). Rundle (1461) suspects Cecchetti’s criticism was a way to pave the way for his own re-translations, pointing out that his strictures are often contradictory. Indeed, Cecchetti at one point in his article states: “In the case of Verga, a literal translation is doubtless the best, because it helps greatly to preserve the peculiarities of the text” (“Verga and D. H. Lawrence’s Translations” 336). Then, on the following page, he accuses Lawrence of usually “translat[ing] word for word, adhering more closely to the letter of the text than was wise”. He then goes on to confuse the issue further:

Following the original as closely as possible, he translated also Verga’s images and idioms, often creating new and very uncommon images in English and achieving the color that British and American reviewers noted in his versions. To create new and uncommon images is the privilege of writers, and the duty of translators when the images are new in the original. However, though aesthetically Verga’s images are always new, for they reflect a truly original imagination in their freshness and intensity, linguistically they are not. (“Verga and D. H. Lawrence’s Translations” 337)

McWilliam was also very critical of Lawrence’s translations, remarking “in passing” that his “versions of Verga can hardly be regarded as adequate. They were written in

considerable haste, and his knowledge of Italian fell some way short of perfection.” (“Introduction” xii) As would be expected after their harsh criticism of Lawrence, the translations of both Cecchetti and McWilliam were subsequently compared by other critics to those of Lawrence, particularly with respect to the handling of idiom.

Concentrating on the details of Cecchetti’s translations, “since it involves mainly [his] command of English idiom”, Robert M. Adams found that in one instance he had used an idiom “unknown to English, Latin or Italian” (“Mater Dolorosa” translated as “Mother Dolorosa”), and “in the field of expletives, Cecchetti impoverishes Gesualdo strikingly”, translating nine different Italian expressions with the same English one. Lawrence’s translations were “old but still vital”. He “may not have had a flawless command of Italian idiom, but his ear for colloquial plebeian English was unflinching”. Lawrence “gets the real point” of Verga’s original text where Cecchetti obscures Verga’s point with his “muffled English”. Adams does criticise Lawrence, however, for “slip[ping] into a broad north country dialect” in one passage, an inconsistency that other critics have remarked upon.

The translator Tim Parks agrees with Adams that Lawrence gets Verga’s real point. In an essay in which he compares Lawrence’s translation of the story “Pane nero” with McWilliam’s version, he asserts that McWilliam has not found “a credible voice. [He] does some excellent work, but his ear lets him down and we regularly find words and expressions that are out of place.” (141) Lawrence mainly stays with the original, whereas McWilliam uses idiomatic expressions more frequently. Although sometimes his choices make sense, at other times they are “ridiculous” or “alarmingly comic” (140). Lawrence, however, despite his “sometimes shaky” (141) Italian, nevertheless understood well enough the meaning of Verga’s writing.

Nicoletta Simborowski, herself a translator of Italian literature, in comparing McWilliam’s translations with Lawrence’s, prefaces her opinions with the warning that it is “unfair to pick out for criticism individual aspects...without bearing in mind the peculiar difficulties of Verga’s style and that individual decisions may be the result of editorial intervention” (537) intended to increase readability. “Any publisher taking on a foreign work does so hoping for sales rather than as an exercise in cultural benevolence.” She believes that translators should ideally be writers themselves, and

that Lawrence was “rather good at the intense, monotonous, doom-laden pronouncements in a dialect-flavoured idiolect” (539). Despite some faults, she found that the narrative in McWilliam’s version comes across as clear and fresh.

Not surprisingly, the Lawrence scholar Nicola Ceramella, finds Cecchetti’s criticisms of Lawrence “unacceptable and perhaps oversimplistic” (“D. H. Lawrence Translator of Verga: Challenge and Fascination” 22). He considers Lawrence’s translations of Verga’s works to have caught their essence in an original and intriguing way, and despite their faults, to be works of art in their own right. He argues, in a two-part analysis of Lawrence’s translations, that “his deep understanding of Verga and the affinity between himself and the Italian author” (“D. H. Lawrence Translator of Verga: Challenge and Fascination” 22) deriving from what Hyde (45) called his “sense of the ‘spirit of place’ and the ‘otherness’ of a distinctive foreign culture” is revealed in the translated texts. Addressing Cecchetti’s attack on Lawrence for having looked at Verga as a challenge and for considering himself the only person in the English-speaking world capable of the task, Ceramella contends that Lawrence’s words (quoted above) should not be taken literally. “Carried away with his usual enthusiasm and briskness”, he maintains, Lawrence “perhaps meant to say he was the only one willing and able to take on the daunting and possibly thankless task” (“D. H. Lawrence Translator of Verga: Challenge and Fascination” 21). He refutes Cecchetti’s accusations that Lawrence was “privileging the commercial exigencies” when making enquiries about any previous translations of Verga, rather than intending to consult them (“D. H. Lawrence Translator of Verga: Challenge and Fascination” 21). To support his view, Ceramella presents epistolary evidence of Lawrence’s aversion to publishers’ aim for profits as well as the author’s concern for quality in translation. As for Cecchetti’s comments about the speed at which Lawrence worked on his translation of *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, Ceramella concedes that it did not produce his best work (that would appear later in *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*) but points out what a great achievement it was considering the speed, the shipboard working conditions and the fact that it was his first translation from Italian.

In the second part of Ceramella’s study, he compares Lawrence’s rendition of “La roba” to that of McWilliam. While McWilliam’s “anglicised” version is “grammatically correct and perhaps gives a more immediate and clearer idea of what

is happening”, it “misses completely Verga’s aim” (“Getting to Grips with D. H. Lawrence’s Translation of Verga’s ‘La roba’” 48-49), whereas Lawrence captures the spirit of the message and recreates the same atmosphere. McWilliam, with his “readable” and “fluent” text “responds thoroughly to the requirements of the more typical *invisible* translator”. Lawrence, on the other hand, is a “visible” translator because he “sticks closely to the source text, which is literally ‘original’, but, for this very reason, he produces a rather ‘disturbed’ communication full of Italianisms, resulting in a not very fluent reading” (“Getting to Grips with D. H. Lawrence’s Translation of Verga’s ‘La roba’” 50-51).

After scrutinising four translations of “Cavalleria rusticana”, (those written by Strettell, Lawrence, Cecchetti and Alexander), Weisstein came to the conclusion that the translations are “almost across the board and in numerous ways still to be detailed, patently inferior to the model, not only because the resources available in the target language are inadequate but also, and specifically in D. H. Lawrence’s case, because the translator’s linguistic competence left much to be desired” (92). In his view, the novella is a “translatorial nightmare”, not so much because of “creative treason” that is “knowingly committed” by the translators, but rather due to “unknowingly perpetrated betrayal (in the form of blunders, slip-ups and stylistic infelicities)”. Such traps, he argues, are “ultimately responsible for the work’s failure to reach out beyond its innate linguistic borders”. Simple mistakes or oversights may be innocuous on their own, but the cumulative effect is devastating “to the point of subverting the overall meaning” (96). He finds the translators guilty of “lexical perversion”, particularly Strettell, and of employing the “annoying” practice of retaining a word in its original form and explaining it in a footnote. None of the translators respected Verga’s “tour de force” whereby he creates a shock effect through “paragraphing his text by segmenting narrative matter into units that are not separated in accordance with units of setting or action but manifest a programmatic preference for bracketing contrasting phenomena” (99). Another collective sin is the ignoring of Verga’s significant structural patterns created through the use of central images or the repetitive use of key words or phrases. In the final analysis, he finds that none of the translations is a complete disaster, but Cecchetti’s is the best of the lot. His renderings are on the whole “reliable”, “apt” and “closest in spirit as well as letter to the original”, while Strettell’s version is “rather coy and slightly prettifying”, Alexander

is inconsistent and at times even offensive, and Lawrence deviates far too much from the original, both intentionally and unintentionally. The boldness of his intentional deviations has produced a version that strikes Weisstein as “being more of a recreation than a translation in the ordinary sense” (104).⁷⁰

In an analysis of the translation of the terms of address used in *I Malavoglia*, Margherita Ulrych concludes that the various strategies adopted by the translators generally reflect quite markedly their overall translation approaches. Situating each translator within the two poles of domestication and foreignisation, in terms of whether they decided to privilege the source or target language, literature and culture when faced with conflicting norms, she finds that Mosbacher and Rosenthal “generally opted for a target text oriented translation aiming for a fluent (in the case of [Rosenthal] even racy) style domesticated for the receiving culture”; Craig had the same approach, but with different effects due to the period of publication, “although her naturalization of the source text does also have some inevitable elements of foreignization”; and Landry “preferred a more source text oriented translation on the whole, highlighting the flavour of the Italian text” (279).⁷¹

4.7 Summary of Analysis of the Full Corpus

In my overview of the full corpus of English-language translations of Verga’s Sicilian works, my aim was to gain some understanding of the translators’ theoretical stances through an examination of the translators’ backgrounds, reviews of their work and the paratextual elements. Without actually analysing the texts in detail, we can obtain some understanding about the degree to which the various translations accord with the theories of the visible translator, the translator as travel writer and the translator as creative writer. By considering the translated texts in chronological order, we can also trace an historical outline of changes in this regard.

In terms of the visibility, with the exception of the text by the colourful and creative character Dole published in 1896, the translator’s role is completely effaced in the

⁷⁰ As discussed in Section 4.7., Weisstein’s own theoretical views do not accord with the approaches presented in this study.

⁷¹ I disagree with Ulrych’s view of Landry’s approach. My discussion of Landry’s translation in Section 5.2.4 explains why I find her approach to be more target-text oriented.

paratext and in critical reviews until Lawrence's translations starting in 1923. Along with being responsible for stimulating Anglophone interest in Verga, Lawrence's role as a translator also stimulated interest in the challenges of translating Verga's work. The paratexts of all the translations that follow Lawrence's continue to highlight the translation act, except for Landry's text of 1985 and the latest text—that of Nichols in 2003. It is significant that both of these translations stand out as being domesticating—a strategy that goes hand in hand with invisibility. The evident goal of both is for the translated text to appear as if it were originally written in English.

We now can see that ten out of fifteen of the translations have paratextual material that mentions the challenges of the translation. This is a very high percentage in comparison to other translations into English. According to an empirical study on prefaces to translations, based on a corpus of over 800 contemporary fictional works by major writers that have been translated into English from the principal world languages, only twenty per cent included prefaces (McRae 20). Of these, only half, or ten per cent of the total number of books, actually discuss the translation or provide information about the source culture that might be unknown to the target audience. The comparatively high percentage—67% versus 10%—of such prefaces to Verga's texts is most likely due to a combination of the interest in Lawrence's translation and prefaces, and the challenges of translating Verga's innovative linguistic style.

In terms of the translator as travel writer, we can include all those who wrote explanatory prefaces in this category, but five translators stand out particularly as cultural missionaries, whose aim is to shape or guide the reader's perception and understanding of the source language and culture: Lawrence (1928), Mosbacher (1950), Cecchetti (1958), Colquhoun (1961) and Maddox (1996). As for the link between translating and creative writing, five of the translators are also poets or creative writers: Strettell (1893), Dole (1896), Lawrence (1928), Cecchetti (1958) and Nichols (2003).

With respect to the scholarly critics' reception of the translations, the main focus lies with the work of Lawrence, Cecchetti and McWilliam. Of the seven reviews or essays I have considered, four agree that Lawrence is the only one that really "gets the point" of Verga's writing. However, the three who do not agree, Cecchetti, McWilliam and

Weisstein, all have biases affecting their opinions. Since Cecchetti and McWilliam also translated Verga's texts, it is understandable that they might criticise Lawrence's work in order to justify their own efforts. Weisstein, on the other hand, has a view of translation that stands out as contrary to the theories considered in this study. He disapproves of all the translators for having "knowingly committed" "creative treason" (92) and employing the "annoying [...] practice [...] of retaining a word in its original form and explaining it in a footnote" (96). As for Lawrence, his is more a "recreation" (104) than a translation in Weisstein's opinion. Clearly, subjectivity, creativity and visibility are not aspects he admires in a translator.

Chapter five: Comparative Analysis of the Translations of *I Malavoglia*

When comparing the four different translations of the first chapter of *I Malavoglia*, it is useful to identify and categorise the specific regional elements of the text. The four main categories of dialect, idiom, metaphor and culturally specific items correspond with those discussed in the section on the specific problems of translating regional literature in Chapter Two. The dialect category is further broken down into the subcategories of lexicon, syntax, nicknames, titles and affective suffixes; the metaphor category includes imagery and proverbs; and culturally specific items include cultural references, currency and measurements and the villagers' reality. I first consider the specific challenges presented to the translators in Verga's writing with respect to each of these individual elements and compare the translators' various responses to these challenges. I then proceed to discuss the four translators and their translations more organically.

5.1 Translation of Regional Elements

5.1.1 Dialect

5.1.1.1 Lexicon

Verga often chose rare or unusual Italian words, or uncommon spellings of common Italian words, because they resembled a dialect word that was semantically close or was an appropriate metaphor. While this adds to the strangeness or the dialectal feel of the text for the Italian reader, the translator faces serious challenges in conveying the strangeness to the target-text reader. For example, according to Cecco (16), Verga may have chosen the term *gruppo* in “si sentiva un gruppo nella gola” (Verga 12), widely used as a variation of *groppo* (‘knot’), because it resembles the Sicilian *gruppu* as in the expression *gruppu di chiantu*, meaning *voglia di piangere* (Mortillaro) (literally ‘knot of tears’). Although “lump in the throat”, used by all translators, is an idiomatic expression that carries over the sense and both terms are metaphoric, albeit using different objects, any connection to the Sicilian term is lost. The only way that a

translator would be able to maintain this connection would be through paratextual exegesis.

Similarly, the dialectality produced by Verga's use of a sonorised form of *ansimando* ("anzimando"), typical of the south (Cecco 18), is lost in the translations.

While it may not be possible to transfer the 'otherness' or the contrast with their Italian equivalents that are conveyed by dialect-originated terms through the target language, the translators can, and should, attempt to convey as much as possible of the distinct meaning of the terms that Verga chose so carefully, provided they recognise and understand the dialectal peculiarities. In this respect, an English word or expression can be more precise in meaning than the term used in the source text is for an Italian reader who is not familiar with its dialectal affiliation and significance. For example, in the following sentence the words "motti" and "antichi" are set in italics to signal that Verga has transposed them directly from the dialect terms, rather than replace them with the Italian equivalents, as revealed in the proverb on proverbs that he quotes: "Lu muttu di l'anticu mai mentiù" (Frattallone 73).

Padron 'Ntoni sapeva anche certi *motti* e proverbi che aveva sentito dagli antichi: «Perché il motto degli *antichi* mai mentiù»: [...] ed altre sentenze giudiziose (Verga 10).

Rosenthal and Landry have respected Verga's deliberate use of the two terms in the first part of the sentence, both translating them with "sayings" and the colloquial "old folks", while Craig and Mosbacher use synonyms of their translations of "antichi" instead (Craig: "old times" and "the ancients"; Mosbacher: "elders" and "old folks").

Padron 'Ntoni was in the habit of using certain proverbs and sayings of **old times**, for, said he, the sayings of **the ancients** never lie: [...] and other wise saws (Craig 3).

Old Master 'Ntoni remembered many sayings and proverbs that he had learnt from his **elders**, because, as he said, what the **old folks** said was always true. [...] And many other sensible sayings as well. (Mosbacher 8)

Master 'Ntoni also repeated certain sayings and proverbs which he had heard from the old folks, because, as he put it, “the **sayings** of the **old folks** never lie.” [...] And many other wise maxims. (Rosenthal 8)

Padron 'Ntoni also knew certain **sayings** and proverbs which he had heard the **old folks** use, and he felt the old folks' sayings were tried and true: [...] He had quite a stock of such prudent sayings. (Landry 2)

The words “sentenza” and “proverbio” in the above sentence also require sensitive and creative handling. According to Pitré's definitions in his introduction to *Proverbi siciliani*, which is the collection Verga consulted, a “sentenza” is distinct from a “proverbio” in that it contains “un gran senso oppure una grande moralità” while a “proverbio” is a popular, brief and concise saying that is used “quando come una sentenza e quando come una massima, acconci o creduta tale per la condotta pratica della vita” (qtd. in Cecco 13). Rosenthal's use of “wise maxims” and Craig's use of “wise saws” to translate “sentenze” capture the nuances of the word whereas Mosbacher's “sensible sayings” and Landry's “prudent sayings” indicate an ignorance of these nuances.

Peter Newmark defines culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (*A Textbook of Translation* 94). He distinguishes “cultural” from “universal” and “personal” language. Universal words represent things that exist in any culture and so do not usually cause translation problems. He points out that dialect words are not cultural if they are referring to universals, which is why the *function* of dialect use is so important. It is often not the content of the dialectal language that is cultural, or that causes problems for the translator and the target reader; it is the form of the language—the fact that it has been written in dialect—that causes the cultural gap between the source and target languages.

We have already established that the function of Verga's dialect use is important and, as we can see by these examples, that sense of ‘otherness’ for the Italian reader cannot be conveyed by the translator through the target language. But we also need to question whether the dialectal words used by Verga are cultural or universal. The

above examples, representative of others in the text, include both universal and cultural words. While *gruppu* and *anzimando* are universal, the proverbial terms *anticu*, *muttu*, *proverbiu* and *sintinzia* are cultural and require creative thinking by the translator.

5.1.1.2 Syntax

The Verghian *che*—an ambiguous particle that translates the Sicilian *ca*—is used excessively and ambiguously to emulate dialectal speech. Verga also uses it as a device to keep the discourse in an intermediate zone in which the reader is left in doubt as to whether the comment belongs to a specific character, the village chorus or the narrator. The translator needs to be mindful of the indirect style function of the *che*, while aiming for a colloquial tone in the target text. Loss of the dialectal connection is unavoidable.

The prevailing solution in the four target texts is to translate the polyvalent *che* as “and”, as can be seen in the following two examples.⁷² This carries over the rolling effect provided by multiple, connected clauses, but considerably reduces the meaning and elusiveness.

Example 1:

...li avevano sempre conosciuti per Malavoglia, di padre in figlio, **che** avevano sempre avuto delle barche sull’acqua, e delle tegole al sole (Verga 9).

...for generations [...] they had been known [...] as Malavoglia, **and** had always had boats at sea and their own roof over their heads (Mosbacher 7).

...they’d been known from father to son as Malavoglia [...], **and** had always had their own boats in the water and their own roof tiles in the sun (Rosenthal 7).

⁷² Craig’s translation of the first example and Landry’s translation of the second example are discussed later.

...they had always been known as the Malavoglia from generation to generation [...], **and** they had always had sea-going boats and a roof over their heads (Landry 1).

Example 2:

La Longa [...] gli andava raccomandando [...] di mandare le notizie ogni volta che tornava qualche conoscente dalla città, **che** poi gli avrebbero mandati i soldi per la carta (Verga 12).

La Longa [...] reminding him [...] to send home news whenever any one came that way that he knew, **and** she would give him money to buy paper (Craig 4-5).

...La Longa [...] kept telling him [...] if he ever met an acquaintance who was coming back to the village he must send back a letter by him, **and** they would forward him the money to pay for the notepaper (Mosbacher 10).

...La Longa [...] kept advising him [...] to send back the news when some acquaintance from their parts returned to the village **and** they'd mail him the money for writing paper (Rosenthal 9-10).

Another dialectal feature Verga uses is to link together clauses asyntactically with the conjunction *e*, as shown in the following sentence. This is a feature that can be successfully transferred, as has been done by Rosenthal and Landry, producing a similar effect to the original.⁷³ Craig's lack of subject pronoun "they" in the second clause, however, reduces the peculiarity of the syntax.

Il giorno dopo tornarono tutti alla stazione di Aci Castello per veder passare il convoglio dei coscritti che andavano a Messina, **e** aspettarono più di un'ora, pigiati dalla folla, dietro lo stecconato (Verga 12).

⁷³ Mosbacher's treatment of this sentence is discussed later.

The day after they all went back to the station of Aci Castello to see the train pass with the conscripts who were going to Messina, **and** waited behind the bars hustled by the crowd for more than an hour (Craig 5).

The next day they all went to the station at Aci Castello to see the conscripts' convoy go by on its way to Messina, **and** they waited for more than an hour, crushed in the crowd behind the fence (Rosenthal 10).

The next day they all went back to the station at Aci Castello to see the convoy of conscripts on their way to Messina, **and** they waited over an hour behind the railings being jostled by the crowd (Landry 4).

In a second example of an ungrammatical *e*, only Craig has retained it as “and”, and again the result is effective. The others have tightened and slightly altered the vagueness of the original, Mosbacher and Rosenthal by replacing it with “because” and Landry, more creatively, by keeping the “e” as “and”, but introducing a qualifying “which”.

Gli uomini avevano avuto un gran da fare tutto il giorno, con quell'usuraio dello zio Crocifisso, il quale aveva venduto la gatta nel sacco, **e** i lupini erano avariati (Verga 17).

The men had been very busy all day with that usurer Uncle Crucifix, who had sold a pig in a poke, **and** the lupins were spoiling (Craig 12).

When the men went to fetch the lupins they had a terrible argument, which lasted all day long, with that usurer Uncle Crocifisso, who had sold them a pig in a poke, **because** the lupins turned out to be rotten (Mosbacher 15).

But all that day the men had to wrangle with that usurer, Uncle Crocifisso, who had sold them a pig in a poke, **because** the lupins were rotten (Rosenthal 14).

The men had been up against it all day, what with that shark zio Crocifisso, who had sold them a pig in a poke, **and** the lupins, **which** were past their prime (Landry 8).

5.1.1.3 Nicknames

In the first sentence of the first chapter, Verga introduces the popular Sicilian custom of *'ngiuria*—the practice of giving a nickname to a person that is usually, but not always, anaphrastic, ironically indicating a characteristic or quality opposite to that of the person. In this instance, the *'ngiuria* is “Malavoglia”, which all the translators transfer directly, but they also all add the same semantic translation of “ill-will”—Craig and Landry in the text; Mosbacher and Rosenthal in the “Translator’s Note”—rather than the more accurate ‘reluctant’ or ‘unwilling’, as the opposite of the family’s deserved reputation of being hard-working. This sustained mistranslation is unfortunate considering the level of significance of the family’s name, as the title of the book and as an omen of the fate of the family. Verga explains the custom (“proprio all’opposto di quel che sembrava dal nomignolo, come dev’essere”) but in the choral voice rather than the narrator’s that he used in his original manuscript, in which “per chi non fosse iniziato alla logica dei nomignoli locali” appeared instead of “come dev’essere” (Cecco 10). Both Craig’s “as is but right” and Rosenthal’s “And this is as it should be” give a similar effect as that of the original. Helpfully, Rosenthal also explains in his introductory note the custom of nicknames and the “consciously sought ironic overtone” of all the important names in the novel (xxiv). Mosbacher omits a translation of “come dev’essere”, so the reader is given no indication that this is a widespread custom and can only surmise it through further reading. Landry’s “as is often the case” helps the reader to understand that anaphrastic nicknames are a regional custom, but her wording takes the voice back to the narrator rather than to the chorus.

Un tempo i **Malavoglia** erano stati numerosi come i sassi della strada vecchia di Trezza; ce n’erano persino ad Ognina, e ad Aci Castello, tutti buona e brava gente di mare, **proprio all’opposto di quel che sembrava dal nomignolo, come dev’essere** (Verga 9).

Once **the Malavoglia** were as numerous as the stones on the old road to Trezza; here were some even at Ognino [sic] and at Aci Castello, and good and brave seafaring folk, **quite the opposite of what they might appear to be from their nickname of the Ill-wills, as is but right** (Craig 1).

The Malavoglia had once been as numerous as the stones on the old Trezza road. There had been Malavoglia at Ognina and Aci Castello; all good, honest, sea-going folk, **just the opposite of what their name implied.** (Mosbacher 7)

There was a time when **the Malavoglia** were as thick as the stones on the old Trezza road. You could find them even at Ognina and Aci Castello, all seagoing folk, good, upright, **the exact opposite of what you would think them from their nickname. And this is as it should be.** (Rosenthal 7)

At one time **the Malavoglia** had been as numerous as the stones on the old Trezza road; there had been Malavoglia at Ognina too, and at Aci Castello, all good honest sea-faring folk and, as is often the case, **quite the opposite of their nickname, which means ‘men of ill-will’** (Landry 1).

As many of the characters are introduced in this chapter, it is filled with examples of nicknames. Despite the fact that their *'ngiuria* status is signalled in the source text through italics and despite the importance of the reasons these nicknames were bestowed on the characters, the prevailing practice in the translations is to ignore that status. The nicknames are generally not italicised, not translated and not explained. Such is the case with the *'ngiuria* “Cipolla”⁷⁴ (“...alla paranza di padron Fortunato *Cipolla*” (9)), even though the English-language reader’s understanding of the character may benefit from knowing that his name means ‘onion’. Similarly, the target-text reader will remain ignorant that the nickname “Mangiacarrubbe” (“La *Mangiacarrubbe*, quando al lavatoio c’era anche Sara di comare Tudda, tornava a

⁷⁴ Cecco, based on Verga’s preliminary notes that describe the character of Cipolla as “il saputo del villaggio, vanitoso di farsi credere ricco, dice spropositi per parlar pulito”, suggests that the nickname should be viewed as one who talks nonsense to seem important: Ferruccio Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1995) 10.

dire...” (14)) refers to someone so poor all he or she has to eat is the fruit of the carob tree, normally considered forage for horses.

The nickname “Cinghialenta” (“che glielo aveva regalato compare Mariano *Cinghialenta*” (15)) is also left untranslated, unhighlighted and unexplained, but even Italian scholars are not sure of what Verga intended by it. Cecco (21) believes it comes from the dialect phrase *allintari e curia* (in Italian, *scogliersi la cinta*), contextually supported by the carter’s habit of beating his wife. However, he also notes that in Mortillaro it is attested that *allintaricci li cinghi* is a metaphor for *cedere dal suo impegno*, suiting a character who Verga represented in his preparatory notes as “sempre ubbriaco, dormente bocconi sul suo carro”.

In some cases the nicknames are close in form to their English-language equivalents, and so it is reasonable to expect the reader to capture their meaning, as well as understand that they are nicknames. This adds to the opening choral comment about nicknames and helps the reader understand the pervasiveness of the practice. For instance, none have considered that the English-language reader needs help understanding that the nickname “Bastianazzo” (here, again in italics in original to signal its *'ngiuria* status, but not in the translated texts) signifies a large bastion, as the Italian and English words are so close in form. The context also makes further explanation unnecessary: “...poi suo figlio Bastiano, *Bastianazzo*, **perchè era grande e grosso** quanto il San Cristoforo che c’era dipinto sotto l’arco della pescheria della città... (9-10)”. For the same reasons, the similarity to English and the context, the anaphrastic “La Longa”, ironically nicknamed because of her short stature, can be understood by the reader without translation or explanation. The ironical contrast of “la Longa, una piccina” reinforces Verga’s anaphrastic use of the *'ngiuria* (“...tanto che s’era tolta in moglie **la Longa** quando gli avevano detto «pigliatela». Poi veniva **la Longa, una piccina** che...” (10)). Some astute thinking will be required by the reader to grasp the irony of the unsaintly Santuzza’s nickname, but not a great deal more than by the reader of the source text.

In other cases, however, the nickname has been left untranslated, but the translator has chosen to provide a translation in the paratext or in the text. For instance, a translation of “La Locca” as “madwoman” is provided in Rosenthal’s and Landry’s casts of

characters, although its regionality, deriving from the Sicilian *loccu* (Cecco 22) or *llocu* (Guglielmino *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 14), is not mentioned. In two instances, the origins of nicknames are clearly spelled out by Verga in the text. In both these cases, all the translators have translated it in the text. In the first of these, *la Zuppida*, they have left the untranslated name and added the translation. In the second, *Campana di legno*, they have all replaced the Italian name with the translation.

The origin of the nickname *la Zuppida*—a dialect form of *la zoppetta*⁷⁵—as the name given to Venera’s husband’s lame grandfather, is not made clear to readers of either the source or the target texts until Chapter IX. Rosenthal and Mosbacher both give a translation in the text but not until Verga explains the reason for the nickname in the later chapter. Craig and Landry translate it here when it first appears, thus putting the target-text reader on a more equal footing with the source-text reader. They can both become curious about the name’s origin at the same time. Although Rosenthal’s readers, and Landry’s, can find the translation as well in his cast of characters

...ma comare Venera **la Zuppidda** andava soffiando che c’era venuta per salutare ’Ntoni di padron ’Ntoni... (Verga 12).

...but cousin Venera, **the Zuppidda (hobbler)**, went on whispering that she had come there to see Padron ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni... (Craig 6).

...but Venera **Zuppidda** whispered to everybody that the girl had really come to wave goodbye to Master ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni... (Mosbacher 10).

...but Venera **Zuppidda** went around whispering that Sara was there to wave goodbye to Master ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni... (Rosenthal 10).

...but comare Venera, **known as ‘la Zuppidda’, the lame**, was spreading the rumour that in fact she had come to say goodbye to padron ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni... (Landry 4).

⁷⁵ Cecco points out the assonance of “Venera la Zuppidda” with “Vènnari Zuppiddu”, popularly used in Sicily to indicate the last Friday of carnival: Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 17.

The origin of the nickname “Campana di legno” is explained at the beginning of Chapter IV: “... per questo lo chiamavano Campana di legno, perchè non ci sentiva da quell’orecchio, quando lo volevano pagare con delle chiacchiere ...”. This accords with the definition of *campana di lignu* given by Mortillaro: “in famigliare significa simulata sordità” (qtd. in Cecco 23). All have chosen to translate the nickname as “Dumb-bell”, although the decision to translate it at all is inconsistent with their usual practice of leaving nicknames as they appear in the original text. They may have done so in this instance because the meaning is integral to comprehension. Although the etymology of “Dumb-bell”, deriving from the practice of removing clappers from church bells to make them dumb, is semantically appropriate, as is its form, it is unfortunate and perhaps misleading that the more common connotation of the term is “a stupid person, a blockhead” (Stevenson and Brown). But then again, the Italian expression *testa di legno*, meaning ‘blockhead’, is close enough to conjure similar connotations for the Italian reader.

Padron 'Ntoni adunque, per menare avanti la barca, aveva combinato con lo zio Crocifisso *Campana di legno*... (Verga 16).

Padron 'Ntoni, to drive the bark, had arranged with Uncle Crucifix **Dumb-bell** ... (Craig 10).

To help out, Master 'Ntoni had arranged a deal with Uncle Crocifisso, **who was known as Dumb-Bell** (Mosbacher 14).

So Master 'Ntoni, trying to make ends meet, had put through a deal with Uncle Crocifisso, **nicknamed “Dumb-bell,”** ... (Rosenthal 13).

So, to keep things going, padron 'Ntoni had arranged a deal with zio Crocifisso **Dumb-bell**... (Landry 7).

And finally, each translator has chosen a different treatment for the nickname “Piedipapera”. While Mosbacher and Rosenthal have left it untranslated (although the latter translates it in his cast of characters), Landry follows the Italian with a liberal

translation in the text (“Duckfoot” rather than the more precise ‘Goosefoot’) and Craig only gives the translation.

5.1.1.4 Titles

The third sentence introduces the titles *zio* and *padron*, both commonly used in Sicily as forms of address. All but Landry translate *zio* into “Uncle” and give no explanation regarding its usage, leaving it to the reader to surmise that, in Sicilian custom, it does not necessarily denote a family relationship. Landry, who has explained that neighbours are often referred to as uncle or cousin “in the small enclosed world of Aci Trezza” in her “Cast of Characters” leaves it in lower-case, non-italicised Italian. *Padron* is kept in Italian by Craig, but in upper case and not italicised and with no explanation of its meaning, and by Landry, who has explained it, in lower case and not italicised. Both Mosbacher and Rosenthal explain the term in their notes but translate it into the English “Master”, with Mosbacher adding the qualifying “old”.

...accanto alla *Concetta* dello **zio Cola**, e alla paranza di **padron Fortunato Cipolla** (Verga 9).

...by the side of **Uncle Cola**’s *Concetta* and **Padron Fortunato** Cipolla’s bark (Craig 1).

...near **Uncle Cola**’s *Concetta* and **Master Fortunato** Cipolla’s *Carmela*, which was a bigger boat (Mosbacher7).

...alongside **Uncle Cola**’s *Concetta* and **Master Fortunato** Cipolla’s big trawler (Rosenthal 7).

...next to **zio Cola**’s boat *Concetta* and **padron Fortunato** Cipolla’s fishing-boat (Landry 1).

In their proper sense, the terms *comare* (Sicilian *cummari*) and *compare* (*cumpari*) mean ‘godmother’ and ‘godfather’, but Verga has used them in the more general sense, common in the south in his time, to denominate close acquaintances or

subordinates. Unlike Rosenthal and Landry, Craig and Mosbacher did not explain the terms in introductory notes or leave them in their original Italian. Craig, replacing it with “cousin”, has made a reasonable choice as the reader is already acquainted with the usage of *zio* as a term that often denotes familiarity, rather than a strict family relationship. The target-text reader’s understanding of the term is also assisted by the close proximity of two instances of its use (“comare Tudda” and “comare Venera”).⁷⁶

Lì presso, sull’argine della via, c’era la Sara di **comare Tudda**, a mietero l’erba pel vitello; ma **comare Venera la Zuppidda** andava soffiando... (Verga 12).

Near by, on the margin of the ditch, pretending to be cutting grass for the calf, was **Cousin Tudda’s Sara**; but **cousin Venera**, the Zuppidda (hobbler), went on whispering... (Craig 5-6).

Nearby, at the side of the road, stood Comare **Tudda’s Sara**, cutting grass for the calf, but **Venera Zuppidda** went around whispering... (Rosenthal 10).

And there at the roadside was Sara, **comare Tudda’s girl**, apparently cutting grass for their calf; but **comare Venera**, known as ‘la Zuppidda’, the lame, was spreading the rumour... (Landry 4).

5.1.1.5 Affective Suffixes

Italian affective suffixes are always a challenge to translate into English, and only Landry attempts to render the sense of the augmentative suffix *-azzo* by following the nickname “Bastianazzo”, with the additional information “or big Bastiano”. However, what is lost in all the translations is the regional element of the suffix, which is the Italianised form of the typically Sicilian suffix *-azzu* (Cecco 11), rather than originating from Italian suffix *-azzo* with its pejorative connotations.

⁷⁶ Mosbacher’s translation is discussed later.

5.1.2 Idiom

Verga's idiomatic expressions were chosen carefully for their regional specificity. Culture-specific idiomatic expressions can be difficult or impossible to translate. By replacing the two examples shown below with 'equivalent' target-language expressions, the translators have left behind all traces of their Sicilianness. The essential meaning may exist in the target text, along with the idiomatic tone, but all the aspects of the experience associated with the contexts in which they are used (Baker 64) are now those of the target culture.

The regionality of the Sicilian phrase “pagare col violino” (“il basso popolo siciliano dice, pagare una certa somma di denaro a piccole rate, a tanto al mese” (Verga *Lettere al suo traduttore* 42)) is lost in the translations, although Mosbacher's solution—“paid off on the ‘never-never’ system”—captures the idiomatic tone well. Has Landry created her own expression with “on the never”?

...e c'era anche compare Agostino Piedipapera, il quale colle sue barzellette riuscì a farli mettere d'accordo sulle due onze e dieci a salma, **da pagarsi «col violino» a tanto il mese** (Verga 16).

...and there was present also Cousin Agostino Goosefoot, who, by talking and joking, managed to get them to agree upon two scudi and ten the bag, **to be paid by the month** (Craig 11).

Piedipapera was there too, and he succeeded by his jokes and witticisms in getting them to agree on a price of two onze and ten a salma, **to be paid off on the “never-never” system at so much a month** (Mosbacher 15).

...and Compare Piedipapera was there too, and with his joshing got them to agree on two onze and ten a salma, **to be paid at so much per month** (Rosenthal 14).

...including compare Agostino Piedipapera, or Duckfoot, who was so bluff and blithe that he managed to bring about an agreement on the price of two onze and ten per salma, **to be paid on the never at so much a month** (Landry 7).

All have opted for the corresponding target-language expression “pig in a poke” to replace “la gatta nel sacco”, an Italian expression that also appears in Sicilian proverbial form: *accattari la gatta 'ntra lu saccu*, meaning ‘to buy something without checking the quality’ (Mortillaro). This is a good match in terms of sense, imagery, etymology, register and frequency of use, but, again, it loses all the associations of its use in the source culture.

5.1.3 Metaphor

5.1.3.1 Metaphors and Imagery

The difficulties involved in the translation of metaphors, arising from the complexity of carrying the double meanings or new creative usages across linguistic boundaries, has led to the common practice by translators of lessening the creative and cognitive functions of metaphors (Gentzler “Metaphor and Translation” 941). Empirical studies have shown that translators tend to reduce the polyvalence and resonance of metaphors, sometimes to the point of omitting them altogether. The translatability of a metaphor depends on how much the speakers of the source and target languages share the cultural experience of that particular metaphor and the semantic associations drawn from it (Dagut 28). However, even when the cultural experience is not shared, translators may choose to use the same image if their aim is to stimulate or respond to their readers’ interest in the regional particularities. In this case, they may choose to add an explanation of the historical origins or connotations surrounding the metaphor. The translator must beware of “overtranslating”, which can occur if the metaphor was used randomly or unconsciously by the writer, rather than as a functionally relevant metaphor that was used creatively or decoratively (Van den Broeck 73). Certainly, Verga’s metaphors would all fall into the functionally relevant category, carefully researched and chosen as they were to represent the reality and the language of his

characters. The cultural experiences in the three examples below—religious festivals, village bell towers and “Turks”—would not, generally speaking, be shared by the target-text reader. Treatment varies from translation *sensu stricto* (Turks), to substitution (religious festivals), to paraphrase (parish church bells).

In all four versions of the sentence “Intanto l’annata era scarsa e il pesce bisognava darlo per l’anima dei morti, ora che i **crisiani** avevano imparato a mangiar carne anche il venerdì come tanti **turchi**” (Verga 15-16), the translators kept the terms “Christians” and “Turks”. The reader might understand the reference to the Roman Catholic practice of not eating meat on Friday, but without an explanation, the resonance of the term *turchi*, used popularly to signify infidels or godless people, is lost, along with all its historical background and figurative meanings.

The somewhat opaque expression “che comandava le feste e le quarant’ore”, signifying that padron ’Ntoni was the head and absolute master of the family, combines the Sicilian derived idiom *cumannari li festi* (Mortillaro) with a reference to the liturgical practice during which the Holy Sacrament is displayed for forty hours—the length of time Christ spent in the tomb—and collectively adored. All paraphrase the expression to a certain extent but omit the specific reference to the ‘Forty Hours’ Devotion’, by referring to “the thumb” as one who “orders” (Craig), “arranges” (Mosbacher), “commands” (Rosenthal) and “is master of” (Landry) feasts. The latter two choices transfer the sense of overall authority more than the first two, which give more of an impression that padron ’Ntoni excels at organising the family’s schedules. Craig and Rosenthal both add “fasting” to the “feasting”, while Mosbacher adds the “festivals” that appear in the original. Landry, departing much farther from the original wording than the others, adds the phrase “as the Bible has it” to retain the religious connection. However, yet again, the connection with Sicilian idiom is unavoidably severed in all the translations.

Prima veniva lui, il dito grosso, **che comandava le feste e le quarant’ore...**
(Verga 9).

First, he came—the thumb—who **ordered the fasts and the feasts in the house...** (Craig 2).

First came the thumb, himself, **who arranged all the feasts and festivals...** (Mosbacher 7).

First came the old man himself, the thumb, **who commanded when to feast and when to fast...** (Rosenthal 8).

First there was padron 'Ntoni himself, the thumb, the **master of the feast, as the Bible has it ...** (Landry 1).

None have attempted to transfer the regionally motivated metaphor “sentire le due campane”, referring to the church bells of two parishes. Rosenthal and Landry have transferred by the paraphrase (“hear ... both sides”), which renders the meaning of the expression, while Craig and Mosbacher have only transferred part of the sense (that it was read twice), although the context fills in the rest (that the two readers had contrasting axes to grind).

Padron 'Ntoni andava di nascosto a farsi leggere la lettera dallo speziale, e poi da don Giammaria, che era del partito contrario, **affine di sentire le due campane**, e quando si persuadeva che era scritto proprio così... (Verga 15).

Padron 'Ntoni went in secret, first, to Don Giammaria, and then to Don Franco, the druggist, **and got the letter read to him by both of them**; and as they were of opposite ways of thinking, he was persuaded that it was really written there as they said... (Craig 9).

Master 'Ntoni went off secretly and had the letter read to him by the chemist, and **then as a check** he had it read to him all over again by Don Giammaria, whose ways of thinking was diametrically opposite, and, when he felt convinced that he really know what the letter said... (Mosbacher 13).

Master 'Ntoni went on the sly to have the letter read to him by the pharmacist, and after that by Don Giammaria, who was in the opposing camp, **so he could hear it from both sides**, and when he was finally convinced that this was really what was written there... (Rosenthal 13).

Padron 'Ntoni went in secret to have the letter read out to him by the chemist, and then by don Giammaria, who was a man of the opposite persuasion, **so as to hear both sides**, and when he was convinced that the letter was indeed as it had first seemed ... (Landry 6-7).

In all three of the above cases, the polyvalence and resonance of the metaphors has been lost or reduced because the cultural experiences they refer to are not shared by the source and target cultures.

5.1.3.2 Proverbs

Verga's generous use of proverbs in *I Malavoglia* is intended to express the collective point of view of the characters without the need for further narrative explanation, and he selected them carefully according to the mood and personality of the character speaking. He often sets the proverbs off in quotation marks so that the reader is fully aware of their proverbial status. It is important that the translator also make clear the status of all proverbs, in order for the reader to understand that the expressions originate not with the speaker but are part of the local folklore.

The degree of proverbs' semantic opacity varies. Sometimes the meaning can be derived from the constituent items, while in other cases they must be interpreted through a metaphoric or analogical process, or their meaning may be completely opaque. As discussed earlier, the translatability of metaphor depends to a certain extent on the degree to which the target-text reader shares the cultural experience of the metaphor.

Many of the proverbs Verga uses are universally transparent so they can be, and generally have been, transferred semantically and syntactically, as is the case in the first example below. Their proverbial status is also generally signalled by the translator, although not always. Only Landry's version does not do so here, whereas the others have all used quotation marks.

...e padron 'Ntoni, per spiegare il miracolo, soleva dire, mostrando il pugno chiuso – un pugno che sembrava fatto di legno di noce – **Per menare il remo bisogna che le cinque dita s'aiutino l'un l'altro** (Verga 9).

...and Padron 'Ntoni, to explain the miracle, used to say, showing his closed fist, a fist which looked as if it were made of walnut wood, **“To pull a good oar the five fingers must help one another”** (Craig 2).

...and Master 'Ntoni, to explain the miracle, would show his clenched fist, which looked as though it were made of walnut, and say: **“To manage an oar the five fingers of the hand have to help one another”** (Mosbacher 7).

...and Master 'Ntoni, to explain the miracle, used to lift his clenched fist, a fist made like a chunk of walnut, and say: **“To pull an oar the five fingers must work together”** (Rosenthal 7).

...this miracle was explained by padron 'Ntoni who would show his clenched fist, which looked as if it were carved out of walnut wood, and would say that **the five fingers of a hand had to pull together to row a good oar...** (Landry 1).

In another example in which Verga has also set the proverb off in quotation marks, Craig and Landry follow suit and, while Mosbacher and Rosenthal do not, it is clear from their wording that the saying is well-known within the community (Mosbacher: “As the saying is...” and Rosenthal: “...and you know what they say:...”).

... Mena (Filomena) soprannominata «Sant'Agata» perché stava sempre al telaio, e si suol dire «**donna di telaio, gallina di pollaio, e triglia di gennaio**»⁷⁷... (Verga 10).

⁷⁷ This is a translation of the Sicilian proverb “Fimmina di tilaru, jaddina di puddaru, e trigghia di jnnaru”: Santi Correnti, *Proverbi e modi di dire siciliani di ieri e di oggi* (Rome: Newton & Compton, 1995) 78.

...Mena (Filomena), surnamed Sant'Agata, because she was always at the loom, and the proverb goes, **“Woman at the loom, hen in the coop, and mullet in January;”**... (Craig 2).

...Mena, short for Filomena, who was nicknamed St. Agatha, because she was always at her loom. **As the saying is, woman at the loom, hen in the coop, and mullet in January!** (Mosbacher 8).

...Mena, short for Filomena, who was nicknamed Saint Agatha because she was forever at the loom, and **you know what they say: Woman at the loom, hen in the coop, and mullet in January!** (Rosenthal 8)

...Mena (short for Filomena) nicknamed Saint Agatha because she was always at her loom and, the saying goes, **‘a woman at her loom, a chicken in the hen-run and mullet in January are the best of their kind;’**... (Landry 2).

Curiously, none of the translators have indicated that the phrase “Il motto degli antichi mai menti”⁷⁸ is a proverb, rather than original words of padron 'Ntoni, thus treating it differently from the other four proverbs in the same sentence. The second, “Senza pilota barca non cammina”,⁷⁹ is translated by Craig and Landry almost word for word, and by Mosbacher and Rosenthal with the addition of the lexical constituents “sail(ing)” and, in Rosenthal’s case “the tiller”. “Fa il mestiere che sai, che se non arricchisci camperai”⁸⁰ has received various treatments. Craig has retained the form and the rhyme, but omitted the “arricchirsi” component. Mosbacher has transferred the full meaning but has lost the poetic form. Rosenthal retains the meaning and adds a bread metaphor. And finally, Landry, in using “a cobbler should stick to his last, a beggar could never be bankrupt and a good name was better than riches” to translate this proverb and the following one together, has retained some of the sense, but added the “good name” component and changed the form and the allusions of the metaphors. With the last of the five proverbs contained in this sentence, “Contentati di quel che

⁷⁸ “Lu muttu di l’anticu mai mentiù.”

⁷⁹ This is a partial recovery of the proverb “Senza pilota nun cammina varca, senza vicinu ’un si cummina furtu”: G. Pitrè qtd. in Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 13.

⁸⁰ This comes from the proverb “Fa l’arti chi sai, si tu nun arricchisci, camperai”: G. Pitrè qtd. in Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 13.

t'ha fatto tuo padre; se non altro non sarai un birbante”,⁸¹ the rhythm and meaning has been retained by Craig, although in order to do so she has added the “neither/nor” component. Mosbacher and Rosenthal both retain the meaning, as well as the form more or less, but only Rosenthal’s version also transfers the rhythm.

Padron 'Ntoni sapeva anche certi motti e proverbi che aveva sentito dagli antichi: «Perché il motto degli antichi mai menti»: – «Senza pilota barca non cammina» – «Per far da papa bisogna saper far da sagrestano» – oppure – «Fa il mestiere che sai, che se non arricchisci camperai» – «Contentati di quel che t'ha fatto tuo padre; se non altro non sarai un birbante» ed altre sentenze giudiziose (Verga 10).

Padron 'Ntoni was in the habit of using certain proverbs and sayings of old times, for, said he, the sayings of the ancients never lie: “Without a pilot the boat won't go;” “To be pope one must begin by being sacristan,” or, “Stick to the trade you know, somehow you'll manage to go;” “Be content to be what your father was, then you'll be neither a knave nor an ass,” and other wise saws (Craig 3).

Old Master 'Ntoni remembered many sayings and proverbs that he had learnt from his elders, because, as he said, what the old folks said was always true. One of his sayings was: “You can't sail a boat without a helmsman.” Another was: “You must learn to be a sexton before you can be Pope.” Another was: “Do the job you know; if you don't make money, at least you'll make a living.” And another: “Be satisfied to do what your father did, or you'll come to no good.” And many other sensible sayings as well. (Mosbacher 8)

Master 'Ntoni also repeated certain sayings and proverbs which he had heard from the old folks, because, as he put it, “the sayings of the old folks never lie.” For instance: “Without a man at the tiller the boat can't sail.”—“You've got to be a sexton before you can be the Pope.”—Or: “Stick to your trade, you may not get rich but you'll earn your bread.”—“Be satisfied to be what your

⁸¹ This comes from a combination of “L'omu nun è cuntentu mai” and “Lu galantomu ca 'mpuvirisci, addiventa birbanti”: G. Pitrè qtd. in Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 13.

father made you, if nothing else you won't be a rascal." And many other wise maxims. (Rosenthal 8)

Padron 'Ntoni also knew certain sayings and proverbs which he had heard the old folks use, and he felt the old folks' sayings were tried and true: a boat couldn't go without a helmsman, for instance; if you wanted to be Pope, first you had to be sexton; a cobbler should stick to his last, a beggar could never be bankrupt and a good name was better than riches, he said. He had quite a stock of such prudent sayings. (Landry 2)

An element that should not be ignored in the translation of proverbs is the sound of the language. All have uniquely reproduced the rhythmic effect of the following proverb. The rhythmic effect is reinforced by Rosenthal's use of "chanted", while Mosbacher's use of "quoted" reinforces the proverbial status.

– **«Scirocco chiaro e tramonta scura, mettiti in mare senza paura»⁸²** –
diceva padron 'Ntoni dalla riva, guardando verso la montagna tutta nera di nubi (Verga 18).

“Clear south wind and dark north, go fearlessly forth,” said Padron 'Ntoni, from the landing, looking towards the mountains, dark with clouds (Craig 13).

“When it's clear to the south and dark to the north, safely to sea you may put forth,” Master 'Ntoni **quoted**, standing on the shore and looking towards Etna, which was covered with clouds (Mosbacher 16).

“When north is dark and south is clear, you can put to sea without fear,” Master 'Ntoni **chanted** from the shore, as he looked towards Mount Etna, completely black with clouds (Rosenthal 15).

⁸² This is a translation of the Sicilian «Sciloccu chiaru e Tramuntana scura, mettiti a mari senza paura»: Pitrè qtd. in Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 26.

‘When the north is dark and the south is clear, you may set to sea without any fear,’ padron ’Ntoni was saying from the shore, looking towards Etna which was all black with clouds (Landry 9).

5.1.4 Culturally Specific Items

5.1.4.1 Cultural References

Unfortunately, all but Landry⁸³ have chosen to omit the regionally specific and eloquent reference to Peppinino, a popular servant figure in Catania’s traditional puppet theatre (originally Peppi-e-Ninu). An explanation in the paratext would not have been out of place and would have given the reader more insight into the region’s culture and traditions, but the translators may have decided it would require too much explanation and is not integral to the story.

Allo zio Crocifisso gli finiva sempre così, che gli facevano chinare il capo per forza, **come Peppinino**, perché aveva il maledetto vizio di non saper dir di no (Verga 16-17).

It was always so with Uncle Crucifix, he said, because he had that cursed weakness of not being able to say no (Craig 11).

That’s the way it always ended with Uncle Crocifisso—you had to bully and cajole him to get him to agree, because he had the terrible failing of not being able to say no (Mosbacher 15).

That’s how it always ended, Uncle Crocifisso said—they’d talk and talk until he gave in, because he had the accursed weakness of not being able to say no (Rosenthal 14).

⁸³ Landry’s rendering is discussed later.

The “fariglioni”, referring specifically to the rock formation along the shore of Aci Trezza, was never documented in literary use before Verga and derives directly from the Sicilian “faragghiuni” (Carnazzi 124); thus it has been italicised in the original text. Craig has gone so far as to provide an explanatory footnote, but defines them only generically. Mosbacher and Rosenthal share the effective solution of qualifying “Fariglioni” as “rocks”. Mosbacher goes further by explaining in his “Translator’s Note” that the “Fariglioni, more commonly Faraglioni, are tall, often pointed rocks, characteristic of Sicily and Capri; according to tradition they were thrown by the blinded Polyphemus at the fleeing Odysseus”. Landry has opted for a description rather than the name of the rock formation (“fangs of rock offshore”).

5.1.4.2 Currency and Measurements

Currency and measurement terms have generally been left untranslated. This reinforces the ‘otherness’ for the reader. All but Craig, who has used “scudi”, a form of currency formerly used in various Italian states, have retained the original Sicilian currency forms here. The regional specificity of “onze” and “salma” is explained in Rosenthal’s and Mosbacher’s introductory notes, but not in Landry’s text. The English-language reader of all texts, however, is left unaware of the significance of their use by the villagers, which highlights the slow withdrawal and exchange in Sicily of the old currency after unification in comparison with that of the north.

5.1.4.3 Villagers’ Reality

An example of Verga’s narrative technique whereby he refers to a reality that would be familiar to the characters but adds no further information to help the reader who is not familiar with it is the phrase “il San Cristoforo che c’era dipinto sotto l’arco della pescheria della città”. Mosbacher and Rosenthal have decided that the reader should be helped and have provided the name of the city (Catania). By naming the city, which the characters would not have done, they have changed the locally specific perspective of the story.

*...Bastianazzo, perchè era grande e grosso quanto **il San Cristoforo che c’era dipinto sotto l’arco della pescheria della città...** (Verga 9-10).*

...called Bastianazzo because he was as big and as grand as **the Saint Christopher which was painted over the arch of the fish-market in town...**

(Craig 2).

...called Bastianazzo, because he was as huge and burly as **the St. Christopher painted under the arch of the fish-market at Catania...**

(Mosbacher 7-8).

...called Bastianazzo, because he was as big and burly as **the St. Christopher painted under the arch of the fish market in the city of Catania...**

(Rosenthal 8).

...called Bastianazzo or big Bastiano because he was as large and solid as **the Saint Christopher painted under the arch of the town fishmarket...**

(Landry 1).

The reference to Sant'Agata, the patron saint of Catania, in "...Mena (Filomena) **soprannominata «Sant'Agata» perché stava sempre al telaio...**" (10) is not explained by any of the translators. Although the Italian reader would be more likely to be aware of the Sicilian saint's symbolism of domestic virtue than an English-language reader would, the context makes explanation unnecessary.

The original form of "Pulcinella" has been retained by Mosbacher and Landry, while Craig changes it to "Punch". Punch traces its roots to Pulcinella but, because it is the British variant, its use threatens the sense of location for the reader. Rosenthal has played it safe with the generic "puppet show". In the process he loses the clue available to the knowledgeable or curious reader that 'Ntoni is in Naples, Pulcinella being a Neapolitan stock character.

Diceva che le donne, in quelle parti là [...] e che sul molo c'era il teatro di **Pulcinella...** (Verga 14).

He said that the women oft there [...] and that on the mole there was **Punch's** theatre (Craig 7).

He said that in Naples [...] and that there was a **Pulcinella** show on the jetty... (Mosbacher 12).

He said that the women in those parts [...] and that on the quay there was a **puppet** show... (Rosenthal 11).

He said that the women in those parts [...] and that on the quay you could watch **Pulcinella**... (Landry 5).

None of the translators expected their readers to be familiar with the wind names of “scirocco” and “tramontana”. By changing them to names of the directions from which they blow, the regional specificity and the villagers’ characteristic way of referring to them is lost.

– «**Scirocco** chiaro e **tramonta scura**, mettiti in mare senza paura» – diceva padron ’Ntoni... (Verga 18).

“Clear **south wind** and dark **north**, go fearlessly forth,” said Padron ’Ntoni... (Craig 13).

“When it’s clear **to the south** and dark **to the north**, safely to sea you may put forth,” Master ’Ntoni quoted... (Mosbacher 16).

“When **north** is dark and **south** is clear, you can put to sea without fear,” Master ’Ntoni chanted... (Rosenthal 15).

‘When the **north** is dark and the **south** is clear, you may set to sea without any fear,’ padron ’Ntoni was saying... (Landry 9).

In his handwritten manuscript, Verga had referred to the mountain as “l’Etna”, but then deliberately changed it to accord with what the villagers would call it. However, only Craig has not changed it back to Etna.

...diceva padron 'Ntoni dalla riva, guardando verso **la montagna** tutta nera di nubi (Verga 18).

...said Padron 'Ntoni, from the landing, looking towards **the mountains**, dark with clouds (Craig 13).

...Master 'Ntoni quoted, standing on the shore and looking towards **Etna**, which was covered with clouds (Mosbacher 16).

...Master 'Ntoni chanted from the shore, as he looked towards **Mount Etna**, completely black with clouds (Rosenthal 15).

...padron 'Ntoni was saying from the shore, looking towards **Etna** which was all black with clouds (Landry 9).

In one of the proofs of the novel, Verga had followed the phrase “filava diritto alla manovra comandata” with “da buon figliuolo e da buon marinaio” thereby rendering more evident the relevance of the image to the language of a fishing community (Cecco 12). This fishing imagery is accordingly maintained by Craig and Rosenthal.⁸⁴

...e così grande e grosso com'era **filava diritto alla manovra comandata**... (Verga 10).

...and big and grand as he was, **he went right about at the word of command**... (Craig 2).

...and big and burly as he was, **he'd put about directly when ordered**... (Rosenthal 8).

5.2 The Individual Translators' Transference of *Sicilianità*

⁸⁴ Mosbacher's and Landry's renderings are discussed later.

5.2.1 Mary A. Craig's Translation of *I Malavoglia*

Unfortunately, little information is available about Craig, apart from the fact that she also translated a De Amicis novel and a story by Giovanni Magherini-Graziani. I have been unable to determine her birth date or nationality, although the publication of her translation by an American firm points to her being an American. Nor have I been able to ascertain whether she was also an author of original texts. At any rate, no original publications under her name appear to exist. What is clear, however, is that the social mores of her day seriously constrained her translation, with the result that many 'risqué' sections of text are missing, such as the proverb «L'uomo è il fuoco, e la donna è la stoppa: viene il diavolo e soffia» (Verga 16)—an aspect that stands out for all the critics of her translations. Although, whether or not she herself approved of these cuts remains a mystery.

In terms of paratextual matters, Craig's translation is on the low scale of visibility. Her name does not appear on the cover of the 1890 first edition, although it appears under the book title on the title page. In the 2003 Kessinger reprint, however, she shares equal billing with Verga on the front cover.

No introductory notes are included to give us a clue as to Craig's translation aims or strategies. The reader is given no indication whatsoever of the idiosyncratic nature of Verga's language in the original text. Nor does Howells's introduction refer in any way to the translation of the novel, although he does play the role of travel guide with his reference to the cultural differences between the characters and the target-text readers, and his praise of Verga for "making us intimate with the hearts of men of another faith, race, and condition". At the same time, however, he emphasises that Verga teaches readers how alike they are in "all that is truest in them". He maintains that Verga's characters "might pass for New England types, which we boast the product of Puritanism, but which are really the product of conscience and order" (v). It is interesting to note here that any intervention by the translator is totally discounted. Should Howells not also be praising Craig for making the reader intimate with the hearts of men of another faith, race and condition? Is it not through her

intervention that it becomes possible? Or is her translation “merely rote mechanical exercise on that miraculous tracing paper”, as Grossman puts it?⁸⁵

However, Craig’s role as translator is visible in her utilisation of some exegesis within the text, in the form of footnotes, or following the explained item in parentheses. The results of the latter practice are awkward: “ma comare Venera la Zuppidda andava soffiando” (Verga 12) becomes “but cousin Venera, the Zuppidda (**hobbler**), went on whispering” (Craig 6). Her footnotes are sometimes inaccurate: “minestra” is described as “macaroni of inferior quality” (Craig 7). In other cases, since she has gone to the trouble of including a footnote, more information would have benefited the reader. For example, the *faraglioni*, which are a specific group of rocks dominating the Aci Trezza harbour, rich in legendary meaning for the villagers, she describes generically as “Rocks rising straight out of the sea, separate from the shore” (Craig 13). Similarly, the lupins that figure so prominently in the plot and in Sicilian history are simply described as “coarse flat beans” in the footnote.

In contrast to later readers of English renditions of *I Malavoglia*, not many Anglophones of her day were very interested in the then current Italian literature. What readership her translation did enjoy was undoubtedly due to the popularity of Mascagni’s opera of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The distance between her readers and the village of Aci Trezza was far greater than it is in today’s globally conscious world, although the temporal proximity would mean that events alluded to in the novel that are now historical would have been current to her readers. This may explain why she is the only one of the four translators to retain Verga’s use of the nickname “Franceschello” (Verga 10; Craig 3) to refer to King Francis II, the king of the Two Sicilies who was ousted by Garibaldi. The nickname was significant as an expression of the disdain and anti-Bourbon attitude of the character don Silvestro, but Craig’s contemporary readers would have been more likely to know who he was than later readers. Retaining references such as “Franceschello” foreignises the text and helps to maintain the location of the original text. In contrast, however, her replacement of “Pulcinella” with the British variant “Punch” is domesticating and threatens the sense of location for the reader.

⁸⁵ See Section 2.3.

Her temporal position may also have been the reason why she chose to retain the terms “salt” and “bread” in her translation of “Quando avrà provato **il pane salato** che si mangia altrove, non si lagnerà più della minestra di casa sua.” (Verga 14) with “When he has learned how **salt the bread** is that one eats elsewhere he won’t growl any longer about the minestra at home.” (Craig 7), while both Mosbacher and Rosenthal translate *sale* as “bitter”. The origin of “pane salato” passes through the Sicilian expression *Lu pani d’altru è salatu* (Pitrè qtd. in Cecco 19) from Dante’s *Paradiso*: “Tu proverai sì come sa di sale lo pane altrui...”; “You shall find out how salt is the taste of another man’s bread...” is a much quoted translation. Evidently they did not expect their readers to be familiar with the Dante quote from which it derives, whereas in the nineteenth century, English-language translations of Dante and other classic writers (Pite) were quite popular.

Craig was at a severe disadvantage compared to the other translators in terms of the resources she could draw on in her translation. Later translators were able to examine and draw from earlier versions and any criticism they received, as well as the extremely useful and ever growing body of studies of Verga and his works by Italian scholars. Over the years, many annotated texts have been produced with detailed explanations of Sicilian terms and expressions that Craig would probably have not even recognised as being peculiar to the region let alone have known their significance, connotations, sense or history.

Was she aware that Verga’s ungrammatical, dialectal constructions were deliberate? For example, while the others translated the polyvalent *che*—which Verga uses extensively to give a colloquial, dialectal flavour—in the phrase “li avevano sempre conosciuti per Malavoglia, di padre in figlio, **che** avevano sempre avuto delle barche sull’acqua, e delle tegole al sole” (Verga 9) with “and” (Mosbacher 7; Rosenthal 7; Landry 7), Craig opted for “who”: “they had been known as Malavoglia, from father to son, **who** had always had boats on the water and tiles in the sun” (Craig 1). Whether this is a deliberate attempt to recreate Verga’s style and intentions, and thus “to experiment with non-standard linguistic forms” as Venuti recommends, is a matter of conjecture. However, her treatment of another instance of a polyvalent *che* suggests she had a firm grasp of Verga’s intentions. The implicit consecutive meaning (Guglielmino *I Malavoglia, by Giovanni Verga* 13; Cecco 21) of the “che” in the

phrase “Ella teneva il ritratto sul canterano, sotto la campana del Buon Pastore—**che** gli diceva le avemarie—andava dicendo la Zuppidda, e si credeva di averci un tesoro sul canterano...” (Verga 15) reveals the malice of la Zuppidda’s remarks. Craig’s use of “so” makes clear the intentions behind the remark: “She kept the portrait on the bureau, under the glass globe which covered the figure of the Good Shepherd; **so** that she said her prayers to it, the Zuppidda said, and thought she had a great treasure on the bureau...” (Craig 9). By recreating features of the original syntax, Craig’s translation disrupts what Venuti terms the “illusion of transparency” and brings the reader closer to Verga.

Craig’s translations of proverbs often display poetic creativity, so that her newly created English proverbs appear to be well-established maxims. For example, her translation of “Contentati di quel che t’ha fatto tuo padre; se non altro non sarai un birbante” (Verga 10) as “Be content to be what your father was, then you’ll be neither a knave nor an ass” (Craig 3) retains both the rhythm and the meaning. And her rendition of the following phrase compares favourably with that of Mosbacher and Rosenthal.⁸⁶ All three have retained the form and the sense of the original, but Craig’s stands out as more poetic.

«Chi ha carico di casa non può dormire quando vuole» perché «chi comanda ha da dar conto» (Verga 11).

“He who has the management of a house cannot sleep when he likes, for he who commands must give account” (Craig 3).

“The head of a household can’t go to sleep when he likes,” he used to say.
“The man in charge has to give an account of his stewardship.” (Mosbacher 9)

“The man who runs a household can’t sleep whenever he wishes,” because
“he who commands must give an accounting” (Rosenthal 9).

However, sometimes she sacrifices part of the original meaning in her concern for a proverbial form. For example, she omits the *arricchirsi* component in her translation

⁸⁶ Landry’s version of this passage is discussed later.

of “Fa il mestiere che sai, che se non arricchisci camperai” (Verga 10) as “Stick to the trade you know, somehow you’ll manage to go” (Craig 3).

Another instance where she reduces the original text is her translation of “la Sara di comare Tudđa” (Verga 14) as just “Sara” (8). The full appellation is an important style element that evokes the importance of Sicilian family relationships in defining a person within the community.

Craig’s creativity shows through on her idiomatic phrasing. For instance, with her choice of “as is but right” following the explanation of the Sicilian custom of anaphrastic nicknames in the opening sentence, she manages to capture the choral voice of the original perfectly.

Un tempo i Malavoglia erano stati numerosi come i sassi della strada vecchia di Trezza; ce n’erano persino ad Ognina, e ad Aci Castello, tutti buona e brava gente di mare, proprio all’opposto di quel che sembrava dal nomignolo, **come dev’essere** (Verga 9).

Once the Malavoglia were as numerous as the stones on the old road to Trezza; there were some even at Ognino [sic] and at Aci Castello, and good and brave seafaring folk, quite the opposite of what they might appear to be from their nickname of the Ill-wills, **as is but right** (Craig 1).

And her choice of “hobbler” as a translation of “Zuppidda”—the dialect form of zoppetta”—carries the idiomatic tone better than Landry’s “the lame”.

Another example of her creativity is her translation of *comare* as “cousin”. In their proper sense, the terms *comare* (Sicilian *cummari*) and *compare* (*cumpari*) mean ‘godmother’ and ‘godfather’, but Verga has used them in the more general sense, common in the south in his time, to denominate close acquaintances or subordinates. Craig has made a reasonable and interesting choice as the reader is already acquainted with the usage of *zio* as a term that often denotes familiarity, rather than a strict family relationship.

5.2.2 Mosbacher's Translation of *I Malavoglia*

Mosbacher is a translator who distinguishes himself for being multilingual—translating from French and German as well as Italian—and for co-translating with his wife. His other translations from Italian are mainly of works by his neorealist contemporaries, including Silone, Pratolini and Vittorini. His interest and specialisation in neorealist literature may account for his decision to translate *I Malavoglia*, considering that Verga's story was adapted by the neorealist director Luchino Visconti into the 1948 film *La terra trema* only a few years before Mosbacher's translation was published. It is interesting to note that most of his translations from German and French were of non-fiction and often political texts, whereas his Italian translations were of fictional works. He did not, so far as I can discover, write original works himself.

In terms of Mosbacher's visibility on the covers of his translations, I have only sighted the cover of the first, 1950 edition by George Weidenfeld, although not its dustjacket, and the 1955 edition by Doubleday Anchor. Neither of these displays his name. However, his presence is prominent in the one-page "Translator's Note" preceding the text, an exegetic method he states that he prefers to "interlard the text with footnotes". He provides a brief historical background to the action in the novel, along with explanations of specific regional or untranslated terms and customs, including the literal meaning of *Malavoglia*, the titles *Don*, *mastro* (both left untranslated) and *padron* (translated as "master"), the Fariglioni rock formations and the tradition behind them, the "Three Kings" constellation, lupins, the Sicilian code regarding women's honour, which extends to her family, and weights, measures and currency (left untranslated).

The Translator's Note increases his visibility and increases the readers' access to the source culture by providing important background information and culturally specific elements in the text. For example, while Landry has left the potentially confusing term "lupins" unexplained and Craig describes them only as "coarse, flat beans" in a footnote, Mosbacher's note explains their historical importance and use in Sicily and removes the potential for the reader to confuse them with the flowers:

The lupins which led to so many troubles for the Malavoglia were not cultivated for their flowers. They were *Lupinus albus*, which has been cultivated in the Mediterranean area since ancient times for forage, for ploughing in to enrich the land and for its round, flat seeds which form an article of food.

Although Mosbacher does not expressly state his theoretical stance, his determination not to “interlard” the text with footnotes and his explanations of terms that might bewilder the reader point to the aim of a ‘fluent’ translation. At the same time, his retention of certain linguistic and cultural items and his explanations give recognition to the differences between the source and target cultures. However, he gives no indication in his note of any translation challenges posed by this text or mention of Verga’s unique literary style.

The lack of mention of Verga’s style coincides with Mosbacher’s decision to discard some of its main devices. For instance, while all the other translators follow Verga’s practice of linking clauses together asyntactically with the conjunction *e* to give the illusion of dialect, Mosbacher often creates his own sentence breaks, as in the following example:

Il giorno dopo tornarono tutti alla stazione di Aci Castello per veder passare il convoglio dei coscritti che andavano a Messina, e aspettarono più di un’ora, pigiati dalla folla, dietro lo steconato (Verga 12).

Next day they all went to the station at Aci Castello to see the train with the conscripts going through to Messina. **They** had to wait for more than an hour, squeezed in the crowd outside the railings; ... (Mosbacher 10)

Also discarded is Verga’s use of imagery relevant to a fishing community in the phrase “...e così grande e grosso com’era **filava diritto alla manovra comandata...**” (10), which Mosbacher replaces with a universal, human body metaphor “...big and burly though he was, **it never entered his head to question anything his father said...**” (8). He also adds information that may not necessarily be true to Verga’s intentions, as the action of responding immediately to orders does not rule out

rebellious thoughts.

Yet another example can be found in his translation of the phrase “il San Cristoforo che c’era dipinto sotto l’arco della pescheria della città”. Verga here refers to a reality that would be familiar to the characters but adds no further information to help the reader who is not familiar with it. However, Mosbacher has decided that the reader should be helped and has provided the name of the city (Catania). By naming the city, which the characters would not have done, he has changed the locally specific perspective of the story.

He also loses the villagers’ perspective when he names the city of Naples in his translation of the phrase “Diceva che le donne, in **quelle parti là**, scopavano le strade colle gonnelle di seta...” (14) with “He said that in **Naples** the women wore long, silk skirts which swept the pavement...” (12). This also flattens the aura of distance and strangeness of “in quelle parti là” that the others have retained with “oft there” (Craig (7)) and “in those parts” (Rosenthal (11) and Landry (5)).

With respect to the ambiguous Verghian *che*, Mosbacher shows problems of interpretation in the phrase below. The implicit consecutive meaning (Guglielmino *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 13; Cecco 21) of the “che”, which reveals the malice of la Zuppidda’s remarks is interpreted appropriately by all the others, but Mosbacher’s wording gives the impression that the first part of the sentence (“She kept the picture on the chest-of-drawers, under the glass dome with the statue of the Good Shepherd to whom she told her beads”) is separate to la Zuppidda’s remarks. The “so” in Craig’s and Rosenthal’s versions and the word order and punctuation in Landry’s version, which follows the original text, make clear the intentions behind the remark.

Ella teneva il ritratto sul canterano, sotto la campana del Buon Pastore—**che** gli diceva le avemarie—andava dicendo la Zuppidda, e si credeva di averci un tesoro sul canterano... (Verga 15).

She kept the portrait on the bureau, under the glass globe which covered the figure of the Good Shepherd; **so** that she said her prayers to it, the Zuppidda said, and thought she had a great treasure on the bureau... (Craig 9).

She kept the picture on the chest-of-drawers, under the glass dome with the statue of the Good Shepherd to whom she told her beads, and she thought she had a treasure there on the chest-of-drawers, or so Venera Zuppidda said... (Mosbacher 13).

She kept the picture on the dresser beneath the glass bell together with the Good Shepherd, **so that** she said her Hail Marys to it and, so Venera Zuppidda went around saying, she figured that she had a special treasure on her dresser... (Rosenthal 12).

She kept the portrait on the chest-of-drawers, under the glass dome with the statue of the Good Shepherd—to whom she told her beads—said la Zuppidda, and she thought she'd got a real treasure there on that chest-of-drawers... (Landry 6).

Mosbacher also alters the meaning of the original by opting for the appellation “Mother” when translating the regionally specific “comare”. His choice renders the sense of familiarity and lack of family relationship of the term, but because it is normally used for elderly women, it is semantically more specific than “comare” and therefore not always appropriate as its translation, which explains why he omits the title before “Venera”.

Lì presso, sull'argine della via, c'era la Sara di **comare Tudda**, a mietere l'erba pel vitello; ma **comare Venera la Zuppidda** andava soffiando.... (Verga 12).

A few feet away from them, by the edge of the road, was **Mother Tudda's** Sara, mowing hay for their calf, but **Venera** Zuppidda whispered to everybody... (Mosbacher 10).

Mosbacher's translation of the phrase "come quella della Madonna dell'Ognina" nicely captures the intended effect of Verga's technique of referring to a precise reality of the characters' world without further explanation. Unfortunately, the effect is spoiled by the fact that Verga is referring to a statue, not a picture, as specified by Mosbacher.

Pareva San Michele Arcangelo in carne ed ossa, con quei piedi posati sul tappeto, e quella cortina sul capo, **come quella della Madonna dell'Ognina...** (Verga 14).

He looked like the Archangel Michael in flesh and blood. With his feet standing on a carpet and a curtain behind his head, **like that one in the picture of the Madonna at Ognina...** (Mosbacher 12).

On a more positive note, Mosbacher successfully captures the idiomatic tone of the phrase "pagare col violino" with the semantically equivalent expression "paid off on the 'never-never' system". He also displays creative thinking and maintains the regional connection in his treatment of the nickname "Franceschello" (Verga 10), which refers to King Francis II, the king of the Two Sicilies ousted by Garibaldi. Verga has used it to express the disdain and anti-Bourbon attitude of the character don Silvestro. By referring to him as "King Bomba's son" (9), he retains a Sicilian-bestowed nickname, but one that he evidently feels would be more familiar to his readers.

5.2.3 Rosenthal's Translation of *I Malavoglia*

Like Mosbacher and Landry, Rosenthal translated from French as well as Italian. Uniquely amongst the four translators, however, he was also a literary critic, and his introductory comments indicate that he was well-informed in theoretical matters. Furthermore, with the third edition of his translation by the University of California Press, his is the only scholarly version.

He dedicates his translation of *I Malavoglia* to his wife, acknowledging her assistance in the task and her "acute and sensitive knowledge of two languages". He also

includes a three-page note on the translation, in which he discusses the previous two renditions by Craig and Mosbacher (xxiii-xxvi). In particular, he comments on the extensive cuts in both. Craig's cuts—"all overt or even covert references to sex, all especially savage or ironical overtones, not to mention all expressions of anticlerical or antigovernmental feeling"—he attributes to Victorian prudery and caution. Curiously, while declaring that Mosbacher's version "followed these cuts", he finds the explanation in "the fact that [he] has obviously used the 'official,' indescribably mutilated version circulated by the Italian educational system", which "exhibit[ed] an amazing unanimity of opinion" with the Victorian prudes "as to what is 'harmful' and 'indecorous'". Rosenthal himself based his translation on Verga's original text edited by Luigi Russo and published by Riccardo Riccardi in 1955.

Explanations are included for the name *Malavoglia*, the "consciously sought ironic overtones" of "all the important names" in the novel (translations of some, but not all, nicknames are provided in the "Cast of Characters"), the forms of address *Compare* and *Comare*, *Mastro*, *Padron* (translated as "Master", as Mosbacher has done) and *Don*, the historical context, lupins, the *ballatoio*, the date of the saints' days mentioned in the text, and weights, measures and currency (left untranslated).

Unlike the other translators of *I Malavoglia*, Rosenthal provides a clear statement of his translation strategy, which is "to remain as close as possible to the immediate, unliterary flavor of the original" (xxiv). He also expresses great admiration for Lawrence's translations of Verga (Mourges and Rosenthal). Despite "some horrendous mistakes"—a result of him not knowing Italian well or not having the right dictionary, in Rosenthal's opinion—Lawrence's ability to write so well in English meant that he was able to give the reader "the feeling, the sense of movement, the style of the original". "It's as if Lawrence's prose is a transparency over Verga's," he claims. In line with Venuti's advocacy of the visibility of translation, the reader is made to understand that the translation involved challenges that required making choices and finding solutions. For example, when he defines the titles *Comare* and *Compare*, he explains that he retains the Sicilian forms not only for their musical value, but also because they symbolise the close relationships between the characters. He also justifies his decision to retain the literal wording of proverbial words and phrases with an explanation of their historical formation and their allusions, giving a

specific example. By following Verga's lead, rather than "smooth[ing] them out into some familiar, glib English or American equivalent" he claims he avoids what would "really amount [...] to a gross misinterpretation". Considering this stance, I find it odd that he chose to replace "Pulcinella" with the generic "puppet show" when the English-language reader could easily cope with the Italian character name and it would have helped to maintain the original sense of location.

Rosenthal has also visibly articulated his theories and strategies in other forums, including an interview in the *New York Times* (Mourges and Rosenthal) in which he discusses his efforts, sometimes failed, to translate the tone of an original text. One writer whose work he gave up on was Cesare Pavese because, in his opinion, his tone comes chiefly from his use of dialect. "It's going to take a genius to do it, to get the grace notes over the words," he claims. When faced with translating changes in vernacular, Rosenthal does not want "the reader to feel words have been thrown in out of context". Ordinary clichés of everyday speech have a certain meaning within a certain framework, and he contends that it would be absurd for him not to honour that, so he searches for English-language words that match the tone of the original within the English-language context. He gives the example of finding, by chance, the perfect match for the "dirty slang words" of Aldo Busi's *Vita standard di un venditore provvisorio di collant* when he went into a bar "where these two tough cookies started cursing at each other". Likening them to actors who throw themselves into their roles, he explains that good translators "disappear into their heads". If they attach too much of their own influence, all their translations will come out with a certain sameness. He also stresses the external forces that translators have to deal with. Not only bad translators, he contends, but also editors can destroy the flavour of the original with their desire to "smooth out the prose". Rosenthal claims to "always fight like mad" not to have that done on his translations.

Cecchetti's eighteen-page introduction in the second edition discusses the literary merit and the context of the novel. He also makes specific reference to the difficulties of translating any Verga work because of the unusual cadences and rhythms, which are "not quite Italian", that make it sound translated in the original. He notes that this observation does not affect the reader of the translated text; however, he explains its

significance in terms of the “expressive texture” that the translator must cope with (“Introduction” xxi).

This second edition also includes a bibliography of recent editions of Verga’s works; “recent translations” of Verga’s works into English—a very limited list of three texts: Cecchetti’s translations of selected *novelle* and of *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, and a translation of the dramatic version of *Cavalleria rusticana*; and a selection of biographical and critical works, the majority of which are in Italian—an indication that this edition is intended for an academic readership, as expected from an academic publisher.

Of the four translators, Rosenthal proves himself to be the most skilful at interpreting the types of terms and expressions that, as Curry argues, have become ambiguous after being translated from Sicilian into Italian. As I suggested earlier, such ambiguity may be reduced in the translations from Italian to English, but this would be dependent on the translator’s understanding of the original dialect terms and expressions. Rosenthal’s rendering clearly shows his understanding, which was undoubtedly assisted by the textual annotations and criticisms of Italian Verga scholars, available to him but not to the earlier translators.

An example is the term “provvidenza”. In Sicilian speech it means a good result or success, as opposed to the more widely held definition of God’s protective care, as in the expressions *avìri pruvireenza, circàri pruvireenza* (Guglielmino *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 16). As such, Rosenthal’s solution, “the name she bore was a good omen” is closest to the original meaning that “la Provvidenza” is an augural name for the boat’s activity; the “luck” in the others’ renditions, on the other had, implies that God is watching over the boat.

Così fu risoluto il negozio dei lupini, e il viaggio della *Provvidenza*, che era la più vecchia delle barche del villaggio, **ma aveva il nome di buon augurio** (Verga 17).

So the affair of the lupins was arranged, and the voyage of the *Provvidenza*, which was the oldest boat in the village, **but was supposed to be very lucky** (Craig 12).

That was how the lupin deal and the *Provvidenza*'s voyage was decided on. The *Provvidenza* was the oldest of the village boats, **but she had the reputation of being lucky** (Mosbacher 15).

So that was the way the lupin deal and the voyage of the *Provvidenza* was settled. She was the oldest boat in the village, **but the name she bore was a good omen.** (Rosenthal 14)

That was how the lupin deal came about, and with it the voyage of the *Provvidenza*, which was the oldest of the village boats **but which had a lucky name anyhow** (Landry 12).

Another example is his translation of the clause “*la Provvidenza se la mangiava inutilmente il sole e l’acqua*”. Verga’s idiomatic, ungrammatical use of the singular form of the verb *mangiare*, as if “*il sole e l’acqua*” were a single entity (Cecco 23), has caused problems of interpretation for all the other translators. Rosenthal is the only one who has correctly treated the sun and water collectively as the subject of the clause.

...e quel furbaccio di Campana di legno sapeva pure che **la *Provvidenza se la mangiava inutilmente il sole e l’acqua***, dov’era ammarrata sotto il lavatoio, senza far nulla... (Verga 16).

...and that old rascal Dumb-bell knew that **the *Provvidenza was eating her head off*** and doing nothing... (Craig 11).

...and sly old Dumb-Bell knew that **the *Provvidenza*** was moored idly below the wash-place, **uselessly eating up sun and water**... (Mosbacher 14).

... and that foxy old Dumbbell also knew that **sun and water were uselessly eating up the *Provvidenza***, tied up below the wash shed, completely idle... (Rosenthal 14).

...and the artful Dumb-bell also knew that **the *Provvidenza* was wasting good sun and water** moored up there by the wash-place, not doing anything... (Landry 7).

Rosenthal is also the only translator whose version indicates that he has interpreted “*si parlavano*” correctly as being used in the popular sense of *amoreggiavano* (Cecco 17). While the rest translate it literally with “talk” or “speak”, his wording—“was carrying on”—transfers its meaning more fully.

...ma comare Venera *la Zuppidda* andava soffiando che c’era venuta per salutare ’Ntoni di padron ’Ntoni, **col quale si parlavano** dal muro dell’orto, li aveva visti lei, con quegli occhi che dovevano mangiarseli i vermi (Verga 12).

...but cousin Venera, the Zuppidda (hobbler), went on whispering that she had come there to see Padron ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni, **with whom she used to talk** over the wall of the garden. She had seen them herself, with those very eyes, which the worms would one day devour. (Craig 5-6)

... but Venera Zuppidda whispered to everybody that the girl had really come to wave goodbye to Master ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni, **who had often spoken to Sara** over the garden wall; Venera Zuppidda had seen them with her own eyes, as true as she was born (Mosbacher 10-11).

...but Venera Zuppidda went around whispering that Sara was there to wave goodbye to Master ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni, **with whom she was carrying on** over the garden wall, she’d seen them herself, with her own two eyes, may the worms devour them! (Rosenthal 10)

...but comare Venera, known as ‘*la Zuppidda*’, the lame, was spreading the rumour that in fact she had come to say goodbye to padron ’Ntoni’s ’Ntoni, **who she used to talk to** over the garden wall, she herself had seen them as sure as she would wind up before God her maker (Landry 4).

It is possible, however, in the above particular instance that the other translators were aware of the original meaning, but kept the literal wording as a deliberate strategy to retain the expression's ambiguity. It could be argued that Rosenthal's wording has interpreted and clarified the text for the reader beyond what Verga intended—something he often clearly does elsewhere in the text. For instance, he names the city of Catania when Verga has deliberately referred to it only as “la città” in order to retain the villagers' perspective. He also replaces the nickname “La Longa” in its first appearance in the text with the character's given name, Maruzza. In its second appearance, the irony of her name is made evident. Here Rosenthal retains “Maruzza” where Verga has “La Longa”, but adds “or La Longa”. Thus the reader of his translation will be more informed as to the character's two appellations than readers of the original and the other translations. However, in this instance, his rendering does no more than give information intertextually that can also be found in the paratext; Verga's intentions have not been substantively distorted. The same is true with his use of the word “beans” after “lupin”. The importance of the *lupini* in the novel warrants a clarification of their meaning for the English-language reader, particularly in light of the possible confusion with the more generally known plant genus. Rosenthal elegantly removes the threat of confusion within the text, as well as providing further explanation paratextually.⁸⁷

Padron 'Ntoni adunque, per menare avanti la barca, aveva combinato con lo zio Crocifisso *Campana di legno* un negozio di certi **lupini** da comprare a credenza per venderli a Riposto... (Verga 16).

So Master 'Ntoni, trying to make ends meet, had put through a deal with Uncle Crocifisso, nicknamed “Dumb-bell,” to buy some **lupin beans** on credit and sell them at Riposto... (Rosenthal 13).

⁸⁷ “The lupins (*Lupinus albus*), which figure so prominently in the Malavoglia's misfortunes, are plants widely grown in the Mediterranean. They produce a round, flat seed used for forage and fertilizer, and also eaten by the poor after being steeped in water to remove the bitterness.”: Raymond Rosenthal, “Note on the Translation,” *The House by the Medlar Tree. By Giovanni Verga. Trans. Raymond Rosenthal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964) xxv.

At other times, the clarification through his additions can be at the expense of the regionality of the original text. For instance, his translation of “Menico della Locca” as “La Locca’s son Menico”, while being helpful to the reader who would not be familiar with this form of appellation, in the process loses the regional element of its construction. A better solution was found by Craig (“La Locca’s Menico”), which stays closer to the form and still implies the mother-son relationship. Readers of Mosbacher’s and Landry’s translations, on the other hand, might surmise that “della Locca” is Menico’s surname.

...e alle volte bisognava prendere a giornata **Menico della Locca**, o qualchedun’altro (Verga 16).

...and sometimes they had to take **La Locca’s Menico**, by the day, to help (Craig 10).

...and sometimes they had to hire **Menico della Locca** or someone else to help them out (Mosbacher 14).

...and sometimes they had to hire **La Locca’s son Menico** by the day, or somebody else (Rosenthal 13).

...and at times they had to take on **Menico della Locca**, or someone else (Landry 7).

In other cases, his additions can disrupt the original style. For example, in the original text, padron ’Ntoni used the word “diceva” in the following phrase. By translating “diceva” with the expressive verb “chanted”, Rosenthal brings the authorial voice into the text, whereas Verga wanted the story to be told simply through the words of his characters.

– «Scirocco chiaro e tramonta scura, mettiti in mare senza paura» – **diceva** padron ’Ntoni dalla riva, guardando verso la montagna tutta nera di nubi (Verga 18).

“When north is dark and south is clear, you can put to sea without fear,” Master ’Ntoni **chanted** from the shore, as he looked towards Mount Etna, completely black with clouds (Rosenthal 15).

Rosenthal’s strength in transferring the *sicilianità* lies in the area of metaphoric imagery.

He is the only translator to have retained the full simile field of “pale di ficodindia” with “cactus blades”—although even more localised a choice would have been “prickly pear blades”, as the prickly pear is the precise type of cactus that grows in Sicily. *Pale* is both the botanical name for the flattened branches of the prickly pear and for the blades of an oar, both terms evocative of the daily experience of the villagers. Landry’s use of “shovel”, although also falling within the varied definitions of “pala” distorts the intended imagery. Craig and Mosbacher simply use “leaves”, thereby reducing the double metaphor to that of the plant alone. Verga himself preferred that his French translator leave “il caratteristico *ficodindia*”, rather than translate it into the French “*figue de Barbarie*” (Verga *Lettere al suo traduttore* 44).

...gli disse che aveva il difetto di esser piantato come un pilastro su quei piedacci che sembravano **pale di ficodindia**; ma i piedi fatti a pala di ficodindia ci stanno meglio degli stivalini stretti sul ponte di una corazzata, in certe giornataccie... (Verga 11).

...told him that his only defect was to be planted like a column on those big ugly feet, that looked like **the leaves of a prickly-pear**, but such feet as that would be of more use on the deck of an iron-clad in certain rough times that were coming than pretty small ones in tight boots... (Craig 4).

...told him that all that was wrong with him was that he was planted as solid as a pillar on two great feet that looked like **the leaves of a prickly-pear tree**. But in some weathers feet like that are better than a smart pair of town boots for standing on the deck of a cruiser... (Mosbacher 9).

...said that his only defect was to be planted like a pillar on those huge feet which looked like **cactus blades**. But in nasty weather feet shaped like **cactus blades** are better than tight little boots for holding the deck of an ironclad... (Rosenthal 9)

...he told him that his defect was to be set like a column on great feet that resembled **the shovel-like leaves of a prickly pear**; but such **shovel-feet** are better than neat-fitting boots on the deck of a battleship on a rough day... (Landry 3).

Rosenthal is also the most successful in transferring both the meaning and form of the expression “che dovevano mangiarseli i vermi”, drawn from the Sicilian expression *L’occhi, si l’avissinu a manciari i vermi*. Both Mosbacher and Landry (“she herself had seen them as sure as she would wind up before God her maker”) have replaced the worm image with target-culture expressions that do not contain the element of exorcism or punishment common to such Sicilian expressions of the time. Craig has kept the worm image (“She had seen them herself, with those very eyes, which the worms would one day devour”), but in the process has lost the meaning that the worms would only devour her eyes *if she were lying*. In fact, her use of “those very eyes” might be interpreted as referring not to her own eyes but to Sara’s.

...li aveva visti lei, con quegli occhi **che dovevano mangiarseli i vermi** (Verga 12).

She had seen them herself, with those very eyes, **which the worms would one day devour** (Craig 6).

...Venera Zuppidda had seen them with her own eyes, **as true as she was born** (Mosbacher 11).

...she’d seen them herself, with her own two eyes, **may the worms devour them!** (Rosenthal 10)

...she herself had seen them **as sure as she would wind up before God her maker** (Landry 4).

5.2.4 Landry's Translation of *I Malavoglia*

Landry translates from French as well as Italian. Fiction is only one of the several genres she works in. As far as I can ascertain, she does not write works of her own.

Landry's name appears quite prominently on the covers of the two editions that I have sighted. However, she has not provided an introduction, apart from a "Cast of Characters" in which she gives the literal meanings of the characters' nicknames and an explanation of the terms *padron*, *mastro*, *compare* and *comare*, and a note that states: "In the small enclosed world of Aci Trezza, neighbours are often referred to as uncle or cousin". Her "Cast of Characters" appears to be adapted from Rosenthal's cast list as they are very similar. A rather unfortunate error in the list may have occurred in the copying process. Rosenthal's version lists:

Compare Mangiacarrube, fisherman

La Mangiacarrube, his daughter

While Landry's version omits vital elements and shows the father as the daughter:

Compare Mangiacarrube, his daughter

Verga's story is preceded by an "Introduction" by Dedalus publisher Eric Lane and is followed by a "Chronology" of events pertaining to Verga's life and literature. In addition to Verga's narrative technique—the regional speech patterns and proverbs, the direct and indirect speech, the mystic village chorus—the introduction by Lane discusses the Italian literary context, the historical setting of the novel, and its epic quality. He also highlights the act of translation by mentioning that the "language of the book is strange, whether in the original Italian or the English of the translation".

In contrast to Ulrych's findings that Landry, in translating *I Malavoglia*, "preferred a more source text oriented translation on the whole, highlighting the flavour of the Italian text" (279), my close analysis of her rendering of regional elements reveals

changes and distortions of the source-text meaning and imagery, and the insertion of target-culture idioms that at times are completely extraneous to the source text. She appears to distance herself from the source culture more than the other translators. For example, where Craig retains the nickname “Franceschello”, and Mosbacher and Rosenthal refer to him as “King Bomba’s son”, thereby retaining a Sicilian-bestowed nickname, but one that they evidently felt would be more familiar to their readers, Landry loses all the nickname’s connotations of disdain and anti-Bourbonism by opting for his formal name and title, “King Francis II”. And with regard to syntax, Landry’s attempt to echo the repetition of the pronoun in the following phrase with “personally” loses the regional, colloquial tone of the original.

Alla Longa, l’era parso rubato **a lei** quel saluto... (Verga 13).

La Longa felt **she personally** had been cheated of **her own** good-bye... (Landry 4).

In terms of imagery, an example is her disruption of the extended hand metaphor that starts in the proverb “Per menare il remo bisogna che le cinque dita s’aiutino l’un l’altro” and carries on through the following three sentences. It is difficult to understand why she replaces the second part of the metaphor with an American proverb, originally published in 1757 by Benjamin Franklin in his *Poor Richard’s Almanac* with the wording “Vessels large may venture more, But little boats should keep near shore” (Bartlett).

– **Per menare il remo bisogna che le cinque dita s’aiutino l’un l’altro.**

Diceva pure, – **Gli uomini son fatti come le dita della mano: il dito grosso deve far da dito grosso, e il dito piccolo deve far da dito piccolo.**

E la famigliuola di padron ’Ntoni era realmente disposta **come le dita della mano. Prima veniva lui, il dito grosso...** (Verga 9)

...the five fingers of a hand had to pull together to row a good oar, and also that ‘little boats must keep the shore, larger ships may venture more.’

And padron ’Ntoni’s little family was indeed **like the fingers of the hand. First there was padron ’Ntoni himself, the thumb...** (Landry 1)

At least in the above case she has kept the imagery in the maritime field, unlike in her use of “shovel” when translating “pale di ficodindia”. Although “shovel” falls within the varied definitions of “pale”, it distorts the imagery evocative of the daily experience of the villagers intended by the double metaphor provided by the two other definitions recognised in Rosenthal’s translation: the branches of the prickly pear and the blades of an oar.

...gli disse che aveva il difetto di esser piantato come un pilastro su quei piedacci che sembravano **pale di ficodindia**; ma i piedi fatti a pala di ficodindia ci stanno meglio degli stivalini stretti sul ponte di una corazzata, in certe giornataccie... (Verga 11).

...he told him that his defect was to be set like a column on great feet that resembled **the shovel-like leaves of a prickly pear**; but such shovel-feet are better than neat-fitting boots on the deck of a battleship on a rough day... (Landry 3).

Similarly, Verga’s use of imagery relevant to a fishing community in the phrase “...e così grande e grosso com’era **filava diritto alla manovra comandata...**” (10) is discarded by Landry and replaced with imagery from a farming environment: “...but large and solid as he was, **he did his father’s bidding like a lamb...**” (1). In another instance, she introduces images of “cobblers” and “beggars” to the fishing world of Aci Trezza when she translates the mottos «Fa il mestiere che sai, che se non arricchisci camperai» – «Contentati di quel che t’ha fatto tuo padre; se non altro non sarai un birbante» (10) with “a cobbler should stick to his last, a beggar could never be bankrupt and a good name was better than riches” (2).

Landry’s divergence from her predecessors’ choices continues with her treatment of the two proverbs: “Chi ha carico di casa non può dormire quando vuole” and “chi comanda ha da dar conto” (11).⁸⁸ While the others retain the form and meaning of the proverbs, Landry has replaced them with English sayings that are not semantically

⁸⁸ These come from the Sicilian proverbs “Cu’ ha càrricu di casa, nun pò dormiri quannu voli” and “Cui cumanna, havi a dari cchiù cuntù” Pitrè qtd. in Cecco, ed., *I Malavoglia*, by Giovanni Verga 14.

equivalent, with “some must watch while some must sleep”, because “Old Care has a mortgage on every estate” (2).

With regard to her additions to the text, she has added meaning to Verga’s use of the polyvalent *che*, with the phrase “he needn’t worry”, which may not even be implied in the original.

La Longa [...] gli andava raccomandando [...] di mandare le notizie ogni volta che tornava qualche conoscente dalla città, **che** poi gli avrebbero mandati i soldi per la carta (Verga 12).

...La Longa [...] urging him [...] to send news every time anyone he knew came home from the city, **and he needn’t worry**, she would send him the money for the writing paper (Landry 3).

And again in this example, departing quite far from the original, she adds her own phrase “as the Bible has it”:

Prima veniva lui, il dito grosso, **che comandava le feste e le quarant’ore...** (Verga 9).

First there was padron ’Ntoni himself, the thumb, **the master of the feast, as the Bible has it...** (Landry 1).

In next example she adds an unnecessary clarifying extension—that these three things “are the best of their kind”—to a proverb. Sicilian proverbs are meant to be brief and immediate, so by adding to them Landry moves farther away from the *sicilianità*.

... Mena (Filomena) soprannominata «Sant’Agata» perché stava sempre al telaio, e **si suol dire «donna di telaio, gallina di pollaio, e triglia di gennaio»...** (Verga 10).

...Mena (short for Filomena) nicknamed Saint Agatha because she was always at her loom and, **the saying goes, ‘a woman at her loom, a chicken in the hen-run and mullet in January are the best of their kind;’** ... (Landry 2).

Like the others, Landry omits the reference to “Peppinino”, but she also, again, distorts Verga’s narrative by putting her own words into the story. Her radical change of “come Peppinino” to “like some girls”, evidently intended to tie in with the following sentence, is inappropriate and misleading. The two sentences represent an opinion about zio Crocifisso’s conduct by two different characters—this view of him being ‘humble’ belongs to zio Crocifisso himself while the following derogatory one belongs to Piedipapera.

Allo zio Crocifisso gli finiva sempre così, che gli facevano chinare il capo per forza, come **Peppinino**, perché aveva il maledetto vizio di non saper dir di no. – Già! voi non sapete dir di no, quando vi conviene—sghignazzava Piedipapera. – Voi siete come le... e disse come. (Verga 16-17)

Things always turned out like that for zio Crocifisso, he could always be wheedled into agreeing because, **like some girls**, he couldn’t say no. ‘That’s it. You simply can’t say no when you should,’ sniggered Piedipapera, ‘You’re like those...’ and he said what he was like. (Landry 7-8)

In contrast to her usual practice of adding information to the text, she is the only translator who does not provide an explanation of the lupins, either within the text or in the paratext, when, in this case, such an explanation would be beneficial to the reader’s understanding.

5.3 Summary of Analysis of Translations

5.3.1 Challenges and Treatments of Regional Elements

The specific challenges presented by Verga's writing with respect to the translation of regional elements have been broken down into the categories of dialect, idiom, metaphor and culturally specific items.

All the dialectal elements—the lexicon, the syntax, the nicknames, the titles and the affective suffixes—require some form of paratextual exegesis in order for their regional connection and significance to be conveyed. While the prefaces by Rosenthal and Lane (in Landry's text) do explain the regionality of these elements, Mosbacher's explanations are limited to specific regional or untranslated terms and customs, with no mention of the dialectal syntax. Craig includes no explanatory preface at all, although she does use a few footnotes. With respect to the lexicon, only through an explanation will the reader be able to understand that the text contains words that are dialectal and strange in contrast with their Italian equivalents; otherwise all regional connection is lost. On the other hand, such words in English translation can potentially be given a more precise meaning than they might offer the Italian reader who is not familiar with their dialectal affiliation and significance, provided the translator is able to recognise, comprehend and creatively express the terms in English.

The strangeness of the syntax, however, can be recreated. All the translators do recreate the stylistic peculiarities, in varying degrees. However, they do not all announce the reason for them or alert the reader to their presence, as Venuti recommends and as Rosenthal and Lane have done. Thus, the regional connection and significance is again lost. In addition, the meaning of the regional constructions and the elusiveness of such elements as the Verghian *che* are usually reduced in the translations.

The regional nicknames and titles offer the translator an opportunity to include spaces of translation. As Cronin argues,⁸⁹ if such items that have no equivalents in the target culture are left in their untranslated state in isolation and also made more conspicuous by being italicised, they leave palpable written traces of the foreign and indicators that the text was written elsewhere. And since an explanation of the nicknames and titles is

⁸⁹ See Section 2.4.

necessary, such items also offer an opportunity for the translator to increase the readers' understanding of *sicilianità*. Signalling the status of each individual nickname through italicising is particularly important because, first of all, Verga himself does so in the original text, and, secondly, to indicate the prevalence of the custom of *'ngiuria*. Furthermore, the meaning of the nicknames and titles is important for understanding the characters and the attitude of the villagers towards those characters. However, only Rosenthal explains the custom of *'ngiuria* in his preface, and the prevailing practice in all the translations is to ignore the nickname status—leaving them unitalicised, untranslated and unexplained. As for the treatment of titles, all but Craig explain and define all or some of these in their prefaces. Within the texts, none of the translators consistently treat the titles as spaces of translation.

Verga chose his idiomatic expressions carefully for their regional significance. However, in general, all the translators replaced them with target-language expressions. While the meaning and the tone may be thus conveyed, all the regional associations are lost.

With respect to metaphors, all of Verga's are functionally relevant, representing as they do the reality and language of the characters, and as such they tend not to offer the same semantic associations to the target readers. The less the cultural experiences of these metaphors are shared by the target culture, the less they are left intact by the translators, and even when they are carried over intact, the polyvalence and resonance—their *sicilianità*—is reduced.

As for the proverbs, these are generally universally transparent and can be successfully transferred. Even the rhythm is generally rendered well by all the translators. Like the nicknames, it is important to highlight the status of proverbs, as Verga often does, in order to show that the expressions belong to folklore, not the speaker, and to show the ubiquity of their use. However, the translators are not consistent in this regard.

The retention and explanation of culturally specific items in the target text adds to the reader's understanding of *sicilianità*, but when such items are considered irrelevant to the story, they tend to be omitted. However, all the translators have treated currency

and measurements as spaces of translations—leaving them untranslated and italicised, although only Mosbacher and Rosenthal explain their regional specificity. None, however, explain the significance of their use by the villagers with respect to the historical context. Finally, Verga’s representation of the villagers’ reality through their use of generic terms to describe specific places is another important element of *sicilianità*. However, Mosbacher and Rosenthal, in particular, prefer to replace the generic name with the specific place name, thus losing the regionality but assisting the reader unfamiliar with the location.

5.3.2 The Four Translators of *I Malavoglia*

In comparing the work of the four translators of *I Malavoglia* in their rendering of the *sicilianità*, my analysis shows that the translations of Craig and Mosbacher display a mix of factors—sometimes drawing readers close to the original and sometimes distancing them, while the translations of Rosenthal and Landry are more clear-cut in their treatment and at opposite ends of the scale.

Craig’s rendering of the *sicilianità* can be broken down into two categories: elements that bring the reader closer to the original text and its language and culture, and those that distance the reader from the original and weaken the connection with the *sicilianità*. Distancing elements include the censored sections of the text, the errors of comprehension, the occasional sacrifice or reduction of meaning for the sake of form, the limited information provided in the footnotes and the occasional substitution of target-culture references for those of the source culture. Also distancing is the lack of acknowledgement of the translation in the introduction. Elements that bring the reader closer to the original text and assist in rendering the *sicilianità* are the contemporaneity of the target and source texts, the passages in which she recreates Verga’s syntax, the retention of meaning and form of proverbial expressions and her creativity in idiomatic phrasing. The introductory remarks about the differences between the source and target cultures also help to render the *sicilianità*.

In terms of distancing effects and reducing the *sicilianità*, we can distinguish the following elements in Mosbacher’s translation: the lack of discussion of the peculiarities of Verga’s linguistic style; the discarding of Verga’s stylistic devices, including the villager’s perspective and imagery; and errors of comprehension. On the

other hand, rendering of the *sicilianità* is increased through his translator's note and his explanation of regional terms and expressions; his retention of certain linguistic and cultural items; his idiomatic tone; and his creative retention of the regional connection while, at the same time, assisting the reader unfamiliar with the source culture. And although he loses the villagers' perspective when providing the names of cities, he thus acknowledges the limited access to the source culture of his readership.

Rosenthal is clearly the most visible translator of the four: in his paratextual presence, in the clear articulation of his translation strategies and the challenges presented by the source text—both in his introductory remarks and in other forums; in his defiance of editors and publishers who want to “smooth” out his translations; in his foregrounding and retention of the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the source text; and in the fact that he is well-informed theoretically. Particularly skilful at interpreting ambiguous terms and expressions used by Verga, he excels at transferring the *sicilianità* through his creative rendering of the original imagery and by retaining both meaning and form. And, finally, he performs the role of travel writer in explaining to the reader the unknown or unfamiliar in his introduction. He also assists the reader by interpreting and clarifying elements within the text. However, in this respect, he might also be considered a translator who carries the author to the reader rather than carrying the reader to the author. At times, by clarifying where Verga has not, he disrupts or loses the regional style.

Landry's translation proves to be the least effective at rendering the *sicilianità* due to her changes and distortions of the meaning and imagery of the original text, her use of target-culture idioms and her additions. And although Lane's introduction and the cast of characters contribute to the visibility of the translation act, as well as assisting the reader's understanding of the source text and culture, Landry's own voice is absent from the paratext.

Chapter six: The Translation of Camilleri's Works

After a brief overview of the translation of Camilleri's works, this chapter provides a review of the translations into languages other than English, in order to demonstrate the extent to which the qualities of the target-text language affect the rendering of the dialectal features. I then consider Stephen Sartarelli, Camilleri's English-language translator, through an examination of his background and of his own words about the problems of translating Camilleri, followed by a review of the critical reception of his translations.

6.1 Overview of Camilleri's Language in Translation

The phenomenal success of Camilleri's books has not been restricted to Italy. They have been translated into twenty-four different languages, including Greek, Dutch, Castilian, Catalan, Gaelic, French, German, Portuguese, Finnish, Swedish, Danish, Polish, Lithuanian, English, Norwegian, Czech, Serbian, Russian, Hungarian, Hebrew, Croatian, Japanese, Turkish and Rumanian, with Arabic and Chinese translations currently under way. Such success outside Italy is quite astounding when we consider that Camilleri's dialectal language is the main reason his books have sold so well to Italians. With all the difficulties and impossibilities involved in the translation of dialect, what is brought across of Camilleri's unique style of writing? What remains of Camilleri? He has wondered this himself:

Pensavo, e continuo a pensarlo, che uno scrittore consista essenzialmente nella sua scrittura. Però, vede, nell'anno in corso [1999], sono state edite dall'estero ben ventuno traduzioni dei miei libri. Dal gaelico al tedesco, dal portoghese all'olandese e via di questo passo. L'anno prossimo sarò pubblicato negli USA e in Giappone. Dico questo, mi creda, con sincero sgomento. In queste traduzioni non esiste traccia, o quasi, della mia scrittura, della mia "voce". Allora, perché? (qtd. in Demontis *I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 52)

In an analysis Simona Demontis carried out to demonstrate how impoverished Camilleri's writing would be without its specific dialectal voice, she translated into full Italian the opening paragraphs from five Montalbano novels (*I colori della letteratura: un'indagine sul caso Camilleri* 53-62). The resulting texts are banal and have lost much of their meaning. All the associations of the dialect words—the ideas they stand for, the history behind them, the linguistic puzzles, the multiple facets—disappear. Also lost is the contrast between the distinct languages attributed to the different characters, languages that reflect their personality and that render character description unnecessary in the original. If so much is lost in a translation into Italian, what hope is there for a translation into another language, even more distant from the uniquely Sicilian cultural connotations?

6.2 Translation into Languages Other Than English

Although my study concerns translation into English, it is worth looking at the strategies of some of the translators into different languages to show that rendering dialectal features can sometimes have more to do with the qualities of the target language than with the translator's abilities.

Translations of Camilleri's books sell better in France than in any other country, and no other Italian author is more widely read by the French. Significant, too, is the visibility of the French translators. Serge Quadruppani and Dominique Vittoz have both written extensive translator's notes that explain to their readers Camilleri's unique style and how they coped with the task of translating it. Quadruppani's notes appear as a preface to his translation of *La forma dell'acqua* (Quadruppani "Andrea Camilleri, la langue paternelle") and those of Vittoz as a postscript to her translation of *La stagione della caccia* (Vittoz "La langue jubilatoire d'Andrea Camilleri").

Quadruppani, who translates the Montalbano series, explains that the different levels of language in the texts require different approaches. The first level, the official language, he simply transposes to a similar register in French. The second level, pure dialect and always in dialogue, he translates to French—just as Camilleri translates it into Italian—signalling in the text that it has been said in dialect and sometimes

reproducing it next to the French to provide flavour. Only the third level, the Sicilian-Italian mix, presents a serious problem. It was while working out how to render this hybrid that he made a real connection with Camilleri's language ("Il caso Camilleri in Francia. Le ragioni di un successo" 204). Before commencing his task and before Camilleri became quite so famous, Quadruddani told various Sicilians he knew of his intentions to undertake the translations. He was struck by the warnings they all gave him: this is not true Sicilian. This word or that word is not right. But each time he asked for the right word, he was told something different. He decided that there were as many ways to speak Sicilian as there were Sicilians, and therefore he had to find a personal language of his own to match Camilleri's very personal language. He turned to an old notebook he kept in which he had recorded expressions from the South of France. He had filled this notebook when his mother had started to suffer an illness that would eventually be fatal. An obscure need pushed him to transcribe the words that she used every day and that he, away in Paris, risked forgetting. This discovery of a personal language in which to render the Italian-Sicilian occurred long before he knew that Camilleri had made his own discovery in a similar way: when the writer's father was dying, he had decided to write in the language that they had always used with each other.

In addition to providing a regional linguistic style that possesses a similar southern fragrance, the French language has a syntactic flexibility similar to Italian. The French translator can easily adapt Camilleri's use of the Sicilian practices of placing the verb at the end of a phrase (*Sicilian sono/Sicilien je suis*) and using the past historic tense where Italian (and French) would use the present or the present perfect tense. Nevertheless, loss is still incurred in the French translation: the mental universe that accompanies the Sicilian words, such as *spiare*, meaning 'to ask', but having the same form as the Italian verb meaning 'to spy'—particularly adapted to Sicilian society where a person who asks too many questions is soon regarded as a police informer (Quadruddani "L'angoisse du traducteur devant une page d'Andrea Camilleri"). Quadruddani knows there is no point trying to find word-for-word equivalents of all such Sicilianisms and that he must settle for the role of "traghettatore". Even if Camilleri has to some extent created an artificial language, he believes it to be out of the question to invent one himself because it would not contain the same mental universe.

Dominique Vittoz, who translates Camilleri's historical novels, maintains the difference in elasticity of the two languages is a fundamental problem of translation from Italian to French. Camilleri's writing in particular requires the French translator to confront the limits of elasticity of French, to go and dig in abandoned fields and to liberate oneself from the obsession with the purity of the French language ("Quale francese per tradurre l'italiano di Camilleri? Una proposta non pacifica" 187; 92). When faced with the problem of rendering Camilleri's mix of languages, she used a process of elimination to arrive at a solution. Slang was not acceptable as it would cause an unwarranted sociological levelling. She preserved the polyphony of the texts by using different levels of language and expressions full of imagery, at times uncommon and thus surprising or humorous. For the Sicilian-Italian hybrid her aim was to recreate in the French reader the sense of estrangement the Italian reader feels. The dialects spoken in the South of France seemed to her to have too many connotations, being widely used already, especially in their phonetic specificity, to dub Italian films. Instead, she chose the language spoken in Lyons, in both the past and the present. The most obvious motive for her choice was that it was familiar to her ("Quale francese per tradurre l'italiano di Camilleri? Una proposta non pacifica" 195) and thus enabled her to use the same naturalness that she had observed in Camilleri's writings. Other motives are that the Lyonnais language possesses a vast lexicon distinct from French, does not sound too distorted to the French ear, has a cultural tradition of stories, songs and puppet theatre, and its syntactic peculiarities allowed her to combine it naturally with the French language. Furthermore, Lyonnais does not evoke connotations of a specific region because it is no longer spoken and is therefore generally unrecognisable. Like Quadruppani, she did not attempt to create a systematic equivalence—word for word, expression for expression—but has been pleased to find what she believes to be the occasional perfect equivalence, for example, the Lyonnais *apincher*, derived from the Germanic word meaning 'to spy' ("Amis de Lyon et Guignol"), for the Sicilian *taliare* (*guardare* in Italian), with its resemblance to *tagliare*. Her word choices depended on their expressiveness, specificity, comicality and irreducible personality. Where a Sicilian term could not be translated by a Lyonnais word, she employed the strategy of compensation, aiming for equivalence on a phrase or text level, and translating a word or phrase into dialect where Camilleri had not.

Yet another French translator, Louis Bonalmi, who also translates Camilleri's historical texts, considered the possible strategies for the treatment of Sicilian terms and expressions: (a) translate them, (b) leave them untranslated but in italics and accompanied by a note, (c) find equivalents from a regional French language (as Quadruppani and Vittoz have done) or (d) strive to recreate, using imaginary forms, the effect that they produce in the Italian context. He believes the last strategy is the least damaging to the original text.

Unfortunately, not all translators have recourse to dialects that are quite as close, culturally, phonetically and geographically, as those of France. As Jon Rognlien, points out, if he used Norwegian dialects in his translations the reader would be carried away to a place quite different from under the sunny palm trees of Sicily. Instead, the dialects would evoke dense fir tree forests, white plateaus with temperatures of forty degrees below zero and ice-laden trawlers in a storm in the arctic seas (Agrosi). Rognlien considers the most acute problem in translating Camilleri's work is the author's use of dialect in a narrative sense. The Sicilian language allows the author to say a great variety of things to the Italian reader without spelling them out one by one. There is no need to provide historical and anthropological backgrounds, or to describe landscapes or social issues. Italian readers immediately know they are in Sicily and understand all that comes with that setting. Camilleri is aware of his readers' competence and counts on them to fill in the gaps in the narration. However, if Norwegian readers try to fill in the gaps, they are going to find it very difficult making their way as far as Sicily, particularly as they generally view Italy as a single entity with no distinctions between regions. The competence of the Norwegian readers is very restricted and cannot go beyond a certain level. Rognlien's strategy for filling in the gaps, which he calls a radical treatment of the idea of equivalence, is to replace the dialectal game with a national game, reasoning that the distance between Florence and Palermo can be compared in a certain sense to the distance between Norway and Italy. He has left various words in Italian that he considers easily decipherable, just as Camilleri's Sicilian can always, soon enough if not immediately, be understood by Italians without a dictionary. The inclusion of Italian titles, names of typical dishes and terms that have become widely known outside Italy, such as *omertà*, as well as certain sayings, in italics with

explanations immediately following, provides readers with a constant reference to the Italianness, which for Norwegians includes Sicilianness, of the text.

In some cases, translators would not be able to use dialects even if they chose to because they do not exist in their languages. Simonetta Neto, whose first language is Italian, believes her knowledge of the source language is especially important for her translations of Camilleri's language into Portuguese (Lombardi). Her versions of the Montalbano series have met with great success. She has aimed for a colloquial, non-literary language to correspond with the original. Although she has translated other Sicilian writers, including Leonardo Sciascia and Gesualdo Bufalino, only for Camilleri did she create a personal dictionary, which she calls her "vocabolario Camilleri". The Finnish translator, Helina Kangas, also used a colloquial language for her translations of the Montalbano series, which she describes as lively, colourful and sometimes a bit archaic (Lombardi). Both Neto and Kangas have left pure dialect as it is in the original; Neto has included explanations in footnotes, while Kangas has followed the passages with Finnish translations.

The Turkish translator, Erdal Turan, and the Danish translator, Cecilia Jakobsen, both called on their imagination to render the movement and agility of the language (Lombardi). To emulate the stratification of the voices with their varying tones and registers, Jakobsen claims to have made use of all the means offered by the Danish language. Again, phrases in pure dialect were left in the original.

The Dutch translators, Patti Krone and Yond Boeke, whose language does have dialects, did not use them because, as their publisher Annaserena Ferruzzi states, they would sound absurd in a Sicilian setting (Lombardi). However, the Japanese translator, Chigusa Ken, did make use of his country's many dialects to create an artificial, and, in his opinion, amusing language to reproduce the flavour of the dialect (Lombardi). Another translator who created an artificial language is the Hungarian Lukacs Margit, but without using her language's dialects because they are not as strong as Italy's (Lombardi). In her renditions, which like Kangas's makes use of archaic words, her aim was to produce an effect of "straordinarietà" on the reader, with a language that is very different from standard Hungarian but perfectly understandable nevertheless.

As is done in France, the detective series and the historical novels are translated into German by different translators, who have settled on their own strategies for dealing with the common problem of translating Camilleri's linguistic variation. And, as in France, the reception of the translations has been exceptional.

The translator of the Montalbano series, Christiane von Bechtolsheim, has used a mix of formal and colloquial German to represent the different levels (Perucco). For those characters who speak a heavier dialect she has used a very simple German, filled with errors and strange syntax. She believes it out of the question to consider replacing the dialect with a German one as this would create an estranging and distorting effect. The reader would never reach Sicily through a Bavarian dialect. Resigned to the loss of a great part of Camilleri's linguistic mix, Bechtolsheim's goal is to recreate the general tone of the books, the melody of a phrase, a character's personality or the atmosphere of a situation. A particular problem, she finds, is the erotic and vulgar vocabulary; such terms have a different effect on Germans than they do on Italians, so she adapted their level of vulgarity to the German context. With regard to Sicilian dishes, she felt they should remain untranslated, with an explanation in a glossary at the end of the novel, in order to retain the impression of Montalbano as a true gourmet of Sicilian specialties.

Before translating Camilleri's historical novels, Moshe Kahn was already known as a specialist in untranslatable Italian novels, after having translated dialectal novels of Luigi Malerba and Pier Paolo Pasolini. However, he contends that "i dialetti *non* vengono *tradotti*, vengono invece *trattati*!" (180) and that for each book a new solution must be found. The solutions for one book are not necessarily repeatable or transferable to another. In his treatment of Camilleri's writing, his goal has been to recreate the effect on the reader. In agreement with Bechtolsheim, he believes it would be absurd to use a German dialect to replace Camilleri's dialect because of the disorienting and contradictory images it would evoke (Perucco). Instead, he has undergone the momentous task of creating an elaborate jargon in German that belongs to no particular location and can be understood by all—a jargon laboriously gathered from all the nuances offered by the geographical and historical variants of the German language. He also found Camilleri's erotic language a particular challenge because of German's very limited erotic vocabulary. He believes it fundamentally important that

an erotic expression or phrase never sound translated; it must appear completely natural, as if the translator had found it in other levels of day-to-day language not yet encountered (Kahn 185-86).

The popularity of Camilleri's books in Spain ranks third behind France and Germany. Again, more than one translator has been responsible. In an analysis of the translations of *Il cane di terracotta* and *Il birraio di Preston* carried out by three different translators, Caterina Briguglia concluded that each translator gave priority to a different element of the text (105). María Antonia Menini Pagès focused on the cultural references and transferred them into Spanish, retaining very distinct features of Sicilianness. Juan Carlos Gentile Vitale chose to preserve the linguistic peculiarity of only one character, resorting to *ceceo*, a manner of speaking typical of southern Spain that shows a pronunciation defect; the other voices he expressed in standard Spanish. The third translator, Pau Vidal, working into Catalan instead of Spanish and therefore into a language with a different, and weaker, linguistic and literary tradition, carried out a translation that respected the function of the linguistic variation as a method of character definition, and relinquished references to the external world.

6.3 Translation into English: Stephen Sartarelli (1954-)

Of all Camilleri's literary works, only novels from the Montalbano series have been translated into English, although books from both categories have been translated into other languages. However, this is set to change soon as Penguin has recently commissioned translations of some of the historical novels. The books, translated by the American Stephen Sartarelli, are first published in the United States by Penguin and then soon after in Great Britain by Picador. In line with what Venuti terms a "fluent translation strategy", "Americanisms" are replaced with "Britishisms" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 4) in the Picador editions, from minor lexical changes such as the replacement of "ass" with "arse" to the more significant replacement of the American edition's translation of the title *L'odore della notte*, *The Smell of the Night*, with *The Scent of the Night* in the British edition. In accordance with American and British publishers' usual practice regarding translated texts, neither edition includes the translator's name on the cover, although brief

biographies of author and translator appear together on the third page of the front matter and “Translated by Stephen Sartarelli” appears under the author’s name on the title page. In this way, potential readers are given no indication whatsoever that the book is a translation until they have actually picked it up in the book store or library and opened it.

The twelve published translations are as follows:

Source Text ⁹⁰	Target Text
<i>La forma dell’acqua</i> (1994)	<i>The Shape of Water</i> (US: May 2002; UK: February 2004)
<i>Il cane di terracotta</i> (1996)	<i>The Terracotta Dog</i> (US: November 2002; UK: June 2004)
<i>Il ladro di merendine</i> (1996)	<i>The Snack Thief</i> (US: April 2003; UK: June 2004)
<i>La voce del violino</i> (1997)	<i>The Voice of the Violin</i> (US: November 2003; UK: July 2004)
<i>La gita a Tindari</i> (2000)	<i>Excursion to Tindari</i> (US: February 2005; UK: July 2006)
<i>L’odore della notte</i> (2001)	<i>The Smell of the Night</i> (US: November 2005); <i>The Scent of the Night</i> (UK: January 2007)
<i>Il giro di boa</i> (2003)	<i>Rounding the Mark</i> (US: July 2006; UK: June 2007)
<i>La pazienza del ragno</i> (2004)	<i>The Patience of the Spider</i> (US: April 2007; UK: June 2008)
<i>La luna di carta</i> (2005)	<i>The Paper Moon</i> (US: Apr 2008; UK: June 2008)
<i>La vampa d’agosto</i> (2006)	<i>August Heat</i> (US: February 2009; UK: June 2010)
<i>Le ali della sfinge</i> (2006)	<i>The Wings of the Sphinx</i> (US: December 2009; UK: June 2010)
<i>La pista di sabbia</i> (2007)	<i>The Track of Sand</i> (US: October 2010)

⁹⁰ All the Italian editions were published by the Sicilian (Palermo) publisher Sellerio.

Further scheduled translations from the Montalbano series include:

<i>Il campo del vasaio</i> (2008)	The Potter's Field
<i>L'età del dubbio</i> (2008)	The Age of Doubt
<i>La danza del gabbiano</i> (2009)	
<i>La caccia al tesoro</i> (2010)	

And scheduled translations of Camilleri's historical fiction are:

<i>La stagione della caccia</i> (1992)
<i>Il birraio di Preston</i> (1995)
<i>La concessione del telefono</i> (1998)
<i>Il re di Girgenti</i> (2001)

Stephen Sartarelli, whose parents emigrated from Rome to the United States, is a poet and a translator of French and Italian poetry and prose, and he has a Master's degree in comparative literature from New York University. He lives in France. His Italian prose translations include fictional works by contemporary authors Gianni Riotta (*Prince of the Clouds*, 2000), Gesualdo Bufalino (*The Plague-Sower*, 1988) and Francesca Duranti (*The House on Moon Lake*, 1985). He also co-translated *La rovina di Kasch* by Roberto Calasso (*The Ruin of Kasch*, 1994) with William Weaver, one of the foremost English-language translators of Italian fiction. Italian poetry translations include works by Nanni Cagnone (the book-length *The Book of Giving Back*, 1997), Mario Luzi (*Poetry*, 155, Oct-Nov 1989), Nanni Ballestrini, Umberto Piersanti and Umberto Saba. The 2001 Raiziss/de Palchi Translation Award was presented to him by the Academy of American Poets for *Songbook: The Selected Poems of Umberto Saba* and the 2002 John Florio Prize from the British Society of Authors for *Prince of the Clouds*. Soon to be published translations are a broad selection of the poetry of Pier Paolo Pasolini, and *Notturmo*, a book-length prose poem by Gabriele d'Annunzio. His translations from French are done in collaboration with his wife, Sophie Hawkes. Three collections of his own poetry have been published: *The Open Vault* (2001), *The Runaway Woods* (2000) and *Grievances and Other Poems* (1989).

It is interesting to observe the evolution of Sartarelli's status as translator of the Montalbano series and how it has affected his choices. In 2002—the year his first Camilleri translations were published—he spoke at the conference “Letteratura e storia: Il caso Camilleri”, held by the University of Palermo, about the special challenges of translating Camilleri into English, and more specifically, for an American public (“L’alterità linguistica di Camilleri in inglese” 213-19). He described how Americans are capable of absorbing all the cultures of the world, but only, paradoxically, if those cultures become Americanised, especially on the linguistic level. A resistance to the ‘other’ means that Americans do not like to watch foreign films, to listen to foreign music or to read foreign books in translation. American editors do not want to publish foreign writers. The very few texts that are translated reveal this resistance in editing choices that assure they conform stylistically, linguistically and grammatically to the prescribed American standards—to become immediately familiar and comprehensible. Anything unusual is suppressed and flattened during the editorial process in the hope that it will thus sell better.

Inevitably, problems will arise with Camilleri's texts, Sartarelli explained, because their originality depends on deviations from common linguistic norms. Should the dialect be translated, and if so, how? The dialect strictly belongs to a specific region in Sicily. English-language dialects hardly exist anymore and, even if they did, he suggested it would be absurd to use the speech of a specific American, British or other Anglophone geographical location. A further complicating factor is that a translator of the English language is almost always translating for the entire Anglophone world and trying to appeal to all possible readers. Furthermore, he felt an attempt to reproduce the linguistic deviation might appear artificial and betray the naturalness of Camilleri's hybridisation.

Sartarelli's expressed aim was to emulate that naturalness. When faced with translating blasphemies and obscenities, he has stuck to the slang and working class language with which he is most familiar—that of a precise region in the north-eastern United States. In some cases he translated literally Sicilian or Italian idiomatic expressions that do not exist in English in order to retain the thematic specificity manifested in the language. He justified any possibly strained result by the importance

of the musicality of certain expressions that appear and reappear in the texts, and because he believed translation should create new spaces in the target language.

Initially, Sartarelli was unsure how far he could go in representing the alterity of Camilleri's language and content without alienating American readers, or how American Camilleri could become in order to satisfy the needs of the editors and the expectations of the public. He did believe, however, that the alterity of Camilleri's language would always come through in the reading:

[L]a facciamo comunque nostra, noi lettori, leggendolo, per via del contatto che l'autore ci fa avere con questo suo mondo, che è anche nostro o che diventa nostro grazie proprio all'amore che lui prova per questo mondo e per questo linguaggio. La distanza che si sperimenta leggendo, via via che si comincia a capire, diventa presto piacere; e l'amore dell'autore, diventato nostro pure esso, diventa immedesimazione. Se riesco almeno in parte a trasmettere al lettore anglofono *questo* procedimento dell'autore, questa sua specie di traduzione linguistica e morale dei valori umani universali che fa sì che l'altro diventi sempre noi stessi, allora non avrò del tutto fallito nel mio compito. ("L'alterità linguistica di Camilleri in inglese" 218-19)

Seven years later, after having translated eight more of the Montalbano series, he again publicly discussed the problems and rewards of translating Camilleri's works on his British publisher's web log ("Notes from the Purer Linguistic Sphere of Translation"). His most important goals remained essentially the same—"rendering the spirit of Camilleri's vision intact" and preserving his naturalness, his "clarity of design and purpose"—but a change had occurred with respect to his visibility as a translator.

Usually most pleased when the act of his translations goes unnoticed by readers and critics—praise for the original author's style he takes as a compliment to his "quiet work"—but with his translations of Camilleri's texts, he is finding it harder to remain anonymous. He gets asked about how he goes about translating his works far more than he does with any other author he has worked on. He attributes this partly to the "problem of language in general, and more specifically of its infinite variability in our

often unconscious use of it” which “lies at the heart of Camilleri’s literary enterprise”, with his “invented language that he has been the first to grace with literary status”. It is not surprising that the “thorniest” questions come from Italians, especially from those who are “versed only in ‘official’ Italian” as they, especially, find Camilleri’s language “unique and often irremediably foreign” and want to know how one could ever “render a proper equivalent of this linguistic stew in English”. English-language readers generally pose the much easier question of what it is like to translate Camilleri. And Sartarelli’s equally simple reply is: “Fun!”—especially when compared to the great effort required of his other translation work.

He spoke yet again about translating Camilleri in 2010 in an interview on SBS Radio in Australia,⁹¹ describing how the success of the books has allowed him more freedom in his choices. He no longer has to fight with his editors and their desire to control the texts—to follow the strict contemporary American editorial rules—as he did at the beginning. He has also had support in his battles from Camilleri, who claims to be very happy with his translations. Camilleri’s command of English may not allow him to fully understand them, but through Sartarelli’s public discussions and writings, he has understood what the translator has been trying to do and approves.

Over time and the increased experience of translating the series, Sartarelli has also become more courageous, allowing himself to take more liberties with the style. The character of Catarella, in particular, terrified him in the beginning. But at a certain point he started to have fun with the character and inventing linguistic games in English, knowing that he would not be able to reproduce the original. The knowledge that Camilleri has invented words allows him to do so, as well.

Sartarelli stresses that an unavoidable loss that is incurred in translating Camilleri’s texts is the distancing effect of the dialect from standard Italian. All he can do is “nudge [the characters’ speech] in certain directions”, as he has aimed to do, for example, when he tinges some of the policemen’s speech with Brooklynese, because many of the police in New York City, where he used to live, are of Sicilian or Southern Italian extraction. Also lost at times are the nuances that arise when there is

⁹¹ See Appendix 2 for a transcription of the full interview.

humour in a character's use of dialect because of the context, in which case he will try to recover it elsewhere. His strategy of compensation has him always on the lookout for opportunities to make up for the occasions when he has been unable to create puns or oddities in English where Camilleri has used them.

All this goes to show that Sartarelli is responding in a positive manner—perhaps inadvertently—to Lawrence Venuti's "call to action" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 265-77), in which he urges translators to "submit their practice to sustained theoretical or critical reflection" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 274) and "to take into account not just the foreign text and its culture, but also the receiving language and its culture" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 275). The title of his article, "Notes from the Purer Linguistic Sphere of Translation", a reference to Walter Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator" (75), demonstrates his interest in translation theory. His concerns, mentioned above, about how far he can go in representing the alterity of Camilleri's language and content without alienating American readers, or how American Camilleri can become in order to satisfy the needs of the editors and the expectations of the public, and his belief that translation should create new spaces in the target language show he is thinking about "the cultural and social effects" (Venuti *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 275) of his translations in the target culture.

He also responds in a particularly positive, and public, manner to Venuti's appeal for translators to present incisive rationales for innovative translation practices in prefaces, essays, lectures and interviews. Along with the conference and publisher's web log mentioned above, Sartarelli has been asked to speak at various other forums, such as the Istituto Culturale Italiano in Melbourne in July 2010, where he gave a talk entitled "Eating Montalbano: Confessions of Serial Translator", or an event at the "Lit & Phil" (The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle Upon Tyne) Culture Club in July 2008, held for members to meet authors shortlisted for the Duncan Lawrie International Dagger Award. That Sartarelli has been given these platforms to discuss his translation, and that he has had to think about his choices when translating Camilleri, can be directly related to the uniqueness of Camilleri's language, as Sartarelli himself acknowledges. As he says, his decision to use "Brooklynese" was

not made consciously but came to him “without reflection, as second nature” (“Notes from the Purer Linguistic Sphere of Translation”). It is the questions put to him by readers and critics that evidently have led to his reflection on the matter.

But it is not only about his translations of Camilleri’s writing that he speaks and writes publicly. For instance, he was invited to speak at the 2010 Mildura Writers Festival in Melbourne and the Australian Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide about the technicalities of translating Pasolini’s verse. And his prefaces to his translations *Songbook: Selected Poems by Umberto Saba* and *The Story of My Life by Giacomo Casanova* detail the specific translation challenges and his strategies for dealing with them.

Despite Sartarelli’s apparent implementation of Venuti’s theories, he agrees with those who say the more invisible the translator, the better. When he reads a translation he does not want to notice the translator. Nevertheless, by his practice of fighting with his editors against uniformity, taking stylistic liberties, inventing linguistic games, creating new spaces in the target language, using different registers, and so on, according to Venuti’s definition, he fits the criteria of a visible translator whose texts remind the reader that they are reading a translation. Furthermore, according to Venuti’s explanation of “dissidence” as practised by Iginio Ugo Tarchetti in his choice of source texts, whereby he challenged the dominant conventions with respect to foreign literature in English (*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 125-63), Sartarelli too executes a foreignising manoeuvre in choosing to translate the Montalbano series.

Before we explore this aspect further, however, it is worthwhile examining the recent phenomenon of the rapidly growing popularity of American and British detective fiction set in Italy (O’Sullivan 64) and how it has affected translation. The most notable writers are the recently deceased Michael Dibdin, and his eleven novels featuring Detective Aurelio Zen, Donna Leon, who has written seventeen Commissario Guido Brunetti thrillers, and Magdalen Nabb, also recently deceased, and her fourteen Marshall Guarnaccia mysteries. Mark Chu has described this “significant sub-genre” as a “fusion of the detective novel, the travel book, and the tradition of the Grand Tour literature” (“Someone Else’s Southerner: Opposed

Essences in the ‘Italian’ Novels of Michael Dibdin, Magdalen Nabb, and Tim Parks” 75). The authors have come to be considered authorities on Italy (O’Sullivan 65), as illustrated by the comment by Tobias Jones that Dibdin’s novels “effortlessly paint a sharper portrait of Italy than any guide-book, cookbook or academic history”, and the books are presented by the publishers as offering the reader privileged access to the country, superior to a tourist’s experience. This insider’s view of another culture is even considered by some to be *the* reason for their popularity, as can be seen in Dibdin’s obituary: “Above all, the novels were read avidly for Mr. Dibdin’s masterly distillation of Italy, whether he was writing about its politics (read: corruption), the church, the Mafia, fashion, truffles, wine or old stones” (Fox).

Despite the gloomy overview of Anglophone publishers’ attitudes towards translated fiction presented earlier,⁹² the new sub-genre has raised the value of English-language translations of Italian crime fiction to a remarkable degree. Between 2002 and 2007 approximately twenty-five such novels have been published—almost half the total number of translations into English of Italian fiction generally (Venuti *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 154). Furthermore, their sales have been extremely high compared to the translations of other genres. While the majority of translated books sell between 1,500 and 6,000 copies, Sartarelli’s first Camilleri translation, *The Shape of Water*, sold more than 60,000 within the first four years (Venuti *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 154).

However, in a kind of Anglophone appropriation manoeuvre, Italian crime writers such as Camilleri, Carlo Lucarelli and Massimo Carlotto are being marketed by publishers and received by critics and readers as part of the English-language sub-genre (O’Sullivan 73-74), rather than as foreign writers. The situation bears out Sartarelli’s assertion, discussed above, that Americans are capable of absorbing all the cultures of the world, but only if those cultures become Americanised. Publishers use the English-language writers to endorse the Italian writers. This blurb by Donna Leon appears on many of the covers of Camilleri’s books: “The novels of Andrea Camilleri breathe out the sense of place, the sense of humour, and the sense of despair that fills the air of Sicily. To read him is to be taken to that glorious, tortured island.” Even

⁹² See Section 2.2.

more blatant is this line from a *Sunday Times* review that appears on the front cover of the Picador edition of *The Terracotta Dog*: “Camilleri writes with such vigour and wit that he deserves a place alongside Michael Dibdin and Donna Leon.” The American website *italian-mysteries.com*, the “definitive website for English-language mystery novels set in Italy”, places Camilleri second in its list of top-ranked authors of contemporary mysteries below Donna Leon and above Michael Dibdin. The fourth in the list, British Timothy Williams is declared to be “the most insightful author” on the list; he “does the best job of portraying the subtle and complex political and social character of modern day Italy” (Vennarucci).

While the inclusion of Camilleri’s books in this sub-genre composed mainly of texts originally written in English bodes well for their sales, is it likely to decrease the resistance by Anglophobe readers and publishers to the ‘otherness’ in Camilleri’s writing? It is significant that, until now, only books from the detective series have been published in English, while his historical and civil novels, which do not belong to this popular American genre and are difficult to ‘Americanise’, have been ignored, although their translations into other European markets have been well-received. As Chu points out, a major characteristic of the sub-genre is that Italian society is perceived through Anglo-Saxon eyes (“Someone Else’s Southerner: Opposed Essences in the ‘Italian’ Novels of Michael Dibdin, Magdalen Nabb, and Tim Parks” 76). By placing Camilleri’s novels alongside those of Dibdin and Leon, critics and publishers are working towards appropriating them in order to make them more acceptable to the Anglophone reader. Chu also suggests that the subgenre reinforces the popular Anglophone perception of Italy as a land of “criminality, corruption, violence, and passions” and that these “works may appeal to readers because they offer reassurance that such problems belong to other cultures” (“Someone Else’s Southerner: Opposed Essences in the ‘Italian’ Novels of Michael Dibdin, Magdalen Nabb, and Tim Parks” 87). By telling British and American readers what they already ‘know’ about Italy, he believes these books are furthering the readers’ sense of ownership of the content. Tobias Jones has a more charitable view, suggesting that: “Rather than being a reflection of the much-lamented parochialism of British publishing, these foreign-based crime novels could be a reflection of the longing to understand abroad that bit better.” Furthermore, he claims, the argument that these books “whet the appetite for the real stuff: indigenous writers” is backed up by sales

figures. He cites several examples of translated crime fiction outselling fiction written by an English-language, foreign-based author, including, of fiction set in Italy, Niccolò Ammaniti's *I'm Not Scared* (translated from the Italian), which sold 75,000 copies in Britain, while Donna Leon's *Friends in High Places* sold only 50,000. Also supporting Jones's view is the fact that Penguin has decided that, after eight years of successful sales of the Montalbano series, it is worth taking a risk with his historical novels. We will have to wait and see what impact they will have, but if successful, this would indeed be a case of the execution of a "dissident translation project" that introduces "foreign texts that deviate from dominant literary canons in the receiving culture" (Venuti *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 152), which brings us back to the question of whether Sartarelli fulfils Venuti's criteria.

In examining the recent trend in foreign crime fiction, Venuti finds the translations "exoticising" rather than foreignising, producing a translation effect that signifies only a superficial cultural difference, through reference to features such as geography, customs, cuisine, historical figures and events, the retention of foreign place names and proper names and the odd foreign world. The translations do not upset or question values, beliefs and representations in the target culture, or in the canon of crime fiction. But a crime novel that noticeably varies the genre's form or theme, gives centre stage to cultural and social issues that are truly specific to a foreign country or offers detailed representations of social situations that differ markedly from that of the target culture can be foreignising in translation.⁹³ Camilleri's novels, in their *sicilianità*, in their unconventional treatment of social and political issues, and in their linguistic experimentalism, clearly fit that description.

To cement the view that Sartarelli deserves the label of a visible translator à la Venuti, let us examine Venuti's description of his own translation of the Italian crime writer Massimo Carlotto. With a few minor adjustments, we could easily substitute the author's name with Andrea Camilleri and the name of the book with one of his, because the similarities in source text and translation strategy are striking.

⁹³ For a discussion of how Camilleri varies the genre of crime fiction and focuses on social issues specific to the source culture, see Jennifer Holt, "Denouncement, Engagement and Dialect: The Sicilian Mystery Novels of Leonardo Sciascia and Andrea Camilleri," Rutgers, 2010. Holt argues that the Montalbano series acts as a powerful tool of social denouncement and breaks with the tradition of the detective genre by showing how it is impossible to prosecute criminals within the framework of the Sicilian legal system.

Massimo Carlotto is among the most fascinating writers to emerge in a recent international trend where a quintessentially American form of writing, the thriller, is adapted to such foreign locales as France and Japan. It is tempting to describe this trend as combining an American genre with a foreign reality. Yet this would grossly underestimate the innovations that foreign writers like Carlotto have introduced into what remains a rather conventional literary form in the United States. For international noir is never simply a matter of transplanting a thriller plot to a foreign site by incorporating local currencies, customs and cuisines. No, the most powerful examples use the dark worldview typical of the genre to present a social diagnosis, usually with reference to actual cultural and political developments. What distinguishes Carlotto's fiction is precisely his politics, his uncompromising critique of contemporary Italy from the 1970s to the present. In depicting a violent underworld where ex-terrorists join with seemingly respectable citizens to commit crimes, *The Goodbye Kiss* is exemplary of his unique approach—and his condemnation of the amoral cynicism that he finds at every level of Italian society.

For the English-language translator, the excitement of Carlotto's novel extends to the challenges posed by his distinctive use of Italian. He cultivates the brutality of language that characterizes noir. But given his characters and his settings he mixes slang and obscenity with political allusions and legal terms that must be retained to support his social criticism. To match these features I sought to develop a fast-paced, hard-boiled English, filled with colloquialisms but also dotted with foreign words and phrases that reflect the narrator's movements from Italy to France to Costa Rica and back to Italy. The result, I think, is a strangely familiar style that offers the pleasures of a thriller, but with constant reminders that you are reading a political novel by a remarkable Italian writer. ("Lawrence Venuti on Massimo Carlotto")

Without a doubt, the Montalbano texts "signal linguistic and cultural differences in intriguing ways" (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 160). The presentation of a social diagnosis with reference to actual cultural and political developments, the author's uncompromising critique and condemnation, the distinctive use of Italian are all present. And Sartarelli also consciously created a

'hard-boiled' English to match the features of the original, as he explained in an interview with Saverio Tomaiuolo: "I had immediately noticed that, despite the dialect, the spare, lean style typical of the Montalbano books was similar, and perhaps owed something, to the American 'hard-boiled' style of Hammett, Chandler and their heirs, and so I wanted this imprint to show in my choice of words in the translation as well" (210). And he too has filled it with colloquialisms, but also dotted it with foreign words and phrases with a similar familiar but strange result, which constantly reminds readers that it is a foreign work.

6.3.1 Critical Reception of Translations into English

Before proceeding to an analysis of the translations, I consider the critical reception of the translations, with special regard to the reviewers' acknowledgement of the translator's role, their awareness of the unique language used in the original text, and whether the functions fulfilled by Camilleri's language in the original are also fulfilled in the translations. The corpus for my review is composed of fifty-seven articles that appeared in British and American newspapers and magazines, pre-publication review journals and web pages dedicated to book reviews.

I first consider the visibility of the translation process. Translator Edith Grossman suggests that reviewers care even less about translations than publishers do. She finds that they rarely speak substantively about it or its practitioners, and that their omissions and distortions are extraordinary. If they do mention the translation, she claims, "this burdensome necessity is taken care of with a single dismissive and uninformative adverb paired with the verb 'translated'" (29-31). How much attention is given to the fact that Camilleri's texts have been translated and do the reviewers attempt to evaluate the translator's work?

Almost half of the reviews (27) commented on the quality of the translation, and only four of those were unfavourable. However, the majority use the shallow, "dismissive" and "uninformative" language so derided by Grossman (30-31). The reviewers praise Sartarelli for having "deft hands" (Koch); doing "an admirable job" (Vennarucci); and for "deftly and lovingly" (Frey); "expertly" (Bailey); and "superbly" (Bolton);

carrying out “spot on” (Onatade); “engaging” (Accone); “smooth and careful” (L. Wilson “Urban Worrier”); “elegant”; (“Rev. of *Shape of Water*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”)and “impeccable” (Pye) translations, while avoiding “any hint of pomposity or long-windedness which often sneaks into translated books” (Gill). Slightly more informative are the comments that the translations are composed of “antic” (Stasio “The Haunted Detective”); “spare and spry English” (“Hesperus Press Blog”); “vivid prose” (Buhler) and “a deft and lively English” (Boddy), and that the language is “wonderfully rich, idiomatic and vulgar” (L. Wilson “Italic Blues”), acknowledging Sartarelli’s command of the target language. However, one reviewer was of the opposite opinion:

The *Shape of Water* is unsatisfying, and that is down to the translation, which manages to be both convoluted and flat, with words in the wrong place, as if translated literally but with no ear for the rhythms of the language. Take the opening: “No light of daybreak filtered yet into the courtyard of Splendour...” Some sentences are so long that it is necessary to read them two or three times to unravel their labyrinthine construction. (“The Body in the Pasture”)

I imagine Venuti would approve of the fact that the reviewer found the language so disturbing.

One reviewer felt the translator did justice to Camilleri’s humour: “savagely funny [...] proving that sardonic laughter is a sound that translates ever so smoothly” (Stasio “Rev. of *The Shape of Water*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”); while another disagreed: “some of the humour does not travel well” (Cornwell).

Twelve reviews—nine positive and three negative—specifically address the matter of Sartarelli’s treatment of the dialect. Comments include:

- “Camilleri writes in Sicilian dialect, and his translator has expertly captured the rhythms and nuances of that tongue in English” (DeCandido).

- Sartarelli has “made a well-deserved career out of rendering Montalbano’s Sicilian dialect first into Italian, then into English, then into your living room” (James).
- Sartarelli’s “salty translation” (Stasio “Rev. of *The Shape of Water*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”) “from the idiosyncratic Sicilian dialect savors the earthy idiom” (Stasio “Rev. of *The Terra-Cotta Dog*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”).
- “[H]is light touch with the translation captures the sunny humour of Camilleri’s idiomatic Sicilian dialect” (Stasio “Crime”).
- He “does an excellent job of conveying Sicilian [...] robust dialect” (Berlins “Crime Round-up”).
- The translation “deserves praise, because he has coped so interestingly with translating Sicilian speech patterns and slang” (Berlins “The Florida Jigsaw Massacre”).

One critic recognises that “one of the most challenging tasks for the translators must be how to convey to the reader a sense of a character by his accent or dialect” and that “Sartarelli has managed this deftly by giving the character Catarella an almost Brooklyn accent” (Gill). This accent is noticed by one other reviewer, who writes, “Sartarelli has great fun finding equivalents for Camilleri’s mix of Italian and Sicilian dialects, and Montalbano’s dumb but often intuitive sidekick speaks a kind of Brooklynese” (Boddy). Others felt Sartarelli’s treatment of the dialect was inadequate: “English readers miss a whole dimension of Sicilian dialect in Camilleri’s fiction, as translated” (Sutherland). Or strange: “It’s also becoming odd to wade through the over-exuberant mouthings of Catarella, the hyper-excitable and over-adrenalised desk officer. Perhaps it’s a flaw in the otherwise engaging renderings.” (Accone). Or distracting:

Camilleri weaves Sicilian dialect and textbook Italian throughout, which was perhaps effective in the original but sometimes distracting in English, since Sartarelli translates the dialect into a phonetic Eliza Doolittle mishmash that requires readers to apply their own detective skills. (Madden Yee)

Although the above reviewer considers it a negative distraction that readers need to apply their own detective skills in order to decipher the meaning, she is describing what Italian readers also need to do with Camilleri's original texts, and a process that Venuti encourages. Thus, for the purposes of this study, her review is actually positive.

Appreciation is shown by three reviewers for Sartarelli's "informative notes at the back" that explain some of Camilleri's "sly comments on Italian life and culture" (Bailey); his "explanations of the political and social backgrounds of remarks made and events referred to in the text" (Berlins "The Florida Jigsaw Massacre"); and his "illuminating background notes on Italian cuisine, culture, current events and its ever-present past" (Buhler). One reviewer, however, was concerned that Sartarelli's "invaluable background notes" did not provide enough information to prevent "some references" being "lost on readers unfamiliar with the shifting realities of Italian/Sicilian politics" (Cornwell). And another (the same anonymous reviewer above who blamed the translator for making *The Shape of Water* unsatisfying) claimed that without the notes some sentences would be "unfathomable" and that it would be preferable for the explanations to be incorporated in the translation, as it is done, "with elegance and precision", in the "wonderful version of Peter Høeg's Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow" ("The Body in the Pasture").

Ten reviewers emphasised the novels' relationship to English-language detective fiction, including the remark quoted above that Camilleri deserves a place alongside Dibdin and Leon:

There is nothing new about corruption in Italy, but Camilleri writes with such vigour and wit that he deserves a place alongside Michael Dibdin and Donna Leon, with the additional advantage of conveying an insider's sense of authenticity. (Smith "Reviews: Crime Fiction: Joan Smith's Round-up")

The opinion that the "insider's sense of authenticity" raises the Montalbano series above the English-language writers' texts set in Italy is shared by four other reviewers: one asserts that "you always get the sense that this is an Italian mystery about Italian characters and written by a superb Italian author" (Vennarucci); another

maintains that “Italy is a popular setting for crime writers” and that “[a]t first glance, Andrea Camilleri’s Inspector Montalbano mysteries offer more of the same”, but “[a]s more of the novels appear in English, [...] it is becoming clear that Camilleri is in a class of his own” (Smith “Crime: Sinister Shadows”); and the third highlights the cultural difference of the writer, pointing out that the “pace of the story is very different from many American and British mysteries as is the importance placed on family, food, culture and society” (Dudley “Rev. of *Patience of the Spider*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”). Although he also includes Camilleri in his rundown of the “vast crowd of Italian lone detectives” headed by Donna Leon, Clive James points out that being a non-Italian can be a disadvantage when writing crime fiction: the visitor’s fascination with Italy can lead to a “tendency to annotate the atmosphere” (James). Thus there is room for Camilleri, who “knows his background too well to be impressed” to “score on the level of economical evocation”—in contrast with the hundred pages of description it takes for Dibdin’s *Zen* to get across Rome. The other four reviews that compared him to the English-language writers of thrillers set in Italy do not acknowledge Camilleri’s being a native Italian as a reason to distinguish him from them: “should benefit from the recent attention given to Donna Leon [...] and other mysteries set in Italy”; “[a] must for fans of Donna Leon’s similarly meditative Guido Brunetti” (Ott); “[like Donna Leon and Magdalen Nabb he] use[s] culture and landscape to bring [his] stories to life” (Dudley “Rev. of *Rounding the Mark*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”); even when the reviewers believe his writing to be superior: “Camilleri’s work is darker and funnier than Leon’s—as different in flavour as Venice is from Catania” (Sutherland); “the books wouldn’t work at all if they were as immaculately mechanical as (say) Donna Leon’s Venetian whodunits” (Pye).

The second step in considering the critical reception of the translations is an examination of the reviews in terms of which specific elements of the writing have stood out for the reviewers as worthy of comment. Have the functions fulfilled in the original texts also been fulfilled in the translated texts, and if so, how much is this due to the linguistic style of the translated text? As stated earlier,⁹⁴ Camilleri used his Italian-Sicilian hybrid language to:

⁹⁴ See Section 3.3.

- express his own, very personal style;
- pay homage to his homeland and carry on its literary tradition;
- firmly locate his stories in their real and specific geographical setting;
- portray the characters' individuality in relation to others;
- express the characters' true emotions;
- convey humour, in order to entertain his readers; and
- convey irony in order to express his personal ideology.

The element that is commented upon by the reviewers more than any other is humour. Among the twenty-three references to the humour are comments that the books are “savagely funny” (Stasio “Rev. of *The Terra-Cotta Dog*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”); “entertaining” (“Essentially Loners”); “a truly civilized entertainment with a pleasingly rumbustious edge” (Kerridge); with “laugh-aloud humour” (Berlins “The Italian Connection”); “humour and occasional slapstick” (L. Wilson “Urban Worrier”); and “occasional [...] broad slapstick” (Clements). “The plots are secondary [to] the humour” for enjoyment (Martin). In contrast to these comments is the contention that the writing is “gentle-humoured” (Stratton); and consists of “gentle farce” (Cross).

Most of the reviewers perceive the irony and intelligence of Camilleri's humour, and the intent behind it to express his personal ideology, as evidenced by the following excerpts: “wit and delicacy and the fast-cut timing of farce” (Koch); written with an “ironic pen”; (“Rev. of *Paper Moon*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”)“illustrating his vision into the humour of life in all its manifold aspects” (Stratton); “refreshingly sardonic” and “laced with [...] reflections, often amusing, on Sicilian society” (Cornwell); combines “hard-boiled fear with humorous frustration of daily life” (Onatade); “witty and perceptive portrait of both the place and its people” (Traficante); “as acute an observer of Sicilian mores as Leonardo Sciascia but adds keen humour to the mix” (Guttridge); “great farcical ingenuity” (Stasio “The Haunted Detective”); “sly, slightly macabre humour” (Gill); “alluring and sardonically witty” (L. Wilson “The Dirty Dozen Meets Harry Potter?”); “bitingly humorous”(“Rev. of *Snack Thief*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli”); and Camilleri's “ironic eye is as sharp as ever”.

Camilleri's characterisation skills are commented upon by eighteen reviewers, two in a negative manner. Among the comments is the opinion that his characters, which he creates with apparent ease—"with just a few deft brushstrokes" (Grant)—are fully realised, complex and vibrant. The characters are "lively" ("A Detective's Lot is Not a Happy One"); "memorable" (Cornwell); "explosive" (Stasio "The Haunted Detective"); "complex" (Smith "At Death's Door"); "three dimensional [...], each with their own individual personality traits" (Gill); and have "wonderful depth" (Bolton). The characterisations are "pungent" (Stasio "Rev. of *The Terra-Cotta Dog*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli"); and "vibrant" (Buhler). Also impressive is the size of the cast: "Montalbano is just one fully realized character among dozens" (Kerridge); "an operatic cast of characters" (Koch); "a remarkable vignette of Sicilian society from highest to lowest" (Stratton); as well as the relationship between them: "[t]he fascination of Andrea Camilleri's books is the interplay between the characters" ("Corporate Skulduggery"); and the "intricate interplay of personalities" (Buhler). One critic believes the writer's skills have improved over time: "Camilleri's character study deepens with every instalment"; and another stresses the weight the characterisation carries in the overall effect of the novels: ("Rev. of *Patience of the Spider*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli)" "the plot is as usual less important than the characters" ("Essentially Loners"). The two following reviews offer such a contrasting opinion to those above that one might wonder if the critics were reading the same texts. The first opines that the characterisation is one of the weaker elements of the novels: "Montalbano novels are not read for their [...] depth of characterization" (Berlins "The Italian Connection"); the other contends that the characters have no individuality: "[t]he characterizations could have been more convincingly done since the goodies (apart from the delicious Catarella) seem to speak with one voice to impart a single thought" (Pickles).

The next most frequently mentioned element in the reviews (sixteen instances) is the novels' representation of their location. Only two of these do not point specifically to Sicily as the location represented. The books are recognised as having a "strong sense of place" (Bolton) and the reader gains an increased understanding of Sicilian society: "we are introduced to a remarkable vignette of Sicilian society from the highest to the lowest [...] and a good number of others who contribute to our greater understanding of Sicilian manners and mores" (Stratton); in a manner that is authentic: "conveying

an insider's sense of authenticity" (Smith "Reviews: Crime Fiction: Joan Smith's Round-up"); "authentic atmosphere of the Sicilian town in which they are set" (Yager); and enjoyable: "laced with memorable characters and reflections, often amusing, on Sicilian society" (Cornwell); "the delicious atmosphere of Sicily" (Berlins "The Italian Connection"). The depiction of Sicily goes behind the scenes: "conveys the darker nuances of the complicated region" (Stasio "Crime"); "a close reading of Sicily's criminal, social and political ills" (Guttridge); and is vivid and realistic: "vividly captures the atmosphere of the small Sicilian town in which it is set" (Traficante); "vivid depictions of Sicilian culture, geography and temperament" and "flavours, smells, sights, sensations and sounds of everyday life in that part of Italy" (Buhler); "vivid portrayal of the small Sicilian town in which Montalbano works and lives" ("Green Grass and Red Blood"); "[y]ou dive into [Camilleri's] world and you live there, tasting, sweating, smelling sea and roses until the book ends. The books [...] guide you through the realities of an unfamiliar place. They're gloriously alive [...]" (Pye). Two reviewers give the impression that the stories could be set anywhere in Italy: "capturing life in small-town Italy without resorting to clichés" (Smith "Trills and Spills"); "Italy, with its idiosyncrasies and manners, is vital to the actions of the characters" (Dudley "Rev. of *Rounding the Mark*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli").

Up to this point in my review of the critical reception, it becomes clear that the translations fulfil several of the functions fulfilled in the source texts, specifically, the firm location of the stories in their real and specific geographical setting, in a way that pays homage to that location; the portrayal of the characters' individuality in relation to others; and the conveyance of humour to entertain the readers and of irony to express Camilleri's personal ideology. The contribution to Sicily's literary tradition goes largely unperceived by the Anglophone readers as many are probably not familiar with other Sicilian writers. However, two reviewers do compare Camilleri to Sciascia. One finds their writing style similar: "Camilleri's novels stand out not just for the economy of his prose, which recalls that of the great Italian crime writer Leonardo Sciascia" (Smith "Crime: Sinister Shadows"); the other believes the two writers' ways of thinking are similar but their expression differs: "Camilleri is as an acute observer of Sicilian mores as Leonard Sciascia but adds keen humour to the mix" (Guttridge).

But can it be said that these functions are fulfilled through Camilleri's hybridised language? Camilleri's use of dialect is noted by many critics (thirteen), but only four explain, or are aware, that he mixes it with standard Italian: "Camilleri weaves Sicilian dialect and textbook Italian throughout [...] perhaps effective in the original" (Madden Yee); "Camilleri's mix of Italian and Sicilian dialects" (Boddy); "[Camilleri's] novels capture the flavour of everyday (often vividly profane) speech, including Sicilian dialect" (Buhler); and only one of the four emphasises the linguistic complexity: "Even the language, in the Italian, has this kind of imaginary reality: lots of Sicilian words, a syntax sometimes twisted just enough to read a bit like dialect, but still understandable. It is a dazzlingly clever, very theatrical kind of impersonation" (Pye). Others describe the dialect as "robust" (Berlins "Crime Round-up"); "idiomatic" (Stasio "Crime"); "idiosyncratic" and possessing "earthy idiom" (Stasio "Rev. of *The Terra-Cotta Dog*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli"); and "a bit rough around the edges" (Clements).

We can conclude, therefore, that overall the reviewers' awareness of the linguistic mix and variation is very slight. And certainly the nuances and allusions of the dialect are lost. Nevertheless, it is clear that the immediacy and vibrancy of expression that Camilleri aims for has come through for the reviewers. The prose style is praised by six critics for its light touch and quick tempo: "delicacy and the fast-cut timing of farce play across the surface" (Koch); "small in wordage, easy and fast to read [...] Camilleri writes with a light touch" (Stratton); "the astonishing lightness of touch that Camilleri achieves" (Grant); "the whole book reads very fast [...] in part because it is short [...] and in part because of Camilleri's storytelling ability and easy-going language" (Stratton); "Camilleri's novels stand out [...] for the economy of his prose" (Smith "Crime: Sinister Shadows"); and "[t]he crisp prose is a pleasure to read". Also noted is the "lively dialogue" (Buhler). (To be noted is the fact that the reviewers discount the role of the translator with respect to style.) Even more laudatory is the view that the stories are "freewheeling, amiable, dialogue-driven" and "more open, more fluid than conventional thrillers" (Pye).

These comments about the prose style of the translated texts suggest that Sartarelli's stated aim of emulating Camilleri's naturalness has largely been achieved. His other

hope is that he manages to transmit, at least in part, the author's humanity—"questa sua specie di traduzione linguistica e morali dei valori umani universali che fa sì che l'altro diventi sempre noi stessi" ("L'alterità linguistica di Camilleri in inglese" 219). Here, also, the critics' assessments point to a successful result: "the style has that good-natured charm full of grace notes and gentle understanding that human foibles are nonetheless human and therefore in their way even noble" (Stratton); "Camilleri's novels stand out [for] their humanity" (Smith "Crime: Sinister Shadows"); "his writing reveals a profound understanding of human weakness" (Smith "Trills and Spills"); the novels show "clear-sighted understanding of human nature" (Smith "At Death's Door"); "the insight and compassion of the central character ensure that the necessary pathos and humanity are there" (L. Wilson "The Dirty Dozen Meets Harry Potter?"); "the author encourages his readers to care, with Montalbano, about the world that the detective inhabits [...] Camilleri explores [...] questions of social responsibility and justice with honesty and humour, with outrage and compassion" (Buhler); and "that's one particular quality of Camilleri. His subject is crime but his love for [the immigrant child who steals snacks], which runs through the books like a vein, shows just how a thriller can also touch the heart" (Pye).

This overview of the critical reception shows that, although the linguistic variation, and specifically its dialectal element and all of its rich associations, only comes through in the translated texts to a small extent, many of the functions fulfilled by Camilleri's language in the source texts are fulfilled in other ways for the reader. The humour, the irony, the immediacy and vibrancy of expression, the individuality of the characters, a sense of the location, and the author's personal ideology—all these elements come through to these reviewers. The analysis also demonstrates that Sartarelli's goals of transferring the naturalness and humanity of the original texts have largely been met. However, with regard to the principal concern of this study, the visibility of the translation, the fact that over half of the reviews do not acknowledge Sartarelli's role in the creation of the works they have evaluated backs up Venuti's contention that the majority of Anglophone reviewers believe that the translation act should remain hidden. Furthermore, in the reviews that do mention the translator's role, apart from a small minority, the comments completely discount Sartarelli's creative input and any intervening linguistic, cultural or social factors. And, finally, we find evidence of the Anglophone appropriation manoeuvre discussed

above,⁹⁵ in which the foreign is made more acceptable to readers, in the fact that ten critics grouped the novels with English-language thrillers set in Italy. Even more significant is the fact that four of these did not distinguish them for being written by a native Italian when the others are not.

⁹⁵ See Section 6.3.

Chapter seven: Analysis of Sartarelli's Translations of the Montalbano Series

While other studies into the translation into English of Camilleri's literary language tend to focus on the loss of the dialectal items and expressions,⁹⁶ my analysis focuses rather on the strategies Sartarelli employs to convey the *sicilianità* of the text. Of these strategies, the most effective and most overarching is his use of compensation.⁹⁷ He uses it in various ways within the text, which I discuss below in detail; however, his compensation strategy also extends beyond the text to his endnotes and to his practice—as a 'visible' translator—of talking and writing about his translations. By telling his readers what he cannot recreate in his translations because of the differences between the source and target languages and cultures, he not only fulfils Venuti's recommendation of "presenting incisive rationales" to show that "the translation originates with the translator in a decisive way", but he also compensates for the losses to a notable degree. Furthermore, he is not acting alone. Camilleri himself aids the reader in understanding the aims and effects of his linguistic choices. He is not a subtle writer. The reader does not have to work hard at reading between the lines to grasp Camilleri's messages because he spells them out clearly, to the point that the non-native-Italian reader of the translated text at times will think that it is Sartarelli who has interjected the explanations that, in fact, were in the original text. Camilleri's assistance to Italian readers also goes far towards compensating for what cannot be recreated linguistically in the translated text.

⁹⁶ See: Emanuela Gutkowski, *Does the Night Smell the Same in Italy and in English Speaking Countries?* (Enna: IlionBooks, 2009), Saverio Tomaiuolo, "'I am Montalbano/Montalbano sono': Fluency and Cultural Difference in Translating Andrea Camilleri's Fiction," *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* 10 (2009), Gaetano Cipolla, "Translating Andrea Camilleri into English: An Impossible Task?," *Journal of Italian Translation* 1.2 (2006), Maria Cristina Consiglio, "'Montalbano Here': Problems in Translating Multilingual Novels," *Thinking Translation: Perspectives from Within and Without* (2008).

⁹⁷ "Compensation" is defined by Hervey et al. as "where any conventional translation (whether literal or otherwise) would entail an unacceptable translation loss, this loss is reduced by the freely chosen introduction of a less unacceptable one, such that important ST effects are rendered approximately in the TT by means other than those used in the ST": Sándor G. J. Hervey, Ian Higgins, Stella Cragie and Patrizia Gambarotta, *Thinking Italian Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Italian into English* (London: Routledge, 2000) 33.

Sartarelli's task is also made easier by the fact that most readers of the Montalbano series, like the Italian readers, will have chosen to read the series in order,⁹⁸ and if they were to pick up one at random and enjoy it, it is likely they would go back to the beginning. Thus they will have built up a substantial understanding of many aspects of the texts, and of Sicilian culture and language—much like a traveller revisiting the same location again and again—including the recurring dialectal terms and expressions that are transferred directly to the English texts.

In analysing Sartarelli's translations, it is also important to keep in mind his own remarks about the constraints he faces in translating Camilleri's texts, and his aims and strategies, as discussed in the previous section. These include constraints that are imposed by the target culture, including his publisher's and readers' resistance to the foreign or unfamiliar, and the pressure to please the entire Anglophone world. Fortunately, over time he has gained more freedom with his translations because of their commercial and critical success, and Camilleri's support. In addition, he has become more courageous and confident about experimenting linguistically. More significant and more difficult to reduce or negate are the constraints imposed by the English language—which has almost rid itself of dialects and has nothing to offer him that bears any resemblance to Sicilian, particularly as it differs from standard Italian. In addition, translating from almost any dialect poses the problem of the absurd and artificial effect that usually results from using a dialect from one geographical setting to represent a dialect from another setting. Sartarelli considers the resulting losses of the distancing effect between dialect and standard Italian and the nuances of the dialect terms regrettable, yet unavoidable.

Sartarelli's goals are:

- to emulate the naturalness of the original texts;
- to render Camilleri's vision intact;
- to retain the thematic specificity;

⁹⁸ According to readers' advisory expert Joyce G. Saricks, "Mystery readers like series. They follow series characters from case to case and are always on the lookout for the next book in that series as well as additional series that have the same appeal. They want to read series in order...": Joyce G. Saricks, *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: American Library Assn Editions, 2009) 218.

- to nudge the reader in the direction of the distancing effect of the dialect with respect to standard Italian; and
- to create new spaces in English.

In addition to what I view as the most important strategy of compensation, the methods he employs to fulfil these goals include:

- using the slang and sociolect of the working class English with which he is most familiar;
- the literal translation of some idiomatic expressions that do not exist in English; and
- the invention of words and linguistic games.

7.1 Dialect

Camilleri uses a mix of language varieties in the Montalbano series, including standard Italian, an overly formal register, the speech of non-native speakers, non-Sicilian dialects, and Sicilian regional speech.⁹⁹ Among the regional speech varieties are a heavy dialect, a hybridised *italiano bastardo* and Catarella's macaronic mix of bureaucratic and formal Italian, working class Italian and dialect. Of the three strategies available to the translator in dealing with dialect—replacing it with a target-language dialect, compensation and standardisation—Sartarelli favours compensation. For heavy dialect, he uses a target-language sociolect and occasional metalinguistic comments. For the hybridised language, he systematically transfers key 'exotic' items directly and occasionally uses literal renderings that evoke foreignness, as well as using a target-language register.

7.1.1 Heavy Dialect

Sartarelli clearly and quite effectively differentiates the heavier dialect used by certain characters—usually from an older generation and of a lower class—but he does so by using an English-language sociolect rather than a dialect. Let us look at an example of

⁹⁹ See discussion in Section 3.3.

his rendition of heavy dialect, in which he uses a type of ‘eye dialect’,¹⁰⁰ or rather an ‘eye sociolect’, drawn from the working class language of Italian-Americans, which deviates strongly from the conventional system of writing, phonetically and grammatically. The speaker here is Montalbano’s housekeeper, Adelina:

“Signuri, you **din’t** eat **nothin** yesterday for lunch or dinner!”

[...]

“I work **m’self** to death **cookin’ d’licious** things and you **jес** turn up **ya** nose at **’em.**”

[...]

“**An’** this house’s become a pigsty! You **don’** want me to wash the floor, you **don’** want me to wash **ya** clothes! For five days you been **wearin** the same shirt **anna** same shorts! You stink, signuri!”

[...]

“Well, **lemme** know when you snap out of it, and I’ll come back. **’Cause I ain’t settin’** foot back in **’ere**. Call me when **ya feelin’** better.” (*The Terracotta Dog*. By Andrea Camilleri. 316)¹⁰¹

Double negatives, “ain’t” for ‘am not’, an apostrophe to mark sounds that are not pronounced, or spellings to close the gap between pronunciation and orthography (“anna”) are all devices used to signal to the reader that the character speaks a different, less educated language variety. In the following example of Adelina’s speech, the ‘a’ appended to ‘come’ and ‘I’m’ (“Amma”), and the extra vowel in “bappetism” are aimed to render a decidedly Italian flavour.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Eye dialect’ is a stylistic device in which non-standard spelling is used to suggest non-standard pronunciations in dialogue in literature. Although sometimes the forms actually attempt to record dialectal pronunciation or forms, often the pronunciations they suggest are not non-standard, for example, ‘woz’ or ‘wuz’ for ‘was’. The effect in such cases is purely visual (hence the term ‘eye’) and implies that the speaker is uneducated (Katie Wales, *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2001) 144-45). It was first used by George P. Krapp in *The English Language in America* (1925), who advised that “the convention violated is one of the eyes, not of the ear” and that dialect writers use it not “to indicate a genuine difference of pronunciation, but the spelling is merely a nudge to the reader, a knowing look which establishes a sympathetic sense of superiority between the author and reader as contrasted with the humble speaker of dialect” (qtd. in Tom McArthur, *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 395).

¹⁰¹ “«Vossia non mangiò né aieri a mezzujorno né aieri sira!» [...] «Io m’ammazzo di travaglio a fàricci cose ’nguiate e vossia le sdegna!» [...] «E po’ chista casa diventò un purcile! Vossia ’un voli ca lavo ’n terra, ’un voli ca lavo i robbi! Havi cinco jorna ca si teni la stissa cammisa e li stessi mutanni! Vossia feti!» [...] «E allora mi lu fa sapiri quannu ci passa, e iu tornu. Iu pedi ccà ’un cinni mettu chhiù. Quannu si senti bonu, mi chiama.»” (Andrea Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1996) 260)

“Can I **come-a** this afternoon to clean house and make you **somehìn a eat**?”

[...]

“**D’jou** decide yet **abou’ ma gransson’s bappetism**?”

[...]

“Ah, Gesù, **Amma** so **heppy!**”

[...]

“**Iss ahp** to you, signore.”

[...]

“Yes, **hit** depends on when you free.” (*The Patience of the Spider*. By Andrea Camilleri. 200)¹⁰²

In addition to the eye sociolect, Sartarelli occasionally makes use of metalinguistic comments, which are not in the original text, to clearly identify their speech as dialect, for example, “she said in dialect” (*The Scent of the Night*. By Andrea Camilleri. 105) or “But the woman smiled at him and said in dialect” (*The Patience of the Spider*. By Andrea Camilleri. 97).

7.1.2 Italiano Bastardo

The most prevalent language variety in the series, and the most important in terms of Camilleri’s personal expression, is the hybrid mix of dialect and standard Italian that he calls *italiano bastardo*. It is used mainly by the character Montalbano and the narrator (although at times the narrator cannot be differentiated from Montalbano and/or Camilleri) and various others with whom Montalbano shares a mutual respect. Unfortunately, this variety is the most difficult to recreate because it not only involves a mixing of standard language and dialect that does not exist in English, but that mixing occurs within single sentences and even single words. As shown by the example below, in which all dialectal terms are highlighted, Sartarelli accepts that it is impossible to recreate the linguistic duality of the narrator’s voice and uses a uniform register in his translation.

¹⁰² “«Dutturi, pozzu viniri doppupranzu a puliziarì la casa e a prepararici ’u mangiari?» [...] «Dutturi, addecise po’ pi la facenna del vattù di mè niputi?» [...] «Maria, chi cuntintizza!» [...] «Dutturi, dipenni da vossia.» [...] «Sissi, da quannu vossi è liberu.»” (Andrea Camilleri, *La pazienza del ragno* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2004) 216)

Ma **indove** erano andate a finire quelle prime **matinate** nelle quali, appena **arrisbigliato**, si **sintiva** attraversato da una **speci di correnti di felicità** pura, senza motivo?

Non si trattava del fatto che la **jornata s'appresentava** priva di nuvole e vento e tutta tirata a **lucito** dal sole, no, era un'altra sensazione che non **dipinniva** dalla **so** natura di meteoropatico, a volersela spiegare era come un **sintirisi** in armonia con l'universo **criato**, perfettamente sincronizzato a un **granni ralugio stillare** ed esattamente allocato nello spazio, al punto **priciso** che gli era stato destinato fino dalla nascita.

Minchiate? Fantasie? Possibile. (*Le ali della sfinge* 9)

What ever happened to those early mornings when, upon awakening, for no reason, he would feel a sort of current of pure happiness running through him? It wasn't the fact that the day was starting out cloudless and windless and the sun shining bright. No, it was a different sensation, one that had nothing to do with his meteoropathic nature. If he had to explain, it was like feeling in harmony with all of creation, perfectly synchronized with a great stellar clock precisely positioned in space, at the very point that had been destined for him since birth.

Bullshit? Fantasy? Maybe. (*The Wings of the Sphinx. By Andrea Camilleri. 1*)

In an essay entitled "Translating Andrea Camilleri into English: an Impossible Task?", Gaetano Cipolla offers a solution to the translation problem presented by *italiano bastardo* (19). He suggests that the translator develop a multiple-level language comprised of normal sequences with interjections of expressions that deviate in a consistent way from the dominant language. He goes so far as to provide an example of this strategy through his own translation of a passage of a Camilleri text. The passage he translates is taken from *Un mese con Montalbano*, a text that Sartarelli has not translated so we cannot compare it to his version. The italics are Cipolla's.

Calorio non si chiamava *Calorio*, ma in tutta Vigata lo conoscevano con questo nome. Era arrivato in *paisi* non si sa da dove una ventina d'anni avanti, un *paro* di pantaloni ch'erano più *pirtusa* che stoffa, legati alla vita con una corda, giacchetta tutta pezze pezze all'arlecchino, piedi *scavusi* ma pulitissimi.

Cam pava dimandando la limosina, ma con discrezione, senza dare fastidio, senza spavintare fimmine e picciliddri. Teneva bene il vino, quando poteva accattarsene una bottiglia, tanto che nessuno l'aveva veduto a malappena brillo: e dire che c'erano state occasioni di feste che di vino se n'era scolato a litri.

Calorio was not his name, but in Vigata the whole town knew him as Calorio. About twenty years back, he had *turned up* in town from God knows where, with a *pair of britches* that were *draftier than a barn* on account of the many holes, tied with a rope around his waist, and with a *raggedy* jacket so patched up *he looked like a circus clown*. He walked barefoot, but his feet were *spotless*. He *scraped along* by begging but without making a nuisance of himself, *never bothering nobody*, or *scaring the womenfolk or young'uns*. He held his liquor so well, when he could *scare up* enough to buy himself a bottle, that nobody ever saw him even *slightly pickled*; t[h]ough there had been times on Feast days when he had *put away* quite a few quarts.

I have two criticisms of Cipolla's version. First of all, the italicised words are intended to stand out as interjections of a linguistic code different from the rest of the text in a way that mimics Camilleri's interjections of dialectal words within a standard linguistic code. However, the impression given by the English text is of a single linguistic code. The italicised words and expressions dominate the text and do not contrast enough with the non-italicised to have the interjecting effect Cipolla intended. The Anglophone world does not have the same linguistic situation that exists in Italy, with its multiple dialects and regional varieties that are often mutually unintelligible, so the distancing effect of the dialectal terms simply cannot be recreated. Secondly, the "slangy, folksy, homespun, Southern" (Cipolla 19) vocabulary seems an inappropriate choice to render the voice of a Montalbano narrative, with its evocations of Tennessee hillbillies drinking moonshine. More appropriate is Sartarelli's 'hard-boiled detective' tone and the slang of the north-eastern United States, with its large Italian immigrant population.

Since the *italiano bastardo* is a mix of varieties, it might seem reasonable, in theory, to try to recreate it by mixing Sartarelli's rendition of heavy dialect with more

standard English, but as we can see in the above examples in which the non-standard items are highlighted, *italiano bastardo* is already a mix of two varieties. Furthermore, the connotations of Sartarelli's sociolect—an uneducated, lower class—differ vastly from those evoked by Camilleri's use of dialect as spoken by the well-read and intelligent Montalbano.

Despite Sartarelli's monolingual rendering of the hybrid language, however, the reader of the translated text is not left ignorant of the fact that Montalbano's manner of speech is out of the ordinary. For example, when the commissioner moans to Montalbano "tanto per usare il suo italiano bastardo" (*Il cane di terracotta* 54), Sartarelli's translation is "to use your odd phrasing" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri.* 60). Elsewhere, Montalbano states, after describing the taste of zucchini as "beautiful" ("leggiadro"), "I'm sorry. Sometimes I abuse my adjectives." ("Mi perdonino, certe volte patisco d'aggettivazione imperfetta.") (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri.* 181; *Il cane di terracotta* 152) And again, after referring to a pasta dish as "mischievous" ("maliziosa"), "he suffered from improper use of adjectives and couldn't define it any better than this" ("pativa di improprietà d'aggettivazione, non seppe definirla meglio") (*Rounding the Mark. By Andrea Camilleri.* 120; *Il giro di boa* 129).

At times, Sartarelli is able to give his readers a sense of the oddness of Montalbano's speech and at the same time create a new space in the English language, for example, with his use of the word "meteoropathic":

What ever happened to those early mornings when, upon awakening, for no reason, he would feel a sort of current of pure happiness running through him? It wasn't the fact that the day was starting out cloudless and windless and the sun shining bright. No, it was a different sensation, one that had nothing to do with his **meteoropathic** nature. (*The Wings of the Sphinx. By Andrea Camilleri.* 1)

The Italian word *meteoropatico* is commonly used and understood amongst Italians, while the English version is extremely rare and will not be found in most dictionaries. However, readers will understand its meaning from the context—not just the

immediate one but through their understanding of Montalbano's character built up over the series—and from its connection with the more common word 'meteoric', meaning 'relating to the atmosphere'. Hence English readers enjoy the opportunity of experiencing a Camilleri effect in their own language: Their vocabulary will be enriched, just as the vocabulary of non-Sicilian Italians is enriched by reading the series.

Furthermore, because of Camilleri's practice of transparency in which he uses the dialogue to clarify and highlight certain points, the Anglophone reader is made fully aware that Montalbano uses dialect in his speech. For instance, it is made clear in the following passage that he can speak dialect fluently and, because it has been transferred directly and set in italics, that it is a separate language from standard Italian.

“Iu persi a me matri ch'era macari cchiù nicu di tia,” he began, telling the child he'd lost his own mother when he was even smaller than François.

They started talking, the inspector in Sicilian and the boy in Arabic, and they understood each other perfectly. (*The Snack Thief. By Andrea Camilleri. 177*)¹⁰³

That he uses it intermittently is also made clear in the following exchange between him and his girlfriend:

So why did you go?”

“Aviva spinno.”

“Don't start talking in dialect, Salvo! You know there are times when I just can't stand it! What did you say?”

“I said I felt like seeing him. *Spinno* means 'wish' or 'desire.' Now that you understand the word, let me ask you. Have you never felt the *spinno* to go see François?”

“You're such a swine, Salvo.”

¹⁰³ “«Iu persi a me matri ch'era macari cchiù nicu di tia» esordì. E iniziarono a parlare, il commissario in siciliano e François in arabo, capendosi perfettamente.” (Andrea Camilleri, *Il ladro di merendine* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1996) 155)

“Shall we make a deal? I won’t speak dialect if you won’t insult me. Okay?”
(*The Scent of the Night. By Andrea Camilleri. 122*)¹⁰⁴

The above passage also highlights the distance between standard Italian and dialect. The Anglophone reader is made aware that dialect cannot be understood by northern Italians, since Livia, who comes from Liguria, cannot understand it. The distinction of Sicilian as a separate language to Italian is made even clearer in the following exchange between Montalbano and the Commissioner:

“Come here immediately.”

“Give me an hour at the most, and I’ll—”

“Montalbano, you may be Sicilian, but surely you studied Italian at school? Don’t you know the meaning of the adverb ‘immediately?’” (*The Scent of the Night. By Andrea Camilleri. 17*)¹⁰⁵

The distinction is also shown in this passage in which a character who had moved to Northern Italy decades previously is speaking to Montalbano:

“Then, if you don’t mind, could you set me a place out here?”

Rizzitano had used the Sicilian verb *conzare*, meaning “to set the table”—like an outsider trying his best to speak the local language. (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 320*)¹⁰⁶

The various passages quoted above in which Montalbano is speaking to non-Sicilians illustrate Camilleri’s practice of using a dialectal term and then explaining it for the benefit of non-Sicilian Italian readers. Sometimes, this is done in a more subtle manner, such as when he simply has one speaker use the Italian word after another

¹⁰⁴ “«Allora perché ci sei andato?». «Avevo spinno». «Salvo, non cominciare a parlare in dialetto! Sai che in certi momenti non lo sopporto! Che hai detto?». «Che avevo desiderio di vedere François. Spinno si traduce in italiano con desiderio, voglia. Ora che capisci la parola, ti domando: a te non è mai venuto spinno di vedere François?». «Che carogna che sei, Salvo». «Facciamo un patto? Io non uso il dialetto e tu non m’insulti. D’accordo?».” (Andrea Camilleri, *L’odore della notte* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1996) 123)

¹⁰⁵ “«Venga immediatamente». «Tra un’oretta al massimo sarò...». «Montalbano, lei è siciliano, ma almeno a scuola avrà studiato l’italiano. Lo sa il significato dell’avverbio immediatamente?».” (Camilleri, *L’odore della notte* 24)

¹⁰⁶ “«Allora, se non le dispiace, può conzarmi qui?». Conzare, apparecchiare. Rizzitano disse quel verbo siciliano come uno straniero che si sforzasse di parlare la lingua del posto.” (Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* 263)

speaker has used the dialect one. In such instances, Sartarelli generally translates both the dialect and the Italian terms with the same English term because the dialect terms are what Newmark defines as “universal” rather than “cultural”:

«Che **ci trasi**, il telefono?»

«**C’entra**, eccome! ...» (*Il cane di terracotta* 33)

“What’s the telephone **got to do with it?**”

“It’s **got** everything **to do with it!**” (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 33*)

However, when the explanation is more overt, Sartarelli transfers the Sicilian directly:

Il commissario s’arricordò d’aver visto, una volta, un rozzo ex voto dei primi anni del secolo. Rappresentava **un viddrano, un contadino**, che scappava inseguito da due carabinieri col pennacchio. (*La gita a Tindari* 210)

The inspector remembered once having seen a crude votive painting from the early twentieth century, depicting **a viddrano, a peasant**, fleeing from two plumed carabinieri in hot pursuit. (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri. 219*)

In particular, when the dialect term requires a multiple-word definition in Italian because no one-word equivalent exists, it is generally culturally specific to Sicily and needs to be retained, such as “accuttufare”:

Si voleva **accuttufare**. Altro verbo che gli piaceva, significava tanto essere preso a legnate quanto allontanarsi dal consorzio civile. In quel momento, per Montalbano erano più che validi tutti e due i significati. (*La forma dell’acqua* 152)

What he wanted to do now was **accuttufarsi**—another verb he liked, **which meant at once to be beaten up and to withdraw from human society**. At

that moment, for Montalbano, both meanings were more than applicable. (*The Shape of Water. By Andrea Camilleri* 192)

Or “quaquaraquà”—a term that was first used by Sciascia in *Il giorno della civetta* and which has since passed into popular usage:

E, di colpo, si sentì un **quaquaraquà**, un uomo da niente, capace di nessun rispetto. (*Il cane di terracotta* 24)

And all at once he felt like a **quaquaraquà**, a worthless man, with no respect for anything. (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri.* 146)

In such cases, readers of the translated text might easily assume that the explanation has been added by the translator, and so they remain unaware that the explanations also appeared in the original text. Thus the distancing effect between dialect and standard Italian, highlighted by these explanations in the original text, is lost in the translated text. Nevertheless, the target-text readers’ appreciation that what they are reading is a translation is increased. As discussed earlier,¹⁰⁷ untranslated items, especially when they are made distinct through being set in italics, operate as a space of translation—a palpable written trace of the foreign and an indicator that the text was written elsewhere. These spaces of translation occur particularly prominently and pervasively in the Montalbano series with regard to food items.

Sicilian cuisine is a major theme of the series, much discussed, savoured and anticipated by readers. There is even a page of the Camilleri fan club website www.vigata.org devoted to “Le ricette di Camilleri”, in which recipes are provided for all the dishes that appear in the novels along with page references. But the descriptions in the novels themselves are sometimes so detailed that an experienced cook could reproduce them based on these alone. The following discussion by a Sicilian blogger (with, as he points out, no literary credentials) eloquently explains how powerful the descriptions are—to the point that the reader tastes and smells the food—and how much the food is tied to the region.

¹⁰⁷ See Section 2.4.

La cucina nell'opera di Camilleri rappresenta uno dei tanti spicchi di sicilianità. Ancora una volta è legata alla tradizione ed al passato, forse ai ricordi dell'autore. Una cucina semplice legata al territorio, all'ambiente, alle stagioni, al caldo, al mare ma anche alle colline e alle montagne di cui la Sicilia è ricca, ma al tempo stesso gustosa, profumata, saporita. In argomento i libri, a differenza delle trasposizioni cinematografiche e teatrali, hanno qualcosa di più. Mentre il film lascia l'immagine, il libro lancia nel lettore il ricordo di ciò che ha assaggiato e mangiato. In chi non ha il ricordo, perchè non ha mai assaggiato il cibo rappresentato, fa costruire un'immagine che parte dal cibo per finire nella sensazione che lo stesso dà. Nella trasposizione letteraria del cibo Camilleri ottiene un effetto onomatopeico—scusate sono un avvocato e i miei ricordi delle figure retoriche sono limitati agli studi liceali—: non solo ti sembra di vedere il cibo servito sul piatto ma anche sentirne il profumo, l'aroma la fragranza. Dalla lettura si riesce, in alcuni casi, anche ad immaginare [sic] la reazione di chi mangia. In poche parole: spesso non solo ti immagini il cibo ed i suoi profumi ma ti viene anche l'acquolina [sic] in bocca. (Anfuso)

The power to transcend the page to the readers' senses of sight, taste and smell, and to retain the ties to the region, is strong enough to carry through in the translation. Witness these reviewers' comments: "Mouth-watering descriptions of Sicilian food sprinkled throughout. Reading Camilleri is like breaking a diet with a huge portion of calzone stuffed full of your favourite toppings and oozing with chilli oil. Literary ambrosia." (Martin) "It all comes together cleverly and the aroma of Sicilian food lingers long after the last page" (Berlins "The Florida Jigsaw Massacre"). "For once in a murder mystery, a genre not generally known for inspiring the appetite (at least not for food), you can't help wishing you were there" (Parsons). "The Real Sicily lives in its pages—its smells, its tastes (I have already cooked a couple of the dishes Montalbano enjoys most) and, above all, its language" (Bailey). "At the same time, Montalbano's rather quirky morality and passion for good food—both very lightly and often humorously depicted—manage to become almost additional characters in their own right. [...] As with one of those meals Montalbano so much enjoys, the last mouthful perfectly satiates, and even a morsel more would be a surfeit." (Grant)

By leaving the name of the dish untranslated and in italics, as in the following example, the reader is made aware that it is native to Sicily and that it does not exist in the target culture. However, by breaking the dish down to its components, which are mostly universal, naming its ingredients and cooking methods, and describing *how* to eat it, the reader from another culture and language, can almost participate in the eating experience.

He sat on the veranda, having savoured the *pappanozza* he'd been wanting for a while. A humble dish: potatoes and onions boiled a long time, mashed into a porridge with the back of a fork, then dressed with an abundance of olive oil, strong vinegar, freshly ground black pepper and salt. To be eaten preferably with a tin fork (he had two which he jealously guarded), scorching the tongue and palate and cursing the saints with each bite. (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri. 41*)¹⁰⁸

Or this enticing menu:

Signora Angila Zarco, a woman of few words, blonde to the point of looking washed out, served them *cavatuna* in tomato sauce that were eminently respectable, followed by *coniglio all'agrodolce*—sweet-and-sour rabbit—from the day before. Now, preparing *coniglio all'agrodolce* is a complicated matter, because everything depends on the right proportion of vinegar to honey and on making the pieces of rabbit blend properly with the *caponata* in which it must cook. Signora Zarco clearly knew how to go about this, and for good measure had thrown in a sprinkling of toasted ground almonds over the whole thing. On top of this, it is well-known that the *coniglio all'agrodolce* you eat the day it is made is one thing, but when eaten the next day it is something else entirely, because it gains considerably in flavor and aroma. In short,

¹⁰⁸ “Assittato nella verandina, si era goduta la pappanozza che da tempo desiderava. Piatto povero, patate e cipolle messe a bollire a lungo, ridotte a poltiglia col lato convesso della forchetta, abbondantemente condite con oglio, aceto forte, pepe nero macinato al momento, sale. Da mangiare usando preferibilmente una forchetta di latta (ne aveva un paio che conservava gelosamente), scottandosi lingua e palato e di conseguenza santiando ad ogni boccone.” (Andrea Camilleri, *La gita a Tindari* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2000) 44)

Montalbano had a feast. (*The Patience of the Spider*. By Andrea Camilleri. 186)¹⁰⁹

According to tourism scholars, a strong link exists between location and gastronomy (Hjalager and Richards 5). “Gastronomic experiences and memories (produce, recipes, traditions) are the most powerful souvenirs of a holiday. They are recalled long after the holiday is over, reinforcing the critical nature of the food experience” (Ravenscroft and Van Westering 153). The cuisine in the Montalbano series is a potent reminder to the reader that the text belongs to a specific region, and is one of the most forceful agents of the vicarious travel experience.

In Sartarelli’s translations, other dialect items left untranslated are:

- proper nouns, e.g., “the San Giusippuzzu district” or “Montalbà”;
- titles, e.g., “Signuri” or “Dutturi”;
- expressions of emphatic exclamation, e.g., “*Madunnuzza biniditta!*” or “*O Gesù biniditto!*”;
- more simple food items, e.g., *caponata* or *tumazzo* cheese;
- and proverbs and popular expressions, e.g., the frequently used “*Nuttata persa e figlia femmina*”.

If such expressions are not easily understood by non-Sicilian Italians, Camilleri tends to define them, in subtle or not-so-subtle ways, but only the first time he uses them in the series. Sartarelli, however, is more generous with his explanations, making use of his excellent endnotes. In certain cases he has reduced his explanations over the series. For example, the first two appearances of “pasta ’ncasciata” (*The Terracotta Dog*. By Andrea Camilleri. 141; *The Snack Thief*. By Andrea Camilleri. 124) receive the following endnote:

¹⁰⁹ “La signora Angila Zarco, biunna fino allo splapito, di rara parola, servì in tavola cavatuna col suco, tutt’altro che disprezzabili, seguiti da cuniglio all’agro-duci del giorno avanti. Ora preparare il cuniglio all’agro-duci è facenna difficile pirchè tutto si basa sull’esatta proporzione tra acito e miele e nel giusto amalgama tra i pezzi del coniglio e la caponata dintra alla quale deve cuocere. La signora Zarco ci aviva saputo fare, e per buon piso ci aviva sparso supra una graniglia di mennuli atturrati. In più, è cognito che il cuniglio all’agor-duci se si mangia appena fatto è una cosa, ma se si mangia il jorno appresso è tutt’altra cosa, pirchè ne guadagna assà in sapori e in odori. Insomma, Montalbano se la scialò.” (Camilleri, *La pazienza del ragno* 201-02)

A casserole of *pasta corta*—that is elbow macaroni, penne, ziti, mizzi ziti, or something similar—tomato sauce, minced beef, Parmesan cheese and béchamel. (*The Terracotta Dog*. By Andrea Camilleri. 240; *The Snack Thief*. By Andrea Camilleri. 296)

In the third appearance it is unexplained (*Voice of the Violin*. By Andrea Camilleri. 217), but then in the fourth appearance (*The Scent of the Night*. By Andrea Camilleri. 181) an expanded description is included:

One of the many forms of southern Italian pasta al forno, that is, a casserole of oven-baked pasta and other ingredients. *Pasta 'ncasciata* generally contains small macaroni, *tuma* or *caciocavallo* cheese, ground beef, mortadella or salami, hard-boiled eggs, tomatoes, eggplant, grated Pecorino cheese, basil, olive oil, and a splash of white wine. (*The Scent of the Night*. By Andrea Camilleri. 228)

But then for the next two appearances (*Rounding the Mark*. By Andrea Camilleri. 120; *The Wings of the Sphinx*. By Andrea Camilleri. 68), once again, no explanation is provided.

The Anglophone reader gains familiarity with the terms and the items they represent—the dishes, customs, proverbs, and so on—not because they have been domesticated by the translator, but because the reader has been vicariously visiting the original region. Their overall understanding of Sicilianness is gradually built up as they make their way through the series. Just as Camilleri writes as if he expects his readers to read all the books in the series, in chronological order, Sartarelli's treatment indicates that he does not view his readers as casual readers of a single text.

7.1.3 Catarella

While Sartarelli has aimed to “emulate the naturalness” of the Sicilian-Italian hybrid used by Montalbano, the narrator and others in his translation, Catarella's macaronic mix of bureaucratic and formal Italian, working class Italian and dialect is intended to

be parodic and as such he is entitled to unleash his own creative skills and enjoy himself. It is Catarella's dialogue that comes to mind if you read Sartarelli's comment that usually translation is so "unfun" that "my wife, normally accustomed to hearing me curse aloud at my desk or hurl books against the wall in despair over the sentences of my authors [...] nearly fainted when, passing by my open study door as I was working hard on my first Camilleri novel, she actually heard me laughing" ("Notes from the Purer Linguistic Sphere of Translation"). As Saverio Tomaiuolo (216-17) argues, it is the character of Catarella—along with other minor characters—through which Sartarelli can put his translating method to the test, creating "something rich and strange" in the English text. He has created, and improved over time, a "specific and recognisable Catarellian idiolect", with recurring expressions such as "poissonally in poison" to translate Camilleri's "di pirsona pirsonalmente".

Sartarelli is again aided by Camilleri's remarks in the text through the voice of the narrator or Montalbano. For instance, that Catarella struggles with standard Italian is made clear when the narrator states, "With Catarella, things would get most muddled up whenever he got it in his head—which happened often—to speak in what he called Talian"¹¹⁰ (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 23*). The natural assumption for the reader of the translated text would then be that he otherwise speaks dialect, but it is also made clear in other comments in the text that Catarella's language is completely unique. Montalbano even calls it "il linguaggio catarellesco", which Sartarelli shortens to "Catarellese" in his translation. Furthermore, he includes an endnote about Catarella's use of "Talian", explaining that "many uneducated Sicilians [...] can only speak the local dialect and tend to struggle with proper Italian. Often what comes out when they attempt to use the national language is a linguistic jumble that is neither fish nor fowl" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 337*).

The character Catarella, under the mistaken impression that he is speaking formal Italian, regularly utters words that he has mangled or has amalgamated with other words. Sartarelli's often felicitous reinventions in English may not always draw on components that match the original semantically but he generally captures the vital ingredient of humour, either through the odd sound of the word and/or through the

¹¹⁰ "Le cose con Catarella s'imbrogliavano di più se gli saltava il firticchio, cosa che gli capitava spesso, di mettersi a parlare in quello che lui chiamava taliàno." (Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* 25)

incorporation of meaning that does not fit the context. For example, Catarella uses “artificioso”, rather than the more appropriate *artificiale*, to describe a lake. Sartarelli combines ‘artificial’ with ‘fishy’, as in ‘something smells fishy’ or ‘arouses suspicion’. Other examples are “precautiously” for “caustamente”; “quietude” for “placità”; “merchancy room” or “hospitable” for “spitali”; blood “transfusal” for “traspozisione”; “pewter” for “informaticcia”; “distrouble” for “distruppare”; “profellactict” for “prisirfatifo”; “crimologogist” for “crimininilologo”; “alimentary school” for “scola alimentary”; “bibiquitous” for “bibiqua”. At other times, he may not be able to reinvent the same particular word that Camilleri has played with, but he freely takes advantage of any other opportunity to do so.

A particular challenge for Sartarelli are the passages in which Catarella’s language leads to confusion and misunderstanding between him and Montalbano, based on the double meaning of certain words. It is rare for such word play or punning to be directly transferrable to another language as there are so many different and usually conflicting constraints to deal with—formal as well as semantic and pragmatic (Delabastita *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation* 11). Sartarelli usually manages to replicate the humour resulting from the confusion, while changing some of the meaning, but not to the extent of affecting the storyline. For example, in the following passage, when Montalbano asks Catarella where a district called “il moro” is, Catarella thinks he means an African man and proceeds to mangle the word “Congolese”. While the confusion stemming from “il moro” is transferrable to English, the confusion of “Congolese” is not, so Sartarelli chooses a different African country whose name he is able to exploit.

«Catarè, poi me lo conti. Sai dirmi dov’è **il moro**?».

Ci fu prima silenzio, poi una risatina che voleva essere di scherno.

«Dottori, e come si fa? Non lo sapi come che siamo accombinati a Vigàta?

Pieni di **conogolesi**, siamo».

[...]

Conogolesi? Colpiti da una lesione traumatica al còngo?

[...]

«Catarè, chi sono i conogolesi?».

«Gli africani del **Conogo**, dottori. Come si dice? **Conogotani?**». (*La gita a Tindari* 234-35)

“Tell me about it another time, Cat. Can you tell me where **the Moor** is?”

First there was silence, then a little giggle of what was supposed to be derision.

“How’m I sposta know, Chief? You know what it’s like in Vigàta these days. There’s **Smallies** everywhere.”

[...]

Smallies? Were there so many Pygmies among the immigrant population?

[...]

“Cat, what is a Smallie?”

“Somebody from **Smallia**, Chief, in Africa. Inn’t that what they’re called? Or is it **Smallians?**” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri. 244-45*)

In another example, Catarella is trying to remember the name “Lapis”. In the original text, he tries to retrieve it through his recollection that the name also means “pencil”, mistakenly ending up with “Matita”, which is a synonym for “lapis”. Sartarelli, on the other hand, exploits the connection with the gem “lapis lazuli”, and Catarella ends up proclaiming that “Lazuli” is the name in the translated text.

«Lo sai come si chiama?».

«Fazio me lo dissi, ma ora non mi viene... Aspittasse... Come si chiama la cosa che abbisogna per scriviri?».

Ma era possibile mittirisi a fari i quiz in quel momento?

«Penna?».

«Nonsi».

«Biro? Hanno ammazzato a un tale che si chiama Biro?».

«Nonsi, dottori, senza anchiostro è».

«**Matita?**».

«Bravo, dottori!».

 (*Le ali della sfinge* 238)

“Do you know what his name was?”

“Fazio tol’ me, but I can’t remember now... Wait... Whass a blue stone called?”

A fine time for a quiz!

“I dunno, Cat. A sapphire?”

“Nossir.”

“Amethyst?”

“Nossir, sounds like fusilli.”

“**Lazuli**? Lap—”

“ ‘Ass it, Chief! Mr. Lazuli was killed.” (*The Wings of the Sphinx*. By Andrea Camilleri. 204)

At times, however, Sartarelli finds it impossible to recreate Catarella’s confused utterances resulting from double meanings. In such cases, he makes use of his endnotes, as in the following example:

“It broke out inna **Pisello** districk.”

Montalbano had never heard of such a district. Since the fire station was nearby, he raced down there and introduced himself. They told him the fire, a definite case of arson, had broken out in the **Fava** district.¹¹¹ (*Excursion to Tindari*. By Andrea Camilleri. 145)

In the endnote he explains that Catarella’s confusion comes from the fact that *pisello* means ‘pea’ and *fava* means ‘broad bean’.

7.1.4 Dialect in Contrast with Other Registers

Camilleri’s use of dialogue in the Montalbano series is similar to its use in a dramatic text in that the differences in speech of each character reveal much about them, including their education, or lack thereof, and social class. Just as readers of the translated texts need to be made aware of Camilleri’s use of dialect, it is important that they appreciate the different registers and styles of the characters.

¹¹¹ “«L’incendio pigliò in contrata Pisello». Questa contrada non l’aveva mai sentita nominare. Dato che il comando dei Vigili del Fuoco era a pochi passi, si precipitò nella caserma, si qualificò. Gli dissero che l’incendio, sicuramente doloso, era scoppiato in contrada Fava.” (Camilleri, *La gita a Tindari* 141)

Camilleri expresses his strong views about those who use overly formal, bureaucratic language, by portraying these characters as pompously correct, inflexible and sanctimonious, with a great concern for their status. The English language cannot hope to match the Italian language when confronted with a formal register, but the fact that Camilleri is ridiculing these characters gives Sartarelli licence to use an exaggerated style in English, which effectively stands out, as shown in his translations of the following dialogues.

Examples can be found in the speech of characters belonging to the church:

«Il vescovo ha appreso, e con un certo stupore, lo confessiamo, la notizia che lei ritiene opportuno un prolungamento d'indagini sulla dolorosa e sventurata scomparsa dell'ingegnere Luparello. La notizia risponde al vero?»

[...] «al fine d'impedire ignobili speculazioni e risparmiare alla già addolorata famiglia un ulteriore strazio». (*La forma dell'acqua* 42)

“The bishop has learned, with some astonishment, I must say, that you think it advisable to prolong your investigation into the sad and unfortunate passing of Silvio Luparello. Is this true?”

[...] “to avoid untoward speculation and spare the already distraught family yet another torment.” (*The Shape of Water. By Andrea Camilleri* 45)

To the legal profession:

«Parlo in nome e per conto del mio cliente ingegnere Antonio Peruzzo. Il quale si vede costretto a uscire dal suo doveroso riserbo per arginare la montante canizza di menzogne e malvagità scatenata contro di lui. [...] Purtroppo alla pronta disponibilità dell'ingegnere non ha corrisposto, inspiegabilmente, una eguale sollecitudine da parte dei sequestratori. L'ingegnere Peruzzo, stando così le cose, non può che ribadire l'impegno già preso, prima che con i rapitori, con la sua stessa coscienza». (*La pazienza del ragno* 174)

“I speak on behalf of my client, Engineer Antonio Peruzzo, who finds himself forced to emerge from his dutiful silence to stem the rising tide of lies and iniquities that have been unleashed against him. [...] Unfortunately, however, and inexplicably, Mr. Peruzzo’s readiness to cooperate has not been returned in kind by the kidnappers. This being the case, Mr. Peruzzo can only reaffirm the commitment he has already made, not only with the abductors, but with his own conscience.” (*The Patience of the Spider. By Andrea Camilleri. 159-60*)

Or to the field of broadcast journalism:

«La voce angosciata e angosciante di Susanna Mistretta è qualcosa che difficilmente può sopportare la coscienza di uomini che viviamo in una società civile. Ma ha prevalso il diritto di cronaca. Il pubblico ha il sacrosanto diritto di sapere e noi giornalisti abbiamo il sacrosanto dovere di rispettare questo diritto. [...] In questo tragico stallo la nostra speranza è risposta nell’ordine. Soprattutto nel dottor Minutolo, uomo di grande esperienza, al quale fervidamente auguriamo un pronto successo.” (*La pazienza del ragno 91-92*)

“The anguished and anguishing voice of Susanna Mistretta is not something our consciences can easily bear hearing, living as we do in a civilized society. But your right to the news prevailed. The public’s right to know is sacrosanct, and it is our sacrosanct duty as journalists to respect this right. [...] In this tragic stalemate, our hope resides in the forces of order, particularly in Inspector Minutolo, a man of vast experience, whom we fervently wish a prompt success.” (*The Patience of the Spider. By Andrea Camilleri. 81*)

Again, Camilleri assists the readers, of both the original and the translated texts, in grasping the irony of these passages. If they do not do so on their own, Montalbano’s musings and his adoptions of the linguistic style of his interlocutor will make it clear and alert them to Camilleri’s intentions when other such passages occur, such as in this example:

«La mia richiesta, signor prefetto, come ho già detto al dottor Lo Bianco e ribadisco a lei, è dettata da una volontà di trasparenza, allo scopo di troncare sul nascere ogni malevola illazione su una possibile intenzione della polizia di non acclarare i risvolti del fatto e archiviare senza i dovuti accertamenti. Tutto qui».

Il prefetto si dichiarò soddisfatto della risposta, e del resto Montalbano aveva accurato scelto due verbi (acclarare e ribadire) e un sostantivo (trasparenza) che da sempre rientravano nel vocabolario del prefetto. (*La forma dell'acqua* 40-41)

“My request, sir, as I have already explained to Justice Lo Bianco and will now reiterate, was dictated by a desire for transparency, to nip in the bud any malicious supposition that the police department might prefer not to clarify every aspect of the case and wish to close it without due verification of all leads. That’s all.”

The prefect declared himself satisfied with the reply, and indeed Montalbano had carefully chosen two verbs (“clarify” and “reiterate”) and one noun (“transparency”) which had forever been key words in the prefect’s vocabulary. (*The Shape of Water. By Andrea Camilleri* 42-43)

The contrast between dialect and more formal registers also reflects Camilleri’s view that the Italian language lacks subtlety and personality, and that only dialect expresses true emotions. Again, if the reader has not grasped his intentions, which will not be as obvious to the target-text reader as they are to the Italian reader, Camilleri clearly expresses them. In the following passage, Montalbano uses a formal register to hide his emotions.

Il commissario si sintì sudare. Come faceva a parlari del rapimento della figlia a un omo al quale la moglie stava morendo? L’unica possibilità forse stava nell’assumere un tono burocratico-ufficiale, quel tono che usa prescindere, per natura sò, da ogni forma d’umanità.

«Signor Mistretta, io devo avvertire chi di dovere di questo rapimento. Il giudice, il questore, i miei colleghi di Montelusa. E, può starne certo [...]» (*La pazienza del ragno* 37)

The inspector felt himself sweating. How was he ever going to talk to the man about his daughter's kidnapping when his wife was dying? The only way, perhaps, was to adopt an official, bureaucratic tone, the kind of tone that precludes, by its very nature, any form of humanity.

“Mr. Mistretta, I have to inform those in charge about the kidnapping. The judge, the commissioner, my colleagues in Montelusa...And you can rest assured that [...]” (*The Patience of the Spider*. By Andrea Camilleri. 28)

In another example, a character's increasing emotional state causes her to switch from standard Italian to dialect. Sartarelli does not attempt to represent the change in language but the metalinguistic comment tells readers that it is happening. In the source text the comment acts as reinforcement; in the target text it is the only clue to the reader.

«Lo sa com'è morto?».

«Gli hanno sparato un colpo in faccia».

[...]

«Scusami, ho bisogno d'aria».

[...]

«Mischino! Mi fa una pena!» disse Michela asciugandosi gli occhi.

«Eravate molto amici?».

«No, ma abbiamo travagliato due anni nella stessa càmmara, non ti basta?».

Continuava a dargli del tu e il suo italiano ora s'imbastardiva col dialetto.

(*L'odore della notte* 167-68)

“Do you know how he died?”

“Shot once in the face.”

[...]

“I'm sorry, I need some air.”

[...]

“The poor guy! I feel so bad!” said Michela, wiping her eyes.

“Were you close friends?”

“No, but we worked together in the same room for two years. Isn’t that enough?” Her proper Italian was starting to break down into dialect. (*The Scent of the Night. By Andrea Camilleri. 167-68*)

In the following example, however, while the change in register is not as clearly marked in the target text as it is in the source text, Sartarelli does represent it quite effectively. Here, the character Valente uses a formal register to speak on the telephone with a high-ranking official and then abruptly switches to an informal, dialect-infused register when he speaks to Montalbano.

«Commendatore, le sono gratissimo dell’esauriente spiegazione» fece Valente. E chiuse la comunicazione.
Rimasero in silenzio a taliarsi.
«O è uno stronzo o ci fa» disse Montalbano.
«Questa facenna mi comincia a fètiri, a puzzare» fece pensoso Valente. (*Il ladro di merendine 167-68*)

“Commendatore, I thank you very much for your thorough explanation,” said Valente. And he hung up.
They sat there in silence, eyeing each other.
“This guy’s either a fuckup or he’s putting one over on us,” said Montalbano.
“This whole thing’s beginning to stink,” Valente said pensively. (*The Snack Thief. By Andrea Camilleri. 193*)

7.2 Idiom

Sartarelli’s aim has been to emulate what he calls the naturalness of Camilleri’s hybridisation. To this end he has used a linguistic variety with which he is most familiar and which is also familiar to many English speakers: that of the north-eastern United States. Idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, slang and obscenities are generally replaced with their English-language counterparts. For example, “Quello si è fatto vent’anni di càrzero” (*La gita a Tindari 108*) becomes “The guy spent twenty years in the slammer” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri. 110*); “Il fatto è che certe volte sono tanticchia fituso” (*L’odore della notte 176*) becomes “The fact is

that sometimes I'm kind of a jerk" (*The Scent of the Night. By Andrea Camilleri. 177*); "Però, arrivati al dunque, niente. Rimangono tutti a bocca asciutta." (*La voce del violino 44*) becomes "But when it comes to the nitty-gritty, nothing doing. They're left high and dry." (*Voice of the Violin. By Andrea Camilleri. 42*). While this strategy may prevent an artificial, unnatural sounding text for the Anglophone reader, there is a risk that the strong connotations of the expressions will interfere with the locating of the stories in their real and specific Sicilian setting and transplant the reader from south-eastern Sicily to the United States. And, of course, the associations surrounding and the history behind certain expressions are lost, such as happens with "Che nicche e nacche?" (*Le ali della sfinge 109*). According to Camilleri's little dictionary of Sicilian expressions this is an "untranslatable" expression, used throughout the province of Agrigento "per un discorso o una situazione che non sta né in cielo né in terra". In his dictionary he provides a tale of an historical event that occurred in 1936 in which the phrase "trovò forse applicazione perfetta" (*Il gioco della mosca 38-40*). And all of this is reduced to "What is this anyway?" (*The Wings of the Sphinx. By Andrea Camilleri. 90*) in the translated text, which conveys nothing of the cultural specificity, the history, the sound or the magnitude ("né in cielo né in terra") of the original expression.

However, from time to time Sartarelli uses a literal translation of a regional expression that may sound strange in English, and perhaps arouse curiosity in certain readers such as "Cursing as if to a platoon of Turks" (*Rounding the Mark. By Andrea Camilleri. 134*) to translate "Santianno come a un plotone di turchi messi in fila" (*Il giro di boa 143*), or the delightful and recurring "cursing the saints" as a translation for "santianno". Another example is found in the sentence "We come to know every detail of their lives, down to the number of hairs on their asses" (*The Patience of the Spider. By Andrea Camilleri. 73*), which is the translation of "Di loro veniamo a sapere vita morte miracoli e quanti peli hanno nel culo" (*La pazienza del ragno 83*). In this case he has rendered literally an expression that, while commonly used in the source culture, is not in the target culture, but since the metaphor is easily understood, it is an opportunity for Sartarelli to foreignise the text.

Sartarelli also tends to retain most proverbial expressions, often keeping the Sicilian form and adding a translation and/or contextual information. Sometimes the context

dictates a literal translation. For example, instead of paraphrasing the expression “Ho un cuore d’asino e uno di leone” (*La gita a Tindari* 135), he translates it literally with “I’ve got a heart like a lion and another like a donkey” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri.* 138) and adds a note explaining that it is a Sicilian expression that means ‘I’m of two minds’ or ‘I’m torn’. In this particular case, retention of the form is important because it is being used to confuse the speaker’s interlocutor, who is not Sicilian. However, in an earlier text, he does paraphrase the expression, despite the context making the meaning clear, not to mention the characteristics that both source and target culture associate with lions and asses.

Il fatto era, spiegò, che una notte era addotato da **un core d’asino** e la notte appresso da **un core di leone**. Si sentiva spaccato a metà, ora aveva scanto di assumersi obblighi che non avrebbe saputo mantenere, ora si vedeva padre felice di almeno quattro figli. (*L’odore della notte* 96)

The fact was, he explained, that one night he wanted one thing, the next night he wanted the opposite. He felt torn in two. One minute he felt afraid to take on obligations he couldn’t meet, the next minute he was imagining himself a proud father of four. (*The Scent of the Night. By Andrea Camilleri.* 94)

Since proverbs generally stand apart as quoted matter in the source text, as well, retaining them does not create the unnatural effect that Sartarelli tries to avoid through the retention of idiomatic phrases. They are recognised as proverbs and the reader expects them to be peculiar to the source culture.

In my opinion, Sartarelli could push the boundaries farther by retaining more idiomatic phrases and colloquialisms than he does, in order to carry the reader closer to the source culture and to create new spaces in the English language. However, the overall strength of the regional voice succeeds in overcoming any transplanting effects of the American expressions. Furthermore, his treatment is remarkably similar to that of Venuti himself. Just as Sartarelli has “coscientemente creato un linguaggio

hard-boiled, come si dice—a volte alla Raymond Chandler, per esempio”,¹¹² Venuti has aimed for “a fast-paced, hard-boiled English, filled with colloquialisms” (“Lawrence Venuti on Massimo Carlotto”), as shown in the following example from his translation of *Arrivederci Amore, Ciao*.

Sapeva che sarebbe **accaduto** (10).

He knew what was **going down** (11).

Però la meccanica **fa schifo** (10).

But the mechanism **ain't worth shit** (12).

Non mi aveva certo chiamato **per scambiare quattro chiacchiere** (10-11).

He definitely didn't call me over **to jaw** (12).

Fu una ragazza con cui ero stato per un paio di settimane a decidere di **pentirsi** una mezz'ora dopo l'arresto e di **fare i nostri nomi** (12).

A girl I'd been with a couple weeks decided to **come clean** half an hour after her arrest, and she **squealed on us** (13).

Compare Venuti's 'hard-boiled' language with the following excerpts from Sartarelli's translations:

Pirchè tu sei un **delinquente da quattro soldi, un miserabile, una merda...** (*Il giro di boa* 139).

Because you're a **two-bit hood, a sleazeball, a piece of shit....** (*Rounding the Mark. By Andrea Camilleri.* 130).

Quello si è fatto vent'anni di **càrzaro** (*La gita a Tindari* 108).

The guy spent twenty years in the **slammer** (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri.* 110).

¹¹² See Appendix 2.

7.3 Metaphor

As discussed earlier,¹¹³ the translatability of a metaphor depends on how much the speakers of the source and target languages share the cultural experience of that particular metaphor and the semantic associations drawn from it. Occasionally Camilleri uses metaphors that the target culture does not share, such as “le gambe fatte di ricotta” (*La vampa d’agosto* 121). Although Anglophone readers may be familiar with *ricotta*, its function and value is quite different in their cultural context and so it does not signify the same thing (Bassnett *Translation Studies* 26). Thus Sartarelli substitutes various different metaphors more familiar to the source culture: “knees turned to butter” (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri.* 10), “legs buckling” (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri.* 270), “legs giving out” (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri.* 299), “legs turned to pudding” (*August Heat. By Andrea Camilleri.* 117), “weak in the knees” (*The Wings of the Sphinx. By Andrea Camilleri.* 226). As I discuss further in Section 7.6, Sartarelli tends to vary his rendering of a term or expression according to the context. Here, he has adapted his translation according to the reason the character is experiencing such a sensation, which varies from fear (“knees turned to butter” or “legs turned to pudding”) to passion (“legs giving out”) to fatigue (“weak in the knees”) and to illness (“legs buckling”).

The multiple meanings of *salma* in the idiomatic expression “una stalla e una salma”, used to describe an insignificant inheritance, has led to an interesting challenge for Sartarelli. The most common meaning of *salma* is ‘corpse’ or ‘body’, but it is also used, mainly in the south, as a term of measurement, for liquids and solids, equal to about 270 litres. In addition, it was formerly used in Sicily to measure surfaces and was equivalent to about 1.7 hectares. Sartarelli claims that the literal translation of the expression is “to leave a stable and a corpse”, although I have been unable to verify the source of the phrase. An equally valid interpretation would be “to leave a stable and a small plot of land”. At any rate, the double meaning leads to confusion for Montalbano when he asks a woman about an inheritance. He interprets it with the

¹¹³ See Section 2.4.1.3.

former meaning, while the speaker had used it, in a figurative sense, to mean the latter.

«... A so' soro ci lassò una stalla e una salma, poca roba, tanto per ricordo» .
Montalbano ammammalocchì. Si potevano lasciare salme in eredità? Le successive parole della signorina Baeri chiarirono l'equivoco.
«No, meno assai. Le lo sa a quanti metri quadrati corrisponde una salma di terra?». (*La gita a Tindari* 213-32)

Sartarelli has managed to find an English word that is both a unit of land measurement that is no longer in use and a metaphor for the human body. The two meanings of “hide” that come into play here are “a former measure of land large enough to support a family and its dependants” and “the human skin (*saved his own hide; I'll tan your hide*)” (Kennedy, Deverson and New Zealand Dictionary Centre. 509).

“... To her sister she left her stable and hide. Not much, just something to remember her by.”
Montalbano was flummoxed. Could one bequeath one's hide to somebody?
Miss Baeri's next words cleared up the misunderstanding.
“No, not much at all. Do you know how much land is in a hide?” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri.* 241)

Sartarelli also includes a lengthy explanation in his endnotes of the passage and his “fortuitous and symmetrical” solution, showing how it reproduces the double meaning but regretting the “inevitable” loss of “Camilleri's rather sly literalization of an idiomatic metaphor” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri.* 313).

7.4 Cultural References

Returning to Schleiermacher's statement that the translator has a choice of either leaving the author in peace as much as possible and moving the reader towards him, or leaving the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moving the author towards

him,¹¹⁴ Sartarelli's translation of the following phrase clearly indicates his intent to carry the reader to the author:

«Pariva proprio una pellicola miricana!». (*La vampa d'agosto* 124)

“That was just like an American movie!” (*August Heat. By Andrea Camilleri.* 120)

Had he taken a domesticating approach, aiming to leave the reader in peace, he would have substituted a word such as ‘gangster’ or ‘action’ for “American”. As it is, the reader must imaginatively transport himself to Sicily into the shoes of the Sicilian speaker and consider what an American film signifies to him.

The problems involved in the translation of culturally specific items have already been discussed throughout the previous sections on dialect, idiom and metaphor, as these issues are intertwined. In particular, the discussion on the treatment of food items demonstrates how the items are often left in the original language and italicised to highlight their regional and cultural specificity. Also explored is the way in which the reader is educated about the items, partly through Camilleri's in-text explanations for non-Sicilian Italians, and partly through Sartarelli's endnotes.

Sartarelli's endnotes are an integral and illuminating component of the target texts. They do not interrupt the reading process in any way—a frequent complaint about footnotes in fictional works—because they are not signposted within the text. Readers may come across an unfamiliar reference and decide to look to the endnotes for explanation, or they may choose to read the notes from time to time as they proceed through the text. If they are already familiar with the reference, this unobtrusive method of exegesis avoids the translator appearing as condescending to the readers. Furthermore, Sartarelli's own personality is present in his notes—in what he chooses to explain and how he chooses to do so—which contributes to the reader's awareness of the translator's role. For example, his political views are clearly evident in his explanation of the phrase “the government was thinking about building a bridge over the Strait of Messina” (*The Wings of the Sphinx. By Andrea Camilleri.* 4):

¹¹⁴ See Section 2.1.

This has long been a pet project of Silvio Berlusconi, past and present prime minister of Italy and a business tycoon in his own right. The bridge project is one of several grandiose public works by which Berlusconi would like to monumentalize his dubious stewardship of the Italian nation. (*The Wings of the Sphinx*. By Andrea Camilleri. 229)

Finally, Sartarelli distinguishes which items or references belong to Italy in general and which are specifically Sicilian. Explanations are given for Sicilian customs, places, gestures, literature, history, mafia customs, current events, the flora, and so on. In this way the readers' awareness of how Sicily differs within its own larger culture is increased, as is their general understanding of *sicilianità*.

7.5 The 'Otherness' of Sicilians

While the distancing effect of dialect from standard Italian is difficult to convey linguistically in the target text, compensation is found in Sartarelli's endnotes, for instance, in reference to the anti-southern Lega Nord political party, as well as in many passages in the text. The otherness of Sicily, the differing character traits and customs, is a recurring theme for Camilleri. Often, it is conveyed through interactions between Montalbano and outsiders, particularly his northern girlfriend. The theme of otherness is firmly set in the very first book in the series, through these three passages.

The inspector lit a cigarette and turned to look at the chemical factory. That ruin fascinated him. He decided he would come back one day to take a few snapshots, which he'd send to Livia to explain some things about himself and his island that she was still unable to understand. (*The Shape of Water*. By Andrea Camilleri 17)¹¹⁵

The first three days spent with Livia at her house in Boccadasse made him forget Sicily almost entirely, thanks to a few nights of leaden, restorative

¹¹⁵ "Il commissario si accese una sigaretta, si voltò a taliare verso la fabbrica chimica. L'affascinava, quella rovina. Decise che un giorno sarebbe tornato a scattare delle fotografie che avrebbe mandato a Livia, spiegandole, con quelle immagini, cose di sé e della sua terra che la donna ancora non riusciva a capire." (Andrea Camilleri, *La forma dell'acqua* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1994) 22)

sleep, with Livia in his arms. *Almost* entirely, though, because two or three times, by surprise, the smell, the speech, the things of his island picked him up and carried him weightless through the air, for a few seconds, back to Vigàta. And each time he was sure that Livia had noticed his momentary absence, his wavering, and she had looked at him without saying anything. (*The Shape of Water. By Andrea Camilleri* 210)¹¹⁶

[After Montalbano gets a phone call from the station giving him details of crimes of corruption and violence that have occurred in his absence:] This time it wasn't the smell and speech of his island that sucked him back there but the stupidity, the ferocity, the horror. (*The Shape of Water. By Andrea Camilleri* 211)¹¹⁷

In the first passage, Montalbano expresses a need to send a visual representation to Livia, as if she might be able to read something inscribed in the polluted and scarred landscape that he is unable to articulate. The second and third passages illustrate both the hold that Sicily has over its people and, what Camilleri believes is the quintessence of being Sicilian, its contradiction (Pezzotti 252): While the smell and speech *pick him up and carry him weightless through the air*, the stupidity, ferocity and horror *suck* him back.

Mention of various typically or even stereotypically Sicilian character traits and customs appear throughout the books:

- lovers' jealousy: "in a surge of Sicilian jealousy" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri*. 153)¹¹⁸
- humour: "What a bunch of jokers we Sicilians are!" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri*. 172)¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ "I primi tre giorni trascorsi con Livia nella sua villetta di Boccadasse gli fecero quasi del tutto scordare la Sicilia, grazie a certi sonni piombigni che si faceva, a recupero, tenendosi Livia abbracciata. Quasi del tutto, però, perché due o tre volte, a tradimento, l'odore, la parlata, le cose della sua terra lo pigliarono, lo sollevarono in aria senza peso, lo riportarono, per pochi attimi, a Vigàta. E ogni volta, ne era sicuro, Livia si era accorta di quel momentaneo sfagliamento, di quell'assenza, e l'aveva taliato senza dire niente." (Camilleri, *La forma dell'acqua* 165-66)

¹¹⁷ "E questa volta non furono solo l'odore e la parlata della sua terra a risucchiarlo, ma l'imbecillità, la ferocia, l'orrore." (Camilleri, *La forma dell'acqua* 166-67)

¹¹⁸ "in un impeto di sicula gelosia" (Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* 129)

- parental jealousy: “Was it a Sicilian father’s jealousy of the female child? Was it obsessive?” (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 253*)¹²⁰
- fatalistic attitude of women: “There is no Sicilian woman alive, of any class, aristocrat or peasant, who, after her fiftieth birthday, isn’t always expecting the worst. What kind of worst? Any, so long as it’s the worst.” (*The Snack Thief. By Andrea Camilleri. 37-38*)¹²¹
- intuitive friendship: “This was real friendship, Sicilian friendship, the kind based on intuition, on what was left unsaid. With a true friend, one never needs to ask, because the other understands on his own and acts accordingly.” (*The Snack Thief. By Andrea Camilleri. 199*)¹²²
- distrust of police: “The door opened and a gaunt, fortyish woman appeared. As soon as she saw the four men, she stiffened, blanched, and in a faint voice said: ‘Are you cops?’ The inspector laughed. How many centuries of police tyranny had it taken to hone this Sicilian woman’s ability to detect law-enforcement officers at a moment’s glance?” (*Voice of the Violin. By Andrea Camilleri. 44-45*)¹²³
- dining habits: “Eating at eight o’clock in the evening was for the Milanese; Sicilians don’t start thinking about dinner until after nine.” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri. 168*)¹²⁴
- superstition: “It was as if the inspector had spoken to crows. (Indeed, people in Vigàta and environs believe that to those who can understand them, these black birds, garrulous creatures that they are, communicate the latest news on the doings of human beings, since they have a clear view—a bird’s-eyed view,

¹¹⁹ “Ma quanto ci piace babbare a noi siciliani!” (Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* 144)

¹²⁰ “Era gelosia sicula verso la figlia femmina? Ossessiva?” (Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* 210)

¹²¹ “Non c’è fimmina siciliana di qualsiasi ceto, nobile o viddrana, la quale, passata la cinquantina, non si aspetti il peggio. Quale peggio? Uno qualsiasi, ma sempre peggio.” (Camilleri, *Il ladro di merendine* 39)

¹²² “Quella era l’amicizia siciliana, la vera, che si basa sul non detto, sull’intuito: uno a un amico non ha bisogno di domandare, è l’altro che autonomamente capisce e agisce di conseguenza.” (Camilleri, *Il ladro di merendine* 172-73)

¹²³ “Si aprì la porta e apparse una quarantina sicca sicca la quale, appena vide i quattro uomini, s’irrigidì, sbiancò e con un filo di voce spiò: «Sbirri siete?». Al commissario venne da ridere. Quanti secoli di soprusi polizieschi c’erano voluti per affinare in una fimmina siciliana una così fulminea capacità d’individuazione di uno sbirro?” (Andrea Camilleri, *La voce del violino* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1997) 46)

¹²⁴ “...mangiare alle otto di sira è cosa di milanesi, i siciliani cominciano a pigliare in considerazione la mangiata passate le nove” (Camilleri, *La gita a Tindari* 163)

in fact—of the whole.)” (*The Patience of the Spider. By Andrea Camilleri. 129*)¹²⁵

- mixing superstition with religion: “The only problem was that the boy and the priest both mistook superstition for religion. Like most Sicilians, for that matter.” (*Excursion to Tindari. By Andrea Camilleri. 219*)¹²⁶
- feeling isolated and out of step with the rest of Italy: “But you know how things go in Italy, don’t you? Everything that happens up north—Fascism, liberation, industrialization—takes a long time to reach us. Like a long, lazy wave.” (*The Patience of the Spider. By Andrea Camilleri. 120*)¹²⁷
- importance of family: “[...] she said she’d gone to Sweden because she’d felt a longing for her family (‘You Sicilians gave me the bug’) [...]” (*Rounding the Mark. By Andrea Camilleri. 39*)¹²⁸

The issue of the prejudiced attitudes of certain northern Italians towards Sicilians is also present in the narrative. In the following passage a couple from Treviso is being interviewed on the television news:

“Have you been in Sicily long?”

“We got here four days ago.”

“On vacation?”

“This is no vacation, believe me. I suffer from asthma, and my doctor told me that some sea air would do me good. My daughter Zina is married to a Sicilian who works in Treviso...” Here Signora Bausan interrupted her speech with a long, pained sigh, as if to lament the fate that had given her a Sicilian for a son-in-law. “...And she told me to come and stay here, at her husband’s house, which they use only one month out of the year, in the summer. So we came.”

¹²⁵ “Parse che il commissario aviva parlato con le ciàule. Si crede infatti, a Vigàta e dintorni, che le cornacchie, uccelli ciarlieri, comunichono, a chi sa intenderle, le ultime novità dei fatti che capitano agli òmini perché loro, a vol d’uccello appunto, hanno una chiara visione d’insieme.” (Camilleri, *La pazienza del ragno* 141-42)

¹²⁶ “Solo che tanto il picciotto quanto il parrino scangiavano superstizione per religione. Come la maggior parte dei siciliani, del resto.” (Camilleri, *La gita a Tindari* 210)

¹²⁷ “Ma ha presente com’è fatta l’Italia? Tutto quello che succede nel nord, fascismo, liberazione, industrializzazione, da noi arriva con molto ritardo, come un’onda pigra.” (Camilleri, *La pazienza del ragno* 131)

¹²⁸ “...contò d’essere andata in Svezia perché le era venuto spinno di famiglia («voi siciliani me avete contagiata»)” (Andrea Camilleri, *Il giro di boa* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2003) 47)

The pained sigh was even longer this time. Life is so hard and dangerous on that savage island!

[...]

“And you, Signor Bausan, do you always carry that weapon with you?”

“No, I don’t own any weapons. I borrowed that pistol from a cousin of mine. Since we were coming to Sicily, you understand...”

“So you think one should come to Sicily armed?”

“If there’s no rule of law down here, it seems logical, don’t you think?”

(*Rounding the Mark. By Andrea Camilleri. 24-25*).¹²⁹

¹²⁹ “«Vi trovate in Sicilia da molto?». «Da quattro giorni». «In vacanza?». «Ma quale vacanza! Io soffro d’asma e allora il medico m’ha detto che l’aria di mare mi avrebbe fatto bene. Mia figlia Zina che è sposata con un siciliano che lavora a Treviso... ». Il racconto venne interrotto da un lungo sospiro di pena della signora Bausan alla quale la sorte maligna aveva dato un siciliano come genero. «...mi ha detto di venire a passare qualche tempo qua, nella casa di suo marito che loro adoperano solo un mese d’estate. E ci siamo venuti». Il sospiro di pena stavolta fu assai più forte: vita dura e pericolosa, su quell’isola selvaggia! [...] «E lei, signor Bausan, porta sempre quell’arma con sé?». «No. Non ho armi. Il revolver me lo sono fatto prestare da un mio cugino. Capirà che dovendo venire in Sicilia... ». «Le ritiene che si debba venire in Sicilia armati?». «Se qui la legge non esiste, mi pare logico, no?». (Camilleri, *Il giro di boa* 32-33)

7.6 Creative Inconsistency

One of Sartarelli's strengths in translating the Montalbano series is his tendency to adapt his rendering of the same lexical item according to the different semantic and functional contexts in which it appears. Thus, for example, the dialect word *babbiare*, meaning *scherzare, prendere in giro* (Bonfiglio 24) is variously translated as "to fuck around" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 7*), "to be a joker" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 172*), "to be kidding" (*The Wings of the Sphinx. By Andrea Camilleri. 145*), "to be funny" (*The Terracotta Dog. By Andrea Camilleri. 114*); "to joke around" (*The Scent of the Night. By Andrea Camilleri. 125*). Other examples are the previously mentioned *ricotta* metaphor and the proverbial expression *un cuore d'asino e uno di leone*.

Both Tomaiuolo and Cipolla, in their analyses of Sartarelli's translations, comment on his rendering of *cornuto* with "bastard" in the first book in the series (*The Shape of Water. By Andrea Camilleri 5*). Tomaiuolo finds the "striking difference" between the Italian "offensive epithet" and the English "term which partially misses the allusion to an eventual (and much blamed in Sicilian culture) conjugal faithfulness" representative of his "basically domesticating method" (211-12). Cipolla, on the other hand, concedes that "bastard" is probably more appropriate as an American epithet, but prefers the word "cuckold", which would "retain a measure of the strangeness evoked by the code-switching". Because Americans do not generally use the word 'cuckold' and might have to look it up in a dictionary, he reasons, "it would work almost the same way for Americans as one of Camilleri's Sicilian words for Italians" (22).

Sartarelli does, indeed, bring in that "strangeness" and the cultural allusion, but at more appropriate points in the books when the cultural allusion is particularly important. In the passage under discussion in Tomaiuolo's and Cipolla's articles, two workers are referring to their foreman and the hard work he hands out to them just because they are educated. The main function of the term is to express the workers' contempt. The allusion to conjugal infidelity is irrelevant in this instance, as it is in other instances in which Sartarelli variously translates it as "jerk-off" (*The Shape of*

Water. By Andrea Camilleri 13), “scumbag” (*The Terracotta Dog*. By Andrea Camilleri. 71), and “lousy fucking” (*The Terracotta Dog*. By Andrea Camilleri. 79). However, a more opportune moment to educate the reader about the term occurs later in various passages in which the *sicilianità* of the term is contextually important. For both of the following appearances of the word, Sartarelli includes a note explaining its literal meaning and that it is a particular favourite of Sicilians. In the first passage below, the Italian is retained and highlighted, and in the second it is translated into the ‘strange’ word “cuckold”. As discussed in Section 3.1.3, Camilleri has strong views about the term *sicilitudine*—which he expresses here through his protagonist, particularly in the second passage—because he believes it implies or presumes a negative view of Sicilians as being different from Italians and is a repository of clichés. He considers the term *cornuto* to be a prime example of such clichés.

«È vero che sei stato escluso dall’indagine come ha detto quel cornuto di Ragonese?» .

«Complimenti, Livia» .

«Perché?» .

«Vedo che ti stai vigatizzando. Hai dato del cornuto a Ragonese. Dare del cornuto a uno è tipico degli aborigeni» .

«Mi hai evidentemente contagiato». (*La pazienza del ragno* 70-71)

“Is it true you were left off the case, as that *cornuto* just said on TV?”

“Congratulations, Livia.”

“Why?”

“I can see you’re becoming a true Vigatese. You called Ragonese a *cornuto*. Calling people *cornuti* is typical of aborigines.”

“I obviously caught it from you.” (*The Patience of the Spider*. By Andrea Camilleri. 61)

«Ah, dottori! Mi scordai: grannissimi cornuti c’era macari scrivuto».

Figurarsi se in Sicilia, in una scritta offensiva, poteva mancare la parola cornuto! Quella parola era un marchio doc, un modo tipico d’espressione della cosiddetta *sicilitudine*. (*Il giro di boa* 14-15)

“Oh, Chief! I almost forgot. They also wrote ‘goddamn cuckolds’.”

Imagine ever finding any obscene graffiti in Sicily without the word “cuckold” in it! The word was a guarantee of authenticity, a classic expression of so-called Sicilitude. (*Rounding the Mark. By Andrea Camilleri. 6*)

As I pointed out earlier, readers of the Montalbano series, in both the original and the translated versions, build up a familiarity and understanding of Camilleri’s literary language and Sicilian culture. Thus, Sartarelli is right to be selective about what original aspects are retained and transferred directly. And we who analyse his translations need to consider them in their entirety. By looking at both form and content of the series of texts in their entirety, along with all the paratextual elements, we can see that, despite the difficulties involved in rendering Camilleri’s literary language into English, the translated texts offer the reader insight into the linguistic situation in Sicily and an appreciation of Camilleri’s code-switching and hybridisation.

Chapter eight: Conclusion

In my thesis, I set out to demonstrate that effective translations of regional literature, provided they have retained their uniquely regional elements, can provide insights into ‘other’ cultures and thus serve as valuable tools for increasing intercultural understanding. I decided to test this very general premise on what has become in the course of my thesis a specific region and a very restricted corpus of texts. My thesis focused on the one particular Italian region of Sicily and on two Sicilian writers, Giovanni Verga and Andrea Camilleri. The range to choose from was great. I started out with the intention of studying a total of six Sicilian authors whose writing has a strong regional resonance, but over time found this to be beyond the scope of a single thesis. I eventually narrowed down my selection to Verga and Camilleri, whose linguistic experimentalism offers interesting analogies and contrasts, as well as special challenges to their translators. My project, informed by a range of translation theories, ultimately posits good translators as those who resist the pressure imposed by Anglophone publishers and critics, and highlights the foreignness of their texts. They must also be travel writers guiding the armchair traveller through new territory and creative writers who can skilfully capture the reader’s imagination. My conclusions are based on analyses that consider the efficacy of the translators in these three roles and test their translations against four specific elements of regional language: dialect, idiom, metaphor and cultural references.

Ultimately, I found that the translators who were most effective at rendering the regionality, or *sicilianità*, of the texts of both authors were those who had a strong paratextual presence, clearly articulated their strategies and the challenges of the text, interpreted and clarified the regionally specific elements for the reader, and retained and creatively rendered the original imagery and the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the text. These findings support Venuti’s theories on visibility in translation, Cronin’s theories on the translator as travel writer, and the theories of the ‘creative turn’ propounded by Loffredo and Perteghella. Susan Bassnett must also be included as a major theorist in my thesis, as she shares the concerns of all three: the

status of the translator, the parallels between travel writing and translating, and the interactions of translating and creative writing.

Verga's and Camilleri's contrasting uses of dialect, the former mainly in the syntax and the latter mainly in the lexicon, necessarily required differing treatments by the translators. Verga did use a few dialect words, however, which were mainly left untranslated as 'spaces of translations'. And since it is impossible for Camilleri's hybrid mix of dialect and Italian to be recreated in English, his translator, Sartarelli, also leaves occasional dialect terms and expressions untranslated, again with the effect of spaces of translation that remind the readers that what they are reading is a translation and that it originated in a foreign place. In both cases, the reader of the translated texts needs to be alerted to the fact that the language of the original text is dialectal and strange in contrast with the national standard. However, in both cases, the reader has assistance from other sources than the explanations in the translators' prefaces and annotations. Sartarelli has the assistance of Camilleri with his transparent practice of clarifying and highlighting certain points in the narrative, including the 'otherness' of particular characters' linguistic expression. The readers of Verga's texts in translation have a very different kind of assistance. Paradoxically, they have a certain advantage over the Italian reader of the original text. When Verga uses Sicilian lexical items, proverbs and idioms that he has translated into Italian, the illusion of dialect collapses for the Italian reader and the original semantic richness is reduced. What has a precise meaning in dialect often has an ambiguous or distorted meaning in Italian. Yet the translator into English is not restricted by lexical form and can choose a word that more closely resembles the dialect semantically. This is dependent, of course, on the translator having extensive and profound awareness and understanding of the dialect from which Verga has translated and the ability to express the term creatively in English. Although the 'otherness' of the regional expression is reduced, the reader of the translated text achieves a closer understanding of its original, regional meaning.

While proverbs are generally retained by the translators because they are more instantly recognisable as such and tend to activate readers' "proverb consciousness" (Berman 287), I found it disappointing that the overall strategy of all the translators with respect to idioms was to replace them with target-language counterparts, apart

from a few exceptions. The replacement of Verga's idioms, in particular, all carefully chosen for their regional specificity, results in the unfortunate loss of their cultural and historical meaning. Even Rosenthal, the most foreignising of Verga's translators in my analysis, who claimed that smoothing out proverbial words and expressions into "some familiar, glib English or American equivalent" would really amount to a "gross misinterpretation" (xxiv), was more concerned with matching the effect of the expression on the target-text reader with that of the source-text reader. Similarly, Sartarelli considers it important for the translator to carry the reader closer to the source culture and to create new spaces in English, yet he replaces most idiomatic expressions with their English-language counterparts because he wants to avoid an artificial, unnatural sounding text. The effect on the target reader of the expression will never match the effect on the source-language reader. Instead, the target-language expressions displace the reader, and, as Berman points out, such displacements can occur thousands of times in the translation of one novel. If readers are fully aware that what they are reading is a translation, might not that proverb consciousness extend to idiom consciousness? The more the number of displacements is reduced, the more the associations of the expressions can be retained, and the more the target language can be enriched.

Loss also occurs when both authors' metaphors and imagery are translated. The less the cultural experiences are shared, the less the translators have left the metaphors intact. Here, too, I believe the boundaries could have been stretched some more. Even when the cultural associations are not shared, the same image can be used to stimulate or respond to the reader's interest in the regional particularities, perhaps with an explanation of the historical origins or connotations surrounding the metaphor.

The last of the translation issues, culturally specific items, were retained more by Sartarelli than by any of the translators of Verga, who tended to omit them when they were irrelevant to the story and, when they did retain them, their explanations were quite limited overall. Sartarelli, on the other hand, generally retains culturally specific items. Yet again, though, he sometimes has the assistance of Camilleri's in-text explanations for non-Sicilian Italians. In fact, the in-text explanations, as part of the narrative, necessitate the retention of the items.

Because of the high degree of ‘untranslatability’ of the regional elements in Verga’s and Camilleri’s texts, paratextual exegesis is vital to compensate for the losses. Rosenthal’s scholarly paratext, with an introduction by Cecchetti, a detailed note on the translation, a bibliography and a cast of characters, serves this purpose well, particularly with his comments on the “fantastically ungrammatical distortion” (xxiv) found in the language of the characters. However, I find Sartarelli’s endnotes to be an even more effective way to assist the reader in gaining insight into *sicilianità*. The endnotes are an integral and illuminating component of the target texts. They are not signposted in the text so do not interrupt the reading process. Available for readers who would like an explanation, their unobtrusiveness avoids the appearance of condescension towards those who are already familiar with a reference. Furthermore, Sartarelli maintains a strong personal presence in the notes through his choice of what to explain and the opinions he adds to his explanations, thereby contributing to the reader’s awareness of the translator’s role. In addition, by distinguishing between items that are specifically Sicilian and those that belong to Italy in general, he increases the readers’ awareness of how Sicily differs within its own larger culture.

Venuti’s call to action and his recommendations for raising the visibility of the translator have been fulfilled by several translators of Verga’s and Camilleri’s texts, most notably, D. H. Lawrence, Raymond Rosenthal and Stephen Sartarelli, but this is not necessarily as a result of deliberate or conscious choices. Rather, it is the unique nature of the authors’ literary expression that has been largely responsible for thrusting visibility on the translators. Verga’s strange, ungrammatical and proverbial language has provoked special interest in the translations amongst scholars and critics over the last century. And while Lawrence may have initiated discussion by the translators in their prefaces of the challenges they face, it was Verga’s “fascinating” language (Lawrence qtd. in Boulton, Zytaruk and Robertson 106) that stimulated his own discussions. As for Camilleri, his blended literary language has prompted an unprecedented amount of interest in the strategies employed by the translators of his texts into other languages—amongst Italians and non-Italians, and amongst academics and non-academics. Sartarelli, normally most pleased when the act of his translations goes unnoticed, has found it increasingly difficult to remain anonymous with his translations of Camilleri’s texts. The translator who believes that “a literary translator should be like the arbiter or umpire of a sporting event: the less noticed the better”

and that invisibility is a compliment to his “quiet work” (S. Sartarelli “Notes from the Purer Linguistic Sphere of Translation”), is constantly questioned and asked to speak publicly about his strategies for translating the Montalbano series. As Sartarelli acknowledges, it is Camilleri’s unique and infinitely variable language, rather than the author’s charm, that prompts the high degree of interest in how he translates it.

Finally, when evaluating the work of translators, it is important to take into account the fact that they do not always have the power to carry out their own translation choices. Particularly since the 1990s, the growth of Translation Studies as an academic discipline and the influence of recent theories about the translator’s role have led to changes in the practices of translators and strengthened the translator’s voice. Translation theorists have given translators the language to speak about their practice and their concepts. Translation conferences, translators’ organisations and electronic networking have increased communication amongst translators, and between translators and readers. Nevertheless, a translator’s power today in relation to other agents within the publishing industry often comes down to monetary concerns. Sartarelli’s power and the freedom to experiment linguistically have increased over the time he has been translating Camilleri’s works because his translations have sold well. Despite Sartarelli’s success, however, the reality is that translators may be forced to follow publishing conventions in order to get their work published. Or they may find the editing of their translations out of their hands completely, as are the decisions on what extra information to give the reader because it is normally the publisher who decides on the peritextual material. Time pressures imposed by the publishers may also hinder a translator’s creativity. Translators also have little control over how the translation is circulated and read, and on its reception, which is usually controlled by publishers and reviewers, or scholars and teachers. Nevertheless, translators do retain a large measure of control. Because it is impossible to transpose every single element of a source text, some must take priority over others, and it is the translator who makes those choices. While a text can be interpreted in multiple ways, the translation is ultimately that particular translator’s interpretation, based on his or her own particular life experience.

My thesis suggests one pathway to understanding the value of regional translation in one particular context. In the Sicilian context alone there is much more to be done and many other writers and translators whose works would elucidate other aspects of regional translation.

A common lament amongst translation scholars is that not enough work has been done on the translation of metaphor, in contrast to the wide research into metaphor itself in other disciplines such as linguistics and philosophy. While my thesis has considered the translation of the metaphors in Verga's and Camilleri's texts, a study of the translation of *Il Gattopardo* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa would yield a wealth of additional results because of the widespread use and importance of metaphors in the novel. Lampedusa's use of metaphor and similes, with a consistent ironic colouring, is its most characteristic style trait; in fact, the entire novel can be viewed as a single, great metaphor. The translation of the metaphors of *Il Gattopardo* presents a particularly interesting subject of analysis because debate over how to interpret the metaphors in the text's original language has been ongoing since its publication. If the meaning is uncertain in the original, what is carried across from one language and culture to another? Christina Schäffner has called for the descriptive analysis of translated texts as a way of adding empirical research and contributing to this debate (74-76). An analysis of the metaphors in *Il Gattopardo*, using the same type of methodology as I have used in my thesis, would answer this call and highlight issues of cultural variation in the conception and expression of metaphor.

Another issue that arises in the translation of regional literature, which would merit additional scholarly attention and which I have not investigated in great depth in this thesis, is intertextuality. Scholars maintain that a literary discourse exists between Sicilian writers of a dense citationary nature, where texts invest authority in other texts, and that Leonardo Sciascia dominates this textualisation of Sicily.¹³⁰ In Sciascia's narrative fiction he often blends historical and contemporary facts into the plots of his fictional works, and frequently inserts references to other texts. The intertextuality is realized in various ways, from referenced citations through to

¹³⁰ See, for example: Mark Chu, "Sciascia and Sicily: Discourse and Actuality," *Italica* 75.1 (1998) and John Dickie, "Reflection on Literary Myths of Sicily in the Wake of the 'Caso Sciascia'," *Reflexivity: Critical Themes in the Italian Cultural Tradition*, eds. Prue Shaw and John Took (Ravenna: Longo, 2000).

allusions, from the appropriation of characters to the structure of the narration. For readers who are unfamiliar with Sicilian society, history and literature, the intertextual aspect of Sciascia's writing leads to gaps that prevent their full appreciation. His translators must decide whether or not to fill these gaps and how to do so. An analysis of the translations of Sciascia's texts, comparing the different approaches to the treatment of intertextual references specific to Sicilian culture, would be a valuable contribution to this interesting issue.

Although there are many possibilities for further investigation into aspects of regional translation in the Sicilian context, I will mention only one more here: Luigi Pirandello and the translation of landscape, which is a striking and integral part of his stories. J. R. Watson argues that in regional literature the combination of the region itself, the author's description of the region and the reader's degree of familiarity or unfamiliarity with the region creates a triple, almost cubic indeterminacy, in that each can be multiplied by the others. In Watson's view, this elusiveness makes it one of the most affecting and absorbing forms of literature, as the most significant literature is that which most effectively remains open to indeterminacy, variety, vision, and revision. But what happens when translation is added to regional literature's combination of uncertainties? It would be fascinating to explore this issue through the translations of Pirandello's short stories. Have the translations opened the texts up to further interpretation or limited the interpretation possibilities for the target reader because they have been interpreted through the translator's own worldview or been subject to linguistic or cultural constraints?

In the epigraph of this thesis, poet Ignazio Buttita laments the loss of the strings of his guitar of dialect. My research has shown how Verga and Camilleri have strengthened those guitar strings, and how translation can bring the notes, chords and harmonics of their music to those who would otherwise not be able to hear it. The questions I have raised regarding the works of Lampedusa, Sciascia and Pirandello suggest avenues for further study within the Sicilian context, but the work to be done in maintaining the strengths and richness in regional expression extends beyond Sicily and indeed Italy. Moreover, works throughout the world are waiting to be translated, so that they too can offer readers a privileged access to unfamiliar cultures.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Publication History of Translations of Verga into English

(All publications of translations of *I Malavoglia* and “Cavalleria rusticana” are set in bold type.)

1890	Craig	<i>I Malavoglia</i> <i>The House by the Medlar Tree</i> Introduction by W. D. Howells New York: Harper Bros
1891 (Reprint)	Craig	<i>I Malavoglia</i> <i>The House by the Medlar Tree</i> London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co
1893	Craig	<i>Mastro-don Gesualdo</i> <i>Master Don Gesualdo</i> London: Osgood & McIlvaine
1893	Strettell	<i>Nedda</i> From <i>Vita dei campi</i> : “Cavalleria rusticana” “Rosso Malpelo” “L’amante di Gramigna” “Guerra di santi” From <i>Novelle rusticane</i> : “ Il mistero ” <i>Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Tales of Sicilian Life</i> London: T Fisher Unwin
1896	Dole	From <i>Vita dei campi</i> : “L’amante di Gramigna” “Jeli il pastore” “Cavalleria rusticana” “La Lupa” From <i>Novelle rusticane</i> : “Storia dell’asino di S. Giuseppe” “Gli orfani” From <i>Drammi intimi</i> : “ I drammi ignoti ” <i>Under the Shadow of Etna:</i> <i>Sicilian Stories from the Italian of Giovanni Verga</i> Boston: Joseph Knight
1907	Cooper	From <i>Vita dei campi</i> : “Cavalleria rusticana” (Collection, various authors and translators) <i>Short Story Classics, Vol. II</i> <i>Italian and Scandinavian</i> New York: Collier
1920	Anonymous	From <i>Vita dei campi</i> : “Cavalleria rusticana” (Collection, various authors and translators) <i>Tales from the Italian and Spanish, Vol. II</i> <i>Stories of Heroism and Romance</i>

- “Rosso Malpelo”
 “Jeli il pastore”
 “Fantasticheria”
 “La Lupa”
 “Il come, il quando ed il perché”
Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories
 London: Jonathan Cape
- 1938 ? ?
 From *Vita dei campi*:
 “Cavalleria rusticana”
 (Collection, various authors and translators)
Great Short Stories of the World:
A Collection of Complete Short Stories Chosen From the
Literatures of All Periods and Countries
 Eds. Barrett H. Clark and Maxim Lieber
 Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Publishers
- 1947 ? ?
 From *Novelle rusticane*:
 “Storia dell’asino di S. Giuseppe”
 (Collection, various authors and translators)
A Treasury of Short Stories:
Favorites of the Past Hundred Years from Turgenev to Thurber
from Balzac to Hemingway:
With Biographical Sketches
 Ed. Bernardine Kielty
 New York: Simon and Schuster
- 1950 (Reprint) Cooper From *Vita dei campi*:
 “Cavalleria rusticana”
 From *I Malavoglia*:
 “Ugly Weather”
 Lawrence From *Novelle rusticane*:
 “Storia dell’asino di S. Giuseppe”
 “La roba”
 “Il mistero”
 “Il reverendo”
 Cavalleria rusticana and Other Narratives
 Ed. J. I. Rodale
 Emmaus, PA: Story Classics
- 1950 Mosbacher ***I Malavoglia***
 The House by the Medlar Tree
 London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson
- 1953 (Reprint) Lawrence *Novelle rusticane*
 Little Novels of Sicily
 New York: Grove Press
- 1953 (Reprint) Lawrence *Mastro-don Gesualdo*
 Mastro-don Gesualdo
 New York: Grove Press
- 1953 (Reprint) Mosbacher ***I Malavoglia***
 The House by the Medlar Tree
 NY: Grove Press
- 1954 (Reprint) Lawrence From *Vita dei campi*:
 “La Lupa”
 (Collection, various authors and translators)
Modern Italian Short Stories

Ed. Marc Slonim
New York: Simon and Schuster

- 1955 (Reprint) Mosbacher** *I Malavoglia*
The House by the Medlar Tree
Garden City: Doubleday Anchor
- 1955 (Reprint) Lawrence *Mastro-don Gesualdo*
Mastro-don Gesualdo
New York: Grove Press
- 1958 Cecchetti** From *Vita dei campi*:
“La Lupa”
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
“La guerra di santi”
“Pentolaccia”
The She-Wolf and Other Stories
(Selected from *Tutte le novelle*)
Berkeley, University of California Press
- 1961 Colquhoun** From *Vita dei campi*:
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
(Collection, various authors and translators)
Italian Regional Tales of the Nineteenth Century
London: Oxford University Press
- 1962 (Reprint) Cecchetti** From *Vita dei campi*:
“La Lupa”
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
“La guerra di santi”
“Pentolaccia”
- New for this edition: From *Novelle rusticane*:
“Malaria”
“Gli orfani”
“La roba”
“Storia dell’asino di S. Giuseppe”
“Pane nero”
“Libertà”
The She-Wolf and Other Stories
Berkeley, University of California Press
- 1962 (Reprint) Lawrence** *Nedda*
Vita dei campi:
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“Pentolaccia”
“Guerra di santi”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Fantasticheria”
“La Lupa”
“Il come, il quando ed il perché”
Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories
London: New English Library

- 1964** **Rosenthal** *I Malavoglia*
The House by the Medlar Tree
 NY: New American Library
- 1965 ? ? From *Novelle rusticane*:
 “Pane nero”
 (Collection, various authors and translators)
The Novelette Before 1900
 Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall
- 1966** ? ? From *Vita dei campi*:
 “**Cavalleria rusticana**”
 (Collection, various authors and translators)
The Short Story: Classic and Contemporary
 Ed. R. W. Lid
 Philadelphia: Lippincott
- 1972** **Alexander** From *Vita dei campi*:
 “**Cavalleria rusticana**”
 From *Novelle rusticane*:
 “Libertà”
 (Within translator’s biography of author)
Giovanni Verga: A Great Writer and His World
 London, Grant and Cutler
- 1973 (Reprint) Lawrence *Novelle rusticane*
Little Novels of Sicily
 Harmondsworth: Penguin
- 1973 (Reprint)** **Cecchetti** From *Vita dei campi*:
 “La Lupa”
 “**Cavalleria rusticana**”
 “Jeli il pastore”
 “Rosso Malpelo”
 “L’amante di Gramigna”
 “La guerra di santi”
 “Pentolaccia”
 From *Novelle rusticane*:
 “Malaria”
 “Gli orfani”
 “La roba”
 “Storia dell’asino di S. Giuseppe”
 “Pane nero”
 “Libertà”
- New for this edition: From *Primavera e altri racconti*:
 “X”
 From *Per le vie*:
 “L’ultima giornata”
 “Conforti”
 “Camerati”
 From *Drammi intimi*:
 “Tentazione”
 From *Vagabondaggio*:
 “Nanni Volpe”
 From *Don Candeloro e C.*:
 “Il peccato di donna Santa”
- 1975 (Reprint)** **Lawrence** *Nedda*
Vita dei campi

- “Camerati”
 From *Drammi intimi*:
 “Tentazione”
 From *Vagabondaggio*:
 “Nanni Volpe”
 From *Don Candeloro e C.*:
 “Il peccato di donna Santa”
- 1983 (Reprint) Rosenthal** *I Malavoglia*
The House by the Medlar Tree
 Berkeley: University of California Press
- 1984 (Reprint) Lawrence *Novelle rusticane*
Short Sicilian Novels
 With an Introduction and Chronology by Eric Lane
 London: Dedalus European Classics
- 1985 Landry** *I Malavoglia*
I Malavoglia
 With a chronology and Introduction by Eric Lane
 London: Dedalus
- 1989 Thresher From Primavera e altri racconti:
 “Le storie del castello di Trezza”
Italian Quarterly
- 1989 ? ? From *Vita dei campi*:
 “Rosso Malpelo”
 (Collection, various authors and translators)
Italian Stories = Novelle italiane
A Dual-Language Book
 Ed. Robert A. Hall, Jr.
 New York: Dover
- 1991 (Reprint) Landry** *I Malavoglia*
I Malavoglia (The House by the Medlar Tree)
 Sawtry, UK: Dedalus
- 1994 Donougher *La storia di una capinera*
Sparrow: The Story of a Songbird
 Translated from the Italian by Christine Donougher
 With an Introduction by Roderick Conway Morris
 Sawtry, Cambs: Dedalus
 New York: Hippocrene
- 1995 Halliday *Una Peccatrice*
A Mortal Sin
 London: Quartet Encounters
- 1996 Maddox** *Nedda*
 From *Vita dei campi*:
 “Rosso Malpelo”
 “Cavalleria rusticana”
 “La Lupa”
 “Jeli il pastore”
 “Pane nero”
The Defeated: Six Sicilian Novellas
 Melbourne, Freshet Press
- 1997 Gordon *La storia di una capinera*

- Frenaye *Sparrow*
New York: Italica Press
- 1998 (Reprint) Landry** *I Malavoglia*
I Malavoglia (The House by the Medlar Tree)
Sawtry, UK: Dedalus
- 1999 McWilliam** *Nedda*
From *Vita dei campi*:
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“La Lupa”
“Fantasticheria”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
“Guerra di santi”
“Il come, il quando ed il perché”
From *Novelle rusticane*:
“Il reverendo”
“Cos’è il Re?”
“Don Licciu Papa”
“Malaria”
“La roba”
“Pane nero”
“I galantuomini”
“Libertà”
From Primavera e altri racconti:
“Primavera”
From *Racconti e bozzetti*:
“La caccia al lupo”
Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories
London: Penguin
- 2002 Appelbaum** *Nedda*
From *Vita dei campi*:
“Fantasticheria”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“La Lupa”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
From *Novelle rusticane*:
“Malaria”
“La roba”
“Storia dell’asino di S. Giuseppe”
“Pane nero”
“Libertà”
Sicilian Stories = Novelle siciliane
A Dual-Language Book
Mineola, New York: Dover
- 2002 (Reprint) Lawrence** *Vita dei campi*:
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“Pentolaccia”
“Guerra di santi”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Fantasticheria”
“La Lupa”

- (Reprint) Donougher
New for this edition
- “Il come, il quando ed il perché”
La storia di una capinera
From *Primavera e altri racconti*:
“La coda del diavolo”
From *Per le vie*:
“Camerati”
From *Drammi intimi*:
“Tentazione!”
“La chiave d’oro”
From *Vagabondaggio*:
“Il maestro dei ragazzi”
Sparrow, Temptation and Cavalleria Rusticana
Sawtry: Dedalus
- 2003** **Nichols**
- Vita dei campi*:
“**Cavalleria rusticana**”
“Pentolaccia
“Guerra di santi”
“L’amante di Gramigna”
“Rosso Malpelo”
“Jeli il pastore”
“Fantasticheria”
“La Lupa”
Life in the Country
London: Hesperus
- 2003 (Reprint)** **Craig**
- I Malavoglia*
The House by the Medlar Tree
Whitefish, Mont: Kessinger
- 2008 (Reprint)** **Landry**
- I Malavoglia*
I Malavoglia (The House by the Medlar Tree)
Sawtry, UK: Dedalus

Appendix 2: Interview with Stephen Sartarelli

Magica Fossati of SBS Radio, Australia, interviewed Stephen Sartarelli on 11 July 2010. Later that day he was to appear at the Italian Cultural Institute in Melbourne for “an informal discussion” entitled “Eating Montalbano: Confessions of a Serial Translator”. Sartarelli first explains the title.

SS: Il titolo è un’allusione a una famosa citazione della poetessa russa Anna Akhmatova, la cui poesia è stata proibita da Stalin stesso. Cioè, dopo che lei aveva scritto una poesia che criticava un po’ Stalin, non poteva più scrivere poesia ufficialmente, in un certo senso; segretamente lei continuava a scrivere. Quindi lei ha dovuto fare traduzioni per campare e il che le ha fatto dire un giorno che per un poeta tradurre è come mangiarsi il cervello. Quindi io facevo un po’ un *jeu d’esprit* su questa idea, ma anche facendo allusione alla fissazione di Montalbano sul cibo, eccetera.

MF: Camilleri è un romanziere che, quando scrive le avventure di Montalbano, usa una lingua italiana non-standard nel senso che usa molti influssi dal dialetto siciliano. Come se l’è cavata lei nel tradurre questa lingua un po’ mista un po’ ibrida in inglese?

SS: Certo che questo è un esempio dove si perde un po’ dello scarto che c’è tra il linguaggio di Camilleri e quello normale—la lingua italiana di oggi. Ma comunque, forse all’inizio ero un po’ più timido nel senso—c’è pure il fatto che—lo ammetta Camilleri stesso—che lui inventa parecchie cose e a un certo punto ho cominciato a concedermi una certa libertà anche nello stile. Ma proprio questo fatto dove, a volte, se un personaggio dice una cosa in dialetto, o se Montalbano stesso dice una cosa in dialetto, ci può essere anche un umorismo nel fatto di dirlo in dialetto rispetto al contesto. Queste a volte sono delle sfumature che si perdono, ma che si possono comunque recuperare altrove. Quindi, col tempo, mi sono abituato a cercare anche le occasioni in cui potevo recuperare alcuni giochi di questo genere. Un altro esempio sarebbe il personaggio di Catarella, che all’inizio mi terrorizzava nel senso, come devo tradurre questa persona? Ma a un certo punto ho cominciato a divertirmi, inventando altre cose che potevo fare, perché c’è pure il fatto che l’inglese—

soprattutto quello americano—è una lingua molto standardizzata benché ci siano grandi autori come Faulkner ed altri che hanno scritto in una specie di dialetto americano. Ma, nell'editoria americana contemporanea, le regole sono molto strette. Quindi, ormai che i libri di Camilleri hanno avuto un certo successo, non devo più lottare. Ma all'inizio dovevo lottare un po' contro gli *editors* perché, nell'editoria americana, c'è pure questo fatto che i testi vengono molto controllati dai redattori.

MF: Quindi c'è meno libertà d'azione per chi traduce.

SS: Sì, c'è voglia sempre di uniformare il testo. Non vogliono incoerenze di spelling e incoerenze di uso, che poi è un peccato e forse un autore ha più libertà da questo punto di vista.

MF: Camilleri l'ha sostenuta un po' in questa sua battaglia per cercare una lingua che fosse meno standard.

SS: Lui è sempre stato molto generoso. Non so fino a che punto lui capisca l'inglese. Forse riesce a leggere un po'. Certamente non riesce ad esprimersi in inglese, ma so che, secondo quello che lui stesso mi ha detto, o secondo quello che ha detto ad altri, lui è molto contento delle mie traduzioni. Anche perché io c'ho scritto un po' su questo discorso e ne ho parlato un po'. Forse per questo ha capito quello che cercavo di fare. Ma non è facile, anche nel senso che l'inglese rispetto all'italiano—anche lasciando da parte il siciliano—è molto diverso. Quindi a volte bisogna riscrivere le frasi. Ho dovuto trovare una voce—un tono—che andasse bene con tutta quell'atmosfera. Una cosa che ho fatto—prima di tradurre Camilleri, non conoscevo bene il grande genere anglosassone del giallo. Conoscevo i classici tipo Edgar Poe e Conan Doyle ed altri, e quelli degli anni venti, degli anni trenta—Dashiell Hammett ed altri. Ma la scena contemporanea non la conoscevo per niente e ho fatto un po' di ricerca. Ho anche coscientemente creato un linguaggio *hard-boiled*, come si dice—a volte alla Raymond Chandler, per esempio. Il personaggio di Montalbano fuma, ma lui non accende mai la sigaretta, l'*addruma* e io ho trovato in Chandler delle espressioni carine per dire così. Quindi io dico “he fired up the cigarette” o “he set flame to the cigarette”. Ho improvvisato un po' anche.

MF: Lei ci ha dato proprio un po' l'idea di quanto può essere complicato il mestiere di traduttore. Prima diceva che il traduttore è un po' come l'esecutore musicale di una composizione che ovviamente non è sua. Però diciamo che i musicisti godono di grande fama, anche quando sono soli esecutori. Invece i traduttori non tanto. È vero che è un mestiere un po' difficile quello del traduttore—quasi invisibile.

SS: Sì, ma si dice pure che il più invisibile è, meglio è, e forse hanno ragione a dirlo così nel senso che io, quando leggo le traduzioni, se noto il traduttore ci faccio caso. Ma è sempre meglio non notare i traduttori perché la maggior parte delle volte li si nota per errori.

MF: Per incongruenze, magari—cose che non suonano tanto bene nella lingua.

SS: Che non suonano tanto bene. Poi, quando io ho fatto dei controlli leggendo le traduzioni di altre persone, spesso quando c'è questa stonatura, se si tratta di una traduzione dall'italiano, se vado a controllare il testo italiano, vedo che la stonatura viene dal fatto stesso di non aver ben capito l'originale. Anche per questo sono un po' critico nei riguardi di certi traduttori—ce ne sono molti anche in America—che magari sanno scrivere bene ma non sanno proprio bene bene, filologicamente, la lingua da cui traducono. Poi non è detto che sia cattivo sempre, perché c'è il grande esempio francese. Le traduzioni di Edgar Allan Poe che si leggono tuttora in Francia sono quelle fatte da Charles Baudelaire. Baudelaire, che è un grandissimo poeta, sapeva l'inglese, però ha fatto anche degli errori. Però ha fatto delle traduzioni così belle che non importa. Ci sono anche altri esempi, come il poeta americano contemporaneo Charles Wright, che fa un po' di traduzione d'italiano. Lui ha fatto le migliori traduzioni di Dino Campana—perché ce ne sono parecchie in questo campo—e le migliori sono di Charles Wright, nelle quali ci sono comunque degli errori. Ma lui è così bravo che non si notano.

(My transcription of interview from podcast downloaded 27 July 2010 from <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/italian>.)

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