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Sommario

Il vero poeta ha una personalità di natura complessa e multiforme
In ricordo di Mario Sabattini (1944-2017)

Da un testo di Mario Sabattini

La conclusione di Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛 è che nella poesia cinese il parallelismo dei suoni derivi da quello delle immagini, e che entrambi abbiano conosciuto un primo sviluppo nel genere *fu* 賦, di cui il *regulated verse* ha subito a sua volta l'influenza. Dopo gli Han Orientali, le ricerche fonologiche connesse con la traduzione in cinese dei testi buddhisti e il confronto col sanscrito stimolarono la tendenza a introdurre gli schemi tonali nella struttura metrica. Infine, un ruolo non indifferente nel processo di codificazione della forma poetica fu svolto, nel periodo delle Sei Dinastie, dalla definitiva appropriazione da parte dei letterati del genere *yuefu* 樂府: essendo venuto meno ogni rapporto tra testo poetico e accompagnamento musicale esterno, si volle accentuare progressivamente il ritmo musicale interno allo stesso testo.

Il XIII capitolo nell'edizione [dello *Shilun* 詩論][1] del 1948 (Zhu 1948) consiste in un saggio a sé stante dedicato a Tao Yuanming 陶淵明. Non è certo casuale che Zhu Guangqian lo abbia incluso nel volume, in quanto il Signore dei Cinque Salici non era per lui soltanto uno dei maggiori poeti cinesi,[2] ma rivestiva in qualche misura un carattere emblematico, perché la sua vita e la sua opera costituivano ai suoi occhi la quintessenza della poesia. Egli afferma che sarebbe vano cercare in Tao Yuanming un sistema di pensiero rigido o una fede religiosa: le molteplici influenze da lui subite si sono fuse nel suo spirito, ed è possibile quindi individuare nella sua opera componenti confuciane, taoiste, e con ogni probabilità anche buddhiste. Pensiero e sentimento sono inscindibili in un poeta, ma la poesia è espressione del sentimento, e lo studio della vita emotiva di un poeta è pertanto più importante che l'analisi del suo pensiero. La vita

[1] La storia delle varie edizioni del saggio di Zhu Guangqian sulla poesia (Zhu 1943) è esposta in dettaglio in Sabattini 2005, 1007 n. 1 [nota dei curatori].

[2] Zhu Guangqian afferma che, tra tutti i poeti cinesi, solo Qu Yuan 屈原 e Du Fu 杜甫 possono essere paragonati a Tao Yuanming: il primo è più malinconico e il secondo più grandioso, ma nessuno dei due raggiunge la sua purezza e la sua perfezione formale ([Zhu 1948], 233).

Figura 1. Mario Sabattini

di Tao Yuanming – come quella della maggior parte di noi, osserva Zhu Guangqian – fu contrassegnata da conflitti e contraddizioni: povero, spesso ammalato, privo di veri amici tra i letterati contemporanei (le persone con cui si trovava più a suo agio erano i lavoratori dei campi), egli non può non provare angoscia e amarezza per i disordini che affliggono la sua epoca. Ma attraverso il dolore il poeta perviene all'armonia e alla quiete. Ciò avviene perché egli è in grado di infrangere le barriere del tempo e di ricercare tra gli antichi coloro che possono consolarlo: funzionari in ritiro, come Zhang Changgong 張長公 e Xue Mengchang 薛孟嘗,[3] oppure personaggi che, in nome della fedeltà al proprio Signore, si opposero in modo attivo o passivo all'avvento di nuove dinastie, come Boyi 伯夷 e Shuqi 叔齊 o come Jing Ke 荊軻.[4] Il poeta, inoltre, ha la capacità di spezzare i vincoli

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[3]   Sia Zhang Changgong (vissuto nel II secolo a.C.) che Xue Mengchang (vissuto nel II secolo d.C.) lasciarono la carriera burocratica senza ragioni apparenti per condurre una vita ritirata. In loro, come in altri eremiti, Tao Yuanming vedeva i propri antesignani.

[4]   I due fratelli Boyi e Shuqi, fedeli alla dinastia Shang, si rifiutarono di riconoscere il potere dei Zhou, e si ritirarono sui Monti dell'Ovest, lasciandosi morire. Jing Ke... [parte lasciata incompiuta nell'originale] L'esaltazione di tali personaggi è stata interpretata da alcuni come testimonianza di una posizione politica legittimista di Tao Yuanming, a favore della dinastia dei Jin Orientali e contro la dinastia dei Liu Song, giunta al potere nel 420. Zhu Guangqian

dell'interesse personale, stabilendo un rapporto di comunicazione diretta col mondo esterno. Egli trasmette nelle cose la propria mente e i propri sentimenti e ne assimila la vita e lo spirito: è per questo motivo che nella sua poesia la natura non ha una funzione meramente decorativa, come in molti altri autori, ma raggiunge i più alti livelli espressivi. Il carattere di Tao Yuanming è come la sua poesia. In lui l''eremita' e l''eroe' confuciano non prendono mai il sopravvento sull'uomo. Ed è proprio il suo calore umano che lo rende vicino alla gente comune. Nel cuore del poeta gioia e dolore si contemperano reciprocamente: la prima nasce dal superamento dei conflitti e da una profonda conoscenza della vita, e non è mai semplice diletto; il secondo è sempre equilibrato e discreto, e non si esprime mai in sfoghi incontrollati e nevrotici. La natura complessa e multiforme della personalità di Tao Yuanming si riflette fedelmente nel suo stile poetico. I diversi commentatori l'hanno definito di volta in volta 'piano' (*ping* 平) od 'eccentrico' (*qi* 奇), 'scarno' (*ku* 枯) o 'rigoglioso' (*yu* 腴), 'semplice' (*zhi* 質) o 'brillante' (*qi* 綺). In realtà, tali definizioni contraddittorie non tengono conto del fatto che la grandezza di un'opera poetica sta nell'espressione di un sentimento attraverso un'immagine appropriata e rispondente. Da questo punto di vista, si può affermare che la poesia di Tao Yuanming non sia né 'piana' né 'eccentrica', né 'scarna' né 'rigogliosa', né 'semplice' né 'brillante', ma che possa apparire, in una continua metamorfosi, ora 'piana' ora 'eccentrica', ora 'scarna' ora 'rigogliosa', ora 'semplice' ora 'brillante'. Dello stile di Tao Yuanming si può dire soltanto che è 'vero' (*zhen* 真), ma non nell'accezione di '*naive*': i suoi pensieri e i suoi sentimenti hanno subito, infatti, un processo di distillazione e di affinamento. Egli è in grado di raggiungere i vertici dell'arte, facendo dimenticare al lettore che si tratta di arte.

accoglie solo parzialmente tale ipotesi, in quanto rileva che Tao Yuanming non era un uomo d'azione, e aveva intrapreso la carriera burocratica solo per ragioni economiche, abbandonandola poi per non subire umiliazioni e per 'tornare alla natura'. Pur avendo in odio la dinastia Liu Song, egli era consapevole di non avere la forza per modificare la situazione: il suo richiamo ai campioni del legittimismo risponde a un'esigenza di natura eminentemente etica.

Mario Sabattini: lo studio come poesia

Ci è sembrato giusto, per ricordare la figura di Mario Sabattini, scomparso lo scorso 20 dicembre, riportare un testo significativo tratto dal suo ultimo lavoro, purtroppo non concluso. Con esso intendeva portare a compimento il suo lungo e intenso percorso di ricerca sull'opera di Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986)[5] e sull'introduzione del crocianesimo in Cina, vero e proprio leitmotiv della sua vita di studioso.

Il brano è stato gentilmente fornito dalla figlia, Elisa Levi Sabattini, anch'essa sinologa, che sta raccogliendo e curando il ricco materiale che il padre ha lasciato sul filosofo, per una pubblicazione che ci auguriamo prossima.

Nel testo sopra riportato Mario Sabattini riprende la sua analisi (Sabattini 2005) del saggio che Zhu dedica alla poesia, *Shilun*, affrontando in particolar modo la figura di Tao Yuanming (365-427).[6] Nei suoi ultimi anni Sabattini aveva intensificato, tra l'altro, il suo fecondo rapporto con la poesia cinese, volgendo il suo impegno di traduttore dai «versi codificati» della poesia classica a quelli più liberi della poesia contemporanea.[7] Una guida sicura al suo felice approccio a un patrimonio letterario così impegnativo gli era probabilmente stata offerta proprio dallo studio attento e appassionato del pensiero estetico di Zhu Guangqian, e in particolar modo del suo *Shilun*.

Chi ha conosciuto Mario non può non ascrivere anche a lui, come persona oltre che come studioso, le qualità che Zhu Guangqian ravvisa in Tao Yuanming: la vita e l'opera di Sabattini si può dire costituiscano la quintessenza dell'intellettuale, e sarebbe vano cercare in lui, così come nel Tao Yuanming visto da Zhu, un sistema di pensiero rigido o una fede religiosa, perché molteplici sono le influenze che si sono fuse nel suo animo.

Mario godeva di una personalità dalla «natura complessa e multiforme»: in campo scientifico, ha sempre nutrito una grande passione per lo studio della civiltà cinese nei suoi più diversi aspetti, dalla lingua alla letteratura, dalla storia alla società. Il suo impegno intellettuale non si è tuttavia

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[5] Per un'ampia panoramica della produzione scientifica di Sabattini e la rilevanza internazionale del suo contributo agli studi su Zhu Guangqian vedi «Mario Sabattini: bibliografia essenziale» (Abbiati, Greselin 2014, 19-22).

[6] Nel testo di Zhu Guangqian *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (La psicologia dell'arte e della letteratura), tradotto in Sabattini 1984, il poeta viene citato con il nome di Tao Qian 陶潛.

[7] Tra i poeti contemporanei tradotti recentemente da Sabattini figurano Zhai Yongming 翟永明, Hou Ma 侯馬 (Caratteri 2014), Hai Nan 海男, Han Dong 韓東 (Caratteri 2015), Qiu Huadong 邱華棟, Du Ya 杜涯 (Caratteri 2016a), Hai Zi 海子 (Caratteri 2016b), Zhou Zan 周瓚 (Caratteri 2017). In precedenza aveva tradotto, all'interno della novella di Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896-1945) *La roccia dipinta* (Yu 1999), un buon numero di componimenti in 'versi codificati' di Huang Zhongze 黃仲則 (1749-1783).

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limitato al campo sinologico, ma ha costituito il perno di un coinvolgimento culturale poliedrico e totale in senso pienamente umanistico. Sabattini è sempre stato animato da grandi entusiasmi: la musica classica, il cinema e in generale la cultura dei nostri tempi, le vicende storiche e politiche dal lontano passato al presente, fino alle nuove tecnologie informatiche e multimediali. Tutti questi sono stati aspetti costitutivi del suo modo di incarnare la versione moderna di un letterato alla cinese, con l'etica e il cuore di un grande poeta, lo *shiren* 詩人 ricco di calore umano impersonato da Tao Yuanming.

Magda Abbiati
Federico Greselin

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Venetian Hosts and Ottoman Guests in the *Venedik Sarayı* in Constantinople (c. 1670-1681)

Maria Pia Pedani
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract   After the end of the Cretan war (1645-1669) and before the starting of the Morean war (1684-1699) Venetian diplomats settled again in Constantinople and in the Venetian Palace (*Venedik Sarayı*) that had been the embassy of the Republic for centuries. In this period *baili* and extraordinary ambassadors (*ambasciatori straordinari*) used to celebrate Venetian or Ottoman civic and religious festivals with dinners and parties. Their guests were above all other European diplomats and middle-ranking Ottoman officials. Some Turks, above all those who lived in the neighbourhood, contributed to the organisation of such events with their gifts and, in exchange, they received money or other presents. This paper aims to study the circulation of objects and commodities between Europe and the Ottoman Empire and, in particular, which kind of items were exchanged before or during official dinners held in the Venetian Palace or in the Venetian summer houses in Arnavutköy and Balta Liman. The Turks brought or sent mostly vegetables, flowers and different kind of food, while Venetians used to give to their guests not only the famous Venetian cloths but also unusual objects such as ivory boxes, gloves, brushes, glass sculptures, mirrors, fans, fake flowers and so on. The sources used for this research are the accounting books of the Venetian embassy for the years 1670-83.

Keywords   Gift exchange. Venice. Ottoman Empire. Material culture. Circulation of goods.

In 1676 *bailo* Giacomo Querini (1671-1675) delivered a report in the Venetian Senate about his mission in Istanbul where he stated that "among the Turks the sweetest action is taking and giving; it is the more desirable and commended behaviour among all the nations [of the Empire]; to make a gift has a mysterious power and a powerful spell and nothing can resist and protect itself against it, even if it is made secretly".[1]

The next bailo, Giovanni Morosini (1675-1680), mentioned this practice and the gifts he made to the sultan's *büyük mirahor*, Süleyman ağa, to a Venetian convert who had the office of cutting the sultan's nails, to the

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1   Firpo 1984, 932: "non v'è azione più dolce tra' turchi, più grata e applaudita tra tutte le nazioni, che quella di ricevere e pigliare, che forza occulta e potente incanto è quello del donare, al quale niuna cosa per riservato che sia può resister e difendersi". All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

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bostancıbaşı, to the favorite *damad* Mustafa and other members of the Ottoman élite. He also recalled that the grand vizier Kara Mustafa paşa was very rich but he used his whole wealth to make gifts to the sultan, the sultanas and the members of the court in order to keep his office. The same was repeated by bailo Pietro Civran (1679-1681): the grand vizier remained in his place thanks to gifts to the sultan who was extremely greedy, to the two favourite sultanas who all the same hated him, the to *müfti* and so on and this was the reason that made the grand vizier so greedy and grasping (cf. Fripo 1984, 1027-8, 1045-6).

Gift giving was a method and a ritual to create ties at every level of the Ottoman society. In their official reports Venetian diplomats often discuss it. According to Lorenzo Bernardo (1591-1592) it was a common practice, used to gain importance and reputation, but also a servile behaviour; thus, the diplomat had not only to give but also to negotiate and, if a gift was really necessary, it was better to give out few presents often rather than many seldom. In grand vizier Rüstem's period gift-giving became common and was widely in use in the period called *kadınlar saltanatı* (1566-1650). Later, gift-giving seems to have been in decline even if it was still mentioned in the Venetian reports at the end of the 18th century.[2]

The Venetians also realised that in the sultans' empire gifts were not all alike. In the Ottoman language several words were used to express this idea. *Peşkeş* (a word of Persian origin) was the tribute given by a subordinate to a high authority, for instance the gift of a Persian ambassador to the sultan or even the tributes of precious objects and animals paid by Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. For the Ottomans, it symbolised loyalty. *Bahşiş* (Per.) was the tip given to a member of the *askeri* class. *In'am* (Ar.) was the favour that either the sultan or a high-ranking officer bestowed on people of lesser status. *Hediye* (Ar.) was the gift exchanged between persons at the same hierarchic level, even if in the North African provinces it was the tribute made by one ruler to another to obtain a favour. *Hediye* usually consisted of money, gifts and even flowers. '*atiyye* (Ar.) was the gift made by a high-ranking person to one of a lower rank and '*atiyye şahane* was the name given to gifts offered by the sultan during particular events such as the accession to the throne or a *sünnet* ceremony (i.e. on the occasion of a prince's circumcision). *Hibe* (Ar.) was a jurisprudential word, *sadaka* (Ar.) was charity and, lastly, *rüşvet* (Ar.) was the forbidden bribe (cf. Rosenthal et al. 1986; Rosenthal 1995).

In the Ottoman Empire those who converted to Islam received a customary gift that, at the end of the 16th century, was made up of 50 *akçe* in cash, one length of turban cloth and a skull-cap. In the Islamic world

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2 Pedani-Fabris 1996, 381-3 (1590), 461 (1600), 603 (1627), 818 (1706); Firpo 1984, 112, 138-9, 145-7 (1592), 278-9, 306 (1594), 873-6 (1641).

the headgear symbolically expressed the quality of the person who used it. Thus, it is clear that to give a kind of skull-cap and a piece of cloth to be wrapped around it was symbolic of welcoming a person into the Muslim community (cf. Graf 2017, 2-3). The importance of gift-giving is stressed also by the following 17th century Ottoman proverb: "if you go to a gate empty handed, they say 'the master is sleeping'; if you go with a gift in your hands they say 'come in, the master orders'".[3]

On studying Ottoman-Venetian relations it is possible to find many records about the different kinds of gifts made by Venetian diplomats to the sultan and to members of the Ottoman élite. The presentation of gifts was often discussed during official meetings of the Venetian Senate. In the 14th century gifts included huge dogs, cloth, even shoes and also, from 1409 onwards, money for bribing Ottoman officials (*mançaria*). In the following period, besides cloths and money, there were luxury items such as books written in Arabic, lamps for mosques or caiques, small bolognesi toy dogs for the women of the imperial harem, clocks, mirrors, window glasses, spectacles, boxes made with rock crystal and silver, glass feathers for turbans, world maps and also pieces of parmesan cheese (cf. Fabris 1992; Fabris 1991).

In recent years many scholars have become interested in the concept of gift-giving. They have begun to study diplomatic gifts, their artistic value, the influence they had on international negotiations, on consumption and fashion, and also how gift-giving was used in Ottoman society.[4] Some papers deal also with Venetian-Ottoman relations due to the ancient links existing between Venice and Istanbul (cf. Raby 2007; Curatola 2010; Vitale D'Alberton 2010). Little is known, however, about gifts made by Venetian diplomats to members of the Ottoman élite during informal meetings or to low-ranking people in Istanbul. The account records of the Venetian embassy for the years 1670-1681 give a glimpse into this practice. In fact, besides official meetings in the Topkapı Palace with sultans and grand viziers, there were many other occasions when it was necessary to give gifts. First of all there were Muslim and Christian holidays, the former based on the lunar calendar of Hijra and the latter on the solar calendar. According to the Venetian custom the year began on the 1st of March but this did not prevent Venetians from celebrating also the 1st of January. On this occasion the bailo gave the so-called *bonamano*, that is to say a sum of money, to the servants of the embassy and all those who worked for it: the clerk, the physician, the barber, the apothecary, the baker, the

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3 Donado 1688, 68-9: "Eli boş bir kapıya varsın 'efendi uyur' derler, elinde bir güzar olsa 'gel, efendi buyur' derler".

4 Cf. Reindl-Kiel 2005, 2009, 2010; Howard 2010; Muhanna 2010; Ajmar-Wollheim, Molà 2011; Komanoff 2012; Reindl-Kiel 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Talbot 2006.

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washerwoman, the bricklayer, the interpreters, the embassy's janissaries, the students who were learning Ottoman and Turkish and their teacher (the *hoca*). Other money was given also to some Ottoman officials such as the *kapıcı* of the Pera gate, the "*makadam* of the messengers"[5] and the janissaries of other embassies such as that of France, England, Netherlands and Genoa. On an occasion of this kind money was given also to the violin and viola players of the French embassy who went to play for the bailo, to the friars of St. Francis who went to bless the house, to the priests of the three churches of St. Peter, of the Holy Land and of St. Mary Draperis and to some poor people and slaves. The sums delivered were about one or two reals for each person. For instance the *hoca* and the servants received 1 real, the barber and the apothecary 2.60, the *makadam* 0.60 and the washerwoman 2.00.[6] The *riyal guruş* or Spanish eight-real coin contained close to 25.6 grams of pure silver. In the period we are studying its exchange rate was 110 (in 1672), 125 (1676) and 130 (1683) compared with the Ottoman coin called *akçe*. In the same years, 300 *akçe* equalled one Venetian gold ducat (cf. Pamuk 2000, 144).

The *küçük bayram* festival, also called *şeker bayram* (sugar holiday), immediately following the end of the fasting month of *ramazan*, occupies the first three days of *şevval*. In Istanbul people used to eat together for the end of fasting and gifts, candies and cakes were exchanged. The *büyük bayram* or *kurban bayramı*, the festival of the sacrifice, is celebrated on the 10th of the month of *zilihicce* and recalls the willingness of Abraham/ İbrahim to sacrifice his son. It lasts three days and people share part of the meat of the sacrificed animal with friends and the needy. In these days helping the poor by giving food, money, meat and clothes in the name of *zakat* was also important. At this time Venetian diplomats used to give only Ottoman silver coins (*akçe*) and only to Muslims. There were Imperial Palace *kapıcı*s of the third gate (50 *akçe*) and of the second gate (1.20), imperial *çavuş*es (3), *saka*s (30), *solak*s (30), *bostancı*s (? *moslangi/ molangi* in the Venetian text) (60), *peşkirci*s (30) *peyk*s (30), members of the *mehter* (50) and guardians of lions (60); *kapıcı*s (1.20), *çavuş*es (1.57), *mütercim*s (0.60) and *peyk*s (1.57) of the *kaymakam*; drummers (1.57), *mütercim*s (0.60) and *çavuş*es (1.57) of the *kapudanpaşa*; *çavuş*es of the imperial arsenal (60), *kapıcı*s of the Pera gate (60, but they often refused to take them and asked for cloth), *segban* janissaries (70), the *kasapbaşı* and *kasap*s of Pera (1.80), the *müşürbaşı* and *müşür*s of Galata (1.50), *kapıcı*s of the Pera Sarayı (0.60), the "*makadam* of the dead"[7] (? *beytülmalcı*) (0.60), Venetian embassy janissaries (Venetian sequins 2 and

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5   Venezia, Archivio di Stato (ASVe), *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313, reg. 493, cc. 4-4*v*.

6   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 388, reg. 5, cc. 89*v*-90 (1679); cf. also c. 43 (1677).

7   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313, reg. 493, c. 5*v*.

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reals 5) and, lastly, the janissaries of the embassies of France, England, Flanders and Genoa (1.57).[8]

In the bailo's registers other Islamic festivals were recorded: the *donanma* of 23rd April 1679 (12 *rebiyülevvel* 1090), i.e. the *mevlit kandili* when the Prophet's birthday was celebrated. That year the Venetian embassy celebrated it for three days with rockets and candles and in the end the whole feast cost 113.30 riyals but it seems that gifts were not delivered on this occasion but only meal and drinks.[9] On the contrary no reference is made to two festivals linked with the beginning of spring: *nevruz*, celebrated on 20th March, the day of the vernal equinox, and *Hıdrellez*, celebrated on 6th May when the Ottoman fleet used to leave Istanbul for the summer campaign.

Christian festivals included Candlemas, when charity was given to the priests who went to the embassy with candles and to the Christian galley slaves of the *banyol* and the Ottoman fleet, and Easter, when lambs and eggs were given to the Venetian embassy's interpreters and janissaries, and to the priests of the churches of St. Francis, St. Peter, St. Mary, St. George and of the hospital of St. John. For Venice another important moment was the day of the patron saint of the city, the Evangelist St. Mark, celebrated on the 25th of April. Then, the bailo used to give charity to the poor and invited Venetians living in Constantinople to eat and drink a toast in honour of the Republic. In 1679 there was also another feast organised by the bailo Giovanni Morosini, when he ascended to the dignity of *procuratore di San Marco*, but this time no expense is recorded in the official account register of his embassy, that is to say that he probably paid for the event out of his own money.[10]

In the Ottoman Empire there were also civic festivals used to stress the strength of the state and the longevity of the dynasty. The most important event of this kind was the circumcision of princes (*sünnet*) often celebrated together with the marriage of imperial princesses. It was a public event recorded also in books of miniatures. Important *sünnet*s took place in 1439, 1457, 1472 (in Edirne), 1530, 1582, 1675 and 1720. In order to organise the 1675 *sünnet* for Prince Mustafa and the marriage of Princess Hatice, the Ottoman authorities asked Venice to send actors and singers to perform an Italian opera. Bailo Querini succeeded in avoiding this expensive task, saying that it was too difficult to find them and it required too much time to be ready for the festival. Moreover, he as well as the other foreign

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8   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313, reg. 493, cc. 4-4*v* (11 Feb. 1671); 5*v* (17 Apr. 1671).

9   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313, reg. 493, cc. 3*v* (2 Feb. 1671), 5 (28 Mar. 1571); b. 388, reg. 5, c. 96*v*.

10   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313/494, c. 32*v* (25 Apr. 1680); b. 388, reg. 5, c. 96*v* (25 Apr. 1679); *Relatione delle allegrezze* (quoted in Hammer 1831, 47).

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ambassadors present in Istanbul decided to decline the invitation to the ceremony in order to avoid the precious gifts they were expected to present. Thus, the only ambassadors who took part to the event were those of the principalities of Transylvania, Moldavia and Walachia and of the Republic of Ragusa that were subject to the Ottoman Empire's authority and could not avoid it.[11]

Another important event that took place during Morosini's period was the festival organised for the Ottoman conquest of the Cossack hetmanate capital of Čyhyryn (21 August 1678) during the Russian campaign. The celebration lasted three days and began on 18th of September. The bailo's spring residence near the Belgrad forest was lit up with candles and rockets. The expenses amounted to 91.40 reals but this time too no special gift was made. The same happened on 26th December of the same year when the Venetian embassy was lit up for the birth of a son to the sultan. This time the expenses reached 106.10 reals.[12]

It is interesting to note that meals were organised in the Venetian palace above all for the members of other embassies, while very few Ottomans were invited to lunch or dinner. Some exceptions can be found: on 1st December 1670, İbrahim Bey and Turgut Bey had a meal with the bailo, while on 22nd December 1675, some 'Turks' took part in a banquet while the *kaymakam*'s drummers and the trumpeters played for the whole day. On 12th September 1678 the *bostancıbaşı* arrived with some of his men and they all received almonds, cinnamon, pine nuts and *confetti* (almonds or anise or coriander seeds covered with sugar or hardened honey). Turks were, however, usually received in the bailo's house. Otherwise there was no reason to perfume the palace with aloe wood "to make it more confortable for the Turks who arrived".[13]

The diplomatic gifts given by the bailo at the moment of the official reception in the Topkapı Palace were usually decided in Venice and paid directly by the office of the Rason Vecchie. Ordinary gifts, however, were paid for by the embassy. In the account registers a special place is reserved to the gifts given to other Europeans. It is noteworthy the list of the presents for the members of the French embassy on 19th January 1680, at the arrival of the new bailo Pietro Civran (1689-1681). The ambassador de Guilleragues received confectionary, a velvet basket with 4 bottle of scented water, 2 velvet boxes embroidered with golden flowers, 6 pairs of gloves in the Roman style, 2 little brooms with the handle covered by velvet, 1

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11 Özkan 2004, 91-6; Terzioğlu 1995; Özkan 2013; Procházka-Eisl 1995; Atasoy 1997; Firpo 1984, 134.

12 ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 388, reg. 5, cc. 81, 89-89*v*.

13 ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313, reg. 493, c. 1*v* (1 Dec. 1670); b. 313, reg. 494, c. 10*v* (12 Dec. 1679); b. 388, reg. 5, cc. 12, 78*v*.

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mirror with a velvet frame, golden and coloured flowers, 2 golden boxes with soap, 8 glass objects (*bizzarri*), 3 glass compositions made of 3 dishes one over the other (*fontane in tre soleri*), 2 golden lanterns, 24 glasses, 24 small carafes. His wife too received 1 mirror with a velvet frame and doors, a velvet box with perfume, 1 pair of embroidered golden gloves, 4 gloves in the Roman style, 2 boxes of golden musk soap, 6 golden and coloured flowers, 2 little velvet brooms, 4 bottles covered with silk and straw, 4 big combs, 4 ivory boxes, 4 ivory penholders, 2 glass dishes, 4 glass objects (*bizzarri*), 2 cups, 4 sherbet cups with lids (*sultanine coperte*), 4 flower vases. For both guests there were also four baskets to bring away all these objects. Another banquet was made for the members of the Venetian nation on 23rd December 1675, and on this occasion too there was a gift of cakes, almonds, confectionary, velvet round boxes (*bossoli*), women's gloves, mirrors with velvet frames, golden and silk flowers, glass objects (*burriani* and *fontane in tre soleri*), golden lanterns, glasses and so on. In particular the silk flowers were those made in Bologna by the nuns of the so-called 'Convento dei fiori di seta', while mirrors, spectacles, magnifying glasses and glass objects came from the island of Murano.[14]

Members of the Ottoman élite received gifts when the bailo went to their official residences to meet them or when they attained or changed office. On these occasions the presents are the same as those mentioned above. For instance on 24th December 1675, former *kaymakam* İbrahim paşa received several cloths, mirrors with velvet frames, ivory combs, ivory tobacco boxes, spectacles, combs for lice, silk and golden flowers, stone fruits; while on 14th January 1676, the new *kaymakam* Osman paşa received an octagonal mirror, a box full of perfumes and creams, velvet boxes with soap, combs for lice, spectacles with their boxes, ivory combs, ivory knives, ivory tobacco boxes, silk and golden flowers, bottles with perfumes, ivory ink bottle (*caramal*), and ivory hourglasses (*hore*).[15]

Also an official journey to Edirne to meet the court gave the opportunity of showing the magnificence of the embassy and the importance of Venetian precious items. For instance, in 1676, several members of the court, from the *valide* to the *kızlar ağası*, the imperial *kilerci*, the grand vizier Ahmed, his secretary, the *müfti* and many other officials received Murano mirrors, cloths, little velvet brooms, ivory telescopes, golden and silk flowers, ivory combs, boxes and small flasks, soaps, confetti, almonds, sugar, parmesan cheese called *piacentino*, clocks, embroidered gloves, fans with miniatures, glass objects, spectacles and even Italian *savonarola* chairs (*sedie da campagna*) with velvet, fringes and golden knobs. Gift were usually delivered taking into account the qualities of the persons: for instance

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14 ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313, reg. 494 cc. 17*v*-18*v*; b. 388, reg. 5, c. 12.

15 ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 388, reg. 5, cc. 12*v*-15.

the woman's gloves and the fans were for the *valide*, cheese and chairs for the grand vizier, a big mirror for the *kızlarağa* and spectacles and cheese for the *müfti*. Among the items delivered to Ottomans in other occasions there were flint stones, sharpening steels, combs for lice, ivory knives, tobacco boxes, golden candles, pillows, perfumes, beard combs, glass bottles (*inghistere*), flower pots, glass washing basins with jugs (*imbrici*), glasses (*bardache*, from the Turkish word *bardak*), huge cups with the crescent, cloths, glass carafes, sherbet cups with their cover (*sultanine coperte*), glass mugs (*mastrapani* from the Turkish *maşrapa*, today *maşrafa*) with or without their covers, glass bowls for oil and vinegar (*gagiandre*), fruit bowls, lorgnettes, perfumes and rose water, lanterns and hanging-lamps (*feriali* and *cesendeli*), bags for bows and arrows, strange glass objects (*bizzarie* and *burle*), glass animals and also bedpans and urinals.[16]

The recipients were not only members of the Ottoman élite but also their relatives and the neighbours of the Venetian palace. For instance, on 22nd March 1678, the grand vizier's interpreter's mother received glasses, cups, glass bottles and other presents while on different occasions Mustafa çelebi who lived in a house near the Venetian embassy received several gifts: on 8th December 1678, he got the Venetian famous *teriaca* (medicine against every kind of illness) he was longing for and on the following 22nd September on the occasion of the *ramazan* the bailo gave him 4 big round pieces of grana cheese, 50 hanging lamps, 6 carved wax candles (*maggioli*), 2 glasses (*bardachi*), 6 spectacles (*occhiali da naso*), 2 boxes for spectacles, 2 ivory lorgnettes (*occhiali da pugno*), and several sweets.[17]

Members of the Ottoman élite sometimes also asked for peculiar items they were not able to find elsewhere and the bailo often gave them as a gift. For instance on 17th August 1677, a *çavuş* arrived to ask for glass window-panes for a new building ordered by the sultan and other sheets were asked for by the grand vizier's *tezkire-i evvel* on 13th September 1678. The same official looked for a velvet chair on 28th September 1679, while on 15th July 1679 the sultan's *tezkereci* asked for grana cheese (*piacentino*). On 15th November of the same year the *kızlarağa* asked for dogs for the sultan's son and the *reis efendi* looked for glass window-panes; on 17th January 1680, the sultan's *tezkereci* again asked for a table clock; on 5th May 1681, a Venetian renegade called Hasan ağa, the grand vizier's pageboy, asked for a wax doll and a microscope; in the following August the Galata voivode asked for flower vases, small carafes (*inghisterole*) and carafes (*inghistere*). On 30th April 1681, the sultan's *damad* and *musahip*

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16 ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313/494, cc. 7*v* (20 May 1671), 9-9*v* (15 Nov. 1679), 9*v* (19 Nov. 1679), 10*v* (12 Dec. 1679), 11-11*v* (17 Jan. 1680), 13-13*v* (20 Dec.1680), 23*v*-24 (12 Feb. 1681), 43*v* (5 May 1681); b. 388, reg. 5, cc. 18-37*v*, 51 (10 Jun. 1677).

17 ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313/494, c. 9-9*v* (15 Nov. 1679); c. 48 (22 Sep. 1681); b. 388/5 c. 71 (22 Mar. 1678); c. 84*v* (8 Dec. 1678); c. 103*v* (27 Aug. 1679).

Mustafa looked for two chairs with velvet, fringes and studs because he had invited the sultan to go to see him in his house – on this occasion the bailo bought them paying 40 sequins each.[18]

Sometimes members of the Ottoman élite invited Venetian diplomats to *sünnet*s or marriages. They too were the occasion of gift-giving. On 16th October 1677, the Venetian account registers record expenses for a vizier's sons' marriages and, on 22nd October 1678, for the *kaymakam*'s son's *sünnet*, while on 28th July 1679, the grand vizier sent his *bayraktar* with a candle to invite the bailo to his marriage.[19]

A peculiar practice used in Istanbul and testified by Venetian documents is also that of knocking at the Venetian palace gate with presents for the bailo in order to get money in exchange. It appears to be a way of selling goods made by poor people or also servants. The records make reference to gardeners and *bostancı*s with fruits, vegetables and flowers, cooks with cakes, Turks with fish, slaves with wooden candlesticks, servants with napkins, milk, butter, bread, *poğaça*s (from the Ven. *fugaza*, It. *focaccia*), hares, jam. The servants of the embassies of France, England and Netherland too used to bring wine, muscatel, rosolio and partridges, besides the very famous big strawberries of the garden of the French palace. They were not the usual *fragaria vesca*, present from the Alps to Persia, but a new sort coming from America, probably the *fragaria verginiana* that arrived in France in the 17th century and at the sultan's table in 1682 thanks to a custom official who asked expressly for them for the imperial palace.[20]

Even if wine and alcohol was officially prohibited for Muslims, members of the Ottoman élite often appreciated it. On 12th December 1670, Turgut reis sent to the bailo some muscat he had on his galley while, on 27th March 1676, the bailo sent two boxes of French *rosolio* to the grand vizier and, on 30th November 1679, he bought two boxes of *rosolio* from a French, monsieur Greasque, to make gifts to the *nişancı*, the *mirahor*, the *tezkire-i evvel*, the *tezkire-i sani*, and other important officials.[21]

Gift-giving was important in the Ottoman Empire. It was a means to immediately obtain something in exchange but also to make friends with people who could be useful in the future. An interesting example of this practice dates to bailo Morosini's period (1675-1680) when the imperial interpreter Marc'Antonio Mamuca della Torre befriended the young Yeğen

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18   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 388/5 cc. 57, 58, 102, 107; b. 313/494, cc. 9-9*v*, 11-11*v*; 38*v*; 46*v*; 74*v*.

19   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 388/5 cc. 61, 82, 103.

20   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 388/5, c. 52 (12 Jun. 1677); c. 77 (29 Jul. 1678). Today huge strawberries are an hybryd formed by the *fragaria verginiana* and the *fragaria chiloensis* that arrived in France about 1750 (cf. Pedani 2012, 57).

21   ASVe, *Bailo a Costantinopoli*, b. 313/494, cc. 2, 10; b. 388/5 c. 20*v*.

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Hüseyin Bey, Mehmed Köprülü's nephew. This Muslim liked wine but he did not dare to drink it fearing his father's reproaches and those of his brother-in-law Kara Mustafa paşa. His secretary was Mamuca's friend and Mamuca was also a friend of Morosini who, during the summer of 1678, lived in a holiday house near the Belgrad forest just outside the capital. There the bailo had built a small lodge on a huge tree where he went to enjoy the cool and he began to lend it to the interpreter's friend. Hüseyin told his father and Kara Mustafa paşa that he went hunting hawks in Belgrad forest but, instead, he climbed on that tree to drink wine and to listen to the playing of ney flutes. About twenty years later Hüseyin Bey became Amcazade Köprülü Hüseyin paşa and was the grand vizier who reorganised the Ottoman army and fleet at the end of the Morea War and negotiated the peace of Karlowitz (1699) with both Vienna and Venice.[22]

As it is self-evident on studying Venetian documents in the modern era, ambassadors sent to Istanbul used gift-giving as a diplomatic strategy to get favours and information from the élite of the government and to be welcomed by the common people. Precious items were used also to show the magnificence of the rulers and the excellence of the goods of a country. In a period in which artists were considered only skilful artisans, art was not so important as it is today but diplomatic gifts were also promoters of artistic fashions and shapers of consumption habits. Besides those given to the sultan and the grand vizier in official meetings, diplomatic gifts dispensed to low level members of the ruling class and common people were important to establish the reputation of a foreign state. As bailo Giacomo Querini wrote: "To negotiate with the Turk, gifts are always required".[23]

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22   ASVe, *Senato*, *Dispacci Ambasciatori*, *Germania*, filza 178.249, cc. 229-231 (all. 12 Oct. 1697).

23   Firpo 1984, 968: "con turchi si negozia sempre con doni".

Glossary

akçe	(Ott.)	silver coin, asper
askeri	(Ott.)	military, pertaining to the army
atiyye şahane	(Ott.)	bounty granted by the sultan during particular events, such as accession to the throne or princes' circumcision
atiyye	(Ott.)	gift from a superior to an inferior
bahşiş	(Ott.)	tip for a member of the *askeri* class
bailo	(Ven.)	Venetian officer in Constantinople with the competences of a consul and a residential ambassador
banyol	(Ott.)	bagnio, prison of the galley slaves
bardaca	(pl. *bardache/bardachi*, Ven. from the Tur. *bardak*)	glass, cup, mug, goblet
bayraktar	(Ott.)	standard bearer
beytülmalcı	(Ott.)	officer concerned with the canonical distribution of the inheritances
bizzarro	(pl. *bizzarri/bizzarie*, Ven.)	glass objects of an unusual shape
bonamano	(Ven.)	tip for the New Year given to the employers of the Venetian embassy
bossolo	(pl. *bossoli*, Ven.)	round boxes
bostancı	(Ott.)	imperial guard
bostancıbaşı	(Ott.)	commander of the imperial guards
burla	(pl. *burle*, Ven)	glass objects of an unusual shape
burriano	(pl. *burriani*, Ven.)	glass objects
büyük bayram	(Ott.)	Muslim religious festival, cfr *kurban bayramı*
büyük mirahor	(Ott.)	master of the imperial horses
caramal	(Ven.)	ink bottle
çavuş	(Ott.)	messenger
cesendelo	(pl. *cesendeli*, Ven.)	hanging-lamp
confetto	(pl. *confetti*, It.)	almonds or anise or coriander seeds covered with sugar or hardened honey
damad	(Ott.)	son-in-law, man married into the imperial family
donanma	(Ott.)	Muslim religious festival, cfr *mevlit kandili*
feriale	(pl. *feriali*, Ven.)	lantern, table-lamp
fontana in tre soleri	(pl. *fontane in tre soleri*, Ven.)	glass compositions made of 3 dishes one over the other
gagiandra	(pl. *gagiandre*, Ven.)	glass bowls for oil and vinegar, turtle
hediye	(Ott.)	gift exchanged between persons at the same hierarchic level
Hıdrellez	(Ott.)	the 40th day after the spring equinox (6 May), popularly considered as the beginning of summer

hibe	(Ott., law)	gift, present, donation
hoca	(Ott.)	teacher, a person who knows how to read and write
hora	(pl. *hore* Ven.)	hourglass
imbrico	(pl. *imbrici* Ven.)	glass washing basins with jugs
in'am	(Ott.)	favour or gift to an inferior
inghistera	(pl. *inghistere* Ven.)	carafe, glass bottle
inghisterola	(pl. *inghisterole* Ven.)	small carafe
kadınlar saltanatı	(Ott.)	'the sultanate of women', period of Ottoman history, about 1566-1650
kapıcı	(Ott.)	door keeper, superintendent of the imperial ushers
kapudanpaşa	(Ott.)	High Admiral responsible for the Ottoman fleets (from 1567 onwards)
kasap	(Ott.)	butcher
kasapbaşı	(Ott.)	superintendent of the butcher's guild and director of the sheep tax
kaymakam	(Ott.)	head official of a district
kızlar ağası	(Ott.)	chief black eunuch of the imperial harem
kilerci	(Ott.)	butler
küçük bayram	(Ott.)	Muslim religious festival, cfr *şeker bayram*
kurban bayramı	(Ott.)	the festival of the sacrifice, celebrated on the 10th of the month of *zilihicce*, also called *büyük bayram*
maggiolo	(pl. *maggioli* Ven.)	carved wax candle
makadam	(Ott.)	head official, leader
mançaria	(Ven.)	money given as a bride
mastrapano	(pl. *mastrapani*, Ven. from the Ott. *maşrapa*, Tur. *maşrafa*)	glass mugs
mehter	(Ott.)	military band
mevlit kandili	(Ott.)	festival for the Prophet's birthday (12 *rebiyülevvel*)
mirahor	(Ott.)	ostler, stableman
musahip	(Ott.)	gentleman-in-waiting of the sultan
müfti	(Ott.)	mufti, official expert in Islamic law
müşür	(Ott.)	field marshal
müşürbaşı	(Ott.)	head of the field marshals
mütercim	(Ott.)	interpreter
nevruz	(Ott.)	the day of the vernal equinox, festival of the beginning of spring
nişancı	(Ott.)	officer whose duty was inscribing the sultan's imperial monogram over the documents
occhiali da naso	(Ven.)	spectacles
occhiali da pugno	(Ven.)	lorgnettes
peşkeş	(Ott.)	tribute or gift brought to a superior

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peşkirci	(Ott.)	servant who had charge of the imperial table napkins
peyk	(Ott.)	messenger
piacentino	(Ven.)	parmesan cheese
poğaça	(Ott. from Ven. *fugaza*, It. *focaccia*)	cake of very fat pastry
procuratore di San Marco	(Ven.)	dignity given to honour very important Venetian noblemen
ramazan	(Ott.)	ninth month of the Islamic calendar
rebiyülevvel	(Ott.)	third month of the Islamic calendar
reis efendi	(Ott.)	reisülküttab, head of the imperial chancellery
riyal guruş	(Ott.)	Spanish eight-real coin
rosolio	(It.)	light liquor
rüşvet	(Ott.)	forbidden bribe
sadaka	(Ott.)	charity
saka	(Ott.)	water carrier, corporal of the janissaries
sedia da campagna	(pl. *sedie da campagna*, It. *savonarola* chair)	Florentine Renaissance chair that could be closed to carry it
segban	(Ott.)	keeper of the sultan's hounds (later incorporated with the janissaries)
solak	(Ott.)	guardsman in attendance on the sultan in processions
sultanina coperta	(pl. *sultanine coperte*, Ven.)	sherbet cup with lid
sünnet	(Ott.)	circumcision, imperial princes' circumcision festival
şeker bayram	(Ott.)	'sugar holiday', holiday following the end of the fasting month of *ramazan* (the first three days of *şevval*)
şevval	(Ott.)	tenth month of the Islamic calendar
teriaca	(It.)	medicine against every kind of illness
tezkereci	(Ott.)	official charged with the duty of writing official memoranda
tezkire-i evvel	(Ott.)	the grand vizier's first secretary
tezkire-i sani	(Ott.)	the grand vizier's second secretary
valide	(Ott.)	mother of the sultan
Venedik Sarayı		'Palazzo Venezia', the Venetian embassy in Constantinople, to-day the office of the Italian general consulate and of the Italian ambassador in Istanbul (Beyoğlu, Tomtom Kaptan Sokak, No. 5)
zilihicce	(Ott.)	twelfth month of the Islamic calendar

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Homeland in the Poetry of Nik'oloz Baratašvili and Giacomo Leopardi

Luigi Magarotto
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract   In 1839, the 22-year-old Nik'oloz Baratašvili composed the long poem *Bedi Kartlisa* (The Fate of Georgia), in which he tackled one of the issues of modern Georgia: whether the choice made in 1783 by King Erek'le II to draw up a treaty of friendship with the Russian Empire had been beneficial for Kartl-K'axeti. In the course of the poem Baratašvili maintains a stiff attitude, never siding for or against the choice of Erek'le II. Much more instinctive and impetuous is the attitude of the 20-year-old Giacomo Leopardi, who, faced with 'Italy in chains', is overwhelmed by an individualistic romantic impulse. In his songs, he desires greatness for his homeland and the glory of ancient times when people ran to die for it, he states his aversion to foreign rule and his hopes for Italy's resurrection.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 The Concept of Nature in Baratašvili and Leopardi. – 3 Homeland in the Poetry of Baratašvili. – 4 Homeland in the Poetry of Leopardi.

Keywords   Nik'oloz Baratašvili. Giacomo Leopardi. Georgian literature. Italian literature.

ცუდად ხომ მაინც არა ჩაივლის ეს განწირულის სულის კვეთება,

და გზა უვალი, შენგან თელილი, მერანო ჩემო, მაინც დარჩება;

რომ ჩემ შემდგომად მომძესა ჩემსა სიძნელე გზისა გაუადვილდეს,

და შეუპოვრად მას ჰუნე თვისი შავის ბედის წინ გამოუქროლდეს!
(Baratašvili 1968, 121)

The yearnings of my restless soul will not in vain have glowed,
The impenetrable path you opened, my Pegasus, will remain.
He who follows in our wake, a smoother path will find;
Daring all, his fearless steed shall leave dark fate behind.[1]

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[1] Cf. http://allpoetry.com/Merani (2017-04-04).

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> O glorioso spirto,
> Dimmi: d'Italia tua morto è l'amore?
> Dì: quella fiamma che t'accese, è spenta?
> (Rigoni 1987, 15)

> Glorious spirit,
> Tell me: Has your love for your Italy died?
> Has the fire that gave you life gone cold?
> (Galassi 2010, 25)

1   Introduction

Nik'oloz Baratašvili's (1817-45) poetry was reviewed by Boris Pasternak, who expressed his opinion in 1946, in a draft of the preface to his translation of the Georgian poet's lyrical works. In these poems, Pasternak finds the hallmarks of European Romanticism: "notes of pessimism, themes of loneliness, feelings of universal pain" (Pasternak 1991, 409). Similarly, Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), although unconnected and indeed opposed to Italian Romanticism, displays an undoubted

> ideal affinity with some of the typical conceptions of European Romanticism, especially German. […] Typically romantic is first of all his anti-rationalism: the defence of imagination, of illusion and of poetry against science. (Rigoni 2015a, 145)

The two poets were born and raised in very different historical and cultural contexts. Leopardi's philosophy and ideals draw inspiration from the vigorous wake of the materialists and sensists of the eighteenth century, enriched by the fundamental contribution of Greek thought and partly also by Old Testament precepts (Timpanaro 1965, 203). Baratašvili elaborates his conception of the world primarily on the teachings of the Old and New Testaments, on the pain and the disillusionment of Ecclesiastes, adopting the maxim: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Qoh. 1: 2)[2] (Gac'erelia 1978, 136; Asatiani 1978, 76). However, he would never agree with Job's radical pessimism and despair expressed in the curse: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived" (Jb 3: 3). On the contrary, it is Leopardi who welcomes Job's curse, along with the maxims of the Greek classics, such as "Better for a man never to have been born or, once born, to die as soon as possible", or "The day

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[2] All Bible quotations are from *King James Bible. Authorized Version*, http://www.Kingjamesbibleonline.org (2017-04-04).

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of mourning should be the day of birth, not the day of death" etc. (Tim-panaro 1965, 203), in the following verses:

> Forse in qual forma, in quale
> Stato che sia, dentro covile o cuna,
> È funesto a chi nasce il dì natale.
> (Rigoni 1987, 88)

> Maybe in whatever form or state,
> Be it in stall or cradle,
> The day we're born is cause for mourning.
> (Galassi 2010, 202)

2 The Concept of Nature in Baratašvili and Leopardi

In the draft of his preface, Pasternak is struck by another important element in the poetry of Baratašvili, which somehow brings the latter closer to Leopardi: the conception of nature. The Russian poet is particularly impressed by two poems: *Šemoyameba Mtac'midazed* (1833-36; Twilight over Mtac'minda)[3] and *Yame Q'abaxzed* (1836; Night over Q'abaxi[4]), where we find that nature is not only described, but also presented as a living totality. For example, the poet addresses the mountain Mtac'minda with the following words: "Mtao cxovelo" (Living Mountain), in whose womb Baratašvili would find refuge (Baratašvili 1968, 88-9). In these poems, and especially in *Činari* (1844; Plane tree), the Georgian poet is able to grasp nature's secret voice and share it with us. He is convinced that nature and all incorporeal and inanimate beings have a voice, a secret language (which can be grasped only by poets), whose meaning is more alive than any other language, as he makes clear in the following verses in the poem *Činari*:

> მრწამს, რომ არს ენა რამ საიდუმლო უასკოთაცა და უსულთ შორის,
> და უცხოველდეს სხვათა ენათა არს მნიშვნელობა მათის საუბრის!
> (Baratašvili 1968, 130)

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3 Mtac'minda is the mountain dominating the city of Tbilisi, where the Georgian Pantheon is located.

4 Q'abaxi was a large area where cavalry exercises took place. A green space used for walks and gatherings, after the annexation of Georgia to the Russian Empire in 1801, it was transformed into a park.

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> Incorporeal and inanimate beings have a secret language, I believe, and its meaning is more alive than any other utterance![5]

Nature and all incorporeal and inanimate beings take on an anthropomorphic semblance (Nucubidze 1981, 6; 2006, 100; Lashkaradze 1987, 183). We do not know whether Baratašvili had some knowledge, maybe indirectly, about the early-nineteenth century German philosophy theories or about the work of Madame de Staël's, entitled *De l'Allemagne* (1810; On Germany), but the idea of a living nature was at that time widespread and shared within European Romanticism. Leopardi also believed that

> The poet does not imitate nature: rather is it true that nature speaks within him and through his mouth, (Caesar, D'Intino 2013, 4372-3: 10 September 1828)

by means of feeling and imagination, so the task of the poet is to collect and express its voice.

When analysing Baratašvili's works and thinking, we cannot rely on the thousands of pages of notes, as it happens for Leopardi, written in the *Zibaldone di pensieri* (1817-32; Miscellany of thoughts).[6] Unfortunately, his death in a foreign land has largely dispersed his work. Only thirty-seven poems, one long poem and eighteen letters survive.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, with his philosophical and cultural attitude, Nik'oloz Baratašvili promoted a radical turn in the poetry of his country, escaping the seduction of the Eastern literary tradition, for centuries the dominant force in the culture of Georgia, and placing himself firmly in the great stream of European literatures. In the literary history of his country, he is an extraordinary and original meteor, which had neither precursors nor followers (Č'avč'avadze 1953, 219).

3   Homeland in the Poetry of Baratašvili

In the draft of his preface, Pasternak makes a fleeting reference to another aspect of Baratašvili's work: his love for the homeland. In 1839, the 22-year-old poet composed the long poem *Bedi Kartlisa* (The Fate of Georgia), in which he tackled one of the issues of modern Georgia that were most hotly debated amongst the indigenous *intelligentsia*: whether the choice made in 1783 by King Erek'le II to draw up a treaty of friend-

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[5] Unless otherwise indicated in the bibliography, translations are mine.

[6] The word *Zibaldone* means «miscellany» or «hodgepodge».

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ship, and establish a protectorate with the Russian Empire under the rule of Catherine II had been beneficial for Kartl-K'axeti.

According to several Georgian intellectuals, this treaty already contained in itself the premises for Kartl-K'axeti's subsequent annexation, accomplished in 1801 by the Russian Empire. The issue of the unexpected annexation by Russia trampled the demands and expectations of the Georgian ruling house, nobility and people. In the countryside a series of revolts broke out and an intense debate among Georgian intellectuals, which continued throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, arose. Some of them argued that King Erek'le had opted for the lesser evil, since the 1801 annexation to the Russian Empire had preserved their national identity, as territorial entity and as Christian nation (Yayanidze 2012, 319; Lomidze 2014, 51-6). Other intellectuals asserted, on the contrary, that Russia, albeit a country sharing the same religion, was as dangerous an enemy as the Persians or the Ottoman Turks; thus, King Erek'le would have done better not to draw up the treaty of friendship, which caused the subsequent annexation, trying instead to find political forms of agreement with the various enemies as the need arose.

The plot of the poem is historically placed in 1795, when the Georgian army suffered a crushing defeat at Krc'anisi by the hand of the Persian Army, led by Shah Agha Mohammad Khan. The poet compares the two positions illustrated above through a close dialogue between two characters: on the one hand, there is the old King Erek'le II, who, witnessing his army defeated and unable to resist the Muslim enemies, supports the idea to put his Kingdom under the crown of the Russian Emperor, for the survival of Georgia. On the other hand, his counsellor Solomon Leonidze sets out the reasons that clash with this choice, in the name of Georgia's freedom and independence. King Erek'le asserts that he is going to take this decision in the interest of Georgians, but his counsellor objects that the Georgian people are very different from the Russians and that, in any case, were Georgians to live under the Russian crown, they would be deprived of freedom, and, therefore, they would live unhappily.

The dialogue between the two characters is lengthy, well-articulated and, on occasion, even harsh, but in the course of the poem the young Baratašvili maintains a stiff, aloof attitude, never siding for or against the choice of Erek'le II. However, with the passion infused in the words of the King's counsellor, in response to Erek'le II's arguments, he expresses the following reproach:

მაგრამ შენ, მეფევ, ვინ მოგცა ნება –
სხვას განუბრძნო შენთ ყმათ ცხოვრება,
მისდევდე შენსა გულისკვეთებას
და უთრგუნვიდე თავისუფლებას?
(Baratašvili 1968, vv. 324-7)

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But who gave you, O Sire, the right
to donate the lives of your subjects,
to follow the desire of your heart,
riding roughshod over freedom?

A reproach that can also be heard in the subtle irony the counsellor Solomon uses when giving his wife a description about the conditions of golden captivity, in which the Georgian nobles should have lived in St. Petersburg, the new capital:

ხელმწიფეს ჰპოვებთ მამად კეთილად
და დედოფალსა დედისა ნაცვლად;
არ მოგაკლდებათ თავისუფლება,
განცხრომილება,ფუფვნეულება
მათთა სიმდიდრის პალატთა შორის!
(Baratašvili 1968, vv. 366-70)

Tsar will be a good father to you,
Tsarina a new mother,
in their rich palaces,
you will enjoy freedom,
luxury, pleasures!

We clearly perceive that the poet shares the opinions of the counsellor, although not explicitly:

His heart – said Pavle Ingoroq'va – is on the side of counsellor Solomon. (Ingoroq'va 1963, 334)

In the stance taken by Baratašvili we could see a certain indifference, albeit painful, but perhaps it is more accurate to claim that we are witnessing a thoughtful resignation, a due obedience to a design that, in his deep religiousness, the poet feels is prepared by the divine mind, whose intentions are not given for us to know. There is no deviation in his love for Georgia, nor any sudden decisions, he instead pursues a line that interprets the negative events happening in his own country as inevitable phenomena, as trials to be accepted in the name of faith; in addition, he sometimes is able to illuminate the events mentioned by means of reason, which often leads the poet to an extreme vigilance, and therefore to inaction and idleness.

Nevertheless, in the poem *Saplavi mepis Irak'lisa* (1842; The Tomb of King Erek'le), which, written three years after the long poem *The Fate of Georgia*, seems to represent its perfect epilogue, the poet is no longer uncertain, hesitant or even against the pro-Russian choice, but he supports and shares King Erek'le's decision:

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თაყვანს ვსცემ შენსა ნაანდერძებს, წინასწარად თქმულს!
გახსოვს, სიკვდილის ჟამს რომ უთხარ ქართლს დაობღებულს?
აჰა აღსრულდა ხელმწიფური აწ აზრი შენი,
და ვსჭამთ ნაყოფსა მისგან ტკბილსა აწ შენნი ძენი.
(Baratašvili 1968, 123)

I pay respect to your testament, prophetically spoken in advance.
Do you recall the time before your death you spoke to orphaned
Georgia?
Behold, your royal idea has come to pass
And we your sons are eating its sweet fruit.
(Rayfield 2010, 162)

There is no enthusiasm in his attitude, nor any expression of joy, he rather displays a simple acceptance of the event. However, it should be noted that this poem is dedicated to Mixeil Baratašvili (the same surname of the poet is coincidental), who was a descendant of one of those families that in 1724 had moved to Russia in the wake of King Vaxt'ang VI, so that his surname was Russified in Barataev. Mixeil was born in 1784 in Russia and was a historian and a numismatist; in 1826 he was arrested for an alleged involvement in the Decembrist revolt of 1825, but was later cleared of all charges. Perhaps the poet had this patriotic figure in mind when he wrote the line of the third stanza, in which he states that the exiled children of Georgia "უდნობს ყინულსა ჩრდილოეთისა, განცეცხლებული" (melt the Northern ice with the fire [of their souls]) (Baratašvili 1968, 123). Probably the poet meant that Georgian refugees would spread their rebellious and libertarian spirit also within the despotic Russian Empire; furthermore, in the same third stanza he says that, returning to his homeland, the exiled children of Georgia would bring to their country education (*ganatleba*), thus foreshadowing, or rather hoping for – as might be understood – a cultural, but not a political union between Georgia and Russia. Because of the character of openness that is connected with the very meaning of the word 'education', we can assume that with this term Baratašvili wants to represent a cultural union of his country that is not limited to Russia alone. A cultural union perhaps open to the great European culture, but it seems impossible to find valid elements in support of this thesis. However, if we accept the interpretation that the poet would welcome a cultural (but not a political) union between Georgia and Russia, the third stanza of the poem would openly contradict the choice made by King Erek'le to conclude a treaty of protectorate and, so, to entrust a despotic Russia with the protection of his country, which Baratašvili defends throughout the poem. In any case, in *The Tomb of King Erek'le* the poet's approval of King Erek'le's pro-Russian choice seems indisputable, except precisely in the third stanza, which is quite contradictory and partly obscure.

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In order to explain this stanza, we must note that Baratašvili wrote the poem *Sumbuli da mc'iri* (The Hyacinth and the Pilgrim) in that same 1842. The hyacinth had been pulled out of the earth, where it had sprung up and, although it had been placed in a luxurious palace, where it was lovingly cared for, it no longer had the fragrance it once had. Here the poet uses again the theme of the golden prison that had already been used, as we have seen above, in the long poem *The Fate of Georgia*. In the flower, we might see a metaphor of Georgia, which, although no longer threatened by Muslim enemies, feels oppressed, if not stifled, under the domination of the Russian Empire, and soon fades. In other words, both the poem *The Tomb of King Erek'le* and the poem *The Hyacinth and the Pilgrim* could be considered as two possible epilogues of the long poem *The Fate of Georgia*, offering, however, opposite conclusions.

Nevertheless, we must add a third conceivable epilogue, less rational and much more romantic, the conclusion of the individual heroic act in the name of the freedom of the homeland, proposed by Baratašvili in the poem conventionally called *Merani* (1842; Pegasus):

გასწი, გაფრინდი, ჩემო მერანო, გარდამატარე ბედის სამძღვარი,
თუ აქამომდე არ ემონა მას, არც აწ ემონოს შენი მხედარი!
(Baratašvili 1968, 121)

Bear me far beyond the bounds of fate, my Pegasus,
Fate whose slave I never was and henceforth – never shall be![7]

In this poem, the theme of sacrifice and individual immolation for the homeland is strengthened by the nostalgia of the impossible or, better still, the desire for the infinite, which can only be fulfilled by breaking the limits set for each one of us by our own destiny. This desire, since Goethe's *Faust*, will mark the philosophy of Romanticism and, consequently, the behaviour of many romantic heroes (Gac'erelia 1978, 159-60).

4 Homeland in the Poetry of Leopardi

Much more instinctive and impetuous is the attitude of the twenty-year-old Giacomo Leopardi, who, faced with 'Italy in chains',

E questo è peggio,
Che di catene ha carche ambe le braccia.
(Rigoni 1987, 5)

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7 Cf. http://allpoetry.com/Merani (2017-04-04).

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And, worse, her arms
are bound with chains.
(Galassi 2010, 3)

i.e. divided into many small states and fallen into the hands of foreign armies and foreign ruling dynasties, is overwhelmed by a romantic impulse of individualism. In the canto or song *All'Italia* (To Italy), written in 1818, he cries:

L'armi, qua l'armi: io solo
Combatterò, procomberò sol io.
Dammi, o ciel, che sia foco
Agl'italici petti il sangue mio.
(Rigoni 1987, 6)

To arms! Bring me my sword;
I'll fight alone, I'll fall alone.
Let my blood, O heaven,
Be inspiring to Italian hearts.
(Galassi 2010, 5)

In two other songs of those years, *Sopra il monumento di Dante che si preparava in Firenze* (1818; On the monument to Dante Being Erected in Florence) and *Ad Angelo Mai, quand'ebbe trovato i libri di Cicerone della Repubblica* (1820; To Angelo Mai. On His Finding the Manuscript of Cicero's *De re publica*), Leopardi

desires greatness for his homeland and the glory of ancient times when people ran to die for it, (Salvatorelli 1975, 180)

and he states his aversion to foreign rule and his hopes for Italy's resurrection. This was true even when his disenchantment worsened, leading the way to his concept of the vanity of human things, starting from political greatness:

E se ne porta il tempo
Ogni umano accidente. Or dov'è il suono
Di que' popoli antichi? Or dov'è il grido
De' nostri avi famosi, e il grande impero
Di quella Roma, e l'armi, e il fragorio
Che n'andò per la terra e l'oceano?
(Rigoni 1987, 51)

And time makes off with every human thing.
Where is the clamour of those ancient peoples?

Where is the renown
Of our famed ancestors, and the great empire
Of their Rome, her armies,
And the din she made on land and sea?
(Galassi 2010, 111)

The love for his own country will always be present within him, becoming more acute and, at the same time, more bitter and exasperated (Rigoni 2015b, 235). This love will never become a rhetorical *tòpos* (Brioschi 1980, 75), it will rather be one of those strong passions and beneficial illusions that, in his opinion, mitigate human unhappiness (Salvatorelli 1975, 180). Leopardi will be a very severe, rigid and intransigent critic of his Italian contemporaries, as we can see in his unfinished work *Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degl'italiani* (1824; Discourse on the Present State of Morality of the Italians). To the eyes of the poet, national spirit takes on a decisive role: without it, he writes in the *Zibaldone* on 24 March 1821,

> there has never been any greatness in this world, and not merely national greatness, but individual greatness also. (Caesar, D'Intino 2013, 865)

The poet traces the decadence of Italy, known since at least the seventeenth century, back to the lack of the concepts of 'nation' and 'national spirit' (nation and homeland are two terms almost synonymous in Leopardi), a lack that pervades every aspect of Italy's life: political, military, social, moral and cultural. On 10-11 November 1823, the poet writes in the *Zibaldone*:

> This political condition of Italy and Spain has produced and produces the usual and inevitable effects. Death and privation of literature, industry, society, art, talent, culture, great minds, inventive faculty, originality, great passions, which are intense, useful or beautiful and splendid, of every social advantage, of great deeds and therefore of great writings, inaction, lethargy both in private life and with respect to the private, as well as with respect to the public, and like the public insignificant with respect to other nations. These effects came into being at once, and from the 17th century onward they have continued to increase both in Italy and in Spain, and today they are at their peak in both countries, although the reasons given for them are perhaps no greater now than in the beginning. […] This came about because nothing in nature happens by leaps, and because a living being when struck down by death, cools little by little, and is a good deal warmer a few moments after death than some time afterward. In the 17th century, and also in the 18th, Italy, though already killed, still twitched and gave off fumes. The same can be argued about Spain. Now one and the other are motionless and ice-cold, and in the complete power of death. (Caesar, D'Intino 2013, 3860)

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At the beginning of his *Discourse*, the poet wonders how modern civil societies can survive in the absence of all their foundations. In terms of this serious problem, Italy is a special case, as it is a country where the vanity and vacuity of life do not disguise themselves, and can be seen for what they are, as the filter, or shield, provided by 'society', is missing. As matter of fact:

> the other civilized nations, i.e. mainly France, England and Germany, have a conservative principle of morality, and therefore of society: though minimal and almost vile compared to the great moral and illusory principles that have been lost, this has nevertheless an important effect. (Damiani 1988, 448)

It is wrongly believed that disenchanted France is the most cynical country: the primacy of cynicism belongs to Italy, where this attitude is widespread in all social classes:

> The upper classes of Italy are the most cynical of all their peers in other countries. The Italian populace is the most cynical of populaces. (Damiani 1988, 462)

> This attitude produces indifference, contempt and derision of everybody against each other, in a kind of war of all against all. (Rigoni 2015c, 217)

If Italy lacks public opinion, society, public spirit, self-respect and a sense of honour there is only one answer: Italy is not a nation. In such situation of social anarchy, Italians cannot be citizens, only individuals, and each one of them makes "their own tone and their own manner" (Damiani 1988, 454) says the poet in his *Discourse*, taking up an observation already made in the *Zibaldone*:

> There is no social tone in this nation [Italy]: everyone has their own. Indeed, there is no tone of society that can be said to be Italian. (Caesar, D'Intino 2013, 3546: 28 September 1823)

Thus, less than ever will Italians experience the strong, national pride that leads the French and the British to look down on all other peoples and that, although born from excessive self-esteem, is a great resource for the unity, strength and morality of a nation. We read in the *Zibaldone* on 25 March 1827:

> But another source of pride and of disregard for others, which is unknown to us but has become natural and typical of the French and English because it is instilled from infancy, is admiration for one's own

country. Whatever happens, it is never possible for the most benevolent, well-educated, and open-minded Frenchman or Englishman, when he finds himself in the company of foreigners, not to think wholeheartedly and sincerely that he is with an inferior (whatever the other circumstances might be), not to scorn other nations in general to a greater or lesser extent, and not to make some kind of outward demonstration of his feeling of superiority. This is a trigger, a very distinctive source of pride and self-esteem, to the prejudice or belittlement of others, about which no other civilized populations, except for people from the said nations, can have or form a proper idea. (Caesar, D'Intino 2013, 4261)

Equally critical towards Italians is Leopardi's work *Paralipomeni della Batracomiomachia*[8] (1831-37; The War Between Mice and Crabs), completed two or three days before his death. From this relentless satire, Italy comes out as subjected to the yoke of a foreign power (the crabs), supported by a clerical faction (the frogs), which is opposed by the progressive liberals (the mice). As a matter of fact, he would also radically demolish the ideology of the 'liberal mice', not to mention his views on the 'Carbonari' conspirators; nevertheless, Leopardi's love for his own country would not be affected in the slightest by this criticism (Bruni 2015, 123-9). Giacomo Leopardi, the man who had broken all illusions, always held onto at least another illusion beside poetry: the illusion of a homeland, the illusion of Italy (Rigoni 2015b, 238).

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8 The word *Paralipomeni* means 'things that are omitted', i.e. 'Appendix'. They are a sort of continuation of the pseudo-Homeric long poem *Batracomiomachia*, translated into Italian three times by Leopardi, with the title *The War of Mice and Frogs*.

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A Wedding Gone Wrong

The Rather Worldly Woes of a Rather Wealthy Qādirī Sufi Shaykh. Two 18th Century Documents from the Ottoman Court Records of Ḥamā and Aleppo

Marco Salati
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract   A rather intricate legal case took place first in Ḥamā's and then in Aleppo's Ottoman Islamic courts around the middle of the 18th century. The setting, the social standing of the individuals involved, and the alleged circumstances of the case all contribute to make clear that this was not just another routine court case. Altogether, the two documents are a good example of the scope and quality of the information preserved in the archives of local courts and they both demonstrate the extent and modes of implementation of Islamic law in a specific Ottoman milieu. The long inventory of personal property in the Aleppo document gives us a good idea of the social status and affluence enjoyed by the plaintiff – a member of the Jīlānī/Qādirī family – and an interesting insight into material culture and what constituted wealth and affluence at the time.

Summary   1 The Documents Translated. – 1.1 Ḥamā Court Records, vol. XLII, 396. – 1.2 Aleppo Court Records, vol. XLII, 79. – 2 Analysis. – 2.1 The Setting: Aleppo and Ḥamā in the 18th Century. – 2.2 The Sources. – 2.3 Plaintiff and Defendants. – 2.4 The Imperial Officials: The Governor, the Judge and the Sultan's Envoy. – 2.5 The Historical Significance of the Case.

Keywords   Ottoman Syria. Ḥamā. Aleppo. Qādiriyya. Court records.

In the course of several visits to the Center For Historical Documentation in Damascus where the Ottoman court records of Syria are located, I progressively assembled a sizeable and varied portfolio of material on one particular notable clan. From the outset this was intended to form the backbone of my research on Aleppo (cf. Salati 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2007, 2010). Over the years, this venture gradually developed in a number of directions, and it became clear that many of these documents, despite their being unrelated to the original plan, were very valuable. They somehow spoke for themselves and could supply information independently on topics such as social behaviour, the economy and legal matters. They would be broadly useful in advancing our knowledge and comprehension of Aleppo in the Ottoman era.

41

Among the documents I wished to transcribe from the Aleppo registers on one typically torrid summer day – a physically challenging but ultimately rewarding endeavour – one in particular, which I'll call the 'Aleppo document', caught my eye. At first there was no specific reason for this except its being rather long, which, when dealing with the court records, almost always means that the case is important. When my eyes fell on the words "Kaylānī", "Qādiriyya", "Ḥamā", then I started to pay more attention. What follows is the result of much subsequent scrutiny and study, and, with the discovery of what will be referred to here as the 'Ḥamā document' in one of the few extant 18th century Ottoman court records of Ḥamā, a providentially hoped for occurrence.

1 The Documents Translated

1.1 Ḥamā Court Records, vol. XLII, 396

At the court of the noble Law and the assembly of the exalted religion in the city of Ḥamā the Protected, in the presence of the chief of the judges of Islam and eminence of the rulers of mankind, our lord and authority the judge, he who places his noble script here above,

[The plaintiff] *shaykh* ʿAbdallāh *afandī*[1] b. *shaykh* Jūdī made a claim in the presence of [the defendant] *shaykh* Aḥmad *afandī* b. *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Qādir. In his claim against him he said that he had given his daughter *sayyida* Ṣāliḥa[2] in marriage to [the defendant] and that [the defendant] had concluded a marriage contract concerning her. [However] the contract was invalid and null in its fundamental nature since [the defendant] already had under his matrimonial authority and bond of marriage four wives besides her. [The plaintiff] demanded that [the defendant] renounce her and keep away from her by declaring his marriage contract null and void according to the Law. [The plaintiff] asked that [the defendant] be questioned.

Upon being questioned, the defendant replied by saying that three months ago he had divorced one [of his four wives] and claimed that the marriage [to the plaintiff's daughter] was valid. [The defendant] was asked for a proof of what he had said about the divorce, but he could not… (produce ?) evidence and was unable to confirm his claim. So,

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[1]   Literally 'master', this title was applied generally to educated members of the religious class. Cf. Lewis, B., s.v. "Efendī". *EI*, II (1991), 687; Bayerle 1997, 44.

[2]   The title *sayyid* was reserved for those who could claim descent from the Prophet, specifically in the line of the second son of ʿAlī and Fāṭima, Ḥusayn. In the Aleppo document Ṣāliḥa is referred to as *sharīfa*, which technically indicated descent from Ḥasan, Ḥusayn's elder brother. Cf. Kılıç 2012, and more in general Morimoto 2012.

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after this, he divorced *sayyida* Ṣāliḥa, the daughter of the said *shaykh* 'Abdallāh *afandī*, by means of the triple divorce [pronouncement] which is [among the] forbidden and illicit things (?) in the Book of Almighty God, without coercion or compulsion.[3]

On the strength of this, our lord the above mentioned judge ruled for the occurrence of the [thrice-pronounced] divorce by the said *shaykh* Aḥmad *afandī* on *sayyida* Ṣāliḥa, the daughter of *shaykh* 'Abdallāh *afandī*, the plaintiff. The judge also informed the defendant and divorcer, *shaykh* Aḥmad *afandī*, that she was separated from him and not lawful to him until she should marry another man [and be divorced by him].[4]

Sentence and information legally valid, worthy of due consideration, and complied with, of which he [the judge] had been asked.

What happened was written and recorded upon request in the last days of the noble month of Dhū l-Ḥijja of the year 1145 [June 1733].

Notarial witnesses (*shuhūd al-ḥāl*):[5]

Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn *afandī* b. 'Affān, *muftī* of Ḥamā,[6]
Sayyid s*haykh* 'Abd al-Mu'ṭī *afandī* b. Muḥyī al-Dīn al-'Alwānī, deputy *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Ḥamā,[7]

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3 The prohibition of the threefold divorce in a single occasion, the so-called "innovative divorce" (*ṭalāq bid'ī*), is not explicitly stated in the Qur'ān, although it may be inferred from the reading of Qur'ān II: 228. It has been noted that "a question not yet conceived in the Qur'ān is that the effect of a *ṭalāq* pronounced three successive times. The traditions are divided regarding this; alongside the approval of such a thing, there is the strongest disapproval, sometimes it is even held to be invalid. In the same direction points the *ḥadīth* that, down to the caliphate of 'Umar, such a *ṭalāq* was considered to be a single one, and that 'Umar was the first to introduce into jurisprudence his view that it was a threefold one, in order to restrain people by fear of the undesirable consequences of this abuse" (Layish, A., s.v. "Ṭalāq". *EI*, X (2000), 152).

4 This procedure is called *taḥlīl* in Islamic Law.

5 The *shuhūd al-ḥāl* were notarial or professional witnesses appointed and employed by the judge in order to monitor the procedures and ensure the regularity of the court sessions. Marcus (1989, 113) observes that in Aleppo "the witnesses usually included one or two court officers, but the majority of them were Muslim men not in the court's employ: people with an interest in the case, neighbors and associates of the parties, and respectable residents who happened to be in court that day for other business". For a more detailed analysis on their role and composition cf. Jennings 1978, 142-7; and also Peters, R., s.v. "Shāhid", *EI*, IX (1997), 208.

6 He belonged to the 'Alwānī family on whom see below § 2.3. Apparently Muḥyī al-Dīn acted as the Shāfi'ite *muftī*, although this is not specified in our document. Cf. Reilly 2002, 29, 62.

7 Judging by his and his father's names, he could be the son of the former. Cf. Reilly 2002, 31 fnn. 24, 62. However, he does not establish a connection between the two. The *naqīb al-ashrāf* was the head of the local descendants of the Prophet, collectively known as *ashrāf*. Cf. Haveman, A., s.v. "Naḳīb al-ashrāf", *EI*, VII (1993), 926-7. On the *ashrāf* in Islamic history cf. Morimoto 2012; Kılıç 2012 for the Ottoman Empire; Salati 1990, 1992 for Aleppo. For the Arabic text of the document see below § 3.1.

Shaykh 'Abdallāh *afandī* b. *shaykh* Sulaymān *afandī* al-'Alwānī,[8]
Shaykh Muḥammad *afandī* b. *shaykh* 'Umar *afandī* al-Sharābī,[9]
Shaykh 'Abdallāh *afandī*, deputy *muftī* of Ḥamā,[10]
Shaykh Mūsā b. *shaykh* 'Abdallāh al-Ḥawrānī,[11]
Sayyid ḥājj 'Abdallāh b. *shaykh* Muḥammad al-'Alwānī.[12]

1.2 Aleppo Court Records, vol. XLII, 79

The case is as it was recorded. The poor Muhammad, the *qāḍī* of the city of Aleppo the Grey, wrote it, may God pardon him.

The legal assembly was held at the Governor's Palace in Aleppo the Protected, in the presence of the honoured vizier 'Uthmān Pasha, the Governor of the Province of Aleppo (the illustrious counsellor, the order of the world, the prudent manager of the affairs of the community with proper reasoning, the consummator of the important affairs of mankind with proper judgment, the arranger of the building of prosperity and felicity, the constructor of the pillars of joy and magnificence, he who is invested by the arrays of favors of the Supreme Lord, the venerable Minister) [...].

Before the above-mentioned assembly, before the presiding judge (our lord and authority, the greatly erudite learned pillar, pride of the noble lords, foremost of the highly respected notables, he who accurately formulates the legal matters of people, is himself the good deed of the days and of the nights, who discriminates between what is canonically permitted and what is forbidden, who clarifies and solves the difficulties of mankind, the judge of the Sharī'a of Muḥammad in the protected city of Aleppo) who places his noble seal above;

With the knowledge of the pride of the most honourable and distinguished, collector of commendable acts and noble deeds) Murtaḍā *bey*,[13] who was appointed as supervisor of the following matter by the exalted imperial power [the following occurred]:

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8   He established a large family foundation (*waqf*) in 1146/1734. Cf. Reilly 2002, 35 fnn. 42, 105-6.

9   On the Sharābī family and this Muḥammad see below § 2.3.

10   No information.

11   The Ḥawrānīs were a family group with Sufi connections. Cf. Reilly 2002, 29, 38, 40.

12   No information.

13   According to Bayerle, the title *bey*, or more correctly *beg*, designated "the military-administrative heads of *sancak*s and their *tīmār* cavalry units. Eventually *beg* became a courtesy title" (1997, 19).

Sayyid Isḥāq b. *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī made [the following] claim. Also present were: *shaykh sayyid* ʿUmar, son of the late *shaykh* Yāsīn whose noble lineage is related to *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī (may God sanctify his venerable secret); *shaykh* ʿAbdallāh, son of *shaykh* Jūdī; his [i.e. Abdallāh's] son *shaykh* Sharaf al-Dīn; *shaykh* Muḥammad al-Sharābātī, son of … [*blank in the original*], and *shaykh* ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥamdūnī. All of these are residents of the city of Ḥamā; their presence in Aleppo "the Protected" had been requested by an imperial command.

In his claim [Isḥāq] said:

"In the year 1145 [/1732-33] I concluded a marriage contract with *sharīfa* Ṣāliḥa, the daughter of *shaykh* ʿAbdallāh, who is the son of *shaykh* Jūdī. On the night of my nuptial ceremony with her the above-mentioned defendants accused me of being already married to four women, not counting [Ṣāliḥa], and that she would be the fifth. They arrested me, told me that my marriage with her was absolutely null and void and separated me from her after detaining me in prison for one day and one night. I relinquished the marital gift to her (*ṭallaqtuhā mahrahā*), and they plundered and robbed my money in cash, my belongings, clothes, and household effects that were in my house in the city of Ḥamā. These [stolen goods] are as follows:

one noble Koran, worth 40 *ghurūsh*;[14]
one *ṭarrāḥa* worth 80 *ghurūsh* which contained pure gold in 1304 gold pieces, worth 5,000 *ghurūsh*;[15]
two sacks with 1,000 *ghurūsh zoloṭa*;
two golden knives weighing 80 *mithqāl*,[16] worth 360 *ghurūsh*;
fifty *mithqāl* of pearls, worth 600 *ghurūsh*;
forty-two *mithqāl* of amber, worth 150 *ghurūsh*;
one sable fur (*sammūr*), worth 420 *ghurūsh*;
two furs … (*a-z-q* ?),[17] worth 160 *ghurūsh*;
one ermine fur (*qāqūm*), worth 50 *ghurūsh*;

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14   The *aqçe*, usually called *ʿuthmānī* in the Arab provinces, was the official Ottoman coin. From the 17th century onwards, two silver coins of European origin were preferably used, the *ghirsh* (pl. *ghurūsh*) *asadī* and the *ghirsh riyālī*. The value of the two coins was far from stable, and varied constantly over the years and from one place to another. In Aleppo, in the course of the first decades of the 18th century, the *ghirsh asadī* equalled 120 *ʿuthmānī*. In the year 1725 a new coin, called 'new *ghirsh*' or *zoloṭa*, was introduced. Cf. Masters 1988, 150-1; Johnson 1999; Pamuk 2000.

15   The script *ṭarrākha* seems to be an error for *ṭarrāḥa*, which defines "des petits matelas, servant plutôt de sièges en Syrie" (Establet, Pascual 1998, 111, and also, 30, 38), or a "large coussin, petit tapis de feutre qu'on met sous la selle" (193). It also means "a thing laid down or spread, as a carpet, cloth, covering" (Redhouse 1987, "ṭarrāha").

16   A *mithqāl* was roughly equivalent to 4.25 grams.

17   Not identified.

one grey-white squirrel fur (*sinjāb*), worth 40 *ghurūsh*;
one squirrel fur of the *binish* kind, worth 30 *ghurūsh*;[18]
one fur *j-l-fāfa* (?)[19] of the *farājiyya* kind, worth 100 *ghurūsh*;[20]
three wools of the *farājiyya* kind, worth 75 *ghurūsh*;
one red ruby ring, worth 100 *ghurūsh*;
one blue ruby ring, worth 65 *ghurūsh*;
one emerald ring, worth 93 *ghurūsh*;
one gilded dagger and one gilded knife, 34 *mithqāl*, worth 113 *ghurūsh*;
one complete saddle [with ?] strap (*rakht kamar*) and one silver bridle (*bāshlaq*) made of silver, worth 130 *ghurūsh*;[21]
one silver *rakht* of the *ḥaydarī* style, worth 67 *ghurūsh*;
two silver halters (*rashma*),[22] worth 62 *ghurūsh*;
two silver coated saddles, worth 97.5 *ghurūsh* e 3/4 of a *ghirsh*;
one horse mantle (*'abā' faras*) in brocaded scarlet red broadcloth, worth 150 *ghurūsh*;
one Homs-style brocaded horse mantle, worth 67 *ghurūsh*;
eight silver *ṭāsāt*[23] and their coverings, weighing 900 *dirhām*,[24] worth 200 *ghurūsh*;
one silver coated basin (*lakan*)[25] and one silver coated pitcher, weighing 600 *dirhām*, worth 150 *ghurūsh*;

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18   The term *binish*, or *banīsh*, means "a long and full outer cloak or robe, formerly worn by gentlemen" (Redhouse 1987, "binish"), a "caftan très ample, à manches larges, porté le plus souvent comme vêtement de voyage ou d'equitation" (Establet, Pascual 1998, 115).

19   Not identified.

20   The term *farājiyya* means a "robe flottante, faite ordinairement de drap, à manches amples et longues, qui dépassent un peu l'extrémité des doigts, et qui ne sont point fendues" (Dozy 1877-81, "farājiyya").

21   Establet and Pascual's definition of *rakht* is of a saddle complete with "bride, mors, rêne et tétière" (1998, 105); "furniture and trappings of a horse" (Redhouse 1987, "rakht"). According to Dozy it means "riche caparaçon d'étoffe de soie" and also "ceinture de soie, garnie de galons d'argent" (1877-81, "rakht"). *Kamar* means "any girdle or belt, especially a belt of cloth with a buckle or clasp" (Redhouse 1987, "kamer").

22   A "strap or chain in a headstall passing over a horse's nose" (Redhouse 1987, "reshme"); a "muserolle formée d'une faisceau de chainettes d'acoer ou d'argent" (Establet, Pascual 1998, 189).

23   "A cup, bowl, or basin convexed at bottom" (Redhouse 1987, "ṭās").

24   A *dirhām* was roughly equivalent to three grams. In the Ottoman Empire 400 *dirhām*s were one *ukka*.

25   A *lakan* (*leğen* in Turkish) is a "smallish wash basin, a large bowl, or basin as a wash hand basin" (Redhouse 1987, "leğen").

one silver censer and one silver *qumqum*,[26] weighing 500 *dirhām*, worth 130 *ghurūsh*;

two pairs (*zawjā*) pairs of silver coated stirrups (*rikāb*), worth 85 *ghurūsh*;

one large armband clock, worth 100 *ghurūsh*;

one silver inkwell weighing 200 *dirhām*, worth 45 *ghurūsh*;

fourteen cushions, worth 280 *ghurūsh*;

samples/exemplars (*qiyāsāt*) of broadcloth, 60 *dhirā'*,[27] worth 130 *ghurūsh*;

three chairs (*maqā'id*) in fine embroidery (*sūzanī*), worth 30 *ghurūsh*;

one table cover (? *urṭā*)[28] of stamped broadcloth (*jūkh baṣma*), worth 40 *ghurūsh*;

two silk carpets, worth 150 *ghurūsh*;

sixty china vessels and plates, worth 240 *ghurūsh*;

four china vessels with their plates, worth 50 *ghurūsh*;

one brocaded bed sheet (*jārshaf*),[29] worth 40 *ghurūsh*;

one Persian table cover (*urṭa*), worth 60 *ghurūsh*;

two prayer carpets, worth 25 *ghurūsh*;

eight *ṭāqa*[30] of *karmasūt*;[31]

nine *ṭāqa* of *b-l-dār* (?),[32]

twelve *ṭāqa* of *quṭnī jālīsī*[33]

six *ṭāqa* of *jitāra*;[34]

26 A sort of metal long-necked bottle used for perfumed water. Cf. Establet, Pascual 1998, 112, 189.

27 According to Redhouse, the *dhirā'* ("cubit") of the *choha arshini* type measured 28 inches and was used for broadcloth, whereas the Aleppo (*ḥalabī*) *dhirā'* measured 21inches and "was used in many places outside of Constantinople for all commercial purposes" (1987, "zirā'").

28 I have interpreted this term as an alternative rendition of the Turkish *urtu*, "cover" "wrap". Cf. Redhouse 1987, "urtu"; also al-Rifā'ī 2005, 107. See also below in the text for a different spelling of this term.

29 One of the many renditions of the term *sharshaf*.

30 "A piece of certain tissue" (Redhouse 1987, "ṭāqa"), the *ṭāqa*, or *tāqa*, was a standard measure for textiles, 1/20 of the Indian *kūrja* (cf. Establet, Pascual 1998, 90-1).

31 The word *karmasūt* means "taffetas chaine de soie tramé de coton" (Establet, Pascual 1998, 96.

32 No information on this term.

33 By *quṭnī* a mix of cotton and silk cloth is meant here, something similar to the *alājā*. See Establet, Pascual 1998, 94-5, 97. According to Dozy a *jalīsh* or *shalīsh* is a "grand drapeau surmonté d'une touffe de crins", whereas *jalīshī* or *shalīshī* means "celui qui est à l'avant-garde" (1877-81, "jalīsh").

34 According to Redhouse, *jitr* (Turkish *chetr*) is a "tent, umbrella or parasol, a veil, a women's muffler or cloak" (1987, "chetr").

five turbans (*shūsh*)[35] of the *jaqmaq* kind;[36]
four belts (*kamarband*) of the Syrian-damascene (*shāmī* ?) kind;[37]
seven *ṭāqa* of cloth (*qumāsh*);
five brocaded *karmasūt*;
four turbans of the *bandī* type;[38]
one *ʿūd māwardī* case weighing 1023 *dirhām*;[39]
one body garment.

The total value of the items and money in cash [gold and coins] whose value has been determined in the above-mentioned manner is 17.500 *ghurūsh*. Now, I demand that they return the money and the value of the goods that were destroyed. I request that they be questioned about this and about their forcing me to repudiate my wife."

The above-mentioned defendants were questioned on the veracity of this claim. *Shaykh* ʿAbdallāh answered by saying:

"The above mentioned plaintiff had concluded a marriage contract with my daughter. On the night of the nuptial ceremony we were informed that he was already married to four women, apart from her, with four marriage contracts. We asked him about this in the presence of the judge of the Sharīʿa [court] for the city of Ḥamā at the time, and he acknowledged being married to four free women but claimed to have divorced one of them, that her legally-prescribed waiting period had passed, and that his marriage with my daughter was valid. The judge requested that he produce evidence of the conclusion of the *ʿidda* of the repudiation of one of his four wives, but he was unable to prove it.[40] Then, to avoid any doubts he divorced my daughter of his own accord".

Shaykh ʿAbdallāh and the above-mentioned defendants denied having taken his money and goods and having forced him to give the divorce.

The aforementioned plaintiff was requested to exhibit indisputable and clear evidence to certify the veracity of his claim and was granted a ten-day delay in order to present the just proof. With the expiration of the ten days, [the plaintiff] demonstrated his inability to establish the required evidence and did not wish to oblige the defendants to take the oath.

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35   Plural of *shāsh*, turban. According to Dozy (1877-81, "shāsh") "la longue pièce de mousseline ou de soie que l'on roule autour de la calotte du turban".

36   *Jaqmaq* literally means 'flint'.

37   The reading is not very clear.

38   The term *bandī* could be related to a turban of Indian/Gujarati variety.

39   The term *māwardī* refers to a variety of aloe wood. Cf. Dozy 1877-81, "māwardī".

40   According to the Sharīʿa, only upon conclusion of the prescribed period of waiting (*ʿidda*) a valid marriage is ended and a divorced or widowed woman may remarry.

As a consequence, the above-mentioned defendants rejected the plaintiff's claim with the assertion that "in the month of Jumādā II of the year preceding the date of the document [/September-October 1737] he [the plaintiff] had acquitted our legal responsibility in this legal suit and from all claims and all legal rights by way of a full and legal release accepted fully by him in the presence of an assemblage of Muslims".

The plaintiff deemed them credible and confirmed his own issuance of the full legal release in the manner documented [above].

[But then the plaintiff] said: "I was forced to give the said release under duress, being threatened by Muṣṭafā Madīnī, the attendant (*jawqadār*)[41] of the Honourable Minister Sulaymān Pasha who said to me: "If you do not give them full release from this lawsuit and everything else, I will have you brought to Damascus from Ḥamā".[42]

Then, when the said defendants requested that the aforesaid *qāḍī* in charge issue the legal ruling on this case and it became clear to [the *qāḍī*] that the said *jūqadār* Muṣṭafā Madīnī was not capable of forcing anything from this plaintiff, and what [Muṣṭafā Madīnī] had said was not anyway among those acts that suppress free will and consent, [the judge] informed [the plaintiff] that the release – which he had acknowledged and had met with the said defendants' acceptance – compromises the soundness of his legal action since it [the release] came later than the said legal action. Therefore, his legal action cannot be heard after it, unless on the basis of a new right occurring later than that [release] The judge prohibited him from further opposing them because of this, the situation being the way it is.

Notification and prohibition according to the Law, which were requested.

The case was written and recorded upon request on the 7th day of the month of Jumādā I of the year 1151 [/23rd of August 1738].

Notarial witnesses:

The pride of the accurate scholars, the most excellent of the precise erudite, His Excellency, our lord *sayyid* Yūsuf *afandī*, currently *muftī* of the city of Aleppo,[43]

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41 According to Redhouse (1987, "chohadār"), the term refers to "a lackey who walks by the side of his lord's horse, and acts as a footman indoors". *Juqadār*s, figured also among the court's police personnel (*ahl al-ʿurf*) alongside the ushers (*muḥḍir*). Cf. Jennings 1978, 153-4.

42 On Sulaymān Pasha see below § 2.3.

43 The historian and biographer Yūsuf b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Dimashqī al-Ḥalabī (d. 1153/1740) was born in Damascus but moved to Aleppo where he became *muftī* and *naqīb al-ashrāf*. Cf. Ṭabbākh 1988, 4: 479-84.

The pride of the noble scholars, the cream of the exalted teachers, His Excellency *sayyid* Aḥmad *afandī*, currently *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Aleppo,[44]

The pride of the noble and the grand, His Excellency Aḥmad *āghā*, the current *muḥaṣṣil* of Aleppo,[45]

The pillar of the noble scholars and teachers *ḥājj* Ḥāmid *afandī*, son of the late Muḥammad *afandī*,

The pillar of the noble scholars and teachers, Ḥusayn *afandī* b. Aḥmad *afandī*,

The pride of the noble scholars and teachers, *sayyid* Muḥammad *afandī* b. *sayyid* ʿAbd al-Salām *afandī*,

The pride of the noble scholars and teachers, Muḥammad *afandī* Qabbānī zāda,[46]

The pride of his noble peers, Muḥammad *āghā*, the Palace interpreter […].

2 Analysis

The two closely related documents presented here deal with a dispute over the validity of a wedding contract according to established Islamic rules. The Aleppo document also includes a claim for damages for stolen goods and an alleged remission of liability. On the one hand they are a good example of the scope and quality of the information preserved in the archives of local courts. On the other, they both are a reminder of the necessity of a cautious approach to this kind of material inasmuch the documents demonstrate, not without some problems which will be discussed later, the extent and modes of implementation of Islamic law in a specific Ottoman milieu. The setting, the social standing of the individuals involved, and the assumed circumstances of the case all contribute to make clear that this was not just another routine court case, a fact also reflected in its unusual length and ornate legal prose.

To start with, two of the litigants – far from being ordinary characters in the everyday queue of petitioners at the *qāḍī*'s tribunal – figure as important personalities in the contemporary biographical literature and are

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44 On Aḥmad Ṭahazāda (d. 1177/1763-64), one of the most influential religious and political personalities of his time, cf. Ṭabbākh 1988, 7: 69-78; Wilkins 2014. Ṭabbākh records that he was *naqīb al-ashrāf* already in 1147 (/1734-35) and again in 1149 (/1736-37) but fails to mention that he still held the office in 1151, the year of the Aleppo document.

45 The title *āghā* ('chief') was generally reserved for officers and commanders of the Ottoman military class. In the course of the 18th century it was also given to important representatives of the merchant class. For their role and position in urban contexts cf. Wilkins 2010, esp. 173-5, 185-92; Reilly 2002, 96-8.

46 Although not much is known about them, the Qabbān zāda were a family of scholarly standing. Cf. Meriwether 1981, 299. For the Arabic text of the document see below § 3.2.

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respected members of a Ḥamā-based clan – the Kaylānī family – with relations in other Syrian centres. From Ḥamā the Kaylānīs held the leadership of the Syrian branch of the important Qādiriyya Sufi order which extended virtually to the entire Muslim world.[47]

Secondly, that the dispute had become much more than an ordinary trial is made obvious in the Aleppo document by the presence of many prominent people. Besides the chief Ḥanafī judge, also present are the Ottoman governor of the province of Aleppo, an envoy of the Ottoman Sultan, and several members of Aleppo's urban elite and notability acting as notarial witnesses. As if to add to its peculiar importance, the proceedings of this lawsuit, though duly entered and recorded in the *qāḍī*'s register, reveal that the trial is actually taking place at the governor's palace, the *sarāy*, not at the *qāḍī*'s tribunal.

Finally, the long inventory of personal property allegedly stolen gives us a good idea of the kind of social status and affluence enjoyed by the plaintiff, his family group and the higher ranks of the Qādirī order in general.[48] Also, this very list provides us with an interesting insight into material culture and what constituted wealth and prestige at that time.

It may seem a little odd that after an initial, and apparently brief hearing in Ḥamā a case dealing with local events and people should be further tried and recorded elsewhere, that is, in Aleppo, and not in Ḥamā itself, or Damascus, the province to which Ḥamā belonged as of the first decades of the 18th century. Some branches of the Kaylānīs, including several members of the main litigants' families, although not the litigants themselves, had relocated, either temporarily or permanently, to Aleppo in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, but the same was true, in fact even more so, for relocations to Damascus (see below § 2.3).

The choice of a new venue may very well have to do with practical purposes and motives on the part of the litigants rather than family considerations. While discussing the different views of present-day scholarship on the functioning and role of the Ottoman courts and *qāḍī*s as allegedly impartial dispensers of justice, Ergene (2003, 106) speaks of ample "evidence that the very same disputes were taken over and over again to different courts for resolution", possibly in the hope that "the decision of the new *kadi* towards the case and the litigants would be different" (107). In that case, "the ability to choose the court where the dispute was heard was critical in determining the outcome" (107). The rather flexible nature of the Ottoman legal structure was partly due to what Ergene characterises

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47   Cf. Beaunel, W., s.v. "Abd al-Ḳādir al-Djīlānī", *EI*, I (1986), 69-70; Margoliouth, D.S., s.v. "al-Ḳādiriyya", *EI*, IV (1997), 380-3; Zarcone, Isin, Buehler 2000; Zarcone 1996.

48   On the 'material', as opposed to 'spiritual', aspects of the living standards of Sufis cf. among others Beldiceanu-Steinherr 1980; Fernandes 1985; Faroqhi 1988, 1976.

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as "reversibility of justice" (2003, 108) an opportunity that clients of the court and litigants were willing to and did in fact make use of.

It is in the Aleppo document that we learn that a direct order from Istanbul had summoned the opposing parties before the *qāḍī* in Aleppo, probably because the lawsuit had dragged on for almost six years. It was now deemed necessary to require full supervision at a higher level of authority, such as that vested in the Pasha and the chief judge of what was still the third most important city of the Ottoman Empire, after Istanbul and Cairo. The presence of an emissary sent from the capital on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan indicates that what may have initially looked like a rather provincial affair had taken on new dimensions. Now, not only two top office holders in Syria's political, administrative, and religious-legal spheres would be present,[49] but, also, albeit indirectly, the Ottoman Sultan himself.

2.1 The Setting: Aleppo and Ḥamā in the 18th Century

Much has been said, and quite rightly, about the decline of central Ottoman authority in the course of the 18th century, particularly its second half, to the advantage of increasingly autonomous local and regional powers established by military clans, notable families, and mercenary adventurers.[50] However, with the full display of the Ottoman chain of command, we have here one more example of sophisticated, experienced administrative procedure. For this reason, too, the two documents make for interesting reading as, amidst more and more turbulent and unstable conditions, we observe an allegedly waning central authority still willing and at times capable to look into and manage its provincial subjects' daily lives and affairs, and in so doing, struggling to preserve its time-honoured legitimacy.[51]

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49 Marcus (1989, 79) explains that "the tip of the power pyramid was occupied by two Ottoman officials, the governor and the *qadi*. Between them they carried out the main functions of government […] and headed the provincial administration. Viewing them as the heads of the executive and the judiciary branches respectively is too sharp a distinction. They both took part in the processes of administration, justice, policymaking, and local politics". Cf. also Douwes 2001, 75-83.

50 According to Marcus (1989, 16, 21) "the Ottoman Empire of the eighteenth century, widely acknowledged as an attenuated image of its former self, could still claim the status of an imposing world power […]. Control was loose in many parts of the empire […]. It was also a period of almost constant war between the empire and its external enemies […]. All this had repercussions in the provinces at the level of public order, the efficiency of administration, the assertiveness of local power figures, the burden of taxation, the security of roads, the prosperity of agriculture, the patterns of trade and the fortunes of different social groups".

51 Marcus (1989, 22, 26) points out that "the Ottoman Empire of the 18th century was not so much a centralized structure as a conglomerate of loosely held districts" where local forces played a prominent role; however, "the state remained an important actor on the local scenes, exerting its influence on events through bribery, patronage, military pressure,

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Included with the rest of Syria in the Ottoman realm in the course of the swift campaign conducted by Selīm I against the Mamluks in 1516-17, Aleppo was granted the status of centre of a large territory that extended deep into southern Anatolia, as far as Marʿash (today Maraş) and ʿAyntāb (today Gaziantep), and encompassing most of northern Syria, including Anṭākya (ancient Antioch) and the seaport of Iskenderūn (Alexandretta) to the West and Manbij and al-Bāb up to the Euphrates to the East.

The governorship of Aleppo became one of those posts most sought-after in the 16th and 17th centuries. The city saw major urban and economic expansion, benefiting from and fully exploiting the strategic networks of international trade that intersected and passed through the city.[52]

Accordingly, the judgeship of Aleppo ranked among the top posts in the Empire. Besides the Great Courthouse, Aleppo had four local courts (Ṣalāḥiyya, Jabal Samʿān, Bānqusā, and Shāfiʿiyya) operating under the supervision of the Ḥanafī judge through his deputies.[53] Justice could also be sought outside the official Islamic framework, in the more secular venues such as the governor's council (dīwān). The latter convened at his residence once a week and functioned as a sort of court of appeal. There, citizens unhappy with the qāḍī's sentence could hope for a revision.[54] The opposite was also true, as more often than not the Sharīʿa courts were solicited by disgruntled citizens and villagers to rectify abuses and mistreatments suffered at the hands of the governor and/or his officials.[55] It has been noted, quite rightly, that the frequent use by the subjects of the

and political intrigue […]. Throughout the 18th century the Ottoman leadership remained firmly committed to preserving the traditional order. Its profound conservatism was rooted in conviction as well as in vested interest".

52 Cf. Marcus 1989, 13-15; Zeitlian Watenpaugh 2004; Masters 1988; Raymond 1998.

53 Cf. Marino 2000a; Marcus 1989, 103, 106. The presence of a specific shāfiʿite court reflected the fact that the school had been predominant in Syria prior to the Ottoman conquest.

54 According to Marcus (1989, 82) "the governor's council (divan) provided the most important setting for local participation in policymaking […]. It met regularly to discuss and make decisions on local and provincial issues, such as insecurity on the countryside, food supply to the city, fiscal and budgetary problems, local appointments and popular unrest and complaints". Regular members were the governor, the qāḍī, the muftī, the naqīb al-ashrāf, the commander of the Janissary corps, and the farmer-general of taxes. The governors were "recognized as an administrative judge […] with the power to pass sentence on criminals independently of the sharia's court […]. The pashas were authorized to try offenders who violated public order and security […]. Theft, assault, fraud, violation of public morals, cursing), and disputes over inheritance, debts and property rights all reached the governor's court. Some individuals who lost in the shariʿa court took their cases to the governors" (105, 107-8).

55 "The shariʿa court was left to rectify their [i.e. the governors'] abuses" (Marcus 1989, 114). On the other hand, Marcus notes, the qāḍīs' "arbitrariness was common knowledge in the city and making a complaint to the pasha figured among the familiar forms of threats and blackmail. Also, some of them who did not get their way in the qadi's court vented their frustration through vexation suits to the pasha" (1989, 114).

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qāḍī's court or, alternatively, the governor's *dīwān* did not automatically entail expectations of fair justice, rather a recognition of the fact, as Ergene notes, that "litigants sometimes shopped for alternate sites where their claims could find sympathetic ears" (2003, 108).

During the course of the 18th century ninety-nine *qāḍī*s and one hundred pashas held office in Aleppo. This does not necessarily indicate political upheaval or discontinuity. Rather, according to Marcus (1989, 81), this shows that Ottoman authority "depended on local assistance […] Some of the townspeople came to participate in government and to exercise an influence on the process of decision-making".

The worsening international situation – ongoing warfare between the Ottomans and the rulers of Iran until 1747 – and changing economic trends severely affected the age-old Silk Road and *hajj* caravan trade. Failing to develop "an independent political leadership" (Masters 1988, 30) as the 'Aẓms were doing in Damascus, Aleppo "witnessed an increasing fragmentation of the city's political elite… and could not offer any effective political resistance to Damascus' resurgence" (33). Aleppo and its merchants may have adjusted to the new political and economic conditions. However, although the city enjoyed a relative period of stability during the first half of the century, there was, as Marcus observes, a "marked change in conditions between the first and second half of the century. In the last three or four decades of the century [Aleppo] sank into a long period of crisis, experiencing a decline of economic prosperity, a sharp rise in the cost of living, a deterioration of public order, factional violence in the streets, large-scale extortion, revolts against governors, and the waning of Ottoman authority" (1989, 6).[56]

If Ḥamā had lost some of the prestige and importance it enjoyed in the pre-Ottoman era, it still retained its position of official halting place along the Anatolian-Syrian pilgrimage (*hājj*) route, at the very centre of the fertile agricultural areas of Syria. As part of a general trend in Ottoman Syria, the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries were a period of urban growth and economic development for Ḥamā (cf. Reilly 2002, 22-3, 69-85; Douwes 2009, 34-9, 66-84, 169-87). Travellers' accounts from the second half of the 17th century confirm this state of affairs. In his *Tuḥfa al-udabā' wa salwa al-ghurabā'* the Medinan Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khiyārī (d. 1671-72), speaks of a "big and populated city, with large mosques, thriving markets and green gardens" (al-Khiyārī 1969-80, 1: 183). The famous traveller Evliyā Çelebī (d. + 1682) corroborates this by providing a long and thorough list of things to see and places to go in what he calls "the

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56   Cf. also Bodman 1963. Likewise Rafeq (1990, 180), referring to 18th century Damascus, speaks of "weak administration", "attempts at enforcement of law and order", "feuding military groups, avid governors and notables [..], wide-spread poverty affecting the bulk of the population".

city of the Ancient (*qudamā'*) and the seat of the Poor Mystics (*fuqarā'*)" (quoted in Dagli, Kharaman, Dankoff 2000, 3: 39).[57]

Still, this did not change Ḥamā's condition as a "small town in Syria", a fact reflected in its being included initially in the province of Tripoli and later, around 1725, into the *pashalik* of Damascus.[58] Accordingly, the city was governed by a district governor (*mutasallim*) who was answerable to the Pasha of Damascus, whereas the courthouse was managed by a deputy judge acting on behalf of the chief *qāḍī* of Damascus.[59] If anything, Ḥamā's administrative re-adjustment allowed the city to somehow withstand the socio-economic decline that affected northern Syria in the course of the 18th century.[60] This reorientation toward Damascus was reflected in and reinforced by the consolidation of the 'Aẓm clan's political and military power in the first half of the century.[61]

2.2 The Sources

As said in the introductory notes, this short study relies heavily on documentation preserved in the Ottoman court records of Aleppo and Ḥamā (*sijillāt al-maḥākim al-sharʿiyya*).[62] The significance of the court records for the study of Ottoman society is an established fact among scholars, to the extent that any investigation on the diverse aspects of Ottoman history may

57 Around 1730 the British traveler R. Pocock describes Ḥamā as a flourishing town (quoted in Douwes 2001, 50, fn. 20).

58 Cf. Reilly 2002, 23-249. However, Douwes (2001, 49, fn. 17) maintains that "it is uncertain whether the Ḥamā district became *formally* attached to Damascus before 1832". On Ḥamā cf. also Glasman 1991.

59 Cf. Reilly 2002, 24, 28. As in other major centers of Syria, a Shāfiʿite judge was present in Ḥamā.

60 According to Reilly "when the fortunes of Aleppo and northern Syria declined [...] during the eighteenth century, Hama became linked to new centers of regional wealth and power in Damascus [...]. Its transfer to Damascus in the eighteenth century reflected the increasing responsibility given to the governor (*wali*) of Damascus for the security of the Syrian pilgrimage caravan to Mecca" (2002, 23). That allowed the city to experience a population growth in the course of the 18th century, despite periods of severe economic crisis due to political or natural events. Cf. Reilly 2002, 74-5.

61 A family group of uncertain origin based in the small town of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān as of the late 17th century, the 'Aẓms emerged during the first half of the 18th as paramount political leaders of central and southern Syria, including Ḥamā, whose district was often given to them as *mālikāne*, a permanent grant of revenues. Cf. Douwes 2001, 45-52, 67-75, 91-9; Rafeq 1966, 85-90; Barbir 1980, 56-64; Schilcher 1986, 29-35; Reilly 2002, 32-3, 38-9.

62 On the Ottoman Court Records, their nature and typology Faroqhi, S., s.v. "Sidjill 3.", *EI*, IX (1997), 539-45; Akgündüz 2009; Zeʿevi 1998. For the court records of Syria cf. Rafeq 1976; Marino 2000a.

no longer be considered well-researched without making use of this material, whenever available.[63] Despite their limitations, and the fact of their occasional manipulation – something that will be discussed shortly – not only do they provide us with solid information about social order, culture, economy, urban and, to a lesser degree, rural history. They also, and quite often, significantly supplement and substantiate data from traditional literary sources, such as local historiography, chronicles and biographical literature.

The *sijillāt* have rightly been described by Marcus (1989, 8-9) as

> an incomparable repository of information. The institution which produced them was at once a main court for adjudicating civil and criminal disputes, a notarial office in which the townspeople drew up their contracts and deeds, and a busy administrative agency which handled all sorts of official business in the city and province. The material in the court records appear as a hodgepodge of unrelated matters thrown together chronologically without regard to any topical order. It is precisely the raw and individualized quality of the information, coupled with its abundance and view from the inside, which make the court records unusually valuable as a historical source. They give us a vivid sense of how society actually worked, of the pursuits, practices, strategies, conflicts and accidents which wove the texture of daily life.

That said, scholars and researchers are aware of the fact that, as pointed out by Reilly (2002, 15-16),

> Shari'a court registers have at times been treated as objective documentary sources from which researchers can extract reasonably reliable data in order to reconstruct historical structures and patterns […], because the registers contain information about social and economic history that is difficult or impossible to find elsewhere. Like all sources, however, the law-court registers have their built-in biases and limitations. The registers reveal only those social processes and transactions that came under the purview of the local administration and for which a judicial record was deemed useful or necessary.

To quote Ze'evi (1998, 37),

> all sources are complex webs of meaning, in which a social "reality", a series of specific biases, contemporary codes and symbols, styles and

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63   Ze'evi (1998, 35), quite simply but effectively, states that "it is now inconceivable for a scholar studying Ottoman society, culture or economy, to ignore the *sijill*". Marcus (1989, 11) points out that "the development of Middle Eastern social history will depend in good measure on the creative use of this [i.e. the *sijillāt*]".

tropes of writing, the interventions of copiers and editors, all blend inextricably to form a written source. The *sijill* is no exception, although it is somehow believed to be immune from such problems […]. The *sijill*s are carefully constructed narratives in which the legal aspect, although invisible to the reader, is still the essence of the record. […] the record discusses the case not as it actually unfolded but rather in terms consistent with legal doctrine and practice.[64]

Even a quick look at the Ḥamā document shows that there is something wrong in the section of the text where the defendant is mentioned. It is the present writer's contention that the text was tampered with, and that the personal name of the defendant, Isḥāq, was deleted, scratched away, and replaced with a clumsily juxtaposed and written over new name, Aḥmad. As to why this was done, I cannot offer a definitive explanation and will limit myself to a few considerations largely based on Ergene's remarks on the nature of the court records as a source.

First of all, Ergene (2003, 125) recalls that "the extent of our understanding of the stories told in the court records is very much dependent on our ability to make sense of how these documents were produced, what they hid and disclosed, and how they were used in the judicial processes". Then, he maintains that one of the problems lies in the fact that "we do not exactly know how these disputes brought to and resolved in the Ottoman courts were recorded in the court records, [whereas] many of us continue to assume that what we observe in the *sicil*s is the direct and immediate representation of the court proceedings" (126).

More specifically, Reilly (2002, 16, fn. 8) notes that "the scribes who produced the registers had their own criteria for including or excluding information, and they reflected the values and assumptions of the system in which they worked". Scribes were of course not exempt from mistakes due to imprecision and poor memory so that, as noted by Ergene (2003, 126), "these documents did not have an immediate relationship with the actual court proceedings […].[65] We notice that the paternal names or the resi-

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[64] Ergene (2003, 129-30) observes that "the production of the written record of any kind of performance (be it judicial, ritual, or artistic) involves a 'disposition if formalization', an inclination in the part of the 'recorder' to single out the formal aspects of the performance […]. The *sicil* of course is nothing but a translation of a particular legal performance into a formal and immensely formulaic language. In the process of this translation, variation is eliminated, and temporal, spatial and improvisational characteristics of individual performances are left out […]. The *sicil* severely discriminates against non verbal acts, body language, or facial expressions of the performers and privileges the spoken word against other acts of communication. That is why no confessions (*i'tiraf*) or acknowledgments (*ikrar*) found in the court records could be assumed as inherently sincere. […] *sicil*s may be significantly misleading sources".

[65] Ergene (2003, 126) further observes that "there is some evidence that the proceedings were not actually recorded during or immediately after the hearings. […;] there might have

dential affiliations of some participants in the court processes are not only withheld […] but are intentionally left blank" (126-7). To omit, exclude or hide the identity of individuals involved in the litigation process, then, was not unusual.

Secondly, when comparing the two documents one cannot but notice the conspicuous difference in length and content. What the Ḥamā document is about is essentially a marriage dispute. Albeit interesting in its own right, it is the Aleppo document which is particularly rich in detail and articulate in depicting a complex and considerably more serious legal case. Now, a rather 'simple' and promptly-solved case rematerialises a few years later as a very articulate situation involving robbery, intimidation, and physical assault. Such divergence is not easy to explain. Here, Ergene's analysis is again helpful when he suggests that there were "significant differences between alternative accounts of a particular hearing. In such cases, later accounts often provide more complete descriptions of the disputes or are more explicit about the judicial proceedings than earlier ones" (2003, 126). This leads him to the very interesting remark that "the reason for the production of a second account of a particular hearing may be that *the first document inadequately represented the exact nature of the dispute* and the full scope of the court's decision" (129; emphasis added). He then concludes by stating that "although relatively rare, substantive differences between separate accounts of a particular court hearing raise another important issue; the problem of representation. Since these accounts refer to the same court hearing, *one of them obviously misrepresents the judicial process in question*, This situation demonstrates that the *ability of the court records to accurately portray the Ottoman court processes may indeed be limited*" (129; emphasis added).

On the other hand, we have at least here one of those infrequent instances where we are able to partially mitigate what Ergene appropriately describes as the "sense of timelessness in the records" (2003, 135) and to detect to some extent the respective legal tactics employed by the opposing parties. A common feature of the court records is that they seldom, if ever, inform us about the time it took to instruct, try and conclude a lawsuit. What the *sijillāt* almost always depict is a rather swift and orderly process that effortlessly led up to its harmonious and logical conclusion, that is, the 'just' pronouncement by the judge.[66] Yet, keeping in mind what has been said above about the questionability of the impartial and objective nature of the judicial

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existed an intermediate stage between the actual court proceedings and their recording in the *sicil*s". According to him, this lends support to the idea "that the drafts prepared by the scribes were probably not transferred to the court registers immediately but accumulated for some time until they were recorded in the registers in no particular order" (129).

66   It should be said, however, that although not the norm, it is not unusual to find in the *sijill*s of Aleppo accounts of the different stages of a trial, either in a single or in successive

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process as implemented in the Ottoman courts and, as a consequence, the fact that the administration of justice by a particular court could be and actually was perceived, to quote once again Ergene's work, as "unfinished, temporary and subject to challenge in other arenas" (2003, 139), this idealistic picture of 'cool', fast justice needs to be, at least in part, revised.

It becomes clear from the reading of the two documents that in this case justice was slow. The legal action began in Ḥamā in 1733 and apparently ended in Aleppo in 1738. In all, the litigation process took a little over five years. This may account for the length and the elaborately detailed composition of the Aleppo document. It would be only logical to assume that during this five-year hiatus, the litigants, in Ergene's words, "conducted their negotiations and designed their strategies" (2003, 138), which were included in the formal legal structure of the Aleppo document. But before addressing the subject-matter of the case itself let us turn our attention now to the litigants themselves.

2.3 Plaintiff and Defendants

The Aleppo document identifies two of the parties involved in the lawsuit as members of the same family clan, namely the plaintiff (*sayyid* Isḥāq) and one of the defendants (*sayyid* ʿUmar). These two were actually distantly-related cousins, as both descended from a common ancestor, *shaykh* Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Kaylānī al-Ḥamawī (d. 1671-72), the head of the Syrian branch of the Qādiriyya order and *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Ḥamā, whose genealogy went back directly to the great Sufi master and eponym ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), Kaylānī/Kīlānī being the arabised form of Jīlānī.[67]

According to a family tradition, one of ʿAbd al-Qādir's great-great-grandsons, *shaykh* Sharaf al-Din Yahya, left Baghdad to settle in Ḥamā around the year 734/1334, laying the foundations of what would make of Ḥamā a "model Jilani city for those who study the political and religious role of Sufi-rooted ashrāf" (Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 71).[68] Over time, the Kaylānīs established themselves as part of Ḥamā's elite group of fami-

recorded documents. Sometimes, dates regarding previous hearings or personal events of the litigants are also given in the text.

67 Sharaf al-Dīn is reputed to have been the first Kaylānī-Qādirī of Ḥamā to hold the office of *naqīb al-ashrāf*. He was honored with a visit by the Ottoman sultan Sulaymān the Magnificent. Cf. Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 1.

68 According to Reilly (2002, 27): "the first Kaylani to leave an imprint on Hama was Ibrahim, who lived in the 17th century. He built a mosque on the right bank of the Orontes and this section of the town became the locus of the Kaylanis' presence in Hama and was also know by the name al-Kaylaniyya in the 18th century".

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lies, holding the office of *shaykh* of the Syrian Qādiriyya and of *muftī* and *naqīb al-ashrāf*.[69] Together with the 'Aẓms and the 'Alwānīs, they came to be considered the local spokesmen of Ottoman Ḥamā, the three family clans that "dominated Ḥamā's society.[70] These family groups constituted an elitist class of power brokers and intermediaries generally referred to collectively as *a'yān*. As elsewhere in Syria and in the rest of the Ottoman Empire, they were "part and parcel of the system of government" (Reilly 2002, 25).[71] In Ottoman Ḥamā, the Kaylānīs are to be considered as the best example of a notable family group of religious scholars boasting prophetic descent at the head of a powerful and influential Sufi order. In this the Kaylānīs followed a pattern that was typical of their times. In Reilly's words:

> The establishment or consolidation of Sufi-linked notable families in Ḥamā during the 16th and 17th centuries, with a strong element of hereditary leadership, is a noteworthy development. The extension or heightened visibility of Sufism in the Ottoman Arab lands was a general phenomenon in the Ottoman period. Sufi affiliation created horizontal ties among confreres across distances, and vertical ties within neighborhoods through the rite associated with visits to the Sufi lodges and saints' tombs. Hence Sufism was an important parts of the consolidation or assertion of authority of notable families. (2002, 30)

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69 For the *muftī*s and *naqīb*s *al-ashrāf* of the Kaylānī family cf. Reilly 2002, 28. In the course of the 19th century several Kaylānīs managed to hold the offices of *muftī*, *naqīb al-ashrāf* and deputy judge at the same time (cf. Reilly 2002, 31). They continued to do so into the early 20th century. Cf. Weismann 2005.

70 Cf. Reilly 2002, 26-41, 61-8, 102-6, 121-3; Douwes 2001, 70-5; 173-8.

71 The term *a'yān* continues to be the object of debate and criticism. Reilly (2002, 25-6, 135-6) observes that although "the word conveys the intermediary function that these individuals and families fulfilled [...] the term needs to be disaggregated according to a distinction drawn by J. Clancy-Smith between 'elites' and 'notables' in the context of Ottoman North Africa. Her differentiation emphasizes *elites* and *notables* respective bases of power and authority [...] elites drew some, though not all, of their political authority from relationships with the state. Religious notables on the other hand tapped deep into other sources – sharifian descent, special piety, erudition, charity... the attributes demanded of the holy person. They wielded socio-spiritual and moral authority [...]. The respective bases of authority often were intertwined, but the basic distinction between people of the military and scholarly/religious status is relevant to the social structure of Ottoman towns including Hama [...]. Elites owed their ascendancy to connections to the Ottoman state, forming a kind of aristocracy of service. Notables, in addition to their connection with the state, possessed autonomous cultural capital that flowed from their illustrious ancestry, their religious learning, and their association with mosques and Sufi lodges that they or their ancestors had founded". According to these definitions the 'Aẓms would belong to the first type of *a'yān*, the elite properly, while the Kaylānī to the second, the notables. For a general overview of the role of the *a'yān* in Middle Eastern societies cf. Hourani 1968.

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In his well known biographical work *Silk al-durar*, the damascene scholar, Sufi *shaykh*, Ḥanafī *muftī* and *naqīb al-ashrāf* Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī (d. 1206/1791) presents the biographies of several Kaylānī-Qādirīs from Ḥamā and Damascus, including the two mentioned in the Aleppo document: Isḥāq b. 'Abd al-Qādir, the plaintiff, and 'Umar b. Yāsīn, one of the defendants. Theirs and their families' story is an interesting one.

Isḥāq's father, *sayyid shaykh* 'Abd al-Qādir b. Ibrāhīm b. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī al-Qādirī al-Ḥamawī (1080-1157/1670-1739) – highly praised by al-Murādī for his personal qualities, education and high standing – was born and raised in Bagdad. Upon completing his first studies, with proficiency in the 'three languages' (Arabic, Turkish, Persian), he arrived in Ḥamā in the year 1095/1684 where he obtained the office of *naqīb al-ashrāf* and undertook several trips to Aleppo, Cairo, and Istanbul. Eventually he emigrated to Damascus with his children:

> The reason for their moving to Damascus was that they ruled the city of Ḥamā on behalf of the [Ottoman] state, holding the city and its districts as a [tax] farm, for which they paid a considerably huge sum. That had become their special responsibility, but they were seized by the ambition of making laws (*aḥkām*), so the populace of Ḥamā, instigated by one governor, rose up against them, attacked their houses with the intent of looting and besieged them with firearms. The people of Ḥamā were shouting: 'Death is pleasant'. This went on for a few days and the situation became hard for them, until they found an opportunity to escape. He (i.e. *shaykh* 'Abd al-Qādir) arrived in Damascus, with his relative *shaykh* Yāsīn, and his ('Abd al-Qādir's) sons: *sayyid* Ya'qūb, *sayyid* Isḥāq, *sayyid* Muḥammad, *sayyid* Ṣāliḥ, and *sayyid* 'Abd al-Raḥmān. That year, 1143 [1730-31], they made the pilgrimage to Mecca and upon their return they settled down in Damascus […]. In his days there, 'Abd al-Qādir spent huge and unlimited amounts of money and became very famous and eminent, to the extent that all the hopefuls came to him for the fulfilment of their needs, and many borrowed money from him. He made a waqf of his home and of some estates in Damascus.[72] He was a good orator, a skilled storyteller and a very sociable person; he narrated poems, pleasant stories and anecdotes, and was of gentle character. He became the administrator of the 'Aṣrūniyya school in Ḥamā,[73] where he also taught, then was given the judgeship of Tripoli of Syria, with a rank equivalent to the judgeship of Jerusalem. He died in the month of Dhū

72 On his considerable *waqf*, which included properties both in Ḥamā and Damascus, cf. Reilly 2002, 36; Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 65.

73 A *madrasa* built by Nūr al-Dīn Zangī in the 12th century for the great Shāfi'ite jurist Ibn Abī 'Aṣrūn al-Mawṣilī al-Ḥalabī al-Dimashqī (d. 585/1189). Cf. Elisséeff, N., s,v, "Ibn Abī 'Aṣrūn", *EI*, III (1986), 681-2.

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l-Qaʻda 1157 [1744-45] and was buried in the Bāb al-Ṣaghīr cemetery. He had a brother, also born in Bagdad, by the name of ʻAbd al-Razzāq, a poet and cultivated man. (al-Murādī 2001, 4: 53-4)[74]

Al-Murādī speaks in favorable, although rather conventional terms of the plaintiff, *al-sayyid al-sharīf* Isḥāq, son of ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Ibrāhīm b. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Kaylānī al-Qādirī al-Ḥamawī al-Ḥanafī. He considers him among the well-known *shaykh*s of his time but limits himself to a half page of much praise and little fact, which is enough for Reilly to call him "a prominent scholar" (2002, 65), a depiction that seems a bit of a stretch.

Born in Ḥamā in 1111/1699, being the eldest of his brothers Yaʻqūb, Muḥammad, Ṣāliḥ, and ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, our Isḥāq followed his father and paternal uncles on their relocation to Damascus, took up the *qādirī* path of his family and ancestors and was respected by judges, governors and the people alike. Al-Murādī says he met him once in Damascus and was offered written amulets (*tamāʼim*) and magic formulas and charms (*taʻāwīdh*). While on his way to Aleppo more than thirty years after the Aleppo trial, Isḥāq met his death north of the Syrian town of Maʻarrat al-Nuʻmān in the aftermath of events linked to the invasion of Syria by the Egyptian Mamluk Abū al-Dhahab.[75] He was killed in the month of Shaʻbān 1185/November 1771 by some Turkish militia, probably *levend* or other irregular troops, who were after his possessions.[76] His brother Yaʻqūb, a long time resident of Istanbul praised by al-Murādī for his pleasant manners and good nature, was killed there too. They were both buried outside Maʻarrat al-Nuʻmān (cf. al-Murādī 2001, 4: 271-2).

Isḥāq's other brother ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, born in Ḥamā in 1130/1718 but raised in Damascus, travelled to Istanbul and was granted the office of *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Damascus by the Sultan. However, faced with strong opposition from the local *ashrāf*, he resigned, secluded himself in his house and died of illness in the year 1172/1758-59 (cf. al-Murādī 2001, 3: 337-46). Yet another brother of his, Muḥammad (d. 1770-1771), was also named *naqīb al-ashrāf*

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74 Cf. also Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 60.

75 Abū l-Dhahab was sent by the *de facto* ruler of Egypt ʻAli Bey to invade Syria and Palestine in the year 1771. He took Damascus and other cities in southern Syria. Cf. Holt, P.M., s.v. "Muḥammad Abū l-Dhahab", *EI*, VII (1993), 420.

76 The term *levend* denoted irregular militias hired by the Sultan, local governors, or even local notables. More often than not they were a cause of disorder and lawlessness, particularly in Anatolia and the Syrian lands. Cf. Kramers, J.H., Griswold, W.J., s.v. "Lewend", *EI*, V (1986), 728-9. Insecurity of major trade routes and in rural districts was still a major problem in the first half of the 19th century. Reilly (2002, 127) notes that "among the highwaymen were irregular troops who drew little distinction between tax collection and robbery".

of Damascus.[77] Of Isḥāq's many children, 'Abdallāh became *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Ḥamā,[78] and a daughter was married into the 'Alwānī family.[79]

Also Isḥāq's cousin and opponent in court, *al-sayyid al-sharīf* 'Umar b. Yāsīn b. 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Qādirī al-Kaylānī al-Ḥamawī al-Shāfi'ī is mentioned and commended by al-Murādī. He actually gets a slightly longer entry than Isḥāq's.[80] Born in Ḥamā in 1127/1715, he too emigrated with his family to Damascus in the year 1730-31. There he spent a fortune building a new house in the old Qabāqibiyya quarter, in the Sayyida Ruqayya area,[81] but did not live to enjoy it much since he took to travelling, visiting Baghdad, Raqqa, and Aleppo repeatedly. On a particular occasion, he went to Istanbul "to alleviate the oppression on the poor people of Ḥamā at the time of Sultan Muṣṭafā Khān and was honored by the state" (al-Murādī 2001, 198).[82] Towards the end of his life, due to the supremacy (*taghallub*) of its governors, he left Ḥamā for good to settle down in Aleppo where he died on 12 Safar 1185/27 May 1771, the same year as his rival

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77 He was given the *niqāba al-ashrāf* in the year 1155/1748. Cf. al-Budayrī al-Ḥallāq 1959, 29; and also Kenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 60, fn. 33.

78 Cf. Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 60, fn. 34. The fact that this 'Abdallāh was a coffee-shop proprietor is good enough reason for Reilly (2002, 35, and fn. 41) to state that "not all sons of *shaykh*s and scholars followed in their fathers' footsteps". It seems to me that his tenure as *naqīb al-ashrāf* proves otherwise. Being a religious dignitary never excluded the possibility of entrepreneurial activities. In fact, Reilly (2002, 36) speaks of 'Abdallāh's father as a "scholar and business man".

79 Cf. Reilly 2002, 122. The 'Alwānīs were *ashrāf* presumably descended from *shaykh* 'Alwān al-Ḥamawī (d. 1529), a religious scholar who established a mosque and a Shādhilī lodge in Ḥamā administered by his descendants. They were originally of Shāfi'ite affiliation and many held the post of Shāfi'ite *muftī* of Ḥamā. Others, presumably out of political expediency/convenience switched to the Ḥanafī school. Cf. Reilly 2002, 31, and fn. 24. In the 18th century they held the *niqāba al-ashrāf* more often than the Kaylānīs. Reilly (65) also adds that two children and a grandson of Isḥāq al-Kaylānī endowed a coffee house as a family *waqf*. A grandson of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī married a descendant of the celebrated mystic al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731).

80 Cf. al-Murādī 2001, 3: 197-8; Ṭabbākh 1998, 7: 58-9. One notes the different legal affiliations of the two: Isḥāq was a Ḥanafite, 'Umar a Shāfi'ite.

81 Not to be confused with the *sūq* al-Qabāqibiyya near the *sūq* al-Ṣāgha to the right side of the Umayyad mosque, the quarter of al-Qabāqibiyya al-'Atīqa is in the 'Amāra neighborhood, near the Farādīs Gate. On the rather confusing history regarding this shrine reputed to preserve the tomb of a daughter of Ḥusayn, the martyr of Karbalā', who died at four years of age, cf. Mulder 2008, esp. 161-80; Tabbaa 2007. The Kaylānīs seem to be somehow connected to the shrine: one of the stone markers that were next to the *miḥrāb* of the old mosque – that is, before the renovation works that completely transformed the site – "commemorated the act of placing a store into *waqf* for the benefit of the shrine. This action was taken in the year 1725 (1713) by a figure titled His Excellency al-Tawfīq Mīrzā Bāb al-Mustawfī al-Kīlānī" (Mulder 2008, 178-9).

82 The Muṣṭafā Khān referred to is the Ottoman Sultan Muṣṭafā III (r. 1757-1774).

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Isḥāq. He was buried in the al-Ṣāliḥīn cemetery.[83] He was *shaykh al-sajjāda* of the Qādirī order and *muftī* of Ḥamā (cf. Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 60).

'Umar's father Yāsīn had been more important, having succeeded his own father 'Abd al-Razzāq as the leader of the Syrian Qādiriyya, holding the leadership of the *ashrāf* of Ḥamā and described as incredibly wealthy. It is probably due to both his position and wealth that he was able to secure for his daughter a marriage with the governor of Damascus, Sulaymān Pasha al-'Aẓm (d. 1743).[84] The famous traveller and scholar 'Abd al-Ghānī al-Nābulusī visited Ḥamā in 1105/1693 and, among others, met with "our dear friend, the pride of the great and commendable notables, his Excellency *sayyid* Yāsīn *afandī*, the *naqīb al-ashrāf* of those territories and the progeny of the illustrious and perfect master, *shaykh* 'Abd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī […]. We met him and were granted his generous hospitality in his beautiful mansion which overlooks the river Orontes" (Nābulusī 1998, 1: 148-9). Yāsīn *afandī* died on Friday 3 Rabī' I 1146/14 August 1733 and was buried at the foot of the Qāsiyūn in Damascus (cf. also Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 59).

As to *shaykh* 'Umar's progeny, his son 'Alī (d. 1824-25) was *shaykh al-sajjāda* and *muftī* of Ḥamā, but resigned from the *iftā'* to dedicate himself to teaching, probably in the mosque he had built and endowed as a *waqf*. 'Ali's brother Muḥammad Sa'dī al-Azharī (d. 1828-29) succeeded him as both *muftī* and *shaykh* of the order. He also compiled a genealogical work on his own family. Their brother Muḥammad Amīn (d. 1816-17) was *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Ḥamā (cf. Khenchelaoui, Zarcone 2000, 60-1).

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83 On this cemetery cf. al-Ghazzī 1999, 2: 289. The Kaylānīs' connection with Aleppo predates the Ottoman era. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī's own son 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Baghdādī (d. 1199) was also known as al-Ḥalabī. The order was officially introduced in Aleppo during the 16th century. Cf. Zarcone 2000, 464. Two 18th century Kaylānīs are recorded in local sources specifically as Halabī: 1) Muṣṭafā b. Yūsuf al-Khojakī al- Kaylānī al-Khalwatī al-Ḥalabī was born in Aleppo in 1045/1635-36. He moved to Damascus with his father, visited Jerusalem and Mecca, then settled in Cairo for nine years. He returned to Aleppo to become an affiliate of the *zāwiya* al-Nasīmiyya where he secluded himself for the rest of his life. He married twenty-two women in the course of his life, but only two sons and a daughter survived him. He died of fever on the 27th of Rajab 1153/18 October 1740 at the age of 108. Cf. al-Murādī 2001, 4: 252; Ṭabbākh 1998, 4: 479. 2) 'Abd al-Laṭīf b. Fatḥallāh al- Kaylānī al-Ḥanafī al-Ḥalabī (d. 1191/1778) was a resident of Istanbul where he served as *mudarris* in the imperial *madrasa* complex. His father was a saddle maker (*sarrāj*) in Aleppo and he also worked in the same trade, this explaining his being known as Ibn al-Sarrāj. He went to Istanbul to file a complaint on behalf of his mother about the Kaylānī family *waqf* and obtained a military license (*berāt*) for its administration. Cf. al-Murādī 2001, 3: 147.

84 When Sulaymān Pasha al-'Aẓm arrived in Damascus as the new governor, in 1146/1733-34, he married *shaykh* Yāsīn's daughter. Cf. al-Murādī 2001, 3: 54; 4: 275; al-Budayrī al-Ḥallāq 1959, 59; Ibn Kannān 1994, 437; Reilly 2002, 40, 67; Schilcher 1985, 33, 194. Schilcher notes that present-day Kaylānī sources give a different story: the marriage actually took place between Yāsīn's granddaughter and 'Abdallāh al-'Aẓm. On Sulaymān Pasha 'Aẓm, who held the governorship of Damascus in two different periods (1734-38, 1741-43), cf. also Barbir 1980, 27-9, 31-2; Marino 2000b; Grehan 2007.

As for the other defendants, their identification has proven more difficult: *shaykh* 'Abdallāh al-Ḥamdūnī could be the 'Abdallāh al-Ḥamawī al-Ḥamdūnī al-Shāfi'ī al-Azharī briefly mentioned in Kaḥḥāla's *Muʿjam al-muʾallifīn* as the author of a commentary on al-Tirmidhī's *al-Shamāʾil*.[85] As to *shaykh* Muḥammad al-Sharābātī we have a recognizable family name that could identify him as a member of a family of *'ulamāʾ* of Aleppo (cf. Meriwether 1981, 302-3). If so, this Muḥammad is more likely the son of 'Abd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad al-Sharābātī al- Shāfi'ī (d. 1178/1764), a well known traditionist and scholar of Aleppo who studied with 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī.[86] 'Abd al-Karīm's son Muḥammad, born in 1131/1719, served as the Shāfi'ite *muftī* of Aleppo and died on 15 Shawwāl, 1203/July 9 1789 (cf. Ṭabbākh 1998, 7: 120-1).

However, this seems problematic. First of all, in the Aleppo document the *qāḍī*'s secretary and scribe forgot to insert, or deliberately left out, the name of the father of this Muḥammad. Secondly, the same document states clearly that all the persons involved in the case are from Ḥamā. Finally, at the time of the events, this Muḥammad was in his early teens, therefore definitely too young to be called *shaykh*. All this makes the identification tempting but tentative, and ultimately dubious. It could very well be that Sharābātī is a misspelling for Sharābī, a family group of second rank notables from Ḥamā. If so, this Muḥammad could be the *shaykh* Muḥammad *afandī* b. *shaykh* 'Umar *afandī* al-Sharābī listed among the notarial witnesses in the Ḥamā document.[87]

Unfortunately, I was not able to find information on *shaykh* 'Abdallāh b. *shaykh* Jūdī and his son *shaykh* Sharaf al-Dīn. Their title of *shaykh* indicates that they may have been people of religious reputation and standing or, alternatively, chiefs of a quarter or masters in a craft guild, as the term '*shaykh*' had many implications.

2.4 The Imperial Officials: The Governor, the Judge and the Sultan's Envoy

The 'Uthmān Pasha (d. 1160/1747) mentioned in the document is among the great Ottoman governors of 18th century Aleppo (cf. al-Murādī 1988, 3: 168-70; Ṭabbākh 1998, 3: 258-65). His full name is 'Uthmān al-Wazīr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Pasha b. 'Uthmān al-Durkī al-Ḥalabī who

85 Cf. Kaḥḥāla 1957, 6: 51. No date of death is given but only that he was alive in the year 1133/1721.

86 Cf. Ṭabbākh 1998, 7: 38-40; Murādī 1988, 3: 70-2. On his father Aḥmad (d. 1136/1723-24) cf. Ṭabbākh 1998, 6: 433-4.

87 The Sharābī traced their origins to a *shaykh* Yūsuf of the Saʿdiyya Sufi order who built a lodge there. Cf. Reilly 2002, 29-30.

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was born and bred in Aleppo, but thanks to his father's dealings he managed to get the highly coveted position of head of the *çavuşiyya* in Istanbul.[88] From then on, his career took a steep climb *muḥaṣṣil* and then *mutasallim* of Aleppo,[89] governor of Tripoli of Syria with the rank of *wazīr*, then of Sivas, Damascus – here he acted as leader of the pilgrimage caravan – and finally Aleppo in the year 1150/1737. Three years later, he was assigned in rapid succession to the cities of Adana, Bursa, Bagdad, Sidon, and Jedda. He died in Mecca in the month of Dhū l-Qa'da 1160/November 1747. In Aleppo he built a large mansion, a mosque, a *madrasa*, and a soup kitchen for the poor, all of which he included in a religious endowment.

As for the presiding judge, his name, Muḥammad, appears on the top left side of the document. Most likely he is the Jarāḥī Muḥammad ʿĀlim mentioned by the historian of Aleppo Kāmil al-Ghazzī as the Ḥanafī chief *qāḍī* for the year 1151/1738 (cf. Ghazzī 1999, 1: 239).

No information was available to me concerning the Ottoman envoy, Murtaḍā *bayk*.

2.5 The Historical Significance of the Case

We have already argued that it is highly likely that the Ḥamā document was tampered with and 'amended', probably in an effort to conceal the identity of the man who was first the defendant in the Ḥamā document, then later the plaintiff in the Aleppo document, *shaykh* Isḥāq b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī. So, it will not be necessary to go over that again here. At any rate this fact does not affect the subject-matter of the trial, though, of course it does have historiographical implications with regard to the *sjillāt* studies.

Beyond that, however, the Aleppo document informs us that in the last hot days of August 1738 a group of prominent Ḥamā residents entered the judge's court, convened, significantly, in the palace of the governor of Aleppo to seek the *qāḍī*'s assistance and judgement on a troublesome case which had festered for more than five years. It reminds us of how important the Islamic courts were at this time in the socio-political and economic arrangements of Syria. Here is an example of the highest levels

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88 The Turkish term *çavuş* referred to "officials staffing the various Palace departments" and to "low-ranking military personnel" (Mantran, R. s.v. Čā'ūsh", *EI*, II (1991), 16). The head of the *çavuş* attended "*dīvān* meetings in readiness and was in charge of the protocol […]. He was one of the aghas in the *aġayān-i rikāb-i hümāyūn* and always carried a silver staff" (Bayerle 1997, 30).

89 The *muḥaṣṣil* was a revenue officer, usually the chief collector of provincial taxes. The *mutasallim* acted as deputy governor of a province.

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of government and society turning to Islamic law and its representatives to settle their disputes. It is a document which shows us how Sharī'a law was interpreted and applied and that this law was significant to both the identity and effectiveness of this society's functioning.

If we take the first of the two documents, the Ḥamā document, at face value, then the judge's job had been rather simple, as is indicated to by the relatively short length of the text. Upon the defendant's (*shaykh* Isḥāq's) failure to produce evidence of his having divorced his fourth wife so as to establish that his marriage contract with the plaintiff's daughter, Ṣāliḥa, was legally valid and binding, the judge obliged *shaykh* Isḥāq to repudiate Ṣāliḥa – about whom, regrettably, we know practically nothing – by means of the irrevocable triple pronouncement of divorce (*ṭalāq*). Though this kind of divorce was reprehensible (*makrūh*), if not downright prohibited (*ḥarām*), it was generally considered legally valid and binding by the jurists (see § 1.1). In any case, the Islamic principle prohibiting one man from having more than four wives simultaneously had been easily applied. On its own then, the Ḥamā document offers one occurrence of polygamous practice. As noted by scholars of the Ottoman court records of Syria, polygamy was not really the norm and for obvious socio-economic factors actually quite rare.[90]

It is clear that what in Ḥamā began and apparently ended as a dispute over the lawfulness of a marriage contract, in Aleppo became a serious quarrel over not only the said contract but also on the physical threats, attack, detention and pillage allegedly suffered by *shaykh* Isḥāq in Ḥamā at the hands of the defendants. Among the latter we find the bride's father, and Isḥāq's own relative, *shaykh* 'Umar al-Kaylānī. We do not know exactly what happened in the five-year gap between the two hearings, but, as noted above, the litigants may have been busy, to quote Ergene' words, a "complicated and informative struggle for evidentiary documentation" (2003, 139), a pattern often observed in the court records.

In any case, it is significant that here we have an example of at least one notable family making its internal quarrels public. At least some Kaylānīs dared to air their internal disputes publicly by turning to the Islamic courts for a settlement. In so doing they also divulged to the governmental hierarchy the internal break-down of family solidarity, something which might have weakened their standing before the Ottoman state on the whole.

Despite its ornate textual structure, underneath its aseptic legal discourse and the rigid formulas which were part of standardised Ottoman-Islamic legal procedure, the Aleppo document conveys a complex picture

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90 Cf. Marcus 1989, 199-200; Reilly 2002, 50-1; Establet, Pascual 1994, 55-7. Reilly actually quotes the 'Ḥamā document' as a rare example of polygamous marriage involving four wives. Not knowing of the 'Aleppo document', he obviously cannot appreciate the full implications of the case.

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of a succession of dramatic events narrated by the litigants themselves in the first-person.[91]

On first sight, it would seem that *shaykh* Isḥāq, unhappy with the Ḥamā judge's sentence, had since that time been trying to plead his case before what he thought might be more sympathetic ears. The Aleppo document could indicate that he may have wanted to distance himself from the long reach of the political power of Damascus, as we read that, according to *shaykh* Isḥāq, a certain Muṣṭafā Madīnī, described as an attendant of Sulaymān Pasha al-ʿAẓm, threatened to take him to Damascus, likely implying that he would have had to face trial by the governor. Although the Aleppo judge did not make much of this threat, it is interesting to note that the contemporary governor of Damascus Sulaymān Pasha, the second member of the ʿAẓm clan to hold this top post, was married to a sister of *shaykh* ʿUmar b. Yāsīn al-Kaylānī, the main opponent of *shaykh* Isḥāq in the case. There may well have been good reason for Isḥāq to doubt that he would receive impartial treatment in Damascus.[92] Apparently, we have here clear evidence of the way politics indeed played a role in the operation of the Islamic courts, at least once a local family (the ʿAzms) were elevated to state power.

However, a closer study of the document's narrative and the litigants' statements show that the case was so constructed as to inevitably bring about the legitimate and lawful rejection by the judge of the plaintiff's claims and allegations (cf. Ergene 2003, 135). The document registers that the *qāḍī*'s decision was based on three facts: first of all, despite a ten-day delay granted to him, *shaykh* Isḥāq was not able to present a 'valid proof' to back up his claim;[93] secondly, he did not require the defendants to take the oath, as was his right according to Islamic legal procedure. Finally, he admitted to having released the liability of the defendants "from all claims and legal rights". This latter admission was a clear statement of his defeat. One wonders what pressures were exerted upon him to make him cave in prior to the hearing and even to provide a statement with that result. One cannot help asking a rather simple but obvious question: why did *shaykh* Isḥāq decide to proceed with his legal action, with all its costs in terms of time and money, if he knew he did not have the necessary evidence and had already released the

91 However, according to Ergene (2003, 134), it would be wrong to "identify the quotations in the *sicil* with the actual words of the litigants" since "there are indications in the court records that what is reported in the *sicil*s as the speech of the litigants is in fact the translation of their voices into the official language of the legal system", so as to produce "a legal statement that was acceptable according to existing legal and religious norms".

92 On the matrimonial strategies, both endogamous and exogamous, of Ḥamā's notable families cf. Reilly 2002, 35-41.

93 Ottoman judicial practice did not strictly require plaintiffs to produce their proofs right away. Rather, if requested, it was common usage to allow for a few day delay (cf. Ergene 2003, 140).

defendants from their guilt? Already prior to the hearing he had precluded any chance of success in court (cf. Ergene 2003, 139-40).

It seems clear then that in fact it was the defendants who were the real initiators of the Aleppo hearing rather than *shaykh* Isḥāq. They staged the event with his compliance and submission. They, not him, had mustered the legal means to end the lawsuit once and for all before a more authoritative, and presumably more scrupulous, court, and so they did.

To my knowledge, neither the Ḥamā nor the Aleppo court records provides further mention of this case or its participants, leaving us to search for further evidence to interpret what was really going on here. However, despite this serious defeat and the loss of much money and valuable personal effects, *shaykh* Isḥāq seems to have carried on with his life in such way as to deserve an entry in one of the most important and well-known biographical collections of his times, as we have seen. Ironically, he would meet his fate at the hands of brutal robbers who, as it had happened in Ḥamā many years before, looted and pillaged his belongings.

3 The Arabic Texts

3.1   The Ḥamā Document

الأمر حسبما حرر فيه نمقه القفير اليه [...] محمد القاضي بمدينة حلب الشهباء غفر له

بمجلس الشرع الشريف و محفل الدين المنيف بمدينة حماة المحمية لدى صدر قضاة الإسلام شرف ولاة الأنام مولانا و سيدنا الحاكم الشرعي الموقع خطه الكريم أعلاه ادعى الشيخ عبد الله أفمدي بن الشيخ جودي بمواجهة الشيخ أحمد أفندي بن الشيخ عبد القادر (؟) أفندي قائلاً في دعواه عليه أنه خطب ابنته المدعوة السيدة صالحة منه و عقد نكاحه عليها و أن العقد غير صحيح و باطل من أصله لكون معه و في عصمته و تحت عقد نكاحه أربع زوجات غيرها و يطلب رفع يده و منعه عنها بإبطال عقد النكاح بالطريق الشرعي و سأل سؤاله فسئل من المدعى عليه فأجاب بأنه من مدة ثلاثة أشهر طلق الواحدة و ادعى صحة النكاح فطلب منه بينة تشهد له بما أجاب به في الطلاق فلم... (؟) ببينة و عجز عن الإثبات ثم بعده طلق السيدة صالحة بنت الشيخ عبد الله أفندي المذكور بالطلاق الثلاث المحرمات في كتاب الله تعالى من غير إكراه و لا إجبار فبموجب ذلك حكم مولانا الحاكم الشرعي المومى إليه لوقوع الطلاق الثلاث الواقع من الشيخ أحمد أفندي على السيدة صالحة بنت الشيخ عبد الله أفندي المدعي و عرف المطلق الشيخ أحمد أفندي أنها بانت منه لا تحل له حتى تنكح زوجاً غيره حكماً و تعريفاً صحيحين شرعيين معتبرين مرعيين مسؤلاً فيهما و كتب ما وقع و سطر بالطلب في أواخر شهر ذي الحجة الشريفة سنة خمس و أربعين و مائة و الف.

الشيخ محيي الدين أفندي العلواني بن عفان مفتي حماة
السيد الشيخ عبد المعطي أفندي قائم مقام نقيب الأشراف بحماة بن شيخ محيي الدين العلواني
الشيخ عبد الله أفندي بن الشيخ سليمان أفندي العلواني

الشيخ محمد أفندي بن الشيخ عمر أفندي الشرابي

الشيخ عبد الله أفندي وكيل الإفتاء بحماة

الشيخ موسى بن الشيخ عبد الله الحوراني

السيد الحاج عبد الله بن الشيخ محمد العلواني

3.2 The Aleppo Document

لما عقد المجلس الشرعي بسراي حلب المحروسة بحضور الدستور المكرم المشير المفخم نظام العالم مدبر أمور الجمهور بالفكر الثاقب متمم ملامّ الأنام بالرأي الصائب (...) الوزير الخطير حضرة عثمان باشا (...) والي ولاية حلب حالاً (...) ادعى بالمجلس المعقود المذكور لدى مولانا و سيدنا العالم العلامة العمدة الفهامة فخر الموالي الكرام صدر الأعالي الفخام محرر قضايا الأنام حسنة الليالي والأيام مميز الحلال من الحرام حلال مشكلات الأنام حاكم الشريعة المحمدية بمدينة حلب المحمية الواضع خطه الشريف أعلاه (...) بمعرفة فخر الأماجد و الأكارم حاوي المحامد و المكارم مرتضى بك المعين من قبل السلطنة العلية مباشراً في هذا الخصوص الآتي الذكر السيد الشيخ اسحق بن الشيخ عبد القادر الكيلاني بمواجهة الشيخ السيد عمر بن المرحوم الشيخ ياسين المتصل نسبه الكريم بالشيخ عبد القادر الكيلاني ، قدس سره العزيز و الشيخ عبد الله بن الشيخ جودي و ابنه الشيخ شرف الدين و الشيخ مصطفى الشراباتي بن... (؟) و الشيخ عبد الله الحمدوني الجميع من أهالي مدينة حماة المطلوب إحضارهم بحلب المحروسة بالأمر العالي و قال في دعواه إني كنت في سنة خمس و أربعين و مائة و الف عقدت نكاحي على ابنة الشيخ عبد الله بن الشيخ جودي المذكور الشريفة صالحة و أن المدعى عليهم المرقومين ليلة زفافي ادعوا عليّ أني متزوج بأربع نساء غيرها و أنها خامسة و تغلبوا عليّ و قالوا أن نكاحي عليها باطل و فرقوا بيني و بينها بعد أن حبسوني يوماً و ليلة و طلقتها مهرها و نهبوا دراهمي و حوائجي و أمتعتي التي كانت موجودة في داري بمدينة حماة و هي مصحف شريف قيمته أربعون غرشاً و طراحة قيمتها ثمانون غرشاً فيها ذهب عتيق عدته ألف و ثلاثمائة و أربعة ذهبات حساباً عن خمسة آلاف غرش و كيسان فيهما ألف غرش زلطة و سكينتان من الذهب وزنهما ثمانون مثقالاً قيمتهما ثلاثمائة و ستون غرشاً و خمسون مثقالاً من اللؤلؤ قيمتها ستمائة غرش و اثنان و أربعون مثقالاً من العنبر قيمتها مائة و خمسون غرشاً و فروة من السمور قيمتها أربعمائة و عشرون غرشاً و فروتان ازق قيمتهما مائة و ستون غرشاً و فروة قاقوم قيمتها خمسون غرشاً و فروة سنجاب قيمتها أربعون غرشاً و فروة سنجاب بنش قيمتها ثلاثون غرشاً و فروة جلفافة فراجية قيمتها مائة غرش و ثلاثة أصواف فراجية قيمتها خمسة و سبعون غرشاً و خاتم ياقوت أحمر قيمته مائة غرش و خاتم ياقوت أزرق قيمته حمسة و ستون غرشاً و خاتم زمرد قيمته ثلاثة و تسعون غرشاً و خنجر و سكين مذهبان بأربعة و ثلاثين مثقالاً قيمتهما مائة و ثلاثة عشر غرشاً و رخت كمر و باشلق من الفضة قيمتهما مائة و ثلاثون غرشاً و رخت حيدري من الفضة قيمته سبعة و ستون غرشاً و رشمتان من الفضة قيمتهما اثنان و ستون غرشاً و سرجان مفضضان مطليان قيمتهما سبعة و تسعون غرشاً و نصف غرش و ثلث غرش و عباة فرس من الجوخ الأحمر الاسكرلات المقصب قيمتها مائة و خمسون غرشاً و عباة فرس من عمل حمص مقصبة قيمتها سبعة و ستون غرشاً و ثمان طاسات و أغطيتها من الفضة وزنها تسعمائة درهم قيمتها مائتان غرشاً و لكنة و إبريق من الفضة مطلي وزنهما ستمائة درهم قيمتهما مائة و خمسون غرشاً و منجرة و قمقم من الفضة وزنهما خمسمائة درهم قيمتهما مائة و ثلاثون غرشاً و زوجا ركاب مطلي ومفضضة قيمتها خمسة و ثمانون غرشاً و ساعة كبيرة قيمتها مائة غرش و دواة من الفضة وزنها مائتا درهم قيمتها حمسة و أربعون غرشاً و أربع عشر مخدة قيمتها كائة و ثمانون غرشاً و قياسات جوخ

ستون ذراعاً قيمتها مائة و ثلاثون غرشاً و ثلاثة مقاعد سوزني قيمتها ثلاثون غرشاً و ارطا جوخ بصمه قيمتها أربعون
غرشاً و طنفستان من الحرير قيمتهما مائة و خمسون غرشاً و ستون جنقاً و طبقاً من الصيني قيمتها مائتان و أربعون
غرشاً و أربع جنقات صيني مع صحونها قيمتها خمسون غرشاً و جارشف مقصب قيمته أربعون غرشاً و ارطة عجمية
واحدة قيمتها ستون غرشاً و سجادتان قيمتهما خمسة و عشرون غرشاً و ثمان طاقات كرمسوت و تسع طاقات بلدار و
اثنا عشر طاقة قطني جاليسي و ست طاقات جتارة و خمسة شوش جقمقي و أربعة كمربندات شامي و سبع طاقات
قماش و خمس كرموتيات مقصبة و أربع شوش بندي و كيسة عود ماوردي وزنه ألف و ثلاثة و عشرون درهماً و ملبس
بدن مجملة قيمتها و النقود و الأشياء المعينة قيمتها على الوجه المحرر أعلاه سبعة عشر ألفاً و خمسمائة غرش و
إني الآن أطالبهم بالنقود و قيمة الأمتعة حيث كانت هالكة و التمس سؤالهم عن ذلك و عن إكراههم فيّ على طلاق
زوجتي المزبورة فسئل المدعى عليهم المرقومون عن حقيقة هذه الدعوى فأجاب الشيخ عبد الله المذكور قائلاً أن
المدعي المزبور كان عقد نكاحه على ابنتي المزبورة و أنه ليلة الزفاف بلغنا أنه متزوج بأربع نساء بأربعة عقود غير
ابنتي المزبورة و سألناه عن ذلك لدى الحاكم الشرعي حينئذٍ بمدينة حماة فأقر بأنه تزوج بأربع من الحرائر و ادعى
أنه طلق إحداهن و انقضت عدتها منه و أن نكاحه وقع صحيحاً على ابنتي [فطلب] الحاكم الشرعي منه بينة على
انقضاء عدة المطلقة من نسائه الأربع المذكورات فعجز عن إثبات ذلك و لدفع الرية طلق ابنتي بعد ذلك طايعاً و
أنكر الشيخ عبد الله و المدعى عليهم المزبورون أخذهم الدراهم و الأمتعة و الإكراه على الطلاق فطلب من المدعي
المزبور بينة عادلة تشهد له بطبق دعواه و أمهل إلى عشرة أيام لإحضار البينة و بعد مضي المدة المذكورة أظهر العجز
عن إقامة البينة و لم يرغب في تحليف المدعى عليهم ثم دفع المدعى عليهم المرقومون دعوى المدعي المزبور بأنه
كان في جمادى الآخرة من منذ سنة ماضية قبل تأريخه بذيله قد أبرأ ذمتنا عن هذه الدعوى و عن جميع الدعاوى
و كافة الحقوق الشرعية إبراءً عاماً شرعياً مقبولاً منه بحضور جماعة من المسلمين قبولاً تاماً ، فصدقهم على صدور
الإبراء العام منه لهم على الوجه المحرر و قال إني كنت مكرهاً على إبرائي المرقوم بتهديد مديني جوقة دار
حضرة الوزير المحترم سليمان باشا بقوله لي إن لم تبري ذمتهم عن هذه الدعوى و غيرها و إلا أحضرتك من حماة إلى
دمشق الشام ثم لما التمس المدعى عليهم المرقومون من المولى المشار إليه الحكم الشرعي في ذلك و ظهر لديه أن
مصطفى مديني الجوقة دار المرقوم غير قادراً على إيقاع شيء بهذا المدعي و أن قوله ذلك ليس مما يعدم الاختيار
و الرضا و أعلمه أن الإبراء الذي أقر به المقابل بالقبول من المدعى عليهم مانع من صحة دعواه المذكورة حيث كان
متأخراً عنها و أنه لا تسمع دعواه بعده إلا بحق جديد متأخر عنه و منعه عن التعرض لهم بسبب ذلك حيث كان الأمر
كذلك إعلاماً و منعاً شرعيين مسؤلاً فيهما ، و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في اليوم السابع من شهر جمادى الأولى
لسنة إحدى و خمسين و مائة و ألف

فخر العلماء المحققين مختار الفضلاء المدققين حضرة مولانا السيد يوسف أفندي المفتي بمدينة حلب حالاً
فخر العلماء الكرام زبدة المدرسين الفخام حضرة السيد أحمد أفندي نقيب الأشراف بحلب حالاً
فخر الأماجد و الأكارم حاوي المحامد و المكارم حضرة أحمد آغا محصل حلب حالاً
عمدة العلماء و المدرسين الكرام الحاج حامد أفندي بن المرحوم محمد أفندي
عمدة العلماء و المدرسين الكرام حسين أفندي بن أحمد أفندي
فخر العلماء و المدرسين الكرام السيد محمد أفندي بن السيد عبد السلام أفندي
فخر العلماء و المدرسين الكرام محمد أفندي قباني زاده
فخر الأقران الكرام محمد آغا ترجمان السراي

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Il Cairo: luoghi semi-ufficiali e personaggi eccentrici nei romanzi di Shalabī e Abū Julayyil

Cristina Dozio
(Università degli Studi di Milano, Italia)

Abstract   Cairo is a constantly expanding and changing megalopolis, whose residents negotiate the binary oppositions of centre/periphery, development/poverty, and local/global. This paper investigates the literary representation of the Egyptian capital in four novels by Shalabī and Abū Julayyil published between 1981 and 2008. Firstly, it overviews recent scholarship about the literary geography of Cairo. Then, it examines the narrative techniques employed by Shalabī and Abū Julayyil to portray semi-official spaces, such as historical palaces now in decline, hash dens, shantytowns, and buildings on the verge of collapse. I argue that these spaces interact with the rest of the city, while developing a highly local culture, embodied by eccentric humorous characters.

Sommario   1 Introduzione. – 2 Geografia letteraria del Cairo. – 3 Autori e opere. – 3.1 Autori nel panorama letterario. – 3.2 Romanzi sulla cartina. – 3.3 Memoria urbana. – 4 Luoghi semi-ufficiali: ridisegnare i confini. – 5 Personaggi eccentrici: ridisegnare l'identità. – 6 Conclusioni.

1   Introduzione

Il Cairo, capitale dell'Egitto e megalopoli del Nord Africa, ha vissuto una continua crescita e trasformazione nell'ultimo secolo. L'area urbana è andata inglobando le zone circostanti il nucleo originario, con la fondazione di nuovi quartieri e, più recentemente, di città satellite ai margini del deserto. Inoltre, nel 2015 il governo ha annunciato il progetto di costruire una seconda capitale, con nuove soluzioni abitative e commerciali, dove trasferire le attività amministrative e l'aeroporto (Kingsley 2015).[1] Attualmente la popolazione dell'area urbana si attesta intorno ai nove milioni di abitanti, mentre nell'area metropolitana risiedono all'incirca venti milioni di persone (Cairo Population 2017).[2]

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[1] Kingsley, Patrick (2015). «A New Cairo: Egypt Plans £30bn Purpose-Built Capital in Desert». *The Guardian*, 16 March. URL https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/mar/16/new-cairo-egypt-plans-capital-city-desert (2017-12-20).

[2] http://worldpopulationreview.com/ (2018-04-20).

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Accanto al dato territoriale e demografico, la toponomastica conferma la centralità del Cairo all'interno dell'Egitto e della sua cultura urbana. La capitale, infatti, è chiamata anche *Miṣr* (*Maṣr*, nella pronuncia egiziana), ovvero con il nome dell'intero Paese. Inoltre, ha l'epiteto di '*Umm al-dunyā*, 'madre del mondo'. Questa relazione tra città e mondo si è complicata negli ultimi decenni per effetto della globalizzazione. Il Cairo partecipa al fenomeno di urbanizzazione del mondo descritto dall'antropologo Marc Augé (2010), il quale registra due tendenze simultanee: il mondo-città, cioè la crescita urbana e la diffusione in diverse metropoli dei medesimi elementi (architettura, attività economiche, prodotti commerciali); e la città-mondo, la quale riflette le contraddizioni e le tensioni dell'intero pianeta.[3] A tale proposito, nella capitale egiziana i sobborghi residenziali esclusivi convivono con gli *slum*, ma talvolta questa polarizzazione si manifesta anche all'interno di un singolo quartiere; d'altro canto, le frontiere interne vengono continuamente attraversate dagli abitanti.

Tali frontiere geografiche, socio-economiche e culturali sono ridisegnate dalla narrativa egiziana, che ha eletto Il Cairo come soggetto sociale privilegiato.[4] Nel presente contributo, si intende fornire una panoramica degli studi che indagano la rappresentazione di questa città in racconti e romanzi egiziani. In secondo luogo, ci si propone di arricchire tale topografia con l'analisi di quattro romanzi di Khayrī Shalabī (1938-2011) e Ḥamdī Abū Julayyil (1968-), due scrittori contemporanei che si interessano alla geografia letteraria e alla memoria urbana. Le opere selezionate mettono in narrazione le trasformazioni del tessuto urbano dovute alle politiche di liberalizzazione economica (*infitāḥ*), avviate negli anni Settanta dal Presidente Sadat e culminate nei decenni della presidenza Mubarak, nel contesto di piena globalizzazione. Inoltre, questi romanzi si concentrano su luoghi marginali non tanto dal punto di vista geografico, quanto per la natura dei rapporti di cui sono intessuti. Essi sono anche spazi liminali perché collocati sul confine e, pertanto, capaci di fondere tratti che normalmente sono separati. Considerando tali caratteristiche, in questo articolo sono definiti luoghi semi-ufficiali per indicare che sfuggono parzialmente al controllo dell'autorità e godono

3   Il presente articolo è una rielaborazione dell'intervento presentato dall'Autore in occasione del Convegno dottorale '*La città mondo: riflessioni attraverso le frontiere del tessuto urbano*' (Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia, 8-9 giugno 2017).

4   Nella formazione del canone romanzesco egiziano sono fondamentali anche altri spazi, come l'immaginario rurale e quello occidentale. Inoltre, gli scrittori hanno rappresentato anche altri centri urbani, quali Alessandria e Port Said. Tuttavia, nel presente articolo si intende Il Cairo come un soggetto sociale privilegiato perché diversi autori lo scelgono come microcosmo dell'intera nazione, alla luce delle sue complesse dinamiche (urbane e di potere) e della compresenza di abitanti originari di svariate zone del Paese. La capitale è anche sede delle maggiori istituzioni culturali, in cui gli intellettuali negoziano il proprio capitale simbolico.

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di un maggiore o minore riconoscimento formale nel corso del tempo. Si tratta di un *underworld* urbano i cui luoghi simbolo strutturano i romanzi presi in esame.

Shalabī ambienta il suo *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī* (1991a; I viaggi del venditore di sottaceti e dolciumi) nel centro monumentale del Cairo, in alcuni palazzi storici caduti in rovina. In *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa* (Shalabī 2000; Il garzone della fumeria), lo stesso autore ridisegna un quartiere adiacente al centro moderno, eppure trascurato, il cui simbolo è una fumeria di hashish. Questi luoghi sfuggono al controllo ufficiale tanto quanto quelli situati in altre zone della capitale e descritti da Abū Julayyil in *Luṣūṣ mutaqāʿidūn* (2002; Ladri in pensione) e *al-Fāʿil* (2011; Il manovale). Il primo romanzo ruota intorno una piccola palazzina in un sobborgo informale, mentre il secondo si sposta fra i condomini sull'orlo del collasso, ristrutturati da squadre di lavoratori edili a giornata.

Dopo aver individuato le tecniche narrative impiegate per la rappresentazione spaziale, nell'ultima parte del contributo si analizza la relazione fra tali luoghi e la ridefinizione di comunità alternative, in cui i personaggi eccentrici elaborano una cultura altamente localizzata, caratterizzata anche dall'esperienza collettiva dell'umorismo. In una città che si espande e si trasforma, ci si propone di indagare la rappresentazione finzionale dei luoghi semi-ufficiali, in relazione al concetto di confine, e dei personaggi che li abitano, in relazione alla sfera dell'identità: quali tecniche narrative costruiscono il tessuto urbano? Come interagiscono gli abitanti di questi luoghi con il resto della città attraverso flussi di persone, oggetti e idee? Come i personaggi eccentrici inscrivono nello spazio la loro identità?

2 Geografia letteraria del Cairo

Il Cairo di Shalabī e Abū Julayyil è la città frammentata dell'epoca postmoderna, la quale ha molteplici centri e altrettante periferie, situate sia ai bordi della città che in prossimità del nucleo urbano originario. In particolare, la mancanza di solide politiche urbanistiche e il costante afflusso di migranti dalle campagne hanno portato allo sviluppo di quartieri informali: dinnanzi alla negligenza governativa, gli abitanti di diverse zone hanno trovato soluzioni dal basso, non sempre legali, per accedere ai servizi idrici ed elettrici, nonché per ricavare degli spazi per l'alloggio e per gestire i rapporti sociali.

Tra gli studi che mettono in relazione queste trasformazioni urbane con le forme narrative egiziane, in questo articolo si fa riferimento soprattutto

a quelli di Sabry Hafez, Mara Naaman e Samia Mehrez.[5] Hafez (2010) illustra le cause che hanno portato alla formazione di quartieri informali nella capitale a partire dagli anni Settanta, connettendo poi questo fenomeno alla generale crisi ideologica degli anni Novanta. In riferimento al Cairo, egli definisce questi insediamenti *'ashwā'iyyāt*, termine traducibile con 'quartiere informale' o '*slum*', pur tenendo conto delle specificità culturali e urbane della capitale egiziana. Lo studioso suggerisce un'omologia tra questo sviluppo urbano caotico (inteso nelle sue componenti materiali e ideologiche) e la rottura estetica della generazione degli anni Novanta.

Accanto a una rinnovata sensibilità per la raffigurazione letteraria delle periferie, Naaman (2011) riscontra anche una tendenza degli scrittori egiziani a tornare al centro. La studiosa esamina la rappresentazione narrativa di *Wasṭ al-balad*, cioè il centro città costruito nell'ultimo quarto dell'Ottocento sul modello della Parigi haussmanniana per volere del *khedivé* Ismā'īl (1863-1879) e divenuto, in epoca coloniale, vetrina (*display*) del progetto di modernizzazione. Naaman ritiene che i romanzi scrivano una storia alternativa di *Wasṭ al-balad*, problematizzando il suo valore simbolico nella produzione dell'identità collettiva egiziana.

Anche Mehrez (2010b) definisce gli scrittori cairoti come storici e architetti informali della capitale, i quali disegnano una mappa da sovrapporre a quella ufficiale. Il suo *The Literary Atlas of Cairo* (2010b) è un'antologia di romanzi egiziani del Novecento, volta a presentare una topografia letteraria della capitale: da un lato, la narrativa fa emergere le trasformazioni storiche, socio-politiche e culturali; dall'altro, in connessione con le medesime trasformazioni, i testi presentano variazioni linguistiche ed estetiche. Come si evince dal titolo dell'antologia, Mehrez si ricollega ad *Atlas of the European Novel. 1800-1900* di Franco Moretti, il quale definisce la mappa «a connection made visible» (1998, 3). Pur con le dovute differenze di approccio, anche Mehrez insiste sulle possibilità offerte dalla geografia letteraria per indagare, o mappare, il campo letterario.[6] Inoltre, riprende da Roland Barthes la concezione di città come discorso, continuamente

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riformulato in termini di *agency* e decifrato in maniera diversa a seconda di chi lo legge (*legibility*, *gaze*).

Riprendendo l'approccio metodologico di questi studi, si ritiene che anche Shalabī e Abū Julayyil possano essere considerati storiografi informali che gettano nuova luce sui luoghi semi-ufficiali, i quali solitamente restano nell'ombra o sono soggetti allo sguardo dall'alto delle autorità. Le loro opere inscrivono nuovi significati in questi luoghi, confrontandosi con il discorso ufficiale e con le precedenti tradizioni narrative. Pur non presentando tutte le innovazioni stilistiche della generazione degli anni Novanta illustrate da Hafez, essi raffigurano dinamiche simili a quelle delle *'ashwā'iyyāt* e affrontano il tema della precarietà urbana.

Con l'emergere di nuovi spazi nella narrativa egiziana, i critici individuano le metafore geografiche impiegate dagli autori per dare forma ai rapporti sociali nella città. Samia Mehrez (2010a, 144-67) teorizza il passaggio dal vicolo (*ḥāra*) al palazzo o condominio (*'imāra*). Il vicolo si trova nel centro storico monumentale (Cairo Islamico o *al-Qāhira al-Mu'izziyya*), caratterizzato da mercati, moschee, caffè, laboratori artigianali e abitazioni affacciate su piccole stradine. Mehrez illustra come le opere realiste, in primis quelle di Najīb Maḥfūẓ (1911-2006), facciano del vicolo uno spazio pubblico, talvolta semi-isolato, innervato di rapporti sociali in trasformazione.[7] Man a mano che Il Cairo diviene una città policentrica e alienante – prosegue la studiosa – ricorre la metafora del condominio, come spazio privato che incapsula la frammentazione urbana. Questi palazzi hanno caratteristiche diverse a seconda della posizione che essi e i loro autori occupano sulla cartina.[8] Tra i casi di studio di Mehrez, infatti, c'è il condominio di *Luṣūṣ mutaqā'idūn* di Abū Julayyil, analizzato come metafora di un intero quartiere informale. Anche Booth (2011) esamina *Luṣūṣ mutaqā'idūn* come esempio di *house novel*, cioè un romanzo strutturato attorno a un unico edificio residenziale, che racchiude il sovraffollamento, l'incomunicabilità e il nomadismo della società contemporanea. Booth precisa che questa casa non solo si trova in un quartiere informale, ma ne condivide la natura porosa e caotica.

Infine, l'ultima metafora individuata dalla critica è quella di *zaḥma*, ovvero ingorgo del traffico e, per estensione, paralisi politica. Con que-

[7]   Significativamente, Maḥfūẓ intitola alcune opere degli anni Quaranta e Cinquanta con il nome di singoli edifici o strade del centro monumentale. Inoltre, la sua rappresentazione del Cairo si modifica insieme al suo percorso estetico, di cui è possibile ricordare il periodo faraonico, la scrittura realista e la scrittura filosofico-esistenzialista. Per un quadro generale della sua opera, cf. Camera D'Afflitto 2007; Hassan, Darraj 2012.

[8]   Mehrez analizza il palazzo come metafora nei seguenti romanzi: *'Imārat Ya'qūbiyān* (2002; Palazzo Yacoubian) di 'Alā' al-Aswānī (1957-), ambientato a *Waṣṭ al-Balad*; *Dhāt* (1998; Le stagioni di Zhat) di Ṣun'allāh Ibrāhīm (1937-), ambientato a Heliopolis, un quartiere settentrionale fondato all'inizio del Novecento e sviluppatosi come zona residenziale dagli anni Sessanta; *Yūtūbyā* (2008; Utopia) di Aḥmad Khālid Tawfīq (1962-2018).

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sto termine, Edwards (2009) riassume le peculiarità della scrittura emergente dell'inizio del millennio, la quale mette in relazione la circolazione sui mezzi di trasporto cittadini con i temi della vita contemporanea caotica e della corruzione del sistema. È possibile estendere questa immagine anche alla narrativa pubblicata dopo il 2011, in cui si ripresenta un senso di blocco, oppressione e caos, mentre si moltiplicano le rappresentazioni distopiche.[9]

Ai fini dello studio delle opere di Shalabī e Abū Julayyil, queste metafore consentono di prendere in considerazione alcuni modelli di rappresentazione dello spazio che interagiscono reciprocamente con le dinamiche cittadine. Inoltre, i romanzi scelti per l'analisi risignificano i cambiamenti urbani fino al periodo immediatamente precedente al 2011, anticipando alcune delle istanze critiche espresse dai manifestanti egiziani. Prima di analizzare queste strategie narrative, nel prossimo paragrafo i due autori e le loro opere sono collocate sulla cartina del Cairo.

3 Autori e opere

3.1 Autori nel panorama letterario

Shalabī e Abū Julayyil appartengono a due generazioni diverse, ma raggiungono negli stessi anni il riconoscimento della critica, che li annovera rispettivamente tra l'avanguardia consolidata e gli scrittori emergenti.[10] Shalabī è legato cronologicamente alla cosiddetta generazione degli anni Sessanta, in cui occupa una posizione isolata, mentre Abū Julayyil è associato agli scrittori degli anni Novanta e Duemila. Nonostante la distanza anagrafica, il loro legame si rinsalda attraverso la frequentazione dei medesimi circoli culturali al Cairo: entrambi sono amici dello scrittore Ibrāhīm Aṣlān (1935-2012) e lavorano ad alcune iniziative editoriali statali.[11]

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9 Le proteste di piazza cominciate nel gennaio 2011 hanno segnato una riappropriazione dello spazio pubblico da parte della collettività in Egitto. Anche nella narrativa pubblicata subito dopo il 2011 emerge questa idea dello spazio partecipato dalla collettività. Per la riappropriazione dello spazio di Piazza Taḥrīr, cf. Prince (2012) e l'analisi che ne fa Kamal (2014). Tuttavia, nel momento in cui l'autorità ha soppresso varie forme di dissenso nello spazio pubblico, alcuni autori hanno optato per la rappresentazione distopica della città. Altri fili conduttori che legano la narrativa precedente e posteriore al 2011 sono: il viaggio, per esempio in al-Khamīsī (2006), al-Shāfiʿī (2008) e Rakhā (2011); la commistione di realtà fisica e virtuale, in al-ʿĀydī (2003) e Nājī (2014); la deformazione distopica in Tawfīq (2008) e Rabīʿ (2015).

10 Per una selezione di autori egiziani degli anni 2000 e traduzione di estratti delle loro opere, cf. Dujols, Jacquemond 2004.

11 Shalabī ha diretto la collana ministeriale di studi popolari, mentre Abū Julayyil lavorava alla collana *Āfāq al-kitāba* (Orizzonti di scrittura), quando era diretta da Aṣlān.

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Dopo aver ricevuto un importante riconoscimento nazionale nel 1980, Shalabī consacra la sua lunga carriera nel 2003 con il *Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature* assegnato dall'American University in Cairo al suo romanzo *Wikālat ʿAṭiyya* (1991; Il caravanserraglio di ʿAṭiyya). Questo premio garantisce la traduzione in inglese dell'opera, che è seguita da ulteriori traduzioni.[12] L'anno successivo, la stessa opera riceve il premio nazionale *State Merit Award*. Il suo ultimo romanzo, *Isṭāsiyya* (2010; Estasi) è selezionato nella longlist del *International Prize for Arabic Fiction* nel 2011 (cf. Heshmat 2012). Abū Julayyil, invece, comincia a pubblicare negli anni Novanta e ottiene un immediato riconoscimento, tanto che il suo primo romanzo viene subito tradotto e il suo secondo romanzo, *al-Fāʿil*, vince il *Naguib Mahfouz Medal* nel 2008.[13]

Oltre alle affinità professionali, Shalabī e Abū Julayyil sono accomunati dal percorso migratorio, che traspare nelle ambientazioni delle loro opere. Emigrati da zone rurali impoverite, vanno in città in cerca di lavoro e trovano delle sistemazioni di fortuna. Shalabī emigra dalle campagne del Delta a Damanhūr, per seguire un corso di formazione per insegnanti; dopo essere stato espulso, vive di lavori saltuari e frequenta gli intellettuali del posto.[14] Giunto al Cairo, mantiene un'attitudine da girovago e successivamente si ricava uno spazio per scrivere in uno dei cimiteri monumentali. Abū Julayyil, invece, proviene da una famiglia beduina originaria della Libia che abbandona la vita nomade all'inizio del Novecento e si stabilisce in un'area agricola nell'oasi del Fayyūm.[15] Data la scarsità di risorse, gli uomini della famiglia sono costretti a inurbarsi in cerca di lavoro. Anche l'autore, da giovane, parte per il Cairo, dove è presente una comunità di conterranei che lavorano come manovali pagati a cottimo. Mentre coltiva le sue aspirazioni letterarie, svolge questo lavoro e abita nel quartiere informale di Manshiyyat Naṣr.

Queste esperienze consentono ai due autori di descrivere con dettagli molto precisi i luoghi semi-ufficiali, noti quasi esclusivamente a chi vi risiede o vi accede di frequente. In particolare, *Wikālat ʿAṭiyya* di Shalabī è ambientato a Damanhūr in uno storico caravanserraglio, ormai in declino, dove gli emarginati trovano rifugio per la notte. Oltre alle ambientazioni urbane, in altri libri l'autore ricrea gli spazi rurali marginali non come luoghi idillici, ma con le loro conflittualità interne.[16] Nelle opere di Abū

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12   Nessuna opera di Shalabī e Abū Julayyil è disponibile in italiano, ma i quattro romanzi qui analizzati sono tradotti in inglese. Inoltre, *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa* è tradotto anche in francese.

13   *Luṣūṣ mutaqāʿidūn* è tradotto in inglese, francese e spagnolo, mentre *al-Fāʿil* è tradotto in inglese.

14   Per un profilo biografico dell'autore, cf. Bushnaq 2002.

15   Altri scrittori di origine beduina sono l'egiziana Mīrāl al-Ṭaḥāwī (1968-), appartenente anch'essa alla generazione degli anni Novanta, e il libico Ibrāhīm al-Kūnī (1948-).

16   Per i romanzi rurali di Shalabī, cf. Mehrez 1993.

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Julayyil, invece, emerge una profonda conoscenza della realtà beduina, delle condizioni materiali del lavoro di manovale e di alcune tappe intermedie del viaggio verso il Cairo.

3.2 Romanzi sulla cartina

Dopo aver riferito degli spostamenti degli autori, i quattro romanzi selezionati sono collocati sulla cartina.

Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī di Shalabī è costituito da una serie di viaggi nel tempo, dagli anni Settanta a diversi momenti nella storia medievale del Cairo. Il narratore in prima persona e protagonista, Ibn Shalabī, si muove nel tempo, ma resta fisso nello spazio, ridisegnando così il Cairo Islamico. Parte dell'azione si svolge nella Cittadella (*qalʿa*) fondata da Saladino (1137-1193), che domina dall'alto quest'area. Il protagonista accede agli storici i palazzi di epoca fatimide e mamelucca; inoltre, gironzola tra i mercati, come *khān al-Khalīlī*, e i vicoli residenziali che contengono alcune sacche di povertà. Nell'opera, i palazzi ufficiali sono contrapposti alla *khizānat al-bunūd* (deposito dei vessilli), costruita dai fatimidi nel punto in cui successivamente fu eretta l'importante moschea di al-Ḥusayn. Qui vengono rinchiusi i prigionieri di guerra, che danno vita a un centro di potere alternativo. Sia la *khizāna* che l'intero complesso del Cairo medievale, sepolto da strati di storia, rientrano nella definizione di luoghi semi-ufficiali. Questi spazi sono mappati a piedi dal narratore, il quale ama passeggiare per il quartiere di *ḥayy al-Salība*, dove incontra scrittori di varie epoche, personaggi televisivi e giornalisti.[17] Per esempio, il romanziere Yaḥyā Ḥaqqī (1905-1992) è menzionato nel seguente riferimento intertestuale:

وينتقل مسرعا إلى الجانب الآخر من الشارع الطولوني ناحية الدحديرة التي أغرم
بوصفها أستاذنا يحيى حقي
(Shalabī 1991a, 157)

attraversò velocemente via Ibn Ṭūlūn, dal lato di al-Duḥdayra, che il nostro maestro Yaḥyā Ḥaqqī amava tanto descrivere.[18]

Il successivo romanzo scelto per l'analisi, *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa* di Shalabī, è ambientato negli anni Settanta a *ḥayy Maʿrūf*, un quartiere popolare (*shaʿbī*) adiacente a *Wasṭ al-balad*. Secondo la ricostruzione storica di Abu-Lu-

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17 Maḥfūẓ è presente come personaggio che viaggia nel tempo ed è caratterizzato da una prorompente risata, forte come un terremoto.

18 Tutte le citazioni dai quattro romanzi selezionate sono tradotte dall'Autore.

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ghod (1961) e Naaman (2011, 73-5), questo quartiere non fu coinvolto nel rinnovamento urbanistico del centro in epoca coloniale, pertanto si sviluppò in modo polarizzato: mentre ospitava ville eleganti, tra le quali la la sede del consolato italiano, sorgevano soluzioni abitative informali. Dopo la Seconda Guerra Mondiale, i migranti dalle campagne della Nubia e dell'Alto Egitto raggiunsero i loro compaesani che già si erano già stabiliti nel quartiere. Nonostante le carenze strutturali, gli edifici vennero adattati per soddisfare le esigenze abitative di classi povere urbane e rurali.

In *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa*, il cuore del quartiere è la *ghurza* (fumeria di hashish) di Ḥakīm, allestita in una casa dichiarata inagibile, dove un gruppo di amici e aspiranti intellettuali si ritrova per passare il tempo in compagnia del cameriere Ṣāliḥ. Quest'ultimo dà il titolo al romanzo ed è soprannominato Hēṣa, un termine che in dialetto egiziano significa 'confusione', 'rumore' e, nello specifico, fa riferimento allo stato di ebbrezza raggiunto dal protagonista dopo l'assunzione di un mix alcolico.

L'emigrazione e il degrado delle abitazioni caratterizzano i luoghi semi-ufficiali anche in Abū Julayyil, il quale descrive gli spazi in cui si muovono i lavoratori edili, di origine beduina o rurale, per lo più emigrati dalla regione del Fayyūm negli anni Novanta. *Luṣūṣ mutaqāʿidūn* è ambientato a Manshiyyat Naṣr, un quartiere sorto negli anni Sessanta ai margini della zona industriale di Ḥulwān, situato nella parte meridionale della Grande Cairo.[19] Voluto dal presidente Nasser per alloggiare gli operai, si è però sviluppato in maniera caotica. Più precisamente, nel romanzo l'azione ruota attorno alla palazzina in cui vive il patriarca Abū Jamāl con la sua famiglia e alcuni affittuari, tra cui il narratore in prima persona.

L'ultimo romanzo, *al-Fāʿil*, tratteggia da vicino le precarie condizioni di vita degli operai edili, i quali dormono negli edifici che stanno ristrutturando o in altre sistemazioni di fortuna. Nell'opera, questi palazzi si concentrano a Shubrā e ʿAyn Shams, due quartieri residenziali abitati dalla classe media e medio-bassa, che si trovano a nord non lontano dal centro. Inoltre, vengono menzionati cantieri in via Fayṣal, nella zona delle piramidi, e una palazzina lussuosa a Heliopolis, dove uno dei personaggi lavora come portinaio.

Shalabī e Abū Julayyil non si limitano a questi luoghi, ma guardano alla complessità urbana in relazione al tempo e alla memoria.

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19   Cf. § 3.1. Esso è il quartiere dove risiede l'autore quando emigra al Cairo.

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3.3 Memoria urbana

Entrambi gli autori coltivano un grande interesse per la memoria urbana anche in opere non narrative. Abū Julayyil è autore di due volumi dedicati ai monumenti del Cairo (2003; 2013), mentre dalle memorie di Shalabī si evince come conoscesse a fondo la cultura dei caffè. In alcune interviste, quest'ultimo dichiara la sua passione per Il Cairo di epoca mamelucca, perché ritiene che questa dinastia abbia segnato profondamente l'urbanistica della città e la cultura egiziana; inoltre, indica come modelli letterari gli scrittori realisti Maḥfūẓ, Ḥaqqī e ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sharqāwī (1920-1987), i quali hanno narrato i quartieri popolari del centro.

Questo interesse per Il Cairo trascende la sfera personale per farsi progetto estetico. Shalabī collega esplicitamente letteratura e geografia nel paratesto di alcune opere: il narratore di *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī* si definisce *ḥawārjī*, 'colui che percorre i vicoli', una sorta di *flâneur* immerso nelle preoccupazioni quotidiane;[20] inoltre il sottotitolo di quest'opera doveva essere *riḥla fī l-zamakān* (Viaggio nello spazio tempo), laddove questo termine traduce anche il concetto bachtiniano di cronotopo; infine, un altro romanzo dello stesso autore, *Baṭn al-baqara* (1996; La pancia della vacca) porta il sottotitolo *jughāwiyya* (geo-novel).

In diversi punti dei loro romanzi, Shalabī e Abū Julayyil operano uno scavo archeologico che penetra al di sotto dell'aspetto attuale di quartieri o monumenti, per recuperare le precedenti funzioni svolte dagli edifici nel corso della storia. In *al-Fāʿil* di Abū Julayyil, il narratore in prima persona descrive Madīnat al-Fayyūm, una città sita a circa 150 km a sud dalla capitale, che è il primo approdo nella migrazione della sua famiglia. La ricostruzione sovrappone le sue memorie personali dei luoghi pubblici (cinema, ristoranti, stazione) a un dato ufficiale, ovvero il progetto residenziale sorto sopra ai resti archeologici della zona:

أول مرة أزور الفيوم كنت في الإبتدائي، أيامها، سبعينات القرن الماضي وحتى ثمانيناته، كانت بقايا مدينة «شدت» أصل الفيوم ما زالت باقية في منطقة كيمان فارس، وكانت منطقة مليئة بالمستنقعات ونباتات والحلفا والعجول والبردي، وكانت التماثيل والمسلات ملقاة وسط الوحل، وبعد سنوات اختفت وأقيمت فوقها مساكن كيمان فارس الحالية.

(Abū Julayyil 2011, 129)

> La prima volta che sono stato a [Madīnat] al-Fayyūm, andavo alle elementari. A quel tempo, diciamo gli anni Settanta e i primi anni Ottanta, i resti di Shedet, l'antica capitale del Fayyūm, erano ancora visibili nella zona di Kīmān Fāris. Era un luogo paludoso, ricco di vegetazione, co-

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20   Il termine *ḥawārjī* genera un'assonanza con gli altri due lavori presenti nel titolo del romanzo. Si tratta di un neologismo coniato a partire da *ḥawārī* 'vicoli', plurale irregolare di *ḥāra*, a cui viene aggiunto il suffisso *-jī* che indica colui che svolge una professione.

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perto di erbacce, canne e papiri, dove le statue e gli obelischi giacevano abbandonati nel pantano. Anni dopo, tutto ciò è sparito sotto all'attuale complesso residenziale di Kīmān Fāris.

Shalabī, invece, ricostruisce sistematicamente la memoria urbana in *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī*, poiché il narratore viaggia nel tempo e può visualizzare gli edifici come strati di tempo accumulati l'uno sopra l'altro. In un passaggio, egli afferma:

<div dir="rtl">

ليس البناء مجرد بناء أبدًا، هو عصور من الصور المتراكمة التي لا تمحى.
(Shalabī 1991a, 10)

</div>

Gli edifici non sono mai soltanto edifici: sono fatti di uno strato sopra l'altro di tempo cristallizzato in immagini indelebili.

La spazio-temporalità, ovvero la sovrapposizione di molteplici livelli spaziali e la percezione plurale del tempo, è uno dei capisaldi della geo-critica, un approccio globale allo studio degli spazi letterari (Sorrentino 2010). Pur non adottando questo complesso approccio teorico, è interessante notare la consapevolezza degli autori stessi in merito alle dinamiche dello spazio urbano. La geo-critica, infatti, è un metodo adatto allo studio della città; il teorico Westphal invita a considerare

lo spazio urbano, e ogni spazio umano, come un mega-libro, un palinsesto costituito da strati di tempo spazializzato. (2009, 227)

4 Luoghi semi-ufficiali: ridisegnare i confini

I luoghi semi-ufficiali di Shalabī e Abū Julayyil sono intessuti della cultura materiale del Cairo, ma anche della sua cultura immateriale, caratterizzata, tra l'altro, dalla capacità di affrontare la vita quotidiana con ironia. Lo sguardo rivolto alla città nei quattro romanzi è accompagnato da un frequente ricorso alla comicità, tanto che è possibile ascriverli a un sotto-genere umoristico nella narrativa egiziana (Dozio 2017). La comicità, impiegata a livello stilistico e come metafora metanarrativa, è generata dal susseguirsi delle disavventure di personaggi eccentrici e dalle incongruenze che essi manifestano.

Molte di queste incongruenze si acuiscono nei luoghi semi-ufficiali, che non sono rappresentati come ghetti isolati, bensì come una realtà inestricabile dall'intero tessuto urbano. Facendoli interagire con l'intera metropoli, i due autori insistono sulla capacità di questi siti di spostare i confini. Inoltre, questa rappresentazione dello spazio dialoga con la precedente tradizione realista e sperimentale; d'altro canto, la produzione narrativa

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più recente conferma la scelta di ambientazioni poco usuali. Tra i modelli di rappresentazione spaziale ricorrenti nella narrativa egiziana, Shalabī e Abū Julayyil fanno ricorso soprattutto al viaggio, che in parte richiama il genere tradizionale della *riḥla*, e al modello gravitazionale che ruota attorno a un singolo edificio.[21]

Il viaggio

Il viaggio regge l'intero impianto narrativo di *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī* di Shalabī. Partendo dal XIV secolo dell'egira (corrispondente al XX secolo d.C.), il protagonista si muove avanti e indietro nel Cairo dei Fatimidi (969-1171), Ayyubidi (1171-1260) e Mamelucchi Baḥrī (1250-1382), seguendo un ordine cronologico solo nella seconda parte dell'opera.[22] Questi spostamenti sono involontari, per lo più causati dalla contemplazione di un monumento o dall'incontro con i passanti per strada. Essi costituiscono una struttura a cornice in cui si inseriscono le avventure di Ibn Shalabī, il quale incappa in comici anacronismi, usando come macchina del tempo il proprio corpo e portandosi come bagaglio la cultura materiale del proprio tempo. Infine, per sfuggire all'ultima disavventura, prende un autobus per tornare a casa, nel quartiere residenziale meridionale di al-Maʿādī. Anche questo mezzo di trasporto funziona come una sorta di macchina del tempo.

Il tour del protagonista offre una panoramica di più luoghi del medesimo quartiere, mentre definisce alcuni tratti salienti della società egiziana nel corso della storia. In tal senso, Shalabī si riallaccia al modello dei resoconti di viaggio degli autori di epoca riformista (*nahḍa*), che univano la descrizione della città con la critica sociale. Un esempio canonico è *Ḥadīth ʿĪsā b. Hishām* (1907; ʿĪsā b. Hishām racconta) di Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1858-1930), in cui l'espediente letterario del pascià, risuscitato dopo circa vent'anni e accompagnato dal narratore per le vie della città, consente di fare osservazioni pungenti su entrambi i periodi storici.

Tornando al romanzo contemporaneo, quando Ibn Shalabī passeggia per le vie del Cairo Islamico, fa notare come esso sia parzialmente trascurato dalle istituzioni e dai residenti, e solo recentemente recuperato come attrazione turistica. Il narratore impiega l'immagine del carnevale (*mahrajān*, letteralmente 'festival') per ironizzare sulla consistente presenza di turisti, ma anche per indicare la vitalità dei residenti e l'abbondanza

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21 Per alcuni modelli ricorrenti nella rappresentazione spaziale, cf. Guth 1999, 476-80.

22 Per l'analisi di questi viaggi nel tempo, cf. Bushnaq 2002 e Cooperson 1998. Inoltre, si ritiene che il calendario dell'egira e il nome del protagonista indicato con la *shuhra* (nome con cui è noto), come nella tradizione dell'*adab*, accrescano la percezione di un viaggio nel passato e nella tradizione culturale arabo-islamica. Una sola volta il protagonista menziona una data esatta, 1400 AH corrispondente al 1979 d.C.

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delle merci in un'epoca improntata al consumismo. Complessivamente emerge l'immagine di un museo a cielo aperto, in cui il protagonista va alla ricerca dello spirito del luogo, ricostruendo la storia dei monumenti. Ibn Shalabī è in grado di aprire varie finestre sul passato, sovrapponendo l'attuale topografia a quella storica. In tal modo, i monumenti non sono solo eretti dalle dinastie al potere, ma anche dagli egiziani comuni con la loro memoria collettiva. Questo tema è centrale nel romanzo, come si evince dal seguente passaggio:

الزمن يا صديقي مثل المكان مليء بالأروقة والأبواب والنوافذ والفراغات الهائلة. ففراغات الزمن أشد هولًا من فراغات المكان، ففراغ المكان براح أحيانًا ولكن فراغ الزمن خواء وجدب وخراب لأنه لا شيء فيه قد حدث.. لا بناء فيه قد بنى.

(Shalabī 1991a, 31)

> Il tempo, caro mio, è come lo spazio. È pieno di colonnati, porte, finestre e buchi giganteschi. Ma un buco nel tempo è decisamente più terribile di un buco nello spazio. Un buco nello spazio, certo, può essere grande, ma un buco nel tempo è puro vuoto, siccità, rovina: nessun fatto è mai accaduto, nessun edificio è mai stato costruito.

Tuttavia, lo stile comico dell'opera riconduce anche questa tematica alla sfera dell'ordinario attraverso immagini concrete e quasi grottesche:

يعلق الزمن بأطراف الذاكرة الإنسانية كالعسل كالجراثيم كالصمغ كالوباء، أحيانًا يصعب على الذاكرة التخلص من لزوجته، وأحيانًا يصعب عليها [إ]يجاد هذا اللزوجة!

(Shalabī 1991a, 216)

> Il tempo si attacca ai bordi della memoria umana come il miele, i germi, la colla o un'infezione. A volte la memoria fatica a liberarsi di questo tempo appiccicaticcio che, altre volte, fatica a restarle appiccicato.

Come sostiene Guth (1999, 476), il modello del viaggio consente di realizzare una panoramica, di rappresentare una totalità geografica e sociale; inoltre, le tappe del percorso possono delineare una maturazione del personaggio. Questa seconda dimensione è assente in *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī*, dove prevale una struttura aneddotica ed episodica, mentre il personaggio rimane uguale a se stesso, pur adottando dei travestimenti per cavarsi d'impaccio. Egli è un furfante e vagabondo, assimilabile a un personaggio picaresco.[23] In maniera analoga, *al-Fāʿil* di Abū Julayyil riper-

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23 La letteratura picaresca, nata in Spagna nel XVI secolo, mette in scena le avventure dei *pícaros*, personaggi popolani e piccoli mascalzoni che vivono di espedienti. Per estensione, il termine picaresco viene attribuito a personaggi di questo tipo. Per la letteratura picaresca, cf. Rico 2001.

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corre la migrazione del protagonista e narratore in prima persona, Ḥamdī, che dal villaggio beduino si sposta al Cairo per lavorare come manovale e coltivare le sue aspirazioni letterarie. Egli si definisce un lavoratore pendolare (ʿāmil tarāḥīl), che fatica per qualche settimana nella capitale e poi fa ritorno al villaggio. Attraverso l'espediente narrativo del viaggio, la tradizionale contrapposizione spaziale città/campagna viene ripresa e innovata con una scrittura sperimentale. Questo percorso migratorio, infatti, non è raccontato in maniera lineare, ma piuttosto risponde a una struttura circolare: all'inizio e al termine della storia, il protagonista si trova nella sua stanza, alle prese con la scrittura di un romanzo che non sa se mai terminerà. Egli compie una minima maturazione e vive una doppia alienazione sia nella capitale che nel villaggio (cf. Dozio 2016).

Oscillando tra i due poli di città e campagna, il viaggio in *al-Fāʿil* tocca alcune tappe intermedie come al-Fayyūm, l'università di Banī Suwayf, che il narratore frequenta senza molto successo e la prigione in cui viene incarcerato a causa di una manifestazione studentesca, a cui non intendeva nemmeno partecipare. In questi tre luoghi, come al Cairo, sono presenti persone della sua stessa regione, che costituiscono una comunità ristretta, in cui Ḥamdī cerca di sentirsi a casa. Per lui, la terra natìa (*homeland*) è il villaggio di Abū Ṭāḥūn, chiamato ufficialmente Dānyāl per la presenza della tomba del profeta Daniele. Si trova ai margini del deserto nella provincia di Iṭsā, a circa quaranta chilometri a sud di Madīnat al-Fayyūm. Ogni volta che il narratore rievoca il paese, la descrizione si apre con immagini nostalgiche, quali, il fiume, la madre e gli amori giovanili. Ben presto, però, spezza l'idillio con alcune osservazioni dissacranti. Per esempio, precisa che Abū Ṭāḥūn è semplicemente un terreno agricolo poco produttivo, in cui i beduini stentano ad adattarsi e mantengono rapporti ostili con i vicini agricoltori. Inoltre, mette in dubbio l'attribuzione della tomba del santo e riporta le espressioni di dileggio nei confronti del suo villaggio. Infine, ricostruisce la sedentarizzazione forzata delle tribù beduine, cominciata ai tempi del *wālī* d'Egitto Muḥammad ʿAlī (1805-1848). Il narratore adotta il medesimo sguardo disincantato nella descrizione del Cairo dove, per altro, questo mondo beduino penetra. Entrambi i poli del viaggio (villaggio beduino/città) sono in trasformazione e, come i personaggi, cercano di ridefinire la propria identità.

Il modello gravitazionale

I romanzi analizzati finora ridisegnano i confini attraverso il viaggio, mentre in *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa* di Shalabī e *Luṣūṣ mutaqāʿidūn* di Abū Julayyil, le opposizioni tendono a sfumarsi nel medesimo luogo, attorno al quale gravita l'azione. Nel primo romanzo, i personaggi si disperdono nel corso della giornata, ma alla sera si riuniscono nella fumeria. Grazie a questo andirivieni e al flusso di chiacchiere stimolato dall'hashish, ciascuno di

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essi definisce il proprio rapporto con il protagonista Ṣāliḥ, contribuendo alla ricostruzione della sua biografia. Nel secondo romanzo, gli inquilini gravitano attorno alla palazzina affittata da Abū Jamāl, il quale esercita la propria autorità patriarcale decidendo chi può restare e chi deve essere espulso.**[24]** Anche il narratore anonimo in prima persona è un inquilino della palazzina. Egli è un beduino immigrato per lavorare nel settore delle costruzioni. Quando non è al lavoro, osserva i suoi vicini e risente del clima di ostilità che vige nella casa. Come anticipato, il modello della *house novel* è consolidato nella narrativa egiziana, ma in questo caso si tratta di edifici in rovina, che offrono precarie soluzioni abitative. La natura marginale dello spazio è resa con alcune tecniche narrative, che qui sono denominate liminalità (§ I), omologia (§ II), semi-legalità (§ III) e narratore-guida (§ IV).

I Liminalità

In primo luogo, questi romanzi insistono sulla liminalità dello spazio, che coniuga elementi normalmente separati, quali città/campagna, centro/periferia, autorità governativa/iniziativa dal basso. Il caso più emblematico è Manshiyyat Naṣr in *Luṣūṣ mutaqāʿidūn*. Come rilevano Booth (2006), El Sadda (2012) e Mehrez (2010a), tutti gli inquilini sono immigrati che coniugano lo stile di vita della periferia urbana con quello delle campagne, adeguandosi alla natura informale del quartiere. Il narratore descrive Manshiyya in questo modo:

المنشية حالة هجين بين القرية والحي العشوائي.
(Abū Julayyil 2002, 80)

La Manshiyya è un luogo ibrido, in parte villaggio e in parte città informale.

Questa definizione si applica anche alla *ghurza* di *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa*, sebbene sia collocata a distanza di chilometri, in prossimità del centro. Originariamente era una casa dove alloggiava una famiglia numerosa, ma, una volta dichiarata inagibile, venne acquistata da Ḥakīm che la trasformò in una fumeria:

الغرزة عبارة عن بيت صعيدي مبني بالطوب اللبن على أنقاض بيت مديني قديم تمت إزالته منذ سنوات بعيدة منذ أن أعلنت الحكومة عن عدم مسؤوليتها عن السكان، لأن الحي كله آيل للسقوط بقرار رسمي من حكومة الثورة عقب توليها الحكم مباشرة.
(Shalabī 2000, 22)

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24   Un episodio significativo è l'espulsione del figlio minore di Abū Jamāl, Sayf, che è un travestito. Per un'analisi del romanzo incentrata sull'identità di genere, cf. El Sadda 2012, 190-201; El-Ariss 2013, 114-44.

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La fumeria era essenzialmente una casa in mattoni crudi tipica dell'Alto Egitto, costruita sulle macerie di una vecchia casa di città demolita molti anni prima, quando il governo aveva dichiarato che non sarebbe stato responsabile per i residenti, poiché l'intero quartiere – secondo quanto stabilito dal neo-insediato governo rivoluzionario – era a rischio crollo.

Il gruppo di amici che vi si riunisce, composto da aspiranti intellettuali originari delle campagne, ritrova in pieno centro città lo spirito di solidarietà delle comunità rurali grazie a Ḥakīm, immigrato dall'Alto Egitto, e al cameriere Ṣāliḥ, di origini nubiane.

La fumeria è avvolta da un'atmosfera magica, poiché simbolo di un'epoca d'oro ormai svanita, in cui i rapporti umani non erano ancora stati guastati dalle liberalizzazioni economiche e dai fallimenti politici. Naaman (2011, 78) sostiene che la descrizione nostalgica si unisce a una forte critica sociale, visto che il narratore non manca di denunciare le carenze del quartiere. Inoltre, si può rilevare che tale attitudine critica si acuisce negli ultimi tre capitoli, dove la rappresentazione dello spazio rafforza il finale tragico del romanzo. Mentre all'inizio del libro compare l'immagine vitale del carnevale, nell'ultima parte prevalgono i riferimenti alla malattia, all'oscurità e alla massa di persone. A esempio, nel capitolo 21 il gruppo di amici è invitato a una festa di matrimonio all'Hotel Hilton. Per una volta, essi abbandonano il loro sguardo interno per adottare la prospettiva dall'alto dei turisti e descrivono ḥayy Maʿrūf come segue:

يستطيع السائح من غرفته في الطابق العلوي رؤية حي معروف بكامله مثل قرحة كبيرة في معدة المدينة المريضة بعسر الهضم تتقيأ سكانها باستمرار إما إلى القبور المزدحمة بالأحياء أو إلى الشوارع المتخمة بالأموات [...]. من هذه العشش خرجنا كويدان طردتها الدمامل المنفوخة بالقيح.
(Shalabī 2000, 236-7)

Dalla sua stanza all'ultimo piano, un turista potrebbe vedere tutto *hayy Maʿrūf* come una grossa ulcera nelle viscere della città piagata da problemi di digestione, che vomita di continuo i suoi abitanti nei suoi cimiteri affollati di vivi o nelle sue strade che fagocitano i morti [...]. Lasciammo quelle catapecchie come vermi che trasudano da pustole purulente.

II   Omologia

Come suggerisce la precedente citazione, l'evoluzione della trama si inscrive nella mutata percezione dello spazio. Questa evoluzione si ricollega alla seconda tecnica narrativa che, già ricorrente nel romanzo realista, viene complicata in questi romanzi sperimentali: il narratore stabilisce un'omologia tra lo spazio e i suoi abitanti. Nei romanzi analizzati, infatti,

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si riscontra un profondo interesse per ricostruire la genealogia dei luoghi e, al contempo, la biografia dei personaggi.

Restando sull'esempio della *ghurza*, essa è la casa in cui il cameriere Ṣāliḥ nasce, vive, lavora e muore. Le principali tappe della sua vita si svolgono in parallelo con la storia nazionale dell'Egitto, mentre la sua scomparsa violenta coincide con la chiusura di varie fumerie in centro da parte della polizia. Egli viene arrestato quando esprime, con sprezzante sarcasmo, la sua disapprovazione per la visita del Presidente Sadat a Gerusalemme per avviare la normalizzazione con Israele.[25] Il protagonista viene prelevato e probabilmente torturato; dopo qualche giorno, il suo corpo privo di vita viene fatto ritrovare nel suo solito alloggio alla *ghurza*. Questo avvenimento segna lo scioglimento del gruppo e l'inizio della repressione, che sposta il consumo di droga da questi spazi aperti di socialità all'interno degli appartamenti. Inoltre, Ṣāliḥ non ha un documento di identità e quindi non è formalmente riconosciuto dalle autorità; in maniera analoga, il suo quartiere resta ignorato dalle politiche urbanistiche.

È interessante notare come il termine '*maʿrūf*' in arabo significhi 'conosciuto', mentre questo luogo è noto solo ai frequentatori abituali. Il narratore gioca sulle immagini di luce e buio per descrivere *ḥayy Maʿrūf*: pur trovandosi accanto allo scintillante *Wasṭ al-balad*, esso è solitamente invisibile e solo la sua cultura del divertimento può portarlo alla luce; quando questa viene repressa dall'autorità, il quartiere ripiomba nel buio.

Se la *ghurza* simboleggia una comunità aperta che discute e si diverte, il protagonista racchiude, dietro il suo aspetto trasandato, l'essenza della saggezza popolare egiziana, soprattutto nella sua parlata dialettale e nel suo modo di scherzare. Nella sua analisi di *ʿImārat Yaʿqūbiyān*, Naaman definisce il palazzo e il suo storico inquilino Zakī come «modernist ruin» (2011, 146), ovvero relitto del passato coloniale di *Wasṭ al-balad*, un passato in parte recuperato da recenti politiche di conservazione urbanistica. Per analogia, qui si potrebbe definire Ṣāliḥ '*shaʿbī ruin*', un relitto della cultura popolare rivificato dalla narrazione.

La genealogia dei luoghi è fondamentale anche in *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī*. Il narratore attribuisce alcune idiosincrasie degli egiziani al loro passato e alla natura della città in cui vivono. Mentre evidenzia la simbiosi tra il luogo e i suoi abitanti, la sua topografia della città vecchia rielabora il genere della storiografia islamica denominato *khiṭaṭ*. Questo genere aveva la finalità amministrativa di registrare i centri urbani di nuova fondazione e necessitava di un costante aggiornamento con il susseguirsi delle dinastie. Ibn Shalabī cita le fonti storiografiche classiche che hanno descritto il Cairo (Ibn Taghrībirdī e al-Maqrīzī) e interagisce con loro sul piano fit-

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25 La rabbia repressa di Ṣāliḥ è paragonata a un vulcano in eruzione, pertanto con un riferimento a un fenomeno geologico.

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tizio. Grazie a questa collaborazione, egli racconta in maniera comica la leggenda fondativa della città, quando il pianeta Marte, il Conquistatore (*al-qāhir*), era ascendente.[26]

Solitamente Ibn Shalabī fornisce un assaggio della genealogia degli edifici, ma di fronte alla moschea di al-Ḥākim, per la prima volta, il narratore ricostruisce l'intera storia in ordine cronologico. Denominata anche *al-Anwar*, la moschea venne costruita sotto il califfo fatimide al-Ḥākim (985-1021), fu danneggiata da un terremoto (1303) e restaurata sotto i Mamelucchi. L'edificio sacro rimase in pessime condizioni, finché all'inizio degli anni Ottanta fu ristrutturato da volontari internazionali dalla setta ismailita dei Bohra. Nel romanzo, Ibn Shalabī incontra i volontari che salvano la moschea dall'incuria dei suoi concittadini, mentre lui la salva dall'oblio con il suo racconto.

Passando ai romanzi di Abū Julayyil, anche *Luṣūṣ mutaqāʿidūn* contiene il mito fondativo del quartiere. Il narratore riferisce che, nel corso della sua visita in una fabbrica, il presidente Nasser venne a sapere dagli operai che dormivano sul luogo di lavoro; pertanto, allungò il dito verso un lotto libero di terreno e stabilì che in quel punto sarebbe sorta Manshiyyat Naṣr. Facendo ironia sulla retorica rivoluzionaria, la voce narrante svela che l'insediamento nacque senza alcun progetto, riproducendo le dinamiche sociali rurali. L'omologia tra gli abitanti e la periferia, al contempo industriale e rurale, si concretizza nella figura di Abū Jamāl, il proprietario della palazzina. Emigrato dall'Alto Egitto, egli lavorava in una delle fabbriche della zona e, in piena fase di fervore rivoluzionario, aveva chiamato il suo primogenito come il presidente. Tuttavia, con l'affermarsi delle politiche liberiste, fu costretto ad accettare il prepensionamento, senza alcuna tutela da parte della fabbrica.

Anche *al-Fāʿil* intreccia la dimensione lavorativa con quella abitativa. La migrazione del protagonista e narratore innesca un processo di ricerca dell'identità (da beduino a lavoratore/scrittore) e di stabilità (da nomade a inurbato). Attraverso la descrizione degli alloggi al Cairo, emerge come l'Io e lo spazio siano accomunati da un forte senso di precarietà. Inizialmente, il ragazzo dorme nei palazzi in costruzione e nel pickup del suo datore di lavoro; poi condivide una minuscola stanza nel quartiere di ʿAyn Shams con numerosi colleghi e compaesani; infine, si sposta con alcuni di loro in un'intera casa a Shubrā, dove ha una stanza tutta per sé, che gli permette di dedicarsi alla scrittura. Come rileva Booth (2006), queste abitazioni sono caratterizzate dal sovraffollamento tipico delle *ʿashwāʾiyyāt*, in cui la prossimità fisica non favorisce il consolidamento dei rapporti umani, ma anzi genera un senso di incomunicabilità.

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26 Secondo la storiografia classica, gli astrologi avrebbero dovuto indicare una coincidenza astrale propizia per la fondazione della città. Tuttavia, il segnale non fu dato dagli astrologi, ma da un corvo che casualmente si posò sul perimetro tracciato per gli scavi. In quel momento, il pianeta Marte era ascendente e gli astrologi lo ritennero comunque un segno di buon auspicio. Nel romanzo, Ibn Shalabī evidenzia i risvolti comici della vicenda.

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III   Semi-legalità

La precarietà e la semi-ufficialità dei luoghi si riflette nelle attività che vi si svolgono. Continuando ad analizzare *al-Fā'il*, i lavoratori edili operano in modo semi-illegale, ignorati dall'autorità ma ben noti ai residenti e ai palazzinari, che beneficiano della loro rischiosa attività. Ciò è esemplificato dal modo furtivo con cui si introducono nei condomini per ristrutturarli:

وكنت أشتغل مع مقاول هدد، ليس هدد وإنما هدد وبناء، لا يشتغل إلا في البيوت الآيلة للسقوط، البيوت التي شُمِّعت بالشمع الأحمر وصدرت قرارات نهائية بتنكيسها هي صميم عمله، يتحى الشمع الأحمر بلطف يناسب مكانته الرسمية ويتسلل للبيت بكتيبة عمال، فريق يحفر القواعد وفريق يشق الأعمدة والحوائط، وما هي إلا أيام وتتحقق المعجزة، ويصبح البيت المهدّد بالسقوط عمارة طويلة ملونة، ومعظم البيوت القديمة في شبرا ونواحيها تدين له بفضل استمرارها على قيد الحياة.
(Abū Julayyil 2011, 8-9)

Lavoravo per un padroncino specializzato in demolizioni. O meglio, non solo demolizioni, ma anche ristrutturazioni. Lavorava soltanto in palazzi che erano sul punto di crollare. Le case a cui erano stati messi i sigilli rossi, quelle che avevano ricevuto un ordine definitivo di demolizione, erano il suo pane quotidiano. Rimuoveva i sigilli rossi con delicatezza per non scalfirne l'ufficialità e si introduceva nell'edificio con i suoi uomini: una squadra scavava le fondamenta, una squadra abbatteva muri e colonne. In pochi giorni il miracolo era compiuto: case sull'orlo del collasso diventavano colorate palazzine a più piani. Quasi tutte le vecchie baracche di Shubrā e dei quartieri circostanti dovevano la loro esistenza a lui.

Analogamente, Abū Jamāl fa della palazzina di *Luṣūṣ mutaqā'idūn* la sede di varie attività illecite, tra cui prostituzione, spaccio, furti e minacce nei confronti degli affittuari. L'alloggio sembra rispondere a regole proprie e vi predomina una violenza gratuita, che si ritrova anche in opere egiziane scritte dopo il 2011.

In *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa*, *ḥayy Ma'rūf* è un sottobosco per lo spaccio e il consumo di droga, che si ramifica anche nelle stradine adiacenti. Occorre tenere presente che in Egitto il consumo di hashish, pur essendo vietato, è socialmente accettato, anzi è considerato come una forma di socialità alternativa, legata alla sensazione positiva di ebbrezza. Infine, in *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī*, la *khizāna* è un centro di potere alternativo in cui si producono e consumano fiumi di alcol. In teoria, l'edificio sarebbe una prigione, ma nella pratica non riesce a contenere i suoi occupanti, che straripano come una massa umana. A più riprese, essi si uniscono alle rivolte contro l'autorità ufficiale che si concludono con furti e danni alle proprietà; nello

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scontro finale, il vino invade le strade, dando vita a un mondo alla rovescia. La principale opposizione spaziale nel romanzo è, dunque, fra gli interni e gli esterni, fra il palazzo e la strada.

IV Narratore-guida

Questa condizione di semi-illegalità richiede una guida interna per accedere a tali luoghi. I narratori in prima persona sono sia dei partecipanti, dotati di una conoscenza diretta del luogo, sia degli acuti osservatori della realtà urbana. Inoltre, è significativo che in tutti i casi si tratti di aspiranti scrittori. Un chiaro esempio di narratore-guida si trova in *al-Fāʿil* di Abū Julayyil, in cui la mappa del Cairo è circoscritta ai luoghi a lui noti. Vengono menzionati alcuni quartieri solo in relazione all'esperienza lavorativa o abitativa, tanto che il narratore ammette la propria conoscenza limitata della capitale:

وكنا لا نعرف في القاهرة إلا ميدان أحمد حلمي وقهوة سالم والبيوت التي يشتغل فيها دولاب المعلم مطر.
(Abū Julayyil 2011, 18)

> Del Cairo conoscevamo solo la piazza Aḥmad Ḥilmī, il caffè di Sālim e le case in cui lavorava la squadra di *miʿallim* Maṭar.

Piazza Aḥmad Ḥilmī esemplifica i luoghi in cui vengono reclutati i lavoratori a giornata (*anfār*), posti in corrispondenza di punti di passaggio come piazze o ponti. Il protagonista e i suoi amici, invece, incontrano il padroncino al caffè di Sālim. Consapevole delle dinamiche migratorie, il narratore menziona anche una zona vicina, in cui vive una comunità di migranti siriani. Infine, paragona Shubrā, a nord, e Fayṣal, a sud, in base alla qualità dell'ambiente lavorativo e ai rapporti che si instaurano con le famiglie, per le quali effettuano le ristrutturazioni.

Il lettore segue gli spostamenti del narratore quando va a piedi al lavoro, quando torna al villaggio, quando si concede un momento di svago. Di conseguenza, ne adotta la prospettiva, che talvolta si origina dal basso, poiché egli sta scavando le fondamenta. Proprio da quest'ottica, racconta del terremoto che colpì Il Cairo nel 1992: mentre lui si trova sottoterra, ignaro di tutto, le altre persone fuggono in preda al panico; solo successivamente, egli diventa consapevole che questo evento causa la ricollocazione forzata di numerosi residenti. Il terremoto è quindi un significativo momento di rinnovamento urbano, che però sfiora soltanto il protagonista.

Il fenomeno sismico viene menzionato anche da Shalabī in *Riḥlāt al-ṭurshajī al-ḥalwajī* in relazione alla moschea al-Ḥakīm. In questo romanzo, il narratore svolge il doppio ruolo di guida e girovago, di osservatore e osservato. Infatti, sebbene si dichiari un venditore di sottaceti e dolciumi,

non svolge affatto questa professione; tutt'al più questa qualifica allude alla capacità dei venditori ambulanti di osservare la città e i suoi abitanti. Se in questo modo Ibn Shalabī si avvicina al mondo degli egiziani comuni, il più delle volte egli si presenta come scrittore e giornalista. Pertanto, in lui convivono queste due personalità e prospettive.

Un altro esempio di narratore-guida si ritrova in *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa*, che ha un narratore omodiegetico, tranne in alcuni flashback narrati in terza persona da un narratore onnisciente. Il narratore principale è uno degli intellettuali che si riuniscono alla fumeria, il quale adotta spesso la prospettiva dell'intero gruppo. In questo modo, egli conduce il lettore in un mondo semi-ufficiale, che, senza la sua guida, risulterebbe quasi inaccessibile. Nei primi cinque capitoli, la prospettiva collettiva del gruppo è predominante perché il narratore illustra le vie d'accesso al quartiere usando la prima persona plurale. Successivamente, la voce narrante passa alla prima persona singolare e acquisisce una sua individualità nell'osservare le dinamiche di gruppo. Infine, nell'ultimo capitolo, il narratore si ritrova da solo in mezzo alla folla. Nella sua analisi di *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa*, Frédéric Lagrange (2015) individua diversi elementi, apparentemente marginali (ambientazione, personaggi, linguaggio), che affermano la natura porosa del confine tra centro/margine. Soffermandosi sull'evoluzione del narratore, lo studioso ipotizza che l'iniziale stile onirico riproduca l'effetto obnubilante dell'hashish. In questo modo, prosegue Lagrange, il quartiere sembra sospeso nel tempo, che torna a scorrere nei capitoli successivi, in cui si passa alla prima persona singolare e alla narrazione cronologica.

Inoltre, gli stessi capitoli iniziali costituiscono molteplici incipit del romanzo, secondo una tecnica comune nella narrativa post-moderna. I capitoli 2-5 prospettano quattro possibili percorsi per raggiungere *ḥayy Maʿrūf*, passando da ampi viali o da stradine nascoste, ma tutti si arenano in un vicolo cieco o nell'incontro con personaggi bizzarri. Paradossalmente, l'approccio diretto, indicato alla fine del quinto capitolo, è quello migliore per raggiungere questo luogo semi-ufficiale. I nomi delle strade sono espressi secondo una duplice denominazione, adottando la toponomastica precedente e successiva alla rivoluzione del 1952, che pose fine alla presenza coloniale britannica. Questa strategia consente di evidenziare i cambiamenti storici dello spazio e di introdurre l'elemento nostalgico, non tanto rivolto al Cairo coloniale, quanto al periodo immediatamente precedente alla repressione della fine degli anni Settanta.[27]

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27 Shalabī utilizza la doppia denominazione solo nei capitoli iniziali, per esempio per indicare via Sulaymān Bāshā/Talʿat Ḥarb, via al-Antīkkhāna/Maḥmūd al-Basyūnī. In *ʿImārat Yaʿqūbiyān*, invece, al-Aswānī usa sistematicamente questa strategia, trasmettendo nostalgia per Il Cairo dell'epoca coloniale e liberale.

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Il primo capitolo, invece, descrive *ḥayy Maʿrūf* nella sua interazione con la vicina *Wasṭ al-balad*. Naaman (2011, 73-80) sottolinea l'opposizione tra i due quartieri, attigui dal punto di vista spaziale, ma lontani per stile di vita. La studiosa sostiene in modo convincente che Shalabī complica la distinzione tra quartiere popolare, inteso come spazio indigeno e premoderno, e *Wasṭ al-balad*, inteso come spazio coloniale e vetrina della modernità. Secondo Naaman, l'autore propone un modo alternativo di accedere alla modernità, attraverso la descrizione della fumeria e dei personaggi eccentrici che la popolano. Nel prossimo paragrafo, questo secondo aspetto viene approfondito con lo studio di personaggi marginali, la cui identità è inscritta negli spazi semi-ufficiali.

5 Personaggi eccentrici: ridisegnare l'identità

Le aspirazioni letterarie dei narratori sono un elemento chiave della negoziazione della loro identità in spazi marginali e in relazione con altri spazi ufficiali. Lontani dalla comunità di origine a causa dell'immigrazione, essi ricostruiscono una comunità di amici o colleghi con cui condividono provenienza geografica, estrazione sociale, dialetto e senso dell'umorismo. Ne sono un esempio la comunità di consumatori di hashish in *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa* e quella di lavoratori edili a giornata in *al-Fāʿil*. Queste comunità sperimentano le trasformazioni urbane, soprattutto nei loro risvolti negativi, come povertà, sovrappopolamento, disuguaglianze, emarginazione e precarietà. Eppure, non vengono schiacciate dall'alienazione grazie all''arte di arrangiarsi' e alla vitalità. Quest'ultima si esplica soprattutto attraverso la comicità vissuta a livello collettivo.

Come anticipato, Naaman ritiene che la comunità di *ḥayy Maʿrūf* negozi un accesso alternativo alla modernità attraverso una complessa interazione con *Wasṭ al-balad*. Questa complessità passa innanzitutto per la descrizione dei luoghi: nel primo capitolo, il narratore mette a confronto le abitudini di vita e consumo (mercati/vetrine) nei due spazi attigui, usa un approccio multisensoriale e antropomorfizza il quartiere della fumeria. Inoltre, i due ambienti ospitano istituzioni culturali opposte: a *Wasṭ al-balad* si trovano i musei (in precedenza il Museo d'Arte Moderna e tuttora il Museo Egizio), i cinema e i caffè, frequentati da intellettuali e turisti, come il café Riche;[28] *ḥayy Maʿrūf*, invece, ospita numerose fumerie e, quindi, una cultura *underground*. Questa distinzione, apparentemente netta, è complicata dagli spostamenti e dall'identità dei personaggi. Infatti, si tratta di aspiranti intellettuali – attori, scrittori, disegnatori, ingegneri – che, di giorno, vanno nel centro moderno e in altri quartieri

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[28] Per la cultura dei caffè nel campo letterario egiziano, cf. Jacquemond 2008, 174-8.

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per svolgere le loro attività. Tra i membri del gruppo, vi sono un ricercatore presso l'*American University*, il quale collabora alla realizzazione di un dizionario di dialetto egiziano, e un creativo che allestisce le vetrine dei negozi moderni, pur essendo analfabeta.

Inoltre, lo spazio locale della fumeria non è privo di una dimensione internazionale. Essa è frequentata da turisti, etichettati come hippie (*khunfusa*) e da alcuni stranieri residenti di lungo corso, come l'italiana Matilde, sposata con uno dei membri del gruppo. Inoltre, Ṣāliḥ ha vissuto in Sudan prima dell'indipendenza, mentre alcuni membri del gruppo emigrano nei Paesi sovietici, in Libia e Iraq, riflettendo lo scenario politico mondiale degli anni Settanta.[29] Prendendo spunto da questi eventi, il garzone Ṣāliḥ commenta in maniera sarcastica la situazione politica ed estende il concetto di *hēṣa* alle brame di potere dei dittatori.

Questo gruppo di amici ironizza sulla cultura ufficiale dei caffè, soprattutto per l'atteggiamento snob degli intellettuali, spesso cooptati da parte del potere. Al tempo stesso, i membri del gruppo aspirano a un riconoscimento sociale. Il loro momento di evasione è alla fumeria, dove costruiscono insieme una cultura alternativa, fatta di discussioni serie, ma anche e soprattutto, di risate, favorite dal consumo di droga. Il narratore sottolinea la capacità dell'hashish di dissolvere le barriere sociali:

في هذا العالم المزاجي الغريب الذي يجمع على جوزة واحدة ونفس واحد بين الفيلسوف والدهماء، المثقف والبلطجي، وكيل الوزارة والفراش، البيك وسامح الأحذية.
(Shalabī 2000, 27)

In questo strano posto sballato, dove una sola *goza*, un solo tiro, avvicina il filosofo e l'uomo di strada, l'intellettuale e il teppista, l'ufficiale ministeriale e il factotum, il bey e il lustrascarpe.

Il collante all'interno del gruppo è rappresentato da Ṣāliḥ, vera e propria anima della fumeria. Considerato un finto tonto, uno sciocco-astuto (*aḥmaq dhakī* oppure *lōh zakī*), è apprezzato per la sua irriverenza nei confronti degli avventori e della società egiziana in generale. Quando termina il lavoro e raggiunge l'ebbrezza con l'alcol, la fumeria si trasforma in un teatro, nel quale egli può prendere in giro tutti senza temere conseguenze. In altri momenti di lucidità, raccomanda la filosofia del finto tonto come strumento di sopravvivenza. Inoltre, egli è stimato per la sua visione lucida e come 'miniera' di espressioni dialettali. Come Ṣāliḥ si contrappone alla morale precostituita, anche il gruppo di amici si contrappone al il modello

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29 I paesi sovietici erano stati un punto di riferimento per tutto il periodo nasseriano, mentre la Libia di Gheddafi e l'Iraq di Saddam Hussein sono le potenze arabe emergenti dalla fine degli anni Sessanta.

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ufficiale di intellettuale: in questo mondo alla rovescia, la comunità della *ghurza* lo sceglie come leader (*zaʿīm*).**30**

Al contrario, il narratore di *al-Fāʿil* non è un leader, ma guarda in modo ironico ai suoi stessi tentativi di farsi accettare all'interno della comunità. Come Ṣāliḥ, però, è un personaggio eccentrico, che suscita l'umorismo attraverso i suoi comportamenti incongruenti e la ripresa di modelli comici proverbiali. Questi modelli rielaborano la tradizione aneddotica, sia popolare che della prosa d'*adab*, nel contesto della città moderna. In questo romanzo, si tratta della figura del beduino che oscilla tra l'ingenuità e la furbizia, con cui può gabbare i cittadini.

La comunità in *al-Fāʿil* è meno unita rispetto a quella di *Ṣāliḥ Hēṣa* e ha carattere maggiormente provvisorio. Una prima negoziazione dell'identità avviene all'università, dove Ḥamdī inizialmente nasconde le proprie origini beduine per timore di non essere accettato, mentre, in seguito, si inserisce in un gruppo di amici con il medesimo background. Il gruppo indossa gli abiti tradizionali e valorizza la propria parlata come linguaggio in codice per prendere in giro gli altri studenti. Una seconda negoziazione avviene in carcere, dove la paura viene esorcizzata con la risata. In questo ambiente ostile, il narratore viene riconosciuto da un conterraneo che lo inserisce in un gruppo di prigionieri che scherzano tra di loro. In questo caso, viene ironizzata l'ingenuità del ragazzo e compare, come in Shalabī, la metafora della performance comica sul palcoscenico.

Infine, Il Cairo è il luogo dove Ḥamdī vuole affermarsi per i suoi meriti letterari, ma si ritrova a parlarne con i colleghi di lavoro, che hanno ben poco interesse per la cultura alta. Mentre riflette con grande autoironia sul suo percorso, il narratore trova alcuni spunti comici nella vita di tutti giorni, precisamente sui luoghi di lavoro e negli alloggi che strutturano lo spazio del romanzo. Per esempio, parla di un collega, chiamato anche lui Ḥamdī, con cui si diverte a lavorare perché gli ricorda i personaggi buffi del suo villaggio:

والشغل معه مريح جدا، أشبه بنزهة أو حتى مسرحية تفطس من الضحك طول النهار، أولا هو كسول جدا، ومقدار المونة الذي ينجح في تثبيته على الحيطة لا يقارن بمقدار الذي ينتره على وجهه وملابسه وعيونه نفسها،[...]. ومعظم الذين عرفتهم يحملونه [هذا الاسم] كانوا مجانين أو معاتيه بشكل ما.

(Abū Julayyil 2011, 27-8)

Lavorare con lui era uno spasso, a metà tra una gita e uno spettacolo [comico] che ti fa schiattare dalle risate. Per prima cosa, era molto pigro. Il gesso che riusciva a far aderire al muro non era nulla rispetto a quello che si tirava sulla faccia, sui vestiti e sugli occhi, [...]. Tutti gli Ḥamdī che ho conosciuto erano dei pazzi o degli idioti.

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30 *Al-zaʿīm* è il titolo del cap. 8, in cui viene presentato questo personaggio.

6   Conclusioni

Shalabī e Abū Julayyil raffigurano Il Cairo frammentato e attraversato dalle dinamiche della globalizzazione, tanto nella sua materialità, quanto a livello di immaginario. I romanzi analizzati ruotano attorno a un singolo edificio (*house novel*) oppure a un quartiere descritto a più riprese, come nelle tappe di un viaggio (*riḥla*). L'attenzione è posta su luoghi semi-ufficiali, che sono rappresentativi delle relazioni sociali di quell'area e, al contempo, interagiscono con il resto della città in un flusso di persone, merci e idee. Il loro cambiamento nel corso del tempo esemplifica le trasformazioni dell'intera città. Questi spazi marginali sono in relazione storica tra di loro e complicano la rappresentazione della città nella sua interezza, in particolare le modalità di abitare la tradizione e la modernità.

Le ambientazioni delle opere analizzate, pur essendo collocate su punti diversi della cartina, sono raffigurate con tecniche simili, tra cui la fusione della dimensione abitativa e residenziale, l'accostamento dello sguardo nostalgico e dissacrante e la prospettiva interna, influenzata dalle esperienze autobiografiche degli autori. Come i loro personaggi, i due scrittori sono immigrati in città e, quindi, si interessano anche alla percezione dello spazio in transito. Inoltre, ricostruiscono la memoria urbana attingendo a documenti storici (la storiografia classica in Shalabī) e menzionando eventi ufficiali (la chiusura delle fumerie in Shalabī e il terremoto in Abū Julayyil), che riscrivono attraverso una prospettiva interna dal basso. Essi rimappano alcuni spazi reali e letterari, quali il caffè e la prigione, mostrando come la comunità se ne riappropri.[31]

Dall'analisi emerge che i luoghi semi-ufficiali e i personaggi eccentrici ridisegnano una serie di confini: geografici (città/campagna, centro/periferia), temporali (passato/presente), sociali (inclusione/esclusione), economici (legalità/illegalità, lavoro, migrazione), politici (negligenza governativa/iniziative dal basso) e culturali (intellettuali, modernità/post-modernità). I quartieri informali (ʿashwāʾiyyāt) e popolari (shaʿbī) non sono dei ghetti chiusi, anche se spesso seguono proprie regole di convivenza. Dietro una patina nostalgica, vengono rappresentati gli aspetti negativi di una vita precaria e le disuguaglianze sociali. Shalabī contrappone le immagini del carnevale e della malattia, mentre Abū Julayyil adotta un approccio più distaccato e inserisce l'elemento della violenza. Tale raffigurazione veicola una critica sociale complessiva, controbilanciata dai valori positivi associati a questi luoghi semi-ufficiali. Infatti, questi ultimi sono anche siti di divertimento, in cui i gruppi di amici possono discutere e autopromuoversi, proponendosi come una comunità alternativa. Il loro legame è rinsaldato grazie a leggende, riferimenti comici e al dialetto.

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31   Per uno studio della rappresentazione del caffè in Maḥfūẓ, cf. Benigni 2012.

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La comicità è un elemento altamente localizzato, tant'è vero che per apprezzarla occorre condividere un patrimonio culturale comune. Al contempo, nel momento in cui supera i confini del gruppo, essa ha un valore universale. Lo humor permette a questi personaggi di identificarsi con la loro ristretta comunità, la città tutta e il Paese intero nel momento in cui riscrivono il concetto di egizianità. Non si tratta di un'identificazione nazionalista, ma legata alla lingua e al patrimonio popolare.

In conclusione, se gli scrittori realisti si concentrano su luoghi storici e, attraverso le vicende individuali, tratteggiano gli snodi della storia nazionale, i luoghi semi-ufficiali di questi romanzi invitano a raccontare una contro-storia, in cui l'individuo circola attraverso gli spazi.

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The Development of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan
An Analysis of the National and International Context

Chiara Pierobon
(Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, Deutschland)

Abstract   In the past two decades, scholars from a variety of disciplines have argued that post – communist civil society is weak and structurally deficient and is characterised by low levels of social trust, voluntary organisational membership, and public participation. This article intends to challenge this academic consensus by providing an in-depth analysis of civil society development in Kyrgyzstan, a country, whose non-profit sector has been described as the most vibrant and plentiful of the Central Asian region. To this scope, the article analyses the ways and extent to which the national and international environments have influenced the development trajectory of Kyrgyz civil society. Special emphasis is placed on the specific forms and manifestations of civic engagement characterising the non-profit sector of the selected country and on the strategies it has implemented to overcome its weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The paper sheds new light on factors and features that have contributed to the strengths of Kyrgyz civil society and which can be used to increase our understanding of civil society developments in other transition countries.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Civil Society: in Search of Definition(s). – 3 Civil Society Developments in Kyrgyzstan. – 3.1 The Establishment of Civil Society (1991-1996). – 3.2 Civil Society Development Through a Community-Based Approach (1997-2002). – 3.3 Consolidation of the Kyrgyz Non-Profit Sector (2003-2010). – 3.4 Kyrgyz Civil Society and Current Trends (since 2010). – 4 Discussion of the Results. – 5 Implications and Conclusion.

Keywords   Post-Soviet civil society. State-civil society relations. International democracy assistance. NGOs and development. Kyrgyzstan.

1   Introduction

In the past two decades, scholars from a variety of disciplines have argued that civil society is structurally deficient in post-communist countries (Ekiert, Foa 2011, 1) and is characterised by low levels of social trust, voluntary organisational membership, and public participation (Howard 2003, 1). This phenomenon has been explained as the result of the Soviet institutional and individual associational legacy: i.e., norms, regulations, attitudes, and behaviours inherited from the Soviet period, which still

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undermine social capital and civic mobilisation in the post-Soviet era. As a matter of fact, civil society remained a very limited phenomenon in the Soviet Union. The Communist Party "attempted to supplant the very need for independent social activities with a dense institutional web of groups and organizations", which ranged from trade unions, cultural associations, and youth, women and workers groups to less-politicised sports and book lovers' clubs (Howard 2003, 23). The engagement in these groups was generally mandatory, coerced and/or instrumental since, by joining these organisations, people could improve their career prospects, receive special benefits and enjoy privileged access to otherwise scarce resources (26-7). At the same time, through the establishment of enforcement agencies and a system of denunciations, the Soviet system contributed in atomising the individual and undermining her trust in society (28-9) with enormous repercussions for contemporary and future development of the non-profit sector in the entire post-Soviet region. Yet, is it accurate to assume that all post-Soviet countries share a uniformly weak and ineffective third sector? And, if not, how can the strengths of post-Soviet civil society be explained? This study intends to challenge the academic consensus around the 'weakness of post-communist civil society' (Howard 2003) by providing an in-depth analysis of civil society development in Kyrgyzstan, a country, whose non-profit sector has been described as the most vibrant and plentiful of Central Asia (Liebert, Condrey, Goncharov 2013, 353).

The geographic isolation from consolidated democracies, the absence of previous democratic experiences and low level of economic development make of Kyrgyzstan a deviant case for theories of democratisation. Remarkably, the development of Kyrgyz civil society was boosted especially by foreign donors who, since the 1990s, have invested millions of dollars in promoting democratisation in the region through the seeding of civil society. The action of the international community was mainly grounded in what Mandel defines the 'civil society orthodoxy' based on which 'NGOs = civil society = democracy' (Mandel 2002): i.e., democracy was equated to civil society and civil society was equated to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). More precisely, foreign donors sought to foster democracy in Central Asia by using a Western-style civil society as

> ready-made, compulsory blueprint for [democratic] reform to be implemented in 'oriental' society in the span of one generation, (Roy 2005, 1005)

and NGOs as the building blocks of civil society itself (Mandel 2002, 283).

In Kyrgyzstan, the initial liberal orientation of President Aksar Akayev contributed in ensuring the country a very generous financial support on behalf of the international community. As a result, the number of Non-

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Commercial Organisations (NCOs) proliferated dramatically.[1] Notably, in the mid-1990s,

> the vibrant civil society that emerged earned the country the tag of Central Asia's 'island of democracy'. (Dar, Firdous 2015, 224)

In the 2000s, Kyrgyz civil society went through a very turbulent phase, playing a major role in the overthrow of President Akayev during the Tulip Revolution in 2005,[2] and President Kurmanbek Bakivey in 2010[3] and in consolidating its position in the public sphere. Since 2010, Kyrgyz civil society has operated in a conducive environment which has allowed NCOs to express criticism on the government and its legislation. Nowadays, there are 14,880 registered Non-Commercial Organisations in the country (ICNL 2017),[4] and civil society representatives are regularly included in public consultation processes. Worthy of note, in 2014, the Law on Public Advisory Councils of the State Bodies was introduced, to establish citizen advisory bodies in all government agencies. Remarkably, the public advisory councils are explicitly aimed at strengthening the involvement of civil society representatives in decision-making processes concerning the formation and implementation of public policy through the monitoring of the activities of public authorities.

This paper explores the development trajectory that Kyrgyz civil society has undergone since the collapse of the Soviet Union by scrutinising the national and international political context in which the third sector of the country could flourish. To this scope, the three following questions are

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[1] In Kyrgyzstan, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are registered as Non-Commercial Organisations (NCOs). In the present paper, the two terms NGOs and NCOs will be used interchangeably.

[2] The First Revolution (also known as Kyrgyz Revolution) began after the parliamentary elections of February 27 and March 13 2005, as a response to reported electoral inconsistencies and violations. The protest goes back to the overall decrease of popularity faced by President Akayev due to allegations of increasing corruption affecting his government and family. The Revolution ended with the Akayev's resignation and the conduction of new presidential election that brought Bakiyev into power on July 10 of the same year.

[3] The Second Revolution should be interpreted as a response to the massive increase of utility prices registered in the winter 2009-10. Also in this case, the protest goes back to a decrease of popularity faced by President Bakiyev due to the allegations of corruption and nepotism affecting his administration. The unrest began with the first rallies in the city of Naryn on March 10 2010, where demonstrators called on the government to withdraw its decision on price increase and privatization of energy companies. It rapidly spread to Bishkek, Talas, Issuk-Kul and Jalal-Abad regions, brinding to the ousting of Bakiyev. In June, clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks broke out in the south of the country during which over 100,000 ethnic Uzbeks fled across the border to Uzbekistan. The revolution led to the consolidation of a new mixed presidential-parliamentary system under the interim government of Roza Otunbayeva.

[4] `http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/kyrgyz.html` (2017-11-20).

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investigated throughout the paper. Firstly, to what extent and how have national and international environments influenced specific forms and manifestations of post-Soviet civil society in Kyrgyzstan? Secondly, where lay the strengths of these forms and manifestations of civic engagement that have contributed to the development of the strongest third sector in Central Asia? And, thirdly, which challenges and vulnerabilities have characterised post-Soviet Kyrgyz civil society and which strategies have been implemented to overcome these weaknesses? In order to better capture the contribution of international and national actors to the development of the sector, the analysis takes into account four ideal-types of civil society – neo-liberal, communal, state-led and global – as identified by Babajanian et al. (2005) in their study on civil society development in Central Asia (and the Caucasus). Although the focus of the paper is on the impact of political institutions in framing the space that exists for civil society, it does not deny that civil society itself is a political agent shaping its context. For instance, as noted by Glasius, Lewis, Seckinelgin (2004) in this regard,

> while civil society is constituted within a particular political discourse, it also in return influences the ways this discoursed is transformed. (4)

Therefore, while identifying the different types of civil society that were promoted by the political context in Kyrgyzstan, the article does not overlook how civil society itself has affected the environment in which it has operated.

This paper is based on the examination of secondary sources concerning the development of Kyrgyz civil society and a review of the legislative framework regulating the activities of the non-profit sector in the country. It proceeds as follows: section two familiarises the reader with the analytical framework selected for this study; i.e., the civil society typology suggested by Babajanian et al. (2005). Next, we then proceed with the analysis of civil society developments in Kyrgyzstan by investigating which types of civil society have been supported by the state, on the one hand, and the international donor community, on the other. Grounded in a critical reading of Giffen, Earle, Buxton (2005) and Alymkulova et al. (2006) and going beyond their periodisation, this paper contributes to the identification of four stages of development of civil society in Kyrgyzstan. More specifically, the article describes a first phase (1991-1996), seeing the establishment of the post-Soviet Kyrgyz non-profit sector, through the seeding of a Western-style civil society equated to NGOs; a second phase (1997-2004), that registered quantitative and qualitative changes linked to the introduction of a community-based approach; and a third phase (since 2005) characterised by a further consolidation of the sector and its active involvement in the reform process of the country. The last part of this section is then centred on a new phase of development starting in 2010, which has seen a more structured participation of civil society in the

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policy-making process, together with a greater engagement of the Kyrgyz government in improving the financial environment of the non-profit sector. Section four sums up the main findings of the paper by highlighting the contribution of the national and international political environment to the development of post-Soviet Kyrgyz civil society. The final section explores the broader implications of these findings for civil society developments in Central Asia and, more in general, in the post-Soviet region.

2 Civil Society: in Search of Definition(s)

The term 'civil society' is very difficult to define and its meaning remains vague and contested. The concept has been employed in different theoretical, practical, and historical contexts, so that contemporary attempts to use this term are usually more obfuscating than illuminating (Jensen 2006, 39). The idea of civil society goes back to the Enlightenment and the values of 18th century Western Europe modernity, where a civilised and commercial society was created as the result of the rise of a capitalist economy and the emergence of a modern bureaucratic state (see, for instance, Keane 1988 and Parekh 2004). The members (men at least) of such a society were given the rights to vote and serve in public office. Their participation in public affairs was no longer inherited or imposed by birth, but rather voluntary and institutionalised (Babajanian et al. 2005, 211). Civil society became a counterpart to the state and a market and, more precisely, a

> buffer zone, strong enough to keep both state and market in check, thereby preventing each from becoming too powerful and dominating. (Anheier 2005, 57)

The concept of civil society was reinvented in Eastern Europe and Latin America in the 1980s (Glasius, Lewis, Seckinelgin 2004, 3), when it was linked to

> the empowerment of dissident opposition movements who launched a liberal political project to terminate their region's socialist/communist experiment. (Babajanian et al. 2005, 211)

In this framework, civil society was defined in a rather neo-liberal fashion and attributed a central role in the process of democratic consolidation by

> stabilizing expectations, bringing actors closer to the political process, reducing the burdens of governance and checking potential abuses of power. (Diamond, Plattner 1996, xxxi)

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This neo-liberal form of civil society was mainly composed of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that were believed to

> have the potential to further encourage the rolling back of the state and contribute to the liberalization of social service provision. (Babajanian et al. 2005, 211-12)

During the 1990s, these NGOs became the main target of the financial and technical support on behalf of Western donors, and addressed a wide range of issues, such as human rights promotion, environmental protection, education, microeconomic development and women's leadership (211-12).

Besides the neo-liberal interpretation, Babajanian et al. (2005) refer to a communal type of civil society, which is relevant for the Central Asian region. This second version is the product of the expansion of the civil society debate to non-Western contexts in the mid-late 1990s and, in particular, of the attempt on behalf of scholars from the Islamic world to re-conceptualise this term (Babajanian et al. 2005, 212). Communal civil society can be located in

> families, communities, friendship networks, solidaristic workplace ties, voluntarism, spontaneous groups and movements. (Dekker, van den Broek 1998, 13)

It is bound by a set territory and focussed on local community, of which it seeks to maintain stability and security. This version of civil society tends to be conservative, patriarchal and consensus-oriented: the expression of group solidarity prevails on the assertion of the individual's will and shared values and ideas on innovative and divisive ones (Babajanian et al. 2005).

The third version of civil society – the state-led one – is well exemplified by the formal public organisations and associations typical of the Soviet period that, while performing civil society functions, were controlled by the state and included in its political structure (Babajanian 2005). In particular, as noted by Frolic (1994), this type of civil society is

> created by the state, principally to help it govern, but also to co-opt and socialize potentially politically active elements of the population. (9)

State-led public organisations may help disseminating information, advocating and representing the interests of their beneficiaries, all that while under the watchful eye of state appointed representatives (Babajanian et al. 2005, 214). This version of civil society is not a counterpart of the state, but part of it, by helping the state in organising the economy and society and acting as its powerful ally in separating individuals from society (Frolic 1994, 10). Examples of these organisations include Women's Federation, the Trade

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Unions, Youth Leagues and Writers' Associations, which in the Soviet Union served as transmission belts for government policies (9), being a

> crucial communications channel between a state organ and the organisations' members, thereby helping the state to get across ideological points or specific policies. (White 1993, 79)

Finally, the global version of civil society can be defined as the

> realm of non-coercive collective action around shared interests and values that operates beyond the boundaries of nation states. (Anheier, Helmut 2005, v)

It can be conceived as a

> thick, sometimes thinly stretched networks, pyramids and hub-and-spoke clusters of socio-economic institutions and actors who organize themselves across borders. (Keane 2003, 2-8)

Examples of this ideal type of civil society include transnational movements and citizens' networks engaged with global issues, such as the implementation of international treaties, the fight against HIV/AIDS and climate change (Babajanian et al. 2005, 214) that advocate for the causes, not only in front of the state, but also the international and intergovernmental institutions.

In the next section, the typology presented above is used to examine the development that Kyrgyz civil society has undergone since the independence of the country by looking at the type(s) of civil society that were promoted by the national and international context.

3   Civil Society Developments in Kyrgyzstan

3.1   The Establishment of Civil Society (1991-1996)

In 1991, Kyrgyzstan gained independence without political struggles and mass mobilisations, and in the early 1990s

> the majority of the people could not understand the reasons for the collapse [of the USSR and] sincerely trusted in the re-unification of the former Soviet Union in the near future. (Alymkulova et al. 2006, 6)

Kyrgyz citizens, who had been extraneous to the momentous political changes affecting the country, were consequently not prepared for and committed to an active engagement in political, social, and economic reforms (6).

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At the beginning of his mandate, the first President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Akayev, recognised the importance of a lively civil society for building a democratic state and fostering economic liberalisation. In fact, the development of a democratic and pluralistic society was stated as one of the main objectives in the preamble of the first Kyrgyz Constitution adopted in 1993 (Jailobaeva 2011, 11). At the same time, the openness towards the non-profit sectors also represented a viable strategy against the increasing mass impoverishment that the Kyrgyz population was facing. Indeed, the development of a neo-liberal model of civil society made up of service organisations was seen by Akayev's government as a possible solution for addressing urgent and acute socio-economic problems, which were caused by events, such as the lay-off at most of the state-owned plants and factories, the reductions of social subsidies, the stagnation in the agricultural sector and the growing inflation (Alymkulova et al. 2006, 25).

The liberal orientation of President Akayev made Kyrgyzstan the main Central Asian target of Western support in the field of political reform, and millions of dollars were invested in the country in seeding a Western-style civil society equated to NGOs. At that time, the international community focussed its efforts on strengthening a neo-liberal version of civil society, which was meant to play a central role in checking and balancing the power of the government and holding those in power accountable. In this context, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were conceived as a useful instrument to avoid possible authoritarian backlashes of former communist leaders and bureaucrats still in power (Shishkaraeva et al. 2006, 6). The US Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank, the European Commission (EC), and the United Nations with the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) were among the most active donors (11). In this first phase, international organisations, such as the Kyrgyz American Human Rights Committee, Counterpart Consortium, INTRAC, and Soros Foundation, began being active in Kyrgyzstan (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 112), where they specialised in the provision of capacity-building activities for NGOs in the fields of institutional and organisational management. Altogether, donor agencies tended to financially support civil society organisations that met Western values, views, and expectations and those which had a global orientation and were involved in fields, such as the protection of human rights, the promotion of women's initiatives and environmental protection (112). The availability of aid for such groups was a catalyst for similar organisations to emerge and, as a result of the generosity of the international community, a neo-liberal form of civil society, characterised by transnational linkages and a strong orientation toward global issues, was rapidly developed. The Diamond Association, Ecolog club, BIOM Ecological Movement, Youth Environmental Movement, the Forum of Women's Non-Governmental Organisations of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Kyrgyz-American

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Human Rights Bureau, the Peace Research Centre of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Women's Congress can be cited as representative organisations characterising the first stage of the NGO development (Alymkulova et al. 2006, 26). At the same time, Soviet organisations, such as the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Society, veterans' associations and children's funds continued to be active in their new NGO capacity (25). It is noteworthy that most of the leaders and representatives of the new NCOs had previously been engaged in Soviet state-funded and -controlled public associations and had succeeded in quickly switching into NGO activities (25).

The rapid growth of the third-sector, linked to the mushrooming of do-nor-funded non-commercial organisations (DONGOs) (see Table 1), was concurrently supported by the liberal legislation in place. Nonetheless, in this first phase, both Kyrgyz government and citizens looked at the development of a neo-liberal civil society characterised by global aspirations with certain scepticism. Soon it became clear that Kyrgyz NGOs were extremely dependent on the international donor community, not only financially, but also ideologically. In most cases, these DONGOs lacked of long-term mission and strategy and set up their agenda based on the availability of foreign aid, rather than on their objectives (ACSSC 2006, 25). The phenomenon was aggravated by the fact that these organisations were concentrated in urban centres and active in (global) fields, which were not relevant for regular population that at that time was affected by apparent mass impoverishment. In this first phase, NGOs were rather

> short-lived, at the mercy of a host of exogenous forces, including skills in writing proposals and the finesse of their consulting firms or organization headquarters in Brussels, Geneva, or inside the Washington belt area. (Mandel 2000, 285)

The DONGOs struggled constantly for their own survival and most of them were created and active only for the duration of one project. Their sustainability was threatened by both their inexperience in strategic and financial management (ACSSC 2006, 25), and a competitive, rather than a collaborative, environment, in which they operated.

Table 1. Number of Non-Commercial Organisations registered in the country (1993-1996)

Regions	1993	1994	1995	1996
Bishkek	298	365	475	586
Chui	55	70	95	238
Issuk-Kul	36	49	56	118
Naryn	20	24	29	63
Talas	27	28	35	86
Jala-Abad	60	60	82	168
Osh	99	110	139	251
Batken	16	17	23	40
Kyrgyz Republic	611	731	934	1,550

Source: UN in the Kyrgyz Republic, Overall Country Assessment 2003 (Alymkulova et al. 2006, 32-3)

Confronted with the limitations of the previous strategy based on the civil society orthodoxy, in the late 1990s, the international community was forced to recognise that

> democracy promotion activities do not occur within an institutional cultural vacuum but are characterised by two-way interactions between international and local actors (Adamson 2002, 180)

with both these actors shaping the outcomes of development assistance programmes. Thus, a new strategy was introduced by Western donors and was focussed on community development by using a participatory approach. The strategy was more attentive to the social context in which the programmes were implemented, and to traditional forms of civic engagement, already present in the country. This new community-based approach and its implication for the development of the Kyrgyz NGO sector will be presented in the next section.

3.2 Civil Society Development Through a Community-Based Approach (1997-2002)

In the late 1990s, donor agencies understood the need of (re-)connecting post-Soviet Kyrgyz civil society with the national and local context in which it operated. As a matter of fact, back then Kyrgyz civil society organisations either had lost touch with their target groups or had never established a full understanding of their needs (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 129). Therefore, in the second phase of civil society development, international donors sought to reduce the existing gap between the non-profit sector and Kyrgyz citizens by ameliorating the access of the former to local communities

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and by improving its contribution to local development in both urban and rural areas. These two objectives should be contextualised in a broader paradigm shift characterising international development cooperation that was linked to the establishment of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Earle 2005, 251). In fact, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, poverty and inequality had affected Central Asian countries more intensively than expected, and Western countries were concerned with the potential negative consequences in the region, such as social unrest and the radicalisation of Islam.

The new strategy adopted by international donor agencies was focussed on community development and promoted a communal version of civil society. More precisely, through a participatory and community-driven approach, they sought to involve

> all groups of the population in decision making processes about the nature, quality and amount of development services people wish to receive. (ACSSC 2006, 37)

A central role was given to community-based organisations and initiative groups that were seen as able to mediate "between donors and villagers, helping to mobilise their input" (Earle 2005, 251), with the international community facilitating the inclusion of pre-Soviet autochthonous forms of civil society (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 90). These community-based groups and initiatives were very often led by the *aksakals* (literally 'white beard'): male members of the community, who had been traditional leaders of villages and small towns before the Soviet era and were still acting as advisors or judges in local disputes. Remarkably, their engagement in the implementation of donor-funded initiatives served as a source of legitimation for the projects and helped in stimulating the participation and financial support on behalf of the other members of the community (Earle 2005, 251). Nonetheless, the donors' engagement with more traditional manifestations of civil society also had a harmful impact. Indeed, in many cases, the cooperation with the *aksakals* conferred greater legitimacy to patriarchal, hierarchical, and undemocratic practices, since local elders were more prone to promote the interests of their families, rather than those of their communities (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 90). In addition, the participation of the *aksakals* in community-based projects had a detrimental effect on gender equality, since many women felt discouraged in voicing their opinions in front of the authority of the 'white beard' men (Earle 2005, 254-5).

In order to strengthen local civil society and foster the mobilisation of local communities, in this second phase of civil society development a

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process of decentralisation of the NGO sector was initiated.[5] This process was funded by USAID and implemented by the Counterpart Consortium which, since the beginning of the 2000s, established a dispersed network of over thirty Civil Society Support Centres (CSSCs) in Central Asia also in partnership with indigenous NGOs (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 124). It is noteworthy that more experienced NGOs began working as intermediary between foreign donors and local organisations, providing the latter with information, capacity-building activities and small tenders (124). Apart from promoting the professionalisation of NGOs also in rural and peripheral areas of the country, the CSSCs contributed to establish the first consultations between the government and the non-governmental sector. At the beginning of the 2000s, CSSCs organised the first meetings, where Non-Commercial Organisations lobbied together against the government over human rights and environmental issues as well as other legislative activities (ACSSC 2006, 33). Moreover, fora and platforms were created in Kyrgyzstan, such as the Association of NGOs and the Coalition of NGOs, which allowed public groups to come together to

> discuss critical issues and articulate opinions and criticism of government policy. (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 128)

Nonetheless, also in this second phase of civil society development, the largest problems faced by the sector were related to its organisational and financial sustainability. Overall, Kyrgyz Non-Governmental Organisations lacked a large membership and stable constituencies and were run by strong personalities, who provided the organisation with short-term effectiveness, but were not able to ensure its continuity beyond their leadership (USAID 2001, 96). At the same time, the tax legislation applying to the NGO sector was not conducive for its growth, since the commercial activities performed by Non-Commercial Organisations did not have any fiscal advantages and were taxed at the same level as business activities. Moreover, due to the economic hardship affecting the country, only very limited local resources were available to NCOs, which were forced to rely almost entirely on the support of the international donor community.

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5 In 1999, about half of the public associations registered in the Kyrgyz Republic were stationed in the capital Bishkek.

Table 2. Number of Non-Commercial Organisations registered in the country (1997-2002)

Regions	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Bishkek	586	821	1,036	1,280	1,065	2,341
Chui	287	369	422	519	798	992
Issuk-Kul	146	199	299	365	454	660
Naryn	78	106	125	183	264	357
Talas	106	164	230	269	359	429
Jala-Abad	212	289	562	672	844	1,113
Osh	312	461	741	878	1,109	1,407
Batken	48	98	158	178	280	331
Kyrgyz Republic	2,010	2,722	3,817	4,669	6,058	7,630

Source: UN in the Kyrgyz Republic, Overall Country Assessment 2003 (Alymkulova et al. 2006, 32-3)

As shown by Table 2, the second phase of development of the Kyrgyz non-profit sector was characterised not only by a qualitative, but also by a quantitative growth. This growth was also sustained by Akayev's government, which became increasingly supportive of organisations working in the field of social services provision. As already mentioned in this paper, service associations were regarded as strategic partners in addressing urgent social and economic problems affecting the country, for which the Kyrgyz state did not have the necessary resources. Remarkably, the government's support did not apply in the case of politically engaged NGOs, whose involvement in the political arena was intensified by the flawed parliamentary and presidential elections of 2000 (USAID 2003, 98). Despite the approval of a new NGO Law in 1999, meant to support the further development of the sector, politically engaged NGOs were subject of harassment on behalf of government structures and encountered impediments in the registration and re-registration processes foreseen by the law (UNSAID 2001, 97). This is emblematic of the government's inclination towards a state-led model of civil society focussed on the provision of social services. As a matter of fact, it was at this stage that a politically-driven fragmentation of the sector emerged, based on which organisations were divided into government-controlled or government-sympathetic versus independent ones.

The politicisation of the sector continued, especially after the tragic killing of demonstrators in the southern oblast of Jalal-Abad in early 2002 that led to

> large-scale protests at the community level and the national mobilization of civil society groups on issues such as press freedom and the right to demonstrate. (Giffen, Earle, Buxton 2005, 155)

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In the following years, civil society organisations held important campaigns against corruption and dynasty-building in the regime, as well as against the referendum proposals introduced by President Akayev to placate his political opponents (155). This was the beginning of a new phase of civil society development, when Non-Commercial Organisations became increasingly involved in advocacy activities and established new forms of cooperation with the government, especially at the local level, as shown in the next section.

3.3 Consolidation of the Kyrgyz Non-profit Sector (2003-2010)

The third phase of civil society development registered an active involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations in promoting the reform process in the Kyrgyz Republic, especially through the intensification of their advocacy activities (USAID 2004, 110). This new focus needs to be contextualised in a shift of priorities characterising bilateral and multilateral development institutions that was linked to the approval of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005. According to the Declaration, development aid should be aimed at

> support[ing] partner country efforts to strengthen governance and improve development performance [and international assistance should] be harmonised within the growth and poverty reduction agendas of partner countries.[6]

Whence it followed that, since the mid-2000s, international agencies active in Kyrgyzstan have withdrawn funding for NGOs' capacity building and have concentrated their efforts on supporting Kyrgyz civil society organisations advocating changes and reforms in state policies (USAID 2004, 110).

The engagement of NCOs in advocacy activities included a variety of causes, as voters' education campaigns and monitoring of local elections, constitutional reforms of the country and related information campaigns for citizens, participation in opposition mass meetings, active lobbying for citizens' rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of conscience (USAID 2009, 135). All these activities were conducted especially with the assistance of USAID. An important contribution was offered by CSOs in lobbying for the bill "Amendments and Addition to the Tax Code of the Kyrgyz Republic" that entered into force in 2003 and made humanitarian aid and grants tax-exempt. This campaign succeeded in bringing together government and non-governmental actors through the creation of a task

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6 http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf (2016-03-26).

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force consisting of representatives of the parliament and the NGO sector, as well as through the organisation of roundtables and seminars throughout the country involving NGOs, mass media, and state institutions. Worthy of note, the advocacy activities increased especially after the regime change in 2005, when

> the organizations found themselves with an unprecedented opportunity to influence the new government's priorities and implement their own agendas in a newly open environment. (USAID 2006, 119)

Nonetheless, by the end of the 2000s, important changes affected the regulatory framework, in which Kyrgyz organisations operated, with significant repercussions also on their ability to engage in advocacy activities. More specifically, the government control of the sector became more systematised and several measures were initiated to limit NGOs and their influence on public opinions (USAID 2007, 135-6). In 2007, a decree was approved to limit the right to assemble and a new draft of the Tax Code was presented. As a matter of fact, this new draft equalised the taxation of the non-profit sector to the for-profit one and imposed financial restrictions for NGOs "Pursuing political objectives" (136). In 2008, amendments to the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations were adopted, which substantially restricted the operation of faith-based organisations. Similarly, in 2009, some amendments to the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations were introduced, which would have given state bodies the right to

> revise NGOs' internal documents, participate in all NGO events, ban NGO financing by international NGOs and stop NGOs' activity or even liquidate an organization at their discretion. (USAID 2010, 130)

Although the amendments were not approved, they testify the government's attempt to increase its control on the non-profit sector and represent a clear sign of the deterioration of its relation with politically engaged NGOs at the national level.

At the same time, the third phase of civil society development registered the establishment of new forms of cooperation between local government and NGOs delivering social services. To be more precise, service NCOs began cooperating regularly with local officials in projects concerning training, budget hearings and research, and local governments' funds were allocated by the Ministry of Finance to local grassroots organisations for the conduction of small social projects (USAID 2010, 130). This mechanism of state funding for civil society organisations was expanded in 2008 with the introduction of the Law on Social Services Contracting. As emerges from Table 3, in the first years, the government's support in this field was extremely limited. This was due to several factors, such as

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state entities' lack of understanding of the law, weak by-laws and norma-tive documents regulating the implementation of the social procurement system and a lack of budget appropriations on behalf of the ministries (USAID 2010, 130). In addition, the budget available was scarce, also due to the difficult economic situation affecting the country. The situation was further aggravated by the April Revolution of 2010 causing the closure of the borders with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and the consequent export suspension with these countries (USAID 2011, 112).

Table 3 – State budget available for social procurements under the Law on Social Services Contracting for the period 2009-2010

Year	Amount in KGS	Amount in $
2009	KGS 5 million	$ 111,100
2010	KGS 5 million	$ 111,100
Source**:** Author's own compilation according to USAID 2013		

In the third phase of civil society development, financial vulnerability re-mained the most acute and serious issue affecting the Kyrgyz non-profit sector. International funding continued to be the main source of financing for NCOs, although the most important donor agencies, like USAID, the DFID and the EC, decreased their financial commitment (USAID 2010, 132). While small and weak organisations were forced to close down, the remaining organisations had to increase their professionalisation to meet the requirements of the international donor community and to be able to compete in an environment characterised by paucity of available funding (Jailobaeva 2011, 151). It is noteworthy that the increase of the profes-sionalisation and institutional capacity of NGOs represented also a *conditio sine qua non* to enhance their legitimacy and to be recognised as partner by the state in the implementation of its development agenda.

In addition, many non-commercial organisations began focussing on so-cial issues and specialised in the provision of social services, especially for women, children, elderly, and other marginalised groups, and in the field of environment and public infrastructures (Jailobaeva 2011, 51). NGOs developed marketing, pricing and service delivery skills and became en-gaged in fee-for-service activities, including paid trainings and consulta-tions. This allowed them to increase membership numbers, as a result of members' high satisfaction with the services offered (USAID 2008, 137), to establish good relations with local businesses and to slightly raise the share of philanthropy and sponsorship in their budgets (USAID 2009, 138). The shift in the priorities of donor agencies and the scarcity of aid had a negative impact on the work of the Civil Society Support Centres that were specialised in providing NGOs with capacity-building and consultancy. Indeed, since less funds were available, less NCOs were now interested

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in investing resources in the services offered by the CSSCs (Jailobaeva 2011, 155). At the same time, a new positive trend emerged with the help of international donors, which assisted NGOs in creating networks and coalitions to better coordinate their activities and advocacy actions. The Union of Civic Organisations and the Alliance for Women's Legislative Initiatives are just a few representative examples of this new trend.

The process of consolidation of the non-profit sector has continued also after the Revolution of 2010, which created more space for structured participation of civil society in the policy-making process. At the same time, as shown in the next section, new draft laws were introduced to improve the access of Kyrgyz CSOs to national and local resources, which, if approved, will increase the options that non-profit organisations have at their disposal to secure their financial sustainability.

3.4   Kyrgyz Civil Society and Current Trends (since 2010)

The Revolution of 2010 and the subsequent change of power have created a conducive environment for the development of the non-profit sector. The mixed presidential-parliamentary system, introduced in 2010, has allowed NCOs to

> freely express criticism on the government and current legislation [and provided them with] relatively good access to the law-making process. (USAID 2013, 109)

Since 2010, CSOs have played an active role in the monitoring and advising of the government also through the involvement in *ad hoc* structures, such as the Committee of Civil Control and the Constitutional Council, as well as the Public Advisory Councils of the State Bodies, introduced by law in 2014. In 2012, a new Law on Peaceful Assembly was adopted, which was promoted by local NCOs, with the aim of strengthening the political rights to organise and participate in peaceful assemblies (USAID 2013, 109). The strength of Kyrgyz civil society is well exemplified by the public debate and mobilisation that took place around the Law on Foreign Agents. More precisely, in 2014, a draft law was registered at the Parliament, which, following the example of the Russian Law on Foreign Agents of 2012, introduced

> a wide range of legal barriers impeding the operations of NGOs and their ability to access funding from foreign and international donors.[7]

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7 http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/kyrgyz.html (2017-11-20).

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The discussion lasted over two years and eight months, during which civil society actively advocated against the law, by organising public hearings, roundtables, TV and radio debates and by formulating and publishing nine appeals. Both the original and the revised (less restrictive) versions of the law were rejected by the Kyrgyz Parliament in 2016.[8]

Nowadays, the activities of CSOs are still regulated according to the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations of 1999, although slightly improved. The law establishes clear procedures for the registration, operation and internal management of NCOs and includes a wide range of permissible fields of engagement, such as human rights, environment, education, art, media, youth and sports (USAID 2013, 109). Although registering an organisation is simple and can be completed within less than two weeks, the process is still highly centralised and small grassroots organisations from remote areas are forced to visit provincial centres, which makes the procedure costly and time-consuming (USAID 2014, 112). On the contrary, the procedure of de-registration is very complicated and requires an organisation to provide evidence that it has no debt to neither financial nor government institutions (112). This is one of the reasons why data on the number of active organisations in the country are not reliable and a significant gap exists between registered and active CSOs, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Number of registered Non-Commercial Organisations in the country between 2011 and 2014

Year	Number of registered organisations	Number of estimated active organisations
2006	12,173	2,000-2,500
2007	8,000	500
2008	8,000-20,000	n.a.
2009	n.a.	n.a.
2010	7,726	500/600
2011	n.a.	n.a.
2012	11,500	1,500
2013	12,720	4,198

Source: Author's own compilation according to the data made available from USAID 2007, 2010, 2014

Financial vulnerability still poses the main challenge faced by the non-profit sector in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz CSOs are still highly dependent on international donor funding, especially on behalf of USAID, the EC, various United Nations (UN) agencies, the Open Society Foundations, Danish Church Aid, and others. However, in the past years, the international support to civil society in Kyrgyzstan (and, more in general, in Central Asia) has been substantially reduced, due to a shift of geographical priorities.

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8 Based on the interview conducted with ICNL representative (Bishkek, 9 November 2016).

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Just to give one example,

> the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has withdrawn from the region and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) closed its country office in 2012. (USAID 2014, 114)

Nonetheless, although the US support to the country has slightly diminished – from $ 48.1 million in 2008 to $ 46.9 million in 2011 and $ 47.3 million in 2012 – in 2013 USAID has introduced a new five-year-programme with a budget over $ 8 million that, in line with the objectives of the Declaration of Paris, is focussed on improving the partnership between the public and non-profit sector and, in particular, the implementation of the state system of social procurements (114).

Similarly, the Kyrgyz government has further promoted the development of civil society following a neo-liberal model, by allocating funding to CSOs through the social contracting scheme introduced by the Law on Social Services Contracting of 2008. In 2014, the Ministry of Youth also started to use this mechanism of procurement, joining the Ministry of Social Development (USAID 2015, 125). As shown in Table 5, although in the past years a positive trend was registered in the government funding allocation for CSOs, the budget available for the social procurement mechanism remains very limited and is insufficient to meet the needs of the non-profit sector. This is due to the country's economic hardships as well as the deficiencies characterizing the implementation of this mechanism.

Table 5. State budget available for social procurements under the Law on Social Services Contracting for the period 2011-2014

Year	Amount in KGS	Amount in $
2011	KGS 12 million	$ 270,999
2012	KGS 13 million	$ 276,595
2013	KGS 13.9 million	$ 281,376
2014	KGS 22.5 million	$ 409,000

Source: Author's own compilation according to USAID 2013, 2015

In order to improve their financial sustainability, Kyrgyz CSOs have recently sought to diversify their income sources also with the assistance of the international donor community. The practice of collecting membership fees – which is common in many countries – is *de facto* not a viable option in Kyrgyzstan, since most of the members and clients can simply not afford it. At the same time, the financial problems characterising the country have also affected the donations from the business sector, with the largest Kyrgyz charity foundation AUB Charity Fund – which in the past donated about $ 500,000 annually – shutting down in 2010 (USAID 2011,

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112). The lack of business skills and limited access to start-up capital make it very difficult for Kyrgyz organisations to carry out income-generating activities and the high-tax rates applying to commercial activities discourage their further engagement in this field (USAID, 2010, 131). Currently, only a limited number of CSOs are involved in providing for-profit services and products, such as consulting, training, renting of resources, Internet, photocopying, tourism, farming, handcrafts and furniture-making, but the trend is increasing also thanks to the support of international donors.

In the past years, new legislative initiatives concerning the financial situation of non-commercial organisations were drafted and are aimed at overcoming these difficulties by facilitating their access to local and national resources. The first initiative is the draft law On Charitable Organisations, which is focussed on ameliorating the regulatory environment of the non-profit sector through tax incentives for non-commercial organisations.[9] Based on this draft law, Kyrgyz CSOs can apply for the status as charitable organisations, which will exempt them from the payment of income taxes, sales taxes, and VAT. The organisations that will decide to go through this certification process and agree on annual and independent financial audit will be eligible to conduct tax-free entrepreneurial activities and invest their entire earnings in charitable activities.[10] The second proposal is the draft law On Social Procurement, which is built upon the Law on Social Services Contracting of 2008 and is focussed on improving the procedures for government financial support to CSOs providing social services to the population. On March 16, 2017, the draft law was adopted by the Parliament and now awaits the signature of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.[11] Once implemented, both proposals will enable NGOs to diversify the resources at their disposal and to create better conditions to ensure their financial sustainability and, thus, greater independence from the international donor community.

4 Discussion of the Results

This paper offers an historical overview of the development of the non-profit sector in Kyrgyzstan looking at the ways in which the national and international environments have influenced the shape and content of the post-Soviet Kyrgyz non-profit sector. In the article, the contribution of national and international actors is analysed by using the typology suggested by Babajanian et al. (2005), who describe four ideal-types of civil society:

9 http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/kyrgyz.html (2017-11-20).

10 Based on the interview conducted with ICNL representative (Bishkek, 9 November 2016).

11 http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/kyrgyz.html (2017-11-20).

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neo-liberal, communal, state-led and global. Overall, the article identifies four different phases of development, which civil society has undergone since the independence of the country, and analyses the main strengths and challenges characterising its evolutionary trajectory.

Table 6. Types of civil society promoted during the four phases of development of the Kyrgyz non-profit sector

Phase of Development	National Context	International Context
First phase (1991-1996)	Neo-liberal Focus on social service provision	Neo-liberal/Global Focus on political reform
Second phase (1997-2002)	State-led Focus on social service provision	Communal Focus on political reform
Third phase (2003-2010)	State-led at national level Neo-liberal at local level Focus on social service provision	Neo-liberal Focus on political reform
Fourth phase (2010- onwards)	Neo-liberal Focus on social service provision	Neo-liberal Focus on social service provision
Source: Author's own compilation		

As emerged from the previous pages and the summary in Table 6, the establishment of the Kyrgyz non-profit sector is strictly connected to the engagement of the international donor community in the country. In fact, from 1991 to 1996, Western donors invested millions of dollars in seeding a Western style civil society equated to NGOs according to a neo-liberal model. In this first phase, priority was given to initiatives, which were focussed on global issues, such as the protection of human rights, women's rights and the environment. As a result of the resource abundance, a mushrooming of organisations operating in these fields was registered. The rapid growth of the sector was also supported by a conducive national environment: indeed, the government considered a neo-liberal version of civil society made up of service organisations as a precious ally to address urgent socio-economic problems affecting the country. The main challenge faced by the non-profit sector in its first phase was related to its sustainability, since most of the DONGOs were completely dependent on the financial support of the international community and set up their agenda based on the availability of foreign aid, rather than on their own long-term mission.

Aware of the limitation of its previous strategy, in the second phase of civil society development, foreign donors adopted a community-based approach focussed on reducing the gap between Kyrgyz civil society and the national and local context in which it is operated. Through a participatory and community-driven approach, the international community sought to involve local population in the development process by engaging com-

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munal and traditional forms of civil society. To this scope, over thirty Civil Society Support Centers were created by USAID in Central Asia, that began working as intermediaries between donor and local organisations, thus contributing to the decentralisation and a professionalisation of the non-profit sector in Kyrgyzstan. The quantitative and qualitative growth of Kyrgyz civil society was supported by the government, which was more inclined to a state-led model of civil society focussed on the provision of social services. Also in this second phase, financial sustainability represented the main challenge affecting CSOs in the country.

An active involvement of NCOs in promoting the reform process of the country characterised the third phase of civil society development, together with an intensification of their advocacy activities, in particular after the regime change of 2005. The politicisation of the sector was driven especially by the changes affecting the financial environment and, more specifically, by the new funding strategy adopted by international agencies, which was focussed on policy reforms. In this third phase, the state's approach to civil society became more diversified, with the government promoting a state-led model of civil society at the national level, and a neoliberal one at the local level. Although the sector was still highly dependent on international aid, new alternatives to limit its financial vulnerability were made available, such as the system of social procurements, funding civil society organisations engaged in the delivery of social services.

Finally, the Revolution of 2010 has created a conducive environment for civil society and, since then, Kyrgyz NGOs have regularly been involved in monitoring and advising state bodies through *ad hoc* structures, such as the Public Advisory Councils. In this fourth phase of development, the international support has been focussed on improving the partnership between the public and non-profit sector and, especially, the implementation of the state's system of social procurements. A neo-liberal model of civil society has also been supported by the government through the allocation of increasing resources to non-profit organisations delivering social services. The two draft laws On Charitable Organisations and On Social Procurement are now awaiting approval (from the Parliament and the President respectively): if implemented, they can potentially open a new phase of development of the Kyrgyz non-profit sector, characterised by greater financial (and ideological) independence from the international donor community.

5 Implications and Conclusion

To return to the opening questions, this paper offers an in-depth study of civil society development in Kyrgyzstan by focussing on the influence of vertical relations in shaping the forms and manifestations of what can

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be considered the strongest third sector in the Central Asian region. On the whole, three conclusions can be drawn from the analysis, which can improve our understanding of the conditions and mechanisms favouring the flourishing of the non-profit sector in Kyrgyzstan, and have important implications also for other Central Asian republics.

Firstly, the findings show that the development of Kyrgyz civil society took place in an overall conducive national and international environment. In fact, state actors recognised already in the 1990s the central contribution CSOs could make in the provision of social services, which they were not able to deliver. It was the liberal legislation in place that allowed the international donor community to freely operate in the country, by stimulating the development of a neo-liberal form of civil society made up of NGOs, which in the next years would specialise in the provision of services, thus becoming a strategic partner of the government. At the same time, Kyrgyz civil society was able to rapidly adapt to the changing financial and opportunity structure, as testified by the new function assumed by CSOs in the second phase of development, when they became intermediaries between foreign donors and local organisations. From the third phase onwards, civil society has significantly contributed in shaping the environment in which it has operated. Examples of this engagement are provided by its lobbying activities for the Amendments and Addition to the Tax Codes of the Kyrgyz Republic and the mobilization taking place against the Law on Foreign Donors. Although the relationship cannot be described as symbiotic (see Glasius, Lewis, Seckinelgin 2002), it is undeniable that a reciprocal influence was exercised between civil society and the political context, at least at the national level.

Secondly, this article points out the need of moving away from an 'either/or' logic, when dealing with civil society developments, by revealing how different forms of civic engagement can (co-)exist and simultaneously be promoted by national and/or international actors. The strength of the Kyrgyz non-profit sector is also the product of the interplay between the diversified, and sometimes even divergent, approaches adopted by the state and the international donor community that in the past twenty-five years, by following different agendas, supported the development of a variety of civil society manifestations.

Finally, the findings shed new lights on how our understanding of civil society dynamics could be improved by the use of a more neutral analytical lens. The notion of civil society clearly has its roots in the Western liberal tradition, which conceives it as a counterpart to the state (and the market). Although the typology suggested by Babajanian et al. (2005) has the merit of diversifying the discourse on civil society, it also shows the limitations of the use of a term originally referring to a specific state-(market-)civil society constellation. As a matter of fact, the focus of both national and international actors on organisations providing social services and the

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increased government efforts in financially supporting these organisations are not only a Kyrgyz phenomenon, but affect also other Central Asian republics (see Pierobon 2016). This has important consequences in the region, in terms of the creation of new forms of cooperation and partnership between the government, and the non-profit sector at the national and local level. Therefore, the authors of the paper suggest to replace the notion of 'civil society' with 'civic engagement', which broadly refers to "individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concerns",[12] bypassing the state-civil society issue. In addition, the term 'civic engagement' is more suitable to capture the complexity of the realities on the ground, where the different versions of civil society, promoted by the national and international context, interact with and are adapted to local structures and circumstances, giving rise to a variety of autochthonous forms of participation. This aspect has important implications also from a practical viewpoint. For instance, the programmes implemented by international actors in the region are targeted at the neo-liberal form of civil society and mainly addressed to officially registered organisations (i.e. NGOs), thus automatically excluding more informal forms of civic engagement from competition. This approach could be improved by introducing forms of assistance that are not based on the official status of the applicants but on their assets and possible impacts on the ground.

List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSC	Civil Society Support Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
DONGO	Donor-Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
EC	European Commission
ICNL	International Centre for Non-for-Profit Law
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
KGS	Kyrgyz Som
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCO	Non-Commercial Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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12 `http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/civic-engagement.aspx` (2017-09-20).

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Un 'tiepido' inverno riformatore
L'inizio del rinnovamento politico in Mongolia, 1989-1990

Emiliano Vitti
(Università degli Studi di Pavia, Italia)

Abstract In the wake of the structural crisis that hit the European countries of the Soviet Block in the last months of 1989, also the Mongolian communist institutions knew the strong opposition of a part of the population against the state and political system represented by the People's Republic of Mongolia, born in 1924 under the influence of the Bolshevik revolution. The aim of this paper is to analyse the evolution of the opposition movements to the regime, the actions implemented by the reformers and the government reactions in a tense political context that did not result in bloody repressions, but gave rise to a process of gradual political, economic and institutional change, which marked a decade of Mongolian history.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 Le prime proteste e l'impatto sulla classe dirigente. – 3 Organizzazione del movimento.

Keywords Peaceful revolution. Beginning democratic transition. Mongolia.

1 Introduzione

Sulla scia delle crisi strutturali che colpirono i paesi europei del blocco sovietico a partire dagli ultimi mesi del 1989, anche le istituzioni comuniste mongole conobbero la forte protesta di parte della popolazione contro il sistema statale e politico, rappresentato dalla Repubblica Popolare di Mongolia.[1] L'obiettivo di questo elaborato è analizzare l'evoluzione dei movimenti di opposizione al regime, le azioni poste in essere dai riformatori e le reazioni governative, in un contesto di tensione politica, che non sfociò in sanguinose repressioni, ma diede inizio ad un processo di graduale cambiamento politico, economico e istituzionale, che caratterizzò circa un decennio della storia mongola.

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[1] La Repubblica Popolare di Mongolia sorse nel 1924, sotto l'influenza della rivoluzione bolscevica.

2   Le prime proteste e l'impatto sulla classe dirigente

Il primo acuto 'ufficiale' di insofferenza al regime da parte di una fetta di popolazione si verificò a seguito delle limitazioni imposte dal *Politburo* alla celebrazione della Giornata Internazionale dei Diritti Umani del 10 dicembre 1989 a Ulaanbaatar nella Piazza Sükhbaatar.[2] Le scene osservate nei pressi della sede del governo impressionarono la classe dirigente, non tanto per la portata numerica della protesta (circa 200 manifestanti), ma per il valore politico e simbolico di aperta opposizione all'operato delle istituzioni, che metteva in discussione per la prima volta la struttura statuale e la dottrina politico-economica del MPRP (*Mongol Ardyn Huv'sgalt Nam* – Partito Rivoluzionario del Popolo Mongolo). I contestatori marciarono uniti, scandendo cori per l'eliminazione dell'«oppressione governativa» (Namsray 1989, 34), e per imprimere maggiore forza al programma nazionale di *perestrojka* (in lingua mongola *uurchlun baiguulalt* – ristrutturazione dell'economia) e di *glasnost* (*il tod* – «apertura ad una maggiore libertà di espressione») (Rossabi 2005, 2). I dimostranti presentarono le proprie richieste senza tumulti e azioni violente, né le guardie della sicurezza fecero nulla per disperdere la folla, evitando un epilogo tragico, come accaduto nella primavera di quell'anno in Piazza Tiananmen;[3] una volta che i manifestanti lasciarono la piazza, il Politburo optò per un segnale politico, sollevando alcuni ufficiali dai rispettivi incarichi (Becker 1993, 44).

Il debole riconoscimento del bisogno di cambiamento si fece strada nel MPRP fin dal 19° Congresso, nel marzo 1986. In quell'occasione Jambyn Batmönh, all'epoca segretario del partito, affermò durante il suo discorso:

> Un nuovo approccio dovrebbe essere adottato per analizzare e generalizzare l'esperienza della costruzione socialista, studiando e risolvendo molte questioni sociali, politiche, economiche e culturali emergenti dalla vita del paese. (Batmönh 1986, 97)

In questo passaggio, Batmönh sostenne la necessità che il sistema-paese dovesse cambiare, ma non attraverso l'abbandono del socialismo stesso, poiché il regime «non [aveva] rivelato ancora il suo pieno potenziale».[4] Il partito e il governo interpretarono l'idea di riforma come un tentativo di

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2   La piazza fu nominata in memoria di Damdin Sükhbaatar, militare che nel 1921 proclamò l'indipendenza mongola dalla Cina, sancendo così la vittoria del comunismo.

3   La protesta di Piazza Tiananmen comprese una serie di manifestazioni di massa contro il regime comunista che ebbero luogo a Pechino tra il 15 aprile e il 4 giugno 1989. Proprio il 4 giugno si verificarono gravi incidenti che ebbero un esito sanguinoso, con fucilazioni di civili da parte dell'esercito.

4   Per riferimenti al pensiero di Namsray sulle condizioni del socialismo mongolo cf. Kaplonski 2004, 52.

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salvare il socialismo e ridare vigore all'economia, seguendo in sostanza la linea politica di Gorbačëv.[5] Come asserito da Christopher Kaplonski, il MPRP non riconobbe all'inizio il ruolo del movimento popolare e le richieste che «soffiassero i venti del cambiamento» (2004, 51).[6]

I manifestanti erano principalmente giovani formatisi nelle scuole e università sovietiche e dei paesi europei satelliti, conoscevano molto bene il russo e, spesso, mostravano buona padronanza del tedesco. In generale il desiderio di cambiamento di questi giovani riformatori si era sviluppato nella seconda metà degli anni Ottanta, con la diffusione dell'idea di un''URSS più libera'. Tra i principali esponenti del movimento democratico vi fu senza dubbio Sanjaasüregiin Zorig, conosciuto anni dopo come «la gazza (ladra) dorata della democrazia»[7] (Rossabi 2005, 4) e comunemente noto come prima figura guida del movimento democratico in Mongolia. Laureato in filosofia nel 1985 all'Università di Mosca, Zorig rientra in patria, desideroso di contribuire alla realizzazione del principio di pluralismo politico, come punto essenziale di maturazione culturale del proprio paese. Iniziò così a insegnare alla Facoltà di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Nazionale Mongola, dando vita a tavole rotonde, a cui parteciparono numerosi studenti animati dalla volontà di cambiamento e di liberazione della Mongolia dall'oppressiva amministrazione comunista. Nel 1988 organizzò un gruppo, detto Nuova Generazione, che si riuniva nel suo appartamento, realizzava manifesti di critica al potere e li affiggeva in tutta Ulambaataar. Propose un pensiero costruttivo, 'educato' e basato sulla non violenza, e vinse la diffidenza dei suoi coetanei, affermandosi come giovane teorico di grande levatura intellettuale e politica.[8] Zorig fu uno dei pianificatori della dimostrazione del 10 dicembre 1989. Il suo modo di porsi di fronte all'impegno politico ebbe un effetto tranquillizzante sulla folla, che apprese della formazione di un movimento democratico dalle voci di due giornalisti, Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj e Sükhbaatarin Amarsanaa, e da uno scienziato, Erdeniin Bat-Üül.[9]

Hashbat Hulan, giornalista e attivista politica cresciuta a contatto con la cultura occidentale,[10] osservò con vivo interesse l'evolversi degli avvenimenti nel suo paese, della cui arretratezza rimase sconcertata al suo

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[5] La politica economica di Gorbačëv era basata sulla perestrojka, ossia sull'idea di ristrutturazione del sistema economico comunista sovietico.

[6] Nel luglio 1989 le pubblicazioni ufficiali facevano invece ancora riferimento al 19° Congresso del partito, ancorato ai dettami ideologici di tipo marxista-leninista.

[7] Cf. Rossabi 2005, 4-6.

[8] Kohn, Michael. «Democratic Leader S. Zorig Murdered», *Mongol Messenger*, 7 October 1998, 2; «Interest of Nation is Priority One: S. Zorig», *Mongol Messenger*, 14 October 1998, 2.

[9] http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~corff/im/WhoIsWho/WhoIsWho-20040703-5.html#ss5.19 (2017-10-04).

[10] https://efworld.org/meet-our-fellows/mrs-hashbat-hulan (2017-10-04).

rientro nel 1986, dopo anni trascorsi in Inghilterra; in un'intervista si dichiarò «impressionata dall'ignoranza e dall'isolamento della [sua] patria» (Prohl, Staisch 1998, 26). La giornalista si stabilì a Ulaanbaatar, vista come una «città dormiente e provinciale» e seguì l'evolversi delle mobilitazioni politiche anti-regime sfociate negli eventi del 10 dicembre. Quel giorno si recò in piazza da

> studiosa, giornalista e cittadina interessata ad un nuovo modello che superasse il sistema comunista senza perdere di vista la tutela dei diritti e delle esigenze sociali del cittadino. (Rossabi 2005, 4-5)

Le sue reazioni di fronte ai proclami del «primo movimento politico organizzato di massa» (Bulag 1998, 86) furono di perplessità e critica verso i principali esponenti. Ricordando l'evento affermò che «non [le] piacquero le opinioni di molti riformatori» poiché essi parevano «sostenere troppo l'economia di mercato», senza «curar[si] abbastanza dell'assistenza [e dei] servizi] social[i] per la popolazione».[11]

Le posizioni più moderate erano prudentemente orientate verso il multipartitismo ed un'economia vicina al libero mercato. Il cambio di orientamento in termini di politica economica non doveva, però, essere slegato da un sistema di *welfare* a tutela dell'equilibrio sociale, attraverso il vigile controllo dello Stato. La transizione avrebbe dovuto, così, mantenere i servizi garantiti dal comunismo e concentrare particolarmente l'attenzione sul bilancio statale, che versava in condizioni pessime, a causa della gestione inadeguata protratta per decenni dal regime.

La portata della pacifica rivoluzione fu compresa immediatamente dal governo sovietico; Michail Gorbačëv invitò infatti il Politburo mongolo a evitare, se possibile, il ricorso alla violenza verso la piazza (Cf. Fish 1998, 127).

Nonostante il mantenimento delle limitazioni alle libertà personali e il controllo sui manifestanti tramite agenti infiltrati, il Politburo operò una svolta nella concezione dell'attività amministrativa e di governo a partire dal 1988 e, poi, nella seconda metà del 1989, accettando, in sostanza, la possibilità di vincolare l'azione governativa ad una forma di rispetto della volontà popolare. Anche all'interno del MPRP vi furono posizioni critiche (successive ai fatti del 10 dicembre 1989), per esempio riguardo alla pratica della secretazione di atti e provvedimenti governativi, che potevano influenzare il «corretto esercizio dell'autoritarismo [nel]la Mongolia comunista» (Sanders 1991, 70-1); oppure in riferimento all'accumulazione di incarichi pubblici (spesso frutto di clientelismo) da parte di membri del partito che si rivelarono inadeguati alla gestione della cosa pubblica, con gravi conseguenze sul piano dell'efficienza amministrativa (47-8). Le

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11 Stralci dell'intervista a Hashbat Hulan del 26 maggio 1998 in Rossabi 2005, 5.

aperture interne prospettate dal MPRP e dal suo storico leader Jumshagin Tsebendal[12] si concretizzarono in una sorta di «destalinizzazione mongola», dal valore più simbolico che pratico, visto che i primi passi per un ammodernamento delle istituzioni si dovettero, non alle manifestazioni dei riformatori, ma alle iniziative politiche sovietiche (Rossabi 1992, 279). I vertici del partito consentirono anche, all'interno del giornale di partito *Ünen* (Verità), alcune limitate forme di «pubblica discussione di aspetti limitati della repressione politica nell'era del socialismo» (Kaplonski 2009, 209). Al di là delle questioni strettamente politiche, la perestrojka produsse anche in Mongolia un'attività di governo basata su interventi strutturali che favorissero le attività commerciali, un miglioramento dell'efficienza dei trasporti e aumento del livello d'istruzione e cultura della popolazione (Rossabi 2005, 9).[13]

Unitamente alle spinte interne, il governo mongolo iniziò un prudente avvicinamento all'Occidente, in un'ottica di «deprovincializzazione» del paese (Sanders 1990, 62).

Si può quindi affermare che il regime abbia tentato di reagire prima di essere colpito, per evitare il contraccolpo di una pur pacifica manifestazione. All'interno del MPRP, la corrente più moderata riconobbe fin dalle prime assemblee pubbliche che i giovani mongoli stavano dando

> segni di impazienza verso le tendenze conservatrici della leadership riguardo a un rapido e radicale cambiamento. (Sanders 1990, 62)

Ciononostante, le azioni di polizia proseguirono con arresti e imprigionamenti dei dissidenti «troppo vivaci» (62).

3 Organizzazione del movimento

Una volta lanciata la sfida ai governanti, i giovani riformatori dovettero articolare un programma credibile per la crescita e lo sviluppo dell'economia. Già alla fine del 1988, il nuovo circolo democratico mongolo fondò il Club dei Giovani Economisti, avvalendosi del contributo di alcuni esperti, formatisi nelle scuole socialiste sovietiche, che avevano maturato un pensiero distante dalla dottrina economica marxista. Tra loro i più autorevoli furono Mendsaikhany Enkhsaikhan, esperto economista sovietico, che lavorò al Ministero per le Relazioni Economiche con l'Estero e

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12 Tsebendal fu primo ministro dal 1952 al 1974 e poi capo dello stato dal 1974 al 1984, durante il regime comunista. Per ulteriori informazioni cf. `https://www.britannica.com/ biography/Yumjaagiin-Tsedenbal` (2018-03-27).

13 Per ulteriori riferimenti sul tema, cf. anche Kim 1992.

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gli Approvvigionamenti e ricoprì il ruolo di Primo Ministro dal luglio 1996 all'aprile 1998, e Davaadorjiin Ganbold, un altro economista sovietico, già docente presso l'Università Nazionale Mongola (Krouchkin 1998, 446-7, 451-2). La rinuncia alla pianificazione economica e l'orientamento verso un sistema di libero mercato furono affrontati con prudenza fino all'inizio del 1990, per non dividere il fronte riformatore e assumere credibilità sul piano 'pratico': i grandi messaggi sull'essenzialità di un sistema multipartitico, sul rispetto dei diritti umani e la tutela della libertà di stampa non avrebbero avuto forza sufficiente senza una proposta concreta in materia economica (Dashzeveg, Ganbold, Elbegdorj 1998, 22-3).

Nei giorni immediatamente successivi alle dimostrazioni, i leader del MDU (Unione Democratica Mongola – *Mongolyn Ardchilsan Kholboo*) si riunirono per scrivere le richieste di riforma, che avrebbero presentato alle autorità comuniste. Presentato il piano con lo slogan «La democrazia è il nostro obiettivo», il punto di maggiore rilevanza politica prevedeva libere elezioni per i rappresentati al *Khural* (il parlamento mongolo) e la revoca del potere di nomina da parte del MPRP. Inoltre, il governo avrebbe dovuto ricoprire il ruolo di garante della tutela delle libertà di parola, di stampa, di movimento all'interno dei confini statali, di religione e di promozione di tali diritti tra i cittadini. Gli esponenti guida del MDU sostenevano che il governo avrebbe anche dovuto «riconoscere e rendere pubblici i crimini contro i cittadini e i monaci perpetrati durante il periodo del terrore di Choibalsan».[14] Infine, i riformatori «insistevano che [il rispetto dei] diritti venisse [inserito] nella nuova costituzione modificata» (Ackerman, Du Vall 2000, 444).

Dopo un acceso dibattito interno al partito, alla riunione del settimo *plenum* del 19° Congresso del MPRP, l'11 e 12 dicembre 1989, i vertici comunisti accettarono sostanzialmente i principi sia di glasnost sia di perestrojka e (almeno formalmente) le richieste dei dissidenti (Dashzeveg, Ganbold, Elbegdorj 1998, 22-3). Il risultato complessivo deluse, tuttavia, una parte dei membri del movimento democratico: il plenum acconsentì, infatti, ad introdurre alcuni elementi fondamentali di democratizzazione del paese, come il multipartitismo, le elezioni libere e la tutela dei diritti civili, e ne stabilì l'attuazione in un tempo di cinque anni (Heaton 1991, 50-1). Le motivazioni della prudente apertura da parte delle istituzioni furono principalmente due: la prima fu quella di restare in linea con il nuovo orientamento del principale 'paese amico', l'URSS, e del suo leader Gorbačëv; la seconda ineriva allo scomodo vicino cinese. La Cina aveva esercitato a più riprese un dominio diretto sul territorio mongolo nei secoli

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14 http://www.britannica.com/place/Mongolia/Independence-and-revolution#ref1111650 (2017-10-04). Khorloogiin Choibalsan, primo ministro dal 1939 al 1952, ordinò decine di migliaia di omicidi di natura politica, per mantenere «l'ordine e la stabilità del regime». Per riferimenti, cf. Ichinnorov 2005.

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ed il governo di Ulaanbaatar non voleva che disordini interni creassero il pretesto per un' intromissione o, peggio, per una nuova occupazione da parte di Pechino (Rossabi 2005, 13).[15] Governanti e dissidenti cercarono, dunque, un compromesso che garantisse l'equilibrio istituzionale e la stabilità sociale.

Il MDU cercò, nei suoi primi mesi di vita, di costruirsi un robusto seguito tra la popolazione, attraverso una linea politica che fosse trasversale e consentisse di acquisire autorevolezza presso il governo e accelerare il processo di democratizzazione. I dissidenti ricevettero dalle autorità il permesso di diffondere il proprio messaggio politico alla radio nazionale il 28 dicembre 1989. Nel frattempo essi fecero propaganda per garantirsi il sostegno di una categoria di lavoratori disagiati, quella del personale delle miniere di rame di Erdenet, specialmente il personale qualificato, come operai specializzati ed ingegneri (Tsengeltuya 2011, 55-87; cf. anche Bayantur 2008, 27-32). Il malcontento derivava dagli accordi stretti dal governo di Ulaanbaatar con l'Unione Sovietica: le estrazioni erano coordinate da una sorta di *joint venture* sovietico-mongola e agli ingegneri e operai russi spettavano salari e condizioni di lavoro migliori, con conseguente insofferenza da parte del personale locale:

> Noi mongoli ci rendiamo conto quotidianamente di essere di second'ordine, di essere sviliti e sminuiti. Questo ferisce profondamente il nostro orgoglio e i nostri sentimenti nazionali. (Prohl, Staisch 1998, 29)

I lavoratori di Erdenet si organizzarono in un movimento di protesta nel dicembre 1989 e, durante le rimostranze, furono lanciati messaggi chiari sulla politica interna ed estera del governo:

> Non vogliamo più essere guidati per mano dell'URSS. Vogliamo lo stesso salario per lo stesso lavoro. Ne abbiamo abbastanza che i russi siano pagati due volte noi per fare lo stesso lavoro. (Prohl, Staisch 1998, 29)

Appresa la notizia, i vertici del MDU si misero in contatto con i dissidenti di Erdenet e il 22 dicembre 1989 venne mandato il fisico e attivista Erdeniin Bat-Üül[16] come delegato del movimento, con il compito di trattare coi lavoratori e coinvolgerli nella causa riformatrice. Dopo alcuni colloqui, Bat-Üül riuscì nel suo intento e tornò ad Ulaanbaatar con la certezza di un risultato importante per il movimento, sempre più prossimo ad essere riconosciuto

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15   Per riferimenti all'occupazione cinese in Mongolia durante la dinastia Qing (1644-1911), cf. Sneath, Kaplonski 2010, capp. 26, 29, 32, 35, 36, 37.

16   Esponente di punta del Partito Democratico Mongolo, è stato sindaco di Ulaanbaatar dal 7 agosto 2012 al 7 luglio 2016.

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come interlocutore ufficiale da parte del governo. Per catalizzare il consenso, il MDU si impegnò in una efficace comunicazione su vasta scala, finalizzata al coinvolgimento non solo delle città principali, ma anche delle aree periferiche del paese. Il metodo più utilizzato fu quello del dibattito pubblico: il 14 gennaio 1990, si riunirono più di 1.000 persone per discutere del programma del movimento nella sala del museo intitolato a Lenin, poco distante dalla Piazza Sükhbaatar. Il comitato coordinatore, guidato da Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, si preoccupò di organizzare i lavori e di esporre obiettivi e prospettive all'assemblea. L'azione venne condotta prestando particolare attenzione al linguaggio espositivo, per evitare che il messaggio riformatore risultasse troppo duro per il Khura: a tal proposito, fu di grande aiuto l'incontro con l'Unione dei Giornalisti Mongoli del 19 gennaio 1990, durante il quale venne studiato il tipo di comunicazione più efficace da utilizzare con le istituzioni (Dashzeveg, Ganbold, Elbegdorj 1998, 24-5, 34-6).

L'appuntamento più importante di quelle settimane fu, però, la manifestazione del 21 gennaio per le strade di Ulaanbaatar, organizzata da Elbegdorj: a dispetto dei trenta gradi sotto zero, la dimostrazione si rivelò un clamoroso successo, con la partecipazione di migliaia di persone ed il riconoscimento formale da parte del governo del MDU come interlocutore politico ufficiale. Gli organizzatori cercarono di ottimizzare il risultato della manifestazione: invitarono il celebre attore e cantante Dogmidyn Sosorbaram, che si esibì in un canto popolare mongolo, celebrativo del mito di Chinggis Khan (Tsengeltuya 2011, 60-5). Inneggiare al ricordo del condottiero costituì un'ulteriore rottura con il MPRP e con l'URSS: secondo la propaganda comunista, Khan era visto solo come un barbaro saccheggiatore e rinnegato (Hyer 1966, 696-8; Rossabi 2014, 267-8). Attraverso queste simboliche forme di opposizione e la campagna nazionale per educare la popolazione ai principi democratici, il MDU intendeva creare presupposti, tali da spingere il governo verso le trattative per un profondo processo di cambiamento della Mongolia.

In risposta il Politburo avviò un'intensa attività di consultazione, a partire dalla fine di gennaio 1990, con la categoria dei dipendenti statali, tra cui operai, impiegati e quadri di vari settori, tutti largamente insoddisfatti delle proprie condizioni salariali. Il MPRP cercò di erodere il consenso maturato in soli due mesi dal MDU con prudenti rassicurazioni e caute promesse di parziali riforme da attuarsi in tempi 'ragionevoli', per evitare di dare segnali di debolezza politica, non rischiare derive capitaliste e prevenire tumulti di piazza. Il Khural mise in atto una campagna diffamatoria nei confronti dei riformatori, descrivendone le azioni come frutto di ipocrisie e contaminazioni capitaliste e presentandone i membri come alcolizzati e malversatori abituali (Becker 1993, 45).

All'interno del movimento democratico si registravano nel frattempo le prime spaccature, con la fondazione del Partito Nazionale Progressista, ispirato da un'idea di economia liberista, che proponeva immediate pri-

vatizzazioni di banche e industrie.[17] Il 18 febbraio 1990, su iniziativa di Bat-Üül, nacque il Partito Democratico Mongolo: alla prima *convention* vi furono circa duecento osservatori, fra cui molti giornalisti, sebbene il governo non avesse formalmente dato alcun assenso all'assemblea, né rilasciato ai rappresentanti della stampa i regolari permessi (Dashzeveg, Ganbold, Elbegdorj 1998, 28). Entrambi i partiti appena nati premevano per la modifica dell'articolo 82 della Costituzione mongola, che imponeva la regola del partito unico, ed auspicavano la fine del monopolio del MPRP. L'opposizione politica al regime si manifestò in diverse forme: la pubblicazione, senza autorizzazione da parte delle autorità comuniste (prima volta dal 1921), del primo numero del giornale dei democratici *Shin Tol*; lo smantellamento, a partire dal 22 febbraio 1990, delle statue di Lenin e di Stalin in molte città del paese (oltre alla capitale, anche a Choibalsan, nella provincia di Dornod); il convegno studentesco del 24 febbraio 1990 presso l'Università Nazionale Mongola, durante il quale vi fu l'adesione dell'Unione della Gioventù Mongola al MDU (Rossabi 2005, 17-8).[18]

Nonostante le iniziative prese dal movimento democratico e l'appoggio di una parte della società civile, l'attività riformatrice non sembrava destinata al raggiungimento di rapidi ed efficaci risultati: la riunione del Politburo del 4 marzo 1990 non offrì alcuna sostanziale apertura. I dissidenti optarono, così, per una soluzione drastica: alle ore 14 del 7 marzo 1990, con una temperatura di quindici gradi sotto lo zero, dieci membri del movimento si recarono in Piazza Sükhbaatar, vestiti con i tradizionali abiti mongoli (*dels*), ed iniziarono uno sciopero della fame. Tra di loro c'erano uomini popolari presso l'opinione pubblica, che avrebbero ricoperto, negli anni successivi, importanti incarichi istituzionali e politici nella Mongolia democratica: oltre a Bat-Üül, parteciparono Gongorjavyn Boshigt (futuro capo dell'Unione Democratica Mongola), Dambyn Dorligjav (Ministro della Difesa nella seconda metà degli anni Novanta) e Damdinsürengiin Enkhbaatar (in seguito a capo della Sottocommissione per la Sicurezza Nazionale presso il Khural) (Krouchkin 1998, 439-43). Come accadde per esempio a Darkhan e Mörön (Provincia di Hèntij, zona nord-orientale del paese), anche in questo caso, molti lavoratori scioperarono simbolicamente per un'ora, in segno di solidarietà verso i manifestanti (Severin 1992, 221; Sanders 1996, 460-1); i rappresentanti dei minatori di Erdenet dichiararono:

> Abbiamo bloccato completamente la miniera per un'ora. Era una sensazione irreale. (Prohl, Staisch 1998, 31)

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17 Intervista a Davaadorjiin Ganbold, Ulaanbaatar, 8 gennaio 1997, in Rossabi 2005, 16.

18 Per riferimenti alle modifiche alla costituzione mongola cf. Hulan 1996, 35-42.

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La sera del 7 marzo il Politburo si riunì per analizzare la situazione: i membri del Consiglio erano consapevoli che il crescente consenso dell'opinione pubblica per i manifestanti, unito all'immobilismo del governo, avrebbero costituito un rischio per la tenuta istituzionale del paese. La divisione interna era fra due correnti: la prima premeva per una linea dura nei confronti dei manifestanti, sostenuta da molti vecchi membri del partito, come Demchigiin Molomjamts; la seconda era improntata verso il dialogo con i democratici ed era appoggiata da membri moderati, come Dashiin Byambasüren. Questi, alle 16 dell'8 marzo, si recò nella Piazza Sükhbaatar per confrontarsi con i dissidenti e convincerli ad interrompere lo sciopero della fame, in cambio dell'inizio di trattative ufficiali tra il governo e il movimento democratico. Dopo un lungo incontro non si arrivò a nessun accordo e lo sciopero non si fermò (Rossabi 2014, 528-31), ma le autorità realizzarono che il processo democratico sarebbe stato inesorabile. Dopo altre ventiquattro ore di trattative il Politburo accettò le istanze riformatrici e il 9 marzo 1990 si dimise.

Ebbe quindi inizio una transizione lenta e prudente, che passò attraverso alcuni momenti fondamentali: il 10 maggio 1990 furono indette le prime elezioni libere per il luglio dello stesso anno; nel 1992 entrò in vigore la nuova Costituzione, che delineava una repubblica semipresidenziale; nel 1996 si registrò la prima vittoria alle elezioni parlamentari di un partito non comunista (il Partito Democratico); nei primi anni Duemila il paese poté vedere, dopo circa un decennio, i primi frutti della conversione all'economia di mercato, con una costante crescita della produzione industriale e del PIL (Hulan 1996, 39-42; Heaton 1991, 51; Prohl, Staisch 1998, 35-6; Boldbaatar, Humphrey 2007, 3-5).[19]

Il tutto avvenne senza scontri tra manifestanti e polizia, con una lungimirante attenzione di entrambe le parti verso il mantenimento dell'equilibrio sociale e dell'ordine pubblico. Le conseguenze positive di questa condotta costituirono una base importante per superare le difficoltà della transizione, favorire il dialogo politico e sostenere il progresso economico del paese durante tutti gli anni Novanta.

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19 Cf. in particolare Prohl, Staisch 1998, 35-6, in cui sono riportate informazioni sul processo di trasformazione delle istituzioni mongole.

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Bṛhaspati and the Barhaspatyas

Ramkrishna Bhattacharya
(Pavlov Institute, Calcutta, India)

Abstract   The name of Bṛhaspati is associated with the materialist doctrine in India. He is supposed to be the preceptor of the gods. It was in order to help them in their battle against the demons that he created the materialist doctrine and thereby deluded the demons. This story, Puranic in origin, can be traced back to a late *Upaniṣad*, *Maitrī*. However, the story given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and other sources does not contain anything specifically materialistic; all the heretical doctrines preached by Māyāmoha appear to be pre-existing; the Jains and the Buddhists are particularly mentioned, not the Lokāyatikas or the Cārvākas. More interestingly, in some other later sources, Bṛhaspati does not seem to be a god or a demi-god; he is as much a human as Kapila, Gautama and other founders of philosophical systems are. This trend of treating Bṛhaspati as a human is found in Kṛṣṇamiśra's play, the *Prabodhacandrodaya*. He belongs to the camp of Kali. Whatever be the identity of Bṛhaspati, his attribution to materialism is inappropriate and has got nothing to do with the development of materialism in India.

Summary   1 Bṛhaspati and His Relation to Materialism. –2 The View of the Demons, *Asura-mata*. – 3 Bṛhaspati and Śukra: Two Rival Gurus. – 4 Two Stories in the *Matsya Purāṇa*. – 5 The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Matsya Purāṇa*. – 6 Other Purāṇic Sources. – 7 The Evidence of the *Devī-bhāgavata (Mahā) Purāṇa*. – 8 The Harivaṃśa: the Rājeyas in Place of the Demons. – 9 Three Sources for the Accounts of Anti-Vedic Views. – 10 The Upshot (1). – 11 Vācaspati in the *Prabodhacandrodaya*. – 12 Kali in the *Naiṣadhacarita*. – 13 Importance of Bṛhaspati. – 14 Philosophy vis-à-vis Religion. – 15 Bṛhaspati Humanised. – 16 Evidence from the *Maṇimēkalai*. – 17 Intelligence of Bṛhaspati: Evidence from the *Pañcatantra*. – 18 The Upshot (2). – 19 Inappropriate Attribution.

Keywords   Bṛhaspati. Heretics. Materialism. Māyāmoha. Purāṇas.

1   Bṛhaspati and His Relation to Materialism

The first question to settle is: which Bṛhaspati? There are several Bṛhaspatis in ancient Indian tradition. One is an author of an *Arthaśāstra* (now lost, but mentioned in *Kautilīya Arthaśāstra* 1.2.4), another is an author of a *Dharmaśāstra* (although the full text is lost, a sizeable number of fragments is available), and there is yet another Bṛhaspati mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* (Mbh), who was appointed by Drupada, the king of Pāñcāla, to teach *Nīti* (polity) to his sons (Mbh, Āraṇyakaparvan 33.56: *nītiṃ bṛhaspati-proktām*). No, we are not going to speak of any of them. We are concerned here with that Bṛhaspati whose name is associated with

the origin of materialist philosophy in India. One of the many names for materialism in Sanskrit is *Bārhaspatya*(*mata*), the *Bārhaspatya* view. The word is a derivative of Bṛhaspati, who is generally represented as the preceptor of the gods, *devaguru*. The namesakes of Bṛhaspati are also used to denote the same person (there are no fewer than 29 names of Bṛhaspati, according to the Sanskrit lexicon, *Śabdakalpadruma*, s.v. "bṛhaspati"). In the *Padma Purāṇa* (PPu), Uttara-khaṇḍa, 236.5 (Vangavasi ed. = Anandashram ed. 263.69) he is called Dhīṣaṇa; Kṛṣṇamiśra in his allegorical play, *Prabodhacandrodaya* (PC), calls him Vācaspati (Act 2, 40); Śrīharṣa in his philosophical treatise, *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādya* (KhKhKh), 15, and Jayarāśi in his polemical work, *Tattvopaplavasiṃha* (TUS), 125, call him Suraguru, the preceptor of the gods. How could such a pillar of the Establishment be the founder of a heretical doctrine like materialism? He should surely be on the side of the gods, not of the demons. The question struck F. Max Müller (1971, 96) too, but the stories in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (MaiUp) and other sources (see below) convinced him that the divine chaplain preached materialism only in order to delude the demons. Yet, in *some* of the Purāṇic accounts (but by no means all), Bṛhaspati and the demons are shown together. Thereby hangs a tale. Let us follow the trail as found in the Purāṇas and other sources, all respectable and brahmanical in origin and *ipso facto* eminently orthodox and conformist in all respects.

2 The View of the Demons, *Asura-Mata*

Before going to that story, let us have an 'aside'. Śaṅkara and following him some other non-dualist Vedāntins, such as Ānandagiri, Dhanapati, Nīlakaṇṭha, Madhusūdana, Śrīdhara and Hanumat, gloss "the view of the demons" (*asura*s) mentioned in *Gītā* 7.8 as those of the Lokāyatikas. Lokāyata is one of the several names for materialism (for other names see R. Bhattacharya 2013a, 3-8). Śaṅkara's identification prompted S.N. Dasgupta to search for the origin of the *asura*s. He discovered them in Sumer: "We thus know that the *lokāyata* views were very old, probably as early as the Vedas or still earlier, being current among the Sumerian people of pre-Aryan times" (1975, 3: 531). G. Tucci (1925, 40), on the other hand, refused to endorse this view. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (1959, 14), though not agreeing with Dasgupta, entitles the first chapter of his *Lokāyata*, "Asura-view". K.C. Chattopadhyaya (1975, 153-4, fn. 42) criticised Dasgupta quite harshly for offering such a view. He also notes that "D.P. Chattopadhyaya has been misled by Prof. Dasgupta in his *Lokāyata* and he has assumed that the *Lokāyata* system was the philosophy of the Asura people" (154 fn. 42). However, Dasgupta's conclusion is so absurd on the face of it that it does not merit any discussion (for further details, see R. Bhattacharya 2016).

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To resume the original narrative: what made Śaṅkara associate Lokāyata with the *asura*s, which no other commentator on the *Gītā,* except the non-dualist Vedāntins, does? The answer can be found by following the story of the deception of the demons occurring in the Upaniṣads and more particularly in the Purāṇas.

3 Bṛhaspati and Śukra: Two Rival Gurus

The association of materialism with the demons is first found in MaiUp 7.9:

> Bṛhaspati, having become Śukra, created this false knowledge for the security of Indra, and the ruin of the Asuras. Through it they point to what is auspicious as being inauspicious, and say that one must ponder the injurious character of the scriptures like the Veda etc. Hence one must not learn that knowledge, else it is like a barren woman: its fruit is near concupiscence; even one who has fallen away from his proper conduct must not embrace it.
>
> Thus the text says: "Widely opposed and differently directed are what are known as knowledge and ignorance... " (Van Buitenen 1962)

The alliance of Indra with Bṛhaspati may even be traced back to the *Ṛgveda* (Rv 8.96.15). Indra with Bṛhaspati as his ally is praised for having overcome the godless people. The similarity between the Rv passage and the MaiUp one, however, may also be purely fortuitous.

4 Two Stories in the *Matsya Purāṇa*

In the *Matsya Purāṇa* (MatPu) there are two accounts involving Indra, Bṛhaspati and the sons of Raji, collectively called the Rājeyas (chs. 24 and 47). The Rājeyas had grown so powerful as to usurp the power of Indra, the king of the gods. In order to assist Indra, Bṛhaspati performs a sacrifice called Paiṣṭika and deludes the Rājeyas with jina-*dharma*, the Jain religion. Once they were alienated from the Veda and *dharma* as also got addicted to rationalism (*hetuvāda*, 24.24-48)*,* Indra overcame them with his thunder:

> *gatvātha* mohayāmāsa *rajiputrān bṛhaspatiḥ* | jinadharmaṃ samāsthāya vedabāhyaṃ *sa vedavit || vedatrayīparibhraṣṭāṃś cakāra dhiṣaṇādhipaḥ |vedabāhyān parijñāya* hetuvādasamanvitān || (MatPu 24.47-48)

In the second account we are told that Indra himself sends his daughter, Jayantī, to Śukra and directs Bṛhaspati to the demons (47.183). No details

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of what Bṛhaspati taught the demons are stated. We only learn that Śukra cursed the demons and left them (47.204).

The two stories are variations of the original story found in the *Harivaṃśa* (see below). The setup is the same: the only difference is that one has the demons, the other, the Rājeyas. Otherwise, the theme of delusion by means of a non-Vedic religious doctrine is common to both.

5   The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Matsya Purāṇa*

In the *Yogavāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, Uttarabhāga (*Yogav*), ch. 101, too, there is a reference to the followers of Bṛhaspati who claimed that the Other World does not exist (*na vidyate paro loko bārhaspatyasya yasyatu,* 101.3). Ānanda Bodhendra Sarasvatī, a commentator on the *Yogav*, apparently knew nothing about materialism. He explains Bārhaspatyas as the followers of the *buddhaśāstra* (scripture of the Buddha, i.e. the canonical work of the Buddhists) written by Bṛhaspati (*barhaspatyasya bṛhaspati-praṇīta-buddha-śāstrānusāriṇaḥ*). He also mentioned the doctrine of momentariness of consciousness and referred to the accounts in the MatPu and other sources in which Bṛhaspati is said to have written a *buddhaśāstra* in order to delude both the sons of Raji and the demons (*rajiputrānām-asurānāñca vimohanāya bṛhaspatinā buddhaśastraṃ praṇītam iti matsyapurāṇṇādau prasiddhaṃ*, note on 101.3). Apparently the commentator, who pompously entitled his work as *Vāsiṣṭha-mahārāmāyaṇa-tātparya-prakāśa*, was deficient both in philosophy and Purāṇic studies. However the MatPu 24.47 refers to the Jain doctrine, not the Buddhist.[1]

6   Other Purāṇic Sources

The story is narrated more elaborately in PPu*,* Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa, ch. 13, with both Bṛhaspati and Śukra present. While the MaiUp story (7.8-9) starts and stops abruptly – we are not told the reason that made Bṛhaspati assume the form of Śukra and why Indra had to be given security – the PPu provides the backdrop. It borrows another story from the Vpu (3.18), although there is neither Bṛhaspati nor Śukra in it. But Indra's insecurity is duly explained.

The VPu story runs as follows. The demons had defeated the gods in war. The gods decided to seek the assistance of Hari (Viṣṇu), who created a creature called Māyāmoha (illusion-*cum*-delusion personified). This al-

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1   MaiUp 7.8, however, specifically refers to *nairātmyavāda*, the doctrine of no-soul, which, as the commentary says and almost all scholars agree, refers to Buddhism. See the commentary on MaiUp, BI ed., 206-7, also J.A.B. van Buitenen 1962, 153, fn. 127.

legorical character, first assuming the form of a Jain monk and then that of a Buddhist mendicant, misled the demons by speaking against the Vedic religion which is based on sacrifice (*yajña*) involving slaughter of animals. He urged them to follow the path of reason rather than accepting verbal testimony (*āptavāda*). This kind of instruction made the demons stray from the path of merit (*dharma*). Prior to that, they too were as much Veda-abiding and seeker for freedom (*mokṣa*) as the gods. Thus they got weakened, and the gods then could overcome them quite easily. The gods, by defeating the demons in a battle, got back the right of receiving oblations from the mortals on earth, which the demons had previously usurped.

The PPu story says that Bṛihaspati, taking advantage of Śukra's absence, disguised himself as Śukra and appeared before the demons. He taught them all kinds of anti-Vedic views, decrying non-vegetarian diet, performance of sacrifices and rites for the ancestors (*srāddha*), and indulgence in coitus. The gods and the brahmanas, they were told, also drink wine and eat flesh. Hence, the religion adopted by them cannot contribute to the attainment of heaven and/or freedom. Instigated by the Jain and Buddhist preachers (Illusion incarnate, Māyāmaya Puruṣa in disguise), the demons started questioning the validity of performing Vedic rites.

This part of the story in the PPu is almost wholly taken from VPu 3.18 with some significant variations. For one thing, it makes use of the rivalry between the two preceptors, Bṛhaspati and Śukra; they openly quarrel with each other, whereas neither Bṛhaspati nor Śukra appears in the VPu. The teachings of the Jain and the Buddhist monks are less elaborately stated in the VPu than in the PPu.

The PPu story is highly intriguing for another reason. Śukra was away from the demons. During his absence, Bṛhaspati appears to them in the guise of Śukra. Śukra comes back after sometime and challenges Bṛhaspati. The demons are at a loss to decide who the real Śukra is, since both look alike and each of them claims to be so. Bṛhaspati then taunts Śukra:

> There are thieves in the world who steal others' goods.
> But such an object as a stealer of the form and the body (of another person) is not seen.
> When Indra was guilty of the lapse of killing a brahmana by slaying Vṛtra [a demon], it was you who absolved him of that (lapse) by the help of the science (*śāstra*) of Lokāyatika.

> *santi corāḥ pṛthivyāṃ ye paradravyāpahāriṇaḥ |*
> *evaṃvidhā na dṛṣṭāśca rūpadehāpahāriṇaḥ ||*
> *vṛtraghātena cendrasya brahmahatyā purābhavat |*
> *lokāyatikaśāstreṇa bhavatā sā tiraskṛtā ||*
> (PPu, Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa 13. 291-92)

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To the best of my knowledge, no such achievement of Bṛhaspati in excul-
pating Indra from his lapse of killing a brahmana (Vṛtra) is to be found
anywhere in the whole corpus of Sanskrit literature, excepting the PPu,
Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa. It is also not clear how and why Lokāyatika-śāstra could be
of any use in making a person free from any lapse. No religious law-book
(Dharmaśāstra/Smṛti) contains such a provision. Does Lokāyatika-śāstra
in this context mean anything other than materialism or a text of disputa-
tion (*disputatio*), a sense found in Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit works (for
details, see R. Bhattacharya 2011, 187-96)?

7 The Evidence of the *Devī-bhāgavata (Mahā)Purāṇa*

In between the VPu and the PPu there is *Devī-bhāgavata (Mahā)Purāṇa*
(*DBhMPu*), 4.13-15 which too has been utilised in the PPu (see Hazra
[1940] 1987, 25). Indra, after losing his kingdom, tells Bṛhaspati what he
should do to help him. The preceptor of the gods then assumes the form
of Śukra and preaches the Jain religion to the demons. The original Śukra
appears and challenges Bṛhaspati in his disguise. Faced by two Śukras, the
demons are at first perplexed, but ultimately opt for the pretender rather
than their true guru. Śukra in rage leaves the demons, his *yajamāna*s.
Bṛhaspati's mission is over, for he has been able to alienate the demons
from Śukra.[2]

Two later Purāṇas, *Śiva Purāṇa* (ŚivaPu), Rudra-saṃhitā, Yuddha-kāṇḍa,
chaps. 1-5, and *Liṅga Purāṇa* (LiṅgaPu), part 1, ch. 71, too have this motif
of delusion (*moha*). The same motif is retained in order to accommodate
the original story of the rivalry between the two gurus. These two Purāṇas,
however, offer slightly different versions of the same tale. Bṛhaspati in
all these later texts plays a vital role in convincing the demons to deviate
from the Vedic path. It is to be noted that although Māyāmoha preached
not only Jain and Buddhist views but also the views of *all other* heretics,
*pāṣaṇḍa*s (see VPu 3.18.21), only the Jain and the Buddhist doctrines are
highlighted.

In the PPu, the change of roles (Bṛhaspati appearing as Śukra and delud-
ing the demons), as stated in the MaiUp before, is reintroduced. Bṛhaspati
also appears in other Purāṇas (see Appendix 1 below). But in the stories
relating to the deception of the demons, he is *not present invariably* in

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2 The story contains several instances of unconscious humour. For example, Śukra laments
that the guru of all gods and the author of a Dharmaśāstra, whose words are accepted as
authoritative, could stoop so low as to adopt the doctrine of the *pāṣaṇḍa*s, and submitting to
greed, turned out to be a heretical savant (*pāṣaṇḍa-paṇḍita*). How can the people then make
him an *ācārya*? Śukra further laments: "Bṛhaspati, the best of the brahmanas, is deceiving
my stupid *yajamāna*s (sc. the demons) by assuming another dress like an actor!" (13.59-62).

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all versions. Sometimes he is invoked to delude the demons (as in MatPu 24.47-48), sometimes others do it instead of him (as in the ŚivaPu and LiṅgaPu, in which a Jain sage [*muni*] called Māyāpuruṣa [Illusion-person] created by Viṣṇu deludes the demons; cf. Māyāmoha in VPu 3.17.41).

8   The *Harivaṃśa*: the Rājeyas in Place of the Demons

The earliest source for the tale of Bṛhaspati in relation to the conflict between Indra and the sons of Raji as well as the war between the gods and the demons, however, is not the Purāṇas, but the *Khila Harivaṃsa* (Hv). Although the work has been reshaped as a Purāṇa (which originally it was not) and several hundred lines have been added, it is still one of the earliest sources for locating Bṛhaspati as the deluder. In a passage of the Hv (Harivaṃsa Parvan critical edition ch. 21; vulgate ch. 28), Bṛhaspati, at the request of Indra, sets out to defeat the Rājeyas who had usurped Indra's power. In order to restore the kingdom of the earth to Indra, Bṛhaspati first performs a sacrifice to weaken the Rājeyas and thereby he succeeds in reinstating Indra to his former glory. In an additional passage (after 21.34), however, Bṛhaspati also writes a book on *Arthaśāstra* (book of polity) containing the *nāstika* view. It was highly prejudiced against *dharma*, and full of anti-vedic teachings (*nāstivādārthaśāstraṃ hi dharmavidveṣaṇaṃ param,* line 1). The Rājeyas were taken in by it. They deviated from the path of virtue, and consequently were ousted from power by Indra.

The story of king Veṇa/Vena is found in the Hv Harivaṃśa-parvan ch. 5 and also in several Purāṇas (for details, see Appendix B below). This king in his overbearing pride orders his subjects not to follow those instructions that are prescribed in the scriptures. He used to declare, "Do not perform sacrifices, do not pay homage to the gods and do not donate for religious purposes" (Hv Harivaṃśa-parvan ch. 5. 6-7). The sages tried to dissuade him but could not succeed. Hence, he had to be done away with. Interestingly enough, there is no reference to any book composed by Bṛhaspati (as interpolated in the additional passage 327* in the Hv Harivaṃśa-parvan, ch. 5) or any doctrine, such as Jainism or Buddhism (as in the VPu and the PPu, discussed above), nor any reference to logic or sophistry (as in the MatPu): Veṇa apparently made up his doctrine all by himself. No mention is made of Bṛhaspati in the Hv chap. 21 (crit. ed.) or in any of the Purāṇas that contain the tale of Vena. Only in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Mahāpurāṇa* (VDMPu) the word *lokāyata* occurs twice:

> [Vena] always indulged in unholy scriptures, and was a well-known Lokāyatika. He issued orders that were irreligious.
> [The sages said:]

You should not flout the rules established by your ancestors and obeyed by your forefathers by following Lokāyatika sayings.[3]

asacchāstrarato nityaṃ lokāyatika*sattamaḥ |*
cakāra loke maryādāṃ dharmabāhyo narādhipaḥ ||108.6||

　　　　[ṛṣaya ucuḥ]
pūrvapravṛttāṃ maryādāṃ pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraiḥ kṛtām |
lokāyatika-*vākyena na tvaṃ hantumihārhasi* ||108.8||

9　Three Sources for the Accounts of Anti-Vedic Views

By far, we have come across three stories that speak of the anti-/non-Vedic views (but *not* materialism, only the Jain and the Buddhist *religious credos*, not the Jain and the Buddhist *philosophies*). All of them are recorded by the authors of the Purāṇas that are brahmanical in origin and considered canonical by all devout Hindus. The stories are the following.

First, the gods and the demons engaged in an eternal war with the outcome of the battles continuously oscillating from one to the other party.

Second, the story of Raji and his sons as found in two versions. They were either duped by Bṛhaspati (as in MatPu 24.47) and/or by some god-created being who preached anti-Vedic doctrine/s to them and led them astray from the Vedic path (as in MatPu 24.44-48) and *Vāyu Purāṇa* (VāyuPu 92.87-99). It is for all practical purposes the same as the first, with the demons replacing the Rājeyas (see Appendix 1 below).

Third, the story of Vena as found in two versions. In one version (Hv, Harivaṃśa-parvan ch. 5, both critical edition and vulgate), king Vena proclaims himself superior to all brahmanical gods, sacrificial rites, etc. That is how he staked his claim to receive all forms of oblations. In one version he is said to have performed the most heinous lapse: he encouraged mixture of castes, *varṇa-saṅkara* (ŚivaPu, Vangavasi ed. 52.3-4; for further details concerning Vena see Vidyalankara 2006, 1:1081-87). All this infuriated the sages who finally assassinated him. No supernatural aid was required. The sages did so by trampling him under their feet (or by some other means, such as, by yelling a mighty roar, as in the account given in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 4.14.34). So it was Veṇa's *hybris* (insolence) that brought about his downfall; Bṛhaspati's aid was not required. The sages were competent enough to deal with him. No Indra or Bṛhaspati was found necessary.

3　The available English translation of this Purāṇa by P. Shah (2000-2002) uses such words as "materialist (follower of carvaka [*sic*])" and "Carvak's [*sic*] preachings" (I:214), although there are no such words in the original.

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Only the account in the VDMPu, as shown above, contains the name Lokāyata, which may very well be a later addition, as is the composition of a non-vedic Arthaśāstra by Bṛhaspati in the Hv (see above). However, the VDhMPu does not mention Bṛhaspati even once. In any case, Vena was an autodidact; he did not need anyone to misguide him.

Let us now analyse the three sources one by one.

In the first instance, the battle against the demons necessitated the creation of one, or more than one, anti-Vedic religion. They require either the help of Bṛhaspati or the intervention of Illusion (*māyāpuruṣa*) or Illusion-*cum*-Delusion personified (*māyā-moha*). However, as has been noted above, Bṛhaspati is not present *invariably* in all the stories. It is only in the Hv, the MatPu (one version) and the *Devibhāgavataṃ* (DbhPu) that Bṛhaspati appears all alone to practise deception. There is no mention of materialism by any of its many names, such as, Lokāyata or *bhūtavāda* (both occurring in the *Maṇimēkalai*, a Tamil epic composed in the sixth century CE) or Cārvaka-mata, etc. whatsoever in the texts that mention Bṛhaspati. The antagonist is mostly *jina-dharma*, the religion of Jina (Mahāvīra), and sometimes Buddhism, another anti-Vedic religion, or both. These two non-Vedic religions were highly critical of animal sacrifice in the rites for the ancestors (*śrāddha*) and in sacrificial rites (*yajña*), and found fault with drinking wine in the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice (for details see R. Bhattacharya 2013b, Appendices A and B). It has been shown that the objection has its origin in the *religious* standpoint of the Jains and the Buddhists, the doctrine of non-injury (*ahiṃsā*) being their chief article of faith. *It has got nothing to do with materialism as such*.

10   The Upshot (1)

To sum up then: in the two stories that have so long been fancied to have mentioned Bṛhaspati (VPu 3.18 and PPu Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa, ch. 13), he *has no role to play as the preacher of materialism*. In fact, as the stories go, Buddhism, Jainism and other heretical doctrines appear to be preexisting. The creature made by Viṣṇu merely makes use of them: he is *not* shown to be their progenitor. The demons, instigated by a Jain and/or a Buddhist monk and other heretics (*paṣaṇḍin*s), speak out against the Vedic religion, but not against religion as such, since they too were desirous of freedom (*mukti*) and they preferred the alternatives to the vedic way, that's all. In any case, materialism is nowhere to be found in what Māyāmoha preaches or what the demons tell one anotherin the VPu and the PPu accounts.

Notwithstanding this role of Bṛhaspati, as related to Jainism/Buddhism, it is Bṛhaspati alone who is proclaimed to be the *āciriyar* (Sanskrit *ācārya*, master, founder) of the Lokāyata system in the Tamil epic, *Maṇimēkalai*

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(27.80). But here he is on a par with Kapila, Kaṇāda and other human originators of the rest of the five philosophical systems. This Bṛhaspati is *not* identified with '*bhagavān* Suraguru', as Śrīharṣa (KhKhKh, 15) and Jayarāśi (TUS, 125) do. Similarly in the PPu Uttara-khaṇḍa (Vangavasi ed. 236.2-5 = Anandashrama ed. 263.66-69), he is treated as much as a human being, trailing no cloud of glory from the world of the gods:

> Goddess! Let me tell you the names of the dark (*tāmasa*) *śāstra*s, listen to me. The very remembrance of these deludes even the cognizant ones. At first I speak of the Śaiva *śāstra*s, such as the Pāśupatas and others. Then listen to the Brahmana, who being enthralled by my power preached the following *śāstra*s. Kaṇāda spoke of the great doctrine of Vaiśeṣika; similarly Gautama spoke of Nyāya, Kapila of Sāṃkhya, and Dhīṣaṇa [Bṛhaspati] of the highly reprehensible Cārvāka view (*dhīṣaṇena tathā proktāṃ cārvākam atigarhitam*).

We shall see that the same is true of the *Prabodhacandrodaya* and the *Naiṣadhacarita* (NC) (see below). This gradual degeneration of Bṛhaspati from the status of the preceptor of the gods to an ordinary human who could always be eulogised but never to be worshipped as a god is worth noting.[4]

Taking leave of the Purāṇas, let us now turn to secular works and see the role that Bṛhaspati ismade to play in them.

11   Vācaspati in the *Prabodhacandrodaya*

In Kṛṣṇamiśra's allegorical play, the PC, Act 2, Vācaspati (another name of Bṛhaspati) is *not* represented as the progenitor of the materialist system. He is merely the author of the science (*śāstra*) of a doctrine that *pre-existed* (see below) among the forces of the evil. King Mahāmoha (Great Delusion) declares,

> This science was composed by Vācaspati *who followed our view* and he has given it to Cārvāka. This science is popularised in the world by him through his disciples and their disciples. (Act 2, C/L, 345; trans. by S.K. Nambiar, modified in C/L; emphasis added)

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4   Jonardon Ganeri admits that the date of Bṛhaspati is 'unknown' (2011, 703), but in the Appendix to his paper it is stated that "[t]he first known reference to Bṛhaspati is from the sixth century…. It is reasonable to speculate, therefore, that Bṛhaspati is no later than 200 ce" (703, fn. 32). Whatever be the merit of this dating, it assumes that Bṛhaspati is a human, not a god or demi-god who existed from times immemorial.

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*tad etad*asmadabhiprāyānubandhinā *vācaspatinā praṇīya cārvākāya samarpitam | tena ca śiṣyopaśiṣya-dvāreṇāsmiṃlloke bahulīkṛtaṃ tan-tram | (40)*

Vācaspati/Bṛhaspati here no longer belongs to the side of the gods; he does not produce this science to help Indra in particular and the gods in general to regain their former glory. He is now under the power of the Prince of Evils and works as per his instruction. Vācaspati thus recedes into the background. It is Cārvāka who, along with Kali (personification of the Iron Age), now appears,very much like a principal of a school, or rather an instructor in a hermitage (*āśrama*). He has his own disciples, as any Sāṃkhya or Nyāya or Vedānta guru would have. The purpose of Mahāmoha, it is to be noted, is not to delude the gods, but to corrupt the humans on earth. Cārvāka here is shown to be wholly subservient to Mahāmoha, who calls him (Cārvāka) his "dear friend". Cārvāka approaches him and says:

> *Cārvāka*: So this is king Mahāmoha! (*going near him*) May the king be victorious! I salute you.
> *Mahāmoha*: Welcome, Cārvāka, be seated here.
> *Cārvāka* (*sits*): Kali prostrates before you.
> *Mahāmoha:* Ah! Kali, unimpaired blessings be upon you!
> *Cārvāka:* By your grace all is well. He has accomplished everything (ordered by you) and wishes to (worship at) your feet. For –
> After receiving the great command (from you) and having accomplished it by destroying his enemies, he is now happy and delighted, and with his great joy feels blessed and prostrates himself at the lotus feet of the Lord! (Act 2, v. 24, C/L, 346)[5]

But there is a problem. Hearing Cārvāka's words Mahāmoha says:

> *Mahāmoha*: And what has that Kali achieved?
> *Cārvāka*: Lord, he caused the virtuous to forsake the path shown by the Vedas and act according to their own wish. It is thy glory, my Lord – neither mine nor Kali's (*tadatra heturna cāpyahaṃ*) – for this achievement. (Act 2, v. 25)

The people of the north and west have forsaken the three Vedas, not to speak of tranquillity and self-restraint. In other places too, the three Vedas exist only as a means of livelihood. (C/L, 347)

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5   This is the second verse attributed to Bṛhaspati in SDS, 5.50-51,13.112-3. The verse occurs with variants in several other sources. See R. Bhattacharya 2011, 84-91. Some other verses occurring in PC, Act 2 are also found in the SDS and other sources. See R. Bhattacharya 2011, 84; Śl.2= PC, 2.26; Śl.3=PC, 2.20; Śl.4=PC, 2.21.

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Cārvāka and Kali thus become two separate entities, their activities, too, are in different regions of India. A few lines before this, they seem to have been presented as one and the same person! To add to this confusion, Cārvāka is made to quote a verse, presumably composed by Bṛhaspati, whom Cārvāka calls the *ācārya* (master):

> The Ācārya [Bṛhaspati] has said:
> 'Oblations in the fire, the three Vedas, the carrying of three staves tied together, and smearing of oneself with ashes – all these are the means of livelihood of those who are devoid of intelligence and manliness'. (Act 2, v. 26) (C/L, 347)

After quoting the verse Cārvāka adds:

> Those in Kurukṣetra and other places, my Lord, need not fear the birth of Knowledge and Spiritual Awakening, even in a dream.

To which Mahāmoha replies:

> Well done. That great holy place is rendered useless. (C/L, 347)

So far as the PC is concerned, Bṛhaspati has become thoroughly human-ised, having no association with the gods or the demons either. He is not required to deceive either the demons or the Rājeyas. Now he has got a new associate: Kali (or he is Kali himself).

12 Kali in the *Naiṣadhacarita*

Śrīharṣa in his *Naiṣadhacarita* (NC) Canto 17 provides an account of the charges made against the gods by a materialist and the counter-charges brought against him by the gods. However, Śrīharṣa dispenses with Bṛhaspati altogether. The charges against the gods are first brought by an anonymous member of Kali's army (NC 17.36). When the gods had made their reply in defence, the accuser appears before the gods and humbly admits:

> Ye gods, I am not guilty, I am subject to others, I am a panegyrist of Kali. My tongue (lit. mouth) is fluent in flattering him. (17.108; trans. by K.K. Handiqui, slightly modified)

No sooner had he said this than Kali himself steps out and starts de-nouncing the gods (17.112-39). It is now his turn to speak of materialism and condemn the gods, the Vedas, and the *āstika* philosophical systems

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such as Mīmāṃsā, non-dualist Vedānta and Nyāya. Neither Cārvāka nor Mahāmoha, nor even Bṛhaspati, has any role to play in this narrative.[6]

13 Importance of Bṛhaspati

Our interest in Bṛhaspati is not prompted by idle curiosity. The brahmanical authors would not permit the demons or the Rājeyas to formulate their own anti-Vedic views; Bṛhaspati or Māyāmoha or some other creature like Māyāpuruṣa fashioned by some god is required to preach to them and convert them to one or the other of the non-Vedic doctrines. Only in the case of king Vena/Veṇa no such supernatural aid is required (in all but one source; see Appendix B). The reason is evident: the *nāstika-śāstra* (heretical science) is to be understood as a product specially manufactured with the express purpose of deluding the demons, or any other force opposed to the gods, such as the Rājeyas. This *nāstika-śāstra* is not to be taken as a properphilosophical doctrine at all; it comprises all anti-Vedic views rolled into one.

Second, it is to be noticed that the term *nāstika-śāstra* does not necessarily mean materialism; the Buddhists, and more particularly, the Jains were always included in the ambit of *nāstika*s when the name is used by brahmanical authors. The mythographers, as in Greece and Rome so in India, loved to give free rein to their fancy; a consistent account either of events or of doctrines is rarely found – nor is it to be expected – in the Purāṇic tales. It is the Jain view that is mostly mentioned and reviled in the Purāṇas. R.N. Dandekar (1993, 752) has rightly observed that the authors of the Purāṇas knew more of the Jains than the Buddhists (as their main enemy) and their knowledge of materialism and its adherents was extremely vague. Sometimes the materialist doctrine is attributed to the Buddhists or the Jains, simply because the authors of the Purāṇas were more interested in defending Brahmanism *as a religious dogma*, not as any pro-Vedic philosophy. Their interest in and knowledge of different philosophical schools, whether orthodox or heterodox, appear to be minimal, almost non-existent. Ganesh Thite has recently shown that the *Sauta*s, rhapsodes of *itihāsa-purāṇa* (legendary history), were practically ignorantof Vedic rites and sacrifices; their ignorance, rather than their knowledge, is revealed in different recensions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Thite writes:

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6 K.K. Handiqui in his English translation of the NC has quite illegitimately introduced the name Cārvāka (17.92, 95) while the text has no such word. On the other hand, he renders Lokāyata as "heretic" (17.97) where the word has been employed as a proper name, and should have been retained in translation. See R Bhattacharya 2016, 597-615.

Much of these epics were transmitted from generation to generation by the wandering bards, monks and public narrators, some of whom may be semi-learned brāhmaṇas. In any case these people cannot be said to be academicians or scholarly people. (2014, 418)

The same remark applies equally to the redactors of the Purāṇas. They knew practically nothing about the three main heterodox philosophical systems. It would hold true for some commentators (like the commentator on the *Yog* mentioned above) and the like.[7] So far as the Purāṇas are concerned, total emphasis is laid (besides fabricating new fantastic stories) on *religion*; philosophy was merely a side issue. Opposition to Buddhism and Jainism was exclusively religious in nature; philosophy, whether *anekāntavāda*, or *vijñānavāda* meant nothing to the redactors of the VPu although these two *vāda*s are mentioned in VPu 3.18.10,16. They knew only the rudiments, or more probably merely the names of the heretical doctrines, that's all. The stories in the VPu and the PPu concerning the deception of the demons bear clear testimony to this. The preacher of *anekāntavāda* appears as a *naked monk* (Digambara) and that of *vijñānavāda* as one wearing a blood-red robe, the typical dress of a Buddhist mendicant. Add to this the fact that, besides the Buddhist and the Jain, Māyāmoha in the VPu also converted the rest of the demons by preaching other heretical doctrines (*anyānapyanya-pāṣaṇḍa-prakārair-bahubhiḥ*, VPu 3.18.21), which again appear to have already existed in fullfledged form. The *pāṣaṇḍas* do not represent any philosophical doctrine; they collectively constitute a combination of the non-Vedic religious cults, so graphically described in the MaiUp 7.8.

MaiUp 7.8 is the first source for the study of heresiology in India. The Purāṇas too contain many such passages, making the unclothed (*digambara*) Jains appear as the arch enemy of the Vedas. More interesting, however, is the long list of diverse religious communities, no fewer than forty six, enumerated by Siddharṣi in his *Upamiti-bhava-prapañcā-kathā* (906 CE). There are such strange names as Uktaṃda, Ulka, Khuṃkhukha (Khuṃkhuka), Cuñcuṇa, Pakṣāpakṣa, Vidyuddanta and the like (1-21, 547-48; see also Jacobi's Preface, xxvii-xxxv). Unfortunately most of these heretical sects are now difficult, if not impossible, to identify. The list incidentally mentions the Kālamukhas the Kāpālikas and the Lokāyatas (547). According to Siddharṣi, the towns dwelt by Bhavacakras, Naiyāyikas, Vaiśeṣikas, Bauddhas and Mīmāṃsakas have the same names, those of Lokāyatas are called Bārhaspatyas (*lokāyataṃ iti proktam puramatra tathā*

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[7] Ciranjīva Bhaṭṭācāryya Śarman (18th century) makes similar ludicrous mistakes in his *Vidvan-moda-taraṅgiṇī campū*. He confuses between the Cārvāka and the Jaina doctrines. There is an English translation of the work by Kalikrishna Deb Bahadur (1832), entitled *Fountains of Pleasure to the Learned*.

param l *bārhaspatyāśca te lokā ye vāstavyāḥ pure 'tra bhoḥ* ll, 661). Why this special provision is made for the Lokāyatas is a matter of conjecture; nothing definite is known about it.

In any case, if MaiUp 7.8 is the *locus classicus* of heresiology, Siddharṣi's works is an elaboration of the list of heretics by a Jain guru. In both cases, the heretics belong both to the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition.

14 Philosophy vis-à-vis Religion

Objections to materialism on religious grounds were thus brought into the domain of philosophy with the well-known distinction made between the *āstika* and the *nāstika* schools. The distinction was for all intents and purposes religious, not at all philosophical, all referring to the three Vedas, the (Vedic) gods, the sacrificial rites and the twice-born.[8] These are the four props of brahmanical religion. Once the concept of *nāstikya* was introduced to the domain of philosophy, it could only reiterate purely religious objections – whether *nāstika* means a denier of the Other World or of the authority of the Veda or any other idea inimical to orthodoxy (for instance, whether matter or consciousness appears first, as found in BṛUp 4.5.13 – opponent's view – and its rejection in 4.5.14). Such a distinction is not to be found in the list of the Six Systems based on argument (*ṣaṭ-tarkī*).[9] Despite the difference in the lists of names – some include Mīmāṃsā, some do not – the *āstika* and the *nāstika* systems rub shoulders with one another apparently without any concern, paying no attention either to the Other World or to the Veda.

15 Bṛhaspati Humanised

Bṛhaspati, as we know from the Tamil epic *Maṇimēkalai*, was long ago accepted as the original teacher (*ācārya*) of the Lokāyata school:

> These are the systems that accept logic:
> Lokayata, Buddhism, the Sankhya.
> Nyaya, Vaisesika, and Mimamsa.
> The teachers of these six: Brihaspati,
> Buddha, Kapila and Akshapada,

---

8 *mohitās tat yajuḥ sarvāṃ trayīmārgāśritaṃ kathām / kecid vinindāṃ vedānāṃ devānāṃ aparedvijja / yajña-karma-kalāpasya tathānye ca dvijanmanām//* VPu 3.18.22cd-23.

9 For a detailed discussion of *ṣaṭ-tarkī,* see Gerdi Gerschhiemer 2007, 239-48. Incidentally Siddharṣi, too, speaks of the followers of six philosophical systems, namely, Bhavacakras, Naiyāyikas, Vaiśeṣikas, Bauddhas, Mīmāṃsakas and Lokāyatas (*Upamiti*, 661).

Kanada and Jaimini. At present
The six systems of logic in use are
Through perception, inference, the Shastras,
Analogy, presumption and negation.
(27.78-85. Trans. Prema Nandakumar)

What is to be noted is that Bṛhaspati is presented here as a human being, very much like the Buddha, Kapila, Kaṇāda, and others. Bṛhaspati is just a founder of a philosophical system, based on logic. There is no motive of deluding anybody, whether the demons or the sons of Raji. Lokāyata is a positive system of philosophy, very much like Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and others.[10]

We come across the name Bārhaspatya as a synonym for the Cārvāka/ Lokāyata and Nāstika at least from the eighth century CE. The Buddhists and the Jains too used this name to designate the materialists along with the other name, Nāstika. This term meant only the materialists to them, whereas it included *them* in the vocabulary of the brahmanical philosophers and, more importantly, law-makers. However, as we have seen, Bṛhaspati does not play his role as the deluder of the demons or of other human enemies of the gods in all the Purāṇic accounts.

There is little room for doubt that materialism in its different manifestations is not *invariably* connected with Bṛhaspati. In the Buddhist tradition, for example, Ajita and Pāyāsi were considered competent enough to formulate their materialist ontology without being duped by any divine or semi-divine being. It is the same with the Jain tradition in which king Paesi appears as an independent agent preaching materialist ontology, denying any life beyond this life. It is only in the brahmanical tradition that materialism is projected right from the outset (even before the basics of the doctrine is stated) as a false doctrine manufactured by Bṛhaspati in order to delude the demons or the sons of Raji. The purpose was to ensure the safety of the gods and enable them to have their due share of the sacrifices.

R.C. Hazra noted long back:

In order to warn the people against violating the rules of the Varṇāśrama dharma numerous stories have been fabricated to show the result of violation. ([1940] 1987, 235)

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10 The omission of Jainism or the doctrine of pluralism (*anekāntavāda*) and probabilism (*syādvāda*) in the list given in the *Maṇimēkalai* is significant but not inexplicable. This is the first instance of *ṣaṭ-tarkī*. Another enumeration is later found in the work of Jayantabhaṭṭa (NM, ch. 1, 9: Sāṃkhya, Ārhata, Buddhist, Cārvāka, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika). The second, third and fourth are *nāstika* systems; others, *āstika*. Rājaśekhara (ch. 2, 191) follows another schema, which too includes Jainism.

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He refers to the story of Raji, Vena and the demons mentioned above.

> Besides these and similar other stories, there are numerous chapters on the description of the ages (*yuga*), on hells and on the results of actions. (235)

The intention of the redactors of the Purāṇas is crystal clear: to create fear in the minds of listeners and dissuade them from following *any of the current non-Vedic religious doctrines*.

The source of all this, of course, is MaiUp 7.8. After enumerating the story of Bṛhaspati in disguise (quoted above), it quotes almost verbatim from the KaṭhaUp and the ĪśāUp. The reference to *Kaṭha* 2.5 is obvious. But what is not so obvious is the leap from the story of Bṛhaspati to the discourse on *vidyā* and *avidyā*. However, this account was amplified in the Purāṇas. The purpose was evidently to highlight the falsity of the non-Vedic doctrines (Buddhism and Jainism in particular). Yet Bṛhaspati's name got associated with Lokāyata (see *Maṇimēkalai* 27.78-80) and later the Cārvāka (see TSP vol. 2, 520, *bārhaspatyādayaḥ*), the philosophical system all human in origin, untouched by any demi-god or any preternatural entity.

Whatever be the original function of the preceptor of the gods, we know of him in relation to only one activity, namely, deluding the unsuspecting demons either in the guise of Śukra (hinting at an old rivalry between the two preceptors) or working in the background without assuming any disguise (as in the *Khila Harivaṃśa* account, critical edition, Harivaṃśa-parvan ch. 21; vulgate ch. 28).

In the Purāṇas, however, the Jains in particular turn out to be the chief target of attack. In the later part of VPu 3.18 the unclad one (*nagna*) assumes a more generic character: whoever is bereft of the cloak (*saṃvaraṇa*) of the Veda, not the Jains alone, is branded as a *nagna*. There is another story (most probably an interpolation), which reveals the gruesome effects of not abiding by the rules of Dharmaśāstra. The process of maligning all heterodox communities must have started much earlier than the fifth century, when the VPu was redacted. As Hazra observes: 'The hatred towards the Nagnas in Vāyu 78.24, 79.25, the Jains and the Buddhists, as also the occurrence of the Nirgrantha and Pāṣaṇḍa in chaps.78-79 suggests the date: the end of second century A.D.' (1940/1987, 16). Bṛhaspati then was merely incidental in the plan of condemning the non-believers in the sanctity of the Veda and the Dharmaśāstras. In other words, religion rather than philosophy was at issue.

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16 Evidence from the *Maṇimēkalai*

The association of Bṛhaspati with Lokāyata is first found in the *Maṇimēkalai* (see above). It further speaks of another materialist doctrine called *bhūtavāda*. A *bhūtavādin* expounds his system to Princess Maṇimēkalai and tells her in which respect it differs from Lokāyata (27.265-276). In later times, when *bhūtavāda* is no longer recognised as a different school of materialism (although in the Tamil epic, Lokāyata and *bhutavāda* are two *distinct* schools with some area of difference), Bṛhaspati lost the stature of an *acārya*: he became just a name as attested by the PC. Like Kaṇāda or Gautama, he is made to appear as quite a human figure, not as a semi-divine teacher of a system of philosophy which is to be taken as it is, not as an instrument of delusion. Bṛhaspati of this play carries no association with the Purāṇic Bṛhaspati, the fabricator of a system meant to delude the demons and the sons of Raji. Apparently Kṛṣṇamiśra did not care to remember the VPu story in which Māyāmoha preached Jainism and Buddhism, two anti-vedic *religious* systems, not any *philosophical* one. Śrīharṣa preferred to identify the materialist with *kali*, the personification of an eon (*yuga*) degenerating from the *satya* or *kṛta* (the Golden Age). Everything was proper and righteous in the first *yuga*: things started degenerating in the *tretā* and the *dvāpara* till it reached its nadir in the *kali*. In the NC too, materialism is projected basically as an anti-religious system and only partially as a philosophical one. The putative materialist harangues against five items: 1. The sacrificial rites (*yajña*) and fire sacrifice (*agnihotra*), 2. Purity of caste (*jātiśuddhi*), 3. Gender discrimination, 4. The concept of heaven and hell, and 5. Worship of gods (*devapūjana*). All these are related to the brahmanical religion, both Vedic and Purāṇic.

The attitude towards the *āstika* philosophical systems too is most evident in Kali's denunciation of Mīmāṃsā (NC 17.61) and more particularly of Nyāya (Gautama, aka Gotama, the founder of this system, is called 'the most bovine', *go-tama*, NC 17.75). In the Jain and Buddhist philosophical works, as also in their religious texts, the philosophical aspects (epistemology, ontology, etc.) of materialism are treated more seriously, without any reference to its non- or anti-vedic character.

17 Intelligence of Bṛhaspati: Evidence from the *Pañcatantra*

The intelligence of Bṛhaspati (and Śukra, also called Uśanas) is prover-bial. We often come across one character or the other in the Mbh being compared with either of the two: *yathā buddhiṃ bṛhaspatiḥ, yathovāca purā śukraṃ mahābuddhir bṛhaspatiḥ, bṛhaspatisamabuddhyā,* all in refer-ence to Bhīṣma. Vidura is said to have excelled both Bṛhaspati and Śukra in intelligence.[11]

In the *Pañcatantra* we read:

Modesty (or shame), affection, clearness of voice, discretion, goodness of heart (or mental ease), vitality, passion, relationship with one's kins-men, absence of pain, sports, discharge of religious duties, knowledge of the *śāstra*s (or action in conformity with their precepts), *a talent like that of Suraguru (Bṛhaspati)*, purity and the thought about (desire for) conforming to the rules of conduct – all these proceed in the case of men when the pot in the form of the belly is full of grain (*i.e.*, when men are in affluent circumstances). (Book 5, tale 12, verse 91, 498)

lajjā snehaḥ svaraviśadatā buddhayaḥ saumanasyaṃ
prāṇonaṅgaḥ svajanamamatā duḥkhahānirvilāsāḥ |
dharmaḥ śāstraṃ suragurumatiḥ śaucamācāracintā
sasyaiḥ pūrṇe jaṭharapiṭhare prāṇināṃ saṃbhavant i|| (253)

Here there is no question of non-conformism: the intelligent man is both *śāstra*-abiding and prosperous. It may be noted in this connection that the boasting of Jayarāśibhaṭṭa that he has out-Bṛhaspati-ed Bṛhaspati (1940, 125) alludes to this super-intelligent Bṛhaspati, not to the alleged founder of the materialist system.

E.W. Hopkins in a rare flash of humour says, "Bṛhaspati (the planet Ju-piter) is preceptor of the gods and gives them instruction orally, as well as composes a Śāstra for them and others [meaning presumably the demons], but otherwise he is remarkably inactive" (1972, 181).[12]

Whatever might have been the original function of the preceptor of the gods, we know of him in relation to only one activity, namely, deluding the unsuspecting demons either in the guise of Śukra or working in the back-ground without assuming any disguise (as in the *Khila Harivaṃśa* account).

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11   Further examples would be found in Sörensen, *s.v.* 'Bṛhaspati' and 'Çukra'. There is a Bangla proverb, *buddhi-te bṛhaspati*, meaning a veritable Bṛhaspati in intelligence, applied to any highly intelligent person (also employed satirically).

12   However, Kāvya (Śukra) is credited with preparing an abridged version of an encyclo-pedia of *Nīti, Dharma*, etc. originally composed by Brahman and successively abridged by Śiva, Indra and Bṛhaspati. Mbh, crit. ed. 12.85-91.

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18 The Upshot (2)

The upshot of the preceding account is that the birth of materialism *cannot be ascribed to Bṛhaspati*. There is no uniformity in the legends given in the Purāṇas. Moreover, the story of Vena has no Bṛhaspati to delude him. He became a Lokāyatika all by himself (as in the VDMPu account but not in any other source). The sons of Raji are sometimes said to be deluded by Indra via Bṛhaspati (*VāyuPu*) but in other accounts (for example, the MatPu) they, like Vena, turned anti-vedic all by themselves. In any case, right from the *Maṇimēkalai* we find Bṛhaspati as totally anthropomorphic as much as Kapila, Kaṇāda or Jaimini. No halo of divinity, or even semi-divinity, is found around his head. The basic theme – delusion of the demons and the sons of Raji – is also conspicuously absent in the PC and the NC. Materialism is as much a system of philosophy as the other five *tarka*s. Materialism may not be a right kind of philosophy, acceptable to religious orthodoxy, but there is no question of rejecting Lokāyata as a philosophy that is not to be taken seriously. Everyone speaking of *ṣaṭ-tarkī* mentions materialism as a matter of fact; even though, like the Buddhist and the Jain systems of philosophy, it is admitted to be outside the Vedic periphery.

19 Inappropriate Attribution

Anantalal Thakur (2015, 188) has acutely observed that no Buddhist, Jain or Carvaka is known to have admitted himself to be a *nāstika*: others called them so. Similarly there are reasons to believe that the first and the last of the four names given to the materialists in India, viz., Bārhaspatya, Cārvāka, Lokāyata and Nāstika (Hemacandra AC 3.525-527 and many other works; for details see R. Bhattacharya 2013a, 3-8) were actually employed by the opponents of materialism. The alleged Cārvāka aphorism, "The aphorisms of Bṛhaspati are everywhere merely for the sake of objections", *sarvatra paryanuyogoparāṇyeva sūtrāṇi bṛhaspateḥ,* as also its variants (see R. Bhattacharya 2011, 96-7, 106-7) is a case in point. Anantavīrya calls this sentence a *sūkta*, "a good or friendly speech, wise remark", *not* an aphorism, *sūtra* (277). The word *sūtra* is sometimes found used rather loosely. For instance, Karṇakagomin calls the first line of a verse, *viśeṣe anugamābhavāt sāmānye siddhasādhanam* (26)*, a sūtra,* which most certainly it is not (for the various readings of the verse, see R. Bhattacharya 2011, 86 Śl. 16).

The name Bārhaspatya as applied to materialism, whether pre-Cārvāka or Cārvāka, is, however, inappropriate in all respects. In fact it is a misnomer insofar as none of the sources, whether belonging to *itihāsa* or *purāṇa*, refer to Bṛhaspati as the progenitor of materialism. Wherever he is found writing a *śāstra,* it is related to polity, or any work admittedly

anti-Vedic in nature, it is never represented as a philosophical base text. In the PPu he preaches Jainism, Buddhism and other heretical doctrines. But, as has been shown above, the nature of the objections to the Vedic sacrificial rites is at bottom *religious*, never *philosophical*. In spite of the mention of *anekāntavāda* and *vijñānavāda*, all that the converted demons speak of is non-injury and celibacy, not materialism or any philosophical doctrine at all. There is of course a reference to other *pāṣaṇḍa* views (as in the Vpu 3.18.21), but there is nothing to show that any of the tenets preached by Māyāmoha refers to materialism as such. As to Jainism and Buddhism, at least two names, *anekāntavāda* (pluralism) and *vijñānavāda* (doctrine of consciousness) are mentionedin the Vpu (3.18.10,16). Some fanciful etymology of the names too is given. However, what the Deceiver (or Deluder) actually does is to speak of non-injury, celibacy and teetotalism, all of which are tenets connected with rules of religion, not philosophy. The rest of the Purāṇic sources too do not bother about philosophy: there opposition is entirely religious.

There are also some other grounds for challenging the attribution of materialism to Bṛhaspati. First, the purpose behind bringing in Bṛhaspati or such allegorical characters as Māyāmoha or Māyāpuruṣa is explicitly directed to portray the non-vedic systems as false, designed to delude the enemies of the gods, be they mythical creatures like the demons or humans like the sons of Raji. Second, the identity of the followers of Bṛhaspati is never divulged. Guṇaratna in his zeal to associate all philosophical systems with a corresponding religious cult in one-to-one correspondence, makes the Cārvākas and the *cārvākaīkadeśiya*s (a section of the Cārvākas) identical with the Kāpālikas, the worshippers of Śakti, who are and had always been very much theistic, with some practices of their own (TRD, 300) that may appear reprehensible to some. This supposed identification is more than unwarranted; it is a calumny pure and simple. D.R. Shastri (1982) made a thorough study of the alleged relationship between the Cārvākas and the Kāpālikas. He came to the conclusion that there is no basis for equating the two (Shastri 1982, 174-85) as Guṇaratna does.[13] S.N. Dasgupta too made a study of the Kāpālikas and came to the conclusion that there was no philosophical basis of this sect: "[W]e have no proof that the Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas had any distinct philosophical views which would be treated separately" (1975, 5: 3). He further says, "[W]e know practically nothing of any importance about the Kāpālikas and the

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13   D.R. Shastri (1982), however, has been too lenient towards Guṇaratna. He has tried to trace the course of the steady degeneration of the Cārvākas, referring to the so-called 'cunning (*dhūrta*) Cārvākas' mentioned by Jayantabhaṭṭa (NM 1:100) and related it to Guṇaratna's description of the Kāpālika orgy. All that Guṇaratna says lacks evidence: everything appears to be concocted. What made the Jain savant go for such an equation between the Cārvākas and the Kāpālikas is to be wondered at.

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Kālāmukhas" (5). He reiterates this opinion again on another occasion (50). Therefore Guṇaratna's facile identification of the Cārvakās and the Kāpālikas is not at all acceptable (for a detailed study of the Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas, see Lorenzen 1991).

Unfortunately we cannot be certain who first used the name Bārhaspatya to designate the materialist system, whether pre-Cārvāka or Cārvāka, and also its adherents. Kamalaśīla (eighth century) mentions Cārvāka (both in singular and plural), Lokāyata and Lokāyatika, and Nāstika (TSP, 520, 633, 637, 639, 657, 663, 665, 939 and 945) as well as Bārhaspatya (520). Haribhadra (eighth century) speaks of Lokāyata (*ṢḌSam* verses 79c and 80a, p. 299.17 and p. 301.2) and Cārvāka (verse 85d, p. 307.18) but not of the other two. From his reference to *āstikavādin* (verse 78d, p. 299.8), however, it may be presumed that he was conversant with its opposite, *nāstikavādin*. In the ninth century Bārhaspatya is used both as an adjective and as a countable noun by Jayanta (*bārhaspatyām* (singular) in NM I:43.11 and *bārhaspatyānām* (plural) I:275.20) and by Śīlāṅka (*Ācāra.*, 189, and *Sūtra.*, 9-10). Somadeva Sūri (tenth century) too mentions the *bārhaspatya*s (*Yaśastilaka*, 269) as Anantavīrya attributes the authorship of the base text of the materialists to Bṛhaspati (*bṛhaspateḥ sūtrāṇi*, the aphorisms of Bṛhaspati, 177) as does Abhayadeva (eleventh century) and others (for details see R. Bhattacharya 2011, 106-7 notes). Hemacandra (twelfth century) in his lexicon, *AC*, records all four names as synonymous (3.526-27) as does Sāyaṇa-mādhava (SDS, 2, lines 13-15,22).

No philosophical work that has so far come down to us offers any explanation of the name Bārhaspatya. Of course, nobody knows for certain why Nyāya is called Nyāya; once it stood for Mīmāṃsā also (cf. Jaimini's *Nyāyamālāvistara*). There is no way of ascertaining whether Yoga originally meant the philosophical system propounded by Patañjali or a system of logic that is now called Nyāya. Phanibhushana Tarkavagisha says that Nyāya also was once called Lokāyata (1981-85, I: xv). So it is too much to expect that some kind soul would inform us why Bārhaspatya was chosen as another name for the materialist system as well as its adherents, and how and from when it got attached to materialism. All we know is that right from the eighth century CE, when the name Cārvāka is found in philosophical literature, it already has no fewer than three other synonyms. Some of them might have already been in use (such as, Lokāyata, Bhūtavāda and Cārvāka), but some others (such as, Dehātmavāda and Bhūtacaitanyavāda), or more fanciful ones (such as Mahā-bhūtodbhava-caitanya-vādi-mata or Bhūtamātratattvāda), not to speak of such derisive nicknames as Pañcagupta and Kuṇḍakīṭa.[14] All of these, beginning with

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[14] For the fanciful names see Franco 1997, 243, n3. For the derisive ones see R. Bhattacharya 2011a *passim*.

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ṇahiyavādī, natthiyavāī, nāhiyavādī (*Vasudevahiṃdi*, 169, 275, 329) were coined by the immaterialist critics.

I would, however, like to point out that the association of Bṛhaspati to the founder or *ācārya* of materialism (as *Maṇimēkalai* says) is *not* explicated anywhere in the whole corpus of Sanskrit literature available to us. He may at best be called the propagator of the *nāstika* view in the broad sense of the term (which would include the Buddhist, the Jain and many other religious systems and cults, belonging to both the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition), but not in the narrow sense of the term which would signify materialism alone. Howsoever, it is worth noting that Indian writers believed in two Bṛhaspatis: one set (for instance, the Purāṇa redactors, Jayarāśi, and Śrīharṣa, author of the of the KhKhKh) viewed Bṛhaspati as a god, and the other set (for instance, Kṛṣṇamiśra and Śrīharṣa, author of the NC) considered him to be purely human, associated with Kali, who represents the force of evil. The materialists in India never called themselves Bārhaspatyas, for by calling themselves so, they would admit their affiliation either to the chaplain of the gods or to Kali. Both of them would be inadmissible to the atheistic thinkers. In any case, it is high time to get rid of the false notion that the Bṛhaspati in Indian philosophical literature, whether divine or human, has anything to do specifically with materialism.

Appendix 1

A tabular representation of the presence/absence of Bṛhaspati in deluding the demons/the *Rājeyas* is given below, followed by a summary of the observations made in this essay.

Purāṇa	Deluder	Deluded	Means
Agni 16.1-13	The Buddha disguised as Māyāmoha	Demons	Buddhism
Devībhāgavata 4.13-15	Bṛhaspati Disguised as Śukra	Demons	Jainism (4.13.54-56)
Garuḍa 1.32	The Buddha	Demons	Not given (Buddhism?)
Harivaṃśa. Harivāṃśa-Parvan. Ch. 21	Bṛhaspati	Rājeyas	Sacrifice [and by composing an Arthaśāstra or a Dharmaśāstra]
Liṅga Pūrvabhāga 71.85-94	Nārāyaṇa disguised as Māyin and Muni (The Buddha)	Demons	Anti-Vedic Śāstra having 16,00,000 books.
Matsya 24.44-48	Bṛhaspati	Rājeyas	Sacrifice and *jinadharma* (24.47).

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Purāṇa	Deluder	Deluded	Means
Matsya 47.183-206	Bṛhaspati disguised as Śukra	Demons	Not mentioned.
Padma Sṛṣṭi. 13.366-371	Māyāmaya Puruṣa	Demons	Buddhism, Jainism and other *pāṣaṇḍa* doctrines (cf. *Viṣṇu* 3.18)
Śiva Yuddhankhaṇḍa Ch. 4.1-2	Māyāmaya Puruṣa	Demons	Jainism
Vāyu 92.87-99	Bṛhaspati	Rājeyas	Sacrifice
Viṣṇu 3.18	Māyāmoha created by Hari (Viṣṇu)	Demons	Buddhism, Jainism and other *pāṣaṇḍa* doctrines (3.18.1-21)

It is not clear, at least to me, what van Buitenen says apropos MaiUp:

> Section 7.9 brings Bṛhaspati who has the (late) reputation of being a false teacher, on account of the materialist *smṛti* ascribed to Bṛhaspati. Here he invents the false knowledge of the unorthodox. 7.10 is a more enlarged-upon doublet of 7.9, but here the false knowledge is authored by Brahmā. (1962, 88-9)

What could be a 'materialist *smṛti*'? Is it not a contradiction in terms?

Bṛhaspati is found in some of the Purāṇas working as a deluder either of the demons or of the sons of Raji, who had threatened the power and position of Indra. He does not produce, so far as my knowledge goes, anywhere in the Itihāsas and the Purāṇas, a work of *smṛti*. It is only in an additional passage in the HV that Bṛhaspati is said to have composed a Book of Negative Arthaśāstra and/or Dharmaśāstra. So far as the so-called *Bārhaspatya Dharmaśāstra* is concerned, enough fragments are available to reveal the basically orthodox character of the work. The author's respect for Manu and the thoroughly traditional views expressed in most of the cases are only too apparent (see R. Bhattacharya 2011, 25-6). As to the *Bṛhaspati-nīti* mentioned in the Mbh, Āraṇyaka Parvan, 33.56-57 (crit. ed.), Jacobi's view is decisive: "The *Nīti*-teachings of Brihaspati which Draupadī expounds in *Mahābhārata* III.32 [vulgate], are at any rate as orthodox as one can wish!" (1970, 737; 1918, 104). So the very idea of 'materialist *smṛti*' is downright absurd.

Admittedly the Purāṇic stories lack coherence and consistency. When the texts were composed by different persons living in different parts of India, no unified pattern is to be expected. Yet it is clear on the surface that the story of Indra and the Rājeyas was but a parallel to that of the gods and the demons. The presence of Bṛhaspati in some of the stories and his absence in some others are equally intriguing. In any case he is not indis-

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pensable to the restoration of the authority of Indra. Even when Bṛhaspati takes an active part in deluding the demons/Rājeyas, he is found having recourse to some sacrifice (for example, Paiṣṭika-yāga), not producing a base text of any materialist philosophy. Hence, the association of Bṛhaspati with materialism is never established in the Itihāsas and the Purāṇas.

Is this Bṛhaspati, who is 'credited' with conceiving materialist philosophy, his sole purpose being with the sole purpose of deluding the enemies of the gods and make them stray from the Vedic path, a demi-god or a human being? The question arises inevitably, for the putative authors of the *Bārhaspatya Dharmaśāstra* (*Bṛhaspati-smṛti*) and the *Bārhaspatya Arthaśāstra* mentioned by Kauṭilya, are never treated as divine but thoroughly human by nature and origin. Even in the PPu Śiva mentions Dhīṣaṇa along with Kaṇāda, Gautama, Kapila as the authors of non-Vedic śāstras (PPu *Uttara-khaṇḍa* Vangavasi ed. ch. 236.2-7ab = Anandashrama ed., ch. 263.66-70). One verse refers to Viṣṇu disguised as the Buddha in order to destroy the demons (*daityānāṃ nāśanārthāya viṣṇunā buddharūpīnā,* Vangavasi ed. 236.6ab = Anandashrama ed. 263-69cd). Hazra thinks that the whole chapter is an interpolation "by some persons belonging to the Śrī or Mādhva sect" (1987, 126).

Appendix 2

The Story of Vena is found in the following works (excepting the Mbh):

HV Harivaṃśa Parvan, ch. 5
Brahmāṇḍa, ch. 68
Bhāgavata, ´part 4, chs. 14-15
Vāyu, ch. 62
Śiva, ch. 52.16-18
Viṣṇu-dharmottara, I.108
Padma Bhūmikhaṇḍa, chs. 36-9
Skanda ?

The earliest source of the Vena legend is a single verse in the Mbh (crit. ed. 59.99). Vena is said to have been under the sway of wrath and malice and performed unmeritorious acts (*adharma*) on his ubjects. The sages killed him with a *kuśa* grass enpowered by a spell (*mantrapūta*). All Purāṇas follow this account. Only one verse in the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* I.108 mentions Lokāyatika (a later addition?). In any case, all sources mention Vena's indulgence in anti-vedic acts, but all by himself, with none to inspire or provoke or assist him. Only in the PPu Bhūmikhaṇḍa, Viṣṇu deludes Vena by preaching Jainism.

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Osservazioni sull'esposizione della creazione del corpo fatto di mente (*manomaya-kāya*) all'interno del *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*

Bryan De Notariis
(Università degli Studi di Torino, Italia)

Abstract   This article will analyse in detail some features of a passage which describes the creation of a mind-made body (*manomaya-kāya*) within the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*. The study starts from the translation of the term '*manomaya*', which could have more than one grammatical interpretation. The point at issue is that both the commentarial tradition and a scholar who discussed this problem (Sue Hamilton) understand the compound with the first term (*mano/manas*) inflected in the instrumental case. I will argue that an interpretation, according to the genitive case, cannot be completely disregarded. Subsequently, the translation of a couple of terms (*muñja* and *isīkā*) will be discussed, having a look to modern translation, to the Buddhist world view, and to the use of these terms within some Vedic texts. Finally, an odd wording of a passage will be analysed, and the comparison with the use of the same passage in a later exegetic text will highlight the conservative feature of the tradition of Pāli texts.

Sommario   1 Introduzione. – 2 Descrizione della creazione del *manomaya-kāya*. – 3 Interpretazione del composto '*manomaya*'. – 4 Metafora per l'estrazione del corpo fatto di mente. – 4.1 Traduzioni problematiche. – 4.2 Inversione ablativo e accusativo. – 5 Conclusioni.

Keywords   Buddhism. Sāmaññaphala-sutta. Manomaya-kāya.

1   Introduzione

Il presente scritto è il frutto di una ricerca più ampia che sto conducendo sul concetto di '*manomaya*' all'interno dei testi buddhisti in lingua pāli. L'approccio diretto alle fonti primarie ha messo in luce alcune difficoltà ermeneutiche, che, se risolte all'interno di altri lavori, avrebbero comportato digressioni eccessivamente lunghe. Pertanto, questo contributo è nato dall'esigenza di discutere alcuni dettagli in maniera più estesa. I risultati non sono da considerarsi ancora come definitivi, poiché necessiterebbero, sicuramente, di una disamina più ampia. Tuttavia, penso possano essere un buon punto di partenza e spunto per futuri approfondimenti.

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Per cominciare, si può affermare che il termine *manomaya-kāya*,[1] traducibile come 'corpo fatto di mente' o 'corpo prodotto attraverso la mente', indica un concetto presente all'interno del canone pāli che si presenta attraverso differenti sfaccettature. Iniziando a sciogliere il composto in due parti, *manomaya* e *kāya*, ci si imbatte immediatamente in un primo problema. Il termine *kāya* non presenta grosse difficoltà, poiché può essere tradotto tranquillamente come 'corpo'.[2] Ben diversa è la situazione per *manomaya*, che, come afferma Hamilton, è uno dei termini più oscuri

1   Per semplicità utilizzerò spesso il composto '*manomaya-kāya*' che appare, prevalentemente, in testi post-canonici (si veda, per esempio, AA, I, 209), qualora non stia citando direttamente uno specifico passo testuale. La tendenza all'interno dei testi canonici, al contrario, è quella di non accorpare i termini '*manomaya*' e '*kāya*' in un singolo composto (es: *mano-mayaṃ kāyaṃ*; D, I, 77).

2   Il termine *kāya*, sostiene Williams (1997, 206-7), è forse una delle parole più comuni per designare il 'corpo' in pāli e sanscrito. Benché la resa traduttiva possa sembrare relativamente semplice, vi è da sottolineare che la scelta di tale termine per designare il corpo potrebbe avere implicazioni tutt'altro che scontate in questo contesto. Tuttavia, una trattazione esaustiva relativa ai differenti vocaboli utilizzati nei testi pāli per indicare il 'corpo' andrebbe oltre i limiti del presente lavoro. Basti qui solo sottolineare come il termine *kāya* indichi un 'accumulo di elementi', poiché deriva da una radice √*ci-* che ha significati quali 'accumulare' e 'raggruppare'. Infatti, quando *kāya* designa il corpo fisico può indicare il corpo costituito dai quattro elementi (terra, acqua, fuoco, vento), ma può essere anche il corpo oggetto di contemplazione che risulta costituito da elementi ripugnanti (capelli, denti, unghie ecc.). Oltre a designare il corpo fisico il suo uso è simile a quello della parola latina *corpus*, come quando indica un raggruppamento di qualcosa (per le varie definizioni di *kāya* si veda PED, 185-7). Di orientamento completamente diverso è *sarīra* (sanscrito: *śarīra*), un altro termine ampiamente diffuso per designare il corpo. Infatti, questo vocabolo, oltre al corpo fisico, indica anche il cadavere e le reliquie (cf. PED, 629). L'accezione indicante il corpo morto è presente anche in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 1.2.6: «Quando le funzioni vitali se ne sono andate, il cadavere (*śarīra*) inizia a gonfiarsi» (*tat prāṇeṣūtkrānteṣu śarīraṃ śvayitum adhriyata*; Olivelle 1998, 38). La differenza tra *kāya* e *sarīra* potrebbe essere paragonata alla differenza che Olivelle ravvisa tra corpo vivente e corpo morto, tra *ātman* e *śarīra*, in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 1.2.7: «Then he had this desire: 'I wish that this corpse of mine would become fit to be sacrificed so I could get myself a living body (*ātman*)!'» (1998, 39). Infatti, Olivelle, commentando *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 3.2.13, afferma: «a distinction is made here between *śarīra* ('physical body' or 'corpse') and *ātman*. The exact meaning of the latter is unclear, but it must be related to the physical elements and the organic powers of the human being, since all the other items fall within those categories. The *ātman* here may thus refer to the vital aspects of the body, as opposed to the corporeal. A similar distinction between a corpse and a living body is made at B[ṛhadāraṇyaka]U[paniṣad] 1.2.7.» (1998, 507, parentesi quadre aggiunte dall'Autore).

trovati all'interno del canone pāli, poiché non solo può avere differenti interpretazioni grammaticali, ma è anche rintracciabile in differenti contesti (cf. 1996, 138).[3] Il commentatore Buddhaghosa sembrerebbe suggerire, in circostanze diverse tra loro, un'interpretazione secondo il caso strumentale del termine *manas*: *manomayo ti jhānamanena nibbatto* (DA, I, 120), *manomayan ti manena nibbattitaṃ* (DA, I, 222), anche se un'interpretazione secondo il caso genitivo sarebbe ben supportata da un uso non raro del termine '-*maya*' in fine di composto con il significato di 'fatto di', 'che consiste di' (cf. PED, 469). Infine, dato che in un composto il primo membro non è mai declinato, non si dovrebbe neanche escludere a priori la declinazione locativa: 'prodotto nella mente'. A complicare la situazione vi è il fatto che questo corpo, descritto come *manomaya*, appaia in differenti circostanze all'interno dei testi, rendendo difficile stabilire quale sia la sua reale funzione all'interno della dottrina buddhista. Sono stati rintracciati da Radich nove contesti all'interno del materiale in lingua pāli in cui viene chiamato in causa il concetto di *manomaya-kāya*. Questi nove contesti sono stati raggruppati in tre categorie: (I) pratiche e ottenimenti buddhisti, (II) cosmologia e (III) visione di altre scuole (cf. 2007, 228).[4] All'interno della raccolta di testi buddhisti denominata *Dīgha-nikāya* (La raccolta dei [discorsi] lunghi), sono presenti esempi per ognuna di queste categorie. Il *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* (Il discorso sui frutti della vita ascetica), *sutta* numero due del *Dīgha-nikāya*, sembra essere il *locus classicus* di una pericope che Radich ha definito la «pericope della pelle di serpente».[5] Questa pericope

3   L'analisi di Hamilton del composto *manomaya* si focalizza su quattro contesti: 1) il contesto in cui rappresenta una particolare ontologia, come nel primo e secondo verso del *Dhammapada*; 2) il contesto in cui il temine *manas* è volto a indicare il senso mentale, il così detto 'sesto senso' e non la mente in generale; 3) il contesto in cui funge da sinonimo metaforico per il livello cosmologico *rūpadhātu*; 4) il contesto in cui appare in relazione all'abilità di coloro che hanno sviluppato un certo livello meditativo di creare un corpo 'fatto di mente' (*manomaya*) (cf. Hamilton 1996, 139-40).

4   Nei nove contesti rintracciati da Radich il *manomaya-kāya* appare come: 1) il corpo mentale sviluppato a uno stadio avanzato del percorso verso la liberazione; 2) il destino nel *post-mortem* per coloro che ottengono un certo livello di realizzazione nel percorso buddhista; 3) il corpo con cui il Buddha visita il cielo di Brahmā; 4) il corpo utilizzato dal Buddha in un'occasione per andare da un discepolo con lo scopo di istruirlo; 5) una rinascita che sembra promessa anche a laici estremamente generosi; 6) la forma in cui alcune divinità sono incarnate in taluni cieli; 7) la forma in cui alcuni esseri erano incarnati nella parte iniziale di un *kalpa* (sanscrito; pāli: *kappa*); 8) un oggetto di un gruppo di oggetti di identificazione che possono essere erroneamente confusi col sé (*attan*); 9) una delle sette visioni nichiliste rifiutate dal Buddha nel *Brahmajāla-sutta* (cf. Radich 2007, 229). Vi è da aggiungere che il *manomaya-kāya* assume connotazioni differenti al di fuori dei testi in lingua pāli. Può, per esempio, essere il mezzo attraverso cui opera il processo di trasmigrazione, come si evince dal *Saṃyukta-āgama* in cinese (cf. Lee 2014, 70).

5   «'snake slough' pericope» (Radich 2007, 233). Di opinione leggermente differente è Mac-Queen, che identifica la sezione compresa tra l'apparizione del Buddha e la distruzione degli influssi impuri (*āsava*) – sezione che include questa pericope – come un'opera indipendente

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è l'unica che pare includere il *manomaya-kāya* come elemento importante (sebbene non definitivo) nel percorso di liberazione buddhista (cf. Radich 2007, 255). Pertanto, sembra doveroso approfondire il modo in cui viene esposto il *manomaya-kāya* all'interno di questo sermone, anche perché il *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* sembra essere un *sutta* particolarmente antico. Infatti, insieme al *Brahmajāla-sutta* (Il discorso della rete di Brahmā; D, 1), viene menzionato nella tradizione canonica del primo concilio.**⁶**

2   Descrizione della creazione del *manomaya-kāya*

Il *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* narra di quando il re Ajātasattu si recò dal Buddha con una domanda che aveva già posto invano a maestri di altre sei dottrine: «O signore, è forse possibile indicare un frutto della vita ascetica che sia visibile proprio in questo mondo?».**⁷** Il Buddha inizia con l'esporre i benefici ottenuti dalla vita ascetica, partendo dai più semplici ed immediati, come la libertà dagli obblighi mondani, fino al percorso che guida il praticante alla liberazione finale. Nel percorso verso la liberazione viene descritto l'iter meditativo del praticante che, una volta abbandonati i cinque ostacoli (*pañca-nīvaraṇa*),**⁸** ottiene, progressivamente, assorbimenti meditativi (*jhāna*) sempre più profondi, fino a ottenere il quarto livello di assorbimento (*catutthajjhāna*) che è «senza dolore e senza piacere, purificazione della

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(cf. 1988, 179). Lo studioso sostiene che siccome questo passo è citato in forma estesa solamente nel *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, «The reader of the *Dīgha*, therefore, may get the impression that this document 'belongs to' the *Sāmaññaphala* […] The *Sāmaññaphala* is the first sutra one encounters in the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* that includes the entire document, and it makes sense that it be given in full here and abbreviated in the following sutras» (1988, 179-80). A sostegno della sua ipotesi, MacQueen sottolinea che: «In the Chinese *Dīrgha* one finds the document in question in a number of sutras […] but here it is given in full only in the A-mo-chou ching (= Pali *Ambaṭṭha Sutta*). And, predictably, one finds that this is the first sutra encountered in this collection that contains it» (1988, 180). La definizione di *locus classicus*, attribuita al *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* in riferimento a questa pericope, sembrerebbe quindi non essere applicabile a tutte le tradizioni buddhiste. Ciononondimeno, non sembra esserci candidato migliore del *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* ad ambire al titolo di *locus classicus* all'interno del canone pāli.

6 Vin, II, 287, questo fatto è citato anche da Pande [1957] 1995, 81. Altre caratteristiche che suggerirebbero l'antichità del *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* sono esposte da Radich 2007, 1427. Anche MacQueen (1988, 111, nota 16) sostiene l'esistenza di questo testo all'interno del canone buddhista in una fase iniziale, antecedente al primo scisma.

7 *sakkā nu kho bhante evam evaṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sandiṭṭhikaṃ sāmañña-phalaṃ paññāpetun ti* (D, I, 51).

8 Per 'cinque ostacoli' si intendono: il desiderio sensuale (*kāmacchanda*), la malevolenza (*vyāpāda*), pigrizia e torpore (*thīna-middha*), agitazione mentale e preoccupazione (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) e, infine, il dubbio (*vicikicchā*) (cf. PED, 339).

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consapevolezza attraverso l'equanimità».**⁹** Ora il praticante ha ottenuto un particolare status mentale, che lo rende in grado di distinguere chiaramente il proprio corpo (*kāya*) dalla propria coscienza (*viññāṇa*):

> Così egli, quando ha ottenuto una mente (*citta*) purificata, ripulita, senza imperfezioni, libera da impurità, malleabile, adeguata a operare, stabilita, che ha ottenuto l'imperturbabilità, dirige e inclina la mente al fine di conoscere e vedere (*ñāṇa-dassana*). Egli così conosce: 'Questo è il mio corpo, dotato di forma, composto dai quattro grandi elementi, nato da madre e da padre, mantenuto da riso e giuncata, impermanente, soggetto a erosione, abrasione, rottura, distruzione, e questa è la mia coscienza che si appoggia a esso, che è legata a esso'.**¹⁰**

Ora che il praticante ha distinto il corpo dalla coscienza è in grado di vederlo chiaramente, dividendolo nei suoi costituenti di base ne vede l'origine e i mezzi attraverso cui esso è mantenuto. Infine, osserva come questo sia tutto sommato insoddisfacente, poiché impermanente e destinato a una progressiva distruzione.**¹¹** Ecco allora sorgere, forse a causa di un siffatto corpo, la possibilità di svilupparne un altro:

> Egli dirige e inclina la mente (*citta*) al fine di creare un corpo fatto di mente (*manomaya*). Egli, a partire da questo corpo, crea un altro corpo, dotato di forma, fatto di mente, dotato di tutte le membra, perfetto nelle sue facoltà.**¹²**

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9 *adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ upekhā-sati-pārisuddhiṃ* (D, I, 75). Il composto '*upekhā-sati-pārisuddhiṃ*' è passibile di differenti interpretazioni. Walshe traduce il composto come: «purified by equanimity and mindfulness» (1995, 103). La mia traduzione è in accordo con l'interpretazione fornita da un testo dell'*Abhidhamma*, il *Vibhaṅga*: *ayaṃ sati imāya upekhāya vivaṭā hoti parisuddhā pariyodātā, tena vuccati upekhāsatipārisuddhin ti* (Vibh, 261). Per questa interpretazione del composto devo ringraziare il Prof. Giuliano Giustarini, che mi ha gentilmente segnalato questa lettura alternativa.

10 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte ñāṇa-dassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so evaṃ pajānāti: ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo odana-kummāsupacayo anicc-ucchādana-parimaddana-bhedana-viddhaṃsana-dhammo, idañ ca pana me viññāṇaṃ ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddhaṃ ti* (D, I, 76).

11 Nel canone è affermato più volte che tutto ciò che si dimostra essere impermanente (*anicca*) è anche insoddisfacente (*dukkha*): «O monaci, che ne pensate? La forma materiale è permanente o impermanente? | Impermanente signore! | Ciò che è impermanente è insoddisfacente o soddisfacente? | Insoddisfacente signore!» (*Taṃ kim-maññatha bhikkhave: rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā ti. | Aniccaṃ bhante. | Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā ti. | Dukkhaṃ bhante*; M, I, 138). Per la traduzione del termine *dukkha* come 'insoddisfacente' cf. Gombrich 2012, 102 e Keown 2013, 51.

12 *mano-mayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṅga-paccaṅgiṃ ahīnindriyaṃ* (D, I, 77).

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La traduzione è già di per sé un atto interpretativo non privo di proble-
matiche. Pare quindi opportuno analizzare meglio la resa di *manomaya*
con 'fatto di mente'.

3 Interpretazione del composto '*manomaya*'

Dal testo non è chiaro se *manomaya* vada tradotto come 'fatto di mente',
'prodotto attraverso la mente' o 'prodotto nella mente'. Il commento di
Buddhaghosa glossa il composto attribuendo al termine *manas* un valore
strumentale.[13] Tra gli studiosi accademici soltanto Hamilton si è occupata
di discutere l'interpretazione grammaticale del composto. La ricercatrice
getta così le basi per la sua analisi:

> *Maya* can mean 'consisting of', 'made' or 'originating'. So, if taken as
> a genitive *tappurisa*, the compound can mean 'consisting of/made of
> the mind'; 'originating in the mind' if taken as a locative *tappurisa*; or
> 'made by the mind' if taken as an instrumental. In effect the locative
> and instrumental have the same meaning: that the mind is the cause of
> something else coming to be. The genitive meaning, on the other hand,
> indicates that the stuff of something is the mind, and its concern with
> *what* something is means that it is an ontological interpretation of the
> compound. (1996, 138-9)

Hamilton, pertanto, suddivide le interpretazioni in due gruppi: 1) la mente
che è causa di qualcosa, interpretazione che implica una lettura del ter-
mine *manas* secondo o il caso strumentale o quello locativo; 2) la mente
come materia di qualcosa, interpretazione ontologica che legge il termine
manas declinato al genitivo. Questa duplice suddivisione è stata di cardi-
nale importanza nella ricerca effettuata dalla studiosa, poiché emerge un
impegno costante a dimostrare che, da un lato, la mente è un agente ed è
causa di cose e che, dall'altro lato, tra stati o livelli di esistenza non esiste
discontinuità ontologica. Questo modo di procedere porta a un'interpre-
tazione secondo il caso strumentale (mente come agente) a discapito di
quello genitivo (mente come ontologia).[14] Benché trovi il lavoro di Hamilton
di notevole interesse, ritengo anche che uno sguardo ravvicinato ai testi
possa fornire una differente chiave di lettura.

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13 «*manomaya* significa 'creato attraverso la mente'» (*manomayan ti manena nibbattitaṃ*;
DA, I, 222).

14 Hamilton, commentando l'episodio della creazione del *manomaya-kāya* all'interno del
Sāmaññaphala-sutta, afferma che: «Its existence, therefore, is not *in* the mind or *of* the mind,
but it is a body created *by* the power of the mind» (1996, 157).

Una prima critica all'interpretazione strumentale del composto concerne il fatto che non ci sarebbe bisogno di specificare che la mente è lo strumento attraverso cui una nuova struttura corporea viene in essere. Infatti, all'inizio del passo in questione, viene affermato che «egli dirige e inclina la mente (*citta*) per creare un altro corpo». Pertanto, sarebbe già chiaro che questo nuovo complesso corporeo è stato prodotto attraverso lo strumento mentale. Confrontando questa costruzione con il passo precedente, in cui il praticante conosce chiaramente la distinzione tra il suo corpo fisico e la sua coscienza (*viññāṇa*), si può notare una certa analogia. Una volta che il praticante prende consapevolezza del proprio corpo, afferma: «Questo è il mio corpo, dotato di forma, composto dai quattro grandi elementi, nato da madre e da padre» (*ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo*; D, I, 76). Successivamente, allo stesso modo, quando crea un nuovo corpo mentale, viene detto che «crea un altro corpo, dotato di forma, fatto di mente» (*aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ*; D, I, 77). In entrambi i passi le due differenti strutture corporee iniziano a essere descritte con il termine *rūpin* che significa 'dotato di una forma'. Nel primo passo il testo continua dicendo che il corpo è 'formato dai quattro grandi elementi' (*cātum-mahā-bhūtiko*) e che è 'nato da madre e da padre' (*mātā-pettika-sambhavo*), mentre nel secondo passo il testo continua dicendo che questa seconda entità corporea è *manomaya*. In un altro contesto, Buddhaghosa glossa il composto '*cātum-mahā-bhūtiko*' affermando che: «*cātummahā-bhūtiko ti cātu-mahā-bhūta-mayo*» (DA, I, 120), usando il termine '-*maya*' in fine composto per sottolineare che è 'composto da'. Inizialmente si potrebbe ipotizzare che il testo affermi che il primo corpo sia dotato di forma e sia composto dai quattro grandi elementi (*rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko*, quindi da intendere come *rūpī *cātum-mahā-bhūta-mayo*), mentre il secondo sia dotato di forma e sia composto dalla mente (*rūpiṃ mano-mayaṃ*), traducendo quindi *manomaya* come 'fatto di mente'. Tuttavia, l'interpretazione di *manomaya* è ancora ben lontana dall'essere chiara, poiché il termine *manomaya* può essere contrapposto anche a *mātā-pettika-sambhavo* 'nato da madre e da padre'. Infatti, così come nel primo caso il corpo fisico ha origine dai genitori (*mātā-pettika-sambhavo*), così nel secondo caso il nuovo corpo non ha origini ordinarie, ma è, per così dire, autoprodotto grazie alla [propria] mente (*manomaya*). Potrebbe anche essere che il composto, in riferimento al corpo, veicoli contemporaneamente entrambi i significati e che quindi questo nuovo corpo sia prodotto attraverso la mente e sempre di mente sia composto.

Uno sguardo alle *upaniṣad* potrebbe essere di sostegno all'ipotesi che vedrebbe *manas* declinato al genitivo piuttosto che allo strumentale. Infatti, l'uso del composto *manomaya* all'interno dei testi upaniṣadici indicherebbe proprio una lettura del termine *manas* secondo il caso genitivo. Tale interpretazione è particolarmente evidente, per esempio, in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 4.4.5:

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Il sé (*ātman*) è, invero, il *brahman*, è fatto di coscienza, è fatto di mente, è fatto di soffio vitale, è fatto di visione, è fatto di udizione, è fatto di terra, è fatto d'acqua, è fatto di vento, è fatto di spazio vuoto, è fatto di lucentezza e oscurità, è fatto di desiderio e assenza di desiderio, è fatto di rabbia e assenza di rabbia, è fatto di giustizia e ingiustizia; consiste di tutto. Proprio questo è detto 'fatto di questo, fatto di quello'.[15]

Anche il dizionario di sanscrito redatto da Sir Monier Monier-Williams sembrerebbe indicare quest'unico modo di interpretare il composto.[16] Questo passo non avrebbe assolutamente senso se fosse tradotto interpretando i primi membri dei vari composti, formati con *-maya* al secondo membro, secondo il caso strumentale, poiché bisognerebbe ammettere che l'*ātman*/*brahman* è creato *da* qualcosa; con buona pace di Hamilton, che, in riferimento ad alcuni passi upaniṣadici, tentando di negare un'interpretazione secondo il caso genitivo, ha commentato: «it appears that there is no ontological discontinuity between levels of existence» (1996, 148).[17] La mancanza di discontinuità ontologica viene paragonata al ghiaccio, all'acqua e al vapore, i quali non sarebbero altro che tre diversi modi di esistere, per uno stesso elemento, all'interno di uno spettro di densità (cf. Hamilton 1996, 150). Tuttavia, nonostante vi sia continuità ontologica tra i vari stati di esistenza di uno stesso elemento, penso sia innegabile che si possa affermare, in via convenzionale, che una cosa è 'composta di acqua' e un'altra è 'composta di ghiaccio'. Si potrebbe dire che, benché in ultima analisi non vi sia una sostanziale differenza, la manifestazione apparente di questi stati di esistenza (ghiaccio, acqua, vapore) li presenta

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15 *sa vā ayam ātmā brahma vijñānamayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaś cakṣurmayaḥ śrotramayaḥ pṛthivīmaya āpomayo vāyumaya ākāśamayas tejomayo 'tejomayaḥ kāmamayo 'kāmamayaḥ krodhamayo 'krodhamayo dharmamayo 'dharmamayaḥ sarvamayaḥ | tad yad etad idaṃmayo 'domaya iti |* (Olivelle 1998, 120).

16 «consisting of spirit or mind, spiritual, mental» (SED, 785), indicando come riferimenti le *upaniṣad* e lo *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*.

17 Per Hamilton il negare una differenza ontologica significa anche negare un'interpretazione del composto secondo il caso genitivo. È anche degno di nota lo sforzo di tradurre i composti upaniṣadici che terminano con *-maya* in fine composto con dei calchi linguistici che lasciano indeterminata l'interpretazione. La studiosa traduce nel modo suddetto lo stesso passo upaniṣadico da me citato (es: conciousness-made, mind-made, breath-made, sight-made, hearing-made ecc.), anche se alla fine ammette: «made of all» (1996, 145). Tale pratica è in accordo con l'uso dei parlanti inglesi di tradurre *manomaya* come 'mind-made', traduzione ineccepibile dal punto di vista formale poiché è un calco pressoché perfetto del composto. Hamilton commenta il passo affermando che: «This passage clearly indicates an absence of ontological discontinuity between the different things of (or by) which one is made and implies that in identifying with Brahman one identifies with every thing» (1996, 145). Anche ammettendo che non vi sia discontinuità ontologica, l'interpretazione strumentale risulta veramente improbabile, tant'è che Hamilton prova flebilmente a insinuare l'interpretazione secondo il caso strumentale tra parentesi con quell''or by'.

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all'esperienza ordinaria come diversi. Così come, utilizzando metaforicamente categorie filosofiche tipiche della speculazione buddhista, si può affermare che non vi è differenza sul piano assoluto (*paramattha*), ma vi è differenza solo sul piano relativo (*vohāra*). Essendo il linguaggio uno strumento puramente convenzionale per descrivere la realtà apparente, va da sé che una sostanziale non discontinuità sul piano ontologico non inficia un'interpretazione secondo il caso genitivo, poiché, apparentemente, le sostanze in gioco sembrerebbero differenti.[18]

Ora, dopo aver esposto quella che potrebbe sembrare un''apologia del genitivo', vi è da dire che non può neanche essere ignorato il fatto che il termine *manas* del composto *manomaya* venga interpretato secondo il caso strumentale all'interno dei commentari in lingua pāli.[19] Infatti, le elucidazioni di parole volte a suggerire sinonimi per i termini più ostici e a fornire indicazioni sull'interpretazione grammaticale dei composti, erano tra i primi modi di commentare e, probabilmente, l'azione stessa di commentare fu un'esigenza già presente agli albori del buddhismo. Il *Pātimokkha*, per esempio, fu incluso all'interno del canone accompagnato da un'elucidazione dei termini parola per parola (*padabhājaniya*). Un altro esempio dell'importanza dei commenti nel buddhismo antico è il *Niddesa*, il commentario a due *vagga* e a un *sutta* del *Sutta-nipāta*, che è stato incluso all'interno del canone (cf. Norman 1997, 149-50). Pertanto, non è da escludere che l'interpretazione commentariale del composto sia antica, anche alla luce del fatto che è condivisa da più commentari pāli.[20] Inoltre, l'interpretazione secondo il caso strumentale sembrerebbe essere presente anche all'interno dell'*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* di Vasubandhu: «è definito '*manomaya*' dal fatto di essere prodotto dalla sola mente, a causa del fatto che non viene in essere per mezzo di qualcosa di esterno come, per esempio, il seme, il sangue ecc.» (*sa eva manonirjātatvāt manomaya uktaḥ | śukraśoṇitādikaṃ kiñcid bāhyam anupādāya bhāvāt*; Pradhan 1967, 153).

Lo scenario che si viene così a delineare rivela che, all'interno di quello che è il contesto più antico – ovvero quello upaniṣadico –, l'interpretazione del composto *manomaya* prevede *manas* declinato al ge-

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[18] Anche Harvey ha sostenuto una non discontinuità ontologica tra corpo e mente: «While *nāma* is centred on *citta* and *rūpa* is centred on the 'four great elements', there is no dualism of a mental 'substance' versus a physical 'substance': both *nāma* and *rūpa* each refer to clusters of changing, interacting process» (1993, 39). Tuttavia, ha anche affermato che lo sviluppo del *manomaya-kāya* esula dalla normale interazione tra corpo e mente: «non-normal patterns of interaction between mind and body are found in the cases of development of the 'mind-made' body [...] these non-normal cases are dependent on the power of meditation to bring about transformations in the normal pattern of *nāma-rūpa* interaction» (1993, 40).

[19] Si vedano, per esempio, DA, I, 110, 120, 222; MA, III, 263; AA, I, 209; PṭsA, II, 666.

[20] Viene sottolineato anche da Norman (1989, 51) come alcune interpretazioni dei commentari siano tanto antiche quanto quelle canoniche.

nitivo, mentre l'interpretazione fornita all'interno della ben più tarda letteratura commentariale buddhista è un'interpretazione secondo il caso strumentale. In verità, dal testo canonico – come è stato precedentemente dimostrato – è possibile desumere entrambe le declinazioni. L'unico elemento, all'interno della narrazione presente nel canone, che sembrerebbe far pendere il piatto della bilancia a favore di un'interpretazione secondo il caso genitivo, consiste nel fatto che il nuovo corpo mentale è creato dopo la presa di consapevolezza della caducità del corpo fisico. Pertanto, sembrerebbe essere stato creato in contrapposizione a quest'ultimo. A questo proposito, è sicuramente degno di nota il trattamento di un corpo definito '*manomaya*' all'interno di un'altra raccolta buddhista di testi presumibilmente antica: il *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (La raccolta dei [discorsi] connessi).

Il passo in questione (S, V, 282-4) narra di un episodio ambientato a Sāvatthī, che vede protagonista il discepolo Ānanda. La narrazione inizia con Ānanda che si avvicina al Buddha, come di consueto gli rende omaggio e si siede da un lato. Una volta sedutosi al suo fianco, gli chiede: «O Signore, riconosce forse il Beato di essersi recato al mondo di Brahmā attraverso il potere psichico, con un corpo fatto di mente?» (*abhijānāti nu kho bhante Bhagavā iddhiyā manomayena kāyena Brahma-lokam upasaṅkamitā*; S, V, 282). Il Beato risponde affermativamente, cosicché Ānanda lo incalza con un'altra domanda: «O Signore, ma allora il Beato riconosce di essersi recato al mondo di Brahmā con un corpo composto dai quattro grandi elementi, attraverso il potere psichico?» (*abhijānāti kho pana bhante Bhagavā iminā cātumahābhūtikena kāyena iddhiyā Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā*; S, V, 282). Il Buddha risponde nuovamente in modo affermativo, provocando una reazione di meravigliata sorpresa da parte di Ānanda.[21] La possibilità di librarsi fino al mondo di Brahmā è dovuta all'unificazione di corpo e mente. Viene affermato che il Buddha «concentra il corpo nella mente e la mente nel corpo»,[22] dopodiché dimora in questo stato di unificazione che comporta sensazioni corporee di piacevolezza e leggerezza fluttuante.[23] Questa pratica rende il corpo più leggero, più malleabile, più lavorabile, più luminescente, proprio come una sfera di ferro riscaldata per un giorno intero diventerebbe più leggera, più malleabile, più lavorabile, più luminescente.[24]

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21 *tayidam bhante Bhagavato acchariyaṃ ceva abbhutaṃ ca* (S, V, 283).

22 *kāyam pi citte samādahati cittam pi ca kāye samādahati* (S, V, 283).

23 *sukhasaññañca lahusaññañca kāye okkamitvā viharati* (S, V, 283).

24 *kāyo lahutaro ceva hoti mudutaro ca kammaniyataro ca pabhassarataro ca. Seyyathāpi Ānanda ayoguḷo divasaṃ santatto lahutaro ceva hoti mudutaro ca kammaniyataro ca pabhas-sarataro ca* (S, V, 283). È degno di nota un parallelismo con la descrizione della mente del praticante che ha superato il quarto stato di assorbimento meditativo (*catutthajjhāna*) all'in-

Come risultato «il corpo, senza difficoltà, dalla terra ascende al cielo».**25** La contrapposizione presente in questo passo concerne la materialità del corpo, quindi, verosimilmente, la materia di cui esso è formato. Al corpo mentale viene contrapposto un corpo materiale, composto dai quattro grandi elementi. Il corpo fisico, più solido e più grossolano, viene alleggerito dall'unione con la mente, che quindi si configura come dotata di una materialità più sottile, in grado di 'diluire' la pesantezza della fisicità.**26** In questa narrazione vi è chiaramente una contrapposizione tra diverse densità corporee. Il commento a questo passo è tratto dalla *Sāratthappakāsinī* (L'illustrazione del significato di ciò che è essenziale),**27** che glossa la sequenza '*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*' affermando che il termine '*cātumahābhūtika*' (composto dai quattro grandi elementi) è da intendersi come '*cātumahābhūta-maya*', utilizzando -*maya* in fine composto per indicare la composizione della materia di cui il corpo fisico è costituito. Il commento procede nella sua elucidazione sottolineando che la caratteristica di un siffatto corpo è la pesantezza (*bhārika*) e la gravosità (*garuka*), evidenziando così la caratteristica peculiare di quest'ultimo: la grossolanità.**28** Il commento, inoltre, evita di glossare il termine '*manomaya*', per il quale usualmente i commentari riportano l'interpretazione secondo il caso strumentale. Penso non sia casuale questa omissione poiché, di norma, la definizione commentariale di *manomaya* è uno scioglimento del composto che comporta l'attribuzione al primo membro (*mano/manas*) proprio del caso strumentale. Difatti, sarebbe stata difficilmente sostenibile tale interpretazione in questo contesto.

terno del *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*. Infatti, in questo testo, tale mente è descritta con svariati termini, tra i quali figurano anche lo stato di malleabilità (*mudu-bhūta*) e l'adeguatezza a operare o lavorare (*kammaniya*), (cf. D, I, 76). Il fatto che gli stessi termini compaiano anche nella metafora della sfera di ferro riscaldata richiama alla mente il concetto di 'ardore ascetico' (sanscrito: *tapas*). Così come il calore riscalda la sfera di metallo rendendola malleabile, allo stesso modo l'ardore ascetico conferisce duttilità alla mente.

25 *kāyo appakasireneva pathaviyā vehāsaṃ abbhuggacchati* (S, V, 283).

26 Questo passo ha portato Johansson a sostenere che: «The idea is probably that the mind (*citta*) is thin and light; by mixing it well with the body the combination will become less heavy» (1979, 38).

27 Il passo in questione è SA, III, 260-1. Una traduzione alternativa del titolo del commento è fornita da Lottermoser che traduce: «she who explains the essence of the goal» (1982, 7).

28 Il termine pāli che, usualmente, viene tradotto con 'grossolano' è *oḷārika* (sanscrito ibrido buddhista: *audārika*, a partire dal termine sanscrito *udāra*; cf. BHSD, 161). Spesso nei testi appare in connessione con ciò che è composto dai quattro grandi elementi. Viene nominato per esempio, all'interno del *Poṭṭhapāda-sutta*, un sé grossolano formato dai quattro grandi elementi: *oḷārikaṃ kho ahaṃ bhante attānaṃ paccemi rūpiṃ cātummahābhūtikaṃ kabaliṅkārāhāra-bhakkhan ti* (D, I, 186). Grossolano (*odārika<audārika*) è anche il corpo fisico, composto dai quattro grandi elementi, presente all'interno del *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* (la versione in sanscrito del *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*) pervenutoci all'interno del *Saṅghabhedavastu* dei Mūlasarvāstivādin: *ayaṃ mama kāyo rūpi* o>dārika<ś cāturmahābhūtikaḥ* (Gnoli 1978, 245).

Dagli elementi analizzati sembrerebbe quindi emergere una certa difficoltà ad escludere completamente il genitivo dall'interpretazione del composto *manomaya*, nonostante l'interpretazione secondo il caso strumentale sembrerebbe quella affermatasi nel tempo. Sarei pertanto incline a ipotizzare una transizione graduale in cui i testi canonici rappresentano ancora un passaggio intermedio in questo slittamento interpretativo, così come esemplificato dalla figura 1.

Genitivo Upaniṣad	Testi canonici buddhisti in pāli	Strumentale Commentari buddhisti

Figura 1. Rappresentazione diacronica dell'interpretazione grammaticale del termine *manas* all'interno del composto *manomaya*

4   Metafora per l'estrazione del corpo fatto di mente

La creazione di questo nuovo corpo viene descritta come l'estrazione di qualcosa dal proprio contenitore o involucro:

> O grande re, così come se un uomo dovesse estrarre da un giunco (*muñja*) lo stelo (*isīkā*). Egli penserebbe: 'Questo è il giunco, questo è lo stelo, il giunco è una cosa, lo stelo è un'altra, ciononostante dal giunco è stato estratto lo stelo'. O grande re, così come se un uomo dovesse estrarre una spada (*asi*) dal fodero (*kosi*). Egli penserebbe: 'Questa è la spada, questo è il fodero, la spada è una cosa, il fodero un'altra, ciononostante dal fodero la spada è stata estratta'. O grande re, così come se un uomo dovesse rimuovere un serpente (*ahi*) dal cesto (*karaṇḍa*). Egli penserebbe: 'Questo è il serpente, questo è il cesto, il serpente è una cosa, il cesto è un'altra, ciononostante dal cesto è stato rimosso il serpente'.[29]

Ora il praticante è in grado di esercitare i poteri psichici (*iddhi*).[30] Pur non

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29   *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja puriso muñjamhā isīkaṃ pavāheyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ muñjo ayaṃ isīkā, añño muñjo aññā isīkā, muñjamhā tv eva isīkā pavāḷhā ti. seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja, puriso asi kosiyā pavāheyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ asi ayaṃ kosi, añño asi añño kosi, kosiyā tv eva asi pavāḷho ti. seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ ahi ayaṃ karaṇḍo, añño ahi añño karaṇḍo, karaṇḍā tv eva ahi ubbhato ti* (D, I, 77).

30   I molteplici poteri psichici (*iddhi-vidha*) che il praticante è in grado di esercitare sono elencati nella seguente pericope: «essendo stato uno egli diventa molti, essendo stato molti egli diventa uno, egli diventa manifesto o si cela, passa oltre i muri, le recinzioni e

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essendo affermato esplicitamente, per come è strutturato il testo, potrebbe sembrare che i poteri psichici vengano esercitati grazie al corpo mentale.[31] I vari ottenimenti sono elencati in progressione, attraverso l'utilizzo di una struttura della frase ripetitiva che culminerà con l'ottenimento della liberazione finale. In questo percorso verso il *summum bonum*, dopo aver sviluppato i poteri psichici, il praticante sviluppa quelle che in altri testi sono definite 'conoscenze superiori' (*abhiññā*): l'elemento dell'orecchio divino (*dibba-sota-dhātu*),[32] la conoscenza del comprendere le [altrui] menti (*ceto-pariya-ñāṇa*),[33] la conoscenza del ricordo delle vite precedenti (*pubbe-nivāsānussati-ñāṇa*), la conoscenza della decadenza e dell'ascesa degli esseri (*cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*).[34] Infine, viene ottenuta la conoscenza della distruzione (*khaya-ñāṇa*) degli influssi impuri (*āsava*) [*āsavānaṃ khaya-ñāṇāya*, D, I, 83], attraverso la penetrazione delle quattro nobili verità– non esplicitamente menzionate, ma implicite nella terminologia utilizzata all'interno del brano –, che porta il praticante alla liberazione finale.

le montagne senza esserne ostacolato come se fosse nello spazio vuoto, si immerge nella terra ed emerge dalla terra come se fosse nell'acqua, cammina sull'acqua senza dividere [la superficie] come se fosse sulla terra, percorre lo spazio vuoto a gambe incrociate come fosse un uccello alato, tocca e accarezza la luna e il sole che hanno grande potenza e splendore, giunge fino al mondo di Brahmā proprio con il corpo» (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti, āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi ākāse, paṭhaviyā pi ummujja-nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake, udake pi abhijjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭhaviyaṃ, ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo, ime pi candima-suriye evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasati parimajjati, yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena va saṃvatteti*; D, I, 78).

31   Sono di questa opinione anche Harvey 1993, 36; Hamilton 1996, 162-3; Radich 2007, 257; Lee 2014, 67.

32   Una forma di chiaroudienza. L'elemento dell'orecchio divino supera quello umano e permette di sentire suoni umani e divini a qualunque distanza, cf.: *so dibbāya sotadhātuyā visuddhāya atikkanta-mānusikāya ubho sadde suṇāti, dibbe ca mānuse ca, ye dūre santike ca* (D, I, 79).

33   Una sorta di telepatia. Il testo afferma che egli conosce i modi di pensare degli altri esseri, cf.: *so para-sattānaṃ para-puggalānaṃ cetasā ceto paricca pajānāti* (D, I, 79).

34   La traduzione inglese di Walshe riporta: «the knowledge of passing-away and arising of beings» (1995, 107). Sembra così interpretare il termine come 'la conoscenza del morire e del riemergere degli esseri', cosa che difatti avviene. Tuttavia, penso che l'enfasi vada posta sul fatto che viene osservata, dopo la morte, una rinascita in un piano di esistenza, inferiore o superiore, a seconda del *kamma* (in sanscrito: *karman*), cf.: *so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti* [...] (D, I, 82).

4.1 Traduzioni problematiche

La terminologia utilizzata nell'esposizione di queste metafore comporta non poche difficoltà. La prima coppia di elementi è composta dai termini *muñja* e *isīkā*, che ho reso rispettivamente come 'giunco' e 'stelo', anche se questa non è sicuramente l'unica opzione possibile e soddisfacente. Prima di spiegare le mie ragioni intendo dare uno sguardo alle altre, altrettanto valide, soluzioni. Una delle prime strategie traduttive adottate consiste nell'interpretare il termine *isīkā* come 'giunco' e il termine *muñja* come la guaina che lo riveste. Questa opzione è stata adottata, per esempio, nella traduzione del 1899 del *Dīgha-nikāya* effettuata da Rhys Davids: «Just, O king, as if a man were to pull out a reed from its sheath» (1899, 88).[35] Un'interpretazione sicuramente più recente è quella di Gethin, il quale intende il termine *isīkā* sempre come 'giunco', mentre traduce il termine *muñja* come 'reed grass',[36] che, vista la tendenza dei giunchi a raggrupparsi in folti ciuffi, tradurrei in italiano come 'cespuglio di giunchi'.[37] Queste due traduzioni implicano un'ermeneutica di questo processo di estrazione leggermente differente. Infatti, da una parte abbiamo un giunco spogliato della sua guaina, mentre dall'altra vi è un singolo giunco estratto da una molteplicità di giunchi. È proprio cercando di considerare come poteva essere inteso il processo di estrazione del *manomaya-kāya* che sono giunto a interpretare *muñja* come 'giunco' e *isīkā* come 'stelo'. Ad attirare la mia attenzione è stata una definizione presente all'interno del recente dizionario di lingua pāli (*A Dictionary of Pāli*), redatto da Margaret Cone. La studiosa interpreta il termine *isīkā* come la parte interna del giunco o dello stelo, la quale poteva venir utilizzata per fabbricare una freccia.[38] Un tale uso del termine viene riportato anche all'interno del *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* per l'equivalente sanscrito *iṣīkā*.[39] Sup-

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35 Questa lettura deriva dall'interpretazione della stessa metafora riportata in *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.[16]: *yatheṣīkā vimuñjā syād*. Il passo afferma chiaramente che il giunco (*iṣīkā*) è privato della guaina (*vimuñja*). Questa interpretazione dei due termini è stata mantenuta nella successiva traduzione di Walshe (cf. 1995, 104).

36 «It is as if, your majesty, a man were to draw out a reed from reed grass» (Gethin 2008, 31).

37 L'interpretazione di Gethin è molto fedele all'interpretazione del PED 480, che vede appunto il termine *muñja* come una tipologia di erba, assumendo quindi che tale termine sottintenda una collettività, così come il termine 'erba' in italiano sottintende un insieme di fili d'erba. Di conseguenza il termine *isīkā* andrebbe a indicare l'elemento singolo. Tale interpretazione connessa con la metafora trova riscontro anche in un commentario pāli, che glossa il termine *muñja* in questo modo: *muñjamhā 'ti muñjatiṇamhā* (PṭsA, II, 666), evidenziando tramite il termine '*tiṇa*' il suo essere una tipologia d'erba.

38 «the inner part of a reed or stalk (used as an arrow)» (DOP, 379).

39 «*Halme* werden häufig besprochen und als Zaubermittel, namentlich als Pfeile» (SW, 828). Anche il *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* accenna a questo uso di *iṣīkā* con qualche riferimento in meno (cf. SED, 168).

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ponendo che qualcuno debba spellare un giunco o estrarre da esso qualcosa, quel qualcosa avrà probabilmente una sua funzione. Nel successivo esempio della spada estratta dal fodero è lampante il fatto che, tra la spada e il fodero, solamente la prima è utilizzabile. Il fodero – così come il cesto nel caso del serpente – funge unicamente da contenitore, da copertura per ciò che invece veramente conta. Ci si potrebbe allora chiedere quale sia il valore del serpente. Il serpente nel cesto poteva essere, per esempio, lo strumento di lavoro degli incantatori di serpenti; i suddetti mendicanti utilizzavano questi ofidi ammaestrati allo scopo di guadagnare qualche moneta. Un resoconto di tale pratica è giunto fino a noi all'interno della *Samantapāsādikā* (L'amabile in ogni dove),[40] il commentario pāli al *Vinaya*. Infatti, questo commento, illustrando il significato del termine *apada* (serpente; letteralmente 'colui che è senza piedi'), afferma:

> Il termine *apadesu* (locativo plurale del termine *apada*) è un nome del serpente (*ahi*), è un serpente che è stato catturato (*gahitasappa*), che appartiene a qualcuno come, per esempio, gli incantatori di serpenti (*ahiguṇṭika*) ecc. Essi, addestrando [i serpenti], guadagnano finanche metà (*aḍḍha*) o un quarto (*pāda*) di *kahāpaṇa*.[41]

L'estrazione del corpo fatto di mente rappresenta anch'essa un'estrazione di qualcosa di valore da un suo contenitore più grossolano: il corpo fisico.

Il fatto che le cose potessero avere più livelli di densità o profondità, e che questi livelli a loro volta potessero avere differenti impieghi o una differente importanza, è cosa attestata sia nel buddhismo che nelle *upaniṣad*. Hamilton, nel suo lavoro, ha richiamato l'attenzione su come alcune cose o elementi possano avere tre modalità di esistenza. La studiosa cita *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* 6.5.1-4, che identifica tre modalità di esistenza per il cibo (*anna*), per l'acqua (*āpas*) e per il fuoco (*tejas*): uno stato grezzo (*sthaviṣṭa*), uno stato di mezzo (*madhyama*) ed uno più sottile, più raffinato (*aṇiṣṭa*) (cf. Hamilton 1996, 146). Similmente, si può osservare che tale modo di categorizzare il mondo era conosciuto anche dal buddhismo come, per esempio, dimostra il *Poṭṭhapāda-sutta* (Il discorso di Poṭṭhapāda; D, 9). In questa narrazione, Poṭṭhapāda postula (cf. D, I, 185-6) l'esistenza di tre tipi di sé (*attan*), i quali vengono man mano rifiutati dialetticamente dal Buddha: il sé grossolano (*oḷārika*), il sé fatto di mente (*manomaya*), il sé privo di forma (*arūpin*). Il semplice fatto che le cose possano avere più livelli o strati implica anche che le varie parti possano avere un determinato

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40 Una traduzione alternativa è fornita da Lottermoser che traduce il titolo del commentario come «completely pleasing one» (1982, 7).

41 *apadesu ahi nāma sassāmiko ahiguṇṭhikādīhi gahitasappo. yaṃ kīḷāpento aḍḍham pi pādam pi kahāpaṇam pi labhanti* (VA, II, 362). Il *kahāpaṇa* è una moneta di rame a forma quadrata (cf. PED, 180).

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valore o un determinato utilizzo e una non vale l'altra. Un buon esempio di quest'ultima affermazione è la similitudine del durame, che appare all'interno del *Mahāsāropama-sutta* (Il grande discorso della similitudine con il durame; M, 29) e del *Cūḷasāropama-sutta* (Il discorso breve della similitudine con il durame; M, 30). In questi due testi viene esposto come i vari ottenimenti non dovrebbero essere confusi con la meta finale, così come il durame dell'albero non dovrebbe essere confuso con altre parti più esterne. Nel modo in cui è formulata all'interno del *Cūḷasāropama-sutta*, la metafora passa in rassegna le varie parti o strati di cui è costituito un albero, evidenziando come tutto ciò che non è durame non sia fondamentalmente utile a realizzare ciò che ci si era prefissati di realizzare con il durame:

> Oh brahmano, proprio come un uomo bisognoso di durame, che cerca il durame, che vaga alla ricerca del durame, dopo aver oltrepassato proprio un grande albero eretto dotato di durame, ignorando il durame, ignorando l'alburno, ignorando la corteccia interna, ignorando la corteccia esterna, dopo aver tagliato e preso rami e fogliame se ne andasse pensando: «È il durame!». Avendolo visto, un uomo saggio direbbe proprio: «Questo buon uomo non conosceva sicuramente il durame, non conosceva l'alburno, non conosceva la corteccia interna, non conosceva la corteccia esterna, non conosceva rami e fogliame così, invero, questo buon uomo bisognoso di durame, che cerca il durame, che vaga alla ricerca del durame, dopo aver oltrepassato proprio un grande albero eretto dotato di durame, ignorando il durame, ignorando l'alburno, ignorando la corteccia interna, ignorando la corteccia esterna, dopo aver tagliato e preso rami e fogliame se ne va pensando: «È il durame!». Egli non raggiungerà il proprio scopo se ciò che dovrebbe essere realizzato col durame [fosse realizzato] attraverso il suo durame (in questo caso rami e fogliame)».[42]

Da questa metafora si può desumere una ripartizione dell'albero secondo vari livelli. La parte più importante, il durame (*sāra*), è anche quella più interna. La figura 2 mostra i vari strati di cui è composto l'albero illustrato all'interno della metafora.

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42 *Seyyathā pi brāhmaṇa puriso sāratthiko sāragavesī sārapariyesanaṃ caramāno mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato atikkamm' eva sāraṃ atikkamma pheg guṃ atikkamma tacaṃ atikkamma papaṭikaṃ, sākhāpalāsaṃ chetvā ādāya pakkameyya sāran-ti maññamāno; tamenaṃ cakkhumā puriso disvā evaṃ vadeyya: Na vatāyaṃ bhavaṃ puriso aññāsi sāraṃ na aññāsi pheg guṃ na aññāsi tacaṃ na aññāsi papaṭikaṃ na aññāsi sākhāpalāsaṃ, tathā h' ayaṃ bhavaṃ puriso sāratthiko sāragavesī sārapariyesanaṃ caramāno mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato atikkamm' eva sāraṃ atikkamma pheg guṃ atikkamma tacaṃ atikkamma papaṭikaṃ sākhāpalāsaṃ chetvā ādāya pakkanto sāran-ti maññamāno, yañ-c' assa sārena sārakaraṇīyaṃ tañ-c' assa atthaṃ nānubhavissatīti* (M, I, 198).

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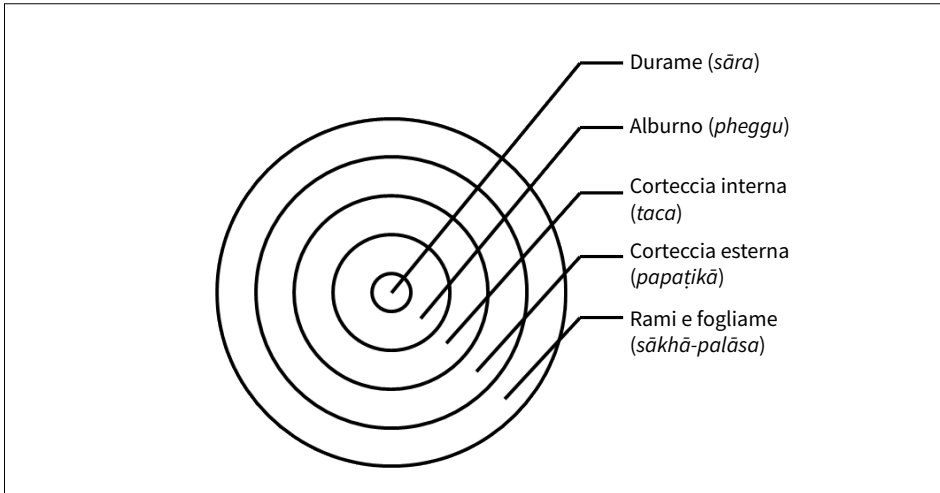
Figura 2. Stratificazione dell'albero descritta all'interno del *Cūḷasāropama-sutta* (M, 30)

Questa suddivisione tassonomica dell'albero mostra un modo di concepire le cose in modo analitico, che suddivide e discrimina tra le parti, poiché non tutte hanno lo stesso valore. L'andare nel profondo per ricercare la vera essenza è un modo di indagare la realtà già presente nelle *upaniṣad*, le quali testimoniano una ricerca del principio vitale all'interno dei fenomeni naturali e della natura dell'individuo (acqua, vento-respiro, fuoco).[43] Questo modus operandi, caratterizzato da osservazione e classificazione gerarchica, ancora permane nel buddhismo, il quale lo riversa nella sua visione del mondo e del cosmo.[44]

Tornando ora al problema del come tradurre i termini *muñja* e *isīkā* – dopo aver accennato a quella che poteva essere la visione del mondo sottesa a questa metafora – si potrebbero suddividere le scelte traduttive in due macro gruppi: 1) l'estrazione di una singolarità (*isīkā*) da una pluralità (*muñja*); 2) l'estrazione di una parte (*isīkā*) da un singolo intero (*muñja*). Nel primo caso *muñja* è un insieme di elementi e *isīkā* è un elemento singolo, nel secon-

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[43]   Cf. Frauwallner 1973, 36-61, in cui è fornita un'esposizione di come il principio vitale fosse ricercato tra questi elementi. Della Casa mette in luce i differenti approcci di questi primi cercatori di verità: alcuni di essi furono osservatori di fenomeni naturali; altri svilupparono un'indagine concentrata sulla natura dell'individuo; per altri ancora vi fu un procedere parallelo dell'osservazione dell'uomo e del cosmo; infine, ci fu chi attribuì le qualità di conoscenza e intelligenza, proprie del principio individuale, al principio cosmico (cf. 1973, 35-6).

[44]   La suddivisione del cosmo buddhista si basa su tre livelli di progressiva rarefazione: la sfera del desiderio (*kāmadhātu*), la sfera della forma (*rūpadhātu*) e la sfera della non-forma (*arūpadhātu*); si veda Gombrich 1975, 133-4.

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do caso *muñja* è un singolo elemento e *isīkā* ne è una parte. Uno sguardo ai testi vedici rivela che non esiste un'interpretazione univoca. In *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.[16] si parla del *muñja* come di un qualcosa che può essere tolto dall'*isīkā/iṣīkā*: *yatheṣīkā vimuñjā syād*. In un altro passo, *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 6.3.1.[26], il dio Agni, allontanandosi dagli dei, entra dentro un giunco (*muñja*): *agnir devebhya udakrāmat sa muñjam prāviśat*, dalla cavità (*suṣira*). Spesso *muñja* sembrerebbe essere un termine utilizzato come singolare e non, quindi, come erba *muñja*, ma come singolo stelo di *muñja*. Infatti, in *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 6.6.2.[15], per esempio, quando si intende l''erba *muñja*' il termine *muñja* è declinato al plurale: *tadvā ātmaivokhā | yonir muñjāḥ* […] (questo corpo, invero, è proprio il calderone del fuoco (*ukha*), l'utero (*yoni*) è l'erba (*muñja*) […]). Anche il termine *isīkā/iṣīkā* sembrerebbe avere connotazioni simili. Si può osservare come *iṣīkā*, all'interno di *Atharva-veda* 7.56.4, abbia la connotazione di 'singolo stelo': *ayaṃ yo vakro viparur vyaṅgo mukhāni vakrā vṛjinā kṛṇoṣi | tāni tvaṃ brahmaṇas pate iṣīkām iva saṃ namaḥ* (Tu [serpente] che qui, sinuoso, senza giunture, senza membra, rendi i volti contorti e deformi, possa tu, O Brahmaṇaspati, distenderli come un giunco).[45] Infatti, in *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* 5.24.3 l'utilizzo plurale di *iṣīkā* è enfatizzato dal termine '*tūla*' (ciuffo) all'interno del composto '*iṣīkā-tūla*', che va quindi a designare un 'ciuffo di giunchi'.

Sembrerebbe, quindi, da preferirsi l'interpretazione che vede *muñja* come singolo elemento e *isīkā* come una parte di esso, verosimilmente quella più importante. Un altro motivo per cui la resa di *muñja* come singolo giunco andrebbe preferita risiede nel fatto che, nelle rimanenti due metafore, da un singolo oggetto (il fodero, il cesto) viene estratto un altro singolo oggetto (spada, serpente). Pertanto, se si deve estrarre dal giunco (*muñja*) la sua parte importante, di valore, questa potrebbe proprio essere lo 'stelo', che quindi andrebbe a tradurre il termine *isīkā*. Questa traduzione potrebbe includere concettualmente anche l'interpretazione che legge *isīkā* come 'giunco' e *muñja* come 'guaina', poiché essendo lo stelo la porzione preponderante del giunco, estrarre lo stelo dal giunco potrebbe rappresentare il ripulire lo stelo dai vari fronzoli o escrescenze della pianta.[46]

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45 Per l'interpretazione di *saṃ-nam*, letteralmente 'piegare assieme', con un'accezione indicante il 'raddrizzare' (straighten out) si veda Whitney [1905] 1962, 426.

46 Un'altra traduzione problematica è quella del termine '*karaṇḍa*'. Tuttavia, ho già discusso la traduzione di questo termine in un paper presentato al Convegno dell'Associazione Italiana Studi Sanscriti, tenutosi presso la Sapienza Università di Roma (De Notariis, in corso di stampa), a cui sto ancora lavorando e che verrà pubblicato in inglese. Basti qui solo specificare che la mia traduzione del termine è sostenuta dall'*A Critical Pāli Dictionary* (cf. CPD, 290).

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4.2 Inversione ablativo e accusativo

Un altro punto di interesse che riguarda questa metafora è una bizzarra inversione dell'ordine delle parole, che non modifica il significato, ma che fa riflettere su alcuni punti. Innanzitutto, quando si ha a che fare con della letteratura orale è pacifico presupporre che le ripetizioni di parti del testo costituiscono lo strumento migliore per la memorizzazione e la successiva trasmissione.[47] Pertanto, la natura orale dei testi buddhisti ha influito fortemente sugli elementi formali in essi presenti.[48] Infatti, come sottolinea Bhikkhu Anālayo, quando si tratta lo stesso argomento in forma sia positiva che negativa accade che la frase in forma positiva venga ripetuta con le stesse parole e nella stessa modalità di formulazione, adottando solo il minimo cambiamento necessario per conferirle un significato negativo. La stessa cosa accade per le pericopi, espressioni formulari che costituiscono un'unità di senso compiuto, le quali vengono usate in testi differenti e adattate, con il minimo cambiamento possibile, all'occasione specifica (cf. Anālayo 2007, 8). Posto che esista quindi un principio di economicità nella struttura di composizione dei testi, sorprende notare che la forma con cui il *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* riporta le tre metafore non è perfettamente identica. Il testo in pāli cerca di rispettare questo principio di economicità. Infatti, i maggiori cambiamenti spesso sono dovuti alla necessità di far concordare gli aggettivi e i verbi con i sostantivi, i quali sono gli unici che effettivamente cambiano. L'unico cambiamento difficilmente giustificabile[49] riguarda la posizione che assumono i nomi di ciò che è estratto (stelo '*isīkā*', spada '*asi*', serpente '*ahi*') e di ciò da cui si estrae (giunco '*muñja*', fodero

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47 Allon giustamente afferma che: «Verbatim Repetition obviously represents the greatest aid to memory. The greater the percentage of a text that is verbatim repetitive the easier it is to learn and remember» (1997b, 52).

48 Una lista concisa di elementi formali per facilitare la memorizzazione è fornita da Sferra che, parlando dei *bhāṇaka* 'recitatori' (coloro che, da quel che sembra, erano responsabili della trasmissione orale dei testi), afferma che essi «per ricordare gli insegnamenti, si sarebbero giovati delle ripetizioni, ma anche di *stock-phrases*, di liste (*mātikā*), di indici dei contenuti (*uddāna*), della disposizione in progressione numerica (il caso più eclatante è quello dell'*Aṅguttaranikāya*), delle allitterazioni, della composizione nominale di termini opposti mediante la a privativa in funzione di cerniera, e, infine, del cosiddetto Waxing Syllables Principle e cioè l'espediente per cui le parole sono ordinate secondo un numero crescente di sillabe» (Sferra 2009, 100). Uno studio approfondito delle caratteristiche stilistiche dei testi pāli dovute all'oralità è sicuramente Allon 1997a.

49 Vi è anche il cambiamento dei verbi utilizzati. Mentre per le prime due coppie si usa la combinazione '*pavāheyya*' e '*pavāḷhā/o*' (a seconda del genere del sostantivo con cui concorda), per l'ultima coppia serpente/cesto vengono utilizzati '*uddhareyya*' e '*ubbhato*'. Probabilmente l'azione di tirar fuori un serpente dal cesto non è sentita come identica all'azione di estrarre una spada o uno stelo, così come in italiano se dobbiamo tirar fuori dal terreno un fiore o un minerale usiamo due verbi differenti: estrarre il minerale e cogliere il fiore. Lo stelo e la spada vengono pertanto 'sfilati' mentre il serpente viene 'tirato su', 'estratto', 'rimosso'.

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'*kosī*', cesto '*karaṇḍa*'). Infatti, la prima coppia, composta da giunco e stelo, è espressa con la forma *muñjamhā isīkaṃ* 'dal giunco [si estrae] lo stelo', mentre le altre due coppie sono riportate in modo invertito: *asi kosiyā* 'la spada [si estrae] dal fodero', *ahiṃ karaṇḍā* 'il serpente [è rimosso] dal cesto'. Nella prima coppia viene usato prima l'ablativo e poi l'accusativo, mentre nelle altre due coppie è stato messo prima l'accusativo e poi l'ablativo.

Una spiegazione potrebbe essere che la coppia '*muñjamhā isīkaṃ*', con prima l'ablativo e poi l'accusativo, sia stata attinta da un contesto comune a quello di *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* 6.17,[50] nella quale appare la formulazione *muñjādiveṣīkaṃ*, che fuor di *sandhi* apparirebbe come '*muñjāt iva iṣīkaṃ*', utilizzando pertanto prima l'ablativo e poi l'accusativo. La formulazione, in entrambi i testi, differisce da quella più antica presente in *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.[16],[51] che riporta *yatheṣīkām muñjād vivṛhed*, in cui l'accusativo precede l'ablativo. Nonostante questa inversione dei casi possa sembrare un dettaglio insignificante, non bisogna dimenticare che questi leggeri cambiamenti nella composizione del testo possono avere implicazioni che a prima vista sembrano irrilevanti, ma che, se analizzati attentamente, possono portare alla luce questioni interessanti.[52] L'impressione è

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[50]   Secondo Olivelle (cf. 1998, 13) la *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* è la più antica di un gruppo di *upaniṣad* (formato da: *Īśā*, *Śvetāśvatara* e *Muṇḍaka*), che probabilmente si sono formate durante gli ultimi secoli che precedono l'inizio dell'era volgare.

[51]   La medesima metafora appare anche in *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 5.1.2.[18].

[52]   Un esempio simile può essere tratto dall'*Ariyapariyesana-sutta* (Il discorso della nobile ricerca; M, 26), all'interno del quale viene narrato l'incontro del futuro Buddha (quindi un Bodhisattha) con i due maestri: Āḷāra Kāmāla e Uddaka Rāmaputta. Nei due episodi la trama è più o meno la stessa: il Bodhisatta si reca prima da un maestro e poi dall'altro per imparare la dottrina. Dopo averla ben appresa gli viene riconosciuto di averla imparata completamente e gli viene proposto di restare e guidare il gruppo di discepoli, ma il futuro Buddha trova questi insegnamenti insoddisfacenti e se ne allontana. Dottrinalmente il Bodhisatta trova insoddisfacente prima la 'sfera del nulla' (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), insegnata da Āḷāra Kāmāla, e successivamente la 'sfera di né-percezione-né-non-percezione' (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*), insegnata da Uddaka Rāmaputta. I due episodi sono narrati in una sequenza e in una forma pressoché identica e l'unica differenza dottrinale riguarda le sfere di assorbimento meditativo. Ovviamente, l'altro cambiamento necessario è il nome dei maestri presso cui il futuro Buddha si reca. Tuttavia, il resoconto dell'accaduto presenta dei dettagli che non hanno niente a che vedere con il messaggio dottrinale, ma sono puramente descrittivi dell'episodio. Infatti, ha notato Skilling: «the main difference is one of tense change: while in the account of the first meeting Āḷāra Kālāma is spoken of in the present tense, in the account of the second meeting Uddaka Rāmaputta is spoken of in the present, but Rāma is spoken of in the aorist or past tense. This tense makes it clear that Uddaka Rāmaputta and Rāma are not one and the same person […] but that Uddaka is the disciple, either the spiritual or real son (*putta*) of the deceased teacher Rāma» (1981-1982, 99). L'episodio è stato utilizzato da Wynne per dimostrare che la tradizione buddhista ha effettuato un deliberato sforzo nel ricordare che, al tempo in cui veniva narrato l'episodio, Āḷāra Kālāma era in vita, Rāma era morto e Rāmaputta non aveva realizzato la dottrina che insegnava (ma era stata realizzata da Rāma, suo padre, in passato). Tale precisione nella descrizione dell'episodio sembrerebbe indicare che, oltre alla volontà di trasmettere un messaggio dottrinale, vi è stato anche lo sforzo di tramandare un resoconto storico (cf. 2005, 62-5).

quella di trovarsi di fronte a delle metafore di natura duttile che potevano essere applicate a vari contesti.[53] Queste metafore facevano parte di un *milieu* condiviso e non è da escludere che, in un dato periodo, abbiano acquisito una loro forma di espressione stereotipata, la quale è quindi stata inserita *verbatim* all'interno della letteratura orale buddhista, dando origine a questa singolarità. Infatti, quello che si può desumere da testi successivi al *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* è che questa inversione di ablativo e accusativo non era la normalità. Un ottimo esempio è presente all'interno del *Visuddhimagga* (Il sentiero della purificazione), il cui autore è presumibilmente Buddhaghosa, vissuto approssimativamente tra il IV e il V secolo d.C.[54] All'interno di questo testo (cf. Vism, 406), nell'arco di una manciata di righe, la metafora viene citata due volte. La seconda volta in cui appare, si presenta come una citazione dal canone e perciò è riportata parola per parola, mantenendo quindi la singolare inversione ablativo/accusativo.[55] Tuttavia, la prima volta in cui se ne fa menzione, la metafora viene parafrasata dal commentatore: *so taṃ muñjamhā īsikaṃ viya kosiyā asiṃ viya, karaṇḍāya ahiṃ viya ca abbāhati* (Vism, 406). Si può quindi notare come, in condizioni di maggior libertà compositiva, un autore del calibro di Buddhaghosa, con un'indiscussa conoscenza della lingua pāli, abbia emendato l'esposizione delle tre metafore, omologando la posizione di ablativo e accusativo. Così, se da un lato la sensibilità di un esperto conoscitore della lingua sembra, per così dire, urtata da questa inversione dei casi, dall'altro lato dimostra una certa cura nel riutilizzo del materiale canonico che viene citato *verbatim*. Un'omologazione della posizione di ablativo e accusativo è presente anche nella versione del *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* in sanscrito (*Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra*) inclusa all'interno del *Saṅghabhedavastu* dei Mūlasarvāstivādin. All'interno di questo testo si può notare come la metafora sia presentata in modo più regolare: *muñjād iṣikām āvṛhyāt* […]

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53   Parte di questa metafora è presente anche in un testo jaina: il *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*. Il passo in cui appare è stato così tradotto da Jacobi: «Those who maintain that the soul is something different from the body, do not see the following (objections): [...] 'As a man draws a sword from the scabbard and shows it (you, saying): 'Friend, this is the sword, and that is the scabbard', so nobody can draw (the soul from the body) and show it (you, saying): 'Friend, this is the soul, and that is the body'. As a man draws a fibre from a stalk of Muñga grass and shows it (you, saying): 'Friend, this is the stalk, and that is the fibre'» ([1895] 1964, 340). La metafora è usata in questo caso con un altro significato. Il suo uso in differenti contesti è discusso anche in Norman [1976] 1991, 102.

54   Il *Mahāvaṃsa* afferma che Buddhaghosa arrivò a Ceylon durante il regno del re Mahānāma (prima metà del V secolo, 409-31 d.C., cf. Norman 1983, 130, nota 217). Sembrerebbe sicuro poter affermare che non può essere più tardo del 489 d.C., data in cui fu composta la traduzione cinese della *Samantapāsādikā* (cf. Norman 1983, 130; Hinüber 1996, 103). È stato proposto da von Hinüber come arco temporale di vita per Buddhaghosa un periodo tra il 370 e il 450 d.C. (cf. 1996, 103).

55   Il passo è introdotto da '*tena vuttaṃ*', che spesso introduce una citazione dal testo radice (*mūla*) o da un altro testo canonico (cf. Kieffer-Pülz 2015, 439-41).

karaṇḍād ahiṃ āvṛhyāt […] *koṣād asiṃ āvṛhyāt*.[56] È anche da notare che nella versione in sanscrito viene usato un unico verbo all'interno di tutte e tre le metafore per indicare l'estrazione (contrariamente alla versione in pāli). Tuttavia, quando si ha a che fare con testi sanscritizzati e li si compara con gli equivalenti in pāli, non è sempre possibile sostenere che sia la versione in sanscrito a essere quella sbagliata (cf. Norman 1997, 103).

La singolarità di questa inversione di ablativo e accusativo nei testi pāli e il trattamento che ha ricevuto da parte del *Visuddhimagga*, rivela una certa fedeltà nella trasmissione del testo. Come questa singolarità sia venuta in essere è un fatto che può essere soggetto solo a congettura.[57] Supponendo che tale forma fosse sorta nel periodo di trasmissione orale del testo, potrebbe avere rilevanza il parallelismo con *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* 6.17 (che mostra la stessa sequenza ablativo/accusativo), e la successiva omologazione, operata dal Saṅghabhedavastu e solo parzialmente da Buddhaghosa (ovvero quando non cita *verbatim* dal canone), sarebbe dovuta a un processo di trivializzazione. Da questo punto di vista, potrebbe sembrare un classico caso di *lectio difficilor potior*.[58] Infatti, è più plausibile supporre che sia stata la tradizione in sanscrito ad omologare una versione che presentava delle difficoltà, piuttosto che la tradizione pāli a intaccare un'esposizione già di per sé lineare e simmetrica. A discapito del fatto che questa ipotesi sia vera, il *Visuddhimagga* dimostrerebbe che, una volta che la versione in pāli del testo raggiunse una forma stabile, ci fu particolare cura nel tramandarla senza emendarla.

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56   «*tadyathā puruṣo muñjād iṣikām āvṛhyāt; taṃ cakṣuṣmān puruṣo dṛṣṭvā jānīyād <ayaṃ muñja iyam iṣikā, muñjād iṣikām āvṛhatīti evam e>va*sa tasmat kāyāt mānasaṃ vyutthāpyānyaṃ kāyam abhinirmimīte rūpiṇaṃ manomayam avikalam ahīnendriyam; tadyathā puruṣāḥ karaṇḍād ahiṃ āvṛhyāt; taṃ cakṣuṣmān puruṣo dṛṣṭvā jānīyād ayaṃ karaṇḍaḥ ay<am ahiḥ, karaṇḍād ahiṃ āvṛhatīti; evam eva sa> tasmāt kāyāt mānasaṃ vyutthāpyānyaṃ kāyaṃ abhinirmimīte rūpiṇaṃ manomayam avikalam ahīnendriyam; tadyathā puruṣāḥ koṣād asiṃ āvṛhyāt; taṃ cakṣuṣmān puruṣo dṛṣṭvā jānīyād ayaṃ koṣo'yam asiḥ koṣād asim āvṛha<tīti; evam eva sa tasmāt kāyāt māna>saṃ vyutthāpyānyaṃ kāyam abhinirmimīte rūpiṇaṃ manomayam avikalam ahīnendriyam*» (Gnoli 1978, 246).

57   Purtroppo non è sempre possibile risalire alla forma originale del testo. Come ha affermato Maas: «Se la tradizione si rivela corrotta, si deve cercare di risanarla per mezzo della *divinatio*. Questo tentativo porta o a un'emendazione palmare, o a più congetture più o meno ugualmente soddisfacenti, o a riconoscere che non si può sperare di risanare la tradizione per mezzo della *divinatio* (*crux*)» ([1960] 2017, 20).

58   Tale principio di critica testuale è stato spesso utilizzato da Gombrich come, per esempio, in Gombrich 1990, 8-9; [1996] 2006, 11-2; 2012, 149, nota 1.

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5   Conclusioni

Il presente contributo, come da titolo, si è limitato a effettuare alcune osservazioni su un argomento che, sicuramente, richiederà ulteriori approfondimenti futuri. È stata messa in luce la difficoltà interpretativa di alcuni termini, come il composto *manomaya* e la coppia di termini *muñja* e *isīkā*, presenti all'interno delle metafore volte a illustrare l'estrazione di qualcosa da un suo contenitore. La tendenza, sia da parte della tradizione buddhista sia da parte di Hamilton, era quella di interpretare il primo termine (*manas*) del composto *manomaya* secondo il caso strumentale. Tuttavia, è stato messo in luce il fatto che ci potrebbero essere buone ragioni per una lettura canonica secondo il caso genitivo, aprendo nuovamente la questione. Inoltre, le differenti interpretazioni grammaticali del composto *manomaya* nel corso del tempo lascerebbero presagire che possa esserci stato uno sviluppo diacronico anche per il *manomaya-kāya*, rendendo pertanto auspicabile una futura ricerca volta a questo approfondimento. I termini *muñja* e *isīkā* si sono rivelati difficili da interpretare, poiché assumono spesso significati leggermente differenti a seconda del contesto. La proposta interpretativa che è stata avanzata vede l'*isīkā* come la parte essenziale della pianta che funge da sostegno, vale a dire lo stelo. Quest'ultimo può avere anche una sua utilità intrinseca come componente principale per la creazione di una freccia. Di conseguenza, il *muñja* può essere considerato come lo stelo con le sue parti in eccesso, ossia il giunco per intero (in senso lato è anche la guaina che fa da scorza allo stelo). L'estrazione dell'*isīkā* dal *muñja*, insieme alle altre metafore, rende evidente che ciò che ha valore è da ricercare oltre la scorza esterna. Queste metafore metterebbero in luce come, al di là di un corpo (*kāya*) più grossolano, esista un altro corpo (il *manomaya-kāya* per l'appunto) più rarefatto, ma altrettanto reale. Ricerche future potrebbero essere volte a rintracciare altre ricorrenze di illustrazioni metaforiche all'interno dei testi vedici anteriori e coevi al buddhismo, al fine di determinare meglio il loro contesto d'uso. Questo porterà a una maggiore consapevolezza delle motivazioni che soggiacciono all'adozione delle metafore in relazione al *manomaya-kāya*. Infine, è stata presa in considerazione la curiosa inversione, all'interno dell'esposizione delle tre metafore, nell'ordine dei termini declinati all'ablativo e all'accusativo. Il trattamento operato dal *Visuddhimagga* nei confronti di questa particolarità sembrerebbe confermare l'asserzione generale, assunta da alcuni studiosi, che vede il canone pāli come il prodotto di una tradizione conservatrice (sebbene non statica).[59]

Viste le insidie che si nascondono dietro a termini apparentemente innocui, si potrebbe dire che, effettivamente, il diavolo si nasconde nei dettagli

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[59]   Questa espressione l'ho attinta da Gombrich che, scrivendo a proposito della lingua pāli, la definiva, in via provvisoria, la lingua «of the earliest Buddhist scriptures as preserved in one (conservative, but not static) Buddhist tradition» (1994, XXIII).

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e sono proprio questi ultimi che necessitano ancora di essere approfonditi. Parafrasando Norman: ciò che è già stato fatto necessita di esser fatto nuovamente.[60] In particolare, se da un lato si guarda ai testi della tradizione commentariale per interpretare il canone, dall'altro bisogna sempre tenere in considerazione il contesto peculiare dei testi canonici. Pertanto, acquistano un'importanza capitale i testi antecedenti alla tradizione buddhista, poiché possono fornire uno scorcio riguardo al contesto di origine di alcuni termini. Ciò che precede e ciò che sussegue un dato testo si pone ai due estremi dell'atto interpretativo e l'interpretare, in fin dei conti, è un po' come attraversare la strada: si guarda prima a sinistra poi a destra e solamente quando entrambi i lati appaiono privi di pericoli si può giungere sani e salvi alla meta.

Abbreviazioni

Testi in lingua pāli

AA	*Aṅguttara-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Manorathapūraṇī*)
D	Dīgha-nikāya
DA	*Dīgha-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*)
M	Majjhima-nikāya
MA	*Majjhima-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Papañcasūdanī*)
PṭsA	*Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā* (*Saddhammappakāsinī*)
S	Saṃyutta-nikāya
SA	*Saṃyutta-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Sāratthappakāsinī*)
VA	*Vinaya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Samantapāsādikā*)
Vibh	Vibhaṅga
Vin	Vinaya
Vism	Visuddhimagga

60 «I say: 'What has not been done needs to be done, and what has been done needs to be done again'. Of these the second is the more important, because, by and large, the most important Pāli texts were published first, when little was known about the Pāli language – there were only inadequate dictionaries and grammars, and only a few manuscripts had come to Europe» (Norman 1997, 2).

Dizionari

BHSD	*Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (Edgerton)
CPD	*Critical Pāli Dictionary* (Trenckner)
DOP	*Dictionary of Pāli* (Cone)
PED	*Pali-English Dictionary* (Rhys Davids, Stede)
SED	*Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Monier-Williams)
SW	*Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (Böhtlingk, Roth)

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Le colombe e gli avvoltoi
Sull'economia politica delle 'ecologie religiose' del passato, in India e non solo

Federico Squarcini
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract Within today's debate on the relationship between economics and ecology we often resort to the ancient models and 'world ideas' generated within Asian religious traditions. Works and authors from the past become part of the contemporary disputes among stakeholders of the economic systems and militants of the various sectors of contemporary environmentalism. In this work I intend to show myopia, risks and dangers underlying certain ways of dividing, justifying and governing the relationships that the human animal has with the ecosystem of which it is a part.

Sommario 1 Le colombe dell'ecologia, gli avvoltoi dell'economia: sull'invisibile convivio fra volatili. – 2 *Divide et impera*. Sulle strategie semiotiche che obliano la simbiosi fra ecologia ed economia. – 3 Colombe e avvoltoi, ossia il medesimo sotto ingannevoli spoglie. – 4 Anche in India le colombe dividono e gli avvoltoi imperano sulla natura. – 5 La colomba del dio – l'*Homo ecologicus* –, che divide e ordina. – 6 L'avvoltoio di Manu – l'*Homo oeconomicus* –, che impera e subordina. – 7 L'imperituro sodalizio fra colombe e avvoltoi, fra il *divide et impera*.

Keywords Religious economy and ecology. Classical ecological discourses. Semiotics of natural elements. Division. Sanskrit normative textuals traditions. Political theology.

1 Le colombe dell'ecologia, gli avvoltoi dell'economia: sull'invisibile convivio fra volatili

La bianca colomba richiama la luce, l'oscuro avvoltoio presenzia la tenebra.[1] La colomba provvede, l'avvoltoio profitta. La candida colomba, vien detto, è segno di pace, mentre il tetro rapace è segnale di morte, presagio di guerra. Il candore e l'altruismo della prima sono esibiti e messi in mostra fin dal celebre passo di *Genesi*, in cui una colomba si staglia nel cielo in cerca dei segni di un migliore avvenire (cf. Gen 8, 8-12). Parimenti antico è il ricorso all'immagine mortifera degli uccelli rapaci, invitati sulla scena per evocare l'indole profittatrice e parassitaria. Emblema primo dei predatori è l'oscura

[1] Ove non diversamente indicato, tutte le traduzioni presenti in queste pagine sono a cura di chi scrive. Ringrazio i due *referee* anonimi degli *Annali* per l'attenzione rivolta a questo scritto.

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e spietata figura dell'avvoltoio, che si nutre di carcasse putrescenti,[2] alla quale si aggiungono quelle degli sparvieri o delle aquile, come accade in *Giobbe*,[3] in cui un rapace necrofago è ritratto assiso sulle vette, intento nello scorgere le sue prede per gettarvisi in picchiata, spinto dal triviale bisogno di procurare ai suoi pargoli l'ambìto seppur cadaverico sangue.

La colomba, serafica, generosa e altruista, è luce di vita, l'avvoltoio, predatore insaziabile, è tenebrosa morte.

Questi i significati che da secoli sono affissi a due diversi tipi di volatili, i cui profili son così diventati sagome e icone di due diversi modi di stare al mondo, contrapposti e antitetici: la colomba è segno di vita e di pace, l'avvoltoio di morte e di guerra. Nella figura della colomba le idee astratte di 'vita' e di 'pace' trovano concreta dimora, mentre in quella dell'avvoltoio la 'morte' e la 'guerra' guadagnano puntuale circoscrizione. Una volta distinti, i diversi diventano 'segni', ossia figure capaci di elargire senso e significati ulteriori. Tant'è che, almeno a partire dal tempo della redazione del testo biblico, si è diffusa l'abitudine al ricorso a tali figurazioni per esprimere giudizi valoriali e moralistici: tutto ciò che è accostato alla colomba ora guadagna significati gradevoli e provvidenziali, mentre ciò che è avvicinato all'avvoltoio si tinge di significati sgradevoli e presagenti l'infausto. Significati astratti che però toccano gli animi, facendo sentire a chi vi è esposto ciò che il coniatore degli stessi intendeva far loro dire.

È almeno da quei secoli che sappiamo che l'uomo si adopera per far sì che le cose del mondo – reperibili solo in senso pratico e per differenza – risultino visibili in quanto tali anche nei frangenti della loro indisponibilità: al fine di trarne profitto anche quando le cose risultano assenti, questi ha fatto ricorso alle loro forme astratte, ossia a dei 'segni reggiposto' che, nel mentre le distinguono fra loro, rappresentano le cose. Peraltro, una volta metaforizzate e 'ri-disegnate', le cose appaiono anche più nette e visibili, quasi fossero più vere delle loro matrici. Grande, infatti, è stata la fortuna delle cose astratte – ossia 'estratte' tramite la parola dalla loro *Sitz im Leben* –, come è chiaro dal successo riscosso proprio dalle 'coppie di cose', le quali son servite per mettere in scena miriadi di giochi dialettici e di saghe degli opposti, all'interno delle quali le diverse cose astratte apparivano, allo stesso tempo, unite e diverse, disgiunte ma affini.

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2   Nell'insieme degli uccelli rapaci, l'avvoltoio appartiene al genere dei *gyps*, volatili predatori accomunati – fra l'altro – dal loro essere necrofagi, genere di cui è parte anche il *Gyps indicus*, uno fra i vari tipi di avvoltoi noti nell'area sudasiatica. Cf. Arnott 2007, 11, 91-92, 106-7, 356; Inskipp, Inskipp 1991, 32-33, 108-11. Inoltre, Grimmett, Inskipp, Inskipp 1999.

3   Cf. Gb 9, 26 (ebr. *nèsher*, gr. LXX *aetòs*, 'aquila'); 39, 26 (ebr. *netz*, gr. LXX *hiérax*, 'avvoltoio/sparviero/falco'); 39, 27-30 (ebr. *nèsher*, gr. LXX *aetòs* [30b: «Dove ci sono [corpi] morti, là c'è lui»]). Inoltre, seguente l'accezione di Gb 39, 27-30 – ossia l'*aetòs* che si nutre di cadaveri –, Mt 24, 28 (gr. *aetòi* [«Dovunque sia il cadavere, là si raduneranno gli *aetòi*»]); Lc 17, 37 (gr. *aetòi* [«Dove c'è il corpo, là si raduneranno anche gli *aetòi*»]).

Le cose astratte sono così diventate 'cose', che risiedono da qualche parte del mondo e vi operano: proprio come la colomba e l'avvoltoio, anch'esse possono arrivare o andar via, apparire o dileguarsi, iniziare o finire, annunciarsi mediante emissari, mediatori, segni e ambascerie.

Per questo le cose 'astratte' sono tali solo di nome, poiché, in forza dell'uso, queste 'vengono in essere', rubando porzioni di scena alle 'cose' a cui rimandano. Come nel caso dei nostri volatili, infatti, il ricorso all'allegorizzazione binaria di due uccelli ha permesso di dare corpo e cogenza patica a ideali astratti e intangibili – quali quelli di 'pace' e 'guerra', di 'bene' e 'male', di 'altruismo' ed 'egoismo', ecc. –, che così hanno guadagnato forma sensibile, apparendo ai parlanti alla stregua di cose concrete. Ben divise e distinte fra loro, le figure morali della 'colomba della pace' e dell''avvoltoio della guerra' possono ora essere abitate, ponendo i rispettivi occupanti entro opposti domini, quello dei cieli e quello degli inferi: è ovvio e 'naturale' che sia così, lo sanno tutti, dice e sente il volgo.

A ben guardare, però, l'ovvietà e la naturalezza che hanno accompagnato per secoli la ricezione passiva delle figurazioni in cui dei semplici volatili fungevano da emblema di 'cose' riguardanti l'umano è piuttosto sospetta: non essendoci nulla di ovvio e scontato nelle valenze di simili figurazioni, la cifra della loro ovvietà deve necessariamente dipendere da altro. Ciò nonostante, l'ovvietà della loro differenza naturale – e delle conseguenti polarizzazioni in termini valoriali – risulta comunque evidente e inopinabile ai più.

Ma cos'è che riesce a far dare per scontato che la colomba *sia* un segno di vita e, di contro, che l'avvoltoio *sia* messaggero di morte? Perché, solitamente, non abbiamo alcuna contezza del fatto che la semplice preferenza accordata da un parlante alla figura della colomba rispetto a quella dell'avvoltoio contribuisce, ribadendola, alla messa in ombra dell'opinabile arbitrarietà della preferenza stessa? In che modo è stata celata e rimossa l'operazione di significazione che ha posto in essere le stesse figure, entrambe ricavate dalla messa in ombra della loro equivalenza ecologica? Al di fuori del consesso dei parlanti umani, peraltro, colombe e avvoltoi non risultano avversi e appartengono entrambi al genere ampio dei volatili, genere che né esprime né rispetta le nostre partizioni di specie. Al gran numero dei parlanti, però, non risulta affatto ovvio che il gradimento e la preferibilità di una singola figura siano intimamente collegati alle logiche di una specifica e più ampia 'economia valoriale' delle figure, la quale, come si è detto, procede selezionando, sezionando, enfatizzando e mettendo in luce – grazie alla forza di un 'misterioso ordinamento' –, (cf. Derrida [1994] 2003; Agamben 2007, 31-6; Gentili 2009, 104-6) solo alcuni aspetti di un fenomeno, che stima e reputa come più utili, validi e interessanti. L'abitudine all'ovvio procede di pari passo alla sparizione dalla scena della *ratio* economica che valorizza le colombe e svaluta gli avvoltoi: una *ratio* di fondo che sancisce, quasi per decreto, la valenza dei modi in cui operano

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i due volatili, che perciò risultano appartenere a gradi diversi della 'natura del volatile'. Una *ratio* che poi stabilisce, *pro domo sua*, susseguenti gamme e livelli gerarchici di subordinazione, con tanto di sotto-insiemi, sotto-specie, sotto-categorie (cf. Lakoff 1990).

Proprio in ragione della frequenza dell'oblio di questa *ratio* prescrivente merita comprenderne meglio l'andamento, soprattutto se si ha interesse a cogliere le logiche dei tanti discorsi che dalla stessa *ratio* sono innervati e derivano.

Si inizi pensando che, ad esempio, ogni volta che un parlante preferisce la figura della colomba a quella dell'avvoltoio, questi allontana da sé il fatto che il cielo in cui volteggiano e roteano entrambi è esattamente il medesimo, così come medesima e indistinta è la terra alla quale entrambi guardano in cerca di nutrimento. Nel dimenticare che le due figurazioni sono state poste in essere per testimoniare ad altri dell'esistenza *in natura* di nature diverse, il nostro parlante dimentica anche l'ecologica equivalenza dei volatili in questione, finendo per sostituire al valore che i due uccelli hanno *di per sé* quello che a loro è stato *assegnato* dalla *ratio* dell'economia valoriale che li ha figurati come distinti e diversi.

Se visto in quest'ottica, il processo che conduce alla messa in ombra del fatto che colombe e avvoltoi convivano in uno stesso dominio di possibilità e obbediscano alle stesse logistiche del moto possibile è tutt'altro che succedaneo o di poco conto: la messa in ombra dell'unità di misura dell'equivalenza è, in verità, il primo atto di fondamento. Un atto tanto fondamentale da stare sullo sfondo di tutte le imprese volte alla creazione di un 'bene comune', di una 'visione condivisa', di una 'prospettiva generale', di una 'verità collettiva'. Tutti gli atti d'oggettivazione pagano il dazio della rimozione, della messa in ombra e dell'oblio, come nettamente scandito dalle parole di Max Horkheimer e Theodor Adorno poste in chiusura di uno dei paragrafi dei loro *Appunti e schizzi*, apertosi con l'eloquente titolo francese *Le prix du progrès*:

> Ma il dominio permanente sulla natura, la tecnica medica e non medica, attinge la sua forza da questo accecamento, ed è resa possibile solo dall'oblio. Perdita del ricordo come condizione trascendentale della scienza. Ogni reificazione è un oblio. (Horkheimer, Adorno 1966, 246)

È solo al prezzo dell'omissione dell'equivalenza fondamentale che accomuna tutti i volatili che il parlante può ritenere che le colombe siano giuste e pure mentre gli avvoltoi siano spietati e sinistri: una volta rimossa l'equivalenza allora l'atto di disposizione ecologica diventa possibile. Diversamente da così, ossia vedendo i due volatili come elementi di un medesimo ecosistema, essi apparirebbero identici ed equivalenti: accomunati dall'abitare e dal convivere entro uno stesso cielo, tutti i volatili obbediscono alle stesse 'leggi' ambientali e sottostanno alla medesima

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ergonomia del moto atmosferico, risentendo di identici vincoli. L'insieme dei volatili potrebbe anche essere identificato e descritto a partire dalle comuni competenze cinetiche e dall'identico saper volteggiare nel cielo, vedere dall'alto, cogliere le cose in prospettiva, osservare scenari più ampi, stare *super partes*.

Ma l'identità, è evidente, non serve allo svolgersi della *ratio* che governa il discorso sull'utile, così come l'uguaglianza mal si presta a fungere da ancella delle logiche di sfruttamento, che invece necessitano di divisioni nette e di chiare significazioni dialettiche, partitive e distinguenti. All'esercizio del giudizio, infatti, servono gli emblemi delle parti, sicché da scegliere con chi stare: da un lato la colomba, che rappresenta l'interesse d'insieme, l'operare per i tanti, l'agire ecologico, dall'altro l'avvoltoio, figura che ritrae l'indole egoistica, l'operare per sé, lo spietato agire economico. Assegnati i ruoli di parte, ora può iniziare l'esecuzione del compito. Tant'è che larga parte della storia dell'umano discorso ecologico si regge e si muove, come vedremo più avanti, a partire dalla pretesa di potere e di sapere organizzare e disporre nel migliore dei modi il senso degli elementi di un *habitat*, sicché questo risulti più ordinato, logico, regolare, fedele testimone e specchio di 'leggi naturali'. Ma ciò non basta a rimuovere dalla scena del visibile il fatto che ogni umana pretesa di poter ri-disporre logicamente la logistica dell'*habitat* si basi sulla rimozione dell'equivalenza fondamentale dell'*habitat* stesso, il quale, invece, non necessita di alcuna 'altra ecologia' – tanto più se antropocentricamente organizzata e disposta – per continuare a procedere.

Facile, però, comprendere perché la rimozione dell'equivalenza fondamentale delle cose risulti tanto longeva quanto necessaria: se essa non si desse, la messa in ordine dell'*habitat* proposta dal conseguente discorso ecologico risulterebbe smaccatamente relativa, accessoria, motivata, interessata, ossia *di parte*. L'arbitrarietà del discorso sarebbe troppo visibile e semplice da denunciare. Si pensi, a proposito, alla *ratio* economica che scandisce l'andamento dell'odierno dibattito ecologico circa il fenomeno detto antropocene,[4] il quale mostra a chiare lettere come ogni umano discorso sull'ordinamento ecologico sia costitutivamente di parte e surrettiziamente basato sull'idea che l'*habitat* debba corrispondere e obbedire, di volta in volta, alle specifiche logiche storiche dell'umano viverci, a ciò che il regnante di turno reputa utile o dannoso, a ciò che questi ritiene economicamente vantaggioso.

Tuttavia, è proprio la naturalizzazione del discorso di parte a rendere invisibile ai parlanti l'effettivo regime ecologico ed economico in cui si svolge il convivio fra i volatili. Un discorso che, mentre riduce all'invi-

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[4] Cf., ad es., Crutzen, Williams 2013; Steffen, Grinevald, Crutzen, McNeill 2011; Steffen, Crutzen, McNeill 2007; Crutzen, Steffen 2003; Crutzen, Stoermer 2000. Inoltre, Clark 2015; Purdy 2015.

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sibilità i principi del convivio, coi suoi distinguo consegna alla sfera del visibile inediti ritratti del conflitto fra le parti, poste in essere a partire dall'esempio 'naturale': in quanto opposte e avverse, le figure della colomba e dell'avvoltoio non solo servono l'una all'altra, completandosi per paragone, ma assieme servono la causa prima dei distinguo discorsivi, ossia l'operazione di divisione e ordinamento dell'identico. Infatti, rimossa l'equivalenza dei volatili, le dialettiche circa il governo del territorio e delle risorse naturali possono procedere. Dopo aver disposto da un lato le 'colombe dell'ecologia' e dell'altro gli 'avvoltoi dell'economia' il discorso ordinatore può muoversi innanzi, invitando le parti al tavolo della trattativa e suggerendo loro – come nell'antico adagio «una mano lava l'altra e assieme lavano il viso» – nuove forme di 'convivenza ecologica'. La stessa semiosi che ha distinto e diviso l'insieme dei volatili divide e distingue e fra loro anche l'ecologismo altruista dall'egoismo economico, autorizzando entrambi a procedere.

Dunque, fintanto che la condizione di possibilità del discorso ecologico sarà data dalla rimozione dell'equivalenza dell'*habitat* – e fintanto che tale rimozione, per suo conto, sarà necessaria per lo svolgersi dei processi di sfruttamento economico dell'*habitat* –, ogni proposta di organizzazione dell'ecosistema, nonostante le dichiarazioni di intenti di coloro che la promuovono, rimarrà incapace di esercizio autonomo e indipendente, sicché vulnerabile ed esposta alle incursioni degli avvoltoi dell'economia predatoria che operano in quei frangenti nello stesso cielo (cf., ad es., Figueroa 2017; Brown, Timmerman 2015; Ward 2009).

È in quest'ottica che l'indagine storica dei discorsi sull'ambiente e dei modi di governarlo può trarre vantaggio dallo studio dei materiali e dei testimoni provenienti da altri tempi e da altri luoghi, alcuni dei quali vado qui di seguito ad analizzare. Materiali che esprimono con eloquenza la fondamentale compromissione fra discorso ecologico e governo economico. Questo può dirsi a partire da molte delle opere classiche votate all'organizzazione logica dell'ecosistema e degli elementi naturali, i quali, al di fuori del discorso dell'umano, risulterebbero in tutto e per tutto equivalenti. Opere e testimoni storici che, sebbene provengano da tempi lontani e da tradizioni diverse, ambiscono sempre a fissare nero su bianco il senso e il significato da dare ai rapporti fra l'animale umano e l'insieme dell'*habitat* dei viventi. Opere che ci informano dei modi in cui, per secoli, le società hanno diversificato le maniere di valorizzare e trarre utile dall'uso dell'acqua, del fuoco, dell'aria e della terra (cf., ad es., Morris 2015).

A simili opere è dunque necessario tornare al fine di scorgere il dettaglio della comune logica usufruttuaria con cui, da secoli, l'insieme degli elementi naturali – proprio come l'insieme dei volatili – è continuamente diviso e distinto.

2 *Divide et impera*. Sulle strategie semiotiche che obliano la simbiosi fra ecologia ed economia

Ho chiamato in causa la semiosi divisiva sottostante alle figure ideal-tipiche della colomba e dell'avvoltoio per mostrare come la distinzione discorsiva e valoriale di un insieme – quello dei volatili – stia alla base sia dei modi in cui l'umano dispone e organizza il reale sia delle logiche con cui questi governa il suo rapporto con l'ambiente e coi suoi cospecifici. La semiosi che realizza e concreta il distinguo fra i volatili è la stessa che distingue e divide l'umano dall'insieme dei suoi simili, generando i segni e le linee di confine che separano fra loro schiere di tipi, ranghi, razze, classi e nature umane. È così che gli esemplari del medesimo umano finiscono per apparire diversi, per indossare più spoglie e risultare difformi: malgrado identici, fra loro gli umani non sono uguali.

Sono gli umani stessi, infatti, a sostenere che fra loro vi sono colombe e avvoltoi, sicché la generica natura umana risulti segnata, distinta e divisa in specie e appaia netto il confine fra gli uguali ma diversi. Riproducendo all'infinito gli idealtipi astratti di 'bontà' e di 'cattiveria', i parlanti giustificano i distinguo concreti fra ciò che è utile e ciò che è dannoso, scavando un fossato imaginifico tra lo spazio naturale e quello umano,[5] fra il dominio ecologico e quello economico.

L'atto della divisione, perciò, è l'operazione di fondo di ogni ordinamento, come testimoniato dai secoli di instancabile riflessione sullo stesso. Da secoli, infatti, la semiosi del 'dividere' è sottoposta a scrutinio: essa è soggetta a vaglio già nei frammenti dell'opera *Peri Physeos* di Parmenide, mentre il catalogo delle partizioni e delle coppie di opposti di scuola aristotelica, intitolato *Divisioni*,[6] ne illustra l'utilità degli effetti. L'utilità di una particolare maniera di dividere in parti, però, non risulta mai tale per tutti, tant'è che, come mostra il caso di Pitagora (cf. Heller-Roazen 2017), è possibile criticarne plausibilità e tenuta. Tuttavia, l'atto di divisione è ancora il soggetto primo del *De rerum natura* di Lucrezio, fino a fungere da architrave dell'opera alto-medievale *De divisione naturae* di

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5 Tra l'altro, se non fosse per il diverso rapporto economico che l'uomo intrattiene con le colombe e gli avvoltoi, né le prime né le seconde avrebbero la valenza e il significato che hanno (per l'uomo). Tant'è vero che, siccome il dividere in parti precede il governo dell'uso e del commercio delle stesse, non vi è regnante che possa rinunciare ad avere al suo fianco schiere di abili tecnici specializzati nella divisione delle risorse, facendo tuttavia in modo che costoro non siano sospettabili di connivenza. Cf. Gaukroger 2016; Morton 2016; Ingrao, Israel 2006. Inoltre, rispetto all'area sudasiatica, Gadgil, Guha [2004] 2005.

6 Come si vedrà più avanti, per molti degli autori di trattati e di opere speculative in lingua sanscrita l'indagine circa lo statuto e il fondamento delle 'divisioni' (*bheda*) del reale è cruciale, non diversamente dall'importanza che alle stesse veniva assegnata negli ambiti aristotelici. Cf., ad es., Rositto 2005. Un problema, quello della distinzione delle 'parti' dal 'tutto', che continuava a sollecitare l'attenzione di Spinoza. Cf. Di Vona 1969, 189-250.

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Scoto Eriugena. L'atto del dividere, inoltre, dilaga in tutti i campi dell'operare umano, da quelli della divisione dei ruoli nelle corti medievali, (cf. Kantorowicz [1989] 2012) fino alle politiche economiche del *diviser pour régner* di Luigi XI.

La semiosi del dividere fonda dunque tutti i campi, *in primis* quello del governo politico del territorio: il 'dividere' (*teilen*), infatti, è ancora al centro del discorso teologico-politico di Carl Schmitt, che lo immagina come perno fra il mero 'pascolare' (*weiden*) e il 'conquistare' (*nehmen*; cf. Schmitt 1972, 293-312. Inoltre, Schmitt 1991, 54-160).

L'atto del porre in essere distinguo e divisioni è perciò alla base di ogni 'forma di ordinamento' (*nomos*; cf. Schmitt 1991, 70-1), grazie al quale l'indivisa potenzialità del reale viene subordinata a specifici interessi pratici e a scopi economici particolari.

Sebbene l'umano trovi utile frazionare e dividere in parti l'insieme del reale, non è difficile vedere che alla base di questo suo operare giace una fondamentale contraddizione, un viscerale conflitto d'interessi: così come accade fra l'oggetto e il soggetto, l'umano è sia servo sia padrone di sé, sia schiavo sia signore del mondo. Anche quando questi si fregia narcisisticamente delle vesti serafiche della colomba, nell'ombra di sé resta latente l'indole oscura del feroce avvoltoio: per ricacciare nel buio questo scomodo chiasmo l'umano infligge a se stesso i distinguo, si ostina nel dividere il mondo. È per la semiosi del differenziarsi dal mondo e dai simili che questi si immagina chiuso, compatto, finito e compiuto.

Ma tutto ciò non basta a sedare l'ambiguo, a estinguere il chiasmo che dice altrimenti: sebbene l'umano parli del mondo fingendo di non esserne parte – come se dal suo dire non traesse alcun vantaggio –, tutti i suoi *diktat* sono chiara espressione d'interesse, orientati dall'utile, sospinti dal bisogno di trovare profitto per sé e per i simili. Ogni umano è sia apostolo sia apologeta di sé, così come della specie di cui è parte. Sebbene distingua i suoi simili in ranghi, questi è comunque figlio ed erede – più o meno consapevole e consenziente – dei grandi inquisitori dell'ecosistema, degli iniziatori dell'era dell'antropocene, dei padri fondatori della signoria umana sul globo terraqueo. Da questo lignaggio l'umano trae anche una fede passiva, una forma d'idolatrico culto. Senza aver mai fatto alcuna scelta votiva, l'umano è fervente devoto di sé, adepto della 'religione' dell'antropocentrismo,[7] una sorta di culto dogmatico che infligge credenze, riti e liturgie, rispetto alle quali – a differenza di ogni altra religione

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7   Da più parti, negli ultimi decenni – rimando qui in particolare a Wilson 1984 –, si è levato l'appello allo smascheramento delle strategie mimetiche dell'antropocentrismo, disvelando le quali l'animale umano scende dal trono su cui si è issato e si spoglia delle menzognere vesti sia dell'avvoltoio sia della colomba. Cf., ad es., Tobias, Morrison 2017; Morton 2016; Ward 2009.

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generata dalle umane fattezze – non può darsi né eresia né tanto meno apostasia.[8]

Per celare a se stesso un siffatto scenario, il medesimo procede sotto mentite spoglie, allontanando da sé tutto quel che lo inquieta e diffondendo nel mondo quel che in sé lo divide. Per questo si reputa diverso dagli altri viventi e vede diversità anche fra i propri simili, che distingue a partire dai modi in cui si rapportano ai viventi, alcuni degni d'encomio altri detestabili: è con grida allarmanti che un'umana 'colomba' segnala la presenza di simili che si comportano da 'avvoltoi'. Ma la colomba è tale poiché indossa una veste, appartiene a un partito, è portavoce di un gruppo e ne testimonia la fede. Tant'è che l'avvoltoio accusato la guarda basito, non vede il perché stia gridando in tal modo. Quest'ultimo, infatti, sentendosi offeso, rovescia la scena e mostra innocente le ragioni sensate del proprio operato.

Per mostrare l'invadenza delle forme di miopia che derivano da siffatta pregiudiziale del partigiano ricorro a uno scritto di Tacito (c. 55-120 d.C.), ossia alle pagine in cui lo storico romano è intento nel descrivere le campagne di conquista in Britannia del legato Agricola. In esse Tacito richiama le parole di Calgaco, uno dei capi caledoni schierato coi Britanni, da questi pronunciate per incitare i propri alleati all'imminente scontro in difesa del mondo reputato proprio. Parole oltraggiose e taglienti, ma che in realtà Tacito impiega per dar lustro ai romani, visto che son pronunciate da uno dei capi dei temuti Britanni, la cui forza – sempre secondo Tacito, *Agricola*, 23 – pareva tale da riuscire a mettere «un limite al valore degli eserciti e alla gloria del nome romano».

Questo il ritratto d'esordio che Calgaco fa dei romani:

Ma ora l'estremo limite della Britannia è scoperto: oltre quello non c'è popolo, non c'è altro che onde e scogli, e più ostili di essi i Romani, dalla cui tracotanza cercheresti invano di salvarti coll'ossequio e la sottomissione. Predatori del mondo, da quando alla devastazione totale sono venute meno le terre sprofondano lo sguardo anche nel mare; per

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8 Si pensi, ad esempio, alla tanto elogiata consapevolezza ecologica dei nostri giorni, la quale, però, è comunque estrusione della matrice antropocentrica. Il punto di vista da cui questa parte è anche ragione della sua miopia, che infatti rende l'umano parlante incapace di mettere a fuoco le effettive priorità e gli aspetti più preoccupanti della scena, primo fra tutti quello relativo all'impatto della specie umana sull'ecosistema: lo stesso umano che distingue e pregiudica i volatili nei termini di colombe e avvoltoi, non è in grado di fare altrettanto con se stesso. Del resto, un umano che pensasse alla sua specie nei termini di una feroce e spregiudicata famiglia di predatori sarebbe sanzionato dai propri co-specifici, che lo riporterebbero presto a immaginare il genere umano nei termini del biblico adagio secondo cui l'uomo è il dono che dio ha fatto al mondo. Ma questo è un modo surrettiziamente elettivo di pensare l'umano: è una sorta di 'falsa coscienza' che scatena invadenti forme di compiacenza, di estraneità, di auto-esonero, di non-responsabilità. Per chi si ritrae a partire dall'immagine della colomba è assai difficile riconoscersi affine – in quanto volatile – al tetro avvoltoio, tanto che la rimozione di questo vizio di forma arriva a risultargli impossibile.

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avidità, se il nemico è facoltoso, per vanagloria se è povero, tanto che né l'Oriente né l'Occidente li sazierebbe: soli fra tutti, guardano con occhio ugualmente cupido alle ricchezze e alla povertà. Depredare, trucidare, rubare essi chiamano col nome bugiardo di impero: e là dove fanno il deserto, gli dànno il nome di pace. (Arici 1959, 515)

È questo il dettato ambiguo e opaco della lotta tra simili, il quale riflette fedele quello che segna il procedere della lotta fra sé e sé che angustia ogni umano. Una lotta intestina incessante, che si riversa perfino in seno alla fangosa trincea scavata dai fanti per osteggiare l'avanzata del comune nemico. Trincea in cui si lotta anche per conquistare il primato sul modo stesso di condurre la lotta. Una lotta che perciò può assumere un numero infinito di forme, dalle più grossolane e patenti fino a quelle in cui il conflitto è quasi interamente misconosciuto.

Della variabilità delle forme di lotta sono chiara espressione proprio le tante battaglie condotte in nome della difesa dell'ecosistema, le quali, avviatesi tutte a partire da una comune condanna dell''avvoltoio' di turno, finiscono spesso col dar vita a un numero altrettanto notevole di lotte intestine: lotte fra i diversi reparti di uno stesso 'esercito' (cf., ad es., Meyer 2016; Moore 2016), oppure fra i capitani che guidano le diverse guarnigioni, i quali rivaleggiano fra loro limitandosi a mostrare reciprocamente le armi, come nei casi in cui le varie 'colombe' dell'ecologia si adoperano per esibire l'antichità ieratica della propria sensibilità ambientalista.[9]

Poiché la contesa tra gli umani circa i distinguo su cui deve incardinarsi il governo del territorio è antica come il tempo, è solo a partire dallo studio della sua storia che possiamo cercare di comprendere le ragioni della sua stessa longevità e persistenza.

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9 A riguardo di quest'ultimo aspetto, mi limito a segnalare le recenti posizioni pontificali circa la dimensione ecologica (Papa Francesco Bergoglio 2015), le quali sono il modo in cui l'istituzione cattolica prende oggi parte alla decennale competizione fra diverse 'ecologie religiose' (cf. Taylor 2010). Merita qui ricordare che è dalla fine degli anni sessanta che si è diffusa l'idea di guardare alle 'altre' tradizioni religiose in cerca di modelli alternativi di governo delle cose del mondo. In particolare, si pensi all'impiego della formula 'Buddhist Economics', introdotta dallo scritto del 1966 di Ernest Friedrich Schumacher (Schumacher 1966), da questi poi incluso nella sua celebre raccolta *Small is Beautiful* (cf. Schumacher 1973). Formula astratta ma di grande successo, tant'è che ancora oggi riempie la bocca di tanti, dai semplici *amateur* della spiritualità orientale agli emergenti guru dell'economia (cf. Brown 2017; Zsolnai 2011).

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3   Colombe e avvoltoi, ossia il medesimo sotto ingannevoli spoglie

A prescindere da quanto netto e profondo sia stato, all'inizio, il solco scavato per tracciare un confine sul manto indiviso di una spiaggia ritorna presto indistinto in forza del rifluire continuo del moto del mare. La forza che veniva dalla condizione di friabilità della sabbia – che accoglie con agio lo scavo del segno – è, allo stesso tempo, il motivo primo della sua debolezza. Similmente, il vantaggio della vicinanza del mare, che inzuppa di sé il terreno sabbioso rendendolo facile sede del solco, è la ragione prima che lo rimuove a breve dal suolo. Le parti si tengono l'una con l'altra, fornendosi assieme durezza e fragranza.

Per le stesse ragioni la semiosi dei discorsi di parte non è sufficiente a garantire la persistenza delle divisioni con cui tenta di separare l'insieme dell'ecosistema. Con l'estinzione del segno divisivo 'colombe' e 'avvoltoi' tornano entrambi volatili, abitanti di uno stesso cielo e mossi dalle medesime istanze di fondo, per quanto diversi possano sembrare i loro modi di librarsi nell'aria. Così come colombe e avvoltoi si spartiscono una stessa volta celeste, anche le diverse sagome che si stagliano sulla scena sociale derivano il dettaglio del loro contorno dal contrasto con uno sfondo comune, da cui partono tutte: malgrado ci appaiano tra loro antitetici, il profilo ieratico e benevolo del difensore dell'ordine costituito e il volto inquietante di colui che lo minaccia non solo sono entrambi ritagliati dalla medesima condizione ontica ma il confine del profilo del difensore si dissolve nell'inizio del volto del minacciante.

Guardando le cose a partire dall'equivalenza fondamentale del reale è infatti più agevole vedere che anche gli atti di figurazione della diversità umana da cui derivano i profili delle 'colombe dell'ecologismo' e degli 'avvoltoi dell'economia' risentono, in tutto e per tutto, dei vincoli e degli imperativi del medesimo ambiente d'esercizio. A coloro che invece rimuovono e dimenticano l'equivalenza di fondo dell'ecosistema, il verbo che illustra e glorifica il *logos* del proprio 'dominio familiare' (*oikos*) risulterà sempre insospettabile, puro e immacolato come una colomba, mentre i propositi e le istanze provenienti da domini d'utile diversi dal proprio gli sembreranno sempre ingiusti, triviali e sospinti dalla stessa spietata avidità che spinge l'avvoltoio, il parassita profittatore per antonomasia.

Tuttavia, per usufruire e governare l'ecosistema serve, *in primis*, circoscriverlo, definirlo, comprenderlo, orientarlo e strapparlo alla condizione inquietante – per gli animali umani – dell'anonimia del suo *telos*. C'è bisogno che le parti del mondo siano viste e intese a partire dal senso, dallo scopo e dal significato di *un* mondo, i quali vanno avidamente perseguiti, rintracciati, colti e distinti, al fine di rapportarsi al mondo *iuxta propria principia*, come si proponeva l'opera *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia* (1565) del naturalista cosentino Bernardino Telesio (1509-1588; cf. Bondì 2009).

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Per l'animale umano, dunque, non c'è modo di fissare una forma condivisa di governo dell'*oikos* senza partire da un significato e da un valore a questo riconosciuto: la gestione dell'*oikos* esige il ricorso sia a un *nomos* sia a un *logos*.

Ciò vale a dire che la dimenticanza dell'equivalenza e della simbiosi di fondo coincide con la dimenticanza della natura semiotica delle divisioni, le quali, perciò, non risultano più come frutto dell'arbitrio e delle convenzioni bensì come 'naturali' forme di vita. Una dimenticanza cruciale, dunque, poiché impedisce di vedere che ogni umano processo di sfruttamento economico[10] dell'ambiente mondo inizia dalla semiosi dell'atto ecologico per antonomasia, ossia quello della divisione e dell'ordinamento dell'ecosistema. Dimenticando la cifra dell'atto che tutto norma e distingue, è assai più difficile vedere la natura della *ratio* che ha fissato i confini, da quelli naturali a quelli geografici, da quelli di specie a quelli biologici. Sfuggendo il movente 'economico' che ha ridisposto le cose, sfugge anche il suo intimo legame col *logos* che ha deciso l'uso e l'impiego del reale, ossia la persistenza dell'umana intenzione di ri-configurare *pro domo sua* le modalità d'esistenza d'insieme: il discorso ecologico e quello economico sono entrambi figli del medesimo dio.[11]

Infatti, così come a fianco di ogni impero c'è un emporio (cf. Gommans 2010; Dale 2010), ovunque vi sia un *Homo ecologicus*, lì c'è anche un *Homo economicus*, con buona pace dei discorsi di parte (cf., ad es., Bütschi, Kriesi 1995. Inoltre, Cecchi 2013).

Per queste ragioni la scena indivisa che accoglie gli elementi costitutivi dell'*habitat* dei viventi finisce presto per fungere da mero pretesto di contese economiche, così come il dibattito circa i caratteri degli elementi naturali si subordina agli interessi degli aspiranti al governo dell'*habitat* stesso. Da questa contesa fra discorsi di parte derivano le immagini ipostatizzanti e reificanti l'oggetto 'natura',[12] il quale è il capro sacrificale da immolare sull'altare dell'ordinamento dato allo stesso dall'umana *polis*.

Di siffatta condizione abbiamo contezza a partire dalla metà degli anni novanta, momento in cui alcuni 'profeti di sventura' iniziavano a suonare

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10 Come mostrato da Giorgio Agamben, serve guardare al termine greco *oikonomia* in quanto luogo in cui è possibile ravvisare la cifra del legame fra il 'regno' e la 'gloria', fra gestione pratica e disegno provvidenziale. Dall'affollato crocevia dell'*oikonomia*, infatti, passano sia le direttive dell'ordinamento e del governo pratico del mondo sia le premonizioni e gli auspici ideali delle agenzie utopiche (cf. Agamben 2007, 83-218).

11 Ai nostri giorni, infatti, colombe dell'ecologia e avvoltoi dell'economia siedono spesso alla stessa tavola, legittimando reciprocamente i propri propositi.

12 La quale, però, potrà poi esser ri-animata e re-suscitata dai discorsi di nuove agenzie. Le tante personificazioni della natura nei termini di 'madre terra' oppure di 'Sacred Nature' ne sono riprova (cf., ad es., Lynch, Glotfelty, Armbruster 2012; Taylor 2010; Moore 2008; Gatta 2004; Orr 2002).

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il campanello d'allarme, richiamando l'attenzione dei tanti ai pericoli della 'human domination', della 'human disturbance of world ecosystems' e segnalando il rischio che la specie umana stesse diventando 'a cancer on the planet' (cf., ad es., Vitousek et al. 1997; Hannah et al. 1994; Hern 1993. Inoltre, ma più recentemente, Barnosky et al. 2011). A partire da queste denunce, infatti, è stato sempre più complesso ignorare la statura dei problemi generati dal già citato fenomeno dell'antropocene, ossia dall'impatto che l'aumento delle popolazioni umane stava avendo sulla biodiversità terrestre. Il superamento delle soglie statistiche del *population momentum* e delle *planetary boundaries* (cf., ad es., Steffen, et al. 2015), assieme all'impressionante crescita della *human biomass* – con la correlata crescita smisurata della biomassa animale necessaria al sostentamento del regime alimentare degli umani stessi –, facevano pensare a molti di essere ormai giunti a un punto di non ritorno. L'equilibrio della relazione fra le esigenze economiche e le risorse ecologiche appariva pericolosamente a rischio.

Erano quelli gli anni in cui, guardando all'ecosistema del tempo da un punto di vista paleoecologico e paleodemografico, vari studiosi iniziavano a far notare le impressionanti cifre della parabola relativa alla crescita storica del numero degli esemplari umani, sulla quale si è perciò continuato a riflettere. Penso, a proposito, alla panoramica presentata di recente da Paul J. Crutzen – insignito, nel 1995, del premio Nobel per la chimica per i suoi studi sull'ozono atmosferico –, la quale segnala che attorno a 12.000 anni fa la popolazione degli ominidi era di circa 5 milioni di esemplari, per arrivare a circa 300 milioni nell'anno 0, fino a 1.6 miliardi nel 1900. Un crescendo che lasciava presagire la condizione in cui ci troviamo ai nostri giorni, dove vive il 6 % della somma totale di esemplari di *Homo sapiens* finora vissuti sulla terra (circa 110 miliardi di unità), di cui il 50 % risiede in aree urbane e in agglomerati metropolitani (cf. Crutzen, Williams 2013). Volendo completare il quadro, a simili dati andrebbero poi accostati gli studi e le stime basate sugli indicatori demografici, le quali presentano calcoli proiettivi relativi al procedere della crescita della popolazione: nel 1950 la popolazione umana mondiale era di circa 2.5 miliardi di unità mentre alla metà del 2017 era arrivata a 7.6 miliardi. Non solo, con un tasso di crescita previsto nei termini di 1 miliardo nei prossimi 13 anni, gli umani saranno 8.6 miliardi nel 2030, attorno ai 9.8 miliardi nel 2050 e, infine, circa 11.2 miliardi nel 2100. Si noti inoltre che, mentre nel 1950 la popolazione di umani in Asia era di circa 1.4 miliardi, nel 2015 è arrivata alla soglia di 4.4 miliardi di unità, crescendo di 3 miliardi di unità in soli 65 anni (cf. United Nations 2017).

Forse perché allarmati da questi scenari – oppure perché interessati a trarne profitto –, negli ultimi anni numerosi e anche autorevoli gruppi di ricerca si sono dedicati a valutare le implicazioni ecologiche e ambientali della crescita dell'economia demografica, troppo prossima al superamento

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delle soglie della sostenibilità,[13] sollevando problemi ecologici tutt'altro che trascurabili.

Cifre e proporzioni a parte, però, il problema non è certo una novità, visto che da decine di secoli la 'natura' – ossia l'insieme degli elementi e le risorse che la costituiscono – è al centro dell'immaginativa economico-ecologica delle tante 'agenzie' che si sono votate all'organizzazione del mondo, a partire da quelle che, fin dall'antichità, si sono rese responsabili della tracciatura di cosmogonie mitiche che ordinassero l'ecosistema (cf., ad es., Lincoln 1981; Lincoln 1986). Agenzie che per secoli, *mutatis mutandis*, si sono contese il primato sull'*habitat* a colpi di ritratti 'logici' dello stesso, in forza dei quali gli elementi e le risorse del mondo venivano disposti secondo uno scenario ecologico d'insieme, figurandovi personificati, ritratti e reificati sotto forma di 'beni preziosi' e di 'cose di valore' (cf., ad es., Moore 2008).

4 Anche in India le colombe dividono e gli avvoltoi imperano sulla natura

È noto che, fin dal primo millennio a.C., in molte tradizioni intellettuali gli elementi della natura sono stati intesi alla stregua di unità di misura minimali attorno alle quali i colti e gli eruditi del tempo disponevano le loro mappe del reale (cf. Evernden 1992. Inoltre, Wulf 2015; Ball 2004). Analogamente, ossia in quanto discorso elementare, il dibattito circa il numero, la disposizione, l'interrelazione e le valenze degli 'elementi' è il *locus classicus* anche di tutte le tradizioni intellettuali che in India, dai primi secoli a.C. in poi, hanno proposto opere e trattati sui propri schemi d'ordinamento degli elementi del mondo. Evento inevitabile, diremmo, visto che il delineare la disposizione delle unità elementari del reale è l'atto semiotico per antonomasia, in quanto permette l'individuazione e la determinazione di tutti i fenomeni, da quelli chimici a quelli morali, da quelli naturali a quelli cognitivi.

Rispetto a ciò le tradizioni intellettuali dell'area sudasiatica non fanno certo eccezione: anche in quella parte di mondo colombe e avvoltoi solcano, da secoli, gli stessi cieli. Anche lì gli avvoltoi che governano il regno siedono al fianco di auliche e gloriose colombe, prodighe di dotti pronunciamenti teologici in favore della divina matrice della natura ed esortanti alla cura della madre terra. Ma anche in India, e non solo in tempi recenti (cf. Framarin 2013), siffatti appelli sono spesso rimasti sulla carta, sterile lettera morta, parola impotente di fronte alla voracità degli appetiti

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[13] Oggi si parla di *Ecocriticism*, ossia di uno sguardo scientifico intento ad analizzare e comprendere il modo in cui il variare del discorso umano sull'ecologia risenta dell'ingerenza delle logiche produttive ed economiche del momento (cf. Clark 2015; Garrard 2004. Inoltre, Morton 2016).

economici. Tant'è vero che, a fronte del suo essere – almeno secondo il dettato della vulgata orientalistica – uno dei 'paesi più religiosi del mondo', l'India è oggi uno dei luoghi più densamente popolati della terra e grava in difficili condizioni ecologiche.

Eppure anche in India il discorso sull'ordine ecologico è in atto da secoli, almeno a partire dai tempi in cui sono state redatte le grandi opere epiche in lingua sanscrita – che comunque, merita ricordare, sono intimamente legate agli ambienti di corte e ai potentati politici (cf. Hiltebeitel 2001) –, all'interno delle quali si è cercato di rimandare a un dio l'origine dell'ambiente mondo e di conferire uno statuto e un ordinamento 'sacro' non solo alla terra – in quanto luogo dell'esercizio umano –, ma anche alle forme animali e vegetali che dalla terra dipendono. Tuttavia, malgrado le apparenze, anche le colombe che hanno redatto simili opere non volavano in un cielo diverso da quello degli avvoltoi che governavano la terra, ragion per cui anche le loro 'ecologie' – ossia le loro maniere di disporre le gerarchie e le tassonomie della natura – non sono né estranee al profitto derivabile dalle stesse né tanto meno immuni alle lusinghe economiche provenienti da coloro che si prodigano nel farle conoscere negli ambienti che contano.

Sono esemplari, a riguardo, i tanti discorsi ecologici che, partendo dalla naturalizzazione della scala alimentare, giungono alla naturalizzazione della scala etologica per poi approdare alla naturalizzazione della scala sociale (cf., ad es., Smith 1994; Seaford 2012; Lincoln 1981; Lincoln 1986).

Anche in India, dunque, le 'anime belle' che indagano con perizia gli elementi e i costituenti dell'ecosistema risentono del vantaggio economico che può scaturire dallo sfruttamento della conoscenza della condizione ecologica. *Anche* in India, come ovunque, l'atto di distinzione e di ripartizione di una non ben identificabile 'natura' in 'elementi' non è solo un atto di conoscenza – animato dalla nobile e pura *curiositas*, fine a se stessa (semmai cosa simile potesse mai darsi)[14] –, bensì un atto semiotico di distinzione e di dominio *del* e *sul* mondo, inclusi tutti gli esseri senzienti e inanimati che lo popolano (cf. Banks Findly 2008; Rambelli 2001; Smith 1994, 208-86; Coccia 2016): di fatto, esibire e imporre il proprio modo di intendere le maniere in cui le parti partecipano del tutto,[15] costituendolo, coincide con la presa di possesso della natura e di tutto ciò che vi è *in* natura.

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14 Situandosi all'interno di un ampio spettro di posizioni – ossia dagli scritti di Habermas fino a quelli di Bourdieu –, molti autori hanno sostenuto non solo la necessità di abbandonare l'immagine di kantiana memoria del 'sapere per il sapere' – dalla quale discende quella del 'conoscere disinteressato'–, ma anche l'importanza di ravvisare proprio negli atti palesemente 'disinteressati' i luoghi in cui è possibile cogliere in flagranza di reato l'interesse che opera (cf. Bourdieu 1998, 17-134; Habermas 1990).

15 Il termine sanscrito – solitamente inteso come il corrispettivo di 'natura' – è il femminile *prakṛti*, il quale rimanda all'idea di una realtà composta, ossia a una 'natura' in quanto 'costituita dai costituenti' (cf. Jacobsen 1999).

L'ingegno dei diversi partecipanti a questo dibattito, infatti, si rende visibile proprio nell'occasione della determinazione e della divisione degli 'elementi' stessi, del loro numero, della loro condizione ontica, delle loro proprietà, dei loro rapporti con gli altri elementi, della loro natura e della loro origine. Essendo finalizzato all'organizzazione elementare del procedere delle cose del mondo, suddetto dibattito ha visto schierarsi diverse fazioni, i cui esponenti hanno dato vita a un'accesa dialettica.

Malgrado vi siano numerosi testimoni più antichi, è almeno a partire dalla porzione nota come 'Discorsi sugli elementi' (*Dhātukathā*) dell'*Abhidhammapiṭaka* della tradizione *theravāda* buddhista, che la contesa circa il numero e il modo di intendere gli 'elementi radicali' (*dhātu*)[16] ha preso forma strutturata e analitica (cf. Karunadasa 1964).

Autori appartenenti a tradizioni intellettuali coeve a questa, a noi note come *sāṃkhya* – termine che caratterizza il loro intento 'analitico ed enumerativo' –, hanno impiegato il composto *bhūtatattva* per indicare gli 'esistenti' (*bhūta*) 'elementari' (*tattva*), il cui dettaglio risulta dalla antica lista dei 'cinque [elementari] esistenti' (*pañcabhūtāni*), enumerati secondo un gradiente d'intensità, dal più rado al più fitto: essi sono distinti in etere/spazio (*ākāśa*), aria/vento (*vāyu*), ardente/fuoco (*tejas*), acqua (*ap*) e terra (*pṛthivī*) (cf. Larson, Bhattacharya 1987). L'insieme di questi stessi *bhūtatattva* è talvolta ulteriormente distinto in 'elementi fini/rarefatti' (*sūkṣmabhūta*) e 'elementi grossi/densi' (*sthūlabhūta*).

All'interno delle tradizioni intellettuali dette *vaiśeṣika*, invece, è più frequente il ricorso al composto *bhūtadravya*, col quale si indicano gli 'esistenti' (*bhūta*) in quanto 'sostanze' (*dravya*) tangibili (cf. Halbfass 1992; Misra 1936). Anche in questo caso essi sono elencati ricorrendo al medesimo gradiente pentadico: etere/spazio (*ākāśa*), aria (*vāyu*), fuoco (*tejas*), acque (*āpas*) e terra (*pṛthivī*).

L'abbondanza delle variazioni sul tema, però, non deve sorprendere, sapendo quanto ambìta è la meta e alta la posta in palio: anche nell'India dei primi secoli a.C. l'opera di individuazione, definizione e disposizione dei costituenti elementari del reale è reputata di primaria importanza.[17] Del resto, è solo dopo aver deciso quante e quali debbano essere le 'unità di misura' del reale – *tattva*, *dhātu*, *dravya* o *mahābhūta* –, che si può far procedere l'*ars combinatoria* che mira a 'vivisezionare' l'indiviso corpo del reale: è dalla preliminare opera di distinzione dei fondamentali che deriva tutto l'ordinamento pratico delle forme di prossimità, di parentela, d'affiliazione, di valore e di senso.

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16   Segnalo qui il legame fra questa accezione del termine *dhātu* e quella in uso presso le tradizioni grammaticali del tempo – per le quali *dhātu* è la radice verbale –, che infatti è intimamente legato alle forme dell''essere' poste in auge dal linguaggio.

17   Tante altre sono le tradizioni intellettuali che proseguono l'impresa della classificazione del reale in elementi base (cf. Baindur 2015).

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Inoltre, poiché strettamente legata al governo del reale, l'opera di distinzione e di definizione dell'ordinamento degli elementi è la madre di tutte le contese, palesatesi almeno a partire dall'antico dibattito attorno ai modi di concepire e rappresentare la relazione fra le cause e gli effetti (cf., ad es., Jurewicz 2000). Esempio mirabile di siffatta contesa è dato dalla proposta di un modello di realtà avente solo quattro elementi avanzata dagli esponenti di antiche tradizioni 'materialiste' – oppure 'mondane' (*lokāyata*) –,[18] il quale puntava a spaginare il sistema di vincoli istituito dalle etiche retributive del tempo.

Dunque, anche nell'area sudasiatica, non diversamente da quanto accaduto al fianco del secolare dibattito attorno agli 'elementi' sviluppatosi in ambito mediterraneo, dalle diverse concezioni del reale sono state tratte diverse maniere di condurre la propria vita al suo interno, palesando così il surrettizio accordo fra i discorsi sulla natura e quelli sull'etica, fra gli ordinamenti fisici e quelli politici, fra i modi di intendere il legame fra il tutto e l'infinita gradazione delle sue parti. Anche in questi contesti, infatti, i processi di ordinamento e di classificazione degli elementi dell'ecosistema sono spesso sfociati nel 'mostrare' l'esistenza di uno specifico ordine socio-economico, sicché si capisse che tutto ciò era dovuto alla presenza di un ordinatore primo. Fissato il principio, ne segue la norma, di cui si fa latore colui che mostra l'ordine ordinato dall'ordinatore, il rappresentante dell'*ordo ordinatus*.

Che questa sia la logica che innerva i pur diversi discorsi di parte è evidente da vari testimoni letterari, alcuni dei quali saranno l'oggetto dei paragrafi a seguire.

5 La colomba del dio – l'*Homo ecologicus* –, che divide e ordina

Rivolgo ora la mia attenzione a una porzione di una delle più antiche opere epiche in lingua sanscrita, ossia alla sezione del sesto libro del *Mahābhārata* nota come *Bhagavadgītā*. Opera che reputo di particolare rilevanza per la tematica in questione poiché la figura protagonista della conversazione messa in scena all'interno delle diciotto 'lezioni' (*adhyāya*) della *Bhagavadgītā* è quella di un dio che si auto-proclama, parlando in prima persona, fonte primeva di ogni ordinamento. Questi, infatti, non ha alcuna remora nell'indicarsi quale «padre dell'universo manifesto, madre, ordinatore e grande antenato» (*pitā 'ham asya jagato | mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ ||*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 9.17); «dimora dell'origine e della dissoluzione [del mondo]» (*prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṃ*) (*Bhagavadgītā*,

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18 Mi riferisco qui alle testimonianze circa il riconoscimento dello 'statuto nominalistico' (*vāgmātratvāt*) delle sostanze materiche da parte di esponenti *lokāyata* (cf. Nanjio 1923, 208).

9.18); «origine di tutto quel che è originato e da cui tutto procede» (*ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo | mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate ||*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.8); «principio, metà e fine di tutti i viventi» (*aham ādiś ca madhyaṃ ca | bhūtānām anta eva ca ||*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.20); «seme vitale di tutti i viventi» (*yac cā 'pi sarvabhūtānāṃ | bījaṃ tad aham arjuna ||*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.39); «matrice di ogni matrice» e «datore del seme di ogni genitore» (*ahaṁ bījapradaḥ pitā*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 14.3-4);[19] «[fonte] perenne di vita delle particole viventi» (*mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke | jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ ||*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 15.7); «forza sostenitrice e fornitore della linfa nutriente di tutti gli organismi vegetali» (*dhārayāmy aham ojasā || puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ |*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 15.13).

È all'interno di questa cornice esplicitamente ecologica, dunque, che lo stesso testo elenca e organizza l'ordine dei fattori costitutivi della natura, ossia i 'cinque grandi elementi' (*pañcamahābhūta*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 7.4, 13.6) di cui è composto l'intero mondo. Fra questi, ad esempio, l'elemento fuoco (*agni*), cifra fondamentale dell'intero ecosistema, guadagna statuto divino (*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.23, 11.39, 15.12) e pervade di sé ogni angolo del mondo, fino al remoto spazio in cui arde il fuoco della digestione di ogni vivente (*Bhagavadgītā*, 15.14, che richiama quanto già indicato nell'antica *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 5.9.1). L'elemento aria trova anch'esso condizione divina (*Bhagavadgītā*, 11.39), che così presenzia in ogni vita sotto forma di 'soffio vitale' (*prāṇa*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 4.27-29, 8.10-12, 15.14). Pure l'elemento acqua è riconfigurato, come nel caso in cui, sotto le spoglie del fiume *gaṅgā*, diviene espressione terrestre e fruibile del dio (*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.31).[20] Lo stesso potrebbe dirsi per l'elemento terra (*bhūmi*), il quale risulta sia in quanto sostanza materica sia in forma personificata (*Bhagavadgītā*, 7.4).

Ad un primo sguardo l'ordinamento a cui rimandano tutti questi versi potrebbe apparire neutrale e innocuo: poiché descrive una sorta di olismo-ecosistemico esso potrebbe venir preso a modello da coloro che sono alla ricerca di esempi di 'ecologie religiose' non gerarchiche, disposte a estendere a tutte le forme di vita, animali o vegetali che siano, pari dignità d'esistenza. A sostegno di siffatta lettura 'panica' del testo potrebbero essere citate varie altre porzioni dell'opera (ad es. *Bhagavadgītā*, 7.4-12), delle quali è senz'altro rappresentativa la seguente:

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19 Cf. *Bhagavadgītā*, 14.3-4 (3. *mama yonir mahad brahma | tasmin garbhaṃ dadhāmy aham || saṃbhavaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ | tato bhavati bhārata || 4. sarvayoniṣu kaunteya | mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ || tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir | ahaṁ bījapradaḥ pitā ||*).

20 In *Bhagavadgītā*, 11.39 l'elemento acqua è anche riferito al dio Varuṇa.

12. Quello splendore, che, accolto nel sole, illumina tutto l'universo, quello che è nella luna e nel fuoco, sappi che è il mio splendore. 13. Penetrando nel suolo, io sostengo gli esseri colla mia forza e divenendo il succo del Soma [inteso qui come la Luna], nutro tutte le erbe. 14. Divenendo il fuoco della vita, occupo il corpo dei viventi, e, unito col soffio ascendente e discendente, assimilo le quattro specie di cibo. (*Bhagavadgītā*, 15.12-14) [21]

Col tipico candore del puro verbo del 'testo sacro' – come vorrebbe far oggi intendere una certa vulgata dell'ecologismo religioso –, la 'divina colomba' della *Bhagavadgītā* pare non aver altro interesse se non quello di invitare il lettore a divenire 'consapevole' delle implicazioni ecologiche del suo vissuto, assumendosi le 'proprie responsabilità' verso il mondo naturale in cui abitiamo.

Tuttavia, come già più volte segnalato, l'aulico verbo delle 'colombe sacre' non solo non viene dallo spazio empireo, ma opera in seno alla medesima volta celeste in cui ugualmente volano tutti i volatili, avvoltoi inclusi: poiché anche la colomba, come l'avvoltoio, necessita di mezzi di sostentamento e di risorse ecologiche essa non può essere immune alle istanze che governano economicamente l'ordinamento dell'ecosistema da cui le risorse sono tratte. L'ingerenza degli imperativi economici, infatti, innerva carsicamente tutto il testo della *Bhagavadgītā*, come è evidente nel caso della sua settima lezione.

In apertura di questa porzione dell'opera, infatti, il dio Kṛṣṇa, appena prima di svelare ad Arjuna gli aspetti più reconditi del reale, stabilisce alcune importanti linee di confine, per il cui tramite distingue e separa, innanzi tutto, proprio gli elementi che costituiscono l'insieme 'natura' (*prakṛti*, ossia la 'costituente', ove *kṛti* sta per 'fare' o 'porre' e *pra-* per 'prima' o 'davanti', 'anteposta', sicché 'costituente') (cf. Jacobsen 1999):

7.4. Terra, acqua, fuoco, vento e spazio, raziocinio, intelligenza ed egoità, di questi consiste la mia natura (*prakṛti*), distinta in otto [elementi]

(*bhūmir āpo'nalo vāyuḥ | khaṃ mano buddhir eva ca || ahaṃkāra itīyaṃ me | bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā ||*).

La logica economica che motiva e ordina questa separazione, però, si coglie appieno solo leggendo il verso successivo, che gli è strettamente correlato e che distingue ulteriormente una prima 'natura' da una sorta di 'oltre natura' (*parāprakṛti*):

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7.5. Questa qui è senz'altro inferiore (*aparā*) all'altra natura (*prakṛti*), che devi invece intendere come la mia [natura] superiore (*parā*), ossia, oh eroe dalle possenti braccia, l'essere vivente (*jīvabhūta*), attraverso il quale questo mondo (*jagat*) è retto.

(*Apareyam itas tv anyāṃ | prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parām || jīvabhūtāṃ mahābāho | yayedaṃ dhāryate jagat ||*)

Quasi alla stregua del distinguo manicheo fra 'materia' e 'spirito' (Pagano 2011; Garelli 2010), con questa separazione il dio protagonista della *Bhagavadgītā* stabilisce il primato di una 'natura' su di un'altra, sicché l'interlocutore Arjuna, identificandosi con la 'natura superiore' (*parāprakṛti*), si erga con forza su quella inferiore e non ne sia più soggetto e schiavo, come ha invece mostrato di essere nelle prime due lezioni del dialogo fra le due figure centrali del testo.

A tal fine, infatti, si sono svolte le precedenti lezioni dell'opera, le quali sono servite a illustrare i pregi e i difetti delle differenti persuasioni del tempo circa i modi e i metodi del conoscere e dell'operare nel mondo. Le parti dell'opera che vanno dal verso 2.11 fino al 6.47, infatti, rappresentano una vera e propria ascesa propedeutica ai contenuti più alti del dialogo, che il dio inizia a rivelare ad Arjuna proprio dall'inizio della settima lezione in poi, la quale segna perciò l'inizio del 'sapere sovrano' e del 'sommo segreto' (*rājavidyā*, *rājaguhya*),[22] il cui vertice è posto al centro delle sei lezioni di mezzo *Bhagavadgītā*.[23]

Nelle restanti parte della settima lezione (*Bhagavadgītā*, 7.6-30), il richiamo all'operare d'accordo coll'ordinamento 'naturale' è costante, così come non manca la stigmatizzazione di coloro che venissero meno allo stesso dandosi come alibi il dettato di altre divinità (*anyadevata*) e il dover assecondare 'ambizioni' (*kāma*) dettate dalla propria 'natura' (*Bhagavadgītā*, 7.20) (*prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā*). Infine, nell'ultimo verso

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22   Cf., ad es., *Bhagavadgītā*, 9.1 (*idaṃ tu te guhyatamaṃ* |); 9.2 (*rājavidyā rājaguhyaṃ | pavitram idam uttamam* ||); 15.20 (*iti guhyatamaṃ śāstram | idam uktaṃ mayānagha* ||); 18.63-64 (63. *iti te jñānam ākhyātaṃ | guhyad guhyataraṃ mayā || vimṛśyaitadaśeṣeṇa | yathecchasi tathā kuru* || 64. *sarvaguhyatamaṃ bhūyaḥ | śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ || iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti | tato vakṣyāmi te hitam* ||).

23   A questo proposito, ossia rispetto alle maniere di ordinare e intendere il discorso con cui il dio ordina il mondo, rimando alla glossa di Viśvanātha Cakravartin (c. 1660-1750) alla *Bhagavadgītā*, nella quale l'esegeta bengali organizza la gerarchia delle diverse porzioni della conversazione tramite l'eloquente metafora della gemma e dello scrigno: protetta dal fondo dello scrigno, ossia la parte delle sei lezioni d'inizio, e dal suo coperchio, ossia la porzione delle ultime sei lezioni, la 'gemma' dell'insegnamento del dio giace nel cuore dello scrigno, ossia nella nona lezione, la quale è al centro delle sei lezioni di mezzo (cf. Viśvanātha Cakravartin, *Sārārthavarṣinī ad Bhagavadgītā*, 18.63). Inoltre, per un diverso modo di intendere le partizioni interne alla *Bhagavadgītā*, Jezic 1979.

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della lezione (*Bhagavadgītā*, 7.30), la divinità indica con enfasi che coloro che 'vedono' (*vidus*) propriamente le cose, guardano ad essa come all''essere che sovrasta [gli esseri]' (*adhibhūta*) e come alla 'divinità che sovrasta [le divinità]' (*adhidāiva*), tutte entità rispetto alla cui posizione nell'ordinamento ecologico il testo si diffonderà nel suo seguitare.**24**

Ma a quali esigenze risponde questo particolare tipo di ordinamento ecologico dei viventi?

Senz'altro risente del bisogno – tutto economico – di dover subordinare l'operato del singolo vivente al più ampio disegno d'ordinamento del mondo, come peraltro risulta dal vincolo che il testo stabilisce fra l'operare dell'intero ecosistema e l'agire umano, i cui 'atti' (*karman*) non sono veramente compiuti dall'agente, bensì dalla 'natura' (*prakṛti*) e dai suoi 'costituenti' (*guṇa* [anche 'fune', 'corda']).**25** In questo modo, ossia obbedendo al ruolo assegnatogli dall'ordinamento *ecologico* che partecipa della 'natura più alta', il vivente si allinea al modo più *economico* di procedere del reale, contribuendo utilmente allo stesso e ottenendo così la più alta forma di retribuzione, ossia la 'liberazione' (*mokṣa*) (*Bhagavadgītā*, 18.66).**26**

Il serafico e lieve timbro di voce del 'divino volatile', che finora si era limitato a indicare ai viventi i capisaldi dell'ordinamento ecologico che governa il reale, muta qui radicalmente di tono: quel che finora appariva come una neutrale descrizione degli elementi dell'ecosistema è ora, in tutta evidenza, prescrizione strumentale allo svolgersi del governo economico del mondo.

Quasi fosse soggetta a una metamorfosi interna, l'aulica voce della colomba cede il passo allo stridulo suono dello spietato avvoltoio, il cui pro-

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24   Cf., ad es., *Bhagavadgītā*, 8.1-22 (in part. 22: *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha | bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā || yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni | yena sarvam idaṃ tatam ||*).

25   Il termine *guṇa* rimanda anche alla 'fune' e alla 'corda' – tale poiché composita di molteplici 'corde'–, così come è spesso utilizzato a indicare le 'gradazioni di densità' dei costituenti, a partire dai gradi di massima luminosità *sattva* fino a quelli dell'assoluto buiore *tamas*, senza che ciò richieda di postulare separazioni ontiche fra le gradazioni stesse. Cf., ad es., *Bhagavadgītā*, 3.5, 3.27-29, 3.33, 3.36-43, 4,20, 5.8-10, 5.13-14, 9.8, 13.20-21, 13.30, 18.13-19 (part. 13. sui cinque 'causanti' [*kāraṇāni*] l'atto, riferiti al *sāṃkhya* del tempo; 17. sull'errore del reputarsi unico attore [*tatrai 'vaṃ sati kartāram | ātmānaṃ kevalaṃ tu yaḥ ||*]); 18.26 (sull'esser svincolati da *ahaṃvāda*); 18.30-31 (sul distinguo differenziale fra 'procedere' e 'arresto' [*pravṛtti* e *nivṛtti*], così come fra 'effetto operante' e 'effetto inoperante' [*kārya* e *akārya*]).

26   So bene che la lettura simbolica della *Bhagavadgītā* non concorderebbe con quanto scritto finora, così come so dei tanti utilizzi della stessa all'interno di certi circoli 'eco-spiritualisti'. Credo tuttavia che il prezzo che si paga per simili usi dell'opera è quello di un riferimento solo frammentario e disinvolto al testo e l'obbligo di privilegiare solo alcune parti di questa settima lezione, rimuovendo dalla scena – mettendole in ombra – tutte le parti ritenute scomode della stessa, come, ad esempio, quella iniziale dal chiaro tono 'dualistico', la quale poneva non pochi problemi già ai diversi esegeti tradizionali, che attorno a questi passi del testo hanno disposto lunghi commenti (cf., ad es., le opposte considerazioni di Śaṅkara e di Madhva *ad Bhagavadgītā*, 7.2-5).

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nunciarsi disvela la verità del discorso: uno stesso ordinamento del mondo può servire due padroni, subordinando l'operare dei viventi alla forma economica favorita da chi su quel mondo già regna sovrano.

6 L'avvoltoio di Manu – l'*Homo oeconomicus* –, che impera e subordina

Ulteriore riprova dell'inevitabile simbiosi fra le istanze 'economiche' e il discorso 'ecologico' è data dal prologo di un autorevole trattato normativo in lingua sanscrita, databile attorno al II sec. a.C., il quale, peraltro, è assai prossimo agli ambienti in cui è stata redatta la *Bhagavadgītā* stessa.

Il trattato in questione è il *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, le cui dodici lezioni sono ordinate da istanze e moventi decisamente economici (cf. Squarcini, Cuneo 2010). Lezioni il cui procedere è talmente strategico da risultare affine ai modi in cui i rapaci predatori esercitano il dominio e il governo delle loro prede. Negli oltre duemila versi del *Mānavadharmaśāstra* l'assiologia eco-logica presentata dalla 'colomba' della *Bhagavadgītā* risuona con chiarezza, a riprova delle tante ingerenze e della loro comune filiazione culturale.

Per illustrarne il carattere e l'indole bastano le prime stanze del prologo d'avvio del trattato, dedicate alla descrizione dell'ordinamento del reale, che qui riporto, commentandole.

Il prologo si apre esibendo il carattere 'disinteressato' dell'enunciatore del trattato, sicché il discorso a seguire risulti diverso da quel che è:

1.1. I grandi veggenti (*ṛṣi*) si recarono da Manu, che sedeva assorto, e, do-po avergli reso debitamente omaggio, pronunciarono le seguenti parole:
1.2. «Acconsenti, o glorioso (*bhagavāt*), a esporci correttamente, se-condo la sequenza appropriata, le norme (*dharma*) di tutte le classi (*varṇa*), come anche di coloro che hanno un'origine intermedia.
1.3. Tu solo, o possente (*prabhu*), conosci infatti il significato e la natura (*kāryatattvārthavit*) dei doveri inerenti alla totalità di questo or-dinamento (*vidhāna*) dato dal nato-da-sé (*svayaṃbhū*); un ordinamento che è inconoscibile attraverso il ragionamento e inattingibile attraverso l'esperienza».
1.4. Così interpellato, nella maniera corretta, da quegli eccelsi, egli, dall'incommensurabile potere, dopo aver mostrato rispetto a tutti quei grandi veggenti, rispose: «Ascoltate». (*Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.1-4)

Dopo quest'inizio 'nobile', il trattato presenta una vera e propria 'ecologia' della generazione del mondo, disponendo con ordine il procedere dello stes-so, dagli elementi grezzi della natura fino ai più minuti dettagli etologici:

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1.5. Un tempo questo era completamente buio, ignoto, indistinto, inde-cifrato, indiscernibile, come immerso ovunque in un sonno profondo.[27]

1.6. Allora il glorioso, nato-da-sé (*svayaṃbhū*), immanifesto (*avyakta*), il cui potere si era attivato, si rivelò, lui che fuga le tenebre (*tamas*), portando questo universo a manifestazione, a cominciare dagli elementi primordiali (*mahābhūtādi*).

1.7. Proprio lui, che è al di là dei sensi, inafferrabile, sottile, imma-nifesto, eterno, che è la sostanza di tutti gli esseri (*sarvabhūtamayā*), inconoscibile attraverso il ragionamento, si manifestò da sé (*svayam*).[28]

1.8. In principio, desideroso di sprigionare dal proprio corpo (*śarīra*) le molteplici progenie, si concentrò ed emanò le acque (*apa*), in cui depose il proprio seme.

1.9. Quello divenne un uovo d'oro, fulgido come l'astro dai mille raggi, nel quale egli stesso nacque come Brahmā, avo di tutti i mondi (*sarvalokapitā*).

1.10. Le acque (*apa*) sono chiamate *nārā* perché sono figlie dell'uomo (*nara*). Giacché di questi furon la prima dimora (*ayana*), tradizionalmen-te egli è conosciuto come Nārāyaṇa.[29]

1.11. Da ciò che è la causa (*kāraṇa*) immanifesta (*avyakta*), stabile, sostanziata di essere e non essere, fu emanato quell'uomo che nel mon-do è celebrato come Brahmā.[30]

1.12. Dopo aver dimorato in quell'uovo per un anno intero, fu il glo-

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[27] Si noti qui l'impiego della *a-* privativa di fronte alle diverse definizioni del reale (1.5. *āsīd idaṃ tamobhūtam aprajñātam alakṣaṇam | apratarkyam avijñeyaṃ prasuptam iva sarvataḥ ||*), con il quale si rimanda alla condizione di indefinitezza e indivisione a cui la figura protagonista di questo discorso di parte ambisce a porre definitiva risoluzione. Dall'indiviso al distinguibile, questo è il senso della distinzione discorsiva qui presentata.

[28] Il composto *sarvabhūtamayā*, qui tradotto come '(colui) che è la sostanza di tutti gli esseri', significa letteralmente 'fatto (-*maya*) di tutti gli esseri', il che appare come una sorta di curiosa inversione, trattandosi qui di una sorta di 'creatore', come i commentatori si affannano a chiarire, il quale non è coestensivo con il 'creato'.

[29] A proposito di semiosi del dividere e di figurazione idealtipica, si noti qui che il lemma *nārā* è un derivato di *nara* (lett. 'uomo'), mediante allungamento della prima sillaba, con il senso di 'discendente da'. Secondo un'analisi semantica concorde con la tradizione nota come *nirukta* – una delle discipline ausiliarie del Veda –, il significato di Nārāyaṇa sarebbe 'colui che ha come dimora le acque'. Nārāyaṇa, però, è anche un patronimico che significa 'figlio di *nara*', cioè figlio dell''uomo dei primordi' (più comunemente chiamato *pūruṣa*). In seguito, sarà utilizzato come epiteto di specifiche divinità, in particolare per Viṣṇu.

[30] Vi è un'ambiguità morfofonetica in sanscrito che rende impossibile stabilire se qui l'autore intenda Brahmā, al maschile, ossia il 'dio creatore', oppure *brahman*, al neutro, os-sia l'ente assoluto impersonale, araldo del successivo discorso degli esponenti del *vedānta*. Abbiamo preferito accogliere l'interpretazione di quei commentatori classici (non tutti) che si esprimono chiaramente su questo punto. Si noti, tuttavia, che potrebbe proprio esser stata questa la sede in cui il neutro *brahman* vedico, viene finalmente risolto nella figura di un dio personificato, *ergo* Brahmā, coniando così un inedito modello rappresentativo che avrà forte impatto sulla storia del discorso religioso sudasiatico. Ciò vale a maggior ragione se

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rioso stesso che grazie alla propria concentrazione divise l'uovo in due (*tad aṇḍam akarod dvidhā*).

1.13. Con quelle due metà allora creò (*nirmama*) il cielo (*divya*) e la terra (*bhūmi*), e in mezzo l'atmosfera (*madhye vyoma*) e le otto direzioni dello spazio e la sede perenne delle acque (*apāṃ sthānaṃ ca śāśvataṃ*).

1.14. E da se stesso estrasse (*udbabarhātmanaś*) il pensare sostanziato [dal distinguo fra] essere e non essere (*manaḥ sadasadātmakam*), e da questo pensare (*manas*) anche l'ego (*ahaṃkāra*), sovrano che determina l'individuazione (*abhimantāram īśvaram*),

1.15. e il grande sé (*mahānt*), e tutte le cose dotate delle tre qualità (*guṇa*), e gradualmente i cinque organi di senso (*indriya*) che afferrano gli oggetti conoscibili (*viṣaya*).[31]

1.16. Poi, combinando le parti sottili di quei sei, il cui potere è illimitato, con le particelle del proprio corpo, formò tutti gli esseri (*sarvabhūtāni nirmame*).[32]

1.17. Poiché le sei parti sottili della sua forma solida (*mūrti*) si legano (*ā-śri*) a quelli [cioè, agli esseri], coloro che sanno (*maṇīṣin*) chiamano 'corpo' (*śarīra*) la sua forma solida (*mūrti*).[33]

1.18. Gli elementi primordiali (*bhūtāni mahānti*) entrano in esso insieme alle proprie azioni, mentre il pensare (*manas*), inesausto artefice di tutto ciò che risulta esistente (*sarvabhūtakṛd avyayam*), vi entra con le sue parti sottili.

1.19. E questo universo ha origine dalle parti sottili delle forme solide di quei sette uomini di grande potere,[34] il perituro dall'imperituro (*avyayād vyayam*).

1.20. Poi ognuno di quegli elementi acquisisce la qualità propria di quello che lo precede; e la tradizione insegna che ciascuno di essi pos-

consideriamo che la figura divina di Brahmā è stata definita come «virtualmente assente dalla letteratura vedica» (Bailey 1983, 58, 58-82).

31   Le tre qualità sono il *sattva*, il *rajas* e il *tamas*, immaginate come proprietà innate della 'costituente' (*prakṛti*), che è il modo in cui ritraggono l'ecosistema gli esponenti del *sāṃkhya* (cf. Jacobsen 1999. Inoltre, *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 12.24-53).

32   Secondo alcuni commentatori classici, 'i sei' qui citati sono la mente e i cinque sensi, secondo altri la mente, l'io, il grande sé, gli elementi sottili, gli organi di cognizione e quelli di azione, secondo altri ancora il sé (o la mente) e i cinque elementi (cf. *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 12.12-15 – sulle interazioni sistemiche che vincolano fra loro i diversi 'sé' e gli elementi –; 12.18.

33   Trattasi qui di un interessante caso di pseudo-etimologia, basato sull'assonanza fra il verbo *ā-śri* 'attaccare, legare, poggiare' e il sostantivo *śarīra* 'corpo'.

34   L'espressione 'sette uomini' (*saptānāṃ puruṣāṇāṃ*) si riferisce probabilmente ai 'sei' menzionati in *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.16, più il glorioso 'nato-da-sé', ma, al tempo stesso, richiama alla mente la già menzionata entità cosmogonica e sociogonica del *puruṣa*, proveniente dal ben più arcaico immaginario vedico.

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siede un numero di qualità corrispondente al posto che occupa nella serie.**35** (*Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.5-20)

Dopo aver così descritto le componenti fondamentali del reale, l'autore del trattato inizia a delinearne dettagliatamente gli aspetti conseguenti:

1.21. In principio egli creò (*nirmama*) per ognuno, dalle parole stesse del Veda, nomi e azioni distinti e disposizioni separate (*nāmāni karmāṇi ca pṛthak pṛthak*).

1.22. Allora, il possente (*prabhu*) emanò la moltitudine di quegli dèi la cui natura è sorretta dall'atto rituale e che sono dotati di soffio vitale, come anche la schiera sottile dei *sādhya*, e il sacrificio eterno.

1.23. Dal fuoco (*agni*), dal vento (*vāyu*) e dal sole (*ravi*) munse il triplice eterno Veda, consistente nelle strofe (*ṛc*), nelle formule (*yajus*) e nei canti (*sāman*), al fine di conferire completa efficacia al sacrificio;**36**

1.24. e, parimenti il tempo (*kāla*) e le divisioni del tempo (*kālavibhakti*), gli astri e i pianeti, i fiumi, gli oceani e le montagne, il terreno piano e impervio;

1.25. e, ancora, l'ardore della disciplina (*tapas*), la parola (*vāc*), il piacere, e poi il desiderio e l'ira. Intenzionato a dar luogo alle creature, originò questa manifestazione.

1.26. Poi, per consentire il discernimento (*viveka*) degli atti (*karman*), separò ciò che è conforme alla norma (*dharma*) da ciò che non lo è (*adharma*) e imbrigliò tali creature con le coppie di opposti quali piacere (*suhkha*) e dolore (*duḥkha*), e così via.

1.27. Per mezzo delle particelle infinitesimali e periture dei cinque elementi, come insegna la tradizione, questo intero universo ha origine nella sequenza appropriata (*idaṃ sarvaṃ saṃbhavaty anupūrvaśaḥ*). (*Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.21-27)

35 Gli elementi sono, nell'ordine, lo spazio, l'aria, il fuoco, l'acqua e la terra, caratterizzati rispettivamente dalle qualità del suono, del tatto, della visibilità, del gusto e dell'odore. Secondo questo schema lo spazio possiede solo la prima qualità, l'aria le prime due, il fuoco le prime tre e così via. Cf. *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.75-78.

36 Sempre a proposito di semiosi del dividere, si pensi all'espressione 'triplice scienza [dei Veda]' (*trayīvidyā*) – in epoche successive superata dal *locus classicus* dei 'quattro Veda' (*cāturveda*) –, la quale serve a segnalare l'autorità 'canonica' che l'autore vuole riconoscere alla disposizione scolastica delle tre antiche raccolte (*Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda* e *Sāmaveda*), tradizionalmente investite dello statuto di autorevole 'audizione' (*śruti*) (cf. *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.23, 2.76-77, 2.118, 2.230, 3.1, 4.123-124, 11.263, 12.112). L'autore del trattato esclude così la quarta raccolta vedica, l'*Atharvaveda*, altrettanto antica ma alla quale solo col tempo fu attribuita pari dignità e autorevolezza. La stanza *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 11.33, infatti, rappresenta l'unica menzione del termine *atharva* riferito ai depositari di una raccolta di formule.

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Una volta disposto in questo modo l'ordinamento ecologico di massima, l'autore può ora procedere con forza verso la disposizione economica degli stessi, mostrando come dal precedente ordine derivino, senza soluzione di continuità, tutti gli aspetti del vivere pratico (*Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.28-31):

> 1.28. Dunque, gli esseri, generati più e più volte, si attengono naturalmente a quegli atti a cui il possente in principio li legò (*nyayuṅkta prathamaṃ prabhuḥ*).
>
> 1.29. Violenti o nonviolenti, miti o aggressivi, conformi o meno alla norma, veridici o mendaci: tra questi atti, quanto egli assegnò a ciascuna creatura al momento della generazione (*sarga*), ciò la innerva naturalmente (*svayam āviśat*).
>
> 1.30. Così come al volgere delle stagioni queste acquisiscono naturalmente i tratti che le caratterizzano (*yathārtuliṅgāny ṛtavaḥ svayam evartuparyaye*), allo stesso modo gli esseri dotati di corpo (*deha*) si confanno agli atti (*karman*) che gli sono stati assegnati.
>
> 1.31. Inoltre, per lo sviluppo dei mondi (*lokānāṃ tu vivṛddhyarthaṃ*), egli generò il *brāhmaṇa*, lo *kṣatriya*, il *vaiśya* e lo *śūdra* rispettivamente dalla propria bocca, dalle braccia, dalle cosce e dai piedi.**37**

Nelle parole dell''avvoltoio' che ha redatto il trattato, la terra, le acque, il fuoco, l'aria, il demiurgo e l'uomo sono tutti descritti a partire da un medesimo momento originario, come figli di uno stesso 'padre', come intimamente affini e tutti 'nati' da una medesima matrice. È questa la 'norma' (*dharma*) di fondo a cui tutto risponde e che salda ogni parte alle altre, in relazione reciproca, sicché tutte possano ritenersi partecipi, ma in subordine, di un medesimo ecosistema provvidenziale e di una medesima economia gestionale, entrambe rispondenti ai criteri d'equivalenza assegnati all'*habitat* in cui esse si esercitano.

Proprio come accade nelle classificazioni etologiche – che obbediscono ai criteri con cui si distinguono i generi dalle specie e dalle famiglie (cf. Lehner 1998) –, stabilendo i principi della norma di sfondo, si deriva l'ordinamento di tutte le cose, il quale, a sua volta, consente la promozione di tutta una serie di gerarchie fra enti, di primati, di monopoli e di forme d'elezione: una volta che la norma è dettata ed è fatta riconoscere come

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37 È chiaro qui il riferimento al modello sociogonico di *Ṛgveda*, 10.90, ossia all''inno del *puruṣa*', in cui compare il discorso fondativo circa la divisione della società degli *ārya* in quattro 'classi' (*varṇa*): i *brāhmaṇa*, la classe intellettuale e i professionisti delle pratiche simboliche; gli *kṣatriya*, la classe regnante e l'aristocrazia guerriera; i *vaiśya*, la classe produttiva; e gli *śūdra*, la classe servile e i prestatori d'opera. Si veda poi, per una definizione più dettagliata dei doveri e delle prerogative assegnati a ciascuna classe dall'autore del trattato, *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.87-91.

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legittima, tutto il resto è derivato per conseguenza, proprio «perché ogni cosa ha la sua radice nella norma».**38**

7 L'imperituro sodalizio fra colombe e avvoltoi, fra il *divide et impera*

La scena con cui vorrei chiudere questo lavoro è tratta dal celebre testo *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, all'inizio del quale troviamo un drappello di mendichi (*bhikṣu*) raccolti attorno alla luminosa figura del Buddha, prossimi all'ascolto del suo sublime insegnamento circa la pacificazione dei tormenti del vivente. La parola salvifica del Buddha sta per esser pronunciata, l'atmosfera è intensamente serafica. Il luogo in cui l'ambìto rimedio sta per esser consegnato è tuttavia davvero peculiare, come risulta già dal suo nome: 'picco dell'avvoltoio' (*gṛdhrakūṭa*), toponimo più volte evocato nel testo.**39** È piuttosto notevole, infatti, l'effetto di scena che muove da quest'ultimo dato, grazie al quale l'episodio guadagna tensione: riuniti e raccolti sulla vetta abitata dai più oscuri e voraci fra i rapaci vi sono dei mendichi che attendono un verbo che li porti all'acquietamento dell'animale bramosia. La scelta dell'impervia dimora degli 'avvoltoi' (*gṛdhra*) come luogo in cui rivelare il viatico verso l'estinzione dello smanioso egoismo (*anātman*) è davvero ben fatta, mostrandoci ancora una volta la potenza della semiosi del dividere. Anche in questo caso, infatti, la divisione dei

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38 Medhātithi, *Manubhāṣya ad Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 2.224 (*dharma eva sarvebhyaḥ śreyānsarvasya tanmūlatvācca*). Ciò è menzionato nel contesto della presentazione di una sequenza di diverse ipotesi sul primato fra *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, a cui l'autore del commento appone un *siddhānta* che accorpa i tre ambiti. L'idea, qui implicita, di un ordinamento del mondo fondato e retto sulle pratiche rituali relative al Veda è presa a fondamento in *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.22-23, 2.6-7, 2.76-77, 3.75-76, 12.97-99. Inoltre, *Mahābhārata*, 5.124.37-38. Idea questa assai diffusa all'interno dei circoli *smārta* e che implica il rimando a un 'principio ordinatore' (*dhātṛ*, *vidhātṛ*) che starebbe a fondamento del mondo manifesto. Cf., ad es., *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, 1.3, 5.28-30. Di fatto, il tema *dhātṛ* (da *dhā-tṛ*) è all'origine dei sostantivi 'fondatore', 'reggitore', 'autore' (*dhātā*, *dhātāram*, ecc.). Peraltro, già in *Ṛgveda* il termine *dhātar* è usato per indicare l''ordinatore' della disposizione del reale (*Ṛgveda*, 10.190.3), così come l'atto del concepimento (*Ṛgveda*, 10.184.1-2). Per altri impieghi del termine, cf. *Atharvaveda*, 7.18.1-2, 7.19.1, 7.20.1. Inoltre, Norman Brown 1965, 1942.

39 Cf. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, 1.1 (*ekasmin samaye bhagavān rājagṛhe viharati sma gṛdhrakūṭe parvate mahatā bhikṣusaṃghena sārdham*). Inoltre, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, 3.42 (*gṛdhrāṇa koṭyo nivasanti*); 3.54 (*te yakṣa pretāśca piśācakāśca gṛdhrāśca āhāra gaveṣamāṇāḥ*); 3.58, 3.66, 11.1 (*gacchata yūyaṃ gṛdhrakūṭaṃ parvatam*); 11.46 (*khagapathena gṛdhrakūṭe parvate bhagavato 'ntikamupasaṃkrāntaḥ*); 15.6 (*tato ahaṃ śrāvakasaṃgha kṛtvāḥ ātmāna darśemyahu gṛdhrakūṭe*); 15.10 (*na ca cyavāmī itu gṛdhrakūṭāt anyāsu śayyāsanakoṭibhiśca*); 16.37 (*yaduta gṛdhrakūṭaparvatagataṃ māṃ dharmaṃ nirdeśayantaṃ drakṣyati bodhisattvagaṇaparivṛtaṃ bodhisattvagaṇapuraskṛtaṃ śrāvakasaṃghamadhyagatam*); 23 (*gṛdhrakūṭe parvate tasya tathāgatadharmāsanasya*; [...] *yena ca gṛdhrakūṭaḥ parvatarājastenopasaṃkrāma*).

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viventi permette di attuare vari altri distinguo, soddisfacendo differenti esigenze di astrazione e significazione del reale. In merito a questo, si pensi proprio all'àmbito della divisione dei volatili: il termine sanscrito *gṛdhra*, impiegato per indicare l'avvoltoio, lo distingue dagli altri volatili mettendo a fuoco alcune delle qualità che questi incarna ed eleggendolo a emblema dell'avida bramosia per le cose, dell'essere assetati (di carcasse), dell'indole famelica e predatrice. Il riferimento all'indole e ai modi crudeli con cui il nostro volatile amministra il suo vissuto è peraltro costante nei vari altri termini con cui, sempre in sanscrito, si distingue l'uccello rapace a noi noto come 'avvoltoio': si pensi a composti come *sthūlanīla* '[l'uccello rapace] dal grosso collo', *kapotāri* il '[l'uccello rapace] nemico del piccione', *śaśaghātin* che '[l'uccello rapace] che uccide la lepre', ma anche a *khagāntaka* '[l'uccello rapace] che mette termine agli uccelli'.

Analogamente a quanto successo nella suddetta scena del Buddha e dei mendichi, l'impiego della figura d'avvoltoio può servire gli scopi di diversi discorsi di parte, alcuni dei quali profittano dell'infamia accostata alla sua oscura sagoma per elogiare qualcuno che a questa si accosta. Altrettanto mirabile, in tal senso, è il ricorso alla figura dell'avvoltoio nell'edificante racconto del *āraṇyakāṇḍa* dell'epico *Rāmāyaṇa*, il cui protagonista è il rapace Jaṭāyu, anche detto 'sovrano dei *gṛdhra*' (*gṛdhrarāja*):[40] Jaṭāyu, contravvenendo a tutti gli stereotipi dell'avvoltoio, si getta senza indugi né egoismi contro al demonico Rāvaṇa, raggiunto mentre fugge dal dio Rāma a cui ha sottratto la casta sposa Sītā. Il demone però ha la meglio su Jaṭāyu, a cui recide le ali. Questi riesce tuttavia a sopravvivere fintanto che il dio e il fratello lo trovano, ricevendo dallo stesso le indicazioni per scovare Rāvaṇa, il malefico rapitore. Ciò fatto, l'avvoltoio Jaṭāyu esala l'ultimo respiro sotto gli occhi benedicenti del dio Rāma, che così lo elegge a idealtipo di *devotio*.

Gli effetti della semiosi del dividere sono tali da generare figure a loro volta in grado di far mutare il segno e il valore delle cose a cui le si accosta. Questo è il potere trasvalutante della significazione, i cui artefatti imagologici, una volta divenuti moneta sonante (cf. Amato 2016, 2008), decidono delle direzioni e dell'andamento di tutto il sistema di commercio e scambio dei valori.

Scopo primo di questo lavoro, infatti, era quello di richiamare l'attenzione di altri e diversi specialisti attorno alla natura delle concomitanze che strutturano gli isomorfismi e le procedure analogiche inerenti alle tante modellizzazioni delle forme ideali delle 'cose', sia che si tratti di idee di mondo, di uomo, di sviluppo o di etica ecologica.

In conclusione, a chi ancora non vedesse l'ingombro e il primato pratico-politico della semiosi del dividere, non posso far altro che ricordare le

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40 Cf. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3.49-50.

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riflessioni che il ventiseienne Karl Marx svolse attorno alla dialettica e al pensiero filosofico di Hegel. Riflessioni in cui il giovane filosofo dell'economia politica si cimentava nella disamina dei nessi fra i processi dialettici, il pensiero astratto e le figurazioni delle cose del mondo. Tra le tante osservazioni critiche che lì Marx muoveva all'opera di Hegel, reputo di particolare rilevanza quelle poste in chiusura del suo scritto, le quali sono strettamente legate a quanto finora detto circa la simbiosi fra l'astrazione dividente, il venire in essere del diviso e l'auto-coscienza del divisore, ossia circa la forza patica degli effetti di scena provocati dagli atti semiotici di ripartizione economica e utilitaristica dell'ecosistema naturale:

> Perciò le *forme* universali ed astratte *dell'astrazione*, appartenenti ad ogni contenuto, e quindi altrettanto indifferenti ad ogni contenuto quanto, proprio perciò, valide per ogni contenuto, le forme del pensiero, le categorie logiche sono staccate dallo spirito *reale* e dalla natura *reale*. [...] Il contributo positivo che qui, nella sua logica speculativa, Hegel ha portato a compimento sta in ciò che i *concetti determinanti*, le *forme fisse* e universali *del pensiero* sono, nella loro indipendenza dalla natura e dallo spirito, un risultato necessario della estraniazione universale dell'essere umano, e quindi anche dell'umano pensiero, onde Hegel li ha esposti e riassunti come momenti del processo di astrazione. Per esempio, l'essere soppresso è l'essenza, l'essenza soppressa è il concetto, il concetto soppresso... l'idea assoluta. [...] Ma l'astrazione che si comprende come astrazione sa di non essere nulla; essa deve rinunciare a se stessa, all'astrazione, e così finisce di giungere ad un essere che è proprio il suo contrario, la *natura*. Tutta la logica è dunque la prova che il pensiero astratto non è per se stesso nulla, che nulla è l'idea assoluta per se stessa, e che solo la *natura* è qualche cosa. [...] Ma anche la *natura*, astrattamente presa, per sé, fissata nella separazione dall'uomo, non è per l'uomo un bel *nulla*. La *natura come natura*, cioè in quanto si distingue ancora sensibilmente da quel senso segreto e ivi nascosto, la natura separata, distinta da queste astrazioni, non è *nulla* è un *nulla che si conferma come nulla*, è *senza senso* o ha soltanto il senso di una cosa esterna che è stata soppressa. [...] Il suo fine è la conferma dell'astrazione. Per il pensatore astratto quindi la natura deve sopprimersi da sé, essendo già da lui posta come un essere potenzialmente *soppresso*. (Marx 1968, 182-7)

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A New Interpretation of the Edicts of Aśoka from Kandahar

Francesco Maniscalco
(Sapienza Università di Roma, Italia)

Abstract   From Alexandria of Arachosia, present-day Kandahar, we have two edicts in Greek, issued by the sovereign Maurya Aśoka (c. 270-230 BC). Arachosia, the ancient Eastern satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire – corresponding to present-day southeastern Afghanistan – had long seen the meeting of the Iranian world to the west and the Indian world to the east. As from the end of the fourth century BC, after the conquest by Alexander the Great and the occupation of the eastern dominions of the Empire by Seleucus Nicator, it was to see a conspicuous Greek presence, strikingly attested by the epigraphs of Aśoka. The first edict – discovered in 1957 – is in two languages, Greek and Aramaic, while the second – discovered in 1963 – is in Greek alone. On the basis of texts from the court of Maurya of Pāṭaliputra, both of them constitute summaries of and propaganda for the conversion and moral principles inspiring Aśoka, subsequent to his bloody conquest of Kaliṅga. Our aim here is to take stock of certain issues, proposing a new completion for the opening lacuna in the Greek section of the bilingual epigraph, and casting doubt anew on the originality of the Greek texts, considering the attribution of the region to Indian, rather than Seleucid rule after the pact between Seleucus Nicator and Candragupta Maurya, Aśoka's grandfather (c. 305 BC).

Summary   1 Prologue. – 2 The Greek Incipit on the Kandahar Bilingual Stele. –3 The Epithets of Aśoka in the Kandahar Inscriptions and the Originality of the Texts. – 4 The Dominion of Kandahar in the Age of Aśoka: the Contribution of the Epigraphs.

Keywords   Arachosia. Aśoka. Greek-Aramaic edict. Kandahar.

1   Introduction

The epigraphic production of Aśoka was clearly intended to be read by the aristocratic class. It was the high officials of the administrations who read the inscriptions and acted as mediators. In Alexandria of Arachosia the languages chosen for divulgation were Aramaic, used by the Achaemenid administration, still very close in time, and Greek, the language of the government following immediately upon the Persian administration.

Daniel Schlumberger and Émile Benveniste, among the first to address the Greek-Aramaic[1] edict found at Kandahar in April 1957 (Schlumberger, Dupont-Sommer, Robert, Benveniste 1958, 1-48), hold that the Greek section of the edict shows a certain originality also at the conceptual level, which they see as distancing it from the original Indian model and, indeed, from comparison with the Aramaic text. They argue that Kandahar was entirely under the Mauryan hegemony as from the pact entered upon in 305-303 BC between Seleucus I Nicator and Candragupta Maurya, Aśoka's grandfather.

The reason why I believe it is now time to re-examine the epigraphs lies in the fact that the certainties – in some cases more asserted than demonstrated – of the first scholars who studied them constitute the basis on which many still work, and after so many years they have come to be credited as incontestable truths.[2]

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1 Aramaic survived as diplomatic language in the chancelleries of the Hellenistic kingdoms that rose from the ruins of the Persian Empire. I concur with Franz Altheim and Ruth Sthiel (1959, 247) that "the Aramaic text of the bilingual Kandahār inscription shows the penetration of later, chiefly East Aramaic peculiarities" and "the second version of the bilingual inscription is Aramaic and must be read as Aramaic. That the Aramaic text was meant *only* to be the substratum of an Iranic reading is an assertion that cannot be proved" (256). There are five of Aśoka's inscriptions in Aramaic in the Afghan territory: one from Pol-i Darūnta in Laghmān (Henning 1949-50, 80-8); an Indo-Aramaic one (Benveniste, Dupont-Sommer 1966, 440-51); one on the Laghmān River and another from the homonymous province (Dupont-Sommer 1970). Laghmān lies on the northern bank of the Kabul River in the vicinity of Jalalabad. It includes the valleys of the lower course of the Alingār and the Ališang; known to Sanskrit scholars as *Lampāka* or *Lambāka*, it lies on the north-western border of India, apparently corresponding to the satrapy of the Paropamisadai, possibly part of Aśoka's Empire (Tarn 1951, 99-102).

2 For example, Gerard Fussman (1974, 369-89) and Paul Bernard (1985, 85-95; 2005; Bernard, Rougemont 2012, 167-71), endorsing Schlumberger's theses on the pact between the two sovereigns and attribution of Arachosia to the Maurya Empire from then until the conquest by Demetrius I of Bactria (c. 190-185 BC). The same position is still maintained in the study on the epitaph of *Sōphytos*, discovered at Kandahar in 2003 (Bernard, Pinault, Rougemont 2004, 265-69; Coloru 2009, 136-7, 145-6, 189-91; *contra* Bopearachchi 1996; Fussman 2010, 695-713; Maniscalco 2014, 83-94; forthcoming b). The conviction of the Indian origin of the name, together with the certainty that Arachosia was still Mauryan on the arrival of the son of Euthydemus, have misled other scholars (e.g. cf. Fraser, Matthews 2009, 156 fn. 27). Although it is beyond our scope here to go into these issues, I feel I must stress my total dissent for different reasons: when Bernard, on the basis of the agreement of the *epigamìa*, ratified by Seleucus and Chandragupta, grants that the mother, grandmother or great-grandmother of *Sōphytos* could perfectly well have been Greek, one might equally well object that they could have been Indian or, for that matter, autochthonous Iranian, seeing that Bernard (1985, 92-3) holds that the clause of the *epigamìa* concerned the autochthonous, and not Indian, population in Arachosia. Following through with this line, *Sōphytos* himself might well have been Greek and his great-grandmother Indian, for example. If the policy of mixed marriages really existed, any observation about the ethnic composition of the families will be, at the same time, both legitimate and speculative. However, we should not lose sight of the simplicity of the basic facts: we are dealing with a written name and it makes sense in Greek, not by virtue of an Indian etymology (cf. Maniscalco 2014, 86-9), in the context of a Greek

2 The Greek Incipit on the Kandahar Bilingual Stele

The Greek epigraph[3] on the bilingual stele – almost entirely intact, once on display at the Museum of Kabul, but missing now for several years – was engraved within the outline of a trapezoidal plaque on a large calcareous stone situated at the side of the road that runs through ancient Kandahar (Guarducci 1969, 91).

The *incipit* shows a lacuna: Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη […] ων βασιλεὺς Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβειαν ἔδειξεν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. The first completion, proposed by Gioᵻ vanni Pugliese Carratelli (Pugliese Carratelli, Levi Dalla Vida 1958, 10) and Louis Robert (1958, 10-4), is πλήρη[θέντ]ων, which should thus be transs lated as "completed ten years King Piodasses revealed pity (εὐσέβειαν) to

composition, in an area where Greeks were present. Effectively, from 305 BC to the renewal of the φιλία (Polyb. 11, 34, 11) between Antiochus III (223-187 BC) and Sophagasenus – Eggere mont (1965-66, 58-66) identifies him with Somaśarman Maurya (208-201 BC); Schmitt (1964, 67) defines him "ein Kleiner lokaler Raja"; anyhow I agree with Paolo Daffinà (1975-76, 57-8) that "maurya o non maurya era in quel momento il re dei territori indiani che confinavano con il regno di Siria ed è comprensibile che Antioco - fallita la sua campagna contro i Parti e i Greci di Battriana – cercasse di assicurarsi almeno l'amicizia del suo confinante indiano, ristabilendo con lui quei rapporti di buon vicinato che erano sempre intercorsi tra l'India e il regno di Siria"; probably his rule was reduced to Gandhāra (cf. Charpentier 1930-32, 304 fn. 1; Filliozat, Renou 1947, 224; Daffinà 1967, 37) – about a century later, although there were no significant changes for the region, remaining where every scholar had previously placed it. Bernard (1985, 90) and Coloru (2009, 186-7) fail to take into account that, as from the death of Aśoka, Mauryan power lapsed into a decline as sudden as it was inexorable. Thus, even though we might contemplate a Mauryan Arachosia up until the reign of Aśoka, it would be still less likely subsequent to it. As for the point that it would have been easier for Demetrius to attack a Mauryan rather than Seleucid Arachosia (Bernard 1985, 90; Bernard, Pinault, Rougemont 2004, 265-9; Coloru 2009, 136-7 2012; Bernard, Rougemont 2012, 167-71), it is surprising to note the failure to consider the importance that the year 187 BC had for the Seleucid Empire – it was a fatal date. After the defeat suffered by his fleet in 191 BC, and again in 190 BC, by the Romans, beaten at Thermopylae, where he had challenged Rome the year before, and having abandoned European soil, Antiochus III was to be defeated at Magnesia, in Asia Minor at the end of 190 BC. Submitting to the Treaty of Apamea (188 BC), he died soon after, in 187 BC. Santo Mazzarino (1957, 180) observes that the Treaty of Apamea «segnò l'assoluta scomparsa di ogni influenza seleucidica». Although Bernard holds that the treaty ratified by Euthydemus and Antiochus would have constituted an insurmountable obstacle for the invasion of Arachosia, once Antiochus was dead, Demetrius could hardly have hoped for a better time to attack the region, then far removed, not only geographically, from the ambitions of the last Seleucids for ever. For a summary of the various interpretations and clauses of the agreement, including the extent of Seleucus's cessions of Arachosia, Gedrosia and Paropamisadai, cf. Maniscalco 2014, 70-9; forthcoming a.

3 For the Indian edicts of Aśoka, I have made use of the unpublished translations by Paolo Daffinà provided in lessons in 2002 and 2003. For the section of the bilingual stele in Aramaic, reference is made to Pugliese Carratelli and Levi Dalla Vida (1958). For the Greek section of the bilingual edict (XXXIII), as also for the monolingual Greek epigraph (XXXIV) from Kandahar, the translations are mine (cf. Maniscalco 2014, 39-45). For the original texts cf. Hultzsch 1925; Bloch 1950; Eggermont, Hoftijzer 1962. For further translations and an up-to-date bibliography cf. Pugliese Carratelli 2003; Bernard, Rougemont 2012.

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men"; the passive aorist participle would stand as the only attestation of the verb *πληρέω, alongside the form πληρόω, explained as normalisation (Benveniste 1958, 46) of the morphological relation between the adjective πλήρης 'full, filled' and the present denominative πληρόω; thus, from πλήρης the new present *πληρέω would be formed; hence the participle reconstructed by the scholars. The hypothesis that the form constitutes a *hapax* does not represent a problem: two more hapaxes are attested at Kandahar, in the bilingual edict ἐνήκοοι 'listening indulgently', and in edict XXXIV, διαμεινόω[4] 'to improve, to increase'.

It's my opinion that these attest to the sensitivity of the Greek redactor, who had the Indian original in hand, but could not make use of any official or literary Greek model, drawing upon all the resources of his language, in the effort to render Indian philosophical concepts to a Hellenic readership. Nevertheless, it hardly seems correct to complete the text with the invention of a term and then justify it, attributing it with the status of a *hapax*, nor does there appear to be much sense in devising *nebenform* for such a very common term as πληρόω. Another point raised is that three rather than four letters would fit well in the space of the lacuna. For this reason, Margherita Guarducci (1969, 91; 2005, 145) proposes Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ὄντ]ων "being fully ten years (from his consecration)", but the possibility of completion with four letters, not totally ruled out by Guarducci, is accepted, as we shall see, by Carlo Gallavotti (1992). Before considering Gallavotti's hypothesis, a point that needs to be made is that the objection by the scholar (1992, 35), that the temporal indication 'ten years complete' (Mazzarino 1973, 232-5; Daffinà 1988, 50-7) does not fit in conceptually with the inscriptions of Aśoka, remains unconvincing. For example, the *incipit* of *RE* (*Rock Edition*) XIII from Shāhbāzgarhī runs "in the eighth year of reign…" (*athavasabitasa Priyadrasine raja*), or indeed the final section of *RE* IV from Girnār "in the twelfth year from consecration (*dasavasabhisite*) King Piodasses dear to the gods had this edict engraved". The importance of the chronological reference, in relation to the drastic changes, resulting from the sovereign's conversion, is evident in *RE* VIII, Kālsī

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4 Cf. XXXIV, 10-1: καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα ἐπασκοῦσι ταῦτα μὴ ὀκνεῖν λέγειν ἵνα διαμεινῶσιν διὰ παντὸς εὐσεβοῦντες, "and there should be no hesitating in saying these things to those who (already) cultivate such precepts, in order that they may better themselves, dedicating themselves to piety (εὐσεβοῦντες) incessantly (διὰ παντὸς)". Instead of the aorist subjunctive διαμείνωσιν from διαμένω 'I remain/I persevere' (cf. Pugliese Carratelli 2003, 120-122; Christol 1983, 32-3, 41) favours the present subjunctive διαμεινῶσιν from διαμεινόω 'I make better/I increase', from ἀμείνων 'better', comparative of ἀγαθός; Gallavotti conjectures an earlier, non-specified origin of the verb (1992, 43-4). In my translation the second ταῦτα in the phrase is the object of λέγειν, unlike the interpretation by Gallavotti, who associates it with διαμεινῶσιν (1992, 44).

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Nei tempi andati i re partivano per viaggi di svago. In quelle occasioni c'erano la caccia e altri divertimenti simili. Orbene il re *Devānāṃpriya priyadarśin*, passati dieci anni dall'*abhiṣeka* (*daśavaṣabhisite*) si è recato alla *Saṃbodhi*.[5] Da ciò i viaggi del *Dharma*.[6]

Edict XXXIV, 11-12 runs: Ὀγδόωι ἔτει βασιλεύοντος Πιοδάσσου κατέστραπται τὴν Καλίγγην, ([having] passed eight years of [the] reign of Piodasses, [he] conquered Kaliṅga).[7] The calculation of time does not differ in the inscriptions and, indeed, serves to appreciate the changes coming about in the sovereign after witnessing the horror, slaughter and deportations provoked by the violence of war, which moves *Devānāṃpriya* (Scharfe 1971)[8] to remorse and to embracing the *Dharma*.

Gallavotti (1992) draws evidence from the Hellenistic epigraph at Acre to fill the lacuna.

The short composition consists of the claim the child Artemis makes to her father Zeus for the honours paid by humans to the other gods: ὤλλοις δ᾽ εἰσὶ τεχνῶν εὑρήματα, κάρποι ἄπασιν, / μνημείων ὅσιοι τιμαὶ καὶ ἀγεῖ'ἀσεβοῦσιν (or: ἀγεῖα σέβοῦσιν), "sono per gli altri le invenzioni delle arti, per gli altri i frutti,/i santi onori dei monumenti e le punizioni per gli empi (oppure: gli onori per i devoti)" (1983, 1-4).

The ambiguity of the expression (ἀγεῖ'ἀσεβοῦσιν/ἀγεῖα σέβοῦσιν) befits the sense of the term chosen for the Kandahar lacuna, τὸ ἄγος, as well

5   In contrast to the 'itinerary of Pleasure' (*vihārayātā*) pursued by the kings, Aśoka asserts the 'itinerary of the Norm' (*dhammayātā*). At the court of Candragupta, Megasthenes, Ambassador of Seleucus Nicator (cf. Beloch 1925-1927, 360; Brown 1955; 1957; Daffinà 1967, 33-4; Bussagli 1984, 43-6; Bosworth 1996; Bearzot 2007; Maniscalco 2014, 79-83; forthcoming a), observed that the sovereign only issued forth on three solemn occasions: judicial hearings, public sacrifices and big hunts. Alongside the route of his procession, ropes were stretched, which were not to be passed on pain of death; the king was constantly surrounded by armed women, his bodyguards (Strabo., 15, 1, 55). Aśoka broke with this practice; he left the court, mixed with his subjects and mingled among them (cf. Filliozat 1949a, 225-47; Filliozat, Renou 1947, 214-18).

6   Aśoka's pilgrimage to Bodhgayā lasted 256 nights (Brahamagiri): "Il re caro agli Dei così ha detto: Discepolo laico (*upāsaka*) per più di due anni e mezzo, in verità, per un anno non sono stato per nulla zelante. Ma da oltre un anno mi sono recato dal *Saṃgha* e il mio sforzo è intenso". Aśoka revered the Threefold Jewel (*Triratna*) (Bhabra): "È a voi noto, o Reverendi (riferito al *Saṃgha*), quanto sono grandi da parte mia il rispetto e la fede per il Buddha, per il *Dharma* e per il *Saṃgha*. Qualunque cosa sia stata detta, o Reverendi, dal Beato Buddha, tutte sono ben dette…".

7   Cf. Shāhbāzgarhī *RE* XIII, *Aṭhavaṣa abhisitasa Devanapriyasa Priyadrasine raijina Kaliga vijita*.

8   "In *devānāṃpriya* Hartmut Scharfe ha scorto la traduzione di φίλος τῶν βασιλέων 'caro alle divine maestà', difatti Seleuco sancì con Candragupta una relazione di φιλία-pactio: Aśoka presentandosi in tal modo dichiarerebbe nei confronti del re di Siria lo stesso ossequio e rispetto che suo nonno accordò a Seleuco" (Maniscalco 2014, 77).

as the formulation thus constructed: Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ς ἀγέ]ων (da dieci anni fornito delle sacralità) (1992, 39).

The substantive τὸ ἄγος (Chantraine 2009, 12-3) expresses sacral pos3 session, consecration and execration; according to Gallavotti this might have corresponded to

una certa interpretazione dell'*abhiṣeka*, quale si riflette nell'iranismo *ptytw* della versione aramaica, (Gallavotti 1992, 39)

harking back to one of the possible senses of the term, in the translation by Levi Dalla Vida (Pugliese Carratelli, Levi Dalla Vida 1958, 20).

In my opinion, Gallavotti's suggestion improves upon the 1958 completion, conveying the idea of the sacred investiture of the sovereign, while the identification of the ablatival genitive δέκα ἐτῶν and πλήρης as attribf ute, associated with the king, is plausible. The doubtful side of it, on the other hand, lies precisely in the reference to the semantic ambivalence of τὸ ἄγος, which is supposed to justify its use.

The *incipit* of the version in Aramaic runs: *šnn 10 ptytw*, and the point of contention is the rendering of the Aramaic *ptytw*. Benveniste, recognising its conjectural nature, translated *ptytw*, tackling the difficulty of finding a sense corresponding to that of πληρη[θέντ]ων conjectured by Robert, thus reconstructing an original **patitav-* to vocalise *ptytw* as *paītita*, to which he attributed the sense of 'duration'; hence we would have "[having] passed ten years" (1958, 36-7).[9]

The interpretation I find most convincing is the one that stresses the sacral sense of the term, as Antonino Pagliaro indicated to Gabriele Levi Dalla Vida (Pugliese Carratelli, Levi Dalla Vida 1958, 20) for the aramaic version; the vocalisation as **patyasti* suggests a sense of 'justice, fairness', but also 'expiation, purification'; thus, "in the tenth year, Our Lord the King, done justice (or purification)". The Aramaic nexus (šnn 10 ptytw) is taken to translate the Indian *daśavaṣabhisite*, 'consecrated for ten years'.

I cannot believe that the Iranian redactor meant to endow the ceremony of royal consecration with an ambivalent sense, or ascent to the throne with a more generic sense, as postulated by Gallavotti. Consequently, it hardly seems appropriate to insist on the presumed ambiguity of *abhiṣeka* for the Greek version, nor indeed for the Aramaic one. Nor can we imagine the Indian sovereign presenting himself through formulas that gave rise to confusion or negativity; rather, far more simply, the stonecutters must have had to indicate the time, when the reign began relying on the Indian

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9 Altheim and Stiehl (1959, 243) criticised the proposal, conjecturing the Avestan *patyāstō* 'obedience' to vocalise *ptytw*.

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text, for which it would be absurd to hypothesise the ceremony of *abhiṣeka* being taken negatively.

In light of all this, I would fill the lacuna in this way: Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ς ἁγν]ῶν, "invested (filled/brimming) with the sacred (powers)/manifold sacredness" also "invested/filled with purifications". The advantage lies in the unequivocal nature of the term chosen: with ἁγνός there is no risk of misunderstanding, nor of semantic ambiguity, which does not befit the context. The adjective, known and employed since the times of Homer – who was, however, unacquainted with the use of τὸ ἄγος and ἄγιος – expresses purity, veneration.

It is an attribute of the divinities, ἁγνὴ Περσεφόνεια (*Od.*, 11, 386), χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ἁγνὴ, "chaste Artemis of the golden throne" (*Od.*, 5, 123), but it can refer to human beings. In a famous fragment by Alcaeus, Sappho is ἰόπλοκ᾽ ἄγνα μελλιχόμειδε, «with violet hair, venerable (pure), with a sweet smile» (*fr.* 384, 1, [Voigt]). Furthermore, it can also be associated with physical phenomena and objects: ἄλσος ἁγνὸν, 'sacred wood' (*Hymn. Merc.*, 187), while the ἁγνὰ θύματα are 'bloodless sacri‌fices', which Thucydides contrasted with ἱερεῖα (1, 126, 6). During the Hellenistic age the term was used to express rectitude and probity. Being unambiguous, but with a more limited semantic sphere (Liddell, Scott 1978, 12; Chantraine 2009, 24-5) than ἄγος, it is to be preferred. The use of the substantivized adjective ἁγνός may raise some eyebrows, but it had already been attested in Aeschylus (*Supp.*, 223). Moreover, the adoption of ἁγνός seems to me to guarantee greater concordance between the two ver‌sions, but, above all, it comes closer to the context: by linking ἁγνός with πλήρης the redactor conveyed the sense of consecration and purification of the monarch. Indeed, πλήρης itself is a verbal adjective, derived from πίμπλημι, 'to fill' (Chantraine 2009, 869-70), but also 'to fulfil, accomplish'. It indicates fullness, filling, not only in the physical sense – for example πλήρης γένηται ὁ ποταμὸς (*Her.*, 2, 92, 2), or πλήρης σελάννα (Sappho, Diehl, 88, 1 [Chantraine 2009]) – but also in the sense of psychic fullness or satisfaction (Soph., *Oid. C.*, 778). Therefore, I believe that the adjective πλήρης can be rendered with 'invested, filled, full of'; it takes the genitive and, more rarely, the dative case and, so, the association with ἁγνῶν, as also with ἁγέων, proposed by Gallavotti, raises no problems.

Having maintained completion with πληρη[θέντ]ων until 1995 and by taking the cue from Gallavotti, Pugliese Carratelli, proposed a new read‌ing (1995, 677-9; 2003, 117): πλήρη[ς ἐλέ]ων, 'overcome by compassion'. This interpretation would be borne out by the use of the term τὸ (but also ὁ) ἔλεος in the epigraph found at Kandahar in 1963. In my opinion, this interpretation presents some critical aspects.

Subsequent to the Kaliṅga military campaign, edict XXXIV from Kanda‌har, summarising rupestrian edicts XII and XIII, records ἀπ᾽ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν, καὶ βαρέως ἤνεγκεν, "from that

time (i.e. the time of conquest) compassion and regret overcame him and deeply was he oppressed". Sorrow and remorse befell Aśoka and led him to conversion. However, the terms do not describe the consecration or enthronement of the Indian sovereign; it is from the time of the *abhiṣeka* that calculation of the years of the reign begins, and not from the moment of conversion. Without taking this into account, Pugliese Carratelli (1995, 679) holds that the redactor of the bilingual version seems to have made use of the plural of ἔλεος to evoke the feelings of the sovereign, and adds

> la mutata integrazione dell'*incipit* comporta una diversa datazione dell'editto greco-aramaico: poiché la conquista del Kaliṅga avvenne otto anni dopo l'*abhiṣeka*, vale a dire intorno al 260, la bilingue posteriore di dieci anni alla conquista, deve datarsi al 250 a.C. (Pugliese Carratelli 1995, 679)

Thus the bilingual edict would be the only one dated on the basis of the conversion (and on a lacuna), rather than the enthronement, and there seems to be no need for such a choice. Only the subjugation of Kaliṅga is dated on the basis of the sovereign's ascent to the throne. Neither the conquest, nor any other event, have ever constitute a point of reference, from which the chronological record of the king's deeds begins. The only exceptions to this practice for dating are to be found in the edicts of Erragudi (XXIV) and Brahamagiri (XXV). These were promulgated at the end of the pilgrimage, lasting 256 nights, but clearly here we have a case (since it is the same event described in both) associated with a particular event, which remains a *unicum*.[10] Finally, the fact that ἔλεος appears in edict XXXIV does not seem to me to prove anything in particular, apart from the fact that the redactor knew Greek.

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10 *Vāssa* (Skt. *varṣa*) 'rain' indicates a 'year' in the inscriptions of Aśoka; the season of retreat is fixed by the Buddhist rule as the four months of the season of rains. Aśoka records the duration of his pilgrimage; an extraordinary deed, making his conversion clear. The King made sure that his official acts tallied with the traditional astronomical computation, which he never ceased to respect, when he had converted to Buddhism. The Brahmanic calendar hinges on conjunction of the moon with a stars group or with one star (*nakṣatra*); the days of the month of lunar sidereal revolution correspond to the interval between two successive conjunctions of the moon with the same star; the sidereal month consists of 27 and 1/3 days. The year lasts 366 days. Since the retreat lasted 109 days (27 days and 1/3 $\times$ 4), subtracted from 366, they give the 257 days and 256 nights of duration of the pilgrimage. It would have been impossible for Aśoka to follow the prescriptions of his time more scrupulously: the retreat began with the season of rains, close to the summer solstice. The sovereign reflected the path followed by the sun, which interrupts the *uttarāyana*, its course towards the north. "Apôtre du dhamma, de la Norme, Asoka avait voulu, avec une précision scientifique, lui être deux fois fidèle: il s'était conformé, en pratiquant pieux, à une prescription du dhamma bouddhique, tout en se réglant, en roi, sur le dhamma cosmique" (Filliozat 1949b, 154). Cf. Daffinà 1988, 54; Meile 1949, 193-225.

3 The Epithets of Aśoka in the Kandahar Inscriptions and the Originality of the Texts

The Aramaic title *mr'n Prydrš* and the Greek Πιοδάσσης are calques of the Indian *Piyadassi/Priyadarśin* 'benevolent gaze'.[11] The bilingual epigraphs open with standard formulas: βασιλεὺς Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβειαν ἔδειξεν, "King Piodasses disseminated piety" and *mr'n Prydrš mlk' ksty' mhqṣṭ* "our lord *Prydrš* shows the truth". In another Aramaic inscription, the sovereign, again defined with the formal expression *mr'n*[12] *Prydrš*, is the "establisher of justice" (Dupont-Sommer 1970, 158-73). Corresponding to the Greek εὐσέβεια is the Aramaic *ksty'* 'truth'. The *Dharma* and the epithets of the sovereign were rendered with essentially analogous terms, though not calques of one another. The two versions (Benveniste 1958, 37-8, 42-3) did not derive the Greek from the Aramaic or vice versa. In my opinion, the fact that they are independent of one another does not imply that the two did not translate a single Indian original; rather, the French scholar detects, in the differing translations, evidence of two distinct traditions, and thus the possibility of another Indian original version behind the bilingual edict. What Benveniste offers is a suggestion, not a certainty, although what he doubted became a certainty for many, who followed after him. Εὐσέβεια and *ksty'* express the Law, of which Aśoka took on the task of ecumenical diffusion. This is the first and most important reason why I feel it is imprudent to make so much of the hypothesis of distinct traditions, failing to appreciate the function they were to serve. Returning to the title, there is no great difference to be noted. The epithets used are those appropriate for the king and evoke the characteristics of gentleness and benevolence, which he declares inspire him, recalling the ideals of royalty associated with the Hellenistic monarch (Festugière 1972, 210-25). Aśoka consistently presents himself both with the title of *Devānāṃpriya*/θεόφιλος, 'friend of the Gods, dear to the divine majesties' and with the epithet *Piyadassi – Priyadarśin* / ἱλαρός – εὐμενής, 'benevolent'.[13] In my

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[11] The kings preceding Aśoka (Kālsī) were attributed with the epithet *Devānāṃpriya*, rather than *rājāno*, while the epithet *Piyadassi* qualified Aśoka alone. Cf. Benveniste 1964, 143-6.

[12] The title *mr'n* continues the use of the Achaemenid administrative language: it appears in the Elephantine Papyri in Aramaic, where it designates the other dignitaries; Aršāma, satrap of Egypt and Bagavahya, governor of Judaea, are defined *mr'n*, cf. Benveniste 1964, 143.

[13] Cf. Shāhbāzgarhī (*RE* XIII): "il *Devānāṃpriya* desidera, per tutti gli esseri, integrità (*savra-bhutana*), autodominio (*akshati saṁyamaṁ*) e condotta equanime di fronte alla violenza (*samachariyaṁ rabhasye*)". In the place of the latter, we read at Girnār and Kālsī *mādava* 'kindness' (Hultzsch 1925, 24-5, 68, 69 fn. 6). Upright moral conduct is common to the Indian monarch and the Hellenistic kings. For the Greeks, filial reverence and firmness in faith were of fundamental importance, including the recommendation to abstain from feeding animals (although this was already a Pythagorean concept); cf. Yailenko 1990, 239-56. The essence of the *Dharma* renders the message unique for the Greek conception;

opinion remains a mystery, because Benveniste insisted on translating the Aramaic *ptytw* in such a way as to correspond to the πληρη[θέντ]ων, completed by Robert and Pugliese Carratelli, in view of the fact that he himself postulated two distinct traditions. In the line of the interpretation established by Benveniste, the edict should be the original creation of one of Aśoka's officials at Kandahar, and, accordingly, this would justify the different redaction since

> s'il pouvait s'occuper personellement des affaires du Magadha il devait lasser à ses fonctionnaires chargés de provinces lointaines une très large délégation d'autorité. (Fussman 1974, 376)[14]

Kandahar is considered part of the Indian dominion, one of the 'provinces lointaines' but, if it really had been so, why was it that only at Kandahar someone took it upon himself to record the sovereign's wishes, without the original text coming from the Maurya court, as was the case in the rest of the kingdom? It would have been quite a different matter to observe, rightly, that

> Asoka fait adapter son texte original aux habitudes des diverses provinces suivant en cela le précepte du Bouddha lui-même. Une certaine liberté laissée aux traducteurs témoigne q'ils n'ont pas prisonniers de l'original. (Bloch 1950, 43)

Fussman (1974) takes the content of the bilingual epigraph as a summary of the first eight rupestrian edicts, and goes on to wonder how it is that some of the information present in the texts, presumed to have prompted it, is missing from the inscription. On the basis of these absences, he asserts the originality of the inscription.

However, supposing one might speak of originality in the case of a summary, what exactly are the 'absences'?

1. The redactors of the bilingual epigraph make no mention of the planting of trees and creation of wells and cisterns – actions which Aśoka ordered to be carried out throughout the kingdom, as we read in edict II from Girnār. Fussman imputes this to the torrid climate of the sun-beaten Indian province (Fussman 1974, 380-5).

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consider the exceptional nature of the repentance of the sovereign weighed down by the gravity of the actions committed; cf. Festugière 1972, 221-5.

14 Fussman sought to demonstrate a sort of federal organisation of the kingdom; *contra*: "The Mauryan centralized monarchy became a paternal despotism under Aśoka. The previously held idea of the king being a protector, remote from the affairs of his subjects, gave way to the belief that he had complete control over all sphere of social and political life" (Thapar 1997, 95).

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2. The three categories of officials, reported in edict III from Girnār – tasked to carry out "giri d'ispezione completi ogni cinque anni, allo scopo di istruire nella dottrina del *Dharma*, oltre che per i compiti ordinari" – are missing.

3. There is not the slightest mention in the Kandahar bilingual epigraph (nor, we might add, in the Greek monolingual epigraph) of the *Dhaṁmamahāmātā* (*RE* V Mānsehrā).

4. There is no reference to the ritual pilgrimage of 256 nights and, finally, all reference to the Brahmins and the ascetics is omitted since they "n'existaient pas chez les grecs" (Fussman 1974, 383).

By virtue of these absences, the bilingual epigraph is held to reverberate with the "liberté de décision et d'action des hauts fonctionnaires royaux" (384). But if this is, in fact, a compendium, would it not make sense to repeat all the material it summarises? Otherwise, what sort of summary is it? Moreover, what originality would the redactors have shown in contents if, as Fussman supposes, they had abided by the contents set out in the first eight edicts to draw up the text? If, indeed, Kandahar belonged to the dominion of Aśoka – a conviction, in which Fussman is by no means alone (e.g. cf. Bernard 1985, 85-7; 2005; 2012; Coloru 2009, 136) – then it would represent no small obstacle to an objective reading of the epigraph. The Greek inscriptions clearly reveal a firm intention of moral proselytism: they celebrate not so much the sovereign himself, as his conversion. This would account for the absence of the ritual pilgrimage, which is more evocative of the role of the monarch in his realm. In the engravings addressing his subjects, the king illustrates the ways and forms of dissemination of the *Dharma* and reference is made to all the activities of a practical nature performed in the Empire, but this is not the case at Kandahar. Consequently, in my opinion, there is no need to fall back on the aridity of the climate to justify the fact that the Kandahar's inscriptions make no mention of the woods planted, or the construction of drinking troughs for animals (and if the city had been part of the Indian Empire there would also have been all the more need for the latter). Instead of weighing up the possibility that Kandahar, like much of Arachosia, might have belonged to the Seleucid kingdom, the most disparate reasons are lined up to interpret the departure of the Afghan edicts from the rest of the sovereign's epigraphic *corpus*.

It would be beyond our scope to review the whole series of classical sources (Strabo 15, 2, 9; Appian Συριακή, 55; Pompeius Trogus in the epitome of Justin 15, 4, 21), on which we depend entirely for evidence of

the pact between Seleucus and Candragupta,[15] but it is worth recalling here Strabo (15, 2, 9):

Ἡ δὲ τάξις τῶν ἐθνῶν τοιαύτη παρὰ μὲν τὸν Ἰνδὸν οἱ Παροπαμισάδαι, ὧν ὑπέρκειται ὁ Παροπαμισὸς ὄρος, εἶτ' Ἀραχωτοὶ πρὸς νότον, εἶτ' ἐφεξῆς πρὸς νότον Γεδρωσηνοὶ σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς τὴν παραλίαν ἔχουσιν ἅπασι δὲ παρὰ τὰ πλάτη τῶν χωρίων παράκειται ὁ Ἰνδός. Τούτων δ' ἐκ μέρους τῶν παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν ἔχουσί τινα Ἰνδοὶ πρότερον ὄντα Περσῶν, ἃ ἀφείλετο μὲν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος τῶν Ἀριανῶν καὶ κατοικίας ἰδίας συνεστήσατο, ἔδωκε δὲ Σέλευκος ὁ Νικάτωρ Σανδροκόττῳ, συνθέμενος ἐπιγαμίαν καὶ ἀντιλαβὼν ἐλέφαντας πεντακοσίους.

The distribution of the populations is as follows: along the Indus the *Paropamisadai*, above which rises mount Paropamisos; successively, to the south, the *Arachotoi*; further south the *Gedrosenoi*, together with other populations that hold the seaboard; the Indus flows through the entire expanse of these lands. On one side [ἐκ μέρους] of these [τούτων], along the Indus [παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν], some [τινα] are held by Indians, having been [who were once /πρότερον ὄντα] Persians, which Alexander seized from the Aryans and founded there his colonies [κατοικίας], [and] Seleucus Nicator yielded [ἔδωκε] to Chandragupta [Σανδροκόττῳ], ratifying the *epigamia* and receiving in exchange [ἀντιλαβὼν] five hundred elephants.

Strabo confines Seleucus' territorial cessions only to the areas, bordering the course of the Indus (παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν), of Arachosia, Gedrosia and Paropamisadai. This geographically precise and specific indication should not be ignored, as Coloru (2009, 136) seems to do, or distorted, extending at will the areas ceded, as far as including even Areia, as Bernard (1985, 85-7) does.[16]

For the absence of officials in the bilingual version of the *Dhaṁmamahāmātā*, we read in edict III of Girnār:

15 Cf. e.g. Wolsky 1947, 20-1; Daffinà 1967, 30-4; 1977, 14-5; for a *résumé* cf. Maniscalco 2014, 70-9.

16 "Dans un cadre géographique aussi vaste, la notion de territoires voisins de l'Indus peut très bien ne pas se réduire aux zones riveraines du fleuve et déborder largement au-delà de la limite occidentale de son bassin" (Bernard 1985, 87; cf. Bernard 2012, 167-70). On the other hand, to cite an earlier observation of mine, "se l'Areia avesse fatto parte del dominio di Candragupta, come si spiegherebbero le rifondazioni di Sōteira, di Hērakleia-Achaia e di Artakoana stessa, visto che esse furono eseguite sotto Antioco I tra il 280 e il 270 a.C.? Bisognerebbe postulare una riconquista seleucide negli anni immediatamente successivi al patto, ma pare improponibile. Ammettendo poi la perdita greca dell'Areia, la Battriana rimarrebbe tagliata fuori dal dominio seleucide e dal momento che, sino alla secessione di Diodoto, cioè nel 240 a.C. circa, la Battriana era inclusa nel regno seleucide, non è credibile mancasse continuità territoriale con il resto dell'impero" (Maniscalco 2014, 74; forthcoming a).

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nel dodicesimo anno dalla consacrazione, ho detto: in tutto il mio regno i dignitari, il governatore e il procuratore di ogni provincia facciano un completo giro d'ispezione.

Again, in Mānsehrā we read

per lungo tempo non vi sono stati Ministri del *Dhaṁma*. Da me, nel tredicesimo anno dalla consacrazione sono stati istituiti i *Dhaṁmamahāmātā*; essi hanno il compito di occuparsi di tutte le comunità religiose, per l'instaurazione del *Dhaṁma*, per il progredimento del *Dhaṁma*, per il benessere e la felicità di chi è dedito al *Dhaṁma* tra gli Yona, i Kamboja, i Gāndhāra.

The institution of the Ministries came three years after the bilingual Kandahar edict, and yet Fussmann (1974) remarks that, seeing that they were instituted for moral care of the subjects Yona and Kamboja, "donc les populations de Kandahar", it is surprising that the bilingual version makes no reference to them [*sic*]. The same applies to the other categories of officials, established in the twelfth year of the reign. At least Fussmann does not deduce from this 'absence' proof of Indian rule in Arachosia, as others would take pains to do after him. Nor, finally, are there grounds to argue that the Brahmans and ascetics were not named because they did not exist where the Greeks were. In the second part of the monolingual epigraph, summarising edict XIII (Shāhbāzgarhī), the βραμεναι ἢ σραμεναι – the *bramaṇa va śramaṇa* of the original text – make an apperance (l. 17).

Henning (1949-50, 80-8) studied the Aramaic term *shyty*, which appears no fewer than nine times in the inscription from Laghmān, and in which has been recognised the transposition of the Indian *sahitaṃ* or *samhitaṃ*, 'composed of/in accordance with'. This formulaic expression links with the extracts from the various edicts to be summarised; each assertion was preceded by "in accordance with that edict…". This constitutes further evidence that the Greek epigraphs derived from the original Indian text.

Christol (1983, 31-2) argues (referring back to Fussman) that

les grecs semblent avoir eu quelque difficulté à assimiler le protocole royale, (Christol 1983, 31-2)

one example being the passage (already considered in relation to the completion by Pugliese Carratelli) ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν. Comparison with the corresponding phrase in edict XIII, *sebāḍhaṃ vedaniyamate… devānaṃpiyasa*, is taken as evidence of the equivalence of the Indian title, *devānaṃpiyasa*, with the pronoun αὐτὸν, and thus far this is plausible, given that the Greek summary may have preferred the pronoun to the epithet. In the same edict, we find the epithet in the genitive absolute case with the

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verb expressing royal power βασιλεύοντος Πιοδάσσου – and the bilingual version, too, uses both βασιλεύς and the epithet: what could we expect to express royalty more than this? Nevertheless, Christol states that the fact that we have no evidence of the political statute of the Greeks of Arachosia – apart from the certainty [*sic*] that the region had been ceded by the Seleucids (not by Seleucus) to the Maurya (to Candragupta) in 303 BC – and

> l'effacement relatif de la personne royale dans la traduction grecque semblent témoigner un esprit répubblicain, (Christol 1983, 32)

so the Greeks

> devaient jouir de l'autonomie de fait, sinon de droit, que donne l'eloignement des centres politiques (32).

It hardly seems likely that the Greeks of Arachosia, hemmed in by the Indian kingdom to the east, and the Seleucid kingdom to the west, could have maintained an order, resembling a no less vague 'republic', until the age of Aśoka. What *de facto* or legally established freedom could they have enjoyed? And, above all, how can it be formulated on the basis of an αὐτὸν? As for the originality, consider the Greek text of the bilingual version:

> Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ς ἀγν]ῶν βασιλεὺς
> Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβεια[ν ἔδ]ε[ι]ξεν τοῖς ἀν
> θρώποις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου εὐσεβεστέρους
> τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐποίησεν καὶ πάντα
> εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν. Καὶ ἀπέχεται
> βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐμψύχων, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ
> ἄνθρωποι· καὶ ὅσοι θηρευταὶ ἢ ἁλιεῖς
> βασιλέως πέπαυνθαι θηρεύοντες· καὶ
> εἴ τινες ἀκρατεῖς' πέπαυνται τῆς ἀκρα
> σίας κατὰ δύναμιν. Καὶ ἐνήκοοι πατρὶ
> καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων παρὰ
> τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ,[17] λῶιον
> καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα, ταῦτα
> ποιοῦντες, διάξουσιν.

> For ten years [having been] invested with purifications king
> Piodasses indicated piety to men
> and, from this moment, more pious
> rendered men, and every thing

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17   I have chosen to insert the comma and the preceding full stop.

prospers on all the earth. And he abstains,
the king, from living beings and so the other
men; and those that [were] hunters or fishermen
of the king desisted from hunting; and
if some [were] violent, they took a distance from intemperance
as far as they were able to. And in respectful listening [ἐνήκοοι] to the
fatherand to the mother and to the elders during
the past [παρὰ τὰ πρότερον] also in the future, more befittingly
and preferably in every respect [λῶιον καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα],
observing these precepts [ταῦτα ποιοῦντες][18] they will behave.

The greatest difference between the translations lies in the interpretation of the nexus παρὰ τὰ πρότερον. Robert (1958, 16-7) translates

> Ils sont devenus obéissants à père et mère et aux gens âges contrairement à la situation antérieure

and observes that

> les éditeurs de la version araméenne remarqueront que là l'accent est porté sur un état antérieur d'obeissance, comme dans les formules des édits indiens. La divergence doit être marquée.[19]

Benveniste (1958) points out that in Aramaic the order of parents is reversed as compared with the Greek (πατρὶ καὶ μητρὶ); in fact, we have the expresꞇ sion *hwptysty l-' mwhy w- l-' bwhy*, thus "obedient to the mother and to the father". The formula corresponds to one repeated many times; for example, in edict XIII from Shāhbāzgarhī, *sadhu matapituṣu* (whose variant at Girnār is *mātarica pitarica*) *suśruṣa* 'docile obedience to the mother and to the father'. The departure of the Greek version from the Aramaic and Indian is taken as yet another sign of its independence (Benveniste 1958, 40-2). This discrepancy between the versions in the bilingual epigraph is stressed by Fussman (1974), Christol (1983) and Pugliese Carratelli (2003, 117-9), the only discordant voice being that of Gallavotti (1959, 185-91). The latter – although Giuseppe Tucci, too, had referred to this possibility in 1958,

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18   I agree with Gallavotti (1959, 188): "I have put ταῦτα ποιοῦντες at ll. 13-14 between commas in order to make it clear (differing in this from one or two of the published translations) that neither ταῦτα should be joined to κατὰ πάντα nor κατὰ πάντα should be joined to ποιοῦντες. The expression ταῦτα ποιοῦντες sums up all the rules prescribed by the *dhamma*: behaving this way, i.e. by following Aśoka's law, men will be well from every point of view"

19   More recent translations have remained consistently in the sense of contrast, which is also in agreement with the 1958 completion; cf. Virgilio 2003, 206-7; Bernard, Rougemont 2012, 169-71.

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in the first publication of the epigraph in Italy – proposes a translation of the nexus παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ on the basis of the Prakrit, or, better, Kharōṣṭī expression *hidalokiko paralokiko* "in this and in the other world" (1959, 188). Gallavotti prefers to see the nexus as agreeing with the period that goes from λῷον to διάξουσιν (in the French translation, however, a full stop is placed after παρὰ τὰ πρότερον, which is possible, considering "ἐνήκοοι as a nominal sentence", cf. Gallavotti 1959, 188):

> during the preceding conditions and in the future they will live better and more happily.

It seems quite likely that the scholar took inspiration from the final section of Shāhbāzgarhī:

> Questa iscrizione del *Dharma* è stata incisa a questo scopo: affinché i miei figli e pronipoti non pensino di fare un'altra conquista [ma] nel loro regno prediligano la tolleranza ed il mite castigo e pensino a quella conquista che è la conquista (o vittoria) del *Dharma*, la quale vale per questo e per l'altro mondo (*hidalokiko paralokiko*). Tutta ed ogni gioia sia quella gioia del *Dharma* che vale per questo e per l'altro mondo.

This proposal is preferable to that of the French school, although my preference is for temporal continuity, applying to obedient docility (in fact, ἐνήκοοι makes clear the propensity to be a good listener, expressed by *śru-*, hence *śuśrūṣa* 'obedience' in the original texts), lovingness due to the father, to the mother and to the elders, thereby according with the frequent Indian reference to devotion to parents, also taking into account the fact that the formulas Gallavotti hypothesises do not appear in the original versions which the bilingual version evidently summarises.

Moreover, I do not believe that παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ would readily be understood by a Greek as "in present life and in future time", as Gallavotti (1959, 188) has advanced. Nevertheless, the possibility of associating only παρὰ τὰ πρότερον, rather than the entire nexus παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ with ἐνήκοοι, cannot be ruled out (even by Gallavotti), and this has left the field open to a considerable variety of solutions, all equally valid from the grammatical point of view. Coming, now, to Robert and Pugliese Carratelli, what need is there to postulate a difference between the various redactions of the bilingual version? Would Aśoka have wanted to address the readers of the Aramaic version in one way, and the Greeks in another? Rather, it is (and should have been) more worthwhile to seek out the reasons for the accordance, rather than those for the divergence. It is worth noting that παρὰ, with the accusative, may

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reasonably be understood with the sense of 'in, during, along',[20] but also "strictly according to, without deviating from" (Liddell, Scott 1996, 1303). My objection is not so much a matter of language, as of the way to penetrate the sense of the sovereign's words. In fact, it would appear that the Greeks were implicitly being reproached, and advised on how to behave with their parents and elders, while the contrary sense emerges in the Aramaic version, where we read in Benveniste's translation

> et (règne) l'obeissance à sa mère et à son père et aux gens âgés conformément (*'yk*) aux obligations qu'a imposées à chacun la sort. (Benveniste 1958, 30)

Benveniste holds that the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic particle *'yk* – 'as, according to' – is κατά, but this certainly does not mean that we have to translate παρὰ as 'differently': why stress this adversive sense ignoring the fact that with παρὰ, with a durative and temporal meaning, a more logical sense is restored, which is also close to that of the Aramaic? The two texts of the bilingual version are not reciprocal calques, which would account for a choice of not entirely analogous propositions, but also the notion of conformity and accord, evoked by *'yk*, should have pointed to a positive reading of παρὰ. My impression is that this meaning has been sacrificed for the sake of an alleged originality – more stated than demonstrated – of the Greek text.

It might be objected, to justify the use in a negative sense, that the sovereign's conversion amounted to a break with the Brahmanic past, and it is true that the radical transformation also had repercussions on the devotion to parents and elders, enhancing it, as we read in the edict of Girnār. Moreover, Brahmagiri recites (*Minor Rock Edition*, *MRE* I-II):

> obbedienza va resa alla madre e al padre, allo stesso modo agli anziani. Salda compassione deve essere mostrata verso gli animali, la verità deve essere detta e queste virtù del *Dharma* essere praticate. Ugualmente l'allievo deve manifestare riverenza al maestro e chiunque deve analogamente condursi con i congiunti. Questa è un'antica regola e questa conduce alla lunga vita. Perciò bisogna compierla.

It's my conviction that the reference to the ancient origins and traditional, rather than original or creative, nature of these customs, which practice of the *Dharma* assimilates and appropriates, is yet another factor pointing in direction of the reasons given. Further confirmation can be inferred from

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20 "Avec l'accusativ 'auprès de', l'accusativ peut aussi exprimer l'extension 'le long de': et au sens temporel 'pendant'" (Chantraine 2009, 826). Cf. *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, 6, 196; Gallavotti 1959, 188.

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the Greek monolingual version:

εὐ]σέβεια καὶ ἐγκράτεια κατὰ πάσας τὰς διατριβάς· ἐγκρατὴς δὲ μάλιστα ἐστιν,
ὅς ἂν γλώσης ἐγκρατὴς ἦι καὶ μήτε ἑαυτοὺς ἐπα[ι]νῶσιν μήτε τῶν πέλας ψέγωσιν
περὶ μηδενός, κενὸγ γάρ ἐστι, καὶ πειρᾶσθαι μᾶλλον τοὺς πέλας ἐπαινεῖν καί
μὴ ψέγειν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς αὔξουσι καὶ τοὺς
πέλας ἀνακτῶνται, παραβαίνοντες δὲ ταῦτα ἀκλεέστεροί τε γίνονται καὶ τοῖς
πέλας ἀπέχθονται. Οἳ δ'ἂν ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαινῶσιν τοὺς δὲ πέλας ψέγωσιν φιλοτιμότερον
διαπράτ(τ)ονται, βουλόμενοι παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐγλάμψαι, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον βλάπτου[σι]
ἑαυτούς· πρέπει δὲ ἀλλήλους θαυμάζειν καὶ τὰ ἀλλήλων διδάγματα παραδέχεσθα[ι],
ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες πολυμαθέστεροι ἔσονται παραδιδόντες ἀλλήλοις ὅσα
ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐπίσταται καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα ἐπ[α]σκοῦσι ταῦτα μὴ ὀκνεῖν λέγειν ἵνα δι
αμεινῶσιν διὰ παντὸς εὐσεβοῦντες. Ὀγδόωι ἔτει βασιλεύοντος Πιοδασσου,
κατέστρεπται τὴν Καλίγγην, ἣν ἐζωγρημένα καὶ ἐξηγμένα ἐκεῖθεν σωμάτων
μυριάδες δεκαπέντε, καὶ ἀναιρέθησαν ἄλλαι μυριάδες δέκα, καὶ σχεδὸν ἄλλοι τοσοῦ
τοι ἐτελεύτησαν. Ἀπ'ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν, καὶ βαρέως ἤνεγκεν
δι'οὗ τρόπου ἐκέλευεν ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἐμψύχων σπουδήν τε καὶ σύντα[ξ]ιν πεποίηται
περὶ εὐσεβείας. Καὶ τοῦτο ἔτι δυσχερέστερον ὑπείληφε ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὅσοι ἐκεῖ ὤικουν
βραμεναι ἢ σραμεναι ἢ καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς οἱ περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν διατρίβοντες, τοὺς ἐκεῖ οἰκοῦ
ντας ἔδει τὰ τοῦ βασιλέως συμφέροντα νοεῖν, καὶ διδάσκαλον καὶ πατέρα καὶ μητέρα
ἐπαισχύνεσθαι καὶ θαυμάζειν, φίλους καὶ ἑταίρους ἀγαπᾶν καὶ μὴ διαψεύδεσθαι,
δούλοις καὶ μισθωτοῖς ὡς κουφότατα χρᾶσθαι τούτων ἐκεῖ τῶν τοιαῦτα διαπρασσο
μένων εἴ τις τέθνηκεν ἢ ἐξῆκται, καὶ τοῦτο ἐμ παραδρομῆι οἱ λοιποὶ ἤγεινται, ὁ δὲ
[β]ασιλεὺς σφόδρα ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐδυσχέρανεν. Καὶ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰσιν...

Respect and temperance in every dispute, but temperance is shown above all by those who have command over their word, for no reason flattering or humiliating their neighbour; such behaviour is vain, and indeed it is well to strive to give just praise to one's neighbour, never offending him in any way. Respecting these precepts, they enhance themselves and attract their neighbour, while, violating them, they become somewhat ignoble and make themselves hateful. Those who extol themselves and blame their neighbour for the sake of greater glory, wishing to shine above the others, bringing yet greater shame upon themselves: it is well to respect one another and learn from one another reciprocally; following these rules they will become wiser, exchanging what each of them knows, and there should be no hesitation in repeating these principles to those who cultivate them so that, being ever compassionate, they may improve. In the eighth year of his reign Piodasses conquered Kaliṅga, from there were imprisoned and deported a hundred and fifty thousand men, a hundred thousand more were crushed and almost as many died. From that moment compassion and remorse filled him and he suffered deeply, thus he prescribed abstaining from living beings and turned zeal and order towards piety. And the king received an even

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deeper sorrow – that those who lived there, Brahmans or ascetics or also any others, who dedicated themselves to piety, who, living there, were to respect the things close to the sovereign's heart, admire and respect the master, father, mother, love friends and companions and tell no lies to them, treat slaves and domestic servants with the upmost mildness – if anyone of these that behaved in such a way is dead or has been deported, and those who remain in the meantime think on this, then the king is dreadfully devastated. Also in the remaining peoples...

Having been accomplished the conquest of Kaliṅga in the eighth year of his reign, the king grieves that the human beings killed and deported held dear respect and love for relatives and the master (at Shāhbāzgarhī reference is to the elders, *suśruṣa guruna*, but the sense does not change) which now he is preaching. Here the monarch addresses a Brahmanic context, what better proof? If this applied to his own subjects, and also to those professing a creed other than his, would it not apply all the more to the Greeks of Arachosia?

In short, expressing his grief for a crushed Indian population, whose respect and care for parents he recognised, is it likely that, at the same time, he would recommend the Greeks only to respect father and mother, in contrast with the past? At this point, the originality of the bilingual edict seems devoid of good sense, apparently having lost logical accord with the Aramaic version, with which it is associated.

Once again, however, we appreciate the originality of the *Dharma*, consisting in a pressing call for pity, filial piety, respect, reverence to the master, attention to those apparently different from us, tending not to wish to shine but to receive, rejecting war and conquest of other peoples, bringing out the intrinsic, ancient equality with themselves. Finally, the fact that mention of the father comes before that of the mother – unlike the Indian original, of which the Greek is a faithful calque (Norman 1972, 18)[21] – reflects, I believe, the habitual Greek practice, to which the epigraph is adapted, and no more than this.

4 The Dominion of Kandahar in the Age of Aśoka: the Contribution of the Epigraphs

Schlumberger (1958, 4-7) holds that there would be no sense in Aśoka's being allowed to have his official proclamations engraved in Greek, in the territory of the city, if it was dominated by the nearby Antioch. If we were

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21   Reference to the elders is omitted in the Greek monolingual version, while in the Indian original of Shāhbāzgarhī it followed reference to the father and mother (*mata pituṣu suśruṣa guruna suśruṣa*).

to follow the approach of the French school, there would be no point in Aśoka's references (Shāhbāzgarhī, *RE* XIII) to the possibility of promoting his doctrines abroad, among his neighbours (*āparānta*), i.e. Aṃtiyoka (Antiochus II of Syria, 262/61-246 BC), Aṃtekina (Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, 276-240/39 BC), Turamāya (Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285-246 BC), Magā (Magas of Cyrene, ?-until 250 BC) and Alikasudara (Alexander of Epirus, 272-240/39 BC) (cf. Pugliese Carratelli 1953; Eggermont 1956; Daffinà 1988). In fact, the victory of *Dharma* meant for him the ability to disseminate his message both to the West, in the Hellenistic kingdoms, and to the other populations of southern India as far as Tāṃraparṇī (Ceylon?).[22] Both the Greek edicts attest to the extraordinary export and reception of the Buddhist precepts, and, in light of the propaganda and cultural outreach, in pursuit of which they were composed, the use of Greek is fully accounted for; it should not necessarily be seen as a sign of physical possession of Arachosia in the Indian Empire.

One last point should be made *ex absentia*: the populations inhabiting the territory on the western borders of the Maurya Empire included the Kamboja – [23] the ancient iranian inhabitants of hodiernal Kāfiristān, the Capisene (Daffinà 1975-76, 53-4) – together with the Yona and the Gandhāra (Mānsehrā, *RE* V). These would be visited by the *Dhaṃmamahāmātā*, the superintendents of the Law. The Kamboja are named after the Yona, i.e. the Greeks, and the areas they occupied bordered the Indian Empire if not overlapping within it, but neither of the two appear in the inscriptions of Alexandria in Arachosia. At the same time, let us bear in mind that there is no mention of the *Dhaṃmamahāmātā* in the bilingual version. Nevertheless, to account for the absence of the ministers of the *Dharma*, Bernard (1985, 89) states that the Yona in Aśoka's inscriptions can only be the Greek settlers at Kandahar, adding:

> peut-on imaginer que ces colonies, si elles avaient été d'obédience séleucide, auraient toléré le contrôle de censeurs venus d'un État étranger et qui s'arrogaient le droit de pénétrer dans la vie privée des citoyens? (Bernard 1985, 89)

22 The *Taprobane* of the classical sources, but also *Tāmraparṇī*, "dalle ali (o piume) di rame" (Daffinà 1988, 63-4), is a river in southern India, the present-day Tāmravarī; there is no certainty that it was Ceylon, or the southernmost tip of India.

23 "Leur religion les caractérise sans discussion possible comme des Mazdéen" (Benveniste 1958, 47) and "les Kambojas de l'Arachosie parlaient une langue iranienne et observaient des prescriptions mazdéenne; mais leur mazdeisme n'était de stricte orthodoxie" (Bernard 1985, 92 fn. 1), but "bisognerebbe riflettere sulla facilità con cui si ignora la nozione che i Kamboja non appaiono in alcun editto proveniente da Kandahar o dall'Arachosia in generale; pertanto come possono essere i Kamboja dell'Arachosia a parlare una lingua iranica, considerata la diversa collocazione geografica? Ma seppure ne ipotizzassimo la presenza a Kandahar, come stabilirne il grado di ortodossia mazdea?" (Maniscalco 2014, 47).

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In short, having decided, with his customary way of proceeding, from certainty to certainty, that post-Achaemenid Arachosia was Indian, the scholar accounts for the absence of officials saying that it was only to be expected – considering the presuppositions, one might add.

Bernard refutes the thesis of Schober (1981, 167), who put down the absence of the ministers of the *Dharma* in the Kandahar epigraphs to its independence from the Maurya Empire, and from the jurisdiction of these Imperial officials. As we have seen, however, this is not the case, at least as far as the bilingual version is concerned, while no information are provided by the monolingual ona as the final section has been lost. However, turning to the final part of the original text (Shāhbāzgarhī), we find no reference to the institution of the ministers of the *Dharma* but, more generically, to the existence of messengers of the king:

> anche là dove i messaggeri del *Devānāṃpriya* non si recano, quelli pure, avendo udito la pratica del *Dharma*, i precetti del *Dharma*, l'insegnamento del *Dharma* del *Devānāṃpriya*, si conformano e si conformeranno al *Dharma*. Quella in tal modo conseguita è una vittoria universale ed è l'essenza della gioia.

In any case, I do not believe that it suffices to invoke the non-mention of the *Dhaṁmamahāmātā* to demonstrate that Arachosia did not belong to the Indian Empire (to asseverate this we have already examined much more substantial issues), and, certainly, not to assert the contrary.

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Sudhīś Pacaurī and Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ 'Śītāṃśu'
Postmodern Approaches to Recent Hindi Literature

Veronica Ghirardi
(Università degli Studi di Torino, Italia)

Abstract Postmodernism is a highly controversial phenomenon, that animated the debates of Western scholars during the closing decades of the twentieth century, but has this term any meaning in the Indian context? This paper aims to introduce the notion of postmodernism in Hindi literary critique and more specifically the contributions of two scholars, Sudhīś Pacaurī and Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ Śītāṃśu, as the possible bases for textual analysis and further theoretical investigations.

Summary 1 Postmodernism: from the Western Origins to the Indian Context. – 2 Sudhīś Pacaurī: Intertextuality and Playfulness. – 3 Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ 'Śītāṃśu': the Four Ingredients of a Postmodern Text. – 4 Conclusive Reflections.

Keywords Hindi literature. Postmodernism. Literary criticism. Sudhīś Pacaurī. Śaśibhūṣaṇ Śītāṃśu.

This paper aims to discuss the concept of postmodernism in the field of Hindi literature, through the perspectives offered by two Indian scholars, Sudhīś Pacaurī and Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ 'Śītāṃśu'. This is an almost unexplored research field and may represent a thought-provoking challenge. Postmodernism has been debated in connection with multiple literary traditions – from Europe to Latin America, from the USA to Japan – but really few pages have been written on Indian literatures.[1] Undoubtedly a first issue has to be related to the origins of this cultural phenomenon, that are indissolubly connected with the Western world: can postmodernism be a suitable term for the Indian context? Or should it be considered a mere imported fashion? With the first section of this paper, after a general introduction to postmodernism, I attempt to answer this question, by discussing some possible acceptations of modernity and postmodernity in India. In sections 2 and 3, shifting from sociology towards literature (and particularly towards Hindi literature), I concentrate on Pacaurī's and Śītāṃśu's contributions, focusing on their analysis of some recent Hindi works.

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1 To be more accurate, a postmodern reading was proposed for the recent Anglo-Indian literary production (Das 2010; Myles 2006), with particular reference to Salman Rushdie's novels (Berlatsky 2011, 109-44; Jenkins 2002, 62-75; Hassumani 2002; Shaikh 2016). Nothing similar happened, at least in any Western language, for Hindi literature.

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1 Postmodernism: from the Western Origins to the Indian Context

Postmodernism has become one of the keywords of intellectuals' debates in Europe and the USA since the 1960s. The prefix *post-* should not be read in a chronological sense, as it refers more to "logical and historical *consequence* rather than sheer temporal *posteriority*" (McHale 2004, 5). Postmodernism is undoubtedly a complex cultural phenomenon, rejecting any unifying or fixed definition. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that it questions the bases of the modern era and problematizes the major certainties of the 'Western world'. As Hutcheon (2004, 18) stated, the prefix *post-*, in fact, denotes a "contradictory dependence on and independence from that which temporally preceded it and which literally made it possible", that is modernism. Postmodernism highlights that realities commonly perceived as 'natural', such as capitalism or the patriarchal system, are actually social and cultural constructs. It challenges scientific positivism, Enlightenment rationalism and the inevitability of human progress. In general, it challenges the modernist acceptation of the cause-effect relation: an effect is no more determined by a unique cause, but by multiple ones. Even the truth has to be considered plural and cannot be reduced to a monolithic assumption. In Derrida and Lyotard's terminology, postmodernism *deconstructs* the *grands récits*, the totalizing ideologies related to the Enlightenment and modernity. To be more accurate, postmodernism does not definitely reject all meta-narratives, but their pretense of being natural and eternal truths. Postmodernism, in fact, wants to return to plurality and specific peculiarities, which can no longer be universalized (Chiurazzi 2002, 39). It interrogates the urge to sameness, certainty and homogeneity, foregrounding what is different, provisional and heterogeneous (Hutcheon 2004, 42).

Undoubtedly, the concept of postmodernism was born in the 'Western world', deeply connected with its historical and socio-cultural background. Lyotard, for instance, in his pivotal text *The Postmodern Condition* clearly defined his field and aim of investigation: in the introduction he clarifies that the object of his study is the state of knowledge in highly developed societies (Lyotard [1981] 2008, 5). For this reason many Indian scholars are quite skeptical about extending the term postmodern to their own reality. Postmodernism is often merely considered as an imported fashion, which is not suitable for a postcolonial reality such as India. There is no modernity in the subcontinent – many of them argue – so how can we talk about postmodernism?

In an interview I conducted in February 2016 with Sudhīś Pacaurī – one of the most important scholars to have written extensively about postmodernism and Hindi literature – he highlighted the importance of looking at India as a complex and multifaceted reality. Simultaneously we can find

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traces of pre-modernity in *ādivāsī*'s style of life; traces of modernity in democratic institutions and in the development of an extended middle class; traces of postmodernity in the revolution of telecommunications, in the participation in consumerism and globalization. From a sociological point of view, Doshi (2008, 79) too described India as a "kaleidoscopic interplay of tradition, modernity and postmodernity". He claims:

> it could be wrong to take the view that in the processes of change, tradition comes first followed by modernity and finally by postmodernity. Empirical history demonstrates that all the three processes can operate simultaneously. People's disenchantment is observed for all the three processes from time to time. Traditions have outlived their time; modernity is many a time fake and it works for the benefits of the dominant class/caste and political groups of society; and postmodernity, which is based on pluralism, differentiation, autonomy, self-identity, may bring out disintegrative tendencies in the society. (Doshi 2008, 79)

The economic reforms of the 1990s played a fundamental role in moving India towards a postmodern condition. During Narasimha Rao's term as Prime Minister (1991-1996) India started on its path towards liberalization, consumerism and globalization, even though aspects of a late capitalistic nation still coexist with others of extreme backwardness. Hence the reality of the subcontinent – which is by its nature a mosaic of languages, cultures, landscapes – has become even more complex, a sort of hymn to pluralism.

For a better understanding of this situation, it is probably necessary to take a step back and see how modernism is defined by Indian sociologists. According to Yogendra Singh (1986), for instance, modernity started in India through the establishment of the British *rāj*. In this acception, modernity is basically connected to scientific and technological advancement, to the introduction of a legal code, and to a first change in the culture and social structure of Indian society. Nonetheless, he admits that this kind of modernity could not deeply modify an ancient system of values and traditions: essentially people maintained their way of thinking, their structure of values, simply benefiting from the facilities provided by modernity. With quite an opposite stance, Dipankar Gupta ([2010] 2014) argued that modernity has not been related to technology and consumption, rather to changes in social relations (family connections, privileges of caste and status), and to the desire to go beyond any restrictions imposed by traditional institutions. To the scholar "once modernity is understood in this fashion, it is apparent that India still has a long distance to go" (Gupta [2010] 2014, 8). Many other sociologists have chosen an intermediate position, underlining that Indian modernity came during the British period, but that it became massively observable in the social fabric only

after Independence and the promulgation of the Constitution. These historical milestones, in actual fact, determined a first real change in the definition of identity. Previously, it was indissolubly joined to caste and religion: it is only in independent India that individual identity becomes powerful (Doshi 2008, 88-9). Among these scholars, Doshi has emphasized that only a tiny percentage of the population (that is to say, the dominant groups) benefited from modernity. Moving from this perspective Doshi – in his text specifically devoted to postmodernism and Indian society (Doshi 2008) – has highlighted that postmodernism in India cannot be seen as a reaction to modernism as a whole, but to the increasing privileges of the upper castes. Moreover, postmodernism should be related to the rise of 'little traditions', specific to particular cultural areas or regions. According to the sociologist, in fact, despite widespread fears, the rise of modernity has strengthened local ethnicity, traditions and customs through the use of modern innovations, particularly information technology. Doshi (2008, 82) even states that "differentiated ethnicity, autonomous ethnicity and self-conscious ethnicity constitute the structure of postmodernity" in India.

Referring more specifically to Hindi literature, the debate on postmodernism has been long overlooked. An exception is represented by the well-known critic Nāmvar Siṃh who, during the 1980s, discussed the concept of *uttar-ādhuniktā* (postmodernity) and rejected it as unsuitable for the Indian context.[2] From the end of the 1990s and especially after 2000, the first dedicated texts of literary criticism started to be published. A first example may be *Uttar ādhuniktā kuch vicār* (Postmodernity, Some Reflections; 2000), a miscellaneous book edited by Dev Śaṅkar Navīn and Suśānt Kumār Miśra. The volume recollects various essays dealing with Western thinkers who anticipated or contributed, more or less directly, to postmodernism. Other noteworthy texts of this period are *Uttar-ādhuniktāvād aur dalit sāhitya* (Postmodernism and Dalit Literature; 2008) by Kṛṣṇadatt Pālīvāl, *Uttar-ādhunik sāhityik vimarś* (Postmodern Literary Discourse; [1996] 2010) by Sudhīś Pacaurī and *Uttar-ādhuniktā: sāhitya aur saṃskṛti kī nayī soc* (Postmodernity: Literature and New Cultural Thinking; 2012) by Devendra Issar. In the next section I will focus on Pacaurī's contribution, as the scholar not only provides a theoretical introduction to postmodernism, but also an example of postmodern reading of recent Hindi works.

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2 I have not been able to find Nāmvar Siṃh's article *Śatābdī kā avsān aur uttar-ādhuniktā* (1984), but its themes are reported in Avadhesh Kumar Singh 2001.

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2 Sudhīś Pacaurī: Intertextuality and Playfulness

Uttar-ādhunik sāhityik vimarś (Postmodern Literary Discourse) by Sudhīś Pacaurī was published for the first time in 1996 and is probably one of the most thought provoking texts published in Hindi on postmodernism. By highlighting the skepticism towards postmodernism which dominates the world of Hindi literary critique, Pacaurī affirms that postmodernism is often considered as a concept borrowed from Western societies, a mere imported fashion. To him, however, postmodernism is nowadays an all-pervading economic and cultural condition which cannot be neglected. As previously mentioned, Pacaurī provides a theoretical overview of postmodernism, based on Western thinkers. The critics he cites include Baudrillard and his concepts of signs and simulacra; Lyotard and the end of the modernist master-narratives; Derrida and his philosophy of deconstruction. From Jameson, Pacaurī recalls the well-known definition of postmodernism as the cultural logic (*sāṃskṛitik tark*) of late capitalism, the ideas of death of the subject (*kartā kī mṛtyu*), effacement of history (*itihās ke vilop*) and schizophrenic writing. These are just some examples, but many others can easily be found. Among the Indian intellectuals Pacaurī mentions Aijaz Ahmad, a Marxist theorist and political commentator, detractor of post-structuralism and postmodernism. Particularly Pacaurī deals with the text *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature* (Ahmad 1992), in which Ahmad discusses the role of theory and intellectuals in the movement against colonialism and imperialism.

Regarding the features of postmodern literature, Pacaurī ([1996] 2010, 96-117) indicates intertextuality as probably the most relevant. In the contemporary world, in fact, intertextuality seems to have become the very condition of textuality: it is no longer possible to create something completely new, there will necessarily be references to the past and to previous works. Through pastiche – a term that he glosses as *kataran sāhitya* (clipping literature) – the boundaries between what is literary and what is not are broken. The critic claims:

> यहाँ इतिहास, आत्मकथा, जीवनी सब मिश्रित हो उठता है। यहाँ साहित्य की विधाएँ टूट जाती हैं, उनके पक्के रूप टूट जाते हैं। वे शाश्वत, मुकम्मल और शुद्ध नहीं रह पाते। यहाँ 'महिला विमर्श' और 'अल्पसंख्यक' और दलित या पिछड़े विमर्श भी जगह पाते हैं। (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 99)

> Here history, autobiography, biography, everything is mixed. Here literary genres are broken, their fixed forms are broken. They can no longer be eternal, perfect and pure. Here the reflections of women, minorities, dalits and subaltern groups find a place.[3]

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3 All English translations from this text are made by the Author.

Parody is defined as an ironic form of intertextuality (*antarpāṭhīytā kā vyaṅgyātmak rūp*) and as another essential postmodern device for looking at reality. It is particularly useful to look at the past: through parody, history can be recovered, but in a new manner, abandoning its traditional aura of grandiosity (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 100). Parody unmasks the misconception that it is possible to reach an ultimate truth about the past (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 106). On this, it is important to notice that for Pacaurī postmodernism does not mean the end of history, it simply brings to light the incompleteness of traditional forms of knowledge. For postmodernism an event does not have a fixed meaning, but multiple possible meanings.

A further relevant postmodern feature is playfulness. During my interview with the critic he argued that in the contemporary world *pleasure* has gained a central role, taking the place of reality. In the consumer society, people do not want to buy sorrow and suffering (which is a fundamental part of the previous realistic tradition), but well-being and happiness. Therefore, towards the end of the Twentieth century, we start encountering texts whose plot is extremely reduced, with no great ideals or eternal truths and especially no didactic intention. We find mosaics of daily-life images (no longer charged with the idea of social commitment), apparently 'light plots' with plenty of sexual allusions and fascinating puns. Moreover, contemporary literature becomes a product of the consumer society and progressively erases the distance between high and popular literature. This is a typical feature of postmodern art, whose authors do not try to conceal the tensions between aesthetic, historical and textual dimensions (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 102-3).

I would now like to introduce Pacaurī's analysis of two Hindi novels – Manohar Śyām Jośī's[4] *Hariyā Harkyūlīz kī hairānī* (The Perplexity of Hariya Hercules) and Surendra Varmā's[5] *Mujhe cānd cāhie* (I Want the Moon) – that he cites as possible postmodern works. Pacaurī commences his discourse on Hariyā's story by comparing significantly its author to Umberto Eco:

अपने उम्बर्टो इको ने हिन्दी में हरिया लिख दिया है। हरिया हरामी इको के 'पेंडुलम' और 'रोज' दोनों को छका रहा है। (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 136)

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4 Manohar Śyām Jośī (1933-2006) is often called the Father of Indian Soap Opera, since he was the scriptwriter of the first Indian TV serial, *Ham Log* (1982). He took several jobs: teacher, journalist, scriptwriter and was also the author of short stories and novels. His best-known novels include *Kuru kuru svāhā* (1980), *Hariyā Harkyūlīz kī hairānī* (1994), *Ṭ-ṭā professor* (1995), *Hamzād* (1999) and *Kyāp*, an allegory of modern India, for which he won the Sāhitya Akademi award in 2005.

5 Surendra Varmā (born 1941) is a well-known Hindi novelist and playwright. His novels include *Mujhe cānd cāhie* (1993), *Do murdoṁ ke lie guldastā* (2000) and *Kāṭnā śamī kā vṛkṣa padmapaṅkhurī kī dhār se* (2010).

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our Umberto Eco wrote Hariyā in Hindi. Hariyā the illegitimate is sur-
passing Eco's 'Pendulum' and 'Rose'".

The story is highly provocative and, for quite some time, it disconcerted
the writers community exactly as, within the novel, Hariyā's behavior
troubled many members of the *kumāūṁnī*[6] community in Delhi. Hariyā
is depicted as a simple man, devoted to the care of sick people, uncon-
cerned about the pleasures of life. Despite the pain and sorrows of his
life he has never felt perplexed. Nonetheless, something changes during
a visit to some relatives. A young boy, Atul, shows him a town with the
intriguing name of Goomalling on a map of Australia. This name prompts
Hariyā to muse about the affinity with the word *gū*, which means feces.
How is it possible that people can live in such a place? Atul explains that
human beings can live almost everywhere, challenging the most inhospi-
table conditions. There will probably be someone in Goomalling who is
experiencing Hariyā's own difficulties. From this moment on Hariyā be-
comes obsessed with the idea of his alter-ego, a man like him devoting his
life to a sick father. The perplexity of our protagonist increases when he
hears the name of Goomalling (perhaps Gūmāliṅg would be more correct
in this case) from one of his father's friends, Banno. She is actually quite
an old lady suffering from amnesia, who is no longer able to recognize her
relatives. Hariyā is chatting with Banno's son when she enters the scene
swearing and evoking Goomalling. Hariyā is completely disconcerted: how
is it possible that Banno knows about Goomalling? And is that Goomalling
the same as the one on the map of Australia? Banno and his father shared
many of their memories, so if Goomalling was in her mind, it had to be in
his father's mind too. So why had his father never mentioned that place?
In Jośī's words:

> Was Goomalling some dangerous place that people were afraid even to
> mention? Or was Goomalling just some lie born of senility? And if that
> was the case, was the Goomalling on the map, too, just a falsehood?
> And the picture kept repeating itself in Hariya's head: that of a father
> and a son irretrievably connected by stuck shit, what was the false
> Goomalling that formed the background of the picture? And was that

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6   The community to which both character and author belongs. Its origins are in Kumāūṁ
region of Uttarakhand. The name Kumāūṁ derives from the hill Kūrmāchala, in Almoṛā
district, where it is believed that Viṣṇu resided for three years in the form of Kūrmāvtār
(tortoise) in order to save the earth. Kumāūṁnī is also one of the most representative *central
pahāṛī* languages (together with Gaṛhvālī) and it is spoken in Uttarakhand, Assam, Bihar,
Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, in some regions of Himachal Pradesh and in the area
of Delhi. In spite of this large area of diffusion, it has been included in the UNESCO Atlas of
the World's Languages in Danger because its usage is rapidly declining (see URL `http://www.
unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php?hl=en&page=atlasmap&lid=1565` [2018-05-09]).

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the one that popped up in Banno's senile mind or the one on the map? (Joshi 2009, 35-6)

But the reader is made to ask some further questions: did Banno really say Goomalling or something like *gū kā liṅg* (a *liṅga* made of feces)? Is everything happening in Hariyā's mind, due to the power of suggestion? In any event, Hariyā's behavior becomes increasingly strange and he starts to represent an intricate argument for his community: according to the doctor an unknown illness affects his brain, while another notable believes him to be possessed by spirits. And the situation becomes worse when Hariyā's father dies and an unexpected treasure is found. In an old trunk, in fact, Hariyā discovers jewelry, gold and silver coins, precious stones, but most interestingly some pornographic pictures of his father and a letter from a mysterious lama. In the letter, the deceased is accused of stealing a holy trunk from the deity of Gūmāliṅg, a mythical place somewhere in the Himalayas. If the treasure is not returned, his whole family will be cursed. Hariyā decides therefore to set out for Gūmāliṅg to atone for his parent's sin. The protagonist's choice is interpreted in various ways by the members of the community: according to a first group he has probably gone mad due to all the sorrows he has experienced; to a second group, he is just pretending to return the trunk, as he wants to keep the treasure for himself; to the last one he is the ideal son, wishing to save his father's spirit and memory. Hariyā leaves for the mysterious site of Gūmāliṅg, never to return. The community will never know what actually happened. People attempt to investigate and various theories are formulated, with the sole result that the story is broken up into a range of potentially true and false accounts. To Pacaurī ([1996] 2010, 142), this is a crucial aspect of the story, which can be linked to post-structuralism: every man can provide a different reading of the story, as nothing is universal and eternal. There is no chance to establish a final truth, only personal and subjective interpretations.

Another interesting aspect of the novel is the change within the community determined by the spread of television. At the time of Hariyā's story, television had yet not entered every house and the people of the community had extremely simple forms of entertainment, especially recounting tales and stories to each other. Immediately after Hariyā's disappearance, one of the most popular entertainment activities was gossiping and wondering about him, forging new narratives of what must have happened. However, after the arrival of TV, only the elder generations continued to talk about Hariyā's story thus keeping it alive. It seems that the community is no longer interested in his tale. Nonetheless, to Atul – who in the meanwhile has become an eminent subject of the community, and has started to work in an American University as an IT engineer – the bond between the story and the community is a sort of necessity:

Whether you write or not, live or die, the story of the perplexity of Hariya Hercules would live as long as our community did, because a story could not exist without perplexity, and our community could not exist without stories. (Joshi 2009, 154)

But let us return for a moment to the role of television within the narrative, since Pacaurī establishes an interesting parallel between TV and the mirror. First of all, how is the mirror (physically or as a metaphor) present in the story? After hearing about Goomalling, Hariyā is affected by some strange epileptic-like fits, where he sees his own Australian double (Harry) struggling with his father's chronic constipation (the old man's name will be Gary, and he will be his father's double). As previously mentioned, Hariyā progressively becomes obsessed by the idea of the double, somebody exactly like him, like the one who looks back at him from inside the mirror (Joshi 2009, 28). The story hence becomes a game of reflected images, a game of mirrors. Towards the end of the story, Hariyā is said to have crossed the mysterious mirror of Gūmāliṅg and to have joined the First Female Other. In actual fact Hariyā has disappeared, but neither the community nor the reader knows what has happened. On this Pacaurī wonders: after the arrival of television (which has substituted the mirror in providing the image of 'the other'), is it possible for us to lose ourselves while watching television in search of the other, exactly as Hariyā lost himself in the mirror of Gūmāliṅg (cf. Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 144)?

Two further points are raised by the critic, respectively related to literature and realism and to the community of writers. On the former, Pacaurī argues that Hariyā's story, through its games of reflections, deeply questions realism and represents a breakthrough in Hindi literature. He believes that

साहित्य जिन्होंने समाज का दर्पण मान रखा है, गूमालिंग के इस अर्थ के अनुसार, जो साहित्य में अपनी छाया खोजते रहते हैं, यथार्थवादी स्कूल की तरह मृत्यु को प्राप्त होते हैं। हरिया हरकुलीज इतना भयावह उत्तर-यथार्थवादी कथाकार ठहरा। हरिया की यह कथा साहित्य की कई यथार्थवादी दुकानों को, पोजिटिविस्ट सम्प्रदायों को ध्वस्त करती हुई आगे निकल जाती है। (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 146)

those who consider literature as a mirror of society, according to this meaning of Gūmāliṅg, who keep on searching for their own reflection in literature, they find their own end as the realist school. Hariyā Harkulīz turns out to be such a dangerous post-realistic narrator. Hariyā's story goes further, destroying quite a few realistic suppliers of literature and positivistic doctrines.

On the latter, he warns the community of writers of the risks implicit in the world of global media: it seems that writers have forgotten what being perplexed means. In this sense, providing a little perplexity again is the

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real goal that Jośī's novel wants to achieve (cf. Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 148).

The second example I wish to mention is based on Surendra Varmā's *Mujhe cānd cāhie*. Basically the novel is a story of female emancipation, whose protagonist, Silbil, starts her conflictual journey during the high-school period by changing her name. Her name will not be Silbil anymore

यशोदा नहीं, नाम होगा वर्षा वशिष्ठ। कारण, यशोदा नाम में कोई सुन्दरता नहीं है। यशोदा के नाम में 'चाँद' नहीं है। चाँद की तलाश यहीं से शुरू होती है। और अन्तिम पृष्ठ तक सिलबिल सौन्दर्य-सधान यानी चाँद-संधान यानी वर्षा-संधान के बारे में सोचती है। (Pacaurī [1996] 2010, 157)

nor Yaśodā, the name will be Varṣā Vaśiṣṭh. The reason, because there is no beauty in Yaśodā. There is no 'moon' in the name Yaśodā. Right here starts her search for the moon. And until the last page Silbil thinks about her aesthetic search, that is to say, about her search for the moon and for Varṣā.

Silbil comes from a traditionalist family: her father is a Sanskrit teacher, none of her relatives has ever tried an acting career, nor left the small city of Shahjahanpur. The arrival at her College of a new English teacher, Miss Divyā Katyāl, radically changes Silbil's life. Miss Katyāl comes from Lucknow and represents a sort of agent of modernization and of the urban world. Thanks to her, Silbil starts to read many important authors of world literature and begins to wonder about the meaning of life: will she live as her relatives did? Silbil reacts to the limitations of her social and family background and starts training as an actress. She moves to Lucknow and, while her parents would like to see her married, she decides to enter the National School of Drama. During this period she meets a young actor Harṣ, who will become her lover. Time passes and Silbil, now named Varṣā, approaches the world of cinema. She becomes a successful actress, but life is not so simple as it might appear: it is not so easy in fact to conciliate art, work, relationships. Harṣ, for instance, is unable to find his own balance and seeks refuge in drugs. Varṣā gets pregnant, but Harṣ's addiction leads to his death.

At a first glance, the novel may appear quite realistic: during the closing decades of the Twentieth century many women could have identified themselves with Varṣā, a courageous young lady ready to challenge her world. Moreover, according to Pacaurī ([1996] 2010, 161), the novel can be read as a brief history of the National School of Drama and Indian cinema, as many celebrities can be found in Varṣā's story and characterization

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(he quotes, for instance Śobhnā Bhūṭānī[7] and Nīnā Guptā[8]). Nonetheless, to Pacaurī ([1996] 2010, 160) it would be too simplistic to read the novel through the lenses of realism alone. For instance, a psychological reading would be possible: in such a perspective, Silbil becomes a symbol of sexual repression and her life experience a journey of liberation of the body, of desire through art and beauty. Apart from this, two further currents can be identified, existentialism (*astitvavād*) and consumerism (*upabhoktāvād*). In the first part of the story the protagonist perceives her world as incomprehensible and restrictive. She knows that she wants something more. She wants the moon. Here we can find the existentialist shades of the novel, with intertextual references to Albert Camus' *Caligula*[9] and Anton Čechov's *The Seagull*[10] It is noteworthy that, before the novel begins, Varmā evokes some lines from *Caligula*, in which the Roman Emperor says that he "suddenly felt a desire for the impossible", that his world "is quite intolerable" and because of this he wanted "the moon, or happiness, or eternal life – something, in fact, that may sound crazy, but which is not of this world". (Camus 1958, 8). These statements can be seen as meaningful anticipation of Silbil/Varṣā's life journey. She too wants the moon, happiness, something that seems impossible. And the contraposition between this desire and the suffering for her own condition is the element which causes Varṣā's life to progress. In order to fulfill her existentialist aspiration Varṣā reaches Bollywood and is completely seduced by its spell. Through the mechanism of the world of cinema the existentialist dimension is progressively passed, overshadowed by appearance and glamour. In Pacaurī's opinion, the existentialist aspiration definitely dies with Harṣ's death and its place is taken by money and media. The great values related to art seem to disappear, leaving space to the law of supply and demand, to the values of the consumer society. Varṣā in fact, following her lover's death, does not abandon the world of cinema: she has acknowledged the

7 Known also as Shobhana Siddique, she studied at the National School of Drama, and wrote short stories and plays. She tragically died by drowning in 1974. One of her short stories (*Full to the Brim*) is available in an English translation in Vanita, Kidwai 2000, 304-8.

8 A popular Indian actress and director, Nīnā Guptā has worked both for Indian cinema and television. She starred alongside Madhuri Dixit in the film *Khalnāyak*; while in television, she worked for various serials, like *Khāndhān* (1985), *Yātrā* (1986), *Dard* (1994), *Cittī* (2003), *Merī bīvī kā javāb nahiṅ* (2004), *Kitnī mohabbat* (2009). She also made appearances in several international films, like *Gandhi* (1982), *In Custody* (1993) and *Cotton Mary* (1993). Moreover, she ran a theater production company named "Sahaj Productions".

9 *Caligula*, begun in 1938 and published for the first time in 1944, is a play showing the Roman Emperor Caligula who, torn by the death of Drusilla (his sister and mistress), ends up arming his murderers with his cruel and insane behavior.

10 *The Seagull* (1895) stages the romantic and artistic conflicts between four characters, the fading actress Irina Arkadina, a storywriter Boris Trigorin, the aspiring actress Nina, and the playwright Konstantin Tréplev.

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primacy of the law of the market. In this acceptation, Varmā's protagonist has reached her moon, that is the consumer condition, through which what was initially considered impossible becomes possible. For Pacaurī, without acknowledging these various levels of reading, it would be impossible to 'reach the moon'. In conclusion, the critic defines the novel as a post-realist work (*uttar-yathārthvādī*),[11] an innovation which he considers necessary for the sake of renovating Hindi literature. Post realism is, to the scholar, a possible chance for a postmodern time.

In the next section I will introduce another thought provoking contribution, provided by Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ 'Śītāṃśu', that attempts to outline a sort of Hindi declension of postmodernism. The relevance of the article is testified by later texts like *Uttar-ādhuniktā aur Hindi upanyās* (Postmodernity and Hindi Novels; 2011) by Sañjay Cauhān and *Uttar-ādhuniktā aur Uday Prakāś kā sāhitya* (Postmodernity and Uday Prakāś's Literature; 2013) by Sureś Paṭel, that explicitly refer to it as an essential source.

3 Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ 'Śītāṃśu': the Four Ingredients of a Postmodern Text

Pāṇḍey Śaśibhūṣaṇ 'Śītāṃśu''s article *Uttar ādhunik sāhitya-sṛṣṭi aur samīkṣā dṛṣṭi ke bīc "Vāren Hesṭings kā sāṁḍ"* ("Warren Hastings' Bull", Between the Postmodern Literary Creation and Critical Perspective) was published in the literary magazine *Madhumatī* in 2000. First of all, the critic briefly retraces the origins of postmodernism in the Western world, referring to its earliest manifestations in architecture and to the theoretical enquires made by Lyotard and Baudrillard (Śītāṃśu 2000, 5). At the same time he highlights that nowadays this phenomenon cannot be relegated to Europe and the USA, and that in India feudal and traditionalist trends coexist with modern and postmodern ones.

According to Śītāṃśu postmodernism is basically a reaction to modernism. In fact, if the keywords of the latter were totality (*sampūrṇtā*) and rationality (*vivek*), the basic concepts of postmodernism are plurality (*bahultāvād*) and will (*icchā*).[12] While modernity describes the era of ideologies and defines national borders, postmodernity sanctions their end and the birth of a new global consciousness (*bhaugolik cetnā*). Moreo-

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11 To the concept of post-realism, Pacaurī devoted an entire volume, entitled *Uttar-yathārthvād* (2012). Apart from recalling the analysis of *Hariyā Harkyūlīz kī hairānī* and *Mujhe cānd cāhie*, the critic discusses many other novels like *Ḍūb* by Vīrendra Jain (Pacaurī 2012, 99-106), *Khilegā to dekheṃge* by Vinod Kumār Śukla (Pacaurī 2012, 107-14), *Idannamam* by Maitreyī Puṣpā (Pacaurī 2012, 119-21) and *Apnī salībeṁ* by Namitā Siṃh (Pacaurī 2012, 122-7).

12 Śītāṃśu (2000, 6) provides the English equivalent of *sampūrṇtā, vivek* and *icchā*. To be more accurate, he translates *vivek* as 'rational'.

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ver, postmodernism is focused on the present time, denying any historical consciousness and underlining the importance of phenomena such as eventuality (*ghaṭnīytā*), untimeliness (*asamayparaktā*) and anachronism (*kāldoṣtā*). The critic complains about the attitude of the Hindi intelligentsia, which has started to attack the concept of postmodernism without any in-depth knowledge. He believes that this cultural manifestation cannot be neglected, particularly in the field of literary criticism, as it may provide useful devices for textual investigation. As the well-known Hindi writer Nirmal Varmā stated, an artist does not say anything, does not teach anything, he makes a revelation, and within this revelation there is no despotic, univocal truth, but multiple and contradictory possible truths. To gather this revelation in its various shades is the aim and the peculiarity of the postmodern critique (Śītāṃśu 2000, 8).

After this general introduction to the topic, Śītāṃśu (2000, 8-10) discusses four elements which he deems crucial to approaching postmodern literary critique. These elements are: the effectiveness of seduction versus production[13] (*līlābhāv banām utpādan kī sakriytā*), the urgency of overcoming institutional traditions (*sāṃsthānik paramparā kā atikramaṇ*), escaping from cultural dogma (*sāṃskṛtik anuśāsan se palāyan*) and aurality versus visuality (*śravaṇśīltā banām cākṣuṣtā*). The author explains each of them as follows:

1. *Līlābhāv banām utpādan kī sakriytā*: in the postmodern era literature is no longer considered a reflection of society, it is no longer subordinated to hard facts. On the contrary, it has become a game of seduction, of presence and absence, of veiled and unveiled meanings. Nowadays, it seems that literature is following a trajectory which is opposite to that of scientific realism and rationality. Literature is now essentially a pleasure, an alluring game.

2. *Sāṃsthānik paramparā kā atikramaṇ*: postmodernism wants to go beyond any restrictions imposed by traditional institutions, such as society, family, marriage. These boundaries were attacked by several movements of the past, but none of them attempted to deconstruct all totalizing concepts and theories in such a radical way. In this context Śītāṃśu refers to the feminist movement as well: as the literary field has been largely dominated by male authors, women are struggling to find their own space and way of writing.

3. *Sāṃskṛtik anuśāsan se palāyan*: in Śītāṃśu's opinion postmodernism may be described as an illusory fascination (*māyik ākarṣaṇ*), which leads to overcome traditional cultural restrictions. 'Global-culture' is becoming the new keyword and the local cultural inhibitions are considered outdated.

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13 The English translation of the key terms *līlābhāv* and *utpādan* is provided by Śītāṃśu.

4. *Śravaṇśīltā banām cākṣuṣtā*: at the beginning of the Twentieth century, imagism (*bimbvād kā andolan*) gained a primary significance, but nowadays echoes and resonances are even more important than images. Śītāṃśu quotes the deconstructionist approach to the text, whose aim is to disclose any hidden echo. The philosophy of deconstruction, in fact, shows that there are no pure texts (*śuddh pāṭh*), as there are always traces of previous ones (*antar pāṭhoṁ* or intertext). In this perspective literature becomes a trace (*cihn*), a 'trace of meaning' (*arth-cihn*) and if we disregard it we cannot properly understand any work of art. The critic refers also to other concepts of the Derridian philosophy, such as *différance*,[14] iterability[15] (translated into Hindi with the world *āvṛtti*) and reversal[16] (translated as *pratīptā*), defining them essential for any kind of postmodern analysis.

The following step of Śītāṃśu's argument is based on the analysis of Uday Prakāś's short story *Vāren Hesṭiṅgs kā sāṁḍ* (*Warren Hastings' bull*),[17] highlighting the relevance of each of the above listed elements. *Vāren Hesṭiṅgs kā sāṁḍ* is described as a postmodern text, in which the historiographic component plays a fundamental role (Śītāṃśu 2000, 10). Nevertheless, this component is indissolubly intertwined with fantasy and the reader is unable to distinguish the former from the latter. Moreover,

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14 Derrida coined the neologism *différance* to demonstrate "the limits of speech in attaining full and immediate self-presence or self-identity. Derrida's invented term alludes to the irreducibility of a movement both of spacing and temporalization (in *différance* both difference and deferral are at play) which in fact produces differences themselves, of the kind that Saussure wants to install at the heart of the arbitrary and relational identity of the sign for example" (Wortham 2010, 38). The word *différance* comes from a graphic alteration of the French world *différence*, which can be noticed in a written text, but which cannot be heard.

15 Wortham in his Derrida Dictionary writes on iterability: "every mark, each singular text or irreplaceable event is at once a unique, 'once-and-for all' occurrence and yet manifests or inscribes itself on condition of a possible re-marking. Thus, the 'singular' is always repeatable; or, rather, it is iterable, since every repetition (*iter* – 'again') inevitably alters (*itara* – 'other'), just as each signature – as the supposed hallmark of identity – nevertheless attains validity only on condition of its inscription at *another* time or in a *different* place. Iterability isn't just a simple add-on, then, an extrinsic and dispensable 'extra' that comes along after the fact of an original form or presence. Instead, iterability implies a supplementarity that goes all the way down" (Wortham 2010, 78).

16 Reversal is another important strategy of the philosophy of deconstruction which Derrida borrowed from Nietzsche, referring to the reversal of metaphysical oppositions. According to Derrida, to execute a reversal of metaphysics as a system of opposition it is not enough to invert it; what is necessary is an opposition which does not recreate a term-for-term opposition, a movement of *oblique reversal* is required (Haar 2002, 73-4).

17 A well-known short story from the collection *Paul Gomra kā scooter*, it was made into a theatrical version by Arvind Gaur (2001). The story narrates Warren Hastings' life, from his childhood to the love affair with the Bengalin Cokhī, from his office as Governor of the East

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eighteenth-century events and issues are linked to contemporary ones. Śītāṃśu defines Uday Prakāś's short story as an example of literature of pleasure and of detachment from cultural traditions and institutions.

Let's start from the presence of *līlābhāv* within the text (Śītāṃśu 2000, 10-12). Initially Uday Prakāś depicts the eighteenth-century Hindustān in a traditional manner, through the images of women at work, cutting wood, fishing, selling food in a market, filling pots. Against this traditional background he refers to the amorous games (hence considering *līlābhāv* in quite a literary acceptation) that animates the British Governor's estate and its surroundings. The author recounts Warren Hastings' relation with one of his servants, Cokhī, but also the sexual relations between Mohinī Ṭhākur (the daughter of a rather powerful family, desirous of establishing a strong connection with the British and benefiting from it) and some English gentlemen. Śītāṃśu highlights that *līlābhāv* operates in the story in two different ways. Let us first consider Mohinī's case: initially, with her lascivious behavior, she aims at gaining material benefits for her family. She is moved by reason. However, gradually she starts to feel a real attachment towards one of the Englishmen and her rational and pragmatic game becomes a passionate one. Due to her new feeling she is scolded by her mother: desire and reason (respectively emblems of postmodernism and modernism) inevitably clash. Warren Hastings' trajectory is quite different. When he meets the young, native servant Cokhī, he seems to surrender to passion. He relinquishes rationality (*vivek*) for the sake of desire (*icchā*), leaving behind the norms of his industrial, modernist country. Warren Hastings starts to think about himself as Kṛṣṇa and about Cokhī as Rādhā. Nonetheless, after Cokhī's death and with the presence of his British wife, this postmodern game of seduction vanishes:

समय गुजरने के साथ-साथ वह गंजा, बूढ़ा और मामूली फिरंग बनता चला गया. चोखी के न रहने से उसके स्वप्नों की दुनिया का अंत हो गया. जीवन में कोई फैंटेसी न रही. और जब किसी मनुष्य के पास स्वप्न न रह जाएं, फैंटेसी न रहे और मिथक नष्ट हो जाएं तो वह घनघोर व्यावहारिक यथार्थवादी आदमी के रूप में बचा रह जाता है. (Prakāś 2004, 143)

As time went on, he became a common white man, old and bald. After Cokhī's death his world of dreams came to an end. There was no more fantasy in his life. And when a human being has no more dreams, fantasy and all his myths are destroyed, he just remains a pragmatic and calculating man.[18]

India Company to the moral decay of old age. The story is a harsh critique against corruption and malpractice that during the Eighteenth century, as well as today, afflicted India.

18   All English translations from this short story are made by the author.

Moving to the urgency of overcoming institutional traditions, Śītāṃśu invites his readers to linger over the characters' oscillating attitude towards their own traditions. In their ambivalent relations with tradition he sees a typical postmodern feature. Warren Hastings, for instance, initially seems to overcome European traditions: for some time he attempts to learn the local language, he wears traditional Indian clothes and with Cokhī recreates Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's sensual game. Nonetheless, in the end he re-assimilates British customs and adheres to the negative stereotype of the modernist, insensitive settler. On the other hand, women like Mohinī Ṭhākur and her mother Nandinī forget their Indian traditions in order to seek material benefits from the East India Company. Moreover, Śītāṃśu argues, Uday Prakāś offers multiple descriptions of traditional Indian culture, but at the same time he goes beyond it. There are, for instance, several references to the devotion to Kṛṣṇa, to the hymns of Jayadeva[19] and to many traditional concepts and elements. Cokhī, for example, during her last encounter with Warren Hastings, is compared to Durga. When she stabs herself she seems to become the terrible goddess riding on a tiger's back, which the Governor kept on seeing in statues and paintings. After this episode and due to the presence of his British wife, Warren Hastings goes back to his 'modern world'.

At the same time, within a traditional Indian scenario, we can see some local officers who betray their own traditions, in their desire to become wealthy. A British officer describes this situation in one of his letters:

वह प्राचीन काल के रोम के गुलामों से भी ज्यादा गुलाम है। इसमें ज्यादातर ऊँची जात के लोग हैं। उन्होंने बीफ खाना शुरू कर दिया है। अंग्रेजी बोलने लगे हैं। यूरोपीय कपड़े पहनते हैं और उन्होंने हिन्दुस्तान की सारी परम्परा को ढकोसला कहना शुरू कर दिया है। वे सिर्फ अपने नस्ल और अपनी त्वचा के रंग के अलावा बाकी सब चीज में अंग्रेजी के हमजाद हैं। […] वे हमारी ही गुलाम छायाएँ हैं। इंडिया में हमारा सारा प्रशासन वही चलायेंगे। हम जब इंडिया को छोड़कर यूरोप लौट आयेंगे तब भी यहाँ हमारी वही गुलाम छायाएँ राज करेंगी। वह इंडिया में हमारा ही राज होगा। (Śītāṃśu 2000, 13; Prakāś 2004, 133)

they were slaves, more than slaves in ancient Rome. Generally, they belonged to a high caste. They started to eat beef, to speak English, to wear Western-style clothes and they started to consider their own ancient traditions as nonsense. Apart from their features and from the color of their skin, they were completely English. […] They are our subjugated shadows. They will rule India for us.

Śītāṃśu highlights how Uday Prakāś plays with the present and the past: on one hand, the contemporary desire to overcome local tradition that had

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19 Jayadeva was a Sanskrit poet, lived during the Twelfth century. His best-known composition, *Gītagovinda*, celebrates Kṛṣṇa's love with the gopis and particularly with Rādhā.

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already existed two hundred and fifty years before; on the other hand, traces of the past – in this specific case, traces of the British dominion – continue to exist in contemporary India.

The third postmodern element to be considered is strictly related to the previous one, and is defined by Śītāṃśu as *sāṃskṛtik se palāyan*, that is to say the willingness to escape from cultural traditions. To the critic, myth, dream, fantasy and spirituality are the main ingredients of the Indian culture. Nevertheless, nowadays, people from all around the world (including Indians) are running away from them. This aptitude can be seen both in eighteenth-century and contemporary India: Warren Hastings lost his dreams, his fantasy, his spirituality, but it seems that in contemporary India all the people are following this same trajectory. Those episodes which happened two hundred and fifty years ago are reaching their peak today.

The final element to which Śītāṃśu devotes special attention is the presence within the text of multiple echoes (*śravaṇśīltā*). The reader, browsing through the short story, immediately notices that Uday Prakāś inserted the pictures of two paintings. It may seem that he is bowing to visuality (*cākṣuṣṭā*), but it is actually the contrary. The author's aim is to analyze these paintings and to deconstruct their superficial meaning, revealing their embedded resonances. In the first painting (*Mr. and Mrs. Warren Hastings*, realized by Johann Zoffany in 1783 and available at the Victoria Memorial Museum of Calcutta) Warren Hastings is depicted together with his wife under a banyan tree. In the background, there is the city of Calcutta. In his left hand, the Governor is holding a cane and a hat, while in his right, his wife's hand. Behind the couple there is one more character, a native girl. It is on her role and on her relationship with Warren Hastings that Prakāś focuses his attention:

उसकी बड़ी-बड़ी आंखें हैं। उसके दाहिने हाथ में वारेन हेस्टिंग्स की पत्नी का हैट है, जिसमें किसी दुर्लभ श्वेत पक्षी के परों की कलंगी लगी हुई है।[…] लेकिन आप अगर गौर से और देर तक इस चित्र को देखें तो आपको पता चलने लगेगा कि उस बरगद के पेड़ के नीचे, वारेन हेस्टिंग्स की पत्नी के पीछे खड़ी उस जवान बंगाली नौकरानी और वारेन हेस्टिंग्स के बीच कोई गहरा, अदृश्य और अपरिभाषित संबंध है। आपको यह लगेगा कि वारेन हेस्टिंग्स अपनी पत्नी का हाथ पकड़कर उसे भरोसा दिलाते हुए, उसी संबंध को छुपाने का प्रयत्न कर रहा है। धीरे-धीरे आप इस रहस्य को जान जाएंगे कि आखिर वारेन हेस्टिंग्स और बंगाली लड़की के हाथों में ही हैट क्यों है, जबकि वारेन हेस्टिंग्स की पत्नी के दोनों हाथ खाली हैं। और तब यह चित्र आपके सामने अपने सारे अर्थ-संकेतों को खोलने लगेगा और आप जान जाएंगे कि चित्रकार जॉन ज़ोफेनी ने यह चित्र वारेन हेस्टिंग्स और उस सांवली नेटिव लड़की के बीच के संबंधों को व्यक्त करने के लिए ही बनाया था लेकिन वे दोनों अपने-अपने हाथ में रखे हैट से उसे लगातार ढांपने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं। लेकिन जॉन ज़ोफेनी अपनी कोशिश में अंततः इसलिए सफल हो गया है क्योंकि उसने उस लड़की और वारेन हेस्टिंग्स की आंखों की भावनाओं को पकड़ लिया है। जी हाँ, आप गौर से देखें, वे दोनों यानी सांवली बंगाली लड़की और वारेन हेस्टिंग्स गहरे आवेग से एक-दूसरे को सम्मोहित होकर निहार रहे हैं और उनके बीच खड़ी इंपीरियल पोशाक में सजी-धजी उसकी दुबली-लंबी पत्नी, बस यहाँ उपस्थित भर है। क्योंकि वह एक ब्रिटिश प्रतीक है। (Prakāś 2004, 127-8)

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She has big eyes. In her right hand there is Warren Hastings wife's hat, on which a crest of feathers of a rare white bird stands out. […] But if you look carefully you will discover that between that young servant, standing under a banyan tree, behind Warren Hastings' wife, and Warren Hastings himself there is a deep connection, invisible and indescribable. It will seem that Warren Hastings is holding his wife's hand to reassure her and to conceal the relationship. And you will discover why both Warren Hastings and the Bengali girl have a hat in their hands, while Warren Hastings' wife has nothing. Then, when the picture starts to disclose its meanings and messages, you will discover that the painter Johann Zoffany painted that picture in order to show the relationship between Warren Hastings and the local girl, even though they were trying to conceal it under the hats in their hands. However, Johann Zoffany reached his goal, because he managed to catch the feelings in the eyes of the girl and of Warren Hastings. Yes, look carefully. Those people, that Bengali girl and Warren Hastings, are looking at each other with passion, enraptured, and his lanky wife, overdressed according to the Imperial style, is standing between them, but she is just appearance. Because she is a British symbol.

In this way, Uday Prakāś deconstructs the painting, showing a reality which is more complex than the one supposed. The characters' eyes and hands talk silently to a patient and careful observer, revealing a new interpretative key.

The second painting included in the short story was made by an unknown artist and is part of a private collection. It depicts Purley Hall, an estate in Berkshire rented by Warren Hastings while awaiting his trial for corruption. In front of the elegant building, a stable boy is leading a magnificent black horse. In the right-hand corner there are a cow and a calf; in the left there is a chained black bull. Uday Prakāś suggests that a careful observer will be unable to avert his eyes from this bottom, left-hand corner, from the mysterious and furious animal. He/she will start to perceive that there is something more beneath appearance, but what is this? To provide a first hypothesis it will be necessary to recall the story of Warren Hastings' bull, a story which is indeed central, as it gives the title to the short story. The author informs his readers that when the Governor went back to England, he took with him five brahma cows and a bull, which he had received as a gift. Unluckily in Britain the cows were no longer considered symbols of the earth, and creatures with their own personalities: they were just goods, sources of milk, meat and leather. The cows stopped eating and one by one fell ill. Within a few months four of them died. The last cow mated with the bull and for some time they recreated a sort of family. However, when their calf died, the cow became inconsolable and starved to death. The bull became crazy out of anger and

sorrow. One evening, while Warren Hastings (after being acquitted in his trial for corruption) was returning home in his carriage with his wife, the bull attacked and injured them. The crazy animal destroyed the carriage tearing apart the stomach of the black steed: the bull raged against them as they were both symbols of the British empire. But in this way the animal became a risk for England and was shot dead by a platoon of the British army. Śītāṃśu highlights that the multiple echoes of meanings related to this animal cannot be understood within the limits of the more superficial plot: it is necessary to investigate its deeper structure. Uday Prakaś himself raised several questions about the image of the bull. Did he go crazy only because of the death of the cow and of the calf? Did he sacrifice his life in a struggle against the Western industrial society which is inhuman and devoid of any compassion? Or did he fight and die like some fanatics in order to preserve the traditions and myths of his country? Did he die as a devoted servant of his homeland in his struggle against British imperialism? All these images can be included in the bull image. But there is something more, as the words of an old lama reveal at the end of the story: "that bull hasn't died yet" (Śītāṃśu 2000, 16).

Moving from the concept of *différance*, Śītāṃśu (2000, 17-18) investigates more deeply the image of the bull. First of all, he remarks that the animal physically appears only in the last part of the story, but is it completely absent in the previous part? Is it something tangible or abstract? According to the critic, in the first part of the story, the bull actually exists in Warren Hastings' mind and is even more dangerous than the external one. This is the bull of Western industrial society and culture, devoid of any compassion and inhuman. Warren Hastings' wife awakes this bull. The madness of this inner bull leads Warren Hastings towards immoral and corrupt behavior. His cruelty seems to reach his peak during the famine in 1769-70, when the Governor, despite the death of millions of people and the desperate conditions of the survivors, continued to collect land taxes and other duties. The bull of Warren Hastings' mind, with its extreme pragmatism, took devastation everywhere. To summarize, within the short story there are two bulls, facing each other: the bull of Western, industrial mentality and the bull of 'Indian-ness'. It seems that the bull of industrialization has killed the Indian one. This is as true today as it was in the Eighteenth century. Nonetheless, the old lama's statement at the end of the tale may be read as a declaration of hope: Indian-ness has not died. Despite the spread of Western culture, there is room for hope. Uday Prakāś knows the strengths and weaknesses of both Western and Indian culture, of modernity and postmodernity. In actual fact, he cannot be considered a supporter of postmodern values, but he is aware that they are spreading within Indian society and it is not possible to reject them in a simplistic way (Śītāṃśu 2000, 19).

Śītāṃśu concludes his analysis of *Vāren Hesṭings kā sāṃḍ* stressing that it can be considered a successful example of postmodern intertex-

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tuality, which could not have been written at the times of Warren Hastings. Moreover, he emphasizes the validity of the postmodern process of critique, particularly the deconstruction of the multiple echoes embedded within a text. A similar method of investigation can be applied to several types of texts and should not be set aside as a mere fashion, imported from Western societies.

4 Conclusive Reflections

Postmodernism is an extremely complex cultural phenomenon the reflections of which within the Hindi literary field it would be impossible to discuss exhaustively here. Nonetheless, with this article I wished to introduce a significant issue largely overlooked so far, particularly by Western scholars. Resorting to any kind of literary label may be risky as every literary tradition, every author has its own peculiarities. Nonetheless, to me, during the closing decades of the Twentieth century, there are some common features that must be acknowledged. From this perspective Pacaurī's and Śītāṃśu's contributions are particularly relevant as they outline a sort of 'local declension' of postmodernism by reading and working with specific texts. Śītāṃśu's discourse on the relationship between postmodernism and the urgency of going beyond institutional traditions, for instance, can be linked to the flourishing of women and dalit writing. These new literary voices attempt to deconstruct two master narratives particularly pervasive in the Indian context, patriarchy and casteism, by questioning institutional traditions, such as marriage, family and societal relations. The importance of pluralism through these new voices is emphasized by Pacaurī as well, even though his discourse on women's writing is more controversial. In the chapter *Strītvavādī vimarś kī śuruāt* (*The beginning of the feminist discourse*), Pacaurī ([1996] 2010, 118-24) acknowledges that social changes have begun to take place in India, leading progressively to women's emancipation and that a new literature is now emerging. He underlines that since the 1980s and 1990s women have started to claim freedom and to occupy new places in the public sphere, particularly by working outside of the house. Moreover, television has allowed questions to be asked relating to the world of women, traditionally bound to the private dimension. This new atmosphere is gradually leading to a new literature, but this process, at least in the Hindi literary field, is still in its earliest stages. To Pacaurī's mind ([1996] 2010, 120), women have to find a new way of writing, centered on their own peculiarities, they have to build a 'destructive' literature, challenging the predominant position of male writers. Nonetheless, according to the critic very few women-writers have already provided examples of this new literature and he mentions none of their names. When, during my interview, I asked him about this

point, about these successful women-authors, he only mentioned Mahādevī Varmā,[20] who undoubtedly had a great literary merit, but cannot be related to the changes that occurred at the dawn of the new millennium.

As regards the idea of *līlābhāv*, the postmodern 'game of seduction', it is echoed by Pacaurī's reflections on playfulness and possible post-realist aesthetic. These concepts become crucial towards the end of the twentieth century, as a considerable part of recent mainstream literature is progressively detaching itself from the tradition of social realism inaugurated by Premcand. Many recent Hindi novels (we may think of Vinod Kumār Śukla's[21] and Manohar Śyām Jośī's prose) start to be free from the necessity of narrating great issues or proposing high moral teachings, abandoning the hard tones of social realism.

A final noteworthy idea, which is present both in Śītāṃśu and in Pacaurī and in almost all Western thinkers dealing with postmodernism, is that of intertextuality. A text is no longer a completely new creation, the result of individual genius, as it always carries traces of previous texts.[22] Moreover, as Śītāṃśu highlights, in the postmodern era, every text is multilayered, hence, apart from its more immediate and superficial meaning, it contains multiple hidden meanings, which can be caught by the reader according to his/her cultural background. It is the special aim of the postmodern critique to deconstruct the text and let these meanings emerge.

Even if it is probably hard to define a sort of poetic of Hindi postmodernism with fixed features, Pacaurī's and Śītāṃśu's reflections highlight the importance of the issue and may represent a valiant starting point for the analysis of many recent Hindi works.

20　Mahādevī Varmā (1907-1987) was an outstanding Hindi writer of the *chāyāvādī* generation.

21　Vinod Kumār Śukla (born 1937) wrote several collections of verses and three novels – *Naukar kī kamīz* (1979), *Khilegā to dekheṃge* (1996) and *Dīvār meṃ ek khiṛkī rahtī thī* (1997) – which constitutes the so called trilogy of the Indian lower-middle class. Śukla's prose is often connected to magical realism, as he seems to rediscover the poetry of small things, mixing reality with imagination.

22　Actually this is much more of a Western idea than an Indian one. In general, in fact, in the South-Asian context the value of a literary work did not strictly depend on its originality. Creating new stories from pre-existing ones, re-elaborating a rich cultural heritage has been perceived natural since the earliest times.

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The Karma of Chicken Curry
Tibetan Masala Films and Youth Narratives of Exile

Mara Matta
(Sapienza Università di Roma, Italia)

Abstract   This essay offers a preliminary study of the cultural translation practices by young Tibetan exilic filmmakers in India, whose films, rather than rejecting the *masala* formula offered by Bollywood, have tentatively adapted it to the expectations of a Tibetan diasporic audience looking for a cinema capable of attending to the escapist needs of their minds while simultaneously catering to the intimate dreams of their hearts. I contend that Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee's first long feature *Phun Anu Thanu* (*Two Exiled Brothers*, 2006) is as an original film that presents a new offer on the menu of Tibetan diasporic films, a kind of spicy curry that has been advocated as a timely necessity and a yet-to-be-fulfilled desire.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Filmmaking Practices by Tibetans in Exile. – 3 In Between the Local and the Global: Tibetan *masala* Films and the Politics of Cinematic Pleasure. – 4 *Phun Anu Thanu* (India 2006): The First Instance of a *Thinglish* Film. – 5 Conclusions.

Keywords   Tibetan diaspora. Hindi cinema. Exilic filmmaking. Cultural identity. Hybridity.

1   Introduction

> The exile mix of Tibetan, Hindi, and English is something I like to call 'Thinglish' untraditional, but it works. This is a key to Tibetan survival beyond the land of snows – we approach what is around us and combine it with what we need and know to define a space uniquely ours. (Rabgay 2002)[1]

The term 'diasporic' in relation to the wor(l)d 'Tibet' poses quite a few serious theoretical problems, since it is susceptible of misunderstandings and misappropriations. In this essay, I use the words 'diaspora', 'exile', 'refugee' and 'diasporic/exilic' as part of a multilayered and contested vocabulary of negotiation, appropriation and resistance. Each of these terms, inside the Tibetan community living outside Tibet, has been undergoing a change in its signifying practices. Since there is no space to provide an in-depth explanation of these terms in the context of Tibet and filmmaking practices, I refer to the works of Anand 2003 and to the concept of 'accented films' developed by Naficy 2001.

[1]   Rabgay is an exile Tibetan whose statement is reported in Basu 2008.

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> If the movies can help attain some purpose of education or enlighten-
> ment, then the recent Tibetan films may be regarded as another dimen-
> sion of Tibet's spiritual culture. (Khortsa 2004)

In 2013, Tsering Namgyal Khortsa, a Tibetan writer born and brought up
in India and recently relocated to the US after many years of studying
and working as a journalist in Taiwan, published his first novel: The Tibetan
Suitcase.[2] The novel's prologue brings together some stereotypical images
of meditating Tibetans, high Himalayan peaks, Americans committed to
'the cause', and the most common setting for a Tibetan refugee's narra-
tive: India, namely Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan Government in
Exile and present home to the XIV Dalai Lama. Describing his first meeting
with Dawa, the writer Tsering Namgyal, whose suitcase full of letters will
become the nostalgic subtext of this semi-autobiographical novel, offers a
presentation of himself which further blurs the distinction between crea-
tive and diarist writing:

> As I gazed into the high mountains of the Himalayas, I told him about
> my background. That I had been a business journalist in Taipei, and how
> I also wrote about Tibet, my ancestral homeland, and how *the idea of
> Tibet, or the memory of the place which I had never seen*, had become
> such an important part of me. It defined me. "You are a Tibetan", he
> said, "regardless of whether you are born in India or Pakistan". (Khortsa
> 2013, 7; emphasis added)

Tsering, despite his acknowledgement that what sustains his identity is sim-
ply an "idea of Tibet", condescends to Dawa's faith in their unquestioned
belonging to a land they have either left long time ago or never actually
seen. As a way of reciprocating his reassuring comments on their fractured
subjectivities, Tsering recommends Dawa to delve into Buddhism and spir-
ituality. But Dawa offers yet another solution to pin down the emotional tent
of their nomadic existence: "to start reading in Tibetan and even practice
calligraphy" (Khortsa 2013, 8), although he is also quick to remark that his
language skills in his mother tongue are far from good:

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2   Tsering Namgyal Khortsa has been a journalist for more than 15 years. His fiction has
appeared in various Asian cultural and literary journals such as Dim Sum (now Asia Literary
Review), *Yellow Medicine Review: A Journal of Indigenous, Culture and Arts* and *Himal South
Asia*. He attended University of Minnesota and University of Iowa, where he also studied
creative writing. Beside a collection of essays and his first novel, *The Tibetan Suitcase*,
Khortsa has also authored a biography of the 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje. He cur-
rently works in New York.

"I call it 'Tibetan-Indian English'", he said, making me laugh. "*Benchod*[3] the interesting thing of being a Tibetan born in India is that your Tibetan is really not upto [*sic*] the mark and your Hindi is equally defective, if not worse. So what option do you have? Chinese? If we could write in Chinese, at least we would have the excuse to explain, like the Indians, that we are using the colonial language. But that is unfortunately not the case".

He left a deep impression on me. […] I walked back to my home. 'A modern Tibetan, and a writer' I thought, as I walked down to my home. But he was sad, almost beyond repair. (Khortsa 2013, 8-9)

The prologue to this epistolary novel by a young Tibetan writer in exile offers us a good starting point to explore some of the pressing questions regarding the creative output of Tibetans living in exile in India. To begin with, the idiosyncratic situation that India presents for Tibetan refugees, who are confronted with the plurality of languages, cultural practices and religious traditions that India accommodates. In terms of language, for instance, the landscape of Tibetans in exile is quite peculiar, as Rabgay (2002) summarizes in the neologism *Thinglish*, elucidating how Tibetans need to combine what is around them and elaborate a new identity – in this case linguistic – that is notwithstanding 'theirs', that is, 'distinctively Tibetan'. The linguistic code-switching also becomes a metaphor of something quite hard to explain or theorize: it conveys in a simple word – *Thinglish* – the complexity of their condition, forced as they are to navigate the interstitial spaces bounded by an essentialist performance of authenticity, on one side, and a mise-en-scène of hybridised identity, on the other.

Since this paper takes as specific object of investigation the issue of Tibetan cinema in exile and the "burden of representation" (Mercer 1994) that appears to afflict many Tibetan filmmakers, I look at the questions of identity performativity and subjectivity construction from the perspective of film and cultural studies, positing exilic filmmaking practices by young Tibetans as instances of "reflections on exiled Tibet" (Khortsa 2006). I adopt this expression from the subtitle that Tsering Namgyal Khortsa has given to his collection of essays mostly set in Dharamsala, very aptly titled *Little Lhasa* (2006), published almost ten years ahead of his novel *The Tibetan Suitcase*. In this first publication, Tsering Namgyal commented on the condition of exiled Tibetans living in India as *de facto* citizens of a non-existing independent country called Tibet – a Utopia or, as Dibyesh Anand (2008) has called it, a "geopolitical exotica" – and *de jure* state-

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3 This Hindi expression literally translates as 'sister-fucker'. As the *Urban Dictionary* explains: "it is used in most North-Indian languages […]. Also used occasionally to indicate sheer delight, excitement, or anger. Increasingly common among non-Indians as well in countries and areas with large Indian populations (e.g. New Jersey, Toronto, England)". See https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=benchod.

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less people belonging to nowhere, bound to a cultural nationalism (Anand 2000)[4] which is carefully nurtured and constantly constructed. Discussing the cultural politics of Dharamsala, where the staging of Tibetan identity is prudently orchestrated by the Tibetan Government in Exile through its main cultural institutions (Tibetan schools, Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, etc.), Tsering Namgyal included in his book an article titled *Movie and Meditation*, where he affirmed that "time had certainly come for the smaller-budget, independent movies to inform and educate the world about Tibet, its culture, its people, and its religious philosophy. Film was the perfect medium […] to tell the story of Tibet and its colourful and vibrant culture" (Khortsa 2006, 96). This short essay, rather than contradicting the mystified image of a spiritual Tibet, appears to reinforce an idea of cinema as a suitable site of "history-making" (Rosenstone 1988; 1995; 2017) or, as S. Brent Plate (2003) argued, "myth-making". Discussing religion and film as "analogous in the first instance due to their activities of taking the world-as-it-is, and inventing a new world through the dual processes of 'framing' and 'projecting'" (3), Plate elaborated on the "*mediated* nature" of these processes and finally asserted that "[f]ilm, like religious myth and ritual, offers windows onto other worlds" (3). In Tsering Namgyal's opinion, the 'other world of Tibet', with its "colourful and vibrant culture" (Khortsa 2006, 96), perhaps could be better conveyed through a Bollywoodised cinematic frame where to perform Tibetan rituals of identity and subjectivity. What is truly interesting in his article, then, is not the sketchy discussion of some recently released Tibetan films, but his insightful thoughts on the relationship between Indian commercial cinema and Tibetan exiles as enthusiastic spectators, keen consumers and fervent fans of Bollywood. It is possible, as Rajadhyaksa (2003, 38) has argued, that "the Indian cinema's modes of address have opened up a new category for spectatorial address that appears not to be accounted for by, say, the American cinema". Much like the distinctive reception of Indian cinema by Nigerian spectators (Larkin 1997) or the Fijian Indians' Hindi film productions in Australia (Ray 2000), Rajadhyaksa (2003, 38) points out that possibly "the cinema's addresses are entering complex realms of identification in these places, which would definitely further argument around the nature of the cultural-political mediation that the Indian, or possibly the Hong Kong, cinemas continue to allow". Bollywood, hence, engages Tibetan spectators into such "realms of identification" (Rajad-

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[4] The scholar of International Relations Dibyesh Anand has extensively discussed the construction of 'Tibetanness' among Tibetans exiles in South Asia. In his essay "(Re)imagining Nationalism: Identity and Representation in the Tibetan Diaspora of South Asia", Anand posits that "it is not only Westerners who have exoticised Tibet and the Tibetans; the Tibetan diaspora too have invested heavily in such (neo)orientalist representation strategies for their own tactical purposes" (2000, 271).

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hyaksa 2003, 38) and its rather ubiquitous place in the cultural, linguistic and sensory 'scapes' of Tibetan refugees in South Asia is once again well argued by Khortsa (2006, 98-9):

> Hindi movies are an integral part of life in India and Tibetans living in India have also, quite naturally, developed an avid liking for these films. When I was young I watched them on television […]. We also watched the Indian television serials […]. Some of my friends were so addicted to movies that they could recite dialogues from the more famous Indian movies straight from memory. And then the teachers would yell at them: "So you have got nothing better to do than big mouth in Urdu. Go home and do your studies".
>
> The actor Raj Kapoor provided us with the perfect exile's song: *Mera Joota Hai Japani*.
>
> My shoes are Japanese
> My pants English
> On my head a red Russian cap
> Still my heart is Indian
>
> My heart is still very much Tibetan but my taste buds, now used to three decades of curry, are definitely looking more Indian. Surely this could inspire another Tibetan film and add to the already growing list of Tibetan films made in India. We could perhaps call it *The Karma of Chicken Curry*.

This essay looks at the cultural translation practices by young Tibetan exilic filmmakers in India, whose films have tentatively adapted the *masala* formula offered by Bollywood to the desires of a Tibetan audience made not just of young dreamers, but also of *amalas*, *palas*[5] and a rather interesting cohort of Buddhist monks[6] who look for a Tibetan *masala* cinema ca-

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[5]   In Tibetan language, the words *A ma* 'mother' and *Pha* 'father' are also employed to respectfully refer to elders. They are usually followed by the honorific suffix *lags* (pronounced 'la').

[6]   It is not the aim of this paper to provide a detailed and complete account of the Tibetan cinema history in South Asia. Here it may suffice to say that Bollywood has made accolades also among important Tibetan and Bhutanese Buddhist leaders, who have shown considerable interest in filmmaking, also experimenting with the formula of the *masala* films. Adopting certain aesthetics of filmmaking which entail "cultural diplomacy and use the genre of romance" (Dudrah 2011, 21), these films remind us of some Black British films of the 1990s, where the filmmakers employed certain conventions that reflected "Black British sensibilities and South Asian filmic conventions associated with the romantic couple" (21). As Dudrah, following Gopal and Moorti (2008), highlighted: "vibrant colours and music, suggesting merriment and togetherness, draw on a tradition in popular South Asian filmmaking where the same signs and codes are often used; not least in, say, Bollywood cinema"

pable of attending to the escapist needs of the mind while simultaneously catering to the intimate dreams of the heart. More specifically, I argue that Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee's first long feature film – *Phun Anu Thanu* (English Title: *Two Exiled Brothers*, 2006) –, beside enriching Tibetan "mediascapes" (Appadurai 1996) through emic cinematic productions, also complicate the history of Tibetan filmmaking practices in exile. The film, in fact, experiments with the possibilities offered by Bollywood cinema to create an original work that is both educational and entertaining, hybrid in its format and yet distinctively Tibetan in its content. Ultimately, they present a new offer on the menu of South Asian diasporic cinemas, that *Karma of Chicken Curry* that Tsering Namgyal advocated as a timely necessity and a yet-to-be-fulfilled desire.

2 Filmmaking Practices by Tibetans in Exile

In 2004, when I arrived in Dharamsala to pursue further research among Tibetans living in McLeod Gunj, the hill station where the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGiE) has established its headquarters since 1959, I was quite fortunate to come across not just one major feature film in its pre-production phase, but two. As a matter of fact, the year 2004 marked a watershed in the history of Tibetan filmmaking in exile, since in that year both Tenzing Sonam, in collaboration with his wife and producer Ritu Sarin, and Pema Dondhup directed and released their first feature films: *Dreaming Lhasa* and *We're No Monks*.[7] The processes of writing the script, casting the actors and selecting the crew, together with the daunting task of coping with the logistics and the finances, brought to the forefront the difficulties of making a full-fledged feature film. These challenges were further complicated by the high expectations of the Tibetan community in India, not last the monks and the religious figures who represented the

(2011, 122). This has been the case also for Tibetan and Bhutanese films produced in recent years. The works by the renowned Bhutanese *tulku* (*sprul sku*) Khyentse Norbu Rinpoche, turned into an award-winning filmmaker after his collaboration to the making of *Little Buddha* by Bernardo Bertolucci (1993), have become quite famous and have attracted a good deal of attention. However, the few studies on his productions keep focusing more on the nexus between religion and cinema, looking at his films as instances of *Dharma* sermons conveyed through the dreamlike lenses of a videocamera. It would be important to inspect not just the director's alleged reasons for making films (Dharma) but also the audience's reception of them, especially the last ones, which overtly adopt a *masala* style of filmmaking, with alluring music and sensual dances to further spice up the scenes. See, for instance, *Vara: A Blessing* (2013) and *Hema Hema: Sing Me a Song While I Wait* (2016). The adoption of an Indian cinematic language in these two recent films by Khyentse Norbu is the topic of a forthcoming article by the author, hence they are not addressed in the present essay.

7 Since these two Tibetan films have been already discussed by the author in other publications, in the present article they are just scantily referred to and not analysed in detail.

image of Tibet on the global stage. Moreover, both filmmakers were troubled by the "burden of representation" (Mercer 1994) imposed on them, since any Tibetan film had to confront a plethora of mystified images of Tibet that during the last century dictated the way the country had been imagined and pictured (Dodin, Räther 2001; also Brauen 2004). Despite all the challenges, these first films revealed the talent and the commitment of a group of Tibetan authors who had identified in cinema and media an opportunity for appropriating strategies of narration to present personal and collective stories of exile and diaspora. More than creative writing and historical literature, films seemed to offer a suitable space for telling a different (hi)story, or perhaps it would be better to say a plurality of different life stories, bits of a very complex, ever modifying and unending jigsaw that never recomposed itself into a unique image of Tibet. If we abide by what the scholar Wimal Dissanayake has affirmed about cinema, "that it makes available to us semioticised space for the articulation of the global imaginary and its formations within the discursive practices of the local" (2003, 217), we can see how feature films as a mode of articulation and as a site of enunciation indeed offer an ideal "semioticized space" where Tibetans can inscribe their own "idea of Tibet" (Khortsa 2013), challenging the mythical representations of Tibet.[8] In their effort at reshuffling such "semioticized space", thus, Tibetan filmmakers began engaging in a difficult and challenging work of debunking stereotypes (Author 2008; 2009), remaking imaginaries and "inventing traditions" (Hobsbawn 1983), in order to contradict some of those forged narratives that derived their truisms by colonial chronicles produced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of these narratives, however, proved hard to die, and became conducive to forms of distorted essentialism and otherising exoticism in the representation of Tibet around the world (Anand 2000; 2008; Dodin, Räther 2001; Brauen 2004). The Tibetans were often seen as intrinsically religious people, whose lives were infused by mysticism and mainly ruled by Buddhist values. Their dissenting voices were silenced and the Dalai Lama and other revered religious (mostly male) figures were elected as the only representatives of the 'peaceful Tibetans', disconnected from history and relegated to a mythical plane of "hyperreality" (Klieger 1997). While this idea of Tibet as a sacred land and Tibetans as deeply spiritual people is still common even in recent writings on Tibetan culture and its creative

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[8] It is important to point out that the practice of negotiating certain images of Tibet dates back almost a century, to the time of the British expeditions to Tibet in the 1920s when the first documentaries were produced. In 1924, Captain John Noel made a silent film titled *The Epic of Everest*. Certain images were deemed so improper that the Lhasa authorities got very upset and, following the scandal of the dancing lamas surreptitiously taken to London for the premiere of the film, decided to deny future permits of shooting films in Tibet. Cf. Hansen 2001. For an overview of cinema in Tibet, cf. Norbu, Jamyang 2004.

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outputs,**⁹** the works of many Tibetan filmmakers – both in exile and inside the geopolitical boundaries of present-day Tibet – appear to contradict, at least partially, this de-historicised view and provide a more articulated and complex portrayal of the many Tibet(s) of the historical and cinematic "imagiNation" [*sic*] (Virdi 2003). Tibetan filmmakers operate through a transnational mode, which, as Ďurovičová (2010, x) has posited, offers both a geographical and a historical approach where the transnational has to be read as the "below-global/above-national" level. This mode of analysis zooms into those "contact zones" between world cinemas (Newman 2010) that compel both spectators and scholars to come to terms with hybridised cinematic languages. These transnational interactions constitute a way of "moving beyond any tendency to reduce the centers and peripheries of present-day capitalism to the past familiar binary of cultural imperialism" (Newman 2010, 9).

Looking at hybridity as a way of destabilising formerly conceived binary oppositions and of fruitfully displacing "our conception of clearly demarcated national/cultural boundaries" (Iwabuchi 2002, 51), Japanese scholar Koichi Iwabuchi argues that hybridity also "obliges us to re-read the binaries as forms of transculturation, of cultural translation, destined to trouble the here/there cultural binaries forever" (51). Discussing the issue of the transnational flow of material and immaterial goods, he also suggests how

> transnationally circulated images and commodities […] tend to become *culturally odorless* in the sense that origins are subsumed by the local transculturation process. By appropriating, hybridizing, indigenizing, and consuming images and commodities of 'foreign' origin in multiple unforeseen ways, even American culture is conceived as 'ours' in many places. (46; emphasis added)

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9   See, for instance, the dissertation by Mona Harnden-Simpson 2011. In there she reclaims "the centrality and multidimensional features of Buddhism" in Tibetan culture, analysing Tibetan cinematic practices through four films that she deems relevant for an understanding of the nexus between Tibetan cinema and Buddhism: *The Cup* (*Phörpa*, dir. Khyentse Norbu, India, 1999); *Travellers and Magicians* (dir. Khyentse Norbu, Bhutan, 2005); *Milarepa: Magician, Murderer, Saint* (dir. Neten Chokling, Bhutan, 2006), and *Kundun* (dir. Martin Scorsese, USA, 1997). Ignoring all the previous scholarship on Tibetan literature and cinema, she posits a very selective and limited reading of Tibetan cinema as better articulated through these "religious films", arguing that "a Buddhist ethos forms the core of these films and informs how the language of cinema is used to convey Buddhist themes and principles" (2011, iii).

I am thankful to the anonymous reviewer of this article who also underlined the parallel with India and the narratives surrounding the anticolonial struggle, dominated by the Gandhian non-violence ethos. The figure of Gandhi in relation to the Dalai Lama, and the discourse of non-violence, are relevant factors which link Indians and Tibetans in their quest for freedom and form important rhetorical strategies of the image of Tibetans.

Iwabuchi's theory may offer us an important tool of analysis in the context of Tibetan filmmaking practices in India, as it is exactly this 'fear' of an odorless ingredient that may be 'surreptitiously' added to the cultural menu produced by Tibetans in diasporic settings that underlines – somehow ironically – the statement by Tsering Namgyal Khortsa of a 'coming soon' *Karma of Chicken Curry*. Irony, in this case, does not conceal but rather adds emphasis to the apprehension that Tibetans feel when faced with the imperatives of 'cultural preservation' imposed on them by the TGiE and its educational and cultural institutions, which keep a watchful eye on every cultural output that aims to be innovative and, as such, may be potentially destabilising. As Hamid Naficy has posited, "as artists who often make distressing and dystopian films, exilic filmmakers inhabit a realm of incredible tension and agony […]" (2013, 142). But, he also points out, they also produce films that are "entertaining, even though ironically and parodically critical of both the host and home societies" (142).

This is often the case as, in such films, the issue of cultural nationalism emerges and takes central stage. It is so also in the productions by Tibetan filmmakers in India, since they work inside the ideological frame of the Tibetan authorities and fear the possibly harsh criticism and attacks by their own community for having 'misrepresented' history and jeopardised the battle for political rights. When Pema Dondhup presented his first film in Delhi in 2004, provocatively titled *We're No Monks*, many Buddhist lamas and various Tibetan and Western spectators expressed their sincere concern for the film, since it contradicted the widespread image of the peaceful Tibetan, projecting on screen the nightmare of a possible "Tibetan *Intifada*"[10] in the heart of India, with young Tibetans resorting to suicide bombings.[11] What interests us here, more than discussing the legitimacy or not of such ideas of violent struggle against China (or the question of self-immolation as a viable strategy of dissent, a favorite theme among Tibetan filmmakers living in the US), is the significant aesthetic and political discourse that a film like *We're No Monks* may help us to make: first, this sense of being trapped in exile responds to certain themes that have been recognised as characterising the "accented cinema" theorised by Hamid Naficy (2001; 2013); second, the low-budget form and the collective mode of production

[10]   During the Napoli Film Festival in 2004, the filmmaker Pema Dondhup and the author had to confront a group of enraged 'Dharma practitioners' who claimed that the film was meant to undermine the credibility of Tibetans as peace-loving people and to bring forward the idea of a possible Tibetan 'Intifada'.

[11]   The film was tolerated by the community due to the intercession of the Dalai Lama, but was badly received even at some International Film Festivals, where many felt outraged by the allegation that Tibetans could resort to violence, ignoring the fact that for many years they had indeed done so with the support of the CIA. On this historical chapter of the Tibetan struggle for independence, see the film produced by Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin (2000) *The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet* (49 min. Color).

of the film qualify it as an example of "exilic filmmaking" produced at the margins of the studio system and outside national productions houses. Following this first experimental feature film and the success of Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin's *Dreaming Lhasa* (2004), many other films produced in exile by young Tibetan filmmakers have followed, capitalising on the idea of a collective mode of production and experimenting with cinematic language to create an 'authentic' Tibetan cinema.[12] But what can be called 'Tibetan cinema'? And what does it mean to preserve a degree of 'authenticity'? While the films made by Tibetan filmmakers in exile certainly complicate and pluralise the images of Tibet, they do so pitting their representations against *the representation* of Tibetan culture that is deemed unquestionable, which is the official 'idea of Tibet' sustained by the official authorities of the Tibetan Government in Exile, nurtured and fuelled by local supporters and international donors as 'fundamentally' related to the religious traditions of Buddhism. The plurality of voices and the possible ways of expressing 'Tibetanness' have often been silenced and reduced to a univocal retelling of Tibet as a country of Buddhist people almost exclusively dedicated to religious practices. This discourse has been strategically deployed to reassure donors of the 'apolitical' nature of the Tibetan struggle and to distance present-day calls for genuine autonomy inside China by former (even violent) fights for an independent Tibet. The tension between the present political position of the Tibetan Government and the aspirations of many Tibetan refugees regarding the issue of independence is portrayed in various cinematic productions by filmmakers in exile, since the efforts of the government to 'preserve' culture as 'authentically Tibetan' appears

[12] There is an ongoing debate on what it should be called 'Tibetan cinema' and who are its representatives. There have been hundreds of films made on Tibet during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, starting with the British documentaries of the 1920s up to the more recent productions by Western and Chinese filmmakers, the co-productions of Chinese and Tibetan artists, the ones that involve Indian, Nepali and Tibetan authors and filmmakers, and many others by directors and producers from all over the world interested in the *Tibetosphere* (which spans from Tibetan regions inside China to states of present-day India like Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Ladakh). Tibetan poet and documentarist Jangbu (alias, Dorje Tsering Chenaktsang 2009) calls most of these productions "Tibet-related films" and argues that a genuine Tibetan cinema has been developing only in the last fifteen years, with Tibetans increasingly coming to experiment with cinematic languages and with the possibility of accessing modes of production that may allow them to 'own the gaze'.

The question of what can be called a Tibetan film is further complicated by issues of modes of productions, on one side, and distribution and intended spectators, on the other. The films I am taking into consideration in this article cannot be distributed inside China and most of the spectators of these low-budget films are Tibetans, Indians and Nepalis living in India or Nepal. Thanks to the creation of digital platforms, it has become easier for Tibetans who choose to make digital films to circulate them online. This has also become a way to reach possible producers and solicit forms of crowd-funding across the various Tibetan communities and Tibet-supporters around the world. These modes of production, however, have also an impact on the independent nature of the film, since many supporters are not keen to invest in a film which is not deemed 'representative' of the 'Tibetan ethos'.

to conflict with their political standpoint that Tibet should not ask for independence. This tension is reflected also in the present debate around the acceptance of Indian citizenship: while the TGiE appears to discourage it, some Tibetans believe this to be a nonsensical stance by the Tibetan authorities, which only prevents Tibetans in India to be entitled to the same civic and political rights of the rest of India's citizens.[13]

Cinema offers a platform for voicing these concerns and make dissenting voices audible, and the concern with authenticity seems to preoccupy more the authorities and the Dharma practitioners than filmmakers and cultural practitioners. As Naficy (2001) has warned, it is almost impossible to strictly confine the cinematic works by exilic authors into the straitjacket of one label or a specific genre. Similarly, Tibetan diasporic films also travel in-between various genres and cinematic languages, making it difficult to pigeonhole them and opening venues for creolised aesthetics and hybridised filmmaking practices. Hence, we may wish to subscribe to the theoretical frame provided by Naficy, who reckons the existence of a cinema that can be identified by its "accented style", and yet remains so undefined and fluid that "encompasses characteristics common to the works of differently situated filmmakers involved in varied decentered social formations and cinematic practices across the globe, – all of whom are presumed to share the fact of displacement and deterritorialization" (21). We may perhaps call it a 'Thinglish cinema', as the aesthetics and the politics of cultural production are inflected by Western imaginaries, Indian *masala* formulas and Tibetan stories and values. Moreover, following the yet to be exhausted debates which have been triggered by the use of terms like "transnational cinema" and "diasporic filmmaking", we must constantly remind ourselves that these labels are contested and contestable and that a filmmaker may fall into various categories according to the film he authors, the conditions of the film's production and distribution, the site of film-making and the place where the film is released, consumed and marketed. Labels may reveal themselves as functional, but they may also be constraining or even misleading if taken for granted without looking at the contextual networks that shaped them. As Mette Hjort (2009) has proposed when discussing the danger of clubbing together different films and cinemas – even by authors belonging to the same community – it is always necessary to differentiate and avoid trusting the supposedly virtuous capacity of tags like 'transnational' to overcome the constraining of the national-international bipolar dichotomy that so much disturbs/disrupts the postcolonial condition of diasporic authors. Moreover, in the context of the Tibetan Diaspora, where a plurality of voices and a complex articulation of identities and belongings further problematises

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13 On this sensitive theme, see, among others, the works by Fiona McConnell 2011, 2013 and Jayal 2013.

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such theories, the idea put forward by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih of "minor transnationalism" (2005, 5) in the performance of cultures, in order to guarantee such performances without necessary mediation by the center, may be especially relevant when there is no clear center of reference and the filmmakers operate outside the studio system and beyond the borders of their (real or imagined) nation-state. "Minor transnationalism" as developed by Lionnet and Shih adds further complexity to the Foucauldian discourses of power dynamics and dismantles binaries like centre-margins and majority-minorities: it shifts the attention to the intersection of voices and the rhizomatic relations among them in an era of global flows. Complicating the question of "nomadic subjectivities" discussed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Lionnet and Shih also highlight the always rhizomatic nature of 'minorities', considering their creolisation – in the way conceived by Édouard Glissant in his *Poétique de la relation* (1990) – as the manifestation of an always already hybrid and relational culture (see also Britton 1999). As Glissant suggested, one of the elements of creolisation is a relational rhizomatic identity and the principle that "what supports us is not simply the definition of our identities, but also their relation to the whole set of possibilities: the mutual mutations generated by this play of relations" (1990, 103). The subject, then, is constituted within this fluid, plural, relational and related identifications that allow, to paraphrase Lionnet and Shih (2005, 7), those "micropractices of transnationality"[14] which emerge in interstitial and collective productions like *Phun Anu Thanu*, instances, we may call them, of minor cinemas in *Thinglish* language and *masala* style.

3 In Between the Local and the Global: Tibetan *masala* Films and the Politics of Cinematic Pleasure

You can't study a single film, nor even a national cinema, without understanding the interdependence of images, entertainment, and people all of which move with increasing regularity around the world. The movies are a model for the 'glocal'. (Andrew 2006, 26)

I begin to discuss what I have tentatively called Tibetan *masala* films, or *Thinglish* cinema, by considering the notion of a cinema world system devel-

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14 "This conception of minor transnationality", write Lionnet and Shih (2005, 8), "differs from the postnational, nomadic, and 'flexible' norms of citizenship (Appadurai; Joseph; Ong). [...] Flexible or nomadic subjects function as if they are free-floating signifiers without psychic and material investment in one or more given particular geopolitical spaces. By contrast, minor transnational subjects are inevitably invested in their respective geopolitical spaces, often waiting to be recognised as 'citizens' to receive the attendant privileges of full citizenship".

oped by Dudley Andrew (2006), where transnational influences and critical approaches to filmmaking practices are apprehended and considered, as Deborah Shaw (2013) has highlighted, in the frame of intertextuality. As Shaw elaborated, a "world system approach is characterised [...] by waves of influence between national cinemas and from film to film in terms of approach, narrative and exchange and visual style" (58). Keeping in mind what we have argued about minor transnationalism and the creolisation of languages and aesthetics, I look at the rhizomatic cross-fertilisation between Bollywood and the productions by Tibetan filmmakers in India as a very important site of departure from a homogenised understanding of Tibetan filmmaking practices in exile. As it clearly appeared from the very beginnings of Tibetan cinema, each filmmaker struggled – and continuously struggles – to find his/her own distinct voice, aesthetic style, mode of production and what Rey Chow has evocatively called "sentimental fabulation" (2007).[15] Notwithstanding the difficulties of filmmaking in the diaspora, the tendency is to strive for productions that can be judged not only in pure ideological terms, but also on artistic and auterist levels, with many filmmakers determined to assure a good post-production process and keen to attend international film festivals, where their films may be able to carve a niche for Tibetan cinema on the global screens. This may be partially justified by their commitment to the Tibetan cause and the necessity of circulating Tibetan films in order to keep the struggle for independence alive, but it also hints to the necessity of creating multiple venues for sharing their films – which still represent a relatively new medium of expression for Tibetans – with other filmmakers who partake of the same challenges and look for international venues such as film festival to reach a broader audience and distributors for their films. While, so far, this has been possible only for few Tibetan directors, whose experience in filmmaking proved consolidated through work in the field and thanks to their privileged positionality as educated and cosmopolitan

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15   In her book on Chinese cinema, titled *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility* (2007), scholar Rey Chow provides an interesting explanation for her choice of such an evocative title, which is worth quoting at length to understand my own adoption of such definition in discussing Tibetan diasporic cinema's aesthetics and politics, also similarly and primarily characterised by a "sentimental fabulation" that brings together various elements that are "polyphonic and polyvalent": "I have borrowed the notion of fabulation in part from Nietzsche, who wrote about 'How the True World Finally Became a Fable', and in part from Deleuze, who defined fabulation as a mythmaking function, central to minor cinemas, that brings together archaic and contemporary, as well as documentary and fictional, elements in the production of collective modes of storytelling, and that in turn constitutes the visionary basis for a people to come (or in the process of becoming). Amid the polyphonic and polyvalent claims to Chineseness – traversed by temporalities, languages, media, and diasporic routes or grounded in stable localities and prideful chauvinisms – the sentimental (in) contemporary Chinese films, with a worldwide accessibility unprecedented among Chinese cultural forms, may yet strike the most resonant chord" (Chow 1990, 25).

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transnational subjects, for other aspiring filmmakers the whole process of writing, producing and directing their films is generally fraught with many challenges. Due to various social and economic factors, among which, just to mention a few, the high costs of film production and the constraints of being a refugee with hardly any chance to pursue a proper education in film studies or in media and communication technologies, most of the dreams of becoming film directors are often doomed to fail. This is not to say that India lacks excellent schools of cinema, as this is obviously not the case, nor I am stating that it is absolutely necessary to attend a prestigious film school to become a filmmaker: what I wish to underline is that for young Tibetans who wish to become filmmakers (or producers, cinematographers, actors, etc.) these paths may be foreclosed by certain difficulties to access not just schools or academies, but also practical training, filming equipment and financial support. This has not discouraged committed Tibetan filmmakers, who have often taken advantage of collaborative work with film directors (among whom also Bernardo Bertolucci) to learn technical skills and nurture their creative aspirations. Moreover, since Dharamsala offers a sort of readymade film set populated by many kind of national and international figures – some of them popular Hollywood and Bollywood personalities who are fascinated by the evergreen myth of Tibet and its "specialness" (Barnett 2001) – Tibetans in exile (at least in India) have had the possibility of meeting famous actors like Richard Gere, who regularly visits the hill station of McLeod Gunj and also acted as Executive Producer of *Dreaming Lhasa*.[16] This exposure to Hollywood, however, has also fostered a sort of American Dream that appears to loom in the backstage: many young Tibetans imagine the world of films as inflected by the Hollywood aesthetics and modes of production. This is also partly because the most famous film productions to date that revived the 'fever for Tibet' among Western supporters were two Hollywood productions (1997): *Kundun* by Martin Scorsese and *Seven Years in Tibet* by Jean-Jacques Annaud. Moreover, McLeod Gunj is a touristic hub for hundreds of American tourists who emotionally and financially feast on the Dream of Tibet while nurturing the American Dream among young Tibetans.

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[16]   The role of Richard Gere and the impact he has had among Tibetan youths in India cannot be underestimated. The second film by Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee was titled *Richard Gere is My Hero*, hinting at the centrality of this figure in the imaginary of Tibetans in India. Gere, beside his personal involvement with Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, has also contributed to support the movement for non-violent struggle and the cultural productions by Tibetans in exile. He also created a garbage-collection system and launched a clean-up operation in McLeod Gunj, showing his practical commitment to the well-being of Tibetans in exile.

   Beside Gere, the main executive producer of the film was Jeremy Thomas, the acclaimed British producer of *The Last Emperor* and other films directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. For more information, see the official website of *Dreaming Lhasa*: http://www.dreaminglhasa.com.

Of lately, though, it is closer 'home' that some young filmmakers are looking for inspiration and support. The relative cheap costs of digital filmmaking and the possibility of processing the films through inexpensive editing software have given birth to a new trend of Tibetan cinema: a Bollywood inflected practice that uses songs, dances and a certain dose of humor and comedy to present the lives, loves and hopes of a new generation born and brought up in exile. This is going to be a rather different Tibetan cinema from the one of the cosmopolitan transnational filmmakers who made the very first films. This exilic "minor cinema"[17] represents the creative output of some young Tibetans born and brought up in India who had begun calling themselves the "India-born" (Chen 2012, 263). As Susan Chen posited, it is crucial to pay attention to "the sensory domains of these Tibetans' local/Indian experiences" and the way these young refugees "ambivalently feel for the place where they are at once native and exilic" (263). Feeling that they are both native subjects and exilic people, and thus accommodating in their social and cultural practices both Tibetan and Indian ways of thinking and performing as social beings, this group of young Tibetans does not shy away, as the elders did until very recently, from the influences of India's 'culture': from their familiarity with Hindi language, to the pleasure of consuming Indian food or cultural products like Bollywood films and TV series, many India-born Tibetans feel at home both in Indian and Tibetan cultures and strive to accommodate both of these dimensions in their quotidian life. As Timm Lau has pointed out,

> Both normative Tibetan moral notions and aspirational Indian popular-cultural representations are appropriated by Tibetans born and raised in India. On the one hand, Tibetan moral notions of harmonious relationships present generally salient norms for Tibetans […]. On the other hand, Indian popular film and television are ubiquitous in Tibetan everyday life. […] Indian popular culture has helped to shape Tibetan diasporic aesthetics and historicity and provides an idiom for ideas and practices of love, romance and marriage for younger Tibetans in India. (2010, 967)

17 The writings of Deleuze and Guattari on minor literature, minor cinema and their relation to a political agenda for the assertion of minority subjectivity have been amply discussed by many scholars and constitute a very useful theoretical frame to also discuss the developing of Tibetan diasporic cinema. David Martin-Jones (2006), offering a good summary of the writings on minor cinema, states: "minor cinema is a product of attempts made by marginalised or minority groups to create a new sense of identity. Minor cinema is 'revolutionary' in its appeal to colonised, minority, postcolonial, neocolonial, or otherwise marginalised peoples to establish a new sense of identity" (6).

Such definition is also very useful to understand the relation between politics, cinema, visual pleasures and the consolidation of a sense of identity in exile.

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While the researches of Anna Morcom (2009) inside Tibet have highlighted the growing consumption of Bollywood films and Hindi songs among Tibetans in China, where such cultural products have come to be seen as an instance of the exotic/erotic Other across the border, on one side, and as a sort of 'sacred commodity' from the holy land of the Buddha (and present abode of the Dalai Lama) to be surreptitiously consumed inside China, on the other, very little has been written on the connection between the pleasure of watching Hindi language films among Tibetans in exile and the elaboration of Tibetan diasporic aesthetics and, we may add, of complex cinematic sensibilities. If inside Tibet the allure of Bollywood points to "the fluidity of cultural topographies and trajectories" (Morcom 2009, 145), linking the historical relationships between Tibet and South Asia to the contemporary plight of the Tibetan diaspora, it may be possible to look at the ties between India and Tibet not just in the frame of the nationalist project of China (hence reading the consumption of Bollywood in Tibet as some sort of counter-hegemonic cultural practice), but also at its aesthetic appreciation and performative appropriation among the Tibetans in exile as a creative way of coping with the emotional struggles faced by Tibetan refugees looking for 'modernity' and 'rootedness' closer to the place they have come to call home. As Keila Diehl (2002) has argued in her work on Tibetan music and songs in exile, where she has examined the development of new soundscapes by young Tibetan musicians in Dharamsala and the cultural politics which are bound to complicate such endeavors, the main problem that confronts young artists in exile is the challenge of satisfying their creativity and desire for innovation, while not rejecting their political commitment to the Tibetan cause. She states: "Despite a well-articulated academic curriculum and general commitment to cultural preservation, what is taught is not passed on unchanged, since Tibetan refugee youth are living undeniably displaced, fragile, and culturally hybrid lives" (18). This reminds us of the difficulties of researching among people on the move, who are constantly destabilised by many structural adjustments and cultural changes. Psychological traumas and feelings of nostalgia contribute to create a very slippery terrain where is difficult to pin down a stable sense of the Self. In this regard, in his considerations on the plight of exile, Edward Said (1984, 50) rightly cautioned those who were inclined to romanticize such painful dimension "as beneficial, as a spur to humanism or to creativity", warning that to do so was equivalent "to belittle its mutilations". Similarly, the feminist scholar Caren Kaplan has also pointed out the risks, for scholars who work at the perceived margins, to indulge into what she calls "a new poetics of the exotic" (1987, 191). Warning against a trivial use of the metaphor of the deterritorialisation of the nomad to signify empowerment, John K. Noyes (2004) has equally expressed his concern towards the uncritical praise of nomadic forms of being in the world, affirming: "It is a miserable plight to be a postmodern nomad, to be homeless, wandering, a

refugee, following not a dream of disembodied bliss but a slim hope for survival" (159). The mental shock and the physical strain of exile, experienced by Tibetans, is reinforced by their disillusionment in coming to terms with what was a chimeric dream. While nobody faces the journey towards exile light-heartedly, the condition of Tibetan refugees is somehow different: when individuals or families decide to make the dangerous journey across the Himalayas, or send their children alone to India, they do so with the hope that life in exile will be blessed by the proximity with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. For many Tibetans, then, exile can guarantee some form of 'freedom' in terms of social and cultural practices, and of 'liberation' in terms of spirituality, because the presence of their religious leader, revered by Tibetans as a manifestation of *Avalokiteśvara* (Tib. *Spyan ras gzigs*), can guarantee 'real salvation'. Obviously, the suffering of exilic subjects is not obliterated by these spiritual practices and often Tibetans, especially the so-called 'new comers' who have arrived in recent years, decide to make the journey back to Tibet as cannot adjust to the ambiguous and uncertain dimensions of life in exile. As Tibetan poet Tenzin Tsundue (2002) touchingly expresses in his verses:

> At every check-post and office,
> I am an "Indian-Tibetan".
> My Registration Certificate,
> I renew every year, with a salaam.
> A foreigner born in India.[18]

In conveying this unwanted hyphenated identity, constricted by the quotation marks as to imply that for many Tibetans this is an imposed identity which signals the simultaneous belonging and un-belonging to a State ready to issue a Registration Certificate to testify that Tsundue is still a "foreigner", albeit "born in India", we can read all the plight of young Tibetan refugees who cannot actually 'find refuge' even in memories and nostalgia of the past, since their past is also a foreign land. Their linguistic and cultural hybridity is a result of that "pluralism that marks this more complex and specialized mode of existence" (Nowak 1980, 219). This pluralistic condition is distinct by a great deal of complexity, where the opposition between 'tradition' and 'modernity' is politically and ideologically played on the minds of young Tibetans, who struggle to find a balance and to define their own "Tibetanness" (Tsundue 2002).[19] In this frame, it is im-

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18   The entire poem is available online at http://tibetwrites.in/IMG/pdf/kora.pdf.

19   It may be interesting to point out that if, on one side, Tibetan families, schools and cultural institutions teach children to preserve 'Tibetan culture' in a state of artificial purity and strategic essentialism – since their *distinctiveness* is what justifies their mode of existence as refugees, as deterritorialised subjects who are keen to return home to a place called Tibet

portant to look at the ways Bollywood films and Hindi songs come to play an important role, filling an emotional vacuum that other Indian cinemas, Tibetan 'traditional' performances or Western forms of entertainment have only partially occupied. What Fareed Kazmi discusses as the "fetishisation of tradition" (1999, 62), theorised as one of the main ideological issues which underpin Indian film culture, becomes also crucial to an understanding of cultural productions by young Tibetans in India, as the duality between modernity and tradition is constantly enacted in their daily lives. Pressurised by the Tibetan authorities and their own families to preserve an essentialised form of Tibetan culture, almost exclusively constructed around customary laws and Buddhist religious practices, Tibetan youths (especially in McLeod Gunj) are simultaneously immersed in an intricate web of parallel realities, where Tibetan lives are affected by a multiplicity of actors that include, but is not limited to, tourists, NGO-workers, scholars and a quite conspicuous number of artists that travel to Dharamsala (and sometimes relocate) in search of a creative and mystical experience. The presence of a cohort of visitors and new settlers generates an anxiety among the elders and the religious authorities that exacerbates the idea of lack of control on the new generations, allegedly threatened in their identity by an array of non-Tibetan influences. Even the consumption of Hindi films and songs is steadily addressed and creatively exorcised through the interstitial production and collective consumption of what I have tentatively called Tibetan *masala* films. Despite the rather disempowering label of "superficial and entertaining" casted upon Hindi music and films (Diehl 2002, 27),[20] the appropriation and adaptation of Bollywood productions into a new Tibetan modern public culture is looked with apprehension by the elders and the leaders, pointing towards a more serious threat posed by this apparently trivial entertainment. As Timm Lau has pointed out in his discussion of Hindi films' consumption by young Tibetan exiles in India, Indian films' emotional content is far from irrelevant for this audience: "young Tibetans in India appropriate the romantic representations

–, on the other side, the fact that Tibetans arrived to India six decades ago and have since then renegotiated their space inside the Indian Republic need to be acknowledged. The older generations may still recollect the 'old world of Tibet', and nostalgically miss it, but the young generations may not be so keen to return to a country that they have never seen and of which they have an idealised image conveyed by both Tibetan and Western imaginaries on Tibet.

20 This may seem to be a rather Western-centric perspective, but it is a rather Tibetan-centric perspective, perhaps reinforced by a certain élite approach to cinema and entertainment, but also due to a certain moral evaluation of these media. Hindi songs, Bollywood films, melodramatic TV series, etc. are usually not much appreciated by Tibetans in exile, because they are deemed as improper entertainment and discouraged by the political and religious leaders. As Keila Diehl has pointed out, for Tibetans in exile "India is *mi yul*, the earthly realm of samsara and human mortality, in opposition to *lha yul*, the heavenly abode of the gods and, figuratively, a blessed country, paradise, Tibet" (2002, 113-4).

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of melodramatic Hindi films, because they are relevant to their own lives amidst social changes, and because they induce strong emotions in them" (2010, 981). The raising of strong emotions and the anxiety they provoke have been the topic of contentious arguments among exile Tibetans, since, as Kay Milton (2002) has argued, those are exactly the things that elicit a strong emotional reaction which come to occupy an important place in our lives. Seen in this perspective, Tsering Namgyal's wish to consume a Tibetan *masala* film aptly titled *The Karma of Chicken Curry* funnily, and yet seriously, conveys the emotional attachment to Indian food and films, an attachment which can be read as the karmic result of the exilic condition, but cannot be neither easily dismissed nor ignored.

Due to the limited scope of this article, there is only so much space that I can dedicate to the development of this *Thinglish* cinema. I will briefly discuss the first Tibetan film produced in India that has adopted a *masala* film formula, i.e. *Phun Anu Thanu* (*Two Exiled Brothers*). With this film, screenwriters and directors Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee have defined another cinematic idiom among Tibetans in exile, employing the genres of melodrama and slapstick comedy to simultaneously offer a mimic of the Hindi films' romances and a parody of Bollywoodised ways of filmmaking. The film has proved remarkably successful among young Tibetans but has also received the appreciation of religious leaders and elder spectators. The reasons behind this success are far from simple and need to be evaluated. As Keila Diehl (2002) has argued,

> Whereas playful (or sometimes unkind) mimicry of an 'other' can be a powerful tool for consolidating in-group identity, identification or the nonironic desire actually to become the 'other' threatens to foreground similarities over differences between groups, thereby blurring boundaries and weakening group solidarity. The ways in which Tibetans 'use' Hindi films as a source of entertainment, as a tool to underscore intergroup differences and tensions, and as a source of ideas about different 'ways to be' now need to be explored. (131)

Spicy films and romantic songs may turn even low-budget films into popular hits, without necessary enraging the custodians of cultural and moral integrity and even winning their praises. The efforts by Wangchuk and Dorjee to produce films that are a homage to Bollywood – and to India, at large – while also bearing the necessary "burden of representation" (Mercer 1994) of the Tibetan cause, have resulted into an entertaining spectacle and a humorous (albeit serious) take on life in exile, where many Tibetans, at least according to what reported on medias and blogs, have been able to identify.

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4 *Phun Anu Thanu* (India 2006): the First Instance of a *Thinglish* Film

Phun Anu Thanu (*Two Exiled Brothers*) is the first feature film made by a talented and creative duo, Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee. They wrote and directed the film with the support of the Tibetan community, casting both non-professional and professional actors like the brilliant comedian Sonam Wangdue, who had already acted in both *We're No Monks* and *Dreaming Lhasa*. Mainly shot in the Tibetan colony of Dehradun (Uttaranchal State, India) *Phun Anu Thanu* is a romantic love story full of comedy and good sentiments. As the synopsis of the film elucidates:

> A story of two good for nothing brothers, Anu and Thanu and their unconditional love for two beautiful and educated daughters, Yangzom and Dechen of Gyakpon la (a camp leader) of Dekiling Tibetan settlement, India. Anu and Thanu are known for their unruly characters while Yangzom and Dechen for their positive qualities. Much against the wishes of the respectable Gyakpon la, the two brothers strive hard to win the heart of his two daughters. The film takes off on the 10th March 2005 when every Tibetan goes to downtown, Dehra Dun, to commemorate the 1959 Tibetan Uprising in Lhasa. The two brothers, however, do not attend the march and lingers around with the two sisters. Since there is no one present at the colony, the time is also perfect for two thieves to do their business. However, love rules the heart of potbellied school cook, Machen la, as he is busy making love with the wine lady, Ama Changma. Apart from entertainment, the film touches social, political, moral and health issues.[21]

Writers and directors Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee produced the film with the support of local Tibetan producers Dickyi Wangmo and Ugen Dolma and shot the film with the help of the Indian cinematographer Narinder Singh. The music and the editing was also done in collaboration with Indian friends, Arun Sharma and Mohit Kumar, and the film was released among great excitement, gaining good reviews and the deep admiration of the then Prime Minister Samdong Rinpoche, who reportedly expressed his congratulatory remarks to the filmmakers saying: "I didn't expect the film as it is. It is perfect" (Ugen 2006). Even the Chief Justice Namgyal Tsering rated the film as "Excellent and very beautifully made" (Ugen 2006), while other Tibetans who had the chance of watching the film during some of the screenings around India or in the US, expressed their delight on the *Phayul* blog with comments such as: "This is one of the best movies that

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21 See: http://seykharfilms.com/#films.

Tibetan has ever made. It's funny, educational, romantic, family oriented and did I say funny. We loved it";[22] or less enthusiastic but still supportive statements like: "Its a good movie - not a 'Titanic' but given the budget its first class. This movie is made by Tibetans for Tibetans-plain and simple- not for Engees or stupid awards. EVERY TIBETAN SHOULD WATCH THIS FILM. Welldone everyone involved in the film - good music and acting and direction".

Indeed, as one of the directors, Tashi Wangchuk, has confirmed in an article published on *The Tibet Sun* (2015), the film was made to cater to the tastes of a Tibetan audience. And even if now, after more than ten years by its release, Tashi acknowledges that "their film was not even near the mark when it comes to a standard professional film" and "the story line [was] redundant, the editing rather sloppy, and many of the scenes [...] totally unnecessary" (2015), he also stresses that "many of the important persons at Dharamshala were impressed by their mediocre work and gave great reviews" and that truly helped marketing the film among the local audience, since "from the beginning their target audience were Tibetans, whom they would not be reaching through film festivals" (2015). So, as Tashi honestly reveals in his enjoyable piece titled "Sweet and Sour" (perhaps a hint that their next films may be inflected by more East Asian tastes of cinema?), "they started touring Tibetan settlements, schools, monasteries, and institutes in India with a DVD player and a rental digital projector to screen their film on a ticket basis" (2015). Writing for the popular online magazine *Phayul* at the time of the film's screening in Minnesota, journalist Jigme Ugen (2006) also commented:

> Is *Phun Anu Thanu*, a Tibetan cult classic? Yes, is the answer as it has broken all standard conventions associated with the new wave of Tibetan films. With an emphasis on strong family values and a theme of love overcoming differences, this film also manages to touch on social, political, moral and health issues. It also throws light on the middle way stand of the Tibetan government-in-exile and its future.

Despite some unavoidable technical flaws and the rather simple plot, *Phun Anu Thanu* remains a 'Tibetan cult film'. The witty comedy and the mimicking of certain Bollywood scenes, like the one where comedian Sonam Wangdue sings and dances in the mountains for winning the heart of his rich and well educated lover, have become popular item songs and have been uploaded on YouTube as an instance of the most enjoyable performance of

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22 For all the reported comments, see: http://www.phayul.com/news/discuss/view. aspx?id=12668#26463.

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the film.[23] If it is true that the film adheres to a certain moralistic ethos and conforms to the official political stances of the Tibetan Government, such 'educational' messages do not obscure the centrality of the main theme, which ultimately is concerned with love, emotion and marriage practices among Tibetan youths in exile. The film, thus, can be read as an expression of an aesthetics of emotionality that have made of Bollywood films, with their romantic stories and melodramatic style, a suitable formula for conveying the heartfelt need, among young Tibetans, to discuss love and intimacy beyond the boundaries of constraining 'traditions'. Paraphrasing what Brian Larkin (1997) has argued regarding the production of local love story books (*soyayya* books) and their relationship to Bollywood films' consumption by young Hausa people in Nigeria, we can also say that "the engagement with themes of romantic love [in Tibetan masala films] exemplifies precisely this desire to explore the limits of social norms during a period of rapid change" (415). As much as the "tension between arranged marriages and love marriages is not new to Hausa society, nor is the idea that romantic love may be subversive of the moral order" (415), comparably such topics are common among young Tibetans, who are equally affected by "the speed of contemporary social change that has placed the issues of love, marriage and sexuality squarely at the forefront of social concern" (415). As Timm Lau (2010, 981) has rightly observed, "young Tibetans in India appropriate the romantic representations of melodramatic Hindi films, because they are relevant to their own lives amidst social changes, and because they induce strong emotions in them".

Coming back to *Phun Anu Thanu*, the success of the film may partially be associated to the representation of the two male characters, the brothers Thanu and Anu, who strive to conquer the hearts of their beloved girls, two rich and beautiful sisters. In the process, as it is expected in a *masala* comedy, they face plenty of difficulties, mainly posed by the girls' father, and overcome issues of social class and economic status, communal problems that understandably strike a sympathetic chord among many young Tibetans living in diasporic enclaves. The pleasure born from enacting the roles of the hero and the heroine typically played in Bollywood films, where the threat is usually posed by Westernisation and lack of respect for 'Indian traditions',[24] in Tibetan films is reformulated through a mimicking parody

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23 While it is very difficult to get hold of a copy of the film, which has been distributed only unofficially through DVDs sold at the screenings' venues, the main item song, which constitutes also the trailer of the film, is still available on YouTube: `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EI0rQ6uhxJo`.

24 Since the liberalisation of the Indian economy, films have introduced new ways of being 'westernised' and 'traditional' at the same time. This is an interesting point to be made also in relation to what Bollywood may come to represent in different cultural settings, such as the ones analysed by Brian Larkin (1997) who has highlighted the ways Indian films provide

of Indian ways of romancing, on one side, and a more serious retake of the tradition-modernity paradigm, on the other. In these Tibetan films, tradition is uniquely identified with a carefully constructed and essentialised notion of Tibetan culture, with its religious principles and moral values, while the second term is ambiguously presented as a conflation of Indian and Western ways of being and doing, acceptable only insofar as such imitation is duly mocked and finally exorcised through humor and parody. Given the exilic setting of production (India) and the pleasure in consuming Indian films and soap operas, this preliminary statement may seem exaggerate. However, it confirms what has also been highlighted by Keila Diehl in her work *Echoes from Dharamsala*, where she has clearly posited how "[d] ifferentiation is generally played down and even considered regrettable in the Tibetan refugee community" (2002, 18). She further elaborates:

> The key for the ethnographer in this situation is to move beyond a fascination with *formal* hybridity – the prayer beads entwined with digital watches, the country and rock music blaring at Himalayan dance parties – and pay attention instead to the ways in which the elements of this particular youth culture are chosen, reproduced, and even standardized. This attention to the motivations behind and feelings about the consumption of cultural elements from here and there reveals a generation of young people who are, for the most part, remarkably conservative and conventional in their beliefs and morals. (18-9)

Shortly, the apparent relaxed condition of life in exile conceals a world of tension and anxiety which has been kept under control by a tight educational diktat where all things non-Tibetan must be vigilantly adopted and craftily adapted for the sake of survival. Tibetan political leaders and religious authorities allow (even encourage) the use of Hindi and English languages, and the adoption of certain Indian foods and Western clothes, but they do so reminding Tibetans that these extras should be seen as occasional 'pepper and salt' to spice up a rather tasteless diasporic life, and should not become "culturally odorless" (Iwabuchi 2002), hence dangerously undistinguishable from what has to remain a distinctive Tibetan culture. "[A]ppropriating, hybridizing, indigenizing, and consuming images and commodities of 'foreign' origin in multiple unforeseen ways" (Iwabuchi 2002, 46) should not be translated into a deeper translation of *other* cultures into 'ours'.

Hence, to adopt a different kind of metaphor, it is fine to inject some flesh and blood in the anemic corpse of Tibetan exilic culture, but due attention

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viewers in Nigeria with a way of being modern that does not mean being westernised. This creation of what Larkin named "parallel modernities" is also relevant to Tibetans consuming and producing Bollywood-style films in exile.

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should be paid not to turn the *masala* into staple food, and to prevent the devastating effects of what Ramirez-Berg has called the "vampire's kiss" (1996, cited in Diehl 2002, 140). Such kiss, in fact, might succeed in revitalising a corpse, but it would do so only at the expenses of the subject's consciousness, resulting into a complete possession of the victim's body, mind and desires. Hence, if Western and Indian cultural products can be accessed and consumed by Tibetans in exile, such consumption must be prevented from turning into adoption of mores and habits that may jeopardize the survival of a carefully crafted authenticity, which must remain at the center of the cultural *mandala* of diasporic existence.[25] The effort at localising their films, keeping in mind a Tibetan audience who may appreciate the vernacular style of the diegetic and cinematic language, adds to the importance of Tashi and Dorjee's films and to the felt necessity of developing a local industry that satisfies the Tibetan spectators in exile. The fact that such films look at Bollywood style of entertainment to discuss issues like identity, exile, love, alienation and political struggle also hints at the efforts by many Tibetans in the diaspora to find a suitable language to address such questions without indulging into some sort of disempowering exercise of imagination.

Tsultrim Dorjee and Tashi Wangchuk have recently relocated to the US but continue to make films, shorts and documentaries related to Tibet and Tibetans in exile. As the new location has perhaps inflected their way of film-making in new ways/waves, their recently released films are distant from their *masala* style comedies of ten years ago. This shifting in diasporic position and socio-cultural positionality may suggest new paths ahead for Tibetan diasporic cinema(s), where the pluralising forms of filmmaking practices point towards an increasing need to discuss these productions in a more complex, intersectional and transnational frame, with all the necessary cautions I have tentatively highlighted in this short essay.

5   Conclusions

Thanks to the work of some scholars who have begun looking at the dynamics of identity construction among Tibetans in exile, we have come a long way in understanding the issues that affect the lives of exiles and refugees from Tibet. Jessica Falcone and Tashi Wangchuk, among others, have addressed the "preoccupation of the exile community with the preservation of tradition", which often "has resulted in a degree of 'enclavement,' or 'emplacement' from Indian society that has come with its own set of costs

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25   In this regard, I have found the diagrams sketched by Keila Diehl (2002, 27) to discuss "Dharamsala's soundscape" remarkably useful. Thus, I refer to her publication for further elucidations.

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and benefits" (2008, 164). Despite all the efforts put forward by the Tibetan Government in Exile and the older generation of Tibetans "to hold on tightly to certain formulations of Tibetanness" (164), Falcone and Wangchuk conclude that there is an increasingly sense of "fluidity of citizenship, home, native and stranger through the experience of the displaced Tibetan community of India" (164). As Serin Houston and Richard Wright (2010) have also asserted, there is a dearth of individual voices emerging from the Tibetan diaspora that "shows how Tibetan diasporic identities are contested, complex and embedded in not one but multiple narratives of struggle" (217). Notions like 'tradition', 'ethnicity', and 'nation', as we know, are constantly shifting and Tibetans in exile continuously negotiate and re-adjust their sense of identity and belonging, perhaps learning to feel more at home in the world, as exilic subjects are expected to do. The film that I have briefly taken into exam has shown this effort at redefining cultural affinities and the way Bollywood cinema offer a template to narrate exiled Tibet and Tibetan youths' psychological and emotional journeys.

   In the last fifteen years, the medium of cinema and the filmmaking practices by Tibetans in exile have grown at a steady and exponential rate, with many films being showcased in international film festivals, museums and other art and education venues. More and more Tibet-related film festivals are being organised around the world, and the success of Dharamsala International Film Festival (DIFF, directed by Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin) also points at another important development in the nurturing of cinema culture among Tibetans in exile. Cinema is seen by Tibetans as a global medium capable of crossing linguistic and geopolitical boundaries and hence a suitable channel that can be employed not just as a tool of advocacy or cultural preservation, but as a site of experimentation and a way to address issues that affect humanity at large. From documentaries on Miss Tibet in India to short videos on the first Tibetan transgender Mariko, from Bollywood-styled love stories to narrations of Tibetan social and economic disenfranchisement in Paris, there is a mushrooming of films by young Tibetan exiles which showcase a growing interest in the use of cinema and its potentialities to transmit a less stereotyped, polyphonic, even cacophonic, voice of Tibet(s). With Ritu and Tenzing presently working at the post-production of their second feature film (working title: *The Sweet Requiem*), Pema Dondhup striving to produce a plethora of new projects (from the story of *Gesar* to the *Search* for the next Dalai Lama) and with many other young – and less young – filmmakers busy at making their own films, we are left looking forward to a growing of this cinemascape, beyond B/Hollywood aesthetic frames and Tibet-related politics and religion. New Tibetan filmmakers, while still making films on the plight of Tibetan refugees or on the spiritual dimensions of Tibetan culture, increasingly look at love and betrayal, sexuality and gender, life in the fortress of Europe and other global – or simply human – themes that do not contradict

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the rising of a distinctive Tibetan cinema but rather contribute to the making of it as another instance of the complicated transnational, diasporic, accented ones. Tibetan diasporic filmmaking practices, multi-vocal and multi-perspectival, engage the spectator in the multi-layered and ever-complex dimension of being a diasporic subject caught in the interstices of globalised modes of living and shifting wor(l)ds.

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How Subjective Is the Subject?
A Fresh Look at Grammatical Relations
in Mandarin Chinese

Anna Morbiato
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract   This article re-examines the issue of grammatical relations in Mandarin Chinese in light of the results of recent large-scale typological research on grammatical relations (henceforth GRs) worldwide. Specifically, it discusses three syntactic operations and constructions that are cross-linguistically relevant to the definition of grammatical relations, namely relativisation, reflexivisation, and quantifier float. The study adopts a strictly language-internal typological approach and avails itself of natural linguistic data or sentences sanity-checked by native speakers. The aim of this paper is twofold: first, it explores the hypothesis that, in line with various other languages, GRs in Mandarin Chinese are construction-specific. Second, it proposes an alternative approach capable of explaining the conflicting evidence often pointed out in the literature on GRs and subjecthood in Mandarin Chinese.

Summary   1 Introduction. –2 Methodology and Theoretical Framework. –3 Mandarin Chinese: the Terms of the Debate. – 4 Grammatical Relations in Mandarin Chinese. – 4.1 Relativisation Site. – 4.2 Reflexivisation. – 4.3 Floating and Quantifier Float. – 5 Conclusions.

Keywords   Grammatical relations. Mandarin Chinese. Argument selectors. Reflexivisation. Quantifier float.

1 Introduction

Grammatical notions like those of subject and object are among the most basic concepts of many models of grammar: as Witzlack-Makarevich and Bickel (2013, 1) note, they are, either explicitly or implicitly, often regarded as universal, and belong to the fundamental concepts in descriptions of most languages. Mandarin Chinese is no exception: in the literature, it is often described in terms of subject and object, which seem to effectively account for a number of patterns and constructions and enable Mandarin Chinese to be comparatively investigated with respect to other languages. However, on closer examination, these notions have notoriously proven to

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display descriptional inconsistencies, which have been frequently high-lighted and debated in the literature. As a result, it has been argued that the notion of subject plays a less significant role in Mandarin Chinese grammar compared, for example, to that of topic (Chao 1968; Li, Thompson 1976; Tsao 1979, 1990 and subsequent literature).

On the other hand, research on non-Indo-European languages has shown that not all languages share the same grammatical notions, as they may employ different strategies in meaning encoding. Subjects in different languages have been shown to display different morphological and syntactic properties (cf. Keenan 1976). Moreover, over the past three decades the range of syntactic properties that identify GRs in particular languages has greatly expanded. Extensive typological databases and refined statistical methods and tools have allowed large-scale, cross-linguistic research on grammatical relations (henceforth GRs), their typological distributions, and their properties (with a particular focus on subject properties). As a result, the universality of subject as a cross-linguistic feature of languages has been questioned, and some scholars hold the view that "GRs hold in constructions and not in languages" (Bickel 2011, 399).

With respect to Mandarin Chinese, despite the significant amount of literature on the notion of subject (especially in comparison to that of topic), the nature of GRs remains rather unclear. Specifically, little attention has been paid to the methodological and theoretical motivations underlying the apparent conflicting evidence displayed by subjecthood tests. No complete systematic analysis of GR-sensitive constructions has been carried out for Mandarin Chinese in light of the latest typological cross-linguistic research on GRs. Moreover, much uncertainty still exists about the relation between the grammatical notion of subject and the semantic notion of agent (or the most prominent argument in the verb's argument structure), and to my knowledge, no viable definition of subject has been provided so far that does not hinge on theory-internal assumptions.

The present study re-examines the long-debated issue of grammatical relations and subjecthood in Mandarin Chinese in light of recent typological research on grammatical relations. Specifically, it explores the hypothesis that, just as in several other languages, GRs could be construction-specific. The methodology of this study was adopted from the project on GRs outlined by Bickel (2011) and Witzlack-Makarevich and Bickel (2013) and involves a systematic investigation of a range of GR-sensitive constructions (or argument selectors), which will be presented in section 2. Because of space constraints, this paper presents and discusses three such constructions, namely relativisation, reflexivisation, and quantifier float, which display interesting differences with respect to the restrictions of the arguments (and non-arguments) they select. As

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will be demonstrated throughout the discussion, this approach also sheds light on the motivations underlying the conflicting evidence often pointed out in the literature on GRs and subjecthood in Mandarin Chinese.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the methodological framework for the present investigation, along with the constructions/argument selectors that are cross-linguistically sensitive to GRs. Section 3 briefly presents some of the issues and terms of the debate on subjecthood and grammatical relations in Mandarin Chinese (MC) and explains them in light of the approach adopted in the present study. Section 4 and its subsections are devoted to discussing relativisation, reflexivisation, and quantifier floating as potential GR-sensitive constructions in Mandarin Chinese. Section 5 summarises the conclusions.

2 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The term grammatical (or syntactic) relations captures how the arguments of a predicative element, usually a verb, are integrated and mapped into the syntactic structure of the sentence, either as subjects or (direct/indirect) objects. Until the 1970s, overt formal criteria, mainly morphosyntactic markers, were employed as unequivocal tests to detect subjects and GRs. These include:

i.   Indexation/agreement (e.g. Italian, and Spanish);
ii.   Flagging/case (e.g. Latin, Russian, and German);
iii. Verb cross-reference (e.g. Enga, Trans-New Guinea, and Papua New Guinea);
iv.   Fixed position or relative order in the sentence (e.g. fairly rigid SVO order in English).

However, research on non-Indo-European languages in the 1970s provided compelling evidence against the universal viability of overt morphological criteria to identify grammatical relations, such as in languages exhibiting ergative alignment like Dyirbal (Dixon 1972) or Chukchi (Comrie 1978) and in Philippine-type languages (Schachter 1976). As a result, the inventory of GR tests was extended beyond morphological marking and word order, and comprised an array of 'covert subjecthood tests', also 'called subject-object asymmetry tests', namely syntactic processes and behavioural properties (cf. Keenan 1976) that can detect GRs in a language. These include (but are not limited to):

1. Relativisation
2. Reflexivisation
3. Passivisation
4. Topic extraction
5. Equi-NP deletion

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6. Floating
7. Finiteness
8. Control
9. Raising

The basic assumption underlying this approach is that subjecthood can be seen as a prototypical notion (Rosch 1983): subjects in various languages display a greater or smaller set of subject properties, resulting in more or less prototypical subjects (Keenan 1976). However, in some languages different constructions and tests provided conflicting evidence: in Nepalese, for example, agreement and case are triggered by different nominals (Bickel 2011, 400). In such cases, the common approach was to pick out one or a small set of particular construction(s) that provided evidence for identifying GRs similar to those in Indo-European languages. However, this approach was criticised as suffering from 'methodological opportunism', employing

> language-specific criteria when the general criteria do not exist in the language, or when the general criteria give the 'wrong' results according to one's theory. (Croft 2001, 30)

The alternative adopted by a number of typologists (Foley, Van Valin 1984; Comrie 1978; Moravcsik 1978; Van Valin 1981, 2005; Croft 2001; Bickel 2011, among others) involves treating GRs as construction-specific, looking at all the behavioural and formal properties of GRs in a language

> without prioritising among them" in that they "do not necessarily identify a single set of grammatical relations [but]…[i]nstead, every single construction can, in principle, establish a different grammatical relation. (Witzlack-Makarevich, Bickel 2013, 2)

The notion of GR is then reconceptualised as

> the syntactic relation that an argument bears to a specific construction or rule rather than to the clause in which the argument is realised. (Bickel 2011, 401)

In light of the excursus provided so far, the present work re-examines the issue of grammatical relations and subjecthood in Mandarin Chinese, and does so by adopting the typological, construction-centred approach developed by Witzlack-Makarevich and Bickel (2013) to explore language-specific grammatical relations cross-linguistically. This framework aims at providing a toolkit for comparing GRs across constructions in a single language as well as across languages. According to this approach, GR-sensitive constructions are defined also as 'argument selectors':

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> argument selectors refer to any morphosyntactic structure, process, rule, constraint or construction that selects a subset of arguments (and possibly non-arguments) and treats them differently from other arguments (or non-arguments) of the clause. (Witzlack-Makarevich, Bickel 2013)

In order to qualify as an argument selector in a language, a particular morphosyntactic structure, process, or rule must display a specific constraint as to which arguments it applies to. In other words, they need to single out restricted neutralisations among arguments (and adjuncts in some cases), identifying NPs

> to which a particular grammatical process is sensitive, either as controller or target [controlled NP]. (Foley, Van Valin 1985, 305)

This paper presents part of the findings of the research I conducted on GR selectors in Mandarin Chinese. For space limitations, it will discuss only three of the above listed constructions/argument selectors: relativisation, reflexivisation, and quantifier float. The choice of these three selectors is motivated by the fact that the selection of arguments/non arguments, they are sensitive to, is based on completely different factors (semantic, discourse-related or none of the above). The analysis avails itself of either natural language data or sentences that have been cross-validated with native speakers. For this purpose, novel examples are mostly drawn from corpora of natural linguistic data (mainly the PKU corpus[1]), or from other blogs or literature websites (URLs are provided for reference). Moreover, test-specific sentences, including those provided as evidence in the literature, have been submitted to a group of 37 native speakers all born in mainland China (with a sufficiently varied geographical distribution between Northern and Southern regions), educated to BA degree level or above, and 86.4% aged between 19 and 30 years. When discussing the feedback provided by native speakers, only statistically relevant data are reported, accounting for the fact that judgements may greatly vary among speakers, as sentences are mostly submitted without providing relevant context. In fact, context plays an essential role in the event participants' disambiguation processes; thus, variations in acceptability judgement by different speakers are very common. According to the feedback provided by the group, ambiguity (or the lack thereof) in the interpretation of roles (who does what to whom) is one of the main criteria affecting acceptability judgements. As Fan and Kuno (2013, 220-4) observe, given the same sentence:

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[1] The PKU Corpus is a corpus of Modern and Classical Chinese hosted by the Center for Chinese Linguistics, Peking University (`http://ccl.pku.edu.cn`).

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[e]ven the same speaker might judge it sometimes acceptable, and other times marginal or awkward. This must be due to the differences among speakers in their ability to place the sentence in contexts […], and to the differences in imagined contexts the same individual speaker places the sentence when they make acceptability judgements.

These aspects are taken into consideration when discussing the feedback provided by the group of native speakers.

3 Mandarin Chinese: the Terms of the Debate

The issue of grammatical relations and especially the notion of subject in Mandarin Chinese has received considerable critical attention since the 1950s. Grammatical notions, such as that of subject, have notoriously been the centre of a heated debate as Mandarin Chinese does not display subject- (or object-) specific morpho-syntactic encoding, such as indexation/agreement or flagging/case.

A considerable number of scholars have devoted attention to the issue of defining and identifying subjects in Mandarin Chinese. For reasons of space, this paper will not attempt to do justice to the wealth of literature on this topic.[2] However, broadly speaking, three positions are found in the literature:
– Mandarin Chinese does have a subject, but its role is less prominent than that of discourse notions, like topic (Li, Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1979, 1990, among others);
– Mandarin Chinese does not have categories, such as subject or object (LaPolla 1990, 1993, among others), or it does have subjects, but the actual meaning of subject is topic (Chao 1968);
– Mandarin Chinese does have a subject, which is structurally important in every sentence (Li 1990; Huang, Li 1996; Her 1991; Tai 1997, among others).

However, the cross-linguistic research on GRs outlined in the previous section helps to clarify the motivations for the different positions held by linguists on GRs in Mandarin Chinese. Clearly, the difficulty with Mandarin Chinese has been the lack of those unequivocal, overt markers that identified GRs in Indo-European languages. Moreover, the different positions and analyses can be largely traced back to two major criteria that

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2 See Abbiati 1990 for a thorough review of the debate and comparison between different accounts.

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have been used to define subjecthood:[3] the positional criterion and the sematic criterion. (i) The positional criterion – the overt subjecthood test (see § 2, iv) – identifies the subject with a specific position in the sentence, namely the sentence-initial/preverbal slot (Chao 1968; Zhang 1952; Zhu 1982). (ii) The semantic criterion defines subject in terms of a privileged semantic relation between a NP and the main verb (Lu, Zhu [1951] 1979; Wang 1956, Li, Thompson 1981; Tang 1989): the subject is roughly the noun phrase that

> has a 'doing' or 'being' relationship with the verb in that sentence. 1981, 87)[4]

In other words, the former criterion identifies the grammatical subject with the first NP (or the preverbal argument) in the sentence, the latter criterion identifies the subject with the semantic notion of agent, or with the most prominent argument in the verb's argument structure.

However, as pointed out in the literature, both criteria evidently fail to account for all word order patterns and constructions. We will briefly summarise the reasons below:

(i) The positional criterion does not account for the fact that the first position in the sentence in Mandarin Chinese (as in many other languages) is also connected with information structure aspects, such as topichood, givenness, and frame-setting (in the sense of Chafe 1976). Moreover, as a syntactic notion, the syntactic (grammatical) subject needs to be distinguished from the first NP in a sentence ('topic'/'theme'/'psychological subject') because the latter does not necessarily bear a selectional relationship with the verb and is more related to information structure and discourse progression. Both issues have extensively been discussed in the literature (Abbiati 1990); thus, we will only briefly consider examples highlighting issues related to positional definitions of subject, as the NP that occurs either in the sentence-initial position or in the preverbal position. Consider

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3 In some theoretical frameworks, the notions of subject and object are considered as basic/primitive or derived from structural configurations. For example, Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) regards GRs as syntactic primitives belonging to the F-Structure. Within Government and Binding (GB) and related theories, the subject is structurally defined as a specific node in the formal representation of the sentence (e.g. SpecIP) and is thus (unlike objects) an external argument of the verb (in the minimalist framework subjects are connected with a set of interpretable EPP- [Extended Projection Principle] or phi-features). The approach adopted in the present study and in the project outlined by Witzlack-Makarevich and Bickel (2013), on the other hand, seeks to investigate GRs as language – internal rather than theory – internal, primitive or derived notions.

4 Li and Thompson (1981, 15) further specify that "the subject must always have a direct semantic relationship with the verb as the one what performs the action or exists in the state named by the verb".

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the following sentences from Abbiati 1990:[5]

1   曹禺₁（啊），   我   认识   （他₁ / 这个人₁）。
    <u>Cáoyú</u> (a)   wǒ   rènshi   (tā/ zhè ge rén)
    Caoyu TM [4]   1SG   know   3SG/this CL person
    'Caoyu, I know him.'

2   去年，   我   买了   新车。
    <u>qùnián</u>   wǒ   mǎi le   xīn chē
    last year   1SG   buy PFV   new car
    'Last year I bought a new car.'

3   曹禺   记性   非常好。
    <u>Cáoyú</u>   jìxìng   fēicháng hǎo
    Caoyu   memory   very good
    'Caoyu has a very good memory.' (Lit. 'Caoyu, [his] memory is very good.')

In (1), the first NP is coreferential with the patient (and possibly the object) of the verb *rènshi* 'know' (whereas the potential subject would be *wǒ* 'I', like in the English counterpart). In (2), it is a temporal expression and not an argument of the verb *mǎi* 'buy.' In (3), a so-called 'double-subject' construction, it is not a verbal argument either and only bears a relevance relation with the immediately preverbal NP *jìxìng* 'memory': in this sense, the NP functions as a *frame-setter* in the sense used by Chafe (1976), namely the topic specifies the frame of validity of the following predication. In none of the above sentences does the first NP qualify as a potential subject in that it is not even an argument of the verb.

A further tentative hypothesis involves defining the subject as the argument that occurs preverbally with transitive verbs.[6] However, this definition is challenged by statistical data on most frequent sentence patterns and preferred argument structure (PAS) in Mandarin Chinese. Statistical

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5 In the present article, the Leipzig glossing rules are adopted (available at `https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf`); other/different abbreviations include: BEI – 被 marker; DE – 的 modification marker; EXP – 过 experiential aspect marker.

6 A similar hypothesis is clearly not possible for intransitives, as many unaccusative verbs of existence, (dis)appearance, as well as several motion verbs allow their sole argument to occur either pre-verbally or post-verbally, depending on information status considerations. Li and Thompson's (1981, 20) well known example illustrated this pattern: 来了人了 [arrive PFV person MOD] "Some person(s) has/have arrived" (Li, Thompson 1981, 20), where the sole argument of the verb occurs post-verbally in that it is indefinite, cognitively new/inactive, focal information. Cf. Basciano (2010) for a detailed discussion on unaccusative verbs and inversions in Mandarin Chinese.

research conducted by Tao and Thompson[7] (1994) on conversations and by Lin (2009) on narratives and written texts show that most sentences in MC display only one overt argument, regardless of the valency of the verb, which can be either intransitive or transitive. As a consequence, most transitive sentences display a structure like [XP V], where the XP can be either of the arguments of a transitive verb (Tao 1996). Thus, problems arise, for example, with sentences displaying a transitive verb requiring agentive, volitional actors, and a single + animate, +volitional noun occurring preverbally, which is semantically compatible with the verb. This is a well-known example by Chao (1968):

4	鸡	不吃了。
	jī	bú chī le
	chicken	NEG eat MOD
i	'I/you…they don't eat chicken anymore.'	
ii	'The chickens are not eating anymore.'	

(4) displays a NP-V pattern, with *jī* 'chicken' being the only preverbal NP. However, the position of the NP does not mark its semantic or syntactic role in the sentence (agent/subject vs. patient/object). Two interpretations are possible depending on the context: in (i) *jī* 'chicken' is the patient of the verb *chī* 'eat' (and possibly, the object of the sentence), while in (ii) it is the agent (and thus a possible subject). Similar considerations hold for the following example:

5	这次探访,	该见的人	没见着。	(He, to appear)
	zhè cì tànfǎng	gāi jiàn de rén	méi jiàn zhao	
	this CL visit	should see DE person	NEG see.succeed	
	'As for this visit, (I/we/…) did not meet the person (I/we/…) was/were supposed to meet.'			

The preverbal NP *gāi jiàn de rén* 'the person (somebody) had to meet' can be either of the arguments of the transitive verb *jiàn* 'see, meet,' i.e. the 'seer' or the 'seen'. In the first case, 'the person who was supposed to meet (X) did not meet him/her', in the second case, 'X did not meet the person he/she was supposed to meet'. Crucially, it is only by virtue of world

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7 In Tao and Thompson's (1994) statistical analysis of naturally occurring conversation, 61% of transitive clauses contained only one overt argument, while only 19% of transitive clauses had two overt arguments. Moreover, "while transitives tend to reduce the number of arguments that are fully specified, the majority of non-transitives sustain the lexical coding of the one argument associated with them" (19).

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knowledge and contextual cues that native speakers disambiguate it as the second argument in that this sentence is more likely to be uttered by the one who failed to meet the person in question.

(ii) The semantic criterion, on the other hand, is clearly related to the notion of agenthood or semantic prominence since it defines the subject in MC as the noun phrase that has a 'doing' or 'being' relationship with the verb in the sentence: in short, the subject is the most prominent or agent – like argument in the verb's argument structure. This bears similarities with the notions of generalised roles, namely macro-roles – i.e. actor and undergoer (Foley, Van Valin 1984; Van Valin, LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005) and proto-roles – i.e. proto – agent and proto – patient (Dowty 1991; Primus 1999). However, the 'grammatical subject' by definition needs to be distinguished from the 'logical subject' or the generalised role of actor/proto – agent:

> What is crucial about the traditional notion of GRs is (a) that they are identified by syntactic properties, and (b) that they relate an argument to the clause; [more specifically, they capture] how this argument is integrated syntactically into a clause. (Bickel 2011, 399)

Semantic roles and syntactic relations are separate notions; this captures the fact that, cross-linguistically, several semantic roles (including patients) can occur in the subject position, just like in passive diathesis, when patients (undergoers) are promoted to subjects and agents (actors) are demoted to obliques. If the subject were always to coincide with the agent/actor/most-prominent verbal argument, there is no need to postulate another purely syntactic (and non-semantic) category. To sum up, if subjects had to be defined with either criteria (positional or semantic), we would need to rule out the existence of a 'grammatical subject' and only use notions, such as 'psychological subject' (topic) or 'logical subject' (agent/most prominent argument).

Again, the terms of the debate revolved around criteria which evidently failed in that, due to the typological characteristics of the language, overt tests do not apply to Mandarin Chinese. However, a look at covert, behavioural properties of GRs provides different insights. Scholars like LaPolla (1990, 1993) and Bisang (2006) conducted research on this; however, they came to different conclusions.

LaPolla (1990, 1993) examines an array of tests, including cross-clause coreference, relativisation reflexivisation, indispensability, comparatives, clefting, raising, and reflexives. He concludes that no viable notion of subject or object exists in Mandarin Chinese. Bisang (2006) also examines a range of tests, concluding, however, that there are subject-object asymmetries (although with some reservations) in the following constructions: raising, reflexives, passives, and topic extraction (2006, 334). He observes

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that Chinese displays "low-profile syntax with lack of subject/object asymmetry in some constructions" (2006, 331). Nonetheless, he argues that such constructions constitute enough evidence to postulate the existence of a grammatical notion of subject in Mandarin Chinese.

However, some of the arguments provided both by LaPolla (1990, 1993) and Bisang (2006) appear to be not clear-cut enough and need re-examination, as highlighted by the fact that they provide conflicting evidence with respect to the same tests. Moreover, the approach they adopt is similar to the one discussed in the section above, and involves picking out a set of particular constructions that confirm (or deny) the existence of a grammatical category similar to those of Indo-European languages.

The present analysis will not discuss further the terms of the above debate. Instead, it seeks to investigate grammatical relations with a fresh look, in light of recent large-scale, cross-linguistic typological research (Bickel 2011; Witzlack-Makarevich, Bickel 2013) with the aim of establishing if and to what extent grammatical relations are necessary in the description of the sentence in Mandarin Chinese.

4 Grammatical Relations in Mandarin Chinese

In what follows, three of the above listed GR-sensitive constructions will be discussed, namely relativisation site (§ 4.1), reflexivisation (§ 4.2), and quantifier float (§ 4.3).

4.1 Relativisation Site

One type of process that varies strongly in terms of GR specifications across languages is relativisation. This process turns a propositional expression into a referential one, and the referent is chosen among the arguments and adjuncts of the clause (Bickel 2011, 428). According to Keenan and Comrie (1977), there exists a hierarchy of accessibility to relativisation in terms of grammatical categories, namely: SUbject>Direct Object>Indirect Object>OBLique>GENitive>Object COMPplement. Constraints on relativisation displayed by different NPs in a sentence are significant with respect to GR individuation: if a language allows only a single argument in a clause to be relativised upon, that argument is the subject of the clause, as in Malagasy (Keenan 1976, 320).

In Mandarin Chinese, the following examples show that it is possible to relativise not only on the agent, but also on the patient NP (6), on a goal/benefactive NP (7), on locative NPs (8), (9.a), and possibly on a 'reason adjunct' NP (9.b) (Cheng, Sybesma 2006, 70). Please also note that both pre-verbal and post-verbal NPs can be relativised upon:

6 饿了   就拿   母亲   留给他的   钱 (…)
   è le   jiù ná   [REL mǔqīn   liú gěi tā de] qián
   hungry PFV   then take   mother leave   give 3SG DE   money
   'When he got hungry, he took the money his parents gave him…'
   Source: PKU corpus

7 就是   你   给   钱的   那两个男公关。
   jiù shì   [REL nǐ   gěi   qián de]   nà liǎng ge nán gōngguān
   just be   2SG   give   money DE   that two CL male pr
   'It is the two 'PR men' (whom) you gave money to.'
   Source: novel "妙手狂医" www.shumilou.co/miaoshoukuangyi/3945440.html
   (2018-02-02)

8 很想了解   他学习的   学校、   他学习的   班级、(…)
   hěn xiǎng liǎojiě   [REL tā xuéxí de]   xuéxiào   [REL tā xuéxí de]   bānjí
   very desire know   3SG study DE   school   3SG study DE   class
   'I really want to know the school in which he studies, the class he's in (…)'
   Source: short story "家长开放日活动感言"
   http://u.sanwen.net/subject/1012047.html (2018-02-02)

9 a   他   修车的   车库 (…)
       [REL tā   xiū chē de]   chēkù
           3SG   fix car DE   garage
       'The garage where he fixes his car'
   b   他   修车的   原因 (…)
       [REL tā   xiū chē de]   yuányīn
           3SG   fix car DE   reason
       'The reason why he fixed his car'   (Cheng, Sybesma 2006, 70)

Bisang claims that MC relative clause constructions "only depend on argumenthood without the mediation of subject and object" (2006, 333); in other words, both agent and patient can control coreference of the zero slot with the head noun and no subject-object asymmetry can be identified. However, the above examples show that relativisation is not restricted to argumenthood, as the relativised NPs in (8) and (9.a-b) are adjuncts and not core arguments. Further evidence comes from what Cheng and Sybesma (2006, 69) refer to as "gapless relatives": in (10.a) and (10.b) the head nouns do not seem to relate to any available gap position (i.e. they correspond to no verbal argument or adjunct) in the relative clause:

10	a		他	唱歌的		声音
		[REL	tā	chàng gē de]		shēngyīn
			3SG	sing song DE		voice
		'The voice (that he has while) singing'				
	b		他	睡觉的		姿势
		[REL	tā	shuì jiào de]		zīshì
			3SG	sleep sleep DE		posture
		'The posture (that he has while) sleeping'				(Cheng, Sybesma 2006, 69)

Both verbs *chàng gē* (sing-song) and *shuì jiào* (sleep-sleep) are transitive activity V-N predicates, where the noun (as generic and non-referential) is usually analysed as the dummy patient/object of the verb; such verbs display no other gaps in the argument structure.[8] In their study on Chinese relative clauses, Cheng and Sybesma (2006) concluded that relatives of this kind are gapless and display a

combination of having a generalised λ-abstraction operator (de) and an event variable. (75)

Moreover, they claim that the head noun is

base-generated external to the relative clause and that there is no empty operator movement within the relative. (75)

It should be noted that similar considerations hold for intransitive verbs as well, where no gaps are available with respect to the argument structure:

11	…在平原上	响起了		马跑的	声音, …
	zài píngyuán shàng	xiǎng qǐ le	[REL	mǎ pǎo de]	shēngyīn
	be/at valley on	sound raise PFV		horse run DE	sound
	'…on the valley resounded the noise of a horse (running) …'				
	Source: PKU corpus				

In (11), the only available argument of the intransitive motion verb *pǎo* 'run' is realised by the noun *mǎ* 'horse'; thus, the head noun of the relative clause (*shēngyīn* 'voice') is not an argument of the verb *pǎo* 'run.'

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8 The semantic relation between the relative clause and the NP is nevertheless very intuitive; similar semantic relations hold in English between the present participles modifying nouns in NPs like: 'his singing voice' or 'his sleeping posture.'

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To sum up, all examples above show that relativisation processes in Mandarin Chinese are independent of the argument structure of the verb in the relative clause; thus, relativisation is not an argument selector process, nor is it restricted to argumenthood (as adjuncts can also be relativised upon). Hence, it shows no evidence of the existence of specific grammatical relations.

4.2 Reflexivisation

Reflexivisation processes are generally connected to subjecthood since grammatical subjects have been shown in many languages to control reflexives in terms of reference as for example in Hindi (Mohanan 1994), Malayam (Mohanan 1982), Urdu (Butt 1995), Malagasy, German, and Japanese (Keenan 1976, among others).

Mandarin Chinese reflexives also appear to be controlled by a potential subject, which is a claim made by several scholars including Li (1990), Tang (1989), Huang C.-T. (1991), Tai (1997), Bisang (2006), and others. This seems to be the case in this example from Huang Y. (1994, 77):

12 小名₁ 给 小花₂ 自己₁的 画。
Xiǎomíng gěi Xiǎohuā zìjǐ de huà
Xiaoming give Xiaohua REFL DE painting
'Xiaoming₁ gave Xiaohua₂ his₁ painting.'

According to Huang Y. (1994), in (12) the only possible antecedent of *zìjǐ* is Xiaoming, who is the agent (and potentially the subject) of the sentence. This is confirmed by native speakers' intuition (fewer than 5% said that the antecedent could be both Xiaoming and Xiaohua).

However, on closer examination, reflexivisation in Mandarin Chinese appears to display some peculiarities. First, unlike English or Italian, it is sensitive to semantic constraints like animacy as (13) and (14) show:

13 * 热水瓶 打破了 自己。
 * rèshuǐpíng dǎpò le zìjǐ
 flask break PFV REFL
 'The flask broke itself.'

14 那种按摩₁ 让他₂ 恢复了 自己₂的 精神。
 nà zhǒng ànmó ràng tā huīfù le zìjǐ de jīngshén
 that CL massage let 1SG recover PFV REFL DE energy
 'That massage₁ let him₂ get his₂ energy back.'

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Sentence (13) from Huang Y. (1994, 77) is ungrammatical as the intended antecedent is an inanimate noun, and this was confirmed by 100% of native speakers. Sentence (14) displays two possible antecedents: the first NP *ànmó* 'massage', which is the first argument of the verb *ràng* 'make, let', and *tā* 'he', the first argument of the verb *huīfù*, 'recover.' However, the first NP is inanimate (and logically not related to *zìjǐ*), and thus the second NP (*tā*) is the only possible antecedent of the reflexive.

Sensitivity to semantic features does not stop with animacy as the following example by Huang Y. (1994, 183) shows:

15	a	王先生₁		希望	许小姐₂		嫁给	自己₁。
		Wáng xiānsheng		xīwàng	Xǔ xiǎojiě		jià gěi	zìjǐ
		Wang Mr		hope	Xu Miss		marry	REFL

'Mr Wang₁ hopes that Miss Xu₂ will marry him₁.'

	b	许小姐₁		希望	王先生₂		娶	自己₁。
		Xǔ xiǎojiě		xīwàng	Wáng xiānshēng		qǔ	zìjǐ
		Xu Miss₁		hope	Wang Mr₂		marry	REFL₁

'Miss Xu₁ hopes that Mr Wang₂ will marry her₁.'

Sentences in (15) are an example of the possibility *zìjǐ* exhibits of having a long-distance antecedent (Huang C.-T. 1991; Huang Y. 1994) that can be retrieved both locally (within the clause where *zìjǐ* occurs) and non-locally (in the matrix clause). Both (15.a) and (15.b) display two animate NPs (Mr Wang and Miss Xu). Note that (15.a-b) differ with respect to the verb in the embedded clause, but display no structural (syntactic) differences. Hence, the disambiguation of *zìjǐ* is, by virtue of the semantic features, required by the two different verbs in addition to conventional knowledge about marriage. The verb *jià* 'marry' requires a female agent and a male patient, while the verb *qǔ* 'marry' requires a male agent and a female patient. Accordingly, Mr Wang and Miss Xu are chosen as the preferred referent for (15.a) and (15.b) respectively.[9]

Moreover, Huang Y. (1994, 190) shows that *zìjǐ* is also flexible in terms of the relative order with respect to its referent: in (16) both nouns (*māmā* 'mum' and Xiaoming) are possible antecedents for *zìjǐ*, although Xiaoming occurs after the reflexive:

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9 Huang Y. provides an account of reflexive disambiguation in light of the Gricean principles of conversational implicature. Cf. Huang Y. (1994, 183) for further discussion.

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16	妈妈₁	表扬了	自己₁/₂	使	小明₂	很高兴。
	māma	biǎoyáng le	zìjǐ	shǐ	Xiǎomíng	hěn gāoxìng
	mum	praise PFV	REFL	make	Xiaoming	very happy

'That mum₁ praised him₂/herself₁ makes Xiaoming₂ very happy.'

This example was checked against native speakers' judgement: with no context provided, half of native speakers thought *zìjǐ* refers to *māmā* 'mum'; however, 41.7% interestingly thought that Xiaoming is a more likely antecedent since it is logically more likely that a son is happy if his mother praises him rather than herself. This rules out a control account of *zìjǐ* based on strict linear precedence as well as on c-command (cf. Huang Y. 1994 for further discussion on this point). Native speakers stressed the fact that context that allows disambiguation of *zìjǐ* is required, which suggests that context and pragmatic inference play crucial roles in *zìjǐ* disambiguation. This is further demonstrated in the following sentence pair:

17	a	陈先生1	认为	刘先生₂	太狂妄，	总是看不起	自己₁。
		Chén xiānsheng	rènwéi	Liú xiānsheng	tài kuángwàng	zǒng shì kànbùqǐ	zìjǐ
		Chen Mr.	think	Liu Mr.	too arrogant	always look.down.upon	REFL

'Mr. Chen₁ thinks that Mr. Liu₂ is too arrogant, and (he₂) always looks down upon him₁.'

	b	陈先生₁	认为	刘先生₂	太自卑，	总是看不起	自己₂。
		Chén xiānsheng	rènwéi	Liú xiānsheng	tài zìbēi	zǒng shì kànbùqǐ	zìjǐ
		Chen Mr.	think	Liu Mr.	too self.abased	always look.down.upon	REFL

'Mr. Chen₁ thinks that Mr. Liu₂ is too self-critical, and (he₂) always looks down upon himself₂.'

Sentences (17.a) and (17.b) provide evidence against the viability of a purely semantic or syntactic account of reflexivisation in Mandarin Chinese. The two sentences are identical except for the attributive verb describing Mr. Liu, namely *kuángwàng* 'arrogant' in (17.a) and *zìbēi* 'self-critical' in (17.b). The reflexive can potentially refer to the first argument of both predicates — Mr. Chen for *rènwéi* 'think' in both sentences, and Mr. Liu for *kuángwàng* 'arrogant' in (17.a), and for *zìbēi* 'self-critical' in (17.b). Crucially, only the contextual information provided by the first clause in each sentence, and not syntactic constraints (e.g. the locality constraint), can reveal the logically most likely choice for the antecedent of *zìjǐ*, which is Mr. Chen in (17.a) and Mr. Liu in (17.b).

To sum up, the examples above suggest that (i) semantic constraints (like animacy and other semantic features), role prominence in the argument structure, (ii) pragmatic/contextual factors, world knowledge, and inference processes, all play an important role in antecedent disambiguation, whereas precedence is not an absolute constraint. Nevertheless, a syntactic account in terms of subject control is not ruled out since, in all

the sentences above, the antecedent is still the most prominent argument (and possibly the subject) of one of the verbs in either the matrix or the embedded clauses. However, let us further consider the following examples from Xu (1994):

18	a	李先生₁的	阴谋	害了	自己₁。
		Lǐ xiānsheng de	yīnmóu	hài le	zìjǐ
		Li Mr. DE	conspiracy	harm PFV	REFL
		'Mr. Li₁'s conspiracy did harm to him₁.'			
	b	李先生₁的	傲慢	害了	自己₁。
		Lǐ xiānsheng de	àomàn	hài le	zìjǐ
		Li Mr. DE	arrogance	harm PFV	REFL
		'Mr. Li₁'s arrogance did harm to him₁.'			

In both sentences (18.a-b) the first verbal argument (and potential subject) is an inanimate external causer (i.e. *yīnmóu* 'conspiracy', and *àomàn* 'arrogance', respectively) modified by an animate noun (*Lǐ xiānsheng*, Mr. Li). The two sentences display a parallel structure: [NP(+animate) DE] NP (-animate) V REFL. However, in both cases, the antecedent of *zìjǐ* is not the head of each sentence-initial NP (*yīnmóu* 'conspiracy' in [18.a] and *àomàn* 'arrogance' in [18.b]), but the modifier of the head, i.e. *Lǐ xiānsheng* 'Mr. Li'. This interpretation is confirmed by 100% of surveyed native speakers.[10] Hence, the first verbal arguments of both sentences, which would also qualify as the syntactic subject, fail to be antecedents of *zìjǐ*.[11]

Let us consider two further examples: (19) is from Pan ([1997] 2013, 20) and (20) is from LaPolla (1993, 779):

19	无情的实事₁	告诉	张三₂	自己₁/₂的	计划	行不通。
	wúqíng de shíshì	gàosù	Zhāngsān	zìjǐ de	jìhuà	xíng bù tōng
	harsh DE fact	tell	Zhangsan	REFL DE	plan	carry NEG through
	'The harsh reality₁ tells Zhangsan₂ that his.₁/₂ plan won't work.'					

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10 In fact, 4% native speakers also pointed out that the antecedent of *zìjǐ* might as well be some other person, depending on the context. For example, it could be the speaker uttering the sentence with the following sense: 'Mr. Li's arrogance/conspiracy harmed me' (or him or someone else).

11 In trying to deal with this inconsistency, Xu (1994) advocates for what he defines as a semantic constraint to justify a syntactic dependency: according to him, Li is an agent or indirect agent in semantic terms (i.e., a person who plots a conspiracy) and thus is a possible antecedent. Although this explanation does not seem consistent with respect to a syntactic account of *zìjǐ*, it is significant since it reveals a meaning-driven disambiguation process that is sensitive to the structure of the described event and not to the syntactic structure of the sentence itself.

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20	有人₁	来警告	朱老板₂	说	自己₂的儿子	在偷东西。
	yǒu rén	lái jǐnggào	Zhū lǎobǎn	shuō	zìjǐ de érzǐ	zài tōu dōngxī
	exist person	come warn	Boss Zhu	say	REFL DE SON	PROG steal thing

'Someone came to warn Boss Zhu₁ that his₁ son was stealing things.'

In (19), the only possible antecedent of *zìjǐ* is *Zhangsan*, that is the second argument of the verb *gàosu* 'tell', in that its first argument (and the possible subject) is inanimate (*wúqíng de shíshì*, 'the harsh reality') and is also a logically impossible antecedent for *zìjǐ*. About 60% of native speakers thought this sentence was acceptable and comprehensible and 100% agreed that Zhangsan is the only possible antecedent for *zìjǐ*. This shows that semantic constraints, such as animacy, are ranked at the highest level of restrictions for *zìjǐ*. This also counts as evidence against subject control of reflexivisation in that Zhangsan would be the 'indirect object' (and not the subject) of the verb *gàosu* 'tell.' A further significant example is (20), where two animate NPs are available: according to LaPolla (1993, 779), the antecedent of *zìjǐ* 'self' is *Zhū lǎobǎn*, 'boss Zhu', which is neither a possible subject nor the agent/actor of any of the predicates in the complex sentence, but rather the second argument of the ditransitive verb *jǐnggào*, 'to warn.' Half of surveyed native speakers thought that the sentence is rather ambiguous when no other contextual cues are provided:[12] 2.2% thought that the antecedent of *zìjǐ* is *(yǒu) rén* 'someone', referring to the first (indefinite) NP, which is actually the agent of the predicate *lái jǐnggào* 'come to warn.' However, crucially, 21.6% interpreted it as being coreferential with *Zhū lǎobǎn* 'boss Zhu' and the remaining thought that both NPs were possible antecedents (although preferring the agent 'someone'). Again, it should be noted that *Zhū lǎobǎn* 'boss Zhu' would be the indirect object, and not the subject, of the verb *jǐnggào*, 'to warn.' According to some speakers, the first NP 'someone', although animate and agentive, is generic/not known/not recoverable and is perceived as a less plausible antecedent for *zìjǐ*, thus *zìjǐ* is interpreted as coreferential with Boss Zhu. This is another example of disambiguation through inference processes based on pragmatic considerations and shows that when no relevant contextual cues are provided, the ambiguity still holds in clauses with two animate NPs, regardless of their semantic/syntactic role in the sentence.

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12   When context is provided, however, it plays a crucial role in the disambiguation of *zìjǐ* in a sentence like (20). For example, in his Ph.D. thesis, LaPolla (1990, 48-9) better clarifies this example by providing two different contexts for this sentence. As a consequence, *zìjǐ* clearly receives different antecedent interpretations: "In the two examples, *ziji* refers to either Lao Wang [a] or Lao Zhang [b] because it is known from the respective preceding contexts whose son is doing the stealing" (LaPolla 1990, 48-9). Cf. LaPolla 1990 for discussion.

A further argument raised by linguists to prove a subject control of *zìjǐ* is that only the subject of a BEI sentence controls reflexivisation. According to Li (1990)

> the fact that the initial NP in the BEI construction can trigger reflexivisation shows that the initial NP is the subject of the BEI construction. (155)

However, counterexamples to this claim are provided by Pan ([1997] 2013, 84): in (21), *zìjǐ* can refer both to John and Bill (this is confirmed by surveyed native speakers). Similarly, example (22) by Huang C.-T. (1999, 7) also shows that *zìjǐ* is controlled by the NP occurring after BEI (Lisi), namely the only animate NP.

21   John$_1$ 被Bill$_2$ 敢进了   自己$_{1/2}$的   房间。

           John   *bèi Bill*   *gǎnjìn le*   *zìjǐ de*   fángjiān

           John   BEI Bill   banish-enter PFV   REFL DE   room

           'John$_1$ was banished by Bill$_2$ to his$_{1/2}$ room (either John's or Bill's room).'

22   那一封信$_1$ 被李四$_2$ 带回   自己$_{*1/2}$的家   去了。

           nà yì fēng xìn   bèi Lǐsì   dài huí   zìjǐ de jiā   qù le

           that one CL letter   BEI Lisi   bring-back   REFL DE home   go PFV

           'That letter$_1$ was brought back to self$_2$'s (Lisi's) home by Lisi$_2$.'

We can summarise what the above sentences show as follows:
1. An animacy constraint applies to all antecedents of *zìjǐ* (sentences 12 to 22). In addition, other meaning-related restrictions and contextual cues play a significant role in coreference disambiguation (sentences 14 to 22).
2. Most antecedents are the highest animate NP in the thematic hierarchy of one of the verbs in the sentence (both in the matrix and in embedded clauses, allowing for long-distance bound reflexives); however, *zìjǐ* can also refer to other (less agentive) verbal arguments such as goals/benefactives/affectees (sentences 19, 20, 21).
3. In some cases, such as when no animate NPs are available among core arguments, any animate participant logically interpreted as having a role in the event described can be a potential antecedent, regardless of its linguistic encoding. In sentences like (18.a-b), the antecedent of *zìjǐ* is the actual event participant performing the action of being arrogant or organising a conspiracy, although such a participant is linguistically encoded as an NP modifier and not as a core argument. Along the same lines, the antecedent of *zìjǐ* in (19) is also an active participant in the event described. In this specific case, a noun (i.e. *jìhuà* 'plan') instead of a verb suggests the role of

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the antecedent of *zìjǐ* (Zhangsan) in the event, i.e. the participant that actually made the plan ('his plan' = 'the plan he made').

If we were to make a generalisation, which holds for all the examined sentences, we might say that all antecedents of *zìjǐ* do refer to some animate participants that play a role in the described event. These participants are likely to be (although not necessarily) explicitly encoded as core arguments of the chosen verbs in the sentence, but may as well be covertly implicated in the meaning of the sentence.

Observation and analysis of the above sentences rule out a purely syntactic (subject-related) control theory of reflexives[13] as the controller NPs do not display restricted neutralisations of, nor are restricted to, verbal arguments. Rather, reflexivisation seems to be connected with the roles of participants in the event. Huang Y. (1994, 184) also concludes his chapter on reflexives claiming that a purely syntactic approach is not sufficient in specifying the domain or the set of possible antecedents for long-distance reflexives:

> it is pragmatics that is responsible for determining the actual, preferred antecedent where there is more than one structurally possible antecedent. (184)

We can conclude that reflexivisation does not prov ide straightforward evidence for a grammatical relation of 'subject'.

4.3 Floating and Quantifier Float

Another construction that displays considerable typological variation with respect to GRs is described as 'floating', which refers to the possibility offered by some languages for a referential operator (e.g. a quantifier, a numeral, or an indefinite marker) to be launched and permitted to leave the NP over which it has scope (Bickel 2011, 430). In the following example, the subject launches the quantifier *all*, occurring in (47.b) after the auxiliary:

23   a   All the children have seen this movie.
      b   The children have all seen this movie.

---

13 Amendments to the claim of a strict subject control of reflexives have been made by several linguists. For instance, Pan [1997] (2013, 21) holds that "non-subjects can be antecedents if there is a feature conflict between the subject and the reflexive, or if the predicate is one that implies non-coreference". Huang C-T.J. and Liu (2001, 6) also address "non-subjects which, in general, are not potential antecedents of *ziji*" but are in some cases controllers of reflexives.

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Floating is relevant for GR identification in that the actual scope is often regulated by a GR, since the floated operator can only take NPs in its scope that bear a certain GR. As Schachter (1977) notes,

> [t]erms of grammatical relations…are ranked in a hierarchy (SU>DO>IO), and 'structure-dependent' rules such as Quantifier Float can be restricted to apply to just part of the hierarchy. (286-7)

This property has been extensively studied in European languages: formal and typological research has found that it is cross-linguistically widespread and common, though not universal (Whaley 2001; Bobaljik 2003). Different languages vary in the syntactic positions that can host Q-float, for example, subjects, direct and indirect objects in French, subjects and direct objects in Japanese, and only subjects (and no objects) in English.[14]

Let us now turn to Mandarin Chinese. In the literature, there is some debate as to whether Quantifier Float is available or not. Jenks (2013) claims that the availability of Q-float is predictable in classifier languages depending on whether they display Quantifier-Noun order (e.g. Vietnamese, Chinese, Hmong-Mien, North and Central Tai) or Noun-Quantifier order (e.g. Khmer, Tibeto-Burman, South-western Tai). According to Jenks, Chinese languages, displaying a Quantifier-Noun order, lack Q-float, the closest equivalent being a quantifier adverb 都 *dōu* 'all', which, however, must occur before the verb unlike *all* in (23.b):

24	三个人	都	吃了	一锅苹果派。
	sān ge rén	dōu	chī le	yì guō píngguǒ pài
	three CL person	all	eat PFV	one CL apple pie
	'Three people each ate an apple pie.'			

However, in the literature, sentences displaying a sentence-initial topic like (25) have also been analysed as instances of floating quantifiers. In sentence (25), the two verbal arguments are in the preverbal position and the floated quantifier may scope over either argument, allowing for two different interpretations of the same sentence. 60% of surveyed native speakers confirmed this and agreed that (25) has two interpretations (most of them thought the two NPs are equally possible with a slight preference towards the first reading, where the main topic/second argument launches the quantifier):

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14 A floated quantifier in English cannot refer to the object, not even when the object is topical, such as for instance 'the movies' in a sentence like 'These movies, the children have all seen.'

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25		那边的食堂，		老师	都	去过。
		nàbiān de shítáng		lǎoshī	dōu	qù guo
		there DE cafeteria		teacher	all	go EXP
	i	'The cafeteria(s) over here, the teachers have all been to them.'				
	ii	'The cafeterias over there, the teacher(s) have been to all of them.'				

As confirmed by Cao (2008, 2), 都 *dōu* appears to scope backwards to NPs that express some sort of plurality, as it "quantifies over elements to its left that have subparts for its predicate".

On the other hand, 每 *měi* only scopes within the NP it modifies and displays no Q-float phenomenon, as the comparison between (26a-b) and (27.a-b) shows:

26	a	我们		都	喜欢	那些电影。
		wǒmen		dōu	*xǐhuān*	*nà xiē diànyǐng*
		1PL		all	like	that CL.PL film
		'We all liked those films.'				
	b	那些电影，		我们	都	喜欢。
		nà xiē diànyǐng		*wǒmen*	dōu	*xǐhuān*
		that CL.PL film		1PL	all	like
	i	'We all liked those films.'				
	ii	'We liked all those films.'				

27	a	我们	每一部电影	都	喜欢。
		wǒmen	měi yí bù diànyǐng	dōu	xǐhuān.
		1PL	every one CL film	all	like
		'We liked every film.'			
	b	每一部电影	我们	都	喜欢。
		měi yí bù diànyǐng	wǒmen	dōu	xǐhuān
		every one CL film	1PL	all	like
		'We liked every film.'			(Cao 2008, 10)

Native speakers confirmed that example (26.b), but not (27.b), can have two interpretations. Moreover, 35% believed that for (26.b) both interpretations (i) and (ii) are equally plausible, with a slight preference for the first over the second reading. Sentences (25-27) show that in Mandarin Chinese the scope of quantifiers like 都 *dōu* 'all' is not syntactically restricted (to the subject). Both arguments of the transitive verbs, the agent and goal-locative

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object for *qù* 'go' in (25), or experiencer and theme/stimulus[15] for *xǐhuān* 'like' in (26), are likely to be modified by *dōu* as long as they occur on its left.

Another instance of Q-float was observed in Mandarin Chinese (Wu 2010, 96) along the same lines as Japanese (Kobayashi, Yoshimoto 2001). In Mandarin Chinese, a numeral quantifier modifying a noun is always followed by a classifier (CL). The classifier indicates the semantic category the quantified nominal belongs to (or specifies the unit of measurement for a mass noun). Given that numeral quantifiers + classifiers can be used as noun modifiers when immediately placed before the NP they modify, as in (28.a), sentences like (28.b) have been regarded as instances of quantifier floating, since the numeral quantifiers are separated rightwards from the NP they modify.

28	a	小偷	偷走了	[那三本]	书。
		xiǎotōu	tōu zǒu le	nà sān běn	shū
		thief	steal-walk PFV	that three CL	book
		'The thief has stolen those three books.'			
	b	书，	小偷	偷走了	[那三本]。
		shū	xiǎotōu	tōu zǒu le	nà sān běn
		book	thief	steal-walk PFV	that three CL
		'Those books, the thief has stolen three of them.'			

The sentence-initial bare noun in (28.b) is the topic and sets the frame of validity for the following predication (Chafe 1976), bearing a partitive (type-token) relation with the post-verbal element (*nà sān běn* 'those three'). Again, crucially, the launcher is the second argument of the verb, and not the potential subject of the sentence. This reading has been confirmed by almost 100% of native speakers. The same 'whole-part' or 'type-token' interpretation also holds for Japanese (from Kobayashi, Yoshimoto 2001, 46):

29	a	John-ga	nizyuppezi-no	ronbun-wo	yonda.
		John-NOM	twenty pages-GEN	paper-ACC	read-PAST
		'John read a twenty page paper.'			
	b	John-ga	ronbun-wo	nizyuppezi	yonda.
		John-NOM	paper-ACC	twenty pages	read-PAST

15   As Levin (1993) notes, *like* and the other admire-verbs are transitive psych-verbs verbs with an experiencer as their first argument, whereas there are a variety of opinions as to the best characterisation of the 'semantic role' of their second argument: "the labels used include theme, target of emotion, stimulus, and subject matter". (192)

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The above examples show that quantifier floating is connected to positional (and not syntactic) criteria in that the first NPs in the sentence, regardless their semantic role (and thus syntactic function), can launch quantifiers. Thus, quantifier float is a reference-related process in the sense of Schachter (1977) or, in Bickel's (2011, 409) terms, it is related to referential properties of NP in that "the choice among arguments rests on referential properties alone". A similar phenomenon is observable in Tagalog, where the most topic-like nominal, marked by *ang=*, is the controller of several constructions, including conjunction reduction, relative constructions, and floated quantifiers.

5 Conclusions

This paper has examined three GR-sensitive constructions with respect to Mandarin Chinese. The first construction, relativisation, displays no restrictions as to what verbal arguments can be relativised upon. In addition, this process is not restricted to verbal arguments, and thus it fails to single out specific GRs. Reflexivisation is also not controlled by a potential grammatical subject; rather, it has shown to be a role-related process, sensitive to semantic constraints (like animacy and inherent semantic characteristics of the verb) and connected with the role of participants in the described event regardless of their linguistic encoding. Lastly, quantifier float also fails to detect a purely syntactic grammatical relations in that it is a reference-related process, controlled by whichever argument occurs as the topic of the sentence.

To sum up, none of the examined processes identifies a purely syntactic notion similar to that of subject; this confirms the construction-specific nature of GRs: the three constructions identify three types of control/behavioural properties:

1. Constructions that do not impose restrictions as to which argument/element is the controller/pivot (relativisation)
2. Constructions that display role-related restrictions (reflexivisation)
3. Constructions that display reference-related restrictions (Q-float)

Moreover, this paper has shown that the debate on the notions of subject in Mandarin Chinese is mainly connected to the assumptions and criteria employed to define them, namely an analysis based on overt subjecthood properties, such as the position in the sentence, fails to capture all argument realisation patterns in the language. Lastly, the status of GRs in Mandarin Chinese benefits from a systematic analysis of all GR-sensitive constructions along the lines of research conducted in other languages.

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The Influence of Tanizaki's Early Works on Edogawa Ranpo's Novels
A Comparison between *Konjiki no shi* and *Panoramatō kidan*

Luisa Bienati
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract   From his debut in 1923, Edogawa Ranpo (1894-1965) acknowledged the influence of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and often referred to his works. Tanizaki had published several short stories characterised by *tantei shumi* between 1911 and 1927, yet the link between the two authors lies not only in their choice of the narrative genre. Tanizaki was a great admirer of Edgar Allan Poe and translated many of his stories including "The Domain of Arnheim". Ranpo, too, was overtly inspired by Poe's stories "The Domain of Arnheim" and "Landor's Cottage", which can be seen in the plot and descriptions of *Panoramatō kidan*. The aim of my investigation is therefore to examine the path that leads us from Poe's "The Domain of Arnheim", to Tanizaki's *Konjiki no shi*, and from Poe and Tanizaki to Ranpo's *Panoramatō kidan*.

Summary   1 Literary Gardens. – 2 A Garden in the Sky. – 3 A Servant Devoted to Art.

Keywords   Edogawa Ranpo. Edgar Allan Poe. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. Literary gardens.

> No definition had spoken of the landscape-gardener as of the poet; yet it seems to my friend that the creation of the landscape-garden offered to the proper Muse the most magnificent of opportunities.
>
> (Edgar Allan Poe 1847)

1 Literary Gardens

This quotation from Edgar Allan Poe underscores the connection between nature and art, but a particular kind of art: the art of gardens. The sentence is from "The Domain of Arnheim" (1847), the famous short story that inspired both Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Edogawa Ranpo. Tanizaki translated this text into Japanese and reworked its ideas in the novel *Konjiki no shi* (The Golden Death, [1914] 1983). Ranpo was inspired by it when he wrote *Panoramatō kidan* (Strange Tale of Panorama Island, 1927). However, *Panoramatō kidan* would not have been conceived in this manner if

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inspired only by Poe's story, and *Konjiki no shi* (Tanizaki [1914] 1983) would have not served as a bridge between the two writers (Nagamori 2014, 311).

Critics often recognise the link between the two authors, and consider Tanizaki the 'father' of Ranpo. We know that Ranpo himself appreciated the fantastic, the imagination, and the plots of the novels by Tanizaki, and that Tanizaki in the decade between 1910 and 1920 was greatly interested in intricate storylines, detective novels etc.

In the essay "Nihon no hokoriuru tantei shōsetsu" (Japan's Proudable Detective Story, 1925), Ranpo affirms his love and admiration both for Poe and for Tanizaki: "Tanizaki has been compared to Oscar Wilde" he wrote, but in his opinion he should be compared to Poe. In the same passage he states that the first work by Tanizaki he read was *Konjiki no shi*. It was serialised in a newspaper and, reading it day by day, he realised that the novel was influenced by "The Domain of Arnheim" and "Landor's Cottage". Ranpo confesses that his admiration for Tanizaki began after reading this novel because he discovered that in Japan, too, there was a writer like Poe, and this made him "very happy" (Ranpo 1925).

Later in the same essay, Ranpo, listing many other short novels by Tanizaki, comments on the novel *Tojō* (Along the Road, 1920): it's "an epoch-making work in *tantei shōsetsu*", and "among Japanese detective novels, one of which we can be proud in front of the Westerners". The writer affirmed also that he "read Tanizaki's stories omitting none" (Silver 2008, 173). For these reasons, in "Nihon no hokoriuru tantei shōsetsu", Ranpo called Tanizaki the "Poe of Japan".

Beginning with these considerations, I would like to compare the very unusual novel by Tanizaki ([1914] 1983), *Konjiki no shi*, which is for some reason almost forgotten, and the most famous *Panoramatō kidan* by Ranpo (1927). Both are indebted to Edgar Allan Poe, but their differences override the most obvious similarities and challenge the link with Western literature, with originality and imitation, and with the cultural trends of the periods in which Tanizaki and Ranpo lived. First and foremost, Poe's and Tanizaki's novels are not crime stories.

Why Edgar Allan Poe? It's a rhetorical question, as we know that Ranpo saw himself as a 'double' of the American writer. We can also easily understand why critics so often compare Ranpo's and Poe's novels. As Mark Silver commented:

> The writings of Ranpo and those of the critics contemporary to him suggest the difficulty their authors faced when it came to seeing themselves as something other than second-rate copies of their Western counterparts […] to describe Ranpo's work as "derivative" risks reinstating a dubious hierarchy of literary value in which the works that inspired Ranpo are implicitly valorized as 'originals' and Ranpo's works themselves are demoted to the status of "copies". (Silver 2008, 134)

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The writers of detective novels recognised explicitly their Western 'fathers' and, in this case, Ranpo appreciated and quoted Tanizaki's novels many times.

My purpose here is not to consider *Panoramatō kidan* a second-rate work. Through the analysis of the adoption/migration of themes, I would like to highlight the links between the three works and to establish the originality of both Tanizaki's and Ranpo's literary gardens. Who is Ranpo's literary 'father' in this novel? Much more Tanizaki than Poe, I think.

In *Panoramatō kidan* Ranpo quotes Edgar Allan Poe twice, by engaging in the following:

1. listing some Western works on Utopia he declared: "It was "The Domain of Arnheim" by Edgar Allan Poe that attracted him [the protagonist] the most" (Ranpo 1927);
2. confessing to the reader his criminal plots and the way he exchanged his identity with that of a dead man, he quoted *A Premature Burial* by Poe (Ranpo 1927).

Ranpo does not quote *Konjiki no shi* nor does he explicitly reveal here his inspiration from Tanizaki. But we know from the quotation above that he loved *Konjiki no shi* precisely because of its inspiration from Poe. The basic idea of the three works is the construction of a magnificent garden, which is a symbol of Paradise on earth, a form of Utopia, "the utopia of a land of dream and beauty, a true terrestrial paradise" (Poe 1847).

In Poe's novel, "The Domain of Arnheim", an anonymous narrator tells of the happiness and prosperity of his friend Ellison. According to the theories of the protagonist, there are four "elementary principles, or more strictly, conditions of bliss" (Poe 1847): exercise in the open air i.e. health; love of a woman; contempt for ambition; an object of unceasing pursuit. He has natural gifts, such as beauty and intelligence, and is lucky enough to belong to a wealthy and prominent family. Moreover, the singular will of an ancestor allows him to inherit a fabulous fortune.

Ellison is a 'poet' and his dream is the creation of beauty. He does not become a musician or a writer or painter or sculptor, but always looks for purely physical beauty in an ambitious quest for perfection. The supreme poet is, thus, the landscape-gardener.

> Here indeed was the fairest field for the display of the imagination, in the endless combining of forms of novel beauty; the elements to enter into combination being, by a vast superiority, the most glorious which the earth could afford. In the multiform and multicolor of the flowers and the trees, he recognized the most direct and energetic efforts of Nature at physical loveliness. And in the direction or concentration of this effort – or, more properly, in its adaptation to the eyes which were to behold it on earth – he perceived that he should be employing the best means – laboring to the greatest advantage – in the fulfillment, not

only of his own destiny as poet, but of the august purposes for which the Deity had implanted the poetic sentiment in man. (Poe 1847)

Together with his friend-narrator, Ellison chooses the appropriate place for the construction of his heaven on earth. Poe does not dwell on the way he built it, but goes on to describe the path the two friends take toward the paradise, a journey through time and space: they get to Arnheim along a river. They leave in the morning and arrive in the evening in a gradual move towards ever more perfect beauty. The beauty of nature is not only a "natural beauty". We always find in these descriptions a complex relation between natural and artificial: to the completeness of nature he adds the ability of human composition, with the effect of bringing out the perfection of the natural through the artificial. At the end, a portal marks the passage of the journey towards the beatific vision:

> Meantime the whole Paradise of Arnheim bursts upon the view. There is a gush of entrancing melody; there is an oppressive sense of strange sweet odor, – there is a dream – like intermingling to the eye of tall slender Eastern trees – bosky shrubberies – flocks of golden and crimson birds – lily-fringed lakes – meadows of violets, tulips, poppies, hyacinths, and tuberoses – long intertangled lines of silver streamlets – and, upspringing confusedly from amid all, a mass of semi-Gothic, semi-Saracenic architecture sustaining itself by miracle in mid-air, glittering in the red sunlight with a hundred oriels, minarets, and pinnacles; and seeming the phantom handiwork, conjointly, of the Sylphs, of the Fairies, of the Genii and of the Gnomes. (Poe 1847)

Thus "the vision ends in a crescendo: the kingdom ceases to be the 'land' to become the paradise of Arnheim" (Halliburton 1973, 361). The end of the novel is a contemplation of nature and art at the same time. This place is the material proof of how art can transform a space on this earth into another world, into a paradise. It is a spiritual experience, and the reader will continue reading the sequel to the novel, "Landor's Cottage". The narration of *The Domain* ends all of a sudden, as words seem no longer able to evoke the beauty of that view. In the last lines of the novel the description of nature almost becomes a list and provides a sense of confusion creating a grotesque effect: exotic buildings of various architectural styles such as "semi-Gothic, semi-Saracenic architecture… minarets, pinnacles, Sylphs, Fairies, Genii and Gnomes" (Poe 1874).

In Tanizaki's work we can find many references to this novel by Edgar Allan Poe. In "Majutsushi" (The Magician, 1917), Tanizaki quotes "The Domain of Arnheim" and "Landor's Cottage", describing the mysterious park in the story:

Until now I had thought it odd that the park completely lacked any natural beauty – no trees, forests, or water – but arriving in this area, I saw that these elements had been put to use here. The natural features employed here had not, of course, been arranged to reproduce a natural scene; rather, they had been used as material for promoting artificiality and supplementing the effects of warped craftsmanship. Seeing these words, some readers may picture the gardening arts depicted in such stories as Poe's *The Domain of Arnheim* and *Landor's Cottage*, but the man-made landscape of which I speak seemed to employ even more elaborate handiwork and to be farther removed from natural scenery than those. (Tanizaki 2016, 119)

But *Konjiki no shi* is the work that is more directly inspired by "The Domain of Arnheim", copying and developing its central idea. This work has a very unusual story, which explains why it is almost forgotten and little studied by critics. Tanizaki repudiated this work and it reappeared in his complete works only after Mishima Yukio became interested in it and wrote a preface to it, offering his original interpretation (Mishima [1966] 1973-82). I will not dwell on this essay here but I will quote it again at a later point, discussing the conception of art that lies behind the creation of these gardens.[1]

The protagonist of Tanizaki, Okamura, gives life to an ambitious project: building an ideal space, a heavenly garden, synthesis of all the arts in which the artistic object *par excellence*, his body, came to be the supreme beauty of the forms, dying coated with gold. Perfection and beauty inherent in nature are enhanced by the genius of man: Okamura identifies a well-defined space and within definite boundaries shapes it with all the visible manifestations of matter. The landscape artist is a maker and creator god who has made his design of the universe in the material world.

Tanizaki's garden is not a frame to the artistic experience of the protagonist but is its very creation, an alternative way of making art that not only involves the language of words or painting. A natural park in the landscape-garden tradition (English Garden) that in the West had replaced the Renaissance garden. No geometric shapes or labyrinthine paths, but a natural park where artifice must remain concealed. This is the idea that Tanizaki takes from Poe but – in my opinion – here the similarities end and the differences begin. Tanizaki, claiming to create a compendium of all man's artistic achievements of every epoch, adds to the iconography of 'his' paradise an endless array of classical and modern buildings, Eastern and Western, sculpture of all eras from Michelangelo to Rodin… so heterogeneous a park as to become distorted.

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1 For Mishima's essay cf. Tanizaki 2006.

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The short list that we read at the end of Poe's story expands dramatically in both *Konjiki no shi* and *Panoramatō kidan*, emphasising the writers' grotesque tastes. This is one of the most important elements that I would like to emphasise in the transition from Poe to Tanizaki and to Ranpo.

Suzuki Sadami said that the origin of the so-called *ero-guro-nansensu* has to be placed in the Taishō period and in the works published by Tanizaki in that period. He refers to *Shisei* (Tattoo, 1910) and Tanizaki's early stories, but certainly *Konjiki no shi* must also be included amongst these works (Suzuki 1996). Edogawa Ranpo and his works of the twenties represent the epitome of the *ero-guro-nansensu*. In the garden of *Panoramatō kidan* there is an even more unlikely mixture: Egyptian sphinxes like in *The Domain*, Greek and Roman temples, the Great Wall of China, Buddhist pavilions of the Asuka era, Ginkakuki and Kinkakuji… East and West, past and present, exactly as in Tanizaki's imagination.

According to Suzuki Sadami, these tastes are an expression of the sensibility of the period,

> a form of resistance and critique of modern materialistic, profit-oriented civilization […]. The ecstasy of desire produces a vision of the world in which everything is upside down, contrary to the normal way of things. Such a vision, which form the point of view of commonsense cannot but appear as utterly nonsensical, may also be regarded as an expression of radical dissent, as a calling into question of the historical context in which the poem is inscribed. (Suzuki 1996, 27)

Also Mishima Yukio commenting on this passage from Tanizaki, judges this mixture negatively and interprets it as the crisis of Taishō intellectuals.

> Tanizaki […] portrays the utopia of beauty but the story remains imprisoned in the cultural constructions of the time… the careless mixture of East and West reflects faithfully the confusion of the utopias of the intellectuals of the time and reveals the ugliness of Japanese culture that had lost its unifying and distinctive style.
>
> That description of the park is not a traditional nor decadent beauty, and yet you cannot claim that Tanizaki is responsible. Responsibilities and limitations are due to the Japanese culture of the time. (Mishima [1966] 1973-82, 392-3)

The same could be said of *Panoramatō kidan*, and the contemporary, highly technological landscape could be seen as a critique of contemporary Japanese society. "An ocular critic of modernity" as Igarashi has commented (Igarashi 2005, 299). Moreover, the writer obsessively stresses the pathological condition of the protagonist, not only as a criminal but also as a person in a fragile nervous condition, always struggling with doubts and

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anxiety. The fragility and fluidity of his personality is a reflection of the culture of the times.

2 A Garden in the Sky

The description of the garden at the end of "The Domain of Arnheim" is the perfect iconography of a paradise, and it has traditional motifs of a journey toward paradise: a detached place reached by boat on the river; passing through a transparent channel of water closed by high dark walls, the narrator and his friend enter a portal and beyond it a beatific vision opens up. An unexpected prospect of natural and artificial beauty accompanied by a sweet melody, by a perfume, by a new "view".

> Grandeur in any of its moods, but especially in that of extent, startles, excites – and then fatigues, depresses. For the occasional scene nothing can be better – for the constant view nothing worse. And, in the constant view, the most objectionable phase of grandeur is that of extent; the worst phase of extent, that of distance. (Poe 1847)

The river trip is actually an interior journey, the imaginary fulfillment of the writer's dreams (Mizuta Lippit 1977).

Reading Tanizaki's description we find hints of the paradise of Western iconography ("as Dante guided by Virgil, we crossed the grass that served as a first door […] we were taken into a forest with every variety of flowers, bright as in a Jakuchū picture of flowers and birds" Tanizaki [1914] 1983, 494). In addition this is traditional Buddhist iconography: in the middle of his paradise there is the statue of a golden Buddha… another disguise, masking of the eccentric Okamura ("After having played many figures of beautiful men and women, he took the features of a *rakan* or *bosatsu*, assumed the guise of a demon, then painting the whole body with gold he created the appearance of the Tathagata Buddha", 497). In the morning, there is revealed the chilling and grotesque scene of his golden death, his body covered in gold leaf.

> Buddhas and bodhisattvas, evil spirits and demons, everyone was weeping at the foot of the golden corpse. This scene made me suspect that all efforts to create his art were designed to this: to offer his dying body, recreating the grand scene of the death of the Buddha. (Tanizaki [1914] 1983, 498)

The construction of the paradise is the construction of an immortal body. For Okamura, the pursuit of beauty through the construction of the garden is the quest for immortality that Tanizaki imagines according to the

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classic Buddhist iconography that portrays the body of the Buddha in the middle of a paradise.

Garden/paradise and death form an inseparable dual relationship. However, this theme of death is not present in Poe's story. We know *en passant* from the narrator that Ellison died, but his death is not linked to the creation of his heaven on earth.

If we now think about *Panoramatō kidan*, we can say that two major themes present in *Konjiki no shi* are developed in an even more original way by Edogawa Ranpo: the theme of death and that of the body.

The transformation of the basic motive of the story – the construction of a paradise garden – implies a different narrative structure. We might say that Ranpo begins the narrative from the end, creating a sense of mystery for the reader. The narrator describes an island now abandoned with the remains of the imposing building materials that had been transported there "for reasons unknown" (Ranpo 2013, 1) and gradually tells the story as "a secret tale" (4). The reader quickly learns that the protagonist, a friend of the narrator, is dead and that the family has abandoned that "kind of fabulous work of art" (3).

The reader perceives the criminal aspect of his plan, but does not imagine what will happen. It is important here to emphasise the role of the narrator/friend: in Poe's and in Tanizaki's novels, a narrator tells the story of a friend with good fortune, beauty, virtue and wealth. The narrator/friend relationship with the protagonist, however, is different. At the beginning of Poe's story the two points of view are quite distinct, but once you enter the paradise the distinction blends in the final description. However, not only does the narrator's friend Okamura, protagonist of *Konjiki no shi*, not share the ultimate ecstasy, but he seems to always maintain a critical, sometimes ironic distance, in revealing the maniacal aspects of his friend, who fascinates him but at the same time he judges a crazy esthete and an artist, ultimately, a failure.

In Ranpo, the narrator is not characterised; he is an omniscient narrator, but we do not know how he learned the story and what his relationship with the protagonist is. This allows him to maintain the same critical distance as the creator of the gardens we find in Tanizaki. The greater the critical distance, the greater the impact of the author's irony and the grotesque elements of the work.

The garden paradise of Ranpo is immediately characterised as a utopia. The author quotes Plato and European writers, stating that he was not interested in political or economic utopias. He promptly adds that the text that had attracted him the most was "The Domain of Arnheim" by Poe. This theme of utopia is a clear reflection of the Meiji and Taishō period, with the widening popularity of Western authors in Japan and famous attempts to create utopian communities, such as *Atarashiki mura* (New Village) by Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885-1976).

The idea of utopia (*eu-topos*) as a happy place is undoubtedly a strong bond with the stories of Poe and Tanizaki, but in rereading it, Ranpo's utopia becomes closer to a dystopia. As an antonym for 'utopia', 'cacotopia' or 'dystopia' are terms generally referred to an unpleasant futuristic world dominated by a cataclysmic decline of social frameworks. The future of Ranpo's utopia-island is the description on the first page of the novel, the destruction of Utopia's realisation and "hardly a place that one would hazard danger to go near" (Ranpo 2013, 1).

The island is the place of the crime – the murder of the wife of his alter ego – the place of the unveiling of his criminal project that had led him to hide the dead body of Komoda Genzaburō and replace him as his twin and 'double' (the theme of the double is recognised as a point in common with the stories of Tanizaki, in particular *The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga* of the same year, *Tomoda to Matsunaga no hanashi*, 1926). In Ranpo's novel the double is linked to the theme of death, with the unnatural scenes at the cemetery.

The idea of dystopia is also suggested by the fact that everything in Ranpo's paradise is unconventional. The view provokes excessive fear, mystery, not a sense of beauty and the sublime:

> It was disgusting rather than sublime, chaotic rather than harmonious. Each and every one of those curves and the arrangement of the inflamed, festering flowers gave endless displeasure instead of delight. (Ranpo 2013, 81)

In the traditional Buddhist view, the senses of paradise are sight and hearing. A new way of seeing, a new visual landscape accompanies the perception of these spaces; heavenly music delights the entrance into paradise. In Ranpo's island the sight captures discrepancies: "Strangely artificial mixture added to those curves was like hearing strangely beautiful orchestral music filled with exceptionally discordant sounds" (Ranpo 2013, 81).

In Tanizaki's utopia, there is a balance between the natural and the artificial. When the artificial prevails, the reader has the feeling of a grotesque description. In Ranpo's novel the artificial is stressed over the natural: "All these features revealed the intention of their creator to outdo nature". There is a manipulation of nature: "I have extended and contracted distances in nature just as I wanted" (2013, 74).

The forest is frightening because a "diabolic artifice" has been added to its magnificence, "concealed with obsessive care and could only be sensed indistinctly". So it appears only to a keen observer: again visuality is a keyword to access Ranpo's landscape "so unnatural, so indescribably artificial" (Ranpo 2013, 78).

To get this effect, Ranpo adds to the elements of nature something totally absent from Poe's and Tanizaki's landscapes: the realisations made

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possible by new technologies. At the beginning of the novel, we read a list of materials for the construction of the garden which, together with rocks, trees and lumber, encompasses barrels of concrete to build iron-framed concrete structures.

When the protagonist guides his wife Chiyoko to visit his "garden in the sky", the reader sees the landscape from the woman's point of view. The narration slips from Hitomi's perspective to his wife's in order to provide an outsider's impression of his fantastical island.

Hence, her surprise is the reader's surprise in seeing special effects made possible by glass and electric lights. The marvels of electricity had from the early twenties begun to loom ever larger in the Japanese popular imagination, but even earlier we can recall the descriptions of Tokyo illuminated by flashlights in Nagai Kafū's or Natsume Sōseki's famous novels.

In Ranpo's garden the electric light is a recurrent motif. The spectator can see the bottom of the sea through a glass tunnel and the electric lamps try to conquer the darkness at the bottom. A marvellous and frightening world then appears, a long list of seaweed and fish accentuates the magnificence of the place: "as they entered the area lit by electric lamps they revealed their strange shapes as in a magic lantern" (Ranpo 2013, 55).

One of the new techniques that magnifies the effect of light are the fireworks, which in the story are the subject of continuous wonder, until the chilling final scene. In the first decades of the twentieth century, fireworks accompanied every major event or official celebration in Japan. I would like to mention here the splendid essay *Hanabi* (*Fireworks*, 1919) by Nagai Kafū that traces the most important historical and political events of his life, through the memory of the celebrations accompanied by fireworks.

New technologies create the effect of amplifying the vision, and through the glass, lens and lighting effects even small fish seem to become gigantic. This enlargement effect (magnification) is related to the new visual technologies, in particular to cinematic techniques, a new subjective experience of space and time. In this regard, the link with the literature of Tanizaki of the twenties becomes even closer. According to the Japanese critic Nagamori Kazuko, *Panoramatō kidan* receives from Tanizaki two important influences: the first is that of the paradise garden by *Konjiki no shi*; the second is that of the visual effects by *Jinmenso* (*The Tumor with a Human Face*, 1918). In this story, as has been well highlighted by Thomas LaMarre (2005), the descriptive technique recalls the cinematic technique of close-up. Tanizaki has transposed his experience in the film world even into his fiction, and many works recall visual film effects (I mention here only *Aoi hana*, *Ave Maria* etc.). I would like also to remember that in 1917 Tanizaki wrote a famous and very innovative essay, *Katsudō shashin no genzai to shōrai* (The Present and the Future of the Moving Pictures). The single attribute of cinema that intrigued him the most is the ability of the medium to portray both realistic and fantastic images

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in an equally convincing manner. In *Katsudō shashin no genzai to shōrai* Tanizaki praised the evocative power of such innovative techniques such as the close-up shot:

> The actors being made larger than in life, the distinctive features of their faces and physiques, which would not be as remarkable in a stage performance, are projected with extreme clarity down to their final details.
> Every aspect of the person's face and body, aspects that would ordinarily be overlooked, are perceived so keenly and urgently that it exerts a fascination difficult to put into words. (LaMarre 2005, 68)

The enlargement effect could be so realistic as to become awesome. In *Eiga no kyōfu* (The Horrors of Film, 1926), an essay of 1926, Ranpo wrote:

> I am terrified of moving pictures. They are the dreams of an opium addict. From a single inch of a film emerge giants who fill the whole theater […] Swift's vision of a land of giants exquisitely unfolds before our eyes. A massive face a thousand times larger than mine suffuses the screen. (Ranpo 2008)

In *Panoramatō kidan* "the island was full of visual illusions that enhanced the beauty of its scenery" (Ranpo 2013, 66). As in Tanizaki's narrative, these effects blur the boundaries between reality and dream. The protagonist of *Panoramatō kidan* is often caught in the dilemma between the attraction of his dreams and the fear of reality, i.e., the danger that his crime will be discovered: "He couldn't give up his dreams, but the temptation of reality was too strong" (43). So he decides to kill the woman and this indeed marks the beginning of the end of his dream.

A further technological element in the novel is the role of machines. On the island there is another world, crammed with lifeless steel machines: "Black monsters that turn round and round without end" (Ranpo 2013, 76), moved by electricity generated below the surface of the island. These monsters are "symbols of a strange mechanical power of a kind that appears in certain dreams" (76).

The narration continues with the description of other worlds: large cities filled with buildings of beautiful architecture; a weird world of wild beasts and poisonous plants; a world of fountains and waterfalls with all kinds of water games; a place full of naked women in a paradise of celestial music (compared to Adam and Eve's paradise), soon transformed into a chaotic human wave where bodies lose their identity and visitors lose their senses. The visitor moves between these worlds like "a dreamer who has different dreams every night" (Ranpo 2013, 77).

Ranpo's description is very original but he does not betray the classical iconography of paradise. In the multiple visions of the 'panorama' there

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is a centre, a unifying place which stands in the middle, a huge column: "From there, the whole island is a single panorama […] made up of assembled panoramas" (Ranpo 2013, 77). The vision is that of the title of the work, a Panorama like the Panorama hall so famous in Asakusa since 1890 and well described in the novel.

Hence the visuality of the place arouses mixed feelings that are very different from the contemplation of paradise by Ellison or Okamura. The island is not a universe but a number of very different universes. The best metaphor Ranpo uses for describing it, is the world of dreams or "a motion-picture film" (2013, 78). The panorama's vision has been called *panoramashugi* and, like cinema, is a fluid, and surrogate experience.

What is real in this garden? Paradise cannot be experienced before death. So only death is the real, complete vision the protagonist can reach. After the crime of his wife's killing, the protagonist's plan has been discovered and the only way for him to escape is by killing himself. In the fantastically disgusting ending, his body is shot into the sky, fragmented into the sparks of light of the fireworks. The scene is described from the point of view of the man who sees the wonder of these fires and only later realises the meaning of the drops of blood falling from the sky.

The body of the protagonist sprays the paradise garden that he created and that, without him, will face the same destruction. The death of the creator is also the death of the creature. "By exploding his body – writes Igarashi Yoshikuni – Hitomi completes his project: he becomes the panorama" (Ranpo 2013, 77).

Like the body of Okamura, the body of Hirosuke Hitomi is at the centre of its creation. Both remain imprisoned by the same wonders they have created and which may include their 'beautiful death'.

In Poe's story, body and death do not have the same central role: indeed the garden paradise is presented to the reader a certain time after Ellison's death but, in spite of this, it has kept all its magnificence. In Poe's vision, there is a cosmology, a metaphysical dimension that is totally absent in his imitators. The world of Tanizaki and Ranpo seems anchored in an earthly dimension, both objective and carnal.

In the likeness of a golden Buddha or in the multicolored light of fireworks filling the sky, the body of the protagonists is at the centre of their "garden in the sky". Mishima wrote commenting about *Konjiki no shi*: "Beauty can be achieved only through its destruction" ([1966] 1973-82, 389).

3 A Servant Devoted to Art

The art of the garden is presented in all three works discussed here as the highest form of art and, artistic research is the way to realisation of the garden paradise. Ellison is a poet in search of new forms of beauty, a

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purely physical beauty. For Poe (1847), creating gardens "was the fairest field for the display of imagination in the endless combining of forms of novel beauty".

In *Konjiki no shi* there is a long philosophical disquisition on beauty and art between Okamura and his narrator/friend, starting from the artistic conception of the German philosopher Lessing. The discussion is on the relationship between objective beauty and subjective beauty: Okamura reiterates his belief only in the "physicality", in the human body as an ideal container for beauty:

> I cannot understand the beauty if it's not realized so clearly before me, the beauty that you see with your eyes, you touch with your hands, you hear with your ears. I am not happy if I do not taste an intense beauty… (Tanizaki [1914] 1983, 482)

The landscape artist is a creator god who has made his design of the universe in the natural world. The garden, apotheosis of cosmic harmony, is the archetype of perfection. At the centre, his physical body, a metaphor of the world and icon of the divine, a Buddha incorruptible and bright as gold, immortal and eternal as the paradise.

Mishima Yukio ([1966] 1973-82) wrote that Tanizaki had achieved objective beauty (and perhaps because of this he rejected the work, in favour of the greater subjectivity of art) and had accomplished the unification of the artist with the art work. Even Ranpo unified artist and work of art, but the same cannot be found in Poe's story. This is an important point of divergence from the 'father' of the detective novels and a point of convergence between Tanizaki and Ranpo.

What role has this conception of art in Ranpo's story? The construction of a "garden in the sky" is the line that leads the whole story, braided with the original elements that we have already highlighted. However, it may seem secondary compared to other more obvious issues: for example the double, the crime and the discovery of the guilty… Nevertheless the realisation of an artistic ideal is a reason that makes the plot coherent till the end. In the opening pages, immediately after quoting "The Domain of Arnheim", the narrator begins talking about the garden project as "some kind of fabulous work of art" (Ranpo 2013, 3).

The protagonist Hitomi had, as a young man, a connection with the arts: he is introduced to us at the beginning of the story as a writer of little talent, and with little success, trying to realise his ideals through words. This failure leads him to develop other forms of artistic achievement. The difference here with Poe and Tanizaki is that he does not receive a fabulous legacy but obtains it by criminal means: a huge sum of money "to build the paradise on earth, the land of beauty I've always dreamt about" (Ranpo 2013, 7). The reader at the end of the long novel has almost forgotten

the protagonist's literary career. But it emerges again at the end when the *Story of RA*, one of his unsuccessful novels, will provide the detective with the solution and will permit the discovery of the murder. Therefore his own art, a literary text, is the cause of his failure; a minor work of art will ruin his paradise on earth. However, the detective does not resort to the police because he is an admirer of that work of art and decides not to report him, defining himself "a servant devoted to art" (Ranpo 2013, 104).

Art till the end of the novel is superior to everything, even to justice in a crime story.

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Production and Circulation of Vernacular Italian Books Related to the Jesuit Mission in Japan in the Sixteenth Century

Sonia Favi
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract   The reports and histories compiled by the members of the Society of Jesus in the second half of the sixteenth century were among the earliest European sources to treat 'Japan' as a geographical and political reality. The peculiarity of the Jesuit approach, focused on research and adaptation, is reflected in the variety of their contents, encompassing descriptions of geography, politics, society, language, religion and art. The reports were also the earliest sources on Japan to reach a wider public in Europe. They were not only delivered to Coimbra, Rome and to the different Jesuit houses, but also distributed commercially, in the form of letter-books, throughout Europe. It can be presumed that the impact of the letter-books on European readership was enhanced by the growing popularity of periodical publications and by the expansion of the publishing market. This paper will use the reports published in vernacular Italian as a case study, and investigate the nature of such readership and how the reports fit into the Italian book market of the sixteenth century. It will analyse them in light of the cultural and economical processes that led to their production and circulation, focusing on publishing houses, editions and formats, in order to evaluate the editorial policies that led to their circulation.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books About Japan: Production, Commercial Diffusion and Impact. – Appendix. Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books About Japan: a Bibliography.

Keywords   Jesuits. Japan. Book history. Renaissance.

1   Introduction

Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese, Spanish and Italian members of the Society of Jesus attempted to evangelise East Asia. To communicate with each other and with their Superiors in Coimbra and Rome, they adopted an institutionalised system for correspondence, adapted from one the order was already using in Europe. The system was devised by the founder of the Society, Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), and remodelled, according to changing needs, as the result of a discursive process between the administrative centre and the peripheries of the order (Delfosse 2009, 71-2).

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Missionaries from different religious orders had reached Asia long before the Jesuits did. The Portuguese were motivated to pursue their maritime expansion by both religious ardour and the economic benefits derived from the African (and Asian) trade.[1] Under the protection of the Portuguese Crown, the Franciscan order and the Dominican order had carried out their missions to India in 1500 and 1503, respectively. By 1538, the Episcopal see of Goa was established, so that when Francis Xavier (1506-52), who was pivotal to the Jesuit mission in East Asia, first set foot in India in 1542, the seeds of the diffusion of the Christian faith had already been firmly planted (Üçerler 2008, 155).

Still, neither the Franciscans nor the Dominicans developed an intelligence system that could compare to the one the Jesuits had set in place. This was mainly because of the importance Loyola placed on the practice of letter-writing. One peculiar element of the Jesuit missionary approach was the way in which it combined Christian belief with humanist moral values. Jesuit thinkers highly valued the mastery of *eloquentia* (that is, proficiency in the language arts and, more specifically, in the rhetorical practice, including the composition of letters); it was considered a means, in itself, to moral perfection and a strategic tool to propagate the Christian message, edify the audiences, and, more prosaically, win the patronage of the ruling classes (Boswell 2003, 248).

The Jesuit system for correspondence consisted of the regular dispatch of official reports (quarterly at first, and later annually) from the different centres of the missions to the Father General of the Company in Rome and to the Jesuit College of Coimbra in Portugal.[2] The letters responded to the need to convey information and to help the bureaucratic machine of

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1   Missionary effort had come hand-in-hand with Portuguese sea explorations since 1418, when Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460) had assumed the position of *regedor e governador* (ruler and governor) of the Order of Christ. Ever since, this crusading militia had been ideologically and materially involved in the Portuguese explorations, providing the Crown with the greatest source of funding for its maritime enterprise (Hamilton 1948, 37). The link between Portuguese imperial ambitions and Christian missionary efforts had been formally asserted by the Roman Church in the second half of the fifteenth century through a series of Papal Bulls: the *Dum Diversas* (1452), the *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) and the *Inter Caetera* (1456), which granted the right to the Portuguese Crown to administer the newly 'discovered' territories in the East Indies, in both a civil and an ecclesiastical capacity. This established the system that came to be known as *patroado real* (royal patronage) (Boxer 1969, 20-4). The system was then formalised in 1494 with the ratification of the Treaty of Tordesillas, which established a circular line of division, running from pole to pole 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands and splitting the known world into two spheres of influence. All territories east of the line were to pertain to Portugal. The full text and translation of the Treaty, as well as a related bibliography, are available in Davenport (2012, 84-100).

2   The letters from the East Indies were usually sorted in Goa, the administrative and religious centre of the mission in Asia. Together with official reports, other private forms of correspondence travelled between singular members of the Society, usually in separate sheets known as *hijuela*. The structure of the system is described in detail in Lach 1965, 314-31.

the Society, but their purpose went far beyond that. They were meant to connect Jesuit communities, spread apostolic models and edifying news, and, in the final instance, build a common religious identity for the Society (Palomo 2005, 59-60). In this spirit, copies of the reports were forwarded from Rome and Coimbra to the various Jesuit colleges of Europe, as a guide and inspiration for future missionaries and other members of the Society. Given the amount of work required to sustain this system, to speed up the process of reproduction and circulation, manuscript copies soon gave way to printed ones (Palomo 2005, 74).

Printing the letters was, however, also a way of exposing them to a wider public. That this was a conscious intent is reflected in the fact that the letters were not merely printed, but published and placed in a circuit of commercial distribution. In this sense, printed Jesuit reports became vehicles through which the European public gained information about the missions, as well as, collaterally, about the geography, climate, culture and contemporary political events of the countries in which the missionaries were stationed. The published letter-books, with their wide accessibility, made knowledge about Eastern Asia available to the European readership in a way previously unthinkable.

A wide range of literature exists discussing different aspects of the Jesuit system for correspondence, its evolution and its long-term impact. Lamalle 1981-82 explores the innovative cultural potential of Jesuit letter writing and the way in which Jesuit correspondence was organised and archived. Lach 1965 underlines the role of the reports in conveying, after the prolonged lack of direct contact during the Middle Ages, the very first significant bits of factual knowledge about Eastern Asia to Europe.[3] In a similar vein, Harris 1999 builds on previous works by Wessels 1924, Bolton 1936 and Dainville 1964 to discuss the contribution of Jesuit travel and writings to geography, natural history, botany and ethnography. Caputo 2016 specifically discusses the reports from Japan published in Italy between 1552 and 1585 as part of a broader analysis of the impact of the imaginary related to Japan on Italian literature, from the writings of Marco Polo (1254-1324) to Francesco Carletti (1573-1636). Palomo 2005 focuses on the edifying nature of the reports and their role in building a common

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3   A notable exception was the writings of the isolated land voyagers of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries – Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruck, Odoric of Pordenone and Marco Polo. All were based on first-hand testimony and all, as Olschki 1957 underlines, were in many ways challenging the Medieval legendary traditions towards Asia. However, in their time the narratives were not as widely read and renowned as they would become in the sixteenth century thanks to the diffusion of print. Similarly unknown to the wider public were the writings of Portuguese traders who, after 1499, had reached Asia by the sea route around Africa. This was probably because, as Lach (1965, 153) again suggests, the Portuguese Crown was enforcing a deliberate policy of reserve so as to prevent useful information from leaking into the hands of their European commercial competitors.

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religious identity among the Jesuits. Friedrich 2008, on the other hand, focuses on the letters' administrative value: he discusses the factors that prompted Loyola and Polanco to conceptualise a central government for the Society, and the ways in which (not without controversy) this sedentary centre obtained and archived information from the local level, using the Jesuit correspondence system as a case study of the connections between the emergence of rational bureaucracy and the birth of a modern system of information management in Europe. Delfosse 2009 more thoroughly analyzes the dialectic relationship between the central level and the local level by describing the system of correspondence in a diachronic perspective. While crediting Loyola for his role in building a pyramid structure of information within the Society and in defining the letters' basic aims and characteristics, she argues that Jesuit letter-writing was an evolving reality, constantly redefined in accord with the order's expanding needs. Similarly, Asami 2002 discusses local contributions to the readjustments of the system, focusing on the reports from Japan, the way Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) envisioned their structure, and the selection of information intended for inclusion in published letter-books.

However, while much has been written about the logic behind the Jesuit system for correspondence and about the mechanics of the circulation of the reports inside and outside the Society, the manner in which the letter-books fit into the European book market of the sixteenth century is still unclear. Were they pushed into the catalogues of printers from the Society of Jesus, or did they fit into a more independent editorial policy on the part of publishers? What was the response to their publication? Did they pass by unnoticed, or can one presume that they truly helped put the 'Indies' on the map, not only for students in Jesuit schools but for a wider European public? If so, for which public, and to what extent?

Given the lack of data about the number of sales, obtaining these answers is not easy. Clossey (2008, 197-215) approaches the questions by focusing on the writings of Nicholas Trigault (one of the best-selling authors within the order). The present article explores them by using Italian editions of sixteenth-century Jesuit letters from Japan as a case study. It discusses them in light of the cultural and economic processes that led to their production and circulation, and analyzes their place in the Italian book market of the sixteenth century. The final appendix provides a bibliography of the editions.

2 Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books about Japan: Production, Commercial Diffusion and Impact

Before the establishment of the Jesuit mission, only vague references to Japan had appeared in European (and Italian) literature. Marco Polo was the first European writer to make a recognizable mention of the archipelago, under the name 'Cipangu'. The information he included in his account was, notably, second-hand and inaccurate. He greatly overestimated Japan's distance from China, misjudged the position of the archipelago, and unrealistically stressed its commercial isolation at a time when Japan had developed a rich history of maritime relationships with Eastern Asia (Oliveira e Costa 2007, 43). However, many European descriptions of the archipelago produced up to the 1540s stemmed from his work; more often than not, they exaggerated its inaccuracies in a way that shaped the myth of 'Cipangu' as something profoundly different from the image of 'Japan' that would emerge from later eye-witness accounts.[4]

In this sense, the Jesuit reports about Japan that appeared in the European book market in the second half of the sixteenth century were a novelty – and a well-received one. Reports from Japan retained a prominence among published Jesuit missionary reports throughout the second half of the sixteenth century – so much so that, as Lach points out (1965, 321), many later writers gave the Jesuit letters from this period the generic title of 'Japan letters'. Moreover, as exemplified by the vernacular Italian editions listed in the appendix of this article, publishers were increasingly singling out 'Japan letters'. Reports from Japan published up to the 1570s were primarily inserts in works more generally devoted to 'India' (in the general meaning of both Brasil and the territories in Asia that the Treaty of Tordesillas had assigned to the Portuguese); however, after the publication of the first letter-book centered wholly on Japan (Zanetti, Rome, 1578),[5] works focusing on Japan – or more rarely on Japan and China – became the rule.

Vernacular Italian editions are of particular interest from the perspective of distribution and reception. In fact, several factors suggest that in the second half of the sixteenth century they were the most popular among European editions of 'Japan letters'. Many studies include listings of and information about the materials related to the Jesuit missions in Asia: Sommervogel 1885, Streit 1916-55, Ternaux-Compans 1968 and

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[4] For an analysis of the impact Marco Polo's writings had on Italian literature, see Caputo 2016. For an analysis of Marco Polo's work in relation to the wider context of Europe's discovery of East Asia, see Olschki 1957. For a more general overview of the historical, geographical and travel narratives on Japan antedating the Jesuit production, see Lach 1965, 652-63. For a specific focus on cartographical sources, see Boscaro 1990.

[5] From now on, works listed in the appendix will be referred to using the name of the publisher, the place of publication and the year of publication.

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Correia-Afonso 1955. Several bibliographies are also devoted to publications and documents related to Japan: Cordier 1912; Japan Institut 1940; Laures 1940; Matsuda 1965; Wenckstern, Pages 1895.[6] From the bibliographies emerges a pattern in the publication of the letter-books that favours the Italian editions, up to at least the 1580s. Many *editio princeps* are Italian, and Italian collections, as underlined by Lach (1965, 674-75), constitute about 50% of the publications. This provides the basis for many subsequent translations in Northern European languages (published in Paris, Louvain and Dillingen).

The fact that reports about Japan dominated Jesuit publishing in the second half of the sixteenth century should not be surprising. The prominence of 'Japan letters' was connected to the centrality of the Japanese mission during this phase of the Jesuit enterprise in Asia. Unlike in India, the Jesuits were the first Christian order to reach Japan, and they retained exclusive influence over the archipelago, as per open Papal instructions (included in the brief *Ex pastoralis ufficio*, dated 1585) until the 1590s, when the first Spanish Franciscans made their way to the archipelago from the Philippines (Massarella 1990, 15-24). Moreover, the mission achieved promising results, at least up to the death of Oda Nobunaga (1534-82) and the rise of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-98), when the first persecutions against Christians began in Japan.[7] It makes sense, therefore, that the Jesuits deemed the reports about the mission as appropriate edifying material.

However, the popularity of Italian editions is more of a puzzle. As early as 1563, Valignano advised against the use of Italian in published letter-books, suggesting a preference for Spanish and, later, for Latin (Asami 2002, 5). Valignano did not clarify the reasons for this request. Possibly, he prioritised the needs of the missionaries stationed in Asia (most of whom would find Latin easily accessible) over the Society's need for publicity. However, in spite of his request, the production and circulation of Italian editions was not discontinued; on the contrary, it flourished throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. One many presume that Jesuit authorities in Europe decided in favour of vernacular editions as a conscious effort to expose the public to the letter-books. Sixteenth-century Europe was a context in which Latin, while still a common denominator for the Roman Church (Eisenstein 2005, 185), was losing its international

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6 In addition to these bibliographies, several works include anthological excerpts from the letters. See, for example, the translations by Murakami 1926 and 1927-28.

7 Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, as the two powerful *daimyō* (warlords) who ended Japan's political division in the second half of the sixteenth century, represented a major reference point for the mission. Nobunaga, strongly opposed to Buddhist sects, was generally supportive of the mission. On the other hand, Hideyoshi, after initially showing a good disposition, turned on the mission in 1587 by emitting two edicts of expulsion. Presumably, the Jesuits' pretensions to authority had alarmed him during his campaign in Kyūshū (Hall 1988, 359-64).

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character (Kristeller 1990, 119-38), and where the 'revolution' brought about by the printing press was promoting a standardisation of vernacular languages (Eisenstein 2005, 91-2). As Hirsch (1977, 41) underlines, a 'new reader', one belonging to social groups once excluded from access to books and unable to understand Latin, was essential to the printing industry's expansion. In other words, by the end of the sixteenth century, a growing European readership was relying less on Latin.

Using Venice as a case study, Grendler (1992, 213-14) estimates the percentage of Italian readers at around 33% of the adult male population and 13% of the adult female population, and underlines how, despite the fact that many readers came from the upper strata of society (including rich merchants and professionals), only about half the men (the learned population of university professors and students, aristocracy, clergy, doctors or jurists) and a small percentage of the women had access to Latin. In this context, the use of the vernacular in publishing was rapidly spreading. In the case of Italy, in the second half of the sixteenth century, about 46,8% of an estimated quantity of 12.724 published books was written in the vernacular (Santoro 1994, 107). If the Society of Jesus meant to promote the letter-books related to Japan, use of the vernacular would certainly enable wider distribution.

Why the Society would allow – or wish to divulge – the books outside the circles of the clergy can be understood not only in light of the Society's need for publicity, but also in light of the Counter Reformation's policies. As Barbier (2004, 227-72) underlines, after the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559 and the end of the Council of Trent in 1563, the Counter Reformation influenced the book market in Catholic Europe both by means of coercion – through censorship and the *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Index of banned books, 1564) – and by means of a concurrent Catholic Revival that stimulated interest in new kinds of publications. News about the conversions of far-away populations could inspire public interest and, in the face of the defeats that Catholicism suffered in Europe after the Protestant Reformation, foster the notion of Catholic Church's greatness and world-wide predominance.

Still, as tools for the propagation of the faith, Spanish and Portuguese editions worked just as well as Italian editions did. In this sense, the popularity of Italian editions cannot, in my opinion, be ascribed only to the efficacy of Catholic propaganda; it is better understood in light of the entrepreneurship of Italian publishers and, more generally, of the dominating trends in the contemporary Italian book market. As Caputo (2016, 140) underlines, the fact that Italy, as opposed to Spain and Portugal, was excluded from the commercial and territorial competition in the East Indies gave Italian publishers more liberty, within the limits imposed by Jesuit censorship, to divulge the contents of the reports related to the missions in Asia. This, I argue, allowed the reports to become part of their response

to the general crisis that hit the Italian book market in the second half of the sixteenth century. [8]

To illustrate my point, I have chosen to focus on the Venetian book market, which works as a mirror for the Italian market as a whole, as throughout the sixteenth century Venice accounted for 48,6% of the total production of Italian *cinquecentine* (Santoro 1994, 108). The policies of the Counter Reformation, as I've mentioned above, deeply affected the publishing landscape of Catholic countries. Publishers negotiated their way through the change by seeking new commercial opportunities through literary genres that the Church approved and promoted. This trend emerged clearly in Venice in the second half of the sixteenth century; works related to religious themes amounted to 25-33% of the totality of the production of Venetian printers, when in the first half of the century religious production had amounted to only 13-15%. This change in editorial policies was at the root of a new expansion in book production after an initial crisis brought about by the announcement of the Index of banned books in 1564. The plague of 1575-77 only temporarily reversed this trend; after 1585, the number of emitted print permits started growing again, though it never reached pre-plague levels (Grendler 1983, 193-5).

By 1564, the earliest editions of letter-books from Japan had appeared in the Venetian book market. They had been published by Michele Tramezzino, who cultivated ties with both the Roman publishing world (through his brother Francesco) and the Society of Jesus (through Cesare Elmi, rector of the Jesuit house of probation in Venice). [9] Caputo (2016, 243) suggests that the publication of the letters might have initially been delegated by the Society of Jesus to commercial publishers such as the Tramezzino as a means of avoiding direct involvement in commercial transactions. In this light, one may presume that, during an initial phase, editions of 'Japan letters' were not meant to be issued in a predetermined number of copies and that, instead, they were meant to be included in a more 'private' circuit of distribution.

Still, giving up the letters to commercial publishing meant, at least in part, compliance with the laws of commercial distribution. The demand for books steadily increased in Italy since the fifteenth century, in connection with an expansion of the reading population. As Santoro (1994, 96-7) underlines, at the root of the publishing industry's expansion was the ability of publishing houses to replace the logic of demand with the logic of supply, at least in quantitative terms. Editions needed high circulation

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8 A crisis that, in the long run, would move the axis of the publishing world towards the Protestant countries. See Maclean 2012, 211-34.

9 This was not uncommon in a context in which, as Romani (1992, 524-5) illustrates, Venetian publishers handled the typographical and commercial aspects of their production, though in many instances Rome exerted a strong direct influence on the editorial process.

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figures to amortise the fixed costs associated with the printing process. For example, we know from a letter by Michele Tramezzino himself[10] that an average edition in Venice had to consist of at least 1000 copies, as the printing privilege was not conceded for fewer than 400 copies, and with fewer than 1000 copies, production costs would not be covered. Michele Tramezzino may have decided to publish the reports from Japan more as a consequence of his personal connections with the Society of Jesus than as the result of a qualitative evaluation of the materials in light of his editorial policy. However, one can presume that he meant to profit from the books. In this sense, his involvement in the distribution of the materials probably became, in sheer quantitative terms, a turning point.

However, as Caputo (2016, 237) illustrates, the impact of the works on the Italian intellectual landscape was still relatively small, at least up to 1585. This makes sense in light of the distribution of the editions. As the appendix of this article indicates, the overwhelming majority of Italian letter-books on Japan saw the light in the last two decades of the sixteenth century. Moreover, books published from the 1580s onward tended to appear in multiple editions.

One factor that was probably crucial in stimulating demand for the reports – and interest in Japan in general – was the fact that the Japanese embassy reached Lisbon in August 1584. Sent to Europe on Alessandro Valignano's initiative, in the name of three *daimyō* from Kyūshū,[11] it was received by the Holy Father and the King of Spain in 1585 and seems to have had a considerable impact on the contemporary public, as records of the time report the enthusiastic reception the envoys received in the various cities they visited.[12] Some researchers, such as Brown 1994, have actually questioned the real significance of such a reception for the general European population. What is certain, however, is that the embassy in itself spurred the publication of a number of titles – at least 80 works produced in the brief span of two years.[13] They included primarily booklets – pamphlets and gazettes reporting on the voyage of the ambassadors, their meetings with various members of the European aristocracy and the public hearing that the Pope granted to them. Sometimes they provided short descriptions of Japan (based mostly on the Jesuits' published firsthand accounts). In addition, the works related to the embassy included at least one more organic work, the *Relationi della venuta degli Ambasciatori*

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[10] Quoted in Grendler 1983, 11.

[11] Ōtomo Yoshishige (1530-87), Arima Harunobu (1567-1612) and Ōmura Sumitada (1533-87).

[12] The reception of the embassy is discussed in Moran 1993, 9-16.

[13] The works related to the embassy have been catalogued by Boscaro 1973.

Giaponesi a Roma by Guido Gualtieri,[14] which collected and reorganised all the somewhat repetitive information that had been scattered throughout previous publications. A growing interest in Jesuit writings on Japan is more easily understood in light of this editorial boom.

In my opinion, this editorial boom also prompted a number of resourceful publishers to integrate the books on Japan into their editorial policies in a more structured way. Such was the case with the Giolito publishing house. The Giolito family, active between 1536 and 1606, was one of the giants of the Venetian publishing industry. Since 1585, it had been responsible for publishing most of the Japanese reports issued in Venice. Quondam (1977, 76), through his work based on the annals of the Giolito house compiled at the end of the nineteenth century by Salvatore Bongi (1825-99), underlines how the Giolito family embraced, from the start, a very definite identity as vernacular publishers, with only 49 titles in Latin – a meager 4,8% of their total production. Unlike smaller publishing houses (where, in the absence of modern strategies of publicity, demand was the primary factor determining editorial policies), the Giolito family was able to drive production to a measure, through rational editorial planning, and publish an average of more than 30 titles per year (Quondam, 1977, 67). They were also among those publishers able to ride the wave of the Catholic revival in qualitative terms. Their production before 1560 was almost exclusively devoted to contemporary Italian literature. When the general Italian book market was hit by the crisis associated with the Counter Reformation, the Giolito were among those publishers who found new commercial opportunities in it, and did so in an innovative way. As Quondam (1977, 74-88) underlines, while other publishers resorted to devotional literature as a response to the crisis, the Giolito devised a new editorial policy, giving birth to the form of the *collana editoriale* (editorial series). A religious editorial series was developed in accord with the trends of the post-Council Venice book market. However, hand in hand with the religious series, the publisher inaugurated a new series of *historie*. The term *historia*, sometimes replaced with *cronica* or *relatione*, stands for a

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14   The full title of the work is *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giaponesi a Roma sino alla partita di Lisbona. Con le accoglienze fatte loro da tutti i principi christiani, per doue sono passati. Raccolte da Guido Gualtieri*. Several editions of the work were published in Italy: one in Rome, in 1586, by the Francesco Zannetti publishing house; two in Venice, both in 1586, by the Giolito publishing house; and one in Milan, in 1587, by the Pacifico Ponte publishing house. Another lengthy and organic account of the embassy was included in the *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam*, published in 1590 in Macao. However, the work, as explained in its preface, was not intended for a European readership, but rather was to be used in Jesuit seminaries as a text for Latin studies and as a sort of guide to Europe for Japanese readers. (This was one of the reasons why the book was not sent to Rome for an *imprimatur*, as was customary.) An annotated English translation of the work is found in Valignano 2012. A more recent Italian translation is included in Valignano 2016.

"form of writing codified by tradition and supposedly grounded in truth, reality, objectivity. […] But 'historia', much like today's 'storia', was used at the time to mean both history and narrative fiction» (Pallotta 1992, 349). The purpose of this series was very different from that of the religious series, though also somewhat complementary. While the religious series was meant to be edifying, the historical series openly appealed to curiosity, the pleasure of reading and what Eisenstein (2005, 108) identifies as a reader's growing desire to vicariously take part in faraway events.

The choice of *historie* as a countermeasure for the crisis proved to be a sound publishing decision in a context like the late sixteenth-century Venetian book market. The sixteenth century could rightly be called the first age of information. *Avvisi*, *relationi*, *fogli di notizia* and other newspaper-like publications circulated in all the major printing centers of the time, relating both national and international events with a regularity that has induced researchers such as Monaco 1992 to trace back to them the birth of modern periodical publications. A similar role in the book market was played by travel literature, in particular the *historie* about the new worlds that the Great Discoveries had brought to the public's attention. The *historie* enjoyed great fortune throughout the century, and found in Venice one of its main points of diffusion (Pallotta 1992, 347).

The decision to include the Japanese letter-books in their catalogue appears to align with both dominating trends in the editorial policy of the Giolito. The reports matched the edifying purpose of the religious series while simultaneously appealing to the thirst for 'curious' news from faraway lands, which was at the root of the historical series' popularity.

The 'curious' nature of the narration was particularly pronounced in 'Japan letters' published in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The earliest Jesuit reports on Japan included in the Italian editions were those written by the founder of the Japanese mission, Francis Xavier. Of the ten letters written before, during and immediately after his trip to Japan from 1549 to 1551, the Italian editions included four letters, a 1549 report from Cochin, written before his departure from Japan, two reports from Kagoshima, dated 5th of November 1549, and one report written, again from Cochin, upon his return from the archipelago.[15] They illustrate the events that prompted Xavier to travel to the archipelago, describe the mission's establishment and first phases, and include Xavier's firsthand assessments of Japan. As Caputo (2016, 165-201) underlines, they are – particularly the letter included in the 1552 edition – of pivotal importance in the founding of a new discourse on 'Giapam' in Italian intellectual history. On the other hand, they did not dwell on the complexity of Japanese

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[15] The first letter was included in Tramezzino (Venice, 1562). The second was included in Dorico and Bressani (Rome, 1552). The third and fourth were included in Tramezzino (Venice, 1558).

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culture and society. Letters from the 1550s, 1560s and 1570s, written by the Fathers who took charge of the mission in Japan immediately after Xavier's departure in 1551,[16] appear to be of a more informative nature. They include, along with the narration of matters more strictly related to the mission, in-depth observations of Japan's geography, politics, society, language, religion and art, as well as descriptions of customs, ceremonies, cities and fortresses.[17]

The evolution in the contents of the books can easily be linked to the missionary strategies of the Jesuit order in Japan, which were reflected in the manner in which the missionaries approached their reports. Xavier describes the Japanese as "the best population that has yet been discovered, and probably the best to be found amongst the infidels"[18] and as "more obedient to reason, than any other Infidels I have met, and so curious and ready to ask, so eager to know, that they never cease to question".[19] His insistence on the concept of 'reason' derived in any probability from the influence of the thought of Thomas Aquinas. If the idea of paganism was, in the Renaissance period, an 'inclusive' category of otherness (Ryan 1981, 525), the concept of 'reason' functioned, in Thomist thought, as an element of distinction between populations that had to be converted. All people possessing the 'right reason' – namely, those who had developed written languages and a structured society – shared a common intellectual and moral framework, identified as 'natural law', from which the Christian religious system was assumed to directly derive.[20] The logical consequence of this assumption was that all beings deemed rational were considered naturally prone to convert if shown the way by means of rational instruction. The fact that Japanese society responded to natural law meant that the Jesuits had to accommodate and compromise with local customs to acquire knowledge and understanding of the Japanese language and man-

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16   The published letter-books from this period include reports by Cosme de Torres (1510-70), Balthasar Gago (1520-83), Gaspar Vilela (1525-1572), Luis De Almeida (1525-83), Francisco Cabral (1528-1609), Organtino Gnecchi Soldo (1530-1609) and Giovanni Francesco Stefanoni (1540-1603), as well as one report by Brother Lourenço (1521?-92), the first Japanese layman to have been received inside the Society of Jesus.

17   See, for example, the annual letter by Father Gaspar Vilela of 1561, published in Tramezzino 1565, which includes an extensive description of the city of Kyōto, and of the celebrations for the Gion *matsuri* and the Obon *matsuri*. For an overview of the typical contents of annual letters, see Cooper 1965.

18   "[La gente, che abbiamo conversata, è] la migliore, che sin'adesso si sia scoperta, et fra gli infedeli mi pare non si ritroveria altra migliore" (Tramezzino 1558, folio 104).

19   "Più obbedienti alla ragione, che gente infidele, che già abbia mai visto, e tanto curiosi e importuni in dimandare, tanto desiderosi del sapere, che mai finiscono di interrogare" (Tramezzino 1558, folio 126).

20   The influence of Thomist thought on the missionary approach that the Jesuits adopted in Japan has been illustrated in depth by Massarella 2008.

ners. In this manner, they could grasp the best ways to rationally demonstrate the Christian doctrine to the Japanese people. While, in concrete, not all Jesuit missionaries stationed in Japan smoothly adhered to this line of thought, this stance became the basic premise for the management of the Japanese mission in the sixteenth century, in a manner reflected in the contents of the reports sent to Europe. Alessandro Valignano, who took charge of the mission in Japan during his first trip as Father Visitor in 1579, further stressed the strive towards research and adaptation, adopting these principles as the heart of his missionary strategy.[21]

This translates into a further expansion of the range of the matters treated in the letters produced after 1580, particularly those by Father Luis Frois (1532-97). The reports include extensive narrations, sometimes in the order of a hundred or more pages, of contemporary political events, at both the local and central levels, and detailed accounts of the wars and shifts of power that involved the Christian *daimyō*. The annual letters from the years 1579, 1580 and 1581 extensively narrate the rise of Oda Nobunaga (Zanetti 1584). The reports of the years 1583 and 1584 relate Nobunaga's death and the subsequent political turmoil (Gioliti 1586). The annual letter of 1586 includes a lengthy account of the rise of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Zanetti 1588). There are even letters devoid of information related directly to the mission, like the one written by Father Luis Frois in 1595, which relates the death of the newly nominated *kanpaku* (imperial regent) at the hands of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Zannetti 1598). All these 'curious' materials were fit to respond to a precise demand from readers after the 1585 embassy, and to be integrated into ampler editorial policies such as those of the Giolito.

Even in light of such considerations, defining the readership of the letter-books from Japan is not easy. Big publishing houses can indicate the type of public for which the publications were meant, as they tended to follow a definite editorial line and address a specific public. In the case of the Giolito house, publications were intended mostly for an upper, educated middle class (Quondam 1977, 88). However, one must consider that, as Eisenstein (2005, 37) underlines, the actual readership and hypothetical targets that publishers devised did not always coincide. Moreover, smaller houses often worked on commission and published materials of a more disparate nature. Outside the big publishing centres, such as Venice and Rome, defining the type of public that had access to the books has proven to be an arduous task.

Certainly, the letter-books were devised for easy and wide circulation. In fact, all editions were in the small 'octavo' format[22] first adopted by

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21   Valignano's approach towards the East Asian missions is analyzed in depth by Ross 1999.

22   In the octavo format, the full sheet of printing paper (about 19 x 25 inches) was folded to form eight leaves (sixteen pages) (Reitz 2004, 96).

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publisher Aldo Manuzio at the beginning of the sixteenth century as a manageable format that would prove convenient to scholar-diplomats and patrician councillors of state (Eisenstein 2005, 295). As Petrucci (1977b, 140) illustrates, given its manageability, the format was also meant to attract a new public. This public, as Montecchi (1992, 355) reports, would come to include less-traditional groups of readers, primarily non-professionals, in the range of the upper middle class.[23] In time, popular books would also adopt octavo, along with other small formats. However, as Grendler (1992, 211-37) underlines, books designed for lower, uneducated classes also shared a recurring set of physical characteristics – such as the use of Gothic characters – that are not common to letter-books devoted to 'Japan letters'. In this sense, reports about Japan do not appear to fall under the flag of 'popular' literature.

As already illustrated, use of the vernacular in the letter-books can itself be deemed an indicator that the books were not exclusively addressed to a learned, professional readership. On the other hand, one must keep in mind that while not all readers knew Latin, all readers, including learned readers, knew the vernacular, and that, as Eisenstein (2005, 48) states, 'traditional' readers were still a main target for publishers and a strong driving force in the production of books.

It was through the learned readership that the letter-books came to influence a wide range of contemporary literary genres. The Jesuit reports were widely exploited not only as sources of religious histories (the most notable of which were those authored by Giovanni Pietro Maffei),[24] but also for a number of lay histories, cosmographies and collections of travel literature. For example, the Italian popular historians Mambrino Roseo (1500-80?) and Cesare Campana (1540-1606) included extensive accounts of the progress of the Christian mission in Japan in their world histories (both titled *Delle Historie del Mondo* and dated 1573 and 1598, respectively). The geographer Giovanni Lorenzo d'Anania (1545-1609) in-

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23   Nor were popular books as often conserved in libraries, nor did they usually circulate in places far from the one in which they were produced, as only educated readers with sufficient financial resources could afford the shipping expenses. The fact that letter-books published in Rome, Naples or Brescia are available today in libraries throughout Europe can, in itself, indicate the type of public that used to read them – although library consistencies, as Caputo (2016, 257) underlines, are not always a reliable indicator of diffusion.

24   The *Rerum a SocietateIesu in Oriente gestarum volumen, continens historiam iucundam lectu omnibus Christianis, praesertimijs, quibus vera Religio est cordi. In qua videre possunt, quomodo nunquam Deus Ecclesiam suam deserat, & in locum deficientium a vera fide, innumeros alios in abditissimis etiam regionibus substituat*, dated 1571, and the *Historiarvm Indicarvm Libri XVI. Selectarum item ex India Epistolarum eodem interprete Libri IV*, dated 1588. The first was the first attempt at an official history of the mission in Asia (particularly in Japan), while the second, which devoted four of its sixteen volumes to Japan, is probably the most complete and reliable sixteenth-century historical account of the Japanese Jesuit mission. Maffei is discussed in Asami 2002, 14-9.

cluded, in his cosmographical work, *L'Universale fabrica del mondo* (1573), lengthy chapters about Japan and China that relied heavily upon the Jesuit sources. Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485-1557) added to the 1554 edition of his *Navigationi et viaggi* the Italian translation of some of the earliest Jesuit letters on Japan. Richard Willes (1558-73), editor of the *History of Travayle* (1577), included in his work a discussion "Of the Island Giapan" based on Jesuit sources, while Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616), author of one of the greatest collections of travel literature in the English language (*The principal navigations, voyages and discoveries of the English nation, made by sea or over land*, first published in 1590) incorporated in his work most of the letters of Father Luis Frois on Japan.

On a more indirect level, the reports, in a way that anticipated later writings on China and the current of seventeenth-century sinophilism, fed universalistic theories that were already surfacing in European political thought. Lach (1977, 235-52) has underlined, for example, how the Jesuit writing on both Japan and China added to an interest in cultural alternatives that found its expression in the writings of such thinkers as Giovanni Botero (1544-1617).

This influence was particularly significant after 1585. Of course, Jesuit writers did not doubt the privileged status of Christendom, and the perspective of their representations of Japan remained extremely partial. Letters did not respond to objectivity in the modern sense of the term, but were conceived as rhetorical devices. As such, they interpreted and assimilated Japan through Eurocentric categories. However, by presenting Christianity as an integration rather than an alternative to Japanese culture, they set a comparison between cultures that helped open the space to a sense of cultural relativism previously unknown to Europe – one that calls for further study.

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Appendix

Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books About Japan:
a Bibliography

In Italy, the following books including letters by Jesuit missionaries stationed in Japan were published between 1552 and 1601. These include both first editions, and reprinted editions of earlier works. Some books consist in but one letter, but most of them are collections. As a whole, the letter-books include a total of about a hundred letters.

All texts listed below are, as already mentioned, in the octavo book-format. In brackets are reported the consistencies found in Italian libraries.

Avisi particolari delle Indie di Portogallo. Ricevuti in questi doi anni del 1551. & 1552. da li reverendi padri de la Compagnia de Iesu, dove fra molte cose mirabili, si vede delli paesi delle genti, & costumi loro & la grande conversioue di molti populi, che cominciano a ricevere il lume della santa fede & relligione christiana.

Rome: Valerio Dorico, et Luigi fratelli Bressani, 1552.   (11)

Nuoui auisi delle Indie di Portugallo riceuuti questo anno del 1553. doue si tratta della conuersione di molte persone principali & tra li altri d'un re signore de 11000. isole, con vna descrittione delli costumi de i giaponesi nostri antipodi & come loro riceuono la nostra santa fede.

Rome: Valerio Dorico, et Luigi fratelli Bressani, 1553.   (2)

Avisi particolari delle Indie di Portogallo. Nouamente hauuti questo anno del 1555 da li R. padri della Compagnia di Iesu doue si ha informatione delle gran cose che si fanno per augmento de la santa fede. Con la descriptione e costumi del Regno de la China, & altri paesi incogniti nouamente trouati.

Rome: Antonium Bladum, 1556.   (5)

Diversi avisi particolari dall'Indie di Portogallo ricevuti, dall'anno 1551. sino al 1558. dalli Reverendi padri della compagnia di Giesv. Dove s'intende delli paesi, delle genti, et costumi loro, et la grande conversione di molti popoli, che hanno ricevuto il lume della santa fede, et religione Christiana. Tradotti nuouamente dalla lingua Spagnuola nella Italiana.

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, [1558].[25]   (1)
Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1565.   (1)

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25 The publication date is tentative, derived from the preface.

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Nuovi avisi dell'Indie di Portogallo, ricevuti dalli Reverendi Padri della compagnia di Giesu, tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell'Italiana.

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1559.   (22)
Venice: Tramezzino, 1568.   (1)

Nuovi avisi dell'Indie di Portogallo, Riceuuti dalli Reuerendi Padri della compagnia di Giesu, tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell'Italiana, Terza parte. Col priuilegio del Sommo Pontefice, et dell'Illustrissimo Senato Veneto per anni XX.

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1562.   (1)

Nuovi avisi dell'Indie di Portogallo, Venuti nuouamente dalli R. Padri della compagnia di GIESV, & tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nella Italiana. Quarta parte. Col priuilegio del Sommo Pont. Pio IIII. Et dell'Illustriss. Senato Veneto per anni XX.

Venice: Tramezzino, 1580.   (1)

Lettere del Giapone de gli anni 74, 75, & 76. Scritte dalli reuerendi padri della Compagnia di Giesu, & di portughese tradotte nel volgare italiano.

Rome: Zanetti, 1578.   (5)
Rome: Zanetti, 1579.
(included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).
Naples: eredi di Matteo Cancer, 1580.   (1)

Lettere del Giappone scritte dalli reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Giesu. Dell'anno 1577.

Brescia: Giacomo e Policreto Turlini, 1580.   (8)
Naples: eredi di Matteo Cancer, 1580 (with the alternative title *Lettere del Giappone dell' anno MDLXXVII scritte dalli reuerendi padri della Compagnia di Giesù*).   (1)

Lettere dell'India orientale, Scritte da' Reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Giesv'. Nelle queli si scopre la grande arte vsata de gli istessi, per liberar l'anime degli infideli Indiani dalla potestà del nimico infernale, et ridurle alla nostra santa fede. Nouamente stampate, & ampliate in molti luoghi, & ricorrette con diligenza.

Venice: Antonio Ferrari, 1580.   (11)

Alcvne lettere delle cose del Giappone. Dell'anno 1579. Insino al 1581.

Rome: Zanetti, 1584. (15)
Rome: Zanetti, 1584 (with the alternative title *Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone. Scritte da' reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Iesu. Dell'anno 1579. insino al 1581*).
Rome: Zanetti, 1584. (20)
Naples: Orazio Salviani e Cesare Cesari, 1584 (with the alternative title *Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone. Scritte da' reuerendi padri della Compagnia di Iesu. Dell'anno 1579 infino al 1581*). (1)
Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1584 (with the alternative title *Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone, paese del mondo nouo, dell'anno 1579 insino al 1581*). (6)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1584. (7)
Venice: Giolito, 1585. (5)

Lettera annale portata di novo dal Giapone delle cose ivi successe l'anno M D LXXXII.

Venice: Giolito, 1585. (11)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1585 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale delle cose del Giappone del 1582*). (11)
Rome: Zanetti, 1585 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale delle cose del Giappone del 1582*). (17)

Avisi del Giapone de gli anni MDLXXXII, LXXXIII et LXXXIV. Con alcuni altri della Cina dell'LXXXIII e LXXXIV. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù.

Rome: Zanetti, 1586. (13)
Rome: Zanetti, 1586. (29)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1586. (5)
Venice: Giolito, 1586 (with the alternative title *Nvovi avvisi del Giapone con alcvni altri della Cina, del LXXXIII, et LXXXIV cavati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesv'*). (1)
Venice: Giolito, 1586 (with the alternative title *Nvovi avvisi del Giapone con alcvni altri della Cina, del LXXXIII, et LXXXIV cavati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesv'*). (1)

Viaggio nell'India Orientale.

Venice: Andrea Muschio, 1587 (included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).

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Avvisi della Cina et Giapone del fine dell'anno 1586. Con l'arriuo delli signori Giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù. Riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588.

Rome: Zanetti, 1588. (12)
Rome: Zanetti, 1588 (with the alternative title *Auuisi della Cina et Giapone del fine dell'anno 1587. Con l'arriuo delli signori giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù. Riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588*). (5)
Rome: Zanetti, 1588.
(included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).
Rome then Verona: Discepolo Girolamo, 1588. (3)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1588. (2)
Naples: Horatio Salviani, 1588. (2)
Venice: Giolito, 1588 (with the alternative title *Auuisi della Cina, et Giapone del fine dell'anno 1587. Con l'arriuo de' signori giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù, riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588*). (7)
Antwerp: Christoforo Plantino, 1588 (included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).
Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1588 (included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1589. (3)

Raguaglio d'vn notabilissimo naufragio, cauato d'vna lettera del padre Pietro Martinez, scritta da Goa al molto reuerendo P. generale della Compagnia di Giesu alli 9. di Decembre 1586.

Rome: Zanetti, 1588. (8)
Venice: Giolito, 1588. (7)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1588. (3)

Raccolta di molti auuisi del Giapone dell'anno 1582 fin all'87. Doue si tratta del progresso della fede christiana, delle varie riuolutioni, e mutationi de' Stati di quel paese, d'vna gran persecutione contra i fedeli, & altre cose notabili. Con alcun'altri auuisi della China dell'anni 83. & 84. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1590. (1)

Lettera annale del Giapone scritta al padre della Gompagnia [sic !] di Giesv alli XX. di Febraio M.D.LXXXVIII.

Rome: Zanetti, 1590. (20)
Palermo: Giovanni Antonio De Franceschi, 1590. (1)
Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1590 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale del Giapone scritta, al padre generale della Compagnia di Giesù alli 20 di febraio 1588. Con l'auiso ancora dell'arriuo delli signori giaponesi, all'isola di Macao, del regno della China*). (5)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1590 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale del Giapone scritta al padre generale della Compagnia di Giesù Alli 20. di febraro 1588*). (6)

Lettere del Giapone, et della Cina de gl'anni M.D. LXXXIX & M.D. XC. Scritte al r.p. generale della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1591.   (18)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1592.   (3)
Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1592.   (8)
Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1592.   (4)

Ragguaglio d'alcune missioni delle Indie Orientali, & Occidentali. Cavato da alcun auuisi scritti gli anni 1590. et 1591.

Rome: Zanetti, 1592.   (10)
Rome: Zanetti, 1592.   (7)
Rome, Turin: Zanetti, 1593.   (3)
Naples: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino e Antonio Pace, 1593.   (1)
Bologna: Benacci, 1593 (with the alternative title *Ragguaglio d'alcuni auisi notabili dell'Indie Orientali, & Occidentali. Con l'arriuo delli signori ambasciatori Giaponesi alli loro stati. Cauato da alcune lettere scritte gli anni 1590. & 1591. Da i PP. Pietro Martinez prouinciale dell'India Orientale, Giouanni d'Atienza prouinciale del Peru, Pietro Diaz prouinciale del Messico*).   (2)

Copia di due lettere annue scritte dal Giapone del 1589. & 1590. L'vna dal p. viceprouinciale al p. Alessandro Valignano, l'altra dal p. Luigi Frois al p. Generale della Compagnia di Giesu. Et dalla spagnuola nella italiana lingua tradotte dal p. Gasparo Spitilli della Compagnia medesima.

Rome: Zanetti, 1593.   (12)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1593.   (3)
Brescia: Policreto Turlino, 1593.   (1)
Brescia: Policreto Turlino, 1598.   (1)

Lettera del Giapone degli anni 1591. Et 1592. Scritta al R.P. generale della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1595.   (11)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1595.   (2)
Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1595.   (4)
Mantova: Francesco Osanna, 1595.   (1)

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Lettera annua del Giapone del marzo del 1593, sino al marzo del 94.

Rome: Zanetti, 1597.   (10)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1597.   (1)

Copia di due lettere scritte dal P. Organtino bresciano della Compagnia di Giesu dal Meaco del Giapone. Al molto r. in Christo p.n. il p. Claudio Acquauiua preposito generale. Tradotte dal p. Gio. Battista Peruschi romano della medesima Compagnia.

Rome: Zanetti, 1597.   (12)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1597.   (5)
Verona: Girolamo Discepolo, 1597.   (1)

Ragguaglio della morte di Quabacondono, scritta dal p. Luigi Frois della Compagnia di Giesu, dal Giappone nel mese d'ottobre del 1595. Et dalla portoghesa nella lingua italiana tradotta dal P. Gasparo Spitilli di Campli.

Rome: Zanetti, 1598.   (11)

Copia d'vna lettera annua scritta dal Giapone nel 1595. al r. p. Claudio Acquauiua generale della Compagnia di Giesu. Et dalla portoghesa nella lingua italiana tradotta dal p. Gasparo Spitilli.

Rome: Zanetti, 1598.   (11)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1598.   (5)

Relazione mandata da don Francesco Teglio gouernatore, e capitano generale dell'isole Filippine, intorno al martirio de i sei frati spagnuoli, dell'Ordine di San Francesco dell'osseruanza. Crocifissi nel Giappone l'anno 1597, con venti altre persone giapponese che con esso loro morirono, animati e conuertiti da gl'istessi santi frati, nella loro predicazione. In lingua spagnuola castigliana stampata in Siuiglia, e nell'italiana fauella tradotta dal r.p. frat'Angelo Celestino theologo, e predicatore nel Duomo di Firenze.

Rome: Niccolò Muzi, 1598.   (1)
Venice: Marcello Iseppo, 1598.   (1)
Urbino: Bartolomeo e Simone Ragusi, 1598.   (1)
Rome: Francesco Osanna, 1598.   (1)
Naples: Giacomo Carlino, 1599.   (1)

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Relatione della gloriosa morte di ventisei posti in croce per comandamento del re di Giappone, alli 5. di febraio 1597. de' quali sei furono religiosi di S. Francesco, tre della Compagnia di Giesu, & dicisette christiani Giapponesi, mandata dal p. Luigi Frois alli 15. di marzo al r. p. Claudio Aquauiua e fatta in italiano dal p. Gasparo Spitilli di Campli.

Rome: Zanetti, 1599.	(6)
Rome: Zanetti, 1599.	(4)
Bologna: eredi di Giovanni Rossi, ad instanza di Gasparo Bindoni, 1599.	(4)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1599.	(3)

Trattato d'alcuni prodigii occorsi l'anno 1596. nel Giappone. Mandato dal p. Luigi Frois, della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1599.	(3)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte.	(4)

Lettera annua del Giappone dell'anno 1596. Scritta dal p. Luigi Froes, al r.p. Claudio Acquauiua generale della Compagnia di Giesù. Tradotta in italiano dal p. Francesco Mercati romano della stessa Copmpagnia.

Rome: Zanetti, 1599.	(11)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1599.	(2)
Venice (Padua): Francesco Bolzetta, 1599.	(10)

Relatione del martirio, che sei padri scalzi di San Francesco et venti Giaponesi christiani patirono nel Giapone l'anno 1597. Scritta dal R.P. fra Gio. di Santa Maria & tradotta dalla lingua spagnuola nella italiana, per ordine del R.P. fra Gioseppe di Santa Maria.

Rome: Niccolò Muzi, 1599.	(2)
Naples: Antonio Pace, 1600.	(1)

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Theoretical Study of Social Hybridity
Possibilities for Social Change Theory
in the Age of Globalisation

Hirofumi Utsumi
(Otemon Gakuin University, Osaka, Japan)

Abstract   The purpose of this paper is to show the new directions for reconstruction of the concept of society made possible by another concept – that of hybridity. First we shall argue that in the era of globalisation, the conventional view perceiving society as a self-fulfilling entity is no longer valid. Next, we will critically review the spatial and temporal frameworks, which have served as the basis for the concept of society so far, basing our analysis on the recent theories of space and time. We shall then focus on the concept of hybridity, showing that it can serve as a pivot providing us with the clue for reconstruction of society making the latter valid again. Although 'hybridity' is a term predominantly used in cultural research, here we shall try to look at it from a sociological perspective. We shall demonstrate that 'social hybridity' presents a new way to see society as a complex entity made of various interactions both within and across borders. Lastly, in order to show how this theory can be applied in empirical research, we shall introduce the concept of 'zones of interactivity'. We will show that the 'social hybridity' approach built around a core of the 'zone' concept makes it possible to resurrect 'society' helping us to see the present social change from a completely new perspective.

Summary   1 Globalisation and Difficulty of Conceptualisation of 'Society'. – 2 Rethinking Time and Space. – 3 Social Hybridity. – 4 Zone-Based Theory of Social Change.

Keywords   Globalisation. Social change. Society. Time. Space. Social hybridity. Zone.

1   Globalisation and Difficulty of Conceptualisation of 'Society'

Today, it is difficult to advance any theory of social change without mentioning the concept of globalisation. Here is why.

Steger and James (Steger, James 2015), in their work exploring the history of the concept of globalisation, show that, actually, the word globalisation first appeared as early as the 1930s. But it is only after the 1990s that its use saw a truly dramatic expansion. As Steger and James note, the concept "erupted in the 1990s with explosive energy in both public

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and academic discourses that sought to make sense of momentous social change"(Steger, James 2015, 3). It has often been mentioned that, partly due to the rapid fashion, in which the use of the concept spread, there is no sufficiently entrenched common understanding of what it actually stands for. A book by Held et al., published at the comparatively early stage of 1999 (Held et al. 1999), classified the discourse involving globalisation into three most prominent ideal types of theories. The most important point made is the confrontation between the hyperglobalists, who regard globalisation as a new era, in which people all over the world are yielding to the rules of the market on one hand, and the skeptics, who assert that globalisation is a mere ideological myth, exaggerating the trend that has been in progress from the nineteenth century, on the other. This confrontation shows that the question of whether globalisation itself is real has been one of the main points at issue in the theory of globalisation.

But, be it as it may, a little over twenty years have already passed since the time when the concept of globalisation first came into fashion, although the way people have construed globalisation has not remained unchanged during this period. As of 2017, a compact book with a generalised overview of globalisation by Steger has been revised three times since its initial publication in 2003, and there the question of whether the phenomenon of globalisation does, in fact, exist or not is no longer an issue. The theories advanced in the book are built on the assumption that globalisation is a fact – and, at the same time, an ideology. Steger focuses on the ideological dimension of globalisation and divides globalism into three ideal types (Steger 2017, 109-27). The first is 'market globalism', which pursues the principle of the free market, the second is 'justice globalism', which demands global solidarity and distributive justice, and the third is 'religious globalism', which strives to mobilise people across the globe to protect religious values. Rizvi and Lingard (2010, 22-43) look into the relationship between globalisation and education policies. They present three viewpoints helpful for understanding globalisation in a way similar to that of Steger, namely, of globalisation as an empirical fact, as an ideology, and as a change of social imagination including people's identities and aspirations.

What we can gather from this recent research is that the word 'globalisation', having passed through a stage where it was used to represent the novelty of the reality experienced by people during recent times, is gradually and increasingly being registered within the humanities and social sciences as a concept useful for analysis of present-day social change.

The more globalisation establishes itself as one of the fundamental concepts within the humanities and social sciences, the more the already established fundamental concepts of the two spheres are required to undergo certain changes. The concept of social change is one of them. One can go even further, and say that the concept of social change is among

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a number of concepts to have been impacted to an especially profound degree as a result of the rise of the concept of globalisation. Particularly at issue here is not only the concept of change, but also – and even more so – that of society, which so far has been the unit delimiting the range of that change. The reason for this is that the concept of globalisation today is dealing a series of devastating blows to the concept of society, which has up to now been the cornerstone for the theory of social change. "Globalisation has had a critical impact on the theory of social change because it leaves us with no choice but to reexamine 'society', that is, the very ground upon which the phenomenon of change is supposed to occur". (Koto 2011, 78).

The difficulties experienced by the concept of society, due to globalisation, have been pointed out by many. One brief, but very insightful analysis, particularly worthy of mention, is that of Koto (Koto 2011, 84-100). As a sociologist, Koto argues that the difficulty, faced by the concept of society in the present age, springs from three habits of thought, namely: the standard of self-fulfillment, comparativism and the theory of endogenous development. The standard that has been used until recently to define the concept of society was the idea of self-fulfillment or self-sufficiency, which presumes that an entity, worthy of being called a 'society', needs to create all of the functions for its survival by itself, and not not being dependent on other societies for supply of such functions. As long as it is defined based on this standard of self-fulfillment, a society is conceptualised as a unique individual entity, much like a biological species. What is used to confirm and finalise the individuality of each society is comparison. In it, we first establish certain variables common to all societies and then, by looking at the values of each variable in each society and their combinations, arrive at the distinctive features of each one. Just as a society is viewed as a set of inner variables, social change is perceived as originating from inner factors. Now, if endogenous development is chosen as a standard, exogenous development is perceived as an inferior type of social change. It should be noted that no such completely self-fulfilling society exists in reality. Nevertheless, a large body of research across the humanities and social sciences has been based on none other than this concept of society. And one upshot of the spread of the concept of globalisation is that the limits of conceptualising societies in this way have been amply demonstrated to us.

If we are to redevelop the theory of social change in this age of globalisation, we cannot do it without coming up with a new theory that would re-establish the concept of society. How are we to address this task? What new horizons will we find, regarding the issue of social change? The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate one way of answering these questions.

2   Rethinking Time and Space

Let us start by considering some recent discussions regarding perceptions of space and time. The difficulty faced by the concept of society, according to Koto, is closely associated with, firstly, the spatial perception of the concept which presupposes that a society is self-fulfilling and, secondly, its temporal aspect assuming that it develops endogenously. The recent attempts to revise these ideas regarding space and time shall surely prove useful for creating a new concept of society, fit for the age of globalisation.

Some clues for that purpose can be found in the works of the geographer Massey (2005) and the historian Hunt (2015). Both base their discussions on the globalisation theory that is most prominent today – one that holds globalisation to be an inescapable process, driven by economical, scientific, and technological powers – and has been present in a wide range of discourses, popular, political, and journalistic alike. This view of globalisation has been subjected to much critique to the purport that this discourse paints globalisation as if it were an inescapable law of nature, while in truth it is nothing more than an ideology masking a man-made attempt to mold the world in a certain way. Moreover, this ideologically promoted globalisation results in high inequality and has caused many problems, including the poverty and discontent of many.[1] Nevertheless, this kind of globalisation theory has been circulating as if it were the only option available, a tale that is supposed to tell it all. This trend has also had a large impact on geography and historical scholarship, causing all kinds of problems to the way these fields operate. And is why Massey and Hunt have been both trying to find a new footing for their respective disciplines, geography and history, in the age of globalisation. Their aim is to revise the perception of geographical space and historical time, re-molding them in ways befitting the present era.

Firstly, what Massey tries to unravel, regarding the concept of space, is the problem posed by our conventional habit of thought that defines space as absence of time. The concept of time is often used to stand for motions and flows, for changes in the ways things are produced, for all the dynamism intrinsically embedded in our world. The concept of space, on the other hand, has often been criticised for being a static category, one that snatches away all motion from the world and freezes it. This sort of conceptualisation of space has been particularly prominent in the understanding of modernity. When theorising modernity, people have stripped all movement from the world, based on this understanding of space as a demarcated and static entity, imagining societies and cultures as immovable and united wholes isolated from everything else. And these spaces,

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[1] Appadurai 2006 is an attempt to give an understanding of this point from a broad perspective.

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or societies/cultures, were all interpreted as different stages of a unitary time – a time that is called 'evolution' or 'civilisation'. This development is known as the 'conquest of time by space', that is, the 'spatialisation of time'. What Massey argues is that an opposite conquest has also simultaneously occurred – the conquest of space by time. When spatial representations are all arranged in their respective places in just one available narrative, the diversity inherent in space is ignored and waved away as a mere diversity of stages within a singular time series.

The rise of the globalisation theory catalysed a tremendous interest in space. Instead of the conventional imaginary of bounded and static spaces, we have increasingly begun to share a new perception of a global space without boundaries, with free fluidity and interconnection inside it. But, according to Massey, the image of space created by globalisation is surprisingly not all that far removed from its counterpart in theories of modernity. Globalisation draws a picture of a unitary global space, which is, in fact, comprised of the same divided spaces. Furthermore, these spaces, incorporated into a solitary whole, are dealt with in the same way – their diversity is perceived as a diversity of stages along the inescapable advent of time, whose name is globalisation. The flows and interconnections that are born between spaces are imagined as transboundary flows and interconnections that traverse all static spaces in the same way. And, just as it was before, space here is still not envisaged as hosting diversity either. Globalisation theory sees space as heterogeneous, filled with coexisting others who, although contemporaries, differ from each other in terms of their place on the unitary timeline. It also fails to recognise the diversities and antagonisms, the future indeterminism and political possibilities that are the essential properties of space. According to Massey, the currently hegemonic globalisation theory is not at all spatial, in the sense that it ignores the contemporaneity of the mutually different narratives that comprise spaces – in fact, it is quite the contrary. "My argument is that this narrative of globalisation is not spatialised" (Massey 2005, 88). What Massey proposes to do is to prop up our social theories and political thinking with the spatial dimension – thus recognising the heterogeneity of the contemporaries – and to see the social as the relationships of co-construction that happen through negotiation between them.

Hunt, on the other hand, briefly looking back on the development of historical science over the years, attempts to find a metanarrative that would be more appropriate in the present age. Historical science underwent a substantial change of format between the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, and that change was linked to a switch towards national narratives. Then, after the Second World War, history adopted metanarratives, such as Marxism, modernisation theory, École des Annales, and identity politics, all attempting to give overarching interpretations to macro-historical developments. But from

the 1960s, with the rise of a number of cultural theories – postcolonialism, cultural studies, structuralism, post-structuralism, postmodernism and the linguistic and cultural turns among them – a lot of historical work has been written with a focus on the cultural aspect. Historians who focused on the autonomy of culture demolished the former historical metanarrative trend that was based on such assumptions as that culture should be explained from the point of view of society or national-based teleological narratives. But the cultural-historical theory did not produce any metanarratives, which made it difficult for historical science to create overarching interpretations of macro-historical developments. It is in this context that the globalisation theory came to be influential among historians. By asserting anew the teleological metanarrative of inescapable economy-driven globalisation – the very narrative that the cultural theory was supposed to have destroyed – the globalisation theory is steering historical science towards research of macro-historical developments again.

Hunt gives some credit to the interest in macro-history in evidence in the present field of global history. At the same time, she is calling for great caution regarding the the global historiography's tendency of adopting a new teleological metanarrative of an inescapable, economy-driven globalisation. What Hunt, who expertly knows both the achievements and the limitations of cultural theory, is after is a non-teleological metanarrative that would induce interest in general historical development. To achieve that, Hunt attempts to reconsider self and society, which are the basic concepts of historiography, and what she arrives at is a possibility for metanarratives that are open to interdependence with other societies. One example she gives is that of a global history research created from a bottom-up perspective, focusing on specific products and networks of ethnic groups. A transboundary circulation of things and people may create a space of intermediary interactions or invent devices to support them. The development of this kind of interactions between societies exists in a reciprocal relationship with changes in people's tastes or choices. Interpreting changes in people and societies with non-teleological narratives that are open to interactions with other societies is, according to Hunt, the direction historians must take.

Let us now look these two discussions and try to see what suggestions for a new concept of society we can derive from them. Massey's attempt at a revision of the concept of space is in stark opposition to an understanding of space as a self-fulfilling entity – an understanding that has always been plaguing the concept of society. Massey's concept of space as heterogeneous, filled with coexisting others, who are contemporaries to each other, suggests that society should also be similarly imagined as a space of heterogeneity. In the same way, Hunt's revision of the historical science's metanarratives is in stark opposition to the narrative of endogenous development that has always been plaguing the concept of society.

Hunt's concept of time, as a non-teleological narrative, based on interactions with other societies, suggests that society should also be similarly imagined through interaction with other societies.[2]

Society, as a heterogeneous space, open to interactions with other societies, is the clue we get from the discussions of Massey and Hunt that could help us to rethink our concept of society.

3 Social Hybridity

One attempt to revise the concept of society in a direction closely resembling the one that can be found in the work of Massey and Hunt has been made by the above-mentioned Koto (2006, 2011). The starting point of his discussion is not so much globalisation but, rather, the doubts he entertained regarding how to position the experience of modern Japan within the modernisation theory framework. This section mainly deals with the analysis of the revision of the concept of society by Koto by focusing on its relationship with the modernisation theory, but in Utsumi (2017), the starting point was the comparison with the anthropological hybridity theory. The two are complementary.

There are many variations of social changes, and the two probably most prominent methods of looking at them are the endogenous development theory and the exogenous development theory. The endogenous development theory explains social change by focusing on endogenous factors, while exogenous development theory searches for exogenous ones. The two theories do not perceive the two forms of social change as equal – they are ranked in terms of their value. Purely endogenous development is seen as the normal form of social change, while exogenous development, wherein the purity of a society is lost due to exogenous factors, is perceived as a more deviant form, inferior to endogenous change. This view that puts greater value on endogenous development has been cherished by sociologists for quite a long time.

Modernisation theory is a typical example of a theory stressing endogenous development. The theory became fashionable after the Second World War with its Cartesian plane of the North, South, East and West – the very basis for understanding societies in the twentieth century. This Cartesian plane had socialism and capitalism on the East-West horizontal axis, and the developed and the developing countries going North-South on the vertical axis: the idea was that any society can be placed somewhere on this coordinate system. The theory was highly influential in all kinds of social

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2 Furthermore, it is very interesting that Massey in her revision of space focuses on multidimensional time, while Hunt in her revision of time focuses on multidimensional space.

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endeavours, from sciences and media to international politics. Built on the basis of this coordinate system, modernisation theory drew a model of human development/history towards modernity – the capitalist state – as the final destination, and theorised the process that takes us there. This theory, which was modelled on the process of modernisation in the West, paid great attention to the struggles between endogenous traditions of societies, on the one hand, and modernity, on the other. Modernisation theory flourished in Western countries and, especially, the US as a way of understanding the evolution of developing countries after decolonisation.

From this point of view, the modernisation of Japan is a typical case of exogenous development. And the reason is that modernisation in Japan, which has been going on since the Meiji period (1868-1912), was driven by contacts with modernity in Western Europe, that is, an external factor. This is why the modernisation of Japan has been perceived as a form deviating from endogenous modernisation (the pure type), and it has often been pointed out that the process here was delayed and distorted, due to the persistence of indigenous traditions.

This sort of view prevailed for a long time, but started to change – and drastically so – after the 1970s. First of all, the East-West axis began to lose its credibility. This was partly due to such forerunners as Bell, with his *The End of Ideology* (1960), and Parsons (1951), with the systems' convergence theory, but what really determined the end of this world view is postmodernism. Since the 1970s, centring on Western Europe, postmodernism took the world by storm as a word expressing the tide of social change. Postmodern theory is, as made clear by its very name, a critique of the modernisation theory. While modernisation theory regarded modernity as the final destination, postmodernism sees this same period as the time when modernity undergoes certain changes, or disappears, or as an era after modernity that leaves modernity behind. According to the postmodern theory, one of the main characteristics of the era that comes after modernity is pastiche, a conglomeration of many heterogeneous elements. With the rise of the postmodernism we have seen the former opposition between East and West in many spheres being substituted with the opposition of modern and postmodern.

As the analytic viability of the East/West axis deteriorated, the South/North classification began to rise in status. The dependency theory by Frank (1967) and the world system theory by Wallerstein (1974) are worthy of special mention, as both advanced perspectives that view the South and the North not separately, but as elements of the same global (economic) system. These theories also chose modernisation theory as the target of their criticism. The modernisation theory, which is a set of notions explaining endogenous development, asserted that the reason why developing countries cannot arrive at their final destination, modernity, is because of certain inner factors. The dependency theory and the world

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system theory, on the other hand, postulated that the reason is actually an external variable – the permanent 'satellisation' or exploitation of the peripheral South by the central North. But, although the relationship between the North and the South has been reanalysed in a more sophisticated way, reality soon proved it wrong. The countries of the South, which used to be perceived as peripheral, began to pose an ever greater threat to the North, the centre, by the end of the twentieth century. The rise of the newly industrialising economies (or the newly industrialising countries) – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), etc – all exemplify this new trend. And, as the South/North division started to lose its analytic power, what appeared to take its place was the concept of globalisation. The point of view presented by the globalisation theory focuses on external factors and global systems. In that sense, it is a successor to both the dependency theory and the world system theory, but it also differs from the two as it does not hold the distinction between the South and the North as – speaking in mathematical terms – a fixed point. Since the 1990s, we have seen the globalisation theory taking the world by storm, just as the postmodern theory did in its day – and replacing it.

Thus, with both coordinate axes – North/South and East/West – no longer viable, modernisation theory itself gradually lost its validity. And, following its invalidation, the positioning of the experience of Japan in the modern era has also started to change. Japanese modernisation, which was perceived negatively within the framework of modernisation theory, as heavily influenced by the vestiges of the premodern era, was positively evaluated within the postmodern theory, as precursory to the postmodern era; in the context of North-South intergradation, meanwhile, it was lauded as the forerunner of economic development.

The way Koto sees Japan's experience partly overlaps with these views and partly diverges from them. Firstly, he focuses on the assertions of postmodern theory to the effect that modernity is being transformed. He also admits that, in terms of the phenomena we are speaking about, there are aspects of postmodernism and the experience of Japan in the modern era that closely resemble each other. However, the mechanisms of the two are completely different. The concept of postmodernism was created on the basis of the experience of the West to express the process of autochthonous change of modernity on the temporal axis. What we can see in Japan's experience, on the other hand, is the process of change undergone by modernity, which had been produced in the West in the course of its migration across the non-Western space.

Contrary to the assumptions of the modernisation theory, the export of modernity to non-Western spaces is not a subordinate phenomenon. One of the most distinguishing features of Western modernity has been its high capacity to export itself to other cultures. The reason why modernity man-

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aged to spread to every nook and corner of the world is because it could effectively function even beyond its native Western context, due to the fact that it could integrate itself into any kind of different conditions. If this capacity for self-dissemination is one of the essential qualities of modernity, the transformations that happen in the course of it are an essential trait as well. The dissemination of modernity to the non-Western world triggers reciprocal actions between it and native traditions. If we call the process of the intermixing of modernity and native traditions 'hybridisation', it can easily produce phenomena that are very similar to what is perceived as the distinctive feature of the postmodern era, that is, phenomena, such as the 和魂洋才 (*wakon yosai*, 'Japanese spirit and Western learning'), in evidence in modern-day Japan. In this way, modernity is not something constructed out of Western qualities only, and neither is it in any way complete. Modernity can evolve in two ways: through temporal and through spatial movement. As opposed to the former, which is called 'postmodernity', Koto proposes to call the latter 'hybrid modernity'. He asserts that the experience of Japan in the modern era is a typical example of hybrid modernity – a state brought about by the spatial movement of modernity.

Koto adds two more points to elucidate the process of hybridisation. One is that when modernity is ex/imported to another place, it is never ex/imported as is. Such movement of modernity is generated through the interaction between the place of origin and the place of destination. As a term to refer to the unit of modernity movement, Koto uses the word 'module' based on a concept formulated by Anderson (2006), defining it as a resource processing program, standardized as a basic unit of social institution. He sees module as a program that is capable of functioning in a great variety of social terrains (relatively independently from the context of its homeland) and of composing – at these social terrains – various social institutions (Koto 2011, 37). The modularisation of modernity is determined through the interaction between the place of origin, which standardises the original system, so that it becomes easier to transfer elsewhere, and the place of destination, which selects it in a form that makes it easier to adopt.

The second aspect of hybridisation is that, when modernity is ex/imported to another place, it never takes root as is, but only when it gets entwined with the various elements existing at its place of destination. During this process, modernity acquires a new meaning through binding with native traditions. In the same way, native traditions also undergo a transformation, as they bind with the modularised modernity. And, with both modernity and the native traditions getting restructured in an emergent way in the course of their interaction, modernity becomes capable of smoothly operating in a new context. This very process of the emergent restructuring of modernity and tradition is what Koto calls "hybridisation".

Koto links his theory of hybrid modernity to the globalisation theory, which has been gaining power since the 1990s. According to his view,

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modernity is being exported all over the world and globalisation is the term coined to refer to this very process – only characterised by highly increased speed and scale. Globalisation is, thus, the process whereby hybrid modernity is promoted on a world-wide scale.

Now, if we are to analyse this process of globalisation, the current concept of society, established on the basis of self-fulfillment, is an unsuitable one, as I mentioned earlier. This is why Koto tries to revise the concept based on his theory of hybrid modernity. He does it from the viewpoint of social hybridity (heterogeneity). What Koto suggests by this concept is the diversity and unity of structure, which can be seen on two social levels. One is the multidimensionality and unity of individual societies, which are open to interaction with other societies. Societies are not self-fulfilling, they are open to multidimensional interactions with other societies, and hybridisation occurs through such interactions. A society is a result of the unification of diverse modernity and traditions, which are restructured in an emergent way by hybridisation. The second level is the multidimensionality and unity of society, transgressing the borders of individual societies. What creates such a society is multidimensional interactions, which stretch far, ranging over many societies. Based on these interactions that traverse two or more societies, we see the emergence of an entity that is more overarching, a society going across individual ones. If hybridisation is a temporal metaphor describing the contact and emergence of modernity and native traditions, we can say that hybridity is a spatial metaphor describing the multidimensionality and unity of society that makes hybridisation possible.

With his idea of social hybridity, Koto arrives at a new image of society, a society open to interactions with other societies, on the one hand, and constructed through such interactions that go across all societies, on the other. He suggests that to understand globalisation, we need to pay attention to these interactions, crucial in the creation of societies. Koto calls his theoretical stance 'macro-internationalism'.

His suggestions regarding the revision of the concept of society overlap with those of Massey and Hunt, as examined in the preceding section. The viewpoint presented by the concept of social hybridity deals with the problems posed by the ideas of self-fulfillment of societies and superiority of endogenous development. Simultaneously, it paves the way towards a recognition of transborder movements of people, things, information, capital, etc., as well as towards a recognition of hybridisation that occurs concurrently with this movement – recognition through connection between societies. Comparativism is still a viable method for the analysis of social hybridity, interactions, hybridisation, etc., but with this different concept of society, the resulting research is less likely to perceive a society as an endogenously developing self-fulfilling unit.

The viewpoint of social hybridity proposed by Koto gives us one possible direction for salvaging the theoretical viability of the concept of society.

4 Zone-Based Theory of Social Change

Based on the theoretical revision of the concept of society by Koto, we can conceptualise social change in the following way. Social change is a change of hybridisation, hybridity of society, and the forms of interactivity, predominantly triggered by the multidimensional interactions configuring society.

We can list several empirical studies that adduce concrete examples of this theoretical image,[3] and one of the most interesting is the special zone theory by the anthropologist Ong (2006).[4] Her focus is on neo-liberalism in Asian nations. Ong does not believe neo-liberalism to be a homogeneous political and economic environment, formed by global capitalism. She sees neo-liberalism as a logic that moves across all kinds of political spaces interacting with various governmental and economic environments of different localities. As the theory of neo-liberalism gets linked to all kinds of native political and economic spaces, we see an emergence of a diverse political and economic environment, which is by no means unitary. One mechanism for this kind of hybridisation, according to Ong, is the institution of 'zones'.

In the process of connecting with neo-liberal logic, countries in East and Southeast Asia established discontinuous spaces (zones) within their nation-states, states that can be authoritarian or socialistic, allowing, as an exception, neo-liberalism to inhabit these spaces – she calls it "neoliberalism as exception" (Ong 2006, 3). These zones can be labour zones, travel zones, zones of natural resources, production zones, zones of science and technology, free trade zones, investment zones, etc. They are differentiated from other zones by mechanisms of taxation, rights of workers, surveillance, citizenship, social welfare, and preferential treatment. Thereby, each special zone is placed within cross-border multidimensional interactions, attracting investments and business enterprises from overseas, inducing inflows of technologies and technical knowledge. By furnishing spaces on the state's own territory, adapted to welcome global capital, or reinforcing legal procedures and practices to support economic activities there, or playing the part of an intermediary or provider of infrastructure and cheap labour force for global capital, the state gains new justification for its existence. Ong calls this kind of flexible use of sovereignty "graduated sovereignty" (2006, 75).

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3   As an example of such empirical research, Koto (2012) adduces a work by Weber entitled *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilisations*.

4   Koto got inspiration for his theory of hybrid modernity from Weber's phrase "universal significance and validity" (Koto 2011, 24-5). When Ong is looking for an approach to global phenomena, she brings up the same phrase by Weber (Collier, Ong 2005, 10-1). Ong et al. propose understanding Weber's term "universal" on two levels, and advance their approach to global phenomena based on the meaning of the word referring to an ability to get connected to all kinds of contexts. It is the same approach as that of Koto.

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The special zones created in this way often become closely intertwined with the hierarchy related to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc., and are often accompanied by the reduction or suspension of the institution of citizenship. Moreover, they create risk-ignoring attitudes, new kinds of rights and life chances, and a sense of values that puts greater emphasis on industriousness, teamwork, and relationships in a way that makes it look as if it has always been a part of the state's traditions. And what makes the countries of East and Southeast Asia as they are today is these sorts of elements generated through hybridisation – united in a single entity. Furthermore, interactions happening via these special zones and extending across countries are creating imagined communities that go beyond the boundaries set by political confrontations or tensions.

Ong's assertions regarding special zones overlap to a considerable extent with the image of social hybridity and social change based on it, which have been proposed by Koto. Ong's empirical research is a useful example if we want to enflesh the bones of Koto's theoretical research. We can actually go even further than that. If we agree to perceive her work as something larger than a mere description of an empirical case, we can elaborate on Ong's theory of special zones to make our image of social hybridity more suitable for practical use. Here is what I mean by this.

A special zone is in fact – just as its name suggests – literally a special zone. The concept of the special zone is very much present in today's Japan. But it is not limited to the phenomena of 'neo-liberalism as exception' in Asian nations and can be applied to other phenomena as well. For example, in the past, there have been places, such as enclaves for foreign residents, which, although they were not called 'special zones', still were very similar. In addition to such relatively clearly defined zones, cities, where interaction with other societies is relatively stronger than in rural areas, can be said to be qualitatively closer to special zones than villages. Conversely, some peripheral regions of Japan happen to be a part of cross-border interaction to a greater degree than some urban areas. This assertion holds true in locales other than Japan as well. For example, in the Central African Republic, the capital city of Bangui, with its numerous international organisations, bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries, NGOs, etc., is constantly interacting with the outer world and, thus, has more special-zone properties than other areas of the same country. Certain other areas in the Central African Republic may be engaged in a different kind of transborder interactions from those of Bangui, the capital.[5] Societies thus contain all kinds of different zones, but still function as a coherent whole. Moreover, transborder interactions connecting

[5] Arrangements of military forces in the Central African Republic since the war that has been going in the country since 2012 or various cross border diamond trade supply chains are good examples (Amnesty International 2015).

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spaces with properties of special zones create regional societies that go beyond individual states-societies, such as Japan or the Central African Republic. Thus, in addition to literal 'special zones', we can perceive all kinds of spaces with all kinds of standards or scales as spaces that belong to both societies with borders and to cross-boundary societies.

Let us recap the arguments we have made so far. The concept of zones proves useful when we want to connect such theoretical images as social hybridity, and social change that occurs based on it, with empirical research. The most important point provided by the zone theory is that it makes us see the phenomena that belong to both societies with borders and to cross-boundary ones. These are spaces that are open to interactions on this side of the border and, at the same time, to cross-boundary interactions with other societies. Through the multidimensional interactions happening within the boundaries as well as across them, we have the movement of people, things, information, capital, etc., causing hybridisation. The various elements, newly created through hybridisation, get incorporated inside societies with borders and cross-boundary societies; they change the shape of societies' hybridity, the shape of interactions between societies, and the manner of hybridisation.

Koto focuses on the concept of module, singling it out to refer to the medium for interaction between societies, and when one focuses on modules only, discussion inevitably inclines towards the hybridity of culture. On the other hand, if we see zones as a medium serving as the intermediary for interactions between societies, it becomes easier to analyse the hybridity of culture generated through modules in connection with the hybridity of society and interactions between societies. The concept of zones thus makes it possible to approach the hybridity of both culture and society.

Now, if we are to approach the present era's social change that is called globalisation, on the basis of this concept of zones, what kind of subjects will we be faced with? Interaction between societies through zones is not a new phenomenon. Long before the concept of globalisation came into fashion, zonal interaction was one of the most important drivers of social change. Accordingly, if we wish to develop a globalisation theory based on this concept of zones, the most essential task will be to compare the forms of social change before and after the globalisation concept came into fashion. In other words, what we need to ascertain is what kinds of changes happened after the popularisation of the concept of globalisation: changes to the way zones exist, to how interactions between societies through zones – both cross-boundary interactions and interactions that do not cross the borders of the state, etc. – happen; changes to the shape of hybridisation through interactions between societies, to the process of incorporation into societies of various elements emerging as a result of hybridisation, and to the state of hybridity of societies including its zones. The first steps towards creating a new globalisation theory, based on the

concept of zones, shall entail an empirical analysis of such questions, and the establishment of a conceptual foundation.[6]

Of course, globalisation is not the only subject-matter for modern social change theory; in all likelihood, it is not even a subject of primary importance. However, it does seem that the impact of globalisation on social change theory is too significant to be neglected, insofar as it gives us an opportunity to review all kinds of issues, such as the possibilities or scope of social change theory – questions, which have hitherto often been discussed in different ways – from a completely new angle.

At the very least, the viewpoint that the concept of zones provides shall serve as one of the main pillars for the creation of a new theory of social change, other than the theory of globalisation that is in power in the world today.

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6 The researcher's interest shall determine what subject matter to look into on the basis of the zone concept. The Author is currently writing a paper with empirical research based on the concept that hopefully will serve as one example of what this perspective can achieve.

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Help the Poor, Help Ourselves
Merging Individual and Collective Interests in the Official Discourse on Japanese ODA since 2000

Marco Zappa
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract Japanese ODA has attracted much attention in the last three decades. This paper aims to shed light on the intellectual evolution of the official discourse on Japanese ODA based on the analysis of two main 'modes of thought' at the foundation of it, namely national interest and international affiliation. Based on a detailed content analysis of official documents and public debates, the paper will take the role of institutional actors – Japanese political leaders, foreign ministers and intellectuals – into consideration. The role of such "entrepreneurs" has been crucial for shaping the current official discourse on Japanese foreign aid. The paper will argue, in fact, that the official discourse is a juxtaposition of two clashing ideas carefully shaped to enlarge the consensus (both domestic and external) toward the Japanese government's policies.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Historical Evolution of Japanese ODA and its 'human turn' – 3 Japan's ODA in the New Millennium: Two Opposed Visions Merged Together. – 4 Conclusion.

Keywords Japanese foreign aid. International development. Ideas. Discourse. Public policy. Sociology of knowledge.

1 Introduction

In the last fifty years, Japanese Official development assistance (or Overseas Development Assistance, ODA) has undergone several transformations. Guiding concepts and philosophies have been transformed too in this process of evolution. How have they been integrated in one single discourse?

The main argument of this paper will be that these changes were the result of both external and internal structural factors (i.e., the emergence of new dominant philosophies in the field of international development and changes in the Government of Japan's policy priorities). At the same time, these changes were brought about because of the action of "intellectual entrepreneurs" (cf. Schmidt 2008) pushing forward their agenda born out of a specific social context and supported by a network of individuals with a certain degree of influence in the policymaking arena. These factors have affected the emergence of two 'modes of thought', i.e.,

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two manners of interpreting the scope and target of economic cooperation (Mannheim 1936). These two ideational 'poles' guiding aid-giving within the Japanese government are the concept of national interest (*kokueki*) and affiliation with the international community (*tsukiai*).

The basic assumption is that "agents and structures are mutually constituted or codetermined entities" (Wendt 1987, 350). In other words, it will be argued that the emergence of certain intellectual entrepreneurs and their ideas cannot be explained if not in terms of the appearance of certain ideas and discourses at a systemic level (i.e., institutional, national, and international). At the same time, systems exist and reproduce because of the actions and interactions of agents (cf. Wendt 1987).

This paper aims to identify ideational clashes and juxtapositions in the official discourse on Japanese ODA, and related relevant actors who have contributed to shaping it. Therefore, a corpus of official documents and public speeches by these actors has been assembled. This corpus is mostly constituted by ministerial statements, policy papers and transcriptions of parliamentary debates. Subsequently, a thematic analysis of the collected textual data has been carried out. Themes have been identified after several readings revealing of both the superficial and deep contents of the texts. In a following phase, the key-themes have been sorted out through software-guided labelling and triangulation with the existing literature and other relevant official documents.

In the first part of the paper, Japanese ODA will be historically contextualised. Its character as both a humanitarian and a strategic-diplomatic policy will be stressed. At the same time, it will be underscored that ODA has always represented the interests of diverse stakeholders, both public (ministries, implementing agencies) and private (companies), each of which with different "horizons of action" (cf. Mori 1995).

In the second section of the paper, the focus will shift on how the official discourse on ODA has evolved since the early 2000s. The role of prominent intellectual entrepreneurs will be illustrated. Former JICA President Ogata Sadako, former minister of Foreign Affairs Kawaguchi Yoriko and current Prime Minister Abe Shinzō were chosen, among other Japanese intellectuals and policymakers, as representative of a specific mode of thought (either bureaucratic/conservative or liberal/humanitarian) and of a specific contribution made to the discourse on ODA in a specific historical context. Concurrently, their ideas about ODA, intended as both cognitive and normative entities (cf. Schmidt 2008, 307), will be analysed.

In light of these facts, the last part of the paper will provide a discussion of the 2003 and 2015 reviews of Japan's Charter. Both amendments were aimed at promoting a paradigm change in terms of the relationship between donor and recipient, advocating for an equal relation rather than one of dependence of the latter on the first. But at the same time

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both reviews have stressed the importance of protecting Japan's national interest while giving aid.[1]

2 The Historical Evolution of Japanese ODA and its 'human turn'

Since the early postwar period, ODA has been for Japanese governments the most important instrument of foreign policy. First, ODA has been a key element of the Japanese *nemawashi* – "going around the roots" – diplomacy, made of quiet and mostly behind-the-scenes negotiations (Hook et al. 2013, 80). Especially in the 1990s, members of the international community accused the Japanese government of using its ODA merely for commercial reasons, giving birth to the expression checkbook diplomacy.

In the last three decades, scholars of Japanese Official development assistance (ODA) have discussed in depth the particularities of the Japanese ODA. Historically, ODA has been subjected to internal and external forces (i.e., business interests, foreign diplomacy, and international politics). In other words, two broad ideas of national interest (*kokueki*) and international affiliation (*tsukiai*) have come to the fore (Arase 1994, 2005; Hasegawa 1975; Hook, Zhang 1998; Mori 1995; Söderberg 1996; Alesina, Dollar 2000; Ampiah 1998; Katada 2005; Asplund, Söderberg 2017).[2]

From a quantitative point of view, the percentage of Japanese GNI (gross national income) allocated to international cooperation has slightly changed since 1960, from a maximum 0,34 (1984) to a minimum 0,17 (2012).[3] Figure 1 summarises the historical evolution of Japanes ODA. The red-dotted line represents Japan, while the black-dotted line represents the average of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries.

[1] Since the Abe administration came to power in late 2012, the Government of Japan (GOJ) has promoted a more proactive foreign policy. Representing a conservative political majority, the Abe administration has been keen to reassess the importance of the *kokueki* factor in international politics. In addition, facing the emergence of new Asian donors, it has been keen on 'marketing' the Japanese approach to development. This attempt to reform clearly appears from the lexical choice used by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Japanese: with a 2015 cabinet decision the GOJ has reviewed the 2003 ODA Charter and renamed it *kokusai kyōryoku taikō* (Charter on international cooperation) rather than *kokusai kaihatsu enjo taikō* (literally Charter on international development assistance) (cf. MOFA 2015c).

[2] See Hasegawa 1975: *The Objectives of Foreign Aid: Japanese Aid for Domestic Prosperity and International Ascendency*. These two words acquire significance when we consider the scope of Japanese ODA in the 1970s.

[3] The 2012 data is the lowest excluding the 0,14 percent registered in 1964.
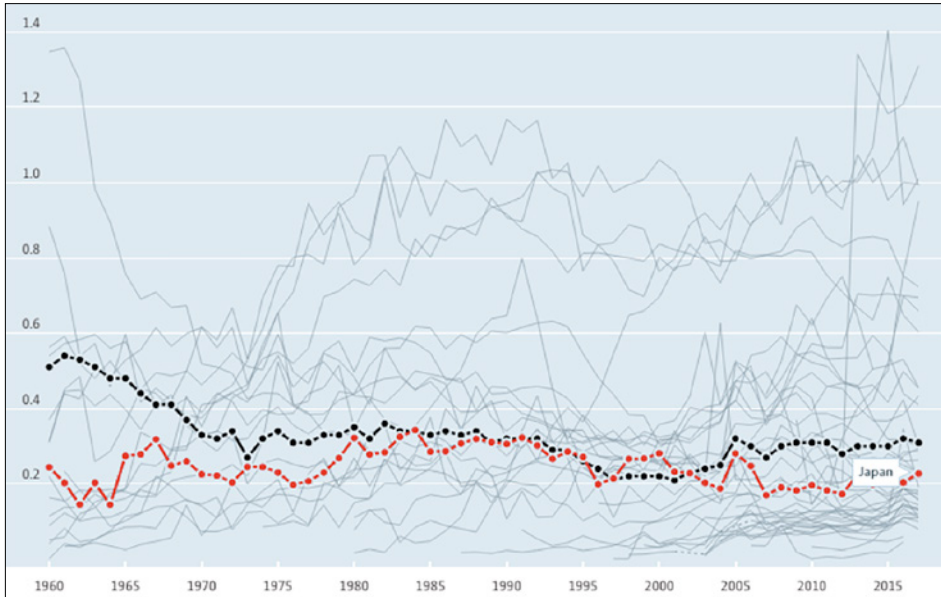
Figure 1. Japan ODA evolution (1960-2017) (Source: OECD-DAC)

In the 1960s, the allocation of funds to international cooperation gained an economic significance.[4] The top recipients of Japanese ODA were Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia and Malaysia. Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke viewed ODA as a tool to secure "as many raw materials as possible, and sell manufactured goods overseas" (Sato 2013, 14).[5]

Under the Ikeda administration, in 1964, Japan entered the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as the first Asian country to be accepted in a Euro-American institution. This diplomatic success gave Ikeda the possibility to put Japan on a different position in the East-Asian frame of political and economic relationships. In those years,

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[4] The Japanese effort in international assistance might also be explained in terms of the obligation (*giri*, in Japanese) that the country's political leadership felt toward the international community for the economic assistance received in the early postwar. Upon joining the World Bank (WB) in 1952, in fact Japan had received a number of loans to rebuild the country's economic foundations and infrastructures (cf. WB 2016). The country's policymakers were eager to show the country's readiness to repay such a debt helping other countries in need (cf. Furuoka, Oishi, Kato 2010, § 2.1).

[5] The words were pronounced before a Budget committee of the House of Representatives in 1960 (cf. Sato 2013).

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the "Flying Geese Paradigm" (*gankō keitai*) gained popularity.[6] In 1967, Japan graduated from the WB status of borrower. Assistance policies in this early period were centred around loan-based infrastructural aid and trade promotion.

Especially in the mid-1970s, after the conclusion of the Vietnam War, Japanese ODA gained a specific strategic significance: with the retreat of the US military presence in the region and among the tensions between China and Russia for the influence in the area, Japan was tasked with the maintenance of peace and stability. Given the constitutional constraints on the use of military forces abroad, such a task could be performed mainly through diplomatic and economic means (Lam 2013, 164).[7]

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, through aid loans, the GOJ built a *de facto* yen-based regional economy. On the one hand, this was a concerted strategy between Tokyo and Washington of 'burden sharing' to stabilise Asia and balance the trade deficit the US had accumulated with Japan before 1985 (Islam 1991b, 196).

On the other, until the mid-1980s, yen-loans became a major tool of economic advance as the yen appreciated against the dollar after the 1985 Plaza Accord (Arase 2006, 101). Yen-loans were instrumental in the creation of a Japan-led regional financial arrangement based on export-driven economy (Jessop, Sum 2006a, 190-1). Up until recent years, much of Japan's cooperation fund has been given to recipient countries in form of loans. In the GOJ's rhetoric, loans contribute to the recipient's ownership

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[6] This economic model was described by the Japanese economist Akamatsu Kaname (1962). According to it, industrial development was the leading force of economic development. A less industrialised country has to import industries and productive methods from other more industrialised countries in order to catch up with them on the path of development. In the mid 1960s and 1970s, prominent political and academic figures such as the then Foreign Minister Okita Saburō and Hitotsubashi University economist Kojima Kiyoshi took inspiration from the paradigm to formulate their policies and proposals regarding a new and peaceful Asian regional integration.

[7] Article 9 of the 1947 Constitution of Japan states as follows: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized". After World War II, Japan virtually renounce to maintain any form of military force (cf. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (Kantei) 1946-47). This article is currently at the centre of the political debate. The current Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government led by PM Abe Shinzō plans to reform Art. 9 in order to allow the SDF to act as a full-fledged army. However, it might be argued that Art. 9 was in principle renounced a few years later, in 1954, when the Japanese Self-Defense Forces were established with the duty of protecting the country's "peace and sovereignty", preserving the country's "security", and, when necessary, maintaining the public order. The SDF were also tasked with contributing to the peace and security of the international community within the activities of the United Nations (Jieitai hō, Shōwa 29 [1954], June 9, Law No. 165; URL http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws_search/lsg0500/detail?lawId=329AC0000000165&openerCode=1 [2018-06-12]).

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of the development projects, to the recipient's self-help effort (*jijo doryoku*) and autonomy (*jishusei*), and to the promotion of South-South cooperation (Katō 1980; King, McGrath 2004; Sasuga 2007). However, this situation undeniably favoured Japanese businesses striving to secure supplies of raw materials and markets for their products and services.

The private sector had a major stake in ODA. Until the late 1990s, most of Japanese ODA loans were in fact tied, that is to be used on procurements to Japanese companies (Katada 2005, 6). Arase (1994) analyses the coordination between business federations, such as Keidanren, and economic ministries, such as the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), now the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI); and agencies, such as the Economic Planning Agency (EPA, now part of METI) in aid-giving. He maintains that these actors favoured a "reorientation" of Japanese ODA since the mid-1980s: in the context of rising production costs in Japan, manufacturers started looking for opportunities of investment in developing countries (where wages and production costs were lower) in order to keep their competitiveness (Arase 1994, 172-3).

In this context, in 1989, Japan emerged as the world's top donor. The Japanese mercantilist approach to development assistance and the low ratio of ODA against GDP (0.2 against the fixed rate of 0.7 %) became the object of criticism from the international community and particularly from the US. Japan was accused of being an international "free rider" profiting from Washington's military protection to recreate a co-prosperity sphere in Asia by means of foreign aid (Islam 1993, 321-2).

The GOJ's practices as a donor however came under scrutiny in the early 1990s. In that period, the poor results of neoliberal programs based on market reforms and structural adjustment implemented by IFIs in order to curb poverty in the Third World were evident (cf. Ferguson 1990). A new paradigm of "inclusive neoliberalism" emerged, based on "social policy, infrastructure, governance reforms and conflict management" along with the traditional focus on growth and privatizations (Hickey 2012, 683-4). Within the United Nations a new view of development emerged. In 1990, the United Nations Development Program published its first Human Development Report stressing the importance of a paradigmatic change in international development policies (UNDP 1990, 1). Development needed to be seen not exclusively in terms of GNP growth or capital accumulation. The new vision stressed the importance of expanding the range of "choices" and improving "human capabilities" in education and health (UNDP 1990, 3).

In this new climate, the GOJ established its view of development. Criticising WB and IMF (International Monetary Fund) policies, in 1991 the Office Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) – a division of the Minister of Finance – published an occasional paper critical of the IMF and WB's policies and called for a reevaluation of the role of the state in a country's economic development (Katada 2005; Wade 1996). One of

the reasons leading to such a reform, was the fear of economic instability spreading outside the formerly socialist bloc. In fact, the fall of the Soviet Union required an action by the rest of the international community toward integration of the formerly collectivist economies in the global neo-liberal economy (Craig, Porter 2004, 64).

A new form of development assistance based not only on economic transfers, but on the transfer of knowledge, know-how, and institutional arrangements, took form at the international society's level and Japan adapted to it. "Peer pressure" by other OECD countries eventually led the GOJ to conform to other donor's practices and multilateral institutions guidelines and curb the image of Japanese diplomacy as based only on mercantilist considerations (Katada 2005, 7).[8] In response to such criticism, in 1992 the GOJ approved a series of regulations on ODA, the ODA Charter (MOFA 2003a). The document was conceived by the GOJ in order to improve Japan's image in the donors' community promoting regularity and transparency (Arase 1994, 195). In addition, the document stressed the importance of human rights, basic freedoms, and environmental conservation. However, the 1992 ODA Charter did not have a relevant impact on the overall aid allocation process which lacked coherence, transparency, accountability, and efficiency (Kawai, Takagi 2001, 13; Arase 2005, 271). Moreover, even if enshrined in the Charter, the provision of "software aid" was burdened with the lack of preparedness of Japanese development officials and by the rigid bureaucratic structure of the GOJ's aid sector (Fujisaki et al. 1997, 538).

Even after the 2008 reform of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), now the only ODA implementing agency, and other reforms inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japan's ODA has been in fact a highly institutionalised and bureaucratised process involving slightly less than a dozen ministries and agencies. As stressed by Mori (1995), the result of this institutionalisation and bureaucratisation of ODA has been the subjugation of policymaking, of which the MOFA is in charge, to the different "horizons of action" of other actors involved and to the power relations in place among them (Mori 1995, 10).[9]

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8 In retrospect, such criticism against Japan was only partially justified: the US, for instance, were giving nearly double the tied aid that Japan gave to its recipients. Japan's ratio of tied aid in the 1980s was also under the DAC average (Islam 1993, 345). In addition, in 1990, Japan allocated to foreign aid the equivalent of the 0,3% of its GNP against the 0,19 of the US. Furthermore, the percentage of grant aid (0,27) was also higher than that of the US (0,19).

9 On the one hand, the MOFA has acted to uniform its ODA to the international standards set by international organisation such as OECD; on the other, he saw in institutional actors such as the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) two more conservative forces: the first trying to lobby lawmakers for a more strategic use of international cooperation apt to serve Japanese companies' interests abroad; the latter, acting as the 'control tower' of the country's economic policy, pulling the 'brakes' on a possible uncontrolled expansion of ODA budgets (cf. Pempel 1982; Shimizu 2015).

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In the mid-1990s, the GOJ was urged by experts in Japan and outside to make its ODA process more transparent and more 'humanitarian' in scope. In addition, internal scandals involving MOFA bureaucrats, and international events as the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York contributed to the reshaping of Japanese foreign aid. The case of misappropriation of ODA funds by an LDP lawmaker, and allegations of development cooperation funds misuse in the early 2002 spurred further reform in the Ministry, and in the overall GOJ's aid policies, leading to drastic budget cuts to Japan's development assistance (cf. Arase 2005, 271; Hatakeyama, Freedman 2010, 354; Jain 2014).

The 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami caused a drop in the GOJ's allocations to ODA. Under the Abe government the ratio of ODA/GNI has returned on a growing trend given the renovated importance attached to this policy by the LDP administration. In 2015, the Japanese government approved a Charter revision (MOFA 2015c), allowing the allocation of ODA funds to security-related areas, previously not included in the framework of international cooperation (see *infra*).

3 Japan's ODA in the New Millennium: Two Opposed Visions Merged Together

After giving an overview of the historical evolution of Japan's ODA since the early postwar, in this section, the two guiding principles of ODA policymaking in Japan will be discussed in further detail. The scope of this paper is in fact not only to present the evolution of the guiding modes of thought in Japanese ODA with regards to facts that might be identified as structural (for instance, changes in the larger international context). The role of certain individuals, that, drawing upon Schmidt (2008) might be described as intellectual entrepreneurs. These are defined as "catalysts for change as they draw on and articulate the ideas of discursive communities and coalitions" (Scmidt 2008, 310).

Naturally, a comprehensive discussion of all those who have contributed to the discursive and intellectual evolution of the Japanese ODA is not possible here. For the scope of this research the analysis will focus on the evolution of the discourse on Japanese ODA since the early 2000s until 2015. Therefore, three representative figures will be analysed: namely, former JICA president Ogata Sadako, former Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yuriko, current Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and former Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio.

The former, notably two women, were the most important actors behind the first ODA sector reform initiated in the early 2000s after a series of bribery and corruption scandals. Ogata, former special envoy to the United Nations (UN) can be considered one of the strongest advocates in Japan of

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a liberal/humanitarian and internationalised idea of human-centred foreign aid. Abe and Kishida can be instead identified with the *raison d'état* guiding ODA policymaking in Japan. Both were and are high ranking members of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the major conservative force in contemporary Japanese politics. The analysis of these individuals' position in the context of the ODA discourse will lead then to consider how different and sometimes conflicting modes of thought can be integrated and provide the intellectual basis for the official discourse on ODA.

3.1 Ogata Sadako and the Alignment of Japanese Aid

The revision of the ODA Charter (MOFA 2015c), on the one hand, reflected the peer pressure from the OECD/DAC donors' community favouring an expansion of Japanese ODA to geographical areas other than Asia where Japanese interests were limited (Katada 2005, 7). On the other, roughly coincided the end of Japan as number one in foreign aid.

The 2003 Charter's 'vision', which brought together global (the fight against global poverty, and terrorism, the need for good governance, etc.) and national concerns (accountability, transparence), was a natural consequence of the scandals involving the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and the ODA bureaucracy which led to the sacking of the then Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko by Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō.[10]

The year 2003 was a crucial moment for the evolution of the Japanese "aid philosophy". An important role was played by Former UNHCR Commissioner Ogata Sadako. Ogata, a US-educated official, became the agency's president in October 2003 after an extensive experience at the UN.[11]

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[10] For a more detailed account of the Suzuki scandal, cf. Berkofsky 2002, Jain 2014 and Hara 2008.

[11] After her studies in English Literature at the University of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo, Ogata got an M.A. in International Relations at Georgetown University in 1953, and 10 years after, a Ph.D. in Political Science at Berkeley University. She entered the UN in the late 1970's when she was appointed Minister at the Japanese Mission at the UN and afterwards she was Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN. In the 1980s she was appointed as Representative of Japan on the UN Commission on Human Rights, and worked as Human Rights expert on Myanmar. She also served in the UNICEF executive board. Ogata served as UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 1991 to 2000. She is the only woman ever to hold the post. In 2001, she was elected Co-chair of the Commission on Human Security along with Indian economist and Nobel Prize Amartya Sen. In the same year, Ogata was appointed by the GOJ as special representative of the Prime Minister of Japan on Afghanistan Assistance. She also made contributions in academia, as Associate Professor of International Relations at the International Christian University, University of the Sacred Heart, and Sophia University in Tokyo. In the 1980's she served as Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University. See the Biography of Mrs. Sadako Ogata at http://www.un.org/News/dh/hlpanel/ogata-bio.htm (2018-06-12).

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The new president promoted a new approach to development assistance, based, among the others, on the concept of human security. At the same time, Ogata sponsored a rationalisation of the Japanese international aid sector. The guiding principles of her presidency were put forward in her 2003 inaugural address: more attention was to be given to the *gemba*, the field of action for aid practitioners, i.e., the recipient country and its population.

> In this occasion, JICA will radically revise its organisation and tasks in order to respond to the Japanese people's expectations and to deal rapidly with the needs of the developing countries on common issues affecting the international community. Concretely, with the promotion of a radical change in our officials' awareness of their work, we will promote a reform focusing on the four pillars of result-oriented action and efficiency; transparency and accountability; people's participation and peacebuilding. Our work will be founded on a recipient-centred approach [*gembashugi*]: we will as always prioritize the necessities [*kankaku*, lit. "perceptions"] of those on the field [*gemba*], and their voices will be reflected in our action [*gemba no koe*]. At the same time, we will contribute to the social and economic development of developing countries including in our action the philosophy of human security which focuses on societies and peoples. (Ogata 2003; Author's translation)

> JICA は、この機会に、より国民の期待に応え、国際社会の共通の課題や途上国のニーズに迅速に対応できるよう、これまでの組織・業務のあり方を抜本的 に見直します。具体的には、職員の意識改革を行い、成果重視・効率性、透明性・説明責任、国民参加、及び平和構築支援の4つの柱に重点を置いた改革を進めてまいります。仕事では「現場主義」を基本とし、常に現場の感覚を大切にし、現場の声を反映しながら事業を運営するとともに、社会や国民に焦点を当てた「人間の安全保障」の考え方を踏まえて、途上国の社会経済の発展に貢献してまいります

In much the same spirit, in a 2006 speech, Ogata announced a JICA reorganisation that would take effect in 2008, expressing her conviction that the new organisational structure and tasks, resulting from the merger of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)'s overseas operations division into JICA, could improve Japanese aid giving on a global level.

According to Ogata,

> Our world is increasingly interlinked. Borders are no longer barriers to transnational crime, terrorism, or even diseases such as SARS. In such an environment, ODA is more important than ever. Assisting developing and poor countries are requirements for building a prosperous global

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community […]. More comprehensive planning will be possible through simplified and quick decision making […] This, in turn, will result in a more integrated and efficient foreign assistance program that can better address the needs of developing nations. (JICA 2006)

On the other hand, domestic dynamics were also decisive in shaping a new ODA framework in Japan. As Mori (1995) argues, different ministerial actors are involved in drafting the GOJ's aid policies.

3.2 Kawaguchi Yoriko and the Reappraisal of "national interest" in Japan's Foreign Aid

The 2003 ODA Charter was supervised by Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko.[12] An US-educated former WB economist and Ministry of International Trade and Industry official, Kawaguchi took over the post at the head of MOFA the previous year at the end of a troubled period for Japanese diplomacy discredited by a series of scandals in the early 2000s. Given her position as successor to the scandal-hit Tanaka Makiko, her approach to international cooperation, and foreign affairs in general, had to be more bureaucratic and practical. Moreover, as a career government official and member of the dominant Liberal-democratic Party, her approach had to be consistent with the government's: with the statements hereby analysed, she appears to counterbalance the prevalently humanitarian vision of the newly elected JICA president.

As the newly appointed Minister argued during a question time in the National Diet, one of the greatest result the Japanese post-war diplomacy has achieved is Japanese 'independence'. This has yielded positive results for the international community and for Japan itself. In turn, Japan has been able to choose its path toward the realisation of its "national interest" being identified with Japan's own peace and prosperity. One way has been to forge an alliance with the US; the other to harmonise its policies with that of the (Euro-American) international community. Both elements have contributed sensibly to Japan's recovery and economic growth after World War II. These two pillars of Japanese foreign policy have also allowed Japan to proactively make its contribution on a global scale. In fact,

It is crucial that the world is peaceful and develops consequently, for Japan has a national interest in the fact that the world is peaceful, secure and developed, just for being dependent on other countries. For this

12 Kawaguchi is a long-serving LDP official in charge of environmental issues and foreign affairs. She is also an academic: she holds a professorship at the Meiji Institute for Global Affairs and serves as an Executive Advisor to the Sasakawa Foundation Peace Foundation.

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reason, its cooperation with the international community is extremely important.[13]

日本は世界が平和であって、安全、発展をしているということに日本の国益を持っている国であるわけでございますから、それだけ日本は世界のほかの国々に依存をしているわけでして、世界が平和であって発展をしていくということが重要である。そのために、日本は国際協調ということを非常に重要なこととして考えているわけです.

Against this background, Minister Kawaguchi went on asserting the necessity of an unprecedented endeavour by the Japanese diplomacy in order to secure a stable, peaceful and prosperous global order. On the one hand Japan needed to further strengthen its cooperation with neighbouring countries, such as those in Southeast Asia. Then, it needed to remain engaged in different peace-building initiatives in Asia, such as in Sri Lanka, East Timor and Afghanistan, making its contribution to the peace process. According to Foreign Minister Kawaguchi, Japan also needed to cooperate with other international partners on issues like the nuclear non-proliferation, with regards to North Korea and Iran.

Furthermore, Japan needed also to take the lead in revitalising Iraq after the 2003 US military campaign. According to Kawaguchi, foreign policy is an integral part of the culture and mentality of country that produces it. A good result is achieved when diplomacy is capable to enhance, and, at the same time, been enhanced by, feelings of "pride" and "belonging" in fellow countrymen.

[…] I agree that diplomacy and the Japanese psyche are two connected factors. I already said that the protection of peace and prosperity is part of the national interest. The encouragement and pride toward Japan of the Japanese people is in fact one component supporting and sustaining diplomacy. At the same time, they are the product of a good diplomacy. I believe that this does not concern exclusively diplomacy. The life-style of each one of us, our education, our personal security, the pride for our culture: in other words, these are all factors that combined will build up a sense of self-esteem and self-respect in the Japanese people. This is the spirit that guide our foreign policy and is its driving force. The results of a good policy ought to be found in that relation and it needs to be further promoted.[14]

13 See 159th Diet Session, House of Representatives, Foreign Affairs Commission, 6th meeting, March 12, 2004, 37/141.

14 See 159th Diet Session, House of Representatives, Foreign Affairs Commission, 6th meeting, March 12, 2004, 87/141. Author's translation.

外交が日本の精神とかかわっていくものであるというのは全くそのとおりだと思います。平和と繁栄の確保が国益であるというふうに申し上げましたけれども、日本人精神の高揚あるいは日本人の国に対しての誇りといったようなもの、これは一つは外交を支持するもの、サポートするものであると思いますし、同時に、いい外交の結果生まれるものでもあるというふうに思います。それからまた、これは外交だけとかかわり合いを持っているわけではない、一人一人の生き方、教育ですとか生活の安定ですとか、あるいは文化に対する誇りですとか、そういったようないろいろなこと全部が合わさって、我が国の要するに日本人の自信あるいは自尊心、そういったことをつくり上げていくということで、それが外交の背景にあって外交をサポートするものであるというふうに私は思います。そしてまた、いい外交の結果、それがさらにはぐくまれる、そういった関係にあるというふうに私は考えております.

3.3 The 2003 ODA Charter as a Juxtaposition of "modes of thought"

The cabinet decision revising the ODA Charter recognised the GOJ's endeavour side by side with the international community in tackling global issues, such as poverty, human security, conflict prevention, and new global 'threats' such as terrorism. The document recognised that in tackling these issues, ODA could guarantee a "benefit" (*rieki*) to Japan as well, specifically in forging positive diplomatic and economic relations. In fact,

> As one of the world's major actors, Japan is determined to use proactively its ODA to take measures to solve these issues. Tackling these issues would benefit our country too, in different ways, broadly speaking, increasing friendly relationships and exchanges with every country, and strengthening our role in the international arena. In addition, Japan, which is highly dependent on foreign countries for the supply of raw materials, energy and food, will enjoy the favor of international trade while deepening its relation of mutual dependency with its recipients, and will contribute proactively to their security and development through its ODA. For Japan, which aspires to peace, making the Japanese presence felt both domestically and internationally proactively tackling these issues through ODA, is the most suitable policy to gain the sympathy of the international community. Therefore, from now on ODA should play an always greater role. (MOFA 2003b; Author's transl.)

我が国は、世界の主要国の一つとして、ODAを積極的に活用し、これらの問題に率先して取り組む決意である。こうした取組は、ひいては各国との友好関係や人の交流の増進、国際場裡における我が国の立場の強化など、我が国自身にも様々な形で利益をもたらすものである。さらに、相互依存関係が深まる中で、国際貿易の恩恵を享受し、資源・エネルギー、食料などを海外に大きく依存する我が国

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としては、ODAを通じて開発途上国の安定と発展に積極的に貢献する。このこと
は、我が国の安全と繁栄を確保し、国民の利益を増進することに深く結びついて
いる。特に我が国と密接な関係を有するアジア諸国との経済的な連携、様々な交
流の活発化を図ることは不可欠である。平和を希求する我が国にとって、ODAを通
じてこれらの取組を積極的に展開し、我が国の姿勢を内外に示していくことは、
国際社会の共感を得られる最もふさわしい政策であり、ODAは今後とも大きな役割
を担っていくべきである。

Aiming at their resolution, the GOJ identified the following guidelines:

1. Self-help (*jijo doryoku*): ODA should be aimed at fostering good governance, developing human resources, a legal system, and the foundation of an economic system, respecting the recipient's 'ownership' of the development process and its specific growth strategy.
2. Human security: ODA should be aimed at cooperating with developing countries in preventing conflicts, natural disasters, and epidemics, empowering local communities through human resource development. Not only this would contribute to the protection of individuals, but it would also make them strengthen their abilities to respond to such crises.
3. Equality: ODA should take into account the situation of the poor and the powerless and tackle income inequalities on a local base. Specifically, its initiatives should improve women's participation in their societies.
4. Export of Japanese experience and expertise: ODA should be based on the Japanese development experience. In other words, Japanese high-level technologies, know-hows, and high-skilled human resources must be deployed in accordance to the requests of the recipient.
5. Harmony with the international community: GOJ's ODA should be harmonised with the development goals set by the major international organisations. Cooperation must be sought with other subjects as NGOs and private enterprises (MOFA 2003a).

As a result, a new ODA vision emerged. On the one hand, it reflected an international discourse on human development, human security and empowerment that had been promoted by the United Nations since the early 1990s, and by the WB in the late 1990s. On the other, even if not too explicitly, the MOFA recognised the importance to preserve national interest in its foreign policy (*kokueki*).

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3.4 The Abe Administration and Its "proactive" Approach to Foreign Aid: the 2015 Revision of the Charter

In February 2015, the Abe administration provided a new revision of the document regulating Japan's international cooperation (MOFA 2015a). The decision was taken by the government in the broader context of the "proactive contribution to peace" launched by the Abe administration in 2013. Since the inception of its second mandate as prime minister, Abe has pledged to reinvigorate the country's foreign policy, which, according to the LDP leader, was frustrated under the DPJ (Abe 2013a, 246). In his essay "For a Beautiful Country", citing the example of Yokota Megumi, a Japanese girl abducted to North Korea in 1977, Abe denounces the inability of the Japanese post-war system to protect its own citizens against foreign threats (Abe 2013a, 252-3). Abe hints at the article 9 of the 1947 constitution, which bars Japan from having a full-fledged army. Even if he does not specifically refer to Japanese international cooperation, the spirit of Abe's words indicated a stronger focus on security issues in comparison with previous administrations.

The cabinet's policy paper underscores the role of ODA in securing Japan's peace and security. In addition, it stresses the importance of an "evolution" of the policy in order for Japan to become an equal partner of developing countries and to help the international community to solve important issues. One of the most apparent feature of the new cabinet decision is the shift from the use of the expression *kaihatsu enjo* (literarily: aid for development) to kaihatsu *kyōryoku* (literarily: cooperation for development).[15]

Though the wording of the 2015 cabinet decision on ODA puts great emphasis on the needs of the recipient countries in terms of economic and social development, human security, good governance and democracy, as in the previous revision, the national interest aspects are evident. In the premises of the document it is stated that international cooperation with both prominent members of the international community and developing countries is "essential" for Japan in order to "secure its national interests". Further, the document reads:

> Japan will promote development cooperation in order to contribute more proactively to the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community. Such cooperation will also lead to ensuring Japan's national

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[15] In fact, this is not a new feature of the GOJ's discourse on ODA. As Jain (2014) maintains, the emphasis on 'cooperation' rather than on 'assistance' has been relevant since 1980s in the Japanese aid discourse and it may indicate a sort of "reciprocity" of the donor-recipient relations. However, the GOJ's decision to change the name of the policy might indicate a further ideational and discursive shift toward presenting donor-recipient relations as equal.

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interests such as maintaining its peace and security, achieving further prosperity, realizing an international environment that provides stability, transparency and predictability, and maintaining and protecting an international order based on universal values. (MOFA 2015a, 3)

The reason for such an emphasis is to be found in the recognition by Japanese policymakers that the international system has undergone profound changes in the last two decades. Interdependency among national economies, technological innovation and growing influence of supranational non-state actors play a fundamental role in today's international system. At the same time, risks and threats have multiplied.

Environmental issues, natural disasters, food shortages and famines, energy issues, infectious diseases, international terrorism, organised crime, and piracy, political instability, economic crises, ethnic divisions and civil wars – especially whether they have a regional configuration –, are increasingly transboundary phenomena: they might originate in one country but can affect other countries if not the entire international community. In this situation, no country, reads the document, can defend itself on its own against such global threats and challenges.

Therefore, the most important challenge for Japan is to provide assistance in order to secure the building of "stable foundations" for development in the recipient countries. That is, contributing to a) peace building; b) to the implementation of the rule of law; c) to the creation of a transparent, accountable and inclusive governance; d) to democratisation and reduction of the gender gap; and d) to the construction and management of a solid economic infrastructure (MOFA 2015a, 2). This view is consistent with the ODA guiding principle of *jijo doryoku*, or self-help. However, the most relevant aspect of the revised Chapter is its recognition of ODA in the security and para-military areas.

Japan will also provide assistance to enhance capacities in developing countries such as: the capacity of law enforcement authorities including capabilities to ensure maritime safety; the capacity of security authorities including capabilities to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime including drug trafficking and trafficking in persons; and the capacity of developing countries in relation to global commons such as seas, outer space, and cyberspace. (MOFA 2015a)

Before 2015, specific security issues were not included in the ODA Charter. Under the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government (2009-2012), foreign aid was considered instrumental to realising "peace and prosperity" across the globe and to "living in harmony" with the international society (Ohno 2013, 78-9). This principle was reflected in the attempt by the DPJ government to get NGOs, private business and the general public more

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involved in international cooperation and in the decision-making process. Though maintaining a generally liberal-humanitarian approach to international cooperation, in the 2009 ODA Review, the DPJ also affirmed the importance of preserving Japan's "national interest", that, however, had to be "enlightened" (78-9).

However, the vision of the national interest emerging in the 2015 Cabinet decision on the Development Cooperation Charter is based on a definition established in 2013 by the GOJ. According to the definition offered by the cabinet secretariat (CAS) in 2013, Japanese national interest is

> To protect Japan's national sovereignty, its territorial autonomy, the protection of Japanese citizens' livelihoods and assets, the support of national culture and traditions and the maintenance of the country's peace and security. […] It is to realize the prosperity of the nation and its people through the strengthening of free trade towards the creation of a stable, transparent and sustainable international environment. (CAS 2013; Author's translation)

Lastly, national interest relates to

> the universal values of respect for freedom, democracy, rule of law and the maintenance and protection of an international system based on [international] rules. (CAS 2013; Author's translation)

In other words, GOJ policymakers seem to see national interest and international (or worldwide) interest as two mutually dependent concepts. This principle is further elaborated in the 2015 *Diplomatic Bluebook*. It is in the mutual interest of Japan and the international community to work on common "interests" such as maintaining security, peacekeeping and peace building in former war zones (for instance, through an enhanced participation of Japanese troops in international missions); fighting international terrorism (for example, the Islamic State); working on disarmament and nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, strengthening the role of the United Nations; promoting the rule of law, in order to facilitate the settlement of disputes; promoting human rights and women inclusion in societies around the world (cf. MOFA 2015b, 175-8).[16]

Another important feature of the 2015 document is the emphasis on the promotion of "quality growth". As mentioned above, the GOJ aims at building through aid the economic and institutional foundations of economic growth in developing countries. In order to provide a kind of aid that fits

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16 See MOFA 2015b, ch. 3 "Japan's Foreign Policy to Promote National and Worldwide Interests". http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000106463.pdf (2018-06-12).

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into this category, the Cabinet decision underscores three broad guiding principles, drawn upon Japan's own experience in the post-war reconstruction: inclusiveness, sustainability and resilience.

In order to resolve the poverty issue in a sustainable manner, it is essential to achieve economic growth through human resources development, infrastructure development and establishment of regulations and institutions as well as the growth of the private sector enabled by the aforementioned actions, which are aimed at a self-reliant growth of developing countries. However, such growth should not be merely quantitative in nature, given that some of the countries that have achieved a measure of economic growth face challenges such as widening disparities, sustainability issues, inadequate social development, and political and economic instability. Rather, it should be "quality growth". Such growth is inclusive in that the fruits of growth are shared within society as a whole, leaving no one behind. It is

> sustainable over generations in terms of consideration to, among other aspects, harmony with the environment, sustained socioeconomic growth, and addressing global warming. And it is resilient, able to withstand and recover from economic crises, natural disasters and other shocks. These are some of the challenges Japan has tackled in its post-war history. Japan will take advantage of its own experience, expertise and technology as well as lessons learned in order to provide assistance to realize "quality growth" and poverty eradication through such growth. (MOFA 2015a, 5)

The Cabinet decision underlines security issues that were not included in the 2003 Charter revision. In order for the recipient countries to "help themselves", in fact, developing countries should be able to preserve their nation's peace and security. These are in turn considered the "prerequisites for nation-building and development" (MOFA 2015a, 6). For this reason, Japan intends to take steps to enhance its developing partners' law enforcement and surveillance capabilities, particularly with regards to maritime security. In other words, the 2015 Cabinet decision allows the GOJ to provide aid for basically military purposes (McGrath 2015; Jain 2016). In conclusion, since 2015, it has been clear that the GOJ foreign aid ideational framework has been framed on the basis of the idea of the "Proactive Contribution". This is presented in official documents as a duty that Japan has facing the expectations of the international community which, in turn, has given Japan "respect and confidence" (MOFA 2015a, 3). In other words, pledging an increased effort in the international arena, the GOJ seems to be looking for a "legitimation" of its possible new role from the international community.

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3.5   Quality Aid for Quality Growth

The discourse on "quality growth" resonates with the one of "quality aid" which has been discussed by the country's scholars and experts and promoted by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō since his comeback to power in late 2012. For example, Kurosaki and Ōtsuka (2015) have underlined the necessity for Japan to achieve a transition toward "quality" in aid. Japan does not need to retain its position as a "big donor", rather, it has to become a model of "smart donor" exporting its know-how, technical assistance and technology accordingly to the needs of the recipient countries. The basic argument of many of the articles collected in the edited book is that in the twenty-first century, Japan will not be able to get back to the top of the world's largest donor. The US primacy appears to be unreachable. However, Japan might still have a say in the global development industry exerting a sort of intellectual leadership drawing upon its own experience as a developing country in the immediate postwar.

This point was already developed in 2005 by the then Japanese Foreign Minister Asō Tarō who defined Japan a "trailblazer" and therefore a model for emerging Asian countries (Asō 2005).

At the 21st International Conference on the Future of Asia in May 2015 that Japan will continue to pursue its aim of making "all-out efforts" for the peace and prosperity in Asia reminding the audience of the crucial role of Japanese assistance to Asia since the 1950s. On the one hand, Abe pledged a more proactive role in Asia, including in security matters, implicitly recognising possible threats to the peace and stability of the region.

On the other, Japan's Prime Minister pointed at the importance of the country's outward economic strategy, reassessing its position as a regional donor and a leading economy since the early postwar period. In his address, Prime Minister Abe stressed a change of paradigm in Asia-Japan relations. The Japanese leader in fact admitted that Asia was "no longer a recipient of assistance", rather a "partner for growth" (Abe 2015). However, in Abe's words, Japan seems to retain a privileged position. His invitation to the audience – head of states and political and business leaders from East and Southeast Asia – to "be innovative" appears to be a call to embrace the Japanese model and learn the Japanese lesson.

What appears clear is that Prime Minister Abe tries to depict a Japanese-influenced "way of operation" that might lead to solving emerging problems in Asian countries.

We now stand at a historical crossroads. What future awaits us beyond Asian growth? Unfortunately, it will not necessarily be only good news. Failure to meet the continuously expanding demand for energy will put the brakes on our high rate of growth. And even in Asia, the wave of a graying population is about to surge. As a result, Asia must be innova-

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tive. We must use innovation to confront the issues that lie in store for us. […]. Whether a blessing or a curse, Japan has grappled with the problem of energy constraints for many years as an island nation having only scarce resources. Having begun to face the issue of an aging population quite early on, we have also improved our medical services. Japan intends to share those technologies and experiences openhandedly with other Asian nations. Moreover, I would like to bring about further innovation by working together, through the amalgamation of young minds from around Asia. (Abe 2015)

Cooperation between Japan and Asia is seen as the way to pursue new economic growth based on innovation and quality. Further in his address, Prime Minister Abe might be suggesting that quality growth can be possible also with "quality aid" from Japan. In its concluding part, Prime Minister Abe's address could also be interpreted as a form of "advertisement" for Japanese aid being praised as a "quality creator" wherever it had been allocated (Abe 2015).

> Creating quality. That is the Japanese way of operating. More than half a century ago, in Indonesia, there was a project to prevent flooding, to tap water for agricultural land, and create electricity through hydropower. Japan supported the development of the Brantas river for more than 30 years. […] Assistance from Japan is not one-sided. The Japanese live under the same roof as the local engineers, and they think and move forward together. Rather than simply bringing Japan's technologies into a country, we foster the people there and make the technologies well-established. This is how Japan operates. […]. Asia, with its ongoing dynamic growth, is no longer a recipient of assistance. It is instead our partner for growth. In this Asia, it is also a partner generating innovation. That's exactly why I believe that the Japanese way of operation is now much more suited to the Asian countries than ever. We create quality. And we think together and move forward together with the people of Asia. (Abe 2015)

In his address, PM Abe has underscored the fact that Japanese aid has had a crucial role in promoting innovation across the Asian continent. This innovation has also been applied in order to reduce the risk of natural disasters. In a period in which the rhetoric of the "knowledge-based society" has become dominant (cf. Jessop 2008), Abe seems to underline the importance of aid in creating knowledge and innovation. On the other hand, he seems to appeal his audience to beware of donors that, contrary to Japan, are not keen on creating quality and keep the distance from their recipient. PM Abe make use of powerful images of Japanese officials working side by side local engineers on ODA projects. In this way, he reinvigorates one of the features of Japanese ODA: the heart-to-heart

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cooperation. The stress on concepts like the "togetherness" of Japan and Asia, and vice-versa, the "Asianness" of Japan, is particularly telling of the attempt that the GOJ is willing to make in order to build positive relations with governments across Asia in a period of diplomatic competition with other regional powers like China.

4 Conclusion

In this article, the intellectual evolution of Japanese ODA has been analysed. In the first section, the intellectual evolution of Japanese ODA has been put in the context of changes at a broader level, namely the field of international aid. After Japan was devastated in World War II, the country received loans for the reconstruction from the US and the WB. In 1954, Japan agreed to disburse war reparations to countries in Asia. In the GOJ official discourse, the decision was taken based on the perception of a duty to repay the international community for the assistance received in the early postwar.

More practical and immediate necessities were however playing a crucial role: Japan needed to ensure a sufficient supply of raw materials for its industries, and, to do this, it needed to restore its national image, at a time when all over Asia the dreadful memories of the Japanese wartime aggression were still alive. In other words, Japan had to integrate into the new global order founded on the US-led liberal international community. Later on, aid has assumed different connotations: most importantly in the 1970s the Japanese leadership came to see it as a strategical tool to ensure comprehensive national security. A dichotomy is here visible: on the one hand, aid was an instrument through which Japan declared its affiliation to the US-Western bloc. On the other, given the constraints of the postwar constitution on the dispatch of troops outside the country, it saw in aid a means to protect its interests abroad and advance its political status in the international arena. A turning point happened at the end of the 1980s when Japan emerged as the world's number one aid donor. The retreat of the US whose policymakers started attaching less importance to aid as a diplomatic tool in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union was crucial in Japan's rise. Japanese aid-giving policies attracted much more attention than before and were often criticised for their 'mercantilist' orientation.

According to some authors, peer pressure, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, was a decisive factor contributing to change. At the same time, the arrival of catalyst figures such as Ogata Sadako in decision-making positions in the Japanese aid giving institutional chain has accelerated the process of reform and the integration of 'new' ideas into the official discourse on ODA. If on the one hand the liberal/humanitarian idea has contributed to the formation of the contemporary official discourse on ODA in Japan, a preeminent role has been played by the bureaucratic/con-

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servative idea. The emergence of conservative intellectual entrepreneurs as PM Abe Shinzō has favoured a periodical reassessment of the idea of national interest over international affiliation. As a result, the two ideas, apparently conflicting, appears to be juxtaposed in the official discourse. In conclusion, it might be said that this juxtaposition enables policymakers to promote one idea without totally renouncing the other, therefore, attracting a larger consensus – in the case of foreign aid both at the domestic and at the external level) – toward their action.

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Recensioni

Borrillo, Sara (2017). *Femminismi e Islam in Marocco. Attiviste laiche, teologhe, predicatrici*. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 274 pp.

Barbara De Poli
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Nell'ambito degli studi di genere, e segnatamente degli studi di genere rivolti alle società islamiche, il volume di Sara Borrillo dà rilievo alle specificità dei femminismi in Marocco, paese considerato tra i più progressisti dell'area mediterranea, dove da tempo le donne rivestono ruoli pubblici di rilievo ma dove, nondimeno, l'intreccio strumentale di potere politico, islam e patriarcato continua a perpetuare discorsi e prassi sociali discriminatori.

L'obiettivo dello studio in oggetto è restituire «la complessità e l'eterogeneità dei discorsi e delle pratiche di lotta delle donne attive per i propri diritti» (1), mettendo in luce una *agency* femminile articolata quanto determinata nelle sue diverse dimensioni e nei diversi approcci e che, ovviamente, si innesta nei discorsi e nelle pratiche politiche locali. Tra valori progressisti e passatisti, che nelle politiche di genere si traducono in eguaglianza (*musāwā*) o complementarità (*takāmul*), dai discorsi femministi emerge un ampio spettro di orientamenti di ordine teoretico ed ideologico – dal femminismo laico a quello islamico –, non esenti da contraddizioni e aporie.

Il rigore metodologico e la profonda conoscenza del terreno di indagine (sia per quanto riguarda gli strumenti ermeneutici diretti allo studio del pensiero femminista sia per quanto concerne il quadro socio-politico marocchino) hanno informato il dialogo diretto con le protagoniste dei diversi movimenti e orientamenti femministi, permettendo a Sara Borrillo di esaminare la questione senza cedere a conclusioni semplicistiche – ad esempio, per quanto concerne l'apertura alle professioni religiose per le donne attuata nel 2004, come predicatrici (*muršidāt*) ed erudite religiose (*'ālimāt*), il dato apparentemente 'rivoluzionario' e democratico si stempera a fronte della considerazione degli obiettivi politici che hanno portato a una tale apertura.

Dopo aver illustrato l'evoluzione dello status sociale della donna in Marocco dagli anni Novanta, la studiosa traccia il percorso storico dei femminismi in Marocco a partire dall'epoca coloniale e per poi approdare alle battaglie politiche per affermare i diritti delle donne dagli Settanta al terzo

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millennio, rilevando affermazioni, vittorie e sconfitte del femminismo laico e la genesi ed evoluzione delle sue direttrici islamiche dagli anni Ottanta. Nella terza parte del suo studio, che presenta l'elemento di indagine inedito più originale, Borrillo entra nel merito dei discorsi femministi con particolare attenzione alle nuove funzionarie religiose marocchine, ponendo l'accento sul confronto tra il loro posizionamento personale (che in certa misura e con diversi gradi tende ad offrire una reinterpretazione dei Testi dell'islam in chiave emancipatrice), e l'interpretazione ufficiale promossa dai dispositivi del potere islamico nel quale sono integrate.

Qui, l'indagine partecipante di Borrillo, che ha raccolto oltre novanta interviste, ha consentito di cogliere sfumature che – come accortamente osserva l'Autrice –, se non hanno la pretesa di accertare verità assolute, indubbiamente assolvono pienamente il compito di «mettere in evidenza la complessità dei discorsi raccolti come prova vivente di aspetti interpretativi più teorici» (20). Ha indubbiamente contribuito all'ottimo risultato della ricerca anche la capacità di astrazione della studiosa, la quale, pur trattando un tema che per forza di cose la coinvolge direttamente, riesce a porsi da osservatrice partecipante neutrale, non intervenendo mai con giudizi di valore anche indiretti nel processo di raccolta delle opinioni, così come nella redazione dello studio.

Soprattutto, i diversi pareri così raccolti e esaminati su temi quali, ad esempio, la poligamia, il ripudio o il divorzio, i matrimoni forzati, le discriminazioni in ambito ereditario o il rapporto con il corpo e la sessualità hanno evidenziato orientamenti non sempre perfettamente allineati o coerenti con i posizionamenti dottrinari e/o ideologici o con i ruoli ufficiali degli intervistati e delle intervistate, dove le contraddizioni tra fede e ragione o tra fede/ruolo e aspirazioni personali/esperienza individuale emergono pienamente. In tal senso, i travagliati percorsi di costruzione del femminismo islamico nel paese convergono con i caratteri globalizzati del movimento espresso sul piano internazionale, confermando quanto l'eterogeneità negli approcci e nei contenuti debba anche alle molteplici ibridazioni identitarie (sociali e culturali) delle dottrinarie che li promuovono.

Nel definire questo quadro certamente complesso, la studiosa ha l'indubbio merito di superare le dicotomie categoriali per scandagliare le numerose intersezioni e porosità tra le diverse concezioni dottrinarie, nonché le evoluzioni del pensiero delle femministe. Non è infatti raro che nel tempo possano maturare visioni diverse da quelle affermate inizialmente, come ad esempio avviene per la voce forse più interessante ed autorevole tra quelle citate, Asma Lmrabet, che aderisce dapprima al principio di complementarietà per successivamente sposare e difendere quello di uguaglianza; o ancora, Ḫadīja Mufid, fondatrice e militante del partito di orientamento islamico PJD (Partito per la Giustizia e lo Sviluppo), accesa sostenitrice del principio di complementarietà (più precisamente di 'dualità', *zawjiyya*) e del ruolo biologico (riproduttivo) della donna in seno

al sistema patriarcale poligamico, che nel 2009 si dimetterà dal partito accusandolo di essere un'istituzione «decisionista e machista che tratta le donne da inferiori» (89).

L'unico appunto che ci sentiamo di muovere rispetto a questo pregevole lavoro – tra l'altro dotato di tabelle utilissime ai fini di sintesi – riguarda la mancanza di riferimenti al dato sociale. In particolare la scollatura che in Marocco interviene tra discorso e realtà, a nostro giudizio poteva essere anche pur brevemente richiamata per quei lettori che non hanno conoscenza diretta del paese: in particolare, al discorso conservatore sul ruolo della donna, sia islamico ufficiale che sociale (la sua funzione ri-produttiva e domestica, il valore insistito della verginità, ecc…), manca il contrappunto del dato reale, dove quei valori sono in grande misura superati (il ruolo 'pubblico' – socioeconomico e politico – della donna è indiscusso) o rimangono alquanto relativamente rispettati (ad esempio la verginità prematrimoniale), come l'evidenza sociologica e in particolare gli studi di Soumaya Naamane-Guessus ed Abdessamad Dialmy hanno da tempo evidenziato.

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