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Beyond the Observation of the 'Traveller': the Other and the Self in the Writings of Anglo-Sicilian Women (1848-1910)

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature**

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Declarations

This thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

An article based on parts of Chapter 3 is forthcoming in *Travel Writing: Otherness and Mediation*, ed. by Jan Borm (New York: Peter Lang, forthcoming). A paper based on Chapter 5 was published in *Bridges and Boundaries*. Warwick Working Papers in Cultural Studies, ed. by S. Chotiudompant with E. Minutella (University of Warwick: Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, 2002); and an article from the same chapter was published with the title 'Beyond the Observation of "The Travelled Reader": The Unknown Sicily of Louise Hamilton Caico', in the journal *Studies in Travel Writing*, 6 (2002), 78-95. A paper based on Chapter 6 was presented at the Society for Italian Studies Post-Graduate Conference 2001 (Department of Italian, University of Warwick), with the title 'Dal privato al pubblico per riscrivere se stessi: Risorgimento e storia famigliare in *Sicily and England* di Tina Scalia Whitaker'.

Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the little-known works by three Anglo-Sicilian women, written at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, as expatriate writing. In particular, this study explores the various mechanisms and strategies at play in the representation of the Other and the Self in these texts, in the light of the events preceding and following Italian Unification. I intend to verify how these texts respond to being analysed as a distinct group, and what are the specific roles and functions of expatriate women's works. I consider these three works through an interdisciplinary, comparative approach. This thesis consists of an introduction, three case studies – structured in terms of generic subdivisions – and a conclusion.

The Introduction draws the historical, social and cultural context shared by the three case studies. It looks at women's expatriate writing as a genre, as well as a few women's travel texts about Sicily.

Chapter one explores Letters from Sicily: Containing Some Account of the Political Events in that Island during the Spring of 1849 (London, 1850) by Mary Charlton Pasqualino. Within the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century epistolary writing, this work is read as a text marking the author's transition from a condition as traveller to that as expatriate.

Chapter two is devoted to an analysis of *Sicilian Ways and Days*, by Louise Hamilton Caico (London, 1910). It looks at strategies used by the author to exert her authority as participant-observer in her ethnographic work. This section also analyses Hamilton Caico's photographs of inland Sicily within a selection of iconographic representations of Southern Italy produced by female travellers.

Chapter three examines the relationship between history and memory, personal and public account through a close reading of *Sicily and England: Political and Social Reminiscences*, 1848-1870 (London, 1907) by Tina Scalia Whitaker. It examines the author's search for an Anglo-Italian identity, as well as the issue of the 'authenticity' of Scalia's historical narrative and self-representation.

The conclusions briefly look at today's reception of the translation into Italian of the works by Hamilton Caico and Scalia Whitaker. This section also suggests further research on women's expatriate writing about Italy.

In memoria di Carola

Introduction: in between two worlds

i. Sicily through others' eyes

Northern and Central Italy were the chief destinations of the aristocratic Grand Tour. and it was only in the second half of the eighteenth century that the Rome-Naples route started to become part of the favourite itinerary for British travellers. After the archaeological discoveries of Herculaneum and Pompeii, Naples was seen as the gateway to the Mediterranean, Magna Graecia and the Byzantine and Arab civilizations. However, the Italy of the Grand Tour terminated at Naples. At that time, for Britons and other Northern Europeans, the rest of Southern Italy was still the enigmatic land of 'legendary brigands', dark forests and horrendous epidemics. Journeys beyond Naples became popular later in the century when Greece, the African coasts and the Mediterranean in general also became the haunts of artists, academics and literati. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the letters of the Prussian Johann Hermann von Riedesel – published in 1771 and reporting a journey to Sicily which he made in 1766 - marked the end of the gloomy pre-Romantic mythology which had characterised the image of the South abroad. The turning point which sanctioned the decisive centrality of the South, and of Sicily in particular, came at the end of the eighteenth century. After Riedesel, Patrick Brydone visited the island in 1770. His Tour through Sicily and Malta, published in 1773, established him as the initiator of a European trend of travel to Sicily for foreign visitors in search of ruins, ancient sites and the picturesque.² Sicily, in fact, satisfied those with romantic spirits who were in search of classical reminiscences, Arcadian swoons, strong feelings and,

The best well-known among them are Houel, Roland de la Platière, Swinburne, Borch, Colt Hoare and Payne-Knight.

Patrick Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta. In a Series of Letters to William Beckford Esq. of Somerly in Suffolk, 2 vols (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1773).

above all, a world which was still exotic, untamed, uncorrupted and mythical. The Italian Mezzogiorno epitomized the mythical Hellas; at the same time, it was perceived as part of a cultural area alien to Northern and Central Italy. The years following the Napoleonic wars and the Italian Risorgimento saw an increase in journeys to and travel writings on Sicily.³ Guidebooks on post-unification Sicily were published by Murray, Forster, Baedeker and Richard, as well as Vallardi and Artaria in Italy. In 1864 Murray published George Dennis' Hand-book for Travellers in Sicily: Including Palermo, Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Etna and Ruins of the Greek Temples with Maps and *Plans.* In the nineteenth century political, geographic and social reports offered new perspectives on the South: the emphatic tone and the dreamy representations of the eighteenth century were replaced by more disenchanted and rational accounts. The growth in numbers also signalled changes in the travellers' profile: the new travellers no longer belonged to the aristocracy. Most of them were middle-class men and women in search of leisure, health and culture. In particular, an increasing number of foreign women - usually from the middle and upper classes - started visiting Southern Italy and they found it challenging and fascinating.

Visits to the island were generally planned as part of a longer tour through the Italian peninsula. One should bear in mind that while, for various foreigners, 'the South' was a unitary reality identified by specific economic and social problems, Sicily was often distinguished even from the rest of the Mezzogiorno. Conceptually even more than geographically, it was perceived as a land on the border between Africa and Europe. In fact, many travel books written after a journey in Italy, had titles which tended to emphasize the two visits to 'Italy and Sicily', and the distinct social and

³ Willian Irvine, John Galt, W.H. Thompson, Thomas W. Vaughan, William Hanson, Edward Blanquiere, Sir George Cockburn, William H. Smyth, George Russell and Edward Boid visited Sicily at the beginning of the nineteenth century. After 1821 British visitors to Sicily included the Duke of Buckingham, Arthur John Strutt and the Marquis of Ormonde. For general information on foreign travellers in Sicily I am indebted to Cesare De Seta, 'L'Italia nello specchio del "Grand Tour", in Storia d'Italia. Annali 5: Il paesaggio, ed. by Cesare De Seta (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), pp. 127-263; Atanasio Mozzillo, La frontiera

economic conditions of the island; a journey to Sicily was often separately identified and recorded in monographic works. At the same time, however, for other travellers, Sicilian reality was just an expression of a varied Italian ethnicity; for them Sicily needed to be understood within an Italian – and Mediterranean – context. For the Greek, Roman, Arab and Norman influence on its history, Sicily was perceived as the 'Archaeological Museum of Europe' and consequently had to be included in a tour around Italy in search of the past. In any case, the island represented the Mediterranean Other to be discovered, and together with the rest of Italy, it was seen as geographically, culturally and politically different from Northern Europe. For the British, in particular, Sicily and its culture⁴ were a source of constructed images of the Mediterranean, against which they defined themselves in Victorian and Edwardian times.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, journeys to Sicily entered a new dimension and travelling to the island was no longer an experience restricted to intellectual élites. Travel and tourism to Sicily significantly increased, as testified by an interesting rise in the publication of Sicilian travel guide books by British and American writers. In 1905 Methuen & Co. published Douglas Sladen's Sicily. The New Winter Resort; the book was clearly addressed to potential tourists in search of therapeutic Mediterranean climates. Sladen's works on Sicily can be taken as examples of the renewed popularity of the island among English speaking travellers.⁵

del Grand Tour: Viaggi e viaggiatori nel Mezzogiorno borbonico (Naples: Liguori, 1992) and R. S. Pine-Coffin, Bibliography of British and American Travel in Italy to 1860 (Florence: Olschki, 1974).

^{4 &#}x27;Sicilian culture' – as well as 'sicilianity' or 'sicilianness' (sicilianità, sicilitudine, sicilianitudine, or siciliania) – epitomises a complex, layered and artificial power system produced by and within a geographically, historically and linguistically determined group (the Sicilians), and its relation with other external (Italian and foreign) groups. Therefore, on the one hand, 'sicilianity' should be seen in the meaning it acquires for other (Northern) societies, as every culture is naturally antagonistic and potentially hegemonic. It embodies a set of behaviours, issues and processes through and against which the other (external) groups define themselves. Coined by Crescenzio Cane, a little known Sicilian poet, the term 'sicilitudine' became known through the work of the contemporary Sicilian writer Leonardo Sciascia, in La corda pazza (Turin: Einaudi, 1970). See also Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (London: Fontana Press, 1993).

Douglas Sladen also produced: In Sicily, 1896-1898-1900 (London, 1901), and Sicily: The New Winter Resort, an Encyclopaedia of Sicily (London, 1905).

As far as critical literature is concerned, recent years have seen the publication of a significant number of works which analyse representations of Sicily as seen through the eyes of male and female travellers who visited the island from many parts of Europe and from elsewhere in the world, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶ Furthermore, over the last two decades, apart from the growth of a substantial critical literature, a great deal of attention has been paid to accounts of Italy and Sicily by foreigners, thanks to the creation of databases, research centers and bibliographies.⁷

But Sicily has not only been a holiday destination or a place to explore and study because of its past and its fascinating relations with other Mediterranean cultures, nor a place of commercial and political interest. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the island was also considered as the adopted homeland of expatriates who had left their countries of origin for a variety of reasons. In particular, it is essential to highlight the fact that in the second half of the nineteenth century, during and following the events which took place in the Italian Risorgimento, many British female artists and intellectuals saw the peninsula as a Utopia for expatriates and exiles, a place to conquer intellectual and social freedom. In such cases, these people's experiences went beyond the limits of a temporary visit; their long stays or permanent residence in Sicily gave

Among numerous studies on foreign travellers in Sicily see Hélène Tuzet, Viaggiatori stranieri in Sicilia nel XVIII secolo, trans. by Alfonsina Bellomo (Palermo: Sellerio, 1988), and Franco Paloscia, ed., La Sicilia dei grandi viaggiatori (Rome: Edizioni Abete, 1989), Emanuele Kanceff and Roberta Rampone, eds, Viaggio nel Sud: viaggiatori stranieri in Sicilia, 2 vols, Biblioteca del Viaggio in Italia (Geneve: Slatkine, 1992). For Italian studies which focus on British travellers in Sicily see Maria Carla Martino, Viaggiatori inglesi in Sicilia nella prima metà dell'Ottocento (Palermo: Edizioni e Ristampe Siciliane, 1977), Atanasio Mozzillo, 'La Sicilia nel giudizio dei viaggiatori inglesi', Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione, 61 (1978), 51-68, and Luigi Monga, 'The Discovery of Sicily by English Travellers in the 16th and 17th Centuries, Arba Sicula, vol. 13, 1 & 2 (Spring-Fall 1992), 80-93. For foreign texts on British and American Travellers in Southern Italy and Sicily see Edward Chaney, 'British and American Travellers in Southern Italy, in The Blue Guide: Southern Italy, ed. by Paul Blanchard (London and New York: Ernest Benn, 1982), pp. 47-59.

In 1980 a centre for the study of travellers in Italy was founded in Turin: Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia (CIRVI). For one recent bibliography of foreign travel writings on Italy see for instance Dante Cremonini, L'Italia nelle vedute e carte geografiche dal 1493 al 1894. Libri di viaggi e atlanti. Catalogo bibliografico di una collezione privata (Modena: Panini, 1991). Specifically on British travelogues on Italy see Pine-Coffin. Among Italian studies on foreign travelogues on Italy see De Seta. Anthologies include Manfred Pfister, ed., The Fatal Gift of Beauty (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996).

them the opportunity to cultivate 'an easy, patronizing familiarity with the local ways and language', which often became the pretext for a 'deeper' observation and representation of otherness.

Critical literature on travel writing about Italy tends to analyse travel texts without making any distinction between works written during a brief visit to Italy and those produced during a long term or permanent residence. Therefore, the recurrent lack of distinction between expatriates' and travellers' texts is open to discussion. In fact, it can be argued that crystallization of all texts recording experiences abroad into fixed academic conventions obfuscates the presence of several expatriates' works: many texts containing accounts of experiences in foreign countries are simply gathered together under the large comprehensive umbrella of travel writing. Works by expatriates are frequently treated disadvantageously because of the citationary nature of bibliographies of travel writings - where texts by expatriates are included -, and travel writing scholars' recurrent use of second-hand information. Also, frequently not enough attention is paid to biographical data - which are very often incomplete - on littleknown authors of texts representing foreign events, people and culture. As a result, short term visitors to a country are not distinguished from long term residents, and the differences between these two kinds of experiences, as they appear in writing, are not given enough weight. Furthermore, one needs to stress that classificatory criteria for works about foreign places and cultures often hinge on the reception of these texts in the target culture. Not enough attention is paid to reader-response issues arising whenever these minor, hybrid texts are received in the culture and place they depict.

Additionally, as far as women expatriates are concerned, Anglophone and Italian scholars have so far tended to focus their attention on British women writers and artists

⁸ John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 78. See also pp. 102-106 for an overview on British residents in Italy. Consider Raleigh Trevelyan, *Princes under the Volcano* (London: Macmillan, 1972) for a history of the most important Anglo-Sicilians, from the time of the Bourbons to the era of Mussolini.

who lived in Northern and Central Italy. Publications concentrate on major writers such as Barrett Browning, Fuller Ossoli, White Mario and a few others. Although recent studies have shed light on lesser known artists in Italy (such as Frances Power Cobbe, Theodosia Garrow Trollope and Margaret Oliphant), the lives and works of those who settled in the South of the Italian peninsula and in Sicily still need to be explored in depth.

This thesis aims to examine the little-known works by three Anglo-Sicilian women, written at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, as expatriate writing (texts written during a long-term, or permanent residence in a foreign country). These works are: Letters from Sicily: Containing Some Account of the Political Events in that Island during the Spring of 1849 (London, 1850) by Mary Charlton Pasqualino, Sicilian Ways and Days (London, 1910) by Louise Hamilton Caico and Sicily and England: Political and Social Reminiscences, 1848-1870 (London, 1907) by Tina Scalia Whitaker. They are analysed in detail in the three case-study chapters which make up the main body of the thesis. In particular, we intend to explore the various mechanisms and strategies at play in the representation of the Other and the Self in these texts, in the light of the events preceding and following Italian Unification. Moreover, considering the fact that travel and expatriate works share numerous characteristics, we need to verify how these texts respond to being analysed as a distinct group, and what are the specific roles and functions of expatriate women's works. At the same time, we need to ask whether expatriate writing should be completely distinguished from travel writing (texts produced during and after a short-term experience in a foreign country) or whether the former should be considered as a particular configuration of the latter.

ii. Making distinctions: women's travel and expatriation

It is essential, then, to start clarifying how the words 'expatriate' and 'traveller' are used throughout the whole thesis. The women who are the subject of the thesis have gone beyond a short visit to Sicily; they have never returned home, and have chosen to continue their experience in the foreign country. They are no longer travellers. They are expatriates, as they have ceased roaming and have embraced a new form of discovery of the Other, from a permanent reference point.

Travelling implies a physical as well as a spiritual division and separation from familiar people, things, places and values. Travellers are 'ex-patriates', as they go 'out of' their native country. However, this departure is temporary, as the travellers plan to return to their land of departure; their journey involves circular movement going from home to abroad, and from the foreign place back home again. In cases where they decide not to return home, they can become long-term expatriates, as they deliberately embrace a state of not being at home for a length of time, or even permanently. This thesis deals with women in this category, and throughout the whole study they will be labeled simply 'expatriates' or, in our case, more specifically Anglo-Sicilians.

The choice to settle down abroad can depend on social, professional, economic and emotional factors. Like other forms of displacement, the expatriate's condition may imply a certain degree of isolation and estrangement. Expatriates may also share with 'voluntary exiles' the use of their native language in their writings and, sometimes, reveal a sarcastic perspective on their country of origin. The expatriates' displacement

According to Said 'expatriates voluntarily live in an alien country, usually for personal or social reasons. (...) Expatriates may share in the solitude and estrangement of exile, but they do not suffer under its proscriptions'. Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile', in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. by Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Cornel West (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 357-366 (pp. 362-363). According to Brooke-Rose, 'Voluntary exiles', unlike 'involuntary exiles', tend to be happy, comfortable, satiric about the society they left behind. Formal, thematic and linguistic distinctions cut across the differences in causes and conditions. Thus, there are writers in exile who continue to write what they would have written at home (i.e. Petrarch, Shelley, Keats, Hugo); writers who write about the society they have left behind (i.e. Joyce, Mann); and writers who shift their analysis from one place to the other (Henry James), or prefer mixing and clashing different cultures (Kundera, Ishiguro). Most of them have in common the use of their native

is clearly characterised by contexts, causes and conditions which are different from those of exiles, emigrants, refugees and nomads. Although reasons and circumstances are different every time, for the expatriate moving away from home and from what is familiar does not always imply definitive loss and breaking off ties. In fact, this experience can lead to a further fusion; a physical and/or spiritual union with a person (i.e. getting married), an ideal (i.e. embracing a cause), or even a place. From this point of view, it is possible to consider expatriation not only as bewilderment and loss, but also as a stage of transition and change which can produce attachment to, and affinity with – although not always acceptance of – the place of destination.

In our specific case, the three case studies which make up the main part of this study deal with British women who joined Sicilian society through marriage with locals or with other British expatriates living on the island. The main distinction between such expatriate women and female travellers in Sicily lies in the expatriates' choice to forsake the status of the Northern, emancipated female traveller. In deciding to embrace the condition of married woman they 'accepted' the ties of a social contract, and the conventions and limitations of domestic and married life in a Southern society.

A female travel writer can be differentiated from an expatriate not only with regard to time (period spent in the host country), but also to space: the place where she can write about her experiences and herself. A room in a hotel, an inn, a guest house, or a palace is the space where women travellers reside temporarily; there, they can chronicle and record facts and impressions after a long day of excursions, discoveries,

tongues. Christine Brooke-Rose, 'Exsul', in *Exile and Creativity: Signtposts, Travelers, Outsiders, Backward Glances*, ed. by Susan Rubin Suleiman (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 9-22 (pp. 9-15).

¹⁰ As Suleiman clarifies the meanings and connotations of the words expatriates, exiles, emigrants, refugees, nomads and cosmopolitans vary according to context, and historical period. All of them, however, imply a certain degree of estrangement or displacement. Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'Introduction' to Exile and Creativity, pp. 1-6. According to Said, unlike expatriation, 'exile originated in the age-long practice of banishment. Once banished, the exile lives an anomalous and miserable life, with the stigma of being an outsider. Refugees, on the other hand, are a creation of the twentieth-century state. The word "refugee" has become a political one, suggesting large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance. (...) Émigrés enjoy an ambiguous status. Technically, an émigré is anyone

brief encounters, consulting maps and guides. On the other hand, for the expatriates that space is their new house and, more specifically, the privacy of their own room, the permanent reference point where they can find the necessary time to reflect about themselves. It is there that they can liberate their 'selves'; and their identities as women and expatriates then emerge on the pages of diaries, journals or letters. Often, it is thanks to their condition as long-term expatriates that these women can write and then publish their works, acquiring an authorial persona. Their personal histories, and the experience of separation from the original home, become a spur to creativity, encouraging them to take on a task which, otherwise, many of them would not have savoured in their motherland. Thus, their experiences as foreigners in an alien world spur them on to write. Whether they choose to concentrate their attention on the host culture and the clashes between that unfamiliar world and the place of departure or focus on other topics, through their writing they seek amalgamation and oneness in contrast to the effect of separation and dissolution. 11 In particular it is the use of the mother-tongue - not just in the act of writing, but also in the act of verbal communication (for instance with fellow countrymen or with other visitors speaking the expatriate's first language) - which works as a sort of compensation for the feeling of placelessness.

ii.i Women's expatriate writing

The three texts studied in the following chapters share a writing characterized by a strong authorial/authoritative presence. Expatriate women's authorial and authoritative stance in narration generally derives from their professional and/or personal commitment to their long-term residency in a foreign country.

who emigrates to a new country. Choice in the matter is certainly a possibility'. Said, 'Reflections on Exile'

¹¹ See Julia Kristeva, Strangers to Ourselves, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

These women's missed return and interrupted journey have become the subject of their writing. Recurrently, their texts develop through a process of looking for similarities between what has been left at home and what has been found in Sicily. Additionally, these expatriates' texts reveal an anxious attempt to justify their choice of moving to a place which is different from their country of origin. A continuous search for personal and collective identity is, therefore, at the heart of their writing.

The three texts studied in this thesis, in their manifold forms and formulas (literary and visual), are a *locus* for personal narrative, reflections on personal experiences and for the production of self-representations. These texts are spaces where the author's perspectives on people, places and facts are expressed, but also where the author finds a space to speak about herself as a woman, an intellectual, a mother, a wife and an expatriate. Forms of female self-representation and self-reference appear within a writing practice which frequently blurs the distinction between the public chronicle and the private realm. All three texts have the same autobiographical impulse in common. The hybrid state of expatriate women authors, their belonging both *here* (the host country) and *there* (the country of origin), opens up a suitable place for them to express themselves in the hybrid genres of letters, journals and memoirs. These texts are written both with a glance back to the point of their origin and from within a new home in the adopted culture.

In the case of these women the act of writing should not be seen only as an expression of their bafflement and displacement, loss of familiar places and images, and a chance to register comparisons between what was left behind and what was eventually found. Rather, writing provides time and space for a self-knowledge distributed over the years, in the context of the new country and the new domestic space itself.

The three texts analysed in the case studies have been selected on the basis of the complex, hybrid identity of the writers. It needs to be underlined that the interest of

most of the texts analysed here derives from the 'hybrid' background of their female authors, for whom a sweeping classification as English women would not be appropriate. England is the country from where they originate, but this does not necessarily imply an English birth or English parents. Thus, the authorial presence in the text should be analysed in taking into account that each woman's personal identity was influenced by forces 'beyond' the culture of the country of departure; it is a personal identity which needs also to be seen in the light of other (European, or even Northern Italian) cultural influxes. We should point out that the ontological significance of these women's writings must be found in an existential need to find a connection between their Northern and Southern existences. Writing can be an attempt to link two (or more) cultural identities which simultaneously meet and clash. Producing memories, accounts and letters (often based on some degree of 'scientific' or historical research), as well as using illustrations, acquires a sort of therapeutic function: it can help to reconstruct and protect the disiecta membra of the author's ego.

iii. Comparing and contextualising

This study considers three Anglo-Sicilian female authors' representation of facts and events, their authorial/authoritative voice, as well as the production constraints and the reception of their hybrid, marginalized texts, through an interdisciplinary, comparative approach. The three texts (all written in English and published in London at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century) which are analysed in the following chapters, are studied by looking at patterns of connection in other texts produced during, or after, an experience in Italy. These texts are: travelogues and other expatriate writings about Sicily and Southern Italy; travel accounts and expatriate writings about the rest of Italy by more famous authors (for instance Elizabeth Barrett

Browning's Letters, and the Letters by the American Margaret Fuller Ossoli); travel texts by Italian women; some travel works by Italian and British men; works on Sicily which fall within other generic classifications (for instance historiography and ethnography); visual texts, in particular paintings and photographs. Moreover, the three works are studied in relation to travel and expatriate texts belonging to different periods. These nineteenth- and early twentieth-century texts are read and analysed in the light of both earlier and later works. For this purpose, the three case studies refer, where appropriate, to eighteenth-century texts by travellers and also include references to some contemporary writings by both female travellers and expatriate women in Sicily. The intention in this is to allow for a wider understanding of the complexity of the three works explored in this thesis. In fact, this approach avoids the limited perspective offered by a reading focused exclusively on the time frame chosen for this study. Additionally, such a comparative reading helps to underline the changing relationship between the Self and the world in each text, as well as the way in which, in each epoch, texts are affected by and avail themselves of numerous past models. Relevant samples will be introduced where appropriate.

Finally, comparing three works by Anglo-Sicilian women, allows us to focus on three diverse types of female writing in Sicily, inspired by three distinct backgrounds, as well as (Sicilian) private experiences. Through such a reading we can observe how these women perceived not only Sicily, but also their country of origin.

iii.i Representing the Other and the Self

Throughout the thesis one needs to question the way the expatriate author's Self is revealed through contact with the (Sicilian) Other. As pointed out by Hartog, the text should be seen as a 'mirror' which reflects the author's own identity, and also a means

¹² See Susan Bassnett, Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998; 1st edn 1993). See also Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes, eds, The Comparative Perspective on Literature.

through which the author gazes at the Other; s/he is the 'looker looked at', 'the questioner questioned', who keeps on stating his/her own 'status and credentials'. ¹³ Any interpreter of the Other's culture and history translates and interprets what is different and alien in terms of the knowledge shared by the group – marked by ethnicity, gender and/or class – s/he originally comes from. At the same time, as will be analysed in detail in the following chapters, through the text the author is involved in a construction and deconstruction of the 'Others' and of their most recent past, as well as in an interpretation of their earlier past. Additionally, the text can become the 'mirror' through which others, and even the 'Others', are inclined, afterwards, to scrutinize the world and themselves.14

The encounter with the Other leads to a re-arrangement of the subject's attitudes and concept of the Self. The encounter, which the three expatriate women analysed here had with the Sicilian world, implies a negotiation of the borderlines between their Selves and the Other.

An identity is never given; it is always a 'cultural artifact', the product of an interaction between the way people 'fashion' themselves, through communication (including and omitting information), and the way they are 'fashioned' by cultural institutions: family, religion, the state. 15 The representation of the encounter between two different identities is the locus classicus where the construction and fashioning of the Self can be constantly re-performed. Consequently, books about the Other and autobiographical writings are key texts where the author's identity – in our specific case that of a woman expatriate - is repeatedly reorganized and reassessed. Examining

Approaches to Theory and Practice (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988).

13 François Hartog, The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. xxiii. See also Dennis Porter, Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 14-15. 14 See Hartog, pp. xxiii-xxv.

^{&#}x27;After all, there are always selves – a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires - and always some elements of deliberate shaping in the formation

accounts by foreigners and autobiographical works – especially letters, journals, diaries and memoirs – as well as their interrelations, does therefore constitute an excellent strategy in order to monitor the manifold transformations and performances of the Self.¹⁶

Furthermore, a study which focuses on works by women cannot ignore the gender factor and the way it appears throughout the writing. Foreign women's interpretations of Sicily are not necessarily less judgemental than men's, although female representations certainly contribute to a deconstruction of a homogeneous (male) idea of the island and its culture, through various voices (subjective or scientific) and images (documentary or aesthetic). In British texts, women's representations of Sicily contain (intentionally or otherwise) traces of a gendered social existence, and a gaze which could be recognized as essentially female. Even when objectivity and scientificity are claimed, in writing about Sicily the author's identity is revealed through the presence of a female voice. Additionally, in travel and expatriate texts of any epoch, differences between women's and men's self-inscription do not lie in a simple distinction between men's modes of representing themselves on the one hand, and women's strategies and ways of doing the same on the other. It can be argued that women construct images of themselves as often as men do, and through similar processes: self-referentiality, and linguistic structures, such as the use of the first person singular. For instance, both genders share a wish to personalise their texts, to differentiate themselves from other travellers and tourists, to make their experiences

and expression of identity'. Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 1 and 256.

In an attempt to interpret the various mechanisms which lead one to abandon him/herself to the self-writing impulse, psychoanalytic theories have frequently been taken in consideration by critics and scholars. In particular, Jacques Lacan's stade du miroir has provided scholars with suggestions for disentangling the issue of the development of the Self and its formation through interaction with 'Others' See Jacques Lacan, 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of I', in Écrits, trans. from the French by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989), pp. 1-7, and Anthony Wilden, 'Lacan and the Discourse of the Other', in The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis, by Jacques Lacan, translated, with notes and commentary by A. Wilden (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, 1981), pp. 159-311, and pp. 161-165.

appear sensational and unique, and to leave their names in the history of ethnography, science, historiography, political and social writings. However, what needs to be distinguished is the complex configuration of psychological, social, cultural and historical circumstances which activate the female self-writing impulse in texts written from and about a foreign country.

In the nineteenth century, external pressures and social constraints imposed by their gender led women to project themselves (through their writing) onto an already established set of values and personality models. However, as will be evidenced by the three case studies, women authors manage to adopt and appropriate disparate identities which do not always belong to the feminine and private spheres. In other words, their female identity frequently interlocks and co-exists with other identities marked by class, culture and race. In this way, different voices emerge from the written page creating 'polyphonic possibilities of selfhood'. 17 Through these strategies the female author can create her self-images as, at any time, she can emphasise a conventional feminine image of herself, choose an autobiographical style of writing, valorise her personal experiences and knowledge, decide to represent the new world through an objective narration and a scientific voice, and assimilate herself to or differentiate herself from men. Here a look at some mechanisms in passages extracted from women's travel works on Sicily, written during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, can help to identify some of these voices. Such a reading of Anglophone travelogues about Sicily is intended to provide a framework, as well as terms of comparison for a (re)construction and deconstruction of the meaning of the three texts studied in the main part of this work. However, as already said, throughout the whole thesis other characteristics which differentiate and/or

Sidonie Smith, A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 58. See also Bénédicte Monicat, 'Autobiography and Women's Travel Writings in Nineteenth-century France: journeys through self-representation', Gender, Place and Culture, 1 (1994), 61-70. Monicat detects four voices in the context of nineteenth-century travel literature by French and francophone women: the 'conventional autobiographical voice', the 'conventional scientific voice', the 'differentiated scientific voice' and the

assimilate women's expatriate writing to women's travel writing, as well as to other kinds of genres, will be highlighted.

In 1905 Norma Lorimer, after various trips to Sicily, co-authored with her husband Queer Things about Sicily, in which her aim was that of depicting 'Sicily from a woman's point of view', bringing out 'the tender and romantic side in the vein' of a female writer.¹⁸ Her self-depiction is a clear example of a continuous alternation between a recognition of her female traits, an assimilation of male roles, and a differentiation from the male world:

At Tyndaris I was the only woman, and I felt my femininity; for I seemed to be interested in such little things, and my ignorance of the classics was so appalling that I was glad when my little orphan companion pointed out simple human things which I could understand - the thoughtfulness of Nature, for instance, in supplying this tunnyfishing district with a wealth of strong grass (...). He also told me that the fichi d'India what we call prickly pears - have their sex easily distinguished, for the feminine pears have no prickles, while those of the masculine gender are covered with angry thorns. Both sorts bear fruit, but the feminine trees produce the largest and the best. 19

In Lorimer's account emphasis is put on the commonplaces of female irrationality, intellectual limitation and attention to trivial details; 'biological characteristics' are at the core of the passage. However, the binary oppositions Nature/Culture, Woman/Man are then strategically subverted to valorise and reinforce (socially constructed) femininity, as hinted at in the last sentence.

On the other hand, at various times imitation and assimilation of (stereotypically coded) male behaviour are perceptible in Lorimer's choices and actions.²⁰ Hence, on the occasion of a frightening descent to the bottom of a sulphur mine, she mustered all her courage as she 'had an English woman's reputation to keep up', and 'for the sake of

^{&#}x27;differentiated autobiographical voice'. And Mary Suzanne Schriber, Writing Home: American Women

Abroad 1830-1920 (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997).

18 Douglas Sladen, 'Preface' to Queer Things about Sicily by Douglas Sladen and Norma Lorimer (London: Anthony Treherne & co, 1905), p. xviii. Apart from the above mentioned work on Sicily, Norma Lorimer was also author of the fictionalized account By the Waters of Sicily (London, 1901), which will mentioned again in chapter two, and the novel On Etna: A Romance of Brigand Life (London,

Lorimer, 'Sicily from a woman's point of view' in Queer Things about Sicily, p. 335.

Monicat also points our that this 'hyperevaluation of the masculine is based on the devaluation of the feminine', as women's longing for assimilation rebounds their inferiority. Monicat, p. 66.

being glad afterwards that you were not quite such a coward as you would have liked to be'. 21

Examples of women's attempts to break stereotyped images of themselves can be found in various women's travelogues. An example is *Sunny Sicily* by Mrs Tweedie.²² Travelling in Sicily with her sister and her grandmother, Mrs Tweedie expressed her wish to see a puppet show during a conversation with a male Palermitan:

'Can we see them?'

'Hardly. The performances are only given in the lowest houses in the town - in six or eight of them, in fact - and for the very poor'.

'But why shouldn't we go?'

'It would be dirty and objectionable, too rough altogether for ladies'

'But Englishwomen can do anything, and we want to see the amusements of the people'.

'Very well, you can go; but at your own risk. You may be robbed, mind, you may catch some horrible disease - anything may happen, and you must not blame me if you don't like it. However, I will find out the exact hour and place'.

All this but whetted our appetite, and we eagerly looked forward to so unique an entertainment as a marionette puppet show in Sicily. ²³

Nineteenth-century travel books on Sicily by women overflow with reports of women's bravery: experiences on Mount Ætna, meetings with brigands, visits to obscure areas and sites, and so on. These women's aim is often that of imitating men, and at the same time, differentiating themselves from local women.

It is important to observe that for many women travellers self-representation in their books was often culturally constructed and determined by various social and cultural expectations. Shirley Forster points out that 'as women became able to travel more widely and more independently they had to adopt a position of gender ambiguity, taking on the *masculine* virtues of strength, initiative and decisiveness while retaining

²¹ Lorimer, p. 359.

Ethel Brilliana Alec-Tweedie, Sunny Sicily. Its Rustics and its Ruins (London: Hutchinson and co., 1904), p. 157. The 131 photos included in her book, and mostly taken by the author, will be mentioned again in chapter two. Mrs Tweedie (c1867 - 1940) was an English traveller, artist, author and socialite. Prolific writer of travel books, some of her works published in London are: A Girl's Ride in Iceland (1889), Danish versus English Butter Making (1895), Through Finland in Carts (1897), Mexico as I Saw It (1901), Behind the Footlights (1904), America as I Saw It; or, America Revisited (1913).

Tweedie, p. 157.

the less aggressive qualities considered appropriate to their own sex'. Hence, a construction of domesticity is constantly present in their travel journals, and also in other writings produced by women abroad. Women's texts show the continuing importance that domesticity had even for those who were strongly involved in political issues. At the same time, in their texts, women needed to submit to 'the rule of decency', the rule which made it difficult for them 'to write publicly about themselves' and to be 'properly' the subjects of their own discourse. A case in point is Julia Kayanagh's 'Preface' to her *A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies*:

I have been detained from publishing it by two objections. One was, that, in a personal narrative, the unfortunate pronoun 'I' must necessarily occur oftener than I cared to use it, being more accustomed to speak to the public through the medium of imaginary beings than in my own person. This objection having been overcome by the desire, irresistible to a traveller, of talking about what I had seen, was succeeded by another more formidable. What was there to say about Italy that had not been said? But this, too, was satisfactorily removed.²⁶

Kavanagh also attempts to represent herself as a different, and better, observer of foreign culture than her fellow travellers. In fact, identification with other travellers was quite controversial, as the British abroad tended to shift from assimilation to differentiation, constructing different images of themselves with each shift. Generally one can notice the traveller's tendency to differentiate his/her experiences from the tourist's superficial wandering and gaze.²⁷ Hence, in *Sunny Sicily*, Mrs Tweedie wondered 'why some people travel at all'; she reported the conversation a friend of hers had with a stylish British lady who had been in a smart hotel in Sicily for about six

²⁴ Shirley Foster, Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings (London: Harverster, Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 11-12.

Monicat, pp. 64-65.

Julia Kavanagh, 'Preface' to A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies, 2 vols. (Paris: Leipzig, 1858), p. v. The Irish writer Julia Kavanagh (1824-1877) was one of the many nineteenth-century women who sought to acquire the public, didactic, and politically-charged role of historian, generally considered, along with non-fiction prose, a male preserve. In her main work she commented on the cultural contradictions and gender politics of life in the island, as seen from a uniquely female perspective, contradicting much of what was expected of travel writing. The book was reviewed in The Athenaeum, n. 1622, 27 November 1858.

In particular, the new nineteenth-century touristic trend was harshly criticized by novelists, journalists and scholars. See James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

weeks. When the lady was asked what she liked the most and what she had seen on the island, she was puzzled and answered:

'I hate markets and smells, long walks and ruins, and climbs for nothing but a view. I just came for the sunshine. There is a nice tea-shop where I can get a good cup of tea and English novels'.

Through her sharp comments on the lady, Tweedie constructed herself as a more discerning traveller while also defining other travellers:

Here was the Britisher abroad. Sicilian sunshine and English tea had brought her hundreds of miles from home to be bored in a foreign hotel, cheered only by a few old English novels. Surely Americans, superficial in their sightseeing as they often are, take a more healthy interest in the places they visit, and put such Britishers to shame.²⁸

Reports and studies of women's conditions in foreign countries often become the occasion through which women abroad could develop a 'differentiated scientific voice', thus acquiring authority. Moreover, women's accounts of the Other can present a constant focus on aspects not often valorized by men (also through the use of such instruments as visual images); this often appears in descriptions of places and situations to which men had no access, giving women empowerment and expertise in a specific area.

Consequently, every text contains a particular 'polyphonic' effect which is the result of a specific way of viewing the world.²⁹ In the following chapters it is possible to observe how similar mechanisms and strategies in the creation of self-images are present in the works by Anglo-Sicilian women. In particular, we need to question which narrative voices distinguish texts written during an experience of expatriation from travel works.

²⁸ Tweedie, p. 105.

²⁹ Consider the concept of 'heteroglossia' as explained by Bakhtin. It is possible to say that heteroglossia enters the expatriates' and travellers' texts, assuming a 'material form' in the various speaking voices of their Self; the varied selfhoods of the woman abroad are the objects of 'verbal artistic representation' and are depicted 'by means of (authorial) discourse'. Michael Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, ed. by Michael Holquist (London: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 332-333...

iii.ii Between the private and the public

The works analysed in the case studies have characteristics which assimilate them to other genres. In the period under discussion, interest in ethnography, archaeology and historiography as well as in geographical, sociological, or biological knowledge, could give women a chance to escape from the narrow confines of their typical social roles and common images. Women could aspire to break through the boundaries of the private and the quotidian, despite the social and educational limitations attached to their gender. In the context of travels to Italy, examples of women's involvement in natural science couched in the format of travel narrative, can be found in books by Agnes and Maria E. Catlow, such as *Sketching Rambles*, published in 1861. An attempt at writing history was made by Francis Marion Crawford who, with her The Rulers of the South (1900) aimed at producing a 'simple and true account' of the dominations in Sicily and the south of Italy from the days of the early Greek settlers down to the establishment of the house of Aragon.³⁰ However, the nineteenth century, with its changing social and intellectual context, was an ambiguous time for women who wanted to find spaces for themselves. In reality, gaining a scientific voice was not straightforward for women. As Lila Marz Harper explains, the post-Darwinian understanding of evolutionary science gained an authoritative voice with regard to social structure. Consequently, women were forced to submit to a scientific culture which sought to limit them to domestic roles more powerfully than before Darwin.³¹ Ethnography, historiography, society, politics and science were then fields where women were often tolerated as second-class practitioners, amateurs, or even disqualified as authoritative subjects; they could not properly enjoy institutional acceptance of their treatises and enquiries. Above all, it was

Lila Marz Harper, Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narrative and Scientific Vocation (Madison [N.J.], London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Associated University Presses, 2001), p. 22.

Agnes and Maria E. Catlow, Sketching Rambles; or, Nature in the Alps and Apennines, 2 vols. (London: James Hogg and sons, 1861). The book was also illustrated by twenty sketches by the authors. The two were also authors of other texts on botany and zoology. Francis Marion Crawford, The Rulers of the South: Sicily. Calabria, Malta, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1900).

not believed that women were able to use a scientific voice which, among other strategies, required distance from personal details and the need for objectivity.³² Women's attempts to produce cultural artefacts could only be labelled as 'autobiographical'.³³

In the case of expatriates, if on the one hand women managed to claim their authority through originality, truth and accuracy, thanks to their long-term experience, on the other hand, they experienced a certain anxiety over how to present to their audience the methodology of their research, the depth of their observations, and the reliability of their enquiries and descriptions. In our specific case, an example of such anxieties can be found in the works by Jeanne Villepreux-Power who was an Anglo-French resident in Sicily for around twenty years.³⁴ At the beginning of her *Itinerario della Sicilia riguardante tutt'i rami di storia naturale, e parecchi di antichità ch'essa contiene*, – written in Italian and published in Messina in 1839 – she stated:

Il metodo in fine da me tenuto è quello appunto di un accorto viaggiatore naturalista, che, ovunque si trova, cammin facendo per l'ordinata e più corta strada, osserva, nota e raccoglie indistintamente gli oggetti che alla storia naturale appartengono di qualunque classe, o specie sieno, per quindi ordinarli a suo bell'agio.

Spero con questo qualsisia mio lavoro, che mi ha costato tempo, travaglio e dispendio, far cosa gradevole sì agli esteri addetti a tale scienza, come ai nazionali; ai primi, perché ho segnato ogni sorta di sostanze col termine scientifico, non meno che col volgare, e così, senza dipartirsi da' loro paesi, purchè dieno incombenza anche ad inesperti abitanti dell'isola, coll'indicazione de' nomi volgari degli oggetti che bramano, verranno a procurarseli; a' secondi perché metto in mostra quali e quante dovizie ha profuse la natura al loro natìo paese, le quali, tranne agli scienziati, al rimanente della nazione son pur troppo ignote.³⁵

³² See Lynnette Turner, 'Feminism, Femininity and Ethnographic Authority', Women: a Cultural Review, vol. 2, no.3 (1991), 238-254.

³³ See Sara Mills, *Discourse of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 12.

Jeannette Villepreux Power (1794-1871) was a marine biologist and author of several books on natural science. Born in France, she married a rich Englishman and merchant in Sicily. It was after she moved to Sicily that she became a fully self-taught naturalist. It seems that Power was the first to create and use aquariums for experimentation in aquatic environments. For almost ten years she was the only woman in Catania's accademia and a correspondent member of the London Zoological Society. Her writings can also been found in leading Natural History libraries.

Jeannette Power, 'Introduzione' to Itinerario della Sicilia riguardante tutt'i rami di storia naturale, e parecchi di antichità che essa contiene (Messina: Giuseppe Fiumara, 1839), pp. iv-v. (See plate 1). In 1842, in Guida per la Sicilia, Power wrote: 'Chi si fa a visitare la Sicilia, classica isola, superiore ad ogni altra in ricchezze naturali ed artistiche, dee avvertirvi pur troppo la mancanza di una Guida esatta e completa. Questa mancanza appunto fu da me riconosciuta quando, tratta principalmente da investigazioni di storia naturale trascorsi per ogni banda l'avventurosa contrada. Volsi l'animo sin d'allora a provvedere i viaggiatori di quell'ajuto che io non aveva trovato. (...) Possa la cortesia de' lettori

Power presented herself as a serious, meticulous collector and observer of the natural and cultural resources of Sicily. Relying on her experience as a long-term resident on the island and as an accurate researcher, Power endeavoured to present her texts from an authoritative standpoint to both an external (British) and internal (Sicilian and Italian) readership. However, although her scientific works were taken seriously by her contemporaries, it can be argued that she also needed to offer both her foreign and Italian audience an image of herself as a humble, meek female writer, partially reassuring the reader she was not straying too far from her gender's limitations. It is this kind of almost duplicitous attitude towards their audience that characterized most women's 'specialized' writing in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. A similar mechanism can also be observed in the works by the three Anglo-Sicilian women analysed in the case studies. However, why did women need such strategies? What were the advantages of such an attitude for these female writers?

iii.iii Italian women's Mezzogiorno

The lives and works of the three Anglo-Sicilian women analysed in the next chapters highlight not only Victorian and Edwardian women's social conditions, but also the constraints in Italian women's lives. In their works, comments on contemporary Italian and specifically Sicilian women are made through the eyes of the foreigner. At the same time, one needs to bear in mind the hybrid nature – the belonging to both England and Italy – of the three women studied in this thesis. Before moving to Sicily these women lived or only travelled in Northern Italy. Therefore, their representations of Sicily need also to be examined bearing in mind what the South represented for the rest of the

compatire l'autrice, facendo ragione alla sua buona intenzione, quella cioè di esser utile agli stranieri non meno che ai nazionali'. Power, *Guida per la Sicilia* (Naples: Girelli, 1842), p. v.

Regarding today's reception of Jeannette Power's works in Italy, it is worth observing that her name has been included in the bibliography of Italian travellers by Luca Clerici, Viaggiatori italiani in Italia

peninsula. Throughout this thesis some references to Italian women's visits to the Mezzogiorno and to their impressions will help to contextualise the three Anglo-Sicilian women's experiences. It is useful here, then, to consider briefly Italian women's mobility at the end of the nineteenth and at beginning of the twentieth century, as well as their contribution to the field of travel writing and in particular to travel books about the South.

As already hinted, in Britain, at least since the eighteenth century, travel writing has enjoyed popularity, generally remaining a prolific area of British literature. Within the Italian literary system, on the other hand, Italian travel writing has often been relegated to a marginal position.³⁷ Additionally, as scholars have noted, only a few works have been dedicated to Italian travellers in Italy. In fact, most of the research, databases, collections and anthologies produced so far have covered texts on Italy by foreigners, or on Italian travellers abroad.³⁸ Therefore, it appears that the main interest has been in the relations between Italy and abroad: Italy as the object of representation for the others, and Italy as the point of departure towards the 'Others'. What has not yet been completed is a comprehensive map of Italy – and its various cultural diversities – represented by Italians, and their internal journeys throughout time.³⁹ The lack of

1700-1998: Per una Bibliografia (Milan: Edizioni Sylvestre Bonnard, 1999); at the same time she is regularly mentioned among the various British travellers to Sicily.

37 See Loredana Polezzi, Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation

³⁷ See Loredana Polezzi, Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 62-63. 'A combination of factors, including the early association between travel and journalism and the late development of the Italian novel, determined the invisibility of the Italian travel writing tradition, at best confining it, to this day, to the role of a useful source of historical and geographical information', p. 25.

Among Italian studies on Italian travellers see Ilaria Luzzana Caraci, ed., Scopritori e viaggiatori del Cinquecento, 2 vols (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi-Mondadori, 1996), Marziano Guglielminetti, ed., Viaggiatori del Seicento (Turin: UTET, 1967), Luca Clerici. 'La letteratura di viaggio', in Manuale di letteratura italiana: Storia per generi e problemi. Dalla metà del Settecento all'Unità d'Italia, ed. by Franco Brioschi and Costanzo Di Girolamo (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1995), pp. 590-610. See also the recent Gaia De Pascale, Scrittori in viaggio: Narratori e poeti italiani del Novecento in giro per il mondo (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2001).

Special attention to Italian travelogues on Italy has been given by Associazione Italiana di Studi sulla Letteratura di Viaggio, in Trieste. See also the works by Luca Clerici such as his bibliography Viaggiatori italiani in Italia 1700-1998, and his essay 'Viaggiatori italiani in Italia (1750-1900)', in L'Odeporica/Hodoeporics: On Travel Literature, special issue of Annali d'Italianistica, ed. by Luigi Monga, XIV (1996), pp. 271-303. Also Elvio Guagnini, 'New and Traditional Forms of Nineteenth-Century Travel Literature', in The Motif of the Journey in Nineteenth-Century Italian Literature, ed. by Bruno Magliocchetti and Anthony Verna (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 150-166.

studies and research on this topic becomes even more evident when we concentrate on women's journeys. It is true that Italian women did not travel as much as their British counterparts; and when they did, not all of them reported their experiences on paper. However, it is also possible that most of their writings, especially in the form of letters and diaries, still need to be properly re-evaluated, if not simply unearthed from libraries and archives.

Only in the second half of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, in Italy, did Italian women begin to travel more than before. After Unification, the press started supplying women with an introduction to the topography of different cities. 40 Generally, only upper class and aristocratic women, and a few women from the middle-classes, travelled in and outside Italy. For Italian women (as for British women), the act of travelling was to become an educational experience: travelling became a significant experience of growth and self-discovery. However, unlike Britain, Italy could not benefit from the memory of great women travellers and a female travel tradition. Whether in the city or out of it, public space was generally not assigned to women and their access to it was strictly monitored and limited.⁴¹ Moreover, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, a journey abroad was still not high on the agenda for early Italian feminists. Family constraints and rules of good manners often restrained Italian women from travelling, especially on their own. As Michela De Giorgio remarks, some of the well-known women who left Italy were not even native Italians; they were foreigners who had become Italian after marriage; examples are the Hungarian Yoi Pawloska, and the Polish Edvige Toeplitz Mrozowska, who encouraged the passion for journeys to the Orient from the peninsula.⁴² In Italy, as in the rest of

life. Hallamore Caesar, p. 135.

⁴⁰ Local and regional information was more easily provided than before 1860 when women's readingmaterial used to come essentially from Paris. Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'About town: the city and the female reader, 1860-1900', Modern Italy, 7 (2), (2002), 129-141 (p. 131).

Literature for women had also the role of drawing up conduct rules for its female readership's urban

Pawloska was the author of A Year of Strangers published in London, in 1911; she got married to the Italian sculptor Antonio Maraini, grandfather of the contemporary writer Dacia Maraini. See Dacia

Europe, the first European translation of *Alf Laila wa Laila (The Thousand and One Nights)*, published in 1704, by the French Antoine Galland, became enormously fashionable.⁴³ The imagination of Italian women was nourished by a cultural repertoire evoking a fabulously rich, sensual, and exotic eastern world, comprising not only areas from India to Japan, but also Northern Africa and the countries of the Ottoman Empire. And for the Italians, too, the Orient turned out to be far from 'an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world. Rather, it was a closed field, a 'theatrical stage affixed to Europe'.⁴⁴ Among nineteenth-century Italian female 'globe-trotters', the most well-known include Angela Bettoni (who followed her husband to Egypt, but also visited Greece, Syria, Russia and Armenia), Amalia Nizzoli, Cristina Trivulzio di Belgioioso, Ida Fusco and Carla Serena.⁴⁵

Some Italian women travelled through their own country as well. The majority of their journeys seems to have had as its destination the main cities, such as Rome, Florence, Venice and Naples. Additionally, domestic trips were often organized within a limited geographical border, such as the region from which the travellers originally came.

Recent bibliographies on Italian travellers show that only a few Northern Italian women visited the South of the peninsula, and above all Sicily. In one recent bibliographical work by Luca Clerici, out of approximately thirty female travellers

Maraini, 'Yoi Pawloska scrittrice, mia nonna (1877-1944)', in Viaggio e scrittura. Le straniere nell'Italia dell'Ottocento, ed. by Liana Borghi et al (Florence: Libreria delle donne, 1988), pp. 175-180. Mrozowska was the wife of Giuseppe Toeplitz, founder of the Italian Commercial Bank. See Michela De Giorgio, Le italiane dall'unità a oggi: modelli culturali e comportamenti sociali (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992), pp. 96-103.

See Ricciarda Ricorda, 'Travel writing, 1750-1860', in A History of Women's Writing in Italy, ed. by Letizia Panizza and Sharon Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 107-119.

Amalia Solla Nizzoli, Memorie sull'Egitto e specialmente sui costumi delle donne orientali e gli harem scritte durante il suo soggiorno in quel paese, 1819-1828, (Milan, 1841); Cristina Trivulzio di Belgioioso, 'Souvenirs dans l'exil', Le National (5 September – 12 October 1850), appendix, and 'La vie intime et la vie nomade en Orient', Revue des Deux Mondes (February – September 1855); Carla Serena, Mon Voyage (Souvenirs personnels): De la Baltique à la Mer Caspienne, also published in Paris between 1880 and 1884; Ida Fusco, Oriente e occidente: viaggi e impressioni della vedova di Edoardo Fusco (Naples, 1882). Angela Palermo Bettoni Haimann, Ricordi di Egitto: lettere ai genitori (Rome, 1903).

writing between the end of the eighteenth century and 1920, about twelve appear to have given an account of a visit to Southern parts of the country. 46 Restricting this analysis to the nineteenth century, it is possible to observe that only works by very few women – among all the texts registered so far – contain descriptions of Southern Italy. 47

As Clerici points out, between the eighteenth and nineteenth century Italy was depicted by Italians through micro-geographies, that is descriptions of circumscribed parts of the country. Fractions, cities and regions of Italy were represented in travel texts producing a general picture of a varied and complex Italian reality. The result was an image of a culturally, historically and politically fragmented country. Moreover, moving around the Peninsula, and especially from North to South, was still made difficult by the lack of proper roads and railways. This, together with the bad reputation the Mezzogiorno acquired, in particular after Unification, can partially explain why most women's journeys stopped at Naples. In fact, most of the women writing about the South originally lived there, and yet none of them appears to have given a complete account of a visit to Sicily. At the same time, it should be underlined that the lack of records of women's mobility depends mainly on the few documents that have been discovered and studied.

See Ricorda, and Mirella Scriboni, 'Il viaggio al femminile nell'Ottocento. La principessa di Belgioioso, Amalia Nizzoli e Carla Serena', in L'Odeporica/Hodoeporics, pp. 304-325.

⁴⁶ Clerici, Viaggiatori italiani in Italia 1700-1998.

It should also be considered that often in bibliographies, anthologies and databases, texts are selected according to their content and typological variety within the travel genre. Among the nineteenth-century women travellers mentioned in Clerici's bibliography, consider: Elisabetta Michiel, co-author with Silvio Martinengo of Viaggio a Roma, 1819-20 (published in 1960), where a visit to Naples is reported; Un viaggetto in famiglia, by Ernesta Picazzi, published in 1871, which describes the region of Marche; Giulia Colbert who reported her experience in Naples and Pompei (1833-34) in Con gli occhi del cuore, posthumously published in 1985. Images of Naples are also included in Napoli e dintorni by Cesira Pozzolini Siciliani, and Da Torino a Napoli by Felicita Morandi, both published in 1880. Luigia Codemo travelled from Venezia to Puglia and her Un Viaggio a Bordo appeared in 1886. 1892 saw the publication of two editions of In Calabria, by Caterina Pigorini Beri. In 1908 the Neapolitan writer Matilde Serao published Lettere d'una viaggiatrice. Libri e opuscoli su Napoli e l'antico reame delle Due Sicilie (Naples: L. Lubrano, 1919) mentions some female authors who published works (not considered as travel writing) specifically on Naples and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Two of them are Cristina Trivulzio di Belgioioso, who published L'Italia e la rivoluzione italiana nel 1848, in 1849, and Irene Capecelatro Ricciardi, who wrote Poesie (contained in G. Ricciardi, Storia documentata della sollevazione delle Calabrie, and published in 1876).

Calabrie, and published in 1876).

⁴⁸ Luca Clerici, 'Introduzione', in *Il viaggiatore meravigliato: italiani in Italia (1714-1996)*, ed. by Luca Clerici (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1999), pp. xi-xxx.

Women certainly travelled all around Italy, but often they did not write about their experience. As Ricciarda Ricorda remarks, examples of female mobility can be discovered among women who moved around Italy for family reasons, or among actresses, painters and teachers who travelled for their professions.⁴⁹ Other cases are to be found among governesses, servants and prostitutes; or among nurses and volunteers, especially during the battles for the Unification of Italy.⁵⁰ Other 'travellers' were workers who needed to move for long periods to extra-urban areas where factories were situated; or mondine (rice weeders) who used to leave every year, for forty days, to work in the countryside of the North, in ricefields. Within the boundaries of Italy, a certain mobility emerges from this picture, especially among the working classes, peasants and, in a limited way, among the middle classes.⁵¹ It is in the diaries and letters, or social and political reports left by these women, that a deeper analysis of their impressions and experiences far from home may be located. However, the general impression that can be drawn, so far, is that Italian women did not go further south than Naples, and only in rare cases did they reach Calabria, Puglia, and sometimes Sardinia. For Italian women – as for British women – the South was an exotic land of contrasts.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ricciarda Ricorda, "Al bel sesso ancora / piace la sempre varia errante vita": viaggiatrici italiane in Italia tra sette e ottocento', in *Il viaggio in Italia: modelli, stili, lingue*, ed. by Ilaria Crotti (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), pp. 105-130.

Consider Laura Guidi, 'Prigioni domestiche e fughe femminili a Napoli nell'Ottocento', in *Donne in viaggio: viaggio religioso, politico, metaforico*, ed. by Maria Luisa Silvestre and Adriana Valerio (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1999), pp. 155-168. Also Judith Jeffrey Howard, 'Patriot Mothers in the Post-Risorgimento: Women After the Italian Revolution', in *Women, War, and Revolution*, ed. by Carol R. Berkin and Clara M. Lovett (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980), pp. 237-252.

⁵¹ For an overview on migration by Italian women between the nineteenth and twentieth century, see Maura Palazzi, 'Le molte migrazioni delle donne. Cambiamenti di stato civile e partenze per lavoro in Italia fra Otto e Novecento', in *Altrove: viaggi di donne dall'antichità al Novecento*, ed. by Dinora Corsi (Rome: Viella, 1999), pp. 79-104.
⁵² In 1880, for example, the Tuscan Cesira Pozzolini Siciliani described Naples in these terms: 'contrasto

In 1880, for example, the Tuscan Cesira Pozzolini Siciliani described Naples in these terms: 'contrasto continuo e stridente come dappertutto; contrasto nelle persone, contrasto nelle cose, contrasto nella natura. Opulenza sfarzosa che ti stupisce, e lurida miseria che ti rattrista. Ampie vie fiancheggiate da sontuosi palazzi, e violetti angusti, fetidi, ributtanti. Piazze ombreggiate da piante rigogliose, adorne di leggiadre aiuole, rallegrate dal vivace colore di mille fiori, e stamberghe, e cosucce, e pubblici dormentorii che son veri canili, dove sulla paglia il povero si ricovera pagando un soldo, se nella cattiva stagione non può sdraiarsi per terra, e dormire tutto rannicchiato sulla soglia d'una casa o accoccolarsi presso un piuolo lungo i marciapiedi. Opere straordinarie d'ogni genere, opere che attestano grande potenza d'immaginazione, vigoria d'ingegno doviziosissimo, e poi ignoranza spaventevole, credenze ridicole, sciocchi pregiudizi'. Cesira Pozzolini Siciliani, *Napoli e dintorni: impressioni e ricordi* (Naples: Vincenzo Morano editore, 1880), pp. 56-57. Writer, patriot and wife of the Italian philosopher Pietro

As will be shown in the main part of this thesis, the image of the exotic, 'distant' land that Sicily represented in the eyes of the British did not differ so much from the idea of the island that Northern Italy had begun to construct, in particular during the events which took place during the Unification of Italy. Post-unification (Northern) Italian culture defined itself against Sicilian culture and society. Being Sicilian – or more generally Southern Italian – came to be seen as a mark of alterity.

Very little is known about women as readers of travel writing in Italy.

Generally, Italian women used to read imported texts in French, and later also in

English. However, strict controls were imposed on their reading until the end of the century. 53

The reason why Italian women did not think of Sicily as their destination can be further sought in the female condition and the struggle for emancipation in the nineteenth century. It can be argued that if travelling could help to flee domesticity and all its constraints, then not Italy but the rest of the world was the ideal destination to prove to others – and to men above all – a woman's hard-won freedom. This explains the growth in journeys to the distant, mysterious and challenging Orient, and the subsequent recording of these experiences.

Around 1790 – when a journey to Sicily was a pilgrimage to the ruins of Greek culture – the noble woman Silvia Curtoni Verza from Verona, mentioned in one of her *Lettere* a visit to Sicily after a trip around Italy.⁵⁴ This is one of the rare Italian women's travel works mentioning a journey to the island in the eighteenth century. As far as journeys in the nineteenth century are concerned, evidence can be found of merely a

Siciliani, Cesira Pozzolini (1845-?) collaborated to the main Italian literary journals. Apart from her work on Naples and its surroundings, she wrote other travel texts such as *Una settimana in Casentino. I Camaldoli e la Verna*, published in 1899 and *Lettere da Parigi* (1904).

53 De Giorgio, pp. 420-429.

Silvia Curtoni Verza, (1751-1835), known in arcadia as Flaminda Caritea, travelled to Sicily at the end of the eighteenth century; she was also a poet, follower of the neo-classic genre of Ippolito Pindemonte. Her work will be mentioned again in chapter one. See Di Matteo. Silvia Curtoni Verza, 'Lettera a Saverio Bettinelli. Verona 14 Dicembre 1790', in *Carteggio inedito d'una gentildonna veronese*, ed. by Giuseppe Biadego (Verona: Artigianelli, 1884).

few, sporadic trips, although Sicily was at the centre of the attention of various British women. For instance, in 1842 Luisa Blondel visited the island together with her husband, the Italian politician Massimo D'Azeglio. They visited mainly Palermo, Solunto, Messina, Catania and Siracusa, between February and March. But only D'Azeglio recorded their journey in letters to his brother and friends. In 1844, Giulia Carafa, a Neapolitan noble woman visited Palermo, Catania, Siracusa and Malta, where she spent a couple of months. She briefly reported her visit in *Quattro mesi di diporto per l'Italia, la Francia, e l'Inghilterra*; however, Sicily only takes up a small part of her account. Between 1868 and 1881 Queen Margaret of Savoy visited Sicily with her husband the Italian King Umberto I; however her journeys lack direct written evidence. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Italian 'feminist' writer Sibilla Aleramo recorded her visit to Sicily in *Dialogo con Psiche*. More texts on Sicily by Italian women appeared just after the First World War.

iii.iv Beyond the pen: picturesque views of Sicily

Increasingly, during the nineteenth and twentieth century, textual representations of Sicily were accompanied by iconographic representations. This thesis, then, looks at the relationship between written and visual representations of the island, as well as the role of illustrations — especially photography — in written works about Sicily. This connection is analysed in particular in chapters two and three where photographs of Sicily produced by the Anglo-Sicilian female authors (or produced by others and then

Giulia Carafa, Quattro mesi di diporto per l'Italia, la Francia, e l'Inghilterra (Messina: Stamp. Fiumara, 1844), pp. 23-28. For information on Giulia Carafa and Luisa Blondel I am indebted to the bibliography by Salvo Di Matteo, Viaggiatori stranieri in Sicilia dagli Arabi alla seconda metà del XX secolo (Palermo: ISSPE, 2000).

King Umberto I reigned in Italy from 1878 to 1900. The royal couple was in Palermo in December 1868. They later returned to Sicily in 1880-81 to visit Palermo again and also Agrigento, Caltanissetta, Catania, Siracusa and Messina. See Catherine Brice, 'I viaggi della Regina Margherita', in *Altrove*, pp. 201-214.

⁵⁷ Sibilla Aleramo, *Dialogo con Psiche*, ed. by Bruna Conti (Palermo: Novecento, 1991). The journeys of Queen Margaret and Sibilla Aleramo will be mentioned again in chapter three.

used by the authors) are examined in relation to drawings, paintings and photographs of Sicily and Southern Italy by other women travellers and expatriates across time.

Sicily acquired a significant presence in visual images thanks to both Italian and foreign artists, in the nineteenth century.⁵⁸ In the Neo-classical age, the search for ancient sites and for the influence of Greece on Southern Italy drove European artisttravellers to re-discover a human and artistic heritage in Sicily, which up until that time had been neglected. They passionately intended to record that patrimony and made it the object of figurative research. Central and northern Italy had been, and continued to be, the strong point of European publishing; the market was congested with English, French and German 'best sellers' on the 'Bel Paese', causing a cut-throat competition among publishing companies. Thus, choosing to devote time and money to the production of a complete work on the uncharted Kingdom of the Two Sicilies might have looked like an astute commercial move.⁵⁹ As far as iconography is concerned, the main works on Southern Italy which were produced in the eighteenth century were a collection of engravings included in Voyage pittoresque ou Description des Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile edited by abbot Jean-Claude Richard de Saint-Non, 60 and the Voyage pittoresque des isles de Sicile de Malte et de Lipary by Jean Houel. 61 These works embodied the main characteristics of the figurative representation of the island in the

There are two main stages in the history of pictorial representations of Sicily. The first is generally considered to be the period from the end of the Middle Ages to the start of the eighteenth century, during which Sicily was the crossroads of Mediterranean trading routes and the destination of Byzantine, Provençal, Valencian, Flemish and Dutch artists. The second period started in the eighteenth century and lasted until the nineteenth century; during this phase many foreign painters included Sicily in their itinerary, and, inspired by the landscape and ancient sites, produced personal images of the island Gianni Carlo Sciolla, 'Il "viaggio pittorico" in Sicilia dal Medioevo alla fine dell'Ottocento: prospettiva per una ricerca', in Viaggio nel Sud: Viaggiatori stranieri in Sicilia, vol. I, pp. 437-448.

De Seta, p. 241.

Abbot Saint-Non never visited Sicily and he commissioned and directed the whole work from Paris.

Voyage is a collection of 417 engravings made by Vivant-Denon and a French équipe who travelled from Naples to Sicily. Jean Claude Richard de Saint-Non, Voyage pittoresque ou description des Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile ecc., 5 vols (Paris 1781-1786). See also Settecento siciliano: i viaggi di Dominique Vivant Denon e J.C. Richard de Saint-Non, ed. by Atanasio Mozzillo, Georges Vallet and Laura Mascoli (Palermo: Società editrice storia di Napoli e della Sicilia, 1979).

Jean Houel, Voyage pittoresque des isles de Sicile, de Malte et de Lipari, où l'on traite des antiquités qui s'y trouvent encore; des principaux Phénomènes que la nature y offre; du costume des habitants, & de quelques usages, 4 vols, in folio (Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1782-1787). Houel's drawings had been edited between 1782 and 1785 after the artist's journey to Sicily in 1776.

eighteenth century: precise panoramas structured according to rigorous architectural and topographic points of view; the idea of 'picturesque' landscapes (in the shape of irregular, restless, and stormy scenes of nature); pastoral and Arcadian images which often accompanied written descriptions of rough places and ruins; the melancholy idea of the flow of time and the transformation of things; ornamental human figures included in landscapes mainly as reminders of the majesty of nature. 62

After the Napoleonic Wars, the growing interest in foreign peoples and cultures among the middle classes led British artists and travellers to extend their gaze beyond the limited canon of High Renaissance artists. The consequences were a new spirit of enquiry, a desire to get off the beaten track and explore undiscovered parts of Italy, as well as a diversification of interests and new paths. Thanks to the fusion between written culture and picturesque aesthetics, the production, as well as the distribution, of 'voyages pittoresques' increased dramatically. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, thanks to new markets and new printing techniques, pictures from all over Italy started appearing in many different kinds of books. Most of these works were meant for pleasurable consumption in the home rather than as practical help on the tour, and they shaped middle-class Northern European ideas of foreign cities and their architecture. Visual images were often accompanied by written descriptions, frequently in the published format of an anthology; the text could be purely made of captions – taken from guidebooks or poetry – and selected narratives by famous authors.

⁶² Around 1787, inspired by Homeric and classical themes Goethe visited Sicily and portrayed it in bucolic and idyllic sketches. His work powerfully influenced further written and visual production of texts on Sicily. See Wolfgang Goethe, *Giornale del viaggio in Italia per la signora von Stein*, ed. by Dario de Tuoni (Turin: Einaudi, 1957).

⁶³ For example, in 1823 the German publisher Rudolph Ackermann introduced a new kind of illustrated book. This was the 'annual': a Christmas and New Year anthology of prose and poetry decorated with scenes and views. Published in the late autumn and mainly intended as a gift for women, it remained popular until the end of the 1850s. Although writers and artists regularly mocked the annuals as trivial and insignificant, most of them contributed to their production. In the early 1830s when the vogue was at its peak, over sixty titles from rival publishers were on the publishing market. Cecilia Powell, *Italy in the Age of Turner: 'The Garden of the World'* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1998), pp. 91-102.

Unlike the historical representations of neo-classical artists, Romantic pictorial production showed an idyllic and emotional interpretation of Sicily.⁶⁴ The most representative work of this vogue was Pictures from Sicily by Henry Bartlett⁶⁵ who, in numerous sketches, offered the British audience different aspects of the island, its landscapes, history, archaeological and artistic monuments, but also its daily life and customs. Thus illustrations made it possible to visualize foreign landscapes and people. In so doing, they contributed to the diffusion of stereotypes of Italian places (which are still reproduced, even today); these include images of 'Italianness' in general, as well as of more limited geographical areas of the peninsula.

After lithography, ⁶⁶ in the 1830s the new technique of the daguerreotype began to challenge painting. The daguerrotype, with its image reproduced on the silvered surface of a copper plate, offered travellers a more accurate representation of foreign places than paintings. Next to illustrated travel books by foreigners, albums with selected photographic views became popular in Italy; they were intended to be sold as souvenirs. 67 Visitors commissioned and purchased photographic souvenirs to recall,

⁶⁴ Other examples of nineteenth-century journals on Sicily embellished with illustrations by the authors are Peter de Wint, Sicilian Scenery. Engravings, after Drawings by Peter De Wint, from Sketches by William Light (London:, 1823); G.F. Angas, A Ramble in Malta and Sicily in the Autumn of 1814 (London, 1842); John Butler, Marquis of Ormonde, An Autumn in Sicily, Being an Account of the Principal Remains of Antiquity Existing in that Island with Short Sketches of its Ancient and Modern History (Dublin, 1850); Henry Gally Knight, Saracenic & Norman Remains, to Illustrate The Normans in Sicily (London, 1840). Among the early nineteenth-century Italian 'vedutisti', the Southerners Francesco Zerilli and Gabriele Smargiassi portrayed the Mezzogiorno. In particular, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Sicilian Zerilli produced views of Palermo in the format of postcards; these were watercolours on paper, probably produced for tourist consumption. See The Foreign Wanderer in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies: a Selection of Rare Travel Books, Paintings and Engravings of the 18th and 19th Centuries (Edinburgh: The Italian Institute, 1988).

⁶⁵ See William Henry Bartlett, *Pictures from Sicily* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Co., 1853). See

plates 2 and 3.

Two masterly draughtsmen of lithography were Prout and Lear. Samuel Prout provided Italian

Rockedon's Road illustrations in a variety of books. These included the scenes engraved in William Brockedon's Road Book, from London to Naples (London, 1835), and the lithographs in his own Sketches in France, Switzerland and Italy (London, 1839). In 1847 Edward Lear travelled to Sicily together with John Joshua Proby. Not much has been left of his impressions of the island. However in about twenty humoristic sketches he portrayed the most salient moments of his journey. See Lear in Sicily: Twenty Line Drawings by E. Lear Illustrating a Tour Made in May-July 1847 in the Company of John Joshua Proby with Coloured Frontispiece Signed by Both the Travellers and a Full Introduction by Granville Proby (London: Duckworth, 1938).

Casa Alinari, in Florence, was one of the main Italian photographic publishing companies of the second half of the nineteenth century. From 1852 to the present day, its production has focused in particular on

when they returned home, the impressions and emotions they had felt during their visit to Italy.⁶⁸

The need to identify Sicily with a picturesque Other led various foreigners to arrange photographic portraits of Sicilians according to the racial category assigned to them. A clear example of this is the work by William A. Paton, Picturesque Sicily, published in 1902; this book contains portrayals of Sicilian peasants, beggar girls and mountain dwellers, dressing and adorning them with Greek draperies or with Oriental and exotic paraphernalia.⁶⁹ At the same time, the demand for images of native people was accompanied by that for photographs of historical sites, many of which were already known from paintings and engravings but were expected to gain new authenticity through the camera's gaze. 70 The scientific claim and the anthropological or ethnographic intent of pictures of Sicilian types and customs repeatedly emphasized the Northern objectification and a metonymic interpretation of Sicily. Through its historical sites and archaeological ruins too, Sicily was 'abridged' through the practice of sampling its elements and features; it was recreated through the Northern European and Italian - perspective of history and culture; Sicily was constructed and arranged into a series of themes, sites and people. In this manner other travellers, writers, foreign and Italian would-be visitors could draw from photographic representations of Sicily, 'mapping' it,⁷¹ while maintaining and continuing the invention of a culture.⁷² From then onwards, depictions of Sicily could be constantly designed for industrial reproduction.

portraits and views of works of art, historical monuments and places, and on documenting foreign and, especially, Italian society.

⁶⁸ Travel albums go back at least to the XVII century when wealthy travellers used to tour together with well-known painters who were in charge of producing a visual record of their experiences. Less well-off travellers could employ artists directly in the places they visited. The travel album answered the need to anthologise views of visited cities. In the late nineteenth century, this vogue was also encouraged by the diffusion of manuals for amateur photographers. De Seta, p. 162 and Maria Antonella Fusco, 'Il "luogo comune" paesaggistico nelle immagini di massa', in *Storia d'Italia. Annali 5*, pp. 774-778. ⁶⁹ William A. Paton, *Picturesque Sicily* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1902).

Natural Values, Form Sequences of Surveyors and surveyed. Photography out and about', in *Photography. A Critical* Introduction, ed. by Liz Wells (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 57-101.

For the concept of photography as a form of 'mapping' see Peter D. Osborne, Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 41.

In travel journals and guides, Sicilian types and places appeared in photographic portraits as the reader-viewer would expect: picturesque, culturally distant and visually different. Unlike painting, the 'objectivity' and 'accuracy' of the camera could visually confirm or contest ideas on people's different physical features and dress, as well as geographically diverse landscapes.

However, if on the one hand (travel) photography claimed a more precise documentary role than drawing and painting, on the other hand it asserted an aesthetic function. Although photography was documentary in form, photographers often arranged objects and people according to the conventions of other visual genres and of painting and engraving in particular. 73 A clear example can be found in the photographs by the German artist Wilhelm von Gloeden, and by other artists who adopted his style and themes.⁷⁴ Von Gloeden's pictures, produced in the small Sicilian town of Taormina, were meant to suggest a vision of an Arcadian world, a golden age still alive in a place with a Greek, Roman, Arab and Norman past. His young Sicilian models, the majority of whom were male, were asked to pose as artistic nudes in front of ruins and romantic landscapes, or were arranged in bacchanalian groups on terraces with a view over the sea and Mount Ætna, or in private courtyards adorned with antique architectural decorations. Rather than constituting an anthropological search for Greek features in local people, von Gloeden's 'version' of Sicily was meant to provide aesthetic pleasure to the viewer, through an idiosyncratic reproduction of antiquity. Moreover, the works of artists such as von Gloeden, with their search for a lost Arcadia, can be seen as clear

For a comparative case, see the British representation of Egypt in Osborne, pp. 20-33.

Peter Burke, Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), pp. 22-23.

See plate 4. Photographs by baron Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931) were published in photographic magazines like *The Studio*. His Arcadian scenes received prizes at various photographic exhibitions as well as from the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain. His work needs to be seen within Winckelmann's – and later August von Platen's – promotion of the Greek ideal of artistic beauty and all things classical, which affected Germany and other northern countries until at least the early twentieth century. See *The Studio*. An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art, vol.1, no.1 and 3, 1893. For a complete biography see Charles Leslie, Wilhelm von Gloeden 1856-1931. An Introduction to His Life and

examples of the need to perpetuate the Victorian and Edwardian dream of the antique world, through a promotion of nostalgia and reverie. For many Northern European artists the South of Italy became an idealized place where one could search for the ancient world, and for a more savage yet innocent civilisation, far from modern commercialised and industrialised society.⁷⁵ By quoting or alluding to poses and subjects of the pictorial tradition, photography could claim its role as producer of works of art just as paintings, sketches and engravings did before it.⁷⁶

It can be argued that a distant stance towards Sicily was the product of the Northern imagination and reverie for two main reasons: firstly, it aimed to produce a conceptual detachment from a diverse, archaic culture; secondly, it was meant to create a temporal distant world on which to project dreams and desires. In this sense Sicily became a commodity to possess visually. Either documentary or aesthetic, the Northern gaze directed upon the island was constructed through a continuous reliance on and reference to its history, as well as through the influence of the past on contemporary traditions, customs and people's physical features.

Chapter two and chapter three will look at the kind of gaze Anglo-Sicilian women directed upon Sicilian culture (its people, traditions and history) through the use of photography, and the way they used visual images to represent their Self. We need to question the role illustrations, and in particular photography, played in modifying or maintaining the functions of images within travel, ethnographic and historiographic

Work (New York: Soho Publishers, 1977), while a detailed monograph on his photographs has been produced by Ulrich Pohlmann, Wilhelm von Gloeden: Sehnsucht nach Arkadien (Berlin: Nishen, 1987).

Among artists who helped to perpetuate this particular aspect of 'Mediterraneanophilia' with its fascination with foreigners and its mixture of scientific and social observation, were Wilhelm Plüschow, Herbert List, German Herbert List, Rudolf Lehnert, Ernst Landrock, Arthur Schulz, Guglielmo Marconi. See Robert Aldrich, The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), Peter Weiermair, The Hidden Image: Photographs of the Male Nude in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, trans. by C. Nielander (London: The MIT Press, 1988), and Alasdair Foster, Behold the Man: The Man Nude in Photography (Edinburgh: Stills Gallery, 1988).

It should also be pointed out that, in the nineteenth century, even great painters used photography for their works of art in various ways. For example, paintings could be excerpts from photographs taken by themselves or by others. See Heinrich Schwarz, Art and Photography: Forerunners and Influences, selected essays ed. by William E. Parker (Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith with Visual Studies Workshop

texts at the end of nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as in what way photography inherited (or claimed) both the aesthetic and documentary roles previously performed by drawing and paintings.

iv. Structure of the thesis and timeframe

The main body of this thesis is made up of three sections which are structured in terms of generic subdivisions. Chapter one focuses on the epistolary genre; it explores *Letters from Sicily* by Mary Charlton Pasqualino, an upper-class English woman who travelled to and eventually settled down in Sicily. Her work describes the island during the uprisings of 1848-1849. The peculiarity of this text resides in the position of the author at the time of writing. The letters, written before her marriage to a Sicilian noble man, marked the author's transition from the condition of traveller to that of resident, and thus the passage from freedom to domestic ties. Generally classified as a travelogue in the source (Sicilian) culture, this work will be read within the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century epistolary writing, and of travel letters about Sicily in particular, as well as in connection to a sample of works on the Sicilian revolutions produced by foreigners. As with the remaining two case studies, the strategies Charlton used to depict herself as an original thinker and a committed writer will be examined in relation to categories of class, nation and gender.

The following two chapters explore two texts originally produced for foreign consumption but subsequently translated into Italian and thus incorporated into the Sicilian cultural archive. Chapter two focuses on the relationship between ethnography and travel writing, as it is devoted to an analysis of *Sicilian Ways and Days*, written by Louise Hamilton Caico and published in London in 1910. The author was the daughter of a French woman and a merchant of Irish origin; she married a Sicilian. Hamilton

Press, 1985), pp. 109-117. On 'pictorialism' see John Taylor, ed., *Pictorial Photography in Britain 1900-1920* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain; Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, 1978).

Caico's work is a hybrid of memoir and ethnography, personal and public account. It has been recently appropriated by the Sicilians through its translation into Italian, published in 1983, and has become part of a corpus of texts which contribute to the conservation of local memory.

Chapter three focuses on the historiographic account, in particular on the genre of the political memoir. This section examines the relationship between history and memory, and between historiography and memoir, through a close reading of the main work by Tina Scalia Whitaker, *Sicily and England: Political and Social Reminiscences, 1848-1870.* The author was the daughter of Italian expatriates to London, and married an Englishman in Sicily. Scalia Whitaker's book, published in London in 1907 and translated into Italian in 1948, was received essentially as a historiographic memoir, both in England and Italy. In this work, Sicily and the author's Self are represented by means of a narrative recording a journey through time. Scalia Whitaker's book will be examined in relation to the author's search for an Anglo-Italian identity enacted through the exploration of her family's past and of historical events. This work also raises issues concerning the 'authenticity' of texts mixing real life events and imagination, historical narrative and self-representation.

As already said chapter two and chapter three will also treat the role of expatriate women in the production of visual records of Southern Italy and Sicily at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. In particular, chapter two questions the way illustrations included in books (especially ethnographic ones) about Sicily modify or reinforce the reading of the Others in relation to the written text. Thus illustrations in works by women need to be seen within a general context which questions the role women play, as producers and/or consumers, in the iconographic representation of otherness and of the Self.

The order in which the three case studies appear in the thesis does not depend on the publication date, rather it is dictated by the role these texts have acquired in the source (Sicilian) culture. Each needs to be read in relation to its genre classification, and also whether or not it has been perceived as a travelogue by the target and the source cultures throughout the years. Moreover, the order in which the three authors appear reflects the increasing depth of the relationship (long-term residence, marriage or parentage) they had with the Sicilian people and culture at the time of writing. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that, from the first case study to the last, female writing moves from being produced for an intended private reader (Charlton's *Letters*), to a personal memoir meant for publication (Scalia Whitaker's work), via a private text produced for the author's consumption and later made public (Hamilton Caico's account).

Besides dealing with the social, economic and political context of the time, a retrospective study of Charlton's, Hamilton's and Scalia's writings needs to take into account a further framework: the one provided by the authors' individual lives. In particular, any analysis of their narrations must take into account the authors' position and role within the society they depicted before, during and after the production of their main works. This sort of re-reading allows us to shed light on textual aspects which had previously been neglected; it also encourages a differentiation between representations of the Other and the Self conveyed by short-term visitors, and those left by long-term residents of a country.

The three texts have been selected with the intention of considering three different generic formats (the epistolary account, the ethnographic journal and the memoir), and for the different historical, political and cultural representations of Sicily each text contains. Various writers represent the world differently at different historical

moments – as the cultural traditions of European travel literature demonstrate.⁷⁷ Sketches of people, places and events also acquire different meaning in the process of reception, according to the context in which they are read.⁷⁸ No representation can be fully contained in a genre or a format. In fact, interpretations of a culture – in our case Sicilian – always shift in relation to the audience which receives them.⁷⁹ It is also in the process of distribution and further consumption that works – especially hybrid ones – can be analysed in their structural heterogeneity, as well as in their interactions with other corpora and classes of texts. The fortuna of a work, under diverse circumstances and in different geographical, social, historical and cultural milieus, may help us to analyse its various functions in the process of reception. Consequently, it is in both synchronic and diachronic perspectives that a text can be read and interpreted as belonging to a specific category or kind of expression. Society makes literary genres conventional. This can explain why a hybrid text might mislead the reader approaching it for the first time; it cannot be judged according to fixed codes and rules. The reception of these three works – all of which contain personal and autobiographical information mixed with political reports or considerations on other cultures – is made possible by the existence of a series of aesthetic and historical implications between the texts and their addressees.⁸⁰ This also means that cultural, historical and geographical settings produce different readings and interpretations of these works, of their generic characteristics as well as of their contents. Every epoch and society has its own system of genres and representations, which are demonstrative of the time and culture they belong to and by which they are produced.

⁷⁷ See Porter, p. 21.

For instance, it can happen that in specific circumstances a text is interpreted as a travel guide, while in another historical and social framework the same text is perceived as a work revelatory of the author's Self, or as an illuminating element for an analysis centred on issues of gender and society, or on aesthetics and Orientalism.

79 See Tayetan Todorov Course to Di

⁷⁹ See Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981).

These works have minority status in both England and Italy. England is the place of origin of their authors, as well as the target reader's country. On the other hand, Italy, and specifically Sicily, is not only the host country depicted in the books, but also the place where some of these texts have been dyachronically translated and received. Therefore, one needs to question the role these texts – in particular the works by Louise Hamilton Caico and Tina Scalia Whitaker – have acquired for modern readers in particular in Italy and Sicily.

Finally, the three case studies provide opportunities for the discussion of issues of gender, class, and in particular of genre and representational practices. Moreover, the focus on Sicily – within the frame of its links with Britain, as well as with Northern Italy at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century – brings to the fore historical, social, cultural and political issues which can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to many other countries, and thus can acquire relevance at a macroscopic level.

Adherence to any single literary, critical, historical or anthropological perspective has been avoided. The choice of theoretical instruments and secondary sources has been dictated by the issues arising in each case. It is noticeable that the same methodological procedures could be adopted in order to study other similar texts.⁸¹

The chronological margins of this study comprise the period between 1848 and 1910. This was a significant period of changes and development in the production and consumption of books, both in Britain – from where most of the women named here originated – and in Italy – where these women lived in contact with a new cultural and intellectual milieu. In the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries, in

⁸⁰ See also Jameson, pp. 106-107, and Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), p. 70.

It is also not the aim of this study to intervene in the debate concerning the British intention to make Sicily a colony at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the brief analysis of the relationship between the North and the South of Italy, in the period taken into consideration, does not intend to join in the vexata quaestio as to whether the problems of Southern Italy are rooted in a colonial

many European countries, a marked growth in the production of a variety of books was encouraged by social, historical and economic transformations; publishers met the demands of new social groups. A varied and flexible repertoire of literary genres was then produced for mass consumption. The shift from the printing of religious books (a predominant category until 1846) to more secular genres (in particular fiction) was already evident in the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly in Britain. Literature had emerged as a bourgeois institution strictly connected to culture and art. Throughout the century, geography, travel, historical biography and memoirs were categories of great financial importance to emergent publishers.⁸² In Italy, after Unification, new genres for mass publication (ranging from the urban and historical serial novel, to the travel journal) were distributed throughout the country. Illiteracy, however, was still widespread (especially in the South), and both the reading public and bookshops were mainly concentrated in towns. Most commercial books were intended for a middle-class audience, and were often imported, especially from France. The genre of historiography - which will be analysed in one of the case studies - was persistently influenced by the genres of biography, novel and autobiography. The diffusion of numerous biographies of Italian patriots and politicians during the Risorgimento – particularly those produced by women writers – is a case in point. Towards the end of the nineteenth century – when the industrial era began in Italy – a more commercial approach to authors and markets was noticeable in the growing success of the so called letteratura amena (light reading usually in the format of

condition lasting from the Norman establishment of a centralized monarchy in the twelfth century to the advent of the unified Italian government which took over in 1861.

Some publishers, such as Bentley, were as much specialists in travel books as they were in novels. It has been observed that the production of travel books tended to decrease whenever the production of fiction increased. In fact, these two categories satisfied similar needs in the audience; besides, travel writing could be fictional or semifictional. As Simon Eliot reports – looking at a number of entries of the journals Bibliotheca Londinensis and Publishers' Circular, between 1814 and 1846 – in Britain the production of 'geography, travel, history and biography' was 17.3 percent, while that of 'fiction' was 16.2 percent. Later, in the period 1900-1909 the first category dropped to 12.1 percent while 'fiction' increased to 30.1 percent. Simon Eliot, 'Some trends in British book production', in Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-century British Publishing and Reading Practices, ed. by John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten

romances), along with adventure and crime novels. In the new process of book publishing, travelogues made it possible for bourgeois readers to develop a visual perception of other worlds. The first Italian travel magazines were *Il giro del mondo* and the *Giornale popolare di viaggi* published by Treves, in Milan. The textual representation of the exotic was increasingly accompanied by another successful form of mass consumption: illustrations. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the creation of weekly illustrated magazines (such as *Illustrazione popolare* and *Illustrazione italiana*) which devoted space to travel, sciences, social life, contemporary history, fashion and so on.

The choice of the chronological margins of this study is, furthermore, dictated by a series of crucial political events, as well as social and cultural changes which affected the history of the Mezzogiorno at that time. The works analysed in the three case studies illustrate this significant period, through the direct and indirect experiences of their authors. This research, then, will also look at how these social, political and economic changes in Italy were represented by the three female foreigners who chose to reside on the island. The Sicilian struggle for autonomy in the years 1848-49 constitutes the main subject of Mary Charlton Pasqualino's letters, studied in chapter one. 1848 is also one of the borders of the period framing Tina Scalia Whitaker's memoir, analysed

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 19-43 (pp. 36-38). See also Per Gedin, *Literature in the Marketplace*, trans. by George Bisset (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1977).

In Italy, in 1846, the production ascribable to historical-geographical subjects (including history, biography and travel literature) was about 9.5 percent. In 1846 about 10 titles of 'geography and travel' books were in circulation. This production went up to 115 titles in 1872. Giovanni Ragone, 'La letteratura e il consumo: un profilo dei generi e dei modelli nell'editoria italiana (1845-1925), in Letteratura italiana. Vol II. Produzione e consumo, ed. by Alberto Asor Rosa (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), pp. 687-772. See also David Forgacs, Italian Culture in the Industrial Era 1880-1980. Cultural Industries, Politics and the Public (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 41-45.

Treves and Sonzogno were the two main Italian companies specializing in travel books. Il giro del mondo. Giornale di viaggi, geografia e costumi was first issued by Charton and Treves in 1863, and Giornale popolare di viaggi in 1871. Both magazines were printed in Milan. In 1872 Il giro del mondo reached a circulation of over 10,000 copies. In 1891, Treves' catalogue included around 130 titles of travel books, prevalently imported. Ragone, pp. 711-733. Other travel magazines were L'esploratore: giornale di viaggi e di geografia commerciale, which started in 1877, Giornale dei viaggi e delle avventure di terra e di mare, started in 1892. At the beginning of the twentieth century new travel periodicals included: Il marinaro. Giornale letterario, illustrato di viaggi, avventura e varietà, issued in Naples, Il giornale dei viaggi issued in Como, Nel mondo delle avventure: giornale illustrato di viaggi,

in chapter three. The events of 1848-49 unquestionably shaped the contradictory representations of the South which dominated the Italian and foreign imagination over the following decades.

The whole of the nineteenth century was characterized by an abundance of travel writings about the island; it was, however, in the second part of the century – under the influence of the Italian struggle for independence – that the representation of Sicily in many travelogues acquired a distinct political and historical character. Moreover, at the end of the century, an increasing interest in regional folklore swept through the peninsula (and the islands), as a reaction to Unification. This trend influenced production and interpretation of accounts of Italy by foreigners, as illustrated in the work by Louise Hamilton Caico, which is examined in chapter two. The publication date of Hamilton's book, 1910, marks the end of the period covered by this research. As already said, at the beginning of the twentieth century the island was becoming a mass destination, despite its perennial social and economic problems. In 1907, in his review of Tina Scalia Whitaker's book, Robert Hichens lamented the escalating migration figures of Sicilians to the United States, and the commodification and 'touristification' of the island: "Tutti" are turning their eyes to America as the great Eldorado, and unless something is done, and done soon, Sicily will be abandoned by the people of the soil and be given over to hotelkeepers, guides, shopkeepers, and officials.'85 Sicily also maintained its paradoxes, continuously highlighted by its foreign visitors. If on the one hand, for example, this was the time of the belle époque, characterized by the presence of protagonists from the international upper classes in the Palermo of the Florios and the Whitakers, by contrast it was also the period of the tragic earthquake which devastated the town of Messina in 1908.

esplorazioni e scoperte, issued in Parma and, for young people, Da un Polo all'altro printed in Florence. See Indice SBN, Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico, Italy.

Robert Hichens, 'Sicily and England', Westminster Gazette, 13 July 1907, p. 5.

The First World War changed dramatically the way many people thought about human progress. The balance between the Self and the world, the private and the public spheres, pleasure and duty, which travel writers attempted to uphold in late Victorian period, was called into question in an international atmosphere of uncertainty and despondency. However, the writer's quest for wholeness and his/her deep analysis of the Self which can be often perceived in post war representations of a foreign country, are still not visible in the works analysed in the case studies.

In conclusion, it is essential to stress that it is not the aim of this thesis to systematically list the differences between travellers' and expatriates' works, nor to produce a comprehensive survey of British women expatriates writing on Sicily in a specific period. Moreover, this thesis does not claim to create labels and taxonomies in order to systematically sample parts or aspects of writings by expatriates. Rather, the aim of this study is to examine different depictions of life and history, as well as performances of the Self in hybrid writings by women with a cross-cultural background. Therefore, this thesis intends to highlight elements which can help to give recognition to women's texts written during a long residence in foreign countries, and consequently to give them visibility as expatriate writing.

The following chapters aim to illustrate how three texts by Anglo-Sicilian women go beyond the level of observation typical of 'travellers' of the same period — who also constituted a large part of the reading public of such books — in particular when studied from the modern reader/critic's perspective. The case studies will examine how the authors claim authority for their detailed accounts, distancing them from the superficial, inaccurate representation of the short-term traveller. It is important to bear in mind that although initially read as depictions of cultural, historical and geographical otherness, for the modern critic, memoirs, journals, diaries and letters by

⁸⁶ See Casey Blanton, Travel Writing: the Self and the World (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), pp. 19-21.

female expatriates reveal the hybrid, complex Self of displaced women: an element not always grasped at the time of these texts' production and distribution. Additionally, we should look at how these texts overstep the boundaries of their target Anglophone audience and the way they are perceived in Sicily today.

RICERCA

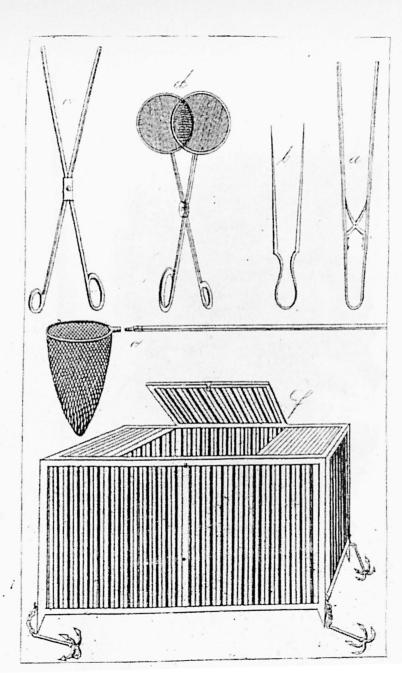
DI OGGETTI TERRESTRI DI STORIA NATURALE,

Pria di andare alla ricerca di oggetti di storia naturale questo era l'usato mio metodo:

Mi preparava un paniere di forma quadrilatera bislunga di reguale dimensione si nella superficie superiore, che di sotto col suo appiccatojo curvo, unde imbracciarlo, avente un pezzo rotondo "di cuojo sisso in un cantone per sostenervi un vaso di cristullo La metà pieno di spirito di 18 gradi con un turaccio di sughero, presso a cui dallo stesso lato metteva tre tasche di cuojo ben legate; dentro di esse eranvi tre mollette (vedi fig. A. B. C.), una delle quali aveva un piede di lunghezza (fig.b.) che serviva per Sprendere vipere, scorpioni, ed altri rettili velenosi; vicino poneva il coppo a forbice (fig D.), il quale serviva per prendere i piccoli insetti. In seguito veniva una piccola scatola di tavolette fine tramezzate da divisioni, e foderata di flanella, con avere al di sopra in vece di tavoletta un pezzo di tela metallica. Questo Pecipiente serviva per porvi i bruchi, che esigono molta cura. Alle due estremità dell' appiccatojo vi legava un fiaschetto da "viaggio pieno di vino da una parte, e dall' altra una tasca con vitto; ed ambodue metteano entro del paniere; nel centro poi di esso collocava una buona quantità di scatolette per riporvi helix, e fossili delicati.

Per riporre oggetti di botanica da me raccolti mi forniva di una cussetta di latta lunga un palmo e mezzo, un palmo è tre once larga, ed once quattro alta; per quattro anelletti passavano due nastri con cui se l'applicava ad armacollo il giovine portatore del paniere. Dippiù gli scendeva a traverso da un lato una cassettina fatta di sughero per fissarvi dentro per via di spille furfalle, ed insetti trapunti sul dorso, con avere al di sopra un cuscinetto imbottito di crusca, per fissarvi spille al di fuori.

Volendo poi raccorre dei fossili, o minerali mi provvedea di un animale da soma, con due cofanelli allato, e con alquanta carta suga, e scatole di tavolette per riporvi al di dentro i fossili, ed una piccola bisaccia mi serviva per serbare martelli, scarpelli e zappette.





2.



3.



4.

Chapter One

Between travel and expatriation: epistolary boundaries in *Letters from Sicily* by Mary Charlton Pasqualino

Expatriating and living abroad certainly develops a necessity for communication and for keeping in touch with what and who is familiar. Letters, cards and, nowadays, electronic means have the power to maintain the link between home and abroad through the written word, as well as to remind those who are at home of an absence. Writing, then, reassures the person abroad that what he/she says will not be quickly forgotten: the written interplay of signs will give a lasting imprint of the expatriate's personality to the receiver. As Janet Gurkin Altman points out:

To write a letter is to map one's coordinates - temporal, spatial, emotional, intellectual - in order to tell someone else where one is located at a particular time and how far one has traveled since the last writing. Reference points on that map are particular to the shared world of writer and addressee: underlying the epistolary dialogue are common memories and often common experiences that take place between the letters.¹

Sending a message from a foreign land becomes a way of reinforcing the sender's personal and collective identity: as a person belonging to a specific class and gender, and as member of a specific culture and society different from the one(s) in the place where he/she is writing from. In particular, the use of one's own mother-tongue frees the expatriate from the tension and the sense of vulnerability accumulated in the host country. Writing a letter can be a way of 'going back' home. Moreover, writing letters from abroad, the expatriate sender encourages the addressee to have a mental picture of daily life in the Other's land.

The relationship between the letter and the novel has recently drawn the attention of various scholars, who have highlighted the links between fictional epistolarity and contemporary letter-writing practices. Ovid's poem the *Heroides*, the correspondence of Abelard and Heloïse, the letters of Madame de Sévigné, the

Janet Gurkin Altman, Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), p. 119.

Portuguese Letters, Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa, as well as La Nouvelle Heloïse, and Les Liaisons Dangereuses have all been extensively analysed. The work of contemporary critics shows a trend in epistolary studies which is toward cultural historicisation, as the epistolary genre is often revisited in the light of changing historical contexts². However, it seems that not many studies have been entirely dedicated to letters by expatriates;³ and whenever studies are devoted to letters by women abroad, travellers' and expatriates' epistles are confused.

Letters were extremely popular in the eighteenth century, in particular among female travellers, as they helped to close the distance between correspondents. They informed people at home about the routes and rituals of life abroad, as well as enlightened relatives and friends about unknown places and customs. At the same time the sender encouraged the addressee to think of him/herself as a fellow traveller. These epistolary exchanges between travellers and friends and family produced the most widely received views of foreign travel. Such letters made seductive readings around the fireside and, in familiar surroundings, people at home could follow the path of their correspondent abroad: 'Travel was about time rather than space - time apart from a friend or lover, time spent anticipating the next letter'.⁴ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the acts of writing and reading letters were already familiar subjects in paintings. Around 1664 Jan Vermeer produced the *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter*, and later, around 1670, *A Lady Writing a Letter*, with her Maid. In particular, the first

² See Gurkin Altman and Nicola Watson, Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790-1825. Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), and Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

More attention has been generally paid to letters from immigrants. For example, see Ulrik Sommer, eds, News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), and Theodore Blegen, Land of Their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955).

Brian Dolan, Ladies of the Grand Tour (London: Harper Collins, 2001), pp. 29-30.

painting links the act of writing, reading and travelling: a large map behind the woman reading a letter hints at her thoughts about distant places and people.⁵

This chapter is devoted to the Letters from Sicily: Containing Some Account of the Political Events in that Island During the Spring of 1849, by Mary Charlton Pasqualino. This is a little known work classified as a travelogue in bibliographies of travel writings on Sicily. But visibility will be given to it as a text marking the writer's transition from her state as a traveller to that of an expatriate, as well as Charlton's passage from 'freedom' to domestic ties in Sicily. The letters will be analysed as evidence of social and cultural practices rooted in a particular context; they are artefacts which display the signs and constraints of the specific environment, and time, in which they were produced. Charlton's 'transition' letters will be mainly studied for the role that the 'Others' take in shaping 'authorial' identity, as well as 'expatriate' identity. The reader's reception and construction of the written text and its images of the Other will also be analysed. The ways in which Charlton represented herself as an original producer of culture, and a committed writer, must be examined in relation to categories of class, nation and gender, in the context of British imperialism in the first half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, Charlton's work needs to be explored within the context of epistolary writing in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, and within a frame of other letters by male and female travellers in Sicily and Italy. Some of these texts have already been studied by scholars, but most of them are little known. Here, they have all been put together to enlarge the fragmented representation of Italy and Sicily, with its paradoxes and contradictions, emerging from the equally fragmented epistolary form. In one of his travel letters to his sister, John Henry Newman stated:

It has been a hobby of mine, though perhaps it is a truism, not a hobby, that the true life of a man is in his letters ... Not only for the interest of a biography, but for arriving at the inside of things, the publication of letters is the true method. Biographers varnish,

⁵ Other more general examples can be *Young Woman Reading a Letter* by Jean Raoux, the *The Letter Writer* by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, and Borch's *Curiosity*.

LETTERS FROM SICILY:

CONTAINING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

POLITICAL EVENTS

IN THAT ISLAND,

DURING THE SPRING OF 1849.

[NOT PUBLISHED.]

LONDON:
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET.
1850.

they assign motives, they conjecture feelings, they interpret Lord Burleigh's nods; but contemporary letters are facts.⁶

Considering Newman's statement in the context of Charlton's work, one needs to question whether what is confessed, declared and told in the conventional form of a letter constitutes 'the true life' of a woman and what, instead, is a construction made in the time interval between action and recording, by the recalling of a presence distant in space, and by the female anxiety concerning authority.

i. The choice of a Victorian lady: from roaming to marriage

Classified as a 'travel text', Mary Charlton's work is mentioned in some studies on and bibliographies of British travellers in Italy. However, the content of *Letters from Sicily* is almost unknown, while its contemporary and modern reception by the source (Sicilian) culture is definitely obscure.

Very little information is available on the life of Mary Charlton, her marriage to a Sicilian nobleman, and on her choice to reside permanently in Sicily. However, a general profile of the writer can be drawn by looking at contemporary English society and, above all, the lives of British ladies travelling abroad.

Mary Charlton was born in Northumberland in 1818 and belonged to a wealthy Catholic family of landowners in the area of Hesleyside. The daughter of William John and Katharine Henrietta Charlton, Mary had two sisters, who died in infancy, and a brother. Nothing is known about her life in England and general biographical information can only be gathered through registers in public and parish archives. What is certain is that she travelled, either for reasons of health or culture, and Italy was one

Marriage Certificates, vols. 2792, doc. no. 100, year 1850, pp. 1031-1038, and vol. 2804, doc. no. 65, pp.

⁶ John Henry Newman, Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman During his Life in the English Church with a Brief Autobiography, ed. by Anne Mozley (London: Longmans, 1891), p. 1. This work contains most of John Henry Newman's account and impressions of his journey in Sicily around 1833. Other details on Sicily can be found in Newman's Autobiographical Writings (1956). Theologian, priest and poet, Newman was one of the most influential figures in the Oxford of the 1830s and 1840s.

This biographical profile has been constructed through data extracted from: Acts of Civil Status,

of her destinations. The main Italian places she visited were in Southern Italy, in particular Naples (where she also lived for a while), as we can deduce from her *Letters*:

From having lived so long in Naples, I had, of course, heard much against the Sicilians. Experience, and the testimony of unprejudiced foreigners, have since convinced me, that on the whole, a more orderly, quiet people do not exist.⁸

Around 1848 she must have already been to Sicily where, after the death of both her parents, she married the Marquis Giuseppe Pasqualino of Palermo, in June 1850. Marquis Pasqualino was a landowner and Prefecture counsellor in Palermo during the Sicilian revolution. In his Mediterranean Passion, Pemble mentions Mary Charlton together with a few other women who managed to acquire Italian titles by marriage. 9 In the nineteenth century, as far as marriage in general was concerned, it was normal for an upper-class woman to marry within her own circle, or to choose her husband among other landed wealthy families, either British or foreign. For a Victorian woman, the consequences of remaining single were economic hardship and social marginality, especially if she had no private income or means of earning a decent living. There is no evidence to prove that her marriage with Marquis Pasqualino was her first. However, she married relatively late in life, as compared with women of the nineteenth-century society: on average, women of all classes married between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-six. After all, as Victorian novels showed, marriage was not only the proper ambition of well-bred young ladies, it was, very often, women's only safe refuge. Protection and fulfilment could be realized in financial security, property, a husband, and children, even if they were found abroad. Quoting Antonio Gallenga, Pemble points out that marriage between Italians and British citizens seemed to be uncommon among

^{675-677,} State Archive, Palermo. See also Register of Roman Catholic Christenings, Bellingham St Cuthbert, Heslevside.

Mary Charlton Pasqualino, Letters from Sicily, Containing Some Account of the Political Events in that Island During the Spring of 1849 (London: Charles Dolman, 1850), p. 5.

Pemble also mentions the Duchess of Sforza-Cesarini, the Duchess of Sermoneta, the Princess Doria, the Countess Gigliucci, and the Countess Pisani. John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion. Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 262.

the upper-classes and when such intermarriages took place, the result was not always a happy union:

The intercourse between the Italians and these strangers, whether fleeting or permanent, is, as a rule, not very intimate or cordial; still some points of contact as well as of repulsion between them do exist (were it only community or antagonism of religious creed), and from such intercourse springs occasional inter-marriage (usually the exchange of a high-sounding Southern title for a comfortable Northern dowry).¹⁰

E. M. Forster, used such a theme to typify cultural discrepancies and incompatibility in Anglo-Italian relations in his novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* which appeared in 1905.¹¹

In 1851, Marquis Pasqualino obtained a passport to travel to England in order to draw, or sort out, his wife's dowry; at that time, because of women's few economic rights, the dowry was a literal payment from the woman's family to her husband. After having given birth to two children, one of whom died shortly afterwards, Mary Charlton died in 1854. Four years later, Marquis Pasqualino married another English lady, the widow Sarah Frost Fry.

A profile of Mary Charlton as a Victorian woman traveller in the South would not be very different from that of many eccentric ladies who, with or without men and the protective presence of relatives or friends, decided to flout the social pressures of their motherland. Because of their bizarre, bold undertaking, many such figures found a place in the late Victorian and Edwardian fiction. However, a distinction lies in Mary Charlton's choice to forsake the status of emancipated female traveller and to embrace

See Pemble, p. 263. It is also believed that Forster's novel was inspired by the marriage of Florence T. Trevelyan with a doctor from the Sicilian town of Taormina. See Raleigh Trevelyan, 'The Anglo-Sicilians: La storia dei Whitaker', trans. into Italian by Attilio Carapezza, in *La storia dei Whitaker*, ed. by Rosario Lentini and Vincenzo Tusa (Palermo: Sellerio, 1988), pp. 13-115 (p. 78).

For information on Victorian women and marriage I am indebted to: Jenni Calder, Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), especially pp. 15-17, and Joan Perkin, Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England (London: Routledge, 1989). See also Pat Jalland, Women, Marriage and Politics, 1860-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

¹⁰ Antonio Gallenga, Italy Revisited, 2 vols (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1875), p. 71.

In 1870, The North British Review, reviewed the publication of the letters by the Italian politician Massimo D'Azeglio. The Wellesley Catalogue of Victorian Periodicals identifies a Mary Charlton (Pasqualino) as the author of the review. The information does not look reliable considering that, as public documents demonstrate, she had died years earlier. See 'Lettere di Massimo D'Azeglio a sua moglie Luisa Blondel / per cura di Giulio Carcano', rev. The North British Review, vol. 53, 14 (Oct.

that of a married woman, joining a society usually depicted as strongly patriarchal. She accepted the ties of a social contract, and the conventions and limitations of domestic, married life in a Southern society. Thus, the letters – written before and published in the year of her marriage – marked her transition from mobility to stillness, from the condition of traveller to that of resident, from freedom to domestic ties. Travelling, moving and settling down abroad break links. Not returning home, in particular, implies a fracture with the past. By going abroad, women have often built distances which cannot be really evaluated in geographical and spatial terms, but rather in terms of a difficulty to tie the thread of life, and to retrieve the past. Writing, then, can be a way of rescuing what has been left behind and abandoned.

ii. Transition letters

Letters from Sicily was published in 1850 edited by Mary Charlton's brother, William Henry Charlton of Hesleyside, author of Four Months in North America (Hexham, 1873), as well as of a number of poems, plays, and translations from the German. It is likely he was also the addressee of the letters. William H. Charlton attempted to produce a travel account, following in his sister's footsteps. In his Four Months in North America — published almost thirty years later than Letters from Sicily — he endeavoured 'to tell honestly' what he 'saw and heard, without seeking to flatter any of the prejudices, social or political, which may be found on either side of the Atlantic'. 16

1870), 284-286; and Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900, 5 vols (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press - Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966-1990), vol. I.

¹⁴ Consider, for example, the theme of travel-as-escape and the violent breaks it can imply: with marriage, family and religion. In this kind of travel, which has been common since the Middle Ages, the protagonists do not plan to return, at least in the short term. Maria Serena Mazzi, 'Viaggiare per fuggire. Scelte di riscatto delle donne medievali?', in *Altrove. Viaggi di donne dall'antichità al Novecento*, ed. by Dinora Corsi (Roma: Viella, 1999), pp. 45-59 (p. 47).

See British Library Catalogue. It is not clear whether William Henry Charlton was a clergyman and the author of Farewell Sermon (London 1845) and Sonnets Sacred and Miscellaneous and Other Poems (London 1854).

⁽London 1854).

¹⁶ William Henry Charlton, 'Preface' to Four Months in North America (Hexham: J. Catherall & Co., 1873).

His interest in travelling supports the assumption he was the addressee of *Letters from Sicily*.

Letters from Sicily was privately published and printed by Charles Dolman, a publisher of Catholic periodical literature. In 1849 (one year before the letters were issued) Dolman devoted himself solely to works that had never been brought out before by the Catholic press.¹⁷ In the British Library the letters have been bound together with other pamphlets and state papers on Italian political matters, all by male writers, published between 1850 and 1862.¹⁸ The text is made up of five epistles written between April and July of 1849. Only in the first two letters has the place where they were written from been indicated: it is Aci Reale, a town on the Eastern coast of Sicily, where the author probably sojourned for a short period during a tour, in the company of other people, around Sicily. The epistles do not develop sequentially and events are not narrated according to their chronological development; rather they are reported through references to other historical facts, reports from other English residents on the island, and comments on the conditions of the Sicilians at the time of the uprisings. In doing so, the author's views on Sicily do not alter as she relates events and facts. Charlton's narration is, nevertheless, littered with paradoxes and contradictions, typical of travellers' accounts. The first three letters seem more political than the others; the writer outlines the situation on the island at the moment of her writing and, at the same time, she attempts to draw a general temperamental profile of the Sicilians, paying particular attention to their social structure. Sections of Letter II focus on Sicilian women. Letters IV and V maintain their focus on political and social events, but they also contain brief travel impressions, as the author reports her visits to various parts of the island. Although the text includes accounts of a few of Charlton's experiences in Sicily, the

See The Catholic Encyclopedia, 17 vols, vol. V (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907-18).

The volume also includes a translation from Italian of a pamphlet by Giuseppe Mazzini, The Italian Question and the Republicans (London, 1861).

letters were sent to the recipient with the intention of informing him about the Sicilian political and social situation during the revolution against the Bourbons:

The newspapers will have informed you, better than I can, of the campaign against Sicilian liberty; for, as is usually the case, persons living on the spot can rarely at the time form a very just idea, bewildered as we are by the reports of an imaginative people. It is only by comparing the two accounts from Naples and Palermo, that we shall be able to guess at the truth, and give a just measure of belief to each version.¹⁹

Unlike other women abroad, including Louise Hamilton and Tina Whitaker, whose works will be the subject of the next two chapters, Charlton does not seem to assert her position as participant observer in the opening of her work. She rather subverts the foreign observer's common attitude of stressing his/her authority as a faithful witness and reporter of real things. Moreover, the image of locals as informants, worthy of trust, is here transformed into the figure of 'imaginative people' able to daze foreign visitors with words. In the rest of the text, we are able to perceive the author's reluctance to use the 'Others' accounts as reference, and a preference for reporting information obtained from other English visitors she met during her residence on the island. Charlton's resolution to 'guess at the truth', through an impartial comparison between 'two accounts', ends up producing a subjective depiction of the Sicilian revolution where the people and the island will be mostly represented as victims of Neapolitan violence and widespread prejudices:

An experience of several months has taught me, that never did a cause deserve sympathy and assistance more than that of the Sicilians; and never were a people more foully calumniated by their foes.²⁰

The first impression the Sicilians gave me, was that of finding myself among a grave and composed people: accustomed, as I had been, to the volubility and gesticulation of Neapolitans, the Sicilian reserve was the more striking (...) I have remarked this in private, as well as in public life.21

After a few lines, Charlton starts asserting her authority as a 'person living on the spot', and distancing herself from other travellers. Consider, for example the following passage where she speaks about Sicilian women:

Charlton, p. 2.

Mary Charlton Pasqualino, p. 1.

Travellers, who reside a few months in a place, and mix in very indifferent Italian society, or perhaps in not at all, hear a few scandalous stories, and return with very erroneous impressions of the virtue of the women.²²

It is considering this constant alternation between Charlton's self-recognition of her limits as teller and her confident authority as reporter of political and social events, that the letters should be analysed. At the same time the author's identity seems to fluctuate between an identification with other travellers, and a separation from them by asserting her position as a reporter to be trusted because of her long experience in Sicily. The fragmented structure of the text mirrors these processes. The author's awareness that she is not a short time visitor in Sicily pushes her to look for identification elements and 'points of resemblance' with the host culture:

Whatever, then, be the issue of the present struggle of a brave and generous people against their oppressor, I would fain hope that in England there are many who watch it with interest; and that a few observations on the actual state of the country may remove some prejudices, and help to acquire for Sicily, whether she stand or fall, the well-merited esteem of my right-minded countrymen. The general ignorance prevailing on this subject in England is the more to be regretted, as between the Sicilians and ourselves there are points of resemblance, which are not to be found among the *Continental* Italians.²³

According to the Constitution of 1812, the Police force is entirely under the jurisdiction of the municipality, the Mayor of which is chosen much after the English fashion.²⁴

The evident process of searching for correspondences seems to have a reassuring effect on the foreign woman who looks for familiar aspects in a foreign world. It is also a way to heighten interest for her correspondent, as well as to 'translate' and explain what is unknown to him. Confrontation with 'otherness' and identification of difference progressively lead to the need for an interpretation of the exotic, unfamiliar reality. And, in the act of writing, especially with the intention of making the work public at home, the foreign traveller automatically needs to resort to and apply strategies which will allow her to 'translate' the different and unknown for 'home' readers.²⁵

Charlton, p. 6.

Charlton, p. 5.

²³ Charlton, p. 2.

Charlton, p. 4.

A rhetoric of otherness is essentially a process of translation. As Hartog puts it: 'a rhetoric of otherness may be developed, to be used by narratives that tell, primarily, of 'others', travellers' tales in the widest sense of the expression. A narrator who belongs to group a tells the people of a about b; there is one

Looking for resemblances the author is constructing her own place, her own new home, looking for equilibrium among chaos and irrationality. The clash between home and displacement, place and placelessness, is accommodated through a search for correspondences between the guest and the home culture which can bestow a sense of belonging and stability on the foreign author. Moreover, the process of looking for similarities between England and Sicily implies an attempt to rescue the past, and what has been left at home, through a sort of glancing back which is typical of someone who has left home with no thought of return.²⁶ Looking for similarities reveals a certain anxious justification of her choice to move to a place different from her country. The efforts to build connections with the Other, however, paradoxically retain and accentuate differences and distance.

As already stated, whether forced or voluntary, a departure can be considered as an act of displacement; one moves from a familiar place to a foreign space, or perhaps from one home to another potential home. In any epoch – for both travellers and expatriates – home is moulded by the material circumstances of the subjects' experience, and by the diverse narratives that aspire to elucidate and translate that experience. In particular, for the expatriate, the new home is not only a place causing estrangement and loss, but it is also possible to think of it as a destination, and a space which needs to be constructed. Within the 'ever-shifting geography of social relations', home and outer space can be re-conceptualised. On the one hand a 'place' (private or public) is characterized by the interaction of a specific set of social relations. On the other hand, social relations can be considered as spatial in their content and form; in fact they exist both 'in space' and 'across space'. Thus, the singularity of a place consists of

world in which one recounts, another that is recounted. How can the world being recounted be introduced in convincing fashion into the world where it is recounted? That is the problem facing the narrator: a problem of translation'. François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 212. See also pp. 212-259.

not only the particularity of all the contacts, communications and relationships which occur there, but also of the social effects which these various social relations will generate.²⁷ As already said, mechanisms of home re-conceptualisation take place in *Letters from Sicily*. Similar constructions of home – as well as fashioning of the Self – can be observed in other women's letters from abroad, although every time the author's relationship with both country of origin and host country differs. In particular, examples can be taken from epistles by two expatriates in Italy at the time of the Italian struggle for independence: Margaret Fuller Ossoli and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In the *Letters* by Fuller Ossoli,²⁸ the home-like quality of Rome arises from the intimacy of the writer's relation to it, as well as from sentimental circumstances. The Italian city becomes a fascinating woman seducing Fuller, 'my country, city of the soul':²⁹

The Italians sympathize with my character and understand my organization, as no other people ever did; they admire the ready eloquence of my nature, and highly prize my intelligent sympathy (such as they do no find often in foreigners) with their sufferings in the past and hopes for the future.³⁰

In Italy Margaret Fuller bound her private quest to that of the Italian people as they struggled for national unification and independence from foreign influence. She incited American people to learn from Europeans and did not understand the apathy or disapproval of other Americans in Rome. In particular, her 'political letters' from

Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'Introduction' to Exile and Creativity: On Signposts, Travelers, Outsiders, and Backwards Glances, ed. by Susan Rubin Suleiman (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 5.

Doreen Massey, 'A Place Called Home?', New Formations, 17 (1992), 3-15 (p. 12).

Margaret Fuller Ossoli (1810–1850) was an American editor, essayist, political journalist and arts critic conversationalist, feminist and Trascendentalist. Emblematic woman of her time she was America's first woman correspondent, and reported to Americans on the Italian revolution of 1848-49. In Italy she married the Italian nobleman, the Marchese Giovanni Angelo Ossoli. She died in a hurricane returning to America from Italy. Her published works include Conversations with Goethe (1839), Gunderode (1842), Summer on the Lakes (1843), Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), and Papers on Literature and Art (1846). Fuller's history of the Italian revolution was lost with her at sea. In 1856, posthumously, Margaret Fuller's brother published her sister's letters to the Tribune from Europe as At Home and Abroad; or, Things and Thoughts in America and Europe. For biographical information see Eve Kornfeld, Margaret Fuller: A Biography with Documents (Boston, Mass.: Bedford Books, 1997). See also Bell Gale Chevigny, The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings (New York: The Feminist Press, 1976).

See Margaret Fuller to Margarett C. Fuller, November 16, 1848, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, 5 vols. ed by Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983-94), V, p. 147, and Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, June 10, 1849, V, p. 240. Mary Suzanne Schriber, *Writing Home: American Women Abroad 1830-1920* (London: University Press of Virginia, 1997), pp. 137-144.

Europe became the public space to report on revolutionary activity in Italy; and through them she created a space in which she could imagine herself in a variety of roles. Collective and personal experiences had never been divided in her life, and the Italian Revolutionary movements, apart from being the collective expression of the hopes of others, became a projection of her own hopes and desires. As scholars have commented, Fuller's Self becomes the locus for her inward life, the languages of the mind (divination, desire, reason), and the languages of society (family, friendship, economy, nation), as well as the place for the recognition of the Others' aspirations.³¹ However, one also needs to notice a certain amount of self-delusion, as well as self-congratulation, in Fuller's words, quoted above. Fuller creates both her Italian 'home' and her Self through a sentimental illusion and a romanticized representation of her life in Italy.³²

Charlton's letters had a weaker political intent than Fuller's. Moreover, unlike Fuller's epistles, in Letters from Sicily the fusion between private aspiration and collective hopes is less evident. However, in both works it is clear that the identity of a space (like that of a person) is 'unfixed', and is continuously produced. It is formed by the juxtaposition and co-existence of social relationships, by their consequences, as well as by their mobile and mutable nature. Yet, the identity of what is conceived as home is also formed by its links with 'the outside', in relation to the present and the past.³³ For example, in 1852, going back to Florence after a journey to France and England, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

I do love Florence, when all's said. The very calm, the very dying stillness is expressive and touching. And then our house, our tables, our chairs, our carpets, everything looking

³⁰ Margaret Fuller to Margarett C. Fuller, October 16, 1847, in *Letters*, IV, pp. 299-300.

³¹ See Julie Ellison, Delicate Subjects: Romanticism, Gender, and the Ethics of Understanding (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 287-298.

Moreover, the foreigner's gaze and sense of superiority are also visible in Fuller's remarks. 'All these things are only to me an illuminated margin on the text of my inward life. Earlier, they would have been more. Art is not important to me now. I like only what little I find that is transcendentally good, and even with that feel very familiar and calm. I take interest in the state of the people, their manners, the state of the race in them. I see the future dawning'. Fuller, Letters, V, p. 271.

^{33 &#}x27;If space is conceptualised in terms of a four-dimensional "space-time" and, (...) as taking the form not of some abstract dimension but of the simultaneous co-existence of social interrelations at all geographical scales, from the intimacy of the household to the wide space of transglobal connections, then space can be reconceptualised too'. Massey, p. 12.

rather better for our having them away! Overjoyed I was to feel myself at home again! our Italians so pleased to see us.³⁴

Unlike Charlton who neglects information on her domestic life in Sicily, Barrett Browning gazes both at a 'privatised' domestic realm and the world outside. Things and people are mentioned to construct home and to reposition the boundaries of identity and difference in relation to her house and 'her' Italians. Although the repetition of 'our' suggests belonging and ownership, the world outside with its Italians is still perceived as Other. Later, in 1854, during a period of tranquil life enjoying her role as a mother (her son was known as Penini), she declared:

There's an inclination in me to turn round with my Penini and say, 'I am an Italian'. Certainly both light and love seem stronger with me at Florence than elsewhere. 35

Barrett Browning represented herself through recounting some details of ordinary daily life, stressing her ease in the country where she lived for fourteen years, until her death. The image of a happy domestic life seems to emphasize her reawakening after years of paternal tyranny. Moreover, for Barrett Browning Italy was a place where she could be free to create, or 'perform', a Self, as it can be seen through her 'inclination' to say she is Italian (which contains the negative she is not). England, on the other hand represented oppression and paternal authority. As suggested by Gilbert, through her involvement with the Risorgimento and the Italian search for political identity, Barrett Browning 'enacted and re-enacted her own personal and artistic struggle for identity, a risorgimento that was, like Italy's both an insurrection and a resurrection'. Through the windows of Casa Guidi, Barrett Browning not only participated in the Italian struggle for independence, but also rescued her strengthened Self, as a woman and as an

Sandra M. Gilbert, 'From Patria to Matria: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Risorgimento', in Publication of the Modern Language Association, 99, n.2 (March 1984), 194-211 (p. 194).

L....

³⁴ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Letters*, ed. by Frederic G. Kenyon, 2 vols (London: Smith Elder, 1898), II, p. 96.

³⁵ Barrett Browning, p. 181.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning could see the demonstrations for independence from the windows of the palace where she lived with her husband. In the poem *Casa Guidi Windows*, which takes the same name as her house, she describes the upheavals in Tuscany. Barrett Browning, 'Casa Guidi Windows', Part One, in *Selected Poems*, ed. by Colin Graham (London: Everyman, 1988), pp. 235-265.

artist.³⁸ In particular, the case of Barrett Browning can also be used to demonstrate that disguising oneself as a native – and playing at being another person – implies an attempt to get rid of an older Self, or selves, through the use of language.³⁹ In Charlton's letter this can be noticed in a narrative voice which emerges from a Self performing also as 'local' observer of events and people, and consequently asserting the authority provided by the expatriate's relationship with Sicily, as opposed to the traveller's.

iii. Female epistolary voice

The aim of Letters from Sicily is not just that of being a communicative bridge between the author abroad and a recipient at home, they also function as a didactic instrument, addressed to a broader English audience. Charlton's letters transcend the character of private communication, acquiring a double function. On the one hand, they represent a document of epistolary travel writing with descriptions of places and people. On the other hand, the text is intended to inform the addressee on facts and events which he would not know, or would have only apprehended through 'unreliable' sources. Charlton's work needs to be seen within the framework of female epistolarity.

For centuries, women's correspondence has had many purposes and functions: to inform, to instruct, to give advice, to entertain family and friends with the narration of social events and daily life matters, or with travel accounts, to maintain or strengthen relationships and to communicate news. Letters by women have often been considered as effective strategies for subverting patriarchal constraints: unlike conversation, they have allowed women the time to reflect, and the voice to raise issues related to female

Michael Cronin, Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), p. 53.

³⁸ Gilbert, p. 200. See also Helen Cooper, 'Working into Light: Elizabeth Barrett Browning', in Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets, ed. by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), pp. 65-81. Casa Guidi Windows has also been interpreted as a political poem expressing a civic ideal and attempting to define the nature and duties of citizenship. Esther Schor, 'The Poetics of Politics: Barrett Browning's Casa Guidi Windows', Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, 17 (1998), 305-324.

conditions and devaluation.⁴⁰ The diversity of topics and tone not only reflects the changing style and content of letter-writing, but it also manifests the spirit and anxieties of the time when the letters are produced.

In the seventeenth-century French salons of the précieuses, in particular, the art of writing, along with the art of conversation, played a central role in codified social relations. Letters were written to maintain contact with distant friends, and also to carry out daily social business. The salons were the realms where women could create literary works, judge the literary works of others and determine the course of at least a part of their own existences. Rather than being isolated at home, these women could gather together and develop their own authority and their own intellectual skills. In order to help letter writers to conform to conventional expectations, letter writing manuals appeared. These contained precepts on epistolary style and model letters for use in different situations. Letter writing inevitably involved a conscious structuring effort, not only to follow epistolary conventions but also in anticipation of a public audience. In fact, letters were often read aloud in the salons or circulated among acquaintances, to be admired and criticized. Epistles became the only kind of writing women were considered capable of, and through which they could try to shape the plots of their own lives.41 Women seemed to have a special affinity for the letter format, which did not require any formal education and scholarly training. The personal, one-to-one format had always been thought of as an accomplishment rather than an art, while its openness and lack of closure had frequently been associated with female characters.⁴² At home

⁴⁰ See the anthology of letters by women composed by Olga Kenyon in 800 Years of Women's Letters (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992).

⁽Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992).

Information on salons and letter writing in the eighteenth century is drawn from: Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature, ed. by Elizabeth C. Goldsmith (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), E. J. MacArthur, Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), and Dolan. See also, Dorothy Backer, Precious Women (New York: Basic Books, 1974) and Benedetta Craveri, Madame Du Deffand and Her World, translated from the Italian by Teresa Waugh (Boston: Godine, 1994).

MacArthur, pp. 25-35. For a story of the epistolary novel see, Frank Godfrey Singer, *The Epistolary Novel: Its Origin, Development, Decline and Residuary Influence* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1933). See also Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class*

men did not usually see this form of writing as threatening. In 1928 Virginia Woolf stated:

Letters did not count. A woman might write letters while she was sitting by her father's sick-bed. She could write them by the fire whilst the men talked without disturbing them.⁴³

However, scholars have pointed out that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries women's letter writing ability and the power they exercized in the salons as arbiters of language and social interactions, seemed to upset male authority. Women's intellectual skills were considered as a threat to the stable social order. Katharine Jensen suggests that the inclusion of women's letters in collections by men reflects a concern about woman's power and an interest in controlling it.⁴⁴ Moreover, although epistolary novels were one of the few kinds of writing which women had been encouraged to try, female production did not dominate this new sort of fiction, and men were still the main purchasers and producers of letter collections and epistolary fiction in the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ Men used stratagems which allowed them to dominate the female world, such as the use of female voices as forms of disguise.⁴⁶

iii.i Travelogues and letters: the art of relating 'here' to 'there'

Men monopolized the production of epistolary fiction. Women, however, managed to find another way to leave the patriarchal seclusion of their house attempting to be

Struggle in Samuel Richardson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), and Réal Ouellet, 'Deux Théories romanesques au XVIIIe siècle: le roman "bourgeois" et le roman épistolaire', Etudes littéraires 1. no. 2 (August 1986), 233-50. Oullet provides an historical explanation for the lessened popularity of the epistolary form in the nineteenth century.

⁴³ Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London: Penguin, 1945; 1st published in 1928), p. 63.

⁴⁴ 'The social and sexual marginalization of the woman writer by the men who included her letters in their privileged space of publication uncovers a tension in the male, monarchical, supremacist position'. Katharine A. Jensen, 'Male Models of Feminine Epistolarity; or, How to Write Like a Woman in Seventeenth Control of Privilege the Femiles Vision and 25, 45 (p. 28).

Seventeenth-Century France', in Writing the Female Voice, pp. 25-45 (p. 28).

Ruth Perry, Women, Letters, and the Novel (New York: AMS Press, 1980), p. 17.

I am referring to the dynamic structure of 'transvestism'. Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, and Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* are examples of works by male authors speaking in female voices. According to Madeline Kahn: 'the male author achieves, through a female narrator, participation in and control over a gendered voice that is simultaneously attractive and threatening'. Madeleine Kahn, *Narrative Transvestism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 44-45.

respected as writers outside the salons. In the age of the Grand Tour, travelling and recording journeys, especially in letters, gave women the opportunity to write and to have their works published. However, for any woman abroad the letter was a perfect frame for travel reports or essays of any length and on any subject, since its tone and content could range from impersonal journalistic stories, to pedantic ethnographies, to theological debates or poetic reflections.⁴⁷ For example, around 1790 in one of her Lettere the Italian Silvia Curtoni Verza recorded a short visit to Sicily. Following contemporary trend, the author associated Sicily with a distant, mythical era; it was from the island (and a few other parts of southern Italy) that Italian neoclassicism drew images of the Hellenic world. In Curtoni Verza's account, neoclassical imprints are mixed with poeticized images:

Di più vidi parte della Sicilia, teatro un giorno di gloria; e oh quale pascolo per un'anima innamorata d'ogni antica bellezza nell'osservare tanti preziosi avanzi! Il moderno è pure seducente in Palermo, ov' io passai un mese deliziosamente, favorita e accarezzata con indicibile non intesa ospitalità. 48

Travellers' accounts in the form of epistles were not simple synopses written and sent to report and prove their presence abroad, or to remind those at home of their absence. Travel letter writers aimed to establish intimacy with their recipients; conversely, for the readers at home, travel letters were a medium through which they learned about the physical, as well as moral experiences. The record of itineraries was almost always accompanied by evaluations and analyses of what their journey meant to the travellers, how the trip affected their views, tastes, health and happiness. For both writer and addressee, nothing in the act of travelling and recording was taken for granted; and meticulous and exhaustive accounts needed to be provided by scrupulous correspondents. Drawings and sketches of places and people and even of animals and

Silvia Curtoni Verza, 'Lettera a Saverio Bettinelli. Verona 14 Dicembre 1790', in Carteggio inedito d'una gentildonna veronese, ed. by Giuseppe Biadego (Verona: Artigianelli, 1884) p. 53.

plants were often included in the letters to accompany written descriptions.⁴⁹ Thanks to the inclusion of detailed itineraries and distances covered in letters from abroad, and through the use of maps by people at home, the reader was allowed to participate in the voyagers' adventures, plotting their path and tracing their progress. Letters by women often possessed similar features to men's. Consider, for example, Frances Levett's opening of her letters:

Italy at last, my dearest Louisa! with its bright blue skies, and unclouded suns, and breathless plains. Get out your map, and follow us here, by the four places in Savoy at which we slept, after leaving Geneva - Frangi, Chambery, St. Jean de Maurienne, and Lanslebourg; and then look at the low dark ridge which represents Mont Cenis, and strive to imagine that those few lines on the map are meant to represent a beautiful ridge of mountains, down which we came winding, with precipices on one side of us and steep rocks on the other, and mountain streams dashing across our path, after falling in rainbow - like cascades from the rocks above, while the plains of Lombardy are extended at our feet.⁵⁰

Levett's letters were 'published under the direction of the committee of general literature and education, appointed by the society for promoting Christian Knowledge'. They contain long descriptions of St. Peter and the Catacombs in Rome, as well as religious and biblical quotations which stress their edifying and didactic aim. For the traveller, observing and registering experience was a responsibility and a didactic mission. Travel writing became an end in itself, perhaps even the ultimate goal of travelling. In 1849, in the 'Preface' to *Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister*, Catherine Taylor, wrote:

During a delightful residence of seventeen months on the Continent, I kept a full and faithful journal; thus hoping to make the members of my family at home sharers in my pleasures. On my return, in pursuing the education of my younger sister, I found that the stores of knowledge and amusement which Italy had unfolded were of inestimable value. It was suggested to me that what for her instruction and gratification, might interest others of her age, and I was thus induced to think of giving this volume to the press. (...) In these days travelling has become so general, that parents take their families to Italy as one step in their education; and I am willing to believe, that to such my little

51 See Dolan.

⁴⁹ For example see George Waring, Letters from Malta and Sicily Addressed to a Young Naturalist (London, 1823-24).

Frances M. Levett, My Journey to Italy Ten Years Ago or, Extracts from Letters to a Younger Sister (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1849). The text does not include the name of its author who, however, has been identified with Frances M. Levett. The author probably travelled in Italy as teacher or nurse of an English family's children.

book may not be without its use: while to those who remain at home, I can only hope it may afford entertainment as well as instruction. 52

In Elizabeth Stisted's *Letters from the Bye-Ways of Italy*, published by John Murray, observations on foreign history and society are meant to have an educational effect on the receiver's children, who are urged to study Italian, and to develop an interest 'in the eventful history and marvellous literature of Italy'. ⁵³ Letters and accounts written for didactic purposes were mainly the work of women. This can be explained considering women's need to find an original purpose for their accounts in order to distinguish their undertakings from those of male travel writers, as Catherine Taylor hints in her text:

Italy has been the theme of so many able and distinguished writers - its history, literature, antiquities, and treasures of art, all that the truth or romance of past and present times can supply, have been so often presented to the public, both in poetry and prose, that the present work may seem an unnecessary, if not a presumptuous undertaking, and many will ask, 'Can anything new be said of Italy?'. I at once confess that in writing, my object has not been novelty, but utility; for amongst the various works on Italy that have fallen in my way, I have not found one which brings this country, with all its interesting associations, within the reach of young people. ⁵⁴

In Taylor's work footnotes are used to explain art terms, quotations from popular Italian writers are included to give strength to the didactic intention, and she even inserts a table of historical and literary characters from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth century. However, aware of her limits, she declares that she has adopted the 'opinions of critics far better qualified to decide upon the merits of works of art'.⁵⁵

Letters were also the *locus* where beauty and pleasure, as well as annoyances and troubles, could be shared with the receiver. Comparisons could facilitate an understanding of life abroad. However, they were often symptomatic of homesickness, as well as indicators of either rejection or appreciation of what had been left at home:

'My dear Arthur (...) when I tell you that the post takes four days in bringing our letters from Naples to Sorrento (a distance of about thirty miles), bethink yourself of Corrybrough and Inverness and Scotch postal privileges and be thankful. (...) I neither love nor like Italy as I do Scotland, and would give all that my eyes can see at this

Catherine Taylor, I, pp. iii-vi.

55 Stisted, p. 1

⁵² Catherine Taylor, 'Preface' of Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1840), vol. I, p. iii.

⁵³ Clotilda Elizabeth Stisted, Letters from the Bye-Ways of Italy (London: John Murray, 1845), p. 1.

moment (...) for the bleakest stretch of the howling wilderness that lies between Moy and Inverness'.56

In the passage of this kind the relationship between letter writer and addressee is made intimate and bilateral by mentioning places and facts familiar only to them, and the wider audience seems to be excluded from the exchange.

Like diaries, letters are generally characterized by a tone of private intimacy and immediacy. However, unlike the traveller who writes retrospectively, after the completion of his/her journey, the genuine letter writer has a short narrative distance from the actual happening of the event. As Pfister points out, letters are 'partnerdirected' with a 'higher or more histrionic degree of self-stylisation as well as screening processes that take into account the addressee's predilections or misgivings'. 57 This is evident in epistles from Italy by Henry Wotton, Thomas Gray, Horace Walpole and Lady Montagu, Shelley and Byron, George Eliot and John Ruskin, which are often particularly telling, vivacious and straightforward in their tone and their frank perspectives and opinions. Nevertheless, not all texts that claim to be letters, or even 'familiar letters', are private. In the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century travel writers often appropriated the epistolary form to stress the 'authenticity' of their representations and to support their claims to be eye-witnesses of, or immediate participant in events. The epistolary conventions were also adopted to legitimise fragmented topics, the mixture of narration, description and reflection, and to emphasise the irregular and subjective nature of the account.⁵⁸ Thus, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after a journey to Sicily, Tripoli, Tunis and Malta, Edward Blanquiere wrote in the 'Introduction' to his work:

Manfred Pfister, ed., The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italies of British Travellers: An Annotated Anthology, (Amsterdam - Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996), p. 12.

⁵⁶ Frances Anne Kemble, Further Records 1848-1883. A Series of Letters Forming a Sequel to Record of a Girlhood and Records of Later Life, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1890), vol. II, pp. 173 and 175. The author, an actress and writer, sister of the opera singer Adelaide Proctor, moved to Europe from the States, after the end of her marriage to an American plantation-owner.

My inexperience in more regular composition suggested the propriety of giving the form of letters to this work, particularly as the greatest part was written at those places from whence the letters are dated; yet as in one or two instances the arrangements may appear to produce incongruous anachronisms, I may be permitted to observe that these points, though of a later date, were of too much importance to be omitted, and I have therefore embodied them in those parts of the work to which they refer.⁵⁹

Although lots of these texts were probably based on real epistles, at the end of the journey, the acts of letter editing, re-writing and re-composition turned them into autonomous books published for a wider public.⁶⁰

iv. The undisclosed author

The following Letters were written during the last struggle for Sicilian Independence, by one who was living at the time exclusively in Sicilian society.⁶¹

This is what the editor wrote in the 'Preface' to Mary Charlton Pasqualino's *Letters* from Sicily. Looking at the cover of the text and reading these first sentences, the modern reader cannot determine the paternity of the letters, since, as already mentioned, the work is not signed by its author. Then, how far does it matter whether we know who wrote the account, or the gender of the author? Can't the letters be analysed only on the basis of their content, their language and the representation of Sicily which they convey?

Foucault claims that 'a private letter may well have a signer – it does not have an author'. For him 'the author function is (...) characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society'. 62 Starting from this premise, however, Elizabeth Cook argues that a 'discursive set' did already exist in eighteenth-century letters: it co-ordinated the concept of authorship, determining its

Examples of this read are: Samuel Sharp's Letters from Italy (London, 1766), John Boyle's Letters from Italy (London, 1773), and Peter Beckford's Familiar Letters from Italy to a Friend in England (Salisbury, 1805).

59 Edward Planning (London, 1774)

Edward Blaquiere, 'Introduction' to Letters from the Mediterranean; Containing a Civil and Political Account of Sicily, Tripoly, Tunis, and Malta: With Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes and Observations, Illustrative of the Present State of those Countries, and their Relative Situation with Respect to the British Empire (London: Henry Colburn, 1813), pp. v-xviii (p. xvi).

60 Pfister. p. 12.

⁶¹ William Henry Charlton, 'Preface' to Letters from Sicily.

boundaries and, according to a classification of public and private, it forged the readership as well.⁶³ In nineteenth-century Britain the discursive set for travel letters was also influenced by the imperial society and culture of that time. Travel letters proliferated, continuing to be an emblem of what was private and, at the same time, embodying the function of public exchange of knowledge, experience, and power.

The author's signature on his/her epistles from abroad, in particular, performs a specific role in relation to a narrative discourse. Thus, for example, the names of Brydone, Swinburne, Lear, Barrett Browning or Mary Shelley on their epistles from Italy have made it possible to classify and define these epistolary texts in relation to other texts by these same authors, as well as by others. They have also forged a readership fond of accounts from abroad, in the context of the British interest in the Mediterranean. Yet, is it always significant for the epistolary text to have a creator, or an owner? Can the author really disappear or, in Barthes' terms, 'die' in the reading process? It can be argued that the writer's name (or his/her signature on the letters) is not always crucial to an interpretation of the epistles. The text can be interpreted and analysed by the modern reader according to elements such as content, style, genre, publication details, editor and title. It would be:

a neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing.⁶⁴

Letters from Sicily then, constitutes an example of the process whereby the modern reader has been left free to focus on the text and to interpret it mainly according to a set of discourses existing at the time of reading. However, from a feminist point of view, Nancy Miller argues that 'the death of the author' cannot be applied to women writers

Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 101-120 (pp. 107-108).

Cook shows that at the end of the eighteenth century the letter was the emblem of the private and, at the same time, always already political and transnational. Public and private worked 'as an interlocking cultural system'. Cook, pp. 5-29.

Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148 (p. 142).

because of their different and complicated social, historical and political situation. The elimination of the author would rob women of authorship:

Because women have not had the same historical relation of identity to origin, institution, production, that men have had, women have not (...) felt burdened by too much Self, Ego, Cogito, etc. Because the female subject has juridically been excluded from the polis, and hence decentered, 'disoriginated', deistitutionalized, etc., her relation to integrity and textuality, desire and authority, is structurally different.⁶⁵

Today, reading Letters from Sicily with no idea of the author's gender, would dispossess this work of a female subject. At the same time, a woman writer would be deprived of the 'maternity' of a social and political document, and of the creative energy which in a nineteenth-century woman appeared 'anomalous, freakish, because as a "male" characteristic it is essentially "unfeminine". 66 As Mary Fravet puts it:

once women's 'looseness' and 'negligence' were known to lend themselves to politics, letters could not easily resume a respectable place in the literary market. They were tainted goods.67

In the 'Preface' to Letters from Sicily the identity of the writer is partially disclosed, as someone

(...) who was, moreover, an eye-witness of some of the events to which she alludes. In causing a few copies to be printed for private circulation, I trust I may afford some gratification to the friends of the writer - a very near and dear relative of my own - who has subsequently become connected with Sicily by the closest of domestic ties.⁶⁸

To some extent, the question of authorship seems to be clarified. There is still no author's name, but the author of the letters can be identified in a 'she', a female subject. Additionally, a few, fragmented details of her private life have also been revealed. With no signature, the reader (contemporary to the text) can acquire information on the author's identity thanks to the informal identification of the author in a female relative of the preface's writer. Further details on the author can be grasped from the narration.⁶⁹

Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 24.

⁶⁵ Nancy K. Miller, 'Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader', in Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, ed. by Teresa de Lauretis (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 103-120 (p. 106).

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Mineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 10. Mary A. Favret, Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters (Cambridge:

William Henry Charlton, 'Preface' to Letters from Sicily. In the British Library copy, the author's name has been identified and written with pencil on the page of the 'Preface'.

These elements might be enough to sustain the 'contract' with the reader contemporary to the author. The reader can still assume that the author is a real person and that the text is authentic. Additionally, by highlighting the writer's connection with Sicily 'by the closest of domestic ties', the Preface makes open reference to the writer's authority and to her experience which went beyond travel; this 'guarantees' the factual nature of the narration. It is argued that Charlton's work is one of those texts which were consumed in primis for the representation of foreign political and social events that they contain. For the nineteenth-century British (middle-class) audience the letters were essentially a means through which to know and fantasize about, the Other (Sicily in this case). Women readers, in particular, could draw on Charlton's letters to identify with the female author's experience and then reflect upon their own gender and ethnic identity.

Nowadays, by means of a more sophisticated reading which considers the historical and social context of the work, the letters acquire a different meaning, for the (post)modern reader, and interpreting them requires a different form of co-operation with the text, depending on whether the reception takes place in the original target culture or in the source culture. In the light of literary theories, a diachronic re-reading of the letters, on the one hand, might question what lies behind the text: its intention, the historical, social and cultural context at the time of the writing, as well as the faithfulness of facts and information to reality. On the other hand, in his/her attempt to understand the present through the past, and the representation of the Self in the text, the reader needs to shed light on other aspects of the author's identity. These are her class, her background, her intention, her state at the moment of writing and her relationship with the host culture, as well as her possible 'maternity' of other texts.

v. Accessing society and politics through correspondence

In Charlton's letters there is little evidence of historical and political sources the author might have consulted. Unlike other women writers, who often anxiously felt the necessity to assert their authority as reliable researchers and reporters, ⁷⁰ Mary Charlton does not really desire to produce proofs of veracity. Actually, it can be said that her authority seems to derive from the lack of quotations from well known primary sources. She does not openly legitimise her attempt to enter a male sphere through the use of sources – which usually consisted of the works and voices of male authors. Instead, political and military news are usually given to the recipient with no clear explanation of how the author knew about them.⁷¹ Only at the beginning of Letter III a Storia Costituzionale di Sicilia by Palmieri is cited. In this Letter the author tried to illustrate some 'points of history' in order 'to understand the position and feeling of Sicily', and the nature of the Sicilian revolution, which 'presents no analogy to any of those which have shaken Europe during this past year'. Charlton states that she aims to correct 'the imperfect acquaintance' of her compatriots 'with the Sicilian question'. Whether the absence of reference is due to the epistolary form (which is supposed to contain information with no scholarly pretensions) or to a conscious choice, the effect produced is that of a self-confident tone.

Charlton appropriates facts, events and words as well. Throughout the whole text various Italian terms are used in italicized form, with the effect that authority stands in the 'word spoken by another in a foreign language', so that the reader 'must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it'. No translation is given for *Sindaco*, *Compagnie d'armi*, *Capitan Giustiziere*, *manto*, *Galeotti* and other instances of 'lexical exoticism', which for the reader has the result of leaving written traces of the 'foreign'. As Michael

¹ Mary Charlton, p. 13.

⁷⁰ See for example Tina Scalia Whitaker's text and her accurate use of primary sources, discussed in chapter three.

Cronin states in his analysis of the language of travel writing: 'the reader is translated into a foreign climate through the untranslated'. 73 At the same time, Charlton's use of Italian and, on a few occasions French, gives the writer a space and an opportunity to explore 'another self', or 'another part' of her fragmented Self:

it offers the promise of liberation from an older self or former selves through the good offices of language. When such a transition to full mastery of language occurs it is usually the result of extensive vertical travel, that dwelling-intravelling which allows time to expand and space to contract'.⁷⁴

Charlton's authority can be seen particularly in her comments on Italian and Sicilian politics. As already mentioned, eighteenth-century salons (and later also dinners, parties and teas) were occasions where upper-class women had the opportunity to intervene, and become involved, in political matters, supporting the political fortunes of male relatives, or even entering into politics for their own ends.⁷⁵ At the end of the eighteenth century Helen Maria Williams had already challenged the sexualized logic that a woman could not both write letters and write about politics. In her Letters from France, published serially in England, between 1790 and 1796, Williams provided an epistolary account of the French revolution and of European politics. Helen Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft were among the few women writers who recognised that, although they were excluded from formally participating in government matters, the world of print could give them an opportunity to establish their views on foreign politics and affairs. Yet, at the same time the principle that politics was a field impenetrable to a woman was remarked upon even by women themselves. ⁷⁶ In 1793, Letitia Hawkins, referring to Williams' undertaking asserted in her Letters on the Female Mind, that 'the study (...) which I place in the climax of unfitness is that of politics, and so strongly does it appear

⁷² Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 2001, 1st edn 1981), p. 343.

⁷³ Michael Cronin, Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), p. 41.

74 Cronin, p. 41.

⁷⁵ Kathryn Gleadle, British Women in Nineteenth Century (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 69. ⁷⁶ Dolan, pp. 276-287.

to me barred against the admission of females, that I am astonished that they ever ventured to approach it'. ⁷⁷

Williams' and Charlton's works have in common the focus on political events rather than on feelings and passions, which were the protagonists of most epistolary novels. Choosing to concentrate on politics, neither author allows the outside reader to speculate on her private world, and the female letter-writer can re-take possession of 'that autonomy which epistolary fictions of the eighteenth century had shattered'.⁷⁸ In *Letters from Sicily*, accounts of Charlton's visit are linked to political and military considerations through a dialogic narration, which has the effect of stressing, even for today's reader, the author's self-portrayal as witness of the social and historical events outlined.

vi. 'I', 'you', the other reader and the Others

Letters from Sicily combines the epistolary form with the travel account, mixing political and military events with Sicilian customs.

As Kauffman puts it, the protagonist of the text (the author herself) is constantly present as 'creator of her own desire'. In this sense Charlton's text is also self-addressed and involves a certain portion of self-creation. In *Letters from Sicily* the fashioning of the Self does not appear only in the sections describing the author's encounters with a few locals, or trips around the island, where the use of the pronoun 'I' and other signs of self-referentiality make clear she is the protagonist of the account. In fact, the process of self-construction can be mainly noticed in the parts where the political and military events are the subjects of the narration.

⁷⁷ Letitia Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, 2 vols (London: Hookham & Carpenter, 1793), vol. I, pp. 21-23. See Favret, pp. 53-95.

Favret, p. 59.

Linda S. Kauffman, Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1986), p. 25.

Letters from Sicily is then an autobiographical work. The hybridity and shifting definitions of both travel writing and autobiography, coupled with frequent similarities in their reception, have often led scholars to draw links between these two genres. Boundaries of – and between – autobiography and hodoeporics are indistinct and unstable; and both are often codified as minor genres. As Adrien Pasquali underlines, both genres can be characterized by the coexistence of author, narrator and character (although functionally and textually distinct) in the same persona. It is the use of the 'I'. the retrospective re-construction of an existence in relation to and from the standpoint of the journey, as well as the author's tendency to present a particular anecdote as a general, universal truth, which have made it possible to associate travelogues and autobiographies.⁸⁰ The link between these two genres is furthermore strengthened by the frequent tendency to read travelogues - predominantly those by women - as autobiographical texts, and/or to rely on travel works for autobiographical records which can help to investigate, or elucidate, aspects of the existence of a well-known author. An illustrative example, here, is Oscar Wilde's Letters. Written in his old age, the letters document his travels to Palermo and Rome, in 1900. Moreover, Wilde's travel epistles are proof of his homoerotic and aesthetic sensibility, as well as his attraction to Roman Catholicism.81

Like travel accounts, autobiography – or 'autogynography', in the case of writing by women about themselves⁸² – is subject to no agreed definitions and norms.⁸³

⁸⁰ Adrien Pasquali, 'Récit de voyage et autobiographie', in L'Odeporica/Hodoeporics: On Travel Literature, ed. by Luigi Monga, special issue of Annali d'Italianistica, XIV (1996), pp. 71-88.

See Oscar Wilde, Selected Letters of Oscar Wilde, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Domna C. Stanton, 'Autogynography: Is the Subject Different?', in *The Female Autograph: Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Domna C. Stanton (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 3-20. Estelle Jelinek recognizes the increasing production of more sophisticated autobiographical works by women in the twentieth century: 'The self-image they project - from apologetic to ambivalent to self-affirming; and variations on the forms their self-portraits take - from episodic diaries and histories to personal narratives to dramatic portraits and free association'. However, a sense of alienation from the male world still characterizes these women's writing. Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present* (Boston: Tweyne Publishers, 1986), pp. 188-189.

However, it is important to stress the frequent distinctions which have been made between 'proper' autobiography – or *self-conscious* autobiography (seen as the representation of a life as a totality)⁸⁴ – and the assorted category of recollections, reminiscences, memoirs, letters, journals and diaries (reproducing anecdotal images of the Self, people and facts, and reporting random reflections), within which travel and expatriate writings generally fit. In texts like *Letters from Sicily* – as well as in the works analysed in the following two chapters – it is not the author's intention to write a study of a portion, or all, of her life; experience is rather the subject-matter of various forms of writing produced during and after a stay in, or visit to, a foreign country.⁸⁵ *Letters from Sicily*, then, produces a portrayal of the author in Sicily, rather than an understanding of her identity or an account of her entire life.

vi.i Letters as artefacts and dialogic performances

Charlton's letters were published after her marriage to the Marquis Pasqualino, and they were edited by a relative. This raises questions concerning publishing constraints and possible interventions and modifications by the editor. However, even if letters are rewritten to such an extent that they no longer belong to the author, but to the editor, success lies in the ability to make the readers believe in an invented authenticity. ⁸⁶

Mary Charlton does not try to capture her readers with excessive sentimentalism; however, the language she uses is punctuated by exclamations and rhetorical questions, so that events and facts of the Sicilian revolution are reported in a manner which reveals some emotions:

Sara Mills, Discourses of Difference (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 38.

⁸³ See also James Olney, 'Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of Bios: The Ontology of Autobiography', in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. by James Olney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 236-267 (p. 237). See also Mary Jacobus, 'The Law of/and Gender: Gender Theory and *The Prelude*', *Diatrics* 14 (Winter 1984), 47-57.

For this terminology see Georges Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography', in Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical, pp. 28-48.

I never witnessed such a unanimity of hatred. But who, after all that has passed at Naples, can trust the King? or how could the Sicilians return to their allegiance without any guarantees for the preservation of even the little he offered them? No! rather let them stake, as they have done, all on the chance of a desperate struggle; secure that, if they fall, they have forfeited no rights, renounced no portion of the liberty they cherish, or of the Constitution they took up arms for; and trusting that, in God's own time, their courageous sacrifices will be remembered and rewarded.⁸⁷

Through the letters the receiver can understand the author's experience of another world. The receiver can directly perceive part of the author's private world without any mediation, merely through the reading of the text and its content.⁸⁸

The structure of *Letters from Sicily* does not follow the traditional letter structure, comprising *salutatio*, *exordium*, *narratio*, *petitio* and *conclusio*; in this way they clearly break the rules of letter writing. Moreover, in the text, every reference to the first addressee is neglected, as well as any element which can help his/her possible identification. What remains is a *you*. Facts and events are also narrated taking into account the recipient's tastes and knowledge and, as in every real correspondence, a shared set of references and beliefs is established between sender and receiver of the epistles. Examples can be found in descriptions starting with 'I fancy you will readily agree with me', ⁸⁹ and 'as you probably know (...)'. ⁹⁰

The authenticity of the epistolary correspondence, evidenced by the *I-you* relationship, does not prevent the text from being accessible to the outside reader. In fact, through a closer analysis, the persistent use of *you* produces the effect of creating a triangular relationship, involving the external reader him/herself. This *I-you(s)* relationship shapes the language used and structures meaning in the letter's narrative. According to Janet Altman, 'the basic formal and functional characteristics of the letter,

⁸⁷ Charlton, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Roger Duchêne, 'Réalité vécue et réussite littéraire: le statut particulier de la lettre', Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 2 (1971), 175-194 (p. 192).

On confond souvent en effet la valeur littéraire des lettres et leur valeur de témoignage. On y cherche des documents sur une époque ou, dans le meilleur cas, sur leur auteur. (...) Par la lettre, la communication est directe entre celui qui écrit et celui qui lit, le second entrant sans médiation et sans guide dans le monde du premier'. Duchêne, p. 188.

Charlton, p. 3. Charlton, p. 37.

far from being merely ornamental, significantly influence the way meaning is consciously and unconsciously constructed by writers and readers of epistolary works'.91

There is not enough evidence to state that Charlton's intention was to address her report (also) to a public audience. Nevertheless, in Letters from Sicily, the omission of the recipient's name, or the use of initials, as well as the use of you, benefit a potential outside reader who, through the narration, is left to believe s/he is the only addressee of Charlton's words, gathered in a self-contained 'travel' account. Whether this was premeditated or not, the Letters were published. The translation of the Other gains a more complex character when the text is re-read, modified, altered and made available to a wider audience (by a different individual). Therefore, two moments can be distinguished in the writing and reading of Letters from Sicily: the first is private and the second is public. At a first stage, description and representation are produced by the writer who tells the original receiver where she is located at a specific time, what she has seen and what has happened since she sent the last letter. The writer needs to (re)establish an emotional and intellectual relationship with the addressee in order to rescue and avoid breaks with her past. The letter then works as a bridge between the expatriate and home, between a fragmented identity and a unified personality. A second stage takes place when the letter is made public and altered to let the audience know about the writer's experience, as well as to educate and to awaken public opinion to social and political problems. In these two moments, two different I-you relationships emerge, as well as two types of 'translation' of the source (Sicilian) culture. When the letters are made public, the relationship between author and original recipient of the letters appears to become more impersonal, and the span of time between the recording of the experiences and their publication is wider. Thus in Letters from Sicily, the oppressive power of a patriarchal and archaic government, the struggle for freedom, the

⁹¹ Altman, pp. 4 and 118-122.

need for liberal principles and the aspiration for a liberal constitution seem to become the universal beliefs of every civilized people, and the narration seems to be addressed to a broader audience. Historiographic memoirs – such as Tina Whitaker's *Sicily and England* – recount a series of past events that can be seen, retrospectively, to lead to a particular outcome. Charlton's letters, instead, emphasize present details. In this way, in the epistolary form, a string of present writing moments predominate. Charlton takes pleasure in a representation of Sicily characterized by instability and fragmentation. The narrative is, however, dispersed between the writer's various voices and the editor's control. The (post)modern reader can attempt to reconstitute a unity out of the scattered voices of the letters.

Moreover, between writer and reader/s, another presence is manifested: that of the people described, who move, talk and act, through the writer's words. Through the writing, the 'Others' take part in the correspondence: they are recalled, interpreted, analysed, justified or condemned by the writer first and, later, by the receiver. It can be said that the main difference between travel journals and travel letters is to be found in the sense of identity of the writer. In travel letters, and also in letters by expatriates, the writer defines and re-defines him/herself not only through the alien Other, but also through the addressee, the spatially distant other. As Bakhtin states: language 'lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's', '92 and the same can be applied to letters. In the dialogic quality of epistles it is clear that two voices take part in the telling and reading of stories, events, impressions and feelings. The situation is even more complicated if the public nature of epistolary writing is considered, and a third person (an outside reader) takes part in the dialogic

⁹² Bakhtin, p. 293.

narration, because, 'letters are not and never can be an entirely private exchange involving only two people'. 93

vi.ii Political and social voice

The disposition of the author towards the events represented in her letters is ambiguous. Charlton narrates facts from the viewpoint of an observer, an English citizen, and at that time, still a traveller in Sicily. However, her position as reporter of information leaves the modern reader doubtful as to whether she really witnessed the events narrated. Moreover, it seems there is little identification with the locals. Although the author stresses her authority as a reliable informer on the revolution and the actual state of things in Sicily, she does not really mix with locals and attempt to penetrate their world. Her interest seems to lie mainly in political facts, the struggle against the Neapolitan Government and the injustice of the King. Often, the anxiety to report and comment, not only on facts but also laws, decrees and data concerning economic and military issues, generates a certain distance between the author and the events and customs outlined.

The letters endow Charlton with a textual form of authority over the reported political and military events, and at a few points even over the people described. Her writing reveals a certain anxiety to gain access to a traditionally male-dominated field.

Approaching political topics she even adopts a sort of propagandistic tone:

(...) Their utter want of sympathy with the French Socialists, and the Italian Anarchists, and their great acquaintance with, and abundant admiration for the English Constitution, are proofs that many years will not pass before we see them progressing in social improvement, and fit for the enjoyment of their own Constitutional liberties. (...) Few people are better fitted for a representative government and for rational liberty than the Sicilians: they have never misused their freedom, and will, in time, know how to defend it. Before the Neapolitan invasion, peace and order reigned throughout Sicily, and it is scarcely possible to see a people more averse to anarchy or more willing to submit to the laws, and with more respect for that Constitution, which, as they say themselves, shall, with patience, union, and the blessing of God,-yet one day be theirs.⁹⁴

Gerald MacLean, 'Re-siting the Subject', in *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture*, ed. by Amanda Gilroy and W.M. Verhoeven (Charlottesville and London: University Virginia Press, 2000), pp. 176-197 (p. 177).

⁹⁴ Charlton, pp. 12 and 19.

Nevertheless, throughout the text Charlton shifts from a 'masculine', scientific voice to traditional 'female' viewpoints. In fact, the traditional female position returns in the representation of customs, women's lives, stories of locals, images of domestic life and the descriptions of injustices and violence. For example in the section reporting the Neapolitans Army's conduct during the siege of the city of Messina, Charlton states:

My authorities are the English residents at Messina, who were indignant at the calumnies cast upon the Messinese. How could there be (as was stated in Parliament) 'equal cruelty on both sides?' Were there women and children, the sick and the aged, to be massacred on the *Royal* sides? Alas! Nothing can exaggerate the horrors committed by the victors, and in proportion, very few of them are generally known, for families will not publish their own dishonour. (...) Women were seen hurrying to the harbour carrying their dying children. I heard of one mother who had lost two children by the bursting of a shell. (...) And after such scenes as these - to talk of *Sicilian* cruelty! 95

The alternation between military and political events and a few social facts narrated with emphasis, allowed Charlton's text a space within the (predominantly male) genre of political accounts. The fact that there are few emotions and descriptions of relationships with the members of the other culture probably fostered the inclusion of the letters in a collection containing tracts on Italian historical and political events by male authors.

According to Mary A. Favret, letters, and especially those about politics and revolution, need to be approached by addressing questions of genre and gender through the question of the formation of British national identity. In many women's accounts of travels in Italy during the Risorgimento, the account of the journey mixed with the account of the revolution, so that journals and especially letters, become not only means to express female revolutionary commitment, but also another way to emphasise the English national identity and to raise political consensus for the Italian cause. In fact, letters contributed in bringing the Italian revolution to the British public, and simultaneously shaped the experience of the revolution for those Britons who were engaged in it (physically and spiritually), and especially for those who came to know

⁹⁵ Charlton, p. 30-31.

about it only through the press. On the one hand, correspondence could keep events at a distance, deferring violence and chaos while appealing to domestic and national bonds. On the other hand, letters translated the political and historical facts into interiorized events which engrossed the British people.⁹⁶

The work by Theodosia Trollope, Social Aspects of the Italian Revolution in a Series of Letters from Florence, can be taken as an example of social and political accounts by women published in the conventional form of letters, where questions of gender and genre are intertwined with those of Britishness and sympathetic response. It comments on the events of 1859-61 and was to enlighten and 'call the attention of her countrymen to manifestations of national character and capabilities, which hold out promise of a very remarkable career of future advancing civilization'. The letters were published in London and then reprinted by the journal The Tuscan Athenaeum in 1861.98 Unlike Charlton's letters, Trollope's name appears in the text together with an introduction by the author where the aim of her account is made clear:

In the following letters (...) it has been endeavoured, not so much to chronicle events as to sketch the visible effects produced by these on the various classes of the people among whom they were occurring. (...) These varying expressions of the popular mind, as it has been moved from hour to hour by hope of fear, misgiving or confidence, disappointment or triumph, it has been sought to describe, while the impressions were yet fresh in the writer's mind, with that local colouring and characteristic physiognomy which make a picture of revolutionary times in Florence so essentially different from any record of similar events in the cities of Northern Europe. 99

In Trollope's letters images of the Italian revolution are given through the perspective of the English people: 'We have made at Florence a revolution with rosewater. (...) and we appear no doubt at this moment to English eyes to be boiling and bubbling, poor souls!

⁹⁶ Mary A. Favret, 'War Correspondence: Reading Romantic War', in Correspondences: A Special Issue on Letters, ed. by Amanda Gilroy and W.M. Verhoeven, Prose Studies 19 (1996), pp. 173-185.

Theodosia Garrow Trollope, 'Preface' of Social Aspects of the Italian Revolution in a Series of Letters from Florence, with a Sketch of Subsequent Events up to the Present Time (London: Chapman and Hall, 1861), pp. v-vi (p. vi). Theodosia Garrow (1825-1865) moved to Italy in the mid-1840s. In Florence she married Thomas Trollope the son of Frances Trollope (writer and famous host to English travellers and Anglo-Florentine expatriates). Together with her husband Theodosia also wrote for the Tuscan

Athenaeum.

98 See Giuliana Artom Treves, The Golden Ring: The Anglo-Florentines 1847-1862, translated from the Italian by Sylvia Sprigge (London: Longmans, 1956), pp. 24-31.

Trollope, pp. v-vi.

in the fiery cauldron of revolution'. 100 At the same time the author stresses that the English at home know about the revolution mainly through witty English weekly journals which amused 'the simple credence of its readers at the expense of a brave and long-suffering people trying hard to shake off an unendurable yoke'. ¹⁰¹ In Trollope's letters the running commentary by one who has taken part in the events makes the letters clearly personal, and the author's physical and emotional participation in the Italian struggle is strengthened by her use of the first person plural and by a persistent identification with the Italians and their cause: 'Still there are hopeful symptoms for those who can read them, which testify that our pudding is turning out well (I say 'our', for a fifteen years' residence in Tuscany seems to invest one with a right to the possessive pronoun)'. 102 Moreover, unlike Charlton, Trollope is mixing with the population, and she gives evidence of her participation in Italian life, as can be noticed in quotations and translations of Italian patriotic stornelli and 'thrills of enthusiasm' into English.

Persuasive constructions vii.

The referentiality of Letters from Sicily leads to representations of the Other, and then to the fixation of given images. It can be added that referentiality in any sort of text, taken together with genre, organizes understanding, practices and beliefs, producing knowledge and meaning. Moreover, specific genre conventions – even in a hybrid work - help to guarantee the credibility, or 'truth', of a representation. The generic 'verisimilitude' of a travel letter – either really written as such or as a generic strategy for a report of events and experiences abroad – generates a constructed cultural 'reality' whose credibility is maintained by the conventions of the epistolary genre itself, and by the contract between sender and receiver at a specific time. According to Stephen Neale

Trollope, Letter I, p. 1.
Trollope, Letter I, p. 20.

different genres produce different relationships between generic and cultural 'verisimilitude'. They seem to support diverse kinds of source material in order to legitimize their narrative and secure their credibility. 103 Meaning is established through production, distribution and reception. Through these mechanisms, representations are built and negotiated, and the objectification of a place, people and events is put into action. Yet through these stages, and the interaction among them, power is established and circulated, both over and within the subjects represented, the readers and even the author him/herself. For instance, the genre of the guide book in early Victorian England, which included books like Travels in Europe, between the Years 1824 and 1828 by Mariana Starke, was generally a sophisticated instrument of knowledge and power through its accumulative reproduction of information, and its packaging of the Other for popular consumption. Although various elements came into play, between the author and the audience, to influence and manipulate the representation (such as the editorial choices made at John Murray's), the reliability of the text depended on its genre, its formula and format. Through distribution the text was then supposed to win the consent of specific groups and achieve a sort of ascendancy in their beliefs and reactions. ¹⁰⁴ In Gramscian terms, this hegemonic strategy of representation can operate whenever a text - in our case Letters from Sicily - is meant to be addressed to a specific audience (in particular to intellectuals or to middle and upper-class readers), because of the representations it contains (for example social and political) and of the generic class of which it is a part. Furthermore, the objectification of the Other – and also of the author's Self – set in place by the text continues through the re-appropriation of the images and the negotiation of their meaning on the part of the audience. In fact, at any time

 $^{^{102}}$ Trollope, Letter I, pp. 12, 47. In the context of genre films, avoiding the problematic category of 'realism', Neale uses the term 'verisimilitude' to refer to a constructed 'reality', and what the dominant culture believes and accepts as credible and appropriate. Stephen Neale, Genre (London: British Film Institute, 1981), pp. 36-41.

¹⁰⁴ See Mariana Starke, Travels in Europe, between the Years 1824 and 1828. Adapted to the Use of Travellers, Comprising a Historical Account of Sicily (London: John Murray, 1828). Considered the

addressees can struggle for the possession of a text like *Letters from Sicily* over its generic features, its potential significance and the author's intention. The result is a further objectification of Sicilian culture; being represented through the *Letters* people, places, customs and events can become the object of a shared process of consumption, which also allows societies to interact with their respective environments.

vii.i Re-building Sicily

Letters from Sicily aims to convince the reader with facts and information rather than feelings. In the context of the Sicilian revolution of 1849, the letters are Charlton's attempt to 'translate' the Sicilian struggle for her English correspondent. But, above all, they also participate in the construction of images of England as a liberal, protective nation bringing freedom, as well as order and development, to oppressed countries. A colonial discourse cannot be directly applied to Sicily and the British presence on the island, but British women participated in the building of images of Britain as a country culturally and politically superior to Italy. During the Italian struggle for unification, numerous philanthropists, volunteers and nurses in Italy were foreign women; they acted as translators and mediators between Italian patriots and the British, and many were proto-feminists, concerned for the situation of Sicilian women and their patriarchal oppression. However, although they were sympathetic to the natives, these women's concern was itself imbued with assumptions of Northern superiority. Resident and expatriate women living in Sicily stated these assumptions less clearly and evidently than women travellers, but nonetheless they still shared them. Therefore, the roles of emancipated and advanced Northern friends or sisters, frequently adopted by resident British women in Italy and Sicily, must be seen within the context of British policy. Foreign women's physical, spiritual and literary involvement in the liberal campaign in

forerunner of traditional guide books, the success of this volume was testified by its eight subsequent editions.

Italy, and in Sicily, was markedly different from men's. Although foreign women's participation in the Italian revolution has often been considered in the context of (and mirroring) their personal struggle for independence and emancipation, their writing and actions, were not marginal to the construction of an image of superior Northern culture and race. However, this does not mean that women always portray positive images of England. Consider for example the following remarks by Charlton:

There can be little doubt, that during the summer of 1848, the Sicilians had every reason, short of positive *official* assurance, to believe the English would not allow them to be attacked, and even afterwards, trusting a second time to England, which was in duty bound to uphold them, and which had twice abandoned them to their fate, they let time pass in legislating for the internal regulation of their country, and neglected every means for the defence of the laws they had made.¹⁰⁵

Yet, although at times Charlton provides her disapproving view on the English political administration of the Sicilian situation, she does not particularly challenge assumptions about the superiority of her country and the inferiority of Sicily.

According to many British travellers, the British constitutional government represented the solution which oppressed countries needed, although they did not really fit that model; Sicily was one of them. In particular, in travelogues about the Mediterranean, the construction of the Other does not lie only in the textual use of racial assumptions and stereotypes. What Pfister calls 'intra-European Meridionism' (to distinguish it from Orientalism)¹⁰⁶ is to be found in the British belief that a place could evolve thanks to British interference, not just in the extreme forms of colonisation and military control, but also through social actions, charitable help and political assistance. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the Napoleonic wars and the British occupation of Sicily, the British liberal middle class believed that a place like Sicily could sort out its social, economic and political problems, thanks to the adoption of a body of fundamental principles in the style of the British government. This conviction continued to be popular in later years, as *Letters from Sicily* shows.

Charlton, p. 18.

Even before that date, the South, and Sicily in particular, was considered a strategic military point by the British, as a result of the Napoleonic conquest of Europe. The British presence in Sicily increased diplomatic and military relations between Britain and Southern Italy after 1797. In 1806 the British military presence was extended to include a garrison at Messina in order to protect the island from French invasion. In 1812, during the Napoleonic wars, British troops occupied Sicily, forcing King Ferdinand I and his family to flee to Naples. In this period, William Bentick and other officials openly asked for the annexing of the island to the Empire. ¹⁰⁷ The writings of Irvine, Blanquiere, Cockburn and others who visited Sicily at the beginning of the nineteenth century give evidence of the English socio-political interests in Sicily, as well as England's project of Mediterranean expansion. In particular interest grew in the commercial resources of Sicily. In Mary Charlton's words:

Sicily produces almost everything, and under judicious government, and the impulse of an extended commerce, might be made again what she once was, when she was considered the granary of Rome. 108

During the Napoleonic Wars, together with soldiers, numerous merchants from Great Britain (and also from Germany and Switzerland), landed on the island looking for new market outlets. They settled down particularly in Palermo, Messina and Marsala. They had been driven away from other European harbours due to the Continental Trade Block. Sicily, together with a few other Mediterranean areas (such as Malta and Sardinia), was not occupied by the French. Therefore, because of its strategic geographical position the island became a British trading partner. The migration of merchants and businessmen did not terminate after the wars, but continued through the second half of the nineteenth century involving professionals, bankers and various businessmen who were linked to the Sicilian bourgeoisie through marriages and trade

Pfister, p. 3.
For a history and analysis of the British presence in Sicily see: Gregory Desmond, *The Insecure Base:*107 For a history and analysis of the British presence in Sicily see: Gregory Desmond, *The Insecure Base:*108 Sicily 1806-1815 (London: Associated University Presses, 1988); John Rosselli, Lord William Bentick and the British Occupation in Sicily 1811-1814 (Cambridge: University Press, 1956); Rosario Battaglia, Sicilia e Gran Bretagna (Milan: Giuffrè, 1983).

partnerships. In the new country, expatriates supported the Sicilian revolution and uprisings until Italian Unification.

The Sicilian situation also led foreigners to develop a patronising interest in the 'degeneracy' and backwardness of the island whose future wealth needed to be guaranteed by a superior civilisation. As Charlton reports:

I fancy you will readily agree with me that the monstrous iniquity of the Neapolitan Government towards Sicily is almost too self-evident to require illustration. What did it matter that the Sicilians were exempt from the Conscription, that they paid no duty on salt or tobacco, and were exempt from many taxes which press heavily on Naples. The crying grievance still remained; they were robbed of their Constitution, their privileges, and their liberty. 109

Although Sicily was seen as the seat of art, fallen greatness and the glory of ancient civilisations, the British felt that their role was that of bringing order and prosperity to the island. These beliefs can be clearly seen in one of the numerous collections of travel letters which appeared during the period of the British occupation. Partially composed during a tour in the Mediterranean, which included Sicily, Edward Blaquiere's letters start by stating that:

I hope to prove that it can only be by a radical change in our policy towards the countries I have described, we can ever expect to become popular amongst people whose habits, religion, and manners, are so totally in opposition to our own. (...) as every line of these observations has been written on the spot, they will, I trust, have the effect of making the people of Sicily more intimately known to those of Great Britain; and, above all, tend to prove, that, to secure the affections of such a nation, we must first prove to them, that we are really interested for their future happiness; which can never be attained without a virtuous determination on the part of our government, seconded by the united population of Sicily, to establish that species of religious, civil, and political liberty, without which a state can never hope to become either great or prosperous.¹¹⁰

It is interesting to note that Blaquiere is writing for wider publication or circulation, compared to Charlton's 'you' implying a more intimate I-to-I relationship. Also, Blaquiere uses 'we' and 'our' equating himself with a whole country, standing as its 'representative'. Through the passages from Charlton's *Letters* quoted in this Chapter, it is possible to note that the author shifts from identification with 'the English' and

¹⁰⁸ Charlton, p. 3.

Charlton, p. 3.

Blaquiere, pp. vii-viii and 321.

distancing from them. Her use of 'our', and 'we' must be seen as a fact taken for granted and not as a political statement like Blaquiere's.

vii.ii Views of the South

Before carrying on with the textual analysis of *Letters from Sicily* it is important to highlight some of the images of Southern Italy which circulated in the second half of the nineteenth century in Italy and abroad. This will help to understand which views might have influenced Charlton's perception of Sicily and her representation of social and political events.

In the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s the Italian Question was a noteworthy issue in the British Parliament. It regularly commanded the attention of statesmen like Palmerston, Gladstone, and Russell, and the British press constantly reported news on the Italian uprisings. One needs to stress that representations of a specific culture produced by outsiders may destabilize or confirm those produced by insiders. In the case of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sicily, the complexity of the process of representation derives also from an intertwining of external and internal (i.e. Italian) relationships. Northern Italian views of the South influenced the perception of the Mezzogiorno abroad, for instance, through the epistolary exchanges between Italian politicians and their foreign correspondents. On the other hand, foreign opinion played a fundamental role in the shaping of a discourse on the Mezzogiorno in Italy; for example through British journals published in Italy for British residents, such as The Roman Advertiser and The Tuscan Athenaeum. The latter, for example, aimed to inform, with scrupulous objectivity, English people in Tuscany and Europe about the revival of Italy: the intellectual English colony in Florence felt the need to record their liberal political and social ideas and news. 111 Another example can be seen in the debates caused by the

The Tuscan Athenaeum was born in 1847, after the abolition of censorship during the period of the Grand Duke of Tuscany Leopold II's liberalism.

Letters to the Earl of Aberdeen, on the State Prosecutions of the Neapolitan Government, written by the Liberal British Prime Minister William Gladstone, in 1851. Gladstone's denunciation of the Bourbon government in his Letters – written during his visit to Southern Italy – provoked scandal especially among commentators on socioanthropological aspects of the South. His sense of superiority and disgust was representative of the power relation between England and Southern Italy. The Letters demonstrated not only the influence of foreign representation of the South, but also the weight they had whenever these images were interpreted and decoded into the Italian context of the time. 112

Both for the hegemonic group and for the group identified as Other, ethnic identity is a relational instrument, specular to and dependent on others. In this sense representation is not just a one-way process involving the group with power, it is also the product of an exchange in which the 'Others' are fully involved. In other words, specific images of a culture (in our case the Sicilian one) also manifest themselves in the ways people from that culture view their own society, erecting new sets of myths and mystifications, while at the same time autostereotyping and reinforcing already existing positive and negative images about themselves. Examples of this kind, in relation to representations of Sicily, can be located in Italian and foreign travelogues, whenever local Southern residents enjoy stressing commonplaces about themselves, or whenever native interlocutors express opinions and convictions, in a desecrating tone, about the conditions of the Mezzogiorno. As Nelson Moe points out, at the time of Italian Unification, Southerners informed outsiders by providing perspectives of themselves that foreigners put into wider circulation. At the same time, foreign views of the South were re-appropriated within Italy. For example, apart from emphasizing the European ideological framework of anti-Bourbon discourse, the use of Gladstone's

See Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 131-139.

Letters by southerners shows the way the problem of European civilisation intersected with that of Italian nationhood. The most famous phrase in Gladstone's Letters 'This is the negation of God erected into a system of Government', then recurrently cited by Italians, was itself a citation and translation of the Italian 'È la negazione di Dio eretta a sistema di governo'. 113 Other examples can be identified in literature, each time Southern writers try to portray the picturesque and folkloric aspects of their culture, deliberately or unintentionally producing appealing images of the South for a Northern audience. 114

vii.iii Views of the revolution

The Italian events became particularly inspiring for British artists for whom 'the liberation of Italy became the gospel of a generation'. 115 However, the issue as to whether the Italians were to be considered as an oppressed people under foreign domination because of their inability to govern themselves, or were simply victims of historical circumstances and foreign absolutism, was at the core of most accounts by English travellers and politicians, and it was central to debates on the Italian Question in English periodicals, newspapers, and in official correspondence. Conservative politicians, such as Benjamin Disraeli in his comments in the Morning Chronicle, argued the inability of the Italians to defend their political rights. At the same time, liberals and Italian sympathisers supported the Italian suitability for national liberty. 116 The question had been pondered since the late eighteenth and, then, for the whole

Moe, pp. 131-132, and "Altro che Italia!" Il Sud dei piemontesi (1860-61)', Meridiana. Rivista di storia e scienze sociali, 15 (1992), 153-189, in particular pp. 72-78. Consider also Augusto Placanica, 'Calabria in idea', in Storia d'Italia. Le Regioni dall'Unità ad Oggi. La Calabria, ed. by Piero Bevilacqua and Augusto Placanica (Turin: Einaudi, 1985), pp. 588-589.

The works by the 'verist' Sicilian writer Giovanni Verga, as well as his contributions to the Illustrazione Italiana, can be taken as examples of nineteenth-century representations stressing images of 'sicilianità', Sicilian local colour and Sicilian essence which the Northern audience was in search of. See Frank Rosengarten, 'Homo Siculus: Essentialism in the Writing of Giovanni Verga, Giuseppe Tomasi Di Lampedusa, and Leonardo Sciascia', in Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in One Country, ed. by Jane Schneider (Oxford – New York: Berg, 1998), pp. 117-130.

115 Pemble, p. 10.

nineteenth century. In Sicily it was central in particular after 1812 and the failure of the British constitution. Curiously, Charlton gives an unusual image of Sicilian 'aptitude for, and affection of self-government', in contrast to the rest of Italy:

Thirty-three years of tyranny and oppression had so little dimmed the recollection of their independence, that, no sooner was the late Revolution over, and the Parliament summoned, than the people at once, and without the slightest difficulty, returned to their old forms of local and municipal government — which forms very closely resemble our own; while, on the other hand, in Central Italy, it was hardly possible to get sufficient voters together to elect a deputy; and even in enlightened Piedmont, the representative system was a mystery to many of the electors.¹¹⁷

Unlike 1859-1860, when the Italian revolution and its patriotism gained British esteem for the campaign of unification (whose methods and liberal principles reminded the British of their own Revolution of 1688), the early efforts of the Italian patriots found little support in Britain. Initially, the Italians were thought to have no experience of political freedom after generations of tyranny, and there was always a deep anxiety that revolution might lead to anarchy and violence; massacres and horrors were feared to be inevitable final consequences of the uncontrollable Italian uprisings. The first crisis of the Risorgimento, in 1848-9, confirmed these misgivings. Revolt 'flared up and spluttered out' in Venice, Naples, Milan, and Palermo, and the people there were seen as too weak to be courageous and too vindictive to be strong. 118 After years of economic exploitation and inefficient, brutal administration, many Sicilians rebelled against the repressive Bourbon government: they both sought the autonomy given by the shortlived constitution established by the English in 1812, and longed for land and work. In February 1848 Ferdinand II had to concede the constitution; in April the King and the Bourbons were repudiated. But one month later a more conservative government was set up and the Parliament and National Guard were dissolved. Again, Charlton's representation of the Sicilian reactions aims at correcting commonplaces:

Maura O'Connor, The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 125.

Charlton, p. 3.
Pemble, 138.

I do not deny, that when their passions are excited, they are fierce and vindictive, and that the mountaineers are a somewhat unruly race; but I deny that they have shown either cruelty or perfidy, during the late events.¹¹⁹

For Mary Charlton, Sicily not only needed to be defended from the tyranny and patriarchal oppression of the Bourbons, according to liberal principles, but also injustices against the Sicilians needed to be correctly known abroad:

I must profit by the opportunity to correct some very erroneous ideas you appear to have formed from, I presume, the reports of the correspondent of 'The Times'. No accusation has been so perpetually repeated as that of *cruelty to their prisoners*, on the part of the Sicilians. *No prisoners were made on either side* at Messina, and therefore it is entirely false that the Sicilians murdered the Swiss in the manner attributed to them. ¹²⁰

In Charlton's letters traces of the 'acceptance' of the Other are present in the form of a stubborn defence of the Sicilian people against distorted images. In between short-term traveller and long-term foreign resident, the author attempts to rationalize her host country before the eyes of her correspondent and ideal readers.

Further examples can be found in Charlton's political opinion on the British Constitution given to Sicily in 1812. In 1849 Charles MacFarlane, ¹²¹ traveller and resident in Italy for a few years, expressed his opinion on the British attempt to give a constitution to Sicily, harshly criticising the 'ultra-Whig' mind of Lord William Bentick' who considered that 'the proper and immediate remedy' for all the 'evils' of Sicily 'would have been to give to Sicily a constitution as nearly as possible like that of England':

But what Lord Bentick and his party seem never to have thought of, was this: -Sicily was not prepared for such institutions - constitutions which are made by *coup de main* never last -. (...) At first the people thought that 'costituzione' meant 'no taxes and cheaper bread', and that it must therefore be a fine thing for poor men; but when they found that bread was no cheaper, and that they must pay taxes as before, they asked what it was worth, and what it could signify to them whether they had it or had it not. 122

Charlton, p. 30.

MacFarlane, pp. 10-29. However, MacFarlane does not clearly question the reasons why that constitution did not fit in with Sicilian politics and economy, nor the deleterious consequences of a period

Charlton, p. 5.

Charles MacFarlane, Sicily; Her Constitution, and Viscount Palmerston's Sicilian Blue-Book: Being an Appendix to 'A Glance at Revolutionized Italy (London: Smith, 1849). MacFarlane's book, A Glance at Revolutionized Italy takes place next to prose works like: James Whiteside's Italy in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1848), Henry Lushington's The Italian War 1848-49 (London, 1849), Hamilton Geale's Notes of a Two-Years Residence in Italy (Dublin, 1848), Richard Monckton Milnes' The Events of 1848 Especially in Relation to Great Britain (London, 1849).

Non piangeva il popolo Siciliano - The Sicilian people did not weep for the demise of the constitution of 1812. I can speak confidently to the point. I was in the island at the beginning of 1816, about six months after the departure of the British army. I heard people complaining bitterly of the pecuniary loss they suffered from that departure; I heard them wish that the English would return and spend their money freely among them as they had wont to do; but I did not hear one of them regret the loss of their parliament, or wish for its return. They spoke of the constitution as of a pazzia, a madness, which had led to strange pranks. 123

In the same year, Mary Charlton's account gave a definitely divergent picture of the Sicilian suitability to a constitution and their claim for it:

It was to regain these privileges, reformed and remodelled in 1812, by the English, that, on the 12th of January, 1848, the Sicilians flew to arms, after having exhausted every pacific mode of obtaining redress. 'We will never lay down our arms,' they said, 'till the Constitution of 1812, is restored to us. (...) It would be impossible to describe the indignation of the Sicilians, when the English and French mediation resulted in nothing more than a copy of the Neapolitan Statute. It is true, that the Constitution of 1812 required alterations and modifications; not such, however, as it pleased the Sicilian Parliament to pass on the 10th of July, 1848.¹²⁴

A reason for the two different opinions can be found in the fact that Charlton's perspective was constructed through the point of view of informants mainly belonging to the Sicilian upper class, which also formed the majority in the Sicilian parliament during the constitutional period. MacFarlane's authority is based on his direct involvement in the Anglo-Sicilian political events at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Charlton's perspective on things and facts is mainly shaped through second-hand information deriving from English expatriates, merchants and rich Sicilian gentlemen as well as politicians and aristocrats. Moreover, Charlton's statements on the constitution must be seen on the basis of her idealization and construction of Sicily as a country which shared similarities with her country of origin.

Charlton, p. 2.

of English protectionism. Lodovico Bianchini, high official of the Bourbons and then minister, explained the aristocratic and conservative character of the constitution, and hinted at the English intention to transform the island into a colony to be exploited and used just for the British interest. His article 'Carattere aristocratico e conservatore della costituzione del 1812 e i dannosi effetti della protezione inglese', was re-published in *Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione*, anno XII, n. 49 (1975), 100-117.

MacFarlane, p. 33.

viii. As the reader likes it

In the eighteenth century Lady Mary Wortley Montagu privately passed around her *Turkish Letters* amongst circles of friends. Her letters were written during travels in Turkey around 1710 (when her husband was appointed ambassador to Constantinople), and published posthumously in 1763. In 1724 Lady Montagu's friend, Mary Astell, who was also one of the first English feminists, decided to add a preface to the letters expressing her admiration for the female perspective on foreign life which was offered in Lady Montagu's accounts:

(...) the World should see, to how much better purpose the LADIES travel than their LORDS, and that, whilst it is surfeited with *Male-Travels*, all in the same tone, and stuft with the same trifles; a lady has the skill to strike out a new path, and to embellish a worn-out subject, with a variety of fresh and elegant entertainment; (...) the reader will find a more true and accurate account of the customs and manners of the several nations with whom this lady conversed, than he can in any other author. 125

Mary Astell claimed that the letters were proof that ladies travelled 'to better purpose' than their lords, assuring readers that a woman's perspective on places and people was new, fresh and reliable. Women's desire to narrate and publish is expressed in Astell's invitation to the world to see what a woman can do. As already hinted, it was in the late eighteenth century that women realized that travel and travel writing could provide a powerful platform for them to be recognized on as writers, and escape the confines of the private sphere. Travel narrative allowed them to approach topics women were not supposed to talk about. However, to publish meant to be prepared to represent themselves as travel writers, and to subject their work to considerable editorial transformations. The route to becoming an appreciated travel writer consisted in retracing, redrawing and re-writing the steps that had made the female author a brave, eccentric traveller in the first place. Hester Piozzi was one of the first to experience the delights of success as a woman travel writer; she published Observations and

Mary Astell, 'Preface' to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Letters Of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Written, during her Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa, third edition, 3 vols (London: Becket and Pade, 1763), vol. I, pp. v-xii (p.viii).

Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey Through France, Italy and Germany (London, 1789). Furthermore, Mariana Starke's two-volume Letters from Italy, published in 1800, was only the first of various editions of her informative guide books, Travel on the Continent. In the first part of this work, Starke gave an account of the military and political situation in Italy during the Napoleonic period. 126 As eyewitnesses of European events these, and other women writers and travellers, acquired a new authority. Above all they seemed to be concerned with the gathering, recording and distribution of information on foreign lands, and displayed a tendency to behave as if, every time, they were entering a terra incognita. Women's ability to produce a new and original representation of places and people was often stressed. However, in the flourishing marketplace for travel literature, which characterized the latter half of the eighteenth century, travellers literally covered the same fields (and read the same texts) while they were conceiving their volumes. Each author tended to stress the originality and reliability of his/her own work in relation to that of others. But, at the same time, they also made the most of textual traditions as sources of authority. In fact, several oedeporic texts use devices of intertextual reference, either by quoting from other travelogues or by referring to a prestigious precursor. By relying on previous works about the same culture, expertise is attributed to the present travel writer and validation is strategically conferred to his/her work. 127

In 1784 Hester Lynch Thrale married the Italian musician Gabriel Piozzi. During her stay in Italy she wrote copiously on her journey. Mariana Starke published her Letters from Italy in 1800. Returning to Italy some years later, she carried on re-writing and expanding her letters. On Hester Piozzi, see James L. Clifford, 'Mrs. Piozzi's Letters', in Essays on the Eighteenth Century, ed. by David Nichol Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), pp. 155-67, and Mirella Agorni, Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century (Manchester: St Jerome. 2002). For a recent analysis of Mariana Starke's letters see, Jeanne Moskal, 'Napoleon, Nationalism, and the Politics of Religion in Mariana Starke's Letters from Italy', in Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writers and the French Revolution, ed. by Adriana Craciun and Kari E. Lokke (California: University of California, 2001), pp. 161-187.

As Said points out: 'travel books or guidebooks are about as "natural" a kind of text, as logical in their composition and in their use, as any book one can think of, precisely because of this human tendency to fall back on a text when the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one's equanimity. (...) There is a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read, and this in turn influences writers to take up subjects defined in advance by readers' experiences'. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1995: 1st published by Routledge & Kegan Paul in 1978), pp. 93-94.

Production and reception of representations of the Other, then, may create a kind of circular system. Texts on 'otherness' can be the result of a reciprocal mirroring, a process of reification and repetition. In other words, the effects and influences of a text on the readership – at the time of its production – can also be seen in the numerous attempts, by different authors, to produce a representation which follows in the track of those of preceding texts. The result is often the re-production of elements and concepts. This process is clearly visible in tourist guides where statements and images (both descriptive and visual) from other travelogues are incorporated as part of the informational system of the guide book. Similar processes can be observed in any kind of travel text. As asserted by De Certeau: 'citation makes credible the simulacra produced in a particular place. (...) To cite is thus to give reality to the simulacrum produced by a power, by making people believe that others believe in it, but without providing any believable object'. 128

Stored in the vast 'archive of culture', written and visual information is available for use by anybody at any time. In the case of texts about foreign cultures, authors can re-elaborate, re-arrange or simply repeat directly earlier representations; each image functions as a referent for another text. Borrowing Said's words we can say that in the system of knowledge a specific culture can become 'a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work (...), or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these'. Whenever the same information is re-used and perpetuated, power and authority is conferred to it. In this sense the aesthetic of citation can be seen as a 'hegemonic' strategy to control knowledge – although the knowledge it provides is fragmented and incomplete.

Said, p. 177.

Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 188-189.

Re-arranging previous representations of Sicily, as well as of the rest of Italy, British women contributed (together with men) to the construction of the Mediterranean 'Others' as irrational and chaotic. Although Charlton does not mention any other traveller's work, her text does share some representations of people and places, as well as stereotyped images, with other contemporary travel accounts about Sicily. Home addressees could receive information on culture and events which was simultaneously new and conventional: the Other always needs to be recognisable so that ethnocentric control is not destabilized.

The need to make sense of things, by looking for norms and conventions may lead to a classification of what is new, foreign and unfamiliar in specific categories, and describe it according to selected verbal and visual languages. As Richard Rorty states: 'the temptation to look for criteria is a species of the more general temptation to think of the world, or the human self, as possessing an intrinsic nature, an essence. That is, it is the result of the temptation to privilege someone among the many languages in which we habitually describe the world or ourselves'. Through interaction and communication among themselves and with the Other, individuals 'invent' cultures which, consequently, can be seen as the result of the agreement reached by people who negotiate certain meanings. In our specific case Charlton 'invents' a Sicilian culture, not merely for the Other at home, but also for herself. 131

In the process of communicating – in our case through letters – both simplification and false representation mechanisms are activated, resulting in the production of commonplaces. The spatial and temporal limitations of dialogues allow the search for an essence to simplify the (Sicilian) Other; and this process helps

Richard Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 6-7.

Consequently culture is never fixed, and it is not an entity developed according to its own specific laws; culture rather originates from an interaction and a kind of agreement among communicating subjects. Ugo Fabietti, L'identità etnica. Storia e critica di un concetto equivoco (Rome: La Nuova Italia, 1995), pp. 52-56.

identification. The search for 'historically determined sets of root-metaphors' used to label the Other actually arises whenever the subject's self-integration is threatened by the unstable perception of the world divided into two fields, 'us' and 'them'; and 'them' are either 'good' or 'bad'. This bipolar representation is legible in the signifying practice of stereotyping. Yet stereotyping is a fictitious representation of reality which individuals and groups need in order to preserve social and symbolic order; through a system of fixing borders and excluding the different, boundaries between what is considered as 'normal' and what is instead 'unacceptable' can be set. 133

In Letters from Sicily some racial observations concerning the locals can be found, for instance, in Letter II; in the same passage, Charlton manages to produce canonical points of comparison between contemporary Sicilians and Eastern peoples:

There is a marked improvement in the beauty of the natives as soon as you leave the sea shore and begin to get into the mountains; the inhabitants of the villages on the skirts of Ætna, and the shepherds on the mountain, are really a 'bella gioventù', tall, active, and well made, with regular features; many of the women with classic heads, and all with good figures. The people on the sea shore, from Messina to Catania, are among the plainest I ever saw, with almost negro features, and woolly black hair. Some of the them bear a strong resemblance to the pictures I have seen of Arabs, and they are undoubtedly of Saracen descent. The Palermitans are good looking, and many of them of fair complexion; I have no idea what the people on the other side of the island are like, but I imagine all on the sea coast have a tinge of the African. The mountaineers are decidedly a fine race, good shots, and 'bravi col coltello'. ¹³⁴

In Charlton's words the polarities black-fair/plain-good looking, are permeated by a racial discourse and a certain anxiety concerning European racial identity. As already hinted, in the nineteenth century, Sicily was an area which needed to be conceptualized as a spatial unit distinct from the rest of the continent, for its history and non-European

Sander L. Gilman, Difference and Pathology, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 16-18. Richard Dyer, 'Stereotyping', in Gays and Film, ed. by Richard Dyer (London: British Film Institute, 1977), pp. 27-39. 'Types are instances which indicate those who live by the rules of society (social types) and those whom the rules are designed to exclude (stereotypes). For this reason, stereotypes are also more rigid than social types. The latter are open-ended, more provisional, more flexible, to create the sense of freedom, choice, self-definition for those within the boundaries of normalcy. (...) You appear to choose your social type in some measure, whereas you are condemned to a stereotype', p. 29. For the contradictory and complex nature of stereotypes, and their link with representation see also Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 75. For a brief analysis of the ways counter-strategies can be used by the stereotyped Other see Stuart Hall, 'The spectacle of the 'Other'', in Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, ed. by Stuart Hall (London: Sage – The Open University, 1997), pp. 225-277 (pp. 269-277).

Mary Charlton, p. 9.

traces. In Sicily the persistent intention of travellers and historians to revive the classical past was encouraged by a racial interpretation of the history of the island, trying to distinguish and isolate Greek features. Although exotic and fascinating, the traces of non-European races were considered as spurious, worrying elements, to be studied scientifically and rejected culturally. However, as already pointed out, similarities between Sicily and her homeland were used by Charlton in justification of her choice to reside in Sicily: in the above passage this is implied in her underlying the 'fair' complexion of the Palermitans among whom she spent the rest of her life, marrying one of them. Objectification of the 'Others', rather than identification with them, can be perceived at various points in Charlton's account. Although she attempts to 'make amends' for 'English prejudices' against Italian women, her comments on local women reveal the common attitudes of the majority of Victorian ladies who wrote on the female conditions in the Mediterranean:

The social position of women throughout Southern Italy, is one of the great evils, and one of the chief sources of their mental degradation.

The almost *Oriental* seclusion and slavery in which they live, deprives the women of any influence in society, and their extreme ignorance prevents them from having any in domestic life, at least to any useful purpose. (...) I speak of the middle classes, and of the provinces, for in Naples and Palermo, the tone of society, and its customs, are much the same as those of other European cities. (...) nothing can be imagined more insipid and slavish than the life of a Sicilian lady in the provinces. (...) Society she has none, as no one 'receives'. ¹³⁷

What a contrast to the position taken by a Frenchwoman of the same class, who reigns triumphant 'chez elle', and contrives, wherever she is, to create a society around her, and to amuse herself, without neglecting any of her duties as a good *mère de famille*. ¹³⁸

In the case of stereotypes and prejudices, some isolated counter-representations can strive to produce dissonant pictures of the Other. In our particular case, as already stated, Charlton tries to resort to 'alternative' images to depict foreign societies with the intention of asserting her authority as a long-term observer, and as a more faithful

Consider, for example, John Addington Symonds, Sketches and Studies in Italy and Greece (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1898), and Will S. Monroe, Sicily, the Garden of the Mediterranean: The History, People, Institutions, and Geography of the Island (Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1909).

¹³⁶ Charlton, p. 8. ¹³⁷ Charlton, p. 7.

Charlton, p. 8.

reporter than short-term travellers. In her work counter-representations of the Other (for example by producing positive images of the host society to replace a widespread discrediting representation) can also work as a strategy to justify her choice (or intention) to settle down in an alien country. Although counter-representations produce different effects, they often end up being appropriated by the more powerful ethnocentric system as significant data. Yet alternative images of the Other can, at least temporarily, destabilize and disorientate the ethnocentric hegemony, spreading information which does not correspond with already familiar images. Reversing or substituting reductive stereotypes and negative representations can aim at producing new meanings and challenging fixed images. After a first destabilizing effect, the new data can however be employed as valuable elements by the hegemonic group. Thus, although counter-strategies may increase the diversity of the ways the 'Others' are represented, the typical binary structure of the stereotype is hard to dismantle, and power and subordination are maintained. The alternative image needs to be recuperated and re-appropriated by the ethnocentric system, in order to ideologically reset and restabilize difference, and to defend the border between Self and Other. However, this process does not lead to an expulsion of the alternative representation; different categories created to classify otherness frequently co-exist. They can even contradict or supplement one another. What makes it possible to link different contradicting images of otherness is the ability to hold simultaneously two (or more) of them. 139

Relations of power not only emerge in cultural and racial oppositions, but also in class boundaries. In *Letters from Sicily* the author's personal construction of Sicily is strictly dependent on her social position and the portion of Sicilian society she associated with, and eventually belonged to. On various occasions, Charlton's experience of Sicilian social life seems to be demarcated by differences of status. Variations of manners and character between mountain dwellers, peasants, lower

Gilman, pp. 15-35. See also Bhabha, p. 80.

classes, middle and upper classes, as well as differences of lifestyle between the main towns and the provinces are highlighted throughout the letters. For example, as mentioned above, she comments negatively on the seclusion of Sicilian women:

I speak of the middle classes, and of the provinces, for in Naples and Palermo, the tone of society, and its customs, are much the same as those of other European cities. 140

Elsewhere, she makes observations on the locals' behaviour and temperament, stating that: 'The people of the mountain districts, are however widely different from their more peaceable brethren of the *littorale*'. ¹⁴¹ In *Letters from Sicily* the polarities modern-traditional, experience-naivety, organisation-chaos and rational-irrational, acquire connotations related to concepts of social order and rank. Coming from an upper-class background, Charlton can make sense of the alien world around her mainly by thinking in terms of rank and status: any form of social levelling and abolition of distinctions causes her puzzlement. A relevant example of such attitudes can be found in Letter IV, in which the author reports a visit made to one of her Sicilian acquaintances:

(...) a Sicilian house, with a few honourable exceptions, is apt to be squalidly dirty, and an abolition of the distinctions of rank reigns, which would delight the heart of M. Proudhon & C.ie. As the line of demarcation is not defined, a tone of easy familiarity pervades the establishment, every door standing open, and every one wandering in and out as they please.¹⁴²

In the letters, imperial discourse and English identity are linked to a social discourse based on class identity. The writer's activities cannot be separated from the number of social forces and experiences related to the author's life; social forces and experiences which inevitably take part in the text.¹⁴³ Thus, it can also be observed that Charlton's self-representation as an educated reporter with intellectual skills (note also her use of French and comparisons between French culture and the Sicilian one), and her choice of informants also tend to identify Charlton's social position. In the passages quoted

¹⁴⁰ Charlton, p. 7.

¹⁴¹ Charlton, p. 9.

¹⁴² Charlton, p. 21.

¹⁴³ See Reina Lewis, Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation (New York and London: Routledge, 1996).
pp. 22-30.

so far in this section, Charlton's patronising and sarcastic tone expresses an 'orientalization' and 'rankization', which affects both the Other as different culture, and the Other as different class. It goes without saying that these factors inevitably influence the representation of the Sicilians, and are meant to shape the readers' response.

Letter V contains another cliché: an account of an ascent to Mount Ætna which repeats a topic abundantly covered in various travel works on Sicily of that time. Emily Lowe's *Unprotected Females in Sicily*¹⁴⁴ is one of the travel books on Sicily which contains such an account. Lowe's work can also be taken as a clear example of how some Victorian women constructed images of themselves as adventurous, brave travellers and, at the same time, maintained their image of respectable ladies, physically weak, romantic and sentimental. Unlike Lowe's account of the trip to the Sicilian volcano, Charlton's Letter V is not imbued with a proto-feminist perspective, although a certain egocentric attitude is often present. Charlton begins her letter by signalling that she is about to cover a trite subject:

I send you an account of our ascent of Mount Ætna, in hopes that it may interest you, though you may deem the subject rather a hackneyed one, having already employed the pens of many tourists. 146

The author strategically justifies a not very original choice, and distances herself from tourists. Generally, as many places visited by travellers are familiar to them through different kinds of representations, when they decide to record their experiences in writing travellers might stumble upon a 'sense of belatedness'. As a result they need to show that they can add something original to the reports left by predecessors. ¹⁴⁷ Charlton ends the account of her ascent of Mount Ætna with advice to future English

¹⁴⁴ Emily Lowe, *Unprotected Females in Sicily* (London: Routledge 1859).

¹⁴⁵ See Lowe, p. 129. Also consider Stefania Arcara, 'La Serpe e la Colomba: strategie femministe di una lady vittoriana in Sicilia', in *DonnaWomanFemme*, 1-2 (Jan.- June 1998), 111-123.

¹⁴⁶ Charlton, p. 33.

¹⁴⁷ Dennis Porter, Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 12. In the context of travel writing and European colonialism the expression 'sense of belatedness' has also been used to denote a nostalgic desire for the 'Others' and the feeling of having missed some authentic experience once conferred by a vanishing

travellers directing them to visit a building 'originally erected during the English occupation of Sicily, by our officers':

After my own experience, I should recommend any one ascending Ætna, to leave Nicolosi in the afternoon; as, whatever state the Casa Inglese may be in, it is better to be there than to spend the night on the mountain.¹⁴⁸

Charlton shifts from communication with the receiver of her letters, to communication with other possible readers. The author perpetuates a cliché typical of travel journals: that of advising compatriots on things and places to see. Charlton influences the English reader's perception of and interaction with Sicily through what Pfister calls a 'social filter'. 149 An example is the 'Casa Inglese' which, 'for the benefit of future tourists and the honour of the country, may, I sincerely hope, be defended somewhat better against the blasts of winter. 150 In other words, in Charlton's Letters, the English building represents the familiar, 'home', which apart from reassuring the foreigner, in an extraneous, hostile environment, also strengthens his/her sense of Englishness. What is 'home' and what is 'otherness' form a binary opposition which is maintained throughout the letters. Moreover, it can be argued that, once the letters were in the editor's hands (or if the author planned to publish them while she was still writing), the ascent of the volcano in Letter V, as well as other conventional descriptions of Sicilian places and people, needed to be inserted for a potential external reader, in order to answer certain publishing requirements. Baffled by an unconventional woman's voice narrating political details, the target (home) audience could be reassured with something conventionally Sicilian, familiarly English and quintessentially female: a well-known place (or a stereotype), seen through the eyes of a British citizen, and romantically depicted so that it could sound more suitable for a lady.

world. See Ali Behdad, Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution (Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1994).

¹⁴⁸ Charlton, p. 38.

¹⁴⁹ Pfister, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Charlton, p. 38.

Conclusions

Letters from Sicily is an authoritative and informative account of the Sicilian revolution of 1848-49, as well as a personal account of experiences. It offers a brief cultural and political analysis concerned with gender, class and national ideologies operating throughout the Sicilian and the English societies. The letters were written before Mary Charlton's marriage to a Sicilian nobleman. It has been argued that this text marks the author's transition from the state of short time traveller to the condition of expatriate, signalling a break with the author's past and country of origin. Analysing the Letters as a first case study serves as an introduction to Louise Hamilton Caico's and Tina Whitaker Scalia's texts. These are works produced by two authors whose state at the time of the writing – unlike Charlton's – was clearly that of foreign women already settled in Sicily, as we will see in the following chapters.

What distinguishes Letters from Sicily from other travellers' accounts, journals, diaries and memoirs, is the kind of experience reported, and the function of the reader. The letters take the form of a fictitious conversation with the private addressee, and the epistolary text is used to communicate and allow the recipient to participate in the author's transformation from traveller to long-term resident in Sicily. Agency is exercized through the act of writing letters, while the fragmented structure of these epistles mirrors the fragmented personality of the writer, as well as a series of anxieties which affected her. Charlton's main anxieties can be identified in her sense of English and class identity; in the justification of her choice to remain in Sicily; in her search for similarities between Sicily and England; as well as in the assertion of her authority as a chronicler of historical and political events. Unlike the texts analysed in the next two chapters, Letters from Sicily is (at least initially) a private act of writing intentionally addressed to a private reader. The epistolary form of Charlton's work brings the writer nearer to the reader; it is a 'reciprocal' experience where the letter writer simultaneously

tries to affect her reader and is affected by the same. Like every letter writer, Charlton is 'always in dialogue with a possible respondent', 151 who may be the direct recipient of the epistle, the external reader, or even herself. As an expatriate text, the Letters are an act of filling reciprocal gaps: the writer's and the recipient's. On one hand, in the foreign country, the writer is left with an empty space created by her break with home and the past, and the lack of mother-tongue communication. On the other hand, the recipient, reading the letter (and replying to it), tries to replace a physical absence and is also often invited to learn about foreign places, cultures and societies, filling other gaps. Spatial distance separates the 'I' and the 'you' in epistolary writing. However, a temporal distance also needs to be added in epistolary correspondence between expatriates and people at home: this is the distance from the past. The longer the absence is, the more the illusion of an extraneous and distant home (as point of departure) increases. Charlton's Letters, then, can shorten distances, re-creating a relation with home, as it was left on the day of departure. There is not enough evidence of Charlton's intention to publish her work. Consequently, her interpretation and depiction of the Other remains ambiguous. It is difficult to state whether the writing of the letters was accomplished taking into account the private reader's interests and background, and/or those of a wider audience. Nevertheless, as Charlton's letters were published, editorial transformations intended to answer publishing requirements need to be taken into account, especially in the representation of the Other.

In the *Letters* Charlton's authority lies in her understanding and defence of the 'Others' against prejudices, and this also gives the text a didactic mission. The 'Others' participate in the shaping of an 'authorial' identity, and an 'expatriate' identity. However, together with the use of textual strategies to show how pleased she was with Sicily, commonplaces, tropes and prejudices typical of travelogues are also present in Charlton's letters. Through a depiction of the Sicilians as naïve and oppressed victims,

¹⁵¹ Altman, pp. 88 and 148.

and the search for similarities with the English, Mary Charlton creates her own Sicily, and her own England too. Images of her country of origin are constructed in the letters. Sicily is not the replacement of England; but rather the writer – in her transition from one country to another, and from one state to another – has attempted to mould Sicily into the sequel of her country, establishing a 'metonymic' relationship.

In *Letters from Sicily*, the 'denial of coevalness' identified by Fabian, ¹⁵² is measured in terms of sociocultural events, and in terms of significant political events. Oppositions such as traditional versus modern, or rural versus urban are stressed in Charlton's work. The Sicilian 'aptitude' for self-government is not enough to guarantee order, civilisation and development. To move from a 'pre-modern' (rural, communal) society to a 'modern' (capitalist, individualistic) society, freedom from the past, as well as from the oppressors, is necessary.

Letters from Sicily is also an autobiographical work in which the author has fashioned her Self throughout the text. Most of what the author declares and reports in the conventional form of the Letters is a construction made in the time interval between the events and their recording. Moreover, it has been argued that the female author cannot entirely 'die' in the reading process, as details of her life are essential to understand the writer's representation of Sicily and of herself. For the (post)modern reader, categories of gender, class and nation are fundamental to the interpretation of the Letters which, only then, can be analysed in terms of their content.

Correspondences by well-known foreign women who lived and wrote in Italy during the Italian Risorgimento, such as the already mentioned Elizabeth Barrett Browning or Margaret Fuller Ossoli, are perhaps more suitable to stress the issue of expatriation and romantic, emotional participation in the Italian struggle for independence. But these works are also related to the popularity of these women, and to

¹⁵² Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Marks its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 22-31.

an attempt to get to know more about their adventurous, politically committed lives. Charlton's less well-known letters give the modern reader the certainty that cases like Fuller Ossoli, Barrett Browning or Trollope are not isolated; thus, through her work, foreign women's interest in the Italian cause can be more widely historicized. Their commitment to Italian matters can be verified through deeper research aimed at examining neglected texts by foreign women produced all over Italy.

Chapter Two

Unsealing the inland: ethnographic performances in Sicilian Ways and Days by Louise Hamilton Caico

The following account of the manners and customs of Sicilians has been written down on the spot from first hand acquaintance with the people, gained by a long residence amongst them, in the province of Caltanissetta, a region as yet unaffected by travellers or by contact with the outer world. Many of the scenes and sayings described would be a 'sealed book' to anyone not acquainted with Sicilians, and even those who are would not be able to participate in them, unless admitted to the intimacy of Sicilians, who are by nature secretive and suspicious of outsiders. (...) The travelled reader will find much in these Sicilian descriptions which has not come under his observation. He must not, therefore, conclude that the things described did not happen. It simply means that between him and the inner life of the people there was a veil he was unable to lift.¹

These lines are taken from the 'Foreword' to Sicilian Ways and Days by Louise Hamilton Caico, published in London in 1910. Right from the beginning, in the introduction to her work, this British woman openly comments on travellers' superficial observation of Sicilian culture and their inability to become involved in Sicilian customs, and publicly claims her authority as participant-observer.

The interesting production of studies, pamphlets and memoirs about Sicily written by foreigners residing either on the island or on the mainland has often been integrated into historical, ethnographic, social and anthropological studies dedicated by Italians to the Sicily of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One such work is *Sicilian Ways and Days*. The uniqueness of this little-known work lies in the long term, close relationship between a foreign female author and inland Sicilian people and customs, as well as in her ability to bring to light shades rarely, if ever, perceived by other foreigners on the island. The work also grasps, through the perspective of an 'outsider', some peculiarities neglected by natives. The rural, feudal conditions of

Sicily, still strong after Italian Unification emerge in all their contradictions in Hamilton's book. In particular, the text, through what Geertz calls 'microscopic ethnographic description'², and its many illustrations, forces the reader to confront problems usually associated with anthropological writings. Moreover, the book suggests a further development in the reading of travellers' and expatriates' gendered accounts of different cultures. In fact, *Sicilian Ways and Days* not only encourages comparisons between the textual authority of travel writers and the participant-observer authority of foreign residents, but it also invites the modern reader to reflect on women's role in the production of ethnographic works.

This chapter will look at some of the strategies used by Louise Hamilton Caico, a British expatriate to Italy, to exert her authority as participant-observer in her book. If we accept that authority and self-expression are also located in the subjectivity of the author, one needs to pay particular attention to the personality and the background of Louise Hamilton. In so doing, other works by Hamilton need also to be glanced at to contextualize the meaning and function of the representation in *Sicilian Ways and Days*. In the light of questions of individual and collective identity, hybridisation and displacement, it is possible to analyse the ways in which images of Sicily have been rendered by Hamilton Caico to fix and record personal experiences, to claim authority as a proficient and reliable reporter of unknown things Sicilian, and to engage the interest of the target foreign reader. Representing another culture, this nineteenth-century woman not only claimed 'authority' as a 'first-hand' observer, but also offered external proof of 'competence' in order to acquire institutional acceptance (raising issues about the role of female ethnographies). In fact, Hamilton's account and illustrations of her Sicily, far from being simple and disengaged, are presented by

¹ Louise Hamilton Caico, Sicilian Ways and Days (London: John Long, 1910), pp. xi-xii.

² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p. 21.

applying, consciously or not, specific strategies through which she not only asserts her authority as participant, but also moulds the images of a less known part of Sicily: the trope of the female gaze, the use of photography, the exploration of some old Sicilian traditions and their subsequent transcription. Descriptions, interpretations, transcriptions and translations of texts are combined in Hamilton's book.

i. Moving off the beaten track

Louise Hamilton Caico was born in Nice in 1859,⁴ the first of four children of a wealthy English merchant of Irish origins and a French woman. In the 1860s she moved, with part of her family, to Florence where her parents managed a boarding house, and later to Bordighera not far from Genoa. In the second half of the nineteenth century the British presence proliferated along the Riviera, and Liguria was the haunt and a favourite leisure spot of many wealthy British families. For its therapeutic climate and peaceful landscapes Bordighera quickly became a first-class residential area, even competing with Nice and Menton. Its popularity particularly increased when *Il Dottor Antonio*, a novel by Giovanni Ruffini, was published in Edinburgh in 1855. The British shaped the character of the Riviera resorts and of Bordighera, filling them with English shops, libraries, clubs, cricket grounds, tennis courts, Anglican churches, theatres and an English newspaper, the *Common Gazette*.⁵ However, Louise Hamilton was mostly educated in England and France. In Florence she met Eugenio Caico for the first time and married him in 1880 in Bordighera. Eugenio belonged to a powerful Sicilian family of landowners from the little village of Montedoro, which was to become the subject of

³ See Lynnette, Turner, 'Feminism, Femininity and Ethnographic Authority', Women, a Cultural Review, 2 (1991), 238-254 (p. 243).

⁴ For this biographical information I am mainly indebted to the unpublished work by Giovanni Petix, Notizie sulla famiglia Caico di Montedoro (Private Archive Giovanni Petix, Montedoro, n.d.). See also Giovanni Petix, Memorie e tradizioni di Montedoro (Edizione a cura dell'Amministrazione Comunale di Montedoro, 1984).

Hamilton's most important work. In Bordighera she gave birth to five children ⁶ and lived there till her father's death in 1894. When they decided to move to Sicily they had to face the strong opposition of Eugenio's family who did not agree with his marrying a British woman. Cesare, Eugenio's eldest brother, prohibited them from entering Montedoro, so they rented a house in Palermo. It was only in 1897, when Cesare became seriously ill, that Louise could settle in Montedoro, in the house of her husband's father. She lived almost permanently in the little village, apart from short visits to Palermo, Northern Italy and abroad. In 1900 she translated into Italian How to Be Happy Though Married by Edward John Hardy. In 1906 she published the pamphlet Per un nuovo costume della donna in Sicilia, one of the issues in a series of propagandistic publications, from which her adherence to 'continental' feminist ideals can be deduced. She wrote other articles describing her impressions of journeys and landscapes, which were published in Il Giornale di Sicilia. Besides the publication of Sicilian Ways and Days, 1910 also saw the publication of her translation from English into Italian of In Tune with the Infinite by the American thinker Ralph Waldo Trine. In 1912 she stayed in Nice to allow one of her daughters to improve her musical skills. In that period, she collaborated with the journal L'Ora and with the Tour du Monde, for which she translated some articles. In 1913, together with Mary Dove, she published in

⁵ See Elia Baudo, Gli inglesi nella Liguria occidentale: the Charm of the West Riviera, (Genoa: Pirella Editore, 1994).

⁶ Almost all Louise Hamilton's children were educated in England. Her daughters worked on translations of foreign books and published their own works too. In particular, attention should be drawn to Lina Caico's friendship with Ezra Pound. See Lina Caico 'Introduzione a Ezra Pound', 'Lettere a Ezra Pound' and 'Presentazione della corrispondenza Pound-Caico' ed. by Laura Mangione, Quaderni di Tradizione Mediterranea (Palermo: Il Triangolo, 1981). Lina was also the founder and one of the members of the hand-written magazine Lucciola created in 1908. The periodical was published up to 1926, except for a short break during the First World War. Its contributors were almost all Italian women, from Cuneo to Caltanissetta, from the North to the South of Italy; some of them were also Swiss, or from Tripoli. It circulated by post exclusively among its members and in their families, and one of its models was the English magazine Firefly. Lucciola looked like other printed Italian magazines for young ladies, such as Rivista per le signorine and Voci amiche circulating at that time. For its originality, Lucciola represents a striking example of women's writing at that time: an attempt to create a closed circle, where not much space was left for men. Its aim was to pierce the silence of quiet and monotonous women's existences, in small, sleepy villages, and to bring togehter women who, although separated in space, were united by a

London *The Roman Campagna*, a translation from Italian into English of a work by Arnaldo Cervesato. Between 1916 and 1920, approximately, Louise moved to London where she worked for the International Labour Office. Her other translations and adaptations into Italian include works by Georges Rodenbach, Maurice Maeterlink and Charles Swinburne; she also translated some poems by Giacomo Leopardi into French.⁷ She died in 1927 in Palermo where she had resided during the last years of her life.

i.ii. Images of post-unification Mezzogiorno

Louise Hamilton's book cannot be interpreted without an awareness of the cultural, political and social conditions of the location and period in which it was produced: the inland, feudal, and less developed part of Sicily (almost never included in the 'beaten track' of foreign travellers), shortly after Italian Unification.

In May 1860, the same year in which Louise Hamilton was taken to live in Italy, Garibaldi's expedition of 'The Thousand' disembarked in Sicily. After defeating Bourbonic troops on the island, and marching through the Southern part of Italy, Garibaldi triumphantly entered Naples in September. Thus, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was conquered, and through a plebiscite, was incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy, under the authority of King Vittorio Emanuele, on 21 October 1860. The Unification of Italy was then formally proclaimed on 17 May 1861, though the acquisition of Rome and Venice happened later. After the struggle for Unification, the new Italy, where Hamilton spent most of her life, was characterized by two antithetical parts which had been (re)unified after more than one thousand years. As the Marxist

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strong desire for writing and dialogue. See Paola Azzolini, ed., Leggere le voci. Storia di 'Lucciola' una rivista scritta a mano, 1908-1926 (Verona – Biblioteca Civica, Società Letteraria: Cierre Edizioni, 1995).

Hamilton translated into Italian: Emma Frances Drake, Quel che la donna di 45 anni deve sapere (Turin, 1915), Maurice Maeterlinck, Il tempio sepolto (Rome, 1923), Poesie: il regno del silenzio (Rome, 1924), Georges Rodenbach, Visioni di Fiandra (Rome, 1926), Charles Swinburne, Canti scelti (Lanciano, 1931).

The Lombard invasion had definitely broken that unity created by Rome. In the North, the Comuni had given a fresh impetus to society and economy, while in the South the kingdoms of the Swabians, of the

intellectual Antonio Gramsci stressed, the relationship between North and South was similar to the relationship between a great city and a great rural area, so that characteristics and elements typical of a conflict of nationalities were accentuated. In the mid-1870s, the writings of Pasquale Villari, Leopoldo Franchetti, Sidney Sonnino, and others, contributed to the start of a field of intellectual investigation which was later to be known as 'meridionalismo'. The Southern 'questione contadina' (peasant question) was then the main social issue for intellectuals, politicians and sociologists who through the 'inchiesta' in the field, and treatises, attempted to define and describe southern problems in terms of agrarian contracts and class relations. There is debate about when 'the Southern Question' first began. For some scholars it began immediately after 1860; they understand it to be a large-scale representation of Southern Italians and of their culture. For others, with the expansion of the market, the Unification made patent what was already existent: the weakness and backwardness of the economy of the South. These who follow Antonio Gramsci believe that the peripheralization of the South was caused by the 'historic bloc', which, after Unification, provided an opportunity for southern agrarian élites to form an advantageous alliance with northern industrialists, especially around tariff policies. Also, there is a controversial issue which links unification with colonisation. On the one hand, from an economic perspective, Northern Italy effectively destroyed the existing industries of Southern Italy in order to convert the Mezzogiorno into a source of cheap labour and a channel for northern goods. On the other hand, the politically-oriented version of this theory identifies the problems of the South in its military conquest by the

Angiou, of Spain and of the Bourbons, produced other effects. In the North, the tradition of a certain autonomy had created an entrepreneurial and brave middle class. An economic organisation similar to that of the other European States favoured the development of industries and capitalism. In the South, no roads, ports, nor a proper middle class had been created under the patriarchal administration of Spain and of the Bourbons. Antonio Gramsci, *La Questione Meridionale*, ed. by Franco De Felice and Valentino Parlato (Rome: Riuniti, 1966), pp. 55-57.

North, with the consequent removal of the southern dynasty and the raiding of the defeated territory.¹⁰

ii. Ethnographic vogue

Sicilian Ways and Days was published in 1910 by the John Long Publishing Company, in London. The book includes one hundred and twenty-eight illustrations and is divided into eighteen chapters and a 'Foreword'. Apart from the first two, describing Louise's arrival in the little village of Montedoro and her room in the Caico's house, the chapters are mostly dedicated to traditions and customs. Hamilton might have started working on the book around 1898, but she only decided to publish it ten years later. It remained in print for just one year and was then rediscovered and translated in 1983 in Sicily, where it is still in print.

Following its publication in 1910, Sicilian Ways and Days was generally reviewed as a travel book in England. For instance, in the 'List of new books' of the Times Literary Supplement it was described as a work made of 'short papers':

but the writer has gone about among the people with a sympathetic and observant eye and has much that is interesting to tell about Sicilian life and customs; and she gives translations of harvest and Christmas hymns. Her very numerous Kodak illustrations, too, are full of life. They are all the better perhaps for being taken, as she tells us, "at a time when the possibility of their being published was not even contemplated" (though the publisher's prospectus calls them "specially taken for this work").¹³

⁹ Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), pp. 92-93.

¹⁰ For a re-examination of the chronology of the Question and a further discussion of its origins, see Marta Petrusewicz, 'Before the Southern Question: "Native" Ideas on Backwardness and Remedies in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, 1815-1849', in *Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in One Country*, ed. by Jane Schneider (Oxford – New York: Berg, 1998), pp. 27-47. See also Marta Petrusewicz, *Come il Meridione divenne una Questione: rappresentazioni del Sud prima e dopo il Quarantotto* (Catanzaro: Rubettino, 1998).

¹¹ The chapters are: 'How we Arrived at Montedoro', 'My Room', 'The Madonna's Arrival', 'Marriage Customs', 'St. Joseph's Festival', 'Lent and Easter', 'Christening Customs', 'Lunch at Serradifalco', 'Harvest', 'San Calogero', 'A Cup of Coffee at Rabbione', 'Funeral Customs', 'Racalmuto and Mount Castelluccio', 'A Stabbing Fight', 'Sulphur Mines and Miners', 'Santa Lucia's Festival', 'Christmas', 'A Summer Day at Montedoro'.

¹² This can be deduced from the age of her daughter Letizia. She was born in 1893 in Bordighera, and in the book Louise says that her child was five during the first period of their Sicilian residency. See, Hamilton, Sicilian Ways and Days, pp. 33-34

¹³ Times Literary Supplement, 2 June 1910, p. 204.

It is not clear whether Hamilton took the photographs deliberately in view of her intent to publish her work. However, publicizing her pictures as 'specially taken' for the book would project the idea of Hamilton as a professional writer and photographer. The publisher has put a deliberate professional gloss on the preparation of the material for the book, implying that both words and images were produced in a premeditated fashion. However, this is inconsistent with Hamilton's statement that the illustrations were produced over a long period of time.

In the same year that Sicilian Ways and Days appeared in London, it was also published in the United States by Appleton. The Dial in Chicago stressed the originality of Hamilton's representation and her experience, which went beyond conventional travellers' observations:

The comparatively unknown interior of Sicily, with its survivals of ancient customs and superstitions, is entertainingly treated in Miss Louise Caico's Sicilian Ways and Days (Appleton). In the province of Caltanissetta, the only Sicilian province with no seacoast, the author was long a sojourner, mingling familiarly with the natives and snapshotting them and the scenes amid which they live. (...) Even the surfeited reader of travels will find novelty and piquancy in Miss Caico's pages. In gaining the confidence and friendship of the inland Sicilians, who are by nature secretive and disposed to suspect the visiting stranger, she has been fortunate, and her readers will profit by her ability to draw the curtain from before much that usually remains hidden to the conventional traveller." ¹⁴

The author was introduced with her married name (although called Miss), and presented as a long-term 'sojourner' on the island. Nonetheless the book was reviewed in the section 'Holiday Publications'. It was also reviewed together with travel journals among which Mrs Maud Howe Elliott's *Sicily in Shadow and in Sun*, 15 and Joel Cook's two-volume work on *The Mediterranean and its Borderlands*.

Despite its originality, Sicilian Ways and Days was defined and classified according to specific tropes and categories which encouraged and allowed its reception within a corpus of existing texts on travels. For the Anglophone reader, Hamilton's

¹⁴ The Dial, Dec. 16, 1910, vol. 49, p. 526.

¹⁵ A secretary of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the American Relief Committee, Howe Elliott reported the earthquake in Sicily and Calabria in 1908.

representation of Sicily formed a view of Sicilian Ways and Days as a travel book. However, today, analysing Hamilton's text in detail – considering in particular her relationship with the host culture – it is possible to observe that its functions are different from those of travel literature. As a text, Sicilian Ways and Days is a hybrid of memoir and ethnographic study, personal and public accounts, and it presents problems of genre classification. What makes Sicilian Ways and Days an ethnographic record, although by a dilettante, is the presence of some characteristics which this work shares with texts by scholars of folklore and costumes produced at that time in Italy. The author's purpose was that of either producing a work along the lines of contemporary experienced ethnographers or, perhaps, just of addressing the book to lovers of folklore and ethnography, as the most important Sicilian ethnographer, Giuseppe Pitrè, for instance, declares in the preface to his work: Usi e costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano. 16

After Unification various regions of Italy feared losing their regional identity, and collecting and recording regional folklore in dialect came to be seen as one method of preserving this identity. Comparetti collected tales in Pisa, De Gubernatis in Siena, Imbriani in Florence, Campania and Lombardy, and Giuseppe Pitrè in Sicily. In 1894 Mario Menghini, quoting Karl Weinhold, reported in *Nuova Antologia* the contemporary 'piacevole occupazione' of Folklore: 'raccogliere è divertente e talvolta utile e in pari tempo l'amatore può darsi un'aria di scienziato se egli raccoglie con gusto e con abilità e se ha il senso dell'ordine'. However, he lamented the fact that, apart from rare cases, Folklore was not getting the right kind of attention:

non v'è quasi letterato, almeno in Italia, che ne' momenti d'ozio non abbia fatto un *excursus* per il Folk-lore; poi appena pubblicato il suo fardellino di canti o di novelle, egli si è prudentemente ritirato, coltivando altri studi cui l'inclinazione lo trasportava'.

¹⁶ Giuseppe Pitrè, *Usi e costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano*, 4 vols (Palermo, 1889; repr. Catania: Clio, 1993).

¹⁷ Giuseppe Cocchiara, Storia degli studi delle tradizioni popolari in Italia (Palermo: Palumbo Editore, 1947), pp. 114-115 and 119-120.

Dall'altra parte si è creduto che il Folklore, sia una scienza di prim'ordine, da rivaleggiare con la storia, la linguistica, l'antropologia, la psicologia.' 18

Three main points can be easily grasped from Menghini's criticism: the increasing popularity of folklore studies in Italy, the indistinct nature and boundaries of such a discipline in the nineteenth century, as well as the gender and class identification of the collector.

The second half of the nineteenth century was certainly the most prolific period for the production and consumption of texts on folklore. However, Italy started paying attention to its own 'tradizioni popolari' later than other European areas like Germany and the Slavic countries, where for a long time – and especially during the age of Romanticism – folk traditions had been considered an intellectual treasure.

In the introduction to his most important work, the Sicilian ethnographer Giuseppe Pitrè¹⁹ emphasized how he was always stimulated by a strong desire to collect anything that could be useful for making Sicily known from a new and unexplored point of view, declaring his intention not to omit even the most insignificant expression of his people:

Così il lettore ha un quadro di ciò che fa, di ciò che pensa, di ciò che crede il popolo siciliano, e può ben capire com'esso vesta e mangi, quali siano i suoi voti, le sue credenze nella terra che abita e nel mondo a cui aspira; come esso intenda la famiglia, la società, la legge, la religione: un quadro, a dir vero, largo e particolareggiato ad un tempo, nel quale troveranno molta copia di documenti umani, come oggi si dicono, etnografi e folkloristi, penalisti e sociologi, moralisti e scrittori profani di varia ragione.²⁰

¹⁸ Mario Menghini 'La "Società nazionale per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari italiane", *Nuova Antologia*, Vol. LI (May 1894), 141-147 (p.142).

¹⁹ Giuseppe Pitré had heard folktales, folksongs, and other genres of the Sicilian popular tradition since he was a child. His mother was the first person to sing him folksongs and tell him tales. A domestic servant was also a sort of model narrator and an essential source for the collection. Giuseppe Pitrè was born in Palermo and was a medical doctor who began his career in the poorer quarters of his town during a cholera epidemic between 1866 and 1867. At the age of 30 he started collecting folklore of all genres throughout Sicily and Tuscany. Being a doctor he had knowledge of and access to a large portion of the population and their folklore, especially in Palermo. For most of the information on Pitrè's work, life and legacy I am indebted to Giuseppe Cocchiara, *Pitrè la Sicilia e il folklore. Biblioteca di cultura contemporanea XXXV* (Messina and Florence: G. D'Anna, 1951), and *Pitrè e Salomone Marino*, ed. by Antonio Pasqualino et al (Palermo: Flaccovio, 1966).

Pitrè's words are symptomatic of a common habit among experiential ethnographers of defining their writing over and against less specialized genres, such as travel books, personal memoirs, journalism and other accounts. As Mary Louise Pratt points out, professional ethnography defines itself by opposition to other kinds of writing, although many of its discursive practices derive from other genres.²¹ Pitrè's authority as a scientific and experiential ethnographer rests on the idea that contemporary and antecedent works by outsiders on Sicilian traditions and customs had just skimmed the surface of Sicilian reality, whereas he lived with the people under study and was of their culture. Pitrè was evidently attempting to represent his land in the most coherent and clear manner, so that at the time of the 'questione contadina', representatives of the Government and legislators could study and provide a better management of the island. Aware of the prejudices, preconceptions and distorted images of Sicily circulating at that time in Italy, Pitrè mainly addressed himself to the followers of new sciences like folklore and ethnography. In so doing he hoped to rescue all those customs and superstitions which attested to centuries of different colonisations, cultures, myths and legends, which history had not been able to grasp and preserve.²² The subject of his work was then the 'popolo minuto': people as a depository of what Edward B. Tylor, in

²⁰ Pitrè, *Usi e costumi*, I, p. ix. This work is part of *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane*, a vast collection on customs and traditions of Sicily published in Palermo and Turin between 1870 and 1913.

²¹ Mary Louise Pratt, 'Fieldwork in Common Places', in Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, ed. by James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 27-50.

Pitrè, *Usi e costumi*, pp. ix-x. Along a similar line, in 1935, in one of his notebooks from prison, Antonio Gramsci regretted the fact that 'folklore' was still studied mainly as a 'picturesque' element of Italian society. Unlike Pitrè, Gramsci's interest in popular culture and folklore was essentially political, as he insisted on a continuous circulation between élite and popular elements, and on the need to study folklore as a 'conception of the world and of life'. Gramsci's concern for folklore was not an erudite curiosity, or the nostalgic longing for a world uncontaminated by modernity; for him it was its instability and multi-layered nature which allowed the past to persist and be fused with the present, the intellectual to be mixed with the popular, in order to form national culture. Antonio Gramsci, 'Osservazioni sul "folclore" (1935), in *Quaderni dal Carcere*, 4 vols, ed. by Valentino Gerratana, vol. III (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), pp. 2311-2317 (pp.2312-2313); and Gramsci, *Selections*, pp. 90-91 and 324.

his Primitive Culture, called 'survivals', all the traditions and customs including proverbs, songs, savings and stories.²³

The work by Pitrè extensively affected the conception of folklore and ethnography in Italy, as well as abroad.²⁴ His material – apart from being the subject of study by generations of ethnologists from Hartland to Gomme, from Frazer to Bolte often became a model for aspiring Italian and foreign scholars of traditions and customs. as well as travellers pursuing in depth scientific accounts of Italian people at the end of the nineteenth century and even later. This stress on Pitrè's activity and the popularity of folklore in post-unification Italy should be seen in connection with a rising interest in Italian regional traditions among a female audience composed not only of Italians but also of expatriates, as Hamilton's Sicilian Ways and Days shows. Pitrè's work should also be seen in connection with changes in the way women participated in the construction and translation of worlds felt as 'distant' by Northern Italians and Europeans. At the same time, many of these texts managed to become part of the collective memory of the region or area they represented.

Germany and by Crane in the United States.

²³ 'There are processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved'. Edward B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1929; 1st edn 1871), vol. I, p. 16. Giuseppe Pitrè was also partly indebted to research by the English anthropologist. In 1871 Pitrè's Canti popolari siciliani was published and, simultaneously, the work by Tylor appeared in England. For Tylor folklore was a branch of social anthropology, or ethnography documenting 'survivals', and above all analogies between modern societies and primitive peoples. Going even further, Pitrè believed that some traditions can be spontaneously born in every time and place without any sort of transmission, as he stated in the XIII volume of his Biblioteca, published in 1877 with the title Saggio di giuochi fanciulleschi siciliani (Palermo: Tip. P. Montaina & Comp., 1877).

²⁴ Pitrè's works were translated by Coelho in Portugal, Monnier in France, Ralston in England, Kaden in

ii.i Interpreting the 'authentic' Other: between insiders' and outsiders' perspective

Years before the publication of *Sicilian Ways and Days*, Caterina Pigorini Beri, in 1883, started publishing a series of essays on the folklore of the region of Calabria. Her studies on superstitions, legends, traditions and customs need to be seen within the context of an ethnographic tendency growing in Italy in the late nineteenth century, and of the nationalism which swelled throughout Europe creating a general interest in particular national characteristics. One of the elements – typical of many ethnographic texts – which emerge from her work, legitimising its representational system, is the awareness of the decline of traditional society and the need to rescue the past. For example, after meeting a group of people belonging to the Albanian community living in the region of Calabria, she reported:

In mezzo a questo rinnovellarsi di gente, di tendenze e di attitudini, nel cancellarsi di tutta un'epoca e di tutta una civiltà, in mezzo a molte cose che sono o a noi sembrano fallaci, scompariranno molti usi, molti costumi, molte credenze che oggi dànno il tipo d'un carattere fiero e antico pieno di forza e di poesia. — La civiltà livellatrice cancellerà i simboli caratteristici di un popolo intiero che studiato sulle roccie aspre e selvaggie o nelle paludi o nei colli lussureggianti, colla lingua mescolata, colle tradizioni autoctone, colle credenze e coi costumi, darebbe forse la chiave di molti problemi d'indole scientifico, dalla cui soluzione siamo ancora ben lontani. 26

²⁵ Caterina Pigorini (1845-1924) was a teacher for a long time before starting her career as a folklorist through a series of essays reporting her journey to Calabria, later published with the title of *In Calabria*, (Turin, 1892). She settled in the region of Marche where she married and wrote *Costumi e superstizioni dell'Appennino Marchigiano* (Città di Castello, 1889). She also published essays on women's education, novels, and monographs, including one on Saint Catherine from Siena. For an analysis of her work see Paola De Sanctis Ricciardone, *L'Italia di Caterina. Demologia e antropologia nelle opere di Caterina Pigorini Beri 1845-1924*, (Rome: Bagatto Libri, 1990). Quotations here refer to the sections from Pigorini's main work first published in the periodical *Nuova Antologia*.

²⁶ Caterina Pigorini Beri, 'In Calabria: passeggiate', *Nuova Antologia*, Vol. XL, (July 1883), 62-75 (p. 73). In another essay she reports 'Era e mi pareva di essere infatti il soldato d'una civiltà rabbiosa che vuol tutto sapere, tutto conoscere, tutto indagare, per poi scrivere dei libri e delle novelle. Popolo positivo che abbiamo così poca fede e ancor meno carità, ci ostiniamo a correr dietro alla leggenda. L'epoca nostra, necessariamente parassita perché incapace di creare, si volge indietro; e quelle cose sì vecchie ci sembrano nuove e ci allettano insolitamente, come tutto quello che richiamandoci a qualche ideale perduto, ci ridesta ricordi soavi d'una infanzia lontana, quasi si aprisse un pertugio per considerare il nostro passato'. Caterina Pigorini Beri. 'La vigilia di Natale dell'Appennino marchigiano: schizzo di costumi', *Nuova Antologia*, vol. XXXVIII, (January 1883), 117-138 (p. 118). See also other articles published in the same journal, in volumes XLI and XLII.

Time and space disintegrate customs, but the field-worker can save them by acting as a 'custodian of an essence, unimpeachable witness to an authenticity'. As Clifford states the allegory of 'salvage' is implied in the process of ethnographic writing every time it 'translates experience into text'. 28

It was not by chance that in the Victorian period a greater awareness of the past and the sense that everything was connected gave urgency to the process of ordering and re-ordering relations to uncover interdependency among human beings. As Gillian Beer argues, Darwin's vocabulary of progress and improvement, mutation, diversification and selection, gladness and destruction, annihilation and transformation had already poured into mid-nineteenth-century Victorian narrative, so that the theory of evolution provided a language which shaped thought and 'a determining fiction by which to read the world'.²⁹ In the latter part of the nineteenth century, evolutionary theory also provided ordering assumptions to developing disciplines like anthropology, sociology and psychology.

Within this view of a changing society, and of the past as constantly aspiring to become the present, it can be argued that foreigners' texts on the various Italian traditions and customs also contributed to export an impression of an Italy in evolution, and encouraged a less homogenized perception of it abroad. Outsiders together with insiders located the different Italian territories in the context of a new national reality. The images which were created were adopted by Italians who mirrored themselves, during the post-unification period. The same images are still exploited in the present day. The text by Caterina Pigorini Beri and the book by Louise Hamilton Caico, are examples of 'ethnography' produced by 'outsiders' and constantly consumed by 'insiders'. It is in their reception today, rather than in their production, that these texts openly enact the

²⁷ James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', in Writing Culture, pp. 98-121 (pp. 112-115).

²⁸ Clifford.

²⁹ Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; 1st edn 1983), p. 2.

structure of salvage ethnography: they allow the source culture to re-appropriate images of its past and of a reality felt as perishable and remote.

It can be argued that what mainly distinguishes ethnographies produced by internal observers from accounts by foreign authors is the time relation between the reporter and the culture interpreted. In both cases the use of the present tense is one of the main features of ethnographic accounts. It is employed to depict social life as a set of collective routines and it also works on the assumption of a certain distance that supposedly confers objectivity. However, it is mainly in ethnographies by foreign observers that, through the strategic use of the present tense, the other society is being situated in a timeless present, which does not correspond with the time of the perceiving and speaking subject; natives' behaviour is discerned as repetition of their 'normal' habits. In the attempt to normalize what is different, the 'Others' are ontologically reduced and then placed in a temporal distancing, or what Johannes Fabian calls a 'denial of coevalness'. 30 On the contrary, in the attempt to destabilize his/her culture, the local observer attempts to close any temporal gap between what s/he writes about and what s/he experiences. The latter is meant to appear as the natural result of an everlasting process of historical and social transformations; traditions and customs are studied in order to contribute to the formation of an 'emic' collective identity, as well as to explain the nature of this identity – and its origins – to assumed external readers.

However, both insiders (as in the case of Pitrè) and outsiders bring experience and discourse into writing, enacting a 'rescue' and claiming scientific and moral authority. Pitrè's massive *oeuvre* not only influenced the production of ethnographies in Italy, but also shaped the Sicilian culture for home, the Italian mainland and abroad. Echoes of works by Pitrè can easily be found in expatriate women's writing such as the

³⁰ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 35.

two following texts written at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1886 and 1887 respectively, in London, Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco published a collection of *Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs*, ³¹ and Rachel Harriette Busk her *The Folk-Songs of Italy*. ³² Both works were written by foreign women resident in Italy, and both books contain one section entirely dedicated to Sicilian folk-songs. Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco focused on the use and charm of folksongs in Italian dialects – comparing them with similar songs from other European countries – as well as on the tendency towards the adoption of standard forms of language, during Italian Unification As she reported:

In the mouth of the people the local dialects have a charm which standard Italian has not - a charm that consists in clothing their thought after a fashion which, like the national peasant costumes, has an essential suitability to the purpose it is used for, and while wanting neither grace nor richness, suggests no comparisons that can reflect upon it unfavourably.³³

Busk published an ambitious work containing representative examples of traditional songs from every province in the country. Her collection introduced English readers to lyrical folk forms, such as the eight-line *strambotti* and the three-line *stornelli*; specimens of the 'canzuni' and 'ciuri' of Sicily were selected by Pitrè. In these texts, both authors stressed their authority as passionate, serious collectors of traces of the past in Italy, and at the same time craved indulgence for coarse lines and forced expressions used in their translations. Stressing the romantic aspect of the songs and their love-themes – thus maintaining a certain romanticized female perspective – Busk faced the

33 Martinengo-Cesaresco, Martinengo-Cesaresco, p. 125.

³¹ Countess Evelyn Carrington Martinengo-Cesaresco, *Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs* (London: George Redway, 1886). Contemporary reviews of the work of Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco (1852-1931) can be found in periodicals such as *Antiquary, Academy*, and *Edinburgh Review*.

³² Rachel Harriette Busk, *The Folk-Songs of Italy. Specimens, with Translations and Notes from each Province: and Prefatory Treatise* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & co, 1887). Busk (1831-1907) was an English woman residing in Rome. She found the popular songs everywhere, collecting them from friends, servants, peasants, soldiers, charcoal burners, housewives spinning silk or washing clothes by the river, and labourers living on the hilly streets of Rome. Among other works she also published *The Folk-Lore of Rome. Collected by Word of Mouth from the People* (1874). Contemporary reviews on her work can be found in periodicals such as *Athenaeum*, and *Ethnomusicology*.

CIURI.

T.

Ciuri di parma! Ammatula mi scappi, e non stai ferma. Siddu nun haju a tia, mi nesci l' arma!

2.

Ciuri di ciuri!

A costu chi mi cassanu lu cori, Nuddu mi spartirà di lu tò amuri!

3.

Rosu ciurita!
Tannu nun passirò cchiù di sta strata
Ouannu la morti mi leva la vita!

4.

Ciuri di risu!

E si 'na vota ssi labbruzza vasu Io moru e mi nni vaju in paradisu!

Signor Guastalla, in his interesting investigation into the history of the Folksongs of the Modica District of Sicily, calls the Stornelli exclusively muttetti (in his part, sciuri seems to be the word for "flower"). To the ninna-nanna he gives the alternative name of viersu, and expresses his opinion that those he has met with are not natives of the island, but received from Tuscany. He speaks also of another little song by the name of razzi-

That doctors found but one medicamental,— But my saliva, to bring health to thee. For twenty years my mouth should give no spittle, And thus, in suffring, thou shouldst die—through me!

FLOWER-SONGS.

τ.

Flower of palm!
In vain I fly—in vain I search for calm.
My life goes from me—left without thee to charm!

2

Flower flowering!
E'en while thy sharpest shaft enduring,
Naught shall thy love from out my heart be snatching!

3.

Blossoming rose!
My passing steps no more'll haunt thy repose
When Death my life shall in last sleep compose!

- 4

Floweret of rice!

If I but once may those thy dear lips kiss, I then may die and pass to Paradise!

neddu, which by his description seems like the religious Canzuni (supra, p. 61) of Dr. Pitrè.

Here is a pretty, simple example:-

Maruzza lavava, Giuseppe stinnia, Gesà si stricava Ca minna vulia.*

* Sweet Mary was washing. Joseph was hanging out the clothes to dry. Jesus was stretching Himself on the ground, For so His mother willed. (A "Holy Family" picture in four lines.)

considerable difficulties of faithful poetic translation, and presented English texts in rhyming stanzas alongside the original Italian texts:

Many times I have thought it would be a not ungrateful labour to bring out a selection of them in such a form that the English reader, almost or altogether "fasting from" (to use an Italianism) all knowledge of the Italian language, might be enabled to enjoy their fresh and simple beauties. (...) It does not seem appropriate to paraphrase these "Folksongs" into the corresponding language of English popular ballads; still less to endeavour to work them up into an unsuitable dress of polished English poetry. ³⁴

In works like Busk's the original is used as a strategy for reproduction of reality, so that faithfulness to the original means faithfulness to factual reality. In this way the folksongs are offered to the target readership - 'those who visit the country parts at all, and especially in the warmer season, when the people are in the fields³⁵ – firstly in their genuine form and 'physical' presence, and secondly through the practice of translation. Reproducing and translating the original implies a desire to certify an experience as truth, so that the audience can taste and grasp the 'real' essence of a culture. On the other hand, although Busk is aware of the difficulty of her task, through her translation of the folksongs from Sicilian dialect into English, the author adapts and moulds incomprehensible, foreign texts, domesticating them in order to meet the requirements of the target (home) audience with whom she shares her cultural codes. It should also be pointed out that the binary opposition authentic-inauthentic is not only present in the contrast original-translation, but can also be identified in the act of transcribing oral folksongs. In journals, reports or accounts, signs, traces and evidence of customs and traditions of an alien culture have been removed from specific contexts (cultural, historical, geographical or intersubjective); collecting them implies 'a gathering up of

³⁴ 'The merits of the original of course excite one's fancy; one feels the instincts of a discoverer towards them; which is the next thing to the instincts of their creator. Then, in the anxiety lest they should lose under one's handling, one gets to think one must "poke" these merits at the reader by additional epithets and explanatory words. The result is fatal; we produce a bad poem instead of reproducing a Folksong at all'. Busk, pp. 7 and 9. See plate 6.

³⁵ Busk, p. 15.

properties in arbitrary systems of value and meaning'. 36 Just like objects in a museum, songs, proverbs and sayings belonging to the Other are shaped into historical artifacts when they are displayed – interpreted and explained – in a book mainly according to the foreign collector's personal scheme of classification.³⁷ Although folk oral traditions are made visible through their transcription, the passage from speech to writing implies denial, or invisibility, of a certain set of components characterizing the verbal performance (for example the interpreter's accent, gestures, intonation). By selecting, translating, recasting, filling, restoring, enriching and refining the 'hybrid nature' of oral texts, knowledge is manipulated. Moreover, 'rescue and irretrievable loss'³⁹ are at stake in any kind of translation of culture into writing – as also in the case of Louise Hamilton Caico's main work - while the author asserts her authority as a committed, reliable informant. The move from oral to written record can alter the authenticity of documents regarded as embodiments of cultural essences and selected by the expatriate author to mark the truthfulness of his/her experience and the accuracy of his/her work (this is also valid for other genres, such as historiography). 40 Thus, even original and unknown documents can appear as signifying structures through which the expatriate author marks otherness to sell his/her experience to a target (home) reader. The audience can consider these documents as genuine signs collected 'off the beaten track', and consequently can regard the whole book as a more valid, reliable representation of an

³⁶ James Clifford, 'Objects and Selves – an Afterword', in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. by George W. Stocking, Jr (Madison, WI: The University of Winsconsin Press, 1985), pp. 236-245 (p. 237).

³⁷ See Clifford, 'Objects and Selves'.

³⁸ This is how Italo Calvino defined his collection of Italian Folk tales, an epitome of works on traces of customs and traditions by other collectors: a work 'which likewise is only halfway "scientific" or three-quarters so; as for the final quarter, it is the product of my own judgment. The scientific portion is actually the work of others.' Italo Calvino, 'Introduction', in *Italian Folk Tales*, trans. by George Martin (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980; 1st edn Turin: Einaudi, 1956), pp. xv-xxxii (p. xix).

³⁹ Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', in *Writing Culture*, pp. 98-121 (p. 115).

⁴⁰ For the concept of 'authenticity' in the context of modern media and its consequences in the creation of mythologized and fetished signs see Gareth Griffiths, 'The Myth of Authenticity', in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 237-241.

unfamiliar culture than travel guides and other journals available on the market. Like the tourist, the expatriate becomes a 'semiotic operator'. In the context of tourism (and its denigration by various scholars) Jonathan Culler has explained the role of tourists as 'agents of semiotics' in their constant hunt for genuine objects and practices as cultural signs and 'markers' constituting 'a sight as a sight: by giving information about it, representing it, making it recognizable'.⁴¹

Claims of scientificity, truth and expertise became quite popular in nineteenth-century texts by female authors. Because of its hazy generic boundaries, folklore offered women opportunities for professional development. By writing about other cultures, women could try to assume a public voice and gain access to traditionally male-dominated fields such as scientific disciplines.⁴² They often resorted to technical language and slowly abandoned the language of aesthetics which characterized descriptions of landscapes and people in most eighteenth-century aristocratic and middle class women traveller's texts.⁴³

⁴¹ Jonathan Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism', in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Norman, Okla: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), pp. 153-167 (p. 159). Although the general idea of the authentic is the unmarked, Culler underlines that without these markers, the 'authentic' could not be certified and experienced as original: 'The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity, is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, as sign of itself, and hence lacks the authenticity of what is truly unspoiled, untouched by mediating cultural codes'. p.164

p.164
⁴² As Lila Marz Harper underlines, the concept of 'scientific' was less restrictive in the nineteenth century than in its modern meaning; it was a manner of observing the world, and included elements of both hobby and mental discipline. Additionally, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – under the influence of Linneaus' cataloguing of the natural world – people were invited to participate in observation and collecting. In this context women endeavoured to develop a scientific career especially through the genre of travel accounts. Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narrative and Scientific Vocation* (Madison [N.J.], London.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Associated University Presses, 2001), pp. 11-35.

⁴³ On the subject of eighteenth-century women travellers and their relation to aesthetics see Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics*, 1716-1818 (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

iii. Inscribing 'my village'

The textual characteristics of Hamilton's book have much in common with ethnographic accounts such as the texts mentioned above. First of all, like other ethnographers, including Pitrè, she claims her authority in the 'Foreword' to her book. Problems of 'testimony' and 'authenticity' often arise in nineteenth-century debates on fieldwork activity and are closely connected to the concept of 'authority'. As already mentioned, Giuseppe Pitrè emphasises how he was always stimulated by a strong desire to collect anything that could be useful in making Sicily known from a new and unexplored point of view, at a time when Sicily was often seen as the object of political, economic and social inquiries. With his detailed report of all the aspects of his people's traditions and customs, Pitrè claims scientific objectivity and reliability. Similarly, Louise Hamilton proudly defines her writing over and against travel books and journals on Sicily. In so doing, she takes pains to distinguish herself from the 'mere traveller' who does not often include that unspoiled part of Sicily in his or her track and, if he or she decides to visit it, just passes through without a deep understanding of that world. In her work Hamilton was indebted to Giuseppe Pitrè, as well as to the ethnographer Salvatore Salomone Marino. Particularly relevant was also Hamilton's epistolary friendship with the Italian intellectual and indianist De Gubernatis, while she was still living in Bordighera 44

Louise Hamilton also asserts her authority to represent the lives of her subjects invoking 'my village' or 'we', 45 and she frequently moves from the position of a curious observer to one with a rather egocentric attitude, as can be noticed in the frequent use of

⁴⁴ Pitrè's work and William Agnew Paton's *Picturesque Sicily* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1902) are the only printed sources she mentions. Hamilton also came into contact with other Sicilian ethnographers and folklore scholars indebted to Pitrè and in Montedoro she knew Giovanni Petix, eminent collector of traditions of the village and a close friend of her husband's family. Giovanni Petix (Montedoro 1884-1970) collected a huge amount of information, memories, stories and poems which he gathered in various works, almost all hand-written and unpublished. See his *Memorie e tradizioni di Montedoro*. An Italian orientalist and intellectual, Count Angelo De Gubernatis (1840 - 1913), was the author of various studies on Vedic religion, Indian and Italian literature, as well as a collector of Italian folktales. Evidence of his relationship with Hamilton can be found in a series of letters exchanged between 1881 and 1884. Archive Petix, Montedoro.

⁴⁵ On this topic see Renato Rosaldo, 'From the Door of His Tent: The Fieldworker and the Inquisitor', in *Writing Culture*, pp. 77-97 (p. 96).

the pronoun 'I', and in the proud reporting of her diversity and non-conformism. In keeping with late nineteenth-century travel books, personal narrative and 'objectified' description are interwoven in *Sicilian Ways and Days*. Frequently, the two are not easily distinguishable since description shifts from one to the other continuously. On the whole, however, in Hamilton's book personal narrative occurs frequently and more evidently in the first and second chapters. The opening narrative recounts the author's arrival at Montedoro, a description of her room, her reactions to new customs and her reception by the Sicilian people. These descriptions play the role of visualising the 'authority-giving personal experience of fieldwork'. This personal narrative reappears in the rest of the work, setting up the positioning of the protagonists of the text: the participant-observer, the Sicilians, and the reader. Moreover, sketches of private life do not only reinforce the author's authority as participant, but also work as a further strategy of 'truthfulness'.

On the one hand, the impersonal descriptions are those of an observer fixed in space, looking in and downwards, from a window or a door, upon what is 'other'. On the other hand, the subjective, personal experience is recorded from a moving position already within the middle of things and people, observing and being observed, talking and being talked to.

Hamilton's account is simultaneously told through the voice of the newly arrived foreigner and that of the experienced British resident abroad. Moving between memoir and journal, the narration in *Sicilian Ways and Days* shifts from the past tense (used for remembered events) to the present tense (for referring to facts still happening at the time of writing). The narrator's current life is represented partly through depictions of former days. Both the past and the present come to constitute the ethnographic reality Hamilton wishes to translate and inscribe in her text. It is in this continuity that her authority, as

⁴⁶ Mary Louise Pratt, 'Fieldwork in Common Places', in Writing Culture, pp. 27-50 (p. 32).

well as the ambiguity of her position as a reporter of things Sicilian, lies. Hamilton writes to record and save a portion of her past life, as well as to make sense of the diversity she encounters; in both cases she translates experience into her text. Whether consciously or not, the British woman outsider has acted as the 'custodian of an essence'.⁴⁷

iii.i. Gazing at the inside world

Gazing and looking are interwoven in *Sicilian Ways and Days*. According to E. Ann Kaplan the 'gaze' connotes an active subject versus a passive object, a one-way subjective vision. Sight implies an attempt at rationalizing the Other considered as a threat for the subject's autonomy and security. In order to alleviate anxiety the object is then denied. Conversely, the concept of 'look' denotes curiosity about the 'Other'.⁴⁸

After landing in Sicily and experiencing a first, brusque contact with its inhabitants, Hamilton begins her accounts with some descriptive images of her new house, an enclosed space which is presented to the 'courteous reader' through a cinematographic technique. Her gaze moves over her new surroundings, focusing on its unfamiliar furniture and objects. Then, she begins a detailed description of her bedroom, the inner space where she starts her recording of her Sicilian days:

It was then that my early experience of Sicilian ways came as a surprise to me, as will be seen in the following pages, where I have attempted describing my room such as I found it, what I discovered in it, and what I finally made of it.⁴⁹

She takes possession of it from the first day of her arrival, transforming it into the place where she can read and write without being disturbed. The first piece of furniture to be introduced is her bed:

⁴⁹ Hamilton, p. 22.

⁴⁷ James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', in Writing Culture, pp. 98-121 (p. 113).

⁴⁸ Ann E. Kaplan, Looking for the Other. Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze (New York & London: Routledge, 1997), p. xvi.

On the point of beginning a descriptive journey around my room, I can't exactly tell why I thought it more appropriate to begin by my bed. Is it because I find it as nearly comfortable as anything can be in this uncomfortable house? (...) I appropriated it the day we arrived, guessing, when I saw it, that it was the only bed in the house where I might possibly close my eyes in sweet oblivion of life and its dull cares. ⁵⁰

Once it has become familiar, the bedroom is clearly the space where Louise spends most of her time. It is her shelter, and at the same time a container, a receptacle in which to transform her experiences into writing. In her choice it is also possible to note her attitude towards the people she was living with, and a tendency to isolate herself, maybe because of a social (as well as linguistic) difficulty in communicating with that new world. Her observation of the 'Others' could be said to start immediately outside the door of her room. The rest of that 'uncomfortable house' and the domestic sphere with its people, rustic chaos and irrational 'dreadful states of affairs' throw her into direct contact with Sicilian ways and customs, forcing her to become a participant-observer. However, to shut the native world out she needs only to hide away in her room and retire to her reading and writing. Another room is particularly important for her, as a creative space where visual images of Sicily can be framed and re-produced. It is the food storage room at the top of the house, where fruits from the orchards are laid out, but where Hamilton also works at developing her photographs:

It may strike the reader that a room where fruit and flour are kept is not exactly suitable for an amateur photographer to prepare fixing and toning baths, and fix and dry prints. (...) This room being isolated at the top of the house, I run no risk of being interrupted or bothered during my work.⁵¹

Within the claustrophobic, limiting space of the new domestic sphere, Hamilton needs to differentiate herself from the world around her and explore her identity as an expatriate, a woman and an intellectual. In her new surroundings she manages to find her own space and re-set boundaries between private and public, internal space and the outside world. In this way her personal identity can be re-moulded. At the same time,

⁵⁰ Hamilton, pp. 23-24.

⁵¹ Hamilton, p. 231.

thinking of and describing her new home, the expatriate author can re-conceptualise the meaning of Home, re-imagine its reality and have 'proofs or illusions of stability'.⁵²

iii.ii Looking at the outside world

Like the threshold of a professional ethnographer's tent, the window of Hamilton's room and the door of her house gave her the opportunity to look in another direction: outwards. It is by looking through the window of the room at the 'mixed view it offers' that she can start observing and scrutinising the outside world and the Other. Taking the reader on a journey around the house she stops in front of a window. 'I see' will be rhythmically repeated at various times giving the impression of her camera-like vision moving continuously from things and sites to people and animals:

I see hens stalking about (...). I see my friend *Leone*, the watch-dog (...). I see my other friends, the horses (...). I see an old man dressed in a violet robe (...). I see the poor, tumble down church itself (...). I see, on Sunday mornings, a cluster of the careful ones, those who are afraid to go in, assisting at Mass from the door (...). I see many of the village houses (...).⁵³

From her look-out she can record small details of a 'picturesque' everyday life, mixing her observations with personal thoughts, trying to find an explanation about the others' diversity.

The front of the sitting-room on the ground-floor, the 'casino', with French windows opening onto the square, becomes another of her usual posts of surveillance. While her observation points are mainly represented by the windows, the main door also puts her into physical contact with the village and the people. However, both the window and the door can function as an opening onto the outer world, as well as allow the shutting out of any unwanted contact with the 'Others'. In so doing, the spatial boundaries accompany the social, ethnic, and cultural ones.

⁵³ Hamilton, pp. 40-43.

⁵² See Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969; 1st edn Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), p. 17.

Sitting in a chair in the 'casino' of the Caico family house, Louise is the sole spectator of a 'theatrical setting' consisting of people with 'odd' behaviour and customs. They seem to be there, sometimes acting and playing just for her, sometimes diffident and afraid, at other times bold and confident, conscious of being the object of her attention. In analysing the power/knowledge interplay in Sicilian Ways and Days, Louise's double role of observer must be pointed out: as a British (cosmopolitan) woman she tries to make sense of a foreign culture, both inside the domestic sphere and in the world outside; as the wife of a member of a powerful local family of landowners she attempts to rationalize on a peasant society from a middle-class point of view. However, observing and participating in the life of the 'Others' does not prevent her from falling into the common trend of using some of the stereotypes about Sicily which are so frequent in travel guides and journals.

In a kind of mise-en-abyme, 'theatrical performances' take place before her eyes, as in a Chinese box, like representations-within-the-representation. The Chapter 'A Stabbing Fight' is a good example of this kind of internal reduplication. It reports a 'crime of passion' that happened before Hamilton's eyes and which reminded the author of one of the plays by the Sicilian writer Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), Cavalleria Rusticana, which is a drama of betrayal, jealousy and retribution set in a Sicilian village on Easter morning, some time in the nineteenth century:⁵⁴

Yesterday, towards sunset, the last scene of 'Cavalleria Rusticana' was played in real earnest on the village square, in a terribly sudden fashion, not even lacking the accessories of scenery, costumes, etc. (...) It was an exact reproduction in real life of the cry: 'They have killed compare Turiddu!' which so dramatically ends 'Cavalleria Rusticana' 55

55 Hamilton, pp. 166-167. It is possible that Hamilton refers to the most popular theatrical version of the short story, or even to the opera adapted by the Italian composer Pietro Mascagni in 1890 and praised all over the world. In fact, the dramatic scream heard of stage does not appear in the short story, but only at

the end of the play and the opera.

⁵⁴ The play Cavalleria Rusticana was originally a short story and belongs to Verga's realist new art, generally differentiated from his first late-romantic, bourgeois production. Santuzza falls in love with Turiddu, who still carries on with his old flame Lola, now married to Alfio. At the end, destiny prevails, as Sicilian honour requires Alfio to redeem his honour with the stiletto, and the guilty Turiddu must submit to his fate. Giovanni Verga, 'Cavalleria Rusticana', in Vita dei Campi (Milan: Treves, 1880).

In 'A Stabbing Fight' a set of actions and feelings and their dramatic consequences contribute to build a stereotyped episode. The conventional 'Sicilian passion', jealousy and sense of honour, together with the fiery temperament and the dramatic reactions of the people, seem to confirm those features which characterised the traditional fascination with 'picturesque Southern Italy', involving the watcher's and reader's imagination, anxiety and pleasure:

As for the cause of this dreadful tragedy, if anyone were to ask me for it, I could only answer with the well-known French words: 'Cherchez la femme!' 56

In an intertwining of description and interpretation and, most likely, by association with a well-known fictional episode, Hamilton attempts to convey the reliability of her account of the scene she witnesses. But, at the same time, she paradoxically influences the foreign reader's perceptions and cultural identification, reaffirming a conventional picture of Sicily.

To Hamilton's gaze, the strong Arab influence on the interior part of Sicily could not go unnoticed. This led her to make a series of comparisons and observations spread throughout the whole account. For instance she attempted to identify the characteristics of Montedoro:

Its eastern-looking, low, flat-roofed houses smile in the sunshine, mellowed and beautified by the distance. The background is formed by a chain of lofty mountains, with the Rocca di Sutera and Mount Cammarata, the latter covered with snow, and giving a very good idea of the Jungfrau, of which it has the outline. ⁵⁷

The Oriental setting of the scene is made more likely by the racial characteristics of the dark-skinned villagers with 'Arab-looking faces' and 'sparkling eyes and dazzling teeth', and their manners and passivity acquired after long centuries of 'Muslim idleness'.

For Hamilton the sensation of past centuries is not felt as such in the village since 'the scenery and general ways of Sicilians in the interior of the island are so Eastern that nothing told, thought or done bearing traces from the past jars upon the people as

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⁵⁶ Hamilton, p. 168.

unlikely or out of place'. 58 This representation positions people and things in an eternal, unchangeable past. Hamilton's host culture is 'orientalized', rendered temporally and spatially distant from her target reader.

At times the peasants play on prejudices and expectations of the South. Their make-believe is a further legitimisation of an outburst of the Sicilian ethnocentric ardour. They seem to act and move according to what she expects, reinforcing some received ideas about them. In doing so, they also contribute to make Sicilian customs and manners a cultural-artefact to be consumed by the foreigner. An example can be found in the episode of the visit to a local nobleman:

I asked my companions to tell me about the Baron of Torretta, to whose country-house we were bound, as I knew there were dark stories afloat about him. In breathless, excited whispers they gave me the following details about him (...). The Baron had in those times, out of pure perversity, made friends and associated with brigands, who then infested the country, helping them with his protection and money, and giving them, in hard times, shelter in his own house, where the local police would not have dared to come after them. (...) I was told - as I had vaguely heard already - that this estimable Baron had been arrested and called to account for the disappearance of the various amateur rabbit-shooters who lay buried under the cluster of cypresses near his house.59

Hamilton's expectations, desire for adventure and curiosity, excited by an account which seems to correspond to popular depictions of brigands and the dangerous South, are soon disappointed by a scene which deviates from canonical images. The mysterious baron is simply a:

tall, square-shouldered man, with a short, grizzly beard, black eagle eyes, with a now piercing, now sleepy look in them, and a chocolate-hued complexion. I was disappointed in him. I had expected to see a blood-thirsty villain, and I found instead the usual type of the Sicilian country gentleman.⁶⁰

Although at times counter-representations may help to give alternative pictures of the Other, stereotypes are not dismantled (at least not 'completely'). A first destabilising effect produced by new, alternative information will often be cancelled and clichéd

⁵⁷ Hamilton, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁸ Hamilton, p. 198. 59 Hamilton, pp. 255-257.

⁶⁰ Hamilton, p. 259.

images maintained. In fact, the word 'type' is often used in Hamilton's descriptions. Also, here, the writer is seen to be relying on superficial appearance; her expectations are built upon rumour and stories. Yet, she expects an appearance which will somehow corroborate these fictions. However, throughout the book, two images of 'sicilianity' (a conventional and an unconventional representation) co-exist, contradicting and at the same time supplementing each another.

iv. Beyond the pen

Two main types of documents function as supplementary appendices to Hamilton's book. The first one is photographic documentation, and the second is the English translation of Sicilian folk songs. The numerous pictures in Sicilian Ways and Days were taken by the author with a small-sized Kodak camera 'when the possibility of their being published was not even contemplated.'61 Hamilton's photos can be roughly divided into four groups, as has been done in the translated edition of the book. The first group represents the author's world, with images portraying her room, one of her daughters, her escort and friends, as well as animals and objects belonging to her. These pictures are meant to suggest spatial mastery, ownership and social state, and emphasize the social status and the position of 'insider' gained by the author in the village, for the benefit of the target reader. The second group represents peasants and people of the village with their costumes, spontaneously involved in everyday actions, or posing for Hamilton with diffidence or amusement. The third group is mainly dedicated to landscapes, buildings and the religious ceremonies of Montedoro and the surrounding territory. Finally, another set of photos represents the people at work in the sulphur mines, in the fields and in the village; the pictures illustrating the Chapters 'Harvest'

⁶¹ Hamilton, p. 2.

and 'Sulphur Mines and Miners' are exceptionally important for their documentary value.

In order to claim reliability and truthfulness, other than using linguistic evidence, the author-observer might decide to resort to visual proof, 'to conjure up the appearances of something that was absent'. Thus, illustrations come to play a central role in the perception of places and people. Especially in travel works and related texts, visual images mark an experience as authentic; they confirm that objects, signs and elements have been seen (i.e. buildings, places, customs and physical features of natives). At the same time, any form of visual representation is often less realistic than it seems; it distorts social reality rather than reflecting it. Images can bear witness to what is not put into words, in the sense that the process of distortion is itself evidence of specific phenomena: mentalities, ideologies and identities. In other words, pictures offer evidence of the mental and metaphorical 'image' of the Self or/and of the Other.

Like reading, visual consumption is one of the 'dominant ways in which societies interact with their respective environments', as John Urry points out.⁶⁴ Especially in a modern, capitalist society new visual technologies seem to be the main modes of producing meaning; they invite spectators to interrelate with the rest of the world, often keeping speech and especially written words in the background.⁶⁵

The dialectical relationship of visual images with writing has been at the core of a number of studies, 66 and generally the image-text relation has been seen as

⁶³ Peter Burke, Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), pp. 30-31.

⁶² John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: BBC with Penguin, 1972), p. 10.

John Urry, The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies (London: Sage, 1990), p. 195. See also Carol Crashaw and John Urry, 'Tourism and the Photographic Eye', in Chris Rojek and John Urry, Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 176-95

⁶⁵ See also Walter Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt and translated by Harry Zohn, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 157-202.

⁶⁶ Some relevant examples are Jane M. Rabb, *Literature and Photography: Interactions, 1840-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995) W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), Mario



7. "THE MEN WHO LOOK AFTER OUR PROPERTY." (Page 25.)



"A DISMALLY SMALL, CANARY VELLOW BOX." (Page 29.)

8.



"SANTO GROOMS THE HORSES." (Page 228.)



DONKEY, WITH PANNIERS ON EITHER SIDE. (Page 228.)

10.

9.

Solic I but never higher their objects are verbal reseased which denotes we



11.

problematic.⁶⁷ As Mitchell argues, the text is an intrusion on the image as the verbal – such as labels, anecdotes, quotations – is a substitute for seeing. The text alters the integrity and purity of the visual presence, as the object results in being seen through words. On the other hand, images in texts are generally considered as just supplementary and even superfluous.⁶⁸ Yet, it must be recognized that 'words can "cite", but never "sight" their objects': a verbal representation cannot represent its object in the same way pictures can.⁶⁹ It is clear, then, that in *Sicilian Ways and Days* the relation between visual images and text raises a number of issues, which need to be analysed, in particular, in relation to the genre of the text they are included in, as well as the author's personal and public intention in resorting to iconography.

iv.i Women's visual narratives

Before examining the role and function of photography in *Sicilian Ways and Days*, we need to look at foreign women's significant role in the production of the pictorial records of Italy. Both as producer and consumer, the female author employs visual images as spaces from where she can perform her 'Selves'.

The varied selfhoods of the woman abroad emerge also in her visual representation of the Other. She shifts from an objective, scientific perspective of people and culture (often in the attempt to assimilate herself to masculine values and work), to a valorisation of the female private sphere of knowledge by placing femininity and domesticity at the centre of her images. A 'multi' visual perspective of things and people appears in her iconographic choice and production.

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Praz, Mnemosyne: the Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). Regarding the interactions between Italian literature and photography, see Diego Mormorio, ed., Gli scrittori e la fotografia (Rome: Editori Riuniti/Albatros, 1988).

⁶⁷ As explained by Mitchell, the term image-text designates *relations* of the visual and verbal. Mitchell, p. 89.

⁶⁸ Mitchell, p. 209.

⁶⁹ Mitchell, p. 152.

Exhibitions devoted to landscapes, views and people portrayed during journeys often displayed paintings and drawings by female artists. In the nineteenth century drawing was part of the education of every wealthy young lady. Some of these women already came from artists' families, and those coming from lower-middle-class and working-class families could benefit from some help from public funding for vocational training in design. Always restricted in content and availability, women's artistic practice was constantly influenced by the pressures of gender codes and constraints. Usually relegated to minor genres, women were encouraged to deal with history painting, portraiture, scenes of daily life, and still life. Subjects were meant to be respectable, and style had to respond to typical stereotypes of femininity, such as having an intuitive stance, a delicate touch and kind manners.

Whether amateurs or professionals, women could exploit their artistic skills to record and frame their travel experiences in Britain and abroad. In this way they took part in the production of visual images of 'Others'. For the traveller and painter Margaret Thomas there were only two ways of representing an object or scene:

First, the rapid sketch or record of the impression received, necessarily broad and simple; secondly, the highly-polished work in which all the details have been long and elaborately studied.⁷²

Throughout the nineteenth century to build a general idea of their types of subject matters. See, Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, 8 vols (London: Graves & Co. and Bell & Sons, 1905-06). For various examples of women's works exhibited in England and their subjects, see also appendices VI and VIII in Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France and England, 2 vols (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), vol. II. Typical subjects in women's paintings were: classical scenes and biblical figures, portraits of men, women, and children, animals, love mainly exemplified in myth, history and literature, maternity, mourning and separation, some social themes, as well as British and foreign landscapes and people. In the second half of the century titles were frequently replaced with quotations, often from poems. Yeldham, vol II, pp. 116-173.

⁷¹ Reina Lewis, Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 56-66. See also Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, eds, Women Artists: 1550-1950 (Los Angeles and New York: County Museum of Art and Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 50-58.

Margaret Thomas, Two Years in Palestine & Syria – with Sixteen Illustrations Reproduced in Colours in Facsimile of the Original Painting by the Author (London: John C. Nimmo, 1899), p. 332. Margaret Thomas (c.1843-1929) was a portrait painter, sculptress and writer. Her parents migrated to Australia where she began to study sculpture. Back to England she exhibited from 1868 to 1880, also at the Royal Academy Society of British Artists. She travelled extensively in Italy, Sicily, Spain, Egypt, Syria and Denmark. Some of her various written works are: A Scamper through Spain and Tangier (1892), Denmark, Past and Present (1901), How to Judge Pictures (1906), How to Understand Sculpture (1911).

Like many male artists, some of these female painters trained in Italy where for women, as well as for men, Rome was the chief place to be artistically educated and inspired by antique masterpieces.⁷³ Others just travelled through the peninsula together with their husbands. In fact, it was not uncommon for couples to produce four-handed travel books where the written skills of one were complemented by the other's artistic ability. Examples are Thomas and Anne Mills, Maria and A.W. Callcott,⁷⁴ the Darby Griffiths and the American Pennells.⁷⁵

Stereotyped views of the most picturesque Italian landscapes contributed to strengthening the already existent, fantasized image of the country. These images accompanied the written text, and as the editor wrote in the introduction to the *Journal* by Marianne Colston, in this manner, 'the pencil will supply the deficiencies of the pen, in placing these interesting scenes before the eyes of the reader'. Pictures similar to Colston's can be found in *Sketching Rambles; or, Nature in the Alps and Apennines*

Italian Girl and Roman Woman are two of her paintings inspired by her journey in Italy. See The Dictionary of Australian Artists, Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870 (Melbourne and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Apart from the popular eighteenth-century painter Angelika Kauffman, some examples of nineteenth-century foreign female painters who moved to and studied in Italy – sometimes getting married to Italian men – are the flower painter Marianne North, Susan Isabel Dacre, Annie Swynnerton Robinson, Anna Blunden Martino, Sophie Gengembre, Luisa Starr Canziani, Hannah Palmer and Marie Spartali Stillman. See *The Dictionary of British Artists 1880-1940* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1976), Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler, eds, *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), and Yeldham.

⁷⁴ See for instance Maria Graham, afterwards Callcott, and her *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell' Arena; or Giotto's Chapel, in Padua*, with engravings from drawings by Sir A. W. Callcott (London: T. Brettell, 1835). See Powell.

Callcott (London: T. Brettell, 1835). See Powell.

The Lucinda Darby Griffith, A Journey Across the Desert from Ceylon to Marseilles Comprising Sketches of Aden, the Red Sea, Lower Egypt, Sicily, and Italy, illustrations by George Darby Griffith (London: H. Colburn, 1845), Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell, Our Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, illustrations by Joseph Pennell (T. F. Unwin: London, 1893).

Examples of exhibitions held in England where female artists displayed paintings of Sicily include: in 1907, Lady Victoria Manners, for 'Water-colours of Gardens etc., in England, Italy and Sicily', at Graves' Gallery, and Winifred Russell-Roberts, in 'Biskra and Sicily', at Dowdeswell Gallery; in 1909 Lady Mabel Sowerby, for 'Water-colours of Malta and Sicily' at the Dudley Gallery; in 1913 Mrs Russell Walker, for 'Drawings of gardens etc. in Sicily and Italy, at the Modern Gallery, and Edith Gaddum for 'Water-colours of Italy, the Andaman Isles and Sicily', at Dudley Gallery; in 1914 Miss White-Jervis, for 'Water-colours of Venice, Taormina etc.', at Brook St Art Gallery. For this information I am indebted to Yeldham, vol. II, appendices VI and VIII.

Marianne Colston, Journal of a Tour in France, Switzerland, and Italy, During the Years 1819, 20 and 21, 2 vols (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1822), vol. I, p. x. The book is illustrated with fifty lithographic prints from original drawings by the author taken in Italy, the Alps, and the Pyrenees.

illustrated by twenty views from sketches by the two authors Agnes and Maria E. Catlow. 78 Taken as (female) examples of the vast production of illustrated travel books, these texts show that the aesthetic and referential roles of pictures are dependent on each other; they are used to give visual pleasure to the reader-viewer, and at the same time they supplement the information and the representation provided by the written text. Selected images of monuments, buildings, streets and landscapes put into action a mechanism of association. Through their 'topological analogy' and semantic meaning, the value of commonplaces is amplified so that they are transformed into entities, which signify a whole area, city and site. At the same time, these images become unifying means of communication of the topographic, architectural and anthropological characteristics of the place represented.⁷⁹ In the nineteenth century, illustrations could produce effects of reverie, desire, voyeurism and visual pleasure especially for the (woman) reader-viewer who was not planning to visit the zone or country represented.

In 1820 Elizabeth Frances Batty published her Views of Italian Scenery.⁸⁰ The text is a collection of drawings made three years earlier. They depict historical sites, ruins and popular landscapes in and around Naples and in Northern Italy. The book opens with a quotation from Petrarch. Descriptions of places and buildings were written by a friend of the publisher. Here, is the text which accompanies the illustrations. Pictures provide an idyllic interpretation of Italian sites and landscapes, so that Italy appears as that classical country idealized and romanticized by Northern Europeans. Some images of locals are also included in Batty's drawings. Generally, at the beginning of the century, human figures were not the main subjects of travel pictures; their

⁷⁸ Agnes and Maria E. Catlow, Sketching Rambles; or, Nature in the Alps and Apennines (London: James

Hogg and Sons, 1861).

79 It is worth noticing, as Fusco also stresses in her essay, that the postcard is the main medium which, since the last century, has been transmitting stereotyped images of cities and places in mass visual culture.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Frances Batty, Views of Italian Scenery: from Drawings Made in 1817 (London: Rodwell & Martin, 1820).

presence, often vague, was essentially functional, decorative and used to emphasize the monumentalism of ruins, the dimension of buildings and monuments, the height of arches, ceilings, pillars and doorways, as well as to amplify the grandiosity of natural landscapes and their power and influence on the every day life of human beings. Mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century, portraits of peasants, fishermen, women and girls became quite frequent in women's pictures; titles such as 'Italian flower-girl', 'An Italian Matron', 'Italian Fisherman', 'Roman Contadina', 'An Italian Fruit Girl', 81 show a clear anthropological interest in types and costumes. In particular, the prevalence of female subjects and images of women's everyday life was one of the main characteristics of the work of female artists and, later, continued in photographic images. Generally concepts of femininity and domesticity are manifest in women's representation of the foreign.⁸² For women the main objects of fascination and interest were people, and their effort to focus on and communicate with the Other needed to be shown, not just written down. The emphasis on encounters with locals can be perceived as one of the modes adopted by women to prove their concern about otherness; this is another strategy aimed at asserting female identity in the public sphere. If men were worried about colonisation, occupation and destruction, women could find their space in public – by salvaging, preserving and protecting, and visual images could contribute to rescue what was destined to be annihilated or transformed. Thus, for example, in 1899 on the occasion of a journey to Syria and the Holy Land, Margaret Thomas wrote:

Civilisation at present advances with such rapid steps, and modern improvements are so indispensable to our manner of living, that the changes which centuries have been able to effect a few years now suffice to complete. Before the country is transformed, before the Bedouin is replaced by the European colonist, the camel by the railway, the tent by the suburban villa, and the Khân by the hotel, I propose to endeavour to depict by means of pen and pencil a likeness, as it were, of the Palestine and Syria of to-day, and so far as is possible, from a purely secular point of view. 83

81 Yeldham, vol. II, pp. 172-178.

⁸² See illustrations: 'Remains of the Temple of Nerva' by E.F. Batty and 'Contadine near Bozzolo' by Anne Mills, in Thomas Mills, *Journal of a Tour Made in 1820* (1826 private collection). See plates 12 and 13.

⁸³ Margaret Thomas, Two Years in Palestine & Syria, pp. ix-x. See plate 14.

Thomas reproduced her impressions 'made on the spot', showing a certain nostalgia for the disappearing Other and a marked consciousness of Europe's appropriation and penetration of the Orient. Her assertion shows also a post-Darwinian sense of imminent changes and the belief that painting could fulfil the role of fixing and recording what time, colonialism and the market could destroy. As Thomas herself declared, what she portrayed was essentially an essence and a likeness of what she saw. Rather than constituting an example of 'objective' reportage, her watercolours appear to be a romantic representation of far-away lands, seen through the eyes of a Western observer. This can also be perceived from an examination of watercolours she made during her travels in the Mediterranean.

Margaret Thomas also visited Sicily. A testimony of her journey to the island can be found in *By the Waters of Sicily*, a novel by Norma Lorimer set on the island. ⁸⁴ The book contains a watercolour by Thomas representing the Arabic style church of 'San Giovanni degli Eremiti' in Palermo. Comparing this work with pictures Thomas made in Spain and in the East, it can be argued that the observer retains an Oriental gaze which seems to associate the South of Europe with the Eastern countries she visited. The colours (generally reds and browns) the warm tones and the choice of the subject – the Arabic architecture of the church – appear to offer the spectator the uniform image of an idealized exotic and picturesque Mediterranean to be served, pleasurable and desirable, to a Western/Northern reader-viewer.

Explaining her use of painting in her travel book on Palestine and Syria,

Margaret Thomas stated that:

The writer of a late description may at least hope to act the part of one of those photographs which it is the fashion to superimpose so as to obtain a representative face; in other words to be one of the units which serve to create a correct impression of the

⁸⁴ Norma Lorimer, By the Waters of Sicily (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1901).

scenes described. For this purpose, with sketching materials and note-book in hand I set out on my journey.⁸⁵

At a time when travel photography was already enormously popular, Thomas decided to persist with traditional techniques of visual representation, criticising the unnatural devices that the camera could offer. Isolating 'momentary appearances' photography destroyed the idea that images were 'timeless'. ⁸⁶ For Thomas, then, contrary to the opinion of the masses, depictions of the unknown could be mainly perceived through the brush and the marks of intentionality and subjectivity which traditional art bore. Thomas' point of view raises issues on new visual techniques at the dawn of the twentieth century.

iv. ii Through the lens

In relation to representations aiming to investigate rural and urban working and living conditions, photography claimed to be able to create objective 'scientific' records free from any influence of human imagination, and to offer a neutral reflection of the world. The invention of photography had a dramatic influence on travel (and travel writing) and marked a significant development in the evolution of image-making techniques associated with travelling. As Peter Osborne explains, in the nineteenth century, at a time of European expansion, cameras and travelling became inseparable, cohabiting at the core of the process of modernity. Through visualising mechanisms, the world was 're-staged' and 'space was shown as continuous and unified'. Thus, within

⁸⁶ The camera showed that the notion of time passing was inseparable from the experience of the visual (except in painting). (...) Every drawing or painting that used perspective proposed to the spectator that he was the unique centre of the world. The camera – and more particularly the movie camera – demonstrated that there was no centre. Berger, p.18.

⁸⁵ Thomas, p. x.

⁸⁷ In particular, rejecting the idea of photography as a record of reality and the notion of a documentary tradition, John Tagg argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century – at a time of rapid social change and instability – photography was linked to the emergence of new institutions (such as prisons, schools, asylums, hospitals etc.) and new practices of observation, surveillance and record-keeping. 'What characterised the regime in which photographic evidence emerged, therefore, was a complex administrative and discursive restructuring, turning on a social division between the power and privilege of *producing* and *possessing* and the burden of *being* meaning.' Tagg, pp. 5-6.

the travel text, photography modified the function of painted images imposing order on experience and infusing order with experience; in this way the camera articulated a relationship between identity, space, mobility, market economy and representation.⁸⁸

In relation to travel, photography was essentially a commodity. Through it, sites and people could be recreated, purchased and consumed. According to Benjamin, photography satisfied the 'desire' of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially, removing 'the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction'. 89

Scholars have studied the uses of photography within anthropology, and within the records of colonial travellers implicated in European imperialism. Particular attention has been drawn to the political and ideological implications of photography in defining social types viewed as different or diverse. Becoming popular in the days of the Empire, photography offered to the Western spectator images of native peoples which, far from being transparent and dispassionate, frequently confirmed prevailing views of 'otherness' as primitive, bizarre, barbaric or picturesque. The Victorians attempted to use photography to delineate, record and classify particular 'anthropological types'. Often through a classificatory system based on physiognomic criteria, they attempted to read into the surface of the body the moral character of the people studied, who were seen as representative of racial or social groups. 91

Native people were often asked (and they still are today) to pose for travellers so as to exemplify particular kinds of dress, social roles and material cultures. Before the

⁸⁸ Peter Osborne, Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 3-13. See also John Berger, 'Ways of Remembering', in The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photography, ed. by Jessica Evans (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1977), pp. 38-49.

⁸⁹ Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, pp. 219-253 (p. 225).

⁹⁰ On the context of colonialism, and the interplay between imperialism and gender see Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Photography and Anthropology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988).

Derrick Price, 'Surveyors and surveyed. Photography out and about', in *Photography. A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Liz Wells (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 57-101.

camera, elements of racial stereotypes and ethnic signifiers could often be regulated and organised to construct and fix an aesthetic objectification, to satisfy the photographer's and his/her audience's scopic drive. A sense of exoticism and of the 'primitive' characterized the act of documenting and cataloguing performed by these surveyors, and the European photographers. However, although the photographer was still powerful, and the subjects' gestures and poses were often executed at her/his command, it must be stressed that in travel photographs, subjects frequently concealed and played at concealing their everyday selves. In this way they offered a new series of myths and beliefs about themselves, as well as supporting old ones: self-fashioning is another mode of addressing the observer, 'a structure of bounded desires' and a 'deliberate shaping in the formation and expression of identity'. 93

In Hamilton's pictures, in facing the eccentric foreigner armed with a camera, the villagers reveal and exaggerate their everyday selves. No rejection is shown in most of Hamilton's pictures; affection or interest, rather than force, could guarantee their voluntary submission, establishing reciprocity and an apparent 'equilibrium through exchange'. A passive form of scopophilia takes place in the locals' exhibitionism and their pleasure in being looked at. According to Mary L. Pratt, 'reciprocity', mainly as 'a goal of desire' and 'value', is the dynamic that can organise the foreigner's 'human-centered' and 'interactive narrative'. Nevertheless, the woman photographer possesses an authority over her subjects since their expressions and stances are adopted at her command. Moreover, the parameters of (Northern) European, middle class hegemony

⁹⁶ Pratt, p. 80.

⁹² Kobena Mercer, 'Reading racial fetishism', in *Welcome to the Jungle*, ed. by K. Mercer (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 173-185.

⁹³ Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 1.

⁹⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 80-97.

⁹⁵ See Sigmund Freud, 'Fetishism', in On Sexualities: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, and Other Works, trans. by J. Strachey, ed. by A. Richards. The Pelican Freud Library, vol.7 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977; first published in 1927), pp. 345-357.

are still visible in her patronising attitude towards the locals. As Fabian states, 'the hegemony of the visual as a mode of knowing may thus be directly linked to the political hegemony of an age group, a class, or of one society over another'. Through the photographs and in the act of taking them the author differentiates herself from the 'Others'. Whether in the act of taking pictures or in the act of writing, she is always the 'seeing woman', whose gaze constructs and possesses. Thus it can be asserted that despite their representation as protagonists of the photographs, the subjects are in a certain way depersonalised, made passive, silent; they appear as 'dead' in the photograph and are appropriated through a sort of power/knowledge relationship.

iv.iii Framing and re-producing life

Louise Hamilton's photographs can be compared to those taken by the Sicilian writer Giovanni Verga. 99 Arriving at the end of the century, the extraordinary discovery of photography appears to embody the ideal model of that objective relationship to reality longed for by Positivism. Faces, types, jobs, activities and dresses are immortalized in pictures (as well as in painting and literature) which represent humanity, unchanged by progress. Verga attempted to compose a sequence of images, a sort of sacred iconography, of his immediate world. His family, house, village, friends, servants, *campieri*, and peasants are represented in a substantial number of photographs. Taking pictures using an 'impersonal' perspective, he watched all his characters from above, always from the same point of view, so that they seem the humble components of a

⁹⁷ Fabian, p. 121.

⁹⁸ See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, and the concept of 'anti-conquest': 'the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony. The main protagonist of the anti-conquest is [...] the 'seeing-man', an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse - he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess'. p. 7.

⁹⁹ It seems that Giovanni Verga took his photos between 1878 and 1911, intensifying his hobby as he slowed his writing down. See Salvatore Lupo, 'Un paese del latifondo siciliano. Dalle immagini di Salvatore Trajna', *AFT. Rivista di Storia e Fotografia*, X, 19 (1994), 16-42. See also Andrea Nemiz, *Capuana, Verga, De Roberto fotografi* (Palermo: Edikronos, 1982).

chorus moving according to the same rhythm, expressing themselves through the same ritual cadences.¹⁰⁰

At a first glance the factual or objective basis in Hamilton's pictures seems to present facts in an informational way. But if one considers how and on what authority the record has been made, her photos offer a subjective and limited interpretation, denying the general belief that photography is essentially objective. Firstly, the world fixed in her pictures is made of those aspects and corners of Sicilian life which interested and involved her, intellectually or emotionally. Both Verga's and Hamilton's photographs are projections of their ways of seeing things, their feelings and their manners. Secondly, in Hamilton's pictures the documents' informational value is mediated through the perspective of the person taking the photograph, and in the case of Hamilton this mainly happens through her habit of accompanying her photographs with quotations from her text. While pictures denote the text, and its messages, quotations come to connote and burden these photos, through the author's imagination and feelings. 101 For example, 'To beg for corn for his Convent', 'Washing was going on', or 'Coming up in sad Procession' (this last used for the photograph representing children working in sulphur mines). Hamilton's attempt to create lifelike images reproduces another kind of mise-en-abyme, so that some of her pictures seem to be little 'tableaux vivants'. 102 These photographs become images of an image. Pictures and quotations are part of the text, and the visible images accompany and support her written representation. However, the titles added to the images are explanatory and unavoidably

¹⁰⁰ Vincenzo Consolo, Di qua dal faro (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), p. 135.

Roland Barthes, Image, Music, Text (London: Fontana Press, 1977, p. 25. Consider also Laura Mulvey, Visual and Other Pleasures (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1989), pp. 139-140.
 Roland Barthes, La Chambre Claire: Note sur la Photographie (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 56.

influence the reception of the visual message. Text and image are then interlocked in what Mitchell has called a rhetoric of 'exchange and cooperation'. 103

Hamilton's intention to record Sicilian customs, and to assert her authority as a British woman involved in a 'reliable' recording and preservation process of foreign tradition, can also be noticed in a set of photographs of the Passion on Maundy Thursday procession in the main town of Caltanissetta, near Montedoro:

Let us follow the commemoration in all its details as it begins in the morning with the arrival of about fifteen bands recruited in the principal towns and villages of the Province. (...) The principal event of the Maundy Thursday feast is the procession of the 'Bare' (Stands), as they are called. These 'bare' are large sculptural groups in painted wood of the scenes and historical characters of the Passion and Crucifixion. They are arranged on about fifteen stands which will be taken around the town, each one being carried by the Association or Corporation of miners or other bodies of workers traditionally attached to each stand; a band will follow each stand, playing funeral marches only. ¹⁰⁴

These photographs are gathered in an unpublished account, written in April 1919, which reports this religious festival of Medieval origins and comments on the 'picturesque crowd in holiday attire'. Again, a theatrical scene takes place under Hamilton's eyes: clean-shaven men dressed in sober black, and women wearing fine wedding dresses, moving, quarrelling, talking animatedly, while bands play noisy funeral marches. Hamilton passes from being a detached, passive spectator gazing from a balcony to being part of the 'densely packed population' walking along the streets. She scans the 'Others', and the procession illustrated in a series of pictures is described in detail in the text. There is some measure of recording achieved, but the 'objective' intent doesn't fully succeed in the descriptions and comments accompanying the photographs. This

W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 296-297.

¹⁰⁴ Louise Hamilton Caico, *Maundy Thursday in Sicily*, unpublished, Montedoro (Caltanissetta), 1919. Private Archive Giovanni Petix, Montedoro. Louise Hamilton may have photographed the stands in the town square before the procession began (she could not have taken them during the actual procession as it would have been to dark and she had not the equipment). These photographs, unfortunately, no longer exist.

Hamilton. It also needs to be said that Hamilton Caico describes one stand which had been damaged dramatically by fire before date 1911, and was no longer a part of the procession. On the other hand, she does not include another stand. It is not clear, then, whether she took these pictures before 1919, or she used photographs by somebody else, or she used photographs from an old local text.

account was never to be published, either in London or in Sicily, and it is difficult to know the exact purpose for which it was written. However, although offering a limited representation of the event (where only peasants and miners are named), the work can be interpreted as another partial attempt at making sense of the new and unfamiliar, as well as a possible contribution to making these traditions known abroad. This text, like *Sicilian Ways and Days*, is Hamilton's interpretation of the real, while the photographs are her attempt at 'imprisoning reality' for herself and for others.¹⁰⁶

Everyday life is framed in Hamilton's visual representations, although she renders it as distant to the eyes of the reader-viewer. Moreover, the foreign photographer is part of that everyday existence portrayed in her pictures. Travel photographs are seen at home (the point of departure and return), after the conclusion of a journey. They are generally meant to evoke past moments and experiences lived in a place which is geographically distant from home. Going through photographs taken abroad, the travelled-viewer recalls (with nostalgia or regret) fragments of a past reality which has got a tenuous relationship to the present, and s/he can position him/herself in opposition to an Other left behind. In this way travel photographs mark an absence. By contrast Hamilton's photographs are developed and seen in the place and with the people she portrays. Although she differentiates herself from the 'Others', they are still part of a present reality she has to face.

iv.iv Women and photography: snapshots of self-discovery

Women travellers also actively contributed to the increasing success of photography, either recycling photographic images from travel and family albums, guide books and journals, or by taking pictures themselves.

¹⁰⁶ Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Farrar, 1978), p. 163.

In By the Waters of Sicily – a hybrid text between travel journal and novel, autobiographical writing and fiction, 'romantic' exoticization and 'ethnographic' report - Norma Lorimer narrates a sentimental story set in Sicily. In the book the main protagonists are British travellers residing in a hotel in Syracuse. Lorimer's work and its illustrations raise various issues on the relationship between writing and photography, as well as on the use of photography itself. For her book Lorimer used various photographic pictures of Sicily by different artists; through them the author allowed her (mainly female) readers to identify details (things, people or places) mentioned in the narrative. The northern European characters remain the main protagonists of the whole written account. At the same time, the iconography frames only Sicilian figures and features, putting them at the core of the visual narration which, in this way, automatically becomes a sort of cultural report. Lorimer used photographs which were meant to be used in a context different from the framework of her text. The pictures were taken by different photographers (whose identities are on the whole unknown). 107 Appearing in Lorimer's book they were detached from the album, book or series of postcards which they originally belonged to. Photographs easily lend themselves to uses which are relatively independent from the photographers' intentions. The reason for this is to be sought in the fact that whenever images are taken out of their context, they are automatically separated from their meaning. 108 Furthermore, a 'unique experience' is reproduced in multiple copies. Techniques of reproduction detach the reproduced object from its traditional domain, and producers, distributors and viewers recast the object into different situations and contexts. In an epoch of serial reproduction the camera satisfies the desire for signs of the 'real'; at the same time the camera takes part in the proliferation and overproduction of these signs. In this way the image reproduced

Only the watercolour by Margaret Thomas carries the artist's name, and a photograph of a 'little cave maiden' can be identified as a work by the German photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden. See plates 16 and 17.

becomes its own simulacrum.¹⁰⁹ Yet, other 'markers' are attached to these images; these are titles, captions, labels and brief quotations. Other examples are the photographs, not taken by the author, in Isabel Emerson, *Things Seen in Sicily*; the author adds her own explanations to photographs taken by others, usually agencies and press services.¹¹⁰ While pictures denote the text and its messages, words – generally included below the image – come to connote and burden illustrations, not only through the author's imagination and feelings,¹¹¹ but often also through editorial choices.

Lorimer's book is one of the many travel texts which use written or visual material by other authors. In this way, the same gaze is adopted, imitated and promoted by various foreign observers. A repeated reference to this same kind of representation lends credibility to and reinforces interpretations of Sicily offered in texts by outsiders. 'Reality' is bestowed upon the visual representation through citation and by providing people with images others believe in. Most of the iconographic repertoire used by foreigners in their works was already part of the Sicilian cultural 'archive'. In this way both foreign and source culture collaborate in the perpetuation of canonical representations of Sicily, and persistently support a fragmented and incomplete picture of it. The visual objectification of a place happens both in the act of producing photographs and in that of distributing them. Furthermore, objectification continues through the re-appropriation of images and the negotiation of their meaning. 112 Viewers/readers/authors continuously reassemble others' (written and visual)

108 Berger, 'Ways of Remembering', p. 44.

See Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*, and Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. by Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983).

¹¹⁰ Isabel Emerson, *Things Seen in Sicily* (London: Seeley Service & Co, 1929). For instance, see plate 18.

Barthes, Image, Music, Text, p. 25.

As stated by De Certeau, viewers of popular culture can 'inhabit' a text and make it their own by negotiating meaning through it, and creating new cultural products in response to it: 'everyday life invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways on the property of others' Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. xii and xxi.

representations, struggling for their possession, over their potential significance and the artist's intention.

For Hamilton the camera offered an opportunity to step outside the domestic sphere and to distinguish herself from the local women. In the second half of the nineteenth century a significant number of women also began to practise photography. Generally belonging to the upper classes, they were aware of the novelty and potential of photography as a means to record and describe family life and everyday events. Eventually, cutting across strict class boundaries, photography also started to be practised by a considerable number of middle-class women. For most of them the camera offered opportunities outside the domestic sphere, allowing them to move into documentary reportage. 113 Together travel and photography offered women opportunities to step out of the house, although, even in their ethnographic reports, it can be argued that the majority of their subjects remained essentially linked to contexts of domesticity and femininity. Examples of this trend can be found in Sunny Sicily, by Ethel Brilliana Tweedie. 114 and By-Paths in Sicily, by Eliza Putnam Heaton. 115 Both travel books were produced by women visiting Sicily at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in both texts the authors included pictures taken by themselves. Analysing their works, it is striking to notice the presence of numerous illustrations with female subjects, children, dwellings, courtyards, doors and windows. The eye and 'I' of the woman traveller emerge also in the iconographic representation. Although generalisations should not be made too lightly, it appears that women notice and depict 'those aspects of human existence that life had trained them to observe: manners, food,

¹¹³ Williams, pp. 11-18.

Ethel Brilliana Alec-Tweedie, Sunny Sicily. Its Rustics and its Ruins (London: Hutchinson and co., 1904). See plates 19 and 20.

Eliza Putnam Heaton, *By-Paths in Sicily* (New York: E.P. Dutton & co., 1920). The author visited Sicily for health reason a dozen years before the publication of her book. There she started studying peasant life. See plates 21 and 22.

family life, fashions'. 116 It is no coincidence then, that all the photographs of ruins, historic sites, churches and works of arts included in Tweedie's book were taken by a male photographer, as opposed to her own photographs of more domestic subjects.

Unlike the inaccessible, mysterious harems and zenanas of the East, the Sicilian world revealed by such foreign women was a world accessible to a foreign male gaze, but nonetheless neglected in its quotidian nature. Women, on the other hand, emphasized everyday existence in their representations, although they portrayed it as distant. Neither did Louise Hamilton see Sicily as the 'Archaelogical Museum of Europe', or as a book illustrating past glories found in sites and relics scattered around the island, and needing photographic evidence. She searched for testimonies of the past in people, tradition and folk customs.

Images of the Other are always places for both identification and differentiation. In particular, power, which is constituted in the procedures and techniques of (photographic) observation, 'establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them'. Frozen in time and space this kind of representation, like others of the Orient, favours and produces a 'discursive form of racial and cultural opposition', so that power can be exercised.

While general portraits of locals wearing traditional costumes showed a certain anthropological interest and emphasized exoticism as well as assumptions about race and cultural distance, images of the private and public lives of local women could often be particularly ambiguous. As Reina Lewis states 'the careful preservation of a certain superiority and distance is complicated for women by points of possible contact and

Nancy A. Walker, 'Stepping Out: Writing Women's Travel', Adl. Annali d'Italianistica, 4, 1996, pp. 145-151 (p. 146).

Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 184-185. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 78.

According to Bhabha: 'the body is always simultaneously (if conflictually) inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power.' p.67.

disassociation'. 119 Written descriptions and above all iconography of Sicilian women's spaces (house, yard, threshold) and life (wedding, children, housework), could be seen as both the familiar ground of femininity and, at the same time, the mark of immutable female Southern otherness. The photographer's objects remain simultaneously same and other, both a source of female sympathy and separation: she is still the emancipated Northern traveller with a powerful camera in her hands, while her subject remains the constrained Southern woman, limited within patriarchal social codes. The photographer projects her identity (that of a Northern European, upper-class, female foreigner in Sicily) onto the outside world, and on her subjects in particular. Thus, the Other, embodied in the models, is not only essential to the constitution of the Self of the observer as subject (as her culture and class are set in contrast to the poor Sicilian villagers), but also to her gender identity. The 'look from the place of the other', as Lacan calls it, allows the photographer to recognize herself in the Other (while at the same time distancing herself from it), looking for fusion and unity against the effect of dissolution. 120 The domestic sphere represented in these photographs, works as a strategy to reconstruct and protect the author's ego from fragmentation. What can be stressed is then the coexistence of the Self and the Other in photographs. Although they claim objectivity and 'faithful' representation of reality, pictures hold the photographer's 'I' in their images. Thus a photograph is a form of self-discovery and self-portrait even if it portrays other people and claims objectivity and selfeffacement. 121 Through the camera's eye, the author not only constitutes the Other as an object, but can also constitute herself as an object to be looked at.

As already said, Hamilton took photographs of her Sicilian house and rooms.

Generally it can be asserted that photographs of houses and possessions distinguish texts

¹¹⁹ Lewis, p. 147.

Jacques, Lacan, 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I', in *Écrits: A Selection*, 1977, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 1-7.

by expatriates from those by travellers: they express the need for public admiration of the status and the condition of insider acquired in the host country. By including these pictures in her book the female expatriate makes it possible for the reader to visualize the domestic space where part of her new life is led, and where the writing takes place. Moreover, such visual domesticity and femininity valorise a private sphere which evolves not only from a female personal experience but also from her non-conformity (settling down in a foreign country and managing a residence).

A recent example can be found in *A House in Sicily* by the English expatriate Daphne Phelps. 122 Published in England in 1999 with a preface by the historian Denis Mack Smith, the book gathers Phelps' 'few autobiographical sketches' of her fifty years in Taormina where she resided in an impressive house, Casa Cuseni, inherited by chance from an English relative. Like the houses of other foreigners resident in Sicily (for instance like those of the Whitakers or the photographer von Gloeden), Phelps' house was the reference point of numerous travellers visiting the island. She actually registered Casa Cuseni as a lodging house where students, professors, artists and directors of national art galleries were hosted. Although, as Mack Smith sympathetically declares, the author 'acquired a deep affection for the country and its people', Phelps does not hide a certain sarcasm and condescending attitude towards the locals.

In Phelps' book the house is the main 'protagonist'. In it, interesting meetings occur (Bertrand Russell, Tennessee Williams, Caitlin Thomas and Roald Dahl are some of Phelps' most prominent guests), but the narrator-author clearly remains centre-stage in the whole account. Phelps maintains at a safe distance the most intimate sides of her life and, at the same time, manages to maintain the position of principal character through the whole narration, as well as in the illustrations included in the book. She is

¹²¹ Sontag, pp. 122-123.

Daphne Phelps, A House in Sicily (London: Virago Press, 1999). See plates 23 and 24.

actually the linchpin of that fraction of Sicilian life described in her text: locals, visitors and events rotate around her figure, which, unlike those of other foreigners mentioned in the book, relies on the fixed, stable reference point of the house. The photographs selected for the text portray the author and people surrounding her and her possessions. Among the subjects of the photographs are some of the visitors who stayed in the villa, as well as images of Phelps with local friends and helpers, pictures of her visits to places in Taormina, and, above all, images of the garden and the inside of the large house. As in the case of Hamilton's photographs these pictures suggest spatial mastery, belonging, ownership and social state. ¹²³ In Phelps' book photographs of the house gaze inwards at a privatised domestic realm, while the outside world is often described as chaotic and exotic. The unifying element of these two spheres is the presence of the foreign travellers who visit the popular Sicilian resort of Taormina and relax in the house. However, contrary to Hamilton's account there is no ethnographic intention in Phelps' book, apart from that of an ethnography of the Self.

Apart from photographs of her room, her horse and other objects, in *Sicilian Ways and Days* Hamilton included a picture of herself riding with her escort in the Sicilian countryside. Relevant examples of this sort of self-representation can be found in early twentieth-century travel texts, where in snapshots the traveller appears next to local people and objects, and posing in front of visited sites. For example, in 1911, after a journey to Sicily with some male and female friends, the Scottish Margaret Philip published her *Sicily in Spring*. ¹²⁴ In Philip's book, sites and things Sicilian were frozen in photographs probably taken by one of her fellow travellers. In some photographs, the tourists put themselves on display. Sicilian sites become spaces in which to be seen, and the foreign visitors wish to be the protagonists of their own performances and self-

¹²³ Julia Hirsch, Family Photographs: Content, Meaning and Effect (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 51-52.

¹²⁴ Margaret Philip, Sicily in Spring (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hanson & co., 1911). See plate 25.

representation. 125 Through this kind of visual self-depiction, the other side of the Freudian scopic drive – exhibitionism¹²⁶ – is manifested in the author; she objectifies and fantasizes about herself, as she does with her subjects. Self-portraits – as well as travelling in itself – then express self-definition and self-exploration. Victorian and Edwardian class and culture, as well as gender identity, coexist in travel pictures like the ones included in Philip's book. These photographs portray the social status and the Northern culture of the individual, or the group to which the traveller belonged; they also portray the authors as they wished to be seen and as they chose to show themselves to one another, and to external viewers. Photographs then conveyed the 'self-image of the middle class across all space under its mastery and across time by inscribing it into the history they were themselves making'. 127 These middle-class photographic portraits taken during a journey abroad, mediate between the private and the public. Similarly to photographic portraits taken in a studio, these pictures standardized their subjects' manners, dress, postures and expressions, becoming images of Self and simultaneously an advertisement for a whole social group. 128 Moreover, the British woman traveller resorts to visual means to assert openly her authority as a reliable reporter, as she also does with her writing. By appearing in photographs she produces a public Self in order to prove her presence in the place described and, at the same time, to claim a space in the genre of travel writing (or in the genre of ethnography, as in the case of Sicilian Ways and Days). 129

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¹²⁵ Osborne, p. 92.

¹²⁶ See Freud, pp. 345-357.

¹²⁷ Osborne, p. 57.

Osborne, pp. 55-56. For a comprehensive study of Victorian portraits see Audrey Linkman, *The Victorians: Photographic Portraits* (London and New York: Tauris Parke Books, 1993).

It can also be argued that group photographs with male presences had to be taken in order to demonstrate the female author did not travel on her own as – according to the conventions of the time – it was expected from a lady.

iv.v The undeletable past

Louise Hamilton's photographs can also be analysed in relation to contemporary visual images of Sicily by foreign women. Such a comparative approach can demonstrate how every contemporary visual image of a culture is a reply to and a negotiation of previous ones; contemporary pictures re-visit an undeletable past in relation to a modern context. Today's illustrated representation of Sicily is actually a re-production and representation of the past in different formats.

In the nineteenth century representation was a form of knowledge whose aim — as also expressed by Positivism — was that of controlling and appropriating nature. By contrast, in the twentieth century, representation takes part in a perpetual mass consumption system. Representation does not aim to provide knowledge about objects in the world, but rather seeks to satisfy the drive for consumption. At the same time, Casey Blanton notices that the most persistent characteristic of late-twentieth-century travel writing is the refusal of the authors to admit to knowing anything for sure: 'there is a mood of off-centeredness in the books of these writers, as if, through the experiences of travel, certainties have been displaced and made as strange as the land through which the writers journey'. The result is not a smooth narrative professing to provide the truth about another culture, but rather, a more evident crossing of the border

The core of positivism is its definition of 'real world'. Science – as opposed to religion and metaphysics – is the highest form of knowledge of the positive (that is the real world), which can be achieved through the accumulation of observed appearances. Consequently, the world is seen as a collection of individual bits of data – facts – to be unearthed, assembled and organized. This observation must be impartial, objective (knowledge must be independent of the social status or political beliefs of the knower) and uncontaminated by theory. Don Slater, 'The Object of Photography', in *The Camerawork Essays*, pp. 88-117 (pp. 97-98).

The photograph today is a verb, it is about events, action, movement, about the transportation of insubstantial realities across time. We look to the photograph not for knowledge of an object, nor even the magical presence of an object, but for outlines of a story, for some chain of events outside the frame which could give some sense to the arbitrary collection of things, meaningless in themselves, assembled on paper'. Slater, p. 102.

between fact and fiction.¹³² Both narration and visual images clearly lose the aura of 'objectivity' insistently claimed by nineteenth-century travel writing. What can also be noted is that in twentieth-century (women's) travel books – and patently in contemporary texts – the author's Self creeps behind accounts of people and places with more awareness and self-confidence than in earlier works. Moreover, re-allocating the narrative from an external to an internal journey, the (post)modern travel writer seeks to offer new perspectives on worlds already known and explored through previous texts and, above all, by the media. In this way the author/narrator/protagonist stands definitely more visible in the text than the nineteenth-century author does.¹³³

Susan Caperna Lloyd's *No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily*¹³⁴ is a text which, relying on the topos of travel, publicly asserts the author's intent of self-discovery. In fact, Caperna's work, published in the United States, is included in the Mercury House's series on *Spirituality and Women's Studies*. Caperna's book contains some old family photographs and others, taken by the author herself, representing Sicilian traditions.

Unlike Hamilton's pictures in *Sicilian Ways and Days* in Caperna's book photography fulfils its function of capturing and representing an existential and spiritual quest. In this way the author's attempt at intersecting writing with visual images goes beyond a simple illustrative and reportage purpose. The Sicilian Easter Week provides Caperna with 'the interesting and colourful story material' she was looking for as writer and photographer. At the same time, an artistic, pictorial intent can be observed in her images which seem to stress her professional involvement with photographic

135 Caperna Lloyd, p. 6.

¹³² Casey Blanton, Travel Writing: the Self and the World (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), pp. 95-96.

See Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 24.

¹³⁴ Susan Caperna Lloyd, No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1992).

practice. Images of the religious procession of the Mysteries in the town of Trapani, and snapshots showing Catholic devotion to the Black Madonna (statues, churches and icons) are inserted in the text together with fragments of 'Sicilian' everyday life in which portraits of women predominate. At other times, the author's point of view on Sicily is offered to the reader-viewer through the choice of ambiguous subjects, such as a pair of dishevelled, old fashion female dummies in a shop window, or the broken arm of a crucifix seen in a local house. Especially in these pictures, a mystic effect is stressed while the photographer attempts to convey realism. The confusion these pictures may provoke when separated from the text is due to the fact that the viewer does not perceive what the actual intention of the photographs is. ¹³⁶ It is essentially within the book that Caperna's photographs acquire a 'legibility' which also limits their infinite meanings. It can be argued that in the text they do not really illustrate what is described in words, but rather extend the author's representation of the Other and the Self presenting further artistic perspectives of things and people seen. ¹³⁷

Within the text, photographs 'alter and enlarge' the viewers' 'notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe'. Caperna's photographs accomplish this task by subverting the idea of what is aesthetically presentable and by denying the sense of determinacy, wholeness as well as the idea of knowledge usually provided by nineteenth-century iconography of Sicilian customs. In line with the postmodern trend, Caperna's pictures frame fragmentation and then indeterminacy. Their ambiguity affects knowledge of Sicilian culture. As a consequence, rather than 'knowing' about Sicily the viewer is given the photographer's sense of displacement and rupture. In Hamilton's ethnographic photographs there was no hidden, second meaning. Her kind of images were meant to make other people know about that

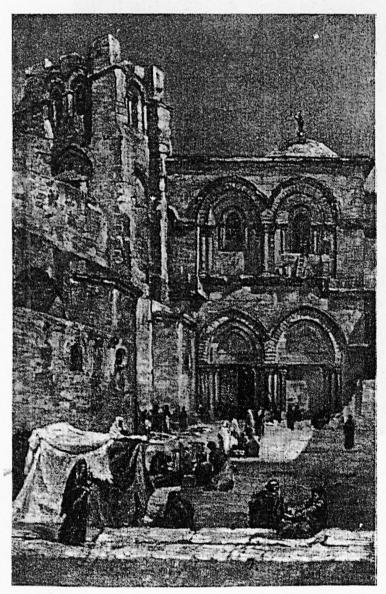
 ¹³⁶ See Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990; 1st edn, Les Editions de Minuit: Paris, 1965), p. 92.
 ¹³⁷ Sontag, p. 77.



REMAINS OF THE TENTLE OF MERNA.



13.



14.



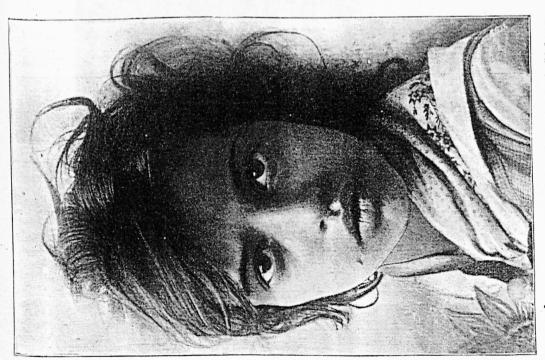
S. GIOVANNI DEI EREMITI.

The Palermo Monastery founded by Gregory the Great.

(From an oil painting by Margaret Thomas)



". One old woman, with her head encased in a fine yellow kerchief." [See β , 97.

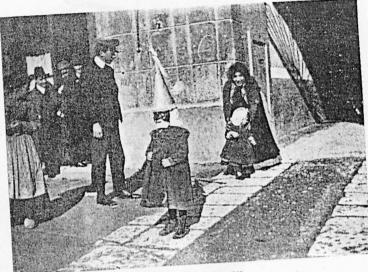


"One little cave maiden , , , had brought Doris a hunch of wild flowers as a parting gift."



A TOMB-DWELLING AT SYRACUSE

The goatherd, his family and live stock, all live happily in this rock-hewn Greek tomb, undisturbed by the ghosts of its former occupants.



19.

THE CARNIVAL BABY

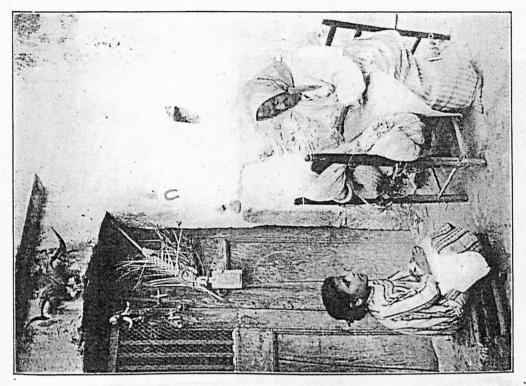


Photo by the Author

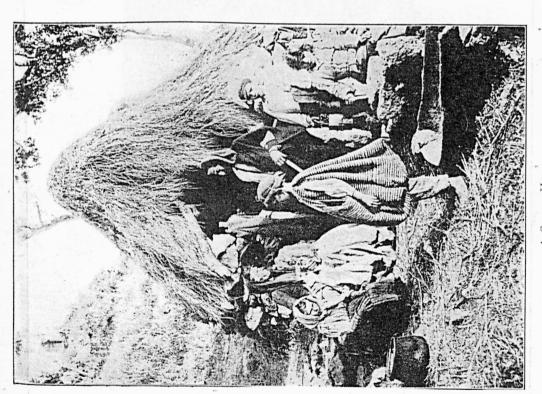
A SICILIAN FARM-HAND'S HOME, MADE OF LAVA LIKE A WIGWAM

Doorway three feet high

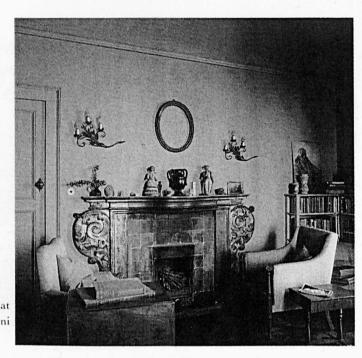
Facing p. 366



DOOR CHARMS FOR EVIL EYE



A STRAW HUT

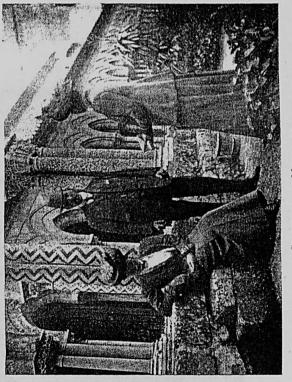


The *valotto* at Casa Cuseni **23.**

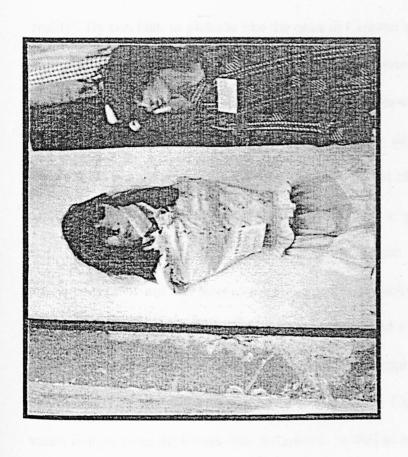


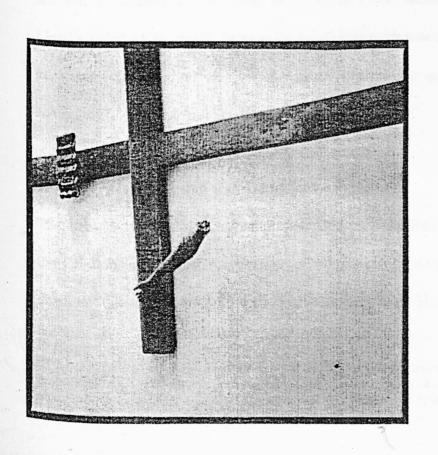
Daphne in the garden at Casa Cuseni

24.



CLOISTERS AT MONREALE





'reality'. By contrast, in pictures like the ones in Caperna's book, the referent seems to be neglected and the viewer is given an inconsistent image to consume and fill with various meanings. 139 At the same time, Caperna's photographs need to be read in relation to nineteenth-century pictures. Contemporary depiction of culture seems to reply to past images apparently diverging from them, but essentially revisiting and often appropriating them. Moreover, the recognition of a photograph is achieved by classification within a genre, and the different genres are defined primarily with reference to their use and their users. It is from its participation within a genre that the purpose of a photograph stems. The puzzlement caused by some of Caperna's images reveals an uncertainty concerning the genre (ethnographic, travel, pictorial, private photographs) to which they are thought to belong. In Caperna's book, both text and visual images cross the border between genres, as well as between fact and imagination, reality and personal perception of Sicily, representation of the Other and personal realization. It can be argued that visual representations in No Pictures in My Grave, do not aim to 'understand' the Other as Hamilton's text aimed to. Texts like Caperna Lloyd's rather try to satisfy the urge for consumption by means of a written and, above all, visual interpretation of Sicily which emphasizes the author's authobiographical stance, together with a 'publicisation' of her Self.

v. Transcribing and translating life

The second type of documentation included in Hamilton's book consists of the transcription and English translations of religious folk songs of Montedoro handed down through oral memory from generation to generation. In this way, Louise Hamilton

¹³⁸ Sontag, p. 3.

As Slater observes, in the twentieth-century 'capitalism became increasingly driven by the need to produce *not* more referents or signifieds (neither objects nor conceptual systems) for consumption, but more and more *signifiers* – visible rallying points for fantasy and "consumer investment" (...) This

moves in her routine of data collection from inscription to transcriptions of texts, from the oral/aural mode to writing. Here the authority of a reliable inscriber of a culture clearly relies on first hand informers. The first attempt to bring ancient, authentic words into a fixed, written text is her recording of the Lenten dirges, the *lamenti*:

Being anxious to become acquainted with the words of these Lenten lamentations, I had the old man who always takes the lead in them brought to me, and during a lengthy interview, and with much difficulty, I was able to transcribe the following verses, which, he said had never been printed, but had been transmitted from father to son for many generations.¹⁴⁰

Her social position, foreignness and education, as well as the prestigious act of writing confer on her authority to demand attention from locals, as it can be noticed from her imperative formulation. She transcribes and then translates the verses from a mixture of Latin, Sicilian dialect and Italian, into English. In so doing, she transforms the 'original', which has been already manipulated through many changes coming down orally from generation to generation. Her translation is a further manipulation of the original Sicilian text which is asked to function 'in the service of power' in the author's country of origin. A second example is that of a rambling old Christmas song of nine stanzas, the *novena*, 'very much in the style of the old Christmas carols sung in England':

I naturally became anxious to know the words of the *novena*, and was able to make a woman dictate them to me one day. I was all the more eager to have these words, knowing that, as a rule, these popular songs on religious subjects have been composed in Sicilian dialect by illiterate poets, generally by one of those improvisers who abound amongst Sicilians of the lower classes.¹⁴²

Again, she translates the songs into English not without realizing the difficulty of her undertaking:

I will now endeavour to give the words of the *novena* in English, though Sicilian dialect is still more difficult to translate than Italian, for there are many special expressions and

¹⁴² Hamilton, p. 197.

production of signifiers is not characterized by coalescence around a stable system of solid objects, but flexibility, re-arrangeability, looseness'. Slater, p. 105-106.

¹⁴⁰ Hamilton, Sicilian Ways and Days, p. 74.

¹⁴¹ André Lefevere, ed., Translation/History/Culture, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. xi.

diminutives which have no equivalent in any other language, and sometimes a word, containing a world of colouring becomes almost meaningless when translated. 143

Hamilton transcribes the *novena* in stanzas of six verses each, covering almost eighteen pages of her book. In the Chapter 'Harvest' she translates some thanksgiving harvest litanies, declaring at the end:

English translation is unable to render the poetic turn of this strange litany, where invocations to the saints are mixed with exhortations to the mules, a charming touch of ingenuity appearing in every line, whilst now and then an elementary rhyme or assonance pleases the ear.¹⁴⁴

On this occasion, again, she strategically confesses the difficulty of her task. The effect of her statement is a strengthening of her authority as a reliable witness (she really saw and heard the litanies) and trustworthy *connoisseuse* of things Sicilian (she understood the verses and tone of the litanies); and as such, she is expert enough to recognize the impossibility of giving the same original effect in translation.

Inscription, transcription and then translation or adaptation are combined in order to interpret and come to terms with a foreign culture, society and language. Moreover, Hamilton feels the necessity to protect 'an essence', recording expressions of that society in writing. Collective memory risks being lost in time and space, but can be saved in the text. However, for the modern critic, this 'bringing a culture into writing' implies a rescue as well as an evident, irretrievable loss, a 'death in life'. In Hamilton's text this loss is made more evident by the fact that she does not report the Sicilian version at all next to her translation. Moreover, she translates culture twice: firstly through her transcription of experience from oral/aural into writing, and then through her linguistic translation from the Sicilian dialect, or mixed language, into English.

¹⁴⁴ Hamilton, pp. 127-128.

¹⁴³ Hamilton, p. 198.

See, James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', in Writing Culture, pp. 98-121.

These strategies aimed at 'preserving' the Other's traditions were often used by Hamilton, not only in her works reporting life in Sicily. In 1913, a few years after the publication of *Sicilian Ways and Days*, her adaptation of *The Roman Campagna* by Arnaldo Cervesato was published in London. In this work, Hamilton, together with the writer Mary Dove, intends to give a picture of absorbing interest of the 'Latin Land' of whose conditions of life even the Italians were ignorant. In the 'Note by the translator', the two translators clearly point out that their intention is to make the foreign reader confront another aspect of the Italian culture through a process of adaptation: 146

This English edition does not profess to be a literal translation of the Italian book. Under the supervision of the author some passages specially addressed to Italian readers have been cut out. Others which might have been obscure to foreign readers have been slightly amplified, and the aim has always been to present the author's ideas rather than his actual words. 147

v.i The Other's voice and digging into the past

Another kind of transcription present in *Sicilian Ways and Days* is that of dialogues. The main voice is that of Alessandro Augello, the *soprastante*, the private rural guard of the Caico family:

(...) my friend Alessandro thin, tall, close-shaven, very like Dante's portraits. He is a most intellectual talker, for he has read a good deal, and continually quotes the Italian classics, which he knows by heart.¹⁴⁸

For the author, he is the voice of the village and of all the area around it: 'general informer of local customs' and 'usual elucidator of things incomprehensible'. 149

Alessandro is Louise's shadow throughout the whole work. He is firstly an object, an instrument of inquiry, and confers authenticity and verisimilitude on the

¹⁴⁹ Hamilton, pp. 47-48.

¹⁴⁶ 'Note by the translator', in Arnaldo Cervesato, *The Roman Campagna*, trans. by Louise Caico and Mary Dove (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1913), p. 11.

Louise Hamilton and Mary Dove, 'Note by the translator', in *The Roman Campagna*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ Hamilton, Sicilian Ways and Days, p. 109.

account.¹⁵⁰ Hamilton asks her guide questions and reports his answers in direct speech, and together they are the joint protagonists of the book. Furthermore, Alessandro is also involved in the process of transcription, for instance when he dictates to Louise the verses of thanksgiving harvest litanies already mentioned:

Delighted with this charming pagan custom of mingling worship with work, I asked Alessandro to dictate to me the invocation or litanies chanted by the threshing men, and with a little prompting from them he dictated the following verses in Sicilian dialect, making me first write out the title.¹⁵¹

Alessandro has a double function, because he is not only an informant but also an intermediary between the difficult Sicilian world and the English woman. In fact, it is also through him that the author, eventually, succeeds in accepting the alien, difficult culture of the island where she will live till her death. There are other, minor voices in the book, those of peasants, priests and servants to whom Hamilton addresses herself in order to satisfy her lively foreigner's curiosity.

A final strategy to assert the authority of committed participant-observer in Sicilian Ways and Days is Louise Hamilton's historical search for past Sicilian traditions. Quoting William Agnew Paton, Louise realizes how 'the more one studies the mythology of ancient Trinacria, the more firmly he becomes convinced that the early Christian Fathers founded many ceremonies upon pagan rites which inspired the devotion of the Greeks and the Romans'. Hamilton points out that the poetic custom of blessing the harvest goes back to an old Roman custom, when the *frati Arvali campestres sacerdotes* 'offered sacrifices for the welfare of agriculture'. At other times, Hamilton tries to look for the ethnological meanings of dialectal terms and expressions. For example, in the chapter 'Funeral Customs', she mentions the dialect word *conzu*, a dinner that friends and relatives offer to the deceased's family, and in the

¹⁵⁰ See Michael Cronin, Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), p. 72.

¹⁵¹ Hamilton, p. 127.

¹⁵² Hamilton, p. xv.

'Foreword' she tries to give it a linguistic explanation, which partially coincides with that of Giuseppe Pitrè, as she tries to add another possible meaning to the Sicilian term: 154

We do not think this is an atavic remnant of the banquets which the Romans held by the side of the tombs, mentioned by Cicero, but rather a charitable intention of enabling the family to take food in a time of trouble, when it might be unseemly as well as inconvenient to think about meals.

And the name they give at Montedoro to this meal - the *conzu*, called at Palermo *cunsòlu* - may originate from the verb *consolare*, to console; or, better still, from the Sicilian verb *cunzari*, to set or lay out anything, the dinner-table especially.¹⁵⁵

It is clear that Hamilton still understands the present through the past, although, as mentioned earlier, the Victorian aestheticisation of Hellenism which made Sicily part of an imaginary space identified with an eternal past, can hardly be noticed in Hamilton's researching on the history of Sicily. Through a scientific voice and means (such as photography) Hamilton shapes Sicilian traditions and customs into historical and cultural artefacts; she displays, interprets and explains them according to her personal scheme of selection, classification and representation. In this way, the documents she presents to the target (home) reader are signifying structures which mark otherness and, at the same time, function as evidence of her long-term experience.

vi. Fragments of ego

Personal narrative is a component of ethnographies. In Louise Hamilton's work it turns up frequently, although the author avoids any clear reference to her family in Sicily. The work by Pitrè, on the other hand, is an example of ethnographic text which, although it falls within the typical parameters of ethnographic accounts, tends to be based essentially on scientific authority; it relegates the personal element to the preface

¹⁵³ Hamilton, p. xiii.

Hamilton, p. xiii. Cf. Pitrè, II, p. 228.

¹⁵⁵ Hamilton, p. xiii.

Exceptions are a couple of references to one of her daughters and to her husband's sister, called the 'padrona' of the house.

without fusing objective and subjective practices.¹⁵⁷ In keeping with late nineteenth-century travel books, personal narrative and objectified description are interwoven in *Sicilian Ways and Days*. Frequently, they are not easily distinguishable and the narrative shifts from one to the other continuously. As narrator/reporter and, at the same time, subject matter of her work, Hamilton moves frequently from the position of an observer to a self-centred attitude. An indication of such shifts is the frequent use of the pronoun 'I', and the overconfident reporting of her rebellion to local habits:

When I first placed this bookcase here and arranged books in it people thought me very odd, as it is the custom here to keep books – and everything one possesses, in fact – locked in hideous green boxes (...). This novel idea of actually displaying books in shelves to please the eye and be easily reached for perusal has made people stare, and wonder where I learnt such unaccountable ways. ¹⁵⁸

A narcissistic attitude and resistance to acculturation appears frequently in the book. Eccentricity then becomes a reason to impress the Other, as well as to stress her difference from the locals, especially women:

I first introduced in this house the novelty of a woman conversing with the men on their own subjects, and I must say they have enjoyed the change. Still, I stand alone in that respect: no other woman here would follow my example; some of them even think me brazen-faced, for their custom is to eat in silence and attend to the wants of the men, getting up continually to wait upon them, even with half a dozen maids in the kitchen. 159

Unlike the woman traveller, whose encounters with the Other take place essentially outdoor, the female expatriate has to come to deal with the new customs essentially indoors; this is the main 'contact-zone' where daily and regularly her life intersects that of the other culture. Consider, for instance, how she narrates the following mourning episode:

I had once more to sit near the mistress of the house, still draped in her black shawl, though I felt like a fish out of water in the midst of all those veiled women with nothing on my head except my hair, and that, even, not black!¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Hamilton, p. 154.

¹⁵⁷ See Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', p. 109, and Pratt, 'Fieldwork in Common Places', p. 35.

¹⁵⁸ Hamilton, p. 34.

¹⁵⁹ Hamilton, p. 242.

¹⁶⁰ Pratt, Imperial Eyes, pp. 4-7.

Moreover, the author depicts herself in relation to the way she appears in the eyes of the locals, as well as to stereotyped ideas of foreign women. For instance, in the already mentioned account of the Baron of Torretta she writes:

One of the Baron's *Campieri* had brought a chair, thinking I would need it to mount my horse, but when the Baron saw me mount it with the help of Ludovico's hand only, he sighed, and remarked what a pity Sicilian women were not more like English ones. 162

Another example of such an attitude is in the following statement:

(...) 'continental' women are eccentric, even if they have their good points. (In Sicily, anyone who is not a Sicilian is dubbed 'Continental' whether he is a native of Naples, Milan, London, or St. Petersburg). 163

Self-depiction is then achieved through other people's words and comments reported (and altered) in the text. Hamilton's habits clearly contrasted with the static alien customs of her husband's relatives and friends. On the other hand, treated with suspicion and kindly indulgence by her new family, Hamilton had to fit into an existing, strong family structure, in a particular kinship tradition, and into prevailing moral discourses about identity and roles. It must be pointed out that there are contrasting opinions on the lives of nineteenth-century Italian women, particularly in Southern Italy. After the introduction of the Civil Code of 1865 Italian married women were completely subordinate to their husbands and lost all legal control of property once they married. Furthermore, outside the home they experienced low social status and wages. Generally, longing for control over public aspects of life, the only accessible authority a woman could achieve was in her old age and when she became a mother, within the private, domestic sphere. In this case, women experienced a large amount of authority within their homes, controlling various aspects of their lives, including money and children, their husbands' employment and household affairs. However, as a foreigner Hamilton could not easily enjoy such a status. In her book, she mentions a 'mistress of the house', an authoritarian woman who was probably her husband's sister, Giulia Caico, and who

¹⁶² Hamilton, p. 262.

occupied a privileged position in the family.¹⁶⁴ Hamilton is catapulted into a world rooted in its stubborn past and traditions, where she is an eccentric and odd creature in the eyes of those who, from her point of view, are alien and mysterious. A sense of disorientation invades her, an 'unhomeliness' in her condition of outsider and crosscultural woman. A strategy she uses to alleviate this sense of displacement is to introduce partial corrections to irrational, 'dreadful states of affairs'. She mostly attempts to introduce changes inside the domestic sphere:

When I first came here, I found they had a strange mode of setting the table. It was the fashion to arrange in its centre, in higgledy-piggledy fashion, a heap of plates, a mountain of knives and forks, a cluster of glasses, and other items. Then, as the family sat noisily down to dinner, each person grasped a plate, appropriated a glass, fished in the heap for a knife and fork, and began eating away, after murmuring vaguely and collectively: 'Good appetite!'.¹⁶⁵

Driven by an instinctive modernizing concern, she attempts to introduce changes that force the 'Others' out of an utter rustic chaos and towards town-habits and order:

I stood it once only. Next day I did what I never do here except when necessity demands it: I asserted myself, and said Arcangela would set the table just as I had taught her to do at Palermo. ¹⁶⁶

Hamilton's strategy of power and knowledge implies the foreigner's desire for reformed, recognizable 'Others' in order to appropriate them and visualize authority. Her request makes the 'Others' 'imitate' refined city manners. But, as Homi Bhabha argues, this 'mimicry' repeats, rather than represents. It also 'articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of the innovative other's authority.' Originality is lost, leaving traces of a strained interpretation of the rational. The mirror-image the 'Others' reflect is just a

¹⁶³ Hamilton, p. 29.

Legal certificates and business documents of the Caicos in the Civil Court Archives of Caltanissetta, prove that Giulia Caico used to take part in some of the family's business. Her name appears, together with those of her brothers, in transactions, ratifications, recognitions and mortgages. See Notarial deeds, (Repertory of Angelo Aneto, from 8/2/1870 to 5/2/1892), Civil Court, State Archive, Caltanissetta. On Southern Italian women consider Ann Cornelisen, Women of the Shadows: A Study of Wives and Mothers of Southern Italy (New York: Vintage Books-Random House, 1977), p. 118.

¹⁶⁵ Hamilton, pp. 237-238.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁷ Bhabha, p. 88.

distorted one, doubled and ambivalent. It is an image created 'to fill an empty space' and to alleviate the foreigner's disorientating confusion between home and the world, familiar and alien. Moreover, such an attempt is destined to fail.

Some members of the family approved of this wonderful innovation, but some were made grumpy and uncomfortable by it (...). A few of the most conservative ones, on sitting down, begin by pushing away to the right their knife and spoon, away to the left their fork, away in front of them their glasses, ending up with a little push to their plate. (...) By the time a few of them have thus behaved outrageously the table is a sad spectacle! 168

Hamilton's acceptance and rejection of the Other alternate continuously, and vain attempts at changing the world around her are frequent. The alternative for the outsider is then a subversion, or a deconstruction of all inclusions and exclusions, or even a contamination by the cultural differences of the native. An example can be found in her statements at the beginning of the book, in the Chapter 'My Room':

'The brazier is supposed to warm the room. I dare say you have missed a chimney when going round with me. I did not miss it, because I have already forgotten even what a chimney is like, which shows how easily surroundings modify one's habits, for I used to think I could not exist without one.' 169

vi.i Unmasking the author: Self and humour

In her daily scrutiny of life around her, Louise Hamilton observes many events preserving a sort of theatrical distance. On other occasions she gets involved in the events appreciating the poetic qualities of rites, the peasants' customs and the landscape:

It was here, at the foot of the old fortress, not far from the ruined chapel, and at the bottom of the little garden, in full view of the immense landscape of Southern Sicily, in sight of the glittering Mediterranean, where the nearest land is the land of Africa - it was in that exquisite spot that we had our lunch. (...) This was our lunch, which we ate with a good appetite, seasoned for me with a poetic originality arising from the lovely spot and my picturesque companions, who not only seemed in harmony with the surrounding scenery, but with their ease of manner, absence of self-consciousness, and natural, inborn courtesy, appeared in my eyes as the only suitable companions I should have cared to have had that day.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Hamilton, pp. 162-163.

¹⁶⁸ Hamilton, pp. 238-239.

¹⁶⁹ Hamilton, p. 35.

This and other episodes imply an interaction and willingness to understand, but not a potential alignment or identification of herself to the different culture. Consider also the following thoughts:

I often ask myself, Why should everything have a sad conclusion here? Why should the general impression be one of pain, sadness and suffering, from the melancholy melodies in a minor key chanted in the solitary hills by the hard-working labourer to the fatalistic smile of the very children? Perhaps it is the unconscious and hereditary manifestation of a people who have suffered much in bygone centuries, and, to say the truth, are suffering still. Or is it perhaps, the intensity of life here which produces an instinctive sense of pain and weariness in all things?¹⁷¹

A romanticized melancholic image of the outside world is provided by means of internal reflection mirroring the author's private condition; fragments of her Self emerge through her representation of the Other. The author's personal identity is projected in the representation of the life of the Other, and the new milieu becomes a mirror by which Hamilton's feelings, fears, oppressions and desires are reflected. Emotions creep into Hamilton's account, so that pathos, romanticism and melancholy find a place in her book. However, attention should also be paid to a constant presence of humour, mainly in the form of irony and sarcasm. The humorous remarks in Sicilian Ways and Days can be interpreted as the expression of her displacement, as well as a sign of her personality and background. The daughter of a wealthy British merchant, mostly educated in England and France, Louise Hamilton Caico certainly observed things, people and events in Sicily from an 'elevated' observation point, which awoke in her a certain sense of superiority often displayed through her cutting remarks. However, the Sicilian village is not the only target of her bitter observations. Hamilton wrote a series of sour, sarcastic verses during a residency in London between 1916 and 1919. There she worked as typist and translator for the International Labour Office, showing an argumentative, rebellious character. Notes, scraps of papers, typed and hand written humorous, rhymed poems testify to her intolerance and a sense of oppression. She gave vent to her creative

¹⁷¹ Hamilton, pp. 42-43.

imagination and sarcasm in caricatured descriptions of colleagues and superiors by alluding to their similarities to various animal species. ¹⁷² It is worth observing that when outside Sicily her biting remarks do not discriminate between English and non-English. Apart from showing a certain temperamental restlessness, this attitude can also attest to a lack of identification with an English collective identity, almost certainly caused by the strong Anglophobia of Louise's father, as well as by her cosmopolitanism. ¹⁷³ Taking a look at a short account written after her marriage, it is possible to get an idea of her sarcasm which was addressed towards non-Sicilians and things from 'that cold dreary country called England'. ¹⁷⁴ While residing in a boarding house (probably in London or elsewhere), with one of her daughters, she sketched out in English a metaphoric representation of the place and its guests:

This Ménagerie is composed of five large cages (or houses) which are numbered and communicate at the back by means of small lawns where during the fine (?) season the keepers allow the beasts to take the air. For each cage has a keeper in a black gown, white apron and cap whose mission is to clean out our little cages, shake the straw of our beds, give us a little water to wash our muzzles and paws and other similar duties; but in reality these keepers do little more than complain that they have too much to do.¹⁷⁵

The use of the present tense is meant to hint that she recorded her impressions in situ and thus to show her incessant need to fix and frame instantly experiences through writing. Her cutting comments involve all the guests, who appear noisy and superficial in her eyes, regardless of their nationalities. There is the 'exotic' young Egyptian 'with dazzling teeth', dusky skin and eyes which look like 'two burning cinders':

¹⁷² In Private Archive Giovanni Petix, Montedoro.

¹⁷³ Federico Hamilton's hatred for England and his expatriation from that country have been generally associated with his Irish origins. Evidence of any other reason has not been reported so far. Furthermore, it is believed that the fact that Louise's eldest brother inherited the family patrimony on their parents' death must have produced in her a certain resentment towards the sexual discriminations of the English law. See Petix.

¹⁷⁴ Hamilton, 'To a Friend of Mine', in *Poems*, Bordighera-Cannes 1878-79 (Private Archive Giovanni Petix, Montedoro).

Louise Hamilton Caico, Our Boarding House, Private Archive Giovanni Petix, Montedoro. Unpublished (n.d.), p. 1.

Three times a day this hero of the 'Thousand and One Nights sings, or rather, chants, a wild and monotonous melody modulated on three notes only in a strange tongue ... it makes one's flesh creep. ¹⁷⁷

And there is also a Danish female guest, as well as English ones, such as the 'big beast of pure English blood', a student from Oxford and a 'good Old Maid' who,

has announced with a good deal of animation that in a certain Tea-Room, besides black and brown bread and butter and a great plate of assorted cakes, they had served her with three different kinds of jam! Several table neighbours, charmed and enthusiastically surprised, hastened to learn by heart the famous address, whilst the countenance of the lady who had made the wonderful discovery, shone with the special radiant happiness of having at last discovered the Prototype of Tea-Rooms and the Realization of the Eternal Idea!¹⁷⁸

Exclamations and underlining reinforce the authorial presence and emotions in the text. The metaphor casts people and things in a hostile light for an unidentified target reader. However, if this is read as a text addressed to an English audience, sarcasm removes the privileged status of English customs and people. In this way the aim of humour would be 'to make the familiar problematic, to violate her readers' expectations, to capture a feeling of verisimilitude through use of metaphor, and to view the world through the eyes of a stranger'.¹⁷⁹

In Sicily, humour helps Hamilton to accept the complex, foreign world around her, within the domestic sphere and outside it. In *Sicilian Ways and Days* sarcasm and irony incorporate the author's feelings, positioning her in the text. Moreover, they often allow the author to adopt an authoritative position. An example can be found in the account reporting the patron Saint's feast day:

Next morning (Saturday), according to a most barbarous custom, the band began to play at 4.30, thus awaking the whole village with warlike marches. As a compliment to our family, they began at our house, and with refined cruelty began their piece loudly, after

¹⁷⁶ 'I have bought a type-writer and can say that I contribute – however modestly – to the general hullabaloo'. Hamilton, *Our Boarding House*, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ Hamilton, *Our Boarding House*, p. 2. It is worth observing that the young Egyptian guest 'has in his room some books on Theosophy', a philosophy which particularly interested Hamilton.

¹⁷⁸ Hamilton, *Our Boarding House*, p. 6.

Gary Alan Fine and Daniel D. Martin, 'Humor in Ethnographic Writing. Sarcasm, Satire, and Irony as Voices in Erving Goffman's *Asylums*, in *Representation in Ethnography*, ed. by John Van Maanen (London: SAGE Publications, 1995), pp. 165-198 (p. 174).

silently gathering under our window. They left us when there could be no possible doubt as to their having awakened us. 180

Hamilton's use of humour selects and imposes meaning. At the same time it destabilizes clarity and invites the reader to reconstruct that meaning. Consider also the following passage about women:

But there they have queer ideas as to how a dressing-table should be arranged, starting from the theory that there should be nothing on it, which simplifies matters considerably. They call them combing-tables, thus strictly describing the truth about them, for they only use them for doing their hair, or, rather, having their hair done, as every provincial lady's ideal or real gentility is that of having her hair elaborately done up rather late in the day by a sympathizing friend or maid, who delightfully rubs oil into it, and toilet vinegar next, until her head smells for all the world like a highly-seasoned salad! 181

In the observer the response to this grotesque episode is instigated by the actual scene she witnesses, and by the parameters of a (Northern) European, 'emancipated' woman; to the reader the sense of grotesque is conveyed through the apparently realistic, but exaggerated, way in which the description is made. The reader then has the task of 'translating', 'deciphering' or 'decoding' the meaning of the author's statements: s/he has to 'peer behind a mask' to unveil the speaker. 182 Hamilton catches the grotesque even in the most sacred aspects of life, such as the account of the out-door function reenacting the meeting between Mary and her Son on Easter morning:

In the middle of the piazza the much-expected *incontro* (meeting) took place, the most comical and puerile performance I ever witnessed. When the two wooden figures were face to face, the bearers stopped, and made them bow ceremoniously three times to each other, the crowd looking on enthusiastically - there was joy in every countenance. The bows were all the more ludicrous from the fact that Mary's effigy was at least three times larger than that of Jesus.

After the bows, they had an attempt at embracing. The effigy of Christ approached its face to the Madonna's, their wooden cheeks knocked against each other, and Christ's little red flag got entangled in the complicated arches of the Madonna's crown, nearly pulling it down; at the solemn moment the crowd, who had looked on in a breathless silence of joyful suspense, all shouted 'Evviva!'. 183

Hamilton, p. 95.

¹⁸⁰ Hamilton, Sicilian Ways and Days, p. 62.

¹⁸¹ Hamilton, p. 31.

As Booth states: 'ironic reconstructions depend on an appeal to assumptions, often unstated, that ironists and readers share. (...) We never make all of our shared assumptions explicit, and if we encounter readers or auditors who are determined to deny all "unproved" assumptions we are always in trouble'. Wayne W. C. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 33-39, especially p. 33.

Unlike the other examples quoted, this episode does not require much effort from the reader to decipher the author's opinion on the events described. The words 'puerile' and 'comical' at the beginning of the description announce the position of the author toward the scene.

Humour establishes a sort of dialogue between author and reader. On the one hand the author is committed to translating culture for the reader. On the other hand the reader needs to translate the author's description to take in her meaning. Irony and sarcasm also work as devices for establishing experiential and interpretative authority. The author's Self is placed in the text and authority lies in this form of self-expression. Moreover, irony and sarcasm work as evidence of the author's witnessing facts that led her to certain conclusions.

vi.ii Beyond and behind Sicilian Ways and Days

A thoughtful personality emerges in *Sicilian Ways and Days*. Hamilton's complex personality, her opinions on social issues of the time, as well as her ideological position in existential matters should be taken into account in order to analyse the author's reaction to displacement and difference, as they emerge not only in descriptions of her life in Sicily, but also in reports of her experiences in other countries. Mainly between 1878 and 1879, before her marriage to Eugenio Caico, Louise Hamilton composed some poems in Italian, English and French, which she collected in a kind of notebook she kept while residing in Bordighera. Despite their arguable literary value, these works help to draw a more detailed picture of her personality, especially when compared to the more sarcastic observations on people she wrote years later. Moreover, the poems document Hamilton's relationship with writing and her recurrent recording of experiences. Openly

autobiographical, they disclose inner feelings and an attempt at controlling emotional upheavals. 184

Another element which should be taken into consideration in sketching Hamilton's personality is her interest in Theosophy. This strengthens the image of the author as a learned woman whose interests ranged over a number of fields; at the same time it attests a search for personal identity and equilibrium. Louise Hamilton, together with one of her daughters, edited the Italian version of the work *In Tune with the Infinite* by the American Valdese thinker Ralph Waldo Trine, who lived at the end of the nineteenth century and was one of the popularizers of the New Thought. The volume was published in 1910, with the Italian title of *In Armonia coll'infinito*, and included a

Whoever you are that in this book Do take a hasty glance or two Remember that they are but few The poems that will bear a look.

And often think that she who wrote The simple lines enclosed here Composed them without the fear Of ever seeing them come to note.

She wrote them down to ease her mind When lone and sorrowful was she At other times she'd merry be As in these pages you will find.

From severe judging then forbear She just wrote down all that she thought And ever and anon she has fought Against the thoughts not just and fair And striven hard against despair.

I am grateful to Mrs Anne Chadwick Agrò for having transcribed the English poems from the manuscript. Ralph Waldo Trine, In Tune with the Infinite or, Fullness of Peace, Power, and Plenty (Crowell & Co.: New York, 1897). Ralph Waldo Trine (1866-1958) was a philosopher, mystic, teacher and author of many books. He was also one of the early mentors of the New Thought Movement, a school of thought that considers knowledge of divine inspiration and science as the expression of a voluntaristic vitalism. Through them the human being can establish a direct relationship with God, without any kind of mediation: 'There is a divine sequence running throughout the universe. (...) To come into harmony with it and thereby with all the higher laws and forces, to come then into league and work in conjunction with us, is to come into the chain of this wonderful sequence'. Trine, p. 6.

¹⁸⁴ See her 'Introduction' to the *Poems*. It invites audience response by means of the open reference to an implied reader. Moreover, her verses show a latent desire to overstep the border of the private:

preface by Arnaldo Cervesato.¹⁸⁶ Apart from translating the work, the two women also enlarged upon the biblical quotations in a series of footnotes.¹⁸⁷ Hamilton could have based her spiritual life on this philosophy, in her attempt to accept a difficult world around her, to alleviate a sense of estrangement as well as personal problems. However, apart from her contribution to the publication of Trine's work in Italy, there is no other strong evidence bearing witness to Hamilton's adhesion to theosophy.

Hamilton was also interested in a few moderately non-conformist ideas about the condition of women. In 1900 her translation of *How to Be Happy though Married*, by Edward John Hardy, was published in Palermo.

This was the quaint title of one of Skelton's sermons, which would certainly cause a momentary cloud of indignation, not to say of alarm, to pass over the minds of a newly married couple, should they discover it when skimming through a collection of old volumes on the first wet day of their honeymoon.¹⁸⁸

Hardy's text is written in a didactic style and supports progressive points, such as the invitation to the wife not to neglect her charm and education after marriage. At the same time, the author offers traditional advice on fidelity, industriousness and above all diplomacy in marriage, falling into the Victorian set of moral and sexual values. The book was meant to defend women's rights in the second half of the Victorian era, when the suffragettes' movement was just starting. There is no evidence of Hamilton's links with pre-suffragist circles, but her interest in Hardy's work, and a pamphlet on the condition of Sicilian women published later, indicated a certain reaction of protest against what in her eyes could appear as oppressive, sexist Sicilian customs. Louise

¹⁸⁶ Ralph Waldo Trine, *In Armonia coll'infinito*, trans. by Luisa and Lina Caico with an Introduction by Arnaldo Cervesato (Rome: Enrico Voghera, 1910).

¹⁸⁷ 'La versione del presente volume è opera di due fra le più colte gentildonne d'Italia: Luisa e Lina Hamilton, che non solo la condussero - come è quasi inutile dire, poiché il lettore capace ha occhi ben idonei ad apprezzare - con ogni cura e rigore da un originale ricco spesso di frasi peculiarmente idiomatiche, ma la corredano anche delle citazioni bibliche necessarie alla dichiarazione di tante sentenze di continuo intercalate dall'Autore. E altresì di note che il testo talora richiedeva. Onde essa appare, sotto taluni rapporti, più chiara e perspicua dell'originale medesimo: ciò che per tutte le traduzioni non accade'. Arnaldo Cervesato, 'Proemio', in *In Armonia coll'infinito*, pp. vii-xxii, (p. xxii).

Edward John Hardy, Come essere felici sebbene maritati, translated by Luisa Caico (Palermo: Reber, 1900), How to Be Happy though Married (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1887).

Hamilton Caico's translation from the English into Italian of *How to be Happy though Married*, can be interpreted as a compromise between domesticity and transgression, as it aims to give advice on marriage and domestic life to an Italian - more specifically Sicilian - female audience, whilst claiming the authority of an emancipated foreign woman. Maintaining the Victorian set of moral and sexual values, Hamilton takes her position on the sexist Sicilian society, trying to distance herself from local women. Simultaneously she valorises a private sphere of knowledge which evolves from her personal experience as a woman married to a Sicilian man and living in Sicily. Reinforcing her progressivist position as a foreign woman, Hamilton also wrote the pamphlet *Per un nuovo costume della donna in Sicilia* which comments on the conditions of women in Sicily. Using a refined, respectful language, she lashes out at the 'gentili signore' of the vast Sicilian upper and lower middle class who, unlike their counterparts in the rest of Europe, rejected innovation and progress:

Ed è appunto nella vita di famiglia di questa classe sociale che spiccano maggiormente quelle abitudini, quelle tradizioni, quei pregiudizi, i quali, certo, non hanno nulla di compatibile più con i progressi e i bisogni della vita moderna, progressi che, appena posto il piede sul continente, vediamo affermarsi già, dove più timidamente, dove più arditamente, ma con una crescente tendenza a perfezionarsi, per meglio rispondere alle nuove esigenze della vita, per meglio raggiungere quegl'ideali, che oramai, per chi sente, per chi lavora, per chi pensa, fanno parte intima della vita stessa. 189

According to the author, young women's education is too protective. The author stresses how, unlike in Switzerland or in England, this leads to the suppression of young women's individuality and of the natural expression of feelings, producing passive, apathetic attitudes. The only aim of their existence is then marriage, where they will be subordinated to sexist husbands. The author is not against marriage, but maintains with steadfastness that a married woman should have the right to preserve and increase her own dignity. The only way to bring a significant change in a woman's condition and in

Louisa Hamilton, *Per un nuovo costume della donna in Sicilia*. Pro Patria, Società per l'educazione fisica. Bibliotechina di propaganda, n. 1 (Palermo: Tipografia Sciarrino, 1906), pp. 3-4. Similar

the existing gender discrimination is a radical reform of education which could give women freedom after long centuries of 'Muslim idleness'. 190 After Italian Unification, when the military phase was essentially over, the serious social and humanitarian problems of the new country needed to be faced. Government reforms aimed at producing social and political stability, but not a new social order. Foreign and Italian women then committed themselves to improving female social conditions, especially within the national education system. Erminia Fuà Fusinato, Aurelia Cimino Folliero de Luna, Sara Nathan are some of the women who expressed new ideas about women's role in the Italian society. All of them agreed with the need for better female education, for more authority within the domestic sphere, and for stronger political commitment as new 'Italian' women. 191 In a society where not so much space was allowed to women's voices. Hamilton could criticize the seclusion of Sicilian women and construct Sicilian Ways and Days in relation to contemporary (Northern) values of femininity and education. Hamilton's argumentative attitude was also encouraged by a feeling of 'otherness' allowing her to take revolutionary positions without fearing for her own reputation as a woman. As she was considered different and extravagant, constructed images of her foreignness could push Hamilton towards a sharp assertion and defence of her non-conformist ideas.

It needs to be emphasised that Hamilton's choice of translating works by Trine and Hardy should not only be simplistically identified with the author's desire to be free

statements, but referred to the lower classes, are present in the chapter 'Marriage customs' of Sicilian Ways and Days, Hamilton, p. 50.

¹⁹⁰ In 1907 similar advice in favour of a solid education, awakening in young women a sense of dignity and independence, was offered in an essay by a local woman teacher. Cfr. Hamilton's pamphlet with Elvira Mancuso, *Sulla condizione della donna borghese in Sicilia* (Caltanissetta: Tip. Dell'Omnibus, 1907). For further contextualisation of Hamilton's pamphlet, see the discussion on how newspapers, novels and schoolhouses shaped women's self-identification as mothers and wives, and generated in them a new sense of national belonging, in the period of mass male migration. Linda Reeder, 'Women in the classroom: mass migration, literacy and the nationalization of Sicilian women at the turn of the century', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 32, n.1 (1998), 101-119.

from the frustrations arising from life in 'archaic', inland Sicily. The reasons for these choices should also be sought in existential and personal dilemmas arising from her condition as woman, mother and wife. This can be better understood by looking at one text written almost ten years after the publication of Sicilian Ways and Days. Despite her several journeys outside of Sicily and her move to Palermo, the aged Louise Hamilton remembers her long experience in the Sicilian inland in L'arrivo a Montedoro. This is an unpublished, short account written in Italian, and is a poetic, melancholic recording of her return to the little Sicilian village after a few years of absence:

Il mio arrivo a Montedoro fu la fotografia fedele di tutti i miei arrivi passati, e malgrado sei anni d'intervallo si ripeterono tutti i dettagli consacrati dalla consuetudine che qui è ferrea. (...) Avvicinando il treno alla Stazione solitaria di Serradifalco io stavo con un po' di emozione affacciata al finestrino, e tosto ebbi la prima lontana visione delle casette biancheggianti di Montedoro disposte sull'altipiano dietro al quale sorge la mole quadrata della Rocca di Sutera. Il treno non era ancora fermato quando riconobbi la siluetta famigliare d'uno dei nostri campieri con la sua immancabile carabina molto invecchiato e dimagrito, più abbronzato che mai, ma sempre lui. Appena mi vide accorse e: 'Bacio la mano, Donna Lisa' - questo saluto rievocò in un lampo tutta la mia vita di Montedoro, 20 anni d'impressioni fresche ed interessanti, forti e pittoresche, prezioso compenso ai molti elementi d'infelicità che mi amareggiavano la vita in quei tempi. 192

The account bears witness not only to her affection for Montedoro, but also to personal past upheavals which certainly affected her representation of the village in *Sicilian Ways* and *Days*. Hamilton uses writing to trace – in the past tense – a route back to the village and the people. Returning to her old house, meeting relatives and acquaintances; having lunch with them and re-exploring her old room, lead her to a reawakening of old sensations and impressions which the author needs to record and frame on the white page. Unlike her first arrival at Montedoro, when the village was alien and hard to

¹⁹¹ See Judith Jeffrey Howard, 'Patriot Mothers in the Post-Risorgimento: Women after the Italian Revolution', in *Women, War, and Revolution*, ed. by Carol R. Berkin and Clara M. Lovett (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980), pp. 237-252.

Louise Hamilton, L'Arrivo a Montedoro, 7 September 1920. Private Archive Giovanni Petix, Montedoro (Caltanissetta). This account has been found written in Italian. No evidence proving that the account had been translated from the English into Italian by the author herself or by one of her children has been provided.

understand, Hamilton is now visiting what is already familiar and what, in the past, was quotidian. L'Arrivo a Montedoro can be compared with the more descriptive and less sentimental first arrival in the village, in the first chapter of Sicilian Ways and Days. 'How we arrived at Montedoro':

A pleasant journey by sea from Genoa to Palermo, three days shopping in Palermo, and then six hours' railway journey in that fraud commonly called *treno diretto* across the solitary interior regions of Sicily, stopping at the lonely little station of Serradifalco, in the province of Caltanissetta, the only Sicilian province not washed by the sea. Several uncouth-looking men are about us at once; they look picturesque in their brown fustian or velvet, muddy top-boots, skullcaps and cartridge-belts - they all carry firearms. My anxiety - I took them for brigands - is quickly dispelled by the explanation, kindly volunteered, that these are the best friends and trusty servants of the family, called *campieri*.' ¹

Gazing through the window of her room now acquires a different meaning for the author: it is a chance to verify that things are still there, unchanged by time, and to have her authoritative position in relation to people confirmed. Now what causes displacement is no longer cultural difference but the passage of time and life:

Affaccio alla finestra della mia camera da dove contemplo a sinistra l'arida collina col Calvario, a destra una fuga di casette bianche del paese costeggianti una viuzza più adatta per le capre che per gli umani; nella casa dirimpetto al di là del cortile scorgo il sarto (e Consigliere Comunale) Don Ciccio, che sta seduto a cucire davanti la sua porta e che da venti anni, ogni volta che arrivo e affaccio mi saluta rispettosamente da lontano, e noto che ha i capelli grigi – anche lui invecchiato ... ed io? ²

What the reader perceives is a static picture of the village, as things seem unchanged, apart from the aged look of people and animals. Years before, villagers, animals, things and customs had functioned mainly as means through which to explore the historical and cultural past of the Other. On the contrary, now they bring back personal memories of the past with her experiences, passions and sufferings. Writing then helps to evoke an intricate web of memories and associations; it also mediates between the past (her residence in the village twenty years ago) and the present.

Hamilton, Sicilian Ways and Days, p. 19.

² Hamilton, L'Arrivo a Montedoro.

Conclusions

Louise Hamilton Caico, a female participant-observer, scrutinised the Sicilians as she went about her daily life, observing them though doors or windows, mixing with the crowd and participating in daily events. Hamilton used each Sicilian person and fact she encountered as a 'source of knowledge', rather than collecting and moulding information through selected, trained informants. In *Sicilian Ways and Days*, through an act of 'inscription', she brings experience and discourse into writing. Through a double translation (that of culture first and that of texts later), Hamilton tries to present a language, a culture, and a society 'in all their opacity, their foreignness, their meaninglessness'.

Local ethnographers can offer a more reliable, experienced and empowered representation of their motherland, but it can be argued that this does not preclude their neglecting some peculiarities and offering some restricted interpretations typical of those who focalise an object from too close a point of observation. As James Clifford states, 'insiders studying their own cultures offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. But, their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways'. By contrast, Hamilton's account is empowered by an interpretation of culture which covers both 'trivial' aspects of everyday domestic life and significant traits of the past and present of a culture.

Hamilton's hybrid identity is created through a variety of stratagems by which the author adapted herself to different societies and to the overwhelming Sicilian cultural patterns. She resorted to strategies in order to have her authority recognized. Her sense of superiority can be guessed at through her personal feminine pride, indissoluble from the presuppositions of her social position, education and cosmopolitanism. Moreover, the author's condescending attitude acquires a different

¹ Ibid.

² James Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in Writing Culture. pp. 1-27 (p. 9).

meaning when we analyse her works in relation to her complex personality and existential dilemmas arising from her condition as woman, mother and wife. Hamilton chose to focus essentially on inland Sicily and most of her attention is devoted to a specific portion of Sicilian society: the rural classes. The limits and the peculiarity of the representation in Sicilian Ways and Days should be also identified in this choice. In Sicilian Ways and Days Hamilton represented the backward inland Sicily of peasants and miners at the time of the 'questione contadina'. However, unlike Charlton's Letters from Sicily and Tina Scalia Whitaker's Sicily and England – as will be examined in the following chapter – Hamilton's book hardly makes reference to the differences between Southern and Northern Italy. The author avoids direct references to political and economic issues of the time, as well as to contemporary treatises and essays about the investigations on the conditions of the Italian Mezzogiorno. The author portrays her Sicily as a microcosm separated from any other Italian reality; moreover, she portrays a section of Sicilian culture by making it a metonymy for the whole island. What she portrayed, was however, the world which intellectuals and economists were trying to study and understand. By researching into Sicilian history, as well as by means of her written and visual representations of rural people and customs, the author attempted to understand the social and historical background of that world and the causes of such a controversial reality.

Chapter Three

Writing the familial past: historical and personal memoir in Sicily and England: Political and Social Reminiscences, 1848-1870 by Tina Scalia Whitaker

Various works have focused on Anglo-Sicilian relationships during the Napoleonic wars and British anti-French intervention on the island. Studies have also considered the prospect that in 1812 Sicily might have been included in the British Empire: 'after Ireland, the brightest jewel in the British crown'. Over the last thirty years, seminars and studies in Britain and Italy have concentrated more on the economic power of British merchants on the island. Among the British families who migrated to Sicily in the nineteenth century (such as the Sandersons, the Woodhouses, the Hoops, the Cossins, the Roses and the Gardeners), the Whitakers, and the Inghams before them, are certainly those who left most traces of their commercial and cultural activities. There are still interesting and conspicuous testimonies to the direct and indirect contribution of the Whitakers and the Inghams to the improvement of the general economic conditions of the island, and of the city of Palermo in particular.

Benjamin Ingham is generally considered as the founder of the Whitaker family.

A native of Yorkshire, Ingham moved to Sicily at the beginning of the nineteenth century, managing to build a huge economic empire on the island and also in America.

After his death, in 1861, his fortune went to his nephew's sons, among whom was

¹ Gregory Desmond, The Insecure Base: A History of the British Occupation of Sicily, 1806-1815 (London: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 124. See also John Rosselli, Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation in Sicily 1811-1814 (Cambridge: University Press, 1956).

² Among Italian studies about British trade in Sicily see: Rosario Battaglia, Sicilia e Gran Bretagna: Le relazioni commerciali dalla Restaurazione all'Unità (Milan: Giuffrè, 1983); M. De Vita, 'Il baglio Woodhouse: simbolo di economia e storicità', Cultura mediterranea, 1 (1984) (Trapani: Archeoclub d'Italia, Petrosino), 64-69; Benjamin Ingham nella Sicilia dell'Ottocento, ed. by Maurizio Signorello (Marsala: Associazione marsalese per la storia patria, 1985); Irene D. Neu, 'Un uomo d'affari inglese in Sicilia (1806-1861), trans. by Pietro Silvestri, Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione, n. 91 (1985), 263-281; Giovanni Alagna, 'La colonia inglese di Marsala. Annotazioni bibliografiche', Spiragli, n. 1-4 (1994), 48-61; Francesco Brancato, 'I mercanti inglesi dell'Ottocento in Sicilia: Vincenzo Florio nei rapporti con

Joseph Whitaker ir.³ Between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries the main characters in the Whitaker family were Joseph, his wife Tina Scalia, their two daughters Delia and Norina, and Norina's husband, the fascist general Antonino Di Giorgio. A fascinating historical, social and cultural fresco of events overwhelming the English magnates transplanted to Sicily has been brilliantly achieved by Raleigh Trevelyan in his Princes under the Volcano. 4 First published in London in 1972, this book focuses on the Anglo-Sicilians linked to important families of the island, from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1970s. Moreover, the absorbing story of the Whitakers has also been the object of increasing attention in Sicily thanks to seminars organized following the reorganisation of their private and business archives in Palermo and Marsala. Tina Scalia Whitaker's Sicily and England – published in London in 1907⁶ – together with her private diary and correspondence, have played a relevant role in the search for information about the social and cultural life of the Whitakers, as well as about the political and social relationships between Sicily and England from the Risorgimento up to the Second World War.

Ingham', in AA.VV, L'economia dei Florio. Una famiglia di imprenditori borghesi dell'800 (Palermo:

Sellerio, 1991), pp. 57-69.

Bejamin Ingham was attracted to Sicily from his humble beginnings in England by the burgeoning trade in marsala wine. He moved to the island soon after the second British occupation of Sicily. He also traded wool and other goods from England. Known as the English Croesus, his marsala money was multiplied by the American railway and canal boom. His fortune, his mastery of language and his relationship with a Sicilian duchess granted him a special position within the Sicilian aristocracy and international society. He became a confidant of high-ranking government officials, and his papers reflect the subversive politics of the times - the revolution of 1820, the excesses of King Ferdinand Bourbon, the campaigns of Garibaldi. Ingham's nephew, Joseph Whitaker senior, moved from England to join his uncle's business in Sicily. He married Sophia Sanderson and had eight sons. After his death, in 1884, only three of his children decided to remain on the island to continue the family business; the others moved back to England.

⁴ Raleigh Trevelyan, Princes under the Volcano (London: Macmillan, 1972). Here quotations will be taken from the edition printed in New York, by William Morrow & Co., in 1973.

⁵ See La storia dei Whitaker, ed. by Rosario Lentini and Vincenzo Tusa (Palermo: Sellerio, 1988); L'archivio Ingham-Whitaker di Marsala: indice generale delle corrispondenze (Trapani: Libera Università del Mediterraneo, 1990); I Whitaker e il capitale inglese tra l'Ottocento e il Novecento in Sicilia, ed. by Claudio D'Aleo and Salvatore Girgenti (Trapani: Libera Università del Mediterraneo, 1992); Francesco Brancato, 'I Whitaker di Villa Malfitano: lineamenti e l'archivio documentario', Nuove Prospettive Meridionali, 9 (1994), 15-34; I Whitaker di villa Malfitano, ed. by Rosario Lentini and Pietro Silvestri. Seminario di studi, Palermo, 16-18 March 1995, Joseph Whitaker Foundation, Palermo.

⁶ Tina Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England: Political and Social Reminiscences, 1848-1870 (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907).

Although Sicily and England has enjoyed a certain popularity among historians and intellectuals in Sicily, it has never been analysed in detail in relation to a series of ontological and literary questions relating to genre, gender and identity issues. Hence, the main purpose of this chapter is that of providing an alternative examination of Scalia's work as expatriate writing, in relation to the representation of history and the self-representation that it offers. In particular, one needs to question what lies behind Tina Scalia Whitaker's need to write history, what kind of representation of the past she conveys in her book, and how she locates her hybrid Self in relation to the Other. Central issues to be highlighted are the relationship between history and memory, personal and public in Sicily and England, together with the problematic discussion of the 'authenticity' of Scalia's historical narrative and self-representation. An analysis of Scalia's writing cannot be undertaken without a biographical sketch which highlights her upbringing, influenced by the romantic ideologies of Risorgimento. This sketch will also help us to understand the formation of her cultural hybridity. Moreover, Scalia's personal and public writing must be contextualized through a glance at women's efforts to blur the boundary between private life and political commitment at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Tina Scalia Whitaker's accounts of past events, her self-depiction, as well as the formation of her Anglo-Sicilian identity need to be interpreted in relation to her minor works; these texts will provide a crucial framework to deconstruct and re-construct the meaning of Sicily and England.

i. From Italy to England and return

Caterina Paolina Anna Luisa Scalia (better known as Tina) was born 'in exile' in London in 1858. As the daughter of Italian patriots, her family's past had been linked to a number of significant people. In fact, from the earliest years of her life, Tina was brought up in an extremely stimulating environment, where liberal political ideas and

artistic interests met, constantly, influencing her imagination, beliefs and behaviour. These influences, together with her hybrid, Anglo-Italian upbringing in London and later her union to an Englishman in Sicily, are key elements in understanding her main work, as well as building up a picture of a woman continually engaged in creating an English/Italian/Sicilian identity through writing.

The family of Tina's father had lived in Palermo for generations, as she reports in her book:

My father's ancestors, the Scalias, had lived for several generations in Palermo, all worthy citizens and much respected, leaving behind them reputations 'senza infamia e senza lode'; not one of them had displayed any great intellectual powers.⁷

Tina's father, Alfonso Scalia, was a general in the Sicilian Merchant Navy, and fought against the Bourbons in Messina and Catania, between 1848 and 1849; after the fall of Palermo he fled to London together with other patriots. At that time London was a refuge for numerous Italian political exiles, such as Mazzini, Pepe, Arrivabene and Gallenga. Tina was particularly proud of her brave Neapolitan grandmother, Caterina Serretta Scalia, who had been initiated into the Carbonari:

going through the ceremony of initiation, an ordeal before which the strongest man might shrink, and taking the oath, in a gruesome cavern near Naples. Her courage throughout her life was undaunted, and in strong contrast to the placid indifference of her husband. 8

Tina's maternal grandfather, Pompeo Anichini, was a Tuscan supporter of Napoleon and of the Florentine clergy. Like other Italian expatriates, Anichini was well accepted by the liberal English middle-class; he obtained English citizenship and converted to Anglicanism:

He was one of the earliest of those Italian patriots who, with no definite plan for her independence or her governance, were inspired with dreams of her unity and her liberty by the rule of Napoleon, which undoubtedly created the germ of a true national feeling throughout the country.⁹

⁷ Scalia Whitaker, p. 93.

⁸ Scalia Whitaker, p. 93.

⁹ Scalia Whitaker, p. 56.

Tina's mother, the artist Giulia Anichini, was born in London and brought up in the Church of England. Tina's admiration for her mother emerges constantly throughout her writing. Tina Scalia Whitaker considered her mother as a kind of guide and a strong model. Giulia Anichini Scalia had a command over her daughter's life. She decided which social events Tina was allowed to take part in, encouraged her daughter's vocal skills and took her around the most exclusive salons of Italy and England, scrupulously selecting her daughter's acquaintances. Giulia Scalia was ever-present in Tina's writing, often a sort of internal interlocutor, and Tina Scalia refers to her very often in her works. Giulia Anichini was 'idolised' by Italian exiles for her artistic and political commitment; she was also compared to the fictional Anglo-Italian Corinne, Madame de Staël's popular heroine in Corinne, ou l'Italie. This novel first appeared in 1807, and the paradigm of the intellectual, inspired woman that Corinne embodied, haunted British readers (especially women) for years. The book represented a new transgeneric text where the novel, the tourist guide, the aesthetics essay and the autobiography intermingled. At the same time, for these women the Anglo-Italian Corinne was a symbol of the independent, yet vulnerable, female artist and traveller, an inspiring figure for her professional and political commitment and alienation:¹⁰

The Italian exiles were constantly at my grandfather's house, and my mother was much admired, being very beautiful, although too stout, even when young, for true symmetry of form. (...) Our old friend, Edward Cavendish Taylor, has often told me that to him she was in many ways the personification of Corinne - as far as her talents and attractions were regarded. Madame Bini Puzzi said, 'She was like Santa Caterina'; (...) Both in singing and in speaking my mother's voice was of rare beauty. (...) She was a remarkable linguistic, her correct ear for music no doubt helping her greatly.¹¹

Tina's parents had two marriage ceremonies, one Roman Catholic and one Anglican; she was baptised an Anglican, had a Protestant education, developed her passion for

See Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler, eds, Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), and Maddalena Pennacchia Punzi, Il mito di Corinne: viaggio in Italia e genio femminile in Anna Jameson, Margaret Fuller e George Eliot (Rome: Carocci, 2001).
 Scalia Whitaker, pp. 66-67.

singing and grew up surrounded by writers, musicians, patriots, revolutionaries and politicians who used to visit her parents' house in London. Writing about her parents the author reports:

The first eight years of their married life in exile seem to have been very happy, more especially perhaps for my mother, who, having been born in England, had all her friends around her. Her patriotism was very strong, but as she had never been brought face to face with the miseries of her native country, it was consequently more abstract than that of my father. Their Sunday dinners, always beginning with the national maccaroni, at which the poorer exiles mixed with the richer, and all talked of the great future day that should see the liberation of Italy, were one of their chief joys. All the possessions and means of existence having been lost by the exiles, my parents were naturally obliged to work for their living.¹²

In 1866, during the war against Austria, she moved to Florence with her parents, then to Palermo, Naples and Parma, and eventually to Sicily again. Her own family background in London had already made her very familiar with Sicilian social and political events. In Palermo Tina Scalia met the Whitakers, married Joseph in 1883 and had two daughters. In 1890, in London, Tina Scalia published an unsuccessful novel, *Love in the Sunny South: A Romance*. ¹³ Later she was urged to publish memories of her parents and the Italian Risorgimento; the work took the title of *Sicily and England: Political and Social Reminiscences*, 1848-1870 and was published in London in 1907.

Joseph Whitaker, Tina's husband, was an intellectual rather than a businessman.¹⁴ In Sicily he always behaved like the prototype of the Victorian dilettante and the typical Edwardian country gentleman; he was always more interested in hunting, reading and spending time in the company of peasants, than in associating with the Sicilian upper class. Although Joseph Whitaker was born in Sicily, like other

¹² Scalia Whitaker, pp. 152-153.

¹³ Tina Scalia Whitaker, Love in the Sunny South. A Romance (London: Remington and Co. Publishers, 1890).

He was extremely interested in archaeological studies of the little island of Motya, where he started tracing the site of an ancient Phoenician colony. He founded a museum there to house his findings. He reported his discoveries in Motya, a Phoenician Colony in Sicily (London: Bell & Sons, 1921). See, Benedikt S. J. Isserlin, 'Motya as I knew it: a vanished piece of rural Sicily', in Studi sulla Sicilia Occidentale in onore di Vincenzo Tusa (Padua: Bottega Di Erasmo, 1993), pp. 101-104. Consider also the recent Gaia Servadio, Motya: Unearthing a Lost Civilization (London: Victor Gollancz, 2000). Later, Whitaker got involved in naturalistic and ornithological studies, encouraged by a series of hunting trips to

English residents in Italy, he kept his English citizenship, and his wife did the same. Tina generally made her social life conform to that of the English expatriates – and it needs to be underlined that the British community in Palermo, as in other parts of Italy, tried to preserve their social and cultural customs. Throughout the nineteenth century colonies of British residents were to be found in the main Italian cities, such as Florence¹⁵ and Rome; they were primarily historians, artists as well as merchants who often settled down in the peninsula and remained until their death. In Sicily foreign presence also exerted particular influence on social models, often offering incentives for urban modernisation and the livening up of local artistic and cultural life. In general, foreigners played a crucial role in the 'invention' of tourist resorts such as Taormina, favoured rises in social status among locals and, in general, offered the Sicilian middle class opportunities and examples for development. Examples are English clubs, sports associations, Anglican churches and cemeteries, as well as journals such as La Gazzetta Britannica and the prestigious Fanoi reading room in Catania, a point of reference for various foreigners. The English residents frequently adopted a paternalistic attitude, converting locals to their tastes and customs, attempting to transform their host country into a sort of regnum in regno, their own 'hybrid' place. In so doing, they not only made Sicily the land they had idealized through travel books, but also avoided assimilating the local culture. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, the English Florence T. Trevelyen purchased areas of the wild landscape around the Sicilian town of Taormina; she managed to convert these areas into cultivated Victorian-style gardens. 16

Africa. In 1905, in London, Joseph Whitaker published two volumes of his The Birds of Tunisia, Being a History of the Birds Found in the Regency of Tunis.

¹⁵ On Anglo-Florentine relations see Giuliana Artom-Treves, *The Golden Ring: The Anglo-Florentines 1847-1862* (London: Longmans, 1956).

¹⁶ Trevelyan first visited Sicily in 1881, but she later married Salvatore Cacciola, a local doctor from Taormina. She settled down in the Sicilian town till her death in 1907. She recorded her first journey to Sicily in her unpublished Letters from Belgium, the Rhine, Switzerland, Tyrol, Italy, Bavaria, Germany, Bohemia, Austria, Istria, Sicily, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, Spain, & France, 1879-1881 (Taormina: Private Archive Cacciola-Acrosso Papale, unpublished). I am grateful to Dino Papale for allowing me to see Trevelyan's work. Further information on Florence T. Trevelyan and English residents in Taormina

However, apart from a few families, such as the Inghams and the Whitakers who left archives documenting their business and private affairs, not many sources are available to construct a complete picture of the socio-economic incidence foreign residents had on Sicily. 17 At the end of the nineteenth century, the construction of an Anglican Church in Palermo¹⁸ shows the British community's need to preserve their collective identity, to generate stability and assurance, within a foreign environment. Communal space and borders are the solution adopted in order to resist rapid assimilation and to maintain a distance from the local Other. At the same time, this mise en scène of Englishness – a simulation intended to construct collective identity – also became a space for encounter and negotiation with the Other. 19 However, on a few occasions, in her Diary and her memories, Tina Scalia lamented the 'fairly retired life' and the limited society in Palermo, far from 'any really intellectual centre' and the 'petty interests of the town excluding all those of a wider range'. Nevertheless, the Whitakers' sumptuous Villa Malfitano used to be patronised by the Sicilian upper-middle class, as well as by travellers and noble foreign visitors to Sicily. Especially in the first half of the twentieth century, the British press dedicated various articles to the Whitaker family and their business and interests in Italy.²¹ The 16th century neo-classical furniture and ornaments gathered from many parts of the world, together with the multifarious interests of Tina

can be found in Toto Roccuzzo, Taormina, l'isola nel cielo. Come Taormina divenne 'Taormina' (Catania: Giuseppe Maimone Editore, 1992) and Filippo Calandruccio, Beehive. Oltre un secolo di attività turistica a Taormina (Palermo: Quattrosoli Editore, 1993).

¹⁷ On this subject see Michela D'Angelo, Comunità straniere a Messina tra XVIII e XIX (Messina: Perna Edizioni, 1995); and Ida Fazio, 'Temporanee confusioni: matrimoni e modelli di successo nelle comunità estere a Messina nell'Ottocento', Quaderni Storici, 107/ a. XXXVI, n. 2 (August 2001), 475-517. See also Enrico Iachello and Alfio Signorelli, 'Borghesie urbane dell'Ottocento', in Storia d'Italia. Le Regioni dall'Unità a oggi. La Sicilia, ed. by Maurice Aymard and Giuseppe Giarrizzo (Turin: Einaudi, 1988), pp. 89-155.

¹⁸ See Michela D'Angelo 'I Whitaker e la chiesa anglicana di Palermo', in I Whitaker di villa Malfitano, pp. 279-293.

See Franco La Cecla, Il Malinteso. Antropologia dell'incontro (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1997).

²⁰ Tina Scalia Whitaker, Fifty Years of a Life, autographic manuscript of seventy-four pages, n.d., and Diary. The latter had originally been preserved in the Whitaker Archive, Joseph Whitaker Foundation, Villa Malfitano, Palermo, till a fire destroyed it in the 1980s. Numerous sections from the Diary are now available only in Trevelyan's Princes under the Volcano. ²¹ See for example *The Times* of 3/11/1936.

and Joseph, gave the house an unreal atmosphere which was often noticed by its guests. Trying to fill her hunger for knowledge, while fulfilling the formalities requested by her class, Tina Scalia Whitaker enjoyed serious conversations and the company of politicians, writers, scholars, patriots and members of the military. Belonging to the Whitaker family, her varied artistic interests, as well as her philanthropic commitment, conferred on her a great popularity in Palermo. The couple founded the Institution for waifs and strays, *Infanzia Abbandonata*, in Palermo. At the outbreak of the Great War Tina Scalia's energies were taken up by the *Alleanza Femminile*, whose aim was to provide children of soldiers at the front with housing, education, health and food.

In 1936 Tina Scalia published a monograph on Benjamin Ingham.²² She spent the last years of her life in Rome where she died in 1957.²³

i.ii The South of the Italians

Tina Scalia lived in contact with the Italian cultural and intellectual milieu for years – as did the other two Anglo-Sicilian women analysed in the previous chapters –, and during her childhood in England she came into contact with Italian (and Sicilian) culture through her parents. Therefore her representation of Sicily in *Sicily and England* and in her autobiographical writings needs to be analysed also in the light of Italian cultural influences.

On the mainland, only after Unification, when the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was transformed into 'Southern Italy', did an image of the South as a homogeneous reality (and as Other for the rest of Italy) become conceptualized and consolidated. As Dickie argues, the idea of the South, as a distinct part of the new country, and the

²² Tina Scalia Whitaker, *Benjamin Ingham of Palermo* (Palermo: Scuola Tipografica 'Boccone del Povero', 1936).

²³ For this biographical information I am mainly indebted to Trevelyan, *Princes under the Volcano* and his 'The Anglo-Sicilians: La storia dei Whitaker', trans. into Italian by Attilio Carapezza, in *La Storia dei Whitaker*, pp. 13-115.

stereotypes of the South as different, came into being at the same time, when negative representations and stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno were 'more fruitfully interpreted as a question of nationalism and ethnocentrism'. ²⁴ In the new geo-political context, the imaginary self-definition of Europe and Italy in particular needed to be constructed through an exclusive, specific language and through pictures in order to define and examine the essence of other social groups. An imaginary definition of post-Risorgimento Italy was then moulded among the middle and upper classes.

Within this context one needs to highlight that abstraction, organisation and classification are essential in order to make sense of the world, as well as to produce 'alterity'. The need for symbols, seen as instruments to make sense of the world, not only occurs at an 'etic' level (when a group or individual is interpreted by outsiders), but also at an 'emic' dimension (when interpretation comes from inside), producing individual and collective self-definition.²⁵ By integrating both an externally-produced image and a self-image, representation takes part in the complex process of identity formation. 'Emic' and 'etic' representations have ambiguous boundaries; what is internal and what is external is not always explicitly definable.²⁶ In the context of the representation of a culture and society (in our case the Sicilian), distinction between what is 'in' and what is 'out' can be operative even within the same (Sicilian or Italian) group. The inclusion of two, or more, entities within the same geographical, linguistic, political and religious borders does not essentially imply a communal perspective shared by all. Any kind of group or class is a fertile ground for ideological conflicts, where practices of differentiation and separation occur incessantly. It is intriguing to

²⁴ John Dickie, Darkest Italy. The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900 (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 2 and 14.

For the use of this terminology see Cris Shore, 'Ethnicity as Revolutionary Strategy: Communist Identity Construction in Italy', in Inside European Identities: Ethnography in Western Europe, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (Providence/Oxford: Berg, 1993), pp. 27-51 (p. 36).

See Ugo Fabietti, L'identità etnica. Storia e critica di un concetto equivoco (Rome: La Nuova Italia,

^{1995),} p. 30.

note, however, that the resistance to a reciprocal identification among members of the same group, can be seen as a feature of a society, and then, paradoxically, part of its culture.

Following the Unification of Italy, variations in culture, language, religion and politics needed to be reported and emphasised to form a new national identity, both through treatises and travel writing. For example, before climbing Mount Ætna, the Lombard traveller Antonio Stoppani reported a short description of the festival of the patron saint in the city of Catania:

festa che continuava già da tre giorni con splendore e devozione grandissima, non esente da quelle stranezze con sui si esprime la religione sempre chiassosa, sempre un po' teatrale dei nostri fratelli del mezzodì.²⁷

Differences, as well as similarities, needed to be played up, and for this reason unified Italy became certainly more interesting to discover and observe. In Italy, clichés did not always make a distinction between Naples as city and Naples as Mezzogiorno; besides, before the nineteenth century only a few works on the South stressed regional differences. As Galasso emphasizes, an attempt to identify the varied anthropological characters of southern people was generally made by southern intellectuals. Examples are Camillo Porzio, in the sixteenth century, Giuseppe Maria Galanti, under the influence of the enlightenment in the eighteenth century, and Salvatore De Renzi, at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁸ Stereotypes of the Neapolitan acquired a certain rigidity in travel books, in journalistic writings, as well as in social, political and

²⁷ Antonio Stoppani, Conversazioni sulle bellezze naturali, la geologia e la geografia fisica d'Italia, (Milan, 1876; repr. Pordenone: Edizione Studio Tesi, 1995), p. 449. The Italian abbot Antonio Stoppani (1824-1891), was a geologist and palaeontologist. Apart from his works on the geological formation of Northern Italy, Stoppani became popular for his book Il Bel Paese published in Milan in 1876 and uninterruptedly reprinted till 1948. Shifting from detailed descriptions of Italian landscapes to moralistic digressions on Catholic faith, and relying on the use of simple language and didactic style, the book was meant to be addressed to a young audience. Among monographic essays and biographies about Stoppani see Enzo Petrini, Antonio Stoppani (Florence: Le Monnier, 1956); Antonio Stoppani tra scienza e letteratura: atti del Convegno nazionale di studi, Lecco 29-30 November 1991, ed. by Gian Luigi Dacco (Lecco, 1993); M. Giuseppina Pala, Critica letteraria e scienze nelle scuole di fine Ottocento (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1989).

²⁸ See Giuseppe Galasso, 'Lo stereotipo del napoletano e le sue variazioni regionali', in L'altra Europa. Per un'antropologia storica del Mezzogiorno d'Italia (Milan: Mondadori, 1982), pp. 143-190.

military reports:²⁹ at an 'emic' level a 'metonymic freezing' allowed the 'Southern species' to be epitomized in the Neapolitan type. This identification of the whole of southern Italy with Naples continued even after the Second World War.³⁰

After the Risorgimento, Italian travellers were animated by a certain faith in the future and by the certainty of being the heirs of a historical process which – despite its failures – was felt as nearing consolidation. After 1861 the interest in the present of the nation led people travelling around the peninsula to undertake an analytical analysis of its multiform face. For the Italians, difference was mainly a matter of regional belonging. Apart from its Hellenic and Roman past, the South of Italy hardly acquired any positive recognition in the formation of the recently born nation; it was rather depicted as a chaotic, violent and anarchic area. On the contrary, the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance were seen as the positive, ideal roots of the new national identity.³¹ Thus, through the eyes of travellers and tourists from northern and central Italian regions, Florence or Piedmont were the main depositories of the hope of a new Italy, while Rome could be deliberately included or excluded from the elastic boundaries of the Mezzogiorno. As Benedetto Croce commented in 1925, apart from 'natural beauties and ruins of Greek and Roman antiquity', in the South, no traces of the 'glorious monuments of Italian history' could be found by 'the travellers and tourists coming from the northern and central regions: 'the South is almost extraneous to the second wave of civilisation (the first being that of ancient Rome) which radiated from the

²⁹ See Galasso, 'Lo stereotipo del napoletano', and *Il Regno di Napoli. Il Mezzogiorno angioino e aragonese, 1266-1494* (Turin: Utet, 1992), pp. 1-12.

³⁰ With regard to stereotypes and prejudices on Naples and Southern Italy see Benedetto Croce, 'Il Paradiso abitato da diavoli', in his *Uomini e cose della vecchia Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 1927), pp. 68-86. Also for the reinforcement of the stereotype of the Neapolitan type through theatrical representations cfr. the essay by Benedetto Croce, 'Il tipo del napoletano nella commedia', in his *Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento* (Bari: Laterza 1962; 1st edn 1911), pp. 261-300.

³¹ Gabriella Gribaudi, 'Images of the South: The Mezzogiorno as seen by Insiders and Outsiders', in *The New History of the Italian South: The Mezzogiorno Revisited*, ed. by Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), pp. 83-111.

Italian peninsula between the beginning of the communes and the height of the Renaissance'. 32

Renato Fucini, author of a book on Naples considered to be a classical example of Italian travel writing, could not avoid using derogatory terms and a grotesque tone in his account. Frequent images of animals used to describe the locals and comparisons with Eastern countries are examples of the distance he maintained with the people he met and the places he visited. Moreover, for the Tuscan Fucini, who visited Naples in the spring of 1877, the chaotic city with its Spanish and Bourbon past (among other dynasties which ruled over it) was depicted as a region of worthless and graceless architectural remains.³³ This kind of image was repeatedly confirmed, but also frequently contradicted, in other travel texts, showing the difficulty of drawing a uniform 'internal' representation of Italy.

In the same period examples of visual production and promotion of the South as a distant, picturesque world, connected to ideas of an Italian cultural identity, can be detected in the *Illustrazione Italiana*. In this magazine, the Mezzogiorno was offered as an imaginary source for the aestheticising sensibility of the middle-class. Definitions of 'sicilianità' or 'meridionalità' were attempted, and pictures reproduced under labels such as 'Tipi siciliani' ('Sicilian types'), aimed at bestowing a 'second-class *italianità*' to the Sicilian people. Moreover, by using racial terms, and building comparisons with images representing eastern 'types', the historical links between Sicily and the Orient were reinforced. As will be repeated later, in *Sicily and England* it is possible to observe the author's use of stereotyped images on Sicily and, at times, her

³² Benedetto Croce, *History of the Kingdom of Naples*, trans. by Frances Frenaye (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970; 1st edn Bari: Laterza, 1925), p. 232.

³³ See Renato Fucini (Neri Tanfucio), *Napoli a occhio nudo* (Florence 1878; repr. Turin: Einaudi. 1976), and Gribaudi.

³⁴ Dickie, especially pp. 83-119.

condescending attitude towards Sicilian culture which demonstrates how Scalia was influenced by both Italian and Northern European representations of the South.

Finally, in the case of Northern images of the Mezzogiorno, as well as in that of Scalia's main work, one should bear in mind that representation has a functional and fictional dimension usually linked to both production and reception. Representation functions as a means for the production of personal identity and of images of familiar or alien cultures. At the same time, at the level of production, representation refracts a meaning that has already been constructed. The images of Sicily which are created in any texts are, therefore, always deformed. This is why culture and identity can be seen as fictions which, in the act of reception, are perceived as 'real'. They become the base for survival, as well as for political and ethnic unity. In fact, in all cases (either between northern Europe and Italy, or between Italy and its South, or even within the Southern territories themselves), ways and strategies of constructing 'otherness' are dependent on a fraught attempt to emphasize and reinforce individual, group and/or national identities.

ii. Re-drawing political boundaries: women and their Risorgimento

The nineteenth-century Italian Risorgimento with its theme of national struggle for freedom from foreign occupation, re-awoke interest in Italy among British politicians and intellectuals. Victorians of all social positions saw many of the events happening on the Continent in their own struggles and aspirations. This was evident in the high regard with which the British working class held Garibaldi during his visit to England in 1864. English radical and liberal women and men saw Garibaldi as a heroic military leader who contributed in creating a unified Italy by liberating the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from the oppression of the Bourbons, and by placing its governance under the Sardinian king, Victor Emanuel. For the English, Garibaldi was also a romantic

projection of their hopes and fears for a new Italy. He was invested with all the significant traits of a bourgeois Englishman whose heroic role of freeing the Italians from their oppressors would teach southern men and women to act more responsibly and moderately; in other words, to be more like the English. The image of a liberated Italy united to England by communal interests spread all over Britain. At the same time travel writing made middle-class men and women more self-conscious about their Englishness. The English defined themselves by romantically recasting Italy as both Self and Other, and defining Italy in terms of what was similar and different from England and Englishness. Moreover, they invented Italy's present and reinvented its historical past.³⁵

The Risorgimento, and the people who participated in it, significantly influenced Tina Scalia's views. As a woman, she could also identify with her mother's and grandmother's contribution to social and political events. It should be stressed that the Italian cause conquered the imagination and re-awakened the political awareness of many foreign bourgeois women. A conspicuous number of them contributed to the Italian struggle by promoting and supporting Mazzini and Garibaldi in their own country and in Italy; they did this by means of their active participation in military campaigns as nurses and propagandists, as well as through their writing. Philanthropy was a means by which the feminist movement made its way through Victorian society. Julie Salis Schwabe, Mrs Chambers, Sara Nathan, or the upper-class Lady Shaftesbury, Lady Palmerston, Mrs Gladstone and the Duchess of Argyll, as well as Harriet Hamilton King, the Ashurst sisters, and Jessie White Mario are some of the several British and Anglo-Italian women who joined and founded voluntary associations and

³⁵ Maura O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 1-11. See also Jeremy Black, 'Italy and the Grand Tour: The British Experience in the Eighteenth Century', in *L'Odeporica/Hodoeporics: On Travel Literature*, ed. by Luigi Monga, special issue of *Annali d'Italianistica*, XIV (1996), pp. 532-541, and Franco Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', in *Storia*

societies, organized medical aid for Garibaldi's troops, and became involved in a variety of radical campaigns in support of Italian republicanism.³⁶ The Italian struggle for independence, as well as post-Risorgimento social and political problems, represented more than an occasion to be charitable for many of these women. Whether remaining in their native country, or travelling and moving to Italy, or even linking their lives sentimentally or intellectually to those of Italian patriots, these women decided to go beyond the domestic boundaries, politically and nationally. Their experience has been interpreted as a search for their own identity, but also as an 'initiation' into love: love as knowledge of themselves, and love for (the) others.³⁷

Within this context we can have a look at some Italian women who got involved in post-Risorgimental social problems, particularly in those of the South of Italy. An interesting case of an Italian woman's journey to Sicily and related construction of identity can be seen in Queen Margaret's travels. Queen Margaret and her husband travelled around Italy to gain popularity and to be recognized as the symbol of Italian Unification. Constructions of national and female identity were at the core of the Queen's visits to the South. On the one hand, Queen Margaret needed to present herself and appear as a model for Italian women at the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, as part of the nation building process, through her journeys the Queen needed to address her subjects and to create a specific image of the monarchy for them. Wearing regional costumes to show her appreciation of different cultures and traditions, as well as performing repetitive theatrical gestures and uttering simple words in front of

d'Italia. Dal primo Settecento all'Unità, ed. by Ruggiero Romano and Corrado Vivanti, 6 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1972), III, pp. 985-1481 (pp. 1330-1331).

³⁶ Examples of associations are the 'Ladies Association for the Relief of the Sick and the Wounded, Windows and Orphans of Garibaldi's Followers and the Sufferers at Palermo and Other Places', founded in London in 1860; the 'Ladies Committee of Birmingham', and the 'Garibaldi Penny Funds'. See Anne Summers, *Angels and Citizens: British Women and Military Nurses* 1854-1914 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), pp. 132-133.

³⁷ Liana Borghi et al, 'Viaggio intorno al viaggio', in *Viaggio e scrittura: le straniere nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, ed. by Liana Borghi, Nicoletta Livi Bacci, Uta Treder (Florence: Libreria delle Donne, 1988), pp. 9-19 (p. 18).

crowds; showing a maternal stance towards children and women, as well as a religious devotion in the presence of representatives of the Catholic Church, Queen Margaret tried to communicate visible signs of mediation between the monarchy and the varied Italian population.³⁸ In this case, then, drawing attention to Sicily and its culture was part of a politics of images aimed at constructing a representation of the sovereigns, functional to the difficult process of political integration. Thus, on the one hand the journey through Southern Italy was the means for a public representation of power; a strategy meant to 'translate' the monarchy for the people. Yet, on the other hand, the attitudes displayed by the Queen can be seen as an attempt to 'translate' the South, and Sicily, for the mainland, and to make political and social sense of it.

At a moment when many women were concerned about making the transition from the private to the public sphere, the events of Italian Unification made the latter accessible to them in a particularly exciting and glamorous way. These women attempted to link their personal lives – marriage, companionship and social relations – to their political commitment. They not only rejected the conception of public and private life as separate and gendered spheres, but also refused to conceive of a politics confined to the public sphere, and consequently excluding them. In the language of nineteenth-century Italy the word 'feminism' was still not in use. Women rejected efforts to render their politics and their perspective a lesser part of existing, or even emergent, political claims. It was a stance which not only challenged attempts to minimise their importance and silence their voices, but one which also questioned the difficult dividing line between individual and collective identity. In seeking to find points of consonance between private life and public commitment, women coherently

³⁸ See Catherine Brice, 'I viaggi della Regina Margherita', in *Altrove: viaggi di donne dall'antichità al Novecento*, ed. by Dinora Corsi (Rome: Viella, 1999), pp. 201-214.

claimed autonomy and action.³⁹ It is also through writing that these women perpetuated the myths of the Italian Risorgimento and re-drew the boundaries of politics. They wrote biographies of patriots and politicians, translated political essays, penned propagandistic pamphlets, and produced their own memoirs and autobiographical writings. Some of these British and Anglo-Italian women are: Josephine Butler, and her *An Autobiographical Memoir* (London 1908), the philanthropist Frances Power Cobbe with her travel book *Italics: Brief Notes on Politics, People, and Places in Italy* (London, 1864) and Emilie Ashurst Venturi, who wrote Mazzini's biography, *Joseph Mazzini: A Memoir* (London, 1875) and translated into English his *I Doveri dell'Uomo*.

Often they critically dealt with emerging topics, such as the Southern Question and poverty. The ones who went to Italy tried to mould and change their fellow citizens' ideas about the Italian state. Margaret Fuller Ossoli, for example, addressed most of her work to American readers. At other times these women showed special attention to issues not always accurately covered in the national press, such as women's and children's conditions, education and prisons. Particularly remarkable are the works by Jessie White Mario, published both in England and Italy, and her numerous articles – published in the American journal *Nation*, and in the Italian *Nuova Antologia* – many of which dealt with the problems of the South of Italy.

³⁹ Philippa Levine, Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp.1-11 and 27.

⁴⁰ Mary Suzanne Schriber, Writing Home: American Women Abroad 1830-1920 (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p. 136. The author distinguishes four forms of 'travel-aspolitics'. In the first one 'national politics is given pride of place' and the traveller exhorts her compatriots to political positions and actions. In the second form the 'woman problem' is included in the text in order to influence domestic and foreign policy. In the third form the author's purpose is to influence the culture's attitude towards gender in order to expand the boundaries of domesticity. In the fourth form of 'travel-as-politics' the 'politics of the independent woman travelling alone' is related to other various gender issues.

⁴¹ Jessie White Mario (Portsmouth 1832-Florence 1906) was brought up in Dissenting and Non-

ri Jessie White Mario (Portsmouth 1832-Florence 1906) was brought up in Dissenting and Non-conformist circles in England. Journalist, writer, teacher and nurse, she was involved in the activities of the 'Friends of Italy' and supported Mazzini. She married the Italian patriot Alberto Mario. Some of her works are La miseria in Napoli (Florence, 1877), Garibaldi e i suoi tempi (Milan, 1887), The Birth of Modern Italy (London, 1909). See Rossella Certini, Jessie White Mario una giornalista educatrice tra liberalismo inglese e democrazia italiana (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998), and Elizabeth Adams Daniels, Jessie White Mario: Risorgimento Revolutionary (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972). It is interesting

iii. Writing history as a need to live life

Jessie White Mario died in 1906. One year later *Sicily and England* was published in London. After the clamorous events leading to the Unification of Italy, Tina Scalia, following in other women's footsteps – and having also had her mother and grandmother to look up to – re-delineated the boundaries of politics and society through a writing which unified the public and private spheres, collective history and self-representation. Yet unlike Risorgimento women, Scalia recorded the Italian struggle for unification retrospectively and passively. Instead of physically moving to search for identity in the Italian events, Scalia travelled in time, digging into her family's past. For the author, writing becomes the expression of a life need: through it she can dig into her personal history and assert her feminine presence in political and social life. As she eventually explained:

My Sicily and England: 'un besoin de vie vecu' in the turmoil of great events. To have been in touch with those who helped to make these events; this was my excuse for it being published.⁴²

Scalia's writing on history provided a motivating factor in terms of writing on life. It also responded to contemporary gender constraints. For a long time, autobiography and biography had been considered as the main genres suitable for women, even when the authors were politically and socially active. Through these two genres women could put their lives into print. In the second half of the nineteenth century, rejecting the conventional image of their little or no involvement with public and political life, women started to recognize the limits of those genres 'in terms of gender-specific and ontological constraints'. Like other contemporary women, Scalia must have felt the

to note that her name can be found in both bibliographies of foreign travellers in Italy and Sicily, and in some bibliographies of nineteenth-century Italian women writers. See for example, Salvo Di Matteo, *Viaggiatori stranieri in Sicilia dagli Arabi alla seconda metà del XX secolo* (Palermo: ISSPE, 2000) and Letizia Panizza and Sharon Wood, eds, *A History of Women's Writing in Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴² Tina Scalia Whitaker, Fifty Years of a Life.

⁴³ Pauline Polkey, 'Reading History through Autobiography: politically active women of late nineteenth-century Britain and their personal narratives', *Women's History Review*, vol. 9, 3, (2000), 483-500.

urge to see her individual story published together with collective history: a self-representation in a historical context. *Sicily and England* then reveals the author's desire to be written into Italian and British history, at a time and place when women were largely being written out of history by men. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when history was beginning to develop into a professional discipline, historically-minded bluestockings started to get more involved in historiography than before. They had access to libraries, archives and learned societies. However, a certain number of women writers seemed to avoid any involvement in political history (or ancient history), and prefer minor areas of study, such as historical biography, stories of life at court, society, 'morals and manners' and the history of art. Others turned to travel history, editing and translation of documents.⁴⁴

In the same period, in Italy the new figure of the female writer started to emerge. This happened, in particular, in the 1870s and 80s, thanks to the alliance between information and publishing, which created a more homogenous and powerful form of literary consumption. The emergence of novels by women on the publishing market happened later than in France, Germany and England. However, after Unification, women writers could distribute their works through books and journals, two areas which, in the '80s, were no longer rigorously separated.⁴⁵

Women could frequently move into specific fields thanks to fathers and husbands who took positive views of the importance of educating women. At other times their middle-class families cultivated bookish interests and were in contact with

⁴⁴ Although male hostility to women's involvement in historiography has always been present, D. R. Woolf disagrees with the rhetorical assumption that women's achievements resulted only from male exclusion, stressing that causes and circumstances have been more varied. For this reason women's experiences in history writing need to be more thoroughly historicized. D.R. Woolf, 'A feminine Past? Gender, Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 102, 3 (1997), 645-679 (in particular pp. 676-678). Consider also Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, eds, *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1740* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1992).

⁴⁵ An example of an initiative to incentivize women's writing is Treves' 'Parco autrici' to which women could contribute with articles, novels and texts on good manners, as well as socio-moral treatises.

current social and political debates. 46 A number of foreign women travelling and living in Italy used to combine their travel diaries, journals and autobiographies with historical erudition. For example, travelling in Southern Italy in 1889, Janet Ross – described by Scalia Whitaker as the 'queen of Florentine expatriates' - published The Land of Manfred. Julia Kavanagh's reputation increased thanks to her historiographic and biographical works, such as Woman in France During the Eighteenth Century (London 1850) and Women of Christianity, Exemplary for Acts of Piety and Charity (London, 1852). Before publishing Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily, Frances Minto Elliot wrote The Priest Miracles of Rome. A Memoir of the Present Time (London, 1851), a historical review of the Saxon period and of the early English Church.⁴⁷ Others followed scientific and political affairs, humanitarian and social movements. Their interests ranged from crusades against vivisection and campaigns in favour of votes for women, to art history and religious subjects. For example, in Rome, the prolific learned historian Mrs Anna Brownell Jameson published her masterpiece Sacred and Legendary Art (London, 1848); she later followed it with Legends of the Monastic Orders (London, 1850) and Legends of the Madonna as Represented in the Fine Arts (London, 1852). She was also author of historical biographies, such as her two volumes on Memoirs of Celebrated Female Sovereigns (London, 1831) and Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters (London, 1845).48

In the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, upper-middle class Anglo-Italian women took advantage of their international contacts with leading personalities to write memoirs, historical biographies or family histories. Thus,

Rohan Maitzen, "This Feminine Preserve": Historical Biographies by Victorian Women', Victorian Studies, 38 (1995), 371-393 (pp. 373-374).
 Frances Minto Elliot was also the author of Old Court Life in France (London, 1873) and Old Court

⁴⁷ Frances Minto Elliot was also the author of *Old Court Life in France* (London, 1873) and *Old Court Life in Spain* (London, 1893). At the beginning of the century Cornelia Knight (Lady Hamilton's companion in Sicily during Nelson's military enterprises on the island) was the author of *Marcus Flaminius or A View of the Military Political and Social Life of the Romans* published in London in 1808.

Margaret Symonds, John Addington Symonds's daughter, wrote *Days Spent on a Doge's Farm. A Memory of Countess Pisani* (London, 1908); Countess Valeria Gigliucci wrote *Clara Novello's Reminiscences. Compiled by Her Daughter Contessa Valeria Gigliucci. With a Memoir by Arthur D. Coleridge* (London, 1910); Teresa Duchess of San Teodoro was the author of her *Memoirs* (London, 1929).⁴⁹ Friendly male mentors often provided personal advice and support, facilitating women's access to wider literacy and the academic field. At the end of the nineteenth century learned women were already more easily allowed to have access to British libraries and archives than before.⁵⁰ Tina Scalia's friends Ronny Gower and Frank Hird encouraged her to write about her family history and the interesting entourage within which she grew up.⁵¹ Additionally, both in London and in Italy, Tina Scalia had access to a varied, stimulating cultural world, thanks to her parents' acquaintances first, and to her salon in her mansion in Palermo later. Contacts with men of letters and politicians, as well as with other like-minded women and writers also gave her access to research material.

iii.i A journey in time

Scalia's book is made up of twelve chapters and contains two illustrations.⁵² From the beginning, *Sicily and England* was conceived as a memoir addressed to the author's

⁴⁸ In the same period Mary Somerville was the author of *On the Connection of the Physical Sciences* (London, 1834) and of *Physical Geography* (London, 1848), which were translated into Italian and ran into four editions.

⁴⁹ Later, Duchess of Sermoneta published *The Locks of Norbury. The Story of a Remarkable Family in the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries* (London, 1940), and her illustrated reminiscences *Sparkle Distant Worlds* (London, 1947).

⁽London, 1947).

Nosemary Ann Mitchell, "The busy daughters of Clio": women writers of history from 1820 to 1880, Women's History Review, 7, 1 (1998), 107-134.

⁵¹ Ronald Gower Sutherland (1845-1916) was a friend of the Whitakers and a habitual guest of their house. He was a dilettante, artist and the model for Lord Henry in Oscar Wilde's *Portrait of Dorian Gray*. In 1888, his monument to Shakespeare was inaugurated in Stratford. Frank Hird (1873-1937) was a journalist for the *Morning Post*, and Gower's lover.

52 Apart from a 'Historical Introduction', the other chapters are: 'Early Italian Patriots', 'Some of my

mother's friends in early life', 'My father and the revolution of 1848', 'The end of Sicily's independence', three chapters on 'The exiles in England and their friends', 'Friends of the exiles in the musical world', 'Friends of the exiles in Paris', 'Palermo from 1849 to 1860', 'Personal reminiscences', and 'Some reflections of modern Italy'. The illustrations – one in the frontispiece and the other facing p.

daughters. The process of mixing historical narrative and family reminiscences is soon made clear in the 'Introduction' to the book:

My reminiscences are only disconnected memories which, though carefully authenticated, have no literary pretensions, nor, as I have said, do they purport to give a continuous history of those times. They were not originally intended for the critical eye of the public, but merely for my daughters and a few intimate friends.⁵³

And in the first chapter the author clarifies:

In order that my readers may realise more clearly the condition of Sicily at the time of the revolution of 1848, as well as the many links which bound the island to England, I have thought it advisable to preface these reminiscences of my family by a sketch of the political events which produced the several risings against the Bourbons and culminated in the insurrection of 1848, when so many of our patriots were driven into exile after maintaining their island's independence for a year and a half against the power of Naples.⁵⁴

She also stresses the aim of her book in the final paragraph of the work:

(...) Italy must and will live, and the memory to the glorious revolutions, which gave her independence, must ever remain as a precious inheritance for the descendants of those who fought and suffered for their country. This is the reason which prompted me to write these memoirs of their grandparents for my girls, that they may ever remember the gratitude Italy owes to the silent help of the English nation (if not to its Government) towards the Unification, and the hospitality, sympathy, and kindness with which the exiles were treated in that truly great and liberal country.⁵⁵

In *Sicily and England* facts, people, and circumstances are selected and accommodated in order to fulfil the purpose of presenting to the reader a scenario which depicts the state of Sicily, and of Italian exiles in London, during the Italian Risorgimento. At the same time, the author's main goal is more specific: 'to point out the many connecting links that have existed for centuries between England and Sicily'. ⁵⁶ In this way, Scalia's reminiscences constitute yet another contribution which helps to document the various British representations of the romance of the Italian Risorgimento, and the ways Italy had been constructed and imagined by middle-class British men and women. On the other hand, the author's wish to see Sicily internationally identified as part of Italy, and

^{291 –} are two paintings: The First Meeting Between Garibaldi and King Victor Emanuel, on the Battle-field Near Teano, and The Last Meeting Between Garibaldi and King Victor Emanuel, at the Palace of the Quirinal at Rome.

⁵³ Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, 'Preface', pp. vii-viii.

⁵⁴ Scalia Whitaker, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Scalia Whitaker, pp. 363-364.

historically connected to Britain, can be interpreted ontologically. It is a necessity for her to find a (politically recognized) connection between her Southern and Northern Italian roots, as well as to link two cultural identities which met and clashed within herself: the Italian and the English.

It can be observed that a game of identification and un-identification repetitively occurs in Scalia's writing. She feels close to her father's compatriots. Often, she identifies with the Italians as a whole; sometimes she identifies with the English, and at other times she keeps her distance from the Sicilians. Remembering her childhood, she writes about her Italian upbringing in Victorian London:

where elders reigned supreme and children never spoke until they were spoken to. Mercifully my parents were not of that strict opinion and I was permitted all the freedom of speech if not of action the average Italian child has always enjoyed until quite lately.⁵⁷

In another passage she identifies with the Italians, referred to as 'we', although she feels gratitude for the English intervention:

Looking back dispassionately on the bitter disappointment of the hopes of the Sicilians in Lord Palmerston in 1849, and recalling to my memory all that I have heard from my parents of the events of those days, I see that, notwithstanding the disillusion, we of Italy must feel the deepest gratitude towards that great man. (...) His courage in allowing arms and ammunition to be supplied to the Sicilian insurgents from England can never be forgotten by Italy.⁵⁸

On the other hand, at times she seems to distance herself from her Sicilian origin, as in this passage from Sicily and England:

My father's sense of humour was unusual for a Sicilian, as the children of that race take themselves and the world around them very seriously as a rule. His eleven years in England gave him a thorough knowledge of the language, although he always spoke English with a strong accent. He was a delightful raconteur, and especially enjoyed telling stories of English people and English life.⁵⁹

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⁵⁶ Scalia Whitaker, 'Preface', p. vii.

⁵⁷ Scalia Whitaker, *Fifty Years of a Life*. It should be pointed out that in this memoir, as in other private writings, Scalia Whitaker's English does not always sound correct. This can be both because of the informal nature of the diary and of problems she might have had with the language.

⁵⁸ Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, pp. 360-361.

⁵⁹ Scalia Whitaker, pp. 177-178.

The same attitudes transpire in pages written in her old age, when she remembers her first impressions of Palermo. She perceives the Sicilian culture from the point of view of an outsider, stressing the difference between Sicily, Britain and the rest of Italy:

Thus from that narrow street I learnt the first words of this most interesting Sicilian dialect. Thus I learnt to know my fathers' compatriots, so different from any other part of Italy except perhaps compatriots of Calabria. Thus fascinated coming from the island proceedings of Great Britain's people, thus did I spend many hours living their lives, more the life of the oriental than the Latin.⁶⁰

At various points she identifies with the English, as in these passages from her Diary:

It is sad to think how the British colony here, and generally throughout Sicily, has dwindled gradually away and is now almost non-existent. Throughout Italy, however, I understand it is the same, but after all I suppose one cannot complain if the Italians now find they can do without us.

I am proud of being a British subject, and love and admire beyond words the country of my birth in exile. I resent those English-born persons, married to Italians and living in Rome, who would dare to hide the nationality of their birth. I consider my object in living is to prove that Britain is Italy's natural ally.⁶¹

In all these works Scalia moves from one perspective to the other; 'us', 'we', 'that race' indicate identification with, or distancing from, this or that cultural group alternatively.

In *Sicily and England* the image of Sicily is created through a journey in time. For the author, Sicily is the land related to her family history, and an 'unfortunate' land whose history is re-written and re-constructed through its links with another island, Britain. Thus, like Mary Charlton in her letters, Scalia also depicts Sicily as oppressed by 'dark times of tyranny and royal oppression'. 'Expensive toy to England during the occupation', ⁶² Sicily is used and tormented by merchants, modern tourists, politicians, soldiers and kings. Hints at traditions and customs are sporadically present in Scalia's private memoirs, but it can be observed that they are mainly used as pretexts to recall something else, to talk about social life or to introduce people. ⁶³ Traditions do not really

⁶⁰ Scalia Whitaker, Fifty Years of a Life.

⁶¹ Scalia Whitaker, Diary, Malfitano, 10 March 1933, and Rome 6 April 1941.

⁶² Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, p.53.

⁶³ This also occurs in her private writing. Thus, for instance, in *Fifty Years of a Life*, talking of the Holy Week makes her remember a 'curious' procession during which the statue of the Madonna is made to meet with that of Christ. As discussed in the previous chapter this tradition is also mentioned by Louise Hamilton Caico, but for Scalia Whitaker it is really an occasion to speak of Princess Beatrice's visit to

interest the author and, if mentioned, they are described superficially; they are mainly small wedges of her memory which help the author to insert new facts in the narration. Apart from a few notes meant to offer linguistic or historical explanations of unfamiliar words and facts, generally Sicilian customs are not analysed and explained. Moreover, people move and behave according to images already fixed in the mind of the observer, who has recorded specific pictures of Sicily through stories told by others, read in travel books and seen in plays. For example in her late memoir, *Fifty Years of a Life*, Scalia Whitaker wrote:

Nor is the Sicily and the Sicilian people much changed now after 50 years. It has been made known to the world at large in its tragic side, by the great Sicilian actor Grasso who with his company had such great success in London. (...) the jealousy of the man, the oriental submission of the woman to him. Their wonderful power of gesticulation making the subject almost clear by mere pantomime, without understanding the words!⁶⁵

And earlier, in *Sicily and England*, images of the island are frequently constructed through references to travel books, as in the following passage:

General Cockburn, in the preface to his excellence work describing a journey he made in 1810 and 1811 which included Sicily and Malta, exhorts England to keep the former island because of its fertility and resources. As for the people, he says they are 'naturally good, but perverted through mismanagement'; and further on, 'Sicilians, if well governed, and allowed trade, and a fair use of the benefits which nature has so bountifully bestowed upon them in climate and soil, would become attached to their rulers.' (...) The book he wrote describing this tour is one of the most valuable aids to the study of the condition and history of Sicily at that period.⁶⁶

Palermo. Unable to see the procession because of the crowd, the Princess gave orders to re-enact the scene a second time. Although the procession was a re-creation, Scalia Whitaker claims it was nonetheless able to generate the same emotional outpouring and theatrical reactions among the people as the original performance.

⁶⁴ An early attempt at making sense of Sicilian customs – through memories – can be found in a note in Italian and entitled 'Prime impressioni'. This was written when she first arrived in Palermo in 1872. Tina Scalia tried to give a linguistic explanation of two Sicilian words: the way widows were called 'cattive', from 'captivity', and the name of a Sicilian dish: 'Ricordo che mia madre appena arrivati noi, aveva intervistato una donna di servizio, e che le chiese particolari. Questa poveretta rispose "sognu cattiva". Mia madre che non conosceva il dialetto rimase molto sorpresa e redarguì la poveretta. Si chiarì l'equivoco, perché in siciliano "cattiva" vuol dire "vedova"! (...) Così ricordo un piatto siciliano, a fine pranzo era chiamato "Conighuo all'argentiera" che non era di coniglio, ma "rare bit" che somiglia in inglese a boccone raro – non "rabbitt savoury" – che si suol servire a fine pranzo, credo su un piatto argentato'. Tina Scalia Whitaker, 'Appunti', Envelope 1, Whitaker Archive.

Tina Scalia Whitaker, Fifty Years of a Life.
 Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, p. 36.

In her main work she quotes John Galt, Lady Morgan, Lady Blessington and Brydone together with officials and diplomats who visited Sicily during both the Napoleonic Wars and the events of the unification. The author relies on travel books and citation, consequently, legitimizing their representation of reality.

Therefore, it can be argued that despite her Sicilian origins, the author does not really identify with Sicilian culture. Besides, it can also be said that for Scalia, Sicily is her father's land, and although she showed admiration for him, it is clear that her affection for, and identification with, her Anglo-Florentine mother was stronger. From this perspective, Sicily and England can be read as an attempt to justify and explain to the reader – and above all to herself – Scalia's link with the island. Additionally, for the author the book is an occasion to construct and unify her identity; it is an instrument she uses to find a solution to her hybridity: Corinne's unresolved transit between Italy and England, between father and mother. This can help to explain her identification with the oppression and struggle for liberation of the island. In other words, the author tries to overcome that fragmentariness which is both of history and life. In so doing, the past and present of Sicily, as well as the author's past and present, cannot be separated from the rest of Italy and from Europe. The author needs to accomplish this 'unification' through a re-composition and re-construction of historical and personal facts and events. From this perspective, writing is, for the author, a way to identify herself as a woman, an Anglo-Italian and a writer in relation to the Other (English and Italian women and men, family, friends and audience). Her representation/interpretation of history originates from a projection of her idealized Self onto the Other.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'objective', 'factual' accounts of unknown worlds relayed through social observation are accompanied, with increasing frequency, by accounts of individual experience and 'inward temporal forms

of memory and recollection'.⁶⁷ Political and social interest, as well as moral commitment, drove women to little known Italian realities, which they used to build up collective and personal identity, as well as to offer access to a deep strata of personal life through introspective writing. Another particular case of writing as an existential need and as means to help the female author to understand, or make sense of events for herself, can be found in a work by one of the few Italian women who visited Sicily at the beginning of the twentieth century. One year after the publication of *Sicily and England*, in 1908 an earthquake devastated the Sicilian town of Messina and part of the region of Calabria. Descriptions of desolation in the wake of the disaster were included in some Italian and foreign travelogues of the time. The Italian 'feminist' writer Sibilla Aleramo recorded her impressions after a humanitarian visit to help survivors in the areas destroyed by the earthquake.⁶⁸ In the form of a dialogue between herself, 'a woman', and the muse Psyche, Aleramo produced a text in which the Self emerges over the description of the others:

Una donna - E pensa, anima, a quell'altro tormento di veder la lentezza e la povertà dei soccorsi, di vedere che chi s'era arrogato il privilegio di dirigere la vita d'una nazione lasciava ora, per impotenza, agonizzare due province di essa sotto la sola assistenza pietosa di pochi fratelli d'altre terre e intralciava l'iniziativa individuale ovunque spuntasse! Non avevo bisogno di quest'atroce parodia di governo per persuadermi nel mio anarchismo, e tuttavia, tu mi credi non è vero? Avrei accettato con gioia una smentita! Che cosa devon aver sofferto coloro che avevan fiducia nell'autorità organizzata! C'è da compiangerli a lor volta. E una specie di compianto ironico va anche a tutti quelli che si son impietositi alle notizie della catastrofe, che han sentito per la prima volta un brivido di cuore – e forse era soprattutto di paura. Occorreva un disastro sismico di queste proporzioni perché essi vedessero gli aspetti della miseria altrui, il volto delle creature senza tetto senza paura e senza avvenire.

Michael Kowalewski, 'Introduction: The Modern Literature of Travel', in Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel, ed. by M. Kowalewski (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 1-15 (p. 9). See also Casey Blanton, Travel Writing: The Self and the World (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), pp. 15-19.
 Novelist, poet, diarist, letter writer, polemicist and journalist, Sibilla Aleramo (1876-1960) was a

Novelist, poet, diarist, letter writer, polemicist and journalist, Sibilla Aleramo (1876-1960) was a controversial figure of the late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Italian literary set. Aleramo's first and best-known autobiographical novel, *Una donna* – published in 1906 – is generally considered as a landmark in the struggle for equality of the sexes and women's emancipation. For some studies on Aleramo's writing see Franco Contorbia, Lea Melandri et al, eds, *Sibilla Aleramo. Coscienza e scrittura* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1986), and Lucienne Kroha, 'Strategies of Intertextuality in Sibilla Aleramo's *Una donna*', in *The Woman Writer in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy. Gender and the Formation of Literary Identity*, (Lewiston – Lampeter: E. Mellen, 1992), pp. 123-142.

⁶⁹ Sibilla Aleramo, *Dialogo con Psiche*, ed. by Bruna Conti (Palermo: Novecento, 1991), pp. 25-26. The *Dialogo* boasts a first-person-singular voice belonging at once to the author herself and to every woman

The 'Others' – although not as essentially Sicilian or Southern Italian – are here felt as victims of fate, and of an inefficient political power. It can be argued then, that 'otherness' is produced by the enigma of the cataclysm, and the miserable conditions and poverty of people in general. The earthquake reinforces the idea of the fragility of human progress. Moreover, Psyche represents the specular image of the author. In Aleramo's work it is possible to detect the author's ability to transform her experience into a literary event, relying on the filter of a lyrical and emphatic writing style. Remaining centre-stage both during the report of what she saw and in her meditations upon life, Aleramo used her writing as a vehicle for personal reflections, spiritual consolation, as well as for verbal attacks on modern society and politics. In both Whitaker's memoir and Aleramo's *Dialogo*, the struggle and the tragedy of others become an excuse for self-discovery and for turning the (home) reader into a participant in this process. The two different encounters with Sicily, then, are linked together by the same outcome: the construction of a woman's identity.

iv. Narrating public and private past

Tina Scalia's work, with its hybridity, must be seen as a text which incorporates two genres, both problematic to codify: memoir and historical narrative. The former is usually classified as a minor literary genre. On the other hand, historical narrative is often at the heart of debates on the relationship between historical writing and literature. The attempt to determine the links between historical narratives and other narrative forms dates back to Aristotle and for a long time the relation of historiography to

⁽a leitmotiv present in most of Aleramo's works). Aleramo's first humanitarian journey with the journalist and writer Giovanni Cena was concluded on January 1909. In mid-October of the same year they travelled together again with the socialist intellectual Gaetano Salvemini and Giuseppina Lemaire; their task was to write a report on the condition of schools in the South of Italy ten months after the earthquake, for the 'Associazione fiorentina per l'istruzione popolare nel Mezzogiorno'. Cena wrote reports denouncing the lack of social and political assistance which were published in the *Nuova Antologia*, while Aleramo wrote *Dialogo con Psiche*. See Bruna Conti, 'Introduzione', in *Dialogo con Psiche*, pp. 7-14.

literature was not questioned, as the former was considered as a branch of the latter. It was toward the end of the eighteenth century, when the institution of literature began to change, that history started to be seen as something different from literature. More clearly, the separation between the two was institutionalized with the dissolution of the 'republic of letters' (where Enlightened and early-romantic historians used to mix and share common experiences with novelists, poets, philosophers, political thinkers, economists, scientists, and statesmen). During the nineteenth century, history withdrew more and more to the university, and history, like literary scholarship, started to belong to professors, rather than to poets and men of letters. Scalia's text combines two processes which are interrelated and, at the same time, distinct: personal memory and collective history. Each contains components of the other.

In Scalia's book public events are incorporated into the author's family past and become annexed to her family history. At the same time, family history stands at the heart of Scalia's understanding of the recent past; it is an instrument through which political events that happened in Italy, and Sicily in particular, could be interpreted, tamed, or better 'domesticated'. In her book, Scalia's need to include numerous details of the political events of her time is mainly dictated by the unique situation of her family – in constant contact with patriots, politicians and artists – and, consequently, by the impossibility of separating her family's past from history. In this sense, *Sicily and England* fulfils one of the conventions identifying the genre of memoirs. In fact, a memoir in the nineteenth century was expected to break down the line between public and private by showing the private aspect of public affairs, or the public manifestations

⁷⁰ Lionel Gossman, 'History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification', in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, ed. by Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp. 3-39. See also Albert Cook, *History/Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For nineteenth-century European intellectual history and the methodological debate over the literary qualities of historical texts, see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). ⁷¹ See David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 187.

of private problems, or just by making the intimate, minute details of someone's private problem public. According to the *Edinburgh Review* of 1834, a memoir is:

a place intermediate between political history and historical romance. It should have the truth and authority of the former - the detail and lively interest of the latter. It should convey to us the graphic exhibition of those characteristic trifles which the gravity of history will not stoop to notice. It should aim at rendering us intimately acquainted with the most eminent characters of the period it embraces. And make us live in former times.⁷²

It can be argued that these conventions are still applicable to modern memoirs. Moreover, the distinction between this genre and autobiography has often been a thorny issue. This is mainly due to the fragmentariness of memoir, caused by the discontinuous flow of reminiscences. One might consider, for example, Benjamin's distinction between reminiscences and autobiography:

Reminiscences, even extensive ones, do not always amount to an autobiography. (...) For autobiography has to do with time, with sequence, and what makes up the continuous flow of life. Here I am talking of a space, of moments and discontinuities. For even if months and years appear here, it is in the form they have at the moment of commemoration. This strange form – it may be called fleeting or eternal – is in neither case the stuff that life is made of.⁷³

In Sicily and England political situations are interwoven with domestic life, frivolous private recollections and personal thoughts. Two forms of memory need to be identified in Scalia's work: personal memory and collective memory. The former takes the form of reminiscences (the main subject of her work), and is also presented as the motif for the book. The latter is the raw material for the writing of history, generally found in books, written documents and oral reports. The author's own recollections, together with those she gathered from English friends and Sicilian exiles in London, are used as a 'living source' in the text. Rambling mental, oral and written reminiscences are put together with other primary and secondary material, and the past is selected and

⁷² 'Review of Memoirs of the Court of Charles I, by Lucy Aikin', Edinburgh Review, 58 (1834), 398-422 (p. 399)

Walter Benjamin, 'A Berlin Chronicle', in *Selected Writings*, 2 vols, ed. by Michael W. Jennings. Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. by Rodney Livingstone and others (Cambridge – Mass., and London: The Belknap Press Harvard University Press, 1999), vol. II, pp. 593-635 (p. 612).

manipulated, as well as accommodated to the needs of the present. Moreover, others' memories, particularly in the form of unpublished letters and diaries - apart from forming the primary source for her writing – are also used to confirm the author's own memories and to confer durability and consistency on them. Author and informants, then, co-operate in the construction of the past, as ethnographer and guide-translator cooperate in the construction of the Other's culture. All of them can be considered as what Benjamin calls 'storytellers'. The author as a 'storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale.⁷⁵ The author gathers stories from others' mouths and then passes them on to the reader. It can be argued that by writing and publishing her work Scalia affirms the 'authenticity' of reminiscences and confirms them. Especially if memories are her own – and this is more evident in her private writing, as we will see later - the author constructs a long-lasting self-image, even if these reminiscences are proved wrong or inaccurate. Memories originate from experience, but they are never identical to it. Imagination – as well as conscious self-construction – play a relevant role whenever memories are recorded. Moreover, memories are subject to manipulation by time and by different societies. However, as they can be checked only against other recollections of the past, never against the past itself, false memories can be as durable and powerful as true ones. 76 In fact, 'the more natural the process by which the storyteller forgoes psychological shading, the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener and, the more completely it is integrated

Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt and translated by Harry Zohn, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 83-109 (p. 87).

⁷⁴ 'Memory is the raw material of history. Whether mental, oral, or written, it is the living source from which historians draw'. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. xi.

The personal character of memories magnifies the difficulty of confirming them. No one else can wholly validate our own unique experience of the past. Memories proved wrong or inaccurate are not thereby dispelled; a false recollection can be as durable and potent as a true one, especially if it sustains a self-image'. Lowenthal, p. 200.

into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else some day, sooner or later.'77

Constructing the past and representing the 'real' iv.i

By sketching, chronicling and explaining the historical connections between Sicily and England in the 'Historical Introduction', and then the events of the Risorgimento through the rest of her book, Tina Scalia becomes not only a 'storyteller', but also a 'history-teller'. However, Scalia needs to distance herself from other 'historians', as she makes clear in the 'Preface' to Sicily and England where she points out that:

In writing these memoirs I have not had the least pretension of giving a history of Italy's great struggles for independence - struggles which finally led to her freedom and unity. Those who would wish to follow this movement in its entirely cannot do better than read Bolton King's 'History of the Italian Unity'. No publication, even in Italian, can equal its concise and careful detail, and if a little undue importance is at times given to a few of the numerous works the conscientious author has consulted, this does not affect the impartial resumé of the events which led to the creation of the Unity, which he lays before the reader.

In this way the female author shows a double attitude towards her audience. On the one hand she strategically craves indulgence for any incomplete information she gives in her work. On the other hand, she claims expertise based on her use of valid sources. Evidence of the use of other texts and documents is frequently given in the book:

For the Historical Introduction I have consulted many authorities upon the different periods, and have found special help in the Storie Siciliane, a work most carefully and conscientiously compiled from existing documents by my father's cousin, Isidoro la Lumia.

In the concluding chapter on Modern Italy my remarks on the value of the English hierarchy of the nobles, and on the importance of an hereditary peerage, come at an interesting moment. They were written before the present conflict between the House of Lord and the house of Commons took place, and before the agitation in favour of reducing the powers of the Upper House had arisen. I may mention that I have consulted several eminent political men in Italy with regard to the facts in this chapter.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', p. 91.

⁷⁸ Explaining the similarities between the writer of history, the historian, and the chronicler, Benjamin writes: 'And in the broad spectrum of the chronicle the ways in which a story can be told are graduated like shadings of one and the same colour. The chronicler is the history-teller. (...) The historian is bound to explain in one way or another the happenings with which he deals; under no circumstances can he content himself with displaying them as models of the course of the world. But this is precisely what the chronicler does.' Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', p. 96.

79 Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, pp. viii-ix.

Women writing history often avoided openly claiming reliability as 'historians' and attempted instead to create their own brand of authority. One way in which they often did this was by declaring their intention to stay away from 'all encroachments on the peculiar province of history'. 80 At the same time, they insisted on providing proof of the scientificity of their work. Scalia's contact with relevant personalities involved in the political events narrated in her work, and her own research based on primary sources, gave the author enough confidence to offer new views on historical events. For example, see the following passage; the author mentions Lord Amherst, a British ambassador in Sicily from 1809 to 1811, who was widely accused of having failed in his duty towards the island:

There is a general opinion amongst writers on this period of Sicilian history, and it has recently been repeated by Bianco in his book, La Sicilia durante l'occupazione Inglese, that Lord Amherst was recalled for lack of energy in the discharge of his duties. The Amherst papers prove this to be untrue. Historians have invariably construed his leaving the island as a sign that his embassy was regarded as a failure by the British Government, and even so late a writer as André Bonnefons falls into the same error in his book on Queen Maria Carolina. (...) I am happy to be able to prove the contrary by quotations from his letters and private papers which have never been published.⁸¹

Providing an alternative version of this episode, Scalia proudly asserts her expertise as accurate researcher even against well-known historians. Tina Scalia's authority lies in her attempt to correct dominant beliefs distorted by accretions or misconceptions. As Federico Curato also acknowledged in his review to the translation of the book, Scalia's text challenged widespread ideas on historical events: 'E questi pregi erano ancor più rilevanti quando esso fu pubblicato nell'edizione inglese perché molte cose scritte avevano allora il sapore della rivelazione inedita'. At other times, recognizing her privileged position as writer and reporter of important events, she feels she has got the

Lucy Aikin, Memoir of the Court of Queen Elizabeth, 2 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, 1826), I,
 p. vii. Quoted by Rohan Maitzen, p. 374.
 Scalia Whitaker, p. 34.

⁸² Federico Curato, 'Sicilia e Inghilterra', Rassegna storica del Risorgimento, 39, 1, (Jan.-March 1952), 86-87.

task of bringing to light the memory of forgotten or unknown people, and acts of heroism which passed unnoticed:

But how many more patriots are there, now completely forgotten and ignored? I find constantly in my uncle's diary such little entries as this: 'Pozzo di Gotto called; fled from Sicily in 1850: comes from New York; professor of Oriental languages: gave him some temporary pecuniary help'. These names, with the few words that follow them, open out vistas of lives that were sacrificed for their country by men who were never known save by a few people long since dead. (...) For the great majority of the patriots there was only the knowledge that the strivings and sacrifices of their earlier years had helped to free Italy.⁸³

The author reveals herself simultaneously as an innovator, recorder and creator, as both passive and active memoirist. She gathers all data of interest and explains the material in hand, attempting to unify and harmonize what is fragmented, forgotten and mistaken.

Although – as already stated – reminiscences can be made believable, the reception of historical narrative is more complex and problematic. The writing of history is traditionally perceived as contingent, based on empirical sources which can be verified or falsified by public records. Historical knowledge can often be confirmed or rejected although, paradoxically, no historical account ever corresponds exactly to any actual past. Although the 'authenticity' of familial memories has not been really questioned in *Sicily and England*, the accuracy of historical information has been at issue. Doubts about Scalia's skills as historian will be mentioned later. In 1952, four years after the book was translated into Italian, Federico Curato identified some historical mistakes occurring in the text. Wrong dates, swapped names, and misspellings were not corrected even in the translated edition. The mistakes may be attributed to

⁸³ Scalia Whitaker, p. 184.

⁸⁴ Lowenthal, pp. 210 and 214-217.

⁸⁵ 'All'estinzione della casa aragonese di Sicilia fu Martino il Vecchio, e non Alfonso, che pretese il trono (p. 19); il richiamo di Lord Minto e di Lord Napier non fu simultaneo, ché quello ebbe luogo nel 1848 ma questo nel 1849, e d'altronde quello di Minto non fu un richiamo, ma un rimpatrio per fine della missione (p. 112); le ostilità napoletane contro Catania non cominciarono tra il 30 agosto ed il 5 settembre del 1848, bensì tra il 2 e il 6 aprile 1849, giorno in cui la città cadde (p. 117); il trattato di Milano fu firmato il 6 e non il 7 agosto (p. 118); l'insurrezione di Genova scoppiò il 31 e non il 17 marzo (p. 118), ché, altrimenti, sarebbe scoppiata prima della battaglia di Novara; Firenze, è ovvio, non divenne la capitale d'Italia nel 1862 (p. 131); Piero Maroncelli ben difficilmente può essere il medico di Goldoni (p. 135), essendo nato due anni dopo la morte del commediografo veneziano; il generale Gorganand, è ovviamente il Gourgaud (p. 171); il Barbieri, autore della vita della principessa Belgioioso, è ovviamente Raffaello Barbiera (p. 185); l'ingresso trionfale di Napoleone III e Vittorio Emanuele II a Milano avvenne l'8 e non

inaccuracies on the part of both author, translator and editors. But they could also be due to the author's naive reliance on sources. In any case, inaccuracy risks invalidating the immediate representation of reality which the book is meant to give.

In the light of these observations, how can such a text, with its limitations and mixing of 'facts' and imagination, personal memory and history, objectivity and subjectivity, be considered as a reliable representation of historical reality?

According to Hayden White a historical work is 'a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing* them.' A point in case is the following account in *Sicily and England*:

After many complications a marriage was arranged between William and Joan, daughter of Henry II of England, and a deputation, with the Bishop of Norwich and the Archdeacon of Rochester at its head, was despatched to Sicily bearing the assent of the English Parliament, which had been voted unanimously. Richard Palmer, with a train of Sicilian nobles, went to England to fetch the bride, and she and William were married on the 13th February 1177 in the Royal Chapel at Palermo. That exquisite gem of Arabo-Sicilian mosaic work was then much as we see it now. The figure of Our Saviour in the semi-domed apse above the high altar, the hand raised in silent blessing, which in these days looks down upon the unheeding modern tourist who, Baedeker in hand, hurries through the sights between arrival by train and departure by steamer, is the same beneath which the young English bride stood to be married to the unknown bridegroom with whom she was to live in a strange land and among a strange people.⁸⁷

Following White, we could say that the historical event of the marriage between William II and Joan of England is 'organized into a chronicle by the arrangement of the events to be dealt with in the temporal order of their occurrence; then the chronicle is organized into a story by the further arrangement of the events into the components of a "spectacle" or process of happening, which is thought to posses a discernible beginning, middle and end'. 88 The chronicle is transformed into a story by means of further details, motifs and descriptions which confer unity to it. These elements also romanticize and

il 7 giugno 1859 (p. 216); William Temple era il fratello e non il nipote di Lord Palmerston (p. 210-211)'. Curato, pp. 86-87. Cfr. Scalia Whitaker, *Sicilia e Inghilterra*.

⁸⁶ Hayden White, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Scalia Whitaker, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁸ White, p. 5.

fictionalize the event, and the author's feelings permeate from the description. Moreover, the author needs to relate the account to a present situation. Personal experience and irony strengthen the visibility of the author within the narration making the latter clearly subjective. History writing and literature cannot be separated; an 'emplotment' is given to events through verbal constructs. This sort of fictionalization of history can call into question the veracity of the events. But, paradoxically, it is in this concatenation of literature and history that Scalia's work manages to answer the claims of validity and truthfulness.

In contrast with the more traditional view of history as contingent, Barthes developed a more sceptical view of historiography (and History). As he maintained in 'The discourse of history'90, historical discourse falls into those genres whose main characteristic is that of signifying that the event, or object, represented 'really' happened or existed. Photography, for example, falls within these genres. 91 However, a reconstruction of historical events is a 'myth', as it is not an object, but rather a message, or a product of 'speech': historical narrative is defined by the way in which it utters this message. 92 Like 'mythical speech', historical discourse is a secondary system which uses signs already invested with meaning within a previous primary semiological system. As in myth, in historical narrative the signifier and the signified seem to be naturally connected as there is no distinction between them:

in 'objective' history, the 'real' is never more than an unformulated signified, sheltering behind the apparently all-powerful referent. This situation characterizes what we might call the realistic effect. The signified is eliminated from the 'objective' discourse, and ostensibly allows the 'real' and its expression to come together, and this succeeds in establishing a new meaning, on the infallible principle already stated that any deficiency of elements in a system is in itself significant. This new meaning - which extends to the whole of historical discourse and is its ultimately distinctive property - is the real in itself surreptitiously transformed into a sheepish signified. Historical discourse does not

⁸⁹ See White.

⁹⁰ Roland Barthes, 'The discourse of history', trans. by Stephen Bann, Comparative Criticism, 3 (1981),

⁹¹ On the relation of historiography to photography consider Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Things* Before the Last (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 45-61.

Poland Barthes, Mythologies (London: Vintage, 1993; 1st edn Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 109.

follow the real, it can do no more than signify the real, constantly repeating that *it happened*, without this assertion amounting to anything but the signified 'other side' of the whole process of historical narration.⁹³

This being given, consider for instance the account contained in Scalia's chapter about the revolution of 1848. In July, the Sicilian Parliament proceeded to appoint a King, and the crown was offered to the Duke of Genoa, the second son of King Albert of Sardinia-Piedmont. Scalia recalls the population's grand rejoicing for the decision:

Only those who know the ineffable fascination of a Sicilian summer's morning can picture the scene - the air laden with the scent of jasmine and magnolia, the parched earth refreshed by the slight dews of night - as the English and French fleets entered the goldentinted Bay of Palermo, firing salvo after salvo in honour of the President of the Government and his Ministers, amid the wild and tumultuous joy of the citizens. All, indeed, seemed as roseate as the exquisite tints on Monte Pellegrino when the sun set on that memorable day of July, and it must have been impossible for those who saw the glorious result of their labours, to believe that clouds were gathering near at hand, and that a storm of anguish and deception was already brooding, and was soon to break over the stricken and helpless country.⁹⁴

Factual accuracy ('only those who know', 'those who saw') and imaginative re-creation ('can picture') are intermixed in this passage. Moreover, a novelistic hindsight is added in talking about the unpromising future, known to the author in retrospect, but not to those 'who saw'. It can also be argued that apart from the arrival of the two fleets in Palermo, this description does not denote anything else concrete in reality; the author does not report any specific reference proving the faithfulness of her description. And it is impossible that she remembered what happened that day, as she still hadn't been born. However, the assertion 'only those who know' implies the author's authority as resident in Palermo and habitual witness of 'Sicilian summer mornings'. The landscape represented in the passage corresponds to a constructed image of a typical Sicilian summer day. The 'wild and tumultuous joy of the citizens' is illustrative of the chaotic reactions of a people struggling for freedom, as Scalia stresses in other parts of the text. The romanticism imbuing the passage is revelatory of the tone the author intends to give

⁹⁴ Scalia Whitaker, p. 117.

⁹³ Barthes, 'The discourse of history', pp. 17-18. See also Gossman, pp. 32-34.

to the whole memoir, and the balance she intends to maintain between gloomy accounts and sentimental depictions.

A further example can show the use of 'shifters' which affect the flow of utterances conveying 'movements in the discourse in relation to its matter'. ⁹⁵ An example can be found in the following passage:

The Lord Lansdowne (...). While in exile his properties were confiscated, and after a mock trial he was condemned to death. Later the Austrians realised the mistake they had made in meting out such drastic treatment to those who did not deserve it; but alas! as we see now in Russia, the realisation came too late.⁹⁶

Scalia needs to rearrange the past, which is subject to the social, ideological, and political structures in which she lived at the moment of writing. In this way 'as we see now' represents an attempt to "'dechronologize' the "thread" of history". The author was clearly influenced by the context of the period she was living in. For her, a past event needed to be explained through a present one, drawing the reader's attention to contemporary political facts. This also happens in sections of her text reporting and commenting on social events and customs; in these pages the author can express her point of view through outbursts of moralising. These sections add a certain didactic zest to the book – which after all was initially addressed to her daughters:

There is a curious contrast between the life led by girls now and in the days of my mother's youth. She has frequently told me that she did not possess a single pair of thick-soled boots, walking being considered quite unnecessary for the health. Young women, even when married, seldom drove in a hansom-cab, and never alone. To leave the doors of the cab open would have been thought the highest impropriety. 98

In conclusion, in *Sicily and England* factual events are taken and transformed into stories. Chronicle is then mixed with self-depiction and fictionalization. The author organizes her own discourse and makes it suitable for communication. This often implies the use of subjectivity. However, in the text, subjectivity does not limit

⁹⁶ Scalia Whitaker, p. 60.

⁹⁵ Barthes, pp. 7-20.

⁹⁷ Barthes, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Scalia Whitaker, p. 75.

knowledge; it might reveal the limits of the author's knowledge, but it still holds the power to make the reader believe in the realism of the representation. Barthes' mythologization of history can help to explain the relationship between history and literature in *Sicily and England*, as well as the authority of the book in England and especially in Italy. Such authority does not really depend on the data and accuracy in Scalia's recording, but rather on the impression of 'reality' it conveys through language. The various stories the text is made up of, and the entire work itself, have maintained their strength over the years. 100

iv.ii. Sicily and England in Britain

Historiography and memoirs, humour, gossip as well as patriotism and sentimental descriptions of people and places are mixed in Sicily and England. After the publication of the book in 1907, reviews published in England stressed these main characteristics. It should be noticed that Scalia's book was constantly reviewed under 'History'. For instance, in the Westminster Gazette Robert Hichens commented:

In this book written in English by a Sicilian Italian, there will be found humour, pathos, excitement, common-sense and heart. Mrs Whitaker can tell you a good story. She can gossip agreeably about social affairs and people of the great world. She can deal lucidly with matters of history. But it is when she is writing of patriotism, and the noble actions of it prompts that she is at the very best. For then she makes us feel that the daughter of the intrepid general Scalia has fighting blood in her despite her English upbringing. There beats a Southern heart, a heart that loves devotedly her exquisite Island that longs to see it recognised as the brightest jewel in the crown of United Italy. ¹⁰¹

The reviewer concludes with an exhortation to translate the book 'promptly' into Italian. In this review as in others, the hybrid (Anglo-Italian) identity of the author and the

⁹⁹ 'The referent enters into a direct relation with the signifier, and the discourse, solely charged with expressing the real, believes itself authorized to dispense with the fundamental term in imaginary structures, which is the signified. As with any discourse which lays claim to 'realism', historical discourse only admits to knowing a semantic schema with two terms, the referent and the signifier'. Barthes, 'The discourse of history', p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ See Benjamin, 'The storyteller', p. 90.

¹⁰¹ Robert Hichens, 'Sicily and England', Westminster Gazette, 13 July 1907, p. 5.

hybrid nature of the book were stressed, together with comparisons between Italy and Great Britain, highlighted in the text, for the benefit of the English readers:

Sicily and England, though widely separated by space and character, have had much in common ever since they fell, in the eleventh century, under the sway of the same Norman race, which left its impress upon both. Politically, too, they have been more than once closely connected – notably during the crisis of the Napoleonic wars; while in the struggle for Italian independence and union of Sicilian patriots found in England ready sympathy and support. Mrs Whitaker is herself a representative of this Anglo-Sicilian alliance, for she is the daughter of Sicilian parents, but English by education and marriage. It is natural, then, that she should give to her reminiscences a title which does not actually cover their full scope. She does, indeed, preface the volume by an historical sketch of the relations of the two island kingdoms, and much of it is devoted to the movements in Sicily for liberation from the yoke of Bourbon Naples. But not the least interesting part of the book is that in which she goes beyond the limits of its title and discusses the Italian question generally and the outcome of the struggles which she records.¹⁰²

In Great Britain, then, *Sicily and England* was received not only for its 'good deal of historical matter', related to the events of Italian and Sicilian independence, but also for the social and political picture of Italy. The target, English (middle-class) audience could define Italy in terms of difference from England. In particular, the final Chapter on 'Modern Italy' offered food for thought on issues concerning the monarchy, the political position of the aristocracy, education and the family, the power of the Church, taxation and judicial administration. It was also an occasion to (re)draw images of contemporary Italy in relation to well-known past ones, as a review of the book on the *Times Literary Supplement* highlighted:

The three plagues of Italy were once 'friars, Germans, and fever'; to-day they would seem to be professional politicians, educated fainéants – the excessive output of cheat Universities – and a ruinous fiscal system. Rightly or wrongly, Mrs Whitaker ascribes much of the disease that afflicts the Italian body politic to the deliberate exclusion of the old aristocracy from its legitimate influence in the State. As to this opinion will naturally differ; but her comparison of Italy and Great Britain in this respect may be heartily commended to the attention of those who wish to destroy the House of Lords. In England the hereditary privileges of the peers have evolved a sense of public duty which is handed on as a precious heirloom from father to son; and with this often goes a capacity for politics, not so much perhaps inherited, as due to training from youth up in the atmosphere of public affairs. (...) But in Italy, as in France, the great nobles, as such, have neither recognized social rank nor political power. They continue to exist, with their inherited wealth and pride of race, a class apart, which, since it has been deprived of the responsibility of power, is an element of weakness rather that of strength to the

¹⁰² Walter Alison Phillips, 'Sicily and England', Times Literary Supplement, 5 July 1907, p. 212.

^{103 &#}x27;Sicily and England', Times Literary Supplement, 7 June, 1907, p. 183.

State. Another question, already touched upon, which is of special interest to English readers at the present time, is that of the educated proletariat, a problem by no means confined on the Continent to Italy. There is a serious danger that the tradition of the old English Universities may soon be sacrificed to a mistaken enthusiasm for that muchabused word Democracy. That a reform of their educational methods is necessary may be conceded; but the zeal of radical enthusiasts goes far beyond this.¹⁰⁴

In 1908, in the *Giornale d'Italia*, Domenico Oliva wrote a long review of Scalia's work, summarizing its content. Unlike most English reviewers, Oliva focused on the Italian patriots and artists mentioned in the book, the Sicilian historical events narrated in it, and the links between Sicily and England as represented in Scalia's work, as well as their relevance for a potential Italian readership. Praising the author for her clear, effective style he hoped the work could soon be translated into Italian:

È artista la Whitaker Scalia è pure in questo libro, dettato in lingua inglese, dalla forma piana e facile, ma quanto mai castigata e nella sua semplicità, anzi per la sua semplicità efficacissima, dettato per le sue gentili figliuole, a ciò che le glorie domestiche non si disperdano e questi episodi delle nostre passate avventure e delle nostre fulgide speranze restino come pio ricordo fra coloro che sono e fra coloro che verranno. Ma, senza volerlo, la Whitaker Scalia ha scritto un libro per tutti e in Inghilterra meritò lodi sincere di critici e fu largamente divulgato e merita essere conosciuto in Italia e converrebbe fosse recato nelle nostra lingua. Certamente ha svelato agli inglesi molto delle nostre storie, delle nostre cronache e dei nostri drammi'. 105

However, the book did not always meet with a favourable reception. An example of the kind of negative response it elicited can be found in a review which appeared in the *Cambridge Review*. In it Scalia's book was compared unfavourably with *The Roman Journals of Gregorovious*, 1852-1874, whose translation into English also appeared in 1907:

Here are two books covering with their narratives a most interesting epoch, both written by people who can give their own reminiscences — but very different works. Mrs Whitaker's need not detain us — her memories are 'political and social', and she recalls so many lords and ladies, in so diffuse and rambling a style, that the reader loses patience, if he is interested in the Italian movement. Her last chapter has been praised in high quarters. The troubles of Italy were not unknown, however, before she wrote, and her attribution of them very largely to the want of a House of Lords on the English model and to the excessive cheapness of University education may be index enough to her qualifications to write history. Gregorovious is another matter. Here is a historian of mark, and the writer of a great history, and he is giving day by day, his impressions as a great story develops under his eyes. Sometimes, it is true, like other men he leaves gaps in his journal, and now and then he visits Germany. None the less here is a Roman

105 Domenico Oliva, Giornale d'Italia, 1908.

¹⁰⁴ Phillips, *Times Literary Supplement*.

journal from the hand of a master - a lover of mediaeval Rome and an enthusiast for Italian liberty, watching events in this most crucial period and missing little. 106

The article clearly stressed the gap between the two kinds of memoir, as well as the idiosyncrasies in Scalia's book. In his review, Hichens also highlighted – although with more magnanimity – the author's limits as historiographer:

Mrs Whitaker has none of the faults, though possibly she may lack one or two of the virtues, of the trained professional writer. She never 'piles on the agony', she never plays to the gallery. She writes simply, naturally, and with transparent sincerity of the things she knows, and as she knows many interesting things about the heroic struggles of the Sicilians in the revolution of 1848 and onwards, her book is deeply interesting and often moving. (...) The discursive writer is sometimes wearisome, but Mrs Whitaker's book resembles an extremely interesting though occasionally rambling conversation.107

Perceptions of Scalia's book in Britain were clearly divergent. Although the picture of the Italian political situation, as in her last chapter, was generally appreciated, most of the time her skills as writer of history were at issue. Her 'rambling' style and the attention on many social events and people seemed to annoy some sections of the British audience. In 1948 Sicily and England was translated into Italian and republished in Palermo, on the occasion of the centenary of the 1848 revolution, with the title of Sicilia e Inghilterra: ricordi politici. La vita degli esuli italiani in Inghilterra (1848-1870), 108 The book is still considered as a source for historical and social information. This and the attention paid to the book today in Sicily, provide evidence of the unremitting power of its representation. Moreover, Raleigh Trevelyan's use of Sicily and England as one of the primary sources for his long saga, Princes under the Volcano, demonstrates the authority of such a book even at the end of the twentiethcentury.

¹⁰⁶ Cambridge Review, vol. 29, (1907/1908), p. 152. For another English review see Academy, 73, 3

⁽August 1907), 743-745.

107 Hichens, p. 5. However, Hichens' positive comments on the book could be due to his close friendship with Tina. See, Trevelyan, especially p. 311.

¹⁰⁸ Tina Scalia Whitaker Scalia, Sicilia e Inghilterra: ricordi politici. La vita degli esuli italiani in Inghilterra (1848-1870), trans, by Vera Certo (Palermo: Mazara, 1948).

v. Beyond and behind Sicily and England

A brief examination of other works by Tina Scalia Whitaker helps us to understand the process of construction and fictionalization of the past, as well as the self-construction occurring in *Sicily and England*. Additionally, such a comparative reading helps to highlight the way her writing evolved through the years, and the changing relationship between Self and world, present and past, before *Sicily and England* and after it.

In 1890, in London, Scalia published a sentimental novel, *Love in the Sunny South*. The female novelist Lynn Linton¹⁰⁹ had urged Tina Scalia to try her hand at fiction; she also edited and tidied up the work. The result was not brilliant, and in later years Scalia very seldom chose to refer to the book. Set in the South of Italy, the story has, as its main protagonist, a woman with a 'strange, fascinating southern languor', neglected by a husband she does not know much about. A young Anglo-Italian lady, a wise mother, a jealous husband, a womanizer, a group of English tourists are some of the other characters in Scalia's novel; they are surrounded by a crowd of Southern upper-class men and women, and the Southern *milieu* where all of them act is constructed according to ready-made images. Women's acceptance of their roles in a patriarchal society, their loneliness at home, the dream of a different life and the impossibility of breaking social orders and going against conventions, are the main topics of the novel.

¹⁰⁹ See Trevelyan, Princes under the Volcano, p. 282. Eliza Lynn Linton (1822-1898) was an English novelist. Among her works Azeth the Egyptian (London, 1847), Lizzie Lorton of Greyrigg, (London, 1866) and The Girl of the Period (Bristol, 1868) an onslaught on modern developments in feminine manners. Her best-seller was The True Story of Joshua Davidson (London, 1872). The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland (London, 1885) was really her own autobiography in male guise, and included portraits of people present also in Tina Scalia Whitaker's book.

110 The story is centred on a charity concert in a town in Southern Italy, somewhere on the Amalfitan

The story is centred on a charity concert in a town in Southern Italy, somewhere on the Amalfitan Coast, where the beautiful Elvira is loved by her brother-in-law, who is shot in a duel by her husband. The work was written at an exciting point in Scalia Whitaker's social life which involved a stay in Sorrento, journeys around Europe and encounters with significant English and Italian artistic personalities, such as Wagner, Hamilton Aïdé, Piozzi and Ronald Sutherland Gower. Therefore, the characters of the novel are inspired by those women and men the author met in her real life, and those places and situations which struck her imagination.

Despite its weaknesses and clichés, the work can be decoded as an analysis of Southern Italian middle-and upper-class society, culture, education and women's conditions. It is important to remember that for Italian middle and upper-class girls education generally stopped at the age of ten or eleven, at the end of primary school, or at the age of sixteen to eighteen for those educated in religious *collegi*. At the end of their schooling, domestic life began for them. Upper-class women were tied down to a sort of economic parasitism, for most of them the main target was just that of waiting for the appropriate husband. The social advantage of their passivity was meant to be an avoidance of competition between women and men.¹¹¹

Scalia's novel is also a woman's means to free herself from solitude, sacrifice and a world full of social codes. It is clear that facts narrated in the novel reflect the author's life and feelings.¹¹² The text, then, becomes a place for female emotions and feelings which deny, or just cross, social-economic rules:¹¹³

Perfect happiness, does not exist in this world, but if equality of intellect, directed both to the same interests, if mutual bearing and forbearing, each with the other's small failings, if unselfish, steady, true affection *can* give happiness, surely Lord and Lady Alfred Boyle have grasped it. And Elvira, has she remained faithful to the memory of her dead love? Will her bruised heart revive again? She is young, eminently seductive, and will be exposed to many temptations, and she lives in a land, where Love is the Bread of Life. There is no divorce either in those sunny countries, to unfetter the chains which drag so heavily about those two; they meet now and then as strangers, as they flit across the stage of the comedy of life. Elvira stands quite alone now; reader, be merciful to her.¹¹⁴

Tina Scalia seems to cross gender limits imposed by social and political conventions – as represented in *Love in the Sunny South* – in her historiographic and political writings. After the unsuccessful experience of her sentimental novel, she tries to find a safe podium from which to express her perspectives on history, society and politics. She first

113 See Elisabetta Rasy, Le donne e la letteratura (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2000), p. 110.

Michela De Giorgio, Le italiane dall'unità a oggi: modelli culturali e comportamenti sociali (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992).

pp. 411-420.

112 Refore getting married to Joseph Whiteland To

Before getting married to Joseph Whitaker, Tina was training as opera singer, and giving various concerts all around Italy. After the marriage she had to abandon her career. Moreover, during the first years of their marriage, Tina felt neglected by her husband who was travelling to Tunisia and was involved in the discovery of the island of Motya. See Trevelyan, *Princes under the Volcano*.

manages to do this through the genre of the historical memoir, in *Sicily and England*. Like *Sicily and England*, her other historiographic texts should be read in correlation with the cultural pressures to which women historians had to adapt their work. Restrained from entering the territory of male historians', many female writers had to disguise historical writing as other literary genres. Apart from memoir, historical biography turned out to be a useful camouflage in order to use serious historical material in an 'appropriately ladylike manner'. After *Sicily and England*, Tina Scalia wrote two short biographical works which appeared in Italy: *Studi sulla Regina Maria Carolina*, published in 1908, and *Benjamin Ingham of Palermo*, published in 1936. 115 The latter is a monograph depicting the story of the English magnate in Sicily. After having written about her own family history, Tina endeavours to sketch the past of her husband's family. Publishing the book in English, but in Palermo, she gave visibility and authority – especially among the foreign communities on the island – to a portion of the history of English merchants in Sicily,

Studi sulla Regina Maria Carolina – published in Italian one year after Sicily and England – is of greater interest here, mainly for two reasons: the attention paid to a woman's existence and the invitation to re-consider and re-assess the life of Queen Carolina – the wife of King Ferdinand IV Borbons of Naples – and her public role. For a number of women, female biography became a critical response to the traditional tendency of historians to highlight the role of men in history to the almost total exclusion of women. Discovering and memorialising other women's lives became, in many cases, an attempt to put women back on the historical stage, and also to assign leading roles to them. In this way female biography represented a platform for radical

114 Scalia Whitaker, Love in the Sunny South, p. 114.

Tina Scalia Whitaker, *Benjamin Ingham of Palermo*, and 'Studi sulla Regina Maria Carolina: considerazioni sopra due nuove biografie della medesima', *Rassegna Contemporanea*, 1 (October 1908), 275-286.

revisionism of traditional political narratives. 116 The occasion for the essay is the publication of two new biographies of the Queen - one of them written by a female historian. In the essay Scalia develops ideas and thoughts already sketched in Sicily and England: 117

Manca per l'Italia una vita completa, un analisi del carattere e della personalità forte e passionale di Maria Carolina, moglie del Re Ferdinando IV di Borbone di Napoli, vituperata dai suoi contemporanei, non mai riabilitata dai posteri. Questa donna (...) è rimasata quasi sconosciuta o mal conosciuta nel paese ove pur passò tanti anni di sua vita! (...) Ho cominciato cominciato deplorando la lacuna che esiste in Italia sull'argomento.118

The author goes even further offering an intimate portrait of a woman of royalty and her private life and social conditions, rather than a theoretical or large-scale military or strictly political history. In the essay the author focuses on Maria Carolina as a sovereign and on some of her public affairs, but also on the queen as mother, daughter and sister of Marie Antoinette of France. In particular, Scalia argues that the cruel events in France are the real reasons which awoke in the queen those strong feelings of hatred and revenge she is accused of. For Scalia, then, an explanation of the queen's complex personality must be produced through an understanding of her private suffering. In this way, Scalia sets a distance from other historians and their 'wrong' interpretations of Maria Carolina. Yet she appeals to historians to produce a more accurate biography of the queen. At the same time, Scalia claims authority for herself not only as a meticulous researcher, but also as a woman more qualified to penetrate the mystery of another woman's life.

An element which links Scalia's first novel with Sicily and England, the essay on Maria Carolina, and her other unpublished works, is the attention she paid to

¹¹⁶ Mitchell, p. 124.

^{&#}x27;An unbiased history of Maria Carolina has still to be written. Bianco, in his careful work on Sicily during the English occupation, says that she was "full of the most startling contradictions; full of vices and virtues". She was undoubtedly carried away by the passion of the moment, no calm or settled policy guiding her actions or prompting her decisions; and there is little doubt that the excessive use of opium to which she was addicted in later years, affected her mentally as well as physically'. Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, p. 26, see also p. 49.

women's social and domestic conditions, to their private and public worlds. Noble women, actresses, singers, writers, travellers, middle-class ladies, servants, peasants, humble citizens and women patriots dominate Scalia's writings, often occupying full pages with their lives and brave undertakings, and stealing the scene from men. The strong authoritarian personalities of Tina Scalia's grandmother and mother, the frequent absences of her father, and also a husband who was not often present, must have pushed Scalia towards a kind of self-defence, as well as to challenge and substitute men's role at home and in social life.

At a time when women's public voices and political commitment were rising, print media was also expanding and the world of journalism was beginning to give more space to a female presence. In 1924, in Sicily, a short pamphlet by Scalia was issued during the first election immediately after the rise to power of fascism: *Al popolo siciliano*. *Scritto da un anomino (che sono io Tina Whitaker Scalia)*. Scalia encouraged the Sicilian people to wait patiently for the positive results of the new regime and to vote for Mussolini. It is probable that Joseph Whitaker collaborated in writing this pamphlet, as he shared his wife's political ideas, but the great popularity his wife enjoyed was to give the pamphlet a larger diffusion. By supporting the Government, Tina Scalia aspired to contribute to the improvement of the conditions of the Sicilian lower classes and of Sicily in general. The author addressed people from an Italian and, more specifically, Sicilian standpoint, considering herself to belong to them, and identifying herself as an 'Italian patriot'. Yet her education, her Northern background, as well as her social position and popularity gave her the authority to shape the thinking of the Sicilians, attempting to influence action on public issues.

¹¹⁸ Scalia Whitaker, 'Studi sulla Regina Maria Carolina', p. 275.

Tina Scalia Whitaker, Al popolo siciliano. Scritto da un anonimo (che sono io Tina Whitaker Scalia), 1924, manifesto a stampa di sei pagine. Whitaker Archive, Palermo.

v.i Outbursts of private life

The need to express the Self freely and to construct it on the white page led Tina Scalia Whitaker to develop a private practice of writing, parallel to the public one.

Through writing, the subject tries to look for fusion and unity against the effects of division and dissolution. Responding to self-writing impulses, the writer creates a distance from herself in order to reconstruct (through the use of memory) and preserve her ego from disintegration and loss. As seen in the previous chapters, this concept invites a discussion of the kind, and degree, of 'truth' that can be demanded from self-writing and representation in writings by women; it also complicates the issue of the author's intentions and motivations. ¹²⁰ In the act of writing about herself, the female subject observes and is observed, she is, simultaneously, the object and the subject of exploration and representation. Moreover, in deciding to write about her experiences, the woman writer elects to differentiate herself from all the 'Others'. In the case of expatriates, the 'Others' can be identified in men, the home audience, travellers and the foreign culture.

In the case of Scalia – as in those of the other Anglo-Sicilian women studied in the two previous chapters – her cosmopolitan background makes a definition of her identity unusually complex. Her subjectivity is construed in, and depends on, various, cross cultural interactions with diverse 'Others', who have either become part of her private world, or have been voluntarily distanced as different. Therefore, because of her background, her Self, as it appears in the text, is a fusion of cultural forms; and this blending, which constitutes an element of her identity, had already started before the author encountered the culture represented in her works.

¹²⁰ On the issue of 'truth' and 'self-evidence' in autobiography, see Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), and the individualistic model of self-evidence in Philip Lejeune, *Le Pacte Autobiographique*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975).

Fifty Years of a Life is an unpublished manuscript which was meant to be a private memoir aiming to tell Scalia's life from 1872 to 1922. It includes a rich portrait of numerous people of social, cultural and historical stature she met during her long life. The manuscript was never completed and the undertaking was clearly ambitious, considering the author's intense social life. Unlike Sicily and England, Fifty Years of a Life is directly concerned with the author's own past. In this way Scalia can connect her existence with her earlier Self, and transmit it to future generations:

Of course my memories can have no real value. (...). This however not being intended for publication will hurt no ones' feelings at all events. (...) To the younger generation of ones' family it is different and later it may amuse them to read the impressions of 50 years which to them seem so far off. I remember as a child when my beloved mother used to tell me of her childhood and seemed to me to lie in such a mist of far off distance; and now it seems to me only the other day I was a child my self. ¹²¹

Scalia continuously feels the need to write about herself and to be reassured that she will be remembered: oblivion and the passing of time must be overcome, and the past must be saved. In *Fifty Years of a Life* public events are transformed into idiosyncratic personal experiences, and are often used to give way to less consequential private reminiscences. Political events are rarely focused upon and the text is rather an opportunity to write about the female world, debuts at balls, weddings, frivolous conversations, summer hats and dresses, emotional accomplishments and a romantic melancholy for the past:

The spring of 1875 seems to hand out this in my memory. I seemed to wake to life, the chrysalis became the butterfly (...) Now looking back on those far off years I feel that on that early spring the violets were sweeter than had been before, or have been again. Nature all seemed to shroud and pulse as I did my self, and that life was so good, and (...) glorious youth was eternal, and that I could shape my destiny as I would. (...) I still remember those wonderful daydreams; oh! wonderful 16, 17, 18 when the world is before one. 122

¹²¹ Scalia Whitaker, Fifty Years of a Life.

¹²² Scalia Whitaker, Fifty Years of a Life.

In the second part of the text the narration seems to be more superficial and faster, as if the author had lost interest in her work; the manuscript stops with events in 1889.

Scalia frames time and preserves the continuity of life also through the recording and writing of the present. Throughout her life Tina Scalia showed a real mania for collecting letters, notes, scraps of paper containing short impressions on people and events, articles on politics, economics and society taken from Italian and English journals, as well as reviews and comments on *Sicily and England*. Some of her fragmentary notes seem to be isolated recordings of an impression, a moment or an idea. Other notes are also present in her *Diary*, where they have been copied through a constant task of writing and re-writing. It seems that for Scalia, fragments of collective and personal history must be constantly preserved, reassembled and protected.

Scalia's *Diary* and notes are containers of her commentaries on life seen as a process, as it is lived. She started keeping a diary in Cannes in 1887. About seven years later, after her father's death, she decided to keep her diary in earnest with the main purpose of leaving some record for her children. As reported by Trevelyan, although at that time she was only thirty-five, she had a presentment that she would not live long and wanted to make her diary a sort of confidant. But she also confessed the difficulty of being constant with entries, and the agony of exposing her intimate thoughts to other people. ¹²⁴ In the beginning the diary contained sporadic entries which aimed to fix the author's thoughts and feelings, and to break the silence about her own life. Then, these pages started to be used as an outlet for emotions, grief, worries, anger, doubts and disappointment over missed opportunities:

When I was twenty I believed all that was prophesied for me that the musical world would echo out my name. Now the struggle has been not to become bitter at the disappointment I have undergone. I am resigned to be nothing, to have produced

See, 'Carte di Paolina Anna Luisa Caterina Scalia Whitaker', Notes (13 envelopes) and Letters (15 envelopes), Whitaker Archive, Joseph Whitaker Foundation, Villa Malfitano, Palermo.
 See Travelyan, p. 288.

nothing, to have done nothing of which my youth and energy made me dream. I am content to live in my children as the future, in my mother as the present. My husband does not require me. 125

The diary is also a podium from which to moralize:

Yes, the secret of life is to play ably on the keyboard of others' feelings, leaving our own in repose to *act*, but only to act, not to show our feelings. Indeed, when we feel the most is when we generally should show the least. 126

A sense of female inadequacy, of existential uncertainty and of the brevity of life appear through Scalia's fragmented self-image. A diary is clearly the journal of an existence rather than the record of a life.

At various times Scalia uses the diary to report gossip about friends, relatives and acquaintances, and to offer sharp comments, even on well-known personalities like the 'vulgar, loud, fat and brilliant in conversation' Italian novelist and journalist Matilde Serao, or the 'degenerate' poet Gabriele D'Annunzio. Things which could not be said in public, or in *Sicily and England*, are thus recorded in the diary. An example is the following entry of 1941, when, at the age of eighty-three, she felt free to be more sarcastic than ever on subjects which had to be treated cautiously inside her family, such as fascism. An example is the following 'fable' she recorded:

Some animals from the country wanted to know what was going on in Rome. So a cow went there, but soon returned. 'They milked me dry and have sent me away'. Then some sheep went, but they soon returned. 'They sheared off all our wool, and fearing worse we got away'. Then a donkey decided to have a look in. He returned hurriedly after a short time, saying: 'Don't keep me. I have to return to Rome as I've been made Duce'. 127

It is clear that the diary is also used to rebel, or to break a silence about facts that perhaps should not be talked about or known, especially by a woman. Moreover, comments on social issues such as marriage and religion are often expressed, and are particularly indicative of the meeting, and often the clashing, of two cultural models, the English and the Italian. An example in point is constituted by her worries for her

¹²⁵ Scalia Whitaker, *Diary*, Malfitano, 20 January 1895.

¹²⁶ Scalia Whitaker, *Diary*, Paris, 16 October 1890.

¹²⁷ Scalia Whitaker, Diary, Castel Gandolfo, 2 August 1941.

daughters' search for the right husband. Such worries are manifested together with all her prejudices and reservations about Italian venial men. Two cultural concepts of marriage clash: the 'English system' centred on the free reciprocal choice of an ideal partner and, on the other hand, the predominant Italian idea of a well matched alliance, a marriage come si deve. 128 Writing a diary especially satisfies Scalia's need for a forum for opinions and ideas on social issues and politics. The diary contains a section called 'Riflessioni filosofiche'. This is an interesting commentary on the political events which she could not include in Sicily and England: the history of Italy in the first half of the twentieth century and of its involvement in the First and Second World Wars. ¹²⁹ Pages dealing with contemporary problems, such as the Mafia, Mussolini's law restricting emigration, Italy's worsening relations with Britain, ¹³⁰ are *loci* where private writing and trivial entries are set aside to give space to issues of public interest. It seems that Scalia is again looking for an overt acceptance of her knowledge and opinions on significant contemporary social subjects. Thus, attention to details and the accurate reporting of the situation suggest the possible intention of making her 'riflessioni' public and of acquiring credibility. Besides, at the start of the thirties, Scalia began losing interest in her diary. Imagining that her life was nearly over, she hoped that her daughters would pass her memories to Frank Hird, who might use them as a sequel to Sicily and England. 131

¹²⁸ See, for example her comments in her *Diary*: Malfitano, 21 January 1904; Malfitano, 2 April 1904; Rome, 2 January 1905. Giovanna Fiume, "Carissima mamma": Lettere di Norina e Delia a Tina Whitaker, in *I Whitaker di Villa Malfitano*, pp. 191-208.

¹²⁹ Tina Scalia Whitaker, 'Riflessioni filosofiche', 1930, Archivio Whitaker, Joseph Whitaker Foundation, Palermo.

Scalia Whitaker, 'Riflessioni filosofiche', 1930. Also quoted in Trevelyan, *Princes under the Volcano*, pp. 413-414.
 In an entry of 1941, she regretted she left writing her memoirs too late to put them together properly as

In an entry of 1941, she regretted she left writing her memoirs too late to put them together properly as she could have found plenty of publishable material, not yet included in her main work. Trevelyan, pp. 412-413.

The writing of remembrances, together with the recording of the present, are the means through which selected moments of life can be stopped, fixed and framed. For Scalia the main aim of this process is searching for identity, as woman, mother, daughter, wife and Anglo-Italian resident in Sicily. This is still valid today. In any epoch, expatriate authors can use their texts to meditate upon, and explain to their home readers their fears and feelings mixing sketches from the past with the present. In autobiographical writings they can attempt to explain the reasons for their choice to settle down abroad and can also recall their approach to the act of writing in Sicily. Hence, for example, in her journal *On Persephone's Island*, first published in 1986, Mary Taylor Simeti wrote:

It is hard for me to believe when I look back on my decision to marry Tonino and live abroad permanently that the fact of leaving my family should have merited so little consideration. Youth and cultural bias, I suppose, combined with my own particular circumstances - my father had died before I started college, my mother was living in Italy, and my two sisters and my brother, all of them considerably older than I, were moving about a lot themselves at that point - made marrying in Sicily seem a not unnatural sequel to going away to college. 133

Mary Taylor Simeti, an American woman married in Sicily, records more than twenty years of life in the island, alternating between a sort of native's intimacy and the eye of the outsider, through an intermingling of past and present. By means of what Adrien Pasquali calls 'resumé rétrospectif', Taylor Simeti attempts to re-construct a section of her personal life through backward glances. By means of analepsis the author fills in the narration with retrospective information and reproduces her perspective of her arrival in Sicily. She also declares:

¹³² Michel Picard, Lire le temps (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1989), pp. 32-33.

¹³³ Mary Taylor Simeti, On Persephone's Island: A Sicilian Journal (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 271. Taylor Simeti was born and brought up in New York and in 1962 went to Sicily where she married and raised two children. The book mainly chronicles the events of 1983. Taylor Simeti is also the author of Pomp and Sustenance: Twenty-five Centuries of Sicilian Food (London, 1989), co-author with Maria Grammatico of Bitter Almonds: Recollections and Recipes from a Sicilian Girlhood (New York, 1994), and more recently Travels with a Medieval Queen (New York, 2001).

^{134 &#}x27;Rien sauf à supposer une réticence à l'égard de la digression personnalisée qui pertuberait un ordre et une chronologie qui sont ceux du récit de vie (...) Pluralité et diversité des temps vécus, cette modalité de l'archéologie intime du sujet autobiographique (existentiel et textuel) trouve peut-être avec le voyage une

I have spent the last few winters reading about Sicily, researching for a book of months that would trace the varying rhythms and calendars - archaic, agrarian, contemporary that govern the passage of time on the island. But time takes over as I take up my pen; the day I start to write ushers in my twenty-first year in Sicily. What began twenty years ago as a brief visit, an interlude between college and graduate school, has been transformed by choice and circumstance into permanence. Right from the outset, then, the book of months becomes a journal, a chronicle of my Sicilian coming of age, in which these personal beginnings, mine and my family's, coincide with a new year in that classical calendar that provides the structure for my thoughts. 135

Simeti's autobiographical writing emerges in the form of memoirs of the past, diarist's reports of daily routine, and accounts of trips around the main local sites. For Scalia – as for other expatriate women - writing is personal time, and space, for self-knowledge, often distributed over years, in the context of the new country, and the new domestic space itself. As in Scalia's memoirs, Simeti's journal register impressions of the outside world together with the rhythm of life within a new home. A similar process was also noticed in the work by Louise Hamilton Caico.

Moreover, as stressed by Picard, the individual past is evidently not the total of all the lived events, but a perpetual 'interior re-writing' and 're-reading' of them: the Self thus exists only in its reiteration. 136 In this way Scalia perpetually re-writes her Selves through fragmented information, certain and doubtful data, trivial and significant details, collective and personal history. Facts from her notes and diary are re-used and re-elaborated upon in order to reiterate her personal (hybrid) history, both for herself and for others. Her re-writing is, then, achieved through a series of adjustments and rereadings which – from the early Love in the Sunny South to the last pages in her Diary – are meant to guarantee the 'truth' of her existence in what Picard calls images-écrans, 137 in which she can repeatedly reflect and recognize herself.

Tasquan, pp. 10 1135 Taylor Simeti, p. 14.

136 'Ces réécritures ou ces relectures perpétuelles offriraient alors la répétition du même, non de l'acceptance de trouve dans ce ieu'. Picard, p. 163.

figuration sensible adéquate, dès lors qu' "un voyage fait songer à une campagne archéologique."" Pasquali, pp. 76 and 79.

¹³⁷ See Picard, pp. 157-164. Picard mentions Ernst Kris' notion of 'mythe personnel' which can be used to indicate 'une sorte de cristallisation dans la mémoire d'éléments autobiographiques reconstruits autour d'images-écrans particulièrement denses et attractives. Inlassablement remaniés aux étapes décisives de l'existence, ces morphèmes mysthiques seraient finalment bien "plus vrais que nature". Ibd, p. 163.

vi. Framing memories

In the Italian translation of *Sicily and England* eight illustrations have been added to the two pictures of paintings included in the original book. They are either painted or photographic portraits of the author's parents, relatives, Italian and English friends. Pompeo Anichini, Caterina Serretta, Alfonso Scalia on horseback, a young Giulia Anichini, as well as the controversial writer and traveller Lady Sidney Morgan are some of the individuals whose pictures were included in the book.

Pictures can be part of an intricate system of memories and meanings through which users make sense of their daily lives. This is more evident when images portraying past people and events are included in memoirs and diaries, as a medium through which individuals confirm and explore their identity. For contemporary readers, pictures of the past are mysterious texts whose meanings must be decoded or historically contextualized by carrying out a textual and semiotic exploration and by drawing attention to cultural as well as photographic codes. In this way a private significance can be translated into a more public domain. 138

In the images of Scalia's book the models appear in static, artificial poses, often accompanied by decorative objects. The photographs are in the style of the Victorian cartes-de-visite, very popular among the middle classes in the second half of the nineteenth century. The camera not only developed in the Victorian era, but was also implicitly caught up in nineteenth-century interests and attitudes. It was popularised in terms of everyday uses of photographs, for personal use in compiling the family album. In particular by supplying the means by which the working and middle classes could see themselves immortalised and framed, photography also allowed them to acquire a visual history. In fact, in relation to private life, photographic portraits and family photographs gained in popularity at a time of social and economic change. The camera made private

portraits available to a larger range of people providing them with a durable view of their own features, or with an embodiment of ancient ideals of family cohesion. 139 Thus family photography needs to be seen in the light of the authority, as well as in the aesthetic and social conventions (like diaries, letters, memoirs and autobiography) of the people who took them, posed for them, and possessed and preserved them. Generally, it is an aesthetic, social, and moral product which grows in importance with time, and of which the individual, and the family, is at once seller and consumer. Family and private photography also embodies a set of visual rules which shape people's experience and memory. 140 A modern example of this can be observed in the family photographs contained in Susan Caperna Lloyd's No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily, already mentioned in the previous chapter. It is interesting to observe that in Caperna's book the figures on the cover and the frontispiece are family photographs; they portray the author's grandmother - an Italian who migrated to the United States after the First World War – as an old woman and as a young mother surrounded by her children:

I thought of a photograph I had at home of Carolina, taken just before she had immigrated to America in 1922. Seated in a photographer's studio in Rome, she had posed regally, although she was wearing the hairstyle and cotton dress of a country woman. Her dark hair was pulled back to reveal a handsome courageous face. My father 'Romy', her youngest child at two, stood beside her in the chair, and his siblings surrounded her. Aunt Amelia, the dutiful daughter, was slightly behind; Uncle Gino, in front, wore a sailor suit complete with a jaunty beret that was almost a duplicate of the hats worn by the men in Trapani's procession. In this picture, Carolina looked like an immigrant Madonna, surrounded by her portatori. And her large, calloused hands clutched a handkerchief. 141

138 Patricia Holland, 'Sweet it is to scan ...', in Photography: A Critical Introduction, ed. by Liz Wells

⁽London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 103-147 (pp. 107-108).

139 Julia Hirsch, Family Photographs: Content, Meaning and Effect (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 42-44. The democratising function of photography offered enlarged visions of the world to those social classes which originally could not afford the more aristocratic means of visual representation such as painting or engraving. See John Tagg, The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 34-59 ¹⁴⁰ Hirsch, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴¹ Susan Caperna Lloyd, No Pictures in My Grave: A Spiritual Journey in Sicily (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1992), pp. 8-9. See plate 30.

Memories interweave with private fantasy and public history. The written description of the photograph, and the image itself, offer glimpses of many pasts: that of the grandmother, the author's father and other relatives, and above all of the author herself. Yet, 'unlike the social historian', the author does not use her family photographs to 'look for the "truth" of the past'; her narrative, which mixes details of private life and personal thoughts with the account of her visit to Sicily, as well as with constant references to her grandmother, can be interpreted as an attempt at representing the past in order to make sense of a private present she knows. Through her family photographs, and her spiritual journey to Sicily, Caperna endeavours to organize the traces of Time and to fill in the gaps of her existence (as a mother, wife and woman with Italian origins). Moreover, for Caperna, photography seems to be imbued with a symbolic and mystic connotation:

Grandma Carolina believed photographs had powers. She spent the last years of her life sending the few snapshots she had to Dad for safe keeping. Later, when she died, Dad placed a photo of himself and my brother in her coffin. 'That way, she'll protect us', Dad had said. Mother wondered afterwards what Grandma would have thought had she known the photo sank to earth with her, and if the living should accompany the dead on such journey. ¹⁴³

Photography accompanies the dead during their journey after life, as it usually escorts people during their everyday-life journey by translating 'experiences into images' and by conferring 'immortality' on events. 144

In Scalia's book Victorian portraits are placed in a specific context and burdened with new signs. Three uses of these portraits need to be distinguished: a synchronic use made by the subjects themselves and their families, a diachronic use made by the author, and one made by the translator (and editor).

¹⁴² Patricia Holland, 'Introduction' to Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography, ed. by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), pp. 1-14 (pp. 1-2).

¹⁴³ Caperna Lloyd, front cover.

Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Farrar, 1978), pp. 7 and 11.

In Victorian times portraits were meant to describe individuals visually and to inscribe and frame their social identity. Photographic portraits, in particular, allowed the middle classes to claim presence in representation, making themselves visible especially within their own social as well as cultural group. 145 Hence, they became a form of visual mass production, a commodity conferring status. In the new context of the translation of Sicily and England, the pictures transport the self-image of the English Victorians across space and time by inscribing it onto the political and social history of Sicily. In so doing they offer a document in which public and family histories intertwine visually. These pictures gaze inwards and outwards: they are evidence of a private and collective past, as well as a contribution to a historic reconstruction of a private and public narrative. For the user/author - who must have contributed to their selection for the translation - these pictures denote a double reconstruction of the past. The author first attempted to assemble and frame history through the writing of the memoir. Later she could do it again by cooperating in the translation of the text and by looking at, and selecting, the pictures for the Italian version of her book. Illustrations are then used to locate and reanimate the past visually. They are traces of identity, and of a sense of Self brought back through the author's family history.

Like memories, these illustrations do not represent any objective truth about past reality, but together with memories they can function as evidence of experience. In particular, for the target Italian readers, pictures – especially photographs – can operate as proof of events, historical and social facts and also ethnic and cultural identity. They also become part of popular memory and accounts of history which reinforce a sense of national and cultural identity. Yet in the book, visual images do not really illustrate the words. Translators and editor felt the text needed pictures, making the words 'parasitic on the image', as Barthes would say. As a result, the image does not come to

elucidate or explain the text, but it is the latter which 'comes to sublimate, patheticize or rationalize the image', whose original aim was not to illustrate a book.

Portraits of different people are collected and put together in *Sicilia e Inghilterra*; there, they gain unity, although this is a representational construction. Apart from being offered as traces of history, they are arranged and framed in the book to rationalise and assert class and cultural relations. Thus they contribute to the author's self-representation. The forms which pictures take, and their meanings, are reliant on a series of social practices which exist outside of the visual image itself. These practices determine the production, distribution and reception of the image. In this way the meaning of photographs is always the 'result of socially and historically specific functions which the photograph serves in the course of its appropriation by the various institutions and practices which put it to work.' 148

Louise Hamilton Caico was the producer of her photographs; they were displayed as cultural artefacts to provide foreign target readers with evidence of her experience and of the Other's culture. Scalia is a consumer of photographic and pictorial portraits which, gathered and displayed in the text, become cultural artefacts; they offer readers 'facts' of the author's past, as well as of a collective past. Both kinds of pictures are loaded with class awareness, ethnic and cultural significance; both are central to the creation and maintenance of social and cultural divisions whenever they are used by the two authors. However, these same divisions can be challenged in their Italian/Sicilian reception by challenging the content and the context of the pictures. As already seen, Hamilton's photographs are used by the source Sicilian culture as a reflection of its

⁴⁹ See Photography/Politics: Two.

¹⁴⁵ Tagg, pp. 37-38, and Holland, Family Snaps, pp. 116-118.

¹⁴⁶ Holland, pp. 1-14.

Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Message', *Image, Music, Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 15-31, p. 25.

David Green, 'Veins of Resemblance', in *Photography/Politics: Two*, ed. by Patricia Holland, Jo Spence and Simon Watney (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1986), pp. 9-21 (p. 20).



GIULIETTA ANICHINI prima del suo matrimonio con Alfonso Scalia



ALFONSO SCALIA Colonnello di Artiglieria 1860



Carolina Caperna and her children, Amelia, Romy, and Gino; Rome, 1922.

cultural and folkloristic past; on the other hand portraits in Scalia's book are used by the Italian/Sicilian readers as evidence of a collective history. Private photographs of the past are objects which are part of the user's personal past. Seen individually, pictures of past events and people appear as 'miniature tableaux' in which the moments are disjointed and displaced. But in the act of collecting and handling them – as well as whenever they are inserted in a diary or a memoir – a sense of historical movement is produced. Selected and arranged, they narrate a story in which a sense of period is constructed and where historical, social and political changes can be perceived, and traces of ethnicity and cultural identity can be discerned in the way people represent themselves, to themselves and others, through their photographs. Furthermore, these photographs acquire a further commodity value. Re-cycled and rehabilitated in the book they not only drift away 'into a soft abstract pastness', open to a new kind of reading, but they also contribute to the book industry, 151 as well as to a consumption of the Self through a commodification of history.

Conclusions

Together with other women's works, *Sicily and England* is part of those forms of female writing which explore political and social issues mixing them with domestic affairs. And, together with other marginalized texts which are themselves minor, impure, and ostensibly trivial, Tina Scalia's book offers original ways of representing the private and collective past. She does it by linking the personal with the political, the mundane with the historical, the trifling with the significant. She crosses the boundaries between personal reminiscences, social comment and history, making history and imagination overlap in the same text. This creation of a hybrid literary form implies

¹⁵¹ Sontag, p. 71.

¹⁵⁰ Patricia Holland, 'Introduction' to Family Snaps.

essentially a process of recognition of the past, and preservation of the ego from disintegration.

For the author, re-writing collective history, through family history, means rewriting her Self. This process runs parallel in Scalia's published works and private autobiographical writing. The author's encounter with Sicily, and with history, implies a negotiation of the borderlines between Self and Other as it leads to a re-arrangement of the author's attitudes and of her conception of personal identity.

Unlike Charlton and Hamilton Caico, Tina Scalia Whitaker is an 'ex-patriate' twice. She is an exile first, as her parents left Italy for London for political reasons; then, she moved from London to Italy, and particularly to Sicily, for personal reasons. This experience, and all that it implies in terms of construction of identity, emerges in all her writings. In her works she performs a Self which is permanently in search of unity against the effects of time and of cultural hybridity. Additionally, being in between two cultures since birth confers on her a strong authorial/authoritative voice. Scalia moves from a fictional representation of her (cosmopolitan) world – as in the novel *Love in the Sunny South* – to a private writing representing her everyday hybrid Self – as in her *Diary* – via *Sicily and England* (and other historical writings) which mixes history and imagination.

The author wrote *Sicily and England* with publication in mind. And all her writings, even the most private ones, appear to have been conceived to be read, sooner or later, by a public audience. A reiteration of the Self through writing is essential for Scalia's self-identification as Anglo-Italian. It is also a way to confer durability to images of the Self, for the familial and foreign others. Tina Scalia Whitaker needs the Other – made up of family, people from the past, Sicily and readers – to identify and differentiate herself as an upper-class woman, wife, mother, intellectual and Anglo-Italian.

For Hamilton Caico digging into the past meant finding the ethnologic meaning of the Other's traditions and customs; for Charlton Pasqualino re-constructing military and political facts meant essentially re-constructing the present and making sense of the new world for her and for her addressee. For Scalia, instead, framing past history implies a search for her own hybrid history. In *Sicily and England* the author does not use memory as a means of explaining the past tidily, nor as an expression of nostalgia nor as a means of seeking refuge from the present: it is a journey through time and space to rediscover a family and a collective history.

For Scalia the past can be interpreted, for herself and her readers, through the fragmentariness and discontinuity of reminiscences. In *Sicily and England* history is narrated mainly using someone else's voice and eyes. Yet Scalia's perspective and preferences shape the choice and use of materials. Consequently, the historical narrative is inevitably subjective and the past becomes an artefact. The reader, then, understands events and facts through the author/historian's eyes: she is an interpreter of memories, as well as a mediator between historical events and audience. By means of linguistic strategies, the 'beyond', that is the past, appears fashioned through the looking-glass of the author's representation.

Conclusions: expatriate women's writing today

i. Beyond travel writing

The research on which this thesis is based was resulted from the observation that texts by expatriates (those who deliberately go to live in a foreign country for personal or social reasons) are not usually distinguished from texts by travellers (short-term visitors to a country) in critical literature. Yet, if we look at past and contemporary books written by foreigners on Italy, we notice that a number of these authors have persistently attempted to differentiate themselves from travellers and tourists. For the purpose of this thesis, I decided to concentrate my attention on women who lived such experiences in Sicily at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. These authors cannot be simplistically classified as 'visitors' to a country: Mary Charlton Pasqualino, Louise Hamilton Caico and Tina Scalia Whitaker are expatriates. Therefore, I have suggested that we should read their works as expatriate writings. Their representations of places, people and events, as well as their self-depiction in their works, are characterized by a distinct authoritative and authorial presence, which is symptomatic of specific anxieties. These anxieties emerge from a prolonged experience abroad, during which these authors have lived in a state which is somewhere between that of 'foreigner' and that of 'local'.

Analysing the writings by these Anglo-Sicilian women as expatriate works extends the possibilities of historiographic, ethnographic, political and social works about Sicily. Moreover, (re)reading *Letters from Sicily, Sicilian Ways and Days* and *Sicily and England* as texts written by expatriates contributes to an understanding of representations of Sicilian historical and social events by 'outsiders'.

Throughout this thesis it has been possible to highlight the heterogeneity and hybridity of expatriate works and their relations to various types of writings. Expatriate

texts violate frameworks of conventions and expectations. It is possible to conclude that, in many cases, expatriate writing – as in Letters from Sicily and Sicilian Ways and Days – can be considered as a particular configuration of travel writing; it extends the category of oedoporics, widening its possibilities. At the same time, other works by long-term residents abroad clearly go beyond narrow definitions of travel writing. Sicily and England is a case in point. This is mostly due to the book's lack of descriptions of Sicilian customs, locals and landscapes, its reception at the time of publication and to the author's Anglo-Italian birth which makes her more related to Sicily than Mary Charlton Pasqualino and Louise Hamilton Caico. In any case it is possible to assert that analysing texts of this kind opens a breach in the generic conceptualization of travelogues, raising questions about the differences introduced by gender, about the border between the writings of temporary observers' and the accounts of a permanent (or long-staying) foreign expatriate, as well as about the classificatory criteria which apply to different kinds of accounts about foreign cultures. Precisely because of their unconventionality, these hybrid works paradoxically create their own legacy.

By looking at the author's life, in particular at the time she spent in the host country and the kind of relationship she had with the host culture, the modern reader can better understand the writer's representation of that culture and of herself. In fact, on the whole, what mainly characterizes the expatriate's physical – and written – experience is the abolition of temporariness and the re-conceptualization of space that goes with it. The long-term expatriate's residence in the country of adoption allows her to write over a number of years, while staying in the same place. Unlike the traveller, the expatriate is aware that his/her meeting with the Other leads to a long-term or permanent relationship, which often needs to be justified and explained to the target home reader. Thus, for instance, a (re)reading of Mary Charlton's *Letters*, together with an analysis of her life in Sicily encourages a perception of her work as a 'transition' text

which marks the author's passage from the state of traveller to that of expatriate. In her writing, places and people are presented to the addressee with the main intent of justifying her choice to her family in England; and one of the ways in which she achieves this is by searching for similarities between host and home culture. In the case of Louise Hamilton Caico and Tina Scalia Whitaker, the streets, squares, houses and people described in their works, are all elements of their daily routines in Sicily and remain fixed reference points. The streets in Palermo, or the country roads in and around Montedoro are spaces the two authors inhabit every day, regularly meeting the Other. Moreover, the house of her husband's family in Montedoro, in the case of Hamilton, and the ostentatious palace in Palermo, for Scalia, were permanent spaces where their writings (as well as Hamilton's interest in photography) could develop. The physical presence of things and people, which constantly surrounded the authors, influenced their accounts. In the case studies, we have seen that expatriate women's impulses to write from abroad should also be perceived as an intimate experience, evolving not only from their relationships with the Other 'outside', in the streets and public places, but also from relationships with the Other 'inside' the new domestic space. As already noted, the Anglo-Sicilian authors gaze simultaneously at a public and a private realm. Unlike in works by short-term visitors of a country, in women's expatriate writings – as well as in their use of visual images – things and people are mentioned in order to construct a new home and to reposition the boundaries of identity and difference in relation to their new private routine and public life. The campiere Alessandro, Hamilton's guide and mediator, helped the author to enter the Other's universe (so that she could also understand her husband's world). Her discoveries were then poured onto the page, or framed in photographs, to record what she had seen and heard. Through her parents' reminiscences, Scalia was introduced to the other half of her hybrid identity: her Italian side. Her friends later encouraged the author to record

her parents' past and to mix it with her own memories and those of others. For Scalia this also became a way to understand the Other, that is both what is Sicilian, and what was by now in the past. For these Anglo-Sicilian women their enquiry into the historical origins of Sicily, its political and social structure, as well as its cultural and linguistic traditions could acquire a spiritual, intimate significance, whether a sentimental family link was established between them and the host culture, after their arrival on the island (as in the case of Charlton and Hamilton), or whether it existed before moving to Sicily (as in the case of Scalia). For the most part, a relevant characteristic of the writing of female expatriates is its alternation between descriptions of life 'outside' and life 'inside'; but also between descriptions of the author's life (in the host country) as lived 'today' (at the moment of her writing) and as lived 'yesterday'.

Moreover, the perspective of the expatriate female author shifts between an 'internal' and an 'external' observer, conferring flexibility to her account. Through the eyes of an 'outsider' she can depict social life as a set of collective routines while also maintaining a distance that supposedly confers 'objectivity' to her testimony; in this way, she can also grasp peculiarities which native observers overlook. At the same time, as an 'internal' observer, she can narrate the domestic and the quotidian usually neglected by foreigners; and she is able – if she wants – to come to terms with the Other in a more intense way than short-term visitors ever could. Places, people and events appear as the natural result of an everlasting process of historical and social transformation. Furthermore, in many cases, the text is addressed to an external target reader, although the author concomitantly looks towards her host culture, since she is aware that her work enacts a 'rescue' of traditions, customs, language or collective history which are significant for her country of adoption.

Charlton, Hamilton and Scalia appropriated popular contemporary images of Sicilian culture and, at the same time, managed to find (or believed they had found)

marginalized, or little known aspects of their host country. They highlighted these aspects in their texts in order to fulfil the specific purpose of self-representation and to justify their authorial claims. However, although certainly more 'committed' to truthfulness and accuracy, it can be clearly argued that these women's accounts of Sicilian customs and events do not automatically provide a more complete report of their discoveries than those of temporary visitors. During a long-term residence in a foreign country – in Sicily in our particular case – observers can try to understand the alien culture over a more extended timeframe and in a more intimate way than travellers. Between foreigners and 'natives', expatriates can even claim a representation which is simultaneously distanced (as through the eyes of an 'external' observer) and intimate (as through the eyes of an 'internal' observer). However, a complete understanding of otherness can never be achieved. Any identity is plurilocal and elusive.

An important function of expatriate writing is that of contributing to the author's self-knowledge over the years, as well as that of helping the author to face fragmentation and displacement in the context of the new country, and the new private space itself. Prolonged periods in a fixed space provided the Anglo-Sicilian authors, studied in this thesis, with the incentive to search for personal and collective identity. In particular, the ontological significance of these women's writings must be found in their existential need to look for links between their Northern and Southern existences, between two (or more) cultural identities which simultaneously overlapped and conflicted. Writing about themselves and about what surrounded them, these women attempted to re-shape and preserve their multifaceted Self. However, similarly to travellers, the Self which appears in their texts is a product of an interaction between the way they moulded and depicted themselves through communication, and the manner in which they were fabricated by others (both in the host and in the home culture).

As seen in the case of Charlton's text, epistles can shorten distances, and can recreate a relationship with home. Moreover, women's lives in the adopted country become an occasion for a quest: the search for the limits and borders of their hybrid identities as women, intellectuals, wives, mothers and expatriates. These women find in their new house the location where these margins are examined and probed. Women's journeys may have reinforced domesticity in the act of departing from it, meaning that women's autobiographical writing may have served to reinforce patriarchal ideas of Woman. However, it can be argued that it is precisely through the act of wandering and exploring other places that these women become aware of the domestic and feminine sphere. This is more evident whenever they decide to settle down in the new country choosing freely what to do with their life, re-choosing voluntary domesticity, and broadening the concept of home.

The expatriate's identity lies in the movement between different spaces, in the constant negotiation between country of origin and adopted country, and in the amalgamation of cultural forms. The boundaries of identity and difference are continually repositioned in relation to varying points of reference. For expatriate women the text becomes the place where different selves perform in a blending of voices. These women's Self is projected in the representation of the *modus vivendi* of the Other, and the new world becomes a mirror onto which their feelings, fears, oppressions and desires are reflected. It is inside the new home – in the host culture – defined as indoor, limited and domestic space to be gradually conquered, that expatriate women can make room for a multitude of internal voices. These voices subsequently find an ideal *locus* for articulation on the white pages. In texts by expatriate women – and particularly in the works by the Anglo-Sicilians – particular speaking voices derive from their position

¹ 'Travel writing is itself the liberating cultural work of revising, complicating, and expanding the culture's idea of Woman, which in turn revises, complicates, and expands the culture's writing of "home", the domain assigned to women'. Mary Suzanne Schriber, Writing Home: American Women Abroad 1830-1920 (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997), pp. 130-131.

of 'in-betweeners'. Their verbal representation is the result of their hybrid cultural identity, their intimate and long-term experience with the people and culture of the adopted country, their experiences as wives, mothers and intellectuals in the new domestic space. The 'polyphonic' effect in their works is thus emphasized by voices emerging from a Self performing simultaneously as 'native and 'foreign'. In particular, these works have in common a voice which asserts the authority provided by the authors' 'immobility', as opposed to the traveller's roaming. As already said, this allows Charlton, Hamilton and Scalia to claim 'deeper' observations and 'reliable' analysis based on their intimate relationships with the host culture.

Charlton, Hamilton and Scalia produced three works which strategically mix scientific accounts with autobiographical voices. They claimed reliability and expertise based on their use of documents, technical language and profound observations, with the intention of stepping over the borderlines associated with gender. At the same time, they were aware that they needed to employ a strategic stance as trustworthy, selfeffacing female reporters, craving indulgence from their audience for any incomplete information. In particular, in prefaces and introductions - where authors are asked to address their audience directly, clarifying their intentions and the scope of their work a genderisation of women's work can easily be detected. Between conforming and transgressing, these three authors - as other women writers of their time - eluded contemporary codes and conventions often from the beginning of their texts. Through a kind of self-censorship they prepared their readership for the reception of their works. Aware of the limitations imposed upon them by the social construction of their gender, women had to combine scientific observations with a personal voice in order to give their work credibility. Finally, their works gave them the opportunity to find points of consonance between their private lives and public commitments, as well as to face

social taboos and gender limitations imposed on women not only in their country of origin, but also in the country of adoption.

ii. Interpreting the present through the past: Sicilian Ways and Days and Sicily and England today

Representations of foreign cultures and events can be read and decoded not only considering their reception at the moment of production, but also on the basis of their long-term *fortuna*. In fact, distinct cultural, historical and geographical settings have produced varied readings and interpretations of the works by Charlton, Hamilton and Scalia, in accordance with the different systems of genres and representations that every period produces. Moreover, these texts set out to overstep the boundaries of their target Anglophone audience for they have been reappropriated and adopted, over time, by the source (Sicilian) culture, consequently to become part of its 'archive' and collective memory. ² In fact, despite their limitations and idiosyncrasies the works by these women – in particular Hamilton's and Scalia's – have created their own legacy within the country they represent, whenever they have been translated into Italian.

Different time and space, as well as the structural heterogeneity of Sicilian Ways and Days and Sicily and England have allowed a diverse interpretation of their representations, as well as their interaction with other classes of texts. This can be noticed in the diachronic reception of these books within the culture which inspired their production.

The reception of a work depends on the existence of a series of aesthetic and historical implications between the text and its addressees. On the one hand, this means

² Assmann speaks of 'cultural memory' as 'a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation'. For Assmann 'cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity'. One of the modes cultural memory exists is then in 'the mode of potentiality of the archive whose accumulated texts, images, and rules of conduct act as a total horizon'. Jan Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', New German Critique, 65 (1995), 125-133 (p. 130). For an interpretation of culture as archive in the service of the

that in their reading and interpretation of a book readers will be sustained and influenced by previous readings and readers' perceptions. On the other hand, different cultural, historical and geographical settings can also generate diverse understandings of a work, of its generic features and of its content. Moreover, powerful institutions such as religion, family and state, may also dictate what kind of information must be archived, and for how long. In fact, in the process of self-representation, a culture canonizes some texts and rejects others. This helps the culture to preserve continuity through generations. Additionally, information considered relevant within a particular group can be regarded as not relevant for another group (and its language). The same text can be interpreted and received in different manners in the languages of different groups.³ A culture – perceived as an immense archive of past and present knowledge collected and united for and by a group – is a long-term, expandable storage of documents and records easily accessible and usable when required, although fragmented and never completed.

Two years before her death, in a letter to one of her daughters Louise Hamilton Caico wrote:

(...) il mio Sicilian Ways and Days è stato scritto per lettori inglesi, e tradotto in italiano tale quale non interesserebbe il pubblico italiano, e meno ancora il (grosso) pubblico siciliano. Difatti é stato esaminato da Bemporad che dichiarò che era una bellissima opera in inglese, ma che non avrebbe successo in italiano.⁴

Sicilian Ways and Days was translated into Italian with the title Vicende e costumi siciliani and published in Palermo, in 1983. In 1996 a second edition of the translation came out in Caltanissetta. Despite Hamilton's low expectations, the book has achieved a certain popularity within Sicily, and in particular, in the province of Caltanissetta.

Empire in the Victorian period, see Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London – New York: Verso, 1993).

³ Jurij Lotman and Boris A. Uspenskij, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. by Ann Shukman (Ann Arbor: Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, University of Michigan, 1984), pp. xi and 3.

⁴ Louise Hamilton Caico, Letters, Palermo 5 July 1925 (Archive Petix, Montedoro).

⁵ The book was first published in 1983 by Epos in Palermo, and in 1996 by Edizioni Lussografica in Caltanissetta.

Copies in the original language must have also circulated in Sicily, probably among the author's acquaintances.

In 1984, in a review of the translation that appeared in a journal specializing in the Risorgimento and contemporary history, Federico Curato emphasized the hybrid nature of the text. He stressed that it cannot be considered either as one of the travel journals so in fashion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or as a socio-economic study based on written documents:

Essa non è un giornale di viaggio, tipo di letteratura così frequente nei secoli XVIII e XIX, né un'indagine economico-sociale fatta su 'documenti' d'archivio e fonti a stampa: è il quadro di un'esperienza vissuta, descritta con tono critico e spessissimo velato di *humour*, nel quale le usanze antichissime, quasi cristallizzatesi nel corso dei secoli, sopravvivono in un mondo che altrove si è trasformato per mille fattori, a quelli sociali a quelli tecnici e igienici, e che veduto ora da chi da quel mondo è lontano, non possono che suscitare sentimenti di sorpresa e giudizi graffianti.⁶

A similar approach can also be noted in the Introduction to the translation. Massimo Ganci clarifies that:

Non si tratta di un giornale di viaggio del tipo di quelli, numerosissimi e famosi, scritti da francesi, tedeschi e inglesi, nel secolo XVIII e nella prima metà del XIX. Louise risiedeva in Sicilia e con l'isola (...) ebbe un impatto violento che non ebbero Goethe, né Oesterwald, né Houel, né Münter.⁷

There is some evidence, therefore, that Hamilton's relation with and reaction to the island have been distinguished from those of travellers by Italian readers.⁸

Recently rediscovered, re-valued and translated, in Sicily the book has been considered as a precious testimony of past traditions and an occasion to interpret the present in relation to the past. In the public library of Caltanissetta, *Vicende e costumi siciliani* is not catalogued as part of the vast travel writing production on Sicily, but is

⁶ Federico Curato, 'Louise Hamilton Caico, *Vicende e costumi siciliani*', *Il Risorgimento*, n.1 (1984), 96-97. All the other book reviews and articles published in this issue are of historiographic works, apart from an article on 'L'esperienza torinese di Richard Cobden (Diario inedito di un navigatore)'.

⁷ Ganci, 'Introduzione', *Vicende e costumi siciliani*, by Louise Hamilton Caico, trans. by Renata Pucci Zanca (Caltanissetta: Lussografica, 1996; 1st edn Palermo: Epos, 1983), pp. i-xv (p. vii).

⁸ However, Hamilton's work has remained almost unknown in the rest of Italy. Her name has recently appeared in bibliographies of travellers in Sicily, and this has contributed to the classification of the book as travelogue for a broad Italian audience.

rather shelved together with a series of other ethnographic and folkloristic texts.9 Bookshops in Caltanissetta and Palermo constantly keep copies of it in stock. However, through the translation the original text has undergone some changes. Alterations and omissions undoubtedly affect the reading of the text, while the translation has adjusted the message of the book to a new context. The presentation of the book has the power to mediate the impact of the translation. For example, it can be noticed that the Italian title Vicende e costumi siciliani accentuates the ethnographic purpose of the text; the idea of long-term experience is also given by neglecting the translation of 'days' and the sense of temporariness it could have suggested. Nonetheless, this effect seems to be destabilized by the cover chosen for the Italian version: a black and white photograph showing a thoughtful woman writing at her desk. This image invites the reader to identify the woman with the author, and her romantic, melancholic pose with her feelings. In other words, the illustration itself suggests a plot and encourages the reader to fantasize about the content of the book and the context it was written in. Facts and imagination have been mixed in the cover, shaping the first impressions of the target addressee.

Hamilton's photographs – which originally were inserted at the point where their subject was described in the text – are grouped together in two sets in the translation. They are also ordered thematically¹⁰ and some of their titles have been modified. Instead of being accompanied by citations from the text, as in the original, most of the photographs are given more indicative titles which imply knowledge of places and names on the part of the readers, and invite them to recognize past things, places and customs.¹¹

⁹ Recently, in a secondary school (Liceo Classico) of Caltanissetta, a teacher put Louise Hamilton Caico's work on the list of suggested books for reading and discussions on Sicilian customs.

¹⁰ 'Il mondo di Louise', 'Costumi e personaggi popolari', 'Luoghi e feste religiose' and 'Il lavoro in miniera, nei campi, nel paese'.

¹¹ For example, 'He filled the measure' (illustrating the harvest) is replaced with 'Si misura il grano con i tumuli'; 'Filling their pitchers at a fountain' is translated with 'Abbeveratoio "Marici" di Serradifalco'; and 'A dismally small, canary-yellow box' becomes 'La diligenza da Serradifalco a Montedoro'.

Additionally, sections have been omitted or cut in the Italian version of Hamilton's book. For example, in the Chapter 'Harvest', Hamilton transcribes and translates four prayers chanted by reapers. Only two of them have been reported in the translation. Moreover, they have been re-translated from the English into Italian. The loss of a part of the original text in the translation is visibly amplified: not only did the translator omit a substantial part of the document, but she also translated from English into Italian what Hamilton had already translated from the Sicilian dialect into English. On the other hand, a *novena*, a long Christmas song of nine stanzas has been entirely reported in English, although it has been placed in an appendix. Ganci justifies this choice as dictated by the need to preserve regional traditions which have nearly disappeared today. This is inconsistent as the song has been left in English, while the litanies have been translated.

Despite its modifications and inconsistencies, the translation has given popularity to Hamilton's work in the place of its setting. The translation has also allowed this text to be included in the Sicilian 'archive' of culture, and to contribute to the strengthening of some form of collective identity and the conservation of regional memory. Especially in the little village described in the book, esteem and high interest for her personality and writing are still present. Louise Hamilton embodies a whole foreign culture and becomes the object of collective admiration and pride for her interest in the unknown Sicilian hinterland, at a time when Sicily, in the eyes of outsiders, could only be a receptacle of ancient glories or the object of political, economic and social inquiries. An example of the rising interest in Hamilton's work and life is the fictionalization of her experience in Montedoro. Thus in 1997 the short-story Il barone di Torretta by a little-known local author, Federico Messana, was published.

¹² 'Questa memoria, oggi, in parte è andata perduta: per cui la trascrizione della Caico ne assume il valore di documento, sia pure indiretto. Riteniamo, quindi, opportuno riportare per intero, in appendice, questa trascrizione inglese. Naturalmente senza tradurla in italiano. Il che costituirebbe un'operazione priva di valore scientifico'. Ganci, p. xii.

This is a tale based on Hamilton's account of her visit to the Baron, as described in chapter two. The author fantasizes about the meeting between the English woman and the mysterious Sicilian man.¹³ At the same time, the interest in her book has been accompanied by a measure of disapproval for the author's mordant comments on customs. Some of Hamilton's observations have been considered imbued with the English and class-conscious prejudices typical of travellers.

Today Hamilton's work is much sought after by Sicilian readers especially for its potential significance. The result is the objectification of the Sicilian culture by that culture itself, and through images produced by a foreign author. By means of her text, Sicilian people, places, traditions, customs and events become part of a shared process of consumption, which also allows that society to interact with its own environment.

The reception of Scalia's book in Italy was slightly different from its reception in England, forty years earlier, as illustrated in chapter two. The publishing company, the Sicilian Mazara, published Sicilia e Inghilterra: ricordi politici. La vita degli esuli italiani in Inghilterra (1848-1870) in its series 'Biblioteca storica', in 1948. The author was still alive at the time and she certainly contributed to the translation. Addressed to an Italian audience, its subtitle, 'the life of the Italian exiles in England' stresses the aim of the book to embrace episodes of national history. Moreover, as explained in chapter three, the author decided to add portraits of her parents, relatives and friends, in the Italian version of her book. In the Introduction to the translation, Biagio Pace clearly defined the book as part of that 'genre' so little represented in the Italian literary production: a collection of family memories and social life characterised by private

¹³ Federico Messana, *Il barone di Torretta* (Caltanissetta: Lussografica, 1997). Also, research has been carried out on the Caicos.

¹⁴ See Scalia Whitaker's 'Prefazione' to the Italian version of the book, in which she thanks Vera Certo 'della sua premurosa collaborazione alla traduzione', and remembers Biagio Pace's solicitation to translate her work for the centenary of the 1848 Sicilian revolution. In 1947, in an entry of her *Diary* she writes 'I intend to spend what energies I have on looking through the last chapters of the translation of my blessed *Sicily and England*'. Scalia Whitaker, Malfitano, 12 November 1947, in *Diary*. See also, Rome, 26 February 1947. According to Trevelyan one of her daughters had the task to check Tina's poor translation. Trevelyan, p. 447.

details, minor anecdotes and facts which confer strong plasticity and tone on the historical narrative:

Esso appartiene a un "genere" tanto scarsamente rappresentato nella produzione libraria italiana – non saprei ricordare che le *Memorie* della principessa Vittoria Colonna, *Il Diplomatico sorridente* di Daniele Varé e i *Ricordi* del conte San Martino – quanto è comune presso inglesi e francesi. Raccolta di ricordi familiari e di vita di società, cui sono riservati quei particolari intimi, quelle minuzie aneddotiche, quei retroscena umili, che nel grande quadro della storia rappresentano le sfumature, atte a conferire pieno valore di plasticità e di tono'. 15

Unlike the English reader, the Italian one seems to be guided towards an interpretation of the book as a family memoir. Antonio Pagliaro, in *L'Italia che scrive*, highlighted the fact that Scalia's book was not properly a historiographic work, but rather a family memoir:

Epperò non si tratta di un'opera propriamente storica, bensì di un libro di memorie, che, per essere buona parte riflesse o indirette, hanno richiesto un attento lavoro di selezione e di completamento. (...) Le sue memorie, più che personali, sono, per ovvie ragioni cronologiche, memorie di famiglia.¹⁶

The limits of Scalia's historiographic narration needed to be underlined too, although they did not invalidate the representation of facts and people, as well as the selfconstruction of the author:

Non può certamente dirsi che la trattazione esaurisca storiograficamente il complesso dei rapporti fra la Sicilia e l'Inghilterra sino al 1870; né che, specie per la fase anteriore ai moti del Risorgimento, alla quale è dedicato un ampio capitolo introduttivo, tutti gli aspetti di siffatti rapporti abbiano completo rilievo. Quello che dà fisionomia al libro e ne rende avvincente la lettura è la personalità dell'Autrice, che introduce i suoi personaggi con mano leggera ma sicura e aneddotica intelligente e garbata.¹⁷

All twelve chapters are maintained in the Italian version, although the editor decided to reduce the section on 'Modern Italy'. As explained in a footnote of 'Alcune considerazioni sull'Italia moderna', only the first and the last pages of the original chapter are published in Italian, as the social and political problems it originally tackled were considered already outdated at the time of the translation. The main explanation for cutting out this anachronistic section can be found in the author's political

17 Pagliaro.

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¹⁵ Biagio Pace, 'Premessa' to Sicilia e Inghilterra, pp. 5-9 (p. 6).

¹⁶ Antonio Pagliaro, 'Sicilia e Inghilterra', L'Italia che scrive, n. 3 (March 1949), 58.

orientation. She believed in a liberal monarchy and in the power of the nobility; and, before the Second World War, she also supported Mussolini. Therefore, in the last chapter of *Sicily and England* Scalia showed ideas and beliefs no longer in line with the Italian political reality of 1948:

My opinion, which is based upon a comparison between Italy and England, will doubtless savour of the archaic, even to those who belong to the most Conservative school of thought; but after years of the closest intimacy with English life, I have arrived at the conclusion that many of the political evils from which Italy is suffering today may be distinctly traced to the fact that the nobility has no place assigned to it in the social order, and that the throne is thus deprived of one of its strongest supports. (...) An isolated monarchy must more easily lead to a republic, and, as we know by experience, Republicanism may ultimately become Caesarism, the worst form of autocracy. A Liberal monarchy was the dream of those Sicilian patriots of whom I have written, not a monarchy which is nothing more than the presidency of a republic under a royal mantle. ¹⁹

Selecting and omitting sections from the book implies an attempt to rewrite the text in order to make it conform to changed domestic interests and political circumstances. Thus, the 'foreignness' of *Sicily and England* is not only constituted by the language it was originally written in, but also by the period and ideologies it belonged to. At the beginning of the book a note points out that: 'I frequenti riferimenti nel testo a persone o a situazioni vanno sempre riportati al tempo in cui il presente libro vide la luce nella edizione inglese'.²⁰ By manipulating the text and its representation, author, translators and editor have moulded the reception of *Sicily and England* in Italy.

Within their separate cultural contexts, Sicily and England and Sicilia e Inghilterra, do not have the same meaning. There is a linguistic and material distinction between the Italian and the English book, but also between the function and value of those texts in two different cultural contexts.

Compared with the work of Louise Hamilton Caico, Whitaker Scalia's Italian version of her book certainly enjoyed a wider Italian audience although, as already said, studies on the author's life and family are now circumscribed to a regional, Sicilian

¹⁸ However, years after her pamphlet written to advice the Sicilians to vote in favour of Mussolini, Scalia Whitaker filled her *Diary* with sarcastic comments on fascism and Mussolini.

¹⁹ Scalia Whitaker, Sicily and England, pp. 324-325.

area. However, in Italy, Sicilia e Inghilterra has acquired a new meaning, and it is read for its reports of Sicilian events during the Risorgimento, as well as for details of the lives of Italian expatriates in London. Sicilia e Inghilterra has been appropriated as a text which, through personal reminiscences, constructs a portion of the historic past for the Italians (and now specifically for the Sicilians). This is also valid for the illustrations included in the book. Today for the Sicilians the photographic portraits of Scalia's friends and acquaintances in Sicilia e Inghilterra become visual evidence of a collective past; photographs of the past supply the present-day readers with historical awareness.

In this way Sicilia e Inghilterra has become part of a collective (historical) memory and has acquired a certain amount of authority within a group. Moreover, through its consumption, the representation of 'reality' it provides has been legitimised throughout the years. Scalia's book can be held up as another example of a minor text produced for a foreign audience which, despite its limitations and idiosyncrasies, has maintained its legacy through its translation.

The recent attention paid to Sicilian Ways and Days and Sicily and England in Sicily, mainly thanks to their translations, illustrates how, a culture can adopt and appropriate texts about itself produced by outsiders; these texts can become part of its collective memory and, thus, elements of its 'archive'. Whenever this occurs, institutions and forces external and internal to the culture collaborate in producing the representation. Furthermore, as any text, these works hold an interpretation of reality and, as containers of knowledge and organized data, they can acquire authority within a group for a short period or over a long span of time. In particular, by consuming these works (with their visual images) and citing them (or from them), subjects constantly legitimise the representation of reality produced in Sicilian Ways and Days and Sicily and England. In this way, these texts about Sicilian culture can be highly sophisticated

²⁰ Scalia Whitaker, Sicilia e Inghilterra, p. 12.



SICILIA INGHILTERRA

RICORDI POLITICI LA VITA DEGLI ESULI ITALIANI IN INGHILTERRA (1848 + 1870)

CON UNA PREMESSA DI BIAGIO PACE



MAZARA SOCIETÀ EDITRICE SICILIANA containers of knowledge; and knowledge, connected to power, can gain the authority of 'truth'.

However, through these works and their forms of intercultural representation, a contemporary society can also be stimulated to rediscover and preserve its own collective memory. The past does not easily disappear, despite the fact that it cannot be preserved; it is fixed in the cultural memory as a productive presence.²¹ Sicilians will gaze at refracted images of themselves recorded by others, and through them reconstruct some forms of collective identities.

iii. The 'authentic' Italian experience

More texts about Italy written by Anglo-Italian women wait to be unearthed from libraries and archives. Others (already examined by scholars) need to be re-explored and (de)constructed according to new perspectives. Additionally, research should concentrate on the diachronic reception and on the translation into Italian of works about Italy by foreigners, as well as, in particular, on the way in which, nowadays, the Italian culture re-appropriates these texts, makes them part of its 'archive' of culture, and uses them to gaze at refracted images of itself. Furthermore, as suggested in chapters two and three, an approach to women's accounts of foreign lands and facts should also insist on their pictorial and photographic representations, and on the way in which these interrelate with the narration.

The main period covered by this study is marked by the broad transformation of Italian and Sicilian society during and after the process of national unification. The period spanning from the Risorgimento to the years before the First World War was a crucial time because of social, political and economic changes which affected Italy, and Sicily in particular. It was also a time during which perceptions of the South, based on real and imaginary 'facts', were shaped as a national concern. The Anglo-Sicilian

women analysed in this work wrote within this context, and their texts are extremely important because they bear witness of these events and the society of that time. However, the late twentieth century offers a context in which images of Sicily (and Italy in general), as well as of the author's Self could be further re-conceptualized. Throughout the thesis a number of recent works by Anglophone expatriate women in Italy have been mentioned. Research on production, publication and reception of similar books today should be carried out. In particular, it would be interesting to examine the forms and functions of women's expatriate writing today. The passages quoted from A House in Sicily by Daphne Phelps, Mary Taylor Simeti's On Persephone's Island (two authors who lived permanently in Sicily) and No Pictures in My Grave by the Italian-American Susan Caperna Lloyd, show similarities with the earlier works by Anglophone women in Sicily mentioned throughout this thesis. In many of these recent works we still find claims for scientific authority, whenever the authors deal with topics such as politics, past history and contemporary society. Nevertheless, on many occasions domesticity acquires more emphasis when compared to earlier works, as these female authors are able to speak of their households with more confidence than their predecessors, often 'hiding' some of the authorial anxieties typical of nineteenthcentury women. It can be observed that late twentieth-century women abroad chose to portray themselves involved in a microcosm of activities involving cooking, harvesting, olive pressing, wine making, and especially restoring houses. A few examples of this trend are the books by the English Annie Hawes narrating her fifteen years of life in Liguria, the works by Joan Marble on her gardens in Rome, and the account by the Australian Isabella Dusi on her 'real' life in Tuscany.²² As can be noticed from their

²¹ Lotman and Uspenskij, p. 28.

²² See Annie Hawes, Extra Virgin: Amongst the Olive Groves of Liguria (London: Penguin, 2001), and her Ripe for the Picking (London: Penguin 2003); Joan Marble, Notes from a Roman Terrace (London: Doubleday, 2003) and Notes from an Italian Garden (London: Doubleday, 2000). Isabella Dusi, Vanilla Beans & Brodo: Real Life in the Hills of Tuscany (London: Simon & Schuster, 2002). See also a more poignant memoir by an American writer married to an Italian, Wallis Wilde-Menozzi, Mother-Tongue: An American in Italy (San Francisco: North Point Press, 2003). Many of these works are written by

narrations, these contemporary foreign women try to surprise locals with their skills, as well as to appear as exemplary models of female entrepreneurialism for target home readers. In doing so, they strategically accentuate the 'plurilocality' of the female identity, as well as the indeterminacy of 'home'. An analysis aiming to compare women's travelogues with expatriates' writings should also focus on today's women's conceptualization of public and private space in a foreign culture, as well as on women's needs to leave their country of origin in search of stability and authority (as well as domesticity) elsewhere. Categories of gender, race and class must still be applied whenever contemporary accounts by women living abroad are critically approached. Moreover, a strong economic component related to modern consumption and improved standards of living should be taken into account. For the foreigner, the desire to buy a house in the Tuscan countryside or on the Sicilian coast, and to reside there permanently, often arises from his/her need for a better quality of life, possibly after years of a city existence.²³ However, his/her choice also implies a search for a new 'exoticism' epitomized by aspects of 'made in Italy', such as fashion and food. In this way, the search for a long-lasting, 'authentic' Italian experience paradoxically amplifies the imaginary fabrication of Italy and, at the same time, leads to its commodification. Writing and publishing perpetuate these processes. By recording their experiences expatriates 'collaborate' with the tourist industry. In fact, numerous contemporary works written by foreigners residing in Italy are classified as travel books, and ceaselessly contribute to a market burgeoning with similar offers. In these books the Other is still depicted as picturesque and Utopian in order to provide amusing stories for

Anglophone women permanently based in Italy. However, others are produced by women who annually go to their houses in Italy for their holidays. For instance, the American Frances Mayes alternates her life between her farmhouse in Tuscany and San Francisco where she works. See Frances Mayes, *Under the Tuscan Sun* (New York: Chronicle Books, 1996).

²³ In one of her books, Annie Hawes writes: 'After a long and gloomy winter of angst and form-filling I'd firmly established that I had absolutely no chance of getting a loan to buy the home of my dreams. (...) Enough lurking in the London gloom, skidding home exhausted through greasy city dark and drizzle. What did I care about a career? Or real estate, for that matter? Freelance horticulture would do very nicely'. Hawes, Extra Vergin, pp. 4-5.

home readers. And it cannot be denied that these authors encourage the idealization and consumption of what is believed to be 'really' Italian, through the stubborn claim of having gone 'beyond' the observation of the traveller.

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