

Testi brevi

di

accompagnamento.

Linguistica,

semiotica,

traduzione



UNIVERSITAS
STUDIORUM

a cura di
Donella Antelmi
Mara Logaldo

Testi brevi di accompagnamento. Linguistica, semiotica, traduzione

a cura di

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Introduzione

Donella Antelmi

1. Testi brevi: brevit as ieri e oggi

La *brevitas* non   certo una invenzione dei nostri tempi. Come ricorda Montandon (2001), incisioni e graffiti, fin da tempi remoti, rappresentano forme espressive concise, lapidarie, affidate a supporti che, per loro natura, non lasciano spazio a messaggi di ampio respiro: pietra, muro, manufatti. Tuttavia, la brevit  non coincide necessariamente con la (poca) lunghezza: essa ha, al contrario, una propria retorica, stilistica e poetica, poich  “riguarda le caratteristiche di una scrittura specifica che mira a una concisione formale determinata da specifici fattori di condensazione, sommariet  ed economia” (Montandon 2001: 13). Non va quindi dimenticato che, a dispetto della – o grazie alla – concisione, le forme brevi rappresentano unit  di informazione ad alto contenuto. L’estetica del corto   insomma caratterizzata da una ricercata densit  semantica, per cui, ad esempio, Abruzzese pu  sostenere che la brevit  “non   un ripiego, bens  un punto di forza” grazie alla sua intensit  comunicativa (Abruzzese 2001: 127).

Venendo all’oggi, c’  da chiedersi quali e quante delle caratteristiche retoriche e stilistiche della *brevitas* tradizionale descritta da Montandon si siano mantenute, in considerazione del fatto che la brevit , oltre che essere ricercata per i suoi effetti accattivanti (ad esempio nella pubblicit  o nei titoli),   spesso imposta dal *medium*: valga per tutti l’esempio dei 140 caratteri di Twitter, o il *time coding* nella sottotitolatura dei film. Le possibilit  e le restrizioni offerte dalla tecnologia (codifica e velocit  di trasmissione) interagiscono, evidentemente, con gli aspetti semiotici e stilistici tradizionali, come si pu  osservare nei mass-media contemporanei.

In considerazione di queste caratteristiche, la ricerca sui testi brevi può essere concepita da diverse prospettive: quella – più tradizionale – centrata sulla *brevitas* formale, costitutiva,¹ oppure quella che prende in considerazione l’interazione tra modi semiotici differenti. Il riconoscimento che la comunicazione è inerentemente multimodale, e che l’alfabetizzazione (*literacy*) non è limitata al linguaggio ha infatti favorito lo studio dell’interazione tra linguaggio e altre risorse, come immagini, simboli, gesti, voce, musica, che, assieme, creano significati in testi multimodali su supporti vari: materiali a stampa, video, siti web, applicazioni digitali (Bateman 2008, O’Halloran/Smith 2011, Unsworth/Cleirigh 2009, Liu/O’Halloran 2009).

I contributi del libro affrontano questo secondo filone, andando a coprire ambiti anche distanti tra loro, come (foto)giornalismo, pubblicità, trailer, espografica museale, traduzione e interpretazione, ambiti resi tuttavia simili dalla presenza, in essi, di testi brevi che ‘accompagnano’ altre modalità espressive, caratteristica che il termine inglese *caption* coglie sinteticamente, indicando una

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1. La proliferazione, dopo l’avvento di internet e delle nuove tecnologie, di forme di comunicazione che hanno nella brevità il loro tratto distintivo (blog, sms, twitter) ed incidono sull’evoluzione della lingua scritta ha dato luogo a numerosi studi. Limitandomi al contesto italiano, ricordo in particolare il Convegno del 2006 (*Testi brevi 1*) che ha inteso definire i confini della nozione di “brevità”, relativa ai prodotti diffusi in tutte le epoche storiche ed in svariati generi (a partire da *defixiones*, *exempla*, aforismi, fino all’odierna pubblicità). Un secondo Convegno del 2009 (*Testi brevi 2*) ha affrontato il tema dal punto di vista della linguistica dei media, dunque prendendo in esame gli aspetti della *brevitas* funzionali alla economicità temporale e spaziale tipica della comunicazione mediale contemporanea. Infine, sebbene principalmente dedicato alle forme abbreviate di scrittura, non va dimenticato l’apporto del progetto Scritture Brevi, avviato da Francesca Chiusaroli nel 2011 all’università Tor Vergata, che ha promosso diversi convegni sul tema. Oltre ai risultati di questi convegni (e pubblicazioni collegate), la ricerca sulle forme di comunicazione brevi è in ogni caso, per quanto riguarda l’approccio linguistico, abbondante e diversificata. (Cfr: Pistolesi (2004), Chiusaroli / Zanzotto (2012), Held / Schwarze (2011), Curcio (2014).

molteplicità di forme testuali la cui caratteristica è di convogliare una informazione dettagliata e specifica, ma estremamente concisa e puntuale.

Proprio per valorizzare questa eterogeneità e multidisciplinarietà ed esplorarne le potenzialità, si è svolto nel giugno 2018 all'Università IULM di Milano il Convegno internazionale *Words Worth Watching: Changing Perspectives on Captions* durante il quale studiosi provenienti da diversi settori disciplinari, professionisti e giovani ricercatori si sono confrontati sulle particolarità dei 'testi brevi di accompagnamento' nelle rispettive aree di studio.

Dalla riflessione iniziata in occasione del Convegno sono scaturiti i saggi raccolti in questo volume, che mantengono, in molti casi, l'esposizione discorsiva dell'intervento orale a commento delle immagini.

2. *Questo volume*

Tre sono le macro-aree tematiche emerse nel Convegno, tre ambiti nei quali osservare e descrivere forme e funzioni dei testi brevi di accompagnamento: le scritture museali (didascalie e pannelli), il sottotitolaggio e la traduzione/interpretazione (film, trailer, tv), il giornalismo e la pubblicità. I saggi raccolti nel volume seguono questo stesso ordine.

Quanto alla prima area, i testi museali hanno solo da poco interessato la ricerca (linguistica) in Italia, sebbene da tempo venga sottolineata la loro funzione all'interno delle esposizioni e la necessità che le didascalie facciano convergere informazione e coinvolgimento del lettore/visitatore. Da mero strumento informativo, infatti, il testo espografico punta a sollecitare la curiosità e l'immaginario del visitatore, contribuendo in modo non marginale alla costruzione di quel dispositivo semiotico complesso che è l'esposizione e la sua mediazione linguistica.

Sulla funzione delle etichette al museo si esprime qui James BRADBURNE, direttore della Pinacoteca di Brera. Oltre a sof-

fermarsi sulle problematiche connesse all'accessibilità, che, per quanto riguarda la dimensione linguistica, implica una attenzione particolare alla confezione dei testi espografici,² Bradburne sottolinea che il compito dell'etichetta è soprattutto quello di far sì che il visitatore si soffermi più a lungo e con maggior curiosità sull'opera esposta. In questa prospettiva i testi delle esposizioni dovrebbero presentare sempre più, accanto agli elementi di aiuto/guida all'interpretazione dell'artefatto, elementi orientati a motivare il visitatore e a rafforzare la sua relazione con l'istituzione museale. L'esperienza che Tim PARKS illustra nel suo saggio mostra, non a caso, la differenza di vedute – e di redazione delle etichette – tra una storica dell'arte ed un linguista (con una visione storica del periodo messo in mostra), e conferma, attraverso il caso concreto, l'efficacia di un approccio comunicativo più che informativo nella redazione delle *captions*. Donella ANTELMINI analizza i testi espografici di tre musei in prospettiva linguistica e discorsiva, evidenziando i tratti dell'enunciazione che condizionano la comunicazione, realizzando o disattendendo l'obiettivo di coinvolgimento del visitatore.

Un secondo ambito preso in esame nel volume riguarda le tematiche relative a traduzione, traducibilità e interpretazione.

La diffusione di audiovisivi (serie, telefilm, documentari, giochi), favorita anche da piattaforme digitali a pagamento (ad esempio Netflix) ha impresso un notevole sviluppo nel campo della traduzione. L'evoluzione della tecnologia ed il passaggio da analogico a digitale hanno visto infatti un incremento delle traduzioni, sia nel doppiaggio, sia nel sottotitolaggio, oltre alla diffusione di sottotitoli specifici per sordi e ipovedenti, e alla descrizione del video, indirizzata ad ipovedenti, che ha iniziato a diventare comune

2. Nell'ottica di tenere conto non solo di svantaggi fisici degli utenti (ipovedenti), ma anche di limitazioni relative ad età, alfabetizzazione, cultura di provenienza (cfr. anche Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo, 2014, *Circolare n 37/2014 DG-VAL: Giornata internazionale dei diritti delle persone con disabilità*).

nel panorama audiovisivo. La circolazione di prodotti audiovisivi al di fuori del mercato nazionale ha anche generato il fenomeno del *fansubbing*, ovvero della sottotitolatura amatoriale, spesso prodotta in tempi brevissimi da non professionisti. Elemento chiave della traduzione audiovisiva è il suo carattere intersemiotico, che la distingue dalle forme tradizionali di traduzione (letteraria ecc.) (Díaz-Cintas/Baños Piñero 2015). La diffusione globale di testi digitali multimodali registra tratti discorsivi e condizionamenti che caratterizzano la dimensione interculturale di tali testi (per esempio le trasformazioni linguistiche apportate dall'introduzione di tecniche digitali quali il *time code* nella sottotitolazione).

Sui sottotitoli come *captions* si sofferma Giuliana GARZONE, illustrandone caratteristiche distintive e particolarità tecniche che li rendono, da un punto di vista traduttivo, meno 'fedeli' all'originale rispetto al doppiaggio. L'analisi di alcuni estratti cinematografici permette a Garzone di esemplificare le procedure di riduzione (cancellazione, semplificazione, condensazione), ma anche di evidenziare come elementi culturali e connotazioni sociali rappresentino altrettanti problemi per la traduzione, e vengano risolti con soluzioni non sempre soddisfacenti. Il tema della diversità culturale è centrale anche nel contributo di Maria Margherita MATTIODA, che discute, attraverso un confronto interlinguistico francese/italiano di alcuni *trailer*, le operazioni di traduzione intrasemiotica e le trasformazioni linguistiche e culturali messe in atto in testi brevi destinati ad un pubblico 'globale'. Vengono così messe in luce le tecniche persuasive e le differenze stilistiche utilizzate che permettono alla struttura narrativa del *trailer* di funzionare in contesti socio-culturali differenti. Un caso particolare è infine costituito dall'interpretazione: Clara PIGNATARO, interprete professionale, discute l'aspetto 'multimodale' dell'interpretazione, quando cioè la voce stessa è *caption* del testo. Nella comunicazione orale infatti molta informazione viene trasmessa attraverso elementi prosodici e prossemici, oltre a quelli propriamente ver-

bali, che l'interprete deve saper cogliere e riprodurre per rendere efficacemente l'intenzione comunicativa del parlante.

La pluralità di livelli semiotici di cui si compone l'universo comunicativo contemporaneo è infine pienamente rappresentata nel giornalismo e nella pubblicità, che costituiscono il terzo ambito studiato nel volume. Nei generi appartenenti a tali settori la relazione tra immagine e testo oltrepassa il tradizionale processo di ancoraggio. La problematica che accompagna l'immagine fotografica, a partire almeno dagli studi di Barthes,³ si concentra sull'assunto che la fotografia rischia di essere fraintesa se non ha l'ausilio della parola. La *caption* che accompagna l'immagine ha così lo scopo di precisarne il significato, e di contestualizzarla sia dal punto di vista temporale e geografico, sia da quello biografico; di costituire, infine, una 'guida alla lettura'.⁴ Una caratteristica dei nuovi generi di giornalismo e delle *online news gallery* è di costituire delle inedite modalità di storytelling (Caple/Bednarek 2015). La predominanza della componente visiva nel (foto)giornalismo, infatti, non impedisce che *captions* e didascalie contengano elementi narrativi, ampliando, in tal modo, la loro funzione originaria di spiegazione e guida all'interpretazione. Sabina BERRA, giornalista professionista, si sofferma sulle didascalie nei giornali, mettendone in luce i cambiamenti diacronici: dalla frase di descrizione, al microtesto di arricchimento, al commento-strumento di propaganda politica. L'analisi delle diverse forme di didascalia diviene secondo Berra anche un mezzo per "comprendere" i giornali che le ospitano, in un gioco di rimandi che dunque chiama in causa l'intera politica editoriale. Il saggio di Mara LOGALDO, centrato su un *Portfolio* di fotografie di natura, mostra come le *captions* nel giornalismo possono oltrepassare la pura descrizione per diventare un mezzo che suscita curiosità e emozioni,

3. Nei due saggi *Il messaggio fotografico* e *Retorica dell'immagine*, ora in Barthes 1988.

4. Pur se suscettibile di manipolazione e contraffazione della realtà, grazie alla possibilità di suggerire interpretazioni arbitrarie (Smargiassi 2009).

diventando anche, nel caso esaminato, un valido supporto in favore di temi etici e di salvaguardia dell'ambiente, in una prospettiva che si riconosce nell'ecolinguistica (Fill/Mühlhäusler 2001).

Ultimo, ma in realtà esempio prototipico delle caratteristiche semiotiche dei testi brevi di accompagnamento, è l'annuncio pubblicitario. Gudrun HELD ne analizza un aspetto particolarmente rilevante negli annunci di destinazione: la deissi. La pubblicità turistica permette alla studiosa di delineare una classificazione del particolare tipo di aggancio che viene a crearsi tra immagine del luogo, parole nel testo e posizione del fruitore. Multimodalità e manipolazione deittica riguardano anche le singole componenti dell'annuncio pubblicitario, come *payoff* e marchio, indagati da Francesca SANTULLI. Se il *payoff* condivide con l'*headline* alcune caratteristiche note (condensazione, polisemia, *embranchage*, densità), è nella sua relazione con il marchio, illustrata da Santulli, che si realizza la costruzione dell'identità del prodotto.

La stretta interrelazione tra *visivo e verbale* non può non coinvolgere anche i più recenti studi che si interessano delle forme contemporanee dell'immagine: i *Visual and Media Studies*. La seconda sezione di questo volume, introdotta da Mara Logaldo, raccoglie i contributi di giovani studiosi che hanno presentato brevi relazioni a margine del Convegno di Milano: Alberto Maria Casciello, Ambra Celano, Eirene Campagna, Arianna Fantuzzi, Vincenzo Di Rosa, Dario Boemia, Roberto Iadevaia. I temi tratteggiati nei rispettivi contributi aprono nuovi e promettenti filoni di indagine nel panorama delle scritture brevi.

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The Label as Battleground: The Museum as a Context for Contested Identities⁵

*James Bradburne - Direttore Generale della Pinacoteca di Brera
e della Biblioteca Braidense*

Paul Valéry, the French philosopher and writer, said in 1924 that there is no theory that isn't in fact part of an autobiography, and the same is true with my situation. I think that what I'm going to present today should not be interpreted as the truth or the final theory. It's the sum of thirty years of struggling with certain very fundamental issues about who has a voice in the museum: what do we say, to whom do we say it and how we say it. So it's very important that we keep in mind, that despite my obvious conviction, it's just my personal opinion.

Now I'll start with a definition of museum that is not the standard ICOM⁶ definition. It's a quote from Nelson Goodman, in which he said that "the museum has to function as an institution for the prevention of blindness in order to make works work [...] Works work when, by stimulating inquisitive looking, sharpening perception, raising visual intelligence, they participate in [...] the making and re-making of our worlds". And in a certain sense he was ahead of his time, as he wrote this in 1980, before the tsunami of images that has now engulfed us. He saw museums as a place where we became critical viewers, where we looked more critically, where we became more critical citizens. This is a position that aligns well with that of the former director of Brera, Franco Russoli. The argument I want to make is that when we talk about labels as a battleground, it is because

5. Keynote speech delivered by James Bradburne at the conference *Words Worth Watching: Changing Perspectives on Captions* (Università IULM, Milano, 18 June 2018).

6. International Council of Museums.

they really are the voice of the museum, and what you read on a label is the result of an often bitter battle about who has the right to speak on behalf of the museum; whose voice is legitimate in a museum; and what kind of things should and can be said about the objects in a museum. My argument is that in our museums labels have tended to remain embedded in a model of transmission and reception, a pyramid with the expert curators at the top and the ignorant public at the bottom, and it is this model – of museums in particular and of society in general – that I profoundly reject. I don't want to deny the fact that experts have expertise but, as I often say at the museum, we don't just let astronomers talk to us about the stars, we actually allow other people with other points of view to say things, and these are very valid contributions as well. So what we are facing now in the museum is actually a crisis of engagement. It's not that we have too many or too few visitors, it's the fact that the kind of engagement people have with the objects in our care is changing dramatically and in some ways we are losing the critical skills to engage with the objects in our care.

I think we have to go back to what is our primary goal. When I look and ask: "Is the museum doing well?", I'm judging certain things. The first thing is that museums exist because we are the custodians of cultural property, of paintings and art of extraordinary intrinsic value. So we want people to look at them longer. We don't go to a museum to look at videos on our phones, we go to a museum to look at Caravaggio, to look at Bellini, to look at Mantegna. Let me just say first that the average time people spend actually looking at paintings in a museum is very short, it's about eight seconds. And people in big exhibitions, like those hosted by Palazzo Reale, are packed like sardines and obliged to move past the paintings pushed by the force of the crowd. We sometimes call this the "Vermeer shuffle" – you get squeezed along, and you spend little time actually looking at the paint-

ings, and what time you spend is far from being comfortable. Our political masters believe that this is a good thing, because they seem to believe that art is somehow radioactive: if I am just exposed enough to an artwork I become 'contaminated' by this experience and become a better person for it. This is, in my humble opinion, total nonsense. So, we want people to look at the painting for longer, in near ideal conditions, and we want them to get more out of it – and that's really one of the prime goals of a museum. Of course, not just that; we want other things to happen in a museum as well, we want emotions to happen, we want lots of things to happen. Museums are defined by their informality, in a very precise sense. Frank Oppenheimer, the founder of the Exploratorium, the world's first modern interactive science center, often said nobody ever failed a museum. There's no test. You don't have to answer five questions to buy a ticket to a museum and you don't have to answer five questions to be allowed to come back. You can actually go and kiss your girlfriend in the museum, and this is a very good thing, because if you did you would probably remember the painting you saw with her for the rest of your life. So we encourage this kind of very ample, very open aspect of the museum.

It is important to recognize that when I'm talking about the label as the heart of the museum battle, I'm not talking only about the written captions, and I'm not talking about just the words. In fact, I'm taking a very metalinguistic position about labels. When you put up a Picasso painting beside an African mask, you don't have to use words, you're already actively doing something, you're already expecting the audience to get something out of it, to create meaning, to understand a connection, in effect you've created a label. Thus a label is best defined as the sum of the intentional acts on the part of a museum to create meaning.

Now, of course, when we make museums, this is what architects want to see in a museum (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. The architect's dream.



Fig. 2. The curator's dream.

Architects don't like labels at all and they don't even really like paintings; now curators are very influenced by architects and they grudgingly *allow* paintings to go on the wall, but they still don't like labels very much because they clutter up the place, in fact they seem to interfere with the serenity of the museum (fig. 2). And the argument curators make is often that 'art is immediate, and needs no explanation', as if you could possibly get something out of a painting about which you had no information except color and form. Now in some

cases that may be true – in contemporary art, in modern art – but it is certainly not true when it comes to art from other cultures, and it is certainly not true when it comes to even art from our own past. As time passes, we can no longer ‘read’ the artist’s intent, so without help we slowly lose the ability to extract the meaning from the art the art put in. So when a museum has no labels, as Pierre Bourdieu said in his classic book *The Love of Art*, the absence of labels is the single most important signal that you don’t care about your public. Now what curators fear is of course the opposite (fig. 3): they fear that if you open the door to labels they’re just going to take over, people will spend more time reading the labels than they spend looking at the art (fig. 4).

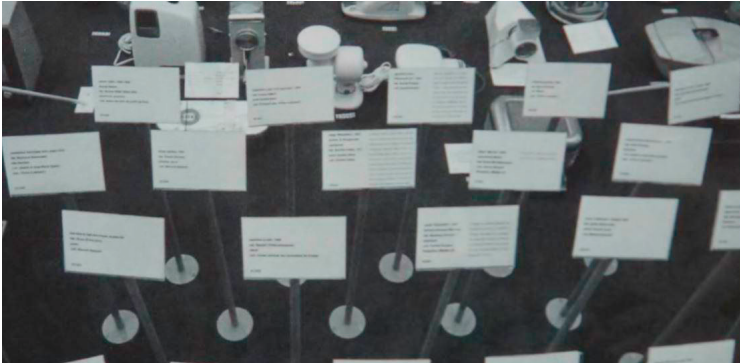


Fig. 3. The curator’s nightmare.



Fig. 4. Cartoon visitors hunched over a label.

This is the great nightmare the curators continually come back to in the museum. And when I say it is contested, remember that curators have a great power in the museum, they dominate the discourse, they're the experts, and often, the managers. So they're always struggling with this dominant expert-driven discourse and then they fear that if you open the door to labels, you end up writing a label about the label and maybe a label about the label about the label as this Dutch contemporary artist did (fig. 5). It is a very amusing reflection on the subconscious fears of curators when it comes to labeling.

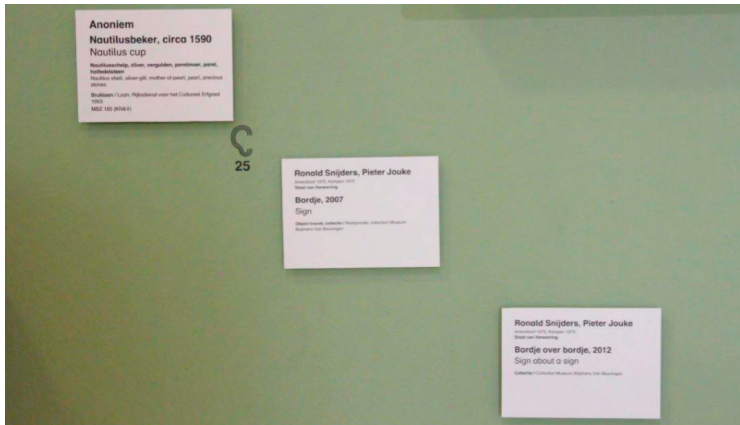


Fig. 5. Labels about labels.

As I said, in my world, a label is the sum of the intentional acts on the part of the museum to create meaning. For instance, when I ask here “where’s the label?”, a traditional answer would be “the card with the words on it” (fig. 6). But in fact, that’s not the label, that’s just some words on a caption. The label is in fact the entire installation of the showcase, and in fact it’s only a partial label because in this case the curator had been very courageous and wanted to fill the vitrine with shards – the

Rijksmuseum has hundreds of thousands of broken dishes – in order to send the message that of all those broken parts we'd been able to salvage a few, and only a very few. So this label in fact has been highly aestheticized, but it's still a label, and the real label says “few whole plates, lots of broken ones”. And that's the label. This just tells you a little bit about what the shards are about, and how hard it was to ship porcelain from China to Holland.



Fig. 6. Shattered blue white porcelain, Rijksmuseum.

Let me quickly go through some considerations about labeling. In the next chapter, Professor Parks will talk about the cut and thrust of the curator's daily life, and of the real work of writing labels. I just want to go through some considerations that we take into account when we're making labels. One of which, of course, is legibility. You're always dealing with that: if you want something to be read, you have to make it readable and many places don't. In many places for a visually impaired person or even for a person of my age you just get this big blur (fig. 7), when in fact what you should be seeing is something like this (fig. 8), except for the fact that this label already has far too many words.

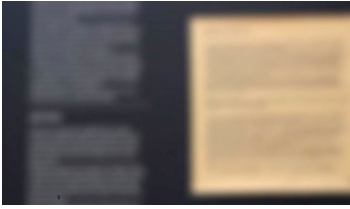


Fig. 7. Blurred label.

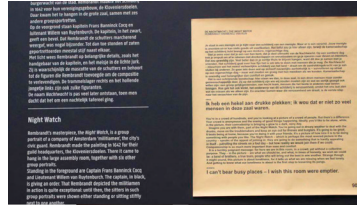


Fig. 8. In focus label.

Hence we look at things like keeping word count down, keeping the labels at an optimal height for a standing visitor, taking into account the ergonomics of reading in order to make the labels readable. We had a rule at Palazzo Strozzi which we also observe at Brera: a label can have no more than five hundred characters including spaces, and has to be readable at the distance of three meters. This is a rule that we applied consistently, which resulted in large readable labels. According to some curators these labels were visually intrusive, but I disagree: in fact, a large readable label underneath the painting that is at the lower edge of the cone of vision is far less intrusive than a much smaller label placed alongside the painting, often obscured by visitors reading it, who in turn obscure the view of the painting. A large label lets visitors move back to the ideal distance from the painting and still read the label, leaving more free space to let others enjoy the painting as well. I'm using Palazzo Strozzi to illustrate these principles, because we used it as a laboratory to test a wide variety of theories about labeling and mediation. At the very end I'll show you what we're doing in Brera, which is very much indebted to ten years of experimentation in Palazzo Strozzi.

The visitors, however, almost universally like this (fig. 9).

From: Elizabeth DeFosa <derosa.ej@gmail.com>
Subject: Compliment
Date: 13 March 2014 12:27:47 CET
To: j.bradburne@palazzostrozzi.org
Cc: Elizabeth DeFosa <derosa.ej@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Bradburne,

I am an American art historian and live part of every year in Rome. Yesterday my husband and I made our annual excursion to Florence specifically to see the exhibition at the Palazzo Strozzi. I am writing to congratulate you and your staff on your ambitious and stimulating exhibition topics and presentation of the material over the past several years. Yesterday at the Pontormo/ Rosso exhibition I especially enjoyed the clear outline of your adventurous exhibition goals and the **large and legible labels placed at good viewing height**. I have seldom experienced such a well thought-out and beautifully presented show.

Thank you to you and to your staff. I think that you are setting new standards for what an exhibition can and should be.

Best regards,

Elizabeth DeFosa, Ph.D.

Fig. 9. Email from a visitor praising large labels.

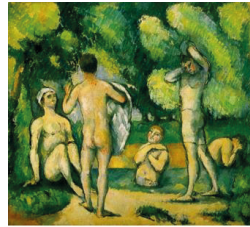
I have to say that the people who object to labels tend to be insiders, art historians who actually don't need labels, because they already know the field inside out. These people could have a museum entirely without labels, as they have already spent twenty or more years studying. But most people don't have that luxury. They may come to the museum with two PhDs, but strangely a PhD in astrophysics and a PhD in mathematics do not mean knowing whether Botticelli came before or after Pontormo, or what is Mannerism. So you do have to recognize your visitors' intelligence and their background: they can be very intelligent, they can be very well educated, they can be very good people but they are not always prepared – and still need help to see what is in front of them. And so that's a major consideration: making things accessible intellectually, as well as making them accessible ergonomically – comprehensibility as well as readability.

A second argument is to allow other voices into the sacred temple of art – to create a place where not just astronomers talk about the stars. You want poets, you want writers, you want ordinary people. This is another argument that I had to make with curators that was often highly contested. They say, well, why other voices? Why other people? *We're* the experts: *we* should dominate what's said. And so, for instance, here is an example from the first exhibition I did at Palazzo

Strozzi. We had this painting, a Cézanne *Bathers* from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (fig. 10), with a very good label: it's five hundred characters including spaces, it's actually quite accessibly written. It's a good label by anybody's measure, in fact it's written by the person that Tim is going to speak about: Ludovica Sebregondi, with whom he did the exhibition *Money & Beauty*. It's a very good label. However, I also invited an eleven-year old and a thirteen-year old girl to write about this and all the other Cézannes in the exhibition, because I felt that they might see other things in the paintings, and say things that a curator didn't dare say, or wasn't prepared to say. And so they did. The result was that in the exhibition, people would first read the curator's label, look at the painting for eight seconds, and then walk on until then they discovered this label:

Well, Cézanne surely does like green. I think this because the sky is grey and the people are trying to dry off quickly. It's a depressing picture because most of the people are frowning. Where does that come from? It shows everybody gets along except one on the right who seems to be crying.

There were three paintings of *Bathers* in the Fabbrri collection painted between the end of the 1870s and 1885. It was one of Cézanne's favourite subjects, treated in more than 140 watercolours, drawings and oil paintings. He showed an early interest in nude studies but his figures were far removed from anatomical precision: they were distorted and depicted with thick brushstrokes and strongly contrasting colours. At the same time Cézanne worked on setting his nudes in landscapes.



Well, Cézanne sure does like green! He has used beautiful shades of green so that even if we spend hours looking at this work we shall never get tired of that luscious colour he has chosen. These five bathers seem to be bathing in a wood that shows they all get along except one of them (on the right) who seems to be crying. This could be a reference to Cézanne's first steps into entering the impressionist world and being an outsider at first then entering their circle.

This must be a cool, breezy day in spring. I think this because the sky is grey and the people are trying to dry off quickly. I think this is a depressing painting because most of the people are frowning.

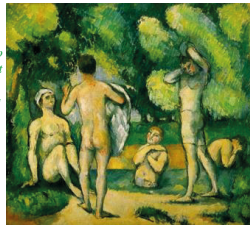


Fig. 10. Cezanne, *Bathers* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

When visitors read this label written by an eleven-year old and a thirteen-year old they almost all went back to the painting, and for up to ten minutes would have a discussion about it. Because it's not *objectively* true. No curator would sign an article to the journal of history of art saying that the boy in the corner is crying: he could just be drying his hair. But I can tell you people looked at this painting for much much longer when they read the voices of the two girls. So as a museum director and an exhibition maker I thought to myself: "mission accomplished", this is what we want to see in museums, people looking at paintings longer, and talking about them with each other. And, in fact, the texts were very well received. The girls' texts were incredibly perceptive and in fact I invited one of them to write the texts for an exhibition two years later because she was such a brilliant label writer.

We also tried other ways of contextualizing the voice of the expert. For instance, in one the curator wrote the main text, as they do when they write in the traditional third-person voice of the curator – which someone once called the voice of God – and signed the text. But then I took this text to five different experts, including the late Franca Sozzani, editor of *Vogue Italy* (this was a show about fashion), Suzy Menkes, Holly Brubach – people who really *were* experts, and recorded their responses as they read the curator's text. And the experts didn't agree. They didn't agree with each other sometimes, and they didn't always agree with the curator – and they gave new information. So what this became was a glossed text in an almost Medieval way, in which we had additional comments running alongside the author's text. These comments showed that the experts were not a single authoritative voice, but in fact represented different voices and, again, what is the meta-message, the semiotics of this is, if the experts can't agree, then I too can have an opinion. Because if the experts can't agree among themselves, why should I be so intimidated by the voice of the expert.

For the exhibition of Tang Dynasty masterpieces, we conducted focus groups in Beijing where we showed group of Chinese museum visitors the objects we were planning to show in the exhibition in

Florence. (Curiously, exhibitions of the art of other cultures are rarely curated by people from those cultures, and much more often curated by experts from the host culture, but this may just be a coincidence). What these sessions contributed was an additional series of labels which was entitled *Through Chinese Eyes* and which described the objects very differently from the curator. For instance, when you and I look at the Bodhisattva, we see a sort of exotic figure with a thousand arms. The Chinese said immediately, “That’s Guanyin, it’s obvious: a thousand arms, compassion, arms to embrace everybody”. I did a little book entitled *They All Look the Same*, in which we reproduced the Chinese comments about their own objects, as well as their comments about selected works from the Uffizi. When the Chinese looked at a Saint Sebastian they responded with the same confusion that we have with the Guanyin – they didn’t immediately ‘see’ it, but we do.

Another example of looking is this object (fig. 11), which was one of the masterpieces of our collection at the Museum für angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt. I invited a Chinese friend, a museum director herself, to tour the museum with me I showed her our ‘star’ object and she burst into tears. Now I thought perhaps because, as a cold Anglo-Saxon, I lacked the sensibility to understand the true beauty of the object, but what she saw was a piece of cultural vandalism. As a consequence, I wrote this text and she translated it into Chinese. Even after fifteen years people still come to me after a visit to the museum to tell me about the label.

I often walk with visitors through the museum. This time, my guest was a friend, Cheng. The sun was shining outside, the collections looked beautiful against the dark green of the park. We stopped in front a Buddha’s head, a model of sculpted serenity, displayed alone on a white pedestal. Cheng started to cry. Tears of joy I thought – encountering a masterpiece of Chinese art in a foreign museum. I was wrong. Cheng saw what I did not, a head brutally ripped from an ancient shrine, impaled on a spike in a faraway land.

How does an object come to the museum? Although it is often difficult to say exactly, this might be the story of the Buddha’s head. Imagine the following...



Fig. 11. Buddha’s head (Museum für angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt).

So we invited many different people to write for the exhibitions at both Palazzo Strozzi and now also Brera: poets like Roberto Piumini, Tim Parks co-curated *Money and Beauty*, for the 1930s exhibition we interviewed Dario Fo, Franca Valeri, farmers people who had lived through the 30s, and we created a radio studio in the exhibition itself to create an archive of oral history of the 1930s. We started to listen to other voices and above all make our listening visible with a strategy that was publicly described as “L’ascolto visibile” (visible listening).

Another meta-message you can send is about the agency of the visitors because in art museums we are expected to be very passive; we can’t often touch the art, and even if we can we can’t do much with it. But you can actually contaminate these spaces with interactivity of different kinds, for instance an experiment in psychology about personal space. Labels may invite people to think differently about the paintings around them and how they relate to other visitors. You can also have very interactive activities. This is in an exhibition about Surrealism and Magic Realism. And we had a whole section integrated into the exhibition of various interactive opportunities: this was about the logic of dreams, where you could combine words to create different coherent sentences.



Fig. 12. Interactive activities at the *De Chirico, Max Ernst, Magritte, Balthus. Uno sguardo nell'invisibile* exhibition (Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi, spring/summer 2010).

So the idea of incorporating interactivity into an exhibition is also a way of desacralizing it and opening it up to different voices and different experiences. And this is something that should be done more often. You know and I know that this is very rare in all the art museums. Even at the Brera, we're just starting to introduce interactive experiences.

Finally, we should talk a little bit about the stories we tell in museums. One of the minor tyrannies – a meta-tyranny because you don't perceive it as one – is the tyranny of the linear narrative. Most exhibitions start at the beginning and end at the end and are organized like a story that has to be seen in a specific order. The problem with museums, or rather, one of the great delights of the museum experience, is that you don't have to do things in order: you can go back to the beginning, you can go back and forth, you can see things along the way in the order you choose. Unlike a film or unlike a play, where basically you sit still and the director passes the content in the order she wants past you, the narrative in a museum is different: everything that the director creates is static and you move through it at different speeds, in different ways, in different orders. So although it is still a time-based medium, it's totally different from those we are most familiar with. Instead of the linear narrative that we normally accept, it's very useful to think about the narrative as discussed by Alice Munro, who won the Nobel prize in 2013, and who said “a story is not like a road to follow; it's more like a house: you go inside and stay there for a while, wandering back and forth and settling where you like and discovering other rooms and corridors related to each other”. *That's* a perfect description of the non-linear narrative of an exhibition.

We really have to think differently about what we do in museum exhibitions. Fundamentally it is a question of power. You have to understand whose museum it is and who has a right to say

something. A great American museum director, Robert Archibald, was fired and sent to Wisconsin in part for having had the temerity to suggest “I don’t think it’s the job of a historian of a museum to create the stories, our job is to create the context in which people create their stories and reach some level of consensus, back to the role of the museum as a place where we find who we are and find some consensus about it”.

I’ll quickly mention two things: one is the notion of context and one is the notion of user-language, terms which nobody uses except me and Tim, and the colleagues I work closely with; which is very similar to what Searle and Austin would have called the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of words. A user-language is the series of constraints we put on the kinds of engagement we expect from the reader or visitor, the ways in which we define the rules of what Wittgenstein would have perhaps referred to as the ‘language game’. It’s the things we say without saying them in the words themselves, in effect, a meta-language whereby meaning is conveyed by the framing of the language, rather than its content. I often illustrate this with the following example. In my office in Frankfurt, I had a big showcase filled with glasses: Roman glasses, Venetian glasses, two thousand-year old glasses and I would write trial labels for the objects. So I wrote a label in which I began, “From fire and from sand glass is born”. It was a very nice label, it was very entertaining, it was interesting to read, 500 characters, and people would read it whenever they entered my office for a meeting, and when the meeting ended they would leave. And then I changed that label and substituted a single phrase: “One of these glasses is a fake”. Now people wouldn’t leave my office, they would stay looking, thinking, debating among themselves. How can a glass be a fake? It is never touched by the glassmaker. What is an original glass? It wasn’t the content of the words that changed the behavior, what was changing was the expectation of what the reader could do: they were invited to solve a problem,

to become detectives. Interactivity isn't in the hands – it is in the mind. It is not an exhibit that is interactive, it is the user. That's a totally different offer in a museum than the traditional offer to be a passive listener, and in fact when you think of user-languages, which are the constraints we put on the words we use, we can rank them in terms of the activity they invite, or more precisely, on the properties they confer. The first and most common one is the user-language of authority: "listen to me; I'm the storyteller and you a listener"; the second one is the user-language of observation: "Look at this and see what's happening"; the third one is the user-language of problems: "There is something going on here that you can figure out"; and the fourth, and the most difficult one, is the user-language of games: "You can play this exhibition". And Tim Parks may speak a little about this because, quite inadvertently or unwillingly, he became my accomplice in an exhibition exploring some of these user-languages, which are quite unfamiliar in museums. During my time as Director General we used at Palazzo Strozzi different ways to experiment with labeling. With *Women in Power* (2009), we had the poet Roberto Piumini write all of our family labels as rhyming riddles. Now a riddle is an invitation to find something in the painting. And the exhibition was of tapestries – very complex and often boring objects to look at for any time – and the labels kept people looking for ten or fifteen minutes because they wanted to solve the riddles Piumini had set for them. In our exhibition on Impressionism we created a murder mystery at the end, where you found the outline of a dead body chalked on the floor as if by the police. You found all the evidence found in the Bois de Boulogne scattered around this poor (fictitious) Impressionist artist, including the painting and his palette, and you had to figure out what happened. There was no right answer. The entire question was left open-ended and at the end of the exhibition's run there were over 500 hundred one-page written proposals as to what had happened. The winner

(the competition was targeted at under-13s) actually won a trip to Giverny for three days with his parents.

Follow your Florins is a game we added to the exhibition *Money & Beauty*, designed by Giuseppe Palombo and Tim Parks, in which every ticket had five thousand virtual florins on it and you could invest it and follow it to a series of choices in the exhibition. If you got to the end of the exhibition and you had made a profit you were asked whether you wanted to donate it to the church or whether you wanted to cash it out as a discount in the shop.

A more radical example of a game imposed on a more conventional Palazzo Strozzi exhibition was *Power and Pathos*, which showed an exceptional collection of Hellenistic bronzes. The exhibition started with a mysterious object, a rock, which was actually a marble pedestal with a single phrase on it saying: "This was made by Leucippus". Arguably Greece's greatest sculptor, creator of over fifteen hundred works of which we have only one very contested bronze in existence. So we started by creating another game, in which we asked "What was standing on this marble pedestal?" We created a game in which visitors could work with precisely the same information the archeologists had. So the archeologist was put on equal footing with the visitor, because in fact archeologists still don't know what was on that plinth either. Again, it created a kind of engagement; sometimes families would stay for over three hours working to solve the mystery. This has to be considered a good thing.

To conclude, in some fundamental ways labelling gives us an answer to how we can reach the museum's key goals to keep people longer, to have them look at the objects longer and to get more out of them. By way of showing the importance of experimentation, even when the results are surprising, I want to show how another author, Alain De Botton, was asked to make an exhibition at the Rijksmuseum. In my opinion it was a great experiment, but a failed experiment. His idea was to write a book and put it on the wall in small post-notes (fig. 13).



Fig. 13. *Art is Therapy*, curated by John Armstrong and Alain de Botton. The Rijksmuseum's experiment with philosophical graffiti (2014).

Now you don't go to a museum to read a book. If these labels were bound together they would be some 10,000 or 15,000 words. It was as much text as a short book. And indeed, they were not legible in the museum space, and they did interfere with the objects. Here was everything that a traditional curator hated and feared, and I had to agree – this was not the way how to do it. Even the best idea can be done badly. So I'm not proposing that the answer is “just add an author's note” or just do big labels. There are many ways to do it and I think that it takes a great deal of finesse, experience and sensitivity to get it right. After all, like making a film, creating a great exhibition is an art in itself.

I'm going to finish very quickly with Brera, which you can probably go and visit any time. Our first goal is to put Brera back in the heart of the city, which we're trying to do by all sorts of means but I'm not going to tell you about them all right now. We're also trying to put the visitor back into the center of the experience, which is largely about attracting and serving new audiences and admitting other voices to the exhibition spaces. So all those ten years at Palazzo Strozzi and the twenty years before them have all come to a focal point in a state museum that, when I walked into the door, was really a museum director's nightmare.

The labels had not been updated in thirty years. The last complete installation of the collections was forty years ago. Nobody even seemed to care that there were visitors. We started to work together, learning from what we had done at Palazzo Strozzi, and do more for families, do more to bring in other voices, but in particular to create a new labeling strategy with three different kinds of labels: curatorial labels, written well; family and children's labels, to give families something to get a little excited about seeing, often aspects of a painting that curators no longer care about so don't write about. The fact that there's a rabbit underneath the throne in the Carpaccio isn't something a curator would ever write about, but is something that a child would be transformed by. And, in fact, a very famous art historian, once confessed to me (we were doing the labels for one of the installations), he said, "You know, James, this Carpaccio, I know now it's a second-rate work, done in haste, probably by the studio. I now know that it is not a very important work, but when I was eight years old I used to come every weekend and see the rabbit under the chair." We have to remember: experts are not born experts; they begin somewhere and they become experts.

And we also have authors' labels, so we now have labels written by Sarah Dunant, Tim Parks, Orhan Pamuk, Ali Smith, Tiziano Scarpa, Joy Kogawa, Yoko Ogawa and Arrigo Cipriani (whose father named a dish of thinly sliced beef after the artist). We have an increasing stable of people who are writing labels for the museum, which give a totally different perspective on the paintings. But remember: no one goes to the museum to read the label. But the label, a good label, gets you look at the painting. And when Orhan Pamuk writes about his Bellini you look at it longer. So the goal is never the label itself, the goal is always the painting or the object. But one of the ways to do that is by inviting other voices, good voices, and creative writers (there is no curator on earth who can write as well a great writer) to write label for us. So where does this

leave us? It leaves us with a research program: we really do have to treat labels seriously, and we have to be aware of the non-verbal, illocutionary power of what we write. My key-message is perhaps this, that it is not about the words. It is about what we expect of the visitors when we write the words in new ways. “One of these glasses is a fake” is not about those words themselves, it is about what we think visitors are supposed to be doing in a museum, what role they have, what they are capable of, and who they are. Labels are the key to a transformative museum experience, and, in my opinion, writing labels is the most important ongoing research project we have in the museum.

Warring Captions: The Case of *Money and Beauty: Bankers, Botticelli and the Bonfire of the Vanities*, an Exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi (2011-2012)

Tim Parks – Università IULM, Milano

In 2003 an American publisher asked me to write a book about the Medici bank. I declined, not being a specialist on the 15th century. But curiosity got the better of me. I started reading about the Medici. Almost at once I realized that what was at stake was something I had always been interested in: the relationship between countable value, goods and money, and non countable value, affections, beauty, religious feelings. Above all, the way people in possession of countable value seek to buy non countable value. I called the American publishers, reversed my decision, buried myself in the archives and wrote a book called *Medici Money*.

In 2009 James Bradburne invited me to curate a show at Palazzo Strozzi based on *Medici Money*, though it would eventually be called, *Money and Beauty: Bankers, Botticelli and the Bonfire of the Vanities*. I declined, pointing out that I was not an expert art historian. James insisted. I said I would do it if I could have a co-curator who was an art historian. This was the beginning of the idea of Warring Captions.

A work of art, be it a painting or a novel or a piece of music, exists as such in so far as there is a spectator, a reader, or a listener to engage with it. Art exists as and when it is consumed. There is no absolute Mona Lisa. There is my experience looking at it. Or your experience. Or the art critic's, the little boy's, the Japanese tourist's. And so on. And each experience will be determined by what we are able to bring to the work of art at this or that moment. This could be our own emotional experience, or it could be context specific to the work and the world it was created in.

When we see a caption beside a work of art, the information or attitude it offers can alter our perception of it, which is, I repeat, the only way art exists, in someone's perception. Even a date can shift the way I look at something: I notice this painting was made in 1380, and I think admiringly, how early this is for that use of perspective, etc. Or I see, Berlin 1936 and immediately I think of the painting in relation to what I know about that time and place.

I came to the works exhibited in *Money and Beauty* profoundly aware of the role of those commissions in the battle for the nature of Christianity, whether it would be a Christianity that saw poverty as a positive value, a duty even, or whether it would accommodate the rising mercantile class, who were eager to have their money and go to heaven too. The art historian chosen to work with me, Ludovica Sebgondi, brought to the same exhibits a lifetime's study of Florentine artists and the general assumption that Renaissance art is the most important and positive phenomenon there has ever been. She had an investment to protect. My position was not exactly iconoclastic. I love these paintings. But I wanted to show that these icons had played an ambiguous role in a debate that shaped the culture of the West. They were paintings with a pro-money agenda.

In short, we did not agree. We could not decide what context we wanted to offer the public as they stood in front of the paintings. James came to the rescue suggesting that each of us would do the sole caption to a third of the paintings, while the remaining third would carry two captions, one hers one mine. Crucially, all the captions would be signed, so that people would appreciate that we had quite different opinions about what we were looking at. In short, we would do battle for the minds of the viewers as they looked at the paintings, always assuming they bothered to glance at the caption. Our disagreement was turned into a debate, which would hopefully enrich the experience of the viewer, and legitimize the notion that we were all free to hold individual views on

works of art. I agreed to this at once, since it seemed to me that just the idea that there were different views, equally authoritative, rather than one official version, would encourage viewers to start questioning the motives behind the paintings, rather than falling into that attitude of 'mere' admiration typical of a certain way of presenting art.

But let me start by showing how a caption can alter our perception of a work of art.



Fig. 1.

What you see is a charming image of a man, no, a saint, he has a halo, holds a parchment, doubtless, you think, a piece of Scripture. He is oddly dressed in a red cloak but also a brown tunic. If we are familiar with a certain kind of iconography we will understand that the brown is a hairshirt or *cilicio*, a form of self-castigation. So this must be John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence.

Let us introduce the so called *caposcheda*, the basic information provided before the main caption:

Statutes of the Florentine Mint, 1314-1461, parchment codex.

At this point we realize we are looking at the cover of a book, which contains the rules of the Florentine Mint, La Zecca. So what John the Baptist is waving in his left hand is not a piece of scripture, but regulations on the manufacture of coins for commerce. This is a little disconcerting, perhaps, as it will be disconcerting to discover that the famous Florentine Florin, first minted in 1252, curiously did not bear a face, or an authority to guarantee the coin's value, but on the one side a lily, symbol of the city and the other John the Baptist, a man who chose to live in absolute poverty as a sign of purity. Religion is called on to underwrite commerce, as when merchants at the time wrote, *In the Name of God and of Profit* on their account books, or as the Americans still write *In God We Trust* on every dollar they print. As if this countable value were underwritten by the ultimate uncountable value.

But very likely this dry piece of information will not set our minds going in this way, or not in the brief time most viewers stay in front of this exhibit. Here is the caption I wrote.

Halos and coins. The biblical John the Baptist lived in poverty wearing a raiment of camel's hair. The Florence mint adds the scarlet cloak of wealth and authority. It was comforting to see no conflict between money and sanctity. The statute contains regulations to prevent cheating and forgery, plus details of those condemned for these crimes between 1314 and 1461.

Bradburne gives strict rules about length for captions. They must be no more than 500 characters long, spaces included, and they must be printed and displayed in such a way as to be easily readable at the distance from which we normally look at works of art. Here I might have stopped at “Halos and coins”. This was the single thing I wanted viewers to notice, this fusion of money and sanctity in the golden halo. But it is also useful for the viewer to know that the document contained long lists of forgers and cheats. Possible metaphysical punishment was a useful deterrent for commercial crime.

This then was a caption of mine that Ludovica Sebgondi, the art historian, found particularly irritating. But it was one of the cases where we had decided on just one caption. However, dominating the entrance to the show there was a huge painting. Here it is.



Fig. 2.

It is important, Bradburne told me, that the visitor to a show be immediately impressed by a magnificent image that will allow him or her to feel the entrance fee was well spent, something with an aesthetic value such that the countable value surrendered seems insignificant. And here it was. This painting is three metres fifty high and almost two wide. Huge. It had been restored, one of the conditions of its loan, for the show. So its colours could not have been richer. Obviously we have a *Coronation of the Virgin*, Jesus crowns his surprisingly young mother in an airy space with saints in attendance dutifully below and looking up, as it were, to heaven.

But what does the *caposcheda* say?

JACOPO DI CIONE, NICCOLÒ DI TOMMASO, SIMONE DI LAPO

Panel of the Mint: Coronation of the Virgin with Saints; the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel (upper corners); Coats of arms (on the predella).

Of course the wonderful old names – Niccolò di Tommaso, Simone di Lapo – immediately seduce us. How charming they are. It's the *Panel of the Mint*. Perhaps with reflection we might understand that this a painting commissioned by the Florence Mint to be displayed in the Mint, the place where value is made countable. But what appears to matter in these few words is the identity of the saints present at the Virgin's Coronation. Ezekiel and Isaiah. Ludovica's caption continues in the same manner.

The panel, created for the Mint's headquarters, gathers the patron saints of Florence, among whom St. John the Baptist and St. Anne, who holds a model of the city. Surrounded by walls and with the Baptistery and cathedral clearly visible, Florence is depicted as it was in 1343 when, on the feast-day of St. Anne, it expelled the Duke of Athens. The various crests on the panel's predella include those of the Merchant's Guild (an eagle with a bale) and of the Money-Changers' Guild (coins).

This is fascinating, though not all will understand the significance of the expulsion of the Duke of Athens, or the importance of St Anne. Our attention is drawn to the painting's rich detail and we are given the unsettling impression that much is going on that only art historians know about. To hear that such and such a figure is Isaiah or Ezekiel means little to us. We feel we cannot engage with the painting in a knowledgeable way. We do not know what a Duke of Athens was doing in the town of Florence. In short, we feel a little excluded as if this fourteenth century art were no longer really available to the layman.

As I saw it, none of this was the reason for our putting on the show *Money and Beauty*. I spent my 500 characters thus:

The *Coronation of the Virgin* gives you a chance to put gold on the Madonna's head. It was a favorite subject for the money men of Renaissance Florence. Here, the Florence Mint commissions an image of the sacred realm where values are sublime and indivisible to grace a building that produces countable cash. The saints are all protectors of Florence. The emblems all celebrate commercial organizations.

This is aggressive stuff. Obviously, having two conflicted opinions polarizes the debate. As I said, I quickly realized that this played to my belief that there is something urgent at stake in these paintings. There was also the advantage that I could rely on my antagonist, Sebregondi to give information that I might otherwise have been obliged to give, at the cost of rhetorical urgency. With the two captions I was freer to invite people to look critically at the implications of art like this. It didn't matter to me that they agreed with the strong position that I was taking, but that they became aware of the issue.

Now you have the idea we can move on quickly to look at two other examples from the show. Here was a painting that simply had to appear in the show's second room, which was entitled: *Everything Has its Price*.



Fig. 3.

How elegant and pious our man is. The *caposcheda* reads:

TOMMASO DI PIERO TROMBETTO, Portrait of Francesco di Marco Datini, 1491-1492, panel painting

This isn't really very helpful unless we happen to know that Datini was better known as the Merchant of Prato; Ludovica's caption fills us in.

This portrait celebrates Francesco Datini, founder of the hospital in Prato, with the symbols of his wealth: an ermine-lined surcoat, rings, tapestries, a marble floor—all products reserved for the ruling class, which

Datini had entered thanks to his mercantile and lending activities. Not having had children from his wife, he proved himself generous towards illegitimate children, and not only his own—with a bequest of 1,000 florins he encouraged Florence to build a hospice for foundlings.

How positive all this sounds. We hear that Datini had illegitimate children, but he made up for it with a donation toward a foundlings' hospice. Again, I felt my duty was to focus on why we had created a section called *Everything Has its Price*, a section where we tried to indicate the price of the paintings at the time – since painters painted at least in part for money – and again of the items in the paintings. Here was my caption.

A man “who kept women and lived only on partridges, adoring art and money and forgetting his creator and himself”. Over his long life the workaholic Merchant of Prato must have set a price on every commodity imaginable, including the 20-year-old slave who bore him the only child he recognized: Ginevra. At his death in 1410, he left 124,549 business letters, 573 account books, and a fortune of over 100,000 florins. The scarlet gown cost around 80 florins, rather more than the slave girl.

This might seem irreverent. But it is as straightforwardly documented as the other caption and gives us perspective on the value of that 1000-florin donation. 1% of total fortune, or the price of a dozen red gowns. These were the realities of ordinary life that original viewers would have been aware of. The operation of the work of art, its business of rendering wealth pious is evident. Much of Datini's personal correspondence came from friends advising him to spend less time thinking about money and more about God. The sheer number of his letters indicates the intensity of his obsession.

Perhaps this would be the right moment to say a word about the translation. The captions had to be in Italian, for an Italian show, but of course they had to be in English for the international public. The translations of my captions were done by an ex student of the IULM post-graduate degree in Specialist Translation, Manuela Faimali, who now has a career as a literary translator.

One problem was to keep the translation short, since translations in any direction tend to be longer than their originals, but also to take advantage of the Italian to introduce authentic language and expressions of the time. Here is the Italian version.

Un uomo «che tenea la femmina, e viveano solo a starne, adorando lo' arte, lo' invio e 'l danaro, dimenticando Iddio e se stesso», Francesco Datini, l'infaticabile mercante di Prato, nella sua lunga vita fissò un prezzo per ogni bene immaginabile, compresa la schiava ventenne che gli diede l'unica figlia che riconobbe: Ginevra. Morì nel 1410 lasciando 124.549 lettere d'affari, 573 libri contabili e una fortuna di oltre 100.000 fiorini. La veste scarlatta sarà costata circa 80 fiorini, ben più della schiava.

You will notice the changes that had to be made to keep this short. “Must have set a price,” becomes “fissò un prezzo”. The rather negative workaholic has become the slightly more positive “infaticabile”. And so on. But above all we have the pleasure of the original Italian at the beginning, a comment made by one of the merchant's friends.

One section of the show was dedicated to the sumptuary laws, a series of regulations that established how people of different social status could and above all could not spend their money: no meal with more than two courses for the common classes; no more than a certain number of guests at any given meal; no clothes with more than one colour, unless you were a knight or his lady; no buttons on women's clothes except between wrist and elbow, etc.

This was a defence of a hierarchical society that Christians believed God had ordained. It also protected people from becoming obsessed by money and luxury by preventing them from having it. As such, it was in line with the anti usury laws which prevented interest bearing loans. The purpose was to block social climbing; if people began to spend all their time thinking about their investments, when would they think of God?

Needless to say the bankers were opposed to this and did everything to celebrate beautiful clothes and luxury goods, which

they not only enjoyed but traded in. One way of undermining the sumptuary laws was to insert fine clothes in paintings of the holy family. If the Madonna is wearing something, that something, however luxurious, can't be bad. And how can it be wrong to show the Madonna wearing something beautiful, even if she was supposed to be a poor woman.

So we have this typical painting.



Fig. 4.

The *caposcheda*, known rather cynically in British museum jargon as “the tombstone”, reads:

LO SCHEGGIA

Virgin and Child, in the cusp God the Father and the Holy Spirit

1470-1480 circa

tempera on panel

You can see why the term *tombstone* is appropriate. Rather than offering much useful information, the tombstone says the obvious as if there were nothing else to say.

Sebregondi’s caption read:

Similar clothes, prohibited to most people by sumptuary laws, were allowed for “knights, doctors in law, medical doctors, foreigners and their women” and, naturally, also for saints and the Virgin. Although unique in every detail, this tabernacle is a good example of a *colmo da camera*, a type of architectural frame used for images meant for private devotion, often mentioned in contemporary documents. This one was probably meant for the Bardelli family.

The only reference here to the sumptuary laws tells us whom these clothes were allowed for. It does not question the purpose of the laws or invite the viewer to reflect on the picture’s relation to them.

I offered this:

How to curb the “*indomitam feminarum bestialitatem*” – the indomitable bestiality of our women? – asked one member of the Florence Commune in a discussion of the sumptuary laws. Woman was the height of virginal purity in the Madonna, and the depth of depravity in the wife who frittered away the family fortune on silks and jewels. But in art the two could be reconciled: here the poor Madonna wears all the rich clothes forbidden by law. Part of a luxury trade in devotional goods, this painting is also male propaganda: mother and child are good as gold.

Again, it was precisely thanks to Ludovica’s determinedly low-key caption with its complacent suggestion that the painting is entirely in harmony with the sumptuary laws, that I am in a position to throw this rather ugly stone into the pond.

Finally, in case it might seem that I am an obsessive Savonarolan fundamentalist, here is a caption written for a painting at Brera here in Milan. James Bradburne asked me to write the usual 500 characters about a *Last Supper* by Paolo Veronese. On this occasion there was no warring opponent, just the need to enliven the viewer's experience of the painting, should he or she care to read what I had said.



Fig. 5.

As you can see this is not one of Veronese's great sumptuous presentations of the last supper, the kind that seem more an excuse to paint a lot of wealthy folk at dinner and that won the painter serious criticism from the Church hierarchy. Here there is some kind of biblical narrative going on. The disciples are involved in an animated discussion. They are bending down to look at something.

Brera supplies a classic tombstone.

VERONESE (Paolo Caliari), Last Supper, 1570 – 1580, Oil on canvas, 220 x 523.

How can we bring the work of art out of its grave? I suppose the particular position I have in relation to a painting like this is that I was brought up in the family of an evangelical Anglican pastor. Gospel accounts of the last supper are all too familiar to me. Here is what I wrote:

Which of us will betray you, Lord? And which will be the greatest? Thus the anxious, competitive disciples. The greatest is he who serves, says Jesus, he who washes another's feet. And the whole unruly table leans left to witness this amazing event; Christ in a corner ready to sponge Peter's feet. But to the right of our dividing pillar the world goes on as ever: fine clothes, dogs, beggars, a pretty woman at the window, where the sunset picks up Christ's pink glow. And onward to Gethsemane.

So, I give the narrative of what was said at the table, of Christ's great lesson of service and humility, and at the same time point to a habit of Veronese's in several paintings, that of picking up the ethereal glow around the Christ figure in some ordinary, but beautiful natural phenomenon. The words invite the viewer to look and think a little while longer than they otherwise might.

Comunicazione al museo: testi e discorso

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Le missioni riconosciute dei musei – rendere le collezioni accessibili, favorire la diffusione della cultura, attrarre e suscitare il piacere dell'arte presso il pubblico – sono riflesse nei dispositivi scritti che i musei mettono a disposizione durante la visita delle sale. Sebbene la presenza dei testi sia oggetto di una *querelle* tra i museologi, divisi tra coloro che li ritengono inutili, fastidiosi e inutilmente direttivi, e coloro che li considerano indispensabili ausili per la loro funzione informativa, seduttiva ed educativa, non c'è dubbio che oggi il testo espografico (scritto o orale) sia un supporto centrale ai fini della mediazione culturale, obiettivo sostenuto con impegno negli ultimi decenni. Pur nella singolarità delle diverse esposizioni o musei, i dispositivi scritti presentano così tratti enunciativi e funzioni di comunicazione omogenee, che possono essere indagate sotto il profilo linguistico e discorsivo. Lo studio del testo espografico è qui centrato sull'enunciazione: l'analisi di tre esempi mostra come i testi esposti possano determinare una comunicazione più o meno coerente con le finalità del museo.

1. Introduzione

I musei dedicano enormi risorse per allestire sale, mostre e siti, al fine di rendere accessibili beni culturali e saperi ad un ampio pubblico. La 'vocazione' del museo è infatti, oltre la conservazione di opere, la diffusione di conoscenze:

La collezione, in un modo o nell'altro, è sempre per il pubblico: quello presente, per il quale viene esposta, e quello futuro, per il quale viene conservata. La collettività che ha delegato il museo a preservare le testimonianze della propria identità e a renderle presenti nella cultura attuale, deve poterne fruire, con il solo limite di non comprometterne la sicurezza e la durata nel tempo. (Marini Clarelli 2005: 16).

Per quanto riguarda la situazione italiana, recenti indagini mostrano chiaramente un indebolimento della fruizione da parte della popolazione locale, attribuita, tra le altre cose, ad una insufficiente accessibilità e comunicazione del patrimonio culturale.⁷ Questa consapevolezza ha portato anche in Italia – come già all'estero, dove la problematica era stata affrontata a partire dagli anni '70 – a riflettere sull'efficacia degli strumenti comunicativi all'interno dei musei⁸, e ad intraprendere un'opera di miglioramento e di formazione di coloro che, all'interno delle istituzioni, si occupano degli apparati di comunicazione museale (Da Milano/Sciacchitano 2015).

Sebbene Duncan Cameron affermasse nel 1992 che “les musées doivent communiquer par un système unique, celui des objets” (Cameron 1992: 266), la museologia e museografia si sono oramai aperte alla considerazione critica degli apparati verbali che accompagnano gli oggetti – d'ora in avanti “testi espografici” – e, non raramente, gli allestitori di musei si avvalgono della collaborazione di linguisti, nella consapevolezza che l'interlocutore del museo (ovvero degli specialisti che vi operano: direttore, conservatore, storico dell'arte, archeologo...) è il visitatore, destinatario di un discorso plurisemiotico. Il testo espografico è di conseguenza considerato una interfaccia tra il mediatore ed il visitatore, che contribuisce in modo determinante alla globale produzione di senso (Pascucci 2007, Ravelli 2006, Stelmes 2011).

Se, sotto il profilo prettamente linguistico, la ricerca sulla comunicazione museale può avvalersi delle iniziative a favore di una lingua ‘piana’, avviate da T. De Mauro negli anni Ottanta (De Mauro 1980), e delle indicazioni per la semplificazione del lin-

7. European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 399, Cultural Access and Participation, Report November 2013, <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf>, cons. 23.8.2018. Sul ruolo delle istituzioni museali come strumento di integrazione sociale, cfr. Da Milano 2009.

8. Continuerò a parlare di musei, ma il tema interessa qualsiasi tipo di esposizione o di sito: archeologico, naturalistico, ecc.

guaggio amministrativo (Fioritto 2009), sotto il profilo semiotico e discorsivo le cose si complicano, dato che il museo può essere concepito come una *Gestalt* (Jacobi/Poli 1993: 65), in cui elemento linguistico e visivo si compenetrano, e nel quale cooperano vari codici semiotici (simboli, grafici, foto, disegni), oggi ancor più densi grazie alle installazioni e agli apparati multimediali (filmati, musica): dimensione plurisemiotica che prospetta la comunicazione museale come un discorso (cfr. §2), su cui museografi, esperti di comunicazione visiva, sociologi, educatori, psicologi sono intervenuti (Coxall 1994, Blunden 2017). Sono invece ancora rari gli interventi di linguisti, che tuttavia sono in misura crescente interpellati per fornire uno sguardo ‘esperto’ sui testi espografici, in una prospettiva descrittiva che è, al contempo, anche un modo per migliorare la ‘messa in parole’ come pratica (Poli 1992, Bruni 2008, Jallà 2008, Rigat 2012, Blunden 2016).

L’articolo prende in esame la comunicazione museale secondo una prospettiva di Analisi del Discorso (§2) che distingue tra obiettivi comunicativi e messa in scena linguistica (§3). La realizzazione delle funzioni comunicative del museo sarà vagliata attraverso l’analisi di tre esempi (§4).

2. *Testo e discorso*

Il testo espografico – vale a dire la sua unità e unicità linguistica – fa parte di un più ampio discorso museale. Non solo, come si è detto, poiché appare accanto ad altri codici semiotici, ma perché compone, all’interno di un museo, e addirittura all’interno dell’istituzione museale in un dato Paese ed in una data epoca, un messaggio globale che non può essere disgiunto da tempo, luogo, partecipanti. In altre parole, il testo espografico fa parte di una pratica che coinvolge elementi verbali e non verbali, e che, rapportata alle sue condizioni di produzione, possiamo definire *discorso*. Nella prospettiva qui adottata, quella dell’Analisi del Discorso detta ‘alla francese’ (Charaudeau / Maingueneau 2002), il discorso è studiato

nella sua componente linguistica, poiché si assume che le condizioni di produzione di un testo non siano parametri interamente esteriori ad esso, ma parametri la cui presenza è attestata nel testo sotto forma di tracce linguistiche (Sarfati 2007: 17).

Dal punto di vista discorsivo possiamo distinguere un discorso museale in senso ampio, generico, che coinvolge fattori sociali, storici e istituzionali, ed uno in senso più limitato, ristretto ad una specifica esposizione. Nel primo caso rientra l'insieme delle esposizioni, musei, siti che presentano tratti omogenei,⁹ ad esempio, oggi, l'attenzione alla valorizzazione del patrimonio, l'osservanza di direttive per migliorare la comunicazione e l'accesso (sia fisico, sia culturale) cui abbiamo accennato in §1; il discorso viene così confrontato con l'intera attività museale e con norme che hanno corso e legittimità in un momento dato per una certa collettività.¹⁰

Nel secondo caso, si ha a che fare con un messaggio costruito per un contesto specifico (*quell* esposizione, *quel* sito), il quale accompagna un percorso e sviluppa dei temi che si appoggiano, come si è detto, a codici semiotici diversificati. Attraverso il discorso l'istituzione istituisce un 'contratto di comunicazione' (Charaudeau 2015) con il suo fruitore, che è influenzato da determinanti tanto simboliche (ad esempio legate ad un territorio) quanto economiche (relative a finanziamenti, gestione, ecc.).

In questa accezione più ristretta di discorso, i testi sono tutti gli elementi scritto-visivi che si integrano nella situazione di mediazione museale e che permettono di realizzare il discorso di quel museo, aiutando l'identificazione e l'interpretazione degli

9. Si potrebbe parlare di 'formazione discorsiva', sebbene l'etichetta risulti ancora oggi controversa, cfr. Maingueneau (2011).

10. Poli (2002: 25) parla di 'campo' museale, nell'accezione di "système à la fois social et symbolique de lieux, d'acteurs et d'événements". La definizione di 'discorso' data in Charaudeau/Maingueneau (2002: 230) è, infine: "Le véritable objet de l'analyse du discours n'est pas l'organisation textuelle en soi, ni la situation de communication" mais "le dispositif énonciateur qui lie une organisation textuelle et un lieu social déterminé".

oggetti esposti.¹¹ La pratica dell'esposizione si realizza, per buona parte, attraverso questi testi.

Jacobi/Poli (1993) individuano cinque caratteristiche in cui si articola la dimensione scritto-visiva: la *collocazione spaziale*, ovvero la disposizione all'interno del museo e la maggiore o minore visibilità durante il percorso; l'*organizzazione tipografica*, ovvero la divisione in paragrafi, la messa in evidenza, la presenza di titoli e titoletti; l'*autonomia o meno* dall'oggetto esposto, che distingue i pannelli autonomi, magari introduttivi, a quelli legati ad uno o più oggetti; la *materialità*, relativa al supporto materiale che ospita il testo: carta, vetro, pietra, video; la *plasticità testuale* (il design), ovvero la disposizione, lunghezza e allineamento delle righe, il carattere tipografico, il colore, ecc. Tutte queste componenti contribuiscono al senso, e condizionano la fruizione: ad esempio un pannello nascosto, o una scritta su supporto trasparente ostacolano la lettura, così come le condizioni di illuminazione e la grandezza dei caratteri (Serrell 1996). Non indugiero', tuttavia, su questi aspetti, peraltro accuratamente presi in considerazione nelle raccomandazioni del MiBAC sulla leggibilità¹² per concentrare adesso l'analisi sulla esclusiva componente verbale, anch'essa responsabile di adeguata comprensione da parte del visitatore.

3. Situazione di comunicazione e situazione di enunciazione

Il 'contratto comunicativo' cui si è accennato poco sopra è l'esito della componente comunicativa del discorso,¹³ vale a dire quella che, secondo Charaudeau, determina una *situazione di comunicazione*:

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11. Certo fanno parte di questo insieme anche altri testi, come i cataloghi, le piantine, le indicazioni pratiche, le informazioni relative alla organizzazione (curatore, autore dei testi, ecc.) che però non saranno considerati in quanto segue.
 12. Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali, *Che cos'è un manuale di base della comunicazione*, Roma 2000.
 13. Le altre componenti sono, per Charaudeau, la dimensione enunciativa (su cui cfr. oltre) e la dimensione topicalizzante.

[...] la situation de communication est le lieu institué socialement où s'inscrivent les conditions communicationnelles de l'échange sous la forme d'un contrat, lequel surdétermine le sujet qui donc n'y intervient pas (Charaudeau 2015: 109)

A questo livello le condizioni della comunicazione sono imposte da convenzioni o abitudini sociali, e non possono essere modificate dall'enunciatore. Si tratta di 'luoghi' in cui determinate pratiche e interazioni vengono riconosciute come pertinenti, e corrispondono a sfere di attività (economica, politica, mediatica, giuridica) che prevedono, per la comunicazione, generi specifici. Nel caso in esame i generi sono rappresentati da cataloghi, brochure, guide, oltre a etichette e pannelli.

Nella pratica è ovvio rilevare, all'interno di un genere, delle variazioni che rispondono a scelte dell'enunciatore,¹⁴ il che dà luogo, appunto, ad una *situazione di enunciazione*, ovvero ad una 'messa in scena' specifica, costruita strategicamente dal soggetto:

[...] la 'situation d'énonciation', [est le] lieu d'intervention du sujet qui sous les instructions discursives imposées par le contrat, procède à la mise en scène de son acte de langage. Je disais: la situation de communication est de l'ordre du contraint, de l'imposé socialement, la situation d'énonciation de l'ordre de la mise en oeuvre, de la mise en scène, des stratégies. (Charaudeau 2015: 112).

Questa distinzione (comunicazione - enunciazione) fornisce la chiave di lettura per spiegare la variabilità all'interno dei generi che stiamo osservando: etichette e pannelli. Sono state proposte, in letteratura, svariate classificazioni tipologiche dei testi museali, generalmente basate su caratteristiche funzionali (ad esempio: etichette identificative, descrittive, esplicative, evocative; cfr. Jacobi 1985, Poli 2002, 2010), senza che, in generale, le caratteristiche enunciative venissero sistematicamente riferite al contesto macro-enunciativo del museo/esposizione.

14. Ciò è tanto più evidente quanto meno il genere è vincolante, secondo la classificazione tipologica di Sabatini (1999).

4. *Funzioni del museo e contratto di comunicazione*

Il Museo è un'istituzione permanente senza scopo di lucro, al servizio della società e del suo sviluppo, aperta al pubblico, che effettua ricerche sulle testimonianze materiali e immateriali dell'uomo e del suo ambiente, le acquisisce, le conserva, le comunica e specificamente le espone per scopi di studio, istruzione e diletto. (ICOM – International Council Of Museums, 1974).¹⁵

Da questa nota definizione possiamo estrapolare le seguenti funzioni del museo contemporaneo:

- funzione di acquisizione, intesa come continuo incremento di opere e manufatti finalizzata allo sviluppo della conoscenza scientifica;
- funzione di conservazione, che riguarda l'obbligo del museo di garantire l'integrità e la disponibilità delle collezioni per soddisfare le esigenze didattiche e scientifiche della comunità;
- funzione di esposizione e divulgazione culturale.

È evidente che queste funzioni riconosciute dall'ICOM rappresentano altrettante sfaccettature del contratto di comunicazione, che caratterizza il discorso museale nel suo complesso. Più recentemente il MiBAC ha sottolineato l'importanza del processo di socializzazione della conoscenza:

Ogni museo affianca al dovere della conservazione del proprio patrimonio la missione, rivolta a varie e diversificate fasce di utenti, di renderne possibile la fruizione a scopo educativo, culturale, ricreativo e altro ancora. Interpretare il suo patrimonio e renderlo fruibile da parte dei visitatori, specialmente esponendolo, è dunque parte integrante della sua ragion d'essere. (*Atto di indirizzo sui criteri tecnico-scientifici e sugli standard di funzionamento e sviluppo dei musei*, MiBAC 2001)

Come si vede, la fruizione a scopo educativo e ricreativo è ritenuta un elemento caratterizzante del museo contemporaneo, che deve consentire alla persona colta e a quella meno colta, al bam-

15. www.icom.museum/definition.

bino, all'adulto, all'anziano, al disabile di godere, a livelli diversi, della stessa conoscenza.

Se, a livello comunicativo, gli obiettivi sono chiari, come si realizzano nella pratica? La messa in scena linguistica a livello enunciativo può in effetti condizionare la comunicazione, privilegiando l'una o l'altra funzione, anche in ragione della disponibilità degli operatori a (ri-)adattare i testi originariamente pensati per un pubblico meno ampio e diversificato di quello attuale. In quanto segue analizzerò tre esempi prendendo in esame gli elementi legati all'enunciazione, relativi a: 1) stile espositivo (specialistico, accessibile, divulgativo); 2) rapporto istituito col visitatore (didattico, persuasivo, amichevole); 3) costruzione del destinatario (generico, esperto).

4.1 Museo Archeologico di Pavia

Didascalie e pannelli che guidano nel Museo Archeologico di Pavia rappresentano una panoramica di quelle che sono le strategie enunciative di un museo la cui principale finalità è quella della conservazione.

La didascalia è, nell'immaginario dei visitatori e in quello degli operatori, un luogo di certezze, lo strumento scientifico per eccellenza, preciso e definitivo. Come si vede nell'esempio (1) il Museo Archeologico conferma questa attesa, infatti lo stile sobrio e la modalità descrittiva sostengono la credibilità dell'espositore/scrittore dei testi (presumibilmente uno storico dell'arte o archeologo). L'oggettività è inoltre sostenuta dalla presenza di numerosi termini specialistici, che presuppongono un visitatore esperto o almeno culturalmente capace di interpretare tanto le sigle (*a.C.*, *d.C.*), quanto i nomi di materiali (*roccia carbonatica*, *marmo proconnesio*), quanto, infine, i nomi di attività e manufatti (*incenerazione*, *stèle*, *sarcofago 'a tabernacolo*).

La preoccupazione di fornire informazioni precise (*vengono dati*) non impedisce, tuttavia, di lasciare tracce della soggettività

di un enunciatore che fornisce una interpretazione, una chiave di lettura (*poiché attesta l'importanza e l'alto valore, interessante per la ricostruzione*) e suggerisce una valutazione (*è da notare, molto interessante, degno di nota*).

(1) L'architettura funeraria

L'ultima sala della parte romana del Museo Archeologico è dedicata all'architettura funeraria. La maggior parte delle testimonianze esposte proviene dall'ambito urbano. Le categorie maggiormente rappresentate sono i sarcofagi e le stele.

I sarcofagi vengono datati al II-III sec.d.C., cioè nel momento di maggior diffusione del rito funebre a inumazione, che sostituisce quello più antico della cremazione o incinerazione.

Tra gli esemplari esposti è da notare soprattutto una fronte del tipo 'a cassapanca', in roccia carbonatica, che riporta un'iscrizione molto interessante per la ricostruzione della topografia della *Ticinum* romana. L'epigrafe originaria, datata al II sec.d.C., venne cancellata nel 528-529 d.C., e sostituita con un testo, che ricorda il restauro, di un anfiteatro nella città di *Ticinum* da parte del sovrano ostrogoto Atalarico (il sito in cui l'edificio si trovava non è a tutt'oggi identificabile).

Un altro frammento degno di nota è quello proveniente da un sarcofago architettonico 'a tabernacolo', in marmo proconnesio, con un testo che si riferisce a un tale *Catus Valerius*.

Egli venne definito patrono del collegio degli addetti alla navigazione e di altre associazioni. Si tratta di una testimonianza interessante poiché attesta l'importanza dei traffici commerciali via acqua in età romana e l'alto valore dello sfruttamento del fiume al quale *Ticinum* era strettamente legata, tanto da prenderne il nome.

L'esempio mostra come i criteri di conservazione e ausilio alla conoscenza scientifica siano soddisfatti, malgrado l'atteggiamento assertivo circa l'interpretazione lasci trasparire una non-neutralità dell'autore del testo e privilegi un 'contratto' col visitatore improntato ad un regime di autorità, che così risulta poco compatibile con la terza funzione attribuita al museo, quella della mediazione culturale e della accessibilità delle conoscenze ad un'utenza variegata.

4.2 Museo della Tecnica elettrica - Pavia

Il secondo esempio è rappresentato da un museo di recente formazione (2000), nel quale è evidente l'intenzione di instaurare un rapporto più amichevole col visitatore, a cominciare dal primo pannello:

(2) Museo della Tecnica Elettrica

Benvenuti nel mondo dell'elettricità
Possiamo immaginare un mondo senza elettricità?
L'elettricità tocca la nostra vita;
le sue applicazioni hanno modellato
il mondo nel quale viviamo.

.....

Non solo l'allucuzione diretta (*benvenuti*), ma anche la relazione tra pari instaurata dall'interrogativa che coinvolge il lettore, e da quel "noi" inclusivo (*possiamo, nostra vita, viviamo*).

Il percorso è suddiviso in senso cronologico, le sezioni corrispondono a momenti chiave di acquisizione di conoscenze, e sono introdotte da pannelli esplicativi. Il linguaggio usato, pur mantenendo il rigore scientifico richiesto dall'argomento, comprende anche talune spiegazioni, in apposizioni o parentetiche, che evidentemente mostrano una attenzione per i visitatori meno esperti.

(3) Oggi per lo più l'energia per produrre elettricità viene da combustibili fossili (carbone, petrolio o gas)...

Nella fusione nucleare, ad altissime temperature due atomi leggeri come il deuterio (che può essere estratto dall'acqua) e il trizio (ottenuto dal litio abbondante in natura) si combinano e si sviluppa calore.

In futuro la fusione nucleare - la sorgente di energia del sole e delle stelle - potrebbe diventare una concreta sorgente di energia.

La componente più tecnica, ed ostica per chi ha poche conoscenze di fisica, è inoltre mitigata dalla narrazione, per immagini e testi, del progresso delle conoscenze. Il percorso è infatti contrassegnato dalle numerose 'voci' che vengono riportate sui pannelli:

brani di Agostino, Alessandro Volta, Guglielmo Marconi, Michael Faraday, Benjamin Franklin, ad es:

- (4) Questo è il gran passo fatto sulla fine dell'anno 1799, passo he mi ha condotto bentosto alla costruzione del nuovo apparato scuotente; il quale ha cagionato tanto stupore a tutti i Fisici; a me grande soddisfazione... (Alessandro Volta, 1801)

Questa componente polifonica sollecita il visitatore e lo 'accompagna' in una sorta di viaggio nel tempo. L'introduzione delle citazioni non è usata come argomento di autorità, né come elemento esplicativo, bensì come stratagemma narrativo attraverso il quale sollecitare il coinvolgimento e l'adesione empatica ad un percorso di conoscenza di cui lui, il visitatore, si trova ad essere testimone ultimo – e, magari, invogliarlo a diventarne un continuatore –.

L'atteggiamento dell'enunciatore è pertanto evidentemente didattico, anche se mai autoritario, e la dimensione narrativa ha l'effetto di 'movere', instillando curiosità e empatia. Le varie forme di interlocuzione istituiscono un rapporto amichevole e costituiscono un motore della partecipazione del visitatore, favorendo la mediazione tra quanto è esposto ed i significati da trasmettere.

4.3 Museo Pelizza da Volpedo - Volpedo

Il terzo esempio presenta elementi dissonanti. Si tratta del piccolo museo di Pellizza, a Volpedo, un antico borgo ai limiti della pianura Padana, all'imbocco dell'Appennino. Oltre al vero e proprio museo, che altro non è che lo studio del pittore (contenente ben poche opere), e a una sede didattica, il museo comprende, disseminate per il paese, le riproduzioni delle opere di Pellizza, collocate nei siti (piazze, giardini, palazzi) che sono stati modello del pittore. Si tratta di un esempio di museo diffuso che ha, come in altri casi, lo scopo di valorizzare il territorio e nello stesso tempo di rafforzare l'identità e la partecipazione della comunità che vi risiede. Proprio consideran-

do questa destinazione, e la particolarità degli elementi (testi e quadri) che si trovano esposti su strada, e ‘dialogano’ con i luoghi e con i passanti (primi fra tutti, gli abitanti), ci soffermeremo solo su questi.

La prima parte delle didascalie fa spesso riferimento al luogo raffigurato, descrivendo anche i mutamenti che lo hanno interessato nel corso del tempo:

(5) VECCHIO MULINO

Il mulino, mosso dalle acque della roggia Ligozzo, era situato al tempo di Pellizza nella piazza Perino all’imbocco dell’attuale via Mazzini; fu abbattuto negli anni venti del secolo scorso, quand’era ormai inattivo, e il corso d’acqua venne deviato fuori dal centro abitato.

PONTECASTELLO

L’area di Pontecastello ritratta da Pellizza, sebbene mantenga ancor oggi l’antica denominazione, sarebbe ormai del tutto irriconoscibile, se non fosse per l’inconfondibile profilo del Poggio sullo sfondo: il corso della roggia Ligozzo che andava a muovere le ruote del mulino in piazza Perino è stato da tempo deviato e coperto, i ponticelli sono stati eliminati e la caratteristica casa con la torretta è oggi celata alla vista.

PANNI AL SOLE

Il soggetto si ricollega agli studi svolti nel prato posto tra la casa del pittore e la pieve [...]

LA PIAZZA DI VOLPEDO

[...] La veduta presenta tutti gli edifici ancor oggi esistenti (sia pure con modifiche) sulla piazza di Volpedo....

Non di rado nel pannello è presente una fotografia, che ritrae il luogo all’epoca del lavoro dell’artista, e che consente di confrontare realtà fotografica e rappresentazione pittorica. Il testo prosegue poi, con tono e stile elevato, a descrivere la fattura del dipinto. Qui intervengono le prime difficoltà, rappresentate da stilemi alti e formule ricercate da esperto d’arte, che mal si coniugano con l’ambientazione ‘su strada’ del pannello:

(6) La tela di Pellizza costituisce l’unica testimonianza iconografica rimasti dell’intero complesso. In essa colpisce la netta scansione dei piani, ottenuta sia con il sapiente incastro delle forme architettoniche del grande mulino e delle case adiacenti, sia con la lunga ombra che si pro-

ietta in primo piano a marcare con più forza l'ampiezza e la profondità della strada. Non è improbabile che Pellizza avesse impostato il quadro agli inizi del Novecento, quando aveva incominciato ad interessarsi allo studio delle chiuse e degli incastri delle condotte d'acqua e, accanto ai temi ricchi di suggestioni simboliste o letterarie, tornava a trattare alcuni scorci ambientali di Volpedo e del suo territorio, puntando su forme articolate in sintesi geometriche, quali aveva praticato nel periodo iniziale di sperimentazione della tecnica divisionista [...] (VECCHIO MULINO)

Ritroviamo qui elementi lessicali (*scansione dei piani, suggestioni simboliste, tecnica divisionista*) e forme enunciative che tradiscono la soggettività dello scrivente. Ad esempio, l'incertezza della datazione, espressa con una doppia negazione modalizzante (*Non è improbabile*) viene attenuata da un insieme di ragioni che lo scrivente, in quanto esperto, può enucleare. Ma soprattutto è evidente la volontà di suggerire una chiave di lettura, o di guida allo sguardo: *In essa colpisce la netta scansione dei piani...*

Troviamo ancora numerose forme assertive, che descrivono il quadro, suggerendo, anche grazie a valutazioni valorizzanti (*definiscono bene, equilibrio perfetto, perfettamente armonizzata*) l'effetto finale che dovrebbe essere condiviso dal visitatore:

- (7) [...] La veduta di paese si caratterizza per l'impianto rigorosamente geometrizzato, messo in risalto da forti e decisi contrasti di luce e d'ombra. Eppure, nonostante tale determinazione di valori contrapposti, *il risultato pittorico è d'effetto molto morbido e caldo* [...] Luci ed ombre definiscono bene anche i vari piani e dislivelli, senza giungere a minuzie descrittive, con un equilibrio perfetto dei piani e dei volumi [...] La tela è quindi perfettamente armonizzata [...] (PONTECASTELLO)

Infine, sebbene mitigato da un avverbio modalizzante (*probabilmente*), viene indicata anche una interpretazione soggettiva:

- (8) Pellizza cercava probabilmente di rileggere alcune fasi della sua esperienza giovanile, tornando a inquadrature molto composte, ma rivivendole con la sapienza di chi aveva ormai appreso a utilizzare con estrema libertà la tecnica del colore diviso.

Ho parlato di ‘dissonanza’ tra la (presumibile) funzione divulgativa e di valorizzazione del territorio dei pannelli esposti nelle strade del paese e la sostanza linguistica ricercata e ‘alta’ di questi. In effetti le didascalie esposte, corredata della firma, sono tratte dal Catalogo Electa del 1986 (a cura del Direttore scientifico del museo), ed evidentemente pensate per un pubblico diverso dal visitatore occasionale o addirittura dall’abitante di Volpedo. Ci troviamo così ad un ‘bisticcio’ tra comunicazione e enunciazione: la prima orientata al pubblico generico, realizzata con forme originali e accattivanti,¹⁶ la seconda proposta per un uditorio selezionato, caratterizzata da forme monologiche di descrizione e spiegazione.

5. Conclusioni

Se il “contratto di comunicazione”, secondo le indicazioni di ICOM, prevede una non secondaria componente divulgativa ed educativa, nelle reali situazioni di comunicazione questa viene più o meno realizzata. I testi brevi di accompagnamento costituiscono evidentemente il piano che, accompagnando il disegno espositivo della mostra/museo, può materializzare questa istanza. Potrebbe sembrare un elemento accessorio, in particolare nei musei d’arte, dove l’esperienza è soprattutto visiva, ma occorre ricordare che tale esperienza è sempre più spesso accompagnata/guidata da parole, attraverso media diversificati: guide, audioguide, installazioni digitali. Per questo motivo la consapevolezza dei processi linguistici e discorsivi è un fattore irrinunciabile, cui curatori, espositori, educatori e critici dovrebbero porre attenzione.

In particolare, come si è cercato di mostrare, accanto a accorgimenti linguistici, quali ad esempio le forme di semplificazione in direzione di una lingua piana, o grafici, come la presentazione del testo in piccoli periodi distaccati (elementi che qui non sono

16. Bisognerebbe aggiungere la presenza del museo didattico, che offre anche contenuti multimediali, e la presenza dei codici, per una fruizione attraverso cellulare.

stati presi in considerazione),¹⁷ la componente enunciativa gioca un ruolo importante. La situazione di enunciazione, la “messa in scena” linguistica delle nozioni che si intendono comunicare può, infatti, condizionare la comunicazione, favorendo o ostacolando quella “socializzazione della conoscenza” che oggi, nel museo del XXI secolo, sembra essere viepiù perseguita.

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17. Questi aspetti sono discussi almeno dal 1996, quando, in un testo classico, Beverley Serrel individuava dodici elementi che minavano l’efficacia dei testi museali: 1. Too long and wordy; 2. Too technical for the intended readers; 3. Boring, with inappropriate information; 4. Badly edited, with mistakes in grammar, spelling or syntax; 5. Too small – tiny words crammed on a 3x5 card; 6. Hard to read (the result of poor typography); 7. Coloured in a way that makes reading difficult or tiresome; 8. Badly placed, causing neck, back, or eye strain in the viewer; 9. Fails to ‘grab’ the attention of the visitor; 10. Codes are open to ambiguous interpretation; 11. Is lost among the visual ‘noise’ of too many other labels and objects; 12. Doesn’t address visitor knowledge, interest and misconceptions (Serrel 2015: 89).

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Subtitles as Captions, Subtitling as Translation

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1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on subtitles, i.e. captions appearing across the lower portion of a cinema screen, or of the frame of a television programme, or any video product, typically supplying a translation of the dialogue, or a version of it for the benefit of the deaf or hard of hearing¹⁸. They are certainly among the most useful of “words worth watching” as they provide access to audiovisual products which would otherwise be inaccessible to viewers owing to language or sensorial barriers, i.e. because of lack of knowledge of the relevant language code or because of physical impairments preventing the reception of oral language.

In Italy, given that the country – like France, Spain, Germany and Austria, among others – is one of the so called “dubbing countries”, recourse to subtitling has been traditionally rare, mostly limited to movies in lesser spoken or ‘remote’ languages, or films considered unsuitable for commercial circulation so that dubbing would not have been economically viable. The “dubbing vs subtitling” polemic is age-old, and saw top level directors like Jean Renoir, Jacques Becker and Michelangelo Antonioni engaged in a battle against dubbing in favour of subtitling. Renoir (1974: 47) wrote that adding the voice of someone else to another’s body was sacrilegious. In Italy, in the 1940s Antonioni was the spokesman of the numerous intellectuals critically opposing dubbing, and his article “Vita impossibile del signor Clark Costa” (“The impossible life of Mr. Clark Costa”) (Antonioni 1940) became a sort of manifesto. The polemic raged on unabated also in more recent times, in spite of the undisputed predominance of dubbing. No

18. Cf. “subtitle, n.”, *OED Online*, accessed 19 January 2019.

sooner than 2014 Italian director Gabriele Muccino provocatively stated that “Watching a dubbed film is like shooting oneself in the mouth, because months of work of the director are destroyed” (Huffington Post 2014). No more than two years later it was actor Vincent Cassel who launched an attack against dubbing and voice actors (“a mafia”, he said: cf. Finos 2016), which he reiterated in a subsequent interview the year after (F.Q. 2017).

Today thanks to technological and communications advances in Italy and in other dubbing countries subtitling is available across the board (e.g. DVD, Blue Ray, pay TV), in addition to dubbing, both intralingually and interlingually, although it is generally not available for dubbed films shown in movie theaters. Thus, to some extent the dubbing vs subtitling opposition has been supplanted by a free choice between the two, with the further possibility of having both at the same time.

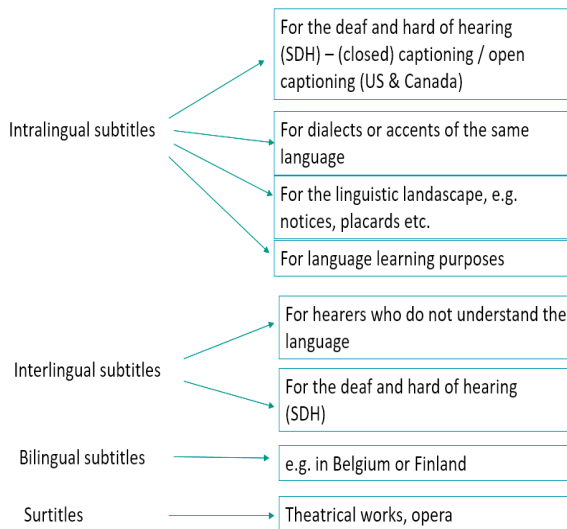
This chapter is organised as follows. In the next section some of the distinctive features and technical peculiarities of subtitles will be briefly discussed, while in §3 the focus will be on the status of subtitling in Translation Studies. Section §4 will rely on a case study to take a closer look at procedures and strategies enacted in subtitling, starting from a comparison of the original script and the corresponding subtitles of the film chosen for exemplification purposes. In §5 the main findings of the analysis will be discussed and conclusions put forth.

2. Subtitling: distinctive characteristics and technical peculiarities

Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 8) define subtitling

[...] a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letter, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off).

Subtitling is produced in different forms and for different purposes. Table 1 shows such forms and functions synoptically.



Modified from: Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 14)

Table 1. A Typology of subtitles (modified from Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 14).

Intralingual subtitling, also denominated ‘Same Language Subtitling’, or SLS, consists of a transcript of the oral dialogue, which in most cases is condensed (for obvious reasons). SLS may serve different purposes: help the deaf and hard of hearing (and it is then called SDH); help viewers to understand dialogues in substandard varieties or accents of their own language (as was the case with Ken Loach’s *Riff-Raff*, 1992; or with the original edition of Ermanno Olmi’s *L’albero degli zoccoli*, 1977, spoken in the Bergamasque dialect and subtitled in standard Italian); offer language learners an opportunity to be exposed to real foreign language dialogue providing at the same time a visual aid to favour understand-

ing; promote literacy intervention programmes whereby subtitling of mainstream TV content is used to help people, especially those who are difficult to reach through traditional literacy programmes, to improve their reading and writing skills, as in a programme implemented in India (Kothari, 2016)¹⁹. In the US and Canada intralingual subtitling is usually denominated ‘captioning’ and may take the form of ‘closed’ captions i.e. the captions that are not visible until activated by the viewer, usually via a remote control or menu option (e.g. in Italy and in other European countries on the 777 or 888 page of telex), or of ‘open’ (or ‘burned-in’, ‘baked on’, or ‘hard-coded’) captions that are visible all the time to all viewers.

Interlingual subtitling, which is the main focus of this study, offers a translation of movie dialogues for hearers who don’t know the language (or not well enough), but also – again – for the deaf and hard of hearing, and may come in two different languages in bilingual countries like Belgium or Finland. Sometimes subtitles are also used in dubbed movies to provide a translation of notices, adverts, placards or newspaper headlines. Surtitles (or, in the US, supertitles) are not technically *sub*titles as they are shown *above* the stage during a live performance on a LED display or projected on a screen. They consist of captions offering a transcript in the audience’s language of the lyrics being sung (in an opera) or words spoken (in a theater production).

In this study the main focus is on interlingual subtitles with specific reference to movies as they are available in DVD/Blue Ray editions or offered as options in different languages on pay TV channels or, more rarely, at the cinema.

While an exhaustive examination of the technical details of subtitling does not fall within the scope of this work, before pro-

19. The programme, managed by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) and not-for-profit organization PlanetRead, started in 1996 and has been implemented for the following languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. Cf. Kothari 2016.

ceeding in the discussion, it is deemed necessary to provide at least some basic information about the constraints to which subtitles are subject.

Subtitles, for Western languages usually placed horizontally at the bottom of the screen on one or two lines, are subject to length constraints and feature a variable number of characters, usually maximum 40 for cinema and DVD, and about 37 for TV.

Given that in audiovisual programmes there is a simultaneous use of two codes, visual and audio, in subtitling the replacement of audio stimuli with written captions needs to function in synergy with the visuals, so it is important to determine the exact moment when a certain set of subtitles appears and disappears on screen, which is technically called 'spotting'. Ideally the appearance of subtitles should match up the rhythm of the dialogue, i.e. appear when a character starts to speak and disappear when s/he finishes, but of course this is not always viable as situations are much more complex. It has been traditionally considered that the time necessary to read two 39-character lines is six seconds, hence the so called 'six-second rule' (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 23), which however is largely overlooked because a six second exposure seems too long and according to some authors allows a second reading by the viewer (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 23). A further time constraint is due to the need "to avoid creating subtitles that straddle a shot change (i.e. subtitle that starts in the middle of shot one and ends in the middle of shot two)" (Williams, 2009: 14; cf also Szarkowska, Krejtz and Krejtz 2018). In practice in most cases the time onscreen of each subtitle is cut down to 1 to 4 seconds depending on length and complexity (Georgakopoulou 2003: 47-48). Overall, the technical aspects of subtitling are quite complex and usually rely on specific software programmes and equipment (for a detailed description, cf. Georgakopoulou 2003: 44-61; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 69-99).

3. Subtitles in Translation Studies

In the very first chapter of their 2007 handbook of subtitling Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 10) pose the problem if subtitling is a form of translation in its own right or a form of adaptation. They question the status of subtitling as a form of translation because it is a *sui generis* form of interlingual transfer, subject to a whole range of restraints and involving an intersemiotic component, so “translation studies of all disciplines have been reluctant to include film translation among their subject of study” (Delabastita, 1989: 13).

Invoking a highly flexible and dynamic notion of translation, Díaz Cintas and Remael reject the idea of subtitling as adaptation, and even as ‘transadaptation’ (a term introduced *ad hoc* by Gambier 2003: 178-179), and propose classifying it under the umbrella term of “audiovisual” translation.

Of course, this proposal serves to accommodate within a theory of interlingual subtitling the relationship between the textual and the visual component, which is not normally included in models of translation. But the only fact of posing the question if subtitling is translation or adaptation seems rather anachronistic in 2007, and even more so today. It is a rather old question that was insistently asked in the past especially for some literary works, for instance for the *belles infidèles* translations of the Latin and Greek classics produced from the late 17th through the 19th century.

A more flexible attitude to translation, as advocated by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), has long been brought home by target-oriented scholarship in Translation Studies (Toury [1995]2012; Vermeer 1996) for which the requisite for a text to be categorised as a translation is not so much its ‘faithfulness’ or ‘correspondence’ to a text which is taken as its original, but rather its adequacy to the expected “function” the Target Text (TT) in the context of the target culture.

Within this perspective, translation can be conceptualised as including various form of rewriting that are all viable provided

they are adequate to the function and role the translation will have to fulfil in the context of the target culture and are incorporated into a coherent translation project. Thus the relationship between TT and Source Text (ST) postulated in the definition of translation is not absolute, i.e. tending towards total faithfulness as was traditionally taken for granted, but rather 'gradable', taking account of the function the translation is expected to fulfil in the target culture.

As mentioned above, already in the past there were translated texts that for some reason departed from the prevailing criterion of strict correspondence with the source text, and this is even more frequent in the contemporary world, where more traditional and consolidated forms of translation, based primarily on the aspiration to intertextual coherence (cf. Nord 2018: 32), are only part of the picture in a context where translated texts in various guises are everywhere, for instance in supranational and international organisations' texts, in dubbing, in machinery and electrical appliance instructions, in advertising, in website text, in books, in TV shows, and often also come in the form of summarized renditions – as for instance in journalism and multilingual abstracting – or result from transfer across media and modes, as for instance in versions for stage or screen of novels or stories, or in subtitling itself. In all these cases a broad variation is admitted in the relationship of the TT to the ST and various forms of manipulation, reduction, expansion, and intersemiotic transfer.

In light of these considerations I have proposed to apply fuzzy set theory (Garzone 2012, 2015) to the class of translations, as this makes it possible to account scientifically for the wide variations that are admitted today in the rendering of a text, thus subtracting translation from the 'faithful vs free' logic prevalent in traditional reflections on translation. Thus, translations will appear as constituting a fuzzy set containing some textual products that qualify for full membership, being unquestionably translations, while others

deserve only graded membership, being partially the result of other kinds of re-writing operations, the set being fuzzy at its edges.

At the centre of the set there is a hard core of texts which match nearly perfectly the abstract idea of the “model translation”, i.e. the prototypical idea of translation (cf. Labov, 1973; Rosch, 1978) that all of us have in mind and ideally try to approximate when we translate, i.e. a translation in which an interlinear approach, based on the transfer of minimum segments of the ST – possibly coinciding with the single word – produces a text that automatically ‘works’ in the target language at all levels (Newmark 1988: 67), syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, cultural, semiotic, with no need for any further intervention. A prototype which hardly exists in reality, if only for typological differences between languages.

As one moves away from the fuzzy set centre, consisting of translations that approximate the prototype, and gets closer to the periphery, one will find texts that exhibit an ever lower degree of membership in the fuzzy set, until at a certain distance from the core the grade of membership will approximate zero, thus making the transition to “non-translations”. This gradual increase in the distance from the centre of the fuzzy set is due to manipulations aimed at making the translated text more suitable to its purpose in the receiving culture, with reformulations, reductions, additions, expansions, free interpretations, adaptation or substitution of cultural elements, etc. In other cases, in addition to interlinguistic translation, there are also elements of re-writing in other dimensions, i.e. intralinguistic translation (cf. Jakobson 1959), as in abridged versions of literary works, or abstracts of scientific research articles, or popularizing accounts, or some form intersemiotic translation, as in movie scripts based on novels or in audio and video presentations.

If then we consider translations as a fuzzy set, dubbed text in its natural oral form is nearer to the prototypical form of translation located at the core of the fuzzy set than subtitles, which are also

members of the set, but are positioned at a distance from that core, along the “full-partial” and the “oral-written” dimensions and with additional conditioning by different constraints (synchrony, length, spotting, on-screen positioning, cf. §2 above).

Subtitling as a form of translation has a number of peculiarities. First of all, it starts from a film dialogue, an oral text which is only occasionally spontaneous (e.g. in many of Ken Loach’s films), and more often scripted and therefore subject to what Austin called ‘etiolation’ (Austin, 1962: 92), i.e. less vivid for the fact of being contrived. But a film dialogue has, indeed imitates, some of the features of spoken language and its complexities (diastratic and diatopic variation, intonation, variation in speed, loudness and pitch, lack of planning, etc.). These features can hardly be rendered in writing, and are even more problematic if they are to be transferred in the regimented form of subtitles, subject as they are to space and time constraints. So these features pertaining to oral language are sometimes compensated for by the addition of linguistic traits which can be noted in writing, e.g. word order, rhetorical questions, interjections, incomplete sentences, thus trying to obtain a similar effect. But in many cases the loss remains. This is made worse by the fact that in subtitling there is a tendency to use standard language (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 185), as indicated in most instructions and guidelines. Other more manageable traits of film dialogue are typical of emotionally charged language, e.g. expletives (swear words, insults, etc.), interjections, jokes, irony, etc., which may require some thought and expedients for an effective translation.

But apart from the problems caused by the shift from an oral ST to a written TT, an important question in subtitling regards text length. As pointed out in §2 above, subtitles consist of a limited number of words that have to be read in a limited amount of time. Various authors have proposed descriptions of the strategies followed in subtitling, the best known being Gottlieb’s (1992:

166) categorization of ten such strategies: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, resignation. Some of these procedures, like expansion and paraphrase or dislocation, are only rarely used, while condensation, deletion decimation (abridging of expression with loss of content) are quite common (Gottlieb 1992: 166).

In their handbook Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) focus in particular on various strategies contributing to the *reduction* of the text, and summarise the principles underlying the procedures followed in two basic principles:

- eliminate what is not relevant for the comprehension of the message,
and/or
- reformulate what is relevant in as concise a form as is possible or required (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 146).

They also emphasise the fact that in the reduction process the main principle guiding the subtitler is that of relevance, as set out in Relevance Theory (cf. Kovačič 1994).

Of course, in some cases preference is given to transference, i.e. literal translation, a procedure that according to Taylor (2000: 156-157) is applied much more frequently than it is usually thought, sometimes being preferred in half of the cases, and occasionally even more frequently.

4. Translation procedures in subtitling

In order to illustrate some of the strategies enacted in subtitling, avoiding isolated and non-contextualised exemplifications, the discussion will rely on a case study comparing the transcript of the original dialogue of a motion picture with the corresponding subtitles in order to reconstruct the translation strategies relied on.

The case study chosen is a successful Hollywood movie, *Crash* (2004; in Italian *Crash – Contatto Fisico*), starring Matt Dil-

lon, Sandra Bullock and Don Cheadle, among others. The film, co-written, produced and directed by Paul Haggis, received six Academy Award nominations, and won three Awards for Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Film Editing.

This movie seems particularly suitable for an analysis of subtitling on account of the multiplicity/diversity of characters and language varieties associated with its peculiar plot. Over a thirty-six hour period in Los Angeles, the lives of a handful of disparate residents interlock in the context of the racial and social tensions prevailing in the city. The movie tells stories of aggression, intimidation, loss and redemption, with a mosaic of characters – never sinking into stereotypes – led by destiny in unpredictable directions. Among them: a Caucasian district attorney and his pampered wife who get carjacked by two black young people constantly theorizing on society and race; a racist white veteran cop (caring for a sick father at home) who uses his authority to harass non-whites thus disgusting his younger partner; a successful black TV director and his black wife who gets angry with him for not defending her from harassment by the racist white cop; a black detective estranged from his mother and his criminal younger brother and gang associate; a Persian store owner, who feels he isn't getting justice from American society as his store is robbed time and time again; a hardworking Hispanic locksmith and family man. All these different ethnic backgrounds and social standings are associated with different accents and varieties of English and communicating styles.

The analysis will be carried out looking at two meaningful excerpts that have been chosen as they offer the opportunity to discuss many of the strategies most commonly followed in subtitling.

In the first excerpt Ryan, the white racist cop, is calling a clinic to ask for medical assistance for his sick father and talks on the phone to a black lady who argues the assistance is unnecessary and implies it cannot be provided under the person's

health care plan. In Excerpt 1, in the left-hand column the transcript of the original dialogue is given, while in the column on the right the subtitles are presented on one or two lines exactly as they appear on screen. R. stands for Ryan, and J. stands for Johnson, the name of the black administrative assistant he talks to on the phone.

EXCERPT 1 (14.45 – 15.28)

1	R: Look, you're not listening to me. This is an emergency.	<i>Questa è un'emergenza.</i>
2	I keep telling you he's in pain. He can't sleep.	<i>Dal dolore non riesce neanche a dormire.</i>
3	J. Mr. Ryan, your father has been to the clinic three times in the last month.	<i>Signor Ryan, suo padre è stato ricoverato tre volte in un mese</i>
4	He is being treated for a urinary tract infection, that is by no means an emergency.	<i>È stato curato per una difficoltà urinaria, non un'emergenza.</i>
5	If you have any more questions about your HMO plan,	<i>se desidera chiarimenti sui diritti del malato</i>
6	why don't you make an appointment to come in between ten and four Monday through Friday.	<i>venga tra le 10 e le 16 dal lunedì al venerdì.</i>
7	R. What does my father do about sleeping tonight?	<i>Mio padre che deve fare per dormire</i>
8	J. I don't know. I'm not a doctor.	<i>Non lo so, non sono un dottore.</i>
9a	R. I wanna talk to your supervisor.	<i>– Mi passi il supervisore</i>
9b	J. I am my supervisor!	<i>– Sono io</i>
10a	R. What is your name?	<i>– Come si chiama?</i>
10b	J. Shaniqua Johnson.	<i>– Shaniqua Johnson</i>
10c	R. Shaniqua. Big fucking surprise that is.	<i>– Per forza le cose vanno a cazzo</i>

The first observation is that subtitles contain 81 words, against 114 in the transcript, with a reduction of 29%. Therefore, it can be expected that condensation procedures have been enacted.

In both line 1 and line 2 the introductory metatextual observations (“Look, you’re not listening to me”; “I keep telling you”) are omitted, although they highlight Ryan’s insistence on his father’s need of assistance. In line 1, after the deletion of the first part, the remaining segment is rendered literally (This is an emergency > Questa è un’emergenza), while for line 2 the contents of two subsequent sentences are merged into one statement (he’s in pain. He can’t sleep > dal dolore non riesce a dormire), thus further reducing the length of the caption. Similarly in the subtitle of line 4, two subsequent clauses are merged into one, omitting the beginning of the second, “that is by no means”: “He is being treated for a urinary tract infection, that is by no means an emergency.” > È stato curato per una difficoltà urinaria, non un’emergenza.”.

Also in the next two lines (5, 6) which are syntactically part of one single sentence consisting of an *if*-clause and its main clause, the initial part of line 6 – worded as a question – is suppressed (“why don’t you make an appointment”), and the main clause is reformulated as an exhortative/imperative (“venga tra le 10 e le 16”). Of course, this condensation changes the illocutionary force of the sentence, originally formulated as a polite question (an indirect speech act: Searle 1975) into a directive.

In the *if*-clause (line 5) there is a cultural element in itself highly problematic translationwise, as reference is made to HMO (Health Maintenance Organization), a cheaper kind of health insurance plan that gives access only to a restricted provider network. This indicates that the policeman cannot afford a better health plan for his father and at the same time accounts the rigidity of the system denying the old man more individualized assistance for a chronic condition. This is an example of a cultural reference which puts the subtitler/translator in a difficult situation. In this case, the trans-

lation “il diritto del malato” (the patient’s right), which is probably intended as a descriptive equivalent (Newmark, 1988: 83), is vague and inaccurate and fails to render the significance of the reference as a useful element to let viewers understand the actual issues being negotiated in the dialogue. This same solution is also adopted in the dubbing so in this case subtitling is not any worse.

The last sequence (lines 10a, b and c) is particularly interesting because, as soon as he learns the first name of his interlocutor, Ryan understands she is black and blames on her ethnicity the failure to respond positively to his request for help. But all this is not made explicit in the dialogue, if not for the fact that ‘Shaniqua’ is a name that is popular in the black community, as any American viewer would immediately understand. The translation provided presumes that the Italian viewer can in some way understand the cultural connotation of the woman’s name with the help of the visuals, as she is black: this is what in technical terms is defined as ‘anchoring’ of the subtitle to the visual (Marleau’s *anchorage*: cf. Marleau 1982: 274) and should aim at generative ‘semiotic cohesion’ (cf. Chaume 2004: 232-237), which in this case cannot be taken for granted.

The following comment by Ryan (Big fucking surprise that is) is ironic, and the subtitles – rather than leaving the viewer to process the implicit meaning of the statement – prefer to provide a ready made solution in the form of an explicitation (per forza le cose vanno a cazzo), also maintaining the recourse to a vulgar word, but do not go as far as to make the racial reference clear. One aspect of this last exchange is the fact that the subtitles for the three lines, 10a, 10b and 10c, are shown together on screen, something that occasionally is done when a sequence is too quick to show the subtitles in succession, although it puts the viewer’s processing capacity under strain.

Excerpt 2 shows a quarrel between Cameron, the successful TV director, and his wife, Christine, after an episode when during a traffic stop officer Ryan molests her in front of her husband. In Excerpt 2 they are respectively indicated as H. (Husband) and W. (Wife).

EXCERPT 2 (20.20 – 23.59)

1	H. Well, maybe you would've been satisfied with just being arrested.	<i>A te forse andava bene essere arrestata.</i>
2	W. Oh, I get it. Much better to let him shove his hand up my crotch	<i>Ho capito. Meglio lasciargli mettere la mano tra le mie cosce,</i>
3	than get your name in the paper.	<i>che vedere il suo nome sui giornali</i>
4	H. You finally got me figured out, 'cause see, that's exactly what I was worried about right there.	<i>Vedo che ormai impari a conoscermi. Era solo quella la mia preoccupazione.</i>
5	W. Oh? You weren't afraid that all your good friends at the studio	<i>Temevi che i tuoi amici bianchi allo studio avrebbero letto il giornale,</i>
6	were gonna read about you in the morning and realize he's actually black?	<i>e avrebbero detto: "Non è altro che un negro in fondo!"</i>
7	H. You need to calm down right now. [...]	<i>Calmati ora! [...]</i>
8	H. Maybe I should've let them arrest your ass.	<i>Forse avrei dovuto farti arrestare.</i>
9	Sooner or later you gotta find out what it is really like to be black.	<i>Sarebbe ora che tu ti rendi conto di cosa vuol dire essere neri.</i>
10	W. Fuck you, man. Like you know.	<i>Come se tu lo sapessi!</i>
11	The closest you ever came to being black, Cameron, was watching The Cosby Show.	<i>Le uniche volte in cui ti senti nero è quando guardi il basket in TV</i>
12	Let me hear it again. Thank you, mister policeman...	<i>Come hai detto? "Grazie, lei è un poliziotto buono"</i>
13	You sure is mighty kind to us poor black folk.	<i>Lei molto gentile con noi poveri negri.</i>
14	You be sure to let me know next time you wanna finger-fuck my wife.	<i>Si accomodi, metta la mano sulla "fica" di mia moglie</i>
15	H. How the fuck do you say something like that to me?	<i>Come puoi dire cose del genere a me!</i>
	You know, fuck you!	<i>Vaffanculo!</i>

In this case the degree of text reduction is 22%, slightly lower than in the previous excerpt, as the dialogue transcript consists of 173 words while the subtitles contain 136.

The subtitle for line 1 is the result of a condensation procedure that relies on the simplification of the verbal periphrasis (would've been satisfied > *andava bene*), as also in line 7 (You need to calm down right now > *Calmati ora*). But, otherwise, in most of the sequence preference is given to the deletion of words that are not indispensable for the rendering of meaning: in line 1 itself the initiator 'well' is deleted; in line 4 the conjunction 'cause' (because), the shortened comment clause 'see' and the final adverbial 'right there'; and in line 6 the time complement 'in the morning' whose meaning is inherent in the text, as reference is made to the news reports of an accident that occurred the night before. Also various swear words used as expletives are omitted (fuck you, line 9; how the fuck do you say ... line 14). In two other cases vulgar words are actually translated with a similarly vulgar expression: in line 13 (next time you wanna finger-fuck my wife > *metta la mano sulla fica di mia moglie*) and line 15 (fuck you > *vaffanculo*).

There are other three procedures implemented in the subtitling of this sequence that are worth looking at. In line 5 Christine talks about her husband's fear to see his name in the papers being read by his colleagues in the studios, to whom she refers as "your good friends at the studio" and it is the context that makes it evident that such friends are obviously white: "Oh? You weren't afraid that all your good friends at the studio were gonna read about you in the morning and realize he's actually black?" (5-6). In the subtitles, instead, this fact is made explicit, rendering 'good friends' as 'i tuoi amici bianchi', thus falling into a form of explicitation which has been pointed out to be a 'universal' trend in translation (cf. e.g. Laviosa-Braithwaite 1998: 288-291; Garzone 2015: 75-83), and especially in screen translation (Perego 2003). Another interesting characteristic of these two lines is the shift from indirect speech

in the original dialogue to a direct language report in the subtitle “temevi che i tuoi amici bianchi allo studio avrebbero letto il giornale, e avrebbero detto: “Non è altro che un negro in fondo!”” (lines 5-6), a procedure which does not really produce a shorter translation, but simplifies the reception process, eliminating the need for the viewer to read and process a long paratactic sentence.

As in the previous excerpt, also here there is a reference to *realia*, notably to the *Cosby Show* (line 11) as representative of the African-American population (in its upper middle-class version). This has been obviously problematic for the translator/subtitler, who probably considered it as impenetrable for an Italian audience, and decided to render it by means of a cultural equivalent (“quando guardi il basket in TV”), or what s/he deems to be such, using basket ball – a sport dominated by black athletes, but traditionally belonging to lower social groups – as a symbol of the black population that is readily recognizable by Italian viewer. However, this substitution – leading to a solution that is not particularly effective – could have been avoided as *The Cosby Show* aired in Italy for several seasons under the title “I Robinson” [The Robinsons].

Another very interesting sequence includes lines 12-14, when Christine does an impression of her husband talking to officer Ryan: she speaks grotesquely imitating him in a scared and humbled voice with a typical Black Vernacular English, which of course is readily recognizable for Americans and Anglophones in general, but is obviously opaque to Italian viewers. Above all it is difficult to record in writing, as are in general all forms of social variation in the oral features of spoken language, which is one of the most thorny problems in interlingual subtitling. The solution adopted in this case, and in many other similar cases, is trying to transfer the trait of phonetic variation to the level of morphology and/or syntax, which can be marked in writing: “Lei molto gentile con noi poveri negri”. The solution adopted in the Italian dubbing is similar in terms of text, but it is pronounced with a similarly humbled

voice and with the accent generally used to make fun of African savages, a solution which for the Italian viewer does not convey the social connotations implied in the original text. But in subtitles there is no possibility to reproduce accents, intonations and other paratextual features. So in most cases – as in the case at hand – the renderings given are rather ineffective and lead to what Gottlieb (1992: 166) calls “resignation”, i.e. the provision of an evidently inadequate translation in the awareness that a certain feature are virtually impossible to transfer into subtitles in another language.

4.1. Discussion

The analysis of a representative case study has shown that the process of rewriting carried out in the practice of interlingual subtitling largely involves operations of reduction, whereby the oral ST is translated in a shorter form. The easiest way to obtain text reduction is by means of omissions and deletions of elements considered redundant or dispensable (conjunctions, adverbials, initiators, expletives, metadiscursive phrases) or, at least in the subtitler’s opinion, retrievable from the visual, which unfortunately is not always the case. A more complex procedure is that of reformulation and condensation, which is effected in a number of ways, e.g. using simple rather than periphrastic verb forms, avoiding the use of modals, merging two clauses into one. Another common procedure that is not aimed at condensing meaning, but rather to make the text more readable is the reduction of hypotaxis to parataxis (e.g. from reported speech to direct speech). The analysis has also provided evidence of the inherent difficulty encountered by subtitlers in the rendering of cultural references or *realia* in a context of space restraint. This difficulty is usually surmounted by making recourse to cultural equivalence, a solution that regrettably in many cases does not work. In some case, even recourse to forms of explicitation – a technique frequently relied on in audiovisual translation – does not guarantee an effective rendering.

5. Final remarks

In this chapter it has been argued that, in a context where its status as a translation activity has been questioned, interlingual subtitling is a form of translation in its own right, although it does not meet the traditional requisites of intertextual coherence that a text had to meet in order to be considered a translation.

Their effective rendering of the meaning of dialogues is put to test by viewers who rely on it to follow what happens on screen and may be thrown into a state of uncertainty if something does not work or is in discordance with the video component of the product. It is also put to test by viewers who know the language and can check their correctness.

The examination of the strategies routinely followed in subtitling highlights the inherent limitations of this kind of audiovisual translation, obviously due to its inherent space and time constraints and its reliance on synchronicity with visuals to obtain semiotic cohesion.

Given the very bad press that dubbing has always attracted, one may ask if subtitling is really much better. Compared with dubbing, it certainly enables the viewer to hear the actor's real voice and understand her/his real physicality. It provides the opportunity to perceive characters' tone of voice and the emotions expressed through it, although it should be considered that in many cases, the expression of emotions through the voice is subject to cultural conventions, so foreigners may not be able to correctly understand the real value of what they are listening to. Another factor to be considered is that the text reduction involved in subtitling also determines a reduction in the content conveyed: for instance most elements associated with the orality of dialogue are irremediably lost, the written medium often entailing normalisation. Furthermore, subtitles are less accessible, being difficult to follow for people with lower literacy or reading disorders. And in all cases, the effort to read captions decreases attention for visual clues.

All in all it can be concluded that both dubbing and subtitling bring with them problems and are in theory objectionable in certain respects, but they both make sense in a target-oriented perspective as they guarantee that persons with a linguistic disadvantage or physical impairment can access cultural products otherwise for them inaccessible.

Two forms of translation that are as imperfect as they are useful. But isn't this true of all forms of translation, inherently imperfect and difficult, but at the same time indispensable for the circulation of knowledge and art (Ortega y Gasset, 1937)?

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Traduire “en bref” : stratégies de communication multilingue dans la bande-annonce

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1. Introduction

La réflexion sur la diffusion massive de formes brèves d’expression constitue à bien des égards une clé de lecture de notre « modernité audiovisuelle et numérique » car l’engouement récent pour ces textes ouvrant le « dialogue de l’absence et de la présence, du réel et de l’image » (Montandon, 1992 : 13) représente la « séduction irrésistible » qu’exerce le bref sur la société contemporaine. À l’ère du numérique de nombreux dispositifs médiatiques s’appuient principalement sur l’immédiateté et l’universalité du code visuel, mais il est patent que les progrès des technologies permettent de réaliser des textes de plus en plus complexes, mixtes ou hybrides, où non seulement le code verbal escorte les images, mais encore contribue à l’imbrication multimédia de systèmes sémiotiques divers.

Dans cet article, nous nous pencherons sur les textes verbaux qui accompagnent l’image, laquelle, de par son évidence analogique, tend à reléguer ces textes au second degré. Plus précisément, nous nous intéresserons à la bande-annonce, l’une des formes brèves de la communication audiovisuelle, en tant qu’objet d’étude relativement peu exploré, mais important si l’on considère son essence synthétique. Les transformations sémio-linguistiques à l’œuvre visent à inscrire le texte bref de la bande-annonce au sein d’un projet esthétique qui va au-delà des traits définitoires de la *brevitas* souvent identifiés avec « la rapidité, l’urgence, le présent, la nouveauté » (Périneau, 2013 : 122). Comme le souligne Pezzini (2002 ; 2013), la brièveté n’indique nécessairement ni la simplification des pratiques communicationnelles au service de la consommation instantanée de l’information ni la réduction du

contenu sémantique ; elle est plutôt le résultat « di un effetto di intensità articolato fra spazio, tempo e testo che si basa sull'elasticità del discorso responsabile di processi di ritestualizzazione, risignificazione e di ridiffusione » (Pezzini, 2002 : 20). C'est dans la force herméneutique déclenchée par la forme brève et ses finalités communicatives et médiatiques que nous situons la bande-annonce en tant que texte promotionnel d'une histoire (le film) qui doit fasciner le destinataire dans un espace-temps concentré et le mobiliser par ellipse, allusion, évocation en vue de la découverte et du déchiffrement de sa signification.

En premier lieu, nous poserons quelques jalons théoriques. Ensuite, nous aborderons la bande-annonce sous l'angle de la traduction intrasémiotique, interlinguistique et interculturelle. Enfin, nous releverons les stratégies de captation mises en œuvre dans le transfert linguistique et culturel, à savoir entre la France et l'Italie.

2. La bande-annonce : un objet d'étude complexe

Tout d'abord, quelques repères théoriques sur notre objet d'étude s'imposent. La bande-annonce peut être considérée comme l'actualisation de choix esthétiques complexes, de stratégies de marketing ciblées et de contraintes socio-économiques. Sa définition demeure assez floue parce qu'elle se situe, en tant que produit artistique, culturel et promotionnel, à la croisée de la communication publicitaire et de la communication culturelle. Ses multiples visages en font une « œuvre de séduction » visant à fasciner le spectateur qui est ainsi incité à aller voir le film ou bien qui est impliqué dans une expérience particulière de consommation projetée dans une dimension temporelle suspendue entre le présent de l'anticipation et le futur de la promesse (le film dans sa totalité). Ainsi, la bande-annonce s'inscrit-elle dans le discours persuasif, puisqu'elle amorce des univers d'attente en s'appuyant sur la logique de la découverte et sur la suggestion de parcours interprétatifs pour séduire le public.

Les études sur ce domaine ne sont pas copieuses, mais les recherches menées dans le domaine des sciences de la communication et du marketing ont mis en évidence certains aspects de cette forme « hybride » dépendant du marché, des conditions de production spatio-temporelles, de stratégies discursives propres au domaine de la persuasion commerciale, mais aussi des langages artistiques. D'après les études sémiotiques et communicationnelles (Pezzini 2002 ; Péryneau 2013 ; Federico 2017) la bande-annonce constitue un ensemble socio-sémiotique, à savoir un ensemble de discours sociaux qui dialoguent et sont interdépendants (Dusi 2002). A partir d'un hypotexte, elle compose des micro-récits sans respecter l'ordre de la narration première, et réinvente de nouvelles lignes narratives dans un ensemble cohérent et plausible, pour stimuler le public par le « sentiment d'incomplétude » (Montandon 2013). Toutefois, il n'agit pas d'un véritable résumé, plutôt d'une synthèse développée autour d'un «topic di base in cui la strategia enunciativa si fa carico di tutti i livelli del testo, valoriale, narrativo, discorsivo» (Dusi 2002: 41). Cet objet médiatique se constitue en tant que pratique discursive et produit culturel au service du texte filmique en s'apparentant au paratexte (Regosa 2003), mais il va bien au-delà d'une simple collocation dans l'épitéxte public car il enchaîne un jeu interprétatif plus complexe où le texte et le paratexte se répondent (Federico 2017). Tout de même, on doit admettre que ce type de construction, inscrite dans la brièveté, relève d'une rhétorique particulière, celle de la relation de contiguïté avec une narration première dont elle réduit, écourte, condense l'univers des valeurs pour stimuler le destinataire, le captiver sans le lasser²⁰, et qu'elle représente un moyen efficace de promouvoir un produit (le film) et de le positionner sur le marché (du ciné-

20. «La costruzione di un trailer si struttura per condensazione dell'universo valoriale e semionarrativo del film; usando prevalentemente modi aspettuivamente puntuali e intensi, rispetto alla duratività e all'estensione del film» (Dusi, 2002 : 63).

ma). Les approches marketing l'inscrivent dans le genre publicitaire, mais elles reconnaissent la nécessité de dépasser la dimension ordinaire d'une annonce audiovisuelle de courte durée pour l'appréhender dans sa complexité²¹ et originalité artistique.

Nous aborderons par la suite la bande-annonce en tant que texte promotionnel fondé sur des opérations de traduction intrasémiotique²² et tâcherons de mieux comprendre son fonctionnement dans la perspective interlinguistique et interculturelle de la communication commerciale (Guidère 2008).

3. Traduction intrasémiotique et procédés de réduction

Les bandes-annonces opèrent un processus de transformation des codes narratifs dans la rhétorique promotionnelle, bien que la narration demeure curieusement le levier communicationnel - sujet, forme et objet à la fois - de ces « little stories [...] in wich selected individual cinematic images, dynamically combined in highly teleological editing structures, shine with a surface gloss of exaggerated spectacularity » (Kernan, 2004 : 10). La construction d'une narration logique propre, grâce à l'utilisation d'outils performants de montage et d'editing, passe fréquemment par l'alternance et l'abréviation de séquences reliées au texte original qui fonctionnent de manière autonome et inédite à des fins commerciales. Il s'agit de textes cataphoriques qui adoptent différentes formes de « falsifications », allant de la suggestion au développement de certaines situations, de la juxtaposition de lignes de dialogues, pour recréer

21. « Fenomenológicamente, un trailer tiene tres características esenciales: la primera lo define como una herramienta de comunicación publicitaria; la segunda, como un tipo de publicidad específica; la tercera, como un género de entretenimiento autónomo digno de contemplación y de reflexión. » (Dornateche Ruiz, 2007: 101).

22. «Per interpretare correttamente il film il trailer dovrà riproporre ed evidenziare alcune isotopie fondamentali, tenendo sullo sfondo, condensando o eliminando, altre linee narrative, tematiche, figurative, ritenute meno importanti per la riuscita del proprio discorso perusativo» (Dusi 2002: 63).

des conversations, à l'extrapolation de bribes de dialogue, pour l'attribuer à la voix off, ou à l'utilisation d'éléments filmiques non présents dans le film. Considérant le type de manipulations sous-jacentes, Federico (2017) distingue trois types de format – narratif, antinarratif et intermédiaire – qui prennent en compte différentes stratégies de séduction et leurs effets sur la perception du public (reconstitution plus ou moins possible de l'histoire). Pareillement, Dornaletche Ruiz (2007) propose un classement de la bande-annonce sur des présupposés sémiotiques qui, à notre avis, apportent des éléments de réflexion supplémentaires sur les procédés de réduction et/ou de condensation, ceux-ci pouvant s'appuyer sur des schémas métaphoriques ou métonymiques²³. Les bandes-annonces créatives (*creative trailers*) sont fabriquées avec des matériaux originaux, réalisés expressément pour promouvoir le film sans recours au montage discontinu, en relation analogique avec le film ; les *clips trailers* dérivent du *cutting* d'une partie du film, sans retouches, à savoir un fragment en relation de métonymie ; les *standard trailers*, le format le plus diffusé, se différencient selon leur durée en *teaser trailer* (1 :00) et en *theatrical trailer* (2 :50 environ). En poursuivant la même relation métonymique, ce dernier parvient à mieux présenter les différents personnages et à mieux expliquer le contenu de base de l'intrigue, tandis que les teasers se concentrent sur une brève présentation de l'histoire et laissent plus de questions ouvertes. D'autres formats publicitaires peuvent accompagner le film tel que les extraits, presque des échantillons du film²⁴, et le *making of*, celui-ci présentant des séquences « en coulisse » qui font référence au processus de fabrication du film et engendrant donc une nouvelle relation « méta-métonymique ».

23. Pour une illustration plus étendue de la typologisation des bandes-annonces voir Domeneleche Ruiz 2007.

24. « L'échantillon est quand même représentatif de quelque chose de caractéristique du film. Selon la logique de l'échantillon, l'extrait est supposé posséder certaines propriétés de l'élément global. [II] témoigne des dimensions sensorielles et atmosphériques du film » (CNC 2000 : 100).

De manière plus générale, ces diverses formes reflètent autant de procédés de manipulations d'un texte de départ dans le but de créer un effet de suspense à travers des réductions programmées et d'obtenir une équivalence sémantique entre unités discursives de dimensions différentes (Dusi 2002 : 39).

En outre, la bande-annonce est caractérisée par des mécanismes d'incitation très puissants qui peuvent déclencher des réactions émotionnelles fortes vis-à-vis d'une histoire, des acteurs, d'un genre. Le contexte de diffusion peut influencer la réception et modifier la perception du film. Dès leur apparition, les salles de cinéma sont les lieux du premier contact du film avec les spectateurs. Les bandes annonces sont projetées dans les salles de cinéma avant la sortie du film et sont diffusées désormais aussi bien à la télé que sur la Toile. Les conditions de réception ne sont pas les mêmes car le canal et son contexte influencent le contact entre l'objet proposé et le spectateur : au cinéma, l'impact est plus profond car le spectateur voit la bande-annonce sur grand écran et dans les mêmes conditions de vision du film. Par contre, la télévision semble avoir un impact plus éphémère parce que le spectateur n'a pas l'impression de « goûter » une avant-première, mais de recevoir une information sur le film, voire une offre promotionnelle. Tout récemment, Internet (sites spécialisées, Youtube, etc.) a multiplié les pratiques d'accès et de consommation de ces textes audiovisuels, de plus en plus nombreux et variés en ce qui concerne les modes de production et de réception.

Dans les prochains paragraphes nous nous intéresserons aux problèmes posés par la circulation des bandes-annonces dans des contextes linguistiques et culturels divers, ce qui nous amène à observer les manipulations de la brièveté dans une perspective interlinguistique et interculturelle. Le cas de la France et de l'Italie constituera l'objet de notre enquête, bien que limitée à quelques exemples près.

4. Traduction interlinguistique et stratégies de réduction

Dans cette partie, nous présenterons un échantillon de notre recherche qui s'est focalisée sur les bandes annonces françaises et sur leur adaptation pour des publics de langue-culture différente. Nous nous sommes intéressés tout spécialement à la promotion des films français et à leur diffusion en Italie, afin d'observer les adaptations linguistiques et textuelles imposées à ce type de produit par la communication commerciale multilingue (Guidère 2008) qui demande de prendre en compte la dimension culturelle et interculturelle, dans le jeu de la séduction des publics potentiels sur un marché de l'audiovisuel mondialisé et largement dominé par la puissance du cinéma américain. Le genre de la comédie nous a fourni un terrain d'enquête exploratoire sur la base de considérations de types socio-culturel, à savoir la prépondérance des comédies dans les entrées en salle en France, l'exportation à l'international des comédies françaises, dont l'Italie constitue un marché limittrophe important et culturellement proche, et la place de la langue française en tant que vecteur culturel²⁵ (l'exception culturelle de la France). De plus, la diversité des comédies produites en France est l'un des facteurs du succès de ce genre à l'international : de la comédie grand public (*Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis*, *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu ?*, *L'Auberge espagnole*) à la comédie engagée (*Samba*, *Intouchables*), en passant par la comédie romantique (*L'Arnacœur*, *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*), la comédie loufoque et la co-

25. Cf. l'étude menée par Unifrance en 2016 : « Sur la question de la langue de production, la comédie est, après le policier, le genre présentant la plus forte proportion d'entrées pour les films en langue française au sein de cette étude (en dehors de l'animation et du documentaire, considérés en langue originale française par dérogation). Avec 309,2 millions d'entrées sur les 326,4 globalement recensées en 20 ans, les comédies majoritaires en langue française représentent près de 95% de la fréquentation totale du genre (*Quels sont les genres du cinéma français qui s'exportent le mieux ?*, <https://medias.unifrance.org/medias/125/97/156029/piece_jointe/quels-sont-les-genres-du-cinema-francais-qui-s-exportent-le-mieux.pdf>, cons. 22.11.2018).

médie d'auteur. Sa grande variété favorise la circulation des valeurs et de l'humour « à la française » et, pour cela, ce genre est à tous les effets « culturospécifique ».

4.1 Corpus

Le corpus faisant l'objet de notre analyse se compose de cinq bandes-annonces officielles que nous pouvons classer parmi les *standard trailers*. Elles ont été sélectionnées parmi une pléthore de titres, proposés en tête d'affiche dans les sites d'information cinématographique, et sur la base du classement Unifrance²⁶ présentant les meilleurs films du genre à l'export. Dans cette première phase de la recherche, nous nous sommes appuyés sur des critères de généralité (la comédie) et sur la saillance de certains segments verbaux et non verbaux pour la réalisation de la version italienne pouvant mettre en évidence les problèmes d'adaptation culturelle. Ci-dessous, nous présenterons brièvement les bandes-annonces examinées, énumérées par ordre chronologique, et accompagnées d'une synopsis du film dont elles sont issues pour ensuite en proposer une analyse plus détaillée :

- *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* (2008) : film de Dany Boon sorti le 27 février 2008 en France et le 31 octobre 2008 en Italie (titre italien : *Giù al Nord*). Ce film raconte l'histoire de Philippe Abrams, le directeur de la poste de Salon-de-Provence qui, pour faire plaisir à sa femme, essaie d'obtenir une mutation en Côte d'azur. Il sera envoyé à Bergues, petite ville du Nord où il devra se confronter non seulement aux traditions locales, mais encore à ses préjugés. A sa grande surprise, il découvrira un monde différent et chaleureux.
- *Rien à déclarer ?* (2011) : comédie franco-belge de Dany Boon sortie le 26 janvier 2011 en Belgique, le 2 février en France et le 23 septembre en Italie (titre italien : *Nulla da dichiarare*).

26. Il s'agit de l'organisme chargé de la promotion et de l'exportation du cinéma français dans le monde. Il est contrôlé par les pouvoirs publics et, notamment, par le Centre National du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC).

Situé l'année où France et Belgique abolissaient les contrôles frontaliers, l'histoire oppose un douanier français (Dany Boon) à son homologue belge, irascible et francophobe (Benôit Poelvoorde). L'intrigue s'enrichit de la collaboration forcée des deux adversaires, d'une histoire d'amour et d'un trafic de drogue autorisant des scènes d'action.

- *Supercondriaque* (2014) : comédie française de Dany Boon sortie le 26 février 2014 en France et le 13 mars en Italie (titre italien : *Supercondriaco. Ridera fa bene alla salute*). Ce film met en scène l'histoire de Romain Flaubert, un homme seul qui à 40 ans n'a ni femme ni enfants. Il est photographe pour un dictionnaire médical en ligne, ce qui a développé en lui une hypocondrie aiguë. Il a comme seul ami son médecin traitant, mais le malade imaginaire est difficilement gérable. Comme remède extrême, il décide de l'aider à trouver la femme de sa vie.
- *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu ?* (2014) : comédie de Philippe de Chauveron sortie le 16 avril 2014 en France et le 5 février 2015 en Italie (titre italien : *Non sposate le mie figlie*). Ce film raconte l'histoire d'un couple de catholiques plutôt « vieille France », incarné par Claude Verneuil et Marie Verneuil, qui voudrait faire preuve d'ouverture d'esprit mais la réalité est plus difficile de ce qu'ils imaginaient : leur première fille épouse un musulman, leur deuxième un juif et leur troisième un chinois. Leurs espoirs reposent sur la fille cadette qui en effet va marier un catholique, mais le futur mari est un jeune homme africain.
- *Retour chez ma mère* (2016) : comédie de Éric Lavaine sortie le 1^{er} juin 2016 en France et le 25 août en Italie (titre italien : *Torno da mia madre*). Stéphanie, la protagoniste du film, a 40 ans, elle est divorcée et a perdu son travail. Elle se voit donc obligée de retourner chez sa mère Jacqueline qui l'accueille à bras ouverts dans son appartement. La cohabitation n'est pas facile et les secrets de famille vont se déchaîner lors d'un dîner avec le reste de la famille.

4.2 Les bandes-annonces françaises

D'après les études réalisées par le Centre National du Cinéma (CNC 2000), les bandes-annonces françaises se distinguent des productions américaines parce qu'elles fonctionnent souvent sur la logique du montrer. L'énonciation est prise en charge par le film lui-même qui se raconte en condensé à travers un montage de séquences qui amènent les spectateurs à plonger directement dans le film et dans sa narration. La logique de la narration présente des variations possibles s'étendant du montage de scènes dialoguées extraites du film, qui en donnent un aperçu, au montage de scènes dialoguées, qui construisent une énigme, au monologue ayant une fonction explicative. Selon la fonction communicative privilégiée, deux axes principaux peuvent être identifiés : un axe cognitif centré sur le schéma narratif et un axe affectif visant à reproduire une tonalité, une ambiance. Ces deux axes souvent se croisent dans les bandes-annonces préférant livrer un double aperçu cognitif et affectif pour stimuler la curiosité des spectateurs et obtenir leur adhésion émotionnelle²⁷. Généralement, les bandes-annonces de film français ont une tonalité plus proche de l'ordinaire et ont un mode de communication moins emphatique et accrocheur que les *trailer* américains. Contrairement aux bandes-annonces des films d'action, qui se prêtent mieux à être découpées en scènes courtes ou en extraits flashes, elles cherchent davantage à transmettre l'atmosphère du film et les acteurs qu'à impressionner le spectateur, en privilégiant d'extraits plus longs mais qui sont plus adaptés pour montrer des films d'humour (CNC 2000). Dans notre corpus, l'éloge des mérites du film laisse la place à la création de micro-fictions visant à restituer les tonalités de l'humour et l'ambiance du film. Dans *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis*, le comique de situation de Dany Boon filtre à travers le montage des scènes dialoguées qui, loin d'en reconstituer le schéma narratif, laissent

27. <<https://testconso.typepad.com/semiologie/2008/10/typologie-des-b.html>> , cons. 23.1.2019.

entrevoir la construction d'une drôle de situation de conflit entre deux mondes éloignés provoquant des malentendus dont on ne connaît pas la solution. Par contre, *Supercondriaque* laisse entrevoir ce même comique de situation, mais suggère également des registres différents, du burlesque à la comédie romantique, et accompagne le spectateur à suivre le fil d'une intrigue que l'on imagine compliquée et dont on peut deviner le dévoilement. Dans *Rien à déclarer ?* les séquences dialoguées se succèdent pour restituer les conflits identitaires interrégionaux dans une Europe à ses tout débuts, sous fond d'un comique populaire et grossier. Les représentations stéréotypées des relations franco-belges suggèrent le déroulement des faits, mais laissent dans l'ambiguïté leur articulation logique.

Le milieu bon bourgeois « catholique » et la forme d'humour particulière qui exploite la mise en scène de stéréotypes²⁸ ressortent du montage de séquences dialoguées, scandées par un ordre chronologique interne à la diégèse (les mariages des filles), dans la bande annonce du film *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait au bon Dieu ?* Les errances de la génération « boomerang » et les problèmes des relations intergénérationnelles abordé dans *Retour chez mère* apparaissent dans le comique d'intérieur et se dessinent autour d'une scène dialoguée qui, seule, fait éclater le comique des gags et des quiproquos, laissant pour autant suspendu dans le fragment le fil d'une histoire à inférer.

Les opérations techniques et sémantiques de réduction, dont se réclame la traduction intrasémiotique activée par les bandes-annonces lors de leur fabrication, souvent décontextualisée de la réalisation du film²⁹, sont essentielles à la réussite

28. Cf. à ce propos l'article de C. Delporte, « Du stéréotype dans la comédie française contemporaine : autour de *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu ?* », *Mise au point* [Online], 9 | 2017, <<http://journals.openedition.org/map/2271>> cons. 22.1.2019.

29. « On pourrait croire que ce sont les réalisateurs qui réalisent les publicités de leurs films, mais non. Alors qui fabrique les bande annonces? En France

d'une forme de communication qui, outre à valoriser le contenu narratif, vise à impliquer le spectateur en s'appuyant sur des mécanismes pathémiques pour attiser l'attention du spectateur et la prolonger jusqu'au moment de la vision. La sélection des contenus emblématiques, l'art de composer les fragments et de les faire signifier dans une sorte d'énigme, ne se limite pas au seul contexte socio-culturel de départ, mais se poursuit sur le plan interlinguistique et interculturel, comme les exigences d'internationalisation de la production culturelle actuelle le requièrent.

4.3 Bandes annonces françaises vs *trailer* italiens

Dans cette partie, nous aborderons l'analyse comparée des versions françaises et italiennes des bandes-annonces de notre corpus pour détecter ces transformations déterminées par la condensation et la réduction dans le processus d'adaptation pour des publics ne partageant pas la même langue-culture de départ. Dans le contexte italien, la traduction des produits audiovisuels trouve ses racines profondes dans son tissu culturel, social, historique et économique qui l'a érigé parmi les pays qui, comme la France, privilégient le transfert linguistique, à savoir le doublage (Gambier, 1996). L'évolution du « promo », « prossimamente » ou « coming soon », au « trailer » actuel, fait preuve, sur le plan linguistique, des changements en cours et de la forte anglicisation de ce texte promotionnel à valeur cataphorique qui, petit à petit renouvelle ses modes opératoires traditionnels en passant de la redondance des débuts, aux mi-

quelques sociétés se partagent le marché : Aparté, Silencio, SLP ou encore Sonia tout court, ce sont donc des boîtes spécialisées dans la réalisation de petits films promotionnels. [...] Aux Etats-Unis ces sociétés sont beaucoup plus nombreuses et les bandes-annonces sont vraiment exclusivement entre les mains des producteurs et des distributeurs. » (<<https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/le-petit-salon/mais-qui-fabrique-les-bande-annonces>> , cons. 14.12.2018)

ni-film, aux formes denses et fulgurantes de nos jours. La tradition italienne semble tracer une ligne de continuation avec une atmosphère plus intime et un rythme mesuré s'identifiant, la plupart des cas, avec la signature du metteur en scène, mais il est évident que le panorama contemporain amène plutôt vers une communication standardisée et/ou internationale où la brièveté représente le véritable langage pour des messages instantanés. Désormais, la bande-annonce se configure plus comme un discours transmédia qui peut être développé à partir de canaux variés, des salles de cinéma aux sites spécialisés sur Internet (allociné, coming soon, mymovies...) à Youtube, ce qui invite à la réinvention des formes et, de surcroît, à l'augmentation des contenus reliés.

Dans le but de souligner ces différences stylistiques et culturelles, nous allons analyser de près les bandes-annonces les plus représentatives de notre corpus sur la base des limites de ces textes dans le temps (durée) et sur les manipulations de réduction pour les adapter au niveau linguistique et textuel.

4.3.1 Durée

Selon les conventions du genre (Dornaletche Ruiz 2007), la durée des *standard trailers* est de 2:50 environ. La comparaison des bandes-annonces françaises et italiennes portant sur le même « produit » à promouvoir met en évidence une certaine harmonisation de la durée des contenus soumis aux impératifs d'un format qui, dans un espace temporel limité, doit condenser un maximum de sens pour captiver et induire le destinataire à poursuivre cette expérience intellectuelle et émotionnelle et à regarder le film. Les deux versions ne montrent pas de véritable écart temporel, hormis une tendance à une majeure économie lexicale dans le texte italien qui n'est pas entièrement dépendant des seuils du format, comme le montre la bande-annonce de *Retour chez ma mère*.

	Version française	Versione italienne	Nombre de Mots VF	Nombre de mots VI
<i>Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis (2008)</i>	mn. 2:05	mn 1:50	443	305
<i>Rien à déclarer (2011)</i>	mn 2:11	mn 2:07	439	295
<i>Supercondriaque (2014)</i>	mn 1:52 mn	mn 1:35	297	183
<i>Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu? (2014)</i>	mn 1:57	mn 1:34	341	224
<i>Retour chez ma mère (2016)</i>	mn 1:35	mn 2:03	245	220

4.3.2 Adaptations textuelles

L'émergence de plusieurs éléments distinctifs dans les bandes-annonces françaises et italiennes examinées nous permet de mettre en évidence le rôle joué par le contexte culturel dans toute opération de transfert linguistique qui à plus forte raison résulte ici sélectif. Force est de constater que la sélection et le montage des séquences ne sont pas plus esthétiques que communicatifs si l'on s'interroge justement sur les écarts entre la version française et la version italienne. Dans le *trailer* de *Niente da dichiarare?* le spectateur ne retrouve pas la totalité des scènes présentes dans la version française, mais il se trouve face à un texte écourté où la voix off relie les différentes parties en ajoutant des informations sur l'acteur/réalisateur et sur ses films. Les réductions portent principalement sur les scènes dialoguées denses d'éléments culturels qui pourraient entraver la réception de l'effet comique. Les scènes accueillant des allusions ironiques, la stéréotypie et les pointes entre les Belges et les Français sont supprimés pour permettre à l'histoire de mettre en avant une enquête policière et une intrigue amoureuse em-

brouillée par une série d'obstacles physiques et mentaux (préjugés et identité nationale) sur le fond de l'histoire récente (l'union douanière, les prémisses de l'Union européenne). Le texte de la bande-annonce originale est complètement remanié, hormis les séquences de la demande en mariage et de l'alliance des douaniers dans la première brigade franco-belge, afin de préserver certains effets comiques du film et de miser sur la notoriété et le succès en Italie des films de Dany Boon. La redondance du graphisme et de la voix off (*Dopo il successo di Già al Nord et del remake italiano Benvenuti al Sud*) ancre le texte dans une stratégie énonciative qui vise à rassurer le public en s'appuyant sur la « logique du dire ». Garants de la valeur du film, les insertions graphiques promotionnelles fournissent des informations supplémentaires sur la réalisation de la promesse contenue dans le titre (en italien renforcé par l'ajout du sous-titre), comme en témoignent *Supercondriaco (Dopo il successo di Giù al Nord, torna la coppia Dany Boon et Kad Merad)* et *Non sposate le mie figlie ! (Dopo il successo di Quasi amici... Un nuovo straordinario successo francese)*, ce dernier incluant dans la preuve à conviction un élément culturel collectif et des renvois intertextuels, clin d'œil à la culture partagée du public (*4 Matrimoni... 2 facce da funerale*).

Le cas de *Retour chez ma mère* nous semble également intéressant parce qu'il s'agit d'une adaptation avec réduction de l'unique séquence offerte pour un premier essai au public français. La bande-annonce originale est centrée sur une seule scène du film (mère et filles aux prises avec les technologies de la communication), alors que la bande annonce italienne est obligée de réduire la portée de cette scène d'intérieur hilarante pour donner plus d'informations sur le déroulement de l'histoire et les personnages, censés retenir l'attention du spectateur plus que les jeux de mots caractérisant l'échange dialogique dans l'original, plus proche de la culture transalpine.

4.3.3 Adaptations linguistiques

L'élimination de certaines scènes ou le changement de parcours narratif dans les différentes versions des bandes-annonces, nous permet également de nous interroger sur les modes d'adaptations qui intéressent le code verbal, cette forme de « fausse oralité » qui caractérise les dialogues des films, traduits et adaptés par des professionnels de l'audiovisuel. Plusieurs stratégies de transfert linguistique peuvent être repérées dans les textes des dialogues qui accompagnent le visuel et qui relèvent d'une médiation culturelle fonctionnelle à la langue-culture du contexte d'arrivée ainsi qu'à la stratégie promotionnelle mise en place. Au niveau linguistique, de nombreux problèmes se posent et demandent des réponses adéquates pour éviter des malentendus et pour mettre l'accent sur des segments significatifs du film au lieu de miser sur le rire culturellement marqué. Ainsi, avons-nous repéré certains points typiques de la réduction audiovisuelle, tels que les termes connotés, les jeux de mots, la variation sociolinguistique (dont le cas de l'adaptation de *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* est exemplaire), l'humour (Perego, 2005). Tout cela peut amener à des formes de réduction totale ou partielle, compte tenu des exigences pragmatiques et contextuelles. Ci-dessous, quelques exemples illustreront nos propos :

- Réduction totale, à savoir la suppression d'une scène entière portant sur des ressorts comiques basés sur la stéréotypie et sur des implicites culturels, qui n'impliquent pas nécessairement un effet comique sur le public italien. C'est ainsi que l'incipit de *Rien à déclarer* (clichés des Belges et des Français) est éliminé dans la version italienne ou que la suite très rapide des séquences présentant un éventail de stéréotypes ethniques est supprimée dans la version italienne de *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu ?*:

<i>Qu'est-ce qu'on fait au bon Dieu ?</i>	<i>Non sposate le mie figlie!</i>
<p>(Changement de scène) Marie: On évite tous les sujets qui fâchent: Israël, le Dalai Lama, la burka.</p> <p>(Changement de scène) David Benichou : Il y aura Jacques et Arafat ?</p> <p>(Changement de scène) Marie : Surtout, pas un mot sur l'équipe de France de foot.</p> <p>(Changement de scène) Isabelle Verneuil: Et si quelqu'un met son accent sur les juifs, tu laisses couler.</p> <p>(Changement de scène) Ségolène Verneuil : Si quelqu'un fait l'amalgame entre immigration et délinquance, bah, toi, tu dis rien.</p> <p>(Changement de scène) Chao : Et si on a quelqu'un qui parle mal sur les chinois, je fais quoi? Odile Verneuil : Bah, tu souris. Chao : Mais je fais le Chinois, quoi, en fait.</p>	<p>-----</p>

De la même manière, l'échange moqueur qui joue sur la variation diatopique pour déconstruire les préjugés dans *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* ou comme prétexte de revendications nationales (l'accent belge) disparaît dans la version italienne qui préfère condenser dans l'énonciation de la voix off la critique des stéréotypes et des clichés et la thématiser dans la scène de la demande en mariage de la sœur du douanier belge de la part du douanier français (*Uno dei nostri*) :

<i>Rien à déclarer ?</i>	<i>Niente da dichiarare ?</i>
<p>(Changement de scène) Mathias : Est-ce qu'on pourrait essayer de se parler gentiment juste une fois ? Ruben : Refais l'accent belge. Je t'explose ta gueule. T'as compris ? Mathias : Je jure que j'avais pas l'accent belge. Ruben : Ah non ? Mathias : Là, j'ai fait l'accent belge une fois, oui, enfin, je sais. (rire) (Changement de scène) Louise : T'as parlé à mon père ? Mathias : Ah non. Louise : A mon frère alors ? Mathias : Bah non</p>	<p>(Cambio scena) Voce off: La stupidità delle barriere mentali. (Cambio scena) Ruben (in chiesa): <u>Fa che mia sorella trovi finalmente un marito.</u> (Cambio scena) Louise: Hai parlato con mio padre? Mathias: Ah no! Louise: Con mio fratello, allora? Mathias: Beh no! (Cambio scena) Ruben (in chiesa): <u>Uno dei nostri.</u></p>

La variation diastratique génère des réductions et implique le déplacement d'expressions familières ou argotiques de la version originale dans d'autres énoncés pour maintenir l'effet comique bas et grossier de l'original :

<i>Rien à déclarer</i>	<i>Niente da dichiarare ?</i>
<p>(Changement de scène) Mathias Ducatel : Tu dois dire à ton frère de se détendre. (Changement de scène) Ruben : Dégage ! (Changement de scène) Louise Vandervoode : Essaie d'être gentil avec lui. (Changement de scène) Mathias : Est-ce qu'on pourrait essayer de se parler gentiment juste une fois ? Ruben : Refais l'accent belge. Je t'explose ta gueule. T'as compris ? Mathias : Je jure que j'avais pas l'accent belge.</p>	<p>Mathias Ducatel: Di a tuo fratello di calmarsi perché è la causa di questo ingorgo mostruoso. Louise Vandervoode: Cerca di essere gentile con lui. (Cambio scena) Ruben: Porco francese di merda. (Cambio scena) Voce off: La stupidità delle barriere mentali.</p>

Parfois les éliminations portent sur un segment de texte contenant un signe culturellement connoté et difficile à substituer :

<i>Rien à déclarer ?</i>	<i>Niente da dichiarare?</i>
(Changement de scène) Ruben: J'ai tous les droits quand il s'agit d'empêcher l'invasion des camemberts dans mon pays !	----

La réduction partielle est une forme d'adaptation qui se réalise par la condensation de certains énoncés plus que par l'omission d'éléments secondaires. La condensation ne comporte pas de réduction informative, mais seulement linguistique, comme dans l'exemple suivant :

<i>Rien à déclarer</i>	<i>Niente da dichiarare ?</i>
(Changement de scène) Le divisionnaire Mercier : Il nous faut un volontaire pour expérimenter une brigade mobile mixte . (Changement de scène) Ruben : Homme -femme ? Chef Willems : Franco-belge . Mathias : J'suis volontaire. Ruben : Pas ça, s'il vous plaît. Non, non.	(Cambio scena) Capo Willems : Ci occorre un volontario per sperimentare la pattuglia mobile mista franco-belga . Mathias: Io mi offro volontario. Ruben: Tutto ma questo proprio no.

Dans d'autres cas, la condensation porte sur l'effet comique et, par conséquent, l'allusion ironique s'estompe :

<i>Rien à déclarer</i>	<i>Niente da dichiarare ?</i>
(Changement de scène) Le chef Willems : A quelques semaines du passage à l'Europe, votre zèle antifrançais est très mal perçu. Ruben : Antifrançais ? Moi ? [Sifflotant la Marseillaise] Non, moi, je suis le plus francophile des belges.	(Cambio scena) Capo Willems: Alla vigilia del passaggio all'Europa, il suo zelo antifrancese è molto mal vissuto. Ruben: Antifrancese? Io? [Ruben fischietta l'inno francese] (Cambio scena) Voce off: Torna Dany Boon per oltrepassare i nuovi confini.

Parfois la réduction entraîne des substitutions dont le but est de permettre une meilleure acclimatation du texte dans la culture d'arrivée. C'est le cas des jeux de mots qui appartiennent à la culture linguistique d'un pays et souvent sont intraduisibles. La scène emblématique dans la bande annonce *Retour chez ma mère* de la fille qui parle le jargon des nouveaux outils de communication sur Internet à sa mère âgée creuse l'écart générationnel et la difficulté à communiquer, à commencer par sa propre famille. La version italienne adapte le comique créé par le quiproquo basé sur l'homophonie en s'efforçant d'établir une équivalence phonique, possible pour la répétition .COM – *comme* – *Come*, mais moins immédiate pour *GMAIL* – *J'ai mal* remplacé par la paranomase (*GMAIL* – *G Cosa? Mele*) :

Retour chez ma mère	Torno da mia madre
<p>Stéphanie : Non, j'ai pas dit ça. Arobase. Un petit comme ça, là. « Gmail » Jacqueline : T'as quoi ? Stéphanie : Non, moi, j'ai rien. « Gmail » G-M-A-I-L « Point com » Jacqueline : Point comme point ? Stéphanie : Voilà. Stéphanie : Non, maman. T'as écrit « point ». Juste un point comme ça. « Com » Jacqueline : Comme ? Stéphanie : Com. Maman tu fais exprès ? Jacqueline : Pas du tout ! Tu dis « comme », comme quoi ? Stéphanie : Comme rien. « Com » C-O-M Jacqueline : Je ne comprends rien. (Titre) Jacqueline : Pour moi Internet, c'est un truc de fou.</p>	<p>(Cambio scena) Stéphanie: Allora ascolta, ti chiedono soltanto l'indirizzo email. (Silenzio) Non ce l'hai immagino? Ok, adesso lo creiamo. (Cambio scena) Stéphanie: Poi fai una "a" con un cerchietto. Sì, bene. "Gmail" Jacqueline: "G" cosa? Mele? Stéphanie: Ma no, "Gmail" G-M-A-I-L "Punto com" Jacqueline: Punto come punto? Stéphanie: Come punto brava. Mamma non devi scrivere "punto". Devi solo farlo così. Jacqueline: Contenta? Stéphanie : Com Jacqueline: Come? Stéphanie : Com. Ma lo fai apposta? Jacqueline: Tu hai detto "come". Come cosa? Stéphanie: Come niente. Scrivilo e basta. Jacqueline: Io con questo internet ho chiuso.</p>

Enfin, le remplacement d'éléments chargé d'implicites culturels (*catholique/attore*) nous semble porter sur le spectateur un regard complice et lui suggérer des pistes ultérieures d'interprétation du rire :

<i>Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu ?</i>	<i>Non sposate le mie figlie!</i>
(Changement de scène) Prêtre : Je pensais à votre petite dernière, elle se mariera peut-être avec un catholique. (Changement de scène) Laure Verneuil: Je veux me marier. Marie : Il est catholique ? Laure : Oui.	(Cambio scena) Prete: Stavo pensando alla figlia più piccola, lei sposerà sicuramente un cattolico. (Cambio scena) Laure Verneuil: Mi voglio sposare. Lui é, come dire, é.. Claude: Sì Laure: Fa l'attore.

5. En guise de conclusion

Dans ce parcours, certes limité par rapport à la matière multisémiotique et fluide qui compose les bandes-annonces, nous avons essayé de suivre le fil de la brevisitas comme moyen créatif et commercial pour fasciner des publics de langue-culture différente et les amener à compléter les indices par la vision du film au cinéma. Nous n'avons pas insisté sur les différentes formes de la traduction audiovisuelle (doublage, sous-titrages), mais nous avons privilégié un décryptage interlinguistique et interculturel de ces textes brefs en nous cantonnant à relever ces quelques phénomènes qui permettent à la structure narrative du trailer de fonctionner dans des contextes différents. La dimension plurielle qui intéresse le transfert culturel dans ce type de communication nécessite de prendre en compte les éléments visuels et textuels retenus parce que seulement « integrando i diversi canali che trasmettono simultaneamente le informazioni, lo spettatore riesce a ricostruire i contenuti e a giungere a un'interpretazione verosimile della trama filmica » (Perego, 2005 : 49). D'après l'analyse de notre micro-corpus, il en ressort que :

- du point de vue énonciatif dans les bandes-annonces françaises le film se raconte en condensé dans un montage de séquences : il est son propre énonciateur et son propre objet. Le destinataire est englobé dans la narration, il n'est pas un interlocuteur ;
- la bande-annonce française est dominée par la logique du montrer (citations d'extrait, scènes d'ambiance), mais la fonction d'interpellation n'est pas éliminée (ex. « *Vous imaginez retourner vivre chez vos parents?* ») ;
- la voix off, plus présente dans les bandes-annonces italiennes a une fonction métadiscursive structurant des arguments de notoriété (*dopo i successi di ..., torna Dani Boon;*) et une axiologie valorisante (*tutto è possibile e anche più divertente*). Celle-ci peut être remplacée par l'insertion d'autres éléments textuels dont la fonction incitative se construit à travers l'emphase (*un nuovo straordinario successo francese, 12 milioni di persone che lo hanno già amato*) et la citation («un fuoco d'artificio di battute e gag» - Corriere della sera) ;
- les bandes-annonces italiennes semblent être plus affectées par la culture internationale (américaine) vu ses oscillations entre la logique du dire et la logique du montrer spécifique au cinéma français.

Dans la communication multilingue de la bande annonce, explorée du côté de la France et de l'Italie, l'adaptation culturelle déploie des stratégies de sélection et de réduction linguistique et textuelle, pour faire œuvre de captation de publics proches, et pourtant différents dans leurs habitudes d'appréhension du cinéma. Le contexte propre à chaque pays influence les formes à donner au texte audiovisuel et la manière dont celui-ci retravaille son tissu linguistique pour obtenir une équivalence fonctionnelle à l'effet de séduction, préalablement construit, dans une dimension qui est esthétique avant toute chose.

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2011 *Rien à déclarer ?*

http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19150863&cfilm=173528.html

Nienta da dichiarare? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adMcbjYjmow>

2014 *Supercondriaque*

http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19541120&cfilm=212120.html

Supercondriaco: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ucisc_bTA54

2014 *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu ?*

http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19542577&cfilm=222259.html

Non sposate le mie figlie! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5NB5yBRuMo>

2016 *Retour chez ma mère*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_OvqLFWrFA

Torno da mia madre: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDLZclg8nWE>

Voice Is Caption: Television Interpreting and Quality Issues

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Language is not the only way to execute an interaction: in oral communication much information is conveyed through extra-linguistic elements (Straniero Sergio 2007: 303), proxemics, gestures, voice and pauses (Cecot 2001). Stress and voice accentuation are important prosodic elements used by the interpreter as a caption, to convey information (Ahrens 2002: 42) and render the speaker's "communicative intentions" (Kopczynski 1994: 89) to elicit a response from the audience. In the oral text voice intonation is also important in terms of cohesion, which is intended as "the result of the relationship between *wordings*, that is to say how the messages are expressed, and *soundings*, that is to say how they are uttered" (Straniero Sergio 2007: 300). In a "sequential environment" or in a "triadic exchange" the interpreter's voice and intonation resources capture (*Captionem*) the listener's attention and contribute to determine the progression of dialogic interaction (Straniero Sergio 2007: 301), facilitating the disambiguation process (Schlesinger 1994: 231). Therefore interpreters are evaluated not only for interpreting a speech correctly but convincingly well (Straniero Sergio 2007: 172). Interpreting quality is not an absolute value, but rather "contextually determined" (Kopczynski 1994: 87). For the purpose of this study, quality can be defined as a pragmatic property where the interpreter "uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the listener" (Schlesinger 1994: 87) and on the "perceptions of the audience as users of the interpreters' product" (Kurz 2001: 128). The study has been conducted on a small corpus of sub-corpus of 4 interviews for a total of 192 minutes in the language combination English-Italian, interpreted in simultaneous voice-over mode by a professional conference in-

terpreter working for the Italian television. Both source and target texts have been transcribed (Straniero Sergio 2007) and analyzed (Heritage 1985) in order to detect the most significant prosodic features for quality assessment.

1. The voice of the interpreter and quality issues

The voice of the interpreter is a caption for the listener. The Latin etymology of caption: *captionem* means “catching, holding, taking”. I will relate to this meaning and analyse the importance of the interpreter’s voice and intonation in capturing the listener’s attention and its relationship with quality with a target-oriented perspective in television interpreting (Kurz 2001, Pochhacker 1995).

The interpreter uses his/her voice to capture the listener’s attention and guide him/her through a narrative. This is of particular evidence in television interpreting where the “communication act” goes beyond the linguistic level, including the extra-linguistic features and the purpose of the event. With this respect non-verbal elements, the speaker’s facial expressions and gestures and the audience reaction to what he is saying is an integral part of the overall communication system.

Quality is not an absolute value, but rather “contextually determined” (Kopczynski 1994: 87). Quality can be defined as a pragmatic property where the interpreter “uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the listener” (*ibid.* 1994: 87) and on the “perceptions of the audience as users of the interpreters’ product” (Kurz 2001: 128). Language is not the only way to execute an interaction: in oral communication much information is conveyed through extra-linguistic elements (Straniero Sergio 2007: 303), proxemics and gestures.

Stress and voice accentuation are important prosodic elements used by the interpreter to convey information (Ahrens 2002: 42) and render the speaker’s “communicative intentions” (Kopczynski 1994: 89) to elicit a response from the audience. Shifts in volume and voice

intonation “appear to be closely coordinated with verbal constructions used in response-elicitation sequences” (Heritage/Atkinson 1984: 399). It is the intonation, the relationship between *wordings* and *soundings*, that sometimes makes it possible to infer the meaning of a message; the interpreter uses voice modulation, rhetorical pauses and repetition to make the message more fluent and convincing (Straniero Sergio 2007: 372) and in order to convey coherence. The interpreter uses his voice to guide and capture the attention of the audience in the studio and at home. More specifically, I have analysed the interpreter capability to trigger the applause: the applause will be considered as an indicator of quality. We will refer not to the “cued applause” but to a genuine applause, or the applause which is spontaneously originating from the audience as a consequence of an adequate and effective interpreting. Quality in interpreting can be measured on the basis of the success of the performance. In a media context the most apparent sign of successful performance is the feedback from the audience, and in our case is the applause or the laugh.

2. *Broadcast talk*

According to Scannell (1991:1) broadcast talk can be defined as a “communicative interaction between those participating in discussion, interview, [...] or whatever and it is designed to be heard by absent audiences”. As Scannell maintains, “people do not expect to be lectured, but they expect to be spoken to in a familiar, friendly and informal way, as if they were equals on the same footing as the speaker” (1991: 3). Just like broadcasters “attempt to produce programs that fit into the domestic sphere [...] the interpreter’s translated text should be in line with users’ expectations. In television interpreting the entertainment function prevails over the information function (Katan/ Straniero Sergio 2001). Therefore interpreters are “evaluated not for interpreting a speech correctly but convincingly well” (Straniero Sergio 2003: 172). Coates defines broadcast talk as “talk-as-play” (Coates 1995: 85 in Straniero Sergio 2007: 155):

Talk-as-play is inevitably structured differently from talk-as-serious business. To begin with, the main goal of the talk-as-play is the construction and maintenance of good social relations, not the exchange of information (though this will also be one of the functions of friendly talk, as there is an informational component to all interaction), the second goal of the talk-as-play is that participants should enjoy themselves. The fun of talk arises as much from *how* things are said as from *what* is said.

3. Data

I have analysed the interpreter's output and his capability to "caption" irony/capture the audience attention and facilitate communication through rhetorical skills (Vuorikoski 2002) and generate an affiliative audience response (Heritage/Atkinson 1984) such as applause and laughter, which is highly desirable in a media context, as stated by Scannell:

Voice intonation, intended as the primary function that anchors an utterance to a context and guides the hearer (audience) towards what is relevant at that stage. Irony is captured and verbally captioned/interpreted by the interpreter through his voice and intonation. For this reason, a clever use of the interpreters' voice may contribute to the transmission of the speakers' message to the audience that is to say the highly desirable applause or laughter (Scannell 1991: 6).

The data analysed in this study consists of a transcript of a televised interview and this particular case study is a part of a corpus of 5 interviews involving the same interpreter. Data are taken from a larger corpus of televised interviews, pertaining to the *infotainment* genre, interpreted in simultaneous voice over³⁰ by an Italian conference interpreter and broadcast by the Italian

30. The original voice/sound is either reduced entirely or turned down to a low level of audibility, after a few seconds. In voice-over, the target voice is usually superimposed on top of the source voice.

television. Both the source and target texts are transcribed and analysed using Transana.

4. Examples

In the following segment Dan Brown is interviewed by an Italian anchorman and he is talking about his new book. In this extract he is explaining some relaxation techniques that he uses during his long writing sessions. He is explaining that he likes hanging upside down using special boots with hooks, like Richard Gere in *American Gigolo*. And his conclusion is as follows: “and now the audience thinks I am crazy”. This conclusion comes after a long sequence of explanations of how he hangs on the ceiling and after a very short pause, it is evident from his *voice intonation* that he wants to elicit a response from the audience (“and now the audience thinks I am crazy”). The interpreter’s voice is effective enough to get what he was expecting. In so doing, the applause is triggered by the interpreter’s utterance and it’s not a cued applause. In this case the applause is intended as “a collective display of affiliation that tends to be displayed in response to a limited range of actions by a public speaker” (Heritage/Atkinson 1984: 398). As Atkinson maintains, “it is possible to note some grossly observable regularities that suggest that prosodic [...] activities may be recurrently implicated in the way audiences are informed that and when an affiliative response will become relevant” (Heritage/Atkinson 1984: 398). Following Atkinson’s assumptions, shifts in volume and voice intonation are closely related to the audience response elicitation (pag. 399). The increases in volume of both the guest and the interpreter are indicated by capital letters. The *emphatic beat* is indicated by underlining and when the speech is quicker the indication is (>...<).

The interpreter raises his voice with a more emphatic beat than before and elicits the audience response:

Example 1

G³¹. [...] AND NOW YOUR AUDIENCE THINKS I AM CRAZY
I. [...] >LO SO CHE ADESSO IL PUBBLICO PENSA CHE IO SONO MATTO<
(general laugh) ((applause))

(*Chetempochefa*, Rai 3, 6.12.2009)

Comment

We can observe that irony is present in both the speaker and interpreter. In the Target Text (TT) the interpreter uses emphasis through voice intonation to express irony and the audience reacts with applause.

Television interpreters are both linguistic experts and performers; they act as performers, speaking to an “overhearing audience” (Katan/Straniero Sergio 2001: 214) and “translation is not the exclusive right of the interpreter, but is a (meta) discursive activity, an interaction space open to all participants” (Straniero Sergio 1999: 315-316). With this respect, the interpreter becomes a dynamic and visible participant (Pignataro/Velardi 2013) and his voice is crucial “for maintaining, restoring and monitoring mutual understanding among participants” (Straniero Sergio 1999: 315). Interpreters are often “instructed to make the guest’s words more interesting [...] to clean up or polish their utterances [...] or complete what the guest cannot say or articulate” (Straniero Sergio 1999: 316). All this in order to please to their audience and to the benefit of the playful macro-function, as exemplified in the following extract:

31. Transcription conventions after Sergio Straniero (2007):

I: interpreter

G: guest

P: presenter

(.): short pause (<3”)

(...): long pause (<3”)

Word: emphasized word/segment.

Example 2

G. I could just say (...) it is really weird to have something I say immediately becoming Italian ((laugh)) this is like the tourist's dream (...) you walk to the hotel (...) you speak in English ((laugh and audience applause)) I have a problem with hot water in bathrooms ((laugh: both presenter and guest laugh at the idea of translation being delivered immediately. Franzen is pointing his fingers upwards, towards the interpreters' booth.))

I. e (.) devo dire un'altra cosa (.) è assolutamente ehm ((laughs)) è incredibile che io parli in inglese e tutto diventa immediatamente italiano (.) è un pò il sogno del turista (.) no? Te ne vai in albergo (.) parli inglese (.) e dall'altoparlante salta fuori la traduzione in italiano (...) fantastico (.) ehm c'ho un problema (.) non mi va l'acqua calda in camera (.) cosa faccio?

[I. *I must say something else (.) it's absolutely ehm ((laughs)) it's incredible that I speak English and everything turns immediately into Italian (.) it's a bit of a tourist dream (.) isn't it? You go to the hotel (.) you speak English (.) and from the loudspeaker a translation into Italian comes out (...) it's fantastic (.) ehm I have a problem (.) I do not have hot water in my room (.) what can I do?*] ((applause))

2 P. È la voce della coscienza (...) tradotta in tutte le lingue.

[*it is the voice of the conscience (...) translated into different languages*]

3 G. I had no idea that my conscience spoke Italian ((laugh))

I. Beh (.) non avevo idea che la mia coscienza fosse così fluente in italiano

[*well (.) I had no idea that my conscience was so fluent in Italian*]

G. Thank you ((the guest laughs and lifts up his hands to thank the interpreter))

(*Che tempo che fa*, Raitre, 20.03.2011)

Comment

Johnatan Franzen is interviewed during a program on Italian television. They are talking about his new book *Freedom*, whose title in Italian is *Libertà*. The question asked by the interviewer is about the issue of freedom and the work of writing a novel. Suddenly, the guest interrupts his talk and makes a comment with the evident intent of entertaining the listeners, as exemplified in the extract. A creative language use occurs in line 1 and is introduced with the phrase *the voice of the conscience* which is metaphorically associated to the interpreter, still a non-person in this segment (Pignataro 2012). It is a metaphoric word play that comes up abruptly,

while the guest is talking about his novel and more precisely about the idea of freedom. It is totally unexpected, an hilarious effect is triggered and the audience reacts with an affiliative feedback, consisting of laughter and applause. The metaphoric word play continues when the presenter uses the metaphor of *the voice of the conscience*, referring to the interpreter, still a non-person. The playful function is also exemplified in the following extract, where the interpreter becomes the subject of the conversation and a pretext to to mediatize: (“According to me he is not saying what you are saying”) and the interpreter is no longer a voice but becomes a persona (“No, I am joking Paolo³²”)

Example 3

G. Thank you ((the guest laughs and lifts up his hands to thank the interpreter))

P. Secondo me lui non sta dicendo quello che dice lei (...) ((addresses first to the guest and then to the audience)) io ho questa teoria ((laugh))

G. That's what I am afraid of

P. No scherzo Paolo ((applause))

(English Gloss)

G. Thank you ((the guest laughs and lifts up his hands to thank the interpreter))

P. According to me he is not saying what you are saying (...) ((addresses first to the guest and then to the audience)) I have got this theory ((laugh))

G. That's what I am afraid of

P. No I am joking Paolo ((applause))

(*Che tempo che fa*, Raitre, 20.03.2011)

Comment

The presenter is taking translation as a pretext to amuse the audience, he says that he is afraid that the interpreter is not saying what they are saying. Then he looks into the camera and he addresses his statement to the interpreter who is personified and becomes the target of the hosts' teasing (according to me he is not saying what you are saying)

32. Paolo is the name of the interpreter.

Only at a second teasing (No, I am joking Paolo) does the interpreter reply when he answers directly to the presenter's turn ("*No no (.) I am staying right here*").

Example 4

In the following extract the interpreter is referred to as a person and becomes a *ratified participant*.

- 8 G. I still think a novel is a vehicle for personal freedom in that sense (...)
9 He is really good that guy (.) yes I think he is ((laughs and point to the interpreter))
10 I. Ecco (.) io ho sempre pensato che il romanzo fosse un grande veicolo per la libertà personale in questo senso (...) ehm E' bravo però eh questo qui ((he laughs and lifts the finger up pointing it to the sky to indicate the interpreter))
[*Well (.) and I have always thought that the novel was an important vehicle for personal liberty in this sense (...) ehm He is good this guy*]
11 C. ((laughs)) Allora ehm
[*Well ehm*]
12 G. or maybe I'm really good ((laughs)) (...) I wanted him to say that
13 I. Allora forse sono bravo io a dire le cose e lui a tradurle ((the guest laughs amusingly and the audience applauds)) beh volevo che lo dicesse (.) insomma
[*Well maybe I am good at saying things and he is good at translating*]
14 C. ((addresses to the interpreter and looks into the camera)) Paolo non prenderti libertà.
[*Paolo do not take liberties*]
15 I. No no: io sto qua
[No no: I am staying right here]

(*Che tempo che fa*, Rai Tre, 20.03.11)

Comment

This phatic exchange between the presenter and the interpreter becomes a sort of "sideplay" and the interpreter is "ratified as a primary participant, or better a co-participant with the host" (Straniero Sergio 2007:146). Interpreters are normally "seen as filling the social role of a non-person" (Wadensjö 2008: 188) but in this case the interpreter is referred to as a person and not as the interpreter ("Paolo do not take liber-

ties”). The interpreter abandons any attempt to maintaining a low profile and takes on a different participation status in the management of the interaction” (Straniero Sergio 1999). Through his voice, the interpreter becomes a dynamic and visible participant, whose translation strategies and interactional resources are crucial for a mutual understanding among participants (Straniero Sergio 1999).

5. Concluding Remarks

Quality in television interpreting is intended as the capability of eliciting an affiliative response from the audience, the use of voice proves to be effective in captioning irony. If quality in interpreting can be measured on the basis of the success of the performance, and if we assume that in a media context the most apparent signal of success is the audience affiliative response, we can easily assume that voice is a powerful tool that tv interpreters can use. Therefore, television interpreters need to properly manage irony, rhythm, emphasis and voice intonation (Weber 1989: 164). So far, our analysis proves that “the interpreter is and needs to be well versed in the rhetorical language and style” (Pöchhacker 2001: 214) and it is thanks to his rhetorical skills that quality interpreting can be attained. An issue still to be considered which would deserve further investigation is whether rhetorical skills are inborn or can be taught. It would also be interesting to have a wider corpus including performances from different interpreters working in a TV setting and make a comparative analysis of their performances. These findings could prove useful in terms of teaching methodologies; new tools could be identified and used in the classroom in order to improve the communicative performance and the interactional capacity of students.

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Indagare le didascalie per capire i giornali (e viceversa)

Sabina Berra – Giornalista

1. Introduzione

“Ho sempre pensato che la fotografia sia come una barzelletta: se la devi spiegare non è venuta bene”. Ansel Adams³³ (1993), uno tra i più grandi fotografi di paesaggi americani, lancia una provocazione. Un seme gettato in un terreno fertile perché il dibattito intorno alla necessità della spiegazione di una fotografia, affiancandola con un testo, la didascalia, è (ed è stato) un tema molto discusso da storici della fotografia, critici e fotografi. Ci sono, si può dire, a grandi linee, due ‘scuole di pensiero’, con infinite e complesse differenze al proprio interno. La prima sostiene che una fotografia non dovrebbe essere mai spiegata, e lo asserisce difendendo a spada tratta l’indipendenza del linguaggio fotografico sostenendo che l’immagine deve farsi comprendere da sé, se è ben riuscita. O, meglio, se è una ‘buona foto’, come si dice nel gergo fotografico: l’insieme di inquadratura, composizione, luce, colore, bianco e nero, contrasto e contesto e distanza devono essere ‘strutture’ in significativo dialogo tra loro. Tra i diversi sostenitori di questo pensiero, c’è una scuola critica che fa capo a Jean-Claude Lemagny (2013), storico e curatore francese che sostiene “che le fotografie nel loro mutismo hanno la loro ragion d’essere, e che ogni tentativo di verbalizzarle le distrugge” (Smargiassi 2016). La pensava così anche un grande editore francese di libri, Robert Delpire, consacratosi nella storia delle immagini per avere pubblicato, con un fiuto eccezionale, *Les Américains* di Robert Frank, il fotografo svizzero che ha raccontato il popolo dell’America degli anni ‘50 (oltre ai

33. Ansel Easton Adams è stato un fotografo statunitense. È noto per le sue fotografie in bianco e nero di paesaggi dei parchi nazionali americani e come autore di numerosi libri di fotografia, tra cui la trilogia di manuali di tecnica, *The Camera*, *The Negative* e *The Print*.

reportage a Tokio di Cartier-Bresson, *Les Gitans* di Josef Koudelka, e *Tokio* di William Klein). Invece l'altra corrente sembra andare d'accordo con Mark Twain che scrisse: "Se le fotografie parlassero così chiaramente, nessuno avrebbe inventato le didascalie". Quindi sostiene che la foto vada illustrata con le parole e che questa aggiunta di testo, la famigerata didascalia, in realtà non comporti alcun danno all'immagine fotografica. E tantomeno che l'aggiunta della *caption* significhi che l'immagine non valga e venga sminuita nella sua qualità dal punto di vista del linguaggio fotografico. Sostiene anzi che spesso ne arricchisca il contenuto perché ne aiuta la comprensione. Anche il filosofo e critico Roland Barthes prende posizione a riguardo e dichiara che la fotografia in sé sarebbe un messaggio senza codice la cui completezza viene assicurata soltanto dalla presenza del testo (*La camera chiara*, Barthes 1980).

2. La pubblicazione di una foto e la didascalia necessaria

Un aspetto fondamentale nel dibattito sempre vivo sul ruolo della didascalia da considerare è per quali ragioni viene 'utilizzata' la foto. Per esempio, se viene pubblicata su una testata giornalistica il ruolo della *caption* assume una differente importanza rispetto a un altro tipo di pubblicazione. Infatti, in questo caso diventa, nella maggior parte dei casi, necessaria e imprescindibile perché deve rispondere alla ragione fondativa di un giornale: informare e quindi comunicare con maggiore chiarezza i propri contenuti ai propri lettori. Se si tratta di una pubblicazione d'arte o di design, o dove la grafica è fortemente subordinata a ragioni estetiche, può accadere che la didascalia sia non ritenuta necessaria, anzi che possa essere un ingombro non necessario nella impaginazione (forse un ostacolo al progetto grafico).

Il ruolo della didascalia è centrale anche se si tratta di pubblicare uno scatto di un fotogiornalista, che ha in sé già una natura informativa, perché il contesto, il giornale o sito dove verrà vista, ne modifica la funzione, o meglio la esalta: la foto qui diventa no-

tizia di un fatto essa stessa, ma questa volta veicolata a un preciso pubblico di lettori e quindi deve essere necessariamente corredata da parole esplicative perché chi ne fruisce ne comprenda in modo corretto il contenuto. Si potrebbe quindi affermare, contraddicendo quanto scritto sopra, che più è una 'buona foto' più è necessaria la didascalia che la spieghi a chi sfoglia (o clicca) quelle pagine. Perché più è 'buona', più ha valore di notizia e quindi di documentazione. Anche Roland Barthes specifica riguardo alla fotografia destinata alla stampa: "Ad una struttura fotografica è allegata una struttura linguistica". Per Barthes la didascalia, oltre a produrre un messaggio, funge da mezzo di "propagazione fisica del codice", che l'emittente, il giornale, usa quando attiva la comunicazione per inviare il messaggio al ricevente, in questo caso il pubblico dei lettori.

3. *Didascalia e linea editoriale*

Per questa ragione lo scrittore inglese John R. Whiting in *Photography Is a Language*, dichiara: "La didascalia è il materiale scritto specifico per una determinata immagine [...], è ciò che ricordi quando parli a qualcuno di un'immagine vista su una rivista" (Whiting 1946: 97). Tanto che si può affermare che comprendendo come è scritta una didascalia si può capire la linea editoriale di una testata: è un valido indizio che racconta cosa vuole essere un giornale per i propri lettori e quale servizio intende offrirgli sul fronte dell'informazione. Perché l'informazione, secondo me, è sempre un servizio, perché la stampa è ancora oggi un valido mediatore (quando è di qualità) tra il mondo e chi lo vuole conoscere. Infatti, i contenuti e la struttura delle didascalie cambiano a seconda della testata: si passa da una frase come descrizione essenziale di quello che è presente nella fotografia fino alla creazione di un microtesto che moltiplica le informazioni sull'immagine, e approfondisce andando oltre i contenuti suggeriti dall'immagine. I modelli più adottati si possono riassumere

in due esempi: la “didascalia narrativa” e la “didascalia aggiuntiva” (Newhall 1952). La prima è maggiormente presente sui quotidiani o i newsmagazine, oppure sui mensili generalisti. “Dirige l’attenzione alla fotografia, di solito inizia con una frase d’effetto in grassetto, poi narra cosa avviene nella fotografia e si conclude con un commento” (Newhall 1952: 68). Nel giornalismo la didascalia aggiuntiva è uno strumento che permette di dare maggiori informazioni al lettore perché il testo viene arricchito anche da contenuti ulteriori relativi alla fotografia, che vanno oltre la descrizione. Per esempio, una foto di un impianto fotovoltaico nel Sahara marocchino pubblicata in un mensile di divulgazione scientifica e di attualità, può contenere nella didascalia, oltre alla descrizione di ciò che appare nell’immagine, anche dati di una recente ricerca sull’energia prodotta in Africa, oppure sull’uso e il successo del fotovoltaico nel mondo. Insomma, si allarga il campo delle informazioni a tutto vantaggio del lettore, che può avere a disposizione un articolo più dettagliato.

Le didascalie talvolta possono assumere la funzione di quelli che vengono chiamati box (riquadri di testo di argomenti in stretta relazione al testo principale), che accompagnano spesso un servizio in un newsmagazine o in un mensile. Un esempio di didascalia come microtesto di grande approfondimento e di utile ampliamento del contenuto dell’articolo era possibile trovarlo nel mensile *Geo* (oggi Mondadori Scienza). Questa testata aveva il suo punto di forza nelle fotografie e nei servizi di ampio respiro con un taglio più di approfondimento che di cronaca, scritti con uno stile più da saggio che da articolo di newsmagazine. E quindi le fotografie e le didascalie erano scelte in relazione a questa struttura di esposizione dei contenuti. Per esempio, un servizio ampio di circa una decina di pagine su un ritrovamento archeologico era stato corredato da didascalie anche di 500 battute, in parte elaborate con contenuti offerti dalle *caption* del fotografo e in parte integrate dal redattore giornalista, che “ha passato” il

testo, come si dice in gergo, cioè che ha il compito “fare lavoro di redazione” ovvero preparare l’articolo scritto dal collaboratore esterno, che arriva in redazione e renderlo pubblicabile, cioè lo “mette in pagina”, lo titola, fa le didascalie appunto e lo rende pronto per il “visto si stampi”, ultimo passaggio prima della stampa. Nei newsmagazine di solito è più diffusa la descrizione della fotografia con una frase che descrive il contenuto (didascalia descrittiva).

4. *Dalla parte del fotografo*

Per il fotografo la didascalia scritta di suo pugno ha lo scopo di precisare il significato dell’immagine e delle ragioni per cui ha scelto di portare avanti quel progetto di servizio fotografico. Per alcuni fotografi e per alcuni servizi è sufficiente indicare il proprio nome, il luogo dove è stata scattata e la data. Ma molto spesso arrivano in redazione anche *caption* molto ricche, cui sono aggiunte descrizioni di quanto presente nell’immagine. Un esempio paradigmatico è quello di Henri Cartier-Bresson, per il quale la didascalia esprime il proprio punto di vista ed è il mezzo con cui esporre i dati tecnici, estetici e morali di ogni immagine. Tanto che lui stesso dietro ogni fotografia metteva una scritta con il timbro di gomma in cui concedeva il diritto di riproduzione solo nel caso in cui venisse rispettata la didascalia. Un altro fotografo storico, Eugene Smith, nel 1939 viene contattato dalla rivista *Life*, con cui inizia una collaborazione come fotografo di guerra in Oriente. Lasciò il magazine perché secondo lui veniva travisato il senso delle sue immagini e autorizzò la riproduzione della sua leggendaria inchiesta a Pittsburgh, commissionatagli dalla agenzia Magnum, solo a condizione che venissero mantenute le didascalie scritte di suo pugno. Era il controverso fotoreportage sulla città americana dell’acciaio che rifiutò di consegnare a *Life*. Pittsburgh era in pieno boom economico grazie alla crescita dell’industria siderurgica e in particolare delle sue acciaierie, che attiravano ope-

rai da tutto il mondo. Eugene Smith rimase affascinato dai volti dei lavoratori, dalle strade, dalle fabbriche, dagli infiniti particolari del tessuto sociale. Fu uno dei progetti più importanti della sua vita: in circa tre anni realizzò 20.000 negativi, 2.000 masterprint e per tutta la vita cercò, senza riuscirci mai completamente, di produrre il saggio definitivo.

Una riflessione attuale sul tema fuori dal coro è quella di Giovanni Gastel, fotografo di moda e artista internazionale, nonché presidente Afip (Associazione Fotografi Professionisti Italiani) con cui si impegna diffondere la fotografia e la cultura fotografica con una serie di iniziative come le “*Lessons*” in Triennale a Milano:

La didascalia? Nelle mie foto non mi è mai servita. È utile al redattore delle riviste che deve spiegare che oggetti di moda sono presenti nel mio servizio. Ma mi interessa comunque il dibattito su testo e immagine, è centrale per la fotografia. Soprattutto oggi che l'immagine è così diffusa ed usata come mezzo di comunicazione di informazioni attraverso gli smart phone. Io sostengo che oggi l'immagine ha in larga parte sostituito la parola. La comunicazione tra le persone che avviene con i social e what's app è basata sulla fotografia e non più sulla parola scritta. È un fenomeno interessante di cui non si può non tener conto, un miliardo e mezzo di fotografie postate al giorno segnano di fatto la nascita di una 'lingua' visiva. Ma questo non mi spaventa come fotografo creativo, perché se fotografia è diventata linguaggio quotidiano, per la fotografia autoriale non ci sarà mai problema: quello che vede un autore è irripetibile. Siamo tutti pezzi unici. Anzi sarà un trionfo.

5. *Didascalia e manipolazione*

Il rapporto dei fotografi con la didascalia non è lineare, anzi è molto differente come abbiamo potuto spiegare. Sembra una conferma di quanto scritto da Susan Sontag riguardo al rapporto testo – immagine: “La didascalia è la voce mancante, e ci si aspetta che esprima la verità. Ma anche una didascalia perfettamente esatta è solo una possibile interpretazione, necessariamente limitativa, della fotografia alla quale è unita. È un guanto che s'infilà e si sfilà con facilità” (Sontag 2004: 97). E infatti la didascalia può essere anche

uno strumento di manipolazione dell'informazione, un giornale può far dire alle fotografie quello che non dicono. Ci sono diversi esempi che lo confermano e suggeriscono di stare sempre all'erta. E affermano ancora una volta quanto sia importante questo 'piccolo testo' in una testata. Un episodio eclatante di manipolazione giornalistica è avvenuto con la celebre fotografia in cui un ragazzo solo ferma i carri armati a piazza Tienanmen. Ha avuto interpretazioni diametralmente opposte con le didascalie scritte dai giornali occidentali e da quelle cinesi: nei primi la fotografia è accompagnata da didascalie che sostengono i giovani cinesi e il loro coraggio contro il regime, nei secondi si vuole mostrare la mitezza delle truppe dell'esercito che non vogliono travolgere un ragazzo!

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Capturing/Captioning Wildlife in Nature Photography

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1. Introduction

“When we are afraid, we shoot. But when we are nostalgic, we take pictures”. With these words, Susan Sontag (1973: 15) described the inherent predatory nature of photography as a sublimation of the act of killing and as the transformation of an aggressive mood into an elegiac one. Like photographs, also the short texts that accompany them may underline this idea. Captions have indeed the task to ‘capture’ the story told by the picture and condense it into its essence. Focusing on photographs of the natural world, it is interesting to observe that captions have ceased to be mere scientific descriptions of animals and plants and have increasingly emphasized a storytelling paradigm in the attempt to seize not only a lifeform but an instant in which the delicate balance of the ecosystem has been fixed.

At its 52nd edition, the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* competition organized by the Natural History Museum of London insisted on the principle that photography “accurately and inspiringly documents wildlife in ways that can help understanding and conservation” (Kidman Cox 2016: 6). As remarked in the Foreword to the *Portfolio*, the hundred pictures have been selected as “icons of nature as an experience and as history [...] ethically sourced and ethically produced” (*ibid.*). The book is a sort of multimodal showcase in which the complexity of wildlife is filtered and assessed through an image-led, creative use of language. The captions that accompany the pictures are consciously used to enhance awareness and emotional involvement; they tell stories that “can move us to action” (*ibid.*).

The aim of this study is to explore from a multimodal and ecolinguistic perspective (Stibbe, 2015) the narrative patterns, rhetorical

strategies and linguistic features used in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* to build up a powerful 'beneficial discourse' around wildlife, both in the pictures and in the captions.

2. Background

2.1 Captions in photojournalism

Captions have always played an important role in photojournalism, providing verbal anchorage/relay with the pictures (Barthes 1964). In recent years, however, their presence has become even more crucial, due to the pre-dominant space given to images over long verbal texts (for instance, extended feature articles), which has resulted in a concentration of verbally-articulated meaning within the few lines of writing placed under, above or beside photographs and sometimes even partly overlapping with them. As their presence has gradually replaced other kinds of descriptive, argumentative or expository texts, captions have turned into interesting objects of study in themselves, as micro-texts that bear the weight of the discursive function both in relation to and sometimes even independently from the picture they go with. In other words, besides showing the multimodal and often multimedial dynamics of contemporary forms of communication, captions have increasingly acquired a relevance of their own, as a form of discourse that displays distinct communicative purposes, rhetorical strategies and argumentative/narrative patterns.

It is widely agreed that a good caption should not state the obvious but say something relevant which is not immediately detectable from the picture (Becker 1992: 133-134). Captions cannot describe whatever occurs within the image – an impossible task given the semiotic complexity of the visual code (Gubern 1974: 122) – but single out some signifieds (Lombardo *et al.*, 1999: 127) which the writer, having in mind the target reader and the editorial framework, intends to highlight. Captions, therefore, necessarily entail

the extraction of one or more details and articulate an interpretation of the image rather than an objective, matter-of-fact account of what appears in it. According to Barthes (Culler, 1975: 33-34), this selective process is aesthetically and ideologically driven: words guide the reader through the image, foregrounding some traits and leaving other ones in the background. Evidence of the powerful combination of pictures and words in the creation of meaning can be observed in the history of photojournalism, particularly in tabloids. Suffice it to think that a biased use of captions has sometimes led to legal cases, especially when the people portrayed have been deliberately put in a bad light (Kobré, 2008: 406).

The shortness of captions makes them interesting objects of study also on account of their semantic and rhetorical density. Indeed, captions not only extract and abstract meaning from the picture, they may also build up a discourse that is related to it in many indirect ways. Like in other accompanying texts based on conciseness such as catch phrases in advertising and taglines in film trailers, also in captions the relation can be metaphorical, pointing to mental associations and using word connotations to transform the observation of the picture into a memorable experience. Furthermore, as captions have become more and more extended, they have also increasingly shown narrative patterns, building up stories that, while revolving around the image, both reflect and transcend it. The process draws from the tradition of reportage, where the power of pictures to tell stories is often enhanced by the storytelling power of words. In fact, both documentary photography and captions intend to capture a moment or event in a narrative fashion, the former through visual techniques, the latter with the aid of verbal devices.

2.2 The *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* competition

The *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* competition is a prestigious international contest whose aim is to provide a showcase for the

world's best nature photography. Owned by the Natural History Museum in London, since its first edition in 1965 it has collaborated with the BBC *Wildlife Magazine*, founded in 1963 and originally called *Animals*. However, it is only since 1992 that the selected pictures have been exhibited in travelling exhibitions and published in portfolios by the Natural History Museum of London on a yearly basis. The two events are obviously interconnected. The opening to a public of millions of people triggered a wide gamut of marketing possibilities besides the exhibitions themselves, such as the creation of a worldwide membership and the use of the brand for merchandising (prints, postcards, lamps, bags, tee-shirts, jewelry, stationery, jigsaw puzzles, kitchenware, etc.). The publication of the *Portfolios* is part of this wide marketing project, one which has certainly increased the popularity of the competition and disseminated knowledge of the natural world among a wide audience of amateurs.

Yet, standards have remained very high. The images must display artistry as well as an original way of seeing nature. Only 100 pictures of wildlife out of the tens of thousands (50,000 in 2016) submitted from countries all around the globe (95 countries in 2016) are anonymously selected among “the most memorable, beautiful and sometimes challenging images” (Kidman Cox 2016: 8) by a Jury composed of nature and fine art photographers, writers, editors and biologists. Both aesthetic and ethical rules are very strict. The subjects portrayed must be wild and free; the welfare of animals is paramount; pictures must be true to nature; manipulation of the animals or digital manipulation of the pictures that goes beyond in-camera settings and digital processing is not tolerated (*ibid.*).

In short, the competition shows what Arran Stibbe in *Ecological* (2015), drawing from Drenson and Inoue (1995), defines as a “deep ecological attitude”, that is, it recognizes “the intrinsic worth of humans, plants, animals, forests and rivers beyond direct,

short-term use for humans.” (Stibbe 2015: 13) In fact, the taking of the picture is justified not only by the aesthetic value of the picture itself but by its being “likely to encourage people to protect and preserve the conditions that support all life, including human life” (*ibid.*).

2.3. Captions in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26*

Though essentially books of pictures, the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* portfolios have always devoted great attention to the written texts. The first edition contained a foreword by Sir David Attenborough (Wilkinson/Glinks 1992), while subsequent editions have been edited by important writers such as Harry Ricketts (who is also a poet and a literary critic), Chris Packham (a naturalist mainly known as television presenter), and Rosalind Kidman Cox (editor of *BBC Wildlife Magazine* and an outstanding writer specializing in wildlife and environmental issues).

It is relevant to note that attention has progressively shifted from the threshold to the body of the book and hence to the captions under or beside the pictures. If we take for instance the reviews from the Amazon website (which may be revealing, since their discourse is targeted on a general audience), we observe that until the 10th edition no reference is made to captions; about the editions published between 2000 and 2006 it is said that short captions will give behind-the-scenes information and photographic details. However, to be highlighted is still the information provided by the pictures and their photographic value. Only from the 17th edition, when the editing was taken over by Rosamund Kidman Cox, the reviews started to specify that each picture “is accompanied by a memorable caption that tells the story of how and why the shot was taken.” (<https://www.amazon.it/Wildlife-Photographer-Year-Portfolio-17/dp/>). About the portfolios 20, 21, 23, 24, 25 and 26 the reviews state that “each stunning photograph is accompanied by an extended caption” (<https://www.amazon.it/>

Wildlife-Photographer-Year-Portfolio-26/dp/). The review which refers to the portfolio 22 does not mention the captions; however, the one related to the book *The Masters of Nature Photography* published in the same year (also edited by Kidman Cox) states that “the accompanying captions focus on why the images are special for the photographer as well as telling the stories behind their creation” (<https://www.amazon.com/Masters-Nature-Photography-Photographer-1-Aug2013/dp/>). Similarly, the review about the most recent edition, *Portfolio 27*, claims that the “memorable book also tells the often memorable stories behind the pictures” (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Wildlife-Photographer-Year-Portfolio-27/dp/0565094157>).

The use of the same adjective – ‘memorable’ – for both pictures and captions suggests that the visual text and the verbal text have reached equal status. It also underlines their common elegiac mood, as underlined by Sontag (1973: 15). The captions in the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* portfolios may therefore be considered a significant example of New Nature Writing, a genre based on “the tonal mix of the poetic and the scientific and analytical” and whose patterns are, at the same time, factual, narrative and lyrical. Indeed, “[New Nature Writing] folds in aspects of memoir, travel, ecology, botany, zoology, topography, geology, folklore, literary criticism, psychogeography, anthropology, conservation and even fiction” (MacFarlane 2013: 166). In this genre, as argued by Smith (2017: 100), language is necessarily drawn into the debate.

3. Aims

As shown in § 2, captions in the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* portfolios are an interesting object from a linguistic, and more specifically ecolinguistic, perspective. While witnessing how these captions differ from those in other prestigious books of nature photography, the study will focus on the texts that accompany the hundred pictures in the 26th edition of the *Portfolio*, which con-

tains the photos selected in the 2016 competition and exhibited at the Natural History Museum in London from 21 October 2016 to 10 September 2017.

As stated in § 1, the analysis intends to highlight linguistic features, narrative patterns and rhetorical devices used in the captions while connecting them to more specific issues of environmental discourse within an ecosophical framework. The aim is to show, on the one hand, the discursive importance of captions in this kind of nature writing and, on the other hand, to demonstrate how captions can incorporate the communicative strategies of “beneficial discourse” aimed at “encouraging people to protect the ecosystem that life depends on” (Stibbe 2015: 201).

4. Methods

The quantitative and qualitative analyses have been carried out with the aid of the Word Search Tool on the captions contained in the scanned version of *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* (for a total number of 18,679 tokens). Keywords and their frequencies within the file have been reported and subsequently examined with an ecolinguistic approach within the wider perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1985). The study builds on the hypothesis that the captions perform in this photographic book an important narrative and communicative function, articulating a discourse around the pictures which feeds on ecosophical ideology. The perspective is preliminarily diachronic: the study is based on the assumption that, in the editions published annually since 1992, captions have become increasingly important and central in the textual organization of the portfolios. But the analysis is mainly synchronic, since it concentrates on the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in the captions of the 26th edition and compares them to contemporary books of nature photography, namely those published by *National Geographic*.

5. *Capturing/Captioning Nature*

As Sontag pointed out in the early Seventies, photography has replaced the crude practice of capturing animals in safaris: now the camera captures their image instead of their body and life.

The photographer is now charging real beasts, beleaguered and too rare to kill. Guns have metamorphosed into cameras in this earnest comedy, the ecology safari, because nature has ceased to be what it always had been – what people needed protection from. Now nature – tamed, endangered, mortal needs to be protected from people. When we are afraid, we shoot. But when we are nostalgic, we take pictures (Sontag 1973: 15).

In the captions of *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26*, the verbs used to express the action of taking the pictures underline this idea of photography. Besides the obvious ‘to photograph’ (13 counts),³⁴ the neutral expression ‘to take the picture’ is unexpectedly low (6 counts), while ‘to catch’ (13 counts for catching the animal in the right place at the right time)³⁵ is preferred. Also worth of attention is the presence of more expressive synonyms of ‘take’, such as ‘seize’ (2),³⁶ ‘grab’ (2)³⁷ and even ‘freeze’ (2).³⁸ But the verb most frequently used for taking the picture is ‘capture’ (27 counts), either followed by ‘picture’, ‘image’ or ‘shot’, by ‘moment’ or the name of the animal itself. Indeed, 1 out of 3 captions contains this verb.³⁹ Here are some examples:

-
34. However, the nouns ‘photographer/photography’ and the adjective ‘photographic’ appear 16 times. When the number of counts is not specified, it means that the term appears only once in the text.
 35. “His perseverance paid off when he caught the perfect pose as a bat leaves the roost on its night-time foray” (Kidman Cox 2016: 77).
 36. “Quickly framing the trail of hefty footprints, blood-spattered ice and contrasting colours, Joanna seized her graphic composition, devoid of the bear and its prey yet resonant with their presence” (*Ivi*, 109).
 37. “Hugo grabbed his chance and illustrated the scattering of glossy black birds contrasting with the white-dusted, geometrically patterned roof” (*Ivi*, 76).
 38. “To freeze the movement and catch the all-important facial expressions in the low light of the forest, he had to use a high speed and a higher-than-normal ISO” (*Ivi*, 45).
 39. Note that, by contrast, “hunt” both as a noun and as a verb, is never used

By angling his camera down to enhance the mysterious atmosphere, he captured the moment a toad rose up – copper-coloured eyes glinting – ‘like a creature from the abyss.’ (Kidman Cox 2016: 18)

As the light faded, he finally captured his magical image of the dying jellyfish. (*ivi*, 23)

Juan was there to capture the character of these strange spider-like arachnids. (*ivi*, 27)

The hardest part was capturing the female flowers motionless while the catkins were moving. (*ivi*, 66)

It can be argued that, as is often the case in photojournalism (Logaldo 2017: 247-266), also in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year 26* the subject is visually captured and verbally captioned. As suggested by the etymology of the word ‘caption’ (from Latin ‘captionem’, assimilated into the English language through Old French ‘capcion’ = ‘capture’, ‘arrest’) (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/caption>) the writer does with language what the photographer does with his/her camera. The idea of photography as capture is underlined and supported by the accompanying text, which therefore constructs a metadiscourse both around the picture and its own role in relation to it.

5.1 A visual/verbal booty: the aesthetic and ethical function of captions in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26*

It would be a mistake to underestimate the artistic intent of the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* competition: pictures are select-

with reference to photography but only literally, as a practice of survival when the agent is an animal and as an anti-ecosophical activity when practised by man: “The hunt had caused the levels of aggression and social stress to surge, and it was a ‘loud, gory and difficult event to witness’, says Ronan. ‘I wanted to capture all those tensions.’ [...] At first glance, it’s not clear from the picture whether the interaction involves play, curiosity or anger, but once you see the protruding spine, the magnitude of the situation becomes clear. Hunts are rare – and in this case, opportunistic – and in the year he spent with the chimps, Ronan only witnessed three” (*Ivi*, 45).

ed not only because they testify to the life of a species, but also because they are beautiful. However, aesthetic achievements are constantly supported by ideological motives, which are highlighted both in the selection of the pictures and in the captions. Hence, photographers that take part in the competition are expected to be, at the same time, artists and naturalists. Like Gideon, aged 16, “who wants to study applied science at college and continue with his photography in his spare time, both as an art and as a way to observe his local wildlife” (Kidman Cox 2016: 139).

At the visual level, this intent is apparent in the choice of photographic techniques. Most of the shots (close ups, medium shots, long shots) are taken from an eye-level angle and from a frontal position (fig. 1), to suggest intimacy and the equal importance of the observer and the animal. High camera angles (fig. 2), which look down on the subject, are also sometimes used, mainly to represent the animal as powerless or endangered; by contrast, low angles, where the camera looks up at the subject, are rarer and mainly aimed at obtaining dramatic and artistic effects, for instance, to show animals fighting for food or for a female or involved in ludic activities. The caption that accompanies the photo titled “Star Player” (fig. 3), for example, acknowledges the artistic intent of the picture. However, this shot, too, is functional to the ecosophical perspective of the book, since the caption specifies that it is meant to show a characteristic of the animal: “Angling his camera up towards the dawn light – just as the pup offered him the starfish and another youngster slipped by close to the rocks – he created his artistic impression of the sea lion’s playful nature” (*ivi*: 104).



Fig. 1. Eye-level angle.

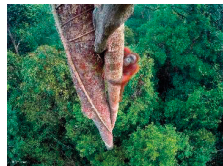


Fig. 2. High-angle.

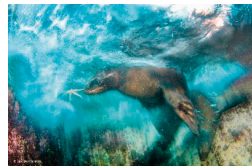


Fig. 3. Low-angle.

The frontal eye-level shots, which, as already remarked, can be observed in most of the photographs, are sometimes defined as “portraits”, thus stressing the “environmental-art appeal” mentioned in the “Foreword”: they are “impactful on the eye”, “icons of nature,” examples of “great photography” which “illustrate our story” (*ivi*: 6). The word “picture” recurs 16 times and so do the words “composition” and “image.” However, collocations (with particular reference to the use of pre-modifiers) are generally meant to present the animal/s portrayed as vulnerable creatures whose transient beauty is to be wondered at with compassion and respect, especially when there is the risk of extinction. The message in all cases is that wildlife deserves being protected.

As the light faded, he finally captured his magical image of the dying jellyfish (*ivi*: 23).

It had taken nearly five months to get a decent image out of the set-up (*ivi*: 139).

He hopes that his image will convey their astonishing adaptability and ‘give value to these miracles of nature, which can be so thoughtlessly exterminated in the name of sport’ (*ivi*: 40).

So he kept the shot wide, embracing the drama of the sunbeams falling through gaps in the riverside vegetation to illuminate his atmospheric portrait (*ivi*: 12).

He was rewarded when the youngster peeked over and, apart from a flick of his ear, stayed motionless for long enough to create this intimate portrait (*ivi*: 78).

Portrait of a pelican (*ivi*: 102).

It would have been so easy for Leon to go for a classic portrait of a basking land iguana, as most of the others in his Galapagos tour group were doing (*ivi*: 149).

As the titles and the captions underline, these are not ordinary portraits. The editor pays great attention not to convey the idea of passivity on the side of the animals. She rather places emphasis on *performance*, representing animals as *actors*, that is, as active

subjects. This explains why there is no conflict between the iconic nature of the pictures and the dynamic world of nature, “from the drama of leopards prowling the alleys of Indian towns at night to the environmental-art appeal of dramatic volcanic landscapes” (*ivi*: 6). The words ‘scene’ appears 13 times, ‘action’ 7 times, ‘drama/dramatic’ 6 times, ‘stage’ 4 times (of which 1 with its literal meaning, for the picture of the young orangutan made to dance on stage) and ‘show’ 3 times. Terms such as ‘performance’, ‘dance’, ‘fandango’, ‘swirl’, ‘spiral’, ‘dynamic’, ‘spectacle’ are also found in the captions. The following example may well illustrate this emphasis on drama:

Above the water, the stage is empty. Below, the show has begun. In February, just before leaving the bays in the fjords of northern Norway to migrate south to mate, male humpback whales begin to play and sing more intensely. From the surface, brief sightings of tail flukes and flippers and the thwack of tails and bodies hitting the surface signal what’s going on, but Audun wanted to capture the whole stage, including the interface between ocean and air. But he faced a considerable challenge: the low light at the end of the polar winter. Not only did he have to fashion his own underwater system for the split-level view, but he had to find a male that would stay with him in the water, with the right background above the surface. He also had to be in the water at the right moment and be close enough to the whale and in the right position without disturbing it. So the picture took a huge amount of planning and attempts to get the composition and mood right: peace above, playfulness below. It’s thought that the male whales are both serenading the females and communicating with each other ahead of the huge journey to southern latitudes and warmer waters where they finally mate – a show worth marvelling at (*ivi*: 94).

The captions reflect the aesthetic intent combined with an ecosophical attitude of the photographs. To achieve this aim, the writer resorts to poetic devices such as metaphor, simile, alliteration, pun, parallelism, as well as to connotation and intertextuality. This is particularly evident in the titles given to each photograph. Here are some examples:

- Metaphor: “Arctic showtime” (*ivi*: 94).
- Alliteration: “Tentacle tornado” (*ivi*: 92).
- Pun: “Current riches” (*ivi*: 93).
- Parallelism: “No voice, no choice” (*ivi*: 114).
- Intertextuality: “Remains of the Day” (*ivi*: 52); “Requiem for an Owl.” (*ivi*: 82).

Rhetorical devices are therefore not used for their own sake but to meet the needs of ecosophical discourse. In the caption that accompanies the picture by Angel Fitor (Spain), titled “The Dying of the Light”, for instance, the dying jellyfish floating in the lagoon in Southeastern Spain is metaphorically described as a dying light but also, with a simile, as “a living island.” In fact, perfectly aligned with the jellyfish, we perceive the real island in the background (fig. 4).



Fig. 4.

According to the caption, this is “a magical image”; however,

It is also a picture symbolic of the lagoon itself. Since the picture was taken, continuing fertilizer and pesticide run-off from intensive agriculture has finally resulted in a huge algal bloom that is threatening to destroy the fragile ecosystem of this Specially Protected Area (*ivi*: 23).

Most of the captions in the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* show this attempt to align beauty and ecological denunciation, rhetoric and ecosophy, the metaphorical and the literal level.

5.2 Captioning/capturing nature “as an experience and as history”: storytelling in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26*

According to Lewis Blackwell, the different categories portrayed in the *Portfolio* encourage “different styles, including documentary reportage and storytelling.” Although the pictures freeze-frame an instant in wildlife, they “tend to combine being impactful on the eye with being part of a narrative – they are icons of nature as experience and as history.” Conversely, the stories told in the captions are triggered by the pictures: they are “image-led stories” (Kidman Cox 2016: 6). Hence, no dichotomy is perceived between visual and verbal language: they are both considered as narrative mediums. The “Foreword” underlines the novelty of the project, the originality and scientific value of the achievement.

At a close analysis, we realise that all the captions in the *Portfolio* repeat the same pattern, one which builds up through the intersection of three parts variously combined: a) the story of the search for the ideal picture; b) a dynamic description of the location and of the subject being portrayed (always supported by scientific data, but mainly constructed around animal behaviour and ecological issues, such as risk of extinction, pollution and climate change deriving from inconsiderate human behaviour); and c) a climax: the story of how the perfect shot was finally obtained.

In the example:

Little treasure
Marco Colombo
ITALY

The summer heat on the Italian island of Sardinia had reduced the mountain river to a series of small pools, but undeterred, Marco eased

himself into the turbid water. His quest – part of a project to highlight the biodiversity of freshwater environments – was the shy European pond turtle. Despite its wide distribution in central and southern Europe and beyond, many populations are declining, threatened by water pollution, habitat loss and the introduction of competing American red-eared terrapins. Individual that have a speckling of yellow or gold across their dark shells and skin are also caught illegally for the pet trade. When Marco was forced to rely on natural light (his strobes failed), his challenge was to stay focused on the turtle as it moved across the shadows, stirring up mud and debris. ‘Conveying a sense of place was essential,’ explains Marco. So he kept the shot wide, embracing the drama of the sunbeams falling through gaps in the riverside vegetation to illuminate his atmospheric portrait (*ivi*: 12).

- a. The summer heat on the Italian island of Sardinia had reduced the mountain river to a series of small pools, but undeterred, Marco eased himself into the turbid water. His quest – part of a project to highlight the biodiversity of freshwater environments, was the shy pond turtle. [...] When Marco was forced to rely on natural light (his strobes failed), his challenge was to stay focused on the turtle as it moved across the shadows, stirring up mud and debris. ‘Conveying a sense of place was essential,’ explains Marco.
- b. Despite its wide distribution in central and southern Europe and beyond, many populations are declining, threatened by water pollution, habitat loss and the introduction of competing American red-eared terrapins. Individual that have a speckling of yellow or gold across their dark shells and skin are also caught illegally for the pet trade.
- c. So he kept the shot wide, embracing the drama of the sunbeams falling through gaps in the riverside vegetation to illuminate his atmospheric portrait.

The passage from the narrative to the descriptive parts goes rather unnoticed, though marked by a change of verb tense (from past to present tense and back again). However, the texts present a prevalence of narrative tenses (-ed 777 counts + -ught 20 + -aw 13), the present simple being used only to intersperse the story with brief, factual descriptions. Continuous tenses (present/past perfect continuous) are frequent: particularly

when animals are the actors/agents, continuous forms prevail over simple ones to suggest duration and continuity, the impression of a ‘real’ story going on. The storytelling revolves both around the picture and the animal’s behaviour. The two are interconnected, for the animal’s behaviour/life is described from the point of view of an observer.



Sand-napping
Destin Wernicke
USA

Destin was captivated by the Galapagos sea lions he saw on the island of Floreana – especially their ‘fun-loving, playful nature’. He enjoyed watching their behaviour, gliding through the surf, waddling along the beach or clustering on the sand or rocks to socialize and dry off, barking at visitors ‘as if owners of the island’. Though sea lions are usually highly gregarious, this young male was dozing alone on the beach. Lying down on the sand, Destin watched him from relatively close quarters and took his portrait as the sea lion rolled over and opened his eyes for a moment: ‘I love the innocent look of the animal and the way the light reflects off his back and contrasts with the texture of the sand’ (*ivi*: 140).

As the predominance of verbs of perception and the presence of direct speech suggest, these are not impersonal accounts; they are “useful alternative ways of telling stories about the world” (*ivi*: 30). As we shall see in 5.3., these are also typical features of benefi-

cial discourse, “a discourse which conveys an ideology that accords with the ecosophy of the analyst” and which is seen as “encouraging people to protect the ecosystem that life depends on” (ivi: 201).

5.3 ‘Beneficial discourse’ in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26*

Emotional impact is necessary to what Stibbe defines as “beneficial discourse”, a form of discourse about the ecosystem which should lead to action, inspiring us “to care” (Stibbe, 2015: 30). He speaks of the “hybrid pattern of scientific or scholarly precision combined with the precision of observed detail,” as well as of the “use of technical terms from science (...) to build facticity (...) and the equally high facticity of direct sensory experience” (ivi: 137-138). He also reports this quote from Aldo Leopold: “We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in” (Leopold, 1979: 204; Stibbe, 2015: 161). Indeed, the style of speech in the captions “opens our senses to the sensuous” (Abram 2010: 3) both when expressing the relation between the photographer and the subject of the picture and when addressing the reader.

According to Stibbe, beneficial discourse can be detected by looking at four features of discourse: 1. Appraisal patterns; 2. Salience; 3. Reminding; 4. Personalisation. In the next sections these modes will be investigated in the captions of *Wildlife Photographer of the Year 26*. Since they are closely interconnected, salience and reminding have been discussed under one heading.

5.3.1 Appraisal patterns

The first trait highlighted by an ecolinguistic readings of texts is the presence of *appraisal patterns*, which Stibbe, drawing from Halliday (2001) and Martin and White (2005), defines as “clusters of linguistic features which come together to represent an area of life as good or bad” (Stibbe 2015: 83). Linguistic features in the captions of *Wildlife Photographer of the Year 26* promote a na-

ture-centred perspective rather than an anthropocentric one. Lexical choices are clearly meant to represent wildlife as an area to be observed and preserved, while human intervention, except for the brief, respectfully ‘stolen’ picture, is often portrayed as senseless and destructive. The participle adjective ‘endangered’ is used 13 times with reference to wildlife, while ‘threat’ is conversely used 10 times with reference to human behaviour towards nature.

5.3.2 Salience and re-minding

The second principle embodied by the captions in the *Portfolio* with reference to the natural world is *salience*. Each subject is portrayed as standing out in the environment. A salience pattern is “a linguistic or visual representation of an area of life as worthy of attention through concrete, specific and vivid depictions” (Stibbe, 2015: 206). In fact, salience patterns are more usually referred to visual representations (Kress/Van Leeuwen 2006: 210) than to verbal ones; however, they can find their linguistic equivalent in the way “patterns of linguistic features” such as focus, vitality, levels of abstraction, transitivity and metaphor “can come together to form salience patterns which represent particular participants prominently in a text” (Stibbe, 2015: 162).

To explain the extensive use of these techniques in the captions of *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26*, it may be useful to compare them to the captions that appear in another prestigious nature photography competition: the *National Geographic Photography Contest*.

Zebras and the Rim of the Crater

Photo and caption by Zik Teo.

Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania, is the world’s largest inactive volcanic caldera. It is a collapsed volcano that harbours a range of African wildlife that live in relatively close proximity and competition of each other. Zebras are amongst the most common animals in the crater along with wildebeest, gazelles, hyenas, and lions. On a clear day, a 360° view of the crater rim can be seen whilst being inside.

Photo location: Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania.

Category: nature

(<<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-con-test-gallery/zebras-and-the-rim-of-the-crater/> 2014>).

This is a more factual, scientific description of what we can see in the picture. The caption opens with a sentence that could be the verbal equivalent of an establishing shot. The location, “Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” is named and defined as “the world’s largest inactive volcanic caldera.” Animals are not represented individually but as a collective category (“A range of African wildlife”), or as species, by using the plural noun: ‘gazellas’, ‘hyenas’, and ‘lions’. Time is not specified either: “on a clear day” means *any* clear day. Nature is objectified. The main copular verb is the verb ‘to be’ (‘is’, ‘are’). We find the use of the passive voice to stress the impersonal construction of sentences: “Can be seen” suggests that everyone can see that scene if they go there. Although the name of the photographer is reported (note that he is also the author of the caption, which entails that the editing process is reduced to a minimum) he is only giving information that is supposed to be as objective as the picture taken through his camera lens. No reference is made to the subjective action of taking the picture in that particular place at that particular time. We have a third person point of view. The most used pronouns for the animals portrayed are it/(implicit) they. Sentences are short and all about the same length. We can summarise the pattern of the caption as such: Name of the photographer/caption writer, definition of the subject, addition of some scientific details, photo location and category.

This pattern is repeated in most *National Geographic* captions. Of course, there are differences and nuances. This is another example:

Spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*) in the waters off Kona, Hawaii. These dolphins forage at night in the deep water offshore, then come into shallow bays in the early morning to socialize and rest. This species of dolphins is known for its spinning behavior, where the dolphins leap out of the water, spinning and turning. Although researchers are not certain why they do this, a leading theory is to dislodge remoras and for communication. Spinner dolphins are especially social and are almost never found alone. They typically travel in large pods. (<https://www.brianskerry.com/portfolio/dolphins_new/attachment/mm8121_130713__38767>)

Although we have here more lengthy descriptions and a deeper interest in the animals' behavior, we still find abstract terms: "This species of dolphin"; the use of the passive voice "is known" "almost never found alone" and impersonal formulae that generally refer to the scientific community: "Researchers are not certain" "a leading theory is". The most used pronoun is "they".

On the one hand, also the captions in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* follow facticity patterns, i.e. "clusters of linguistic devices which come together to represent descriptions as certain or true" (Stibbe, 2015: 202). In fact the project is avowedly based on "absolute concern for truthfulness to the experience, to show the world as it is and how it changes" (Kidman Cox, 2016: 6) and should accurately and inspiringly document wildlife (*ibid.*). Hence the captions do contain scientific information about the animal or plant and related ecological issues. On the other hand, impersonal formulae are rarely used. There are only three examples of purely academic register:

- (1) Recent research suggests that it uses special platelets in its skin cells to reflect polarized light (light moving in a single plane), making itself almost invisible to predators and potential prey (*ivi*: 16).
- (2) And now recent research suggests that bees may also play a role (*ivi*: 66).
- (3) And research suggests that, with overfishing and warming waters, the run is becoming less predictable (*ivi*: 84).

More often, a harmony between researchers and the subjects they study is supported by the use of verbs of cognition and em-

phasis on a cooperative relationship. The aim is to promote a more ecosophical way of conceiving scientific research.

University researchers know the individual personalities of the meerkats and even the cultures of different groups. [...] Part of the story for Jennifer is the cooperative relationship between researchers and their subjects – ‘the joyous part of research’ (*ivi*: 121).

Furthermore, unlike the caption used for the *National Geographic* competition, which represents animals as a species (i. e. in a more abstract way and as objects of a study), here focus is on the individual: the single animal (the whale, the turtle, the eagle) is named and conceived as a unique subject. The definite article ‘the’ is used in the captions 1714 times, while the indefinite article ‘a’/‘an’ appears 538 times (‘any’ 9 counts).

Obviously, it would be difficult to judge which kind of approach is more effective or truer to nature. The aim of this study is only to show how, through discursive strategies, the captions in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* achieve what Stibbe calls *re-minding*: by explicitly calling “attention to the erasure of an important area of life in a particular text or discourse and demand that it be brought back into consideration” (Stibbe, 2015: 162). In these captions, re-minding is obtained through concrete and specific lexical sets drawn from nature rather than abstractions such as ‘fauna’, ‘ecosystem’, ‘species’, ‘extinction rate’ (*ivi*: 163). Moreover, the animal is represented actively as doing something in the world for its own purposes: emphasis is on behavior – both animal behavior and human behavior – particularly when the author wants to emphasise the disastrous consequences of inconsiderate human action on the ecosystem.

5.3.3 Personalisation

A point made in the “Foreword” of *Portfolio 26* is that these pictures are cognitively relevant. Blackwell speaks of “the emotional grab of a photograph” and states that “pictures must

be made with emotional impact while also holding an absolute concern for truthfulness to the experience” (Kidman Cox 2016: 6). He insistently resorts to expressions referring to cognition and feeling: “emotional grab”, “emotional impact”, “our thoughts”, “our reflections”, “passionate”; the pictures are something to “to marvel at” (“marvel about the health and the value of this truly wonderful natural world”) and they make us “think about” what these photographers “see or witness”. The verbs reflect this interest in perception and cognition. Some examples: see/saw (27 counts), watch/ed (27), know/knew (19), feel/felt (5), love (5).

With reference to the photographer, the process of personalisation in *Portfolio 26* goes as far as to include his/her first name in the body of the caption. In other words, the name does not only appear under the heading or at the bottom of the caption, which would simply remind the reader of authorship: through the use of either direct or free indirect speech, the editor (here clearly distinct from the photographer) suggests that the story behind the picture is told from the point of view of the photographer, who is not a mere observer but a *senser* physically and emotionally involved in the action of taking the picture.

Bence was so busy concentrating on adjusting the composition and focus that he failed to notice what the piece of ‘reed’ really was. It wasn’t until he was checking through his images later that he saw that the gull’s foot was trapped in a plastic clothes hanger. The gulls feed at rubbish dumps outside the national park. ‘I often saw them entangled in bits of rubbish,’ he says, ‘but mainly they get caught up in fishing line and hooks discarded around the lakes. I saw this poor bird flying around in the area for two more days before it disappeared (*ivi*: 120).

Personalisation, of course, also regards the representation of wildlife, which stresses uniqueness rather than generality (§ 4.3.3.). Animals are often humanised. Whenever the gender of

the animal is known, the author of the captions resorts to the pronoun “he” (161 counts) or “she” (16) rather than “it” (137). Even when the gender is unknown or the text refers to a number of animals so that the pronoun must necessarily be ‘they’ (105), as in the example above (‘the gulls’/‘them’), there are other words in the text that signal the focus on a particular individual rather than on an indistinct group (“this poor bird”).⁴⁰ We also find verbs and adjectives usually adopted for humans: ‘feast’ (7 counts) outnumbers ‘eat’ (4 counts). Also nouns such as ‘father’, ‘pup’, ‘baby/ies’, ‘mate’, etc., which tend to attribute to animals human or personal qualities, are very frequent. As in the example: “The father of her pups is nearby, keeping watch (maras mate for life, and the male follows the female wherever she goes).” (*ivi*: 42)

In conclusion, personalisation of both humans and animals in the captions is aimed at concretely satisfying one of the core tenets of beneficial discourse: the idea that recognising worth in nature may encourage people to protect all forms of life. As underlined in the foreword, the pictures in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* are “the polar opposite to the repetitive self-portraits found in social media.” They’re not “solipsistic reflections”, they are focused on “the world around us,” since wildlife looks outward at all other species and places.” On the other hand, they are also about ourselves: “While these pictures may not have our faces in shot, they have our fingerprints on the cameras and the files, and our thoughts are in the frame, along with our reflections as we look at them” (*ivi*: 6).

40. Explicit devices are also used. See, for instance, “Individuals that have a speckling of yellow or gold across their dark shells and skin are also caught illegally for the pet trade.” (*ivi*: 12)

6. Concluding remarks and future developments

The study seems to confirm that captions can be a powerful form of New Nature Writing. Indeed, the captions in *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio 26* satisfy all the core tenets of deep ecology: “ordinary plants and animals are represented as worthy of consideration in their own right; [...] are referred to in concretely imaginable ways; and are [...] given the role of *actor* and *senser* in sentences” (Stibbe, 2015: 145). Through narrative patterns and linguistic choices that underline salience patterns and produce reminding and personalisation, they build up, along with the pictures, a ‘beneficial discourse’ which is, at once and at the same time, aesthetically rewarding and ethically useful.

The analysis carried out from a multimodal and ecolinguistic perspective has shown that both the visual and verbal text are aimed at representing researchers, photographers, editors and readers as harmoniously cooperating to articulate the stories animals implicitly beg for, thus witnessing the risks run by wildlife in times of pollution and human exploitation while also creating beauty.

A limit of the research is that it analyses only the captions of one edition of the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Portfolio*. Further research could be focused on the development of captions in all the editions since 1992, investigating the forms taken by multimodal and beneficial discourse in a diachronic way, thus highlighting how captions have evolved from simple accompanying texts to the undisputed co-protagonists of pictures in these fascinating nature books.

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Captare lo ‘sguardo turistico’: osservazioni sul deittico QUI nella pubblicità di destinazione

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Nell’ambito di un convegno con il titolo *Words Worth Watching* mi propongo di prendere in esame un tipo di parole che non solo valgono la pena di ‘essere viste e osservate’, ma anzi che non possono non ‘essere viste ...e (quindi) osservate’: si tratta delle parole deittiche, dette anche parole indessicali, le quali, usate con alta frequenza nella testualità promozionale postmoderna, svolgono un multiplo ruolo di “esca”. Sono vere *captions* che – proprio per il legame ottico che instaurano immediatamente tra testo e contesto – saltano all’occhio dei lettori, pur frettolosi che siano. Il carattere di queste parole è dunque primariamente visuale, un fatto che, malgrado il vasto sfruttamento che ne fanno i pubblicitari per crearne efficaci strategie multimediali, non è mai stato preso in particolare considerazione né dai linguisti, né dai pragmatici, per i quali la deissi è stata sempre un oggetto di discussione; solo ultimamente questa – per la funzione che ha con altre risorse semiotiche – si sta conquistando più terreno di ricerca (cf. Fricke 2007, Jungbluth/Da Milano 2015).

In riferimento alla testualità di oggi che è indirizzata innanzitutto a una lettura sbrigativa e quindi percettiva (“*Sehlesen*”, cf. Schmitz 2011, 2015), vorrei mettere l’attenzione, in questa sede, su una sola unità deittica, e cioè sul prossemico spaziale QUI (e i suoi corrispondenti *here, hier, aquí, ici*, etc.). Mi interessa rilevare come, perché e in che modo diventa *caption* fungendo da collante nell’incrocio dei modi di un testo multimodale e portando così gli occhi dei lettori al punto significativo che si districa tra azione verbale e spazio indicato.

L'interesse verso questo oggetto di studio mi era venuta quando un paio di anni fa l'ente del turismo italiano aveva messo un banner sul sito www.discoveritalia.it con lo scopo di captare – scintillando sullo schermo – l'attenzione dei lettori con la breve domanda stuzzicante: *Siete mai stati qui?*

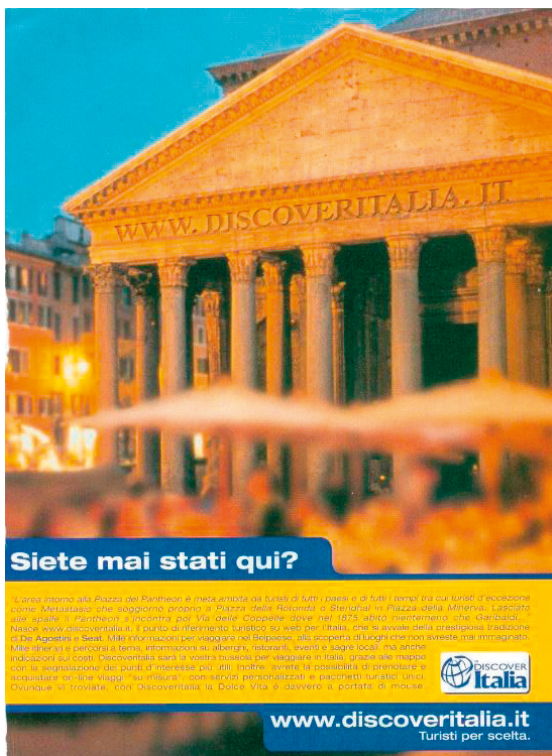


Fig. 1. *Discover Italia.*

E in effetti, pur distratti che siano, gli *users* posano automaticamente lo sguardo sul *visual* e connettono il QUI topicalizzato con la parte del Pantheon che si intravede. Di conseguenza,

pensano a Roma, poi all'Italia, scatenando così la strada di inferenze cognitive intentata dai pubblicitari. Questi invece ne approfittano in un altro modo: QUI si presta come punto centrale intorno a cui ruota l'intera composizione testuale, offrendo la possibilità di aprire sempre nuovi scenari e di sostenere così una campagna infinitamente variabile e adattabile che – a seconda dello slogan del banner – fa sì che tutta l'Italia possa 'essere scoperta', prima nell'immaginario, e poi magari nella prossima scelta turistica.

Carica di tante funzioni pragmatico-testuali, la piccola parola QUI vale dunque la pena di essere osservata più profondamente con i seguenti obiettivi: in base a una brevissima revisione della ricerca sulla deissi – tra il lavoro pionieristico di Bühler del 1934 alla pragmatica moderna – vorrei presentare QUI come elemento centrale di qualsiasi costruzione discorsiva dello spazio. Come tale si fa mezzo indispensabile in ogni tipo di comunicazione turistica la quale è *per se* comunicazione primariamente spaziale. Per sostenere questa tesi sottometto un corpus di pubblicità di destinazione ad un'analisi socio-semiotica (secondo Kress/Van Leeuwen 1996): i dati si basano su una varietà di spogli raccolti nella stampa italiana, francese e tedesca negli ultimi 45 anni. In quanto genere testuale molto studiato con le note strutture *logo+slogan, catch visual, headline* e – semmai – *body copy*, il testo pubblicitario rappresenta un testo multimodale per eccellenza. Si presta dunque bene per esaminare i modi di collaborazione tra codice visivo e codice verbale e di identificare i loro punti d'interfaccia resi salienti maggiormente da una sola parola, una *trigger word* di grande perspicuità.

In una tale funzione la piccola parola QUI è molto potente e capace di dispiegare tra significato e significante quattro dimensioni per cui si aprono tante possibilità di usarla con lo scopo di presentare e promuovere uno spazio da destinazione turistica in modo 'captante':

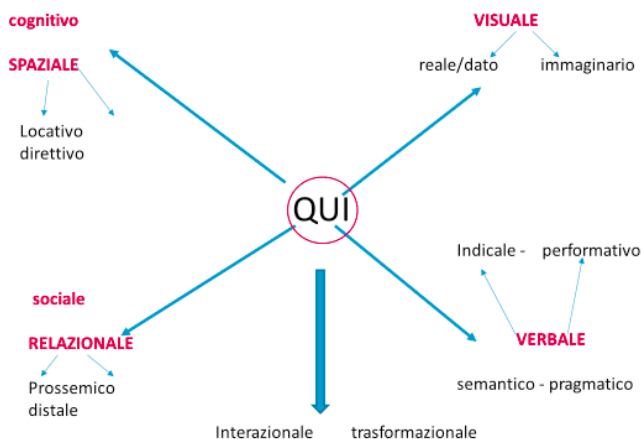


Fig. 2. Le dimensioni funzionali del deittico QUI.

Come si vede in figura 2, il deittico QUI è un complesso segno verbale che grazie al suo valore indessicale sviluppa una funzione ottica-visiva; nel testo multimodale – dove immagine e lingua sono strategicamente collegate – funge da guida attirando gli occhi dei lettori su posizioni o direzioni dello spazio riportato nel *catch visual*. Come parola sinsemantica dipende sempre dal contesto spaziale che indica. Implica però visioni diverse di questo contesto a seconda delle prospettive intersoggettive che cambiano e si trasformano nell’immaginario discorsivo. Gli si ascrive dunque un valore performativo. Insomma, QUI ha e dispiega una forza percettiva molto complessa che si riferisce sia a dimensioni spaziali, sia a dimensioni relazionali provocando proprio nei testi turistici un’immaginazione perspicua dello spazio da propagare. Quest’idea mi permette di avanzare l’ipotesi che in ogni caso QUI può essere considerato come leva centrale per promuovere quello che Urry (1990) sostiene come il famoso *tourist gaze*, concetto sociologico che vede nel turismo un ‘sensuale’ consumismo spaziale:

Spaces are culturally and communicatively constituted, and the meanings of spaces are established by the way they are represented (e.g. written and talked about) and by the nature of social interactions that take place within them. As such, space is always in the process of becoming, of being spatialized. (Jaworsky/Thurlow 2009:9)

In questo senso il concetto del *tourist gaze* è un'interessante categoria analitica da applicare all'analisi di testi turistici. Essendo una costruzione discorsiva, si intende come strategia che ha lo scopo di trasformare uno spazio reale di per sé insignificante in una specifica destinazione turistica: desiderata, immaginata e poi – casomai – realmente usufruita o sperimentata. Il fatto di come uno spazio viene 'guardato' dai visitatori è dunque frutto di un processo testuale: in effetti, "referring to discursive determinations" lo stesso Urry intende *gaze* "a skilled cultural practice" (Urry 1995:10) e lo definisce "as a product of textual mediation" che si presenta "exclusively constructed through signs" (Urry/Larsen 2011:2).

In stretto riferimento al significato metaforico della parola *gaze* possiamo dunque assumere che questi segni siano di natura prevalentemente percettiva: servono a presentare la destinazione come spazio da guardare, da vedere, destinato ad essere esplorato; in breve, la rendono – in anticipo – quel *sight* unico e particolare che la distingue da altri *sights* altrettanto unici e particolari. Costruire il *gaze* con segni riporta lo sguardo linguistico al testo stesso dove effettivamente appaiono molti segni che – comparabili alla funzione di guida turistica – conducono gli occhi dello spettatore attraverso i vari livelli del testo pre-coniando così un primo surrogato dello spazio propagato; viene creato letteralmente un *sight-seeing* virtuale che non solo dà una prima impressione spaziale, ma nello stesso momento invoglia anche il piacere di scoprirci qualcosa di nuovo, di differente o inusuale e/o di riconoscerci anche qualcosa di consueto e di proprio: "Places are chosen to be gazed upon (...) because there is anticipation" (Urry/Larsen 2011:4) e "such anticipation is constructed and sustained through communication practises ... which reinforce that gaze" (ibid.:1).

La nozione del *tourist gaze*, però, non è solo un concetto visivo; esso comprende invece l'intero comportamento turistico come una consumazione di spazio (*space consumption, consuming places*, cf. Urry 1995) in modo complessivo-sensuale. Pur essendo il punto di riferimento fondamentale la semanticità di 'visione' va dunque intesa in un senso più ampio, essa implica non solo '*ways of seeing*' ma anche '*ways of being*' (per citare il titolo di un convegno di Bergamo nel 2016); si intende come azione totale "encompassing sensual and bodily experiencing as a complex fruition of space" (Urry 1995:40).

Di fronte a questa apertura semantica il concetto di *gaze* cambia da segno visuale a segno performativo. La destinazione si rivela non più solo come spazio di esplorazione visiva dei prerequisiti naturali, culturali e materiali; nello stesso momento si trasforma anche in uno spazio di azioni momentanee, innestate però nelle pratiche sociali costituite dall'ideologia "turistica" di spostamento e mobilità, di piacere ricreativo e avventura della scoperta. Non a torto, nascono frameworks sociologici che vanno oltre il concetto metaforico dello sguardo. Comprendono turismo in senso attivo come *doing tourism* e quindi particolarmente come "performing tourist places" (cf. il titolo di Baerenholdt *et al.* 2004). Definita poi come "a visually performed and socially produced spatiality" (*ibd.*:4) anche questa visione più ampia si rivela infine come concetto prevalentemente visuale.

Il predominio di un apparato di segni di carattere percettivo-visuale è quindi senz'altro responsabile di creare (e anticipare) la voluta visione di una incensata destinazione turistica. Per distillare la parte che ha il deittico QUI in questo processo di creazione spaziale ci rivolgiamo alla famosa distinzione di Lefebvre (1974) secondo cui la rappresentazione testuale di spazialità comprende tre livelli:

- *l'espace perçu*, e cioè lo spazio fisico-materiale,
- *l'espace conçu*, e cioè lo spazio mentale-immaginario,
- *l'espace vécu*, e cioè lo spazio (momentaneamente) vissuto o meglio: sperimentato di persona.

I mezzi che dominano nella testualità turistica – quelli verbali e quelli visivi – contribuiscono quindi sempre a costruire questi tre aspetti di spazialità: in genere lo fanno in modo talmente perspicuo da creare un complesso processo di percezione che incita i lettori ad immedesimarsi con lo spazio rappresentato e a sperimentarlo mentalmente come se lo vivessero di persona. Si conferma Urry/Larsen (2011:2): “Gazing at particular sights is conditioned by personal experiences and memories and framed by rules and styles, as well as by circulating images and texts of this and other places.”

Emergendo dalla rappresentazione testuale dei primi due, lo spazio vissuto dipende da come viene visualizzato il lato performativo, cioè quali sono le tipiche azioni che rendono un posto uno spazio ‘turistificato’: vengono inscenate tipiche esperienze turistiche, quali gli usi di impianti turistici particolari, fruizioni delle strutture spaziali, movimenti e spostamenti nelle varie dimensioni, aspetti temporali e, infine, le relazioni e interazioni sociali che nascono negli incontri tra ospiti e ospitati, tra consueto e estraneo. In tutte queste attività semiotiche le parole deittiche, grazie alle loro capacità visuali-spaziali, hanno vari compiti di collegamento, anzi, di ‘incollatura’.

Prima di connettere queste premesse alla discussione teorica, vediamo l'esempio di una campagna pubblicitaria per la Spagna del 1989:

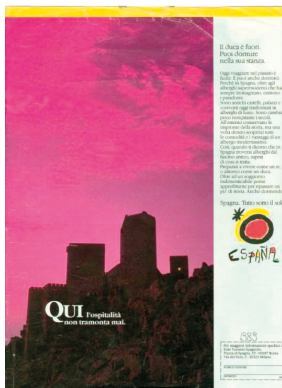


Fig. 3. Spagna. Tutto sotto il sole.

Il QUI graficamente marcato, posizionato in testa a una semplice frase dimostrativa e collocato nel centro del *visual* svolge effettivamente un multiplo ruolo di cerniera tra i costituenti multimodali e si rivela come elemento captante in funzione sia spaziale, sia relazionale. Ne esplicitiamo alcune. Come avverbio locativo e prossemico QUI

- è innestato nella sagoma buia di un castello per cui dirige immediatamente lo sguardo del lettore in questa direzione coinvolgendolo nello scenario spaziale raffigurato;
- suscita una costellazione che implica prossimità e immediatezza (la famosa “*Hörreichweite*” di Bühler 1934) presupponendo un ‘altro’ soggetto il quale, in allocuzione ostensiva, sta svolgendo un atto dimostrativo diretto a qualcuno che lo sente;
- indica la posizione di questo soggetto come *origo* nello spazio raffigurato e proietta questa prospettiva di vicinanza ai lettori;
- prefigge una visione spaziale in cui prevalgono dunque atti di guardare, di (ri)cercare e di scoprire un’adeguata ‘localizzazione’ degli interlocutori nel campo indicale che comprende la rete tra parlante (fittizio), castello (nel *visual*) e Spagna (nel logo).
- implica un atto comunicativo ‘iconico’ auto-referenziale che nella salienza grafica diventa tema del testo in veste della USP: vediamo tre frasi semplici di vago contenuto spaziale descrittivo (copy: *Il duca è fuori. Puoi dormire nella sua stanza*) alle quali solo QUI dà il loro senso. Funge da indice ‘dimostrativo’ che l’enunciato diretto allo spazio del castello è un invito allettante di passare il prossimo soggiorno nei *paradores*, alberghi romantici di alta qualità perché impiantati sempre in castelli storici originali.

Muovendosi, allora, tra percezione spaziale e proiezione interpersonale, QUI può essere considerato davvero come quello che Testa (1988:21) chiama “una parola immaginata”, parola dunque che “serve a coinvolgere lo spettatore, o il lettore, rendendolo parte

attiva del gioco, o toccandolo nei sentimenti o sorprendendolo piacevolmente”.

Questa interpretazione va già oltre la funzione che Bühler da predecessore della pragmatica moderna ha dato alla deissi quando l’aveva scoperta come elemento indispensabile di ogni sistema linguistico: ha ascrivito a QUI una funzione indicale tipica delle *Zeigewörter*, parole di valore dimostrativo, che, partendo dalla famosa *origo ego – hic – nunc*, indicano sempre punti dislocati sui relativi assi personale, locale e temporale. Ne nasce un vasto campo di ricerca che si occupa di questo tipo di parole ‘indessicali’ cercando di rilevare la loro natura nell’interfaccia tra semantica e pragmatica. Esistono tante riflessioni che puntano sulle caratteristiche che ha questo gruppo di parole grazie all’indessicalità e lo stretto vincolo soggettivo che innalza col contesto d’uso. Scegliendo la voce di un linguista, si nota subito perché la deissi è passata dalla semantica ai primi ranghi della pragmatica (allora nascente):

By deixis is meant the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred on, in relation to the spatio-temporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it. (Lyons 1977:637)

In questa sede, ci interessa invece l’applicazione testuale di questo genere di parole. Si tratta di analizzare il loro uso nel testo pubblicitario e ricavarne i vantaggi che porta la messa in scena multimodale. Rifacendoci a Bühler, sosteniamo l’ipotesi che il compito primario del testo multimodale è quello di evocare l’*origo* rendendo percepibili in qualche modo non solo i dintorni spaziali, ma anche i locutori del testo, la relazione sociale e temporale che si effettua tra le loro azioni e movimenti. Ed è così che suscitano innanzitutto *embodiment*; sorgono automaticamente prospettive intersoggettive che inducono Perugini – l’unico che nota l’alta frequenza del deittico QUI nella lingua della pubblicità – ad ascrivergli una funzione immedesimante (Perugini 1994: 613).

Secondo me, questa funzione ‘immedesimante’ che coinvolge i lettori come se fossero già fisicamente *in loco*, si giustifica nel valore performativo che QUI rappresenta nei testi di promozione turistica. È una funzione che il deittico acquista tramite un voluto intervento nel disegno multimodale: viene trasformato – sempre secondo Bühler 1934 – lo *Zeigfeld* statico in un *Lenkfeld* dinamico. Suggestendo o figurando corporalità (ovvero: personalizzazione) QUI indica non solo *loci*, direzioni e distanze, ma implica automaticamente anche socialità e quindi costruisce rapporti sociali che – nel caso nostro – rappresentano il tipico incontro (inter-) culturale tra ospiti e ospitati.

Il valore performativo-‘corporale’ di QUI nasce allora da un insieme multimodale di:

- indicazioni spaziali (monitorando punti, indicando direzioni ed espansioni, definendo località, dando misure, ecc.)
- istanze sociali (mediando presenze fisiche, incontri significanti, interazioni di ospitalità, ecc.)
- *time flows* (indicando partenze e arrivi, inizio e fini oppure tipici momenti *pre-trip*, *in-trip* o *post-trip*, ecc.)

Nel testo, quest’apparato di segni dovrebbe essere disposto e combinato in modo tale da raffigurare uno spazio interattivo. Secondo Hausendorf (2010), nascerebbe da quattro co-attività situate (*Situierungsaktivitäten*) che si incontrano, si sovrappongono e si incrociano in un’unica parola e cioè nel HIER (QUI) che esso solo porta al colmo l’impressione di immediatezza momentanea. Come si vede in figura 4, succede nella co-costruzione (immaginaria) delle attività seguenti:

- la co-orientazione della percezione (spaziale)
- la co-ordinazione dei movimenti
- la co-operazione delle azioni
- la co-attivazione delle mosse comunicative/significative (“*Spielzüge*”)

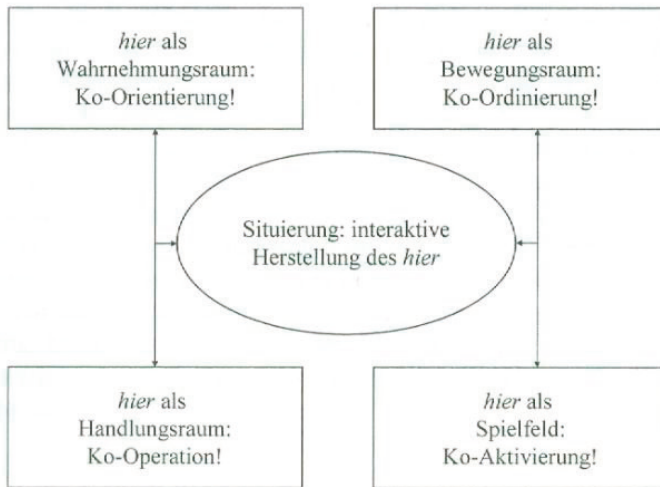


Fig. 4. Costruzione dello spazio interattivo intorno a HIER
(Hausendorf 2010:191).

È dunque il compito del testo pubblicitario di destinazione di produrre e costruire questo HIER immediato in modo immaginifico.

Dopo queste riflessioni teoriche sostengo l'ipotesi che le funzioni attualizzanti/attivanti che QUI ha nei testi turistici emergono dall'investimento o inserimento del deittico nella costellazione multimodale. L'esempio della Spagna in figura 3 ne dà prova convincente per cui giustifica le seguenti osservazioni che riassumono l'analisi delle *reclame* estratte dalle riviste dagli anni '80 fino a 2010.

Per afferrare i vari aspetti significativi del deittico QUI nella pubblicità turistica ho analizzato i dati in base alla *Social Semiotics* (Kress/Van Leeuwen 1996, Kress 2010) la cui griglia tripartita trasforma le metafunzioni del linguaggio puramente verbale in quelle di un complesso linguaggio visuale ovvero multimodale.

Riguardo il lato compositazionale (*compositional meaning*) si rilevano, tra l'altro, posizione e uso di QUI nel *text-design* e nei

moduli testuali, la salienza grafica, le marcatezze sintattiche, gli agganci e spostamenti testuali, ecc..

Si vede per esempio l'uso ripetitivo di QUI nel *copy text*, posizionato in mezzo di un annuncio per l'Egitto:

Nel nostro paese potrete rilassarvi al sole, anche d'inverno.

Qui verrete accolti con calore tutto l'anno.

Qui potrete correre come il vento sul Mar Rosso.

Qui potrete visitare tombe e templi del 5.000 AC...

Qui scoprirete quante emozioni vi siete persi fino ad oggi.

Vi piacerebbe essere qui?

Riguardo il lato semantico (*representational meaning*) ci interessano gli aspetti di aggancio tra immagine e lingua e la rivelazione del significato dimostrativo-ostensivo della parola QUI. Da un lato, in riferimento alla funzione indessicale, si identificano i *loci*, i punti specifici o le direzioni che il deittico indica. Il suo valore spaziale dipende dal contesto lessicale e sintattico; ma risulta anche dai dintorni multimodali, specialmente se il deittico è accompagnato da gesti direttivi o altri segni iconografici. Dall'altro lato, l'attenzione si pone sulla funzione iconica da sguardo immaginato posto sullo scenario. Si cerca di ricavare tipici *frame* turistici, di animare cognizioni e esperienze, eppure distinguere tra significato letterale e figurativo dello scenario, sostenendo così, nell'immaginario, una "semiosi esplorativa" di uno spazio evocato.

Si vedano per esempio le *headline* captanti e posizionate in un idillico *locus amoenus* mediterraneo; si tratta di enunciati generali di ammirazione:

La madre naturaleza da a luz AQUÌ. (Madeira)

Zweifellos beginnt man HIER von Wiedergeburt zu träumen. (Türkei)

Oppure l'equivoco del significato ICI in un annuncio di Abu Dhabi dove troviamo la *headline*, sottolineata dall'indice di una mano (decorata con l'enna) che punta su una carovana di cammelli minuscola nell'infinità del deserto: *C'est n'est pas la fin du voyage, ce n'est que le debut. ICI le silence est sérénité.*

Riguardo il lato pragmatico (*interpersonal meaning*) infine si prendono in esame le capacità relazionali-performative che sviluppa il deittico nell'insieme multimodale. Si riconoscono dal tipo di atto linguistico retto da o diretto a QUI, dal tipo di discorso dove il deittico è coinvolto (libero, indiretto libero o riportato), dall'uso di stile e varietà linguistica, dalla direzione allocutiva oppure, infine, dalla messa in scena dell'evento comunicativo incorporato e/o mediato.

Dai tanti esempi si noti uno solo dove la *headline* consiste di questo piccolo discorso (polisemico!) fatto da una indigena sorridente e tipicamente decorata di fiori esotici:

L'idea di partire vi sorride? Fate bene, QUI il clima è gentile tutto l'anno. (Tabiti)

Riassumendo l'interpretazione dei risultati che l'analisi dei tre livelli meta-funzionali ha riscontrato, si può costatare che il deittico QUI sviluppa forze 'visive' diverse a seconda della "veste" multimodale nella quale è investito. Ho l'impressione però che sia effettivamente un catalizzatore polivalente o polifonico che plasmò il 'tourist gaze' districando la sua costruzione discorsiva – sempre in riferimento a *visual* e costituenti verbali (tra cui soprattutto il logo che indica il paese come marca) – in vari tipi 'percettivi'. Possiamo quindi spartire il nostro corpus di annunci pubblicitari in 5 gruppi. A seconda della prospettiva soggettiva che riportano (dal punto di vista degli ospitanti oppure da quello degli ospiti), si distinguono 5 tipi di discorso 'immagifico' o 'immaginario' per cui identifico 5 costruzioni di *gaze* diversi che diano allo spazio propagato l'attrattiva di desiderata destinazione turistica; vediamo:

- a) un discorso contemplativo che pone uno sguardo girovagante su un *locus amoenus* presentato come un affascinante quadro dipinto (tipo: È bello QUI)
- b) un discorso esortante commissivo che si basa sulla dimostrazione allettante rivolgendosi direttamente verso lo spettatore fittizio (tipo: Guarda QUI da noi!)

- c) un discorso suggestivo che si basa su visioni irreali, proiezioni ottative e trasferimenti fittizie anticipati (tipo: Potresti essere QUI)
- d) un discorso emotivo e ammirativo che si costituisce come se fosse l'esplorazione emozionale *in actu*, la vista su luoghi e posti o la testimonianza momentanea di un evento (tipo: Oh, com'è bello QUI e anche QUI...)
- e) un discorso memorativo che rievoca le sensazioni sperimentate tramite un discorso riportato e tramite lo sguardo mediato da oggetti di ricordo (foto, cartoline) (tipo: Quanto ho visto e goduto QUI...)



Domani potresti essere QUI...
(Australia)



HIER spüre ich den Frieden
(Domin. Republik)

Fig. 5. Esempi di discorso suggestivo e di discorso memorativo.

Concludendo il mio discorso sul deittico QUI come parola captante, torno alle caratteristiche della comunicazione turistica in quanto promozione spaziale e cerco di sottolineare il

ruolo che la piccola parola svolge per mettere in rilievo quanto sia valido un luogo come destinazione per la prossima vacanza. Essendo parola “immaginata” e parola “immedesimante” alle volte QUI funge da adesivo intermodale che deve saltare all’occhio: da un lato dirige lo sguardo immediato verso l’autentico e il particolare dello spazio in oggetto assicurandogli un valore di marca con qualità uniche; dall’altro evoca l’esperienza turistica immediata incorporando in modo esplicito o implicito presenze coinvolte nell’avventura di un *sight-seeing* virtuale. Così vengono messi in rilievo i tipici *people on the move* che vivono e consumano lo spazio raffigurato in modo emozionale e attivo. Il deittico è quindi considerato fondamentale nella costruzione discorsiva del *tourist gaze* – siccome questo non è solo un concetto ottico, bensì sociologico, il suo carattere tra indessicalità e iconicità contribuisce a sostenere un disegno testuale che promuove lo spazio come un avvincente prodotto turistico da consumare. Per rendere merce uno spazio non bisogna propagare solo le risorse della sua bellezza; bisogna invece mettere in rilievo discorsivo le tre leve ritenute fondamentali (cf. Giordana 2004) per sussistere sul mercato estremamente concorrenziale della globale industria di spazi: attrazione, accessibilità e accoglienza. Secondo le nostre riflessioni, QUI come deittico prossemico locale e relazionale le capta tutte.

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Il *payoff* dalla *brevitas* alla multimodalità

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1. Introduzione

La struttura tipica del testo pubblicitario destinato alla stampa presenta, pur nella variabilità delle realizzazioni, alcuni elementi ricorrenti, immagini e testo, che interagiscono in un'ottica tipicamente multimodale.⁴¹ Secondo lo schema classico le componenti fondamentali includono una parte visiva (l'immagine principale o *catch visual*), combinata con l'*headline* (la frase che veicola il messaggio chiave in stretta connessione con l'immagine), cui si aggiunge spesso un testo di accompagnamento più o meno esteso (*body copy*), in carattere molto più piccolo e di solito stilizzato o frammentato in vario modo, che in tempi più recenti tende tuttavia a ridursi fino a scomparire del tutto; essenziale è infine il marchio (*trademark*), in senso stretto il simbolo aziendale, che si combina con il *logotipo*, il nome di marca variamente individuato e graficamente riprodotto, e con il *payoff*, la frase conclusiva, breve e di facile memorizzazione che sintetizza l'identità stessa della marca. In questa struttura compositiva, gli elementi si relazionano in modo altamente interattivo, formando un tutto articolato ma coeso, che proprio attraverso i rimandi intermodali riesce più efficacemente a propagare il prodotto, sia esso un oggetto, un servizio, un luogo.

Nel testo pubblicitario si realizza quindi un uso intenzionalmente interattivo di diversi codici semiotici, che si integrano secondo principi di salienza e rimando reciproco, con lo sfruttamento di giochi retorici complessi messi in atto sulle parole e

41. L'importanza della multimodalità nel discorso pubblicitario è evidente, ed è da tempo oggetto di ricerca. Cfr, tra gli altri, Kress/van Leeuwen 1996, 2001; Ventola/Cassily/Kaltenbacher 2004, Stöckl 2006, Garzone/Poncini/Catenaccio 2007.

sulle immagini, lavorando su di esse separatamente e soprattutto intrecciandole fino a rendere labili e superabili i confini tra le due entità. In questo saggio ci focalizzeremo inizialmente sul *payoff*, come sintesi verbale del messaggio di marca, esaminandone innanzitutto le caratteristiche linguistiche ricorrenti; il suo autentico valore comunicativo emerge tuttavia solo attraverso l'analisi della sua integrazione nel testo multimodale e della sua interazione con le altre componenti di questo. Partendo dalla descrizione del campione di testi esaminati e dell'approccio teorico (§ 2), ci soffermeremo inizialmente sull'analisi del *payoff* come testo linguistico (§ 3); esamineremo quindi le caratteristiche del marchio, nella cui struttura il *payoff* primariamente si inserisce (§ 4), per concludere con l'analisi di un sottogruppo di marchi, contenuti negli annunci di destinazione tipici del settore turistico, che presentano soluzioni particolarmente interessanti (§ 5).

2. Testi e metodo

Si sono esaminati 170 annunci pubblicitari a stampa, pubblicati su diverse riviste italiane negli ultimi dieci anni, che rappresentano uno spaccato di questo genere della comunicazione aziendale in un arco temporale che, non abbastanza lungo per evidenziare una progressione diacronica marcata e specifica, è tuttavia sufficientemente ampio per mostrare elementi di variazione. Gli annunci sono stati raggruppati per categorie di prodotti e di servizi, focalizzando l'attenzione su alcune di esse; sono stati inoltre considerati diversi segmenti di mercato, con esempi differenziati. Metà del *corpus* è costituito da annunci pubblicitari di destinazione (APD, Held 2007), ai quali si sono aggiunti i marchi utilizzati dalle regioni italiane per le loro campagne promozionali. Gli esempi sono stati scelti per commentare le strategie ricorrenti e per offrire testimonianza di soluzioni particolarmente creative.

I testi pubblicitari, esplicitamente e dichiaratamente persuasivi, sono esempi privilegiati per l'analisi retorica e argomentativa.

A questo proposito, è necessario precisare che individuare contrapposizione da questi due aspetti, separando di fatto la stilistica dalla dialettica, porterebbe ad una interpretazione della retorica riduttiva e oggi non più tacitamente condivisa. Se la rinascita della retorica nel Novecento è stata segnata da una biforcazione (costantemente segnalata nelle sintesi manualistiche: cfr, ad es. Reboul 1994), questa non è che il riflesso di una divaricazione che aveva segnato il declino della disciplina, con la rottura di quel legame tra dialettica e oratoria che costituiva la sua caratteristica più marcata e più proficua. L'unità, già aristotelica, dei due diversi elementi è oggi generalmente riconosciuta (Piazza 2004), e anzi, considerato che l'uomo come essere pensante, parlante e sociale si caratterizza per la sua partecipazione a processi di persuasione, l'unità e l'utilità della retorica emergono con prepotente chiarezza: già presenti nella sistematizzazione aristotelica, esse sfociano nella pervasività del processo retorico, che si manifesta così sistematicamente da rendere inevitabile la presenza di una componente persuasiva in qualsiasi discorso. Benché per alcuni studiosi sia comunque opportuno considerare separatamente i discorsi miranti alla persuasione e ritenerli ambito esclusivo dello studio retorico, altri preferiscono riconoscere l'esistenza di diversi gradi di argomentatività, che si manifestano nei diversi contesti e generi del discorso (Amossy 2006). Si può distinguere quindi tra una intenzione argomentativa esplicita ed una dimensione argomentativa che è di fatto ineliminabile in qualsiasi istanza discorsiva. In questa prospettiva, la pubblicità si collocherebbe nella prima categoria, in considerazione dell'intento persuasivo che per sua stessa natura le appartiene; tuttavia, poiché la persuasione, in modo altrettanto intrinseco, non si manifesta esplicitamente e anzi, come si può facilmente rilevare anche nella dimensione discorsiva, si esercita preferibilmente in modi allusivi e indiretti (Halmari/Virtanen 2005), lo scopo della pubblicità, che pure la individua come macro-genere (detto banalmente: indurre all'acquisto di beni, servizi, ecc.), resta e deve restare nascosto, evo-

cato ed implicito: il testo pubblicitario si caratterizza piuttosto per la continua ricerca di nuovi mezzi di ‘accecamento’, che consentano di indirizzare altrove l’attenzione del destinatario, focalizzandola su giochi verbali e visivi attraverso i quali si veicola, attenuato e mascherato, il messaggio persuasivo.

Tenendo presente questo quadro generale di riferimento, i testi qui considerati saranno quindi analizzati con riferimento specifico agli strumenti retorico-argomentativi. Considerando le caratteristiche del *payoff* e del marchio, si porrà particolare attenzione alle tematiche che riguardano l’ethos, soprattutto nella sua dimensione intradiscorsiva (Amossy 1999, Maingueneau 2002), nonché agli aspetti linguistici che realizzano la (macro)funzione interpersonale del discorso (Halliday 1985). Questo approccio, lasciando in secondo piano la dimensione stilistica e l’analisi specifica delle figure, potrà meglio mettere in luce gli obiettivi dei testi analizzati e le modalità prescelte per la loro realizzazione. Ovviamente, gli strumenti di analisi retorica saranno applicati anche al livello multimodale, per cogliere nel suo insieme la dimensione discorsiva dei testi e, al loro interno, la specificità delle diverse componenti che concorrono alla loro costruzione.

3. *Il payoff come testo breve: densità, deissi, ethos*

La brevità è uno stratagemma compositivo riconosciuto fin dall’antichità, “una categoria storicamente operativa nell’ambito della retorica” (Schwarze 2011: 16). Il principio della *brevitas* rientra tra le massime retoriche, nella misura in cui si ambisce a produrre un testo ideale “a cui non si può togliere nulla senza renderlo oscuro, e a cui non è neppure necessario aggiungere nulla per renderlo più chiaro” (Mortara Garavelli 1993: 102). Nel contesto dei *media* contemporanei, la testualità breve può essere esaminata come categoria della comunicazione (Held/Schwarze 2011), che si realizza in numerosi generi tra loro anche molto diversi, che si moltiplicano anche grazie alle possibilità tecniche di diffusione e trasmissione dei

messaggi.⁴² In generale la brevità implica condensazione, riduzione progressiva che mira a ottimizzare lo sfruttamento dello spazio mediatico a cui si affida il messaggio. Ciò porta a considerare la densità semantica del testo, non solo nella prospettiva lessicale, fondata sulla ormai classica distinzione tra parole lessicali e parole grammaticali e utilizzata per contrapporre lo scritto al parlato (Halliday 1987), ma anche nella prospettiva informativa, tenendo conto delle caratteristiche di genere e delle differenze interlinguistiche (Jansen 2003). Nella cultura postmoderna, che coniuga l'intrattenimento all'economia, il testo breve si presenta come una pratica sociale vera e propria (Held 2011), in un'ottica di rapidità di consumo ed efficacia di messaggio. Nasce così una lingua breve, che si avvale di processi di condensazione e di frammentazione, producendo uno stile brachilogico (la *disjunctive grammar* già descritta da Stöckl 1997) con una forte carica retorica, che si realizza anche nella rappresentazione grafica del messaggio, là dove la parola stessa si trasforma in immagine.

Esamineremo ora alcuni esempi, limitandoci, in questa sezione, ad analizzare i testi verbali.

Il *payoff*, come genere testuale e come parte di un genere semiotico multimodale, rispecchia perfettamente le caratteristiche della *brevitas*, cominciando dalle scelte sintattiche a favore di uno stile quasi sempre nominale e proseguendo con il ricorso a parole polisemiche, ambigue e allusive, che sono in grado di innescare simultaneamente interpretazioni diverse dello stesso testo (come *condire* nell'esempio (1) e *genuino* nel (2), che attivano il *frame* del cibo e al tempo stesso quello della vita), con frequente ricorso a forme di ri-uso linguistico (nell'esempio (3) si evoca il *trattamento di bellezza*).

42. Tra i testi brevi che rimandano a testi più ampi si possono menzionare, tra gli altri, gli abstract, le quarte di copertina, le sintesi informative (es. voci di Wikipedia); testi brevi per natura sono tutte le nuove forme generate dalla comunicazione istantanea (SMS, post, messaggistica, ecc.), che costituiscono un immenso universo di possibilità e di realizzazioni, al quale la ricerca in ambito testuale e comunicativo si accosta ormai con grandissima frequenza, rendendo impossibile dar conto in questa sede della relativa bibliografia.

- (1) Ti condisce la vita [Cirio]
- (2) Scegli un mondo genuino [Mulino Bianco]
- (3) Il tuo trattamento di dolcezza [Dietor].

Passando a considerare altri aspetti della struttura del *payoff*, si osservi che nei tre esempi proposti è utilizzata, come accade anche in numerosi altri casi, una deissi personale che attiva una forma di *embrayage*: il destinatario del messaggio è attratto nel testo, e la sua presenza rende il messaggio stesso più chiaro, oltre ad aumentarne il *pathos*.⁴³ La presenza dell'enunciatario non si manifesta solo con l'uso di forme di imperativo (come in (2)), che anzi non sono particolarmente frequenti. L'imperativo rende esplicito l'intento persuasivo e pertanto, secondo quanto già osservato sopra, annulla l'effetto di allusione e di mascheramento. Più frequente è la rappresentazione del 'tu' in affermazioni veridittive, come in (1), in cui il pronome personale assume la forma di dativo etico, sottolineando l'impegno dell'enunciatore a realizzare una situazione di soddisfazione e di benessere. In (3), viceversa, è l'enunciatario che si appropria dell'oggetto, diventando responsabile in prima persona della cura di sé, attraverso un'azione nascosta in una nominalizzazione (*trattamento*), che trasforma il processo in un esito felice.

Due esempi diversi, restando nell'ambito della stessa categoria merceologica:

- (4) Ottima scelta [burro Prealpi]
- (5) Il buono del biologico dal 1978 [Alce Nero]

In (4) la presenza dell'enunciatario è più implicita, ma tuttavia percepibile: una *scelta* presuppone l'esistenza di un soggetto che sceglie, o più precisamente *ha scelto*; si rappresenta così, in condizioni di estrema condensazione, l'azione compiuta dal consumatore (hai fatto un'ottima scelta preferendo il burro Prealpi), opportunamente valorizzata e trasformata in un principio di generale validità (il burro Prealpi è un'ottima scelta, ogni volta che la farai).

43. Cfr, in prospettiva discorsiva, Antelmi 2012.

Diversamente, (5) non contiene elementi di deissi personale, ma si articola sull'asse temporale: l'affermazione è priva di elementi di modalità, si giova solo di una espressione positiva di giudizio (*buono*) e utilizza l'argomento della quantità (nella sua declinazione temporale: maggiore durata corrisponde a maggior valore). Non è un caso che questo prodotto sia destinato ad un segmento di mercato molto ristretto, di nicchia, che si suppone essere più sensibile ad argomenti di tipo logico piuttosto che al coinvolgimento emotivo, benché, ovviamente, l'argomento utilizzato non garantisca di per sé la *bontà* del prodotto.

In tutti questi esempi si costruisce l'*ethos* della marca, ma ciascuno di essi testimonia una diversa modalità: l'impegno diretto a soddisfare il consumatore (1); l'offerta di uno strumento con il quale il consumatore può curare se stesso (3); l'approvazione di un comportamento indotto (2) o già attribuito al destinatario (4), che implica la veridicità dell'offerta e dell'impegno assunto; l'affermazione *tout court* del proprio valore, una tesi e un tentativo di argomentazione (5).

Il coinvolgimento del destinatario si osserva anche nelle altre categorie merceologiche. Particolarmente interessante il caso dei servizi bancari e assicurativi:

- (6) Costruita intorno a te [Mediolanum]
- (7) Nata per starti vicino [Banca del Sud]
- (8) Al servizio delle tue idee [UniCredit Banca]
- (9) Ti rende sicuro [Ing Direct].

Nei quattro esempi è sempre l'enunciatore che si fa carico di rappresentare nel testo l'enunciatario, presentando l'oggetto-banca come frutto di un processo non tematizzato e ormai concluso, i cui esiti si configurano come una presenza reale (*nata*), solida (*costruita*), che affianca, supporta e rassicura.

Una (apparente) eccezione:

- (10) Una banca fatta di persone [Monte dei Paschi di Siena].

dove non compare esplicitamente l'enunciatarario. Tuttavia, la sua presenza si può cogliere tra le *persone* di cui è composta la banca, che mette insieme il *suo* personale, come espressione umana e emotivamente vicina di un'istituzione che potrebbe risultare rigidamente lontana e imperscrutabile, e i suoi clienti, che sono i destinatari dell'annuncio. In altri termini: tra queste persone ci sei anche tu.

Un'ultima serie di esempi raccoglie prodotti di vario genere, accomunati dal riferimento ad un analogo (ed alto) segmento di mercato:

- (11) Sempre meglio [Miele]
- (12) Some things are just better [Illy]
- (13) The sign of excellence [Omega]
- (14) L'élégance du temps depuis 1832 [Longines].

Tre esempi su quattro sono in una lingua straniera: non si tratta di una casualità, bensì di una caratteristica ricorrente, sicché si potrebbe quasi affermare che è il *payoff* in italiano a costituire un'eccezione. In (11) il senso dell'eccellenza è dato non da una espressione assoluta e definitiva (come in (4)), ma dall'idea della ricerca continua e inarrestabile di una (inarrivabile) perfezione: un concetto raffinato, che si addice ad un consumatore attento alle sfumature. Negli altri tre esempi, la scelta linguistica di fondo è essa stessa garanzia di prestigio, non solo quando è legata alla provenienza del marchio, come in (14), ma anche quando è in evidente dissonanza con questa. In (13) si pubblicizza un prodotto proveniente dalla patria riconosciuta degli orologi, la Svizzera, che tra le sue pur diverse lingue ufficiali non annovera l'inglese, eppure questo è prescelto come veicolo di una affermazione di eccellenza, per la sua riconosciuta universalità, quasi fosse esso stesso un valore assoluto. Ancora più interessante il caso di un prodotto, (12), che si potrebbe considerare un esempio di eccellenza italiana: il ricorso all'inglese si comprende, al di là della possibilità di utilizzare lo stesso testo anche per campagne all'estero, come un segno di

distinzione, un valore aggiunto che scaturisce dalle dinamiche sociolinguistiche tipiche dell'Italia contemporanea (Santulli 2002). Anche in questo caso, come in (11), si preferisce una valutazione comparativa (*better*) rispetto ad una affermazione assoluta – un segno di raffinata distinzione.

Gli esempi selezionati danno conto dei fenomeni più tipici e frequenti, anche in funzione delle tipologie di prodotti e delle caratteristiche di mercato. La loro analisi resta comunque parziale e riduttiva, se non si considera il rapporto dinamico del *payoff* con gli altri elementi dell'annuncio pubblicitario, in primo luogo quelli che gli sono solidali nella costruzione della 'firma' dell'annuncio stesso, il marchio. A questo indirizziamo adesso l'attenzione, esaminandone dapprima alcune caratteristiche generali, anche in prospettiva storica.

4. *Il marchio: valore storico e sintesi multimodale*

Etimologicamente, il marchio è legato all'azione di segnare il confine, generalmente di un terreno o di un'area geografica. La pratica ha origini antichissime: una lunga tradizione di segni finalizzati a diverse forme di identificazione (origine, produttore, proprietario, ecc.) ha attraversato la storia, lasciando tracce importantissime delle civiltà di ogni tempo, ancor oggi preservate e studiate, tra esse in primo luogo monete, sigilli, pietre di confine (Monachesi 1993). Ciò che accomuna questi oggetti diversissimi è l'obiettivo di trovare una rappresentazione sintetica ed efficace di una identità: famiglie, città, scalpellini, stampatori. Nell'araldica, in particolare, la tradizione degli stemmi può essere considerata un diretto antecedente del moderno uso del marchio. Uno stemma combina immagini simboliche (animali reali o immaginari, fiori, stelle) e motivi geometrici con un motto, una frase che sintetizza i meriti distintivi di una famiglia, come il coraggio, la forza, la perseveranza. Durante il Rinascimento si diffusero due forme di rappresentazione connesse e complementari: l'*emblema* (etimologicamente

indicante un oggetto gettato dentro un altro), una composizione di immagine (*res picta*) e motto (*inscriptio*), finalizzata a rappresentare un precetto generale; l'*impresa*, costituita da un disegno con un motto inscritto sopra, utilizzata per ricordare una situazione storica, una decisione, persino una ambizione.⁴⁴ Questa brevissima sintesi storica mira semplicemente a sottolineare come il desiderio di identificarsi e mostrarsi in modo univoco abbia radici e manifestazioni antichissime, che nella moderna società industriale si sono sviluppate enormemente, per rispondere alle esigenze della concorrenza e al bisogno di riconoscibilità presso i potenziali clienti. Il marchio industriale, la cui nascita è legata al bisogno di proteggere i prodotti e garantirne l'autenticità imprimendo su di essi il segno dell'appartenenza, ha sviluppato potenzialità molto più ampie, giungendo a trasferire l'identità dal produttore/prodotto al consumatore/acquirente che diventa parte di un gruppo riconoscibile per la preferenza concessa ad un certo marchio: indossare gli stessi indumenti, usare lo stesso cellulare, ecc. rende membri di una comunità.

Come si è accennato sopra, nel marchio si riconoscono tre elementi di base che riproducono il nome (del prodotto, della linea, del produttore), l'immagine del prodotto e il motto (*payoff*). Il nome (*logotipo*) può essere il risultato di una strategia di *namings*, come nella maggior parte degli esempi relativi al settore alimentare, meno frequentemente nell'ambito bancario-assicurativo. La scelta del nome di marca rende naturalmente possibile l'individuazione e la promozione di una serie di qualità essenziali del prodotto: il dolcificante *Dietor* mantiene 'a dieta', i biscotti (riconducibili ad un produttore comunque noto per altri numerosi e popolari prodotti) della linea *Mulino Bianco* evocano campagna, tradizione, pulizia,

44. Monachesi 1993: 91-101. La parola *impresa* si riferisce all'intenzione di intraprendere un'azione (in campo militare, cavalleresco, amoroso, ecc.) che si intende identificare in questo modo, ed è interessante notare che oggi la parola indica una società commerciale, una entità per la produzione di beni o servizi che sintetizza la propria identità, appunto, in un marchio.

un ritorno alla natura cominciato ben prima dell'entusiasmo più recente per i prodotti biologici. Il nome si potenzia naturalmente nella combinazione con gli altri elementi (l'immagine, nell'ultimo esempio, della ruota di un mulino), anche attraverso la scelta della veste grafica. Esempi particolarmente interessanti si trovano nel settore turistico (dove il nome non può essere frutto di una scelta), che esamineremo più avanti.

Gli altri due elementi del marchio sono solitamente in strettissima connessione: la loro interazione riproduce su piccola scala quella tra *catch-visual* e *headline*, che è la base bimodale dell'annuncio. Il rapporto tra immagine e testo, a partire dalla opposizione tra *relay* e *anchorage* proposta da Barthes (1964), è stato studiato in prospettiva multimodale, individuando diversi tipi di relazioni: additiva, complementare, gerarchica, divergente, conflittuale (Held 2007: 249); altri hanno sviluppato da tempo classificazioni ancora più articolate, cercando di connetterle alle figure retoriche tradizionali (Gaede 1981), o le hanno analizzate nella prospettiva della *visual argumentation* (Stöckl 1997). Risulta tuttavia difficile, e non sempre univoco, stabilire differenze precise tra i diversi tipi di interazione (e ciò in particolare quando aumenta il numero delle possibilità individuate), e soprattutto è spesso impossibile assegnare un singolo caso ad una o all'altra categoria, in quanto nella realtà si verificano continue sovrapposizioni e contaminazioni. Lo sfruttamento creativo del potenziale comunicativo di codici diversi porta a violare le regole e scompigliare continuamente le forme tradizionali di classificazione. Si è parlato di *Zeichenmetamorphose* ('metamorfosi dei segni', Keller 1995) anche nella prospettiva della trasformazione di segni linguistici in segni visivi (e viceversa), che rende impossibile una interpretazione stabile e costante, mentre l'interazione intermodale trasforma il valore semantico autonomo dei singoli elementi. In ultima analisi, la ricchezza del dibattito e delle proposte non sembra essere sfociata in una metodologia. Held (2007), dopo aver esaminato in dettaglio diverse possibi-

lità, cercando una base più solida, ha utilizzato la fondamentale tripartizione di Peirce: icona, indice e simbolo. Tuttavia, persino questa non consente sempre categorizzazioni univoche. Basti, per tutti, l'esempio del *Mulino Bianco*: rappresentato graficamente nel marchio, induce ad una interpretazione iconica; tuttavia la sua raffigurazione (in un cerchio circondato da spighe e fiori di campo) ha una funzione di rimando ad un contesto agreste più ampio, che diventa decisamente il simbolo capace di evocare i valori fondamentali già menzionati sopra.

5. *Il marchio nella pubblicità di destinazione*

La pubblicità di destinazione presenta sue caratteristiche specifiche (Held 2007). Nell'economia di questo intervento non è possibile soffermarsi in generale sulla costruzione del luogo come prodotto desiderabile, né sulle diverse modalità di attrazione del consumatore. Ci limiteremo a considerare le caratteristiche particolari del marchio, con lo sfruttamento del nome, delle potenzialità tipografiche, delle immagini iconiche e simboliche, con cui si combina il testo linguistico. Gli esempi proposti sono tratti da una raccolta dei marchi delle regioni italiane.

La prima caratteristica peculiare è proprio nel nome (proprio) del luogo, che ha valore identificativo, minima estensione (*Umfang*) e massima intensione (*Inhalt*).⁴⁵ In quanto elemento di designazione, il toponimo esclude possibilità connotative, ma nella pubblicità di destinazione viene messo in atto un processo di reinterpretazione: il nome del luogo viene trasformato in un segno linguistico nuovo, la cui intensità semantica non contiene le caratteristiche fisiche dell'oggetto di riferimento, ma si arricchisce di una serie di associazioni rappresentative dell'unicità del

45. Il problema è stato ampiamente discusso in termini filosofici nel corso del Novecento, a partire dalla teoria dei nomi propri di J. Stuart Mill (1843). Più di recente Calefato (2006) riesamina le varie tematiche anche nella prospettiva dell'uso dei nomi propri a fini promozionali.

luogo stesso. Si può attivare la figura di antonomasia, procedendo in senso opposto a quello di formazione del toponimo, sicché il luogo diventa un sinonimo della parola che indica la sua caratteristica più saliente (Sardegna sta per *mare*). In questo caso, però, l'equivalente non è la designazione ordinaria di un oggetto (un "mare qualunque"), ma si carica di una forte valorizzazione positiva, che altera il significato della parola (il "mare per eccellenza" è limpido, azzurro e pulito). L'antonomasia implica di norma una perdita di intensione: alcune delle caratteristiche dell'individuo devono essere scartate perché il nome possa essere applicato ad una intera classe, aumentando la sua estensione. Nel logotipo turistico avviene di fatto il contrario: la ricchezza del significato non diminuisce, anzi si intensifica a livello qualitativo (il mare della Sardegna è unico, ma è l'unico degno di essere chiamato mare), permettendo così di generare una immagine unica, che non può essere presa a prestito da altri luoghi che appartengono alla stessa classe fisica (luoghi di mare, dove il mare non è "mare davvero").

Nella presentazione del nome vengono ampiamente sfruttate le possibilità tipografiche (Stöckl 2005), trasformando la scrittura in un oggetto da vedere (Fix 2002). Un esempio eccellente è il marchio scelto dalla regione Abruzzo, che scrive il proprio nome con diversi colori e sviluppando creativamente la forma delle lettere in modo da rappresentare sinteticamente le bellezze dei luoghi: si va dalle cime innevate (il bianco sulla cima della A), ai boschi verdissimi, ai prati più chiari, fino all'azzurro del mare ("zz" in azzurro) che si completa con il giallo sole in cui si trasforma la o finale (comprensivo di raggi). Questa rappresentazione si combina con il *payoff*:

(15) Tutta la tua natura.

Qui è evidente la funzione interpersonale: la natura abruzzese, rappresentata nel nome, si offre al potenziale turista perché questi

possa coglierla; tuttavia, la parola *natura* è polisemica e, nel contesto del motto, può essere riferita alle caratteristiche, inclinazioni e credenze dell'enunciatario, sicché l'Abruzzo si pone in stretta sintonia con i suoi ospiti, che attivamente si appropriano di un luogo corrispondente ai loro più intimi sentimenti. L'identità del luogo e quella dell'ospite si mescolano e si rafforzano reciprocamente.

Il legame tra immagine e testo (che l'Abruzzo esemplifica egregiamente se si considera la scrittura del nome come una immagine), si riconosce con particolare evidenza anche nel caso di altre regioni italiane. La Campania, ad esempio, propone un'immagine che unisce alle colonne di un tempio (Pompei o Paestum), il ben noto profilo del Vesuvio e i faraglioni di Capri sormontati dal sole; il *payoff*:

(16) Una terra alla luce del sole,

sembra descrivere verbalmente l'immagine visiva, il sole che illumina le più celebri bellezze della regione. Il testo linguistico lancia un ponte verso l'immagine (Stöckl 1997: 143), stabilendo un contatto tra i due codici semiotici. In questo *payoff* si possono tuttavia rintracciare altre implicazioni, se si considera una possibile interpretazione metaforica dell'espressione *alla luce del sole*, riferibile a una situazione chiara, priva di ambiguità e raggiri, opposta all'intrigo. LA LUCE È CHIAREZZA E TRASPARENZA, potrebbe esserne la sintesi in termini di metafora cognitiva (Lakoff/Johnson 1980). In questa prospettiva, si combattono gli stereotipi negativi solitamente collegati alla regione come terra della camorra e della criminalità: la luce contrasta il lato *oscuro* del luogo, rafforzando al tempo stesso gli aspetti positivi legati al clima mite e soleggiato e all'atteggiamento caloroso degli abitanti.

Anche il marchio della regione Liguria gioca sull'ambiguità polisemica. Il *payoff*, riprodotto in *scriptio continua*, è leggibile in due modi (una sorta di calembour):

(17) terradamare,

dove le lettere centrali (da) in rosso spezzano la sequenza azzurra delle altre. Il testo può essere scomposto in *terra da* [di] *mare* (un paese marittimo), ma non si esclude una interpretazione alternativa, *terra d'*[da] *amare*, che rafforza una campagna promozionale centrata sull'idea che la Liguria offre molto di più che il mare (l'*headline* di una campagna multisoggetto era: *E pensare che qualcuno ci viene solo per il mare*).

Concludiamo con una rapida rassegna di esempi che riflettono le tematiche fin qui affrontate.

Il ricorso alla deissi interpersonale nei marchi turistici è meno frequente: per le regioni italiane, a parte il caso dell'Abruzzo, i riferimenti all'enunciatario sono rari e indiretti. Il Trentino:

(18) Sopra le aspettative.

Benché la persona non sia rappresentata linguisticamente, si infersce il riferimento a qualcuno che ha delle aspettative, il turista che troverà molto più di quanto potesse desiderare. La raffigurazione di una farfalla stilizzata ha valore iconico, ma evoca anche il volo, l'idea di volare alto, *al di sopra* delle attese. Il Friuli Venezia Giulia:

(19) Ospiti di gente unica.

Anche in questo caso gli *ospiti* materializzano la figura del turista, che stabilisce una relazione privilegiata (in quanto ospite) con degli *ospiti* unici che lo accolgono. L'enantiosema che caratterizza in italiano la parola *ospite* consente questa sovrapposizione di identità e di unicità.

La maggior parte dei *payoff* scelgono affermazioni veridittive, con sfruttamento di polisemie e significati evocativi. Il marchio del Molise combina il *payoff*:

(20) Il cuore pulito d'Italia,

con la rappresentazione della regione nel profilo dello stivale, sottolineando la sua posizione centrale (metafora del *cuore* in quanto centro geografico), ma allo stesso tempo attivando una interpretazione valoriale e affettiva (*cuore* in quanto sede di sentimenti), completata dall'aggettivo *pulito* (*cuore* in quanto punto di propagazione di una caratteristica cruciale). Ancora:

- (21) Tra la terra e il cielo [Veneto]
- (22) Terra con l'anima [Emilia Romagna].

Entrambi i testi individuano caratteristiche identitarie particolari, poco legate alla realtà fattuale, che si rispecchiano nelle rispettive immagini: il leone alato di San Marco e una stella variopinta iscritta in un cerchio (un ricordo di Arlecchino? una rappresentazione circolare dell'arcobaleno?) per il Veneto; una serie di linee ondulate di vari colori che formano un semicerchio (fiamme? e quindi, forse, anime?) per l'Emilia Romagna.

Anche le regioni italiane sfruttano talora il potenziale di prestigio dell'inglese. Il Piemonte ha fatto passare il rinnovamento della propria immagine attraverso l'adozione di un *payoff* in inglese:

- (23) Passion and art,
così come Torino ha scelto:
- (24) Always on the move.

Infine la Val d'Aosta, dove la questione linguistica è realmente una questione di identità:

- (25) Ci sono mille valli, ma una sola è la Vallée.

La parola francese richiama il nome della regione (che nel marchio è riprodotto sia in italiano sia in francese) e quindi diventa un segno distintivo in modo del tutto naturale, ma non per questo meno speciale, unico.

6. Conclusioni

L'analisi dei testi pubblicitari raccolti per questa ricerca, focalizzata sul *payoff* e sul marchio, ha messo in luce alcuni elementi caratteristici, che si è cercato di mostrare e commentare negli esempi. Condensazione, polisemia, *embrayage* sono caratteristiche ricorrenti e cruciali nella costruzione di testi brevi e agganciati ad un contesto testuale multimodale, che ne esalta e moltiplica i significati. La relazione del *payoff*, in primo luogo, con gli altri elementi del marchio, appare fondamentale eppure difficilmente riconducibile ad un modello di interazione nel quale le categorie non si moltiplichino e sovrappongano continuamente. Anche nello schema più essenziale di classificazione, i singoli esempi si prestano ad interpretazioni multiple, e questo non è che un riflesso della ricchezza dei loro significati.

Si possono tuttavia individuare alcune caratteristiche settoriali: in particolare, nell'ambito della pubblicità turistica di destinazione, le soluzioni grafiche e linguistiche sono fortemente condizionate dalla fissità del logotipo e dalla necessità di trasformare questo limite in una opportunità. Del nome del luogo, di cui bisogna accettare la forma fonica, si personalizza e arricchisce la veste grafica, mettendo parallelamente in atto un processo di revisione semantica, che consente di selezionare le caratteristiche salienti dell'oggetto, espanderle qualitativamente, trasformandole in segni di identità. Del nome proprio, quindi, si mette in secondo piano il riferimento concreto, puntando sul suo valore immateriale, che si determina nell'interazione con gli elementi visivi e con le parole: si trasformano dati estrinseci (le caratteristiche naturali, la posizione geografica), impegni soggettivi (l'offerta e la cura dell'ospitalità), invenzioni creative (la presenza di un'anima, di una condizione di sospensione) in affermazioni di identità unica e irripetibile. L'istanza etica emerge nel motto, e si rafforza nella lettura di questo resa possibile dal contesto multimodale: parole che si pronunciano, si ricordano, si guardano.

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Captions in Visual and Media Studies An Introductory Note

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It was only during the editing process of this volume, when the book-object began to take shape, that I realized how closely the relation between its verbal and visual parts actualize the topic stated in the title. Not only do the pictures illustrate the written paragraphs; the pages present a kind of rhythm, a patterned alternation of written and visual text, which, reiterated throughout the book, produce a sort of script, a multiplied tribute to the existence of captions as *accompanying* texts of images. Indeed, the term used in the title recalls synonymous expressions such as *escorting*, *chaperoning* or *attending*, thus obviously implying that it is no longer the pictures that are ancillary to the written text, but rather the other way around. Despite the old-fashioned scenery evoked by these verbs, the idea is actually a fairly recent one, the product of an era that has admittedly stepped beyond literacy. As argued by Kress/Van Leeuwen (2001: 46), “in the age of multimodality, language, whether as speech or as writing, may now often be seen as *ancillary* to other semiotic modes: to the visual for instance. Language may now be seen as ‘extravisual’ (see also Lombardo *et al.*, 1999).

It is significant that, despite the emphasis placed on the merging of semiotic modes, the dichotomy has been maintained. This seems to suggest that a specific interest lies in the tension between the image and verbal text as distinct, yet interacting, entities with equal capacity to serve “for representation and communication” (*ibid.*), rather than in all the possible ways in which they may overlap or even identify as, for instance, when considering the superimposition of words and figures in avant-garde paintings or, more generally, the iconography of the written word (Pozzi 1981). This tension is probably necessary to avoid a blurring of bounda-

ries that would finally lead to the negation of both the verbal and the visual, just as the denial of the existence of a *literal* dimension of language would ultimately contradict the idea that discourse also has a *figurative* space (Kittay 1989: 20). Captions do acquire meaning in their relation to pictures but at the same time they are also physically or graphically *framed*, which somehow marks their separateness from the image even when, being framed, they *become* the image.

On the other hand, in multimodal contexts discussions about priorities between ‘telling’ and ‘showing’ or on which semiotic mode is more complex are often sterile (Gubern 1974; Kress/Van Leeuwen 2006: 19; 2010: 79), as are endless debates about the possibility of translating images into verbal texts and vice versa. Rather than strive on general paradigms, it is therefore far more productive to focus on specific examples and see how the interaction works in *that* particular case. Zooming in and out to see how meaning is constructed through both pictures and words is probably the most effective way to focus on connections between semiotic modes within multimodal contexts, just like a Prezi presentation is sometimes more explicative than a PowerPoint slideshow. In the end, the peculiar prerogative of captions is that of activating a sensory and cognitive loop, from picture to verbal text and back again: you look at the picture a first time, read the caption, then look at the picture a second time, with the words of the caption echoing in your mind. As synthesized by Culler with reference to Barthes’s choice to concentrate on captions in fashion magazines, “language permits one to pass from the material objects to the units of a system of signification by bringing out, through the process of naming, meaning that was merely latent in the object” (Culler 1975: 33).

This is what the Doctoral Students of the PhD Programme in Visual and Media Studies at IULM University in Milan have attempted to do in this section: by presenting seven case stud-

ies, they have briefly but clearly illustrated how captions may relate to the visual in literary and visual artworks, highlighting semiotic processes while also shedding light on the context in which the works of art were conceived and set. Indeed, this approach also has the advantage of tackling the issue from a historical perspective, showing how the idea of ‘accompanying written texts’ has changed over time. In fact, the progression outlined in the following section is not organized around different media or themes but roughly chronologically: it spans from Renaissance painting to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, from the representation of the Holocaust in photographic exhibitions to meta-art experiences, from installations to comics and electronic literature.

Alberto Maria CASCIELLO investigates the *cartellini* containing literary citations in sixteenth-century painting – particularly in Veneto painters Lotto and Il Moretto – discussing their guiding function through the different signifieds of the visual representation and hence their crucial role in its interpretation, which would allow the critic to identify them as ‘proto-captions’.

While in the *cartellini* the connection between visual and literary themes had to be detected within the picture and read as a sort of meta-textual conundrum, three centuries later, in Dante-Gabriel Rossetti – the poet and painter who is at the centre of Ambra CELANO’s study – the connection was deliberately searched for. Rossetti wrote sonnets as *ekphrases* of some of his paintings. In *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, displayed at the Free Exhibition in London in 1849, he overtly stated the relation between the literary text and the painting by inserting the sonnets that described it in the frame, in the place usually meant for the label.

Rossetti’s sonnets somehow *literally* translated or mirrored the paintings in a different medium. Today, almost two centuries later and after the experience of postmodernism, captions may

produce meaning precisely by contradicting the image under which they appear. This is what happened in the 2015 exhibition *Poland-Israel-Germany: The Experience of Auschwitz Today* held at the Mocak Museum in Krakow. As argued by Eirene CAMPAGNA, it is only through the process of estrangement generated by the unexpected associations between the captions and the photographs that the tragedy of the Holocaust re-acquires its concrete poignancy, beyond all the commemorations and tours that have often transformed the concentration camp into a horror theme park.

The extent to which captions may change the meaning of artworks and the defamiliarizing effect that can be obtained by altering their position and function are also underlined by Arianna FANTUZZI. Her study focuses on *The Imaginary Museum*, Hans Hollein's exhibition presented at the eighth edition of *Documenta* in 1987. In the exhibition, the Viennese architect and designer decided to overturn the hierarchic relationship between artworks and labels by magnifying the latter and placing them at eye-level and, conversely, by reducing the former and allotting them a tiny space underneath. As a result, the label turned into the work of art and vice versa, thus producing a dizzying effect aimed at emphasizing the importance of looking at the work of art rather than at a discourse about it.

This theme is further explored by Vincenzo DI ROSA in his research on Philippe Parreno's *Labels and Marquees*, with particular reference to the exhibition *Anywhere, Anywhere, Out of the World* held at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, in 2013. Indeed, Parreno's *Marquees* perform the function of 'accompanying texts', as they ostensibly invite the visitor to the artistic experience. But since the experience they flashily point to is denied – the work of art they are supposed to lure to is missing and *they* are the artistic experience – what they ultimately underline is the idea that art today may only exist as meta-art.

The ambiguous function performed by captions is also explored in Dario BOEMIA's research on the graphic novel. Indeed, nowhere more than in comics is the (never fixed) relaying function of captions and balloons within and in relation to the drawings shown. In comics, the story emerges from a constant renegotiation of meanings and roles between pictures and writing, hence producing a complex semiosis that plays on space and temporality, narrating/narrated voices, visions, thoughts, imagined utterances and actual dialogue. Boemia analyses these dynamics in a page from Zerocalcare's *Forget My Name* (2014), demonstrating how also in the graphic novel narrative and cognitive meaning may stem from an unexpected swapping of roles or from the intrusion of captions and pictures into each other's space. Indeed, as also seen in the previous studies, one of the most interesting ways of showing the interplay between images and words is by getting them to trade places.

After seeing how accompanying texts can metamorphose into a wide range of semiotic devices according to artform and the aesthetic *aut aut* of the period – namely as *cartellini*, labels and captions – in the study that concludes this section we find an analysis of the role played by *tags* in contemporary electronic literature. Indeed, Roberta IADEVAIA presents a complex taxonomy through case studies that exemplify the different actions that can be triggered by tags – conceived both as metadata and as powerful aesthetic tools – within virtual or augmented environments. It is interesting to see how these devices, whatever their algorithmic nature and the sensory/mental experience they activate, are ultimately embodied by verbal objects which can stand for “purchased, searched for or implanted words”. More generally, tags “can affect the way we write, think, see and perceive the world”, which is, all things said, what accompanying texts have always attempted to do, through all media and ages.

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The *Cartellini* in 16th-Century Veneto Painting as Proto-Captions

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‘Tag’ and ‘label’ could both be a suitable translation for *cartellino*, the inscribed piece of paper that first appeared in Flemish painting and later – during the first half of the 15th century – also in Italian painting. Originally performing the function of bearing the signature of the painter, by the beginning of the 16th century the *cartellino* or *letterina* (Michiel, 1800: 75) was used to convey more refined and subtle contents, namely references to ancient Greek and Roman culture⁴⁶. Starting from the assumption that these short texts played a key role in the interpretation and understanding of the paintings in which they were displayed, I will here attempt to treat them as an example of proto-captions.



Fig. 1. Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of a Woman inspired by Lucretia*.
London, National Gallery.

46. On this issue, see Rawlings K. 2013 and its bibliographical references.

In Lorenzo Lotto's *Portrait of a Woman inspired by Lucretia*⁴⁷ from c. 1530-33 (fig. 1), a woman attired in a green-and-orange stylish dress is standing between the back of an armchair and a table. In her left hand, she is holding a drawing representing the Roman heroine Lucretia, portrayed in the very moment before stabbing herself. At the same time, the sitter is pointing with her right hand to another sheet of paper which is lying on the table, thus catching the attention of the viewer. The *cartellino* shows two evident folding marks but it is now open and reveals the Latin text: "nec ulla impudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet"⁴⁸ (fig. 2) which translated into English reads "in time to come no unchaste woman will be able to cite my example as an excuse for living" (Penny, 2004: 81)⁴⁹. These are Lucretia's last words in Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, therefore what she may be supposed to declaim in the instant captured in the drawing. The general idea is that by committing suicide she will deprive unchaste women of a possible excuse for going on living (Penny, 2004: 77).

47. London, National Gallery (NG4256).

48. The complete passage reads: "«Vos» inquit «videritis quid illi debeatur: ego me etsi peccato absolvo, supplicio non libero; nec ulla deinde impudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet.» (Titus Livius).

49. The translation of the complete passage – see previous footnote – by Nicholas Penny reads: "It is for you to decide what he [Sextus Tarquinius] deserves; for my part, although I acquit myself from guilt I do not absolve myself from punishment: in time to come no unchaste woman will be able to cite my example as an excuse for living" (Penny, 2004: 81).

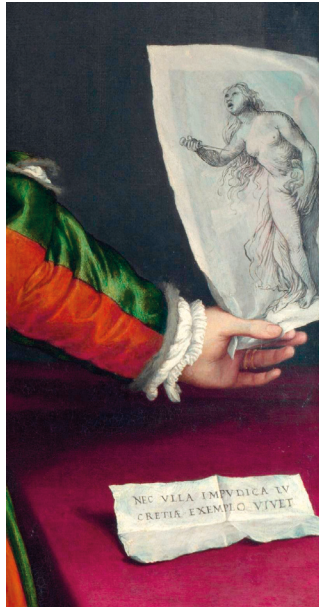


Fig. 2. Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of a Woman inspired by Lucretia* (detail).
London, National Gallery.

If we consider the *cartellino* as an object that, although appearing to belong to a contemporary dimension, clearly provides “a visual and temporal bridge between the Renaissance viewer [...] and the antique past” (Rawlings, 2013: 29), then the Latin text in Lotto’s canvas could arguably be read as a proto-caption to both the painting and the drawing depicted in it. Indeed, the words could both refer to the actual condition of the sitter – who was very likely called Lucretia herself – and, as Penny (2004: 78) argues, set the Roman heroine as an example for unchaste women. The latter interpretation would be supported by the fact that she seems to be prepared to follow Lucretia’s fate. Yet, the text seems to go beyond the mere *exemplum*. The ostensive gesture, combined with the fact that the sitter is not holding a dagger but rather a

drawing, might suggest that the woman is not at all cast as the Roman heroine. As suggested by Penny (2004: 78), if she had been depicted as Lucretia, “then she would be claiming – or she would be liable to be understood to be claiming – that she had been dishonoured”. Hence, the choice of representing on the proto-caption the heroine’s Latin words – rather than the sitter’s claim in 16th-century-Italian – could strengthen Penny’s idea (2004: 78) of the woman not embodying the ancient Roman lady, but making a conditional point, that she would, under certain circumstances, act like her. The text could therefore be read not as a literal description of the painting, but as an interpretation aimed at ‘giving voice’ to the character portrayed.



Fig. 3. Alessandro Bonvicino, known as Il Moretto, *Portrait of a Young Man*. London, National Gallery.

Let us consider another example of this use of proto-captions. Alessandro Bonvicino, known as Il Moretto, sets his *Portrait of a Young Man*⁵⁰ dated c. 1540-45 (fig. 3) in an opulent setting. Against a gold-and-burgundy damask curtain that partly covers a grey marble niche, a richly dressed sitter – represented thigh-length – is wearing a close-fitting grey tunic with a band embroidered with a gold-thread pattern, a pair of luxurious silky quilted sleeves, a velvet cap and a gown with a lynx fur lining. He is sitting in an armchair, with his left hand holding the silk velvet close-covered armrest, the right elbow on two taffeta pillows placed on a table and his right hand supporting his head.

On the table, there is a pair of grey leather gloves as well as three ancient coins: the nearest two, bearing imperial heads, seem to be of tarnished silver. The third one, placed into an open case, could be golden. The case, with its lid beside it, is of turned ivory or bone and behind it there is another case, which is closed. Beside the coins and gloves there is a bronze oil lamp in the shape of a sandalled foot with a horn-shaped projection rising from below the large toe. This last object recalls the marble feet – fragments of ancient statues – that were treasured by sixteenth-century collectors (Penny, 2004: 174-175).

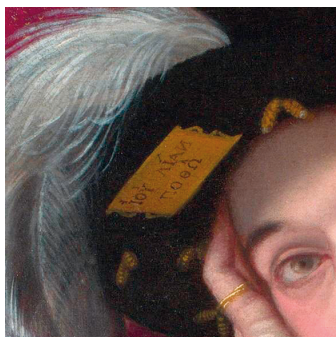


Fig. 4. Alessandro Bonvicino, known as Il Moretto, *Portrait of a Young Man* (detail). London, National Gallery.

50. London, National Gallery (NG299).

The pose of the sitter, with his right hand supporting his head and his empty gaze looking upwards, suggest a pensive, melancholic attitude. If not for the proto-caption – here a short inscription on the underside of the rim of the cap (fig. 4) — it would be impossible to know the source of the sitter’s sorrow. The ancient Greek words on this up-to-date specimen of the 15th century *cartellino* read: “ιοὺ λῆαν ποθῶ”. In translation: “Alas, I desire too much” (Penny 2004: 172). Hence we understand that what is bringing the sitter down into an endless melancholic spiral is his desire for expensive material goods, unsatisfied despite the extraordinary display of richness and luxury within the painting.

Through the examples provided, proto-captions appear as a fundamental feature to fully decipher the paintings in which they were displayed. However, conversely to what happens nowadays when captions are widely employed in various contexts and along with almost any kind of image, during the Renaissance short texts were mainly depicted in works of art for the private sphere and could only be fully deciphered by the educated elite of the time.

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Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Sonnets as Captions

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The aim of this paper is to present a particular example of *ekphrasis*. The case study is based on *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a painting that is also stated to be the first Pre-Raphaelite work. In it the artist, who was actually one of the founders of the reform movement known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, added the initials of the group as part of the signature. After inscribing this example within the framework of the 19th-century vogue for the Victorian “single painting poem”, this paper intends to interpret the latter as a peculiar case of intersemiotic translation.

According to a definition provided by Aphthonius of Antioch in one of his four books, a collection of exercises on prose composition, that go under the name of *Progymnasmata* (Kennedy, 2003), *ekphrasis* is “a descriptive [...] speech which brings (literally ‘leads’) the thing shown vividly before the eyes” (Webb 2009: 51). *Ekphrases* have oftentimes become the sole testaments of numerous ancient works of art that had gone lost, meaning that their readers and listeners could only imagine the works depicted. Indeed, one of the earliest examples of *ekphrasis* is Philostratus of Lemnos’ *Eikones*, where the sophist described a series of images contained in a villa in Naples. Furthermore, throughout the centuries, from Homer’s description of the shield of Achilles and Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Archaischer Torso Apollos*, the practice of *ekphrasis* has granted to combine a vivid description of an *objet d’art* to the creation of another work of art, namely a poem.

During the eighteenth century ekphrastic poetry served as a means to describe the *oeuvres d’art*, mostly in Southern Europe (especially Italian) tradition, contemplated by northern writers

during their *Grand Tour*. But it is especially during the nineteenth century that it acquired a particular literary form and status. Following the famous *Ode on a Grecian Urn* by John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci, in the Florentine Gallery*, the Romantic period and the Victorian age witnessed the rise of the "single painting poem". A single painting poem was an ekphrastic composition providing the description of a painting which could have been directly contemplated by the reader. Within the narration, the poet might amplify the descriptive elements of the painting, in order to capture the amazement of the reader and the looker-on together with the response of the artist who gave birth to the artwork described.

In addition to the trend of celebrating Italian painters, 19th-century fondness for the Italian tradition is also proved by the structure of ekphrastic poems, often inspired by Petrarchan sonnets. It is relevant to note that their rectangular shape bore a certain similarity to the configuration of both a picture frame and a caption. Indeed, the word 'frame' comes from the Old Norse *fremja*, which means 'to promote', 'to execute', and it is possible to associate it with the legal usage of the word 'caption' that became popular in the vocabulary of jurisprudence from the second half of the 7th century. In fact, at that time captions were depositions in the form of declarative and descriptive headings, whose function was to implement the denotation of a law document.

Accordingly, in 1849, Rossetti decided to attach a sonnet written on a gold-faced sheet of paper to the frame of his first major oil painting "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin", exhibited at the Free Exhibition in London (Fig. 1). He had also one more sonnet printed in the catalogue of the exhibition. When the picture was reframed in 1864, after Rossetti repainted parts of the work, he had the two sonnets inscribed next to each other on the lower part of the frame.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, Tate Britain.

They respectively served as an explanation of the imagery of the painting and of its Catholic symbolism:

I

This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
 God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
 Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
 Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
 Profound simplicity of intellect,
 And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
 Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;
 Strong in grave peace; in pity circumspect.
 So held she through her girlhood; as it were
 An angel-water'd lily, that near God
 Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home,
 She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
 At all, – yet wept till sunshine, and felt aw'd:
 Because the fulness of the time was come.

II

These are the symbols. On that cloth of red
 I' the centre, is the Tripoint, —perfect each
 Except the second of its points, to teach
 That Christ is not yet born. The books (whose head
 Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said)
 Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich:
 Therefore on them the lily standeth, which
 Is Innocence, being interpreted.
 The seven-thorned briar and the palm seven-leaved
 Are her great sorrows and her great reward.
 Until the time be full, the Holy One
 Abides without. She soon shall have achieved
 Her perfect purity: yea, God the Lord
 Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son.

This act inaugurated Rossetti's practice of executing a painting and then writing one or more poems to comment on it. The result is a sort of 'double work of art', a work with both poetical and

pictorial components that the viewer can contemplate simultaneously. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood promoted this new type of description, in the form of an evocative caption which added further verbal elements to the linguistic forms that already populated the pictorial work. These “representations in language of canvases”, as Steiner would define them a century later in *After Babel* (1998: 12), are already stated to be in Rossetti’s preface to the Brotherhood Magazine «The Germ» as some sort of translation “with a view to obtain the thoughts of Artists, upon Nature as evolved in Art, in another language besides their *own proper* one”, as Rossetti wrote in the preface to the Brotherhood’s magazine (Rossetti 1898: 11). Indeed, Rossetti was not only a painter, and a poet, but also a translator, since he rendered sonnets by Dante, Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoia into English. Hence the sonnets written to help the readers interpret his paintings during their fruition could be considered as examples of a reversed Jakobsonian intersemiotic translation. The intersemiotic translation “or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign system” (Jakobson 1959: 233) and here, *ekphrasis* becomes the transmutation – or the changing of place – of an image, from its original location, the canvas, which hosts it in the shape of nonverbal signs, to a new setting, the paper, which is the heart of the verbal sign system.

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I will survive: l'arte può davvero raccontare Auschwitz?

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Il genocidio ebraico, passato alla storia con il termine *Shoah*, occupa una posizione di rilievo nei circuiti artistici e culturali, non solo per le innumerevoli opere letterarie, filmiche, teatrali che si sono ispirate ad esso e che ancora oggi vi si ispirano, ma anche per la crescente attenzione rivolta ai musei dell'Olocausto e ai luoghi della memoria che hanno subito un processo di museificazione e di monumentalizzazione. D'altro canto, a detta di alcuni storici, l'Auschwitz prodotta e diffusa da tanta cultura oggi dominante apre al rischio opposto: potrebbe trasformarsi sempre più in 'merce di consumo' (Traverso, 2005), evento esposto a ricostruzioni di circostanza, ma anche ad una manipolazione dell'evento storico, quando non ad un'ondata di negazionismo. Sembra, infatti, che attualmente il discorso pubblico sulla Shoah abbia scavalcato di gran lunga il fatto storico per sfociare in una sovraesposizione mediatica.

L'appropriarsi, da parte dell'industria culturale, dell'universo concentrazionario-sterminazionista edificato dai nazisti trasformandolo in un tema di spettacolo, non ne ha ampliato la conoscenza presso la platea dei consumatori-spettatori, poiché la comprensione dei fatti storici viene ormai prevalentemente appiattita in immagini e video privi di ogni dimensione storico-critica. L'effetto che ne deriva, se da un lato concorre a sacralizzare e a monumentalizzare il ricordo, dall'altro corre il rischio di svuotare progressivamente la sostanza della memoria stessa della Shoah. Questo porta ad interrogarsi su quanto sia utile rinunciare all'approfondimento, allo studio e all'analisi, per privilegiare unicamente la 'comunicazione' e la spettacolarizzazione dell'evento Shoah.

L'area nella quale ho inquadrato questo oggetto di studio è quella che individua la problematica rappresentabilità della me-

moria della Shoah in chiave artistico-espressiva. In questo campo d'indagine sto sviluppando una ricerca finalizzata ad una lettura dettagliata di alcune delle forme artistiche finora realizzate che raccontano lo sterminio degli ebrei.

Nel configurarsi delle diverse rappresentazioni che hanno investito su una funzione testimoniale ed espressiva legata alla Shoah, è interessante ricordare la mostra realizzata al MOC AK, il museo di arte contemporanea di Cracovia, nel 2015, intitolata *Polonia-Israele-Germania: l'esperienza di Auschwitz oggi*. L'esposizione mostra come possano oggi gli artisti affrontare un tema del genere, in un momento in cui, a più di settant'anni dall'apertura dei cancelli del Lager della Slesia, stanno per mancare i testimoni diretti (Bidussa, 2009; fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Mocak, Museo di arte contemporanea di Cracovia.

Nella mostra, curata da Delfina Jalowik e Jurgen Kaumkotter, sono state raccolte opere realizzate da una ventina di artisti negli ultimi vent'anni che hanno tentato di dare una risposta anche a questa domanda. Il punto di partenza è radicale e di

per sé controverso: Auschwitz, inteso come ex Lager, ha oggi una duplice natura: luogo della memoria, teatro di celebrazioni ufficiali e gite scolastiche, ma anche parte di un circuito turistico che potremmo leggere, estremizzando, come una specie di *Disneyland dell'orrore*.

La mostra ha evidenziato la significativa presenza della tematica della Shoah all'interno del discorso sociale e culturale su Auschwitz. Le didascalie che accompagnano le opere d'arte non si limitano a descrivere i lavori, ma fungono da guida per i visitatori attraverso tutta l'esposizione. Infatti, la relazione che si instaura tra le opere e le didascalie genera tutta una serie di riferimenti che saranno qui brevemente analizzati.

Al centro di una grande sala, che ricorda l'interno di una fabbrica (il museo si trova sul terreno della ex fabbrica di Schindler), si vedono una dozzina di paia di scarpe disposte in cerchio, forgiate nel bronzo, "perché di bronzo sono fatti i monumenti" è scritto nella didascalia (Goldkorn, 2015). Ma a contrastare il bronzo e la monumentalizzazione della morte, sono le normali stringhe che legano le scarpe, per ricordare che si trattava di esseri umani, di nostri nonni e di nostri zii, e non di eroi mitologici caduti in un'epoca remota.

L'opera è intitolata *Oh, miei amici, non ci sono amici*, ed è stata realizzata da Sigalit Landau. La didascalia è una citazione, che solitamente è attribuita ad Aristotele, ed è evocativa rispetto all'opera che descrive: dà voce all'immagine, evidenziando l'ambiguità tra la vita e l'arte, i legami presenti tra gli esseri umani e la separazione generata dall'Olocausto.

Landau, a sua volta, è allieva di Yehuda Bacon, padre ideale di tutti gli artisti che affrontano l'Olocausto ed ex prigioniero di Auschwitz. In un'altra sala, in un video registrato, con un sorriso ironico e in un impeccabile tedesco, Bacon spiega che: «nonostante Adorno, dopo Auschwitz, abbiamo continuato a fare arte e poesia» (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Sigalit Landau, *Oh my friends, there are no friends*.

Ma torniamo nella sala principale: volgendo lo sguardo a sinistra, accanto all'opera di Landau, c'è un video dalle dimensioni di una gigantografia. Vi si vede a rallentatore una limousine nera, con i vetri oscurati, con una dozzina di guardie del corpo intorno. A primo sguardo potrebbe essere l'auto di un mafioso russo o di un capo dello Stato, ma il luogo è Auschwitz e l'automobile è di Papa Ratzinger. L'autore Miroslaw Balka, dimostra come l'ex Lager sia diventato un posto di cupa esibizione del potere, ma anche come l'esibizione del potere sia legata alla paura del terrorismo. Mostra anche un terribile paradosso: in un luogo dove morirono oltre un milione di persone per mano dei tedeschi, si ha paura per la vita di un potente tedesco. È interessante anche questa didascalia: la scritta *Audi HBE F114*, sottolinea infatti la totale discrepanza tra il testo e l'immagine; in realtà, viene isolato un solo dettaglio rispetto all'intera opera, per cui potremmo parlare di questa didascalia come di una sineddoche che sembra essere completamente decontestualizzata e che, pertanto, produce straniamento. (Fig. 3)



Fig. 3. Miroslaw Balka, *Audi HBE F114*.

All'interno della stessa mostra, si può assistere anche ad una performance dell'artista australiana Jane Korman, presentata per la prima volta nel 2009 in una galleria d'arte di Melbourne: si tratta di un video che ha per protagonista il padre dell'autrice, Adolk Korman, che balla con la figlia e con i tre nipoti, al ritmo della canzone *I will survive* di Gloria Gaynor, di fronte al cancello d'ingresso di Auschwitz, con la scritta *Arbeit macht frei* ben in vista alle loro spalle. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4. Jane Korman, *Dancing Auschwitz*.

Il video non ha ancora smesso di fare il giro del mondo a causa delle numerose critiche che gli sono state mosse dalla comunità ebraica internazionale (Perilli, 2010). «Un’interpretazione fresca della memoria storica», risponde l’artista accusata di aver strumentalizzato il dramma dell’Olocausto. In questo caso, la didascalia, che riprende il titolo della famosa canzone di Gloria Gaynor, è chiaramente legata a ciò che si vede: una semplice coreografia, attraverso la quale l’autrice ha voluto focalizzare l’attenzione degli spettatori sulla figura del sopravvissuto, e sulla trasmissione della testimonianza nelle successive generazioni.

La stessa tematica è sviluppata anche in un’altra opera dal titolo *Second Generation: What I Haven’t Told My Father* (*Deuxième génération. Ce que je n’ai pas dit à mon père*) di Michel Kichka, (immagine 5) dove la didascalia, chiaramente legata all’immagine, vuole essere anche un messaggio di speranza e trasmettere l’idea dell’artista di intendere l’arte come testimonianza tangibile di uno degli eventi più drammatici della storia.

In un angolo, alla fine della mostra, un foglio bianco con la scritta “Non ho mai fatto un’opera sull’Olocausto” (Goldkorn, 2015). Come dire: si può fare un discorso *attorno* ad Auschwitz, non *su* Auschwitz.



Fig. 5. Michael Kichka, *Second Generation: What I Haven’t Told My Father* (*Deuxième génération. Ce que je n’ai pas dit à mon père*).

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Changing Places: The Imaginary Museum of Hans Hollein

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Since the twentieth century captions have always been considered fundamental elements of art exhibitions, to clarify the provenience, the author, the chronology and, in some cases, the interpretation of the artworks shown in museums, private collections and galleries. It is relevant to point out that the content of captions is generally accepted as something absolutely certain and immovable, a sort of identity card of artworks, whose authority is seldom – or never – questioned. Nevertheless, as Anna Chiara Cimoli argues in her article *Didascalie museali. Domande, non risposte* (Cimoli 2016) captions are actually mutant elements, which constantly alter their shape and their content in relation to the history of the artwork to which they refer. In fact, attributions, dating or links with other artworks – especially in the case of ancient works – often derive from interpretation and can change over time, along with the owners of the artworks, collections in which they are located and so forth. However, it cannot be denied that in the context of exhibitions captions have a visible power, which can strongly influence the glance and the opinion of the visitors.

Starting from these assumptions, during the 8th edition of *Documenta* in 1987 the artist, designer and architect Hans Hollein realized *The Imaginary Museum*, an exhibition room where the classical hierarchy between image and caption was overturned. Hollein (Vienna, 1934-2014) was a prominent figure of postmodern architecture and his vision of its subject was so sweeping that it led him to write that “Everything is architecture” (Hollein, 1968) and that “We have to liberate architecture from building”, redefining architecture as a *medium* (Hollein, 1967).

This original vision of artistic space and its components emerged in a peculiar way in *The Imaginary Museum* realized for *Documenta's* exhibition. Inside the museum room, Hollein enlarged the labels and reduced the dimension of the pictures, forcing the visitors to bend to see the images, thus reversing the movement that is usually made to read the labels. By magnifying them, the artist transformed, in a provocative way, captions into pictures and exposed them as artworks, aestheticizing them. At the same time, Hollein reduced their content to the essence so that visitors could easily read it all almost at one glance, even if, as a result of his action, the captions seemed to lose some of their original, informative function, acquiring a new status.

It is relevant to specify that the idea of reversing a picture had already appeared in *Documenta* exhibitions. In fact, during the previous edition (1982), the German artist Georg Baselitz exposed several of his upside-down paintings which induced the viewers to concentrate on lines and marks rather than on figures⁵¹. Formerly, in 1968, the Italian artist Luciano Fabro had done a similar operation realizing a sculpture, named *L'Italia rovesciata*, with the shape of Italy upside-down, which he reproduced in a series, although with significant variants, over the decades⁵².

Nevertheless, *The Imaginary Museum* of Hans Hollein diverged from the works of Baselitz and Fabro for two reasons. First, Hollein did not only realize an overturned artwork whose appearance and concept refers to art history, visual culture and history itself but, with an impressive operation, he intervened directly in the exhibition space, reversing the relationship be-

51. Georg Baselitz began to paint figures upside-down in the late 1960s and, during the decades, it became his mark.

52. Some of these variations are represented by works such as *Italia Cosa Nostra* (1968), *Italia d'Oro* (1971) and *Italia all'asta verde* (1994).

tween two of his constituent elements: the picture and its caption. Second, he combined pictures with words, making clear the potential conflict and the power relation between these two languages.

It is also relevant to point out that the 8th edition of *Documenta* was a peculiar one as it was decidedly involved with the social and political issues of the period and it comprehended a huge number of participating artists whose different approaches reflected the multiplicity of the moment (Schneckenburger, 1987).

It is important to focus on this aspect because, even if the Hollein's installation did not report evident political elements, his contribution to the exhibition was not neutral as it might seem. As a matter of fact, inside the context of the exhibit, *The Imaginary Museum* of Hans Hollein ironically questioned the traditional curatorial methods and focused on the issue of *ekphrasis*, highlighting the cultural importance of words into art's spaces. Moreover, it can be argued that the artwork of Hollein emphasised the power of images, whose effects on visitors could not be replaced by their description.

The installation may also be seen as a commentary on the reception of artworks by an audience that devotes more time to absently acquainting the content of captions rather than to observe the object of art itself. During an interview with the journalist Michel Guerrin in 1997, the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson claimed: "I would like to write false captions under my pictures to force people to see with their eyes instead of their brain" (Guerrin, 2008). It can be argued that Hans Hollein works in the same direction, pointing out the controversial, mixed nature of captions, which contain both visual and verbal elements and whose role in relation to artworks should not be seen as neutral under any circumstance.



Fig. 1. Hans Hollein, *The Imaginary Museum*, Documenta 8th, 1987.

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When Captions Need Captions: Notes on Philippe Parreno's *Labels* and *Marquees*

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Captions are considered one of the most important elements of an exhibition and therefore an interesting topic for researchers of exhibition and curatorial studies. However, until the 1990s captions were taken into consideration – especially by curators – almost exclusively for their role in giving information about artworks, as well as for interpreting and structuring the exhibition routes. By contrast, in the last decade of the twentieth century there was a “curatorial turn” (O’Neill, 2012) which elicited a progressive overlap between artistic practices and curatorial strategies. Since then, artists have begun to reflect on captions both as autonomous objects and as artworks in their own right. In their seminal work *Art Since 1900*, Bois *et al.* (2004: 628) overtly acknowledge this ambiguity between making and curating art: “[...] the nineties witnessed the rise not only of the artist-as-curator but of the complementary figure of the curator-as-artist [...] This development of curating as a pervasive medium of contemporary art suggests an uncertainty about the domains of artmaking and curating alike”.

In this paper I would like to analyze some artistic experiments with captions performed by the French artist Philippe Parreno, with particular reference to his exhibition *Anywhere, Anywhere, Out of the World* and to his *Marquee* series. Parreno’s meditation on captions actually began in 1994 when, in an article published in the journal «Document sur l’art» and titled *Facteur temps*, he wondered about the time of reception of the artwork and the control that the artist should have on this process. Moreover, in a later text, he would declare: “Museum signage often tell us where to look, and why artworks are important; but by avoiding the use of

this kind of instructive and didactic text, people are more entitled to create the artwork for themselves” (Parreno, 2014a).

In *Anywhere, Anywhere, Out of the World* (Paris, Palais de Tokyo, 2013), Parreno used the whole exhibition as a medium, assigning a central role to captions, which were part of a complex narrative structure. For the large scale of Palais de Tokyo, the artist realized *Flickering Labels* (2013). It consisted of captions composed of small Kindle screens that were set on the walls and turned on and off intermittently according to the sound of *Petrushka* by Igor Stravinskij, spread out throughout the exhibition space by four Disklavier pianos. Besides information about the artworks on show, *Flickering Labels* displayed on the screens passages from the artist’s 1995 book *Snow Dancing*. By following the arrangement of the captions into space it was possible to follow the story told in the book⁵³.

Parreno focused on the ambiguous nature of the caption between text and image also in the exhibition *The Ultrasonic Scream of the Squirrel* – held at the Air de Paris Gallery in 2007. In that exhibition Parreno presented two flashing labels subjected to different light rhythms: the former consisted of an image of the performance in which the artist, together with the ventriloquist Ronn Lucas, read his text *Underground man*; the latter presented the same text that Parreno and Lucas were reading in the photograph.

The *Marquee* series is profoundly marked by similar considerations. In fact, they are luminous sculptures – made of plexiglass, lights and sounds – inspired by the luminous signs placed outside the cinemas of Broadway in the 50s to promote films. As the artist states, “the *Marquee* is a big label in 3-D that takes the place of an object that was supposed to be labelled. It’s a body snatcher; the marquee replaces the object, and that is the event! Usually movie marquees tell you what movies or plays are on,

53. It was during the exhibition *Alien Seasons* at Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris in 2002 that Parreno exhibited for the first time the flashing captions.

but here you end up with a thing that doesn't provide that kind of information. You are attracted to it anyway because it's big and lit up" (Parreno, 2014b: 37).

A similar installation, although not part of the *Marquee* series, was created by the artist in 1994 for an exhibition in collaboration with Carsten Höller held at the Air de Paris Gallery. In that case, however, there was a textual element which referred to the title of the exhibition: "Mais ce que vous avez contre moi c'est que j'ai abandonné mon premier amour". The artist produced the first *Marquee* in 2006 for the exhibition *Interior Cartoons* at the Esther Schipper Gallery in Berlin. On that occasion, the installation surmounted the entrance of the gallery and was presented with a neon on the front side of the *Marquee* which replicated the perimeter of the gallery. Indeed, *Interior Cartoons* was conceived as an exhibition of the exhibition space, and the *Marquee* in this case announced, with the neon sign, the structure of the space as well as its emptiness.

The difference between Parreno's first experiment in 1994 and the *Marquees* realized after 2006 is that the latter present no textual elements or iconic signs that refer to something outside themselves: the *Marquee* is a self-referential sign, although it is at the same time deeply dependent on the context of exposure. As a matter of fact, this interrelatedness was underscored in the exhibition at Palais de Tokyo, where the artist juxtaposed for the first time seventeen *Marquees*, presenting them together as a new artwork entitled *Danny the street* and inviting visitors to pass through the installation.

The analysis of Parreno's artistic production reveals a progressive subtraction of textual and iconic element linked to the *Marquee* and a consequent tautological dimension of his work. With the *Marquees*, Parreno deconstructed the system of signs on which the artworld is based, evoking its irresistible power of attraction and questioning the control by museums upon the reception of

works of art. Through this practice, Parreno has ultimately reconsidered the concept of caption, conceiving it not as a support for the interpretation or identification of the artwork but as a work of art itself. In doing so, he also suggests a complex question: when captions become artworks, do they need other captions?

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Captions and the Narrator's Voice in Italian Comics: Homodiegetic and Autodiegetic Narration in Zerocalcare's *Forget my Name*

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Let us take a look at history. In Italy comics were born in periodicals as single sketches with captions. It will suffice to consider the example of comics such as *Felix the Cat*, which appeared in «Corriere dei Piccoli» in the 1920s. Interestingly, these comics had no balloons: these were deleted from the original model and substituted with rhyming metered verse. In the case of strips written by Italian authors, such as the stories by Antonio Rubino which appeared in «Corriere dei Piccoli» as early as in the 1910s, comics were born directly with rhyming metered verse and without balloons. In *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (1988) Italo Calvino wrote that when he was a child and could not read he spent hours and hours reading, or, rather, looking at cartoons. About those captions he claimed: “When I learned to read, the advantage gained was minimal. The silly rhyming couplets provided no useful information” (Calvino 2016: 114). According to Gianni Bono, Leonardo Gori and Cristiano Zacchino (Bono, Gori, Zacchino, 2016: 74), balloons arrived in Italy in 1932. The weekly magazine *Jumbo* can be given credit for this change. Since that day, Italian comics readers began to familiarise with these two different kinds of comics texts: captions and balloons.

Actually, in comics text mainly appears as a balloon or a caption. The former can communicate meaning in a number of ways, by the shape of the balloon or by the formal characteristics of the text (Forceville *et al.*, 2010); in the latter words appear in a box separated from the rest of the panel or page,

usually to give voice to a narrator, but sometimes it is also used to report the characters' thoughts or dialogue. Forceville *et al.* claim that "captions are usually distinguished from balloons by visual means, [...] by occurring, usually in boxes, at the top or bottom of panels, and by having no tails or thought bubbles, the latter being a logical consequence of the fact that they communicate information from an agency outside the storyworld" (Forceville *et al.* 2010: 65-66). Thus they argue that captions convey the discourse of an agency at a different narrative level.

Until lately it was widely agreed that in caption, in Gérard Genette's classification (Giovannetti 2012: 137-148), narrators are heterodiegetic (i.e. outside the storyworld). This was actually true for early comics but is no longer so. The presence of a homodiegetic narrator (i.e. a narrator who is inside the storyworld) has offered to cartoonists unprecedented opportunities. In the first place, the relationship between balloons and captions has changed, becoming less static than before. Indeed, it is now possible to create many narrative levels, stories into stories. Secondly, captions have broken the box where they had been kept imprisoned for decades.

The aim of my proposal is to highlight the role of captions in comics and briefly show how captions may change in the presence of a homodiegetic and autodiegetic narration. In doing so, I will focus on the techniques displayed by Italian cartoonist Zerocalcare in *Forget my Name* (2014).

Forget my Name begins with a memory. In the first chapter, "Every Damn Monday", the homodiegetic and autodiegetic (i.e. a homodiegetic narrator who tells his own story) narrator Zerocalcare, both the stage name of the author and the name of the main character, remembers when he was a child and went with Mamie, his grandmother, to the zoo every Monday. There, the watchman called him 'the major'. He said hello to everyone (every

animal) and felt at home. The narrator's voice, situated between the frames, is the voice of the adult Zerocalcare. In the next figure, the reader finds out where he is now: he is at the hospital with his imaginary friend Armadillo. His grandmother is dying, and he has to say goodbye to her.

In the following chapter, *Goodbyes*, we see the main character entering his grandmother's hospital room. The first image shows this movement while the words, both in captions and balloons, guide the reader into the character's thoughts. "*One of the most recurring phrases when someone dies is 'I didn't even get to say goodbye'*", claims the narrator. "*Well... now I have all the time in the world*", and this time the words report what the character thinks. The point is that, in such a dramatic situation, he does not know what to say. Then, the narrator's voice is so strong and so predominant that the images, too, where story time and discourse time usually coincide, become part of his speech. The story time stops, and the narrator's voice shapes the frame. The captions are scattered in the drawings, among the incomprehensible objects of the hospital room, to highlight the confusion felt by Zerocalcare. His mother appears and gives him her wise advice: "*Do what comes natural*".

This case study definitely shows how narrative choices may overturn the role of captions: not only can they leave their boxes and spread across the page, they can also incorporate images and balloons into their discourse.



Zerocalcare, *Forget my Name*, p. 7.

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Tags as Literary Devices. Purchased Words, Searched Words, Implanted Words

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Tags are metadata, that is, codes (keywords, images or symbols) associated with a piece of information that can thus be searched and classified. The renowned sociologist and media critic Derrick De Kerckhove remarked their importance by stating that “The tag is the message. The tag is the nature of the Internet” (Boccia Artieri, 2007), as it allows a truly distributed and non-hierarchical structure.

Tags are powerful marketing tools, but they can also be used for aesthetic purposes.

The aim of this case study is to briefly illustrate three works which use tags as literary devices. Each work described here approaches the tags in different ways – hence the identification of three categories: “Purchased Words”, “Searched Words” and “Implanted Words” – but they all demonstrate how tags can affect the way we write, think, see and perceive the world.

1. Purchased Words

The will to “unveil the Generalized Semantic Capitalism” (Bruno, 2006) on the net is at the base of *The Google Adwords Happening* (2002), an internet performance by the French artist Christophe Bruno. *Google AdWords* (renamed *Google Ads* since July 2018) is an online advertising platform that allows you to purchase some words in order to get short advertisements that will be highlighted in the search results page. However, Bruno chose to buy some very peculiar words to write even more particular ads (fig. 1). In fact, instead of promoting products or services, the artist posted poems, sometimes funny and nonsensical poems, sometimes sarcastic and polemical ones.

Keyword	Clicks / Day	Average Cost-Per-Click	Cost / Day
anal	390.0	\$0.83	\$319.90
art	800.0	\$0.52	\$409.67
bin laden	250.0	\$0.10	\$24.37
briney spears	490.0	\$0.30	\$144.20
capitalism	30.0	\$0.10	\$2.74
communism	2.1	\$0.16	\$0.33
death	92.0	\$0.47	\$42.66
dream	390.0	\$0.17	\$63.07
free	5700.0	\$1.33	\$7,569.23
freedom	5.1	\$0.37	\$1.88
gay	2200.0	\$1.02	\$2,239.56
hemorrhoid	0.5	\$0.16	\$0.08
language	650.0	\$0.37	\$237.30
lesbian	740.0	\$0.80	\$594.62
love	730.0	\$1.74	\$1,264.72
mankind	8.0	\$0.59	\$4.70
money	350.0	\$0.81	\$281.46
net art	0.9	\$0.05	\$0.05
self	80.0	\$0.85	\$67.72
sex	7500.0	\$0.52	\$3,836.79
suicide	18.0	\$0.27	\$4.72
symptom	23.0	\$0.30	\$6.83
Overall	20,443.5	\$0.84	\$17,108.49

[Words aren't free anymore](#)
 bicornate-bicervical uterus
 one-eyed hemi-vagina
www.unbehagen.com

[Follow your dreams](#)
 Did I just unrate ?
 Directly into the wind
www.unbehagen.com

[mary !!!](#)
 I love you
 come back
[john](#)

[don't ever do that again](#)
 aaargh I
 are you mad ?
[oops !!!](#)

Fig. 1. Prices of some words (left) and some poems by Bruno (right).
 Source: www.iterature.com/adwords/.

As expected, Google punished the misuse of its commercial software, censoring the artist. Bruno’s poetry advertisement campaign is interesting especially because it reminds us that “words aren’t free anymore”, that they can be purchased and sold, and that therefore their value depends on market rules, just like any other kind of goods. At the same time, by using tags to write poems, the artist demonstrates that codes can never be mere operational instruments, because they are tools of communication conceived, written and read by human beings. Therefore, a code can never be transparent; it will always be ideological as a bearer of cultural and social messages.

2. Searched Words

Tags as camouflaged links are used in *Golem* (2014), a graphic novel by LRNZ (alias Lorenzo Ceccotti), an Italian cartoonist and illustrator. *Golem* (fig. 2) is a cyberpunk story set in a not-too-distant dystopian future in which the boundaries between real and virtual world are so osmotic that their difference can hardly be identified.



Fig. 2. The cover of GOLEM by LRNZ.

Golem is among the first Italian comics using Augmented Reality; the volume is in fact provided with NFC technology so that, using devices that support it (such as smartphones and latest generation tablets), you can access extra contents that reveal backgrounds of events and in-depth analyses of characters. It is important to note that these added contents are wholly original, that is to say, they are not present in the book.

One of the most interesting features of *Golem* is that the tags allowing the access to the augmented contents, which can be both images and words, are not highlighted in the text, unlike hyper-texts, for example. Consequently, everything could be a potential tag, because tags are indistinguishable from the other elements composing the text. The reader is then forced to inspect the pages, using the device as if it were a magnifying glass or a torch (not surprisingly, *gamification* is one of the main themes of the novel).

Moreover, by hiding the operating codes behind the graphic interface, the author invites the reader to hack the latter, namely to understand its logic, actively participating in order to access information, another crucial issue in the comic. It is also interesting to note how, in this case, the tactile relationship with the book as an object is not erased but strengthened by digital technology.

3. *Implanted Words*

McLuhan's metaphor of the media as a prosthesis is at the basis of *WiFi-SM*, a performance designed, once again, by Christophe Bruno between 2003 and 2006. This time, too, the artist chose a series of very particular keywords linked to various tragic events such as murders, earthquakes, wars, tortures, etc. Those who wanted to participate in the performance could choose one or more words from the list and fix the WiFi-SM, an internet-connected wireless device, on any part of their bodies. WiFi-SM automatically detected the information from news sources, and each time the text of the news contained one of those keywords, the WiFi-SM device delivered an electric impulse to the user so that he/she could feel a certain amount of pain (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Screenshot of the web page dedicated to WiFi-SM device.
Source: www.unbehagen.com/wifism/.

We can note that, unlike *The Google Adwords Happening*, this performance is open to the active participation of more people. Moreover, the focus is no longer on what happens in the virtual environment, but in the real world. The tags are therefore no longer shown on a screen but implanted within the very interface that belongs to us more than anything else: our body. In the end, the tags physically affect our senses.

4. #StayHuman

The mentioned works demonstrate that, as noted by Nicolas Bourriaud, an artist is a “*semionaut*: an inventor of itineraries through a landscape of signs” (Bourriaud, 2004). Quoting Joseph Tabbi, they “[...] willingly accept the constraints of the medium; they work within these constraints, play off them, and in so doing make the medium their own” (Tabbi, 2002). By using computer devices as aesthetic and rhetorical tools, writers show their literary potential, transforming them from tools of control into tools for the imagination. In doing so, they reveal what happens to language, society and culture in a world increasingly hyper-mediated by network communication.

Albeit their diversity, the described works show an alienated society dependent on technology, which is at the same time an instrument of dehumanization and re-humanization (empathy stimulator). If information is the gold of our society, metadata is the mold that shapes it, as it is from these constellations of tags that the spirit of time, the fears, the hopes, the desires of humanity emerge.

When tags become invisible to the human eye and so numerous that they transcend human computing skills, technology becomes an essential tool for knowledge. This is not to be considered a bad thing, provided that we all have the same access to the technology and can use it not just to be seen but to see. However, these works also highlight more and more pervasive and subliminal technolog-

ical mechanisms able to operate in the body of the text as well as in the human body. These mechanisms seem to disclose dystopian scenarios: when our inputs become commercially exploitable tags, it is not only the freedom of words that is at risk, imprisoned in hashtags to be fed to AI, but also our freedom as individuals. Hence the artistic use of digital media is not just an expressive need, but a mission, a fight against the reduction of everything to bits, so that the “bug of humanity”, in its irreducible complexity, can continue to live.

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La *brevitas* non è certo una invenzione recente. Incisioni e graffiti, fin da tempi remoti, rappresentano forme espressive concise, lapidarie, affidate a supporti che, per loro natura, non lasciano spazio a messaggi di ampio respiro: pietra, muro, manufatti. Tuttavia, la brevità non coincide necessariamente con la (poca) lunghezza: essa ha, al contrario, una propria retorica, stilistica e poetica, poiché riguarda le caratteristiche di una scrittura che tende a una concisione formale ottenuta attraverso specifici fattori di condensazione, sintesi ed economia. Di conseguenza, a dispetto della – o grazie alla – concisione, le forme brevi rappresentano unità di informazione ad alto contenuto. L'estetica del corto è insomma caratterizzata da una ricercata densità semantica, per cui la brevità “non è un ripiego, bensì un punto di forza” (A. Abruzzese) grazie alla sua intensità comunicativa. I contributi del libro prendono in considerazione la *brevitas* nell'interazione tra modi semiotici differenti (linguaggio, immagini, simboli, oggetti, voce) in ambiti di varia natura: espografica, giornalismo, pubblicità, cinema, traduzione, interpretazione.

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