Transformations of *Montalbano* through languages and media: Adapting and subtitling dialect in *The Terracotta Dog*

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Introduction: Montalbano as intertext

The literary and media phenomenon of *Il Commissario Montalbano* is a vast and complex one. The success of Andrea Camilleri's novels is global, with 21 titles of the *Montalbano* series published in Italy, of which 16 have now been translated in over 30 languages. TV adaptation by RAI began in 1999, and *Montalbano* was soon extensively discussed on the Internet and other media such as the press, radio, and even comic books. In Italy, the series has become the nation's favorite, while also receiving consistently high critical praise (Buonanno, 2000: 334-5). The TV series has been dubbed or subtitled in 16 countries. In the UK, the TV series was first aired as *Inspector Montalbano* in 2008, and all nine seasons and 26 episodes of the original RAI productions had been broadcast by the end of 2013.

There has been plenty of scholarly interest on various cultural and linguistic aspects of *Montalbano*, (Vitale, 2001; Pistelli, 2003; Serkowska, 2006; Vietina, 2010). The present article is concerned with the *transformations* of Montalbano as a character, rather than the static features of each of his incarnations. Its purpose is to identify some of the ways in which the series and its protagonist have evolved as they progressed from the novelistic form to the televisual one and from an Italian to an international audience. This investigation will be conducted through the single prism of the translation of Sicilian dialect, which is one of the main characteristics of the stories as a whole and the eponymous character in particular. We will concentrate on one of the first Montalbano novels, *Il cane di terracotta* (Camilleri, 1996), as well as on the script and the English subtitles of the respective TV episode, while the English translation of the novel by Andrea Sartarelli (Camilleri, 2002) will serve mainly as a reference.

The processes of remediation and internationalization to which Montalbano as a cultural product has been subjected can be considered as forms of translation, in the broad sense that first Jakobson (1959/2000) gave the term, which includes intersemiotic transfers in addition to linguistic ones. As Gianfranco Marrone has argued, Montalbano exists beyond literary or TV narratives, in a series of discourses (reviews, interviews, paratexts and images), which retrospectively transform his textual or mediatic incarnations, problematizing what appears to be a linear progress from source to target

texts. Drawing on Levi-Strauss's structural analysis of myth, Marrone notes that in the case of Montalbano there is a myth-like structure which continuously feeds back on itself and which ultimately "coincides with the network of translations/betrayals from one version to another, both in time and in space" (Marrone, 2003: 28).[1] The literary/televisual/media persona of Montalbano thus appears to be living in the mode of translation, as a concatenation of translational acts and impacts: "In this sense, *the character does not live in a single text* or in a generic context with no textual links; *it rather lives and feeds itself in the intertextual network in which it is constantly being retranslated*" (Marrone, 2003: 28, emphasis in the original). Foregrounding the intertextuality and the translatability of Montalbano allows for a comparative investigation of the way in which images, sounds, texts and paratexts affect each other, contributing to a complex cultural product that partly eschews authorial management and control. In a more general sense, along with broadening the concept of translation to include non-linguistic transfers and adaptations, such a comparative approach also applies to other complex literary and media phenomena that are similar to Montalbano. As this article will suggest, such phenomena invest equally on local attachments and global flows, and spread eagerly across texts, images and media, thus transcending traditional analytical categories such as the 'truthfulness' of the narrative, the 'authenticity' of the cultural references or the 'essence' of the characters.

Within the broader discussion of the intertextual representations of Montalbano, the interlingual translations of the novels and the TV series are of special importance. This is not only because linguistic transfer entails negotiations and reinterpretations of meaning, but also because every new translation is inscribed within a new (inter)national framework and adds new levels of textuality to the already complex intertext.

This is particularly true when it comes to the so-called *sicilianità* of the *Montalbano* novels and the TV series, that is, the marked presence of local cultural, literary and socio-political references and the systematic foregrounding of the local dialect. The presence of the *sicilianità* in Camilleri's novels has been highlighted by critics and scholars alike, and its role as a feature that lends authenticity to the narratives has been pointed out (Pezzotti, 2012: 125-146). Arguably it constitutes one of the major reasons of Montalbano's success both within Italy and internationally. It also forms part of the identity of the main character of the novels and the TV series, crucially through his peculiar use of local dialect, as we will discuss further down. However, the *sicilianità* and its attendant effect of authenticity are felt in different ways depending on whether one is reading the novels in the source language or in translation, or indeed whether one is watching the TV series with or without subtitles or dubbing. It is precisely the comparative study of the ways in which

authenticity is sought through the translation of *sicilianità*, which allows us to explore some of the characterological transformations of Montalbano.

By choosing to examine these transformations through the translation of local dialect, we are dealing not simply with a linguistic phenomenon (albeit a quite challenging one), but with a crucial "authenticating" feature of the Montalbano intertext. The presence and variations of dialect are suggestive of authorial intentions and narrative agendas, as much as of translation and adaptation strategies. The translation of dialect is important insofar as it affects individual character construal too. Thus the questions that we will be asking in this article include the following: What is the effect of the use of Sicilian dialect in the original Italian novels? How was dialect used as part of *sicilianità* in the TV series and to what extent does it survive in the subtitles? Finally, how is the unity of Montalbano's character affected by these complex transformations and how does it emerge specifically in and through the English subtitles?

The storyline of *Il cane di terracotta*, the novel and TV episode on which we shall focus, is among the most emotional ones of the series. Montalbano gets shot by a Mafia family while trying to disentangle a mystery that involves historical memory and personal trauma in addition to the more common themes of amorous passion, greediness and revenge. The book was the second in the series to be published in Italy, in 1996. Like the rest of the Montalbano novels, the book was translated in English by Stephen Sartarelli and published in 2002 as *The Terracotta Dog* (Camilleri, 2002). The TV episode was broadcast on RAI in 2000, and on BBC4 with subtitles for the first time in 2012, with the title *The Mystery of the Terracotta Dog*. For the current article, we use the Acorn Media UK DVD edition of 2012, which does not specify the name of the subtitler.

Sicilian dialect through languages and media

The Montalbano book series and Italiano bastardo

For the Italian audience, language is one of the most prominent points when discussing the success behind the Montalbano book series, while a foreign reader/viewer is not necessarily aware of its particularity. As translator Sartarelli and a number of scholars have pointed out, most characters speak a mixture of Sicilian dialect and standard Italian (Sartarelli, 2004; De Meo, 2010: 23; Serkowska, 2006: 164-165; McRae, 2011: 235 ff.; Taffarel, 2012). This hybridized language was defined by Camilleri himself in *Il cane di terracotta* as "italiano bastardo" (Camilleri, 1996: 54, but see also Filipponi, 2002). It is a mixture of standard Italian and Sicilian, showing a pattern of

everyday communication whereby standard Italian is used in more formal occasions and usually to express ideas and thoughts, while Sicilian is used in less formal contexts, often to convey feelings and emotions (Tomaiuolo 2009: 6).

Salvo Montalbano's character also speaks different varieties of language "according to his interlocutors in order to put himself on the same plane" (McRae, 2011: 82). Overall, it is possible to identify four linguistic variations, which are – to a greater or lesser extent – evident to the Italian readership and TV audience: first, the "pure" Sicilian dialect, generally used with elderly or lower class people, out of respect and to ensure mutual understanding; second, the *italiano bastardo*, a medium-strength dialect used by the narrator and the inspector in most occasions; third, standard Italian, in formal situations and with non-Sicilian characters; and, fourth, the bureaucratic register that Montalbano speaks when dealing with self-important high-status characters such as politicians or authorities (McRae, 2011:82). In each of these cases, Montalbano makes use of the relevant linguistic variety in order to understand and be understood properly, to gain trust and obtain information, or occasionally, as in the case of over-bureaucratic Italian, to mock his interlocutor.

From the novels to the TV series

Some research has been conducted on the characterological modifications undergone by the hero in the transition from bestselling *giallo* to primetime television series. These modifications go beyond the formal constraints imposed by the different medium, and respond to audience expectations, economic imperatives and other extratextual factors. Marrone has described how Camilleri has created an essentially different character for the TV series: "Montalbano as a television character is visibly much younger and fitter than his literary counterpart, the places where he lives and works are more beautiful and dramatic, and the people around him are stereotypically more Sicilian" (Marrone, 2004: 4). The tensions that appear between the literary and the TV versions of Montalbano point to the hypothesis that there is no stable set of features that can be attributed to the main character; instead there are translations and interpretations where various forces and tendencies are at play, including the tendency to domesticate or foreignize the original text. These two concepts, borrowed from Lawrence Venuti's work on translation strategies, define the extent to which the traces of the translation process remain visible in the translated text (Venuti, 2008). Domestication involves the eradication by the translator of those signs that indicate untranslatability or subjective interpretation, so that the target text tends to read as fluently as if it were originally written in the target language. At the other end of the spectrum, foreignization entails an effort to

retain in the target text those linguistic, textual, cultural or pragmatic elements that point to differences and gaps between source and target languages. If we apply this distinction at the level of TV adaptation, then choosing between these two strategies would mean, among other things, deciding whether to highlight or not the originally literary character of Montalbano, whether to resist or not the tendency to follow TV detective series stereotypes about on-screen action, sex appeal of the hero, attractiveness or the settings and the locales, etc. For Venuti, it is ethically preferable to follow a foreignizing attitude in translating (Venuti, 1995/2008). For our purposes, however, the emphasis is not on evaluation but on identification of the strategy followed. To that effect, we examined whether the use of dialect as a narrative device is equally evident in the TV adaptation of *Il cane di Terracotta*. As the following analysis suggests, it is suppressed to a greater or lesser degree, indicating an effort to domesticate the audiovisual text, that is, to make it culturally and linguistically easier to process.

Dialectal expressions are reduced, often toned down and simplified in the dialogue, so as not to sound too alien to an Italian audience. The Italian viewer is not required to make as much effort as in reading the novels, but can clearly recognize the Sicilian intonation. Nevertheless, it is evident from the TV series as well that Montalbano adopts different registers of language, from standard Italian to strong dialect. In spite of the elimination of considerable parts of Sicilian dialect, an average Italian audience can clearly understand the difference between the linguistic variety Montalbano uses with his non-Sicilian girlfriend Livia (standard Italian), with the long-time mafia boss Tano (stronger dialect and intonation), and with his boss, the police commissioner (light dialect and intonation).

As in the book series, dialect is often used when conveying emotions; the linguistic changes brought about by the change in medium could imply an intention to boost comprehensibility at the expense of emotional depth, as we can see in the passage of the death of Tano, where the dialectal terms and their translation are highlighted in bold (see Table 1).

Table 1: Adaptation of dialect in the TV episode

Novel	Italian TV script
Tano: **Mi scanto**. Montalbano: **Non t'affruntari,** non ti vergognare a dirlo. **Magari** per questo tu sei un **omo**. Tutti ci **scanteremo** a questo passo.	Tano: **Aio, aio** paura Montalbano: Non ti vergonare a dirlo. Tutti abbiamo paura a questo passo.

Sartarelli's translation	Literal translation of the script
- I'm **spooked**. - **You needn't be ashamed** to say so. **It's one more** thing that makes you a man. We'll all be **scared** when our time comes.	- **I'm… I'm** scared. - Don't be ashamed to say so. We're all scared at this stage.

The omission of most dialectal elements in the TV version of *Il cane di terracotta* is important, not least because this is an emotional story - the second book of the series, in which Camilleri's effort at building Montalbano's identity is palpable. In addition to emotional depth, dialect in this scene suggests Montalbano's connection at a human level even with the Mafia, which Tano represents, on the basis of belonging in the same linguistic community.

There are however further aspects that need to be taken into account here. Firstly, the loss of emotional complexity during linguistic transfer is at least partly compensated for through the acting, the cinematography and the *mise-en-scène*. In the scene under discussion, emotion is conveyed through close-ups, slow pace, intonation, pitch, as well as pauses and silence. Secondly, even though the use of authentic Sicilian dialect is less frequent than in the book, Montalbano still uses the *italiano bastardo* with the appropriate accent to convey intimacy and emotion. In total, and without counting the parts that were excluded from the TV adaptation (for instance, the dialogues with his dialect-speaking housemaid, Adelina) we identified 23 instances of dialectal expressions in the novel; in the TV script, seven of these expressions were completely eliminated or strongly attenuated, and 16 were kept, although some were slightly attenuated.

The English translation of the novels

There have been substantial analyses of Sartarelli's translations of the novels, especially by Tomaiuolo (2009) and McRae (2011); this section will summarize and contrast their findings with regard to the use of dialect, with a view to establishing a baseline for the analysis of the English subtitled version of the selected episode, further down.

Sartarelli does not deploy the full range of linguistic variation in his translation, yet he produces a fluent text mostly in standard English. Local color is added with occasional Sicilian expressions and slang from the New York-Brooklynese area, historically the home of Italian and Sicilian immigrants

(Tomaiuolo, 2009: 12). At times, Sicilian terms are left untranslated, and regional or Italian idioms are rendered literally when there is no correspondence in English (McRae, 2011). While this strategy reinforces the presence of the foreign element in the English translation, its impact is often to exoticize Sicily and its language, rather than to demand the reader's effort to understand the foreign elements of the novel (McRae, 2011: 218). With reference to Venuti's analysis of translation strategies, Tomaiuolo argues that "Sartarelli chooses to offer his readers a 'transparent' version of Camilleri's problematic mixture of linguistic codes and registers" and explains with examples "Sartarelli's normalization of Camilleri's Sicilian-sounding syntax;" he concludes that "Sartarelli's translating method is a mixed one, with the prevalence of a 'domesticating' strategy over a foreignizing one" (Tomauiolo, 2009: 11-12).

McRae, on the other hand, examines closely Sartarelli's translation and uncovers several cases of compensation for the loss of dialect. For instance, in rendering housekeeper Adelina's dialect, Sartarelli draws from the sociolect used by Italian Americans – especially the less educated linguistic varieties. To use an example from *Il cane di terracotta*, Adelina's heavily dialectal phrase "Vossia non mangiò né aieri a mezzujorno né aieri sira!" [You did not eat either yesterday midday or yesterday evening] has been rendered as "**Signuri**, you **din't** eat **nothin** yesterday for lunch or dinner!" (McRae, 2011: 234). Here, phonetic and sociolectal markers in English compensate for the untranslatable Sicilian dialect. The vocative "signuri," which does not lexically appear in the source text, simultaneously conveys (i) the use of politeness which is present in the source text form "vossia," (ii) the Italian context in general, and (iii) the dialectal element in particular, for those readers who know that the standard form of the word is *signore*. McRae concludes that "despite the difficulties involved in rendering Camilleri's literary language into English, the translated texts offer the reader insight into the linguistic situation in Sicily and an appreciation of Camilleri's code-switching and hybridization" (McRae, 2011: 269).

Indeed the creative side in Sartarelli's translation is expressed through the most dialect-speaking characters such as Adelina and agent Catarella. The translation of Catarella's ungrammatical idiolect is of particular interest; Sartarelli has invented a distinctive "macaronic" language for him, made of imaginary and broken words, Brooklynese accent and elements of slapstick comedy (Tomaiuolo 2009:16), which manages to convey a good part of humor of the original.

It is also worth mentioning that at the end of each translated book Sartarelli includes a set of notes with descriptions of Sicilian cuisine, habits, festivities, sayings, words, and references to local

history and politics. Inevitably, these notes draw attention on the act of translation as linguistic mediation, and on the cultural, anthropological and linguistic differences between those who read the novel in Italian, and those who read it in English. In this way, the inclusion of the notes should be acknowledged as part of the creative and foreignizing impulse at play in the English translation.

The English subtitles

As it is well-known, translation choices made in the process of subtitling are not only dictated by linguistic and cultural criteria. Subtitles have to adhere to certain space and time constraints, that is, limitations that have to do with the length of each subtitle line, and with the time that the subtitle may stay visible on screen. Another limitation is the semiotic context in which the subtitle occurs. The semantics, the aesthetics and the position of each subtitle has to respect the image on-screen, while subtitles must also follow the visual rhythm of the cinematography and the editing. These limitations create a specific set of criteria outside of which it is not possible to evaluate interlingual subtitling strategies (Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998).

In this subsection, we will discuss the translation of Sicilian dialect as we pass from *Il cane di terracotta*, the novel, to the Italian TV script, and from the latter to the English DVD subtitles. As is expected, in the very frequent cases in which dialectal elements failed to make the transfer from the novel to the TV script, these elements were not present in the English subtitles either. In what follows we will concentrate on examples in which dialectal features survived in the TV script, and we will examine how they were rendered in the subtitles, if at all. Comparisons will be made with the English translation of the novel, where appropriate.

Example 1

In this example, strong dialect is present in the novel but it is not identical with the dialect used in the TV script. In the English subtitles, dialect has been totally eliminated and the dialogue has been translated using standard English. Only swearing is retained, in a milder form, as we can see in Table 2, where dialect and its translation is highlighted in **bold,** and swearing is <u>underlined</u>.

Table 2: Strong dialect is slightly modified in the TV script and completely eliminated in the subtitles

Novel	Italian script	English subtitles
«Chi parla?». «**La to' morti**, parla. Ti voglio dire che non te la passerai liscia, <u>cornuto</u> d'un **tragediatore**! A chi credevi di <u>pigliare per</u> **fissa** con tutto quel **triatro** che hai fatto col tuo amico Tano? E per questo pagherai, **pi aviri circato di pigliàrinni po' culu**».	MONTALBANO: Ma chi è? CALLER: Chi è? **È la tò morte. Nun** te la passi liscia <u>**curnuto d'un curnuto.**</u> Ma chi **pinsavi di** <u>**pigghiare pu' culu co'**</u> **tutto sto tiatro** che hai fatto col tuo amico **Tanu?** E pe' questo la pagherai m'hai **caputo?**	- Who is it? - *It's your death, that's who.*
		You won't get away with this, *you* <u>*bastard*</u>*.*
		Did you think that little show you and/ your mate Tano put on could fool us?
		You're going to pay for that.
Sartarelli's translation	**Literal translation of script**	
'Who is this?' '**It's your death**, that's who. You're not gonna wiggle out of this one so easy, you <u>lousy fucking</u> actor. Who'd you think you were **fooling** with that little **song and dance** you put on with your pal Tano? You're gonna pay **for trying** <u>**to fuck with us**</u>.	MONTALBANO: But who is it? CALLER: Who is it? **It's your death**. You're **not** going to get away with it, <u>**you asshole.**</u> But who **did you think you** <u>**were getting by the ass**</u> **with all this theatre** that you set up with your friend **Tano**? And for this you will pay, did you **understand**?	

In this scene, Montalbano receives an anonymous phone call by an unidentified member of the Mafia who threatens to kill him. Verbal confrontation and anger are expressed through the use of swearing and dialect. Dialectal elements that have been retained in the script include variations in morphology, for instance "la tò morte" instead of standard Italian "la tua morte." In one case, lexical variation is present in the script and not in the novel: *sto* (script) as opposed to the more standard *quel* (novel). The opposite tendency is also present: the highly marked *triatro* in the novel has been rendered as the less marked *tiatro* in the script, both of which differ from standard Italian *teatro*. Phonetic variation seems to be more present in the script rather than in the novel. For instance the phrase "A chi credevi di pigliare per fissa**"** [whom did you believe you could fool?],

which contains standard Italian plus the dialectal swearword *fissa*, has been rendered in the TV script as "Ma chi pinsavi di pigghiare pu' culu" [Whom did you think you got by the ass?], which is phonetically much more marked: *pinsavi* instead of the standard *pensavi*, *pigghiare* instead of *pigliare*, *culu* instead of *culo*. Overall, in this case, dialect features strongly in both the novel and the script, in line with our argument that it tends to indicate expression of emotion.

In the English subtitles, swearing is retained for the most part, but dialect has disappeared leaving only some traces of marked language. There is a visible effort in the subtitles to convey roughness of expression and threat, for example in the repetition "It's your death, *that's who,*" and in translating "curnuto" with "bastard" (see relevant discussion in McRae, 2011: 267). Compared with Sartarelli's translation, however, there is much more intensive use of marked language in the English translation of the novel than in the English subtitles: "gonna", "wiggle out of", "lousy fucking actor."

If we compare the information that each target audience receives from this sequence, it is possible to argue that (i) the reader of Sartarelli's translation will sense the seriously threatening and insulting intentions of the caller, but will not be aware of the special linguistic connection between him and Montalbano, and will not immediately assume that the caller is a Mafioso; (ii) the Italian viewer of the TV program will be fully aware of all of the above dimensions, and will probably respond to the exotic style of the language; (iii) the viewer of the TV episode who relies on the English subtitles will not associate the language with the Sicilian dialect and culture and will not necessarily recognize the caller as a Mafioso. This viewer will also have to surmise that this is an emotionally charged scene based on swearing and traces of marked language in the subtitles, and – perhaps above all – based on the intonation and pitch of the telephone conversation.

Example 2

In the following dialogue between Montalbano and his deputy, Mimì Augello, the text of the subtitles has been significantly condensed compared to the script due to time and space constraints. Sicilian dialect in the TV script is left as in the novel, while the English subtitles bear no trace of it. Non-marked English language is used to translate the dialogue, while in most cases the swearing disappears. There is also another element to consider: in this passage, Camilleri uses the technique of intradiegetic explanation of dialect, which has been perfectly transferred to the TV script: In the novel, the Sicilian word *scantato* is followed by its Italian counterpart, *spaventato*, meaning

"scared;" in the TV episode, the word *scantato* is followed by the common Italian expression "ti sei messo paura" – "you got scared."

Table 3: Dialect is maintained in the TV script and completely eliminated in the subtitles

Novel	Italian script	English subtitles
"Ma dove sei stato? Dove ti sei andato ad **ammucciare**? Ma ti pare modo di fare, **buttana d'una buttana?"**	MIMÌ: Salvo, ma dove ti sei andato a ficcare **buttana di una buttana** si può sapere?	Salvo, are you going to tell me where the <u>hell</u> you've been hiding?
[*text not appearing in the script*]		
"Mimì, **che ti piglia?"** "Come, **che mi piglia! Mi sono scantato,** mi sono!" "Ti sei spaventato? E di che?"	MONTALBANO: Eh. **Ma che ti piglia?** MIMÌ: E **che mi piglia, mi sono scantato, Salvù.** MONTALBANO: **Pecchè** ti sei messo paura?	Mimì, what's got into you?
		- I got scared. - Scared? Of what?
Sartarelli's translation	**Literal translation of Script**	

'Where the hell have you been?! Where've you been **hiding**? What happened to everybody else? **What the fuck** is going on here anyway? [*text not appearing in the script*] 'Mimì, **what's got into you**? '**What's got into me**? I got **scared**, that's what!' 'Scared? Of what?'	Salvo, where have you been hiding, <u>for fuck's sake</u>, if I may know? - **What's got into you?** - **What got into me**, **I got scared**, **Salvo**. - **Why** where you afraid?	

This is a moment in the narrative in which Mimì expresses fear, so dialect is prominent. Mimì uses the Sicilian variation "Salvù" (instead of "Salvo," Montalbano's forename) to invoke friendship beyond the professional context, and perhaps also to express affection, since he feared for Montalbano's life. It is interesting that the dialectal "Salvù" has entered the TV script while it was not part of the original book. Augello then uses the Sicilian expression "Mi sono scantato", ("I was scared"), which Montalbano explains in standard Italian for the benefit of the Italian viewer. The English reader of either Sartarelli's translation or the DVD subtitles is not aware of these subtle transactions.

Example 3: "Montalbano sono"

The characteristic expression "Montalbano sono" ("I am Montalbano") has become a trademark for Montalbano. With this phrase the inspector announces his identity in a memorable, if slightly comical, exoticizing fashion. At the same time, Montalbano also affirms his *sicilianità* through the syntactic inversion between verb and subject, one of the most salient characteristics of the Sicilian dialect. In the English translation of the novels, including *The Terracotta Dog*, the phrase has been consistently rendered as "Montalbano here" (Camilleri, 2002: 121, 157, 265, 272). In the TV episode under examination, it has been twice translated as "It's Montalbano" (00.32.33 and

01.21.10). It is worth noticing that Sartarelli's translation is sensitive to the hierarchical order between proper noun and verb. Insofar as this catch phrase is suggestive of the main character's personality, the priority of the name over the verb may indicate Montalbano's self-confidence in his social interactions. Insofar as the catchphrase is suggestive of his *sicilianità*, it could be hypothesized that Camilleri makes an amicable and humoristic comment on the stereotypical self-confidence of some Sicilian men, which characterizes other male roles too, for example that of Augello. Be it as it may, some of these connotations are indeed conveyed by the translation "Montalbano here." The English phrase is not grammatically incorrect, but its repetition may create an effect of foreignness, and could suggest a level of self-assurance that is only expected of a fictional superhero, such as a detective, rather than any realistically described narrative character.

In this sense, the subtitler's choice, "It's Montalbano," which substitutes the impersonal "it's" for the first person singular, seems to serve above all pragmatic purposes of relevance and communication. It does not convey any psychological subtlety, neither does it add to the characterization of the hero. In the case of the TV episode under discussion, it merely serves to inform Montalbano's interlocutor that Montalbano is calling them on the phone. As a translation strategy, the prioritization by the subtitler of propositional over expressive meaning seems to indicate a domesticating tendency, whereby fluency and invisibility of subtitles are deemed more important than subtlety and complexity of meaning. This said, it cannot be ignored that TV viewers will be listening to Montalbano's utterance and will also probably be looking at his face while reading the subtitle; they will be able to perceive the vocal stress on the proper noun "Montalbano", and will rely on the subtitle only for information purposes.

Discussion and conclusion: The "true essence" of Montalbano?

In an article about the standardization of regionalisms in literary translation, Ritva Leppihalme (2000: 264) found that some of the main functions of regionalisms include creating a sociocultural context, individualizing the characters, and adding humor. The same can be claimed about the use of dialect in the Montalbano series of novels and TV episodes. Camilleri (quoted in McRae, 2011: 73) seems to agree with the use of dialect as an individualization device, when he states that "dialect, or dialects to be more precise, are the *true essence* of the characters" (our emphasis). In this article we have concentrated on the role of dialect in defining the "true essence" or "authenticity" of the Montalbano series, with special emphasis on the titular character. However, based on our comparison of the presence and importance of dialect in successive transformations of

Montalbano (the books and the TV series), it seems that there is no single "true essence." When we examine Montalbano as a network of literary/mediatic translations through the prism of dialect, different characterological profiles appear for the cultural product as a whole and for the main character in particular. If we consider dialect as one of the implicit cues that convey character information by inference (Culpeper, 2001: 172), then our (necessarily partial) analysis points to the following thoughts:

a) Toning down the dialect in the English translation, the TV series, and even more so in the subtitles of *Il cane di terracotta* results in a reduction and simplification of verbally conveyed emotion. If the expression of emotion plays a specific part in managing the detective puzzles (as in the case of the novel under discussion), then downplaying the complexity and intensity of emotions in the translations and/or adaptations could result in gaps in both understanding the storyline and appreciating its density and refinement. By the same token, the different mediatic and linguistic incarnations of the main character may be construed as partially incompatible variations of Montalbano, lacking what Camilleri intended them to have, a single true essence.

b) Another effect of toning down the dialect is the de-emphasizing of the *sicilianità.* More than a natural or architectural background, in Camilleri's novels Sicily constitutes a marked cultural and anthropological context that provides narrative and aesthetic clues to the reader. Avoiding implicit references to it through the use of dialect may result in Sicily becoming an exotic *décor* of the action, during which known stereotypes about food, the Mafia, etc. are being confirmed. Montalbano's identity risks transforming accordingly. He risks to be construed as a cosmopolitan detective who is capable of thinking, speaking and acting in universally unproblematic ways.

c) The above remarks can only be considered as a contribution to a broader comparative examination of contextual, intertextual, visual and televisual parameters than we have allowed for here. While we propose that the reduction of dialect affects the characterization of Montalbano in concrete ways, we also suggest that this reduction may be compensated for through other means. For example, in assessing the effect of adaptation and translation choices, the following elements (or implicit cues: Culpeper, 2001) must be taken into account: accent, intonation, (im)politeness strategies, as well as facial expression, posture, kinesis, clothing, etc. *Mise-en-scène*, cinematography and editing also play an important role in compensating for the loss of emotion and local reference in the processes of translation and adaptation.

Although the discourse of translation evaluation is often articulated in terms of loss and compensation, examining translation networks, such as the polysemiotic network of Montalbano, cannot be reduced to such simplifications. It is therefore not our purpose to conclude with a judgment – however tentative - regarding the quality of the TV series, the English translation or the English subtitles. What the example of the versions and translations of *Il cane di terracotta* seems to indicate, however, is that Montalbano's multiple transformations do not contribute to a unique character profile. These transformations do not necessarily point to a linear progression or to a central narrative management of the character that can be attributed to a single authorial source. On the contrary, we witness a series of agents, including the translators, the subtitlers and those involved in the TV adaptation of the novel, who follow different norms and conventions and have different priorities and commitments. In line with Marrone's semiotic approach, our brief examination of the fate of dialect in one of Camilleri's best-known novels suggests that Montalbano's multiple versions and reflexions can hardly be synthesized into a single identity; if that identity exists, it must be sought for *not* in terms of authenticity or "true essence" but in terms of translation, intermediality and intertextuality.

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[1] Translated from Italian by the authors. All translations from Italian scholarly sources are by the authors.