

Fenoglio's binoculars, Johnny's eyes: history, language and narrative technique in Fenoglio's Il partigiano Johnny

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has been
entirely composed by myself,

The historian has always to try to do two different things simultaneously. He must swim with the stream of events, allowing himself to be carried along as though he has been present. He must from outside converge on his subject from various directions, a later, better-informed observer, and catechize it, yet never quite have it in the hollow of his hand. How to combine these two methods so as to yield a semblance of homogeneity and without the narrative falling apart, that would be a man of letters' concern. (Golo Mann, Foreword to the English-Language Edition of Wallenstein)

Abstract

This thesis centres on the writing of the Piedmontese author Beppe Fenoglio, particularly on the unfinished material which makes up the long Resistance novel known as Il partigiano Johnny. Many critics have tended to devalue the historical aspects of the material, choosing instead to concentrate on 'timeless' qualities. The thesis questions such established critical assumptions by firmly placing the work in its historical, cultural, and linguistic context. The thesis begins with a brief examination of relevant critical material. It then goes on to analyse the dating debate surrounding the texts and argues, in opposition to the editors of the 1978 critical edition of Fenoglio's works, that they were composed in the 1950s. In the next chapter, a model is created of the underlying narrative technique, or what is subsequently termed the 'Deep Structure Rhetoric', that Fenoglio uses in Il partigiano Johnny. This model, captured by the phrase 'Fenoglio's binoculars, Johnny's eyes', both describes and accounts for the way that the author was attempting to reconcile two separate points of view in Il partigiano Johnny: his own 1950s point of view, and that of Johnny, his Resistance protagonist. Two subsequent chapters then examine narrative technique and language insofar as they contribute to the historical dimension of Il partigiano Johnny. The chapter on language is informed by the work of the linguistic critic Roger Fowler, and in particular by his notion of 'mind style'. The final chapter analyses the treatment of certain historical issues in Il partigiano Johnny. The conclusion then argues that the work can be read, following the historical theory of Carlo Ginzburg, as an example of 'microhistory'.

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introduction

In his preface to the 1964 edition of Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno Italo Calvino gives a wide-ranging overview of the literary achievements of his generation of writers. For Calvino, the greatest work of the whole post-war literary movement in Italy, the book that summed up his generation's struggle, is Una questione privata, a novel by the Piedmontese author and ex-partisan Beppe Fenoglio. According to Calvino, who had himself been a partisan in the Italian Resistance, it is in this novel that the partisan war receives its most authentic and realistic treatment: 'c'è la Resistenza proprio com'era, di dentro e di fuori, vera come mai era stata scritta' (Calvino 1987, 24).¹

Fenoglio had died in 1963² (the year before Calvino's preface) and had published very little in his short lifetime. It therefore seemed that Una questione privata was destined to be his final monument. However, after his death, his widow sent a number of her husband's unfinished manuscripts to Einaudi. Amongst these manuscripts were two untitled versions of a lengthy work written in an apparently experimental language, characterised by the free combination of Italian, English and occasionally French, Latin and Greek syntax and lexis. These manuscripts describe the Resistance

experiences of a partisan named Johnny. Recognising their merit the critic Lorenzo Mondo, who was working for Einaudi, attempted to create a coherent and publishable narrative out of them by carrying out a complex process of textual splicing. As Mondo explains in his preface (see Mondo 1968), for the early chapters of his edition he used the opening section of the first manuscript, for which a corresponding version is missing in the second, and then turned to the second manuscript itself in order to complete the story. Mondo gave the work the title Il partigiano Johnny and it was published in 1968.

The book immediately became a 'caso letterario' - its success far exceeding that of Una questione privata. Il partigiano Johnny is now viewed as Fenoglio's major work and as one of the most significant achievements of modern Italian literature. Indeed, in the recent Garzanti Storia della letteratura italiana Geno Pampaloni ranks Fenoglio higher than Calvino, and even goes so far as to say that 'il lettore novecentesco non può fare a meno del partigiano Johnny' (Pampaloni 1987, 559).

The editorial status of the Mondo edition of Il partigiano Johnny is, however, obviously limited. And it is not surprising that shortly after it was published, the methodology behind the edition was questioned by Maria Corti, who accused Mondo of having created a 'stupefacente ibrido testuale' (Corti 1969, 17). Corti also advanced a series of philological and critical

theses which were radically different from those put forward by Mondo in his preface. She argued that the texts were not, as Mondo had suggested, once an integral part of Fenoglio's short novel Primavera di bellezza (published in 1959 and also with a protagonist named Johnny), but were rather successive stages in the development of an autobiographical, diaristic, partisan chronicle composed in the immediate post-war period, at a time when this particular genre was extremely popular.

It was clear that without an accurate, critical edition of Fenoglio's works it would be difficult to resolve many of the issues raised by Corti's hypotheses. Hence the publication of the five volume Opere³ in 1978, edited by scholars from the University of Pavia led by Corti herself. Opere gave access to the full versions of both texts which make up the Mondo edition of Il partigiano Johnny (entitled respectively and henceforth referred to in this study as Pj1 and Pj2) as well as to a large number of previously unavailable works, including two other important texts, the so-called Ur partigiano Johnny (henceforth UrPj), which is written in a highly individual 'English' and describes Johnny's role as an interpreter to the British Mission in the later stages of the war, and an earlier version (Pb1) of Primavera di bellezza (Pb2). Not only does Opere contain Fenoglio's entire extant narrative production, but each text is accompanied by notes and apparatus giving details of variants and marginal emendations made by the author.

Amounting to nearly four thousand pages, it is an impressive work of textual scholarship, without which the majority of academic research on Fenoglio would not have been possible.⁴

Since the publication of Opere, the debate over the dating, design and interpretation of Il partigiano Johnny and Fenoglio's minor works has continued. This introduction will now analyse the critical literature on Fenoglio's writings insofar as it examines, or as we shall see *denies*, their historical aspects.⁵ As this study primarily deals with Il partigiano Johnny we shall concentrate on critical reaction to this text. However, as a number of Fenoglio's other writings have to be taken into consideration in this thesis, some attention will be given to the critical response to the relevant minor works.

0.2 'Metahistorical' tendencies in the critical literature

As we have seen, Calvino praised Una questione privata for its authentic treatment of an important period in Italian history: the Resistance. However, with a few notable exceptions such as Guagnini (1975), Falaschi (1976) and Bigazzi (1983),⁶ the historical interpretation of Fenoglio's writings is not shared by other critics. Instead, there has been a marked and consistent tendency in the critical literature to question the historical

dimension of Fenoglio's works. They are interpreted as either 'false' depictions of the Resistance, or, and this is particularly the case in recent criticism, they are perceived as not being about the Resistance at all. This trend also extends to interpretations of Fenoglio's non-Resistance writings which deal, in the main, with peasant life in the Langhe region of Piedmont.

The majority of critics now see Fenoglio's achievement in his apparent ability to transcend the reality of his times in his writings. For ease of reference this particular trend shall be termed the 'metahistorical' thesis. The aim of the present study is to question the established critical position by showing that in his Resistance writings, and in particular in Il partigiano Johnny, Fenoglio was attempting to give as accurate an account as possible of the reality of the times in which he lived. In other words, this study argues that Calvino, as well as a small group of other critics, got it right.

Let us now look at some of the 'metahistorical' interpretations of Fenoglio's works in more detail: firstly, those interpretations which argue that Fenoglio's depiction of the Resistance is false.

In 1952 Fenoglio published his first work, the collection of twelve short stories entitled I ventitré giorni della città di Alba (henceforth VGA). Six of the stories in the collection describe the Resistance in the Langhe.

However, unlike most of the literature that came out in the years after the war, VGA is not a celebration of the Resistance. Instead, it is an often highly ironic representation of the partisan movement. Understandably, the Italian Communist Party, which had been responsible for much of the organisation of the Resistance, objected to the work, and VGA became the subject of a series of negative reviews in various local editions of the PCI newspaper 'L'Unità'.⁷ In the first of these reviews, Giorgio Guazzotti concedes that Fenoglio possesses 'una scrittura che raggiunge perfettamente una efficacia realista' (Guazzotti 1952, 3). But despite this capacity the author is unable to describe, so Guazzotti argues, 'quegli aspetti di carattere storico, morale, quei suggerimenti anche minimi di sostentamento alla lotta che facevano parte di quella realtà' (Guazzotti 1952, 3). In other words, Guazzotti feels that Fenoglio's realism is superficial and fails to capture the most important aspects of the Resistance: the motives and the morality of the partisans who fought.

Subsequent reviews are less balanced than Guazzotti's and degenerate into personal attacks against Fenoglio. On one occasion he is accused of adulterating the wine for the company he worked for, so twisted was his portrayal of the Resistance. Looking back on these reviews in his anthology of Fenoglio criticism, Giuseppe Grassano (1978) claims that they are evidence of the cultural Zdanovism of the Italian communist party in the 1950s. It is,

however, more likely that the reviews in question merely underline how important the Resistance was to the PCI in the context of the post-war struggle for power. As they saw their role in Italy's post-war government dramatically reduced by the results of the 1948 election and the skilled manoeuvres of Alcide de Gasperi, so they turned to the Resistance and what they considered to be its 'values' as a means of defending their position. Any work of literature which appeared to question the mythology of the Resistance in the way that VGA did was bound to be attacked.

Now that fifty years have elapsed since the start of the Resistance, we ought, perhaps, to be in a much better position to analyse the depiction of Resistance in VGA as well as in Fenoglio's other works. Indeed, a large body of Resistance historiography now exists to help in this task.

However, as has already been indicated, most critics who have worked on Fenoglio in recent years would argue that such an operation is unnecessary. According to them, Fenoglio's works may appear to be about the Resistance, but, in fact, they are about something else. For these critics it does not really matter whether Fenoglio's depiction of the Resistance is true or false, because his actual interests lie elsewhere. Let us now therefore turn to the specific arguments of this group of critics.

Although, as has already been indicated, the 'metahistorical' thesis is a characteristic of recent criticism, it was with the publication of Il partigiano Johnny in 1968 that this tendency first began to show itself.⁸ Thus, while many of the first reviews of the work concentrated on its value as a documentary account of the Resistance, a number of others see metaphysical and existential themes in the work which have the effect, so it is argued, of making Johnny's experiences universal. According to these critics Johnny is, in fact, a symbol of humankind. For example, Pietro Citati suggests that Johnny's flight from the great German 'rastrellamento' of the Langhe in the winter of 1944 is a figurative representation of the flight from death, the inevitable destiny of 'ogni creatura umana' (Citati 1968, 3). Such sentiments are echoed by Geno Pampaloni who argues that it is in his awareness of our tragic destiny that lies the 'indubitabile poesia di Beppe Fenoglio' (Pampaloni 1968, 3). Subsequently, critics such as Elisabetta Soletti (1971), (1976) and (1987),⁹ Gian Luigi Beccaria (1984),¹⁰ Francesco de Nicola¹¹ (1976), (1985) and (1989) and Maria Grazia di Paolo¹² (1988) who have dealt at greater length and in greater detail with Fenoglio's works (the two most recent monograph studies are by De Nicola and Soletti) have extended these early metahistorical interpretations. However, it is difficult to agree with many of the arguments that they have employed.

Firstly, let us deal with the argument that, although Fenoglio's Resistance works appear to be about the Resistance, their purpose is actually to deal with more universal issues: the problem of good and evil, of liberty and so on. The basic point being made by those critics who hold this view is that Fenoglio's writings appear to say one thing but really mean something else. In other words they are 'allegorical' or 'symbolic' texts. Yet if, say Il partigiano Johnny, is actually an example of this kind of allegorical or multilevelled text, then it is surely worthwhile analysing what is said on the surface before going in search of would-be deeper meanings.

Nonetheless, it is very hard to see Fenoglio's Resistance writings as genuinely allegorical. Although allegory is frequent as a conscious device in medieval literature, it is not nearly so common in the twentieth century. In particular, the period in which Fenoglio was writing was characterized by a renewed interest in the 'direct' portrayal of reality, in opposition to the excessive formalism and decadence of the fascist period. It seems unlikely that he should have considered writing an allegory given the cultural context in which he was writing.¹³

Having briefly dealt with the general question of allegory, let us now deal with the more specific argument put forward by many of the proponents of the

'metahistorical' thesis: that Fenoglio's interest in death in his writings is evidence of his universal preoccupations; that his works serve to underline the basic fact of our mortality. This interpretation is undermined by the obvious truism that, sadly, a lot of people died tragically young during the Resistance and in circumstances which were quite out of the ordinary. Fenoglio's Resistance writings are full of death and its horror because death and its horror were historical facts. In short, death is a theme of Fenoglio's Resistance writings because death was a reality of the Resistance. A possible counter-argument might be that Fenoglio also deals with death in his Langhe works, demonstrating that his interest in this topic spreads across the boundaries of contexts, thus making historical or geographical settings relatively unimportant. Indeed, such an argument is employed by Soletti. The critic admits that the 'impressionante catalogo di morti violente' might find 'una legittima e plausibile collocazione nell'ambito dell'esperienza traumatica ed eccezionale della Resistenza', but argues that it (i.e. the catalogue of death) becomes 'emblema della condizione umana quando è trasferita fuori dall'ambiente resistenziale e si pone come misura e regola di ogni rapporto e di ogni esistenza' (Soletti 1987, 37). But again, the kind of life that most of the peasants endured in the Langhe, as analysed, for example in Nuto Revelli's Il mondo dei vinti or in the prose fiction of Cesare Pavese, led to low life expectancy, and all too

frequently to suicide and murder. Again, I would suggest that death is frequently present in Fenoglio's Langhe works, because premature mortality was typical of the Langhe.

Despite the limitations of the metahistorical thesis that have been outlined above, some of the critics' arguments for an allegorical or metahistorical reading do, nonetheless, appear to be persuasive. Whereas texts like VGA do not strike one as particularly metahistorical, some of Fenoglio's other writings, and in particular Il partigiano Johnny, do seem to possess the kinds of features typically associated with works which pretend to universal significance. Soletti (1971 and 1976), for example, has studied the complex array of metaphors and symbols in Il partigiano Johnny. She perceives a kind of ordered symbolic system in the work which serves to foreground what she considers to be one of the central issues of Il partigiano Johnny: the universal conflict between good and evil. As such, the 'simbologia' of the text would appear to be evidence, according to Soletti, against a realistic, historical interpretation.

Along similar lines, many critics have noted the large number of intertextual references in Il partigiano Johnny to works of an allegorical or metahistorical nature. There are explicit textual quotations from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Coleridge's The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner as well as a number of implicit

references to works like Moby Dick and the Divina Commedia. In addition, Il partigiano Johnny contains many allusions to 'epic' works of literature, in particular the Homeric epics The Iliad and The Odyssey. Likewise, the Old Testament is frequently evoked.

The effect of such intertextuality is, so it is argued, to problematize the genre of Il partigiano Johnny. In other words, the wealth of references to works of literature which seem to have very little in common with a partisan chronicle are claimed to imply that the work in question is not, despite its setting, a partisan chronicle. These are arguments which the few critics who have interpreted Il partigiano Johnny as a realistic work have failed to come to terms with.

In chapter 2 of this thesis I propose to address these arguments, offering the suggestion that both the metaphorical and the intertextual dimension of Il partigiano Johnny are a common feature of partisan memoirs and one of the distinguishing features of the particular narrative technique adopted by Fenoglio in the work.

Let us now turn to a slightly different argument put forward by another proponent of the 'metahistorical thesis'. In a detailed study, Francesco de Nicolò (1976) compares historical events with their portrayal in Fenoglio's Resistance writings. Numerous anachronisms,

deviations from the truth and untenable chronological sequences are evidence, so de Nicola argues, that Fenoglio's aims were not historical. His thesis is, in many ways convincing insofar that it disproves, or at least casts doubt on Corti's thesis of a 'cronaca', but it does not absolutely preclude the possibility of historical concerns on Fenoglio's part. De Nicola's concept of historical literature and of history in general seems far too narrow. Historical literature and most modern historical writing do not pretend to give an account of the precise unravelling of historical events. This would reduce such writing to a catalogue of facts and dates. Historical writing and historical literature is concerned with what it was like to live in a particular historical epoch, what it was like to be there, not simply with what happened.

0.3 Conclusion and the rest of this thesis

This brief introduction has concentrated on the limitations of Fenoglio criticism, arguing that a possible way forward might be to place Fenoglio's works and in particular Il partigiano Johnny back in the historical context in which they were produced. A comparison, therefore, of the history of the Resistance with the history as it is inscribed in the works takes place in chapter 5. Before reaching this point a number of other operations will take place. In a study which is concerned with history, the necessity of a precise dating

of the work is obvious. Therefore, in the first chapter, the dating debate is analysed in more detail. This allows for criticism of the work to begin in chapter 2, a chapter which carries out a number of different, but related, tasks. It attempts to define what type of text Il partigiano Johnny is, places it in the cultural context of post-war Italy and introduces the complex narrative technique of the work *upon which its historical interpretation is dependent*; chapter 3 then looks in more detail at the way the narrative techniques of the text work and chapter 4 looks at the language of Il partigiano Johnny, interpreting it as a language for history.

Notes to introduction

1 Calvino had been largely responsible for discovering Fenoglio in the early fifties. Working as a consultant for Einaudi he had read some of his short stories as well as a short novel and recommended them to Elio Vittorini. For a detailed study of Calvino's reading of Fenoglio see Ferretti (1989).

2 Fenoglio was born in Alba on 1 March 1922 and died in Bossolasco on 18 February 1963. Most of the monographic studies published over the last twenty years contain brief biographical sketches. See, for example, De Nicola (1989).

3 All quotations from Fenoglio's writings are taken from the critical edition and references are given immediately after in brackets. For example, 1.2 354 indicates volume one, tome two, page three-hundred and fifty four. Any spelling mistakes made by Fenoglio, particularly in UrPj, have not been corrected and have been left as they appear in the critical edition.

4 More recently another edition of Fenoglio's works has been published in the Einaudi series 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade'. It is edited by Dante Isella.

5 For a more detailed overview of the criticism published before 1978 (the year in which Opere was published) see Grassano (1978). Grassano has also written a detailed analysis of post-1978 criticism (Grassano 1991).

6 The outstanding work is Roberto Bigazzi's book Fenoglio: Personaggi e narratori (1983). The success of Bigazzi's approach lies in the way he analyses Fenoglio's works in the light of contemporary literary trends, also demonstrating an admirable understanding of their complex narrative techniques.

7 For a detailed analysis of the early reception of VGA see Briganti (1984).

8 There is some evidence for a metahistorical trend developing even earlier than this. In his 'Ritratto di Fenoglio' Giorgio Barberi Squarotti argues that in Fenoglio's works the 'rappresentazione angolata secondo una visione delle cose dominata da questa preoccupazione tragica della violenza non può aver nulla a che vedere né con una derivazione pavesiana né con un'intenzione di strutturazione realistica (o neorealistica: nel senso della riproduzione documentaria e descrittiva di dati storico-sociali)' (Barberi Squarotti 1963, 61). I find it difficult to agree with these arguments.

9 In her recent book Soletti recapitulates many ideas from a series of earlier articles and claims, in polemic with Corti, that: 'l'incompiuto Pj non è cronaca ... nella guerra e nella storia di Johnny si specchiano le grandi linee di ogni avventura umana' (Soletti 1987, 123). Soletti has extended her thesis to other works by Fenoglio. She suggests that in VGA, Fenoglio's preoccupation with existential themes (chiefly death and its horror) means that in this work he shows a 'sostanziale indifferenza al contesto in cui sono situati gli eventi' (Soletti 1987, 19). Similarly, it is argued that the stories dealing, apparently, with peasant life in the Langhe region deal with 'ogni rapporto e ogni esistenza' and that the short novel La malora, similarly 'set' in the Langhe is 'un'indagine metafisica, una sorta di teorema sulle infinite possibilità di male e di sofferenza che colpiscono l'uomo' (Soletti 1987, 58). Despite the fact that my study questions a number of Soletti's critical reactions to the content of Fenoglio's writings, it is important to note that I have found many of her observations on form (in particular, style and narrative technique) extremely convincing.

10 In his major and influential study of the 'grande stile' in Il partigiano Johnny Beccaria argues that the subject of this work is not the Resistance but rather 'il dramma dell'esistenza nella sua totalità' (Beccaria 1984, 115). He concludes his study by arguing that Il partigiano Johnny is not 'prosa sociale ... che Fenoglio rifiuta e trascende' nor is it a 'romanzo sulla sfera politica di un momento storico (la Resistenza)' or a 'spaccato realistico-psicologico'. Instead it is a 'romanzo sublimante la cronaca ... tutto rivolto invece ai problemi estremi, alle cose ultime, agli interrogativi del destino, la morte, la violenza, il bene e il male, la libertà, la pace' (Beccaria 1984, 127).

11 De Nicola has published a number of works on Fenoglio. These include, as we have seen, an early study comparing fact and fiction in the Resistance writings (1976), a monograph (1989) and a volume in the 'Come leggere ...' series devoted to Il partigiano Johnny (1985). In his account of the criticism he argues that Citati's metahistorical interpretation is now 'condivisa dalla maggior parte dei critici' (De Nicola 1985, 75).

12 In the preface to her monograph Di Paolo suggests that 'per Fenoglio ... la Resistenza non fu che un punto di partenza, o per meglio dire un mezzo di cui servirsi per trasmettere dei valori più universali: quelli cioè che riguardano la tragedia esistenziale dell'uomo in lotta contro il suo destino di dolore per la morte sempre in agguato' (Di Paolo 1988, 18-19).

13 Nonetheless, the critics who have advanced the 'metahistorical' thesis argue that Fenoglio operated separately from the literary movements of his times, that he had 'un radicale disinteresse per ogni tipo di poetica

regionalistica o neorealista' (Soletti 1987, 19). Not only are his works dehistoricized by these critics, but so is the author himself. The poverty of this approach is exposed in chapter 2 of my study where it is argued that Fenoglio deliberately invites his readers to consider Il partigiano Johnny in the light of contemporary culture.

Chapter 1

IL PARTIGIANO JOHNNY: THE PHILOLOGICAL DEBATE

1.1 Introduction

In my introduction the importance of an accurate dating of Il partigiano Johnny was stressed. In this chapter it is therefore proposed to analyse and evaluate the various dating arguments that have been advanced so far. Given available evidence, a late dating is shown to be the most likely.

1.2 The 'early' dating thesis

Since Maria Corti published her first series of articles on the dating issue, her and her adherents views have been refined, yet the substance of the early dating thesis has remained the same. Essentially, it is argued that the two groups of works, the 'Partigiani' and the 'Primavere', the first of which comprises the three texts UrPj, Pj1 and Pj2 and the second the two texts Pb1 and Pb2, all of which have a protagonist named Johnny, belong to separate phases in the writer's career, the one early/diaristic, the other late/novelistic. Although Pj2 shows an apparent shift in content towards an emblematic or symbolic novel, its stylistic incompatibility with the two 'Primavere' is evidence that it belongs to a different project. The exuberant language of the

'Partigiani' is not then the result of a Gadda-esque search for expressivity, or a Joycean delight in experimentation, as some early reviewers claimed, but originates in the author's youthful contact, or immersion in English Literature which led him to write, when prompted by his partisan experiences, a private diary in his own idiolect. In contrast, the 'mature' language of Pb1 and Pb2 is held to be flat, dry, measured, 'quasi pavesiana' (Corti 1969, 18), a far cry from the burgeoning style of the distant Pj texts. These ideas have gradually developed in articles published over the last twenty years, receiving their most extensive treatment in Corti (1968), (1969), (1970), (1973) and (1980), Grignani (1978) and (1982) and De Maria (1973). A more recent study by another scholar from Pavia, Mariarosa Bricchi (1988), attempts to reinforce some of these concepts. Bricchi analyses, amongst other things, the nature of the focalisation of all four texts and, by employing the typologies suggested by Gerard Genette, argues that the two groups are *narratologically* incompatible. The 'Partigiani' are held by Bricchi to be characterised by a fixed internal focalisation, and the 'Primavere' by an omniscient, unfocalised system. Hence the title of her book: Due Partigiani, Due Primavere.

The arguments advanced by these scholars have their strengths. Methodologically, they employ respectable, and tried and trusted techniques of philological analysis. Above all, their arguments are based on internal

evidence. However, the problem with their contentions is, it seems to me, that they rely on a series of ideas about Fenoglio's writings, which appear, initially, to be convincing, but when put under close analysis, are shown either to be specious, or to be excessively schematic and simplistic.

1.2.1 Autobiographism

The starting point of Corti's argument is that Pj1 is, in some way, an accurate reflection, a diary, of the author's partisan career. An assertion of this nature needs to be backed up by a close analysis of the process, in Pj1, by which Fenoglio's autobiographical experience is transformed into a written, diaristic form. Yet, despite frequent claims by Corti and others for the text's substantial historical accuracy, they have never produced convincing documentary evidence to this effect. Indeed, as Francesco De Nicola has convincingly demonstrated in his study Fenoglio, partigiano e scrittore (see introduction), Il partigiano Johnny is clearly not a diaristic autobiography. For example, the conversation (see 1.2 408-411) that Johnny has with his teachers Pietro Chiodi and Leonardo Cocito (two people who not only actually existed, but taught Fenoglio at his 'liceo' and participated in the Resistance) could not have taken place, as by this stage Cocito was already an active partisan leader, fighting some distance away from Alba.

The discovery of UrPj, apparently written before Pj1 and Pj2, led Corti to define this text as the most exactly autobiographical of all of Fenoglio's writings. Again, this (difficult to prove) claim has yet to be substantiated. Indeed, as little reliable documentary material exists on Fenoglio's activities during the later stages of the war, it seems unlikely that we will ever know the degree of autobiographism in UrPj as relative to Pj1.

As well as never having convincingly demonstrated the would-be strict autobiographism of Pj1 and UrPj, Corti and her associates have failed to demonstrate just how, according to them, texts like Pj2, Pb1 and Pb2 are less autobiographical than the earlier UrPj and Pj1. Using the evidence of a conversation she had with Piero Ghiacci, who appears as the character of Pierre in the textual cycle, and who actually fought alongside Fenoglio during the Resistance, Corti has argued that the ending of Pj2 deviates more from historical reality than the ending of Pj1. Ghiacci has stated that the penultimate paragraph of Pj2 which opens with the sentence 'Pierre bestemmiò per la prima ed ultima volta in vita sua'(1.2 1203) is an invention. He did not, as far as he can remember, give vent to a swear-word. The last chapter of Pj1, so Corti (1980) argues, is therefore closer to historical, autobiographical truth than the last chapter of Pj2, where fiction begins to take over. Leaving aside the

questionable logic of her argument, this suggestion overlooks paragraph 36 of the final chapter of Pj1 which actually contains the same reference to the act of swearing supposedly 'invented' in Pj2:

Il grosso tornava per salvare la retroguardia e conquistare la giornata. Pierre bestemmiò la prima ed ultima volta in vita sua e urlò e segnò la ritirata. (1.2 922)

Quite apart from the factual errors, it is clear that the whole premise of Corti's autobiographism argument is suspect. Corti believes that there is a simple, chronologically defined, movement from autobiography to fiction in Fenoglio's writings. The later the work, the less autobiographical it is. Yet Milton, the protagonist of Fenoglio's last work Una questione privata, and like Johnny a lover of women and English literature, is transparently autobiographical. The villa in the Langhe that Milton visits at the start of Una questione privata is clearly inspired by the author's own personal experience. Indeed, Fenoglio's brother has revealed that he is the inspiration for Giorgio, the character who, in Una questione privata, steals Fulvia, the object of Milton's desire. On the other hand, La malora, Fenoglio's account of peasant life in the Langhe which was published before Una questione privata is his least autobiographical work. The point is that the relationship between the autobiographical and the fictional elements of Fenoglio's writings is very complex indeed, and for

this reason, autobiographism is an extremely hazardous dating tool.

1.2.2 Style

The linguistic, and stylistic characteristics of the 'Partigiani' and the 'Primavere' are very different. This is an obvious, even banal point. One group of texts uses English in the diegesis, the other does not. However, does this radical difference provide evidence, as Corti argues, that the 'Partigiani' belong to a period of early, undisciplined, literary apprenticeship, and the 'Primavere' to a controlled, mature, 'almost Pavesian', phase? In order to substantiate this notion of a consistent stylistic parabola, some analysis of Fenoglio's literary output in the intervening years is clearly necessary. Following Corti, we would expect to find experimentation in his early works, such as VGA, giving way to greater control in La malora. Yet, when we come to examine these texts, it is clear that quite the opposite obtains.

The style of VGA is characterised by its lack of radical experimentation. Short, laconic periods succeed one another in a stark manner similar to that of much of the literature of the immediate post-war. There is an attempt to imitate local dialect but this is limited, as Soletti has shown (1987, 22-23), to a few lexical units and

occasional distortions in syntax. It is here, and not in Pb1, that Fenoglio is at his most 'Pavesian'.

A few years later, in La malora, we find one of the most sustained attempts in Italian Literature to synthesise, to mix 'lingua' and 'dialetto'. In this work, Fenoglio boldly employs dialectal stylemes and lexical units inside a framework of literary Italian. 'Lingua' and 'dialetto' co-exist in a new symbiotic relationship. In short, Fenoglio attempts to create a new language. From the combination of Italian and dialect in La malora it is, I would argue, but a short step to the addition of Fenoglio's other language, English. La malora is not a move away from the 'Partigiani' but a preparation for them.

1.2.3 Pj1 and the Racconti della guerra civile

Perhaps more convincing than the arguments dealt with above is the suggestion that Pj1 was used as a direct source for the seven partisan stories, the Racconti della guerra civile (RGC) which were completed in 1949. Both Corti (1969), (1973) and (1980) and in more detail De Maria (1973) have been successful in showing many thematic and linguistic connections between the two works e.g:

Pj1 - Una scheggia di mortaio gli aveva enucleato un occhio ed il globo, simile ad una noce di burro, gli scivolava, lento e gentile sulla guancia (1.2 560)

RGC - io vidi Leo drizzarsi athleticamente in tutta la sua statura. Teneva le braccia al cielo emetteva un grido interminabile e l'occhio destro, simile a una noce di burro, gli scivolava giù per il cavo della guancia.(2.76)

However, as Falaschi (1976) and others have rightly objected, this kind of evidence, and there are many other examples which could be given, is clearly not sufficient to prove that one text, Pj1, was the source, and another, RGC, the direct recipient. It is equally possible that such borrowings occurred in the opposite direction, or that they stem from a common source, the author's memory. Indeed, as Merry (1973) has demonstrated, the majority of literary quotations in Fenoglio's writings are not copied directly, with the relevant text before the author's eyes, but are instead retrieved from the, occasionally imperfect, recesses of his mind. De Maria is herself aware of some of the problems associated with the argument:

Questo intricato mischiarsi di unità tematiche e microsequenze riferibili a tempi e luoghi diversi fa pensare a recuperi ora memoriali ora diretti dal grande crogiuolo della Cronaca, cui Fenoglio attinge per racconti di guerra partigiana.(De Maria 1973, 154)

1.2.4 Focalisation

The latest, detailed investigation into the debate, carried out by Bricchi, is at its most convincing when it deals with the apparent narratological incompatibility

between the 'Partigiani' and the 'Primavere'. However, the whole focalisation issue is a complex one and it is possible to raise a number of objections to the philological possibilities of this kind of approach. Whilst narratological analysis can be critically fruitful, it is far from certain whether it is a reliable philological tool. In particular, some consideration of the possible thematic links with the narratological differences highlighted by Bricchi is required. The change in technique from one text to another may be the result of a (again difficult to quantify) chronological distance between them, as Bricchi argues, but it is equally possible that it is a deliberate stylistic choice by Fenoglio, and has its thematic origins in the protagonist's increased sense of participation or involvement in historical reality in Pj1.

In addition, Bricchi's study does not extend to UrPj, in which it is possible to discern an uneven, or what Genette terms 'polymodal' narrative system, which seriously undermines Bricchi's notion of a smooth progression from one group of internally focalised texts to another group of unfocalised ones. To give a few examples, at an early point in UrPj, Johnny crosses the Tanaro river on a ferry, along with several members of the British Mission. During this crossing a ferry-man:

was eye-devouring all details in the Englishmen's dress and weapons and moves for his tales-stock this evening with the neighbours on some lost hill-farm "And one was a Scotchman, but truly he wore no skilt" (1.1 41)

Clearly this is not narrated 'internally' through Johnny, but by an external narrator with access to more knowledge than the protagonist can possibly have. Other phrases such as 'Whitaker was a common youngster (the same age as Johnny)' (1.1 9) imply omniscience. There are also frequent examples of internal focalisation: 'Johnny's heart stopped beating at these last two words and he cast eyes to the opposite hills, luridously outlined into the black-blue sky' (1.1 5) and of variable internal focalisation: '[Johnny is picked up by a staff car] under the gaping eyes of the Mango men and the nostalgic ones of Ghiacci and Franco'(1.1 5). The focus of narration thus jumps from narrator to protagonist and back again.

1.3 The 'late' dating thesis

Despite the frequent claims of scholars from the University of Pavia to have produced the definitive account of the texts' many complexities, a number of other critics have felt it necessary to question not only the early dating thesis, but also, and more importantly, have made alternative suggestions as to their meaning as well as to the significance of their language.

Following contributions by Eugenio Corsini (1973) and Giovanni Falaschi (1976), major articles by Eduardo Saccone (1980), slightly revised (1988), and Roberto Bigazzi (1980), revised (1983), argue that all five texts form part of a unitary, albeit mobile project written in the mid-fifties. This view is also shared by Dante Isella, editor of the latest edition of Fenoglio's works (see Isella (1992)). Both Saccone and Bigazzi agree (though not without some reservations) with the stylistic interpretation put forward by Gian Luigi Beccaria who, in his analysis of the language of Pj1 and Pj2, dismisses the philological enquiry as much wasted 'fiumi d'inchiostro' (Beccaria 1984, II) and perceives in the 'Partigiani' an attempt by Fenoglio to achieve an epic manner, a 'grand style', to attain, that is, linguistic totality.

Beccaria's criticisms concerning the seemingly endless nature of the philological debate pointedly question its very validity. However, his neo-Crocean stylistic approach relies on the questionable notion that great literature is metahistorical, timelessly transcending the historical conditions that produced it, and so dating issues are, *a priori*, of little interest to him. Criticism of a historicist orientation is, however, considerably hampered if one group of scholars dates the works to the immediate post-war and another to the mid-fifties.

Bigazzi and Saccone employ a variety of types of evidence to substantiate their arguments. Internal and external evidence are convincingly combined. A sign of their objectivity is that both critics reached similar conclusions independently of each other. Moreover, they have both followed their necessary philological reconstructions with subtle critical investigations, ably demonstrating the considerable narrative inventiveness and sophistication of the 'Partigiani'. The criticism that has been levelled at them by scholars from Pavia is that they have not been to study the original manuscripts held at Pavia. However, the manuscript inspection which I carried out in 1991 did not unearth any evidence to question Biazzzi and Saccone's arguments.

1.3.1 'egg-head' and 'besprizorni'

The starting point of Bigazzi's enquiry is the appearance of the word 'egg-head' in UrPj. The word first came to widespread public notice during Adlai Stevenson's Presidential campaign of 1952, when it was used as a term of abuse. This allows Bigazzi to date UrPj to after 1952. However, how, and when, Fenoglio came across the word is a complicated, and much-discussed issue. As scholars from Pavia have pointed out, the word was in limited circulation in the United States for some years before it was applied to Stevenson and his supporters. All the same, it seems more likely that Fenoglio came across it in the 1950s when its use became international.

In addition to 'egg-head' in UrPj, Bigazzi has noted the use of 'besprizorni' in Pj1. This Russian word denotes homeless and starving youths, and was used by Anna Banti in her 1955 review of Pasolini's Ragazzi di vita:

Da cui la ovvia domanda: chi parla nel 'romanzo' di Pasolini? Non certo la famelica muta dei 'besprizorni' romani, presi in blocco, giacché la loro unità d'interessi, di pensieri e di sentimenti può far 'macchia', ma non fa coro (Banti 1955, 90-91)

Bigazzi argues that it was in this article that Fenoglio came across the word. Hence a post-1955 dating for Pj1. Again, scholars from Pavia have pointed out instances where this word, and other cognates, were used previous to 1955. As they have demonstrated it was used in a film entitled Il cammino verso la vita which was shown at the Venice film festival in 1932. However, again, its most likely route through to Fenoglio's lexicon, is via Banti's article.

Other scholars have used this kind of approach to back up the idea of a late dating for the works. Bessi (1982, 170) argues that the syntagm 'armi belle' which appears frequently in Pj1 has its origins in Rosa Calzecchi Onesti's translation of The Iliad which was published by Einaudi in 1950. As Bessi argues, Onesti consistently translates a series of different versions from the original Greek (teuchea calà, éntea calà, teuchea poichila, entea daidàlea) as 'armi belle'. Hence,

according to Bessi's argument, Fenoglio had read this particular translation and used the formula in his own post-1950 work.

1.3.2 Epistolary evidence

Both the Einaudi and Garzanti archives contain letters, written in the mid to late fifties, which refer to a work in progress similar in content to the 'Partigiani'. Both Saccone and Bigazzi therefore argue that the entire textual project belongs to this period in the writer's career. This argument is strengthened by the fact that, although Fenoglio was in regular contact with his publishers from the beginning of his career up until his death, none of the earlier letters contain references to a work of such dimensions.

In the latest statement on this evidence, Grignani (1982) argues that the only text that can be positively identified as being referred to in the letters is Pb1. And indeed, the only exact correspondence between a text mentioned in the letters, and a text published in the critical edition, is Pb1. Yet, this misses the point. The letters are important because they allow us to identify the idea of a mobile project conceived and written in the fifties. Rather than looking for exact correspondences between letters and texts, it is the recognition of the idea *in fieri* which counts. Thus, when Grignani argues that the period 1943-1945 would, in a (never-written)

final version, have been dealt with by revisions of Pj1 and Pj2, this suggestion is probably true. However, this does not push the date of composition of Pj1 and Pj2 back to the forties. Indeed, in 1957 Fenoglio tells Calvino that he has not yet finished a 'prima stesura' of the project. This clearly contradicts Pavia's argument that Fenoglio had already completed two or perhaps even three vast autobiographical drafts, 'stesure', by the late 1940s. The logical conclusion is that the 'Partigiani' were written in the fifties.

1.3.3 The 'cartelle' Corsini

Both Bigazzi and Saccone use the evidence of the so-called 'cartelle Corsini', discovered by the scholar, and friend of Fenoglio's, Eugenio Corsini. These are three empty files in the Fondo which have the following annotations on the left and right side of their upper part:

Cartella 1

Capitoli 9 (7 - 15)
Pagg. 70
Revisionato 21/8/57

21 Maggio - 13 Giugno '56
Pagg. 62

Cartella 2

Capp. 4 (36 - 39)
Pagg. 46
Finito di revisionare 18/9/57

24 Novembre - 17 Gennaio
Pagg. 50

Cartella 3

Capp. 6 (40 - 45)
Pagg. 44
Revisionato il 26/9/57

19 Gennaio - 22 Febbraio
48 pagg.
(50 ?)

Heated arguments have developed as to the meaning of this data. Only one point is certain and verifiable and above all agreed on by scholars from all sides: the left-hand annotations on the second and third folders unquestionably refer to the manuscript of Pj1. Scholars have counted the pages and shown that in Chapters Trentaseiesimo - Trentanovesimo (clearly once kept in Cartella 2) they amount to forty-six (see pagg.46), while in chapters Quarantesimo - Quarantacinquesimo they amount to forty-four (see Pagg.44).¹ The numbers on the left-hand side of the first cartella and on the right-hand side of all three do not correspond to any text in the Fondo. As to what Fenoglio means by 'revisionato' and 'finito di revisionare' (a difference which has not yet been noted) and what the right-hand annotations refer to is a question which has not, as yet, found an answer. What is clear though, is that in 1957 Fenoglio was conducting some kind of revision on Pj1, and when he finished this operation he left the chapters in the same state that they are in today. Bluntly speaking, scholars from Pavia have never found a convincing response to the evidence provided by the 'Cartelle Corsini'. They have argued that Fenoglio was revising Pj1 in preparation for another text, but this argument is far from persuasive. According to Pavia Pj2 had already been written. If this was the case then Fenoglio would have been revising the relevant chapters in this text, and not those in the already superseded Pj1. Recently, Bricchi sidesteps the whole issue by suggesting that the 'cartelle Corsini' are

'di assai dubbia decodifica' (Bricchi 1980, 11). This may be true but it is no reason to ignore them.

1.4 Conclusion

It seems certain, therefore, that both groups of texts were written during the mid to late fifties and represent the various stages of a work originally intended to describe the period 1940-1945. This work went through several compositional stages, possibly beginning with a long draft in English (of which UrPj is the only surviving fragment). However, a great deal more research is necessary before a definitive account of the project's complex articulations can be produced.

In this study we will analyse the work in its longest possible form by assembling our own text from the surviving manuscripts: Pb1 covers the period 1939-43, Pj1 1943-1945, and UrPj supplies the ending. This created text will be referred to throughout as Il partigiano Johnny. Whenever the Mondo edition of the work is referred to this is made clear. This is not an operation that would be sanctioned by the editors of the critical edition, but is one which Bigazzi and Saccone have, with reason, argued to be valid. ²

Notes to chapter 1

1 During my inspection of the manuscripts I verified the accuracy of these figures. Unfortunately, I could not study the 'cartelle Corsini' at first hand as I was unable to locate them.

2 Bigazzi, for example, describes the whole project as a kind of 'Commedia delle cui tre parti si posseggano tre stesure diverse in ordine quasi inverso: la terza dell'Inferno (Pdb1), la seconda del Purgatorio (Pj1) e la prima del Paradiso (UrPj), lasciando fuori Pj2 e Pdb2 perché appartengono a un altro progetto, in quanto presuppongono la mutilazione di UrPj (nel caso di Pj2) e di tutto il resto (Pdb2) dato che ambedue finiscono con la morte anticipata di Johnny. E allora, se avessimo una Commedia in queste condizioni, sarebbe il caso di stamparla a cantiche separate o non varrebbe la pena di riunirle nel disegno voluto dall'autore almeno fino al tempo di Pj1 a di Pdb1 (con tutti gli avvertimenti del caso)?' (Bigazzi 1983, 153).

Chapter 2

FENOGLIO'S BINOCULARS, JOHNNY'S EYES

2.1. Introduction

In 1957 Fenoglio received a letter from Italo Calvino asking him whether he was writing a new novel. Fenoglio's reply confirmed that he was preparing a new work, but that it was not, at least in the strict sense of the word, a novel: 'romanzo propriamente non è' (Bigazzi 1983, 124).¹ The work referred to is probably, as was suggested in the previous chapter, Il partigiano Johnny. If, by the author's own definition, the cycle is not a novel then a number of simple, but nevertheless important, questions arise: what is it? why is it what it is? and in what way does its particular nature structure its interpretation? This chapter attempts to find some answers to these three questions.

As we have seen, there are a number of different answers to the the question of the genre of Il partigiano Johnny. It has been described as an epic novel, as a kind of autobiographical partisan memoir, and as a Bildungsroman. This last definition, offered by Bigazzi is the most accurate that has so far been offered, as it clearly captures the way Johnny develops over time. However, we do not have to analyse these different definitions in any particular detail because the author chooses to reveal what Il partigiano Johnny is in the text itself. We discover that

none of the definitions that have been applied to Il partigiano Johnny are absolutely accurate. It is neither an autobiography, nor purely a work of fiction, but a combination of both. Like Proust's Recherche it is a *fictive autobiography*.

This revelation appears in a kind of post-preface which is placed in the latter stages of UrPj. Johnny hears: 'the jerking and croakings of a much nervously operated-radioset' (1. 243) and his fellow partisan Marino explains that 'their host was feeding as always on Radio London, as Ugolino on the skull of a Bishop' (1. 243). Immediately afterwards a 'thick-relegated, rainbow-costured block-notes appeared into the fidgeting, feminine hands of Marino' (1. 243) and the latter asks whether he can draw a portrait of Johnny:

- A pencilled or a written one?
- A written one. I'm jottling a book on us and our things. - That does strike you?
- Not at all. I personally know dozens of us picking up such flowers. - voyaging with a block just like yours in their knapsacks.
- Really? Marino gasped, at a loss for the first time.
- I can quote you at least ten of them only in North's army. As soon as the war ends, there will be no other concern for them than editors.
- And ... and who will emport the laurel? Who will have written the book of books on us?
- Johnny sighed: - Nobody of you, nobody of us. The book of books on us will be written by a man is yet unborn, the woman will bear him in his womb is not yet more than a baby now, growing in the midst of our reports...
- Marino flapped a puzzled, disheartened hand upon the rich cover of his secret book. - That's sad -. He ceased flapping and fixed on the book a desperate but contained look. - And, say, Johnny... won't our work aid him to his aim?
- Quite not, in my naked opinion. The man will simply see *and transfer* (my emphasis 1. 243).

As Fenoglio is here close to finishing the final part of the first draft of a work, in which he appears to be Johnny, it is not unreasonable to assume that the work which will carry off the laurel wreath, the work in which its author 'sees' and 'transfers', is precisely this one. And given that on almost every page of the three texts there appear expressions like 'Johnny vide', 'Johnny scortò', 'il tremendo occhio di Johnny colse', this would certainly seem to be the case. Johnny's words are therefore, as Bigazzi has already argued in an article appropriately entitled 'Il narratore par lui-même' (Bigazzi 1984)², of great importance for an understanding of the whole cycle. However, their implications are complex, if not apparently contradictory. The man³ who will write the book of books on the Resistance is still to be born. This suggests that this 'he' is not going to be himself, the partisan Johnny, and that 'he' will write some years after the Resistance.⁴ Yet, he must see (an act which suggests participation in the Resistance) and then, apparently contemporaneously, transfer. He must be different, yet at the same time identical persons. He must be, as Bigazzi notes, 'distante ma tuttavia partecipe' (Bigazzi 1984, 24). The only way that these diverse operations can be performed is in the writing of a fictive autobiography, whose twin aspects fully satisfy Johnny's strict criteria. This work is, of course, none other than Il partigiano Johnny. Its fictive and retrospective nature allows its author to be different from and more mature (distant) than its participating protagonist (Johnny is

Fenoglio's fictional invention), but at the same time its obliquely autobiographical nature makes them almost identical. The book is therefore organised around Johnny, the unborn potential writer who 'sees' and participates directly in the historical events as they occur, and Fenoglio, the recently born *de facto* writer who carries out the operation of 'transferring' for his now no longer existing other self, Johnny. In other words, the book, the book of books on and about 'us', the Resistance, has a special kind of technical structure. It is built around the subtle dialectical relationship between Fenoglio and Johnny, between what, for ease of reference shall be termed Fenoglio's binoculars, capable of seeing history from a distance, and Johnny's eyes, capable of seeing it close up.⁵ The next chapter analyses the various ways in which Fenoglio attempts to sustain this complex technical relationship. The present chapter continues with an analysis of why Fenoglio felt that in order to write the definitive book on the Resistance he had to write fiction whilst working within the parameters of an autobiographical framework.⁶

In order to find a solution to this, our second question, it is necessary to consider Johnny's comments to Marino from a 1950s perspective. They represent not so much a prediction as to what will happen, but a considered response to what did happen, a reaction that is to the many writings on the Resistance which had been published since 1945. The following section, therefore, analyses some of the Resistance writings which formed part of the lenses of

Fenoglio's binoculars when he picked them up and decided to write his story, Il partigiano Johnny. This operation will not only help to provide a partial answer to our second question (why did Fenoglio choose to make Il partigiano Johnny a fictive autobiography?) but will also begin to provide an answer to our third (in what way does its genre affect interpretation?).

2.2. Fenoglio's binoculars

The Italian Resistance provided the subject matter for a vast number of literary texts, and to attempt to take even a small percentage of them into consideration would be a lengthy task. In order to keep the number of texts dealt with down to a manageable number, it is proposed, firstly, to examine the type of writings specifically criticised by Johnny, that is the post-war 'memorialistica'. The works which are taken into consideration include one memoir which we can be fairly certain Fenoglio had read (i.e. Chiodi's Banditi),⁷ as well as others which he might well have not (e.g. Bolis's Il mio granello di sabbia). After the memoirs a number of 'literary' Resistance texts are analysed, including some of Fenoglio's own earlier writings.

2.2.1 The Resistance and the 'memorialisti'⁸

As Johnny himself 'predicted' a large number of Resistance memoirs were published after the war.⁹ Indeed, Resistance memoirs are still being published today, and it is likely

with the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Resistance in 1993, that a number of others will be published. Many of these works contain an introductory preface written by their author. Here are some examples of the kind of comments that can be found in these prefaces:

1. Luciano Bolis, Il mio granello di sabbia:

Questa cronaca ... non ha pretese letterarie ... L'unico pregio di questa storia è ... l'assoluta autenticità di quanto vi si narra; e tale autenticità ho osservato proprio per l'urgenza di verità che mi ha indotto a documentare in parole un'esperienza che poteva sembrare inenarrabile, a me che non faccio di mestiere lo scrittore. (Bolis 1946, 3)

2. Roberto Battaglia, Un uomo un partigiano:

per chiarire poi che cosa è stato il movimento partigiano in Italia non posso commentarlo che attraverso ciò che io stesso ho visto o fatto, ossia commettere l'immodestia di parlare in prima persona. (Battaglia 1945, 5)

3. Giambattista Lazagna, Ponte rotto:

Questo libro fu scritto tra il mese di giugno ed il mese di agosto del 1945, sulla base di ricordi personali, sorretti da taccuini tenuti durante il periodo partigiano ... Scopo del libro, fu principalmente quello di conservare tutto quanto la memoria fresca dei fatti mi consentiva, e di spiegare, attraverso una testimonianza diretta, che cosa fosse stato il movimento partigiano. (Lazagna 1946, 5)

Later in the same preface Lazagna admits to 'prolissità di talune parti, stile non curato e poco scorrevole' (Lazagna 1946, 5).

4. Pietro Chiodi Banditi:¹⁰

Questo libro non è un romanzo, nè una storia romanzata. È un documento storico, nel senso che personaggi, fatti ed emozioni sono effettivamente stati. (Chiodi 1975, nota dell'autore)

5. Emilio Lussu, Un anno sull'altipiano:¹¹

Il lettore non troverà, in questo lavoro, nè il romanzo, nè la storia. Sono ricordi personali ... Io non ho raccontato che quello che ho visto ... Non alla fantasia ho fatto appello, ma alla memoria ... Io mi sono spogliato anche della mia esperienza successiva e ho rievocato la guerra così come noi l'abbiamo realmente vissuta, con le idee e i sentimenti d'allora. (Lussu 1945, premessa)

From these prefaces it is possible to summarise the implicit beliefs of their authors as follows: a) they believe that they are faithfully representing themselves; b) they believe that they are faithfully representing what they saw c) they believe that they are not, and are in some cases incapable of, writing fiction. Many people familiar with these works, including, I would suggest, the Fenoglio of the 1950s,¹² have realised that their authors have not understood the complexity of the problem that they were dealing with. Turning, first of all, to the problems inherent in a), it is clearly difficult enough to attempt to understand and depict a present self. But it is even more difficult to attempt to understand and depict exactly a past, historical self. The Roberto Battaglia, as described in Un uomo un partigiano, is not the same Roberto Battaglia of the Resistance, but a

different Roberto Battaglia, a Roberto Battaglia that is, according to the Roberto Battaglia of 1945, and not 1943 or 1944. Had Beppe Fenoglio tried to write a work with himself as the protagonist he would, in effect, be telling the story of a person he no longer is. Fenoglio was not the same person in the 1950s as he was in the 1940s. Just as the Fenoglio of the 1950s is unborn according to Johnny, so in the 1950s the Fenoglio of the Resistance was then dead.¹³ Writing a few years after Fenoglio, Luigi Meneghello encountered the same problem: 'Quello che è privato è privato, e quando è stato è stato. Tu non puoi piú pretendere di riviverlo, ricostruirlo: ti resta in mano una crisalide' (Meneghello 1976, 19). Indeed, this problem is not just limited to works about the Resistance. It is, arguably, the central problem of autobiography. There is an irreconcilable rift between the narrating 'I' who tells the story that is his/her life and the narrated 'I' who lives the life that is the story. Recognising this problem, Fenoglio chose to confront it by creating, fictionally, another person, Johnny, in many respects like him, but in many respects not like him, an operation that the 'memorialisti' themselves did without realising it.¹⁴ By then opting for a third person narrative system, Fenoglio was able to create sufficient space or distance between himself and his protagonist to avoid the kind of pitfalls that the 'memorialisti', who wrote in the first person and believed that their narrating 'I' was identical to their narrated 'I', had fallen into.¹⁵

The problems of b) and c) are best dealt with simultaneously. The following passage is taken from Luciano Bolis' description of his attempted suicide:

io mi cacciai le dita già irrigidite dal freddo e dalla morte nella ferita e tirai, spezzai, slabbrai quel taglio da farlo divenire uno squarcio, scavai la mia gola da farci entrare la mano intera, strappai le parti molli che mi si presentavano, mentre tutto in me convergeva nello sforzo della mia mano di andar dentro, piú dentro, sempre piú dentro, ove si annidava la morte.
(Bolis 1946, 54)

This description does not, and can not coincide exactly with the actual event. It is a *post facto* fictional reconstruction built around a sentence which is loaded with some of the more conventional rhetorical devices of literature. The alliteration created by the concatenation of verbs beginning with 's' sounds 'scavai', 'slabbrai', 'strappai', 'spezzai', and the nouns 'squarcio' and 'sforzo' is a case in point. Likewise, a further example is the anaphoric repetition of 'dentro, piú dentro, sempre piú dentro'. Yet, despite this rhetoric, Bolis' work is, in many ways, a superior example of its kind. Many of the other memoirs are far less subtle. However, in each case, it is clear that memoir writing, like all forms of written discourse, has an inescapable rhetorical dimension. Reality, therefore, can not simply be 'transferred' en bloc to the page, it has to be recreated through the medium of fiction. Acquainted as he was with the post-war memoirs, Fenoglio realised that it was impossible to write the lived experience of autobiography without writing fiction, that it

is impossible to 'transfer' without picking up a pair of fictional binoculars. And good fiction and good binoculars are infinitely better than bad fiction and bad binoculars.¹⁶ The deliberate 'fictionality' of Il partigiano Johnny does not, therefore, lead to a blurring of the historical nature of the text, as critics have tended to argue. When coupled with the cycle's autobiographism, it simply serves to reinforce its substantial realism.¹⁷

In this section we have seen that Il partigiano Johnny is a product, as well as a kind of rejection, of post-war memoir writing. Read out of context, as many critics have done, it is easy to mistake it for something that it is not. Il partigiano Johnny is an historical work, written in a specific historical period about a fictional person in a specific historical period. Let us now turn to some *avowedly* literary recreations of the Resistance in order to see how Fenoglio may have been influenced by them.

2.2.2 The literature of the Resistance

2.2.2.1 Vittorini: Uomini e no

Shortly after the war finished, Elio Vittorini, arguably the most influential figure in modern Italian culture at the time, published his own Resistance novel, Uomini e no. The novel is given a clearly marked historical and geographical context and many of the events described in the book actually occurred. Vittorini uses a fictional construct as

his protagonist, the intellectual Enne 2, with whom he at times appears to identify, above all in the chapters written in italics. Uomini e no, represents a text which all Italian writers of the Resistance, and particularly those attempting to portray the role of the intellectual in the struggle, turned to as a starting point for their own works. How, then, might Vittorini's novel have affected Fenoglio's later work?

In terms of technique, Vittorini uses a third-person narrative system, and so attempts to create the same kind of 'distance' between narrator and protagonist that Fenoglio himself later achieved. Yet, despite this technical similarity, the two books have widely differing ambitions. In Il partigiano Johnny, Fenoglio attempts to write the fictive autobiography of one man, Johnny. As such, Johnny's individuality is insisted on throughout the work. In contrast, Vittorini tries to tell the story not of one man's place in the Resistance, but of Man's place in the Universe. His designs were much different than Fenoglio's, and were motivated by his ideas about the possible realities that a work of fiction should represent. Vittorini argued that the depiction of the colours of the times was only the writer's first task. Far more important was the portrayal of moral and universal realities. In Uomini e no, this leads to Vittorini conceiving Enne 2, not just as the individual Enne 2, nor even as 'Resistance man', but as Mankind. However, as many critics have subsequently realised, his attempt in Uomini e no to grasp and describe historical, moral and

universal truths is ultimately a failure. He believed he was writing the great book on the Resistance, but, as Manacorda has commented, he only succeeded in discovering 'i simboli, e forse le etichette, e ne lasciava cadere il corpo vivo' (Manacorda 1967, 80). In particular, Vittorini's moral/universal investigation into the nature of 'man' in the book is often unconvincing and frequently trite. This is the case, for example, with the banal reflections ('Questo, tra i deserti, è il piú squallido' (Vittorini 1979, 34)) on the existential and spiritual emptiness of the loveless sex that Enne 2 has with his 'staffetta' Lorena. Vittorini tries to turn Enne 2 into a universal figure, but ultimately his protagonist becomes a nobody.

To return to our earlier concepts of 'distance' and 'participation', it is clear that, in Vittorini's case, they are more relevant to the content than to the formal strategies of this particular example of Resistance writing. The central figure of Uomini e no (as well, perhaps, as the author/narrator himself) is, in terms of his intellectual engagement with the world, too distant from his historical environment. Vittorini achieves distance and participation in the form of his novel, but not in the content. And it is this aspect of Uomini e no which Fenoglio specifically criticises and then seeks to rectify in his own work. This critique of Uomini e no appears in a kind of internal 'content' preface, a parallel passage to the discussion with Marino in UrPj. This content preface is placed in an episode which occurs shortly before Johnny decides to join the

partisan movement. Following a visit from his father to his hill-side retreat, Johnny spends the night feeling that he is cut off from the world. His problems are further compounded by a frustrated sexual urge. Johnny quickly resolves this second problem and the following chapter opens with him having sex with an unnamed 'ragazza della collina'. Nevertheless, the physical relief she provides only adds to Johnny's struggle:

- Ti sono piaciuta? - she stammered. -
 Infinitamente. Sei ... sei stupendamente
 praticabile -. Ma poi Johnny si aderse e gridò: -
 Ma io non mi sento un uomo! - Lei gogglè: Tu ti
 fai torto... - e ancora, Johnny, piú forte e
 indifferente e sordo alla ragazza, ripeté: - Io
 non mi sento un uomo! (1.2 402)

The thematic parallels between this rather artificial scene and the Enne 2/Lorena episode which was mentioned above are obvious. Indeed, by including a semi-quotation in Johnny's cry 'Io non mi sento un uomo', a simple reworking, that is, of Enne 2's impassioned exclamation to Lorena: '"Io voglio sapere se sono ancora un uomo" (Vittorini 1979, 33)', Fenoglio makes it clear that he means this particular scene to be considered in the light of the similar one in Vittorini's novel. The point that Fenoglio thereby polemically makes, is that the anguish that Johnny feels is created because he does not feel that he is participating in history, whereas Enne 2's distress stems from the metahistorical, purely existential problem of loveless sex.

2.2.2.2 Hemingway: For whom the bell tolls

Johnny and the 'ragazza della collina' are subsequently interrupted by the approach of allied aeroplanes, and the ensuing bombing raid damages a bridge. This passage is itself another literary quotation, a reference to Hemingway's novel of the Spanish Civil War, For whom the bell tolls. Hemingway's novel, which had attained the status of a 'modern classic' amongst young Italian intellectuals, ends with the famous description of the protagonist Robert Jordan's unselfish 'beau geste', and the successful destruction of a bridge. Fenoglio, therefore, is inviting comparisons between his text and Hemingway's. The point he makes is a refinement of his earlier 'remarks' concerning the nature of his intellectual protagonist. Fenoglio has already suggested that Johnny should not, and indeed will not, participate in the manner of Vittorini's Enne 2 who remains distant throughout his Resistance career. Here, he implies that Johnny ought to behave in the manner of Hemingway's Robert Jordan, who represents a kind of ideal 'participant'.¹⁸ However, at this stage in the narrative, it is the allies who are blowing up bridges, and not Johnny. It is thus at the end of the chapter which contains this internal preface, that Johnny begins to contemplate the possibility of joining the partisans (see 1.2 413).

2.2.2.3 Fenoglio

In 1952 Fenoglio published his first work, the collection of short stories VGA. The collection brings together what the author originally conceived as two separate volumes, the seven RGC and the short novel La paga del sabato (henceforth PDS).¹⁹ After numerous changes in design, suggested both by Fenoglio and by his editors (chiefly Elio Vittorini), it was eventually decided to make a substantial volume of short stories out of both texts, and include a number of other, once separate stories. Six of the seven RGC were therefore preserved in their original sequence for the published volume, albeit with certain minor changes and in two cases with altered titles. The stories which were retained were 'I ventitré giorni della città di Alba', 'L'andata', 'Il trucco', 'Gli inizi del partigiano Raoul', 'Vecchio Blister' and 'Un altro muro'. 'Nella valle di San Benedetto', the penultimate story of RGC was excluded, although for some time Fenoglio had decided instead to omit 'Gli inizi del partigiano Raoul'. Two stories were taken from different parts of PDS ('Ettore va al lavoro', 'Nove lune') and were placed seventh and ninth. The rest of PDS which, in Vittorini's opinion, relied too heavily on borrowings from the cinema,²⁰ was put to one side. Four other stories ('Quell'antica ragazza', 'L'acqua verde', 'L'odore della morte', 'Pioggia e la sposa') placed eighth, ninth eleventh and twelfth respectively were added to make up the twelve.²¹

Critics have seen in this laborious process a marked improvement from Fenoglio's two original, separate projects. Corti, for example, describes the RGC as an 'operetta', whilst 'la sorella piú matura', VGA, 'si presenta armonicamente ripartito' into six partisan stories set in the Langhe and 'sei di vita paesana delle stesse Langhe' (Corti 1980, 69). Along similar lines, Soletti perceives a 'simmetrica corrispondenza tra i racconti partigiani e langaroli' (Soletti 1987, 69). However, an analysis of the subject matter of the twelve stories shows that the apparent symmetry between the six Resistance stories and the six Langhe stories is, in fact, an illusion. The first six do indeed deal with various aspects of the partisan struggle in the Langhe region. Yet, the seventh and ninth, 'Ettore va al lavoro' and 'L'odore della morte', are not depictions of 'vita paesana', but instead deal with the aftermath and the effects of the civil war in a city context. As such, they follow on logically from the first half of the volume. But the connection between 'Acqua verde' (suicide), 'Nove lune' (unwanted pregnancy) and 'Pioggia e la sposa' (a rain-affected outing to a wedding in the Langhe) and the other nine stories is tenuous. Rather than symmetry, it is perhaps more accurate to speak of a high degree of imbalance. Indeed, Vittorini seems to have attempted to reconcile this imbalance by suggesting the all-encompassing title 'Racconti barbari'.²² The title appealed to Fenoglio, but it was eventually decided to change it to I ventitre giorni della città di Alba when the collection was in the presses.



The long editorial history of the volume, and the eventual unsatisfactory solution provide a number of indications about the kind of problems Fenoglio encountered in the early stages of his career; problems which he eventually resolved in the mature work Il partigiano Johnny. Fenoglio had collected a wealth of material belonging to three geographically connected subjects: the Resistance in the Langhe, peasant life in the Langhe, and his life in the Langhe. He chose to keep the depiction of himself out of his works until Il partigiano Johnny. Hence PDS, which is in many ways an autobiographical novel, is not a fictive autobiography in the manner of Il partigiano Johnny. In VGA, however, the impression given is that Fenoglio attempted to do too much by placing the two remaining subjects in the same volume. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that his original project, before the intervention of Einaudi, was to publish the partisan stories separately. In his next work of fiction, La malora, Fenoglio chooses to separate the Langhe from the Resistance by setting the story in the earlier part of the century. In Il partigiano Johnny, Fenoglio finally succeeded in bringing together all of his three subjects, by making one of the key aspects of the book the three-way relationship between the Resistance, the peasant world and Johnny (for an analysis of this issue see my chapter 5). Il partigiano Johnny is, therefore, a kind of 'summa fenogliana'.

Fenoglio's earlier experiments and difficulties helped shape the content of Il partigiano Johnny. But did they also help

to determine the form of the work? Why, for example, did Fenoglio eventually decide to reject 'Nella valle di San Benedetto' from VGA? The story recounts an attempt by a partisan to hide from a German 'rastrellamento' by shutting himself inside a tomb. The protagonist's growing claustrophobia, as well as his fervid imagination then combine to produce a chain of existential terrors. Unlike any other story in the collection, 'Nella valle di San Benedetto' is told by a first-person narrator. In terms of his Resistance fiction up to Il partigiano Johnny, the story is thus a kind of technical 'hapax'. Fenoglio does not explain in his letters why he eventually chose to sacrifice it. Critics from Corti onwards have suggested that the decision was taken in response to the story's excessive autobiographism. Indeed, De Nicola (1976), who shares Corti's opinion, has discovered that it is inspired by an incident from Fenoglio's own partisan experience. However, I would suggest that the real problem of the story is a technical one. Fenoglio's decision to employ a first person narrator means that, technically speaking, the story suffers from problems of too little 'distance' and too much 'participation'. Indeed, in her analysis of this story Soletti sees one of its weaknesses as the 'distanza negata dall'io narrante' (Soletti 1987, 37). It is too easy to see the story as a straight account of an episode from Fenoglio's life. And it was for this reason that he eventually decided not to include it in the collection.²³

The above analysis of Resistance texts has helped to illuminate a number of aspects of Il partigiano Johnny. However, as has already been indicated, the book is not just dependent on Fenoglio's binoculars, but on Johnny's eyes as well, and in order to fully understand the particular nature of Il partigiano Johnny, it is to Johnny and his eyes that we must turn.

2.3. Johnny's eyes

2.3.1 A life of literature

In the early stages of Pb1, Johnny frequently expresses a frustrated desire to pursue a literary career. For example, in an attempt to win the affections of a woman called Elda, he asks her what she would think of him if he became a writer. The idea so excites her that she wrings her hands enthusiastically and nearly causes the boat they are travelling in to sink. Yet, despite this encouragement, Johnny later concedes to his friends that, because of his inability to finish anything that he starts, he has abandoned creative writing and turned to translation instead (see 1.3 1278). Fenoglio's subsequent autobiographical reconstruction is therefore an admission that the material for his great book was to be found, as it was for Proust's hero, in his own life. By writing the book we are now reading Fenoglio satisfies his protagonist's desires to be a writer. At the same time, he realises the wish expressed by

Johnny's friend Lalla to 'see' what he will 'see' in his life:

Hai degli occhi meravigliosi - ripetè Lalla con durezza: - Vorrei conoscere tutto ciò che vedranno, Johnny, da domani in avanti per tutta la tua lunga interminabile vita. (1.3 1312)

2.3.2 A life in literature

As we saw above there are occasions when the reality of the Resistance assumes a certain literariness as it is reinscribed in literary form by the authors of the memoirs. There are, however, other similarities between Fenoglio's work and the post-war memoirs. Not only are the memoirs fictional, but they also tend to contain many of the kinds of literary references that are characteristic of Il partigiano Johnny. The following analysis of these similarities will help to question one of the central arguments of the metahistorical thesis - that because of the complex array of literary references in Il partigiano Johnny it cannot be considered a partisan chronicle.

There are many occasions when the imagination of the protagonist of a memoir goes into a kind of overdrive, and events which are objectively historical become subjectively literary. The narrated 'I' of the memorialisti and, likewise Johnny, start to see the world with literary eyes, they lead a life in literature. In other words they start 'seeing things'. A few examples from some 'memoirs' should help to illustrate this point:

1. Franco Fortini, Sere in Valdossola:

[Whilst he is helping a fire-fighting operation]
 Jam proximus ardet Ucalegon, vado ripetendomi e
 tentando di ricordare i versi che seguono.
 (Fortini 1985, 94)

Le scarpe fanno rumore sulle foglie secche, come
 in quella pagina di Erodoto che dal ginnasio mi
 porto nella memoria: E il sentiero della montagna
 era coperto di foglie secche dei castagni, e i
 Lacedemoni li udirono, che discendevano' (Fortini
 1985, 152)

2. Giambattista Lazagna, Ponte Rotto:

La lontana fiamma azzurra di Gino proiettava
 immense ombre di blocchi inequali sparsi al suolo.
 Ogni piccolo movimento provocava un vasto gioco di
 ombre cupe e di tenui luci. La sagoma di Gino
 sembrava di un gigante lontano. Pensai di essere
 capitato nel regno di Caronte, in compagnia di
 ombre nelle viscere della terra. (Lazagna 1946,
 51)

3. Emanuel Artom, Diari:

Almeno mi pareva di essere come Ciacco stasera
 (Artom 1966, 122)

[Dinner at a local peasant's house] Celebrando le
 imprese giovanili ed esercitando l'ospitalità
 pareva un vecchio eroe d'Omero. (Artom 1966, 132)

Ci si fa la barba, ci si lavano i denti e poi si
 va a dormire in un immenso letto con tre posti, in
 un letto da Fiammetta, ma purtroppo Fiammetta non
 c'è. (Artom 1966, 69)

4. Cino Boccazzi, Col di luna:

I vestiti fumano, la pentola fuma, il fuoco fuma,
 le maglie, le camicie sono appese dappertutto, la
 legna bagnata fuma. Nell'aria torbida e pesante, i

corpi nudi dei partigiani, su cui la fiamma mette un lucido riflesso ricordano la scena del bagno nella casa dei morti di Dostoiewski. (Boccazzi 1947, 113)

In 1., 2., and 3. we see how events are interpreted in the light of a) classical literature and b) Dante and Boccaccio, whereas in 4. the text which comes into the author's mind (Dostoevsky's Memoirs from the House of the Dead) is more recent. Let us now turn to Il partigiano Johnny and see how this tendency, which critics have interpreted as evidence of the metahistorical nature of the work, but which is in fact both a commonplace in memoir writing and a central aspect of Johnny's personal vision of the Resistance, manifests itself.

The determining role that literature has in structuring Johnny's view of the world first becomes apparent during his brief stay in Rome, at precisely the time that his desire to pursue a literary career looks destined to fail: he cannot be a soldier and a writer at the same time, or so he thinks. Instead he, or rather, his consciousness continues to write, by applying literary formulae to the outside world. As he gazes at the sea from his seat on the train, his companion at arms Lorusso asks him what it is that he sees, to which he replies 'come a Re Artú Sir Bedivere: 'I see nothing but waves and winds' (1.3 1361). Questions of perception and understanding are resolved with recourse to other knowledge, and this other knowledge is, in this case, specifically literary (Malory's Le morte d'Arthur).

This way of dealing with epistemology, of 'seeing' the flux of the world, becomes a key element in Pj1, when Johnny's imagination reacts to the extremes of partisan warfare. To give an example, prior to the attack on the city of Alba, Johnny leads an abortive mortar attack against the fascist garrison in the city. The mortars land far away from their target and Johnny and his men are forced to beat a hasty retreat. At one point Johnny turns round to 'guardare indietro nella luce canuta la sfilata' and a quotation from Coleridge's Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner comes into his mind: '«yea, we were a ghastly crew»' (1.2 614). Thus, when he is earlier invited by the communist commissioner Némega to write articles for the partisan newspaper and Johnny violently states that he has left his pen at home and has *consciously* renounced all things literary, he fails to realise that his pen is, in fact, now inside his mind. The wiser, transferring author Fenoglio, realised that he was unable to escape his life in literature, he continued to *unconsciously* write over reality throughout the armed struggle, and so the book that he is now writing has, out of necessity, to be literary.

In the two examples from Il partigiano Johnny looked at above, the literary quotation is explicit. Most of the time, however, the quotation, is hidden behind the text, it is integral to the narrative and is not separated from it by punctuation marks. Let us look at a couple of examples. In a scene placed in the 'rossi' section of the narrative, Johnny takes part in a disastrous expedition to requisition

tobacco. His friend Tito is killed, and another partisan is captured. As he and Fred come to the foot of a 'grande collina, spenta di colore' (1.2 490) it seems to Johnny 'credulo, una sollevata distesa di asfodeli' (1.2 490). The field of asphodels is a recurrent motif in Greek literature, a symbol of death and oblivion. Hence, Johnny's first 'vision' of death leads him to perceive the world, at least temporarily, in a literary manner. It is not then that Johnny is an epic character as Beccaria and other critics believe, but that he interprets, 'sees' the war as an epic. He lives in an epic world of the imagination, whilst actually participating prosaically in the Italian Resistance. In a later scene, matters become even more complex when Johnny's friend Ettore, who actually existed in reality as Ettore Costa, reminds Johnny of the Homeric Hector. Ettore is given a leather helmet which is 'molto massiccio ed imponente' and Johnny bursts out laughing saying to himself 'che con la sola vista del suo elmato se stesso Ettore avrebbe sgomentato tutti i fascisti e tedeschi a reggimenti' (1.2 732). He laughs because the helmet that Ettore wears resembles the helmet that Hector wears in The Iliad, which, in one of the most famous scenes in Homer's epic, frightens his son Astyanax.

These literary signals are therefore the material of Johnny's and Fenoglio's literary reading of the real historical world.²⁴ In Il partigiano Johnny Fenoglio therefore transfers what objectively 'was' as well as what subjectively seemed. In other words, we are afforded a

vision of reality which depends on the reality of a vision. Because of the book's organisational rhetoric, that is the close technical relationship between Johnny and Fenoglio, every literary reference, trope, metaphor or symbol then operates in a special, and highly complex, manner in Il partigiano Johnny. Fenoglio, transferring events, has perforce to endow them with literary qualities, whilst Johnny, looking directly at events on behalf of his author prior to their transferral, also places an extra, earlier layer of 'literariness' on them.

2.4. Conclusion

Il partigiano Johnny can, therefore, be best interpreted in the light of the many Resistance writings that had been published since 1945. It is not an epic, or a history-dissolving allegory. It is a fictive autobiography, the story of what Johnny the partisan saw and what he, when reborn as Fenoglio, transferred. Its clear literary nature is not, as many critics believe, evidence of an attempt to transform or transcend history. It is, instead, an indication that it was in a work of this kind that Fenoglio considered he could most effectively portray his own vision of the Italian Resistance.

Notes to chapter 2

1 As Fenoglio's letters are still to be published in a reliable edition, all quotations from them are taken from secondary sources.

2 The title of Bigazzi's article is taken from the series of school textbooks of the type 'Rousseau par lui-même'. Bigazzi thus suggests that Fenoglio (through Johnny) is explaining his choice of narrator to the reader, a task which is usually the reserve of the literary critic. I take matters a stage further by arguing that this episode not only tells us about the narrator, but also informs us what kind of work the narrator is telling us.

3 Typically, Johnny does not even consider the possibility that the book of books on the Resistance could have been written by a woman. For an account of the way that women's contribution to the Resistance has been ignored until very recently by historians, as well as an examination of Giovanna Zangrandi's I giorni veri, see Morris (1991).

4 Johnny's suggestion that some time will have to pass before the composition of the work of which he is the protagonist would also seem to confirm the late dating thesis proposed by Bigazzi, Saccone and others.

5 This relationship also provides the organisational and interpretative structure of my thesis. The chapters which follow, dealing with technique (chapter 3), language (chapter 4) and content (chapter 5) are built, as this one is, around the Johnny/Fenoglio dialectic.

6 And why does he reveal his decision at such a late stage? The answer to this question lies, I think, in the way that the book is designed to be read at least twice. It is only on a second reading with the knowledge of the conversation with Marino that all the diverse elements of the work become clear. For an analysis of internal textual promptings to a second reading see the section in chapter 3 entitled 'The signposts of history'. This second reading also mirrors Fenoglio's approach, his first reading occurred when he was a partisan, his second and more authentic one when he is rewriting with the knowledge that he had since gained.

7 Pietro Chiodi was, as we have already seen, one of Fenoglio's teachers. They continued to see each other after the war, although it has been suggested that political differences led to a cooling of their relationship.

8 The research for the following section was carried out in the Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento della Liberazione in Italia, Milano, which has a large collection of Resistance memoirs.

9 For an overview of these memoirs see Falaschi (1976) chapter 2.

10 I have been unable to locate the first edition of this work, published in Alba in 1945. However, there is no reason to suspect that the author's preface was not in the 1945 version.

11 This work, published in 1945, is a memoir of the First World War. While it does not describe the Resistance, its preface is clearly similar in style to those of the works which were being published on the period 1943-1945.

12 I am indebted to Rosella Prezzo, of the Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento della Liberazione in Italia, for the many useful suggestions she has made to me concerning the failings of the 'memorialisti'. I have also found useful the comments made by Guido Quazza in the introduction to his Resistenza e storia d'Italia (Quazza 1976).

13 In his own memoir Leo Valiani offers lucid comments on the notion that a history of the Resistance can only be written by someone who did not participate in it. His thoughts are remarkably similar to Johnny's: 'Questa non è la storia della nostra guerra di liberazione. La storia conviene scriverla a maggior distanza di tempo e la scriverà, probabilmente, chi non sia stato attore del dramma' (Valiani 1947, 7).

14 Arrigo Benedetti in Paura all'Alba also realises the necessity of fiction: 'Il desiderio di raccontare è stimolato in me dal piacere di rivivere con la fantasia che li trasforma e li fa piú veri fatti italiani dei quali spesso tanti nostri compatrioti non paiono serbare alcun ricordo e tanto meno coscienza' (Benedetti 1975, V [my italics]).

15 It is, of course, theoretically ingenuous to assume that narrator = author simply because a book is written in the first person. For a clear analysis of this important point see Genette (1972). However, in terms of *reading practice*, there is frequent confusion (again see Genette on mis-readings of Proust) when a first-person narrative is used. Indeed, Proust was not at all clear in his own mind as to nature of his relationship with his narrator/protagonist, referring at one point in his life to 'Je, qui n'est pas moi', only to speak later of 'Je, qui n'est pas toujours moi.'

16 As Lazagna's apology in his preface implies, distance is also a necessary factor for good writing. Johnny's argument for distance is not then solely a plea for a mature fictional vision, but for a mature literary style to go with that fiction. Emanuele Artom also sees immediacy as an obstacle to poetry and understanding: 'Questo diario è molto mal scritto, ma ho pochi minuti al giorno da dedicargli e molte cose concrete da dire. Addio poesia, addio

introspezione' and later on: 'Un diario non può essere opera di poesia e di pensiero, perché rappresenta una immediata relazione di fatti personali, mentre la poesia e il pensiero nascono da un lungo approfondimento interiore delle nostre esperienze' (Artom 1966, 86).

17 This awareness of the 'higher' reality of literary representation can also be found in Stuart Hood's account of his experiences as an escaped prisoner of war in Tuscany, Carlino. Hood recounts how on one occasion he revisited a place he had described in the first version of his book (entitled Pebbles from my skull), only to discover that the valley in question was markedly different in reality. However, Hood did not alter the description in the revision, firmly believing that his 'topography was more real' (Hood 1985 p.37).

18 The 'ragazza della collina' is named Marida in a later chapter. This name is, I suspect, a variation on Maria, Robert Jordan's lover in For whom the bell tolls.

19 The RGC were eventually published in Opere. PDS was published in 1969, with an introduction by Maria Corti.

20 Vittorini's criticisms demonstrate not only, I argue, a mis-reading of the book (see note 24 below), but also imply that he failed to understand that he himself uses cinematic techniques in his own writing. See, for example, the opening scene of Uomini e no.

21 In her analysis of the Einaudi-Fenoglio epistolary, Maria Corti argues that the RGC were first sent to the Turin-based publishing house in 1949. PDS, she argues, was submitted the following year. However, although the title page of the manuscript indicates that the stories were written by 1949, the pencil annotation 'all'esame di Einaudi' does not necessarily imply, as Corti argues, that completion and subsequent submission to Einaudi happened in the same year. Indeed, there is no record of the exact date of submission of the RGC in the Einaudi archive. This is not the case for PDS, whose early editorial history is better documented. A letter from Italo Calvino, dated 2nd November 1950, suggests that Fenoglio had sent in PDS some months previously: 'L'ho potuto leggere solo ora perchè non ho avuto, in questi mesi, un momento di respiro.' And Calvino's judgment in the same letter: 'Mi sembra che tu abbia delle qualità fortissime, certo anche molti difetti' would seem to suggest that this work, and not VGA, was Einaudi's first contact with Fenoglio's writing. The accuracy of the rest of Corti's account of the various subsequent stages of VGA's composition is beyond question.

22 Later critics (Soletti and Di Paolo) approve of Vittorini's suggestion, arguing that Fenoglio was more interested in abstract, rather than in historicised barbarity. Naturally, I find it difficult to agree with this line of argument. The point is that both the Langhe and the Resistance were characterised by their barbarity, but that

this barbarity should not be considered as a *subsumptive*, but rather as a *common* element in Fenoglio's writings.

23 Many of the other stories in VGA, although more successful, suffer from the opposite problem, that is too much 'distance' and too little 'participation'. This is the case, for example, in the title story, 'I ventitré giorni della città di Alba'. For an analysis of how Fenoglio subsequently 'retells' the Alba story in Pjl according to a different narrative perspective see the section in chapter 3 entitled 'Two views of Alba'.

24 This is a theme and a technique that Fenoglio had already used, in a slightly different manner, in PDS. However, in the earlier work, Fenoglio questions not the effects of literature, but the effects of cinema on his protagonist, Ettore. During his first meeting with the criminal, Bianco, Ettore addresses him in the following strange manner: 'L'amore dell'uomo per la donna cresce e diminuisce come fa la luna, ma l'amore dell'uomo per l'uomo, del fratello per il fratello, è fermo come le stelle ed eterno come la parola di Dio' (2. 69). The reasons for this mystifying speech are soon explained when we learn that it is the epigraph from an American film which Ettore had recently seen. At this stage in the novel, the protagonist is already speaking like a character from a Hollywood film. Soon afterwards, he joins a gang of petty gangsters and begins to act like one. Vittorini's criticisms of the 'cinematic' nature of PDS (see above) therefore imply an inability to understand the workings of the text.

Chapter 3

THE TECHNIQUES OF HISTORY IN IL PARTIGIANO JOHNNY

3.1. Introduction

In the crucial passage from UrPj which was quoted at the beginning of the previous chapter (see above p.37), Johnny explicitly reveals the particular genre as well as the complex technical organisation of the book. Put in simpler terms, he tells us what Il partigiano Johnny is and how it works. Il partigiano Johnny is a fictive autobiography, told by a third person narrator (the 'transferrer' Fenoglio) who is at the same time almost, *but not exactly*, the hero of the story (the 'seer' Johnny). For ease of reference, this technical side of the revelation in UrPj will be termed the 'Deep Structure Rhetoric' of the work (henceforth the DSR).

As is clear, Johnny's words also imply that the ideal narrative of the history of the Resistance should contain an even balance between 'seeing' and 'transferring', between a 1940s and a 1950s viewpoint. However, it is equally clear that maintaining such an even balance over a text which, in our version, is over eight hundred pages long will not be easy. There is (or will be) a certain amount of give and take between Johnny and Fenoglio. In other words, there will be times when Johnny's role as the 'seer' in the narrative will be more apparent than

Fenoglio's role as the 'transferrer' and vice versa. This chapter is concerned with the various ways that Fenoglio manages to cope with the technical relationship between himself and Johnny.

3.2. Pbl chapter 1: establishing the technical paradigms

Let us now turn to the first brief sentence of Il partigiano Johnny:

Dall'alto della torre medievale la sirena ululò
nella notte di giugno. (1.3 1259 [unless
otherwise indicated all references in this
section are from this page of Pbl])

At this stage in the work it is not possible to tell whether the story is being told by a third or by a first person narrator. The description of the siren could be given by an external narrator, positioned next to the medieval tower, or it could be given by someone lying in bed, in a position below the tower, hearing the noise as it arrives from a height. The narrative of Il partigiano Johnny could, hypothetically, have proceeded with the introduction of a first-person pronoun (Tentai di riaddormentarmi), or some other locution revealing the person of the narrator (Mia madre si svegliò); it could have carried on with an extended description of the sound of the siren and then introduced a first-person pronoun; or it could have homed in on a character and revealed itself as a third-person narrative. In fact, this is what seems to occur:

Subito la madre lo chiamò con la sua voce imperterrita: - Johnny? L'UNPA -. Johnny rotolò da un ciglio all'altro del letto, sospirando vestì una parte dei suoi leggeri indumenti estivi.

This passage suggests that a third person narrator is inside Johnny's room, perhaps standing at the end of his bed, from where he (the narrator) has just heard the sound of the siren. Up to, and perhaps beyond the point when the mother calls out 'Johnny', the narrator appears to be 'blind', the darkness of the June night preventing him from seeing anything at all. He seems to be standing in the dark, the only source of information coming to him being sound: the sound of the siren, the sound of the mother's voice, the sound of Johnny rolling from one end of the bed to the other. The narrator's almost total ignorance is further underlined by the fact that in the first sentence of the quotation he is only able to refer to Johnny by using the direct object pronoun 'lo'. It is only after the narrator has been 'told' the character's first name that, in the next sentence, he is able to call him by this name.

This kind of technique, bordering on the extremes of impersonality, can be found in many twentieth-century narratives, but is, above all, typical of Hemingway. Consider the frequently analysed¹ short story The Killers. In the story the way the name of one of the

characters is held back is similar in style to the passage we are studying:

The door of Henry's lunch-room opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.

"What's yours?" George asked them.

"I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"

"I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."

Outside it was getting dark. The street light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. From the other end of the counter Nick Adams watched them. He had been talking to George when they came in.

"I'll have a roast pork tenderloin with apple sauce and mashed potatoes," the first man said.

(Hemingway 1942, 377)

The two men that enter the room are unknown to the narrator. He is only able to name one of them when he (Al) is asked by the other what he wants to eat. After this, the narrator can call him by his first name. In contrast, he knows the identity of George and Nick Adams. It is almost as if he has been inside the room with them for some time and learnt their names during their earlier conversation ('He had been talking to George when they came in'). As the story develops, the narrator stays close to Nick Adams, only very rarely allowing his judgments to impinge on the objectivity of the narrative.

At this stage then, Fenoglio appears to have achieved something approaching a rigorously Hemingwayesque, objective narration. Using his binoculars he has managed to achieve the requisite degree of distance. Indeed, this was the substance of the judgment of Eugenio Montale, one

of the first readers of the published novel Pb2, who praised the way that Fenoglio managed to suppress the work's autobiographical inspiration: 'la bravura vi sostituisce il riflesso di una ispirazione che in lui fu certo vera ... ma nel corso di tempo si è alquanto raffreddata' (Montale 1959, 3). What Montale appears to be saying is that, although Johnny is autobiographically inspired, Fenoglio always manages to keep at a distance from him. In a similar vein, but expressing herself with much greater sophistication and clarity, Grignani argues that in Pb1 and Pb2 'si apprezzi a prima vista la presa di distanza del narratore' whose 'procedimenti astrattivi o analogici' gain the upper hand over Johnny, the 'protagonista ... obiettivato' (Grignani 1984, 39) of the text. As will now be shown, Grignani's and Montale's analyses are initially very convincing, but they do not actually do full justice to the technical complexities of the 'Primavere'; they do not take into account the role of Johnny's eyes, or the character's as opposed to the narrator's vision.

Let us return to the passage that we have just discussed, which I quote again for ease of reference:

Subito la madre lo chiamò con la sua voce imperterrita: - Johnny? L'UNPA -. Johnny rotolò da un ciglio all'altro del letto, sospirando vestì una parte dei suoi leggeri indumenti estivi.

Up till now we have considered the way that the naming of Johnny, the fact that the information that the narrator

can give us is restricted to the inferences he makes from sounds alone, appears to imply an almost total objectivity. However, the reporting clause 'Subito - imperterrita' possesses, I would argue, clear indications of Johnny's subjective presence. Instead of reading 'la madre lo chiamò con una voce imperterrita', which would have easily and quite naturally preserved the narrator's distance from the character of the mother, we find 'la madre lo chiamò con la sua voce imperterrita' in which the phrase 'con la sua voce' suggests that, in some way or another, the narrator is all too familiar with the mother's laconic style. But this clashes with the impersonal 'la madre'. One way that such a situation can be possible is if we assume that the phrase 'con la sua voce' is voiced by her son - Johnny. The narrator now appears to have altered his position slightly and is now looking with Johnny's eyes; his protagonist has taken over. Yet this contradicts our earlier argument that we are reading the report of a narrator, outside, but close to Johnny. In order to resolve this apparent paradox, I argue that as Johnny's words in UrPj imply, there is a constant and complex interplay between two narrating voices - Johnny's and Fenoglio's. Fenoglio is sometimes seeing and transferring with *his* binoculars (without the aid of Johnny's eyes), and at other times Johnny is seeing and Fenoglio transferring. In other words, the narrator uses his binoculars to plunge back into the past, from where, standing next to his fictional creation Johnny he 'sees' past events and 'transfers' them into

narrative form. And at times he not only stands next to Johnny but inside Johnny and uses his eyes to see with.

As the narrative continues, so the complex dialogical relationship between the two voices of Il partigiano Johnny develops. At times Johnny's voice seems to speak at a greater volume than Fenoglio's, at times the situation is reversed. And occasionally, they appear to speak in a kind of perfect stereo. To extend the musical metaphor further, Fenoglio appears to be constantly adjusting the 'balance' control of his literary amplifier. Let us now turn to the next sentence of Pb1:

Poi passò nella camera dei genitori, torrida.

Up to the comma, Johnny appears to be moving away from the narrator. The unusual right-hand position of the adjective 'torrida' quickly dispels this illusion, giving the impression that both Johnny and the narrator experience the heat of the room contemporaneously. The sentence which follows helps to underline this close proximity of character and narrator:

Suo padre giaceva in un sonno inviolabile, con un fendente di luce lunare attraverso il viso.

If we were to look at the first part ('Suo ... inviolabile') of this sentence in isolation, without the knowledge that we have already gained, it would be easy to read it as the work of an omniscient narrator able to

see and recognize people in the dark. However, given what we already know, and in particular when we come to read the second part of the sentence, any notions that we might have of an omniscient, all-seeing, all-knowing narrator rapidly disappear. The description of the shaft of moonlight on Johnny's father's face implies that he is able to be seen (and described) only because something is making him visible. The narrator thus seems to be standing behind Johnny, peering over his shoulder. How does he know that the character is his father? The answer is simple: the narrator has now entered Johnny's eyes, which belong to the sleeping man's son.

By this stage in the narrative, the identity of the protagonist has been firmly established. It is Johnny. The question of the identity of the narrator is, however, far more problematic. At times the narrator appears to be Fenoglio, at other times he appears to be Johnny, and occasionally he seems to be both Fenoglio and Johnny. Clearly, it is important to distinguish between the two narrating voices, but this is not at all easy.

Nevertheless, this problem of distinguishing the separate narrating voices is not unique to Il partigiano Johnny, for a similar kind of narrative style can also be found in many other modern works of fiction. I am thinking, amongst others, of the early writings of Joyce, of the works of Virginia Woolf and Flaubert and of the style that is most closely associated with them: Free Indirect

Discourse or Style Indirecte Libre. However, it would be dangerous to exactly assimilate the style of Il partigiano Johnny to that of these writers. There are moments when they are, indeed, extremely similar (see, in particular, the section below on Free Indirect Thought), but in the case of Il partigiano Johnny we are dealing with something that is a little more complicated. The complication arises because of the extremely close relationship between Fenoglio and Johnny which is revealed in UrPj and which makes it so difficult to identify the narrating voice when we read the work. This is in contrast to the greater distance between narrator and protagonist in works recognized as containing Free Indirect Discourse (henceforth FID). This is a difficult point to understand and the distinction that is being made is subtle. But it is necessary in order to avoid confusion. An example from Joyce helps to illustrate the point that is being made.

Joyce's story, 'Eveline', recounts a brief fragment in the life of a shop-girl. She agrees to elope to Buenos Aires with her boy-friend, Frank, but in the end cannot make the decisive step to escape from her dreary life, and so stays behind in the spiritual and emotional desert that is Dublin. The story begins as follows:

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains, and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired. Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterward crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with the other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it - not like their little brown houses, but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field - the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters ... That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. (Joyce 1969, 40-41)

The first paragraph is narrated by a third-person who adopts an external position with respect to Eveline. However, as the second paragraph develops we get the impression that we are hearing the voice of Eveline, rather than that of the narrator. This is particularly evident in the phrases 'other people's children' 'little brown houses' 'shining roofs' and so on. The story, which is very short, continues with these clear oscillations between Eveline's and the narrator's voices. The deictic 'now', which occurs in several of the paragraphs which follow, is the most explicit indicator of her presence. As Roger Fowler comments in his analysis of the story: 'the double voice of FID allows Joyce to present and to question her attitudes virtually simultaneously; to place two sets of values in an implicit dialogue with each other' (Fowler 1986, 140). By the time we reach the end of the story it is a relatively simple task to identify

the shifts in 'dialogue'. Those sections which are voiced by Eveline have been italicized:

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. *He was drawing her into them: he would drown her.* She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

'Come!'

No!No!No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.

'Eveline! Evvy!'

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on, but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition. (Joyce 1969, 44)

In Il partigiano Johnny, on the other hand, the similarities between Johnny and Fenoglio make it far more difficult to separate out the two narrating voices.

For the same reasons that it is risky to define the style of Il partigiano Johnny as FID, it is also inaccurate to assimilate the text to other works which use a similar system of point of view. In particular, Il partigiano Johnny appears to be an example of a work with what Genette² (1972) describes as 'fixed internal focalization', the canonical example of which is Henry James' novel The Ambassadors. In this novel the narrator follows the protagonist, Lambert Strether, everywhere. All that is described and told by the narrator is heard and seen in the presence of Strether. But whereas in Il partigiano Johnny the narrator is but a hair's-breadth from being Johnny, in The Ambassadors there is no such intimacy. The narrator of The Ambassadors is never

Strether, but in Il partigiano Johnny the narrator is Johnny reborn. This leads to a number of crucial differences between the two texts. The technique that James uses in The Ambassadors allows him to create an impression of minimal narratorial intervention. To use James' own expression 'the tale seems to tell itself'. This leads to a situation in which there is a minimum of what theorists of the novel term 'telling' and a maximum of 'showing', a large number of 'scenes' and very few 'summaries'. In Il partigiano Johnny on the other hand, the situation is quite different. The concentration on the 'seeing' figure of Johnny would seem to imply little intervention on Fenoglio's part. But as we know from the crucial conversation with Marino in UrPj, Fenoglio is Johnny reborn as the narrator. These two entities thus participate in, organize and interpret the story. They are everywhere. This leads to a paradoxical situation in which there is both a maximum of telling (which in terms of the DSR of Il partigiano Johnny corresponds to 'transferring') and a maximum of showing ('seeing'). Hence, even in those moments when Fenoglio appears to dominate completely, when he is most obviously telling ('transferring'), Johnny is always there showing him what to tell ('seeing'). Conversely, when Johnny appears to be doing all the showing, Fenoglio is doing just as much telling. To make a comparison with the Joyce story, it is as though Eveline is Joyce and Joyce is Eveline, which is, of course, impossible. But this is what happens in Il partigiano Johnny, in which the hero is almost the

narrator and the narrator is almost the hero. Let us now return to the first chapter of the work.

Having asked his mother whether he can take a cigarette from his father's trousers we find the following two sentences:

Non poteva affrontare senza tabacco ore e ore di vagabondo servizio UNPA. Trovò nelle tasche del padre una sigaretta, deformata dalla pressione di un mazzo di chiavi.

The first sentence appears to be voiced by Johnny. The evidence for this is contained in the second part of the sentence 'ore e ore di vagabondo servizio UNPA' which seems to echo Johnny's displeasure at having been woken up in the middle of the night in order to carry out a duty which, as we subsequently find out, is largely worthless. Thus, when attempting to distinguish between the two narrating voices, a potential area of analysis would be subjective adjectives (i.e. of the type 'vagabondo' as opposed to more neutral ones like, say, 'rosso'). The second sentence appears to contain more elements of Fenoglio's voice, although we might perhaps wonder as to how he manages to get his hand inside the pocket at the same time as Johnny.³

The paragraph which follows has been quoted by Grignani (1984, 40) in support of her arguments for the greater objectivity of the 'Primavere' as compared to the 'Partigiani'. Yet despite the subtlety and intelligence

of her arguments in the article in question, it is very difficult to agree with them. Instead, I suggest that the paragraph appears to be voiced chiefly, but not entirely, by Fenoglio. As with the previous paragraph, some of the adjectivisation, which has been italicized, can be attributed to Johnny:

Fuori, la notte premeva *concreta e vischiosa*, non meno lugubre nelle radure di chiaro di luna; e giusto in quel momento vi si iniettava il rumore dei bombardieri, *flebile e smarrito, interamente patetico*.

Admittedly, at this early stage in the text such assumptions may seem premature. However, as the narrative continues and we become more and more aware of the presence of Johnny's perceptions in the narrative, so phrases which we might initially attribute to Fenoglio gradually seem to shift to Johnny. In particular, adverbs of manner (see above 'interamente') are usually fairly reliable linguistic signs of Johnny's presence. The next adverb of manner which occurs in the text is a case in point. By now Johnny is outside, in front of the 'Municipio'. The city firemen emerge and begin to ask around for cigarettes: 'E già mendicavano svergognatamente da fumare, da questo la cartina e da quello la presa di tabacco' (1.3 1259-1260). As we have already seen, Johnny is in the fortunate position to own a ready-made cigarette. The adverb 'svergognatamente' would therefore appear to convey his slightly hypocritical reactions to the firemen's behaviour.

Subsequent adverbs reinforce this interpretation. Having lit his own cigarette Johnny hears 'una voce idiotamente sarcastica' (1.3 1260) behind him. It is 'inconfondibilmente' the voice of a certain Giovanni Rabino. Although the first of these adverbs could potentially spring from the reaction of the narrator standing next to Johnny, the second must be voiced by Johnny. This has the affect of post-attributing the first adverb to Johnny. The same applies in a later example when a telephone rings which is 'certamente' a call from 'un posto di vedetta Dicat' (1.3 1261). This has to be voiced by Johnny.

To sum what has been said so far, we have by now seen how various techniques involving light and sound suggest that the narrator has adopted Johnny's perceptual standpoint. In other words he seems to be standing behind him. But at the same time, it frequently appears that the narrator is not looking from behind Johnny's shoulders, but actually from within his eyes (and ears). In other words, it seems that Johnny's senses are 'speaking' to us. The more the reader becomes aware of the presence of Johnny in the narrative the more narrative s/he ascribes to him. Yet at the same time, Fenoglio's voice is never drowned out completely. It is always there. This is the miracle⁴ of the narrative of Il partigiano Johnny. Not 'seeing' then 'transferring' but 'seeing' and 'transferring', participation and distance, showing and telling, presence and absence.

3.3. The narrative rendering of speech and thought

Let us now turn to an analysis of two related types of special discourse which are to be found in Il partigiano Johnny - *speech* and *verbalized thought* (i.e. inner speech).⁵ The purpose of this analysis is to see what roles 'seeing' and 'transferring' and Fenoglio and Johnny play in the presentation of words which were originally voiced in the 'seeing' period 1943-45.

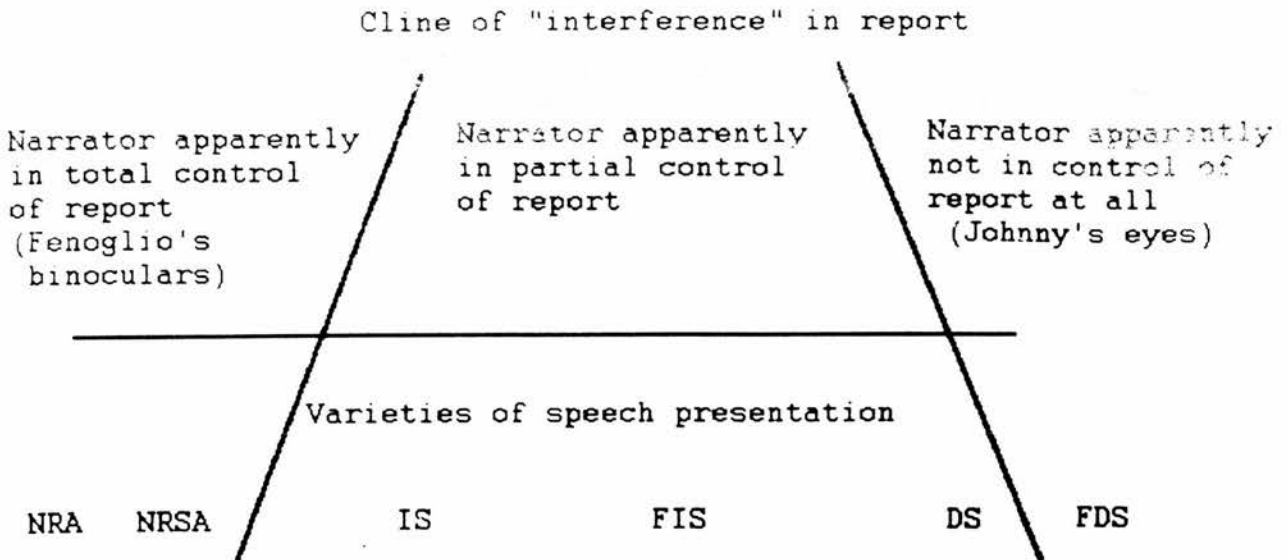
3.3.1 Speech

Leech and Short (1981) distinguish the following types of speech representation in narrative: Direct Speech (DS); Indirect Speech (IS); Free Direct Speech (FDS); The Narrative Report of Speech Acts (NRSA); Free Indirect speech (FIS). All of these types are present in Il partigiano Johnny. In line with the nature of our analysis, let us now examine how Johnny and Fenoglio are, in varying degrees, subjectively 'present' in these five categories of speech.

3.3.1.1 Direct speech

In terms of the subjective effects that we are interested in analysing, direct speech would appear to offer the least possibilities of binocular interference. Accordingly, Leech and Short place DS on the right hand

side of a diagram (see Leech and Short 1981, 324) which illustrates the cline of interference in report. Here is their diagram, altered to incorporate the narrative system of Il partigiano Johnny:



Thus if we wish to represent textually the speech of an individual, there seems to be no other alternative apart from writing it down verbatim, as it was uttered, or in the case of Il partigiano Johnny, heard by Johnny. However problems arise with dialect or foreign languages. Should a writer leave the spoken language in the original form, or should it be translated into more comprehensible terms? Both practices are found in literature. Consider, for example, Emily Bronte's attempts to imitate the rough Yorkshire drawl of the peasant Joseph in Wuthering Heights. This compares to the suppression of dialect in Hardy's Wessex novels. Turning to Il partigiano Johnny, we find that despite the large number of probable dialect speakers amongst the characters, there are no attempts to record conversational exchanges in dialect. It would thus

seem that the transferring narrator Fenoglio took the decision to employ Italian in speech, in a way ignoring what Johnny heard in 'reality'. In terms of dialect, then, 'transferring' wins over 'seeing'.

Nonetheless, despite Fenoglio's removal of dialect, he consistently attempts to record conversational exchanges in English. When this occurs, it takes the narrative closer to the moment of Johnny's 'seeing', or rather 'hearing'. Examples of this phenomenon are the occasions in Pb1 where Johnny speaks in English; in Pj1 where Johnny speaks to the South African prisoners Burgess and Grisenthwaite; and in UrPj when Johnny works with the British mission.⁶

In addition to these 'special' moments of speech, there are countless occasions when the speech of other characters apart from Johnny is represented. Again, these cases are apparently closer to Johnny. For the purposes of this study, in which the Johnny/Fenoglio relationship is central, it is worth looking at examples of Johnny's Italian speech because they offer the reader important clues as to when his voice is being heard in the *diegesis*.⁷ Consider the following example:

Gli avrebbe detto: - Tu sei solo un sergente,
tenente Biondo. Ma hai comandato
splendidamente. Eppure non potevamo pretendere
che tu fossi un vero capo ... Ma tu, sergente,
sei un vero capo. Hai comandato magistralmente.
(1.2 482-3)

There are two words which stand out for their high degree of subjectivity: the adverbs 'splendidamente' and 'magistralmente' which describe Johnny's admiration for Biondo. Having read this passage, the reader would therefore be on the look out for similar adverbs in the diegesis of Il partigiano Johnny since, when they appear, they are liable to be voiced by Johnny. Indeed, we have already looked at some adverbs in an earlier part of this chapter, concluding that they belonged to Johnny's voice. This piece of speech therefore helps to confirm our earlier suspicions.

3.3.1.2 Free direct speech

In FDS the reporting clause (e.g. 'Johnny disse') is omitted. Thus when FDS occurs in Il partigiano Johnny, characters appear to speak more freely, without the narrator or Johnny functioning as an intervening filter. In this example Johnny has just had a shave at a barber's in Santo Stefano Belbo. He speaks first:

- Sigarette? - Ma io faccio il barbiere ... - Johnny mostrò i soldi. - Qual è il prezzo di giornata? E' altuccio, signore, per difficoltà sopravvenute. L'uomo che me le portava da Asti è stato arrestato dai fascisti ... - Due pacchetti di nazionali. - Non mi restano che Ambrosiana. - Ambrosiana, - disse Johnny (1.2 583)

After six exchanges in FDS, Fenoglio moves to DS, probably in order to avoid confusing the reader.⁸ FDS in

Il partigiano Johnny is therefore closest to Johnny's 'seeing'.

3.3.1.3 Indirect speech

On the cline of interference diagram Leech and Short place indirect speech some way to the left, indicating that the narrator is in greater control than with, say, DS. Here is one relatively simple example:

Tito riconfermava che per lui tutto il sistema era sbagliato, si voleva cominciare da dove la Jugoslavia insegnava che si doveva finire (1.2 474)

The tenses, pronouns, and above all the reporting phrase 'riconfermava che', are all indications of indirect speech. Consequently Tito may have said something very close to what is reported or he may have said something very different. It is impossible to tell. In this case, Fenoglio's 'transferring' would appear to dominate over Johnny's 'seeing'.

3.3.1.4 The narrative report of speech acts

There are many cases of NRSA in Il partigiano Johnny, a way of condensing relatively unimportant speeches or conversations. NRSA is placed at the extreme left of Leech and Short's cline of interference. Here is an example in which three separate speech acts follow one

after another, compressing the real time of Johnny's orders into the fictional time of Fenoglio's narration:

Johnny segnò la long-overdue fine del gioco e li mandò tutti a dormire, tranne il primo turno di doppia guardia. (1.2 690)

In this case then, the transferrer, Fenoglio, would appear to be in control.

3.3.1.5 Free indirect speech

There are many examples of Free Indirect Speech in Il partigiano Johnny. This happens because in FIS there is the most obvious potential for a mixture of 'seeing' and 'transferring'. Hence, on their cline of 'interference' in report, Leech and Short place FIS midway between the positions 'Narrator apparently in total control of report' (i.e. the position which corresponds to 'transferring') and 'Narrator apparently not in control of report at all' (i.e. the position which corresponds to Johnny's 'seeing'). As they argue:

FIS has a rather odd status in terms of truth claims and faithfulness. It is in a sort of halfway house position, not claiming to be a reproduction of the original speech, but at the same time being more than an indirect rendering of that original (Leech and Short 1981, 325)

Let us turn to an example from the Winter stage of the narrative. Johnny wakes up and goes in search of food,

quickly finding a peasant woman who offers him a bowl of milk and a fried egg:

Preparandolo e poi servendolo, la donna non si frenò dal parlare e dal chiedere. Non s'era lasciata ingannare dal suo aspetto presente, egli era certamente un ragazzo molto distinto, da una distintissima famiglia cittadina, e con molti studi ... che studi aveva fatto? L'università, gran Dio, per la laurea da professore! Gran Dio, e professore di che? Ah, l'istruzione era una gran cosa, la cosa piú grande: nessuno poteva dirlo meglio di lei che non ne aveva. Indovinasse fin quando ella era andata a scuola: seconda elementare, poi via a servizio ... - Lei che è un professore, ci sarà un cambiamento in meglio, dopo tutto questo? (1.2 824)

After the initial sentence which indicates how talkative Johnny's host is, the impression given is that she has started to speak. However, there are no punctuation marks to indicate that real speech is taking place, and tense and pronoun selection (verbs back shifted to pluperfect and imperfect and all in third person) imply indirect speech. Nevertheless, the reporting clause (i.e. 'disse che'), characteristic of indirect speech is omitted. What we have then is something approaching a mixture of direct and indirect speech. In other words, FIS. Yet, though Leech and Short correctly observe that it is very difficult to separate the rewritten elements of FIS from the real ones, it seems to me that in this example it is possible to allocate certain sections of the peasant woman's speech to Johnny's 'seeing' and others to Fenoglio's 'transferring'. Fenoglio's transferring intervention appears to start at the beginning of her

'speech' and continues up to the first pause. After the ellipsis, we then seem to be offered an almost direct rendering of her speech as Johnny hears it. This is implied by the punctuation marks (colon and exclamation mark), the repetition of the phrase 'Gran Dio', the interjection 'Ah' and the transition to the peasant woman's FDS at the end of the last section of FIS. In this example then, there is a kind of rhythmic alternation between 'transferring' and 'seeing' and then back to 'transferring'.

In the above example we saw how there was a transition from FIS to FDS. Indeed, it is extremely common in Il partigiano Johnny to find paragraphs in which there are several mixtures of types of speech. Consider the following example which moves from the FIS of the peasant woman (1), to the mixed⁹ FIS/IS of Michele (2), to the IS of the peasant woman (3), to the IS of the partisans and (4), finally, to the FDS of the peasant woman (5):

la donna ora squirmed and wrenched at the pitch of anguish. (1) Aveva resistito, resistito, ma ora cedeva. Le fecero indossare il cappotto ... E Michele l'inondò di assicurazione (2) che oggi non v'era battaglia, tutte sciocchezze, sciocchezze ed incubi, egli aveva il sesto senso per tali cose, certamente, ed oggi sarebbe stato il piú quieto e noioso giorno dell'anno. Ma ella (3) notò che i cani latravano in un modo che non le piaceva ... essi (4) replicarono che era causa dei loro uomini tutti desti e in movimento. - (5) No, Johnny, i cani latrano molto particolarmente. (1.2 691)

One final example before moving on. Here the 'vecchia delle Langhe' is telling Johnny about her experience of captivity. Note how in this short extract (taken from a speech which lasts over a page) the FIS encourages the reader to fill in the gaps in the conversation. In other words the reader has to imagine the substance of Johnny's speech which is suppressed by Fenoglio in order to allow for a smoother flow:

la donna ancora non aveva vuotato tutto il suo grosso sacco. Sí, Ettore si era fatto una grande forza al processo, ma ella era al suo fianco e poteva vedere che gli occhi gli uscivano dall'orbita e il cuore gli batteva in gola. No, non era stato picchiato, a quel che si vedeva, almeno. (1.2 880)

It would be possible to go on giving many more examples of FIS. But this would rapidly become tedious. Let us now turn to thought.

3.3.2 Verbalized Thought

As with speech, Leech and Short distinguish five different types of thought presentation in narrative: Free Direct Thought; Direct Thought; Free Indirect Thought; Indirect Thought; Narrative Report of a Thought Act.

3.3.2.1 Free Direct Thought

There are some, but not many examples of free direct thought in Il partigiano Johnny. It would seem that Fenoglio reserves this kind of discourse to particularly important moments in the text. Thus, although we are frequently, indeed almost constantly *indirectly* aware of Johnny's thoughts by virtue of the discourse techniques of Il partigiano Johnny the few occasions that his soul is laid bare to us by Fenoglio merit close attention. Here are the two most significant examples:¹⁰

- Really, I'm in the wrong sector of the right side. (1.2 455)

La sua testa ronzava, la tremendità subdola dei suoi pensieri in oscena facilità e prevalenza... - Basta, basta, oggi ne ho avuto abbastanza... fossero ancora vivi loro due, ma sono morti... basta, basta, I don't want to be shot at any longer... basta... il bando ... no, non mi consegnerò, ma mi rifugerò in qualche casa, mi farò mantenere, vestire in borghese... seppellirò lo sten... basta... avrò certamente pazienza fino alla fine... sono solo... (1.2 791-792)

The first follows Johnny's introduction to the political commissar Némega and is highlighted by being placed at the end of a chapter. The second occurs at a moment of crisis in Johnny's life, when he thinks that his two closest comrades have been killed. In neither case are Johnny's thoughts introduced by a parenthetical 'pensò Johnny'. Instead, the only indication of narratorial intervention is the punctuation '-'. In the second example we are then given a string of vaguely linked concepts. The cumulative effect of these inchoate

thoughts, the frequent repetition of the word 'basta', of the future tense and of the ellipsis, is to give the impression of a mind stretched to the limits. It is the only point in the novel where Johnny's mind loses all fluency. The one moment in which we, as readers, are allowed to see directly inside Johnny's mind is, however, soon over. The sight of a dead partisan lying on the road before him brings him out of his frenzy and back to his senses.

3.3.2.2 Direct Thought

As with FDT, DT only appears rarely in Il partigiano Johnny. The reasons for its comparative rarity are the same as for FDT. Here is one important example which occurs after the death of Tito in an ambush. Note the subjective reference phrase to the functioning of the brain and the fact that the thoughts are in English: we are brought as close as possible to the inner language of Johnny's mind:

Il suo cervello balbutiva: - I'll get out of this all. I can't abide it. I won't never again go through this all. I've had really too much of this all... - (1.2 491)

3.3.2.3 Free Indirect Thought

As with FIS (see above) there are a number of examples of FIT. Of these examples, a number are striking for the way that Fenoglio uses punctuation to great effect. It is

almost as if he is straining to use everything that is available to him to get his message across.¹¹ Consider, for example, the three word sentence which describes Johnny's first encounter with a group of partisans: 'Questi erano partigiani!' (1.2 439). The 'close' deictic (Questi) and the exclamation mark, both direct features, clearly imply that Johnny is responsible for these two particular elements of this sentence. The back-shifted verb 'erano' (shifted, that is, from the present form 'sono') is, on the other hand, an indirect feature and belongs to the transferrer Fenoglio. The noun 'partigiani' is linguistically neutral. Thus we have a case of FIT. In other words, the sentence would seem to reflect, indirectly, Johnny's excited thoughts, reported by the narrator Fenoglio, as he (Johnny) contemplates his future as a Resistance fighter. Had the sentence been 'Questi sono partigiani!' then it would be a case of FDT ('free' because the parenthetical 'pensò Johnny' is omitted and direct because of the present tense verb 'sono'). What we are dealing with is an example of Johnny's 'seeing' structuring the nature of Fenoglio's 'transferring'. The two narrating voices of Il partigiano Johnny play off each other, *alternately*, to create FIT.¹²

In the above example, it is reasonably easy to find the relevant voices to which elements of the sentence belong. There was one word and a punctuation mark which belonged to Johnny, one word which belonged to Fenoglio, and one word which belonged to them both. In a way, then,

Johnny's voice appears to shout loudest. As we might expect in a work of such technical complexity as Il partigiano Johnny, things are not always as simple as this. Consider the following sequence of thoughts, which occurs only a short time after Johnny has joined the partisans:

Il cuore di Johnny decadde, si squagliava, ecco non era già piú consistente della neve intorno corrotta dall'arsenicale precoce, ingannevole disgelo. *Ma che s'aspettava che fossero i partigiani? Questi, gli arcangeli?* (my italics 1.2 442)

Who produces the metaphor of the melting heart? There is no verb phrase connected to the adverb 'ecco',¹³ to indicate who is thinking here. It may be Johnny, for the closeness of the material (i.e the snow) which produces the metaphor would imply his thought processes are at work here. Nonetheless, it could just as easily be Fenoglio's metaphor. Or, perhaps, both voices are, in this example, working in unison. This is confirmed by the internal thought section which is italicized. The reproach is not voiced by Johnny or Fenoglio, but by Johnny and Fenoglio.

In the two examples that have been given so far we have seen how question and exclamation marks function in place of certain unwritten parenthetical phrases such as 'pensò Johnny' or 'penso io' (Fenoglio). Much rarer are the cases when Fenoglio employs the colon. The following example is taken from a crucial point during the battle

of Valdivilla. Note how the shift in the deictics (questa -> quell') mark the point of transition from Johnny's thoughts to Fenoglio's, capturing with the utmost vividness, the moment when the protagonist/narrator comes face to face with the realisation of his failure as a partisan :

Braced and called himself up: questa era l'unica, fugace, ultima possibilità di inserirsi nella battaglia, di sfuggire a quell'incubo personale ed inserirsi nella realtà collettiva. (1.2 920-1)

In order to demonstrate that FIT is not always accompanied by modalising punctuation marks, the final example that we shall look at only contains standard symbols. It is one of the most sustained and vigorous passages of FIT in Il partigiano Johnny:

Il cuore di Johnny s'apriva e scioglieva, girò tutta l'aia apposta per farsi partecipe e sciente di ogni uomo. Erano gli uomini che avevano combattuto con lui, che stavano dalla sua parte anziché all'opposta. E lui era uno di loro, gli si era completamente liquefatto dentro il senso umiliante dello stacco di classe. Egli era come loro, bello come loro se erano belli, brutto come loro, se brutti. Avevano combattuto con lui, erano nati e vissuti, ognuno con la sua origine, giochi, lavori, vizi, solitudine e sviamenti, per trovarsi insieme a quella battaglia (1.2 482)

3.3.2.4 Indirect thought

There are only a few examples of IT in Il partigiano Johnny. All of these report Johnny's thoughts. This is as it should be for the narrator is, as has already been

stressed, bound to Johnny's perceptions. And Johnny is unable to see inside the minds of the other characters. Here is an example in which Fenoglio reports Johnny's thoughts:

Poi si riprese la montata, mentre Johnny si diceva che aveva imparato che nei partigiani non si moriva soltanto per i fascisti (1.2 443)

Johnny may have thought to himself 'Ho imparato che nei partigiani non si muore soltanto per i fascisti'. But he may also have thought a potentially infinite number of other things ranging from a slight to an extreme variation on the above (e.g. 'nei partigiani non si crepa soltanto per i fascisti' to 'Dio buono, potrei anch'io morire in quella maniera'). In this case the 'transferring' voice of Fenoglio wins over the 'seeing' (and speaking) voice of Johnny.

Nevertheless there are examples of IT in which Fenoglio's intervention appears to diminish. Consider the following example in which the increased subjectivity of the reporting phrase '*e sentiva che*' (Fenoglio's italics) affects the way that we approach the authenticity of the reported thoughts in the subordinate clause:

e sentiva che si sarebbero ancora combattute battaglie, di quella medesima ancora guerra, quando egli e il Biondo e Tito e tutti gli uomini sull'aia (ed ora gli apparivano numerosi, un'armata) sarebbero stati sottoterra, messi da una battaglia al coperto da ogni piú battaglia (1.2 483)

We would therefore place this example of IT in a different position on Leech and Short's cline (much closer to FIT) than the previous example.

3.3.2.5 Narrative report of a thought act

There do not appear to be any examples of NRTA in Il partigiano Johnny.

3.4. Small-scale linguistic indications of voice - adverbs.

3.4.1 Modal adverbs

In 3.2. (above) it was argued that the modal adverb 'inconfondibilmente' and the adverb of manner 'idiotamente' were voiced by Johnny. Adverbs, therefore, which tend to reveal subjectivity more immediately than, say, nouns, would seem to offer an obvious area of potentially fruitful study. In this section we shall analyse the contributions of Fenoglio and Johnny to the adverbialisation of five chapters of Il partigiano Johnny (Pj1 20-25). The search has been limited to those adverbs formed following the pattern of adjective + adverb morpheme (i.e. 'mente' or the English equivalent 'ly').¹⁴ Here is a list of the adverbs in question. They are arranged in alphabetical order and repetitions are included:

abissalmente; abissalmente; abramicamente;
 accoratamente; amaramente; animalescamente;
 animalmente; anodinamente; anormalmente;
 appallingly; assolutamente; assolutamente;
 assolutamente; assolutamente; attimically;
 automaticamente; automaticamente; bitterly;
 bizzarramente; bizzarramente; certamente;
 certamente; certamente; certamente;
 chirurgicamente; ciecamente; ciecamente;
 clamorosamente; comodamente; completamente;
 compressamente; concordemente; critically;
 debitamente ; disinvoltamente; disperatamente;
 distintamente; docilmente; dolorosamente;
 dolorosamente; duramente; eccellentemente;
 effettivamente; efficiently; egualmente;
 enormemente; esageratamente; esteticamente;
 estremamente; estremamente; estremamente;
 estremamente; estremamente; eternamente;
 etilicamente; evidentemente; facilmente;
 fatalmente; fearfully; ferocemente; finalmente;
 Finalmente; finalmente; fissamente; flatly ;
 frontalmente; fugacemente; furiosamente;
 generalmente; gradualmente ; hatefully;
 horribly; implicitamente; inaspettatamente;
 inconsapevolmente; incredibilmente;
 incredibilmente; indefessamente;
 indifferentemente; indifferentemente;
 individualmente; inequivocabilmente;
 inespessivamente; inevitabilmente;
 inevitabilmente; infantilmente; infantilmente;
 infantilmente; infinitamente; infinitamente;
 infinitamente; infinitamente; infinitamente;
 innaturalmente; innaturalmente; intensamente;
 interamente; intollerabilmente; inutilmente;
 involontariamente; istantaneamente;
 istantaneamente; istintivamente; lateralmente;
 leggermente; legittimamente; leisurely;
 lentamente; lentamente; lentamente; lentamente;
 lentissimamente; letteralmente; liberamente;
 libidinosamente; lietamente; lontanamente;
 magistralmente; malignamente; malinconicamente;
 marchianamente; martellatamente;
 massicciamente; meticolosamente; micidialmente;
 miserabilmente; miserabilmente; miserevolmente;
 mitemente; morbidamente; morbosamente;
 Naturalmente; Naturalmente; naturalmente;
 nebulosamente; necessariamente;
 necessariamente; necessariamente;
 negativamente; neutramente; noiosamente;
 nuovamente; opacamente; orribilmente;
 orribilmente; orribilmente; orribilmente;
 orribilmente; orribilmente; orribilmente;
 orribilmente; ostentatamente; ovviamente;
 palesamente; paradigmaticamente;
 paradossalmente; particularly; paurosamente;
 pazientemente; percettibilmente; perfettamente;
 perfettamente; perfettamente; pesantemente;
 piattamente; pienamente; plausibilmente;

possibilmente; precariamente ; precariamente;
 prodigiosamente; professionalmente;
 pulcinellescamente; quietamente; quietly;
 rapidamente; rapidamente; rapidissamente;
 rassegnatamente; regimisticamente;
 retoricamente; rigidamente; rovesciatamente;
 rudemente; sadically; scarsamente;
 schizzinosamente; semplicemente; semplicemente;
 semplicemente; semplicemente; sessualmente;
 simply; simply; sobriamente; solamente;
 sommamente; sonoramente; sorprendentemente;
 spietatamente; splendidamente; sportivamente;
 straordinariamente; strenuamente; strongly;
 subitamente; suggestivamente; tacitamente;
 talmente; tremendamente; tristemente;
 unicamente; unicamente; unobtrusively;
 vagamente; vastamente; vergognosamente;
 violently; visibilmente; wreckedly;
 zingarescamente;

Over 75% of these adverbs occur only once (170 out of a total of 225) over the course of the six chapters. Furthermore, although I have not as yet had the opportunity to check the whole text of Il partigiano Johnny, a large number of the adverbs seem to be hapaxes¹⁵ (e.g. 'zingarescamente', 'retoricamente', 'pulcinellescamente' and so on). Thus, the impression given from an initial reaction to the search is one of an author looking constantly, almost obsessively, for adverbs which will not only convey the light and shade of meaning, but also the light and shade of Johnny's experience.

Quoted out of context it is, naturally, impossible to tell to whose subjectivity the various adverbs belong. Let us now, therefore, look at the context on which some of the adverbs are placed. Given the nature of this study the adverbs will now be organised according to the sense which produced them. Hence we shall deal, in this order,

with adverbs of sound, touch, and sight. There are no adverbs produced by the sense of smell. A significant number of adverbs fall outside these three categories; these are placed under the category of 'inner feeling'. Furthermore, a small number of the adverbs do not, for various reasons, fit into any of these categories. These have been omitted as they do not bare significantly on the findings of this section.

3.4.1.1 Sound

Out of the total of 225 adverbs, 17 belong to characters other than Johnny and all occur, with the exception of two in FIS, in direct speech. These then can be immediately discounted from our analysis. In addition 12 (2 in FIS, 1 in ID inclining to FIS)¹⁶ are spoken by Johnny himself. It is difficult to infer much from this, apart from the fact that Johnny does use certain adverbs when he speaks directly to us as a character, so we naturally expect that when he 'speaks' as an indirect narrator that there will be a number of adverbs voiced by him.

18 adverbs describe the manner of the direct speech of certain characters, whilst a further 3 of this type occur in NRSA's ('Johnny refused flatly' (1.2 455), 'Nemega refused piattamente' (1.2 461) and 'Fred ... duramente rampognato dai primi' (1.2 485)).¹⁷ Of these 18 reporting clause adverbs, which we shall term RCA's, 1 describes

the way Johnny speaks to the partisan Regis when he hears of the existence of the South African prisoners ('gli disse rudemente' (1.2 462)) and another describes one of Johnny's speeches when he is speaking to them ('Johnny disse ... pesantemente' (1.2 464)). Both these RCA's are, therefore, voiced entirely by Fenoglio. More importantly, however, a significant cluster of the remaining RCA's actually occur during the episode of Johnny's meeting with the South Africans. Here are the RCA's in question, in the order that they occur in the text:

Burgess domandò semplicemente (1.2 463);
 precisò Burgess, rather martellatamente (1.2
 463); disse Burgess prodigiosamente riuscendo a
 saltare tutte le vocali (1.2 463); disse
 l'altro con una voce bizzarramente immatura
 (1.2 463); Grisenthwaite sillabò docilmente
 (1.2 463); disse Burgess mitemente (1.2 464);
 s'inserì inaspettatamente Grisenthwaite (1.2
 464)

The meeting with the South Africans is an important moment in the text for it is the first time that Johnny comes across English-speaking people. When he discovers that they are spineless cowards, quite content to while away the remaining war years peeling potatoes, Johnny is obviously disappointed. However, Fenoglio chooses not to comment directly on Johnny's shattered preconceptions, but reveals his state of mind through the way his (i.e. Johnny's) voice impinges on the RCA's. Hence, although the meeting with the South Africans is characterized, above all, by direct speech which, as we saw above, appears to involve the least possibility of subjective

intervention by the narrating voices, the large number of RSA's voiced by Johnny highlights his appalled reactions to, what are for him, second-rate substitutes for Englishmen.

Remaining in the context of the verbalisation of sound for a short while longer, there are a small number of adverbs (15) which are produced by the 'ears' of one or the other narrators of Il partigiano Johnny. However, because of the transient nature of sounds (they fade quicker from the memory than images) I would suggest that the adverbs in question are closer to Johnny's voice. Here are the most significant examples:

gli diede il chi va là ... con un accento così disperatamente siciliano (1.2 439); le strofe non ben note ed egualmente a tutti (1.2 442); Gli uomini bussarono retoricamente (1.2 443); l'indifferentemente annunciato nuovo (1.2 444); l'augurio corretto gli suonò appallingly anomalo nell'ambiente (1.2 447); Johnny notò che Tito pronunziava i gradi con una ironia sommamente indiretta (1.2 449); E fuori, fischiava eternamente un vento nero (1.2 459); Le note atterrarono ciecamente in qualche anfratto (1.2 460); la natura grondava orribilmente (1.2 481); picchiettavano, ora fissatamente (1.2 481); lacerava ferocemente l'aria (1.2 487); non ebbe bisogno di voltarsi, era Fred, certamente Fred (1.2 487)

In each case the adverb appears to belong more to Johnny's immediate perceptions than to Fenoglio's transferring binoculars.¹⁸ The last example is perhaps the most interesting for the way the narrator's restricted position dictates the voicing of the adverb.

Here is the whole sentence in which the adverb in question appears:

Qualcuno lo inseguiva, ma non ebbe bisogno di voltarsi, era Fred, certamente Fred.

The indeterminate pronoun 'Qualcuno', referring to a person heard from behind, vividly conveys the image of Johnny running from the enemy whilst the narrator, restricted, better blinkered, by his viewing position inside his hero's head almost seems to anxiously question him about the identity of their pursuer. In addition it is worth noting that 'certamente' is the same adverb that we encountered during a similar moment of perception in Pb1.

3.4.1.2 Touch

Only 3 adverbs are produced in the context of direct physical contact with the outside world. These are as follows:

A differenza della maggioranza si lavava ogni mattina ... l'acqua micidialmente fredda (1.2 459); I capelli ... lunghissimi gli pesavano intollerabilmente (1.2 459); L'aria era sottile e fredda, sportivamente fredda (1.2 484)

Again, given the closeness of these adverbs to Johnny's own experience, we would ascribe these to his voice.

3.4.1.3 Sight

As one might have expected in a work in which 'seeing' is the dominant activity of the senses, over 50% of the adverbs (116) are connected to an act of seeing either by Johnny or by Fenoglio. However given the importance of adverbs in Johnny's lexicon the vast majority (109) seem to be voiced by him.

First of all, though, the 7 adverbs which are clearly voiced by Fenoglio:

Johnny se ne risentí, stupí ed accordò incredibilmente (1.2 439); Johnny goggled bitterly (1.2 446); Johnny si alzò, incesplicando orribilmente (1.2 448); Johnny shrunk violently (1.2 454); Era arrivato a stringergli il braccio, Johnny palesemente shrinking (1.2 474); [Johnny] andò lentamente alla spianata della specola (1.2 475); così come Johnny lentamente si aderse sui gomiti (1.2 479)

In each case it appears that Fenoglio is standing outside Johnny, looking at his reactions or the speed of his movements. The last example is the most useful one to look at closely, because the same adverb appears twice in one sentence. On the first occasion it appears to be voiced by Johnny as he watches his victim fall to the ground, whereas on the second (quoted above) it is voiced by Fenoglio as he studies the reaction of his hero:

Il ragazzo danzava a cento metri, accecato dal suo stesso coraggio ... Johnny gli sparò senza affanno, senza ferocia, ed il ragazzo cadde, lentamente, così come Johnny lentamente si aderse sui gomiti nell'ascensionale sospensione davanti al suo primo morto. (1.2 479)

It is clearly impractical to list all of the adverbs which belong to Johnny.¹⁹ Let us therefore look at a short episode from the first of the six chapters under examination.

The episode describes Johnny's feelings as he travels back to base with the partisans from the Garibaldi brigade. Here are the adverbs which accompany this episode in the order that they occur in the text:

Stava constatando come ognuno di quegli uomini stava abissalmente inferiore (1.2 441); il rimorchio, molto precariamente agganciato alla macchina (1.2 441); Tre partigiani s'accostarono rassegnatamente al rimorchio (1.2 441); A seguire il dito di Tito, la base era un paese bizzarramente foggato a barca antica (1.2 441); spariva e riappariva il paese della base, orribilmente fantomizzantesi nella notte precipite (1.2 442)

In each case it is clear that these are Johnny's perceptions that we are reading. He looks at the partisans and realises how 'abissalmente' inferior they are to him; he then studies the hook, 'precariamente agganciato' to the inside of the lorry; three partisans, he notes sit 'rassegnatamente' next to it; from the contemplation of the partisans, Johnny eyes then move to Tito's finger pointing to the base 'bizzarramente' situated high up in the distance; and finally the base itself seems to him to become 'orribilmente' ghost-like.

3.4.1.4 Inner feeling

Let us now move into our last category, into which a total of 27 adverbs fall. Of these, 5 describe the feelings of other partisans or the enemy (example from when Biondo is shot by the fascists: 'Era così paradigmaticamente il capo sognato che c'era quasi da temere fosse soltanto e proprio un sogno che dovesse necessariamente, clamorosamente fallire' (1.2 477)). 1 belongs to a passage of FIT during which the narrators consider the low quality of the Garibaldini ('così dolorosamente avvertire lo stacco qualitativo' (1.2 447)) and is therefore voiced by both Fenoglio and Johnny. The rest are produced by Johnny during moments of contemplation of his inner state. Here is one example:

Johnny si sentiva una subdola, lunga corrente nella spina dorsale, tal quale dopo la battaglia, ma infinitamente piú subdola e lunga. Tremenda era l'aperta battaglia, ma infinitamente di piú l'imboscata (1.2 491)

3.5. The signposts of *Il partigiano Johnny*

Up to this point we have dealt with those aspects of the techniques of *Il partigiano Johnny* which are, to a large extent, dependent on the 'seer' Johnny. The impression that has been given is that the narrator, Fenoglio, is frequently nothing more than a kind of slave to Johnny, that his choices are both structured by his protagonist and dependent on his protagonist. In other words, the information that the narrator is able to give to the

reader is extremely restricted, restricted, that is, by Johnny. And in some cases the information that is given appears to be told to us by Johnny and not by Fenoglio. Indeed, since it is clear that 'seeing' comes before 'transferring', then 'seeing' should prevail over transferring. And this is what, in fact, happens, most of the time.

Nevertheless, between Fenoglio's binoculars and Johnny's eyes there is a significant temporal gap which gives Fenoglio one major advantage over Johnny: he possesses hindsight. Looking back from his 1950s viewpoint Fenoglio knows, unlike Johnny, *what happened next*. For the same reason, he is in a much better position than Johnny to reflect upon what happened earlier. Johnny, on the other hand, can not look into the future and only rarely looks back at his past. This means that Fenoglio is able to see much more clearly than Johnny what are or were the links between one episode in his life and another. He can look at any scene in the text and see the connections between it and both future and past events. In other words, he has a more acute sense of history than his protagonist. This extra perceptual faculty of binocular hindsight manifests itself in the text in various different ways.

On one level, Johnny occasionally appears to know more about the future than he should. That is, he appears to be excessively prescient. In chapter 5 (see, for example, the section which discusses Johnny's objections to the

occupation of Alba) we will deal in more detail with some of these moments of 'forward' vision which are, effectively, tantamount to cheating on Fenoglio's part. For the time being one simple example will suffice. In the penultimate chapter of UrPj Johnny has a brief discussion with a fascist officer who is about to be executed. The latter refers to Mussolini as a hero, to which Johnny interjects that he has a 'nasty unhealthy feeling [that] Mussolini will die like a dog and a pig' (1.1 221). As is well known, Mussolini suffered just such an ignominious end, but it is highly unlikely that Johnny, despite his wisdom, should be so able to predict the future. Writing in the 1950s Fenoglio was, of course, fully aware how Mussolini was executed and then exposed to curious onlookers at Piazzale Loreto in Milan. He thus furnishes Johnny with knowledge that he could not otherwise have had.

However, Fenoglio's binocular wisdom is generally manifested in Il partigiano Johnny, not in overt references, but in subtle indications to the reader, that s/he should look back to past events as well as forward to future ones. Examples of this phenomenon are: the mention of a character's name which invites the reader back to the previous occasion that the character in question appeared, or forward to the next occasion when the same character appears; occasions when Johnny recalls an episode from his past, or a detail such as Johnny's second sensation of the asphodels which refers back to

the earlier episode in which he experienced the same sensation beneath his feet (which in turn points forward to the second occasion). Let us call these references, following Genette, proleptic (forward pointing) and analeptic (backward pointing) signposts.²⁰

The distribution of these signposts is not even throughout the book. At certain pivotal moments, however, Fenoglio packs the narrative with them. This is particularly the case when Johnny returns to Alba after the 8th of September, when he returns there again with the partisans in October 1944, and when he leaves his partisan brigade to act as an interpreter to the British Mission.

It is important to stress that the signpost system only really comes into its own on the second reading of the book. On a first reading, the reader is naturally unaware of what happens next, so s/he is unable to perceive the forward looking signposts. The reader's first experience is thus similar to Johnny's. On a second reading, the reader knows what occurs in the future, sees the signposts and makes the connections. His/her second experience is thus closer to Fenoglio's.²¹

This section will continue with an analysis of those signposts which point to and from the four chapters which describe the occupation of Alba by the partisans in the Autumn of 1944. We shall also deal with the signposting

in VGA, which is not as subtle as it is in Il partigiano Johnny, but nonetheless offers some indications about Fenoglio's earlier concerns with linkage. First of all though, let us look at an episode which deals with Johnny's own concerns with linkage, and which demonstrates the importance of this particular aspect of the techniques of Il partigiano Johnny.

In a brief scene which Fenoglio did not, eventually, include in Il partigiano Johnny, Johnny has a conversation with his lover Marida about his total separation from the reality of the partisan struggle. The name of the female character and the subject of the discussion indicate that the episode in question (appendix 'a' in the critical edition) was originally part of the section (chapters 16-20) in which Johnny slowly decides to join the partisan movement. In the suppressed episode, Johnny fears that he is 'il personaggio inammirabile di un altro racconto' (1.2 1247). Clearly, this ties in with the theme of life and literature which has been discussed above. But in this particular episode, Johnny's crisis is intensified not by the fact that he is leading a life in literature, but by the fact that he is leading a *disconnected* life in literature; he feels that he is the protagonist, not of a novel, but of a series of different stories without unity or cohesion:

Ecco, la sua vita non gli appariva piú nella connessione d'un romanzo, ma egli si vedeva via via come il protagonista sempre variante e dimenticabile di tanti racconti non proprio omogenei: ora era il racconto di lui con Marida, e sperava che si trasformasse in romanzo ... (1.2 1248)

Indeed, an analysis of the text of Il partigiano Johnny reveals that it is itself divided up into a series of episodes or 'racconti' which follow on from one another in linear succession: the 'racconto' of Alba, the 'racconto' of the Winter, the 'racconto' of Johnny's life with Marida and so on. In a sense then, Johnny's lamentations would seem to be more appropriate to Fenoglio. Once he had written all the short stories which make up Il partigiano Johnny, his task was to find some way to bind them together in such a way as they did not appear as separate and independent, but connected and interdependent, to make his protagonist the hero of a novel rather than a series of short stories. He found the solution to his and Johnny's problem in the system of signposting. Signposting is therefore, not simply a textual manifestation of hindsight, it is the technique, which, above all, leads to narrative cohesion.²²

Nevertheless, the signposting system is not unique to Il partigiano Johnny. It can also be found in the collection of short stories VGA. We have already seen how keen Fenoglio was to have the stories published in a particular order. In addition to the earlier comments on the obvious thematic parallels between the stories, I would also suggest that there are a number of signposts

linking the stories together. As the present discussion is specifically concerned with Alba, we shall limit our analysis to those signposts which point to this city, rather than to signposts between individual stories.

3.5.1 Signposts in VGA

The title story of VGA is placed at the beginning of the collection. For this reason there can be no proleptic references to it in previous stories. The stories which follow do, however, contain a number of analeptic signposts. In particular, 'L'andata', the first story after 'I ventitrè giorni', is full of them. The opening sentence of the story describes how the bells in the town of Mango slowly grind into action:

Quando il meccanismo del campanile di Mango cominciò a dirugginarsi per battere le cinque di mattina, Bimbo dal bricco dov'era stato un paio d'ore a fare la guardia corse giù alla cascina dove gli altri dormivano (2 243)

If this story were read separately, then this opening gambit's only real function would be to initiate the narrative. However, the detail of the bells points back to the *last* sentence of the previous story, which describes how the fascists had gone 'personalmente a suonarsi le campane' (2 241). The parallel creates a simple kind of signposting which the reader can not fail to notice. As 'L'andata' continues so references to Alba and the events described in the previous story

accumulate: Bimbo recounts how his sister has seen an officer 'sempre in giro sulle prime colline di Alba' (2 245); Colonello, another partisan, tells one of his comrades that they are going to 'far[ci] fottere dalla repubblica di Alba (2 246); Colonello feels a certain tightening in his stomach 'man mano che s'avvicinava ad Alba' (2 247); and at one important point they have a discussion about the occupation of the city during which Biagino comments:

Pensare che solo due settimane fa c'eravamo noi dentro e loro erano di là - e mostrava la stretta pianura a sinistra del fiume - e io avrei giurato che non passavano. (2 248)

In addition to the signposts which have been highlighted there are another seven or so scattered throughout the story. Given the sheer quantity it is, therefore, striking that in the third story, 'Il trucco', there are no signposts and in the fourth story, 'Gli inizi del partigiano Raoul' there is only one: Sergio is congratulated for arriving in possession of a gun, because the battle of Alba had drastically reduced the partisans' stock of weapons. In contrast, these two stories are followed by 'Il vecchio Blister' in which there is a marked increase in the number of references. Blister, a partisan who faces the death penalty for armed robbery, tells his comrades that if they really want to see him killed, then they should send him to a 'posco di blocco' outside Alba. And in the long monologue which follows he reminds his one-time friends of how he was one

of the six partisans who went into the city to collect the corpses of those who had fallen in battle. In 'Un altro muro', the final one of the six partisan stories, which is set in Alba itself, there are, as we might expect a number of signposts. As Max is led to the execution site he implores the 'gente di Alba' to come to their windows to see what is happening, but his cries fall on deaf ears. This is clearly a signpost back to the 'carnival' described in the opening story, and it serves to underline the fact that a great deal has changed since the heady days of the partisan occupation of Alba.

There is, therefore, a certain amount of signposting in VGA, but it is neither particularly sophisticated nor particularly extended. The problems with the signposting in this text can be explained by the way that the narrating voices (Fenoglio's and his popular narrators') are, as we have already seen, in competition with each other. There is a sense that Fenoglio desires to link his stories together into a coherent whole, but that his different narrators, who lack his sophistication, form an obstacle to any such sustained cohesion. In his next work, La malora, Fenoglio partially resolves this problem by, effectively, withdrawing from the battle. His voice is almost completely muted as he gives the stage to a popular, first-person narrator. Agostino, who has a limited understanding of the connections between the significant episodes of his life, thus recounts them in a series of unconnected episodes. The divisions between

different sections of the narrative appear almost entirely arbitrary, and it is difficult to see any logic behind why one particular episode follows or precedes another. The reader is thereby left entirely on his own to piece together the disparate details of Agostino's miserable existence. Let us now turn to Il partigiano Johnny to see how Fenoglio's decision to allow his own voice to return to his narrative (even though it is now in competition with Johnny) transforms the system of signposting into a fully developed and powerful tool.

3.5.2 Signposts to and from Alba in Il partigiano Johnny.

The four chapters which describe the 23 days of Alba in our version of Il partigiano Johnny occupy a position just after the half-way point of the narrative. This gives Fenoglio an obvious structural advantage that he did not enjoy when he wrote VGA, and meant that he was able to lay both proleptic and analeptic signposts over several hundred pages on either side of the story of Alba. Let us now look at where these signposts are and how some of them function.

Throughout Pb1 the identity of the city is withheld from the reader and is only referred to obliquely as 'la città'. Nevertheless, during those sections of the narrative which are set in the city, Fenoglio is careful to lay a number of 'destinations' which are picked up on later. In much the same way, the city remains anonymous

during the four chapters which describe Johnny's tortured existence as a draft-dodger prior to his decision to become a partisan. In these chapters a number of new 'destinations' are laid and some of the earlier 'destinations' are signposted. During the communist brigade section of the narrative there are no references to Johnny's home town whatsoever, implying that he has left city life behind in order to be a Resistance fighter. In a way, then, the absence of signposting in these chapters helps to reinforce an element of their content.

After the defeat at Mombarcaro this situation changes and Alba begins to acquire more importance. On his way from the 'rossi' to the 'azzurri' partisans Johnny stops at an 'osteria' to buy a bar of chocolate. There he asks for information about his city, but the owner replies that she knows nothing about the situation in Alba. This is an important moment in the story as it is the first time that we actually learn the name of Johnny's city ('E di Alba che sapete'? (1.2 527)). Shortly afterwards, he sits down on a hill, lights a cigarette and contemplates his city for the first time in months. In particular, he studies the river and 'la mutilazione del ponte che lo varcava, lo squarcio delle bombe inglesi' (1.2 528). This detail acts as a signpost back to the earlier destination point of the bombing of the bridge by the allies which, as we have seen, coincided with one of Johnny's major existential crises. We and Johnny are thus taken back to

an earlier moment in the story, to earlier themes and ideas.

During the interlude chapter between the 'rossi' and the 'azzurri' sections of the narrative there are a number of other signposts back to Johnny's existence there.²³ However, it is in the 'azzurri' section that the first proleptic signposts to the disastrous occupation of Alba occur. When he first joins the 'azzurri' Nord describes how happy he is to have Johnny amongst his ranks because 'Alba era l'immediato diretto obiettivo della sua divisione' (1.2 543). At this stage then, the situation would appear to be quite promising, but soon after this announcement of the azzurri's military intent Fenoglio intervenes in the narrative to anticipate the outcome of the occupation. In what is the only overt prolepsis in the whole book, he tells us that the 'esperimento si provò disastroso' (1.2 550) and led to the almost total collapse of the partisan system in that region. In a later episode which is a clear parallel to this prolepsis, Johnny tells Nord why he thinks the occupation will be a disaster. His protestations are not enough to make Nord change his mind and the partisans duly descend on Alba.

With the return to Alba the reader's sensitivity to signposts is naturally sharpened; s/he is looking out for invitations to return to early sections of the narrative. Yet, during the first few pages of the Alba episode there

are not, as far as can be discovered, any signposts at all. This situation changes when, after the fascists withdrawal from Alba, Johnny volunteers to take his men to patrol the banks of the Tanaro. This is the description of the river that the narrator gives:

Sull'acqua correva un brivido come di postuma felicità estiva, ma il greto e l'argine erano desolati, come sterilizzata dalla stessa arressata, miserabile presenza dei fascisti in esodo (1.2 628)

The detail of the 'brivido' is a clear signpost back to a scene in Pb1 when Johnny, then a university student, spends a relaxing day by the river reading, swimming and smoking. Here is the description that the narrator gives on that occasion:

Sull'acqua correvano brividi di felicità, il cielo era d'un turchino granuloso, fregiato di un'unica nube, affusolata e forte come l'ala di un arcangelo, i milioni di pietre del greto antistante l'isola cona barbagliavano come un selciato di diamanti. (my italics 1.3 1280)

There are, then, four clear lexical connections ('acqua', 'correva', 'brivido' and 'felicità') between the opening phrases of the descriptions. The alert reader casts her/his mind back to Johnny's earlier, idyllic existence and compares this with his present situation. Extra meaning is thereby added. But as well as pointing the reader backwards, this signpost also points her/him forwards. As the story of the partisans' occupation of Alba continues so the river assumes a more and more

important role. The appalling weather causes it to swell alarmingly, and in the end it almost becomes one of the protagonists of the battle. When the description is read the second time round it thereby assumes much greater importance.

As the Alba episode continues so the number of signposts increases. Thus on his way to his parents' house Johnny hears a: 'ben nota, sostanzialmente sgradevole voce, interamente borghese' (1.2 634). It belongs to his friend, Alessandro, who is wearing 'il suo invidiato Burberry originale' (1.2 634). We learn that he has hidden himself away from 'history', leading a life of seclusion. As such, he is clearly intended to act as a contrast to Johnny, a one-time bourgeois who decides to take to the hills and fight. A discussion about the significance of the occupation of Alba follows and Johnny underlines the importance of opposing fascism, but Alessandro appears uninterested. As with the previous signpost back to Pb1, this one serves to underline how much Johnny, as well as the historical situation, has changed.²⁴

When Johnny returns home there are, as we might expect, a number of references to what happened in the past. He looks at his shelf of books (a signpost back to his literary life), pats the bed on which he used to sleep (a signpost back to the opening paragraph of the work) and is scolded by his father for his decision to join the

partisans without telling them (a signpost back to his previous stay in Alba). More interesting, though, are the forward looking signposts. Whilst he has been away his parents have bought a new dog which, Fenoglio comments, would become a splendid companion 'nei giorni di dopo' (1.2 639). This is obviously a signpost forward to a time after the war, but it also points to Johnny's crucial friendship with the 'cagna delle Langhe' during the winter of 1944. The other forward looking signpost in this brief episode is contained in Johnny's mother's persistent enquiries about Ettore. She asks why they are not fighting in the same outfit and Johnny replies that, though they are not yet in the same partisan unit, he is certain that they will soon be together. And indeed, after the defeat at Alba and the ensuing 'rastrellamento', Johnny, Ettore and Pierre form a trio which is subsequently broken up by Ettore's illness and Pierre's capture.

During the occupation of the city, Johnny and his fellow partisans are billeted at the 'fattoria di Gambadilegno'. The corner of the house normally occupied by the owners' daughter (a school mistress) is particularly pleasing to Johnny, as it contains a radio and three shelves of books of mostly romantic fiction, Incontrarsi e dirsi addio by Kormendi, and the complete works of Mura. Deprived of any other work of literature Johnny immediately sets about reading them:

In brevissimo tempo, piuttosto shamefully, Johnny si trovò in grado di competere eventualmente con la maestra in una tenzone di intrecci e di nomi di personaggi di Mura (1.2 652)

Clearly this brings us back to the life/love in literature theme which is such an important feature of Il partigiano Johnny. We are thus taken back to Johnny's earlier pre-partisan life which, so it would appear, he is in danger of lapsing back into. This point is emphasized by the signpost contained in the mention of the author Kormendi, whom Johnny refers to in the opening chapter of the work: 'Sei una pecora nera, Margaret. Il tuo preciso dovere sarebbe di leggere Kormendi e l'altra mezza dozzina di romanzieri magiari nostri alleati' (1.3 1266). Johnny and the 'maestra' finally meet in a subsequent chapter. When she leaves, she invites Johnny to drop in on her and her pupils if he ever passes through the town of Rodello.

To sum up, we have seen the way that the reader is prompted to look around the text greatly enriches the meaning potential of any given episode of Il partigiano Johnny. Instead of reading a chapter in isolation, the reader's own vision is expanded, backwards and forwards. Although the structure of Il partigiano Johnny is linear, as Fenoglio himself commented in a letter to Livio Garzanti ('comincia ad A per finire a B') the reader does not actually read it in a linear fashion. S/he is constantly ranging around, looking back to episodes which

may have occurred several hundred pages before, or which will occur several hundred pages after. Above all, this forcing of the reader to make connections instils in her/him a *sense of history*.

3.6. Two views of Alba

In this final section we will again concentrate on the four chapters which contain the description of the period of occupation of the city of Alba by the partisans. Our aim will be to see how the adoption of a particular point of view (i.e. an internally focalized narrative) structures and affects the description of the 23 days of the city of Alba.

There are a number of different ways of approaching this question. We could look at a version of the events as told by an omniscient historian, such as Barbano (1950), and analyse the points of intersection and divergence from it in Il partigiano Johnny. Using the terms employed by the Russian formalists, we could compare 'fabula' (the story as it happened) with 'syuzhet' (the story as it is fictionally narrated). Such an analysis would be revealing insofar as it would help to show up how the restriction of the events to Johnny's field of vision limits the narrative, as well as highlighting some of the distortions from the truth present in the fictional discourse of Il partigiano Johnny. But such an approach has a number of obvious limitations. Above all, it would

be a mistake to view the Barbano article as a kind of absolute norm, as the authentic 'fabula'. Historians are not, though they might claim to be, objective reporters of the facts, but writers who select and suppress information according to their own perspectives. Historians tell stories. Barbano's account possesses much more 'syuzhet' than we might think. In order to place our analysis on a more secure footing, we could perhaps go to another historical account of the events in Alba and see how this differs from Barbano's version. But this would lead us into a never-ending game. Instead, it is proposed to compare the description in Il partigiano Johnny, with another fictional description: the short story 'I ventitré giorni della città di Alba'. As we already know, the story was written by Fenoglio himself and uses very different techniques from those that he employed in the later text Il partigiano Johnny. We shall look at the events as they are told in the short story and then see what changes Fenoglio makes in the longer version. I have found it convenient to term the short story syuzhet1 and the four chapters of Il partigiano Johnny syuzhet2.

Syuzhet1 is 15 pages long and contains 55 paragraphs of narrative. The following table illustrates how the 23 days of the 'fabula' are redistributed in the 'syuzhet'. I follow the temporal indications provided by the narrator. Section three is bracketed as there is no textual reference to these days:

<u>Real time</u>	<u>Narrative time (paragraphs)</u>
1. 10 October	11
2. The next eight days	1
3. (19-23 October)	0
4. 24 October	6
5. l'indomani	1
6. 'Verso la fine d'ottobre piove'	1
7. 'Lo stesso giorno che spiove'	3
8. 1 November -	4
9. 2 November	28

The 23 days are, as we can see, divided into nine sections, with two days receiving markedly more treatment than others. Hence, the first and last days of the occupation (1. and 9. [respectively the day when the fascists leave and the day they return]) account for the majority of the narrative. The 21 remaining days are sandwiched in between: the 11th to the 23rd of October (2. and 3.) are given one paragraph; the 24th October (4. [the day of the first fascist attack]) is given 6; the day after (5.) is given 1; the day it starts raining (6.) is given 1; the day when it stops raining (7.) and the fascist leaders came to have talks with the partisan leaders is given 3; and the day of preparations for the battle (8.) is given 4. This imbalance confirms what some critics, in particular Bigazzi and Saccone, have already said about Fenoglio's popular narrator. He does not stop to analyse or describe the minutiae of everyday reality;

he is interested, above all, in dramatic events, in what Saccone describes as 'il fatto straordinario'. Ordinary events are quite simply passed over. On one level, therefore, point of view affects not just how events are narrated, but *what* events are narrated.

Let us now turn to the second version of the story. The following table illustrates how events are redistributed in syuzhet2. As with syuzhet1 3. is bracketed because there are no references to these dates:

<u>Real time</u>	<u>Narrative time</u> (paragraphs)
1. 10 October	55 cap.36
2. The next 'dieci giorni'	23
3. (19-23 October)	0 cap.37
4. 24 October	19
5. 25 October	0
6. 'Seguí un'era di diluvio'	14
7. 'La pioggia aveva slackened'	19 cap.38
*. Il giorno dopo	17
8. 1 November -	18
9. 2 November	33 cap.39

As we can see, syuzhet2 possesses, *grosso modo*, the same basic articulations as syuzhet1. There are, however, some significant differences in the weighting given to each section. Before considering this question in any detail some comments are, however, needed on the obvious difference in length between the two versions of the

story. Syuzhet1 runs to some 15 fifteen pages, whereas syuzhet2 is some 77 pages long. This difference in length seems to correspond to an obvious difference in genre: the former is a short story, the latter is a series of chapters from a very long fictive autobiography. It would, therefore, appear that choice of genre is important a factor as choice of narrator. Instead of analysing the effects of two different narrators, we should perhaps look at the way in which genre determines content. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to over-emphasize the importance of genre over the importance of the narrator. It is, after all, the narrator who chooses to adopt a certain kind of writing in favour of another. The ironic popular narrator of syuzhet1 chooses the short story form because it is more suited to his designs - a rapid and devastating critique of the Resistance. Conversely, the intellectual narrator of syuzhet2 is more interested in the wide open spaces that the longer form offers him.

To return to the question of the articulations of syuzhet2 and the relative weighting accorded to each of them, there are, as we have already seen, obvious similarities. There are also a number of significant differences. However, in order to understand the more important differences between syuzhet1 and syuzhet2 we need to examine a few examples.

Section 1. of both syuzhets narrates the events of 10 October. Syuzhet1 divides this section up as follows:

- Para.1 - Intro. Alba taken by 2000 partisans on 10 October and lost by 200 on 2 November
- Para.2 - 'antefatto': partisans pressure of city during summer
- Para.3 - 'esodo': fascists leave city.
- Para.4
- Para.5
- Para.6 - Description of victory parade
- Para.7
- Para.8
- Para.9
- Para.10 - Discussion of administrative procedures
- Para.11 - First night of occupation and fears of populace and partisans

Minor narrative units within the major narrative unit (e.g. 'antefatto' 'esodo' within unit 1. '10 October' correspond to paragraphs in paragraphs 1,2,3,10 and 11. Paragraphs 4-9 contain a minor narrative unit divided into six further units. For ease of reference I shall number these as follows (the number to the left of the '=' indicates the number of the paragraph, the 1 immediately to the right indicates syuzhet1, the 1 to the left of the '.' indicates the major narrative unit and the number to the right of the '.' indicates the minor narrative unit. Hence 1.1D means syuzhet1, unit 1, minor unit D and corresponds to the six paragraphs which describe the victory parade): 1 = 1.1A, 2 = 1.1B, 3 = 1.1C, 4-9 = 1.1D, 10 = 1.1E, 11 = 1.1F.

Syuzhet2, on the other hand, divides this section up as follows:

Preceding chapters - intro. (2.1A) and antefatto (2.1B)
 Paras 1-23 - l'esodo. Johnny takes partisans with him to
 patrol river bank (2.1C)
 Paras 24-30 - Johnny goes into the city, sees last signs
 of the victory parade (2.1D), meets Alessandro
 Paras 31-45 - Johnny goes to visit his parents
 Paras 47-50 - Night-time (2.1F), Johnny returns to
 barracks
 Para 51 - Pierre returns at 10 p.m. Tells Johnny about
 discussion of administrative procedures (2.1E)
 Paras 52-55 Johnny describes his fears.(2.1F)

Let us now analyse some of the minor narrative units
 within this major unit of syuzhet1 and syuzhet2. The
 narrator of syuzhet1 tells us in 1.1A that the occupation
 of Alba was a failure. The numbers in brackets mark the
 important pieces of information given to us:

Alba la presero (1) in duemila (2) il 10
 ottobre (3) e la persero (4) in duecento (5) il
 2 novembre (6) dell'anno 1944 (2. 227)

The narrator of syuzhet2, on the other hand, gives us the
 information (2.1A) in a much different order. We have
 already seen how the defeat of Alba (4) is announced in
 an earlier prolepsis, but we do not get the exact details
 until they actually occur. Thus, with the exception of
 the anticipatory prolepsis, which is something of a
 technical hapax in Il partigiano Johnny, for most of the
 time Fenoglio is restricted by what, standing next to
 Johnny, he is in a position to know. The majority of the
 details contained in the first sentence of syuzhet1 are
 therefore strung out along different points of syuzhet2.
 3. is given to us in the first sentence of syuzhet2
 'L'alto mattino del dieci ottobre essi furono su per Alba
 (1.2 625). 1 is given to us when Johnny hears the bells

and the shouts of joy which announce that the last fascist has left the city (see 1.2 633). 6. is given to us on when the narrative eventually reaches the day of the battle and 2. and 5. are given to us on the first of November when the partisans, Johnny amongst them, assemble and assess their strength:

Convennero e si contarono. Non eran piú di duecento. Allora gaped, tremanti e scandalizzati. - Come? Eravamo duemila a prender la città? E saremo duecento, a tenerla? Ah, ah? (1.2 685)

The narrator of syuzhet1 is in a much better position to give information in a compressed format than the narrator of syuzhet2. It is therefore clear that whilst genre is important in determining the length of both syuzhet, the freedom that the popular narrator enjoys, as compared to the restrictions that the focalized narrator of syuzhet2 is bound to, is also a major factor when it comes to determining length. More importantly, it could be argued that syuzhet2 is much closer to an authentic account of the reality of the narrated events, because the narrator is allied to someone who participated in those events, rather than being a distant, non-participator (or ex-participator) who organises the information as he pleases. To use the terms coined by James, in syuzhet1 telling > showing whereas in syuzhet2 showing > telling.

Minor units 1.1B and 1.1C occupy much more space in syuzhet2 than in syuzhet1. The 'antefatto' of syuzhet1

amounts to one paragraph, whereas the *antefatto* of *syuzhet2* is described, as it occurred, over a series of chapters.

Leaving aside 1.1C I shall now turn to 1.1D in which there occurs something close to a reversal of the situation described above. The narrator of *syuzhet1* gives a great deal of attention to the victory parade. Paragraphs 4-9 occupy roughly two and a half pages of the total four pages of major unit 1 and give us a detailed description of the excesses of the event. Alongside the male partisans the narrator informs us that the female partisans '*sfilarono in abiti maschili*' (2 228) the sight of which caused the populace to murmur '*Ahi povera italia*' (2 228). Indeed, disturbed by the potential effect that they might have had, the partisan commanders had ordered their female troops, so the narrator informs us, to stay in the hills, but they had refused: '*quelle li avevano mandati a farsi fottere e s'erano scaraventate in città*' (2 229). Rather like the women, a number of the commanders show signs that they too are seeking to escape from their gender. When they appear on the balcony to accept the salutes of the crowd which, the narrator ironically interjects, had been forcibly assembled, one is wearing a pair of '*calzoncini corti*' similar to a ballerina's, and what appears to be an ermine fur-coat. Another sports a rubber outfit complete with shining buckles. Rank and file partisans behave in a more 'conventional' heterosexual fashion, rushing off to the

brothels where eight prostitutes excel themselves. Those partisans not spending their time in brothels set about requisitioning cars, tyres and petrol, for pleasure, rather than for military purposes. Their crass irresponsibility is underlined by the narrator's reference to their arguing amongst themselves (2 229), whilst leaving the safety catches of their weapons off. The whole scene rapidly degenerates into a puerile game as they roll tyres along 'come i bimbi d'una volta i cerchi nei giardini pubblici' (2. 230). Thus, the entire first day of occupation is, in *syuzhet1*, characterized by wanton excess.

Syuzhet2, on the other hand, gives a much different treatment of the victory parade. As we have already seen, Johnny agrees to take his men to patrol the banks of the Tanaro. Following the rules of the system of internal focalisation the narrator is obliged to follow him. He can not go down into the centre of the town with the other partisans and enjoy the experience of narrating the parade. The only information we get is from Pierre, who comes back from the parade to tell Johnny, the narrator (and of course the reader) what has occurred:

La gente, Johnny, la gente, ragazzi, il popolo,
 - diceva Pierre alludendo ai suoi occhi rossi:
 - Vedrete, dovevate tutti vedere. La gente che
 portava i partigiani a casa per il pranzo o nei
 caffè per la bibita. La gente! (1.2 631)

Pierre's expression 'dovevate tutti vedere' encapsulates the restricted nature of the narrative at this point. We would have liked to have experienced the narrative of the victory parade, but Fenoglio's rigorous application of technical consistency means that it is denied to us. We can only guess, on the basis of the following passage, that his description would not have been as dismissive as that of the narrator of *syuzhet1* :

Ora partigiani venivano in vista, a gruppi, in franchigia, chiedendo la strada per i postriboli, le sartorie e gli studi fotografici, shamelessly begging for carburante e macchine imboscate. Ma circolavano anche ronde, serie e tese, estremamente tese, in vera austerità (1.2 634)

Note how the expression 'venivano in vista' is used to guarantee the authenticity of the description of the partisans. The negative details which follow largely agree with what the popular narrator of *syuzhet1* tells us. However, this critical image is balanced by the sentence beginning with 'ma' which means that the description does not end on a negative note. It is important to note that the popular narrator gives us none of this mitigating evidence. This begs a question. Whose account is truthful? My answer to this question is that no-one provides an absolutely truthful account. Both narrators give us their own versions, both narrators organise the evidence to fit their interpretation of events. Nonetheless, one version has to be closer to the truth than the other. In the case of the parade, I would

suggest that the compressed version of syuzhet2 is closer to what actually happened. There is a sense of excess, but also a sense of responsibility towards the population. In the expanded version the narrator deliberately exaggerates the excesses because they are what both fascinate him and excite his imagination.

We have now begun to analyse questions which go beyond simple perspective and lead to questions of interpretation. This is as it should be, as it would be an error to analyse point of view purely in terms of narrative perspective. Ideological (by which I mean 'world view') point of view is inextricably linked to perceptual point of view. It is therefore always necessary to consider these two aspects of point of view, bearing in mind that on some occasions ideological point of view has a greater effect on the narrative than perceptual point of view. In order to avoid possible confusion I shall, from now on, distinguish ideological point of view by italicising it. In the above example, therefore, the narrator's *point of view* led to greater distortions of the truth than Fenoglio's *point of view*. In a way this is a little ironic, as the narrator of syuzhet1 enjoyed a privileged point of view, which allowed him access to much more information (and thus greater access to the truth) than Fenoglio's limited point of view. Is this paradoxical situation constant through both narratives? My answer to this is no. There are a number of occasions when *point of view* in syuzhet2

leads to much greater distortions than *point of view* in syuzhet1. In this context an analysis of the treatment of the elements in the two syuzhet is most revealing.

The narrator of syuzhet1 describes the manner in which the weather turns for the worse the following manner:

Ma verso la fine d'ottobre piovve in montagna e piovve in pianura, il fiume Tanaro parve rizzarsi in piedi tanto crebbe. La gente ci vide il dito di Dio, veniva in massa sugli argini nelle tregue di quel diluvio e studiava il livello consentendo col capo ... Il fiume esagerò al punto che si smise d'aver paura della repubblica per cominciare ad averne di lui (2 232-233)

As is clear, there is a certain amount of personification in this description ('parve rizzarsi' 'il fiume esagerò') but nothing, with perhaps the exception of the people's reaction ('la gente ci vide il dito di Dio'), which could be described as excessive or exaggerated. In syuzhet2, on the other hand, the rain seems to be a much more dangerous and uncontrollable force:

Il sole non brillò piú, seguí un'era di diluvio. Cadde la piú grande pioggia nella memoria di Johnny: un liquido rullo compressore, pioggia nata grossa e costante, inarrestabile, che infradiciò le terre, gonfiò il fiume a un volume pauroso ("la gente smise d'aver paura dei fascisti e prese ad aver paura del fiume") e macerò le stesse pietre della città.
Johnny sollevò gli occhi al suo flagello sui vetri di una stanza del Collegio (1.2 664)

The sentence which begins the passage gives an idea of an intense, almost Biblical drama. The narrative then

focusses on Johnny perceptions ('Cadde la piú grande pioggia nella memoria di Johnny'), suggesting that the long sentence which follows the colon is entirely voiced by him, rather than by Fenoglio. This is confirmed in the first sentence of the next paragraph in which the metaphor of the 'flagello' is clearly produced by Johnny's vigorous imagination. It is almost as if the reactions which the narrator of *syuzhet1* perceives in the 'gente' are entirely transferred to Johnny. But whereas the narrator of *syuzhet1*, from his external point of view, is always distant from the people that he describes, the narrator of *syuzhet2*, from his internal point of view, is that much closer to his protagonist. This means that he is obliged to devote much more attention to the elements than the narrator of *syuzhet1*. Thus if we look at the two tables above we note that section six of *syuzhet1* (half of which I have quoted) amounts to one paragraph, whereas in *syuzhet2* the 'era di diluvio' covers a total of fourteen.²⁵ Let us now return to major unit 1.

After the victory parade *syuzhet1* focusses on the partisan leaders' discussion of tactics and administration (1.1E) and the people's fears during the first night of the occupation (1.1F). *Syuzhet2*, on the other hand, moves to Johnny's meeting with Alessandro and his eventual return to his parents' house, thus postponing 2.1E and 2.1F until later. The additional material in *syuzhet2* highlights one of the main

differences between the two versions of the events. The narrator of syuzhet1, who is able to cast his eye everywhere, naturally tends not to concentrate on individuals but on groups. From his 'distant' point of view both the partisans and the populace are an anonymous, amorphous mass. He never calls anyone by name, nor does he ever stop to analyse the responses and behaviour of a particular character. Put in simpler terms, he is interested in what I would call the 'big picture' of the events. The narrator of syuzhet2, on the other hand, cannot cast his eye everywhere, but what he can do is study, in detail, the events in terms of their impact on the focaliser, Johnny, and on those people who are in his, and Johnny's, field of vision. He is necessarily restricted to the minute detail, the single brush stroke in the corner of the picture. For this reason he can include the discussion with Alessandro and Johnny's return home, two scenes which would be unthinkable in syuzhet1.

Fenoglio is, as I have repeatedly stressed, severely limited in terms of the information that he can convey. Nevertheless, despite the blinkers on his binoculars, he manages to include most of the details that the omniscient narrator of syuzhet1 gives. He achieves this by virtue of a number of different tricks. As we have seen, Johnny spends most of the evening at his parents home before returning to his barracks. Given this situation he is clearly not in a good position to report

on the tactical discussion and the fears of the populace and the partisans. He has to look for an opportunity for this information to filter through Johnny. Such an opportunity arises when Pierre returns to the barracks at 10 p.m and he tells Johnny about the tactical discussion that he had participated in. And by and large his negative comments ('Ho la testa che mi scoppia. Parlare, proporre e decidere. Governo civile, vettovagliamento annonario ... Mi sento incompetente' (1.2 642)) agree with those voiced by the narrator of *syuzhet1* ('sedevano davanti a gravi problemi di difesa, di vettovagliamento e di amministrazione civile in genere. Avevano tutti l'aria di non capircene niente' (2 230)). Rather than placing himself inside the room where the discussion takes place, like the fly-on-the-wall omniscient narrator of *syuzhet1*, Fenoglio deliberately chooses to make Pierre function as his ears. The effect is to make *syuzhet2* far more realistic than *syuzhet1*. This is a relatively simple device, which works because the discussions were voiced out loud in Pierre's presence, who in turn reports them out loud to Johnny. In contrast, fear is a much more difficult concept to handle in a focalized narrative because it is, generally speaking, an unvoiced emotion. The narrator, that is, only has access to Johnny's thoughts. As we have seen, there are no narrative reports of thought acts in Il partigiano Johnny except ones which describe Johnny's thoughts. But the omniscient narrator of unfocalized narrative can penetrate other people's

minds and see what is going on within them. Here is the description of the partisans' fears in syuzhet1:

E i partigiani ... non chiusero occhio. Pensavano, e in quel pensare che a tratti dava nell'incubo, Alba gli pareva una grande trappola colle porte già abbassate. Era l'effetto del sentirsi chiusi per la prima volta; le ronde che viaggiavano per la città nel fresco della notte erano molto più tranquille e spensierate. (2 231)

Yet the question arises, how does the narrator of syuzhet1 know this information? How can he possess the God-like powers of being able to read the minds of others? His omniscience, therefore, ultimately detracts from the realism of the narrative, and leaves us doubting its authenticity and accuracy. The situation is quite different in syuzhet2. Here is the parallel passage from the later work:

Gli uomini erano chiusi e morosi, tutt'al più humming, il tempo passava in un hush nervoso, disagiato cambiar di fianchi e libertino fumare. Johnny, i nervi crescendogli dentro a doppi, capiva: gli uomini avevano paura della città, del chiuso della coordinazione ... Forse tutti gli uomini sognavano soltanto l'ora di uscire per servizio, di sentinella o meglio di ronda, per liberarsi da quell'incantesimo di trappola. (1.2 642)

Note how the partisans' fears are understood by the perceiving subject Johnny. He senses their emotions because he is able to look at them closely and sees and hears how restless they are. But even then he has to guess ('Forse') that they were dreaming about going out on patrol. Again then the focalized narrative gives rise

to a greater realism than the omniscient narrative of syuzhet1.

Let us now turn to major unit 2. As is clear from the two tables above, syuzhet1 devotes only one paragraph to the period between the occupation of Alba and the first fascist attack. As the narrator, only interested as he is in 'fatti straordinari', comments: 'Non successe niente, come niente successe negli otto giorni e nelle otto notti che seguirono' (2 231). Syuzhet2 on the other hand devotes 23 paragraphs to this period for the narrator is interested in both 'fatti straordinari' and 'fatti ordinari'. Chapter 37, therefore, opens with Johnny's visit to command headquarters. He has a brief conversation with capitano Fede, who is the officer in charge of the occupation and then takes his men to their billet at the fattoria di Gambadilegno. The fattoria is in a strategic position outside the city, and Johnny's men get down to the task of guarding their position against a potential fascist attack which eventually takes place on the 24 October (major unit 3).

The treatment of the attack in syuzhet1 and syuzhet2 graphically illustrates the differences between the two narrators' points of view. The narrator of syuzhet1 is, as I have already stressed, able to view everything. Thus, in the first paragraph of the description, he appears to be standing next to a group of partisans who are fishing with hand-grenades. They see a cloud of dust

rising from the Alba-Bra road and hear the roar of engines. He remains with them as they peer through the gaps in the trees and see a number of enemy lorries and two small armoured cars (2 231 para.13). He then moves from this position to somewhere inside the city. From this different standpoint he describes the sound of the siren, the citizens who hide away in their cellars, and the movement of the whole garrison to the river banks (2 231 para.14). He then crosses to the other side of the river to where the enemy set up their troops, a change of position which is implied by the detail of the description of the enemy front 'non piú di mezzo chilometro, disteso tra un pescheto e un arenile' (2 231 para. 15). After an exchange of fire the fascists send forward one of their armoured cars, but this is severely damaged when it is struck by 'un colpo da 81', a detail which implies that the narrator has crossed back to the other side of the river and has seen the partisan load the mortar. The enemy are eventually repulsed to the collective joy of both partisans and civilians. In *syuzhet2*, the narrative treatment of this battle is much different. Johnny is described washing himself in a secluded part of the river and does not hear the sound of the approaching enemy:

Johnny stava lavandosi in solitudine in un cantuccio del fiume, e forse fu la frizione e lo sgrondare dell'acqua ad assordirlo al passante fragore degli autocarri, furgoni, autoblindo e carri armati sulla provinciale oltre il fiume. (1.2 655)

As is clear, the narrator who is standing next to Johnny can hear the 'fragore', otherwise he would not be able to describe it to us. The impression given is that the narrator has his eyes concentrated on Johnny, but his ears are trained elsewhere. Unlike Johnny he is not washing himself, and is therefore able to hear the approaching enemy whilst at the same time studying his protagonist's ablutions. The 'forse' captures the moment that the narrator hears the rumble, looks at Johnny and wonders why he does not hear what he himself is hearing. This is, perhaps, one of the best examples of what happens when the narrator positions himself behind the shoulders of his protagonist, as opposed to inside his eyes. Immediately afterwards the sound of the siren is heard. But unlike the narrator of *syuzhet1*, the narrator maintains a fixed position, as is indicated by the way '*gli ululi delle sirene vennero spazzanti sino alla fattoria, lungo il chiaro cielo*' (my italics 1.2 655). After the sound of the siren Johnny is surrounded by his men who plead with him to send them to the bridge where the battle is taking place. He, however, refuses to leave the position at the *fattoria* until he receives orders to the contrary. For this reason, the partisans, Johnny, the narrator and the reader are obliged to participate in the first stages of the battle from a distance, from where they can only use their ears and not their eyes. The effect of this is to create a kind of *sensurround* effect which adds to the realism of the 'sound track' of the narrative. Thus the sounds of the battle come to us and

the partisans as though from another set of loud-speakers, placed in a different position from the main ones: 'Andarono, depressi e increduli, distogliendo gli orecchi dal glorioso, inebriante fragore che schiacciava l'incomprimibile fiume lontano (1.2 656). Shortly after this Johnny's men are taken to the battle in a lorry. Johnny and the narrator are thereby transferred to the same riverbank from which the narrator of *syuzhet1* described the battle.

Let us now turn to major unit 7, the description of the meeting between the fascist gerarchi and the partisan leaders. In *syuzhet1* this event covers three paragraphs. The first describes the measures taken when the chief partisan leader learns that the enemy plan to attack not later than the third of November. The next two describe how a priest, acting as a go-between, conveys a message to command headquarters asking for a meeting between both sides; this is agreed to, and the fascists unsuccessfully ask the partisan leaders to withdraw for the good of the city. This is obviously an important 'fatto', and one which the narrator of *syuzhet2* could not afford to exclude. However, the meeting takes place outside the city, thus posing problems which the omniscient narrator of *syuzhet1* did not have to cope with in his version. The solution that Fenoglio finds is to make Johnny visit the partisan H.Q at the same time that the priest, in this version the Vicario Generale, is arranging the meeting. Pierre, who as we have already seen, functions as the

narrator's ears during these chapters, eventually emerges from the meeting with the Vicario Generale to tell him about the planned encounter. Fenoglio could have continued to use Pierre in this way, allowing him to report to Johnny what happened at the meeting, but there are obvious limitations to this device: after a while it becomes a little laboured. For this reason, he makes Pierre say to Johnny that he too will participate ('Tu sarai della partita. Nord m'ha ordinato di scegliere uomini scelti' (1.2 671)). The events described in syuzhet2 are then roughly similar to those in syuzhet1. The principal difference is that actions and even words which the narrator of syuzhet1 attributes to anonymous partisans, are subsequently transferred wholesale to named characters by the narrator of syuzhet2. Here are the two most significant examples of this movement from the general to the particular. I have italicized those phrases in which the transference is most obvious:

Syuzhet1

arrivarono tagliando il fiume con un barcone e siccome quella traversata poteva rappresentare *una prova generale, i partigiani sull'altra sponda rimasero malissimo a vedere con che sicurezza quel barcone passò il fiume gonfio* (2 233-234)

Syuzhet2

Dalla piú prossima golena spuntò, con rozza maestà, una larga, piatta pesante barca, arando con derisoria facilità e sicurezza le acque ultragonfie. *Johnny ed Ettore stettero a*

boccaperta a quell'irridente specie di prova generale ... (1.2 674)

Syuzhet1

I capi fascisti infangatissimi ripartirono col loro barcone dicendo: - *Arrivederci sul campo, - e i partigiani risposero: - Certamente - e stettero a guardare se quelli per caso non facessero naufragio. Non lo fecero. (2. 234)*

Syuzhet2

Lo splendido fra loro cedette l'ultimo, ma prima si rivolse alla ripa in generale e a Pierre in particolare. Disse distintamente: - *Ci vedremo sul campo - con voce quieta e rivolgendosi, oltre a Pierre, a Mauri e Nord interiti sulla soglia della fattoria. - Certissimamente - rispose Pierre quietamente per tutti.*

I rematori puntarono e staccarono. - *Pazientiamo, alquanto, - disse Ettore: - non è fuor del caso che facciano naufragio, in fondo -. Ma nulla di ciò accadde, il barcone tornò derisoriamente com'era venuto.*

The above analysis has emphasised the way that the employment of different narrators affects the two syuzhets in question. It would be possible to continue our analysis through to a comparison of the final battle scene. But this would not really add anything to what has been said already.

3.7. Conclusion

In a letter to Livio Garzanti Fenoglio claims that Primavera di bellezza is 'in sé opera singolare e con parecchi punti ed aspetti di forte interesse artistico e

tecnico'. In this chapter I hope to have highlighted some of these 'punti ed aspetti'. A more detailed analysis would pick up on other aspects of the technical subtleties of the work as well as extend some of the areas analysed above. For example, further research might indicate whether or not Fenoglio gets closer to his protagonist as the narrative develops. In other words, is there a sense in which Fenoglio negotiates with his protagonist, perhaps identifying more and more with him as the story develops? An analysis of this issue would in turn raise interesting issues of psychology and psychoanalysis which are conspicuously absent from this study. Alternatively, more work could be done on the use of 'sense expressions' in the text, seeing whether they cluster in certain points of the narrative. Or a comprehensive analysis of what have been termed 'small-scale linguistic indications of voice' would study adverbialisation in much greater depth, as well as dealing with other areas of subjectivity in language, such as adjectives.

Whatever the limitations of this chapter, though, I hope to have demonstrated that the sophisticated techniques in the work are not present because Fenoglio was simply interested in technique for techniques' sake. In Il partigiano Johnny technique is central to the achievement of the historical dimension of the work.

Notes to chapter 3

1 See, for example, Pugliatti (1985, 25-26).

2 The literature on point of view is now extremely extensive. Despite some flaws, which Genette himself has subsequently recognized, I refer to his most famous work (Figures III) more often than others because of its now wide influence. I have also found Uspensky (1973) to be useful. For more extensive bibliography see Pugliatti (1985) which is an excellent overview of the whole issue of point of view.

3 Saccone's remarks on the narrative style of Il partigiano Johnny are similar to the kinds of comments that I am making in this section of this study. Having quoted extensively and appositely from Pb1, Saccone argues that 'si sarà infatti notato nei passi su riportati che immagini, aggettivazione, forse persino qualche modo sintattico sono riferibili pressoché costantemente a Johnny: e spessissimo si tratta esplicitamente di sensazioni, e di possibili o effettive verbalizzazioni, del personaggio' (Saccone 1988, 158) .

4 Given Fenoglio's knowledge of the Recherche, it is perhaps worth quoting Genette's (similar) considerations on the 'miracle' of Proustian narrative. Taking as his example the famous scene when Swann's visit to Marcel's parents' house prevents his mother from giving him his longed-for goodnight kiss, Genette reflects that there is nothing more intense than the vision of the father with his candle and white night shirt, nothing more 'present' than the moment when the child bursts into tears. But, at the same time: 'rien n'est plus explicitement médiatisé, attesté comme *souvenir*'. For Genette, the scene in question is not simply 'l'histoire', but 'son "image" ... sa trace dans une mémoire. Mais cette trace si tardive, si lointaine, si indirecte, c'est aussi la présence même' (Genette 1972, 188). Though the question of memory does not seem to worry Fenoglio, I would suggest that he was striving for a similar effect in his work.

5 The subject of speech and thought representation has received a great deal of critical and theoretical attention over the last few decades. For an excellent overview of the question of Free Indirect Discourse see McHale (1978). For further bibliographical references see Leech and Short (1981, 351). The chapter in Fowler (1986, 102-126) entitled 'Some Aspects of Dialogue' is also useful. Turning to critical works which analyse speech representation in Fenoglio's works the only full-length article is Bricchi (1991) which deals with La malora and the Racconto del parentado. In her earlier 1988 study, Bricchi also deals tangentially with the question of speech in Pb1, arguing that in this text, as compared to Pj1 and Pj2, Fenoglio is more interested in direct

speech. This constitutes, according to Bricchi, further evidence of the incompatibility of the 'Partigiani' and the 'Primavere'.

6 It is, however, worth observing that Fenoglio's rather stumbling attempts to record conversational English are not very impressive.

7 It could be objected that people do not write in exactly the same way that they think or speak. In other words, writing is a different discourse than speech. It is, unfortunately, impossible to provide anything more than fairly impressionistic evidence in favour of my argument for speech/writing homology. Thus, the speech of Roberto Pazzi, the only author I know personally and have spoken at length with, is very much like the fiction he writes (and vice versa). As far as academics are concerned, I would suggest that it is frequently possible to hear their (spoken) voice in their writing.

8 Leech and Short quote a section from a long passage of FDS in Hemingway's story 'A Clean, Well-Lighted Place' (Leech and Short 1981, 322). Hemingway deliberately confuses the reader by making it difficult to work out who is speaking. I have not been able to find any examples in Fenoglio's work which exploit this potential of FDS. However, see the opening page of Vittorini's Uomini e no for a good example of this phenomenon in the work of another modern Italian writer.

9 'Mixed' because Michele's speech appears to start off in IS, only for it subsequently to become FIS.

10 Another significant example occurs when Johnny realises that he is beginning to lose his Greek: 'constatò di non ricordare nulla degli aoristi - Tutto questo finirà, ed io dovrò rimettermi da capo col greco, non potrò mai fare a meno del greco per tutta la vita' (1.2 485)

11 Moreover, the frequent use of 'special' punctuation marks imply that the text was written with readers other than Fenoglio himself in mind. Exclamation and question marks, ellipses and so on all imply an act of communication. Again, I have to question the idea of a private text theorized by scholars from Pavia.

12 Another similar case appears before Johnny's first major battle: 'Non vedeva nessuno, a chi sparavano i compagni? (1.2 478)'.

13 The way 'ecco' functions in this example is repeated shortly afterwards. Tito says quietly 'Porci fascisti e tedeschi' and Johnny and Fenoglio both appear to think together 'Ecco, bisognava prendersela soltanto con i fascisti, non con la natura ... (1.2 443). Nevertheless these are exceptions to the general rule, as this adverb usually indicates that Johnny's eyes, rather than

Fenoglio's binoculars, are at work. For example, see the discussion of the fight with the 'rossi' in 'The Red and the Blue' (below)

14 I am currently preparing a machine-readable version of Il partigiano Johnny. I therefore hope shortly to be in a position to carry out a more detailed search over the three texts which make it up. Nevertheless, I would argue that the chapters I have selected for the present analysis are representative of the text as a whole.

15 In this context I list the most frequently used adverbs, which are, in descending order: 'orribilmente' (8 times), 'estremamente' (5) 'infinitamente' (5), 'semplicemente' (4), 'lentamente' (3), 'infantilmente' (3), 'finalmente' (3) 'naturalmente', 'perfettamente' (3), 'necessariamente' (3).

16 By this I mean the adverb, although 'reported' by Fenoglio, seems to be voiced by Johnny: 'Johnny osservò che significava allarmare inutilmente la gente di Marsaglia' (1.2 486)

17 I should add that there is one adverb in a reported speech act within a piece of direct speech. It is voiced by Regis with reference to the South African prisoners refusal to fight: 'hanno semplicemente declinato' (1.2 462)

18 Binoculars are not, of course, capable of picking up sound. However, I prefer to keep the metaphor as it is, rather than altering it to, say, Fenoglio's 'video camera with microphone'.

19 Here are a few additional examples taken from different sections of the sample chapters: 'vide subito un grosso fabbricato ... regimisticamente identico a tutti i granai del popolo d'Italia' (1.2 439); 'Il suo occhio ... pareva illuminare ... l'umanità circostante ... miserabilmente abbandonata nel sonno plumbeo' (1.2 447); 'il macellaio incredibilmente insanguinato e furiosamente contratto in quella inesperta fatica' (1.2 451); 'non c'era che un uomo, vastamente impellicciato' (1.2 467); 'una mitragliatrice precariamente piazzata' (1.2 467); 'Nemega appariva come etilicamente eccitato' (1.2 474); 'tutta la bocca fugacemente guarnita di vomito giallo' (1.2 488); 'Tito fu rapidissamente calato e rapidamente interrato. E guardando quella tomba fresca, Johnny si disse che per quanto presto la guerra finisse, quella tomba fresca gli sarebbe sempre apparsa lontanissima' (1.2 494).

20 Genette places this kind of narratorial intervention in the category of 'mode'. In Proust, the signposts are limited to overt forward-looking references, what Genette calls 'annonces': 'telles interventions ... représentent simplement la part du narrateur autobiographique dans l'exposé de faits encore inconnus du héros, mais dont le

premier ne croit pas devoir pour autant différer la mention jusqu'à ce que le second en a pris connaissance' (Genette 1972, 220). I first came across the concept of signposting in Zygmunt Baranski's article (1986) on 'Structural retrospection in the *Commedia*: the case of *Purgatorio XXVII*'. It is important to stress that I use the concept in a slightly different manner than Baranski. In the *Commedia* the signposts are, as Baranski demonstrates, foregrounded by expressions like 'Ricorditi, ricorditi!' (*Purg.* XXVII, 22) or 'Ricorditi, lettore' (*Purg.* XVII, 1). Whilst in *Il partigiano Johnny* there are some signposts of this overt nature (although a direct appeal to the protagonist or the reader's memory is never made), the majority are more like small markers on a mountain path, notches cut in trees to help the reader. Nonetheless, other terms which spring to mind, such as 'internal echoes' do not bring across the notion of the reader being *directed* to a particular point in the text.

21 In much the same way, as several critics stress, the *Recherche* also needs to be read twice. When we first encounter Charles Swann in the Combray section of the narrative, we know very little about him and are, in particular, unaware of his unfortunate liaison with Odette de Crécy. When we read Combray for the second time, we know that this is the character who threw away his life, and a good part of his fortune, on a woman who had offered herself as a prostitute to large numbers of the French aristocracy.

22 In this context it is worth quoting Baranski's comments in the conclusion to his article on Dante: 'Without its web of connections and reminiscences the *Comedy* would collapse into a jumble of disconnected self-contained episodes, and so lose that overall coherence and excellence, the integration of all the parts in the whole, which reveal, according to its fiction, the hand of God behind its writing and its goals' (Baranski 1986, 23). I would suggest that Fenoglio was striving for a similar effect, albeit without divine help.

23 Consider, for example, Johnny's meeting with the 'industriale enologico B.' and his daughters. Their fascination with music and English literature (specifically P.G. Wodehouse) is clearly a signpost back to Johnny's liceo/university student existence, as are B.'s references to Chiodi and to Sicco (see 1.2 532 and 1.2 535)

24 Alessandro's difference from Johnny is referred to again at two other points in the narrative. Hence Johnny: 'pensò d'incontrare le sue vecchie conoscenze del circolo sociale, compagne d'università ... Sandro stesso ... ma non andava ad incontrarli, e questo era la grandezza di tutto' (1.2 651). And before the battle he is amongst the civilians who are called upon to assist in the construction of barricades: 'Fra i civili stava Sandro,

perfettamente inattivo, anzi spingendo i pugni nelle tasche del suo impermeabile, in amara irosa allegoria della sua resistenza a un inammissibile impiego' (1.2 678).

25 These fourteen paragraphs, as well as many other in subsequent sections, contain a number of compelling passages of description. Here is just one example among many:

Al crepuscolo, Johnny s'avvolgeva stretto in un vatro inglese e andava nel grevore e nel disgusto della pioggia agli argini marginati. Alle porte della città, l'accoglieva, travolgente, il rombo delle acque. Il fiume aveva annullato gli argini della battaglia d'ottobre, le sentinelle erano rinculate addirittura alla scarpata del viale; il fango bulicante era altrettanto tremendo delle acque impazzite, la riva opposta fondeva in un fango crepuscolare. Le altissime acque sfioravano in lunghissime, quasi concrete ondate le superstiti arcate del ponte, eppure nel tutto-affogante tuono del fiume potevi cogliere i colpi di tosse delle sentinelle invisibili. Il caotico cielo, forgia di quella pioggia era odioso e bestemmia-tirante ... Johnny scivolò giù a quel cosmogonico caos d'acqua e fanghiglia alla sentinella più vicina. (1.2 665)

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to read such passages, as several critics have done, as evidence of the metahistorical, metaphysical message of the book. They are as they are because of the DSR of the work, because of the way that Johnny 'sees' and Fenoglio transfers.

Chapter 4

A LANGUAGE FOR HISTORY

4.1. Introduction

Whilst dealing with the question of technique in the previous two chapters a number of aspects of the language of Il partigiano Johnny were touched upon. The present chapter will deal at greater length with the question of the language of Il partigiano Johnny, and, in line with the central argument of this study, will suggest an historical interpretation.

4.2. The languages of Il partigiano Johnny

In the introduction a partial description was offered of the languages of the three texts which make up Il partigiano Johnny. The following quotations are therefore given in order to remind us of the kinds of language we are dealing with:

4.2.1 Pb1

In piena notte sfilarono davanti a una fabbrica colossale, uno dei massimi opifici per la guerra, i suoi letali prodotti spediti al Don e in Marmarica. Riflessi velenosi iridavano il ventre sidereo delle torri di catalisi, mentre veloci pattuglie di vapori picrici decollavano ad affrontare disperatamente la statica armata della notte. (1.3 1360)

4.2.2 Pj1

Pivottarono e marciarono verso il traghetto di Castagnole, con le loro speranze ed angosce taciute, inconfessate. Fu un duro cammino, nella tenebra condensantesi, lungo il fiume sempre piú sinistro, per labirinti in scoscendimento e fratta, con le accelerazioni della fede e i rallentamenti di pessimismo. Gli ci volle un'ora per arrivarci ed ecco l'altro natante, bene ancorato ed in perfetta forma, col suo lungo potente, regolare cavo corrente sopra le acque, vibrando elettricamente nella notturna, acqua gale. (1.2 775)

4.2.3 UrPj

At his keenest of Langhe-homesickness and queer and crooked and angent sense of unpartisanship due to his english aggregatedness, Johnny rambled in the ecological outskirts of the war-like Cisterna castle ... (1. 99)

4.3. The major critical perspectives

4.3.1 Private 'mental' language and 'grande stile'

Critics have reacted in a number of different ways to these languages. Two differing interpretations stand out, one formulated by scholars from the University of Pavia, the other by Gian Luigi Beccaria. Whatever the differences between the two schools of thought, both present an interpretation which questions, rather than underlines, the connections between the languages of Il partigiano Johnny and historical reality.

Private mental language

Recapitulating what has already been said earlier, Corti argues that the 'partigiani' represent Fenoglio's first adventure into narrative. Hence, according to Corti, the language of these first 'stesure a caldo' can be explained by Fenoglio's youthful inability to master a literary language (Italian) which as a dialect speaker was not his own. For this reason he sought his inspiration in another literary language (English) which again was not his own, but which, for reasons of his youthful immersion in English literature, he was more familiar with. The 'Partigiani' are thus held to be essentially private experiments which Fenoglio never even considered publishing. Once he had completed his literary apprenticeship, so Corti maintains, he then began to compose publishable works characterised by a lesser degree of stylistic exuberance and a greater degree of mature linguistic control, and which were, above all, in Italian. This maturity is exhibited, Corti asserts, in the 'Primavere' which, it is held, are characterised by a flat, near-Pavesian style which bears little or no resemblance to the language of the 'Partigiani'. Corti's theories concerning the linguistic characteristics of the texts inform all the critical articles written by scholars from the University of Pavia (for comments on language see in particular Grignani (1978), Meddemmen (1979) and Bricchi (1988)).¹ Yet, despite the quantity of

evidence amassed by these and other scholars it is not easy to agree with their basic arguments.

Firstly, the dating of the works to the 1950s clearly leads us to question the idea that the language of the 'Partigiani' corresponds to a period of literary apprenticeship. Fenoglio had been writing for more than ten years when he began to compose the 'Partigiani'.

Secondly, though superficially very different from the language of the 'Partigiani', the language of the 'Primavere' is, in fact, striking in its complexity² (compare the two examples above which are, I would suggest, quite similar). Both the 'Partigiani' and the 'Primavere' are linked by the highly metaphorical nature of their languages. Equally, as Gina Lagorio (1970, 80) comments there appears to be an English substructure underneath the Italian of the 'Primavere'. Indeed, her judgments are confirmed in one of the few comments that Fenoglio makes about the language of this work when he explicitly reveals that the 'Primavere' were originally written in English and then translated into Italian:

Per quanto cerchi, non trovo alcun aneddoto di un qualche sapore relativamente alla genesi e alla pubblicazione dei miei libri. Potrà forse interessare questa piccola rivelazione: Primavera di Bellezza venne concepito e steso in lingua inglese. Il testo quale lo conoscono i miei lettori italiani è quindi una mera traduzione (Acrocca 1960, 180)

Despite the superficial differences in language between the texts, they are, in fact, stylistically compatible and part of the same project.

Grande stile

Gian Luigi Beccaria's interpretation is premised on a 1950s dating of the texts. Unlike critics from Pavia, Beccaria argues that Fenoglio is consciously doing something with language in Il partigiano Johnny. His analysis underlines the presence of, inter alia, neologisms, alliteration, and syntactic distortion, all of which, so he argues, constitute elements of a 'grande stile'. The overall effect of this 'grande stile', which employs language taken from a number of different time spheres is, so Beccaria maintains, to move the time dimension of the work into a 'tempo grande' outside contemporary (i.e. Resistance) history. Yet, impressive though his linguistic scholarship is, his analysis suffers from a failure to deal at any length with Pb1, as well as a certain vagueness concerning what he means by a 'grande stile'. Here are two of the many descriptions of the style that he offers:

Il grande stile è difficilmente definibile in termini linguistici: lo potremmo intendere intanto come unità e totalità di stile monotonale ad alta tensione, buona per parlare di vortici notturni del vento o di pace edeniche collinari come di un taglio di capelli sotto Natale. (Beccaria 1984, 35)

Ma anche, senza tensione di registro, 'grande stile' è quel modo antifeigurativo che non riproduce gesti, avvenimenti, ma è gesto, avvenimento, e presenta azioni, movimenti quotidiani, con astrazione e concentrazione applicata anche a piccoli dettagli. (Beccaria 1984, 37)

What seems surprising is that the one definition of 'grande stile' that does not occur in Beccaria's article is the one that most obviously springs to mind in the context of Il partigiano Johnny: that is the 'Grand Style' of classical rhetoric and of the epic poems of Tasso and Milton. Indeed many of the aspects of the language of the text that Beccaria picks out do appear to have their origins in classical rhetoric. In other words, Beccaria's *terminology* may well be accurate, but his application of *his* notion of 'grande stile' is questionable.

Both interpretations are thus linked by the fact that they suggest that the language of Il partigiano Johnny has little to do with persuading the reader of the reality of Johnny's experiences. The Pavia thesis suggests that Il partigiano Johnny is a kind of private dialogue between author and text in which no act of communication to another person outside Fenoglio was ever intended to take place. In other words the language of the text is deemed to have an exclusively private function. On the other hand Beccaria, who does argue that an act of communication was intended to take place, suggests that the referent of the language is not the Resistance.

The following section proposes an historical interpretation of the language of Il partigiano Johnny, based on the concept of 'mind style'. It adjusts the existing critical models in order to incorporate the DSR of the texts.

4.4. The concept of mind style

4.4.1 Mind style: a definition and some examples

The concept of 'mind style' was first coined by the linguistic critic Roger Fowler in his book Linguistics and the novel (Fowler 1977). He defines it as: 'any distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual mental self' (Fowler 1977, 103). His concept is in turn derived from Halliday's functional grammar.³ Halliday's system is wide-ranging, however for the purposes of our argument it is enough to be aware of one of the three functions of Halliday's linguistic model: what he calls the *experiential* or *ideational* function. For Halliday language is central to the way in which we classify experience:

Language serves for the expression of content: it has a representational, or, as I would prefer to call it, an ideational function ... the speaker or writer embodies in language *his experience* of the phenomena of the real world; and this includes *his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness: his reactions, cognitions and perceptions*, and also his linguistic acts of speaking and understanding (my italics Halliday 1971, 332)

In other words, language is not realized mechanically, built up, so to speak, from extra-mental concepts, but is dependent on the mode of cognition of the individual speaker, *language depends on the way we perceive the world*. Or, as Leech and Short describe it in Style in fiction 'language conveys and organizes the cognitive realities of experience' (Leech and Short 1981, 31).

It is important to stress that mind styles are not unique to works of fiction: the vast majority of Halliday's work is on 'ordinary language'. Mind styles are everywhere, in the books scattered on the desk before me and in this thesis itself. It is just that most of the time mind styles are not so linguistically marked as to attract attention. Some of the examples discussed by Halliday (1971) Leech and Short (1981), Fowler (1977 and 1986) which are drawn from a number of different works of fiction will help to demonstrate what is, in the end, a relatively straightforward idea.

4.4.1.1 Some normal mind styles

By way of introduction to the topic of mind style Leech and Short argue that they would, ideally, like to compare descriptions of the same event/character by different authors. However, they readily admit that there are no such fortunate coincidences in literature and are obliged to compare three different character descriptions: Steinbeck's description of Tom Joad from The Grapes of

Wrath, Joyce's description of Lenehan from the 'Two Gallants' story in Dubliners and Henry James' description of Mr. Grant-Jackson in The Birthplace. For reasons of economy we shall not deal with the Joyce description. First of all, then, an extract from the Steinbeck description:

His eyes were very dark brown and there was a hint of brown pigment in his eyes. His cheekbones were high and wide, and strong deep lines cut down his cheeks, in curves beside his mouth.

Noting, amongst other things, the simple lexical and syntactic structure, the clear absence of complex or abstract nouns and adjectives as well as the dearth of verbs of perception, Leech and Short infer that 'we are being given a simple, objective, external and factual description. The reality which Steinbeck sees is, we feel, being *transcribed* so that we can perceive it directly' (Leech and Short 1981, 192). As such the Steinbeckian view of a harsh and readily perceived external reality is reflected in the mind style of the passage.

Now, the James passage:

Their friend, Mr. Grant-Jackson, a highly preponderant pushing person, great in discussion and arrangement, abrupt in overture, unexpected, if not perverse in attitude, and almost equally acclaimed and objected to in the wide midland region to which he had taught, as the phrase was, the size of his foot - their friend had launched his bolt quite out of the blue and had thereby so shaken them as to make them fear almost more than hope.

Clearly, the spiralling syntactic structure of this long sentence is far more elaborate than was the case in the previous example. Very few details of Mr Grant-Jackson's actual physical characteristics are given. Instead, there are many abstract terms. Equally, there are numerous attempts to be as precise as possible, leading to a number of near redundant phrases. The impression given by the mind style of this passage is one of a writer striving to make sense of a complex and bewildering world which can only be comprehended by way of 'the exact discrimination of attitudes and social relations' (Leech and Short 1981, 196).

Leech and Short then go on to analyse some more unusual mind styles (see pp.196-202) but we shall pass over these. Let us now turn to what Leech and Short call 'very unusual mind styles' as they are most directly relevant to the argument of this chapter.

4.4.1.2 Some very unusual mind styles: two examples

In the previous section we looked at what may be called 'authorial mind styles'. In other words, the language of the texts carried with it evidence as to the manner in which the authors in question perceive reality. Yet, the linguistic effects created by such mind styles do not seem to have much in common with the spectacular distortions of Il partigiano Johnny. Clearly though, when we come to examine texts with characters acting as

focalizers or with first person narrators, we are likely to come across some far more interesting effects, particularly if such narrators or focalizers perceive reality (as Johnny does) in an unorthodox fashion. Then we shall see more obvious links with Il partigiano Johnny. The first example is taken from William Golding's novel The Inheritors.

The Inheritors is one of Golding's early novels and describes the tragedy of the elimination of Neanderthal man by *homo sapiens*. Much of the early part of the novel is focalised through the limited Neanderthal mind of the protagonist Lok, a name which, in its constriction of the word 'look', Golding chooses to reflect the partial nature of his perceptions. This focalisation through Lok has obvious effects on the language of the novel, as the following passage illustrates:

The bushes twitched again. Lok steadied by the tree and gazed. A head and a chest faced him, half-hidden. There were white bone things behind the leaves and hair. The man had white bone things above his eyes and under his mouth so that his face was longer than a face should be. The man turned sideways in the bushes and looked at Lok along his shoulder. A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle. Lok peered at the stick and the lump of bone and the small eyes in the bone things over the face. Suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out to him but neither he nor Lok could reach across the river. He would have laughed if it were not for the echo of the screaming in his head. The stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again.

The dead tree by Lok's ear acquired a voice.
(Golding 1990, 106)

We, as *homo sapiens*, are quickly able to realize that Lok is being attacked by one of the would-be inheritors. But had Golding used 'our' language then the passage and the novel would have lost all its poignancy. Instead, we read a description couched in the language of Lok's uncomprehending mind. As such, both the syntax and lexis of the description are extremely simple, indicating a restricted ability both to verbalise external reality and then to structure what little is verbalised into coherent and logical discourse. As Halliday has shown in his virtuoso analysis of the novel, the type of clauses that are associated with Lok are characterized by the absence of human subjects or objects ('A stick arose upright' rather than, say, 'The man lifted up his bow and arrow'). Indeed, Halliday argues that what he describes as the lack of 'transitivity' of the 'Lok language' is the key to understanding the novel. The limited cognitive faculties of Neanderthal man, reflected in the lack of linguistic transitivity in the above passage, eventually brought about his downfall. Mind style and the restricted mind of Neanderthal man are thus tragically linked.

The importance of the focalizer, Lok, in structuring the language of the novel is best illustrated in the next example which is taken from the penultimate chapter. The *homo sapiens* have, by this stage, either captured or killed Lok's companions. The first paragraph of the example, like the rest of the book up to this point is written in 'Lok' language, the second in the language of a *homo sapiens* as he studies the last surviving being of

the race he has conquered. The episode thus marks a moment of transition in the work, the moment when the narrator moves away from the protagonist and shifts to the point of view of a person whose method of perceiving the world is similar to our own:

Lok began to gibber again. He ran up and down on the terrace. The tree would not be cajoled or persuaded. It moved to the edge of the fall, it swung until it was lying along the lip. The water reared up over the trunk, pushing, the roots were over. The tree hung for a while with the head facing upstream. Slowly the root end sank and the head rose. Then it slid forward soundlessly and dropped over the fall.

The red creature stood on the edge of the terrace and did nothing. The hollow log was a dark spot on the water towards the place where the sun had gone down. The air in the gap was clear and blue and calm. There was no noise at all now except for the fall, for there was no wind and the green sky was clear. The red creature turned to the right and trotted slowly towards the far end of the terrace. (Golding 1990, 161)

The second example of a very unusual mind style is taken from the opening section of William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury.

The Sound and the Fury has four separate narrators. One of these narrators, Benjy, is severely retarded and has the mental age of a three year old. The following passage is taken from the first section of the novel, which is narrated by Benjy himself:

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hitting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.

'Here, caddie'. He hit. They went away across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away.

'Listen at you, now'. Luster said. 'Ain't you something, thirty-three years old, going on that way. After I done went all the way to the town to buy you that cake. Hush up that moaning. Ain't you going to help me find that quarter so I can go to the show tonight'.

They were hitting little, across the pasture. I went back along the fence to where the flag was. It flapped on the bright grass and the trees.

'Come on', Luster said. 'We done looked there. There ain't no more coming right now. Let's go down to the branch and find that quarter before them niggers finds it'.

It was red, flapping on the pasture. Then there was a bird slanting and tilting on it. Luster threw.

The flag flapped on the bright grass and the trees. I held to the fence. (Faulkner 1987, 3)

As with the Lok passage, the simple syntax and lexis reflect Benjy's limited understanding of something he is witnessing: in this case, a game of golf.

We have now seen two examples of unusual mind styles. In the context of a study on Fenoglio, that drawn from Faulkner's novel is probably the most interesting and revealing, as the influence of the latter on the former has already been acknowledged by some critics (an example which springs to mind is the use in PDS of multiple point

of view, a technique which may be traced to As I lay dying). Yet, whereas it has been argued that this influence wanes after the first phase of Fenoglio's career, I would suggest that it is in Fenoglio's later long 'racconto' La malora that Faulkner's 'presence' is most readily detected. Agostino, the protagonist/narrator of La malora (composed, as argued in 1.1, immediately before Il partigiano Johnny) has a restricted, compressed conception of reality. Though he is neither Neanderthal or mentally subnormal, the limitations of Agostino's consciousness are reflected, as the next section argues, in the language of the text.

4.4.2 Mind style in La malora

The following quotation, taken from the first page of the work, gives an idea of the kind of language present in the text:

Pioveva su tutte le langhe, lassú a San Benedetto mio padre si pigliava la sua prima acqua sottoterra.

Era mancato nella notte di giovedì l'altro e lo seppellimmo domenica, tra le due messe. Fortuna che il mio padrone m'aveva anticipato tre marenghi, altrimenti in tutta casa nostra non c'era di che pagare i preti e la cassa e il pranzo ai parenti. La pietra gliel'avremmo messa piú avanti, quando avessimo potuto tirare un pò su testa.

Io ero ripartito la mattina di mercoledì, mia madre voleva mettermi nel fagotto la mia parte dei vestiti di nostro padre, ma io le dissi di schivarmeli, che li avrei presi alla prima licenza che mi ridava Tobia.

Ebbene, mentre facevo la mia strada a piedi, ero calmo, sfogato, mio fratello Emilio che studiava da prete sarebbe stato tranquillo e contento se m'avesse saputo cosí rassegnato dentro di me. Ma il momento che dall'alto di Benevello vidi sulla langa bassa la cascina di

Tobia la rassegnazione mi scappò tutta. Avevo appena sotterrato mio padre e già andavo a ripigliare in tutti e per tutto la mia vita grama, neanche la morte di mio padre valeva a cambiarmi il destino. E allora potevo tagliare a destra, arrivare a Belbo e cercarvi un gorgo profondo abbastanza. (2. 371)

During La malora's initial period of reception, this kind of language provoked incomprehension and some stern criticism from readers - most notably from Vittorini. In the rear inside cover of the first edition of the work, he describes Fenoglio as one of 'questi giovani scrittori dal piglio moderno e dalla lingua facile' (Vittorini, 1954). This suggestion that the language of the La malora is the result of a relatively straightforward, even hackneyed, artistic intervention (he refers later on to 'afrodisiaci dialettali') was echoed by other critics. Domenico Porzio, for example, notes that Agostino is paid in 'marenghi', an indication, he observes in a parody of Fenoglio's style, that 'la storia si svolge qualche decina di lustri addietro'. An exception to this generally negative trend of early criticism can be found in Contini's preface to Gadda's linguistically complex masterpiece La cognizione del dolore. Likening La malora to Gadda's novel, Contini enthusiastically describes it as one the works of the period 'ove l'espressività prevale sulla mimesi' (Contini 1971, 164). I would not choose to disagree with Contini's underlying assertion that the style of La cognizione del dolore is, in some way, a 'dress' to the realistic body of the work. But I can not, for obvious reasons, agree with the suggestion that there exists a separation of form and content in La

malora; the point is that, as Piera Tomasoni (1980) has shown, the expressivity of the language of La malora is inextricably bound up with an attempt at mimesis, mimesis, that is, of Agostino's experiences. In her article, Tomasoni examines the role of dialect through three separate phases in Fenoglio's career - the first encompassing VGA and PDS, the second La malora, and the third the stories published in the collection Un giorno di fuoco. Tomasoni notes that during the first phase the presence of dialect is strong in direct speech, particularly in the area of lexis. On the syntactic plane its presence is, however, less marked (again this is in reference to direct speech). Turning to the diegesis of these first phase works, Tomasoni suggests that it is 'costruito sintatticamente con periodi brevi collegati mediante paratassi' and is 'lessicalmente neutro' as opposed, that is, to 'il mimetismo in direzione regionalistica del dialogato' (Tomasoni 1980, 117). In contrast, by the time of Fenoglio's second phase (i.e. La malora) Tomasoni argues that the dialectal imbalance between the diegetic and non-diegetic elements of the text has all but disappeared, thus creating what she describes as 'una straordinaria omogeneità linguistica' (Tomasoni 1980, 117).⁴ This homogeneity, in direct speech and diegesis, in syntax and lexis, is, so Tomasoni argues, created by the combination, better *fusion*, of a popular narrator with a popular protagonist (Agostino).⁵ In other words, the voice of Fenoglio appears to have vanished. Above all, it is on the syntactic plane that Tomasoni claims Fenoglio achieves his most convincing

imitations of the restricted linguistic and mental palette of the popular narrator:

il costrutto [sintattico] rivela un semplice accostamento di due o piú elementi, che, nell'uso consueto, potrebbero essere collegati, oltre che dal semplice 'e' copulativo, anche da nessi piú forti, di natura causale, temporale o relativa. E' un vero e proprio rifiuto di una struttura logica appena piú complessa della semplice sequela di membri. Il procedimento, fortemente mimetico nei confronti di un narratore elementare appare vistoso ... (Tomasoni 1980, 121)

Tomasoni then quotes the following example from La malora (among many) to back up this insight:

A me toccò che andavo per i diciassette anni e a dispetto della carestia di casa nostra pesavo sette miria, ero tanto grosso d'ossa (2. 69)

There is, so Tomasoni asserts a logical link between the two clauses 'pesavo sette miria' and 'ero tanto grosso d'ossa' but it is not realized linguistically, thus creating an 'effetto ... esclamativo' (Tomasoni 1980, 121) typical of popular speech. Extending her powerful argument to other elements of the diegesis of La malora, Tomasoni notes 'sempre nel contesto di una ricerca di fedeltà ad un narratore elementare' (Tomasoni 1980, 124) how there are very few metaphors and only a small number of similes, all of which are inspired by peasant reality.

The links between the technique and the language of La malora and the technique and the language of Il partigiano Johnny would thus seem abundantly clear. The crucial difference is that the narrator/protagonist of La

malora has a restricted/popular mind which creates a restricted/popular 'mind style', whereas the narrator/protagonist of Il partigiano Johnny has an expanded/intellectual and very peculiar mind, which in turn creates an expanded/intellectual and very peculiar 'mind-style'.⁶ However, as Tomasoni accepts the chronology and interpretations posited by scholars from the University of Pavia, she does not make the connection. Bringing her discussion of La malora to a close, she quite correctly distances herself from those critics (Barberi-Squarotti and Jacomuzzi) who see baroque/scapigliatura elements in this text, but only in order to differentiate its language from what she (following Corti and others) incorrectly sees as 'il barocco del Partigiano Johnny' (Tomasoni 1980, 125). The language of La malora is, as Tomasoni demonstrates, 'un unicum', but it is definitely not 'un'esperienza isolata'. It is, rather, an intimately connected harbinger, a kind of trial run in reverse of Il partigiano Johnny. And it is to Il partigiano Johnny, and the 'mind style' of this work that we now turn.

4.4.3 Mind style in Il partigiano Johnny

We have already seen in chapter 2. how Johnny tends to perceive reality in a deviant fashion. This is not intended to imply that there is, in some way, a standard, objective fashion of perceiving reality, but that Johnny's mode of cognition does not comply with what might be considered a relative norm. One obvious

manifestation of the distortions of Johnny's eyes is that, as we have seen, he has a tendency to connect lived experience with his own literary experience. In terms of mind style, many of the texts' linguistic and epic characteristics can therefore be explained as an attempt by Fenoglio to mirror the language of Johnny's literary experience of the war.

The 'literariness' of Johnny's eyes will allow us to account for a good percentage of the literariness of the language of Il partigiano Johnny. However, our theory can quite easily be taken further, particularly when it comes to explaining the presence of English syntactical and lexical structures in Il partigiano Johnny's language. For, in addition to thinking in a literary manner, Johnny also thinks in English. As he explains to a friend in the very early stages of the work, English words come into his mind more readily than Italian ones and all the conversations that he has with himself are in English 'automaticamente' (1.3 1263).

It is now necessary to identify certain elements of the language of Il partigiano Johnny which may be attributable to Johnny and thus contribute to the mind style of the work. In other words, we need to find certain words, or types of words, which represent 'good bets' for when we come to look at the text as a whole. As we saw in the previous chapter adverbs in '-mente' were an example of just such a 'good bet'. In this section, I use as my point of departure the first chapter of Pj1

(Cap. 16) and concentrate on three passages where Johnny and the word 'occhi' appear together. As is clear any words in the immediate surroundings of Johnny and his eyes are likely to belong to him.

The first occurrence of the word 'occhi' occurs in the third paragraph of the chapter in question. Although Johnny has initially enjoyed his solitude in his hill-side retreat, he soon realises that isolation is not what he wants:

non sapeva piú da che parte si cominciasse a smontare un mitragliatore, ciò che una settimana prima sapeva fare ad occhi bendati. Ed era male, qualcosa, dentro pungente e icefying, l'avvertiva che era male, le armi sarebbero rientrate nella sua vita, magari per la finestra, ad onta d'ogni strenua decisione o sacro voto contrari. (1.2 393)

In the sentence in which it is placed, the vision word does not have a particularly important function. It does not, as is often the case, precede a series of phrases linked to Johnny's visual perception. However, the second sentence contains a range of feelings which are clearly attributable to Johnny. Let us concentrate on the two present participles 'pungente' and 'icefying'. This adjectival use of the present participle is now extremely common in English, less so in modern Italian. Furthermore, it used to be considered a 'literary' form in both languages. As Wales remarks about English: 'such modification is characteristic of traditional poetic diction' (Wales 1989, 340). The same can be said for Italian literature. As Johnny is given to thinking both in English and in a literary fashion, it might therefore

be argued that the two participles belong to him, particularly 'icefying'. By the same token, although 'pungente' is a word that can be found in any standard Italian dictionary, in this context it seems to be more a calque on English given the left-hand position of 'dentro'. Therefore an analysis of the use of the present participle as an adjective in the text could yield useful results.

Let us now turn to the next incidence of 'occhi'. Johnny has visited his cousin, a fellow draft-dodger, and exchanged information:

il cugino uscì per accompagnarlo un breve e cieco tratto sulla strada della collina brulicante di buio frappè. E non si dissero parola.

Il primo autunno appariva all'agonia, a fine Settembre la trentenne natura si contorceva nei fits della menopausa, nera tristezza piombata sulle colline derubate dei naturali colori, una trucidà da mozzare il fiato nella plumbea colata del fiume annegoso, lambente le basse sponde d'infida malta, tra i pioppeti lontani, tetri e come moltiplicantisi come mazzo di carte in prestidigitazione ai suoi occhi surmenagés. E il vento soffiava a una frequenza non di stagione, a velocità e forza innaturale, decisamente demoniaco nelle lunghe notti. (1.2 397)

Note how, in contrast to the previous passage, the present participle 'brulicante' is used as a present participle, rather than as an adjective. In this case, the use of the poetic '-ante' morpheme, instead of the conventional '-ando' appears to indicate Johnny's perceptions (particularly given the appearance of the phrase 'ai suoi occhi surmenages' at the end of the sentence). This usage therefore invites us to extend the

range of our search to any participial ending in the morpheme 'ante' (regardless of whether it is used participially or adjectivally). In addition the appearance in the same paragraph of 'lambente' and 'moltiplicantisi', also used participially, invites us to analyse participles in 'ente' and 'antisi' (as well as other variations).

Turning to other unusual aspects of the lexis of this paragraph, let us concentrate on the two neologisms 'trucità' and 'annegoso'. In terms of their construction both words conform to standard Italian patterns of morpheme linkage. Nonetheless, I would argue that the language which really lies behind these words is English. They are nothing more than 'trucity' and 'annegous' - words that do not exist but which are coined from yoaking, in Johnny's head, the English morphemes 'ity' and 'ous' with the Italian forms 'truce' and 'anneg-'. Hence, another potential area of enquiry includes neologistic abstract nouns in 'ità' and neologistic adjectives in 'oso'. However, the fact that Johnny tends to abstraction anyway, regardless of whether he is thinking in English, also invites us to look at abstract nouns which are not neologisms.

Let us now turn to the third instance of 'occhi'. On this occasion, Johnny has received a visit from his father:

Johnny sollevò gli occhi dal giornale a suo padre. Sedeva con una certa ritenuta scompostezza sulla cheap sedia di vimini, la sua testa leggermente oscillante nella discreta luce del rapidly-decaying pomeriggio. L'angoscia, la disperazione, il veder nero gli conferivano una petrea configurazione d'egizio o d'atzeco uomo: i sentimenti elementari a galla, congelavano tutti in una antichissima iconicità, annullando, constatava Johnny, secoli di progresso nell'atteggiamento. (1.2 398)

That these are Johnny's perceptions that we are reading is made abundantly clear. Having raised his eyes from his newspaper in the first sentence, Johnny then looks closely at his father in the next two. Thus the many abstract nouns (e.g. 'scompostezza', 'iconicità'), the adjectives ('certa' 'ritenuta' 'cheap', the present participles ('rapidly-decaying' 'oscillante') and so on are all there because of Johnny's eyes.

We have, therefore, isolated some potential areas of analysis. The following examples, based on the above discussion, are limited to what can be discovered by way of a manual search. It is hoped that when I have made a large database of all the texts that a more comprehensive piece of work will be possible.

As we saw above, the present participle is one of Johnny's favoured constructions. Here are some more examples:

sfacentesi, giocanti, saliente, ciabattanti, sfumante,, sbiancante, agevolante, incommentante, spegnentesi, dante, abbrividenti, candente, oscillante etc.

More interesting, though, are the large number of neologisms created by the yoking together of an Italian base unit and an English morpheme. Here are a few examples taken from Pjl. Firstly adjectives with end morpheme 'oso' (from the English suffix 'ous'):

sudoroso, annegoso, fremitoso, accaioso, coloso

Or with the end morpheme 'esco' (from English 'esque'):

giocattolesca, pugnalesca, bufalesco, ziesco,
compagnesche,

Or words with the English morphemes 'in/un' functioning as prefixes:

'in'

inafollata; inaiutante; inallusività; inalluvionabile;
inapparire; inapprensivo; inarrendibili; inarrossente;
inattaccata; inavvistata; inazzurava; incapente;
incastigabile; incollettive; inconsistentizzato;
indissimulatamente; indissolvibile; ineffettivo;
insmorente; intacente⁷

un

unintenzionali, unresponsive, unvedenti, unrisparmiente,

Or, similarly, with the morpheme 'a' as prefix:

atabagico, anarrativa, atarissica, amarziale

Turning now to abstract nouns in 'ità' (English 'ity' > Italian 'ità') there are a great many examples. Here is a selection, including a large number of neologisms:

accademicità, acquosità, acrità, agità, alibi-notturnità, burocraticità, caldità, camerateschità, canterinità, deità, enormità, eredità, ertità, esiguità, estraneità, estremeità, febbrilità, femminilità, finalità, fluidità, formalità, frugalità, fulmineità, funzionalità, galvanicità, gelidità, gradualità, gravità, graziosità, impetuosità, inallusività, incontrollabilità, infinità, leoninità, levità, liscità, livellità, località, massiccià, materialità, minuscolità, minuziosità, orribilità, oscurità, ospitalità, ostilità, presagità, primaverilità, primitività, pronità, prossimità, protocollarietà, puntualità, querulità, razionalità, sanità, scattità, scivolosità, selettività, sepolcralità, singolarità, sinistrità, sistematicità, sodalità, sottoumanità, spontaneità, squallorosità, staticità, taciturnità, tenebrosità, tenuità, terribilità, tersità, tonalità, torvità, trucità, ufficialità, umanità, vaporosità, vastità, vendicatività, verginità, verità, verminosità, virilità.

Likewise, abstract nouns in '-ezza' (from English 'ness') abound:

brillantezza, grezzezza, direttezza, sigillatezza, immotezza, frustatezza, scatenatezza, dinoccolatezza, nerezza, radezza

Turning to verbs, many appear to be formed on the model of the English infinitive morphemes 'ize' and 'ate':

brivire, velocitare, verticare, microscopizzare, fungare, lezzare, periplare, acrobatizzare, olocaustare, inviziosare

Now adverbs. These are formed in the 'standard' fashion by adding the morpheme '-mente'. But whereas most Italians would shy away from such odd-sounding constructions and rephrase with expressions like 'in modo ...' or 'in maniera', Fenoglio enjoys the greater flexibility of English/Johnny style adverbialisation:

selvaggiamente, orribilmente, iperbolicamente,
 astralmente, sideralmente, niagaricamente, suicidalmente,
 inesorabilmente

Turning to syntax, it has not been as easy to find examples which are based on the systems of English grammar. This is probably because syntactic deviance can only really be detected at clause level; and such deviances are not as marked as was the case with the above examples, which are all small-scale and easily noted lexical units. Nonetheless, two obvious cases are the use of the English style genitive 'alle civette's occhiaie delle spie' and the construction 'avevano stato' (English 'had been'). Other examples would be the many incidences of unusual, left-handed syntactic positioning with respect to the main verb (where in standard Italian a right-handed position, or a left-handed position preceded by an article, would be expected). Hence: 'Uomini apparivano repentini; Ore passarono in vuota guardia' but compare these with the more poetic, almost epic: 'Congelante era l'acqua fangosa' 'Rumore veniva dalle sale di biliardo'.⁸

4.5 Conclusion

The interpretation that this chapter offers is not significantly different from that formulated by other scholars. The adjustment that has been made is to combine both of the major schools of thought, suggesting that the language is an attempt to make public Johnny's (as opposed to Fenoglio's) idiolect. The 'expressivity' and

'epic' qualities of the language of all three texts is not then part of a kind of baroque experiment by Fenoglio (whether 'private' or 'public'), although it can be easily mistaken for this. In Il partigiano Johnny the extreme literariness of the language is produced by and because of the role of Johnny in the DSR of the work. In other words the expressivity is mimesis. Even on those occasions when Johnny's eyes do not appear to structure Fenoglio's linguistic choices, I suggest that Johnny continues to play a kind of hidden role.

In UrPj we are very close to Johnny's idiolect, in Pj1 the transferring voice of the narrator Fenoglio begins to make itself heard by translating into Italian, although he is always, it must be stressed, chained to Johnny. In Pb1 the process is complete, leading to a fine balance between 'seeing' and 'transferring', creating that is, a language for history.

Notes to Chapter 4

1 Grignani (1978) is an in depth analysis of the revision Pj1 -> Pj2. Following Corti's model, Grignani argues, amongst other things, that the syntax and lexis of Pj1 undergoes a major transformation in Pj2. The majority of English words are removed, as are the frequent neologisms, and the rhetorical figures such as polysyndeton and derivatio which, so Grignani maintains, belong to Fenoglio's 'tirocinio letterario', are mercilessly excised. Beccaria's analysis does, however, show that the logic behind the stylistic reworking of Pj2 is not quite as straightforward as this. Meddemmen (1979) analyses the language of UrPj and argues that it is a kind of internal Italian, the addressee of the text being Fenoglio himself. Bricchi (1988) is a wide-ranging analysis of the supposed incompatibility of the 'Primavere' and the Partigiani (see intro. above for an analysis of the majority of her arguments). With reference to language, she compares passages from the 'Partigiani' which were subsequently incorporated in Pb2 and argues that in this editing process Fenoglio largely removed the stylistic experimentation of the earlier texts. The problem, it seems to me, with this approach is that the sections of Pb2 from which Bricchi draws her examples are characterised by their absence of focalisation through Johnny - hence the greater 'control' in the language is not caused, as Bricchi argues, by the attainment of maturity in the author, but by a shift in point of view.

2 For further perceptive comments on this complexity, and on its probable origins in the role of Johnny as focaliser, see Saccone (1988, 41-44 and 154-159)

3 Halliday's system differs from the Chomskyan approach in the way that it is more interested in the social dimension of language. Clearly then, Halliday's work is more relevant to the present study than Chomsky's (although Transformational Grammar terminology is the inspiration behind my term 'Deep Structure Rhetoric').

4 Similarly accurate observations are made by Soletti who argues that 'il dialetto non affiora qua e là come tassello lessicale o calco sintattico, disposto a macchia. Il dialetto nella Malora permea tutti i livelli del discorso, è forma interna' (Soletti 1987, 58).

5 My only quibble with Tomasoni's version of the progression between phase one and phase two is that it does not account for the occasional dialectisms in the diegesis of VGA and PDS, and appears to imply that the narrating voice of the first phase is purely and solely Fenoglio's. As I argued above there are two competing narratorial voices in VGA and PDS, Fenoglio's and his popular narrator's. Nevertheless, to be fair to Tomasoni, her analysis would appear to reinforce my claim that it is Fenoglio's voice that is most frequently heard.

6 A possible flaw in the logic of the argument that I have presented so far is that Tomasoni argues for a blanket, general, popular 'mind style' in La malora, whereas I have posited a character-based, particular Johnny 'mind style' in Il partigiano Johnny. My answer to this problem is that though the mind style of La malora is indeed popular, it also must possess elements which are undoubtedly specific to Agostino. By the same token, although the mind style of Il partigiano Johnny is clearly particular to Johnny, it is not in itself totally unique. It is, unfortunately, very difficult to provide hard evidence to substantiate this statement. However, consider the examples from the 'memorialisti' quoted in Part Two, where their manner of reading the world in a literary fashion (similar that is to Johnny's cognitive approach) is reflected in the language they employ. Similarly, a comparison of Agostino's mind style with that of other peasants from his region would be beneficial. Regrettably time restrictions and my own linguistic limitations make such a comparison impossible at the present moment.

7 There are a number of examples of this type of calque in the 'Primavere': 'insperante, inaggirabile, infamiliari'.

8 One possible way of highlighting the presence of English syntax in Il partigiano Johnny would be to translate a series of passages into English. If they were relatively easy to translate, and did not require significant changes in word order and clause structure then this may indicate the presence of English 'behind' the Italian. This is an exercise I hope to carry out in the near future. Indeed, Saccone (1988, 60-61) has already done some work in this direction. Saccone quotes two passages from Pj1 and then offers suggestions as to how they might have been written in an original English version (his thesis being that Pj1 is a translation of a much longer UrPj). Although it is perhaps dangerous to hypothesize about the existence of texts which we do not have at our disposal, his arguments would add weight to my idea of English being ever-present behind the surface structure Italian of two of the three sections of my version of Il partigiano Johnny (i.e Pb1 and Pj1 - the presence of English in UrPj need hardly be proven).

Chapter 5

THE HISTORICAL VISION OF IL PARTIGIANO JOHNNY

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 argued that the literary form and the DSR of Il partigiano Johnny was the result of a reaction to the many post-war writings (literary and avowedly non-literary) dealing with the historical subject of the Italian Resistance. Chapter 3 showed how some of Fenoglio's techniques in the work emphasised both immediate historical experience ('seeing') and retrospective historical narration ('transferring'), while the elaborate system of textual signposting was seen to function as a means of sharpening the reader's 'sense of history' and awareness of the fundamental interconnectedness of Johnny's experiences. Chapter 4 examined the historical language of Il partigiano Johnny. What remains to be done, therefore, is an investigation into just what the history was that Fenoglio and Johnny were part of, and how that history is inscribed in the literary text, Il partigiano Johnny.

5.1.1 The Italian Resistance: an outline

Although there exist a whole series of problems in defining when the Italian Resistance started, it is generally accepted that some form of *armed* Resistance began shortly after the armistice declaration of the 8th September 1943.

To his great surprise Mussolini had been asked to resign by the king on 25th July of the same year, was arrested immediately afterwards, and held captive on the Gran Sasso. In the interim period, the so-called forty-five days, the new government, under Marshal Badoglio, and the allies entered into negotiations concerning the terms of the armistice. Aware that the Axis agreement between Italy and Germany was about to collapse, the German high command sent a large number of troops into the peninsula. Thus, when the armistice was made public, the Italian army was powerless. The entire military system collapsed, the officer classes failed totally (any orders that they issued were confused and contradictory) and the resulting chaos led to the deportation of thousands of rank and file soldiers to Germany. Those lucky enough to escape the first wave of mass arrests attempted to return home on foot or by train.

Shortly after these events, Mussolini was freed from his prison following an S.S raid. He was flown to Germany to have brief discussions with Hitler, and then sent back to Italy where he set up his own separate 'Republican' government with its headquarters at Salò on Lake Garda. Thus, whilst the Allies, who had landed at Salerno, pushed upwards from the South of Italy, so the fascists (in collaboration with the Germans) held central and northern Italy. It was during this period that the initial partisan bands, the so-called 'ribelli', were formed. In these early stages they were mostly made up of one-time soldiers and

young men avoiding the fascist draft. Gradually they formed into more coherent units as long-term anti-fascists, particularly from the communist party, seized the opportunity to consolidate the foundations of the armed Resistance.

The subsequent history of the Resistance is complex, its intricacies being compounded by the essentially regional nature of the struggle. It is not, therefore, my intention to give any lengthy account of what happened. It is, however, convenient to separate the events into four distinct periods. The first period covers the Autumn of 1943 and the Winter of 1943-1944 (establishment of first formations), the second Spring and Summer 1944 (the high point of partisan success), the third the Winter of 1944 (the low point) and the fourth Spring 1945 up to the declaration of the liberation of Italy (April 25).

5.1.2 The historiography of the Resistance

If we are to measure the historicity of Il partigiano Johnny, then, more so than a knowledge of the events themselves, what we need is a knowledge of how these events have been looked at by historians. In the following section I briefly trace the chief developments in the historiography of the Resistance. More specific analyses of how these works treat key issues are placed in the sections which follow.

The first attempts to retell, analyse and interpret the Resistance were made by the 'memorialisti' whose works were considered in chapter 2. As was argued in that chapter, Il partigiano Johnny is a conscious attempt to write a superior memoir. However, it has not only been Fenoglio (through the opinions expressed by his fictional character Johnny) who has seen faults in this kind of writing. Over the years professional historians have frequently questioned the accuracy of such accounts, arguing that authors all too often failed to check their facts. If historians do not accept the 'memorialistica' as reliable historiography, then the status of Il partigiano Johnny as a historical text is, perhaps, called into question. However, the same argument which was applied to De Nicola's view of history (see introduction) can be used here. The point is that history is much more than the 'facts'. They are, of course, important. But history, as some of the most interesting works of modern historiography have shown, is also about the feelings and reactions of men and women to their circumstances. Thus the memoirs and Il partigiano Johnny are not invalid because they fail to present us with a painstakingly detailed account. They offer us something different, something far more interesting.

The vast majority of memoirs were published in the years immediately following the end of the war. Other significant works such as Luigi Longo's Un popolo alla macchia, which is heavily biased in favour of the communist party,¹ and the early collection of essays Aspetti della Resistenza in

Piemonte also belong to this period. In 1949 a national institute for the study of the Resistance was set up in Milan, whose journal (*Movimento della liberazione in Italia*; from 1972 *Italia contemporanea*) continues to publish many significant contributions.

It was not, however, until 1953 that the first attempt at an organic study of the Resistance was produced. Roberto Battaglia's work, subsequently revised (1964), is, nonetheless considered by many historians to be flawed. In 1952 scholars had underlined the need for patient archival research and critical reflection by historians, but, as Charles Delzell has pithily commented 'The advice came too late to be fully heeded by Roberto Battaglia' (Delzell 1975, 75). The main problem with Battaglia's work is that it is heavily biased in favour of the communist party. Nevertheless, it is still an important work and has not been discounted for the purposes of this study.

The fifties and sixties saw a number of other further publications.² However, events in France in 1968 and student unrest in Italy, culminating in the Hot Autumn of 1969 led to important changes in the interpretation of the Resistance. The student protest against the Italy that had been born out of the Resistance, created by the Resistance, meant that the political significance of the movement was questioned. It was in the light of these tensions that Guido Quazza published what is beyond question the outstanding study of the Resistance, namely his Resistenza e storia

d'Italia. The result of nearly thirty years of enquiry into the Resistance, in which Quazza was an active participant, the significance of this work is almost inestimable. Perhaps Quazza's most important contribution is to extend the notion of 'Resistance' beyond the confines of 1943, back, that is, to before the rise of fascism as well as after the end of the war. He stresses, therefore, the 'longue durée' aspect of the struggle. Thus, although Fenoglio did not, regrettably, live long enough to read Quazza's study, the former's decision to dedicate the first part of the work to the development of Johnny under fascism as well as to stress the importance of a combined 1940s/1950s viewpoint, almost seems to anticipate this leading historian's own vision of the Resistance.

As well as providing the most lucid account of the Resistance to date, Quazza also offered many suggestions as to the course of future historical enquiry into the Resistance, suggestions which have recently been updated and revised (see Quazza 1988).

Alongside the works which aim to provide an organic study of the Resistance, a number of regional histories have been published. Diana Masera's 1971 study of the Resistance in the Langhe is a particularly useful example of its kind, as is Mario Giovana's more recent enquiry into the communist brigades in the same region. These works reflect the increasing specialisation of Italian historians and the move

towards a more detailed, and I think more convincing, 'storia locale'.

In 1990 the Resistance again became the subject of intense debate, following accusations that many partisans took part in the revenge killing of fascists long after the war was over. Accepting the possibility that such atrocities might well have occurred, an editorial of 'Italia contemporanea' (see Legnani 1990) invited historians to open a new phase in Resistance historiography, one which considered not only its positive aspects, but also its contradictions and darker moments. Indeed, in September 1991 Claudio Pavone published his monumental study of the Resistance 'Una guerra civile: saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza (my italics). As his title suggests, Pavone's enquiry moves away from an analysis of the military history of the period to an analysis of certain key moral issues (for example, violence).

The new directions that historical research into the Resistance has taken over the last few years informs the content of this part of my thesis at various points, structuring some of the decisions behind certain historical aspects of Il partigiano Johnny that I have chosen for analysis. The three sections that follow deal with the general depiction of the partisan struggle, the relationship between the peasants and the partisans and the issue of death.

5.2. The Red and the Blue

5.2.1 Introduction

Fenoglio's Resistance writings have been frequently criticised for their apparent 'ideological' weaknesses, or, according to some critics, gross distortions of the truth. As we have seen, when the collection of short stories VGA was first published in 1952, it was attacked in various editions of 'L'Unità' as a travesty of the movement. Equally, critics who believe that Fenoglio's designs were not historical see this aspect of his writings as a positive advantage. Politics are for the here and now, whereas literature is forever. As I have argued throughout this study that Fenoglio's aims were historical, it is clearly worth reconsidering the depiction of the Resistance in Il partigiano Johnny, not just in terms of the representation of its politics, but also in terms of the general depiction of its successes and failures.

As is always the case in the work, it is the central figure of Johnny who has first hand 'seeing' experience of both communist (Garibaldini or 'rossi') and loosely monarchist ('azzurri') brigades, who provides the central gantry for Fenoglio's historical investigation. The division of Johnny's partisan career into two distinct sections allows Fenoglio to analyse the different formations in a more effective manner than is the case in the majority of partisan memoirs. These writings usually record the

impressions of their protagonist insofar as he participates in the vicissitudes of one particular type of band. Equally, they tend to be full of accounts of heroic deeds and successes and make little or no mention of partisan failures. As Johnny never really feels that he can fully identify with his fellow participants in the Resistance, his distance from them allows him to function as an effective filter for the fictional representation of their successes and failures, as well as for their views.

5.2.2 Tactics/Organisation/Efficiency

5.2.2.1 The 'Regio esercito' in Pb1

The version of Il partigiano Johnny which I suggested we study in chapter 1 begins with Pb1. Its importance in establishing the techniques employed in the work as a whole has already been underlined in chapter 3. It is a kind of technical preface. Equally though, its *content* prestructures the reader's approach to the partisan section of the work. The content of Pj1 and UrPj can only really be understood in the light of a knowledge of Pb1. For this reason, any analysis of partisan successes and failures has to take into account the depiction of the army in Pb1.

By far the greater part of Pb1 comprises the narrative of the period of officer training that Johnny receives at Moana, followed by his transfer to Rome. The image of the army that this narrative offers is both hilarious and

grotesque. After a few days, the future officers all become ill with dysentery, yet are forced to carry on with their training. Hectic sessions of closed order marching end abruptly as the soldiers rush to the toilets for relief. Elsewhere, gymnastics practice leads to injuries and broken limbs. The eventual collapse of the army is itself 'binocularly' anticipated during Johnny's meeting with his father before he sets off to Rome: 'Su quel treno sarebbe salito prima di sera, un treno destinato a deragliare, quel treno era l'esercito italiano' (1.3 1358).

During Johnny's stay in Rome, Mussolini is deposed and the armistice subsequently declared. At the time, Johnny and his companions are on patrol in the outskirts of the city and are unsure as to what course of action to take. One soldier makes a quick decision and begins to remove his uniform 'prima che lo uccidesse, nuova camicia di Nesso' (1.3 230). Much worse, though, is the behaviour of the commanding officers, as described by one discontented soldier:

D'ordini ne è arrivato un fottío, ma uno diverso dall'altro, o contrario. Resistere ai tedeschi - non sparare sui tedeschi - non lasciarsi disarmare dai tedeschi - uccidete i tedeschi - autodisarmarsi - non cedere le armi. Tutti ci serravamo la testa tra i pugni, perché non ci scoppiasse. (1.3 1402)

All this information has to be born in mind when we approach the partisan section of Il partigiano Johnny. When Fenoglio shows that there were similarities between the mistakes of the regular army and the mistakes of the partisans, he

suggests a fundamental continuity between the old and the seemingly new. The idea then, that the Resistance led to a Revolution and the birth of a new Italy is questioned, because the old Italy is shown to have never really died. As Quazza comments when dealing with the complex question of the post-war betrayal of the ideals of the Resistance 'non può essere rivoluzione mancata ciò che non è mai stato potenzialmente rivoluzione' (Quazza 1976, 130).

5.2.2.2 Tactical errors

The chaotic events of 8th September 1943 and the collapse of the army not only revealed the woeful inadequacies of the officer classes, but also highlighted the limitations of conventional military practices. It was, therefore, clear that new approaches were required in order to drive out the German and Fascist enemy. For the first time in Italy, the relatively new techniques of guerrilla warfare had to be adopted. This approach was a sensible one, given the circumstances and the success of similar movements in Yugoslavia, but led to problems when either Fascists or Germans took their revenge against the elusive partisans by carrying out callous reprisal actions against the, largely innocent, civilian population. The slaughter at Boves in Piedmont, described by Nino Berrini in Il villaggio messo a fuoco (1945), is a case in point. In an effort to avoid painful repetitions of this kind, one method employed in Piedmont in the early stages was to use towns as bases from which to carry out surprise attacks and acts of sabotage,

and then defend them to the bitter end if they were attacked (the so-called 'difesa ad oltranza'). There was therefore, a clear attempt to combine old style military techniques with innovative, less conventional guerrilla sorties. Again then, the Resistance did not represent a clean break from the past.

This tendency to combine the old and the new was undoubtedly a mistake, particularly in the early stages of the struggle when the enemy enjoyed a massive weapons supremacy,³ and were able to crush such bases with relative ease. In Il partigiano Johnny both partisan formations commit this error, thereby underlining the work's substantial verisimilitude. Hence, the day after Johnny joins the Garibaldi formation, he walks past the 'comune' building which is draped with red flags, and whispers to his new companion Tito that the fascists could probably see their base from Rome. This observation paves the way for the first lengthy discussion on tactics in the book. Asked by his new friend what he thinks of their strategic position, Johnny reflects that if the base is surrounded the 'magnifica posizione' that they are currently occupying will become their 'primordiale tomba' (1.2 450). The base is, indeed, eventually destroyed in a massive enemy operation, and the partisans are either killed, or dispersed.⁴ Rather than setting up bases in this manner, what the partisans should be doing, according to Tito, is carry out small guerrilla operations and then disappear again into hiding. For Tito, the fascists who survive such an attack must be left with

the impression that 'i loro morti sono stati provocati da un albero, da una frana, da ... un'influenza nell'aria, debbono impazzire e suicidarsi per non vederci mai' (1.2 450-451). Tito, arguably the supreme partisan tactician, is himself killed in an early expedition to requisition tobacco. An immature partisan sets off a burst of automatic gunfire in order to find out what it feels like to lose his 'sten virginity'; the noise alerts the enemy to their presence, and Tito is cut down by a 'prince raffica'. His early death has an obvious symbolic function: his tactics die with him.

When Johnny moves to an 'azzurro' formation at Mango he realises that they too make the same tactical errors as the Garibaldini: 'gli azzurri stavano perpetrando la medesima infrazione dei garibaldini alla teoria di guerriglia che fu di Tito e che Johnny condivideva pienamente' (1.2 539). Johnny, therefore, makes an effort to spread the knowledge he has gained from his dead companion. Thus, when the fascists approach the 'azzurro' base at Mango, Pierre, who is in charge of the outfit, and Johnny argue over the best way to react. Pierre wants to defend Mango, whereas Johnny suggests that they would be better off temporarily abandoning the town in order to take up a strategically superior position on a nearby hill: 'Non ci compete di tener posizioni, ci compete di uccider fascisti' (1.2 555). Yet, as Pierre counters, how will the people of Mango react, abandoned by the partisans at the first sign of trouble? Johnny's answer is a simple one; 'Non è colpa nostra se essi non afferrano che razza di guerra è questa' (1.2 555).

Eventually, Pierre submits to Johnny's logic and a successful, guerrilla style ambush of a fascist lorry follows.

By far the most blatant tactical error which Fenoglio exposes is the decision to occupy the city of Alba, an episode whose centrality to Il partigiano Johnny I have already commented upon (see chapter 3). There is little to add to what I have already said, apart from recording the various comments in the text about the supreme lack of wisdom behind the whole adventure. Thus, while describing the stagnant situation that set in during 1944, with the partisans holding the hills and the fascists the cities of the plain, Fenoglio reflects on the future dangers of disrupting the *status quo*:

Quando ciò venne fatto, con la città di Alba nell'ottobre '44, l'esperimento si provò disastroso e la data segnò il rovesciamento della situazione e lo sconvolgimento tellurico di tutto il sistema partigiano, che si sarebbe ripristinato soltanto nel gennaio 1945. (1.2 550)

When the attack on the city is imminent, Nord (the commander of the 'azzurri' forces in the Langhe) summons Johnny to his headquarters to offer his opinions. He gives a lengthy and detailed exposition of why he considers the action to be so mistaken. Johnny's reply to Nord's arguments, and other similar discussions may not, perhaps, be particularly interesting to the modern reader, but the fact is that they are there to be read. So many critics who interpret Il partigiano Johnny as a timeless masterpiece simply fail to

take these kinds of passages into consideration. Johnny divides his comments into four separate 'passività': military, psychological, political and propagandistic. In military terms, he argues that the occupation will provide the fascists with an opportunity to confront many more partisans than would have been possible had they remained in the hills. Moreover, the fascists will undoubtedly employ their best forces in the attack on Alba 'contro i quali i dilettanti partigiani non avevano, campalmente, una probabilità su mille' (1.2 599). In terms of psychology, Johnny argues that the occupants of the city have, and should maintain, an idealised picture of the partisans 'i cittadini li giudicavano arcangeli' (1.2 599). Their opinions will, he argues, soon change if the partisans occupy the city and show themselves for what they are 'il fiore e la feccia' (1.2 599). Moving to politics, Johnny argues that there are fascists in the city who will undoubtedly denounce Nord's civilian collaborators in the city once it is retaken. Lastly, Johnny suggests that the partisans are heavily dependent on the people of the hills for provisions, whose confidence in their ability to achieve final victory will be shaken in the wake of a heavy partisan defeat.

Notwithstanding these stern warnings, the city is attacked and all of Johnny's fears are realised. Clearly, the majority of this tactical wisdom belongs to Fenoglio's binocular hindsight rather than to Johnny's 'seeing' wisdom. Il partigiano Johnny is as much a retrospective reflection

on what should have happened as it is a representation of what did happen.

The disastrous occupation of Alba points to more specific areas of criticism in the novel, namely to the failings of the partisan commanders who decided to occupy the city and to the crass inefficiencies of the men serving under them. I shall deal firstly with the depiction of the partisans.

5.2.2.3 The partisans

Johnny sets out with high hopes towards the 'arcangelico regno dei partigiani' (1.2 413).⁵ However, after searching for most of the day without success he begins to contemplate the embarrassing possibility of spending his first night at an inn. Finally, however, he sees a lorry surrounded by armed men, who turn out to be Garibaldini. Their ineptitude is immediately hinted at as only one of them is 'attento con felina indolenza alla strada di Johnny' (1.2 439). Nevertheless, Johnny is happy to have finally discovered some partisans 'Questi erano partigiani, and sunshine reshone all over the dusk-dommed world' (1.2 439). Johnny approaches and alarms a partisan who challenges him, but who takes so much time to do so that he could easily have been killed three times in the process. This pattern of casual, undisciplined behaviour runs through the whole of the 'rossi' section of the narrative. Sentry duty is frequently neglected (see 1.2 448); in the absence of direct conflict the partisans resort to games ('Vararono per il vertiginoso

pendio una slitta di fieno e fecero sport' (1.2 451)); even when they do carry out an operation they exploit it for its ludic possibilities, ordering the 'carabinieri' to take their trousers down so they can kick their backsides; during a card game one of them accidentally shoots three of his companions and the last 'rosso' that Johnny sees before leaving to join the 'azzurri' moans 'fanciullescamente, che il suo braccio era ormai perduto' (1.2 522).

Equally, though, Fenoglio's criticisms apply to the 'azzurri' as well as to the 'rossi'. Pierre and Michele, who are in charge of the outfit that Johnny is put into, have to prevent the younger partisans from taking part in desperate raids 'come tenendo bambini discosto da crushing machinery' (1.2 546). Subsequently, the image of the rank and file partisans worsens as the important turning point of the Alba episode approaches. As a preparation to the assault of Alba, Johnny leads a mortar attack on the city. The partisans responsible for aiming the mortars make gross errors of calculation and fail to get anywhere near their target. This chaotic scene is followed up by an undisciplined attack on the fascist barracks. Johnny attempts to call a halt, but it is only when he repeats his order that his men obey. Even then, a reckless youth can not resist firing further shots and he is wounded, dragging Johnny in to save him. When, after Alba, the partisans start disappearing in droves, Johnny and Pierre view this mass desertion with a certain indifference (see 1.2 725, 1.2 727 and 1.2 783). It is almost as if Alba is a purging operation, leaving the real

men to continue the struggle. Significantly, Ettore compares the chaos of the post-Alba 'rastrellamenti' to the disastrous events of 8th September 'Ettore notava come tutto questo, su scala minima, rassomigliasse al giorno dell'armistizio' (1.2 730). Again the reader is pointed back to events in Pb1 and invited to make parallels with the old and the new orders.

The 'rastrellamenti' that follow Alba disperse the forces, and partisan activities are cut down to a minimum. One incident does, however, take place which shows the kind of success that the partisans were capable of. A group of fascists capture a number of partisans at Manera, but are then themselves ambushed. Whilst the partisans take the opportunity to give them a gratuitous beating one of them shouts in triumph 'Questa è vittoria e tattica partigiana! Non la pazzia della città, ma questo, questo!' (1.2 811). Similarly, Johnny and Ettore are pleased, but place the incident in the context of the many disasters that have already taken place 'pensando tetramente che questo era il piú vittorioso e positivo giorno da secoli' (1.2 812).

The partisans reform again in early 1945 and take part in the battle of Valdivilla, which they lose. After this battle, the fortunes of the partisans change for the better and in one particularly bloody encounter (see 1. 119-121) they inflict heavy casualties on the fascists. However, this section of the text is more concerned with Johnny's relationship with the British mission than with the

partisans themselves, whose importance diminishes with the growing Allied presence. The implication is that it was the Allies and not the partisans who made the most significant contribution during the final stages of the Resistance.

5.2.2.4 The capi

The first partisan leaders that Johnny meets remind him of his previous experience in the army. One (Biondo) looks like 'sergente Sainaghi' and another (Mario) resembles the 'ascaro perfetto di Porta Pia'. The reader is therefore invited to remember the lack of real leadership provided on the 8th September 1943. At this point, it seems that nothing really has changed, the partisan leaders are as useless as their predecessors in the regular army. However, when the fascists make their first attack and Biondo is put under pressure, he makes a series of telling strategic decisions, all of which lead to the eventual defeat of the enemy. When the fighting is over, Johnny pauses to congratulate Biondo, the first leader he has encountered who is actually capable of command: 'Ma tu, sergente, sei un vero capo. Hai comando magistralmente' (1.2 483).

After this battle, Johnny's admiration for the leaders can only go downhill, as in fact it does. When he first meets Nord, the 'azzurro' commander in Johnny's particular section of the Langhe, he is struck by his beauty and physical presence. Later on, though, he comes in for some stiff criticism. I have already dealt with the glaring tactical

error of the occupation of Alba in a separate section (see above). However, it is in the Winter of 1944, when the partisans are left to fend for themselves in extremely difficult conditions that criticism of his failings is at its most bitter. He disappears off the scene, he becomes a ghost. The very mention of his name leads Johnny and Ettore to pour out a stream of invective:

Nord? Nord? - jerked Johnny: ma dov'è Nord? Scommettiamo che s'è già dimenticato di noi, al punto di schioccar le dita nel vano tentativo di ricordarsi i nostri nomi? - E - rincarò Ettore: non è notorio che gira e dorme con mezza dozzina d'amanti fra quei suoi cento uomini? e chissà quanto denaro porta con sè, mentre noi non abbiamo di che comprare una sigaretta (1.2 786).

When Johnny visits Sergio and Noé, two partisans suffering from scabies, they too vent their anger on Nord, suggesting that he has probably escaped to a comfortable winter residence in France. It is only when Johnny meets the English commanders like Major Hope in UrPj, that he begins to feel that he is before capable leaders. Yet even they, eventually prove to be a great disappointment for Johnny.

Despite their many failings, the partisans and their leaders are, it has to be noted, depicted as better amateurs than the professionals of the 'Regio Esercito'. While Fenoglio's vision provides a counterbalance to many excessively triumphant post-war glorifications of the movement, he never goes as far as to deliver an outright condemnation of the Resistance. He reserves his utter contempt for the stupidity and inefficiencies of the regular army.

5.2.3 Politics

I now move to the vexed question of the politics of the Resistance. As I argued above, some of the most convincing historiographical works published on the subject of the Italian Resistance have been ones which have concentrated on particular zones, say the Resistance in the Veneto or the Resistance in Tuscany. There was not, and never will be, a history of the Italian Resistance, but rather a history of the Italian Resistances. In Il partigiano Johnny Fenoglio adopts a similar technique to that of the regional historian, but goes one step further by concentrating not on one region, but on one man whose experience of the Resistance is confined to a small area in Piedmont, namely the Langhe. This approach is bound to have its effect on the representation of politics and ideologies as the technique of focussing on an individual who is constantly at pains to underline his difference from everybody else, functions at the expense of any collective vision. In itself, this would be enough to answer those critics who have complained about the ideological weakness of Fenoglio's writings. Quite simply, it is not that Fenoglio is not interested in ideology (which I take to mean a system of *common* beliefs), but that his technique (and Johnny's snobbism) all but preclude its presence from most of the text. Nevertheless, Johnny does occasionally say what he thinks about politics and he does decide to become a partisan for reasons which will be investigated. There are views in Il partigiano

Johnny, but not ideologies. Views allow for nuance and difference of thought, ideology does not. Equally, Johnny is not, it goes without saying, the only character in the book. There are other partisans who express their political views, and these views, in terms of the manner in which they are filtered through Johnny, are worth investigating.

5.2.3.1 Johnny's choice

The question as to why thousands of people decided to actively oppose fascism and the Nazis over the twenty months of the armed Resistance is one which has led to intense debate amongst historians. For a long time there was a common misconception that the partisan movement was nothing short of a revolutionary uprising, peopled by revolutionaries seeking a revolution. Yet, Roberto Battaglia, himself a committed Marxist who has been (justifiably) criticised for the left-wing bias of his history of the Resistance, admits that the majority of those people who took to the hills when the movement started were not motivated by clear-cut ideologies, but by the desire to 'tenere un'arma in pugno per sentirsi degni del nome d'uomo' (Battaglia 1968, 69). Along much the same lines Charles Delzell reflects that 'Not all Garibaldini were communists, for there was always a strong tendency for men to join whatever band was closest' and that only a fraction of the young men who volunteered the first autumn 'subscribed to coherent political creeds' (Delzell 1968, 290). Quazza, in his excellent analysis of this topic continues to underline

the many complexities of the question. For Quazza, a distinction has to be made between the 'organised' and the 'spontaneous' Resistance. The 'organised' Resistance applies to anti-fascists who were active during the 'ventennio' and who saw the partisan war as an opportunity to drive out the people whose views they had opposed for years. The 'spontaneous' Resistance, of greater interest to us, corresponds to a body of people who had not been active anti-fascists, and who had, in many cases been active supporters of the regime. The reasons for the 'scelta partigiana' in this body of 'resisters' are far more difficult to grasp. Indeed, Quazza argues that a good deal of work still remains to be done on this subject, particularly with regard to why individuals chose to be partisans instead of enlisting for the Republic of Salò, or remaining in hiding. Quazza then further divides his typologies to define a type of 'antifascismo esistenziale', principally embraced by 'giovani studenti e/o figli della piccola borghesia' (Quazza 1988, 463). Clearly, this category is of central importance to this study given Johnny's student/bourgeois background. Quazza explains that the term 'esistenziale' implies *process*, process 'a parte *objecti*, da una posizione che nasce nel privato ma si sviluppa e sostanzia del rapporto con la situazione degli altri per diventare pubblica' (Quazza 1988, 464). Equally, the term facilitates the explanation 'a parte *subjecti* [del] carattere vitale della scelta partigiana, perché coglie anche il *durante* e il *dopo* della maturazione individuale del combattente' (Quazza 1988, 464). As we shall see, the

various elements which Quazza perceives as central to 'antifascismo esistenziale' can be found in Il partigiano Johnny.

Towards the end of Pb1, Johnny decides, like many thousands of his fellow recruits, to avoid capture and deportation by the German forces and sets out for home. His train journey back to Piedmont marks the end of his relationship with the fascist system and a full awareness of the 'delusioni che il regime aveva dato rispetto alle promesse fatte' (Quazza 1988, 463). Upon his return, he immediately dresses himself in a comfortable bourgeois jacket and heads for a period of solitude in the hills. Over the course of the next month, which occupies four full chapters of the text, Johnny slowly realises that he has to become a partisan.

Initially, he goes back to the kinds of activities that he enjoyed before he was drafted. He reads from the Pilgrim's progress, Browning and Marlowe, but after only a short while 'la letteratura lo nauseava' (1.2 392). After a week has passed he feels that he has forgotten how to dismantle a machine-gun, but is nonetheless convinced that 'le armi sarebbero rientrate nella sua vita, magari per la finestra, ad onta d'ogni strenua decisione o sacro voto contrari' (1.2 392). Indeed, although it is his parents intention that he should divorce himself from 'history' and politics he begins to feel a desire to keep up with events. He learns from his father about the liberation of Mussolini as well as news about the return of his peers. Despite parental warnings to

avoid contact with other human beings, he cannot resist the urge to visit his cousin, a fellow 'renitente di leva', who gives a detailed description of what happened in Milan when the armistice was declared. Johnny's aunt manages to tune the radio into the voice of America and they hear about the Allied landing at Salerno. As his feelings of restlessness grow, he reflects that during his officer training the conditions of solitude and isolation, which now cause him so much inner turmoil, were the very ones that he had longed for then. He decides to attempt a translation from English as a kind of therapeutic exercise 'la grafia come un ceppo di salvezza' and sets to work on Marlowe's The Jew of Malta. But, the first lines that he reads alert him to the fact that he cannot isolate himself from historical developments for they remind him of Hitler: 'Sebbene il mondo pensi morto il Machiavelli l'anima sua è sol migrata oltr'Alpe' (1.2 401). He slams the book shut and tries to get to sleep feeling that his whole being is 'spaventosamente ridotto rispetto ad una normale dimensione umana' (1.2 401).

Significantly, Johnny's teachers, Cocito and Chiodi (in Pb1 they appear under the pseudonyms of Monti and Corradi) are mentioned or appear in three of the four chapters in this important section of the text. He enquires as to their whereabouts when he returns home in the first chapter, at which point he learns that Cocito has openly declared his communist sympathies, and has significant meetings with them in the following two, all of which contribute to his decision to join the partisan movement. Johnny's mentors

therefore occupy a crucial role in this crisis point in his life. Moreover, in terms of their function in the book as a whole, the statements they make during these meetings provide the intellectual foundations upon which, or rather *against which*, the whole work's philosophical enquiry is constructed.

Both figures appear at an early stage in Pb1. Cocito announces that he has decided to amend drastically the literature course for the 'maturità' exam by skipping Oriani and reducing D'Annunzio (both authors were popular with Mussolini) to the 'stretto necessario'. Chiodi plays a less dominant, but equally important role in the proceedings when he articulates his fears to Johnny concerning the forthcoming declaration of war. In Pj1, the picture presented of the two teachers is markedly different. The impression that Chiodi gives is not entirely positive. When Johnny first meets him after his return, Chiodi's philosophical nature is constantly, almost cruelly, derided. He gives Johnny 'un abbraccio filosofico' and announces that had his young friend died he would have recited from the Phaedo as a funeral oration. During his description of a recent meeting with Cocito and his fellow Resistance fighters, he recounts how he was always referred to as an 'amico', whilst the others were 'compagni', and he rounds off his speech as if he were still speaking to pupils at the liceo 'notate la distinzione concettuale' (1.2 407). Chiodi then takes his leave by announcing that he is off home to read Kierkegaard, only to be spurred into further verbal

outpourings by the anonymous Y.'s caustic comment 'ma è igienico darsi a Kierkegaard di questi tempi?' (1.2 408). While Johnny leads a life in literature, Chiodi thus seems to be criticised for leading a 'life in philosophy'. He then delivers what is clearly meant to sound like a prepared speech, in which the use of the ellipsis by Fenoglio implies that Chiodi carries on, regardless of his listeners, for some time afterwards:

Vedi l'angoscia è la categoria del possibile. Quindi è infuturamento, si compone di miriadi di possibilità, di aperture sul futuro. Da una parte l'angoscia, è vero, ti ributta sul tuo essere, e te ne viene amarezza, ma d'altra parte essa è il necessario «sprung» cioè salto verso il futuro... (1.2 408)

The significance of this philosophical discourse has received some comment in recent years. Gabriella Fenocchio, in an article which is chiefly concerned with linguistic experimentation in Fenoglio's writings, has claimed that the concept of anguish articulated in Chiodi's speech can be traced to Heidegger's work Being and Time, rather than to Kierkegaard's opus. A similar comment has been made by Di Paolo (1988), although she has not, as yet, published an individual study of this topic. Fenocchio, on the other hand, goes on to suggest that the 'motivi fondamentali del massimo rappresentante dell'esistenzialismo tedesco paiono investire tutta la realtà testuale del Pj' (Fenocchio 1985, 94). This is a challenging statement, for it would seem to suggest that, if Fenoglio does not present a *political* vision of the Resistance, what he does do is present instead

a *philosophical* vision. It may then be further argued that Johnny's choice to be a partisan is not dictated by political concerns, but by philosophical, existential concerns. By becoming a partisan he expresses the existentialist desire to create his own being out of his actions. Nevertheless, Fenocchio's initial hypothesis involves a consideration of a number of complex methodological problems, as well as requiring more examples of 'realtà testuale' than the critic herself offers. If existentialist philosophy is present in Fenoglio's writings how familiar was he with it? Certainly, if Chiodi's speech is inaccurate in its contents then this would not attest to an extensive expertise on Fenoglio's part. We do know, however, that the author did have lengthy philosophical discussions with Chiodi before and after the war and that Chiodi himself was an expert on Heidegger. We know that existentialism was in vogue in Italy in the fifties, and that Norberto Bobbio was involved in a polemic over the subject in the late forties. Given this information, it is unlikely that this speech is merely inserted at random. Is, Il partigiano Johnny, therefore an existentialist Resistance text, a sort of Italian version of Sartre's Les chemins de la liberté?

My own feelings are that, for a number of reasons, this is not the case, that far from embracing existentialist philosophy, Fenoglio provides a critique of it. The manner of Chiodi's presentation, and the way in which his speech on Kierkegaard finishes, as we have seen, with a highly ironic

ellipsis, questions his role as the provider of the philosophical message of the book. Moreover, the fact that the novel is so concerned to examine the loss, rather than the apprehension, of the self runs counter to such a reading. Essentially, existentialist philosophy posits the idea that man is a self-creating being able to carve out the paths of his own existence independent of Nature and History. However, Il partigiano Johnny is a deeply pessimistic work which argues against the possibilities of apprehending the self within the context of the partisan struggle. Nature and History master Johnny, rather than the other way round. At one point Johnny reflects on 'l'assurda fede partigiana nell'iniziativa e fantasia individuale'. Instead the randomness of existence is underlined, the partisans lives prior to the great rastrellamenti being compared to 'dadi in fondo al bossolo' (1.2 789). Similarly, existentialism is a philosophy which deals with notions of the present and the future in concrete terms. However, despite its apparently linear structure, Il partigiano Johnny contains several references to a cyclical notion of time and Johnny's internal clock is often confused. Shortly before the end of the novel his real watch has stopped.

Johnny's meeting with Cocito is no less important for it gives Fenoglio the opportunity to introduce a materialist-based philosophy into the text (communism) as opposed to the idealist system which I have just discussed. By this stage Johnny is already aware of his revered teacher's openly declared communist principles and he stares at him 'con un

fascino nuovo; lo vedeva come in divisa, come un prete, comunque un separato' (1.2 410). However, Cocito's warmth and gregariousness remind Johnny of why the teacher had become his hero at the 'liceo'. The atmosphere of the meeting is tainted when those present learn that a young man who had failed to respond to the draft (as they themselves have done) has been executed by the Fascists. This news brings Cocito to life, and he argues that the 'renitenti di leva' should attack Fascist soldiers from behind and remove them from the face of the earth. In other words, they should join the partisan movement. A discussion then follows on the true significance of word partisan, with Chiodi maintaining that it is only necessary to believe in a vague concept of liberty in order to act efficiently. Cocito, on the other hand, maintains that a partisan needs to possess a coherent political creed i.e. he should be a communist. In order to illustrate his point, he singles out Johnny and suggests that he will probably make a good Robin Hood but will be: 'infinitamente meno serio, meno meritevole, e bada bene, meno bello, dell'ultimo partigiano comunista' (1.2 410). Ironically, when Johnny joins the partisans a short while after he ends up, as we have seen, in what appears to be a communist outfit, but which is peopled, almost without exception, with bungling incompetents. The point that Fenoglio forcefully makes is that you do not need coherently theorised political views in order to be an effective partisan.

Although he decides that he should not attempt to see his teacher's again, following the highly charged meeting in the café, Johnny announces to his parents that he is going out in search of Chiodi 'Debbo pur tenere qualche contatto, qualcosa sta maturando, ed è impossibile ed illogico, tenersi soli' (1.2 419). That evening he meets him and is immediately informed that Cocito is already in the hills near Bra. Chiodi affirms that he would have already joined him, notwithstanding their ideological differences, but is prevented from doing so because of his arthritis. As such, the implication is that a fit person like Johnny should take to the hills forthwith. To add to Johnny's feelings of guilt Sicco, an old friend, appears and announces that he has decided to join the underground Resistance co-ordinators, the C.L.N., as an interpreter. The three friends pay a quick visit to the local brothel and then part company, Sicco off to join the C.L.N., Chiodi for his 'veglia filosofica' and Johnny towards 'una tetra notte previa d'un goalless giorno, vuoto e fremitoso e senza fine' (1.2 431) The following morning he hides his gun in the attic of his parents house 'il cervello sickening nell'immaginare il tempo che ci sarebbe rimasta sepolta'. His mother tells him that subsequent to a minor partisan raid at the nearby town of B. the Germans had responded by razing the place to the ground. The news fills Johnny with further hatred for the Germans and a certain contempt for his parents who criticise the partisans for their rash actions.

In early December a large Fascist outfit arrives in Alba to round up the 'renitenti di leva' and, having finished most of the task in one day, hand over responsibility to the local carabinieri. Johnny receives a message from his mother telling him not to leave his hide-out. Ever the dutiful son, Johnny immediately leaves for the city where he meets his cousin Luciano 'anch'egli alla ricerca del riacquisto della sua misura di uomo' (1.2 445). They participate in a successful raid on the carabinieri barracks and Johnny intervenes when one of the raiders starts beating up one of the carabinieri. His attempt to stop the violence does not please the attacker who justifies his actions by saying that his father had been tortured by the carabinieri and subsequently died. This piece of information has a profound effect on Johnny 'facendolo apparire a se stesso come un uomo non fatto di carne e di sangue, ma fatto come un compensato di fibre di fogli di libro' (1.2 446). He has realised that he needs to put his bookish existence behind him and become part of reality. Thus, Johnny quickly gets over his guilt, and that evening when he goes to bed he feels a 'spaventosa concretezza d'uomo'. The following day he sets off to find the partisans, having finally decided to act.

5.2.3.2 The politics of the formations in Il partigiano Johnny.

Leaving aside the question of the initial choice, political or otherwise, it can not be denied that as the movement

progressed its political element became stronger. This was particularly the case in areas like Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, where the twenty years of fascist domination had not extinguished deeply-rooted left-wing sentiments. However, the situation in Piedmont was, and still is, much different. Monarchist sympathies were, for obvious historical reasons, dominant. Socialist or communist elements did, of course, exist, but tended to be confined to the urban proletariat in the bigger cities. For this reason, the communist party had to work much harder in Piedmont than in other regions to stress, what was for them, the political nature of the struggle. However, in the early stages, the PCI was more concerned to organize, rather than politicize their formations:

In questo periodo l'attività degli inviati del Partito comunista si orienta soprattutto sulla riorganizzazione degli uomini in bande partigiane autosufficienti. I motivi ideologici della lotta sono inseriti piú tardi con l'arrivo dei commissari e degli ispettori, che li chiariranno agli uomini che non hanno ancora precise tendenze e che, in questo momento lottano per la sopravvivenza (Masera 1971, 36)

Yet, as Masera goes on to state, the political aspect remained weak in the Langhe:

Si deve tuttora notare che nella zona delle Langhe, l'orientamento dato dal PCI si presenta piú elastico che in altre zone e si dirige in particolare, data la scarsa maturazione politica del territorio, ai quadri dirigenti delle formazioni (Masera 1971, 41)

Turning to the text, it is clear that Fenoglio's representation of the political nature of the partisan movement in the Langhe is substantially accurate. Having discovered, much to his regret, that he has joined a 'garibaldini' formation, Johnny asks Tito what his political views are:

Io no ... Io sono niente e sono tutto. Io sono soltanto contro i fascisti. Sono nella Stella Rossa perché la formazione che ho incocciata era rossa, il merito è loro d'averla organizzata e d'avermela presentata a me che tanto la cercavo, come finora non ho cercato niente altrettanto intensamente. Ma a cose finite, se sarò vivo, vengano a dirmi che sono comunista! (1.2 446)

Tito's comments are a close reflection of the apolitical nature of the partisan movement during its initial stages, and of the communist party's early organisational supremacy.

After Johnny leaves to join the 'azzurri', political discussions largely disappear. The 'azzurri's' sole interest was in defeating the enemy. Indeed, for their leader Mauri, the only way to conduct the struggle was by adopting an apolitical stance:

Per alcuni comandanti autonomi, soprattutto per il magg. Mauri, l'apoliticità è l'optimum, diviene la condizione necessaria per il proseguimento della lotta contro il nemico, unico scopo della resistenza (Masera 1971, 42)

When Johnny meets up with a communist leader at the beginning of the occupation of Alba, the political stance of

the 'rossi' is re-examined. He asks whether Gabilondo, who had diverted an Allied lancio and subsequently been killed, was a communist:

Comunista? - Gabilondo? Dalla testa ai piedi. Perfetto. - E tu? - Puah - fece lui, ma lo spregio era per sè, non per l'idea. - Del resto, guarda i miei compagni oltre la strada. Guardali, sono quindici. E sono la crema della nostra brigata. Ebbene, uno solo è comunista: quello tarchiato, con le lentiggini e gli occhiali. Ed io sono il meno comunista dei quattordici non comunisti. Eppure sono pronto a mangiare il cuore al primo che facesse appena un risolino alla mia stella rossa (1.2 631).

Little has changed from the time of the discussion with Tito.

5.2.4 Convivenza

In his introduction to Masera (1971), Quazza suggests that the rivalry between the different partisan formations was one of the major themes of the Resistance in Piedmont. As Masera herself then goes on to demonstrate in her book, the 'azzurri' leader, Enrico Martini Mauri, was probably responsible for fomenting much of the conflict, frequently refusing to deal with representatives of the CLN, and all too often failing to inform partisan commanders from other formations as to what his next move was going to be. Furthermore, the Allied tendency to provide weapons for the 'azzurri', but not for the other formations, only exacerbated the situation.⁶ Yet, as Masera reflects at one point in her study, there is very little reliable

documentation of these tensions, and what is available tends to be weighted in favour of the communists. In terms of archive evidence Maserà's analysis is probably correct. However, Il partigiano Johnny, a literary source, deals extensively with this issue from Johnny and Fenoglio's point of view, providing an opportunity to fill in one of the grey areas of the Resistance in Piedmont.

The tensions between communists and 'azzurri' follow roughly the same course as the criticisms directed at the partisans and their leaders. A first stage sees the early development of friction when the different formations gather at Santo Stefano Belbo during the summer of 1944 for drinks, cigarettes, and above all women. The occupation of Alba and its aftermath aggravates the situation, finally leading to a violent confrontation between Johnny and a communist who he suspects wants to disarm him. Afterwards, relationships gradually improve and in UrPj there is a certain amount of cooperation between the formations. The different stages of development of this parabola are worth looking at closely.

Shortly after his arrival at Nord's camp Johnny realises that all is not well between the 'rossi' and the 'azzurri'. The 'azzurri' leaders who, almost without exception, come from bourgeois families, have had regular military training and enjoyed officer status in the army. They look down on their communist counterparts whom they consider as 'operaiacci', the products of a 'misteriosa generazione spontanea' (1.2 540). The 'azzurri' leaders dream of

occupying and controlling the whole zone but, much to their disgust, a number of 'self-affirming enclaves comuniste' threaten their dominance. According to Masera, a similar dream was dear to the communists. For most of the Summer of 1944, when little serious action takes place and a condition of inertia sets in, the opportunities for clashes between the two forces are rare. They tend to stay in or around their own bases, training in preparation for later offensives. However, Santo Stefano Belbo, with its many attractions and its geographical position on the meeting point between the red and blue zones, provides a 'scoglio di frangimento' (1.2 551) where arguments soon develop. The local girls wear coloured ribbons in their hair according to their sympathies or preferences. However, the frequent cases of an 'azzurro' partisan spying his one-time girlfriend sporting a new red ribbon lead, understandably, to confrontations, and the leaders of both formations decide to set up a kind of military police to control the situation. Johnny and Ettore visit Santo Stefano once only during this period. Their car runs out of petrol on the bridge near the central square and they are forced to suffer the indignity of pushing it the last few yards. Ettore attempts to chat up two girls, but is unsuccessful. He returns to Johnny to tell him that, in any case, they both had bad breath. However, Johnny knows better and points out that both had red ribbons in their earrings. Ettore is dismayed by his failure, and lets out his annoyance on Johnny's sharp eye: 'Mannaggia al tuo occhio'. Again, it is Johnny's vision which reveals the truth of the situation. At this stage in the book, Fenoglio

exploits the tensions for their comic possibilities. There is a carnival atmosphere around Santo Stefano, almost of a world at play. The 'spirito di corpo' is there but 'quel giorno, in quell'ora, azzurri e rossi apparivano nel migliore dei rapporti' (1.2 581). When the Garibaldini are forced to leave to defend their zone from a fascist attack there is still no letting up on the humour. The communist who arrives to announce the attack offers Johnny a red crystallized fruit after he has wished them the best of luck, and, not wishing to see his companion go without, gives one to Ettore as well:

Johnny ricevette il frutto e indicò Ettore allusivamente. - Ho un compagno con me. - Oh, pardon! Noi non dobbiamo sgarrare mai, dimenticare mai niente, in fatto di compagni -. Rise nuovamente e porse a Ettore la pera. (1.2 585)

This convivial atmosphere can not last for long and the situation worsens when a Garibaldi unit intercepts an allied lancio (see 1.2 601). Tensions continue to increase during the occupation of Alba. When an early fascist attack is repulsed by the partisans and Nord arrives right at the end of the action, two partisans, one 'rosso' the other 'azzurro', are seen fighting. They are quickly separated and Johnny asks his breathless companion what had happened: 'Volevo tappargli per sempre la sua sporca bocca rossa! Ha visto la macchina di Nord, il porco rosso, e ha detto: 'Arriva adesso il vostro grande capo?' (1.2 663).

After the repossession of Alba by the fascists, Johnny's outfit sets up base in the town of Castagnole. Again the rival partisan formations are scattered into different zones, just as they were before the occupation of the city. However, by now arms and fuel are in particularly short supply and the tensions between the forces increase. One evening Johnny is enjoying an erotic dance with a local girl named Elda when they are interrupted by the sound of gunfire. Panic follows, but it turns out that they have been raided, not by fascists, but by communists come to steal their 'prezioso carburante' (1.2 718). Shortly after this raid by their would-be associates, the fascist counter-attack follows. By placing these two scenes so close together Fenoglio questions the identity of the real enemy. Tensions have become hostilities.

Johnny and his companions manage to escape the 'rastrellamento' by crossing the river. When they cross back again to return to their previous position they see an unarmed 'azzurro' partisan who warns them to look out for the 'rossi'. They later learn that the 'rossi' are disarming the 'azzurri' partisans whom they now consider as deserters. Johnny and his companions' reaction to this news is predictable, after all they have been close to death on more than one occasion during the previous twenty-four hours. They are stunned, silent but inwardly seething. This complex of emotions is brilliantly captured by Fenoglio's use of progressively rarer units of vocabulary, culminating in 'estuosamente', the only incidence of this word in Il

partigiano Johnny: 'Lo stupore li paralizzò, poi il furore li ammutí, pur squassandoli estuosamente' (1.2 781). Their informer angrily asks how the communists will defend themselves when they are attacked. A few chapters later we find out: they escape across the river in the same way as the 'azzurri'. Before he leaves, he tells the partisans to shoot the 'rossi' before they can capture them. The civil war is no longer between fascists and anti-fascists, but between partisans and partisans. Amidst this atmosphere of growing tension, Fenoglio carefully prepares for one of the most violent scenes in the novel.

Ettore, Johnny and Pierre march ahead, filled with desire to meet one of the 'odiosi rossi'. At this point the language ('agognando di incontrare', 'nel torcere della passione') takes on the characteristics of a quasi-religious experience, as though the partisans were pilgrims about to reach their goal. Instead, what will shortly occur is the exact opposite.

Fenoglio employs the technique of immediate vision to good effect when they spy three of their new enemy who emerge from their cover and greet them warmly:

eccoli! un trio appostato emerse dal coperto e accennò ed halloed a loro amichevolmente e con amichevole passo venne loro incontro sui prati.
(1.2 781)

The repetition 'amichevamente' 'amichevole' underlines the exaggerated cordiality of the 'rossi', showing that their

apparent friendship is just a mask. The chief of the 'rossi' has a 'chioma rossosaggina'; he is not only red on the inside but on the outside as well. The pattern of their first exchange: 'E allora? - dissero molto slackenly. - E allora' (1.2 781) is repeated later on in the scene when the 'rossi' have themselves been disarmed: 'E allora? disse Ettore. - E allora? disse Johnny' (1.2 782). The tables have been turned, but Fenoglio also suggests that the 'azzurri' partisans are now occupying the same questionable moral position as the 'rossi'; they behave in the same way as the 'rossi', they become the 'rossi'. This point is further underlined when they disarm their new enemy: 'li spogliarono dei moschetti' (1.2 781) which repeats the verb used by the anonymous informer to describe the 'rossi': 'Quelli isolati li spogliano direttamente' (1.2 780). The communist leader explains that his commander needs to interview everyone returning from the river: 'una pura formalità, nell'interesse generale' (1.2 781). The heavy irony of the phrase 'nell'interesse generale' is obvious. Rarely, if at all, do communists and 'azzurri' work together against the common enemy. Ettore's reaction to all this is to reply with controlled contempt. The build up of adverbs 'studiatamente', 'piattamente', 'marcatamente' underlines this control. But Johnny, who has remained calm throughout the whole course of the novel up until this point is bursting with hatred. In contrast to Ettore, his lips are trembling 'Ireneticamente' and he is unable to speak. This contrast between hatred in one character and contempt in

another appears at the very beginning of Pb1 when Johnny and Mario discuss their attitude towards fascism:

Mario finí di lisciare il bracciale infilato di rabbia. - ... Io li odio. Tutti, da Mussolini a questo somaro di Juancito -. Disse Johnny: - Io li disprezzo. Sono nato nello stesso anno e mese in cui marciarono su Roma, e sento di disprezzarli dalla nascita. - Ma disprezzarli basta? Io credo che bisogna odiarli. O forse sono arrivato a odiarli perché sono un ignorante anch'io. Ci vorrebbe la tua grande istruzione, forse, per fermarsi al disprezzo (1.3 1262)

By the time Mario has finished speaking Johnny has moved into his own private world, and is singing 'Stardust memories' based on his own translation into English of the Italian version of the song. The connection between these two episodes is clear. At this point in the narrative, however, Johnny's cultured bourgeois education is behind him. He angrily raises his sten and orders the 'rossi' to put their hands up. The leader's shocked reply 'Sei pazzo' recalls another earlier episode when Elda had looked into Johnny's 'mad' eyes and seductively asked him the same question. Again, what would appear to be an isolated episode assumes greater meaning by forcing the reader to make a connection with what has gone before. This technique appears for the third time in this short passage when Johnny's mouth is described as being 'essiccata dall'ira' (1.2 782). The other occasions when Johnny's mouth is dry is during battles with the enemy; again the implication is that the identity of the enemy has changed. A brief discussion follows, ending with a highly ironic plea by the communist for solidarity: 'ma compagno, fratello' (1.2 782). This proves too much for

Johnny who attacks him. The contradictory nature of the whole scene, and of Johnny's behaviour in particular, is continually foregrounded by the use of opposites and unusual lexical collocations. Johnny is not attacking the 'rosso' but himself. The beating is appalling more for the precision than for the violence with which Johnny proceeds. He strikes him with a 'cecità lucida, esattissimamente sugli occhi e sulla bocca' (1.2 782). He moves his victims head with a 'cura feroce' so that he can punch him exactly where desires. The rapidity of events is underlined by the use of polysindeton: 'E per il prossimo colpo ... E gridava ... e lavorava' (1.2 782), a sentence which comes to an end with another striking collocation 'lucida selvaggità' (1.2 782). The voices of Ettore and Pierre reach Johnny as though from a distance, imploring him to stop before he kills his victim. But Johnny continues, and with 'amichevole acquiescenza' (a phrase which points back to the communists 'friendly' behaviour earlier on in the scene) replies that he is not going to kill him, but make him lose 'per sempre i connotati umani'. Yet it is Johnny, as well as the communist who loses his human characteristics. He is dragged away from the 'tronco immoto' and is now barely able to stand. He has become a non-man, a 'disarticolato automa'; he is now, like his victim 'arrossente'; and behind his silent companions he proceeds to the 'pacifico paese di Castagnole' as the scene, perhaps the high point of Fenoglio's realism, comes to a solemn close.

After this episode, the theme of the tensions between the forces disappears, indicating that the partisans have now to combat a new common enemy, the winter. With the arrival of the British mission in UrPj, the issue resurfaces again. As Johnny escorts Whitaker and Boxhall through Monferrato, the English officers ask the driver to accelerate. Johnny discourages this, explaining that if they go too fast they will probably be shot at by the 'rossi' mistaking them for the enemy. This mention of the 'rossi' leads Whitaker to enquire as to the political set up in the Monferrato region:

It's a 3/4 Red Star zone, and I'm said them thousands commy partisans wear fire-red shirts, so to appear to fascists poppies in a field. Whitaker swore at this, but Boxhall simply commented: "Funny" (1.1 27)

The Allies have already demonstrated that they are unwilling to assist the communists, and Whitaker's comment demonstrates that the situation will not, at least for the present, change. Shortly afterwards, they arrive at La Motta, the town where the 'rosso' patrol had earlier wanted to take Johnny and his companions. A 'reddish light' and a 'reddish flash' index the communist presence there and Johnny is asked by one of the communist leaders whether he can persuade the English officers to do anything for them. Johnny's reply is curt: 'Lascia perdere, don't make me waste my breath in translating' (1.1 29). When a socialist leader asks Johnny the same favour shortly afterwards, he is slightly more accommodating, but once again the response of the English commander is negative: 'Hope bluntly shook his

head' (1.1 45). Significantly, there is no rancour shown towards Johnny by both the communist and the socialist, suggesting that they have now realised that the favouritism shown towards the 'azzurri' is purely the result of the Allied forces ignorance and stupidity. This is the first sign of an improvement in the relations between the forces. As the story proceeds, so this improvement continues. Johnny learns that the 'Neive presidium was held by Blues and Matteotti' together:

agreement had been reached and maintained, and all proceeded fairly well. The same with nearby Castagnole; GI and Blues presiding it, in toward perfect alliance (1.1 171).

Yet, still missing, is an alliance between the 'rossi' and the 'azzurri', the two formations who have been most at odds. And it is at Santo Stefano Belbo, the traditional point of conflict between the two sides, that the first signs of a new solidarity are evident:

There was a mixed line of Blues and Reds, with mighty weaponings supplied by the Blues but manned by the Reds too ... A Red subchief, an old St. Stephen eye-acquaintance of Johnny, crossed to him and magnified the vastity and efficiency of all those arms. The announce that the English were going to make drops for all without stopping on colours had appeased the rage and irony of the Reds (1.1 201)

The impression given here is a relatively hopeful one. There is though, a hint of caution behind this hope. Franco spots the 'rossi' attempting to steal petrol from their lorry, thereby closing the scene in an atmosphere of distrust.

Written during the 1950s, UrPj conveys the hopes of the Resistance, mingled with the fears of the Cold War. Once again, it is clear that Fenoglio's desire in Il partigiano Johnny is not to transcend his times, but to reflect the colours of historical reality.

5. 3. The Resistance and the peasant world

5.3.1 Introduction

At the end of Frammenti di romanzo (henceforth FR), a draft novel written by Fenoglio after Il partigiano Johnny, Milton, the dead protagonist, is seen floating down the river by a peasant and a boatman. They have a brief discussion about what they have just witnessed:

- E chi sarà stato? Uno di questi che fanno la guerra?
- Può darsi, rispose il barcaiolo. - Per quanto mi sia sembrato in borghese.
- Anche al contadino era parso in borghese. - Vestito come noi. Non da fascista nè come gli inglesi. Chi sarà mai stato?
- Mah, - fece il barcaiolo. - Parte tanta di quella gente oggigiorno. Ad ogni modo, è uno che non vedrà come andrà a finire. (1.3 1717).

In this brief scene, which is almost like the end of a film, Fenoglio touches on what historians now recognise as one of the central issues of the Italian Resistance: the question of the relationship between the partisans and the peasant world. Here, in FR, the peasants are depicted as largely uninterested in the struggle against the fascists, occupying

a world of their own untouched by history, an attitude captured by Fenoglio in his characters' deictic references to '*uno di questi che fanno la guerra*' and '*parte tanta di quella gente oggiigiorno*'.

This image of substantial indifference and separation can also be found in some of Fenoglio's other Resistance writings. It is the case, for example, in '*Il trucco*', a story from the collection VGA. In this brief story three partisans who have been sent to carry out the execution of a fascist prisoner argue over who will be allowed to do the shooting. Eventually, '*Napoleone*', the cunning leader of the squad, sends his two unsuspecting comrades towards the wrong execution site and then goes on to perform the deed himself, hence the title. Rather than following the execution itself though, Fenoglio chooses to concentrate on the two duped partisans who hear the sound of the shooting just as they come in sight of a group of peasants tilling the land, the sound of which they had earlier mistaken for the digging of a grave. In this way, Fenoglio effectively highlights the abyss separating these two worlds of the Resistance, one made up of the partisans who attempt to carry out their '*occasional*', historically determined, job as executioners, the other made up of the peasants, doing the kind of thing that peasants have done for thousands of years, oblivious to what is occurring around them.

It would, nevertheless, be a mistake to think that in Fenoglio's minor Resistance writings the two worlds never

meet. There are cases of peasants warning partisans of impending danger, or simply pointing them in the right direction, as happens, for example, in 'L'andata'. All the same, such occasions tend to be rare and scattered. However, in Il partigiano Johnny, written in the years between VGA and FR, and most significantly *after* the composition of the peasant tragedy La malora, Fenoglio's treatment of this issue is far more extended and complex.

This section is an analysis of the presentation of this relationship in Il partigiano Johnny. Let us firstly examine the, still fluid, historiographical position on this subject.

5.3.2 The peasant question in Resistance historiography

5.3.2.1 The peasants and the Armed Resistance

For many years the 'questione contadina' was ignored by historians since, quite understandably, much of the early historical work on the Resistance was aimed at reconstructing the course of events. As Luigi Arbizzani commented at the 1984 congress on 'Contadini e partigiani' held at Asti: 'Per quasi vent'anni dal 1945, l'analisi del rapporto contadini-resistenza nella storiografia è stato sacrificato alla storia militare' (Arbizzani 1986, 27).⁷

Nevertheless, Roberto Battaglia, author, as we have seen, of a frequently uneven history of the Resistance movement does

devote some attention to this topic. In a series of early general considerations, Battaglia suggests that the peasants in the mountain regions had greeted the first partisans 'con simpatia' (Battaglia 1964, 181), in much the same way, that is, as they had given assistance to the young soldiers and escaped prisoners of war immediately after 8th September 1943. This assessment of the situation during the early stages of the Resistance is, no doubt, reasonably accurate, but a little too sweeping to be totally convincing.⁸ Furthermore, it is not easy to agree with certain aspects of Battaglia's version of subsequent events. Thus, the first 'rastrellamenti' by the Germans, aimed in Battaglia's words at breaking 'questi primi vincoli d'umana solidarietà' (Battaglia 1964, 181), only served, so he argues, to stiffen the peasants' resolve and, incredibly, to sharpen their sense of national identity 'La patria, da concetto astratto e lontano, da privilegio delle classi dominanti, stava così discendendo lentamente in ogni casolare o in ogni vallata' (Battaglia 1964, 182).⁹ Despite this entirely unsubstantiated claim, his suggestion on the same page that the peasants played a vital role as guides, or as early warning signals employing 'la propria astuzia nella difesa dei patrioti' does seem to have some grounding in reality, and is indeed confirmed in many partisan memoirs. At a later stage in his study Battaglia moves towards an analysis of peasant support in various regions throughout Italy. And it is here that his analysis becomes more promising. In Umbria, for example, Battaglia refers to 'il difetto di un legame solido e costante fra i partigiani ... e le masse contadine'

(Battaglia 1964, 233), whereas Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna are cited as regions in which cooperation was at its height. Battaglia's work is therefore useful as a starting point for discussion, if the reader is prepared to ignore the guileless rhetoric.

Battaglia's sensitivity towards regional differences prefigures some of the methodological advances of the last twenty years. Indeed, the Langhe have, as we have already seen, been the object of two significant regional studies, Masera 1971 and more recently Giovana 1988, both of which offer useful information. Although Masera is given to occasionally uncritical and highly speculative assessments of peasant mentality ('Innanzitutto, osservando il comportamento della popolazione contadina, si notano segni di risveglio delle coscienze' (Masera 1971, 16)) the majority of her observations are reasonably convincing. Masera argues, in a similar vein to Battaglia, that during the early stages of the conflict the peasants offered assistance to the partisans, but is, however, careful to warn against overly tendentious interpretations of the motives behind this help (see pp.17-18). Indeed, evidence of a lack of real solidarity is the fact that only a relatively small number of peasants actually joined the movement during its early stages (p.19). As the struggle continued, and the need for food became ever more pressing, so, occasionally, the relationship between the peasants and the partisans became strained. Masera refers to 'requisizioni indiscriminate delle formazioni partigiane e il pagamento in

buoni (che non sempre riscuote la fiducia di tutti)' (Masera 1971, 77). The black-market flourished, resulting in the transfer of essential provisions into the fascist-held cities, and partisans were led to progressively more desperate measures to secure food: 'alcuni distaccamenti compivano requisizioni isolate e in massicce proporzioni per il loro fabbisogno e molte volte questo era eccessivo' (Masera 1971, 79). However, within the confines of what is more a narrative than a social history, Masera does not develop this issue as far as she might have done.

Mario Giovana's recent study, written in a more sceptical and questioning tradition,¹⁰ offers a more extended treatment of the issue, and is far more explicit than Masera on the demands made on the local population. The partisans were obliged to rely heavily, as Giovana observes, on the 'buon volere popolare per proseguire la lotta' (Giovana 1988, 49). However, in exchange for the materials and resources which were given to them the partisans could only offer 'ultra aleatorie cauzioni di remunerazione dei guasti materiali arrecati' (Giovana 1988, 49). Worse was to come, though, when enemy forces carried out reprisals. As the peasants watched the houses, which they had sheltered the partisans in, being burned to the ground, so the mobile partisans invariably fled to the temporary safety of yet another peasant dwelling, again offering no guarantees of protection. Thus, the partisan war had for the peasants, as Giovana eloquently describes it 'le sembianze della piú funesta sciagura. Così, e non altrimenti potrebbe essere,

prosaicamente la accolgono le campagne langarole' (Giovana 1988, 49). Nevertheless, Giovana's work never quite confronts the peasant problem in all its considerable complexity and given its title (Guerriglia e mondo contadino) it is ultimately a disappointment. An organic and authoritative study of the Italian peasant\Resistance question still, therefore, remains to be written.

If, and when, such a work is published it will, I think, have to be based more on oral accounts than previous studies. There are, of course, many difficulties involved in reconstructing peasant mentalities through their oral testimony, the most acute of which is, quite simply, the dwindling number of peasants witnesses available for interview. Equally, there exists the problem of the extent to which the processes of time have affected the validity of such sources. Luisa Passerini has argued, in defence of oral history, that memory and perception of the past can not be 'cosí influenzati dal presente da perdere tutto lo spessore precedente' (Passerini 1988, 114). I would, however, argue that Passerini's defence is unnecessary, for it is the very process of the passing of time which adds, rather than detracts from the 'spessore' of such testimony. In much the same way as Johnny argues for distance (see chapter 2) so oral testimony becomes a more useful tool as time passes after the event. Fortunately for our purposes, the ex-partisan Nuto Revelli has already published the transcriptions of a series of interviews which he conducted with a selection of peasants from different areas of

Piedmont, including the Langhe. His Il mondo dei vinti, although perhaps lacking the kind of scholarly rigour normally required by professional historians,¹¹ is therefore a vital source of primary information, an invaluable benchmark against which to measure the limits of Fenoglio's historical sensitivity.

Il mondo dei vinti begins with a long and important preface by Revelli himself. According to Revelli, the attitude of the peasants to the Resistance around the Cuneo area was 'agnostico'. Equally though, he recognises that the various formations were not entirely made up of city-dwellers, for some peasants did participate as active partisans. When discussing German reprisals, Revelli describes the way the attitude of the people he interviewed underwent a dramatic change when he began to ask about them. Similarly, when dealing with requisitions he admits that alongside many blameless partisans there were 'abusi', 'errori', 'episodi di indisciplina', 'casinisti', and 'profittatori' (Revelli 1977, CXIX).

The interviews that Revelli conducted, transcripts of which form the bulk of his book, then go on to provide a rich and varied account of peasant attitude to the situation during the twenty months of the partisan struggle. Here are some examples of the kinds of reactions that Revelli transcribes:

Ahi ..., alla campagna non piacevano i partigiani, quando i partigiani andavano a chiedere un pò di grano o qualche bestia facevano dei salti alti così. Qualcuno capiva qualcosa, Bottasso era uno

bravo, ma gli altri pensavano quasi tutti ai soldi e basta. (Revelli 1977, 18)

Cosa pensavamo di quella guerra? Uno sparava addosso all'altro ... , ecco. (Revelli 1977, 74)

Per chi teneva la gente? In alto ... tenevano per i partigiani. Qui la gente teneva alla pelle e basta: veniva il tedesco, gli davano quel che chiedeva; veniva il fascista, lo stesso; veniva il partigiano, lo stesso. (Revelli 1977, 128)

Poi è venuta la guerra partigiana. Qui i contadini tenevano per i partigiani, erano contro i fascisti e i tedeschi. Ma non partecipavano con passione, stavano sempre un pò in disparte. (Revelli 1977, 133)

Il novanta per cento dei contadini erano e sono critici nei confronti dei partigiani. (Revelli 1977, 243)

These comments show, that in terms of active cooperation, we are unlikely to find many examples of easy co-existence between peasants and partisans. Moreover, as the penultimate quotation shows, whatever help was given to them should not only be assessed in terms of its quantity, but also in terms of its quality. Providing food and shelter is not *necessarily* a reliable indication of real solidarity.

Up to this point we have concentrated on the role of the peasants during the armed Resistance (the material, that is within Johnny's field of vision). Let us now move to a brief description of the role of the peasants during the period of the 'dopoguerra' through to the 1950s (the material, that is, in Fenoglio's binoculars).¹²

5.3.2.2 The peasants in the 'dopoguerra' and the 1950s

The post-war restoration in Italy was marked by periods of great social unrest and conflict. In the Summer and autumn of 1946 there was a series of strikes by the working classes in the Northern cities. In the South peasant discontent with the antiquated systems of land tenure reached new heights and further attempts were made to ensure the enforcement of the much-vaunted Gullo decrees (which were aimed at altering the balance of class relations there). A similar situation obtained in central Italy. As Paul Ginsborg has commented this unrest marked a period of peasant solidarity unparalleled in the history of Italy (see Ginsborg 1990, 127). For the first (and last time) mutual peasant distrust and suspicion were cast aside in an attempt to find a concrete solution to their common misery.

Such was the situation in the South and in central Italy. In the North there was some peasant unrest, but it was not on such a grand scale and most of the activity was confined to the Po delta. In particular, the agitation does not appear to have spread to the area of most interest to us, Piedmont. There, peasant jealousy, and in Castronovo's words 'la totale mancanza di spirito associativo' (Castronovo 1977, 616) meant that the highly inefficient system of farming small and unproductive parcels of land continued. The rural economy went into an irreversible and fatal decline. Rather than continuing the traditions of the 'vita paesana', the

new generations moved en masse to the cities in the search for work in the factories, leaving behind deserted villages and an increasingly older peasant population. In the space of a few decades, a whole society and culture which had continued unaltered for centuries all but disappeared. The Agrarian Reform of the 1950s came, quite simply, too late.

Let us consider the literary tradition that Fenoglio was working in and the short novel, La malora, Fenoglio's most sustained analysis of peasant life in the Langhe.

5.3.3 The peasant question and the literary tradition

The peasantry has provided Italian literature with the subject matter for some of its most well-known works. I am thinking, for example, of Verga's I Malavoglia, Carlo Levi's Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli, Pavese's Paesi tuoi, Jovine's Le terre del sacramento and so on. Whether Fenoglio had read these texts is not a question which I wish to address. In this section I am not looking for sources, but problems of representation which have been confronted by other authors and which Fenoglio himself was forced to deal with when he chose to attempt to depict his peasants.

The major problem for writers whose works of literature sought to be authentically historical, was that the peasantry seemed almost entirely independent of the forces of history. How was it possible to write historically about a sector of society which was only itself partially touched

by history? Both Verga and Levi chose the sensible solution of reflecting the essential separation of the peasantry and history, whilst suggesting that they were not entirely cut off from the world. Hence, in I Malavoglia references to the unification of Italy are rare and vague and the peasants main concern is not history, but destiny, symbolised by their frequently sunk fishing boat, 'La provvidenza'. The role of the 'popular' narrator is crucial in this text. Since he is so much a part of the world of the Malavoglia, rather than that of the intellectual Verga, his narration is, a priori, less historical than it would otherwise be. In Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli, where the narrator is Levi himself, there are many more allusions to historical events, but again the peasants are essentially indifferent. In La malora Fenoglio opted for the same solution as Verga. Whilst it is not easy to establish when the story is set, certain indications suggest that events take place during the first decade of this century. The story is narrated by the peasant protagonist Agostino, whom circumstances and plain bad luck condemn to a life of misery and sacrifice. Agostino's limited knowledge of events other than those which immediately concern his life coupled with his restricted view of time, mean that the narrative never extends beyond a tightly confined geographical and temporal area. Agostino is not interested, or perhaps unable to conceive of the links between the various episodes that he narrates; it is events and not processes which structure the nature of his discourse on reality.

The restriction of the narrative by the narrator/protagonist of La malora is a technique with which we are by now extremely familiar. In Il partigiano Johnny the narrator is no longer the peasant Agostino, but the intellectual Johnny. Yet, there are points of intersection between the two, the most important of which is their common tendency to perceive reality in an unorthodox fashion. While Agostino has a drastically compressed sense of reality, similar, as we saw earlier, to Lok's in The Inheritors, Johnny has a highly expanded notion of it. Real time for Johnny is a vast continuum stretching back thousands of years to the Ancient Greeks. The framework within which Johnny perceives the world is itself partially dehistoricised. When dealing with the partisans this does not lead to any significant distortions because they are themselves so richly historical. But when it is the peasants that Johnny is looking at, whose historical and temporal status is already objectively problematical, then we are liable to encounter a higher than average quantity of historical deviation. Again it is the formal rhetoric of Il partigiano Johnny which is crucial for our full understanding of the text's content.

5.3.4 Peasants and partisans in Pj1

Let us now move to Il partigiano Johnny. The following section is divided into two parts - the first deals with the attitude of the partisans to the peasants, the second with the attitude of the peasants to the partisans.

5.3.4.1 Peasants in the partisan movement

An area which has so far received little treatment by historians is the question of the partisans attitude towards the peasants. Any analysis of a difficult relationship of this nature should involve an examination into both parties views, yet up till now historical enquiry has been too 'peasant centred'.

This major issue first comes up during an early stage of the Garibaldi section of Il partigiano Johnny when Johnny has a conversation with Tito in which his new friend expresses his profound disapproval of peasant participation in the Resistance. It is not that Tito has anything against peasants, per se, but that he objects to their method of killing. Unlike students and workers, the peasants, according to Tito, kill as if they had captured a fox, screaming, shouting and generally behaving barbarically. According to Tito, he who is unfortunate enough to die at the hands of a peasant 'deve far mille morti' (1.2 452). Tito's attitude is hostile, but understandable in the circumstances. The majority of partisans in the Langhe during the early months had fled from the cities to avoid the draft, and so for them the peasant world was a new and unfamiliar environment. Faced with these mysterious, arcane beings, a reaction of Tito's kind is readily comprehensible.

Fenoglio returns to the theme of the 'contadino partigiano' when one of their breed, Polo, reacts in an extreme manner

during Tito's funeral, turning the whole event into a grotesque, tribal ritual. In the light of Tito's earlier comments on the barbarity of the peasants it is clear that the two scenes are linked and that the reader is invited to make the connection between them. The ceremony is interrupted by a scream which 'inorridí quanto Tito tutti'. In the centre of the square Polo is on his knees lamenting Tito's death. He announces that he wants to wash himself in the blood that the enemy have spilt 'Voglio lavarmi fin qui, - e indicava i bicipiti ed ora si lavava, con orribile naturalezza' (1.2 493). The image of two unintegrated social worlds is rendered by the unusual collocation of the adjective 'orribile' with the noun 'naturalezza', highlighting the appalled reaction of the narrator/protagonist. Again it is Fenoglio's recourse to a 'defamiliarising' use of language which allows him to capture a complex historical situation.

After Tito's funeral the issue of the 'contadino partigiano' disappears from the novel for some time. It resurfaces again when Johnny meets his friend Franco who offers him and Ettore a lift after their abortive trip to Santo Stefano Belbo. One of the two peasants they are travelling with removes some plastic explosive from a bomb. Ettore and Johnny 'i due profani' (1.2 587) expect some kind of demonstration, but instead the peasant places the explosive in his mouth and starts to chew it contentedly. As Franco explains 'il plastico era edibile, con un grato sapore mandorlato' (1.2 587). Franco then goes on to describe the

composition of the saboteur outfit which he leads. They total forty 'protesi anima e corpo alla preparazione ed all'addestramento' hastening to add that Ettore and Johnny should not measure 'gli altri, veri guastatori da questi due presenti, questi erano uomini ... da soma' (1.2 588). For Franco, as for Tito, real partisans are not to be found amongst the peasantry. However, after Johnny and Ettore have been dropped off near their base, Johnny observes his friend's shambling gait. He reflects on how their life in the hills has changed the way the partisans walk 'Essi tutti camminavano ormai come i contadini nativi' (1.2 589), without, that is, any 'ritmo apparente'. The partisans, without noticing it, are beginning to adapt to their environment, they are becoming peasants.

5.3.4.2 Peasants and the partisan movement

Let us turn now to the more vexed question of the peasants attitude to the partisans. As with so many of the principal issues in the work Fenoglio chooses to use the Garibaldi section of the narrative as the place to introduce his theme. During the period of inactivity which follows Johnny's arrival at the Garibaldini base, a number of requisitions take place. The peasants turn over their possessions with 'mani lente, rincesciose di quanto porgevano' (1.2 457). They look at the voucher they have been given as if it were an 'oggetto chimerico' and then, in order to make sure that everybody else suffers the same fate, give precise details and addresses of people able to

provide more, and better, goods. This last detail arouses Johnny's amused irony 'Era la lenta, forcipata nascita della coscienza fiscale in Italia? pensava Johnny.'

Immediately afterwards, the narrative moves on from these general considerations to the description of an actual requisition. The whole scene is carefully designed to bring out the particular nature of the peasant world and the way in which Johnny interprets it. The scene begins with the establishment of eye contact between Johnny and the event: 'scortò il maresciallo a requisire un vitello presso un proprietario' (1.2 457). To Johnny the peasant is 'un epigono dell'antica razza di alta collina' (1.2 457). He is seated 'Abramicamente' in the centre of the kitchen, surrounded by the various generations of women who descend from him. The neologistic adverb 'Abramicamente' has been cited by Beccaria as evidence of the ahistorical nature of the novel. By using Biblical language, the language of another distant time, Fenoglio moves outside the context of the Resistance into a 'tempo grande', and into the world of absolutes. It is very difficult, as I have already stated, to agree with this kind of criticism. 'Abramicamente' is used by Fenoglio to foreground the way Johnny and his eyes interpret reality. To Johnny, the peasant looks like the Old Testament patriarch, untouched by time, the first branch in a massive genealogical tree. Historical experience, for Fenoglio, is not and can never be objectified, but can only be 'seen' and 'transferred' by the subject of the experience itself.¹³ The peasant studies the 'buono' that Mario writes,

takes it into his 'mani sformate' and tears it up. Instantly, Geo is upon him, tightening his silk scarf round his neck. After wavering between 'sdegno' for the brutality of Geo's attack, and 'disgusto' for the peasant's greed, Johnny begins to feel 'pena per la solitudine estrema del vecchio' (1.2 458). It is when the peasant is closest to his own position, that of the man alone, that Johnny feels sympathy for him. Geo releases the peasant, and Mario delivers a lecture on the validity of their vouchers 'garantiti dal popolo italiano, che è poi il tuo popolo' (1.2 458). It is clear that at this point, the peasant does not feel part of the 'popolo italiano'. He is more concerned with protecting his livelihood from outside intruders.

In the early stages of the war the kind of mentality shown during the requisition scene was, as we have seen in the comments of Revelli's peasants, one shared by many others, particularly when the desire to protect valuable commodities was combined with the fear of fascist, or worse German, reprisals. In Il partigiano Johnny Fenoglio provides a series of scenes which illustrate this fear. After their base at Mombarcaro has been surrounded by German forces, Johnny and his companions spend the night in a 'casale'. They are woken the following morning by the sound of gunfire and run across the threshing-floor. The peasant, who has been studying the situation from behind a haystack 'quasi morí a scoprire i partigiani uscendo dalla sua stalla' (1.2 518). He closes his eyes in terror, contemplating his probable 'morte e carbonizzazione' at the hands of the

Germans. Il Biondo runs over to him to ask for some grappa for his men but the peasant shakes his head 'la sua miseria pari al suo terrore'.

During his journey towards the 'azzurri' camp following the rout at Mombarcaro, Johnny stops off at a tavern to buy a bar of chocolate. The female innkeeper looks at him suspiciously, fearing a requisition 'nella disperata muta difesa di un lucro secolare' (1.2 526). When Johnny shows that he is actually going to pay, she is naturally relieved, emerges from her earlier silence and becomes quite talkative. She fills Johnny in on those details of the battle that he was unaware of, describing how many partisans were captured and shot, and how many had escaped with deportation to Germany. It is in this capacity to provide information that the peasant world came into its own during the Resistance. Johnny asks her whether she has any news of Alba, and is shocked to hear that she has never been there, having spent her whole life at the crossroads where the 'osteria' is positioned. As she goes on to explain, her sons have not been to Alba since the 8th September, a fact which causes her much distress as the possibilities for making money on the black market are good 'Ma doveva ammettere di aver procreato dei conigli, i loro coetanei col piccolo rischio di una entrata in Alba accumulavano tanti soldi che le botti non bastavano piú a stivarli tutti' (1.2 527). Again it is the peasant desire to hold onto, or indeed, make money during the Resistance which is the dominant mentality.

After the abortive mortar attack on Alba, one of Johnny's younger partisans is wounded (see above). Johnny decides that they should take him to a nearby farmhouse so that they can see how badly injured he is. They knock several times without response and Johnny eventually manages to get an answer from the terrified peasant inside by speaking to him in dialect. This is an important moment in the book. It is the first time that there is any real communication between a partisan and a peasant. Having assured him that they are not being followed by fascists they are eventually allowed in. Johnny asks the peasant to lend them a cart and an animal to draw it, which he does, though not without a certain rancour 'Io ho tutto quello che dite e ve li do, perche ve le prendereste ugualmente, ma non contate su me come guida' (1.2 620). They transport the injured man through a tunnel and are met at the other side by a group of peasants who have a doctor staying at their house. Once the doctor has confirmed that the partisan is dead, Johnny goes to have a wash. He is watched by an older peasant who comments on his thinness 'Sei magro patriota. E pensare che noi contadini non vi manteniamo mica male' (1.2 623). There are, therefore, occasional signs of sympathy in the Rossi section of the narrative but they are, it has to be said, few and far between.

As was argued in chapter 3, the Alba episode represents the central turning point in the work. And it is during the occupation of Alba that the first signs of co-operation appear. Johnny and his companions are, as we have seen,

billeted at the 'Fattoria di Gambadilegno', owned by a peasant family who are slightly better off than the ones that appear earlier. Throughout their stay, Johnny is pleasantly surprised by the welcome that he and his fellow-partisans receive. Nevertheless, the young male peasants never join the partisan struggle and they demonstrate a 'vigilatissimo sarcasmo oculare' (1.2 652) towards those partisans who are of peasant extraction. The night before the battle of Alba, the 'padrona' prepares a special meal for the partisans and even offers Johnny the chance to sleep in one of her sons' beds, an offer which Johnny refuses.

During the early part of the long 'rastrellamento' section of Il partigiano Johnny, Pierre's outfit is given a hearty meal by a character whose importance grows as the novel develops 'la vecchia delle Langhe'. She is later arrested by the fascists for her collaboration with the partisans and it is in her house that Johnny spends most of the winter. This archetypal mother figure could easily be interpreted as an exemplary peasant, exposing herself to great risks for the sake of the partisans and eventually paying a heavy price for her support. Nevertheless, her motives are suspect. Pierre describes how, according to a special arrangement with Nord, she is paid down to the last 'centesimo' at the end of every month. And when she asks two partisans to help her catch the animals that will provide that evening's food, her eyes light up when Pierre announces that he will be paying for everything generously, immediately, and *in cash*.

Following the 'rastrellamento', during which they are frequently pointed in the right direction or warned of the presence of the enemy by peasants, Johnny and his companions sleep in a barn. The following morning a young peasant wakes them up and his wife provides food for them. Meanwhile, the peasant keeps watch. It is difficult to see in this character anything but a genuine sympathy for the partisans. Indeed he explicitly declares that 'i fascisti non mi vanno' (1.2 777).

As the winter continues so Johnny's relationship with the peasants continues to improve. It is in this section of the book that it is possible to detect a kind of 'weak' populism. One morning Johnny is witness to a heated exchange between two partisans and a deputation of peasants. The peasants wish to clear the roads of snow so that they can protect their livelihoods, whereas the two partisans, Ivan and Luis, want the snow to be left as it is, so as to prevent enemy access. Eventually the peasants are sent back home to the sound of Ivan and Luis' insults. Shortly afterwards a groups of peasants arrive at Johnny's door to make the same request. Unlike Ivan and Luis, Johnny assents to the request and the following morning even offers to help: 'desideroso di lavorare con loro, di unirsi a capofitto in quell'opera delle opere, così primitiva e perfettamente umana' (1.2 849). This desire to participate in a kind of primitive labour, and the ironic glances that the peasants give Johnny, is a reworking of one of the most famous scenes of Tolstoy's Anna Karenin when Levin, to the

amusement of his serfs, helps to harvest the wheat on his estate.

Another example of this kind of intertextuality occurs when Johnny suffers a crisis of doubt about his mission, only to be brought to his senses by a peasant:

Mossero insieme e abreast, Johnny avvertendo un briciolo di calore per essere stato chiamato "partigiano". C'era, restava gente per la quale egli era sempre un partigiano, e lui si sentiva non piú tale? Lentamente, lentamente si reinquadrava. (1.2 868)

The rediscovery of the meaning of existence in the presence of, and indeed because of a peasant, recalls Levin's discovery, at the end of Anna Karenin, of the meaning of life in the simple religiosity of a peasant. Similarly, the scene in Il partigiano Johnny invokes the figure of Platon Karataev, the peasant who reveals so much to Pierre in the later stages of War and Peace. Again, the notion that Fenoglio was cut off from mainstream European culture, living in an English world of his own, has to be questioned. The broad intertextuality of Il partigiano Johnny which has been highlighted in this study is evidence enough of Fenoglio's cultural pluralism.

The final and probably most important episode involving a peasant in Il partigiano Johnny concerns the tracking down and execution of a fascist spy by Johnny. Several partisans have already been killed in mysterious circumstances during the winter section of the narrative when a peasant tells

Johnny that his farmhouse has been visited by a mysterious 'venditore ambulante'. The fact that he spoke Italian, and not dialect, allows Johnny to surmise that the 'venditore ambulante' is, in fact, a spy. In the penultimate chapter of Pj1, set at an indeterminate time before the reformation of the partisan forces prior to the battle of Valdivilla, the peasant who had first discovered the spy rushes up to Johnny to tell him that he has been sighted again. Johnny borrows the peasant's cloak, confronts the man in question and promptly guns him down. There follows a brief conversation with the peasant, but the chapter is unfinished, ending with the word 'ma'. The elimination of the spy is thus largely dependent on the peasant's role as a kind of guide figure. The fact that his name is Anselmo, the name of Robert Jordan's peasant guide in For whom the bell tolls underlines his significance.

5.3.5 Conclusion

The depiction of the peasantry in Il partigiano Johnny is, therefore, frequently dependent on literary models and precedents. Yet, the literariness of this presentation is, as I have stressed before, part of the rhetoric of the work. As Giuseppe Bussignana, one of the Langhe peasants interviewed by Revelli states, Fenoglio's is an historical literature :

Leggo tanto la storia, la storia dell'Italia e dell'Europa, una storia che fa pietà a una pietra ... Ho letto Pavese e Fenoglio, anche quella è storia, storia nostra. (Revelli 1977, 161)

5.4. Death

5.4.1 Introduction

In his most recent contribution to the historiography of the Italian Resistance, Quazza invites scholars to analyse the subject of death in the works of the memorialisti (see Quazza 1988 p.482). In this chapter, therefore, we will examine the theme of death in Il partigiano Johnny, a work which, as argued in chapter 2, is the most successful example of this kind of writing. This chapter also serves to question one of the principal arguments of the proponents of the 'metahistorical' thesis: that the massive presence of death in Fenoglio's writings is evidence of his universal concerns.

Whereas for earlier sections of this chapter there existed a good deal of historiography on the relevant subject, in the case of death in the Resistance there is nothing in the way of a systematic analysis of this issue. The lettere dei condannati a morte della Resistenza provide many moving final testimonies, but do not, for obvious reasons, tell us anything about, say, the fear of death in combat or what it felt like to shoot someone. Similarly, the monumental studies which have been written by the French historians Philippe Ariès and Michel Vovelle are highly stimulating, but are more concerned with everyday attitudes to death, than with death in the context of war. There is, therefore, very little available material against which to measure the

success or failure of Fenoglio's treatment of death in Il partigiano Johnny. For this reason, it is proposed to analyse how Fenoglio copes with this issue in two of his earlier works: VGA and PdS. This will allow us to see how his fictional treatment of this complex topic develops over time, receiving its most convincing and sustained analysis in Il partigiano Johnny.

5.4.2 Death in works preceding Il partigiano Johnny

5.4.2.1 VGA

The title story of the collection contains very little in the way of death. A grazing cow is accidentally shot; during the battle there is a brief description of the last moments of a Fascist officer whose 'due mani non gli bastavano piú per tamponarsi il sangue che gli usciva da parecchi punti della divisa' (2. 238), and a laconic comment about the 'vento di pallottole' which stripped the leaves off the bushes and 'fece naturalmente dei morti, ma non tanti' (2. 239). The strong sense of narratorial irony thus precludes any serious considerations on death.

After the first story there is a move away from the earlier carnival atmosphere. A more serious tone sets in, though certain linguistic indications indicate that the narrator is still the popular voice of 'I ventitré giorni'. It is significant, however, that despite the general decrease in humour, at particularly important moments in the stories (as

we shall see usually during a description of death) the ironic narratorial voice re-emerges.

'L'andata', the second story in the collection, describes an ill-conceived and amateurishly executed sortie into the hills near Alba by a group of partisans. After they have captured a fascist officer, they pass by a graveyard where Tom, a one-time partisan, lies buried, and hear the sound of the hooves of the fascist cavalry. The action then moves rapidly and events are seen through the eyes of Negus, who shoots the captured fascist, and starts to flee up a grassy slope: 'Ma appena ci posò i piedi, capí che quello era il piú traditore dei pendii. L'erba nascondeva il fango' (2255). The topos of the slippery slope has already appeared in the previous story but then it was an occasion for comic possibilities, with partisans slipping and falling on top of each other as though they were in a scene from a slapstick comedy. In this story, however, the slope leads to death. Nonetheless, the intratextual echo inevitably calls into question the seriousness of the narratorial viewpoint. Negus desperately climbs up the slope, using his elbows, turning round only to see that Bimbo and Colonello are already dead. He then tries to defend Treno and Biagino but they too are soon shot. Immediately afterwards Negus is fatally wounded and he feels his mouth fill with vomit. The trail of death ends with him rolling down the slope and landing at the feet of an enemy officer, another intratextual echo of the falling partisans in the previous story. Clearly these signposting techniques invite the stories to be compared.

Both are characterised by the ludic nature of the partisans behaviour, but in 'L'andata' there are serious casualties (all the partisans are killed) whereas in 'I ventitré giorni', as we have seen, death plays only a minor role. Yet, in 'L'andata' as in 'I ventitré giorni' the issue of death is never really dealt with head on. The cumulative effect of the negative depiction of the partisans, the ironic 'distant' stand-point of the narrator, the intratextual references to comic events in the previous story, and the grotesque detail with which the story ends, is to deflect the reader's sympathy away from the plight of the partisans involved. Yet, despite the presence of these distancing techniques, Fenoglio himself does seem to be trying to make some serious points. Although the partisans behave as though they are at play, the events in the story illustrate that their games are, in fact, very serious indeed. Marziano Guglielminetti's observation that it is striking how many of Fenoglio's partisans die during an 'attentato che hanno disposto con tanta cura' as though the author wished to underline 'l'arbitrarietà di ogni calcolo e la facoltà di ritorsione che è nelle cose e negli oggetti ritenuti sfruttabili dall'uomo' (Guglielminetti 1969, 869) seems potentially applicable to this story. Yet, the 'serious voice' of Fenoglio which Guglielminetti correctly perceives remains hidden behind his popular narrator.¹⁴ Fenoglio's views are kept in the background and any comments or observations that he has to make about death are either lost or obscured. There are, as we have already seen earlier on in this study, unreconciled technical tensions in

Fenoglio's early stories. In particular, the problem of too much 'distance' (see above) is applicable. The distance brought about by the narrator's irony means that the story does not, indeed cannot squarely confront the reality of death. It is, therefore difficult to agree with Guglielminetti's suggestion that there is a problem of a 'tabú della morte' in Fenoglio's works which prevents him from abandoning himself 'compiutamente alla sua istintiva vocazione di cantastorie beffardo della Resistenza' (Guglielminetti 1969, 866). The problem in the stories is really the reverse - the 'cantastorie beffardo' and Fenoglio *compete* for narratorial space to the detriment of the artistic unity of the story. The plurality of narrating voices in this and other early works end up drowning each other out. A lack of technical focus detracts from the stories potential to analyse the problem of death.

Leaving these technical consideration aside 'L'andata' is also significant for the fact that, although it is the second story in VGA, it is the last story which deals with the subject of death in combat. Apart from 'Gli inizi del partigiano Raoul', in which nobody dies,¹⁵ all the rest of the stories deal with the issue of death by execution. 'Il trucco' details, as we have seen, the dubious behaviour of a partisan execution squad. The execution, however, is only described obliquely (for more details of how this deflection is achieved see above). What Fenoglio is really interested in is analysing the *partisans'* callous attitude rather than that of the condemned man. Hence, after lamenting that they

have been tricked by their leader, they are comforted to learn that before he died his victim had wet himself 'Moro non deve aver goduto granchè a fucilare uno che prima si piscia addosso' (2 262).

The later story 'Il vecchio Blister' recounts the execution of a partisan by his fellow-partisans. Blister, the protagonist of the story, is accused of having committed armed robbery at a local farmhouse. In contrast to 'Il trucco', in which none of the inner impressions or emotions of the convicted man are revealed, indeed we only catch a fleeting glimpse of him, we are given access to Blister's thoughts throughout the story. However, his thoughts never really turn to death, as he attempts to convince himself that the sentence is really a practical joke played on him by his comrades in order to scare him into wetting himself. It is only at the very last moment that he realises the truth 'Corse avanti colle mani protese come a tappar la bocca dell'arma di Set e cosí i primi colpi gli bucarono le mani' (2 293). As in 'L'andata' and 'Il trucco', the grotesque ending of the story and the ironic attitude of the narrator ('Blister afferrò quel rumore e capí ed emise un mugolio che fanno gli idioti che han sempre la bocca spalancata' (2 293)) force the reader away from identifying sympathetically with the victim and oblige her/him instead to consider the moral complexities of the situation. Blister's relatively late realisation that he is going to die again means that there is no real treatment or analysis of how he felt in the face of death. For this we have to

wait until the last partisan story in the collection 'Un altro muro'. The story was originally entitled 'Raffica a lato', and as Soletti has demonstrated it underwent a number of significant changes during the process of revision. In particular, Soletti notes how from the first version which 'segue a distanza un evento di cui è dichiarata fin dall'inizio la natura' there is a change in the second version towards 'una scrittura focalizzante' (Soletti, 1987, 32). This shift in perspective is consonant with the techniques that Fenoglio employs in Il partigiano Johnny. The revision of the short story would thus appear to mark a point of transition in Fenoglio's narrative technique. It is a kind of bridge between Fenoglio's early stories and his later masterpiece.

'Un altro muro' places a communist and a Badoglian in the same cell the night before their execution. During a moment of crisis occasioned by fears of death and its horror, Max (the Badoglian) rounds on the communist and questions him about the sense of their sacrifice: 'Tu te la senti di morire per l'idea? Io no. E poi che idea? Se ti cerchi dentro, tu te la trovi l'idea? Io no. E nemmeno tu' (2 306). Fortunately a priest intercedes on Max's behalf and he is spared. He merely has to suffer the indignity of wetting himself at a mock execution designed to teach him a lesson. The communist standing next to him is not so lucky. He is shot. In a highly unconvincing interpretation of this story Di Paolo has suggested that it is about the tragic nature of human life. A more convincing reading of the story would be

that under extreme conditions any notion of altruism gives way to existential egotism, and that ultimately politics determines who lives or dies.

5.4.2.1.1 Conclusion to VGA

Death, then, appears, in some shape or form, in all of the partisan stories in VGA. Its function is, however, mobile. Whilst it is certainly not introduced for purely narrative purposes, it is only in the later stories that Fenoglio begins to show any real interest in man before death, and this is only limited. In the earlier racconti he is more concerned with ethical issues (partisan justice) and with the incompetence of the partisans themselves. In order to complete this survey of death in Fenoglio's early works let us now move to his first attempt at writing a novel, PDS.

5.4.2.2 Paqa del sabato

Set, not in the period 1943-1945, but in the immediate post-war, PDS depicts the problems encountered by a disaffected partisan, Ettore, as he struggles to re-adapt to the society that he had left behind for the Resistance. Unable to hold down a steady job he eventually decides to join Palmo and Bianco, both one-time Resistance fighters, who earn their living from theft and extortion. After a successful career as a petty gangster he decides to settle down, marry Vanda, his pregnant girlfriend and set up a legitimate business running a petrol station. His hopes for a comfortable future

are, however, dashed when, in the novel's rapid denouement, he is crushed to death by a lorry.

PDS has, for the most part, been interpreted by critics as an investigation into the problem of 'reducismo'. Indeed, the almost evangelical zeal with which Fenoglio encouraged Einaudi to publish the novel (he spoke of a 'morale necessità') would appear to give authorial confirmation to the generally accepted interpretation. However, there is a strong existential undercurrent to the novel which critics have so far overlooked, surprisingly so given the tendency of scholars, as we have seen, to dwell on such issues and conclude that the historical setting of Fenoglio's works is of little or no importance. Thus throughout, PdS is characterised by images of illness, physical decay and mortality. The opening sentence refers to a bottle of liniment which Ettore's father uses every evening when he returns from work, and as the novel progresses so Ettore becomes increasingly aware of his father's decline. The night before he himself is killed, Ettore listens to his father's snoring, and rather than thinking about the girl he is due to marry and who will bear his child 'pensò alla morte di suo padre' (2 220). Similarly, his mother suffers from a liver complaint and continually complains about the price of the injections that she has to administer to herself. Other characters are worse off. In an early scene, Ettore and his gangster associates visit a one-time fascist sympathiser who suffers from 'il morbo di Basedow'. When they confront him and Ettore brandishes his pistol before

his swollen face, he promptly collapses and dies from a heart-attack. Towards the end of the novel the gang leader Bianco's mother dies and he is unable to eat meat for some time afterwards. In another episode, the chemist, Faraone, who is tricked into accompanying the gangsters on a mission to obtain cocaine, believes that Ettore is going to take him to his sister who is dying of diabetes. But, as Faraone wistfully recounts 'si è uccisa lei, non si è curata lei che poteva ... Non si è curata, ha lasciato che il diabete le aprisse le piaghe' (2 179). However, realising the inappropriateness of this tale of misery, he stops 'Basta, voi siete giovani e queste miserie non sono per voi' (2 179). However, as Fenoglio is keen to point out, it is not just the old and the decrepit who fall ill and die. As I have already mentioned, Ettore is crushed by a lorry at the prime of his life, clearly suggesting that chance plays a significant part in matters of life and death. In a similar vein, at the beginning of the third chapter Ettore meets the 'invalido Baracca', crippled in an industrial accident and now forced to earn his living as a beggar, exchanging alms for horoscope cards, an obvious early reference to the role of fate in human affairs.

Death and illness are therefore, as in VGA, ever-present in PDS. What, though, is their precise function? In fact, rather than speaking of one function, it is more accurate to speak of functions. In one sense, the references have an obvious symbolic rather than 'literal' significance. They are indices of the malaise afflicting post-war Italian

society, a common enough literary conceit (consider, for example, the topos of death and illness in Proust's Recherche, Mann's Der Zauberberg and Svevo's La coscienza di Zeno). In another sense, the repeated references to death do indeed serve to underline man's basic mortality. But, I would suggest that their employment should be understood in the light of the manner that Fenoglio overlays them, as we shall see, with Ettore's own morbid obsession with death as *generated* by his experience of the Resistance. Fenoglio establishes a model of the human condition, or at least constantly reminds us that we are all mortal, in order to show how historical circumstances worsened the situation.

Following the argument with his mother with which the novel opens, Ettore sets out to look at the progress of work on the town's drainage system. He smells the earth that is being dug up, an 'odore di lombrichi e di fiori marciti' that is similar to 'l'odore del cimitero quando ci andava il due di novembre' (2 126). In the early stages of the novel this obsession with death appears in a variety of different circumstances. For example, in a flash-back to an episode which occurred before the beginning of the novel, Vanda recalls how Ettore had wanted to make love as close to the river as possible so that the spirits of the drowned could watch them, and when she had refused he had beaten her. The motives for Ettore's morbid request are not touched on during the analepsis, yet it is clear that it is a direct result of his partisan experience. Likewise, on his first night as a gangster he contemplates his victim's face and

reflects that it was, above all, the eyes of the people killed during the war that had fascinated him. He constantly relates his present experience to the past. He is unable to break free from the psychological trauma of the Resistance. In a later scene, Ettore recounts a harrowing dream in which he came face to face with a German soldier who raised his automatic weapon in order to shoot him. When Ettore's pistol had failed to function properly the enemy soldier had, initially, burst out laughing and then pursued him through the barracks in which the encounter took place. Eventually, Ettore was forced to jump out of the window in order to escape: 'Alla fine ho dovuto gettarmi giù dall'ultimo piano della caserma. Mi sono svegliato, ma stavo male e non mi sono piú riaddormentato'(2 181). After this account of his dream, Ettore has no further thoughts on death until the penultimate chapter, when he is invited to the unveiling of a stone to the memory of the partisans who died at the battle of Valdivilla. Rather than honouring their sacrifice, Ettore reflects on the futility of their deaths:

Fissava il cippo e diceva mentalmente: - Che sbaglio avete fatto, ragazzi. Mi odio, mi darei un pugno in testa se penso che anch'io mi son messo tante volte nel pericolo di fare il vostro sbaglio - . E tremò, lí, di colpo, come se gli si fosse parato davanti un pericolo di morte cosí preciso ed avanzato che il terrore era già agonia e come sotto i piedi si sentisse aprirsi la terra della collina pronta per il suo cadavere. (2 201-202)

Indeed, it is this memory of his dead companions and how close he himself came to death which convinces him that he should leave the gang and pursue a normal existence. That he

should die in a freak accident reflects Fenoglio's deep scepticism about the rebirth of Italy. Ettore's death therefore combines the two functions of death in the novel. It has a symbolic as well as a literal function.

The treatment of death is, therefore, much different in PdS than it is in VGA. In the novel, Fenoglio is more interested in the psychological trauma brought about by daily exposure to killing than in the moral questions which occupy much of VGA. Yet, he never really develops this issue to its full potential. His use of death as a symbol of post-war malaise also indicates that, if he does not use it as a source of narrative gambits, then he is willing to exploit its literary potential in other areas. Still missing from his Resistance works is a convincing and sustained analysis of the experience of the *reality of man before death*. The problem that Fenoglio seems to encounter in these early works is that literature and death do not appear to be able to function symbiotically. Ultimately he found a solution in Il partigiano Johnny by combining literature and death through the technique of 'seeing' and 'transferring'. The literariness of his representation of death is then sanctioned by the literary nature of Johnny's experience of the world. The tension is, therefore, not resolved, but becomes one of the main dynamics of the work.

5.4.3 Death in Il partigiano Johnny

Johnny's first comments on death occur in an early chapter of Pb1. His fellow-student, Italo Morra, is killed during an allied bombing raid on Turin and Johnny expresses the fear that he might die in a similar fashion, leaving behind nothing of himself 'nemmeno un racconto'. His fears thus connect the themes of death and literature at a very early stage in the narrative. At this point in his life, death is seen more as an obstacle to the pursuit of a literary career than as an end to life. It is not the fear of death's existential emptiness that troubles Johnny, but the anxiety that he might leave behind a literary void.

When he returns home after the 8th September, Johnny seeks information about the friends he had left behind. All are alive and well with the exception of Gege who had committed suicide. Although this character does not appear in Pb1 he was clearly a significant influence on Johnny's development:

Cosí, Gege; l'assurdo veterinario, l'uomo che l'aveva istradato al dream-boyness, nessuno piú vi sarebbe stato, dopo Gege, che corresse con le braccia ad ali di gabbiano. (my italics 1.2. 391)

It was, therefore, Gege who was responsible for the early definition of Johnny's character (and, by extension, the nature of the book itself). Gege's death, and above all the manner of it ('la famiglia sosteneva che era caduto in guerra, ma da tutti si sapeva che era finito suicida, s'era sparato in bocca') would suggest the dramatic end of an era, a time for Johnny, that is, to exit from his 'dream state' and enter the real world. Instead, as we know (see above)

Johnny initially retreats to the hills with his books, only to subsequently decide that he must join the partisans and abandon his pretensions to a literary life.¹⁶

As Johnny sets out for the hills following his decision to join the partisans he feels '*investito - nor death itself would have been divestiture - in nome dell'autentico popolo d'Italia, ad opporsi in ogni modo al fascismo*' (my italics 1.2. 437). He accepts the possibility of his death, but thinks that his country merits the sacrifice. This passage has been much quoted and much praised by critics (see, for example, Jacomuzzi (1980)) but it has not yet, I feel, been fully understood. Its true, ironic, significance can only be really apprehended retrospectively, or during a second reading when the reader has a fuller knowledge of Johnny's partisan experiences. Thus, Johnny's idealised expectations of the partisans are shattered when he comes across his first group of them (see above 'The Red and the Blue'). More importantly, he is forced to question his earlier notions of how sweet it is to die for his own country when a Sicilian partisan is killed in a bizarre accident on the way to the base at Mombarcaro. A hook swings erratically in the back of the lorry that the partisans are travelling in, two of them dive out of the way but a third, sitting opposite Johnny, is not so fortunate and '*la sponda del rimorchio gli atterrò sulla schiena*' (1.2 443).¹⁷ After a brief discussion, it is decided to leave the dead man where he is, and deal with him the following morning. His boots and rifle are delicately removed '*con una pietà riguardosa eppur decisa*' (1.2. 443)

and the lorry sets off again, leaving Johnny to reflect that 'nei partigiani non si moriva soltanto per i fascisti, e la cosa lo congelò piú che il vento vilissimo e già pieno notturno' (1.2. 443). Indeed, travelling in a lorry to Carrú shortly afterwards Johnny comes close to suffering such a fate. The customary bumpy ride causes a partisan to land on him and inadvertently put the point of his gun to his neck. When all is back to normal, Johnny notices that the gun in question does not have its safety catch on (see 1.2. 468).

The theme of accidental death resurfaces frequently in Il partigiano Johnny, with several other characters dying in a non-combat situation. There follows a list of such deaths in the order that they occur in the text:¹⁸

1. An unnamed English officer - 'schiacciato da un autocarro partigiano coi freni infranti' (1.2. 553)
2. Kyra and several other partisans - blown up whilst testing an improvised 'lanciabombe'.
3. An unnamed partisan - 'orribilmente bucato da 2 colpi di 20 m.m.' (1.2. 683) which are shot from an allied aeroplane.
4. Paul who inadvertently shoots himself - 'Sedendosi sulla poltrona del barbiere, la sua pistola fuori sicura scattò e lo ferí al ventre contattante, in rapida morte...(1.2 718)
5. Major Hope, the leader of the English mission, shot when he goes to shake hands with Pascal - the latter's sten 'goes off, with a humorous click, right into the Major's belly (1. 211)

By regularly distributing these accidental deaths through the novel, Fenoglio constantly reminds the reader of Johnny's earlier thoughts when confronted by the death of the Sicilian: it was not just the enemy who were responsible

for partisan deaths, the enemy, all too frequently were the partisans themselves.

Needless to say, though, the majority of deaths in Il partigiano Johnny occur during combat, or are a result of it. And in contrast to his earlier works Fenoglio shows considerable interest in the moment of death:

In quel momento partí la raffica dal mitra del Biondo: breve, essenziale e decisiva, il maresciallo si piegò senza attriti, planò morbidamente sulla ghiaia tinnante (1.2. 471).

La raffica, una earl raffica, una prince raffica, esplose da dietro la propaggine del castello. Tito cadde fulminato (1.2. 479)

Valodkia è morto. Ce l'abbiamo lasciato. Una palla nella fronte. (1.2. 507)

Il ferito reeled ora, ed il rantolo s'era ingrassato e acutizzato ... il ferito diede un brevissimo cough e Johnny voltatosi fulmineamente gli vide sulla faccia la fulminea sigillatezza della morte. (1.2. 622)

Non vedo quello calvo, con il fratello in Isvizzera. - Morto. L'ho lasciato dietro, fra i muri ... Un'incredibile pallottola che ha indovinato la feritoia. (1.2. 700)

i fascisti rafficarono tutt'insieme, il marmocchio stridette, Ivan e Louis urlarono, urlarono i fascisti. Il marmocchio era già sulla neve, squassando il suo nero corpicino, ma Ivan e Louis stavano ancora eretti, le loro ginocchia cedendo solo a gradi ... i due partigiani stettero flat e still sulla neve dura. (1.2. 890)

il caricatore di Johnny si esauriva a velocità astrale: piombò giù con il mezzo, scalciò his last fra le ruote. (1.2. 904)

l'automatico riandava a loro, e Franco inciampò nel suo fuoco, morto stecchito (1.2 921)

l'automatico risparmiò e l'uomo a fianco di Pierre, Sergio, sussultò e stette fermo per sempre. (1.2. 922)

What is striking about these descriptions is the manner in which the victims take such a short time to die, indeed, quite simply, they just *die*. There are no severed limbs, spilt entrails, or screams of agony. The grotesque images which we normally associate with death in modern warfare are largely absent from Il partigiano Johnny. This absence can be accounted for by the DSR of the work. In other words, the image of the heroic, literary, death is within Johnny's eyes. In order to illustrate this point let us now look at the most obvious literary death in the work, that of the sergeant Michele which occurs during the battle of Alba. Realising that Michele has been killed, Johnny goes up to him in order to inspect the corpse. He studies the point where the bullet had penetrated the head and watches the blood as it mixes with the torrential rain. He then takes steps to shelter the body from the elements and pushes it headfirst under a suitable slab of concrete, thus protecting the 'piú nobile parte' from the 'pioggia verminosa' (1.2. 699). The juxtaposition of corpse and elements has many literary precedents, but the model for this scene is clearly the famous Bonconte da Montefeltro episode in Purgatory where ''l pregno aere in acqua si converse' (Purg. V. 118) and carried the great warrior's corpse down to the Arno (replaced in Il partigiano Johnny by the Tanaro). This borrowing from another work of literature might initially be seen as a deflection from a depiction of the reality of the event. Yet, as I argued in chapter 2, it is the rhetoric of Il partigiano Johnny which accounts for the literariness of

this episode. Most of the time, though, Johnny does not stop to consider the authenticity or otherwise of his reading of reality. The death of Michele, however, causes him to think twice. Thus, when he looks back at the battlefield, he initially feels that it is all 'un vorticoso sogno, e nulla realtà (1.2. 703) only to swiftly change his mind:

Ma non era un sogno, per i fascisti non era un sogno, e non era un sogno la morte di Michele, ed il suo cadavere, in qualche posto laggiú nei rolling vapori, mezzo sepolto in perfunctory tomba. (1.2. 703)

As Il partigiano Johnny reaches its final chapters in UrPi there is a shift away from the literary presentation of death. It is almost as if Johnny's daily exposure to mortality has anaesthetized both him and his imagination. Accordingly, the descriptions that Fenoglio offers have a rather grim, bloody quality. Consider the following two examples:

From the uncrumbling dust-cloud some people pushed forth, straddling in explosive intoxication; then all to fall under timely, careful bren-fire. Two women gushed forth ... The first one stumbled upon bren-fire, and the second was hit too, clearly into her breasts, and she rolled down, and the officer was bending himself and revolver to coup-grace her in summa pity, when his gesture was trunkated from a definitive, sealing whirl of bren (1.1 123)

and now he stood, smiling and oscillating, at 8 steps from Johnny, who sighed and at him pulled twice his carbine's trigger. But nobody saw him falling, for a plastic stumbled at his cedent feet and erased him to nothing. There was no yelling any longer, but the plastic went down and up still at the blazing, corpses shrinking skeletons ... too much, too much plastic. (1.1 155)

At the same time, though, Johnny begins to fear his own death much more in this section than he did previously. When he set out to join the partisans, Johnny was able, as we have already seen, to accept with relative calm the possibility that he might die for his country. Having been prepared for death throughout the greater part of the struggle, Johnny's attitude undergoes a notable shift as the end of the war approaches. The closer the end of the struggle becomes, the more Johnny fears that he might be killed 'Well the Montemagro fear was almost nothing vis-a-vis the foreseen fear of the end. - I can't absolutely die in those days, the last days, my life can't afford it' (1345).

Unfortunately, however, UrPj breaks off in mid-sentence. Upon inspection the manuscript evidence would suggest that there did once exist further material, but we can only guess as to what such material contained. Bigazzi has suggested that Johnny is accidentally killed at the end of UrPj, his English officer's uniform being mistaken for that of an enemy officer. I find this suggestion persuasive, particularly in the light of the importance of the accidental death theme highlighted above. Furthermore, by killing off Johnny, Fenoglio then allows himself to be born as the 1950s writer predicted in the crucial 'preface' scene in UrPj. If Bigazzi's hypothesis is correct, Johnny's death allows him, paradoxically, to live a second 'life in

literature' in the work which has been the object of this study: Il partigiano Johnny.

Notes to chapter 5

1 Longo was the head of military operations for the PCI.

2 Another important work published in the 1950s is Kogan (1956). Of the many works published in the 1960s see Vaccarino (1966) and Bocca (1966).

3 The problem of adequate arms is a frequent topos in the early partisan section of Il partigiano Johnny. See, for example 1.2 467: 'erano così male armati, erano così disarmati che esisteva un'arma ogni due-tre uomini, se la passavano a turno'. An expedition to the military deposit at Carrù improves the situation, but not enough to arm all the new partisans 'il più attrezzato dei quali si presentava con uno scacciacani' (1.2 474).

4 Many of the early formations were indeed crushed in the opening part of 1944. For more detailed comments see Giovana (1962) pp. 52-53. Giovana is also frank about the tactical errors made during this period: 'i partigiani avevano combattuto con coraggio infliggendo al nemico gravi perdite; ma l'impianto tattico della guerriglia aveva rivelato lacune spesso puerili, improvvisazioni disastrose, poca coesione nei reparti e ristrettezza di criteri nei comandi' (Giovana 1962, 52).

5 Johnny uses the same adjective to describe the naive view that the citizens of Alba have of the partisans (see above). By then he has discovered the extent of his original misconceptions.

6 A number of other historians and 'memorialisti' have shown that relations between the various forces in Piedmont were difficult. Giovana, in his history of the CLN in Piedmont, reflects that 'Le dispute concorrenziali causavano continui episodi incresciosi' (Giovana 1962, 100). Autonomous 'memorialisti' do not deal at length with the issue. Mauri refers obliquely to suggestions that there was a 'mancanza di unità e di solidarietà reale fra le varie correnti' (Mauri 1947, 9) but argues that he was never aware of any problems of this nature.

7 This neglect was not, however, common to many of Italy's post-war writers who, in Absalom's words 'retrieved disturbing images of a peasant Italy distrustful of or indifferent to or ambiguously mobilised by anti-fascists and Fascists alike' (Absalom 1989, 172).

8 Battaglia's explanation for the reasons behind this initial hospitality is, however, very difficult to accept 'Si era fatto ... ciò che si desiderava che fosse stato, nel grande mondo ignoto, al di là dei confini dell'orizzonte, per il proprio figlio' (Battaglia 1964, 181).

9 Battaglia's exaggerations are, however, slight when compared to the hyperbole of A. Co (Alessandro Colotti) in the Enciclopedia dell'antifascismo e della Resistenza (see Colotti 1968, 664-666).

10 Quazza offers lucid comments on the subject (see Quazza 1976, 138-141). Other contributions I have found useful and convincing are Castronovo (1977) pp.556-562, Paola Corti (1978) pp.682-708 and Absalom (1980) (less useful is Absalom (1989), which is too provocatively sceptical). An important article which predates the recent flurry of scholarship by a number of years is Legnani (1965), which deals at length with the black market in the 'zone libere'.

11 For further comments on Revelli's work (and on the methodological problems behind the investigation of the peasant question) see Absalom (1984) and also the reply to this article De Luna (1985).

12 Some consideration must also be given to the role of the peasants under fascism. More than any sector of Italian society, the peasants suffered heavy losses during the First World War. Nonetheless, the Fascists' attempt to gain their support in the wake of the post-war 'betrayal' was largely a failure; the peasants remained as indifferent to the State as they always had done. Given this continued peasant separation from political events, it is therefore hardly surprising that they did not wholeheartedly assist the Resistance.

13 Later examples of a similar nature are a large farmhouse 'buona per impiegare mezza la famiglia di Abramo' (1.2 623) and the peasants behaviour before the Vicario: 'i contadini ... guarnivano il loro sentiero, principalmente inchinandosi al Vicario, sicchè la scena acquisiva per Johnny un preminente aspetto di vecchio ordine medievale' (1.2 676).

14 Another index of Fenoglio's presence behind the story is the 'literary' manner in which the Fascist cavalry are presented (i.e. the iconography of death arriving on horseback).

15 During the first night that he is with the partisan group that he joins, Raoul does, however, dream that he is executed by the enemy. However, it is not death itself which is his main preoccupation, but the prospect of being executed alongside people that he considers rough and coarse.

16 See 'The Red and the Blue' for an analysis of the process which leads to Johnny's decision. In the context of this chapter it is worth reiterating the importance of the scene in which Johnny reproaches a man for beating a carabinieri, only to be told that other carabinieri were responsible for the death of the assailant's father. Johnny's reaction underlines the idea that death and literature are incompatible:

La cosa pugnalò Johnny, facendolo apparire a se stesso come un uomo non fatto di carne e di sangue, *ma fatto come un compensato di fibre di fogli di libro* (my italics 1.2. 431)

17 Fenoglio used this passage in the published novel Pbl. The scene, though, is significantly reworked and, instead of being killed, the Sicilian lands face down on a block of lard.

18 This list does not include other near-death incidents (e.g. Johnny is involved in another road accident on the way to Nord's base, a partisan exhibiting his weapon to a woman at Santo Stefano accidentally fires a shot 'miracolosamente innocuo in quella ressa' (1.2 582) and during a card game Renè inadvertently shoots and badly injures three of his comrades who are only saved by the timely intervention of a doctor (see 1.2 509-510).

CONCLUSION

From the opening sentence of Il partigiano Johnny when Johnny is woken by the sound of the siren in the June night it is him, and his eyes, that we follow. We see him as an adolescent living under the baleful influence of the Fascist regime, as a soldier in the 'regio esercito', and then as a partisan, at first as a 'garibaldino' and subsequently as a 'badogliano'.

Il partigiano Johnny is not, as this study has hoped to show, the story of *the* Resistance, but the story of Johnny's Resistance, the story of one man's reactions to the specific events and issues of a particular historical epoch. Yet this concentration on the figure of Johnny leads us into a problem. How can the story of one man, rather than that of a class or a generation, be authentically historical?¹

This is a crucial issue which has not been addressed by the few critics who have seen Fenoglio's designs in Il partigiano Johnny as being historical. And it is one which this study has not so far addressed. In the following paragraphs a solution to this impasse is offered by drawing on the historical theory and methodology of the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg.

Carlo Ginzburg's Il formaggio e i vermi is the first, and best known, example of what came to be known as 'microhistory'. In the book Ginzburg offers a microscopic

study of an individual in his historical context - in this case the Friulian miller Menocchio, burnt at the stake for heretical beliefs. In his preface to the book, Ginzburg explains why he turned to this particular type of historical enquiry. Ginzburg begins by analysing the successes and failures of a number of studies dedicated to popular culture, or to use Gramsci's phrase, the culture of the 'subaltern classes'. Fascinating though these comments are, we shall concentrate on sections 7. and 8. of Ginzburg's preface, as it is here where his considerations on his 'microhistorical' approach begin.

Ginzburg introduces his discussion of his approach by suggesting that it is legitimate to ask: 'che rilevanza possano avere, su un piano generale, le idee e le credenze di un singolo individuo [Menocchio] del suo livello sociale'. As he is writing at a time 'in cui interi équipes di studiosi si lanciano in imprese vastissime di storia quantitativa delle idee o di storia religiosa seriale' he reflects that his idea to 'proporre un'indagine capillare su un mugnaio può sembrare paradossale o assurdo: quasi un ritorno al telaio a mano in un'età di telai automatici' (Ginzburg 1976, XIX). Ginzburg's response is to argue, in section 8 of his preface, that the type of history of collective mentalities practised by many leading French social historians (the 'équipes' referred to above) is just too abstract and schematic. Ginzburg does not wish to deny the legitimacy of the 'histoire des mentalités' approach, but suggests that all too frequently its practitioners fall

into the trap of making 'estrapolazioni indebite è molto grande' (Ginzburg 1976, XXIII). The example that Ginzburg gives of such 'extrapolations' is taken from Lucien Febvre's 1968 book Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI siècle. La religion de Rabelais, but it is clear that his comments are equally applicable to a large number of other large-scale studies of this type. The problem with Febvre's work is, according to Ginzburg, that he sees Rabelais' religious sentiments as paradigmatic of those of Cinquecento man. But, as Ginzburg rightly argues:

Chi erano quei non meglio identificati "uomini del Cinquecento"? Umanisti, mercanti, artigiani, contadini? Grazie alla nozione interclassista di "mentalità collettiva", i risultati di un'indagine condotta sul sottilissimo strato della società francese composto da individui colti vengono tacitamente estesi, fino ad abbracciare senza residui un intero secolo (Ginzburg 1976, XXIII)

In order to get back to a more convincing approach to social history, Ginzburg thus suggests a series of detailed studies of individuals, of which, as we have seen, Il formaggio e i vermi is the first.

Returning to Il partigiano Johnny, it is clear that there are obvious parallels, as well as a number of differences, that can be highlighted between this text and Ginzburg's study. Il partigiano Johnny, like Il formaggio e i vermi, is a minute investigation of a fairly eccentric individual in his historical circumstances. Just as Ginzburg is careful to avoid searching for dangerously general historical

paradigms, so Fenoglio does not give us a picture of undifferentiated Resistance man. Nor indeed does he give us a picture of the dehistoricized, universal 'man' beloved of many critics.

Having said this, it is clear that the social class that Johnny comes from is much different than Menocchio's. Johnny is irredeemably bourgeois, whereas Menocchio belongs to the 'subaltern' class. But this is not a problem. Though Ginzburg's approach is designed for, and has been fruitfully used by, historians interested in popular culture, there seems no reason why it cannot be applied to different classes and sectors in society. Il partigiano Johnny can thus be read, and analysed, as a kind of literary 'microhistory' in which Fenoglio combines, rather like the man of letters referred to by Golo Mann in the epigraph to this study, a 1950s and a 1940s viewpoint.

Notes to conclusion

1 The problem over the tension between objective history and the individual subject's interpretation of it informed much of the debate over realism in literature and film in Italy in the 1950's. In 1955 Vasco Pratolini's novel Metello and Visconti's film Senso aroused controversy by concentrating on their central characters rather than on the objective recording of events.

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