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History's Flagstones

Nuruddin Farah and Italian Postcolonial Literature

Christopher Fotheringham

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Supervised by Professor Libby Meintjes

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DEDICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study presents an argument for considering the works of Nuruddin Farah translated into Italian as core texts in the body of postcolonial Italian literature. The study focusses on Farah's first two trilogies: *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship* and *Blood in the Sun*. It is shown in this study that the translated versions of the novels making up these two trilogies, the former in particular, provide rare and unique narrative content capable of directly challenging the myths and misconceptions that have come to characterise the memory of the Italian colonial period. These works are read contrapuntally against historical narrative tropes that were used to represent Africa and Africans in Italian colonial literature. Farah's work is also compared with the writing of contemporary writers of African descent whose work is at the forefront of interest in postcolonial studies in Italy. This study shows how Farah's work complements and enhances this emerging literary tradition. It is then shown that, despite this obvious potential, the status of Farah's work in the Italian literary system has been limited by an unwelcoming publishing climate for African literature in Italy. The study then provides an analysis of the translations themselves focussing on three texts: *Maps, Gifts* and *Sweet and Sour Milk*. This analysis takes the form of a descriptive comparative analysis aimed at establishing the extent to which the three different Italian translators of these texts handled the translation of stylistic features of the texts which signal their postcoloniality and their heritage of Somali oral poetry. It is concluded that, in the main, the translations are somewhat domesticated which has certain negative consequences in terms of their ability as texts to speak on behalf of the colonized people they represent. It is however noted that one text exhibits a greater tendency towards foreignization. By no means coincidentally, this text was produced by a translator with theoretical and practical experience in the field of postcolonial literature. The study concludes by conceiving of the trajectory of Nuruddin Farah's work through the Italian literary system as a narrative of violence, resistance and retribution on either side of the colonial divide.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Translation and Interpreting Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

Signed at _____ on the ____ day of _____ of the year _____

Christopher Fotheringham

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Orthographical notes

In this study the Italian orthography for certain place names in East Africa is used e.g. *Mogadiscio, Adua*. This is done in the interests of consistency with Nuruddin Farah's use of these forms in his fiction. Where referencing a source which uses the English orthography, I maintain the orthography used by the source author. Sources differ in their spelling of *Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan*. Where quoting a source using the spelling *Abdille*, I leave it as such.

Ingriis, Amchaar iyo Talyaan
Arlaada yaa kala boobayaa
Waa duni La kala iibsaday
Anse la ah, Aakhiru Sabaan

way akeekami ye
ka u itaal roon e
aan naLa ogaysiin e
iligyadiisii ye

Faraah Nuur

The British, the Ethiopians, and the Italians are squabbling
The country is snatched and divided by whosoever is stronger,
The country is sold piece by piece without our knowledge,
And for me, all this is the teeth of the last days of the world.

Translation by B.W Andrzejewski

INTRODUCTION

Nuruddin Farah on the banks of the Rubicon

> Attentive to history's flagstones linking Italy to Somalia, I tried to trace Mogadiscio all the way back to Italy through my writing.
>
> NURUDDIN FARAH,
>
> *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices of the Somali Diaspora*

Preamble: Why the Rubicon?

The river that Julius Caesar crossed with his battle-hardened 13th Legion in 49BC has ever since been synonymous with fateful decisions from which there can be no turning back. It is also representative of the violation of the most sacred of borders: that which separated Republican Rome and its Italian heartland from the barbarian lands to the north. Crossing the Rubicon with armies was an act of high treason and an act of blasphemy; the transgression of a sacred oath to protect the Senate and the People. The act splintered the Roman state and plunged it into a lengthy and violent period of civil strife. The Italy that emerged was forever altered.

This study concerns another moment of insecurity and insurrection in Italian cultural history. Again the borders of the nation are being transgressed and redefined and there can be no turning back. Italy is facing a radical transformation in its national identity. Thousands of immigrants from all over the world have poured over the Rubicon and now call Italy home. The country is rapidly, but reluctantly, becoming multicultural. Responding to their experience of life in their new home, diasporic communities have adopted the Italian language and are writing their stories. A new literature representing the hybrid face of Italy has rapidly emerged and Afro-Italian writing, in particular, has become one of the most productive sites in contemporary Italian writing and literary scholarship. The creative capacity of hybridity, the potential of the Bhabhian third space, has exploded into life in Italy and the lofty towers of the Italian literary establishment are being buffeted and slowly breached as a nascent tradition of postcolonial

Italian literature emerges. For his Italian descendants, Pliny the Elder's dictum, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*, still holds true.

However, these exciting contemporary developments in Afro-Italian literature risk overshadowing the historical connection between Africa and Italy. While they respond to the multiculturation that Italy is now experiencing, they cannot be read in isolation. Italy is a former imperial power which ruled over millions of African subjects for a period spanning 70 years from the late 19th century until the mid 20th century. The contributions of Edward Said to our conception of how colonial culture functioned as a product of discourse cannot be ignored in the Italian context. Like all imperial powers, Italy produced a set of discourses to contain, control and conceptualise the subjected Other. These discourses continue to colour the relationship between Italy and Africa. Hence the title of this study: *History's Flagstones*. The words are Farah's own and he uses them to describe the indelible link between Mogadiscio and Rome. Nuruddin Farah, along with a number of other Afro-Italian writers from the Horn of Africa, are voices that speak directly to the history of Italian colonialism. They describe the historical cultural meeting of Africa and Italy under the conditions of colonialism; the repression and resistance in the Italian colonies; Italian colonial policies in the Horn of Africa and their alienating effects on the indigenous people; and, importantly, the violence, both physical and representational, that shaped the relationship between coloniser and colonised.

What I do in this study

In this study I argue that the translated works of Nuruddin Farah represent an essential but somewhat overlooked contribution to the core of Italian postcolonial literature. My reading of Nuruddin Farah has led me to the conclusion that his entire body of work including his most recent novel, *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014), has contributions to make to the corpus of Italian postcolonial literature.

Examples of the cultural connection include the nicknames and names of several characters such as a village girl called *Makiino* after the Italian word for automobile *macchina* (*Gifts* 17) which indicates the aspiration of rural Somalis to the lifestyle of the cosmopolitan Mogadiscio with its strong Italian influence; another character in *Gifts* is nicknamed the Latinate *Scelaro* because of his speed; the *Variations* trilogy makes frequent reference to a shady and mysterious character known as *il Siciliano*. Travel between Rome and Mogadiscio for business,

leisure and study and the use of Italian luxury products is frequently alluded to by Farah's socially elite characters (*Gifts* 104,119,165,177,191 and *Secrets* 223). Characters answer the phone *all'italiana* saying *Pronto* (*Secrets* 22). On a crocodile hunt, the character of Timir in *Secrets* announces to his grandfather, whom he calls *Nonno*, that the beast is coming by shouting *arriva, arriva!* (*Secrets* 61). It seems that, according to Farah, Somalia had the unfortunate fate of inheriting Italy's famously entangled bureaucracy: characters register themselves at the *Anagrafe del Municipio* (*Maps* 168), they carry around *Carte d'Identità* (*Maps* 171), and family records are stored in a file called a *foglio familia* (*Maps* 172,197). Throughout the trilogies characters occasionally address one another in Italian and in moments of high emotion exclaim in the language. They utter things like *finito* to express abruptness (*Secrets* 108, 183); *Dio mio!* for shock (*Maps* 206); and *E come!* for disbelief (*Secrets* 275 and *Maps* 196). A female character is described as *simpatica* (*Secrets* 135). The inhabitants of Mogadiscio (note that Farah uses the Italian spelling throughout) find themselves at a *Centro Sportivo* (*Gifts* 185); they visit the beachside *Lido Club* (*Maps* 149); and report crimes at the *Giardino Police Station* (*Maps* 258). Farah provides a particularly memorable image in *Gifts* (257) where a character describes his trip back to the centre of Mogadiscio from the airport saying: *"I told him that I had seen a group of companionable goats eagerly feeding on a shoulder bag with ALITALIA on its side."* Here Farah highlights the juxtaposition of the cosmopolitanism represented by the discarded *Alitalia* branded product lying abandoned in the desolate landscape of a famine-stricken Somalia to become fodder for desperate goats.

Links (2005) is directly inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the *Inferno* in particular. F. Fiona Moolla notes the interesting intertextual relationship between Dante's voyage through hell in the foundational epic of the Italian language and a modern voyage through the hell which Mogadiscio has become in Farah's 2005 novel:

> Dante Alighieri's Inferno, the first canticle of the Divine Comedy, is a strong literary antecedent of *Links*. In an interesting, ironic twist, Dante the Pilgrim descends into Hell and discovers that it looks remarkably like his native Florence. Jeebleh, by contrast, returns to his native Mogadiscio and discovers that it looks remarkably much like Hell. Even if it were not for this superficial similarity, there are a number of other reasons why Farah might identify with Dante. Dante like Farah was an exile whose writing obliged him to revisit again and again the soil of his birth in his imagination. Dante, through his political activities and his association with a Florentine faction called the White Guelphs, was forced into exile from his beloved

> Florence for over 19 years till his death. The clan politics of Dante's Florence strike one as remarkably similar to the politics of Mogadiscio. Allusions to Dante's *The Divine Comedy* occur not only in *Links*, but also, as discussed in an earlier chapter on *A Naked Needle*, Dante is alluded to in a network of intertextuality encompassing Joyce, Beckett and also Soyinka.
>
> (Moolla 2014:158)

The title of Farah's novel, *Links*, which is described in relation to the *Inferno* by Moolla above, is instructive in itself. Clearly there exist strong *links* between Farah's novelistic prose and the culture of Italy. The word *link* appears also in the epigraph to the study taken from *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices of the Somali Diaspora* where Farah says, "Attentive to history's flagstones *linking* Italy to Somalia…" This study is concerned with these many links as they manifest in Farah's novels and the effects they could have on Italy's collective conception of its colonial heritage were they to gain a wider public readership. The uniqueness of Farah's fiction in English-language literature is that it recounts the little-known historical connection between Italy and Africa. The subject of this study is not the English language texts themselves nor their role in African or English language literature, but, rather, the potential of the Italian translations of this body of work to make an important contribution to an Italian literary system in dire need of voices speaking from Italy's former colonies in Africa.

Of all Farah's work, the first trilogy, *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship*, offers the most direct engagement with the historical relationship between Italy and Somalia. For this reason, this trilogy is the focus of the third chapter of this study, where I discuss the role Farah's fiction might play in bolstering the corpus of Italian postcolonial literature. However, traces of the legacy of Italian colonialism and neo-colonialism are also present in the Somali novelist's later trilogies, leaving no doubt that Italy left a marked trace on the psyche of the writer and on the landscape of the Somalia he describes to the world. These cultural legacies have been noted by Italian scholars dedicated to African and Afro-Italian literatures (see Ahad 2004 and 2007, Gorlier 1998, Vivan 1998, Sumeli-Weinberg 2013). However, what this study contributes is a detailed analysis of the direct contrapuntal and political engagement of Farah's novelistic prose with the history of Italian colonialism and neo-colonialism. The thematic intersection of Farah's oeuvre with the young tradition of Italian postcolonial literatures is also central to the thesis of this study which argues for Farah's fundamental contribution to this

emerging corpus. Another contribution is a materialist book history which accounts for the scant reception of Farah's work by a more general public

Despite the entire oeuvre appearing worthwhile for study under the rubric of Italian literature, because of the size and depth of Farah's body of work, a selection of works has been made. In my study I focus on the translations of Nuruddin Farah's first two trilogies, *Variations on the theme of an African dictatorship* and *Blood in the Sun* and their articulation within the field of Italian postcolonial literature. I have chosen these two trilogies because they emerge in Italian translation concurrently with a developing interest in Afro-Italian postcolonial writing produced by members of the African diaspora in Italy: the so called *letteratura di migrazione*. The two trilogies also emerge before the publication of other anti-colonial writing by Afro-Italian writers from the Horn of Africa such as Gabriella Ghermandi, Igiaba Scego and Ubax Cristina Ali Farah (though not before Shirin Ramzanali Fazel who is one of the absolute pioneers of African writing in the Italian language). Farah's is one of the very few voices that speak of the African and, more specifically, Somali experience of Italian imperialism and the legacy of the Italian colonial period on Somali politics, culture and identity. I position the Italian translations of Farah's work within the emerging canon of postcolonial Italian literature, illustrating the important contribution they make to a literary corpus which, without him, has limited historical horizons.

I go on to argue that, despite his obvious importance and the efforts of the stalwarts mentioned above, Farah has not received the attention he deserves in the scholarship on Italian postcolonial literature (e.g. there is not one monograph dedicated to Farah as a figure in Italian postcolonial literature). More critically, from the point of view of this study with is systemic and materialist bent, because of the economics of publishing and circulating translated African literature in Italy, the general public has not benefitted from the contribution Farah stands to make to the Italians' conception of their colonial past. Perversely, given the revisionary agenda of postcolonial literatures, this oversight may have arisen because of the incisiveness of the critique provided by the *Variations* trilogy in particular. The trilogy had a limited print run and is now out of print and is virtually impossible to source in Italy. The copies I worked on are all second hand and were printed in the late 80s and early 90s. I was forced to source them through contacts closely involved in their publication or second hand through online vendors. Farah's

earliest work *From a Crooked Rib*, which is actually set in colonial Somalia, has never been translated into Italian. His second novel *A Naked Needle*, the one that led to his being noticed in the Anglophone book world, has equally never been seen on the shelves of Italian bookshops or libraries.

Moving from the macro-textual or distant reading performed in the first half of the study, I perform a close comparative analysis of a set of Italian translations of Farah's second trilogy. This is done from the perspective of postcolonial and African translation theory. A close stylistic analysis of source-text segments and their corresponding target-text realisations allow me to ascertain the overall approach that the various translators assumed when approaching the translation of the texts. I find that certain of the translations are subjected to a domesticating approach which levels their stylistic individuality and undermines their postcolonial textuality. However, my intention is not to perform translation criticism but, rather, to draw some conclusions about how the translation of postcolonial texts was approached in Italy in the early days of the discipline's emergence in that country. I am, in this way, able to make some interesting observations on the effects of the professional histories and educational backgrounds of the individual translators in terms of their approach to the translation of postcolonial texts.

I focus particular attention on an area of literary translation, and indeed literary studies, that has been severely neglected: that of rhythm in prose. My interest in rhythm arises from the preoccupation that African literary studies has with the notion of orality. Regardless of the validity of the claim that African literatures are more oral than European ones (a claim I scrutinise), the importance of rhythm as an element of the aesthetic whole of all prose cannot be ignored. In an attempt to address the dire lack of scholarly interest rhythm in prose, I develop a method for accounting for prosodic rhythm which overcomes many of the pitfalls of previous attempts to do so. By applying this method systematically I am able to show the effects that a more or less assimilative translation approach have on the overall rhythmic quality of a segment of prose.

Finally I draw the various threads of this study together based on the themes of violence, retribution and resistance. Slavoj Žižek talks about a triumvirate of violence. First there is violence in its most obvious physical manifestation which he terms *subjective violence*; then there are two kinds of *objective violence*, the first of which he terms *symbolic violence* and the

second of which he terms *systemic violence* (Žižek 2008: 1). Subjective violence is violence which can be seen. It is the violence we can perceive, the violence that outrages us and the violence upon which we pour our moral censure. Symbolic violence is the violence of language which inscribes systems of domination. More fundamental still is systemic violence: the violence that is inherent to the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems (Žižek 2008: 1). Symbolic and systemic violence are more insidious than subjective violence. Symbolic violence pervades our everyday language; it helps organize and maintain the *status quo* and the social hierarchy. Symbolic violence bears out in discourses about the Other which essentialize, contain, aestheticize or even demonize. Systemic violence is the most insidious because it goes unnoticed; it is taken to be the natural state of thing. I delineate a narrative of violence and resistance in this study, demonstrating that all these three modes of violence have had, and continue to have, a role to play in Italy's historical and contemporary relationship with Africa and Africans. I show that violence was at the centre of the Italian colonial project in Africa; that this violence was both physical and representational/textual; that the works of African writers who use the Italian language are sites of resistence to hegemonic modes of representation and language use and, finally, that the act of translation can easily become a powerful weapon in this struggle for representation.

Why this study matters

The bulk of research in Italian postcolonial literature has tended to focus on the emergence of immigrant writing in Italian which had its beginnings in the late 1970s by both migrants from former Italian colonies and countries with no direct link to Italy (Curti 2007, Mellino 2006, Portelli 2006, Coppola 2011). Apart from strongly felt regional identities, Italy is still one of Europe's most racially and culturally homogeneous societies. Until relatively recent times, it was a country of emigrants as opposed to a destination for immigrants. The economic boom years of the 1960s, one of the most boisterously confident periods in Italian history, marked a shift in perceptions as Italy became attractive to economic migrants. Immigrants to Italy have principally arrived from North Africa, Senegal and other West African countries, the Indian subcontinent, China and the Philippines (King et al. 1999, Andall et al. 2003).

Importantly, despite being among the first immigrants, nationals of Italy's former colonies in the Horn of Africa and Libya represent a relatively small proportion of the total

immigrant population (King et al 1999). These demographic realities, as well as the lack of literature emerging directly from Italy's colonies, have led to literature produced by immigrants from countries with no historical experience of Italian colonialism representing a high proportion of postcolonial literary output in the Italian language. This scenario is in strong contrast with the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone traditions of postcolonial literature which saw national literatures emerging in the respective languages of colonial domination before and immediately following decolonization. Migrant literature is included in the rubric of postcolonial literature owing to the wider conception of postcolonial as referring to the broader cultural interaction between North and South and to the creative output of diasporic communities. So called *letteratura di migrazione* or 'migrant literature' has become an important field in Italian literary studies and one that engages critically with a central issue in the contemporary Italian cultural milieu: that of the new multiculturalism of the Italian landscape. I argue in Chapter 3 below that the term *migrant writing* is limiting and inappropriate but, for now, given the currency the term has gained, I will continue to use it. Migrant writing in Italian tends to focus on themes of voyage, displacement alienation and negotiated identity in the country of adoption (Curti 2007, Portelli 2006, and Ponzanesi 2004a, 2004b). This phenomenon has affected Italian literature profoundly by forcing a literature predominated by national and European canons to embrace a new set of voices from the formerly colonized world writing in Italian (Mellino 2006).

Nonetheless, for Italy, a former colonial power, to rely solely on the postcolonial writings of late 20th century and early 21st century immigrants means that the long history of Italian involvement in North and East Africa risks being overlooked. Italy is grappling with redefining its traditional, ethnic-based concept of nationality. Racism and islamophobia, in particular, are entrenched problems (Orsini 2006, Andall et al. 2003). This situation has been brought to the fore in the wake of the 2015 migrant crisis. In the context of rapid societal change it is only natural that the writing of immigrants and their descendants should be at the forefront of research in Italian literary and cultural studies. However, given that much of this writing is produced by immigrants from countries with no direct experience of Italian colonialism, there is a risk that this contemporary focus might undercut the study of the historical experience of a colonial project that is all too easily forgotten or dismissed in the Italian cultural mainstream. For this reason this study aims to refine the definition of Italian postcolonial writing, not excluding the contemporary concerns of multiculturalism, but properly situating them within a tradition of

historical colonial representation and postcolonial literary production. In this study the collective memory of the colonized is placed in direct opposition to the collective amnesia of the colonizers and it is argued that historical revision of this kind is one of the most important political goals of postcolonial literature: a goal that cannot be met by other migrant writing originating from regions not colonized by Italy.

I show how Nuruddin Farah contributes in important ways to filling the gap in Italian postcolonial literature by providing a voice that speaks to the Italian people about their country's role in Somali history. I bring migrant writing into productive dialogue with the works of Nuruddin Farah and show how the two interact to produce more valuable readings by providing historical context for the fraught relationship between Italy and Africa. I argue that literature, and postcolonial literature in particular, is fundamental in overturning misconceptions, nuancing debate and raising consciousness. It is my contention that the works of Nuruddin Farah have the capacity to act as a remedy to what has been described as Italy's colonial amnesia and to foster a much needed postcolonial consciousness for a country facing an uncertain multicultural future.

This study needs to be understood against the backdrop of Italian collective memory about the colonial period. Some commonly held views are that Italian colonialism took on a gentler form than that of Britain or France; that exploitation was not the principal aim of Italian colonialism; and that native people previously steeped in barbarism and despotic rule benefited from progressive Italian governance (Calchi Novati 2008, Jedlowski 2011, 2012, Battini 2004, Petrusewicz 2004, and Triulzi 2004). These perceptions ignore the inevitable negative consequences of colonialism. The national myth surrounding Italian colonialism of *italiani brava gente* is akin to ideas of the *Mission Civilisatrice* of French colonial discourse and the *White Man's Burden* of Kipling fame. These myths have been engaged with and re-evaluated largely in the light of the work of canonical historical postcolonial writers and theorists writing in French and English (Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Memmi, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak) which have spawned in their turn the entire modern discipline of postcolonial studies. The debate remains muted in Italy although recent years have seen a flowering in the discipline in Italy. The critical voices of what Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961/1968: 170) calls "the native intellectual who takes up arms to defend his nation's legitimacy and who wants to bring proofs to bear out that legitimacy, who is willing to strip

himself naked to study the history of his body, is obliged to dissect the heart of his people", are, however, are rare in the case of Italian literature and criticism.

To use Ngũgĩ's (1989) phrase, the *decolonization of the mind* that was seen in the first generation of postcolonial Anglophone and Francophone African writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Ousmane Sembène and others is conspicuous in its absence in the Italian system. This is as a result of Italian educational policy in the colonies along with an unconventional process of decolonisation. Absence, however, is not strictly accurate. Delay is a more appropriate term because certain contemporary writers originating from the Italian colonies and writing in Italian have a clear anti-colonial focus alongside the more typical identity-based concerns of migrant writing. Nuruddin Farah's path into the Italian postcolonial literary corpus is equally delayed but also circuitous because his writing was translated into Italian years after its initial publication in English. His focus is also quite different from the writers mentioned above because, unlike them, he is not writing from a position of migrancy to Italy or negotiating his identity within the Italian cultural landscape but rather speaks of a Somalia that continues to bear the mark of the Italian imperial period.

The lack of postcolonial fiction in Italian emerging from Africa in the years following decolonization is therefore, quite arguably, a significant contributing factor to the collective amnesia of Italian colonialism. In this study Italian postcolonial literature produced by immigrant writers from the Horn of Africa, namely Gabriella Ghermandi, Igiaba Scego, Ubax Cristina Ali Farah and Shirin Ramzanali Fazel are read as a direct confrontation to the myths or discursive narratives that underpinned the Italian colonial project. Alongside these works I position the translated corpus of Nuruddin Farah. In this context the Italian translations of the work of Nuruddin Farah, who represents one of the only significant modern literary voices emerging from Somalia, take on an important ideological and historical significance for the Italian literary and cultural system.

Why Farah? Why now?

Nuruddin Farah is a globally acclaimed author and the winner of a number of prizes for literature, including the Tucholsky Prize in Stockholm for work as a literary exile in 1991; the English-Speaking Union Literary Award for *Sweet and Sour Milk* in 1992; the Neustadt International Literary Prize in 1998; the St. Malo Literary Festival award for the French edition

of *Gifts*. Significantly for this study on his position in the Italian literary system, in 1994 he won the Premio Cavour for the Italian version of *Close Sesame* and more recently the Premio Napoli in 2005 for the Italian version of *Links*. The influence of these prizes in terms of the canonisation process of Farah's oeuvre in Italy is the subject of Chapter 4 of this study.

His work has been critically analysed from a number of perspectives, including its strong feminist and women's liberation themes, its acid criticism of the Siad Barre regime, and its tacit criticisms of the failures of the unfolding democratic process in postcolonial Africa in general (Masterson 2009, Wright 2002). There is relatively little scholarly work indeed on the importance of Farah as one of the only sources of postcolonial fiction from the sphere formerly colonized by Italy. The idea has been alluded to by some scholars who note the presence of Italy, Italian colonialism, Italian products and the use of Italian words within the narrative (Ahad 2004 and 2007, Gorlier 1998, Vivan 1998, Sumeli-Weinberg 2013). The most convincing argument for the importance of his work in the Italian corpus of literary texts is provided by Ali Mumin Ahad (2004, 2007), but this too is a short reflection as opposed to a systematic and comprehensive study with a theoretical apparatus that takes into account the dynamics of translation. The only Italian monograph about the oeuvre of Nuruddin Farah, *Lo specchio Infranto* by Rosanna Ruggiero (1997), has chapters about his main thematic concerns, namely patriarchy, feminism, and Somali national identity, but no detailed reference to Italian postcolonial literature and the position of Farah within this body of work.

Quite apart from the importance of dealing critically with the historical legacy of Italian colonialism, the tragic contemporary political and social situation of Somalia lends weight to the importance of any serious study engaged with the region. Contemporary Somalia is a country that has been crudely demonised in the global press. The complexity of the historical process is usually glossed over, and it is associated with rampant Islamic militancy, lawlessness, fractured and ineffectual government, widespread social and political chaos, famine, human rights abuses and piracy. It is the archetypal failed state in the view of the West. Somalia is therefore the focus of much negative international attention and the victim of broad generalisations. In this context the literary production of Somalia is important as a counter-measure to the crude external characterisations of the country. Nuruddin Farah is the best known voice of Somalia and the Somali diaspora. He is the most prolific and successful author of fiction from a people whose

literary production has always been more dominated by oral forms. He continues to be actively engaged with Somali issues despite his long exile and his works of fiction, as well as his essays, are one of the West's only windows into Somalia as written by a Somali.

The fact that Farah wrote in English and his work was translated into Italian also contributed to defining his position in the Italian literary system. For this reason, a theoretical basis in systemic translation studies as a mode of analysis is vital. The politics of language and the status of translations are crucial nodes in my analysis. Currey comments on Farah's choice of the English language as his medium of expression:

> English is only Nuruddin Farah's fourth language, but London provided a crossroads for this nomad. Through polyglot English he could address his fellow Africans and, increasingly, an audience outside the continent. Somalia is at the crossroads of the Islamic world, but politics largely removed the possibility of Nuruddin Farah talking to his countrymen in his first three languages of Somali, Arabic and Italian.
>
> (Currey 2008: 168)

Politics indeed removed the possibility of Farah writing in Italian or Somali. He was exiled from Somalia and his work was banned in that country following the publication of a few chapters of a Somali version of *A Naked Needle* in serialised form in a Somali newspaper in 1973. Because of his exile Farah was forced to produce the English version of the novel which was published in 1976. Italian was also not an option for him because of the unwelcoming climate of the Italian political scene and because the more open atmosphere that has since allowed Afro-Italian writing to emerge was still far from materialising. While living in Italy in the 1970s a draft of *Sardines* written in Italian was rejected for publication (Alden and Tremaine 2002:41). Lidia Curti (2006:199-200 quoted in Mari 2014: 245) also notes that Farah tried in vain to publish in the 1970s in Italy and that it is only with the publication in 1993 of the first translation of *Close Sesame* that he acquires any notoriety at all in Italy. Lorenzo Mari (2014: 246-247) recounts an interesting incident in which Itala Vivan discovered in the archive of the Centro di Ricerca per il Teatro in Milan an Italian version of one of Farah's early forays into dramaturgy: an Italian translation of *The Offering*. Mari notes that Vivan investigated, without a conclusive result, the possibility that this Italian version was a self-translation produced by the author during his sojourn in Italy. I argue in Chapter 4 this study, however, that Farah's "notoriety" is sadly limited to a relatively small group of commited scholars and specialist readers and that its

enormous value to the general public in Italy has never been realised because of the limited publication of the translations of his early novels.

Farah was a migrant in Italy for a number of years but the Italy inhabited by Farah in the late 1970s is not the Italy of today. ISTAT projections estimate that one out of three people under 24 will soon be descendants of immigrants (Italiani a metà: giovani stranieri crescono review, 2010). Italian census data indicates that in 1981 there was one foreign resident for every 250 Italians in Italy whereas today the figure is estimated at a ratio of 1 in 12 (8% of the total population) (IDOS Immigration in Italy Dossier 2013). However it must be remembered that African immigrants represent a very small proportion of the total population: about 1,65% according to 2010 statistics (ISTAT: Stranieri Africani, 2010). The 21st century will clearly see massive changes in the demographic and cultural landscape of Italy with consequences for literary production and publishing. The climate that has allowed Afro-Italian literature the space to grow in importance did not exist for the young Farah trying to publish his early works in Italian. Lefevere (1992) is worth quoting in this regard:

> Even writers of genius do not create *ex nihilo.* They are quite aware of the poetics of their time and of previous times; they, too, are in the end the products of a socialization process, although they often rebel against it. What is more, their allegedly unfettered creation appears to be fettered, in practice, by a number of constraints. Economic constraints, to be sure, although we shall not talk about them here; constraints imposed by the language they are using; but mainly ideological and poetological constraints. I am not saying that they submit to the ruling ideology and the ruling poetics of their time – at least not in systems where they are not dependent on one type of patronage, the type that upholds a certain poetics and a certain ideology against all others. I am saying that they are, in the fullest sense of that word "aware" of them, whether cautiously aware during the process of composition, or jolted into that awareness in more unpleasant ways, such as censorship or inability to get a manuscript published anywhere.
>
> (Lefevere 1992: 75)

Lefevere's contention is instructive because it describes in general terms the specific situation which constrained Nuruddin Farah's choice of language. To use Lefevere's words from the above quote, Farah was "jolted into awareness" about the serious consequences of attempting to write in Somali by his exile while his "inability to get a manuscript published anywhere" closed the door to writing in Italian. His choice to write in English was a constraint imposed on him from the outside and, as Currey suggests, this linguistic nomad found a home in English: a

literary system that had an avenue for his brand of writing conveniently to hand in the form of the Heinemann African Writers Series.

In the recently published collection, the *Cambridge Companion to the African Novel* (ed. Abiola Irele, 2009) four of fifteen essays mention Nuruddin Farah explicitly. This is a considerable number considering the huge scope that the book is intended to cover. However, none of these essays makes any reference to the clear traces of historical, cultural or political ties with Italy or the use of the Italian language in Farah's novels. One article by Booker (1995) goes as far as discussing all the historical influences bearing on the work without making any reference to Italy: over a hundred years of colonial and neo-colonial shared history ignored. To bring home the point I quote from the article:

> Also notable among historical novels dealing with the postcolonial period is Nuruddin Farah's trilogy *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship*… It is somewhat unusual among African novels in that it deals in important ways with the influence of the Soviet Union on the Siyad Barre government during the period 1969 – 78, though it looks back to the influence of earlier Arab intrusions as well.
>
> (Booker, 1995: 150).

Booker overlooks the striking Italian influence on the *Variations* trilogy but notes the influence of Arab intrusions and Soviet realpolitik. It is odd that in a so-called discussion of "historical novels dealing with the postcolonial period" that the Italian cultural connection of a novel so deeply influenced by historic Italian colonialism should be ignored.

Also highly peculiar is the treatment of Farah's novels in Alain Ricard's (2004) *The Languages & Literatures of Africa* where he states:

> Writing in English opens new horizons for him [Farah], although the presence of Somali oral literature makes itself felt in his works through the use of certain allegorical devices. Like all Somali poets, he considers women to be the country's symbol. The rigorous narrative construction and the Islamic literary presence lend an absolutely original tone to an oeuvre in which the choice of English is not a form of colonial heritage, but the expression of certain modernity. It is an overture to the world via Anglophone Africa, a world to which Somalia doesn't belong.
>
> (Ricard 2004: 198)

Ricard's book ostensibly engages with the politics of language in a broad survey of African literature. One would think that the presence of the Italian language would have been noted. This

is not a language with a large presence in Africa and certainly not a language with which African literature is generally associated. As extraordinary as the almost universal and rigorous indifference to the use of the Italian language in English academic writing about Farah may be, what is even more extraordinary is how, compared to his reception in the English speaking world, the Italian public, and to an extent the academy, have not taken full cognizance of this writer's importance. Only in faculties of English literature studies have a handful of closely connected academics taken any notice whatsoever (see Vivan 1998 and Gorlier 1998). The fact that most of the Italian interest in Farah coincides with his winning of the *Neustadt* prize in 1998 before precipitously waning is also interesting (see Chapter 4).

An author's choice of language seems to constrain the reception of his work within a nationalistic framework. Indeed, the creation of national literatures in national languages is a central element of the creation of national identities. This is supported by Benedict Anderson's ground-breaking study on the link between the birth of print capitalism and nationhood. He says:

> The lexicographic revolution in Europe, however, created, and gradually spread, the conviction that languages (in Europe at least) were, so to speak, the personal property of quite specific groups – their daily speakers and readers – and moreover that these groups, imagined communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals.
>
> (Anderson, 1983: 84)

The notion, highlighted by Anderson above, of a language belonging, as if it were personal property, to a specific group is only compounded when it comes to literature, which is typically viewed as an ingenious use of language and a source of national pride. Great writers are often taken possession of and seen as representative of the collective genius of their people. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* makes the links between literature and nationalism explicit.

> You read Dante or Shakespeare in order to keep up with the best that was thought and known, and also to see yourself, your people, society, and tradition in their best lights. In time, culture comes to be associated, often aggressively with the nation or the state; this differentiates "us" from "them", almost always with some degree of xenophobia.
>
> (Said, 2012: xiii)

The examples of Dante and Shakespeare by Said are felicitous because they both inhabit the Holy of Holies of their respective literary canons; canons which happen to be the very ones with which we are concerned here. The two competing traditions to which these renowned poets belong both have a long and well-established literary history. Italian is frequently invoked as the language of Dante. This is because the modern standard of the language was based on the Florentine variety used by Dante. Shakespeare's influence on the English language has also been incredible, an inestimable number of words and idioms being coined by the poet/playwright[1].

Lefevere (1992: 49) speaks of an "almost obsessional identification of language and nation". It has been widely noted that Romanticism was central in the association of literature and nationalism (Eagleton 1996). The cult of genius which was at the centre of the Romantic conception of literature implies an identification of literary production with national genius (Lefevere 1992: 49-50). With Romanticism the literary text started to be seen as a sacred object of national importance. Lefevere considers the effects of this identification of language and literary output with nationhood in the context of translation. He comments on the constitution of the literary canon and the tension translation implies for anyone who considers the canon a repository of intrinsically good literature as opposed to a social construction. He says:

> If a work of literature is the product of genius (and how else could "good" literature possibly be produced) it is admitted to the corpus, which is used both as a model and as a yardstick, for production and evaluation respectively. Any kind of tampering with the text then becomes, quite logically, sacrilege. And translation is such a kind of tampering. To put it differently: if the original is a work of genius it is, per definition, unique. If it is unique, it cannot be translated. And here we discover the deeper reason for the animosity the corpus concept displays towards translation: translation represents a threat to the uniqueness of the literary work in a way criticism, e.g. does not.
>
> (Lefevere, 1992: 71)

[1] This trend towards national vernaculars would come to full fruition with the Protestant reformation in Northern Europe which saw the publication of Luther's Bible in the German language (Anderson, 1983). Similarly Tyndale's Bible, despite its suppression, much like Shakespeare's work, had a major influence on English; contributing hundreds of idioms to the English language. Read from a polysystem perspective these events are interesting. Polysystem theory posits that translation introduces new modes into national literatures. The huge effect of Tyndale's and Luther's bible on the English and German languages respectively is evidence of this process. The Italian nation came into being with the Risorgimento between 1815 and 1871 and the establishment of a national literature in the Florentine standard was considered a priority in the cultural sphere. Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* becoming the most famous, celebrated and in turn emulated work in the Italian standard.

Reacting to the limits imposed on literature by nationalism, Goethe famously made an early call for the development of a *Weltliteratur*[2]. Paradoxically, Goethe's work would come to be used as a prop for German nationalism in its most virulent form under the Nazi regime (Dennis 2012: 98). In Chapter 2 we see how the Italian Fascist regime co-opted literature to support its nationalistic cause. Goethe's call has yet to gain ground in university faculties where, apart from comparative literature, most language departments teach an exclusively national literature. Despite the unprecedented quantity and improvements in quality of literature available in translation, translated works continue to be regarded by many readers with distrust. As important as translated literatures might be (translated novels in 19th Russia is a case in point), they are always secondary from the national canon of work produced in the national language. Romantic notions of literary genius die hard

Even for literatures emerging from the postcolonial world, linguistic nationalism continues to play a definitive and divisive role. As literatures from the postcolonial world written in English began to emerge, the developing field of study devoted to them floundered as an appropriate designation was sought. Terms like *Commonwealth Literature*, *New Literature in English* and *World Writing in English* were all used before the term *Postcolonial literatures in English* was settled on. All these terms, even arguably the most current term, *postcolonial*, inherently denote a dependence of the former British colonies on London. In Chapter 4, I reveal the existence of a linguistically chauvinistic or smug attitude in the Anglophone criticism surrounding Farah's choice of the English language. At the same time I show how the chauvinism is unfounded as Farah's choice of English was governed by a set of economic and political imperatives rather than a belief in the expressive superiority of the language.

This study aims to open up the work of Nuruddin Farah to enquiry at the heart of the emergent discipline of Italianist Postcolonial Studies by proving that the Italian translations of his work are a contribution to the field that scholars of contemporary Afro-Italian literature cannot afford to overlook. In this study I explain why Nuruddin Farah still waits patiently on the far bank of the Rubicon: an artificial border which, I argue, he has every right to cross.

[2] I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. . . . I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.

(Goethe quoted in Eckerman 1994: 132)

Outline of chapters

Chapter 1, entitled *Struggle and Systems: Theoretical Orientation,* sets up the overarching theoretical orientation of the study. The study is materialist, postcolonial and systemic in nature. It reviews the theoretical literature relevant in these areas and illustrates how they are applicable to this study. Of particular relevance in this chapter is my argument for selecting a Marxism-inflected paradigm of postcolonialism. Chapter 1 also establishes the model for the descriptive comparative analysis employed in the micro-textual analysis performed in Chapters 5 and 6. This is based on the application of Paul Bandia's (2008) model for the translation of European language African literature into other European languages. The model has two emphases: the first concerns the translation of *postcoloniality* and the second concerns the translation of *orality*. These two foci form the bases of the two micro-textual analysis chapters of this study. Bandia's model is, however, strongly scrutinised throughout the study. The notions of *struggle* and *systems* forming the chapter title refer to the difficulty faced by marginalised literatures and translated literatures in penetrating the canon of a well established literary system. The notion also has a bearing on the dangerous journey of African postcolonial literature, with all its stylistic and thematic complexities, as it embarks on the process of being translated into another language.

Chapter 2, *The Battle for Representation,* is a review of the historical relationship between Italy and Somalia spanning the period from the beginning of colonial intrusion until the fall of the Siad Barre regime and the arrival of migrants in Italy. The chapter is a historico-literary analysis which traces the development of Italian colonial representations of Africa in order to illustrate how the discourses that have shaped the outlook of contemporary Italians towards the Africans now living among them are rooted in the heritage of colonialism. The chapter thus establishes the historical realities of Italian colonialism as well as the discursive constructions that accompanied it which postcolonial literature serves to counter and complicate. The chapter title reflects the tug-of-war which pits the Othering discourses of the colonizer against the efforts of the colonized to claim the right to self-representation and autonomous identity.

Chapter 3 is entitled *Conflicts of Memory*. In this chapter I review literature on collective memory based on the logic that what I am dealing with in this study is the clash of two sets of

historical memories on either side of the colonial divide. I also engage with Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of *horizon merger*, the meeting and merger of two historical horizons in the act of interpretation, as a way of imagining the effects of the introduction of a postcolonial literature into the literary system of a former colonial power. Collective memory was chosen as a theoretical framework for this chapter because it engages with the collective amnesia of Italian colonialism. The main purpose of this chapter is to illustrate that the literary production of certain Italophone writers of Somali and Ethiopian origins, along with the Italian translations of Nuruddin Farah's oeuvre, provide a direct threat to this colonial amnesia.

In Chapter 4 of this study, *Publishing, Prizes and Politics,* I turn my attention to the position Farah's oeuvre occupies in the Italian literary system by conducting an analysis of the reception of his work in Italy. This chapter has two main focal points. The first is the political climate in Italy at the time of the fall of the Siad Barre regime and the influence this had on the publication of the *Variations* trilogy. I explore how events in Somalia seem to have prompted the sudden publication of Nuruddin Farah's first trilogy in Italy and the influence of the political agenda of the trade-union owned publishing house that produced the translations. The second focal point is the economics of literary prizes and how Farah's winning of several prestigious prizes, the Neustadt Prize in particular, coincides with the acquisition of the rights to his work by Frassinelli, a house within one of the largest publishing conglomerates in Italy.

Chapter 5, *A War of Words: the Translation of Postcoloniality,* is the first half of the micro-textual analysis of the study. Having established the specifically Italocentric postcolonial *content* of Nuruddin Farah's oeuvre in Chapter 3, the micro-textual analysis answers the need to establish whether the translations take on what might be described as a *postcolonial* form. This is defined as a focus on form and word choice which signals the abrogation of the colonial language by the formerly colonized. I establish a model for analysis to investigate the translation of specific elements of Farah's postcolonial textual style. I base this model on postcolonial translation theory and literary stylistics. I then perform a comparative analysis of 8 prose poems from *Sweet and Sour Milk* and their Italian translations in *Latte agrodolce*. These prose poems are selected because they are illustrative of Farah's entangled and intricate writing style. The creolization of the colonial language typical to most European language postcolonial literature can be seen as a form of anti-colonial resistance. The micro-textual analysis in chapter 5

evaluates whether the translation of the novel makes use of similarly defamiliarizing formal features in the target-text or whether the form of the translation prevents the text from operating subversively. The treatment of these prose poems by the translator reveals that a distinctly domesticating translation strategy was adopted. I argue that the approach taken to the translation represents the repression of the text as a site of resistance against the continued symbolic violence implied by the erasure of the historical experience of Italy's colonised. Viewing postcolonial writing vs. domesticating translation as modes of assault in a struggle between the colonized and the colonizers draws the micro-textual aspect into the broader concerns of the study as a whole.

In the 6th chapter of my study which I call *Style and Strife: the Translation of Orality*, I engage with the notion that African literature very often has an oral inflection which needs to be handled sensitively in translation. This is the second thrust of Bandia's (2008) analytical model for the translation of African literature. Nuruddin Farah is a complex writer with a postmodern bent who engages in sophisticated intertextuality. One of the most important sources that inflect his work is the spoken poetry of Somalia. Despite this, in this chapter I express my strong reservations about the pervasive discourse that paints African literature by definition as a 'translation' of African oral narrative into the written word. I establish in this chapter that what is often called *orality* in African writing is rather more accurately defined as African writers drawing on a wide range of intertextual sources and literary traditions from the African continent, including its rich heritage of orature. For this reason, I engage in what I consider the long-standing failure of translation studies to establish a workable model for the analysis of rhythm in prose. I produce such a model specifically for the comparison of Italian and English and apply it to the analysis of six segments from *Maps* and *Gifts* and their respective Italian translations. I cover the rationale and the most important elements of my model in the body of Chapter 6 but, because of its length and complexity, in the interests of not overburdening the body of the study, I have included the detailed explanation for this mode of analysis as an appendix.

The concluding chapter, *Alea iacta est*, ties the findings of the various threads of the study together and presents a statement of the position occupied by Nuruddin Farah's work in the Italian literary system. In the concluding chapter, the overarching narrative of violent conquest

and resistance which pervades the entire study is used as a means of theorizing the complex trajectory travelled by the novels of Nuruddin Farah in the Italian literary system. I draw together the historical context, postcolonial thematics and linguistic abrogation and intrusive approaches to translation and analyse how they can be understood as attacks, counter-attacks and retributions on either side of a violent power struggle between the colonized and the colonizer.

CHAPTER 1
Struggle and systems
Theoretical Orientation

> The difficulties of human practice outside or against the dominant mode are, of course, real. It depends very much whether it is in an area in which the dominant class and the dominant culture have an interest and a stake. If the interest and the stake are explicit, many new practices will be reached for, and if possible incorporated, or else extirpated with extraordinary vigour.
>
> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism*

This chapter sets out the theoretical orientation of the study to follow. In broad strokes the study is a descriptive study with a materialist, postcolonial and systemic orientation. This theoretical stance has been chosen because it provides all the tools necessary to analyse the production and reception of postcolonial literature in the Italian literary system. The overarching theoretical framework is the glue that binds the macro-textual analysis and the micro-textual analysis sections of this study. This is because descriptive and systems approaches to translation analysis lend themselves to the drawing of links between the economic and societal conditions of a receiving system and the actual form that a translation takes based on the norms prevailing in that system. Where the macro-textual analysis concerns the publishing, reception and position of the translated works of Nuruddin Farah in the Italian literary system, the micro-textual analysis explores the effects that the receiving system had on the production of the translation at the textual level. The current chapter focuses on the literature relevant to the various pivots of this theoretical orientation. It contains a section each on the following areas: Cultural Materialist Literary Criticism; Postcolonialism, Postcoloniality and Postcolonial literature; Polysystem Theory, and Descriptive Translation Studies. Because, in Chapters 5 and 6, the study is concerned with micro-textual comparative analysis, this chapter concludes by setting up a model for analysis based on Paul Bandia's (2008) model for analysing the translation of European language African literary texts into other European languages. These theories and approaches could be seen by some as mutually exclusive and contradictory because the neutral descriptivism required by DTS would seem conflictual with the politically motivated stance implied by cultural

materialist and postcolonial criticism. DTS and systems studies moved the discipline of translation studies forward by orientating research in translation towards a more empirical framework and by taking into account the societal structures that govern translation activity. The insistence on neutrality by DTS scholars was based on the prevalence of translation criticism based on subjective and often rigidly source-oriented paradigms. In this study I make use of the most valuable aspects of DTS and systems approaches: that they provide a framework with which to position and analyse translations within the target-system and as facts of that system alone. For my study, concerned as it is with the articulation of Nuruddin Farah's works in the system of Italian postcolonial literature, these frameworks are highly suitable. However, I see no contradiction in taking a further step and evaluating from a politically engaged stance what I have been able observe using a DTS framework. This step is particularly interesting and illuminating in the greater scheme of the study as it provides a linkage between the macro-textual reading and the micro-textual analysis by allowing me to contextualise the translational approach that prevailed as governed by the socio-political climate at the time of translation.

The theoretical orientation described in this chapter elaborates the various elements of the overarching approach taken, of which each of the chapters is an articulation and development. Literature and theories specific to the concerns of individual chapters are reviewed as part of those chapters themselves.

Cultural Materialism

Cultural Materialism is a brand of literary theory and criticism concerned primarily with the relationship between cultural production and productive forces. Graham Holderness famously describes Cultural Materialism as "a politicised form of historiography" (quoted in Barry 1995: 182). That is to say, a method of analysing historical writings and literature with a view to establishing the historical political climate that shaped their production and/or reception. A critic working in the Cultural Materialist tradition reads cultural products, and the process of canonisation of literature in particular, through a Marxism-inflected economic lens. The term was coined by influential Marxist critic Raymond Williams in a collection of seminal essays in the field, *Culture and Materialism* (1980/2005). In the first and second essays included in this collection, Williams outlines and exposes the limitations of the traditional Marxist approach to literary criticism with its simplistic view of the interaction between base and superstructure

(known as Vulgar Marxism). Such an approach reads all literature as the simple representation of or reaction to the material realities of the economic base. Cultural Materialism goes beyond this and, influenced by Gramsci's notion of hegemony, theorists in the Frankfurt School and Foucauldian New Historicism, recognises the role culture plays in *shaping* societies rather than merely reflecting them. Williams describes his view of the production of culture:

> As a matter of general theory it is useful to recognise that means of communication are themselves means of production. It is true that means of communication, from the simplest physical forms of language to the most advanced forms of communications technology, are themselves always socially and materially produced, and of course reproduced. Yet they are not only forms but means of production, since communication and its material means are intrinsic to all distinctively human forms of labour and social organization, thus constituting indispensable elements both of the productive forces and of the social relations of production.
>
> (Williams 1980/2005: 50)

Cultural Materialism thus recognises that the analysis of cultural objects within the socio-historical contexts of their production and reception can be illustrative of the power relations that exist between producers and receivers. Such an approach to cultural objects articulates well with the postcolonial framework of this study because it is concerned with the reception in Italy of authors whose work represents a counter-current to the dominant modes of representing Africans and the history of Italian colonialism in East Africa. In addition Marxism posits a permanent and more or less violent struggle between opposing forces in a dialectical engagement. This study is concerned with the confrontation of two historical perspectives and the struggle of the marginalised experiences of the colonized to assert themselves in the face of the hegemonic discourses that have tended to shape the vision of Italian colonialism.

One of Williams' most important contributions to the field of Marxist literary theory and criticism is his notion of "dominant", "residual", "emergent" and "oppositional" culture. These ideas are defined explicitly in Williams' (1977) *Marxism and Literature* but appear in a less developed form already in *Culture and Society* (1958). Dominant culture naturally refers to cultural forms that are hegemonic and empowered in a society. For my purposes, then, the dominant culture refers to the Italian mainstream literary culture. Migrant literatures in Italian and translated literature from outside the main European canons exist on the periphery of this literary culture. Residual culture refers to those elements of past culture which inform the

contemporary dominant culture. These can be supportive of or oppositional to the dominant cultural mode. In the case of this study, the residual culture refers to the legacy of colonial era representation as it continues to shape contemporary modes of understanding the Italian cultural sphere. Finally we have emergent culture, which refers to new cultural modes. A cultural mode is emergent if it is not merely a novel manifestation of the dominant culture but rather is oppositional to it. In the context of this study, the emergent culture in question is new Afro-Italian literature and the new currents of postcolonial thought that have been experienced in sectors of the Italian academy. These are oppositional because they represent a counter-hegemonic discourse and represent a cultural expression of a new multicultural Italian identity, in other words, an emergent culture. This too is consonant with a Cultural Materialist stance because the approach takes into account marginalised groups of all kinds within a society, looking beyond class issues alone.

Traditional humanist readings often ignore the oppressed and marginalised in textual readings. Cultural Materialists in contrast consider accounting for such groups in their studies of literary texts an essential component of their political engagement. In the next section of my theoretical orientation below I explore an approach towards postcolonialism which has a strong Cultural Materialist slant. Lazarus (2011:I), a postcolonial theorist with a Marxist bent, responds to the material conditions which underscore postcolonial writing and which, according to him, other schools of postcolonial criticism overlook in favour of a specific focus on discursive analysis and the politics of representation. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield are foundational figures of Cultural Materialism. They are also clear, in their 1994 collection of essays *Political Shakespeare*, that the main distinguishing features of the Cultural Materialist approach to literary criticism is its political commitment to analysing the material and historical conditions that literature and other discourses have a hand in shaping. These are historical context, close textual analysis, political commitment and theoretical method (Dollimore and Sinfield 1994: vii).

In this study historical context is all important as I am situating the works of Nuruddin Farah in counterpoint to Italian collective memory and representation of colonialism. I am also attempting to illustrate the contemporary value of his work for the Italian literary system. Cultural Materialism, with its basis in the New Historicism, generally seeks to use the text as a

means of analysing the material conditions and power relationships prevalent at a historical moment. I instead use my data set of Nuruddin Farah's translated works and the migrant literature I analyse to uncover the 'historical horizons' of these African authors *vis à vis* the accepted wisdom of the dominant culture's representation of the same history (see Chapter 3). The political stance assumed in this study derives from Marxist-inflected postcolonial criticism and the position that postcolonial literature is politically significant because it serves to counter and complicate hegemonic discursive practices. The theoretical method of the study draws on Polysystem Theory which helps account for the role played by marginalised literatures and translated literatures in a larger literary system. Much like the notion of dominant and emergent literatures proposed by Raymond Williams, Polysystem Theory concerns itself with struggles for dominance between genres, traditions and forms in the literary system. Descriptive Translation Studies also contributes to my theoretical method as it provides a framework for describing and analysing translations in order to ascertain what ideological forces acted upon the translation in the target-system. These socio-political and economic constraints concern both the broader production and reception and the textual form. My analysis is not purely descriptive but includes an element of critique based on postcolonial translation theory. These various theoretical components are examined in turn below and the articulation of each one with a broadly Cultural Materialist stance is illustrated.

Postcolonialism, Postcoloniality and Postcolonial Literature

Three distinct but interrelated terms used in the context of this study require careful definition: *postcolonialism, postcoloniality and postcolonial literature*. *Postcolonialism* refers to the academic and critical institution of Postcolonial Studies and the premises and assumptions of the discipline. The branch of cultural studies known as *postcolonial theory* and the critical apparatus based on this theory known as *postcolonial criticism* have established themselves at the forefront of the humanities and provide many of the tools necessary for the analysis of the culture of our contemporary, globalised world. The theory is founded on two very different areas of thought: Marxism and Poststructuralism. For example, Edward Said's foundational work in the colonial discourse analysis, *Orientalism* (1978) is based on a dynamic linkage of Foucault's concept of discursive power and Gramsci's concept of hegemony. There has however been a backlash against the dominance of French 'high' theory in the field of postcolonial studies. Bart Moore-Gilbert's (1997) book entitled *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* is a useful

account of the infiltration of French theoretical thought of figures like Derrida, Lacan and Foucault into the emergent discipline of Postcolonial Studies as embodied by the writings of what has come to be considered the Holy Trinity of Postcolonialism: Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Though, on paper at least, the broad political motivations remain the same, the priorities, assumptions and methods employed by more Marxist leaning as opposed to more Poststructuralist leaning postcolonial theorists and critics have been the source of acrimonious disagreements. Marxist leaning postcolonial theorists accuse the Poststructuralists of sophistry and abstract posturing that diverts attention from the pressing needs on the ground, while Poststructuralists deride the Marxists for subscribing to naive, totalizing narratives. Brouillette comments on this conflict, saying:

> Since its inception Marxist critics have isolated and challenged postcolonial literary scholarship's tendency to be swayed by poststructuralism, making the reading of literature central to critical understandings of colonial and postcolonial power relations… This narrative suggests that postcolonial scholarship has been radically diverted from its initial impetus in political decolonization, enshrined as an academic discipline woefully tied to the epistemological uncertainty characteristic of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and, most importantly, late capitalism.
>
> (Brouillette 2007: 19 - 20)

One of the most scathing attacks on this high-theory-inspired brand of postcolonialism was provided by Aijaz Ahmad's (1994) *In Theory*. For Ahmad, postcolonial theory is the activity of a privileged class of scholars removed from the material realities of the Third World. Ahmad has been widely cited in the tradition of Marxist postcolonial criticism (Moore-Gilbert 1997; Quayson, 2000; Dirlik 1994; Huggan, 2001). Another attack on what has become the main institutional current of postcolonial studies is that criticism derived from French high theory has assumed a position of privilege within the discipline, relegating other modes of thought to a secondary or underdeveloped status (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 18).

Moore-Gilbert summarises one of the most important foci of Materialist criticism levelled by this school of thought against the appropriation of postcolonial cultural products. He says the "dynamic energies [of the Third World] are appropriated and domesticated into a chic but finally unchallenging intellectual commodity which circulates largely within the Western academy" (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 18). Huggan (2001: 3) argues along similar lines against

poststructuralist theory within postcolonial thought, although in much more mitigated language, asserting that to suggest that poststructuralist thought is side-lining daily struggles in the Third-World is "an over-narrow view of postructuralism's critical capacities". He continues to say, however, that "the danger exists that a rarefied critical/theoretical consciousness might end up turning the specific realities of social struggle into an infinite spiral of indeterminate abstractions" (Huggan 2001: 3). This position is also assumed by Ato Quayson (2000: 8) who concludes that postcolonial critics increasingly "resort to a sophisticated form of rhetoric whose main aim seems to be to rivet attention permanently on the warps and loops of discourse" despite the social inequalities of the postcolonial world calling for "urgent and clear solutions".

This study focusses on the role played by Nuruddin Farah's work in Italian postcolonial literature. As a result, it seems more productive to follow Graham Huggan's call that it is more useful to ask "what can postcolonialism do?" rather than "what is postcolonialism?" (Huggan 2001: 1). Responding to this, I assume the working definition proposed by Ato Quayson and his vision of postcolonialism as an active *process of postcolonializing*:

> A possible working definition for postcolonialism is that it involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire… Put formulaically, it is that postcolonialism has to be perceived as a *process of postcolonializing.* To understand this process, it is necessary to disentangle the term 'postcolonial' from its implicit dimension of chronological supersession, that aspect of its prefix which suggests that the colonial stage has been surpassed and left behind. It is important to highlight instead a notion of the term as a process of coming-into-being and of struggle *against* colonialism and its after effects.
>
> (Quayson 2000: 2-9)

Quayson does not advocate the outright banishment of Poststructuralist thought from postcolonial studies. Nor does he propose a wholesale and dogmatic application of a Marxist economic theoretical orientation with its "deterministic mode of analysis that views transformations strictly in terms of the move from economic feudalism to capitalism" onto postcolonial studies (Quayson 2000: 14). He cites Rattansi (1997) as an important source of criticism of the pitfalls of applying Marxism as too blunt-edged an analytical tool. What he suggests is "a more culturally sensitive form of Marxism": in particular he notes the value of the

concepts of "residuality" and "emergence" proposed by Raymond Williams (1977) in *Marxism and Literature* (Quayson 2000: 16). In this view of historical change, old and new values are not seen as cyclical but rather in a constellation with some values being foregrounded at the expense of others which are in turn marginalised (Quayson 2000:16). This notion bears some striking similarities with Polysystem Theory which is discussed in detail later in this chapter. Quayson also highlights that it is unnecessary to view Marxism and Poststructuralism as mutually incompatible, rather, he proposes taking what is best suited from both fields to address the practical inequalities of the world (economic and cultural) without getting trapped in the loops of either discourse. This dynamic and pragmatic approach is the key to his vision of the process of *postcolonializing*. This view holds postcolonial thought accountable to the economic realities of the productive process and conscripts it as part of a gradual and progressive effort to redress past and present injustices. In terms of this definition of postcolonialism, this study aims to show how Nuruddin Farah's work could play a greater role in *postcolonializing* Italian literature but how its potential in this regard has been lost so far.

In the context of this study, the term *postcoloniality* is used as short-hand for the many distinctive aesthetic and stylistic features of postcolonial literature. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989/2002) were responsible for describing the importance of linguistic abrogation in terms of the broader political motivation behind postcolonial text production. The idea that distinctive language may be used as a marker of alternative identity and the consequent linkage of language and politics is at the heart of postcolonial studies. The analysis of Farah's aesthetics and stylistics and the effects translation has on his style in the Italian texts is, for this reason, an integral part of this broader study of the role of his fiction in the Italian postcolonial literary system. Bandia's (2008) model for the analysis of the translation of African literature uses the term *postcoloniality* as a corollary for *orality* in his description of the two most important elements that a translator should strive to represent in his translation. In this context *postcoloniality* refers to textual devices that mark for the rooting of a text in a postcolonial context. This is what is meant by *postcoloniality* in this study and it is described in much greater detail in the section entitled *model for analysis* below in this chapter as well as in the introduction to Chapter 6 which deals with the translation of postcolonial aesthetics.

Literature as a resistance

The capacity of fiction to effect moral change in the reader and to promote empathy is a thorny question in the study of literature. The idea that literature makes the reader a better person is closely associated with FR Leavis and his perennially influential school of literary criticism. Leavis boldly claimed in this regard that "literature is the supreme means by which you renew your sensuous and emotional life and learn a new awareness". Terry Eagleton, a leading Marxist critic, points out that very evil men have also been literate men:

> The strength of Leavisian criticism was that it was able to provide an answer, as Sir Walter Raleigh was not, to the question, why read Literature? The answer, in a nutshell, was that it made you a better person. Few reasons could have been more persuasive than that. When Allied troops moved into the concentration camps some years after the founding of *Scrutiny*, to arrest commandants who had whiled away their leisure hours with a volume of Goethe, it appeared that someone had some explaining to do. If reading literature did make you a better person, then it was hardly in the direct ways that this case at its most euphoric had imagined.
>
> (Eagleton 1996: 30-31)

Eagleton clearly considers the deterministic association between reading literature and moral virtue as extremely naïve.

The Leavisite argument is, however, slightly more nuanced (though no less elitist) than it appears from the above quote. Leavis had a conservative approach to literary criticism that suggested that literature was good if it promoted the good. Moral virtue was inextricably tied to good taste. There was an inherent moral stance in Leavisite readings. Leavis' ideas about what constituted great literature were set out in one of his most influential and controversial treatises *The Great Tradition* (1948). Whatever we may think about Leavis' choices as to what constituted great literature or whatever biases, class or otherwise, motivated his choices, what is clear from *The Great Tradition* is that certain authors are considered to promote the "proper" relationship between art, life and morality while others are excluded from this illustrious tradition. In the case of Eagleton's camp commandant, Goethe's writings exhibited the strong nationalist sentiment associated with German Romanticism; Nazi period readings of Goethe probably privileged or foregrounded this nationalistic sentiment. The Nazis had their own very well developed propagandist cultural programme of visual arts, music, cinema and literature

designed to disseminate their ideology to which Eagleton's camp commandant would have been exposed (Steinweiss 1993). It is obvious that reading literature in itself doesn't make a person good as if by magic, but rather that literature has a role to play in shaping the discourses that permeate a society and its people. Pinker (2011), who argues that fiction has a role to play in fostering empathy, notes the strong antipathy towards this idea in literary studies:

> They [scholars of literature] see the idea as too middlebrow, too therapeutic, too kitsch, too sentimental, too Oprah. Reading fiction can just as easily cultivate schadenfreude, they point out, from gloating over the misfortunes of unsympathetic characters. It can perpetuate condescending stereotypes of "the other."
>
> (Pinker 2011: 589)

Rather than disproving my premise that Afro-Italian postcolonial literature has consciousness raising potential, the idea that literature can equally be used for more nefarious ends proves the need for a literary dialectic. In the chapter that follows I trace a tradition of nationalistic and militaristic Italian literature which, I argue, fostered jingoistic attitudes which contributed to Italy's conquest of an African empire and ultimately helped prop up the Fascist programme. In Chapter 3, I show how Afro-Italian writing and the fiction serve as a dialectic counterpoint to these discourses.

Nussbaum (1993), a moral philosopher, is convinced of fiction's ability to effect moral change. This is not because fiction *teaches* morality *per se*, as is the case in the Leavisite argument, but rather because fiction develops the reader's capacity for the faculty of mercy: the ability to identify with the human suffering of another. She claims that the very nature of fiction, a form that requires the reader to enter the mind of another, encourages this faculty of perspective taking. She says:

> Novels do not withhold all moral judgement, and they contain villains as well as heroes. But for any character with whom the form invites our participatory identification, the motives for mercy are engendered in the structure of literary perception itself.
>
> (Nussbaum, 1993: 109)

My premise about the potential offered by Afro-Italian literature to nuance Italian historical memory is based on this kind of cognitive or psychological paradigm. I make use of Gadamerian

hermeneutics with its inherent notion of perspective taking in the form of *horizon merger* and theories of collective consciousness/memory to explain how the fiction of certain Afro-Italian writers along with that of Nuruddin Farah might contribute to the balancing of the discursive paradigms in the Italian cultural sphere. In a similar vein, the value of literature as a site of resistance is a central assumption of postcolonial studies. Many of the foundational texts of the discipline refer to the subversive potential of 'Third World Literature' to destabilise the Eurocentric canon, to provincialise Europe and to undermine Western assumptions regarding the cultural other (Ashcroft et al. 1989, Jeyifo 1990). Graham Huggan (2001: 40) also comments on the capacity of African postcolonial literature to perform the function of destabilising the Western canon. Huggan considers the fiction of the African continent to have a dual functionality: firstly it serves to inscribe new ways of thinking about Africa and Africans, and, secondly, it contributes to undermining faith in Western modes of conceptualising Africa. Huggan calls these two functions respectively the "recuperative" and "deconstructive" aspects of African Literature. As is clear from the points of view assembled above, African literature is clearly seen as one means of dismantling, resisting and deconstructing Western perspectives. The fictional literature analysed in this study also has this function but it is unique in that it serves to deconstruct a specifically Italian mode of remembering the colonial period and, indeed, of conceiving of Africans.

Pinker (2011) argues in his substantial work about the global historical decline of violence, *The Better Angels of our Nature*, that fiction has indeed been responsible for expanding the circle of empathy to people whose experiences of violence and subjugation have been previously ignored. He gives some compelling historical evidence for what he calls "reading as a technology for perspective taking" (2011: 175) which is worth quoting at length:

> The moral revulsion [to slavery] was stimulated by first-person accounts of what it was like to be a slave. Some were autobiographies, like *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, the African, Written by Himself* (1789) and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845). Even more influential was a work of fiction, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly* (1852). The novel depicted a wrenching episode in which mothers were separated from their children, and another in which the kindly Tom was beaten to death for refusing to flog other slaves. The book sold three hundred thousand copies and was a catalyst for the abolitionist movement. According to legend, when Abraham Lincoln met Stowe in 1862, he said "So you're the little woman who started this great war".

(Pinker 2011: 155)

…

> But the full-strength causal hypothesis may be more than a fantasy of English teachers. The ordering of events is in the right direction: technological advances in publishing, the mass production of books, the expansion of literacy, and the popularity of the novel all preceded the major humanitarian reforms of the 18th century. And in some cases a bestselling novel or memoir demonstrably exposed a wide range of readers to the suffering of a forgotten class of victims and led to a change in policy. Around the same time that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* mobilized abolitionist sentiment in the United States, Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) opened people's eyes to the mistreatment of children in British workhouses and orphanages, and Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years before the Mast: A personal Narrative of Life at Sea* (1840) and Herman Melville's *White Jacket* helped end the flogging of sailors.
>
> (Pinker 2011: 177)

It is clear that fiction is a mechanism by which varying perspectives are disseminated. It is no coincidence that totalitarian regimes ban and censor huge numbers of books written by ideologically undesirable elements. The perspectives offered by marginalised groups in the form of fiction have the potential to change thinking patterns and discursive paradigms and, as Pinker shows with his historical examples above, fiction is a potent weapon in the battle for the recognition of marginalised perspectives. As is shown in Chapter 2, much like the experiences of the victims described by Pinker above, the suffering of the subjects of Italian colonialism has also been ignored or misunderstood. Postcolonial literature in Italian and the translated fiction of Nuruddin Farah, in particular, is a means of inscribing these experiences on the collective psyche of the Italian people.

Quayson argues that literary criticism can be closely aligned with a materialist analysis of society and culture (2000: 76). Biodun Jeyifo (1990) defines two categories of postcolonial writer: 1) the writer who writes within the postcoloniality of "normativity and proleptic designation"; and 2) the writer who writes within an "interstitial or liminal postcoloniality" (quoted in Quayson 2000: 76). The first category of writer fits neatly with the concept of the postcolonial writer 'writing back to the centre' on behalf of his country or any other group he represents. This is, as Quayson (2000: 77) argues, the author figure of the "Novelist as Teacher" which was central to Chinua Achebe's conception of his task in writing *Things Fall Apart.* The

second category of writer is a writer that embodies "what is normally perceived in the West as a metropolitan or hybrid sensibility" (Quayson 2000: 78). Of the two, Nuruddin Farah, with his frequent avowal to act as an ambassador for Somalia, can easily be categorised as the former: though his long exile from his homeland and sophisticated hybrid literary style with its multiple influences lends weight to considering him as also the latter. For this reason it is possible to say that he straddles the two modes. This makes his contribution to a belated emergent Italian postcolonial literature particularly valuable. In simple terms this study provides an argument for the importance of Nuruddin Farah's work as a *postcolonializing* force in the Italian cultural system.

Polysystem Theory

This study is a function-oriented study within the descriptive translation studies (DTS) approach. Polysystem theory is a theory of systemic literary function and DTS is an analytical tool. They go hand in hand and are used at both the macro-level analysis and the micro-level analysis to describe the translation of Nuruddin Farah's work into Italian and its publication and reception there. Some attention is paid here to the potentially unsound harnessing of Polysystem Theory with its Structuralist assumptions to the later theories of cultural criticism that are used in this study. As an initial statement in this regard it must be noted that the case for using the concept of systems with its roots in Russian Formalism as a "heuristic construct" in the study of translation and literary field has been made by André Lefevere (1992) in his hugely influential book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. He argues for the benefits of using systems theory in the following terms:

> [I]ts basic tenets are relatively easy to explain, which has a distinct pedagogical advantage; because it promises to be 'productive' in the sense that it may reveal problems of importance to the study of rewriting that other heuristic constructs do not reveal; because it is 'plausible' in the sense that it is also used in other disciplines, not just in literary studies, and to some advantage, which might also work against the growing isolation of literary studies within educational institutions; and because it provides a neutral, non-ethnocentric framework for the discussion of power and relationships shaped by power…
>
> (Lefevere 1992: 10).

Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory is a functional, dynamic and systemic theory of literature first postulated in 1970 and revised in 1990. It is heavily reliant on Russian Formalist

notions of what constitutes literariness. In the simplest terms the Russian Formalist view of literature was that it relies on the presentation of the unfamiliar for aesthetic effect. Literature in other words is a set of tricks, devices and artifices used to disarm the reader and produce a pleasing effect. Based as it is on Russian Formalism, the inscription of innovation at the centre of literariness is the basis of Polysystem theory. Polysystem theory posits that every literary system has a centre that is constituted by conservative canonised literature. Literary forms and genres on the periphery gradually penetrate the centre and become inscribed in the canon whose petrified forms very gradually disappear as literary models. The flux is always from the periphery to the centre. This is because literariness relies on innovation and innovation is more likely to occur in the less rigidly institutionalised periphery systems. This necessary movement from the periphery to the centre explains why in the West, the novel (once a popular literary form) has moved to the centre, previously occupied exclusively by drama and epic poetry and has risen to become the most important serious literary form in the Western system. Genres also exist as systems and while various genres like magic realism from periphery systems have been accepted into the centre (once only legitimately occupied by the realist novel) others like science fiction still occupy periphery systems with their own conventions. Some of the conventions of science fiction, in particular the free use of speculation and allegory, have been mined by "serious" authors like Margaret Atwood whose work has contributed to moving these conventions to the centre.

The Polysystem is often understood as referring exclusively to a national system. While this can be the case, it can also be used to describe sub-systems within larger systems (Hermans 1999: 108). The globalised and hyper-media world means that national Polysystems need increasingly to absorb multiple influences. The term Polysystem refers to a constellation of systems each with their own centres, peripheries, canons, conventions and institutions. A useful image is that of a galaxy. Stars and celestial bodies exert gravitational influence on the bodies around them and a sense of order is maintained. This harmony persists until a star dies out or a supernova is created, or a black hole opens up or an asteroid knocks a planet out of its usual orbit. The system is destabilised and needs then to reconfigure itself. The process is often violent and destructive but is always productive and creative. Stars and planets are born and new systems emerge. The flowering of Italian postcolonial studies in recent years and the interest shown in these writers by the academy is indicative of this gradual process of canonisation. The

amnesia of colonialism is slowly being eroded in academic circles and a postcolonial consciousness in Italy is belatedly emerging (Mellino 2006). A number of special issues of Italian studies journals have been published on the theme of Italian colonialism, public memory, colonial and postcolonial literature (*Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 2003, 8:3 and 2004, 9:3; *Interventions* 2006, 8:3; *Quaderni del 900* 2004, 4). The study of Italian colonialism and the re-examination by scholars of this silent period in history has begun to flourish in earnest. The failure up till now of the Italian public and Government to address and engage with the nation's colonial history and the urgent need to redress this imbalance has been noted by a number of scholars in various fields. The growth in interest in this field of study is illustrated by the publishing of a number of books on the topic in Italian and English in recent years (Palumbo 2003, Ben-Ghiat and Fuller 2005). Indeed migrant writing has been described by some as representing the innovative avant garde of an ossified Italian literature (Gnisci 2003: 7). Polysytem Theory also posits that translated literature is the site of greatest innovation and one particularly apt to influence the production of new work in a similar vein.

In this case, two sub-systems of the Italian polysystem, namely Afro-Italian literature and translated Anglophone literature from Africa are under scrutiny. Establishing the position of this system in relation to the greater system is crucially important to this study. Despite its many pitfalls and limitations, Polysystem theory places translation studies within a much broader cultural setting and, if carefully handled and combined with other theories, is ideally suited as an analytical tool to study the evolution of cultural objects and their consumption. Polsystem theory has been criticised over the years from a number of perspectives. The main criticisms have been that the theory relies too heavily on "overgeneralization to 'universal laws' of translation based on relatively little evidence" (Gentzler 2001: 120 -123). The theory has also been criticised because it relies on the theories of Russian Formalism postulated in the 1920s and which may not be applicable today. Furthermore Gentzler criticises the scientific basis of the model with its "tendency to focus on the abstract model rather than 'real life constraints'. He also goes on to question the objectivity of the model. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere also criticise the abstract nature of the model and its reliance on potentially outmoded Russian Formalist ideas (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 127). Theo Hermans (1999) provides an extremely clear and readable account of the history, contributions and limitations of Polysystem Theory in his book *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained.*

Polysystem Theory's age is showing and its reliance on Structuralist paradigms that are considered outdated can present problems. However, the theory's sweeping generality and its failure to provide a concrete model (often considered primary weaknesses) can be considered a strength. Because it is relatively amorphous, it can lend itself to use in a wide variety of sociocultural and historical translation studies provided it is properly fleshed out with more modern cultural or sociological theories. What follows is an explanation of the key constituents of any literary system which form the basis of the analysis of the literary system under scrutiny.

Zohar's scheme of literary systems based on Jakobson's communicative model is reproduced and illustrated diagrammatically below (Even-Zohar 1990:31).

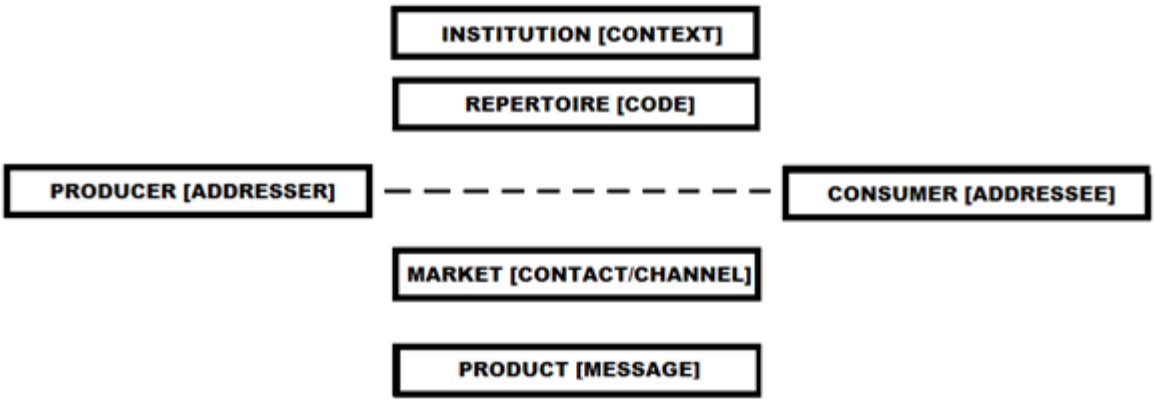

Figure 1: Even-Zohar's (1990:31) scheme of the literary polysystem based on Jakobson's communication model.

Four of the six boxes in the diagram - *institution, producer, consumer* and *market* - concern the macro-textual context of the publication and will provide a framework for the analysis of the sample oeuvre and its position in the target system. *Product*, which naturally refers to the material text itself, is analysed in the micro-textual analysis along with repertoire which refers to the type of language and the style used. The fusion of this analysis with the findings of the macro-textual analysis of the study provides a holistic picture of the relationship between the text and the target-system. Here follows a brief explanation of each of these components making up the holistic text.

Producer refers of course to the writer of a text. This seemingly self-evident point is nonetheless nuanced in the Polysystem Theory view owing to the complexity of processes governing literary production. Even-Zohar is wary of the term *writer* in his explanation and always puts it in inverted commas. In the wake of author-centred analyses of text going out of vogue for various reasons, literary critics had adopted a text-centred approach (Even-Zohar: 34). Even-Zohar does not subscribe to a completely text-centric approach which places the reader and his or her interpretation at the centre of the text which seems to suggest that the text appeared *ab nihilo*. He considers this a limited, one-dimensional approach and, as the scheme above suggests, he considers the writer important in the production of a text. Polysystem Theory enforces a holistic "above-the-text" approach to literary criticism where all the various actors in the life of a text are considered, including the writer. Even-Zohar's scepticism of the word *writer* is more associated with the simplistic individualism it seems to entail. He prefers the more neutral term producer given that "text-making" (writing) is actually only a small part of the total process of production and because a writer does not perform this role in isolation in the literary system but often fulfils the role himself of institution and market existing in a network of people engaged with or influential in the literary system (Even-Zohar 1990: 35). Further complicating the notion of *producer* is the translator acting as a mediator between the source-culture and the target-culture. As mentioned in the introduction above and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, what is interesting in this regard is how often criticism of Farah in the Anglophone world exhibits a certain smug nationalism regarding Farah's choice to write in English. It almost seems to suggest a belief that the choice to write in English was governed by the linguistic and literary superiority of that language. The choice has, furthermore, had far-reaching, if perhaps unintended, consequences on his reception in Italy. This is shown to be the result of linguistic/literary nationalism and the consequent undervaluing of translated literature. The role played by the creation of an author figure to the reception of a body of work is central here.

The intention of the author as an essential part of the interpretative process for literature has been undermined by key movements in twentieth century literary theory. The most notable movements contributing to this lowered status are the New Criticism and the poststructuralist attitude formalised in the work of Roland Barthes (Brouillette 2007: 11). To these must also be added the Russian Formalists with their pioneering rejection of biographical criticism and their focus on textual form. A systemic approach needs to insist that the author's intentions have been

conditioned to some extent by the surrounding system and in turn contribute to that system. In other words the author is part of the Literary Polysystem (which is in turn contained within and conditioned by a greater real world cultural and material setting). Farah's product reflects the conditioning of that Polysystem but also reacts to it by addressing the reader using unfamiliar devices (a prerequisite for a text to be considered literary according to the Formalist notion upon which Polysytem theory relies). Innovative writing in turn contributes to the evolution of the polysystem. The intended meaning of textual utterances made by the author is never definitively knowable nor is it particularly relevant. What is relevant in this theoretical paradigm is not the mind of the author *per se* but rather the *author figure* as a discursive construction with an authoritative function in literate culture. The idea of the *author figure* comes from Foucault; he sums the idea up saying:

> The author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse: the fact that the discourse has an author's name, that one can say "this was written by so-and-so" or "so-and-so is its author," shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes, not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status... The author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture… A private letter may well have a signer – it does not have an author; a contract may well have a guarantor – it does not have an author. An anonymous text posted on a wall probably has an editor – but not an author. The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society.
>
> (Foucault 1969 in Richter 2007: 907)

This is not to say that the author is some kind of charlatan who engineers an image of himself for public opinion (this may or may not apply depending on the author!) Rather it implies that the author and his intentions when producing a text are all part of a greater system. This explains Even-Zohar's preference for the more culturally neutral designation of *producer*. What is relevant therefore is how Nuruddin Farah presents himself to the reader and how he is represented to the reader by critics.

Juliet Gardiner (cited in Brouillet 2007: 11) claims that [notions of the death of the author are] "at odds with the realities of archival research, empirical practice, and particularly

contemporary observation, where the author-figure grows ever more ubiquitously represented". She goes on to stress that it is essential not to confuse the recuperation of authorship as a concept in the discipline of book history with the old-fashioned mode of author-centred biographical literary intepretation. What Gardiner is commenting on, the idea of the author growing ever more important, can conveniently be interpreted as a comment on the current state of the literary polysystem. While Roman Jakobson stresses that in order to be considered literary, a text has to feature the *poetic function* as its dominant function, he and others in the Prague School also stressed that the other functions are nonetheless present in every text existing in a hierarchy of importance under the poetic function (Jefferson and Robey 1982: 53). Gardiner's claim therefore can be interpreted in the light of this as meaning that the *phatic function* (the establishment of a relationship between sender/producer and receiver/consumer) remains important in the literary system. This is attested to by the central role the awarding of prizes has played in the increased fame of Nuruddin Farah. The Prague School put forward the idea that literary language consists of a hierarchy of functions headed by the poetic function but is free to perform other secondary functions. This frees Formalism from the criticism that it ignores the role of the author and the sociocultural and historical context of production. An author may use his novel as a platform to express criticisms of a regime, for example. This may entail functions like the informative function (where he exposes the scandals and abuses of the regime) and the appellative function (where he calls on his readers to question their faith in the regime). However, that said, to be considered a work of literature at all, as opposed to a treatise or a pamphlet, these functions must be subordinate to the poetic function *at the same time as* having the function in discourse of authorial presence.

The Prague Structuralists were thus able to simultaneously insist on specific properties that define literariness while taking literature's connections to the external world into full account. It must be noted that many of the criticisms levelled against Polysystem Theory regarding its abstractness from sociocultural realities result from faulty notions about its relationship to Russian Formalism. Even-Zohar notes this himself (1990) and is emphatic that Polysystem Theory is based on late Russian Formalism as practised by the Prague School and consequently does provide theoretical grounds for the effects of sociocultural factors on literature. The idea of a hierarchy of functions means that individual researchers working within the Polysystem Theory framework may focus on different functions of literature.

Returning to figure 1 above we turn our attention to the *consumer*. The consumer is what in literary theory is most often referred to as the reader. When we are concerned with literary systems as a whole, it is not sufficient to think of the consumer as the individual reader. Even-Zohar (1990: 36) extends the consumer to include the entire community of a literary system which, even if not directly engaged in the reading of a work of literature, is affected by the cultural ripple effect that a work generates within a system. A rather obvious example of this is Shakespeare in the English-speaking world. The English speaking community (in the West) may have very little direct knowledge of Shakespeare's original texts or never have watched productions of his work and yet, despite this lack of direct readership, cultural tropes inspired by Shakespeare's work permeate the cultural consciousness of this community to the extent that very few people with even the most basic education would be unable to tell you that Romeo and Juliet signify archetypal lovers. This is true of all major canonical texts in all literary systems: all Italian school children are familiar with Dante and all Spanish children with Cervantes. Importantly, these works have directly shaped the manner in which these populations speak Italian and Spanish, by becoming models of refined speech. It is common knowledge that Shakespeare, for example, provided the English language with thousands of words and phrases that today we take for granted.

At the top of the schema is the *institution*. This is not one body as the term seems to imply but rather a complex of factors that contribute to the maintenance of literature within a system (Even-Zohar 1990: 37). The institution "decides" what literature to include, which to exclude and in a sense ensures which literature will be remembered by a community as important. This is by no means to suggest that the institution works as a unified body with any specific agenda but is rather informed by, as well as informing, the prevalent cultural norms surrounding literature in a given system (Even-Zohar 1990: 38). In real terms the institution is made up of the producers themselves, critics, publishing houses, periodicals, clubs, groups of writers, government bodies particularly linguistic academies and educational departments, educational institutions and mass media (Even-Zohar 1990: 37). The influence of the institution on the formation and maintenance of a literary system is particularly important in this study. This is because the relative inclusion or exclusion of Nuruddin Farah's work within the Italian literary system is a central research question.

Market is "the aggregate of factors involved with the selling and buying of literary products and with the promotion of types of consumption" (Even-Zohar 1990: 38). The market and the institution are closely linked in that they are mutually sustaining. The market refers both to overt selling and promotion spaces like bookshops, libraries, book clubs and now the internet or to less obvious spaces such as schools and universities which, prompted by the dictates of the institution, promote the acquisition of certain texts by students (Even-Zohar 1990: 38-39).

Product is defined as "any performed (or performable) set of signs (Even-Zohar 1990: 43). In literature the most obvious meaning of the word *product* is a text itself, however, in Even-Zohar's understanding the product may also refer to the effects that a text is designed to produce. This is adaptable to the concerns of this study because the texts in question with all their inherent concerns and preoccupations can be interpreted as having certain intended effects. It is important to note that intended effect is not always the same as actual effect, the reception on behalf of the readers having an effect on the latter. Close reading of the text and comparison with critical meta-texts can shed light on the relationship between intended effect and actual effect. The analysis of the product will therefore have macro-textual and micro-textual implications.

Repertoire refers to the code in Jakobson's communicative model. In one sense, the purely linguistic one, repertoire refers to the given set of signs available for the production of a product in a system. In another sense it refers to the system's "shared knowledge necessary for producing and understanding a text" (Even-Zohar 1990: 40). Repertoire is often where the traditional concerns of translation studies are located. Firstly on the linguistic level where two languages do not share the same set of signs leading to translation problems, and secondly, where two language communities involved in the translation act do not share the same knowledge basis for understanding a text. Given that the older and larger a system the richer its repertoire becomes, the interaction between the translations of Nuruddin Farah's work and the repertoire of the Italian literary system with its more limited access to African literature will be revealing. It is with the areas of repertoire and product that much of the micro-textual analysis of this study is concerned.

Descriptive Translation Studies

Descriptive Translation Studies emerged in the 1970s out of the perceived need for a pure descriptive branch of the discipline of translation studies. In his 1985 *Rationale for Descriptive*

Translation Studies, Gideon Toury explains that DTS provides the discipline with a "systematic scientific branch armed with a methodology and research techniques" which moves away from the anecdotal insights and intuitions that dominated a discipline based mainly on translation criticism (Toury 1985: 17). DTS is particularly suited to the needs of this study because it a) provides a clear distinction between process-oriented, product-oriented and function-oriented studies of which this study is the latter and b) provides space for studies that are more broadly concerned with the relationship between the target-text and its adoptive system rather than the narrower relationship between target-text and source-text. Even if the basic assumptions of DTS are accepted in their entirety, it is still flexible enough an approach to cater to individual research objectives and provides room for the individual researcher to shape a specific model. This is important in this study because it requires a second step based on the findings of the DTS analysis of the target-texts within the adoptive system. This step is essentially a source-oriented critique concerned with the endurance through the translation process of the source-based postcolonial and African character of the novels in the target-system (these terms are properly theorised in the introductions to the micro-textual analyses below).

The theoretical basis of this study is a broad application of Toury's (1985) model for Descriptive Translation Studies as it provides a salient framework within which the key research questions of this study may be answered in an empirically sound and methodological fashion. Unlike models of translation analysis that preceding the DTS revolution tended to focus on the analysis of the translation process from a source-oriented standpoint, DTS in the Tourian mould views a translation as a fact of the target-system only (Toury 1985:19).

Broadly speaking, there are three main types of study available within the DTS framework: process-oriented studies, product-oriented studies and function-oriented studies. A function-oriented study like this one is concerned less with the process of translation itself but rather aims to describe and analyse the position and function of the finished translated product in the contextual framework of its adoptive target-system.

Toury uses the terms *acceptability* and *adequacy* to denote, respectively, "the subscription of translated texts to the norms of the system into which they are accepted" and, in contrast, conformity to textual norms prevalent in the source system (Toury 1995: 25). These terms have since been problematised because of their apparent prescriptivist connotations and the

more neutral terms target-orientedness and source-orientedness are preferred. This is the central binary that governs most theories in translation studies, with theorists positing different terms like Lawrence Venuti's opposition of *domesticating* and *foreignizing* approaches (Venuti 1998) or Juliane House's *covert* and *overt* denomination (House 2005). The terms for the opposite ends of this binary spectrum suggested by the different theorists are based on the specific concerns of their theories but essentially are all patterned on the basic premise that all translations occur somewhere on the spectrum of total source-orientedness or *adequacy* at one extreme or total target-orientedness or *acceptability* on the other extreme.

Toury's model requires an analysis of the sample text itself to establish the position of the text in the target-system in terms of its acceptability or adequacy. The micro-textual analysis is concerned with the minutiae of the translation sample where a close textual reading of the translation as compared to the original inevitably, given the very nature of languages, reveals translation shifts. Shifts in the DTS framework are not viewed as intrinsically negative as is the case in traditional Western source-oriented translation criticism where ideas of originality, authorship and poetics are extremely influential. Shifts in DTS are rather viewed from a neutral perspective as the inevitable consequence of transferring text from one language system to another. The identification, analysis and attempt to empirically account for the shifts in an attempt to shed light on the dynamic process of translation are the goals of DTS. Every DTS study defines the kind of shifts it will examine and the perspectives it takes on shifts based on its particular objectives.

Being a function-oriented study the micro-textual analysis of the chosen sample will be designed to meet specific requirements based on the objectives of the study. The micro-textual analysis usually forms an important part of a product-oriented study in which a researcher engages critically with the translation shifts between the source and target texts and attempts to account for the motivation for these shifts. In this function-oriented study the possible motivations for the shifts are not the primary focus, rather it is their effects which are at stake. In Toury's (1985: 22) DTS research methodology the second step in a study consists of a contrastive analysis of the source and target-texts in order to map what he calls "translation phenomena". Translation phenomena are solutions to translation problems which sometimes

entail shifts. The basis for the selection of these pairs is dealt with in the method section below entitled *Applying the theory*.

The third step in Toury's (1985:22) methodology is to identify and describe the relationships obtaining between the pairs in terms of their functional/relational equivalence as they pertain to the study. In Tourian terms 'equivalence' is not a term connoting a unidirectional flow stressing the primacy of the source-text as a template for an equivalent target text. Rather he uses the word to describe a relationship assumed to exist between two texts (Toury 1980:39). Viewing equivalence in these neutral terms frees the researcher to interrogate the type of translational orientation applicable in a specific translation phenomenon and to suggest possible reasons for the adoption of that orientation (Schäffner 1999: 4).

Venuti's ethics of difference

As has been stated in the sections above, part of this study consists in the evaluation of the translations from the point of view of an ethic of representation. No study that concerns itself with the translation of minority literatures can overlook the signal contributions to the field of translation studies provided by Lawrence Venuti (1995, 1998) who argues in favour of what he variously calls a minoritizing translation strategy or foreignization. Venuti's adoption of this definite ethical stance towards the practice of literary translation could be considered contradictory to the neutral descriptivism of DTS. However, I see no contradiction in using DTS as a tool with which to describe and analyse the translation products to uncover the norms that governed their production before taking a further step using a more political stance to assess and analyse the data. Venuti, having recognized the enormous debt translation studies owes to Toury and Even-Zohar, suggests how a stance like his can effectively and validly be combined with a descriptive study. He says:

> Toury's method for descriptive research, setting out from comparative analyses of the foreign and translated texts to elucidate shifts and identify the target norms that motivate them this method must still turn to cultural theory in order to assess the significance of the data, to analyze the norms. Norms may be in the first instance linguistic or literary, but they will also include a diverse range of domestic values, beliefs, and social representations which carry ideological force in serving the interests of specific groups. And they are always housed in the social institutions where translations are produced and enlisted in cultural and political agendas.
>
> (Venuti 1998: 29)

This study concerns itself directly with the presence of the literature of a marginalised and formerly colonised people in the hegemonic literary system of their former colonisers. For this reason Venuti's stance is ideally suited as a means of analysing the significance of the findings of my study.

Inspired in part by Schleiermacher's (1813/2004) idea of the *valorization of the foreign* and Antoine Berman's (1985) *Negative Analytic of Translation*, and in part by what he considers the scandalous state of translator invisibility, Venuti advocates for an approach to literary translation that registers the presence of the foreign. In such a translation, Venuti argues, the reader is able to detect the foreign provenance of the text as well as the fact that the text is a translation as opposed to providing the reader with the comfortable sensation of reading a text which subscribes to his or her expectations. Such a translation approach is desirable from a number of points of view. From a purely aesthetic point of view, we can relate Venuti's idea to the Russian Formalist notion of *ostranenie* or defamiliarization, where aesthetic pleasure is drawn from unfamiliar use of language. In the statement quoted below, Venuti seems in some way to subscribe to this idea and uses it as an argument in favour of a foreignized translation:

> A translation always communicates an interpretation, a foreign text that is partial and altered, supplemented with features peculiar to the translating language, no longer inscrutably foreign but made comprehensible in a distinctively domestic style. Translations, in other words, inevitably perform a work of domestication. Those that work best, the most powerful in recreating cultural values and the most responsible in accounting for that power, usually engage readers in domestic terms that have been defamiliarized to some extent, made fascinating by a revisionary encounter with a foreign text.
>
> (Venuti 1998: 5)

While the aesthetic argument for a translation which distances somewhat the target reader from the translated text is compelling in itself, what Venuti is more concerned with, and what from the perspective of postcolonial literature is particularly important, is the ethical imperative of the translator to maintain difference in his or her translation. Venuti is adamant that this injuncture should apply particularly in the case of minority literatures, that is to say literatures which are peripheral either because of their relative influence *vis à vis* the translating language or because they are little known or on the margins of institutionally sanctioned genre conventions. According to Polysystem theory (reviewed below), these are the literatures most likely to be

subjected to the domesticating norms of the receiving system and, consequently, a studied foreignized approach is in many ways an act of resistance against the levelling effect translation into a hegemonic literary system can have on a work of literature. What is at stake here is the source-author's subjectivity and his or her right to self-representation. Where domestication can render a text an object for the gaze of the receiving audience [in the case of Postcolonial Literatures, the ethnographic gaze in particular (see Huggan 2012)], foreignization is an attempt to allow the text to speak from the position of subject. Venuti also calls this approach "ethnodeviant" because it deliberately rejcts the ethnocentric norms of the receiving language creating an alienating effect which draws attention to cultural difference.

It is important *not* to confuse foreignizing with faithfulness. Source-orientedness is one among many strategies that a translator may utilise. Venuti, in his translation of *Fosca* by L.U. Tarchetti, a 19th century Italian novelist, combines the archaism derived from stylistic calque of the Italian with the occasional intrusion of quite idiomatic English which he claims breaks the spell of realism and interrupts the smoothness of the reading (Venuti 1998: 18-19). However, in the case of postcolonial African literature it is important that the mode of foreignization is engaged in such a way as to avoid the pitfall of an exoticizing impulse: the aestheticisation and ethnographization of otherness (see Huggan 2012). This is because, as Ovidi Carbonell Cortés (2006: 51) notes, "[e]xoticism is primarily a consequence, the effect obtained when the textual practice constitutes a subject and a setting that relate intertextually to stereotypes of the Other," and "the Other as an exotic stereotype – as the sum of fixed traits which construe a discursive paradigm, a *discourse* – is invariably based on the expectations aroused by the process of translation." So on the one hand translation runs the risk of denying a text its alterity while on the other hand it can be accused of presenting that alterity as a mere aesthetic device; a kitsch trinket for Western consumption which serves only to undermine the ideological project behind the original text production. A central issue in postcolonial translation theory is, therefore is the attempt to resolve this difficult dual arrangement, what Libby Meintjes (2009: 67) calls the "fundamental *crisis of identity* in the act of translation [where] translation's fatal flaw is to be, at one and the same time, *Other* and *not Other"*.

Tymoczko (2000: 83) argues that Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization are too vague, lacking a "tight definition". I would tend to agree and it seems important

therefore, in the context of this study particularly, that Venuti's broader notion of foreignization needs to be inflected with a postcolonial slant which performs what Niranjana (1992: 167-186) describes as the circumvention of "western metaphysical representation" and the utilisation of an "interventionist approach" which enscribes the presence of the other onto the discursive structure of the target language. These notions could be compared profitable to Huggan's (2012) categorization of African literature having both a deconstructive and a recuperative aspect. In Chapters 5 and 6 below, which deal with the micro-textual analysis and evaluation of the translation fromorm a postcolonial and African literature perspective, the approach to stylistic foreignization assumed in this study is explained in great detail. What follows is a brief description of the method employed in those chapters.

Model for analysis

Paul Bandia (2008) puts forward a theory for the stylistically appropriate translation of Europhone African literature from one European language into another. Bandia's model posits a three tier process entailed by the process of translating African literature (Bandia 2008: 174). The model is reproduced in the diagram below.

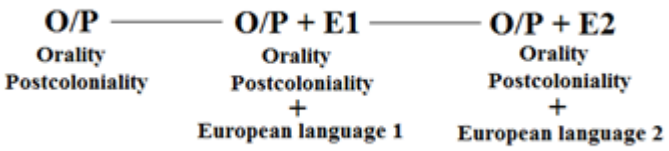

Figure 2: Paul Bandia's (2008:174) three-tier approach to the translation of African fiction

The initial phase is the process of "translating" African orature and postcolonial experience into the writer's European language. This is where the European language in which the original is expressed is shaped to the African worldview and its alterity from metropolitan forms is established. Bandia (2008: 161) suggests that these stylistic effects very often have their roots in the tradition of African oral narrative. Bandia is, however, not simplistic in his treatment of this controversial issue and qualifies it, saying that the extent to which African writers draw on oral tradition varies enormously between Anglophone and Francophone traditions (among many others), individual countries, different times and individual authors. He contrasts, as an example,

the writing of semi-literate Amos Tutuola with his radical style of producing an English calque of the Ijaw language, and writers in the Francophone tradition who, until relatively recently, closely modelled their usage of French on metropolitan standards (Bandia 2008). *Orality* more broadly then refers to the distinctive style that an African writer uses to express "African thought and sociocultural reality, as gleaned from the oral tradition in many instances, in an alien European language, and reconciling the African world view and the European mode of expression" (Bandia 2008: 161). In Chapter 6, Nuruddin Farah's prose is situated within this debate about orality in written prose so that reductionist statements about the "Africanness" of his fiction might be avoided. The very notion that writing styles can be imbued with some sort of essentialised "Africanness" is itself interrogated. In the case of Nuruddin Farah's writing, the influence of the rich tradition of Somali oral literature on his written English prose is important but requires careful handling as the writing of this astute and cosmopolitan author is never simple. The debate around orality in African prose is engaged with in Chapter 6 which is focussed on rhythm and alliteration.

Postcoloniality in Bandia's model refers to the manifestion in fiction of the thematic and stylistic resources that the postcolonial condition offers. Bandia describes this in Gadamerian terms as the "life-world" of a postcolonial subject where the experience of bi-culturality or multi-culturality inevitably produces an aesthetic of hybridity in the novel (Bandia 2008: 175). Where *orality* refers to the "Africanness" of the style of the prose, *postcoloniality* refers to the "sense of difference of the source-language culture" and its confrontation with the dominant culture (Bandia 2008: 175). It is here that a translator would need to bring Venuti's idea of an "ethics of difference" to bear upon the translation process in order not to subject the text to a homogenisation that could smooth the rough edges of a hybridised postcolonial aesthetic.

The second phase in the model, the translation of the written European language 1 source-text into the European language 2 target text, is what Bandia (2008: 179) calls "postcolonial translation as conversion". He uses the word conversion not in the sense of religious conversion where a previous identity is abandoned in favour of a new one. Indeed, this wholesale conversion is quite the opposite sense to the one he intends. He likens the process to that of currency exchange, saying:

> Like a commodity whose commercial value is adaptable to specific markets and their currency, African oral tradition and sociocultural reality, which assume a certain "cultural capital" in the writer's colonial language, are transferred to another colonial language according to the terms of conversion, so to speak, appropriate for the receiving language culture. The terms of conversion may vary from one colonial language to another, depending on each language's history of colonization in Africa, as well as the relations between African and colonial language cultures on the one hand, and those between the rival colonial languages themselves on the other.
>
> (Bandia 2008: 179)

Establishing what exactly the "terms of conversion" are for the translation of Nuruddin Farah into Italian is the focus of the micro-textual analysis. Simply put, terms of conversion favourable to the source-culture would result in a foreignised translation whereas terms of conversion favourable to the target-culture would result in a domesticated translation. Bandia's metaphor of currency exchange is interesting from the perspective of Polysystem Theory. Rephrasing Even-Zohar's laws of interference in terms of this metaphor we see that that where the more the source-text is valued, the more source-norms apply, whereas the less the source-text is valued the more target-norms apply. Bandia (2008: 187), like Venuti with his "ethic of difference", naturally favours the source-oriented conversion, saying: "Postcolonial translation as conversion is not a straightforward search for linguistic equivalents, but rather a serious undertaking to maintain the African world view in the alien colonial language".

Applying the theory

The theoretical literature reviewed above is harnessed for the purposes of this study as follows. DTS provides this study with its overall framework. Any study in the DTS mould requires three steps: 1) establishing the position of the translated literature in the receiving system; 2) isolating and describing translation shifts; 3) providing a qualitative assessment of the possible motivations for these translation shifts taking into account the societal and cultural features of the receiving system.

Establishing the position occupied by the translations in the receiving system is the goal of Chapters 2, 3 and 4. This analysis is organised into three foci: 1) the historical context in which literary traditions on both sides of the colonial divide developed and to which the work of Nuruddin Farah responds; 2) the production and reception of contemporary Afro-Italian literature and the articulation of Nuruddin Farah's writing within that tradition; 3) the

introduction of the translated works of Nuruddin Farah into the system of African literature publication in Italy.

The exposition of the historical context is provided in the form of a chronology of events in the history of Italian involvement in Somalia. The literature that emerged at the various points in this historical relationship is emphasised in detail to provide a discursive backdrop against which Nuruddin Farah's work and that of other Afro-Italian writers can be read contrapuntally. This section is important because, as established above, my study is situated within the tradition of Cultural Materialism and Marxist approaches to Postcolonialism. Both these approaches require thorough treatment of the historical and material conditions of which a literature forms part (as discussed above this role is both reactive to and productive of the culture in question).

The second focus takes the form of a reading of Nuruddin Farah's work against the historical backdrop established. In this section extracts of Nuruddin Farah's work and that of selected Afro-Italian writers of Somali and Ethiopian cultural origins are read in counterpoint to historical discourses discussed in the historical exposition. The logic here is that ideas do not change unless they are actively challenged. This is the role thinkers and writers have to play in shaping a society's consciousness. In this case the writers I am concerned with are shown to have active potential to contribute to the *postcolonializing* of the Italian cultural frame. The theory underpinning this section is based on conflicting historical memory and the role literature can play in fostering empathy, providing catharsis, and causing the revaluation of established thinking patterns. Extracts of Farah's works are quoted and analysed in the form they take in the Italian translation. This is because as Toury claims, "translations are facts of one system only: the target system" (1985: 19). The translations are what the Italian readers have access to and it is for this reason that these works are considered for their role in the Italian literary system.

The last section concerned with establishing the position of Farah's work in the Italian literary system is the analysis of the fate of his work in the Italian publishing industry. I trace the trajectory towards publication that his work travelled, I provide a detailed context of the Italian publication of African literature, I perform an analysis of the material factors that shaped the translation and reception of Farah's work and Farah the man in Italy, and I analyse the paratextual and metatextual data which indicates how the works were conceived of, packaged and marketed by the Italian publishers.

By reading Farah's work from a contrapuntal postcolonial perspective these chapters also establish the *potential* for Farah's work to occupy a core position in the corpus of Italian postcolonial literature. But, by extending the analysis to take into account the material and historical factors that governed the translation, publication and reception of his work in Italy it is possible not only to show that his work has been overlooked but also posit ideas about the reasons behinf this state of affairs.

DTS then calls on the researcher to coordinate the findings of the socio-historical analysis with a microtextual analysis of the translated texts. I do this in Chapters 5 and 6 where I elaborate on Paul Bandia's model described above to describe the form the translations took from the perspective of *orality* and *postcoloniality*. This is integrated with the first half of the study because I am able to show how the attitudes to translation and African literature that prevailed in Italy shaped the translations. This is complemented by an analytical model informed by a postcolonial stance which is concerned with the political ethics of representation. The descriptive study is complete when the findings of the various foci of the body chapters are harmonized in the conclusion.

The chapter that follows represents the first important step in the study: that of establishing the historical unfolding of the cultural and political relationship between Somalia and Italy. It is only in this context that the importance of Farah's work in the Italian literary system can be appreciated.

CHAPTER 2
The Battle for Representation

> Stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history.
>
> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

A historicizing and materialist study necessitates a clear and detailed survey of the historical and cultural context from which a literature emerges and, in the field of translation and reception, into which a literature is accepted. This chapter is entitled *The Battle for Representation* because the physical violence described in the pages that follow is closely matched by a kind of representational violence in the form of dehumanizing colonial discourses. However, what is described is not a massacre but a battle: the other side fights back and this chapter concerns itself also with the small body of literature of anti-colonial resistance written by the colonized. The aim is to show how, when and to what effect the work of Nuruddin Farah enters this fray.

Much of the material reviewed here is more comprehensively covered elsewhere by distinguished scholars in the field of Italian colonial history and Italian colonial literature (Del Boca, Tripodi, Tomasello). I foreground the most relevant aspects of work done in these fields focussing particularly on the historical relationship between Somalia and Italy and the cultural and literary consequences of the prolonged contact between these two countries. The chapter establishes the importance of colonial culture as a linchpin of Italian nationalism in the early twentieth century and illustrates how colonial attitudes persist long after the formal close of Italian colonialism. What emerges is a clear picture of how old and deeply entrenched the tradition of colonial literature is in Italy and how literary responses to these colonial discourses produced by the African victims of Italy's imperial pretensions have been few and far between.

Italy's past relationship with Africa continues to colour its relationship with Africans now calling Italy home. Historical consciousness is therefore not purely abstract but is invested in current realities. For this reason, a detailed account of the history of representation of Africa and

colonialism in Italian literary texts is justified and important. This endeavour is more or less in the tradition of Edward Said's discourse analysis in his path-breaking works *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Said performs a discourse analysis of texts that informed and were informed by the European construction of the 'Oriental' object as opposed to the European or Western subject. His approach is based on the Foucaldian notion of discursive power (Said 1978: 3). Central to his project is the notion of the constructedness of such discourses. He says in this regard citing Denys Hay (1968) (italics mine):

> Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, *a collective notion* identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.
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> (Said 1978: 7)

This chapter analyses a number of such Italian discourses about Africa which were developed during the colonial period to frame its 'civilizing mission' in Africa. Their continued survival is also demonstrated along with the argument that postcolonial literature serves to counter these narratives. Many of these discourses remain, to a greater or lesser extent, 'a collective notion' in the Italian consciousness long after the formal close of colonialism. For this reason, within the scope of describing the counter-hegemonic discourses offered in my selection of Italian postcolonial literature, this review is essential. However, it must be noted that a detailed analysis of Italian representations of Africa, Italian *Orientalism* (or Africanism), and the *Orientalizing* (or Africanizing perhaps) of Africa is far beyond the scope of this study. Some ground in this fascinating new area of enquiry has been covered by Schneider (1998) and De Donno (2010). Said notes that his work *Orientalism* does not cover the cultural response to the totalizing hegemonic discourses that enabled European imperialism in the Middle East and is limited to that geographical region to the exclusion of other parts of the globe subject to European colonial intrusion (Said 1993: xii). He covers some of this ground in his later work *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) with sections devoted to the African experience and to cultures of resistance. Similarly, the review of Italian discourses about Africa presented in this chapter reflects early literary responses to Italian imperialism originating in the Horn of Africa and Somalia in

particular. The study situates the more contemporary responses of the Italo-Somali writers and Nuruddin Farah within this counter-hegemonic discursive tradition.

The aim of the current chapter is primarily to bring these discourses to the fore and illustrate the pervasiveness and longevity of Italian colonial culture. In Chapter 3 these historical and cultural narratives are compared with Nuruddin Farah's work. These are historically sensitive novels characterized by an active engagement with redress in the context of Italian colonialism in Somalia. They are shown to offer a counterpoint to many of the colonial discourses and practices exposed in this chapter.

Italian colonial culture and literature: the formative years

"From its earliest contacts with Africa, Italy pursued – and to some extent achieved – a sort of pre-eminence in the Horn. Italian explorers were followed by missionaries, and these by ethnologists, linguists and historians" (Giampaolo Calchi Novati 2008: 41). It is the accounts of these early explorers and ethnologists that form the bulk of the earliest modern writings concerning Africa in Italian[3].

Italian expeditions funded and conducted by geographic and scientific societies were not unlike those of explorers like Livingstone, Stanley and Brazza which paved the way for British, Belgian and French colonialism in other parts of Africa (see Pakhenham 1991, Del Boca 1992/2002, Hess 1966, Maino 1969). Cristina Lombardi-Diop (2003: 120) illustrates a number of interesting parallels between the Sudanese travel diaries of Carlo Piaggia entitled *Nella Terra dei Niam-Niam* (1863-1865) and that of Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1799). The published details of Italian expeditions into Somalia represent some of the earliest Italian writing on the country. Many have evocative titles like Vesme's 1893 *Un'escursione nel paradiso dei somali* (An expedition into the paradise of the Somali) and Brichetti's 1903 *Nel paese degli aromi* (In the land of spices). They embody a spirit of adventure, geographical and

[3] These writings start in 1885 when Cecchi explored the mouths of the Juba River in the south of Somalia (Del Boca 1992/2002: 19). Robecchi Brichetti explored the north of the country three years later reaching as far into the interior as Harrar (Del Boca 1992/2002: 19). The same explorer was to undertake a complete exploration of the coast from Obbia to Alula in 1890, before completing the first march across the entire length of the country from Mogadiscio to Berbera later in the year, the first European to complete either undertaking (Del Boca 1992/2002: 20). In 1891 Ugo Ferrandi attempted the ascent of the Juba valley hoping to reach the mythical Bardera but was repelled (Del Boca 1992/2002: 20). Two years later however he tried again with much better results and was invited to an audience with Sultan Abdio Osman who accepted an Italian flag and the status of Italian protectorate (Del Boca 1992/2002: 21).

ethnographic discovery that would come to typify the developing tradition of Italian colonial literature and travel literature[4]. An example of the importance of these early expeditions in the developing tradition of Italian colonial literature is evidenced by the following passage from Giuseppe Stefanini's 1922 *In Somalia: note e impressioni di viaggio,* a travel log of a trip made to Italian Somaliland to conduct the first geological survey of the region. He proudly notes how his voyage to Somalia takes place aboard the same steamer that had brought the legendary explorer Vittorio Bottego to the shores of Somalia on the occasion of his second and fatal expedition into the interior:

> Il 'Po' è una nave importante per la storia della Somalia Italiana: è questo il piroscafo che trasportò un giorno Vittorio Bottego e i suoi ardimentosi compagi verso quella seconda spedizione, che dovevea avere un epilogo tanto tragico quanto glorioso. Son passati quasi venti anni e il vecchio piroscafo è ancora sulla breccia. Deve conoscere il Mar Rosso meglio di molto marinai! Ma un piroscafo storico non è di regola, un piroscafo comodo…
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> (Stefanini 1922: 1)

Vittorio Bottego is still widely considered a hero in present day Italy with roads named after him in every city and a monumental bronze statue of him standing in a central piazza of his city of birth, Parma (Del Boca 1992/2002: 114). Importantly D'Annunzio's most important 'African novel' *Più che l'amore* refigures the person of Vittorio Bottego as a Nietzchean superman fighting to regain the virility lost as a result of living with the feminizing effects of urban modernity. Bottego's exploits have inspired generations of comic books and adventure stories for children which were popular from the 1930s until 1960s (Bonati 1990). He is the subject of two recent books by Manlio Bonati bearing the hyperbolic titles *Vittorio Bottego: un ambizioso eroe in Africa* (1997) and *Vittorio Bottego: Coraggio e determinazione in Africa Orientale* (2005). These titles differ little in spirit from the fascist era account by Aroldo Lavagetto (1934) entitled *La vita eroica del capitano Bottego*. The longevity of this explorer as an Italian hero and the cultural production he has inspired is quite astounding. However, according to Del Boca (2002:

[4] Antonio Cecchi, *Al Giuba*, Nuova Antologia, 1892
Luigi Robecchi Brichetti, *Nell'Harrar*, Galli, Milano 1896.
Luigi Robecchi Brichetti, *Nel paese degli aromi. Diario di un'esplorazione nell'Africa Orientale da Obbia ad Alula*, Cogliati, Milano 1903
Luigi Robecchi Brichetti, *Somalia e Benadir. Prima traversata della Somalia*, Aliprandi, Milano 1899
Enrico Baudi di Vesme, *Un'escursione nel paradiso dei Somali*, Società Geografica Italiana, Roma 1893.
Vittorio Bottego, *L'esplorazione del Giuba*, Società Editrice Nazionale, Roma 1900

114) this mythologizing of the figure of Vittorio Bottego, whom he maintains was a murderous criminal responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of indigenous people during his travels through Ethiopia, is indicative of the failure of Italian culture to address and internalize the realities of its colonial history. The importance of colonialism in the history of modern Italy cannot, however, be overlooked. Colonial culture emerged in Italy in the years following the *Risorgimento* and had an effect on the formative years of Italy's national identity (Finaldi 2009).

Italy was not content merely to describe and catalogue the territories its explorers had been investigating. The time had come for the new nation to acquire a 'place in the sun' and assert itself as a European power with an overseas empire. In an age of fierce economic competition between imperial powers and frequent recourse to strategies of Realpolitik there was the fear of Italy being 'trapped' in the Mediterranean Sea by antagonistic powers who ruled the straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. This put Italy at risk of being strangled economically with no access to the open ocean. The Red Sea was considered the 'key to the Mediterranean' and it was on this coast that Italian interests were concentrated at the ports of Massawa and Assab. Italian attempts to penetrate the hinterland around these footholds would bring them into conflict with the Ethiopian Empire which laid claim to sovereignty over the region.

On 26 January 1887, 16 years after the completion of the Unification of Italy, a force of 500 Italians was surprised and annihilated by a much larger force led by Emperor Yohannes IV's general Ras Alula Engida at a place called Dogali north of Massawa, in a province of the Ethiopian Empire that would later come to be known as the Italian Colony of Eritrea. The disastrous battle of Dogali was quickly converted into a spectacle of propaganda for the fostering of Italian nationalism. The artist Cammarano was commissioned to create an enormous painting of the battle at great expense which was unveiled in 1896 (Duggan 2007: 325). The piazza fronting Termini Station in Rome was renamed *Piazza dei Cinquecento* in honour of the 500 Italian soldiers who died in the battle and an Egyptian obelisk was placed in front of the station to commemorate the battle. The new nation, riven by deep seated regionalism and class conflict, found it convenient to promote imperial ideology as a unifying nationalistic rallying point. Imperialistic discourses encouraged Italians to identify with one another in nationalistic terms and the acquisition of colonies gave them an external other against which to gauge the new Italian self (Finaldi 2009, Tripodi 1999).

Italian culture was becoming increasingly militaristic and an idea emerged that a 'baptism of blood'[5] was a necessary step in the evolution of this newborn nation. Francesco Crispi was elected as Prime Minister against promises of revenge for the battle of Dogali and of a war with France to establish Italy's place in the new European order. A war with France never came and Crispi turned his attention to Ethiopia signing the Treaty of Uccialli with Emperor Menelik in 1889. In terms of the treaty Ethiopia recognized Italian sovereignty over the colony of Eritrea and placed itself under the protection of Italy. The Ethiopian Emperor did not however feel bound by Italian protection because of a disparity between the Italian and Amharic translations of clause 17 of the treaty[6]. Based on this important difference between the two documents Menelik was able to overturn the Italian claim to Ethiopia. Eritrea became an official Italian colony in 1890, the beloved *colonia primogenita*, but Ethiopia once again eluded the grasp of Italian colonial interests.

Literary output grew increasingly to reflect boisterous imperialism. The poet Carducci was growing ever more militaristic and nationalistic, publishing his ode to war 'La Guerra' in 1891 (Duggan 2007: 336). In 1894 Italy began a military offensive to capture Tigré and nearly succeeded in annexing the entire region. By the end of 1895, however, Menelik's army now supplied with modern weaponry by France, began to resist Italian incursion. Italy now found itself in a full scale colonial war with a united and well-organised enemy. Duggan (2007: 346) notes how Crispi's militaristic vision for a new and strong Italy was expressed in an article entitled *L'Italia Nuova* in January 1896 where he writes:

> And look, indeed, at how many cubits the Italian people has grown since the war in Africa began… No, this people is no longer the starving eunuch, forced or condemned, as some would have liked, forever to watch over the harems of French policy… Rather, this is a people of mature political conduct, conscious of its rights and duties… May victory soon shine on the heroes of Africa… With pride, we can now claim that not only Italy, but also Italians, have been made!!
>
> (Francesco Crispi: 1896 cited in Duggan 2007: 347)

[5] This phrase comes from an 1882 entry diary in the diary of Marquis Alessandro Guiccioli cited in Duggan (2007: 325).

[6] The mistranslation or otherwise of this clause and the debate about whether it was deliberately ambiguous has historically been a source of interesting disagreement among scholars (Kuner 1991, Giglio 1965, Rubenson 1964, Hess 1973, Stern 1936,). The issue ought to be examined from a more modern translation studies perspective.

The importance for Crispi of the conquest of African colonies and a victorious war for the building of an Italian national spirit is obvious in the above quote. Crispi references D'Azeglio's famous adage (*L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli Italiani*) expressing that the geographical unification of Italy was only the first step in the programme of the Risorgimento and it remained incomplete without the fostering of a national identity to unite the people of the peninsula. The implication is clear: Italians would be forged as a nation in the fires of an African war.

The bitter irony for Crispi and for the project of nation building as a whole was that less than two months later, on the first of March 1896, 5000 Italian soldiers and 2000 Ascari met their deaths at the hands of an overwhelming force of 100, 000 Ethiopian soldiers at the battle of Adua. This was the worst defeat ever suffered by a colonial army at the hands of an indigenous people. It caused the collapse of Crispi's government; an immediate surrender on the part of Italy and the end of Italian colonial ambitions for many years. Ethiopia remained the prize of Italian colonial ambition and the humiliation of Adua was to remain an important part of Italian public memory. The long-term effect of this defeat on the Italian consciousness is evidenced by the censorship in Italian cinemas of Haile Gerima's 1998 documentary *Adwa: An African Victory* over a hundred years after the battle. Adua left an indelible stain on Italian national pride: a stain that would drive Mussolini to exact his terrible vengeance on Ethiopia in 1936. In the intervening period Italian ambitions were focussed on the other shore of the Horn of Africa: the land inhabited by the Somalis which remained open for European expansion and provided a second point of entry to the Ethiopian prize.

Largely overlooked by European colonial ambitions because of its relative poverty as a region, the Somali coast had been left to the interests of the Sultan of Zanzibar while the interior was roamed by nomadic Somali clans (Hess 1966: 7-10). Originally held in lease from the Zanzibari Sultanate and administered by the Filonardi Shipping Company, Italian direct rule of the Somali coast officially began on 13 January 1905. The mandate of the Filonardi Company in the Benadir was broken on the back of a newspaper scandal that erupted in Italy denouncing the continued flourishing of the slave trade along the Somali coast, partly encouraged by the chartered company (Besterman 1999: 56). The moral mission to ensure the abolition of slavery prompted the Italian government to assume direct Italian rule of Somalia in the hope of succeeding where the company had failed. This followed talks between Rome and the Sultan of

Zanzibar mediated by the British and payment of compensation to the Sultan of Zanzibar (Lewis 1980, Hess 1966, Maino 1959). The territory inhabited by ethnic Somalis was divided between Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, British Kenya, French Djibouti and the Ogaden ruled by Ethiopia. The current political impasse with the north of the country occupying the former British Somaliland as *de facto* independent from the south of the country is another example of the disorder caused by colonial era political divisions.

The official annexation of Italian Somalia in 1905 led to scurried attempts to set up a colonial administration with the result that, in the absence of sufficient civilian officials, the Italian military rose to prominence in the governance of the country (Hess 1966: 105). Conflicts between the civil administration and the military finally prompted the government in Rome to review the situation and appoint a new civilian governor in 1910 under whose auspices a new governing structure for the colony was established (Hess 1966:106). Given the scant resources allocated to colonial governance, indirect rule became the model for colonial administration favoured in Somalia until the fascist revolution. This period of Italian rule in Somalia was characterised by various uprisings against Italian governance and the reprisals that were in turn meted out by the colonial forces (Del Boca 1992/2002: 806). Despite early attempts to project an image of moderation and enlightened tolerance, Italian colonialism in Somalia differed little from the draconian colonialism experienced elsewhere in Africa.

The growing need to "pacify" the unruly interior meant that Italian troops (which were often complemented by a large proportion of Somali and Arab mercenaries) would increasingly come into direct conflict with locals. Uprisings sparked by Italian interference in local affairs, notably in terms of applying the ban on slavery, erupted at Bimal, Bahallè and Lower Webi Shebelle (Del Boca 1992/2002:806-819). These uprisings required military force to be suppressed and gradually the colony was increasingly militarised. The main concern of the Italians was that the locals would arm themselves with modern weapons and thereby become ungovernable (Del Boca 1992/2002: 807). This preoccupation with weaponry, quite natural for an occupying force, continues into the fascist era under the rule of De Vecchi and is used as a key plot device in Nuruddin Farah's *Close Sesame,* as is illustrated in Chapter 3.

D'Annunzio, Marinetti, Italian Nationalism and Africa

The literary and cultural landscape of Italy in the early twentieth century was dominated by the figure of Gabriele D'Annunzio. Labelled by Sisley Huddleston in 1924 as the John the Baptist of Mussolini, a prophetic figure of the violence that would grip Italian culture under Fascism, D'Annunzio was a literary figure simultaneously held in awe and reviled on the Italian and European stage (Woodhouse 2001). His personal relationship with Mussolini was never simple: at times they had a relationship of mutual admiration, at other times they competed over the hearts and minds of the Italian people and D'Annunzio, with his aristocratic pretensions, was often snobbish about Mussolini's proletarian background (Woodhouse 2001). However the dominant status in Italian literature of this disciple of Nietzsche, who revelled in the pursuit of pleasure, in violence, in courage, bold action, nationalistic fervour and in war, certainly added to, what Woodhouse (2001: 34) describes as, "the discursive atmosphere of revolt against the status quo" which characterized the Italian literary scene in the early twentieth century.

D'Annunzio was part of and influenced by a rising tide of nationalism in an Italy fed up with what was seen as weak and ineffectual leadership in the era of Giolitti's premiership. Upon the death of Carducci, another great nationalist poet, D'Annunzio took up the mantle of the bard of the nation, in effect having a massive effect on the cultural direction taken by Italy. Duggan (2008: 377-378) notes that the nationalist movement in Italy was a highly intellectual movement adhered to by leading writers of the day such as Prezzolini, Papini and Corradini. Tomasello (2004) adds Pascoli, Martini and Oriani to the mix with a particular emphasis on how Africa and the colonial project figured in their nationalistic writings. Nationalism and imperialism were actively fostered in the field of text production and *Il Regno*, a review founded in 1903, along with other journals and reviews, became a particularly vocal mouthpiece for the building of the nation's prestige through the acquisition of colonies (Tripodi 1999: 30). Duggan also notes in this regard:

> From the outset the main vehicles for Nationalist ideas were journals, in the main based in Florence: *Il Marzocco*, which began in 1896, *Leonardo* and *il Regno*, founded in 1903, *Hermes*, 1904, and most influentially, *La Voce*, set up in 1908... They never had large circulations... but their contributors included nearly all the most talented younger writers and thinkers in the country; and they came together on a common platform of dislike of the status quo...
>
> (Duggan 2008: 378)

D'Annunzio's prolific literary career coincided with and fuelled the fire of this nationalistic and militaristic literary atmosphere. He embraced nationalism and war and, much like many of his contemporaries in intellectual circles, was very much in favour of Italy's expansion and consolidation of African colonies. The atmosphere was one of rebellion against the perceived weakness of Liberal Italy and an ardent desire to put Italy on the map and gain international prestige. This was a newly formed nation flexing its young muscles and, with vengeance for the humiliation of Adua in mind, all too often Africa became the testing ground for this new-found enthusiasm for violence and conquest. Corradini claimed to have been converted to Nationalism on the wake of the Italian government's response to Adua (Duggan 2008: 379). Woodhouse (2001: 17) notes how D'Annunzio's megalomania and narcissism as well as his taste for florid literary style was combined with a fierce nationalism from an early age. Aged fifteen, in a letter home from the boarding school in Prato, Tuscany where he was sent to smooth out the provincial accent of his native Abbruzzo and learn the dialect of Dante, he wrote the following:

> My first mission on this earth is to teach people to love their country and to be honourable citizens, the second mission is to hate to death all the enemies of Italy and constantly to combat them. Ah! If all Italians were like me, they would pay dearly for the blood they have sucked from us with their cowardly betrayals.
>
> (D'Annunzio in Woodhouse 2001: 17)

This nationalistic and militaristic character continued in D'Annunzio and characterized both his verbal art and the carefully constructed performance that ensured he was a figure both fascinating and controversial for much of his life. D'Annunzio strove always to behave in the model of the *Ubermensch* of Nietzsche's philosophy. He fostered the image of himself as "daring, cruel, aggressive, courageous and sexually predatory" (Duggan 2008: 350). His literary work was characterized by "themes of heroism, love, decadence and death" and the ever-present aestheticization of violence and cruelty (Duggan 2008: 351).

Like many of his generation D'Annunzio was frustrated and disillusioned by the politics of Liberal Italy which he saw as failing to deliver on the glorious promise of the Risorgimento to restore Italy to greatness. He was horrified by the lack of idealism and the pragmatic direction Italian politics had taken. He was particularly disgusted by the weak response of the Italian government to the humiliation of the battle of Adua (Duggan 2008: 375). What he sought for Italy was a fundamental renewal, a new idealism, a revolution of ideas and a great war in which

to cauterize the weakness of the past and forge a new and proud Italy. Such a war came in 1915 and D'Annunzio greeted it with passion and excitement, saying to the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg:

> We live in a loathsome epoch, under the domination of the multitude and the tyranny of the masses... The genius of the Latin people has never fallen so low. It has completely lost its sense of energy, pride and heroic virtues; it wallows in the mire and revels in humiliation... A war, a great national war, is the last remaining hope of salvation. It is only through war that peoples who have been turned into brutes can halt their decline, as it offers them a stark choice: either glory or death... Consequently, this next war, that you seem to fear, I invoke with all the passion of my soul.
>
> (D'Annunzio 16 June 1914 to Maurice Paléologue in Alatri 1983: 343-4)

The warlike culture to which D'Annunzio was aspiring would eventually come in the form of Fascism and much of the violence he wished for would take place in Italy's African colonies starting with the conquest of Libya already under Liberal Italy in 1911; an event celebrated by the poet.

D'Annunzio also turned his literary hand to Africa, publishing *Più che l'amore* in 1906, an epic tragedy, in which the character of Corrado Brando explores Africa following the routes forged by the early Italian explorers described above, among them Vittorio Bottego. The novel describes the exploits of this *Ubermensch* character as he battles the elements in Africa and is spiritually renewed. Africa becomes a symbolic space which contrasts against what D'Annunzio saw as the debilitating effects of Liberal Italy's 'decadent' and 'inert' culture (Tomasello 2004). The notion of Africa as a place of renewal, a place where time has stood still and where modern man could recover his primordial and instinctive self was a common trope in Italian colonial literature. It was also found in examples of the other great militaristic current in Italian literature in the early twentieth century: Futurism.

The founder of the artistic doctrine of Futurism, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, also wrote an African novel: *Mafarka le futuriste* which was written in French and published in 1909 (Tomasello 2004). Upon translation and publication in Italy the novel was accused of offending public decency (*oltraggio al pudore*) and Marinetti defended his work in the following terms:

> I have described the impressive ascension of an African hero, temerarious and cunning. After displaying, in manifold battles and adventures, the most vehement will to live and dominate, [...] still unsatiated by moulding the world to his own liking, he abruptly rises from the heroism of war to that of philosophy and art. In a superhuman struggle against matter and mechanical law, he wants to and does create his ideal son, a masterpiece of vitality, a winged hero whom he transfuses with life by a supreme kiss, without the concurrence of woman who witnesses the tragic superhuman birth.
>
> (Marinetti 1910)

Much like in D'Annunzio's African novel, the setting of Marinetti's novel in Africa is an act of mythologizing Africa as a landscape free from the decay of urban modernity. Mafarka is himself an African and is able to become the embodiment of Futurism despite his 'primitive' surroundings through sheer force of will and through violence. Violence and its capacity for renewal is central to the futurist project. Blum (1996: 55) says in this regard "[t]he clash between the fiction of virile power and the spectre of femininity/feminization resounds loudly in Marinetti's 'African Novel'." Indeed the glorification of masculinity at the expense of femininity was central to the Futurist manifesto and colonial literature, particularly in the Fascist period, would pick up on this refrain, with the commonplace trope of Africa as the playground of a renewed virility for men softened by the feminizing influences of modernity and city life.

In the words of the Manifesto itself famously (and allegedly) penned by Marinetti and his friends late at night "under hanging mosque lamps with domes of filigreed brass" the nature of the new art was devised and described as such: "[a]rt, in fact, can be nothing but violence, cruelty and injustice." The Futurists, like D'Annunzio and many of the intellectuals of the day in a nation steeped in tradition and history, a land permeated by the "smelly gangrene of professors, archeologists, ciceroni and antiquarians", wanted to see radical change. But while D'Annunzio and Carducci wanted to see the glory of Rome restored the Futurists revelled in the idea of flattening history and beginning anew by embracing a vicious, rapid modernity where flux was ensured and nothing could ever grow stale. Their poetry, art and politics all glorified danger, energy, courage, audacity and revolt. They would "exalt aggressive action, feverish insomnia the punch and the slap". They revelled in the speed and danger of the modern world and claimed that "war was the world's only hygiene". The glorification of violence seen in Italian art and literature would have serious consequences for the people of Africa.

In 1911 Italy launched a sudden invasion of Libya. This was greeted with exultation from the Nationalists who had long been calling for a war in North Africa (Duggan 2008: 381). Interestingly, Duggan (2008: 381) notes that the nationalist newspaper *L'Idea Nazionale* was launched on 1 March, the first day of the month dedicated to Mars, the god of war, and the day Ancient Roman armies were mustered on the Field of Mars outside Rome in readiness for the summer campaigns. March 1 happened also to be the anniversary of the battle of Adua (Duggan 2008: 381). The importance of this defeat in the cultural consciousness of the time proved itself again to be a central thorn in the side of Italian pride and war in Africa was considered the only palliative. When Italy invaded Libya, Marinetti, who travelled there as a newspaper correspondent, was quick to denounce what he described as 'stupid colonial humanitarianism' impeding the war machine (Duggan 2008: 382). He had this in common with many contemporary nationalists who decried the sentimentality of Italian ‘leniency’ in Libya. These criticisms were levelled in the context of a violent struggle in Libya where brutal reprisals against Libyan civilians were all too frequent (see Del Boca 1992/2002 and Duggan 2008). The direct link between the Futurist project and Fascism is subject to debate in the scholarship (see Blum 1996). The details of this debate are not the focus of this study but what is clear is that the heady cultural atmosphere of revolt and renewal, the fierce nationalism that gripped Italy, the glorification of colonial war and the aestheticization of violence that were embodied in different ways by D'Annunzio, the Futurists and other artists at the time certainly reflected a cultural climate conducive to the rise of Fascism and one that Fascism would in turn sustain.

The Fascists were masters of discursive acrobatics and were able to harness and mesh the seemingly opposing dogmas of looking back for inspiration to ancient Rome and looking forward to the strident modernist extremism of the Futurist movement. Comparing statements made by Mussolini to the Manifesto of the Futurists and to the inflammatory rhetoric of the nationalists and D'Annunzio, the cultural and discursive links are clear. Mussolini's aphorisms that were inscribed in public spaces all over Italy: “Believe, obey, fight; Live dangerously; Better one day as a lion than a hundred years at as a sheep” all have a striking resemblance to the tone of the Futurists and to the nationalism and militarism of D'Annunzio (Duggan 2008: 478). The colonial history of Fascist Italy is described in greater detail below where it is argued that it evolved from the cultural milieu that preceded it. The period also saw fierce resistance to the Italian colonial project particularly in the form of the famous and celebrated Bedouin freedom

fighter Omar al-Mukhtar, the Lion of the Libyan Desert, and Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, the famed 'Mad Mullah' of Somalia. Both figures inspired defiant anti-colonial literature. The following section focusses on the Somali case.

Warrior poet Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan

Somali resistance to colonialism manifested with particular vigour in the form of Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan's prolonged holy war against British, Ethiopian and Italian interests in the region. His crusade was initially directed against Ethiopia because of the increasing frequency of violent Ethiopian raids against Somali pastoralists in the Ogaden but eventually involved British interests and finally Italian colonial interests as the atmosphere of rebellion swept through the region (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 55 -56). The reasons for Abdullah Hassan enlarging the scope of his rebellion to include interests in Italian Somaliland involve a number of promises made by the Italian authorities which, according to Abdullah Hassan, were not honoured (Del Boca 1992/2002: 819-820). An extract from a letter sent by Abdullah Hassan to the commissioner of British Somaliland complaining about the behaviour of the Italians and rejecting the validity of the Italian protectorate attests to Abdullah Hassan's attitude towards Italian rule:

> Noi ci lagniamo anche degli italiani che ci tormentano, ci istigano, ci disturbano molto e imprecano contro di noi in ogni modo. Essere bestemmiati è per noi più duro che di aver tagliato il collo. Gli italiani hanno sequestrate la nostra *daua* e vi hanno issato la loro bandiera. Inoltre avvelenarono mio figlio, che, ritornato da me gravemente ammalato, morì subito dopo il suo arrivo. Dobbiamo dichiararvi che noi non riconosciamo gl'italiani, ma voi solamente e a voi attribuiamo la causa del male e del bene che essi ci fanno.
>
> (Abdullah Hassan as quoted in Del Boca 1992/2002: 820)

Abdullah Hassan managed to unite the disparate clans of Somalia into a united struggle by appealing to clan leaders, claiming that "infidel invaders have come to surround us; they have come to corrupt our ancient religion, to settle our land, to seize our herds, to burn our villages and make our children their children" (quoted in Laitin and Samater 1987: 57). Abdullah Hassan is considered the national poet of Somalia. Offensively labelled by the British with the dismissive title 'The Mad Mullah', Abdullah Hassan and his dervish freedom fighters became a rallying point of nationalistic pride while his own poetry and the poetry he inspired are the stock in trade of Somali nationalistic literature (Samatar 1982). Poems attested to be those of Abdullah

Hassan and other important national poets were transcribed and collected in a book entitled *A Collection of Somali Literature: Mainly from Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan* by Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal in 1964. Another collection of the poems of Sayyid Mohamed Abdullah Hassan was produced ten years later in 1974 (this time in the new official Somali orthography instituted in 1972) by Jaamac Cumar Ciise with the title *Diiwaanka Gabayadii Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan*. Another work, *Ismaaciil Mire* (1974), is a collection of poems by one of Abdullah Hassan's generals which was collected and transcribed by Axmed F. Cali.

The dervish rebellion also forms the backdrop of the 1974 Somali novel *Aqoondarro waa U nacab jacayl,* translated into English as *Ignorance is the Enemy of Love* (1982), by Farah Mohamed Jama Awl (sometimes written *Faarax M.J. Cawl*) which is considered the first novel published in the Somali language. The translation of the novel was commissioned by UNESCO and was undertaken by the renowned Polish scholar of Somali language and literature B. W. Andrzejewski, who also provided an introduction to the novel. The English version is out of print and it has not been translated into Italian. It is thus far the only novel written in Somali to ever be translated out of that language. Awl belongs to a group of Somali writers that Andrzejewski (2011: 76) calls "transmuters" because they transform traditional poetic oral literature into written prose. The prose of Awl's novel is interspersed with poetry, much of it allegedly transcribed verbatim from poems composed by the two lovers and passed down orally (Andrzejewski 2011: 77). Nuruddin Farah also draws on Somali oral tradition and could be considered a 'transmuter' to some extent (see Chapter 6). *Aqoondarro waa U nacab jacayl* is interesting for a number of reasons, not least because of its advocacy of literacy in a society passionately devoted to oral poetry. The story is about a soldier of Abdullah Hassan whose illiteracy causes him to inadvertently disgrace his lover when he asks her own relatives to read him a love letter she had sent him. The lovers are separated and both die tragically. In the story, ignorance of the written word causes the tragic death of the lovers. Awl was apparently writing in support of Somali government attempts to improve literacy and women's literacy in particular. This preoccupation with the tension between traditionalism and modernity which is exhibited in this early work of Somali literature is also a key thematic thread in much of Nuruddin Farah's work.

Abdullah Hassan's exploits in British Somaliland did not go unnoticed in the Italian-held south and, despite the resistance of certain Islamic sects who branded him a heretic, he inspired resistance against Italian intrusion into the Somali hinterland (Lewis 1980: 86). Abdullah Hassan is one of the few symbols of national unity revered in both Somalia and Somaliland. Abdullah Hassan and his rebellion is the backdrop to the narrative of Deeriye's youth in Nuruddin Farah's *Close Sesame* (1986), a fact that links Farah to this tradition of anti-colonial Somali literature. Moolla says in this regard:

> Like the Sayyid before him who resisted British colonialism, Deeriye challenges Italian colonialism and then later the postcolonial dictatorship. In the same way the Sayyid was betrayed by a fellow Somali, being accused to the British of the theft of a rifle, Deeriye is betrayed in a circumstance which leads to his incarceration in an Italian jail for twelve years. For his resistance to the dictator, he is later imprisoned for four years. History repeats itself when, just as the Sayyid is summoned to a meeting of the leaders of the Qadiriy Brotherhood in the coastal town of Berbera to discuss the religious validation of the resistance methods used by the Dervishes, so too, Deeriye is called to a meeting of clan elders convened by the Dictator.
>
> (Moolla 2014: 128)

The thread that links the Sayyid to Deeriye is very important in terms of this study. The referencing by a modern Somali author of a historical anti-colonial warrior poet serves to lend Farah's prose the distinction of picking up the baton of a literary tradition characterized by resistance to Italian colonialism. Farah's critique in the *Variations* trilogy is mainly focused on the neo-colonial oppression of Siad Barre. However, he never lets the reader forget the presence and effects of Italian colonialism. As Moolla notes, Deeriye fights with equal vigour against oppression in the form of Italian colonialism and the totalitarianism of the postcolonial state.

The Dervish resistance ended in 1920 following the use of overwhelming force in the form of aerial attacks of Dervish strongholds by British planes, an epidemic that levelled many resistance fighters and the sudden death from influenza of Abdullah Hassan at the age of 64 (Laitin and Samatar: 1987). Despite becoming a focus for national pride and future resistance, Abdullah Hassan and his Dervish rebellion, actually had the unintended effect of entrenching colonial and Ethiopian control of Somali interests because of the harsh reaction and securitization of the region on the part of the powers (Lewis 1981: 91). The end of Somali resistance to colonial forces in 1920 more or less coincides with the rise of Fascism in Italy following the 1922 March on Rome by Mussolini's blackshirts.

Fascist colonial culture and literature

While Italian colonialism in Africa is most commonly associated with the megalomania of the Fascist era, the ideology of Fascism relied on the same jingoist nationalism that was first used in Liberal Italy to create enthusiasm for the colonial project. In terms of colonial policy the Fascist era can be seen as a consolidation of what came before rather than a complete shift in attitudes. Fascism in Italy was as much a cultural movement as a political one and the culture that inspired Fascism was central to the Italian artistic and literary avant-garde in the early twentieth century. Futurism, with its celebration of war, violence, strength and modernity; D'Annunzio with his gripping poetry of nationalism, heroic militarism and the glorification of the Italic race; writers like Carducci who drew inspiration from the faded glory of Imperial Rome for inspiration in an Italy that was viewed as a corrupt shadow of its former glory. This was the heady cultural milieu from which Fascism emerged and which galvanised the conquest and consolidation of empire. The contribution of key early-twentieth century writers like Oriani, Corradini, D'Annunzio and Marinetti as well as Pascoli and Martini to the creation of a nationalistic and imperialistic Italian literature is also attested to in detail in Giovanna Tomasello's book on the history of Italian colonial literature (2004). In this regard the often cited essay by Pascoli written upon Italy's defeat of Libya entitled *La grande proletaria si è mossa* is particularly illuminating (Pascoli 1911/1952). Unfortunately the brunt of the posturing and muscle-flexing of this newly forged militarism would be borne by the inhabitants of Libya and the Horn of Africa. Fascism marked a consolidation of imperialism in Italy and led the nation doggedly and determinedly to pursue its self-appointed position of civilizer and imperial overlord. Many of the worst excesses of the Italian colonial project were committed under Fascism and racism against the indigenous people was actively fostered. However in many ways Fascism was a violently logical conclusion to a trajectory begun when Italy first set its sights on gaining an African empire.

The rise of Fascism in Italy had an immediate effect on Somalia in the form of a new governor and a new style of government. On 8 December 1923, the year following the March on Rome, one of the four men responsible for carrying out this audacious coup, arrived in Mogadiscio to assume the governorship of Somalia. His name was Cesare Maria de Vecchi and his governorship would have a lasting effect on shaping Italian Somalia. His posting to Somalia was less a reward for his part in the Fascist coup and more an imposed exile by Mussolini with whom he had differences and who feared his influence (Del Boca 1992/2002: 51-52). Once de

Vecchi arrived in Somalia he was determined to prove his mettle and to impose on this laid-back colony discipline in the Fascist mould. His priority was to overturn the old policy of indirect rule which was an anathema to the fascist ideology of strong, direct and centralised government.

For this reason the disarmament of the Somali by the Fascist administration was a clear signal that the colony was in future to be run on very different lines. As opposed to a colony that gave arms to chieftains and trusted them to manage the affairs of their territories on behalf of the Italian colonial administration, the Fascists were determined to create a centralised colonial state. The chieftains were ordered to surrender their arms in March 1924. The humiliation of being disarmed cannot be underestimated. Some chieftains complied; others refused and the violent backlash from the Italian forces was instantaneous. The new Fascist order would brook no defiance and rebellions by those who refused to give up their arms were put down with a brutality previously unseen in Somalia (Del Boca 1992/2002, Lewis 1981, Hess 1966). One such incident involved a Webi Shebelle Sheik called Haji Hassan who, already embittered by having been forced to release his slaves, defiantly refused to disarm (Del Boca 1992/2002: 56, Hess 1966: 151). For four days between 27 March and 31 March 1924 the Sheik's lands were ravaged by a column of 800 colonial soldiers supported by artillery and machine guns. Fields were put to the flame, livestock destroyed and villages bombarded by artillery. In the end Sheik Haji Hassan capitulated in the face of the overwhelming military pressure. The violent repression of the rebellion of a tribal chieftain is the backdrop for some of the events in Nuruddin Farah's *Close Sesame* (see Chapter 3 below).

In 1928, when de Vecchi returned to Italy, his hugely expensive military annexation of the northern sultanates of Obbia, Nogal and Mijjertein and the diplomatic treaty which saw Jubaland in the south pass from British hands completed the conquest of Italian Somalia (Hess 1966: 149). All Somali speaking people were now directly governed by foreign powers: the Italians in Somalia, the British in British Somaliland and northern Kenya, the French in Djibouti and the Ethiopians in the Ogaden. De Vecchi's own writings about his experience governing Somalia are contained in a book of memoirs entitled *Orizzonti d'impero. Cinque anni in Somalia* published in 1935.

Somalia had always been seen as a stepping stone to the ultimate prize which was Ethiopia. The invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 was the pivotal moment of the Fascist period and a

key moment in the relationship between Italy and Africa that would define the future relationship between Africans and Italians. The glorious war and the celebration of violence, the long awaited vengeance for the defeat of Adua, the militarism and nationalism which had been building to a crescendo over the previous forty years exploded in an outpouring of patriotism and devotion to the regime. With the conquest of Ethiopia Mussolini's popularity reached new heights. The rhetoric of the time proclaimed the return of the Roman Empire and likened Mussolini to Caesar Augustus. The king, upon hearing the news of Ethiopia's defeat, spent a sleepless night wistfully gazing at a map of Africa and weeping, D'Annunzio stirred from his retirement on Lake Garda to write a letter of congratulation in his typically overwrought style to Mussolini and the widow of General Baratieri of Adua infamy wrote to Mussolini to thank him for redeeming the honour of her late husband by finally and definitively defeating the Ethiopians (Duggan 2008: 506-508). What was largely absent in the heavily censored and propaganda ridden press of fascist Italy was any criticism of the war. In fact criticism of the war from Britain and France was dismissed by Mussolini in Italy and by many Italians at the time as hypocrisy and bullying and an attempt to deny Italy her place in the sun. The atmosphere of celebration clouded the particular brutality of this war that pitched a modern army against a militarily backward African state. Widespread bombing, the use of gas on combatants and civilians and the brutal suppression of dissent were all ignored. This celebration of violence drew on powerful currents of thought from the early years of the century: nationalism and futurism with their aestheticization and celebration of violence. Duggan (2008: 504) explains how Mussolini's son Vittorio, who served as a pilot during the war, describes the war as a form of “sport”, conferring “a diploma of manhood” and how “entertaining” it was to watch Ethiopians explode as their bombs fell upon them or fleeing ablaze from their burning huts. He was also disappointed that the African huts failed to explode theatrically like in American films. This disconnect from the pain and suffering the war was inflicting on the indigenous people was tremendous and could only be possible in a culture which had been inured to violence by years of empathy-crushing propaganda and militaristic literature. The embarrassment that followed the close of the war meant that the facts about the use of gas in Ethiopia only came to light in 1996 when the Ministry of Defence finally conceded this point (Duggan 2008: 503). A cloak of silence still surrounds the war in Ethiopia and the brutality perpetrated during the war is not common knowledge in Italy.

Creating a new fascist culture for Italy was considered a priority and literature was used to serve as effective propaganda for the state. In Fascist Italy, as in any totalitarian regime, culture was harnessed to the specific ideological goals of the state. Duggan (2008: 462) notes in this regard "Gentile [the fascist minister of education] endeavoured to rally the intellectual community to fascism, and in 1925 he published a manifesto, signed among others by Pirandello, Corradini, Marinetti, Soffici and Malaparte, which called for the cultural life of the nation to be placed at the service of the new regime." Art for Art's sake was rejected as a bourgeois affectation of the feminized and directionless culture of democratic Italy; alien to the national and revolutionary culture of the new Fascist Italy where the state was supreme and art was conceived as a tool for moulding and shaping national culture. In 1931 Mussolini declared that culture was an 'arm of the regime' (Cannistatrato 1972: 135). An essential element in the fascist cultural revolution was the fostering of a colonial culture; Italians were to view themselves as the deliverers of civilization to their African colonies, the racial and cultural superiority of the Italians was emphasised by the regime and a 'proper' master and subject relationship was encouraged.

Mussolini's ministry of culture set about reforming Italian colonial literature so that it reflected the colonial philosophy of the regime (Tomasello 2004: 141 - 143). Much of the exoticism and romanticism which was used to characterize Africa in earlier Italian literature was rejected by the regime which preferred a literature that expressed the strength and prestige of the Italian colonial endeavour. The importance of colonial literature as part of the fascist regime's propaganda machine is underlined by the institution in 1926 of an annual colonial literature competition. The first novel to win the endorsement of the state as part of this competition was Mario dei Gaslini's (1926) Libyan novel *Piccolo amore beduino*. Gaslini was the archetype fascist colonial writer inaugurating the official regime sanctioned form for the genre (Tomasello 2004: 155).

Like *Piccolo amore beduino*, other colonial novels endorsed by the regime also featured strong, fearless and adventurous male officers as protagonists and emphasised the tradition in Italian literature of viewing Africa as an adventurous setting where the hardships of raw nature would reinvigorate a masculinity that had been enervated by modernity (Stefani 2007: 92). The war and conquest of Ethiopia served as a catalyst for fascist propagandist literature imbued with

"mythological resonance" (Ponzanesi 2004b: 107). The conquest of Ethiopia was heralded as the moment of rebirth of the Roman Empire and Mussolini was the new Emperor of a strong and virile Italy that would not only regain the glory of Imperial Rome but supersede it. A clear indication of the mythologizing of Fascist Italy as picking up the mantle of the Roman Empire is the release of Carmine Gallone's film *Scipione L'Africano* in 1937 after the completion of the conquest of Ethiopia (Cannistraro 1974: 126). The film won the Mussolini Cup for the best Italian film at the 1937 Venice Film Festival. This is unsurprising given that Mussolini had commissioned the film before his invasion of Ethiopia a year earlier. The film tells the story of legendary Roman general Scipio Africanus who defeated Hannibal at the Battle of Zama in North Africa. The resonance of this film featuring a glorious Roman general and a successful African campaign in the year of the conquest of Ethiopia was an obvious but effective propaganda stunt.

The Ethiopian war provided fodder for a huge outpouring of propagandist literature detailing the exploits of Italian soldiers in Ethiopia. The regime promoted literature that glorified the war and according to Ponzanesi "the actions of the Italian soldiers had to be thoroughly described and reported in order to construct a model for the future by showing how young men going to Africa returned physically and morally strengthened" (2004b: 107). An example of this is the protagonist of *Azanagò non pianse* by Tedesco Zammarano (1934), who is described as a man in perfect physical condition, a fighter, hunter, explorer and ethnologist who views the colony as nothing more than a training ground for perfecting his energies far away from the debilitating effects of urban modernity (Stefani 2007: 92). A similar trope exists in Gino Mitrano Sani's (1933) *Femina somala*, whose protagonist also expresses a longing in old age for the invigoration that his experience in Africa afforded him as a younger man because of the contact it offered modern man with a memory of a more 'primitive' or simple existence (Stefani 2007: 93). For both these protagonists there exists another side of the coin, the other main trope in Italian colonial writing, the danger of *insabbiamento* similar to the British colonial expression "to go native" (Stefani 2007 : 95). Africa was thus presented as a place where the soul could be exorcised of the debilitating effects of urban civilization but also as a place where degeneration, decadent exoticism and *mal d'Africa* could lead to a crisis of identity and a weakening of resolve. This was the fate of the protagonist of the 1935 film *Mudundu* scripted by Ernesto Quadrone. It is the story of an Italian advocate who comes to Somalia and begins to be 'seduced'

by the local way of life, living among indigenous people and marrying a Somali woman (Stefani 2007: 95).

The regime's desire for art that reflected the ideological and propaganda aims of the fascist state did not stop at creating new works. Older works were often revised and heavily edited to reflect the cultural agenda of the state. An example of this is the publication of the diary of the explorer Carlo Piaggia. In 1941 the diary was published for the first time in a heavily revised and edited version produced by Alfonso Pellegrinetti under the name *Le Memorie di Carlo Piaggia.* Pellegrinetti's embellishments of the text transform it so that antislavery and romance are fused and the text takes on a sentimental abolitionist character (Lombardi-Diop 2003: 127). Both antislavery and romance were stock tropes in fascist colonial literature that Pellegrinetti's revision of the text anachronistically imposes on Piaggia's work to serve the propaganda interests of the fascist regime. According to Del Boca (1992: 9) this practice was not uncommon during the fascist period when the activities of early Italian explorers were frequently exaggerated or manipulated to fit the rhetoric of the fascist state[7]. This is not that dissimilar from D'Annunzio's refiguring of Italian explorers as supermen in *Più che l'amore*. The invasion of Ethiopia also saw many British and French texts being banned from school curricula and replaced by nationalistic authors like D'Annunzio and Oriani (Duggan 2008: 463).

Del Boca (1992) includes some autobiographical accounts of soldiers sent to Africa who wrote diaries. These display a "boy scout" quality and wanderlust that underlines the powerful pull of the fascist world-view and the effectiveness of its propaganda. That Africa was seen as a sort of boyish adventure becomes clear. One such account quoted by Del Boca (1992: 34) is reproduced below.

> Noi sentiamo che questa avventura ci salva, ci prende da una vita borghese nella quale le più belle aspirazioni d'azione, di movimento, di vita si dovevano solo espletare attraverso i surrogati delle gare, e ci mette in una vera azione, in una grande e potente spedizione che è preparata a tutti gli eventi... Oramai abbiamo fretta di iniziare la grande avventura; slanciarsi nel futuro, lontani dalla Patria, dalla mamma, dal babbo, dalla ragazza, con il fucile in mano e una grande fede nel cuore.
>
> (Cesari 1938: 6-7 in Del Boca 1992/2002: 34)

[7] Texts that underwent this kind of manipulation and republication include *Kif tebbi: Romanzo africano* by Zuccoli (1924), Franco and Questa's (1929) *Antologia Coloniale* and Giardini's (1936) *Pioneri e soldati.*

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, already in his sixties at the time of the Ethiopian war, participated in the campaign and wrote a lyrical account entitled *Il poema africano della divisione '28 ottobre'* (1937). Africa had already appeared prominently in this foundational figure's early work in the form of the 1909 futurist novel set in a fictional Africa *Mafarka il futurista* originally written in French but translated a year later into Italian (Tomasello 2004: 83-120). Other titles of novels published during the fascist period reveal the extent to which the Ethiopian war was conceived as a great adventure. These include for example Vittorio Beonio Brocchieri (1936) *Cieli d'Etiopia. Avventure di un pilota di Guerra* and Ignazio Battaglia (1939) *Un legionario in Etiopia* (Del Boca 1992/2002: 35). Apart from stories based on adventure narratives Del Boca (1992: 35) also notes that the civilizing mission, important to the fascist regime's conception of its role in Africa, also became prevalent in accounts from the fascist period. Novels exhibiting these themes include Sem Benelli (1937) *Io in Affrica, con conclusione politica* and Bruno Roghi (1936) *Tessera verde in Africa Orientale* (Del Boca 1992/2002: 36).

Africa and the Ethiopian campaign also gave rise to a certain lyricism in certain accounts which reflect the mythology of *Mal d'Africa*. Gino de Sanctis (1958) in his *La mia Africa. Storie di uomini e bestie* contains, for example, the following lines:

> Tra le mie righe vorrei che ascoltaste i motivi di un grande poema sinfonico: *La Sinfonia d'Africa*, che io scriverei se fossi musicista... Spero che queste mie pagine vi rechino l'aroma d'Africa, quello che, dopo le piogge, il 'Mascal' riporta con la primavera.
>
> (De Sanctis 1938: 15-16 in Del Boca 1992/2002: 36)

Critically, the first encounter with alterity in the form of black people for many of the soldiers would give rise to racist impulses which were supported by the regime. For many the sense that they were white became obvious only once they had set foot on African soil and encountered the Other for the first time. The regime's rhetoric would ensure that this encounter produced a racism that perhaps never existed in the monochromatic landscape of pre-war Italy. As mentioned above in this chapter, Africa presented Italians with a distinct Other against which to measure the self, minimizing internal racism between north and south and projecting racism outwards to people beyond the national borders. The forging of a cohesive Italian ethnicity relied to some extent on the conquest of colonies. Del Boca (1992: 37) includes an example of this revisionary encounter with alterity in the form of an account by Niccolò Giani:

> Alla vista di questi indigeni nasce in noi un orgoglio che prima non ci conoscevamo: quello di essere bianchi. Sentiamo infatti che siamo diversi, che nulla ad essi ci può unire, che essi sono ancora all'*a b c* della civiltà, che hanno bisogno di imparare a lavorare, a sudare, a faticare, a rendere. Che tra noi e loro c'è veramente un abisso, profondo, incolmabile... Per tutti questi musi neri noi sentiamo di poter essere solo i fascisti, i capi, le guide, i maestri, non i commilitoni, mai gli amici, mai i fratelli maggiori!
>
> (Giani 1937: 24 in Del Boca 1992/2002: 37)

Propaganda in the form of films, radio, press, advertisements, songs, posters, maps, photography, paintings, travel accounts and reports all formed part of a media campaign to represent the African as inferior and therefore destined to be colonized and dominated by superior Italian culture (Ponzanesi 2004b: 124). Italian culture was represented as ancient and mythic as opposed to the culture of African people which was considered devoid of history (Ponzanesi 2004b: 124). This supremacist attitude ties in with the description of African civilization by Giani quoted above, where he describes Africans as being in the "a b c of their civilization" and in need of guidance from a stronger more established 'superior' civilization: that of the fascists and their revival of Roman civilization.

While not initially central to the Italian Fascist project, which was more focussed on nationalism than race, racism was increasingly fostered by the Fascist regime which felt that the formation of a national consciousness relied on Italians regarding themselves as a superior race. It was also considered important to prevent insabbiamento and maintain the 'correct' balance of power in the colonies. Indro Montanelli, a leading Fascist wrote in 1936, 'racism is a catechism which, if we do not know it already, we must quickly learn and adopt. We will never be dominators without a strong sense of our predestined superiority" (cited in Duggan 2008: 504). This increasingly racist attitude is captured in the story of 'The White Soul of Black John' which, much like the Abyssinian slave girl of the famous soldiers' ditty *Faccetta Nera*, is rescued from Africa and brought to Italy where he is civilized and given a 'white soul' despite his black skin (Duggan 2008: 462).

By far the most common tropes in Italian colonial accounts both pre-fascist and fascist have to do with the perceived mystery, wildness and arcane beauty of the landscape. *Mal d'Africa* remains central and descriptions of the oppressive heat, the endlessness of the horizon, the beauty and openness of the sky, the noises of wild animals in the night dominate these

narratives. These are covered excellently in Stefani's (2007) interesting study on autobiographical literature that emerged from the Italian colonies in Africa. She collects together and examines a large number of autobiographical accounts produced by soldiers and settlers in Italian Africa and traces their themes and tropes noting above all the gendering of the colonies as feminized and as a location for the expression of the masculinity of the conquerors. Interestingly she notes that the indigenous people are often described generally and vaguely along with the descriptions of the local landscape, fauna and flora rather than as people in their own right. Stefani's study provides a very useful account of the nature of the Italian colonial gaze on Africa and crucially shows how very little has changed over the years when they are compared with more recent representations of Africa. This highlights the importance of a postcolonial project in Italian literature of which Nuruddin Farah forms an important part.

Even during the fascist era there were writers who rejected the demagogical fascist modes of representing Africa. Ponzanesi (2004: 134) mentions for example Luciano Zuccoli (1924) whose novel *Kif tebbi: romanzo africano* is an attempt to exorcise from colonial literature romantic exoticism and refocus the lens on the indigenous experience. Another novel in this category was Riccardo Baccheli's (1962) *Mal D'Africa. Romanzo storico* which was reprinted in 1990 (Ponzanesi 2004b: 134). The disappointment of soldiers arriving in East Africa as a result of the difference between the propaganda image of Africa and the reality is a consistent trope in much of the colonial literature of the period. Fascist propaganda represented the Italian possessions as an orientalist African Eldorado, ripe for exploitation by Italian settlers who would put this rich land to good use and make a fortune. The reality was quite the opposite. Indeed, the regions colonized by Italy had been, in the main, side-lined by the other powers precisely because they were arid and poor in resources. This lack of interest in these areas on the part of the major powers is what allowed Italy, a latecomer to colonial expansion, to accumulate what would become known derisively as "Mussolini's collection of deserts" but which in the bombastic jargon of Fascist Italy was dubbed *l'Impero*. This disappointment is captured in the following extract from *Aethiopia. Appunti per una Canzonetta* by Enrico Flaiano (1935) cited in Stefani (2007: 79):

> Un soldato scende dal camion, si guarda intorno e mormora: 'Porca miseria!'
> Egli sognava un'Africa convenzionale, con alti palmizi, banane, donne che danzano, pugnali ricurvi, un miscuglio di Turchia, India, Marocco, quella terra ideale dei film

> Paramount denominata Oriente, che offre tanti spunti agli autori dei pezzi caratteristici per orchestrina. Invece trova una terra uguale alla sua, più ingrata anzi, priva d'interesse. L'hanno preso in giro.
>
> (Flaiano 1935/1988: 259-260)

Interestingly Flaiano's *appunti per una Canzonetta*, based on the notebook he kept during his experience fighting in the Italo-Ethiopian war, was intended as a realist counterpoint to that other famous propagandist *canzonetta*: *Faccetta nera* (Fioretti 2009: 172). There were also writers who, following the end of fascism and the war, began to reflect more soberly on the horrors of the war and the tragic futility of the colonial venture. Mario Tobino's (1952) *Il deserto della Libia* as is a good example of literature of this kind (Ponzanesi 2004b: 134, Tomasello 2004: 199-215). By far the most influential and well known novel in this category, and one that deals with Italy's East African imperial concerns, is *Tempo di Uccidere* (1947) also by Ennio Flaiano. Flaiano took part in the Ethiopian campaign and *Tempo di Uccidere* is inspired by his experiences during that war. It is a sober and realistic account of an anti-hero, an ordinary or indeed weak man; the antistudy of the typical colonial hero that dominates the tradition that starts in Liberal Italy with D'Annunzio's Nietzschean hero in *Più che l'amore* (1906) and was endorsed by the Fascist regime. Flaiano's work has been described as occupying a similar position to the work of Conrad and Kipling in that it has it presents an anti-colonial stance without really escaping from the assumptions that underpinned colonial domination (Fioretti 2009, Orlandini 1992). The striking similarities of *Tempo di uccidere* to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in particular are interesting because *Tempo di uccidere* emerges after World War II as opposed to the late 19th century, as is the case of *Heart of Darkness*. This is illustrative of the delayed timetable in the development of colonial and postcolonial Italian literature that results from Italy being a relative latecomer to the colonial experience.

Ethiopian literary responses to Italian occupation

Ethiopian literary responses to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia do exist. The first Amharic language novel ever published, entitled *Fictitious Story*, appeared in 1909 and was written by Afawarq Gabre Yesus who had spent much of his life living in Italy (Beer 1977: 100). An English translation of the Ge'ez poem *On the Eve of Battle*, composed before the battle of Adua in 1896 and sung on the streets of Addis Ababa while the battle against the Italians was in

progress, was published in 1953 (Beer 1997: 105). The importation of the literary form of the novel into the ancient literary system of Ethiopia dominated by poetry and religious texts in Ethiopia's liturgical language Ge'ez was largely driven by cosmopolitan writers like Yesus and by translation. David Beer, in terms of the emergence of English language writing by Ethiopians, notes in this regard:

> It is noteworthy that translations from Amharic, Ge'ez, and one or two other Ethiopian languages have usually directly preceded significant creative work in English by Ethiopian writers, and one suspects that a definite stimulus-response relationship initially existed.
>
> (Beer 1997: 102)

The 'stimulus-response relationship' to which Beer refers might be described from a translation studies perspective as an effect of intersecting polysystems. One such work in English that is relevant in terms of the experience of Italian colonialism is the *Voice of Blood* by Makonnen Endalkachew which is a play recounting the martyrdom of Abuna Petros, a leader in the Ethiopian church, who, having refused to collaborate with Italian occupying forces, is executed by Marshal Graziani in 1936 (Beer 1997: 102). This event is recounted from the Italian perspective in the diary of Ciro Poggiali (1971: 75-8) written between 1936 and 1937 where he describes the dignity with which the Ethiopian bishop faced his execution at the hand of the Fascist authorities (Burdett 2000, 2011). Another work in this category is *Mammite* by Daniachew Worku (1968) which recounts the evolution of a young boy's relationship with his Ethiopian nanny during the Italian occupation.

Interestingly, for the present study on postcolonial literature, the position of some Ethiopian intellectuals on the status of their own literature reveals an ambivalence towards the postcolonial project. Sahle Sellasie, writing in the *Ethiopian Herald* in 1974 (cited in Beer 1997: 101) says the following in this regard:

> We have no reason to protest vehemently against cultural assimilation because we have never been victim to it. If we have become westernised it is because we wanted to. It has not been forced upon us. Likewise we have no reason to search for our roots because we have never lost them. On the contrary, we have become victims of our own tradition, of our own roots. We have lost ourselves in self-praise, in clapping our hands to our stunted tradition which we consider sacred.

The emergence of migrant literature in Italy, particularly enunciated in *La regina di perle e fiori* by Italo-Ethiopian Gabriella Ghermandi which counters the narrative of Flaiano's *Tempo di Uccidere* by portraying the murder of an Italian soldier by an Ethiopian woman whom he tries to rape, would seem to complicate this view. If Ethiopia had never been victim to western representation what need would there be for this kind of literature in the migrant scene or the smattering of works discussed above to emerge? Clearly the effect of the short-lived Italian occupation of Ethiopia had more of an effect than an Ethiopian nationalist narrative would admit, not to mention the continuing influence of Soviet and American power brokering in the region which largely defines Ethiopia's post-war history. For Somalia, whose colonial experience was of a much longer duration and far more intense than the Ethiopian experience as far as cultural penetration is concerned, a postcolonial literature dealing with this experience is all the more relevant and the Italian translations of the work of Nuruddin Farah represent the best candidate for this role.

The demise of Fascism and AFIS

Despite the bombastic militaristic rhetoric of Fascism, Italy was wholly unprepared for the rigours of an actual war. The outbreak of the Second World War would see the elaborate edifice built by Fascism strained to its limits and eventually crumble along with its African empire. In 1941 the ill-prepared and poorly motivated Italian forces were floundering on all fronts from Greece to Libya, forcing their German allies to intervene. In this year the erstwhile *Africa Orientale Italiana* capitulated before advancing British forces which met with less resistance than anticipated. Ruth Ben-Ghiat (2006: 389) argues that while the conquest of Italian Africa by British forces may have put paid to Italy's "colonial projects of civil and social engineering", years of ingesting nationalistic propaganda made sure the colonial mentality remained entrenched. In the view of many Italians "their superior civilization entitled them to a better position within Europe and to the possession of imperial territories" (Ben-Ghiat 2006: 389). The stripping of Italy's colonies at the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 meant that Italians could easily view themselves as victims after the war. This also meant that Italy was released from the torturous process of decolonization experienced by other imperial powers.

In 1947 Italy renounced any rights to its former colonies and the post-war period saw the fate of these territories decided by the United Nations. Eritrea, which had been an Italian colony

since 1890, was federated with Ethiopia at the insistence of the United States. This action would have serious repercussions in the region leading to what has been described as Africa's longest war, as the Eritreans struggled till 1991 to gain independence from Ethiopia. Guy Arnold (2005: 477) argues that "[t]he roots of the Eritrean struggle can be traced to the scramble for Africa when Italy, defeated by the Ethiopians at the battle of Adua in 1896, was able to retrieve something from the disaster by making Eritrea an Italian colony". Alessandro Triulzi (2006: 436) notes how much of the growing literature on the Ethio-Eritrean conflict of May 1998 to December 2000 which "claimed some 100,000 victims and shattered the political, geographic and moral economy of the two countries" fails to notice the extent to which the conflict "was rooted in different experience of the colonial past." Relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia were particularly tense as a direct consequence of Italian colonialism because Eritrean Ascaris in the Italian colonial corps had always fought alongside the Italians in their campaigns against Ethiopia (Triulzi 2006: 437).Throughout the conflict Ethiopian media portrayed the Eritreans as having inherited expansionism, fascism, racism and colonial arrogance from their ex-colonial masters and portrayed them as traitors who collaborated with the Italians to break the centuries old independence of Africa's oldest surviving empire (Triulzi 2006: 436). The legacy of being on opposite sides of historical conflicts, the religious and ethnic differences between Ethiopians and Eritreans and the divergent historical experiences *vis-à-vis* European expansionism and settlement experienced by the two nations meant that federation and the return of Eritrea to the Ethiopian empire was doomed to failure.

Somalia was mandated back to Italy in 1950 by U.N decree under strict conditions for a period of ten years in order to prepare the country for independence. This administration was referred to as AFIS or *Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italo-Somala*. The ten years of Italian trusteeship were unable to radically reform and modernize the Somali economy (Lewis 1980: 139-148). What resulted was a system of dependency on Italian aid and monopolies best exemplified by the banana industry. Bananas were Somalia's principal export crop with Italy monopolising the market for Somali bananas in the form of the Azienda Monopolio Banane. Although this arrangement may ultimately have proven detrimental to the development of a profitable banana industry it served various parties' interests for a number of years and is typical of the relationship of dependency and artificial trade that developed between Italy and her former

colony (Lewis 1980: 143). Somalia's role as a reservoir for Italian bananas is criticised by Siad Barre in the following 1970 interview:

> Il colonialismo italiano non ha visto più in là delle banane e al di là delle banana non ha svillupato praticamente nulla. È stato un colonialismo che ha fatto male persino i suoi interessi; miope insomma. (…) Poi c'è stata l'indipendenza, e non sono cambiate di molto le cose, perché i vecchi dirigenti non sono stati altro che marionette teleguidate dai vecchi interessi coloniali.
>
> (Mohammed Siad Barre cited in Del Boca 1992: 288)

Despite nationalistic rhetoric about self-suffiency promoted by the doctrine of 'scientific socialism', the "old colonial interests" referred to above by Siad Barre would continue to characterize the relationship between Somalia and Italy during his entire reign. While here he pays lip-service to the problem of neo-colonialism his regime was only too happy to rely on unwavering Italian support where other nations were withdrawing from his increasingly autocratic and violent dictatorship.

Italian neo-colonialism and the Siad Barre regime

Given the instability of the Somalia that Italy left behind in 1960 at the expiry of the trusteeship, it is unsurprising that democracy failed after only nine years. By the 1969 election the political scene had splintered irreparably. A thousand different candidates representing 60 parties ran for 123 seats in parliament: fertile ground for the Siad Barre's military takeover (Tripodi 1999: 114). The coup of 21 October 1969 ushered in 20 years of dictatorship and a new and shameful chapter in the history of Italo-Somali relations.

Despite frequent criticism Italy remained the main source of military and civil aid to Somalia (Del Boca 1992/2002: 171). Italian aid to Somalia continued unabated in the face of frequent evidence of the brutality of the Barre regime, including the 1989 report by Robert Gersony published by the US State Department denouncing the murder by the Somali armed forces of 5000 civilians of the Isaaq clan in northern Somalia; the brutal murder of the Italian Bishop of Mogadiscio; Salvatore Pietro Colombo and the violent suppression of anti-government protests in the capital in 1989 and the murder in Somali custody of an Italian biologist (Del Boca 1992/2002, Achtner 1993). In fact, in tone-deaf defiance of both the international standpoint and the obvious resistance to the regime on the ground in Somalia, Italian government support of Siad Barre continued right up until his 1991 flight from Mogadiscio and the collapse of his

regime (Del Boca 1992/2002: 171). This continued support of the regime in Somalia on the part of Italian governments and political parties was not a result of blind ignorance but rather part of carefully calculated political and economic manoeuvres fuelled by corruption and lucrative kickbacks on both sides.

Some form of literary response to neocolonialism in Somalia in Italian is provided by the 1961 novel *Settimana Nera* by Enrico Emanuelli which is set in Mogadiscio in the final days of the Italian trusteeship and is critical of the continued exploitation of Somalis by certain Italian interests (Tomasello 2004, 217). Moravia, in particular, in his famous African travelogue *A quale tribù appartieni* (1972) comments on the capitalist exploitation of Africa that replaced direct colonial exploitation during the neo-colonial era (Tomasello 2004, 217). He does not however engage with Italy's colonial legacy and overlooked the Horn of Africa entirely (Tomasello 2004, 222). While these writers represent progressive voices in terms of the Italian vision of Africa, their writing did not represent a significant departure from the traditional colonial image of Africa in the Italian consciousness. Indeed Moravia's vision of Africa and Africans has been heavily criticized. He is accused of presenting an essentialised primitivism and an exoticisation of African characters in his novel or of outright silencing them (see Pedroni 2001). What is shown in the following chapter is that Nuruddin Farah, who was living in Italy during these turbulent times, was actively engaged with the issue of Italian neo-colonial interests in Somalia and deeply critical of the continued economic and ideological backing of the Barre regime.

Following Somalia's collapse into chaos in 1991, Italy played a significant role in the American led *Operation Restore Hope* (Tripodi 1999). Italy's bid to take part in the peace-keeping efforts in Somalia following the demise of Siad Barre was highly controversial. Many of the key anti-Barre factions were openly hostile to Italy's involvement in the humanitarian intervention; some going as far as viewing it as a declaration of war (Tripodi 1999: 143). This was because of the legacy of Italian colonialism and, more importantly, because of the support Italy had always offered the Barre regime and allegedly continued to provide to pro-Barre factions (Tripodi 1999: 143).

The Italian peace-keeping force was charged with securing large sections of Mogadiscio, a city the infrastructure and civilian population of which had been completely ravaged by fighting. They were also tasked with securing the *strada imperiale*, the road built between Addis

Ababa and Mogadiscio during the Fascist period (Tripodi 1999: 144). General Bruno Loi claimed in an interview with Paolo Tripodi (1999: 144): "People, after two years of civil war, were resuming a normal life… Now we are welcomed everywhere." While General Giampiero Rossi claimed in a *Corriere della Sera* article entitled 'Ora i Somali fidano di noi' (The Somali trust us now): "There is a constant positive change that can be perceived day by day. At present people trust us… I believe that the initial hostility came about as a result of political choices." (Tripodi 1999: 145). What is interesting about these claims is the return of the *Italiani brava gente* discourse. The assumption that Italians are basically good people acting out of kindness to the indigenous people, an assumption which persisted throughout the colonial period and beyond, returns to mark the humanitarian efforts of the 1990s.

The Italian response to the Somali crisis was the last direct involvement of Italy in Somalia. It was the desire to be taken seriously as a power that prompted Italy to colonize this part of Africa; it was the desire to maintain some dignity and prestige that brought a defeated and economically ruined Italy back to Africa after the Second World War; not being able to bear the loss of influence and the privileged relationship she had with her colony, Italy steadfastly supported Siad Barre and his regime; and finally, as Somalia burned in the early 1990s, Italy still clung anachronistically to its old colony, refusing to allow the Americans free rein over traditionally Italian stomping grounds. Once Italy had come to Africa, it seemed determined to stay; in the meantime Africa had also come to Italy in the form of thousands of immigrants making Italy their new home. These immigrants would provide Italy with its first real contribution in terms of postcolonial literary voices writing in Italian.

The following chapter examines migrant writing in Italian and aims to position Nuruddin Farah within this unfolding tradition, arguing that he provides certain perspectives that are otherwise lacking and in this way contributes to completing the picture of a postcolonial literature that redresses the uniform representation of the Italian colonized by the colonizer by adding a critical colonized voice. I show how the literature of the Afro-Italian diaspora and Nuruddin Farah's work operate as sites of resistance to the history of violence, both physical and representational.

CHAPTER 3
Conflicts of Memory

> Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreements about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps.
>
> EDWARD SAID, *Culture and Imperialism*

> Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourse of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South.
>
> HOMI BHABHA, *The Location of Culture*

Selective memory and postcolonial unconsciousness

Farah has commented on the relationship between Italy and Somalia. He describes this relationship in terms of the invisibility of Somalis and Somali culture in Italy and conversely the lack of knowledge about the Italian colonial period among Somalis. A rather bitter tone regarding the Italian indifference to Somalia and to the colonial legacy emerges in his 2000 essay on the Somali diaspora in Italy:

> Perhaps it is no surprise that Somalis are nearly invisible in Italy. The connections between Italians and Somalis are obscure on both sides, a curious legacy of their colonial encounter. Italian colonists in Mogadiscio lived apart from their subjects, in far more sumptuous circumstances. There were no channels of communication, no places or occasions for encounter. "They were two societies, in parallel existence, neither taking account of the other," as the political scientist Mohamed Aden Sheikh observed in *Arrivederci Mogadiscio*. There is a certain amnesia about the whole affair. Sheikh was "truly surprised" to discover that present day Somalis knew little about the era of Italian colonial rule. Italians, in turn, are convinced that their colonialism was less brutal than the empires of Britain or France. I doubt it. As conquerors, the Italians were citizens; Somalis were indigenous noncitizens in their own country. Italians belittled their African subjects, whom they saw as "negri" - uncivilized primitives, on par with the beasts in the jungle. The Italians never signed treaties or entered into agreements with Somali sultanates (whose authority they

> never recognized); they did their business with other imperial powers. Somalis were just a mass of subjects. Things are not so different today.
>
> (Farah 2000, 10)

In the light of this quote from one of Farah's own essays it is clear the important role his fiction could play in sensitizing the Italian audience, an audience that we have established remains ignorant of the realities of life faced by their former colonial subjects in Somalia. Farah notes that under Italian colonialism "Somalis were just a mass of subjects" and adds that "[t]hings are not so different today". In so saying, Farah is underlining the importance of historical memory in the articulation of current realities. One of Farah's main reasons for writing, according to his essays, is to keep the memory of Somalia alive; to prevent his country from falling into an abyss of silence (Farah 1995, Farah 1998, Farah 1988). In this context the translation and dissemination of his works into as many languages as possible is an important task, not least Italian, which of all the European languages has the most to gain from his work. Echoing Farah, Gabriele Proglio, a scholar of Italian postcolonialism, says "Italy seems to have forgotten about Somalia; its erstwhile colony: there isn't the slightest recollection of the violent acts committed by Mussolini's soldiers in the country of the white star on the sky blue background, itself another emblem of the wounds inflicted by European colonialism"[8] (Proglio 2011: 120).

This chapter serves to illustrate how Italian colonial history has fallen into what has been widely described as 'collective amnesia' and how postcolonial literature in Italian can perform a mnemonic function. Migrant literature may be defined along the lines delineated by Homi Bhabha in the epigraph of this chapter. This is because Afro-Italian literature "emerge[s] from the colonial testimony of Third World contries and the discourse 'of minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South." (Bhabha 1992: 171). I argue, however, that while all migrant writing responds to the need for perspectives from minorities living in Italy, only certain writing can respond to the need for "colonial testimony". Literature able to perform this function is constituted by Afro-Italian writers with origins in the Horn of

[8] Translation mine. "L'italia sembra essersi dimenticata della Somalia, di quello che un tempo fu suo possedimento coloniale: non c'è una minima reminescenza delle violenze che i militari di Mussolini commisero nel paese con la stella bianca su campo azzurro, emblema di altrettante ferrite dei colonialismi europei." (Proglio 2011, 120). The five points of the star represent the five administrative districts that the Italian colonial authorities divided Somalia into. Thus even the very symbol of the nation carries the legacy of its colonial history.

Africa along with Nuruddin Farah. The testimony or remembrance provided by these writers serves to counter the amnesia of Italian colonialism.

I would like to qualify the term amnesia in the Italian colonial context as it implies a complete forgetting, an erasure of memory, whereas what has been experienced in the Italian cultural and political spheres is not erasure but rather selective memory. The colonial past has not been forgotten wholesale, rather, it has been repressed, remembered partially and it has been selectively represented using a range of discourses that mitigate or minimise its negative consequences. This chapter is devoted to exploring the notion of collective memory as it relates to the Italian and African experiences of colonialism in the Horn of Africa and the active revisionary role that postcolonial literature can perform.

In this regard Paolo Jedlowski (2012: 34), a scholar of Italian literature concerned with historical representation, also notes the potential of imaginative literature to contribute to the revision of public memory. He says:

> But there are other media and other types of discourse, such as novels, films, and plays – the vast motley world of fiction. All these elements are fully involved in public memory. They belong to it because they circulate and are discussed in public and because they contribute substantially to the construction of the images of the past that audiences remember, and which are afterwards regarded as plausible and important. Fiction often deals with the historical past. It is not historiography, but in its own way it teaches history.
>
> (Jedlowski 2012: 34)

The lack of postcolonial fiction in Italian emerging from Africa in the years following decolonization is therefore arguably a significant contributing factor to the collective amnesia of Italian colonialism.

Possible reasons for the silence surrounding Italian colonialism include the post-war trauma of Italy as a defeated nation struggling to come to terms with its own fascist and bloody war-time past; the preoccupation with internal and external migration; and the rapid shift in Italian national culture and identity during the boom years of the 1960s: all of which garnered the lion's share of public attention for much of the second half of the last century (Palumbo 2003, 1-14). The loss of Italy's colonies and the military defeat and subsequent occupation of Italy by Nazi and Allied forces "left many Italians feeling wronged rather than repentant" (Ben-Ghiat

2006: 390). Wittinger notes that a similar mode of remembering the events of World War II prevailed in post-war Germany:

> In contrast to what academics claimed for a long time, the early postwar years were not characterized by a general amnesia regarding the period between 1933 and 1945, but were dominated by a highly selective mode of remembering. Rather than remembering German crimes and the victims of the Germans, the period up to the end of 1950s was characterized by mass individual memory focussing on German suffering and Germans as victims.
>
> (Wittinger 2007: 51)

In much the same way and for similar reasons, Italy is also characterized by a "selective mode of remembering" as opposed to "a general amnesia". Discourses painting Italian colonialism in a positive light still predominate the cultural sphere.

Italians are also largely unconscious of their country's colonial heritage as a result of the anomalous decolonization process that Italy experienced (Del Boca 1992/2002: 165). Relieved of the responsibility of decolonization faced by other powers by being stripped of her colonies in 1943 (except Somalia which would be held in trust until 1960) and emerging from 20 years of fascist rule, Nazi occupation and a devastating partisan civil war, Italians could easily see themselves as victims with colonialism being considered one of the many grandiose, misguided and dangerous follies of the fascist interlude.

This colonial amnesia is more the result of policies after decolonization than the colonial era proper. The governments of the first Republic in Italy stubbornly refused Ethiopian requests for a war crimes tribunal to be held to try perpetrators of Fascist era atrocities in Ethiopia (Labanca 2004: 308-309). This refusal, and similar refusals to the government of independent Libya, created the "first cloak of silence" regarding Italian colonial activity (Labanca 2004: 308). Labanca (2004: 308) goes on to explain how public memory was directed towards only the "good Italians" and that crimes were denied and forgotten. The third reason she notes is the "tardy decolonization of Italian historiography" which was for years dominated by reactionary and nostalgic figures from "colonial circles" who kept control of the archives and reinforced a rosy picture of Italian colonialism. These three factors contributed to a "mantle of silence" which "caused colonialism to be remembered in Italy for its exotic coloration, for the roads, the schools

and hospitals that Italians built in Africa" (Labanca 2004: 309). This points to the fact that discourses that prevailed in the colonial literature discussed in Chapter 2, persist to this day.

Historiographical censorship is mirrored in the cultural sphere and the revision of public memory of Italian colonialism is often hampered by the censorship of cultural material. For example, the 1979 big-budget American film *The Lion of the Desert* starring Anthony Quinn and Rod Steiger which tells the story of Omar al-Mukhtar, a Libyan resistance fighter who was hanged by the Italian occupation forces, has never been screened in Italian cinemas (Jedlowski 2012: 36). Equally, Haile Gerima's documentary *Adwa: An African Victory* (1998) which portrayed the defeat of the Italian forces at the 1896 battle of Adua was never screened in Italian cinemas despite receiving critical acclaim elsewhere (Jedlowski 2012: 36).

Apart from censoring negative representations of Italian colonialism, representations that cast it in a positive light have sometimes been actively encouraged. Jedlowski (2012: 39) highlights in this regard a 2004 exhibition of photographs from colonial Eritrea entitled *L'epopea degli Ascari Eritrei* [Epic of the Eritrean Ascari] which was curated at the nationalistic Vittoriano monument in Rome. The event was attended by important ministers of the then right-leaning government. The exhibition honoured the loyalty and bravery of the Eritrean Ascari in a setting festooned with symbols and discourses of colonial nostalgia without mentioning the coercion, discrimination or harsh discipline the Ascari may have suffered in service to their colonial masters (Triulzi 2006; 439, Jedlowski 2012: 39 and Palma 2007: 57 in Jedlowski 2012: 39). Interestingly, the Ascari are remembered from a completely different perspective in the work of Igiaba Scego.

> Molti furono reclutati come soldati. Eritrei e Somali divennero così quegli ascari di cui si sarebbe fatta forte la propaganda fascista e su cui avrebbe poggiato quasi tutta la sua retorica coloniale. Poveri ascari! Nella triste verità dei fatti non erano altro che carne da cannone che gli italiani facevano combattere in prima fila.
>
> (Scego 2010: 83)

For Scego, the Ascari were victims of coercion and acted as cannon fodder for the Italian military while their memory was twisted in the interests of Fascist propaganda. Given the exhibition discussed above, her intuition on the matter is an accurate reflection of how memory of historical events can be distorted for specific agendas. In order to make sense of the role of

cultural representations in the production, or indeed revision, of historical memory, recourse to some significant literature in the field of collective memory is vital.

The term collective memory refers to the conscious or unconscious memories of a collective which have been mythologised and form an integral part of the collective's cultural identity (Nora 1979: 398). These memories are constituted in terms of material cultural objects such as texts, images or monuments "which are designed to recall fateful events in the history of the collective" (Kansteiner 2006: 182). Maurice Halbwachs is the father of the notion of collective memory, a notion that has become extremely important and fruitful in the study of culture and contributed to the destabilising of the trust placed in the objectivity of historiography. Halbwachs makes the bold claim that there is not really any such thing as individual memory unconstrained by collective memory. Halbwachs argues that even when reflecting on our own memories of events in our lives we view them from the perspective of society: "in the same moment that we see objects we represent to ourselves the manner in which others would look at them" (Halbwachs, 1952/1992: 168). According to Halbwachs, the production of group memory is an active site of cultural production and no memories can exist in isolation of the collective's representation of the past. He claims:

> The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory. In other words, the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past. But, as we have seen, they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it. There are surely many facts, and many details of certain facts, that the individual would forget if others did not keep their memory alive for him. But, on the other hand, society can live only if there is sufficient unity of outlooks among the individuals and groups comprising it.
>
> (Halbwachs 1952/1992: 182)

The idea that "the individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory" brings to mind Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony granted by consent. Hegemony refers to quiet power or the predominance of certain cultural forms over others and the normalisation of said cultural forms by the society at large; hegemony in turn constrains and governs cultural production and the proliferation of narratives and discourses. In terms of my study, hegemony can clearly be seen at work in the Italian representations of Africa discussed in the previous chapter as well as in the practices characterising the publication of African literature in Italy.

Given my study's interest in competing interpretations of the same historical events, I have found it useful to harness Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic principle of historical horizons and "horizon merging". Gadamer's hermeneutics is intimately engaged with memory in the sense that to interpret is to forget certain perceptions, replacing them with others. This is contained in the notion of "prejudice" which, in *Truth and Method*, he takes great pains to rescue as a useful term in hermeneutics (Gadamer 1960/1975). He achieves this by narrowing his definition of the term to the exclusion of the negative connotations it has come to embody. For Gadamer prejudice refers to fore-knowledge, that is to say, knowledge the interpreter of a text brings with him to the reading of a text. For example, an Italian reader's historical consciousness of the Italian colonial experience might be characterized by the mainstream narrative of *italiani brava gente.* Preconceived notions about Italian colonialism will thus be brought to bear on the reading of the Italian translation of *Sweet and Sour Milk*. Upon encountering a passage like the one cited below, the Italian reader's preconception is bound to come into conflict with the meaning presented in the passage:

> Per quasi un secolo l'Africa è stata governata dal pugno di ferro degli interessi coloniali degli europei: hanno governato il continente come se si fosse trattato di una camera di tortura. L'Africa ha conosciuto il bastone di ferro, la frusta, lo strappo delle unghie e dei testicoli: è stata umiliata in tutti i modi. Non credo di dire nulla di nuovo quando affermo che gli inglesi, i francesi, i belgi, gli spagnoli, i portoghesi e gli italiani, tutti indistintamente, tutte le mafie conquistatrici che hanno amministrato barbaramente e selvaggiamente le colonie per conto del mondo civilizzato, non hanno mai ritenuto di dover garantire ai loro sudditi, sia come cittadini in patria, sia per la loro condizione privilegiata di governanti, viceré o dominatori.
>
> (*Latte Agrodolce*: 149)

Here the character of Margaritta (an Italo-Somali intellectual living in Mogadiscio) indicts Italian colonialism along with other European colonialisms of having turned Africa into a "torture chamber" where the indigenous people were savaged, humiliated and their rights trampled. When an Italian reader who is ignorant of or has a neutral or positive attitude towards Italian colonialism reads the above claim he or she might experience a revision of her prejudices. Gadamer refers to this revisionary experience as "being pulled up short" that is to say being surprised by the encounter of a meaning incompatible with the expected meaning (Gadamer 1960/1975). Whether or not the reader accepts the meaning offered by the text is hardly relevant, he is nonetheless made aware of the existence of another viewpoint which differs from the

accepted hegemonic cultural memory she has come to accept as a certainty. This encounter with uncertainty and differences sows seeds of doubt in the mind of a reader. The mere experience of coming to acknowledge the existence of a competing discourse contributes to *postcolonializing* the mental space of the reader: that is to say making her aware of the existence of an Other on the opposite side of the mnemonic divide.

Gadamer's framework is useful in describing the act of reading and its potential to effect shifts in perspective. He posits an idea that explains the process of interpretation of both historically and culturally distant texts. This idea is called *horizontsverschmelzung* or "horizon merger" (Gadamer 1960/1975). His premise is based on the indisputable fact that between any reader and any text there exists a gap which limits the interpretation. Gadamer refers to this as a gap in horizons between the reader and the text. The breadth of the gap is amplified in the case of texts from remote times or from different cultures. Building on the hermeneutic tradition established by Heidegger, Gadamer conceives of the reading process as circular in nature (Gadamer 1960/1975). The reader, as he progresses through the text, constantly revises his prejudices as he learns more. This is a process of gradually merging the historical horizon of the text with that of the reader. It is in this horizon merger that meaning is attained and prejudices overturned. In this way reading can be seen as a simultaneous act of forgetting and remembering: forgetting old prejudices and replacing them with new prejudices. Forgetting and remembering are two sides of the same coin in the sense that forgetting a prejudice implies gaining an insight that forms a new memory. The role of postcolonial literature is to nuance memory and create ambiguity and dissonance in an otherwise stable narrative. Gadamer (1960/2004: 15) says in this vein "keeping in mind, forgetting and recalling belong to the historical constitution of man and are themselves part of his history and his Bildung". The development of an Italian postcolonial consciousness thus requires forgetting certain discourses and recalling others, the merging of two horizons, that of the Self and the Other on both sides of the colonial divide.

Only by incorporating voices from the experience of the colonized into the Italian literary system can a postcolonial consciousness arise. This is not to suggest that the voices of colonized should drown out the voices of the former colonizers but rather that their relative horizons should be brought into useful confrontation. In this vein Wittinger (2007: 43) suggests that memory of historical events needs to acknowledge "the subjective element of historical interpretation". This acknowledgment of subjectivity is a particularly useful way of conceiving of the project of

revisionist postcolonial fiction in the context of the Italian colonial past. What is at stake here is a struggle between two competing subjectivities or historical perspectives. Wittinger (2007: 43) goes on to make an important concession levelling the playing field between historiography and memory where she says "[a focus on memory] recognizes the existence of hi/stories rather than History". Of particular interest in this regard is her deliberate emphasis of the word "stories" embedded within the word "histories". This is relevant concerned as we are with the manner in which fictionalized stories can effect a revision of a biased collective consciousness.

It is important to recall that none of the writers considered in this study (Ghermandi, Scego, Ali Farah, Ramzanali Fazel and Nuruddin Farah himself) have direct lived experience of Italian colonialism. However, as evidenced in their work, they have inherited a collective consciousness of the events through an oral tradition. Much of their work exhibits a sense that history has been preserved through stories passed on from grandparents and parents. A few examples would be the patriarch figures of Deeriye in Farah's *Close Sesame* and Yacob in Ghermandi's *La regina di fiori e di perle.* By the same token, Italian people with direct experience of their country's colonial past would today be over 70 years old even if they had been *born* in 1943, the year Italy lost her colonies. Also important to note is that direct lived experience, as we know, is no guarantee of historical accuracy. Memory is notoriously unstable and subject to manipulation by the culture and ideology that surrounds it. The rhetoric and representation in cultural products and public discourse of the colonial past is indicative of how the period of colonialism has been memorialized in Italy. A telling example of the bias, or indeed naivety, of Italian memory about the Italian colonial project comes from a 1969 television interview screened on RAI 2 with Indro Montanelli, an man widely considered one of Italy's greatest journalists and historians. It is important to note that Montanelli began his journalistic career by writing for the fascist periodical *Il Selvaggio*. I remind the reader of Indro Montanelli's exaltation of racism as a "catechism" which the Italian people needed to learn (see Chapter 2). At the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian war, Montanelli volunteered to go and fight in Abyssinia. In the interview, his responses to an audience member (who seems to be African or of African

descent) are indicative of the conflict of subjectivities. I quote at length from the interview where Montanelli reflects on his memories of the war in the footnote below[9].

The lengthy transcript of this interview clearly shows the juxtaposition of two contrasting viewpoints on history: one from the perspective of a man who considered his experience in Africa as a boyish adventure in an untamed wilderness; the other from the perspective of a much younger woman. The description of his experience as "una avventura… in mezzo a questa natura selvaggia" is a typical representation of the Ethiopian conflict and one that has a long tradition in contemporary literary sources from the time as seen in Chapter 2 above. What is particularly illuminating is his cavalier description of what the audience member scathingly, and from my perspective justifiably, describes as the rape of a twelve year old girl whom Montanelli bought from her father. Montanelli recalls a legitimate marriage based on the customs prevailing in Abyssinia at the time while the female audience member envisions an underaged sex-slave

[9] 0:00 - Indro Montanelli: Considerandola oggi con la mia maturità d'oggi una avventura di una stupidità senza fine ma immaginiamo un ragazzo di venti quattro anni messo al commando di una banda indigena con cento uomini neri, il solo bianco, puntato all'avventura di quella guerra che di combattimenti ne abbiamo avuto molti pochi. Non voglio passare per un gran guerriero affatto. Beh, insomma furono un anno e mezzo a cavallo, di così, cavalcate in mezzo a questa natura selvaggia, ripeto combattimenti ben pochi.
0:36 – Interviewer: Dicono anche che Lei aveva una moglie, diciamo, indigena molto bella anche era la più bella di tutte quelle che avevano gli ufficiali d'allora e che era inviato per questo.
0:46 -Indro Montanelli: Pare che avessi scelto bene. Era una bellissima ragazza Bilena di dodici anni. Scusate. Ma in Africa è un'altra cosa. E così l'avevo regolarmente sposata nel senso che l'avevo comprata dal padre che mi ha accompagnato insieme alle mogli degli ascari cio'è queste mogli degli ascari non è che seguivano la banda ma ogni quindici giorni raggiungevano la banda. Io non ho mai capito come facessero a trovarci in questo infinito dell'Abissina dove nessuno sapeva da dove quelle arrivavano, e arrivava questa mia moglie con la cesta in testa dove mi portava la biancheria pulita.
1:30 - Audience member: Lei aveva detto tranquillamente di aver avuto una sposa, diciamo, di dodici anni e a venti cinque non si è veritato afatto a violentare una ragazza di dodici anni dicendo "ma in Africa queste cose si fanno." Pure chiederei a Lei come intende normalmente i suoi rapporti con le donne date queste due confermazioni?
1:46 - Indro Montanelli: Signora, guardi, sulla violenza, nessuna violenza perchè le ragazze in Abissinia si sposano a dodici anni.
1:52 - Audience member: Lo dice lei. Sul piano di consapevolezza dell'uomo insomma un rapporto con una bambina di dodici anni è un rapporto con una bambina di dodici anni. Non è se lo facessi in Europa ritenerebbe di violentare una bambina vero?
2:03 - Indro Montanelli: Sì, in Europa sì.
2:07 - Audience member: Ecco, sì appunto. Quale differenza crede che esiste da un punto di vista biologico o psichologico anche?
2:10 - Indro Montanelli: No, guardi, in Abissinia si sposano a dodici anni.
2:17 - Audience member: Ma non è il matrimonio come Lei intende a dodici anni in Africa. Guardi, io ho vissuto in Africa. Quindi il vostro era veramente il rapporto violento che il colonialista che veniva lì e si impossesava della ragazza di dodici anni senza assolutamente, ma glielo garantisco, senza assolutamente tenere conto di questo tipo di rapporto sul piano umano. Eravate vincitori cio'è i militari che hanno fatto le stesse cose ovunque si sono presentati come dei militari. La storia è piena di queste situazioni.
[Indro Montanelli sposa una bambina di dodici anni (RAI 2 1969)]

acquired as part of the spoils of war. The juxtaposition of the words “moglie” and “ragazza” used by Montanelli as opposed to “bambina” as used by the audience member drive home this point.

The audience member describes the event as the violent actions of a conquering colonial force adding that “la storia è piena di queste situazioni”. These affirmations are important because they act to assimilate Italian colonialism into a larger historical narrative of European imperialism in Africa and to dispel the myth of Italian colonialism as benign as compared to other imperialisms. Sexual relationships between indigenous women and Italian men are the stock in trade of Italian representations of the colonial experience. The feminization of Africa, its landscape and its people and its availability as a site of masculine penetration has been widely noted in the scholarship (see Chapter 2). One important example is Enrico Flaiano’s (1945) *Tempo di Uccidere* which recounts the story of an Italian soldier who has intercourse with an Ethiopian girl drawing water from a well and then kills her accidentally. Whether the soldier rapes the girl or not is deliberately ambiguous in the narrative but this may well have been Flaiano’s intention given that “la storia è piena di queste situazioni”. The story then focusses on the Italian soldier’s attempts to cover up and escape prosecution for his crime and his psychic and existential reflections. The experience of the murdered girl merely forms a backdrop to the story of the Italian soldier. Gabriella Ghermandi in *Regina di fiori e di perle* provides a counter narrative to this, telling the story of an Abyssinian woman who kills an Italian soldier.

The altercation between Montanelli and the audience member highlights the value of conflict where the revision of memory is concerned. Memory needs to be understood as something that is created and consumed and therefore something that can be complicated, refined and revised in a process much like Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle. For this reason Kansteiner (2006: 179) criticises the tendency in studies of memory to focus on “representation of specific events” while sidelining the reception of these representations by their intended audiences. He suggests as a remedy for this bias a careful approach to the contextualization of these “strategies of representation” in relation to their reception, acknowledging both the “ingenuity of memory makers” and the “subversive interests of memory consumers” (Kansteiner 2006: 179). The difference between history and memory has been theorised by Pierre Nora : “[Memory] remains in permanent evolution… History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer…Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it (1989: 8 in Gedi and Yigal 1996: 33). In the case of the

creation of memory of the Italian colonial project, "memory makers" categorically only accommodated the facts that suited them.

In the case of chemical weapons, concentration camps and summary executions in Libya and Ethiopia the "memory-makers" resorted to outright censorship of the facts, closing the colonial archives to the public until the late 1960s. Revisionist historiographers, Angelo del Boca in particular, have provided an alternative narrative countering the myth of a benign Italian colonialism. The political and public institutions have been recalcitrant if not aggressively opposed to absorbing these alternative narratives into the domain of public memory. Kansteiner (2002: 187) accounts for this, citing the examples of the Holocaust and the Vietnam War, by saying the "the delayed onset of public debates about negative pasts has more to do with political interest and opportunities than the persistence of trauma or with any 'leakage' in the collective unconscious". The case of Italian colonialism and the political interests that sought to bury the memory of its true face is no different.

Collective memory can be conceived of as "ahistorical" or even "antihistorical" in that it "tends to simplify and reduce the ambiguities of the past" and is accordingly "a subjective experience of a social group that essentially sustains a relationship of power" or, more simply put, "who wants whom to remember what and why?" (Müller 2002 in Wittinger 2007: 44 -45). The opening of the colonial archives, which were censored for decades after World War II, has allowed greater emergence into the public sphere of evidence of Italian crimes in the colonies. However the myth of *italiani brava gente* has continued to be perpetuated in the mainstream and Italy's public memory regarding colonial history is still suppressed. The myth of *italiani brava gente* can be considered, to use Wertsch's (2008: 140) words, as a "narrative template" or a "basic plot" which casts the Italians in a favourable light as compared to the other nations of Europe. The myth entails the perceived good-naturedness of the Italian people and their disposition towards non-violence and gentleness. Narrative templates of this kind have a levelling effect on historical consciousness, discouraging the acceptance of ambiguous perspectives (Novick 1999: 3). In the public sphere a postcolonial consciousness has yet to emerge and indeed discourses painting Italian colonialism in a positive light have actually been perpetuated by the right-wing in recent years. This is illustrated by a quote from Gianfranco Fini, a right-wing politician, on a trip to Libya where he declared:

> There is not the slightest doubt that colonialism was one of the most difficult moments in the relations between Europe and, in this case, North Africa, but, and this is obviously a personal view, in speaking of Italian colonialism I think we should speak of it bearing clearly in mind the fact that it is others in Europe who should be ashamed of certain ugly events. We have our responsibility too, but, to Libya at least, the Italians brought not only roads and employment, but also those values, that civilization and those laws that are a lighthouse for a whole culture, not only for Western culture.
>
> (Fini 2004 cited in Mellino 2006: 470)

What emerges from this quote is the enduring myth of the civilizing mission and the bigoted assumption that before the invasion of Libya by Italian forces and the imposition of colonial rule there was no local industry, culture, legal system or infrastructure of any kind. Granted that the quote does represent an extremely conservative and reactionary opinion, it is nonetheless indicative of a survival of colonial discourse in Italian public life well into the first decade of the 21st century and ignores the facts of the war crimes committed in Libya during Italian occupation. This is all part of what has been variously described as collective amnesia (Del Boca 1992/2002) or as a "spiral of silence" (Jedlowski 2012) that surrounds public memory of colonialism in Italy and ensures that the task of fostering a postcolonial consciousness faces great challenges.

Farah engages directly with this mode of memorialising Italian colonialism in *Chiuditi Sesamo*. He describes the encounter of Deeriye, the now elderly freedom fighter who suffered greatly under the Italian administration of Somalia, and an Italo-American who "remembers" the period through a distinctly rosy lens:

> Nella città dove soggiornavano c'era un italiano, proprietario di un caffè, che accoglieva sempre festosamente Deeriye e i suoi amici e faceva loro dei doni, descrivendogli un'Italia che per Deeriye era totalmente sconosciuta. Il proprietario italo-americano del caffè era ingenuamente convinto che i somali avessero profittato e tratto grandi benefici dal contatto con i colonizzatori italiani; Deeriye non riusciva a fargli capire quello che si provava ad essere parte dei colonizzati.
>
> (*Chiuditi sesamo: 63-64*)

As this quote seems to emphasise, collective memory "simplifies; sees events from a single committed perspective" (Novick 1999: 3). The value of postcolonial literature is the potential to overturn monolithic metanarratives that pervade settled identities and fundamentally destabilise a community's notion of its own history and of its own self. This is achieved by crossing what

Wertsch (2008: 151) calls the "mnemonic divide": in this case the divide between the colonizer's memory of imperialism and that of the colonized. Afro-Italian literature originating in the experience of Italian colonialism acts as a point of contact where the memory of the historical relationship between Italy and Africa can be revived. To quote Coser in the introduction of the 1992 edition of Halbwachs (1952) pathbreaking work *On Collective Memory*:

> If there is a long span of time during which we have not had any contact with a specific set of once significant others who had similar experiences the memory of them tends to fade. In such cases, given long time intervals, memory may be lost altogether unless it is brought to awareness again through contact with others.
>
> (Coser 1992: 24)

There is no denying the fact that the inhabitants of the Horn of Africa do constitute a "set of once significant others" for the Italian nation in that they were for many decades a subject people who, from the point of view of the Italians, were reliant on Italy for support and civilizing influence. This notion of the burden of responsibility, the "white man's burden", that the colonizers held towards their subjects is a clear theme in the colonial literature described in Chapter 2. In another sense, the acquisition of African colonies and the encounter with radical alterity in the form of Africans helped solidify Italian national identity and the prestige of a newly unified nation: prestige because possessing an empire classed a European nation among the more significant powers; identity because the fractured regional identity now had a binary other, an external enemy, against which to gauge itself. The long relationship between Italy and its colonies is also practical and material in nature: sharing economic and cultural ties and the very borders of the modern nations in the Horn of Africa being drawn up based on colonial divisions[10]. The

[10] The borders in the Horn of Africa have undergone a number of readjustments following colonisation, liberation and various wars between the various constituent nations: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti. The current borders of Eritrea correspond to the territory on the Red Sea conquered by Italy from the Abyssinian Empire. The borders were decided following the disastrous (for the Italians) battle of Adua. After the war, when Italy was stripped of its colonies, this territory was granted to Ethiopia. Colonial era divisions were deeply felt however and Eritrean guerrillas fought a long and bloody civil war for independence which was gained in 1991. Current day Somalia corresponds to the area controlled by the Italians along the Benadir coast along with the former British Somaliland or Puntland which was merged with Italian Somalia in 1950 upon the return of the Italians as a trusteeship administration. Somaliland is *de facto* independent of Somalia, having declared its independence after the civil war of the 1990s. Its independence is largely unrecognized internationally. Again the division is along old colonial lines. Djibouti was a French enclave and remains independent despite Somali claims to the territory based on ethno-linguistic lines. Ethnic Somalis form the majority in Somalia, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia (where Nuruddin Farah was born), Northern Kenya, Djibouti and Somaliland. These five regions are represented by the white five-pointed star on the blue background of the Somali flag, indicating the irredentist goals of the only African nation that refused to accept the delineation of colonial borders following decolonization. The ambition to unify all Somali speaking regions remains enshrined in the Somali constitution. In 1979 the Ogaden war between Somalia

following section deals with the emergence, albeit tardy, of a counter-discourse in the form of the blossoming of postcolonial studies in the Italian academy but one that is shown to be deficient in some important senses.

Postcolonial literature and postcolonial criticism in Italy

This section details the rise of postcolonial criticism in Italy and the focus it places on migrant writing. Based on the notions of collective memory described above, without undermining the value of migrant writing in contemporary Italy, I draw a distinction between migrant writing with no historical memory of Italian colonialism and literature that can revise this historical memory. I go on to position the translated works of Nuruddin Farah in the latter category. Working in the tradition of Descriptive Translation Studies, I consider the target-texts only for this purpose. This is because these are the texts to which the Italian audience has access and, having been translated, from the perspective of the end user the existence of the originals is largely irrelevant. Toury (1985: 19) underlines this concept stating that "translations are facts of one system only: the target system". This chapter is focussed on the *content* of postcolonial literature as opposed to the style which is analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. For this reason, it is only in these later chapters where the translations are compared against the originals.

In terms of Italian academic responses to postcolonialism, Miguel Mellino (2006) blames the conservatism inherent to the university system in Italy for the slow uptake of postcolonial studies in the academic sphere. The lack of intellectuals from the global south taking up posts in Italian universities as they did in American and British universities may also have played an important part (Mellino 2006: 468). This point is reiterated by Palumbo who says:

> The isolation of Italian scholars from the growing number of postcolonial theorists in the Anglophone academy also contributed to the lack of serious discussion on Italian expansionist policies in Africa. Indeed, because of Italian educational policies in the colonies, no postcolonial critics – that is, critics from formerly colonized nations writing in Italian – emerged after Italy's departure from Africa.
>
> (Palumbo 2003, 1)

and Ethiopia broke out. Siad Barre attempted to annex the Ogaden resulting in a massive humanitarian crisis. The war also witnessed cynical power brokering of the United States and the Soviet Union in the region with disastrous consequences. The complex issues of borders and identity in the Horn of Africa are the main themes of Nuruddin Farah's (1986) *Maps*.

While Palumbo is focussing on critics as opposed to imaginative authors, the logic stands for fiction too. Postcolonial fiction encourages debate about colonialism and forces a historical revision to take place. Postcolonial writing contributes to the "rescuing of history from the colonizer's custody" (Innes 2007, 37). This is what Salman Rushdie famously referred to as "the Empire writing back to the centre" which inspired the title of the now canonical work in postcolonial studies by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989).

Interestingly for scholars of systems based translation studies, translation may have had a role to play in the belated emergence of Italian postcolonial criticism. Edward Said's important text *Orientalism* was only translated into Italian in 1991 while *Culture and Imperialism* only emerged in Italian translation in 1998 when it was hardly noticed by the academy (Mellino 2006: 468). That postcolonialism was seen as relating only to British or French issues and failed to take off as an academic discipline in Italy indicates how entrenched the colonial amnesia is in Italy; it is as if Italian scholars forgot they had a former empire to consider (Mellino 2006). This is despite over 70 years of direct Italian involvement in Africa during the colonial period, a rapidly changing racial and ethnic makeup as a result of immigration and neo-colonial involvement in Africa, all of which are enough to qualify Italy as an important player in the postcolonial field.

Most Africans living in Italy today are of West African, particularly Senegalese, extraction. Other significant immigrant communities are people from the Indian subcontinent, the Philippines, China and South America (Ellero 2010). The result is that a minority of immigrants or their children living in Italy have any historical memory of the Italian colonial experience. In Britain and France the immigrant populations are predominantly constituted by former colonial subjects with strong ties to the metropole in terms of language and culture. A shared history of colonial contact also colours the relationship of these immigrants to the metropole. In Italy, in the main, this is not the case and the development of Italian postcolonial literature reflects this.

The first phase in the development of what would become known as *migrant writing* in Italy began in the 1980s with *lettaratura a quattro mani* which referred to collaborative projects between Italian immigrants, not fully comfortable with the Italian language, and Italian journalists or writers. In this phase migrant writers were helped by Italians to write autobiographical texts about their experience of immigration. The predominant themes of this

literature include discrimination, precarity, poor living conditions, difficulty in integrating, second class citizenship, racism, exploitation, loss of home and the dream of return (Ellero 2010). Some important writers in this class are the Moroccan Tahar Ben Jelloun (1991) who wrote *Dove lo stato non c'è* and the Senegalese Pap Khouma (1990) and Saidou Moussa Ba (1991) who wrote *Io venditore di Elefanti* and *La promessa di Hamadi* respectively (Ellero 2010). The emergence of these foundational texts in the 1990s is also suggestive of the late emergence of Italian postcolonial literature. These writers stand out because their work has endured as exemplars of the genre, but there are many titles in this class of literature reflecting the need, both on the side of immigrants (many of whom wrote just one autobiographical text recounting their difficult journeys and stays in Italy), and of many Italians who were at the same time fascinated and wary of the rapid change in their country as it shifted from a country of emigrants to one that attracted immigrants.

The second phase of *migrant writing* refers to writers using Italian with greater confidence. The period of linguistic insecurity having passed, writers in this class no longer required the help of Italian journalists or writers to produce their texts. That is not to say that these writers now use "standard Italian" but rather that they are eager to express their hybrid status in an Italian language that represents their origins and both linguistic and cultural. Italian is co-opted into a new framework and a *lingua meticcia* emerges in the writing (Ellero 2010). This literature represents the valorization of the writers' culture of origin and their struggle to maintain their identity, or find a congruent hybrid identity in the setting of their adopted home. This confident attitude of stylistic individuality and co-option of the metropolitan language is typical of postcolonial literatures generally. This phase also represents the increasing acceptance in the Italian market of non-ethnically Italian voices using the Italian language to represent their reality. Writers falling into this class include Christiana de Caldas Brito from Brazil and the Algerian Tahar Lamri.

These writers explain their experience of writing in Italian in terms of fitting their cultural and linguistic identity into the parameters of an alien language. This is the classical postcolonial condition which Salman Rushdie refers to as being a *translated man*.

> Scrivere 'migrante' significa riordinare attraverso la scrittura, una vita che sembrava dover scorrere fra le pareti domestiche della patria e che, invece, ha subito una deviazione e si è trasferita altrove. La letteratura della migrazione comincia qui: nel

> racconto scritto delle esperienze e delle emozioni presenti nell'atto del migrare e dello stabilirsi in un paese diverso. Significa dare un senso all partenza e dare un senso all'arrivo.
>
> (de Caldas Brito in Ellero 2010: 76)

Tahar Lamri describes the experience of being a migrant writing in Italian in similar terms:

> Ho la ferma impressione che la letteratura dell'immigrazione in Italia o i *Migrant Writers*, come si chiamano da un po' di tempo a questa parte, non parla d'altro che dell'eloquente silenzio dell'immigrato, scrittore esso sia o meno. C'è in questo silenzio la gravità, senza ostentazione, un fascino sovrano, una grazia raffinata: un modo discreto di parlare delle cose della vita, dell'amore, del *saudade*, della ghurba, della femminilità e dell'infanzia, della morte, della difficoltà e della gioia, e soprattutto del potere di utilizzare le parole –italiane– per esprimere tutto questo con una sorta di indulgenza che fa sì che ci sorprendiamo ad amare tutto, ci cogliamo a perdonare tutto allorché noi stessi, viviamo situazioni contingenti, malferme, in equilibrio ora su un piede ora sull'altro, mai su entrambi in perenne stato di sospensione.
>
> (Tahar Lamri in Ellero 2010: 6)

The third phase of *migrant writing* is that of the second generation migrants: born in Italy of the first wave immigrants, or brought to Italy as young children, and schooled in Italian, these writers are at home in the Italian language even while feeling alienated from the rest of Italian society (Ellero 2010). The joys and difficulties of cultural hybridity are an important element in Igiaba Scego's writing for example. She says in this regard:

> La mia formazione culturale è italiana, la lingua in cui scrivo è l'italiano (non per scelta, ma per corso naturale)… ma il mio vissuto è legato a doppio filo con la madrepatria del cuore, ossia quella Somalia martoriata dei miei genitori… Quindi siamo italiani tutto per tutto… Però in noi c'era una differenza, la nostra origine migrante. Abbiamo succhiato con il latte materno mondi lontani, esotici che però ci appartenevano nell'intimo. Nel caso mio era la Somalia: a casa vivevo la cultura somala e la religione islamica. Parlavo il somalo, mangiavo il cibo somalo, facevo le preghiere ad Allah e non a Gesù.
>
> (Igiaba Scego in Ellero 2010)

Unlike the first phase of *migrant writing* this phase is dominated by women and exhibits a far greater number of writers with a heritage from the former Italian colonies in East Africa. Writers like Igiaba Scego, Cristina Ali Farah, Shirin Ramzanali Fazel and Gabriella Ghermandi are

prominent in this category[11]. The problem of in-betweeness, hybridity or occupying "the third space" is prominent in this literature (Bhabha: 1994). This is embodied in a frequent theme present in the work of these writers: that of not being Italian enough for one's peers but having become too Italian for one's traditional and conservative family. The difficulty in finding a place to belong and the construction of an alternative identity is important to this literature's thematic content. What is at stake in the construction of cultural identity among migrants and their children and the representation of that identity as articulated in the field of diasporic writing is captured in the following quote from postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha.

> The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed value of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from a minority perspective, is a complex on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation.
>
> (Bhabha 1994: 3)

Reading Italian migrant literature (particularly that of the second generation writers) in the light of this quote is illuminating as it has to be remembered that Italy is a relative newcomer to immigration and the existence of plural ethnic, linguistic and religious identities in one country. These writers are certainly negotiating their identities in a moment of profound historical and cultural transformation for Italy. Homi Bhabha points to the creative potential that inhabiting this "third space" affords the minority person.

[11] **Igiaba Scego** was born in Rome in 1974 to a family of Somali origins. Her most famous works include her contribution to *Pecore nere* (2005), a collection of eight short stories written by four writers from diverse origins, *Oltre Babilonia* (2008) and *La mia casa è dove sono* (2010).
Ubax Cristina Ali Farah was born in Verona in 1973 to a Somali migrant family. Apart from poetry published in an anthology edited by Mia Lecomte (2006), her most famous novel is *Madre piccola* (2007).
Shirin Ramzanali Fazel was born in Mogadiscio in 1959. She is of Pakistani and Somali origin. She grew up in the Somalia of the Italian trusteeship and at age ten her parents were forced to leave Somalia during the Siad Barre regime. She is one of the only first migrant writers to write in Italian without the help of an Italian speaker. Her most famous work is the nostalgic *Lontano da Mogadiscio* (1994) which describes her childhood in a city that has long since ceased to exist in the form she remembers it. Her experience of imposed exile and her project of memorialising the Somali crisis requires that parallels be drawn with Nuruddin Farah.
Gabriella Ghermandi was born in Addis Ababa in 1965 and moved with her parents to Italy in 1979 in her early teens. Her most famous novel is *Regina di Fiori e di Perle* (2007) which subverts the narrative of Enrico Flaiano's wartime story (1947) *Tempo di Uccidere* thus becoming an important text in Italian postcolonial literature.

The term migrant writer itself is rather essentializing and bears interrogation. Igiaba Scego describes her relationship with the label of migrant writer as follows:

> La mia grossa paura è di essere ingabbiata in una etichetta, ossia 'scrittrice migrante'. Lo sono e non lo sono. Non mi piacciono le etichettature, perché quando penso alla scrittura migrante io penso a una scrittura che parla d'immigrazione, ma non dovrei limitarmi a questo.
>
> (Igiaba Scego in Ellero 2010)

The term *migrant writing* is clearly limiting. Igiaba Scego, for example, is the child of migrants and her experience is coloured by her parents' immigration and her culturally complex upbringing, but she is also Italian, having been born and schooled in Italy. Even for first generation migrants the term presents problems. When does a migrant stop being a migrant? Is migrant status eternal? These problems are tied intimately with Italian ethnicity and citizenship. Despite Italy's relatively late emergence as a unified state and the continued regionalism that characterized the country, an idea of ethnic nationalism with its roots in the discourses that fostered *Risorgimento* and *Irredentismo* politics. Italy continues to govern citizenship in terms of *jus sanguini* as opposed to *jus soli* which effectively means that anyone with one Italian parent automatically qualifies for Italian citizenship regardless of their place of birth while the children of immigrants born in Italy are denied citizenship. Italian nationality, with immigration being a relatively recent phenomenon, is still very tied in with the idea of ethnicity, culture and religion while other countries in Europe, which experienced immigration much sooner, like Britain, have slowly been redefining the idea of nationality along lines less clearly defined by ethnic notions. Because the term *migrant writing* as a denomination serves to delimit the potential of writing rather than opening it up to a variety of themes, the term *Afro-Italian Literature* seems more useful. The term is open to criticism for a number of reasons because it too implies a 'hyphenated' identity which some writers object to. It is beyond the immediate scope of this study to enter into the lively debate surrounding the labelling of these writers and their subjective identities (for full treatment of the issue see Hogarth 2013). Suffice it to say that these writers are ccomplicate and disturb the canon of Italian literature by introducing, for the first time, a set of voices that speak of Black experiences in the Italian language.

Unlike in the cases of Britain and France, for many Italophone diasporic writers, the appropriation of the language of the metropole did not occur within the colonies. This is because, as discussed above, many of these writers come from backgrounds with no historical links to Italy. For many of these writers, writing in Italian is a conscious and deliberate choice for artistic or political motives. For these writers the struggle with an alien language which is entailed in their choice of the Italian language represents the deeper cultural strife which immigrant status endows. Christiana de Caldas Brito compares writing in her native Portuguese to driving along a highway with great speed and ease as compared to writing in Italian which is like navigating a treacherous mountain pass in a Fiat 500 (Ellero 2010). For her the difficulty is enormous but the rewards in terms of artistic production are great. The aesthetic value of defamiliarization springs immediately to mind in the context of Caldas Brito's description.

For Tahar Lamri the choice to write in Italian is based on his relationship with French and Arabic, languages which were more familiar to him, but, in contrast to Italian, lacked the intimacy of his new status as an immigrant in Italy. He explains how Italian became a way to avoid the gaze of people back home and their potential censure and a way to communicate directly with the citizens of his new country and immigrants sharing his experience of living in Italy (Weinberg 2013: 30). Typical of postcolonial literatures, for diasporic writers in Italy, the relationship with the Italian language is complex. Crucially, however, there does seem to be a definite split between the attitudes of writers from those countries which were formerly Italian colonies and migrants from other countries. For Tahar Lamri and Christiana de Caldas Brito, the relationship is one of linguistic struggle and artistic strife and the notion that there is an intimacy to be found in the Italian language. For Ali Farah, in contrast, there is a concern with co-opting the language and making the Somali language and experience speak through a uniquely hybridised style. This has, of course, to do with their status as second generation immigrants but also, crucially, because of her colonial links with Italy and the Italian language. This is clearly demonstrated in the following quote from Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, another Somali Italophone writer who was born in Mogadiscio, where she talks about the massive influence of a profound knowledge of the Italian language, culture and history growing up in Somalia where the Italians, she found to her horror, instead maintained the most base racist notions of Africans:

> Per farmi coraggio mi convincevo che andavo in un paese che in fondo conoscevo già: l'Italia l'avevo studiata sui libri sin dai tempi delle elementari. Ho avuto amici e

> compagni di scuola italiani. Molti di loro avevano il padre italiano e la mamma somala. Era come se fossi vissuta all'ombra dell'Italia per anni. Ho appreso la storia studiando i moti carbonari, Garibaldi e Mazzini. Il cinema mi ha fatto conoscere la sensibilità di Pietro Germi a la comicità di Totò e Sordi. Ho gustato le specialità delle varie cucine regionali. Le canzoni di Modugno, Mina e Gianni Morandi hanno allietato la mia adolescenza. La lettura della Divina Commedia, di Pavese e Pirandello mi avevano avvicinato alla letteratura italiana.
>
> ...
>
> Allora capii la grande ignoranza che c'era. Loro conoscevano solo l'africano dei documentari in bianco e nero; l'africano dei film di Tarzan che fa roteare gli occhi parlando all'infinito. Provai una gran rabbia, ma non per loro! Io come moltissimi Somali avevo studiato la lingua italiana e la storia d'Italia, mentre l'Italia non s'era mai degnata di fare altrettanto con noi. I bambini in Italia, sui libri di scuola hanno ancora la figura del negretto col gonnellino di paglia, l'anello al naso e l'osso tra i capelli, pensavo.
>
> (Ramzanali Fazel 1994/1999: 25-29)

In sharp contrast with the above opinions, where Italian is clearly portrayed as the language of a chauvinist colonial power, the following quote from the Senegalese writer Mbacke Gadji reveals a very different relationship to the Italian language:

> Alle orecchie degli scrittori africani l'italiano si presenta come una lingua amica e neutro rispetto all'inglese, al francese, allo spagnolo e al portoghese, che sono state le lingue dei nostri colonizzatori.
>
> (Mbacke Gadji in Poletti 2005)

This opinion, that Italian does not present itself as the language of the colonizer, can clearly only hold true for those writers who have migrated to Italy from parts of the world not previously under Italian colonial administration. Comparing the attitude of Gadji towards the Italian language to that of one of the characters that the protagonist of *Regina di perle e di fiori* meets in the cathedral in Addis Ababa, the contrast could not be clearer. Having described the death of her family at the hands of Italian soldiers during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and invoked God with the words "Che Dio tenga gli uomini di quel paese lontano da noi" the old lady continues to express her feelings towards the Italian language itself. She says:

> Che vuoi farci figliola! Pensa, durante i cinque anni di occupazione imparai l'italiano. Lo saprei parlare anche ora, ma mi rifiuto di parlare la lingua di quegli uomini che hanno ucciso i miei genitori.
>
> (Ghermandi 2007: 166)

In addition to differing attitudes towards the Italian language, the writing of Italo-Somali writers like Igiaba Scego, Cristina Ali Farah and Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, and the writing of the Italo-Ethiopian Gabriella Ghermandi all include themes not present in the writing of migrants from other parts of the world. The historical link between Italy and East Africa is apparent. This makes their work similar to that of Nuruddin Farah, particularly to the trilogy *Variations on the theme of an African Dictatorship*, much of which he wrote while living in Italy. Gabriella Ghermandi, for example, in *Regina dei fiori e di perle* (2007) describes how as a girl in Ethiopia she remembers eavesdropping on the conversations of the elders of her family and, caught in the act one day by one of her favourite uncles, is tasked with a very special mission: that of taking the stories of the Ethiopians to the ears of the Italians, their erstwhile conquerors. This element of testimony and redress, of reclaiming the history of the Italian colonies in East Africa and the political act of re-presenting that history from the point-of-view of the colonized people distinguishes the writing of the Somali and Ethiopian diasporic women writers from that of migrant writers from other parts of the world living in Italy. While their experiences and motives for writing overlap, in the crucial element of historical memory of Italian colonialism they differ enormously.

Farah's translated corpus is an indispensable component of this literary tradition and one that in many ways not only complements but enhances this corpus by providing a male voice to a largely female corpus and by providing works that focus a critical and contrapuntal lens on the historical relationship between Italy and Somalia. While he lived in Italy and experienced Italian racism and colonial attitudes first hand, he is not an Italian migrant writer in any sense. Writing in English, he is distinct from the migrant writing scene thanks to his global reach. His work is also thematically much more complex than much of the other work available within the field of postcolonial Italian literature and moves beyond the simple task of autobiographical testimony and reflections on identity. This adds weight to recognizing the important contribution the translations of his work make to the body of Italian postcolonial literature.

The literature of remembrance and Nuruddin Farah's voice

> Tienila stretta quella curiosità e raccogli tutte le storie che puoi. Un giorno sarai la nostra voce che racconta. Attraverserai il mare che hanno attraversato Pietro e Paolo e porterai le nostre storie nella terra degli italiani. Sarai la voce della nostra storia che non vuole essere dimenticata.
>
> (Ghermandi 2007: 6)

In this passage from *Regina di fiori e di perle*, the elderly Yacob gives a directive to the young Mahlet to collect the stories of the Ethiopians, become their voice and take their stories to the Italians to prevent them forgetting. This instruction from the elder highlights the central mission behind Ghermandi's novel, a mission shared by the Somali migrant writers reviewed here and one which, as is showed, is shared by Nuruddin Farah. Theirs is a literature of remembrance; the remembrance of a history of suffering that is all too often overlooked or minimized.

The section that follows illustrates how certain Italophone writers hailing from the former Italian East Africa represent a source of alternative memory of the events and experiences of Italian colonialism in the region. The writers in question are Igiaba Scego, Ubax Cristina Ali Farah, Gabriella Ghermandi and Shirin Ramzanali Fazel. The coverage presented here is broad rather than deep as the focus remains Nuruddin Farah. The purpose of this section is to establish the specific Italian postcoloniality of these writings and to illustrate how the work of Nuruddin Farah intersects with and complements them. In the simplest terms, the work of these women novelists along with the translations of Nuruddin Farah's corpus into Italian provide a solid counterpoint for the narrative tropes that remember Italian colonialism in a good light. For this reason, I consider them the core of postcolonial Italian fiction. Adhikari (2002: 43) in a paper on Michael Ondaatje's *English Patient* and James A. Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific* suggests that historical fiction or as he terms it "literary history" provides a middle ground between historiography and story-telling because of the distancing effect of fiction. He argues that as a consequence literary history is "perhaps the most effective tool with which the past can be understood and evaluated" (Adhikari 2002: 43)

Itala Vivan notes the effect of migrant writing on the Italian literary system:

> Un elemento che in Italia ha contribuito a far cambiare il rapporto con le culture africane è che a partire degli anni Ottanta nel nostro paese sono arrivati, sempre più numerosi, immigrati africani. Essi hanno portato con sé le proprie culture, che non mancano di celebrare e divulgare quando gliene sia loro offerto il destro. Fra di loro

> si sono manifestati i nuovi scrittori italiani di origine africana che, narrando se stessi e il proprio passato aiutano a diffondere la nozione dell'esistenza di culture africane ricche e antiche, assai diverse l'una dall'altra e ancor più da quelle europee, degne di attenzione e di rispetto, capaci di insegnare cose interessanti a chi le sappia leggere e marcate dalla presenza e dall'influenza di grandi personalità letterarie.
>
> (Vivan, 2013: 16)

Itala Vivan notes the influence of the presence of African immigrants in changing the Italian relationship with Africa. The writing of migrants in Italian is considered particularly important in disseminating consciousness about African cultures and the life experience of African writers in Italy as well as complicating the cultural landscape of a previously ethnically homogenous society (or at least one constructed as such by nationalist myths). Huggan (2001: 156) suggests in this regard that "[e]thnic autobiography is a privileged mode for the exploration of fractured postcolonial subjectivity…" Gianella Sansalvadore, a South African scholar of Italian literature, also notes the importance of certain of these writers in reimagining the landscape of the Italian literary system and their potential to reflect both the lived realities of immigrant life in Italy as well as an awaking of a historical, postcolonial consciousness of Italy's long engagement with the Horn of Africa. She specifically mentions in this regard Gabriella Ghermandi and *Regina di fiori e di perle* and its capacity to overturn entrenched notions about Italian colonialism.

> The literature of migration in Italy today, arising out of a void that should have been occupied by this historical debate shortly after the era in which the events took place, may be seen as a part of this social and emotional renewal and occupies an important step in the general process of reconciliation. The need for storytelling relating to the Italian colonial past goes hand in hand with an evaluation of the realities of the émigrés life, both the present conditions and the past injustices.
>
> (Sansalvadore, 2013: 65).

Sansalvadore makes an important point in her paper and one that this study has been attempting to explore in greater detail and emphasize: that is, migrant writing in Italian, particularly the writing of authors from the Horn with their historical connection to Italy, should not be confined to limited readings within the paradigm of immigrant autobiography. Rather they should be read more incisively as literature critically engaged with undermining the assumptions of the Italian colonial project and its continued shaping of Italian consciousness and discursive representations of Africa and Africans.

Igiaba Scego provides a very good example of this brand of literature. History is brought to the fore in her novel aimed at children *La mia casa è dove sono* (2010). In one instance quoted below she engages with the memory of Marshall Graziani and the brutal repression he unleashed in the Italian colonies in Africa. Having conquered Ethiopia the Italians pitilessly put down anti-colonial resistance by means of a crack force with extensive powers known as the *Grand Colonial Police*. One incident of particular note was the ultra-repressive response for the attempted assassination in 1937 of Graziani by the resistance in Addis Ababa. The crackdown following this event occasioned the wholesale slaughter of anyone assumed to be anti-Italian in sentiment including entire tribes and important local religious leaders (Del Boca 1992/2002: 166, Calchi 1994: 75, Tripodi 1999: 30, Labanca 2004: 304). These events are alluded to in detail by Scego:

> Oggi sono in pochi a ricordarsi Graziani, ma fu tra i più feroci uomini che il fascismo abbia mai avuto. In Africa ha compiuto stragi brutali e inenarrabili. Fu un militare di carriera che grazie al fascismo raggiunse l'alto grado di Maresciallo d'Italia. Sarà ricordato non per il suo genio militare, ma per la crudeltà dei suoi metodi…Ma fu in Libia, nel 1921, che Graziani si fece conoscere tristemente per la prima volta. La Libia era formalmente colonia italiana, ma la gran parte del territorio libico era nelle mani dei partigiani capeggiati da Omar al Mukhtar, un religioso senussita. Graziani fu senza pietà. Per piegare la Libia decise di piegare letteralmente il suo popolo. Ricorse a sistemi selvaggi contro le varie tribù. Tra le molte atrocità la più terribile furono i trasferimenti coati nei lager. Donne, bambini, giovani, anziani venivano presi, brutallizzati, picchiati e veniva abbattuto il loro bestiame. Il tutto poi era corredato da fucilazioni a impiccagioni di massa… Per piegare la popolazione etiope che resisteva all'Italia fascista furono usate le stesse torture, gli stessi campi di concentramento, le stesse esecuzioni sommarie del 1921. Nella guerra per l'impero mussoliniano, Rodolfo Graziani, insieme a Badoglio, fece uso di armi chimiche severamente vietate dalla convenzione di Ginevra…
>
> (Scego 2010: 84-85)

In the context of literature acting as an antidote to collective amnesia, the words "oggi sono pochi a ricordarsi Graziani" are particularly telling. Scego's book is directed at children, written in a simple style with footnotes explaining difficult words and it includes a short history of Italian colonialism in the appendix. It also includes resources for learning more about the subject. Scego's book is replete with reflections on the colonial past that Italy and Somalia share. It is insistent on the psychic and physical damages caused by colonialism and it makes frequent allusions to the problem of forgetting. It continues by focussing on her experience as a black girl growing up in a culturally and racially homogenous Italy and the open racism she faced. This

book is clearly designed to raise consciousness among a new generation of Italian children about the history of their country as well as its contemporary situation. The link between the past and present is not ignored, expanding the scope of her work beyond that of Afro-Italian writers from other parts of Africa who do not share the memory of Italian colonialism. The idea of writing as testimony comes across clearly in Scego's creative and critical work.

Similar historical events of colonial repression form a backdrop of Nuruddin Farah's *Chiuditi sesamo* (1992). The contribution that historiography has made to the narrative fiction of Nuruddin Farah is acknowledged in the author's note at the end of the novel where he recognizes the influence of historians like I.M. Lewis (1980) and Angelo del Boca (1979). Reading *Close Sesame* alongside del Boca's *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, the influence is tangible. Farah engages with the governorship of another fascist tyrant, Cesare Maria de Vecchi, in Somalia through the eyes of a fictionalized Somali community directly affected by the draconian measures put in place by the historical de Vecchi to 'pacify' the Somali hinterland. Here the character of Deeriye recalls the excesses of de Vecchi's governorship:

> "Non pensi che dovremmo giungere a un accordo a chiarire esattamente il motivo per cui ci state offrendo la pace? Mi pare che questa terra sia stata per così dire pacificata già da un pezzo, a forza di massacri – di uomini e bestiame – e grazie ai metodi di pacificazione impiegati dal secondo Governatore Generale dieci o quindici anni or sono… sai chi intendo, no? De Vecchi".[12]
>
> (*Chiuditi sesamo*: 44)

The destruction of livestock as a punishment for dissent was both humiliating for a people whose wealth was measured in heads of livestock as well as disastrous on a human level given that these nomadic communities depended on their livestock for their sustenance. Adhikari (2002: 45) states that "if history concentrates on the events of the past that are determined by our own particular present, fictionalized history also inquires about the past by focussing on *human predicaments, social responsibilities, and the observance of human values* (italics mine)". In a sense, reading an account, even if fictionalized, of the direct human consequences of historical crimes as opposed to a historiographical abstraction is bound to have a more direct effect on the reader, appealing to his or her capacity for empathy.

[12] The only significant difference between the Italian translation presented here and its English counterpart is the removal in the target-text of the use of italics to mark the words *peace* and *pacification* in the source-text. The italics indicate the disdain that Deeriye holds towards the Italian notion of peace which he is being offered: the same *peace* which 15 years prior saw his people massacred and their livestock destroyed.

For Gabriella Ghermandi too, the project of memory is also central. In her book *La Regina di fiori e di perle* (2007) the elderly Yacob, who fought as a guerrilla in the Italo-ethiopian war, charges his granddaughter with a solemn promise: to keep the memory of his story alive and bring it to the Italians. He says:

> Allora prometti davanti alla Madonna dell'icona. Quando sarai grande scriverai la mia storia, la storia di quegli anni e la porterai nel paese degli Italiani, per non dare loro la possibilità di scordare.
>
> (Ghermandi 2007: 67)

Similarly, the use of gas in the Italo-Abyssinian war, an issue which is still a source of massive controversy in Italy, is alluded to in Ghermandi's *Regina dei fiori e di perle* (2007) where Yacob, one of the elderly patriarchs of the family, has a terrible nightmare:

> Avevo sognato. I bombardimenti. I gas. Il sibilo delle bombe che cadevano al suolo e si spaccavano lasciando fuoriuscire quella nube che incendiava i polmoni da dentro. I nostri uomini urlavano lacerandosi la pelle della gola con le unghie.
>
> (Ghermandi 2007: 32)

The use of mustard sulphur gas against Ethiopian forces was denied outright for decades following the war, a position which became untenable after the opening of the colonial archives in the 1960s (Duggan 2008: 503). Grip and Hart (2009: 3) claim that the use of gas "…resulted in many long-lasting, painful injuries and in a significant number of deaths". Nonetheless, discourses that deny or minimise the use of gas in the conflict continue to be prevalent (Del Boca 1992/2002, Palumbo 2003). Grip and Hart (2009: 3) admit that the "nature of the conflict" and "exaggerated statements" made about the use of gas mean that we will probably never know with certainty the scale of the use of chemical weapons or the quantity of victims it claimed. But abstractions focussing on facts and figures like this are far less effective than the recollection of horrendous violence and abject suffering of those exposed to these poisons described in Ghermandi's novel. Literature has the ability to bring history into the realm of the living and lead the reader into consciousness of the experiences lived by others. History is about abstractions and collectives where literature is about individuals and therein lays its enormous power.

Memory is important in the work of these writers not only because of their reaction to the forgetting of their colonial experience by the former colonizers but also, in the case of the Somalis, because the descent of Somalia into chaos and destruction following the civil war has

meant that for these Somali writers, their task is to keep the memory of what their country was alive in the world. This preoccupation is also shared by Nuruddin Farah whose lifelong literary project he has himself described as an act of remembering: "to keep my country alive by writing about it". The following passage from Nuruddin Farah's *Close Sesame* serves to illustrate how fiction can serve to break this amnesia or stop the spiral of silence.

> La storia era una sequela intollerabile di sciochezze: dominazioni che venivano controbabandate per missioni civilizzatrici, forze di spedizione pacifiche che saccheggiavano, distruggevano e violentavano, spacciando queste "uccisioni di massa" per il processo di civilizzazione dei selvaggi. I paesi erano trasformati in colonie e le colonie in (pacifici) centri commerciali; una popolazione di 30.000 indigeni veniva "pacificata" in modo che 300 Italiani potessero vivere tra loro da padroni (nel 1930 c'erano 300 italiani a Mogadiscio, dei quali 40 donne e 30 bambini: in tutto 230 uomini. Di questi, 84 lavoravano per società private, 70 erano militari e 78 impiegati dell'amministrazione pubblica. I Somali a Mogadiscio erano 30.000). La storia (negli anni Venti, gli anni della dominazione fascista) aveva dato a Mogadiscio "*tre buoni ristorante e tre alberghi mediocri; tre circoli con ampie sale da ballo"*, due caffè, un cinematografo e seicento automobili.[13]
>
> (*Chiuditi Sesamo*: 115-116)

Two more contradictory passages than that of Gian-Franco Fini cited above, where he talks of the inestimable benefits of Italian colonialism, and this by Nuruddin Farah would be difficult to come by. The value of this paragraph in terms of consciousness raising is amplified by the citation of minute historical details and facts. These lend credibility to Farah's representation of Somalia under Italian colonial domination. However, the strength of *Close Sesame* lies in its equally scathing attacks on neo-colonial oppression. He goes on to expose the Barres regime's obsession with empty and inaccurate statistics and shows how domination and oppression of African countries continued under the dictatorial regimes of postcolonial African governments themselves. The title of the trilogy, *Variations on the theme of an African Dictatorship*, itself indicates this preoccupation. The links and similarities between the colonial experience and the postcolonial experience are thus made obvious.

[13] The only significant difference between the English original and this Italian translation is that where there is Italian in the original, the translator notes this in a footnote. This serves to indicate to the Italian reader the influence of Italian culture and language on the landscape of Somalia. My only criticism of the translation is that the Italian in the original reads as follows "*tre buoni ristoranti e tre alberghi cosí cosí; tre circoli con ampie sale da ballo,"* and the Italian translator made an incursion into the Italian as used by Farah to render it more idiomatic and standard. This undermines one of the most important stylistic features of postcolonial literature which is the abrogation of the language of the colonizer. The stylistics of the translations is covered in the chapters on orality and postcoloniality of language below. Suffice it to say at this point that this stylistic shift does not detract from the *postcolonializing* potential of this novel in the Italian literary system insofar as content is concerned.

The potential of the translations of Nuruddin Farah's fiction among Italian readers to effect a revision of conventional historical memory is obvious. However it is his nuanced and balanced approach to history that lends his work an air of credibility. His is not a diatribe against Italians; fostering guilt is not the aim of his novels. Awareness is. An example of this is another direct and unambiguous attack on the Italian colonial system but one that is tempered and qualified by illustrating the complicity of certain Somalis in the system:

> Nel silenzio la mente di Deeriye spaziava per i pascoli della memoria e ritornò al giorno in cui l'amministratore coloniale italiano era andato da lui a offrirgli la pace sulla canna del suo fucile. Non poté fare meno di rammentare alter occasioni nella storia somala e africana in cui colonizzatori avevano imposto I loro metodi di "pacificazione", per sottomettere i nativi, grazie alla collaborazione di alcuni capitribù prezzolati o facendo ricorso ai cannoni quando questo non era sufficiente. "Pacificare: dare poco in cambio di tutto quanto si ricava attraverso lo sfruttamento; incoraggiare lo sviluppo economico, creare una classe, una èlite e governare per mezzo di essa: metodi classici che hanno sempre funzionato, rifletté."
>
> (*Chiuditi Sesamo*: 96-97)

The role played by complicit Somalis is an important nuance of *Chiuditi sesamo's* treatment of the Somali experience of Italian colonialism. In the following paragraph, Deeriye ponders the course Somali history may have taken if the Italian occupation had not been aided by certain Somalis:

> Un terzo traditore a cui fece riferimento era l'uomo che aveva aiutato gli italiani a intercettare, e a confiscare, la corrispondenza tra il Sultani del reame di Obbia e quello di Murjeetenya, gli unici due regni somali che erano riusciti a mantenersi indipendenti fino agli anni Trenta; Deeriye si chiese quale direzione avrebbe potuto prendere la storia della Somalia se Cesare Maria de Vecchi, il *Gran Pacificatore*, non avesse scovato un traditore che facesse al caso suo.
>
> (*Chiuditi sesamo: 108*)

The paragraph continues with Mursal and Zeinab presenting a less optimistic viewpoint of what may have happened, doubting the possibility that other foreign powers might have intervened to help Somalia even had the correspondence been made. They cite the failure of these powers to intervene in the Italo-Abyssinian war of the 1930s as evidence for the indifference of the Western democracies to the plight of Africans at the hands of Mussolini's forces. In this way Farah builds a detailed and nuanced picture of how history unfolded in the Italian colonies. He is not quick to demonize the Italians outright but rather shows the complex web of *realpolitik* that

contributed to the events which unfolded. Neither does he mitigate Italian guilt as the prevailing Italian discourse tries to do.

This attitude is further evidenced by the description of the character of Deeriye and his attempts not to inculcate a simple anti-Italian stance in the mind of his young son Mursal. This is despite the sad description of the absence of Deeriye during his son's formative years owing to his being held in Italian colonial prisons for his seditious stance.

> Deeriye, che in carcere aveva imparato a leggere e a parlare l'arabo e l'italiano, aveva insegnato al figlio quanto aveva appreso, e condiviso con lui alcune esperienze di prigionia, sempre attento però a non incorraggiare o scorraggiare quella mente infantile e a non instillare pregiudizi nei riguardi della politica.
>
> (*Chiuditi sesamo*: 13)

Farah's novels clearly have the potential to cause a re-evaluation of Italy's colonial legacy on the part of the Italian reader and are for this reason, given the breadth and quality of his writing, an important element in the process of developing a postcolonial consciousness in Italian public culture and one that cannot be ignored just because they are written in English. Adhikari (2002: 47) notes in this regard that "[fiction] can experiment with the form and content of history and in so doing bring about a change in the nature of historical understanding". The significance is that fiction, unlike historiography which is limited to a more specialised audience, has a greater potential to 'speak truth to power' in a larger public sphere.

In Farah's fiction, in addition to the colonial era proper, the period of neo-colonialism, which was characterized by Italian support for the Siad Barre regime (see Chapter 2), is also not allowed to slip into oblivion. *Sardines* contains references to Italian support for the regime and the pretensions of Italian characters who refuse to accept that Barre was nothing other than a tyrant. This is best embodied by the character of Sandra. Sandra is an Italian Marxist who is friends with Medina and Samatar whom she met while they were studying in Italy. She later comes to Somalia where she enjoys good relations with members of Siad Barre's ruling elite but begins to alienate Medina and Samatar by insisting that Africa's problems can be solved by adherence to sound Marxist ideological principles. The following paragraphs are indicative of the paternalistic tone she takes with Medina when discussing politics and arguably represent to

some extent how the myopic Italian left refused to acknowledge the realities of Somalia's descent into dictatorship.

> Sandra si tirò su e appoggiò un cuscino al muro per sostenersi la testa. Perse tempo. Credeva di sapere cosa provava Medina anche se l'amica non lo diceva mai: Sandra è sempre pronta a criticare gli sforzi e le mosse politiche dell'Africa come "neocolonialisti", "imitativi", "improvvisati e male organizzati" oppure "tribali".
>
> (*Sardine*: 225)

Sandra's paternalism is particularly evident in the fact that she is typically infuriated when either Samatar or Medina attempt to talk about Italian politics, saying they couldn't possibly understand its complexities. She is, nonetheless, smug enough to pronounce on African politics. In the paragraph below Medina tries to rebut Sandra's argument by citing the example of the Italian Communist Party but is interrupted by a furious Sandra who retorts that Medina is in no position to talk about Italian politics:

> "Per cominciare, il Partito comunista in Italia…."
> La battaglia era iniziata. Sandra pareva una leonessa inferocita cui avessero ferito i cuccioli. Aveva gli occhi rossi e il viso infuocato mentre diceva:
> "Un attimo, un attimo".
> "Sì?"
> "Lasciamo fuori l'Italia da tutto questo, Mina".
> "Ma perché?"
> "*Tu non hai mai capito l'Italia"*.
> "Io non ho mai *cosa*?"
> "Tu hai vissuto in questo paese per periodi diverso nel corso degli ultimi dodici anni, parli la nostra lingua perfettamente, hai letto tutto quanto quanto è stato scritto su ogni curva, ogni svolta delle nostre rovine, ma non capisci l'Italia e non la capirai mai. Non è così semplice."
> "Eppure tu parli dell'Africa. Come puoi…".
> "Un momento, Mina!"
> "Che diavolo! Non posso accettarlo!"
> "Non sto parlando dell'Africa, sto parlando della teoria marxista, l'ideologia marxista è fondamentalmente europea, sia nell'aspetto generale che nello sviluppo filosofico. Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin. Erano tutti europei."
>
> (*Sardine*: 226)

In this way Sandra completely disempowers Medina who becomes the mute Spivakian subaltern. On the one hand she is forbidden from speaking about Europe and on the other hand she is forbidden from speaking about Africa because she doesn't have, according to Sandra, complete

mastery of Marxism, the imported European political philosophy which Sandra considers necessary to unlock Africa. Sandra is essentially saying that Medina cannot understand anything about her own country, let alone any other country, without the guiding hand of European ideology (Sumeli Weinberg 2013). The inherent distrust of ideology is exhibited in the trilogy along with the bitter and unflattering description in *Sardines* of Sandra, who symbolises the Italian left with its bombast and blind support for the Somali regime.

The Italian landscape of Mogadiscio

Apart from the political and historical concerns discussed above, the Italian influence on Somalia manifests in the cultural and spatial sphere in the work of the Afro-Italian writers discussed as well as in Farah's *Variations* and *Blood in the Sun* trilogies. The landscape of Mogadiscio (Farah always uses the Italian spelling of the city's name) has a noticeable Italian accent.

Ramzanali Fazel, in her nostalgic memoir of her childhood in Somalia *Lontano da Mogadiscio* discusses the strong Italian presence in that city before decolonization. She writes about how the Italian settler community shaped the city's landscapes to remind them of home and how this distant Italy influenced the lives of the Somali locals:

> Si creavano piccoli oasi in cui rivivere le abitudini della patria lontana, ed attraverso questi micro-cosmi, anche chi, come me, non aveva mai visto l'Italia se la sentiva vicina.
>
> Le vie, le scuole, le chiese, le caserme, i monumenti, i negozi, i cinema, i ristoranti, i bar e gli alberghi erano lo scenario di questa piccola Italia che facevano della mia città una provincia italiana, in cui i nomi ricorrenti erano: Bar Impero, Bar Nazionale, La Croce del Sud, La Mediterranea, La Pergola, El Trocadero, Tre Fontane, Cappucetto Nero, Via Roma, Corso Italia, Caserma Podgora, Cinema Centrale, Supercinema, Scuola Regina Elena, Ospedale De Martio, Chiesa del Sacro Cuore…
>
> (Ramzanali Fazel 1994/1999: 20)

The idea of Mogadiscio as a province of Italy occurs in Farah's *Latte agrodolce* in a scene which unfolds in an Italian restaurant in Mogadiscio which, incidentally, forms part of Ramzanali Fazel's list of Italian places of interest in Mogadiscio, *Cappucetto Nero*. Loyaan and Margaritta are meeting in an Italian restaurant in Mogadiscio to discuss the mysterious events that led to Soyaan's death. The scene unfolds as follows:

> A quel punto furono interotti dall'arrivo del cameriere, che si presentò tutto sorridente portando le ordinazioni in equilibrio sulle braccia: *zuppa di pesce* e una fetta di pane per Loyaan, una *scaloppina alla Milanese* e un'insalata mista per la signora. Il signore voleva ordinare un *secondo*? Il cameriere porse un menu dattiloscritto e rivestito di un foglio di plastica per proteggerlo dall'umidità distruttiva di Mogadiscio. Il ristorante si chiamava *Cappuccetto Nero*. Sembrava di essere una cittadina italiana di provincia: la presentazione del cibo, lo stile, le tovaglie, il modo stesso come le si cambiava.
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 144)

It is telling that this scene brings to the minds of the characters a provincial Italian city. Mogadiscio was the site of the strongest Italian influence in Somalia and became in many ways just that, a province of Italy. The most interesting moment in the paragraph is the description of the menu which has been covered in plastic to protect it from the destructive humidity of Mogadiscio. This represents that the menu and the restaurant have found themselves in an alien setting to which they are not quite suitably adapted. Later on in the scene the waiter is described as speaking Italian in a strong Somali accent. The scene highlights the hybridised identity that emerged from the Italian occupation of Somalia[14].

Igiaba Scego also provides us with a list of places of note in Mogadiscio which were centres of Italian life in the city. These include a number of the same places mentioned by Ramzanali Fazel in her list including the famous hotel *la Croce del Sud* and, again, the restaurant *Cappucetto Nero* which she describes as being frequented by Italians even after independence (Scego 2010: 30). The presence of the restaurant *Cappucetto Nero* in the works of Farah, Ramzanali Fazel and Scego is also strongly indicative of the Italian-inflected cultural memory of Mogadiscians. That those of Ramzanali Fazel and Scego are memoirs while Farah's is a work of fiction further points to the possibility that fiction can teach history.

[14] Farah makes specific reference to Ramzanali Fazel's *Lontano da Mogadiscio* in his 2004 memoir *Links* where the protagonist claims to have found the memoir to be a worthwhile read owing to its lack of focus on clan politics. In addition to this several other Afro-Italian writers including Ubax Cristina Ali Farah, Igiaba Scego and Gabriella Ghermandi (among others) have acknowledged their debt to Fazel's work. Given its basis in a polysystem framework, the current study makes a small foray into the web of literary influences that have shaped the emerging tradition of Afro-Italian literature but more comprehensive systemic study of the phenomenon would be a very interesting avenue for future research.

Ramzanali Fazel describes her childhood visits to Afgoi, a countryside village and popular daytrip from Mogadiscio, where her family would enjoy lunch at an Italian restaurant. She describes the scene in the following terms:

> Afgoi era un tranquillo villaggio di agricoltori, dove scorreva un fiume e serviva da oasi per i cammellieri di passaggio. La vegetazione era lussureggiante ed il fiume color miele scorreva lento. Il programma prevedeva sempre e solo il pranzo "Da Cristiani", il migliore dei due ristoranti italiani di Afgoi. La specialità era pasta fresca al forno e il pollo alla diavola.
> Sotto gli enormi alberi di mango e le buganvillee dai colori vivaci, i tavoli erano apparecchiati con tovaglie a quadretti bianchi e rossi.
>
> (Ramzanali Fazel 1999: 17)

Much like the scene in the Italian restaurant described by Farah, Ramzanali Fazel alludes to the adaptation of Italian culture to the landscape of Somalia. She notes how her family enjoyed traditional Italian dishes seated at tables with the prototypical white and red checked tablecloths closely associated with Italian restaurants but in a setting of local vegetation, bougainvillea and mango trees. Indeed as the scene unfolds she describes one such lunch at the Italian restaurant when the proprietors had brought in a lioness in a cage for the entertainment of the patrons.

One of the most poignant moments that expresses the attitude of Somalis as represented by Farah towards Italy and the Italian language occurs here. This scene has been noted for its importance in this regard by Vivan (1998) and Gorlier (1998). In the scene Ubax, Medina's daughter, asks her mother who is expected for dinner. The invitation card is on the table and Medina tells her daughter to read it herself. Picking up the card and examining it Ubax replies confused:

> "È una lingua straniera".
> "No, è italiano."
> "Appunto, *è* straniera". E Ubax incrociò le braccia sul petto con aria di sfida, arabbiatissima. Le pupille dei suoi occhi lanciavano fiamme di indignazione: perché Medina era tanto stupida e ostinata? L'italiano era una lingua straniera e lei, Ubax, non sapeva leggerlo.
>
> (*Sardine*: 220)

This moment represents the moment of rupture between Medina's generation and that of her daughter. For Medina Italian is not by any means a foreign language: it is a language she grew up with and was educated in whereas for her daughter, growing up under the Barre period with the Somali language now established as a language of education, Italian gradually recedes in importance. While in Somalia itself, the Italian language has died out and the physical and cultural vestiges of Italian colonialism have largely been erased by decades of war and destruction, the cultural memory of Italian colonialism and the link between Somalia and Italy lives on in Somalis in Italy.

The reception of migrant literature

Afro-Italian writing has relied on small independent and experimental publishing houses and cultural collectives owned and managed by members of the African diaspora in Italy. These publishing houses tend to focus on African diasporic writing in Italian and not on translating works from the African continent itself. Of particular importance is *el Ghibli*. *El Ghibli*, which translates as *wind of the desert* is an online magazine of migrant writing which has been at the centre of the promotion of migrant writing in Italy. The editorial board of the journal is made up primarily of migrant writers including Pap Khouma, Gabriella Ghermandi, Christiana de Caldas Brito, Kossi Komla-Ebri, Mia Lecomte and Erminia dell'Oro. Ubax Ali Cristina Farah was also one of the journal's founding members.

Huggan (2001: 155) is critical of the limitations imposed on authors from "ethnic minority backgrounds" who, more often than not, are strictly contained within the genre of life-writing owing to the "dual process of commodification and surveillance" imposed on them by the dominant culture. Citing Susan Hawthorne (1989), Huggan (2001: 155) goes on to claim that even when writers in this category, especially women, produce other forms of writing like novels, the tendency to read their works within the paradigm of autobiography has prevailed over any attempts to broach themes of more universal import. Hawthorne (1989, in Huggan 2001: 155) suggests that this reading practice is the result of a certain voyeurism on the behalf of the dominant culture because they are perceived to provide privileged and intimate access to 'exotic' cultures. Interestingly, especially when viewed in the Polysystem framework, Huggan (2001: 155) again citing Hawthorne, further claims that "ethnic autobiographies might be construed as less imaginatively rich than other, more canonical works of Western literature". Madeleine Hron (2009) reiterates these concerns in her book *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature*

and Culture in which, given its inhabiting cultural interstices much like translation, she reads immigrant writing through the lens of translation theory. She comments:

> Immigrants may internalize the conventional image of the successful immigrant, and so feel compelled to play down their suffering of immigration, be it in their home country, so as to measure up to the stereotypical fiction of success. Similarly, immigrant writers might find themselves conforming to standard models of immigrant narrative, or popular notions about immigration, so as to meet the expectations of their readership or more importantly the demands of the publishing market.
>
> (Hron, 2009: xiv)

In most Italian immigrant writing, suffering is a central theme but what is interesting in the light of the above comment is that immigrant success, even where it is not explicit in the narrative, is actually *implied* by writing and successful publication. This is because immigrant writing is almost always read, explicitly or implicitly, as autobiography or autofiction. Hron (2009: 45) furthermore conceives of immigrant writers as performing a sort of intersemiotic translation of the the immigrant experience into target-language prose for the target-reader inhabiting the target-culture. For this reason the very existence of a novel by an immigrant who has managed to emerge from the grinding anonymity of immigrant life and speak to the majority culture, gaining cultural capital and making a name for herself, is in itself a narrative of success. The power entailed in the process of writing itself is a major thread in Ghermandi's *La regina di fiori e di perle* which seamlessly blends fiction and fact but keeps the metafictional authorial voice always close at hand.

The emerging scholarship on Italian postcolonial literature focusses almost exclusively on the phenomenon of migrant writing (Gnisci 2003, 2007; Parati 2005; Ponzanesi 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2012). Gnisci (2003: 7) goes as far as saying that migrant writing represents the *avant garde* of 21st century Italian literature. Migrant writing has risen to prominence because it represents a new and innovative mode of expression in the Italian language and one which exposes and illuminates issues at the forefront of Italian cultural politics at this historical moment. A polysystem analysis of the phenomenon of migrant writing may prove instructive. In Russian Formalist terms, migrant writing defamiliarizes the Italian language causing the estranging effect that these theorists claimed was at the centre of literariness. If the premise that innovative writing at the periphery of a system may have reforming effect on the system as a

whole, it stands to reason that migrant writing may become an important feature of the Italian canon, move the Italian language into a more globalized era and breathe new life into its literary production. The demographic facts that are forcing a radical revision of the idea of Italian identity would seem also to necessitate this. The flowering of academic interest in migrant writing would also seem to support the idea that it is breaking into the canon. The interest in this new wave of Italian literature is predicated on the fact that it can be described as such: *Italian*. Being written in the national language it is considered part of the national literature.

I am of the opinion that, as important as migrant writing is, the historical memory of Italy and Africa's relationship is as important as the contemporary one. This is because contemporary racism and bigotry find their roots in the representation of Africa by a colonial power; a mode of representation that has not been adequately countered by the emergence of a postcolonial literature. For this reason, alongside the second generation Somali and Ethiopian writers discussed above, Nuruddin Farah should be considered one of the most important contributors to the corpus of Italian postcolonial literature. Farah writes in English and his work is translated into Italian. The post-romantic notions of literary nationalism and the cult of genius continue to pervade literary studies. There is a prejudice against translated works and this in turn means that Farah's work, despite its obvious centrality in the corpus of key texts in Italian postcolonial literature, has been overlooked.

CHAPTER 4
Publishing, Politics and Prizes

> Culture is a sort of theatre where various political causes engage one another. Far from being a placid realm of Apollonian gentility, culture can even be a battleground on which causes expose themselves to the light of day and contend with one another.
>
> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

In the chapters above an argument was made for the central position the translated work of Nuruddin Farah could assume in Italian postcolonial literature. The previous chapters were designed to prove the radical potential of his works in the Italian system. Here I shift the focus of the study from historical and literary analysis to a description of the publishing and reception of Farah's works in Italy. The analysis presented here is grounded in the discipline of book history. Book history takes as its object of study the material conditions of book production and reception. Material conditions refer to "those processes and institutions that mediate literary production and consumption, as influenced by economic systems, political frameworks, and legal institutions" (Brouilette 2007:1). This chapter is grounded in these concerns because this study goes beyond literary analysis of Farah's oeuvre within the framework of Italian postcolonial literature and aims to establish materially the actual position occupied by the oeuvre in the Italian literary system as well as the economic and material imperatives that led to its occupying this position.

I explore the publication of African fiction in Italy, linking its weaknesses to the delayed emergence of an Italian postcolonial consciousness. I situate the publication of Farah's work within the publication and reception practices that characterize African fiction in the Italian literary system. I illustrate that Farah's work has had limited influence in Italy because of systemic economic pressures that restrict the publication and reception of African fiction in the Italian market. I argue that this is both symptomatic of and a contributing factor towards the slow uptake of postcolonial literatures and the failure to erode the colonial mentality in Italy.

An important aspect of this chapter is an analysis of the history of African fiction publication in Italy which highlights the tight grip major publishers have on the Italian market

and the huge economic challenges faced by small publishers willing to take risks on new African writers. In particular the difficult trajectory of the pioneering imprint *Il lato dell'ombra* of Edizioni Lavoro, a left-leaning Rome based publishing house that launched the imprint to promote translations of postcolonial writers in Italy is examined. At the centre of this imprint is Farah's *Variations on the theme of an African dictatorship* trilogy.

Also examined in this chapter is the influence of the awarding of prestigious literary prizes to Farah and the effect this has of boosting his value to mainstream Italian publishers and the commoditisation of Farah's works within the framework of specific practices associated with the marketing of African fiction in the West and in Italy. This section will focus on the Frassinelli editions of the *Blood in the Sun* trilogy.

The Italian publishing industry is dominated by two major conglomerates: The Mondadori Group which in 2011 was ranked the 33rd largest publishing group in the world and the GEMS Group (Gruppo Editori Mauro Spagnol) which was ranked the 34th largest publishing group in the world in 2011. Between them these groups include most of the important publishing houses in the country. GEMS, the mother company of which is Messaggerie Italiane, controls Pro Libro, Bollati Boringhieri, Nordm Longanesi, Guanda, La Coccinella, Garzanti, Adriano Salani, TEA, Vallardi. The Mondadori group is one of the biggest publishing companies in Europe and Italy's biggest publisher. The website of the group describes it as "the absolute leader in Italy's book market" although only 23.4% of its revenue comes from the sale of books, the rest coming from Italian and French language magazine, retail, radio, advertising and holdings (Mondadori.com group profile). Publishing houses falling under the group include Edizioni Mondadori, Einaudi, Piemme, Sperling & Kupfer, Electa and Frassinelli**.** Mondadori is a listed company on the Milan Stock Exchange and employs 3,436 people. In 2013 sales revenues amounted to 1.2758 billion euro (Mondadori.com group profile). Incidentally, the group is headed by Marina Berlusconi, the eldest daughter of the right-wing, ultra-capitalist Silvio Berlusconi who led the Italian government for three terms between 1994 and 2011.

In a 2011 interview with Claire Genevieve Lavagnino (2013), Ubax Cristina Ali Farah described her experience of the Italian publishing industry and of Frassinelli in particular. When asked whether she had a publisher in mind for her new novel *Il comandante del fiume* which

came out in 2014 she responded with reservation about going back to Frassinelli, suggesting that according to the editor with whom she was working on *Il comandante del fiume* (Alessandra di Maio) Frassinelli had not offered her enough support with *Madre piccola* (Ali Farah in Lavagnino 2013: 172). However, she goes on to say that Frassinelli is a very large publishing house with a large distribution and that she enjoyed working with the Frassinelli editor of *Madre Piccola,* adding that she was hopeful they would take her on for her latest book (Ali Farah in Lavagnino 2013: 172). Ali Farah was then asked what the advantages of choosing a small publisher over a bigger one might be. She responded that the choice represents "a double-edged sword" because although Frassinelli has a bigger distribution they did not protect her or promote her work (Ali Farah in Lavagnino 2013: 173). Interestingly, she notes that the fact that Frassinelli had published Toni Morrison and Nuruddin Farah was a significant factor in her choice to accept Frassinelli's offer (Ali Farah in Lavagnino 2013: 173). She, nonetheless, suggests that on reflection, feeling flattered to be included in the offering of the same publisher which published Nuruddin Farah and Toni Morrison was "misguided" (Ali Farah in Lavagnino 2013: 173).

It is hardly surprising that a writer like Ubax Ali Cristina Farah should feel insecure with entrusting her work to a faceless monolith where it stands to fall into legally binding oblivion. As mentioned above, Frassinelli also holds the rights to publish and distribute the work of Nuruddin Farah and, regrettably, his early works have not re-emerged from the belly of the beast. In an email correspondence with me dated 28 January 2010, Ubax Cristina Ali Farah acknowledges her own literary debt to Nuruddin Farah and comments in disillusioned terms about the disappearance of her countryman's important work into Frassinelli's neglected archive. She says:

> Nuruddin Farah appartiene a una generazione (è nato lo stesso anno di mio padre) che ha vissuto il sogno dell'indipendenza, della costruzione dello stato nazione e ne ha visto il fallimento. Io ho vissuto in Somalia quando questo sogno era ormai crollato e la dittatura mostrava il suo volto più perverso… A proposito dell'Italia: è molto triste che Frassinelli abbia deciso (dopo aver acquistato i diritti persino dei primi romanzi) di non pubblicare più Nuruddin. Questa decisione parla da sola.
>
> (Email correspondence with Ubax Cristina Ali Farah 28/01/2015)

Ali Farah highlights in a sad tone in the correspondence above the importance she attributes to the work of Nuruddin Farah as a member of the generation which witnessed the end of Italian colonialism, the birth of the independent Somali nation and its tragic demise as a viable nation. While she has the deepest respect for Nuruddin Farah, she goes on to suggest with sad resignation that, where Italy's relationship with the Somali writer is concerned, the decision by Frassinelli to no longer publish Farah's older works despite owning the rights to all his novels speaks for itself.

Other Afro-Italian writers have been published by small publishing houses. One such house is Sinnos which is dedicated to providing young people with educational material that provides a vision of multicultural Italian citizenship, the immigrant experience and different points of view on Italian identity (Sinnos.org). Various works by Igiaba Scego which are directed at a young audience such as *La mia casa è dove sono* (2010) and *Il nomade che amava Alfred Hitchcock* (2003) are included in this publisher's offering. Other works by Igiaba Scego like *Oltre Babilonia* (2008) and Gabriella Ghermandi's *Regina di fiori e di perle* (2007) were published by Donzelli Editore. Donzelli is a young publishing house founded in 1993 by a small group of intellectuals who had previously managed *Meridiana* a journal of contemporary Southern Italian literature (Donzelli 2012). The house describes itself as fiercely autonomous, blessed with great enthusiasm but with limited financial resources (Donzelli 2012). The contrast between the poor but happy Donzelli and the corporate monster Mondadori/Frassinelli could not be clearer. The mission statement of Donzelli is to publish books which reflect the multiple and fractured voices of the globalised world. An extract from the company mission statement makes this clear:

> Curiosità, progetto, catalogo sono state da allora le nostre parole d'ordine. Una curiosità onnivora, invadente, capace di spaziare dall'indagine sulle trasformazioni del nostro "piccolo" universo, all'attenzione per gli altri tempi e gli altri spazi. Un progetto a tutto campo, che non settorializzasse la ricerca, che mescolasse i saperi, le tendenze, le discipline, moltiplicandone gli effetti di conoscenza. Un catalogo strutturato come una rete in grado di accogliere ogni libro con elasticità, ma di cui fosse possibile individuare la trama, i fili portanti… Libri, non feticci. Non l'ultimo baluardo della cultura contro le nuove barbarie. Occhi e mani di carta per vedere e toccare pezzi di mondo.
>
> (Donzelli 2012)

The imagery used in this extract is enthusiastic. It is about opening up Italian publishing ("nostro piccolo universo") to the wider world ("gli altri tempi e gli altri spazi") and providing readers with access to innovative cultural production. The house evocatively claims to provide "paper eyes and hands with which to see and touch pieces of the world." The offering claims to be about intellectual curiosity and experimentation and critically it is about "*books not fetishes*" (Donzelli 2012). If these claims are to be believed then it is obvious that Donzelli offers a much more appropriate and sensitive publishing environment for Afro-Italian writing. But, unfortunately, choosing a publisher that offers sensitivity entails limited financial resources, and this is the cause of the double bind described by Ubax Cristina Ali Farah.

If the publishing environment for Afro-Italian writing can be described as difficult today, for a young Farah living in Italy finding a publisher was impossible. While residing in Italy between 1976 and 1979, Farah produced an entire version of *Sardines* partially set in Milan and written in Italian (Alden and Tremaine 2002:41). This manuscript was abandoned after difficulties finding a publisher willing to support his project in Italy and Farah reverted to writing in English. The Italian translation of *Sardines* would only finally emerge 16 years after its original publication in English. These anecdotes are evidence of two things: that Farah's engagement with the Italian Somali historical and cultural connection is not casual but carefully studied and deliberate and that, conscious of this, despite his best efforts to penetrate the Italian literary system, Italy would not be ready for his message for many years to come.

Farah's choice to write in English as opposed to any of the other languages he knows had some interesting ripple effects in terms of the reception of his works in Italy in a cultural framework that tends to marginalise translated literatures. Farah is clear that writing in Somali was not an option for several reasons. He answered a question about his choice to write in English posed to him by an audience member at a public lecture at the University of the Witwatersrand on 26 March 2012 more or less as follows: Somali had no official orthography before 1972, making it difficult or impossible to write and publish in that language; Somalia is a largely illiterate country with no established book culture; censorship under Barre and his status as *persona non grata* in that country meant that his novels would find no reception in Somalia under the dictatorship; following the collapse of the dictatorship, Somalia descended into famine and chaos – hardly an atmosphere conducive to the development of a book culture; and finally,

because Farah is self-avowedly writing to keep worldwide memory of his country alive, his choice of English is deliberate and reasonable given the hegemony of English language publication.

Postcolonial writers have been conceived of as mediators between the world of the colonized and the world of the colonizers; as the Empire writing back. Huggan (2001: 34) starts his analysis of African literature and the anthropological exotic with this notion in mind, noting that what is generally known as 'African Literature' at least by Western readers and book-buyers refers very specifically to literature produced in European languages and very often aimed, if not completely at least partially, at consumption by metropolitan audiences. Huggan says:

> This suggests the view of African literature as primarily an export product, aimed at a largely foreign audience for whom the writer acts, willingly or not, as cultural spokesperson or interpreter.
>
> (Huggan 2001: 24)

Nuruddin Farah's case would seem to reinforce this view first and foremost because of his choice to write in English, the language most widely associated with postcolonial writing and criticism but also because of his status as the foremost literary voice of Somalia: translating that country's plight into words the world can read. A few examples from blurbs[15] on the backs of the latest publications of the books forming part of *Variations on the theme of an African Dictatorship* are preliminary indications of this status. Nadine Gordimer is cited on the back of *Sardines* as saying:

> Farah is one of the real interpreters of experience on our troubled continent. His insight goes deep, beyond events, into the sorrows and joys, the frustrations and achievements of our lives. His prose finds the poetry that is there. This trilogy represents both the wide scope and beautiful intimacy of his work.
>
> (Nadine Gordimer commenting on *Sardines*)

Gordimer's use of the word 'interpreter' is telling. She clearly sees Farah in the role of mediator, bringing the Somali experience to the world. She also generalises the Somali experience to a

[15] A blurb is an element of the publisher's epitext aimed at marketing the book to potential readers. It very often consists of a short extract from a critical review from a prestigious publication or a commendation from a well-known writer. Analysis of epitextual and paratextual features, like blurbs, are an important element in this chapter and are conducted within the tradition laid down by Gerard Genette (1987).

wider African and a wider human level. This is not alien to Farah's work which he writes very much within a spirit of liberal humanism and universal values. The title of Farah's own trilogy *Variations on the theme of an African dictatorship* seems also to indicate that his Somali trilogy serves as a case study for a more generalised African experience of totalitarian regimes. Although, it must be remembered that Farah's characters, in the main, represent a small cosmopolitan segment of Somali society that is middle-class and Western educated and hardly speak for the mass of Somalis. Farah's role as the voice of Somalia –the man who speaks for the Somalis and humanises their tragedy for international readers is reiterated by Chinua Achebe on the back of *Close Sesame* where he says:

> "Farah takes us deep into territory he has charted and mapped and made uniquely his own… [sic.] He excels in giving voice to tragedy in remote places of the world that speak directly to our own hearts".
>
> (Chinua Achebe commenting on *Close Sesame*)

Both these quotes by writers who are themselves African illustrate the sense of the African writer as a cultural translator whose task is to interpret the realities of his "troubled continent" and "the remote places of this world" into a language and format that can be appreciated outside of Africa. The extremely high status of these writers in the field of African literature also serves to invite the reader to see Farah as part of a special fold. The process of canonisation of which this paratextual activity is indicative is discussed in greater detail below.

The concentration of capital in the West still wields powerful influence over African literature. Cultural critic in the Marxist tradition, Frederic Jameson, as early as 1986 noted the intractable economic entanglement in which African writers find themselves *vis à vis* western publishers. He posited this position a highly controversial and much debated paper entitled *Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism* where he says:

> One important distinction would seem to impose itself at the outset, namely that none of these cultures can be conceived as anthropologically independent or autonomous, rather, they are all in various distinct ways locked in a life-and-death struggle with first-world cultural imperialism, a cultural struggle that is itself a reflexion of the economic situation of such areas in their penetration by various stages of capital, or as it is sometimes euphemistically termed, of modernization

(Jameson 1986: 68)

While his claim that 'third-world' cultures cannot be considered "anthropologically independent or autonomous" is highly contentious, what Jameson is pointing to is the dominance of Western publishing; in particular Anglo-American publishing of the English language. The situation described by Jameson nearly 30 years ago remains unshaken and this English language hegemony extends to the publication of translated works. English has become the language most translated out of but least translated into (Venuti 1998: 160). Based on 1987 UNESCO figures, Venuti showed how staggering this inequality was at the time Jameson was writing[16]. The most recent data available on the UNESCO *Index Translatonium* shows that the trends noted by Venuti in 1987 have only been compounded over the past 25 years. 2005 Figures on the Index show that the top five source-languages remained English with 63 622 titles translated into other languages, German with 9 505, French with 9 350, Italian with 3 486 and Japanese with 3 232. The enormous disparity between English and its closest runner-up, German, shows the incredible preponderance of English as a source-language. This is perhaps not surprising when you consider the worldwide ratio of English speakers to German speakers. What is surprising, however, is that in 2005 Chinese, with a massive population of native speakers, was the source language for only 650 titles. The top five target languages of 2005 according to *Index Translationum* were French with 14 983 titles, Chinese with 12 095 titles, German with 10 746 titles, Spanish with 9 461 titles and English with 7 153 titles. This huge disparity is not only due to English being the global language of utility but also with the immense cultural capital of Anglo-American cultures. Indicative of this cultural capital are the records of *Index Translationum* where, of the total 63 467 source-texts translated from English in 2005 about 51 % were classified as literature: an exclusively cultural product. When this figure is compared to the paltry 1 870 pieces of literature translated into English from *every* other language in the world the cultural dominance of English is manifestly clear. In this context it is little wonder that Farah and so many authors like him feel compelled to write in English.

[16] This is illustrated by the UNESCO figures of 1987 which show the staggering inequality in the flow of translated literature: 32000 books were translated out of English versus 6700 from French, 5000 from German and 1700 from Italian. The global south fared even worse than the other European languages with only 479 books being translated from Arabic, 216 from Chinese, 89 from Bengali, 14 from Korean and 8 from Indonesian. He goes on to comment that there was (and probably still is) virtually no interest in texts written in indigenous African, Asian or South American languages.

African literature, in particular, is in thrall to the Western publishing system. The reasons for this Western monopoly on the publication, distribution and even the definition of African literature as a field has a great deal to do with the underdevelopment of the African publishing industry (Huggan 2001: 35). Another reason is the lack of support, or even active repression by various African governments for emergent literatures at different points in their histories (Huggan 2001: 269). Farah's own experience of exile from Somalia as a result of the ruling regime's censure of his literary work is indicative of this. These factors have had the inevitable effect of putting African writers at the behest of influential Western patrons and the Western critical academy, thus limiting the ability of a truly independent African literature to emerge. Huggan (2001: 4) stresses the need to critically question the "neo-imperialist implications" of an industry centred in the West (and he cites that most major publishing houses are based in London or New York as evidence of this) and cater largely to a Western metropolitan audience. The chance of new or experimental African writing penetrating the Italian system is even slimmer because of the high cost of translating novels and the risks associated with publishing obscure African authors. This means that only writers and works sanctioned and lauded by the Anglophone (and to a lesser extent Francophone and Lusophone) book markets and critical industries can hope to enter the Italian market.

Another problem for African literature is that certain politicised writing can suffer being undermined by forces keen to market the literature's 'exotic' appeal in a Western world hungry for new consumer experiences (Huggan 2001: 35 - 36). This too can be exacerbated in the Italian case both at the stage of selection of works to translate and publish and because, again, the process of translation almost inevitably submits the text to re-presentation in line with target textual and literary norms. This was shown to be the case in Chapters 4 and 5.

Huggan (2001) argues that third-world cultural products, whether traditional African craft, oriental rugs or indeed novels, are subject to being aestheticized, trivialised, decontextualized and packaged as commodities for Western consumption. Even more perversely writers from formerly colonized countries are being co-opted into this process by adapting their writing style to meet the dominant poetics expected by metropolitan readers of postcolonial narrative. He also notes that the discourse around much of postcolonial literary criticism is one of *translation* with literary products emanating from the "periphery" but aimed at the "centre" seen

as cultural translations with the West as the target-audience (Huggan 2001: 4). The strong Italian tendency to approach Africa from a romanticized, exoticised or anthropological lens has its roots in the Italian colonial project (see Chapter 2 above). These roots run deep and have continued to shape the production of Italian writing on Africa in Italy. Itala Vivan notes this tendency linking it to the popular African writings of Moravia and Pasolini (see Chapter 2):

> Al contempo, in Italia si proiettava anche l'immagine dell'Africa sensuale e sonante cantata dalla Negritudine, che esaltava la bellezza della pelle nera e la peculiarità di un continente che si voleva caratterizzato dalle emozioni (una ideologia africana dell'alterità). Un'Africa che trovava echi prolungati in molta produzione letteraria africana francofona e specialmente nella poesia di marca senghoriana. Questa Africa andava ad allearsi alle sensibilità incline all'esotismo – vedi Moravia e Pasolini – e solleticava spinte tendenti ad alterizzare l'Africa, a distanziarla in prospettive estetizzanti…
>
> (Vivan 2013: 7)

The same aestheticization of alterity that has shaped the writing of Africa by Italians alluded to by Vivan continues to delimit the scope of the reception of African literatures. An analysis of the paratextual presentation of Farah's published works is presented below detailing the effects of this trend on the reception of his first two trilogies in Italy. Also in this regard the translation process itself poses further problems in that the distinctive styles, worldviews and politics of African writers are subject to filtering through a target-culture translator with an almost inevitable stylistic homogenisation.

Exoticising tendencies are not unique to Italian publications of African literatures and continue to be associated with the marketing of African literature in the West. Literatures from the global south have long been at the centre of academic interest, spawning an entire discipline in the form of Postcolonial studies which has grown exponentially since its inception in the late seventies. Novels set in the Global South but have also come to occupy an important position in today's mass-readership book-market. Popular novels like *Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid* and the *Sewing Circle of Kabul* by Khaled Hooseini, *Q&A* by Vikas Swarup and the works of Kiran Desai, Paulo Coelho and Amy Tan set in 'exotic' contexts have long been staples of book clubs and populate the shelves of mass-market bookstores in considerable numbers. The boom of mass popularity for writers from the Global South mirrors the popularity of postcolonial studies and third-world literature at its centre is the focal point of academic faddism where more

'literary' and cosmopolitan authors like Salman Rushdie, V.S Naipaul and Nuruddin Farah exist as academic rock-stars.

Postcolonial writing has been called 'ethnographic fiction' because it provides readers with access (real or imagined) to foreign cultures (Huggan 2001: 42). The economic benefits of publishing work that appeals to anthropological interest is immense, Western japanophilia has fuelled the meteoric rise of Haruki Murakami who provides readers with access to a cultural universe otherwise difficult to 'access'. Popular writers of novels like *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Goldman and *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, themselves not members of the societies they fictionally represent, have also inappropriately "cashed in" on the popularity of exoticism and the anthropological gaze. The popularity of these two texts is indicated by their adaptation into high budget feature films aimed at a broad audience.

Naturally, the work of Nuruddin Farah has also been absorbed into a market and a critical industry based on anthropological curiosity. An example of this is the following extract from a paper published in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*.

> Against this background of developing familial relations, Farah's novel is a subtle reflection on giving and receiving, dependence and reciprocity in a starving Somalia seen through the eyes of a single mother, while simultaneously exploring the interrelation of the philosophical and anthropological discourses of gift-giving, and the discourse of the politics of Third World aid donorship. In his bold approach to questions of modern African identity and sexuality in the shifting realities of the Horn of Africa, Farah creates a singular meta-fictional space where Joseph Conrad collides with spirit-world djinns, where Jungian dreams and local folklore converge with the rattle of modern fax machines and the gunfire of clan violence.
>
> (Woods 2003: 92)

As Woods' analysis of *Gifts* illustrates, there is a tendency to read Farah's work through the same lens of the postcolonial exotic and ethnographic fiction. His work might be particularly susceptible to this kind of reading given his status as one of the only writers representing Somalia, a 'mysterious' and inaccessible country steeped in human tragedy.

Lefevere, working in the translation studies paradigm he pioneered known as the *manipulation school*, incisively critiques the cynical economics that underlie the publication of African literature in the west:

> Publishers invest in a number of pages because they publish for a potential audience. Kgotsile has strong views on the composition of that audience: "who is the audience of the contemporary African writer? The bored Euro-American liberal literati searching for literary exotica in the African quarters of their empire? The African elite trained away from themselves in institutions of European design?
>
> (Lefevere 1992: 124)

In the same publication, Lefevere (1992: 124) notes how publishers respond to high-profile third-world human tragedies with a slew of publications to capitalise on suddenly piqued western interest. Examples of this would be the popularity of *Kite Runner* against the backdrop of the American-led war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Ghezzi (1992: 278) notes how in 1960, "the year of Africa" in which so many African countries attained independence, Africa was suddenly in vogue and Italian publishing houses began producing and publishing translations of Senghor's poetry which reached a wide readership in the Italy of the 60s and to a lesser extent the 70s. Negritude, the controversial early experiment in black writing so critical in the creation of a local written literature in West Africa in the pre-war years but since discredited even by its founders for perpetuating colonial stereotypes about Africa, thus only reached Italy in the 1960s. This anachronism was again caused by the isolation of Italy from the main currents of African literature owing to the fact that all African literature is mediated via translation and the marketing concerns of Italian publishing houses.

Similarly the fall of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia, with the attendant humanitarian crisis that captured the attention of the world in the early 1990s, seems to have prompted the rapid translation and publication of the Farah's *Variations* trilogy by Edizioni Lavoro. The first instalment *Chiuditi Sesamo* appeared in 1992 which was the year following the collapse of the Barre regime. The critical introductions to the translations of *Sweet and Sour Milk* and *Sardines* both make explicit reference to the renewed importance of the Farah's novels in the wake of the outbreak of the Somali civil war:

> I romanzi della trilogia assumono una valenza ancor più forte per chi li legga negli anni Novanta, dopo la caduta di Barre, il dilagare della guerra per bande e la frammentazione in mille schegge del fronte della Resistenza.
>
> (Itala Vivan in *Latte Agrodolce* XI)

> Rileggendo *Sardine,* alla luce dei recenti avvenimenti in Somalia e in tutta l'Africa, si resta colpiti da tanto pessimismo, dal ritratto cupo che l'autore traccia

> dell'impotenza della borghesia illuminata, troppo egoista e lontana dalla realtà politica.
>
> (Jacqueline Bardolph in *Sardine* XIX)

Reading these claims, one is struck by the irony that a set of works which intricately and explicitly exposes the flagrant injustice; the gruesome physical and psychological suffering imposed on its citizens by the Barre regime – a regime that was intimately entangled with the Italian government right until its dramatic collapse – should only emerge in Italian translation *after* the collapse of that regime. Lefevere comments on this cynical tendency in international publishing writing:

> If publishers want to catch the attention of the potential White liberal audience, they should be ready with an anthology at a "historical moment" – when Africa is in the news outside Africa. It also helps to have the anthology either compiled or introduced by an Established European or American (preferably Black) writer who can be shown to have a certain affinity with things African.
>
> (Lefevere 1992: 125)

Unfortunate as this may be, it is not altogether surprising given the enormous challenges faced by African literature as it runs the gauntlet of the Italian publishing industry. The access to any translations at all, let alone good quality translations, of African literature in Italian has, until very recently, been extremely limited and, despite growing interest, continues to languish.

The translation and publication of Farah's works in Italy seems to coincide with the increased international profile of Somalia's plight. Farah's first trilogy, *Variations on the theme of an African dictatorship* composed of *Sweet and Sour Milk*, *Sardines* and *Close Sesame* were originally published in English in 1979, 1981 and 1983 respectively. The first instalment of the Italian version of *Variations* was *Chiuditi Sesamo,* first published in 1992 following the outbreak of the Somali civil war. The following section describes how Nuruddin Farah first came to be translated and published in Italy and draws some links between the publication of his novels and the agendas of political alignments in Italy.

Publication and politics: the *Variations* trilogy

Unless more broadly defined to include the work of African diaspora writers working in Italian, African literature available in Italian is by definition translated literature. This is, of course, the result of no Italian language writing emerging within the former Italian colonies. By and large

only works well received and critically acclaimed elsewhere ever make it into Italian. Importantly, no literary text from Africa ever arrives in Italy unless it has been chosen and translated by the Italian publishing industry (Vivan 2013: 7). Large Italian publishers rarely take risks on the publication of new or unknown African authors, generally preferring to wait for their being sanctioned by the critical industries and markets of the Anglophone world. The situation was particularly grave up until the mid-eighties. Italian publishers paid very limited attention to African literature. Translations were sporadic and very poorly done with little intervention from experts, novels were haphazardly selected for inclusion in arbitrary collections and key titles were woefully absent (Vivan 2013: 8).

The control of the Italian publishing industry over the publication of translations implies a delay in the availability of works of African literature in Italy as compared to the rest of the world. One notable and extreme case of this tardiness is Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* which was first published in Italy in 1986, one hundred three years after its 1883 appearance in English. (Vivan 2013: 10, Ghezzi 1992: 281). The emergence of Farah's works in Italy also follows the trend of translations of African literature emerging long after their original publication.

In the Italian context, African literature has suffered from a lack of public and critical interest and poor quality publications and translations. When Mondadori published Chinua Achebe's watershed novel *Things Fall Apart* as *Le locuste bianche* in 1962, the Italian public was not prepared for it and it achieved limited success (Ghezzi 1992: 279). In 1977 it was repackaged by the Publisher Jaca Book and presented as part of an Achebe trilogy and given the more appropriate title *Il crollo* (Ghezzi 1992: 279). Jaca Book was the most prolific publisher of African literature in Italy during the sixties and seventies but as Itala Vivan notes, the links between Jaca Book and the Christian group Comunione e Liberazione meant that many of the translations of such political writers like Achebe and Ngugi were "made saccharine and marked by a Christian spirit completely alien to them" (Vivan 2013: 6-7 - translation mine). Ghezzi (1992: 281) echoes this sentiment adding that Jaca Book, while well intentioned tended to produce domesticated and watered-down versions of the radical literature it published and that often the translations were sub-standard.

The *Variations* trilogy was published by a house called Edizioni Lavoro in a new imprint called *Il lato dell'ombra* (later renamed *L'altra riva*). The series was edited by Itala Vivan[17] who is a leading and long established scholar of African literature in Italy and in many ways can be considered the *doyenne* of the discipline in that country. The series had the aim of bringing the 'classics' of African literature to the Italian market and to equip readers with a critical apparatus with which to approach the reading of the books in the form of an introduction provided by an academic expert (Vivan 2013, Ghezzi 1992, Filesi 1986). *Chiuditi sesamo* (1992) was published nine years after its appearance in English. *Latte agrodolce* (1993) was published fourteen years after the English version. *Sardine* (1996) was published fifteen years after the English version appeared in 1979 in the series *L'altra riva* which superseded *Il lato dell'ombra*. The publication of the Italian versions of the various instalments of *Variations* does not match the chronology with which they appeared in English. The choice to publish the books in this order seems haphazard. However it is quite possible that *Close Sesame*, Farah's novel which most explicitly deals with Italian colonial history, was published first because these themes would be interesting to an Italian reader. This seems to be confirmed by the blurb on the back of *Chiuditi Sesamo* which talks of Deeriye's role as a rebel against Italian colonialism while in Claudio Gorlier's critical introduction, considerable space is devoted to the cultural and linguistic ties between Italy and Somalia that pervade the novel (*Chiuditi sesamo*: XIV - XV). In his introduction Gorlier also describes *Close Sesame* as "perhaps the most complex and articulated novel by Nuruddin Farah" which also explains why it might have been chosen as the first novel to be published (Gorlier in *Chiuditi sesamo* VII). The importance of the novel in Italy at the time is shown by its winning of the Premio Cavour in 1994. It is now out of print.

[17] Itala Vivan is a Professor at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Milan. She is one of Italy's most accomplished and respected experts of African literatures. Over her long career she has been instrumental to the development of postcolonial criticism in the Italian academy. She has also been a central figure in the promotion and publication of contemporary African literatures in Italy. She has edited novels and collections of African literature for Italian publishing giants like Giunti, Feltrinelli and Adelphi. She founded and directed the series *Il lato dell'ombra* of Edizioni Lavoro which published the Italian translations of the *Variations* trilogy. She also edited the Frassinelli publications of the *Blood in the Sun* trilogy. Her long engagement with African literature pubblication in Italy has seen her being editor for the translation and publication of critical African writers like Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer, Chinua Achebe, Nagib Mahfuz, Olive Schreiner, Elsa Joubert, Mia Couto, Thomas Mofolo, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Zoë Wicomb, Bessie Head, Amadou Hampate Ba, Amos Tutuola, André Brink, Peter Abrahams and Cyprian Ekwensi among many others. She has also followed the careers of Italian writers of African origin and forms part of the scientific committee of the journal *Scritture migranti*.

The novels included in the imprint represented a panorama of important African and Caribbean texts from key moments in the colonial and postcolonial periods. They were selected, translated by experienced translators, reviewed by experts and provided with what Vivan (2013: 11) describes as a "paratextual strategy" designed to guide the reader. The internal jacket cover (second cover) of many of the earlier editions published in the series contains the following rationale written by Vivan describing the purpose of the series:

> Il mondo di oggi appare come un mosaico di società, culture, nazioni e sistemi linguistici al cui interno l'Occidente, e in modo particolare l'Europa, ha perduto funzione e ruolo egemonici. Lo scambio è ora un fenomeno di osmosi, di interrelazione, di molteplice baratto; e genera le mobile, precipitose situazioni postcoloniali. Attraverso le lingue e i modelli culturali europei la temperie del mondo occidentale si trasferisce nell'altrove coloniale e si ricrea in nuovi usi e sensi: ecco così nascere, di ritorno, il controdiscorso postcoloniale, in cui quello che era il muto ogetto osservato e descritto dalla colonizzazione assurge a soggetto di sé e della storia, e racconta *la propria storia.* La collana "Il lato dell'ombra" offre una galleria di romanzi significativi delle culture africane, caraibiche ed arabe: testi prescelti in quanto classici del genere per pregi estetici (formali), storico-antropologici (grazie all'importanza che hanno rivestito nello sviluppo delle single tradizioni culturali), o perché si collocano allo snodo di grandi crocevia di problematiche centrali alle culture stesse.
>
> (Second cover of *Latte Agrodolce* and *Chiuditi Sesamo*)

The intervention of Itala Vivan and her team from the basis of their own dissatisfaction with the haphazard state of postcolonial literatures available in Italian translation represents a turning point in Italy, where African literature starts to be taken more seriously. The launch of *Lato dell'ombra* is arguably also the launch of a formalized approach to the publication of postcolonial literature in Italy. Here in the second cover Itala Vivan gives the would-be reader a précis of the main concerns of postcolonial literature: decentralising or provincializing Europe, hybridised culture and style, anti-hegemonic narratives of self from the point of view of the colonized and globalization of knowledge systems. Based on her description of the series it would be fair to say that *Il lato dell'ombra* could have served as a crash course in postcolonial literatures for the uninitiated Italian reader.

The series published 36 titles between 1987 and 1996 and includes such authors as Djibril Tamsir Niane, Peter Abrahams, Bessie Head, Amadu Hampaté Bâ, Thomas Mafolo, Olive Schreiner, Lewis Nkosi, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Mia Couto, Sembène Ousmane, Chinua Achebe

Abdelkébir Khatibi and Zoë Wicomb. It retranslated and republished some well-known classics and also brought less well-known literatures and works to the Italian market for the first time. A critical component of the series was Farah's *Variations* trilogy because the publication of his novels starting in 1992 represents the first time that this author who, as has been shown, is so important to the programme of *postcolonializing* the Italian literary frame was brought to market in Italy.

Il lato dell'ombra helped energize the study of postcolonial literatures in Italy and brought Italian critics and academics into direct contact with African scholars. Vivan notes in this regard:

> La lunga avventura con "Il lato dell'ombra" fu occasione di una serie di incontri con scrittori e studiosi da qui nacquero contatti e amicizie che portano in Italia gli autori e contribuirono al dibattito sulle culture e le situazioni sociali e politiche del continente. Si creò all'interno dell'università, un rapporto di collaborazione anche con storici, geografi e antropologi che risultò fecondo e certamente aricchì gli studi ma anche i lettori che gravitavano intorno a quei libri. Il pubblico fu più numeroso e attento di quanto sarebbe stato lecito sperare, data la novità dell'iniziativa, e va riconosciuto che quella collana (che si chiuse negli anni Novanta) è ormai entrata nella memoria storica dell'editoria.
>
> (Vivan 2013: 15)

Given the importance of *Il lato dell'ombra* in launching African literature in Italy it can in some small way be compared to the Heinemann African Writers Series which, for better or worse, was responsible for the birth of publishing of modern African writing (Huggan 2001, Currey 2008). Farah is one of only a handful of African writers who has more than one or two works on the Heinemann list. This puts him in a club with figures like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo, Beti Mongo, Armah Ayi Kwei and Ousmane Sembéne. The offering of Heinemann African Writers series and *Il lato dell'ombra* overlaps considerably and both contain the most prominent names in the canon of African literature. Farah is the *only* writer of whose works more than two are published in the Italian imprint. This establishes him as one of the most important writers in this imprint. This level of representation is arguably because of the strong Italian connection in his work which makes it one of the rare sources of African literature of direct interest to Italian readers interested in exploring the historical connection between Italy and Africa. His long sojourn in Italy, the contacts and he made in the world of Italian literature, his professional relationship with Itala Vivan (as attested to in conversation with both Vivan and Farah) and her

specific interest in his work may also have contributed to this important position in the corpus of African literary works available in translation.

In terms of this study, two important trends emerge from Itala Vivan's definitive article on the history of African literature publication in Italy (2013). The first was an 'exoticising' impulse that favoured 'sensual' descriptions of Africa very much in the old colonial spirit of *Mal d'Africa* and the second was an opposite militant Marxist activist culture which co-opted African literature into a general struggle against imperialism and global capitalism and read African narratives through this constricted lens. Like Jaca Book's link to Communione e Liberazione, the publication of African literature in Italy has frequently been linked to political or development organisations with specific agendas.

Edizioni Lavoro, which published *Variations* as part of the *Il lato dell'ombra* imprint, falls under the auspices of Cisl, the *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* (Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions). Cisl is a confederation of trade unions which in 1950 split from the larger trade union Cgil, *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro*, (Italian General Confederation of Labour). Cisl represented a more conservative and Roman Catholic friendly branch of the trade union and was aligned to the *Democrazia Cristiana* which dominated Italian politics for most of the 20th century. Cgil was aligned to the Italian Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party. *Chiuditi sesamo* was published with the support of ISCOS, *Instituto Sindacale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo* (The Trade Unions Institute for Development and Co-operation). The aim of this institution is to foster solidarity between Italian workers and those in developing countries with the scope of partnering with local trade unions and promoting projects for human development, peace, democracy and human rights. As explained on the publisher's website, *Edizioni Lavoro* was founded in 1982 as an initiative of the Cisl directive and describes its activity as a "laboratory for research on problems related to the world of work, the economy and society"[18] (Edizioni Lavoro 2015). The house describes itself as providing space for reflections on important current themes like ethics, globalization and civil society (Edizioni Lavoro 2015). The website describes the *lato dell'ombra* and the *l'altra riva* imprint as

[18] Translation mine

the publisher's debut in fiction which began by publishing African and Caribbean authors "making them known to a wider public"[19] (Edizioni Lavoro 2015).

The choice by *Edizioni Lavoro* to publish Nuruddin Farah's first trilogy may have something to do with the political stance of Cisl. The political and ideological stance assumed by Farah in his first trilogy is very much aligned with a liberal democratic ideological position of Cisl. In *Variations*, Farah devotes considerable energy to critiquing extreme leftist ideological orthodoxy (see Chapter 3). Farah's inherent distrust of ideology and the conflicts with the Italian left that his anti-regime stance precipitated while he was living in Italy are recorded in some detail in *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora* (2000):

> I discovered in the first three weeks of my exile that I was up against a multi-pronged attack. Some of the detractions had an ideological thrust (a couple of my Italian friends reacted so hostilely to my description of Siyad Barre 'as a pillager of socialism' that they refused to talk to me).
>
> (Farah 2000: 59)

Farah notes how the Italian left, which ruled the political and cultural landscape of the country during his exile, was traumatised by a Fascist past and were so enchanted with Siad's rhetoric of 'scientific socialism' that, perversely, they persecuted Farah because of his anti-regime political stance:

> Charmed by Siyad's Marxist jargon, the Italian left, then the shapers and vocal arbiters of the country's postwar cultural and political framework, preyed upon someone like me, whom they defined as an alienated *petit bourgeois*. A casual acquaintance would have the gall to come up to me and say, 'Why don't you return to Mogadiscio where a socialist miracle is happening?'
>
> (Farah 2000: 60)

Farah lived in Italy in the midst of a long period of great political turmoil known as the *Anni di Piombo*, 'the years of lead', thus named because of all the bullets that were fired[20]. The country was gripped by a widespread campaign of violent terrorism perpetrated by paramilitary factions of the far-left supported by the Soviet Union as well as far-right paramilitary groups. The period

[19] Translation mine

[20] For fuller treatment of this period see: Pansa 1980, Bravo 1982, Fasanella 2000, Lucarelli 2007**,** Franzinelli 2008**,** Boatti 2009.

was characterized by a highly tense and polarised political culture within which Farah's criticisms of Socialist Somalia and Marxist ideology would have been controversial and divisive. There was a tendency in the Italian left to assume the struggles of African people against imperialism and global capitalism as part of their political agenda. Many African writers' revolutionary fervour was appreciated (or co-opted) by the Italian left. Itala Vivan comments in this regard on the attitude of the extreme militant left towards the political force of African literature:

> Le lotte anticoloniali e, poi, l'istituzione degli stati independenti, hanno avuto un'interfaccia importante in Italia. La lunga battaglia per le indipendenze africane è stata appogiata e variamente interpretata dagli schieramenti di sinistra della cultura militante italiana, e sopratutto dai movimenti di ispirazione marxista, i quali hanno visto in questo momento di riscossa colletiva nella lotta generale contro l'imperialismo.
>
> (Vivan, 2013: 5-6)

The left's simplistic ideological approach to the reading of African literatures described above by Vivan would seem at odds with the multivalent critique of complex and insidious power that Farah provides in his *Variations* trilogy[21]. In *Yesterday, Tomorrow,* Farah resolves not to engage his Italian hosts in rhetoric that may alienate them but rather to "publish writings worthy of respect" (*Yesterday, Tomorrow*: 59). In the context described above the following comparison between Barre and Mussolini in *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979) would most likely have irritated the extreme left:

> Dictators, like our General, like Mussolini, love to be remembered by history, by posterity, but forget that they will be remembered for the least banal of things and also for their cruelties. When I was last in Rome, in fact, when going up to Alassio, I talked to an elderly man and asked him if people still remembered Mussolini and if so what it was that the mention of his name reminded them of. Do you know what the man's answer was? 'When Mussolini was here," the man said, 'trains arrived exactly on time.'
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 247)

During his stay in Italy, Farah was also acutely aware of the precariousness of his situation as a known enemy of the Somali state living in that country's most vociferous foreign support base:

[21] See Masterson (2013) *The Disorder of Things: Farah and Foucault.*

> Suspecting that the authorities were keener on being in Siyad's good books than in mine, I tried my damndest to remain 'legal', not when it came to employment but with regard to my stay permit. I had to leave every so often, and return with a three-month visa issued at an Italian consulate abroad.
>
> (Farah 2000: 59-60)

Italy was clearly not a welcoming environment, in those years, for a Somali dissident and it is likely that in this context his writings would not have been welcomed either. In fact, according to Farah, his attempts to publish the first draft of *Sardines* which was written in Italian during his stay in Milan, came to nothing (Alden and Tremaine 2002: 43).

The exceedingly corrupt relationship between the Socialist Party and the Somali regime which dominated Italian politics in the 1980s meant that demands for economic sanctions on Somalia were rebuffed by the government (Achter 1993, Del Boca 1992/2002). The socialist foreign minister Gianni de Michelis argued that "if we were to abandon all those states in Africa run by dictators in Africa there would be no one left to cooperate with" (Achter 1993). This statement was neither true nor an excuse for cooperating with Barre whose brutal autocracy was well known. According to Del Boca (1992: 287) "anyone who operated in Somalia acted with complete knowledge and calculated the relative risks and the advantages of doing so". Independent Somalia became a playground for Italian political and economic interests. The Italian construction sector used Somalia as a site for making huge profits in the form of aid projects (Del Boca 1992/2002, Achtner 1993, Tripodi 1999). The role Italy played in propping up the Barre regime was exposed by Wolfgang Achtner, a journalist at the Washington Post, who published an article, entitled *The Italian Connection: How Rome Helped Ruin Somalia*, in the January 24 1993 edition of that newspaper. In this article he claims:

> The agony of Somalia has its roots in the endemic political corruption of Italy. Throughout the 1980s, Italian politicians and businessmen used the country, once a colony of Italy's, as a playground for huge construction projects that either did little to help the local population or actually disrupted and damaged Somalian society.
>
> (Achtner 1993)

Achtner goes on to quote Francesco Rutelli, then a parliamentarian representing the Green Party in Italy who helped expose the scandal and according to whom "Italy is definitely responsible for

the tribal warfare and genocide in Somalia… [i]f you consider that from 1981 to 1990 Italian aid was almost equal to 50% of the country's (Somalia's) GNP and that for years Italy was the major donor of aid to Somalia, it's easy to see what a negative influence we had and just how great our responsibilities are" (quoted in Achtner 1993). While the simplistic claim that Italy was "responsible" for Somalia's descent into chaos needs to be regarded with some scepticism, the fact remains, as Rutelli points out, that Italy played a major role in keeping the regime's economy afloat and for this reason alone bears a heavy burden of guilt regarding the tragic events that transpired in Somalia. Rutelli is also cited by Del Boca where he, along with Marco Pannella, are quoted from an article they published on 21 January 1986 in *La Repubblica*. They write about the billions of lire wasted in aid projects which were mired in corruption and clientelism:

> Dei miliardi forniti a Siad Barre servono a ben poco, e quel poco è disastroso: aiuti alimentari rivenduti sul mercato nero, una flotta di pescherecci semiaffondata e distrutta, un piano regolatore di Mogadiscio del quale si occupa con grande lentezza anche la magistratura italiana, decine di programmi di fattibilità che servono come finanziamento partitocratico e clientare.
>
> (Pannella and Rutelli in Del Boca 1992/2002: 309)

The lucrative profits of continuing the relationship were clearly the driving motivation for this benevolent relationship (Veronese 1985, 1988). Craxi, the socialist Italian Prime Minister at the centre of the Somalia corruption scandal that would later come to light, became the first Italian head of state to visit Somalia since the fall of the colonial empire. His visit occurred in 1985, at the height of Barre's power and repression. Thus Italy's unwavering support for Somalia was confirmed. The Italian Socialist and Communist parties offered their vociferous support to the Siad Barre regime which was seen by many Italians, as highlighted in the statement above by Nuruddin Farah, as a "socialist miracle". Achtner says in this regard:

> The Socialists' long affair with Siad Barre had its roots in the early 1970s, when the future dictator had embraced socialism and vowed to carry out a revolutionary transformation of the Somali pastoral society. At first, Barre was embraced by the Italian Communist Party. Party officials, leftist intellectuals and sympathetic businessmen all frequented Somalia. But this flirtation ended abruptly in the first months of 1978, after Barre attempted to grab the Ogaden region from Ethiopia. The Somali invasion ended in defeat and humiliation. Barre broke off with Moscow and renounced "scientific Socialism."

(Achtner 1993)

The flirtation did not end as abruptly as Achtner believes. The controversial tryst just became more secretive. Despite frequent criticism Italy remained the main source of military and civil aid to Somalia (Del Boca 1992/2002: 171). Italian aid to Somalia continued unabated in the face of frequent evidence of the brutality of the Barre regime including the 1989 report by Robert Gersony published by the US State Department denouncing the murder by the Somali armed forces of 5000 civilians of the Isaaq clan in northern Somalia, the brutal murder of the Italian Bishop of Mogadiscio, Salvatore Pietro Colombo and the violent suppression of anti-government protests in the capital in 1989 and the murder in Somali custody of an Italian biologist (Del Boca 1992/2002, Achtner 1993). In fact, in tone-deaf defiance of both the international standpoint and the obvious resistance to the regime on the ground in Somalia, Italian government support of Siad Barre continued right up until his 1991 flight from Mogadiscio and the collapse of his regime (Del Boca 1992/2002: 171). With Somalia in tatters and Siad Barre fleeing Mogadiscio, his regime discredited and destroyed, de Michelis (at this stage Prime Minister of Italy) insisted on attempting to broker a peace agreement with representatives of rebel movements in Rome. The agreement tried to maintain a position for Barre in the new political scenario. This interference definitively alienated any future rulers of the now fractured Somalia from Italy (Del Boca 1992/2002, Achtner 1993).

A year later the Italian version of *Chiuditi Sesamo* was published by *Edizioni Lavoro*, the international prominence and specific interest in Italy surrounding the events in Somalia as it descended into civil war probably boosting interest. I am tempted to describe the choice by Cisl to publish Farah's work in Italian as a salvo in the ideological battle between the far left and the centre of Italian trade unionism. Achtner gives some further convincing evidence of the rift between the two trade unions, the political parties they represent and their respective spheres of influence in the Horn of Africa:

> Control over the aid and development projects was shared by all the political parties in exactly the same way that all jobs in the vast public and semi-public sector were divided up. Ethiopia, another former Italian colony in the Horn of Africa, was awarded to the Christian Democrats. The Socialist party got Somalia.
>
> (Achtner 1993)

In the ideological proxy war being fought on the battleground of Africa's postcolonial political struggles, Farah's first trilogy represents a decisive counter-attack against far left ideology. These dynamics have their root in the intrigues of the various Italian political and economic role players in the former colonial sphere. Farah's important trilogy was never again published in Italy and almost a decade would pass before any of Farah's novels would again appear on the shelves of Italian book stores. The following section describes how the re-emergence of Farah is intimately linked to the economics of literary prizes.

Publishing and prizes *Blood in the Sun*

From the vantage point of her long engagement with African literature in Italy, Itala Vivan is pessimistic about the prospects of African writing to make headway in the Italian literary system:

> Le librerie sono a loro volta minacciate da catene di proprietà dei gruppi editoriali, così che ogni nuovo libro deve affrontare un'alea durissima contro molteplici fattori avversi. C'è quindi da stupirsi che così pochi libri di autori africani vengano pubblicati in Italia, e che poi ottengano un successo consistente, se si eccettuano i pochissimi nomi di autori-star che l'acquirente compra a occhi chiusi?
>
> (Vivan 2013: 19)

Because, as Vivan notes, only "star-authors" stand any chance of success in the Italian market, the fate of African writers in Italy is very much linked to the awarding of prestigious international prizes. Vivan (2013: 9) recounts in this regard that when Wole Soyinka won the Nobel prize in 1986 there was confusion in Italy at the identity of this unknown person with those few of his novels available in Italian translation proving illegible (Vivan 2013: 9). There was a swift move to retranslate and publish his novels in the years that followed the awarding of the prize. Huggan (2001: 118), citing Bourdieu, suggests that literary prizes "function as *legitimising mechanism*s that foreground the symbolic, as well as material, effects of literary evaluation". The notion that prizes serve to legitimize an author and his work is in keeping with theories of literature that deny the intrinsic value of literature but rather see canonization as the product of social convention and taste as dictated by the elite of any given literary system. Terry Eagleton, a leading political critic in the Marxist school of literary theory, defends this line of thinking in no uncertain terms. He says:

> Shakespeare was not great literature lying conveniently to hand, which the literary institution then happily discovered; he is great literature because the institution constitutes him as such. This does not mean that he is not 'really' great literature – that is just a matter of people's opinions about him – because there is no such thing as literature which is 'really' great, or 'really' anything, independently of the ways in which that writing is treated within specific forms of social and institutional life.
>
> (Eagleton 1996: 202)

Translation scholars working within the *manipulation school*, André Lefevere in particular, are also committed proponents of this model of canonization. Lefevere, in his substantial body of work on translated literature and the manipulation, refraction and rewriting of literature, convincingly shows that literature, like any cultural product, is subject to the vagaries of societal norms and the prevailing tastes and fashions of the literary establishment.

> It is my contention that the process resulting in the acceptance or rejection, canonization or non-canonization of literary works is dominated not by vague, but by very concrete, factors that are relatively easy to discern as soon as one decides to look for them, that is as soon as one eschews interpretation as the core of literary studies and begins to address issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation.
>
> (Lefevere, 1992: 2)

Farah's canonization begins with his inclusion in the Heinemann African Writers Series. The series launched the careers of most of the best-known names in Anglophone African literature. Farah's inclusion in the series saw him join the ranks of Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Mongo Beti, Ali Mazrui, Naguib Mahfouz, Alex la Guma and Bessie Head to name but a few of the most renowned authors published in the series. Inclusion in the series is, in essence, inclusion in the Anglophone African literary canon. The paratexts of his novels indicate the importance of Farah keeping company with other canonized African and postcolonial writers insofar as the creation of an *author figure* is concerned. An extract from a review in the *Wall Street Journal* which figures prominently on the back of the *Links* says:

> Farah takes his well-deserved place beside Chinua Achebe and V.S. Naipaul… He writes of the country lost to him with passion and pain, in a voice that is lyrical and incisively intelligent but never sentimental.

Where the reviewer refers to Farah taking his *"well-deserved place beside Chinua Achebe"*, the language is almost ecclesiastical in tone. The canon of literature here is almost literally modelled

on the canon of Saints whose good deeds have earned them a spot beside God in paradise. Other canonized postcolonial writers also chime in, welcoming this pilgrim into the communion of Saints. Scott Wilson (1995: 4) discusses the creation of literary canons from a Cultural Materialist standpoint, illustrating how what he calls "the traditional approach" to literary criticism draws on ecclesiastical traditions: he writes "Just as the medieval Christian tradition sought to establish and maintain a sacred 'canon' of texts, so traditional literary scholars seek to conserve a canon of literary 'classics' that are valued above and beyond any other work or text in what the tradition defines as the field of literature". Salman Rushdie welcomes Farah into the canon by saying "Nuruddin Farah is one of the finest contemporary African writers…*Maps* is a true work of art." (*Maps*) adding to the praice already heaped on him by Chinua Achebe and Nadine Gordimer discussed above.

Gerard Genette describes in detail the role of paratexts of this kind in determining the reception of a work of literature. He says the following (here referring to the role of the allographic preface in particular but nonetheless relevant to the purposes of analysing the commendations on the backs of the books):

> The other function of the allographic preface is without doubt far more important, especially for original allographic prefaces; above all it is more specific, and accounts for the resort to a preface-writer. This is the function of recommending: "I, X, tell you that Y has genius and that you must read his book."… Fortunately, the function of recommending usually remains implicit because the mere presence of this type of preface is in itself a recommendation. For an original preface, this support is generally provided by a writer whose reputation is more firmly established than the author's.
>
> (Genette 1997: 267 - 268)

In the light of Genette's description of the paratextual role of an 'argument from authority' emanating from a respected author or critic, the inclusion of the above commendations from the likes of Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie and Nadine Gordimer visible on the paratext serve to prove that canonized status of Farah is central to the marketing of his books. They are also indicative of the relatively small coterie of individuals with the institutional authority to constitute the canon. It must be noted here that Achebe was himself a central figure in the Heinemann African Writers Series. The influence of this man in creating a dominant poetic for Anglophone African literature must have been enormous, firstly because of his being involved

with the selection of works to be included in that canon and, secondly because, given that his works are among the earliest and most widely read works of postcolonial African fiction, it stands to reason that the poetic that has come to characterize much of postcolonial Anglophone African writing is influenced by Achebe's writing.

As opposed to the traditional view of the canon as a repository of uniquely valuable texts, if we accept that the canon is merely a social construction imbued with the authority of an educated elite, one cannot help wonder what has been excluded from the canon of African literature. If Lefevere is to be believed, the implication would be the exclusion of any writing that does not fit the dominant poetic mould of African Postcolonial literature written in English as sanctioned and promoted by the African elite and Western markets. Huggan (2001: 35), whose work also cites Lefevere (1983) seems to agree with this proposition, describing "a situation where metropolitan publishers and other related patrons (commercial sponsors, institutionally based reviewers and accreditation agencies, and so on) being granted a virtual stranglehold, not only over the distribution, but also to some extent the *definition*, of African literature as a cultural field." African literature in Italy is also dominated by a relatively small number of individuals. Of the total 25 articles mentioning Nuruddin Farah available on the online archive of the Italian daily *La Stampa* since 1992, 12 were written by Claudio Gorlier, an academic, critic and self-professed friend of Nuruddin Farah. Itala Vivan was alone responsible for editing every Italian translation of Farah's works. These two figures are also responsible for much of the academic work available in Italian about Farah.

The failure to include translations of many of Francophone Africa's most eminent writers in the Heinemann African Writers Series itself indicates a linguistic nationalist bias towards what are perhaps considered works of genius in the English language to the exclusion of other traditions. The Heinemann series was designed, in part, to provide a corpus of English language Afro-centric texts available for educational purposes in Africa. The motives for this seem rather dubious: perhaps an attempt by a crepuscular British hegemony to keep its linguistic and cultural hold on its former African empire. Nonetheless, the linguistically parochial practices of publishing houses have meant that an often lamented, but nonetheless, impenetrable fault line exists between French-speaking and English-speaking African literary traditions. Farah's initial inclusion in the canon of African literature was followed a few decades later by his inclusion in

the canon of world literature by the awarding of prestigious literary prizes. The fate of Farah's oeuvre in Italian publication seems to correspond closely to the increased legitimacy afforded to his works by the winning of literary prizes: the Neustadt International Literary Prize in particular.

The Neustadt Prize, originally called the Books Abroad International Prize for Literature, was established in 1969. It is often called the "American Nobel" because 30 of its laureates, candidates or jurors have gone on to win Nobel prizes after their involvement with the American prize[22] and because, similarly to the Nobel, it is awarded for an entire body of work as opposed to a single work (Neustadt Prize 2015). Davis-Undiano, permanent chair of the Neustadt juries, says,

> The founders of the prize set a very high standard. Basically, the finest writers in the world are always on the juries, and these writers nominate their peers for the prize. Given that the prize operates at an incredibly high level of renown and expectation, it is not surprising that many of the jurors and Neustadt winners are also Nobel Prize winners.
>
> (Davis-Undiano quoted in Kalder 2013: 1)

More important than the allusion to "high standards" and "fine writing", which are subjective categories are the allusions to the "incredibly high level of renown" among the peers who nominate and adjudicate for the prize. From a materialist perspective there is no such thing as an objective standard for high quality literature; there is only the attribution of literary fame and the attendant cultural capital that this implies (see Eagleton 1996). Huggan, citing Bourdieu, comments in this regard:

> As Bourdieu suggests, prizes reflect as much upon their donors as their recipients; part of a wider struggle over the authority to consecrate particular works or writers, they are powerful indicators of the social forces underlying what he might call the politics of literary recognition. Far from offering tributes to an untrammelled literary excellence, prizes bring the ideological character of evaluation to the fore.

[22] There have been 30 Nobel-Neustadt convergences. Nobel awards have been awarded to 4 Neustadt Laureates, 7 Neustadt Jurors and 19 Neustadt Candidates. Laureates of both prizes are Czesław Miłosz (Neustadt 1978 - Nobel 1980); Gabriel Garcia Márquez (Neustadt 1972 - Nobel 1982); Octavio Paz (Neustadt 1982 - Nobel 1990); Tomas Tranströmer (Neustadt 1990 – Nobel 2011). Candidates for the Neustadt Prize that went on to win the Nobel are: Alexander Solzhenitzyn, Pablo Neruda, Eyvind Johnson, Eugenio Montale, Elias Canetti, Claude Simon, Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer, Toni Morrison, Kenzaburo Oe, Seamus Heaney, José Saramago, Günter Grass, V.S. Naipaul, J.M. Coetzee, Harold Pinter, Orhan Pamuk, Doris Lessing ad Mo Yan (Kalder 2013: 5).

(Huggan 2001: 118)

The Neustadt Prize is considered by some to be a more globally oriented and less Eurocentric alternative to the Nobel (Huggan 2001: 119) while Davis-Udiano insists that the only criterion for the awarding of the prize is "literary merit" and that no extraneous factors are brought to bear on the decision (Kalder 2013: 2). Aware as we are of the politics of literary recognition, these assertions need to be viewed with quiet reservation given, firstly, the massive overlap between the set of people involved and laureates of the two prizes and, secondly, because it smacks of the allure of smug elitism often attributed to any alternative to the mainstream: a common marketing ploy in an age of brand saturation. Worth quoting here is a sardonic comment by a reader called Bruce Humes of Kalder (2013) online article about the convergence of the Neustadt and the Nobel. He quotes a line of the article, "The Neustadt and Nobel prizes are choosing their winners from the same pool of the world's elite authors, and so the overlap is inevitable…" and proceeds to comment drily, "I think it's kind of depressing, actually. No wonder that many of the works that are highly promoted tend to read somewhat similarly, no matter who wrote them or in what language". Bruce Humes' shrewd observation actually has important resonance given what we know about the pressure, overt or covert, imposed on writers, particularly writers from postcolonial contexts, to write about certain things and in certain ways in order to be taken seriously by the establishment (see Huggan 2001 on strategic exoticism). This flies in the face of the assertions by the Neustadt spokesperson's claim that the prize is about literary merit and literary merit alone. The institutionalisation and promotion of a specific brand of literary taste is clearly in play. What counts here is fashion and patronage.

Farah's winning of the Neustadt Prize for Literature in 1998 seems to have had an almost immediate effect on his reception in Italy and on the value of his name for Italian publishers. The archives of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* contain a number of articles on Farah, many of which relate to the winning of Italian literary prizes[23]. His winning of the Premio Cavour for the

[23] Gorlier, C. 06/05/2005. La Stampa Torinese. *Fiera del libro*. 55
"Vincitore del Mondello e del Grinzane, autorevole candidato al Nobel…"
Gorlier, C. 04/12/2001. La Stampa Nazionale. *A colloquio con il romanziere Naruddin (sic.)Farah, Vincitore del Mondello "Bin Laden in Somalia? Lo vendiamo subito"*. 33

Italian version of *Close Sesame* in 1994 and the Neustadt International Literary Prize in 1998 probably served to consolidate the position of his works in the Italian literary sphere. He went on to win two important Italian literary prizes: the Premio Mondello in 2001 and the Premio Napoli for the Italian version of *Links* in 2005. Significantly, Farah's later work is published by Frassinelli, one of Italy's largest and most well-resourced publishing houses. The Italian publishing industry is dominated by a number of large firms. Some of the largest firms include Einaudi, Frassinelli and Mondadori. Of these firms, Milan based firm Frassinelli, part of the larger Mondadori/ Sperling & Kupfer group, has published the later works of Nuruddin Farah including *Mappe* (1986/2003), *Doni* (1993/2001) *Segreti* (1998/2002), *Legami* (2003/2005) and *Nodi* (2007/2008). The gaps between the emergence of the originals of the *Blood in the Sun Trilogy* and their Italian counterparts are seventeen years, nine years and five years respectively. Again the order in which the elements of the trilogy emerged in Italian translation does not match the order in which the originals appeared. The last two books by Farah to appear in Italian translation are *Legami* (2005), the translation of *Links* (2003) and winner of the Premio Napoli in 2005, and *Nodi* (2008) the translation of *Knots* (2007). The last instalment of this latest trilogy, *Crossbones,* (2013) has yet to be translated into Italian. The relative speed with which Frassinelli translated and published the last two novels is indicative of the growing popularity of Farah globally and in Italy.

Frassinelli and Sperling & Kupfer have historically focused on the publication of translations of international titles. Sperling & Kupfer launched two prestigious imprints *Narratori Nordici* in 1929 and *Pandora* in 1931 offering the Italian public entry into the literatures of Northern Europe and Central Europe. This series included important German writers like Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, Franz Werfel, Arthur Schnitzler and Hermann Hesse. Over the years the sale of Italian translations of popular American best-selling authors like Stephen King and Danielle Steel became important to the publisher's business model.

Frassinelli was acquired by Sperling & Kupfer in 1982. Frassinelli was started in 1931 and began its activity by translating into Italian and publishing important works by authors like

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Martinengo, M.T. 16/01/1993. La Stampa Torinese. *Dopo le indicazioni dei critici, le opera passeranno al vaglio delle giurie degli studenti I magnifici sei del premio Grinzane Cavour Oggi i nomi nella cerimonia che si svolge a Palazzo Barolo*. 33.

Herman Melville, Mark Twain, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Fiodor Dostoevsky and André Gide. These are included in the "Biblioteca Europea" line. The company still focusses on the publication of translations. The "Narrativa" line contains titles by contemporary writers like Tom Wolfe, Toni Morrison, André Brink, Maya Angelou, David Malouf, Orhan Pamuk, David Mitchell and our own Nuruddin Farah. The Nobel Prize winners included among their offering are proudly indicated on the press page of the website along with the date of the awarding of the prize. Farah is a perennial nominee for the Nobel Prize and it is the only major literary prize he has yet to win.

In an email correspondence with me on 20 January 2015 Itala Vivan indicated that the rights to Farah's work had been bought by the Frassinelli/ Sperling & Kupfer / Mondadori group whose much greater financial resources allowed them to outbid the poorly resourced trade-union publishing house Edizioni Lavoro. The awarding of the Neustadt Prize with its illustrious list of laureates and Nobel hopefuls must have been a significant factor in increasing Farah's marketability and Frassinelli's entering into a bidding war over the copyright to his work. This indicates a shift in status for the writer from the niche, left-leaning and rather academically focussed readership to a more mass-market readership.

The marketing potential of Farah's winning of the Neustadt prize is obvious. The Penguin editions of *Gifts*, *Secrets* and *Maps* all boldly indicate the winning of the prize on the front covers. The Penguin version of *Secrets* draws particular attention to the fact. Unlike the other two covers that simply indicate "winner of the Neustadt Prize" positioned in small print above the name of the author, the cover of *Secrets* has a two line band of medium sized font in two colours across the bottom of the cover indicating "Winner of the – 1998 Neustadt International Prize for Literature". Clearly the 1998 publication of *Secrets* aimed to take full advantage of the literary prestige afforded by the prize Farah won that year. Apart from the front covers each of the Penguin editions has a biographical note that begins with "[t]he 1998 laureate of the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, Nuruddin Farah has been described as 'one of the finest contemporary African novelists' (Salman Rushdie)" while the biographical note in *Secrets* adds "'but with *Secrets*… as one of the world's greatest writers' (Ismael Reed)". The extra detail given on the cover of *Secrets* along with this statement could easily mislead the consumer into believing that the award was granted for *Secrets* and not for Farah's entire body of work which

would certainly boost sales of the book among readers keen to try something new. The green light from Salman Rushdie would also help if they were in any doubt about buying the book.

The sanction afforded by literary prizes is also taken advantage of by the Frassinelli versions. *Mappe* and *Segreti* indicate the following in an biographical note in the epilogues:

> Nel 1994 gli è stato conferito il Premio Grinzane Cavour e nel 1998 ha ottenuto il premio letterario internazionale Neustadt Prize, che ha dato occasione alla pubblicazione di un numero speciale a lui dedicao della rivista *World Literature Today*. Nel 2001 il romanzo *Doni* ha avuto il Premio Mondello per la narrativa internazionale.
>
> (*Mappe* – Nota Biografica)

> *Segreti*, ultimo romanzo della trilogia *Blood in the Sun* (Sangue al sole), pubblicato in lingua inglese nel 1998, è stato preceduto da *Maps*, del 1986, non ancora tradotto in italiano, e dallo splendido *Doni* del 1992, che nel 2001 è stato introdotto in Italia da Frassinelli e insignito del Premio Mondello per la narrativa straniera.
>
> (*Segreti* – Nota Biografica)

Unfortunately the *Variations* trilogy never gained the fame of his later novels in Italy. They have been out of print for decades. This is not the case for the English versions with Graywolf Publishers recently producing new editions of the three novels making up the *Variations* trilogy.

From a Crooked Rib and *A Naked Needle* have never been translated. Itala Vivan reported in an email to me dated 20 January 2015 that the translation and publication of these early novels had been part of her plan as director of *Il lato dell'ombra* but that she had decided to leave off their publication till after the trilogy which she considered of better quality and more likely to sell. Vivan relinquished control of the imprint and it came to an end without the publication of *A Crooked Rib* or *A Naked Needle* ever coming to fruition. Presumably Frassinelli owns the copyright to these as yet untranslated texts, but given their recalcitrance even to republish *Variations*, the chances of *Crooked* or *Naked* ever being translated or published in Italy seem extremely remote. The *Variations* trilogy remains out of print in Italy. It is only possible to speculate that the uncomfortable content of these works with their unambiguous critique of Italian colonialism may have contributed to their disappearance from the Italian literary system. What is not speculation, however, is that this important trilogy with its obvious capacity to overturn colonial prejudice, recover memory and raise postcolonial consciousness in Italy is

woefully absent from the contemporary literary offering. If, as Vivan states in her introduction to the *Lato dell'ombra* imprint quoted above, the role of postcolonial literatures is to create a counter-discourse to represent the once mute object of colonial representation and recount our own stories then the current absence of the *Variations* trilogy from the Italian market is unfortunate.

Perhaps, given the obvious power of literary prizes to catapult authors to fame, the republication of Farah's first trilogy in Italy by a big publishing house will have to wait for his winning of the Nobel Prize. This hypothetical scenario seems more likely in the light of events surrounding the reception of the work of Toni Morrison in Italy. Chiara Spallino is another of Frassinelli's translators. She has been commissioned to produce and edit a volume of Italian translations of Morrison's work for the prestigious *I Meridiani Mondadori* imprint. Her work involves retranslating some of the earliest works by Toni Morrison which exhibited, according to her, gross translation errors and misrepresented Morrison's voice (Spallino 2014). She praises the later translations, two of which were done by Silvia Fornasiero, the same translator who has handled the translation of the bulk of Farah's later works. This is more than incidental and indeed has far-reaching consequences for her profile as a translator and her approach to Farah's work. This is discussed in the closing of Chapter 6 following an analysis of her translating style. *I Meridiani Mondadori* offers anthologies of selected works by the most important canonical Western writers in the history of literature. The offering of the imprint mainly covers Italian and European "greats" along with the most important examples of American literature and one or two Japanese modernists. The imprint catalogue reads like an encyclopedia of literary classics and includes names like Dante Alighieri, Ariosto, Balzac, Baudelaire, Boccaccio, Bonnefoy, Borges, Calvino and Celan to select but a few of the most well-known names from just A to C on the list. Incidentally Morrison is the first and only black writer to be included in the imprint (Bonin 2014). Chiara Spallino, in her 2014 interview with Elisa Bordin, discusses the reasons for Frassinelli's sudden resurgence of interest in Toni Morrison's work:

> Questo lavoro inizia due anni fa, nel 2012, grazie alla lungimiranza e alla sensibilità editoriale di Renata Colorni, direttrice dei Meridiani, nonché traduttrice raffinata, che ha ritenuto opportuno dedicare un Meridiano alla straordinaria figura di Toni Morrison, anche per colmare un inspiegabile vuoto: non c'è un solo autore nero nella sua prestigiosa collana. La Morrison ha avuto una storia editoriale abbastanza infelice in Italia, poiché la Frassinelli, che ne ha pubblicato tutte le opere negli anni

> passati, le ha proposte sul mercato italiano senza un adeguato inquadramento. Oggi c'è una maggiore attenzione verso questa grandiosa scrittrice, vincitrice del premio Nobel nel 1993, anche per la sua centralità nell'attuale panorama americano: infatti, Morrison non è soltanto una grande affabulatrice, ma anche una scrittrice politicamente impegnata. In linea con il suo credo che l'arte debba essere "irrimediabilmente politica, oltre che irrimediabilmente bella" ha preso posizioni molto nette rispetto ai grandi problemi dell'America e ha appoggiato pubblicamente il Presidente Obama, rimbalzando quindi sulle pagine dei giornali.
>
> (Spallino 2014)

Spallino recounts the unhappy fate of Morrison's early works in the Italian market: they were poorly translated and poorly presented and, perhaps as a result, poorly received. She goes on to explain that Morrison has become the focus of greater public attention because of the endorsement of her work by Barack Obama and, significantly, her winning of the Nobel prize in 1993. A Nobel prize might well see the work of Nuruddin Farah retranslated where necessary, republished, repackaged for Italian readers. Perhaps he might even be invited to join the *Meridioni* club, becoming its second Black and very first African writer. As I hope I have shown, he certainly deserves a place there given the size, span and prestige of his work in the global literary scene and, more importantly, because he is one of the very few, perhaps the only, writer of any global reach that illuminates the obscure period of Italian imperialism.

In the above chapters I have established the important contribution the inclusion of Nuruddin Farah's work in the Italian literary system could make. This is because of the postcolonial thematic content of his novels which have potential to complicate the Italian collective memory of colonialism. I then went on to show that, sadly, this potential has not been reached and does not look like it is likely to be actualised in the near future because of factors surrounding the publishing rights to his novels in Italy. In the chapters that follow, I turn my attention away from macro-level systemic analysis and turn towards close textual analysis. This is because *postcolonializing* the Italian literary system goes beyond introducing postcolonial content into the system but requires an assault on the structures and textures of the Italian language itself. In the chapters that follow I show how Somali and Ethiopian Afro-Italian writers have set out to disrupt the standard flow of the Italian language, inscribing on it their alternate identity. The question the chapters that follow answer is whether the Italian translators of Nuruddin Farah's novels have allowed his texts to do the same.

CHAPTER 5
A War of Words
The translation of postcolonial style

His prose finds the poetry that is there.

Nadine Gordimer

> The crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that post-colonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place…
>
> Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin
> *The Empire Writes Back*

Ubax Cristina Ali Farah, a member of the second generation Somali diaspora born in Italy, speaks of the satisfaction of creating an Italian through which the structure, tone and patterns of an underlying Somali voice emerges. She says:

> La questione della doppia lingua influisce molto nella mia scrittura. Nell'atto di tradurre, ciò che percepisci di più, è la differenza nel ritmo delle lingue: cambia il modo di raccontare, e la costruzione sintattica; si usano intercalari diversi. Ho ritrovato in me queste differenti radici, ne ho avuto consapevolezza quando ho cominciato a raccogliere racconti in italiano da donne immigrate. Nel momento in cui trascrivevo le storie, sentivo lo strato della lingua madre, non percepibile nelle imprecisioni lessicali, bensì nel ritmo della lingua, nella costruzione delle frasi. Ciò ha un potenziale poetico molto forte, se lavorato e strutturato con cura.
>
> (Ubax Cristina Ali Farah in Ellero 2010)

Ubax Cristina Ali Farah is pointing out a central feature of most postcolonial literatures: that of creolization of the textuality and style of the literary production in the European language. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin term this feature of postcolonial style abrogation and describe it as a "refusal of the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning 'inscribed' in the words". The manifesto of *El Ghibli,* the journal of Italian migrant writing, describes the genre in the following terms (translation mine):

> What distinguishes migrancy and migrant writing apart from the language it which it expresses itself? The multiple identities of which it is composed; the stratification of

> destinies and futures that guide its voice; The ever changing forms that ensures that it is always different, estranged from itself and in a continuous state of renewing its own volatile essence.
>
> (El Ghibli Manifesto)

Innovative use of language has come to distinguish migrant writing which, like much postcolonial writing, can be metaphorized as a form of translation where experiences and world-views alien to the target-language are expressed in a form of language that is defamiliarizing.

El Ghibli is describing the creative manipulation of the language of the colonizer and its shaping to the expressive needs of the colonized subject that typifies the style of much postcolonial writing. Ubax Cristina Ali Farah herself describes this abrogative stylistics as an "act of translation" (*atto di tradurre*). This is a commonplace comparison made in the field of postcolonial translation studies where postcolonial writers are described as intercultural translators (Tymoczko 1999). The notion also brings to mind Bandia's (2008) model of the translation of Europhone African literature where he states that African literature can be conceived as a form of translation where an underlying linguistic and literary tradition may manifest traces of itself in the "target-language" writing. Interestingly, if Ali Farah admires writing where an underlying voice shines through and compares this kind of writing to translation, it implies that Ali Farah's notion of translation is one where palimpsestic traces of the source-language survive the assimilation implied by translation. Not everyone would agree with Ali Farah on this point. Venuti (1995) notes that the prevailing preference in the English speaking world is for translations that read "fluently". However, given the politicised nature of postcolonial writing, where difference is inscribed through the abrogation of colonial languages; where the stakes are the voice and right to self-representation of marginalised people, style is a struggle to the death. In the epigraph to this chapter, Steiner (1975: 187) quotes St Jerome using the martial language that has long typified the way translation is conceptualised. Steiner, following Heidegger, talks of understanding as "inherentely appropriative and therefore violent" and as interpretation as a "mode of attack".

Because of the presence of a substrate cultural background expressed through the medium of Italian, Ubax Cristina Ali Farah is able to describe her writing as a form of translation. The metaphor is commonplace in the field of postcolonial writing. In the words of

Salman Rushdie (1981-1991) in *Imaginary Homelands*, speaking of the position of exile and on behalf of postcolonial subjects "[h]aving been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained." For this reason Bandia (2008) considers the translation of African literature as the translation of a translation. What is the role of the translator in the translation of a postcolonial novel? A postcolonial text might be imagined as a raiding party from a wayward and beleaguered province come to strike at the capital of literature. Who is the translator in this violent conflict? He might alert the guards at the bastion's gate to the presence of the intruders and limit the damage of the attack by fighting back the raiding party's advance. Alternatively, he might choose to side with the attackers and, using subterfuge and wile, sneak them past the city walls leading them to strategic targets for sabotage. Translators, as the Italian adage would have us believe, are traitors. But to whom does the translator owe his allegiance and who will he betray? The position of theorists of postcolonial translation is unambiguously in favour of the beleaguered raiding party come to redeem the honour of their people.

Translating postcolonial texts

The translation of postcolonial texts and translation in postcolonial contexts have become extremely productive areas of research in translation studies. The "cultural turn" and "sociological turn" in translation studies both drew attention away from strictly textual notions of translation and incorporated the influence of culture, ideology and power into translation theory. The effect of postcolonial thinking on cultural studies has not gone unnoticed by translation scholars and many of the most interesting and innovative ideas in contemporary translation studies are the fruit of the postcolonial turn in translation studies, especially as non-Western theoretical perspectives on translation gain ever more exposure in a traditionally Eurocentric discipline. Gayatri Spivak (2000), Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) and Harish Trivedi (2006), all of whom are concerned with power monopolies in the world of translation, have been central figures in the introduction of perspectives from the Indian subcontinent into the mainstream of translation studies. Theo Hermans (2006a/2006b), Maria Tymoczko (1999a/1999b/2003/2006) and Lawrence Venuti (1992/1998) have also added considerably to discourse on translation, ideology and postcolonialism. In a more globalised world, postcolonial translation studies aims to answer the need for a more inclusive approach to translation theory and practice: one which

takes into account complex politics of representation that occur when texts migrate from dominated to dominant cultures.

The chapter that follows is concerned with the form the translated Italian texts take and the implications of the passage from Farah's accented English into Italian. The issue is not merely one of literariness but rather of politics: what is at stake here is the right to self-representation. All translation runs the risk of smothering the identity or voice of the Other by employing poetic modes typical of the translating language. Translation scholars like Toury, Even-Zohar, Hermans and Lefevere teach us that this is more often than not inevitable. Where the writing of the colonized is mediated through translation into the language of the colonizer (as is the case with the Italian translations of Nuruddin Farah) there is a very real danger of stylistic levelling. Postcolonial writing is known for its defamiliarising use of the colonial language to signal the alterity of the postcolonial context from which the writing emerges and to claim ownership of the colonial language. Bandia (2008: 53) suggests that African writers, in particular, use narrative devices drawn from traditional oral narratives to produce "signposts of alterity and cultural representation". This idea is not new; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989/2002) describe a number of "textual strategies" typical of postcolonial writing which are aimed at appropriating the language of the colonizer and subverting it to the needs of the colonized. These include such strategies as glossing, untranslated words, the use of interlanguage, syntactic fusion and code-switching and vernacular transcription (Ashcroft et al 1989/2002: 37- 76). As is well-known, the novels of Chinua Achebe are written in an English that is bent and adapted to the needs of representing the Igbo world view. He is a pioneer of an aesthetic of hybridity that would come to define postcolonial African literature. Achebe defines this aesthetic as follows:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings.
>
> (Achebe 1965:59 quoted in Bandia 2006: 351)

Achebe's use of the word *altered* to describe the English he uses is pertinent in that it signals the *alterity* of the text. The notion that this political and aesthetic stance represents a form of translation itself has become commonplace in postcolonial studies generally where the importance of hybridity is central: the idea being that postcolonial writers are *translating* their

positionality into the language of the colonizer which they have inherited. They do so in such a way as to draw attention to this process of translation, thus signalling the difficulty of transfer, producing a language roughened and twisted by its exposure to an alien context; bent to its needs; forceful in its alterity from hegemonic language use. Because of this feature, Bandia (2008) describes the translation of Europhone African writing into another European language as "thrice removed from reality". This refers to the process of translating a text that has already, in a sense, been "translated". There is consequently a danger of this experimental and challenging poetic being levelled in the target-text: the language being returned to a comely shapeliness with which the audience is comfortable.

Postcolonial translation theory has consequently concerned itself with setting up an ethical stance towards translating texts from postcolonial contexts, the idea being to limit the damage that prevailing ethnocentric and hegemonic translation practices can cause. In this regard Tejaswini Niranjana, an Indian translation scholar, comments:

> Translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism. What is at stake here is the representation of the colonized, who need to be produced in such a manner as to justify colonial domination… Translation thus produces strategies of containment. By employing certain modes of representing the other – which it thereby also brings into being – translation reinforces hegemonic versions of the colonized, helping them acquire the status of what Edward Said[24] calls representations, or objects without history.
>
> (Niranjana 1992: 2-3)

To translate is therefore very often to domesticate and to domesticate is to strip the text of its right to alterity. Another approach is to foreignize, to deliberately by means of conscious translation strategies exaggerate the alterity of the text all the while avoiding the pitfalls of exoticism.

Stylistic analysis of the translation of postcolonial literature

Ascertaining the orientation of the translations on the source/target orientation spectrum requires a comparative analysis based on a stable model for stylistic shift analysis. This study makes use of two schemes of stylistic shifts from two prominent 20th century translation scholars: Antoine

[24] Said, discussion with Eugenio Donato and others ("An exchange on Deconstruction and History," *Boundary 2* 8, no. 1 [Fall 1979]: 65-74) in Niranjana 1992: 3

Berman and Anton Popovič. Before their contribution to the stylistic analysis of translated literary texts is reviewed, the notions of style and stylistics need to be clarified.

I employ Geoffrey Leech's (1981: 38-39) outline of style in this regard. This is because he belongs to the school of stylistics, the study of style from a linguistic point of view where the assumption is that literary language deviates in organised ways from ordinary language by means of defamiliarizing linguistic devices. For this reason stylistics is a methodology coherent with the formalisms of the Jakobsonian and Prague structuralist models upon which Polysystem Theory is based. Leech (1981: 38-39) defines style in terms of deliberate choices or selections from a repertoire and deliberate choices about the combination of such to produce a particular form of language use. This is reminiscent of the famously obscure Jakobsonian (1960: 358) dictum that "[t]he poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination." Leech (1981: 38-39) proposes the following schema to define style and stylistics:

1. Style is a way in which language is used: i.e. it belongs to parole rather than to langue.
2. Therefore style consists of choices made from the repertoire of language.
3. A style is defined in terms of a domain of language use (e.g. what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre or in a particular text)
4. Stylistics has typically been concerned with literary language.
5. Literary stylistics is concerned with explaining the relation between style and literary or aesthetic function.
6. Style is relatively transparent or opaque. Transparency implies paraphrasability; opacity implies that a text cannot be adequately paraphrased, and that interpretation of the text depends greatly on the creative imagination of the reader.
7. Stylistic choice is limited to the aspects of linguistic choice which concern alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter.

As is clear from Leech's (1981) scheme, style is a set of formal interventions or intrusions into the texture of ordinary language. Because stylistics grew out of the application of linguistic theories to literature, it is natural that stylistic analysis is consonant with the formal approach to literary analysis adopted in this study. Popovič's scheme of *shifts of expression* and Berman's scheme of *deforming tendencies* are both concerned with form and also articulate particularly well with the needs of this study. These two schemes are presented in the paragraphs that follow and their applicability to my analysis is explained.

A Slovak translation theorist central to the early development of Descriptive Translation Studies, Popovič's importance has been rather overlooked until recently (Špirk 2009). Ironically for a theorist in the field of translation studies, Popovič remained obscure because his work remained untranslated from Czech and sequestered behind the iron curtain. In 1968 Popovič initially suggested a classification for the analysis of stylistic shifts in translation in his article "The Concept of 'Shifts of Expression' in Translation Analysis" (Špirk 2009: 8). The classification is presented below as it appears in Špirk's 2009 essay on the influence of Popovič on translation studies.

a. *Stylistic levelling* – simplification of the expressional qualities of the original (model);
b. *Stylistic intensification* – exaggeration of the expressional qualities of the original;
c. *Stylistic transformation* – change in the expressional values of the model (source);
d. *Stylistic substitution* – replacement of the original expressional features by domestic ones (encompasses words, phrases and idiomatic expressions);
e. *Stylistic compensation* – compensating for the untranslatable elements, often in another place, by stylistic means unique to the translation's language;
f. *Stylistic standardization* – translating by stylistic means typical of the translator's language and literature;
g. *Stylistic individualization* – translating by stylistic means untypical of the translator's language and literature.

(Popovič 1968 in Špirk 2009:8)

As far as the translation of postcolonial literature is concerned, by far the most appropriate approach is the last one: *stylistic individualization.* This is because the creation of an individualistic style closely modelled on that of the source-text and untypical of the target-language is the goal of minoritizing translation or foreignization. In contrast, *Stylistic levelling*, *Stylistic substitution* and *stylistic standardization* are all hallmarks of a domesticated translation. An exoticised translation would feature *stylistic intensification* with the exaggeration of the expressional features of the original. In the context of postcolonial translation this would cause the text to take on an "exoticized" character: a completely undesirable effect from the ideological orientation of ethical postcolonial translation methodology. The desired effect is what Popovič (1968 in Špirk 2009:9) calls a "stylistic calque", that is to say a translation which is rendered in a new style having a fresh effect on the receiving culture.

Popoviĉ's classification of shifts of expression may be profitably coupled with Antoine Berman's (1985) schema of "deforming tendencies". This is because Popoviĉ's scheme bears on the overall approach taken in a literary translation where Berman's deforming tendencies provide a framework for close analysis of different kinds of stylistic shifts. The word *deforming* is critical here. The word should be understood as *altering of form* not as *making ugly*. As Venuti (1998), who was influenced by Berman, tells us, the prevailing preference is for translations that are *deformed,* that is to say stripped of formal features unique to the source-language prose and rendered in clear and fluent target-language prose. Berman (1985:286) calls this approach to translation "the negative analytic of translation" and applies it to translations that are "ethnocentric and annexationist" in their approach. Form is all important in African postcolonial literatures. Bandia (2006: 356) reminds us of the political implications of form by saying that "postcolonial or minority-culture literatures seek to challenge dominant standards of language, poetics and culture by introducing *new formal resources*" and that "[t]his kind of *innovative formalism* has the potential to draw attention to minor literatures and cultures and, as a by-product, render dominant language cultures more inclusive of minority practices" (italics mine). As a result a translation which gives free rein to deforming tendencies and employs strategies to contain the formal play of a postcolonial text silences the voice of dissent that make these literatures effective.

Berman (1985) describes twelve deforming tendencies which occur in literary translation. These are used in the stylistic comparative analysis in the chapters below to describe the stylistic shifts that occur between the English source-texts and the Italian target-texts of Farah's novels. These are summarized as follows:

1. *Rationalization* – This has to do with the ordering of phrases and sentences and changes occur in order to render the target text more acceptable to the target-audience in terms of certain target-centric notions of discursive order.
2. *Clarification* – This refers to the tendency of translators to make explicit what is implicit, to make the text clearer and more meaningful in the target version. Clarification seeks to remove ambiguity where literary language is often deliberately ambiguous;
3. *Expansion* – Rationalization and clarification both lead to expansion. Translations are almost always longer than originals. Expansion slackens what is tight, unfolds what is folded and impairs the rhythmic flow of the literary language.

4. *Ennoblement* – This refers to the production of phrases and sentences that are elegant by some standard of target-culture rhetoric. Ennoblement is stylistic transformation according to target preferences of good writing.
5. *Qualitative impoverishment* – This refers to changes in the selection of lexical items, replacing items in the source-text with items in the target-text that lack their "sonorous richness" or "iconic richness". Sonority refers to the sound quality of words while iconicity refers to the imagery or cultural significance of a word.
6. *Quantitative impoverishment* – This refers to lexical loss. Prose is rich in synonymy: the same thing being referred to using different words in variation for stylistic effect. In translation synonymy is often reduced.
7. *The destruction of rhythms* – In prose, rhythm is marked by punctuation and sentence length both of which are frequently altered in translation. This compromises the rhythmic flow of prose.
8. *The destruction of underlying networks of signification* – This refers to the destruction of "chains of signification" where words or word-forms reappear repeatedly in the novel.
9. *The destruction of linguistic patternings* – This refers to the altering of the types of sentences or sentence constructions used in the source-text. The result is individual sentences that appear more elegant or stylistically homogenous but an overall work of prose that lacks a coherent stylistic character in terms of sentence construction.
10. *The destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization* – Berman (1985: 294) states that "all great prose is rooted in the vernacular language" and that "prose often aims explicitly to recapture the orality of the vernacular". The destruction of vernacular networks is important because rendering the oral or vernacular into more cultivated language or attempting to imitate the vernacular code using a stereotyped linguistic code familiar to the audience effaces the subjectivity of the speaker in the original.
11. *The destruction of expressions and idioms* – This refers to the attempt to replace idioms, expressions and proverbs with "equivalents" in the target-language. This serves to erase the existence of the Other and subordinate him to the life-world of the target-audience.
12. *The effacement of the superimposition of languages* – This refers to the levelling in the target-text of interplay between various languages, varieties of language or even idiolects found in the source-text.

The theory of style provided by Leech along the frameworks for stylistic shift analysis provided by Popovič's Shifts of Expression and Berman's Deforming Tendencies are used to account for the stylistic treatment of *postcoloniality* (aesthetic and stylistic choices that mark for postcolonial identity) in this chapter and orality in the chapter that follows, as per Bandia's model, in the translation of Farah's texts into Italian. Where necessary, in the body of the analysis, the concepts covered in passing in this introduction are elaborated upon.

Poetic devices in *Sweet and Sour Milk*

Each chapter of *Sweet and Sour Milk* is introduced by an enigmatic and highly poetic paragraph. Many of the prose poems do share certain themes, foremost among them, in my opinion, the

themes of childhood vulnerability and, perhaps, parental neglect. Each poem is a stand-alone text without an immediately transparent connection to the chapter it introduces. Neither, by any means, is the relationship between the prose poems and the textual body of the novel obvious. Prose poetry is a hybrid literary form which straddles the traditional divide between prose and poetry (Clements and Dunham 2009). Prose poems usually appear as short pieces of connected text with no obvious versification which, nonetheless, exhibit a highly intricate poetic structure untypical of ordinary prose. Like poetry in verse, prose poetry is a condensed form of verbal art which uses the phonic and symbolic qualities of a relatively small number of words to maximum aesthetic effect. Literary devices more commonly associated with poetry than prose are also utilised. The prose poems in *Sweet and Sour Milk* are representative of Farah's rich and articulated literary style which very often is characterised by mysterious or enigmatic happenings described in vivid detail. The complexity of these poems makes them an interesting site for the analysing the translator's approach to translating Farah's postcolonial textuality.

Segment 1

The prologue of *Sweet and Sour Milk* opens with the following short prose poem. All the prose poems introducing the chapters are scenes featuring children or babies, sometimes in potentially hazardous situations, and their caregivers. It is not particularly clear how or whether at all the prose poems relate to the content of the individual chapters but many of them embody a sense of foreboding which is the general mood of this thriller-style novel.

> Like a baby with a meatless bone in his mouth, a bone given him by his mother to suck while she is in the kitchen minding the pot which has now begun to sing…
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 1)

> Come un lattante con un osso in bocca, un osso spolpato che la madre gli fa succhiare mentre lei sta in cucina a sorvegliare la pentola che borbotta…
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 5)

Arranged into lines as though it were a poem the segment can be analysed more easily in terms of rhythmic structure and poetic devices (any analysis of rhythm in the examples below is brief while Chapter 6 below, because of its focus on orality, engages with this issue in great detail). Punctuation marks or conjunctions introducing new finite clauses mark the ends of lines in my

system of arrangement. This is based on the premise that word clusters between pauses form rhythmic units. This is explored in detail in the following chapter.

[1]Like a baby with a meatless bone in his mouth,
[2]a bone given him by his mother to suck
[3]while she is in the kitchen minding the pot which has now begun to sing…

[1]Come un lattante con un osso in bocca,
[2]un osso spolpato che la madre gli fa succhiare
[3]mentre lei sta in cucina a sorvegliare la pentola che borbotta…

The translator has not altered the rhythm of the segment in her translation, maintaining 3 lines separated by a comma and a conjunction which correspond to the movements of the narrative. Detailed justification for considering punctuation as the most salient indicator of rhythmic structure is provided in the following chapter. The order of the events in the poem is maintained and the semantic content and narrative structure is largely identical. There are, however, some significant changes in terms of the stylistic devices employed in the target-text as compared to the source-text. *Baby* becomes *lattante* (suckling or infant) as opposed to the more conventional *bimbo*. This is a case of ennoblement where the translator introduces a "rhetorical elegance" to the translation, giving it a more 'elegant' style from the point of view of the receiving language (Berman 1985: 290). Berman goes on to argue that ennoblement has serious consequences in terms of the *orality* of written prose. He states:

> This procedure [ennoblement or rhetoricization] is active in the literary field, but also in the human sciences, where it produces texts that are "readable", "brilliant", rid of their original clumsiness and complexity so as to enhance their "meaning". This type of rewriting thinks itself justified in recovering the rhetorical elements inherent in all prose – but in order to banalize them and assign them a predominant place. These elements – in Rousseau, Balzac, Hugo, Melville, Proust, etc. – restore a certain "orality", and this orality effectively possesses its own norms of nobility – those of "good speaking", which may be popular or "cultivated". But good speaking in the original has nothing to do with the "rhetorical elegance" extolled by the *rewriting* that ennobles.
>
> (Berman 1985: 291)

Applied to the segment above then, in transforming *baby* to *lattante* the translator is attempting to produce more elegant literary prose than the original by using more elevated language. In so doing she undermines the norms of spoken English or the orality of English by replacing them

with the norms of good writing in Italian. There are further implications for this decision in terms of the text as a whole. The word *baby* is repeated in many of the prose poems that introduce the chapters of *Sweet and Sour Milk*. By varying the word used to translate the word *baby* in an effort to introduce a certain elegance represented by avoiding repetition of the same word, the translator runs the risk of affecting the "underlying networks of signification" in the text as a whole. Underlying networks of signification are described by Berman as "…an, 'underlying' text, where certain signifiers correspond and link up, forming all sorts of networks beneath the 'surface' of the text itself" (Berman 1985: 292). He goes on to refer to "word-obsessions" which an author uses to create a network or chain of signification operating throughout the text; a textual feature which Berman claims is an aspect both of rhythm and the process of meaning-making in a literary text (Berman 1985: 292).

Ennoblement attempts to render ordinary language literary but it tends to do so on the model of established or even classical domestic literary conventions and in so doing renders it banal and clichéd and undermines the orality and rootedness of the source-text prose. Almost diametrically opposed to ennoblement is qualitative impoverishment where the original author's particular use of words that are strange and defamiliarizing are replaced with words that lack the "sonorous or iconic richness" of the original (Berman 1985: 291). This is seen in the translation of …*the pot which has now begun to sing.*… as …*la pentola che borbotta.*… (the pot that grumbles). The engaging imagery of a singing pot is levelled and the Italian pot grumbles laconically. This is not only stylistic levelling but also stylistic substitution. A grumbling pot is indeed a personification, a feature characteristic of literary language, but while the device is the same the image is not. There is no obvious reason why the Italian pot could not have sung.

Another revision in the translation that points to a domesticating impulse on the part of the translator are the repositioning of the word *spolpato* (meatless) to the second clause in the target-text where it was in the first clause in the English. Also to note is the translation of *given him by his mother to suck* as *che la madre gli fa succhiare* (that his mother makes him suck). There are no obvious reasons why the translator would make these changes apart from her own intuition about what sounds more fluent to the Italian ear. However, fluency can be considered undesirable from two perspectives: firstly, subscribing a translated text to the fluency norms of the receiving culture serves to render the source-culture and its textual norms invisible and in so

doing aggressively encroaches on the representational territory of the Other; secondly, from the perspective of Formalist notions of literariness, to render fluent what ought to be defamiliarizing is to strip the text of its aesthetic effect. Literary language is supposed to be the opposite of ordinary language, it is supposed to surprise and disconcert. The author of a literary source-text is attempting to roughen his language to this poetic effect but a domesticating translation smooths out this roughness.

One way for a translator to mitigate this loss of literariness is to let the expressive qualities of the original disfigure and roughen the target-language insofar as the grammatical structure of the target-language allows. The translator might have quite easily done this in this segment producing a much more literal rendering on the lines of:

> Come un bimbo con un osso spolpato in bocca, un osso datogli a succhiare dalla madre mentre lei sta in cucina a sorvegliare la pentola che ormai ha cominciato a cantare.

It must be highlighted that this is not criticism for the sake of criticism based on my own subjective ideas of how the translation "ought" to have been done nor on the basis of an arbitrary preference for literalness in translation. My version is merely aimed at illustrating that the translator was not obligatorily constrained into making the choices she did and to prove, therefore, that her impulse in translating the segment was domesticating in nature.

Segment 2

The prose poem that opens the first chapter of *Sweet and Sour Milk* refers to the structure of a bicycle: two wheels that are bound together, but by definition never meet. The image of the bicycle with twin wheels reliant on one another is probably a reference to the twins at the heart of the novel: Soyaan, who dies mysteriously, possibly from poisoning, and Loyaan, his twin whose quest to discover the cause of his brother's death is the basis for the plot of the novel. The segment and its Italian translation are presented below:

> Like two tyres of a bicycle that never touch, never come together, to tell each other of a wish to retire from serving an ungrateful master – each remains isolated within its own limits of space, a system, a code of behaviour that perpetuates and makes possible the serving; each is, for a purpose, locked, tied, screwed to a bar which runs between, which makes possible the moving, gives the article an existence, offers the metallic composition a name – and a label that.

(*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 21)

> Come le ruote di una bicicletta, che non si toccano mai e mai si incontrano per rivelarsi il desiderio reciproco di lasciare il servizio di un padrone ingrato: ognuna resta isolata nei limiti del proprio spazio, come un sistema, un codice di comportamento che perpetua e rende possibile il servaggio; ognuna è, ai fini pratici, legata, incatenata, inchiodata a una sbarra che la collega all'altra e che permette il movimento, dando origine a quell'oggetto e offrendo un nome, un'etichetta, a quell'insieme di parti metalliche.

(*Latte agrodolce*: 25)

The segment is philosophical and deconstructive in nature. In it Farah personifies the twin wheels, imagining them as trapped in relationship with one another: a functional relationship without which the assemblage of parts we call a bicycle cannot exist. The paragraph is a metaphorical representation of interdependence of parts to form the whole. It may refer specifically, in veiled terms, to Soyaan and Loyaan, twins whose interdependence is a defining feature of their identity in the novel. The segments are divided into lines to reveal their prosodic and rhythmic structure and to facilitate the comparative analysis.

[1]Like two tyres of a bicycle that never touch,
[2]never come together,
[3]to tell each other of a wish to retire from serving an ungrateful master –
[4]each remains isolated within its own limits of space,
[5]a system,
[6]a code of behaviour that perpetuates and makes possible the serving;
[7]each is,
[8]for a purpose,
[9]locked,
[10]tied,
[11]screwed to a bar which runs between,
[12]which makes possible the moving,
[13]gives the article an existence,
[14]offers the metallic composition a name –
[15]and a label that.

[1]Come le ruote di una bicicletta,
[2]che non si toccano mai
[3]e mai si incontrano per rivelarsi il desiderio reciproco di lasciare il servizio di un [4]padrone ingrato:
[5]ognuna resta isolata nei limiti del proprio spazio,
[6]come un sistema,

[7]un codice di comportamento che perpetua e rende possibile il servaggio;
[8]ognuna è,
[9]ai fini pratici,
[10]legata,
[11]incatenata,
[12]inchiodata a una sbarra che la collega all'altra e che permette il movimento,
[13]dando origine a quell'oggetto
[14]e offrendo un nome,
[15]un'etichetta,
[16]a quell'insieme di parti metalliche.

In translating this segment the translator has introduced some changes in the organisation of the first three lines. She introduced a comma separating the first line of the source-text into two lines in the target text and combines the second line with the third creating a much longer line in the target-text. This is an example of rationalization where a translator "recomposes sentences and sequences of sentences, rearranging them according to a certain idea of discursive *order*" (Berman 1985: 288). The result of rationalization is not only the alteration of the shape of the literary text but also of its intrinsic rhythm. Rationalization is foremost among the domesticating procedures described by Berman. Firstly this is because of the frequency with which it is carried out and secondly because it is one of the most destructive domesticating procedures. Rationalization is target-oriented in the extreme because it seeks to impose a domestic notion of what is rational and discursively ordered onto a text from a foreign provenance and in the process constrains that text's right to alterity. Berman 1985: 288) gives an example from translations into French which is instructive for our purposes because, based on the examples in the analysis, it appears Italian translations have a similar impulse: "This is visible, for instance, in the fundamental hostility with which the French greet repetition, the proliferation of relative clauses and participles, long sentences or sentences without verbs – all elements essential to prose". Another revision of this kind that the translator makes is the translation of the last three lines of the English text *…gives the article an existence, offers the metallic composition a name – and a label that.* Here the source-text inexplicably tails off mid-sentence and leaves the thought unfinished. This is a deliberate literary strategy that the Italian translator rejects in favour of the rationalized and organized phrase, *…dando origine a quell'oggetto, e offrendo un nome, un'etichetta, a quell insieme di parti metalliche.* This rationalization is achieved by means of the reorganization of the phrase but also through the

substitution of the somewhat abstract words and phrases *article* and *composition* and *for a purpose* with more the concrete terms *oggetto*, *insieme di parti* and *ai fini pratici*. This renders the lyrical somewhat more mechanical.

Again in this segment the translator has resorted to domesticating procedures that discipline the text according to Italian target norms of 'proper' written discourse. Speech is periphrastic while written language is synthetic. The incomplete nature of the segment represented by the unfinished thoughts and mysterious comparisons is converted into the written and set, the surprising thus becomes conventional, the literary somewhat more prosaic.

Segment 3

The prose poem introducing chapter 2 is about a tumbleweed and a tree in a desert setting. The segment is rich in personification and other poetic features.

> Like a dry weed in the wind, blowing along with the breeze, light and skinny; a dry weed nodding in approval to the forceful wind blowing about; a dry weed blowing. A few yards away, there is a lone tree in the heart of barren terrain. Surrounding the base of the tree are a number of twigs which have been tamed by time and climate, twigs which fence the stalk, twigs which tease the root-stock. Something climactic runs havoc; the weed, in a head-long rush, somersaults hurriedly towards the growth at the bottom of the lone tree and breaks in two.
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 36)

> Come un'erba secca al vento, che si curva nella brezza, leggera e sottile; un'erba secca che china il capo davanti alla forza del vento; un'erba secca che si piega. A pochi metri di distanza, al centro di un terreno spoglio, c'è un albero solitario. Attorno alla sua base spuntano numerosi virgulti, domati dal tempo e dal clima, virgulti che colpiscono il tronco e stuzzicano le radici. Un improvviso cambiamento meteorologico scoinvolge la scena; il ramoscello d'erba secca, con uno scatto improvviso, oscilla bruscamente verso la vegetazione che cresce alla base dell'albero solitario, e si spacca in due.
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 41)

The segments are arranged in 'verse' according to where the punctuation is placed.

[1]Like a dry weed in the wind,
[2]blowing along with the breeze,
[3]light and skinny;
[4]a dry weed nodding in approval to the forceful wind blowing about;
[5]a dry weed bowing.
[6]A few yards away,

[7]there is a lone tree in the heart of barren terrain.
[8]Surrounding the base of the tree are a number of twigs which have been tamed by time and climate,
[9]twigs which fence the stalk,
[10]twigs which tease the root-stock.
[11]Something climactic runs havoc;
[12]the weed, in a head-long rush,
[13]somersaults hurriedly towards the growth at the bottom of the lone tree and breaks in two.

[1]Come un'erba secca al vento,
[2]che si curva nella brezza,
[3]leggera e sottile;
[3]un'erba secca che china il capo davanti alla forza del vento;
[4]un'erba secca che si piega.
[5]A pochi metri di distanza,
[6]al centro di un terreno spoglio,
[7]c'è un albero solitario.
[8]Attorno alla sua base spuntano numerosi virgulti,
[9]domati dal tempo e dal clima,
[10]virgulti che colpiscono il tronco e stuzzicano le radici.
[11]Un improvviso cambiamento meteorologico sconvolge la scena;
[12]il ramoscello d'erba secca,
[13]con uno scatto improvviso,
[14]oscilla bruscamente verso la vegetazione che cresce alla base dell'albero solitario,
[15]e si spacca in due.

The first noticeable difference between the two segments is the revision the translator makes to the punctuation and organization of line 7 of the source-text which she divides into two lines in the target-text. She also opts to reorder the structure of the proposition: …*there is a lone tree in the heart of a barren terrain*… becomes *al centro di un terreno spoglio, c'è un albero solitario.* This is an example of rhetoricization where a relatively straightforward source-text phrase presented in a manner more typical of spoken language is rendered more consonant with the literary norms of the target-language. The Italian is thereby rendered more 'poetic' in a generic way typical to written literature in that language as opposed to the direct, spoken quality of the source-text. The reordering of the phrase and the revision of the punctuation also clearly would have implications in terms of the rhythmic structure of the target-text as compared to the source-text. Another change evident in the translation of line 7 is the replacing of the word *heart* with *centro*. This is a case of qualitative impoverishment where the expressional qualities of a word are levelled by its translation with a more generic word.

The translator has, in general, been sensitive to the personification of the plant-life and environmental elements in the segment but has introduced some inconsistencies. The dry weed of the source-text is *nodding in approval to the forceful wind* whereas the Italian weed *bows its head before the force of the wind*. The image is somewhat different because in the English the wind is ascribed a personality trait, forceful, whereas in the Italian it appears inanimate. The image of a plant bowing in the wind is a far more conventional image than a plant nodding in approval. The translation also enacts a shift in the relationship between the weed and the wind. The Italian weed is prostrate to the dominant wind where the English weed approves of the force of the wind. If, for argument's sake, Farah intended the plant to represent subjected citizens and the wind to represent a totalitarian regime, the original would act as a metaphor for the simpering acquiescence of ordinary people to the workings of oppressive power. The translation would lose this metaphor. Insofar as possible, for this reason, it is important not to arbitrarily change imagery in a translation. This is a case of rationalization and stylistic substitution. Another moment where the personification of the weed is destabilised in the translation is the translation of *light and skinny* as *leggera e sottile* in line 3, where *skinny* usually refers to a person and *sottile* usually refers to an object, as well as in lines 24 and 15 where the English author has the weed as the subject of a *head-long rush* and *somersaulting* where the Italian weed is the object of *uno scatto improvviso* and *oscilla* (sways) passively in the wind. The climate too, which is personified and given a sense agency in line in line 11 where it is described as *running havoc* becomes passive and inanimate in the target-text where a sudden climatic change disturbs the scene.

The source-text makes use of frequent repetition of the words *dry weed*, *twigs* and *lone tree*. Dry weed and lone tree become a kind of refrain in the short segment. The translator maintains these in the form of *erba secca* and *albero solitario*. She even inserts a repetition of the refrain where it is not present in line 13 where the English *the weed* becomes *il ramoscello d'erba secca*. She does, however, undermine the effect achieved by the repetition of the word *twigs* and the beginning of lines 9 and 10 by introducing the conjunction *e* and assigning two actions to the *virgulti* as opposed to one action at a time as in the English. Strangely, in a process of stylistic substitution, she has her twigs hitting the roots of the tree where in English they fence the tree's root-stock.

There is finally a case of "destruction of vernacular networks" in the domestication of *yards* which is converted to *metres* in the Italian. An Italian word corresponding to the imperial unit is available: *iarda*. Maintaining this would have signalled the foreignness of the text to the target reader whereas the metric system goes by unnoticed.

Segment 4

Chapter 3 opens with the description of a baby abandoned in a garbage-bin greeting his or her first dawn. The insecurity of the baby's future is prominent in the scene and only the personified light of day notices this abandoned human infant.

> Like an infant in the embrace of a garbage-bin, an infant barely a week old; abandoned; with the light of life seemingly spent like the crossroad hour of night and day; not a whimper; not a cry. A child of dawn, conceived, given birth to and abandoned at the crack of it. With its birth it filled the cupped hands of dawn with a human responsibility. Will the sun receive it, will it find a home?
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 50)

> Come un neonato stretto nell'abbraccio di un bidone della spazzatura, un neonato di appena una settimana, abbandonato, con la luce della vita apparentemente spenta, come l'ora crepuscolare in cui si fondono il giorno e la notte; senza un lamento, senza un grido. Un figlio dell'alba, concepito, partorito e abbandonato al primo sorgere di essa. Con la sua nascita ha colmato una responsabilità umana le mani protese dell'aurora. Lo accoglierà il sole? Gli darà una casa?
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 57)

The segment can be versified as follows for ease of analysis.

[1]Like an infant in the embrace of a garbage-bin,
[2]an infant barely a week old;
[3]abandoned;
[4]with the light of life seemingly spent like the crossroad hour of night and day;
[5]not a whimper;
[6]not a cry.
[7]A child of dawn,
[8]conceived,
[9]given birth to and abandoned at the crack of it.
[10]With its birth it filled the cupped hands of dawn with a human responsibility.
[11]Will the sun receive it,
[12]will it find a home?

[1]Come un neonato stretto nell'abbraccio di un bidone della spazzatura,
[2]un neonato di appena una settimana,
[3]abbandonato,
[4]con la luce della vita apparentemente spenta,
[5]come l'ora crepuscolare in cui si fondono il giorno e la notte ;
[6]senza un lamento,
[7]senza un grido.
[8]Un figlio dell'alba,
[9]concepito,
[10]partorito e abbandonato al primo sorgere di essa.
[11]Con la sua nascita ha colmato una responsabilità umana le mani protese dell'aurora.
[12]Lo accoglierà il sole?
[13]Gli darà una casa?

In this segment the translator has reorganised line 4, dividing it into two lines in the Italian. She has inserted a pause where none exists in the English. This is the result of expansion of the lines caused by the clarification of the phrase *crossroad hour of night and day* into *l'ora crepuscolare in cui si fondono il giorno e la notte* (the hour of dusk in which night and day melt). Her translation of this phrase is also a case of qualitative impoverishment and stylistic substitution: she converts the image of the *crossroad hour* into another image of day and night melting into each other. The result is a loss of the particular literariness of the source-text in favour of a much more clichéd image. Another stylistic substitution which has an effect on the accurate transfer of imagery occurs in the translation of line 10 (line 11 in the Italian) where the *cupped hands of dawn* become the outstretched hands of dawn (*le mani protese dell'aurora*) in the target-text. The Italian brings to mind the stock epithet *rosy-fingered dawn* of the Homeric epics in the place of an imagistic innovation employed by Farah. The last line of the prose poem experiences a change in transitivity: where the English segment asks "*will it find a home?*" referring to the baby, the Italian asks whether the sun will give it a home *(gli darà una casa).*

The translation of this segment again indicates that the translator has opted for a domesticating approach in her translation by substituting fresh imagery in the English for rather worn imagery typical to standards of literary language in the target-language.

Segment 5

The prose poem introducing chapter 4 of *Sweet and Sour Milk* recounts a vicious night-time brawl between two cats over the prize of a dead rat.

> Like two cats in a brawl over a dead rat's meat – the evening silent except for their cries or an occasional braying of a donkey in heat. The cats wrestle. One of them falls. The claws of the other bite into the whiteness of the fallen rival's belly. There is blood, the cat's blood and the rat's. The cat licks its whiskers of triumph. It walks away majestically, leaving behind it a dead rat and a fallen rival.
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 65)

> Come due gatti che si contendono il cadavere di un topo morto: la sera è silenziosa, ad eccezione dei loro miagolii e dell'occasionale lamento di un asino in calore. I gatti lottano. Uno di loro cade. Gli artigli dell'altro affondano nel ventre bianco del rivale caduto. C'è sangue dappertutto. Quello del gatto si mescola a quello del topo. Il vincitore si lecca trionfante i baffi e si allontana maestoso, lasciandosi alle spalle un topo morto e un rivale sconfitto.
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 73)

Divided into lines according to the positioning of punctuation the two segments can be arranged as follows:

[1]Like two cats in a brawl over a dead rat's meat –
[2]the evening silent except for their cries or an occasional braying of a donkey in heat.
[3]The cats wrestle.
[4]One of them falls.
[5]The claws of the other bite into the whiteness of the fallen rival's belly.
[6]There is blood,
[7]the cat's blood and the rat's.
[8]The cat licks its whiskers of triumph.
[9]It walks away majestically,
[10]leaving behind it a dead rat and a fallen rival.

[1]Come due gatti che si contendono il cadavere di un topo morto:
[2]la sera è silenziosa,
[3]ad eccezione dei loro miagolii e dell'occasionale lamento di un asino in calore.
[4]I gatti lottano.
[5]Uno di loro cade.
[6]Gli artigli dell'altro affondano nel ventre bianco del rivale caduto.
[7]C'è sangue dappertutto.
[8]Quello del gatto si mescola a quello del topo.
[9]Il vincitore si lecca trionfante i baffi e si allontana maestoso,
[10]lasciandosi alle spalle un topo morto e un rivale sconfitto.

In this segment the translator has reorganized the phrasing. She divides line 2 of the English into two lines in the Italian separated by a comma and combines lines 8 and 9 of the English into a single line. The English segment is rich in unusual word use, imagery and poetic features like rhyme, alliteration and repetition. There is a rhyme evident in lines 1 and 2 where *dead rat's meat* rhymes with *donkey in heat*. It is a very rare translator that is able to render rhyme in a translation, indeed it is a commonplace guideline in the field of poetry translation that to try and twist the target-text to the extent that rhyme can be rendered often results in unacceptable contrivances that mar the quality of the translated poem as a whole (Campbell 1989). Nonetheless, there is more to the word choice of *meat* than the fact that it rhymes with *heat* and the translator's choice to translate the word as corpse (*cadavere*) can be described as stylistic levelling. An unusual collocation in the English is rendered quite ordinary in Italian. In contrast to this levelling of line 2 of the English (line 3 of the Italian) there is an opposite effect in play: that of stylistic intensification, where *braying* becomes cry or lament (*lamento*) in the Italian where an equivalent word in the verb form (*ragliare*) or the noun form (*raglio*) does exist. Line 5 of the English experiences a rationalization where, *the claws of the other bite into the whiteness of the fallen rival's belly*, becomes the rather more prosaic, *the claws of the other sink into the white belly of the fallen rival* (Gli artigli dell'altro affondano nel ventre bianco del rivale caduto). The unusual collocation of *claws* and *bite* and the shift in perspective from a belly being described as white to *whiteness* as a noun being the object of the sentence are levelled in the translation. Similarly *whiskers of triumph* is levelled and the Italian cat licks his whiskers triumphantly. There is a clarification in the addition of *dappertutto* and *si mescola* in lines 7 and 8 of the Italian to describe the blood.

Segment 6

Chapter 5 of *Sweet and Sour Milk* opens with a prose poem describing a child who accidentally breaks a favourite toy.

> Like a toy vehicle which has been a child's central concern for many days, the child's object of love. One day, however, while studying the outlines and the structure of what makes the machine tick, his eyes chance upon a nail sticking out. The child tugs at the nail, and pulls it out. The vehicle falls apart. The child, hours

> later, is seated in front of the disjointed piece of his original love. It transpires, when his mother comes, that he has misplaced the nail.
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 77)

> Come una macchina giocattolo, che per parecchi giorni ha polarizzato l'interesse del bambino, costituendo l'oggetto del suo amore. Un giorno però, mentre studia gli elementi che compongono il meccanismo che la fa muovere, gli occhi del piccolo cadono per caso su un chiodo che sporge. Il bambino tira il chiodo e lo sfila: la macchinina va in pezzi. Ore dopo è ancora seduto davanti ai frammenti sparsi dell'oggetto del suo amore. E quando arriva la mamma, è chiaro che ha perduto il chiodo.
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 85)

The segments can be organized into lines as follows:

[1]Like a toy vehicle which has been a child's central concern for many days,
[2]the child's object of love.
[3]One day,
[4]however,
[5]while studying the outlines and the structure of what makes the machine tick,
[6]his eyes chance upon a nail sticking out.
[7]The child tugs at the nail,
[8]and pulls it out.
[9]The vehicle falls apart.
[10]The child,
[11]hours later,
[12]is seated in front of the disjointed piece of his original love.
[13]It transpires,
[14]when his mother comes,
[15]that he has misplaced the nail.

[1]Come una macchina giocattolo,
[2]che per parecchi giorni ha polarizzato l'interesse del bambino,
[3]costituendo l'oggetto del suo amore.
[4]Un giorno però,
[5]mentre studia gli elementi che compongono il meccanismo che la fa muovere,
[6]gli occhi del piccolo cadono per caso su un chiodo che sporge.
[7]Il bambino tira il chiodo e lo sfila:
[8]la macchinina va in pezzi.
[9]Ore dopo è ancora seduto davanti ai frammenti sparsi dell'oggetto del suo amore.
[10]E quando arriva la mamma,
[11]è chiaro che ha perduto il chiodo.

The most obvious difference between the original and the translation of this segment is the length of the individual lines. The English is made up of a great number of short lines and frequent pauses where the Italian condenses these lines into longer lines. This has important consequences for the rhythm of the segment in the translated version. The dramatic tension achieved in the English by the staccato rhythm and frequent pauses is undermined in the Italian translation.

Other important changes occur in the translation of the line *while studying the outlines and the structure of what makes the machine tick* which is rendered as *while studying the elements that compose the mechanism that make it move* (mentre studia gli elementi che compongono il meccanismo che la fa muovere). Here the translator has accurately transferred the semantic contents of the line: the child observes his toy trying to understand how it works. However, there is a destruction of idiom where the translator explicates the expression *what makes the machine tick.* Expressions and idioms are one of the most challenging aspects of translation. A foreignized approach would have the translator translate the idiom literally so that the otherness of the source-text is not subsumed into the hegemonic linguistic patterns of the source-language. A domesticating translation might opt to replace the idiom with an equivalent idiom where one exists in the target-language. In this case the translator has opted to paraphrase the idiom, preserving its meaning but not its form but making that meaning somewhat more transparent. There was very little the translator might have done in this case to avoid this stylistic shift. In contrast the transparent clarification represented by *elements that compose the mechanism* seems like a less necessary intrusion into the territory of the target-text.

Segment 7

The prose poem that introduces chapter 6 presents a scene of parental negligence which is a theme of a number of the prose poems in *Sweet and Sour Milk*. Here a man and a woman (presumably the child's parents) are engaged in intercourse as their evidently very sickly child crawls towards some potentially dangerous medications and swallows them.

> Like a child, perhaps consumptive, coughing convulsively – a lonely child. It crawls in the direction of voices, those of a man and a woman, hit the apex of a climax,

> which is followed by a moan from the man; then the shrieking hysteria of the woman shouting, "I didn't come I didn't. It is unfair." The child's eyes fall on capsules and pills the colour of sweets. His uncoordinated movements of hand and mouth work miraculously and he swallows seven of these beauties. The clock strikes twelve.
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 89)

> Come un bambino, probabilmente tisico, che tossice convulsamente – un bambino solo. Si trascina in direzione delle voci che sussurrano, in cerca di compagnia. Le voci, quelle di un uomo e di una donna, raggiungono il parossismo di un orgasmo, seguito da un gemito da parte dell'uomo; quindi si odono le proteste isteriche della donna che grida: "non sono venuta non sono venuta, Non è giusto". Gli occhi del piccolo vengono attratti da una manciata di pillole e capsule, colorate come caramelle. I movimenti diacronici della sua mano e della bocca trovano come per incanto l'accordo e lui inghiotte sette di quelle meraviglie. L'orologio batte le dodici.
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 99)

The prose poem can be arranged into lines as follows:

[1]Like a child,
[2]perhaps consumptive,
[3]coughing convulsively –
[4]a lonely child.
[5]It crawls in the direction of voices,
[6]those of a man and a woman,
[7]hit the apex of a climax,
[8]which is followed by a moan from the man;
[9]then the shrieking hysteria of the woman shouting,
[10]"I didn't come I didn't.
[11]It is unfair."
[12]The child's eyes fall on capsules and pills the colour of sweets.
[13]His uncoordinated movements of hand and mouth work miraculously
[14]and he swallows seven of these beauties.
[15]The clock strikes twelve.

[1]Come un bambino,
[2]probabilmente tisico,
[3]che tossice convulsamente –
[4]un bambino solo.
[5]Si trascina in direzione delle voci che sussurrano,
[6]in cerca di compagnia.
[7]Le voci,
[8]quelle di un uomo e di una donna,

[9]raggiungono il parossismo di un orgasmo,
[10]seguito da un gemito da parte dell'uomo;
[11]quindi si odono le proteste isteriche della donna che grida:
[12]"non sono venutam non sono venuta,
[13]Non è giusto".
[15]Gli occhi del piccolo vengono attratti da una manciata di pillole e capsule,
[16]colorate come caramelle.
[17]I movimenti diacronici della sua mano e della bocca trovano come per incanto l'accordo
[18]e lui inghiotte sette di quelle meraviglie.
[19]L'orologio batte le dodici.

Interestingly the child is again referred to as *it*, his or her gender unspecified in the English but, as above, the Italian system of grammatical gender forces the translator to make a choice and the choice made is that of a little boy. The Italian segment is also expanded, being made up of 19 lines in the place of 15 by means of the insertion of 3 additional punctuation marks as compared to the source-text. The rhythmic structure of the two segments is consequently bound to be very different. There is also a case of stylistic compensation which has contributed to this expansion. The word *lonely* in English in line 4 is translated as *solo* in the Italian. *Solo* means alone but doesn't quite capture the emotional dimension implied by lonely. In Italian this is generally expressed using the verb *sentirsi solo*. To compensate for this the translator has added in a line *in cerca di compagnia* (in search of company) to explain the child's crawling towards the voices he hears. Rationalization occurs where the translator inserts a full stop at the end of line 6 in the Italian and repeats the subject of the sentence, *le voci* (the voices), at the beginning of line 7. This makes the sentence clearer and more accessible but represents a domestication of the text according to target notions of discursive order and clarity. There is an example of stylistic substitution or ennoblement where *apex* is translated as *parossismo* (paroxysm). This is clearly appropriate in the context of a sexual climax but is rather more obvious and explicit than the original word choice. Similarly to the example of the whiteness of the cat's belly discussed above, a modulation of grammar occurs in the translation of line 9 of the original text. Here *shrieking hysteria* where *shrieking* is an adjective and *hysteria* is a noun becomes *proteste isteriche* where *proteste* is a plural noun, and *isteriche* is an adjective. This translation renders an unusual grammatical structure into a standard one. Additionally in the same phrase the substitution of *shrieking* with *proteste* (protests)

represents a stylistic levelling and a qualitative impoverishment. The strangest choice made by the translator is the translation of *uncoordinated* as *diacronici* which is a technical word which might in some contexts mean *out of synchrony* but used where a word from the spoken register meaning clumsy such as *goffo* or *maldestro* may have sufficed and been clearer and more accurate.

Segment 8

Chapter 7 of *Sweet and Sour Milk* begins with a strange and lyrical description of a baby positioned beside a lagoon observing the sights and sounds around him or her.

> Like a baby born at the crack of the whip of dawn, a baby nameless, a baby that moans near the ladder which leads to a fisherman's dhow, with the cock crowing in the distance, calling the vanishing apparition of the night, calling to the frogs in the marshes; and life at a standstill, the sand blind, and sharks grazing in the greenless weeds in the bottom of the sea. The baby cuddles to himself a sea-shell dry as sand which has made it heavier. The baby looks at a stone house which he can see in the reflection of the water in the lagoon.
>
> (*Sweet and Sour Milk*: 105)

> Come un bambino nato allo schioccare di frusta dell'alba, un bambino senza nome, che geme ai piedi della scaletta che conduce alla barca di un pescatore, mentre un gallo canta in distanza, invocando il fantasma sfuggente della notte e chiamando a raccolta i rospi nelle paludi. La vita si ferma; la sabbia è cieca e i pescicani pascolano tra le alghe scolorite in fondo al mare. Il bambino stringe a sé una conchiglia, asciutta come la sabbia che appesantisce. Il piccolo guarda una casa di pietra che vede riflessa nell'acqua della laguna.
>
> (*Latte agrodolce*: 117)

The segments are arranged into lines.

[1]Like a baby born at the crack of the whip of dawn,
[2]a baby nameless,
[3]a baby that moans near the ladder which leads to a fisherman's dhow,
[4]with the cock crowing in the distance,
[5]calling the vanishing apparition of the night,
[6]calling to the frogs in the marshes;
[7]and life at a standstill,
[8]the sand blind,
[9]and sharks grazing in the greenless weeds in the bottom of the sea.

[10]The baby cuddles to himself a sea-shell dry as sand which has made it heavier.
[11]The baby looks at a stone house which he can see in the reflection of the water in the lagoon.

[1]Come un bambino nato allo schioccare di frusta dell'alba,
[2]un bambino senza nome,
[3]che geme ai piedi della scaletta che conduce alla barca di un pescatore,
[4]mentre un gallo canta in distanza,
[5]invocando il fantasma sfuggente della notte
[6]e chiamando a raccolta i rospi nelle paludi.
[7]La vita si ferma;
[8]la sabbia è cieca
[9]e i pescicani pascolano tra le alghe scolorite in fondo al mare.
[10]Il bambino stringe a sé una conchiglia,
[11]asciutta come la sabbia che appesantisce.
[12]Il piccolo guarda una casa di pietra che vede riflessa nell'acqua della laguna.

In this segment the translator has made only one change to the organization of the punctuation, dividing line 10 of the English into two lines in the Italian by means of the addition of a comma. A notable feature of the English segment is the use of repetition. The word *baby* appears four times at the beginning of lines 2, 3, 9 and 10 while the word *calling* is repeated in lines 5 and 6. Repetition is an important element of rhythm in prose and lends a stretch of text a certain poetic quality, emphasising an image or idea. Italian typically avoids repetition for stylistic reasons (Musacchio 2005: 89). This preference manifests itself in the translation of this segment where the word *bambino* is alternated with *il piccolo* in line 12 and the relative pronoun *che* in line 3. Similarly in contrast to the English which repeats the verb *calling* at the beginning of two consecutive lines, the Italian translator opts to alternate the words *invocando* and *chiamando*. If classified in terms of Popovič's scheme these changes would qualify as stylistic substitution because the translator substitutes a stylistic feature in the source-text for one considered more acceptable to the target-reader. They could also be qualified as stylistic levelling because the stylistic effect achieved by repetition is lost in the target-text. In Berman's scheme these changes would qualify as destruction of linguistic patternings and consequently destruction of rhythms. There is a significant domestication in line 3 where *dhow*, a distinct marker of the cultural sphere in which the novel's occur, becomes *barca* (boat). Berman would call this the effacement of the superimposition of languages. This refers to an author's deliberate strategy of signalling cultural difference by using loan words or

elements from a specific dialect. Qualitative impoverishment and consequent stylistic levelling occurs in the translation of line 8 where *greenless weeds*, a creative coinage, becomes *alghe scolorite*. This segment, like those analysed above, indicate a strong preference for a domesticating approach to translation which levels the cultural and stylistic individuality of the source-text.

Findings of Chapter

All of the segments analysed in this chapter indicate that the translator, Maria Ludovica Petta, showed a distinct preference for a domesticating approach in her translation. This manifests in particular in the reordering of phrases according to domestic literary norms, the substitution of imagery and the substitution of words. Some of the translation shifts observed are natural and the unavoidable consequence of the passage from one language to another but the most noteworthy discussed above are not in any way obligatory and are the result of subjective stylistic preferences. Such an approach to translation risks reducing the text's ability to speak on the behalf of its culture of origin in terms which estrange the metropolitan reader. However, it is important not to be uncharitable towards the translator in this regard for a number of reasons. Foremost among these reasons is that she translated the novel in the early 1990s before the rise of postcolonial translation theory and before the burgeoning interest in Italian postcolonialism in the form of studies of multicultural Italy and migrant writing. Indeed the translator would presumably be constrained by the limited exposure of the Italian literary system to African literatures, a situation which her translation and the others produced by the small publishing house Edizioni Lavoro would contribute enormously to changing (see Chapter 4). Apart from the *Variations* trilogy her experience of translating African literature is very limited. Other authors she has translated are American writers Pete Dexter and Daniel Stern; the Chinese American writer Bette Bao Lord; South African poet Ralph Nixon Currey. Most interestingly she also translated *The Buddha of Suburbia* by British-Pakistani writer Hanif Kureishi: a novel that is considered a classic postcolonial text dealing with cultural hybridity.

The following chapter describes and problematizes the notion of orality as an important element of African literary style before examining the translations of two later

works by Farah from the *Blood in the Sun* trilogy. This affords the opportunity to compare the approach taken by Petta to that of two other translators working after her.

CHAPTER 6
Stylistic Strife
The translation of rhythm

Around the age of ten I remember thinking I was luckier than most of my contemporaries because I shared a name with a famous prince in *A Thousand and One Nights*. With a discarded razor-blade, I cut out the name Nuruddin and glued it to my exercise book, with its arithmetical tables on the back. Then I would boastfully tell my friends, "see, see my name is in print!" I wonder if my writing dates back to that moment when I appropriated the spirit of the prince and stepped from a culture belonging to the oral tradition to the written one.

Nuruddin Farah, *Why I Write*

In *Lontano da* Mogadiscio, a nostalgic novel recounting her youth in a lost Somalia, Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, an Afro-Italian writing of Somali descent, describes the relationship between the Somali people and the art of oration in the following terms:

> I somali sono sempre stati un popolo ricco di fantasia, dotato di grande loquacità e una innata gioia di esprimersi. Nella boscaglia i cammellieri si riunivano sotto le acacia improvvisando gare di poesia e dialettica, ed i vincitori venivano ricompensati con animali e fama.
> Ai matrimoni, nascite e funeral, i cantastorie sono sempre presenti. Ai bambini non sono mai mancate nuove filastrocche e favole incantevoli.
> Gli innamorati recitavano versi alle loro belle. Ci si prendeva in giro con rime improvvisate. Durante la dittatura i cantautori usavano clandestinamente la satira come unica arma contro il regime. I dialetti sono molto ricchi di espressioni colorite ed i proverbi abbondano.
> Amore, fedeltà, tradimenti, pace e nascite, tutto si tramutava in versi.

(Ramzanali Fazel 1994/1999:14)

In this chapter I argue that the traditional poetic traditions described by Ramzanali Fazel, among many other cosmopolitan influences, have inflected Nuruddin Farah's English prose and that the translations into Italian should reflect this. In Bandia's (2008) model for the translation of Europhone African literature into other European languages he speaks of the need to retranslate what is already in many senses a translation. The implications of this, which were discussed

briefly in the theoretical framework, are explored here in greater depth. The foci of the chapter are the issues of rhythm and phrasing alluded to by Ali Farah in the above quote. Similar textual devices are prevalent in Nuruddin Farah's prose (evidence for this is provided in the body of the chapter below). This chapter presents a close comparative analysis of two texts by Nuruddin Farah, *Maps* and *Gifts*. The goal of the analysis is to ascertain the various translators' treatments of the stylistic features of Nuruddin Farah's texts which signal their being accented or hybrid texts drawing on African literary traditions. The chapter begins with a thorough investigation of the question of orality and literary influence in African literature before setting out the method by which the analysis proceeds.

Debating and defining Orality

There is a powerful and entrenched discourse about the oral nature of African literature. It is a widely held notion that much of written African narrative is a 'translation' or 'transcription' of oral forms into writing (Julien 1992). The deterministic association of African literature with oral tradition has been attacked by some scholars who view the insistence on this point as reductive, essentialist or even racist. The notion is based on a binary that positions Europe as lettered and Africa as oral where the reality is that every literary tradition is a combination of the two traditions organized hierarchically in terms of the community's esteem for one or the other mode of literary expression. Eileen Julien (1992) questions the pervading discourse of African orality showing it to be the result of a logical fallacy: one that confuses the material conditions that have historically led to the predominance of the oral mode of expression in African verbal art with some sort of ontological claim for orality as the special province of Africans. She traces the development of this essentialist discourse both within Africa (particularly in the Negritude movement[25]) and in terms of the history of criticism and scholarship of the African novel outside Africa (Julien 1992). Julien succinctly highlights the effects of this discourse about African verbal art on the reception of the African novel by saying:

> Thus, in discussions of written African poetry, the assumption of an underlying orality is so commonplace as to go unarticulated. And when it is articulated, it is greeted enthusiastically because of the consensus that holds it to be useful to poetic practice.

[25] In this regard Julien (1992: 18) notes: "It is no coincidence that a particular reverence of the 'oral character' of Africa should mark the writings of négritude writers and other pan-Africanists who have looked to cultural origins as a way of differentiating and shoring up the identity of Africa vis-à-vis Europe."

> On the other hand, in debates on the novel – the only genre, according to Bakhtin, to come into existence since writing and the book – the assumption of African orality can readily be perceived. It is surely one of the reasons for the perennial controversies surrounding the African novel: there has been an unspoken belief that novels were not for Africans (because oral forms were) and that African writers needed guidance in perfecting this craft, or, alternatively, that truly African novels are and in fact need to be "oral" in some fashion.
>
> (Julien 1992: 9)

The now untenable binary that saw African literature as existing at an inferior stage of development, as yet to reach the standards of European literary development, has been replaced by a more charitable, seemingly politically correct, but no-less reductive, vision of African literature being essentially oral (Julien 1992). Ricard also positions himself quite strongly in the debate by deconstructing what he calls "a discourse of orality" (Ricard 2004: 23). He says in this regard:

> The vague, old phrase, 'the oral tradition', comes from the tiresome equation – Africa equals oral tradition versus Europe equals modernity and the written word – and must be replaced by a more nuanced vision of relations between North and South, or between cultures dispensing different means of expression. But we should not delude ourselves: dualistic clichés carry a lot of weight and have established themselves as a vital form of common sense, or, in other words, an important source of inaccuracies.
>
> (Ricard 2004: 22)

What Ricard alludes to here is an essentially ethnographic or anthropological vision of African literature steeped in a certain romantic primitivism on the part of the Western reader. A tendency to read written African narrative with a view to uncovering an assumed oral substrate falls into the trap of reading African literature through the lens of the "anthropological exotic" (Huggan 2001: 37). Huggan describes this reading practice in the following terms:

> Thus, the perceptual framework of the anthropological exotic allows for a reading of African literature as the more or less transparent window onto a richly detailed and culturally specific, but still somehow homogenous – and of course readily marketable – African world. Anthropology is the watchword here, not for empirical documentation, but for the elaboration of a world of difference that conforms to often crudely stereotypical Western exoticist paradigms and myths ('primitive culture', 'unbounded nature', 'magical practices', 'noble savagery', and so on).
>
> (Huggan 2001: 37)

Huggan and Ricard both point to a discursive construction of the West that serves to contain African literature within the strictly defined paradigm of orality. Huggan (2001), in his treatment of the exoticist reception of African literature in global markets, develops the idea of "strategic exoticism". He describes strategic exoticism as the tendency of postcolonial writers to pander to the expectations of their Western readership (this may be done either complaisantly or subversively). This could be profitably linked to Julien's (1992: 10) ideas about the reception of African literature, where she states: "[p]aradoxically, the assumption of the profoundly oral nature of African life and art is expressed more subtly in the expectation or requirement that novels be leavened with the appropriate African yeast of orality". It would be interesting to extend the exploration of the reception of African literature as delimited by the expectancy of orality by linking it to the notion of strategic exoticism and thereby uncover the extent to which the expectations of Western markets are shaping the production of African novelists. This would be an interesting area of future research but one that is far beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say, however, in the context of this study, that, if and where any stylistic or thematic links exist between the novelistic prose of Nuruddin Farah and the rich heritage of Somali oral literature these are seen as a deliberate exercise in intertextuality on the part of a polyglot, cosmopolitan and sophisticated writer who consciously draws on many traditions. Moolla is convinced of the existence of traces of the tradition of Somali oral poetry in the novelistic prose of Nuruddin Farah. She notes:

> Somali culture was almost exclusively oral with poetry at its heart. Despite the inroads of print culture and the recognition of the value of literacy, Somalis remain enthusiastically audio-aural. Somali culture took instinctively to the audio-casette a few decades ago and is currently exploring the potential of the audio features of the internet for dissemination of poetry and other forms of cultural contact and exchange. Reviews and criticism of *From a Crooked Rib* at its publication emphasized the oral features of the novel. These include the use of alliteration, the hallmark of Somali oral verse, as well as symbolism and imagery from the oral poetic tradition. Somali proverbs and folktales also feature prominently in this novel. Some early critical responses to *From a Crooked Rib* imply the autochthonous emergence of the novel form out of the semi-desert sands of the Horn of Africa. The idea of the development of Farah's novels out of orality gathers credibility from the fact that Farah's mother was a well-known oral poet.
>
> (Moolla 2014: 1)

Jacqueline Bardolph notes in a similar vein that "…it is interesting to observe how, although Farah writes in English, he establishes a continuity with the aesthetic and rhetoric modes of his country's poets in the oral tradition and "the characters [of his novels] are modern and also shaped by several world views, by Islamic texts and pre-Islamic beliefs, tales, poems *The Arabian Nights*, and, for some, contemporary media in European languages" (Bardolph 1998: 163-164).

The lecture given by Farah upon his winning the Neustadt prize in 1998 provides ample justification to read his works in this light. I quote at length from the lecture in order to support my contention that African oral tradition is just one among many intertextual inspirations on the stylistics and themes of Farah's prose:

> When I started writing, no standardized system of spelling or of writing existed in Somali; none was established until October of 1972.
> Despite this, writing in foreign languages was as much fun as reading had been entertaining and edifying too. I felt encouraged by what I read, stories whose cunning and sophistication enabled me to get in touch with the narrative genius of the African folktale. Literature of the written and the oral variety became a mansion in which I moved with self-edifying ease, reading books in foreign tongues and listening to the oral wisdom transmitted in Somali. Meanwhile I enjoyed going from *Kalila and Dimna* to Ernest Hemingway, to Mark Twain, to Agatha Christie, to a Somali poem recited under the shade of a tree. I was elated by this multicultural encounter, the world now unitary, and now boasting of a wealth of differences, each expressive of a human need: the need to gain more knowledge about myself and about the lives of others, in order to be fulfilled… Sadly, I admit to having become more fascinated by the written variety of literature, perhaps because, as with all new converts, I was attracted to the barely familiar in preference to the oral tradition which was everywhere around me. There was a freshness to the stories in the books every time I read them. I was a child apart, my parents two wordsmiths, in their different ways[26], each forging out of the smithy of their souls a creative reckoning of the oral universe. It was in deference to their efforts that I lent a new lease on life later to the tales told to me orally, tales that I worked into my own, all the more to appreciate them.
>
> (Farah 1998/2002: 18-19)

Farah's own description of the literary influences that shaped his writing reveals a much more eclectic range of sources than a simplistic insistence on the essentially oral nature of the African novel would suggest. The statement above supports the view that traditional oral literature exists as one among many intertextual traditions that play out in Farah's work. This is not to downplay

[26] Farah's mother was a locally renowned oral poetess and his father was an Italian/English/Somali interpreter.

the significance of the influence of oral traditions on his work. On the contrary, recognizing the influence of oral tradition as a deliberate stylistic intervention in a writer's work serves to legitimize the use of orality or orality-inspired devices, not as a given based on the writer's inability to escape the oral mode because he is African (a frankly racist proposition), but rather as a complex strategy to mark for the alterity of the literary tradition from which the writing, in part, emerges. Julien drives this idea home saying:

> … the oral traditions of Africa are vigorous aesthetic and social acts, but there is nothing more essentially African about orality nor more essentially oral about Africans… Our objective, then, as readers and critics should not be to isolate orality, to see is as singular, as inherently "first" or "other" in opposition to writing. Neither medium is "the good guy" or the "bad guy". Neither should serve as metonymies for African or for European. Speech and writing are modes of language, and both modes are ours when we have the means to produce them. When we look at their interaction in literary genres, it therefore should not be in an effort to prove or disprove cultural authenticity but rather to appreciate literature as a social and aesthetic act.
>
> (Julien 1992: 24)

Paul Bandia (2008) seems to have adopted the folk wisdom that written African prose is inherently built on a foundation of oral literature to the extent that he describes African Europhone writing as a 'translation' of oral tradition into a European language. Although, to be fair, he does qualify his use of the term orality by suggesting that orality more broadly refers to the distinctive style that an African writer uses to express "African thought and sociocultural reality, as gleaned from the oral tradition in many instances, in an alien European language, and reconciling the African world view and the European mode of expression" (Bandia 2008: 161). In his contention that literary translation should strive as far as possible to preserve the distinctive stylistic features of the source-text rooted as it is in a literary tradition different from that of the translating language, I am in full agreement. This is in keeping with the ethnodeviant/ foreignizing approach to translation espoused by Venuti (1998). Such an approach is based on the idea that style represents voice and subjectivity and subscribing translated literature to dominant hegemonic literary standards is unethical particularly where postcolonial literatures from economic and culturally disadvantaged areas of the world are concerned. Berman (1985: 294) states that *"all great prose is rooted in the vernacular language"* and this applies equally to European and African literature, both of which have oral and written modes, both contemporary and traditional.

Quite apart from the abstract issues cited above, trying to analyse *orality* in written prose, because the term is so broad and reductive, is a practical impossibility. Instead the researcher is required to situate the prose within the literary tradition to which it belongs (partially or fully), and take into account the linguistic, literary and stylistic influences of the prose and read the prose closely and sensitively. For this reason I favour the definition of orality provided by Killam and Rowe (2000: 204), in their *Encyclopaedia of African Literatures*. They say:

> An interest in their oral heritage is abundantly evident in the works of modern and contemporary African writers throughout the continent and testifies to the power and aesthetic pleasure to be found in traditional African orature. These writers' combination of traditional intercultural and colonial, Western education, and their incorporation of aspects of their oral traditions into their writing is significant evidence of orature's vitality.
>
> (Killam and Rowe 2000: 204)

This definition works because it acknowledges the importance of orality as an aesthetic tradition upon which African writers draw as opposed to a *sine qua non* of African literature. The acknowledgement of the hybridity of the literary influences (local and international) that shape African writing is also taken into account in the definition. One crucial element of prose style which may legitimately be considered to have a strong relationship with the literary and oratory traditions of the African continent is that of rhythm. Rhythm is often overlooked or poorly accounted for in scholarship on the translation of literature precisely because it has proven difficult to convincingly analyse. My analysis takes this task on board, partly in an attempt to advance knowledge in this particular area but also, more importantly, because rhythm is an all important feature of what I am tentatively calling *orality*.

Constituting a methodology for the analysis of prose rhythm

Responding to Bandia's (2008) call for an approach to translation of African literature which takes into account elements of the African traditional literary tradition that may exist in Europhone prose, the section that follows presents an analysis of an area of prose translation that is often ignored: the rhythmic structure of prose. The analysis that follows compares the rhythmic structure of segments of the English original with their corresponding Italian translations. Antoine Berman pays limited attention to this area of prose translation in his *Negative Analytic*. Berman claims that prose is no less rhythmic than poetry and that it indeed contains multiple rhythmic structures. He claims as a result that "since the entire bulk of the

novel is thus in movement, it is fortunately difficult for translation to destroy this rhythmic movement" (Berman 1985: 292). I disagree fundamentally with this position. I aim to show in this chapter how easy it is to alter the rhythmic structure of prose in translation and the effects this has on both the aesthetics of the prose and sometimes even on the meaning of a sentence. Berman notes correctly that the most obvious intrusion a translation can make into the rhythmic structure of an original work is an "arbitrary revision of the punctuation" (Berman 1985: 292). Based on Berman's assertion that punctuation is the clearest indicator of rhythmic structure in prose the segments are arranged in such a way that the density of syllables between obvious pauses can be measured in the English as compared with the Italian. Analysing prose rhythm in this way avoids the agonising and often very subjective process of trying to decide the distribution of stressed versus unstressed syllables in a run of prose. Leech (1981: 215) argues similarly that punctuation is a graphic indicator of an "unspoken intonation" and constitutes a distinctive element of any author's style. He further suggests that "[w]hen the length of graphic units follows a regular pattern, the text seems to progress with a measured dynamic movement" (Leech 1981: 215). Leech illustrates his point by separating prose according to its punctuation and arranging it as though it were verse in order to analyse its tempo and rhythm. This is the approach taken in the analysis below and proves useful in terms of analysing the various translators' handling of Farah's distinctive rhythmic structures. O'Callaghan (1984:105) too, argues that pauses also contribute to the overall rhythm.

The analysis of prose rhythm has traditionally been concerned with the distribution and variation of stressed and unstressed syllables. Scholars working in the early twentieth century tried to develop approaches to analysing prose rhythm based on the study of metre and scansion in poetry (Newton Scott 1905, Lotspeich 1922, Andrews 1918, Lipsky 1908, Routh 1923, Saintsbury 1912). These accounts are frankly unconvincing because they are largely based on subjective and impressionistic notions of where stress lies in any given segment of prose. Michael Duncan (2011: 587) shares this viewpoint and criticizes studies in this tradition in the strongest terms. Of Saintsbury's (1922) massive volume *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, Duncan (2011: 587) scathingly suggests, "Saintsbury only examines literature, with evident tastes, and arranges his system of metre and feet in arbitrary ways, revealing the subjective nature of his analysis and its untenable assumption that scansion governs prose rhythm". O'Callaghan (1984: 102) reiterates this, saying: "in any reading situation there is a fixed element

(the text) and a variable element (the reader)" and for this reason the distribution of stress will differ from reading to reading. O'Callaghan (1984: 103) calls this approach to the analysis of prose rhythm the "accent approach" but for the reasons cited above, favours analysis based on syllabic runs alternating with pauses. This approach also fits with Duncan's (2011) strong conviction that any worthwhile analysis of prose rhythm requires a "multisensory-organic approach" taking into account the visual cues perceived by the silent reader as opposed to attempting to impose the patterns of spoken language onto written prose. O'Callaghan's (1984) takes into account three factors in the analysis of the rhythmic relationship between runs and pauses: the length of runs, vowel length and proportion of stressed syllables to total syllables in a run. These factors combined have an overall effect on the rhythm of a stretch of prose: a high concentration of long vowels results in a slow rhythm; a high concentration of short vowels results in a fast rhythm; a high proportion of stressed syllables results in a slow rhythm and a low proportion of stressed syllables results in a fast rhythm (O'Callaghan 1984:103). However as noted by Duncan (2011: 590) stressed-based languages, like English and Italian, lack "standard intervals between syllables" a fact which inevitably creates "a subjective complication that has long plagued prosodic systems for English prose that concentrate on syllables."

Another element of rhythm discussed by O'Callaghan (1984: 106) is the alternation of phrase-runs which he describes as "higher order syllabic runs". He provides an example of this is given from a sermon of John Donne: *[He that starves](as well as he that surfeits), [he that lies in the spitting places and excremental corners of the street], (as well as he that sits on carpets in the region of perfumes)* (O' Callaghan 1984: 106). This example illustrates the alternation of two formats of phrase-runs: the first beginning with *he that…* the second beginning with *as well as…* which result in an internal harmony for the sentence.

As we have seen, all attempts to analyse prose-rhythm in terms of stress patterns fail because of the subjective nature of stress placement. Because no reliable means of accounting for stress patterns in prose has been developed, I opt instead to focus on the rhythmic interplay between syllable length and pause. This mode of analysis ignores stress distribution. Any attempt to match the stress distribution in prose of different languages would be an exercise in futility. However, I do take into account stress density per syllable-run and phrase-run on the premise that the rhythm of prose is largely an effect of the arrangement of runs of varying lengths against

pauses of varying lengths as indicated by punctuation. In the appendix to this study I provide a protracted and detailed analysis of a long segment from *Gifts* and the corresponding segment in the Italian translation in which I prove that quantifying *total syllables* per phrase-run and syllable-run accounts for the density of stressed syllables. I also prove that the distribution of pauses as represented by punctuation *vis à vis* total syllable density is a valid criterion for the evaluation of the extent to which a translation reflects the rhythmic structure of a source-text in the case of stress-timed languages. To drive home the point that stress distribution and syllable distribution largely coincide in stress-timed languages and therefore a syllable count approach as opposed to a stress count approach is justified, I perform a detailed analysis of a long segment from *Gifts*. The choice of a long segment, relative to those selected in the body of the analysis, is meant to allay fears that the data may be skewed by focussing on too short and selective a segment. Because of its length and complexity the proof is included in an appendix. The reader may, at his or her discretion, opt to overlook the proof in the appendix and skip to the next section on alliteration and parallelism.

In simple terms, what I provide is an attempt to quantify Antoine Berman's intuition that arbitrarily revising the punctuation of prose alters its rhythmic structure. As is shown in the analysis below, these revisions of punctuation may be quite arbitrary but are often the result of a ripple effect caused by other "deforming tendencies" most notably *rationalisation* and *clarification* which the translators apply in an attempt to render the text more easily digestible to a domestic audience.

Alliteration and parallelism

O' Callaghan's (1984) account of how pauses work is unfortunately not all that clear and falls into the trap of putting too much emphasis on the reader's interpretation. He suggests that pauses can be abrupt when they are maximised giving the example "*He fell into the pit, vanished, and is thought to be dead"* or they may be cadenced when they are have prolonged endings that run over the pauses as in the example *"The bird's cry, the ocean's surge, I'll hear forever more"* (O Callaghan 1984: 105). As far as I am concerned, the difference between the rhythms in these two sentences lies in the patterning of phonetic qualities. The author of the first examples employs a series of word final alveolar plosives as shown in bold here: *He fell into the pi**t**, vanishe**d**, and is thoug**h**t to be dea**d***. This is opposed to the high density of sibilants, glides and unvoiced

fricatives in the second sentence. In musical terms this lends the first sentence a *staccato* rhythm while the second is much more *legato*. Much of my analysis below is concerned with sound patterns of this kind and their effects on the rhythm. The special attention paid to phonaesthetics is based on the wide use of alliteration (called *hikaad* in Somali) as the central formal feature of the traditional Somali poetic aesthetic: an aesthetic which surely inflects Farah's writing (Andrzejewski 1985; Laurence 1954/1993; Samatar 1982; Andrzejewski & Lewis 1964; Orwin 2006; Bardolph 1998).

It has long been suggested that an extremely common feature of English prose rhythm is the "principle of parallelism" (Lipsky 1908). Lipsky (1908: 285) refers to parallelism as a "larger rhythm, the rhythm of thought"; this ties in also with O'Callaghan's (2011) model for the analysis of prose rhythm which urges the analyst to seek rhythm of an order higher than the relationship between syllable-runs and pauses. Lipsky (1908: 285) further suggests that the habit of parallelism as a rhetorical device in English derives from the inestimable influence of the King James Bible as a foundational text in English language prose. He notes that parallelism is the formal principal of classical Hebrew poetry and one that the translators of the King James Bible imported into English[27]. Lipsky (1908: 285) gives an example of Biblical parallelism in the form of the Ezekial 7:26, "Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour". Parallelism is also a critical formal principle of the *gabay*, the most formalised and prestigious poetic form in Somali orature. This formal principle is called *miizaan* in Somali, a word which can roughly be translated as *balance* (Samater 1982: 62). Each line of a *gabay* is composed of two hemistiches separated by a caesura (Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964: 63; Samater 1982: 62). The hemistiches must relate to one another rhythmically in terms of syllable count and in terms of parallel alliteration (Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964: 63; Samater 1982: 62). Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964: 63) provide an example of an extract of a poem called *A Tree for Poverty* by Ali Hammaal which illustrates the interaction between *hikaad* and *mizaan*:

Dhaachaan ka gabangaabsaday e waygu geliseen e

[27] The influence of the King James Bible on the structures of the English language and its massive contribution to the idiom and forms in daily use in English has been well documented (MacGregor 1968, Crystal 2011). Similarly Luther's Bible is credited with formalising the written variety of the German language into a coherent standard (Salmons 2012, Sanders 2012). Given that the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages not only had an enormous effect on the cultural and political context but also on linguistic patterns, these phenomena could very profitably be studied within the framework of Polysystem Theory laws of literary influence.

Gooddiga Ban Cawl buu fakhrigu *geed ku leeyahay e*
Gaajada huggeedi miyaa *galabta i saaray?*[28]

Lewis and Andrejewski note that the title of this poem was the inspiration for the title of the first translated anthology of Somali poetry compiled by Margaret Laurence in 1954. In the author's note to *Close Sesame*, Nuruddin Farah writes that this resource was useful reading in preparation for the writing of the novel but adds "although being Somali myself, I've had to depend more on the resources of my own memory than on Laurence's" (*Close Sesame*: 261). Farah is here stating explicitly the influence of Somali oral tradition on his novelistic prose.

Each parallel hemistich of similar length in the poem also contains one repetition of the sound represented in the transliteration by *g* at word initial position. The rules by which the metre of Somali poetry works remain somewhat mysterious. It has been noted that Somali audiences are ruthless in their criticism of the rhythm of the poems to which they listen but are unable to accurately describe the formal qualities that contribute to their sensibility of what constitutes a well-balanced poem (Samater 1986: 63). Johnson (2001) argues that the finer points of Somali poetic rhythm are in fact imperceptible to the unconditioned ear of a foreigner and uses computer software to analyse the acoustic waves of recorded oral performances to uncover the miniscule variations that the Somali listener is trained to perceive.

Raising these two points, parallelism and alliteration, is not to be naively over-deterministic about the influence of Somali oral poetry on Nuruddin Farah's prose but rather to suggest the possibility that an author raised in such a context would naturally be inclined to a heightened sensitivity to rhythmic devices in his prose. The analyses of the prose poems in Chapter 5 above also indicate the novelist's poetic taste. As mentioned above, Nadine Gordimer says on the back cover of *Sardines* that "[Farah's] prose finds the poetry that is there". Farah, as we have seen above, frequently alludes to the presence of Somali poetry in his life in his formative years and the influence of that tradition on his novelistic prose. Prose rhythm is extremely complex to analyse because, much like the rhythm of the poems listened to by the Somali audiences described above, it is largely a question of sensibility or aesthetic awareness.

[28] *I lately sought this plight for myself and you put me into it*
On the edge of the 'Awl Plain, poverty has a tree to sit under
Have the garments of hunger been put on me this evening?

Formal criteria must exist but defining them accurately has proved an elusive venture. Perhaps Johnson's (2001) use of software might be an avenue to explore. Based on the formal features of traditional Somali poetry, I have selected a number of principles on which to base my analysis: syllable density alternating with pauses; the use of alliteration; the use or parallelism. It must be understood however that the fact that these are features of Somali oral poetry is not to say that their existence in Farah's prose is determined by their widespread use in Somali orature (this would be falling into the habit of essentialising African literary production criticised above). Rather, the choice to focus on these areas is governed by the very real need to isolate some specific foci for the analysis of rhythm in Farah's prose and the fact that these foci coincide with some of the formal qualities of Somali orature is to acknowledge the literary tradition from which these works partly emerge and to remain open to the possibility that there is a correlation. Whether or not a tangible influence of Somali orature exists in Farah's English prose is an interesting question and one into which this study is making a small foray but the point of the analysis below remains focussed on stylistic translation. Ultimately, the features I isolate in my analysis below (whatever their provenance or whatever may have influenced Farah to use them) are present in the source text and therefore, if we accept the ethical stance implied by foreignization, should be reflected in as sympathetic a way as possible in the target-language.

Analysis of segments

The section that follows is a formal comparative analysis dedicated to prose rhythm, alliteration and parallelism in *Maps* (1984) and *Gifts* (1993), two of the novels forming part of the *Blood in the Sun* trilogy and their Italian translations focussing in particular, but not exclusively, on dream sequences in these novels. These have been selected for the analysis because, as argued by Bardolph (1998) in an essay on the role of dreams in Farah's novels, they are one of the elements of Farah's novels with which he establishes the Africanness of his characters' worldview and links his prose to the oral poetic traditions of Somalia. Other segments from *Maps* are chosen on the basis of their dealing with cultural taboos for much the same reason. The first section analyses two segments from *Maps* (1984) and its corresponding translation into Italian *Mappe* (2003) by Silvia Fornasiero. The second section analyses two segments from *Gifts* (1993) and its corresponding translation *Doni* (2001) by Anna Rusconi. This affords the opportunity to contrast two translator's styles and approaches in terms of translating the lyrical prose that characterizes Nuruddin Farah's style. This is profitably linked to an analysis of the profiles of these literary

translators. The analysis below is instructive from two perspectives: firstly, it contributes to developing the analytic model for prose rhythm and its translation developed above, an endeavour which may prove fruitful in future research into this understudied area; and, secondly, more strictly in terms of this study, the analysis provides a useful means of evaluating the extent to which and the means by which certain elements of the "orality" of the source-texts (rhythm, alliteration, parallelism and other poetic devices on an *ad hoc* basis) have been transferred into the Italian target-texts.

In the analyses below I isolate corresponding segments for comparison. I then proceed to quantify the rhythm of the segments for the purposes of comparison. I do this at two levels based on O'Callaghan's model: the level of *phrase-runs;* and at the level of *syllable-runs*. A *phrase-run* is a unit constituted by clause. A sentence with three clauses therefore has three phrase-runs. Phrase-runs are the higher order of rhythm. The *syllable-run*, the lower level of rhythm, is constituted by syllable density per phrase. Having quantified these two factors (the work is contained in footnotes), I then plot them on graphs for ease of comparison. The appendix to this study explains in detail how the data is gathered and how the graphs are produced.

Segment 1 Maps

The segment selected for comparative analysis below comes from Chapter 2 of *Maps*. The chapter is about the mysterious circumstances under which Askar's mother died and how he came to be under the guardianship of his Uncle Qorrax and under the care of Uncle Qorrax's Ethiopian servant Misra. The chapter begins with Askar questioning whether he was the cause of his mother's death. The question of whether she died in childbirth bringing Askar into the world or shortly afterwards is never made clear. Askar's father is said to have died in battle the day before his birth. The chapter also recounts the abusive sexual relationship that develops between Uncle Qorrax and Misra as a result of Askar's arrival. The bond between Misra and the young Askar is described as preternaturally strong throughout the novel, sometimes as though they were of one being. Uncle Qorrax uses this bond to blackmail Misra, forcing her into sexual relations with him on the threat of removing Askar from her. Askar is frequently present in Misra's room, and even in her bed, when she and Uncle Qorrax sleep together. Some of his earliest memories are of this entangled semi-incestuous arrangement.

The paragraph analysed here is the second paragraph of Part 4 of Chapter 2. The segment begins with Askar explaining how while growing up the topic of death was a taboo subject in his home. This was because of the awkward questions such a conversation might raise in relation to the orphan's own parents. The paragraph underlines the ridiculousness of making questions about life and death taboo in the context of a nation racked by war, famine and disease.[29] In addition to this the familial arrangement with which Askar grows up, where he witnesses intimacies between adults that most children do not, brings questions of life and death strongly to the fore. The paragraph below describes in vividly poetic language the absurdity of the taboo around death:

> There were epidemics, there was a drought, and the earth lay lifeless, treeless, dead, growing nothing, causing things to decay and metal to rust – and we weren't allowed to talk about death. Whispers. Conspiracies. With the night falling secretly and Uncle Qorrax crawling into bed with us and making love to Misra – the cycle of life and death, the circle ending where it began – the flow of menstruation, of death ascertained – and we weren't to talk of death. Not even when Misra was helped to abort, not even when a calendar was brought into the compound and when circles in green were neatly drawn round the safe days and nights. An ovum lives for less than thirty-six hours, sperm for about twenty-four. Yes, only one, maximum two days in each cycle. And we weren't to talk of death.[30]
>
> (*Maps*: 31)

[29] Shirin Ramzanali Fazel notes in *Lontano da Mogadiscio* (1999) that death, from her perspective, is not typically a taboo subject in Somali culture. She says:

Sin da bambini noi veniamo messi di fronte a questo evento come l'ultima tappa della vita di ognuno di noi. Quindi per noi la morte non è quel tabù che gli occidentali cercano di esorcizzare relegando quest'ultimo appuntamento della vita in una grigia stanza d'ospedale oppure in una squallida casa di riposo per anziano; quasi nell'inconscio tentative di allontanare la morte dalle loro case.

(Ramzanali Fazel 1999: 16)

[30] Analysis of ST prosody and syllabic density
[1][[1](/There/ were/ ep/i/de/mics/) {,} [2](/there/ was/ a/ drought/) {,} [3](/and/ the/ earth/ lay/ life/less/) {,} [4](/tree/less/) {,} [5](/dead/{,}[6](/grow/ing/ noth/ing/) {,} [7](/caus/ing/ things/ to/ de/cay/) {,} [8](/and/ me/tal/ to/ rust/) {-} [9](/and/ we/ weren't/ al/lowed/ to/ talk/ a/bout/ death/.)]
[1][[1](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](1 syllable) {PAUSE} [6](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [7](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](9 syllables) {PAUSE}]
9 syllable runs = total 43 syllables
[2][[10](/Whis/pers/) {.}[11](/Con/spi/ra/cies/) {.} [12](/With/ the/ night/ fal/ling/ se/cret/ly) {*} [13](/and/ Unc/le/ Qor/rax/ crawl/ing/ in/to/ bed/ with/ us/) {*} [14](and/ mak/ing/ love/ to/ Mis/ra/) {-} [15](the/ cy/cle/ of/ life/ and/ death/) {,} [16](/the/ cir/cle/ end/ing/ where/ it/ be/gan/) {-} [17](/the/ flow/ of/ mens/trua/tion/){,} [18](/of/ death/ as/cer/tained/) {-} [19](/and/ /we/ /weren't/ to/ talk/ a/bout/ death/).]
[2][[10](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [12](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [13](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [14](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [18](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](8 syllables)]
10 syllable runs = total 68 syllables
[3][[20](Not/ e/ven/ when/ Mis/ra/ was/ helped/ to/ a/bort/) {,} [21](not/ e/ven/ when/ a/ ca/len/dar/ was/ brought/ in/to/ the/ com/pound/) {*}[22](and/ when/ circ/les/ in/ green/ were/neat/ly/ drawn/ round/ the/ safe/ days/ and/ nights/) {.} [23](An/ ov/um/ lives/ for/ less/ than/ thir/ty/-six/ hours/) {,} [24](/sperm/ for/ a/bout/ twent/y/-four/) {.} [25](/Yes/) {,} [26](/on/ly/ one/){,} (/max/i/mum/ two/ days/ in/ each/ cy/cle/) {.} [27](/And/ we/ weren't/ to/ talk/ of/ death/).]
[3][[20](11 syllables) {PAUSE} [21](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [22](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [23](11 syllables) {PAUSE} [24](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [25](1 syllable) {PAUSE} [26](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [27](7 syllables)]
8 syllable runs = total 70 syllables

In order to analyse this paragraph in terms of its rhythmic structure it is convenient to split it up into 'lines' as though it were a poem. The breaks between 'lines' are made where a punctuation mark indicates a pause or a conjunction introduces a new clause. *Lines* correspond with syllable-runs and the words are used interchangeably. This results in 27 lines that vary in length from between 1 and 16 words.

The Italian translation of the segment read as follows:

> Ci furono epidemie, una siccità, la terra giacque senza vita, senz'alberi, morta; non vi cresceva niente, tutto andava in rovina e il metallo arruginiva: e non ci era permesso di parlare della morte. Sussuri. Complotti. La notte scendeva in segreto e lo zio Qorrax si infilava nel nostro letto e faceva l'amore con Misra: il ciclo della vita e della morte, il cerchio si chiudeva; il flusso delle mestruazioni, della morte accertata: e non dovevamo parlare della morte. Nemmeno quando aiutarono Misra ad abortire, nemmeno quando venne portato in casa un calendario, su cui tracciare ordinate cerchi verdi attorno alle notti e ai giorni sicuro. Un ovulo vive meno di trentasei ore, lo sperma circa ventiquattro. Sì, solo uno, Massimo due giorni per ciclo. E non dovevamo parlare della morte. [31]
>
> (*Mappe*: 40)

[31] Analysis of TT prosody and syllabic density
[1][[1](/Ci/ fu/ro/no/ e/pi/de/mi/e) {,} [2](/un/a/ sic/ci/tà/) {,} [3](/la/ ter/ra/ giac/que/ sen/za/ vi/ta/) {,} [4](/senz/'al/be/ri/) {,} [5](/mor/ta/) {;} [6](/non/ vi/ cres/ce/va/ nie/nte/) {,} [7](/tut/to/ and/a/va/ in/ ro/vi/na/) {*} [8](/e/ il/ me/tal/lo/ ar/ru/gi/ni/va/) {:} [9](/e/ non/ ci/ e/ra/ per/mes/so/ di/ par/la/re/ del/la/ mor/te/.)]
[1][[1](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [7](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](16 syllables)]
9 syllable runs = 71 syllables
[2][[10](/Sus/su/ri/) {.} [11](/Com/plot/ti/) {.} [12](/La/ not/te/ scen/de/va/ in/ seg/re/to/) {*} [13](/e/ /lo/ /Zi/o/ Qor/rax/ si/ in/fil/a/va/ nel/ nos/tro/ let/to/) {*} [14](/e/ fa/ce/va/ l'am/o/re/ con/ Mis/ra/) {:} [15](/il/ ci/clo/ del/la/ vi/ta/ e/ del/la/ mor/te/) {,} [16](/il/ cer/chio/che/ si/ chiu/de/va/) {;} [17](/il/ flus/so/ del/le/ mes/tru/az/io/ni/) {,} [18](/del/la/ mor/te/ ac/cer/ta/ta/) {;} [19](/E/ non/ dov/e/va/mo/ par/la/re/ del/la/ mor/te/).]
[2][[10](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [12](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [13](16 syllables) {PAUSE} [14](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [18](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](14 syllables)]
10 syllable runs = total 92 syllables
[3][[20](/Nem/me/no/ quan/do/ ai/u/ta/ro/no/ Mis/ra/ ad/ a/bor/ti/re/) {,} [21](/nem/me/no/ quan/do/ ven/ne/ por/ta/to/ in/ ca/sa/ un/ ca/len/da/ri/o/) {,} [22](/su/ cui/ trac/cia/re/ ord/in/a/ti/ cer/chi/ ver/di/ al/le/ not/ti/ e/ ai/ gior/ni/ si/cu/ri/) {.} [23](/Un/ ov/u/lo/ vi/ve/ me/no/ di/ tren/ta/sei/ o/re/) {,} [24](/lo/ sper/ma/ cir/ca/ ven/ti/quat/tro/) {.} [25](/Si/) {,} (/so/lo/ /un/o/) {,} [26](/Mas/si/mo/ du/e/ gior/ni/ per/ ci/clo/) {.} [27](/E/ non/ dov/ev/am/o /par/la/re /del/la/ mor/te/).]
[3][[20](17 syllables) {PAUSE} [21](19 syllables) {PAUSE} [22](24 syllables) {PAUSE} [23](14 syllables) {PAUSE} [24](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [25](1 syllable) {PAUSE} [26](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [27](13 syllables)]
8 syllable runs = total 108 syllables

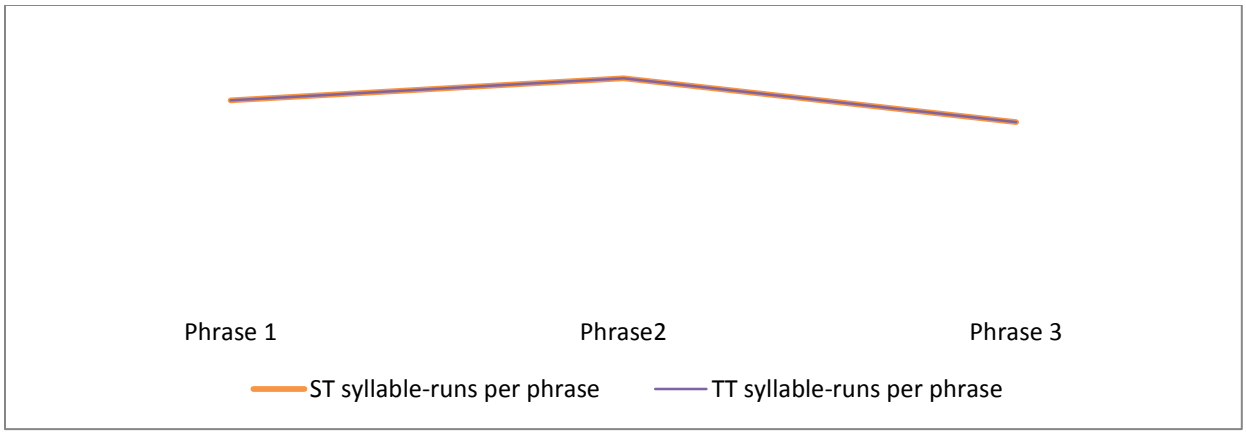

Figure 3: graph comparing ST syllable-runs per syllable-phrase to TT syllable-runs per syllable-phrase (*Maps* segment 1)

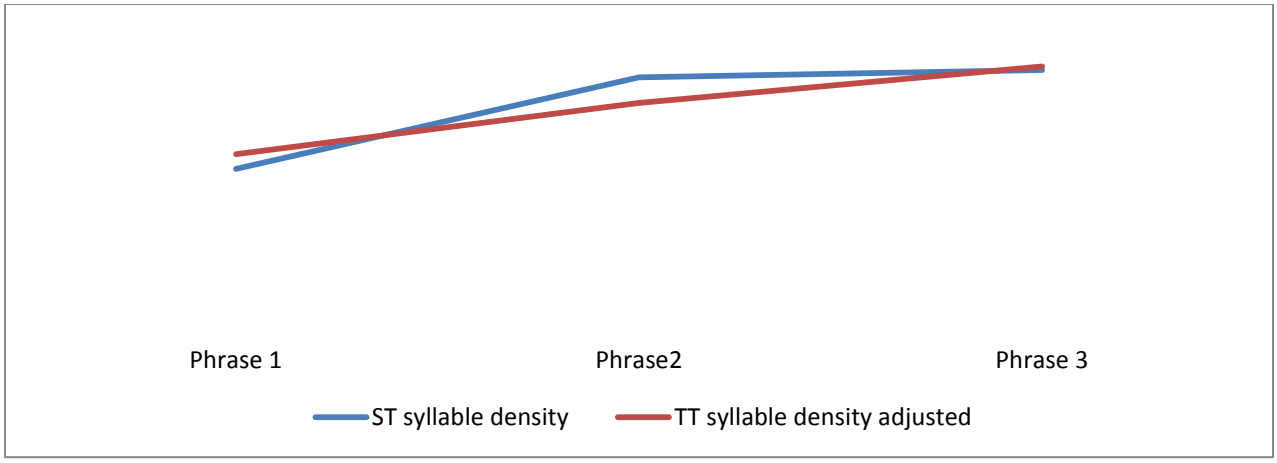

Figure 4: graph comparing ST syllable density per phrase-run and TT syllable density per phrase-run (*Maps* segment 1)

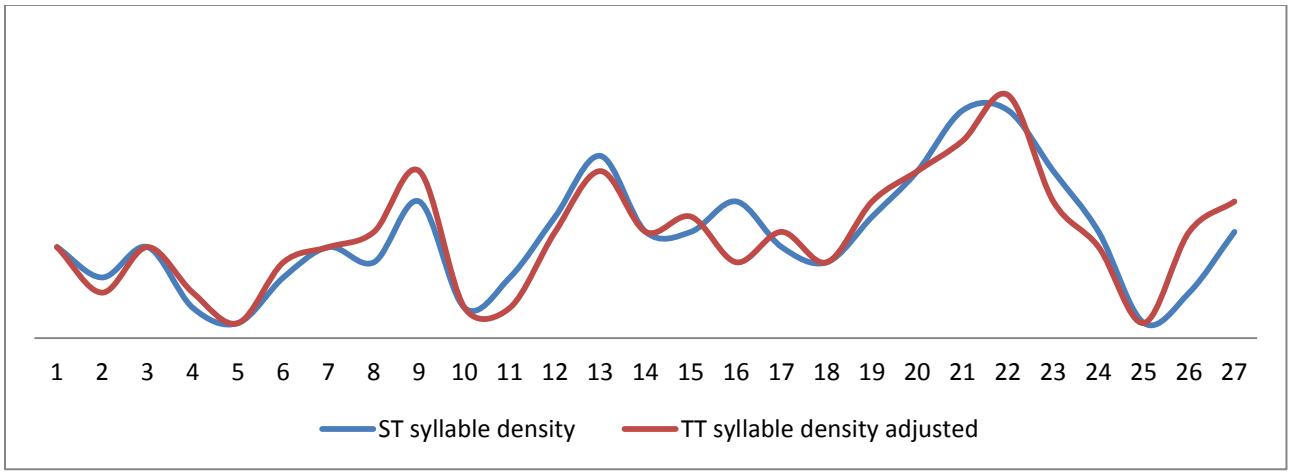

Figure 5: graph comparing ST syllable density per syllable-run and TT syllable density per syllable-run (*Maps* segment 1)

The Italian translator has maintained exactly the same structure as the English original in terms of the position of punctuation and clause-introducing conjunctions. This results in a neat correspondence of lines in the source-text and target-text. The Italian text is shorter by 10 words probably as a result of the inflectional nature of the language but it is longer by 81 syllables for the same reason: individual Italian words are often longer as a result of containing more grammatical inflections than English. Despite having more syllables per line, because the translator closely modelled the organization of the text on the source-text, the weighting of syllables per line remains broadly similar. This is indicated visually on the graph above where the peaks represent long lines and the dips represent short lines. The graph indicates that the paragraph is made up of three rhythmic crescendos between lines 5 and 9; lines 11 and 13; and lines 18 and 24. Each of these is followed by a dip.

The structure of the paragraph can further be analysed as consisting of three 'stanzas' (phrase-runs) of 9, 10 and 9 lines respectively, each of which is concluded by a refrain in the form of "*and we weren't allowed to talk about death*" after the first 'stanza' (line 9) and "*and we weren't allowed to talk about death*" at the ends of the second 'stanza' (line 19) and the third 'stanza' (line 28). Each of these refrains is situated at a rhythmic peak preceded by a build-up of lines of greater and greater syllable length.

The high points of the graph, representing the lines with the most syllables, are moments of high drama in the paragraph referring to the continual sexual abuse of Misra. These are line 13 *"and Uncle Qorrax crawling into bed with us"* and lines 11 to 16 "*Not even when Misra h(w)as helped to abort, not even when a calendar was brought into the compound and when circles in green were neatly drawn round the safe days and nights"*. These moments of high drama, underlined also by the emphatic repetition of the words *not even* , contrast distinctly with the impassive tone of the refrain, which is introduced by the word *and* used in a contrastive sense and ironic sense. The refrain serves to resolve the rising angst of each crescendo in a clipped ironic tone. The Italian translation resembles this structure thanks to the translator's decision to organize the paragraph along very similar lines to the English.

The paragraph makes use of a number of poetic devices, particularly repetition and alliteration (both of which, incidentally, are also the main features of Somali oral poetry). Lines 1 and 2 begin with the words *there were epidemics and there was a drought*. The repetition of the demonstrative pronoun and copula in favour of the more prosodic *there were epidemics and a drought* is a deliberate stylistic choice. The Italian translation does not match the repetition producing instead *ci furono epidemie, una siccità*. This is not an obligatory shift and the translator may have opted to translate the lines as *ci furono epidemie, ci fu una siccità.* The English syllable structure for the lines is 6 and 4, a difference of 2 syllables whereas the syllable structure of translation is 9 and 5, a difference of 4 syllables. Had the translator preserved the repetition the result would have been a ratio of 9 to 7, a difference of 2 syllables. For this reason it is impossible to argue that the translator was trying to avoid overloading the second line in terms of syllable weight. Instead this decision needs to be understood as a translation technique aimed at *rationalizing* the line. The literariness of the line therefore suffers.

There are other phonetic features of the first five lines some of which the translator has been able to maintain but others that were not. Between lines 1 and 8 there are 3 separate words which begin with the phoneme /d/. These are: *drought*, *dead*, and *decay*. These words are all in a similar semantic field and work to build the image of a bleak and hostile landscape. The Italian translator has opted for *siccità, morta, rovina* which do not alliterate. There is very little a translator can do in the face of such a challenge. Another similar use of alliteration is in lines 3 and 4 *and the earth lay lifeless, treeless*. Here the /l/ phoneme is repeated 4 times in the course of

5 syllables and the morpheme *–less* is repeated twice. The translator has not introduced any alliteration into the lines but she has matched the repetition of the morpheme *–less* by using the words *senza vita* and *senz'alberi*. Lines 6 and 7 of the English also contain alliteration in the form of four repetitions of the sound *–ing* in *growing nothing, causing things to decay.* The translator here has produced a chain of rhyming words linking lines 2 and 5: *siccità, vita, morta* while the last words of lines 6 (*in rovina*) and line 7 (*arruginiva*) both make use of the same set of phonemes to pleasing effect. Use of alliteration is also seen in lines 10 and 11 with the /sp/ consonant cluster in *whispers* and *conspiracies.* These are translated as *sussuri* and *complotti,* both of which have a geminate consonant which maintains some of the alliterative quality. These literary devices are extremely challenging to replicate in translation but they are very often critical to the development of a theme. One such example is the frequent repetition in the paragraph of the motif of *cycles* and *circles* which underlie the cyclical pattern of life and death which is linked to Misra's menstrual cycles and the green circles drawn on the calendar to mark the days it was 'safe' for Uncle Qorrax to copulate with her without risking another abortion. These are generally handled literally by the translator maintaining the development of the motif structure in the paragraph. However, line 15 *the circle ending where it began* is translated as *il cerchio si chiudeva* (the circle was closing). This translation represents *ennoblement* in Berman's scheme. It is an attempt to render the text more refined or elegant. The result, however, is a fresh and nuanced image which articulates delicately with the rest of the paragraph being swamped by a cliché.

While literary qualities like alliteration are difficult to maintain in translation, certain shifts can only be seen as the imposition of the textual-linguistic norms of the translating language on the text. This is particularly prevalent between lines 3 and 8: *and the earth lay lifeless, treeless, dead, growing nothing, causing things to decay and metal to rust*. The earth here is personified and made the agent of the verbs *growing* and *causing*. The image is striking and powerful and flips the perspective. The Italian translation is as follows, *la terra giacque senza vita, senza'alberi, morta; non vi cresceva niente, tutto andava in rovina e il metallo arruginiva*. This sentence has four different agents: *la terra*; *niente*; *tutto* and *il metallo* all of which correspond to their own verb. The personified agent earth of the English becomes a passive theatre where other things happen independently. The structural logic of the original is completely distorted. What is literary language in the original (English speakers don't typically

talk about the earth growing things, causing decay and causing metal to rust) is rendered prosaic in the Italian (we do tend to talk of nothing growing on the earth, of everything decaying and of metal rusting). Another example of the rationalization of a grammatical structure in the Italian translation appears in lines 20 and 23. The original reads, *not even when Misra was helped to abort, not even when a calendar was brought into the compound and when circles in green were neatly drawn round the safe days and the nights.* The use of passive forms in this sentence contains a powerful message underlining the lack of agency afforded to Misra. She is an object for Uncle Qorrax's pleasure; she is 'helped to abort' when found with his unwanted child, a calendar 'is brought' into the compound on which green circles 'are drawn' to indicate when she may next be bedded 'safely'; safe here meaning from Uncle Qorrax's perspective. The use of passives renders her powerless and objectified. In the Italian the grammatical forms used are haphazardly in contrast to the deliberate pattern in the English. This diminishes the effect of the sentence and reduces its full horror.

The analysis of the segment indicates a pattern in the translator's approach. She has made a real effort to maintain the rhythmic structure of Farah's prose in this segment by organizing the text on the model of the English, punctuating at the same points and keeping the structure of the various clauses as in the original. She has also attempted to compensate elsewhere for some of the poetic devices that she was forced to abandon in the transfer to Italian. However, she opted in several places to adapt the grammatical structures of the original in such a way that the certain very striking stylistic choices made by the author were levelled and rendered dull and prosaic in the target-language.

Segment 2 Maps

The following segment (also from *Maps*) concerns the belated circumcision of Askar: an important moment in the life of a Muslim boy which in the case of the orphan was neglected. The circumcision represents an important turning point in the novel and the protagonist's self-image. Where before he had been completely reliant on Misra, his Ethiopian surrogate mother, for his self-image, the circumcision represents a moment of rupture where the young boy is initiated into the culture and religion of his own people: an identity which excludes the Ethiopian and Christian Misra. It is a moment where the central themes of the novel come boldly into the

light: the territorialisation of the body and the dissection of people from one another on nationalistic grounds.

> During my brief sojourn in the land of pain, two things occurred: one, I lost myself in it (I wondered, was this why Misra suggested I was given a map of the globe and of the oceans?); two, I took hold of a different "self", one that had no room and no space for Misra and no longer cared for her. I let go of Misra and, with self-abandon, roamed about in the newly discovered land, thinking not of her, but of pain. It rained a lot and the rain levelled the terrain which wiped out the readable maps, the recognizable landmarks and milestones. And there I met the children of sooterkin and I shook hands with them. I was introduced to my future, my destiny – indeed, somebody pointed it out to me, and there was no Misra. Or was I in the land of dreams?
>
> (*Maps* 96)

The first sentence of the paragraph is highly articulated but on close analysis is organized very carefully with a bearing on the rhythmic quality of the sentence. There is use of parallelism in that the sentence pivots around the description of two things that happened to Askar. I have divided the sentence up into the various clauses that form it in order to illustrate the parallelism that is used; I have also marked the presence of the parallelism internal to two of the clauses with forward slashes. The sentence consists of an introductory statement *(During my brief sojourn in the land of pain, two things occurred)*; the introduction of the first point *(one, I lost myself in it)*; a parenstudy which reflects on this point *(I wondered, was this why Misra suggested I was given a map of the globe // and of the oceans?)*; the introduction of a second point *(two, I took hold of a different "self")*; a parenstudy qualifying the second point *(one that had no room // and no space for Misra // and no longer cared for her)*. This is rhythm of the "higher-order" described by O'Callaghan (2011). The poignancy of the sentence rests, in my opinion, on the juxtaposition of Askar's distracted musings about the reason Misra suggested Askar be given a map of the globe and the parallel phrase where Askar proclaims that he no longer cares for Misra. This gives the statement an air of flippancy which is striking and wounding to the reader who has spent the greater part of the novel delving into the deep love that Misra holds for the orphaned boy. The image of getting lost and being alienated and the suggestion that a map could help in this regard drives home the theme of the emotional damage wrought by nationalism in the story: ultimately it is the claiming of Askar by his community and his initiation into its rites and customs that alienates the boy from Misra, who is seen as a foreigner, a heathen and representative of the

Ethiopian enemy (the novel is set at the time of the Ogaden War). The two long clauses both in parenstudy which serve to qualify the main statements also illustrate instances of parallelism internal to the clauses. This is constituted by the repetition of …*of the globe and // of the oceans* and …*no room and // no space // and no longer cared.*…. The parallel rhythms caused by these repetitions also contribute to the overall mirroring quality of the sentence. The segment is carefully analysed into phrase-runs and syllable-runs in the footnote.[32]

There is a definite symmetry in the rhythmic structure of the sentence. The parenthetic clauses made up of syllable-runs 5 and 6 and syllable-runs 9 and 10 are both roughly double the length of the runs they qualify, lines 4 and 8 respectively and each contain a pause. The extra syllabic weight given to phrase-run 2 as compared to phrase-run 3 contributes to the uncomfortable litotes of the sentence that puts Askar's distracted and inappropriate musings about maps and globes on the same level of importance as the fact that he no longer cares for his adopted mother. Given this analysis there can be no doubt that rhythm is an important device that Farah uses to structure thought and emotion in his prose.

The Italian translation of the sentence reads as follows:

> Durante il mio breve soggiorno nella terra del dolore accaddero due cose: uno, mi smarii (mi domandai: era per questo che Misra aveva suggerito allo zio di darmi una mappa del globo e degli oceani?); due, mi impossesai di un diverso "io", in cui non c'era posto né spazio per Misra, un io cui non importava più niente di lei.[33]

---

[32] Analysis of prosody and syllabic structure of ST segment
[1][[1](/Du/ring/ my/ brief/ soj/ourn/ in/ the/ land/ of/ pain/) {,} [2](/two/ things/ oc/curred/)] {:}
[2][[3](/one/) {,} [4](/I/ lost/ my/self/ in/ it/) {*}[5](I/ wond/ered) {,} [6](was/ this/ why/ Mis/ra/ sug/gest/ed/ I/ was/ giv/en/ a/ map/ of/ the/ globe/ and/ of/ the/ oc/eans/?)] {;}
[3][[7](/two/) {,} [8](/I/ took/ hold/ of/ a/ dif/ferent/ "self"/) {,}[9](/one/ that/ had/ no/ room/ and/ no/ space/ for/ Mis/ra/) {*} [10](/and/ no/ long/er/ cared/ for/ her/).]
[1][(11 syllables) {PAUSE} (4 syllables)] <HINGE>
[2][(1 syllable) {PAUSE} (6 syllables) {PAUSE} (22 syllables)]<HINGE>
[3][(1 syllable) {PAUSE} (11 syllables) {PAUSE} [5][7 syllables].
Note: *Hinges* refer to the longer and more significant pauses as far as the overall sentence structure is concerned represented by the colon and semi-colon in the sentence.

[33] Analysis of prosody and syllabic structure of TT segment
[1][[1](/Du/ran/te/ il/ mi/o/ bre/ve/ sog/gior/no/ nel/la/ ter/ra/ del/ do/lo/re/ ac/cad/de/ro/ du/e/ co/se/)] {:}
[2][[2](/un/o/) {,} [3](/mi/ smar/ii) {*} [4](/mi/ do/man/dai/) {:} [5](e/ra/ per/ ques/to/ che/ Mis/ra/ a/ve/va/ sug/ge/ri/to/ al/lo/ zi/o/ di/ dar/mi/ un/a/ map/pa/ del/ glo/bo/ e/ de/gli/ o/ce/a/ni/?)] {;}
[3][[6](/du/e/) {,} [7](/mi/ im/pos/se/sai/ di/ un/ di/ver/so/ /i/o/) {,} [8](/in/ /cui/ /non/ /c'e/ra/ /pos/to/ né/ spa/zio/ per/ Mis/ra/) {,} [9](/un/ i/o/ cui/ non/ im/por/ta/va/ più/ nien/te/ di/ lei/)].
[1][[1](26 syllables)] <HINGE>
[2][[2](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](26 syllables)] <HINGE>
[3][[5](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [7](13 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](14 syllables)]
Note: *Hinges* refer to the longer and more significant pauses as far as the overall sentence structure is concerned represented by the colon and semi-colon in the sentence.

(*Mappe*: 123)

There are certain arbitrary revisions to the punctuation in the Italian translation with effects on the rhythmic structure of the sentence. In the first run a comma is removed, leading to a much longer syllable-run. This has the effect that the emphasis is taken off the fact that two things are being introduced. A colon is inserted in the place of a comma in the third run. This implies a longer and weightier pause as compared to the source-text. The pattern of syllabic symmetry of the sentence has been effaced in the translation. This results in the carefully constructed rhythmic parallelism of the English becoming much more prosaic in the Italian. The Italian translation undermines the parallelism in other ways: the mirroring and repetition seen in the English described above is absent from the Italian translation. As mentioned above, because of obligatory syntactic changes necessitated by the structure of the Italian language, maintaining the rhythmic structure of English prose in Italian translation is difficult. Examples of where expansion is obligatory are, *my* (1 syllable) > *il mio* (3 syllables); *was this why* (3 syllables) > *era per questo che* (6 syllables); *suggested* (3 syllables) > *aveva suggerito* (7 syllables). Moving away from rhythm per se, other shifts present in the target-text are not obligatory: the addition of *allo zio* is completely unnecessary. The phrase may have been rendered *Misra aveva suggerito che mi dessero…*; I also feel that the translation of *I lost myself in it* as *mi smarii* is inadequate. The idea expressed in the English is that Askar gets lost and simultaneously loses himself in the land of pain for which reason Misra suggests he needs a map and for which reason he emerges fundamentally altered. The translator might have opted either for *mi persi lì dentro* or *mi ci persi*. This solution would maintain the double entendre and also avoid the deforming tendency of *ennoblement* which subjects the text to the imposition of classical literary tastes as embodied by the word *smarire* with its Dantesque inflection[34]. In order to maintain the parallels a translation on the lines of the following might have been appropriate:

> Durante il mio breve soggiorno nella terra del dolore, due cose accaddero: uno, mi persi lì dentro (mi domandai, era per questo che Misra aveva suggerito che mi

[34] Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Che la diritta via era *smarrita*.
(Dante Alighieri *L'inferno* 1265-1321: lines 1-3)

> dessero una mappa del globo e dell'oceano?); due, assunsi un altro "io", dentro il quale non c'era né posto né spazio per Misra e al quale non importava più di lei.

In this translation, very closely based on Fornasiero's, I have recalibrated the punctuation along the lines of the English and tried to lighten the syllable density where possible in order to balance out the rhythmic structure. As noted above, the syntax of Italian makes this very difficult. I have also effected the semantic changes discussed above. I have made other changes to try maintain the parallelism: I singularised *oceano* so that I could mirror *del* and *dell'* and not have to inflect the morpheme as *degli*; I inserted another *né* in the fourth run; I removed the repetition of *un io* in the fifth run and reordered the phrase more closely along the lines of the English as well as introducing a parallel with the repetition of the word *quale*.

While the above analysis may seem like translation criticism, I am well aware that, given the subjective nature of criticism, another analyst could well criticise my translation on the basis of a different set of assumptions of what constitutes "good" translation. My intention is not to criticize the translation or to suggest that my version is superior but, rather, to explore a specific aspect of prose translation that is under-researched and under-emphasised in literary translation practice: that of rhythm in prose. Quite to the contrary of negatively criticizing the quality of Fornasiero's translation, it seems, based on the segments I have analysed, that she is generally very sympathetic to the source-text, maintaining the textual and syntactic organisation of the text insofar as is possible given the constraints of the translating language. This is illustrated by how infrequently she reorders sentences or punctuation.

The segments continue as follows organized in such a way as to reveal the rhythmic structure as represented by the punctuation marks (and following conjunctions which introduce new clauses):

> I let go of Misra and, with self-abandon, roamed about in the newly discovered land, thinking not of her, but of pain. It rained a lot and the rain levelled the terrain which wiped out the readable maps, the recognizable landmarks and milestones. And there I met the children of sooterkin and I shook hands with them. I was introduced to my future, my destiny – indeed, somebody pointed it out to me, and there was no Misra. Or was I in the land of dreams?[35]

[35] Analysis of ST prosody and syllabic structure
[1][[1](/I/ let/ go/ of/ Mis/ra/ and/) {,} [2](/with/ self/-ab/and/on/) {,} [3](/roamed/ a/bout/ in/ the/ new/ly/ dis/cov/ered/ land/) {,} [4](/think/ing/ not/ of/ her/) {,} [5](/but/ of/ pain/)].
[1][[1](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](11 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](3 syllables)].

(*Maps*: 96)

> Mi staccai da Misra e, abbandonato a me stesso, vagai in quella terra appena scoperta, pensando non a lei ma al dolore. Piovve a lungo e la pioggia livellò il terreno, rendendo illegibili le mappe, cancellando tutti i punti di riferimento e le pietre miliari. E lì incontrai i bambini di sooterkin e strinsi loro la mano. Mi presentarono il mio futuro, il mio destino: qualcuno me lo indicò, e Misra non c'era. O forse ero nella terra dei sogni?[36]

(*Mappe*: 124)

In this segment the English consists of 17 syllable-runs while the Italian comprises 16. The difference is the result of the omission of the 14th syllable-run in English: the word *indeed*. The Italian translator has substituted the word with a colon. In line 8 the translator has replaced the relative pronoun and verb *which wiped out* with a comma followed by the gerund phrase *rendendo illegibili*. The graph below illustrates the syllable density of the English syllable-runs as opposed to those of the Italian translation.

---

5 syllable-runs = total 31 syllables
$^{2}[^{6}$(/It/ rained/ a/ lot/) ^{7}(/and/ the/ rain/ lev/elled/ the/ ter/rain/) ^{8}(/which/ wiped/ out/ the/ read/ab/le/ maps/) {,} ^{9}(/the/ rec/og/niz/ab/le/ land/marks/ and/ mile/stones/)] .
$^{2}[^{6}$(4 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{7}(8 syllables) ^{8}(8 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{9}(11 syllables)] .
4 syllable runs = total 31 syllables
$^{3}[^{10}$(/And/ there/ I/ met/ the/ child/ren/ of/ soot/er/kin/) {*} ^{11}(/and/ I/ shook/ hands/ with/ them/)].
$^{3}[^{10}$(11 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{11}6 syllables)].
2 syllable-runs = total 17 syllables
$^{4}[^{12}$(/I/ was/ int/ro/duced/ to/ my/ fut/ure/) {,} ^{13}(/my/ des/ti/ny/) { –} ^{14}(/in/deed/) {,} ^{15}(/some/bod/y/ point/ed/ it/ out/ to/ me/) {,} ^{16}(/and/ there/ was/ no/ Mis/ra/)].
$^{4}[^{12}$(9 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{13}(4 syllables) { PAUSE} ^{14}(2 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{15}(9 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{16}(6 syllables)].
5 syllable runs = total 30 syllables
$^{5}[^{17}$(/Or/ was/ I/ in/ the/ land/ of/ dreams/)]?
$^{5}[^{17}$(8 syllables)]?
1 syllable run = total 8 syllables

[36] Analysis of TT prosody and syllabic structure
$^{1}[^{1}$(/Mi/ stac/cai/ da/ Mis/ra/ e/){,} ^{2}(/ab/ban/don/a/to/ a/ me/ stes/so/) {,} ^{3}(/vag/ai/ in/ quel/la/ ter/ra/ ap/pen/a/ sco/per/ta/) {,} ^{4}(/pen/san/do/ non/ a/ lei/) {*}^{5}(/ma/ al/ do/lo/re/)].
$^{1}[^{1}$(7 syllables){PAUSE} ^{2}(8 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{3}(13 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{4}(6 syllables) {PAUSE}^{5}(5 syllables)].
5 syllable-runs = total 39 syllables
$^{2}[^{6}$(/Piov/ve/ a/ lun/go/) {*}^{7}(/e/ la/ piog/gia/ li/vel/lò/ il/ ter/re/no/) {,} ^{8}(/ren/den/do/ il/leg/i/bi/li/ le/ map/pe/) {,} ^{9}(/can/cel/lan/do/ tut/ti/ i/ pun/ti/ di/ ri/fer/i/men/to/ e/ le/ pie/tre/ mi/li/a/ri/)]
$^{2}[^{6}$(5 syllables) {PAUSE}^{7}(11 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{8}(11 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{9}(23 syllables)].
4 syllable runs = total 50 syllables
$^{3}[^{10}$(/E/ lì/ in/con/trai/ i/ bam/bi/ni/ di/ soot/er/kin/) {*} ^{11}(/e/ strin/si/ lo/ro/ la/ ma/no/).]
$^{3}[^{10}$(13 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{11}(8 syllables)].
2 syllable-runs = total 21 syllables
$^{4}[^{12}$(/Mi/ pres/ent/ar/o/no/ il/ mi/o/ fu/tu/ro/){,}^{13}(/il/ mi/o/ des/ti/no/) {:} ^{14}(/qual/cu/no/ me/ lo/ in/di/cò/) {,}^{15}(/e/ Mis/ra/ non/ c'e/ra/)].
$^{4}[^{12}$(12 syllables){PAUSE}^{13}(6 syllables) {PAUSE} ^{14}(6 syllables) {PAUSE}^{15}(8 syllables)].
4 syllable-runs = total 32 syllables
$^{5}[^{16}$(/O/ for/se/ e/ro/ nel/la/ ter/ra/ dei/ sog/ni/)]?
$^{5}[^{16}$(12 syllables)].
1 syllable-run = 12 syllables

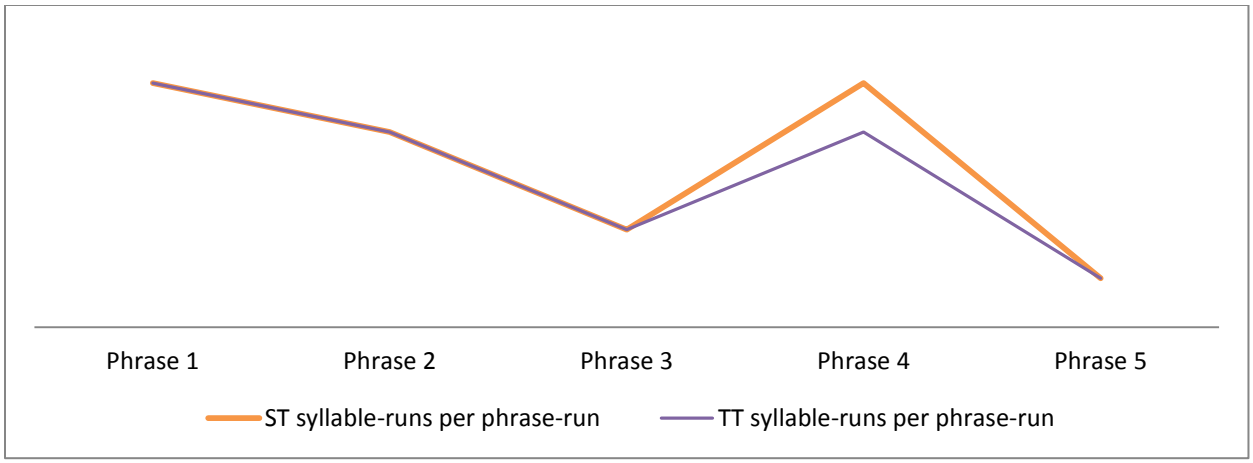

Figure 6: Graph comparing syllable-runs per phrase run in ST and TT (segment 2 *Maps*)

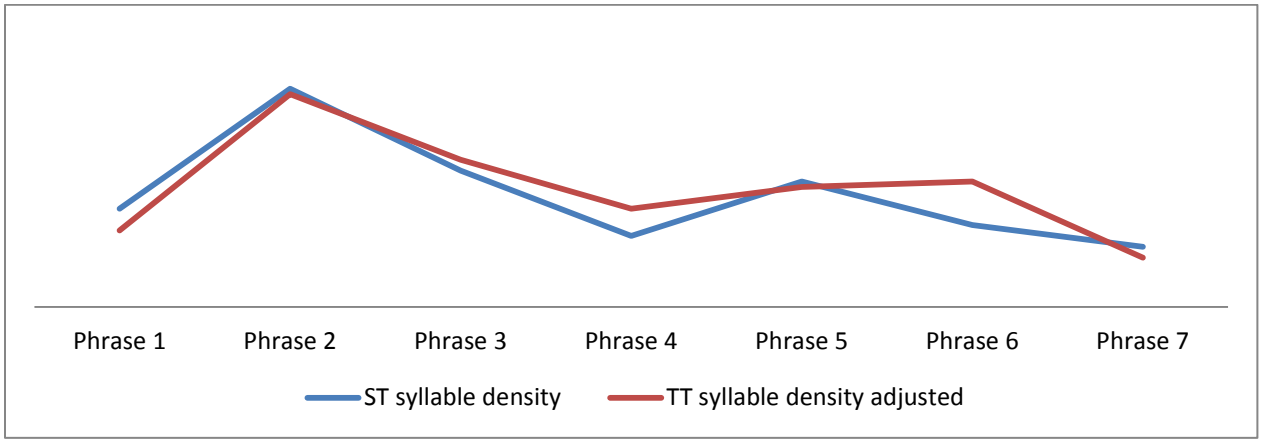

Figure 7: graph comparing syllable density per phrase-run in ST and TT (segment 2 *Maps*)

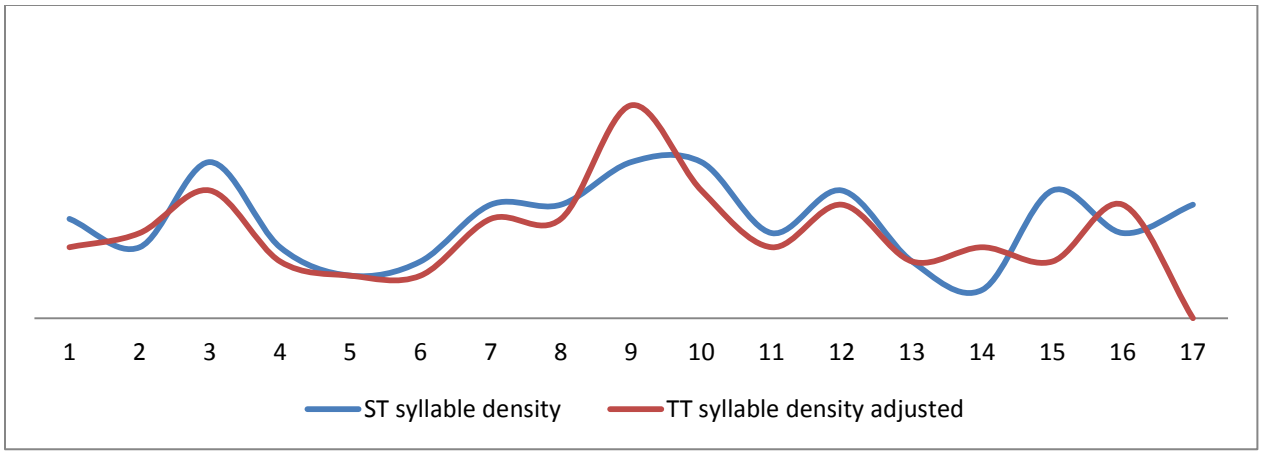

Figure 8: graph comparing syllable density per syllable-run in ST and TT (Segment 2 *Maps*)

As we have come to expect, the Italian segment is much more syllable dense but because the translator tends to maintain the pattern of punctuation present in the source text, the density trends are similar. There are two important differences however. The first is the gradual rise followed by a plateau between lines 7 and 10 in the English being replaced by a sharp rise in the Italian. Looking closely at the syntactic structure the translator has opted for explains this.

> It rained a lot and the rain levelled the terrain which wiped out the readable maps, the recognizable landmarks and milestones.
>
> Piovve a lungo e la pioggia livellò il terreno, rendendo illegibili le mappe, cancellando tutti i punti di riferimento e le pietre miliari.

The higher syllable density of the Italian is explained by the addition of the gerund verb *cancellando* where in the English the verb *wiped out* has several objects. Another reason for the high syllable density is the translation of *landmark* as *punti di riferimento*. Where the translator has rendered *wiped out the readable maps* as *rendendo illegibili le mappe* this can be classified as rationalization and clarification in Berman's scheme of deforming tendencies. The Italian translation is indeed more rational, it is clear that rain would cause a map to become illegible by dissolving the ink. However, the meaning of Farah's original statement is far more impenetrable and far less prosaic. The use of the relative pronoun makes the subject of the second clause unclear. Was it the rain or the terrain itself that wiped out the maps? The meaning of the sentence is not at all immediately obvious and the reader stumbles. If literariness is achieved by the

roughening of everyday speech which causes the reader to be stopped short and to reflect on the unusual and the aesthetic qualities of language (see section on Russian Formalism above) then this particular solution falls short in terms of literary translation. Where the translator had no option but to throw the rhythm out was in rendering *landmarks* and *milestones* both of which are succinct two syllable words but which in Italian require the use of phrases in the form of *punti di riferimento* (8 syllables) and *pietre miliari* (6 syllables).

The second major difference between the two texts is caused by the omission of the 2 syllable long syllable-run *indeed*. This can be classified as qualitative impoverishment in Berman's scheme. This refers to translations which replace words with equivalents that lack their "sonorous" or "iconic" richness (Berman 1985: 291). In this case the abrupt change in tempo introduced by the word *indeed* is lost. Another difference that emerges in the translation is a change in transitivity. In the English the narrator meets the children of sooterkin and is subsequently introduced to his destiny by someone who points it out to him. In the Italian the children of sooterkin are made to explicitly show the narrator his destiny. The Italian translator also decides to italicize and footnote the term *sooterkin* explaining it as follows:

> Termine inglese ormai raro, nel XVIII secolo indicava un orribile animaletto imaginario che si diceva le donne olandesi partorissero assieme ai bambini; per estensione, se applicato a un testo letterario, ne indicava il carettere accessorio o imperfetto (N.d.T).
>
> (*Mappe*: 124)

The use of italics and footnotes is what Berman refers to as exoticization. Perhaps counter-intuitively, exoticization is at the extreme end of the domestication spectrum. This is because it reduces the foreign to an icon of otherness for easy domestic consumption. This sets an unfamiliar cultural item apart from and isolates it from the main body of the text. The use of footnotes is particularly intrusive as it interrupts the reading experience and subverts it to the purpose of gaining anthropological or linguistic knowledge. The term sooterkin is extremely rare in English and its use is a deliberate gesture on the behalf of the author for stylistic reasons: in this case probably a subtle intertextual or meta-fictional reference possibly to this poem by Alexander Pope :

> Swearing and supperless the hero sate,
> Blasphemed his gods, the dice, and damned his fate,
> Then gnawed his pen, then dashed it to the ground,
> Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!
> Plunged for his sense, but found no bottom there.
> Yet wrote and floundered on in mere despair.
> Round him much embryo, much abortion lay,
> Much future ode and abdicated play;
> Nonsense precipitate, like running lead,
> That slipped through cracks and zig-zags of the head;
> All the on folly frenzy could beget,
> Fruits of dull heat and sooterkins of wit.
> Next, o'er his books his eyes began to roll
> In pleasing memory of all he stole,
> Hoe here he sipped, how there he plundered snug
> And sucked all over like an industrious bug.
>
> (Alexander Pope *Dunciads* Book I, II. 115-30)

This poem is at the origin of the now rare use of the word *sooterkin* to refer to a failed literary venture. The poem is all about the difficulty of the writing process. The imagery of an aborted embryo is very apt in the context of *Maps* given the obsession with the mysterious circumstances of Askar's birth. This opaque inter-textual reference is a hallmark of Nuruddin Farah's postmodern-leaning style and one that is there to challenge the reader. The translator's note in the Italian is an intervention which is typical of a domesticating approach to translation: one which attempts to reduce the foreign material to something easily assimilated by the target-audience.

Segment 1 Gifts

Gifts opens as follows:

> Duniya had been awake for a while, conscious of the approaching dawn. She had dreamt of a restless butterfly; of a cat waiting attentively for the fretful insect's shadow to stay still for an instance so as to pounce on it. Then the dark room lit up with the brightness of fireflies, agitated breaths of light, soft, quiet as foam. Faint from heat, Duniya watched the goings-on, supine. The butterfly flew here and there, movements mesmeric in its circling rainbow of colours. As if hypnotized, the cat's eyes closed slowly, dramatically, and it fell asleep.
>
> Fully awake, Duniya got out of bed.[37]

[37] Analysis of ST prosody and syllabic structure

(*Gifts*: 3)

The poetic nature of this paragraph comes from the use of short phrases alternating with longer ones as well as vivid imagery like *fretful insect's shadow, the brightness of fireflies, agitated breaths of light, quiet as foam, movements mesmeric* and *circling rainbow of colours.*

The Italian translation reads as follows:

> Duniya era sveglia da un po', conscia dell'approssimarsi dell'alba. Aveva sognato una farfalla irrequieta, e un gatto concentrato nell'attesa di scorgere l'ombra mobile dell'insetto fermarsi un istante, pronto a spiccare il balzo. Poi la stanza buia si era illuminata di lucciole, nervosi aliti di luce, miti bagliori silenziosi come schiuma. Fiacca per il caldo, Duniya era rimasta supina a osservare l'andirivieni. La farfalla volava qua e là, i movimenti ipnotici nel roteannte arcobaleno di colori. Ammaliato, il gatto aveva chiuso gli occhi, lentamente, teatralmente, e si era addormentato.
>
> Del tutto sveglia, Duniya si alzò dal letto.[38]

ST syllabic analysis
[1][[1](/Du/ni/ya/ had/ been/ a/wake/ for/ a/ while/) {,} [2](/cons/cious/ of/ the/ ap/proach/ing/ dawn/)].
[1][[2](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](8 syllables)]
2 syllable-runs = total 18 syllables
[2][[3](/She/ had/ dreamt/ of/ a/ rest/less/ but/ter/fly/) {;} [4](/of/ a/ cat/ wait/ing/ at/tent/ive/ly/ for/ the/ fret/ful/ in/sect's/ sha/dow/ to/ stay/ still/ for/ an/ inst/ance/ so/ as/ to/ pounce/ on/ it/)].
[2][[3](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](30 syllables)]
2 syllable-runs = total 40 syllables
[3][[5](/Then/ the/ dark/ room/ lit/ up/ with/ the/ bright/ness/ of/ fire/flies/) {,} [6](/ag/i/tat/ed/ breaths/ of/ light/, [7](/soft/) {,} [8](/qui/et/ as/ foam/)].
[3][[5](13 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [7](1 syllable) {PAUSE} [8](4 syllables)]
4 syllable-runs = total 25 syllables
[4][[8](/Faint/ from/ heat/) {,} [9](/Du/ni/ya/ watched/ the/ go/ings/-on) {,} [10](/sup/ine/)].
[4][[8](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](2 syllables)]
3 syllable-runs = total 13 syllables
[5][[11](/The/ but/ter/fly/ flew/ here/ and/ there/) {,} [12](/move/ments/ mes/me/ric/ in/ its/ circ/ling/ rain/bow/ of/ co/lours/)]
[5][[11](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [12](14 syllables)]
2 syllable-runs = total 23 syllables
[6][[13](/As/ if/ hyp/not/ized/ {,} [14](/the/ cat's/ eyes/ closed/ slow/ly/, /dram/at/ic/ally/) {,} [15](/and/ it/ fell/ a/sleep/)].
[6][[13](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [14](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](4 syllables)]
3 syllable runs = 15 syllables
[7][[12](/Ful/ly/ a/wake/) {,} [13](/Du/ni/ya/ got/ out/ of/ bed/)].
[7][[12](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [13](7 syllables)]
2 syllable-runs = total 11 syllables

[38] Analysis of TT prosody and syllabic structure
TT syllabic analysis
[1][[1](/Du/ni/ya/ e/ra/ sveg/lia/ da/ un/ po'/){,} [2](/con/scia/ del/l'ap/pros/si/mar/si/ del/l'al/ba/)].
[1][[1](10 syllable){PAUSE} [2](11 syllables)]
2 syllable runs = 21 syllables
[2][[3](/Av/ev/a/ sog/na/to/ u/na/ far/fal/la/ ir/re/qui/e/ta/){,} [4](/e/ un/ gat/to/ con/cen/tr/a/to/ nel/l'at/te/sa/ di/ scor/ge/re/ l'om/bra/ mob/i/le/ del/l'in/set/to/ ferm/ar/si/ un/ is/tan/te/){,} [5](/pron/to/ a/ spic/ca/re/ il/ bal/zo/)].
[2][[3](16 syllables){PAUSE} [4](33 syllables){PAUSE} [5](9 syllables)].
3 syllable runs = 58 syllables
[3][[6](/Poi/ la/ stan/za/ bu/ia/ si/ e/ra/ il/lum/i/na/ta/ di/ luc/cio/le/){,} [7](/ner/vo/si/ al/i/ti/ di/ lu/ce/){,} [8](/mi/ti/ bag/lio/ri/ sil/en/zio/zi/ co/me/ schiu/ma/)].
[3][[6](18 syllable) {PAUSE} [7](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](13 syllables)].
3 syllable runs = total 40 syllables
[4][[9](/Fiac/ca/ per/ il/ cal/do/){,} [10](/Dun/i/ya/ e/ra/ ri/mas/ta/ sup/in/a/ a/ os/ser/va/re/ l'an/di/ri/vien/i/)].
[4][[9](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](21 syllables)].
2 syllable runs = 27 syllables
[5][[11](/La/ far/fal/la/ vo/la/va/ qua/ e/ là/){,}[12](/i/ mov/i/men/ti/ ip/not/i/ci/ nel/ ro/te/ant/e/ arc/o/bal/en/o/ di/ co/lo/ri/)].

(*Doni*: 3)

The syllable densities of the runs are indicated graphically in the figures below:

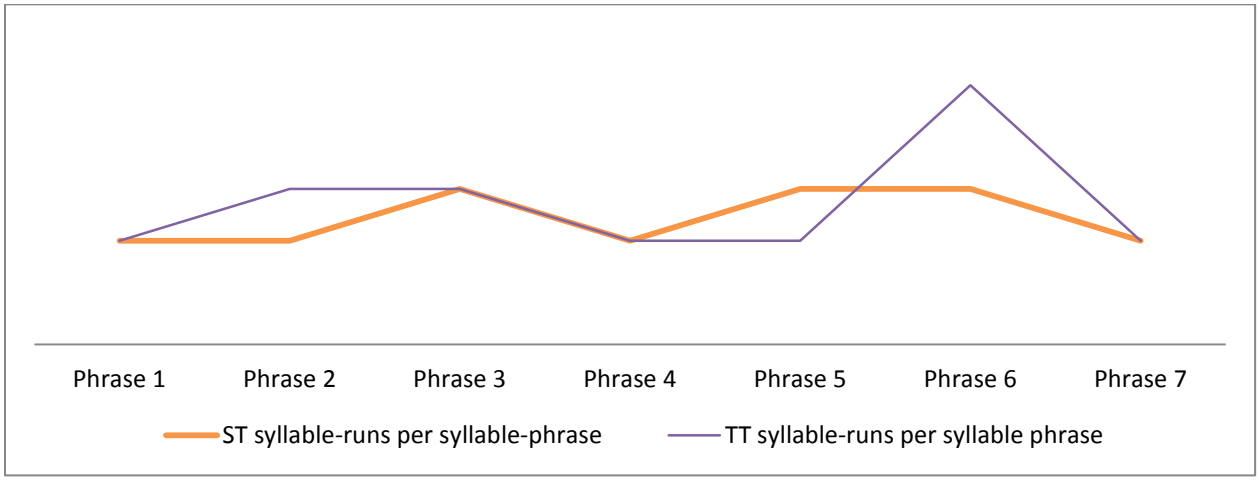

Figure 9. Syllable-runs per phrase-run in ST as compared to TT (Segment 1: *Gifts*)

The graph in figure 9 illustrating syllable-runs per phrase in the ST and TT of this segment indicates that the Italian translator made some significant changes to the structure of the segment as she translated it. The changes occur in phrase 2 which is made up of 3 syllable-runs in the Italian as opposed to the English; phrase 5 which has 2 syllable runs as opposed to 3 in the source-text; and, most significantly, phrase 6 where the Italian translator divides the phrase into 5 syllable-runs where the English original has only 3.

[5][[11](10 syllables){PAUSE}[12](23 syllables)].
2 syllable runs = total 33 syllables
[6][[13](/Am/ma/li/at/o/){,} [14](/il/ gat/to/ /av/e/va/ chiu/so/ gli/ oc/chi/){,} [15](/len/ta/men/te/){,} [16](/te/at/ral/men/te/){,} [17](/e/ si/ er/a/ ad/dorm/ent/a/to/)].
[6][[13](5 syllables){,} [14](11 syllables){,} [15](4 syllables){,} [16](5 syllables){,} [17](9 syllables)].
5 syllable runs = total 34 total syllable runs
[7][[18](/Del/ tut/to/ sveg/lia/){,}[19](/Du/ni/ya/ si/ al/zò/ dal/ let/to/)].
[7][[18](5 syllables){,}[19](9 syllables)].
2 syllable-runs = total 14 syllables

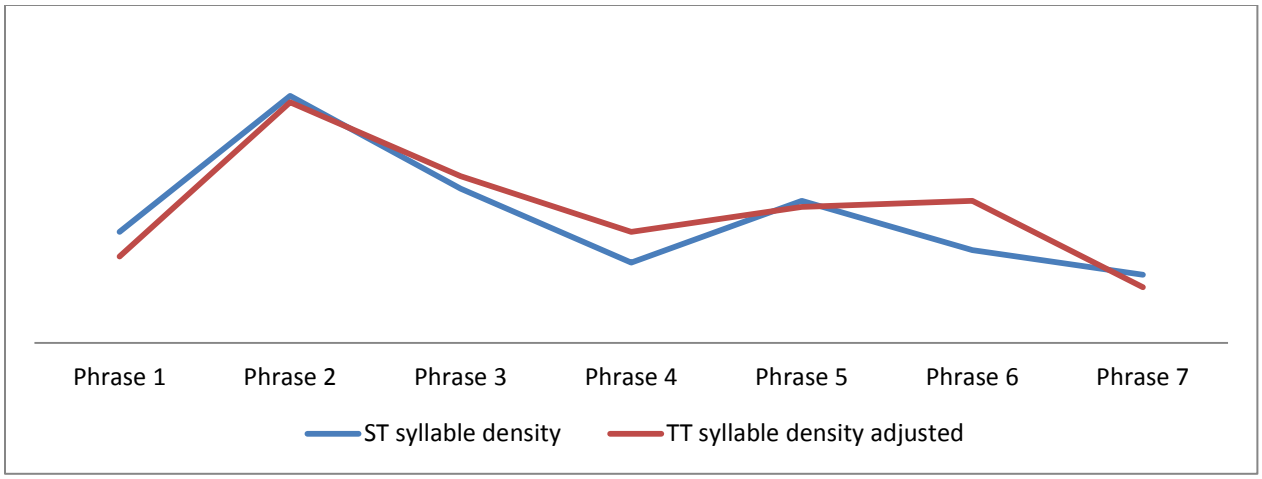

Figure 10. Syllable density per phrase-run in ST as compared to TT (Segment 1: *Gifts*)

Figure 10, in contrast, indicates that in terms of syllable density per phrase-run, the Italian translation and the English original follows an almost identical trend. The graph below which compares ST syllable density syllable-run as opposed to TT syllable density per syllable-run reveals a different picture.

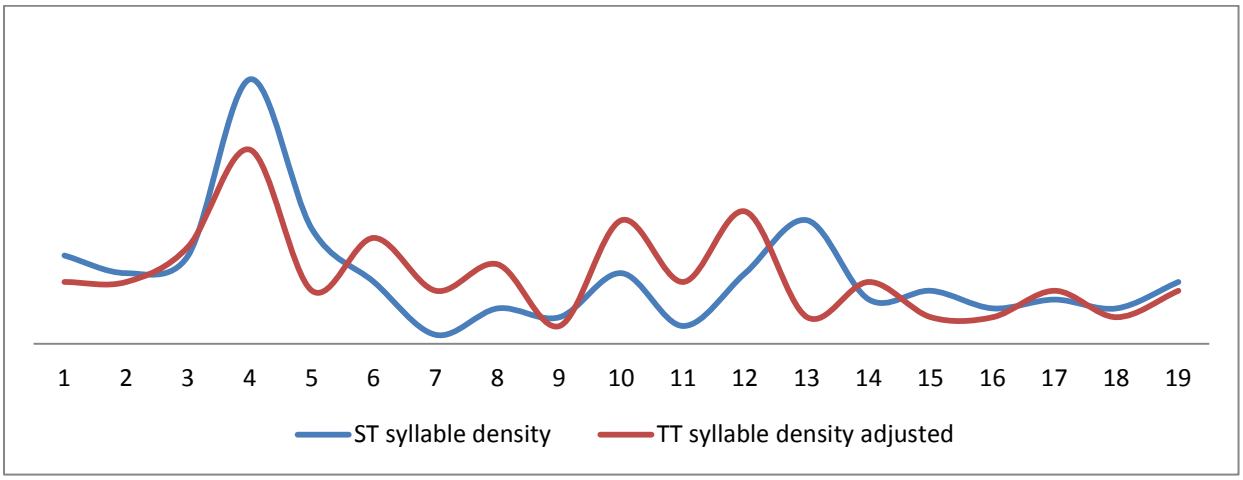

Figure 11. Syllable density per syllable-run in ST as compared to TT (Segment 1: *Gifts*)

In the English we note one major peak in syllable density at line 4 which is a phrase about a predatory cat in Duniya's dream which is preparing to pounce on a butterfly. This is a phrase of great nervous tension which is juxtaposed with the soft lyricism of the rest of the paragraph. This peak is matched by the Italian syllabic structure but is modified in that it is split into two lines by a comma. This, and other arbitrary revisions of the punctuation move the English and Italian

rhythmic structures out of kilter and we see a graph that correlates poorly as compared to the segments translated by Silvia Fornasiero above.

Despite the arbitrary revisions to the punctuation and sentence structure, the Italian, like the English, consists of 19 syllable-runs. This appears coincidental however as the semantic content of the syllable-runs do not always coincide because of the revisions made by the translator. The general rhythmic structure is thus altered. This happens, for example, in line 4 where the one long syllable-run in *Gifts* is divided into two syllable-runs in *Doni*. The difference in rhythm is caused by the translator's modulation of the grammatical structure of the phrase. The verb phrase *waiting attentively* inexplicably becomes a complex adjectival phrase *concentrato nell'attesa di scorgere*.

Another inexplicable modulation occurs in the translation of *the fretful insect's shadow* which becomes *l'ombra mobile dell'insetto*. Here the adjective is shifted to qualifying the shadow of the insect as opposed to the insect itself. In addition to this the choice of adjective to translate *fretful* is bizarre. *Fretful* which can be defined as *feeling distressed* is translated as *mobile* which can be defined as *prone to movement*. Italian has a wealth of synonyms with strong emotive connotations that could be used to translate the meaning of *fretful*: *agitato, eccitato, esagitato, turbato, ansioso, inquieto, irrequieto, nervoso, smanioso, angosciato, apprensivo,* etc. The image which ascribes fearful, distressed and agitated emotion to the insect becomes simplified in the Italian and what remains is the image of a moving shadow. This is not an unpleasing image from an aesthetic perspective but it is somewhat more mundane and represents an unnecessary change from the source-text. This shift represents a number of deforming tendencies in Berman's scheme. The first is of course "the destruction of rhythms"; the second is "qualitative impoverishment" where a word is replaced by another word that lacks its "iconic or sonorous richness"; the third is "the destruction of underlying networks of signification" and "destruction of linguistic patternings" which both refer to the destruction of patterns and links in the lexical choice of prose. In this case the paragraph contains three words, *restless, fretful* and *agitated* which form a network of signification. This network of signification is important because the dream sequences in the novel represent the state of mind of the protagonist (Bardolph 1998). Here the protagonist could be represented by the butterfly: beautiful, fragile and vulnerable to the aggressive, predatory cat. This may well be an image to represent the

situation of Duniya or, by implication, of women in general in the war-torn and famine-ravaged Somalia that forms the backdrop of the novel. In the Italian, while of course the cat's predatory designs on the butterfly itself are clear, the language nonetheless softens the quiet horror of this miniature vignette by implying that the shadow is the object of the cat's attention. The dread present in the scene is further attenuated by another modulation where *ready to pounce on it*, where the victim of the attack is specified, becomes *pronto a spiccare il balzo*, in which the victim of the attack is abstracted by the removal of the direct object.

O'Callaghan (1984: 107) provides some evaluative criteria for successful literary prose rhythm. The most important among these is the idea that syllabic runs and sense units should coincide. He quotes Harding (1976: 131) who suggests that syllabic runs ought not to "unite words that shouldn't go together and help to separate those that should". In terms of this evaluative criterion, the translator has failed to transfer the rhythm appropriately even if the sense is largely intact. The literary translator, as Berman and Venuti and many others point out, is, however, constrained by far more than the transfer of denotative meaning. These translation choices are all the result of a domesticating impulse which seeks to rationalize and clarify the text and bring it line with the norms of standard Italian, thereby levelling the literariness of the segment.

Phrase 3 is another example of arbitrary punctuation changes altering the rhythm as well as changes of a lexical nature. Firstly the above noted poetic phrase *the brightness of fireflies* is simply rendered as *lucciole*. The word *soft*, 1 syllable isolated from the rest in which sense and rhythm coincide to great aesthetic effect, is removed and instead the translator inserts a phrase *miti bagliori*. The first shift can be described as qualitative impoverishment in Berman's scheme of deforming tendencies while the second one is an opposite tendency called ennoblement or rhetoricization which "consists in producing "elegant" sentences, while utilizing the source text, so to speak, as raw material" (Berman 1985: 290). In Popovič's terms these procedures can be referred to as *stylistic substitution* – replacement of the original expressional features by domestic ones (Špirk 2009: 8). What is clear is that shifts of these kinds are very often responsible for changes in the rhythmic structure of the overall paragraph.

The last four sentences of the segment which complete the poetic and sensuous dream sequence are shown below. They follow a rhythmic arrangement where sense units correspond to

phrase-runs which are presented in a pattern of alternation. The phrase units of the English original are presented below in the form of lines. In the corresponding footnote the prosody and syllabic structure is shown: phrase-runs are shown in square brackets numbered 4 to 7 in superscript; pauses are indicated by the word *pause* in curled brackets; the length of individual syllable-runs within the phrase-runs are indicated by round brackets. These are numbered with the syllable-run number which they correspond to in terms of the greater segment; total syllables in each phrase-run are also indicated.

Faint from heat, Duniya watched the goings-on, supine.
The butterfly flew here and there, movements mesmeric in its circling rainbow of colours.
As if hypnotized, the cat's eyes closed slowly, dramatically, and it fell asleep.
Fully awake, Duniya got out of bed.[39]

Observing the organization of the segment it is obvious that there are four movements or phrase-runs separated by full stops which alternate between activity and inactivity: Duniya lies in bed; the butterfly flits around the room; the cat falls asleep; Duniya gets out of bed. This alternation gives the segment an almost haiku like quality which closes the drama of the preceding half of the segment in an anti-climax. The anti-climax of the cat not attacking the butterfly is matched by the anti-climax of Duniya merely getting out of bed and the sequence closing. The poetic interlude where dreamy sleepfulness and wakefulness are in an uncertain fluid relationship with pleasurable aesthetic effects closes suddenly and the mundane and prosaic of real-life suddenly takes its place. The first and last lines which open and close the segment are in a relationship of parallelism. They both consist of a clause describing Duniya's state (*faint from heat* and *fully awake*) followed by the word *Duniya* and a description of her actions (*watched the goings-on* and *got out of bed*). The first line adds the adjective *supine* which results in the line being made up of three syllable-runs where the last line consists of two. The second and third lines of the segment are also parallel: the butterfly's actions are described in the second line and the cat's in the third.

As shown below, the Italian translation follows this overall structure extremely closely.

[39] Prosody and syllabic analysis ST
[4][[9](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](2 syllables)].
[5][[12](8 syllables) {PAUSE}[13](14 syllables)].
[6][[14](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](5 syllables)].
[7][[18](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](7 syllables)].

Fiacca per il caldo, Duniya era rimasta supina a osservare l'andirivieni.
La farfalla volava qua e là, i movimenti ipnotici nel roteante arcobaleno di colori.
Ammaliato, il gatto aveva chiuso gli occhi, lentamente, teatralmente, e si era addormentato.
Del tutto sveglia, Duniya si alzò dal letto.[40]

In the Italian the three syllable-runs of the first line are transformed into two syllable-runs by the restructuring of the phrase. The Italian Duniya remains supine watching the goings-on as opposed to the English Duniya who watches the goings-on, supine. The difference represents an arbitrary modulation of the grammatical structure of the phrase based on nothing more than the conventions of the Italian language. In Berman's terms the translation procedure followed here constitutes *rationalization* and *destruction of rhythms*. As the graph below shows, the difference between the two segments in terms of the rhythmic structure of the phrase-runs is minimal, both following a very similar trajectory. The difference lies predominantly in the values of syllables. As has been noted frequently, Italian is much more syllable rich than English which is characterized by low morphology and many monosyllabic lexemes in sharp contrast to Italian which is inflectional.

The graph below highlights the syllable densities of the ST and TT in phrases 4 to 7 of the segment.

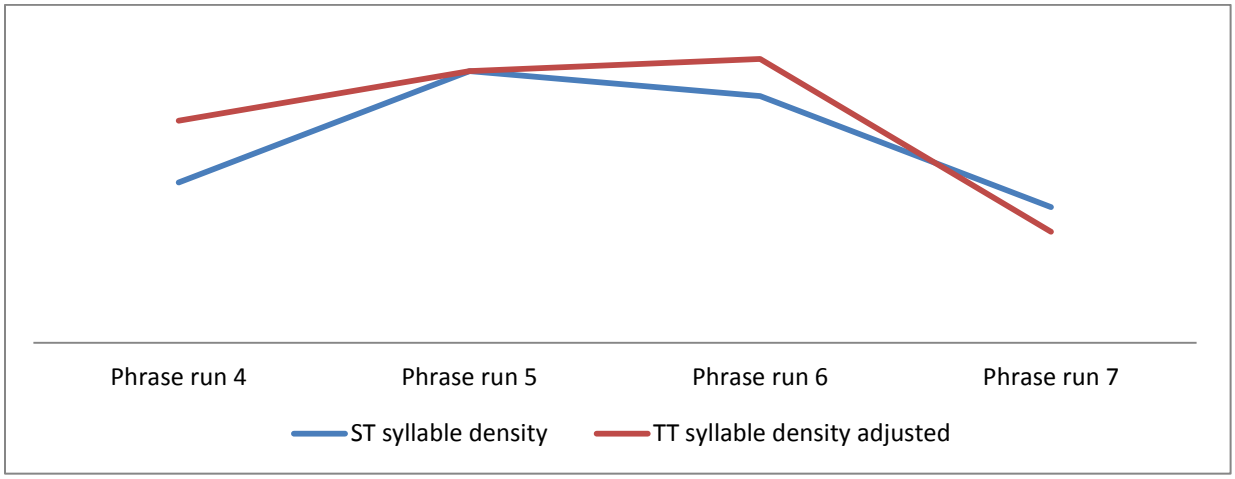

Figure 12. Syllable-density in phrase-runs in lines 9-19 of segment 1 *Gifts*

[40] Prosody and syllabic structure TT
[4][9](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](21 syllables)].
[5][11](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [12](23 syllables)].
[6][13](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [14](11 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](8 syllables)].
[7][18](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](9 syllables)].

In contrast to the pattern of the phrase-runs which largely coincide as seen in the graph above, the following graph which illustrates the pattern of syllabic density of lines 9 to 19 (a magnification of the last third of the main graph for this segment above) shows how (the) low the correlation between the ST and TT at the level of syllable density per syllable-run is.

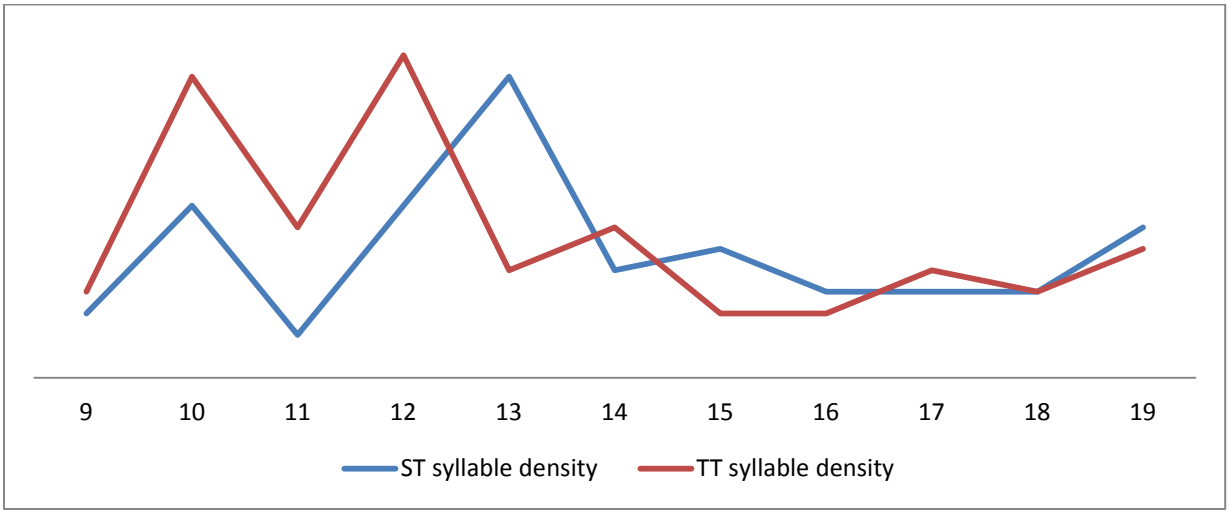

Figure 13. Syllabic density lines 9-19 of segment 1 *Gifts*

The graph shows that the translation has a different rhythmic structure from the English. This is largely due to the revision of the punctuation which sees phrase-run 1 consisting of 2 syllable-runs in Italian as opposed to 3 in English and phrase-run 3 in Italian consisting of 5 syllable-runs as opposed to 4 in English. Readjusting the Italian punctuation and lightening the syllabic density of certain phrases where possible to more closely match the English syllabic structure could result in the following translation.

> Fiacca per il caldo, Duniya osservava l'andirivieni, supina. La farfalla volava qua e là, i movimenti ipnotici nel roteante arcobaleno di colori. Ammaliato, il gatto chiuse gli occhi lentamente, teatralmente, e si addormentò. Del tutto sveglia, Duniya si alzò dal letto.

These processes of revision, it must be pointed out, are not meant as a condemnation of the translation or a suggestion that I could have done better. They are merely a means of exploring how rhythm operates in prose and how a similar rhythm could be achieved in source-texts and target-texts should the translator prioritise this. In the case of African literature, if we go with Bandia's model, a means of explaining and analysing rhythm, which is an important element of an oral poetics, is a necessary element for translation practice in the field of African literature.

A graph of this solution below shows that the revision of punctuation is indeed at the heart of rhythmic differences seen in the translation.

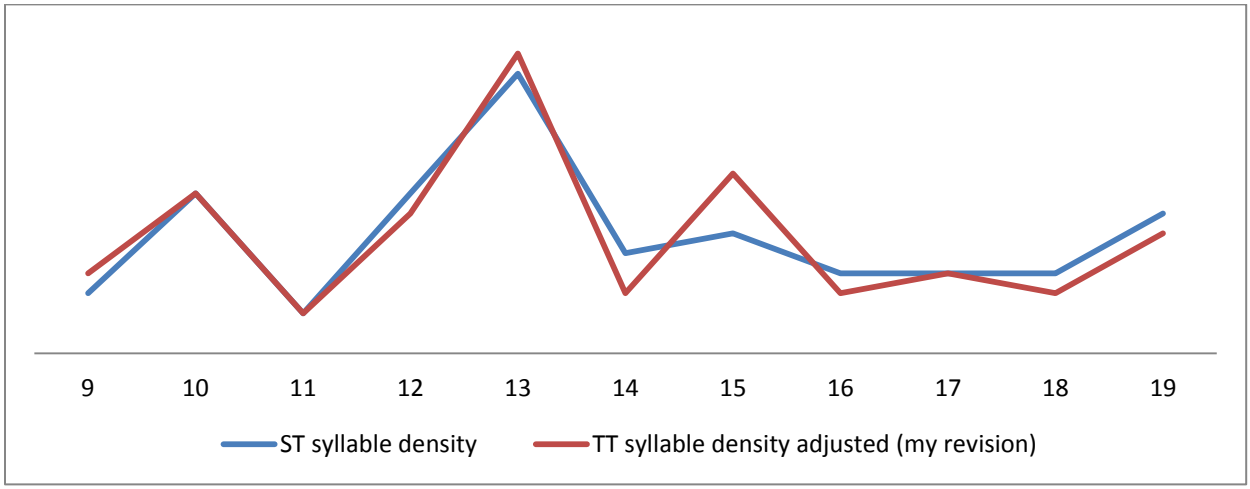

Figure 14. Syllabic density of lines 9-19 of my revision of segment 1 *Gifts*

That is apart from line 15 *il gatto chiuse gli occhi lentamente* which remains much more syllabically dense than *the cat's eyes closed slowly* despite changing the subject of the clause from *the cat's eyes* to *the cat* in order to save syllables.

Segment 2 Gifts

Another dream sequence occurs at the beginning of chapter 5 of *Gifts*. The dream sequence is again blended with wakefulness and it is ambiguous whether the events are real or imagined. Each chapter of *Gifts* begins with a summary of the contents of the chapter in the style of an 18th century novel. The summary at the opening of chapter 5 highlights the uncertainty surrounding the dream world vs. the real world. It reads: "Bosaaso, at first dreaming then awake, relates aspects of his life history to Duniya, who is asleep and perhaps dreaming *him* too." The dream again involves animal messengers, this time an eagle and a plover. The dream sequence is long and is divided into two parts based on the paragraph divisions present in the ST. The first paragraph of the dream sequence is analysed here and the second in the following section.

> Bosaaso had been up for some time, turning and tossing in his bed, eager for dawn. He had dreamt of a brightly-coloured eagle soaring high, unprepared to alight on any of the tall eucalyptus trees in the vicinity. Below, where he waited for the handsome bird to descend on a branch so he could take aim and shoot it, was a long-legged red plover, chattering its customary oaths, repeating its standard vow in the ugliest notes ever sung by a bird.[41]
>
> (*Gifts*: 42)

The Italian translation is rendered as follows:

> Bosaaso era sveglio da un po', si girava e rigirava nel letto e non vedeva l'ora che arivasse l'alba. Aveva sognato un'aquila dai colori sgargianti; volava alta in cielo, senza accenare a posarsi su nessuno dei grandi eucalypti della zona. A terra, dove lui aspettava che lo stupendo uccello si appolaiasse su un ramo, pronto a prendere la mira e a spararle, sostava invece un piviere rosso dalle lunghe zampe che biascicava le sue usuali imprecazioni, reiterandole sulla sequenza di note più sgraziate mai emesse da un volatile.[42]
>
> (*Doni*: 55)

Like the English, the Italian is made up of three phrase-runs representing the major movements in the narrative of the sequence: first a description of Bosaaso the wakeful man, restless in bed and unable to return to sleep; second the description of the first element of the dream, the eagle

---

[41] Analysis of ST prosody and syllable structure
[1][[1](/Bo/saa/so/ had/ been/ up/ for/ some/ time/) {,}[2] (/turn/ing/ and/ toss/ing/ in/ his/ bed/) {,} [3](/eag/er/ for/ dawn/)].
[1][[1](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](4 syllables)] {PAUSE}
3 syllable-runs = 21 syllables
[2][[4](/He/ had/ dreamt/ of/ a/ bright/ly/-col/oured/ eag/le/ soar/ing/ high/) {,} [5](/un/prep/ared/ to/ a/light/ on/ an/y/ of/ the/ tall/ euc/al/yp/tus/ trees/ in/ the/ vic/in/it/y/)].
[2][[4](14 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](24 syllables)] {PAUSE}
2 syllable-runs = 38 syllables
[3][[6](/Be/low/){,}[7](/where/ he/ wait/ed/ for/ the/ hand/some/ bird/ to/ des/cend/ on/ a/ branch/) {*} [8](/so/ he/ could/ take/ aim/ and/ shoot/ it/) {,} [9](/was/ a/ long/-legged/ red/ plov/er/) {,} [10](/chat/ter/ing/ its/ cus/tom/ar/y/oaths/){,} [11](/re/peat/ing/ its/ stan/dard/ vow/ in/ the/ ug/li/est/ notes/ ev/er/ sung/ by/ a/ bird/)].
[3][[6](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [7](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](19 syllables)]
6 syllable-runs = 60 syllables

[42] Analysis of TT prosody and syllabic structure
[1][[1](/Bos/aa/so/ e/ra/ sveg/lio/ da/ un/ po'/) {,} [2](/si/ gi/ra/va/ e/ ri/gi/ra/va/ nel/ let/to/) {*}
[3](/e/ non/ ved/e/va/ l'o/ra/ che/ ar/iv/as/se/ l'al/ba/)].
[1][[1](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](14 syllables)]
3 syllable-runs = total 36 syllables
[2][[4](/Av/e/va/ sog/na/to/ un/'aq/ui/la/ dai/ co/lor/i/ sgar/gian/ti/) {;} [5](/vol/a/va/ al/ta/ in/ cie/lo/) {,} [6](/sen/za/ ac/cen/ar/e/ a/ po/sar/si/ su/ nes/su/no/ dei/ gran/di/ e/u/cal/yp/ti/ del/la/ zo/na/)].
[2][[4](17 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](26 syllables)]
3 syllable-runs = total 51 syllables
[3][[7](/A/ ter/ra/) {,} [8](/do/ve/ lui/ as/pet/ta/va/ che/ lo/ stu/pen/do/ uc/cel/lo/ si/ ap/po/lai/as/se/ su/ un/ ra/mo/) {,} [9](/pron/to/ a/ pren/de/re/ la/ mi/ra/ e/ a/ spa/rar/le/) {,}[10](/sos/ta/va/ in/ve/ce/ un/ pi/vie/re/ ros/so/ dal/le/ lun/ghe/ zam/pe/ che/ bias/ci/ca/va/ le/ su/e/ us/ua/li/ im/pre/ca/zio/ni/) {,} [11](/re/it/e/ran/do/le/ sul/la/ se/quen/za/ di/ no/te/ più/ sgra/zia/te/ mai/ e/mes/se/ da/ un/ vo/la/ti/le/)].
[3][[7](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](25 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](14 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](34 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](28 syllables)
5 syllable-runs = 104 syllables

soaring above; third the description of Bosaaso within the dream and the plover on the ground with him. The translation maintains the division of the paragraph into these three phrases with the same sense units being contained within the full-stops. This is the first element of rhythm which Lipsky (1908: 285) refers to as a "larger rhythm, the rhythm of thought". However, looking more closely at the organisation of the individual phrases it can be noted that some revisions of the punctuation have been introduced in the translation. In the first phrase a comma has been replaced with the conjunction *e* which I have been considering as equal to a pause in my analysis. Accordingly I don't consider the segmentation of the first phrase to be significantly altered. In contrast the translator introduces a semi-colon in phrase two, shortening syllable-run 4 and adding an extra syllable-run to the phrase. In phrase 3 a comma is replaced by the relative pronoun *che* which creates one long syllable run out of two in the English.

Graphically represented this structure of syllable-runs to phrase-runs is as follows:

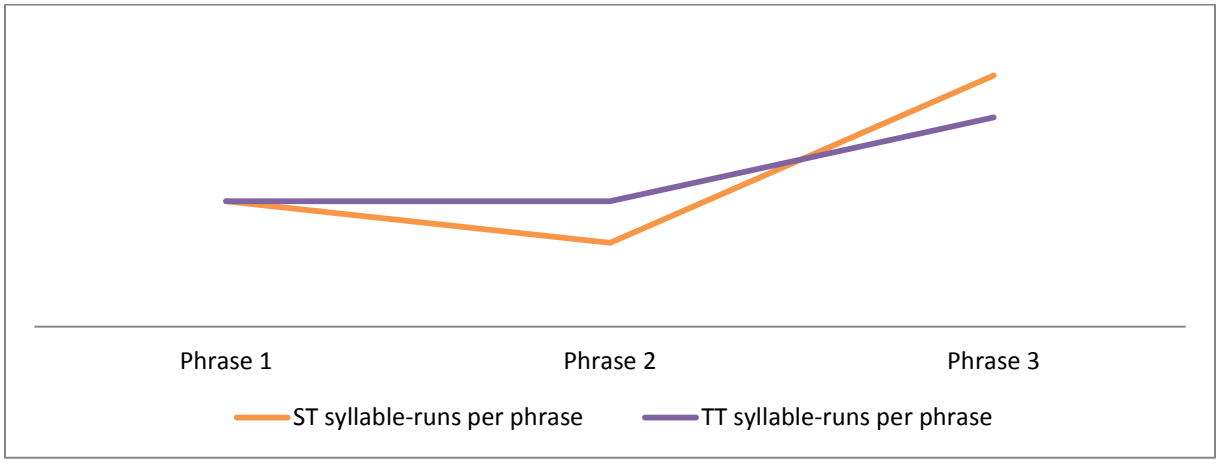

Figure 15. Syllable-runs per phrase-run in ST as compared to TT (segment 2: *Gifts*).

The graph of syllable density per phrase-run shows the difference in overall number of syllables in the ST and the TT. The small differences observable in this graph are illustrative of a natural fluctuation in syllable length between the two languages and are not attributable to the translator revising the structure of the punctuation.

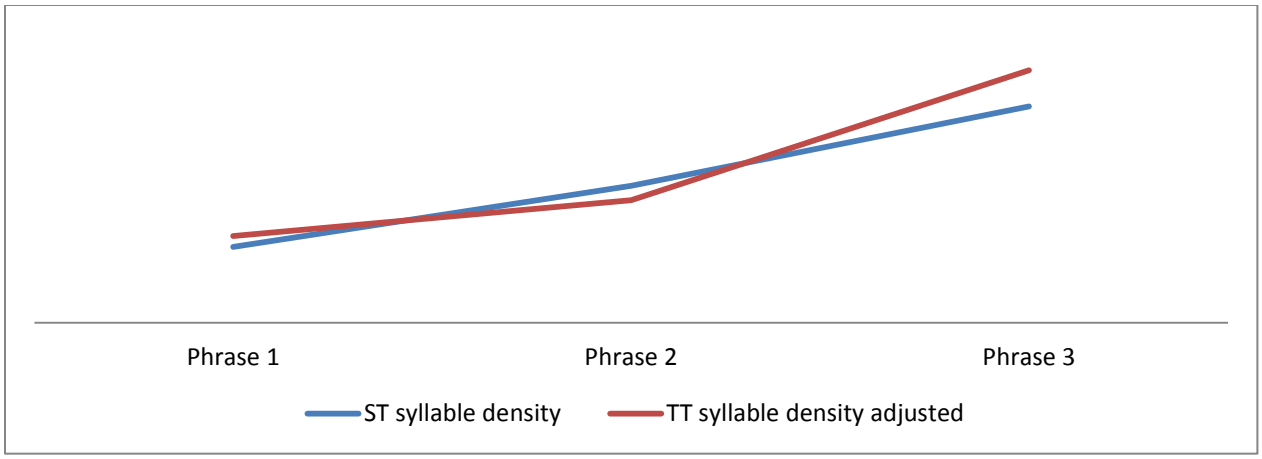

Figure 16. Syllable density per phrase-run in ST as compared to TT (segment 2: *Gifts*).

An example of this inevitable expansion of the TT would be the translation *long-legged red plover* as *piviere rosso dalle lunghe zampe*. Here the translator is forced to render the sense of this five syllable compound word by using a series of qualifiers. These kinds of expansions both in terms of number of total words and total syllables are inevitable in the translation of English into Italian but the reorganizing of punctuation which led to the trends in figure 15 is not necessarily obligatory. The graph of syllable density per syllable-run illustrates more closely the results of this reorganisation.

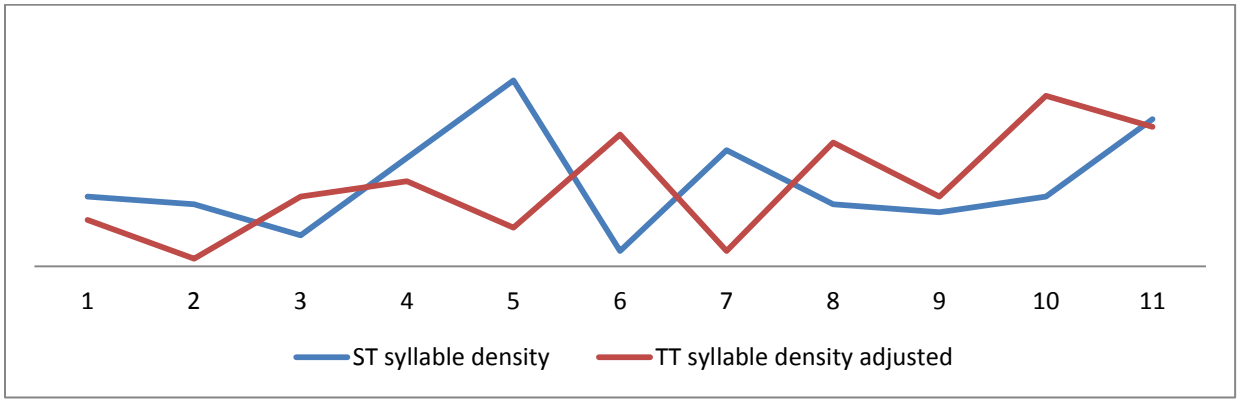

Figure 17. Syllable density per syllable-run in ST as compared to TT (segment 2: *Gifts*).

The graph shows clearly that the revision of punctuation has produced a rhythm of variation between runs and pauses in the Italian quite different from that in the English. Once again, by revising the punctuation more closely along the lines of the English a rhythmic structure more similar to the original can be maintained. The revision reads as follows:

> Bosaaso era sveglio da un po, si girava e rigirava nel letto non vedeva l'ora che arrivasse l'alba. Aveva sognato un'aquila dai colori sgargianti che volava alta, senza accenare a posarsi su nessuno dei grandi eucalypti della zona. A terra, dove aspettava che lo stupendo uccello si appolaiasse su un ramo, pronto a prendere la mira e a spararle, c'era un piviere rosso dalle lunghe zampe; biascicava le usuali imprecazioni, reiterandole sulla sequenza di note più brutte mai cantate da un uccello.

The graph below illustrates how the positioning of punctuation along similar lines to the original can bring about a more comparable rhythmic structure.

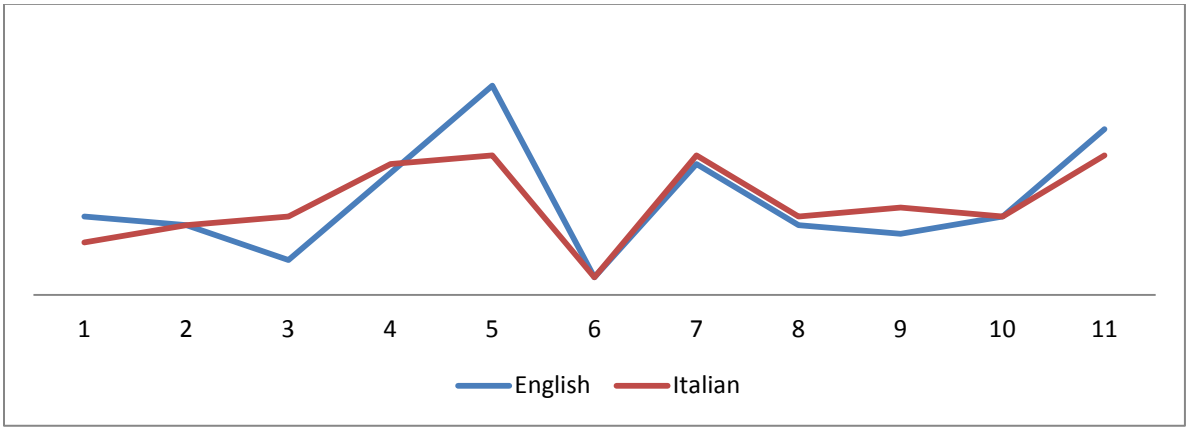

Figure 18. Syllabic density per line of my revision of segment 2 *Gifts.*

In this segment that translator has been careful to organise the progression of sense-units in the same way as in the original. These are represented by the phrases of both the English and the Italian corresponding to the same semantic content. Within the phrases themselves too she has maintained the semantic values of the the English and the order in which these values are expressed but here she has chosen to introduce revisions in how the information is organized. The rhythm is consequently altered. The revision, however, indicates that the alteration of the rhythm is not a prerequisite for the sense to be maintained but rather a stylistic choice on the part of the translator based on Italian textual norms.

Segment 3 Gifts

Bosaaso's strange dream continues in the following segment:

> In his dream, a small boy carrying a kilo or so of uncooked meat on an uncovered platter walked into view, and the alert eagle came down in a sudden swoop, going not for the blood-dripping raw flesh but for the child's brain. The boy fell to the ground in fear, dropping the meat. Several women emerged from behind the acacia bushes and formed a mournful circle around the prostrate boy. One woman stood apart, a woman wearing a patchwork of peacock-coloured clothes, with feathers in her hair. The others hushed when she beckoned. She took from the folds of her clothing a talismanic pebble which she placed near the boy's nostrils. The child jerked with life-returning spasms. Then he rose and, unafraid, walked away, taking with him the platter of meat, now dusty.[43]
>
> (*Gifts*: 42)

The extract is lyrical, making use of a number of aesthetically pleasing effects. These include creative compounds like *blood-dripping raw flesh, a patchwork of peacock-coloured clothes* and *life-returning spasms*. As has been discussed in many of the segments analysed above, compounds of this kind present a major challenge for the translator of English into Italian. The Italian translation reads as follows:

> Nel sogno faceva poi la sua comparsa un bambino che portava della carne cruda su un vassoio scoperto. L'aquila attentissima, si gettava in repentina picchiata, puntando non alla carne fresca e sanguinolenta, bensì alla testa e al cervello del bambino. Spaventato, il piccolo cadeva, e con lui il vassoio. Da dietro una macchia di acacia sbucavano allora alcune donne che subito gli si affollavano intorno formando un cerchio di dolenti intorno al corpo esanime. Una sola si teneva in disparate, una

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43 Analysis of ST prosody and syllabic structure

[1][1](/In/ his/ dream/) {,} [2](/a/ small/ boy/ car/ry/ing/ a/ ki/lo/ or/ so/ of/ un/cooked/ meat/ on/ an/ un/cov/ered/ plat/ter/ walked/ in/to/ view/) {,} [3](/and/ the/ a/lert/ ea/gle/ came/ down/ in/ a/ sud/den/ swoop/) {,} [4](go/ing/ not/ for/ the/ blood/-drip/ping/ raw/ flesh/ but/ for/ the/ child's/ brain/)].

[1][1](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](26 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](13 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](15 syllables)]

4 syllable runs = total 57 syllables

[2][5](/The/ boy/ fell/ to/ the/ ground/ in/ fear/) {,} [6](/drop/ping/ the/ meat/)].

[2][5](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](4 syllables)]

2 syllable runs = total 12 syllables

[3][7](/Sev/eral/ wo/men/ em/erged/ from/ be/hind/ the/ ac/a/cia/ bush/es/) {*} [8](/and/ formed/ a/ mourn/ful/ circ/le/ a/round/ the/ pros/trate/ boy/)].

[3][7](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](13 syllables)]

2 syllable runs = total 28 syllables

[4][9](/One/ wo/man/ stood/ a/part/) {,} [10](/a/ wo/man/ wear/ing/ a/ patch/work/ of/ pea/cock/-col/oured/ clothes/) {,} [11](/with/ feath/ers/ in/ her/ hair/)].

[4][9](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](14 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](6 syllables)]

3 syllable runs = total 26 syllables

[5][12](/The/ oth/ers/ hushed/ when/ she/ beck/oned/)].

[5][12](8 syllables)]

1 syllable run = total 8 syllables

[6][13](/She/ took/ from/ the/ folds/ of/ her/ cloth/ing/ a/ ta/lis/ma/nic/ peb/ble/ which/ she/ placed/ near/ the/ boy's/ nos/trils/)].

[6][13](24 syllables)]

1 syllable run = total 24 syllables

[7][14](/The/ child/ jerked/ with/ life/-re/turn/ing/ spa/sms)].

[7][14](10 syllables)]

1 syllable run = total 10 syllables

[8][15](/Then/ he/ rose/ and/) {,} [16](/un/a/fraid/) {,} [17](/walked/ a/way/) {,} [18](/tak/ing/ with/ him/ the/ plat/ter/ of/ meat/) {,} [19](/now/ dust/y/)].

[8][15](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [18](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](3 syllables)]

5 syllable runs = total 22 syllable runs

> donna con piume nei capelli e strati di vesti color azzurro pavone. A un suo gesto le altre si scostarono. Dalle pieghe delle vesti estrasse un ciottolo magico e lo accostò alle narici del bambino che immediatamente fu percorso da tremiti di nuova vita, si rialzò e, senza alcun timore, se ne andò con il vassoio di carne ormai impastata di polvere.[44]
>
> (*Doni*: 55-56)

The Italian translator has dealt with the compounds using a variety of techniques. In the English, the first compound *blood-dripping raw flesh* contrasts with the prosaic *uncooked meat* from earlier in the sentence. In the Italian these become *carne cruda* and *carne fresca e sanguinolenta.* Italian doesn't draw a distinction between *flesh* and *meat*, both words typically being rendered as *carne*. The author's marked choice of the word *flesh* is therefore unfortunately impossible to render. The result is more culinary than macabre. This is compounded by *blood-dripping* and *raw*, with their connotations of violence and barbarism, becoming *fresca* and *sanguinolenta* which are words a butcher might use to favourably describe his products. This is a shift that Antoine Berman would describe as qualitative impoverishment. It is important to underline, however, that Berman, himself a literary translator reflecting on his own work in that field, was describing shifts that occur to a lesser or greater extent in *all* literary translations. In this case it is hard to imagine how a translator could counter this deforming tendency without running into another like *expansion*, making the text longer and more articulated, or

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44 Analysis of TT prosody and syllabic structure
[1][[1](/Nel/ sog/no/ fa/ce/va/ poi/ la/ su/a/ com/par/sa/ un/ bam/bi/no/ che/ por/ta/va/ del/la/ car/ne/ cru/da/ su/ un/ vas/soi/o/ /sco/per/to/)].
[1][[1](35 syllables)]
1 syllable run = total 35 syllables
[2][[2](/L'aq/ui/la/ at/tent/is/si/ma/) {,} [3](/si/ get/ta/va/ in/ rep/en/ti/na/ pic/chi/a/ta/) {,} [4](/pun/tan/do/ non/ al/la/ car/ne/ fres/ca/ e/ san/guin/o/len/ta/) {,} [5](/ben/sì/ al/la/ tes/ta/ e/ al/ cer/vel/lo/ del/ bam/bi/no/)].
[2][[2](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [3](13 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](16 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](15 syllables)]
4 syllable runs = total 42 syllables
[3][[6](/Spa/ven/ta/to/) {,} [7](/il/ pic/co/lo/ ca/de/va/) {,} [8](/e/ con/ lui/ il/ vas/soi/o/)].
[3][[6](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [7](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](7 syllables)]
3 syllable runs = total 18 syllables
[4][[9](/Da/ diet/ro/ un/a/ mac/chia/ di/ ac/a/cia/ sbu/cav/an/o/ al/lo/ra/ al/cu/ne/ don/ne/ che/ su/bi/to/ gli/ si/ af/fol/lav/an/o/ in/tor/no/ for/man/do/ un/ cer/chio/ di/ do/len/ti/ in/torn/o/ al/ cor/po/ es/an/im/e/)].
[4][[9](56 syllables)]
1 syllable run = 56 syllables
[5][[10](/U/na/ so/la/ si/ te/ne/va/ in/ dis/part/e/) {,} [11](/un/a/ don/na/ con/ piu/me/ nei/ cap/el/li/ e/ stra/ti/ di/ ves/ti/ co/lor/ az/zur/ro/ pa/vo/ne/)].
[5][[10](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](25 syllables)]
2 syllable runs = total 37 syllables
[6][[12](/A/ un/ su/o/ ges/to/ le/ al/tre/ si/ scos/ta/ro/no/)].
[6][[12](14 syllables)]
1 syllable run = total 14 syllables
[7][[13](/Dal/le/ pie/ghe/ del/le/ ves/ti/ es/tras/se/ un/ ciot/to/lo/ ma/gi/co/) {*} [14](/e/ lo/ ac/cos/tò/ al/le/ na/ri/ci/ del/ bam/bi/no/ che/ im/med/ia/ta/men/te/ fu/ per/cor/so/ da/ tre/mi/ti/ di/ nuo/va/ vi/ta/) {,} [15](/si/ ri/al/zò/ e/) {,} [16](/sen/za/ a/lcun/ ti/mo/re/) {,} [17](/se/ ne/ an/dò/ con/ il/ vas/soi/o/ di/ car/ne/ or/mai/ im/pas/ta/ta/ di/ pol/ve/re/)].
[7][[13](18 syllables) {PAUSE} [14](34 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](22 syllables)]
5 syllable runs = total 86 syllables

ennoblement, making recourse to words and expressions from classical literary traditions far outside the range of vernacular speech. For example, the highly Latinate word like *cruento* might have been more appropriate from the perspective of mitigating qualitative impoverishment but would certainly have been a case of ennoblement.

The other compounds in the segment, *patchwork of peacock-coloured clothes* and *life-returning spasms*, also presented the translator with problems as evidenced by the creative transpositions she has been forced to employ. *Patchwork of peacock-coloured clothes* becomes *strati di vesti color azzuro pavone*. The change from *patchwork* to *strati*, which translates as layers, shows the translator struggled with this very English culturally specific word. The *Sansoni* English-Italian dictionary offers the borrowing of the English word into Italian. For example a *quilt* may be translated as a *coperta patchwork*. There is a word *raffazzonatura*, referring to a patching together of different pieces of material, that might have been used. *Strati*, however, is perfectly adequate as the image of a mysterious sorceress clad in strange colourful garments is maintained. This is what Popovič would call *stylistic substitution*, again an unavoidable feature in any literary translation. Faced with the challenge of translating *peacock-coloured clothes* and *life-returning spasms* the translator made recourse to modulation rendering the phrases as *vesti color azzurro pavone* and *tremiti di nuova vita*.

The shifts described above are the result of the problem of transfer between English and Italian: languages whose grammatical structures are significantly different. However, turning our attention to the organization of the extract and the effects that this has had on the rhythmic structure of the extract, we again note that arbitrary adjustments to the punctuation of the extract have had a significant effect. The English segment is composed of 8 phrase-runs corresponding to movements in the narrative and indicated by full-stops. The Italian, in contrast, contracts the 7th and 8th phrase-runs into a single run. There are also significant revisions of pauses and runs within the phrases while the 1st phrase-run is split into two phrase-runs by the introduction of a full-stop. These changes are not insignificant in the translation of literary prose; they represent the effacement of the drama and tension that the author produces in the source-text. The differences in the rhythmic organization of the extracts are represented in figure 19 below detailing syllable-runs per phrase.

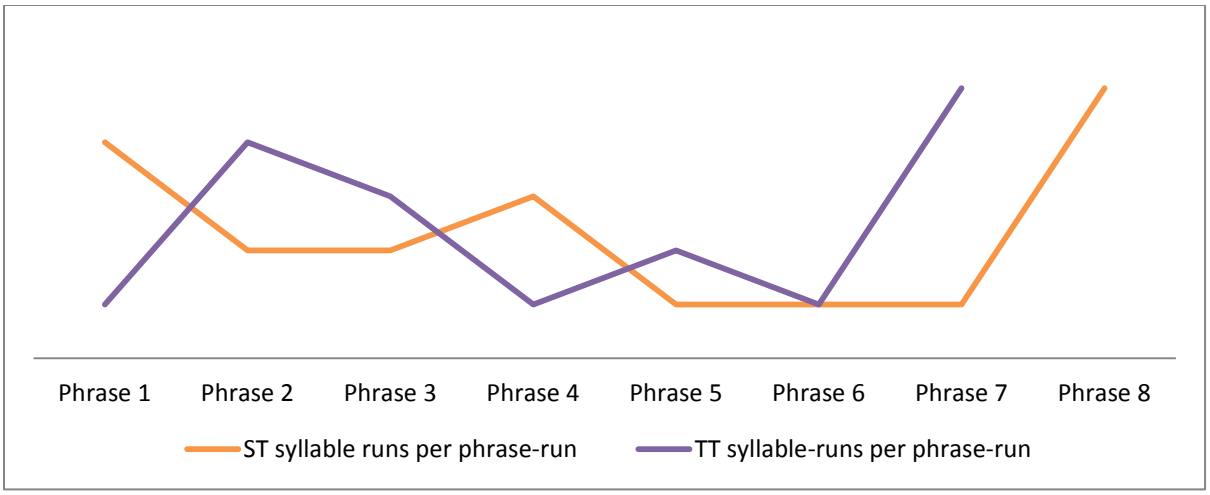

Figure 19. Syllable-runs per phrase-run in ST as compared to TT (segment 3: *Gifts*).

Similarly, as illustrated in figure 20 below, the lengths of the phrases in terms of syllable counts are also completely out of sync as a result of these revisions of the punctuation.

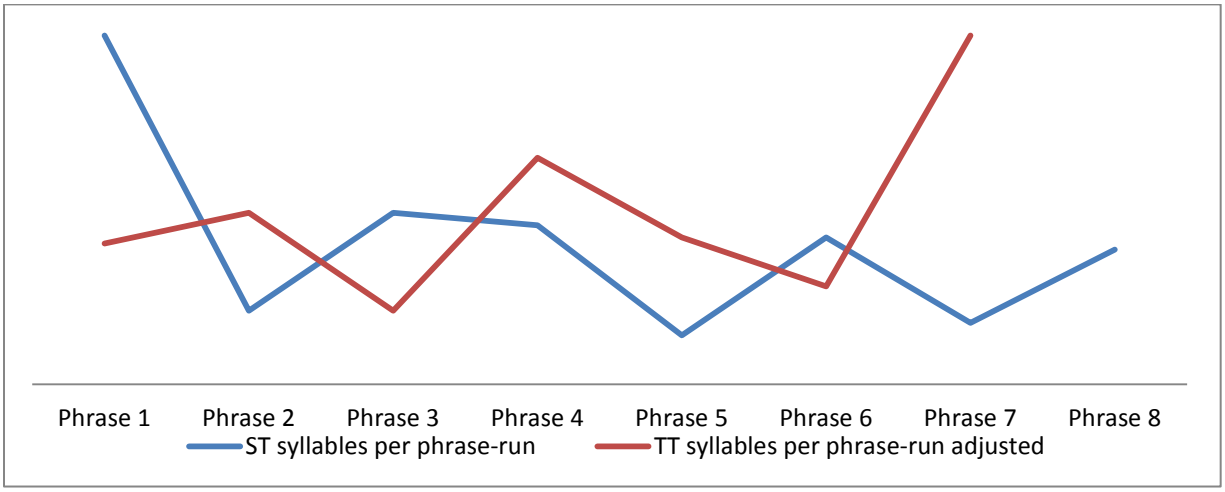

Figure 20. Syllable density per phrase-run in ST as compared to TT (segment 3: *Gifts*).

Logically, given the extent to which the punctuation has been altered, the change to rhythm is particularly marked at the lowest level of my rhythmic analysis: that of syllable-density per line. This is illustrated by the lack of coherence between the English and Italian segments as shown in figure 21 below.

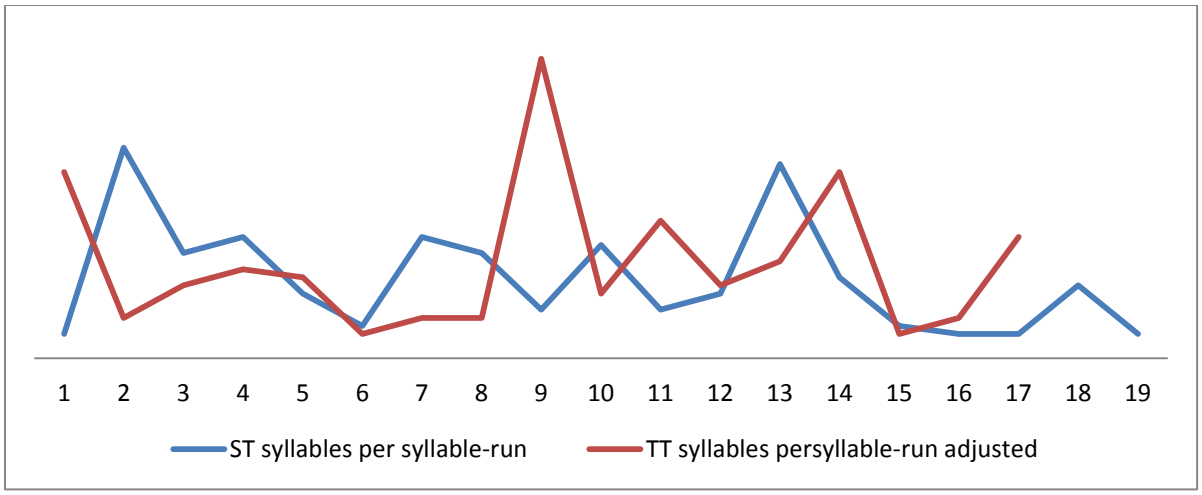

Figure 3. Syllable density per syllable run in ST as compared to TT (segment 3: *Gifts*).

Quite apart from the TT having far fewer deliberate pauses as indicated by it ending abruptly at line 17, the graph of the ST rhythmic structure shows regularity in the line lengths in that none of the peaks is significantly higher than the other. Line 9 of the Italian is significantly more syllable dense than any other line. The ST graph also rises at the beginning and tapers at the end, in direct contrast to the TT which does the opposite. Most significantly, however, is that the semantic content that the original author chooses to emphasise as individual units by isolating them between pauses has been arbitrarily jumbled.

Unlike the shifts discussed above where the translator was creatively dealing with the complexities of translating between two very different syntactical and morphological systems, these changes to the rhythm are based on text-discursive norms of the Italian language. A reorganization on these lines appears in the first sentence of the segment where *walked into view* which appears after the subject *a small boy* is replaced with the literary cliché *faceva poi la sua comparsa* (then made his appearance) which appears before the subject *un bambino*. Another occurs where the translator feels that the eagle swooping for the child's brain is not clear enough and adds *alla testa e al cervello* (towards his head and his brain). The strangeness of the word-choice is thereby effaced. Another reorganisation occurs in sentence 3 of the source-text where in the English women emerge from behind some acacia bushes, in Italian from behind some acacia bushes there emerged some women. A rationalization and qualitative impoverishment occurs where these same women form a *mournful circle* in English, but a *circle of sorrowful [women]* forms in the Italian. The magic-worker of the English is described as having feathers in

her hair after her clothes are described whereas the Italian text has this information coming first. The women in the English hush when the sorceress beckons; the women in the Italian move aside. In sum, the translator has altered several elements of the structure of the paragraph in order to make it conform to natural, flowing and elegant Italian language prose. The 'deformation' of the rhythm is, for this reason, the side-effect of the rationalization, clarification and ennoblement of the target-text according to domestic standards.

Analysis of findings

The aim of this chapter was to ascertain the means by which the two translators of *Maps* and *Gifts,* Silvia Fornasiero and Anna Rusconi respectively, handled the translation of certain features of the novels, namely rhythm and literary devices. I was able to make use of a system designed to quantify and compare rhythm in an original text and its translation. Using this system, I discovered that while both translators were faced with similar challenges, Anna Rusconi, in her translation of *Gifts*, resorted to domestication with greater frequency than Fornasiero. Rusconi's strategies were shown to have a direct influence on the rhythmic structure of the text whereas Fornasiero's approach tended to more frequently maintain the rhythmic structure of the original.

Tellingly, the reasons for the substantial differences in the approaches taken by the two translators are directly proportional to their relative acquaintance with postcolonial thought and Black literature at the time of translating. In an e-mail sent to Anna Rusconi, I asked her to relate to me her experience of translating *Gifts* into Italian. She offered me the following frank appraisal in response:

> Gentile Christopher
>
> Magari le rispondo meglio nei prossimi giorni: sono occupatissima con la chiusura di un libro.
>
> Intanto però le dico che *Doni* lo tradussi molti anni fa e senza alcuna cognizione di causa in materia di letteratura postcoloniale, purtroppo. Non so nemmeno che tipo di revisione fecero in casa editrice: insomma, è un lavoro di cui ricordo pochissimo e che non sono in grado di argomentare, diversamente dalla maggioranza delle cose che faccio. Oggi so che forse non lo accetterei, o che lo accetterei a condizioni molto diverse. Se avessi tempo, sarei lieta di riprenderlo in mano e di riguardarlo dal punto di visto traduttivo, ma questo tempo non ce l'ho. E in più c'è il discorso della

> revisione, che non ricordo chi l'avesse fatta, ma che spesso è una nota assai dolente. Insomma, non è un libro di cui conservo una memoria particolare o di cui vada particolarmente fiera, ecco.
>
> (Anna Rusconi in an e-mail to me dated 03 February 2015)

Rusconi's tone is melancholic when she candidly admits to not being very proud of the quality of her work when translating *Gifts*. She repeatedly mentions that she doesn't remember who edited the translation and that it is very often in the editing phase that becomes "una nota assai dolente". It is interesting, given the metaphor of translation as an act of violence, that she herself uses the word *painful* to describe the intrusion of an editor into a text. The pain she is describing, of having one's work appropriated and misrepresented by a ruthless and intransigent editor, is another experience to which I think most practising translators can relate. However, in this case, it is unlikely the editor was at fault for the simple reason that the editor was Itala Vivan, the very same editor that oversaw Fornasiero's translation of *Maps*. The fact that Rusconi was replaced by Fornasiero after the publication of *Doni* may have had something to do with a perception that the product was unsatisfactory.

Most importantly, Rusconi suggests that her translation is not one she is very proud of for the reason that she produced it without any knowledge of the field of postcolonial literatures. This admission is critically important as it highlights that this working translator knows implicitly what scholars of postcolonial translation theory expound in the abstract: that the translator of postcolonial texts ought to be equipped with both theoretical knowledge about and empathetic concern towards the generic specificities and political significance of postcolonial writing. I was unable to contact Silvia Fornasiero for comment but her background suggests that, in direct contrast to Rusconi, she has substantial knowledge and experience of the process of translating postcolonial and Black writing.

Silvia Fornasiero is the translator of *Segreti* (2002), *Mappe* (2003), *Legami* (2005) and *Nodi* (2008). She is thus responsible for the translation of five of the six Italian translations of Farah's fiction published by Frassinelli. Born in 1977, she was only 25 when she translated *Secrets*. She studied translation and interpreting at a specialised secondary school in Milan and completed a Masters in European and World Languages and Literatures from The University of

Milan. She now teaches there in the department of translation studies. She translated *A Mercy* (2009) by Toni Morrison which was published by Frassinelli under the title *Il dono (2009)*. She completed a study on her translation of *A Mercy* supervised by Franca Cavagnoli, a well-respected Italian translator who teaches World Literature in English at the University of Milan. Franca Cavagnoli has herself translated a number of Toni Morrison's most important works including *Song of Solomon* (1981), *Paradise* (*Paradiso* 1998), *Sula* (*Sula* 1991), *Jazz* (*Jazz* 1992), *Love* (*Amore* 2004). She edited Silvia Fornasiero's translation of *A Mercy* (*Il dono* 2009) and *At Home* (*A casa* 2012). Incidentally Itala Vivan who was responsible for the editing of all of Nuruddin Farah's Italian translations (both when they were published by *Edizioni Lavoro* and following the take-over by Frassinelli) also teaches World Literatures in English at the University of Milan with a specialisation in African Literature. It is safe, I think, to say that a small number of committed scholars at the University of Milan have a great deal to be proud of in terms of bringing African and Black literature to the light in Italy. The role played by these scholars, critics and translators working closely together is illustrative of the importance of the Polysystem theory notion of *institution* in the acceptance and indeed canonisation of new literary forms into a literary system.

It is clear that Fornasiero's extensive experience and interest in the field of translating Black literature in the form of Toni Morrison contributed directly to this sensitivity she displayed in her approach to translating Farah's work. While obviously very different, the work of Morrison and Farah both fall under the broad rubric of the postcolonial. They represent writing from the margins: in the case of Morrison from the perspective of an African-American woman and in the case of Farah from the perspective of a Somali man in exile. Their use of the English language is marked by their respective lived experience: poles apart from one another but united in their difference from, or perhaps even resistance to, hegemonic metropolitan forms of the English language. Having studied in the field of World Literatures in English and having worked on Toni Morrison in particular, it seems Fornasiero had a basis of theoretical and practical experience with postcolonial writing to draw upon. This is reflected in the more foreignized approach her translation takes as opposed to those of Petta and Rusconi. The fact that a translator who exhibits this kind of sensitivity to the subjectivity of the original author was chosen to translate the remainder of Farah's works published by Frassinelli is positive. It would be interesting to delve deeper into Fornasiero's approach to translating a larger sample of Farah's

work, perhaps to see her style unfolding or to compare her approach in translating Farah to that in translating Morrison. What has become increasingly clear from the preceding chapters is the value of focussing the research lens on the *institution* which commissions, produces, critiques, markets and distributes translations and the figure of the translator. This is all the more true where the literature involved is marginal. As we have seen in the case of Fornasiero, the translator is often embedded in the institution and the priorities of that institution along with the subjectivity of the translator and his or her relationship to the work can have a massive bearing on when, how and under what conditions a marginal literature is absorbed into a literary polysystem.

CONCLUSION

Alea Iacta Est

> Saint Jerome uses his famous image of meaning being brought home captive by the translator. We "break" a code: decipherment is dissective, leaving the shell smashed and the vital layers stripped. Every schoolchild, but also the eminent translator, will note the shift in substantive presence which follows on a protracted or difficult exercise in translation: the text in the other language has become almost materially thinner, the light seems to pass unhindered through its loosened fibres.
>
> George Steiner
> *The Hermeneutic Motion*

The mechanics of Italian Imperialism and the subjugation and governance of its African colonies entailed great violence. This violence was of the subjective kind described by Žižek. It took the form of wars of conquest, massacres, atrocities against civilians, internment in concentration camps, brutal repression, destruction of property, rape and humiliation of every kind. These events have left behind a lasting memory of trauma among the subject people of Libya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. Italy's colonial presence in Africa spanned a period of 70 years from the annexation of Eritrea in 1890 to the end of the Italian Trusteeship of Somalia in 1960. The Italian colonial project is often side-lined both in histories of colonialism in Africa and in histories of Italy. It is often dismissed as too short-lived, weak or ineffectual to have had a real effect on the regions it colonized. Alternatively the memory of Italian colonialism is characterized by myths of a more benign, humane and tolerant brand of imperialism. The memorialisation of Italian colonialism in this benign mode is itself an act of grave symbolic violence against those who suffered under its oppressive yoke. Historical facts, many of which have often been deliberately kept from the Italian public, indicate the harsh reality faced by the the colonized of Italy. The tally of crimes committed during the colonial period is exhaustive. In Libya and Cyrenaica a total of 100 000 people were killed between 1911 and 1932, many of them dying in the 1911 razing of Tripoli or during the fascist period in concentration camps built at the behest of Marshall Graziani to intern civilian agitators (Del Boca 1992/2002: 166, Labanca 2004: 304). In Ethiopia

300 000 to 400 000 Ethiopians died defending their country against Mussolini's unprovoked aggression and during this conflict Italy became the only power ever to use poison gas in a colonial war (Del Boca 1992/2002, Labanca 2004: 304).The scars of Italian Imperialism are above all the border lines scratched onto the maps of the Horn of Africa. The engineers of *Africa Orientale Italiana* helped entrench ethnic and religious strife and create fragile nation states with shoddy foundations all of which would contribute to the long-term instability of an entire region. A system was set up in the colonies which privileged Italians and their culture and established the inferiority of Africans. This system took the form of *baaskap all'italiana* and *madamismo* which established a clearly delineated social hierarchy in the Italian colonies as well as institutionalising the sexual availability of African women to Italian men (see Chapter 2).

The violence was also symbolic. I exposed a discursive and representational tradition in Italy in which black cultures were essentialised; black people were subject to racist representations; were exoticised and romanticised or crudely demonised. The notion of their inferiority to their white masters was emphasised over and over in different ways in colonial narratives. Africa was reduced to the playground of the fearful, curious or intrepid white imagination and African women were alternately cast as objects for masculine conquest or as objects of revulsion. Along with the gun, the subjugation of indigenous people was carried out with the book. At various points the writers discussed in this study describe the education that was received in the colonies: an education that taught the colonized that their civilization was deficient; that their inferiority was innate and that their greatest need was for the illumination provided by Western civilization. Ignorant discourses of fear and hatred continue to permeate Italian culture. Black people who have made strides in Italian society have been subject to ridicule and the crudest of racial stereotypes. Cécile Kyenge, the first black member of parliament in Italy, has been called an orangutan and had bananas thrown at her while making a speech while Mario Balotelli, a premier league footballer, has faced crowds of football fans chanting "a negro cannot be Italian" (Kingston 2013). Igiaba Scego and other migrant writers discussed in this study attest to the symbolic violence of racism and victimisation they bore as children in Italian schools.

The central notion underlying my study is that literary fiction has a very important role to play in the countering of self-serving mythologies. In this case the mythology in question is that

of *italiani brava gente*. I have demonstrated that Italy had a strong tradition of colonial literature which reinforced this myth and that the Italian nation continues by and large to be in thrall to the belief that colonialism was not a serious chapter in the country's history. I have demonstrated also the ways fiction produced by the heirs of this history of violence is able to debunk these myths. The fiction produced by Afro-Italian writers like Gabriella Ghermandi, Igiaba Scego, Shirin Ramzanali Fazel and Ubax Cristina Ali Farah attest to the subjective violence meted out to subject people from the point of view of its victims. This literature is a site of resistance where the colonised retaliate in an attempt to push back the borders of representation which have contained them. They reveal the abuse of indigenous people by Italian soldiers in the Ethiopian war; the use of banned chemical weapons; concentration camps; mass retribution; imprisonment of political dissidents; torture and humiliation. They also attest to the symbolic violence experienced in the colonies, in the postcolonies and by immigrants and their descendants in Italy. Among these writers, in pride of place perhaps, belongs Nuruddin Farah, the translations of whose works, above all in the *Variations* trilogy, provide Italian readers with a clear vision of the unfolding of this violent encounter and its lasting effects. In a letter dated 10 March 1970 to James Currey, a publishing agent from the Heinemann African Writers Series, Nuruddin Farah reported on a conversation he had had with another agent, Keith Sambrook , regarding the publication of *Sweet and Sour Milk.* At a certain point in the letter Farah writes:

> We talked about exploring together possibilities of getting *Crooked* and *Naked* translated into Italian (which to my way of thinking is as important in Somalia as getting the book out in the first place).
>
> (Nuruddin Farah in Currey 2008: 164)

This correspondence makes clear that Farah himself considered his novels reaching the Italian audience to be of extreme importance. He uses the words "important in Somalia", underlining his own perception of the value of his work as speaking on behalf of the Somali people to their former colonizers. Despite this, to this day *From a Crooked Rib* and *A Naked Needle* remain untranslated and unpublished in Italian. The incisiveness of his critique of Italian colonialism in its subjectively violent manifestations; his interrogation of the symbolic violence to which Africa has been subject in the field of representation and discourse; and his insightful and fair analysis of the postcolonial state with its tendency to reinscribe systemic violence in the form of neo-colonial exploitation, could have earned his work the distinction of being counted among the

most important examples of Italian postcolonial literature. This has unfortunately never happened.

One reason for this state of affairs relates to the politically sensitive content of his first trilogy which, on the one hand would have offended the sensibilities of the right which was all too happy to go on believing in the merits of Italian colonialism and, on the other hand, would have embarrassed the left because of the scathing critique of the part played by the Socialist Party in propping up the Siad Barre Regime. My analysis of the political climate during which the first trilogy was launched in the early 1990s makes this a plausible hypothesis. I indicated in Chapter 4 that Nuruddin Farah was brought to market in Italy by a left-leaning publishing house called *Edizioni Lavoro* which was aligned with the trade union *Cisl*. I provided historical evidence that suggests that the choice to translate and publish Farah's *Variations* trilogy in the early 90s may have been a political statement directed against the rival Socialist government and its aligned trade union *Cgil*. The novels were published shortly after the fall of Mogadscio and the flight of Siad Barre. In the political atmosphere of the time, with scandals exposing the Socialist Government's role in supporting Barre and with the dictator humiliated and on the run, these highly critical novels would have been the perfect ammunition in an ideological battle.

Further exploration of this compelling possibility would be an interesting avenue for further research. Indeed more studies specifically linking foreign policy with trends in the publication of foreign translated literature in various contexts might illuminate a great deal about the passage of ideas across borders at different historical junctures. State censorship is an obvious manifestation of this kind of manipulation and one that has received a great deal of attention from translation scholars. However more work could be done on the more insidious networks of political affiliations and webs of economic intrigue influencing decisions made by publishers in capitalist democracies. This is an area of knowledge towards which the field of book history has contributed enormously but more work needs to be done by scholars of translation to fruitfully harness the theoretical assumptions of our systems theories with the empirical raw material provided by studies of publishing and book history.

Equally, scholars of postcolonial literature and translation can little afford to ignore these concerns. Before appearing on the shelves of bookshops, in the library and in the syllabi of schools and university departments, books run a gauntlet fraught with economic and ideological

obstacles. We have seen how these obstacles are greater still for novels emerging in Africa and requiring translation into Italian before being received on the small and selective Italian market. I showed how the path taken towards reception in Italy by many African writers and by Nuruddin Farah is often circuitous, long and even perilous. It is a journey that only the hardiest reputations can survive. I indicated that Farah's first trilogy, the one I believe belongs among the foundational texts of Italian postcolonial literature, remains out of print. Much like the colonial archives which were closed to the public for decades after the war, the rights to Farah's novels are kept behind the vaults of Frassinelli. While the first situation concerns historical documentation and the second concerns fiction, the results are similar: the violent history of Italian colonialism remains obscured.

The very existence of a work of fiction by an African writer and journey it took to see the light may reveal more about the assymetry in global power than the content of a novel itself. In fact, if we accept the existence of Žižek's systemic violence as a force that covertly crushes all opposition to the economic and social system, we have to admit that the literature to which we have access has been pre-selected for us. If scholars of literature are to contribute to exposing the operations of systemic violence, perhaps it is advisable for us to seriously interrogate the means by which we come to access those books that make it into print and, indeed, which potential or hypothetical books have not reached us. There are two questions to ask then: 1) what systemic and material conditions allowed for the existence in print of this book? 2) what books have systemic and material conditions prevented from coming into existence? Perhaps instead of asking "what has been said?" we are better off asking "what has not been said and why?" My examination of the publishing of Nuruddin Farah's works explored these questions in the contexts of Somali and Italian literature. The censorship of the Barre regime which led to his exile prevented Farah from producing a postcolonial literature in the Somali language. In exile in Italy, an Italian language manuscript of *Sardines* was rejected for publication because of economic and, perhaps, political concerns. In the process a potential early Italian postcolonial literature was lost. Farah exists today as a writer because he was accepted into a pre-existing literary system of English language African writing with an established readership and well-resourced structures in the form of the Heinemann African Writers Series. It is largely as a consequence of this series of events that Farah now belongs to the canon of Anglophone African writers.

In the narrative of violence I have traced, there emerges a form of resistance on the part of the colonised. The fiction produced by Afro-Italian writers of Somali and Ethiopian descent represents a potential intrusion into the canon of Italian literature, to the racial composition of Italian culture and even the way the language itself is used. These rebellious new voices have occupied the language of Dante and Manzoni. In their novels the Italian language rings with fresh images, strange words, unfamiliar metaphors and unusual collocations. Unlike the first generation of migrant writers who relied on Italian journalists to standardize their prose, these writers are in full ownership of the Italian language and make linguistic abrogation a strategic tactic in a slow war of attrition against linguistic and identitarian hegemony. They are claiming their right to an accented Italian and using their hybrid subjectivities to creolize the Italian language. These writers have by and large been represented by small publishing houses but have begun to make inroads into the mainstream of Italian literature responding, as they do, to the rapid societal changes gripping the country.

Much like emergent cultural forms, translated literature has a similar invasive potential that often meets with fierce resistance in the receiving system. I quote Robyns in this regard:

> Still, this is precisely one possible function of translation. It introduces discursive elements from other discourses and, therefore, by definition is a potential code violation. The simple fact that a text is written in something other than the common language is already a radical challenge to the conventions of a target discourse. Since the awareness of common norms constitutes the basis for discursive self-definition, the intrusion of alien, convention-violating elements is a potential threat. Therefore, every discourse is continually forced to determine its position(s) toward such alien elements, hence toward translation.
>
> (Robyns 1994: 4)

Robyns describes in martial language the relationship between translated literature and the receiving system. Translation also represents a threat to established literary and linguistic norms and, in the case of Nuruddin Farah, one that, unfortunately, has been by and large contained. I illustrated how, unlike the work of the Afro-Italian writers, the translated works of Nuruddin Farah are isolated from the body of Italian postcolonial literature because of their outsider status. This is only one means of containment however. The translation of *Sweet and Sour Milk* by Maria Ludovica Petta and that of *Gifts* by Anna Rusconi both exhibited the hallmarks of an aggressively assimiliationist translation strategy averting any “potential code violation”. Silvia

Fornasiero's translation of *Maps*, in contrast, seemed to employ a more foreignizing approach. This is perhaps because of her greater sensitivity to issues in postcolonial literature.

The analysis of the rhythmic structures of the translations of *Gifts* translated by Anna Rusconi and *Maps* translated by Silvia Fornasiero reveal a marked difference in the strategies employed by the respective translators. Silvia Fornasiero's translation of *Maps* exhibits far fewer arbitrary revisions to the rhythmic structure of the original text. She equally avoids making overly aggressive incursions into the text in order to clarify meaning or rationalise the structure. Rusconi, in contrast, much like Ludovica Petta in her translations of the *Variations* trilogy, approaches the translation of *Gifts* from a decidedly domesticating angle. Her translation consistently exhibits the use of strategies that level the stylistic individualism of the text and render it in a fluent but flat Italian idiom. The text is clarified, rationalised, almost dissected and put on display for an Italian readership. As a result, the translation of *Gifts* is less able than the translation of *Maps* to boldly pronounce its difference and its right to otherness. This can be linked to the narrative of violence if it is conceived of as a counter-attack against the intrusion of hybridised linguistic forms presented by a foreignised translation.

A limitation of this study is the small size of the data set analysed. Only three of the eight novels by Farah currently available in translation were examined and within these only a small number of segments. The limitations imposed by the small sample size also apply to my treatment of rhythm in translation. This is an area which I think requires more attention from scholars and not just those in the field of African literary translation. Unlike in poetry where metre and scansion have always been considered essential elements of the literary make-up of a poem, in prose, rhythm is almost studiously ignored. Where it hasn't been ignored the work done has been almost useless and seems to have largely been abandoned. In this study I discussed the African oral literature and the appreciation that Somali audiences in particular have for artful recitation. In our literate culture we have come to overlook the audible in favour of the visual when it comes to the analysis of prose. However I am convinced that our appreciation of literature has more to do with pleasing rhythms than the paucity of scholarly literature on the subject would have us believe. The value of using audiobooks to improve reading skills in adolescents and people with reading difficulties has been recognised by scholars (Wolfson 2008, Davies, Stock and King 2008, Grover and Hannegan 2008). However, limiting the study of the

audiobook to their application to learning problems is to reinscribe the primacy of written literature over oral forms. Of course high function literacy is of paramount importance to surviving the modern world but the opportunities presented by portable audio technology in the field of linguistic art should be celebrated rather than feared by scholars of literature.

The meteoric rise of audiobooks and the increasing popularity of spoken-word poetry performances may well be related to the quality of the audible aesthetic experience that consuming literature in this way provides. As discussed in Chapter 6, orature and literature are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. It seems that the West may slowly be rediscovering the art of recitation, alive and well in Africa, but largely forgotten in Europe after the invention of the printing-press. The printing-press precipitated a revolution in the democratisation of knowledge, in the accessibility of information and in our ability to share ideas. However in this study we have witnessed firsthand the strictures that economic imperatives place on publishing houses. It will be interesting to observe how the other great innovation in knowledge sharing, the internet, changes the way literature is consumed in the 21st century. Downloadable audiobooks and free online on-demand video content to which anybody can contribute to a future where audio, once again, becomes an important modality by which verbal art is consumed. If scholars of literature are to remain relevant we will have to be ready. The use of technology in Johnson's (2001) study of the appreciation of Somali oral poetry may well be a model to emulate (see Chapter 6). It would be ironic indeed if scholars of African oral literatures, which many consider backward, provided some of the groundwork essential for the analysis of the literature of the future.

Any shortcomings in the formal qualities of the translated texts from the point of view of postcolonial textuality do not, by any means, disqualify them as candidates to enjoy pride of place in the canon of Italian postcolonial literature. Predictably, but not insignificantly, I contend that in terms of content alone Farah's novels offer invaluable resistance to the regime of symbolic violence represented by Italian colonial amnesia. There is another, more abstract, notion that may allay these fears. In the *Hermeneutic Motion* George Steiner (1975) posits four movements in the translation process. These are initial trust, aggression, incorporation and, finally, reciprocity. The aggression implied by translation, where the foreigner is brought home in chains, has been the focus of my analysis. Also relevant to my analysis was incorporation.

Steiner again makes recourse to powerful bodily metaphors to illustrate what he means by incorporation. He posits that a receiving literary system reacts to the introduction of an imported form either with the revulsion shown to poison or with the reverence shown to the Holy Sacrament. In my study I showed the relative indifference with which the Italian literary system reacted to the incorporation of Nuruddin Farah's early work. His later work, in contrast, on the wake of his winning the Neustadt prize, was greeted with greater enthusiasm, winning literary prizes and acclaim in Italy. Again the experience of Toni Morrison is instructive. The substandard early translations of her works have just been redone, others have been revised and all of them are about to appear in a prestigious collection. The canonisation of the translations of Toni Morrison's work in Italy described in Chapter 4 above is indicative of this. The *I Meridiani Mondadori* Toni Morrison collection edited by Spallino discussed in Chapter 3 above is due for release in 2015. Since 2012 Spallino has been working on updating and improving substandard translations of Toni Morrison's early work (Spallino 2014). In a 2014 interview with Elisa Bordin she described the poor quality of the earliest translations but praised the translations by Franca Cavagnoli and her protégé Silvia Fornasiero. The experience of Toni Morrison's experience of the Italian book market is similarly indicative of the requirement that in order to be incorporated into the Italian literary system, the translations of the work of a novelist first require the unambiguous sanctification of the Anglophone literary academy. Without this, well-resourced publishers will simply not take the risk.

The last movement of Steiner's hermeneutic motion is a heartening and hopeful one for our purposes. Steiner refers to it as reciprocity. It is the correction of the disequilibrium caused by the violent intrusion of translation. I quote Steiner at length:

> The enactment of reciprocity in order to restore balance is the crux of the metier and morals of translation. But it is very difficult to put abstractly. The appropriative "rapture" of the translator—the word has in it, of course, the root and meaning of violent transport—leaves the original with a dialectically enigmatic residue. Unquestionably there is a dimension of loss, of breakage—hence, as we have seen, the fear of translation, the taboos on revelatory export which hedge sacred texts, ritual nominations, and formulas in many cultures. But the residue is also, and decisively, positive. The work translated is enhanced. This is so at a number of fairly obvious levels. Being methodical, penetrative, analytic, enumerative, the process of translation, like all modes of focused understanding, will detail, illumine, and generally body forth its object. The over-determination of the interpretative act is

> inherently inflationary: it proclaims that "there is more here than meets the eye", that "the accord between content and executive form is closer, more delicate than had been observed hitherto". To class a source-text as worth translating is to dignify it immediately and to involve it in a dynamic of magnification (subject, naturally, to later review and even, perhaps, dismissal). The motion of transfer and paraphrase enlarges the stature of the original. Historically, in terms of cultural context, of the public it can reach, the latter is left more prestigious. But this increase has a more important, existential perspective. The relations of a text to its translations, imitations, thematic variants, even parodies, are too diverse to allow of any single theoretic, definitional scheme.
>
> (Steiner 1975: 189)

What Steiner is expressing here is simply the idea that the translation creates the original. The existence of a translation lends the original dignity and the distinction of being worthy of translation. In the target-system the existence of a translation can lead to a ripple effect of imitation and literary influence. Translations also enjoy the benefit of being subject to retranslation or revision. The superficial flaws in the Italian translations of Farah's novels are just part of the learning curve. Italian postcolonial literature is a young field.

There is a certain exciting potentiality in the fact that Farah's novels might also one day be revised or retranslated in the light of developments in Italian postcolonial literature. My contention was always that his works have a great deal to offer the field of Italian postcolonialism but, in equal measure, in line with Steiner's notion of reciprocity, the field of Italian postcolonialism has a great deal to offer his works.

My hypothesis was that the Italian translations of Nuruddin Farah's works can be considered the cornerstone of Italian postcolonial literature despite their status as translations. I have shown that in theory they could but in practice, at the moment at least, they cannot fulfil this role. Fortunately a final note on Steiner's concept of reciprocity tempers the sadness of this observation. Thanks to Steiner himself, as the father of modern Translation Studies, the existence of a translation arouses scholarly interest and the belief that "there is more here than meets the eye". Humble studies like this one not only observe the literary polysystem but may gradually influence it. I reviewed how Graham Huggan (2012) problematizes the entanglement of postcolonial theory with the production of postcolonial literature in Chapter 1. His contention, in broad strokes, is that postcolonial theory has become the catalyst for the production of certain

modes of postcolonial writing as opposed to the means by which that writing is theorized. In Chapter 4 of this study it became clear that the institution of postcolonial literature in Italy is a very small and interconnected one. In the course of my research I personally met with Nuruddin Farah and Itala Vivan, and corresponded with Igiaba Scego, Ubax Ali Cristina Farah and the translator Anna Rusconi. In the social sciences observer's paradox is something researchers tend to try avoid but, when our field of study is the study of a field itself, we are obliged to reflect on our own capacity to influence the system we are observing. I said in the introduction that Nuruddin Farah waits patiently on the banks of the Rubicon. My profound hope for this study is to have a small hand in helping him cross. For my part, the die is cast.

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APPENDIX

Proof for the methodology for the analysis of prose rhythm

Here follows a proof of the premise that quantifying total syllables in phrase-runs and syllable-runs naturally takes into account the stress distribution of the same and that the distribution of pauses as represented by punctuation vis à vis total syllable density is a valid criterion for the evaluation of the extent to which a translation reflects the rhythmic structure of a source-text in the case of stress timed languages.

The extract selected for the proof is taken from the opening paragraphs of chapter 13 of *Gifts*. It is a dream sequence which is typical of most of the opening paragraphs of this novel and which form the data for the analysis of *Gifts* in the below chapter. The proof below is divided into two sections, further divided into three sub-sections each. The first section deals with the English ST while the second section deals with the Italian TT. The first sub-section of the relative sections includes the entire segment of the English ST and the Italian TT.

This is followed by a second set of sub-sections detailing the segmentation of the paragraphs into phrase-runs (corresponding to complete sense units which represent distinct movements in the narrative of the extract) and syllable-runs (phrases contained between pauses) as they appear in the ST and the TT. These are analysed in terms of total syllables per phrase-run and total syllables per syllable-run followed by stressed syllables per phrase-run and per syllable-run.

Stress is allocated in an extremely conventional and conservative manner for the purposes of this proof. In English monosyllabic content words are stressed while function words are unstressed and there is one major stress per multisyllabic word. In the Italian, in the absence of accents marking for unconventional stress, the penultimate syllable of each multisyllabic word is stressed. The analysis makes use of a notation developed to facilitate the segmentation of the extract along the lines suggested by O'Callaghan (1984) and developed by me for the purposes of this study. Divisions between syllables are indicated with slashes e.g. *x/y/z* where *x*, *y* and *z* represent individual syllables. Stressed syllables are indicated by being underlined e.g. *x/y/z* where *y* represents a stressed syllable. Phrase-runs are indicated by numbered square brackets e.g. ^{1}[*xyz*] where *xyz* represents a phrase-run. Syllable-runs are indicated by numbered round

brakets e.g. ^{1}(*xyz*) where *xyz* syllable-runs. They are numbered according to their overall sequence in extract not according to their sequence within the phrase-run. Pauses are represented by curled brackets e.g. {*x*} where *x* represents a punctuation mark or an implied pause before a conjunction introducing a finite clause. Givòn (1995: 373) considers conjunctions signal thematic continuity between clauses and classes them along with pauses and other markers which perform this discursive function under the label *cataphoric.* The example given represents two phrase-runs separated by a pause within which are two syllable-runs of three syllables each separated by a pause where *y* represents a stressed syllable in each syllable-run:

^{1}[^{1}(x/y/z){PAUSE}^{2}(x/y/z] {PAUSE} ^{2}[^{3}(x/y/z){PAUSE}^{4}(x/y/z)]

Having quantified in the ST the total syllables per phrase-run and the stressed syllables per phrase-run, these are graphed in order to compare the overall density, as well as the trajectory, of total syllables as compared to the stressed syllables in each phrase-run. (Also indicated on the graph are the syllable-runs per phrase-run.) The total syllables per syllable-run as compared to the stressed syllables per syllable-run are graphed in the same manner to compare the overall density and trajectory of syllables at this level. This process is repeated for the TT.

Two graphs are produced comparing a) the syllabic density and trajectory of the phrase-runs in both the ST and the TT; and, b) the density and trajectory of stressed syllables in both the ST and the TT. Finally, the data is analysed qualitatively.

Analysis of ST
ST Extract in full

> A woman lay asleep in the scanty shade of a fig tree, dreaming. She heard a weak whistle, that of a kestrel, then the shrill cry of a kite calling her name, a call she refused to respond to. When the woman imagined the kite had tired of shouting her name, she opened her eyes and to her amazement saw a hat drop from the clutch of the kestrel's claws, a hat which she caught with her alert hands. When next the hawk spoke her name, the woman prepared to get up, but couldn't bring herself to do so, given that she was absolutely naked. Again the kestrel's claws let go another surprise gift, this time a garland of leaves, thus providing her with something to cover her embarrassment with. That done, the woman rose to her feet, putting on the hat, too.
>
> But the woman was on a footpath going south towards a marshland. With the sleepy look of a dreamer, she spotted the figure of a man in an upright position, a man dwelling within the confines of a pearl-shaped framework of wires serving as a cage. Further ahead, there was a three-storey house with a large fruit garden surrounding it. Rather suddenly the hawk chanted its message, "Befriend me,

> Woman, and I will be yours for ever; have faith in me and I will give you what is due to you."
> Frightened, the woman let go both the hat and the garland of leaves, upon which she now trod. The hawk's cries ceased, night became day: and the woman woke up.
>
> (*Gifts*: 149)

Analysis of syllabic structure of ST extract

An analysis of the prosody and syllabic density of the ST extract results in a division of 12 phrase-runs made up of 38 syllable-runs. The details of the analysis are included in a footnote while the values and trends of the analysis are presented in graph form below[45]

---

45 Analysis of prosody and syllabic density in ST extract
[1][1](/A/ wo/man/ lay/ a/sleep/ in/ the/ scan/ty/ shade/ of/ a/ fig/ tree){,} ([2]dream/ing/).]
[1][1](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](2 syllables)] = 17 syllables
[1][1](6 stressed syllables) {PAUSE}[2] (1 stressed syllables)] = 7 stressed syllables
[2][3](/She/ heard/ a/ weak/ whis/tle/){,} [4](that/ of/ a/ kes/trel/){,} [5](then/ the/ shrill/ cry/ of/ a/ kite/ cal/ling/ her/ name/){,}[6] (a/ call/ she/ re/fused/ to/ re/spond/ to/).]
[2][3](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](5 syllables)] {PAUSE} [5](11 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](9 syllables) = 31 syllables
[2][3](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [4](1stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [5](5 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [6](3 stressed syllables)] = 12 stressed syllables
[3][7](/When/ the/ wo/man/ im/ag/ined/ the/ kite/ had/ tired/ of/ shout/ing/ her/ name/){,} [8](she/ op/ened/ her/ eyes/ and/ to/ her/ am/aze/ment/ saw/ a/ hat/ drop/ from/ the/ clutch/ of/ the/ kes/trel's/ claws/){,} [9](a/ hat/ which/ she/ caught/ with/ her/ a/lert/ hands/).]
[3][7](16 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](23 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](10 syllables)] = 49 syllables
[3][7](6 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [8](9 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [9](4 stressed syllables)] = 19 stressed syllables
[4][10](/When/ next/ the/ hawk/ spoke/ her/ name/){,} [11](the/ wo/man/ pre/pared/ to/ get/ up/){,}[12](but/ could/n't/ bring/ her/self/ to/ do/ so/){,} [13](giv/en/ that/ she/ was/ ab/so/lut/ely/ na/ked/.)]
[4][10](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [12](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [13](11 syllables)] = 35 syllables
[4][10](4 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [11](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [12](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [13](3 stressed syllables)] = 14 stressed syllables
[5][14](/A/gain/ the/ kes/trel's/ claws/ let/ go/ an/oth/er/ sur/prise/ gift/){,} [15](this/ time/ a/ gar/land/ of/ leaves/){,} [16](thus/ pro/vid/ing/ her/ with/ some/thing/ to/ co/ver/ her/ em/bar/rass/ment/ with/).]
[5][14](14 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [16](17 syllables)] = 38 syllables
[5][14](7 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [15](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [16](5 stressed syllables)] = 15 stressed syllables
[6][17](/That/ done/){,} [18](the/ wo/man/ rose/ to/ her/ feet/){,} [19](put/ting/ on/ the/ hat/){,} [20](too/).]
[6][17](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [18](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [20](1 syllable)] = 15 syllables
[6][17](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE}[18](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [19](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [20](1 stressed syllable)] = 7 stressed syllables
[7][21](/But/ the/ wo/man/ was/ on/ a/ foot/path/ go/ing/ south/ to/wards/ a/ marsh/land/.)]
[7][21](17 syllables)] = 17 syllables
[7][21](6 stressed syllables)] = 6 stressed syllables
[8][22](/With/ the/ sleep/y/ look/ of/ a/ dream/er/){,}[23](she/ spot/ted/ the/ fig/ure/ of/ a/ man/ in/ an/ up/right/ pos/i/tion/){,} [24](a/ man/ dwel/ling/ with/in/ the/ con/fines/ of/ a/ pearl/-shaped/ frame/work/ of/ wires/ ser/ving/ as/ a/ cage/.)]
[8][22](9 syllables) {PAUSE} [23](16 syllables) {PAUSE} [24](22 syllables)] = 47 syllables
[8][22](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [23](4 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [24](8 stressed syllables)] = 15 stressed syllables
[9][25](/Fur/ther/ a/head/){,} [26](there/ was/ a/ three/-stor/ey/ house/ with/ a/ large/ fruit/ gar/den/ sur/round/ing/ it/).]
[9][25](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [26](17 syllables)] = 21 syllables
[9][25](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [26](8 stressed syllables)] =10 stressed syllables
[10][27](/Rath/er/ sud/den/ly/ the/ hawk/ chant/ed/ its/ mes/sage/){,} [28]("Be/friend/ me/){,} [29](Wo/man/({,} [30](and/ I/ will/ be/ yours/ for/ ev/er/){;}[31](have/ faith/ in/ me/) [32](and/ I/ will/ give/ you/ what/ is/ due/ to/ you/.)"]
[10][27](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [28](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [29](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [30](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [31](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [32](10 syllables)] = 39 syllables
[10][27](5 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [28](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [29](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [30](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [31](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [32](5 stressed syllables)] = 18 syllables
[11][33](/Fright/ened/){,} [34](the/ wo/man/ let/ go/ both/ the/ hat/ and/ the/ gar/land/ of/ leaves/){,}[35](up/on/ which/ she/ now/ trod/).]
[11][33](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [34](14 syllables) {PAUSE} [35](6 syllables)] = 22 syllables
[11][33](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [34](5 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [35](3 stressed syllables)] = 9 stressed syllables
[12][36](/The/ hawk's/ cries/ ceased/){,} [37](night/ be/came/ day/){:} [38](and/ the/ wo/man/ woke/ up/).]
[12][36](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [37](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [38](6 syllables)] = 14 syllables
[12][36](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [37](3 stressed syllables) {pause} [38](3 stressed syllables)] = 9 stressed syllables

Comparison of stressed syllable density and unstressed syllable density per phrase-run in the ST

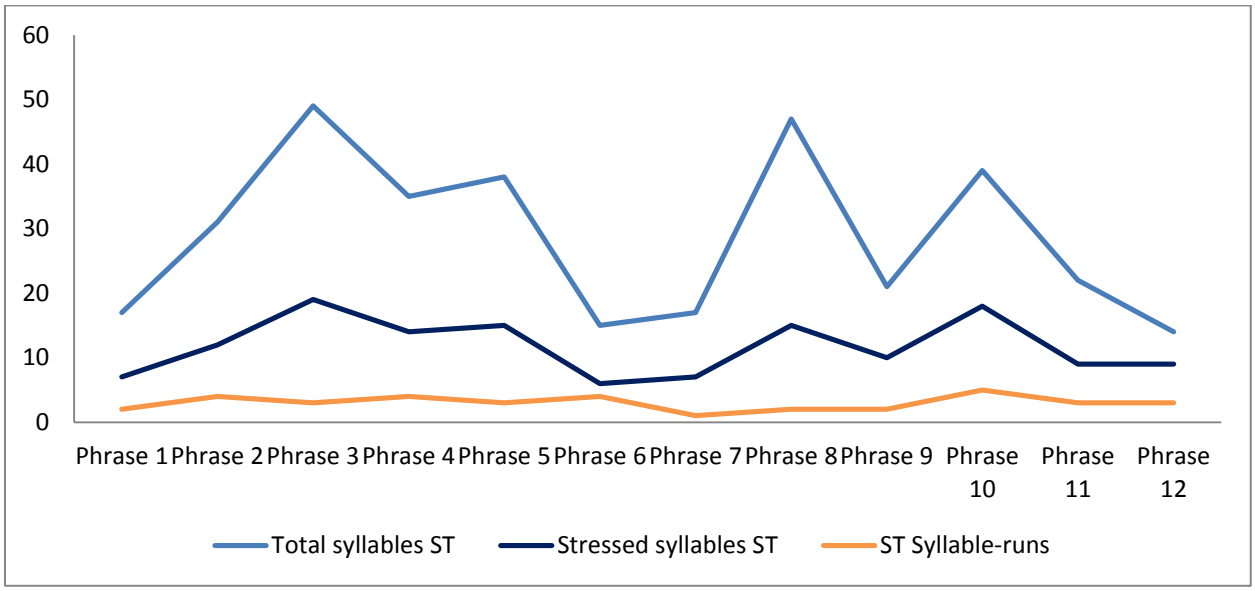

Figure 4. Graph comparing stressed syllables as compared to unstressed syllables per phrase-run in the ST (proof segment).

The graph clearly indicates that there is a strong correlation in the peaks and drops of the stressed ST syllables per phrase-run and the total ST syllables per phrase-run.

Comparison of stressed syllable density and unstressed syllable density per syllable-run in

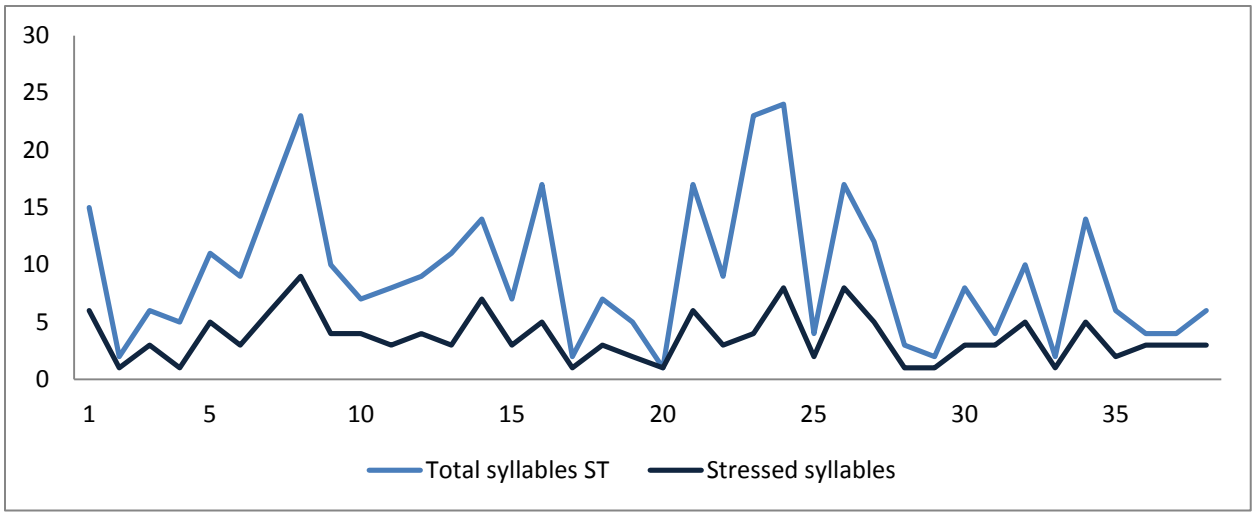

Figure 5. Graph comparing stressed syllables as compared to unstressed syllables per syllable-run in ST (proof segment).

The graph clearly indicates that there is a strong correlation in the peaks and drops of the stressed ST syllables per syllable-run and the total ST syllables per syllable-run.

Analysis of TT

TT extract in full

> Una donna giaceva addormentata all'ombra avara di un fico, e sognava. Udì un fischio leggero, il fischio di un gheppio, quindi il grido acuto di un nibbio che la chiamava per nome, ma rifiutò di rispondere. Quando pensò che il falco si fosse ormai stancato di lanciare il suo richiamo, aprì gli occhi e, con grande stupor, vide un cappello sfuggire alla presa degli artigli del gheppio. Con rapido riflesso, la afferò tra le mani. Poco dopo il falco ripeté il suo nome e lei fece per alzarsi ma non poté: era completamente nuda. Allora gli artigli del gheppio sganciarono un altro dono inatteso, questa volta una ghirlanda di foglie con cui coprirsi il sesso. Fatto ciò, la donna si sollevò e indossò il cappello.
>
> Si trovava su un sentiero che conduceva a sud, verso una palude. Con gli occhi impastati del sogno vide la figura di un uomo in posizione eretta, un uomo confinato in una gabbia di cavi metallici forgiata a forma di perla. Più avanti si ergeva una casa di tre piani circondata da un ampio orto. All'improvviso, il falco prese a cantarle il suo messaggio: "Siimi amica, Donna, e io sarò tuo per sempre. Abbi fiducia in me, e io ti darò ciò che ti aspetta".
>
> Spaventata, la donna lasciò andare ghirlanda e cappello e si mise a correre. Le grida del falco cessarono, la notte volse in giorno, la donna si destò.
>
> (*Doni*: 195-196)

Analysis of syllabic structure of TT extract

An analysis of the prosody and syllabic density of the TT extract results in a division of 12 phrase-runs made up of 37 syllable-runs. The details of the analysis are included in a footnote while the values and trends of the analysis are presented in graph form below[46]

[46] Analysis of prosody and syllabic structure of TT extract
[1][[1](Un/a/ don/na/ gia/ce/va/ ad/dor/men/ta/ta/ al/l'om/bra/ a/va/ra/ di/ un/ fi/co/) {,} [2](/e/ sog/na/va/).]
[1][[1](22 syllables) {PAUSE} [2](4 syllables)] = 26 syllables
[1][[1](7 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [2](1 stressed syllable)] = 8 stressed syllables
[2][[3](U/di/ un/ fis/chio/ leg/ge/ro/{,} [4](il/ fis/chio/ di/ un/ ghep/pio/) {,} [5](/quin/di/ il/ gri/do/ a/cu/to/ di/ un/ nib/bio/ che/ la/ chia/ma/va/ per/ no/me/{,} [6](ma/ ri/fiu/tò/ di/ ris/pon/de/re/).]
[2][[3](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [4](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [5](19 syllables) {PAUSE} [6](9 syllables)] = 43 syllables
[2][[3](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [4](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [5](7 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [6](2 stressed syllables)] = 14 stressed syllables
[3][[7](/Quan/do/ pen/sò/ che/ il/ fal/co/ si/ fos/se/ or/mai/ stan/ca/to/ di/ lan/cia/re/ il/ su/o/ ri/chia/mo/) {,} [8](/ap/rì/ gli/ oc/chi/ e/) {,} [9](/con/ gran/de/ /stu/po/re/) {,} [10](/vi/de/ un/ cap/pel/lo/ sfug/gi/re/ al/la/ pre/sa/ de/gli/ art/i/gli/ del/ ghep/pio/) {.} [11](/Con/ ra/pi/do/ ri/fles/so/{,} [12](/la/ af/fe/rò/ tra/ le/ ma/ni.)][46]
[3][[7](26 syllables) {PAUSE} [8](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [9](6 syllables) {PAUSE} [10](21 syllables) {PAUSE} [11](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [12](8 syllables)] = 74 syllables
[3][[7](9 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [8](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [9](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [10](8 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [11](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [12](2 stressed syllables)] = 25 stressed syllables
[4][[13](Po/co/ do/po/ il/ fal/co/ ri/pe/té/ il/ su/o/ no/me/) {*} [14](/e/ /lei/ fe/ce/ per/ al/zar/si/ ma/ non/ po/té/) {:} [15](e/ra/ com/ple/ta/men/te/ nu/da/).][46]
[4][[13](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [14](12 syllables) {PAUSE} [15](9 syllables)] = 36 syllables
[4][[13](6 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [14](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [15](3 stressed syllables)] = 12 stressed syllables
[5][[16](Al/lo/ra/ gli/ ar/ti/gli/ del/ ghep/pio/ sgan/cia/ro/no/ un/ al/tro/ do/no/ in/at/te/so/) {,} [17](quest/a/ vol/ta/ un/a/ ghir/lan/da/ di/ fo/glie/ con/ cui/ cop/rir/si/ il/ ses/so/).]
[5][[16](23 syllables) {PAUSE} [17](20 syllables)] = 43 syllables
[5][[16](7 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [17](7 stressed syllables)] = 14 stressed syllables
[6][[18](/Fat/to/ ciò/) {,} [19](/la/ don/na/ si/ sol/le/vò/ e/ in/dos/sò/ il/ cap/pel/lo/).]
[6][[18](3 syllables) {PAUSE} [19](15 syllables)] = 17 syllables
[6][[20](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [21](4 stressed syllables)] = 5 stressed syllables

Comparison of stressed syllable density and unstressed syllable density per phrase-run in the TT

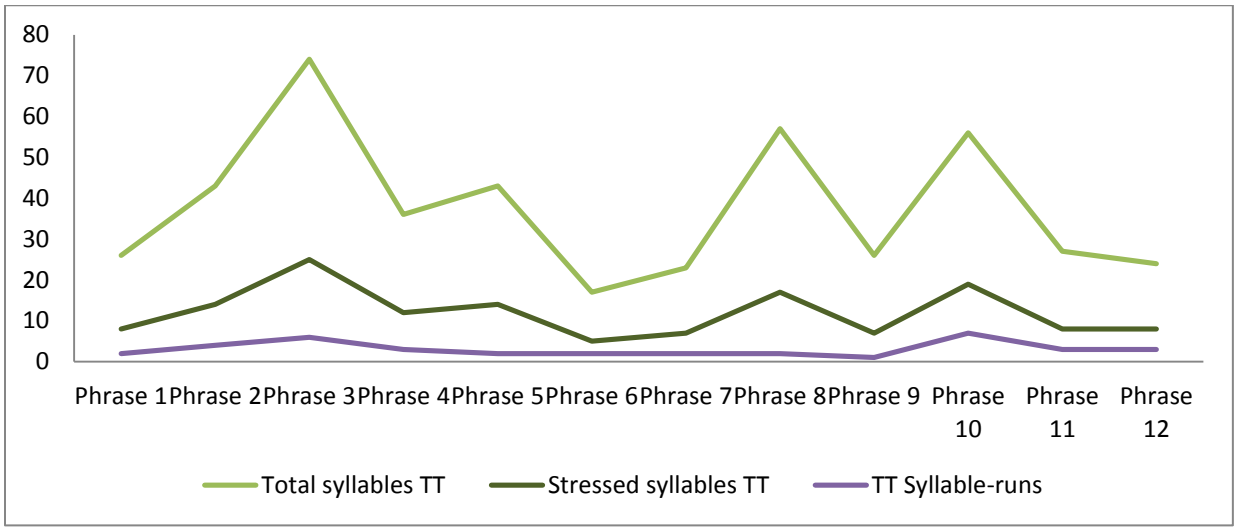

Figure 6. Graph comparing stressed syllables as compared to unstressed syllables per phrase-run in the TT (proof segment).

The graph clearly indicates that there is a strong correlation in the peaks and drops of the stressed TT syllables per phrase-run and the total TT syllables per phrase-run.

Comparison of stressed syllable density and as unstressed syllable density per syllable-run in the TT

---

[7][20](/Si/ tro/va/va/ su/ un/ sen/tie/ro/ che/ con/du/ce/va/ a/ sud/) {,} [21](/ver/so/ un/a/ pa/lu/de/).]
[7][20](16 syllables) {PAUSE} [21](7 syllables)] = 23 syllables
[7][20](4 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [21](3 stressed syllables)] =7 stressed syllables
[8][22](/Con/ gli/ oc/chi/ im/past/a/ti/ del/ so/gno/ vi/de/ la/ fi/gu/ra/ di/ un/ uo/mo/ in/ po/si/zio/ne/ er/et/ta/) {,} [23](/un/ uo/mo/ con/fi/na/to/ in/ un/a/ gab/bia/ di/ ca/vi/ me/tal/li/ci/ for/gia/ta/ a/ for/ma/ di/ per/la/).]
[8][22](29 syllables) {PAUSE} [23](28 syllables)] = 57 syllables
[8][22](8 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [23](9 stressed syllables)] = 17 stressed syllables
[9][24](/Più/ av/an/ti/ si/ er/ge/va/ un/a/ ca/sa/ di/ tre/ pia/ni/ cir/con/da/ta/ da/ un/ am/pio/ or/to/).]
[9][24](26 syllables)] = 26 syllables
[9][24](7 stressed syllables)] = 7 stressed syllables
[10][25](/Al/l'im/prov/vi/so/) {,} [26](/il/ fal/co/ pre/se/ a/ can/tar/le/ il/ su/o/ mes/sag/gio/) {:} [27](/Sii/mi/ am/i/ca/) {,} [28](/Don/na/) {,} [29](/e/ i/o/ sa/rò/ tu/o/ per/ sem/pre/) {.} [30](/Ab/bi/ fi/du/cia/ in/ me/) {,} [31](/e/ i/o/ ti/ da/rò/ ciò/ che/ ti/ as/pet/ta/).]
[10][25](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [26](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [27](5 syllables) {PAUSE} [28](2 syllables) {PAUSE} [29](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [30](7 syllables) {PAUSE} [31](12 syllables)] = 56 syllables
[10][25](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [26](6 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [27](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [28](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [29](4 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [30](2 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [31](3 stressed syllables)] = 19 stressed syllables
[11][32](/Spa/ven/ta/ta/) {,} [33](/la/ don/na/ las/ciò/ an/da/re/ ghir/lan/da/ e/ cap/pel/lo/) {*} [34](/e/ si/ mi/se/ a/ cor/re/re/).]
[11][32](4 syllables) {PAUSE} [33](15 syllables) {PAUSE} [34](8 syllables)] = 27 syllables
[11][32](1 stressed syllable) {PAUSE} [33](5 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [34](2 stressed syllables)] = 8 stressed syllables
[12][35](/Le/ gri/da/ del/ fal/co/ ces/sa/ro/no/) {,} [36](/la/ not/te/ vol/se/ in/ gior/no/) {,} [37](/la/ don/na/ si/ des/tò/).]
[12][35](10 syllables) {PAUSE} [36](8 syllables) {PAUSE} [37](6 syllables).] = 24 syllables
[12][35](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [36](3 stressed syllables) {PAUSE} [37](2 stressed syllables).] = 8 stressed syllables

The graph clearly indicates that there is a strong correlation in the peaks and drops of the stressed TT syllables per syllable-run and the total TT syllables per syllable-run.

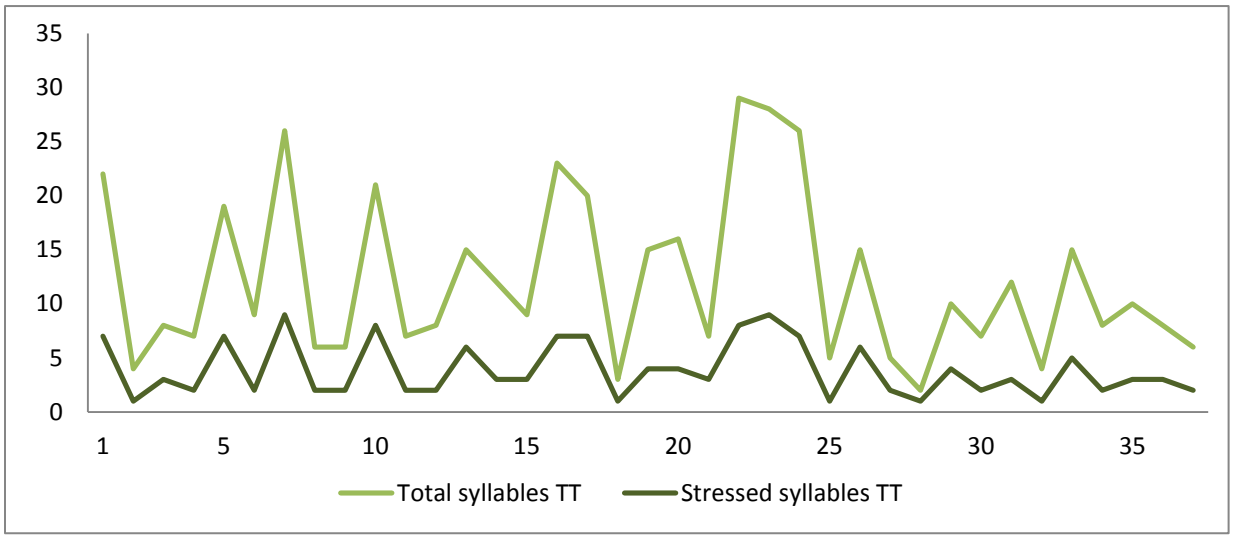

Figure 25. Graph comparing stressed syllables as compared to unstressed syllables per phrase-run in the TT (proof segment).

Comparison between ST and TT

Comparison of stressed and unstressed syllable density in ST as compared to TT at the level of phrase-runs

The graph shows that the above mentioned correlations operate effectively for both languages under scrutiny.

Comparison of total syllables per syllable-run is ST and TT

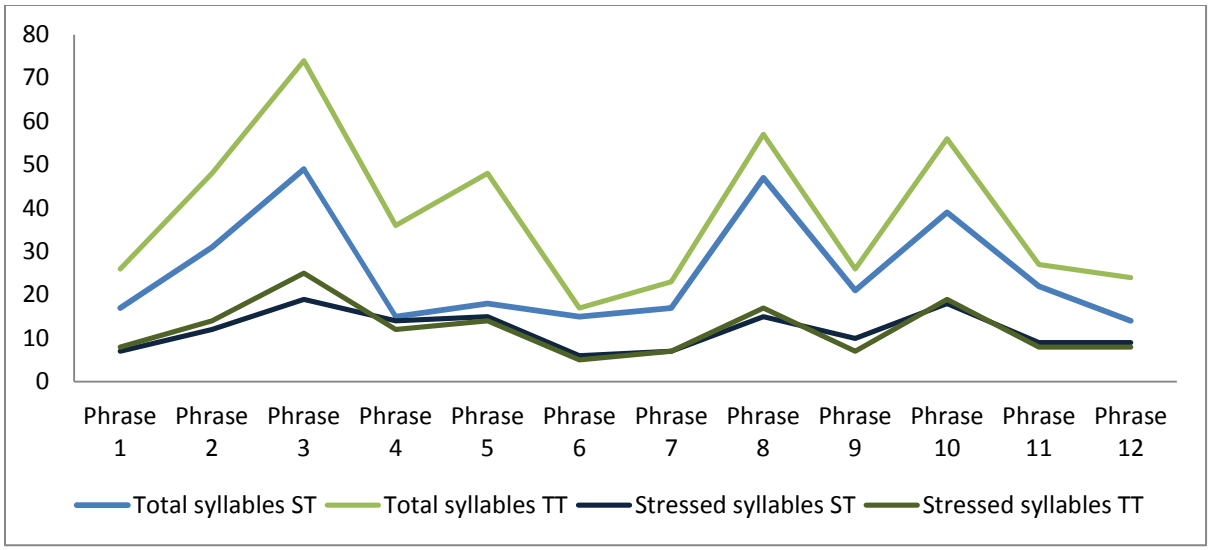

Figure 26.Graph of total syllables as compared to stressed syllables per phrase-run in ST and TT (proof segment).

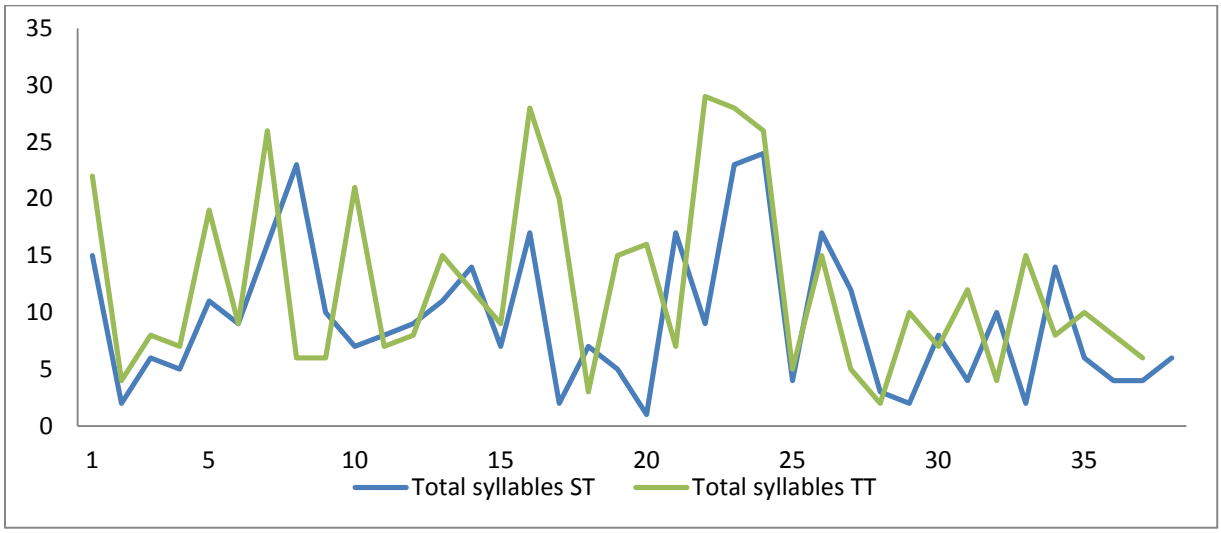

Figure 27. Graph comparing total syllables per syllable-run is ST and TT (proof segment).

This graph as compared to the graph below indicates the strong correlation between the density of stressed and total syllables in both the ST and TT at the level of syllable-runs. Both graphs follow the same trends in peaks and drops and densities are comparable.

Comparison of stressed syllables per syllable-run is ST and TT

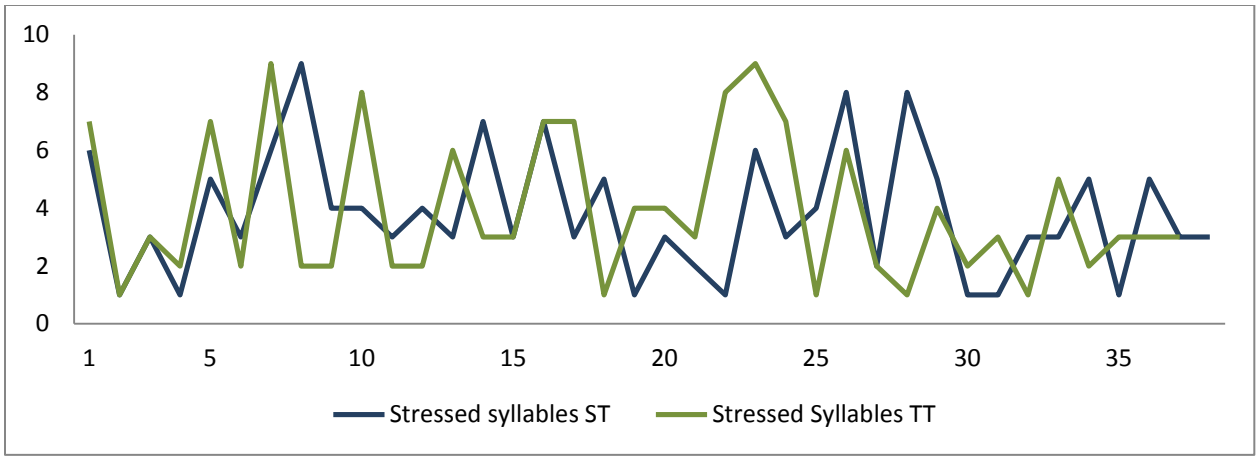

Figure 28. Graph comparing stressed syllables per syllable-run is ST and TT (proof segment).

Ratios

The analysis of the data results in the following ratios. The values show that a quarter of Italian syllables in the segment analysed are stressed whereas half of the English syllables are stressed. The pattern is regular and total syllables can therefore be said to account by means of an average for stressed syllables implicitly without having to assign stress arbitrarily. For this reason only total syllables are accounted for in the analysis below. The most important ratio established is that of 1:1,5 for ST total syllables to TT total syllables. This ratio is used in the analysis below to make the comparisons between ST and TT syllable densities fair. This is because the analysis of the proof segment indicates that Italian typically is more syllable dense than English as a result of its inflectional structure.

- ST total syllables to ST stressed syllables = 2:1
- TT total syllables to TT stressed syllables = 4:1
- ST total syllables to TT total syllables = 1, 1,5
- ST stressed syllables to TT stressed syllables = 1:1,2

Analysis of data

A comparison of the graphic representations of the syllable densities in both the phrase-run and the syllable-run series indicates that, as expected given that both Italian and English are syllable timed languages and that it is logical that a higher syllable count will naturally imply a higher quantity of stressed syllables, there is a close correspondence between the peaks and dips in

syllable density for both total syllables and stressed syllables for both phrase-runs and syllable-runs.

The ratios indicate that while the TT has roughly double the total syllables per run as compared to the ST (4:1 vs 2:1), it has a roughly similar number of stressed syllables per run (1:1,2 vs 1:1,5). Figure 25 visually demonstrates this rough correlation because the total TT syllable graph line is much higher than the total ST syllable graph line, while the TT stressed syllable graph line matches the ST stressed syllable graph line much more closely.

The conclusion to be drawn is that, when comparing the syllable density of an English run with that of an Italian run we can take for granted that the syllable count will be much higher for the Italian but that, based on a law of averages, the two languages will have a comparable number of stressed syllables in each run. We can much more easily compare the rhythmic trajectory of the English segments and their Italian counterparts if the lines on the graphs are closer together. For this reason the ratio that was established in the comparison of ST total syllables to TT total syllables (1:1,5), will be applied to the graphs in the analysis below. The graph of the phrase-runs in the segment is adjusted below to illustrate this point:

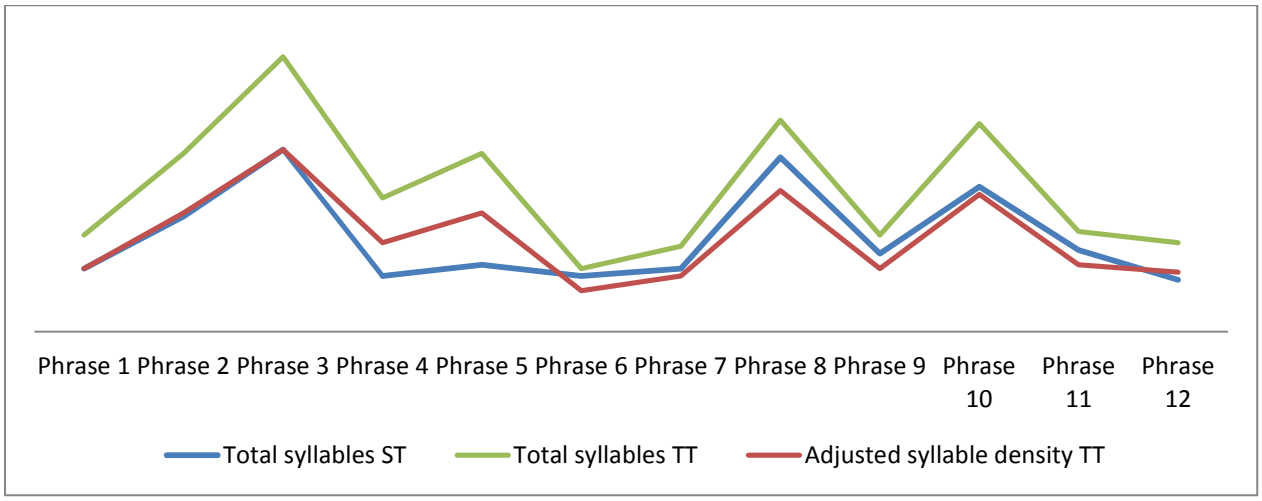

Figure 29.Graph of total ST syllables per phrase-run as compared to TT total syllables per phrase-run along with TT total syllables adjusted by a ratio of 1:1,5 (proof segment).

As can be seen, the line with the adjusted values (red) more clearly indicates, for example, that the TT syllable densities of phrases 4 and 5 differ greatly from the ST than if we were relying on the total syllables (green). The adjusted values are, for this reason, applied throughout for ease of comparison.

There is a danger that the graphs could be misinterpreted where the number of syllables in the same syllable-run in the ST and TT coincide coincidentally. A deception of this kind is illustrated in the figure 27. Here the syllable-runs appear to be neatly in sync at point 25. However syllable-run 25 in the English appears in phrase 9 and refers to the words *further ahea*d whereas syllable-run 25 of the Italian appears in phrase-run 10 and refers to the words *all'improvviso*. For this reason another kind of analysis is required which gives a fuller and more accurate account of the overall rhythm of a segment: that of syllable-runs per syllable-phrase. The graph below indicates an analysis of this kind.

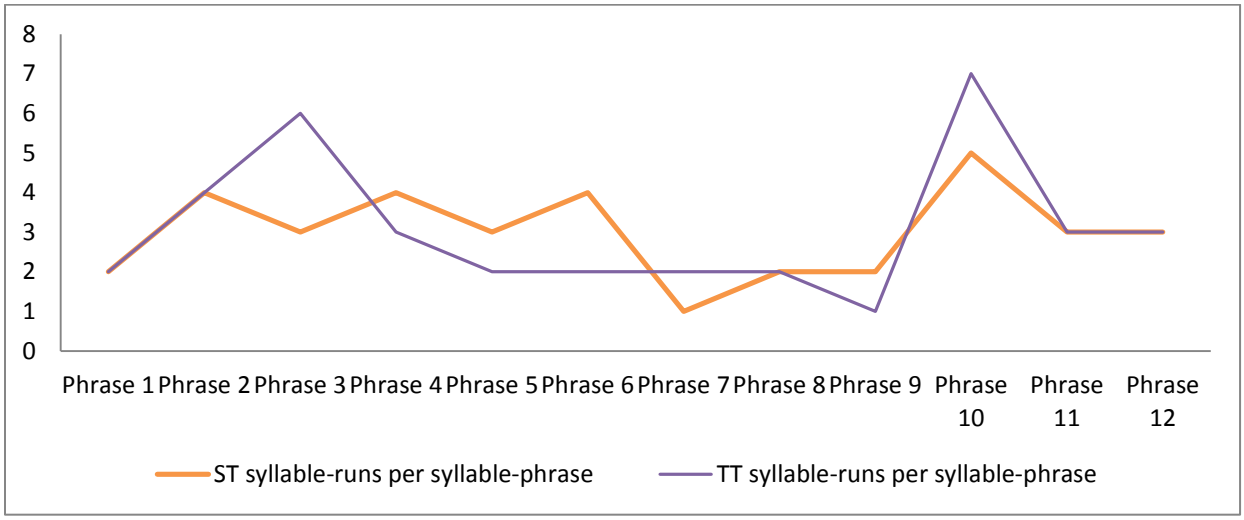

Figure 30. Graph comparing ST syllable-runs per phrase-run to TT syllable-runs per phrase-run (proof segment).

In this graph we can see that arguably the most important feature of rhythm, the variation between runs and pauses, is very much out of synchrony in the ST and TT. This proves to be the most valuable tool in the analysis of the rhythm below and the fairest measure of the translator's opting for source-orientation or target-orientation insofar as rhythmic structure alone is concerned.

English and Italian stress patterns are completely different: English tending towards an iambic metre and Italian towards a trochaic metre.[47] For this reason distribution of stress cannot be a criterion for evaluating whether an Italian translation has a similar rhythmical structure to an English original. In any case, we are dealing with prose not poetry which would not be prose if it did have a regular metrical structure. Instead the density of stressed syllables between pauses is the only criterion available to us. However, as noted above, assigning stress is far too subjective an exercise but, at any rate, as established in this analysis stressed syllables correspond in a relatively regular way to total syllables in the stress-timed languages with which I am dealing. For this reason, based on the ratios produced through the analysis of the long extract from *Gifts* and the visual cues provided by the graphs, the main body of my analysis of rhythmic structures in the segments below concerns the distribution of pauses in relation to total number of syllables in phrase-runs and in syllable-runs, the theory being that, if syllable-runs are kept at a ratio equal to or less than (TT) 4: (ST)1 and the punctuation is distributed in the same way, the segments are of a similar rhythmic structure.

[47] This is, incidentally, what makes the translation of metrical poetry between the two languages very challenging as attested to by Anthony Esolen, the translator of a recent English edition of Dante Alighieri's *Comedia*, who in fact opts to transform Dante's trochaic metre into iambic metre to maintain a rhythmic structure which is more suited to the natural flow of the English language.