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**A Foreignising or a Domesticating Approach
in Translating Dialects?**

Andrea Camilleri's detective novels in English and *The Simpsons* in Italian

TESI DI DOTTORATO

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis titled *A Foreignising or a Domesticating Approach in Translating dialects? Andrea Camilleri's detective novels in English and The Simpsons in Italian* is divided into four parts:

- 1) an introductory chapter dealing with the most noteworthy translation theories developed in the Western World over the centuries, with a special focus on *Translation Studies*;
- 2) a second part analysing two detective novels by Andrea Camilleri, in particular those passages that, because of the high concentration of diatopic, diastratic and diaphatic varieties and the combined use of standard and dialect in the same segment of the text, represent a serious challenge to the translator. This analysis (whose aim is to detect the functions of these linguistic variations) and the *skopos* the translator wants to maintain in the target text, will be followed by comparisons between the original excerpts and their respective English translations. Stephen Sartarelli is the sole translator of Camilleri's detective novels for the Anglophone world. The existence of this kind of monopoly renders impossible the comparison between different English translations of the same work, so this section will focus on the evolution of Sartarelli's

translation strategies over the years he has been working. The basis of my research consists of two detective novels by Andrea Camilleri, one of the first to be translated into English (*The Voice of the Violin*, first published in Italian in 1997 and in English translation in 2003) and one of the latest (*The Wings of the Sphinx*, first published in Italian in 2006 and in English translation in 2009). By comparing them to their respective translations, I will be able to say which aspects of the original texts Sartarelli has opted to maintain (precisely which kind of fidelity he has opted for) and whether he has adopted a “foreignising approach” to preserving the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the way in which Camilleri uses Sicilian dialect and if over the years, Sartarelli's translating method has changed. Indeed, I consider the “foreignising approach” the best and perhaps the only way to deal with such culturally-connotated texts. For instance, one of the funniest characters in Camilleri's novels is the semi-illiterate Agatino Catarella whose idiolect merges Sicilian dialect and Italian, a strange mix that linguists define as “popular Italian”;

3) A third chapter, specular to the first, which focuses on *Screen Translation* (dubbing and subtitling), and on the most interesting contributions to the field with a particular focus on Italian dubbing. Both case studies will be exemplified by the contrastive analysis of those excerpts that may represent a challenge to the translator;

4) In the fourth and last part by contrast, the problem of translating culture is treated from a different point of view: the source language (English), the medium conveying the message (the dubbing process imposes various constraints such lip and paralinguistic synchronization) and the translation approach change. The case study analysed in this part of the thesis is represented by some episodes of *The Simpsons*, an animated American television serial that is broadcast in many countries. The cartoon is ideal for this purpose, since it is extremely humorous and its humour is based on elements of the cultural context and on the exploitation of linguistic varieties. *The Simpsons'* Italian dubbing is in fact one of the best examples of the “domesticating method”, or rewriting of the dialects, sociolects and idiolects of the famous cartoon. For instance, Italian screen translators had to deal with and to maintain the cultural connotations of for instance, Italian-American spoken by some mafia characters like Fat Tony and his *goodfellas*, and to totally recreate the connotations of some other original accents. Finally, the contrasting analysis conducted between original and Italian translations of the three episodes selected (namely *The Last of the Red Hat Mamas*, *The Italian Bob* and *The Color Yellow*) will be fundamental to shed light on the translating approach adopted for such a cultural- and linguistic-based humour, so that tendencies in the translation of humour and of cultural references in audiovisual texts can be pinpointed.

Chapter One

Translation Studies: a general frame

With the rapid spread of the electronic media (above all the Internet) in the 1990s and in a world extremely contracted both in space and time, the contact between languages and cultures necessarily and increasingly requires the mediation of translation. This is why nowadays the study of translation equals the study of cultural interaction since *only translation can reconcile the differences that separate languages and cultures* (Venuti, 2000: 67). The translator becomes then an intercultural mediator and interpreter and *one of the most important and most effective promoters of cross-cultural connection with the literature of other lands* (Holmes, 1970: 93).

But, as we will see, the practice of translation is not a recent phenomenon.

1.1 Antiquity

Interest in translation is as old as human civilization: the first reflections on the subject date back to the 46 BC when Cicero¹, with his work titled *Libellus de optimo genere oratorum*, launched the still current opposition between strict literalism, performed by the *interpretes*, and autonomous recreation that only a good *orator* can perform (Cicero, 1993: 58), or, quoting George Steiner's words, between letter and spirit.² Cicero's preference for the latter alternative will also be shared by Horace in his *Ars Poetica*, dated around 10 BC, where he elaborated the principle of *non verbum de verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu*³, and by Saint Jerome in his *Letter to Pammachius* dated 395 AD (Baker, 1998: 87). Saint Jerome's *Vulgata* (384 AD), consisting of the revised translation of the Old Testament (*Septuaginta*) and of a completely new version of the New Testament, was built upon two idiosyncratic principles: Cicero's principle of rendering *sensum de sensu* instead of *verbum de verbo* (this is especially valid for profane texts) and, on the

¹ Cicero's precept on translation is the first work on the topic for Western culture. It is thought that the Romans did invent the practice of translation: they were supposed not to be able to create a literary system of their own without "preying" on Greek cultural material. On the contrary, we do not possess any Greek writing on the subject because the Greeks did not translate. In fact, according to Lefevere they were not interested in knowing the Other (which they simply called *barbaroi*). (Bassnett, Lefevere, 1998: 13-14).

² *Whatever treatise on the art of translation we look at, the same dichotomy is stated: as between letter and spirit, word and sense.* (Steiner, 1998: 275).

³ *Do not worry about rendering word for word, faithful translator, but render sense for sense.* (Lefevere, 1992: 15).

other hand, on the urgency for an interlinear version of the Scriptures *ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est*.⁴

1.2 From the Middle Ages onwards

It is important to underline that these first overt considerations on translation were confined, borrowing Genette's terminology, to the so-called *peritext* and *epitext*⁵ (literally: around the text or outside it). During the late Middle Ages written translation started to cover a fundamental role for the transmission of Greek and Latin texts to the Christian world. In particular, Toledo, with a large population of Arabic-speaking Christians called Mozarabs had been an important centre of learning since the end of the 10th century. From the 12th the coexistence of the Arabs, Jews and Christians, favoured the creation of the first school of translators, "The Toledo School of Translators", which made available, through the translation into Latin, many important texts from Arabic, Hebrew and Greek philosophers such as Avicenna, Aristotle, Archimedes and many others. (Bertazzoli, 2009: 39)

The principles theorized by Cicero, Horace and a Saint Jerome of

⁴ *Where even the order of the words is a mystery*. (AAVV, 1981: 450).

⁵ The French literary critic Gérard Genette defines the "paratext" as those secondary or ancillary texts (the author's name, title, preface, introduction, footnotes, commentary, translation and so forth) that in a published work accompany the text. The "paratext" is composed of a "peritext" which includes elements inside the confines of a volume, and of an "epitext", that denotes elements outside the volume such as interviews, reviews, correspondence and diaries. (Genette, 1989: 4-7).

a sense-for-sense translation were still used as guidelines, since the transmission of the contents was deemed more urgent than the accuracy of the translation. For this reason it is more appropriate to consider these operations as vernacularizations of classical works rather than proper translations, since they lacked what the Latin people used to call *aemulatio* or artistic translation. (Folena, 1994: 10)

The first author to grant a proper *locus* to the subject was Leonardo Bruni who expounded his philological and hermeneutic principles⁶ in the little treatise titled *De Interpretatione recta* (c. 1420): deep comprehension of the text to be translated; mastery and knowledge of both the languages involved in the translation; and last but not least the recreation of the stylistic structures and elegance of the author (Folena, 1994: 58-60). In addition, we owe to Leonardo Bruni the current meaning of the Italian *tradurre* (to translate). In fact, he misinterpreted the Latin word *traducere* in Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*: the actual sense of the sentence *vocabulum graecum traductum in linguam Romanam* (Folena, 1994: 67) was to transplant a Greek term in Latin (the so-called borrowing) and not to translate. This curious episode is very representative of the power of translation to introduce new linguistic material: translating then contributes to the rise and development both of languages and literary forms. From the fifteenth century onwards, the

⁶ Etienne Dolet will list very similar principles in his *De la manière de bien traduire d'une langue en autre*, published in 1540. (Lefevre, 1992: 27-28).

verb *traducere* will spread in Europe and will substitute *transfero* (hence *traslatum* that instead is maintained in English in the form of *to translate*). This is why, according to Folena, translation is synonym of tradition (1994: 3). In fact, as Latin literature owed its existence to Greek literature which provided topics and linguistic models on the new culture (obviously through translation), so, from the Middle Ages onwards, vulgarizations of classical authors will play a major role in the crystallization of national cultures (Even Zohar, 2000: 192). In this regard it is worth remembering Martin Luther's innovative translation of the Bible of 1522, which linguistically and semantically led to the rise of the modern German language while championing both the respect for the original text and a transparent and universally intelligible translation. This kind of biblical translation was oriented to the so-called pole of "acceptability"⁷ that along with its opposite, "adequacy"⁸, will set up the eternal dichotomy between receptor and message.

⁷ *Acceptability*: orientation toward the textual norms of the receptor/target culture. (Manini, 1996: 171).

⁸ *Adequacy*: maximum reproduction of the source texts, functional features regardless of the expectations of the receptor audience. (Manini, 1996: 171).

1.3 The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were characterized by the typically baroque phenomenon of the *belles infidèles*⁹. This tag reaffirmed the everlasting clash between letter and spirit by comparing translations either to beautiful but unfaithful women (if a pleasant and readable text was the translator's first goal) or to their opposite (uncouth/awful and consequently faithful women) if the form was neglected and the meaning transferred slavishly. A marked stylistic licence and the neoclassical principle of imitation were the supreme values of the period. Greek and Latin works were used as prototexts¹⁰, as rough material to re-elaborate according to the coeval/current literary canons even through omissions and improvements. In his *Preface to Ovid's Epistles* of 1680 John Dryden listed three kinds of translating approaches: *metaphrase* or word for word translation; *paraphrase* or sense for sense translation; and *imitation* where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty, non only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the

⁹ Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt's translations were the first ones to be termed *belles infideles*: *I do not always stick to the author's words nor even to his thoughts*. (Lefevre, 1992: 36).

¹⁰ The term *prototext* (Popovic) is preferred to original text because it lacks the idea of the superiority of the original. *Prototext* is not superior to its translation but only anterior to it. Since the temporal sequentiality has always been held as a proof of inferiority. <http://www.esamizdat.it/rivista/2009/1/recensioni/ravalli2.htm> (29/12/09).

groundwork, as he pleases. (Baker, 1998: 111)

Among these three alternatives Dryden preferred the second one and introduced the metaphor of the translator as a portrait painter *who has the duty of making his work resemble the original* (Bassnett, 2002: 64).

1.4 Romanticism

Romanticism is a very fertile period for a “Science of Translation” *ante litteram* because it is through translation that peoples construct their own identity and their image of the Other:

Specific translation strategies may serve a variety of cultural and social functions, building languages, literatures and nations.

(Venuti, 2000: 11)

Herder for instance, as well as his contemporary scholars, celebrated the disaster/blessing of Babel that George Steiner later defined as *a rain of stars upon men* (Steiner, 1998: xviii) since the peculiarities and differences among languages and cultures lead to different *Weltanschauung* and so to a broader and deeper perception of reality. Herder thought that each culture, each idiom resembled the facet of a

prism reflecting the world from a particular perspective (*Weltanschauung*). Another very important scholar was Wilhelm von Humboldt who, together with Herder, considered translations as necessary and fundamental for every literature not only to reveal the “otherness” but especially to enhance and broaden the expressive potentiality of each language.¹¹

Friedrich Schleiermacher instead advocated, in his 1813 *On the Different Methods of Translating*, word-for word literalism in order to produce an effect of foreignness in the translation. (1993: 176) According to him, we do actually translate only when the reader is carried to the language of the author and not when the author is brought to the language of the reader, but in this case we simply effect an imitation or paraphrase of the original text (Lefevere, 1992: 149). He also considered the genuine translator as someone:

who wants to bring those two completely separated persons, his author and his reader, truly together, and who would like to bring the latter to an understanding and enjoyment of the former as correct and complete as possible without inviting him to leave the sphere of his mother tongue [...](Venuti, 1995: 100)

¹¹ *Translation, and especially the translation of poets, is one of the most necessary tasks to be performed in literature, partly because it introduces forms of art and human life that otherwise have remained totally unknown to those who do not know a language, and above all because it increases the significance and expressiveness of one's own language.* (Lefevere, 1992: 136-137).

1.5 Universalism vs Relativism

According to George Steiner, the author of the 1975 international best-selling *After Babel*, which is considered a milestone in the historical and critical reconstruction of the translation theories of the Western world, translation can be seen from two different perspectives:

1) The first perspective, called “the universalist view”, assumes that translation is realizable because differences in languages are only superficial and hiding universal underlying structures common to all idioms. According to Paul Ricoeur (2002: 54) a lost Adamic language (where there was a perfect correspondence between objects and their names) could be found by eliminating the imperfections inherent in every language. This is what Walter Benjamin expounded in his widely known 1923 essay *The Task of the Translator*. He saw translations as fragments of the same vessel, of different sizes and shapes that combined and glued together may reveal the Pure, original language and express the ancestral relationship between languages. (Benjamin, 2000: 17)

2) According to the so-called “monadist view”¹² by contrast, translation is impossible because languages and cultures are monads, *perpetual living mirrors of the universe* (Steiner, 1998: 78), each showing reality

¹² Monad is a concept elaborated by the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz in his 1714 work titled *Monadology*.
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/leibniz.htm> (8/01/10)

from a differing and irreconcilable perspective.

In the twentieth century this conception (already systematized by von Humboldt) was further developed by Franz Boas and his pupil Sapir. According to them the grammatical categories of a language are fundamental to determine the aspects of every experience. (Jakobson, 2000: 116)

Sapir's student Benjamin Lee Whorf became associated with the principle of linguistic relativity that came to be known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: it is our culture that determines our language, and our language is the matrix of our civilization. As a consequence, linguistic and cultural discrepancies that derive from different mental pictures and from disparate intellectual systems, make translation impossible. (Ricoeur, 2002: 54) In fact, different cultural concepts and categories inherent in different languages affect the way their speakers perceive the world, think and behave. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis assumed that each human language mapped the world differently:

we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language [...] the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way –an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of

course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees. (Lee Whorf 1956: 212-213)

This is why for example there are different treatment of colours and time-sense throughout the world.

A kind of conciliation came from Ortega y Gasset according to whom translating was as utopian as every human action, but, at the same time he thought that translation's *raison d'être* lay *in forcing the reader from his linguistic habits and in obliging him to move within those of the (foreign) author* (Venuti, 2000: 14) and *in carrying the possibilities of his language to the extreme of the intellegibile so that the ways of speaking appropriate to the translated author seem to cross into his.* (Ortega y Gasset, 2000: 62) In Paul Ricoeur's words, translation is a paradigm of linguistic hospitality and a model of religious tolerance since every religion has its own grammar and rules as well. (2002: 67)

1.6 A Science of Translation

The discipline of translation has been given different names during the twentieth century according to the various approaches and contributions it has been characterised by.

After the Second World War the label “Science of Translation” was adopted by Nida and Wilss. The term “science” suggested a quest for objectivity¹³ and a systematization typical of sciences in general, and for this reason machine translation was thought to be highly achievable. (Baker, 1998: 140-149) Equivalence was the controlling concept of the period and translating meant to communicate the foreign text by establishing a relationship of linguistic identity (firstly in meaning and then in style) with it. For this reason this translation methodology was termed source-oriented: the translated text was exclusively conceived as ancillary to the original and functional to it. (Bertazzoli, 2009: 73).

One of the most remarkable contributions came from Eugene Nida’s 1964 book titled *Principles of Translation as exemplified by Bible Translating* which probably represents the most effective attempt at systematizing translation as a science by elaborating some fixed principles. After analysing some Bible translations, Nida came to the

¹³ Of a different opinion is Willard van Orman Quine who thinks that it is very difficult to establish the meaning of a term even in the presence of an environmental “stimulus” because there is no correlation between meaning and stimuli and we do not know how other peoples categorize their experiences. (Venuti, 2000: 67).

conclusion that there were two kinds of equivalence every translator could aim at: “formal equivalence” and “dynamic or functional equivalence”. “The formal equivalence” focused the attention on the message itself in both form and content according to standards of “accuracy” and “correctness” like in gloss translations. (Nida, 2000: 129) “Functional or dynamic equivalence” was based instead on the principle that the SL and the TL words should have substantially the same effect on their respective readers. (Baker, 1998: 77)

A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture. (Nida, 2000: 129)

The linguistic approach in translation continued with Jakobson’s *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* of 1959 (2000: 114) where translation was seen as a process of recoding two equivalent messages in two different codes. Translation was thought to be in every form of human communication and as a consequence the model sender- message-receiver could be easily applied to the translation process: the source-language message, after an operation of interpretative decipherment was to be delivered to the target-language receptor. Translation could be *intralingual* (when verbal signs are interpreted by means of other signs of the same language); *interlingual* (translation proper); and

intersemiotic (if verbal signs are rendered by means of non verbal signs).

As well as Roman Jakobson also George Steiner was convinced that *inside or between languages, human communication equals translation.*¹⁴ He thought also that *a study of translation is a study of language* (Steiner, 1998: 49) and re-elaborated the concept in the formula *to understand is to decipher, to hear significance is to translate.* (Steiner, 1998: xii) Furthermore, he made a further distinction: to Jakobson's threefold model of translation, Steiner added the horizontal and vertical transfer of significance (translation across space and across time).¹⁵

Strictly speaking, every act of translation except simultaneous translation as between earphones, is a transfer from a past to a present. [...] the hermeneutic of import occurs not only across a linguistic- spatial frontier but also requires a motion across time. (Steiner, 1998: 351)

Genuine translation, that Steiner calls *the hermeneutic motion* is fourfold: after an initial phase of *trust* where *we grant ab initio that there is something there to be understood,* (Steiner, 1998: 312) comes *aggression* that comprehends and capture the meaning by encirclement and ingestion."¹⁶ Thirdly, the *importation* of meaning and form, that is

¹⁴ In proper translation when a message from a source text passes to a target text (after a process of encoding and decoding) the barrier is space. When the same model is operative within a single language, the barrier is time. (Steiner, 1998: 29).

¹⁵ *Any model of communication is at the same time a model of trans-lation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance.* (Steiner, 1998: 47).

¹⁶ According to Saint Jerome meaning is "brought home captive" by the translator, the translator invades, extracts and brings home. (Steiner, 1998: 314).

never made in a vacuum, causes the transformation of the native structure. Finally, *restitution* enhances the statures of both the translated and the original text. *Translation is like a mirror which not only reflects but also generates light.* (Steiner, 1998: 317)

1.7 Polysystems Theory

The idea of equivalence that had characterized the previous period (until 1970s) and the so-called prescriptive translation studies (which aimed at detecting universal norms that would distinguish neatly faithful translations from unfaithful ones) are substituted by the concepts of “acceptability” and “adequacy” and by the *descriptive translation studies*. One of the most innovative contribution to descriptive translation study is represented by Polysystem Theory which focuses attention on the way the target culture receives the foreign text and on the recognition that linguistic, extralinguistic and extratextual phenomena work together for the production of meaning. Polysystems Theory is based upon the notion of system that Itamar Even Zohar, a scholar from Tel Aviv took up from the Formalists in the early 1970s. For instance, the socio-cultural polysystem is made up by the literary, the artistic, the religious and the political polysystem (Baker, 1998: 176). Original compositions, translations and all the norms governing the production, promotion and

reception of texts constitute every national literary polysystem. Translations may occupy central (especially in minor literatures) or peripheral positions (in major literatures) and perform innovative¹⁷ or conservatory¹⁸ literary functions.¹⁹ Translations are innovative when through the foreign works, new features and new techniques²⁰ are introduced into the home literature. Gideon Toury consolidated the analysis of the way a translated text is welcomed by the receptor culture, and developed the notion of translation norms. In fact, translation is subjected to the norms active in the target system and to the norms active in the source system. Two kinds of norms regulate translation: *preliminary norms* selected either from the standards of the source culture or the receptor culture and *operational norms* guiding the translator's choices during the decision-making process. These norms dictate "adequacy" or "acceptability" and influence the translator's strategies more than the linguistic discrepancies between two linguistic

¹⁷ Translated literature can be innovative (when it introduces new literary forms and techniques) or it can maintain the *status quo*. It is innovative in three cases:
-if the polysystems is not crystallized yet (young literature);
-if the literature is peripheral or weak;
-if they are crisis or a vacuum in literature occurs;
If the translated literature is in a primary position the translator's strategy is adequacy. (Baker, 1998: 177).

¹⁸ If the translated literature has a secondary position it serves to maintain already established norms (acceptability). (Even-Zohar, 2000: 193).

¹⁹ Function had been understood as the potentiality of the translated text to release diverse effects, beginning with the communication of information and production of a response comparable to the one produced by the foreign text in its own culture. (AAVV, 1979: 130).

²⁰ "Pseudotranslation" was in the past an "alibi" for introducing innovation into a literary system especially when the system was resistant to deviations from canonical models and norms. Very famous cases of "pseudotranslation" were James McPherson's Ossian poems published first in 1760, and the found manuscripts written in a foreign language as in Cervantes' Don Quixote. (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998: 28).

systems (Toury, 1995: 53-61). This new perspective has thus signalled a shift from source-orientedness to target-orientedness.

1.8 A change

From the 1980s, with the development of the *Translation Studies*, the idea of translation as a transfer of a text from one language (source language)²¹ into another one (target language) has given way to the brand new conception of translation as a process tied up to the cultural context. The so-called “Cultural Turn”²² conceives of the translator as an essential figure and the only negotiator between cultures, the only one who can contribute to the comprehension of a more and more fragmented world, the only one ensuring the survival of writing across time and space. *Translation Studies* is (the singular verb is preferred to the plural one in order to underline the cohesion and coherence of the discipline) nowadays the most widely accepted definition of the academic discipline which deals with the study of translation as an autonomous field of research. The label *Translation Studies* was adopted for the first time by

²¹ In his book titled *Dire quasi la stessa cosa*, Umberto Eco proposes to translate the English word “source” into the Italian “fonte” and “target” into “foce” (river mouth, estuary). This metaphor is perfect to describe the work of translation. Just as estuaries are delta-shaped or funnel-shaped, in the same way translations can be either an improvement and an enrichment for the source text (if funnel-shaped) or they can branch out into new territories (if delta-shaped). (Eco, 2003: 195).

²² [...] in these multifaceted interdisciplines, isolation is counter-productive...The study of translation, like the study of culture, needs a plurality of voices. And similarly, the study of culture always involves an examination of the processes of encoding and decoding that comprise translation. (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998: 138-139).

James Holmes in his 1972 article *the Name and Nature of Translation Studies*, in which the scholar attempted to define the discipline as a whole and not just as a subject strictly dependent on linguistics. In fact TS draws its methodologies and theories from fields of studies other than applied linguistics such as psychology, literary theory, anthropology, philosophy and cultural studies and it has also widened its perspective to include not only literary translation but also other forms of non literary translation such as interpreting, dubbing and subtitling.

1.9 The translator's constraints

A very important contribution to the development of *Translation Studies* came from Polysystems Theory. With a shift of interest from the source language to the target culture and with an emphasis on the constraints limiting the translators' work, Gideon Toury focused more on the acceptability of the translation in the target culture than on exploring the equivalence between two texts. In his study *The Scandals of Translation* published in 1998, Lawrence Venuti, one of the most brilliant scholars of *Translation Studies* along with André Lefevère and Susan Bassnett, analysed the cultural, economic and political scandals of translation.

Nowadays it is generally accepted that the rules to be observed

during the process of decoding and reformulation are especially external factors imposed by those people who commission the translation, the so-called “patrons” (now publishing houses).²³ The audience or implied reader²⁴ and the function²⁵ or *intentio operis* (Eco 1995: 80) that a translation should respect in a given society are fundamental laws to take into consideration as well. Besides, according to André Lefevere, translators are forced to operate keeping in mind the conceptual and textual grids of both source and target systems. These grids derive from the cultural and literary conventions of a given time (Bassnett Trivedi, 1999: 15) and function through certain markers placed across the text that trigger certain “expected” reactions on the reader’s part. But very often these markers are used to manipulate, to construct and to translate the foreign culture into Western categories. (Lefevere, 1999: 77) Translation becomes then a very dangerous instrument exploited by educational systems, governments and publishing houses to shape society’s expectations of the Other. Venuti summarizes the essence of translation in this way:

Translation is a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings,

²³ Power and control in art were active since Horace’s times: when he talks about the *fidus interpres*, the object of the translator’s *fides* is not the original text but his patron. (Lefevere, 1992: 14)

²⁴ <http://www.answers.com/topic/implied-reader> (7/01/10)

²⁵ According to Hans Vermeer who founded in 1978 the widely known “skopos theory”, a translation, like every human action, requires an aim or *skopos* which is determined (in advance) by the target text’s user. (2000: 221).

*whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics...
Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and
its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a
society.* (Venuti 1995: vii)

And also:

*Foreign text are always rewritten to conform to styles and
themes that currently prevail in the domestic literatures, they fix
stereotypes for foreign cultures signifying respect for cultural
difference or hatred based on ethnocentrism and racism.* (Venuti,
1998, p. 67)

As well as Polysystem Theory even Post-structuralism²⁶ and
Deconstructionism²⁷ (and therefore Post-colonial Studies and Gender
Studies) have lent to the discipline various concepts and new
perspectives leading to a reformulation of these three basic principles
(Bassnett, 2002: 6):

²⁶ **Post-structuralism** is founded on the conception of language as a site of uncontrollable polysemy. Post-structuralism rejects the idea of a literary text having a single purpose, a single meaning, or one singular existence. Instead, every individual reader creates a new and individual purpose, meaning, and existence for a given text. Translation is therefore reconceived questioning the concept of semantic unity, authorial originality and copyright that continue to subordinate the translated to the foreign text. Both texts are heterogeneous consisting of diverse linguistic and cultural materials making meaning unstable and plural. (Venuti, 2000: 218)

²⁷ **Decostrutionism** represents a challenge to the attempt to establish any ultimate or secure meaning in a text. It is a philosophy according to which the world is indeterminate until someone – temporarily – makes it determinate by using words to describe it. But since language constructions are unstable, and words are always shifting their meanings, interpretation is also uncertain. *Deconstruction* attempts to demonstrate that any text contains several and contradictory interpretations and hence meaning is always dependent on the context. <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/stephens/Jacques%20Derrida%20-%20LAT%20page.htm> (6/01/10)

- 1) translation as an act of creative rewriting;*
- 2) importance of the visibility of the translator;*
- 3) the redefinition of faithfulness and equivalence and their substitution with new translation strategies.*

1.10 Translation as an act of creative rewriting

Post-structuralism and Deconstructionism deny the assumption of the superiority of the original compared to its translations. Since language is conceived as dominated by polysemy, the idea of a literary text having a single meaning ceases to exist. The concept of authorial originality and copyright is therefore reconceived and the original text differs from its translations just because chronologically anticipating them. Nowadays then, both the original and its translation are considered equal products of both the writer's and translator's creativity but, as Octavio Paz explains the two have different tasks:

the writer must fix words in an ideal shape, while it is the translator's task to free those very words from the boundaries of the source language donating them a new life in the target language. (Bassnett, 2002: 5)

On this purpose, Lawrence Venuti:

Translation is a process by which a chain of signifiers that constitutes the source language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation...Both foreign text and translation are derivative: both consist of diverse linguistic and cultural materials [...] A foreign text is the site of many different semantic possibilities that are fixed only provisionally in any one translation [...](Venuti, 1995: 1)

Indeed the twentieth century is characterized by the reevaluation of the reader who is not only a consumer but is also an interpreter and according to Barthes, the actual producer of the text. (Bassnett, 2002: 82)

All translations in fact reflect the individual translator's readings, and interpretations. A new figure is born then: the one of an absolutely independent artistic creator mediating between cultures and languages and assuring the survival of a written text in time and space:

Translation is an attempted revitalization of the original in another verbal order and in another temporal space. (Devy, 1999: 187)

But translating can also have a negative application whenever it reflects the inequality of power relations active in economics, politics, gender and geography. The so-called *post-colonial* and *women and gender studies*, have analysed the internal mechanisms of translation to find the right instruments to deconstruct the hegemony of European culture. In the same way that the colonial model was based on the idea of the superiority of a culture taking over an inferior one, so the “original”²⁸ text was always seen as superior to its “copy”. (Bassnett, 2002: 5) According to Spivak, during the imperialism of the nineteenth century Western translations deprived the colonized people of their linguistic, cultural voices. (Venuti, 2000: 338)

As E. G Fitzgerald, famous translator of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* put it in his letter to Cowell:

It is an amusement to me to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who, (as I think) are not Poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them. (Bassnett, 2002: 13)

²⁸ The translator Rossella Bernascone (2008: 136) gives a very interesting explanation of the word “original”: according to her original is a text whence her words “originate” from.

Similarly, in the field of *women and gender studies*, the feminist scholar Lori Chamberlain has analysed translated works of the past underlying the sexualization of culture and its organization in terms of disequilibrium: productive work i.e writing, characterized by originality and creativity has always been conceived of as masculine while translating, a highly reproductive and derivative operation has been depicted obviously as feminine. (2000: 314) In addition, the metaphor of translation as a woman (if beautiful necessarily unfaithful) is celebrated in the famous tag of the *belles infidèles*, and fidelity, for centuries the translator's first goal, in the Earl of Roscommon's works (Chamberlain, 2000: 315) is talked about as of a contract between translation (woman) and original (husband).

1.11 The importance of the visibility of the translator

Invisibility is the term that best describes the translator's situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture. It is determined by the individualistic conception of writing as the *locus* where the author freely expresses his/her thoughts and feelings without any linguistic and cultural filter (Venuti 1995: 1). In *The Translator's Invisibility*, Venuti complains about the tendency to label a translation as adequate or

faithful only if the reading is fluid and the presence of the translator is not directly detectable. These are Venuti's words:

On one hand, translation is defined as a second-order representation: only the foreign text can be original, an authentic copy, true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy. On the other hand, translation is required to efface its second-order status with transparent discourse, producing the illusion of authorial presence whereby the translated text can be taken as the original.
(Venuti 1995: 7)

But the prevalence of fluent strategies for easy readability and the illusion of transparency mask imperialistic domestication and the desire to assimilate and annihilate the Other . (Venuti, 2000: 341)

Interpretation²⁹ instead, is the key term in every genuine translation: words are never pure³⁰ and objective: every translator automatically and personally selects syntactical constructions, words and expressions from his or her own idiolect or vocabulary³¹ provoking, as a very positive effect, the obvious inscription of his/her tastes in the text.

²⁹ Aristotle's term *hermeneia* which signifies because it interprets is conceptually and practically inherent in even the rudiments of translation. (Steiner, 1998: 191).

³⁰ *Le parole non sono mai pure: nel percorso che le porta da chi le pronuncia o le scrive a chi le riceve si riempiono di incrostazioni semantiche [...].* My translation: words are never pure: along the road from the one who pronounces or writes them to the one who receives , they become covered with semantic incrustations. (Aceto, 2008: 19)

³¹ The so-called "reactivation of internalized knowledge". (Wills, 1996: 57).

1.12 The redefinition of faithfulness and equivalence and their substitution with new concepts

Lawrence Venuti, has reformulated the two translating strategies of “domesticating” and “foreignizing” (Baker, 1998: 240-244) already elaborated by Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century, into the concepts of “acceptability” and “adequacy”.

The first strategy implies the flattening of the foreign text to the reader’s categories and expectations and by reducing it to a set of domestic values. This method is the typical choice of an ethnocentric and conservative culture and leads to the creation of cultural stereotypes. Respect for the target text from a linguistic and cultural point of view leads by contrast to the “foreignizing method”: the translator tries to characterize the target language with the peculiarities that can reveal its foreign alterity overtly displaying supplementary information, whether in the form of expansion, insertions or annotations.³²

In fact, Venuti points out that the defamiliarization of the language of a translation can call into question the supremacy of the standard language (Bassnett Trivedi, 1999: 14), refute cultural stereotypes and, last but not least:

³² Translators share these technical devices with the post-colonial writers. (Venuti, 2000: 122).

inform domestic readers of foreign philosophies and views and also to provoke them into new thinking (Venuti, 1998: 115).

Indeed, a revolutionary translating should promote the use of dialects, registers and styles to create a discursive heterogeneity (Venuti, 2000: 341) and release a

domestic remainder, an inscription of values beliefs that supplying the loss of the foreign language differences, may communicate the foreign text to an interested community (Venuti, 2000: 485).

This process is what Umberto Eco calls *negotiation* (Eco, 2003: 91-94), a contract between the the reader, the original author and translator, whose goal is to preserve the differences in culture and the style, rhythm and the texture of the work.

I would like to conclude this chapter in which I have analysed the most effective and fundamental contributions to the discipline through history, with this splendid “jail metaphor” of translating elaborated by Emanuela Bonacorsi, the Italian translator of Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair*. According to her when the writer builds a fortress with words (the text with all its intricacies and labyrinthine meanings), the

translator digs deep into its foundations to break a path and let the reader pass. Any traveller (reader) needs directions and road signs along the path the writer has opened; the translator widens that road and provides the traveller with rest stops and lighting. (Bonacorsi, 2008: 163).

In the following chapters we will see how the personal choices of the translators, their poetics and tastes can represent the only reason why a literary work or an audiovisual text become successful in the target country. And how the translation activity is an extremely creative process.

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Chapter Two

Camilleri in English

The purpose of this part of my research is to investigate how linguistic variations in a literary text can be translated and reproduced in the target language. My investigation will be conducted on two detective novels by the well-known Italian writer Andrea Camilleri, and on their English translations. The selected works are *The Voice of the Violin* (first published in Italian in 1997 and in English translation in 2003) and *The Wings of the Sphinx* (first published in Italian in 2006 and in English translation in 2009), one of the first and one of the latest novels published in the Anglophone world in the translation of Stephen Sartarelli. The choice of the two books was dictated by their covering a period of nearly ten years, a period long enough to better analyse not only the evolution in Camilleri's style, but also in Sartarelli's translating strategies. First of all I will detect the most peculiar aspects in Camilleri's writings. It is widely known that the linguistic mixture, which can also be explained (as we will see later in this chapter) as the alternation of a "marked" and "unmarked" use of language, is the reason for the Sicilian author's success, at least in Italy. Secondly, following the

so-called *Skopos Theory*, I will analyse the two functions this “singlossia” performs: a mimetic function and a postcolonial function. In the end I will see which of these functions is maintained and how. Specific examples taken from the texts and their translations will follow.

2.1 Andrea Camilleri’s late success

Nowadays Andrea Camilleri is one of the most read contemporary Italian writers. His fame as a writer has arrived quite late in his career (in his 70s) but since then, he has been publishing nearly a novel a year.³³ The strong appreciation of his works not only by the Italian public but also by readers all over the world³⁴ has led to the publication and, in some cases, to the re-publication of his early works such as *Il corso delle cose* (1978), *Un filo di fumo* (1980), *La strage dimenticata* (1984) and *La stagione della caccia* (1992). Camilleri’s favourite genres are detective novels (Chief Inspector Salvo Montalbano’s cases) and historical novels such as *Il birraio di Preston* (1995), *Il re di Girgenti* (2001) and lastly *Il nipote del negus* (2010). From his long experience as a screenwriter for both theatre and television he has derived the

³³ <http://www.vigata.org/bibliografia/biblios.shtml> (17/01/11)

³⁴ Andrea Camilleri’s novels have been translated in many different languages and his success is truly worldwide. It is worth remembering in this context, and regarding the global diffusion of Camilleri’s works, the author’s annoyed comment on the cover of the Japanese translations of his detective stories where, without any reason, Montalbano is depicted as wearing glasses while it is known that not only does he hate them but also he cannot even stand the sight of them. http://www.repubblica.it/2009/04/sezioni/spettacoli_e_cultura/intervista-camilleri/scrive-camilleri/scrive-camilleri.html (03/01/2011)

structures of his plots that employ the same strategies as movies: usually the narrator does not appear and the plot is built on the juxtaposition of different scenes or written documents such as letters, newspapers articles as in *La scomparsa di Patò* (2000). Camilleri has also written novels in “pure” Sicilian, the so-called *Metamorphosis Trilogy* including *Maruzza Musumeci* (2007), *Il casellante* (2008) and *Il sonaglio* (2009). Camilleri has always been a detective novel reader. French writer Simenon and Catalan writer Vazquez Montálban’s characters have been fundamental to the creation of Chief Inspector Salvo Montalbano. From the Catalan author Camilleri has derived not only the name of his most famous hero, but also some traits of his personality such as the love for food, while from Simenon’s Maigret he has taken the sympathy for the poor and unfortunate.³⁵ Camilleri’s literary success has been boosted by the TV adaptation of Chief Montalbano’s cases which has also lead to the touristic development of the localities where the episodes are shot.³⁶

³⁵ <http://www.vigata.org/montalbanosono/montalbanosono.shtml> (17/01/11)

³⁶ http://www.vigata.org/vigata/montalbano_viaggio.shtml (03/01/2011)

2.2 Camilleri's language

Those who come across any of Camilleri's books are struck by the peculiarity of his language, an idiolect which merges Italian and the Sicilian dialect of his childhood. In her article *La lingua de 'Il re di Girgenti'*³⁷ the Canadian linguist Jana Vizmuller Zocco (2004: 87-98), describes the language spoken in the novel as characterised by three main mechanisms which can be applied to the detective novels as well:

*-code switching*³⁸ or functional alternation of codes when the communicative situation and/or the participants change:

«Non le piace, signor dottore? Vuole che lo canti in musica? Che lo dica in poesia?»	«You don't like it, Chief? What do you want me to do, sing it? Recite it like poetry?»
« <u>Stamatina macari tu, in fatto di 'ntipatia, mi pare che non scherzi</u> ». (1997: 67)	« <u>You know, as for being obnoxious, you're doing a pretty good job yourself this morning.</u> » (2003: 70)

«Non lo sarebbe più se io putacaso ora	«Then would no longer be the case if I,
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³⁷ This historical novel presents both endolinguistic plurilinguism and esolinguistic plurilinguism.

³⁸ According to the scholar Giovanna Alfonzetti, *code swiching* (from Italian to dialect) is a "story telling" strategy because it signals the beginning of a narrative sequence or story entry. (1992: 75-94). We will see later how *code switching* is used by the so-called *tragediaturo* (narrator) to comment on events or to emphasize a particular aspect of the story.

andassi a dire ai fratelli Stellino che lei li ha accusati. Non pensa che se la piglierebbero a male e verrebbero di corsa a domandarle spiegazioni?» [...] «E pi...e pi...dovrebbe di dire ‘sta minchiata? Se eravamo d’ accordo che i Stellino non ci trasino!» <u>«E allora rapri la vucca e dimmi cu è ca ci trase!»</u> (2006: 205-206)	say, went and told the Stellino brothers that you had accused them. Don’t you think they would take it badly and immediately come and demand an explanation from you?»[...] «B-but wh-why would you go and do something so stupid as that? I thought we agreed that the Stellinos had no part in this!» <u>«Then start talkin’ and tell me who and what’s got a part in this!»</u> (2009: 175).
«Guardi non era per niente <u>camurriusa</u> . [...]» (1997: 46)	«Look, <u>she never made any trouble</u> . [...]» (2003: 45)

-code mixing or juxtaposition of two different language systems:

E naturalmente la discussione era <u>finuta a schifio</u> (2006: 20)	Naturally the argument <u>had ended in a nasty squabble</u> (2009: 10)
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«Ti porto un esempio. <u>Piglia 'na picciotta vintina, beddra assà, di famiglia <u>povira</u>, le offrono di fare cinema ma lei <u>arrefuta pirchì</u> è onesta e <u>si scanta</u> che quell’ambiente possa corromperla, a un certo momento incontra un industriale <u>cinquantino chiuttosto laiduzzo ma ricchissimo</u></u>	«Lemme give you an example. <u>Take a twenty-year-old girl, a beautiful girl from a <u>poor</u> family. Somebody offers to put her in the movies, but <u>she refuses</u>, 'cause she’s a respectable girl, and <u>she’s afraid</u> she might get corrupted by that world. Then she meets some <u>fifty-year-old businessman, pretty ugly but</u></u>
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che se la vuole <u>maritare</u> [...]» (2006: 29-30)	extremely rich, who wants to <u>marry</u> her. [...]» (2009: 19)
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-Lexical hybridisms or italianisation of the regional dialect. This is an intermediate level between Standard Italian and Sicilian. It can be considered as an “italianised Sicilian” created by apposing Italian morphemes onto Sicilian lexis. Examples: *appizzato*, *scanto*, *tabbutu*, *parrino*, *sperto*, *fastiddio*, *sciauro* and *pititto* are masculine names and adjectives that in proper Sicilian have *-u* ending (*appizzatu*, *scantu*, *tabbutu*, *parrinu*, *spertu*, *fastiddu*, *sciauru* and *pitittu*). *Travaglio* presents a double Italianisation: at the end (*-o* instead of *-u*) and in the middle (*-gli* instead of *-gghi*), since the correct Sicilian is *travagghiu*. Some endings of the infinitive verbs (especially first conjugation verbs) follow the Italian morphology and not the Sicilian one: *firriare* (and not *firriari*) *acchianare* (and not *acchianari*), *travagliare* (and not *travagghiari*), *scantare* (and not *scantari*), *muzzicare* (and not *muzzicari*), *'nzallanire* (*'nzallaniri*).

This analysis of the linguistic phenomena can be carried out perfectly by making use of Vizmuller Zocco’s list³⁹ of the major linguistic variations interwoven in Montalbano’s novels:

³⁹ http://www.vigata.org/dialetto_camilleri/dialetto_camilleri.shtml (17/01/11)

1) Formal, bureaucratic Italian: spoken usually by government officials or politicians, it has a negative connotation; it is very pompous and people who speak it are not appreciated by detective Montalbano who despises them, in fact they are always parodied. This first example shows how Montalbano readjusts his idiolect to his interlocutors' (Commissioner Bonetti-Alderighi and Judge Tommaseo) in order to make fun of them:

<p>«Tutto è possibile. Io ho voluto metterla a conoscenza <u>nel pieno rispetto delle sue inderogabili prerogative</u>». (1997: 26)</p>	<p>«Anything is possible. I simply wanted to let you know, <u>out of respect for your prerogatives</u>». (2003: 21)</p>
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The second example involves the teasing of Commissioner Bonetti-Alderighi and his cliché-ridden style:

<p>«[...]Se vengono a protestare per il suo modo di fare, le tolgo il caso immediatamente. <u>E anche se lei verrà a Canossa, io farò orecchie da mercante e le dirò: ti conosco mascherina!</u>» (2006: 152)</p>	<p>«[...] And if they object to your methods, I shall remove you from the case at once. And <u>even if you eat humble pie at my feet, I will turn a deaf ear and say: You can't fool me twice!</u>» (2009: 129)</p>
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2) Standard Italian: Standard Italian is used in passages dealing with

current affairs, in socially relevant comments made by the narrator or in some formal dialogues between characters of a higher social status or between characters who are not Sicilian, or for instance, even between Montalbano and his girlfriend, Livia, who comes from Bocadasse, near Genoa, as in this first example:

<p>«Ma che c'è da capire, Livia? Te l'ho detto e te lo ripeto. I documenti per l'adozione di Francois non sono ancora pronti, sono nate delle difficoltà impreviste e io non ho più alle spalle il vecchio Questore che era sempre pronto ad appianare ogni cosa. Ci vuole pazienza.»(1997: 17)</p>	<p>«What's to understand, Livia? As I said, and now repeat, Francois's adoption papers aren't ready yet. Some unexpected problems have come up, and I no longer have the old commissioner behind me always smoothing everything out. We have to be patient.» (2003: 11).</p>
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In the second example Montalbano is speaking with Ingrid, his Swedish friend. The following scene would suggest a more intimate and familiar language (especially in the light of their long-lasting friendship). By contrast, they make use of Standard Italian even if the communicative situation is informal. In this case Standard Italian is required by the interlocutor's foreign origin and limited competence in Sicilian dialect.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Actually I think that, to be more realistic, Ingrid should have at least a passive competence since she has been living in Vigata and has been married to a Sicilian politician for many years.

<p>«Non hai una cassaforte?».</p> <p>«No. Li tengo nascosti in tre posti diversi. Non me li metto mai. Ma una volta ne ho indossati alcuni perché dovevo accompagnare mio marito a una cena importante e la ragazza in quell' occasione deve avere individuato dove li tenevo.» (2006: 96)</p>	<p>«You don't have a safe?».</p> <p>«No. I keep them hidden in three different places. I never wear them, but once I did put some on, because I had to accompany my husband to a dinner, and on that occasion, the girl must have figured out where I kept them.» (2009: 79)</p>
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3) Regional Italian⁴¹: In Camilleri's texts we find phonetic and morpho-syntactic traits typical of the Regional Italian of Sicily. A typical phonetic trait of regional Italian in the texts is the apocopation of proper names and nouns in general: *Salvù, Dottò, Gelsomì, Catarè, Montalbà*. Morpho-syntactic phenomena are:

a) the reiteration of the substantive, of the adjective, of the adverb or of the verb:

<u>Campagna campagna</u> (1997: 102)	<u>Out and about</u> (2003: 111)
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Non aveva gana di vedere Panzacchi	He had no desire to see Panzacchi <u>in</u>
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⁴¹ *Regional Italian* is a coherent subcategory of Italian deeply permeated by dialect. Regional traits can be recognised in intonation, phonetics, morpho-syntax and lexicon. Extralinguistic factors (for instance an informal situation, an elderly and less educated speaker will determine a higher degree of "regionalization" of that linguistic production. (Marcato, 2002: 92-93).

<u>casa casa.</u> (1997: 151)	<u>his house.</u> (2003: 171)
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Il capo della mobile era un omo tozzo ma elegante, dagli occhi <u>chiari chiari</u> [...] (1997: 152)	The captain of the Flying Squad was a stocky but elegant man with <u>very pale blue eyes</u> [...] 2003: 172)
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Si misero a parlare <u>fitto fitto</u> [...] (1997: 178)	They got into <u>an involved conversation</u> [...] (2003: 204)
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Volava <u>terra terra</u> (1997: 184)	[...] who usually flew <u>close to the ground</u> (2003: 212)
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«Comu <u>si chiama si chiama</u> » (2006: 13)	«'Is name is what 'is name is [...]» (2009: 4)
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Avanzò un vrazzo <u>a lento a lento</u> (2006: 22)	<u>Ever so slowly</u> , he extended his right arm [...] (2009: 12)
--	--

[...] <u>torno torno</u> al corpo (2006: 26)	[...] anywhere <u>around the body</u> (2009: 15)
--	--

b) the collocation of the verb at the end of the sentence especially nominal predicate:

«[...] Una domanda <u>mi feci</u> » (1997: 39)	«[...] <u>I asked myself</u> a question [...]» (2003: 36)
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«Sbirri <u>siete?</u> » (1997: 46)	« <u>Are you cops?</u> » (2003: 44)
«Salvo <u>sono</u> , amore». (1997: 57)	« <u>It's Salvo</u> , Darling.» (2003: 57)
«Pronto <u>è</u> il caffè.» (2006: 13)	« <u>Coffee's</u> ready.» (2009: 5)
«Montalbano <u>sono</u> [...]» (2006: 58)	«Montalbano <u>here</u> » (2009: 44)

c) the preference for remote past instead of recent past:

«Perché, che le <u>capitò</u> ?» (1997: 46)	«Why, what <u>happened to her</u> ?» (2003: 45)
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«[...]La notte non <u>tornò</u> qua [...]» (1997: 72)	«[...] He <u>didn't come</u> home that night [...]» (2003: 76)
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«[...] Mi <u>spiegai</u> ?[...]» (2006: 54)	«[...] you know what <u>I mean</u> ? [...]» (2009: 41)
---	--

d) the intransitive verb used as a transitive.

[...]Contemporaneamente il dottore <u>niscì</u> dalla sacchetta un mazzetto di chiavi. (1997: 86)	[...] As he was doing this, the doctor <u>extracted</u> a bunch of keys from his own pocket. (2003: 92)
---	---

L'altro <u>niscì</u> dalla sacchetta un blocchetto e 'na biro (1997: 181)	His assistant <u>took</u> a notepad and a pen out of his pocket. (2003: 155)
---	--

«Hanno ammazzato <u>a</u> Maurizio di Blasi.» (1997: 114)	«They killed Maurizio Di Blasi.» (2003: 124)
---	--

e) prepositional accusative:

«Sì, facivi morire d'invidia <u>a</u> don Giovanni [...]» (2006: 27)	«Yes, you would have made Don Juan die of envy. [...]» (2009: 16)
--	---

«Salutami Beba e mandami <u>a</u> Catarella» (2006: 27)	«[...] Say hi to Beba for me and send me Catarella» (2009: 17)
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«[...] Non ama <u>a</u> quell'omo [...]» (2006: 30)	«[...] She doesn't love the man [...]» (2009: 19)
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«Arriconobbe <u>a</u> Montalbano» (2006: 36)	«[...] recognized Montalbano [...]» (2009: 27)
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«E <u>a</u> chi ha denunciato?» « <u>A</u> lei.» (2006: 44)	«A statement with the minister?» [...]» « <u>About what?</u> » « <u>About you</u> » (2009: 32)
--	--

Other common phenomena are: the use of the verb *stare* + the gerund in sentences like *sto tornando* (I'm coming back) instead of *torno subito* (I'll be right back) and the substitution of the plural with a

collective noun for instance *lenticchia* instead of the correct *lenticchie* (lentils) (Tropea, 1976).

Coming across Sicilian varieties of Italian is an extremely funny experience both for those who daily use them and apparently for those who hear them for the first time. Reading or hearing Italianized versions of Sicilian dialect reminds me of when I left Sicily to attend courses at the University of Pisa. Proud of my classical studies and extremely sure of the sharp distinction between Italian and dialect, I was fazed when my Tuscan colleague burst out laughing at my kind request “di uscire la bottiglia dal frigo”⁴², a sentence which later on I discovered was actually forcing Italian grammar by transforming the intransitive verb *uscire* (to go out) into a transitive one. The innocent “ignorance” of the real correct Italian continues to provoke reactions of frustration against a norm which seems to be unnatural and superimposed. The reaction against this “linguistic artificiality” has led to the creation of an amusing FB group by those Sicilian who live in the North of Italy and who consider the transitivized verbs *uscire* (to go out), *entrare* (to get in), *salire* (to go up) and *scendere* (to go down) more effective and economical than the correct Italian structure *portare* + preposition. The perception sometimes of Italian as a second language being the dialect the mother tongue for many of us, has historical reasons.

⁴² In an attempt to reproduce this peculiar use of language, a possible translation could be “out the water of the fridge”.

The authoritative linguist Tullio De Mauro underlines how peoples living inside the borders of Italy, experience, more than any other country in Europe, a native condition of internal⁴³ and external plurilinguism. In Italy in fact, idioms belonging to different linguistic families (German, Slavonic and Romance languages) cohabit in the same territory. External plurilinguism has its acme in the Italo-Romance group which is fragmented in a myriad of dialects. Regional peculiarities were favoured by historical factors, by the geographical characteristics of the Peninsula and mostly by the fact that unlike France, Spain and England, Italy lacked demographic, economic, political and intellectual centralization for many centuries and linguistically speaking, a model represented by a capital (1987).

Before 1861, dialects (especially those spoken in the most important cities) enjoyed a condition of social prestige and were used both by the upper class and by the lower class. According to De Mauro, Italian was absent in its spoken mode and was threatened as a written code (1976, 32-33). After the Unification important writers such as Manzoni and De Amicis thought that the use of dialect should be fought against through an adequate scholastic policy. The artificiality of a method based on the imposition of a norm and not on the natural

⁴³ Internal plurilinguism consists of diastratic, diatopic and diachronic variations (De Mauro, 1987: 23)

acquisition of Italian led to the creation of a code unsuitable for everyday matters and far from the speakers' needs. The expression “parlare come un libro stampato” (literally to speak as a printed book) is exemplary of this problem. (1976: 357)

Anche nei più colti, parlare a mo' del dialetto è come adoperare la mano destra: parlare secondo le norme del buono italiano, è come adoperare la mano sinistra, per quanto si voglia educata..[...] (1976: 372)⁴⁴

In the first twenty years of twentieth century and after Fascism, Italo-Romance dialects were affected by two changes: first of all their dominion was restricted to private and informal use and at the same time they were invaded more and more increasingly by words, constructions and pronunciations of Italian origin. Therefore, both speakers and idioms were Italianized⁴⁵. (1987: 41)

The prestige of the four regional varieties (Northern, Tuscan, Roman and Southern) varies especially with respect to the pronunciation. The Southern pronunciation has a very low prestige⁴⁶ even among its

⁴⁴ My translation: *Even among the most cultivated people, to speak dialect is like using the right hand while speaking according the norms of a good Italian is like using the left hand even if adequately trained.*

⁴⁵ According to Ugo Foscolo people who spoke regional varieties were doubly condemned: firstly not to be understood by those who exclusively used dialect and secondly to be teased by learned people. (De Mauro, 1976: 370)

⁴⁶ The ethnic prejudice and the immediate individuation of the Southerners from their linguistic behaviour (often heard as a stereotypical mixture of Roman, Neapolitan and

speakers, who usually yield to conscious or unconscious phenomena of hypercorrection to avoid real or supposed regional peculiarities of pronunciation⁴⁷ (1976: 172). Finally it is important to recognise the importance of TV that, more than bureaucracy, the army, the industrialization, the urbanization, interregional exchanges and the school, has succeeded in limiting the dominion of the dialect by providing its viewers with a tradition of formal and informal Italian and by reducing the linguistic and social gap between *those wearing hats and those wearing coppolas (caps)* (1976: 459)

6) Sicilian dialect⁴⁸: “pure”⁴⁹ dialect is normally used in dialogues taking place between locals, in direct speech or in proverbs. It contains expressions specifically from Porto Empedocle where Camilleri was born in 1925. It is easy to detect these local words because they contain the consonant cluster /*ddr*/ very common in the province of Agrigento: *picciriddru* (kid), *ciriveddro* (brain), *a pampineddra* (slightly open), *addritta* (standing, upright), *gaddrina* (hen), *addrumare* (to light), *beddra* (beautiful). Other words from the same area are: *'nzemmula*

Sicilian elements) triggered off phenomena such as dialectal mimetism especially among the working class looking for an occupation in the North of Italy. But notwithstanding the efforts, people pretending to be able to speak Italian were despised more than those speaking pure dialect and called “piccoli italianizzanti da strapazzo” (insignificant little Italianisers). (De Mauro, 1976: 87-88).

⁴⁷ Italian was considered the only way to ascend the social ladder. Antonio Gramsci for instance despised dialects for being symbols of provincialism and backwardness. (De Mauro: 1987, 61)

⁴⁸ Camilleri's exclusive use of dialect especially in the Trilogy is representative of the linguistic situation of Sicilians after the Unification of Italy.

⁴⁹ I define it pure because it is not mixed with Italian words and expressions. Actually it is very often slightly modified to help the reader (as we have previously seen talking about the so-called Italianization) in both pronunciation and comprehension.

(together with), *gana* (will, desire), *n'zinga* (nod), *cataminare* (to move), *imparpagliato* (embarrassed), *làida* (ugly), *bastevole* (sufficient, enough), *narrè* (behind), *catanonno* (great grandfather), *farfanteria* (bullshitting), *santiare* (to curse the saints).

Sicilian words⁵⁰ in general: *arrispunniri* (to reply, to answer), *cadìri* (to fall), *rumpìrisi* (to break), *sissi* (yes, of course), *scìnniri* (to get down), *addunàrisi* (to realize), *picciotta* (girl), *strata* (road, street), *cammisa* (shirt), *càmmara* (room), *cammarrera* (housemaid), *matinata* (morning), *macari* (even, as well), *tanticchia* (a little bit), *taliata* (look), *tràsiri* (to get in), *masculu* (man), *ammucciata* (hidden), *strammato* (astonished), *sacchetta* (pocket), *offisa* (offended), *arrubbato* (stolen), *nesciri* (to got out), *pàisi* (village, country), *fora* (out of), *curcàrisi* (to go to bed), (occhi) *sgriddati* (wide open eyes), *dòrmiri* (to sleep), *nìvuri* (black), *stanchizza* (weariness), *machina* (car, machine).

Sicilian dialect is used especially for proverbs and typical expressions. Here are some proverbs and expressions present in the two novels I have analysed and their respective translations by Stephen Sartarelli:

Frumento sutta u sulì (1997: 23)	Like wheat in sunlight (2003: 17)
A palla allazzata (1997: 65)	Barreling (2003: 67)
Alla scordatina (1997: 144)	The whole kit and caboodle (2003: 144)

⁵⁰ Aware of the fact that his books are read not only by Sicilians, Camilleri has provided his readers with a little online dictionary collecting the most common Sicilian words and expressions. http://www.vigata.org/dizionario/camilleri_linguaggio.html#F (21/01/11)

	162)
Madonnuzza santa (1997: 163)	Jesus (2003: 186)
Spissu e vulanteri (2006: 9)	very often (2009: 1)
O sicco o sacco (2006: 33)	o sicco o sacco (2009: 22)
Chioviva a rètini stisi (2006: 73)	It was coming down in buckets (2009: 58)
Nuttata persa e figlia fimmina (2006: 117)	Nuttata persa e figlia femmina (2009: 97)
Feto d'abbrusciato (2006: 120)	to smell a rat (2009: 100)
Schitto e nitto (2006: 133)	pure and simple (2009: 112)

2.3 Catarella

Agatino Catarella is one of the funniest inventions to come from Camilleri's pen. I would say that part of the fortune of Montalbano's stories does lie in the peculiar linguistic features of this character. His language is one of the varieties that merit particular attention in the study of Camilleri's detective novels. Catarella is a semi-literate (but a genius in computer science)⁵¹ police officer who makes his first appearance in the second episode of the Chief Inspector Salvo Montalbano stories titled *The terracotta dog* (first published in Italian in 1996 and in English translation in 2004). Simona Demontis in her monograph *I colori della letteratura*, points out that it would be more appropriate to define Agatino Catarella as a caricature (2001, 36: 38) rather than a real character since his idiolect has been concocted (Capecchi, 2000: 89-90) by the author clearly for the sole purpose of amusing the reader. The combination of incorrect bureaucratic Italian, incorrect formal Italian, incorrect popular Italian and a quite "personal" use of Sicilian dialect trigger off many misunderstandings and extremely funny situations:

⁵¹ <http://www.vigata.org/montalbanosono/montalbanosono.shtml> (21/01/11)

<p>«Ah dottori dottori! Pirchè mi dice accussi? Mi voli ammortificari? Se fusse per mia, io ogni matina l'arrisbigliarebbi con una notizia bella, che saccio, che vinci trenta miliardi al supirinalotto, che l'hanno fatto capo della pulizia, che...».</p> <p>(2006: 11)</p>	<p>«Ah Chief, Chief! Whyddya say that? You wanna humilitate me? If it was up to me, I'd wake you up every single mornin' wit' rilly good news, like, I dunno, like you jess won tirty billions inna lattery, or like you was jess made chief o' police, or...»(2009: 3)</p>
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especially when he mispronounces and misspells people's names:

<p>«Pronti, dottori? È lei di pirsona pirsonalmente?»</p> <p>«Pirsonalmente, Catarè. Che c'è?»</p> <p>«C'è che chiamò il giudice Tolomeo».</p> <p>«Tommaseo, Catarè, ma va bene lo stesso. Che voleva?».</p> <p>«Parlare pirsonalmente con lei pirsonalmente. Ha chiamato almeno almeno quattro volte. Dice così se gli tilifona lei di pirsona».</p> <p>«Va bene».</p>	<p>«Hullo, Chief? Izzatchoo y'self in poisson?»</p> <p>«In poisson, Cat. What's up?»</p> <p>«What's up is Judge Tolomeo called.»</p> <p>«Tommaseo, Cat, but I get the picture. What did he want?»</p> <p>«He wanted to speak poissonally wit' you y'self in poisson. He called at lease four times. Says you should call him y'self in poisson.»</p> <p>«Okay.»</p> <p>«Oh, Chief, I got another streamly</p>
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<p>«Ah, dottori, ci devo quomunicare una cosa d'importanza strema. Mi chiamò dalla Quistura di Montilusa il commissario dottori che di nomi si chiama Tontona».</p> <p>«Tortona».</p> <p>«Come si chiama, si chiama. Quello. Lui dice che io devo affriquentari un concorso di informaticcia. Lei che ne dice?». (1997: 36-37)</p>	<p>impoitant ting to tell ya. Somebody from Montelusa Central called to talk to me in poisson, Inspector Whatsizname, Tontona»</p> <p>«Tortona.»</p> <p>«Whatever's 'is name. Him. Says I gotta take a concourse in pewters. Whattya think, boss?»</p> <p>(2003: 33-34)</p>
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2.4 Marked vs Unmarked Use of Language

As we have seen before, Camilleri's linguistic *pastiche* is the most noteworthy aspect of his works. The notion of "singlossia"⁵² can be also explained by Hatim and Mason's concepts of "marked" and "unmarked" use of language.

The combination in the same segment of dialect and standard provides the text with a high degree of "informativity" and causes a sort of linguistic alienation/estrangement in the reader. The concept of "informativity" along with the other six *standards of textuality* (cohesion⁵³, coherence⁵⁴, intentionality and acceptability⁵⁵, intertextuality⁵⁶ and relevance⁵⁷) constitute R. T. Bell's model for the

⁵² *Singlossia* is a Greek word indicating the co-existence of two or more language varieties in the same text. This term has been used by Jana Vizmuller Zocco to describe the mixture of different languages (Spanish as well) present in the historical novel *Il re di Girgenti* (2004: 93). In my opinion this terminology is valid for Camilleri's detective novels as well.

⁵³ *Cohesion* requires that *the various components of the surface text are mutually connected within a sequence of some kind. In terms of both lexis and grammar, that is, the surface components depend upon each other in establishing and maintaining text continuity* (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 15).

⁵⁴ *Coherence* requires that the grammatical and/or lexical relationships involve underlying conceptual relations and not only continuity of forms (as in *cohesion*). (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 214).

⁵⁵ *Intentionality* and *acceptability* determine the appropriateness of a linguistic form to the achievement of a pragmatic purpose. Even if a text is *cohesive* and *coherent*, it must be **intended** to be a text and **accepted** as such in order to be utilised in communicative interaction i.e. the producer of the text must **intend** it to contribute towards some goal and the receiver of it must **accept** that it is, indeed, fulfilling some such purpose. The two are the converse of each other, *intentionality* being sender-oriented and *acceptability* being receiver-oriented (Bell, 1991: 167).

⁵⁶ *Intertextuality* refers to the relationship between a particular text and other texts which share characteristics with it. (Bell, 1991: 171-172).

⁵⁷ Texts contain a degree of *relevance* or *situationality* because they exist for a particular communicative purpose and link communicative acts to the situation in which they occur. (Bell, 1991: 170).

analysis of texts (163-172). According to this theory an interlinguistic communication is ensured if these seven elements are relayed into the target culture. But while “cohesion” and “coherence” are easily realized in the target text, the concept of “informativity” represents a serious challenge to the translator since it involves a motivated deviation from some linguistic norm. As Hatim and Mason explain:

It (informativity) is the degree of unexpectedness displayed in some context when norms conventionally considered appropriate in speech or writing for a particular situation are deviated from mostly pursuing a particular rhetorical aim. (1997: 216)

Hatim and Mason (30-35) start from Bell’s model for the analysis of texts and define language situations which are predictable, expected and thus with a low degree of informativity as “static”, and those unpredictable, unexpected and then highly informative as “dynamic” and introduce the notion of “marked” and “unmarked” use of language to describe instances when the use of language fulfils the expectations of the reader or not. The right balance between the complete fulfilment or complete defiance of expectations is the key to stylistic creativity. As Bell suggests, it has to be noted also that *too much information renders the text unreadable, while too little information renders it readable but not worth reading* (167-168).

But this is not the case in Camilleri’s novels, which manifest a well balanced and skilful alternation of dialect and standard, low and high degrees of “informativity”.

Let us consider the following passage from *Le ali della sfinge*:

<p>Ora, appena <u>isava</u> le palpebre, immediatamente le <u>ricalava</u> e <u>sinni ristava</u> allo <u>scuro</u> per <u>qualichi</u> secondo, mentre una volta, appena <u>rapriva l’occhi</u>, li <u>mantiniva</u> aperti, <u>squasi tanticchia sbarracati</u>, per <u>agguantare</u> avidamente la <u>luci</u> del <u>jorno</u>. (2006: 10)</p>	<p>Now the moment he raised his eyelids, he immediately lowered them again, remaining in darkness for a few more seconds, whereas before, the moment he opened his eyes, he kept them open, even slightly agape, avidly taking in the light of day. (2009: 1)</p>
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The average Italian reader does not find what he or she is expecting because dialectal words are used even when the corresponding Italian words are available. In the description just quoted, Camilleri could have used the corresponding Italian of the underlined words but he prefers to challenge the reader to enter into a language which is incomprehensible at the beginning but which becomes clearer and more familiar in its foreignness as the reading continues. Camilleri in fact facilitates his readers by helping them: he often resorts to certain stylistic

devices to clarify obscure terms for instance by using an Italian synonym for a word in dialect in the same paragraph (especially when Catarella's *talian*⁵⁸ is involved):

«Domando pirdonanza e compressione, dottori».	«Beckin' pardon, Chief, for the 'sturbance».
Ahi. Domandava perdono e comprensione. (1997: 10)	Uh-oh. He was begging pardon for the disturbance. (2003: 2)

«Mi ha fatto un solenne lisebusso, una cazziata da levare il pelo»(1997: 146-47)	«He gave me a royal tongue-lashing, flayed me alive» (2003: 166)
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[...] una telefonata a casa a quell'ora significava certamente una chiamata dal commissariato, una camurria, una rognà. (1997: 170)	A phone call to his home at that hour could only have been an annoying, pain-in-the ass call from headquarters. (2003: 195)
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Very often Camilleri uses the same dialectal terms over and over again throughout the text so that, by their recurring in contexts and situations that help deciphering them, they will be identified: this is the case of Sicilian words with a high degree of frequency like the verbs *spiare* (to ask), *taliare* (to look), *tràsiri* (to enter), *nèsciri* (to go out), *addunàrisi* (to realize) or nouns like *picciotta* (girl), *camurria* (nuisance),

⁵⁸ *Talian*, in Agatino Catarella's language, stands for Italian.

cabasisi (testicles). Over the years Camilleri's challenge has turned into a reward for his readers: *Le ali della sfinge* published in Italy in 2006, presents a much higher occurrence of dialectal words if compared for instance to *La voce del violino* (1997). Several words in fact, do not need to be explicated or glossed because readers have accepted this challenge and, in doing so, have enriched their own linguistic repertoire (Demontis, 19).

2.5 Translating problems

There are many elements to consider in a translation. It is impossible to recreate an equivalence *tout court*, retaining all aspects of the source text in the translation. The translator indeed, as a mediator between cultures, should develop his or her translation strategy according to the level of equivalence he/she wants to aim for. For instance three of the most important scholars such as Nida, Bell and Newmark distinguish between equivalence in form and equivalence in effect. The translator for instance needs to choose between Nida's concepts of "formal equivalence"⁵⁹, which preserves the semantic equivalence of the ST and hence disregards the context, and of "dynamic equivalence"⁶⁰ which maintains the communicative value of the ST in the context. According

⁵⁹ Or stylistic equivalence (Bell) or semantic translation for Newmark.

⁶⁰ Or semantic equivalence (Bell) or communicative translation.

to *Skopos Theory* (Baker, 2001: 235) translation is an activity involving not only purely linguistic factors (for example depending on the proximity of source and target languages) but also extralinguistic constraints such as:

-the genre conventions of the novels to be translated and the intended target audience;

-the constraints imposed by the publishers;

-the structure and nature of the target language and its relationship with the source language (if the two cultures are near, if the two languages belong to the same linguistic family, if they have dialects with similar connotations);

-the translator's personal linguistic choices and skills.

The first two points represent the “extralinguistic” constraints every translator has to deal with. For instance, the selected works by Andrea Camilleri fall into the category of detective novels, an Anglo-Saxon genre *par excellence*. Stephen Sartarelli, Camilleri’s official translator, echoing Lawrence Venuti’s *The translator’s invisibility*, complains about the lack of interest in the “other” on behalf of the Anglophone publishing world which is known to select and accept only “familiar” and “attractive” (to the Anglophone audience) literary genres and themes that will inevitably be linguistically domesticated. According

to him, the familiar genre (in this case the American born detective novel)⁶¹ is the very reason why these writings have been selected by the American-English publishers (Penguin) (Sartarelli, 2004: 215). Another reason may be found in the fact that in some way Camilleri's novels match the American/English readers' expectations about Sicily or Italy in general (seaside, good food and mafia). A proof of this shared image about Italy is the English cover of *The Voice of the Violin*, the first novel I am going to analyse. While a violin stands out on the Italian cover, the English cover is clearly describing a story set in a generic Mediterranean village by the sea with red roofed houses. This is a quite effective strategy to invite the foreign reader to buy the book, reassuring him/her that the image of Italy conveyed is the expected one. Instead, the cover of the second novel I will analyse, *The Wings of the Sphynx*, with its dark tones and colours tells us exclusively about the genre of the novel: a detective story set in an indefinite place. In my opinion, the lack of "localization" is dictated by the fact that in 2009, the year of publication of the novel, Camilleri is already an immediately recognisable name to the American readership.

The third constraint is dictated by the different structures of the target languages. The translators at the convention that took place in Palermo in 2002, described not only the difficulties but also the adopted

⁶¹ *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* by Edgar Allan Poe, published in April 1841 is considered the first example of detective story.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/159456/detective-story> (13/01/11)

solutions to the translation of linguistic variations showing that, even for the same author and even for the same novel there are many possibilities depending mostly on the target language and culture. As we have already seen, an equivalence *tout court* is a chimera because languages and cultures have peculiarities and limits which prevent texts being reproduced exactly from one language to another. Katan says that *every culture acts as a frame within which reality is interpreted* (1999: 1) and every language mirrors this shared interpretation. In addition to the different ways experiences are conceptualized and reflected in languages, idioms have structural peculiarities dictated by their separated evolutions. For instance, if we take as an example the translations throughout the world of Camilleri's stories, we will notice how the approach to the translation of the linguistic varieties changes according to the major or minor proximity between source language and target languages. Rendering a dialect with another dialect (with a good chance of creating effects which are not intended) is always a risky operation because of the various connotations they imply in every country. For instance, it is worth remembering that translators into other Romance languages like Spanish and French had the possibility of substituting the Sicilian dialect with the dialects present in their own countries. Dominique Vittoz, the French translator specialised mostly in Camilleri's historical novels⁶², recalled from her memories the language of her

⁶² She has translated into French: *La concessione del telefono* (1999), *Il gioco della mosca*

childhood, the *patois* from Lyon, perfect as the equivalent of the Sicilian dialect for its original lexicon (completely different from the French one), for its phonetics (not very distant from Standard French) and thirdly for its ancient and prestigious literary tradition (2004: 192-195). Serge Quadrupani (2004: 200-205) instead, the French translator in charge of Chief Inspector Montalbano's cases, found in Southern French dialects the solution to the problem of translating the Italian-Sicilian mixture. Spain by contrast, proposed two linguistic solutions: a Castilian version that does not signal the different backgrounds of the speakers (nor the diatopic variation) thus levelling the original multiplicity into an homogenous linguistic text, and a rich-in-nuances Catalan edition that, because of its historical conditions and connotations, is considered more respectful of the spirit of the original because equally evocative.⁶³

English, on the contrary, does not have a Romance structure, and even if it presents variations in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, these do not have the status and history of Italian dialects. Stephen Sartarelli talks about his efforts in finding a good Anglo-Saxon alternative for Sicilian dialect. Besides the fact that dialect is a strictly local phenomenon, he could not make use of English dialects for four

(2000), *La stagione della caccia* (2001), *Un fil di fumo* (2002), *Il re di Girgenti* (2003), *Il corso delle cose* (2005), *Privo di titolo* (2007), *Il colore del sole* (2008), *Le inchieste del commissario Collura* (2008), *Racconti quotidiani* (2008), *Le pecore e il pastore* (2009), *Maruzza Musumeci* (2009), *Voi non sapete* (2009), *Il sonaglio* (2010).
<http://www.vigata.org/traduzioni/bibliost.shtml> (15/01/2011).

⁶³ http://www.intralea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=746_0_49_0_M
(31/12/2010)

main reasons. First, because they hardly exist anymore, secondly because it would be bizarre to render the language spoken in Vigàta with a dialect for instance from Mississippi, thirdly because as the sole translator for the Anglophone world, he needed to find a “neutral” code that all readers could understand easily. Lastly because, according to him, editors would have inevitably corrected any linguistic deformity (2004: 215-216) nullifying all his attempts to adhere to the original. We will later consider in more detail the strategies adopted by the American translator.

But there is one last element that I would define “internal” which influences the process of translating: the translator’s personal interpretation of the text. As Roger T. Bell says:

Translation theory is primarily concerned with an ideal bilingual reader-writer, who knows both languages perfectly and is unaffected by such theoretically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention or interest, and errors (random or characteristics) in applying this knowledge in actual performance (1991: p. 38)

This re-coding process is a highly creative activity resulting from the translator's idiolect⁶⁴, sensitivity, culture, background, memory⁶⁵ and skills. All these personal features grant translation the uniqueness and the subjectivity of a proper work of art, and provide the text with a peculiar lexicalization (choice of words) and peculiar syntactical preferences from the translator. This is why it is impossible to find two identical translations, since as Susan Bassnett notes:

a writer does not write in a vacuum: he or she is the product of a particular culture, of a particular moment in time, and the writing reflects those factors such as race, gender, age, class and birthplace as well as the stylistic, idiosyncratic features of the individual (1998: 136).

In my opinion, a very useful approach to the translation of linguistic varieties is the functionalist one (*Skopos Theory*) which aims to release to the reader in the target language linguistic peculiarities in accordance with the function(s) they cover in the source text (Baker, 2001: 235-238). First of all we are going to analyse the functions fulfilled by the dialect in the source text and then we will check if these

⁶⁴ By idiolect we understand the individual distinctive and motivated way of using language at a given level of formality or tenor. (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 98).

⁶⁵ Every translator possesses an internal *Thesaurus* since concepts and words are not stored in memory like in a random manner but in a way which permits linkages to be created between them to both increase the efficiency of the storage system itself and to facilitate recall and retrieval. (Bell, 1991: 95).

same functions are maintained and performed through the same means as in the source text (through dialect).

2.6 Mimetic function

Camilleri's mimesis of the linguistic situation of contemporary Italy

According to Berruto (1987: 30), Italians turn both to dialects and to national language for everyday communication when changing interlocutors, communicative intentions or to create particular effects. The linguistic model for the Italian language is constituted by Standard Italian⁶⁶ (at the top of the axis) and by dialects⁶⁷ (at the bottom), while in the middle we find the so-called “linguistic continuum” that in sociolinguistics is said to exist when *two or more different languages or dialects merge one into the other(s) without a definable boundary* (Marcato, 2002: 85). These intermediate varieties include *social variations*⁶⁸ and *functional variations*⁶⁹ but quite often the dialect covers the domains of the other two variations (diaphasic⁷⁰ and diastratic⁷¹). As a result, dialectal variations often coincide with variations in register. For

⁶⁶ Normally codified by norms which regulate its correct use and is employed in social and state institutions (Dizionario di linguistica, 1979: 285).

⁶⁷ The regional variations which are distinguished according to geographical location and are not normally codified. (Dizionario di linguistica, 1979: 89).

⁶⁸ Variations used by different social groups, also known as sociolects or diastratic variations.

⁶⁹ Linked to particular interactions, institutions, situations and also called register or diaphasic variations.

⁷⁰ Linguistic variation determined by interlocutors, context and situation.

⁷¹ Linguistic variation determined by the speaker's social class, sex and age.

instance, it is very common for an elderly and not well-educated (diastratic parameters) speaker to choose to use dialect at home (diaphasic element). The mimetic reproduction of everyday language (where dialectal and register features overlap one with another), mostly made of dialogues (especially marked sentences with right or left dislocation and parataxis) and of *code switching*, makes Camilleri's style fresh and provides every character with a different voice, as a proof of the pluralism of reality.

But according to some critics⁷² this linguistic pluralism has to be considered exclusively a literary invention and the Sicilian dialect artificial because it does not follow the rules of regional Italian of Sicily, there is not a fixed pronunciation since dialectal words are spelled differently throughout the text. This ready-made language, in my opinion, has been modified and re-shaped in order to fit the "foreign" reader's (I mean non Sicilian's) expectations about Sicilianity. Another proof that the dialect is not used exclusively for mimetic purposes is that it is shared by both the characters in dialogues and by the narrator. This narrator, who can be considered an effective character of the story, is reminiscent of the so called Sicilian *tragediaturi* (La Fauci, 2004: 161), an omniscient voice not directly involved in the story who directs his ironic comments to the reader:

⁷² The Sicilian writer Vincenzo Consolo and the literary critic Giulio Ferroni do not appreciate Camilleri's literary style and use of the dialect.
http://www.vigata.org/hanno_detto/hanno_detto.shtml (24/01/11)

<p>Il Salsetto, al tempo dei greci, era stato un fiume, po' era addivintato un torrente al tempo dei romani, appresso un rivo al tempo dell'unità d'Italia, appresso ancora, al tempo del fascismo, un rigagnolo fituso e infine, con la democrazia, 'na discarrica abusiva. (2006: 14)</p>	<p>In the days of the Greeks, the Salsetto had been a river. Later, in the days of the Romans, it became a brook, then a rivulet by the time of Italian unification, and later still, in the Fascist era, a stinking little trickle, before finally becoming, with the advent of democracy, an illegal dumping ground. (2009: 5-6)</p>
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In my opinion, the fact that this external voice shares the same idiolect with the other characters renders the comments more sympathetic to the characters' adventures. But even if we consider this *singlossia* just a literary invention by the Sicilian author, it is highly revealing of the linguistic peculiarity of Sicily with respect to the rest of the Italian Peninsula, especially after 1861.

Italian⁷³ as universal medium of communication both written and oral spread only after the Italian nation was born in 1861. According to de Mauro (1976: 43), by the 1861, the year of the political unification of Italy, only 2.5% of Italians knew Italian. It was the mass migrations (due to industrialization, First World War, urbanization) and later the mass

⁷³ Standard Italian grew from the Florentine dialect, codified in the sixteenth century by Pietro Bembo. This *koiné* was until after the political unification of the country rather an elitist language, while the dialects were used all the way down to the most recent decades. (Vizmuller Zocco, 1995: 512).

media and general schooling that contributed to the more extensive use of Italian as a spoken language. Dialects were used as proper languages in pre-unification Italy. It should indeed be pointed out that the term “Italian dialects” is a misnomer since they are not dialects of one language, Italian, but the result of a gradual change undergone by spoken Latin in various territories during centuries (Vizmuller Zocco, 1995: 512). Sicilian is one of these: it has a Latin vocabulary, Latin grammatical forms and syntactical constructions as do the other *Southern* Italian dialects (Southern Marchigiano, Campanian, Abruzzese, Calabrese Apulian, Lucanian), but with peculiar differences due to its *sostratum*⁷⁴ (Greek and Carthaginian) and *superstratum*⁷⁵ (Arabic, Norman, French and Spanish).

2.7 Cultural function

Camilleri’s rebellion against flattening globalization

As we have seen in the previous paragraphs, at first sight we could infer that the combination of different layers of language (diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic variations) in Camilleri’s texts is dictated by a mimetic purpose, a specific poetics that advocates an adherence to reality

⁷⁴ The *substratum* or *substrate* is a language that influences an intrusive language that supplants it. (Marcato, 2002: 160-161).

⁷⁵ A *superstratum* or *superstrate* is the counterpart to a substratum. When one language succeeds another, the former is termed the superstratum and the latter the substratum (Marcato, 2002: 161).

through a “realistic” use of language. Dialect is circumscribed and confined not only to dialogues between Sicilian characters but it is also employed in the narration, description and commentaries on various events from the already-mentioned *tragediaturi*. As we have seen, the combination of dialect and Italian is indeed typical of storytelling. Camilleri makes use of the local Sicilian dialect from the place of his birth⁷⁶ for specific reasons.

First of all dialect is employed as a literary device to contextualise the story in a geographical, social and cultural reality. Secondly, it is a very economical instrument to conjure up the essence of the people, places, notions, social codes and tastes of Sicily. The author in fact, by adopting the Pirandellian distinction between dialect as language of the soul, expression of genuine feelings and of the various nuances of human experience (Demontis, 2001: 18), and standard language, a distant and bureaucratic means of communication, pays an affectionate tribute to Sicily, trying to preserve at the same time its identity and its authenticity. In Camilleri’s view there is something missing from the standard Italian language that does not allow him to describe the setting and the environment in which the novels take place (Demontis, 2001: 27).

Thirdly, by resorting to an “inferior” language to express an identity that runs the risk of disappearing, he is adopting an effective

⁷⁶ Camilleri’s detective novels with Montalbano as a protagonist are set in Vigàta, a fictitious name for Porto Empedocle, the town where the author was born in 1925. Vigàta represents Sicily. <http://www.vigata.org/biografia/biografia.shtml> (02/01/2011)

postcolonial strategy whose aim is to resist the homogeneity of Italian culture and language. I think indeed that the extended use of *singlossia* has much more in common with postcolonial literature strategies than with mimetic purposes.

In fact, if we accept Maria Tymoczko's (1999: 19-10) comparison between postcolonial writing and translations, we can easily affirm that Andrea Camilleri is performing a "foreignising translation" of Sicilian culture into Italian culture. According to her, both postcolonial writers and translators are concerned with the translation/transmission of elements from one culture to another usually separated by a linguistic gap. This gap can be reduced by inserting linguistic and cultural features related to the source text which may cause problems to the audience. The result is a "foreignising" translation in which certain words that have no direct equivalent in the target language are not translated at all. By leaving untranslated certain lexical items which have no equivalent in the receptor culture (Italian) and explaining them only by periphrasis, Camilleri is preserving local culture and traditions. However, there are occasions when he bends the dialect to fit the reader's expectations of the Sicilian way of being, often exaggerating some of its characteristic and in a way, reinforcing stereotypical traits.

Since according to many critics Camilleri's success is to be attributed to the language he uses, the translator is confronted with the

problem of attempting to reproduce this melange between the official and dominant language and the unofficial language.

In the light of the functionalist approach and considering that Camilleri has often spoken of the meaning and finality of his own language, the first step has been the study of the *skopoi* dialect performs in his literary production. Sicilian dialect allows the writer to achieve linguistic realism and the cultural preservation of the Sicilian identity at the same time. If we deem it necessary that readers of these novels in other countries should have a glimpse into Camilleri's style and understand what makes his novels different from others written in standard Italian, we need to maintain both purposes. But since in the majority of cases the translation of dialect with another dialect is an unfruitful operation, we will consider which interesting solutions to the problem have been found.

2.8 Northern paths

Sicilian dialect is a very economical device for the writer to concretely identify the place of action, to make the reader experience the humour and irony which are characteristics of Sicilian people, but also to make his readership reflect on the history of Sicily. Every translator has to choose his or her own strategy. While some translators can substitute

Southern dialects with dialects from their own country (as the French translators have done), other translators cannot totally make use of their own linguistic material because their dialects evoke different landscapes and atmospheres.

Two Scandinavian translators of Montalbano's series, Jon Rognlien⁷⁷, and Helina Kangas⁷⁸ talk about their experiences and strategies in dealing with the dialect. Jon Rognlien, who is the Norwegian translator of Camilleri and Ammaniti, affirms that most of the difficulties of translating the Sicilian author lies in his narrative use of Sicilian dialect. This means that, by employing the dialect, Camilleri skilfully succeeds in communicating several things to the Italian reader without mentioning them one by one. In fact, he does not need to give historical and anthropological information or to describe landscapes. An Italian reader immediately knows he or she is in Sicily, with all its concerns (citrus fruits, palms, Falcone, Sciascia, Nero d'Avola, Pirandello, Saracens, Normans, Etna, tuna fish, almonds etc). The author knows that his reader possesses this competence and counts on it "to fill the gap" in the narration⁷⁹. But a Norwegian reader needs something more than the Italian reader "to fill the gap" and arrive in Sicily. Otherwise he or she will be lost. To the average Norwegian readership

⁷⁷ http://www.lanotadeltraduttore.it/domande_roglien.htm (03/02/11)

⁷⁸ <http://www.vigata.org/traduzioni/bibliost.shtml> (02/02/11)

⁷⁹ Indeed the existence of a shared cultural frame is confirmed by the absence of glossaries in the Italian editions and by the presence of compensation devices in the translations.

Italy is only the combination of cities and typical products tourism and economy have exported and made famous. For this very reason Jon Rognlien's translating method is based on the substitution of a regional play (which requires the same cultural competence as Italian people to be understood) with a national play (which refers to the knowledge Norwegian people or foreigners in general have of Italian culture and history). Untranslated words that are easily decipherable such as *commissario, avvocato, cavaliere, signora, signorina, omertà, capo* and nouns of typical dishes constantly recalls the Italianity of the original. This option has been adopted also by the Finnish translator Helina Kangas who has maintained terms such as *ciao, amore, signora* and performed a loan translation of the sentences in strict dialect.

2.9 Where does Sicilian dialect lead the Anglophone reader?

The Voice of the Violin and *The Wings of the Sphynx* represent a literary attempt to describe how Sicilian people speak. Camilleri in fact tries to imitate and reproduce the way Sicilian people behave in conversation. Dialect plays a very important role in dialogues because, besides being principally a diatopic variety, it covers also the domains of diaphasic and diastratic variations. This means that in these two novels we find characters using dialect not only because of their geographical

origins but also because they have social and situational reasons to do it. Dialect is a local factor and translating it into American or English dialects (if still existing) would lead the readers somewhere else than to Sicily. So, which is the right path to follow?

The previously mentioned considerations made by the two Scandinavian translators remain a valid help for the issues Stephen Sartarelli has to face when translating Camilleri. In my opinion, the American translator splits the Sicilian dialect according to two distinct circumstances:

- 1) when it is a component of colloquial language and signals a change in register and interlocutors;
- 2) when it is a localization device which helps to contextualise the story. It serves as a cultural label for food, institutions, proverbs and traditions.

2.10 The core of the research

The core of my research is a contrastive analysis between the ST and the TT, the approach is product-oriented with particular emphasis on the recreation of “situationality” and with the preservation of “informativity” (Hatim and Mason, 1997:16). I have decided to give priority to the analysis of the translations for two main reasons: to avoid any influence from the Italian texts and to verify if the language

represents the most remarkable aspect of the novels as it does in Italian. I was interested also in finding out which image of Sicily can be conveyed by a language (English) which is not its most immediate expression. Despite the fact that the picture of Sicily evoked proved to be quite blurred, the fundamental cultural elements were preserved, in particular the Italian setting was clearly maintained.

As a second step I have focused on all those elements (in the translations) diverting from the standard and representing, according to Hatim and Mason, a marked use of the language. Needless to say, the English versions show no trace of the markedness of the originals nor any particular linguistic obstacles. The American translator has preferred a standard and quite linear English, which has turned the original multiplicity into an homogenous linguistic text with the exception of some characters (i. e. Agatino Catarella) speaking with a Brooklynese accent. The result is a communicative translation⁸⁰ which prefers meaning to form, a domesticating translation with some reference (provided that it will be comprehensible to the Anglophone world) to Italian culture in general (words like *spaghetti*, *trattoria*, *veranda* and interjections are indicative) rather than to specific Sicilian culture. In fact, the smooth reading and what Lawrence Venuti calls “the translator’s invisibility” are interrupted exclusively by a few untranslated dialectal words (in italics)

⁸⁰ Peter Newmark defines a translation communicative when the translator tries to produce in the TL readers the same effect the original produces in the SL readers. By contrast, a semantic translation tries, within the limits of the syntactic and semantic restrictions imposed by the TL, to reproduce the exact contextual meaning of the author. (1988: 51).

and by the glossary.

One last element to consider is the different rate of “linguistic obstacles” present in the two novels. *The Wings of the Sphynx* presents a higher rate of dialectal terms than *The Voice of the Violin* surely because Camilleri is well aware that his readers have accepted his challenge and are able to decipher the text by themselves. But of course the author has instructed the reader to cope with unknown words since his first novels by introducing dialectal terms similar to Italian ones like *fimmina* (femmina) and *nivuru* (nero) so their degree of “informativity” is not as high as other terms which would require greater processing efforts on the part of the reader. In other cases Camilleri uses an idiolect made of some fundamental words indicating common actions like *taliare* (to look), *spiare* (to ask), *ire* (to go), *arrispunnire* (to answer, reply) etc., and repeats cultural items such as typical dishes and proverbs. As we can see, these words are examples of a dynamic use of language and therefore more informative.

Another evident difference between Camilleri’s first production and his latest production is represented by *The Wings of the Sphynx* being clearly a text almost exclusively written in dialect. Unfortunately, the translations cannot reflect this dissimilarity as they exploit the same strategies employed in the first novels even if the original texts are considerably different in their linguistic varieties.

2.11 Dialect for a change in register

In the first case the American translator has opted for substituting the diatopic variety with the appropriate English diastratic and diaphasic varieties, alternating formal and informal language. I have chosen some excerpts where the speakers use dialect because of the situation or their social rank. As has been noted before, in *La voce del violino* dialogues in “pure” Sicilian are very infrequent, because Camilleri prefers to combine Italian with it.⁸¹ In the following excerpt from *La voce del violino*, Gelsomino Patti, the owner of Bar Italia, blends the two codes as storytelling strategies imply:

«Commissario, il <u>patre</u> lo disse <u>macari</u> a <u>mia</u> e cioè che Maurizio verso le nove di <u>sira</u> venne qua. Il fatto è che si fermò sulla <u>strata</u> , proprio qua davanti e io lo vedevo benissimo dalla cassa. Stava per <u>trasiri</u> , poi si fermò, tirò <u>fora</u> il telefonino, fece un <u>nummaro</u> e si	«Inspector, the father told me the same thing, that Maurizio came here round nine o'clock that night. But the fact is, he stopped on the street, right here in front, and I <u>seen</u> him real good from the register. He was about to come in, and then he stopped, pulled out his cell phone, and started talking. A little
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⁸¹ *La voce del violino* is the fourth detective novel with Chief Salvo Montalbano. In my opinion Andrea Camilleri is aware that his readers still need time to get accustomed to this funny mixture of Italian and Sicilian. This is why in the first detective novels Sicilian words are rationed.

<p>mise a parlare. Dopo <u>tanticchia</u> non lo <u>vitti</u> più. Qui però la <u>sira</u> di <u>mercordi</u> non <u>trasi</u>, questo è certo. Che interesse avrei a dire una cosa per un'altra?». (1997: 73)</p>	<p>while later he was gone. But on Wednesday evening, he didn't come in here, that much I know for sure. What reason would I have for <u>sayin'</u> something that wasn't true?». (2003: 77)</p>
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It is immediately evident that the translation has been completely “flattened” that is to say rendered in standard English but for two marked elements: “I seen” and “sayin’” (both underlined). According to *Urban Dictionary*⁸², *I seen* is an uneducated way to say *I saw* and the final elision in the *-ing* form verb is typical of informal language. In fact the deviation from the standard that in the original is represented by the dialect, in the translations assumes the form of informal language and slang.

In *Le ali della sfinge* by contrast, several characters express themselves in dialect because of their social rank. Adelina⁸³, the fisherman, Mrs Loporto, Ernestina Vullo, signora Bellini and Pasquale Cirrincìo (Adelina's son) speak mostly in dialect. Here are the English linguistic resources Stephen Sartarelli has made use of to indicate low register.

⁸² <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=I%20seen> (07/02/11)

⁸³ Adelina is Salvo Montalbano's maid and a really great cook!

Adelina's idiolect

«Ma lo sapi che vossia è ancora un bell'omo?». (2006: 13)	«You know you're still a <u>good-lookin'</u> man, <u>signore?</u> ». (2009: 5)
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«Dutturi, sbagliai? Forsi ca vuliva durmiri ancora?». (2006: 219)	« <u>D'I</u> do right, <u>signore?</u> Maybe you <u>wannata</u> sleep <u>s'more?</u> ». (2009: 187)
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«Pari tra dù jorni». (2006: 220)	« <i>Mebbe</i> in a <u>coupla</u> days». (2009: 188)
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The fisherman's idiolect

«Dutturi, vidissi che dumanì chiovi forte e fa friddo. E farà accusì per una simanata intera». (2006: 33)	«Inspector, you <u>oughta</u> know that tomorrow is <u>gonna</u> be cold with heavy rain. <u>An' iss gonna</u> stay that way for a whole week.». (2009: 22)
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Mrs Loporto's idiolect

«Comu, chi è? Un parrino. 'U parracu della mè chiesa!».(2006: 110)	« <u>Whattya</u> mean, 'who's <u>he</u> '? He's a priest. The priest of my parish!».(2009: 91)
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Vidova Bellini's idiolect

«Cu è?». [...] «La signora Bellini?». «Sì. Che volite?». (2006: 181)	« <u>Whooazzat?</u> ». [...] « <u>Signora</u> Bellini?». «Yes. <u>Whattya</u> want?». (2009: 154)
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Signora Ernestina Vullo's idiolect

«Sintissi, iu a mè figliu 'Ntoniu lo ghittai a pidati 'n culu fora di casa. E' maggiorenni? [...].» «Certu ca è maggiorenni! Avi trent'anni! E perciò lei l'annasse a circari indove minchia sinni sta a fissiarasilla e non lo vinissi a circari nella mè casa. Bonasir...».(2006: 129)	«Listen, I kicked my son 'Ntoniu right <u>outta</u> the house on <u>'is</u> ass. Is he a legal adult? [...].» «Of course he's a legal adult! He's thirty years old! So you just go look for <u>'im</u> wherever the hell he happens <u>a</u> be jerking off and <u>don'</u> come <u>lookin'</u> for him anymore at my house. Good-b—». (2009: 108)
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«Nun lo sapi che è? Oh binidittu Diu! Tutti lu sannu che è! E io ora comu fazzu a spiegaricillo?». (2006: 131)	« <u>Don 'tcha</u> know what it is? Good god, everybody knows what it is! So <u>how'm</u> I <u>gonna 'splain</u> you what it is?». (2009: 109)
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Pasquale Cirrincìò's idiolect

«Anzi facemu accusi vossia non ha mai 'ncontrato in càrzaro a Pasquale Cirrincìò. Non vogliu aviri la nominata di 'nfami». (2006: 139)	«So that's the deal: You never met with Pasquale Cirrincìò in prison. I don't <u>wanna</u> get a reputation for <u>being a rat</u> ». (2009: 117)
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Sartarelli has exploited several features to render the dialogues those of non-standard speakers by using for instance expressions typical of colloquial usage, low register and informal language which consist of the omission of sounds and syllables at the end or at the beginning of a word like in *good-lookin'* (good-looking), *D'* (Do), *An'* (and), *he'* (he's), *'is* (his), *'im* (him), *lookin'* (looking), *don'* (don't), *'m* (am), *'splain* (explain) or internal elision like in *s'more* (some more). In the case of *'splain* the initial elision is combined with the substitution of the -x with an -s to reinforce Signora Ernestina Vullo's idiolect. Adelina's first and second comments provide us with two examples of compensation.⁸⁴When there is no satisfactory word to translate the

⁸⁴ *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* defines compensation as a *technique which involves making up for the loss of a source text effect by recreating a similar effect in*

Sicilian, Sartarelli draws from English linguistic resources to achieve an equivalent effect between ST and TT on the level of *informativity*. This is the case: *vossia* is the Sicilian second person polite form pronoun which could be translated as *you Sir*. So in any case, to convey the formality of the pronoun, the English translator would need to add a respect title like *Sir*. The most immediate translation would be *you Sir* but Sartarelli very skilfully substitutes *Sir* with *Signore* in order to maintain both formality and culture. The same method has been applied to the translation of *Dutturi*, a title of respect for graduates which has been transformed in *Signore* so both deference and Italianity are preserved.

Pasquale Cirrinciò speaks with Inspector Montalbano in strict dialect but the lack of a corresponding English dialect is compensated by an informal trait like *wanna* (want to) and by the expression *being a rat*, a derogative form for *betrayed*. In general we can affirm that other non standard features like *wannata* (want to), *mebbe* (maybe), *coupla* (couple of), *oughta* (ought to) *iss* (is), *whooazzat* (who is that) *whattya* (what you), *outta* (ought to), *don 'tcha* (do not you), *gonna* (going to) contribute to the depiction of a poorly-educated person.

Besides drawing inspiration from slang and informal language, the American translator has been helped by the so-called *eye-dialect*⁸⁵, a very

the target text through means that are specific to the target language and/or text. According to its location it can be parallel, contiguous and displaced. (Baker, 1998: 37-40).

⁸⁵ According to the scholar David Brett, the term *eye dialect* was first used to reproduce colloquial usage by describing unconventional spelling (examples are *enuff* for *enough*, *wimmin* for *women*) and to insinuate on the part of the author that the characters who speak like that possess low levels of education and of literacy. Now *eye dialect* has a wider

useful literary device based on modifications of the standard orthography due to variations of pronunciation, which renders extremely visible the differences between various idiolects and sociolects of the characters. *Eye dialect* is majestically represented by Agatino Catarella's semi-illiterate Sicilian:

<p>«A dottori, dottori! Lei mi disse di non distrupparlo a mentre che parlava con la signora e io obbediente fui! Ma arrivò uno sdilluvio di tilifonate! Tutte le scrissi a sopra di questo pizzino». (1997: 65)</p>	<p>«Oh, Chief, Chief! You said you <u>dint wanna</u> be <u>distroubled</u> when <u>you was</u> talking <u>wit da</u> lady <u>an'</u> I did what you said! But <u>inna</u> meantime you <u>gotta lotta</u> phone calls! I wrote 'em all down on <u>dis li'l</u> piece <u>a</u> paper». (2003: 67)</p>
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<p>«Pronti, dottori? E' lei pirsonalmente di pirsona? Catarella sono. Tilifonò il marito della pittima dici che così che se lei pirsonalmente lo chiama al Ciolli stasira inverso le dieci». (1997: 120)</p>	<p>«<u>Hullo</u>, Chief? <u>Zatchoo</u> in <u>poisson</u>? Catarella here. The <u>vikkim's</u> <u>huzbin</u> called <u>sayin'</u> as how <u>yer</u> <u>sposta</u> call 'im <u>poissonally</u> at the Jolly <u>t'nite</u> roundabout ten <u>acklack</u>». (2003: 131)</p>
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<p>«Disse accussi che lui non avento il dono della bibiquà, non potiva essiri in loco prima di un due orate.</p>	<p>«He says how since he <u>ain't</u> <u>bibiquitous</u>, he can't get to the scene for a couple of hours. Chief, could you</p>
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meaning and describes any variation in spelling. It may be used successfully in contexts where the readers have similar accents and are amused by recognising it. This is true for Catarella's Brooklynese accent whose pronunciation (rendered graphically with a different spelling), different from General American, provokes amusement in the reader. (2009: 50).

Dottore, me la fa una spiega?» (2006: 13)	<u>asplain sumpin a me?»</u> (2009: 4)
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From these passages it is immediately clear that Stephen Sartarelli has succeeded in creating a typically American character as funny as his Sicilian “relative”. This “new” Catarella is linguistically identifiable by a peculiar pronunciation that the translator has graphically reproduced through initial, internal and final elisions (respectively *'im* instead of *him*, *t'nite* instead of *tonight*, *sayin'* instead of *saying*), and through *eye dialect* which has been employed for the spelling of *dint* (did not), *wit* (with), *da* (the), *inna* (in the), *gotta* (have got), *lotta* (lot of), *dis* (this), *li'l* (little), *a* (of) *hullo* (hello), *zatchoo?* (is that you?), *poisson* (person), *vikkim* (victim), *huzbin* (husband), *yer* (you are), *sposta* (supposed to), *poissonally* (personally), *roundabout* (around), *aclack* (o'clock), *ain't* (is not), *asplain* (explain), *sumpin* (something) and *a* (to). Syntax does not follow standard rules either: *as how* and *how since* are used in place of the correct subordinating conjunction *that*. *You was* is a non standard form for *you were*.

2.12 A Brooklynite Catarella?

In my personal view, Catarella's idiolect shares some of the characteristic features of the so called Brooklynese dialect. According to

the scholar David Shulman (1996: 331-333), this locution, which has improperly been named after the borough of Brooklyn, designates instead an uncultivated New Yorkese and is spoken in all the five boroughs of the city. According to Mark Francis Cohen

Brooklynese is perhaps the most recognisable regionalism in the world thanks mainly to movies and television, which have transformed it into an emblem of class as much as place (1998: 11).

Even William Labov, in his fundamental study on *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*, confirms the fact that New York speech is quickly identified outside the city and often stereotyped. Many factors have contributed to this evidence and the scholar himself affirms that

On radio and television, more or less accurate stereotypes of middle class and working class New York speech have traditionally been used for comic effects. For lower class New York City speech have been stigmatized under the label of Brooklynese. [...] Indeed, some of the features have entered into a folk mythology. Great numbers of people, including New Yorkers, have been amused by the appearance of dem and dose, boid and shoit as they see forms in print or hear them on the stage, without realizing that they themselves use the same vowels and consonants as the original speakers who are being caricatured (1982: 19).

Labov's work is centred on the analysis of five phonological variables in particular in the area of the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the port of entry of all immigrant groups: the presence or absence of final and pre-consonantal /r/, the height of the vowel /æ/ in words like *bad*, *bag* etc., "the long open o" symbolized by the phoneme /oh/ and heard in words like *lost*, *talk*, *dog* and finally the initial consonants in words like *thing* and *then*, this one a phenomenon common throughout the United States (1982: 35-37). The survey, based on informants from inside and outside the city, declared that Brooklynese was to be considered "sloppy", "careless", "hurried", "loud" or "harsh" (1982: 338) because of some morphological variants such as *ain't* for *isn't*, *gonna* for *going to*, *whatcha* for *what are you*, or *aks* for *ask*. The only phonological trait mentioned frequently and spontaneously was the stigmatized upgliding central diphthong in words like *third*, *bird* and *shirt* which fails to distinguish between *oil* and *Earl* and *voice* and *verse* and thanks to gangster movies and cinema has come to symbolize New York City speech in folk mythology (231). Another case of stigmatized form is the suffix *-ing* of participles and verbal nouns. According to Labov there are two distinct traditional pronunciations of this forms best represented by the two variants phonemic variants /in/ and /ing/ and that only at the end of the 18th century the /ing/ variation started to be considered the correct

one because closer to the spelling. This is why nowadays /in/ is considered uneducated (271).

All these linguistic traits that make Brooklynese recognisable can be easily spotted in Catarella’s language whose pronunciation has been reproduced through the device of *eye dialect*. One could consider this segment of text from page 10 of *The Voice of the Violin* a further example of the features of Brooklynese:

<p>«Tre giorni passati cercarono propio lei di lei, dottori, lei non c’era, però io me lo scordai a farle referenza». (1997: 10)</p>	<p>«<u>Tree</u> days ago somebody <u>aks</u> for you, Chief, wanted a talk t’ you in <u>poisson</u>, but you wasn’t ‘ere an’ I <u>forgotta</u> <u>reference</u> it to you». (2003: 2)</p>
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The underlined words represent a deviant or marked use of language: *tree* (*three*) is a peculiar realization of the phonological variable (th), *poisson* (*person*) presents the upgliding central diphthong and lastly *forgotta* (*forgot to*) signals a certain vowel openness. I suppose that the translator has employed Brooklynese as a socio-ethnic⁸⁶ mark to trace back Catarella’s social class (working class) and Italian origin.

⁸⁶ If we consider the history of this borough, we will discover that Brooklynese was created by ethnic groups from Europe who contributed to its development with an array of linguistic factors. In the 17th century it was the Dutch and French settlers who, trying to learn English but having trouble in pronouncing the final “r” in many words, started to eliminate it. The second ethnic group to add a peculiar trait from their own language were the Irish immigrants who made “th” into “t” and “ir” in “oi” (ex: thirty-third became toity-toid). Also, in Irish Gaelic there is no “th” sound and that is pronounced as “d” (dese instead of these, doze instead of those). Lastly at the end of the 19th century Italian added Italian words and imbued the vowels. (Cohen, 1998: 11)

And now we will consider how the cultural function performed by the dialect is recreated in the translations.

2.13 Dialect as a cultural label

The cultural alterity of the text is maintained through a “foreignising translation” of some typical aspects of Sicilian and Italian life and history. But is Sicilian culture detectable by the Anglophone readership in the Italian background? Not easily. In my opinion it is mainly made of the stereotypes of Italy existing abroad concerning food, family, religion and mafia which have their closest expression in Italian-Americans. It is for this reason that the translator had to be content with conveying Italian culture in general or exclusively those Italian elements which may appeal to the English speaking audience. For this very reason the target text proves to be flattened and deprived of many peculiarities of the original. In many cases a communicative translation which goes towards the reader and answers his or her expectations on Italianity is preferred, but unlike Spanish, Catalan and French translations, Sartarelli’s solutions fail to describe the internal clash of the Italian Peninsula. Instead, this clash between North and South of Italy has been replanted in the American soil becoming a clash between USA and Italy and in Catarella’s case, between General American speakers and

Brooklynite speakers. Sartarelli has maintained some key words to remind the reader that the story is set somewhere in Italy (through words like *signorina*, *signora*, *carabiniere*). Sometimes I had the impression that Montalbano's investigations were taking place somewhere in an imprecise Mediterranean country as these two extracts from *The Wings of the Sphynx* show:

«[...] Il solo vederlo gli faceva girare i <u>cabasisi</u> [...]» (2006: 35)	«[...] the very sight of him sent his <u>cojones</u> into a spin [...]» (2009: 24)
«Guardi che stamatina ho i <u>cabasisi</u> che mi fumano»[...] (2006: 60)	«Look, I'm warning you, this morning my <u>cojones</u> are smoking» (2009: 46)

In the translation instead of what is more expected (an English form for testicles), the reader finds the corresponding Spanish word. Is this justified by the fact that the Anglophone world sees Mediterranean countries as an unique block or by the necessity to give anyway a Latin nuance to the text?

Following the Polysystem Theory we could affirm that the strong Anglophone culture is not interested in knowing deeply other cultures. This could explain why Sartarelli has adopted a light “foreignizing approach” only for those elements recognisable by American people like

food⁸⁷ and some famous interjections⁸⁸. Typical Sicilian expressions⁸⁹, references to Italian history, institutions and politics are all explained in the final pages of the books. The glossary indeed allows the translator to give some information about Italian culture and explain the connotations of some expressions without altering the text too much. Of other idiomatic locutions the translator has preferred to underline the meaning to the detriment of the form.

Culinary matters and typical dishes are representative to a great extent of a local culture and for this reason they represent a serious challenge to the translator. In my opinion the best tool to deal with this issue is the “foreignizing” approach, which has the merit of keeping the foreign in the translation in order to shake the readers out of their target values and customs. In fact, in an extremely self-centred culture as the Anglophone one is, it is important to signify the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the original text. This is what Sartarelli has done by embedding, as often as possible, “exotic” elements in a more “comfortable” English structure. Indeed, some of the words and expressions which are left untranslated (but explained in the glossary) belong to the semantic field of food⁹⁰: *tinnirume*, *caponata*, *tetù*, *taralli*,

⁸⁷ It is important to underline that some Sicilian dishes, which in the *Voice of the Violin* were transcribed in italics to remind the reader of their explanations in the glossary, were by contrast graphically neutral in the *Wings of the Sphinx*. In my opinion, this demonstrates that Sartarelli is confident enough of his readership’s comprehension skills.

⁸⁸ At page 9 of the *Wings of the Sphinx*: «Matre Santa, the press!».

⁸⁹ The idiomatic expression *o sicco o sacco* has been maintained at page 22 of *the Wings of the Sphinx*.

⁹⁰ The translation of typical dishes is a very complicated issue because strictly linked to

*viscotti regina and Palermitan mostaccioli*⁹¹, *cassata*, *lamb alla cacciatora*, *baby octopus alla Luciana*, *pasta 'ncasciata*, *melanzane alla parmigiana*. The word *napoletana*, which cannot be directly ascribed to this semantic field⁹², has been maintained in Italian and explained in the glossary as well.

Sometimes Sartarelli prefers to make some adjustments to non-English words to be kept in the translation. In the following extract, for instance, to the underlined term *granita* is added a specification which does not exist in the original text:

culture and local tradition. Iain Halliday in his analysis of the English translations of *Pinocchio*, notes some of the problems the translator comes across when dealing with culinary matters. Referring to an extract from chapter thirteen of Collodi's *Pinocchio*, he points out that *the literal translation of lepre dolce e forte would be 'sweet and strong hare'*. *Rather than being an 'almost literal translation', 'sweet and sour hare' is an anglicized description of the dish which unfortunately certainly does (nowadays, with the prevalence of world cuisine throughout the Anglophone world) bring with it connotations of Chinese food, but surely 'jugged hare' while undoubtedly 'being richly flavoured country food' bring us into the Anglophone world rather than the universal sphere.* (2006: 65)

⁹¹ This list is explained in the text (in parenthetical dashes) as all long-lasting cookies (2003: 109).

⁹² A *napoletana* is a tin espresso pot. (2003: 246).

«Ti mangi una brioscia con la <u>granita</u> che qua la fanno buona e poi ce ne torniamo. [...]» (1997: 15)	«You're going to eat a brioche with a <u>granita di caffè</u> , which they make very well here, and then we'll head home. [...]» (2003: 8)
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The only explanation I can hazard is that apparently to the American readers the Italian *granita par excellence* is coffee-flavoured. A similar example is the following one:

[...] il punto giusto di cottura della <u>pasta</u> . (1997: 36)	[...] the proper <u>al dente</u> texture of the <u>spaghetti</u> . (2003: 33)
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«[...] s'attrova davanti o al pisci congelato o a 'na bella <u>cotoletta alla milanisi</u> ». (2006: 73)	«[...] you'll find a plate of frozen fish, or a nice piece of <u>vitella alla milanese</u> under your nose». (2009: 58)
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Apparently *al dente* is a word known in the Anglophone world. The choice of transforming the hyperonym *pasta* into the hyponym *spaghetti* was dictated, I believe, by the exigency of highlighting, as often as possible (even if in some cases the stereotype will result exaggerate), the Italianity of the original texts. The preference for *vitella* instead of *cotoletta* maybe depends to its wider spread in American menus. Other words which have not been translated because highly

indicative of their belonging culture are: *osteria*, *signora*, *Liceo scientifico*, *sursum corda*, *Azione Cattolica*, *Famiglia Cristiana*, *Osservatore Romano*, *scopa*.

«Excuse me, <u>signora</u> , whose funeral is this?» (1997: 8)	«Scusi, <u>signora</u> , di chi è questo funerale?». (2003: 14)
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«Vorrei macari sapiri <u>vita e miracoli</u> di questo <u>cavaliere</u> Guglielmo Piro [...]» (2006: 133)	«I also want to know <u>everything</u> about this <u>Cavaliere</u> Guglielmo Piro since the time he was born». (2009: 111)
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Of the typical Sicilian expression *vita, morte e miracoli* (here just *vita e miracoli*), only the content has been translated, not the form. In the following examples the translator leaves the words in Italian but substitutes them with more understandable synonyms:

«Smistava la telefonata all’ <u>Arma</u> , che quelli in queste cose ci bagnano il pane!» [...] (1997: 67)	«He should have passed the phone call on to the <u>carabinieri</u> , who get off on that kind of thing! [...]» (2003: 69)
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In other cases an Italian synonym whose English cognate is also a synonym is all that's required:

Il negozio che vinniva colori non era	The store that sold paints wasn't really,
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<p>stato un vero e proprio negozio di colori, si chiamava “Fantasia” con <u>scarsa fantasia</u> ed era ‘na speci di supermercato [...] (2006: 192)</p>	<p>strictly speaking, a paints store. It was rather <u>unimaginatively</u> called <u>Immaginazione</u> and was a kind of supermarket [...] (2009: 163)</p>
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Changing the Italian synonym for *fantasia* with an adverbial construction using *unimaginatively*, has been an extremely successful solution for preserving the wordplay and the ironic contradiction between the name of the store (Fantasia) and the following adverb (con scarsa fantasia).

2.14 Translation of idiomatic expressions

Proverbs and idiomatic expressions are very important components of everyday language and, as we have previously seen, Andrea Camilleri is very keen on describing Sicilian people in their daily conversation. This is why the Sicilian author has employed a great number of old sayings and idiomatic sentences embedded in Italian and Sicilian traditions. Idioms are very useful tools to express common sense and ancient wisdom in a very effective and immediate way. In fact, according to Peter Newmark, an idiom can be defined as a more complex

metaphor (1988: 96) whose aim is

To describe an entity, event or quality, more comprehensively and concisely and in a more complex way than is possible by using literary language (1988: 152).

Metaphors may be universal or cultural and the second kind are certainly the most troublesome to the translator. Following Newmark's five suggested strategies⁹³ for the translation of metaphors (1988: 158-165), I have detected which of these have been of some help to the translation of the proverbs and metaphors present in the two novels I have analysed: *The Voice of the Violin* and *The Wings of the Sphynx*. I have reported for some of the proverbs present in the two novels the strategies applied by the translator.

1) Newmark's first strategy consists in translating an image in SL into an image in TL provided this image has comparable frequency and currency in the appropriate register. (1988: 158).

[...] Non passava anima viva. (1997: 12)	[...] There wasn't a soul around. (2003: 5)
Gettare la pietra e nascondere la	Throwing the stone but keeping the

⁹³ Actually, Peter Newmark's strategies are seven: the fourth strategy consists in translating the metaphor by a simile plus sense (ex: she's a goose becomes she's as silly as a goose). The explanation of a metaphor by a gloss (1988: 164) is the seventh to be suggested by the scholar. But for my purpose I will deal only with five translating options.

mano. (1997: 122)	hand hidden. (2003: 134)
[...] non era omo da spartirci il pane insieme. (1997: 128)	[...] he was not the kind of man one would want to break bread with (2003: 142)

All of these idiomatic sentences have corresponding forms in English. What I have noted is that Sartarelli has applied this first translating option even to those expressions which recur frequently in Camilleri's idiolect but which do not have the same currency and frequency in the target language. This method could represent a creative method to introduce new words in the target language. Here are two more examples:

<u>Con santa pacienza</u> decrittò [...] (1997: 65)	<u>With the patience of a saint</u> ⁹⁴ he deciphered [...] (2003: 68)
«[...] e andiamo a <u>coltivare fave</u> ». (1997: 121)	«[...] and we can <u>grow fava beans</u> together» (2003: 133)

Another proverb has been translated literally and the rhyme has been maintained as well⁹⁵:

«Il letto è una gran cosa, se non si	<i>Of all things the bed is the best. / If you</i>
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⁹⁴ This is not the only translation of *con santa pacienza*. In other Camilleri detective novels *with saintly patience* can be found in its place.

⁹⁵ It is worth remembering that Stephen Sartarelli is also a poet. He is the author of three collections of poetry: *The Open Vault* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2001), *The Runaway Woods* (2000) and *Grievances and Other Poems* (1989). <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/928> (07/03/2011)

dorme s'arriposa» [...] (1997: 156)	<i>can't sleep you still can rest.</i> (2003: 178)
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2) The second strategy has proved to be the most used one. It consists in replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image. The result is that of different images convey the same meaning. There are several examples of this kind in *La voce del violino*:

[...] triplice misurazione della pressione, radiografie e compagnia bella [...] (1997: 13)	[...] three blood pressure exams, X rays, <u>and everything else in the book</u> [...] (2003: 6)
[...] fresco come un quarto di pollo (1997: 30)	[...] <u>cool as a cucumber</u> (2003: 26)
[...] <u>la via era libera.</u> (1997: 32)	<u>The coast was clear.</u> (2003: 28)
[...] <u>come il cacio sui maccheroni.</u> (1997: 33)	[...] <u>the icing on the cake.</u> (2003: 29)
Però <u>arrivati al dunque</u> , niente (1997: 44)	[...] but when <u>it comes to the nitty-gritty</u> [...] (2003: 42)
Rimangono tutti <u>a bocca asciutta</u> (1997: 44)	They're left <u>high and dry.</u> (2003: 42)
[...] <u>aveva centrato il problema.</u> (1997: 47)	<u>She'd hit the nail on the head</u> [...] (2003: 46)
[...] questo è <u>un altro paio di maniche</u> (1997: 50)	[...] that's <u>another kettle of fish.</u> (2003: 50)
[...] in quella casa dovevano <u>essere sulla bragia</u> (1997: 71)	they were probably already <u>on pins and needles.</u> (2003: 74)
<u>«Aveva perso la testa?»</u> (1997: 78)	<u>«Fell head over heels for her?»</u> (2003: 82)
Non <u>usava tanti giri di parole,</u>	<u>He didn't beat around the bush,</u> this

Emanuele Licalzi. (1997: 83)	Emanuele Licalzi. (2003: 88)
[...] hanno scoperto che <u>la luna è fatta di ricotta</u> . (1997: 126)	[...] say <u>the moon is made out of Swiss cheese</u> . (2003: 140)
«[...] L'aveva <u>a pochi passi!</u> » (1997: 129)	«[...] which was <u>a stone's throw away?</u> » (2003: 144)
Ora <u>la strata era in discesa</u> . (1997: 134)	It would be <u>a smooth sailing</u> from here. (2003: 150)
[...] fornire armi <u>a tamburo battente</u> . (1997: 143)	[...] provide him with weapons <u>at the drop of a hat</u> (2003: 162)
[...] visto che <u>non c'erano santi</u> . (1997: 160)	[...]seeing <u>there was no hope in heaven</u> [...] (2003: 182)
[...] senti che <u>le gambe gli diventavano di ricotta</u> . (1997: 170)	[...] felt <u>his legs turn into pudding</u> . (2003: 195)
<u>Ci inzertò in pieno</u> [...] (1997: 181)	<u>He'd hit the nail on the head</u> [...] (2003: 209)
[...] dopo che per mezz'ora <u>avevano fatto storie</u> [...] (1997: 190)	<u>after hemming and hawing</u> for half an hour [...] (2003: 220)
Ma sono <u>una goccia nel deserto</u> [...] (1997: 195)	But it turns out to be <u>a drop in the bucket</u> (2003: 225)

There are examples in *The Wings of the Sphynx* as well:

[...] <u>in quattro e quattr'otto</u> [...] (2003: 36)	[...] <u>in the twinkling of an eye</u> [...] (2009: 25)
[...] chioviva <u>a rètini stisi</u> . (2006: 73)	[...] it was coming down <u>in buckets</u> . (2009: 58)
[...] <u>un gran mangia mangia</u> (2006: 156)	[...] <u>one giant pork barrel</u> (2009: 132)

3) The third solution identified by Newmark lies in the translation of the

metaphor by a simile in order to preserve the original image. The following example is taken from *The Voice of the Violin*:

«Frumentu sutta u suliu». (1997: 23)	«Like wheat in sunlight». (2003: 17)
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4) This method reduces the metaphor to its meaning, by explaining the idiom and by focusing mostly on the reader's understanding of the sentences. The explaining translation is very common in both novels:

[...] proclamò <u>all'urbi e all'orbo</u> . (1997: 32)	[...] he declared <u>to one and all</u> . (2003: 29)
«[...] La signora ama <u>fare le ore piccole</u> [...]» (1997: 43)	«[...] The lady likes <u>to stay up late</u> [...]» (2003: 41)
[...] Catarella trasi <u>a palla allazzata</u> . (1997: 65)	[...] Catarella came <u>barrelling</u> into the room. (2003: 67)
[...] <u>non c'erano santi</u> [...] (1997: 97)	[...] <u>there was no getting around it</u> [...] (2003: 106)
[...] <u>pacienza</u> [...] (1997: 112)	[...] <u>what can you do</u> [...] (2003: 122)
<u>Pensa ca ti ripensa</u> [...] (1997: 138)	<u>After thinking long and hard</u> [...] (2003: 155)
«[...] <u>Tanto di cappello</u> , commissario.» (1997: 162)	«[...] <u>My compliments</u> , Inspector» (2003: 185)
« <u>Mi pari un figurino</u> » [...] (1997: 179)	« <u>My, my, don't we look, fashionable?</u> » (2003: 206)
[...] pareva <u>una stampa e una figura</u> con un professore d'orchestra. (1997: 222)	[...] <u>looking exactly like a concert violinist</u> . (2003: 222)

192)	
«[...] Tu sei <u>la bandiera</u> del nostro commissariato!» (1997: 205)	«[...] You're <u>the pride</u> of the department!» (2003: 238)

The Wings of the Sphynx:

[...] <u>ti saluto e sono</u> (2006: 9)	[...] <u>nice knowing you.</u> (2009: 1)
[...] <u>spissu e vulanteri</u> [...] (2006: 9)	[...] <u>very often</u> [...] (2009: 1)
«[...] se la sta piglianno <u>suttagama!</u> » (2006: 44)	«[...] you are taking the disappearance of my poor husband <u>very lightly!</u> » (2009: 32)
«É 'na parola». (2006: 56)	« <u>That's easier said than done.</u> » (2009: 43)

5) Newmark includes in the list as the last option the possibility of eliminating a redundant image. In the example below the description of Zito's interior struggle is committed exclusively to the adjective *torn*. The underlined idiom (literally: a donkey's and a lion's heart) is omitted first of all because the image would not work in English, and secondly, because its meaning is conveyed by the previous sentence anyway.

Zito non rispose, era chiaramente combattuto, <u>un core d'asino e uno di lione.</u> (1997: 121)	Zito said nothing. He was clearly torn. (2003: 133)
--	---

The following example coming from *Le ali della sfinge*, is

characterised by the omission of the religious but ironical reference to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus which perhaps the American reader would not have recognised:

Il casto <u>Giuseppe</u> Montalbano doviva sintirisi orgoglioso? (2006: 84)	Or was Montalbano the <u>prude</u> supposed to feel <u>proud</u> ? (2009: 68)
---	---

But this apparent loss, which in my opinion is majestically compensated by another rhetorical device, the paronymy between *prude* and *proud*, is the clear evidence of Sartarelli's translating skilfulness.

2.15 Displaced compensation

As Crisafulli points out *the relationship between sounds and meaning in the source text generates problems of a special kind, forcing the translator to resort to a variety of alternative rewritings which involve compensatory strategies.* (1996, 259-260). When dealing with carrying across metaphors or idioms from one language to another, it is extremely likely for the translator (and the reader) to be faced with translation loss. It is not always possible to resort to TL idioms to translate SL idioms and sometimes it is really hard to find images valid in both cultures. The American translator is well aware of the obstacles caused by the cultural and linguistic discrepancies between source and

target texts. This is proved by the fact that, whenever possible, he inserts some Italian words to maintain a sort of balance and to fill the gap that the Sicilian dialect inevitably leaves in the translations. The following two cases taken from *The Voice of the Violin* and *The Wings of the Sphynx*, show how the displaced compensation is used to recover the loss of the original culture throughout the text:

Montalbano si associò <u>di cuore</u> [...] (1997: 24)	Montalbano joined in <u>with gusto</u> . (2003: 19)
---	--

The word *gusto* is perfect for two reasons: it has an Italian origin like our protagonist and it is adequate to the context of a classical concert. Italian widely-known passion for opera and classical music emerges in the following extract as well:

«[...] Ma se se ne dimentica che facciamo? Ci mettiamo a cantare <u>papim papom?</u> ». (2006: 84)	«[...] But if he forgets, then what do you do? Start singing, <i>Casta Diva?</i> » (2009: 67)
--	--

Casta Diva works even better than the original (*papim papom*) for the reference to chastity in a very embarrassing context for Inspector Montalbano and his Swedish friend Ingrid. In the next extract the displaced compensation in the form of an imperfect rhyme (book and boot) makes up for the loss of the natural rhythm of Sicilian dialect:

Tutte ce l'aveva Nicolò Tommaseo ⁹⁶ . <u>Era macari un corvo</u> (1997: 34)	<u>He had every kink in the book</u> , this Nicolò Tommaseo. <u>He was a raven to boot.</u> (2003: 31)
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Sartarelli uses English idioms even if the originals do not require it:

Sicuramente qualichiduno della questura <u>aviva fatto la spiata.</u> (2006: 19)	Obviously somebody from the commissioner's office <u>had spilled the beans.</u> (2009: 9)
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Ma l'ipotesi <u>non quatrava lo stisso</u> [...] (2006: 65)	But this hypothesis <u>didn't hold water</u> [...] (2009: 51)
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⁹⁶ Camilleri winks at the Italian reader by naming this nasty character after the more famous Nicolò Tommaseo, a contemporary writer with Manzoni: Manzoni's original quote on him in Lombard dialect has been neutralised at page 30 of *The Voice of the Violin (This Tommaseo with one foot in the sacristy and the other in the whorehouse)* and explained in a note of the glossary.

2.16 Keeping the puns and wordplay

The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, echoing Vinay and Darbelnet, defines adaptation *as a procedure which can be used whenever the context referred to in the original text does not exist in the culture of the target text, thereby necessitating some form of re-creation* (Baker, 1998: 6).

Among the modes on which adaptation can be carried out I have found one which surely is pertinent to this extract from *La voce del violino*:

«Non sono in concorso alla <u>mostra di Venezia</u> [...]» (1997: 148)	«I'm not competing for <u>an Oscar</u> [...]» (2003: 167)
--	---

The procedure I was referring to is named *situational equivalence* and can be defined as *the insertion of a more familiar context than the one used in the original*. (Vinay, Darbelnet, 2000: 91). The translator, perhaps underestimating his readers' cinematographic competence, has deemed it wiser to help them by choosing a more familiar event.

But a very interesting aspect of adaptation is that it is often linked to a metalinguistic aspect of language, where language itself is the protagonist. And where else than in puns is language the main feature?

Dirk Delabastita, in his introduction to *Wordplay and Translation* defines a wordplay as an unique expression to identify *various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings.* (1996: 128)

A pun lies in contrasting linguistic structures with different meanings but which are formally similar. This formal similarity can be further distinguished in terms of **homonymy** (identical sounds and spelling), **homography** (different sounds but identical spelling) and **paronymy** (incomplete formal similarity). Moreover, the two components of the pun may occupy the same portion of the text (vertical wordplay)⁹⁷ or occur one after another in the text (horizontal wordplay). The scholar also proposes, making a list which recalls Newmark's strategies for the translation of metaphors, several methods to deal with the translation of puns or wordplays⁹⁸.

The two novels I have analysed contain five wordplays and while the last two are caused by Catarella's inattention and ignorance, the ambiguity and irony of the first three examples is triggered off by words

⁹⁷ In vertical wordplay one of the pun's components is absent from the text.

⁹⁸ These are the proposed strategies: a SL pun is translated by a TL pun which may be more or less different from the original wordplay; by a non-punning phrase; by some related rhetorical device; the SL pun is omitted; the SL pun is re-contextualised; the translator introduces a pun in the target text as a compensatory device where the original does not have a pun or as totally new material; lastly editorial techniques as explanatory footnotes or endnotes fill the gaps. (134).

which in the source text are homographs but have a different meaning. In *La voce del violino* the chief of the cabinet, Dr. Lattes has been renamed “Lattes e mieles” for his unctuous attitude:

<p>[...] fece il capo di Gabinetto tanto per non smentire il soprannome “Lattes e mieles” che gli era stato affibbiato per la <u>melliflua</u> pericolosità. (1997: 25)</p>	<p>[...] the chief of the cabinet said snappily, true to the nickname of <u>Caffè-Lattes</u> that someone had hung on him for the dangerously <u>cloying warmth</u> of his manner. (2003: 20)</p>
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<p>Riattaccò. Doveva essere cosa seria, perché il <u>mieles</u> era tutto sparito dal lattes . (1997: 92)</p>	<p>He hung up. It must be something serious, since the <u>Caffè-Lattes</u> wasn't even <u>lukewarm</u> (tiepido) (2003: 98)</p>
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<p>Il pericoloso <u>miele</u> del Dottor Lattes traboccava. [...] (1997: 93)</p>	<p>The <u>Caffè-Lattes</u> has <u>warmed</u> up dangerously. [...] (2003: 100)</p>
--	--

The first examples present a vertical pun based on homophony/homography. The surname Lattes immediately recalls the Italian word *latte* (milk) and the wordplay is based on the almost total identity of sound between the two. The phrase “latte e miele” (literally: milk and honey) is used in Italian to indicate someone’s extreme politeness (è tutto latte e miele). Hence the ironic epithet “Dottor Lattes e Mieleles” to describe Dr Lattes’ manners.

Names and surnames are never translated into another language provided they are not meaningful names as in Dickens' or Lewis Carroll's novels. Therefore, Sartarelli was obliged to maintain the surname Lattes (Milk as a surname does exist, but it would be acceptable in Sicily only if the character was expressively said to be American or English, otherwise "situationality" would not be respected). How to render the formal similarity between "Lattes" and *latte* in the target texts? Sartarelli resorts to Delabastita's suggestion of re-contextualising the pun by substituting "mieles" with "Caffè" since *caffè-latte* is nowadays a worldwide drink. But *caffè-latte* does not convey the idea of sweetness as *miele* (honey) does, hence the translator had to find an equally valid feature in *caffè-latte*: no more "melliflua pericolosità" (mellifluous dangerousness), *miele* and "mieles" but respectively "cloying warmth", "lukewarm" and "warmed up". Lattes' "mellifluous and hypocritical manners" become "dangerously warm manners".

The following dialogue between Montalbano and the Commissioner rests on a misunderstandings caused by homonymy: *Piccolo*, the surname of the retired sixty year old man Montalbano's superior is referring to, is mistaken for the Italian common noun for child:

<p>«Lasciamo perdere, Montalbano, ch'è meglio. Che fine ha fatto la faccenda del <u>Piccolo</u>?».</p> <p>Intorduni. Quale <u>piccolo</u>? Di che picciliddro parlava?</p> <p>«Senta signor questore, ma di questo <u>bambino</u> io non...».</p> <p>«Montalbano perdio! <u>Che bambino e bambino!</u> Giulio Piccolo ha almeno sessant'anni! [...] (2006: 21)</p>	<p>«Let's drop it, Montalbano, it's better that way. What ever happened with that <u>Piccolo</u> business?»</p> <p>Montalbano was befuddled. What <u>piccolo</u> business? He didn't know of any <u>piccolo makers</u> in Vigàta.</p> <p>«Uh, Mr. Commissioner, I don't know of <u>any musical instrument makers in</u>»</p> <p>«For God's sake, Montalbano! <u>What are you talking about? Giulio Piccolo is a person, not an instrument;</u> he's retired, seventy⁹⁹ years old and... [...] (2009: 11-12)</p>
--	--

But piccolo does exist in English since it indicates a small musical instrument similar to a flute but producing higher notes (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 1995: 869). Therefore the wordplay remains valid and effective but an explication is required: the Commissioner is not referring to an instrument but to an old man. And when Catarella is involved, misunderstandings are predictable:

«Qua me lo scrissi. S'acchiama	«'E writ it down for me 'ere. 'Is name
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⁹⁹ The translator has probably misread the original “sessant'anni”. He should have translated “sixty years old” and not “seventy years old”.

<p><u>Ignoto</u>».</p> <p>Possibile? Come il <u>Milite</u>?</p> <p>(2006: 52)</p>	<p>is <u>De Dodo</u>.»</p> <p>Was it possible? Like the <u>extinct flightless bird</u>? (2009: 39)</p>
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“Ignoto” (unknown) to our Brooklynese Catarella may sound like “De Dodo” and recall not the glorious *Milite Ignoto* (Unknown Soldier) but the extinct bird. The adaptation focuses on the similarity of sounds between “Ignoto” and “De Dodo”. From *Le ali della sfinge*:

<p>«Fazio me lo dissi, ma ora non mi viene...Aspittasse...Come si chiama <u>la cosa che abbisogna per scriviri</u>?».</p> <p>Ma era possibile mittirisi a fari i quiz in quel momento?</p> <p>«<u>Penna</u>?».</p> <p>«Nonsi».</p> <p>«<u>Biro</u>? Hanno ammazzato a un tale che si chiama <u>Biro</u>?».</p> <p>«Nonsi, dottori, senza anchiostro è».</p> <p>«<u>Matita</u>?».</p> <p>«Bravo dottori!». (2006: 238)</p>	<p>«Fazio tol’ me, but I can’t remember now...Wait...Whass <u>a blue stone</u> called?».</p> <p>A fine time for a quiz!</p> <p>«I dunno, Cat. <u>A sapphire</u>?»</p> <p>«Nossir.».</p> <p>«<u>Amethyst</u>?».</p> <p>«Nossir, sounds like <u>fusilli</u>.»</p> <p>«<u>Lazuli</u>? Lap— ».”</p> <p>«’Ass it, Chief! <u>Mr. Lazuli</u> was killed»</p> <p>(2009: 204)</p>
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In this last example the vertical wordplay of the original, based on the synonymy between the victim’s surname “Lapis” (pencil) and

“Matita ” (pencil), is transferred into a different semantic field, the one of precious stones with the word “lapis lazuli”. The English wordplay lies in Catarella’s erroneously associating the surname of the murdered with the second part of the blue stone’s name (lazuli) and not with its first component (lapis).

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Chapter 3

Audiovisual Translation

Language is the medium which gives individuals glimpses into diverse cultures, allowing people from different nations to absorb ideas, information and experiences. Unfortunately or maybe blessedly (if we share George Steiner's point of view), language is often as much a barrier as it is a key to understanding. To overcome these barriers, most people depend upon the services of an intermediary, who will interpret and reshape the foreign material into something more familiar to them.

As long as the screen's potential to communicate in its own universal (and silent) language lasted, being its dialogues and other narrative information conveyed primarily through intertitles¹⁰⁰, it was a rather straightforward task to translate these short samples of written text into the language of the target audience. But as soon as screen characters began to talk, the translation issues arising from the two main practices (subtitling and film re-voicing), have become a more and more debated concern in both theory and practice (O' Hagan, 2007: 157).

¹⁰⁰ Intertitles or captions were brief dialogues or commentaries edited into the midst of two scenes of a silent movie. They were used for the first time in Europe in 1903 and in the US in the 1908. They are considered the predecessors of subtitles (Perego, 2009: 34).

An audiovisual text is a multilayered semiotic construct comprising several signifying codes (mostly written, oral and visual) that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning. The typology of a film, its genre, the way it is organized and the meaning of all its elements result in a semantic structure that needs to be deconstructed as a whole by the spectator. The translator's task thus is to master the functioning of all these different codes and to be able to cope with the incidence of both linguistic and non-linguistic signs within a translation (Chaume, 2004: 16-17). The peculiar nature of this complex text has deserved a specific branch of the already-multifaceted field of *Translation Studies*. *Screen Translation*, *Audiovisual Translation* and *Multimedia Translation* are all labels for a discipline that, unlike literary translation, has to exclude many of the most common translation aids (explanatory footnotes, glossaries, asterisks or asides) which may help the viewers understand what is going on the screen (Ascheid, 1997: 34). In fact, in *Screen Translation*, external factors, influencing the process of translation such as human agents and recipients (producers, addressers, consumers, addressees, the critics, film majors, distributors, the market), and internal factors (conveyed messages, linguistic, contextual, pragmatic, cultural translating problems), coexist with the basic medium constraints which differentiate multichannel texts from other mode texts (for instance written translation): dubbing lip-synchronization¹⁰¹ and subtitle space

¹⁰¹ Paolinelli and Di Fortunato (2005: 67-68) distinguish four kinds of synchronization: *a lip-*

limitations.

When foreign language television programmes are to be made available to a domestic market two main contemporary adaptation methods are favourite: voice dubbing or a written dialogue summary in the form of subtitles (Ascheid, 1997: 32). According to some scholars (Koolstra et Al. 2002), the choice of the strategy to be adopted may depend, broadly speaking, on the economic power of a country: this implies that dubbing is more likely to assume a position of dominance in wealthy countries. In Italy, France, Germany, Austria and Spain, dubbing is an established mode, while typical subtitling countries are Denmark, Finland, Greece, Portugal and Sweden. According to other studies (Plourde, 2000) instead, behind the apparently casual choice there would be a question of cultural power: the dubbing would position a barrier between the strange(r) and the native, between the familiar and the unusual and its adoption would reveal that the dominant televisual discourse of that specific nation primarily adopts the so-called *defensive stance*, especially against elements considered to be sources of instability for the target culture. As suggested again by Plourde (2000: 129), four are the types of approach for audiovisual translation: *the imperialist stance* (exemplified by movie remakes or adaptations where all foreign

synchronization which has to pay particular attention for instance to those consonants whose articulation require a complete (B, M, P) or semi-complete (F, V) closure of the lips; *a gesture synchronization* (between gestures made and words spoken); *a linear synchronization* which has to preserve the length and duration of the original sentences; and in the end, *a rhythm synchronization* which has to reflect the morpho-syntactic structures of the original language, the actor's voice tone and the acting speed.

and original elements are replaced with local ones and both the audio and visual are altered); *the defensive stance* (dubbing or voice-over in which only the audio channel is replaced); *the transdiscursive stance* (subtitling or a commentary which preserve the audiovisual and add a visual signal as an explanation); and finally *the defective stance* (not translating practice). Still, others (Paolinelli, Fortunato: 2005) interpret US cinematic majors' reluctance to invest money in dubbing foreign movies as a perfectly conscious and protectionist strategy for limiting the number of imported films.

As we have just seen, dubbing and subtitling are the most common audiovisual translating practices for foreign fictional products such as films and TV series. Documentaries by contrast, consisting mainly of still images, photographs and historical records, are better conveyed by a voice-over, an off-stage commentary (formal and planned) on the on-screen material which preserves the original voices of the interviewed experts. In some countries, such as Russia, Poland and Bulgaria, a voice-over provided by a couple of artists (one man voicing all the male characters and a woman voicing all the female characters) is commonly used as a valid alternative to dubbing because much less expensive.¹⁰²

¹⁰² In the voice-over the original audio is silenced and, as a consequence, there is no need to synchronize the voices with the character's lip movements (Perego, 2009: 28-33)

3.1 Subtitling

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish which of these two main adapting methods is the most valid to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. Both dubbing and subtitling have positive and negative aspects. Subtitling involves an interlinguistic and endolingistic operation: each subtitle indeed reduces and rewords the target language at the same time (Pavesi, 2005: 21). To those championing it, subtitling's most important merit lies in the preservation of the original sound track which can still be heard while a written version (in the form of a series of titles) condensed in order to achieve an acceptable reading speed, keeps the viewer informed about what the people in the screen are saying (Kilborn, 1993: 642-643). Furthermore, this practice, by combining original voices, images and explicative captions, is held to be a very good instrument for learning (and teaching) a foreign language and a game of spotting the error for bilingual audiences. According to its detractors instead, reading the captions would distract the viewer by relinquishing the feeling of pleasure connected with the simultaneous perception of all the different components of a film and be frustrating also to those who know some of the spoken language. Moreover, the maximum length of each subtitle (two lines or thirty-six characters in total) and its limited permanence on the screen (four seconds at longest)

causes the massive reduction of the original text by around 40-70% (Paolinelli, Di Fortunato, 2005: 37-38).

According to the Danish scholar and subtitler Henrik Gottlieb (Perego, 2009: 47-50), five parameters distinguish subtitling from other forms of audiovisual translation: the first one is the *written* form, which necessarily implies the previous interpretation of the text and the selection of its communicative intentions by the translator. Subtitling is also *additive* (it is added to the images and original voices), *immediate* (it is transient on the screen), *synchronous* (to be authentic, it is synchronized with the images and voices on the screen in respect of the paralinguistic features of the audiovisual text such as proxemics and kinesics). Lastly, it is *polymedial* because the written message, the visual and auditive channels work together for the production of meaning. The complexity of the mode leads to the reinterpretation of the concepts of fidelity and equivalence: according to Perego (2009: 39-47), the subtitling translator should balance formal and dynamic equivalence, aiming at the closest possible equivalence between the content of the dialogues and the formal qualitative and quantitative constraints that regulate respectively the length of the subtitles and their position on the screen. Subtitling must integrate principles governing different codes and strike a balance between a great number of polysemiotic interferences: all this in a limited portion of the screen. For this reason two scholars,

Gottlieb and Lomheim have attempted to categorize the strategies employed by subtitlers in dealing with these issues. Gottlieb's model is made of the most commonly used ten strategies: *expansion*, *paraphrase*, *transfer*, *imitation*, *transcription*, *dislocation*, *condensation*, *decimation*, *deletion* and *resignation*. Lomheim's model re-edits Gottlieb's strategies of *effacement* (deletion), *condensation* and *addition*, but also features *hyperonymie*, *hyponymie* and *neutralisation* (Perego, 2009: 100-118). We will see later on that some of these strategies can be applied to dubbing as well.

3.2 Dubbing

George Mounin (1965: 162) agreed with Edmond Cary's considering dubbing *a total translation*, a global process aiming at striking a balance between the various components of the audiovisual text. In any multimedia text in fact, a linguistic code (written as if oral and spontaneous), a paralinguistic code (suprasegmental features), a musical code (songs important for the plot that require adaptation) and a graphic code (captions, titles, intertitles) need to be transferred into another language and culture, provided they fulfil the main limitations imposed by unchangeable elements on the screen such as mobility codes (proxemic and kinetic signs) which, along with lip-synchrony¹⁰³, maintain that impression of verisimilitude (or the so-called suspension of disbelief to say it in Coleridge's words) that “deceives” the viewer and makes him or her think that the actors on the screen share his or her own tongue. This “illusion” is made possible both by the more and more advanced techniques employed for matching lip movements and translated words, and by some linguistic strategies which fill up the time difference of pronunciation between the original and the translated film.

¹⁰³ This is also known by the term “isochrony”, or equivalent duration of the source text utterances and the utterances of the target text. Respect for the “isochrony” in a dubbed work is an endeavour to maintain a realistic effect and make the product more credible.

These filling interjections¹⁰⁴ in fact, quite often create an entirely new product rather than transforming an old one: new characters utter a translated, interpreted, appropriated, and recreated new text, thus undergoing fundamental shifts in the construction of their original national and cultural identity and context. The author when creating a film, has in his mind an ideal spectator who shares his/her tastes and speaks his/her language. Then, the fruition of a film in a language different from the language intended by the author introduces an illicit and wholly unexpected connotation, influenced both by the translator's ideology and by those receiving the translation (Baccolini et Al, 1994: 61). But since the common consumer, not knowing the original, does not perceive the text as translated, the translation starts to make part of what is considered normal language and then works in the target language/culture¹⁰⁵.

In audiovisual translation in fact, the idea of fidelity ceases to be the ultimate goal: the definition of a text that works is based exclusively on the impact of this language on the generic public (Baccolini et Al,

¹⁰⁴ Very often, for reasons of “isochrony”, screen adaptors resort to a hybrid and artificial language that is called in Italian *doppiaggese* (dubbese) and which has given way to hybrid expressions halfway between English and Italian, like “prendimi le mie scarpe” and “già” as a translation of “yes”. These Angloamerican expressions and formulas are marginal and unnatural in spoken Italian. (Antonini, 2009)

¹⁰⁵ According to Baños-Piñero and Chaume, audiovisual texts should not be analysed as an isolated phenomenon, but as elements belonging to a complex, dynamic system that is comprised of numerous subsystems. All kinds of audiovisual formats and texts, regardless of their genre and origins (domestic or foreign), could be accommodated within this audiovisual polysystem. A clear distinction could further be made between the subsystem of native texts (domestic subsystem) and that of (translated) foreign productions. http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=761_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

1994: 80-81). As Galassi underlines, the adaptor's task cannot be based on accuracy but on the relevance of the linguistic material (Castellano, 2000: 92-94) because dubbing is indeed based on a contradiction: adapting what is peculiar in a culture to the tastes and inclinations of a different culture. Language should be deprived of all its original meaning to host a completely different cultural and semantic set of ideas that will make the target audience react as the audience of the original version would react (Mounin, 1965: 163).

In fact, if done properly dubbing can be a very interesting, high-quality and creative act. In some cases dubbed films manage to maintain and enhance the “sacred” power of the original version (La Trecchia, 1998: 122). This is what happened in many Italian dubbed films of the classical Hollywood period (1940-50) where the voices of the dubbing actors sometimes attained a life of their own becoming the absolute protagonist and fundamental instruments for the Italian viewer to recognize the film genre.

3.3 Italian dubbing

Dubbing is the commonest audiovisual translating practice in Italy and one of the best all over the world. In particular Italian dubbing is mostly appreciated for masterfully “voicing” the actors' psychosomatic traits and personalities. According to Castellano (2000: 13) this excellent quality could be traced back to the condition of “attore dimezzato” (half actor) of the first dubbers who were principally stage actors and then accustomed to emphasise the infinite acting potentialities of their voices.

The first sound movie, *The Jazz Singer*, arrived in Italy in 1929, two years later its US screening. The Fascist government, fearing the contamination of the Italian language by the exposition to movies in original language, strictly forbade their circulation and started to promote exclusively silenced film to which intertitles had been added. The main problem was that around the 25% of Italian population was illiterate and the 50% could not read properly (Castellano, 2000: 29). But the Italy represented a huge slice of market so the major distributors decided to overcome the language barrier by producing more versions of the same narrative using the same locations but actors of different nationalities. In particular MGM, Fox and WB shot more versions of the same film in Hollywood employing immigrant actors of Italian origin who had a

strong American accent and had never heard or spoken Italian. An example of this expensive and amusing method are Stanley and Oliver's first movies. The two actors used to repeat the scene in five different and unknown (to them) languages. Their peculiar anglicized Italian pronunciation became the two actors' trademark that even their Italian official dubbers Mario Zambuto and Alberto Sordi decided to adopt. In 1934 the Fascist government forbade the circulation of dubbed-abroad films, and the American distributors decided to turn to *ItalaAcustica* and *Fono Roma* (set in Rome) for Italian dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, commentary and narration. On the fifth of October 1945 the restriction on the circulation of foreign movies was withdrawn but dubbing was already an established practice for the translation of audiovisual products (Castellano, 2000: 31-37).

3.4 Tendencies in Italian dubbing

Probably due to the influence of theatre practices and norms, the first dubbing voices sounded quite artificial and expressed a standardized linguistic *koiné* which had absolutely no adherence to the Italian linguistic reality. Only by the 1970s and 1980s Italian dubbing started to focus, rather than on the perfect elocution of the voice (Castellano, 2000: 19-20), on rendering slang nuances, regional and social varieties. It has

been observed indeed that recent films tend to faithfully reproduce spontaneous face-to-face conversation by employing hesitations, false starts, overlapping, jargon, slang, colloquial expressions, tag questions and non-standard tags, since linguistic realism is deemed a necessary tool to attract the audience's attention (Pavesi, 2005: 30).

But it would be a gross mistake to ignore the fact that audiovisual texts have their own rules and conventions concerning the reproduction of orality (Chaume, 2004: 14). First of all it is fundamental to underline that audiovisual texts are written to be spoken as if not written. Their orality may seem spontaneous and natural, but is actually planned or, as Chaume terms it, “prefabricated” and this is a characteristic common to most audiovisual fictional texts regardless of their origins.¹⁰⁶ Scriptwriters then select specific features of everyday oral language that are widely accepted and recognised as such by the source audience, and audiovisual translators act as second scriptwriters by selecting expressions of the target language which are perceived by the new audience as true-to-life conversation and as belonging to the oral mode. A study by Chaume on the Spanish dubbing of the American sitcom *Friends* reveals that also the domestic fictional dialogues of the Spanish version (*Siete vidas*) are pretend and prefabricated. These oral features either planned or triggered by improvisation, and aimed at mimicking

¹⁰⁶ Rocío Baños-Piñero & Frederic Chaume, *Prefabricated Orality. A Challenge in Audiovisual Translation* in http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=761_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

spontaneous speech include, linguistic patterns which normally occur in spoken texts, such as the high occurrence of repetition, the frequent use of short, simple syntactic structures at the syntactic level, and the introduction of suffixes, slang, prefabricated fillers and simple vocabulary in fictional dialogues (lexical-semantic level). According to some critics (Baccolini et Al, 1994: 132-133), our country follows this general trend as well and carriers of orality are more prevalent at the morpho-syntactic and lexical level (that thus go closer to contemporary Italian) while at the phonetic-prosodic level, unlike spoken Italian they are limited or practically non-existent. Thus, the foundations of prefabricated dubbed fictional dialogue rest upon the partial and selective imitation of the syntax and lexis of spoken language, while dialects or regional Italian, rather than reflecting a linguistic reality, obey clichés and stereotypes and are reserved for fantastic or comic characters.

An interesting case of linguistic neutralization, which implies the loss of sociolinguistic connotations, is exemplified by the rendition of English tag questions¹⁰⁷ into Italian, analysed in the study *Translating English Non-Standard Tags in Italian Dubbing*¹⁰⁸. In this work, the dubbing of three different types of non-standard tags displayed in four

¹⁰⁷ TQs can be divided into two groups: tag questions *stricto sensu* and invariant tags. The first category is created according to certain syntactic features that characterise the main sentence or host clause while the second is completely independent from the main sentence. More specifically, invariant forms are expressed by single adverbial or interjectional particles such as “right”, “ok”, “yeah”, “no”, and “eh”.
http://www.intralea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=751_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

¹⁰⁸ http://www.intralea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=751_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

British films¹⁰⁹ were analysed, namely “innit”, “ain't” and “weren't it?”. The complexity of the phenomenon derives from the difficulty in pinpointing their function (which results from the interplay of different linguistic levels, namely syntax, pragmatics and phonetics) and in rendering the sociolinguistic and diatopic¹¹⁰ connotations that are attached to them.¹¹¹ Usually non-standard tags are indicators of cultural background, education, social status and ethnicity. Since Italian does not structurally display such complex set of tags as English does, it is often very difficult to transpose these forms into Italian. First of all, because of the different degree of affinity between source and target language (tag questions syntactic construction is a typical and characterising feature of the English language) and secondly, because non-standard tags feature also a socio-cultural connotation which expresses a specific social and cultural meaning which has no correspondence, neither a formal nor functional equivalent in Italian. Moreover, dubbing itself has to deal with a set of predetermined aspects that cannot be modified, such as setting,

¹⁰⁹ The films are: *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002, G. Chada); *Secrets and Lies* (1996, M. Leigh), *The Full Monty* (1997, P. Cattaneo) and *Green Street* (2005, L. Alexander).

¹¹⁰ For instance “innit” is a highly noticeable feature of the London teenage vernacular and “ain't” is not an extended phenomenon but rather part of the traditional dialect system of the Southeast of England and of the town of Reading in particular. http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=751_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

¹¹¹ Question tags are used with different functions: to invite the hearer to validate the truth of a certain proposition (informational function); or to ask for confirmation (confirmatory function); to invite the hearer to participate in the conversation (facilitative function); to soften the strength of a threatening or disagreeable utterance by rendering it more acceptable to the addressee, (softening function). But conversely, there are specific situational contexts in which TQs are used as aggravators to strengthen their illocutionary force (challenging or peremptory and antagonistic function).

gestures, facial expressions, sounds and synchronism.¹¹²

Film language in dubbing tends to undergo a process of standardisation (Pavesi, 2005: 21), in order to render the text more accessible to the audience and to increase its receptivity. Actually, the strategy of levelling out any linguistic variation or else to make explicit the cultural references contained in the original dialogues, is recognised as a universal in the translation of fictional products (both serial or cartoon), and runs the risk of producing a neutral and flat language, without any difference in accent, dialect and pronunciation which can personally characterise the speaker. The different solutions, such as the use of simple expressions like “no?”, “eh?” and conversational routines of the type of “vero/non vero?” adopted for the Italian dubbing of “innit”, “ain't” and “weren't” present in the above-mentioned movies, have generally preserved the diastratic and diaphasic functions to some extent, but they have been less convincing in expressing the diatopic variation and the values that are attached to them.¹¹³ For instance, the use of “innit” by the protagonist of one of the films analysed, *Bend It Like Beckham*, is indexical of her cultural background and her belonging to the Indian community living in London. Indeed, the fact that *innit* is not translated in Italian in any way causes a marked loss of the diatopic variation, together with the loss of social, cultural and ethnic

¹¹² http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=751_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

¹¹³ http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=751_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

connotations. Usually diatopic and diastratic varieties are partly rendered through morphosyntactic and lexical means (Pavesi, 2005) and some compensation strategies are adopted in order to recreate the same illocutionary force of the low and informal register.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Bonsignori detects these compensation devices: the use of the demonstrative pronoun *quello*, the use of *ci* (as a marker of colloquial register), the use of the emphatic adverb of negation *mica* which and the emphatic adverb *pure*. In particular, these two latter adverbs are typically used in central and southern areas of Italy so they release a specific diatopically-marked connotation.
http://www.intralea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=751_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

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Chapter Four

The Simpsons

As we have seen the general tendency in dubbing implies a certain flattening in particular of diatopic variations. Unlike diastratic variations which are a quite universal phenomenon, diatopic variations represent a big issue especially in audiovisual translation where the viewer cannot avail of any translating aid. Cultural-bound references are equally demanding obstacles: their geographical specificity and their conjuring up unique connotations and nuances challenge the screen translator to try his/her skills and imagination. And the case study I have decided to analyse through a contrasting analysis between original and dubbed version, does represent a challenge: *The Simpsons* is expression of a specific and complex (American) culture, features diastratic and diatopic variations that need to find target language corresponding resources, and lastly makes a brilliant use of wordplay and puns. In the following section all these characteristics will be analysed in details.

4.1 *The Simpsons'* worldwide success

The Simpsons, created by cartoonist Matt Groening, started broadcasting in the US in 1987 as a series of skits on the Tracey Ullman show. In 1989 with its first-full length episode, *Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire* (7G08)¹¹⁵, it became a half-hour show of its own and gained immense popularity. The first season debuted in January 1990 and since then it has enjoyed both popular and critical esteem becoming by far the most important cultural institution to transcend its medium and define its time (Turner, 2004: 43). The appeal of the show to both adults and children can surely be attributed to the skilful way in which the series subtly brews stinging social satire (which lashes all spheres of society such as politics, religion, health care system etc.) and basic physical humour. Unlike its contemporary, *The Cosby Show*, and other previous TV shows from the '50s, '60s and '70s¹¹⁶, *The Simpsons* has reflected the national *zeitgeist* relative to the '80s, the '90s, characterized by economic anxiety, cynicism toward national institutions and diminished expectations of America's role in the world¹¹⁷, being the portrait of “*What Is and not of What Should Be*” (Turner, 2004: 58).

¹¹⁵ Production code

¹¹⁶ According to Steeves (2005: 264) There are three sorts of television comedy: traditionalist (1950s-1960s), modern (1970s-1980s) and postmodern (from 1990s on).

¹¹⁷ <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA96/lesman/thesis.html> (21/10/11)

The series depicts, like many sitcoms, family life in a typical American town. I use the verb “depict” because the cartoon exploits realism to deal with the daily trials of a cohesive nuclear family. Through the family matters the show manages to shed light on contemporary American culture and great institutions like the church, the state and school (Cantor, 2008: 193). The show combines traditionalism and anti-authoritarianism: in fact, in the very act of satirizing American family, it offers an enduring image of a family that resists (Woodcock, 2008: 156). This narrative strategy can be applied often to other targets: as soon as the show satirizes something, it is recognising the importance of it. This happens with religion: while blaming institutionalized religion, the show underlines its great value in Americans' genuine lives.

4.2 Realism in the form of a cartoon

Disguised as a mere cartoon, *The Simpsons* expresses a deeper contempt for authority than for anything else in the pop culture of the day (Turner, 2004: 8). The amalgam of realism and cartoon indeed works particularly well on television, where the humour of the show is largely visually driven. Apart from their appearances (yellow skin, four fingers and blue hair) the characters act and move like real people. The background of the programme is portrayed both as totally “unreal” and

yet universally recognisable as the archetype of suburban life. The detailed characterization of the family members and the memorable microcosm of minor characters enhance the notion that the family and its polluted home town are realistic. According to McMahon (2008: 254-259), its realism (we can easily identify with the characters' lives and their problems), its humour and its wide popularity render the show a heuristic instrument to teach various topics such as politics, philosophy, psychology and to communicate important truths and make people reflect on important issues. As Chris Turner (2004: 56) puts it:

We are presented in every episode of The Simpsons with hard truths and about the hideous mess of our own world, and we laugh along because we see ourselves in those nasty yellow faces. And to face up to this sort of unvarnished, unpleasant reality is a powerfully subversive thing.

4.3 Springfield as *omnitopia* and microcosm

As I have just said, the Springfield “mediascape” to say it with Turner, adds layers of realistic details to the cartoon and provides the writers of the show with an extensive arsenal of satirical weapons for attacking all aspects of contemporary society from almost any angle (Turner, 2004: 395). Springfield has been defined as an *omnitopia* (from

the Greek “every place”), an eclectic geographic mixture of places which, as an artistic representation, is both generic and specific at the same time, located not in any particular American state, but despite this, not a placeless everyplace. While usually real locations to the other sitcoms are just a background, Springfield instead is a credible human community, rooted and with an unique history (Steeves, 2005: 262-263). It does not represent the nostalgic home town of Matt Groening's own childhood but the amalgamated “Everyhometown” (Turner, 2004: 28-29) celebrating the ideal of provincial America staged in a typical '50s sitcom. In a show based on the distrust of power and on its remoteness from people, a genuine local community is a relief to the postmodern condition (Cantor, 2004: 197).

4.4 The Simpsons: Postmodern art

With skilful use of the cartoon form, a self-reflexive, allusive narrative style, which blends high and low culture (Foote, Fink, 2007: 48), *The Simpsons* is a milestone in American pop culture and one of the most creative and intelligent postmodern television programs which, since the mid-1980s, have offered viewers new ways of watching and understanding television. *The Simpsons*, the dozens of other characters who inhabit their home town of Springfield, and the adventures they all

have there, have created a detailed satirical reflection of the world we live in. The show's extraordinary talent for self-reference, pop cultural allusion and media criticism offers an elaborate picture of postmodernism and of the hypermediated society that created it (Turner, 2004: 11).

It is quite difficult to define the term postmodernism. It has fluctuating meanings and has been used to discuss philosophy, political thought and the arts in general. It can be described as an “alienatory” mode¹¹⁸ which destabilizes, through critical detachment, the dominant “realist” tradition which instead focuses on concepts such as presence, identity, historical progress, epistemic certainty, univocity of meaning and emotional involvement¹¹⁹. By the late nineteenth century modernity is an achieved reality, and science and technology, including networks of mass communication and transportation, reshape human perceptions. There is no clear distinction, then, between the natural and the artificial in experience. The fact of alluding to other texts and other media reminds us that we are in a mediated reality, and as Linda Hutcheon claims the postmodern mission is a way to

de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as

¹¹⁸ <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html> (16/09/11)

¹¹⁹ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/postmodernism/> (14/09/11)

natural...are in fact cultural; made by us, not given to us (cited in Weinstein, 1989: 2).

Postmodernity as a category first entered the philosophical field with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition* by Jean-François Lyotard in 1979. This category was also applied to motion pictures for the first time in 1981 to describe Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (Degli Esposti, 1998: 4). According to Cristina Degli Esposti, postmodern texts

base their very existence on repetition with a difference, on recycling the past through the rereading of every story and every meaning. (1998: 7)

Through memory and quotations from both popular and elite culture, postmodern texts reproduce a collective recollection of the past into the present. The lack of innocence peculiar to telling and showing already told and shown stories requires an adequate code, a language with a lost innocence. As Steeves puts it:

Words, instead, are linked in intricate webs of self-reference. They mean each other; they mean what we agree to allow them to mean. And with them, we carve up an ever-malleable world rather than reflect a rigid world. Thus, when I say "I love you", there is no stable and universal referent for each world. [...] "I love you" has meaning because each word means other words, and because

when I speak it I am speaking an echo of every time the phrase has ever been uttered before: it means everything it has always meant. All language is metaphor. (2005: 267)

Intertextual and hypertextual travels are indeed the most important components of any postmodern text and make the spectator centre

on details that are often a reference to, or a quotation of something else. In doing so, those details become fragments, thereby taking on a life of their own and opening up visual digressions that manneristically point their own being to the reference of something else. [...] The desire to digress is what fuels the very existence of postmodern hypertext. [...] They (details) almost become more relevant than the whole to which they belong and constitute excessive, baroque, hyperbolic iconic forms of estrangement that can, in postmodern times, be referred to as “neo-baroque” (Degli Esposti, 1998: 7-8).

Furthermore, the crisis of authority in art, in science, in philosophy has led to the demystification of the name of the author and to the desacralization of the origin of the text to be interpreted: the postmodern narrator is so uncertain that he overtly demands the reader's help to fully develop the text and to make sense out of the language common to both of them (Hutcheon, 1985: 6). *The Simpsons'* use of

postmodernist techniques such as fragmentation, serves to highlight the impossibility of establishing moral authority and absolute truths in postmodern society¹²⁰.

The acts of textual production and reception require then the competence on the part of the decoder (Blakeborough, 2008: 65). If his or her competence is weak, the citation may not be recognized at all; if it is strong, then the reference and intertextuality develop into a hypertext able to produce a true pleasure of recognition. *The Simpsons* is a perfect example of a postmodern text: it often quotes itself and also other art linguistically, visually and thematically. It is masterful in recurring to a complex system of intertextuality, hyper-reality, hyper-irony, parody and allusion. Through all these tools, it deconstructs almost every aspect of American culture, not asserting or imposing its own discourse but revealing all the flaws and idiosyncrasies hidden in the apparent meaning of the representations of American culture.

By recognizing the history of these representations, by questioning their past and their legitimacy, the show offers more than simple imitation; it offers a political critique that opens the door for these representations to be undermined or subverted. This leaves the reader with the task of having to reconstruct the sense of the ironic text, and such reconstruction, of course, requires competence on the part of the decoder (Blakeborough, 2008: 65).

¹²⁰ <http://www.snpp.com/other/papers/bf.paper.html> (20/09/11)

The show attacks capitalist culture in general and television in particular. It is a commentary not on the American family but on the American family's appearance in television because the meaning of family today is the meaning it has through television (Steeves, 2005: 269). In postmodernism, *hyperreality* is the result of the increased infiltration of technology especially of mass media (TV, film and advertising) into the representation of reality. The world, which once consisted of signs referring to a fixed referent to the real world, has been replaced by what Baudrillard calls “postmodern simulacrum”, a network of simulations of reality, of copies of copies without reference to an original, so that what is represented is representation itself¹²¹.

The Simpsons has much to say about a wide range of topics, but it is by exploiting its insider position that the show makes a detailed social commentary about its own conventions, the standard formulas of TV shows, the way the entertainment and news industries function, the machinations of the mass media, the nature of TV as a medium. In *The Simpsons* the medium is the message (Turner, 2004: 434). Not only does the show dismantle and examine realistic television form and content, but it also probes the effects of television on viewers' psychic realities¹²²:

¹²¹ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/postmodernism/> (15/09/11)

¹²² For instance, in the episode of the fourth season titled Selma's Choice (9F11), the Simpson family attends the funeral of Marge's great aunt Gladys. Thinking of her, Marge gets confused and mistakes a scene from *The Prince of Tides* for her own memory of a beautiful day spent with her aunt.

their thoughts, fantasies, dreams, desires (Weinstein, 1998: 62). Like many postmodern texts the show, through its self-reflexive and fragmented narrative structure, de-naturalizes the technical processes and generic rules which construct television shows. To borrow Ben Agger's words:

the series as a text is centrally concerned with the forms, the pleasures and mind-zapping effects of the late-twentieth-century commodity culture in which the series as a thing is so thoroughly implicated (cited in Cherniavsky, 1999: 140).

Another postmodern tool employed by *The Simpsons* is *hyper-irony*, a kind of humour typical of the general crisis of authority (Matheson, 2008: 136) which the show applies to every aspects of American life, even to the family values that it seems to represent. When there are no more high goals to defend like moral teachings or philosophical truths, cynicism itself is not enough. Rather, it becomes itself a target.

As we have just seen, *The Simpsons* deploys combined incredible diversity of themes and liberal mixing of genres with some of the most prominent features that are commonly associated with postmodernism: hyperrealism, non-linear narrative, verbal and visual puns, pastiche, parody, multi-layered satire, a strong opposition to hierarchy and authority, ambiguity, allusion to both high and popular culture, auto-

referential humour, extradiegetic references and a particularly self-conscious form of intertextuality: all this suggests that *not only television, but life itself, may endlessly be remade* (Weinstein, 1998: 71).

The show makes regular parodic and intertextual references to contemporary culture, in particular to pop culture¹²³. According to Thomas J. Roberts' *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction*, this is typical of “junk fiction”. Popular narratives establish connections to their readers and spectators through frequent quotations of people, events and extratextual but familiar and recognisable objects (clothes, songs, cars, rock stars, movies etc) whose main characteristic is their being transient (cited in Knight, 2008: 110-111). These references help to give historical referents to both *The Simpsons* and the text they parody. In this manner, the show pays respect to the past undermining at the same time

media-generated stereotypes through an interrogatory utilization of these same stereotypes with subversively ironic intent.

(Blakeborough, 2008: 60)

One of the prominent features of many postmodern art forms is

¹²³ Popular culture arises from those who consume it. It is made up of the raw material of the dominant, commodified culture to which we are all exposed. Subordinated groups, including women and children, take control of the raw material of cultural creation, both material and in the realm of discourse, that are provided by the very social system which disempowers them. is made from within and below and not imposed from above (Teer-Tomaselli, 1994: 56)

the use of *intertextuality*, which *The Simpsons* frequently adopts in its narratives. The term was first coined by Julia Kristeva in 1969 and proposed that a literary work is not simply the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts (palimpsests). Palimpsests subvert the concept of the author as the sole originary source of his or her work, and thus defer the meaning of a work down an endless chain of signification.¹²⁴ Kristeva referred to texts in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis connecting the author and reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts previous or synchronic of which it was a “transformation”. The experience of intertextuality involves a text, a reader and his or her reactions and knowledge (Hutcheon, 1985: 23).

The conscious and auto-reflexive modern art forms often take the form of *parody*. Parody is one of the ways in which modern artists have managed to come to terms with the weight of the past (Hutcheon, 1985: 101). Unlike Romantic aesthetics which valued genius, originality and individuality and considered parody a parasitic and derivative form of imitation, nowadays we live in a technological world where and culture “has replaced nature as the subject of the art” (Hutcheon, 1985: 82) and everything is mediated by representation. This is why, “saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said” (Blakeborough, 2008: 59-69) is one of the major contemporary

¹²⁴ <http://elab.eserver.org/hfl0278.html> (16/09/11)

strategies of formal and thematic construction of texts.

The key to understanding the real meaning of the word parody is in its Greek origin. *Parodia* can be translated as *counter-song* but Hutcheon underlines how the prefix *para* can mean *against* and *beside*. It is in the second denotation that can be found “a suggestion of an accord and intimacy instead of a contrast”, that better defines parody as repetition with difference and not as ridiculing practice. Parody, then, is conservative (it preserves continuity with the past) in its discontinuity (it is a renewal throughout synthesis) (Hutcheon, 1985: 98).

A declared intention of the author in the codification of “a repetition with a difference” is required since repetition denotes the recognition of historical precedents in the world of art. Likewise, parody makes demands upon the reader's knowledge and recollection¹²⁵ for the recognition of the target and parodied text.¹²⁶ Finally, according to Hutcheon it is important to distinguish parody from satire: while the first one is always intramural and based on ironical detachment, the second one is always extramural and then social and moral in its intention (1985: 43). Another important distinction should be made between popular

¹²⁵ Readers need to possess three kinds of competence: linguistic, rhetorical (literary norms) and ideological (Hutcheon, 1985: 94-95).

¹²⁶ The parodied or backgrounded text does not need to belong to high culture. It is always another work of art or, more generally another form of coded discourse. (Knight, 2008: 116)

parody which concentrates on comedy and is dictated more by homage and affection for the target text, and art parody which has aesthetic and critical reasons (Knight, 2008: 122). We will see how *The Simpsons* conjugates parodic forms and satiric intents.

Allusion is another device of the show more or less closely related to such terms as reference, quotation, citation, intertextuality, punning and wordplay which convey to the text an extra effect and an implicit meaning by its association or connotation¹²⁷. The insertion of a text in a new text means the recognition that all texts owe something to other texts and measures the capacity of literature to create new literature out of old (Leppihalme, 1997: 8). It can be defined as an intentional reference which creates associations going beyond the mere substitution of a referent. It is always manifested by a frame¹²⁸, that is a combination of words that is accepted in the language community as an example of pre-formed material. Allusion simultaneously activates two texts but it does mainly through correspondence and not difference, as in the case with parody.¹²⁹ Beside its aesthetic value allusion its has also a practical function: it links to other art works, to make a homage or to parody the

¹²⁷ Leppihalme (1997: 34) quotes Hatim and Mason's distinction between an association which is subjective and arbitrary, and connotation which by contrast requires social and collective knowledge.

¹²⁸ A frame can be a famous quote or a proper name. In fact there are two main kinds of allusions: *key-phrase allusions* (the most common are biblical) and proper-name allusions. There are also stereotyped allusions which, by frequent repetitions, have lost their evoking power and have become clichés or semi-allusive comparisons (example: in the land of Oz) (Leppihalme, 1997: 11).

¹²⁹ <http://www.snpp.com/other/papers/eh.paper.html> (23/10/11)

predecessors or the contemporaries (Irwin et Al, 2008: 102). Another aspect of the enjoyment provided by the allusion is the intellectual joy and the happy surprise that the reader may feel at recognizing the allusion. This creates a bond between author and audience that excludes all those who lack that cultural literacy that is essential for a correct communication and comprehension. It works in a similar way to parody: allusion to be such must be intended by the authors of the series. The success of allusion in *The Simpsons* is linked also to the fact that it is not destructive, because the authors know that not all the viewers will catch the allusions and so they design them in order to add more fun if they are spotted and not to spoil the episode if they are not (Irwin et Al. 2008: 99-100). Referential humour also enhances the show's realism making the Simpsonian world equate with our own (Turner, 2004: 421).

4.5 *The Simpsons'* ingredients

The show proudly obliterates the highbrow/lowbrow distinctions and skips from genre to genre and medium to medium (Turner, 2004: 415). But it is mainly an omnivorous consumer of comedy: its many antecedents are sitcoms and classic cartoons: *The Flintstones*¹³⁰, *Warner Bros* cartoons, blueprints from late-night show TV (Late night with David Letterman, Saturday Night Live) and sketch comedy. The result is a tank full of brilliant one-off gags, surprising inversions of expectation, elaborate re-imaginings of classic comedic forms and a microcosm of minor characters that make Springfield a lush satirical environment. Everything in fact about *The Simpsons* is derivative, even the location. As Turner says:

Its setting is a pastiche of nostalgic 1950s sitcoms and cartoons, with a Norman Rockwell Life magazine cover or two tossed in for good measure. (2004, 414).

¹³⁰ The basic idea of the characters heading home at the end of the day is modelled after the opening of *The Flintstones*.

Matt Groening is the creator of the show: from him came the form, the structure, the main characters (their names are taken after Groening's relatives' names) and the satirical values: a deep distrust of authority and a permanent commitment to subverting it (Turner, 2004: 23). But the cartoon's greatness and originality is due to a massively talented creative team (John Swartzwelder, Jon Vitti, George Meyer, Jeff Martin, Al Jean, Mike Reiss, Jay Kogen and Wallace Wolodarsky) coming mostly from the magazine *Army Man: America's Only Magazine*. All these writers are called *Ivy League Mafia* and have transformed the so called *Boomer Humour* (oppositional counterculture expression of the baby boom generation's ideas, attitudes, debates, priorities) which characterized the first series of *The Simpsons*, into *Egghead Humour*: highbrow literary references, high-flown cinematic references, ironic detachment) (Turner, 2004: 45).

According to Chris Turner, these are the main layers of the show's humour:

1) ***Surface gags***: the show appeals across geographic, ethnic and political divisions thanks to the simple sight gags, catchphrases and recurring one-off gags (2004: 59);

2) ***Referential humour***: as we have previously seen, because of its *postmodern condition*, *The Simpsons* is an astute and realistic

documentary of its age, packed with allusions and explicit and implicit references to cultural icons from the past and the present (2004: 63). For instance, in the episode *Last Exit to Springfield* (9F15) the following references can be pinpointed: *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (title of the episode) by Hubert Selby Jr. , Jimmy Hoffa and his alleged burial (by the Mafia) at New Jersey's *Giants Stadium*, *The Godfather Part II*, *The Beatles* movie *Yellow Submarine*, Tim Burton' s *Batman*, *Citizen Kane*, *Moby Dick* (Captain Ahab's curse), Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and many others.¹³¹

3) ***The good joke, better joke principle:***

ironic inversion of expectation, the twisting and bending of long-standing cultural forms into clever new shapes; gag sequence in which the first (more obvious, more expected) good joke is spun into another or even several more (unexpected, incongruous) better jokes (Turner, 2004: 65-66).

4) ***Symphonic humour:*** looping, multilayered humour that functions on many levels and disrupts the linearity of the text making the storyline erratic. This comic strategy is reminiscent of the *riff*, a technique borrowed by jazz music. As a noun it means “a short repeated phrase in

¹³¹ <http://www.snpp.com/episodes/9F15.html> (20/09/11)

popular music or jazz”¹³², as an intransitive verb it means “to play a riff”.¹³³ Chris Turner (2004, 27) affirms that more recently, though, the verb has started to mean “to begin from a basic premise (the riff) and to build it out and up through wild new tangents into something unique and compelling”. Riff quotations contain as a spiral information and events to satirize. One of the most indicative examples of *riff humour* is the so-called *Freeze Frame Fun*, to which is dedicated a section in every episode's capsule.¹³⁴ A very funny example is in the nineteenth episode of the sixth series titled *Lisa' s Wedding* (2F15). The story is set in the future (in the year 2010, 15 years beyond the year the episode was aired). In Lisa' s campus room there is a poster reading *2010 Rolling Stones Steel Wheelchair Tour* which alludes to the group's perseverance in playing even in advanced age.

¹³² <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/riff> (20/09/11)

¹³³ <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/riff> (20/09/11)

¹³⁴ <http://www.snpp.com/episodes.html> (20/09/11)

4.6 Characters and idiolects

The Simpson family is a typical American family made up of a blue-collar working dad (Homer), a nurturing stay-at-home mum (Marge), three kids (Bart, Lisa and Maggie), a dog and a cat. Homer's simple-mindedness, stupidity, laziness, his almost total subservience to his basest desires and his absolute lack of impulse control are hallmarks of his character and make him the the Aristotelian anti-hero *par excellence* (Halwani, 2008). He is a quick doer, a powerful symbol of consumer-age America. Homer's doughnut is a stand-in for any product, any desire, any random hunger demanding to be satiated, a kind of consumer-age widget (Turner, 2004: 83). Loud, naïve and uncivilized, Homer's success as the most loved character of the series is linked to the coexistence of intellectualism and anti-intellectualism in the show (Skoble, 2008: 44) and to the defence of the common man against intellectuals. Homer Simpson is America's latest, greatest *Everyman*, the anarchic energy propelling the show whose redemptive side is his love for his family (Turner, 2004: 85).

His older son, Bart, is as much rebel as a punk icon. Bart is an icon of youth's rebellion, fiercely opposed to those who exert power over him and might force him to obey their rules. He has been compared also

to the Nietzschean *Übermensch* (Conard, 2008:) whose identity is ensured only by its stubborn opposition to all authority. Lisa, his sister is the opposite. She is the animated social conscience of the show' s creative team, and the embodiment of its countercultural sympathies. She incarnates existential angst and worldly knowledge, but her young age (she is only eight years old) and her flawed nature permits the show to escape the trap of elitism and to aspire to realism (Turner, 2004: 197). Marge instead serves as the rational, moral virtue and represents the spiritual centre around which her family gathers, namely the personification of the Aristotelian virtue (Erion et Al, 2008: 61)

Despite the fact that the show is a densely written, witty, culturally bound American cartoon, it has become a global phenomenon. The answer is in the show's universality: *The Simpsons* (it is indeed also a cartoon) features a number of basic elements (we have called them *surface gags*) such as physical humour (banana-skin situation), sight gags and sound elements (funny sounds) that translate easily almost everywhere, regardless of the linguistic differences. Homer's lack of personal specificity has made him an icon of global popular culture. In fact, if stripped of his American Everyman touches (the *Duff beer*, the doughnuts, the bowling ball and rock & roll), he is just a universal dimwit clown, whose vices and defects make anti-American feeling

justifiable all over the world.¹³⁵ Even Bart, a professional prankster with easy catch phrases, and detachment from any specific ethnic, racial or political identity has considerably appeal in almost any corner of the planet.¹³⁶

The universality of this family is spoken through universal linguistic traits that are reproduced (under the strict supervision of the producers of the show) almost identically all over the world. All the family members (everyone but Maggie whose permanent silence symbolizes the silence of underdeveloped countries (Bronson, 2008) have idiolects which are not connoted geographically or diatopically: they speak without an accent even because Springfield¹³⁷ has a fluctuating and unknown position which cannot be recognised by a corresponding dialect and, moreover, they represent any American family.¹³⁸ Therefore, others are the features of speech (mainly suprasegmental traits) expressing our protagonists' personalities. For instance, Homer's pharyngeal dumb voice and slow speech rate perfectly convey his being selfish, greedy, ignorant and of rather limited intelligence. Marge instead is often and understandably nervous and

¹³⁵ For foreign viewers much more than for Americans, one of the strongest attractions of the show is the sharpness of its critique of America itself. (Turner, 2004: 335)

¹³⁶ Actually, it is important to underline that Bart is mostly appreciated by the West. His attitude towards authority in general (family, school etc) is considered extremely disrespectful in Asia and as a consequence in those countries FOX TV has focused on Lisa's intellectual character (Ferrari, 2010: 102).

¹³⁷ Springfield stands for America: this is why it has the most common name among American towns and has in itself all the typical traits of American places (San Francisco's hills, New York' little Italy and so on).

¹³⁸ <http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/2182/> (23/10/11)

frustrated and her hoarse voice transfers successfully across languages her harassed condition (Armstrong, 2004: 106-107).

In addition to the main family characters, *The Simpsons* boasts a high number of minor characters who ensure the longevity of the show by providing infinite cues for the development of alternative narratives. When describing the main components of any postmodern text, we have listed among others, *hyperreality*, a concept elaborated by Baudrillard dealing with the substitution of reality (typical of postmodern societies) with its copies and simulations. In the show most of the minor characters are a reference to a real or fictional character developed from already established stereotypes¹³⁹, a one-sided presentation generally conceptualised from a dominant cultural viewpoint. *The Simpsons'* world is populated by many secondary characters who are depicted through their national, racial and ethnic characteristics to which are usually associated recurrent jokes. These character types such as the headmaster, the Indian-born proprietor of the convenient store, the Italian restaurant owner, the clerk with the pimped face, the nerd and so on, are part of our collective imagination and extremely funny because they are immediately recognisable to the audience. According to Teer-Tomaselli humour depends on identity. (1994: 54)

¹³⁹ <http://www.snpp.com/other/papers/eh.paper.html> (23/10/11)

The *Simpson* family's long-distance vacations to foreign countries such as England, Scotland, Ireland, Micronesia, Australia, France, Japan, Brazil, Italy and many others, are a recurring plot device and another example of the show's adoption of overly simplistic stereotypes. The Simpsonian versions (made of postcard images, caricatures and dusty clichés which are usually associated with those countries) of the rest of the world reality bear a much closer resemblance to the imagination of middle Americans than (of course) to the actual places they are pretending to be. These fictitious places represent *what the show's Ivy League-educated writers believe to be the commonly held stereotypes of unsophisticated middle Americans* (Turner, 2004: 324).

The oversimplistic portrayal of foreign countries in the show can be seen also as a satirical comment on the insular nature of American society. And this satire permeates the streets of Springfield itself, where

absurdly broad stereotypes coexist with the town's more realistic details. This is a town, after all, whose Irish inhabitants are essentially leprechauns and whose Italian restaurant is run by a fellow named Luigi who is, if anything, a broader stereotype than Chef Boyardee (Turner, 2004: 326).

But Fink and Foote (2007: 49) disagree with Turner and consider the use of pre-existing mass media stereotypes a conscious strategy aiming at destabilizing them.

The show's human heterogeneity needs the exploitation of variable language to depict the social polarities between male and female, young and old, middle class and working class and different ethnicities. The approach features mainly the mimicry of social-regional accents, even if some accents are produced in a stereotypical way, by exaggerating certain of their most salient features (Armstrong, 2004: 103). Here is a list of the most representative secondary characters of the show and of their corresponding idiolects.

Mr Burns¹⁴⁰ is the local tycoon, owner of the nuclear power plant where Homer works and symbol of unbridled and unscrupulous capitalism. He is almost always represented negatively: his wickedness and his incalculable great age¹⁴¹ are reflected by an old-fashioned speech peppered with uncommon terms like “crapulence”, “fiddlesticks!” and “huzza!” and by his Anglicised, upper-class US New England accent. The show's hatred for authority, capitalism and shady politics is evident from the way in which the characters who symbolize these powers are

¹⁴⁰ Charles Montgomery Burns is a typical Scottish name and reminds another famous greedy character: *Uncle Scrooge/ Scrooge McDuck*. <http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/2182/> (23/10/11)

¹⁴¹ There are many clues alluding to the fact that Mr Burns is at least centenarian: he possesses shares of the Slave Trade and he has never forgiven his mother (still alive) for being General George Washington's lover.

depicted. Womanizer Mayor Quimby, *Corruptus in Extremis*¹⁴² as the seal on the wall of his office reads, is one of these: his anglicised Bostonian hyperlect¹⁴³ which was designed to recall on purpose the speech of John F. Kennedy or the clan members in general, is used to give voice to the corrupt and cunning political class (Armstrong, 2004: 104). Villainous Sideshow Bob, Bart's sophisticated *nemesis*, also speaks with a British accent.

As we have noticed, the use of British accents for evil characters is a very common practice which reveals a still widespread stereotype in the US. Specific examples comes from the voicing of some evil characters of Disney movies. The first case is the evil Scar of the *The Lion King*, who kills his brother Mufasa, to usurp his throne. Scar is skinnier and darker than his brother and notwithstanding their being brothers and being born in the same place, they do not share the same accent. While Mufasa speaks a mainstream US English accent, Jeremy Irons' British accent dubs Scar. Schiffman argues in *Language and Authenticity*¹⁴⁴ that foreign language used in the media is not authentic but planned according to the Hollywood view of the linguistic world. The fact that Scar speaks with a British accent is intended to highlight his snobbish mannerisms and his feelings of intellectual superiority towards

¹⁴² <http://www.snpp.com/guides/quimby.html> (23/09/11)

¹⁴³ The American equivalent of the poshest form of British RP and is characterised, unlike other prestige US accents, by rhoticity and by the lack of post-vocalic /r/ (Armstrong, 2004: 105).

¹⁴⁴ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/authentic.html> (6/09/11)

the rest of the animals. Lance Gould in an article for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*¹⁴⁵ states that

There is a certain snob appeal about a British accent that Americans really respond to. The accent bestows an immediate sense of superiority in culture and intellect that the shows producers and writers can semaphore to the audience with minimal effort.

The same article also highlights that Britain is generally viewed as a “theme park of quaint characters and eccentrics”¹⁴⁶ and also that the British accent represents intelligence, breeding and refinement, so such depictions are examples of class envy on the part of Americans towards the British (Gould 1998:2). Another example of a villainous character in a Disney film who speaks with a British accent in contrast to the mainstream standard accents of the other main characters, is Jaffar in the movie *Aladdin*. *Aladdin* takes place in Agrabbar, a mythical Arabian desert kingdom. This choice highlights the association between the British accent and the villainous characters of Scar and Jafar, and may help teach children to ethnocentrically discriminate.¹⁴⁷ Yet another example in Disney characters is the use of minority accents: a contrived

¹⁴⁵ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/accents/ang15.htm> (6/09/11)

¹⁴⁶ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/accents/ang15.htm> (6/09/11)

¹⁴⁷ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/wenkeric.htm> (13/7/11)

Yiddish accent was used in the portrayal of the Big Bad Wolf in the Disney feature *Three Little Pigs* where the Wolf was also dressed as a Jewish peddler with a hook nose, sidelocks and a dark broad-rimmed hat. When the scene was reanimated the Wolf did not appear Jewish, yet his contrived Yiddish accent survived the reanimation. Lippi-Green argues that the fact that the Wolf still spoke with a Yiddish accent contains an underlying message based in anti-Semitism and fear of the other: a link between the evil intentions of the wolf and things Jewish.¹⁴⁸ A last example of the use of minority accents in Disney films occurs again in *The Lion King* with a hyena character speaking with a fake Hispanic accent. According to Schiffman's theory¹⁴⁹ of foreign language usage in cinema, the accents are intended to add flavour to the characters, to set the characters apart from others in the film, to add comic elements to scenes and to demonize the characters. A Hispanic accent for a hyena is utilized to enforce a stereotype common to Hispanics in New York consisting in their being short and quarrelsome.

In *The Simpsons* there are also other minor characters whose connotation is linked to specific ethnic stereotypes. This group includes the mobster Fat Tony, whose strong Italian-American sounds like Scorsese's *Goodfellas*'; Apu, the stereotypical Indian proprietor of the Kwik-E-Mart 24 hours-convenience store who speaks a perfect English

¹⁴⁸ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/wenkeric.htm> (13/7/11)

¹⁴⁹ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/authentic.html> (6/09/11)

with a strong Indian inflection; and Groundskeeper Willie¹⁵⁰, an aggressive Scottish immigrant easily identifiable by his strong Scottish accent and by his nostalgic reminiscences of his rural homeland. All these idiolects fall within the category of the pre-fabricated language which is designed to conjure up certain connotations in the audience and to satisfy their expectations about the people speaking those accents.

4.7 An American family abroad

The Simpsons has become a major cultural presence in the Western world. Comedy is legendarily a poor traveller, particularly when its main components are social satire, cultural and political references as the case with *The Simpsons*. But given its international popularity from the 1990s to the present, one might assume that the show is easily exported abroad because of the familiarity that audiences worldwide have with the characters. It is instead important to underline that *The Simpsons'* worldwide success is not sufficient to ensure an equal treatment and reception of the text/product all over the world. In fact, even if the show' s cultural content is so relevant to require a particular attention for its rendition, at the same time every nation, when selecting

¹⁵⁰ Willie is such a very important character in the show that the derogatory description of French people as *cheese-eating surrender monkeys* he pronounced in *Round Springfield* (2F32) is now widely used by journalists.

its own translating approach to the text (dubbing, subtitling or no translation at all) is claiming its own cultural discourse and deciding whether to accept the intrinsic elements of the original discourse or to build on them a completely new kind of discourse. When adapted a movie ceases to be “foreign” in order to become part of a nation polysystem (Ascheid, 1997: 39-40). The recodification process starts from the commercialization of the product: quite rarely the original title of a movie is translated literally into the target culture: more commonly movie titles are designed *ex novo* to select a certain target audience and exclude another, or they are slight re-elaborations of titles of previously successful movies that immediately collocate the new movie in a specific genre grid. Here are two examples dictated by misleading economical decisions. The first one is the beautiful Michel Gondry's *The Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind* whose poetic title perfectly summarizing the plot, belongs to Alexander Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* poem. The underambitious Italian title *Se mi lasci ti cancello* instead, has erroneously but purposely echoed in the Italian audience one of Julia Roberts' movies disappointing many viewers and preventing others from going to watch it¹⁵¹. Sam Mendes' 2009 *Away we go* has been changed into the English *American Life* in order to remind Italian viewers of Mendes' great success *American Beauty*. These are clear examples of

¹⁵¹ <http://www.globalvoices.it/blog/2010/10/se-mi-lasci-ti-cancello-se-storpi-ti-schifo/>
(28/09/11)

how extralinguistic factors (producers, assumed tastes of the target audience) may influence the process of translation favouring a particular reading of a product.

The interference that the target culture's values may have with the original discourse is also well illustrated by the decision of executives at the Arab network MBC to launch *Al Shamshoon*, an Arabized version of *The Simpsons* which, according to them, is more respectful of the feelings and beliefs of Islam. To this end they have turned Homer Simpson into Omar Shamshoon, hot dogs into Egyptian beef sausages and Duff beer into simple soda. This is a particular revealing example of how television executives aim at making a foreign product more familiar and appropriate to the domestic audience in order to maximize profit. The importance given to the translation of *The Simpsons* is further confirmed by the attention that FOX and *Gracie Films* have paid to every phase of the show's international distribution (Ferrari, 2005: 101-102).

As we have seen the importance given to the domestic market is both economical and cultural. Plourde's analysis of the different approaches adopted by linguistically-close countries like France and Québec in the translations of *The Simpsons* is exemplary of the issue. The two approaches show two different strategies of cultural appropriation, especially concerning elements considered intrusive by the target culture. While in Québec the series is addressed to children and as

a consequence its subversive discourse has been toned down and censored accordingly (Plourde, 2000: 114), in France the show reveals a quite imperialistic and aggressive attitude: the villainous character Sideshow Bob who has a posh Anglicised accent in the original, does not speak standard French and also, had his name changed into Tahiti Bob. According to Plourde, the French translator's choice has reaffirmed France's sovereignty over a dependent territory in the Pacific (2000: 119).

But the translating problems are not exclusively cultural: for example in the case of *The Simpsons*, most of its humour and subversive discourse passes through a specific linguistic message that is expression of a specific (American) culture. And this is particularly true with comic texts where a certain number of jokes combine to trigger off humour. Obviously the most difficult jokes to translate are culture-bound jokes, jokes expressing a specific community-sense-of humour and linguistic-based jokes (Martínez-Sierra, 2006: 289). The first two categories represent a real challenge to the translator/adaptor because contradictorily their cultural specificity needs to be transplanted into another cultural context. The third category, which contains a linguistic-tied kind of humour based on colloquial language, wordplay and linguistic variations, is as hard to translate as the culture-bound humour. For this very reason, *The Simpsons'* closest sitcom cousin (they share the

same kind of irony), *Seinfeld*, is practically unknown outside the US because its code-tied puns and culture-bound references fail to convey a coherent meaning outside their original context and constitute thus what Ritva Leppihalme has defined “culture bumps”. According to her, one of the problems in enjoying a comedy from a different culture is the existence of a cultural barrier that prevents a not sufficiently biculturalized receiver from getting the allusions and a great deal of the humour (1997: 4). Moreover, unlike *The Simpsons* (which is also a cartoon), *Seinfeld* cannot benefit from a strong visual humour (typical of cartoons) because of its more realistic setting.

As we have discussed before, linguistic variations¹⁵² in *The Simpsons* serve, besides realistic purposes (it is indeed a pre-fabricated language), mainly to trigger off laughter. The use of a dialect to typify a social class in adaptation is a very economical device that immediately conjures up certain connotations associated with a particular social class or ethnicity. This attitude is so pervasive among both participants in the dubbing process (translators, dubbing actors, broadcasters) and television viewers that it is extremely hard to break it up.¹⁵³ The rendition of a

¹⁵² The language variations on the levels of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary help to differentiate speaker groups on the basis of sociological criteria such as age, sex or gender, social class, region and ethnicity. According to Armstrong these variables are indeed “acts of identity” that express, especially phonologically, the speakers' social identities: *we use pronunciation in order to identify our origins while we may use morphology, syntax and vocabulary in order to identify our current status in society* (Armstrong, 2004: 97-99).

¹⁵³ According to Schiffman the foreign language we find in the media is a concocted and stereotypical representation of the language we think a certain country or ethnicity speaks. It is the Hollywood version of what a certain language use is imagined to be like in the real world, and its function is not to communicate information but to give a taste of something different and exotic. This misleading representation has been drawn from other Hollywood

variable (especially qualitative) into another language is very problematic because the connotation it has changes from nation to nation. For instance, Neil Armstrong's study on the effectiveness of the adaptation of *The Simpsons* from English into French, shows how the lack of a wide variety of accents in the French language creates difficulties in attempts to localize the program because the many accents (and connotations) of the original dialogue cannot be properly transferred into the more linguistically uniform French context.¹⁵⁴

representations of it and will continue to imbibe future representations like in a vicious circle. This representation means for instance that benign creatures (such as Yoda in Star Wars) speak English with not so much an accent, even if their syntax is scrambled. Evil human creatures like terrorists in airplane disaster movies, have as their "real" language (usually enemy languages such as Arabic, German, Russian, Japanese etc.) not translated at all and but they scream and shout wildly like animals. Their language is not depicted as "communicating" anything but is used to demonize them. <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/authentic.html> (6/09/11)

¹⁵⁴ Neil Armstrong distinguishes between qualitative and quantitative variables and explains that in the UK and US, qualitative variables (concerning for instance the rendition of a vowel) generally have a clearly recognised regional-social distribution and are often negatively perceived. By contrast, quantitative variables (presence or absence of a sound) are better tolerated by all those speakers who need to economise time and effort without compromising the meaning and then they are not socially connoted. Since deletion phenomena typical of quantitative variables are found across languages, then approximately equivalent translation effects are achievable (Armstrong, 2004: 100).

4.8 A Scottish enchanter speaking Neapolitan

Is it then right to sacrifice the original cultural context for a more familiar setting or specific jokes for others alluding to a completely different reality than the original one? The question depends on the goal of the operation: if it is exclusively economical any means is accepted (Baccolini et Al. 1994: 58), if instead a cultural operation is deemed more important than its economical results, completely different strategies will be adopted. It depends mainly on the function the dialect covers in both the source and target audiovisual texts.

Davies suggests that before starting to translate a humorous text in dialect it is best first to ask whether it is worth making the effort to find a good equivalent in the language into which it is being translated. Secondly, it is fundamental to find out why dialect is used and if it indicates regional, ethnic or national identity, education or lack of it, urban versus rural. Thirdly always ask why a certain character has a particular ethnic identity and which particular conventional ethnic script underpins the joke or anecdote.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=747_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

According to Morini's pragmatic theory of translation¹⁵⁶, three main functions of audiovisual texts should be recreated: *performative*, *interpersonal*, and *locative functions*. The *performative function* consists of the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects of texts and describes what they are supposed to do in the world and what they actually do. The *interpersonal function* instead, establishes relationships with readers and non-readers. Finally, the *locative function* is defined by the geographical, chronological and intertextual dimensions in which texts are created or placed. Very often comic effects are obtained by *locative* means (culture-bound references, regional dialects and accents, etc.) that make people laugh (performative function) by establishing certain interpersonal relationships. Usually the need to preserve the *performative aim* of the source audiovisual material, leads translators and dialogists to modify audiovisual texts radically, above all on the *locative* plane, often neglecting their interpersonal functions. In particular economical factors force the translators to neglect one or two functions. An extreme simplification of the jokes for the new audience may weaken the *performative function* of the source text, an unnatural locative shift of the humour may disrupts its *interpersonal function*. The recreation of the three functions by contrast must be balanced in order not to estrange the viewer.

¹⁵⁶ http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=757_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

Locative adaptation can be cultural or linguistic. When the translator has to cope with cultural-bound elements of the source culture which are not universally known to the target audience, he or she will have to decide whether to keep the references intact or to transform them into something more immediately retrievable and meaningful to the target audience. The same argument can also be applied to those circumstances when non-standard varieties of the source language (accents, sociolects, geographical dialects) are used in the source text. In that case the translator can choose to render or ignore the distance between standard and non-standard language. If he or she decides for the reproduction of that distance, all the various options available (for instance translating geographical dialect by geographical dialect or recreating in a variety of the target language some phonetic, lexical characteristics of the source language) will involve *locative shifts* to a new or partly imaginary setting¹⁵⁷.

Italian dubbing of US TV series shows a certain tendency to domestication. There are many examples of Morini's *locative adaptation* in the Italian audiovisual polysystem. One of the most striking is *The Nanny*, an American television sitcom whose protagonist, a Jewish Queens native, casually becomes the nanny of three children from the New York/British upper class. The love between two members of

¹⁵⁷ http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=747_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

different social classes is a worn-out *topos* in movies and Italian dubbing, in order to maintain the clash between a posh, British-origin and Upper East Side family and a loud, working class Queens woman, has just replaced Jewish culture and stereotypes associated with it (and almost unknown to Italian audience), with culture habits more familiar to Italian viewers: the Jewish Fran Fine becomes then *Francesca Cacace* from *Frosinone* living in New York City with her aunt *Assunta* who in the original version is her mother Sylvia. But despite all these accurate changes, the Italian audience is often at loss when Jewish ceremonies are celebrated in this apparently “Italian-American” context and the so-called *interpersonal function* is disrupted.

According to Morini, another noteworthy instance of *locative adaptation* on the cultural plane is provided by the Italian dubbing of Monty Python's *Communist Quiz* sketch where a political debate, impossibly hosting Che Guevara, Karl Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung, turns into a quiz about English football and American rock music. In the dubbed version in fact, the difficult references to British culture become questions about Italian popular culture: Atalanta soccer team replaces Coventry City, Claudio Villa Jerry Lee Lewis. Most of the humour of Monty Python also resides on jokes based on the linguistic oppositions between for example British and Australian English, RP pronunciation and cockney accent and so on. *The Albatross* sketch and its Italian

translation illustrate, according to the scholar, the functioning of a *linguistic locative adaptation*. In this case, the comic effect is created through the contrast between the uneducated and impolite albatross vendor and the highly educated and pointlessly inquisitive customer. The disparity of accents of the source text is reproduced in Italian by giving the vendor a Roman accent.¹⁵⁸

The Italian version of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1974) represents an extreme version of *locative adaptation*, on both the cultural and the linguistic planes. While the English version is a parody of the *Arthurian cycle*, the target film creates typically regional caricatures and alludes to contemporary Italy. The most evident transposition effected by the Italian dialogists is on the linguistic plane. *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* makes use of mostly phonetic varieties of language to distinguish characters: a Scottish enchanter speaks with an exaggerated, Macbeth-like accent; the lower class characters are cockney; a French soldier has a strange gallicized version of English; Arthur and most of his knights, instead, speak almost RP English. In Italian, to all these accents have been found their correlatives on the basis of certain connotations: Arthur's standard accent becomes Tuscan (close to standard Italian), lowly characters speak dialects from all regions of the peninsula, the French soldier absurdly speaks with a marked Sicilian accent and presents himself as Austrian and finally, the Scottish enchanter is

¹⁵⁸ http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=757_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

transformed into a Neapolitan tax consultant.

Morini underlines how adaptations are made inevitable by the presence of *locative* features which create comic effects in the source. When a sketch exploits a cultural or linguistic gap (between characters, between characters and audience), that gap must be reproduced and the ***performative function*** of the original that makes people laugh has to be recreated by any means. But if as a consequence the ***interpersonal function*** is changed beyond recognition, laughter turns into annoyance or perplexity. The target audiovisual text does not perform as it should not because the message is wrong, but because it has been sent to the wrong receiver.¹⁵⁹ So, according to him, dialogists when applying ***locative adaptation*** have two possible choices: or try to guess which equivalent context may activate the same response in the Italian audience; either exploit a well-known Italian prejudice about certain regional dialects to arouse laughter. Many cases of dubbing may be quoted to demonstrate that the substitution of Italian dialects for varieties of English, or of Italian cultural references for allusions to contemporary Britain (or Australia, or the U.S.), does not often trouble the viewer's mind: the Italian version of *The Aristocats* has been praised for its substitution of an Irish for a Roman tomcat. But Italian dubbing can provide negative experiments as well, and more than once. One of the funniest example is the Italian dubbing of the western *Rivers to Cross* (1955, Roy Rowland),

¹⁵⁹ http://www.intralinea.it/specials/dialectrans/ita_more.php?id=757_0_49_0_M (13/07/11)

titled *Un napoletano nel Far West* (A Neapolitan in the Far West), whose Irish protagonists become, for the Italian audience, immigrants from Naples (obviously and very realistically speaking in dialect) living in *San Gennaro Village*, Kentucky. In one of the most absurd scene one of the characters warns the other protagonist about the imminent attack of the Natives using these words: «Tu stai 'nguaiato» («You are in trouble»). But notwithstanding the horrible adaptation, it was a great commercial success (Baccolini et Al., 1994: 23-24). Another estranging case is the Italian rendering of the linguistic variation spoken by the Afro-American protagonist of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and characterised by double negation, present perfect without the auxiliary to indicate the past and so on. The Italian screen adaptors thought in fact that Sicilian dialect featured the same connotation as the Black English Vernacular of the source text, maybe because the speakers of both groups share negative characteristics like poverty and prejudices.

4.9 A case study: *The Simpsons* in Italian

Many scholars think that it is highly advisable to translate geographical, national, regional, ethnic and social varieties by using instruments other than the target accents (Baccolini et Al., 1994: 103-104). For instance the Italian dialogist Gianni Galassi deems absurd to establish an analogy between a US dialect and an Italian regional dialect even if a North and South can be found in any corner of the world. It would be unthinkable to make people from New Mexico speak Sicilian and people from Maine speak dialect from Valtellina¹⁶⁰. But surely the Italian dubbing of *The Simpsons* would make him change his mind since it provides one of the most successful and creative examples of cultural and linguistic relocation. The show's worldwide success is due to its locally directed satire which makes it appreciated at home, and to its use of global themes and archetypal and stereotypical characters and settings which helps it cross borders. It is mostly its global reach that offers many possibilities of re-contextualization and local adaptations for international markets.

The cartoon was broadcast for the first time in Italy in 1991. *Gracie Films*, co-producer of the series, collaborated with *Mediaset* to

¹⁶⁰ <http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/2182/> (23/10/11)

find dubbing voices that match those of the original American actors as closely as possible, and after a thorough selection chose the translators Elena Di Carlo (Ferrari, 2010: 101-102), Cristina Cecchetti and Cecilia Gonnelli. As we have seen, humour-dubbing¹⁶¹, in particular, seems to require a kind of domesticating translation that makes the audience's decoding work as simple and immediate as possible. Yet, it is a question of intellectual honesty to preserve also the cultural peculiarity of the source text.¹⁶²

The translating strategies adopted by the Italian dubbers respect these two conditions: far from depriving the show of its humour, have allowed the series to boost its success in Italy (Ferrari, 2010: 102). This new product in fact, succeeds in being faithful to both the audiovisual source text (by rendering its original features) and to the target audience (by almost totally recreating some idiolects). The modifications included in the Italian translation indeed relocate most of the cultural allusions to a new national context and re-territorialize the characters according to domestic stereotypes still maintaining the global appeal of these ironic portrayals. This process of moving the scene of the series to the

¹⁶¹ Delia Chiaro makes a distinction between a *universally funny humour* (even called banana-skin humour), which is strictly linked to funny situations and images, and a more sophisticated *word humour* which causes serious problems of translation. The scholar proposes to opt for a dynamic equivalence based on the effect of that joke on the new public. The result will be a different joke but the same effect of the original. (cited in Baccolini et Al, 1994: 105-106).

¹⁶² In my opinion there are occasions on which it may be advisable to recreate as little as possible because sometimes the audience is interested in decoding some parts of the text themselves and also because they may be eager to know elements of the source culture.

boundaries of the target culture's country or nation can be called, to say it with Morini, *cultural and linguistic locative adaptation* or *re-territorialization* as Plourde has defined it.

However, *I Simpson* is built on a contradiction: the scene is still set in Springfield but some of its inhabitants speak with various Italian accents that recall precise Italian stereotypical traits (Ferrari, 2010: 109-110). The fact that Italian audience not only has tolerated this incongruity but also has warmly welcomed the show is representative of what Italian people think is humorous. While the original US voiceovers tend to play more with the tone of the characters' voices often imitating famous actors, adding regional traits to the characters according to stereotypical lines to arouse laugh is a typically Italian tradition. Italian humour has been based on the exploitation of various regional accents and dialects since the *Commedia dell' Arte* (Baccolini et Al., 1994: 67-68). Its stock characters, representative of different Italian areas, used to wear masks and speak dialects. This could be the reason why any character speaking with an accent even if appearing grotesque, appeals to Italian viewers and readers.¹⁶³ The Italian adaptation has indigenized the text through an all-encompassing process that includes changes to acronyms, jokes, catch phrases, cultural references, signs, billboards, advertising jingles, songs

¹⁶³ In the chapter on Camilleri's English translations, we quoted the negative opinions expressed by some literary critics regarding Catarella, the funniest character in Montalbano's stories. They considered him a mask and a stock character since his use of the Sicilian dialect was, according to them, not realistic at all and pre-fabricated by the author just for humorous aims.

and episode titles.

The number of characters speaking with a linguistic variation (diatopic or diastratic) in the original includes: Fat Tony, Apu, Sideshow Bob, Willie, Burns and Quimby. The Italian dubbing has recreated as diastratic variations Sideshow Bob, Burns and Quimby' s accents. Fat Tony and Willie' s accents by contrast have been transplanted geographically and culturally in the new national context. Besides these, regional traits have been given also to another four characters whose original idiolects instead were characterised by specific connotations (Lovejoy, Winchester and Carl) and by suprasegmental traits (Otto). As we have seen, Sideshow Bob, Burns and Quimby are depicted as negative characters through their Anglicized accents. US cinema industry in fact enhances, out of a tacit convention or maybe out of a kind of class envy, the negative portrayal of a character by giving him or her a British accent. As a consequence, American viewers will immediately associate this accent with a set of weird, eccentric characters superior to them in culture and intellect but quite often villainous¹⁶⁴ The Italian perception of British accent is not so detrimental: on the contrary, the accent bestows such a sense of elegance, refinement and accuracy that the Italian dubbers in recreating these upper-class characters have drawn inspiration from high-brow register and affected (and sometimes old-

¹⁶⁴ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/accents/ang15.htm> (6/09/11)

fashioned) expressions. Instead, the evil connotation associated with them and conjured up by British accent was performed by the visuals.

Italian dubbing plays with stereotypes uite often reaffirming them, as in the case of Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, the Indian proprietor of the 24 hour-convenience store who, in the source audiovisual text, speaks in proper English but with a marked Indian accent. His idiolect has been recreated according to the stereotypical perception that Italian people have of immigrants speaking Italian: a scrambled syntax,¹⁶⁵ many grammatical errors, a strong accent and a singsong intonation mark him as a foreigner and as the typical immigrant who will never really master the national language (Ferrari, 2010: 120-121). A similar example is represented by the dubbing of Italian-American mobster Fat Tony, whose “natural” corresponding language has been found in the Sicilian dialect. Rendering the Italian-American accent with the Sicilian accent has been common practice since the first dubbing of American gangster movies like *The Godfather* or Scorsese' s *Goodfellas* up to the more recent *The Sopranos*. The choice of Sicilian among the other Italian regional accents, demonstrates how the use of Southern Italian accents and of Sicilian dialect in particular, is immediately associated with the illegal activities of Mafia.

¹⁶⁵ In Lisa the Vegetarian (3F03) Apu reveals: «Of course I am a vegetarian». In Italian this same sentence becomes: «Io essere di vegetariano». <http://www.snpp.com/episodes/3F03.html> (5/10/11)

It is difficult to operate a domestication of Groundskeeper Willie, a surly character whose Scottishness is underlined by both his appearance (he often wears a kilt) and his accent, without interrupting the so called “suspension of disbelief”. The major translating problem lies in fact in the completely different connotation that the Scottish stereotype has in Italy. The Italian description of Scottish people as greedy does not correspond to the characteristics that Willie presents in the original: he is usually aggressive, quite primitive and nostalgic of his rural childhood in his native Scotland. So, the factors that need to be geographically and linguistically transferred in the Italian context are his Scottish origins and his outcast condition in Springfield. The choice of a Sardinian stereotype for Willie is more appropriate than the Scottish one and creates in the Italian audience associations about the character that are analogous to what the American audience associates with him as Scottish (Ferrari, 2010: 114-118). This demonstrates that if a variety of the source language has a specific function (in this case to further highlight Willie's diversity, alienation and solitude), the very same function needs to be recreated with the target language material. Morini quotes the Italian adaptation of *Groundskeeper Willie* as one of the most successful example of *locative adaptation* especially on the linguistic plane and a perfect exception to the impossibility of matching dialects from two different countries.¹⁶⁶ Extraordinarily, Scottish and Sardinian share

¹⁶⁶ There are some visual elements that contradict Willie as a Sardinian: in “Bart's Girlfriend”

certain surprising prosodic isoglosses and are both perceived as harsh and incomprehensible to the rest of the community in which they are used. As much as Scotland, Sardinia is also very isolated and its inhabitants are stereotypically seen as primitive, rural (usually shepherds) and stubborn.

But the main innovation of the Italian version consists in the recreation of the idiolects of four characters (Lovejoy, Wiggum/Winchester, Otto, Carl) through regional dialects. As we have just seen, the Italian dialogists quite often draw on ethnic stereotypes when selecting a pertinent dialect in the target language (as in the case with the rendition of Italian-American accent with Sicilian dialect)¹⁶⁷. Reverend Lovejoy and Clancy Wiggum are both characters speaking American English without any particular accents in the original version. Their Italian voiceovers instead, exploit the typical Italian stereotype of churchmen and policemen as Southerners: Reverend Lovejoy becomes Calabrian, and Wiggum, the Springfield Chief of Police, not only had his surname changed into Winchester (after the famous shotgun brand to mock American police officers' ease with weapons) (Ferrari, 2010: 114), but also he speaks with a marked Neapolitan accent. Clancy Wiggum is

(2F04), he wears a kilt and plays bagpipes during a fake “Scotchtoberfest”; in the episode called “Monty can't buy me love” (AABF17) he goes to Scotland and meets his parents (they wear a kilt too). <http://www.snpp.com/episodes/2F04.html> (03/10/11)

¹⁶⁷ As we have seen in the previous chapter, Sartarelli's chose to render Catarella's illiterate mixture of Italian and Sicilian by Brooklynese dialect. Brooklyn is widely known to be an Italian neighbourhood so the question I ask to myself is: Is Sicilian the most natural corresponding language to Italian-American accent and viceversa?

defined by his continual eating, incompetence and lack of intelligence and his funny voice is an imitation of the actor Edward G. Robinson's voice. But as in Italy Robinson is almost unknown the easiest element to transfer only was Wiggum's dishonesty, perfectly evoked by the accent of corrupt Neapolitan police.

But other times stereotypes are turned upside down: Otto Mann, the school bus driver whose original voice is not marked diatopically but characterized by cannabis assumption, is the opposite of what a Milanese should behave like;¹⁶⁸ and the African-American Carl Carlson, Homer's colleague at the nuclear plant, speaks with Venetian accent even if his look does not correspond to the stereotypical idea of the Italian people and of "Padani" in particular¹⁶⁹

According to Wallace, the many stereotypes in *The Simpsons* should be considered not negative representations of ethnic groups but a warning against our tendency to use stereotypes. Moreover, the cartoon functions as a kind of *Brechtian* TV show, which alienates (estranges) its viewers preventing them from the identification with the characters so that they can continue to evaluate the ideological content on the screen (2008: 268-269). Moreover, as we have already discussed before, one of

¹⁶⁸ The Italian writers chose a Milanese accent for Otto Mann's voiceover (in Italy Otto Disc) because his irresponsible life contradicts completely the stereotype of efficiency associated to the Northern city. People from Milan are usually seen as snobbish, ambitious and very efficient. This choice challenges and contradicts the expectation associated with these regional traits. (Ferrari, 2010: 113)

¹⁶⁹ According Sabina Fusari making an "immigrant" speak with a Northern accent was a kind of "punishment" to Lega Nord who was founded in the very same year (1991) that the show was broadcast for the first time in Italy.

the main postmodern characteristics of the show is *hyperreality* which consists in the representation of representations, and what is a stereotype if not a simplified and misleading depiction?

But apart from this noble aim, in almost all the cases, *I Simpson* confirms the tendency of the Italian media (Ferrari, 2010: 122-123) to consider Southern accents and stereotypes in Italy as a very common and economic strategy of creating humour on TV. Especially the use of language represents a watershed in cultural and national identity and its mastering is considered the only key to integration. It is not by chance that the stereotypical depiction of “others” passes through their incapacity of speaking proper Italian without regional expressions and inflections. This linguistic issue perpetuates the idea of the inferiority of immigrants and of Southern Italians as compared respectively to native and Northerner Italians. The separation between Northern and Southern Italy is perpetrated in the stereotypical and often comical representation of Southerners (Sicilians in particular) as ignorant, crooks and unable to speak Italian as demonstrated by the Italian dubbing of the episode titled *Trilogy of Error* (CABF14).¹⁷⁰ The association between the Italian-American accent and Sicilian dialect relies on the fact that both variations divert from the standard and conjure up a very similar negative connotation. In the episode Lisa creates *Linguo*, a grammar-correcting robot for the school science fair. Whenever *Linguo* detects a grammatical

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.snpp.com/episodes/CABF14> (05/10/11)

error it responds with the correct answer. Unfortunately *Linguo* falls into Springfield gangsters' hands and because of their too many grammatical errors, explodes.

Louie: «Hey! They's throwing robots!»	Louie: «Mmi chisti stannu tirannu robbò!»
Linguo: «They *are* throwing robots».	Linguo: «Costoro stanno tirando robot».
Legs: «He's disrespecting us. (to Linguo) Shut up you face!»	Lupara: «Non ci porta rispetto. A zittiti scarrafò!»
Linguo: «Shut up *your* face.»	Linguo: «Sta' zitto scarafaggio».
Legs: «Whassamatta, you?»	Lupara: «Chi ti credi d'esse?»
Louie: «You ain't so big».	Louie: «Sei solo un pidocchio»
Legs: «Me and him are going to whack you in the labonzza!»	Lupara: «Io e Louie ti scocozziamo il capozzone!»
Linguo: «Bad ... bad grammar overload -- error, error!»	Linguo: «A-um a-aum a-um sovraccarico pessima grammatica errore errore errore erroreee»

4.10 Analysis of the episodes

Translators have to make the foreign familiar, while keeping the awareness of the alterity of the original source in the reader's mind. Moreover, the viewer cannot escape the images which remind him or her of the cultural alterity of the work and it is for this reason that in

audiovisual translation “domestication” and “foreignisation” coexist both in the translators' and viewers' minds (Pavesi, 2005: 27). Italian dubbing shows a double tendency: on the one hand, it tends to favour communicative translation and linguistic neutralisation, on the other hand, it tends to leave the material and intellectual tradition of the source country (for instance institutions, food, units of measurement, places etc) intact or at worst replaces them by more common and easier to understand terms always in the original language. Regarding linguistic neutralisation, there are only a few exceptions: those cases in which dialect or regional Italian is spoken by criminals, comic or fantastic characters. In that eventuality, the language used does not mirror linguistic varieties effectively spoken but is a conventional language which abundantly exploits clichés and stereotypes with respect to cinematic tradition (Pavesi, 2005: 38). For instance, after the great success of *The Godfather* in 1972, Italian audiovisual translation started to make a systematic use of Southern dialects (Sicilian in particular) to dub mobsters and Italian-Americans in general (Paolinelli, Di Fortunato, 2005: 19). The same but reverse procedure can be noticed in the English translation of Catarella's idiolect. The official translator in fact, maybe exploiting this cinematic convention which voices Italian-origin people through Italian-American accent, makes Catarella speak Brooklynese and treats him as if Italian-American. This analysis will be conducted on

three episodes from two recent series (the seventh and the eighth episodes from the seventeenth series and the thirteenth episode from twenty-first series) titled respectively *The Last of the Red Hat Mamas* (GABF22), *The Italian Bob* (HABF02) and *The Color Yellow* (MABF06). The first two episodes have been chosen because they display (in the original) Italian language and stereotypes on Italy and on Italian-Americans. It was interesting to make a brief overview of the main obstacles concerning the possibility (or impossibility) of rendering in the target language the original gap between English and Italian. The third episode instead presents an extreme attempt of *locative adaptation*: the original Southern American dialect has been transferred to the Italian regional context. Another obstacle important to consider was the rendition of puns and cultural references. The peculiarities found in these three episodes will be analysed in the following order: wordplays, cultural references and dialects.

4.11 Wordplays

Mayor Quimby: «Welcome to the Mayor's Easter Egg Hunt and now my rarely seen wife would like to say a few words».	Mayor Quimby: «Benvenuti alla caccia dell' uovo di pasqua del sindaco e ora mia moglie che è sempre in controluce vorrebbe dirvi alcune
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	parole».
Mrs Quimby: «Thank you Joe. In just a few moments the hunt will be opened by our own <i>wascally weferee</i> <u>Hugs Bunny</u> ». (The Red Hat Mamas).	Mrs Quimby: «Grazie Joe. Fra pochi istanti la caccia verrà aperta dal nostro <i>avbitvo malandvino Hugs Bunny</i> » (Le <i>allegre comari Di Rossor</i>).

This extract is taken from *The Red Hat Mamas*, the seventh episode of the seventeenth series of *The Simpsons*. The English title is an overt reference to Sophie Tucker's nickname *The Last of the Red Hot Mamas* and to *The Red Hat Society*. The Italian process of adaptation starts from the title: the original reference is practically unknown to an average Italian viewer so the Italian screen adaptors have opted for substituting the SL reference with another SL reference but better known to the Italian public. This is one of the strategies Ritva Leppihalme proposes for the translation of proper nouns allusions¹⁷¹. In fact The Italian title of the episode *Le allegre comari di Rossor* recalls Shakespeare's *Le allegre comari di Windsor* (The Merry Wives of Windsor). The adapted title reproduces the original wordplay based on the relation of paronymy (Delabastita, 1996: 128) between “hot” and “hat” in the substitution of “Windsor” with “Rossor”. From this first example is evident that the show is culture-bound and that the Italian

¹⁷¹ The other strategies are: to keep the name unaltered and add some guidance (footnotes); to change it with a SL or TL name; to omit it or substitute it with a common noun (Leppihalme, 1997: 79).

translators needs to find equivalent effects for every wordplay or cultural reference.

This first extract of this episode has as protagonists Mayor Quimby and his Jacqueline-Kennedy-like wife. As we have seen in a previous chapter, Quimby has a Bostonian accent, an hyperlect which recalls the Kennedys' accent. The Italian version recreates the woman's posh accent through a particular intonation. But the main translation problem is in the words “wascally weferee Hugs Bunny” which echoes *Looney Tunes* cartoons and in particular *Elmer Fudd's* way of speaking (he calls his archenemy Bugs Bunny wascally wabbit), and in the recreation of the wordplay which lies in the paronymy between “Bugs” and “Hugs”. Moreover, “Hugs” perfectly describes what the man dressed as a rabbit is supposed to do (to hug kids). In Italian the wordplay between “Bugs” and “Hugs” disappears, but the name remains untranslated because *Bugs Bunny* is a famous cartoon character in Italy too, even if I cannot figure out how quick the average Italian viewer would be in spotting the allusion to *Elmer Fudd*.

In the following lines, the wordplay is based on the homography between “wainscoting” and “Wayne Scott”:

Marge: «This house has such a	Marge: «Questa casa ha davvero una
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beautiful <u>wainscoting!</u> »	splendida <u>boiserie</u> » .
Marge: «Did you know it's not named after someone named <u>Wayne Scott?</u> » (The Last of the Red Hat Mamas)	Marge: «Lo sai che si chiama così per via di uno chiamato <u>Philippe Roman Boise?</u> » (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

Instead, Italian Marge, notwithstanding her French origins, does not recognise the French “boiserie” as derivative of “bois” (wood) and then as a term indicating woodwork or panelling¹⁷², but believes that a certain (fictitious) “Philip Roman Boise” has invented it.

The table below illustrates a perfect translation of a rhyme from the second episode analysed, *The Italian Bob*. The title is a clear reference to the movie *The Italian Job*. In Italian it has been translated into *Il Bob italiano* but in my opinion the adaptor could have left it untranslated because the film is known to the Italian viewers by its original title. Moreover, the translation obliterates the paronymy between “Job” and “Bob”. The episode is set in Italy, in the imaginary Tuscany village of *Salsiccia* (Sausage). The journeys abroad of the Simpson family are always a pretext to make a 22 minute-long list of stereotypes on the visited country, in this case Italy. In *The Italian Bob* the family is sent to Italy to pick up Mr Burns' new car, a “Lamborgotti Fasterossa” (a blend of *Ferrari* and *Lamborghini*)¹⁷³. At the “Da Vinci Airport”, the air

¹⁷² <http://www.wordreference.com/fren/boiserie> (18710/11)

¹⁷³ In the original the owner of the car factory, the typical Italian industrialist speaks English with an Italian accent. In the translated version, his voice sounds like Gianni Agnelli's voice.

traffic is busy with *Leonardo Da Vinci's* inventions and the rest of the story makes fun of the typical Italian excellences such as opera, food (there is a very long list of cheese) and wine (apparently Italian people are always drunk). It is also important to underline the look of the Italian characters: the old lady of the Tuscan village is black-clad¹⁷⁴, men are dressed like figures from a Salvator Rosa painting and Francesca, Sideshow Bob's Italian wife, looks like Esmeralda, the gypsy beauty from the Walt Disney movie *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. We have already discussed *The Simpsons'* authors drawing heavily on Disney images to mock them. In the selected extract Bart wants to provoke Bob's reaction (he has already tried to kill Bart seven times) with a rhyme:

¹⁷⁴ In a section on the Sicilian stereotype of a special edition of *Lonely Planet* Guide dedicated to Sicily, the black-clad widow, bent double with hard work and age, and the menacing Mafioso in a dark pinstriped suit and sunglasses, are listed as the most representative images of the island. (Smecca, 2005: 128)

Bart: «Come on Bob, <u>slice</u> , <u>dice</u> and serve on <u>rice</u> [...]». (The Italian Bob)	Bart: «Avanti, taglia, <u>affetta</u> e servi con la <u>polpetta</u> [...]». (Il Bob italiano)
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The original rhyme between “slice”, “dice” and “rice” has been perfectly recreated by substituting “rice” with “polpetta” (meatball).

In the lines below, Marge's false praises to Bob are “corrected” by a tipsy Lisa:

Lisa: « <i>Bravo, bravo bravissimo</i> [...]»	Lisa: «Bravo bravo bravo bravissimo [...]»
Marge: «It's obvious why Bob is a <u>wanted pillar</u> of your community...»	Marge: «Bevi tu che bevo anch'io, perciò Bob è tanto amato in questa comunità...»
Lisa: «Yeah, but he's a <u>wanted killer</u> in our community!»	Lisa: «Già ma nella nostra comunità è un criminale ricercato!»
Marge: «He deserves <u>to be hailed at this winding</u> ...»	Marge: «Acclamiamolo tutti in questo giorno felice...»
Lisa: «more like <u>jailed in Sing Sing</u> ». (The Italian Bob)	Lisa: «Più che altro rinchiuso a Sing Sing». (Il Bob italiano)

The pun is based on assonance: Marge's statements (wanted pillar, to be hailed at this winding) are echoed by Lisa's nearly rhyming corrections (wanted killer, and to be jailed at Sing Sing). Unfortunately

in Italian a necessary choice between form and content was to be made and a communicative translation has been preferred for the development of the plot's sake.

The joke based on the similar initial sounds of “vendetta” and “vending machine” has become a pun based on the panonymy between “*vendetta*” and “*vendutta*”:

Krusty: «Vendetta? What's that? An Italian vending machine? » (The Italian Bob)	Krusty: «Vendetta che significa una macchina che fu vendutta?» (Il Bob italiano)
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Again in *The Italian Bob*, *The Simpsons* ask for help from Krusty The Clown who is on tour in Rome with a very special version of *Pagliacci*. The first part of the song he sings is translated literally: “Rice Krispies” do not need explanations. In the second part instead, Krusty makes a joke about a misadventure caused by homophony:

<p>Krusty (on the music of Leoncavallo's <i>Pagliacci</i>): «No more <u>Rice Krispies</u>, we are out of <u>Rice Krispies</u>...Hey don't blame me I didn't write this crap![...] (So, I had this beautiful tour guide, right? And I tell her: I wanna see your <u>Naples</u> and <u>she slapped</u> me!»</p>	<p>Krusty (on the music of Leoncavallo's <i>Pagliacci</i>): «Basta <u>Rice Krispies</u>, son finiti i <u>Rice Krispies</u> ahahah che volete non le ho scritte io queste porcate![...] Ah..avevo una guida turistica bonazza, le ho detto: Fammi vedere le tue <u>mozzarelle</u> e mi ha preso a <u>pizze</u>!»</p>
<p>Man from the audience: «We call it Napoli!» (The Italian Bob)</p>	<p>Man from the audience (with a Tuscan accent): «Per quelle lì tu devi andà a Napoli!» (Il Bob italiano)</p>

Unfortunately the near homophony between “Naples” and “nipples” is impossible to reproduce. The Italian version tries to compensate this loss by employing two typical Italian words like “mozzarelle” and “pizze” which, besides indicating Italian cheese and pizzas, are also informal synonyms respectively of “breast” and “slaps”. The Italian rendering modifies Krusty's cultural bump into an intentional provocation. Another element that left me puzzled was the Tuscan accent of a man from the audience of *Colosseo*. I mean, it is plausible but in my opinion it is not the accent one expects to hear in Rome. Why did the translators not choose the Roman accent?

The following scene is very funny to an Italian watching the episode in the original language. The language the Italian characters busy with the grape harvest speak, probably was only supposed to conjure up the sound and rhythm of the Italian language since it is practically a loan translation of English. It even presents a non-recognised false friend: the informal English “to suck” (in Italian *fare schifo*, non essere adatto) has been translated into the most immediate and identical “succhiare” (to suck) which indicates the action of suction. This (fake) Italian has been reasonably transformed into Tuscan dialect because the fantastic country of *Salsiccia* is located in Tuscany.

The adaptation of Bob's singing in both its music and content is a great challenge: the scene depicts him while he is stomping grapes to the tune of Nancy Sinatra's song *These boots are made for walkin'* which for the occasion has been transformed into *These feet are made for stomping*, an allusion impossible to recreate in Italian as a whole. Thus the dubbing preserves the meaning at the expense of the rhythm and allusion.

Woman stomping grapes: « <i>Rinuncio questo è troppo difficile</i> »	Woman: «Un ce la fo proprio, l'è troppo fatihoso maremma bona!»
Man stomping grapes: « <i>I nostri piedi piccòli succhiàno</i> »	Man: «Codesti piedini zozzi nun valgono un fico secco»
Second man stomping grapes:	Second man stomping grapes: «Guarda

«Guardate quei piedi grandi (Bob's feet)!»	lì che fette! Maremma maiala!»
Bob (singing): «This feet are made for stomping, and that's just what they'll do, one of these days these feet will make <i>Chianti</i> out of you». (The Italian Bob)	Bob (singing): «I piedi nascono per pestar ed è quello che voglio far con questi piedi giganti adesso qui ci faccio il Chianti (musica diversa da originale) pronti piedi? Pesti i chicchi e poi ti siedì». (Il Bob italiano)

The following wordplay is excerpted from the third episode I have analysed, *The Color Yellow*. The title recalls Alice Walker's best-selling novel *The Color Purple*. The plot is not a parody of the novel nor of the adapted film, but focuses on Black History:

Marge: «Hey Bart what are you doing for Black History month?»	Marge: «Bart invece tu cosa farai?»
Homer: «You can <u>march to Selma</u> and tell her she's ugly! Ehehehe»	Homer: «Ho un'idea: puoi <u>fare una marcia su Selma</u> e dirle che è una cessa! Ahah»
Lisa: «[...] Our family was on the <u>Underground Railroad!</u> »	Lisa: «[...] La nostra famiglia <u>stazionava in clandestinità!</u> »
Bart: «We ran a subway station?»	Bart: «Dirigevamo una stazione metropolitana?»
Lisa: «No, underground railroad was	Lisa: «No, facevamo parte di un

made of people who helped slaves escape to Canada. There weren't actual trains and it wasn't underground!»	gruppo di persone che aiutava gli schiavi a scappare in Canada. Non era una ferrovia e non era sottoterra!»
Bart: «They shouldn't have called it underground but <u>normal road!</u> » (The Color Yellow)	Bart:«Allora dovevano chiamarla <u>stazionamento sopraelevato!</u> ». (Il colore giallo)

In the table above two wordplays based on the identity of sounds and spelling (Delabastita, 1996: 128) pose different translation problems to the adaptors. The first pun contrasts Selma, the name of one of Marge's twin sisters, and the town of Selma, Alabama, where one of the most dramatic episodes in Black History, the march of the so-called *Bloody Sunday*, took place on the 7th of March 1965, as a protest for the fatal shooting of activist Jimmy Lee Jackson. The roughly 600 civil rights demonstrators marching from Selma to Montgomery, were indeed attacked by state and local police with billy clubs and tear gas. It was the climactic event of the Selma voting rights demonstration which led ultimately to the passage of *the Voting Rights Act* of 1965¹⁷⁵. Obviously it was impossible to change the wordplay since its functioning relied on a visual element (the character of Selma), but I think that the dramatic events of Selma have not been as easily retrievable by the Italian viewers' as they have been by American people. This historical event may

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1114> (27/10/11).

represent an obstacle to the comprehension of the joke but at the same time references to supposedly unknown cultural specificities may invite the receivers to become more informed about “the other”. The second reference to Black History is a pretext to make another homonymy-based pun. The term “Underground Railroad”, used to indicate an informal network of secret routes and safe houses used by runaway black slaves in the 19th-century United States to escape to free states and Canada. It was also applied to the black and white abolitionists, both free and enslaved, who aided the fugitives. The system made use of railroading terms: the homes and businesses where fugitives would rest were called “stations” and so on.¹⁷⁶ Then it is quite easy for Bart to mistake it for an actual railroad. The original wordplay is based on the double meaning of “underground railroad”. The Italian translation instead proposes a different and quite opposite solution: “stazionare in clandestinità” means “to go underground”, “to live in hiding”, while the translators to be faithful to the English dialogue probably meant “to act as an underground station”. The translator's attempt to find a corresponding ambiguous term in Italian is praiseworthy but the conclusion of the joke with “stazionamento sopraelevato” does not work as a correction of “stazionare in clandestinità” because, while “underground” means both “clandestine” and “subterranean”, “clandestino” is not synonym of “sotterraneo”.

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/j1.html> (27/10/11)

4.12 Cultural references

Nowadays, thanks to culturally oriented translation studies, it is impossible to analyse both source and target text just as samples of linguistic material: culture, situation, function and audience are necessarily concepts the modern translator has to deal with. The Finnish scholar Ritva Leppihalme (1997: 20) in this regard, suggests that the modern translation scholar approach a text as if from a helicopter, considering first its cultural context, then its situational context and finally the text itself. It is particularly the cultural context conditions of the sign receivers which may contribute to intercultural misunderstanding in the reception of texts. The interest in intercultural problems arises from the recognition that culture-bound concepts, even when the two cultures involved are not too distant, can be more problematic for the translator than the semantic or syntactic difficulties of a text. The linguistic and extralinguistic components of a message are usually intuitively accessed by ST receivers who share a certain amount of cultural background information with the sender or writer of the message. On the contrary, TT readers, living in a cognitive environment different from the source text author's, will require the cultural mediation of a competent translator who, through his or her language skills,

extralinguistic knowledge of the SL culture and metacultural capacity, will be able to detect similarities and differences between cultures and to avoid the so-called “cultural bump”. Any text indeed features both an explicit and an implicit content. It is in particular the implicit content which is derivable from the context (culture), that varies according to the cultural environment in which it is expressed: differences between cultures imply that whole categories of objects or phenomena present in a culture do not exist in another (Bertazzoli, 2009: 92).

Culture-bound peculiarities and extralinguistic problems are often expressed as lexical: according to some scholars they are mainly terms related to man-made activities or institutions, or to the flora and fauna of the ST country. Other scholars feel instead that culture-bound translation problems are mainly intralinguistic (concerning idioms, puns, wordplay etc) and pragmatic (concerning the function of these features) (Leppihalme, 1997: 2). The rendition of cultural references in the target language/culture varies according to the level of acquaintance TT receivers have with ST elements. Different solutions can be adopted such as the retention of the original name, its substitution with a more familiar SL or TL name, or as a last resort, its omission. Normally the praxis prefers the modification of names in order to favour the comprehension of the target audience (Baccolini et Al., 1994: 90-91). A good alternative to the translator's mediation activity might be represented by a massive

exposure of TL receivers to SL culture and by education in general. Anyway, a translation refusing to cope with differences in cultural backgrounds runs the risk of being unintelligible. The translation of wordplays and cultural references represents a challenge because *The Simpsons* is deeply rooted in American popular culture so it is inevitable that comical references are altered and adapted for new audiences in order to recreate its pragmatic function.

As we have just said, dubbing is the most common Italian method for the translation of audiovisual products. A study by Antonini¹⁷⁷ posits that on Italian television, the vast majority of foreign programmes broadcast every week are dubbed programmes and that the great majority of fictional programmes (mainly soap operas, series, serials, situation comedies and cartoons) are imported from the USA. In Italy 88% of movies broadcast by RAI are dubbed, while foreign films (dubbed) bought by Mediaset are around 97% (Paolinelli, Di Fortunato, 2005: 21). Italian TV viewers are then constantly exposed to a *plethora* of foreign cultural references (e.g. education, institutions, legal systems, units of measurement, place names, food and drink, sports etc.) of the source countries of the programmes available to them. This would imply that the Italian audience is quite acquainted with culture-specific references. But the findings of this study have revealed that, although Italian TV viewers have been exposed for many years to a great number of programmes

¹⁷⁷ http://www.intralinea.it/volumes/ita_more.php?id=752_0_2_0_C (13/07/11)

imported from the United States, they have not assimilated the knowledge resources that would allow them to immediately identify and comprehend the customs related to this specific aspect of American life and culture. This was particularly true for all the references to US high school and college life (student loans, class rings, yearbook), food, measurement, places, sports (basketball, football, cheerleading), institutions, legal and health systems, and lastly famous people and events (Ken Follett, Willy Wonka, Bob Hope's shows during WWII).

So let's see which strategies can be employed for the translation of cultural references in an attempt to avoid that the intended message does not get across.

The first table from *The Red Hat Mamas* is an example of both “foreignising” and “domesticating method”:

Tammy: «I don't know how you keep your hair so perfect!»	Tammy: «Non so come tu riesca ad avere i capelli così a posto».
Marge: «Johnson water seal».	Marge: «Sigillante impermeabile Johnson».
Tammy: «Ahahha my name's Tammy and these are my friends, “The cheery red tomatoes”». (The Red Hat Mamas)	Tammy: «Ahahah mi chiamo Tammy e loro sono le mie amiche, “Le allegre comari di Rossor”». (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

The “foreignising approach” is best represented by the decision to leave untranslated the water seal brand “Johnson” (which probably stands for *Thompson*, a real famous brand of water seals). The Italian screen adaptors have not looked for an equivalent Italian brand to mock but have maintained the original term. Instead, the English name of the group of women Marge joins is domesticated and “The cheery red tomatoes”, which reminds American viewers of *The Red Hat Society*, a national social organization for women over 50, has been transformed into a reference to one of Shakespeare's masterpiece. It is important to

notice that the Italian adaptors have translated both *The Red Hat Mamas* and *The Cheery Red Tomatoes* into just *Le allegre comari di Rossor*, in order to avoid any kind of confusion.

In the following extract instead, the “foreignising approach” and substitution by a hyperonym coexist:

Homer: «Hey Marge, where' re you going?»	Homer: «Ciao Marge, dove vai?»
Marge: «Mmm..bird watching».	Marge: «Ehmmm io...a osservare gli uccelli».
Homer: «Wait a minute...if she's going bird watching why did she leave our “ <u>Peterson Field Guide to Birds</u> ” on the kitchen counter?»	Homer: «Un momento...se va ad osservare gli uccelli perchè ha lasciato sul ripiano della cucina il libro “ <u>Guida agli uccelli</u> ” di Peterson?»
Homer: «Arghh road runners are real!» (The Last of the Red Hat Mamas)	Homer: «Arghhh questi uccelloni esistono davvero?» (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

The decision of leaving the book title untranslated was probably dictated by the visual constraint: Homer is holding the book and its title is visible. In effect, written titles are translated because in the show every element is important and a source of humour: numerous are the newspapers' titles or the billboards translated. “Road runners” have been changed into the generic (hyperonym) “uccelloni”, while, in my opinion a good translation could have been Beep Beep, that is how Wile E. Coyote's famous enemy is known in US and in Italy as well. So the cultural reference to Warner Bros cartoons could have been maintained.

Another reference to cartoons (Toy Story) provides the occasion for a third translating option:

<p>Lisa: «And literature is filled with tales of redemption, from Jean Valjean to the voice of Buzzlightyear, Tim Allen». (The Italian Bob)</p>	<p>Lisa: «E la letteratura è piena di racconti di redenzione, da Jean Valjean alla voce di Buzzlightyear di Massimo Dapporto». (Il Bob italiano)</p>
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When dealing with a culture relevant text, the translator is faced with three possible choices, whether to “foreignize”, to “domesticate” (or localize) or to “standardize”. The substitution of Tim Allen, a famous American actor and voice of Buzzlightyear, *Toy Story's* protagonist

cowboy, with his official Italian dubber, Massimo Dapporto, is an example of standardization. In the following excerpt instead a typical element of the Anglo-saxon culture which could provoke a “cultural bump”, has been replaced by an element of the target culture:

Marge: «Homer cut up my wedding dress to make a <u>badminton net</u> which he never uses». (The Red Hat Mamas)	Marge: «Homer mi ha fatto a striscette il vestito da sposa per farci <u>una rete da pesca</u> ». (Le allegre comari di Rossor)
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“A badminton (an English-origin sport) net” has been localised into the more Italian fishing net.

When the cultural references present in the source text belong to the target culture, the text can fall into a kind of censorship:

Marge: «We've passed <u>the Ponte Vecchio bridge</u> three times I think we're lost! [...]»	Marge: «Siamo passati su <u>questo ponte</u> tre volte e mi sa che ci siamo persi! [...]»
Bart: «Dad, cheese truck!»	Bart: «Papà, un furgone di formaggi!»
Lisa: « <i>Mozzarella, parmigiano, provolone, pecorino, gorgonzola, fontina, taleggio, formaggini</i> »	Lisa: «Mozzarella, parmigiano, provolone, pecorino, gorgonzola, fontina, taleggio, bocconcini ahhhh la

<i>arghhhhhhhhh mortadella!!</i>	mortadella!»
Homer: «Don't worry we got the cheese insurance!»	Homer: «Non vi preoccupate abbiamo l'assicurazione contro i formaggi!»
Marge: «It doesn't cover <i>mortadella!</i> » (The Italian Bob)	Marge: «Ma non copre la mortadella!» (Il Bob italiano)

Marge affirms that they are probably lost because they already passed *Ponte Vecchio Bridge* three times (instead of a car navigation system, the “Lamborghini Fasterossa” they have to ship to Mr Burns, is equipped with a DVD player with a Fellini's movie on). But Marge's statement about *Ponte Vecchio Bridge* is contradicted by the images of the car running in open country. Maintaining such sentence would have been unacceptable to any Italian viewer because it is widely known that *Ponte Vecchio* is in Florence. This is an example of censorship or correction for the plain hyperonym “ponte” has been preferred to the specific *Ponte Vecchio*. The choice of the adaptors was not due to the lack of knowledge by the target audience, but to the opposite reason: *Ponte Vecchio Bridge* is a so important monument that Italian viewers would have not forgiven the gross mistake. The long list of Italian cheese can be seen as exemplary of the stereotype which associates our country with a kind of food obsession. Another similar example regarding Italian ancient food traditions is contained in the table below:

Butcher: «Sono abitato dai fantasmi di 10 mila maiali morti». (The Italian Bob)	Butcher: «E infatti sono perseguitato dai fantasmi di 10.000 maiali morti sgozzati». (Il Bob italiano)
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There is a certain irony in representing a butcher's shop which has been slaughtering the same family of pigs for 600 years. “Mile” is the way the pseudo-Italian butcher pronounces “*mila*” (one thousand).

4.13 Dialects

As we have seen a very common technique in dubbing consists in deleting the linguistic gap between characters and in flattening these varieties towards a standard. For instance the Italian dubbing of Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre* loses the connotation linked to the languages spoken in the original, namely Castilian and Catalan¹⁷⁸. Linguistic cleaning, standardization and neutralization are usually preferred to non-standard varieties. Another strategy is represented by the substitution of a source-language variety with a target-language one.

Translating a script for a dubbed version requires a linguistic and cultural adaptation that is realized through a series of strategies similar to those applied to subtitles like: dislocation of extra elements throughout

¹⁷⁸ http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-743752/Doppiaggio-sottotitoli-e-fenomeni-di.html (30/06/11)

the target text to compensate some loss of the original; expansion (new parts of text are added to the translation especially when there are no exigencies of lip synchronization as in voice over); explication of expressions that are typical of the nation the film belongs to and which can cause the so-called cultural bumps; and finally deletion of words and expressions referring to the source culture if they are considered to be a problem for the target spectator.

Now we will analyse the treatments of dialects in the Italian version of the three episodes. One of the most noteworthy approaches to the translation of diatopic varieties is their adaptation to the new national context and perspective (locative adaptation). The first example is taken from *The Red Hat Mamas*:

<p>Chinese woman: «Well done blow our tea, Marge...That 's the last refrigerator calendar magnet you get from me!» (The Red Hat Mamas).</p>	<p>Chinese woman: «Bel modo di <u>falci saltale</u> il tè <u>Malge</u>...Quello è l'ultimo <u>calendario</u> magnetico da <u>fligo</u> che <u>licevelai</u> da me!» (Le allegre comari di Rossor).</p>
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This section clearly demonstrates the tendency of Italian dubbing to recreate a foreign accent according to the way it is perceived in Italy. As in the case with Apu (the Indian proprietor of convenience store who

speaks a perfect English but with an Indian intonation), the Chinese woman's perfect English with a slight Chinese accent, has been rendered nationally according to the Italian stereotype that depicts foreigners as unable to master Italian in general and in this case typically unable to distinguish between “l” and “r”.

The same episode presents an extreme attempt of recreating the gap between two languages (in the original between American English and Italian) even at the expense of the fidelity to the original. Since it was impossible to recreate in Italian the gap between Italian and American English, some elements of the plot have been changed. The original gap has been “nationalised” and transformed into a clash between Italian and Sicilian. In order to convince the target receiver, the translators have opted for modifying some elements of the original plot such as the subject Lisa needs to know to be sent to Rome: instead of a fluency in the Italian language, a good knowledge of the ancient history of Rome is required. Moreover, Milhouse will teach her Ancient history mainly in Sicilian dialect because his Sicilian grandmother, Nana Sophie, whom he goes to visit every summer in Tuscany, becomes Sicilian for the Italian audience. These adjustments have permitted the adaptors to recreate that linguistic clash which constitutes most of the humour of the episode. The visual constraints which show a typically Tuscan landscape had been justified by making Milhouse's Sicilian grandmother live in

Tuscany.

Principal Skinner: «Ok, Lisa. To study in Rome an applicant needs outstanding grades, check...oh oh Lisa, it says you have to speak fluent <u>Italian</u> ».	Skinner: «Ok, Lisa. Allora, per studiare a Roma il richiedente deve avere voti eccezionali e ci siamo...oh oh Lisa, dice anche che devi conoscere molto bene <u>la storia di Roma</u> »
Lisa: «Ehmm check!»	Lisa: «Ehm va bene».
Skinner: «You speak <u>Italian</u> ?»	Skinner: «Tu <u>la</u> conosci?»
Lisa: «Of course I do! Why would I say it if I didn't? »	Lisa: «Ma certo che la conosco perchè lo direi se non fosse vero, mi scusi!»
Skinner: «A flawless logic..I am gonna have to ask you to speak a few phrases to verify your fluency...». (The Red Hat Mamas)	Skinner: «Logica stringente ma dovrò chiederti di dirmi alcuni fatti per verificare il tuo livello...». (The Red Hat Mamas)

Lisa: «Oh that's <u>my Italian tutor</u> ! Oh ehi Milhouse, I think Bart's upstairs».	Lisa: «Questo è <u>il mio insegnante di storia italiana</u> . Oh ciao Milhouse credo che Bart sia di sopra».
Milhouse: «I'm not here for Bart. I'm here to <u>teach you Italian</u> ».	Milhouse: «Ma io non qui per Bart sono qui per <u>insegnarti tutto sull'Italia</u> ».
Lisa: «Oh sure I get it...Bart told you I	Lisa: «Ah come no! Babi ti ha detto

was having lessons so you thought you come over and...»	che dovevo prendere lezioni e così tu hai pensato che dovevi venire qui...»
Milhouse: « <u>Prego si fermi e riascoltare</u> . That means please stop and listen. I'm the tutor the company sent over, I'm here to teach you <u>la lingua di arte e la musica</u> ».	Milhouse: « <u>Nihil est dictu facilius!</u> Volevo dire ora fermati e ascolta. Io sono l'insegnante mandato dalla società, sono qui per insegnarti <u>la storia dell'arte e della musica!</u> »
Lisa: «You really <u>speak Italian?</u> »	Lisa: «Davvero <u>conosci la storia italiana?</u> »
Mil: « <u>Sì</u> . My grandmother <u>Nana Sophie lives in Tuscany</u> ...since I was a baby I spend two weeks every summer...Nana <u>hated English</u> because in WWII a G. I. left her with child, my uncle <u>bastardo</u> . Nana only <u>spoke Italian</u> to me».	Milhouse: « <u>Sì</u> . Mia nonna Nanna Sofia è siciliana ma vive in Toscana. Da quando ero bambino ci passo 2 settimane tutte le estati. <u>Nana sapeva l'inglese</u> perchè durante la seconda guerra mondiale un soldato l'aveva messa incinta di mio zio bastardo. Nanna Sofia mi <u>raccontava sempre tante cose in italiano</u> .»
Nana: « <u>Questi il mio cherubino sono delle oliva</u> ».	Nanna: « <u>Chisti cca i viri gioia mia bedda, so alivi, u capisti?</u> »
Milhouse: «I love you nana».	Milhouse: «Ti voglio bene Nanna Sofia!»
Nana: « <u>Idiota!</u> »	Nanna: « <u>Scimunitu!</u> »
Milhouse: «Every time <u>I spoke</u>	Milhouse: «Tutte le volte che <u>non le</u>

<u>English</u> she hit me...Oh that hurts!»	<u>parlavo in dialetto</u> mi dava uno schiaffo...Ahi che male!»
Nana: « <u>Idiota!</u> »	Nanna: « <u>Babbasunazzu</u> »
Milhouse: «I'm sorry I'm so stupid!»	Milhouse: «Scusa se sono così stupido!»
Nana: «Milhouse Mussolini van Houten <u>parla l'italiano, idiota!</u> (...)»	Nanna: «Milhouse Mussolini van Houten <u>devi parlare in dialetto pezzu i lignu!</u> »
Milhouse: «What do you say, can I be your <u>insegnante?</u> »	Milhouse: «Comunque che ne dici, posso essere il tuo <u>mentore?</u> »
Lisa: «Ok. if that means teacher...»	Lisa: «Ok, se vuol dire insegnante...»
Milhouse: «It means masculine teacher!». (The Red Hat Mamas)	Milhouse: «Per l'esattezza vuol dire insegnante maschio!». (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

Successful in my opinion the choice of translating the Italian “insegnante” as “mentore” which is a more high register and formal word for teacher and perfect to start a class on the history of Rome. Instead, the Latin sentence chosen to translate the Italian in the original does not mean “please stop and listen” but “nothing is easier than speaking”. Maybe it was chosen just to give a taste of Ancient Rome and not for its relevance to the text. It is easy to note how the Italian spoken in the original has nothing to do with real Italian: quite often there are mistakes in both pronunciation and morphology like in the case of

“idioto” used as the masculine of “idiota” and of “oliva” in the place of “olive” (olives). I cannot figure out why the translators have opted for translating “she hated English because a G. I. left her with a child” into “sapeva l'inglese perchè un soldato l'aveva messa incinta di mio zio bastardo”. The meaning is more or less the same: Milhouse's grandmother knows English but hates it because of the American soldier who left her alone. Here, the refusal and hatred towards the foreigner invader is reposed nationally: Italian is prohibited by Milhouse's grandmother because it is seen as a foreign language, the language of the invader, while dialect (in this case Sicilian) is perceived as the real first language.

In the second episode analysed, *The Italian Bob*, The Simpson family arrives at the Tuscan village of *Salsiccia* where they meet an old woman who speaks Italian in the original. The dubbed version gives her a realistic Tuscan accent thanks to “gorgia toscana”, a linguistic phenomenon, maybe of Etrurian origin, which implies the aspiration of some consonants [k p t] in postvocal position (miha, Amerihano).¹⁷⁹ Unfortunately the Italian dubbing fails to transfer the humour of a part of the dialogue between Homer and the old woman: when she asks him if he is “Americano”, he is so stupid that he cannot figure out the meaning of a word which is practically identical in both English and Italian. This serious attack underlines American people's close and provincial attitude

¹⁷⁹ http://forum.accademiadellacrusca.it/forum_7/interventi/2123.shtml (04/11/11)

towards other countries' traditions and language. Instead, Homer's Italian answer to the old woman's question weakens the humorous energy of the original transforming Homer's belief that English is the only language worth knowing in the world into just a question of correct and standard pronunciation. Concerning this, other changes have been made, such as the substitution of the English language with car knowledge. One element left me puzzled: the apparently offensive meaning of Kentucky to an Italian speaker. Another example of pseudo-Italian is “Escusi” instead of “Scusi”, a middle way between Italian and Spanish, “il mayore” instead of “il sindaco” (the mayor) and “la inglese” as the feminine adjective of the left out *la lingua* (the language).

Homer: «Hey do you know anything about fixing sport cars?»	Homer: «Lei sa qualcosa di come si aggiustano le macchine sportive?»
Old woman: « <u>Escusi?</u> »	Old woman: « <u>Te tu cc' hai detto?</u> »
Homer: «It's a Lamborgotti Fasterossa XT550 with abs sport tech package»	Homer: «É una Lamborgotti Sportivosa XT550 con pacchetto abs sport tech»
Old woman: « <u>Ehm Americano?</u> »	Old woman: « <u>Te tu sei miha amerihano?</u> »
Homer: «Americano? What the hell could that mean? Why can't you people learn <u>my language</u> ? I learned to	Homer: « <u>Amerihano? Ma che mi vuole dire?</u> Perchè non imparate a parlare <u>bene</u> ? Io ho imparato a

eat your food!»	mangiare i vostri cibi scusate!»
Old: <u>Il Mayore capisce la inglese</u> [...]»	Old: «Il sindaho ci capisce di hodeste hose»
Lisa: «Hey she says the mayor <u>speaks English</u> [...]»	Lisa: «Dice che il sindaco <u>ci capisce di macchine</u> [...]»
Old woman (after receiving by Homer a mug that reads Kentucky): «Kentucky?? In Italian it means whore!» (she slaps Homer's face). (The Italian Bob)	Old woman (after receiving by Homer a mug that reads Kentucky): «Kentucky a chi? <u>Te tu m'hai detto baldracca maremma maiala!</u> (she slaps Homer's face)». (Il Bob italiano)

4.14 Stereotypes on Italy and Italian-Americans

According to Duncan Beard, *The Simpsons* can be considered “oppositional because of its ironic use of pre-existing mass-media stereotypes precisely in order to destabilize them.” (2004: 273) The fact that the conventional character of the show are immediately recognisable to an American audience as consciously intended stereotypes, constitutes their very possibility to function as satirical tools. Many characters' clichéd characteristics serve as a means to critique elements of American society. This factor has also created interpretative problems for international audiences, particularly concerning the show's satirical intent and its “critical edge” that need to travel to diverse and

divergent cultures. The reception of the show in Australia and in Brazil is a telling case. The episode *Bart vs. Australia* (2F13) has caused an unprecedented amount of criticism and was seen as an attack on Australian national identity. The unsatisfactory Australian accents presented in the show were attacked as being New Zealand accents (Beard, 2004: 278). Brazilians instead, were offended by the way Rio de Janeiro and Brazil in general were portrayed in the episode titled *Blame It on Lisa* (DABF10), that is as a country having street crimes, slums and monkeys crowding the streets (Turner, 2004: 324-326). In the episodes I have analysed, Italy is depicted in all its stereotypical traits: as a nation obsessed by food and ruled by Mafia. The translators' only way to act was to transfer these international stereotypes concerning our country to the Italian national boundaries. The procedure is similar to Sartarelli's strategy: the English translation of Camilleri's novels have transformed the national conflict between Italy and Sicily into an international clash between Italy and US. Since Italians perceive themselves along regional lines, the translators have not other solution than exploiting the stereotypes linked to Italian regions.

The Red Hat Mamas offers also several examples of how deeply rooted are the stereotypes concerning Italian-Americans:

Audio tape to learn Italian: « <u>Voglio</u> »	Cassetta: « <u>Chista è na cassetta ppe</u> »
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<i>affittare una barca piccola. I want to rent a small boat».</i>	<i>primi storie de fatti vecchi. Arripieti ccu mmia.»</i>
Lisa: « <i>Voglio affittare una barca piccola.»</i>	Lisa: «Questa è la tua cassetta per la prima lezione di storia antica, ripeti.»
Audio tape: « <i>Progetto di scaricare chesto corpo nell'osceàno.</i>	Cassetta: « <i>Cu fu ca ammazzau du gran figghiu di Giulio Cesari?»</i>
« <i>I plan to dump this body in the ocean».</i> (she finds out that the cover of the audio tape reads <i>Italian for Italian-American</i>)	« <i>Fu nu cunnutazzu</i> » (she finds out that the cover of the audio tape reads <i>Storia per Italo-Americani</i>)
« <i>Chesto è chello che prendi per fare domande!</i> This is what you get for asking questions!» (gunshots) (The Red Hat Mamas).	« <i>Accussì ti 'nsigni a essiri gnuranti, gran pezzu di sceccu!</i> » (gunshots) (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

Lisa: « <i>Buongiorno, Milhouse.</i>	Lisa: « <i>Baciamo le mani Milhouse</i> »
Milhouse: « <i>Perfetto! [...]</i> Oh Lisa you don't learn Italian, you live Italian. Come we ride to Little Italy».	Milhouse: « <i>Perfetto! [...]</i> Oh Lisa l'Italia non si impara, si vive! Vieni, facciamo un giro a Little Italy».
Man at the window: « <i>Milhouse, che cosa di nuova?»</i>	Man at the window: « <i>Ou compare Milhouse che mi racconti di bello?»</i>
Woman: « <i>Ciao Milhouse come stai?»</i>	Woman: « <i>Vi Milhouse, comi ta passi?»</i>
Milhouse: « <i>Un gelato per la bella ragazza</i> »	Milhouse: « <i>Nu beddu gelato ppa bedda picciotta</i> »

Lisa: «One gelato for the pretty girl».	Lisa: «Un gelato per la bella ragazza»
Luigi: «Ah Mr Milhouse, thank goodness! Could you translate and help me buy cheese for my lasagna?»	Luigi: « <i>Uh Signor Milhouse menu mali va! Potete tradurmi e aiutarmi a comprarmi i formaggi per le mie lasagne?</i> »
Lisa: «But Luigi surely you speak italian!»	Lisa: «Ma Luigi, non parli italiano tu?»
Luigi: «(sigh) No I don't, I only speak...how you say... fractured English...that's what my parents spoke <i>atta da home</i> » (The Red Hat Mamas)	Luigi: «Ah no, mi dispiace assai..non lo parlo..io parlo solo <i>come si rice</i> ...in dialetto stretto, quello che parlavano i miei a casa mia a <u>Pozzuoli</u> » (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

What we have here is a celebration of the stereotypes which inevitably depict Italian-Americans as mobsters. The Italian-American stereotypes have been relocated nationally by employing Sicilian dialect to give voice to *mafiosi*. This choice makes evident the Italian translators' attempt to make the Italian audience react as an American audience would, by exploiting commonplaces which depict all Sicilian people as *mafiosi* or Italian/Sicilian women as violent, passionate and nervous. Moreover, Milhouse is dressed like Don Fanucci from *The Godfather II* and the other people Milhouse and Lisa meet in Little Italy are the typical Italian characters who belong to cinematic imaginary such as the fat dishevelled man at the window, the dark-haired, gypsy-like woman

and Luigi, the Italian cook we have already seen in *Lady and the Tramp*. The locative adaption recreates the Italian-American characters through the dialects: the man at the window and the woman speak with Sicilian accents, and in the case of the cook Luigi, who speaks in Neapolitan, the translators have reinforced his Italianness by adding a locative specification about his place of origin, Pozzuoli, maybe as a displaced compensation for “atta da home”, a linguistic feature that we have found also in Catarella's Brooklynese.

We have already underlined that the Italian spoken in the original is a literal translation of American English: “che cosa di nuova” (where “nuova” erroneously agrees with “cosa”) is followed by other examples contained in the extract below:

Lisa: «(on <i>La donna è mobile</i> tune) Milhouse is teaching me to speak so prettily I'll quip so Italy when I'm in Italy»	Lisa: «Mi metto la vestaglia Milhouse mi insegna sull'Italia a tono risponderò quando in Italia sarò»
Lisa: «Milhouse just what's going on?» (Milhouse has a girl on his lap)	Lisa: «Milhouse che sta succedendo qui?» (Milhouse has a girl on his lap)
Mil: «Run along Angelica but not too fast...Lisa Lisa, she's the appetizer, but you are the main course!»	Mil: «Vai via Angelica ma non troppo in fretta...Lisa Lisa, lei è l'antipasto ma tu sei il piatto forte!»
Lisa: « <u>Sono così matto a lei! Ho</u>	Lisa: « <u>Ah e così fai il cascamoto con</u>

<i>pensato abbiamo avuto qualche cosa</i>	lei! Neanche fosse Cleopatra quella
<i>andando e poi la prendo con questa</i>	maga Circe che ti ha irretito! <i>Cosa</i>
<i>sgualdrina! Lei mi fa malata!»</i>	<i>facisti con quella Messalina ah?»</i>
Milhouse: «Lisa, you speak in perfect <u>Italian!</u> »	Milhouse: «Lisa!! Ormai sai tutta la <u>Storia antica!</u> »
Lisa: « <u>Grazi... idioto! idioto idioto</u> <i>idioto!»</i> (The Red Hat Mamas)	Lisa: «Grazie... <u>Scimunitu! Scimunitu!</u> <u>Scimunitu! Scimunitu!</u> ». (Le allegre comari di Rossor)

Lisa's jealous bluster at Milhouse in Italian could be back-translated as “I'm so mad at her! I thought we were having something going on and then I catch him with this “sgualdrina! She makes me sick!” Also, “idioto” as masculine of “idiotia” and “grazi” as English pronunciation of “grazie” reveal that Italian was just used to give a taste of exotic and not for realistic purposes. Unfortunately the most common stereotype on Italy is linked to Mafia:

Old woman: «You have brought shame upon our humble mafia-controlled village, you are welcome in <i>Salsiccia</i> no more!» (The Italian Bob)	Old woman: «Tu hai rihoperto di vergogna il nostro umile paesino gestito dalla mafia te tu non sei più il benvenuto a Salsiccia!» (Il Bob italiano)
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And to *opera*:

Homer: «Owww opera, they have it here too?» (The Italian Bob)	Homer: «Oww all' opera ma esiste anche qui cavolo!» (Il Bob italiano)
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4.15 Extreme locative adaptations

Sometimes the desire or maybe the obligation to make people laugh, leads the adaptors to go beyond a certain realism or to disrupt what Morini has defined as “interpersonal function”. The last episode analysed, *The Color Yellow*, is an extreme example of “locative adaptation”:

Burns: «I don't like this new dance craze, the waltz, one two, <u>th(r)ee</u> , one two <u>th(r)ee</u> , <u>wh(e)r</u> e's the <u>fou(r)</u> ? All music needs a <u>fou(r)!</u> ». (The Color Yellow)	Burns: «Non mi piace questa moda della danza viennese, il walzer, un due e <u>tre</u> , un due e <u>tre</u> , dov'è il <u>quattro</u> ?? La <u>mosica</u> sempre bisogno di un <u>quattro ha!</u> ». (Il colore giallo)
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In this episode, Lisa discovers that her ancestor from Florida, Eliza, helped a black slave named Virgil (who looks like an African-American version of Homer) escape to freedom. In the scene I have

quoted, Colonel Burns (later said to be the father of Mr Burns, again making fun of his age), the host of the ball where Eliza meets the slave, complains about a new dance, the waltz. The fact that the episode is set in a Southern State (Florida) is underlined by Colonel Burns' suit (identical to Colonel Sanders' garment, the founder of *Kentucky Fried Chicken* food chain) and by his non-rhotic accent. Rather low-prestige Southern accent and prestigious North-Eastern New England accent (especially of Boston, New York City and surrounding areas) are non-rhotic (Wolfram, 1998: 39). As we have seen Mayor Quimby and his wife feature a non-rhotic and prestigious hyperlect, while Southern American English (SAE), spoken in some areas such as central and southern Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia, is both the most widely recognized regional dialect of American English, and also the most negatively evaluated (but not as much as African American Vernacular English to which it is associated). The widespread recognition and negative evaluation of SAE in some cases include negative stereotyping and linguistic discrimination, all negative prejudices in large part fuelled by media portrayals in movies such as *Gone With the Wind* and in television shows such as *The Dukes of Hazard* that presented grossly exaggerated and inaccurate stereotypes of SAE¹⁸⁰.

The Italian translators' rendition of this non-rhotic and non prestigious variety is carried out according to the negative connotations

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/southern/sounds/> (27/10/11)

the two varieties (SAE and Sicilian) have among their own speakers and among the speakers of more prestigious varieties. Sicilian dialect is both Southern and backward, and typical Sicilian features like the pronunciation of “-tr” and the verb at the end of the sentence have been considered connotatively equivalent to the r-lessness of the Southern American dialects. The other stigmatised dialect, African-American Vernacular English spoken by the slave Virgil, has been translated into the dialect of Bari, chief town of Apulia. In my opinion in this case *the locative adaptation* has been too forced and unnatural. It is strange to hear people from the Alabama or Florida speak in Sicilian. And if the emphasis is supposed to be on how well a translation functions in the receiving language culture, this is quite an estranging way to make it work.

CONCLUSIONS

Translation Studies is a very broad field of research and multimedia is a defining characteristic of contemporary art. Nowadays dubbing and subtitling represent a fertile ground for the application of *Translation Studies*, and for this reason I have chosen to deal both with literary translation (the English translation of Andrea Camilleri's detective novels) and with audiovisual translation (the Italian dubbing of

The Simpsons' episodes).

Two specular sections of my work (chapter 1 and chapter 3) have been dedicated respectively to the most indicative translation theories developed in the Western world and to the most interesting findings in the field of *Screen Translation*, a branch of *Translation Studies* (which mainly takes the form of dubbing and subtitling) featuring exigences different from literary translation. Each general frame has been followed by a close analysis of the translating problems each text has posed for the translators/adaptors and the strategies adopted by them. The purpose of my work was to discover how much these two texts have been flattened and shaped according to the Anglo-American/Italian textual grids and if the “original” linguistic choices have been preserved or “domesticated” in the respective target cultures: Anglophone and Italophone.

The selection of these two case studies has to be attributed not only to my personal taste but mostly to the main characteristics these two texts have in common: Camilleri's novels and *The Simpsons'* episodes are both cultural-bound texts, they both display different degrees of linguistic variations and most of their irony is based on the exploitation of dialects (especially in Camilleri's case) and on wordplays. Two main points have guided my analysis: after establishing that the “dominants” in both works to transfer in the target language and culture in my opinion were humour and flashes of the “Other” (namely of a different culture), I

have tried to see whether the excerpts selected have been recreated so that the target reader/audience can enjoy the text as much as the source audience and if enough respect has been paid to the authors' intentions.

First case study: Camilleri's novels

The Voice of the Violin (1997) and *The Wings of the Sphynx* (2006), the two novels on which the contrastive analysis has been conducted, are characterised by what Tullio De Mauro defines as ***internal plurilinguism*** that is by the presence of diaphasic, diastratic and diatopic varieties such as formal and bureaucratic Italian, standard Italian, regional Italian of Sicily, and “pure” dialect. The coexistence (in the same segment of the text) of all these elements is regulated by three main mechanisms: ***code switching***, ***code mixing*** and ***lexical hybridisms***. For each phenomenon examples from the two analysed novels have been quoted. The linguistic *pastiche* typical of Andrea Camilleri's style has also been studied as juxtaposition of ***marked*** and ***unmarked language***, two concepts elaborated by Hatim and Mason. This alternation of language with a high degree of informativity (marked) and of language with a low degree of informativity (unmarked) represents a real challenge to the linguistic competence of the Italian reader who needs to make use of other elements in the text to “guess” the meaning of the

words he or she does not know (mostly in pure dialect). The author has instructed the reader to cope with unknown words since his first novels by introducing dialectal terms similar to Italian ones like *fimmina* (femmina) and *nivuru* (nero) so their degree of informativity is not as high as other terms which would require greater processing efforts on the part of the reader. In other cases Camilleri uses an idiolect made of some fundamental words indicating common actions like *taliare* (to look), *spiare* (to ask), *ire* (to go), *arrispuunnire* (to answer, reply) etc., and repeats cultural items such as typical dishes and proverbs. As we can see, these words are examples of a dynamic use of language and therefore more informative. I have deemed it necessary that the readers of these novels in other languages should have an insight of Camilleri's style and recognise the uniqueness of these texts in their language.

There are many elements to deal with in a translation: linguistic factors (such as the major or minor proximity between source and target languages) and extralinguistic factors (constraints imposed by the so-called “patronage”, by the genre, by the tastes of the audience and so on) and since it is impossible to recreate an equivalence *tout court*, the best approach is, in my opinion, the functionalist one which aims to release to the reader in the translated text linguistic peculiarities in accordance with the functions they cover in the *source text*. In the light of the functionalist approach, the first step has been to pinpoint the *skopoi* that the dialect

covers in the literary production of the Sicilian writer. After analysing the linguistic peculiarities of the *source texts* I have spotted two specific functions that it covers: *a mimetic function* and *a postcolonial or cultural function*. The translator has thus to distinguish the dialect according to two different circumstances in which it presents: when it signals diaphasic and diastratic variations and when it functions as a label for food, institutions, proverbs and traditions. The mimetic function aims at rebuilding even if in a fictitious way, the linguistic condition of Sicily after the unification of Italy. The second function instead localises geographically the story and gives voice to an identity that runs the risk of disappearing. In most cases the translation of dialect into another dialect is an artificial operation and Stephen Sartarelli has found many interesting alternatives to this impracticable path.

The contrastive analysis between the ST and the TT and the product-oriented approach with particular emphasis on the recreation of situationality and on the preservation of informativity have led to the following conclusions:

- 1) The picture of Sicily evoked by a language (English) which is not its most immediate expression has proved to be quite blurred, even if the fundamental cultural elements have been preserved, in particular the Italian setting has been clearly maintained.
- 2) Regarding all those elements in the translations diverting from the

standard and representing, according to Hatim and Mason, a marked use of the language, needless to say that the English versions show no trace of the markedness of the originals nor any particular linguistic obstacles. The American translator has preferred a standard and quite linear English, which has turned the original multiplicity into a homogenous linguistic text with the exception of some characters (i. e. Agatino Catarella) speaking with a Brooklynese accent. The result is a communicative translation which prefers meaning to form, a domesticating translation with some reference (provided that it will be comprehensible to the Anglophone world) to Italian culture in general (words like *spaghetti*, *trattoria*, *veranda* and interjections are indicative) rather than to specific Sicilian culture. In fact, the smooth reading and what Lawrence Venuti calls “the translator’s invisibility” are interrupted exclusively by a few untranslated dialectal words (in italics) and by the glossary.

There is one last element to consider: the different rate of “linguistic obstacles” present in the two novels. *The Wings of the Sphynx* presents a higher rate of dialectal terms (it is almost exclusively written in dialect) than *The Voice of the Violin* surely because Camilleri is well aware that his readers have accepted his challenge and are able to decipher the text by themselves. Unfortunately, the translations cannot reflect this dissimilarity as they exploit the same strategies employed in

the first novels even if the original texts are considerably different in their linguistic varieties.

The two translations performed by the American poet Stephen Sartarelli have succeeded in making the reader taste the exoticism and the slow pace of Sicilian life. It is quite hard to define the strategies adopted by the translator in a precise way: on the one hand a clear domestication of the linguistic material has led Sartarelli to consider the resources of the English language at his disposal, on the other hand the necessity of preserving the cultural peculiarity of the novels could not be neglected. To conclude, I can affirm that two different approaches have been used in these translations: *a domesticating approach* to translate the mimetic function of the dialect and *a foreignizing approach* to localize the story and the most typical cultural elements such food, famous people, institutions and so on.

Second case study: *The Simpsons*

The second section of the thesis (chapter 3 and 4), specular to the first section, focuses on dubbing and in particular on the strategies that the screen adaptors of *The Simpsons* have adopted for the rendition of diatopic, diaphasic and diastratic variations of some minor characters of

the American cartoon. The brief description of the two audiovisual translating methods (dubbing and subtitling), of their diffusion and of their respective advantages and disadvantages, is followed by the analysis of their historical and technical aspects.

An audiovisual text is a multisemiotic system in which different codes operate simultaneously in the production of meaning: written code, oral code and visual code have to be recreated in the target language provided that they respect the limitations imposed by the visual constraints (the space limits on the screen in case of subtitling or lip synchronization. The complexity of audiovisual translation and the impossibility of making use of the most common translation aids (footnotes, glossaries etc.) modifies the dialogist's task which ceases to focus on adequacy and fidelity to the original text (formal equivalence), but aims at triggering in the new audience the same reaction of the audience of the source text (dynamic equivalence), especially if the audiovisual products are humorous. Dubbing is indeed based on a contradiction: adapting what is peculiar to a culture to the tastes and inclinations of another culture even using a new (but effective) linguistic material. And *The Simpsons* is a very successful example.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the global phenomenon of *The Simpsons*. The American cartoon, broadcast for the first time in the US in 1989, with its autoreferential and allusive narrative construction which

blends high and low culture, intertextual and hypertextual travels, quotations, parody, hyperrealism, hyperirony, pastiche and satire, is known in the world as one of the most intelligent and creative examples of postmodern art. The show directs its satirical weapons at every aspect of contemporary American life: institutions, state, religion and capitalism. And as with every postmodern text, *The Simpsons* also requires the participation, interpretation and the deconstruction of a competent and attentive reader.

Notwithstanding the numerous references to pop culture, American history and politics, the success of the Simpson family lies in its universality, linguistically emphasised by the total lack of diatopic and diastratic variations in the idiolects of its members. The universality (even linguistic) of the family is counterbalanced by the varied community of Springfield, made up of minor characters who display certain ethnic and linguistic characteristics. These characters are re-elaborations of already existing stereotypes whose humour is strictly linked to the stigmatised language they speak which is concocted so that it responds to the expectations of the audience.

The most creative part of the high-quality Italian dubbing is indeed represented by the relocation of these secondary characters inside national stereotypical lines. In the Italian dubbing the original humour of the show is boosted by a very common (and very risky) practice which

has been defined as *locative linguistic and cultural adaptation*. The linguistic and cultural adaptation not only has recreated linguistically those characters whose idiolects presented diatopic and diastratic varieties (as in the case of Willie, the Scottish groundskeeper who has become Sardinian), but has also added dialectal traits to other characters' talks. This perhaps extreme *domesticating method* confirms the typically Italian tendency (deriving from *Commedia dell'arte*) to exploit the regional accents in function of the humour, even at the expense of creating grotesque and flat characters who, in truth, perfectly match hyperrealism of the series.

Finally, also for this case study has been adopted a descriptive approach: since the main function of the show in my opinion is to satirise American society in all its aspects, two main features have to be necessarily delivered to the target audience: references to American culture, history and politics without which satire has no reason to exist, and humour (deriving from dialects, wordplays and puns) which is functional to satire.

To conclude, I can affirm that two opposite approaches have been adopted in the Italian dubbing of *The Simpsons*: mainly *a foreignising approach* for all those cultural elements which are widely known by the Italian audience (such as food, famous people, institutions and so on), and *a domestication* of the ethnic attributes of the characters and of the

linguistic elements (variations, wordplay etc) of the source text. In my opinion, these two opposite approaches coexist because on the one hand, humour is usually conveyed and linked to the exploitation of linguistic variations so it needs to be recreated and domesticated to achieve the same effect as the source text; on the other hand, the cultural discrepancies between Italy and America do not generally need domestication because Italy has been deeply immersed in American culture for many years.

Lastly, preserving the cultural peculiarities of the source text is a matter of intellectual honesty both to the authors of the original text and to the target audience who has the right to know the “Other”. But after the analysis of the two case studies it is evident that both literary translation and multimedia translation of culturally connoted products, require a target-oriented translation centred on the concept of *acceptability* elaborated by Toury.

Intellectual honesty both to the authors of the original text and to the target audience and the desire for more “adequate” translations of audiovisual products has turned *fan translation* into a mass social phenomenon on Internet. The development of this “democratic” alternative to official translations has coincided with the growing discontent among fans who, complaining in forums about the extreme

neutralisation, the delay or lack of the audiovisual translations of their favourite TV series, movies and cartoons have decided to resort to their own linguistic competence (mainly of the English language) to make these products available all over the world for free and rapidly. This noble aim is often thought to justify the infringement of the copyright of the originals and nowadays, because of the exponential growth of this kind of translation (it now encompasses almost every language and genres) due to the Internet (especially BitTorrent), it can be easily associated to illegal piracy.

The most common example of fan translation is *fansub*¹⁸¹, a type of subtitling carried out by amateur translators, mainly fans of the TV series and television programs they translate. This practice began with the subtitled version of Japanese anime programmes that in the 1980s were not easily available outside of Asia. Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez in their article "Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment" have listed the following distinctive feature of fansubbing such as their hybridity (they resort to conventions used both in subtitling for the deaf and also of strategies applied in the subtitling of video games); their extreme respect and preservation of the cultural peculiarities of the original in the target text (the translators know that the special audience they are addressing is very interested in the world that the audiovisual product comes from); and lastly, they explain certain

¹⁸¹ The most famous Italian fansub is <http://www.italiansubs.net/> (25/11/11)

cultural referents such as names of places, traditions and other celebrations in notes and glosses written in a different colour and placed at the top of the screen as a preface to a book (2006: 46).

Other examples of fan translation are *video gaming* (translating of older classic games), *scanlation*, the distribution of fan translated comics, especially manga, as scanned computer images, and finally *fundubbing*, a fan-made dub or redub of a production, which typically alters dialogues, story plots and personalities of protagonists in a funny way.

Academic study of this new phenomenon, a phenomenon that may spread to other media and change the nature of subtitling and of audiovisual translation in general would be a stimulating field of investigation.

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