

Novels, translations and reviews

A digital enquiry on eighteenth century literary journalism

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 <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.155.09pen>

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Pages 225–245 of

Literary Translation in Periodicals: Methodological challenges for a transnational approach

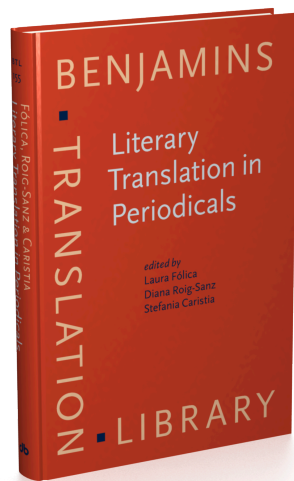
Edited by Laura Fólca, Diana Roig-Sanz and Stefania Caristia

[Benjamins Translation Library, 155] 2020. vii, 401 pp.

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Novels, translations and reviews

A digital enquiry on eighteenth century literary journalism

Andrea Penso

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This chapter presents the collaborative research project *The reception of the English novel in the Italian literary press between 1700 and 1830: a transcultural enquiry into the early shaping of the modern Italian literary and cultural identity* (VUB – University of Guelph), aimed at investigating the reception of English novels in the Italian literary press during the Long Eighteenth Century (1700–1830). Its main purpose is to uncover how the English novels were introduced to the Italian readership, censored and translated, through the application of Digital Humanities methodologies of investigation. One of the project goals is in fact to create a methodological paradigm that may be extended to the study of the reception of English novels in the literary journalism of other nations.

Keywords: English novel, Long Eighteenth Century, Italian literary press, Reception Studies, Journalism Studies, Digital Humanities, Reader Response Studies, women studies

From the 18th through the early 19th century a fully-fledged inter-European cultural dialogue developed on the continent, thanks to the wide dissemination of knowledge granted by the so-called “second printing revolution”. The periodical press was instrumental in such dissemination and its popular appeal reflects the perception of “other” European cultures and of European cultural diversity like no other medium. The Italian literary press acted as a vehicle for the propagation of English novels through announcements and reviews, and played a key role in the propagation of new ideas and moral values, together with new stylistic and narrative features. In the Long Eighteenth Century the periodical press represented, in broader terms, the most direct and widespread medium that put eighteenth- and early- nineteenth century European readers in touch with foreign literature.

As I will detail in the section “state of the art”, the reception of the English novel in Europe through the periodical press is a still largely unknown aspect of Enlightenment and early Romantic culture, of particular relevance at a time when the European inter-cultural dialogue was being shaped according to interpretative lines that were to influence the European perception of “the other” for centuries to come. This project explores the processes that enabled the transnational circulation of ideas and texts in the modern age, and promotes awareness of the boundaries of cultural traditions and of their influence on identity formation.

State of the art

As stated above, this research will allow to fill a gap in existing scholarship. In fact, the ancillary scholarly literature on the topic of Italian journalism and its role in the Italian reception of the English novel in the Long Eighteenth Century is considerably old. Very few significant contributions on the topic have been produced in the past two decades. Only recently, Daniela Mangione pointed out that a systematic examination of the reviews of foreign novels in the 18th century Italian literary press is still missing.¹ To this day, critics have focused on specific aspects of the role of the Italian literary press in the Long Eighteenth Century and of the reception of English novels: bibliographical enquiries (Streeter 1970, Balay 2000), studies about England’s cultural influence in Italy (Pfister 2008, Loretelli and O’Gorman 2010), surveys on the reception of English novels in Great Britain and the role of the press in the Long Eighteenth Century (Forster 1997, Siskin 1994, Parker 2000, Moretti 2006, Underwood 2008), studies on the development and function of English readership (Klancher 1987, Rivers 2001, MacMurran 2010) and studies about Italian journalism (Bellocchi 1974, Murialdi 2000, Crotti, Vescovo and Ricorda 2001, Infelise 2002). Even if these works provide an understanding of the cultural and socio-political context in which the press operated during the Enlightenment and early Romantic period, at a time of political and social fragmentation in pre-unified Italy, to this day there is no comprehensive study on the reception of foreign novels in Italy via the periodical press. Very few significant contributions on the topic have been produced in the past two decades.

The project builds on studies that have focused on specific aspects of the reception of English novels in Italy and in Europe, and of the role of the Italian literary press as a vehicle for information in the long 18th century. The primary comparative frames of reference for this research project are the critical literature on

1. Mangione, Daniela. 2012. *Prima di Manzoni: autore e lettore nel romanzo del Settecento*. Rome: Salerno Editrice.

the reception of English novels in England and the role of the press in the long 18th century (Siskin 1998, Reiman 1992, Ward 1977, Forster 1997, Mayo 1962), the studies on the development and function of English readership (Klancher 1987, Rivers 2001) and the bibliographical and critical investigations on the reception of English novels in 18th century France (Streeter 1970, MacMurrin 2010). Studies of Italian journalism provide an understanding of the cultural and socio-political context in which the press operated during the Enlightenment and the early Romantic period, at a time of political and social fragmentation in pre-unified Italy (Infelise 1989, Piccioni 1984, Berengo 1962, Murialdi 2000). In 1962, Maria Rosa Zambon published a *Bibliographie du roman français en Italie au 18e siècle*, which – thanks to a substantial amount of bibliographical information and a selected anthology of text – represents a pioneering study of early translations of French novels in Italian as well as novels that were printed and read in Italy in the original French language. Very little has been done in this direction with regard to the reception of English novels in Italy during the long 18th century. In this sense, the most relevant contributions date back to the beginning of the twentieth century.

First of all, a seminal work by Giambattista Marchesi, entitled *Studi e ricerche intorno ai nostri romanzi e romanzieri del Settecento coll'aggiunta di una bibliografia dei romanzieri editi in Italia in quel secolo* (1903), needs to be mentioned. Marchesi's book presents a substantial amount of data, but the inventory is incomplete and includes only a selected number of Italian translations of foreign novels. It thus ignores a large repertoire of titles made available to Italian readers through French translations (the language used by large portions of the learned community in most states and territories of pre-unified Italy) or through the many announcements of foreign titles in their original languages and their reviews in the literary press. In fact, all this data still needs to be thoroughly collected and analyzed today, from a stylistic, historical, geographical and sociological point of view. The project will indeed give particular importance to the role played by the French mediation (translations, book circulation and advertisements) in the Italian reception of English novels. Maria Rosa Colombo's *Lo Spectator e i giornali veneziani del Settecento* (1966) is the only study of how British journalism influenced the 18th century Italian literary press (for example, how the contents of the British journal were taken and adapted by the Italian according to its target audience, and how the concept of the journal itself was "imported" to Italy), and is still a valuable source of information on the reception of English novels in Italy, even though it focuses on one major periodical publication.

The influence of English culture at large has been addressed in two studies, but they are limited to the Milanese area: Franca Rossi's *La cultura inglese a Milano e in Lombardia nel Seicento e nel Settecento* (Bari: Adriatica Editrice, 1970), and *La*

stampa periodica milanese nella prima metà dell'Ottocento. Testi and concordanze (Pisa: Giardini, 1983), by Stefania de Stefanis Ciccone.

Objectives of the project

The question of the Italian reception of the English novel in Europe during the Enlightenment and the early Romantic culture is crucial to understanding the impact of a genre that has been a primary vehicle for social, political, and moral ideas, and outlining the process that has defined modern subjectivity for three centuries. The study will offer insights into the links between social structure endorsement and self-consciousness development through the diffusion and the knowledge of English fiction as presented by the outputs of Italian 18th and 19th century literary journals.

The research will outline specific readers' response to the English novels, related to the revolutionary social ideas and the new narrative features they spread, according to geo-political areas. The study will trace different characteristics (concerning style, language, authors, objectives) of the Italian reviews and articles dedicated to the English novels, and will delineate the particular function they played in the Anglo-Italian intercultural dialogue.

The project has three primary objectives:

- a. To explore the transcultural dimension of the corpus of data relative to the information about the English novels, their translation and their diffusion in the Italian literary press during the long 18th century. The journals have been selected with attention to their diffusion, their prominence in the market, their longevity, and ultimately taking in consideration various geographical areas: the catalogue of journals that are being analyzed includes (but are not limited to) the production of Venice, Milan, Turin for the northern part of the Italian peninsula, Florence and Rome for the central part, Naples and Sicily for the southern. The goal is to cover the whole peninsula as much as possible, in order to understand the differences between the many pre-unitarian states in the reception of the English novel through the press. The corpus of journals where the reviews and announcements were published is extremely heterogeneous, as it ranges from journals specifically targeting people fond of literature (it is the case for example of the *Giornale de' Letterati*, the *Giornale Enciclopedico*, the *Novelle della Repubblica delle lettere*), to journals aimed at treating facts of science, costume and society (for instance the *Magazzino Italiano* or *Il Raccoglitore*), to the gazettes and their cultural sections, which were read by a

very broad public, thanks to their widespread diffusion and to the custom of reading them out loud in the cafeterias and in the cultural circles.

- b. The interpretation of the reviews' content. This critic work will lead: (1) to understand its relevance when compared to reviews of Italian and French novels (which were published in the same journals); (2) to comprehend the extent to which the Italian press was receptive to the innovative nature of English fiction; (3) to outline the debate it sparked and how this played a role in the definition of Italy's discourse about modern cultural identity (i.e. in which sense and by what means the Italian process of cultural and, in the aftermath, political unification was influenced by the reception of the English novel). The study of the readers' response to the contents, spread by the novels via the reviews, is deeply connected to the stylistic analysis of the reviews the research team will achieve with the work related to "Objective a". In fact, the outlining of the reviews' stylistic features is crucial to understanding in which ways the contents were revealed to the public, and how the audience was influenced in the perception of the moral values and the social messages of the novels (see below the details concerning the approach to this aspect of the research).
- c. To create a methodological paradigm to examine the reception of English novels in the literary press of other Western European countries during the long 18th century. Even though the phenomenon of the reception of the English novels presents particular aspects for each country (e.g. morality was different in each nation, the importance of religion varies from country to country etc.), there are well defined functional aspects that can be studied with the same methodology that will be developed with the project: the reviews' stylistic characteristics, their geographical distribution and the sociological impact of the divulgation of the novels are only a few of a series of important aspects that can be considered as constant features of this cultural phenomenon. The digital approach of this project could be the *trait d'union* between the different geopolitical contexts: the text encoding of the reviews, the stylometric analysis of their content and the geographical visualization of both the reviews and the novels' publication places can surely be applied also to corpora belonging to different linguistic and literary traditions.

Theoretical frameworks

In order to explore the complexity of the reception of English novels via the literary journalism in the long 18th century, the study draws a line of continuity between History of the press (with regard to the peculiar history of English and Italian press in the long 18th century, as defined in Bellocchi 1974, Basker 1997,

Farinelli 1997), Comparative Literature (Mayo 1962, Magnani 1974), and Reader Response and Reception Studies (Donoghue 1995, Altick 1998, Mangione 2012). Furthermore, to investigate the interconnectedness of the cultural discourse in 18th century journalism, an exploration of print sources (Forster 1990, Reiman 1972, Sgard 1991, Ward 1977) was needed. Each study mentioned so far provides us with a precise analytical method and an interpretative key that unlocks certain hidden aspects of the role literary journalism had in the dissemination of knowledge and culture in the long 18th century. However, a transcultural approach to literary studies like the one pursued with this project is not yet mainstream in academia, especially in Italian studies, and needs to be developed and fostered. In a new perspective, the project will consider the reviews as a privileged source of information to understand the reception of English novels. The strategies will include a significant implementation of the methodologies for the study of the 18th and early 19th century literature and culture. To translate the research into an organized, meaningful and accessible discourse without compromising its complexity, the research team will use an innovative approach based on computational techniques to bring the data to fruition. The synergy between Digital Humanities and Literary Criticism will allow the research team to develop a new methodological paradigm for 18th century studies, which will guarantee the exploration of the intellectual network connected to journalism in that era. The existence of a link between literature, journalism and sociology in the study of the reception of the English novels is the reason why this research project also includes Sociology of literature as a theoretical and analytical framework, which will constitute one of the principal methodological tools (see, especially, studies conducted on the English readership and audience: Rose 2001, Rivers 2001, Benedict 2004). This choice is motivated by the observation that the English novel's redefinition of social hierarchies, its examination of the feeble boundaries between decorum and virtue, between aristocracy and the nobility of the individual, its frequent empowerment of women, its empathy towards common people, its overt realism and Protestant ethics, had a bigger impact on the Italian cultural scene than, for instance, the deprecated French laxity of morals, as explained above.

The study of the reception of the moral values divulged by the novels' reviews will be conducted following the approach theorized by Jouve and aimed at identifying, in a semiological perspective, the values clearly shown by a text, the so-called "effet-valeur". Jouve's work is based on the studies of Sartre 1948, Barthes 1953, Bourdieu 1979, Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980, Lafarge 1983, Greimas 1983. The study of the relation between literature and social and moral values is based on a double perspective: firstly, it is to investigate how literature influences the social values, i.e. how the diffusion of the texts (and in the case of this project, the diffusion of reviews and discussions), contributes to shaping people's mentality.

According to this theory, every literary work has always been perceived as an active action on the world, being this effective thanks to the style (Sartre) or to the contents (Barthes).

The second approach is complementary and seeks to analyse what social circuits develop the “literary value”, and how, i.e. the process that lead to the rise and popularity of a certain literary genre (the novel, in the case of the project) in precise geopolitical areas and historical moments. By applying this dual approach and the methodology conceived by Jouve to the analysis of the corpus, and thanks to the aforementioned study of the reviews’ style and contents, of the historical context and of the journals’ diffusion and impact, the research will allow deep understanding of the audience’s reception and perception of the values spread by the reviews.

The combination of the aforementioned approaches makes it possible to relocate inside the canon of Italian Literature and History the role of the reception of the English novel, and paves the way to an interdisciplinary methodology (literary, social, historical) that, if applied to the corpus examination, gives us an insight into the communication techniques through which the values of the novels reviewed were spread and perceived. The reception of the English novel in Italy seems particularly suitable for a critical approach of this kind, and could therefore become a landmark case study for broadening the scope of critical analysis. Indeed, as noted above, this study has a comparative flavour, so its methodology could also be applied to the analysis of the reception of foreign literature in other, non-Italian, literary press. Conversely, the research team shall also focus on the re-interpretations of Italian reviewers who drew on the Italian literary tradition but challenged its subjects, genres and linguistic structures. The last approach seeks to establish a crossover between sociological and historical elements by blurring the borders between them: in order to fully understand what impact the reception of the English novels had on the Italian readership, an analysis of the relationship between the literary journals and their target audience will be mandatory. In fact, most of the time, when a journal started to be published, in the first issue a sort of “manifesto” can be found, an introductory article aimed at explaining how it planned to engage with the target audience and where it aspires to be located in the international context. These “prefaces” are precious sources of information, as they allow to trace the communicative strategies of the journals, their engagement in the cultural and political panorama, the impact they had in a sociological perspective. This analysis will lead to describing the involvement of the literary press in the process that led to the building of a national cultural identity, and will therefore be nourished also by Imagology and Imagined communities’ theories tools (Spiering 1999, Beller and Leerssen 2007).

First research results

The research team established a corpus consisting of almost 600 critical review and editorial advertisements published in the most relevant literary journals of the time across the Italian peninsula in the pre-unitarian states, which have been collected in recent years during archival research.²

Particular emphasis was given to the Venetian Republic, which at that time was the most active publishing hub in Italy (1/3 of all books published in Italy were printed in Venice). Among the 66 journals that have been examined, all published within the years 1700–1830, some of the most relevant are *Giornale de' Letterati d'Italia* (1710–40); *Giornale de Letterati di Europa* (1727); *Giornale Enciclopédico di Liegi* (translation with additions of the Belgian journal *Journal encyclopédique de Liège*, 1756–60); *Biblioteca antica e moderna di Storia Letteraria* (1766–1768); *La Frusta letteraria* (1763–65), which is an example of the English influence on Italian culture: the model of the English journal *Spectator* (1711–12) is in fact the basis of its structure and concept; *Il corrier letterario* (1766–1768); *L'Europa Letteraria* (1768–1773); *Giornale Enciclopédico* (1774–83) founded by the most important female journalist of the time, Elisabetta Caminer Turra; *Antologia Romana* (1774–1796); *Gazzetta Letteraria* (1774); *Nuovo Giornale enciclopédico d'Italia* (1787–1794); *Nuovo Giornale letterario d'Italia* (1788–1792); *Giornale bibliografico universale* (1807–1810); *Giornale italiano* (1811–1812); *Annali di Scienze e Lettere* (1810–12); and the main issues of *Biblioteca italiana* (1815–1840). Venice's thriving international book trade left in its archives many periodical publications from the Venetian Republic, Italian and international cultural centres.

This material is nearly completely inaccessible in digitized form and it represents an untapped source of intellectual debates, trends in reader reception and popular culture, and in the transcultural dimension of intellectual exchanges in an increasingly cosmopolitan Europe. To make the material available for the research team and, therefore, for the public, archival research has been conducted in the most important Italian libraries, and most of all in the *Marciana* and the *Correr* in Venice, the *Laurenziana* in Florence, the *Labronica* in Livorno. In addition, journals comprehended in digital repositories like 18th Century Collections Online, 18th Century Journals Portal, Hathi Trust Digital Library, Internet Culturale, Nines, Orlando were also analyzed. Each issue of the selected journals undergoes a process of close reading in order to locate the information about the English

2. The research focuses on the analysis of publicly accessible materials, and there will be no problem or costs connected to copyright issues: according to Article 108 of the Italian code for the protection of Cultural Goods, I will be allowed to publish the reproduction of the original reviews, with the sole purpose of the repository being a non-profit scientific divulgation.

novels. Most of the times, there are precise and recurrent sections dedicated to foreign culture: contents about successful spectacles in foreign theatres, latest literary trends or recent publications are endless sources of news. The corpus has initially undergone a process of cataloguing and digitization, a preliminary operation necessary to allow the following steps of the theoretical and critical work. In fact, once the reviews and the articles that concerns the Italian reception of English novels are identified, the text is transcribed in digitized form, and a digital picture is taken.

At this point, with hundreds of reviews, picture and transcriptions, the risk of losing information is concrete. To organise this huge amount of data, and to carry on the research on the corpus effectively, the research team created an open access, annotated and searchable digital repository (in the form of a dedicated website which will include a relational database) on the reception of English novels in Italy during the long 18th century. The digital database consists of a Drupal-based software for corpora, and it represents an immediate way to develop the research. This will be the basis of the subsequent computational, textual and critical analyses. The categorization of the corpus will also allow to understand which novels were the most read and translated, and also which translations were the most widespread in the country. The survey on the Italian journals showed that it is possible to divide the articles about the English novels in three categories.

The first concerns the proper reviews, i. e. articles that contains an opinion or a judgement about a specific novel or a collection of novels. It has been possible to identify this kind of entries in journals printed all over the Italian peninsula: the format may be various (long or short, detailed or summarized, original or copied from foreign journals), but the distribution is homogeneous. The second category consists of general articles: usually longer than the reviews, they contain information about the novels in general, without particular references to one specific book. General articles are a precious source of information with regard to reading trends, perception of the reader response, idea and conception of the English novel and often, more in general, of the English society and cultural milieu. The last kind of entry includes the publishing announcements: they usually consist in a very short sequence of words with bibliographical data concerning the publication of the novels or of their translation, but they prove to be fundamental to map the distribution of the novels and their translation in the peninsula.

An example of how the entries have been classified and catalogued in the repository is shown by the following images, concerning the novel *A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci*, written by Dora Maunsell Tenducci in 1768. The first image (Figure 1) depicts the original review of the novel, through a picture of the journal *L'Europa Letteraria*:

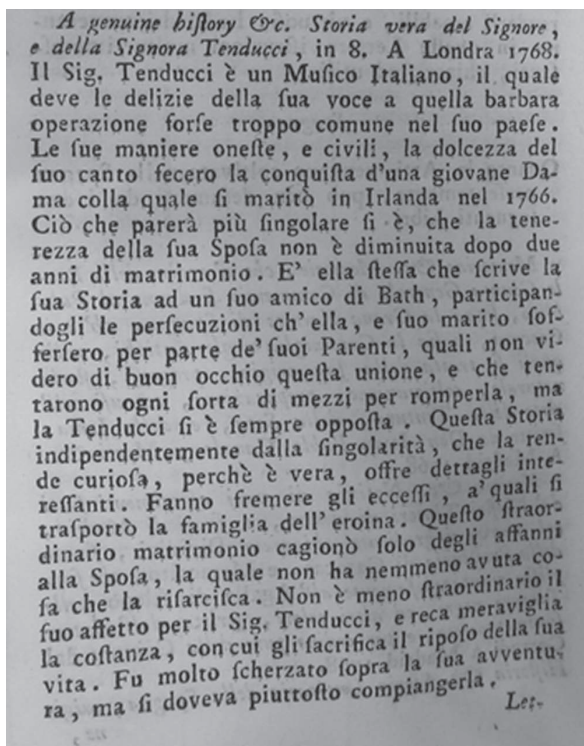


Figure 1.

The following image (Figure 2) represents the data provided for the description of the novel and of the journal where the review was published:

A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci

View	Edit	Revisions
<p>▼ Novel</p> <p>Title: A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci</p> <p>Author: Dora Maunsell Tenducci</p> <p>Place of Publication: London</p> <p>Date of Publication: 1768</p>		
<p>▼ Periodical</p> <p>Title: Europa Letteraria (It)</p> <p>Volume: I, ottobre 1768</p> <p>Issue: Tomo I, Parte II</p> <p>Type: Review</p> <p>Place of Publication: Venice</p> <p>Date of Publication: 1768</p>		

Figure 2.

The next image (Figure 3) concerns the transcription of the review and its translation, which are provided of some notes to facilitate the comprehension of the content or to integrate the bibliographical information. Each text will be the object of the analysis, as it will be described below:

Text:

A genuine history ec. Storia vera del Signore, e della Signora Tenducci, in 8. A Londra 1768. Il Sig. Tenducci è un Musico Italiano, il quale deve le delizie della sua voce a quella barbara operazione forse troppo comune nel suo paese. Le sue maniere oneste, e civili, la dolcezza del suo canto fecero la conquista d'una giovane Dama colla quale si maritò in Irlanda nel 1766. Ciò che parerà più singolare si è, che la tenerezza della sua Sposa non è diminuita dopo due anni di matrimonio. È ella stessa che scrive la sua Storia ad un suo amico di Bath, partecipandogli le persecuzioni ch'ella, e suo marito soffersero per parte de' suoi Parenti, quali non videro di buon occhio questa unione, e che tentarono ogni sorta di mezzi per romperla, ma la Tenducci si è sempre opposta. Questa Storia indipendentemente dalla singolarità, che la rende curiosa, perché è vera, offre dettagli interessanti. Fanno fremere gli eccessi, a' quali si trasportò la famiglia dell'eroina. Questo straordinario matrimonio cagionò solo degli affanni alla Sposa, la quale non ha nemmeno avuta cosa che la risarcisca. Non è meno straordinario il suo affetto per il Sig. Tenducci, e reca meraviglia la costanza, con cui gli sacrifica il riposo della sua vita. Fu molto scherzato sopra la sua avventura, ma si doveva piuttosto compiangere.

Translation:

A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci, in 8. London 1768. Mr. Tenducci is an Italian Musician, who owes the delights of his voice to that barbarous surgery, probably far too common in his country. His honest and courteous manners and the sweetness of his singing won over the heart of a young Lady with whom he got married in Ireland in 1766. What will appear most curious is that the tenderness of his Wife was not diminished after two years of marriage. She herself is the writer of this Story, addressed to a friend in Bath, with whom she shares the persecutions that she and her husband suffered because of her Parents, who did not view their union highly, and who tried to break it off in every possible way, with Mrs. Tenducci's steady opposition. This Story, independently from the singularity that makes it curious because it is true, offers interesting details. The excesses reached by the heroine's family make one shiver. This extraordinary marriage was but a cause of troubles for the Bride, who has not even received any form of compensation for it. Her affection for Mr. Tenducci is no less extraordinary, and the constancy with which she sacrifices her life's peace to him is a cause of wonder. Her adventure was very much joked about, but it should have been pitied instead.

Notes:

See the 2011 study of Gusto Ferdinando Tenducci and his wife Dorothea Maunsell:

The Castrato and His Wife

Helen Berry

336 pages | 8pp black and white plates | 216x135mm

978-0-19-956981-6 | Hardback | 22 September 2011

<http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199569816.do>

Figure 3.

Every entry of the database has been provided with an XML transcription, which includes all the details concerning the novel object of the review, all the information concerning its publication (i.e. place, year), and all the data of the journal in which the review (or the announcement or the article) was published (Figure 4).

```
<text>
  <body>
    <div type="original" xml:lang="it">
      /A genuine history ec. Storia vera del Signore, e della Signora Tenducci/, in
      8. A Londra 1768. Il Sig. Tenducci è un Musico Italiano, il quale deve le
      delizie della sua voce a quella barbara operazione forse troppo comune nel
      suo paese. Le sue maniere oneste, e civili, la dolcezza del suo canto fecero
      la conquista d'una giovane Dama colla quale si maritò in Irlanda nel 1766.
      Ciò che parerà più singolare si è, che la tenerezza della sua Sposa non
      è diminuita dopo due anni di matrimonio. È ella stessa che scrive la sua
      Storia ad un suo amico di Bath, partecipandogli le persecuzioni ch'ella,
      e suo marito soffersero per parte de' suoi Parenti, quali non videro di
      buon occhio questa unione, e che tentarono ogni sorta di mezzi per romperla,
      ma la Tenducci si è sempre opposta. Questa Storia indipendentemente dalla
      singolarità, che la rende curiosa, perché è vera, offre dettagli
      interessanti. Fanno fremere gli eccessi, a' quali si trasportò la famiglia
      dell'eroina. Questo straordinario matrimonio cagionò solo degli affanni
      alla Sposa, la quale non ha nemmeno avuta cosa che la risarcisca. Non è meno
      straordinario il suo affetto per il Sig. Tenducci, e reca meraviglia la
      costanza, con cui gli sacrifica il riposo della sua vita. Fu molto scherzato
      sopra la sua avventura, ma si doveva piuttosto compiangere.

    </div>
    <div type="translation" xml:lang="en">
      /A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci/, in 8. London 1768.
      Mr. Tenducci is an Italian Musician, who owes the delights of his voice to
      that barbarous surgery, probably far too common in his country. His honest
      and courteous manners and the sweetness of his singing won over the heart of
      a young Lady with whom he got married in Ireland in 1766. What will appear
      most curious is that the tenderness of his Wife was not diminished after two
      years of marriage. She herself is the writer of this Story, addressed to a
      friend in Bath, with whom she shares the persecutions that she and her
      husband suffered because of her Parents, who did not view their union highly,
      and who tried to break it off in every possible way, with Mrs. Tenducci's
      steady opposition. This Story, independently from the singularity that makes
      it curious because it is true, offers interesting details. The excesses
      reached by the heroine's family make one shiver. This extraordinary
      marriage was but a cause of troubles for the Bride, who has not even received
      any form of compensation for it. Her affection for Mr. Tenducci is no less
      extraordinary, and the constancy with which she sacrifices her life's peace
      to him is a cause of wonder. Her adventure was very much joked about, but it
      should have been pitied instead. @#

    </div>
  </body>
</text>
</TEI>
</teiCorpus>
```

Figure 4.

The text encoding process has been conducted using the software “Oxygen”, and according to the standards set by the TEI (*Text encoding initiative*). Once completed, in fact, the encoding and mark up process will make the texts completely searchable. The preliminarily created digital database and the mark-up of the contents will allow in-depth textual and spatial analysis and visualizations of popular reading trends in 18th and early 19th century Italy, thanks also to a tagging process which will help to categorize not only the thematic aspects but also the lexicon of the corpus, allowing both a stylistic and linguistic analysis. To complement the analysis allowed by the TEI mark-up, the research team will conduct a stylometric study, which will provide understanding of the specific features of Italian literary journalism at the time, unveiling the communication strategies that were adopted to disseminate knowledge and information. This stylistic and linguistic analysis will be pursued equalizing and comparing stylistic and lexical constellations belonging to different discursive practices from various journals and authors. Digital stylometry, word frequency and statistical analyses tools such as R, MiniTab and Intelligent Archive will be used during this phase. The analysis will unveil the peculiar stylistic features and elements of the Italian literary journalism of the time, a neglected aspect of the studies on the History of Italian journalism to date (with repercussions also on the History of foreign culture reception).

One application of the TEI mark-up, for example, concerns the genealogical dimension of the reviews, i.e. the comparative analysis of reviews that were taken from French or English periodicals and made their way into the Italian press. These sources have already been identified, and the research team will be able to understand the extent of the influence French and English journalism had on the Italian press (see also above in “Objectives”), and to outline the specific Italian input. In the examination and marking-up process of each review, the research team shall point out the elements that are original and innovative with respect to the French reviews of the time, which the Italian press copied from, often adapting the contents, rather than from the English reviews. A preliminary reading suggests that the questioning of social hierarchies in the English novel, its examination of moral ambiguity, its interplay of gender roles, and its scrutiny of the ethical, religious, and psychological foundations of social norms, are in fact more shocking to the Italian cultural milieu than, for example, the clichéd “looseness of morals” of French literature, whose dissemination had been structural in the construction of the 18th century social fabric. The controversial nature of English novels started a debate on their moral values, which in Italy was carried on under specific circumstances, i.e. the Catholic groundings of ethics and the predominance of Cartesianism in philosophy of knowledge and psychology.

Let us consider an example to clarify this aspect. In February 1787 the *Journal Encyclopedique* (p. 72–80) published a very long review (eight pages) of the novel

Maria, by Elizabeth Blower, in its French translation *Maria, ou Lettres d'un gentil-homme anglais à une religieuse, traduit de l'anglais*. The judgment is not positive, since from the very first paragraph we can read:

Si ce ouvrage est vraiment une production angloise, l'auteur n'as pas donné a son compatriote, M. Croli, le plus beau rôle à jouer.

[If this work is really an English production, the author did not give to his compatriot, M. Croli, the best role to be played.]

The journalist then explains what the plot of the novel is, giving from time to time some personal remarks on the poor value of the story. Two months later, the *Nuovo giornale enciclopedico* (p. 76) publishes a much shorter review of the same novel, adapting the French content to the Italian readership. The judgment in this case is much sharper than the first one. The novel is defined as a “romanzetto di poco edificante condotta e di men lieto fine” [a novelette of a poorly edifying conduct, and with an even less happy ending], populated by characters with an unworthy behaviour (“indegnamente”), whose brain deserves to be burnt (“cervello ch'era degnissimo d'esser bruciato”). The Italian journalist goes deeper in the moral judgement of the novel: there is no such harshness in the French review, which indulges more on the contents and on their weakness. This is made extremely clear by the conclusion of the review, which is the only part completely absent in the French, being an original section added by the Italian journalist:

Maria ha servito di titolo a varie produzioni Letterarie, e chi sa quanto dovrà servirne ancora; ma codesto romanzo non è degno di portare un così bel nome.

[The name of Maria has served as the title for several Literary productions, and who knows how many more it will serve for; but this novel is not worth of bearing such a beautiful name.]

Such a beautiful name as Maria should not belong to a licentious, negative character. The reference to the holy Mary appears rather clear: giving Her name to a totally unworthy woman almost results in something blasphemous. It is impossible to determine if the Italian reviewer actually read the novel, or if he/she simply adapted the information obtained from the French review. After all, it is probably not necessary for the understanding of how the readership was influenced by the review: what is extremely important in this circumstance is to see how the Catholic moral was playing a big role in the reception of the English novels. In this particular case, the grounding of ethics is conveyed starting from a very simple fact, the name of the character, which gives the opportunity to point out how far from the moral orthodoxy the novel's contents were to be located.

As this first example might suggest, the research has also a gender dimension. For example, many of the novels that were introduced to the Italian readership

were written by women, and a woman, Elisabetta Caminer Turra, was among the most prolific reviewers. To this day, there are no in-depth studies about the role women had in the Italian literary press of the period: the project will deal with all the moral issues connected to the novels, and it will also investigate the topic of women's reading practices, as the novel was considered a "female genre" (see D'Alia 1990, Di Fino 1990, Pearson 1999, Franchini 2004). The following examples concerns general articles strictly connected to this aspect of the research. First of all, the novel was considered as a very dangerous genre for the mental stability of the women who read too much. In an article published on the 28th March 1819 on the *Gazzetta di Milano*, it is possible to read the report of a journalist after a visit in a mental asylum (p. 382):

La pazzia fra le donne rinchiusa in quest'ospizio non mi sembra aver, come altrove e nell'umano consorzio, che due caratteri ben distinti: l'amore e la vanità. La prima donna che abbiamo visitata avea perduto la ragione a forza di legger romanzi.

[Madness among women locked up in this mental hospice has nothing but two well defined features: love and vanity. The first woman we visited lost her mind because she read too many novels.]

According to the article, many of the women that were kept in the asylum became mentally ill after reading too many novels. In many other occasions, reports like this were published in journals and newspapers, stating that the novels were challenging the mental stability of the female readers. From this kind of anecdotes we can infer at least two things. Firstly, the perception that novels were read intensively mostly by women was clear from the beginning: it is in fact impossible to find not only stories in which men lose their mind for too much reading, but, for a long time, even reports stating that the genre was appealing for the male readership. Secondly, it is rather clear how the values conveyed by the novels were having a disruptive impact on the audience, to the point that they were believed to literally drive people, and namely women, mad and ill. To face such a threat, many journals started to publish articles with the aim of discouraging the reading of novels among young ladies. An example could be the following, from the journal *Teatri, arti e letteratura*, published in 1827 (p. 181):

Le signorine non debbon leggere romanzi.

La loro lettura è od inutile, od anco pernicioso. [...] la mia sentenza, troppo pronta e troppa assoluta, non sarebbe passata per buona dal bel sesso, che oltre ogni dire si compiace di leggere romanzi, ed a' tempi nostri un tal genere si è fatto universale; né solamente ingegni leggerissimi se ne occupano siccome dappima, ma uomini per ogni titolo commendevolissimi non hanno dubitato, e non dubitano di mescersi nell'infinito esercito de' romanzieri.

[Young ladies should not read novels.]

Reading novels is generally either useless, either damaging. [...] My sentence, too absolute, would not be appreciated by the gentle sex, which is too keen on reading novels, a genre that nowadays is universal. Not only light minds are interested in it, like it was before, but also eminent men did not hesitate in joining the infinite army of the novelists.]

The (almost surely male) author of this article is not really pleased by the widespread success of the novels, and calls them useless when not even damaging. By stating that the “bel sesso” (women) would not be very happy hearing this sentence, the journalist is clearly pointing out the audience of that kind of literature. Also, by pinpointing the dangers of the novel for the ladies, he is recognizing the strength of the genre as a vehicle of new, shocking and controversial values for the Italian social fabric. In the first half of the 19th century, the novel as a genre was starting to be legitimated also in Italy: in 1827 Alessandro Manzoni would publish *I promessi sposi*, the first and most famous Italian historical novel, which gave rise to many other publications following its success. In the second part of the small abstract, it is possible to see the journalist’s awareness of the fact that the novel was undergoing an evolution, somehow: written by “poor minds” for the pleasure of young (and maybe silly, according to the journalist) ladies in the past, novels were now attracting more prominent literary figures, who were starting to realize that the popularity of the genre could translate into good publishing contracts.

At this regard, journals from the first half of the 19th century seems to show another significant fact, concerning the social status of the novelists and the gender dimension of the research. In that period, Italian journalism was starting to become more independent from the French or English sources (see above) when it came to the reception and introduction of foreign culture in the peninsula. In fact, the original contributions started to be more and more every year, while the number of articles “copied” or adapted from foreign journals started to decrease sensibly. This means that the contents that started circulating about the novel, and specifically about the English novels, were the product of totally original reflections and meditations over the topic. This is not an irrelevant particular: after having been influenced by the foreign press, a more mature awareness of the particular social, economical, literary context was animating the journalism of the various Italian regions. The most relevant feature of this new trend concerns the involvement and the active role of women in the production of literature. Let us consider an example. The following excerpt, about female authors of novels, is taken from *Giornale Pisano dei Letterati*, 1806 (VI, p. 216):

Dopo gli eleganti romanzi delle *de Tencin*, delle *de Fontaines*, delle *Graffigny*, delle *Riccoboni*, è stato detto con qualche sorta di verità, che questo genere tra tutte le produzioni di spirito è quello di cui le donne sono più capaci. L'amore che ne è sempre il principale soggetto è il sentimento ch'esse meglio conoscono.

[After the elegant novels of the *de Tencin*, of *de Fontaines*, of *Graffigny*, of *Riccoboni*, it has been said with some sort of truth, that this kind of productions of the spirit is where women are more capable. Love is always the main subject, and it is the feeling that they know best.]

The journalist, clearly a man, prudently states that the novel *might* be the ideal genre for women writers. It could be said that after all this is just another sexist remark: women should not attempt the road to the poetical glory, and should prove themselves in a less prestigious literary format instead. Journals and pamphlets with this exact idea were circulating all over Europe in the long 18th century. But in this case there seems to be something more: the journalist does not speak depreciatively about the novels like in the previous examples we showed, and actually acknowledges that women are somehow superior when it comes to the topic of love, which was associated to the plots of most novels. Therefore, women should definitely occupy an important place in the literary panorama of the time, and they should do it by writing about what they know best. Also, since some pioneer women opened the path for the others with some excellent results, the public and the audience should expect some significant results from the *gentil sesso*.

What we have been trying to describe so far is made extremely clear by another article published in 1826 in *Biblioteca Italiana* (pp. 55–56), at that time one of the most prominent periodicals of the Milanese area and of the whole country. A (male) journalist wrote an article about the fact that Italy had still produced no significant novels until that moment, even if the Italian language would have been a good instrument and the Italian literary tradition an outstanding support. At one point in his essay, the journalist wrote:

Più che agli uomini convien forse al sesso gentile questo genere di componimenti [...]. E questo bene può ora l'Italia dalle donne aspettarsi, dappoiché la coltura dello spirito e lo studio delle filosofiche discipline qui ancora costituiscono nelle due primarie classi non l'infima parte della femminea educazione. Più soggette le donne al sentimento delle passioni, più sagaci nel seguirne gli andamenti, più studiose nel penetrare fra l'uman cuore e trarne profitto, aver debbono, ove intendano la letteratura, una naturale inclinazione ed attitudine a quel genere di libri, il cui scopo è quello di dipignere i costumi e lo stato della civile società, della quale formano esse la parte più soave e più bella; genere che non esige sempre volo d'immaginazione o vigore di raziocinio, ma piuttosto squisitezza di sentimento e diligenza di osservazione. [...] Quanto non sarà più agevole alla vezzosa metà della specie nostra l'ottener nome trattando in prosa argomenti d'immaginazione

in un secolo assai più che agli studj poetici dedito alla morale ed alla filosofia, e molto più se elleno alla naturale attitudine accoppieranno il corredo delle virtù domestiche? Così i giovani e le donne d'Italia non più sentirebbero il bisogno di pascere il lor cuore coi romanzi delle straniere nazioni; né inesperti volgarizzatori servirebbero in ciò sì facilmente l'avidità de' librai; e fors'anco cesserebbe la guerra che a sì fatti libri venne dai vecchi nostri Aristarchi dichiarata.

[The genre is more suited for the gentle sex rather than for men [...] And Italy can expect this from women, since here the culture of the spirit and the study of the philosophical disciplines still constitute in the first classes an important part of the female education. Women are more subject to the sentiment of passions, wittier in following its paths, more diligent in penetrating the human heart and in taking profit from it. They have, when they understand literature, a natural disposition to that kind of books, whose purpose is to depict the customs and the civil state of society, of which they represent the most suave and beautiful part. It is a genre that does not require flights of imagination or robust reasoning, but rather an exquisite sense of sentiments and a clever spirit of observation. [...] How much easier will it be for the sweeter half of our species to acquire fame treating topics of imagination in prose, in a century keen on moral and philosophy rather than poetry, and even more if they will match to this natural attitude their domestic virtues? This way, the youngsters and the ladies of Italy would not feel the need to feed their hearts with novels coming from abroad; and also, no inexpert translator would easily help the greed of the book sellers; maybe, even the war carried against this genre by the many, old Aristarchus of our literary tradition would end.]

This appears to be a “call for novels”, specifically addressed to Italian women. Surely, the domestic virtues are still perceived like a fundamental component of women personality, even for the artists. After all, women are still the sweetest, most lovely (therefore innocuous?) part of society. But besides this, the journalist clearly acknowledges and recognizes the superiority of women when it comes to the interpretation of passions, to the penetration of the human heart and to the depiction of society's rituals and costumes. After having been for many decades the almost exclusive readers of the genre, it is time for women to capitalise this long training-experience, and to put it at the service of their natural attitude to the interpretation of sentiments and their spirit of observation. Even without pushing the interpretation of this article too far, it seems rather clear that it represents one of the first witnesses of an invocation for women empowerment in Italy, to be pursued through a specific kind of literature, which was not anymore facing the hostility experienced in the past. On the contrary, to quote the journalist, it was about time that a novel worth reading was published in Italy, as this achievement would also allow three important consequences.

Firstly, to stop the everlasting xenophilia, that was historically perceived by many intellectuals like a threat for the Italian literary tradition. Secondly, to influence the book market, by slowing down the bad habits of the book sellers, which used to assign to inexperienced people the translation of foreign books in order to save money and maximize their profits. Lastly, and most importantly, the rise of women novelists in Italy could put an end to the prejudices and the resistance the genre was encountering since the very beginning within the traditional literary *milieu*. Such a difficult challenge is now addressed to women, who are warmly invited to have an important spot in the Italian cultural and literary consortium.

Dissemination of the research results

The gender dimension of the research is also at the very base of the dissemination activities connected to the project. The creation of a blog will allow to reach also non-expert audiences, in order to achieve the full exploitation and diffusion of the research results. Its particular focus on the history of literary journalism and on the rise of female journalism will allow to disseminate knowledge and information about neglected aspects of media and communication history, and to engage with particular gender issues (e.g. the growing importance of women and their role in the diffusion of culture, an activity that they were previously precluded from), which even nowadays are at the centre of many cultural, sociological and political debates. The open access form of dissemination through an institutional repository, and the availability of data will ensure the accessibility of the research material inside and outside the international academic community.

Beyond academia this project will change the understanding of the impact of the English novel as a vehicle for cultural diversity and identity formation in pre-global environments, and as a benchmark of fictional practices in pre-unified Italy. It will allow non-expert audiences to access a network of transcultural debates that they were previously precluded from by linguistic barriers and logistic inaccessibility. This will change the mode of enquiry into a whole historical epoch, opening up fresh and new perspective on the literary, sociological, cultural, and political role of the long eighteenth-century English novel outside of Great Britain. This project will also serve educators who wish to present concrete examples of cosmopolitanism and transnational cultural practices at the dawn of modern Europe through textual and visual tools. The open access form of dissemination will also serve members of the public at large, in and beyond Belgium, who nurture a fascination with the Enlightenment, the age of the novel, the Italian connection to English culture and the Grand Tour, and who seldom have the opportunity to access popular period culture, such as journalism, in English translation. The wide

dissemination of the research results will thus provide an easy access to the role played by cultural differences and expectations within Europe at an early stage of European cosmopolitanism.

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