

RECOVERING VANISHED SOUND-LANDSCAPES SOUNDS, IDENTITIES AND MULTILINGUALITY

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*In this paper authors¹ will highlight certain literary works belonging to different times and different genres, all revolving around the category of “Southern Italy”, dealing with the irreversibility of social changes and defining certain specific contexts by recalling sound-related expressions. We take into account the comedy *Frischijamu* by Domenico Mosca as an example of a representation of sound phenomena as perceived by the community in the semi-public environment of the ruga (gr. Ροῦγα ‘alley’).*

Keywords: *soundscape, perception, identities, music, travel literature, local literature, Calabrian dialect*

*V tem prispevku avtorci opozarjata na nekatera literarna dela, ki pripadajo različnim časom in različnim žanrom, vsa pa se vrtijo okrog kategorije »južna Italija«, obravnavajo ireverzibilnost družbenih sprememb in opredeljujejo določene specifične okoliščine z obujanjem nekaterih zvočnih izrazov. Komedijo *Frischijamu* Domenica Mosce avtorici upoštevata kot primer upodabljanja zvočnih pojavov, ki jih skupnost dojema v pojavnem okolju ruge (gr. Ροῦγα ‘ulica’).*

Ključne besede: *zvočna krajina, zaznavanje, identitete, glasba, potopisna literatura, lokalna književnost, kalabrijsko narečje*

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY ON SOUND ATMOSPHERES AS FOUND IN LITERARY MODELS

In his article *Tuning in to the Past*, David Lowenthal begins by asking the reader:

What becomes of music, speech, and other sounds; natural and man-made, when they cease reverberating? How far do previous sounds differ from those of today? How much do we remember of what we hear? What meanings and emotions attach to sounds from the past? Why do familiar sounds often trigger nostalgic yearning? What sounds do we regard as antiquated, and why? (Lowenthal, 1976: 15)

The last question he poses follows the idea of the “past” as something that changes according to time and peoples; and spurs from the current perception of the past as something that includes, and refers to, a series of other debated concepts such as “tradition”,

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“cultural heritage”, and “community” (cf. Lowenthal, 1985; Hobsbawn, Ranger, 1983; Hafstein, 2018), all of which lead to further interrogations about sounds and music in traditional contexts (Macchiarella, 2011). When referring to the sounds of past atmospheres and sceneries, things become more complex if we consider “antique” as something that is somehow linked to the present. As far as literature is concerned, the level of complexity stems from the distance between the author and the contemporary reader (as well as between one author and another). This means that it depends on how we interpret the text in relation to the representations offered by the author to the readership, i.e. their use of personal knowledge to develop the spaces and characters inhabiting the world they narrate and describe. Given all this, the written traces recounting these sounds appear to be both fascinating and challenging at the same time.²

This paper intends to outline certain sound atmospheres and landscapes of Southern Italy, as they are portrayed in the literature of the *Grand Tour* and in some local models of the early 1900s, in order to investigate significant soundscapes which allow the inference of relevant performances and contexts. Some of these instances make it possible to broaden the analysis as to include other works and genres, such as the works of poetry and vernacular theatre published after the Second World War. Going into more detail, the works written in Calabrian vernacular (likewise the subject of this paper) have struggled to fit in the panorama of Italian vernacular literature, and it is so because of the choice of their authors to use dialect to address a narrower community. Nevertheless, it is precisely because of this choice that it is now possible to identify the nuances of the changes in social scenarios and, consequently, the relevant soundscapes. More specifically, I am here referring to the *ruga* as the space of a community, that is to say: that social setting portraying –and portrayed as– the “stage” of interpersonal relations and daily expression within small towns and villages. Indeed, the term *ruga* is still used today, as in the past, to define a semi-public space inhabited by different families (not always blood related) in which symbolic gestures and ritualised behaviours took place in the past times – i.e. the abduction of the bride amongst the Italian/Albanian communities of Calabria, to mention but one example of these gestures and behaviours. The *ruga* also saw the occurring of gestures involving music (see *canti di la ruga*, namely *songs of the ruga*, cf. Dattilo 2020) during courtships, weddings, partings and departures. The comedy *Frischijamu* –the main topic of this study– is written in the dialect of Stalettì, and it is one example of folk theatre intended for the *ruga*-specific audience of Stalettì, a small village in the province of Catanzaro. Indeed, Calabria is a mosaic of many dialects, and it is subjected to a “political” and literary Italian that appears fictitious and alien

² The interpretation must take into account the perspective of the various authors, and the way in which the world is categorised. In my opinion Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak sets forth an interesting viewpoint for the analysis and interpretation of these texts around the concept of “worlding”: “a ‘reading’ of a handful of archival material, bits of ‘the unprocessed historical record’” (Spivak 1985: 248) in a perspective that is “equally knowledgeable about the specificity of the study of history and the study of literature as institutionalized disciplines.” (ibid.: 249).

to its inhabitants (Costantino, 2004: 31). Though written in 1978, the style of the comedy tends towards *verismo*.³ Furthermore, the play highlights the enduring social, expressive and sound elements of those communities that, at the time, still attempted to resist just like many inhabited areas of Calabria (cities excluded). These attempts of resistance (even as far as language is concerned) explain why most works written in the Calabrian dialects did not make it into the wider Italian vernacular theatre – which, instead had managed to better adapt to the needs of the audience. Yet it is those very forms of cultural resistance that allow us to reconstruct the dynamics and expressive peculiarities of certain environments. The research of this and other sources began some years ago during the 8th International Symposium on Soundscape (2017) focusing on “Different Rhythms” (cf. Dattilo, 2019). During the occasion, discussed was the historical memory of the sound perception of earthquakes as it had emerged from the primary sources found in literature (1700s-1900s), and the linguistic links with organology concerning some Holy Week rituals as they occurred in certain Calabrian areas (Tucci, 1954, 2007). The analysis was later extended to the secondary sources, and this showed recurring coherent and significant descriptions of the soundscape and music as found in travel and regional literature (cf. Dattilo, 2018). During the International Year of Sound (2020-2021), the ISPC (Institute of Heritage Science) of the CNR (Italian National Research Council) introduced research proposals and results related to some projects of soundscape virtual reconstruction in certain cultural contexts. It aimed at blending philology research with literary sources (mainly ancient literature), technology, and creativity, in order to recreate the soundscapes of the past useful for the dissemination and understanding of these aspects from a historical perspective. Therefore, the analysis of such and other examples is partly intended from this viewpoint.

FLUCTUATING PERCEPTIONS IN LITERARY RECORDS

The atmospheres of most of the Italian peninsula –and more specifically of the rural and peripheral areas– were perceived by travellers as “antique”, “exotic” and in some cases “pagan” (cf. Douglas, 1915: 166). Those who travelled beyond Naples and towards the further south generally did so because of their desire to visit the sites of the *Magna Grecia* and re-invoke its splendour (Bevilacqua, 2005: 30).

The cosmopolitanism and exoticism of isolated pioneers, the 1700s concept of the “noble savage”, and even the Romantic idealisation of the pure expression of the “folk” are all problematic efforts which, in the face of unusual sound events, have engaged a Eurocentric culture that has always been more careful to visual aspects

³ In the comedies of Domenico Mosca it intertwines with realism. Perhaps this is attributable to his experience as an actor in the ‘neorealist’ cinema and his small appearances in *Prima di sera* (1953) and *I tre ladri* (1954).

rather than sound ones. The widening of the historical horizon of sound did not necessarily correspond to a more ductile perceptive capability. (Sassu, 2011: 39–40)

Nevertheless, descriptions of collective expressions are not rare to find. Indeed, if on the one hand authors such as François Lenormant use the writing experience to talk about antiquities and enact potential and imaginative time-travels; on the other, many authors push their observations towards ethnography.⁴ The latter sources include two different types: those describing collective expressions and performances related to cults, rites and celebrations, or simply referring to certain performative practices observed (or heard) during occasional events; and those that implied listening to wider sound scenarios – often conveyed through literature expedients, such as complex elaborations of personal impressions, categorisations, judgments or feelings (Lear, 1852: 66–74; Gissing, 1905: 73, 228; Pigorini-Beri, 2000: 172) that either transfigure reality or adapt to it. The traces of these literary models have helped forge a picture and a physiognomy of Southern Italy that somehow still persists in the rhetoric of the “horrors and magnificence without end” (Lear, 1852: 3; Meadow, 2017).

Furthermore, language and verbal expression – or else, the need to name something in order to bring it to life (Citraro, 2018: 128) – both stem from a listening process and from the transmission of such experience, as it is inferable from the highly specific and elaborate terminology used especially in poetry. By identifying the literary sublimation processes of the clearly distinct *signals* and *soundmarks*, it is possible to unveil and broaden these scenarios, while also favouring the implicit restoration of a narrative that simultaneously belongs to the individual and to the community.

KEY FIGURES AND BACKGROUNDS SOUNDS

The literature of the *Grand Tour* includes a series of works about journeys to Southern Italy. Recently, this has sparked interest as a transversal means in the narration about landscapes and specific areas and communities as perceived by the foreign traveller. In the specific case of Calabria, these writings cover about a century and a half, and in a way they represent a significant part of Calabrian narration; between the historiography of 1500s and 1600s by Calabrian authors such as Bernardino Bombini, Gabriele Barrio, Girolamo Marafioti, and Giovanni Fiore, and the following local literature of the early 1900s (Corrado Alvaro, Francesco Perri, Fortunato Seminara, Saverio Strati *et al.*). Together they provide a full and diachronic picture of the transformations undergone by the landscape and the social geography of Southern Italy. In the last two decades in particular, light has been shed on the works of George Gissing (*By the Jonian Sea*, 1901), Edward Lear (*A Pedestrian Tour in*

⁴ In his *Grand-Grèce*, Lenormant himself devotes a long passage to the phenomenon of tarantism, covering it from its origins until its current state. More specifically, he mentions the *carnevaletto delle donne*, that is to say the carnival of women (Lenormant, 1881: 108–114).

Calabria and Sicily, 1842), and Norman Douglas (*Old Calabria*, 1915). This also occurred given the matters related to landscape perception and, precisely, the debate on the depopulation of villages. Furthermore, there has also been an important re-edition of many texts collected in series specifically dedicated to travel literature;⁵ yet, several authors still remain unknown to the wider public. Although the descriptive incursions connected to the visual landscape have been highlighted, the evident and significant elements concerning soundscapes have been disregarded.⁶ For instance, a peculiar description can already be found in *A Tour through Sicily and Malta* by Scottish traveller Patrick Brydone (1736-1818), published in 1773. Brydone is amongst the first who visited Malta and wrote about it. During his sea voyage towards Sicily, he describes the performance of a mysterious sailor song he manages to overhear clearly owing to the good weather conditions:

A little after nine we embarked. The night was delightful; but the wind had died away about sun-set, and we were obliged to ply our oars to get into the canal of Malta. The coast of Sicily began to recede; and in a short time, we found ourselves in the ocean. There was a profound silence, except the noise of the waves breaking on the distant shore, which only served to render it more solemn. [...] The scene had naturally sunk us into meditation; we had remained near an hour without speaking a word when our sailors began their midnight hymn to the virgin. The music was simple, solemn, and melancholy, in perfect harmony with the scene, and with all our feelings. They beat exact time with their oars and observed the harmony and the cadence with the utmost precision. We listened with infinite pleasure to this melancholy concert, and felt the vanity of operas and oratorios. – There is often a solemnity and a pathetic in the modulation of these simple productions that causes a much stronger effect than the composition of the greatest masters, assisted by all the boasted rules of counter-point. At last, they sang us asleep. (Brydone, 1773: 304–305)

Some years later, in 1783, Henry Swinburne (1743-1803) –an English traveller who, between 1775 and 1779, travelled much in Spain and Southern Italy– published his *Travels in the two Sicilies*. In it, he devoted a few pages to the musical ritual practices of tarantism he witnessed in the Apulian city of Brindisi (Swinburne, 1783: 400–403), recording also his

⁵ We nevertheless cannot ignore that the first Calabrian work of historiography, *De Antiquitate et Situ Calabriae* by Gabriele Barrio (1571), still counts only one re-edition translated into Italian, edited by Erasmo A. Mancuso and published by Edizioni Brenner in 1979.

⁶ In this paper I have omitted many texts by authors who have travelled to Southern Italy, such as: Johann Wolfgang Goethe's experience in Sicily, Justus Tommasini, Richard Keppel Craven, Charles Didier, Alexandre Dumas, and Arthur John Strutt's visit to Calabria. An initial study (from an ethnomusicological perspective) on some of these authors, as well as on other local ones, can be found in Goffredo Plastino's *Suoni di carta: un'antologia sulla musica tradizionale in Calabria, 1571-1957*, which covers a longer time span.

personal observations about some bagpipers from Abruzzo and Calabria passing through Naples at Christmas time (ibid.: 92). He also described the scene of women performing the *tarantella*, and noted how their dance elucidated the male authority they are still subjected to (ibid.: 60–62). In his narration, the city of Naples in particular appears to be one filled with sounds.

Several years later, while recounting his visit to Basilicata, Edward Lear offers a significant description of the celebrations in honour of Saint Michael Archangel held in Monticchio. He records that a group of farmers performed the spiritual songs about Saint Michael's miracles in an earthly manner, and that their singing was often echoed by the brays of mules and donkeys, and by the musical accompaniment of four or five bagpipers (Lear, in Settembrino, Strazza, 2004: 112, 113). In this extract, besides swiftly describing the (earthly) *manner* of singing, Lear references the Gargano cult of Saint Michael. As already noted by Bronzini, this cult is strongly connected with Brittany (Bronzini, 1988a: 316–317), and is traceable in many areas of Southern Italy, including Monticchio (ibid.: 308). Until the beginning of the 1980s, the cult preserved its fluctuation between sacred and secular.⁷ The narration indirectly depicts the relation and the compresence of humans and animals in shared spaces, even ceremonial ones: a reality that startles Lear and many other travellers after him.⁸ This compresence is used in the local literature of the early 1900s as a motif of setting transfiguration within a “sound” atmosphere. In the work *Emigranti*, for instance, Francesco Perri uses the zoophonies as opposed to “noisy” settings plagued by technological progress – a development viewed as a sign of unquestionable alienation,⁹ rather than as the end of aristocratic “feudal” oppression.

Even the reports of Italian geologists and geographers, who travelled towards the regions of Basilicata and Calabria around 1880 for important inspections, include few scattered news and vast descriptive passages. Indeed, during some research in the valley of Sinni in 1875, the engineer Giovanni Battista Bruno (originally from Basilicata) delineates the sound

⁷ For further information on the cult of Saint Michael and the sacred repertoire, see Bronzini, 1988a, 1988b, and Telesca, 1998. Bronzini himself reports the song of Monticchio called “La cantata a Monticchio” (108) (Bronzini, 1984: 568–569): *I monaci fratelli del silenzio / vennero ai due laghi occhi del cielo / che si sono posati sulla terra. / Occhi del cielo, occhi del cinghiale / aperti ai mille colori del sole*, etc. (The monks, brothers of the silence / came to the two lakes, the eyes of the sky / laid down on earth. / Eyes of the sky, eyes of the boar / open to the thousand colours of the sun, etc.) in De Vita, 1984: 241, which refers to the pilgrimage in honour of Saint Michael Archangel recorded in the early 80s. There are two references: a first one about the “distinguishing presence” of the zampogna and ciaramella players (ibid.: 234); and a second about the practice of performing “improper” songs: *L'amore è una rosella, Quel mazzolin di fiori, Viva l'amore, Quanti è bello lu primo ammore, Romagna mia, Marina, O campagnola bella, Volavo la lucardillo*, and many folk songs of this sort (namely, *stornelli*).

⁸ “There was no time to be lost, and having persevered in obtaining a light in spite of this disagreeable interruption, I jumped off the bed, and with a stick thrust hastily and hardly below the bed, to put the intruder, ghostly or bodily, onto fair fighting ground, — Baa—aa—a! — Shade of Mrs. Radcliffe! It was the large dirty tame sheep! So I forthwith opened a door into the next room, and bolted out the domestic tormentor” Cf. Lear, 1852: 189.

⁹ Cf. Perri, 1945: 33, and Dattilo, 2018: 27–28, 34–35, 97–102, to deepen the features related to Francesco Perri's spaces of narration, related to zoophonies, music and sound, and to the use of Italian language and dialects.

panorama: “nel silenzio della maestosa ed imponente foresta [...], rotto di tanto in tanto dal tintinnio di qualche campana di vacche e per una sol volta da un colpo di archibugio tirato contro un caprio” (Settembrino, Strazza, 2004: 168).¹⁰ Some lines later, his narration focuses on the significant act of lighting a bonfire¹¹ within a ceremonial setting:

Sopraggiunta la notte, dormirono “all’aperto” dando fuoco ad “una immensa pira di tronchi di abete”, alimentata sino al mattino, tra balli e canti “nella spianata trasformata in una sala da ballo”. “Il morbidissimo tappeto venne in tutti i modi pestato e ripestato dai pastori che, al suono della cornamusa grottescamente contorcendosi e saltando mostravano di aver tenuto molto da conto la qualità [...] del vino” [...].¹² (Settembrino, Strazza, 2004: 169)

The description of such a type of scenarios can also be found in the first works of Corrado Alvaro. His narrative often uses *grandeurs*, coming on the one hand from his own perception of the natural soundscape; and on the other from his experience of and participation in performance moments linked with rituals and religious ceremonies in the mountains of the Aspromonte. More specifically, I am referring to performance related to the healing rituals held at the sanctuary of Polsi, where ordinary time seems to come at a halt:¹³

Per quella turba magna, non basta né il convento né le case della comunità, né le capanne, e si sceglie ognuno il suo posto sotto i boschi. [...] C’è quello che spiega, su un cartello dipinto a quadri successivi, le gesta dei Paladini; c’è la frotta degli zingari, la sonnambula, i carabinieri che fanno paura ai vendicatori e agli innamorati respinti. E si vedono le mille facce delle Calabrie. La chiesa è spalancata, la gente vi si pigia a poco per volta; presso l’altare i muti vogliono parlare, i ciechi vedere, gl’infermi guarire. Le donne intorno dicono le parole più lusinghiere alla Madonna, perché si commuova. Arrivano gli animali infiocchettati che si donano per voto, e cadono sulle ginocchia perché sembra che capiscano anche loro. Viene il mulo carico di grano e di vino, le caprette coi loro campani, che suonano. [...] Si sta là dentro come in una conchiglia piena del rombo della folla come d’un mare; la terra pestata dai balli che si intrecciano in ogni angolo di strada, su tutta

¹⁰ Translation: “in the silence of the majestic and grandiose forest [...], occasionally interrupted by the jingling of cowbells, and only once by a harquebus fired at a buck”.

¹¹ For more information on bonfires in ritual ceremonies, see Buttitta, 2002.

¹² Translation: “At night, they slept outdoors, lit an ‘immense pyre of spruce trunks’ and fed it until morning, while singing and dancing ‘on a clearing turned into a ballroom’. The extremely soft carpet was constantly trod upon by shepherds who, wriggling and jumping grotesquely at the sound of the bagpipe, showed much appreciation for the quality [...] of the wine [...]”.

¹³ For further information on the sound and cultural horizons of San Luca (RC) as it emerges from the works of Alvaro, see Plastino, 1991: 141–161.

la piazza, sotto una porta, sotto un albero, fa un rumore come se vi si gramolasse tutto il lino della terra, si macinasse tutto il grano. Nuove turbe arrivano d'ora in ora, sparando e gridando, in quella terra promessa.¹⁴ (Alvaro, 1912)

Around the same time, Norman Douglas – who ventured in Southern Italy between 1907 and 1911– devotes a chapter of his *Old Calabria* (1915) to the *Mountain Festivals*, and describes them as a relic of ancient paganism.¹⁵ More specifically, he narrates his witnessing of the celebrations in honour of the Madonna of the Pollino, held on a “spacious green meadow, at the foot of a precipice. [...] now covered with encampments in anticipation of to-morrow’s festival, and the bacchanal is already in full swing. Very few foreigners, they say, have attended this annual feast, which takes place on the first Saturday and Sunday of July” (Douglas, 1915: 151). These encampments persist in the pilgrimages in honour of Saint Michael Archangel that took place between Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria until the 1980s (De Vita, 1984).

In a narrative by Edward Lear –set in Southern Calabria, and precisely near the town of Palizzi– the reader often encounters a bagpiper who “accompanies” inhabitants returning home at nightfall.¹⁶ Some years later, those same scenarios reappear in the travel writings by the Italian traveller and ethnographer Caterina Pigorini-Beri (1845-1924), specifically in a work titled *In Calabria. Passeggiate*, published in 1883 in *Nuova Antologia* together with

¹⁴ Translation: “Neither the convent nor the houses of the community suffice that great crowd; therefore, each choose their spot under the woods. [...] There, one finds a man narrating the achievements of paladins, depicted on boards painted in sequence; one finds the swarm of gypsies, the sleepwalker, the guards scaring away avengers and rejected lovers. There, one also finds the thousand faces of Calabria. The church is wide open, people slowly cram into it; near the altar, the mutes long for words, the blind for vision, the ill for recovery. The women, enveloped around the Madonna, address her with the most pleasing words in order to move her [heart]. The embellished ex-voto animals arrive, and fall on their knees as if they too understand what is happening. Then, comes the mule loaded with wheat and wine, and the goats with their bells jingling. [...] Everyone dwells in that space as if in a shell, a shell filled with the rumble of the crowd as if it were filled with the sea; the earth, trod upon by the dance intertwining at every corner of the streets, in the entire square, under a door, under a tree, (this earth) produces a noise, as if it hosts the kneading of all the flax in the world, the grinding of all the wheat. New crowds arrive by the hour, firing and shouting, in that promised land.”

¹⁵ This part highlights the differences in opinion between the locals “The same stern men [...] declare that such nocturnal festivals are a disgrace to civilization [...]” and the author: “Festivals like this are relics of paganism, and have my cordial approval. We English ought to have learnt by this time that the repression of pleasure is a dangerous error” (Douglas, 1915: 153).

¹⁶ Lear passes through Condofuri, and reaches Palizzi “a most singular town, built round an isolated rock commanding one of the many narrow valleys opening to the sea”. During his exploration of the lower part of the town (of which we still have some sketches published in Lear, 1852: 49), he proceeds towards the Calabrian Greek village of Pietrapennata, north of Palizzi, towered by Staiti: “above us on the opposite side of a deep dark gully, filled with wondrous groups of giant ilex”. In describing what he sees and hears, Lear strongly focuses on the elements that, in his opinion, represent the territory: “As we slowly toiled up to this most strange place, wholly Calabrese in aspect, with its houses jammed and crushed among extraordinary crevices, its churches growing out of solitary rocks, and (what forms the chief characters of these towns) all its dwellings standing singly—the Zampognari were playing, and all the peasant population thronging upwards to their evening rest” (ibid.: 50).

other travel narratives about her surveys in Calabria. Near the city of Cosenza, and more precisely in the whereabouts of the Rovito's Valley, she witnesses the performance of a song (voice and bagpipe), and so describes an Arcadian scene, giving the whole lyrics both in Italian and in the dialect of Cosenza.¹⁷ From holding a key role in celebration scenarios (or else, in a context where the group reaffirms its social belonging) to becoming a secluded and almost iconographic element left out of social turmoil (cf. Dattilo, 2018: 33), the bagpiper swifts from centre stage to the background: “Sul pendio ripido e roccioso dove il borgo era appollaiato [...] nel buio si levavano delle voci umane lunghe, un po' lugubri, come richiami di animali selvatici [...] Veniva anche il suono di qualche zampogna”¹⁸ (Perri, 1945: 228).

A RANGE OF SOUNDS: PERSONIFICATIONS, SOUNDMARKS, AND COMMON GESTURES

Texts dating from the 1900s still show an idealised contrast between the urban sound setting (ordinary, structured, organised and “noisy”) and the rural one (sublime, extraordinary, indistinct, shapeless, and most certainly “sonorous”). Yet, in poetry and traditional songs, nature and its sounds are often expressed as if constituting a threat to life. Looking at dictionaries published in the past century we find a series of nouns, adjectives and verbs all referring to natural elements, which illustrate the depth of the daily practice of listening.¹⁹ “Soundful” catastrophic events can be recovered in the names of Calabrian musical

¹⁷ Cf. *Nuova antologia...* 1883: 75: “E intanto sull'alto del colle un giovinetto calabrese sonava la zampogna: vicino a lui pascolavano le capre affettuose e le pecorelle ingenue: egli era seduto sopra un tronco d'ulivo rovesciato e stendeva le sue gambe nude penzoloni sul vallo. Vicino a lui un altro cantava [...]. La melodia mesta e lunga giungeva a me con le parole incerte e confuse del dialetto: la zampogna rauca e nasale con il suo ventre pieno d'aria accompagnava il dolcissimo canto: *Jancacchiu de la carta dilicata / Russa come lo milo de luvierno: / La mamma che ti fece fu na fata / E ti mantenne de buono cuvierno: / Ti fece sta vuccuccia aggraziata / Ché sette mele e manna astate o vierno / Si sta vuccuzza tua forrie vaciata / N'anima caccherie de intra lu 'nfierno*”. Translation: “And in the meantime, on a hilltop, a young Calabrian boy played the bagpipe. Beside him the devoted goats and naive sheep grazed. He sat on an upside-down olive tree trunk, and he stretched out his bare legs leaving them to dangle upon the vale. Nearby, another boy sang. The long and melancholic melody reached me with unsure and confused dialect words: the rough and nasal bagpipe, its womb filled with air, accompanied the song: *Whiter than the most delicate paper / Redder than the apple of winter / The mother who gave birth to you was a fairy / and she gave you a proper education: / She gave you such a graceful mouth / that it is seven apples of manna [in] summer or winter / If such a mouth would receive a kiss / it would free a soul from hell.*”

¹⁸ Translation: “On the steep and rocky decline where the village was settled [...] in the darkness [of the night], like the call of wild animals rose some stretched and slightly gloomy human voices [...]. With them, also came the sound of bagpipes”.

¹⁹ At this point, I refer the reader to check some terms, most of which onomatopoeic and no longer in use, included in Marzano, 1928: 32, *Ad*; 91, *Catriculu*; 101, *Cichiti*; 108, *Coclò*; 118, *Cu-cu*; 119, *Cuccuvèju* (‘owl’, Gr. *κουκουβαία* or *κουκουβαγία*). A great range of terms was used to describe the type of winds (cf. Marzano, 1928: 295, 339, 353, in Dattilo, 2018: 25–26).

instruments (*rummu* meaning roar, *tirrimutu* meaning earthquake, cf. Tucci, 1954–1955, 2007; Dattilo, 2019), as well as in literature, in memory and in the stereotyped and mythological image related to these cataclysms (Pigorini-Beri, 2000: 141).

At a local level, literary critics find that, in the insurgency for a stylistic independence (Chiodo, 2014: 282),²⁰ the presence and the personification of elements reappear in local poetry and in prose. The *soundmark* of the sirocco wind, named *sbaflagnu* or *vralali* (Marzano, 1928: 353; Rohlfs, 1977: 903) makes an infernal music, as if produced by the instruments constituting an entire orchestra (Chiodo, 2014: 282); while in the Gargano area in Apulia, during the rough winters, the wind called Lucifer paves the way for tales of witches. (Alvaro, 1995: 214)²¹

According to Chiodo (2014: 17), the poet tends to use dialect in order to introduce the psychology of characters and delve into it, while simultaneously introducing the folds featured in the main characters of an “inner” town. This position could also apply to certain works of folk theatre. Indeed, in the comedy *Frischijamu* (1978) by Domenico Mosca and written in the dialect of Stalettì, the *ruga* is the common space for expression that dwells in the author’s memory:

the *ruga* directly or indirectly becomes part of solo songs as a spatial representation of the microcosm of social activities, bonds, relationships and communications. The *ruga* is inhabited by neighbours and not by relatives, that is by other family groups with which it is possible to share a certain level of intimacy despite the complete absence of blood relationships. In the *ruga* –and this was still the case not long ago– the elderly used to sit outside and tell stories in the shade during summer evenings, while the children played, under strict control of their own families, and got to know one another. In that physical space one could encounter a future wife or husband, and this explains why the songs of the *ruga* (*canti di la ruga*) were often love songs expressing the essence of this microcosm that, in turn, represented both the time and space of that same social group within a strong hierarchical context. (Dattilo, 2020: 66)

²⁰ Carmine Chiodo is referring to Fortunato Seminara, but I believe this level of autonomy could be extended to many other Calabrian writers and poets; an autonomy that, in my opinion, should not be read as an exclusion from cultural and literary movements, but as a lyrical exclusiveness that, if anything, denotes a peculiar relation between the individual (who writes) and their environment (experienced and intimately perceived by authors).

²¹ The personification of natural elements and birds (particularly the eagle and the partridge), and the assignment of symbolic values, occurs in Pigorini-Beri’s descriptions of bridal abductions within the nuptial contexts of Calabria’s Albanian communities (*Nuova antologia*, 1883: 712–713). Furthermore, for Alvaro it represents a “call of love, like those of birds and wild beasts, a deaf whistle like that of the summer crickets” (Alvaro, 1995: 214); see also De Grazia, 1889: 56–59.

Stalettì's *ruge* are the spaces where the objects marking the surface of the community –and still indispensable for its subsistence– acquire the body of a human voice. It is the case of the talking fountain which, in this text, embodies the most basic infrastructural problems still afflicting Calabria at the end of the 1970s:²²

Domenico: L'acqua. On bola u scinda. Aiu chidda funtana chi para n'orfanedda. L'adrujornu a guardai e para ca mi dicia: cchiù mi guardi e cchiù mi sentu rispettusa.²³ O no vidi caciangiu senza lacrimi; e avarissi e sapira quanti mi dispiacia e tia u ti viju girara u paisa paisa cu ssu coddareddu. Ma eu on ti pozzu fara nenta. Quando vena u vernu ti dugnu acqua cchiù c'anda voi. Mo su ccà pe viduta; pè scornu meu e pe raggia tua. / Concetta: Dicia ca mò a liberannu nu jornu sì e unu no [...].²⁴ (Mosca, 1978: 9)

As it happens with Mosca, other authors choose to use dialect in order to fully express the daily relations and problems experienced by people of the same environment.²⁵ Excluding a few instances where he resorts to some archaic words discovered by conversing with the elderly women of his birth-town, the language Mosca decides to use is that of the family and, therefore, the language of childhood (to quote Pier Paolo Pasolini). This choice is made either to generate sound insertions, by adapting to dialect some terms that result from conceptualisations (for instance, the Italian word for car horn *clacson* becomes *craxi*);²⁶ or to highlight the topical moments marking a territory, such as: bell tolls that track the time

²² Towards the end of the 1930s, before the introduction of aqueducts and fountains in residential areas, it was common for water peddlers in many Calabrian towns and County Seats to shout: *cui voli varliri aò*, (Ahoy! who wants a barrel of water?) (Marzano, 1928: 32). This clearly denotes that there were no public water supplies. See also *L'acqua*, in Alvaro, 1995: 3–7, a chapter of *Itinerario italiano*, and an actual ethnological fantasy about a town that had longed for water for over a century [...] (Onofri, in Alvaro, 1995: XIV), and that –after obtaining the aqueduct– forgets how it used to overlook its thirst at the sound, carried about by the wind, of the waterfalls of mills and sawmills (ibid.: 7).

²³ This form (*rispettusa*) is a printing error. The right word is *dispettusa* 'spiteful'.

²⁴ Translation: Domenico: "Water. It doesn't want to come down. I've got that fountain that seems a little orphan. The other day, I looked at it and it seemed as if saying: the more you look at me, the more I feel spiteful. Don't you see I cry without tears? And you should know how sad it makes me to see you walking around the town with this bucket. Alas, I can't do anything for you. When winter comes, I'll give you more water than you'll ever need. Yet now, I'm only here for show; for my own mockery and for your anger". / Concetta: "They say from now on they'd have freed her day on and day off [...]"

²⁵ Vittorio Butera (1877-1955) stated that his attraction to dialect poetry arose because of his love for the first language he had learned from his mother; because it is a language filled with words, and because it allows to express thought in a sculptural way as its roughness makes it appear as an individual that is male and agreeable. (cf. Chiodo, 2014: 7, footnotes 1 and 11). Furthermore, there are some manuscript pages by Mosca himself in which the author indistinctively and simultaneously uses Italian language and the Stalettì dialect.

²⁶ Cf. footnote 47, *infra*.

(Mosca, 1978: 22) or signal death with the so called *u mortorio* sound (ibid.: 11–12) that becomes *soundmarks* in a town moving towards strong depopulation:

GIUSEPPE: *Li guai de la fortuna sugnu nenta, quantu no mmu sona la campana!*

(Si sente suonare un mortorio)

TERESA: *Nu Mortorio!*

CONCETTA: *E veru! Cu sapa cu muriu.*

DOMENICO: *U matrimoniu meu.*

[...]

GIUSEPPE: *Pò essera puru ca moriu ncunu all'estaru; ntà Svizzera o ntà Germania, nte Stati Uniti o ntò Cannatà, all'Argentina o a lu Brasili o all'Australia. Nu paisa picciuli comu u nostru stravijau i figghi soi nte tuttu u mundu.*

CONCETTA: *Però è bellu. Dopu chi unu emigra e passa a vita sua all'estaru, quandu mora u li sonanu u mortoriu dova nesciu. È nu ricordu pe tutti i paisani. Poi nu scordamu e passa nto libru e l'Eternu.*

[...]

DOMENICO: *Si continuamu e stu passu nto paisa resta unu sulu: chiddu chi sona u mortoriu.*²⁷

And also peddlers working on the streets, in particular the *ciciaredda* (baby anchovies) street vendor crying off-stage (Mosca, 1978: 26),

*Fuori scena: Ciciaredda! Ciciaredda! Arrivau a ciciaredda! On da voliti ciciaredda! Accattativi a ciciaredda o n'indajamu!*²⁸

and funeral marches performed by bands (ibid.: 25) – all of which emerge as *soundmark* within a Mediterranean soundscape.²⁹

²⁷ Translation: “Giuseppe: Fate’s troubles are nothing, so long as the bell doesn’t toll! (Sound of a bell toll signalling death, the so-called *mortorio*) // Teresa: A *Mortorio!* // Concetta: True! Who knows who’s died? // Domenico: My matrimony [...]. // Giuseppe: It could also be that someone has died abroad: in Switzerland or Germany, in the United States or Canada, in Argentina or Brasil or Australia. A town as small as ours has spread its own children all around the world. // Concetta: It’s wonderful, though. After people emigrate and live abroad for all their life, when they die, the bells toll the *mortorio* there where they were born. It’s a way for all those still living in the town to remember [them]. Then, we forget them and they move on towards the book of the Eternal. [...] // Domenico: If we carry on like this, there will only be one person left in the town: the one that lets the bell toll the *mortorio*”.

²⁸ Translation: Off-stage: “Baby Anchovies! Baby Anchovies! We bring baby anchovies! Do you want any baby anchovies? Buy some baby anchovies or we’ll leave.”

²⁹ Henry Swinburne devotes an entire chapter to bells. In them, he examines their history and use (from their origins until modern times) in the pastoral and military settings (Swinburne, 1783: 98, 150). For further information on the use and values attributed to bells and cowbells, see Bonanzinga, 2000.

FRISCHJAMU BY DOMENICO MOSCA: SOME LINGUISTIC
OBSERVATIONS

Published in 1978 and written in dialect, the comedy *Frischjiamu* bears a title that is evocative in itself: because of the Mediterranean setting and sense of community it portrays, and because of the first-person plural and choice of verb semantics.³⁰ More than developing a well-defined plot, the comedy portrays a series of separate pictures that are, so to say, juxtaposed by the author. The narrative cue is Giuseppe and Concetta's attempt to combine a match between a widow and a widower: Teresa and Domenico. Around this topic –which, again, is merely a fictional pretext– Mosca sketches a series of scenes that are typical of the *ruga*: scenes that allow to recall personal experiences, village gossips, obscene jests, jokes and witticisms. Indeed, this is exactly what *frischijare* means: surrendering to chitchat, talking about this and that in order to try and forget the powerful heat affecting the body.

Resorting to the categorisation introduced by Trumper and Maddalon (1988) in their attempt to describe the linguistic situation in Calabria, then further developed in Trumper (1997) who divides the linguistic partition of the Calabrian territory into four groups, we could place the dialect used by Domenico Mosca within the third group of such a classification.³¹ More specifically, it is the dialect of Stalettì, a town in the province of Catanzaro and right in the middle of the Gulf of Squillace.³² Unlike other Italian regions, Calabria does not enjoy a lengthy tradition of dialect-written texts: this, of course, is due the fact that Calabrian dialects have never been used for bureaucratic or institutional contexts; while, as far as literature is concerned, it is due to the lack of a driving force so strong as to impose a reference model (*infra*). Thus, when it comes to lettering, all authors wishing to write in any Calabrian dialect –no matter the topic– are confronted with a missing fixed reference-norm. In this regard, Maddalon (2017) stresses the difference between the dialects of Sicily and Calabria by referencing Camilleri's words on Meli:

Da questo brano quello che emerge è, oltre la consapevolezza e la riflessione linguistica di Camilleri, la possibilità per i siciliani di disquisire di modelli alti; non è questa la sede per ricordare il peso di Meli nella storia della lingua in Sicilia, ma va invece rimarcata la differenza con quella calabrese che, quando produce figure rilevanti, lo fa in ambiti circoscritti e non validi per tutta la regione.

³⁰ Indeed, in *Nuovo Dizionario dialettale della Calabria*, the term *frischiare* is defined as: “pigliare il fresco, porsiall' ombra” (enjoying the cool shade, finding shelter in the shade), while the word *frischia* as “fa fresco” (‘it is cool, chilly’) (Rohlf, 1996: 279).

³¹ The dialect groups are established according to certain shared linguistic phenomena. If interested, the reader may check the referenced works which include a detailed description of the linguistic phenomena from which the division stems, as well as the language maps tracing the physical limits of the identified groups.

³² Trumper, Maddalon, 1988. See also: Trumper, 1997; Maddalon, 2009; Trumper, 2016.

Localmente – pensiamo al Cenacolo apriglianese il cui membro più conosciuto è certamente Domenico Piro detto ‘Duonnu Pantu’– i personaggi, i prodotti e la natura delle riflessioni sono spesso di ottimo livello e importanti per le ‘storie’ linguistiche della Calabria. I tentativi dei membri del Cenacolo e di amici di altre ‘accademie’, ad esempio, di intraprendere una prima traduzione, o meglio un rifacimento, del Secondo Canto della Gerusalemme del Tasso in calabrese settentrionale (pre-silano), per ‘testare’ la bontà di ogni singola versione, sono di certo rilevanti.³³ (Maddalon, 2017: 82)

This means that in Calabria, there is no propulsive centre capable of generating a model so strong as to impose itself as the norm. This absence is the reason why, when asked to transfer into writing what they master orally, dialect speakers are forced to resort to impromptu strategies (for specific references on this issue, and specifically as far as Calabrian dialects are concerned, see Chillà, Citraro, 2010: 204).³⁴

Hence, it is no surprise that similar phenomena can also be found in Mosca’s text, alongside instances of: different ways to spell a same term, as in the case of³⁵ *a ricchili ricchi* (21, ‘ears’), *vidarissilbidarissi* (25, ‘you would see’), *mfamulmpamilmpamu* (34, ‘scoundrel’), *telefanultelefanu* (40, ‘telephone’); erroneous segmentation of the phonic chain as evident in

³³ Translation: “Besides Camilleri’s deep knowledge of language and his reflexion on it, this text shows that the discussion of high models is possible in Sicily. Though this is no right place to recall Meli’s role in the history of language in Sicily, it is important to stress a difference with the case of Calabria: indeed, when relevant writers develop in this last region, these are meaningful only to a restricted sphere and not to the entire region. At a local level –and we could recall, for instance, the Cenacle of Aprigliano, whose most renowned member is of course Domenico Piro called ‘Duonnu Pantu’– the characters, results and nature of the reflexions are often extremely valid, and they are relevant to the language ‘histories’ of Calabria. For instance, the efforts –by the members of the Cenacle and by friends belonging to other ‘academies’ who wished to ‘test’ the soundness of each single version– to translate, or else rewrite the Second Canto of Tasso’s *Jerusalem Delivered* in northern Calabrian dialect (more specifically, in the Presila area), all seem to be positively relevant attempts”. The analysis of the situation of Calabrian theatre, undertaken by Trumper and Maddalon (2003: 179) is particularly relevant to our work: “When thinking about Italian plays in dialect, one spontaneously thinks about the Neapolitan one, or the Venetian, the Ligurian, the Tuscan one; yet, nobody –besides those who inhabit the region itself– refers to the Calabrian one”.

³⁴ While stressing the limitations of the dialect enquiries carried out via mail, Grassi, Sobrero, and Telmon (2005: 272) had already identified phonetic and phonological items as sore spots, since this type of research acquired data whose interpretation was left exclusively to the informants. Writing in dialect proved to be difficult not only for those who spoke it regularly, but also for professional authors: some instances can be found in the novels by Domenico Dara, as observed by Maddalon (2017: 75) in relation to use of two different spellings for the word for ‘woman’: *fimmanal fimmina*.

³⁵ From this point onwards, the quotations taken from the texts will be written by signalling their page of appearance in brackets. Furthermore, the expressions in dialect are included here as they appear in the text, without any kind of addition or revision. Again, I would like to remark that this examination that does not intend to be neither systematic nor thorough: it merely wants to identify some linguistic phenomena included in Mosca’s text and highlight what makes them interesting.

the use of *l'inda* instead of *li nda* (8, 'you have [talked to her] about it'), *q'ua* instead of *qua* (28, 'with the'), *da Merica* instead of *d(a) America* (14, 'from America'), *s'amanera* instead of *samanera* (17, 'this way'), *s'indajiu* instead of *sindajiu* (41, 'she went [to]'), *m'ungessaru* instead of *mu 'ngessaru* (41, 'they've put in a plaster cast'), and *l'ha de vira* instead of *l'ha d'evira* (30, 'she should have [it]').

The text also includes instances where the actual production of a nasal consonant before a voiced bilabial plosive is expressed correctly in the case of a single word, but not so in terms of phonotaxis: see the instance of *mbecia* 'instead' compared to *on bidi* 'don't you see' at page 14:

TERESA: *A Micu, mbecia u cunti fissarii, pecchì on bidi si nc'è ncunu ziteddu pe mmu vaci u m'accatta u sala.*³⁶

there is a further example of the phenomenon, also at page 14, in *on bogghiu* 'I don't want' compared with *mbidia*, 'envy'. Similar examples give rise to two remarks: the first is that speakers, when it comes to the phono-syntactic chain, tend not to be aware of their production; the second is the idea that, in such cases, lettering choices are strongly driven by standard-Italian norms. In addition, the text of comedy provides data sparking an interest not only in terms of phonetics and phonology (and more specifically of their written representation), but also in terms of morphology, syntax, lexicon and semantics. Further instances include phenomena relating to level interfaces, as it is the case with vowel coalescence: *accattamu nu pocu* instead of *a accatumu nu pocu* (26, 'shall we buy a bit [of it]'), and *su vippa* instead of *su u vippa* (41, 'she drank it').³⁷

As for morphological features, the items included in the text allow a deeper and more detailed definition of the situation of verbal morphology in Calabria. Certain types are quite renowned, like the conditional *porria* (25, 'he could').³⁸ Others instead, being non-macroscopic phenomena scarcely or by no means described in literature, are not as known. More specifically, it is the case of the *-a* suffix used to conjugate the first-person singular of

³⁶ Translation: "TERESA: Oh Domenico, why don't you go have a look if there's a child who can go buy the salt, instead of saying such silly things".

³⁷ Prantera-Mendicino (2013) analyse cases in which this phenomenon occurs in the presence of complementisers. The syntactic strategies achieved through such complementisers, in the variety analysed here – namely, that which counterbalances the so-called "unpopularity of the infinite" – are well documented even in *Frischijamu* (for reference, see the interaction between the characters of Teresa and Concetta at page 7: "TERESA: *A mia mi piaccia u staiusula*. CONCETTA: *Sarria megghiu u v'accasati cu cumpara Micu*. TERESA: *Eu on voggghiu genti ammenzu i pedi*. *Genti c'aiu u mi lavu, u mi stiru e u mi rapezzu [...]*". Translation: "TERESA: I like being on my own. CONCETTA: It'd be best for you to marry Master Domenico. TERESA: I don't want anyone in my way. People I'd have to wash, iron and mend for [...]"). As previously stated, according to Trumper and Maddalon 1988, the absence of infinitival strategies is a defining feature for the third group of Calabrian dialects.

³⁸ An innovative form compared to the common conditional tense ending in *-erral-era* (Maddalon, 2009: 8).

the remote-past tense (*passato remoto*):³⁹ (*eu vinna* (7, ‘I arrived’), (*eu ntisa* (19, ‘I heard’), or (*eu dezza* (46, ‘I gave’). There are further elements that raise an interest in terms of syntax, like the repetition of the noun for ‘town’ to express what in Italian is called *complemento di moto per luogo*.⁴⁰ Thus, the expression *u paisa paisa* (literally ‘the town town’; in 9, *u ti viju girara u paisa paisa*, ‘[the fact that] I see you walking around town’) wants to convey the idea of someone walking through/around town.

The comedy overflows with wordplays, allusions, impactful closing statements, sayings and idioms that, although still used, are not generally documented in lexicography. This abundance can easily be explained by resorting to the comical genre to which *Frischjiamu* belongs (one would say in the wake of Italic peoples’ best tradition, though not limited to it). There are instances of impactful closing statements achieved through phrasemes (*infra*) such as: *e bona notta a li passari!* (8, ‘what will be will be!’); or through *adynata* used in the contexts of fast interactions, as exemplified in the following extracts:

TERESA: *Quandu u sula tramunta e matina.*

GIUSEPPE: *All’ottavu jornu da settimana o u trentadui do misa chi trasa.* (34)⁴¹

and:

NICOLA: *Rimetti*⁴² *vor dira c’a mmu mi duni i centuliri.*

CONCETTA: *E mina, mina, cà nu jornu e chissi ti duna.*

GIUSEPPE: *Quandu u sula nescia e sira.*

TERESA: *Quandu Pasqua cada e marti.*⁴³ (46)

As for lexical analysis, the initial focus is on single words and specific meanings. Then, it moves on to units that include more words⁴⁴ and distinguishes them in: multi-word units (which feature a certain level of fixation), sayings (which combine fixity with gnomic value),

³⁹ In Italian language, the “*passato remoto*” is a specific type of past tense.

⁴⁰ In Italian language, the “*complementi di luogo*” are grammatical complements used to express movement, or to state where something is taking place. In particular, the so-called “*moto per luogo*” is used to express movement through, along or around something.

⁴¹ Translation: “TERESA: When the sun will set in the morning. GIUSEPPE: On the eighth day of the week or on the thirty-second day of the month after this”.

⁴² The word *Rimetti* is a reference to the Catholic prayer *Our Father*. More specifically, it recalls the lines: “*Rimetti a noi i nostri debiti, come noi li rimettiamo ai nostri debitori*”, which are said in English as “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”. However, the verb *rimettere* also means ‘to restore something to its former condition’. Therefore, in this case, the character plays with word by inviting his interlocutor to give him back his money in order to put them back where they belong: with him.

⁴³ Translation: “NICOLA: “*Condono*” means you have to return my hundred *lire* to me. CONCETTA: Sure, you carry on insisting and he’ll definitely return them to you. GIUSEPPE: When the sun will rise in the evening. TERESA: When Easter will fall on a Tuesday”.

⁴⁴ This paper shall not focus on the debated notion of “word” or on the analysis of unit in semantics; hence, I refer the interested reader to Ježek, 2011, to mention but one.

apotropaic expressions (which feature a certain level of fixity alongside a magic value) and idiomatic expressions (which do not only feature fixity, but also a global non-compositional meaning).⁴⁵ The text of the comedy includes some terms that now – that is to say forty years after its publishing – are no longer in use (for example 15, *tata*, ‘papà’):

PASQUALE: [...] *Eu, a mamma e u tata stacimu ncampagna e avimu a casedda vicinu a strata.*⁴⁶

It also contains words that are not included in the NDDC Dictionary (10, *suparu*), or that belong to an area that is not the one this study focuses on (it is the case of 14, *strambottu*, that Rohlfs exclusively relates to the area of Reggio Calabria).⁴⁷ There are even words taken from other languages and adapted to Italian morphology (13, *bisinnessi*; and 40, *craxi*; respectively meaning ‘business’ and ‘horn’);⁴⁸ as well as terms imported and assimilated from Italian itself (42, *attrosi* instead of *artrosi*). Similarly, in some occasions, the text allows to infer a semantic sense that is not mentioned in the reference lexicography: it is the case of *passiara* (8, used transitively in the expression *passiara i seggi* or else, to carry the chairs back and forth), *viduta* (9, ‘just to be noticed/seen’), *liberannu* (9, ‘open the floodgates’), *ossigianu addemuratu* (16, ‘gone bad, rottened’):

PASQUALE: *Ma chiddu è ossigianu de bumbuli, ossigianu addemuratu.*⁴⁹

The text of the comedy includes many instances of multi-word expressions. Here are some examples: *a chi mundu arrivamma, figghjoli mei!* (22, ‘oh my, what has it come to!’), *è penzeri u meu!* (26, ‘it is my business now!’ or else ‘leave it to me’), *ccà sulu simu abbandunati e Diu e de Santi* (31, ‘only this place has been forsaken by God and the Saints’), *mi para mill’anni* (18, ‘it seems as if a thousand years must go by before [...]’), *quantu onora chi mi duni!* (32, ‘what honours you grant me!’), *comu quandu chi* (39, ‘as if’),⁵⁰ *a tenami ca caju* (33, ‘grab hold of me ’cause I’m about to fall’, used when speaking of something so badly crafted, it hardly stands), *ca chiddu è u guai [...]* (38, ‘that is exactly the problem’, usually

⁴⁵ For the features of idiomatic expressions, see Croft, Cruse, 2004: 230.

⁴⁶ Translation: “PASQUALE: [...] My mum, dad and I live in the country, and our little house is near the road.”

⁴⁷ Rohlfs (1996⁵: 691) quoting Malara, 1909.

⁴⁸ Indeed in Italian the word *clacson* is referred to hooters. It is explained in Battisti C., Alessio G., *Dizionario Etimologico Italiano* (Vol. I, 972, col. B) as follows: “*clacson*, m. XX sec.; apparecchio sonoro, avvisatore negli autoveicoli; ingl. *klaxon* (1914), cf. fr. *klakson*, *klaxon* (in origine nome di una marca di fabbrica)”. However, this loanword has been not successful in all languages (for example, the word horn is preferred to *clacson* in the English language).

⁴⁹ Translation: “PASQUALE: But the oxygen in dolls is stale oxygen.”

⁵⁰ DOMENICO: “*No! A comu quandu chi non bolia dira a virgogna.*” Translation: “No! As if he wouldn’t want to state the shame”.

followed by an explanatory sentence), *pe dispettu e cui non bola* (36, ‘to spite those who don’t want [...]’), *A focumeu! A mammaredda mia!* (36, ‘Oh gosh! Oh my!’). The reader also finds many sayings which, as a reflection of conventional wisdom, provide the text with a more sententious tone: *si a mbidia nesciaria e fora tutti quanti avarivamu a guaddara* (14, ‘if envy could show itself, many of us would have hernia’), *duva cacci e non menti resta u vacanta* (19, ‘if you take something without replacing it, there will be nothing left’), *senza sordi non s’inda cantanu missi* (19, ‘you can’t request a mass if you don’t pay for it’), *pota sbagghiara u ciucciu c’ava a testa tanta randa, e non pozzu sbagghiara eu chi l’aiu cchiù picciula* (20, ‘so a donkey, with its big head, is allowed to make mistakes and I –with my little head– am not allowed to?’). The use of the verbal form *pota*, included in the previously-mentioned sentence, sparks an interest since it is more conservative than other verbs still in use, especially with the connotation ‘to bear, to support’. Anyhow, to continue and conclude the previous list of instances, there are: *ogni Spiratu leva in Domini!* (34, ‘each Holy Spirit rises to God’, which means that the overall success of something depends on the contribution of each component), *sta mpacia unu finu a chi bola n’addru* (36, ‘one is alright only until the others allow it’). Among the apotropaic expressions, there are: *cu saluta a nui* (12, ‘to our good health’), or *adduppricatu* (21, ‘twice as much’, a formula used by a speaker who wants to reply to a received wish of good health by wishing twice as much of it in return). Finally, there are several instances of idioms: *chi guasta l’acqui* (19, “that muddies the waters”, *guastara l’acqui* means ‘to create troubles’), *ti fai a crucia cu dui mani* (20, “you make the sign of cross with both hands”, or else ‘to be grateful for a result that has exceeded all expectations’), *nd’a paga nu litru* (29, “she pays for a litre [of something]” or else ‘to not care about hurting other people’s feelings’), *a terra mi mancava e sutta i pedi* (35, “I lost the ground beneath me” or else ‘to feel lost’), *si ti jetti a mara nesci qui taschi chini i pisci* (39, “if you throw yourself at sea, you will end up with your pockets full of fish” or else ‘to be lucky’), *si bola u mu llonga u coddu* (25, “if he wants to stretch his neck”, or else ‘to want something badly, to crave it’), *pagati, mastru, co furnu catta* (42, “master craftsman take your payment, because the kiln you’ve made doesn’t even stand”⁵¹ or else ‘all is lost’), *paru paru pigghia* (42, ‘struck by [tragedy], hit by [a curse]’), and so on and so forth.

THE USE OF DIALECT: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

The text of Mosca’s comedy provides certain interesting linguistic data – which has been briefly discussed above. Some phenomena concern writing itself, fluctuating ways of spelling a term, and also mistakes in the phono-syntactic segmentation. Other interesting phenomena concern, instead, the use of verbal forms that are not retrievable in existing literature (such as

⁵¹ This sentence refers to the final stage of building a kiln, when the builder had to carry out a last check to assess if it actually stood or not.

eu vinna), or the existence of scarcely-known syntax strategies (such as the repetition of the noun in order to convey the idea of pacing back and forth in a place). Lastly, as for the lexical aspects, the comedy includes: terms no longer in use (*tata*), or undocumented meanings related to documented words, wordplays, allusions, impactful closing statements, sayings, and idioms (the latter change from low-semantic-opacity expressions, as in the case of *si ti jetti a mara nesci qui taschi chini i pisci*, to high-semantic-opacity expressions, as in the case of *nd'a paga nu litru*).

The use of dialect in theatre must be read within the wider frame of the relation between dialect and literature – a relation that, although dependent on time and space, seems to find its *raison d'être* in the need to fulfil functions unachievable through standard language. This complex issue cannot be understood if separated from its temporal dimension or from more strictly linguistic features. Thus, we must take into account the peculiar situation of Italy, the old and the new Language Question,⁵² the history of Italian dialects and, more specifically, if we wish to analyse the use of dialect in the Calabrian drama, we must bear in mind the previously mentioned lack of any kind of solid tradition. As for the issue of “Calabrianness” within dramaturgy, Trumper and Maddalon (2003: 179) emphasize how, in Neapolitan seventeenth-century theatre for instance, the desire to portray a comic type prevailed over the criterion of likeliness to such a degree that the character of the Calabrian boorish was voiced in an extremely unlikely dialect. If, on the one hand, it is true that dialect is generally used in literature in order to fulfil the functions unachievable through standard language; on the other it is also true that this choice bears many linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties. In our case, a clear issue is represented by the above-mentioned uncertainties linked to writing in dialect. Yet there is more to it: the more the use of a certain dialect is restricted to a specific area, the harder it will be to understand the text (be it read or performed). Some authors, though not many, have come up with brilliant solutions to this widespread hindrance. Camilleri is one of these: indeed, recent studies (Maddalon, 2017) have highlighted that the dialect used by the Sicilian author is more fictional than real.⁵³ Most likely, these choices could have been driven by practicality, since –overthrowing what has been so far said– the more a text becomes understandable, the more its (potential) audience increases. The observation of certain

⁵² The Italian “Language Question” has experienced many phases before reaching the so-called “New Language Question”. The latter one was introduced by Pasolini’s “Nuove questioni linguistiche” (in *Rinascita*, 1964), and by Parlangeli’s collection of all works that addressed Pasolini’s stand on the matter and published between 1964 and 1967.

⁵³ “Il lessico camilleriano, ad esempio, sembra in parte una sorta di corpus chiuso che gli innumerevoli lettori conoscono a memoria, fino a fare propri alcuni lemmi ormai pan-italiani”. Translation: “Camilleri’s lexicon, for instance, is like a sort of closed corpus known by heart by all his readers. They have made some terms their own to such a degree that [they transcend the Sicilian borders and] belong to all Italian speakers” (Maddalon, 2017: 63). Others, like Salvatore Niffoi, prefer to support some of their novels with a glossary of dialect terms (as it happens in “Il pane di Abele”, 2009). Ultimately, some others have decided to narrow down their use of dialect –which was conspicuous in their first works– to a limited range of fields (onomastics): it is the case of Domenico Dara and his latest novel, *Malinverno* (2020).

drama mechanisms –which are themselves based on how linguistic mechanisms relevant to comedy work– supports such considerations. As many are aware, the ability to bend language in a pliable manner, even for the purpose of comedy, depends the author’s and the public’s command of that language. Indeed, the public must be able to “play/engage” with the author by completing any multi-word expressions left elliptically unfinished, or by knowing the meaning of the idioms included in the text.⁵⁴ For instance, this could be the case of: *l’avia trovata a santa (infra)*, a sentence that combines in itself both features since it is an idiom whose completion is left to the public;⁵⁵ or *musica maestru a stessa* (13, or else: ‘Off we go! Let’s play the same one again’), which is also part of the wider expression *Quala sonamu? Musica maestru a stessa* (‘Which [song] shall we play? Off we go! Let’s play the same one again’).⁵⁶ In other words: in those comedies that pursue a comic effect through verbal invention, sayings, idioms and other expedients, the author and the public must both have full command of their language.⁵⁷

The difficulties caused by the use of dialect –which are only more so in the case of Calabria– have a strong impact particularly on comedy. Dialect use, in fact, shows the two sides of the same coin: on the one side, the choice of dialect ensures the author a greater effectiveness and allows a stronger attraction to the public because of the mechanisms of shared identities driven by language and setting; on the other, instead, this choice is a risky one since it limits the author’s possibility of “efficiently” addressing a wider public – or else, a public that does not share the values inherent to that specific linguistic material.

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⁵⁴ Besides the debate on whether the meaning of idioms is either stored or processed online, knowing what an idiom means is considered proof of strong linguistic skills in a given language. As evidence of its being still current, even in terms of language, it is to be noted that, in Staletti, the comedy is still performed today.

⁵⁵ The author reuses this expression at page 21, but this time in its full version: “L’avia trovatu bona a santa a qu’aiu u mi vutul”, which means ‘I’m following the wrong path’ or else ‘I’m seeking help in the wrong place’ *et similia*.

⁵⁶ On closer inspection these mechanisms appear to be similar yet opposite in terms of direction. Indeed the first one is top-down; while the second is bottom-up since it requires us to recall the first part of the expression, not the final one.

⁵⁷ “Humour, of all forms of communicative acts, is one of the most heavily dependent on equal cooperative participation of actor and audience. The audience, in order to enjoy humour must ‘get’ the joke. This means they must be capable of analyzing the cognitive frames presented by the actor and following the process of the creation of the humour” (Beeman, 2012: 543).

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OBNOVITEV IZZVENELIH ZVOČNIH POKRAJIN ZVOKI, IDENTITETE IN VEČJEZIČNOST

Če je res, da lahko o zvočni pokrajini govorimo šele, ko jo prepoznamo, je prav tako res, da zvočna pokrajina obstaja ne glede na to, ali jo znanstvenik morda prepozna ali ne. Ker daje trenutni družbeno-kulturni kontekst prednost podobi pred poslušanjem, ki je osrednji element znanja in razmerij, ta prispevek ponuja analizo akustičnih zaznav zvočne krajine z razlago literarnih besedil, ki pripadajo različnim žanrom in so predstavljeni diahrono (na zgodovinski in kronološki ravni). Na eni strani nam potopisna literatura ponuja osebne opise določenih okolij, kakor so jih avtorji zaznali in razumeli, po drugi strani pa je na lokalni ravni opazna rast literarnih prispevkov, od proznih del do dram, v katerih je zapisan zvok sredstvo za interpretacijo zelo svojevrstne in emsko definirane družbene dinamike. Zato ni presenetljivo, da gredo v to smer nekateri pomembni premisleki o pomenu zvoka v kulturni dediščini, ki jih v Mednarodnem letu zvoka (IYS 2020–2021) promovira Italijanski nacionalni raziskovalni svet (CNR). Te vrste refleksije nadalje utirajo pot zapletenim in zelo specifičnim raziskavam, ki jih je v 70. letih prejšnjega stoletja začel Murray R. Schafer.

V prispevku avtorici najprej analizirata različna besedila, sledi podrobnejša analiza Frischijamu Domenica Mosce (1913–2003). Komedija, napisana v narečju stalttese (1960–1970), prikazuje vas kot gledališče. Frischijare v rugi (gr. Ποῦρο, uličica) se nanaša na izključno na preživljanje prostega časa ob poslušanju in pripovedovanju zgodb na pragu hiš, ko posameznik komunicira s skupnostjo in si ob vročih dneh privošči svež zrak (friscu, svež).

V preteklih stoletjih so nekatera italijanska narečja (npr. beneško) postala jezik literarnih del, kar pa za kalabrijska narečja ni veljalo. Zaradi tega so za rekonstrukcijo prejšnjih razvojnih faz narečja najpomembnejši pisni viri. Z diahronega vidika komedija Frischijamu (natisnjena leta 1978) vključuje oblike, ki so zanimive z morfološkega, skladskega in leksikalnega vidika, konteksti, predstavljeni v komediji, pa lahko omogočijo rekonstrukcijo nesnovnega scenarija z jezikovne in zvočne perspektive.

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