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Margins and Forgotten Places

Proceedings of the interdisciplinary Ph.D. conference
(Verona, 17-19 May 2021)

edited by

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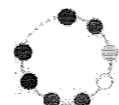
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Introduction

"For us, true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power; it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges politics of domination that would render us nameless and voiceless. As such, it is a courageous act – as such, it represents a threat [...]. Speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being object to being subject. Only as subjects can we speak. As objects, we remain voiceless – our beings defined and interpreted by others [...] We are rooted in language, wedded, have our being in words. Language is also a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves – to rewrite, to reconcile, to renew. Our words are not without meaning. They are an action – a resistance".

(Hooks, 2015: 8, 12, 28)

The concept of *margin* may be considered to be intrinsic to the nature of a broad academic field such as the humanities and its comprehensive range of disciplines, each one with its own research objects and methodologies to investigate different aspects of human society and culture. Due to the considerable influence of literary canons on cultural production and a strong orientation towards conventionality, some marginal, non-traditional but nonetheless authentic forms of cultural, historical and political expression are often neglected the right to make their own voice heard, thus perpetuating social injustice and inequality.

About the conference

Margins are not only meant as geographic borders; they can be regarded as cultural spaces which remain unknown and unrecognised by the cultural canon. By taking into consideration what remains at the margins, the aim of the conference on which this volume is based was to shed light on "[...] la historia del desorden, de la variación, de los conflictos, de la asimetría"¹ (Garatea Grau, 2010: 174). In

¹ The quote in Spanish may be translated into the following phrase in English: "[...] the history of disorder, variation, conflicts, and asymmetry". Carlos Garatea Grau is a Spanish

spaces where new cultural contacts take place, one is confronted with “[...] una realidad diversa, múltiple, inmensamente más rica y compleja que la pobre y estrecha mirada monocéntrica”² (Garatea Grau, 2010: 173). Only by emphasising the importance of restoring interest for minorities and the need for revitalisation of their sociocultural heritage, thereby attempting to identify the details that have been forgotten or condemned, we can assume that the complexities and contradictions of history and culture can be grasped.

The conference we organised and held at Verona University aimed to showcase contaminated literature, fragments and signs which are still unknown, and to highlight the existence of genres that can embrace various influences, including linguistic and cultural minorities. In other words, the aim of this international event was to investigate the concept of margin in cultural production and dissemination, and to consider the social impact of marginal literary, linguistic and cultural practices from a variety of academic perspectives – from the broad area of the humanities to the scientific world, including natural sciences, computer science and much more. To this end, we invited participants to reflect about what it means to exist at the margins, and to investigate how the complex intertwining between cultures, civilisations, and society occurs within the constraints of frontiers of different countries and populations. Thus, this conference was conceived as an attempt to shed light on forgotten aspects of human societies, cultures and fields of scientific investigation, in order to better understand the complex nature that surrounds us.

In this sense, we encouraged a dialogue in several parallel panels that could transcend *disciplinary boundaries*, or ‘borders’, in which limits and definitions may be seen as a starting point for a change in terms of traditional perspectives. Moreover, in order to address often forgotten and marginalised, interdisciplinary and socially relevant challenges in the circumstances and narratives of the present age, we devoted one day of the conference to the 17 sustainable goals included in the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations.

The African environmental activist Dr. Wangari Maathai (1940-2011) once affirmed that: «The future does not exist in the future. Rather, it is born only through our actions in the present, and if we want to realize something in the future, we must take action toward it now» (2006: 293). As we live in a society which is

linguist and German philologist. He was appointed as Rector of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru in 2019. His work on the history of Peruvian Spanish gained international recognition and deserves attention in this volume for its social and academic relevance to the study of dialects and non-standard varieties.

² This sentence may be translated into the following in English: “[...] a different, manifold reality which is far richer and more complex compared to the poor and narrow monocentric point of view”.

rapidly expanding in terms of cultural and virtual interconnections, it is absolutely crucial to find a way to integrate academic fields and unveil relations between different perspectives, and this is what this volume set out to do. As editors, we encouraged specifically the submission of contributions that wished to stimulate a dialogue between humanities and science, and which attempted to contribute to the achievement of U.N. goals³.

Hosting an international event at the University of Verona

Astonished by the large number of proposals that we received from all over the world, we decided to organise the conference in four panels, each one addressing issues concerning the topic of *marginality* that were related to a specific discipline. The last panel, particularly, was devoted to investigating the relationship between margins and the U.N. Agenda of sustainable goals. It was, indeed, our great pleasure to organise the first interdisciplinary Congress of PhD Candidates at the University of Verona, which gathered, for the first time, the academic community in times of crisis, i.e. during the Covid-19 pandemic. This particular state of affairs enabled us to welcome proposals from both national and international PhD students from every field, under the common thread of *margins* and social, economic *sustainability* promoted by the UN 2030 Agenda.

The conference hosted more than 60 contributors from many disciplines, ranging from social sciences, arts and humanities, foreign languages to economic, legal studies and biology, as well as computer science.

The first two days of the conference saw the participation of experts focusing on the topic of *margins* from a variety of perspectives, whereas the third day revolved around the sub-topic of *sustainability* in the UN 2030 Agenda. To make the dialogue even more enriching and dynamic, several scholars and specialists working in various fields were invited as keynote speakers to plenary as well as roundtable sessions.

The conference hosted three plenary sessions, which were led by: Dr. Reto Sorg, Temporary Professor of Contemporary German Literature at the University of Lausanne and Director of the Robert Walser Centre in Bern, Switzerland; Dr. Joachim Kokkelmans, post-doctoral researcher at the Free University of Bozen, with a research focus on Germanic-Romance language contact, phonetics and phonology, and regional variation; and Dr. Maurizio Bettiga, Assistant Professor

³ For further reference, please visit <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> and https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf. Accessed 23 April 2023.

and senior researcher in Industrial Biotechnology at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden, and owner of EviKrets Biobased Processes Consultants.

Prof. **Sorg**'s speech focused on the figure and work of Robert Walser, an author specializing in marginal literary topics, themes and genres. His talk also introduced Thomas Hirschhorn's installation "Robert Walser-Sculpture", which was realised in 2019, in summer, in Biel, Switzerland. To emphasise the revolutionary nature of Walser's message, the work was embellished with the slogan 'Be an outsider! Be a Hero! Be Robert Walser!'.

By integrating linguistic approaches into the analysis of the concept of margins, Dr. **Kokkermans**' talk illustrated the shift in the articulation of sibilants of minority languages in north-eastern Italy – including Trentino and Veneto dialects – towards those of dominant varieties and showed how subtle phonetic phenomena may operate across generations to push minority languages a little closer to dominant varieties.

Opening the day dedicated to the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Goals, Prof. Maurizio **Bettiga** made the attendees reflect on the need to articulate thinking on climate change by drawing upon the expertise of different disciplines. Starting from his own field of research, his contribution described how biotechnology can become a tool for sustainable development, thus reflecting on the role of biotechnological innovations as facilitators of sustainable and just, responsible and wide-ranging development.

The U.N. Agenda

In light of the latest political developments and peaceful revolution in Eastern Europe and Belarus at the time of the conference organization (2020-2021) – and regrettably antecedent of the current and ongoing war in Ukraine – the roundtable discussion on the third day of the conference focused specifically on the 4th goal, "high quality education", by investigating its potential social and cultural impact through the lens of artistic works and its role as a promoter of human rights and peace (Art. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Therefore, the roundtable offered an opportunity for dialogue with four academic figures on the role that art and theatre can play in education; these, indeed, may become tools to shed light on and condemn the atrocities that still occur around the world.

In this regard, specialists working as theatre translators as well as directors and managers contributed to this discussion, in particular: Giulia **Dossi**, Harvard PhD and author of the English translation of Andrej Kurejčik's protest play, "Обиженные. Беларусь(сия)" ("Insulted. Belarus"), which casts light on the cruelties inflicted on peaceful protesters and the Belarusian population through fragmented dramaturgy; Matteo **Spiazzi**, theatre director, actor and pedagogue

whose plays are often produced and performed in Eastern Europe. Thanks to his experience in the Belarusian context, he provided the audience with a glimpse into the emancipating and supportive process of artistic work in the field in an emergency setting, in which life, safety and right are in immediate jeopardy. His latest initiative, Stage 4 Ukraine, is a humanitarian organisation and international co-operation project in support of Ukrainian theatre artists⁴, and has gained national recognition due to its significant impact on the access to and quality of Ukrainian refugee programs and education in times of war. As a matter of fact, the project was recently awarded the 2022 Pantheon prize⁵.

The remaining participants in the roundtable sessions were Amerigo **Zanetti**, an Italian project manager, educator and lecturer in several Eastern European universities, and Isolde **Quadranti**, coordinator of the CDE (European Documentation Centre) at the University of Verona. By introducing the "Manifesto of Inclusive Universities" and the "Scholars at Risk" projects, the speakers provided a more international and institutional perspective on the types of initiatives that can be implemented by different institutions to build bridges between countries at risk and promote peace actively.

Opening up new paths for interdisciplinary contact in the *Humanities*: A 21st-century academic and social challenge

As was the case during the organisation and realisation of the conference, we found it appropriate to make use of the English vehicular language with the hope it would give more resonance to these marginal investigations. For the contributions, on the other hand, we decided to let each contributor opt for one language instead of another. We invite anyone who would like to learn more about these topics to contact the scholars of the essays directly, so as to give new impetus to the research and, hence, encourage continuous sharing and development.

Thanks to the work carried out together in each phase of conception, design and realisation of this event, we believe that the most important lesson learnt from this experience is the crucial importance of teamwork with colleagues who, despite their expertise in different disciplines and contexts, can open our eyes and

⁴ For further information on the project, please visit <https://www.instagram.com/stage4ukraine/> and <https://stage4ukraine.wixsite.com/stage4ukraine>. Accessed 23 April 2023. Both the website and Instagram account were designed and are still managed in terms of content creation by Elena Mattei, one of the editors of this volume.

⁵ Source: <https://www.heraldo.it/2022/12/31/matteo-spiazzi-la-guerra-e-il-teatro/>. Accessed 23 April 2023.

enable us to picture a broader horizon, generating a wave of mutual improvement and encouragement.

In an increasingly alienating and highly specialised academic world, we wish to advocate the collective and choral value of scientific research and advise as many colleagues as possible to promote interdisciplinary initiatives aimed at dialogue and deepening the *little*, the *small* and the *useless*. Only by actively listening and giving space to what is different, indeed, can we learn to truly appreciate what we already know.

What follows in the next paragraphs is a brief overview of the contributions collected in the volume, so as to allow for a deeper understanding of the impact and relevance of each selected contribution to the main aim of this collection. We hope it will serve as a reading companion that may spark your interest in the wide array of connections and potential for interdisciplinary dialogue each chapter explores.

Part I

The first part of the volume addresses the historical development of marginal communities, spaces and signs of human presence, and attempts to provide an answer to the following questions: How do humans engage with the areas they inhabit? To what extent is the role of anthropocentric beings crucial to the development of new ecosystems that coexists peacefully? What is the contribution of *humanities* to the new challenges of the future?

In the first section of **Part I**, contributions related to the fields of anthropology, history and law emphasise the role of the learning process in tackling new challenges and future scenarios. Furthermore, they also demonstrate how arts and education may support small communities in the achievement of the U.N. 2030 AGENDA objectives.

In her essay, Chiara **Crescioli** touches on a current, pressing issue, i.e. the protection of citizens from increasingly coordinated and untraceable computer fraud attempts and the design of novel systems that may track and sanction such illegal activities. From her discussion, it becomes clear how computer crime remains largely a marginal issue in the Italian legal system. In an increasingly connected and technologically advanced context, the lack of development of the Italian system regarding these offences makes Italian citizens feel unable to protect their rights and to receive support from the government after the fraud has been committed, leading to an increasing sense of distrust of institutions. This short text provides some food for thought and sheds light on the ways in which individuals'

assets may be protected, also by bringing cybercriminals to justice with more effective and concrete punishments.

Following this line of investigation into the *contemporary* and its facets, Sara **Fontana** highlights how some *marginal* elements of current theatre and dance adaptations of Dante Alighieri's *Comedy* promote and support the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its seventeen sustainable goals. By examining a few performances staged in Europe between 2018 and 2021, her contribution shows how Dante's message articulated in the three Canticles becomes an opportunity to give space to instances of human dignity, care for others and for the environment. In particular, the *Purgatorio* offers significant creative staging cues, which are expressed mainly in the scenic and lighting elements rather than in the dramaturgy.

In the performances analysed as case studies, Fontana highlights the role assigned to certain marginal elements – such as costumes, decor and lighting effects – the relevance of which is sometimes not fully understood by the spectator. It is precisely through these elements that contemporary issues and concerns are raised and conveyed to the audience. By tackling the topic of climate change and human responsibility with respect to planet Earth's ecosystems and the ecological crisis, these Dantesque performances actively support and promote the lines of action proposed by the United Nations 2030 Agenda, consequently resonating with multiple global campaigns aimed at cultivating environmental awareness, including the Fridays for the Future (2019) protests.

By integrating anthropological research interests into theatre studies, Stefania **Tagliaferri**'s contribution focuses on theatrical practice as a means to encourage communities to engage actively in critical thinking and fruitful discussions. In her essay, she analyses a Public History event concerning the former Church of the Visitation in Aosta (ITA), which was deconsecrated following Napoleon's plunder and then abandoned for decades. Through participatory theatre actions aimed at re-establishing areas of collective memory of abandoned buildings and hinting at possibilities of restoration of historical sites for collective use, it becomes possible to stimulate individual creativity and allow for the survival of such *forgotten places*. By activating a process of social ecology that articulates new relationships between the people of a community who exchange narratives in a diachronic and dialogic dimension, the positioning of each individual leads to a 'refunctionalisation' of the former non-place in terms of community identity. Art – and in this case, theatre – becomes a staunch advocate of active citizenship.

Marta **Turroni**'s research focus, conversely, shifts to geographical and social margins. By taking into consideration the Covid-19 pandemic and the opportunities intrinsic to smart working, new possibilities of repopulation continue to be offered to villages and marginal realities in our peninsula. As she highlights how this type of small-scale phenomena qualitatively attests to research and trends

on the repopulation of rural and low-density areas, Turrone reflects on the interdisciplinary, anthropological approach applied to this research, starting with terminological shifts from 'marginal' to 'rebalancing' areas. If abandoned areas are sometimes associated with Marc Augé's non-places and Zygmunt Bauman's non-civilised places, underlining a common loss of identity, specificity and sociality, in this brief contribution the case study of the alpine hamlets of Alta Val Chisone investigates the living nature of an active and productive establishment of a new sense of identity community.

In the second section of **Part I**, four contributors analyse marginal historical and humanistic *foundations* as basis for civilisation attempts and improvements of the condition of humankind.

Giulia **Adami's** article represents a form of redemption of art restoration – an artistic form that is too often disregarded but which necessitates a new gaze 'from the outside'. In this sense, the museography choices at the Museum of Frescoes "G.B. Cavalcaselle" in Verona, in the 1970s, express an early dialogue between the preservation history of the ancient objects and the principles of museography applied to their display, in an attempt to communicate not only the value of the frescoes, but also their troubled path of decontextualisation. Rearranged in 2015, the museum evokes the tradition of the *urbs picta* through the display of wall paintings from the city's public and private buildings, thereby collecting evidence of a past that spans from the 9th century to the dawn of the 17th century.

Drawing on the history of science, Andrea **Franzoni's** contribution is particularly interesting from the perspective of gender studies applied to the history of medicine. Starting from the text "Breve compendio dell'arte obstetricia" (1787) by Teresa Ployant, midwife and symbol of a practical knowledge as old as the female act of giving birth, Franzoni investigates how the dialectic between scientific medical knowledge – a purely male prerogative – and the empirical knowledge of the midwife – who has always been a woman with direct experience of birth – came to be articulated. Despite the central role of these figures in the childbirth scene, the body of knowledge of midwives has taken a back seat in the obstetrical treatises written by the medical profession. In recent decades, thanks to the stimuli offered by gender history and *histoire sociale* in the French context, more attention has been paid to the role played by midwives in childbirth assistance. Taking this treatise as a starting point – which, to date, is the only scientific text written by a woman about midwifery in 18th century Italy – Franzoni highlights the context in which a midwife worked on a daily basis.

By exploring the connections between archaeology and linguistics from an interdisciplinary, historical approach, Fiammetta **Gori** analyses the numerical notational system used in the administrative texts of the ancient city of Ebla. Starting

as a small settlement in the Early Bronze Age (EBA), this prominent city located in Syria flourished and became an important centre for political and commercial activities. It secured specifically its hegemony over northern and eastern Syria thanks to the ability of the community to consciously absorb different influences, managing to adapt them to its own local needs.

In her contribution, Gori focuses on the administrative texts that were found in Palace G, a structure dating back to the EBA period, during which Ebla had distinguished itself as a cultural, linguistic, and geographical crossroads regulated by a developed administration system. In a context such as the Near East, affected by complex political and economic relations, the writing and use of calculation and measurement systems reveal peculiar functional and ideological implications that consequently prove worth discussing in the marginality framework of this volume.

Tracing connections between historical processes and gender oppression, Elisa **Santoro's** scholarly contribution sheds light on the marginal nature of female actions and decisions in partial historical reckonings. The subject of her research is Emma Donoghue's "The Woman Who Gave Birth to Rabbits", a collection of seventeen short stories published in 2002. The work expresses more than a marginal point of view. Contrary to well-established sexist and patriarchal practices of obscuration of the female role, this article gives space not only to a female perspective, but also to the narrative of an Irish national identity subjected to English hegemony. Additionally, the author's choice to use the form of the short story is not arbitrary; indeed, it wishes to assign to this genre a prominent position in the hierarchy of literary stylistic traditions, consequently delegitimizing its minor role compared to the novel.

If the previous contributions focused on gender discrimination and the marginal role of historical sites and specific genres, Andrea **Tenca's** essay investigates the role of Nature in human development and civilization from a literary perspective. What is the relationship between Nature and humans? How is Nature described in the social and intimate sphere, and how is it connotated? For what purposes? Tenca attempts to provide some answers by examining the vast amount of literature available on the human/non-human dichotomy and the key concepts of *hybrid* and *uncanny*. By relying on a historical approach to the works by writers, biologists, and anthropologists in the 19th century, the author delineates a chronology of the steps that led from "Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature" (1863) by Th. H. Huxley, in which the human being is portrayed as an undifferentiated life form in the ecosystem, albeit endowed with morality, to the weird science-fiction productions of biologist and writer H.G. Wells.

The original contribution of this essay lies in its ability to combine traditional works from the weird fiction criticism with anthropological perspectives, such as

those of Mary Douglas and interpretative categories from the sociology of science and Bruno Latour. Ultimately, Tenca offers an interdisciplinary scientific work that explores the boundaries between human and nonhuman as a socio-cultural construct.

In the last section of the first part, the topic of *margins* is addressed from a philological and literary perspective. Such *margins* may resemble the physical *margins* of a *folio* from a manuscript, or a reference to a writer's place of exile, or even a place at the edge of the world that reflects a journey out of the ordinary.

Within this context, Erika **Capovilla** analyses the experience of marginality in the biographical and artistic journey of the Austrian writer and journalist Joseph Roth. In the panorama of Germanophone literature, he plays anything but a marginal role: indeed, not only his reportages stand out as a sharp snapshot of European and Soviet situation between the two wars, but also as novels belonging to the canon of narratives of the 'world of yesterday'. Roth's key role in German-speaking literary culture is paradoxically linked to his position of marginality as an individual and artist, which finds expression at multiple levels: geographical, as he comes from the eastern border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; cultural-religious as Ostjude, ranging between assimilation and segregation; socio-political, being an intellectual in exile; and familiar, for he is excluded from his relationship with the father figure.

In his contribution, Lorenzo **Ferroni** examines the description of Alexander the Great's exploration of the East, detecting liminal places, where the king encounters various people and creatures. This legendary journey is chronicled, among others, in two German manuscripts – Straßburger (S) and the Basler Alexanderlied (B) – in which content, scope, and reference sources are extremely different. Ferroni's contribution wishes to provide an overview of some of the most significant, remote areas explored by the Macedonian king, along with a brief discussion about the functions of these narratives in the editorial context of each of these two works.

Chiara **Fragomeli**'s contribution offers an overview of the production of the so-called *libri d'abaco* in Italy between the thirteen and fourteen centuries; as a matter of fact, these are a particular kind of manuscripts produced for calculation purposes. Except for sporadic contributions, a detailed study of such handwritten books has never been undertaken, for most scholars – including mathematics historians – have focused on the content of the texts that were considered the most relevant, to the detriment of other elements worthy of interest, such as philological and linguistic ones. Moreover, 300 manuscripts are unedited. Her work illustrates then the state of the art concerning research on Italian *libri d'abaco* to suggest lines of future research.

The section concludes with Serena **Picarelli**'s analysis of *margins* in fourteen century's Italian manuscripts; indeed, these prove to be a valid support in the search for traces that provide information on the design and purpose of the text, such signs related to the manuscript production site or notes taken by readers. In this sense, these spaces 'at the margins' become the primary object of investigation of various manuscript-related disciplines, such as codicology, philology, and the history of the miniature. The analysis of the margins of manuscripts as sources of annotations makes it possible to investigate aspects relating to the origins of illustrative cycles, from the perspective of geographical location, historical period and the socio-cultural level underlying iconographic efforts, as well as identities of the personalities involved – such as patrons, stationers, artists.

Part II

The second part of the volume investigates the impact of language on social change and quality of life across cultures and contexts, highlighting the importance of linguistic research in the development of more sustainable and prosperous societies. It addresses specifically the ways in which language functions as a response to difficulties and as a means to challenge pre-established views or practices.

The concept of *margins* is key also in Chiara **Bernardini**'s systematic review of the literature focusing on disturbances in expressive language in stigmatised personality disorders, with the objective of determining whether such phenomenon is an understudied subject. By demonstrating that very marginal research attempts have explored the correlation between linguistic impairment and successful clinical treatment, the author proves not only that linguistic, experimental research efforts may decrease the chances of linguistic impairment and increase chances of recovery of patients with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD); indeed, they may also lead to an improvement of patients' marginalised, social status.

In this section, Daniele **Caccin**'s work on lexical creativity in Chinese and Italian proves fruitful to raising awareness of how social and linguistic change co-occur and influence each other in the reshaping of events and expression of culturally shared interpretations, despite social restrictions to protect the 'authenticity' of standardised language. Through an onomasiological approach supported by corpus analysis, he provides examples of how the term *chengyu* underwent semantic elaboration and change to enable speakers in informal contexts to express irony and wordplays during the Covid-19 pandemic. The socio-cultural enrichment such events provide becomes evident particularly at a sociolinguistic level, as it shows how linguistic adaptation may fulfil innovative social purposes and needs, such as the cultivation of hope, in times of unprecedented crisis.

Massimo **D'Angelo**, in particular, presents the historical evolution of the figure of Turkish women and underlines the active role of feminist protestors in constructing discourses of resistance to misogyny, thus challenging hyper-masculinised narratives and political contexts which relegates women to passive, marginalised and discriminated positions, and fostering the ground for the establishment of gender equality rights.

Part III

The third part of the volume concludes our investigation into the concept of *margin* by exploring *marginality* in literary texts, such as poetry and drama, in different languages and in various cultural contexts, with particular attention to *space* as an interdisciplinary topic and to crucial, multifaceted aspects related to discrimination, conflicts and memory.

In his contribution, Noè **Albergati** presents *La Morte del Danese* by Cassio da Narni, a chivalry poem on the *margins* of the canon established by *Orlando Furioso*. Despite the widespread recognition of the latter, Ariosto's audacity to push and transcend the boundaries of the genre partially contributed to a limited adoption of his stylistic conventions; some evidence of this may be found in the fact that some authors of chivalric poems preferred to remain anchored to traditional canons.

Cassio da Narni, for example, explores the *topos* of chivalry with unbridled imagination and a drive to express extremity, pursuing the declared intent to astonish and captivate the reader. The analysis of this poem, which did not gain much prestige or popularity – as may be deduced from the low number of reprints – may therefore offer a glimpse into ground-breaking, literary canons within, or rather on the fringe of, the chivalric genre, and become an alternative to the solution adopted by Ariosto. The latter represents a route that was not designated by other authors; nonetheless, it is worthy of consideration, both for its peculiarity and for its modern traits.

A different focus is that of Antonio **Arnieri**, who elects gender as the discriminating factor in his analysis. In his contribution, Arnieri surveys Early Modern English nuances of gender differentiation by focusing on the sound of Viola's voice in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. In that time, eunuchs or castrati were a classic example of gender differentiation. Indeed, due to the physical presence of mutilated body parts, they occupied a liminal space within the gender and social *milieu*; notwithstanding, they played a key role in society for their unparalleled singing abilities.

Within the theoretical framework of migration, another form of complex marginalization is presented by Beatrice **Berselli**, who examines how the works by Sandra Cisneros of Chicano origins and Jhumpa Lahiri (of Bengali Indian par-

ents) depict the emigration process within a multicultural Anglo-American context. More specifically, the common feature in these two authors' works is the feeling of being in a place without being in that place, living in a country that is far from home, which results in a profound identity crisis every immigrant has to deal with. This contribution highlights the struggle that Cisneros and Lahiri face to create a new identity out of their original, previous self, meanwhile perceiving themselves as both marginal and marginalized.

Shifting the focus to a different century, Luigia **Buffatti**'s works offers metaphorically a glimpse into the forge of ideas⁶ of Marquis Scipione Maffei's translation through his notes in the version in blank verse of *Iliad*, V. Prior to the actual analysis of the translation, the contributor focuses on the Italian intellectual's peculiar statements on his translation choices, which are found in the two main published works on the subject, i.e. *Traduttori Italiani, o sia notizia de' volgarizzamenti d'antichi scrittori Latini, e Greci* (1720) and *Iliad* itself. Indeed, the latter represent – in the research studies on the author – a case of *limes*. Maffei's manuscripts, which are preserved in the Capitolare Library of Verona and include his handwritten notes, allow Buffatti to define the role of *marginalia* in Maffei's works. They enable specifically to determine the *modus operandi* of his translation method, its depth of investigation as well as linguistic understanding and rendering in the target language.

Simone **Carati** addresses the *topos* of space by analysing its representation in DeLillo's works, with particular attention to the method implemented by the author to express an authentic experience that is disengaged from the globalised world. The author defines himself as a marginalised writer, due to his peculiar use of language, which is however as close as possible to something *real*. In this contribution, Carati points out how DeLillo's use of the language and spaces of outcast characters to narrate the *margins* of society is a clear adoption of stance towards the role of speech and self-determination in an apparently globalised but isolated, meaningless world, in an attempt to shape a new sense of belonging and political community that lies outside late capitalist logic.

In his essay, Simone **Pettine** sets out to analyse ethnic conflicts – a dramatic theme – in Francesco Biamonti's prose, investigating the subject of war and the tragedy that follows, which we consider to be as topical as ever. The writer reflects on dramatic situations at the margins, that lay outside the Euro-centered perspective, attempting an ongoing but silent dialogue with his reader. The author, thus, deliberately ascribes the conflict in Bosnia a universal, symbolic meaning that sheds light on the futility of war and its tragic consequences.

⁶ Here, forge of ideas refers to the stylistic and narrative approach of the author.

The final contribution to this volume is an article that deals with contemporary German-language literature. Fabio **Ramasso** investigates the subtle relationship between memory and literature and its complex nature composed of both traumatic and submerged elements in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's play *Perikızı. Ein Traumspiel* (2010). The complex historical and cultural background of Turkey and Germany provides insights into the scenes analysed – that of prostitutes and that of the re-set of a new form of Hades. Past, future and present. Myth and history. The *impasse* nature of these instances brings into crisis the cultural foundations of an era, namely that of the twentieth century, which is imbued with ghosts of the past.

We sincerely look forward to seeing what each of the following essays brings to you. We are glad you decided to embark with us on this journey towards a more just and peaceful society, with renewed hope, strength and knowledge for the years to come.

The Editors

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The programme with specific information regarding each speech is available at <https://sites.google.com/view/2021univrdoctoralconference/home?authuser=0>. Accessed 24 April 2023.

Recordings of each panel as well as the concluding remarks of Prof. Nicolini and the Organizing Committee may be found on the Conference YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGmHBfp9Hh05dwr6HWAXEhA>. Accessed 24 April 2023.

First Part

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES, SPACES, SIGNS AND ARTISTIC PRODUCTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE AGENDA 2030