

Maria Cristina Seccia

TEXTUAL SHIFTS IN TRANSLATION:
THE CASE OF THE MIGRANT (M)OTHER
IN ITALIAN-CANADIAN WOMEN'S WRITING

24

Intersezioni/Intersections
Collana di anglistica

Maria Cristina Seccia
*Textual Shifts in Translation: The Case of the Migrant
(M)other in Italian-Canadian Women's Writing*
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Gruppo Editoriale Tangram Srl
via dei Casai, 6 – 38123 Trento
www.edizioni-tangram.it – info@edizioni-tangram.it

Intersezioni/Intersections – Collana di anglistica – NIC 24

Prima edizione: dicembre 2024, *Printed in Italy*

ISBN 978-88-6458-275-7

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TEXTUAL SHIFTS IN TRANSLATION:
THE CASE OF THE MIGRANT (M)OTHER
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Introduction

Why This Study

The present book analyzes the representation of the migrant Italian maternal figure in the Italian translation of three memoirs by Canadian women writers of Italian origin: Penny Petrone's *Breaking the Mould* (1995/2001), translated under the title *Il modello in frantumi* (2004); Caterina Edwards' *Finding Rosa: A Mother with Alzheimer's, a Daughter in Search of the Past* (2008), the translation of which is entitled *Riscoprendo mia madre: Una figlia alla ricerca del passato* (2021); and Mary Melfi's *Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother* (2009), translated as *Ritorno in Italia: Conversazioni con mia madre* (2012b). These texts are the only memoirs available in translation that offer a representation of the Italian mother migrating to Canada in the first half of the twentieth century from the perspective of the daughter. Significantly, they reveal the crucial influence exercised by the Italian maternal figure in the process of constructing the daughter-narrator's transcultural identity.

The fact that such details are particularly relevant from a Translation Studies perspective has been key in selecting the three memoirs under analysis. First, the representation of the maternal figure affords visibility to those first-generation Italian women who experienced migration to Canada – and the resultant marginalization – principally in the first half of the twentieth century. Considering that these migrant women have been «forgotten» and «voiceless» in the Canadian literary panorama, at least until the mid-1980s (Pivato 1986a: 87), and are still «quiet» – as suggested by the title of Laura Libralato's recent multimedia ethnographic project *The Quiet Immigrant* – it is fruitful to see how these women have been presented when these texts are translat-

ed into Italian¹. Second, the memoirs exemplify a form of migrant women's life writing that scholars such as Eva Karpinski (2012) associate with "translation", in a metaphorical sense, since they both function as a way of addressing and engaging with otherness, facilitating a dialogue between "self" and "other" without erasing cultural difference. This leads us to the third and most important point, namely the author's representation of the migrant mother as the Italian cultural "other" through the eyes of the Canadian daughter-narrator. Hence, the pun "(m)other" in the title of this study, first proposed by Barbara Godard (2001) when analyzing the women's quest for selfhood in *My Mother Myself* (1977) by Nancy Friday. From a Translation Studies perspective, the notion of otherness is what makes the narration of the maternal figure particularly significant. Indeed, considering that the mother is seen as the bearer of cultural origins – and, by extension, as the emblem of Italian culture – in the transcultural daughter's imaginary (see Giorgio 2002; Baldassar and Gabaccia 2011; Schultersmandl 2009), this representation can be interpreted as a form of «cultural translation» (Asad 1986), namely, as the representation of one culture – in this case the Italian one – as other to the Canadian author-narrator's one. The portrayal of the maternal figure as the cultural "other" reflects the cultural distance between the Italian mother and the Canadian daughter-narrator, which generates a conflictual relationship. More specifically, the Italian migrant mother is depicted as passing down conservative and strict precepts to her daughter, exemplifying the fictional maternal figure discussed by Marianne Hirsch (1989), the embodiment of conventional constructions of femininity from which the daughter disidentifies. This characterizes the daughter-narrator's complex negotiation of a feminist consciousness between "self" and "other". From this perspective, the three memoirs under analysis demonstrate how, in Italian-Canadian women's writing, the daughter-narrator gives voice to her urge to understand and tell her mother's story in order to reconcile with her own Italian origins and negotiate her Italian and Canadian cultural identities.

¹ See the website page of *The Quiet Immigrant* project at <https://thequietimmigrant.ca/> (Accessed 10.10.2024).

The following section provides an overview of the concepts underpinning the present research – namely the maternal figure, origins, migration and otherness – from a Translation Studies perspective, thus shedding light on the approach and aim of this study.

The (M)other, Origins, Migration and Translational Metaphors

As well as being a recurring theme in Italian-Canadian – and, more broadly transnational – women’s writing, the migrant maternal figure is the source of powerful metaphorical expressions hinting at the creative force of translation, seen as engendering new interpretations of a text². More specifically, poet and translator Jacqueline Risset has defined the translator as both a «midwife» and a «mother», thus equating translating with caring and giving birth (in Ward Jouve 1991). As a «midwife», the translator takes care of the source language by considering the different possibilities available in the target language while, as a mother, they give birth to the text in the target language (46). Commenting on Risset’s metaphor, writer and literary critic Nicole Ward Jouve has added that the translator

[...] tries to be the go-between, to cunningly suggest what readings there could be in the foreign language other than those the chosen translation makes available (47).

This observation sheds important light on the translator’s choices as the result of their own way of reading a text, which, in turn, guide the reader’s interpretation³. In a more elaborate way, literary and Translation Studies scholar Carolyn Shread (2007, 2011;

² On translation as a creative activity, see in particular Holman and Boase-Beier 2004 (1998); Bassnett 2002; Bush and Bassnett 2006; Loffredo and Per-teghella 2006.

³ On a similar note, translingual author Jumpa Lahiri (2015) argues that writing in Italian, her third language, thus “translating” herself, in a broader sense, feels like being “reborn” in a new language.

see also von Flotow and Shread 2014), has borrowed Gender Studies theorist Bracha Ettinger's neologism «metramorphosis» (1992), an amalgam of *metra* – which in turn combines a play on *meta* with an evocation of *mater* (*mother* or *womb*) – and *morpheous* (*form*). Ettinger has introduced *matrix* as a feminine symbolic concept, which supplements rather than replaces Lacan's masculine phallus. Her use of the term *matrix* thus significantly shifts its association from the womb as a passive receptacle to that of an active «borderspace» (Shread 2007: 221), which is transformed. From this perspective, Ettinger's «metramorphosis» is used to describe the exchange processes occurring within a matrixial paradigm and, more specifically, how the matrix offers «a locus where meaning is generated rather than foreclosed, transferred rather than buried» (224). «Metramorphosis» thus refers to «the transformations in meaning accessed by the layer of subjectivity as an encounter» (224) and, in this sense, it promotes, according to Shread, a view of translation as a generative activity. The Translation Studies scholar, in fact, has adopted the term «metramorphosis» to describe translation as

[...] a transformative process which does not mask or efface the source text but rather expands it through a visible interaction in which the source is still present in the target text and where they meet creatively (224).

As well as Risset and Shread, other Feminist Translation Studies scholars have theorized gendered metaphors based on the association between translation and – more broadly – women. For example, based on Luce Irigaray's feminist psychoanalysis theory, Karin Littau (2000) has proposed the Ancient Greek myth of Pandora, the figure of Earth Mother and symbol of fertility, as a metaphor for translation, which is thus presented as an endless creative activity resulting in a proliferation of meanings, versions and texts. Among others, an even earlier attempt to categorize translation through metaphor was that of Canadian feminist translator Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, who defined translation as «re-belle et infidèle» (1991: 21), thus clearly subverting one of the oldest, notoriously and most widely used sexist metaphors, «les belles infidèles», coined by literary critic Gilles

Ménage in the early-seventeenth century (in Castro 2009: 5) and hinting at the incompatibility between the “faithfulness” to the “original” and the fluency – or generally speaking, high quality – of a translation. This is simply one of the earliest of several sexist metaphorical expressions in this regard that reveal an obsession with the notion of “faithfulness” to the “original” text and with the “purity” of the mother tongue. The implied view of writing as a productive and generative activity performed by men, in opposition to translation as a reproductive and secondary activity performed by women and resulting in a copy of a superior “original” text, is at the root of the problematic notions of origins, originality, authority, authenticity and faithfulness that have long heated the Translation Studies debate⁴. These have been severely questioned not only in Feminist Translation Studies, as revealed by the empowering gendered metaphors reviewed above, but also in Postcolonial Translation Studies, which sees translation as a tool not only of potential control, but also of subversion in settings affected by asymmetrical power relationships between cultures, such as colonial and migrant contexts.

Migration – and mobility, more broadly – has often been associated with translation, given their shared interplay with movement and transfer. As a result, migration and translation have often been used as metaphors to describe each other (see in particular Bhabha 1994; Malena 2003; Cronin 2006; Steiner 2009; Polezzi 2012, 2020; Bandia 2014; Baldo 2019). Similarly, parallels have been drawn between migrant – and, more broadly, transnational and translingual – writing and translation (see in particular Tymoczko 1999; Polezzi 2001; Cutter 2005; Bandia 2008; Baldo 2019; Wang 2019; Jones 2022)⁵. Relating specifically to migration, Loredana Polezzi (2021) has presented translation as a «trace», that is to say, a co-presence, the negotiation and re-ne-

⁴ Sexist metaphors in translation have been examined by Lori Chamberlain (1988), Olga Castro (2009), and Pilar Godayol (2013), among others. More generally, James St. André (2010) and Rainer Guldin (2020) have offered comprehensive overviews of metaphorical language across various semantic fields used to describe the translation process.

⁵ For an overview of the use of translation as a metaphor for transnational and translingual writing, see Baldo 2019: 1-17.

gotiation of otherness and sameness, which typically happens in migrant contexts. Otherness, namely the part of a culture, language or text that is foreign and unfamiliar (in this case) to the translator and the target-text reader, is also at the heart of Translation Studies, since the treatment of the “other” – ranging from elimination to preservation – has ethical and political implications⁶. With reference to Italian-Canadian literature in particular, Michela Baldo has pointed out that in the translingual works by Mary Melfi, Frank Paci and Nino Ricci analyzed in her monograph (2019), the narrators’ otherness is signalled by code-switching – the switch from English into Italian and Italian regional languages – which Baldo interprets as an important sign of the authors’ attempt to return to their Italian origins. The scholar points out that the narrators’ otherness risks being turned into sameness when these works are «translated back» into Italian as this is also one of the languages embedded in the translingual source texts⁷. More specifically, Baldo observes that these Italian translations are framed by translators and publishers – possibly influenced by their own ideology, background and the Italian target-text readers’ needs and expectations – according to the idea of returning the source texts to their authors’ language and country of origin. However, in light of the neutralizing translation strategies used to treat the original code-switching – and, more specifically, the use of standard Italian to replace the Italian regional languages originally embedded in the source texts – Baldo points out that it is an illusory and impossible return journey, since the authors’ language of origin is not standard Italian, but rather the regional languages spoken in Molise and in the Marche. Baldo proposes «restoration» and «restitution» as metaphors for translation, following her observations about the Italian translators’ and publishers’ view of translation as a way of restoring Italian-Canadian authors’ to their Italian origins and to

⁶ On the link between otherness and gender, see Godard 1990; Bassnett 2005; Federici and Leonardi 2015. For a review of the notion of otherness in Translation Studies, see Brisset 2003.

⁷ On the notion of “translating back”, see Maher (2012) with reference to travel writing, and Seccia 2014 with reference to Italian-Canadian literature.

«return» them «back home», in an effort to honour Italian-Canadian authors and pay homage to those often forgotten Italian emigrants, thus giving back their dignity.

Bringing motherhood, migration and translation together, we might add that all could be defined as a “transformative journey”, that is to say, a transition between life stages, languages, cultures and countries, which entails a sort of reshaping, being it of bodies, identities or texts. Looking at translation in metaphorical terms sheds light on the different ways in which it intersects with motherhood and migration, which are at the root of the research approach of the present study.

Aim, Approach and Significance of the Study

Proceeding from the assumption that translation engenders new meanings and readings, as suggested by the translational metaphors reviewed above, the principal aim of this book is to analyze the shifts – namely alterations – undergone by the maternal figure as represented in the Italian translation of Petrone’s *Breaking the Mould*, Edwards’ *Finding Rosa* and Melfi’s *Italy Revisited*. This illuminates how the Italian cultural “other” is reconstructed when it “travels back” to its original Italian cultural context through translation. To this end, the analysis underpins a Descriptive Translation Studies approach (Toury 1995), which involves a comparative analysis of the source and target text after situating the latter within its cultural context; identifying any translation patterns with a focus on translation shifts; describing these patterns and finally drawing generalizations on the translation as whole by considering its cultural context. Since it is the way in which language is used (in translation) that gives rise to new interpretations of a text, this work applies a linguistic approach to Descriptive Translation Studies. More specifically, as illustrated in detail in Section 1.4, it draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics, which provides a systematic link between observed translation shifts and the target cultural system (Munday 1998; Kim and Matthiessen 2015), and sees language as

functioning as a network of interrelated meaningful choices. Following Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen's view that textual choices provide the author with resources that enable them to guide their reader (2014: 284), the present research focuses on textual translation shifts – namely any changes determined by the textual choices made in translation – with a focus on the thematic structure of clauses and clause complexes as well as on cohesive resources. Based on a qualitative, product-oriented analysis grounded in Descriptive Translation Studies, the present study examines how these textual translation shifts, which result from the foregrounding effect of the thematic structure and cohesive devices chosen in the target texts, bring specific aspects of the migrant maternal figure to the fore, thus offering an alternative interpretation of the Italian “other” to the Italian reader⁸. Consequently, a discussion of quantitative results, the quality of the translation choices examined, or the reasons behind them, falls beyond the scope of this book. While the translator's agency, visibility and collaborative enterprise with the multiple actors contributing to the fabrication of a text (including publishers, editors and copyeditors) are clearly a crucial aspect of investigation in Translation Studies – and, more specifically in Translator Studies – the principal aim here is to look at how language generates new meanings and interpretations through translation⁹. While Feminist Translation Studies scholars have challenged the focus on linguistic shifts and privileged a culturally-oriented approach, the present book shows that this discipline benefits from a linguistic approach, since it sheds light on how language – and, in this case, textual choices specifically – contributes to the recreation of meaning through translation, thus engendering a new interpretation of the text, which is a notion at the core of Feminist, and – more broadly – Cultural Translation Studies.

In light of the research aim and approach just outlined, the present study is the first monograph to examine the representa-

⁸ On the role of translation in the interpretation of a literary text, see in particular Gaddis Rose 1997; Venuti 2004, 2013.

⁹ On Translator Studies from a gender perspective, see in particular Vassallo 2022.

tion of the maternal figure in the translation of Italian-Canadian – and, more generally speaking, anglophone transnational – women’s writing by bringing together gender and migrant perspectives. More broadly, it is the first book-length study on the translation of Italian-Canadian literature with a focus on a linguistic aspect other than code-switching. It is, moreover, the first monograph on literary translation offering a qualitative analysis based entirely on textual translation shifts.

Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 1 situates this book within the Translation Studies debate on the translation of Italian-Canadian women’s writing (and, more broadly, of transnational women’s writing, particularly between English and Italian), as well as within the Systemic Functional Translation Studies debate. In illustrating Michael A.K. Halliday and Matthiessen’s Theme System (2004/2014) as well as Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan’s original model of cohesion (1976), the chapter presents textual translation shifts as a fruitful analytic tool for discussing the alternative interpretation of the maternal figure offered in the translation of the memoirs by Petrone, Edwards and Melfi¹⁰. More specifically, it argues that in organizing the text into units of information, the textual metafunction of language provides textual resources (both structural, such as the thematic structure of clauses and clause complexes, and non-structural, such as cohesive devices) that significantly guide the reader, helping them to interpret a text as it unfolds. The overview presented in this chapter highlights the uniqueness of the present work in terms of both its aim and methodology, within the Italian-Canadian Translation Studies debate focused primarily on translanguaging, particularly in self-translation, and within Systemic Functional Translation Studies, where quantitative analysis has been dominant thus far.

¹⁰ Certain Systemic Functional Grammar terms are capitalized in line with the conventions followed in Halliday and Matthiessen 2014 (2004).

Chapter 2 situates the three memoirs by Petrone, Edwards and Melfi within the context of Italian-Canadian women's writing. It explains that this study engages with the term "Italian-Canadian" since it highlights the interaction between Italian and Canadian cultures at play in these works, which contributes to the transnational nature of Canadian literature. The chapter highlights the important role played by Italian-Canadian women's writing in offering a representation of the construction of transcultural identity for women of Italian origin in Canadian society, which had long been represented exclusively from a male perspective. The comparative analysis of the three memoirs reveals both similarities and differences in how the maternal figure is represented. In light of the process of othering the maternal figure at play in the three daughter-centric memoirs, they are presented as a form of cultural translation. It finally shows how the othering of the Italian migrant mother ultimately resolves through the narrator's reconciliation with her mother – and, by extension with her Italian cultural origins.

This discussion sets the stage for the analysis presented in Chapter 3. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the shifts in the representation of the maternal figure in the paratextual elements – particularly the cover images and titles – of the three books as they entered the Italian literary market through translation. This overview illuminates the target-culture context and the textual shifts occurring in translation. The chapter continues by exploring how, by foregrounding certain aspects of the maternal figure, the textual choices made in translation result in a shift in focus. More specifically, it examines how they take emphasis away from the otherness of the maternal figure.

As illustrated in the Conclusion, the resultant softening of the mother-daughter conflictual relationship is interpreted as an attempt to emphasize, from the very outset of the target texts, the narrator's reconciliation with her mother – and, by extension, with her own Italian cultural origins – which in the source texts is represented solely as the narrator's final achievement. This interpretation offers an opportunity to propose translation as a form of reconciliation, thus ultimately contributing to the ongoing Translation Studies debate surrounding translational metaphors reviewed in this Introduction.

1. Textual Analytical Framework

1.1. Italian-Canadian Women's Writing in Translation

Although a number of Italian-Canadian women writers' works that have been translated or self-translated offer insightful reflections on the reconstruction of the maternal figure, the theme remains underexplored from a Translation Studies perspective¹.

So far, two studies focused on lexical shifts have demonstrated that two important aspects of the mother-daughter relationship are brought to the fore in the Italian translation of Genni Gunn's novel *Tracing Iris* and Mary Melfi's memoir *Italy Revisited* (see Seccia 2023, 2024)². In the former, the translator's lexical choices underscore the traumatic effect caused by the absence of the maternal figure for the fictional daughter character (see 2023). In the latter, the translator's choices highlight the daughter-narrator's act of coming to question her mother's memories of her miserable pre-migrant past in Italy, thus shedding light on the narrator's attempt to reconcile with her Italian cultural origins and

¹ In addition to the three memoirs under analysis in this book, Italian-Canadian women writers' translated works representing the maternal figure include Melfi's *Riti di Infertilità* [*Infertility Rites*] (2002); Genni Gunn's *Accoppiarsi in cattività* [*Mating in Captivity*] (2004), *Solitaria* [*Solitaria*] (2013), and *Alla ricerca di Iris* [*Tracing Iris*] (2022); Edwards' *La bocca di leone* [*The Lion's Mouth*] (2023); and Cynthia Sguazzin's *Il passaggio* [*Passaggio*] (2024). Self-translated works representing the maternal figure include Dôre Michelut's *Ouroboros. The Book That Ate Me* (1990); Gianna Patriarca's *Donne italiane e altre tragedie* [*Italian Women and Other Tragedies*] (2009); Rosetta Rosati's *Aceri & Castagni: Memorie* [*Maples & Chestnuts: A Memoir*] (2019); and Connie Guzzo-McParland's *Le donne di Saturno* [*The Gilrs of Piazza d'Amore and The Women of Saturno*] (2021). Other translated works include Mary di Michele's *Canto d'amore* [*Tenor of Love*] (2006) while Licia Canton's *Vino alla mandorla e fertilità* [*Almond Wine and Fertility*] (2015) and Anna Ciardullo Villapiana's *Frammenti di luce/Fragments of Light* (2015) and *Al di là del mare. Dialoghi DiVersi/Beyond the sea* (2018) are examples of self-translations.

² Genni Gunn's novel *Tracing Iris* (2001) does not feature a migrant setting.

construct a transcultural identity (see 2024). In both cases, the analysis demonstrates that translation is a form of recreation revealing the translator's interpretation of the source text. To date, these are the only studies examining the reconstruction of the maternal figure in the translation of Italian-Canadian women's writing. This notwithstanding, with a focus on the treatment of translingualism, Deborah Saidero (2024) has highlighted the relationship between mother, mother tongue and motherland in Dôre Michelut's and Gianna Patriarca's self-translations, which she presents as powerful transcreative and gendered sites through which the poet-narrators re-instate translingualism, retrieve their mother tongues, address gender issues transnationally and reclaim their mother. Meanwhile, without specific reference to the maternal figure but nonetheless from a gender perspective and with a focus on the rendition of translingualism, Elena Anna Spagnuolo (2023a) has also explored the relationship between mother tongue and motherland. She presents the self-translations of Dôre Michelut, Gianna Patriarca and Licia Canton as the result of the authors' need to express and negotiate their Italian and Canadian identities in their different languages. Going beyond explicit references to the notions of mother tongue and motherland, the treatment of translingualism is certainly the most widely explored aspect – albeit not always from a gender perspective – within scholarly criticism on the translation (see Seccia 2014: 160-211; Nannavecchia 2016: 187-207; Marino 2017, 2020; Baldo 2019: 247-286) or self-translation (see De Luca 1999, 2020; Saidero 2011, 2020; Bonomo 2019; Spadafora 2023; Spagnuolo 2023b) of Italian-Canadian women's writing.

Despite being a fruitful object of analysis, to date there is only one book-length study examining the representation of the maternal figure in translation, Eliana Maestri's *Translating the Female Self across Cultures* (2018), but none in the Canadian context nor from a migrant perspective. Through a comparative analysis of the Italian and French translations of three works by British women writers Jeanette Winterson and Antonia Susan Byatt, as well as the Antiguan-American Jamaica Kincaid, Maestri shows how each translation activates different cultural, literary, linguistic and rhetorical frames of reference. Her analy-

sis highlights key themes in the daughter-protagonist's quest for identity, including the cult of the Madonna, humour and irony, gender and class, mimesis and storytelling, as well as performativity and geographical sense of self. The results of her comparative stylistic and linguistic analysis, focusing on different types of translation shifts (including lexical and syntactical shifts as well as shifts of cohesion), show that the target texts examined reflects the feminist debates circulating in the cultural contexts in which they are embedded. They ultimately confirm that translation is an original activity with a proper status in the literary institutions.

Outside the criticism on translations between English and Italian, to date, there are no studies on the representation of the maternal figure in translated migrant or transnational women's writing. Certainly, some studies examine the interplay between gender and race (see Kadish and Massardier-Kenney 2009, 2010) as well as gender and transnational identity (see Lukić *et al.* 2019) in translated women's writing. With regard to the Italian scholarly debate in particular, there has been a focus on translation as feminist practice (see Boria and Risso 2009; Federici *et al.* 2011; Federici and Leonardi 2013; Francellini 2014; Federici *et al.* 2018) and on the translator's gender identity and agency (see Taronna 2006; Leonardi 2007; Palusci 2010; Sanson 2022)³.

While most of these studies are grounded in culturally- and sociologically-oriented Translation Studies, Vanessa Leonardi (2007) and Lingzi Meng (2019) have used a linguistic approach.

³ For monographs focused on the impact of the translator's gender identity in the translation of literary texts in different language combinations, see also Yu 2015. For monographs and edited volumes on the translation of women's writing, see in particular De Lotbinière-Harwood 1991; Simon 1996; von Flotow 1997, 2011. For edited volumes and special journal issues on the interrelation between women, gender, feminisms and translation of different types of text and in different cultural contexts, see Santaemilia 2005; Larkosh 2011; Santaemilia and von Flotow 2011; Phoenix and Slavova 2011; Castro 2013; Castro and Ergun 2017; Alvarez *et al.* 2014; Malena 2015; von Flotow and Farahzad 2016; Camus Camus *et al.* 2017; von Flotow and Kamal 2020; Castro and Vassallo 2020; Bracke *et al.* 2021; Federici and Santaemilia 2021; Federici and Maci 2021; Karpinski and Basile 2022. For volumes collecting the Italian translation of feminist texts, see Saidero 2013; Di Giovanni and Zanotti 2018.

More specifically, drawing on contrastive, text and critical linguistics, Leonardi has analyzed Italian literary texts and different English translations at syntactical, textual, semantic and pragmatic levels, with a focus on transitivity, thematic structure, register and modality. Transitivity and modality have also been explored by Meng – through a critical discourse analysis approach – in her comparative analysis of a Chinese novel and different English translations. Both studies identify similarities and differences in the translation strategies depending on the various translators' gender identity, thus suggesting a link between gender and ideology.

Transitivity, modality and Theme, which Leonardi and Meng have analyzed through the lens of critical linguistics, text linguistics and critical discourse analysis approaches, were originally conceived within Systemic Functional Linguistics, as systems that provide lexicogrammatical resources to realize the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions respectively. Unlike Leonardi's and Meng's research, the present study draws precisely on this branch of linguistics, which was first theorized by Halliday (1978, 1985/1994). Systemic Functional Linguistics enables a systemic description of language patterns and addresses language as interconnected linguistic systems from which the author (and the translator) chooses in order to express meaning. The present study focuses on the textual metafunctional mode of meaning as it equips the author – and the translator – with strategies for guiding their reader, helping them to interpret a text as it unfolds (Kim and Matthiessen 2015: 337). This thus enables us to analyze how the textual choices made in the translation engender a new reading of the maternal figure.

1.2. Creating Meaning through Textual Choices

The textual metafunction of language facilitates the other two functional components through which meaning is expressed: the ideational metafunction, which provides the resources in language for construing the experience of the world as meaning, and

the interpersonal one, which enacts relationships between the author and the reader (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004/2014: 30-31). Each metafunction is linked to one of the three dimensions that realize the context of situation, namely those extralinguistic factors affecting the linguistic choices made by the author, such as the audience, medium and purpose of communication (33). More specifically, the ideational metafunction is linked to field, which indicates the event where the text is functioning; the interpersonal metafunction is related to tenor, which concerns the type of role interaction between the author and the reader; while the textual metafunction is linked to mode, which refers to the function of the text in the event – including the means of communication and its genre – and regards the role played by language in the situation in which it operates (35). All these dimensions influence the language produced and the meaning created. The three different metafunctional strands of meaning are combined in the clause, which is seen as representation from an ideational perspective, exchange at an interpersonal level and – of most relevance to the scope of this study – the realization of a message, textually speaking (83). By weaving together the ideational and interpersonal meanings, the textual metafunction presents them as text, that is to say the basic unit of meaning in language constructed around the semantic relation of cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 25).

In order to create a text and guide the reader in their interpretation, the textual metafunction provides textual resources, which are divided into two categories: structural and non-structural (29, 1989: 82; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004/2014: 114, 650). Structural textual resources are the Theme and the information structures, which engender grammatical structure at clause and clause-complex levels, while non-structural resources are grammatical and lexical cohesive devices, which create semantic links within and across clause complexes, and manage the flow of the text (650). While the clause is the basic unit in thematic structure, the clause complex also serves as a domain of organization of the text within the textual metafunction (549, 552). Indeed, the sequence of clauses within a clause complex is textually significant from a thematic point of view and as a cohesive do-

main (549, 550). Every clause has the structure of a message, and every clause complex has the structure of a message complex; in both cases, the Theme is the point of departure. Textual resources also realize patterns of meanings outside the hierarchical organization of the system, as in the case of the information structure, which is the ordering of the text into units of information, independently of its construction in terms of clauses and clause complexes, and which is closely related to cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 27).

Structural and non-structural resources work together in the marking of textual statuses between messages/message complexes or textual transitions of the components of these messages/message complexes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004/2014: 650). The resources concerned with textual statuses are reference, substitution, ellipsis and lexical cohesive devices, as well as Theme and information (608). The author assigns these statuses to the components of the message/message complex in order to produce a text and to help the reader to interpret it. Textual transitions, by contrast, hold between messages/message complexes, and may be left to the reader to infer or can be marked explicitly by textual or logical resources, which complement one another in the grammatical realization of transitions in a text (655). The textual resource which indicates the type of relations – especially between clause complexes – through which textual transitions are created is the system of Conjunction (608, 655). The logical resource, instead, combines the type of relation with taxis in clause complexes. Complementing one another, textual transitions and textual statuses enable the development of the text and guide the reader in their interpretation.

1.2.1. Structural Textual Resources: Theme and Information Structures

The Theme is the first component of a clause and the first clause of a clause complex: by occupying the first position, it locates and orients the clause/clause complex within its context. The Theme is combined with the remainder of the clause/clause complex, the Rheme, where it is developed and with which it constitutes