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UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Joyce Lussu's *Fronti e frontiere*

Re-writing between Literature and Political Activism

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Abstract

The present work analyses the writing of Joyce Lussu (1912-1998). In particular, this study aims at defining the major characteristics of Joyce Lussu's poetics and their evolution through time. For this purpose a close reading of the novel *Fronti e frontiere* and an analysis of the re-writing process of the text in the two editions (Edizioni U, 1945 and Laterza 1967) supplies elements necessary to trace the changes in the author's poetics. In the first place, the thesis evaluates how elements of different literary genres are present in the narrative, and how the ratio of these elements changes in the second version of the text. Secondly, the changes in the language and style are interpreted in light of the influence of foreign writers who collaborated with Joyce Lussu in the years between 1945 and 1967. In conclusion, it is discussed how the portrayal of female characters change in the rewriting of the narrative and how the representation of the protagonist alters in the second text.

Table of contents

Introduction

1. Literary genre
2. Poetics of clarity
3. A lost feminism?
4. A protagonist-based narrative

Conclusion

Appendix

Bibliography

Introduction

Joyce Salvadori Lussu was a partisan, a political activist, a translator, a writer, a cultural promoter and the initiator of numerous cultural associations. Her extraordinary life has been the focus of various monographs, articles and conferences.¹ Because of the exceptional nature of the events of her life, numerous studies have been focusing, especially after the death of Joyce Lussu, on different details or sections of her life-story. The present study is not intended as a description or as a comprehensive presentation of Joyce Lussu's life, but on the contrary aims at analysing the importance and the nature of her writing, investigating how her narrative becomes the means for the expression of her political ideology. However, because of the autobiographical nature of all her written works, a brief introduction to the main events of Joyce Lussu's life is a necessary step in order to discuss the elements of her poetics.

Joyce Salvadori was born in 1912, third of three children, in an aristocratic family of Marche. Her father was Guglielmo Salvadori and her mother Cynthia Galletti. They both share ancestors from the English family that emigrated to central Italy in the eighteenth century, as Lussu herself narrates in *Le inglesi in Italia*.² Guglielmo Salvadori (1879-1953) was a positivist philosopher, who studied in Florence and Lipsia, to become a professor at the Universities of Pisa and Rome and also the first translator of the philosopher Spencer. Cynthia Galletti (1875-1960) was the daughter of an officer who fought with Garibaldi and an English aristocratic woman. Liberal and antifascist, she worked as a correspondent for the

¹ Monographs on the life of Joyce Lussu include: Maria Teresa Segà, *Sguardi sul domani*, (Fermo: Andrea Livi Editore, 1996); Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, (Milano: Baldini & Castoldi, 1996); *La vita è infinita. Ricordo a più voci di Joyce Lussu*, edited by Andrea Livi, (Fermo: Andrea Livi Editore, 2000); Federica Trenti, *Il novecento di Joyce Salvadori Lussu. Vita e opera di una donna antifascista*, (Sasso Marconi: Le voci della Luna, 2009). Collection of essays on the life of Joyce Lussu published as a result of conferences held in her memory include: *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, edited by Francesca Consigli, (Firenze: Alinea Editrice, 2002); Maria Luisa Plaisant, edited by, *Joyce Lussu. Una donna nella storia*, (Cagliari: CUEC, 2003). The life-story of Joyce Lussu also inspired a theatre play written by Rosetta Martellini, *Capelli al vento*.

² See Joyce Lussu, *Le inglesi in Italia. Storia di una tribù anglo-franco-marchigiana in un angolo remoto degli stati pontifici*, (Ancona: Il Lavoro Editoriale, 1981).

British newspapers *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New Statesman*, to raise international awareness of the political situation in Italy and the rise of Fascism. Because of their political activities, the Salvadori family was forced to leave the country in 1924 and moved to Switzerland. Joyce and her siblings were educated privately by their father, but they also visited Italy periodically in order to sit public examinations for their high school diplomas. Joyce Lussu continued her education in Germany, beginning a philosophy course in Heidelberg and working as a language teacher in a private school for girls. However, she was forced to leave the country in 1932, when Nazism took over.

In the following years she became involved in the movement *Giustizia e Libertà* and met Emilio Lussu, working as a 'staffetta', when she was in charge of giving Lussu a message from other members of the movement. After this episode, Joyce Lussu put aside her political engagement. She married Aldo Belluigi and moved to Kenya with him to work in a farm. In 1939, however, she was back in Europe, divorced, and reconnected with the '*Giustizia e Libertà*' movement.

Joyce and Emilio Lussu worked together, as a couple, for *Giustizia e Libertà*. They move to Paris, where the central organization of the antifascist movement of Lussu and Rosselli gathers and works. They move to the south of France after the entry of the Nazi army into Paris, in June 1940. The following events and movements of the couple throughout Europe are narrated in Joyce's novel *Fronti e frontiere* and in Emilio's *Diplomazia Clandestina*: the couple tries to organize the formation of antifascist groups and works with the Allies in order to support them; in addition to this, they also work for the clandestine passage out of Italy of Italian antifascist intellectuals and activists. During this period of movements and clandestine life, Joyce continues her studies in Literature at the Sorbonne University in Paris, and in Philology at University in Lisbon. In the meantime, her 65 year-old mother was arrested and confined in Abruzzo because of her activity in helping the antifascist groups in Italy.

In 1943 Joyce Lussu is the protagonist of two important actions for *Giustizia e Libertà*: she arranges the escape to Switzerland of the couple Modigliani, and after the 8th of September she crosses the Nazi lines and succeeds in creating a link between the Allies in the South of Italy and the partisan groups in the North of the country. In this same year, her son Giovanni is born in Rome a few days after the

liberation of the capital. Her military action in southern Italy will award her with the silver medal from the government after the end of the war.

After the war, Emilio is nominated 'Ministro dell'Assistenza Post-bellica' by the Parri government. Joyce, who does not want to live in the shadow of her famous husband, decides at first to continue her political activity running for the local elections in Porto San Giorgio, Marche. She participates in community life with speeches and intense political activity. She is one of the national leaders of UDI (Unione Donne Italiane) from 1949 to 1953. Joyce Lussu also runs for the local elections in 1946 in Porto San Giorgio with Partito d'Azione as a city councilman. In 1947 both Joyce and Emilio Lussu work in the PSI, after the dissolution of the PdA.

In the years 1958-1968 she decides to leave domestic politics and dedicates her engagement and political activism to the International Peace Movement. In Stockholm she meets the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet, and the friendship between the two will lead to successful publications of his work in Italy, translated by Joyce Lussu. After this experience of collaboration with Hikmet, Joyce Lussu decides to translate other works by foreign authors. Lussu sees in her translation activity a way to make the Italian audience aware of some foreign political situations, in particular she decides to translate and publish the poems of freedom fighters of various nationalities (Agostinho Neto, José Caraverinha, Alexandre O'Neil, Mao Tse Tung, O Chi Minh, and a few Kurdish poets) or simply poems of cultures little known by the Italian audience (for example Eskimo poems and the works of Albanian authors).³

In 1968 she takes part, with her son Giovanni, in the students' protests and returns to a political engagement in her own country. She also participates in the feminist movement in the Seventies, publishing several essays and narrative works on the condition of women. Lussu also combines her interest in the condition of women with her interest in history and family history: she publishes in these years some works that reconstruct the role of women in her own family *Le inglesi in Italia*,

³ These works will be published in several different monographs, but also in the collective volume: Lussu Joyce, *Tradurre poesia*, (Milano: Mondadori, 1967).

as mentioned earlier, and also an essay on the role of women in western history *Padre padrone padreterno*.⁴

After Emilio Lussu's death in 1975, Joyce Lussu decides to leave Rome and moves back to her family house in Porto San Giorgio, Marche. In these years she starts to organize visits and speeches in local schools, devoting her activism and civil engagement to the education of the new generations. During this time spent in the Marche, Lussu also does research on the ancient communities in Central Italy and the folklore of the area she inhabits.⁵ In the last years of her life Joyce Lussu continues her activity as a cultural promoter mainly for local institutions with tireless enthusiasm until her death in 1998.⁶

Joyce Lussu often preferred not to refer to herself as a professional writer or as a poet; she always preferred to be known for her initiatives and activism rather than for what she wrote about them. However, many people among friends, colleagues, scholars and admirers often referred to her as a professional writer and several studies have been dedicated to the analysis of her literary works.⁷ As Traini underlines: 'Joyce Lussu non ama definirsi una poetessa o meglio, non considera la poesia come rappresentativa della sua vita. Eppure la poesia attraversa tutta la sua esistenza.'⁸

Writing was always a consistently present activity in Joyce Lussu's life, since her childhood: she wrote poems and short stories as a little girl, encouraged by her mother. Her first works were published in the monthly magazine *L'amico dei fanciulli* of the Libreria Claudiana, a publishing house based in Florence, from 1922 to 1926. In addition to this, a number of short stories and poetry were recently

⁴ See Lussu Joyce, *Padre, padrone, padreterno. Breve storia di schiave e matrone, villane e castellane, streghe e mercantesse, proletarie e padrone*, (Milano: Mazzotta, 1976).

⁵ See Lussu Joyce, *Storia del fermano. Dall'arrivo dei Piceni al regno di napoleonico*, (Roma: Lerici editore, 1970); Lussu Joyce, *Tra comunità e comunanze all'ombra della Sibilla: divagazioni picene*, in «Proposte e ricerche», (Università degli studi di Ancona, Camerino, Macerata, Urbino, 1988); Lussu Joyce, *Comunanze picene. Appunti e immagini tra storia e attualità*, (Fermo: Andrea Livi editore, 1989).

⁶ For updated information on Joyce Lussu's life and works see Antonietta Langiu and Gilda Traini, *Joyce Lussu. Biografia e bibliografia ragionate*, (Ancona: Assemblea legislativa delle Marche, 2008).

⁷ See for example the contributions by Gigliola Sulis in *Joyce Lussu. Una donna nella storia*, edited by Maria Luisa Plaisant (Cagliari: CUEC, 2003) and in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, and Cretella Chiara and Lorenzetti Sara, *Architetture interiori: immagini domestiche nella letteratura femminile del Novecento italiano. Sibilla Aleramo, Natalia Ginzburg, Dolores Prato, Joyce Lussu*, (Firenze: F.Cesati, 2008).

⁸ See Gilda Traini, *Introduzione*, in Joyce Lussu, *Inventario delle cose certe*, (Fermo: Andrea Livi editore, 1989), p.5.

found at the family archive, that were never published.⁹ The cultural upbringing of the Salvadori family undoubtedly provided a fertile ground for the literary growth of Lussu: on the one hand, the habitual conversations and discussions about literature and the readings of poetry performed by Guglielmo Salvadori must have acquainted the young Joyce Lussu with various modes of narration. On the other hand, writing was accepted as a common activity among the women of the family as well: Joyce Lussu's mother Cynthia Galletti Salvadori was an amateur writer, and her grandmother Margaret Collier was a published author of numerous novels.¹⁰

However, for Joyce Lussu writing did not have the same recreational aim as it did for her ancestors. Although the present study does not aim at an in-depth analysis of the poems by Lussu, a close reading of a few compositions can reveal important elements of the author's poetics.

The poem *Che cos'è la poesia* from the 1989 collection *Inventario delle cose certe*, for example discusses the nature of a poetic piece:

Che cos'è la poesia? Non è un problema
difficile da risolvere.
Basta andare in giro con un pezzo di carta
su cui sono tracciate parole
in righe disuguali
e chiedere al primo che passa
scusi, legga, le sembra una poesia?
Se il primo passante
è recalcitrante
si prova con un altro
e alla fine magari con qualche parente
vicino o lontano
con qualche conoscente o amico devoto.
Uno si trova sempre che dice: è una poesia,

⁹ As I was informed by Clara Muzzarelli, responsible for the Salvadori family archive, during an interview that took place on 12/08/2013. Elena Pisuttu, PhD student at Università di Sassari is currently analysing these works.

¹⁰ The most important of which will be published by Joyce Lussu, translated by her sister Gladys Salvadori, see Margaret Collier, *La nostra casa sull'Adriatico. Una nobildonna londinese nelle Marche meridionali*, translated by Gladys Salvadori Muzzarelli, (Ancona: Il Lavoro Editoriale, 1981).

certo, che vuoi che sia,
è bella, non c'è male.
Dopo questa verifica
si può andare a riempire un altro foglio
di righe disuguali
e cominciare da capo.¹¹

This composition is a good example of both the ironic tone typical of Lussu's writing and the idea of a literature as a simple means of communication with the audience. The only requirement for a written work to be a poem is to be recognised as such by an audience. And, most importantly, not by an academic reader or a scholar, but by a passer-by. In the poem, communication with the public is presented as a fundamental objective of Lussu's writing and her privileged audience is not a well-educated reader, but a common passer-by. As underlined by Luzi in his commentary on *Inventario delle cose certe*, Lussu's poetry is never self-referential, but always aimed directly at the reader.¹²

Another fundamental element of Lussu's literary works is the consistent engagement of her works with the present. To Joyce Lussu even her writings on history are a means of discussing issues that are related to the present. For example her studies on the ancient Sibyls are a way to stimulate a reflection on the role of women in contemporary society, or for example her account of antifascist activism is presented as a lesson for future generations and as a tool to enable readers to understand the present history as a consequence of the past. Again in another of her poems presented in the 1989 collection *Inventario delle cose certe*, Lussu herself explains her interest in writing on the present, rather than simply commenting the past, with the peculiar irony that characterizes her poems. This poem stages an interview between a journalist and the poet herself. When the journalist asks if she is concerned or not with success, she replies playing on the ambiguity of the Italian word 'successo':

¹¹ Joyce Lussu, *Inventario delle cose certe*, p.9.

¹² See Alfredo Luzi, *Inventario delle cose certe: esperienza vissuta e scrittura*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, p.102.

'Senti, sia come sia, ti confesso
che non m'interesso molto al successo
ma appassionatamente al succede
e al succederà.
Il successo è un paracarro
una pietra miliare
che segna il cammino già fatto.
Ma quanto più bello il cammino ancora da fare,
la strada da percorrere, il ponte
da attraversare
verso l'imprendibile orizzonte
e la sorpresa del domani
che hai costruito anche tu.'¹³

In order to establish this communication with the audience, Lussu's poems and prose often use visual images to stimulate the reader's attention. As Luzi comments when discussing the poetic style of Lussu: 'Poeticamente la Lussu è stata una grande pittrice'.¹⁴ Ballestra, when interviewing Lussu about her poetry, asks how her writing process began, Lussu explains that her own writing process is triggered by a visual image. For this reason, visual images become an effective means to illustrate a certain concept:

Qual è il momento in cui senti di voler scrivere una poesia?

C'è un'immagine che ti colpisce, all'inizio, non un ragionamento. C'è qualcosa che vuoi dire e che vedi improvvisamente illustrato, che non è più pensiero astratto, ma 'illustrato', immaginato, dispiegato.¹⁵

These images are also used to convey a message and stimulate awareness on the reader on specific topics or issues. The poem *Scarpette Rosse* on the Holocaust is an example of this technique: the portrayal of the red shoes creates an indelible image

¹³ Extract from *Un giornalista mi ha chiesto*, in Joyce Lussu, *Inventario delle cose certe*, p.24.

¹⁴ Alfredo Luzi, *Inventario delle cose certe: esperienza vissuta e poesia*, p.104.

¹⁵ In the text the italics indicates the questions of the interviewer, Silvia Ballestra, whereas the rest of the text corresponds to the answers of Joyce Lussu. See Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, (Milano: Baldini & Castoldi, 1996), p.45.

that sums up the terrible tragedy of the concentration camps and communicates effectively the political message of the text:

C'è un paio di scarpette rosse
numero ventiquattro
quasi nuove:
sulla suola interna si vede ancora la marca di fabbrica
"Schulze Monaco"
c'è un paio di scarpette rosse
in cima a un mucchio di scarpette infantili
a Buchenwald
più in là c'è un mucchio di riccioli biondi
di ciocche nere e castane
a Buchenwald
servivano a far coperte per soldati
non si sprecava nulla
e i bimbi li spogliavano e li radevano
prima di spingerli nelle camere a gas
c'è un paio di scarpette rosse per la domenica
a Buchenwald
erano di un bambino di tre anni e mezzo
chi sa di che colore erano gli occhi
bruciati nei forni
ma il suo pianto lo possiamo immaginare
si sa come piangono i bambini
anche i suoi piedini
li possiamo immaginare
scarpa numero ventiquattro
per l'eternità
perché i piedini dei bambini morti non crescono
c'è un paio di scarpette rosse
a Buchenwald
quasi nuove
perché i piedini dei bambini morti
non consumano le soles.

When Vittorio Foa was asked, in an interview, to give a description of Joyce Lussu, he remembered her as being a very gifted and versatile woman, but when he tries to find a comprehensive definition of her personality and of her work, he concludes: 'Se dovessi scegliere una caratterizzazione io sceglierei la poetessa, una poetessa politica di grande forza, ma una poetessa'¹⁶. What characterizes Joyce Lussu's writings is the combination of a strong political activism and literary production. Ada Donno, talking specifically about her role in the feminist movement, in her contribution on Joyce Lussu explains how she realized her political activism through her activity as a narrator: 'Joyce è stata soprattutto narratrice. Consacratrice profonda di intrecci di culture e di poesie'.¹⁷

Because of this profound connection between Lussu's activism and her writing, the present study aims at understanding the development of Joyce Lussu's style and the way in which she combines narrative and activism. In particular her novel *Fronti e frontiere* can be used as an instrument to analyse the evolution of her style: in fact, *Fronti e frontiere* is not only Lussu's first engaged literary work, a breakthrough following her earlier divertissements, but also it is a text that was re-written throughout the years and it can be used as an effective means to track the changes in Lussu's poetics from the early production to the full maturity of the author.

¹⁶ See Francesca Consigli, *Intervista a Vittorio Foa*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, p.50.

¹⁷ Ada Donno, *Joyce, la scrittura e la vita*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, p.78.

1. Literary genre

1.1 Engagement and literature in Post-war Italy

Fronti e frontiere is an autobiographical novel that narrates the events witnessed and the missions carried out by the author between the years 1939 and 1943, while she was operating in Europe for the antifascist movement *Giustizia e Libertà*: the narrative opens with the events of 1939/1940 when Joyce Lussu's activism for *Giustizia e Libertà* begins, and closes with the events of 1943 at the end of this first phase of Lussu's political activism.¹⁸ It was written in 1943, right after the events narrated, and published shortly after, in 1945 in Rome, as soon as the political situation of the country allowed editorial activities to restart.

Although *Fronti e frontiere* is the first novel published by Joyce Lussu, her interest and commitment to literature begun years before the publication of the novel. Her literary debut was in 1939, when Lussu published *Liriche*, a collection of poems, with Ricciardi and with the help of Benedetto Croce, who in 1939 travels to Switzerland to propose to the young writer the publication of her poems¹⁹. Despite this promising debut, Joyce Lussu would not be involved in poetry again until 1989, the year of the publication of her second and last collection of poetry, *Inventario delle cose certe*. This shift from poetry to prose testifies an important change in Lussu's idea of what literature is: if in the early years of her life Lussu is involved in writing lyrical and unengaged poetry, as a consequence of her life-long passion and dedication to literature, after her experience of the war she was committed to a literature that is more engaged with the present, and that is a direct expression of her personal political activism. Lussu therefore rejected her poetical work, seen as an empty exercise of form. In the interview with Ballestra, Lussu discusses this shift in her poetics:

¹⁸ There are differences between the events and dates that open and close the narrative in the various editions of the text. The problem will be discussed further on.

¹⁹ See Gianfranco Leli, *Introduzione* in Joyce Lussu, *Inventario delle cose certe*, (Fermo: Andrea Livi Editore, 1989). Croce's admiration for the works of Lussu is also evident from the review of the piece in *La Critica*: 'Le visioni trascendentali (...) non hanno potere in lei; conosce il dolore, ma non conosce l'accanimento né la disperazione, perché sa che è l'amore (...) che non vien meno; l'amore per tutto quello che innalza l'uomo, che è veramente l'uomo.' In 'La Critica', XXXVII, 2, (Napoli: 1939).

Come sai, avevo scritto delle poesie, in gioventù, che Croce aveva gentilmente lodato, ma io non ci avevo creduto. Siccome nonostante la gentilezza e l'affetto, Don Benedetto non m'aveva convinto delle mie attitudini a scrivere, di fatto avevo proprio smesso. Per molti anni. Tuttavia, subito dopo la guerra, dato che Emilio e io avevamo avuto una vita abbastanza avventurosa, succedeva che la gente mi chiedesse di raccontare com'erano andate le cose.²⁰

Writing becomes a way to fix the events of the war just witnessed, in order to satisfy the curiosity of people who were asking to narrate her personal story. *Fronti e frontiere's* first edition responds to the need to narrate her account of the historical and political events that she witnessed and, in order to do so she adopts a narration in prose, perhaps because poetry does not seem the most apt form for expressing these needs.

But if, on the one hand, writing becomes a way to satisfy the curiosity of others, on the other hand it is also a way to express her own need to narrate the war that she just took part in. This was not an isolated feeling in Post-war Italy and it recalls the words of Calvino, who retrospectively described the feeling of the partisans returning from the war in the short essay that became the manifesto of Italian Neorealism:

[eravamo] carichi di storie da raccontare, ognuno aveva avuto la sua, ognuno aveva vissuto vite irregolari drammatiche avventurose, ci si strappava la parola di bocca. La rinata libertà di parlare fu per la gente al principio la smania di raccontare.²¹

During the years after the Resistance there is a vast proliferation of works that give voice to the numerous war stories witnessed. After the end of Fascism, and mostly after the end of the civil war, a literary discussion takes place evaluating the necessity of creating a new art, that would be highly engaged with the problems of the present age. This necessity of creating a literature and a new culture that engages with the present is promoted in particular by Vittorini's journal *il Politecnico*, from September 1945. The word 'impegno' is used to define the

²⁰ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, (Milano: Baldini & Caatoldi, 1996) p.118.

²¹ Italo Calvino, *Introduzione in Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, (Milano: Mondadori, 1996), p.VI.

political commitment to the issues of the present and it is used for the first time by Vittorini as a translation of Sartre's term 'engagement', used in the first article of *Les Temps Modernes*. In translating Sartre's term Vittorini also takes on the idea of a participation of culture and literature to contemporary history, however, Vittorini's discussion on the nature of the cultural 'impegno' was long and articulated, and led to a well-known debate with the representatives of the PCI.²²

During these years of 'impegno' many writers wrote novels and short stories about their experience during the war, and even more non-professional writers composed and published documents on their autobiographical experience, in order to give voice to their own experience as antifascists. These included Roberto Battaglia, *Un uomo, un partigiano* (1945), Pietro Chiodi, *Banditi* (1946), Paolo Monelli, *Roma 1943* (1945), Arrigo Benedetti, *Paura all'alba* (1945), Pino Levi Cavaglione, *Guerriglia nei castelli romani* (1945). In parallel with the publication of personal memories, literary texts that narrated the events of the war and of the Resistance published in these years also were at the centre of the discussion on Neorealism: for example Vittorini's *Uomini e no* (1945), the aforementioned Calvino's *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (1947), *Se questo è un uomo* (1947) by Primo Levi on the experience in a concentration camp and *La casa in collina* by Cesare Pavese (1948) on the role of intellectuals during the war.

The aim of creating a literature that was politically engaged, and from a clear left-wing perspective, with the problems of the present and the consequent publication in the early Post-war period puts Joyce Lussu's work among the Post-war engaged narrative. However, it would be difficult to include Lussu's work on the Resistance in the Neorealist movement, however problematic a definition of Neorealism might be, both because of some stylistic choices that differ greatly from the Neorealist narrative, and also because of the re-elaboration of *Fronti e frontiere* that followed the first publication. *Fronti e frontiere* is not only the author's account of the war, an example of the 'scrittura a caldo' which Calvino refers to. The text is also subject to a re-elaboration process that takes place long after the end of the conflict. The second edition of the novel was published in 1967 by Laterza, with major differences in language, structure and ideological message.

²² See Giuseppe Leonelli, *Politica e cultura. La letteratura tra impegno e sperimentazione*, in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, edited by Enrico Malato, vol.IX, part 1, (Milano: Salerno Editrice, 2000), pp. 689-727.

Several other editions followed, introducing the novel to numerous different contexts: it was published in 1969 in the English version *Freedom has no frontier*, translated by William Clowes; and afterwards, in 1969 and 1971 for Mursia edizioni scolastiche. The novel will also be published as part of the collection of Lussu's works in *Storie* in 1986 and 1987; and again in *Alba Rossa* in 1991, together with the work of Emilio Lussu *Diplomazia clandestina*, which narrates the same events from his perspective.²³

In spite of the numerous editions, the text of the novel is only changed substantially once: after the version published in 1945 by Edizioni U the text is re-written in 1967 and published by Laterza. The two editions are here abbreviated respectively as U/45 and L/67.²⁴ The editions after 1967 all re-propose the Laterza version of the novel (with the exception of the Mursia edizioni scolastiche that adapts the text to a different readership). A comparative analysis of these two texts shows the most significant changes in Lussu's poetics and provides material for an analysis of the development of her personal style and for a study of the most prominent features of Lussu's idea of writing.

Because of the combination of autobiographical elements and historical events, *Fronti e frontiere* has sometimes been described as a 'novel', sometimes as a 'historical testimony', sometimes as an 'autobiographical account'. All these terms have been used before by critics to describe the text, however, it is difficult to find a comprehensive definition. Certainly Joyce Lussu is not a canonical author and, as Sulis states, she deliberately keeps herself outside of the official literary schools or movements:

A ciò si aggiunga l'atipicità del percorso culturale, e letterario di Joyce Lussu, il suo attraversare in modi e tempi personali il Novecento, il porsi caparbiamente e provocatoriamente fuori dalla letteratura ufficiale: fatti che

²³ The republications of the novel include the English translation: *Freedom has no frontier*, translated by William Clowes, (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1969); a publication for didactic use: *Fronti e frontiere*, (Milano: Mursia edizioni scolastiche, 1969 and 1971); *Fronti e frontiere* in the collection of works by the author *Storie*, (Ancona: Il Lavoro editoriale, 1986 and 1987); another collection is *Alba Rossa*, which includes the short essay *Che cos'è un marito visto dalla donna* by the author and *Diplomazia clandestina*, by Emilio Lussu, (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1991); the last publication of the novel is *Fronti e frontiere*, (Ancona-Milano: Editore Teoria, 2000).

²⁴ I here follow the nomenclature provided in Gigliola Sulis, *Scrittura e riscrittura. Note sulle varianti d'autore di Fronti e frontiere*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, pp.35-42.

la rendono di difficile collocazione negli inevitabili casellari degli inquadramenti letterari.²⁵

Various influences and elements of different genres shape Lussu's narrative, creating a personal style that is difficult to define according to canonical literary categories.

1.2 Autobiography or memoir

In the first place, *Fronti e frontiere* is presented by the author herself as an autobiographical narrative: in the Preface by the author to the first edition Lussu introduces the text with the words 'Ho rievocato questi ricordi' (U/45, p.5) and also warns the reader that the narrative deals with personal matters 'trattandosi di cose personali' (U/45, p.5). The work is presented as an autobiographical account. In fact, comparing the events narrated by Lussu with other war diaries and testimonies by other antifascist exiles, it is possible to assert the historical truth of most of the facts presented.²⁶ Nevertheless, mainly because of the short period of the life of the author covered in the narrative, it seems restrictive to consider the text just as an autobiography.

In particular, a substantial change between the first and the second edition shows a very different approach to the narrative. Whereas in U/45 the narration describes Lussu's life story from 1940 to 1943, in L/67 a more in-depth representation of the main character is given, and the narrative covers the story of Lussu's life from 1938 until 1943. But what changes most is the focus of the narration: whereas in U/45 the narrative seems more linked to the necessity of the 'scrittura a caldo', of giving a testimony of a historical condition just witnessed, in L/67 the witness also becomes the protagonist of the narrative and in this sense more autobiographical details and a more detailed portrait of the main character is given. Flashbacks are added to the narration, with the result of changing the flavour of the narrative from a representation of a historical situation from the

²⁵ Gigliola Sulis, *Parole di tutti i giorni. Appunti sulla scrittura di Joyce Lussu*, in Joyce Lussu. *Una donna nella storia*, p.92.

²⁶ Emilio Lussu, *Diplomazia clandestina*, in *Alba Rossa*, (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1991) narrates the same events that are present in *Fronti e frontiere* from the point of view of Emilio Lussu; Vera Modigliani, *Esilio*, (Milano: Garzanti, 1946) narrates the episode of the escape to Switzerland of the Modigliani and Leo Valiani, *Tutte le strade conducono a Roma*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983) narrates in a short episode Joyce Lussu's mission in Italy and her crossing of the Nazi lines.

point of view of an eye witness, to the recounting of the personal life-experience of the writer. For example, in 1945 the narrative opened in medias res, at the time of the German invasion of Paris. Particular attention is given to the description of the crowd of people who fled from the north to the south of France, focusing on large scale phenomena of historical importance, of which the narrator is only a part and an eye witness. Instead, in the first chapter of the second edition, flashbacks on the family background and education of the narrator are given, in order to create a chronological portrait of the protagonist, emphasises the autobiographical component of the narrative.

The words used by the author to present her narrative in 1945 suggest another possible genre that could define the text: 'Ho rievocato questi ricordi per il piacere di ricordare' (U/45, p.5). As stated in the Preface to the first edition, the subject of the narrative consists of the author's memories. So it would probably be more accurate to describe *Fronti e frontiere* as a memoir, the account of the personal memories of selected historical events, rather than a comprehensive account of the author's life. It is possible that Joyce Lussu was inspired by some of the memoirs of other *fuoriusciti* abroad, and, more likely, by the writing activity of her husband. Emilio Lussu was writing and publishing his most important autobiographical testimony on the First World War during the years of cohabitation with Joyce: *Un anno sull'Altipiano* was published in 1938. In addition to this, he had already published other first-person narratives: in 1929 *La Catena*, a report of his incarceration, followed by *Marcia su Roma e dintorni* in 1933, an account of the rise of fascism. Due to the ideological and cultural proximity of Emilio's works it is probable that Joyce Lussu's texts have been influenced by these 'testimonianze storiche' in the form of autobiographical narratives, that were written by her husband and by other activists of Giustizia e Libertà.

Emilio Lussu's texts are all autobiographical and told by a first-person narrator who coincides with the author. However, the personal experience of the narrator is offered to the reader as a testimony to discuss a specific cultural and political situation, and the text never indulges in the intimistic narration of the self. Sanna underlines how Emilio's narrative is 'un racconto autobiografico che non è mai autobiografismo, ma spiegazione storica, ritratto di costume'.²⁷ On the same topic

²⁷ Paola Sanna, *Emilio Lussu scrittore*, (Padova: Liviana editrice, 1965), p.70.

Salvestroni argues: 'Quello che egli [Emilio Lussu] vuole fare in *Marcia su Roma e dintorni* non è, come già sappiamo, parlare dei propri problemi privati, ma offrire le sue esperienze agli altri, perché vi meditino sopra e traggano le loro conclusioni'.²⁸ Joyce adopts the same idea of writing history by offering of a testimony of a private and personal experience.

The features of this historical autobiographical account link Emilio Lussu's works to the genre of memoir of the late nineteenth century, as suggested by Sanna.²⁹ Various elements of the genre are present both in the work of Emilio and of Joyce Lussu. Particularly in the *Risorgimento*, patriots would write and publish their memoirs with the specific intention of creating an accessible text for the middle class. In this way, they could discuss broader ideological themes and historical perspectives, by presenting their personal life-story.³⁰ In a similar way, both Emilio and Joyce Lussu's texts present their own memories in order to discuss history and both of them address more or less explicitly to an audience that is engaged in the discussion on the ideals presented in the memoir.

However, whereas the works of Emilio were published primarily to convey a specific political message, Joyce Lussu's novel is more literarily self-conscious and presents some elements of other genres of narrative. Emilio Lussu would always refuse to consider himself as a literary writer and the way he and Joyce Lussu conceive their personal works and their commitment to literature differs greatly. Emilio Lussu considered writing to be primarily a way to raise political awareness on specific topics, but also a means to support himself economically: most of his works were published in the years of his clandestine political activism abroad, and the profits of the sales of his books constituted most of his income.³¹

La mia attività è stata solo politica, in patria e in esilio, anche quando ho esercitato l'avvocatura. [...] I miei scritti sono tutti saggi politici, autobiografici.

²⁸ Simonetta Salvestroni, *Emilio Lussu scrittore*, (Firenze: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1974), p.2.

²⁹ See Paola Sanna, *Emilio Lussu scrittore*.

³⁰ See *Memorialisti dell'Ottocento*, edited by Gaetano Tromatore and Carmelo Cappuccio, (Ricciardi, 1972). Among many of the autobiographical works of politically involved men during the *Risorgimento*: Silvio Pellico, *Le mie prigioni*; Carlo Bini, *Manoscritto di un prigioniero*; Massimo D'Azeglio, *I miei ricordi*; Luigi Settembrini, *Le ricordanze della mia vita*; Giuseppe Bandi, *I Mille da Genova a Capua*.

³¹ See Giuseppe Fiori, *Il cavaliere dei Rossomori. Vita di Emilio Lussu*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1985).

Se dopo la prima guerra mondiale non avessi assunto un impegno politico, non avrei mai scritto un libro. Io non appartengo alla repubblica delle lettere.³²

In Joyce Lussu's life, by contrast, writing was always a central activity, and most of her works were published after the end of the war, when her economic condition was very stable. Although she never defined herself as a professional writer, along with political essays Joyce Lussu also published two collections of poems, several anthologies of poetry that she translated, a detective story, a collection of short stories and historical and cultural studies in the form of narratives, proving to be an all-round writer.

Particularly in comparing Emilio Lussu's *Diplomazia clandestina* and Joyce Lussu's *Fronti e frontiere* it is possible to see how Joyce Lussu's text presents elements of a fictional narrative. Both *Diplomazia clandestina* and *Fronti e frontiere* are autobiographical accounts of the events that occurred during the years of the antifascist activism of the couple. However, whereas the narrative of Emilio concentrates, as clearly presented in the title, on the diplomatic negotiations of the antifascist movement, Joyce's text describes the characters' itinerary and adventurous travels across the fronts and frontiers of a Nazi occupied Europe. In two different instances in her novel Joyce Lussu points out this difference between the two texts: 'A Lisbona Emilio era occupatissimo anche in una serie di contatti con i movimenti antinazisti di vari paesi e le loro rappresentanze all'estero; l'intensa attività di quel periodo, fino al ritorno in Francia, è descritta nel suo libro *Diplomazia Clandestina*' (L/67, p.62). Referring to the negotiations between Emilio Lussu and the British War Office in London Joyce Lussu also comments: 'Su queste cose, sulle quali, se mai, Lussu scriverà un giorno, io mi soffermo appena perché il lettore si renda conto delle nostre peregrinazioni' (U/45, p.76). On the other hand, Joyce Lussu favours the narration of their travels and of the most adventurous aspects of their journey. The fact that her narrative focuses primarily on her travels and adventures opens a discussion on whether the narrative itself could be referred to an adventure novel as well as an autobiographical memoir.

³² Emilio Lussu in Giuseppe Fiori, *Il cavaliere dei Rossomori. Vita di Emilio Lussu*, pp.257-258.

1.3 Elements of an adventure narrative and of the *roman à thèse*

A variety of definitions has been used to describe Joyce Lussu's *Fronti e frontiere*, and each critic has chosen a particular perspective to analyse the text. Contarino particularly underlines the elements that bring the narrative closer to the adventure novel:

Il racconto si sviluppa, in clima di ansia e tensione, attraverso una serie di quadri successivi secondo una tecnica che per suspense e rapidità raggiunge in più punti gli effetti di un vero romanzo d'avventure.³³

In a similar way, Manetti points out the multiplicity of elements that coexist in *Fronti e frontiere*: 'Un libro trasparente e complesso [...] in bilico tra la testimonianza, la ricostruzione storica e il racconto picaresco'.³⁴

Robert Alter's 1964 definition of the picaresque narrative may be useful here to understand how Lussu's work relates to the genre. Alter discusses the importance of the picaresque genre from the Sixteenth century onwards, analysing the influences of the genre in later literary movements, arguing that 'the picaresque novel is not simply a long-finished episode in Western literature, but rather a permanent addition to the storehouse of literary resources, capable of regenerating and transforming itself in a variety of new environments'.³⁵ Alter defines the picaresque novel as a narrative that is: 'the adventurous story of a rogue's life, usually told in the first person' but also as the 'episodic account of wanderings, adversity and ingenious role-playing'.³⁶ In a similar way to the picaresque novel, *Fronti e frontiere* is also an autobiographical account of the protagonist's wanderings and travels. In both editions of the text in fact, the narrative is centred on the adventures of the protagonist and, as a consequence, the plot is composed by adding these different episodes, without a clear

³³ See Rosario Contarino and Marcella Tedeschi, *Dal fascismo alla resistenza*, in *Letteratura italiana Laterza*, edited by Carlo Muscetta (Roma: Laterza, 1980), p.171-172.

³⁴ Beatrice Manetti, *Da una frontiera all'altra*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, p.98.

³⁵ Robert Alter, *Rogue's progress. Studies in the Picaresque novel*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), p.ix.

³⁶ Robert Alter, *Rogue's progress*, p.viii.

teleological structure. *Fronti e frontiere* is constructed as a chain of episodes: 'inanellando episodi minimi', according to the definition of Manetti.³⁷

The main protagonist of Lussu's novel also presents, in both editions of the text, some characteristics of the picaresque. The numerous episodes that narrate how the protagonist deceives the police controls and investigations using her linguistic skills and her quick mind are worthy of a real picaresque.

The narrator of *Fronti e frontiere* is characterized, as the picaresque, by an ambivalent morality: on the one hand she is an outlaw, living a clandestine life, continuously changing her identity and enjoying her continuous disguises. On the other hand, as the picaresque, Lussu's protagonist, is also not portrayed in negative terms. Because of this ambivalence, in *Fronti e frontiere* as in the picaresque novel, the narrator narrates the dangerous and illegal adventures of the protagonist, keeping at the same time a sympathetic relationship with the reader, who can sympathize with the character because of its good nature and fundamental benevolence.

The most picaresque element of Lussu's narrative consists, however, in the ironic episodes of the protagonist's adventures and in the satirical view on society that these episodes offer. As in the picaresque novel, *Fronti e frontiere* is representing a reality that is going under a dramatic change, both from a political and a historical point of view. As Alter notes, the picaresque narrative historically portrays 'a world where the social order is disintegrating but it is still regarded as though it were continuing undisturbed'.³⁸ In a similar way, frequent targets for the satirical representation in Lussu's text are soldiers, officers, or other member of the police force, who belong to an order that is about to be subverted, often portrayed as simple minded and incapable. An example of this ironic, but highly critical, description of the officers of the Italian army is given in the narrative when the Italian army is portrayed fleeing from the lines at the cry of 'tutti a casa' after 8th of September 1943. Lussu is travelling to Rome in a train overcrowded with soldier of all ranks:

Il treno stracarico entrava a Termini, lentamente. E d'improvviso, come un gran fuoco di paglia, il panico si propagò tra quelle migliaia di soldati e ufficiali

³⁷ Beatrice Manetti, *Da una frontiera all'altra*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, p.98.

³⁸ Robert Alter, *Rogue's progress*, p.66.

che si preparavano a scendere. S'era sparsa la voce che v'erano nella stazione due soldati tedeschi, i quali avrebbero controllato i viaggiatori. Il tenente accanto a me [...] era bianco come uno strofinaccio. 'Senta', mi confidò, 'quando i tedeschi mi han fatto scappare alla caserma, sono riuscito a salvare una delle mie pistole. [...] Ora, se c'è il controllo tedesco, non vorrei che me la trovassero addosso. Potrebbero fucilarmi. Non so cosa fare'.

'Non si preoccupi' dissi. 'La dia a me, gliela porto io'. [...] Usciti dalla stazione, feci per rendergliela.

'Senta', mi disse ancora il tenente 'io non abito poi tanto lontano da qui. Non possiamo sapere se non incontreremo dei tedeschi per la strada. Io non avrei parole per ringraziarla, se mi portasse la pistola a casa. Una donna non la fermeranno'.

E io lo accompagnai a casa, insieme a un capitano che si era messo anche lui sotto la mia protezione. (U/45, p.196).

The description of the army on the train underlines the general lack of courage: an entire army is in fear because of the unfounded rumour of a couple of German soldiers on the platform. The general state of fear is also underlined by the use of similes that ridicule the soldiers: the lieutenant becomes 'bianco come uno strofinaccio' for a danger that does not even exist, and in the train the panic overflows 'come un gran fuoco di paglia'. In addition to this, the laughable representation of the soldiers increases when the lieutenant and a captain ask the narrator for protection and she ends up escorting them to their houses.

Even if picaresque elements in Joyce Lussu's narrative can be found and if the text has aptly been referred as an adventure novel, there is a crucial element of *Fronti e frontiere* that differentiates it from the picaresque genre. While in the picaresque novel the protagonist never questions the social organization of the world he lives in and never considers the possibility of changing its social structure, Joyce Lussu's character does precisely the opposite: the main aim of the protagonist in *Fronti e frontiere* is to subvert the political organization of her world and all of her actions are specifically oriented to this purpose.

The narration provides a strong ideological message that is the aim of the novel itself. This characterizes the text not simply as an adventure novel, but also partly as an ideological novel or a *roman à thèse*. Adopting the definition of a *roman à*

these proposed by Suleiman, it is possible to relate *Fronti e frontiere* to the literary genre:

A roman à thèse is a novel written in the realistic mode (that is, based on an aesthetic of verisimilitude and representation), which signals itself to the reader as primarily didactic in intent, seeking to demonstrate the validity of a political, philosophical or religious doctrine.³⁹

Because of the fact that the text is presented as an autobiographical testimony, the narrative mode is consistently realistic. In addition, the didactic aim is a central feature in *Fronti e frontiere*, as is evident particularly by the fact that the narrative was published by the author, after the editions of 1945 and 1967, also in a special edition, specifically intended for school use.⁴⁰ Also, the communication of a specific political message is the centre of Lussu's poetics. Particularly in *Fronti e frontiere* the fundamental elements of the political doctrine presented are the antifascist ideals, the fight for freedom and the Resistance seen as a class struggle for a more just society. More importantly, these ideals are not just presented in the text for a personal recollection of the past, on the contrary it is central to the author to direct the discussion upon the past into an engaged reflection on the present. This idea is clearly shown much later in *Lotte, ricordi e altro*, when the publisher suggested a publication of a collection of autobiographical stories and Lussu replied: 'a condizione che questi ricordi non restino solo memoria del passato, ma chiarimento del presente e anche ipotesi per il domani'.⁴¹ The pedagogical aim and the 'rule of action' addressed to the reader are certainly features of the ideological novel that have a strong importance in Lussu's narrative.

In order to make the narrative a vessel for a political meaning, it is of fundamental importance that the message or doctrine is represented without ambiguity. For this reason, the value system in most ideological novels coincides with a Manichean world-view where the ethical and unethical behaviours, situations, characters are very clearly distinct.⁴² In contrast with the Modernist

³⁹ Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian fictions. The ideological novel as a literary genre*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁴⁰ Joyce Lussu, *Fronti e frontiere*, (Milano: Mursia edizioni scolastiche, 1969 and 1971)

⁴¹ Joyce Lussu, *Lotte, ricordi e altro*, (Roma: Biblioteca del Vascello, 1992), p.10.

⁴² See Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian fictions*.

rejection of a unique meaning, the *roman à thèse* needs, as underlined by Suleiman, 'a single meaning and a total closure'.⁴³ In Lussu's novel all the fascists are represented as negative characters, unintelligent and profiteers; all the members of the army (the Italian and German in particular, but also the Allied army) are represented as simple minded or cruel predators; on the opposite side, clandestine refugees or antifascist exiles are always portrayed in a positive light; peasants and country people are defined by generosity and altruism, qualities always presented as a direct consequence of their social status.⁴⁴ In this way, all the descriptions and characterizations contribute consistently to the communication of the antifascist ideal: the Fascists are oppressors, the partisans flawless heroes, the members of the lower classes genuine and righteous members of society who deserve to become a more influential social class.

This Manichean world view typical of the *roman à thèse* is very dissimilar from the representation of the Resistance of the Neorealist or post-war writers contemporary to Joyce Lussu: for example in the works of Vittorini, Calvino, Pavese or Fenoglio the ambiguity of partisans and antifascists is explored in detail, and it precisely this problematic that is at the centre of their narratives.⁴⁵ In Beppe Fenoglio's *Una questione privata*, the partisans are described in contrast to the comforting moral of partisan martyrdom and they are represented in their humanity, with all the imperfections and incoherent behaviours that this nature implies.⁴⁶ In a similar way, the depiction of the 'distaccamento del Dritto' in Italo Calvino's *Il Sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, the partisans are deliberately depicted in their most negative features, in order to describe 'una storia che restasse in margine alla Guerra partigiana, ai suoi eroismi e sacrifici, ma nello stesso tempo ne

⁴³ See 'The interest of the *roman à thèse* today resides in the fact that it incarnates the opposing tendency: where the modernist text seeks to multiply meaning or to 'pluralize' it [...], the *roman à thèse* aims for a single meaning and a total closure.' In Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian fictions*, p.22.

⁴⁴ The element of populism is discussed in chapter three.

⁴⁵ See for example Elio Vittorini, *Uomini e no*, (Milano: Bompiani, 1945), Italo Calvino, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1947), Cesare Pavese, *La casa in collina*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1949), the first literary works to discuss the reality of partisans and antifascist intellectuals during the Resistance. Beppe Fenoglio, *Una questione privata*, (Milano: Garzanti, 1963) also relates to the same topic and is said to conclude the movement of Neorealism with his posthumous novel on the Resistance. The narrative of Joyce Lussu relates more to the novel by Renata Viganò, *L'Agnese va a morire*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1949), that even if has often been referred as a neorealist narrative, is characterized by a similar Manichean depiction of the Resistance.

⁴⁶ See Gabriele Padullà, *Alla ricerca del romanzo, Introduzione* in Beppe Fenoglio, *Una questione privata*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1986).

rendesse il colore, l'aspro sapore, il ritmo', as the author himself points out in his *Prefazione*.⁴⁷ Similarly, in Vittorini's *Uomini e no* and Pavese's *La casa in Collina* the partisans of Milan and the antifascist intellectuals in Piedmont are represented in their weaknesses to underline the problematic nature of moral choices in a civil war. Particularly Vittorini deliberately protests against the idea of a sugar-coated representation of the 'socialist hero' in the figure of the partisan, resulting in the conflict with Togliatti, who believed in a literature that could give voice to the political ideals of the party.⁴⁸ Whereas Lussu's contemporaries pursued a narrative that would be independent from the ideology of the party line, Lussu seems to take the side of Togliatti, creating a narrative where the PCI ideology is never put into question and is never presented as problematic. The didactic intent of the novel is even more evident if the text is considered in its re-writing. Whereas the political message in the first edition could be seen as a consequence of the 'scrittura a caldo' after the war, the fact that the pedagogical intent of the author increases in 1967 (see below) demonstrates importance that the author attributed to the political message of the text.

It has been shown how *Fronti e frontiere* is a text with elements of various genres. The narrative offers the historical accuracy of a testimony, but also the subjective experience of an autobiographical document. And if the events are historically accurate, a great attention is also paid to the way the adventurous episodes are presented, with consideration for suspense effects and irony. Having analysed these elements, it could be said that *Fronti e frontiere* is a memoir, with a focus on the adventurous travel of the protagonist and elements of fictional narrative, and also elements of ideological novel. However, the question of genre is also coloured by the re-writing process of the text. In fact, even if the differences of the two editions do not change the genre of the work completely, it sometimes privileges some aspects instead of others. The differences in language, style and content in the two editions will be discussed in the following chapters showing how the ratio of autobiographical, adventurous and ideological elements shifts

⁴⁷ See *Prefazione* in Italo Calvino, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1970), p.12.

⁴⁸ See Toni Iermano, *Letteratura e politica: Elio Vittorini*, in *Prosatori e narratori del pieno e del secondo novecento*, in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, edited by Enrico Malato, vol.IX, part 1, (Milano: Salerno Editrice, 2000), pp.740-750.

from 1945 to 1967, and the way in which this effects the overall character of the text.

2. Poetics of clarity

In re-writing *Fronti e frontiere*, Lussu works mainly towards a simplification of the narrative: 'scriveva lavorando a togliere invece che a mettere' as her editor and friend Mangani remembers her style.⁴⁹ The first text that counts 241 pages, is reduced to 137 in L/67. This means that numerous episodes and, most importantly, many characters are eliminated, with the result of privileging an account based on the autobiographical protagonist narrator. The number of the chapters is also reduced from twelve to eight, but most significantly, the chapters that were entitled or dedicated to a female character of the story are left without nomenclature in the second edition. In addition to a quantitative simplification of the text, a qualitative clarification is also made. A careful work of revision is applied to various linguistic choices: numerous changes in the language are made to achieve a clearer and simpler style. The starting point for my research was the work of Sulis who reconstructed for the first time the editorial history of *Fronti e frontiere* and collected data related to the most relevant changes in the two editions of the novel. With a wider set of examples and a more detailed analysis I will bring one step further Sulis' findings, trying to outline the reasons behind the changes made in the rewriting of the novel and trying to trace the evolution of Lussu's writings between the years 1945 and 1967.

2.1 A new lexicon

Changes in the lexicon are made in the second edition in order to modernize the language, as well as to create an effect of a more spontaneous prose privileging every-day expressions instead of more formal terminology. Changes are made towards a more colloquial language: the word 'uomo' is changed with the more familiar 'tipo' ('Era un uomo assai prudente' in U/45, 'Era un tipo assai prudente' in L/67 p.40); 'discorreva volentieri' (U/45 p. 32) becomes less formal with 'faceva volentieri due chiacchiere' (L/67 p.44). Some words are replaced by a lower register synonym or a more modern term: 'reclusione' (U/45 p.36) becomes 'carcere' (L/67 p. 45); 'equanime' (U/45 p.50) is replaced with 'con calma' (L/67

⁴⁹ Giorgio Mangani, *Il lavoro editoriale. Catalogo storico (1979-2009)*, (Ancona, Il Lavoro Editoriale, 2009), p.13.

p.52); the past form 'trasse' (U/45 p.52) is modernized into 'tirò fuori' (L/67 p.54); 'con pochi spiccioli' (L/67 p.56) substitutes the formal 'senza sufficiente moneta' (U/45 p.56); 'ci addossammo' (U/45 p.61) becomes 'ci appoggiammo' (L/67 p.59); 'flemma anglosassone' (U/45 p.86) is replaced by 'serenità' (L/67 p.63); the Latin-based 'turba' (U/45 p.187) is modernized in 'folla' (L/67 p.111); the uncommon term 'ferraiolo' (U/45 p.231) is substituted with a more modern 'mantello' (L/67 p.131).

In other situations, adverbs are replaced by adjectives or other expressions, creating a more fluid language and avoiding very long words in -mente: 'celermente' (U/45 p.95) becomes 'rapidissima' (L/67 p.67) and 'rapidamente' (U/45 p.97) becomes 'di corsa' (L/67 p.68) and 'tristemente' (U/45 p.98) is replaced with 'con malinconia' (L/67 p.69); 'tra le tenebre' (U/45 p.96) is changed into 'al buio' (L/67 p.68). Elaborate expressions are shortened or simplified in meaning with lexical substitutions, for example: 'in capo a pochi giorni' (U/45 p.25) is changed into 'in pochissimo tempo' (L/67 p.39); 'si direbbe che vi avete il dubbio' (U/45 p.114) becomes 'avete l'aria di pensare' (L/67 p.73); 'Fabbri era solo un centralino segreto di corrispondenza' (U/45 p.133) is changed into 'Fabbri si occupava solo di trasmettere alcuni messaggi' (L/67 p.83). More modern expressions are introduced, for example in several occasions expressions like 'v'era', 'v'erano' are changed into 'c'era', 'c'erano'; 'tessere' (U/45 p.152) is replaced with a clearer and less ambiguous term 'carte d'identità' (L/67 p.93, but other times as well); 'savi' (U/45 p.155) becomes 'saggi' (L/67 p.95).

In addition to simplifying some words or expressions, Lussu also eliminates most foreign words, in order to create an easier to understand lexicon: 'mazout' (U/45 p.24) is 'nafta' (L/67 p.39); 'mètèques' (U/45 p.25) is simplified to 'clandestini' (L/67 p.40), losing the negative connotation of the French term in favour of a simpler language; 'varina' (U/45 p.66) mentioned in the first edition with a short explanation of the term, is simply 'pescivendola' in the second edition (L/67 p.61), creating a more fluid narration, without the interruption of an explanation; 'saudade' (U/45 p.71) and 'banderillas' (U/45 p.72) are eliminated; 'Fannies' (U/45 p.81) is substituted with a periphrasis 'forze ausiliari femminili britanniche' (L/67 p.63). The elimination of foreign words allows the narration to proceed uninterrupted and to omit explanations that diverge from the narrative.

In other situations, when foreign words are maintained, they are simply written in a more Italianized spelling, perhaps to improve the fluidity of the text. For example: 'kasbah' (U/45 p.24) is replaced by 'casbah' (L/67 p.39); 'espadrille' (U/45 p.53) is written as 'espadriglie' (L/67 p.54); 'gaullisti' (U/45 p.175) is spelled as it would be in Italian, 'gollisti' (L/67 p.107); on the contrary, in multiple occasions 'tassi' is changed into 'taxi', since the term was probably already in use in Italian at the time of the second edition.

However, the process of elimination of foreign words does not seem to apply to German quotations: German words are not eliminated, but added in some cases to the text. I believe that by introducing occasional foreign words, generally orders given in German, Lussu is trying to create a more expressive language. The German expressions introduced to the second version of the text are easily understandable from the context and they add colour to the language without undermining the clarity. For example, the episode of the arrest of Joyce and Emilio Lussu by German soldiers is enriched with German words that were not present in the first edition; as analysed by Sulis⁵⁰, this addition increases the tension and dramatic effect of the dialogues, introducing a more animated tone: 'Ach! Souper!' (L/67 p.74), 'Worwärts! Marsch!' (L/67 p.76), 'Herr Hauptmann' (L/67 p.80) are expressions introduced.

In a similar way, as well as some German expressions, some regional influenced sentences are introduced: here, as in the previous example with the use of German sentences, the meaning is easily understandable and the regional flavour of the language only adds expression to the text. Examples are the comical effect obtained by the Tuscan swearing (L/67 p.95) or the Piemontese 'Anduma, anduma ragazzi' and 'Sior tenente'(L/67 p.98). However, when dialect expressions undermine the comprehension of the text, they are substituted with more standardized terms: 'buzurro' (U/45 p.176) becomes 'disgraziato' (L/67 p.107) and 'pizzardone' (U/45 p.146) is standardized to 'carabiniere' (L/67 p.90).

In simplifying the lexicon and creating a more immediate language, Lussu also substitutes words that belong to a specialized jargon with every-day language and expressions. For example: 'tartana o paranza' (U/45 p.23) becomes 'peschereccio' (L/67 p.38); again 'paranza' (U/45 p.27) is 'barca a remi' (L/67 p.41) 'quando non

⁵⁰ Gigliola Sulis, *Scritture e riscritture*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, (2002), p.40.

era di quarto' (U/45 p.93), an expression of the nautical jargon that indicates a four hours shift, is simplified in 'quando non era di servizio' (L/67 p.65). In some cases, Lussu substitutes some political terminology as well with a clearer and more particularizing expression, an example of this is the generic 'controrivoluzionario' (U/45 p.48), changed into a more specific and unmistakable 'franchista' (L/67 p.51).

Following the idea of re-writing the novel in a simpler language, some abbreviations or acronyms are avoided in the later edition, for example: 'P.S.' (U/45 p.185) is expanded in 'pubblica sicurezza' (L/67 p.109) to facilitate the reader, that, in 1967, might not have been familiar with the abbreviation.

Another change of lexicon in the rewriting of the novel concerns the choice of adjectives: the presence of adjectives is reduced to a minimum, eliminating the redundancies of a double adjective construction. As a consequence of this, the style of the sentence appears lighter, for example in: 'I nostri abiti erano umidi o bagnati, e infreddoliti li rimettevamo' (U/45 p.31) is shortened 'I nostri abiti erano bagnati, e bagnati li rimettevamo' (L/67 p.43); 'un aspetto decoroso e decente (U/45 p.31) becomes 'un aspetto decoroso' (L/67 p.43); 'alzò le spalle con aria tra fiera e sconsolata' (U/45, p.60) is simplified into 'con aria sconsolata' (L/67, p.59); 'aspetto untuosamente ipocrita' (U/45 p.80) becomes 'aspetto ipocrita' (L/67 p.63).

Exemplary of this re-writing process is the description of the apartment in Marseille: in the first edition 'L'appartamento era *spazioso e pulitissimo* (...) il soffitto si macchiava *di chiazze e striature* di muffa, e i telai delle finestre *si gonfiavano e marcivano*'⁵¹ (U/45 p.130) is changed into a lighter narrative, eliminating double adjectives or redundant expressions: 'L'appartamento era pulitissimo (...) il soffitto si macchiava di muffa, e i telai delle finestre marcivano' (L/67 p.82); also 'un ragazzino di dieci anni girava solo, sconcolato e intimidito' (U/45 p.185) is shortened to 'girava solo' (L/67 p.110). Similarly, in the sentence 'con infinita insolenza e sconfinato disprezzo' (U/45 p.197) the adjectives are eliminated in the second edition in favour of a lighter prose 'con insolenza e disprezzo' (L/67 p.116).

⁵¹ Italics are mine, to underline the redundancies in U/45 that were eliminated in L/67.

2.2 A more accessible narrative: clarity and purpose

The process of removing redundancies in the lexicon and in the organization of sentences was also applied to the structure of the novel that, as a result, appears extremely reduced in the form. If the first edition was composed of 241 pages, the second only counts 137. In a similar way, the number of chapters diminishes from twelve to eight. As mentioned earlier, simplifying through removal seems to be the rule followed by the author. In her interview with Ballestra in 1996, when she is asked about her choices of poetics in the process of re-writing *Fronti e frontiere*, Lussu states:

‘La mia sola preoccupazione era di dire le cose con chiarezza e onestà, senza raccontar balle e con meno parole possibili. (...) Il mio solo intento è di comunicare, raccontare le cose alla gente nel più breve tempo possibile e senza dilungarmi, con efficacia.⁵²’

Another simplification of the narrative through removal consists in the elimination of literary references. Whereas the first edition of the texts contained numerous similes or references to literary works, in the second they are all eliminated. The two references to Dante of the first edition (U/45 p.46: ‘sfilavano con muto sussiego, ma con gli occhi bassi e il passo tardo, come gli ipocriti di Dante’ and U/45 p.202: ‘forse eravamo arrivati nell’Inferno, nel girone dove si puniscono gli eretici’) are eliminated in the rewriting, although they were poignant in meaning and created a powerful description of both the procession in Spain and of the disastrous situation of central Italy after the bombings.

Other references to Italian literature are omitted: the character Colombina, the servant of the *Commedia dell’arte* (U/45 p.99); a reference to the medieval writer Dino Compagni (U/45 p.130); a couple of lines by the poet Giusti, quoted in the novel (U/45 p.137) are omitted. Along the same line, references to foreign literatures are cancelled as well: the *Arabian Nights*’ citation (U/45 p.51); the reference to *Les Misérables* (U/45 p.143); Alexandre Dumas’ character *De Raquelon* (U/45 p.157). Classical mythology references are cancelled as well: *Melpomene* and

⁵² Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.118-119.

Tersicore (U/45 p.79), *Nemesi* (U/45, p.27), *Anteo* (U/45 p.79), *Venus* (U/45 p.91) and *Gorgone* (U/45 p.222), but also the Celtic *Fata Morgana* (U/45 p.215).

The decision to eliminate these references appears in contradiction both with the passion for literature that Lussu cultivated since she was very young, and with the author's aim at constructing a more expressive narrative. Particularly, the Dante references contribute significantly to the description of societies where Fascism is in power, and the simile between Dante's damned and the population of Italy and Spain under a regime is highly communicative. Moreover, in many of her works, Lussu describes her passion for the *Commedia*, and the inspiration she derived from reading it since she was a child. The author explains in the extended interview with Ballestra, when she discusses the books that influenced her personality as a young student, the importance of Dante in her readings: 'La Divina Commedia, come ti ho detto, la leggevo invece liberamente e senza note o commenti'⁵³, and also 'A sei anni volevo imparare la Divina Commedia a memoria e non la smettevo di fare domande ai miei genitori'⁵⁴.

The decision to avoid literary references responds, however, to a specific rejection of literary conventions, which force the writer, in Lussu's opinion, to create a work that reflects on the prior cultural products and only addresses an audience that shares with the author the same background and education. Joyce Lussu, in 1967, has become aware of this and wants to get rid of her literary erudition, in order to create a new language, understandable for everyone, educated and uneducated people. These are her own words on the topic, taken from the book-interview that she wrote with Ballestra:

I poeti che ho tradotto non avevano nessuna possibilità di avere dei riferimenti letterari. Se a un letterato italiano togli la possibilità di riferirsi al mondo classico o cristiano, si scoraggia e le sue citazioni sono comunque una cosa orrenda, perché chi ti sta di fronte può non aver letto i libri citati. Ora, in Occidente sembra praticamente impossibile ricominciare daccapo, e non c'è

⁵³ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.87.

⁵⁴ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.60.

nessuno capace di scrivere un racconto o una poesia senza riferirsi a qualcosa di scritto prima.⁵⁵

In the passage above, Lussu discusses what she learned from her experience as a translator of non-western literature. Lussu chose to devote her passion for foreign literature towards the poems of politically engaged and extra-European authors. Of these authors she admires the capability of using a language accessible to everyone, and also a style that does not need to refer to previous literary work.⁵⁶ Lussu wants to create a new literature, that, as the one she translated, is accessible to everyone, that 'starts again from the beginning' without using references from previous literature. In the years between 1945 and 1967 the author is involved in an intense activity of poetry translation. This activity enables her to travel to countries that are experiencing their own liberation, mostly independence wars from European colonization. These experiences and interaction with other cultures are lived by her through the lens of literature: Lussu works closely with poets to translate their works, and even when she does not know the language, she communicates in French or Portuguese with the other authors in order to transfer the meaning of their compositions in Italian.

Her activity as a translator and her experience with foreign authors is particularly relevant towards an analysis of *Fronti e frontiere*. 1967, as well as being the year of the re-publication of *Fronti e frontiere*, is also the year of the publication of an important work on translation by Lussu: *Tradurre poesia*. This text is the result of a long process of translation and travelling and includes all the works that she elaborated in the decade between 1958 and 1968. The volume is an anthology of poems aiming at promoting authors little-known to the Italian public (Alexandre O'Neill, José Craveirinha, Ho Chi Minh, Agostinho Neto and Nazim Hikmet among many). However, the volume also includes an autobiographical narrative, in the sense that Joyce Lussu adds long passages as introduction to the

⁵⁵ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.221.

⁵⁶ Joyce Lussu's reference to a literature without 'riferimenti letterari' could be seen as rather condescending. However, the author does not mean to underestimate the literary traditions of extra-European poetry, on the contrary she expresses her admiration for a literature that uses easily accessible references, rather than scholarly and sometimes deliberately inaccessible literary references.

texts, where she narrates her experiences and her travels, discussing the process of engaging with these authors.

From some of the authors that she translates she learns the importance of an easily accessible literature. Reading Mao Tse Tung, as Lussu herself states in the book-interview with Ballestra, she realizes the importance of adapting a clear style, that could be easily understood by people from any social or cultural background: 'Eppure trovava il modo di fare versi, vale a dire un modo straordinario di comunicare con tutti, poiché anche l'ultimo dei disgraziati, degli analfabeti, una poesia la recepisce⁵⁷'. Similarly she talks about Ho Chi Minh, who wrote history in the form of poetry so that even uneducated people, who could not read, would have been able to memorize the lines, aptly arranged in easy to memorize four-line stanzas.

The Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet, whom she met in Stockholm in 1958 at the international conference for peace, was the writer who had the strongest influence on her writings. Since they first met, Lussu and Hikmet worked together on the translation of his poetical work, successfully publishing collections of poems for leading Italian publishers, which made Hikmet's fame in Italy.⁵⁸

Hikmet's influence on Lussu will be fundamental in the development of the 'poetics of clarity' in the author's work. As she states in the book-interview with Ballestra:

Si dice che la poesia è di per sé ambigua, e invece per Hikmet la poesia è soprattutto solare, e le parole devono avere un solo significato, e questo è un magnifico addestramento⁵⁹.

In the passage Lussu highlights how she thinks of Hikmet's words as a teaching, 'addestramento'. Under this perspective, the influence of the poetics of Hikmet may explain, in part, the logic behind the major lexical and syntactical changes in the second edition of *Fronti e frontiere*: substitution of old fashioned words, elimination of foreign and dialect expressions when undermining the clarity of the

⁵⁷ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.42-43.

⁵⁸ *Poesie d'amore* is first published by Mondadori in 1963 and eleven reprints followed, then again in 1965 by Lerici editore, and in 1972 by Newton Compton Italia editore.

⁵⁹ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.57

narration, omission of all literary references, are all changes for a more straightforward narrative. These changes towards a more accessible writing recall the words that Hikmet used to instruct Lussu about her style: 'Adopera soltanto parole concrete, non ambigue, quelle che si usano tutti i giorni e che capirebbe anche un contadino analfabeta'.⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that Lussu adopts Hikmet's teaching not only for her poetry, but also for her works in prose, extending his advice for clarity to literature in general.

The changes made to the first edition of *Fronti e frontiere* also show a clear difference in the purpose of the novel: from the personal 'pleasure' of recalling the events witnessed to the idea that her own history could be a significant experience for others to be shared with. In the preface of the first edition, Lussu introduces her narrative with (false?) modesty, insisting on the idea of writing for her personal pleasure, even if the publication of her memoir would be of no interest for others:

Ho rievocato questi ricordi per il piacere di ricordare. Trattandosi di cose personali, non so se questo piacere potrà essere condiviso da altri.(U/45, p.5).

This idea of intimate writing, writing for the pleasure of the self, of no use for others, appears completely different in a later retrospective comment by the author, who discusses the ideological purpose behind the original publication of the text.

In the interview with Ballestra, Lussu explains, in 1996, why she decided to write *Fronti e frontiere* in the first place. However, the reasons given seem very distant from the intimate pleasure of writing her personal experiences. Writing is, in this account, seen as the means of communicating with people, the means to make the past accessible for others, but most importantly writing her own experience is the means to create a discussion on the present through the reflection upon the past. This shows the author's ambivalent attitude towards her own novel:

⁶⁰ Joyce Lussu, *Tradurre poesia*, (Roma: Robin edizioni, 1998), p.8.

Subito dopo la guerra, dato che Emilio e io avevamo avuto una vita abbastanza avventurosa, succedeva che la gente mi chiedesse di raccontare com'erano andate le cose. Alla fine, arrivata alla ventesima versione dello stesso episodio, mi sono resa conto che correvo dei gravi pericoli. Intanto, era faticosissimo ripetersi (...) E poi era una noia, a me interessava parlare del presente.⁶¹

Lussu here talks about 'gravi pericoli' of repeating the narration of the same story several times. We can perhaps infer that the dangers feared by the author are those of forgetting or misremembering the past. Therefore, writing becomes the means with which the past becomes fixed, permanently shaped in one narration. Writing her own version of the Resistance, her own experience in exile during fascism has the aim of creating a story to be shared with others. Lussu writes *Fronti e frontiere* in order to have a complete version of the stories she used to tell, in order to be able to share her knowledge and experience with others, but mostly, to discuss the present: 'a me interessava parlare del presente'. The past is told not for the personal pleasure of recalling, but to share her experience with the audience and to create a debate on the past that will influence the present.

A significant change of perspective has occurred: as it is expressed in her interview with Ballestra in 1996, Lussu shifts from writing as an action for the self, as a private matter, to an idea of creating a dialogue about the present with her audience, a public experience to be shared. Lussu seems to embrace Hikmet's commitment to the idea of a useful poetry, as she remembers in *Tradurre poesia*:

'Penso' mi diceva Hikmet 'che la poesia debba essere innanzi tutto utile, utile a tutta l'umanità, utile a una classe, a un popolo, a una sola persona; utile a una causa, utile all'orecchio. Voglio essere capito e letto dal maggior numero possibile di persone, ai più vari livelli di cultura, nei più diversi stati d'animo, dalle prossime generazioni.⁶²

This is the most important teaching that Lussu achieves from her experience with foreign literature: using a clearer language in order to create a work that is

⁶¹ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.118.

⁶² Joyce Lussu, *Tradurre poesia*, p.19.

useful and discusses the present with its audience. Politics and art are now conjugated in a singular form. This is how Lussu herself explains the influence of foreign and extra-European literature in the development of her model of engaged literature:

Il tipo di poesia che trovavo in queste altre situazioni invece, con l'aiuto di un poeta e di una persona così diversa da quelle che avevo conosciuto – in occidente si è sempre creduto che poesia e politica fossero due cose opposte, non si è mai fatto un tentativo per avvicinarle, farne degli alleati e non dei nemici che si guardano con sospetto – mi aiutava a vedere unito ciò che poteva essere pensato.⁶³

Lussu admires Hikmet's capability to create a revolutionary literature, 'fare la rivoluzione cantando' is the objective of Hikmet's poetry.⁶⁴

In her reflection upon poetry in 1967, Lussu explains her rejection of a self-centred literature: she talks about her preference towards a politically committed literature, and her rejection of a hedonistic and self-indulgent poetry:

Le angosce di sensibilissimi nevrotici sono reali, ma mi commuovono meno del genocidio. Non ho mai potuto dar torto a Zdanov quando se la prendeva con la Achmatova, che cantava gli occhi del gatto mentre il mondo andava a fuoco, bruciando milioni di esseri viventi tra grandi sofferenze. E mi chiedo come mai queste grandi menti ipersensibili, così attente e pronte a sdegnarsi per le ingiustizie della natura e del condizionamento nei propri confronti, siano poi così lenti e confusi quando si propone loro di partecipare concretamente agli sforzi contro le ingiustizie fatte ad altri.⁶⁵

In the passage above, it becomes clearer that literature for Lussu is a medium to communicate with others, to give expression to her own activism. Whereas in 1945 Lussu was still a young author who introduced her work with a defensive and modest preface, in the second edition of the text, through the changes made, she

⁶³ Joyce Lussu, *Il turco in Italia (ovvero l'italiana in Turchia). Una biografia di Nazim Hikmet*, (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1998), pp.12-13.

⁶⁴ Joyce Lussu, *Il turco in Italia*, p.88.

⁶⁵ Joyce Lussu, *Tradurre poesia*, p.162.

has strongly embraced the idea of useful and politically oriented narrative. The political commitment of Hikmet's poetry is directly inspired by the Russian revolutionary artists of the early twentieth century. Lussu, writing the poet's biography, describes the environment in which Hikmet's cultural education takes place: after having escaped from the regime of his own country, Nazim Hikmet flees to Moscow in 1921. After this experience of working within the Russian post-revolution avant-garde movement the poet will change his way of writing, as he tells Lussu 'E cominciai a scrivere in un altro modo'.⁶⁶ According to his account, the artists who influenced him the most were the poets Majakovskij, Chlebnikov and Esenin, the director Eisenstein, the performers Meyerhold, Tairov, Vachtangov.⁶⁷ Lussu from the socialist and revolutionary art of Hikmet takes the idea of a non-hierarchical relationship between the author and the public, with a subsequent choice of an easy and accessible language and a rejection of scholarly expressions; in addition to this, Lussu also adopts his way of conceiving art as a means to communicate a political ideal, specifically literature has the purpose of raising awareness on specific historical moments.

The political commitment of Lussu's narrative consists in the pedagogical aim of her historical account. As suggested by Hikmet, Lussu opens her work to the new generations and creates a text that is useful for its historical message.

2.3 The influence of Socialist Realism

The influence of Hikmet's socialist poetics on Lussu and her statement on Zdanov suggest a link between the second edition of *Fronti e frontiere* and the Socialist Realist novel. Although it would not be accurate to label Lussu's novel as a Socialist Realist text, some of the author's ideas on literature developed after 1945 and some of the changes operated in the rewriting of the novel underline significant similarities between the Laterza edition of *Fronti e frontiere* and the genre of Socialist Realist novel.

In the first place, the very idea that a literary text must be used to convey and spread a political message, as argued by Lussu in the passage previously analysed from the interview with Ballestra, creates a significant connection with Socialist

⁶⁶ Joyce Lussu, *Il turco in Italia*, p.36.

⁶⁷ For the account of the Russian period of Hikmet see Joyce Lussu, *Il turco in Italia*, pp.38-39.

Realist ideology.⁶⁸ The importance of the educational task of literature is a feature that puts *Fronti e frontiere* in contact with Socialist Realism literature. If on the one hand the Socialist Realism manifesto insists on the importance of art as a means of communication with the masses, on the other hand Lussu re-works her war novel with the precise intention of creating a more readable text, accessible to the widest audience, as analysed earlier.

In addition to this, the refusal of a lyrical subjectivity concentrated on the individual's inner thoughts creates another link between Lussu and Socialist Realist poetics. Specifically, the claim for a useful literature and the rejection of an intimistic type of writing recalls the criticism on Modernism moved by the First Soviet Writers' Congress of 1934: by indulging in psychologism, modernist literature was considered to neglect the objective representation of reality. According to Lussu and the Socialist Realist writers, in concentrating on the individual's perceptions, modernist literature fails in portraying reality in a truthful mode. Particularly, both the Writers' Union at the Congress for Soviet Writers and Joyce Lussu take James Joyce's *Ulysses* as the most marked example of this type of narrative, that according to Lussu lacks of engagement with the present, that engagement with the present that she feels necessary, precisely due to the introverted nature of his writing.⁶⁹

If a fundamental operation in the process of re-writing of the novel consists in a simplification of the language, another re-work of the narrative is made in order to avoid subjective expressions and adopt a more objective narration. These modifications of the text align the narrative of the Laterza edition of *Fronti e frontiere* with a fundamental element of Soviet literature: the commitment to a realistic and objective representation of reality.⁷⁰

In fact, some of the changes made to the novel result in a more objective narration. For example, Joyce Lussu eliminates or re-writes different passages that show an emotional participation of the narrator: among other features, rhetorical

⁶⁸ See passage quoted above, in Joyce Lussu, *Il turco in Italia*, pp.12-13.

⁶⁹ See Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.119 and Régine Robin, *The Debates over Individualism and Modernism Centering on Radek*, in *Socialist realism. An Impossible Aesthetic*, translated by Catherine Porter, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp.25-31.

⁷⁰ As expressed in the Statutes of the Writer's Union at the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934: 'Socialist Realism, the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, demands of the sincere writer a historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development'. See Régine Robin, *Socialist realism. An Impossible Aesthetic*, p.11.

questions are often eliminated. The result of these changes is an apparently more objective representation of the events. For example in chapter three (in L/67, 'Joaquina' in U/45) the characters of Joyce and Emilio are portrayed fleeing from Spain and entering Portugal, they just crossed the border and the bootlegger that was supposed to bring them to Lisbon is not arriving. In the first edition the moment of high tension is emphasized by a rhetorical question: 'Erano arrivati in Portogallo, attraverso due frontiere, ma ora, come sarebbero andati a finire?'⁷¹ (U/45, p.56) in the re-writing the omission of the rhetorical question privileges a more objective narration: 'Nascondemmo i passaporti in un angolo, sotto la paglia. Jean Laskowski e Anna Laskowska erano sotterrati' (L/67, p.56). In the following chapter, the protagonist is on a ship on her way to Gibraltar, describing the route of the boat and the surrounding landscape 'Niente vedette tedesche all'orizzonte, non la più modesta torretta di un sottomarino tascabile. Infine piegammo verso est. Si cominciavano a vedere le fauci dei due continenti [...]' (L/67, p.64). The first writing of the passage, however, was not so dry and objective and included a stronger emotional participation of the narrator: leaving the Portuguese coast the protagonist thinks of Carolina 'Che farà donna Carolina? Starà proteggendo i ragazzini e le poetesse a trentun escudos al mese?' (U/45, p.90). This free association of ideas and memories, generated by the sight of the Portuguese coast, is eliminated in favour of a more factual representation of reality. In a similar way the following rewritten passage describes the path of the protagonists from Cassis to Marseille: 'da lì ci sarebbe certo stato un sentiero. Andammo su, in punta di piedi' (L/67, p.68), this second edition has eliminated three rhetorical questions: 'Che ci sarà dietro quel muro? Guardie di finanza? Contadini dal sonno leggero?' (U/45, p.97).

In order to conform to an apparently more objective representation of reality, Lussu also re-writes some expressions and descriptions that reveal the emotional participation of the narrator. For example emphatic expressions such as 'E poi, tornavamo tra le fauci del lupo' (U/45, p.95) is changed into a more neutral 'tornavamo in terra nemica'. Similarly, the following poetical image is eliminated in favour of a more objective narration: 'camminavamo nel fango molle dei campi,

⁷¹ The sentence is referring of course to the autobiographical character Joyce Lussu and her husband Emilio. The use of the third person in this case is due to the fact that the subjects of the sentence are 'Jean Laskowski e Anna Laskowska', Polish identities of Joyce and Emilio Lussu.

dietro all'ufficiale svizzero. Pareva che la terra stessa, attaccandosi ai nostri piedi, c'invitasse a restare' (U/45, p.118), in the later edition a more laconic and neutral expression described the situation: 'Non avevamo nessuna voglia di rimanere bloccati in Svizzera, nell'inattività, fino alla fine della guerra' (L/67, p.76).

The episode of Minna is also an interesting example of this re-writing technique that privileges an objective narration. Whereas the first text narrates the tragic story of the Polish Jewish woman, Minna, in a very emotional fashion, the second text presents the same story in a more detached way: 'povera, povera Minna, che non uscisti di lì che per essere consegnata ai tuoi aguzzini, e trasportata, in quegli orrendi vagoni suggellati, al campo di morte di Lublino' (U/45, p.172); 'Fu consegnata ai tedeschi e, nei vagoni piombati, arrivò ancora viva al campo di concentramento di Lublino. Non rivide più il suo bambino, e fu bruciata.' (L/67, p.105). Nevertheless, the second narrative does not seem to have lost the communicative effectiveness: the laconic and neutral style is probably a more powerful means of involving the reader in the story.

The changes towards a clearer language, a more straightforward narrative structure and also towards a more objective or realistic mode of narration are all different devices adopted by the author in order to create a more persuasive and communicative text. The re-writing process bears witness to a change in Lussu's ideas on how to write about recent history.

2.4 Towards a didactic historiography:

When in 1967 Lussu decides to re-write her war novel, her aim is to write history in order to be understood by a larger public; it has been shown how her language and style have been adapted specifically to this purpose. More precisely, Lussu's attention to the public and to the reception of her novel seems to be oriented towards a pedagogical aim. Some statements released by the author in the interview with Ballestra, as well as some passages added to the text of the novel in the second edition, seem to confirm this idea of a didactic historiography.

Having previously analysed the changes towards clarity made by removal, it is important to notice that, in the second edition, some insertions are made to the text as well. Historical comments and clarificatory passages are introduced to create a text that is more oriented to the public's reception than to the recalling of personal memories.

In the rewriting of the first chapter, a few explanatory passages are introduced: the description of the life of the antifascist intellectuals who escaped from Italy, 'i fuoriusciti', and the organizations that they run is expanded in the later edition.⁷² Again in the first chapter, a long passage is introduced by the author with the specific intention to give a clear presentation of the political situation in Europe at the time of the events narrated: 'Il '39 si annunciava come l'anno della grande offensiva. Nel marzo, i nazisti occupano la Cecoslovacchia e Franco annunzia la capitolazione di Madrid. In aprile, l'esercito fascista entra in Albania. Hitler e Mussolini fanno il patto d'acciaio.' (the lines are just the incipit of a long description of the historical situation in the year 1939, all the major events are listed, to give a clear overview of the historical moment⁷³). This and other similar passages are introduced to add a discursive and almost pedagogical tone to the narration. A clear and detailed account of the most important historical events is the means by which Lussu renders her history more accessible to a younger audience.

In other situations, short sentences are introduced to clarify the development of political events. For example, when Lussu is describing the illegal activity with the American Mr. Bohn in France, she adds a sentence to the second edition: 'Gli Stati Uniti erano ancora neutrali, e i suoi cittadini potevano circolare in Europa abbastanza liberamente' (L/67 p.39).

The organization of the Partito d'Azione is also clarified in the second edition with a short history of the movement: 'Ai primi di settembre si tenne a Firenze il primo congresso del Partito d'Azione, clandestinamente.' (L/67 p.113) This is the beginning of a detailed description of the movement and of its components and political parts. This long passage clarifies the development of historical events and tries to organize in a straightforward comprehensive narration the intricate situation of the genesis of the PDA.

Similarly, a long passage is introduced explaining the organization of the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale: when and where the movement was created, who was part of it and what were the major objectives. The passage begins: 'I sei partiti antifascisti, che avevano già preso accordi per un'azione comune subito dopo il 25 luglio' (L/67 p.116-117) and a detailed chronological report of the

⁷² See long paragraph in L/67 p.27.

⁷³ See L/67 p.29.

events follows, mainly creating a didactic emphasis, in a similar way to the passage previously commented.

These insertions contribute to create a clearer idea of the intricate developments of historical events, they are in line with Lussu's desire to write a history that is readable and accessible for young generations. As Lussu states herself when she is asked about her poetics, her ideal interlocutor, in the later years of her life, is a 13 year-old:

Io mi sono posta il problema dell'interlocutore. Con chi vuoi parlare? Mi son detta. Adesso per me è importante parlare con i ragazzini delle medie: capiscono tutto, se glielo spieghi in maniera dovuta (...) secondo un raccontare e un argomentare capaci di rinunciare alle parole difficili o a un linguaggio formalizzato⁷⁴.

In fact, after the publication of the second edition of the novel, Lussu devoted her attention specifically to the problem of education. In 1969 and 1971 she published another version of the novel for Mursia edizioni scolastiche, specifically intended for school use. This idea of publishing her novel again for a school edition was probably suggested by the publisher Mursia, as inferred by Mangani.⁷⁵ In a similar way, also some works by Emilio Lussu were published for school editions under the initiative of publishing houses that considered the possibility of making a linear and adventurous account of the war a successful school text book.⁷⁶ In Emilio Lussu's case, however, he was not very happy about the possibility of addressing a young public and shows perplexity towards the publisher's initiatives.⁷⁷ Emilio, unlike his wife, was not sure that such violent narratives were apt for young students. Nevertheless, both *La Marcia su Roma e dintorni* and *Un anno sull'Altipiano* were published by Einaudi in the book series 'Lecture per la scuola media', respectively in 1966 and 1974. Around the same years, Joyce Lussu's novel was also adapted for a younger public. However, adaptations to the

⁷⁴ Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.57.

⁷⁵ See interview with Giorgio Mangani, publisher of *Il lavoro editoriale*, dated 09/04/2013.

⁷⁶ Giovanni Falaschi, «Un anno sull'Altipiano» di Emilio Lussu, in *Letteratura italiana, Le opere, Il Novecento. La ricerca letteraria*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1996), pp.167-199 and Gian Giacomo Ortu, *Introduzione*, in Emilio Lussu, *Tutte le opere*, (Cagliari: Aisara, 2008), pp.xxxvii-lxxiii.

⁷⁷ Giovanni Falaschi, «Un anno sull'Altipiano» di Emilio Lussu, (Torino: Einaudi, 1996), pp.167-199.

texts only consist in censorship of strong language and very low register. As Sulis underlines the only expressions changed are the ones that could be considered offensive or vulgar: the blasphemy 'Porca Madonna! Dio boia!' (L/67 p.95) is omitted, the expression 'On est foutus...On est foutus, c'est officiel' (L/67 p.34) is deleted as well, and also an entire paragraph describing the activity of Carolina, a 'mantenuta', a girl who is the lover of a married man who maintains her with a small salary (L/67, p.61).⁷⁸

However, the text of the Mursia edition is practically unchanged from the Laterza edition, since the modifications of the 1967 edition already made the text accessible to a wider audience.

In addition to the Mursia edition, Lussu's activity and involvement in schools as a teacher or speaker also shows her commitment in the field of education. Lussu, invited to middle and high schools, gives talks about history, narrating her experiences as an antifascist activist and as a partisan. This teaching activity of the Resistance is very significant if we consider that the study of the Resistance was not part of the school curriculum until 1960, when the Resistance was formally introduced as a topic in the history programmes by the minister of education Bosco of the Fanfani government.⁷⁹ Before that year, the study of history in schools simply stopped with the First World War, studying the events until 1918. However, even after 1960, most teachers were hostile to teaching contemporary history and the topic was often circumvented in class. Lussu, on the contrary, is not afraid of discussing contemporary problems and believes in the importance of talking with young people about the events that led to the present political situation.

We can see this in the book written in collaboration with Maria Teresa Segà, where Lussu talks about her experience in schools during her history lectures. Her aim is to involve the students in the study of history: studying history beginning from ourselves and the present generation, to then go back to an analysis of the past is the approach that she suggests.

Bisogna fare storia partendo dall'oggi. Se non si comincia a dire al ragazzo che l'Italia è un paese così congegnato, come fa a provare interesse per la Spagna

⁷⁸ Gigliola Sulis, *Scritture e riscritture*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, (2002).

⁷⁹ See Philip Cooke, *The legacy of the Italian Resistance*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.93-94.

di Carlo V che è remota nel tempo e nello spazio? La storia comincia dall'oggi, da noi stessi, dalla storia nostra anche soggettiva.⁸⁰

When Cornacchioni comments on Lussu's style in writing history, he highlights this concept of teaching history 'à rebours', questioning the idea of approaching the past and having the need to propose a new didactic methodology. This process of beginning from the present develops into a very particular teaching approach, what Cornacchioni calls 'didattica empatica', which works from a very personal point of view, involving directly the students in the narration of the events.⁸¹ Lussu elaborates this technique of history teaching methodology long after the first writing of the war novel *Fronti e frontiere*. The changes towards a clearer and more accessible narrative show an evolution of the way Lussu decides to write history, influenced by the poetics of the authors that she worked with. Lussu transforms the ostensive and implicit aim of her text: from the pleasure of recalling memories, to an effective tool for the teaching of history.

⁸⁰ Joyce Lussu, *Sguardi sul domani*, p.10.

⁸¹ Tobia Cornacchioni, *La Sibilla fra Clio e Minerva. Joyce Lussu, la storia, la scuola, in Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, pp.163-177.

3. A lost feminism?

Another important aspect of the new edition of *Fronti e frontiere* concerns the modifications made to the text regarding the 'feminist question'. The attention devoted to the conditions of women in the first edition seems to have decreased in the rewriting of the second, in a phase when the feminist activism of the author was increasing. The most striking example of this shift is the elimination of several female characters that are cancelled from the narrative.

In the first edition, the novel was composed of twelve chapters, each named after a female character of the book. Lussu explains the nomenclature of the chapters in the preface, that was also eliminated in the second edition of the text:

Alcuni si domanderanno perché i capitoli portano come titoli dei nomi di donne, che non sono figure centrali nello svolgimento del racconto. In realtà avrebbero dovuto esserlo, perché la mia intenzione, inizialmente, era di presentare appunto queste figure femminili. Si parla così poco di donne nella letteratura italiana, di donne nel pieno senso umano e non solamente amoroso e sentimentale! Ma il filo della narrazione ha poi tradito questo intento iniziale.

Pure io lascio, in cima a ogni capitolo, questi nomi che mi sono cari, non come titolo, ma come dedica (U/45 p.5).

In the second edition of the text the chapters are reduced from twelve to eight, due to the cuts in narrative described above, and the names of the women dedicatees of these chapters disappear. Most of the time, the characters who gave their name to the chapters did not have a specific importance in the development of the narrative itself. However, they introduced a pause, with a flashback or simply a reflection on the personal stories of these women. They were not key or central elements in the narration, but they gave space to the story-telling propensity of the author, who lingered over detailed and personal descriptions of these women.

In the later version of the text, not only are the names eliminated from the title of each chapter, but also the characters themselves are strongly condensed. Some

of these dedicatees are cancelled from the story completely, and the majority of them are flattened into fleeting appearances.

Each of the female characters presented in the novel, introduced a perspective on a specific situation, on a peculiar way to behave towards and during the war. The women portrayed all belong to different countries and age groups; they are all involved in very different activities, but nonetheless they all contribute to give an example of courageous behaviour. In other words, the women represented in U/45 are positive characters that give an almost idealized portrait of the lower social classes or the disadvantaged members of society. As a result, the narration appears more influenced by the political ideology of socialism, promoting a positive representation of the lower classes. An analysis of some of the most developed characters that are the dedicatees of each chapter will provide material for further investigation and understanding of Lussu's poetics between 1945 and 1967.

3.1 Madame Noëlie

Madame Noëlie is the first of these women to be described in the novel and the first chapter of U/45 of the novel is named after her. She is a peasant who lives in the South of France, working a little piece of land that surrounds her house and waiting patiently for the end of the war that she did not want and does not understand. She is a simple, practical and strong woman, and possesses the wisdom of popular tradition. A long description is given of the character in the first edition of *Fronti e frontiere*: the narrator lingers over details that are not related to the main events of the novel, pausing the narration.

Madame Noëlie era una contadina dagli occhi larghi e chiari e dal sorriso parco ma luminoso, piccola e magra e ormai vecchia ma robustissima ancora. [...] Ella viveva tutta sola in una casetta costruita coi suoi risparmi e coltivava, senza nessun aiuto, un gran numero di orticelli e campicelli sparsi qua e là, i cui prodotti, che non poteva consumare e nemmeno raccogliere, si perdevano per tre quarti. [...]. Noi prendemmo in affitto da lei una camera e una cucinetta [...]. E Madame Noëlie, genio benefico e fonte perenne d'antica saggezza, presiedeva alla nostra convalescenza spirituale. (U/45, pp.19-20).

The passage above is taken from the ending of the first chapter and it signals a strong contrast with the beginning of the chapter. The novel opens in fact with the dark description of the entrance of the Germans into Paris and the triumph of Nazism in France, a country at the centre of Europe that was believed to be one of the strongest opponents to Nazism. In contrast with this tragic atmosphere, where the population is fleeing without resisting the coming army and even the French army retreats without fighting, the first chapter ends with the tranquil description of the French countryside and the peaceful life that Joyce and Emilio Lussu live in the house of Madame Noëlie. She represents, in a way, a possible response to the coming destruction: the positive and quiet life of a hardworking woman who never loses hope for the future. In her description, the defining characteristic of Madame Noëlie is her popular wisdom, 'genio benefico e fonte perenne d'antica saggezza' (U/45, p.20). Her popular wisdom is made explicit by some of her beliefs described in the following paragraph: Madame Noëlie does not believe in the power of the Church and of priests because she considers herself a 'libero pensatore' (U/45, p.20), on the contrary she believes that human beings have to find spiritual resources within themselves. She is generous with the poor and diffident with the rich, who have tried to take advantage of her good character in the past: 'Non uscivo mai, diceva, nemmeno la domenica. Sempre sui fornelli, sempre sui fornelli, in una cucina nel sottosuolo [...]. Siccome non ero una scansafatiche e facevo le cose con coscienza, i padroni facevano far tutto a me e non mi davano un minuto per respirare' (U/45, p.21). Finally, she is described in her political orientation by the narrator as an heir of the French Revolution: 'La rivoluzione francese era ancora viva in lei come una durevole conquista, che aveva fatto dei suoi antenati, servi, dei cittadini indipendenti, e della terra del signore la terra del contadino che la lavorava' (U/45, p.21). In the figure of Madame Noëlie, the representation of the lower classes of society appears idealized and the oppressed and the poor are celebrated as embodying positive values.

However, in the later edition of the novel, the portrait of Madame Noëlie is omitted and a brief description of the character is given in a parenthetical clause: 'Prendemmo in affitto da Madame Noëlie, una vecchia contadina che viveva tutta sola, una cameretta con uso di cucina' (L/67, p.36). The narration in the re-writing

is centred on the protagonists and, as a consequence, the descriptions of other characters are restricted to strictly functional passages.

3.2 Claudina

The dedicatee of the second chapter is Claudina, an Italian political activist who lives in Marseille with her husband. When Joyce Lussu is working with the 'Archivio' in the forgery of documents, she described the environment of the Italian political exiles or, *fuoriusciti*, in Marseille, who live in very poor and precarious conditions. Claudina is young, educated, politically engaged and committed to her ideological cause. She is described as a very different character from Madame Noëlie, but nevertheless they are both praised for their qualities. In particular, they both share wisdom and courage in facing the difficult situations in which they are living:

L'angelo tutelare dell'Archivio fu Claudina. Carrarese anche lei, aveva la politica nel sangue. 'Che donne sono', diceva, 'le donne che impediscono ai mariti di fare politica? Che vita è, senza l'ideale?'. Durante lo squadristico, prima che il fascismo trionfante li obbligasse a fuggire all'estero, aveva preso una parte attiva alla lotta civile; trasportava le armi nelle ceste di verdura che si caricava sulla testa, passando così sotto il naso dei fascisti in agguato, per i quali aveva sempre qualche risposta disinvolta. Era ancora vivacissima e piena di buonumore, nonostante la miseria, i rischi, le traversie [...]. Eppure aveva spesso il cuore grosso, tra il marito malato, senza lavoro e bisognoso di diete impossibili a rispettare. (U/45, p.35).

Claudina is represented as a strong political activist, who sacrificed her life for her ideals. She is generous and caring with the people who share with her the same difficulties of a life conducted in poverty and in the name of an ideological cause. She is educated, and conscious of the life decisions she has made, she strongly embraces the consequences of a life devoted to an antifascist ideal. As in the description of Madame Noëlie, in the portrait of Claudina her generosity is also described as a consequence of her state of misery: 'Ma agli ospiti, Claudina mostrava sempre un viso sorridente, pronta in ogni momento a spartire con loro l'ultima crosta di pane e a dormire per terra per offrir loro un giaciglio.' (U/45,

p.35). Solidarity among political exiles and clandestine is the positive value praised by the narrative voice and it is often presented as a consequence of the poverty of the characters: because they have suffered from poverty, they are ready to share what they have with others.

In the re-writing of the novel the character of Claudina is reduced. In particular, the descriptions of her personality and character are eliminated and she is only present as a character in collective episodes: for example, in the new edition an episode that narrates the escape from the police of a small group of *fuoriusciti* is kept, and Claudina is present in the scene represented. However, more intimate moments, such as conversations with the narrator are omitted. In addition to this, in some passages the nickname 'Claudina' is substituted by a more formal 'Claudia Cervia', which privileges a more objective narration and avoids a personal perspective on the woman. The focus on the character is eliminated, all the dialogues where the character speaks in first person are cancelled, in favour of a representation of collective scenes or narrator-centred episodes.

3.3 Donna Carolina

When Joyce and Emilio arrive in Lisbon, the narration of their adventures is interrupted by the description of their host, Donna Carolina. She is a young woman of very poor origins, who does not know how to read and write, but is appreciated for her generosity towards the poorer people in the neighbourhood, and for the kindness and grace with which she conducts her life of misery.

Donna Carolina non sapeva né leggere né scrivere [...]. Il suo piccolo appartamento era arredato in modo delizioso [...]. Carolina vestiva con gusto perfetto, cucendo da sé i suoi abiti con finezza di sarta; era una cuoca sopraffina e sapeva disporre le vivande nei vassoi in modo artistico e decorativo. [...] Sempre memore della primitiva miseria, aiutava come poteva la numerosissima famiglia, e aveva una clientela fissa di povera gente, che senza di lei sarebbe morta di fame. (U/45, p.67).

The good nature and the generosity of Donna Carolina are her defining characteristics. She is not a political activist or an educated idealist, but she is an example of altruism, sharing the little she has with others who are in a more

miserable condition than herself. Her generosity is specifically presented as a consequence of the poverty that she had to suffer herself, and here again embodying of positive values in a society in decline is a woman of high morals and low social condition. Her lower class altruism is highlighted by the contrast with the proud behaviour of the higher classes of society: most effective is the description of Carolina's acts of benevolence towards a fallen poet of noble origins, who lost her wealth but not her noble attitude of superiority. Carolina proves to be very understanding and treats her with reverence, offering food as if to an honourable guest and not as an act of charity:

[V]’era una poetessa cinquantenne, di aspetto ancora signorile sotto l’abito consunto. [...] Era fiera, e Carolina doveva far uso di molto tatto per poterle offrire un piatto di minestra o uno sfilatino imbottito, benché le pupille della povera poetessa si dilatassero selvaggiamente alla sola vista di un pezzo di pane. Finiva con l’acceptare, ringraziando con dignitosa noncuranza, e aspettava un po’ prima di addentare il primo boccone: ma per quanto Carolina fosse affaccendata e bisognosa di aiuto nella cucinetta bianca e celeste, l’ospite non alzava un dito per soccorrerla. I pregiudizi le avevano a tal punto contorto il senso morale, ch’ella giudicava un disonore lavorare; ma non mendicare il pane da una cortigiana. (U/45, pp.67-68).

However, the character of Carolina is significantly reduced in the later version of the novel and, as a consequence, the account of the stay in Portugal is more centred on the narrator’s impressions and vicissitudes.

3.4 La Sindachessa

After the failed diplomatic mission in London, Joyce and Emilio Lussu return to France to re-establish contacts with the antifascist organization. During the summer 1942 they seek refuge in a small village in the Alps. The political organization of the village is told by the narrator with great admiration and the organization of the small community is presented as a positive model:

Il villaggio era abitato da una sessantina di persone. Dieci famiglie, tutte imparentate fra loro. Era un comune autonomo, col proprio sindaco, la propria

scuola, la propria chiesa, nella quale peraltro il prete non veniva a officiare che una o due volte all'anno. (U/45, p.102)

The value represented by the community is, first of all, equality among the different inhabitants. The members of the community know no class or gender-based privileges and cooperation among the inhabitants of the village is at the base of every activity: men and women work in agriculture as peers, children are brought up by the entire community without a sense of belonging to a specific class. In addition to this, the church does not have an external influence of doctrine in the village. Also, solidarity and cooperation are values represented by the community to the point that private property is almost abolished. Pasture and agriculture are the main activities of the community, and the use of the land and of the woods is shared among the families according to the individual needs: 'Era un comune benestante: disponeva di vasti pascoli dove tutto il bestiame pascolava in comune, e di vasti boschi in cui ciascun abitante andava a prelevare la legna che gli occorreva.' (U/45, p.103). The community promotes a pacifist ideal as well: the village is presented as an oasis of peace in the devastated Europe of the years of the war. This representation of the community gives a positive portrayal of communitarian ideals and community life, offering a positive political model, in contrast with the dictatorships that were ruling Europe at the time.

La Sindachessa, the wife of the mayor, is the story-teller of this episode. As with Madame Noëlie, Claudina and Carolina, the narration is presented through dialogue with the narrator:

«I figlioli degli altri» diceva la moglie del sindaco, «van trattati come i propri. Non siamo tutti eguali? Dobbiamo lavorar tutti, chi ha e chi non ha». (p.102) [...] Le donne lavoravano ai campi quasi come gli uomini; facevano tutti i lavori salvo quelli più duri, come falciare l'erba o caricare sacchi, e condividevano col marito l'amministrazione del patrimonio familiare; [...] Non si consideravano né erano in nulla inferiori agli uomini. «È un villaggio ideale» dicevo alla sindachessa, ch'era una saggia donna. Andava anche lei a lavorare per i campi, ma oramai si faceva un po' anziana. [...] Coi suoi grembiali neri, il suo sorriso pallido e i capelli argentei un po' mossi, la sindachessa aveva certamente un aspetto distinto. (U/45, p.103).

La Sindachessa is a character of major importance among the female dedicatees of the chapters. La Sindachessa is a political leader, who was able to guide a community towards an ideal of equality and social justice. In this case, the positive model presented through the example is not simply an individual role model, she represents an ideal political organization: in an historical moment when Fascism, social inequality and injustice are invading Europe, La Sindachessa creates a model for a pacifist community based on the principle of social equality and cooperation.

In addition to this, La Sindachessa is also the first woman portrayed according to the module of the Sibyl, the old and wise woman who is the guide of community life, role that Lussu will explore and study in different works.⁸² Precisely the portrayal of La Sindachessa according to the module of the old Parca, who weaves the destiny of humanity, establishes a precise link with the representation of the Sibyl in later works by Lussu.⁸³

In the second edition, the character is completely cancelled and the description of the organization of the village is omitted. In this way, the positive model of the small community does not appear in the narrative and the narration flows without deviations, and it concentrates on the movements of Joyce and Emilio Lussu.

3.5 La Signora Maria

Dedicatee of the seventh chapter is la Signora Maria, another significant female character who is described in the first edition of the novel, and disappears almost completely in the second edition. The description of La Signora Maria is one of the most extended in length among the female chapter dedicatees, and it is also significant for the careful depiction of the character, who is rich in detail and in-depth representation of the character's life-story.

La Signora Maria is described as a strong woman, a political activist during fascism in Italy, who works in France during the Resistance with the members of Giustizia e Libertà based in France and Switzerland. The character of la Signora

⁸² See the stories of 'streghe' or 'sibille' presented in *Il libro perogno*, (Ancona: Il Lavoro Editoriale, 1982) and in *Il libro delle streghe*, (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1990), and also the studies *Le streghe e il tesoro nascosto in una leggenda dell'alto maceratese*, in «Proposte e ricerche» (Urbino: Università degli Studi di Urbino, Centro di Ricerche e Studi dei beni culturali marchigiani, 1981); *Tra comunità e comunanze all'ombra della Sibilla: divagazioni picene*, in «Proposte e ricerche», (Università degli studi di Ancona, Camerino, Macerata, Urbino, 1988; *Comunanze picene. Appunti e immagini tra storia e attualità*, (Fermo: Andrea Livi editore, 1989).

⁸³ 'E la sindachessa traeva tra le dita pallide il filo di lana bianca, qua e là puntato di nero; sembrava intenta a filare la storia di un destino' (U/45, p.104) is the description that links the Sindachessa to the mythical figure of the Parca.

Maria is defined by an indomitable courage and a strong political awareness, towards which she had been educated since childhood.

L'anima del centralino era la signora Maria, una coraggiosa romagnola il cui marito antifascista attivissimo, era tra quelli che Lussu aveva fatto partire per il Messico. [...] La signora Maria aveva succhiato col latte la passione politica. Discendeva da generazioni di focosi e intransigenti repubblicani, e aveva vissuto la lotta politica sin dalla più tenera infanzia. Già all'età di nove anni, aveva salvato dalla catastrofe il gruppo repubblicano di Sarzana, quando la polizia era venuta a perquisire la casa di suo padre, e lei, che stava a letto malata, aveva avuto la presenza di spirito di alzarsi, raccogliere le armi nascoste in casa e ficcarle sotto il suo materasso; e i poliziotti, vedendo la bambina così pallida tra le coltri, tutto avevano pensato, ma non ch'ella riposasse su bombe a mano e rivoltelle. (pp. 111-112)

Here the character is presented through an episode that describes her childhood, so as to create an almost fantastic beginning to political commitment and engagement. This representation of her character is unique to la Signora Maria: the other chapter-dedicatees are represented in a more static manner, and details of their past are never narrated. By contrast, the description of la Signora Maria involves a number of different episodes of her past, that give a clear idea of her personality and political engagement:

In esilio in Francia, la signora Maria aveva sempre collaborato all'attività antifascista del marito. Durante la guerra di Spagna, quando tentava di far arrivare dalla Svizzera armi per le truppe repubblicane, era andata più volte a Ginevra a prelevare pistole e pezzi di mitragliatrice. Usciva a passeggio con la bimba di pochi mesi nella carrozzella, scambiava coi doganieri qualche frase amabile sul bel tempo e la salute dei bambini, e continuava la passeggiata in territorio svizzero. Al ritorno, portava la bambina in braccio, e la carrozzella era piena di armi. (p.112)

Strong and brave, la signora Maria uses her charming personality and gender-based cultural prejudices to her advantage: acting as a loving wife and a caring

mother she distracts the police and succeeds in her political operations. Every episode of her past describes a different aspect of her personality, building a rounded character:

Di carattere assai vivace, la signora Maria si era tolta la soddisfazione di schiaffeggiare in pubblico alcune personalità fasciste, tra cui il vice-console a Ginevra. Le vittime, per quanto invocassero l'intervento della forza pubblica, non avevano potuto mai far cadere su di lei i rigori della legge; chè la popolazione presente, solidale con la simpatica e bollente romagnola, si univa a lei per negare che il fatto fosse avvenuto. «Io, schiaffi?» dichiarava imperterrita la signora Maria. «Quel signore è pazzo. Forse sogna schiaffi perché li merita. Le pare che una signora come me vada schiaffeggiando la gente per le strade?» (U/45, p.112)

In this case, as in the previous example with la Sindachessa, the author gives voice directly to the character who speaks in first person in a dialogue. This provides a vivid and powerful depiction. Witty and funny, daring and strong, Maria is another example of positive behaviour in difficult political circumstances. From the episode of her childhood, to the description of her missions for Giustizia e Libertà, the character is built to communicate the idea of a strong and capable woman who does not surrender to the fascist enemy. The last episode portrays her as an efficient housewife, hospitable to every comrade who entered her door, treating all the partisans as if they were her own sons, recalling the 'mass maternage' analysed by Anna Bravo:⁸⁴

La sua ospitalità era proverbiale, e non si scomponeva mai quando il marito le portava in casa, all'ultimo momento, sei o sette invitati imprevisi. Con una celerità insuperabile tirava il collo a un paio di polli, impastava dieci o dodici uova di tagliatelle e imbandiva accoglienti mense nel modestissimo appartamento. Tutto l'antifascismo italiano in Francia ha conosciuto le tagliatelle della signora Maria. (p.112).

⁸⁴ See Anna Bravo, Anna Maria Bruzzone, *In guerra senz'armi. Storie di donne (1940-1945)*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2000).

It is interesting to note that the character of la Signora Maria also appears in the diary of the exile by Vera Modigliani, who met la Signora Maria when Joyce Lussu was in charge of arranging the transit to Switzerland of the Modigliani couple. Her description, however, is not so rich in detail and offers a different representation of the woman:

È Maria Biasini; repubblicana, per convinzione e per tradizioni di famiglia. La tavola è apparecchiata; malgrado le restrizioni, la nostra ospite è riuscita a preparare un vassoio di agnellotti che mandano un odorino da far resuscitare un morto. 'Non aspettiamo suo marito?' domando. 'Mio marito – e gli occhi le si velano di lacrime – mio marito è al Messico!..'85

As is shown in the passage quoted above, Vera Modigliani portrays Maria Biasini as a nostalgic wife, rather than a brave antifascist activist. Which one of the two accounts best represents the true nature of the woman, we will never know. However, it is interesting to highlight that the portrayal constructed by Lussu aims specifically at constructing a positive role model: la Signora Maria is strong and committed to her political activism, she is generous with other antifascist exiles, and she shares the little she has with the poor.

However, the character of la Signora Maria is almost completely deleted in the second edition of the novel. All the episodes describing her life-story are omitted, and as a consequence of this, the narration concentrates more on the protagonist-narrator and does not allow divergences from the main plot. The name itself of the character is changed: as happened for 'Claudina', who became 'Claudina Cervia' in the second edition, from 'signora Maria', probably a familiar nickname used by those who knew her to refer to the woman, the character is referred as 'Maria Biasini', a more impersonal nomenclature.

3.6 La Duchessa di Grand Manche

The Lussus, forced to leave Marseille as it has become unsafe, move to Lyon. Here they are hosted by an antifascist friend, ironically nicknamed the 'Duca di Grand-Manche', for the great dignity with which he carries out the most modest

⁸⁵ Vera Modigliani, *Esilio*, p.432.

jobs. His wife is the dedicatee of chapter eight, and her description is among those eliminated in the later edition of the novel.

Like some previous characters, Libera is described as a political activist, raised by her family with political values and a specific ideology. Her strength and courage are underlined here, as opposed to the usual tenderness, 'molle dolcezza' in the text, which is the most common feature of the women from Veneto.

La duchessa di Grand-Manche, Libera per gl'intimi, era mia grande amica. Figlia e nipote di organizzatori socialisti, era stata allevata anche lei, come la signora Maria, in un ambiente di profonda coscienza politica. Era di famiglia veneta, ma non aveva delle venete la molle dolcezza: di temperamento anzi vivace ed esplosivo, non aveva peli sulla lingua, fioriva il suo linguaggio di interiezioni rare, e, quando s'inquietava, qualche oggetto correva il rischio di volare per aria. (p.131).

Libera is cultured and intelligent. She has a strong personality but is also very thoughtful. The narrator particularly admires her friend's conversation skills and her intelligence. The narrator presents Libera as a positive model, highlighting her qualities by contrast with the weaknesses of the upper/middle class women of the city. Utilizing the contrast already present in previous descriptions, the narrator presents Libera as a bearer of positive values: intelligence, critical thinking and political awareness are the main characteristics highlighted in Libera's description.

Ascoltare Libera era sempre interessante. Mentre le conversazioni tra signore più o meno oziose – che non parlano che di casi personali, d'incidenti e di malattie, di parti e di cucina, di vestiti e di difficoltà con le domestiche, o se si elevano a soggetti d'interesse generale, non fanno che ripetere le opinioni e i giudizi degli uomini attorno a loro – tediano insopportabilmente, e danno un senso di rimorso per il tempo così perduto, Libera, come le altre mie amiche operaie, non parlava mai di cose futili. Esse conoscevano il fondo della sofferenza umana – la miseria, la fatica eccessiva, le umiliazioni – e distinguevano ciò che è importante da ciò che non lo è. E poiché l'esperienza sofferta non si era risolta in sterile avvilitamento, ma in coscienza attiva, il suo pensiero diventava ricco di critica e di visioni costruttive. (p.132).

In the passage quoted above, the narrator re-proposes the moral judgement which opposes lower and upper classes of society. As in the descriptions of Madame Noëlie, Carolina and Claudina, the positive characteristics of Libera's personality are underlined by the negative ones of her upper-class peers. In addition to this, it is important to underline that the narrator presents their positive qualities as a direct consequence of their social status: for example generosity and altruism are often presented as a consequence of poverty and the need to share.

This representation of the lower class characters as flawless recalls the ideology of the populist novel. As stated by Asor Rosa: 'L'uso del termine *populismo* è legittimo [...] quando sia presente nel discorso letterario una valutazione positiva del popolo, sotto il profilo ideologico oppure storico-sociale oppure etico. Perché ci sia populismo è necessario insomma che il popolo sia rappresentato come un modello'.⁸⁶ I believe that the stories of the female characters told in each chapter constitute a positive model of behaviour for the reader: the aim of the whole novel consists in fact, as previously analysed, in discussing the past in order to create a dialogue with the present, through a pedagogical narrative. The populist novel is also characterized by a simplification of the moral values, a specific pedagogical intent and a factual portrait of reality, with a particular attention on the positive characterization of the lower classes of society.

What is distinctive of Lussu's writings is the fact that the positive populist characters are for the most part women. In a similar way to the first text of *Fronti e frontiere* also the coeval autobiographical narrative *L'olivastro e l'innesto* is centred on the positive representation of lower class female characters.⁸⁷ And whereas in the second edition of *Fronti e frontiere* these female populist characters are omitted, in later works Joyce Lussu returns to similar descriptions of positive women. Particularly in *Lotte, ricordi e altro* when the author narrates her memories of fascism as a child, she presents three men as the symbolic icons of fascism (a land owner, a police officer and a *squadrista*) whereas the iconic images of antifascism that follow are women:

⁸⁶ Alberto Asor Rosa, *Scrittori e popolo. Saggio sulla letteratura populista in Italia*, (Roma: Edizioni Samonà e Savelli, 1965), p.19.

⁸⁷ *L'olivastro e l'innesto* was published in 1982, but written in 1943, while the author was living in Sardinia, right after the liberation of Rome and . See Joyce Lussu, *L'olivastro e l'innesto. L'incontro con un uomo, la sua isola antica e la sua gente*, (Cagliari: Editore Della Torre, 1982).

La presenza del fascismo si fissò nella mia mente infantile con tre immagini nette: mio nonno agrario, nell'elegante tenuta da cacciatore; l'ufficiale che mi aveva picchiata, con l'uniforme attillata e i bottoni lustrati; e lo squadrista Mustafà, lo sbirro privato dei padroni, con la frusta e il manganello. Dall'altra parte, c'era la gente a cui volevo bene: la Cognina, moglie del vergaro della casa colonica vicino alla villa, una donna alta e bella con una crocchia grandissima di trecce nere; Filomena la marinara, col viso cotto dalla salsedine e le gonne rimboccate fino al ginocchio, che viveva in una capanna col tetto di paglia e il pavimento di terra battuta.⁸⁸

Considering the ideological importance in Lussu's narrative of these descriptions and of these characters it seems incomprehensible for the author to eliminate almost completely from her work such an important part of her ideological message. Why should these examples or role models disappear in the rewriting of the text? Why did the author choose to eliminate a prominent and innovative characteristic of her novel? The idea that Lussu has changed her commitment to writing a gender oriented history seems very unlikely, considering her subsequent commitment to writings on feminism during the 1970s and beyond;⁸⁹ again in *Lotte, ricordi e altro*, published in 1992, Lussu will confirm her dedication to the problem of writing history from the women's point of view with the same conviction (if not stronger) expressed in the preface of *U/45*:

Io ero irriducibilmente convinta che alle donne non spettano le retrovie della storia, ma la prima linea. Avevo una gran fiducia nelle mie consorelle e, durante l'attività clandestina contro il fascismo, avevo lavorato di preferenza con le donne.⁹⁰

But if the ideological premises of the stylistic choice did not change, it is difficult to find a plausible reason to explain why the author decided to delete these characters.⁹¹ It is possible that Lussu decided to eliminate what she considered to

⁸⁸ Joyce Lussu, *Lotte, ricordi e altro*, p.27.

⁸⁹ *Padre, padrone, padreterno; L'uomo che voleva nascere donna* (Milano: Mazzotta, 1978); *Il libro delle streghe*, (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1990), but also poems in *Inventario delle cose certe*.

⁹⁰ Joyce Lussu, *Lotte, ricordi e altro*, p.54.

⁹¹ The question has in fact already been highlighted in Gigliola Sulis, *Scrittura e riscrittura. Note sulle varianti d'autore di Fronti e frontiere*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, pp.35-42 and in

be an unsuccessful first attempt to write a gender oriented history, as can be suggested by her statement in the preface to the Rome edition of the novel:

‘Alcuni si domanderanno perché i capitoli portano nomi di donne, che non sono figure centrali nello svolgimento del racconto. In realtà avrebbero dovuto esserlo, perché la mia intenzione, inizialmente, era di presentare appunto queste figure femminili [...] ma il filo della narrazione ha poi tradito questo intento iniziale.’ (U/45, p.5)

It could be argued that the decision to omit this first attempt to write a gender oriented history is probably made in order to privilege other later works, such as *Padre, padrone, padreterno*, that succeed more, according to Lussu herself, in the realization of the set goal. This interpretation appears to be confirmed by Tedeschi, who evaluates *Fronti e frontiere* just as a first attempt to write a gender oriented history, whereas considers other narratives more developed in this ideological aspect:

Il disegno di approfondire il ruolo delle donne nella storia politica della Resistenza, espresso nella dedica, non va oltre l'ipotesi e si limita ai nomi femminili dei titoli dei capitoli e ad alcuni ritratti. L'ipotesi sarà ripresa dalla Lussu più tardi quando, dopo l'esperienza della lotta politica, come responsabile nazionale femminile del PSI e dirigente dell'UDI, nel recente *Padre, padrone e padreterno* (Milano 1976) affronterà in chiave storica il problema femminista.⁹²

As analysed by Tedeschi, it is probable that Lussu preferred to concentrate her historical and feminist analysis in her later work, designated precisely for the purpose of discussing the role of women in history. This, however, does not explain entirely why the author decided to eliminate completely the characters that in *Fronti e frontiere* constitute one of the most interesting and innovative features of the novel. It could also be argued that the decision to eliminate the female

Federica Trenti, *Il novecento di Joyce Salvadori Lussu. Vita e opera di una donna antifascista*, (Sasso Marconi: Le voci della Luna, 2009).

⁹² See Rosario Contarino and Marcella Tedeschi, *Dal fascismo alla resistenza*, in *Letteratura italiana Laterza*, p.171.

dedicatee characters of each chapter responds to the general principle of re-writing by removal adopted for the entire novel. The dedicatees of the chapters are in fact not the only characters to have been eliminated from the narration in the second edition.

4. A protagonist-based narrative

4.1 Elimination of characters

In eliminating the women characters that were the dedicatees of every chapter, the narrative as a whole appears simplified in structure and possibly easier to read. However, the omission of such substantial characters also creates a narrative that is less dispersive and more focused on the protagonist. As Sulis states in her essay, discussing the differences between the two editions of *Fronti e frontiere*:

Viene inoltre limitato lo spazio concesso ad altri personaggi, i cui tratti vengono in genere sfolpiti, ridotti all'essenziale, fino a renderli figure prive di spessore (...) a tutto vantaggio della narratrice, che invece si rafforza e viene così ad occupare in tutte le occasioni il centro della scena⁹³.

But while Sulis in her article points out the issue and presents some examples to clarify her argument, this study intends to provide a larger number of examples and to attempt an interpretation of the changes towards protagonism. For instance the omission of the character of la signora Maria is used to eliminate deviations and secondary plots, and to highlight the role of the narrator-protagonist in the events of the story: in the Laterza edition the chapter flows from the description of the flight from Marseille caused by the increasing police checks, directly into the narration of the arrest and interrogation of Joyce and Emilio, who were illegally crossing the French-Swiss border. The episode is probably one of the highest moments of tension of the whole novel, and presents the protagonist character in her most positive aspect, underlining her courage and intelligence. After years of leading clandestine lives the Lussus are eventually caught by the police and brought to the station for further interrogation. The spouses are interrogated separately and in a brilliantly narrated theatrical episode, the narrator describes how she, who could understand the soldiers speaking in German, manages to convince the officers of their innocence and to release them. In the second edition of the novel, the chapter is completely centred on the character of Joyce Lussu,

⁹³ Gigliola Sulis, *Scritture e riscritture* (2002), p.89.

without any deviation from the main protagonist. The success of the operation is at the centre of the narrative, providing a description completely oriented towards the narrator-protagonist. The elimination of the description of la Signora Maria contributes to a process in which the narrator becomes the predominant model and example of positive antifascist behaviour during the war. In the rewriting of the novel, the feminist purpose of the text is not abandoned, but it is expressed through a single role model protagonist, instead of a mosaic of descriptions of different characters. In this way, the ideological message – both antifascist and feminist – is concentrated in one single and more powerful character.

The female characters are not the only ones to be eliminated in the re-writing of the text, and the omission of other characters seems to have been planned in a similar way, highlighting the protagonist as a positive role model. Among relevant characters eliminated in the second version of the novel is, for example, Omero Ferrarin: Omero is a painter and decorator who works for 'Giustizia e Libertà' and, as a consequence of his first arrest in France, started to forge identity cards and passports for himself and his colleagues of the antifascist movement in order to escape the controls of the Italian police. The episode of his escape from the hospital and his love story with the Signorina Monti is deleted in the second edition. Most importantly, the character of Omero Ferrarin is eliminated in his role of creator of the forgery technique. In the 1945 edition the forgery activity is presented as follows:

Quando con gli arresti di Omero anche casa Monti divenne una casa sospetta e dovemmo sloggiare, Lussu mi chiese di occuparmi dell'Archivio. Mi misi a lavorare intensamente per perfezionare la mia tecnica, e in capo a due mesi potevo paragonarmi, senza sfigurare, ai più esperti falsari. (U/45 p.34)

In the Laterza edition, with the omission of Omero Ferrarin, the tone of the passage changes completely. Joyce Lussu is portrayed as the only protagonist, who works alone, who decides for herself and not as a consequence of her husband's request.

Il materiale occorrente era così semplificato che entrava tutto in una vecchia scatola di biscotti, che io battezzai 'Archivio'. Ero la sola depositaria del segreto, e lavoravo da sola, in casa Cervia, in uno sgabuzzino dietro la cucina.

(L/67 p.44)

The elimination of characters in the narration can be read as a strategic means for Lussu to establish her personal contribution to the antifascist movement. The author portrays herself as a brave and audacious and indeed ingenious woman, unquestionable protagonist of the action.

In the same way that the elimination of la Signora Maria and the omission of Omero Ferrarin help to focus the narrative on the antifascist actions of the narrator, another character is strategically eliminated in order to emphasize the role of Lussu in her political activism: the Sardinian officer who accompanies Lussu in the crossing of the Nazi lines in Italy, described in the last chapter of the novel. After the 8th of September 1943 and the Nazi occupation of Northern Italy and the Allied advance from the South, Lussu was sent by the antifascist movement to the South to make contacts with British and American armies to arrange a delivery of weapons to the partisan groups that were forming in the North. In addition to military matters, Lussu was also sent to discuss the political issue of the monarchy; she was the delegate for the liberation movement CLN, commissioned to talk about the impossibility for Italy to maintain the monarchy after the flight of the king following the armistice. These political and military missions are very significant in Lussu's activism for 'Giustizia e Libertà' as they are the most valiant war actions that will earn her the award of the 'medaglia al valor militare' and of a life-long stipend for her military actions during the Resistance.⁹⁴ Therefore, in the structure of the novel, the account of these events is also very important. In L/67 the narrative is reconstructed to highlight the difficulties of the mission and the valour of the protagonist. In the first version of the novel, Lussu narrates how on her way to Allied territory, she meets other soldiers who are trying to reach the South of Italy in order to join the British or the American army. The narration of the subsequent events includes the presence of these men on her route. One man in particular accompanies Lussu until the very end of her journey. In the second

⁹⁴ As narrated in Joyce Lussu, *L'uomo che voleva nascere donna. Diario femminista a proposito della guerra*, (Milano: Mazzotta, 1978).

version he is completely erased from the account and the action shifts, throughout the whole chapter, from a first person plural to a first person singular narration, perhaps the most flagrant case of rewriting as self-promotion. For example '*Giungemmo a un minuscolo e bizzarro villaggio*' becomes '*giunsi*', '*trovammo una coppia di vecchietti che ci accolsero*' is '*trovai una coppia che mi accolse*' in the later edition (U/45 p.211 and L/67 p.121). Other times in the text, the words of the Sardinian are re-written as the protagonist's: '*«Vorrei arrivare a San Severino» disse il sardo*' (U/45 p.211) becomes '*«Vorrei arrivare a San Severino» dissi*' (L/67 p.121).⁹⁵

It is interesting to note that in narrating the returning expedition from the South of Italy to Rome, Lussu appears to adopt a different approach and decides not to eliminate the character who guides her through the lines. The officers of the Allied army offer Joyce Lussu a guide to travel with her, however whilst the character is not eliminated, in the second edition he is presented as an imposition that the narrator feels unnecessary in the second edition: '*nonostante le mie proteste, poiché preferivo andare sola, e poter decider senza condividere le responsabilità, volle farmi accompagnare da una guida, un ufficiale italiano che conosceva la zona alla perfezione. Aveva un'aria melanconica e lo soprannominai Torquato Tasso.*' (L/67, p.130). The narration of the passage across the lines follows in the text. The character of Torquato, moreover, proves to be far from the useful guide that the Allied officer thought he would be: while Joyce and Torquato were taking shelter in a house of peasants, the Germans arrive in the house, looking for Italian men to take as prisoners. The situation turns again in favour of the heroic representation of the protagonist, who with her excellent linguistic skills distracts the German soldiers by speaking to them in their native language.

By attenuating the presence or relevance of other characters, Joyce Lussu concentrates on the representation of herself, creating a protagonist that is described with heroism. Indeed, if in the second rewriting of the novel most of the literary references are eliminated, in order to achieve the simple and clear style praised by Hikmet, the few literary similes that remain, underline the heroism of the protagonist. For example, when Lussu arrives in 1943 to the south of Italy, where the Allies are, she is brought to a British camp for further investigations,

⁹⁵ Italics mine to underline the grammatical changes of the verbs in the two editions.

suspected to be a spy. In this situation Lussu portrays herself as an offended soldier, a resisting fighter with heroic connotations: 'Il quarto giorno ero così adirata per il trattamento che subivo, che decisi di fare lo sciopero della fame. Come Achille, mi ritirai sotto la mia tenda, mi sdraiai sulla branda e non mi mossi più' (L/67 p.125). The tone of the simile is surely ironic, but it is worth noticing that in the process of eliminating literary references, one of the few that is kept refers to the *Iliad* and makes a connection directly with the protagonist, suggesting, however ironically, a certain heroism on the part of the protagonist.

4.2 Emilio Lussu

Among the characters minimised in the narrative is that of Joyce's husband Emilio Lussu. In the first edition of the novel, Emilio is portrayed not only as the leader of the movement Giustizia e Libertà, but also as the leader of the couple, and is present in numerous key-episodes of the narration. By contrast, in the re-writing of the text his presence is omitted and his character attenuated.

Emilio is eliminated particularly in the episodes that describe his position of power in the movement 'Giustizia e Libertà' and his influence on Joyce's political activities. For example, when the narrator describes her activity in forging documents for political enemies of the regime, Emilio Lussu is portrayed as 'capufficio' in U/45. Speaking of a forged identity card just completed Joyce writes: 'La presentavo allora a Lussu, che la considerava non con indulgenza di *marito*, ma con la severità di un *capufficio responsabile*' (U/45 p.36).⁹⁶ This characterization of Emilio as her 'boss' and his following reproaches for imprecise work, are omitted in the later version of the text.

In a similar way, when Joyce describes the events that led the couple to move from Marseille to Lisbon, the expressions used in the first edition to describe Emilio's role as a leader are eliminated in the second edition. For example: 'Lussu decise allora di andare' (U/45 p.38), 'Per quanto desiderassi accompagnarlo, ero disposta a restare in Francia, se fosse stato più utile. Ma Lussu era convinto che una coppia desta sempre meno sospetti' (U/45, p.39), 'Lussu rifletté a lungo se dovesse arrivare a Casablanca per la stessa via degli altri' and in the end of the passage 'decise per Lisbona' (U/45 p.39). In the first edition, the narration is centred on the decisions of the husband. On the other hand, in the second edition

⁹⁶ Italics mine.

these expressions are simply omitted and the flavour of the passage changes completely: the account of the events is less centred on Emilio, giving more space to the character of Joyce. There is a privileging of impersonal structures and a tendency to substitute first person plural verbs with a third person narration: 'A Lisbona non si poteva arrivare che traversando illegalmente' (L/67 p.46); 'Decidemmo perciò di seguire la stessa via' (L/67 p.47), engaging Joyce in the decision-making activity of the couple.

In order to eliminate the predominant role of Emilio in the couple, his direct speeches are often removed in the second version of the novel. In eliminating Emilio's interventions, the character of Joyce stands out more vividly. For example, the strong intervention in a discussion with a bootlegger 'Vuoi farci l'affronto di trattarci peggio di due chili di zucchero?' (U/45 p.55), that is fundamental to convince the bootlegger to bring the couple to a safe place for the night, is simply omitted in the second edition. The impression of the new text is that of an experience equally shared between the two members of the couple, instead of a husband responsible for the problem solving of difficult situations. There are numerous examples of these shifts in style. As a general rule, Emilio is changed into a less authoritative character, mainly through a process of elimination of his sentences and small episodes of his protagonism.

In particular, in order to strengthen the portrait of Joyce as an independent and heroic character, Emilio's requests to her are cancelled from the narration. The episode of the escape of the Modigliani couple is an example. The couple was persecuted by the fascist regime both because of their antifascist political activity and because of their Jewish origins and the movement 'Giustizia e Libertà' decides to help them escape to Switzerland in order to allow them to continue their political activism abroad.⁹⁷ In the first edition of the novel, it is Emilio who asks his wife to organise the escape of the Modigliani: 'Senti, per andare a prendere il Patriarca e la signora Vera, traversare con loro la Francia, condurli alla frontiera svizzera e organizzare il passaggio, ci vuole una donna, per non attirare l'attenzione. Visto che conosci bene la situazione al confine franco-svizzero, potresti occupartene tu' (U/45 p.136). In the later edition, this request is eliminated, and the plan is presented as a mutually agreed project. Similar

⁹⁷ Emanuele Modigliani was among the founders of the Socialist party in Italy. See Guido Quazza, *Resistenza e storia d'Italia*, (Milano, 1976).

requests, that without a question-mark almost sound like orders, are eliminated in the rewriting of the story, for example: 'Lussu infatti mi aveva detto: «Se i Modigliani vengono arrestati, bisogna che venga arrestata anche tu. O si riesce o si cade insieme»' (U/45 p.139).

After the successful escape to Switzerland of the Modigliani couple, Joyce is arrested by the police. In the 1945 edition, her first thought goes to Emilio: 'Ma io marciavo trionfalmente, figurandomi i Modigliani seduti lì al posto di dogana tra quei bravi svizzeri [...] «Lussu sarà contento» pensavo'(U/45 p.156). This sentence is eliminated in the 1967 edition. In this way, the characterization of the female protagonist as a devoted wife is omitted, in favour of a depiction of Joyce as an independent activist who fights for her own beliefs. In a similar situation, other lines that express the concerns of a devoted wife for her husband are cancelled. During her stay at the prison in the French border, for example, Joyce worries about Emilio, asking herself where he is and what he is doing: 'Che starà facendo ora, Lussu?' (U/45 p.165). This disappears in L/67.

As analysed previously, an episode that is fundamental to the representation of Joyce Lussu as protagonist of the history of the Resistance movement is the narration of her expedition to southern Italy. The representation of this mission is very different in the two versions of the novel: whereas in the 1945 edition the mission is instigated by Emilio, in the later version it is Joyce herself who volunteers to the CLN to be assigned for the expedition.

'Avrei qualcosa da fare per te, mi disse [Lussu] una decina di giorni più tardi. [...] È necessario prendere contatto con gli Alleati. Abbiamo mandato alcuni dei nostri a passare il fronte con questa missione, ma o son caduti o non hanno potuto continuare. Forse per una donna sarebbe più facile. Vuoi tentare?' (U/45 p.198).

The passage above in the second edition becomes: '*Pensai* che a una donna il passaggio delle linee poteva riuscire più facile, e *proposi* al CLN di fare un quarto tentativo' (L/67 p.117).⁹⁸ In addition to this, episodes where Joyce Lussu is portrayed as an ingenious activist are always kept in L/67, with a particular

⁹⁸ Italics mine.

attention for the narration of episodes when the narrator speaks fluently various foreign languages. This capability of the protagonist is underlined in the later edition, creating a contrast with the character of Emilio, who does not possess similar linguistic skills.

We have seen how the character of Emilio is reduced in the rewriting of the novel, through the omission of his interventions in dialogues and through the elimination of his requests to Joyce. However, if on the one hand the character of Emilio Lussu is strongly reduced in the rewriting of the novel, on the other hand, a particular attention is devoted to the description of the intimate relationship between Emilio and Joyce. A few episodes portraying the couple are introduced, and the depiction of Emilio as a caring husband instead of an imposing leader is prioritised. In particular, two episodes added to the novel in the 1967 edition are relevant in this new depiction of the couple. The first episode describes the very strong connection between Joyce and Emilio, who manage to meet at the train station of Imperia, a few days after they had an appointment to meet in Rome. The story takes place in the confusion that followed July the 25th 1943: Emilio and Joyce Lussu decide to return to Italy from France after the fall of Mussolini. However, they cannot return together, because Emilio does not have a regular passport and is still wanted by the government because of his escape from the fascist prison in Lipari.⁹⁹ Therefore they take different routes, with the idea of meeting in Rome. But their journeys are delayed by police checks and unexpected deviations occur. Tired of waiting for her husband in Rome, Joyce decides to take a train north, to try to trace Emilio's journey from France to Italy. While in the first edition the meeting is not narrated, the text of 1967 describes in detail the reuniting of the spouses, highlighting the strong, almost telepathic, connection between them:

Quando eravamo separati, il che accadeva abbastanza spesso, avevamo sempre un'idea abbastanza esatta di ciò che l'altro stesse pensando o facendo. Non credo che fosse telepatia, ma piuttosto una profonda conoscenza reciproca, e un rigoroso calcolo delle probabilità. Fatto sta che viaggiai fino a Imperia, e lì decisi di scendere, e di aspettare sul marciapiede della stazione i

⁹⁹ See Emilio Lussu's biography: Giuseppe Fiori, *Il cavaliere dei Rossomori. Vita di Emilio Lussu*, but also his autobiographical works Emilio Lussu, *La catena*, (Dalai Editore, 1997).

treni che arrivavano dalla frontiera francese. Col primo treno in arrivo, vidi Lussu che si sporgeva dal finestrino, facendomi segni di saluto. (L/67 p.112).

However, one may also note that rather than 'telepatia' the narrator emphasises also the importance of her own decisions and calculations (note the expression 'un rigoroso calcolo delle probabilità' and the use of the first person in 'decisi', 'vidi').

In a similar way, a second episode is introduced in the second edition of the novel, underlining the idea of Emilio as a devoted partner, more than a political leader. After the mission in southern Italy is accomplished by Joyce, she returns to Rome, where Emilio and other members of the 'Giustizia e Libertà' movement are waiting for her arrival. After days of walking towards the city and after having crossed the lines once more, she safely arrives in the capital. This episode of love and reunion is placed in a very relevant position in the text: at the end of the final chapter of the novel, as the conclusion of the whole narrative. On the one hand the narrator character is presented as a more independent character and on the other hand the relationship between the two seems to be described in a more idealised way. This change in the depiction of the character is also evident from the name used to refer to the character: if in the first edition, the narrator's husband is addressed by his family name, 'Lussu', to strengthen the impression of a political leader (the members of 'Giustizia e Libertà' used to call him by his last name, even in private letters), whereas in the second edition he is occasionally referred as 'Emilio', a more domestic name, suited for the description of a partner. The character of the second edition belongs to a more domestic atmosphere, distant from the political leader of the first.

The description of the strong emotional relationship between the two is also communicated by the choice of the author's name in the novel. A different last name is in fact used for the first and the second edition of the novel: whereas in 1945 both the preface and the cover are signed 'Joyce Salvadori-Lussu', in the 1967 edition, and in all the following publications of the author, the last name adopted is 'Joyce Lussu'. This will remain the name that she will use for all of her following publications. This decision to adopt Emilio's surname is explained by the author herself:

Mi chiamo Joyce Lussu perché le donne non hanno un proprio nome. Le donne devono sempre portare il nome di un uomo, o è il padre o è il marito. Il padre me lo sono trovato, il marito me lo sono scelto: c'è un briciolo in più di autonomia. È stata una decisione politico-culturale quella di portare il nome del mio compagno¹⁰⁰.

The decision to adopt her husband's name is presented, ironically, as an act of protagonism and taking actions and decision in her life.

In general the author refuses, in the Laterza edition, to portray Emilio as the leader of the couple and subsequently the portrayal of the relationship between the two changes in tone. This change in the description of her relationship with Emilio may well reflect a shift towards a different way of regarding the nature of the marital relationship in general, in the context of the late 1960s: Joyce and Emilio are represented as peers, and the role of the protagonist is strengthened in numerous instances.

4.3 Reshaping the opening and the ending of the novel

A closer analysis of the opening and the ending of the novel in the two different editions also shows how the idea of a protagonist-based narrative is developed by the author between the years of the first and the second publication. The U/45 edition of *Fronti e frontiere* opens with the description of Paris in June 1940. The Germans are entering the city without encountering any resistance from the army, but also, to great disappointment of the antifascist community in the capital, without any resistance from the population. The description of the deserted city, with a 'densa, giallastra, nauseante caligine' (U/45, p.7) that covers the streets and the neighbourhoods reflects the despair of the main characters, Joyce and Emilio. The narrator draws a simile that likens the situation of invasion to an historical tragedy: 'I vecchi palazzi e i nobili monumenti, abbandonati e venerandi, come i senatori romani che, immobili nelle sedie curuli, avevano atteso in Campidoglio l'arrivo dei barbari invasori.' (U/45, p.7). The surrender of Paris is particularly significant to the Italian antifascist exiles, since Paris had been the centre of Italian *fuoriuscitismo*, and its fall means they must move and reconstruct an antifascist unit in another city. Joyce and Emilio are portrayed escaping from the deserted

¹⁰⁰ See Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, p.190.

city, abandoning the place that had been the centre of their activism. The presentation of the main characters, and the powerful images of destruction and abandonment within specific historical coordinates, frames the theme that will be central throughout the whole narration: the clandestine life of the militants in the antifascist movement and the continuous travels across military fronts and frontiers of the protagonist.

By contrast, the Laterza edition proposes a completely different opening. In the second edition, an account of the events of the years 1938 to 1940 is added to the previous text. The narrative in the first chapter opens in April 1938, when the protagonist is in Aden, Saudi Arabia, trying to get her passport renewed in order to go back to Europe and join the *Giustizia e Libertà* movement. Joyce Lussu has been working in Africa as a secretary and as a teacher since 1933, when she had to interrupt her studies in Germany because of the rise of Nazism. In 1938, she feels the urge to come back to Europe and to politically engaged activity, because the moment seems favourable for the rise of the antifascist movement: 'gli avvenimenti facevano prevedere che un gran terremoto era prossimo. Anche da noi si preparava la rivoluzione, finalmente' (L/67, p.25). From the moment when her passport renewal is refused in Aden, the protagonist realises the necessity of starting a clandestine life. This moment in her life is chosen as the opening of the novel because it clarifies the specific moment in time when she decides to abandon her regular life and her job in Africa, to undertake the life of a political activist.

In the Laterza edition the presentation of the protagonist is centred from the very beginning on her political activism: after being portrayed at the consulate trying to get a passport to travel to Europe, a flashback follows in the narration, providing a description of the past of the character, tracing the beginning of her political awareness to her family and her upbringing. The narrator's parents are presented as socialist activists and correspondents for a British newspaper, *The Manchester Guardian*, who were threatened and forced by the Fascist government to leave the country in 1924. In this way, the narrator presents her political engagement as a natural consequence of her upbringing and of her family history. In a similar way, other characters of the novel are described as born-activists, and some episodes of their childhood are narrated in order to celebrate this family tradition of activism. A similar portrayal is given in the description of la Signora

Maria, in the chapter that has her name in the first edition of the novel, as previously analysed.¹⁰¹ It is significant that while this sort of in-depth validity of antifascist credentials is removed for other characters, it is introduced for the protagonist. This family commitment to antifascism is underlined in the narrator in order to suggest that she was more authentically antifascist than those who converted later. As Quazza writes Italian antifascism can be divided into three categories: firstly, the traditional antifascists, who opposed Mussolini's dictatorship from the beginning and cultivated their political beliefs in clandestine parties and political organizations; secondly, the spontaneous reaction of young people who were raised under fascism but felt the necessity to fight in the Resistance after July 25th; thirdly, the 'fascist antifascism', as Ginsborg defines 'quelli che avevano appoggiato il regime, ma reputavano adesso opportuno abbandonare la nave che affondava'.¹⁰² It is possible that in the account of the Resistance given in 1967, Joyce Lussu tends to emphasise her belonging to the first antifascist movement, considered to embody authentic antifascism.

The presentation of the narrator character in the two openings also differs. In U/45 Joyce is presented directly as the wife of Emilio Lussu and both characters enter the narration simultaneously, together as a couple. By contrast, in L/67 Joyce Lussu is introduced in the narration as an independent character, often portrayed alone. She is alone facing the argument with the consul in Aden and alone she starts her clandestine travels to Marseille. The figure of Emilio is introduced in the narration only later, through a flashback.

It is important to notice not only what Lussu chooses to write, but also what she decides not to write about her past. Indeed, in tracing her past experiences in the long flashback that provides information on the protagonist's childhood, education and travels until 1938, the moment of the narration, an important detail of her personal life is omitted. Her marriage with the landowner Aldo Belluigi, a member of the fascist party, is in fact always carefully omitted in all Lussu's autobiographical narratives. Police reports are the only evidence of this first marriage, as Elisa Signori points out:

¹⁰¹ See U/45, pp.111-112.

¹⁰² Guido Quazza, *Resistenza e storia d'Italia*, (Milano, 1976), pp.115-116, and Paul Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1989), p.12.

Sul matrimonio, che Joyce ha rimosso da tutti i suoi scritti memorialistici, le fonti poliziesche sono invece assai dettagliate offrendoci un ritratto analitico dello sposo, Aldo Belluigi, definito possidente, di condotta regolare e politicamente affidabile per non aver mai dato luogo a sospetti e per aver percorso il prescritto iter formativo nei ranghi del Pnf.¹⁰³

In the first chapter of *Fronti e frontiere*, L/67, the description of the protagonist is carefully shaped in order to create the protagonist that Joyce Lussu wants for herself. The omission of the fascist first husband certainly helps her shaping the heroic and immaculate antifascist protagonist that she wishes for herself.

The ending of the novel also presents some differences in the two editions. In both versions of the text *Fronti e frontiere* ends with the completion of Lussu's mission in Southern Italy, where she met with the Allies to agree upon the air-drop of weapons in Lazio and support for the partisan military organization. Having concluded the discussions, Lussu crosses the German lines again to go back to Rome, where the Giustizia e Libertà movement is preparing for the insurrection of the city. Crossing the border will prove to be a long and difficult task and the description of her successful return to Rome ends the narrative.

However, some important differences can be noted in the development of the ending in the different texts. A short episode is, for example, introduced in the Laterza edition and concludes the novel: it is an episode of intimacy between Emilio and Joyce, underlined by the sort of quasi-telepathy that was described also in chapter seven, that closes the whole narrative on a positive tone:

Andai all'indirizzo di una famiglia, la cui casa era ancora sicura, come ci eravamo accordati prima della mia partenza. Vi trovai Emilio e parecchi compagni del Partito d'Azione che mi aspettavano, tranquilli.

La notte prima, Emilio aveva sognato che io sarei tornata quel giorno e, fiducioso nella nostra telepatia familiare, aveva annunciato ai compagni che potevano riunirsi per attendere il mio arrivo e le notizie che avrei portato dall'Italia già liberata. (L/67, p.137).

¹⁰³ Elisa Signori, *L'antifascismo come identità e scelta di vita. Joyce Lussu dal fuoriscitismo alla Resistenza*, in *Joyce Lussu. Una donna nella storia*, p.25.

In this way, the novel ends with the representation of the Lussu couple happily re-united, but also, significantly, with the celebration of the return of the protagonist, placed at the centre of attention.

The tone of the ending of the first version of the text is, however, very different. After the description of the arrival in Rome, an epilogue, that will be omitted in the Laterza edition, follows: the description of Rome after the 4th of June 1944, the day of its liberation, creates a parallel link to the opening of the novel, that described Paris exactly four years earlier. In the epilogue of the novel the Germans are described fleeing from Rome, when the city is very crowded and already celebrating the liberation, whereas at the beginning of the novel they were occupying the deserted city of Paris.

[...] quella sera del 4 giugno, quando i tedeschi in fuga abbandonarono Roma, quattro anni dopo esser entrati invitti e orgogliosi a Parigi.
Ero uscita, quella sera, e mi ero appostata a Ponte Risorgimento, per godermi lo spettacolo della ritirata tedesca, miserabile e disordinata. (U/45, p.241).

The two mirroring episodes create a symmetrical frame of the narrative. In this way, the novel is presented as the narration of the events that took place in Europe during the German occupation. The central theme of the novel, in the first edition, is the account of the events that the antifascist movement had to face during the Nazi invasion in Europe. The author chooses a historical perspective, in contrast with U/45.

Among the many characters that are eliminated in the Laterza edition is the German soldier that is the centre of the epilogue in the first edition. This description also emphasises the wider picture of destruction and the futility of war. The German soldier is described as injured, walking miserably by the streets of Rome with a missing shoe, trying to stop German cars or tanks and persuade them to take him away with them, before the arrival of the Americans. His monologue on the unavoidable nature of war concludes the novel in the first edition, giving a tone of pessimism to the narrative:

«Maledetta guerra.»

«Maledetta, ma continuate a farla.»

«La facciamo», disse il tedesco, «perché siamo una razza maledetta. Una razza maledetta. Altrimenti perché la faremo? Mio padre, che era un vecchio socialista, è stato ammazzato dai nazi nel '31. E io faccio la guerra per i nazi. Mia moglie e il mio bambino sono morti sotto i bombardamenti. E io faccio la guerra per i nazi. Perché? Perché siamo una razza maledetta.» (U/45, p.242).

The monologue of the soldier that closes the whole narrative shifts the tone of the narration from a joyful celebration for the liberation of the city and the successful accomplishment of the protagonist's mission, to a pessimistic and existential consideration on the human race. In U/45 the author closes the novel with the words of a soldier, who is hopelessly conscious of the fact that the end of this war, does not imply the end of all the wars.

«La nostra maledizione», continuò «è che quando arriva un ufficiale col chepì, col monocolo, coi guanti, noi ci mettiamo sull'attenti. [...] Ci dice: ammazzatevi e fatevi ammazzare, e noi ci ammazziamo e ci facciamo ammazzare. Perché? È la nostra maledizione. È stato sempre così. E sarà così, sempre. Quando verrà un ufficiale, ci metteremo sempre sull'attenti. Finché ci saranno ufficiali, continueremo ad ammazzare e farci ammazzare.» (U/45, p.242).

The fact that the narrative ends with the thoughts of the German soldier links to the choice of relating the novel, in the first edition, to a broad historical perspective. The perspective of the losing army is taken into consideration and stimulates a philosophical thought on the human nature and war. Contrarily, in the second edition, the historical perspective is given through a personal point of view and offering a personal autobiographical testimony. The aim of the re-writing seems to be to provide a personal testimony of the antifascist activity during the war, instead of adopting a broader historical perspective.

It is possible that in the years between 1945 and 1967, after she successfully established her literary career, Lussu achieved the confidence necessary to promote her own testimony of the war as a text on the Resistance, without the need to write a more comprehensive narrative. Other women in the same years of the rewriting published their own partisan diaries and numerous initiatives were

aimed at promoting the women's contribution to the Resistance.¹⁰⁴ In this aspect, it is possible to consider *Fronti e frontiere* as part of a re-thinking of the female contribution to the Resistance. As well as being the result of change in the poetics of the author, the portrayal of the relationship with Emilio can also be read as a consequence of the general cultural change in the way of regarding the marital relationship in 1967. And the shift in the representation of the main character is not only a consequence of a stronger confidence of Lussu as a writer, but also a consequence of the cultural change in society and that brought the author to describe a more independent female protagonist.

¹⁰⁴See for example, *L'altra metà della resistenza*, edited by Lydia Franceschi, (Milano: Mazzotta editore, 1978), collection of essays on the women's participation in the Resistance, for which Joyce Lussu contributes with an article.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate Joyce Lussu's poetics analysing the changes in her writing between 1945 and 1967. A close reading of the two different editions of the novel *Fronti e frontiere* provided material for the investigation of the evolution of Lussu's writing.

The starting points for this research were the publications on the life and historical importance of Joyce Lussu, and mostly, the articles and monographs that focused on her literary works and provided the first analysis of her poetics. Of particular significance were Luzi's evaluation of the predominant elements in Lussu's poetry and the use of visual images and irony; and also Cornacchioni's investigation of the way the author chooses to write about history, developing the concept of 'didattica empatica'. In addition to these, the interviews by Ballestra shed light on the author's fundamental ideas concerning her writing.¹⁰⁵ The methodological foundation for the analysis of the development of Lussu's poetics in this study drew from Sulis' contribution on the rewriting process of *Fronti e frontiere*.¹⁰⁶ However, while Sulis' article provides a collection of data and points out the differences between the two editions of the narrative, it does not suggest an interpretation of these changes. Sulis also analyses the rewriting process of *Fronti e frontiere* as an example of the *riuso* technique, a peculiarity of Lussu's writing. The present study, on the other hand, was aimed at considering the two editions of the novel as the two extremes of the literary evolution of the author: U/45 being the first work in prose published by Lussu and L/67 a work that reflects the full literary maturity of the writer.

In the first instance this study analysed how different literary genres converge in Lussu's narrative: elements of autobiography, memoir, as well as the adventure novel and picaresque narrative, with aspects of the ideological novel. The study, also pointed out how the question of relating the narrative to a literary genre is coloured by the rewriting process of the text. In the rewriting the memoir element

¹⁰⁵ See Alfredo Luzi, *Inventario delle cose certe: esperienza vissuta e scrittura* and Tobia Cornacchioni, *La Sibilla fra Clio e Minerva. Joyce Lussu, la storia, la scuola*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore* (2002); Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, (1996).

¹⁰⁶ Gigliola Sulis, *Scritture e riscritture*, in *Joyce Lussu. Il più rigoroso amore*, (2002).

of the narrative is privileged and the adventurous episodes in the text are concentrated on the protagonist instead of being distributed among a number of secondary characters. In addition to this, substantial changes in language, structure and narrative style were demonstrated to be linked to the influence of foreign authors and more ideologically determined models of writing. The impact of foreign authors on Lussu's writing revealed a shift in the literary models of the writer in the years between the first and the second edition of *Fronti e frontiere*. Lussu moves from the literary models that were offered by her family context, the literary works of Margaret Collier, as well as the narratives of her husband Emilio, to the poets and narrators that she encountered during her professional life as a translator, Nazim Hikmet among others.¹⁰⁷ This shift shows a development and a stronger literary and ideological awareness on the part of the writer. The current study of the rewriting of *Fronti e frontiere* has also discussed the problematic change in the representation of the female characters in the novel highlighting the paradox of the diminished presence and relevance of women characters in the second edition, at the moment when the feminist activism of the author is increasing. I have suggested that the omission of secondary characters responds to the need of shifting from a more inclusive and almost collective viewpoint to a more coherent narration, centred on a singular experience. This change towards protagonism has also been traced in various other aspects of the narrative and has been highlighted most evidently in the opening and the ending of the novel. As a result of these changes, it has been indicated how the second edition privileges the aspect of a more personal point of view instead of attempting a collective and historical narration.

This study also aims at providing a starting point for further research on the writing and poetics of Joyce Lussu. Particularly, a study that traces Lussu's activity as a translator and that determines the impact of her professional activity on her whole literary production is still missing. It would also be interesting to analyse her translations and investigate in detail her methodological approach. In addition to this, an analysis of the portrayal of the female characters in Lussu's writings could trace the different stages of the evolution of the type of the Sibyl. From the characters of *Fronti e frontiere* and *L'olivastro e l'innesto*, which despite the

¹⁰⁷ See Margaret Collier, *La nostra casa sull'Adriatico*, (1981), Emilio Lussu, *Un anno sull'Altipiano*, (Parigi, 1938), and Emilio Lussu, *Marcia su Roma e dintorni*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1945).

similarities and the temporal proximity have never been compared, to the representation of women in the later poems of *Inventario delle cose certe* and the interlocutors of the half-fiction, half-testimony stories of *Il libro delle streghe*. In addition to this, it would also be useful to extend the study of Lussu's rewriting technique to other literary works, in order to assert whether there are similarities in the way Lussu changes different texts in the same period of time.

What the present study has shown is that the changes made by Lussu in the second edition are far reaching in their implications. The differences that emerge are extensive in themselves but also show a significant shift in the form and nature of the narrative over time, reflecting the changing cultural and historical context, and in how Lussu places herself within it. In 1967 the increased centrality of the first person protagonist constructed in such a way as to highlight the political and ideological protagonism of the character and can be seen as a change that is inseparable from Lussu's sense of her own political activism and from how her writing engages with it.

Appendix

Intervista a Giorgio Mangani, editore per Il lavoro editoriale di Ancona, 9 Aprile 2013

Come ha conosciuto Joyce Lussu?

Il mio rapporto con Joyce è nato nel 1978, come racconto nell'introduzione al catalogo della casa editrice pubblicato nel 2009. In quell'occasione noi ci conoscemmo perché lei voleva pubblicare il libro della nonna, *La casa sull'Adriatico* di Margaret Collier, che ebbe poi un discreto successo e numerose ristampe.

Joyce all'epoca era già una scrittrice affermata, aveva pubblicato già diversi libri, il più importante sicuramente *Fronti e frontiere*, oltre a questo era già famosa per il suo vissuto storico, era già un mito della resistenza, nonché moglie del celeberrimo capo di Giustizia e Libertà Emilio Lussu, e oltretutto era anche una donna bellissima.

Joyce Lussu è famosa per la sua personalità esuberante, lei ha qualche ricordo in particolare di questo carattere?

Per esempio mi ricordo di una volta in cui la ospitavo a casa mia, perché Joyce soffriva molto la solitudine e passava volentieri del tempo in casa di amici, mentre ero uscito per delle commissioni mi aveva buttato via dalla cucina tutte le mie spezie e i miei tè, dicendo che ormai erano scaduti. Il tutto senza minimamente preoccuparsi di quello che pensavo io. Lei era così. Era anticonformista, per esempio entrando in una casa in cui non era mai stata, era capace di chiedere di fare il bagno, suscitando il panico dell'ambiente piccolo-borghese che la accoglieva. Ma lei era così, non aveva paura di dire quello che pensava. Una volta eravamo a un convegno a Roma dove c'era Pannella, che alla fine degli anni Settanta era all'apice della sua carriera politica, e lei lo prese per un orecchio di fronte e tutti, rimproverandolo per qualcosa che aveva detto o fatto. Oppure una volta la invitai a una conferenza dove parlava Cacciari, che si concluse con lei che lo mandava a quel paese. Non bisogna infatti dimenticare che lei aveva tentato nel '34, mentre era studentessa a Heidelberg, di organizzare un contraddittorio a Hitler, che stava facendo un comizio nella città con il suo nascente partito. Devo dire che la sua personalità non è cambiata negli anni.

Come descriverebbe invece il suo interesse per la storia? Joyce Lussu con voi ha pubblicato anche opere di storia oltre che di narrativa, se non sbaglio.

Lei si occupava, tra le altre cose, di storia locale. Con noi ha pubblicato *Storia del Fermano*, che è curato da lei, ma è scritto in collaborazione con insegnanti di liceo e di scuola media. Loro avevano lavorato sulla storia locale, cercando di andare in controtendenza rispetto alla storia antiquaria, alla storia erudita tradizionale, dedita alla ricostruzione dei documenti d'archivio, senza sentimento politico. Invece per lei tutto era visto nell'ottica politica, gli schiavi del mondo classico erano interpretati secondo il filtro dello sfruttamento della classe operaia dell'Ottocento.

Storia del Fermano, come diceva, è scritto con degli insegnanti delle scuole. E come è nato il suo impegno nelle scuole?

Quando Joyce dopo la morte di Emilio, lasciò la casa di Roma per tornare a vivere nelle Marche, cominciò a girare per le scuole. Lei nelle Marche aveva creato delle cellule di fan o amici o sostenitori che erano sempre affettuosi e la invitavano. Il suo obiettivo era promuovere il pensiero verde, il pacifismo. Era molto amica di Lelio Basso che si occupava di storia politica. Lei era sempre molto disponibile, le piaceva parlare, era molto contenta di discutere coi ragazzini, rispondere alle domande.

Come era il suo rapporto con Joyce?

Lei aveva sempre con le persone un rapporto informale. Il carattere di Joyce era questo. Lei si coinvolgeva nei rapporti con le persone. Anche con noi era così, nonostante la differenza d'età, io avevo allora venticinque trent'anni e lei era già una signora sulla sessantina inoltrata. Per esempio, quando le chiesi di pubblicare il suo giallo, la storia di Sherlock Holmes nel monte Conero, lei non voleva soldi e l'unica cosa che chiedeva era stare in compagnia (Joyce aveva paura della solitudine). Allora stette un mese a casa mia, andavamo insieme al mare, la portavo alle serate con gli amici, al cinema, lei si ambientava dovunque benissimo. Era venuta con delle fotocopie di documentazioni che le servivano e un canovaccio in testa e scrisse il romanzo così, in un mese.

Ma lei come vedeva la sua attività? Si pensava una scrittrice? Perché in molte dichiarazioni e interviste che ho letto lei diceva di considerare il suo scrivere

semplicemente come un modo per comunicare con le persone. Tuttavia il suo impegno nella scrittura è presente in ogni fase della sua vita, sembra quasi, anzi, che tra tutti i contesti che cambia, i viaggi, gli impegni, l'unica costante e filo conduttore delle esperienze più diverse sia proprio la scrittura. Lei ha sempre pubblicato con regolarità le sue opere.

Per lei non era poi molto importante pubblicare. Soprattutto non le interessava molto la questione delle case editrici. Per lei pubblicare con Mondadori o con noi o dare in stampa quattro fogli con i quaderni del circolo Gramsci di Fermo in fondo era uguale. Non aveva il 'mito dell'autore'. Non aveva neanche contratti con le case editrici, almeno con noi contratti non ne ha mai fatti, io il primo che ho firmato per i suoi diritti di autore è stato con il figlio, Giovanni, dopo che Joyce era morta. Quindi lei pubblicava e ripubblicava spesso gli stessi pezzi in contesti diversi. Il libro che aveva dato a te, poi lo dava a un altro che si mostrava interessato alla sua opera. Quello che a lei interessava era andare a presentare il suo lavoro, parlare di quello che scriveva, avere occasioni in cui poteva andare nelle scuole, nelle librerie, per lei era un passatempo.

Comunque secondo me lei in fondo si sentiva una scrittrice. Non lo avrebbe mai ammesso neanche sotto tortura. Per lei l'ego era una cosa piccolo-borghese, non indulgeva mai in tali considerazioni di sé. Definirsi scrittrice lo avrebbe considerato una frivolezza. Per lei il mito dell'autore, dell'intervista, della foto sulla rivista, erano cascami, frivolezze. Per lei era più importante passare un pomeriggio in una scuola o a chiacchierare con un pensionato anziché con un qualsiasi intellettuale del momento.

Si considerava parte di qualsiasi corrente letteraria?

No. Non credo.

Aveva degli scrittori che considerava i suoi modelli letterari o a cui guardava con particolare ammirazione?

Non direi. Negli anni in cui la ho conosciuta io lei leggeva sempre testi di saggistica. Secondo me la sua vena narrativa era una dote naturale. Si capisce che ha uno stile che ha formato su testi letterari, ma non saprei dire quali. È uno stile asciutto, a togliere anziché a mettere, che sicuramente non è soltanto di getto, ma non saprei dire quali e se avesse dei modelli letterari.

Secondo me, lei ha la stessa vena narrativa di Margaret Collier, la nonna. E della madre, che scrisse delle lettere che abbiamo pubblicato, *Lettere ferme*. Joyce mantenne a mio parere quello spirito aristocratico, ma allo stesso tempo informale.

Un ricordo: c'è stato un momento in cui si pensasse che la nominassero senatrice a vita, per la sua esperienza nella resistenza. E invece non fu così. Quello le sarebbe piaciuto.

Volevo farle una domanda su Fronti e frontiere. Joyce Lussu ha pubblicato il romanzo a caldo nel 1945, poi lo ha riscritto e ripubblicato nel 1967, poi ancora in veste di libro per la scuola negli anni Settanta, e poi ancora con voi del Lavoro Editoriale. Ma secondo lei perché questa insistenza a riproporre il suo testo sulla seconda guerra mondiale?

Per quanto riguarda l'edizione scolastica credo sia stata un'iniziativa di Mursia perché si trattava di una narrativa semplice, una storia della Resistenza e scritta in modo molto obiettivo, si prestava bene ad un pubblico di ragazzi. Per il resto non so, direi che a lei piaceva pubblicare e ripubblicare per avere sempre nuove occasioni in cui parlare dei suoi libri. A lei piaceva andare in giro e parlare delle sue opere.

Come sceglieva Joyce Lussu le case editrici a cui affidare i suoi libri?

Per amicizia e simpatia. E poi sceglieva chi era disposto a pubblicare tutto velocemente.

Come hanno influito le pubblicazioni dei libri di Joyce Lussu nel destino della sua casa editrice?

Se non avessi incontrato Joyce, la casa editrice non sarebbe nemmeno nata.

Qui nelle Marche Joyce Lussu è una scrittrice abbastanza conosciuta, secondo lei ha avuto lo stesso successo anche nel resto d'Italia?

Qui nelle Marche tutti la conoscono perché lei faceva di tutto per farsi conoscere. Parlava nelle scuole, faceva incontri in qualsiasi spazio le venisse concesso e non rifiutava mai un invito a parlare dei suoi libri. Aveva anche la capacità di saper parlare a generazioni diverse, riusciva a farsi ascoltare da molti. I suoi libri li hanno comprati perlopiù le signore bene della società, però era molto letta anche tra i giovani, quelli della mia età per esempio. Per il resto d'Italia, direi

che è molto conosciuta anche in Sardegna, nella zona da dove veniva il marito e dove lei ha anche vissuto per un periodo.

Quali erano, tra i suoi, i libri ai quali Joyce Lussu era più affezionata?

Non lo so. Credo *Fronti e frontiere*, ma anche *Le inglesi in Italia*, il libro sui suoi antenati, e *Padre, padrone, padreterno*.

Tutti i racconti di Joyce Lussu sono autobiografici, nonostante l'autrice si misuri in generi letterari che dovrebbero richiedere una certa impersonalità, penso ad esempio agli studi storici o alla saggistica. Ma quanto c'è di vero nei racconti in prima persona di Joyce Lussu?

Joyce scriveva fiction, di vero c'è poco. (Ride). A parte *Fronti e frontiere*, il cui canovaccio è una esperienza vera, ma perché in quel caso la verità superava ogni immaginazione, per il resto usava la fantasia. Anche in *Fronti e frontiere* alcuni elementi sono fantasiosi, penso ad esempio a quando descrive l'episodio dell'incontro con il fratello: come è possibile che Joyce, superate le linee naziste, raggiunti gli alleati, incontri per caso il fratello Max che nel frattempo si era arruolato nell'esercito britannico grazie alla sua doppia cittadinanza? Mi sembra un racconto molto romanzato, un *coup de théâtre*. Io credo che sapesse che il fratello fosse con l'esercito britannico e credo anche che lo abbia cercato in ogni modo. A mio parere lei prendeva spunto da esperienze vissute per elaborare altro. Aveva in questo un che di aristocratico, che si dedicava alla scrittura per il piacere di raccontare. Come molti aristocratici che nel Settecento si vestivano da pastori per recitare poesie arcadiche. Un po' come la nonna, Margaret Collier, scriveva per diletta se stessa e la propria famiglia con delle storie. Ovviamente Joyce aggiungeva a questo il suo impegno politico, il suo anticonformismo.

Qual era l'italiano di Joyce Lussu? parlava in dialetto?

No, mai. Capiva il fermano, bene. Ha anche riscritto delle canzoni in fermano, quando si occupava del folklore dell'area geografica. Ma lei parlava un italiano senza accento. Non aveva mai avuto d'altronde una frequentazione locale, lei è nata a Firenze, poi ha vissuto in esilio con la famiglia in Svizzera, frequentava la casa nelle marche in estate, ma per il resto è cresciuta in un ambiente internazionale.

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