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# *A comparative analysis of the English translations of Sibilla Aleramo's Una Donna*

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## Introduction

Translation is still nowadays a highly debated topic. Several studies have been done to introduce the role of translation and translators within society. During the years, it has been analysed how and why translation may, or may not, be considered just a copy of the original work and, for this reason, not as important as the source text is, but it has been argued that a translation is not a merely copy of the source text, but it becomes a new work, even though respecting its source. Translation is a complex process that goes beyond mere mechanical conversion of words from one language to another. It involves the translator's personal engagement, beliefs, and understanding of the text. In addition to the translator's ideologies, both time and gender can play significant roles in shaping the approach to translation.

While extensive research has been conducted to comprehend the impact of time changes on translation, the exploration of gender in translation has received limited attention until recent times. However, in contemporary scholarship, there has been a growing interest in examining the influence of gender on translation. This emerging field investigates the gender of translators and its role in shaping the translation process, as well as how the gender of characters in literary works is rendered in translation. By placing emphasis on gender dynamics, this renewed focus adds a new dimension to the study of translation and underscores the significance of considering gender dynamics within the translation process.

It is by considering these aspects that this study on the Italian novel *Una Donna* emerges. Written at the beginning of the 20th century, precisely in 1906, this novel is a perfect example of feminine and feminist writing, establishing its author, Sibilla Aleramo, as a pioneer of Italian feminist literature. Studied and translated in several languages, this research focuses on a comparative analysis of the Italian novel and its three English translations published respectively in 1908, 1980 and 2020.

This study aims to investigate how the temporal and gender factors impact the translation of a literary work. Specifically, it seeks to analyse the influence of chronological time and the gender of translators on the translations of a woman-authored literary work from the 1900s. This research also aims to examine and understand the role of translators in the translation process and determine whether their

presence is visible or not in the final version of the source work, in order to also understand to which extent time, gender and translator's ideology influence translation.

The corpus of texts under examination consists of three translations that belong to different time periods. The first translation was carried out by a woman, Maria Hornor Lansdale, the second was also by a woman, Rosalind Delmar, but it also includes an introduction written by a man, Richard Drake, while the third and last translation was a collaborative work between a man, Simon Carnell and a woman, Erica Segre.

To conduct the analysis of the Italian novel *Una Donna* and its three English translations, it would be beneficial to consider the specific versions used in the research.

The source text *Una Donna* will be examined using two versions: the original reprint of the novel published by Feltrinelli in 2013, and another version from the "narrativa scuola" edition (Feltrinelli/Loescher 2004), the latter edition which will be useful to give some lexical explanations, aiding the analysis. For Lansdale's translation, which title is *A Woman at Bay*, the edition used for the study is the only one available published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in 1908. The version used for Delmar's translation is the first print of *A Woman*, published by the University of California Press; Delmar translated the novel using the Italian reprint of *Una Donna* from 1950. In the end, regarding Segre and Carnell's version of *A Woman*, the analysis employs the first and only printed version edited in 2020. However, it remains unclear whether they worked with the original print of Aleramo's *Una Donna* or one of the subsequent reprints.

The objective of this study is to seek answers to the previous questions through the analysis of, arguably, the most significant chapter of the novel, namely the twelfth chapter.

However, the topic being explored appears to be quite broad, making it challenging and difficult to provide a definitive answer to such a significant question. For this reason, this study aims to be a small contribution to previous research on the themes of time and gender in translation studies, offering new insights and adding to the existing body of knowledge.

In order to find possible answers to these questions, the research will be divided into two kinds of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative ones, whose aim is to give a wide vision of the twelfth chapter and understand both how it has been translated over the years and how the different translators's socio-cultural background may have influenced the translational process.

Through an attentive focus on single words, idioms, etc. the analysis could highlight important findings in the examination of the several factors previously cited, i.e., time changes, cultural choices, gender-neutral preferences or ideological inclinations reflected in the target text. In particular, the research will be composed of four chapters, where each one will be focused on a particular theme.

In the opening chapter a comprehensive analysis of the Italian, American and English socio-political background will be done to examine the time and place in which both the author and the translators lived in order to provide a cultural context for the Italian novel and its three English translated versions. In addition to the socio-political analysis, special attention will be given to the examination of gender issues prevalent during the period under study. This includes exploring the implications of these gender dynamics within Italian, American, and English societies, as well as their reflections in literature.

The second chapter, instead, will go deeper in the study of the Italian novelist Sibilla Aleramo. Starting from her biography and background, particular attention will be given to her works and, above all, to her masterpiece *Una Donna*. Additionally, an important section will deal with the analysis of her literary style and the comparison with other authors of the time. This chapter, indeed, will provide information on how and where she was received, taking into account both critics and supporters, who have made her a real worldwide known feminist author.

The third chapter, however, will be a sort of preparatory one, which will introduce previous research on translation studies. Taking into account past research over translation and translator, another important section of the chapter will be covered by an analysis of gender within translation and gender of translators and, subsequently, how it can, or cannot, shape translation. In general, it is possible to look at this chapter as a general overview of translation and the multiple factors that can influence it.

The fourth and last chapter, instead, is a direct and practical analysis of the twelfth chapter of the novel *Una Donna* and the three translated versions. Analysed comparing the Italian source to the three English target texts, this research will focus on a qualitative research of the chapter 12, in order to find possible answers to previous questions; words and sentences will be scrutinised to show similarities and differences between the source and the target texts and try to demonstrate whether time, gender or ideologies can influence translation. The second part of the chapter, instead, will concern a brief quantitative analysis of syntactic and lexical choices analysed through a

software that will allow to consider the rank scale of concordances and frequency of those analysed words.

This study focuses on an accomplished Italian novelist who has achieved widespread recognition in various countries, but whose work requires ongoing emphasis. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that her literary works have been translated into English over a span of approximately 200 years, establishing her as a prominent figure within English society.



## Chapter 1

### Unveiling the context: the feminist author of *Una Donna* and the translators' backgrounds

The first chapter of the study will provide an overview of the Italian, American and English socio-political context, trying to focus the attention on the women's struggle for equal treatments and rights. Beginning with the Italian perspective, which can highlight the characteristics of an old backward environment in which the author/protagonist of the novel wrote, it would be also useful to find out some significant events and facts in America and in the United Kingdom, in order to present a clear panorama of the two countries which have hosted the anglo-american translations of Aleramo's novel, *Una Donna*.

In particular, in terms of the Italian context, the period investigated spans from the second half of the 19th century to approximately the first half of the 20th. This timeframe analysed is intended to provide a general background for both the author, who lived during the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and her major novel, published in 1906. Similarly, the study explores the periods of the 20th and 21st centuries for the American and English translators, who played a role in introducing *Una Donna* to readers in the United Kingdom and the United States. By examining the socio-political developments during these time periods, the research aims to establish a contextual framework for understanding the translations and their reception in these respective countries.

In addition to a socio-political analysis, it would be important to introduce a cultural analysis of the studied periods, in order to contextualise Aleramo not only within the social framework as an individual but within the cultural and literary context as an author and novelist; the same process should be carried out for all translators of *Una Donna*.

In general, it could be stated that literature was perceived differently during the various centuries in Italy, America and the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, due to gender differences, a lot of women writers were overshadowed by the male counterpart, being men authors, much freer to write and publish their work. By giving voice to Aleramo

and exploring the translations by other women, the research sheds light on the significance of her work and the enduring impact of gender on literary representation throughout centuries.

The ultimate goal of the third chapter is to convey information about the overall socio-political and cultural context which lies behind the Italian novel *Una Donna* and her author, and the three different translations and their respective authors.

### **1. Socio-political context of late 19th and early 20th Century Italy: a look at gender *inequality***

After the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, Italy's economic situation was not the most favourable (Malanima 2020). The budget deficit due to unification had to be restored and, thanks to the Sinistra Storica<sup>1</sup>, a period marked by transformism was born.

As Italy was an economically backward country, characterised by agriculture and few industrial activities, attempts were made to move the country towards an industrialised vision of the nation, but “The productivity of labour was low, rents high, and peasant earnings barely exceeded subsistence level, which meant that they could not afford to buy industrial goods, thus hampering the development of manufacturing” (Federico 1996: 767), thus, new social and political reforms were made to improve the Italian situation, among them the universal male suffrage in 1912.

However, the social and political changes were aimed at improving the condition of men, rather than that of the population as a whole; in fact, “historians refer to this reform as quasi-universal suffrage. In practice, it granted universal male suffrage to the over 30s, while keeping the 1882 restrictions only for the population between 21 and 30” (Larcinese 2011: 9).

Furthermore, despite the increasing employment of women, the first decade of the 20th century saw no profound changes in the legal and social situation of women, who were largely relegated to performing domestic tasks and caring for their children. Culture and

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary group arising from the merger of the left of the Subalpine Parliament with representatives of the Mazzinian and Garibaldian tradition, who reorganised themselves after the defeat of 1848-49 in the Action Party, and with the so-called «sinistra giovane», especially from the South, formed after the unification.  
[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sinistra-storica-italiana\\_%28Dizionario-di-Storia%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sinistra-storica-italiana_%28Dizionario-di-Storia%29/)

tradition proposed a family model based on the authority of the father, to whose figure both wife and children were subordinate, echoing, albeit with due distinctions, the model of the *patriarchal family* of Roman tradition. Indeed, as stated by Roticiani (2018), during the first years of the 20th century the figure of the father is represented by literature as a *pater familias*, an authoritarian individual who wanted to be respected and obeyed before being loved.

Another case is exemplified by the enactment of the new civil code in 1942 which reflected the idea of the family (Gini, Caranti 1954) adopted by the Fascist regime (Smyth 1948): a series of restrictions were introduced for women, particularly in the sphere of marriage, sanctioning the husband's marital authority and the subordinate role of the woman, who, among other things, could not own material possessions, but was subject to marital authorisation (Smyth 1948).

As early as 1865, the previous civil code identified the husband as the dominant figure and provided for the obligation of cohabitation and the indissolubility of marriage.

Indeed, women had no passive and active electoral rights in politics and were only included in areas where their help and support could be exploited; in fact, already at the end of the 19th century, women were employed in factories, but they had no rights, and were even paid less than men, with working hours equal to or even higher than those of their male counterparts (Gribaudo 1997).

As a matter of fact, patriarchal values were difficult to destroy and subvert; areas such as the work field precluded women from access to most public positions, as did the civil and penal code, which did not safeguard the life and identity of women (Piattelli 2015), but aimed at safeguarding both the honour of the family<sup>2</sup> from which the woman was descended and the man's earnestness she was to marry/had married. During that time laws such as reparative marriage<sup>3</sup> were still in force; it was customary that if a woman was raped, she had to marry her abductor to safeguard her and her family's honour, as if the injured party was not actually her who had deserved this treatment.

With the aim of putting a veil over rape, even Sibilla Aleramo experienced, in 1891, the "matrimonio riparatore", a topic highly discussed in her novel that will mine her self-confidence and authority during her whole life.

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<sup>2</sup> L'art. 587 del codice penale consentiva quindi che fosse ridotta la pena per chi uccidesse la moglie, la figlia o la sorella al fine di difendere "l'onore suo o della famiglia".

English translation here: Article 587 of the penal code thus allowed for a reduced sentence for anyone who killed his wife, daughter or sister in order to defend "his or her honour or that of the family".

<sup>3</sup> Celebrated to remedy a situation considered dishonourable such as a love elopement or pregnancy.

## **1.1 Women's struggles in Italy on the eve of the 20th century and its consequences in Aleramo's *Una Donna***

In general, what is possible to argue is that the figure and role of women, between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, changed considerably. In about seventy years, several women struggled to assert her identity, both individually and through feminist activist groups that aimed at the subversion of the patriarchal and sexist values that have always been perpetrated. Feminist movements took different forms and objectives in different contexts and periods. They were particularly active, visible and incisive before the First World War and between the 1960s and 1970s.

The first wave of feminism, which took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focused on the idea of emancipation. This concept, particularly cherished by equality feminism, is also employed by Aleramo in her first feminist novel, *Una Donna*. Equality feminism encompassed the demands and struggles of women aiming to achieve equal rights or parity with men. It is within this specific historical and cultural context that Sibilla Aleramo wrote *Una Donna*, the first Italian feminist novel, addressing these topics sincerely and in detail, with particular attention to the portrayal of women as wives and mothers, alienated from social life and subservient to their husbands.

Thus, it is important to contextualise the author within this feminist framework, as she appears to be a perfect fusion of two types of feminism: equality feminism, characterised by the aforementioned features, and difference feminism.

In fact, with her novel, Aleramo seemed to be a pioneer of the second wave of feminism, which embraced difference feminism and emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s. During this period, feminists aimed for the "liberation" of women, asserting a female identity that was neither subordinate nor assimilated to that of men, while recognizing and appreciating the differences inherent in both genders.

It is worthwhile to say that Aleramo's *Una Donna* might be considered a *bildungsroman*, a coming of age novel, due to the protagonist's journey of personal growth. This journey can be seen as dividing the novel into two phases, with the twelfth chapter as a divisory one, which highlight the transition from an awareness of the importance of equality feminism to a subsequent development where the protagonist

perceives herself as a whole individual. This transformation exemplifies the influence of difference feminism in shaping the second part of the novel. For this reason, it might be useful to better explain these two “kinds of feminism”.

### **1.1.1 Equality feminism**

Equality feminism (Barrett 1987) claimed the erasure of the differences between the sexes established in Western culture and life and which have resulted in discrimination, subordination, exclusion<sup>4</sup>. It called for women to be considered equal to men by nature, i.e. of equal value and capacity; it demanded access to the same rights as men and rejected as factors of oppression the roles and characters traditionally attributed to women (Faulkner 2001).

As previously stated, at the end of the First World War women, despite having been a valuable aid and labour force during the conflict, were largely expelled from the labour market; though, the changes brought about by the mobilisation of the war were reflected in the recognition of their right to vote in several countries. However, in Italy things worked differently. It would have to wait until the end of the Second World War for women to achieve the right to vote and other rights, such as compulsory education for girls, which could previously only attend the first two years of elementary school.

### **1.1.2 Difference feminism**

After almost a century, in the context of the 1960s/1970s, feminist movements returned powerfully to the scene and in the 20th century, they shifted the focus from *emancipation* to the *liberation* of women. The second wave of feminism radically challenged the oldest and most basic form of domination and oppression, according to which one sex dominated the other, so that the former gained a form of property on the latter.

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<https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/terms/feminism.html#:~:text=Difference%20Feminism%20represents%20a%20broad,caring%2C%20feeling%2C%20or%20empathy>

This wave organised itself as an autonomous space in which to deconstruct and construct being a woman. It moved from the terrain of the rights to be claimed to that of the definition of the subject of these rights (i.e. the woman), from the equality of men and women to the recognition and valorisation of a female identity that is neither subordinated nor assimilated to that of men: to equality in gender difference (Barrett 1987).

The new wave of feminism denounced patriarchy, its laws, its images of the feminine, and subjects the sexual mores, habits and conventions of everyday life, and the (gendered) roles that men and women play in social life, in the couple, in the family, to radical criticism (Stanford<sup>5</sup>).

Additionally, the new wave questioned what a woman was; Simone de Beauvoir started *The Second Sex* (1949) precisely with the question *What is a woman?* and fought, often in a provocative and blatant manner, especially for the legalisation of abortion, in the name of conscious motherhood, for the spread of contraception, for the demand for women's advice centres and social services.

In the end, this new form of feminism proposed and implemented new models of behaviour based on the equal division of tasks within the couple and the family, on sexual freedom, on solidarity between women, on the autonomy of the female subject.

Women's autonomy, in particular, was a matter that Aleramo deeply cared about, and all the choices she made throughout her life serve as an example of this ideal. As evidenced by the final chapters of the novel *Una Donna* and her work *Apologia dello spirito femminile*, her decision to fight for her freedom by leaving her abusive husband and sacrificing the love of her son exemplify a new type of feminism, of which Aleramo maybe is one of the early advocates. Despite having written the novel *Una Donna* long before this second wave of feminism reached Italy, her ideas were deeply rooted in the awareness of being more than an object of ownership. Her experience as a woman transcended her personal life circumstances and addressed a broader audience, which would find its voice in the second wave of feminism during the 1960s and 1970s.

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<https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/terms/feminism.html#:~:text=Difference%20Feminism%20represents%20a%20broad,caring%2C%20feeling%2C%20or%20empathy>

## **1.2 The history of the American 19th and 20th century: a socio-political context**

As previously argued, examining the social and political landscape of the United States in the late 1900s can aid this research in understanding the placement of the translated work *A Woman* within a new American environment marked by transformative shifts and a growing desire to propagate feminist principles. As Zinn (2005) states, the 20th century was a period of significant political and social change in America.

The United States, in particular, experienced a period of rapid industrialization and economic expansion that lasted from the 1870s to the early 1900s, becoming the world's leading industrial nation thanks to the Second Industrial Revolution which pioneered an expansion in organisation, coordination, and the scale of industry, spurred on by technology and transportation advancements such as the telegraph, railroads, and the steel industry, and created a new class of wealthy industrialists known as robber barons. This period is often referred to as the Gilded Age and lasted from 1870 to 1900 (Cashman 1984).

During that time women were still fighting for the right to vote and for other basic rights and protections. The Women's Suffrage Movement gained momentum in the early 1900s, but had its roots in the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 (Elliott 2020), which was organised by women's rights advocates such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. The convention was attended by over 300 people, both women and men, and marked the beginning of a larger movement for gender equality.

In the late 1800s, women also began to gain greater access to education and professional opportunities, although these goals were often limited by societal expectations and discrimination. The end of the century also saw the emergence of the Progressive Movement<sup>6</sup>, which sought to reform many aspects of American society, including labour conditions, political corruption, and women's rights, thanks to meetings such as The Seneca Falls Convention<sup>7</sup>. But, in the fast-growing industrial

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<sup>6</sup> The Progressive Era (1896–1917) was a period of widespread social activism and political reform across the United States focused on defeating corruption, monopoly, waste and inefficiency.

<sup>7</sup> The Seneca Falls Convention was the first women's rights convention in the United States. Held in July 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, the meeting launched the women's suffrage movement, which more than seven decades later ensured women the right to vote. <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-rights/seneca-falls-convention>

sector, there was no place for women's requests; male workers had to accept that the work was harder with less leisure, but this precarious situation provoked economic depression, layoffs and wage cuts. The return of full prosperity only happened between 1897 and 1920 (Hoffmann 1956), after the rise of industrialization and the growth of cities, which led to the emergence of new social and economic difficulties, including urban poverty, crime, and disease and, subsequently, to the birth of the Progressive movement.

The US's entry into World War I in 1917 marked a turning point, leading to a period of economic growth, increased international involvement and also brought significant changes in attitudes towards gender and sexuality thanks to a wider and more modern perspective.

Women began the 20th century fighting for the right to vote, which was finally granted with the passage of the 19th Amendment, thanks in part to the tireless efforts of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (DuBois 1999) and for the Equal Pay Act (1963) (Alkadry et al 2006), which ensured that women were paid the same as men for equal work (Monopoli 2017).

If the first World War saw many women taking what were traditionally men's jobs for the first time, it is during World War II that women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, even though the end of the war saw many women pushed back into traditional gender roles. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s brought increased attention to issues of gender and racial inequality. The feminist movement emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with activists like Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg advocating for equal rights and opportunities for women (Rosen 2000). This movement led to significant changes in areas such as reproductive rights, employment discrimination, and domestic violence. However, the 1980s and 1990s saw a conservative backlash against feminism, with some conservative politicians and religious leaders opposing progressive efforts to expand women's rights. During this cultural shift, a significant number of feminist works emerged, including many translations of literary works by feminist authors from around the world. One such example is Rosalind Delmar's translation of the Italian novel *Una Donna* into American English, which gave the book the title *A Woman*, preceded by an introduction which considered it "a classic too long neglected by Americans" (Drake 1980: vi); translated for the first time in 1908, it was again brought to light in a new and more modern context, thanks to this feminist and gender studies scholar.



### 1.2.1 Males' chauvinism in the US, a look at the 19th and 20th century

As shortly stated in the previous section, before the mid-19th century, women's education was largely informal and limited to domestic skills such as sewing, cooking, and child-rearing. "Few education institutions of any kind existed for females in the early 1800s [...] a few wealthy ones attended finishing schools to learn social graces, and a pioneer effort was begun by Emma Willard in Troy, New York, to give upper and middle-class white girls an education similar to that offered their brothers" (Edwards 1934: 1).

The early 20th century witnessed a women's rights movement that advocated for expanded educational opportunities; this led to the founding of women's colleges which provided women with a rigorous liberal arts education and prepared them for careers in teaching, nursing, and other professions. Additionally, more educational opportunities became available to women, including access to public schools and the opportunity to attend universities alongside men, marking a significant step forward. However, despite these advances, women still faced significant barriers in education. Women's colleges were often seen as less prestigious than their male counterparts; moreover, women were frequently discouraged from pursuing careers in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and maths.

In response to these challenges, women's rights activists continued to push for greater access to education and equal opportunities for women; this included the passage of Title IX in 1972<sup>8</sup>, which prohibited gender discrimination in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, women kept experiencing difficulties within the workforce and in politics, with laws and social norms limiting their opportunities and roles; often relegated to low-paying, menial jobs, they were frequently excluded from leadership positions.

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<sup>8</sup> In June 1972, President Nixon signed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 into law. Title IX is a comprehensive federal law that has removed many barriers that once prevented people, on the basis of sex, from participating in educational opportunities and careers of their choice. It states that:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation, in be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-ix#Introduction> and [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix\\_dis.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html).

<sup>9</sup> A recipient institution that receives Department funds must operate its education program or activity in a nondiscriminatory manner free of discrimination based on sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thus, Rosalind Delmar's life could be considered an example of this time change; Born in the early 1940s, she grew up as a working-class girl in the 1950s, attending a convent grammar school where she became aware of the complex cultural interactions of class and gender dynamics (The British Library). Strongly involved in feminist causes, Delmar translated many feminist texts, among them *Una Donna*.

### **1.3 Socio-political context of England: early 20th and 21st century**

Between 1900 and 1910, England experienced notable transformations in its social, economic, and political spheres.

The country was in the midst of the Edwardian era, a time of relative prosperity for the middle and upper classes. There was a sense of optimism and confidence in the future, thanks also to the economic growth and industrialization, which was reflected in the arts and culture of the time. However, this prosperity was not shared equally by all, and poverty and inequality remained significant problems for many working-class people (Thompson 1997).

Politically, the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, introduced a series of social welfare reforms, including pensions, unemployment benefits, and health insurance. These reforms aimed to alleviate some of the worst effects of poverty and inequality.

Internationally, England was a major imperial power, with colonies and territories all around the world. The country was involved in numerous conflicts and diplomatic negotiations, including the Second Boer War in South Africa and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

But one of the most important events was the rise of the suffragette movement, which campaigned for women's right to vote. The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, and became the most militant of the suffrage groups (Shew 2022). They used tactics such as hunger strikes and property destruction to draw attention to their cause. Women were still largely excluded from the political process at this time, and the suffragettes faced significant opposition and even violence from some quarters (Stanley Holton 1986).

Almost a hundred years later, the major changes concerned social issues, starting from several policies aimed at reducing immigration, even social movements against violence

aroused: Black Lives Matter movement, the Me Too movement, and the Extinction Rebellion movement. These movements have raised awareness about issues such as racism, sexism, and climate change.

Within these two particular periods, even though separated by a significant historical gap, two translations of the novel *Una Donna* were published. The first translation, titled *A Woman at Bay*, was done by Mary Lansdale, while the second one whose title will be *A Woman*, was produced by Erica Segre e Simon Carnell. Notably, this was the first time a male translator had been involved in transposing this work into English.

### **1.3.1 Women in the UK, a passage from the early 20th to the 21th century**

As a starting point for the 20th century, the Education Act was passed, which made it compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 13 to attend school. This had a significant impact on girls' education, as it meant that more of them were able to attend school and receive an education.

Women in England were still largely restricted to low-paying jobs, such as domestic work or factory work. However, some women were starting to break into traditionally male-dominated professions, such as teaching and nursing (Ludowise 2018).

Therefore, women had very few rights within marriage. They were not allowed to own property or keep their own earnings, and had limited say in matters such as child custody and divorce (Bruley 1999).

A century later, women have continued to make progress in various aspects of life. First of all, they have made significant strides in political representation in England, with the number of women in parliament increasing steadily. Moreover, there has been progress in workplace equality, with laws being introduced to help reduce the gender pay gap and promote equal opportunities (Thackeray 2010). More women are now in leadership positions in various industries, and there are laws protecting women from discrimination at work. Indeed, women have also made progress in social and cultural spheres, with a growing recognition of women's contributions to society and culture. Women are increasingly represented in the media, arts, and other cultural industries.

Among these advancements, it is possible to include the translation of Segre and Carnell, which highlights the socio-political change in the consideration of women. Although the first translation of the work was done a century earlier by a woman alone,

the social change is particularly visible in the second translation, in which the female translator is joined by a male translator.

#### **1.4 Italian literature, if men and women are equally considered**

In Italy, the very beginning of the 20th century was characterised by a literary scene shaped by the differentiation of gender roles and societal expectations of the time.

Male literature tended to focus on themes of politics, nation-building and modernity. Prominent male writers of the time such as Gabriele D'Annunzio, Giovanni Verga, and Luigi Pirandello explored the changing landscape of Italian society, from the struggles of unification to the challenges of industrialization and urbanisation. They often celebrated the virtues of masculinity and championed traditional male roles in society. Indeed, “la donna - angelicata, madre, moglie, fatale, demoniaca - è sempre stata un tema privilegiato della letteratura (maschile), ma sempre raccontata dall'uomo” (Cohen Hemi Nizza 2021).

Women's literature, on the other hand, was expected to explore more personal and emotional themes, such as love, family, and domesticity. Nevertheless, many women writers such as Grazia Deledda and Anna Maria Ortese wrote works focused on emancipation that challenged the traditional roles assigned by the society to women and often featured strong, independent female characters. Sibilla Aleramo, for example, wrote about the figure of the woman as equal to man both in necessities and capacity, focusing her attention on motherhood and the need to be fully loved, understood and supported by both the husband and the family. These writers also explored the challenges faced by women in a male-dominated society, such as limited opportunities for education and employment (Gomez 2013), trying to assert their voices and perspectives.

It is worth noting that not all writers conformed to these gendered distinctions in literature. There were many writers, such as Morante, who defied traditional gender roles and explored a range of themes in their work transcending binary categorizations, whose literary output blended elements of both male and female characteristics, encompassing themes of politics, history, and personal relationships (Liimatta 2000).

### 1.5 Sibilla Aleramo and *la Letteratura al Femminile*

In general, it is possible to analyse Italian women's literature as a response to the oppression of the patriarchal society. In a volume entitled *Letteratura al femminile* (1980), Biancamaria Frabotta critically examined the constraints imposed by traditional categories when it comes to analysing the relationship between women and literature. Frabotta pointed out the tendency to view women's literature as a means of finding solace in marginalised forms of expression, while also highlighting the limitations inherent in the definition "literature in the feminine" (Russell 1997: 98).

Monographs, such as *Sibilla Aleramo e il suo tempo*<sup>10</sup> (1981) by Bruna Conti and Alba Morino, aimed to explore the significant connection between Aleramo and her need to write. From the earliest investigations, in fact, the several works by Sibilla Aleramo have revealed a remarkable link between life and writing and, more in general, between experience and literature. The *Fantasma space* can be seen as a clear example of this necessity. It is understood as a place where female authors could hide from the outside world which does not allow any woman to express herself as she really is.

The relationship between women and writing, however, goes beyond just a place to express their inner nature, but highlights women's difficulties in being accepted within a society ruled by patriarchy. Within this kind of society, shaped by sexism, women's needs are not always respected and heard. For example, disease and divorce were, at that time, two marked consequences of the 20th century; of which women were often the injured party.

Italian women writers, for example, have dealt extensively with several mental illnesses. In particular, the feminist writer Sibilla Aleramo, suffered from depression and in her autobiography she saw depression as "the epitome of women's oppression" (Russell 1997: 70). As another example of tightness, many women writers spoke about their marriage experiences depicting them as "gloomy marriage tales", to highlight also their defiance of the institution that had caused them so much suffering (Russell 1997: 72).

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<sup>10</sup> In *Sibilla Aleramo and her times*.

## **1.6 A glimpse of American literature, gender differences in the concept of “authorship” and translation**

American literature of male and female writers of the 20th century was marked by a shift in the representation of gender and a growing emphasis on social and political issues.

If in the mid-20th century, male writers such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner dominated American literature with their works exploring themes of individualism, masculinity, the dark side of human nature, and the impact of war on society, leaving women authors aside (Baym 1981), female writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, and Carson McCullers (Abate 2006) also gained popularity with their portrayals of women’s experiences and challenges to traditional gender roles, exploring race, gender and identity (Schoemaker 2014). It is possible to argue that they were pioneers in a field that was often dominated by men, and their work paved the way for future generations of women writers.

Moreover, female writers like Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, and Gertrude Stein challenged societal expectations of women through their writing. Wharton, in particular, explored themes of class and gender in her works, while Cather’s portrayals of women in frontier settings broke new ground in American literature (Baym 1981).

During the last part of the century, additionally, women were perceived and treated differently, and this was echoed in the way they were translated in literature and other forms of media. Indeed, many translators, particularly women, aroused and sought to highlight the voices and experiences of other women in their translations. Rosalind Delmar, for example, showed her interest and strong commitment in her translation of *Una Donna*, by including personal thoughts and beliefs which reflect both her ideology and studies.

## **1.7 If English literature is gendered or not**

During the early 20th century, male and female writers in English literature often explored different themes and styles. Male writers, such as Joseph Conrad and D.H. Lawrence, tended to focus on traditional themes such as realism and naturalism, while female writers delved into more diverse topics such as gender roles and societal

constraints on women. Additionally, male writers were more likely to be recognized and praised by the literary establishment, while female writers faced significant barriers to entry and were often marginalised or dismissed (Tova Linett 2010). Despite these challenges, female writers of the time made critical contributions to the development of modern literature through their experimentations; for example, Virginia Woolf explored the stream-of-consciousness narrative techniques and their investigations of the inner lives of their characters.

Additionally, during the period of the early 20th century, women played a significant role also in the field of translation; although they often faced discrimination and were not always given proper recognition for their work, women translators tried to give voice to other contemporary or previous women authors; Maria Hornor Lansdale, for instance, attempted to tackle the translation of *Una Donna* in 1908, an attempt that will not be reproduced until the next century.

Male authors and translators dominated the literary scene for much of the century, even in terms of representation within literature itself, men were often portrayed as active and powerful figures, while women were relegated to more passive or domestic roles (Linett 2010). Despite this, many changes characterised the beginning of the new 21st century; there has been a significant shift towards greater gender equality in English literature, with women having made significant strides in terms of representation and recognition. One of the most notable changes in 21st century literature is the increased visibility and prominence of female authors. In Nagar et al. (2002) it is stated that women have been winning major literary prizes and gaining critical acclaim, and their works have been widely read and celebrated.

Even the condition of translators improved; many male and female translators have been widely appreciated, also thanks to their cooperation in translating many important works. An example can be represented by the couple Segre and Carnell, who translated, among others, also *Una Donna*, in 2020.

## Chapter 2

### Sibilla Aleramo, a pioneer of Italian feminism translated worldwide

In a century marked by gender inequity, Sibilla Aleramo put the basis for an Italian feminism that still recognises in this author the first feminist novelist of Italian literature. Through the analysis of Aleramo's biography and the social context around her, this chapter tries to consider her person in a broader context, which should allow the research to better position her both in time and place.

This research would be useful to also consider the moral strength Aleramo put in place in discussing such new topics and issues within an Italian socio-political context which was not at all accustomed to such cutting-edge female authors and their determination in being considered as complete individuals. In fact, an important part of the chapter will be covered by a short comparison between women's emancipation in Europe and in a more culturally and socially advanced America.

The second part of the chapter is more concerned with Aleramo's reception in other countries. Due to the innovative and groundbreaking character of *Una Donna* and her other works, the responses were different; thus, starting from her supporters and critics, this study tries to organise them according to the period and the countries in which she was first translated.

In the end, by referring to literature on Sibilla Aleramo's life and her works, this chapter's aim is to provide information which will support the subsequent analysis of the three translations in the English language of *Una Donna*.

#### **2. Her biography, a life-long struggle for freedom**

Marta Felicina (also known as Rina) Faccio, whose pseudonym was Sibilla Aleramo, was born in 1876 in Alessandria. She was an Italian writer, a poetess and a feminist journalist who highlighted the woman's condition between the XIX and XX century in Italy (Strappini 1994).



During her childhood, she lived for a couple of years in Civitanova Marche, where she had to face a difficult period of her life, characterised by the psychological absence of her mother Ernesta, who was afflicted by severe depression that led her to attempted suicide and then to mental disorder. A few years later, all the family moved to Milan, where she managed to complete her studies. Her mother's illness led Rina to take charge of the household (she was the eldest of four children) and to start working at a very early age. However, Aleramo did not feel troubled by being forced to work, on the contrary, she accepted the role of accountant in the same factory of which her father was director with great enthusiasm, mainly out of love for her father to whom she was bound by deep affection and boundless admiration.

It is worth mentioning that among the most important features of Sibilla's life is her close relationship with her father Ambrogio, an engineer who instilled on her his atheism; the paternal figure was seen as a role model until the daughter distanced herself because of the discovery of her father's extramarital affair. When she turned 15 in 1893, coinciding with the worsening marriage crisis between her parents, she was seduced and sexually assaulted by a factory employee, Ulderico Pierangeli. Because of him and her family, she was forced into a rehabilitating marriage. As Drake stated, "Aleramo had been raped at fifteen and had felt compelled to marry the rapist, by whom a son was later born to her when she was scarcely more than a child" (Drake 1990: 255). So, this event marks the violent and definitive interruption of her adolescence. Because of this rape, she became aware of the society around her, characterised by sexism and gender differences that make women subordinate to their abuser (Zucchi 2021). Shortly after her marriage, she became pregnant but, although Aleramo's life was enriched after the birth of her son in 1895, the joy of motherhood was not enough to repress the repulsion for married life that dragged her further and further into obscurity.

Overwhelmed by societal pressures and a physically abusive husband, she attempted suicide but she did not succeed; her only surge was reading and writing several drafts of her novels, finding refuge in her hidden desire for academic education and humanitarian aspiration.

The period of her life from 1898 to 1910 was characterised by a personal militant feminist commitment, from which she later distanced herself. During those years she wrote unpublished short stories and articles that were published in the *Gazzetta Letteraria*<sup>11</sup> and

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<sup>11</sup> An artistic-literary weekly magazine, founded in Turin by V. Bersezio in 1876, as a supplement to the daily *Gazzetta piemontese*, and published until 1902. It was important for having gathered, immediately after the unification of Italy, the collaboration of the greatest writers of the peninsula and for having contributed to the knowledge of foreign literature and art.

*L'Indipendente*<sup>12</sup> di Trieste. She collaborated with *Vita Moderna*, a feminist newspaper and worked with many authors and exponents of Italian positivism.

In the article *Apologia dello spirito femminile* she wrote “Il femminismo, movimento sociale, è stato una breve avventura, eroica all’inizio, grottesca sul finire, un’avventura da adolescenti, inevitabile ed ormai superata” (Aleramo 1911: 64). For Aleramo, the feminist urge had now shifted to the literary and spiritual side, in the vindication of female “diversity” and the need for the “free expression of feminine energy” (Strappini 1994).

Indeed, as Meda stated,

Se siamo persuasi d’una profonda differenziazione spirituale fra l'uomo e la donna dobbiamo persuaderci che essa implica una profonda diversità espressiva [...] Il mondo femminile dell’intuizione, questo più rapido contatto dello spirito umano con l’universale, se la donna perverrà a renderlo, sarà, certo, con movenze nuove, con scatti, con brividi, con pause, con trapassi, con vortici sconosciuti alla poesia maschile (Meda 2003: 26)<sup>13</sup>.

During the apprenticeship years where she improved her stylistics and writing capacities as self-educated, Sibilla was actively involved in the movement for women’s emancipation. She collaborated with various magazines and newspapers, endeavored to establish sections of the movement in Le Marche, and participated in several significant campaigns, including those advocating for women’s suffrage, peace, and against issues such as alcoholism, prostitution, and the white slave trade (1978)<sup>14</sup>.

In 1899, Sibilla and her husband relocated to Milan after he was dismissed from his job and their business failed to produce the desired outcomes. At the same time, Aleramo accepted an

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<sup>12</sup>*L'Indipendente* (4 June 1877 - 24 March 1923) was a daily newspaper from Trieste, the medium of information of militant citizen irredentism; the first issue came out on 4 June 1877 under the direction of the Dalmatian Enrico Matcovich. It proposed itself as a continuation of the progressive liberal line and in time would also include a large part of the democratic-garibaldine group, who had abandoned left-wing positions to embrace the nationalist ideal. The subtitle of the paper was *Giornale politico, letterario, commerciale, marittimo* (Political, Literary, Commercial, Maritime Newspaper).

Since its main purpose was to serve as a sounding board for a specific political faction and thus had clear propagandistic aims, the editors set aside the presentation of international news in order to dwell rather on facts and problems concerning Italy and irredentism; the city chronicle was almost absent. “L’Indipendente” was aimed at an elite readership, it was committed to building an Italian national consciousness and therefore also reserved ample space for culture: literary contributions, costume, music and theatre criticism and other topics came from the pen of the most prominent exponents such as Silvio Benco, Gian Giacomo Manzutto, Alberto Boccardi, Giuseppe Caprin, Cesare Rossi and others.

<sup>13</sup> Translation here: If we are persuaded of a profound spiritual differentiation between man and woman, we must persuade ourselves that it implies a profound expressive diversity [...] The feminine world of intuition, this more rapid contact of the human spirit with the universal, if woman manages to realise it, it will certainly be with new movements, with jerks, with thrills, with pauses, with passages, with whirlpools unknown to male poetry.

<sup>14</sup> Articles collected, posthumously, in *La donna e il Femminismo 1897-1910*. Rome.

offer to become the director of *L'Italia Femminile*, a weekly magazine founded by socialist Emilia Mariani, which Aleramo had previously collaborated with. During her brief editorship from November 1899 to January 1900, Aleramo infused the magazine with a more pronounced political and topical character. She signed the program *In salotto*, a conversation-style work with readers on the most hotly debated issues of the day.

During her time in Milan, Aleramo collaborated with prominent figures such as Maria Montessori and came into contact with leading socialists in the area, including F. Turati, C. Treves, and A. Kuliscioff, as well as many feminist activists. However, her stay in Milan was cut short when her husband was offered a management position at the family factory in Porto Civitanova. Additionally, Aleramo's disagreement with Lamberto Mondaini, the publisher of *Italia Femminile*, led her to resign from the magazine's editorship, but she continued her journalistic pursuits with greater vigour during this period (Strappini 1994).

Sibilla Aleramo felt trapped in her married life and the stifling atmosphere of her hometown. The price to escape her abusive husband was to abandon her child<sup>15</sup>; she fled to Rome in February 1902, where she became involved with Giovanni Cena, the editor of *Nuova Antologia* and a champion of democratic and humanitarian causes. Following Cena's advice, Aleramo began to write her autobiography in 1902, chronicling her life from childhood to her difficult and tumultuous decision to leave her husband and child behind. Her memoir, titled *Una Donna*, was published in 1906 in Rome and Turin, becoming an immediate success. *Una Donna* was reprinted multiple times and was still in demand, with its 17th edition being published in Milan in 1986.

In the wake of this success, Aleramo intensified her commitment to the feminist movement and humanitarian initiatives. From the creation of schools in the Agro Romano (Drake 1990) together with Cena and the Celli couple she participated in the Committee to Promote Education in Southern Italy, which arose following the disasters caused by the 1908 earthquake in Calabria and Sicily. In 1908, she also attended, as a journalist, the First National Women's Congress called by the National Council of Italian Women and continued her journalistic activity by publishing various articles on the feminist movement in the *Tribuna*, collaborating with the *Resto del Carlino* (from 1912), the *Marzocco* (from the same year) and the *Grande Illustrazione* (from 1913) of which she was the director between January 1914 and April of the following year.

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<sup>15</sup> During that period, women had no rights over their children, who were totally linked to the *patria potestà*. If a woman decided for any reason to "abbandonare il tetto coniugale", she lost any right as a mother. Basically, laws said that children were only linked to the father.

She was always curious and interested in significant intellectual and cultural figures and events. While in Florence, she got involved with the circle of *La Voce* (Treccani 1910) and met E. Cecchi, with whom she developed a long-lasting friendship, even though the critic had some public reservations about some of her works.

In the years that followed, Aleramo lived a nomadic lifestyle, frequently travelling between Italy (she returned to Milan on multiple occasions and also stayed in Rome, Florence, Naples, etc.) and Paris. During this time, she often established close correspondence relationships, including with various Italian literary figures.

Aleramo's second novel *Il passaggio*<sup>16</sup> was published in 1929, but she had actually begun writing it back in 1912 during a visit to Corsica. This marked the start of what Aleramo called her "third life", the beginning of the third ten-year period, (Aleramo 1932: 13). During this period, she also published her first poems, some of which were featured in *La Grande Illustrazione* between 1914 and 1915. In 1933, she joined the National Fascist Association of Women Artists and Graduates (Cagnolati, Follacchio 2022).

Aleramo then began a period of intense activity, including giving lectures, poetry readings, attending congresses, and writing articles mainly published in communist press in order to find remedy for financial difficulties caused by her living as a "single woman".

Unfortunately, the last years of her life were characterised by a long illness that led to her death on 13 January 1960 in Rome (Strappini 1994).

## 2.1 Sibilla Aleramo and her background

In a time when universities and schools were gendered, Sibilla Aleramo played a vital role in the struggle against male-dominated education. Indeed, "sul fronte dell'istruzione, venne permesso soltanto nel 1874 l'accesso delle donne ai licei e alle università, anche se in realtà continuarono ad essere respinte le iscrizioni femminili" (Piattelli 2015)<sup>17</sup>.

In 1911, a Reform enacted for children between 6 and 12 granted primary school education also for girls; the educational gender gap seemed to decrease (Cappelli, Quiroga Valle 2021), but this only happened for the lowest level of education. In fact, "In Italy, gender differences in educational attainment have been persistent and have been only slowly diminishing during

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<sup>16</sup>Novel available here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49626/49626-h/49626-h.htm>

<sup>17</sup>Translation here: On the education front, women were only allowed access to lyceums and universities in 1874, although in reality female enrollments continued to be rejected.

the 20th century. In 1900, 6.0% of the men aged 25 years and older had at least lower secondary education, compared to about 2.4% of the women” (EDU20C, 2017<sup>18</sup>).

According to EDU20C, higher education during the years in which Aleramo wrote comprehended about 30% of men and boys attending both schools and universities, compared to 4% of women and girls who could only attend schools. Universities, in fact, weren't accessible to the female sex at that time.

While it can be challenging to find extensive information on education during the time of Italy's unification (1861) and in the years following, Bertocchi and Bozzano (2019) suggest that the gender gap began to decrease significantly at the start of the 20th century.

Living during the late 19th and early 20th century, Aleramo attended primary school until 1887, thanks to her wealthy family conditions, but she soon understood that her life would have been overlooked by patriarchal society.

Facing challenges in all aspects of her life, from work to domestic duties, already after 1887 she only could wish for a “self-made education”. In fact, she was forced to interrupt her studies because of her father, who had to direct a factory in Civitanova Marche.

As a result, in 1895 she started to actively fight against the differences between men and women. In that period, a double standard that created a disparity between the male and female individual existed; if men had the right to be free and unjudged in their sexual conquest, women had the obligation to pursue purity and chastity for life. “Le donne si trovavano inoltre in una situazione di esclusione, non solo dalla maggior parte degli atti giuridici e commerciali in assenza del consenso dei propri mariti, ma anche dalla possibilità di agire come tutrici nei confronti dei figli” (Duby e Perrot 2007: 147)<sup>19</sup>.

At that time, a shared ideology sustained that marriage was a debt contracted by the woman who, therefore, had to fulfil any sexual or other request of her husband, as she was contractually obliged. Even Aleramo experienced this form of marriage; at the age of 15, in fact, she was obliged by her family to marry the young man who had raped her. Rape, in fact, was not considered an offence, and rape within a married couple was considered permissible in Italy until 1976 (Marano 2011). Margherita Pelaja (2001) explains that it was the condition of being married that indicated women's place and their value in the social organisation in the post-war years, so “Sibilla Aleramo ha svolto un ruolo significativo grazie al contributo

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<sup>18</sup> <https://edu20c.org/italy/#>

<sup>19</sup> Translation here:

Women were also excluded not only from most legal and commercial acts without the consent of their husbands, but also from the possibility of acting as legal guardians of their children.

pionieristico che ha offerto non solo al dibattito sulla condizione della donna ma anche alla riflessione sulla scrittura femminile stessa” (Meda 2003: 175)<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, Aleramo struggled against the legal, economic and social status of women, in many ways inferior to that of men, through literature and writing. Excluded from voting, from public employment on account of their gender and, especially if married, deprived of many legal rights granted to men, Italian women of the 20th century were still not active citizens (Willson 2009), on the contrary, they were considered as the other side of society and often not even taken into consideration.

Thus, Sibilla Aleramo should be perceived as a witness of this calling for equality. With her historical and autobiographical novel, *Una Donna*, she analysed how she experienced gender inequity and several other topics which were banned and censored in the early 20th century in Italy.

By taking the reader into the depths of the female condition, Aleramo’s aim is to make the reader understand the subjugated role of women and how it is possible to subvert this common belief through the medium of literature and writing. Indeed, “the dilemma she explored became once more a symbol of the need for women’s liberation and an indication of how much that liberation could cost” (Caesar 1980: 79).

## **2.2 Aleramo’s masterpiece and her other works**

Sibilla Aleramo is renowned for her novel *Una Donna*, which was published in 1906 and is considered a seminal work in Italian literature. The novel recounts the story of a young woman who remains unnamed, just like the other characters in the novel, growing up in a small Italian town and yearning to break free from the constraints imposed by traditional gender roles and societal expectations. As the protagonist reaches adulthood, she becomes increasingly disenchanted with the limited prospects available to women in her community, leading her to embark on a quest for personal fulfilment and independence.

*Una Donna*, addresses significant issues such as women’s rights, sexuality, and the search for identity and self-determination (Zucchi 2021). The novel received critical acclaim for its candid portrayal of women’s experiences and its criticism of the patriarchal society in which

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<sup>20</sup> Translation here:

Sibilla Aleramo played a significant role thanks to the pioneering contribution she made not only to the debate on the condition of women but also to the reflection on women’s writing itself.

the protagonist lives. It was both controversial and influential and has been translated into multiple languages and adapted for stage and screen.

In addition to *Una Donna*, Aleramo wrote several other works such as *Il Passaggio* (1919) and *Andando e Stando* (1921) that explored feminist themes and the experiences of women in early 20th century Italy. She began writing articles<sup>21</sup> “on ‘the woman question’ in 1897, at the time when the feminist debate in Italy was about to enter its most productive decade, although the question had been receiving attention since the mid-nineteenth century” (Caesar 1980: 79).

Aleramo’s memoir, *Il Passaggio*, was published in 1919 and provides a detailed account of her tumultuous relationship with the poet Dino Campana. In her collection of essays, *Amo dunque sono* (1927), published in 1929, Aleramo reflects on the role of love and desire in women’s lives and advocates for greater freedom and self-expression for women.

Aleramo’s contributions to Italian literary and feminist history are significant, and her work continues to inspire readers and scholars. Her writing is known for its lyrical prose style, sensitivity to human emotion, and powerful advocacy for women’s rights and dignity.

### **2.3 *Una Donna (A Woman)***

As noted previously, *Una Donna* is widely regarded as a groundbreaking work of Italian feminist literature. It is considered one of the earliest novels in Italy to address issues related to gender and women’s experiences, and it had a profound impact on the feminist movement both in Italy and abroad.

The novel draws heavily on Aleramo’s own life experiences and, as such, she is considered one of the first Italian women to publicly challenge the gender roles and expectations imposed upon women in her era. Alongside her literary pursuits, Aleramo was also a committed social activist and a vocal advocate for women’s rights, dedicating much of her life to promoting greater gender equality and fighting for social justice.

The novel is a semi-autobiographical account of Aleramo’s own experiences growing up and coming of age in a patriarchal society. The story follows a young woman who is raped and forced to marry her aggressor according to the customs of Southern Italy. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son, who becomes her sole reason for living. Trapped in a

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<sup>21</sup> Some of these articles, including previously unpublished material have now been collected and published (Aleramo 1978b) which has a long and informative introduction by Bruna Conti.

loveless and violent marriage, the protagonist ultimately decides to leave, but this decision comes with the heavy cost of abandoning her child. During this period in Italian history, mothers had little to no legal rights over their children, and this aspect of the novel highlights the social injustice of the time, often justified under the “*patria potestas*” rule.

Aleramo’s work also critiques the legal system and places the position of women in Italy under critical examination. Through her writing, she questions the terms “mother” and “woman” and questions the link between being a mother and sacrifice (Caesar 1980). She describes motherhood as it was conceived in the 19th and early 20th century, namely, as a monstrous chain of servitude passed from mother to daughter. For example, in the chapter 18 of *Una Donna*, she wrote

Perché nella maternità adoriamo il sacrificio? Donde è scesa a noi questa inumana idea dell’immolazione materna? Di madre in figlia, da secoli, si tramanda il selvaggio. È una mostruosa catena. [...] Allora riversiamo sui nostri figli quanto non demmo alle madri, rinnegando noi stesse e offrendo un nuovo esempio di mortificazione, di annientamento (Aleramo: 144).

The unnamed protagonist (anonymous because she represents any woman, as Aleramo underlines) breaks the cycle by deciding to leave her family, hoping that her son will develop a different perspective on the mother-child relationship. In addition, the novel delves into the issue of women writers and their place in society. The act of writing becomes a crucial element for the protagonist’s mental well-being and serves as a way for her to express herself freely. Delmar, in her translation wrote:

That evening, after supper, I was sitting at my desk and my son was playing in his favourite place by the stove, when suddenly I found myself with my head in my hands as tears flooded down my face and my body was shaken by violent sobs. [...] As a last resort he seized my pen from the desk and thrust it between my limp fingers, saying, “Mamma, mamma, don’t cry; write, mamma, write... I’ll be good; don’t cry...” (Delmar translation 1980 [1979]: 173).

Furthermore, the discovery of her mother’s writings plays a pivotal role in the protagonist’s decision to break away from traditional gender roles and expectations (Russell 1997).

Despite often being considered the first Italian feminist novel, *Una Donna* was met with controversy upon its initial publication in 1906. Many critics deemed the novel too radical and subversive, leading to its ban in certain regions of Italy due to its depiction of women’s sexuality and desire.



Aleramo's commitment to improving the lives of women extended beyond her literary work, "She remained faithful to her belief that a woman writer should never separate life from art and continued through her work to recuperate, interpret and express her own experience of life" (Caesar 1980: 81). She became involved in adult literacy courses and demonstrated concern for the working classes and the uneducated. She also travelled extensively throughout Europe and wrote for various socialist and feminist periodicals. After the publication of *Una Donna*, Aleramo did not return to writing fiction for some time.

Despite the initial controversy, *Una Donna* proved to be both a critical and commercial success. What is interesting to notice is that Aleramo's work is often compared to other feminist writers of the time, such as Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir.

Like these writers, Aleramo aimed to challenge traditional gender roles and to give a voice to women's experiences and struggles.

Autobiography has always been a powerful medium for women's personal and artistic expression, as well as a liberating activity. Unlike diaries and letters, which were more commonly practised in the early years of women's writing, autobiographies address an audience and take a public stance, thereby breaking the silence that patriarchy has imposed on women. By exposing the lives, frustrations, and desires of women, which have traditionally been the object of male description, women's autobiographies implicitly challenge patriarchal values and the conventional view of femininity.

However, Italian women writers have often preferred to label their autobiographies as novels, and perhaps due to the fear of public exposure, they have refused to align themselves with personal and feminine forms of literary expression. Therefore, their stories often blur the lines between different genres, particularly family stories, autobiographical fiction, and poetry (Russell 1997).

#### **2.4 Aleramo: how she lived and what she wrote; comparison with other authors of the time**

Beyond her literary work, Aleramo was a prominent feminist and activist for women's rights in Italy. She was a member of the Italian Women's Union and worked to promote women's suffrage and education. She was also involved in the socialist movement and supported workers' rights (Commire, Klezmer 2002).

Aleramo's literary work was part of a wider movement in Italian literature at the turn of the 20th century. This movement was characterised by a rejection of the traditional values of Italian society and an emphasis on the individual and their subjective experience (Zancan 1997). Known as the Scapigliatura, this movement was influenced by European literary trends such as naturalism, symbolism, and decadence.

Aleramo's literary works were frequently compared to those of other prominent Italian writers of her time, including Gabriele D'Annunzio, Giovanni Verga, and Luigi Pirandello, as well as to feminist writers such as Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir.

In terms of literary style and themes, Aleramo shared similarities with both D'Annunzio and Verga. With D'Annunzio, Aleramo had a shared interest in language and style, as well as a focus on exploring themes of sensuality and psychology. Aleramo even adopted D'Annunzio's leitmotif of "doing life as one does a work of art", attempting to merge the real self with the narrating self until they become indistinguishable (Re 2009).

On the other hand, Aleramo and Verga were both realist writers who sought to depict the lives of ordinary people, especially those who were marginalised or oppressed. Additionally, both writers were interested in exploring themes of social inequality, poverty, and injustice.

Instead, Pirandello is associated with Aleramo for his criticism of her work. He argued that the novel could not be read as an autobiographical confession, as Aleramo claimed, but rather as a work of fiction that drew upon personal experiences for inspiration (Frenquellucci 2013).

Aleramo's literary work stands out for its particular attention to women's experiences and its critical perspective on patriarchal society. *Una Donna* is a groundbreaking work in Italian literature, as it portrays a woman's fight for autonomy and emancipation in a society that regards women as inferior and subordinate. Aleramo's work is also noteworthy for its candid depiction of female sexuality, which was a contentious topic at the time, and for its portrayal of a woman's journey towards self-discovery.

Aleramo's feminist activism was also notable for its focus on education and suffrage (Commire & Klezmer 2002). She strongly believed that education played a crucial role in empowering women and actively campaigned for greater educational opportunities for women in Italy. In addition, she was a vocal supporter of the women's suffrage movement and fought for women's right to vote, which was finally granted in Italy in 1946.

## **2.5 The novelist and her literary style**

As previously stated, *Una Donna* was considered a candid and unapologetic portrayal of a woman's struggles with love, marriage, and motherhood in a male-dominated society. The book received high praise for its emotional intensity, lyrical prose, and bold feminist perspective. The Italian poet and novelist Gabriele D'Annunzio was an early supporter of the book and his endorsement helped to popularise it.

Aleramo's subsequent novels, including *Il Passaggio* (1919) and *Andando e Stando* (1921) were also well-received by both critics and readers. However, some critics noted that her later works lacked the passionate intensity and raw emotional power that had characterised *Una Donna*.

Authors such as Benedetto Croce have supported her work through praise and positive criticism. As an example, *La Letteratura della nuova Italia* (1910) is a classic work of Italian literary criticism, in which Croce analyses the major trends and figures in Italian literature from the Renaissance to the early 20th century. In it, Croce devotes a chapter to Aleramo's *Una Donna*, praising its psychological insight and its exploration of the conflicts between men and women in a patriarchal society. Calvino, the Italian writer and literary critic included Aleramo's *Una Donna* in his list of "canonical" works of Italian literature in his book *The Literature Machine* (Lavery 2014).

In addition to endorsing *Una Donna* and helping to popularise it, Gabriele D'Annunzio wrote a letter to Sibilla Aleramo in 1909. The letter, titled *Lettera a Sibilla Aleramo*<sup>22</sup>, praised her writing and encouraged her to continue writing in the face of criticism and adversity. This letter can be seen as a testament to the high regard in which Aleramo was held by some of the leading writers and intellectuals of her time. It also served as a means for Aleramo to reach a wider audience and gain more recognition for her literary contributions.

The Italian novelist and literary critic Elena Ferrante has also acknowledged the influence of Sibilla Aleramo on her own writing. In her collection of essays, letters, and interviews titled *La Frantumaglia* (2003), Ferrante praises Aleramo's seminal work *Una Donna*. Specifically, in her work *La Figlia Oscura*, Ferrante lauds the emotional power of *Una Donna* and its exploration of female desire and agency and how motherhood was perceived by Aleramo (Cuic 2017).

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<sup>22</sup> Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Lettera a Sibilla Aleramo* was first published in the magazine *La Fiera Letteraria* in 1908. It is a text that provoked many reactions, both positive and negative, and had a great resonance within 20th century Italian culture. For more details see:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150721053946/http://www.scuolaromana.net/riviste/italett.htm>

Indeed, despite her reputation as a pioneering feminist writer, Aleramo's work has been the subject of ongoing critical debate. While some critics have praised her work for its psychological depth and exploration of women's experiences, others have been more critical, arguing that her writing reinforces patriarchal norms and perpetuates gender stereotypes. One of the most notable criticisms of Aleramo's writing came from the Italian literary critic Luigi Pirandello, who was a contemporary of Aleramo. In a review of Aleramo's novel *Il Passaggio*, Pirandello criticised her writing style and use of melodrama. He argued that Aleramo's writing was excessively emotional and lacked the psychological depth and complexity of other modernist writers. Moreover, he stated that "quel romanzo, specie nel finale, tradiva gli ideali puramente artistici della letteratura e si piegava, compromettendosi, a intenti espliciti di vita" (Castaldo 2019).

Additionally, one of the most significant criticisms of Aleramo's work has been the accusation that her writing is overly melodramatic and lacks psychological nuance. The Italian literary critic Luigi Russo, for example, argues that Aleramo's writing is "somewhat overblown", and that her "psychological analysis is often lacking in subtlety and nuance" (Russo 1986).

Some critics have also argued that her portrayal of women's experiences is simplistic and formulaic, and that her work perpetuates the same gender stereotypes she tries to fight. For example, although the Italian feminist writer Carla Lonzi recognised Aleramo's importance as a feminist writer, she criticised her for reinforcing a stereotypical representation of the relationship between the sexes (Lonzi 1973). For example, in her book *Sisterhood is Powerful* (Morgan, 1970), even the feminist activist and writer Robin Morgan argues that Aleramo's *Una Donna* is "narrowly focused on a white, upper-class, heterosexual female experience" and that it fails to address the experiences of women from different backgrounds and social classes.

Other critics have also lauded Aleramo's work, arguing that her writing was groundbreaking for its time and remains relevant today. Gargiulo, for example, stated during the same period as the first publication of *Una Donna*, that the novel was "la bibbia del femminismo, al posto della genesi" (Guerricchio 1974). Aleramo's portrayal of women's sexuality and desire, which was considered scandalous when it was first published, has been celebrated by many feminist writers and activists as a bold and empowering exploration of female experience. Her use of language and imagery has also been praised for its innovation and depth, with many critics arguing that Aleramo's writing broke new ground in the use of metaphor and symbolism to explore complex emotional themes. American feminist critic Elaine Showalter

(1981), for example, has praised Aleramo's "poetic and imaginative" writing, which she sees as a model for subsequent feminist writers.

One of the most significant factors influencing the critical reception of Aleramo's work has been the historical context in which it was produced. Aleramo's writing emerged during a period of great social and political upheaval in Italy, as the country underwent a rapid process of modernization and industrialization. Women's roles in society were changing rapidly, with women gaining new opportunities in education, employment, and politics. Aleramo's work reflected these changes, exploring the challenges and opportunities that women faced as they sought to navigate the new social landscape. As Italian feminist scholar Laura Benedetti notes that Aleramo's writing gives voice to women's innermost feelings and experiences in a patriarchal society undergoing major changes (Benedetti 2000).

Despite ongoing debates about Aleramo's work, her legacy as a groundbreaking feminist writer and social critic is well-established. Her writing has been extensively studied and translated, and it continues to inspire feminist writers and activists who strive to challenge patriarchal norms and give voice to women's experiences. As the feminist movement continues to evolve and adapt to new social and political realities, Aleramo's work will no doubt continue to be a source of inspiration and insight for many years to come (Muzzioli 1994).

In recent years, Aleramo's works have been the subject of renewed interest and critical attention with scholars examining her contributions to feminist literature, her use of language and imagery, and her place in the Italian literary canon. Indeed, Virginia Scott's essay, *Aleramo's 'Una Donna': The Semiotics of a Woman's Text*, is a detailed analysis of the language and imagery used in *Una Donna*. Scott argues that Aleramo's writing is characterised by a complex interplay of symbol and metaphor, and she explores the ways in which Aleramo uses these literary devices to convey the emotional and psychological landscape of her protagonist (Scott 2008).

## **2.6 Women in Europe and America in the 20th century**

Throughout the 20th century, women's experiences and opportunities in Europe and America were not so different; even though shaped by diverse cultural and historical contexts, women faced many similar challenges in terms of gender inequality and discrimination. In both

Europe and America, the focus was often on labour and economic issues, with women demanding equal pay and better working conditions.

In Italy, for example, women were heavily involved in the labour movement of 1950 and played a key role in organising strikes and protests. As a matter of fact, the traditional gender roles and expectations of women as wives and mothers limited their access to education, employment, and political power (Bock 2000). And it was just in 1946 that women obtained the right to vote. However, after those years, the final part of the 20th century saw the feminist movements of the second-wave feminism beginning to gain momentum, advocating for gender equality, so that more and more women started to achieve little access to higher education and employment opportunities.

At the beginning of the 20th century in America, women did not have the right to vote and were largely excluded from higher education and the workforce, with limited career opportunities. Responsible for domestic duties and childcare, women saw significant progress in advancing women's rights at the end of the century. But the women's suffrage movement successfully secured the right to vote with the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1920.

So, it is worthwhile to state that one of the most significant differences between Europe and America during this century was women's suffrage. America seemed to be more concerned with gender equality, at least at the beginning of the century. If places such as the United Kingdom are quite cutting-edge countries, it should be stated that the general overview of Europe does not offer a modern vision and perception of the female sex, as well as its consideration within society.

## **2.7 Reactions on Aleramo's work; writers and intellectuals across Europe and beyond**

Aleramo's personal life and relationships have been the subject of much debate and analysis among scholars and biographers such as Calabretta-Sajder (2020) or Meda (2003) and Lombardi (1986). During her lifetime, Aleramo was both celebrated and criticised for her feminist views and her frank portrayal of women's experiences. Some praised her for her courage in breaking free from traditional gender roles and speaking out about women's oppression, while others viewed her as a threat to traditional values and attacked her as immoral and promiscuous.

In the period of the 20th century,

Italian women were conditioned to pursue domesticity and motherhood; the emphasis on domestic life reinforced the concept of the *angelo del focolare*, or angel of the house, the model that women were to emulate. The angel of the house never soiled herself with sexual desires. Nor did she engage in intellectual pursuits, and she remained steadfastly faithful and submissive to her husband (Annunziato 2023).

This literary perception of the proper place of Italian women predominated in 1906, when Aleramo's book first appeared adding her voice to the growing chorus of those demanding a better life for Italian women and in a more dramatic way than she had ever done before, with the publication of her novel.

As evidence of her distress, Aleramo made the decision to leave her husband, Ulderigo Pierangeli, in 1911, in order to find personal freedom. Later on, she pursued several relationships with women, a choice which caused scandal and condemnation from some quarters.

Some critics and researchers (i.e. Richard Drake in his introduction to Rosalind Delmar's translation of *A Woman*) argued that her decision to leave her husband and explore romantic relationships with women was a bold and courageous act of self-determination, while others (such as Spackman's essay of 2009, *Puntini, Puntini, Puntini: Motherliness as Masquerade in Sibilla Aleramo's Una donna*) have questioned whether Aleramo truly had the opportunity and freedom to fully explore her sexuality within the societal and cultural confines of her time.

Aleramo's sexuality and non-conformity to traditional gender roles made her a target for ridicule and discrimination, but she continued to advocate for women's rights and equality throughout her life.

Despite the challenges she faced, Aleramo remained committed to advancing the cause of women's rights and social justice. In addition to her literary work, she was also involved in various political and social movements throughout her life.

Numerous Italian critics questioned the issue of gender when they reviewed Aleramo's novel, *Una Donna*. Many of the early reviewers were perplexed about the autobiographical question, as was perhaps Aleramo herself. Moreover, Italian critics saw in *Una Donna* a very modern literary achievement and were fascinated by the depiction of the heroine's relationships with the different members of her family. However, the response in Italy was far from unanimous. In fact, reactions were quite mixed, with many critics taking issue with the

protagonist's choice to forgo marriage and leave her son behind. Virginia Olper Monis sharply criticised the heroine's drastic action, pointing out that in the end the child left behind becomes an innocent victim. She also emphasised that *Una Donna* should not be regarded as a model for intelligent women to aspire to (Grimaldi Morosoff 1999: 12).

Other critics reacted positively to Aleramo's novel, considering it a triumph in the cause of women's rights. Far from being selfish, the heroine's final decision to leave home was seen by the Italian researcher and professor Adolfo Sassi<sup>23</sup> as an act of sacrifice for the greater goal of female emancipation (Grimaldi Morosoff 1999).

Gina Lombroso applauded the generational bond established in the play, "The drama ... is not so much between this man and this woman but the struggle which the woman carries on with her own mother" (Wood 1997: 121).

It is important to state that Aleramo's influence extended beyond Italy, and her work was read and appreciated by writers and intellectuals across Europe and beyond. The French writer Simone de Beauvoir also cited Aleramo as an inspiration in her own feminist writings. And further, the German press praised the autobiographical novel heartily, and French reviewers were perhaps kinder to *Una Donna* than any other foreign audience.

## **2.8 With which and how many languages has she been translated**

As mentioned above, Sibilla Aleramo's work has received a great amount of critical acclaim in other countries. Although her masterpiece was best known and translated within Europe, its greatness reached as far as the United States, where her autobiographical novel *Una Donna* was received with interest, but translated about 70 years after its publication in Italy. It would be rather important to note that most of the translations in the various countries of the world were not made long after, but in the years immediately following the first publication in Italy, in 1906.

This could probably show that the novel's value was appreciated throughout Europe until America, highlighting how feminist thought had already created its foundations, enhancing the importance of a feminine view of social issues, such as marriage and parental authority, still in the hands of sexist thought.

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<sup>23</sup> For further information on Adolfo Sassi biography see:  
<http://www.aracneeditrice.it/index.php/autori.html?auth-id=ASna1ss>



1. Spain (*Una Mujer*) - 1907, by José Prat
2. United States of America (*A Woman at Bay*) - 1908, by Maria Hornor Lansdale
3. Germany (*Eine Frau*) - 1908, by Nina Knoblich
4. Sweden (*En Kvinna*) - 1908, by Lars Gabriel Branting
5. France (*Une Femme*) - 1908, by Pierre-Paul Plan
6. Russia (Женщина) - 1908, by Elena Lazarevskoj
7. Poland - 1909/191, by Stanisława (Soava) Winawer
8. United States of America (*A Woman*) -1980, by Rosalind Delmar
9. United Kingdom (*A Woman*) - 2020, by Erica Segre and Simon Carnell

In Spain, Aleramo's work was translated into Spanish very soon, in 1907, one year later the first Italian publication, and was widely read and appreciated. Her frank and honest portrayal of women's experiences has resonated with Spanish readers, who have seen in her work a reflection of their own struggles for gender equality (Cartoni et al. 2001).

According to the National Library of Spain's catalogue, the first Spanish translation of *Una Donna* was published in Madrid by Editorial Mundo Latino in 1933 but the translator's name is not listed. Nevertheless, this is not correct, in fact, after a wide search on the Cervantes database<sup>24</sup>, it is possible to find that the Sempere editor published the first version of *Una Mujer* in 1907 by the translator José Prat.

Immediately after the Spanish translation, in the following year, 1908, several translations were carried out and published. Among them are the American, German, Swedish and French ones.

Sibilla Aleramo's work was first translated in America in 1908 by Maria Hornor Lansdale, two years after the Italian novel was published; "Mary Lansdale's English translation, *A Woman at Bay*, had brought Aleramo to the attention of an admiring Anglo-American audience" (Drake 1980: v).

Successively, another American translation appeared after about 70 years. Rosalind Delmar's translation of *A Woman* was published in 1980 and had a great impact within the country in that period (Drake 1980), indeed, it introduced Aleramo's novel to a new audience and helped to spark renewed interest in her writing. Critics in the United States were struck by the book's raw emotional power and its uncompromising portrayal of the difficulties faced by women in a male-dominated society (Jeffries 1982). The book helped to inspire a new

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<sup>24</sup> [https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/iulmyt/pdf/traduccion\\_clasicos/12\\_calvo.pdf](https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/iulmyt/pdf/traduccion_clasicos/12_calvo.pdf)

generation of feminist writers and activists, who saw in Aleramo's work a powerful and unflinching critique of gender inequality and the oppression of women. Aleramo's work has since been included in many feminist anthologies such as *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* and *The Feminist Reader*, which have helped to introduce her writing to a wider audience, and has been the subject of numerous scholarly studies and literary analysis.

In Germany, *Eine Frau* was translated by Nina Knoblich in 1908 and published in Berlin by the Marquardt publishing house, quickly becoming a bestseller. The book was seen as a powerful indictment of the patriarchal society that oppressed women and denied them basic rights and freedoms. Although some sources suggest that the translation of her work *Eine Frau* was by Hedwig Lachmann, there is no concrete evidence to confirm this connection with the hypothetical translator who is thought to have translated the work in 1910. Following the initial translation, it would take more than 50 years for a new version of the work to be published. Notably, in 1974, the second translation of the work was released, which was done by Peter Härtling. This indicates the continued relevance and appeal of Aleramo's writing, as demonstrated by the renewed interest in her work over time.

In France, Aleramo's work was presented to the public by translator Pierre-Paul Plan in 1909, who praised *Une Femme* as a revolutionary work that dealt with issues rarely discussed at the time, such as domestic violence, marital rape and women's sexual desire. The first French translation of the book, *Une Femme*, was indeed welcomed by critics who admired Aleramo's honesty and sensitivity. French intellectuals such as André Gide and Romain Rolland were particularly enthusiastic about Aleramo's work and praised her courage and acumen. For example, the former wrote in his diary: "I find in Aleramo's work a deep and intense beauty that I have found in few other writers" (Gide 1947: 82), while the latter wrote, "Her book touched me deeply... I see in it the suffering of all women" (Bertoni & O'Brien 2002: 19).

The book was also greatly appreciated by French feminists, who saw in Aleramo a model and a pioneer of women's liberation. Among them was Marguerite Durand (Metz 1992), a feminist activist and a well-known journalist in France, who was passionate about promoting women's rights and feminist literature. She was a friend and admirer of Aleramo and was eager to share Aleramo's work with a French audience. Durand was also responsible for bringing Aleramo to France in 1899 (Greco) for a series of lectures and public appearances, which helped to further spread Aleramo's work and ideas among French feminists.

During 1908, the novel was also translated into Swedish by G. Branting. This translation, however, is a so-called "authorised" version, which was quite common at the time and which

allowed the translator, and even more so the publisher, not to be completely faithful to the original, rather he could choose both qualitative and quantitative changes to the original. The final version was thus a liberal interpretation, in which parts of the novel or even whole chapters were modified or eliminated altogether (Dahl 2016).

The same happened with the Russian version *Женщина* by Elena Lazarevskaja who published, always in 1908, the first translation in St. Petersburg in the Russian magazine *Obrazovanye*. Moreover, the Polish translation by Stanisława (Soava) Winawer was published in a magazine (*Prawda*), in instalments between 1909 and 1910.

After the publication of the translation into Polish in 1910, but it took almost half a century for another translation to appear. In 1959, a new translation was published in Czechoslovakia. Between 1970 and 1990, Aleramo's novel seemed to be partially rediscovered, when new translations of the book appeared in Germany, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. The book was also published for the first time in the Netherlands (1978), in Greece (1979), in Portugal (1983), in Denmark (1985) and in Iran (1993). Since 2000, the book has been published again in France in 2002 and 2007, and also translated for the first time into Albanian (2007), Catalan (2013) and Macedonian (2015). There is even a translation of the book in Sardinian in 2011. Recently, *Una Donna* has been published in Spain (2020) and the United Kingdom (2020), with the latter release being by the esteemed Penguin Books. Furthermore, a new Arabic translation was published in 2018.

However, it could be argued that not all of her works were translated. *Una Donna*, in fact, seems to be the mainstay on which Aleramo's fame and knowledge is based. Translated in 18 different countries, the novel acts as a mirror for the figure of Sibilla who, despite being a feminist at a time when feminism was still emerging in Italy, allowed her to be known and gain visibility far beyond Europe. Despite this, works such as *Liriche* (1915), *Andando e stando* (1921), *Momenti* (1921), *Il frustino* (1932), *Si alla terra* (1935) and other works, including her diaries and other writings published posthumously, have never been translated.

## **2.9 Translations of her other works**

Following Aleramo's initial success, her works continued to be translated and published mainly in France. For instance, her novel *Il Passaggio*, which was published in Italy by Treves in 1919, was translated and republished in France in 1922. The same translator, Pierre-Paul Plan, who had worked on the translation of Aleramo's novel *Una Donna*, also

translated *Endymion*, a one-act dramatic poem, which was even staged in Paris the following year. Later works such as The collection of essays *Gioie d'occasione* (1930) had its French translation by Yvonne Lenoir published in 1933, receiving the Latinité prize that year.

Along with her other works, such as *Orsa minore: notebooks*, which was published in Paris in 2003, Aleramo's other writings have been translated into French, making France the country where her work has been most widely received.

After a brief stop, Aleramo's novel *Amo dunque sono* (1927), which marked the beginning of her collaboration with the Mondadori publishing house, was first published in Hungary (1928), and later other editions appeared in France, in 1992, and in Spain, in 2017 (D'Agostino 2020).

Overall, Aleramo's work has been well received in other countries and has helped to establish her as an important figure in the history of feminist literature.

In general, it can be said that a wide audience has had the opportunity to read at least one of his works, which over the years, have also reached countries such as The Netherlands, where, for example, *Lettere d'amore a Lina* (1982) were translated and published in 1986.

However, it must be emphasised that Aleramo was received in various foreign countries not only in printed forms; there were also numerous theatre performances or film adaptations made, which allowed Aleramo to be known both as a feminist character and a feminist author.

Hence, *Lettere 1956-1958*, which contained Aleramo's correspondence with the poet Dino Campana, was first published in 1958 and then republished in 1987 with the new title *Un viaggio chiamato amore*, translated much later into French (2003) and Catalan (2012).

## Chapter 3

### A general overview of translation: time, study and gender changes

The first two chapters of this study dealt with a general Aleramo's background, serving the purpose of situating this important feminist author in time and place and to give some details of her life and works. The third chapter, instead, is a theoretical approach to translation studies and the changes it had over centuries. Quoting several translation researchers to support the information given, the primary objective of the first section is to provide an overview of what translation is and to highlight the different strategies translators use when coping with translation difficulties.

The chapter also focuses its attention on two coefficients that have significantly shaped the field of translation and elevated its significance within the realm of scholarly investigation: time and gender. Indeed, a brief section explores the evolution of translation across different historical periods, tracing its development from ancient times to the modern era; while, the next two ones explore the gender topic, drawing attention to two factors: how characters' gender within a work is translated according to the translators' gender and in which period they have translated and, moreover, how translators are influenced by their gender while transposing messages of a work.

### **3. Decoding the essence of Translation: unveiling its meaning and complexity**

Translation allows people to communicate with each other, to have an effective understanding of each other. Indeed, "language is the stream of continuity of a society. It is the vehicle that transports the social lives, cultural identity and heritage of every civilisation. The need to communicate and impart or transfer information as well as knowledge is the root for the origins of languages" (Ilkal, Bi Khan 2020). Translation, in fact, is the means by which the whole world can connect and get to know each other. Without translation, a language remains a small island without connections, and its inhabitants have no chance of communicating with the wider world, while others are unable to include them in their own communities.

Through translation, argues Derrida, it is possible to destroy the confusion created by the Tower of Babel and make it a bridge between cultures (1985). Derrida, in fact, emphasises the importance of a translation that carries not just the words which compose a language, but also the meaning they convey. “The role of the translator, he continues, is to surrender to the original text and place oneself in a listening situation” (1985: 178).

It would be important to highlight that the role of a translator goes beyond mere language conversion. In fact, translators play a pivotal role in connecting communities, languages, and even ideologies. By bridging the gap between languages, translators create a network of threads that interconnect various societies and cultures. In doing so, they transport beliefs and ideologies from one language to another, making them accessible to a wider audience. The idea of “transporting” is also motivated by the etymology of the same word, in fact, the English word “translation” derives from the Latin word “translatio”, which in turn derives from “trans-” (across) and “ferre-” (to carry or to bring) (Vélez 2005).

George Steiner (1975)<sup>25</sup> states that the history of translation is divided into four periods which start from the Roman translators Cicero and Horace to arrive to the fourth period characterised by Benjamin<sup>26</sup> who argues that “Translation is a form. To comprehend it as form one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translation: its translatability” (Benjamin 1923: 254).

The translatability of a text is the area in which the translator operates. Despite the inherent complexity involved in conveying the nuanced concepts and definitions of a source language into a target language, it is important that the translator moves within this area in order to render comprehensible what may be, at times, initially obscure or unintelligible in the target language. In addition, it should be emphasised that translation allows the original work to remain alive in other cultures over the centuries. As

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<sup>25</sup> George Steiner was a renowned literary critic, philosopher, and cultural theorist whose contributions to the study of language and translation have had a profound impact on the field of translation studies. One of his most significant works, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, explores the complex nature of translation and the challenges involved in conveying meaning between languages and cultures. He argues that translation is a vital tool for fostering cross-cultural understanding and communication.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Bendix Schönflies Benjamin was a German Jewish philosopher, cultural critic and essayist who believed that translation was an essential component of the process of creating a truly cosmopolitan culture. Benjamin's approach to translation was unique in that he saw it not as a mechanical process of converting one language into another, but as a creative act that required a deep understanding of both the source and target languages.

Benjamin argues “For a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life” (1923: 254).

The translator’s role, therefore, is not only to be able to translate a work, but to be open enough to new horizons, which could lead him to unexplored places and which would confront him with a cultural choice, as well as a syntactic or grammatical ones. However, it is not unusual for translators to prioritise their own cultural background over the meaning of the source language. This can result in a target text that has been altered in a way that detracts from the original work and its intended message (Leonardi 2007).

One should consider the role of a translator as compared to that of a “confessor”, in that they have a moral obligation to listen attentively to the work being translated and to convey its message faithfully to the target culture. In other words, the translator should strive to remain true to the original text, without making significant alterations that could compromise its meaning or impact. Indeed, translators hold a crucial role in guaranteeing precise, proficient, and culturally fitting communication across various languages. Indeed, sometimes translation errors are not conscious, but due to a message misunderstanding. For this reason, it is important for translators to possess an extensive comprehension of both the source and destination languages, alongside the cultural nuances inherent in their usage.

Nevertheless, “translation neither reproduces nor copies an original, it gives nourishment to the original to let it grow and ripen. The pure language, the original, first language, is like a seed in language, and it is only fully grown when translated. Thus, translation once again is placed as the central creation of meaning, working on a point of meaning, which, although being “original”, is by no means complete, total and without fault. It is but the seeds of a meaning about to grow up and ripen, given the right conditions” (Vigsø 2015: 6).

Ladmiral (1994) also argues that translators of technical texts must possess specialised knowledge of the subject matter they are translating to produce accurate and effective translations. This is why different ways of translating have been theorised, from that which is faithful to the word and less to the meaning, to that which moves decisively away from the single term, but looks at the work, the sentence or the concept as a whole.

### 3.1 Translation strategies and their theorizations

Translators face numerous difficulties as they undertake the task of translation, especially when transposing meaning between societies with contrasting ideologies. The challenge lies in finding solutions that can bridge the gap between the source text and the target language, effectively minimising any discrepancies. To address these complexities, researchers have formulated theoretical “strategies” that serve as valuable resources for translators, as they try to find a solution to the difficulties a translator may encounter.

Venuti stated that translation strategies “involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it”(1998: 240) and employed the concepts of domesticating and foreignizing in order to talk about translation strategies and how the translator decides to solve translation difficulties, thus, by using a *sourcier* approach or a *cibliste* one (Ladmiral 2014). In general, the translation process is not just linked to expressing the general meaning of the source text, but the translator has to find solutions to translate single sentences and even the smallest units of language. Indeed, one of the first to theorise these strategies is Chesterman, who affirmed that the basic strategy of translation is “changing something” from the original text (1997). But it is Vinay et Darbelnet’s work (1955) that categorised strategies according to the kind of method translators could choose, which names are literal or direct translation and oblique translation. Thus, when word-for-word translation is not possible, because of lexical or syntactical differences between the source text and the target one, oblique translation is the correct choice according to Vinay et Darbelnet. Indeed, the concept of oblique translation encompasses seven distinct subcategories, each serving as a strategy to address specific challenges in the translation process. In general, it is possible to state that not always the strategies listed in the oblique translation can be applied while translating, but Baker (2011: 15-50) listed eight strategies which are effectively used by professional translators. In particular, she listed strategies which are not lexicalised, but that are clearly visible in almost every translated text and that belong both to the sphere of lexical changes and structural ones.

1. *Borrowing* involves using terms from the source language directly in the target text, primarily employed to handle meta-linguistic differences. Seen as the simplest form of



translation strategy, an example could be the Italian word “Ciao”, that can be borrowed directly into an English target text, without translating it. This strategy, according to Baker (2011) involves the utilisation of loan words or loan words accompanied by explanations. When faced with culture-specific items, modern concepts, or buzzwords, translators may opt to directly import a term from the source language into the target language. To ensure clarity, they may supplement the loan word with an explanation that modifies the preceding superordinate or general word, compensating for any potential lack of familiarity in the target language. For example, incorporating the term “karaoke” into an English translation along with a concise explanation clarifying its meaning and origin.

2. *Calque* is a specialised form of borrowing where expressions are literally translated into the target language, maintaining the structure of the source language, i.e. the English expression “time flies” comes from the French expression “le temps passe”, where “le temps” means time and “passe” means flies.

3. *Literal translation* entails faithfully rendering the source language text into an appropriate idiomatic or grammatical equivalent in the target language, ensuring accuracy while preserving the original meaning. For instance, the Spanish phrase “me duele la cabeza” is literally translated as “my head hurts” in English.

4. *Transposition* involves substituting words from one word class with another without altering the message’s intended meaning, allowing for flexibility in expressing ideas. An example could be changing an adjective phrase into an adverb phrase, such as translating “very fast” as “with great speed”. Nevertheless, Baker (2011) introduced a new way to look at this strategy; using the idea of transposition, she affirmed that “A source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture” (Baker 2011: 18), so this strategy entails replacing a culture-specific item or expression with an equivalent target language item that resonates more naturally with the target reader. For example, translating a culturally specific dish like “sushi” from Japanese to English without using the loan word but instead referring to it as “Japanese-style rolled rice”.

5. *Modulation* involves changing the point of view or perspective in the translation, often achieved by altering the part of speech or grammatical structure of certain elements, thus, changing active voice to passive voice, such as translating “She wrote the book” to “The book was written by her”. This strategy may also involve the translator’s ideology according to which a particular message could be emphasised or

minimised. Baker (2011), for example, affirmed that in certain cases, translators opt for a more neutral or less emotionally charged word within the semantic structure. For instance, translating the Spanish word “enojado” (angry) as “upset” in English. Baker, additionally, uses the example of the English word “homosexuality”; if it has no pejorative meaning in it, the traditional equivalent expression in arabic, “shithuth jinsi”, literally means “sexual perversion”, so there is the need to use it in a neutral context without giving the idea of strong disapproval.

6. *Equivalence* refers to the translation of two situations using different stylistic and structural methods. It encompasses both the source text and its equivalent target text, emphasising the need to convey similar meaning through different linguistic approaches. For example, the French expression “joie de vivre” can be rendered as “joy of living” in English. This captures the essence of the French phrase, conveying the idea of a zestful and exuberant approach to life, but through a different stylistic and structural method. Another way to respect the source text when not having direct equivalent in the target language could be, according to Baker (2011), translating by paraphrase using related or unrelated words. The first option, in cases where the source item is lexically available in the target language but in a different form, could involve paraphrasing with a related word. This strategy is particularly useful when the source term is frequently used in the text. For example, paraphrasing the English adjective “creamy” in an advertisement to show how soft a hair conditioner can be with the words “that resembles cream” in an Arabic text, because the source item is lexicalised in the target text but in a different form. In the second case, it is possible to translate using unrelated words. When the concept in the source item lacks a direct lexical equivalent in the target language, translators may resort to paraphrasing with unrelated words. This strategy helps convey the intended meaning despite the absence of a direct translation. For instance, paraphrasing the Arabic term “tawheed” (the oneness of God) as “the concept of divine unity” in English. Thus, the advantage of this strategy is that paraphrasing can achieve a high level of precision in specifying propositional meaning but it has two main disadvantages: the first is that paraphrase has no status of lexical item and for this reason it cannot convey expressive or evoked meaning, the second disadvantage is that paraphrase transposed the source meaning using several words, that may be a problem if translating an advertisement, for example.

7. *Adaptation* occurs when cultural differences arise between the source and target languages, requiring translators to adapt the translation to ensure cultural

appropriateness. Translation, in this context, can be seen as a specialised form of situational equivalence. For instance, it could be possible to adapt cultural references in a novel from Arabic to Spanish, replacing specific Arabic customs or traditions with equivalent ones familiar to Spanish-speaking readers. According to Baker (2011), a form of adaptation could be translating a specific term with a more general word. To deal with the problem of non-equivalence, Baker stated that not always a specific term can be found in the target language, also because in a given semantic field, meaning is not language dependent. So changing a specific word with a more general one should be working appropriately in most languages. Thus, English words under the hypernym of “house” such as “bungalow”, “cottage”, “croft”, “lodge”, etc., may lack hyponyms in the target language, so superordinates may represent the correct choice for many translators.

It could be worthwhile also to say that there are forms of strategies, which are not lexicalised, that can cope with the *im-possibility* to translate a given concept which are: omission and illustration. Baker (2011) stated that there are very difficult cases in which a particular “strategy” may be the solution for such difficulties. Even though it can seem a drastic solution, in some cases translators may omit translating a word or expression if its meaning is not crucial for understanding the overall translation. This strategy is employed to avoid lengthy explanations and maintain conciseness, but it has to be said that through this strategy “there is inevitably some loss of meaning” (Baker 2011: 43). For example, omitting the translation of a culturally specific idiom in a novel if its significance is not integral to the plot.

Moreover, when the target language equivalent does not fully capture certain aspects of the source item, translators may use illustrations or visual aids to supplement the translation. This strategy helps convey the intended meaning efficiently without excessive explanation. For instance, including a diagram or illustration to depict a complex technical term in a scientific manual. Baker, in fact, used the example of “tagged teabags” of an English advertisement; if in the source text these words have an exact meaning, it seemed impossible to translate “tagged” in Arabic advertisements without writing a lot of words that may have failed the message the advertisement intended to give, so, an illustration of the “tagged teabags” should have been useful to explain it, instead of a paraphrase.

Overall, it is important to consider these strategies within the analysis of the novel *Una Donna* and its three English translations. It is important to consider the translation strategies employed by the translators because they could provide valuable insights into the translation process and facilitate an evaluation of how effectively the translations convey the original meaning and capture the author's intent. This analysis, indeed, explores how the translators navigated the intricacies of the source text, making decisions to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness in the target language. In general, it is crucial to consider both the relationship between Aleramo's *Una Donna* and its three translations, as well as the comparison among the three English translations. By examining the translations in relation to the original text, it could be possible to gain a deeper understanding of how the translators approached the linguistic and cultural challenges posed by *Una Donna*. But it is also important to compare the three English translations themselves in order to identify similarities and differences in their choices and so understand how these strategies are shaped by translators. Including ideology, time choices and gender of translators, these strategies may be used in different ways, highlighting that translation is not just a mechanical process, but that it is shaped by multiple factors deriving from translator's choices and (cultural) backgrounds.

### **3.2 Tracing the transformation and evolution of translation and translators**

In ancient times, in particular during the Middle Ages, translation was not "laic", but played an important role in the spread of religious dogmas. During this time, translators were often monks or other religious figures, so the major part of translations of this period regarded religious themes and topics. Even though translating subjects other than religious ones, translators often had a religious background, that is why it can be underlined a religious point of view within a huge amount of works. Furthermore, it is possible to state that starting from the Renaissance, not just religious figures translated works, but more and more scholars entered this world, translating ancient Greek and Roman texts into European languages (Baker, 2011). The period of the Industrial Revolution brought about significant changes in the way translation was done. The rise of printing technology made it possible to produce translations on a larger scale, and the development of the telegraph and other communication technologies made it easier for

translators to communicate with clients and colleagues around the world. This general background put the basis for a modern era characterised by a more laic perspective and made translation a very specialised field, with translators working in a wide range of areas and many scholars studying specific translation topics.

### 3.3 Translation studies as a multidimensional field

The term “translation studies” was coined by the Amsterdam-based American scholar James S. Holmes<sup>27</sup> in his 1972 paper *The name and nature of translation studies*, which is considered a foundational statement for the discipline.

Translation studies are a multidisciplinary field that draws on insights from linguistics, cultural studies, philosophy, psychology and other disciplines to develop a comprehensive understanding of the translation process. It encompasses a wide range of topics, including the different approaches to translation, the cultural and linguistic differences that can affect translation, the ethics and politics of translation, the role of technology in translation, and much more. Indeed, the goal of translation studies is to help translators and scholars develop more effective and accurate translation strategies, as well as to deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics of language and communication across cultures.

What is important to state is that at the very beginning of their theorisation, translation studies were seen as prescriptive, telling translators how to translate, due to the *mot à mot* (non verbum pro verbo) idea of translating, which Cicero subverted; he explained that translation is the ability to translate the concept, thus not translating the exact words but the efficiency of those words (Cicero 1949: 365). He is the first to understand that a translator is not an interpreter, but an orator, “*Vir bonus dicendi peritus*” (1949), that is “A good man skilled in the art of speaking”. Many years later, the Russian-American linguist Jakobson affirmed that translation is not a word-for-word replacement of linguistic terms, but the substitution of “entire message in some other language” (Jakobson 1959: 114).

One of the leading theorists of translation was Jean René LADMIRAL, already mentioned above, who dwells on an important *di*-vision of translation. He first tried to understand

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<sup>27</sup> James S. Holmes is one of the chief poetry translators, and the world of translation studies recognizes him as the founder of the discipline.

how a translation can be considered a good translation and later by asking himself whether the best translation is the one that takes the source language more into account or the one that gives more importance to the target one (1994).

So, because according to Carl G. Hemper, translation studies have the objective to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience (Holmes 1988), it is important to understand how this idea can best be applied to translation practice. Through the Walton theory of the division between a *translation* and a *version*, Ladmiral (2014) aims to explain that a version has more to do with the literal interpretation of a work, while a translation cares more about the meaning of the thoughts expressed in it. The translator dwells on the success of a translation and, bringing to light various critics, linguists and translation specialists, he ends by stating that, with prior knowledge of the work being translated, a good translation may need both literal and conceptual transpositions.

In any case, one should always consider the importance of translations and what translanguaging studies have changed over the years and what they have been able to affirm. In fact, translation has a long history that predates literary translation. As early as the 2nd century BC, contemplation arose regarding the role and value of translation. At that time, translation was predominantly seen as a vehicle for disseminating religious themes on a global scale. However, this perspective was met with criticism, as some believed it to be inconceivable that humans could translate the sacred Bible, it was unthinkable that the mystery of God's word could be transposed into the language of humans. Therefore, people began to consider the translation as sacrilege and the translator as a blasphemer (Ricoeur 2004).

But it is thanks to Friedrich Schleiermacher's positive critics that the true role of translation and the translator is brought to light. Schleiermacher recognized the translator as a key figure in facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas between cultures. By conveying the meaning of the source language to the target language, the translator aims to compensate for the reader's lack of knowledge in the source language. Therefore, the translator is no longer regarded as a traitor or a desecrator of the original text, but rather as a cultural mediator, a listener to the author's voice, and a storyteller for the reader (1813).

He also states that the translator's role goes beyond the mere transposition of the work from the source language to the target language, but must also try to decide what is the most appropriate "movement" in the translation. He says that "either the translator

leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader towards him, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer towards him” (Schleiermacher 1992: 42).

Thus, it can be argued that the translator is constantly faced with the difficult decision of determining the balance between the source language/culture and the target language/culture. This decision highlights how translation studies have emphasised not only the importance of the translator but also the various approaches to translation. The translator must navigate between the two languages and cultures, while taking into account the context, purpose, and audience of the translation.

Over time, and particularly in modern and contemporary times, it has become evident that the roles of the author and the translator are distinct. Thus, translation studies have broadened to encompass a range of theoretical approaches to translation, including sociological, communicational, hermeneutic, linguistic, literary, and semiotic theories (Venuti 2000). However, while each theoretical approach to translation emphasises different aspects of the translation process, they all share a common factor: the importance of the translator’s linguistic and cultural knowledge.

One must, in addition, come to terms with the in-translatability of texts. Although it has been widely asserted that there is no such thing as a work that cannot be translated (Mounin 2016), one must always be aware that there could exist a semantic residue between the sentences of the two versions, which may evaluate the translation as some copy of the original. It is important to emphasise localization, a feature that in a sense goes beyond translation. Localization is called the cultural component that is taken into consideration when translating a work; it is the process of adapting a product for a specific region. It takes into consideration the cultural aspects in which languages are of great importance.

Knowing a culture allows the translator to “manipulate” language better; customs and traditions allow her/him to find distinctions, tones and nuances easier. Consequently, localization implies a deeper understanding of both the target and source languages. It might even be said that localization is a more complete version of translation because, as argued earlier, it goes beyond simple word-to-word conversion. As Vinay et Darbelnet argued, translation “becomes an art as soon as techniques are assimilated” (1995: 24).

So, it is possible to highlight that translation consists of two basic parts: the technique, given by the study of translation and what lies behind it, and the art, which could reflect

the passion for inclusion given by the translation of works itself, which allows societies to create a network of interwoven knowledge and cultures.

In the specific case of the study and analysis of *Una Donna* and its three English translations, it could be important to consider factors such as localization and the profound understanding given culture and language. By delving into the depths of localization, it is possible to understand how the translators of *Una Donna* faced the cultural differences to recreate the essence of the original work in English. The knowledge and sensitivity to the target culture become vital in capturing the subtleties and nuances embedded within *Una Donna* and ensuring its resonance with the English-speaking audience, which may not be as prepared as the Italian society to specific cultural uses such as the “matrimonio riparatore”.

### **3.4 Examining the role of gender in the translation process**

Venuti (1986: 455) states that the translator faces several difficulties, among them what he calls “the translator’s invisibility”. He states that the translators’ names, in general, are often omitted from the title pages of their translations and often receive little commentary in journals. In response to this issue, feminist translators and theorists have sought to highlight the gendered aspects of translation by examining the ways in which gender can influence the translation process and by promoting greater visibility of women as both translators and as individuals with their own distinct voices and perspectives.

Chamberlain (1988) decided to apply feminist theories to traditional translation metaphors, the ways in which authorship and originality are expressed in terms of the masculine and paternity, while translation, along with other artistic forms of expression such as the performing arts, is considered to be feminine and derivative. To talk about this concept, it is essential to start with what Mounin called “Les belles infidèles” (2016) In this formulation, “belles” refers to the beauty of the translated text, while “infidèles” refers to the degree of faithfulness or accuracy to the original.

As previously noted, the French word for translation, “La traduction”, is grammatically feminine, aligning it with traditionally feminine qualities and associations with artistry. This contrasts with the notion of translation as a faithful (fidélité) and trustworthy representation of the original text, which emphasises the masculine qualities of the



source, according to Chamberlain (1988). This metaphor dates back to earlier debates about whether translations should prioritise beauty or fidelity, as if these qualities were mutually exclusive.

Indeed, Chamberlain criticises this dichotomy as the “sexualisation of translation” (1988: 455). Since, she argues, the word translation is feminine, it makes it impossible to be preceded by “Beaux” (masculine plural of beautiful) and adds that, the idea of fidelity is linked to marriage, thus one sees in the placement “belles infidèles” an indissoluble bond between the original (male) and the translation (female), as if the latter, insofar as it depends on the original, obviously creates an indissoluble contract between the two works. This bond makes one think of the translation as a woman, capable of betraying, while her husband, the original, is for obvious reasons incapable of committing crimes. “Such an attitude betrays real anxiety about the problem of paternity and translation; it mimics the patrilineal kinship system where paternity -not maternity- legitimises an offspring” (Chamberlain 1988: 456).

To subvert this idea that links translation to the female gender, translators such as Suzanne Jill Levine provoke this ideology by trying to subvert those texts that are offensive to women, such as the novel by the Cuban exile Cabrera Infante<sup>28</sup>. She tries to respond to the sexism of the original work by setting infidelity against infidelity. Indeed, her aim is not to reject the translation commission, but chooses to “follow the parodic logic of the text” (Chamberlain 1988/2000). Thus, Chamberlain’s aim is to make translation a political act and an activity to try to open the reader’s mind, forcing him to discover even the differences with the original, if he can. This is why Levine seeks to reposition the ideology of the source text, recontextualising and making translation a critical act. Indeed, the role of a good translation should be to produce and reproduce an effect and persuade the reader, thus it is to all intents and purposes, a political act (Levine 1991).

One of the strategies implemented by the translator, and later taken up by the “translation project”, of which feminist translators such as Simon (1996) and van Flotow (1997) are part, is to use puns to foreground the feminist in the translated text. These strategies, whether linguistic or not, aim to make the woman visible. Some examples include the mixing of languages in which the Spanish original “amantes” (female, in this case lesbian, lover) becomes “lovHers” (Baker 2011). In translating

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<sup>28</sup> *La Habana para un infante difunto* (1979)

from other languages into English, there is always the possibility of playing with the language and the physical spelling of words; see the French word “lover” (the final silent -e indicates the female gender) is translated into English as “shelove” (Simon 1996: 21), instead of lover, precisely to specify gender.

Often English, being gender-neutral grammatically, does not specify whether an adjective or some other grammatical category refers to a feminine or masculine subject and, maybe, this could overcome the present dichotomy between male and female, which only accentuates the differences instead of levelling them out to the point of eliminating them altogether.

While it is fair to make a sharp criticism of translation scholars like Stenier and the four stages of translation he theorised, it is also mandatory to seek a balance between the source text and its direct translation. Steiner tries to explain the translation process through this theory, according to which his “hermeneutical model also presents a process of translation in four phases, as a hermeneutic of trust, of penetration, of embodiment and of restitution” (Steiner 1975: 319). Here emerges an erotic language “and a sexed model where metaphorically the man is the translator and the woman, the translation” (Castro 2009). As argued earlier, translation seems to be inextricably linked to the original and, over the years, the metaphor of the husband and wife has seemed the most appropriate to various authors, as well as Derrida (1985) who considers the original-translation relationship as a contract in which the translation marries the original in order to be comple(men)ted in another new text that guarantees the survival of both (Castro 2009). The figure of the woman is thus linked to a kind of inferiority with respect to the man, just as the translation seems to be inferior to the original text, since, as the word itself says, the work is precisely the original, the first and only.

Since woman, therefore, as well as translation is considered inferior, “for Chamberlain (1992: 66), the reason why these metaphors are sexualised is quite clear: it makes it easier to justify the power between the source text and the translation, that is, what is presented as being an aesthetics problem is in actual fact a question of power” (Castro 2009).

However, it would be necessary to subvert these approaches from within the system, not through puns or linguistic modifications to the text, but rather by increasing the number of female translators so as to regain the equality, which only working on its modification from within the translating field itself could bring about.

Referring back to Venuti's theory of the invisibility of the translator, we can therefore consider it necessary to reformulate the concept of the translator, emphasising not only that the work has in fact been translated, and is not therefore inferior to the original, but emphasising that the female translator is not inferior to the original (man), on the contrary, she has perfectly understood her role, claiming equal rights in the translating field and equality in the treatment of the figure of the translator.

Here, even the dichotomy between "translator" and "translatHer" would not be sufficient to emphasise this equity, indeed it could accentuate the differences. A benefit of the English language is that it is not structured around gender, making it a good candidate as a starting point for a language that prioritises gender equality. Unlike languages that assign gender to every noun and adjective, English does not inherently promote or reinforce gendered stereotypes and biases through its grammatical structure.

### **3.4.1 The influence of translators' gender on translations**

Although the connection between gender (or woman) and translation has existed since the beginning of time, it was not made explicit until the 20th century. "A key role was played by Canadian women authors and translators, who reclaimed a more central role in the culture of both translation and women, both underrated throughout the centuries" (Castro 2009: 17).

"When the issue of gender is considered, the woman centred focus has to involve women in a positive way and the position of the translator has to be flaunted in the process" (Hansrai college 2016: 33).

However, before discussing the translation process, it is useful to take a step back in analysing gender, what it is and what consequences it brings and entails. "Gender is without doubt a cultural construction, but first of all it is conveyed (marked) through language" (Castro 2009: 18). It is important to note that factors such as language knowledge, cultural background and personal experience can play a significant role in a translator's work. Indeed, as Butler states (1993), gender is not an innate characteristic of our biological self, but the way we perform our sexuality according to what people expect of us. She "developed her notion of gender performativity arguing that gender is not a given, but rather something that we have to perform constantly, 'gender is a doing, an incessant activity performed'" (Butler 2004: 1).

So, it is society that shapes our gender perception, and this can also affect what we really feel about our being and what the external community wants us to be; the same works for translators who often have to face both a common shared ideology and their own thought while translating a work, and it is more and more difficult when that given work is very far from the target culture; this will bring to an obvious change in particular features of the source language in order to make it more appreciable within the target society. This becomes a real issue when a translator has to choose among her/his strategies to translate a work. Such strategies are always imbued with common ideologies that may contradict those of the translator, especially if a woman translating a sexist work.

It has been thought that a woman is characterised by “powerless language” (O’ Barr and Atkins’ 1980), so women translators have had to overcome both credibility obstacles and sexist ones. Bucholtz (1999) affirmed that in a near past women were considered as lacking of assertiveness or characterised by indirectness, something that has been mostly subverted, thanks to many linguists who are focusing “on strong women speakers and women’s resistance to masculine forms of speech such as interruption or aggressiveness” (Bucholtz et al. 1999: 53). These forms of offensiveness which mine women’s identities, both as individuals and translators, can be also found in translations by male translators.

“The ways in which the translators use language to construct their gender identities can be revealed through the actual linguistic features of the target texts” (Bucholtz et al. 1999: 70). It is important to underline that a translator can share or modify the source culture in various ways but, above all, foregrounding his/her gender through which it is also easy to find his or her point of view concerning how gendered discourses in the source text are revealed. For example, “the gender tone is suggestive of the author’s gendered positioning of the work and/or her own attitude towards femininity and masculinity, and it can be indicated by the general thematic and narrative features and the paratextual elements, in addition to lexical means” (Meng 2019: 62). It is possible for a translator to licence him/herself to modify the structure of the source text through, for example, changing the lexicon or narrative arrangements, by deleting or adding some textual or paratextual elements in order to highlight or hide the author’s gender performance.

Therefore Meng, brings to light the study of two English translations of the above-mentioned novel *Chenzhong De Chibang*, by Quirk and colleagues (1985: 79), made by

the woman translator Yang, and the man translator Goldblatt. In general, what is important to underline in this study is understanding how different genders of translators may modify the target text. According to their gender and the ideologies which surround them, it is possible to state that Yang seems “susceptible to the general expectations of the society upon women’s (linguistic) behaviour” so that, through the relational modality of “obligation”<sup>29</sup>, she seems to highlight subordination and obedience, two characteristics that are thought to be very linked to women and that demonstrate their succumbing to patriarchy and the chauvinist ideology that tends to evaluate women as inferior. Furthermore, Yang, compared to Goldblatt, does not use more emotional words, but unemotional ones, rendering totally false the idea that women are more sensitive, therefore unable to translate like a man.

It is important to state that, according to Cameron (1995: 42), men and women are not different, but their background and culture behind them, make them seem different and so opposed. But, as it is possible to argue, both in everyday life and in translation, there are characteristics that can overlap and, so, match together both between men and women translators. It is worth to say then, that as Butler states, gender is a performance but this does not mean that it isn’t real, but that gender is not an innate characteristic of an individual, “this personal reality comes [...] from our participation in the global performance that is the social order” (1993: 321).

### **3.5 The role of time in translation: understanding its influence**

In general, it can be stated that gender can be included in two major areas that influence translation, which are mutually consequential: time and cultural shifts. In fact, it is almost impossible to separate these two factors, as cultural changes occur over time, and similarly, time is the primary factor because it always progresses forward. Therefore, it is impossible to halt time and separate it from the modifications it brings to translation, whether they are linguistic, social, or cultural.

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<sup>29</sup> According to Quirk and colleagues (1985), different modal auxiliaries may express varied modal meanings in different contexts. These modal meanings can be divided into two types, “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” (Quirk et al. 1985: 219). Intrinsic Modality includes “permission, obligation and volition, which involve some kind of intrinsic human control over events” (ibid). Extrinsic modality, on the other hand, refers to “possibility, necessity and prediction which do not primarily involve human control of events, but do typically involve human judgment of what is or is not likely to happen”, (p. 71).

Indeed, studies on translation are based on the modifications that time has made to the perception of translation and the ways in which this “process” is carried out. As seen before, translation has not always been widely accepted everywhere, especially due to cultural and religious reasons. This can lead to view translation studies as something that evolves over time and, through the studies that have been conducted, justifies its existence and identity (Aaltonen 2003). Translation, therefore, is influenced by history, but at the same time, history is shaped by and within time. Thus, translation is not a static practice; it evolves alongside historical and societal changes (Delisle and Woodsworth 1995).

In general, it is possible to state that time is not a linear road through which translation develops, but it can also turn back or form a loop. According to Aaltonen, “time is not synonymous with progress, but insisting on linearity for clarity” (2003: 11). Translation studies, indeed, are always shaped by a kind of time that shows societal modifications and, thus, it can be almost impossible to separate “progress” as a human idea from “time changes and shifts”. As an example, Venuti (2000) argues that in the 1940s-1950s, the focus was on translatability. The 1960s-1970s emphasised equivalence. In the 1980s, translation was seen as independent writing. The 1990s brought diverse theoretical approaches and sub-specializations, leading to a standstill in dominant theory while allowing for a deeper exploration of specific aspects of translation.

Therefore, it is worth noting that while time can be considered linear, the evolution of ideas within it is not (Aaltonen 2003). However, this does not negate the fact that the two factors, translation and the course of time, are closely interconnected. Thus, translation must always be analysed in relation to the passage of time. This recognition highlights the importance of understanding the dynamic nature of translation, which continuously adapts to changes in language, culture, and society. Considering the temporal dimension is essential for a comprehensive analysis of translation and its ongoing development over time.

## Chapter 4

### Textual Analysis of Three Aleramo Translations: Considering the Possible Influence of Time and Gender

The previous chapter, the aim of which was to provide general information on what translation is and how it has been studied for years, laid the foundation for a more practical one. As seen in the previous chapter's sections, translation has changed over years, and as its perception among translators evolved, there is also another factor that is still transforming: the one linked to gender. Nowadays gender is a much debated topic, but within translation studies there's still little attention on whether a translator's gender can influence or not their translations.

The fourth chapter focuses on a textual analysis of Aleramo's masterpiece, *Una Donna*, and its three English translations, published in 1908, 1980, and 2020. To determine the extent to which the translators' gender and the time period in which they worked influenced or not their translation choices, it is important to analyse both factors. This analysis will try to determine if the translators' gender had a significant impact on their translations, or if it was primarily the era in which they worked that shaped their approach, even though it is necessary to recognise that the data collected for this study is not sufficient, because of an imbalance of men/women translators within a group of three translators overall.

The initial section of this chapter will explore the dataset used in this study and the methodology employed to select the group of information, with particular attention on the main goals of the research; successively, the practical analysis will begin. From the second section onwards, in fact, the research will show three different comparisons and contrasts between the twelfth chapter of Aleramo's *Una Donna* and all its three English translations.

Additionally, all the sections of this chapter will show a qualitative analysis based on grammatical, lexical and syntactical choices of the translators, on the basis of both previous research and new hypotheses created.

#### 4. Method of analysis, data and research questions

The novel *Una Donna* was written during a period of great changes in Italy that saw women as subservient to men and society in general. The first English translation appeared only two years later through the female translator Maria Hornor Lansdale, who translated the work in 1908 into English. After this first English translation, there were no further attempts by other translators to publish a new version until Rosalind Delmar's English translation was released in 1980. Delmar's translation, which appeared in America, notably includes an introduction written by Richard Drake. It was not until 2020 that Erica Segre and Simon Carnell published their English translation of the Italian novel.

This study focuses on how the English language can be adapted to convey the intended meaning of the original text. The study adopts a qualitative approach to examine the linguistic choices of the translators to transpose the Italian novel and its message into English.

The research is focused on chapter 12 of the novel *Una Donna*, one of the central chapters of the second and middle section of the text. This third chapter of the second section can be considered as the central one not just for its position within the novel, but also for the themes it addresses. Topics such as women's emancipation appear in the novel for the first time in this chapter, while other subjects such as motherhood or marriage are treated differently, with a new vision and insight.

The twelfth chapter put a significant emphasis on the protagonist's character, highlighting her experience during a challenging period characterised by seclusion and alienation from the outside world.. During this period, she wrote about humanitarian principles and social inequalities she experienced during her youth, also fomented by her father's autocratic ideas, which became even more evident in the time she wrote. The protagonist found herself confined to a single room and forced to consider her reputation as seen in a new light, which solely depended on her husband, who treated her as a mere object of property. Her only chances to survive were religion, motherhood, the books she read and the love she received from her son. It is also important to highlight the protagonist's first realisation of the surrounding society and the role of women during the historical period she lived in. This newfound perspective introduced the term "emancipation", which concept was interiorised by Aleramo, who started to consider herself as one of the pieces of the patriarchal puzzle manipulated by



the male counterpart; she became aware of the inequality between sexes which perpetuated the idea of women as subservient, as testified by this section of the twelfth chapter:

“E come può diventare una donna, se i parenti la danno, ignara, debole, incompleta, a un uomo che non la riceve come sua eguale; ne usa come d’un oggetto di proprietà; le dà dei figli coi quali l’abbandona sola, mentr’egli compie i suoi doveri sociali, affinché continui a baloccarsi come nell’infanzia?”(Aleramo 1906: 85).

Simultaneously, she became increasingly aware of the way women were merely regarded as decorative “ornaments”, relegated to the role of serving their husbands and fulfilling the sole purpose of bearing children:

Io avevo sentito di toccare la soglia della mia verità, sentivo ch’ero per svelare a me stessa il segreto del mio lungo, tragico e sterile affanno...” (Aleramo 1906: 86).

The chapter ends with the protagonist’s stream of consciousness, during which she understood women’s fights as an effort to reach equality between sexes.

This study, thus, tries to examine whether a translator finds the way to show himself/herself and the related point of view; it could be argued that, consciously or not, a translator is never totally objective when translating but, as stated by the researcher Leonardi (2007), gender and ideology always contribute in the way a translator creates a translation.

The analysis conducted for this study focuses on three translations, specifically examining the translators’ word choices, sentence structures and punctuation marks. These aspects will be subsequently compared among the texts under consideration.

Venuti (1986) talked about the “translator invisibility”, speaking about the impossibility of a translator to be seen as such, because the only name shown in a copy is the author one; nevertheless, even if a translator is not cited in a translated version of a given work, it is also worthwhile to affirm that a translator may always show herself/himself in a variety of manners, such as a detached attitude or a very involved one.

In the end, by examining all the different versions of the twelfth chapter of the novel, this study tries to put a new insight in the wide vision of how translation is not just a copy of the original work but, sometimes also failing in its work, a revised and new

version of the original, where the author is not the only writer of the work, but she/ he is flanked by the translator.

#### **4.1 A look at the translators and a comparison with Sibilla Aleramo**

This first translation is by Maria Hornor Lansdale, a British translator who lived between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, exactly as Sibilla Aleramo's life. Her translation, as mentioned above, is the first English one to appear on the scene.

It has been difficult to find much information about this translator; her life is still quite unknown, apart from a few religious or historical works translated which show her name as translator (Goodreads)<sup>30</sup>. One of the peculiarities of this female translator is that the only reliable information found relates back to her funeral, which was held in Old St. Peter's Episcopal Church, in Scotland. As testified by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, a Pennsylvanian newspaper, Miss Maria Lansdale died on the 13th of April of 1945, at the age of 85. Additionally, as a symbol of her literary activity, in the last clause of the obituary, it is written that "Miss Lansdale, who was active in the affairs of St. Peter's Church, was author of several works on Scotland and France" (*The Philadelphia Inquirer* 1945).

She was also cited in the work *Woman's Who's Who of America: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Women of the United States and Canada, 1914-1915*, by John William Leonard, edited in 1914.

The second translation analysed is by Rosalind Delmar, an American scholar, translator and author who lived during the 20th and 21st century. Attending primary school during the 1950s, she soon understood how class and gender influenced society. Twenty years later, she attended the first women's liberation conference in 1970 and became a strong feminist and activist, studying topics such as family, history, and sexual difference, which she developed further by maintaining "a scholarly interest in the diverse history of feminisms and of women's ideas" (The British Library). In 1979 Delmar started working on the translation of *Una Donna* and it was published in 1980. Involved in women's struggles and fights, Delmar published *What is feminism?* in 2001, trying to

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<sup>30</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/3039950.Maria\\_Hornor\\_Lansdale](https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/3039950.Maria_Hornor_Lansdale)

theorise the “feminist” and “feminism” concept and how, erroneously, they are taken for granted.

The third and last translation appeared in 2020 in England. *A Woman* was translated by Erica Segre and Simon Carnell in contemporary times. Erica Segre, was a lecturer and Fellow of Trinity College; international specialist on Mexican visual culture, especially of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, she published many works dealing with intersectional identities and was also prolific as an innovative and celebrated translator of Italian literature and science (University of Cambridge)<sup>31</sup>. Together with Simon Carnell she translated *Una Donna*, one year before dying of a long illness. Simon Carnell, instead, is a freelancer reviewer, translator and poet, who has worked with several newspapers such as Sunday Times and Guardian.

#### **4.1.1 Possible influence of time on the three translations**

As previously stated, Sibilla Aleramo and Maria Hornor Lansdale lived during the same period, even though in a different socio-political context. Lansdale’s translation was published only two years after the Italian version, edited in 1906. The first years of the 20th century Italy and Britain were both very similar for social and cultural ideologies; women were treated similarly within society and their fight for freedom was at its beginning in both countries.

On the other hand, the two following translations by Delmar and Segre and Carnell were published respectively around 70 and 210 years later. This significant time lapse highlights the substantial shifts in social ideologies, cultural beliefs, and the passage of time.

At first glance, each of the three translations seem to follow a guiding thread that the translators decided to apply for their translations, and that can be easily recognisable. Lansdale, for instance, opts for a faithful approach, prioritising the preservation of the source text without introducing significant alterations (Jeffries 1982). On the other hand, Delmar’s translation leans towards amplification of the entire text, also aiming to provide a politically correct language. Lastly, Segre and Carnell’s translation stands out for their deliberate use of inclusive language, reflecting a conscious decision to employ lexicon that promotes inclusivity.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/news/erica-segre>

With regard to Lansdale, the whole translation seems to respect almost entirely the Italian source in syntactical, grammatical and punctuation choices. However, a notable departure can be observed in the organisation of the novel's structure. Unlike the other translations, Lansdale's version introduces titles for each chapter and modifies the original title, distinguishing it from the rest.

It could also be argued that Lansdale adopted a strategy to translate Aleramo's work which includes adding extra words or phrases to the translation to provide more context, clarity, or emphasis compared to the original text, namely, expansion or amplification (Newmark 2003). A possible example for this hypothesis lies in the title of this first English version. The Italian novel is entitled *Una Donna*, but Lansdale translated it with *A Woman at Bay*; the added part "at Bay" may represent a sort of explanation of women's situation in Italy during that time. Nonetheless, it is important to say that the idiom "at bay" is a bit obscure to understand, so it could be difficult to accept that this strategy may help simplify the title. Within this context, the expansion of the title *A Woman "at Bay"* may have been used by the translator to express the feeling of oppression the protagonist felt; surrounded by social and cultural restrictions, the main character is presented through the title. Lansdale, thus, may have used it to transfer the fighting essence within the protagonist, by underlining the message of Italian emancipation and rebellion against social ideologies of that period.

Being a well-known author, Sibilla Aleramo may have had no need to express the topic within the novel via the title of her work, on the contrary, Lansdale might have used the idiom (Baker 2011) "at bay" as an explanation of the subject of the novel and, perhaps, as a summary to show Aleramo as a feminist woman.

As testified by the Longman Dictionary, "keep/hold something at bay" means "to prevent something dangerous or unpleasant from happening or from coming too close". Although there is no evidence supporting this hypothesis, Lansdale may have used that idiom to express a double meaning: the necessity and will of the protagonist to come closer to a patriarchal society and, at the same time, its impossibility to be part of it because of their subalternity to a man's world which rejects them because of their unimportance.

Another particularity of *A Woman at Bay* is the organisation of the novel; composed of three sections within which the 22 chapters were not equally distributed. Aleramo's novel *Una Donna* was reorganised by Lansdale in a work without sections and with a title in each chapter, as if it was a strategy to simplify the novel's structure.

In the particular case of Delmar and her *A Woman* of 1980, there are two distinct factors that characterise this second version of *A Woman*. The first one is exemplified by the introduction written by Richard Drake while the second element is represented by a sort of strategy employed by Delmar throughout the text, that is “expansion”. However, the former aspect did not directly impact the translation itself but rather influenced the reader’s perception and approach to the novel, as the introduction is placed immediately before the story. On the other hand, the latter aspect could be seen as a deliberate choice used by Delmar to elucidate Aleramo’s words and create a sort of involvement with the American audience, who may have been unfamiliar with the novel after its 70-year interruption without a new translation. As Drake affirmed in his introduction of the masterpiece, “the new translation by Rosalind Delmar is to be welcomed for the opportunity it affords a generation of readers, especially interested in the social and cultural issues raised here, to appreciate a classic too long neglected by Americans” (Drake 1980: vi).

Furthermore, it is possible to observe that Delmar used a significantly higher number of words (73686) compared to Aleramo (60053) in her translation of the novel. This fact suggests that Delmar may have employed “expansion” as strategy of translation, to explain Aleramo’s words and provide a deeper understanding and engagement for the American audience. The use of a greater number of words can be interpreted as an attempt to clarify concepts and cultural references that may be less familiar to English-speaking readers, thereby making the novel accessible to a new generation of readers.

It is possible to argue that the twelfth chapter of Delmar’s translation of Aleramo’s novel may be seen as evidence of a potential expansion of the source text. Although the English language has different structures for clauses compared to the Italian original, Delmar’s translation is notably longer than the other translations. Already at the beginning of the novel, Delmar’s first chapter seems to be the lengthy one; for instance, the first paragraph consists of 81 words, while Aleramo’s is just 67 words long.

Aleramo: 1	Lansdale: 2	Delmar: 3
<p>La mia fanciullezza fu libera e gagliarda. Risuscitarla nel ricordo, farla riscintillare dinanzi alla mia coscienza, è un vano sforzo. Rivedo la bambina ch'io ero a sei, a dieci anni, ma come se l'avessi sognata. Un sogno bello, che il menomo richiamo della realtà presente può far dileguare. Una musica, fors'anche: un'armonia delicata e vibrante, e una luce che l'avvolge, e la gioia ancora grande nel ricordo.</p>	<p>MY childhood was free and healthy. It would be useless to attempt to live it over again, to try to make it sparkle as of old before my imagination. I can see the child that was I at six years of age, at ten, but as though I had dreamed her. A lovely dream which the faintest recall to the present instantly dispels.</p>	<p>I had an active, carefree childhood. If I try to live it again in my memory, rekindle it in my conscious mind, I always fail. I see the child I was at six, at ten years old, but it is as if I am dreaming her. It is a lovely dream, delicate and vibrant as a piece of music, clothed in light. The least recall to present-day reality can dispel it. But it leaves me with a sense of enormous joy.</p>

This section can be seen as potential evidence supporting the hypothesis that Delmar's version might be an "amplified" version of the source text. In this regard, it is useful to compare Delmar's translation to Lansdale's. Thus, Lansdale translated Aleramo's paragraph using 63 words, even fewer than Aleramo's original paragraph.

This example could suggest that Delmar's choice to expand the target text is not directly shaped by linguistic and syntactic English rules but rather may reflect a personal choice to enhance the reader's comprehension of the text itself.

What could be said is that time has positively affected this second translation. Rosalind Delmar, maintaining a scholarly interest in the diverse history of feminisms and of women's ideas (British Library)<sup>32</sup>, was particularly involved in the modification of women's perception over time, so she tried to constitute a translation that could provide a correct "image" for women, putting stress on the fact that "English and American women lived in capitalist countries, too, but at the same time they enjoyed rights and honors of which few Italian women had any inkling" (Drake 1980: x).

In a similar way, there is a possibility that both the second translation and the third one, by Segre and Carnell, have experienced a positive influence of time. Published in 2020,

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.bl.uk/people/rosalind-delmar#:~:text=Rosalind%20Delmar%20became%20aware%20of,Workshop%20and%20its%20office%20colle%20ctive>

the third version of *A Woman* is the first British English translation to appear in England. With no introduction, this translation may show how time changed lexical choices and cultural ideologies. Indeed, both the second and third translations originated in a modern era characterised by significant women's goals, such as the fight for women's suffrage. While Aleramo and Lansdale lived in a time when women's voting rights had not yet been granted, Delmar's education was shaped by gender and women's studies, as well as Segre and Carnell, who lived in more contemporary times and were likely influenced by cultural shifts in the perception of women.

#### **4.2 An examination of the three translations of the twelfth chapter**

The twelfth chapter of the novel *Una Donna* is relevant for different reasons. Indeed, in my opinion it not only is the essence of the masterpiece, but it also encompasses several distinctive aspects that deserve careful attention and examination. According to me, being part of the most important section of the novel, this chapter could provide much information on the three translations being analysed in this study. As a matter of fact, the twelfth chapter of Lansdale's version is entitled "An interlude" and, as testified by the Longman Dictionary, the "interlude" is "a period of time between two events or situations, during which something different happens". Thus, Lansdale may have recognised in it a very important section of the novel which showed a shift from the "previous Aleramo" and the "new one".

Thanks to the variety of topics Aleramo dealt with in this chapter, it offers a wide view over the three translations and how the translators approached these thematic elements. In general, it could be stated that Lansdale tried to respect as much as possible the source text. In particular, words such as "society" and its derived terms are very used in Aleramo's novel, and also transposed in Lansdale's version, but there is a particular sentence in which Lansdale may have misunderstood Aleramo's meaning of society. At the real beginning of the twelfth chapter, Aleramo wrote "questione sociale" to stress the protagonist's shifting focus from youthful interests to adult ones, highlighting her symbolic transition from adolescence to a newfound perspective on the world, namely, by her compelled entry into the "realm of adulthood". This focus on the shift from personal to social issues, is not transposed in Lansdale's translation, who wrote "the question of socialism".

Aleramo: 81	Lansdale: 192	Delmar: 108	Segre and Carnell: 119
Un silenzioso istinto mi faceva porre da parte i problemi sentimentali, mi teneva lontana anche dalle letture romantiche delle quali m'ero tanto compiaciuta nell'adolescenza. La <b>questione sociale</b> invece non aveva nulla di pericoloso per la mia fantasia.	Instinctively I let sentimental problems alone and ceased to read the romances which had so delighted me in my girlhood. The <b>question of socialism</b> , on the other hand, I felt could do my mind no harm.	Now, <b>social questions</b> preoccupied me.	<b>Social questions</b> , on the other hand, posed no danger to my imagination.

Maybe failing in her translation, it is not certain whether Lansdale's translation of "sociale" into "socialism" was premeditated or not. In fact, an hypothesis could highlight that Lansdale clearly decided to write "socialism" for political reasons. According to the Longman Dictionary "socialism" is "an economic and political system in which large industries are owned by the government, and taxes are used to take some wealth away from richer citizens and give it to poorer citizens". Indeed, in 1908, socialism was just emerging in America (McKillen: 2017), so it is possible that Lansdale translated "sociale" as "socialism" to highlight the historical period. Lansdale, thus, may have emphasised Aleramo's concept of the social which carries a political dimension, something completely absent in the other two translations. In fact, both Delmar and Segre and Carnell's translations, translated it as "social questions," indicating that they are far removed from the birth of the socialist party and instead focus on social matters rather than political ones, as Aleramo actually expressed.

#### 4.2.1 Their (distinct) use of Italics

Having looked at the whole text, chapter 12 is the one which includes the highest number of words written in italics. This chapter encompasses 5 italicised words, namely "sommo", "recitare una parte", "una donna", "emancipazione" and "mia". Even though



they belong to different semantic fields, if read consecutively, they could almost indicate a metaphorical journey towards women's liberation.

Thus, "sommel" could be related to the idea Aleramo had of religion as double meaning, thus, salvation and moral duty of purity and chastity. Indeed, the other four words, which are listed in a sequence of appearance within the chapter, can be seen as a step by step consequence after escaping from the religious bias. Freeing herself from prejudice and moral obligations, any woman does need no more to "play a part" in the societal theatre, but she can be "a woman", to assert her identity and ideology, fighting to affirm her "emancipation" and, so, to perceive herself as a complete individual, she is only "her" own.

While analysing all the three translations, what can be highlighted is that all of them respect the author's choice of this change of style; even though, sometimes, translating those words differently, each of the translators kept the Italics style. Nevertheless, a particular word within the Segre and Carnell translation did not follow the same rules as the others, that is, "emancipation".

Quasi inavvertitamente il mio pensiero s'era giorno per giorno indugiato un istante di piú su questa parola: *emancipazione* che ricordavo d'aver sentito pronunciare nell'infanzia, una o due volte, da mio padre seriamente, e poi sempre con derisione da ogni classe d'uomini e di donne (Aleramo: 86).

Almost inadvertently I had each day lingered longer on a single word: emancipation. Which I recall having heard once or twice during my childhood, uttered seriously by my father - and spoken of with derision subsequently, by every class of man and woman alike (Segre and Carnell: 124).

This term, in fact, has no special character style; so, it could be argued that the decision to avoid the stress on "emancipation" may signify that this particular concept is, nowadays, taken for granted<sup>33</sup>. This translating choice could express, once more, that time has changed and still changes in our days, and there is growing evidence that women's equality and inclusion is an issue of importance.

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<sup>33</sup> The emancipation in America was enacted on August 26, 1920, with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which introduced universal suffrage. Nowadays, it is no longer spoken of emancipation but rather there is a focus on equal rights and gender equality. Emancipation is something that has already been achieved.

Perhaps for this reason, Segre and Carnell decided to omit the italics for this word, as it appears entirely natural and "taken for granted" to them.

It is worth mentioning that beyond the specific selection of those five words by Aleramo, the use of italics extends further in Lansdale's translation; for example, she chose to write all terms loaned from other languages in Italics, such as the French terms "bourgeoisie" or "fiancée". Owji (2013) stated that "using the calque strategy, that is, a special type of borrowing in which the borrowed expression is literally translated into the target language", but Lansdale borrowed some terms from other languages, instead of from Italian and transposed them into her version of *Una Donna*. In contrast to the other translators, who do not borrow words from other languages and instead focus solely on the duality of Italian and English, Lansdale incorporates loanwords from other languages.

Nonetheless, particular stress has to be put on a term taken from the Italian novel, that is, "blasé". Partially translated from the Italian "blasonato", Lansdale may have failed in her transposition.

Era a colazione da noi il padrone della fabbrica, un blasonato<sup>34</sup> milionario. Questi aveva sfogliata una rivista alla quale mio padre era abbonato (Aleramo: 82).

Through the borrowing (Venuti 2001) of the Italian word "blasonato" in "blasé", she may have tried to keep her translation near to the Italian source, but she failed in transposing the original meaning of the Italian word. Indeed, "blasonato" indicated someone who possessed the "stemma gentilizio", also called "blason", a title that only nobles possessed (Treccani), instead, the French word "blasé" within English vocabulary, means "not worried or excited about things that most people think are important, impressive etc", according to the Longman Dictionary.

The owner of the factory, a *blasé* millionaire, had been taking breakfast with us one day and was sitting turning over the pages of a review to which my father subscribed; he admired it but thought it "too dear" (Lansdale: 194).

#### 4.2.2 Focus on the Italian words used in the three translations

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<sup>34</sup>The scholar edition published by Loescher Editore provides a footnote in which "blasonato" indicated "nobile, che ha il blasone; dal francese *blason* che vuol dire scudo, è lo stemma sul quale sono poste le insegne nobiliari" (Aleramo: 113).

English translation here: Nobile, which has a coat of arms; from the French word "blason" which means shield, it is the emblem on which the noble insignia are placed.

It seems possible that each of the three translations distanced itself from the source novel according to the passage of time between each translation and the source text. Indeed, Lansdale seemed to have respected Aleramo's choices of style and syntax more than the newer versions. But it should be added that Lansdale, as previously stated, was the first one translating such a new novel. Thus, trying to faithfully transpose the Italian culture and society, several Italian words used in the source are faithfully calqued (Venuti 2001) in the target language of Lansdale's translation.

In particular, chapter 12 of Lansdale's translation is characterised by some Italian words belonging to different registers and uses (Halliday 1976). The use of Italian terms such as "sommo" or "a priori" probably helped the translator to depict the author's Italian background and better set the translation in an Italian environment. For example,

He told me that he had been better than any other man, the chief exponent of love and sincerity, a martyr to his own conscience. I had shut this name into my heart, making it the occult symbol of perfection, though without worshipping it; happy simply in the knowledge that a *sommo* had once existed, that the human creature could, if it would, rise until it should reach the ideal of divinity, the desire of the eternal! (Lansdale: 196).

Within this paragraph, it is possible to highlight the importance Lansdale gave to the Italian source text by faithfully respecting the word Aleramo employed to talk about Jesus and God. Indeed, Lansdale lived from 1860 to 1945, a very fruitful period for Catholic religion both in America and in Italy (Gleason 1987); thus, a particular focus should be put on the term "sommo", which may have helped the translator to express how important was Catholic religion in the country and in Italy, also stressing how different societies were ruled by the same religious ideology, according to which women were supposed to follow purity and chastity as main goals throughout their life (Zuanazzi 2018). Thus, Lansdale seemed to fully understand Aleramo's thoughts and so, by respecting the Italian source, she possibly identified herself with the author of the novel and, at the same time, she put an accent on the Italian language. By doing so, she tried to create a balanced translation (Baker 2011) between how involved she felt and the Italian calques that conveyed the original meaning of the source text.

Another example may be given by the adjective "a priori".

Aleramo: 84	Lansdale: 199	Delmar: 112	Segre and Carnell: 122
Mia sorella accettava tutto a priori; le idee vivevano, palpitavano nel giovane, ed ella non poteva distinguerle da lui.	My sister accepted everything <i>a priori</i> ; ideas lived, palpitated in this youth, and she could not separate them from him.	My sister accepted everything he said <i>a priori</i> ; ideas lived and breathed in this young man, and she couldn't distinguish them from him. I argued with him, growing passionate.	From the start, my sister had accepted everything: his ideas were embodied by him; they were so much part of him that she could hardly separate them from his person.

Perhaps trying to create a sort of equilibrium between the source and target text, the expression “a priori” is found in the source text by Aleramo and both the target versions of Lansdale and Delmar. Probably both translators, recognizing that the English expression “a priori” conveys a formal register compared to its Italian counterpart, could have opted to italicise it in their writing. By doing so, they would have aimed to capture the informal register of the Italian expression<sup>35</sup>, rather than strictly adhering to the formal register associated with the English equivalent. As possible evidence, the Italian dictionary Treccani wrote that the expression, belonging to medieval latin, comes from philosophical subject, instead “nell’uso com., affermare, giudicare a p., in astratto, senza probanti elementi che diano validità all’affermazione o al giudizio, e quindi, spesso, in base a preconetti.” [In common usage, “affermare, giudicare a p.,” means to assert or judge something in the abstract, without any supporting evidence that would give validity to the statement or judgement, and therefore often based on preconceptions] (Treccani<sup>36</sup>); instead, the Longman dictionary considers it as “formal”. Instead, Segre and Carnell decided to modify the original adjective, writing “from the start” in the target text, so they may have chosen to adapt the translation (Baker 2011: 33) to fit perfectly within the target culture.

<sup>35</sup> The scholar edition published by Loescher Editore provides a footnote in which “a priori” is defined as “ancor prima che egli avesse esternate le sue idee” (Aleramo 1906 [2004]:116).

English translation here: even before he had expressed his ideas , indicating that the term is used by the author to convey the concept of something that is known or assumed beforehand.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/a-priori/#:~:text=%E2%80%B9a%20pri%C3%B2ri%E2%80%BA%20locuz..logicamente%5D%20%C3%A8%20prima%C2%BB>

### 4.2.3 Possible influence of religion on translations

As stated before, there could be possible evidence that the three translations have been more or less modified and shaped not just by time but, also, by the mutual influence of time and religion. To support this hypothesis, the words belonging to the semantic field of religion could be analysed.

Aleramo: 80	Delmar: 107	Segre and Carnell: 117
Ella aveva desiderato che almeno i suoi figli fossero salvi: a mia volta che cosa avrei chiesto <b>a un Dio</b> che mi fosse apparso davanti?	The least of her wishes had been that her children should have some security; and <b>if God</b> had appeared to me then what would I have asked of him?	She had hoped that at least her children might be spared: and in turn what would I have asked <b>if a god</b> had appeared before me?

In the table above, it can be observed that Segre and Carnell opted not to capitalise the word “God”. This choice may be attributed to their adherence to English grammatical conventions rather than indicating a lack of respect for religion. However, it is important to note that the absence of the indefinite article “un” in the source text may suggest that it is not referring to a general concept of god. Supporting this notion is the capitalization of the term “Dio” [God] itself, emphasising a specific and tangible entity. The whole sentence following the colon could also be interpreted as a hypothetical construction, similar to saying “cosa gli avrei chiesto, qualora (hypothetically) Dio mi fosse apparso davanti” [What would I have asked of Him, if God had appeared before me?]. This assumption could be also supported by Delmar’s translation, which also employed the conditional “if”; even her translation may suggest that Aleramo’s God was a single God, the omnipotent one.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the Italian sentence as a hypothetical construction could gain support from the fact that both Delmar and Segre and Carnell translated the Italian phrase “a un ... che” as the hypothetical “if”.

Another point to be considered is a specific part of the twelfth chapter which deals with religious issues.

Aleramo: 82	Segre and Carnell: 121
<p>Un giorno della mia infanzia mio padre mi aveva parlato di Cristo. Mi aveva detto ch'era stato il migliore degli uomini, il maestro della sincerità e dell'amore, il martire della propria coscienza. Io avevo chiuso in petto quel nome, ne avevo fatto l'occulto simbolo della perfezione, senza adorarlo tuttavia, felice semplicemente di sapere che un sommo era esistito, che l'essere umano poteva, volendo, salire fino a rappresentare l'ideale della divinità, l'aspirazione all'eterno. Come mi era parsa puerile la mitologia cristiana! Cristo non era nulla, se Dio; ma se egli era uomo, diveniva il fiore dell'Umanità, non un dio diminuito, ma l'uomo nella sua maggior potenza. E sempre Gesù, il Gesù di Nazareth sorridente ai bimbi, il Gesù indulgente verso la pentita, incapace di rancore, sereno nell'ammonimento come nella profezia, aveva brillato davanti alla mia anima, figura ideale che mi pareva di veder offuscarsi di tristezza ogni volta ch'io mi allontanavo dalla bontà e dalla verità.</p>	<p>One day when I was little, my father had talked to me about Christ. He told me that he had been the best of men, a paragon of sincerity and of love, a martyr to his own conscience. I had taken this idea of him to heart; without worshipping it, I had turned it into a symbol of perfection: I was happy in the knowledge of a highest possible existence, that if he really wanted to a human being could raise himself until he resembled a divinity- that he could aspire to the eternal. How childish actual Christian belief and doctrine seemed in comparison! Christ was nothing if he was God, but if he was a man then he was the epitome of humanity: not a diminished deity but humanity at its greatest and most powerful. And always Jesus, the Jesus of Nazareth who loved children, the Jesus who had forgiveness for the penitent woman; who was as incapable of rancour in warning as in prophecy: this was the ideal figure which shone in my mind's and seemed to be saddened and cast into shadow every time I myself veered from goodness and from truth.</p>

The section mentioned above directly precedes the aforementioned section. However, while the former is translated in all versions, the latter is not found in Segre and Carnell's publication.

Dopo mesi, forse dopo anni di smarrimento, io rivedevo il sorriso di Cristo su la mia strada, e mi rivolgevo a lui come a una fonte d'ispirazione. Per alcun tempo vagheggiai una dottrina che unisse la soavità dei precetti del Galileo, sorti dal grembo della natura, alla potenza delle teorie moderne emanate dalla scienza e dall'esperienza, la libertà con la volontà, l'amore con la giustizia. Era come un'orientazione, come l'affermazione di una armonia.

Attorno a me, frattanto, molte cose prendevano un significato, attiravano la mia attenzione. Mi accorgevo con lento stupore di non essermi mai prima chiesta se io avessi qualche responsabilità di quanto mi urtava o mi impietosiva nel mondo circostante. Avevo mai considerato seriamente la condizione di quelle centinaia di operai a cui mio padre dava lavoro, di quelle migliaia di pescatori che vivevano ammassati a pochi passi da casa mia, di quei singoli rappresentanti della borghesia, del clero, dell'insegnamento, del governo, della nobiltà, che conoscevo da presso? Tutta questa

massa umana non aveva mai attratto altro che la mia curiosità superficiale; senza esser superba né servile, io ero passata fra i due estremi poli dell'organizzazione sociale sentendome isolata. Non avevo mai accolta l'idea d'essere una spostata, a cui l'osservazione del mondo si presentava in circostanze eccezionalmente favorevoli. Il mio allontanamento dai volumi di scienza era una colpa assai meno grave di quella che consisteva nell'aver trascurato di gettar gli occhi sul grande libro della vita.

[...]

(Aleramo: 83).

This passage, central to the twelfth chapter, appears to be missing in the latest translation. Within this very important part, Aleramo explained God's importance and power over the protagonist and her subsequent questions over the world, as if she was a superficial individual who had never asked.

A possible explanation for this might be a forgetfulness or misprint, but another potential explanation for this omission could be attributed to Segre and Carnell's exploration of secularism. This possible deliberate omission of this part from the twelfth chapter may have been influenced by a change of the epoch in which the translators worked, mirroring the socio-cultural context in which they have been living. To avoid influencing the reader, the authors may have chosen to exclude certain inconvenient aspects from the text, such as the portrayal of subjugation (in this specific case to both God and Aleramo's husband). This omission, however hard to believe, could also be perceived as a deliberate effort to challenge the dominant ecclesiastical doctrine of that era, which frequently marginalised women and regarded them as "the other" or subordinate beings (Zuanazzi 2018).

The exact reason for this choice remains uncertain, but one possible explanation could be that the only section present in the translation, primarily focuses on Aleramo's father and his religious influence on her during her formative years. As a result, it highlights his perspective rather than delving into Aleramo's personal contemplations and reflections on religious principles.

Another point to take into consideration is how the two newer translations transposed the term "sommo", regarding which, extensive discussion has taken place above.

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 195-196	Delmar: 110	Segre and Carnell: 121
Io avevo chiuso in petto quel nome, ne avevo fatto l'occulto simbolo della perfezione, senza adorarlo tuttavia, felice semplicemente di sapere che un <i>sommo</i> era esistito, che l'essere umano poteva, volendo, salire fino a rappresentare l'ideale della divinità, l'aspirazione all'eterno.	I had shut this name into my heart, making it the occult symbol of perfection, though without worshipping it; happy simply in the knowledge that a <i>sommo</i> had once existed, that the human creature could, if it would, rise until it should reach the ideal of divinity, the desire of the eternal!	It was not that I worshipped him, but I was reassured to know that there was an example of <b>the best</b> , that a human being could, if he so wanted, raise himself so that he represented divinity -that man could aspire to the eternal.	I had turned it into a symbol of perfection: I was happy in the knowledge of a <b>highest possible existence</b> , that if he really wanted to a human being could raise himself until he resembled a divinity- that he could aspire to the eternal.

Although respecting the general idea of “someone higher than us and even more powerful, neither Delmar nor Segre and Carnell used a word directly belonging to the sphere of religion, employing the strategy of “adaptation” (Baker 2001: 25).

Delmar translated “sommo” as “best”, with no capital letter, while Segre and Carnell as “highest possible existence”, in italics. This choice may have been made to convey a sense of supreme or ultimate significance without explicitly invoking religious connotations. By avoiding a direct association with God, they aimed to present the notion of the highest being without imposing a specific religious interpretation.

#### 4.2.4 The temporal dynamics of translations: if time shapes and alters meanings

Another analysis of the twelfth chapter is linked to the hypothesis that not only can time influence translations, but also the context in which the translation is produced can shape the product of the translating process (Leonardi 2007) .

For example, a specific part of Aleramo’s chapter 12 used the word “estero” to indicate a possible place where the boyfriend of Aleramo’s sister had gone in order to study. But what is important to see here is that Lansdale modified the concept of “all’estero”



[abroad] and transposed it in the target language with the term “Germany”. As possible evidence, she could have used the translation strategy of adaptation (Baker 2011).

By replacing the generic term “all’estero” [abroad] with the specific term “Germany”, Lansdale chose to adapt the cultural context of the source text to the target language. This strategy may aim to make the translated text more understandable for the target audience, as well as to provide a more concrete and specific reference to the location mentioned in the original text.

Aleramo: 84	Lansdale: 199	Delmar: 112	Segre and Carnell: 122
<p>Egli aveva studiato <b>all’estero</b>, aveva viaggiato, e, tornato nella sua regione da due anni per dirigere i lavori di un nuovo tronco ferroviario, aveva sentito il bisogno prepotente di tentare qualcosa per quelle miserevoli popolazioni, da cui egli era pur germinato.</p>	<p>He had studied <b>in Germany</b>; then, after travelling for a time, he had come home to direct the laying out of a line of new railroad, and had felt an overmastering desire to try to do something for the miserable population from which he had himself sprung.</p>	<p>His own family were workers, but he had travelled and studied <b>abroad</b> and when he returned to his home town two years earlier to supervise the construction of the railway line he had felt an overwhelming need to try and do something for the underprivileged people with whom he worked.</p>	<p>He had studied <b>abroad</b>, he had travelled, and having returned to his native region after two years in order to oversee the building of a new railway line, he had felt the urgent need to try to do something for that impoverished section of society from which he himself had come.</p>

Indeed, Aleramo wrote “estero”, without specifying the exact place in which the young man had studied, but Lansdale translated it as “Germany”. This could seem very strange but, during the beginning of the 20th century, the American views of German education were generally positive. Germany was widely recognised as a leader in science, engineering and academic research. Many American scholars had studied in Germany and admired its universities and educational system (General printing office: 1959). It could be possible that, by indicating the man’s place of study, Lansdale was trying to establish a specific time and place for her translation to be understandable by the readers. This could be seen as a strategy to make the reader feel more comfortable while reading,

especially considering that the novel deals with subject matter that may be unfamiliar to the reader's social and educational context.

### **4.3 Influence of gender in translation**

Many studies have analysed the relation between translation, ideology and gender. Researchers such as Venuti (1986), have acknowledged that the target culture can influence the translations more than the source culture does, so translators should strive for maximum objectivity in their work. According to Leonardi,

Especially in the case of feminist texts, both the message and the linguistic forms should be retained as much as possible and the translator's mediation should be minimized. It is not up to the translator to decide what is right and what is wrong in terms of message transfer in the TT. S/he should only make sure that the ST is reproduced as faithfully as possible in the TT (Leonardi 2007: 52).

Although the material examined may not provide sufficient grounds for a comprehensive and detailed study of the translation and its potential gender influence, analysing the three translations under consideration could be valuable in gaining insights into this matter.

#### **4.3.1 Lansdale, Delmar, and Segre and Carnell's "possible" translations influenced by gender**

Lansdale was the first and only translation completely and entirely made by a woman. Delmar's translation, although published 70 years later, was also executed by a woman. However, it was preceded by an introduction penned by Richard Drake. It is noteworthy to mention that Drake's introduction does not influence Delmar's translation, as she had completed her work prior to its publication. Nevertheless, Drake's contribution as a man offering insights on Aleramo's work remains a notable aspect. Moreover, Segre and Carnell's translation, published in 2020, is the only English translation by both a man and a woman.

By analysing different parts of the twelfth chapter, it could be possible to argue that Lansdale showed a great involvement while translating. However, there also appears to be a subtle apprehension about becoming overly involved or taking an overly active role. Thus, adding to the title *A Woman*, the locution "*at Bay*", Lansdale may have

expressed not just the position of the protagonist within a patriarchal society, but also her personal involvement in the “questione femminile”.

Chapter 12 of the translation seems to follow a “*fil rouge*” in which Lansdale tried to keep a balance between what she had to say and what she wanted to affirm. On the basis of her literary style and choices, there are parts of the chapter that may show Lansdale’s commitment to the topic treated in the novel, sometimes also emphasising what is not stressed in the source text.

Aleramo: 85-86	Lansdale: 203	Delmar: 114	Segre and Carnell: 124
Dacché avevo letto uno studio sul movimento femminile in Inghilterra e in Scandinavia, queste riflessioni si sviluppavano nel mio cervello con insistenza. Avevo provato subito una simpatia irresistibile per <b>quelle creature esasperate</b> che protestavano in nome della dignità <b>di tutte</b> sino a recidere in sé i più profondi istinti, l’amore, la maternità, la grazia.	Ever since reading a study of the feminist movement in England and Scandinavia these reflections had been revolving persistently in my brain. I had instantly felt an instinctive sympathy <b>for those incensed fellow-creatures</b> who were uttering their protests in the name of the universal dignity <b>of the race</b> , going so far, even, as to sacrifice their most sacred privileges, love, maternity, sympathy.	After I had read a book on the women’s movement in England and Scandinavia, thoughts like these kept coming insistently into my head. I felt irresistibly drawn to <b>these exasperated women</b> who protested in the name of all their sex, often at the cost of suppressing their deepest needs for love, beauty, and motherhood.	Ever since I had read a study of the women’s movement in England and Scandinavia, these thoughts had been running insistently through my mind. I had immediately felt an irresistible sympathy <b>towards those exasperated individuals</b> who were protesting in the name of the dignity of all women, even to the point of renouncing their deepest instinctive gravitation towards love, motherhood and grace.

When talking about the feminist movement born both in England and in Scandinavia, Aleramo expressed a sort of detachment, as if she was a super partes or as she was so feared about expressing her involvement that, even though she felt “una simpatia irresistibile”, she addressed to those fighting women as “quelle creature esasperate”. The demonstrative adjective “quelle”, should have highlighted Aleramo’s distancing from women’s struggle, so the sympathy felt was suddenly opposed by the separation

from “quelle creature esasperate”, as if she was part of women’s sufferings, but not so much to be part of this community.

In her translation, Lansdale respects Aleramo’s stylistic choice, but even though she maintained fidelity by using the English equivalents of “quelle” and “creature” as “those” and “creatures”, respectively, she goes a step further by adding the adjective “fellow”. This addition may be the result of her desire to demonstrate and show how close she was to those fighters who struggled for women’s emancipation or, even, perhaps she wanted to transmit how close to the “creatures” she felt Aleramo was. Indeed, another interesting example to consider is Lansdale’s translation of the following passage, “protestavano in nome della dignità di tutte”. Aleramo employs the complement “di tutte” to emphasise that the struggle for dignity was carried out by women fighting for women themselves. However, Lansdale transforms the complement into “of the race”. This choice appears highly significant when considering that the translator highlights not only the women’s fight to free themselves from subjugation but also speaks of the dignity of the entire human race, as if this struggle should liberate and improve humanity as a whole.

The choice Delmar made regarding “quelle creature esasperate”, is important as well because she used a strategy to both respect the source text and show her involvement. As Aleramo wrote “creature esasperate”, Delmar used a calque (Baker 2011) of these words translating “exasperated women”. Thus, at the same time, instead of respecting the adjective “quelle”, she used the adjective “these”, as to underline her commitment in the struggle women of that period were pursuing. In fact, instead of translating “creature” as Lansdale did, Delmar wrote “women”, precisely to show that the fight for equality was conducted only by women.

Things are quite different in the last translation. Segre and Carnell decided to keep this paragraph almost identical to the source one. Nevertheless, the words used in this translation could be motivated as an attempt to perfectly fit this translation to the source text or to express a detachment which could be motivated by the presence of a male translator other than a female one (Chamberlain 1988).

In a specific paragraph of the chapter, Aleramo explained that the effort she made on herself to keep living and facing her daily life was too big to let herself dedicate to her sisters and brother.

Aleramo: 84	Lansdale: 199	Delmar: 111	Segre and Carnell: 122
Compievo su me uno sforzo riparatore troppo grande perché mi avanzasse l'energia di dedicarmi efficacemente a quei poveri abbandonati del mio sangue.	The struggle I was making to recover my own poise was so great that it seemed to leave me no strength to accomplish anything effective for those poor, abandoned creatures of my own flesh and blood.	The only thing I could do for my brother, now sixteen, and the two girls, was to guarantee this sort of support: although they were my own flesh and blood I was so heavily engaged in efforts to restore my own strength that I had little energy left to look after them.	I was expending too much effort in other directions to have any time and energy left to dedicate to my closest, neglected relatives.

While the first two translations, only by women translators, tried not to minimise the personal feeling of dejection Aleramo felt, the third translation tended to mitigate this sentiment (Coates as cited in Leonardi 2011).

Indeed, the last translation, as previously stated, could have used the form “in other directions” specifically not to draw the attention to the protagonist’s feeling, but just to tell the reader that the protagonist was not dedicating her time and strength to her brother and sisters because she had something else to take care of. “In other directions”, therefore, serves to broaden the concept, shifting the focus away from the moral burden carried by the protagonist and attempting to diminish the emphasis on her individuality. These choices made by Segre and Carnell give the impression that the protagonist was indifferent to the family matter, and the omission of specifying the directions in which she directed her energies diminished the importance of those directions, as if they were inconsequential. It could have portrayed the protagonist as lacking genuine willingness to help her brother and sisters.

Another very important passage which could help the analysis in the research of gender (in-)equality while translating could be Aleramo’s explanation of her education during the period in which she was still a young girl.

Aleramo: 81	Lansdale: 193	Delmar: 108	Segre and Carnell: 119
<p><b>Nella mia educazione</b> era stato uno strano miscuglio. Non s'era coltivato in me il senso dell'armonia. Nessuna pagina immortale era stata posta sotto ai miei occhi durante la mia fanciullezza.</p>	<p><b>My education</b> had been a queer mixture. No sense of harmony had ever been cultivated in me. No single page of immortal writing had been held before my eyes, as a child.</p>	<p>The education <b>he</b> had given me had been a strange amalgam, <b>completely incoherent</b>. I had never read any of the classics and as far as I was concerned the past barely existed.</p>	<p><b>My education</b> had been strangely compartmentalized. I had not been encouraged to cultivate any sense of connection or harmony between things. <b>As a girl</b>, no immortal page of writing had been placed before me.</p>

While comparing all the three translations to the source text, there is no striking evidence of how gender could have modified the way of translating, nonetheless, it would be important to look at the different ways in which the kind of education given to Aleramo has been transposed in the three versions. The term “compartmentalized”, if compared to the other translations, seems to lack emotions, “thus, softening the effect” (Leonardi 2007). Lansdale put a stress on the lack of sense of harmony, thus, stressing the disagreement towards this “decision”, whereas Delmar used “completely incoherent” which seems to mirror her personal thoughts about this issue. Nonetheless, what is important to underline in Delmar’s translation is the shift in focus she decided to employ.

Both Segre and Carnell and Lansdale translated “nella mia educazione” as “my education”, maintaining the emphasis on the protagonist. On the other hand, Delmar diverges from this approach by shifting the subject to “he”; thus, her aim could have been focusing the reader’s attention on how Aleramo’s father had decided her kind of education, perhaps stressing the imposition.

Additionally, it would be important to focus on a specific part of the third translation, namely, the term “fanciullezza” translated as “as a girl”. Through these words, the stress on the fact that being a girl prevented the protagonist from studying, while a male child could attend school, is particularly evident. Two factors can show the hypothesis that Segre and Carnell, maybe due to the epoch in which they lived, care about gender

perception and equality between sexes. First of all, “as a girl” is put at the beginning of the clause as a theme<sup>37</sup>, so particular stress is due to the position of the terms which gives new information (Baker 2011: 166-67), then, it is the only translation among the three where the gender of the protagonist is stressed in such a strong way.

Segre and Carnell’s translation could possibly be considered a product of both time and gender, where neither of the two elements particularly overcomes the other. Indeed, Segre and Carnell’s translation aims to highlight the educational situation of girls during that time, where they lacked the opportunity to study except at home and only in the most enlightened and modern environments, emphasising the impossibility of educational equality between boys and girls.

#### **4.3.2 The woman’s figure in Aleramo and its transposition within the three translations**

As previously seen, the image of the woman in Aleramo’s novel is marked by the shadow of a shared ideology according to which all women have to be subservient to the male counterpart and that each field of their life has to be organised and allowed by men (Caesar 1980).

Each female in the novel, indeed, possesses a set of characteristics which conform women to a single model, the remissive obedient woman who is not respected by man and perceived as his property. This lack of respect towards women can be noticed in different parts of the novel, as in a section in which Aleramo remembered an episode of her life; she was talking about the factory in which she worked, but maybe she cared so much about that factory that she felt as if she owned it or, at least, that it was so normal for her to work there, that she addressed the factory as “la nostra”. The owner’s response provides a clear explanation of how men reacted to any attempt made by women to be recognized as equals in society.

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<sup>37</sup> Hatim (2001) pointed out that “because they represent new information, it is rhemes rather than themes which push text development forward”.

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 195	Delmar: 109	Segre and Carnell: 120
M'ero troppo incoraggiata a chiacchierare, perché, parlando del mio ufficio, avevo detto « la nostra fabbrica ». E correggendomi la mamma, il conte aveva soggiunto: « <b>Lasci!</b> E come il mio cocchiere che dice 'i miei cavalli' ».	Mamma chided me, upon which the visitor remarked: “ <b>Let her alone</b> ; she's like my coachman; he always speaks of 'my horses'!”.	Mother told me to be quiet, but the count remarked, “ <b>Oh, leave her alone.</b> My coachman does the same. He talks about “my horses”.	And while my mother intervened to correct me, the count had remarked: “ <b>Never mind.</b> I'm used to my coachman referring to his horses.”.

It could be interesting to analyse how “Lasci!” was translated in the three translations. Lansdale translated it as “Let her alone” (p. 195), while Delmar translated it as “Leave her alone”, but it is the last translation by Segre and Carnell to be particularly interesting to analyse. Partly due to the period in which they translated, this translation is the only one in which the personal pronoun “her” was not used. The locution “never mind”, in fact, seems not to be such a dysphoric term as the other two translations could be.

At the same time the verb “to correct”, which fully respects the source text, has been translated using the calque just in Segre and Carnell’s translations, while Landale and Delmar’s translations used verbs which marked the strength of the action done by Aleramo’s mother.

Indeed, Lansdale employed the formal and archaic verb “to chide” to show the disapproval of Aleramo’s mother and to emphasise the disappointment she felt towards her daughter’s behaviour. By choosing this particular word, Lansdale subtly emphasised how Aleramo’s mother viewed her daughter’s words as a disappointment, perceiving her inability to conform to the societal expectations and roles traditionally assigned to all women.

Another part that points out the perception men had of women is found in a brief description of Aleramo’s mother.



Aleramo: 85	Lansdale: 202-203	Delmar: 113	Segre and Carnell: 124
Ma la <b>buona</b> madre non deve essere, come la mia, una semplice creatura di sacrificio: deve essere una donna. Una persona umana.	But the <b>good</b> mother must not, like my own, be simply an example of self-sacrifice: she must be a woman, a human being.	But a <b>good</b> mother must not be simply a victim of self-sacrifice, as mine had been: she must be a woman, a human individual.	But a <b>good</b> mother must not be, as I had been, a one-dimensional, self-sacrificing creature: she must be a woman, a human being.

As an adult, Aleramo’s mother knew very well how women were considered and how they had to behave in front of a man. In fact, Aleramo’s choice of the adjective “buona” in describing her mother may appear simplistic, but it effectively captures her mother’s conduct, reflecting the ingrained societal norms that guided her actions. Aleramo’s mother, therefore, is seen as something of little value, devoted to sacrifice and who did not have any other necessity than taking care of her husband and her children.

If Lansdale and Delmar’s translations respect almost faithfully Aleramo’s text, Segre and Carnell introduced some different choices that modified the source text in two different points. Within their version, the term of reference is no more Aleramo’s mother, but the protagonist herself, secondly, the adjective “semplice” is substituted by the adjective “one-dimensional”. In particular, by using the protagonist as a benchmark, Segre and Carnell put the protagonist as the main reference point of the novel, stressing the protagonist’s individuality and identity. Additionally, deleting “simply” from their translation and substituting it with “one-dimensional”, the translators may have underlined a new necessity, namely, the vision of the woman not as a unidimensional individual; each woman is not just a “martyr” repressed by a society that clips the wings and thinks she is an incapable individual, but an individual with needs and rights. Thus, the “dimensions” of a woman are several and it is not possible to force her into a sacrificial framework.

Aleramo’s novel is characterised by a very backward vision of the woman, but it could be said that, probably due to their gender, neither Lansdale nor Delmar translated the part focused on the forgiveness God dedicated to the penitent woman.

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 196	Delmar: 110	Segre and Carnell: 121
E sempre Gesù, il Gesù di Genezareth sorridente ai bimbi, <b>il Gesù indulgente verso la pentita</b> , incapace di rancore, sereno nell'ammonimento come nella profezia, aveva brillato davanti alla mia anima, figura ideale che mi pareva di veder offuscarsi di tristezza ogni volta ch' io mi allontanavo dalla bontà e dalla verità.	And Jesus, always that Jesus of Gennesaret, smiling upon the little children, Jesus, <b>kind to penitents</b> , incapable of ill-will, serene in admonition as well as in prophecy, [...].	Jesus of Nazareth, lover of children, never bitter, serene in his judgements and his prophecies, brought light to my life.	And always Jesus, the Jesus of Nazareth who loved children, <b>the Jesus who had forgiveness for the penitent woman</b> ; who was as incapable of rancour in warning as in prophecy.

The translation of “Gesù indulgente verso la pentita” is translated in Lansdale and Delmar’s translation into a more general statement, which could presume their perception of “sin” as something that could be committed by everyone, men and women. Indeed, both translations, even though belonging to different periods of time, showed that God is indulgent and kind towards all penitents and not just women guilty of sin. This neutralisation, curiously, is not reported in the third translation. For instance, Segre and Carnell’s translation faithfully respected the source novel. Thus, Leonardi (2007) stated that it is commonplace to assert that male translators are less involved in interpreting the source text, keeping the source word or set of words identical in the target text.

Moreover, it could be said that Segre and Carnell’s translation offers a double gendered perspective, as a sort of mixture between a male point of view and a female one.

In this regard, it would be useful to analyse the following section of Aleramo’s novel, which belongs to the final part of the chapter.

Aleramo wrote one more time about each woman as subservient to her husband, but if the first two translations corresponded almost entirely to what Aleramo wrote, Segre and Carnell changed the meaning of the whole sentence.

Aleramo: 85	Lansdale: 203	Delmar: 113-114	Segre and Carnell: 124
E come può diventare una donna, se i parenti la dànno, ignara, debole, incompleta, a un uomo che non la riceve come sua eguale; ne usa come d'un oggetto di proprietà; <b>le dà dei figli coi quali l'abbandona sola,</b> mentr'egli compie i suoi doveri sociali, <b>affinché continui a baloccarsi come nell'infanzia?</b>	And how is she to become a woman if her parents deliver her, ignorant, weak, incomplete, into the hands of a man who does not regard her as an equal, treats her as he would a piece of property belonging solely to himself, <b>gives her children and then leaves her alone with them,</b> fulfilling his own social duties <b>and letting her continue to amuse herself in much the same way as when she was a child?</b>	But how could she possibly become an individual if her parents handed her over, ignorant, weak, and immature, to a man unable to accept her as an equal, a man who treated her like a piece of property, <b>giving her children and then abandoning her to perform his social duty,</b> leaving her at home to idle away her time - just as she had done as a child?	And how can she become a woman if her relatives hand her over ignorant, weak and immature to a man who does not receive her as an equal; who uses her like an object that he owns, gives her children which <b>he abandons to her sole care</b> while he fulfils his social duties, <b>and while he continues to childishly amuse himself?</b>

These two translations, indeed, show that it is not he who is playing, but ironically, it is the wife who assumes the role of caretaker for their children, reminiscent of her past nurturing of dolls. But in Segre and Carnell's translation, it is not she who is playing but the husband. Probably due to an error of understanding, this third translation may have shown a particular new insight of the paragraph. The husband, thus, is portrayed by Segre as a "perpetual child" who enjoys himself and neglects his responsibilities as a father, while the mother alone at home raises their children. This interesting theory may support the hypothesis that in the Segre and Carnell version of *A Woman*, the gender of translators may change the final product.

#### 4.3.3 An analysis of politically correct within the three translations

Segre and Carnell's translation could be considered as much concerned with new and contemporary topics such as gender equality and inclusion, thanks to some terms belonging to the sphere of politically correct language (Mukhametzyanova et al. 2017).

In a specific section, Aleramo wrote about what her sister’s boyfriend had done to organise the workers of the factory in which he worked too.

Aleramo: 83	Lansdale: 198	Delmar: 111	Segre and Carnell: 121
Il giovane che mia sorella amava s’era in quell’inverno impegnato in una lotta che gli aveva alienato del tutto l’animo di mio padre: organizzava gli <b>operai</b> della fabbrica, li univa per la resistenza; il socialismo penetrava mercé sua nel paese.	Meanwhile my sister’s lover had, during the preceding winter, initiated a struggle which was certain permanently to estrange him from my father. He had organised the <b>workmen</b> at the factory and had formed a defensive union.	That winter the young man my sister was now engaged to became involved in a struggle which finally turned my father against him: he was organising the <b>workers</b> in the factory into a trades union.	That winter the young man with whom my sister was in love had become involved in a struggle which completely alienated him from my father. He’d organized the factory <b>workers</b> , uniting them into a body that could take strike action -and thanks to him the town was beginning to register the influence of socialism.

Lansdale used the word “workmen” as a calque from the source text, which considered the “operai” as just men workers. Even though, according to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, the word “workman” was specifically used in the past to indicate manual workers. While the term “workers” may appear to be more gender-neutral, Lansdale may not have taken into account the presence of women working in the factory. Delmar and Segre and Carnell, instead, translated the word “operai” as “workers”, showing particular interest in ungendered language.

However, it could be still possible to hear the term “workman” used in certain contexts, particularly in industries or trades that have traditionally been male-dominated, but it is not as common usage as it was in the past. In general, though, it is more common to hear terms like “construction worker”, “factory worker” or “maintenance worker” instead of “workman”.

As another example, Delmar was particularly attached to women’s condition (The British Library) and to the social division. Particularly interested in gender and race equality, Delmar transposed this commitment in her translation and seems to reflect what Venuti argued about the translator’s background, who “cannot avoid a

fundamental ideological choice and what had been presented by other writers as simply a personal preference comes to be seen as a commitment” (Venuti cited in Leonardi 2011: 51). In a specific paragraph, it is possible to notice her translation which is the only one to differ from the others.

Aleramo: 86	Lansdale: 125	Delmar: 114	Segre and Carnell: 203-204
Quasi inavvertitamente il mio pensiero s’era giorno per giorno indugiato un istante di piú su questa parola: emancipazione che ricordavo d’aver sentito pronunciare nell’infanzia, una o due volte, da mio padre seriamente, e poi sempre con derisione da <b>ogni classe d’uomini e di donne</b> .	Almost without my knowing it my mind had dwelt day after day on that word “emancipation,” which I remembered to have heard uttered seriously once or twice by my father, when I was a child, and since then always in derision by <b>every class</b> of men and women.	Almost without my noticing it my eyes lingered a little longer each day over the word emancipation. I remembered it from childhood, having heard my father use it once or twice very seriously; since then I had heard it used derisively by <b>all kinds</b> of men and women.	Almost inadvertently I had each day lingered longer on a single word: emancipation. Which I recall having heard once or twice during my childhood, uttered seriously by my father - and spoken of with derision subsequently, by <b>every class</b> of man and woman alike.

Going beyond the global meaning of the part she is translating, it could be possible to see that Delmar was particularly focused on the elimination of class divisions. At the same time, both in Lansdale’s and Segre and Carnell’s translations, the term “class” is employed, namely “every class of man and woman alike” (Segre and Carnell: 125) and “every class of men and women” (Lansdale: 203-204).

Another example can be seen in another section of the twelfth chapter in which Aleramo wrote about the answer the factory owner gave to the protagonist when she was feeling like owning the factory in which she worked:

E correggendomi la mamma, il conte aveva soggiunto: «Lasci! E come il mio cocchiere che dice ‘i miei cavalli’ ».  
 La stizza che mi aveva invasa subitamente aveva anche scossa la mia concezione della società (Aleramo: 82).

The “conception of society” [concezione della società] is translated by Delmar as “the picture of social order”. Even though she did not distance the target text from the source one (Chamberlain 1988), she added a particular detail which is not found in the Italian novel. “La società” Aleramo wrote about, was not intended as the group of different social classes which together form the “society”, but the “strangeness” of a society in which a rich man is not interested in culture even though being rich.

Mother told me to be quiet, but the count remarked, “Oh, leave her alone. My coachman does the same. He talks about “my horses.” His remark made me very angry, but he had shattered my confident picture of the social order (Delmar: 109).

Instead, Delmar put, once more, the emphasis on the hierarchical order which did not allow people to be part of the same “society”, but who are separated by economical and social differences. However, Lansdale and Segre and Carnell respected the source text, using the strategy of the calque, keeping a neutral tone, to transpose this message, indeed, they both used “society”:

The anger which blazed up in me shook, at the same time, my conception of the framework of society! (Lansdale: 195).

The offence, which I felt immediately stung by, changed my conception of society (Segre and Carnell: 120).

As a matter of fact, Delmar made numerous additions to the text, perhaps to emphasise what Aleramo affirmed or, to show her involvement and both to give a more clear context to the American reader.

The history I learnt at school seemed to have no connection with my own experiences - I never imagined that people in the past might have been like me - it was more like a tapestry, a web of fairy tales, hanging before my imagination (Delmar: 108).

For instance, the sentence in brackets “I never imagined that people in the past might have been like me” did not exist in the source text, so maybe Delmar added it to express, one more time, the condition of uncertainty in which women lived.

Il passato non esisteva quasi per me, non andava oltre i miei nonni, cui sentivo accennar qualche volta; e la storia che m’insegnavano a scuola mi appariva non come la mia stessa esistenza prolungata all’indietro indefinitamente, ma figurava davanti alla mia fantasia come un arazzo, come una fantasmagoria (Aleramo: 81).

Stressing the doubt Aleramo had of the mere existence of her ancestors, Delmar aimed to show the readers that women were put in a sort of bubble with no connection with the external world.

Another form of sharing women’s past conditions can be found in the use of specific inclusive and respectful terms employed by Segre and Carnell. As previously stated, this third translation is highly characterised by words highlighting political correctness. Sometimes, as it is possible to notice, this employment of such words is not totally corroborated by the context in which they are found; a phrase used by Aleramo, whose meaning was a “wider perspective” of life, is changed in Segre and Carnell’s translation.

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 195	Delmar: 109	Segre and Carnell: 121
Più tardi il matrimonio aveva prodotto una specie di sosta nel mio sviluppo spirituale. Ed ecco che infine penetrava in me il senso di un’ <b>esistenza più ampia</b> , il mio problema interiore diveniva meno oscuro, s’illuminava del riflesso di altri problemi più vasti, mentre mi giungeva l’eco dei palpiti e delle aspirazioni degli altri uomini.	Later on my marriage had given a check to the development of my mind, but here, at last, the <b>sense of a wider life</b> had penetrated my being. My own personal problem grew less obscure as the light reflected from other, vaster, problems fell upon it, and an echo broke upon my ear of the longings and palpitations of others.	[...] Now, at last, I was discovering how important it was to have a <b>wider perspective</b> . My own problems seemed less obscure when I looked at them in the light of these larger issues.	[...] And now at last I was gaining a more <b>inclusive sense of existence</b> ; my personal problems were becoming less dark when seen in the light of other, more significant ones, as I was touched by the pulsating lives and aspirations of others.

Indeed, the term **inclusive**, much debated and used in contemporary times, may have been used within this third translation as not just a transposition of the italian “esistenza più ampia”, but as a term able to express that the protagonist, even though suffocated by her marriage, was trying to fight not just for herself, but for all individuals (empathy as a form of inclusiveness).

In general, it could be possible to notice that little changes happened between the three translations of Aleramo’s novel thanks to single words scattered throughout the twelfth

chapter. An example is given by an important word found in the Italian novel, that is, “adolescenza”.

Aleramo: 81	Lansdale: 192	Delmar: 108	Segre and Carnell: 119
Un silenzioso istinto mi faceva porre da parte i problemi sentimentali, mi teneva lontana anche dalle letture romantiche delle quali m'ero tanto compiaciuta nell' <b>adolescenza</b> .	Instinctively I let sentimental problems alone and ceased to read the romances which had so delighted me in my <b>girlhood</b> .	Some strong instinct made me put aside emotional problems and kept me away from the romantic novels I had enjoyed so much <b>as a girl</b> .	I instinctively put aside all sentimental problems and avoided anything resembling those romantic texts in which I had so delighted in my <b>adolescence</b> .

By examining the introductory paragraph of the twelfth chapter, which has been discussed earlier, it could be possible to gain new insights not only into the chronological variations of the translations, but more significantly, into the translators themselves. The Italian term “adolescenza” [adolescence], in fact, is used for both males and females in their pubescent age. However, both Lansdale and Delmar chose to emphasise (Baker 2011) the fact that she had to face difficult choices that had distanced her from her young age, precisely because she was a female.

These two forms “girlhood” and “as a girl”, may put a stress on how gender modified not just her future life as an adult woman, but that the changes started from a very early age. At the same time, this word could have a negative connotation if the activity of reading romantic novels is linked just to girls. By using the generic noun “adolescenza”, thus, Aleramo went beyond the boundaries put for women. In fact, maybe due to the contemporary times in which they lived, Segre and Carnell respected the Italian source, using the term “adolescence”.

But it could be also possible that this third translation was influenced by the male translator since, using the calque of “adolescenza”, the translators did not take a stand but decided to adopt the neutral approach to the source text.

It could be important to analyse other terms which could explain the time changes within the three translations. Despite not being part of two totally different socio-



cultural contexts, Delmar’s translation and the last one show little differences due to lexical changes over time.

In the twelfth chapter, Aleramo wrote “scapolo” [a man who is not married and who does not want to “tie the knot”] to indicate one of the doctors with whom she talked about several important topics.

Aleramo: 85	Lansdale: 201	Delmar: 113	Segre and Carnell: 123
Mi chiedevo ancora se erano esistiti e se esistevano rapporti intimi fra lui e mia cognata, e il solo sospetto mi riusciva umiliante. Ma come viveva egli scapolo?	[...] But why did he live a bachelor existence?	[...] All the same, how did he manage as a bachelor?	[...] Yet how could he live as a single man?

Thus, both Lansdale and Delmar translated the Italian word as “bachelor”, a dated term that indicated “a man who has never been married”, according to the Longman Dictionary.

Segre and Carnell, instead, perhaps decided to opt for a more modern word, namely “single”, perhaps to be more easily understandable by the English contemporary readers (Baker 2011: 99). Thanks to the word “single”, in fact, the two translators took distance from any form of judgement towards personal choices, but they transposed the meaning of the Italian novel for a new kind of audience, more inclusive and more focused on lexical correctness.

Another similar example, which could corroborate this hypothesis, lies in the decision to transform the Italian term “miserevole” as “impoverished”.

To indicate the poor part of society, Aleramo used the term “miserevoli popolazioni”, but the adjective “miserevoli” [miserable], according to the Treccani Online Dictionary, indicates a person “che è tale da suscitare pietà e compassione” [which arouses pity and compassion], so that section of society did not have, according to Aleramo, a sense of dignity because lacking money and so, lacking respectability.

Aleramo: 84	Lansdale: 199	Delmar: 112	Segre and Carnell: 122
Egli aveva studiato all'estero, aveva viaggiato, e, tornato nella sua regione da due anni per dirigere i lavori di un nuovo tronco ferroviario, aveva sentito il bisogno prepotente di tentare qualcosa per quelle miserevoli popolazioni, da cui egli era pur germinato.	He had studied in Germany; then, after travelling for a time, he had come home to direct the laying out of a line of new railroad, and had felt an overmastering desire to try to do something for the miserable population from which he had himself sprung.	His own family were workers, but he had travelled and studied abroad and when he returned to his home town two years earlier to supervise the construction of the railway line he had felt an overwhelming need to try and do something for the underprivileged people with whom he worked.	He had studied abroad, he had travelled, and having returned to his native region after two years in order to oversee the building of a new railway line, he had felt the urgent need to try to do something for that impoverished section of society from which he himself had come.

Segre and Carnell, instead, decided to only highlight the economical side, and not to include the sense of dignity which is not, in fact, given by money but by the inner self of a person. It could be stated that their technique, used several times, is a sort of generalisation (both modulation and adaptation) in order to try to neutralise the target text (Vinay et Deberlenet 1995).

As possible evidence of their interest in the politically correct, a comparison with the previous two translations could be created. Lansdale did not put specific attention on this topic, translating those words as they were written in the source text. Instead, Delmar wrote “underprivileged people”, a choice that could have been motivated by the changes she saw during the period in which she wrote but, also, to try to respect those people who did not choose to be poor; even here it is possible to see the stress on the hierarchical order which was not possible to face and overcome.

As previously stated, each translation followed a “*fil rouge*”, for this reason, it could be possible to state that while Delmar was particularly interested in avoiding any class division and in gender equality, Segre and Carnell tried, through their translation, to focus their attention on the respect for each social “category” (Levine 1991).

#### 4.3.4 How much the gender of translators can influence their translation

What is interesting to notice is that, instead of what Venuti (2000) affirmed about the translator's invisibility, it could be possible to affirm that all the translators analysed in this study showed some details and particularities that can demonstrate how a translator modifies and shapes the translation he/she is working on (Bucholtz et al. 1999).

According to some examples of the twelfth chapter, Delmar's translation could seem particularly careful to social issues as well as to the personal struggle the protagonist tried to face. These two elements are often blended and it could become difficult to separate them.

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 195	Delmar: 110	Segre and Carnell: 121
Ed ecco che infine penetrava in me il senso di un'esistenza più ampia, il mio problema interiore diveniva meno oscuro, s'illuminava del riflesso di altri problemi più vasti, mentre mi giungeva l'eco dei palpiti e delle aspirazioni degli altri uomini. Mercé i libri io non ero più sola, ero un essere che intendeva ed assentiva e <b>collaborava ad uno sforzo collettivo.</b>	[...] I was listening, and agreeing, and toiling in conjunction with <b>a great collective force.</b>	I began to feel the resonance of other people's lives and dreams. Thanks to my books I no longer felt alone. I felt that <b>instead</b> I was someone who could listen, sympathise, and <b>contribute to a collective struggle.</b>	[...] I was someone who could understand, sympathize and <b>collaborate with a collective struggle.</b>

In the paragraph in which Aleramo explained a sort of stream-of-consciousness of the protagonist, the translators dealt with the message given by the author in different ways. For instance, Lansdale stressed the wide new perspective Aleramo had of society, through the adjective "great", even though she still used the same syntactical structure Aleramo used remained faithful to Aleramo's original syntactical structure in the translation, preserving the literary style and expression that Aleramo employed. Instead, Delmar focused her attention on both the collective struggle and the protagonist's one. In particular, it is interesting to analyse the parenthetical "instead". In the source novel,

Aleramo explained how, thanks to books, she was now able to consider a general struggle, not just her own; but Delmar, using “instead”, put particular emphasis and impact to this phrase, using a marked information structure (Baker 2011).

One more time, instead, Segre and Carnell used a neutral tone, probably choosing not to put particular emphasis on the clause. By utilising the verb “to collaborate with”, Segre and Carnell did not stress Aleramo’s presence as a driving force that could have led the society around her to improve itself, but as one of the people within it, whose intention is to assist in some capacity without positioning herself at the forefront.

There is reason to think that sometimes, it is not difficult to find a switch in how things are “said” in Segre and Carnell’s translation, probably linked to the fact that some parts were translated by Segre and other ones by Carnell, so they showed a different way of “performing sexuality” (Butler 2004: 1). In support of this hypothesis, there is a specific sentence in which Aleramo wrote:

Aleramo: 81	Delmar: 108	Segre and Carnell: 120
Io non potevo quindi, in quel tempo, che riportarmi alla realtà immediata, e tutto m’era divenuto oggetto.	With this background all I could hope to do was to examine immediate reality, treating everything as an object of scrutiny.	At that time I could only relate therefore to my immediate reality, and everything in it had become a subject of investigation for me.

The stressed form “Io non potevo [...] che...” has the aim of explaining that, far from choosing, because of her little knowledge of the past, her only possibility to know the external society was to think about the immediate reality that existed around her; with no terms of comparison with the past, she was forced to live without roots in the past. In this particular case, it is possible to cite Meng (2004), who said that the author’s gendered perspective is reflected in the way he/she positions the work and expresses his/her attitudes towards femininity and masculinity.

Segre and Carnell’s translation, instead, is one more time rooted in the decision of not emphasising Aleramo’s words and preferred to use the unstressed form “I could only”.

Despite appearing similar to the source text, the change in emphasis can indeed be observed in Delmar’s translation. It is interesting to see that this phrasal form “All I could...” is used multiple times in Delmar’s translation.

Probably due to its strength and emphasis for what will be written after it, Delmar utilised the same emphatic language in another part of the twelfth chapter, where the protagonist was found in the only room in which she was allowed to live.

Ed ora? Non potevo andare fra il popolo, né rientrare in quell'ambiente il cui contatto mi era stato fatale; la mia reclusione, per forza d'abitudine, era diventata ormai così spontanea, che non si sarebbe potuta rompere senza sommuovere nuovamente l'esistenza della nostra casa. Dovevo limitarmi a raccogliere l'eco che saliva dalla strada alle mie stanzette (Aleramo: 83).

My habits of seclusion had by now become so natural that they couldn't be broken without disturbing our household routine yet again. All I could do was to sit in my room and listen to the noises from the street below (Delmar: 111).

In order to stress the few things the protagonist could do, Delmar's use of this wording highlights the portrayal of women being submissive to societal expectations of that period.

The emphasis Delmar put on different topics is also found in the section where Aleramo explained her loss of the sense of community.

Partita dalla città, piombata in paese incolto, avevo ben presto, **sotto l'esclusiva influenza di mio padre**, smarrito quel senso di larga fraternità che nei grandi centri è imperioso ed attivo, avevo concepito il mondo come un gruppo d'intelligenze servito da una moltitudine fatalmente ignara e pressoché insensibile (Aleramo: 81).

But when catapulted into a backward, rural environment I had become more and more **dominated by my father's ideas** and quickly lost that sense. I began to think, like him, that society was divided into two groups: one small, composed of superior intellects, the other much larger, made up of an invincibly ignorant and well-nigh insensitive mass of people whose job it was to serve the others (Delmar: 109).

In this particular case, Delmar stressed the fact that it was her father who, because of his ideas, eliminated the sense of community from Aleramo's vision of life. Thus, Delmar's use of the strong verb "dominated" underlined that because of her father, the protagonist lost her innate capacity to understand the other and her capacity to be empathic, and soon understood that the world is divided between who rules and who has to serve the ruler.

There is a possibility that Delmar could be particularly involved in the translation due to her "anger" towards Aleramo's father, who embodied the example of a sexist father totally unaware of her daughter's needs and thoughts. This stems from the fact that the

father had instilled his own thinking into the protagonist, disregarding her perspective. In this sense, Delmar's translation could be perceived as an accusation against the protagonist's father, and his way of educating the daughter, who consequently emerged as an oppressive presence for the protagonist. Nonetheless, Delmar's linguistic choice may also highlight that the common thought of women translators using powerless language is not as common as it was thought to be (O' Barr and Atkins' 1980). Aleramo's novel, for instance, did not stress this topic too much, but used the verb "influenzare" [to shape] to indicate her father's "pressure" on her. In contrast, Delmar's translation provided potential evidence to support this hypothesis, indicating a stronger focus on illustrating the impact of her father's influence.

Another example of Delmar's involvement can be seen in a syntactic choice she made in a specific paragraph of the twelfth chapter.

Increasingly I began to think that my neglect of the living world around me was a far more serious fault than my ignorance of the world of science and philosophy (Delmar: 111).

Il mio allontanamento dai volumi di scienza era una colpa assai meno grave di quella che consisteva nell'aver trascurato di gettar gli occhi sul grande libro della vita (Aleramo: 83).

Delmar changed the position of the two parts of the clause, putting at the beginning her "neglect of the living world around" her. Indeed, the translator decided to modify the syntactical order of the clause, in order to emphasise the protagonist's ignorance resulting from the social system that compels her to remain unaware of what exists around her.

The translator, as testified by multiple examples, preferred to underline pungent topics through the modification of syntax. When talking about the protagonist's stop of her "intellectual development", Delmar blamed the protagonist's marriage and its consequences over her life.

And then, when I married, my intellectual development stagnated altogether (Delmar: 109).

The translator emphasises how marriage is seen as a tool used for men to "constrain" women's minds. Nevertheless, Aleramo, blamed the protagonist's marriage as it had

become over time and not the institution in itself, instead Delmar criticised marriage as an imposition over women.

Più tardi il matrimonio aveva prodotto una specie di sosta nel mio sviluppo spirituale (Aleramo: 82).

Additionally, there is a specific paragraph in which Delmar added a short phrase, in order to stress the social division and “classification” that obliged people to remain within a hierarchical order for their whole life.

His own family were workers, but he had traveled and studied abroad, and when he returned to his hometown two years earlier to supervise the construction of the railway line, he had felt an overwhelming need to try and do something for the underprivileged people with whom he worked (Delmar: 112).

This specifically highlights that the family of the young sister’s fiancé belonged to a lower social class and emphasises that those labourers were “underprivileged” individuals he worked alongside.

Delmar’s commitment to the struggle to escape from social hierarchy can explain a harsh reality, this young man tried to improve his social condition through his studies and the travels he made, but his condition remained perpetually fixed within the social stratum, thus, poor with the poor and rich with the rich.

In contrast, Segre and Carnell’s translation could be the result of a “different historical context”, in fact, they wrote “he had come” to indicate that the young man had had the chance to move beyond that social situation, so this translation implies that social progress and advancement up the social ladder are possible.

He had studied abroad, he had travelled, and having returned to his native region after two years in order to oversee the building of a new railway line, he had felt the urgent need to try to do something for that impoverished section of society from which he himself had come (Segre and Carnell: 122).

Another example linked to Delmar’s way of transposing the source text, can be found in the sentence:

This meant that I thought about the people I met with exceptional intensity, and, without noticing, I developed a kind of commitment to humanity as a whole which was totally untheoretical (Delmar: 108-109).

The modifications made to the original text can be observed through the inclusion of the clause “the people I met”, suggesting a personal connection on the part of the translator. These additions introduced new elements not found in the original text.

*M'ero condotta a considerar di mia iniziativa l'essere umano con un'intensità eccezionale, formandomi con inconsapevoli sforzi un culto dell'umanità non del tutto teorico (Aleramo: 81).*

Additionally, Aleramo's analysis is centred on the broader human condition, while the protagonist in Delmar's version seemed to mirror the translator herself, as if she were Delmar's alter ego, who analyses the human being via her personal experiences (Cameron 1998).

#### **4.3.5 Punctuation marks and their changes within the three translations**

Analysing the three translations is also useful to understand that even punctuation marks may influence and be influenced by time and gender (Simon 2005). Thus, it is important to go beyond linguistic rules when analysing these orthographic choices, because they do not just respect linguistic rules, but they also follow translator's choices (Von Flotow 1997).

The first translation fully respects the source text in the number of sentences employed within the chapter, but what is particular to notice is Delmar's amount of sentences. She translated the chapter using 111 sentences, thus, maybe she wrote about 20 more sentences as a stylistic choice. Additionally, the case of Segre and Carnell, is also quite unusual, given that their translation counts 11 fewer sentences due to the absence of a whole paragraph. If one were to consider the absence of these sentences as an error and add the 11 sentences present in the original, the total number of sentences in the chapter would amount to 90, which is not significantly different from the count of sentences in the Italian work.

Secondly, it would be rather important to look at all kinds of punctuation marks within Aleramo's chapter and compare them with the three translations. The author used 9 exclamation marks, 8 question marks and 3 suspension points, but the three translations made several changes in its use.



There are many examples which could show the different approaches (Benjamin 1923) the translators used during the translational process.

One of the first changes which could be possible evidence of the translator's involvement is the change from the suspension points to an exclamation mark.

Aleramo: 85	Lansdale: 202	Delmar: 113	Segre and Carnell: 123
Ecco, anche questo giovane, che professava un tal rispetto per me e riconosceva delle verità superiori, conducendo una vita esemplare secondo le convenzioni sociali, aveva una vita segreta forse non confessabile...	Here, for example, was this young man, professing such respect for me, recognising the higher truths, and leading an exemplary life according to the conventions of society, yet, all the time, perhaps, following another, secret, unacknowledged existence!	Here was a young man who claimed to respect me so much and to respect high ideals, who led an exemplary life according to convention, yet he too had a secret life he would probably never openly acknowledge.	And so even this young man, who professed such respect for me and upheld superior standards, who conducted an exemplary life according to social convention, perhaps even he conducted a parallel, clandestine life that could not be mentioned...

While in Aleramo's version, the ellipsis underscore a doubt, but it doesn't seem to elicit judgement from the protagonist, in Lansdale's version, the exclamation point prevents the adverb of doubt "perhaps" from serving as an example of something that is revealed or not. On the contrary, it is immediately contradicted by the final exclamation point, which highlights the negative judgement towards a possible secret relationship.

In this particular case, Segre and Carnell respected the author's choice, instead Delmar, although changing the punctuation mark, put a full stop instead of an ellipsis.

Without questioning the possibility of the doctor having a hidden relationship, Delmar remains quite neutral. The period, in fact, does not emphasise the sentence, which remains a simple statement without judgments for or against the situation being discussed.

In general, it is possible to state that Delmar's translation seems to be the most neutral one, according to her use of punctuation marks since she only used 3 exclamation marks.

Malgrado la contrarietà di mio marito invitai il giovane ingegnere in casa mia. Come luccicavano gli occhi della fanciulla la prima volta che le feci trovar da me, senza preavviso, l'amato! (Aleramo: 83-84).

Although my husband opposed me, I invited the young man to visit our house, and my sister was overjoyed when she arrived one day and found him there! (Delmar: 111).

This translated part seems to faithfully respect the source text. Nonetheless, it is important to state that the aforementioned section does not fully respect Aleramo's punctuation choices.

Aleramo: 84	Delmar: 112
<p>Pensare, pensare! Come avevo potuto tanto a lungo farne senza? Persone e cose, libri e paesaggi, tutto mi suggeriva, ormai, riflessioni interminabili. Talune mi sorprendeivano, talaltre, ingenue, mi facevano sorridere; certe ancora recavano una tale grazia intrinseca, ch'ero tratta ad ammirarle <b>come se le vedessi espresse in nobili segni, destinate a commuovere delle moltitudini.</b> La loro varietà era infinita. Tanta ricchezza era in me? Mi dicevo che probabilmente essa non aveva nulla di eccezionale, che probabilmente tutti gli esseri ne recano una uguale nel segreto dello spirito e solo le circostanze impediscono che tutte vadano ad aumentare il patrimonio comune. Ma non ero persuasa dell'ipotesi. Tanta incoscienza e noncuranza erano intorno!</p>	<p>I was thinking! However could I have gone so long without it? Everything I looked at now -people and things, books and landscapes- triggered off an endless series of speculations. Some of my thoughts surprised me, others were so naïve they made me laugh, and yet others seemed so intrinsically interesting that I had to admire them!  <b>I seemed to possess an internal language eloquent enough to move millions.</b> The variety of my thoughts was infinite. Did I really possess such a wealth of ideas? [...]</p>

In this section the first exclamative mark is placed the same way Aleramo did, but the second one is placed in a way that the period may seem separated from the subsequent discourse. The emphasis that the second exclamation mark gives to the first part of the protagonist's stream of consciousness, let the reader concentrate on the first part of the discourse, avoiding too much attention to the second part of the text where the protagonist herself wonders about her inability to think and how she could have stayed

for so long without thinking, highlighting the possible richness of her soul, which could also be nothing special.

In summary, it could be said that, perhaps, Delmar tried to nullify any blame that the protagonist may place on herself. By creating an image of a girl completely overwhelmed by the male-dominated society surrounding her, Delmar may have sought to distance any feelings of guilt that could torment her inner self, which actually have no basis. However, in doing so, Delmar often modified the original meaning of the novel.

Another example can be shown in the absence of two exclamation marks in the final part of the text.

Ore solenni della mia vita, che il ricordo non potrà mai fissare distintamente e che pur rimangono immortali dinanzi allo spirito! Ore rivelatrici d'un destino umano piú alto, lontano nei tempi, raggiungibile attraverso gli sforzi di piccoli esseri incompleti, ma nobili quanto i futuri signori della vita! (Aleramo: 86).

These moments were intensely solemn. I will never recapture them exactly, but they still live within me -revelations of a higher human destiny, distant but nonetheless attainable through the efforts of those who might be weak and immature now, but still have that dignity which befits the future inheritors of the earth (Delmar: 114)

These omissions may be considered a deliberate choice to emphasise the closure of the protagonist's stream-of-consciousness that began with the analysis of the word "emancipation" and led to the conclusion that the struggles of these women will have repercussions on the fate of future individuals. Delmar, in fact, may have used a gentler tone, as if she wanted to give importance to the solemnity of the moment, where the protagonist elevated herself, distancing herself from the multitude that did not understand her.

The last interesting element that regards Delmar's translation lies in her choice of using a lot of question marks in the paragraph characterised by the explanation of God as great power and her subsequent turning to him.

Had I ever seriously considered the condition of the hundreds of workers my father employed? Had I ever thought seriously about the thousands of fishermen and their families who lived in hovels crowded together, not a stone's throw from my own house? And what did I think about the middle classes -the clergy, teachers, local administrators- and the aristocracy, people I knew who lived close by? Had I ever felt more than the most superficial curiosity about them? In my attempts to avoid both arrogance and

servility I had drifted between these social groups, feeling isolated from all of them (Delmar: 111).

Indeed, even in this passage, the translator may be seen as safeguarding the protagonist's image, particularly in the section of the text where, instead of stating that the protagonist's curiosity about the less privileged people was merely superficial, Delmar questioned whether her curiosity could have been something else, perhaps deeper.

Avevo mai considerato seriamente la condizione di quelle centinaia di operai a cui mio padre dava lavoro, di quelle migliaia di pescatori che vivevano ammucchiati a pochi passi da casa mia, di quei singoli rappresentanti della borghesia, del clero, dell'insegnamento, del governo, della nobiltà, che conoscevo da presso? Tutta questa massa umana non aveva mai attratto altro che la mia curiosità superficiale; senza esser superba né servile, io ero passata fra i due estremi poli dell'organizzazione sociale sentendome isolata (Aleramo: 83).

In fact the question "Had I ever felt more than the most superficial curiosity about them?" sounds less certain than "Tutta questa massa umana non aveva mai attratto altro che la mia curiosità superficiale" [All this mass of humanity had never aroused anything other than my superficial curiosity].

In general, the previous passage is characterised by many questions; the translator likely wanted to divide a sentence that is definitively too long, thus trying to draw attention to it by splitting it into three shorter sentences. This may have placed emphasis on the social and economic condition of the less privileged people, namely the factory workers and the fishermen, considered as a whole, but who still possessed their identity. Thus, the question mark between the two sentences forced the reader to pause and consider both the social conditions of the workers and the fishermen. Additionally, it can be stated that the second question mark further divided different social categories. While the workers and the fishermen are in two separate sentences, the third question mark is placed at the end of a commonality among the bourgeoisie, clergy, teachers, etc., and all the affluent individuals of the time.

One of the particularities of the punctuation marks found in the three translations is an exclamation mark put instead of a full stop by Lansdale.

I had shut this name into my heart, making it the occult symbol of perfection, though without worshipping it; happy simply in the knowledge that a *sommo* had once existed,

that the human creature could, if it would, rise until it should reach the ideal of divinity, the desire of the eternal! (Lansdale 195- 196).

Io avevo chiuso in petto quel nome, ne avevo fatto l'occulto simbolo della perfezione, senza adorarlo tuttavia, felice semplicemente di sapere che un sommo era esistito, che l'essere umano poteva, volendo, salire fino a rappresentare l'ideale della divinità, l'aspirazione all'eterno (Aleramo: 82).

As highlighted by the volume *Woman's Who's Who of America* (1914), Lansdale adhered to religious precepts, although her specific religious beliefs, whether Catholic or Protestant, are not known. Therefore, the exclamation mark near the word “eternal” may have indicated her strong religious belief that prompts her to emphasise Aleramo’s words regarding religious faith, highlighting divinity as an eternal figure that endures over time.

Another exclamation mark that Lansdale employed is found at the beginning of the twelfth chapter.

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 195	Delmar: 109	Segre and Carnell: 120
<p>Lasci! E come il mio cocchiere che dice ‘i miei cavalli’ ».</p> <p>La stizza che mi aveva invasa subitamente aveva anche scossa la mia concezione della società.</p>	<p>Let her alone; she’s like my coachman; he always speaks of ‘my horses!’”</p> <p>The anger which blazed up in me shook, at the same time, my conception of the framework of society!</p>	<p>[...]</p> <p>His remark made me very angry, but he had shattered my confident picture of the social order.</p>	<p>[...]</p> <p>The offence, which I felt immediately stung by, changed my conception of society.</p>

Instead of using the exclamation mark at the beginning of the clause, Lansdale decided to put two of them at the end of each sentence. Despite there being no significant change in emphasis in the sentence, the exclamation point placed immediately after “my horses” seems to give more emphasis to what the coachman is saying, rather than silencing the protagonist.

Lansdale may have used an exclamation point after the word “society” to indicate that the sentence had particularly shaken the protagonist. In this way, it could be possible to

notice that the translator may identify with the protagonist as what Aleramo's mother said "invaded" the protagonist so much that she opened her eyes to the society of the time; at the same time, being a woman, Lansdale may have well understood how a female individual lived surrounded by a patriarchal society.

Just as the coachman is in a subordinate position to the master who actually owns the horses, so the woman is subordinate to the man who truly holds the "power" (social, economic, and political).

Further evidence of this hypothesis is provided by the absence of the exclamation mark in the two subsequent translations which, however, respected the source text.

In both versions, thus, the tone of the sentence therefore appears assertive, probably due to their awareness of women's condition at the beginning of the 20th century.

## Chapter 5

### A corpus-based analysis of Lansdale's, Delmar's and Segre and Carnell's translations

The fourth chapter of the study tried to provide some examples of how time, gender and ideology may shape translation. Through a qualitative analysis of the three versions of Aleramo's novel *Una Donna*, the study tried to put the basis for another kind of examination, a quantitative analysis of the twelfth chapter, wherein contrasts and comparisons between Lansdale's, Delmar's and Segre and Carnell's translations and the source text will be made (Ladmiral 1994).

This chapter will specifically deal with the choices made by the author and examine to which extent these choices are respected by the translators, trying also to point out whether ideology, time and gender may have shaped their versions of *Una Donna*.

Conducting a quantitative analysis of the twelfth chapter of the novel *Una Donna* may limit capturing reliable and complete information. However, it could serve as a starting point to understand if and how these three factors influence the outcome of the translation process (Levine 1991).

#### **5. Method of analysis of the quantitative study**

For the corpus-based analysis, the AntConc software was employed to explore comparisons between the source text and its English versions. The main corpus consisted of the three translations of the twelfth chapter of Aleramo's *Una Donna* which, for some examinations, will be further divided into the three subcorpora which see Lansdale's, Delmar's and Segre and Carnell's translations separately.

The analysis focused on examining occurrences, concordances<sup>38</sup>, and n-grams<sup>39</sup> of specific lexical items. Frequency analysis provided a quantitative perspective, indicating the frequency of given words in the translations. Concordances were examined to gain

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<sup>38</sup> A concordance displays instances of the searched term along with their surrounding context. It provides a way to examine the occurrences of a word or phrase within the corpus and gain insights into its usage and collocations.

<sup>39</sup> An n-gram is a contiguous sequence of n items, typically words, within a text or a corpus. The "n" in n-gram represents the number of items in the sequence. The items can be individual words, characters, or even phonemes, depending on the context and the analysis being performed.

insights into the contextual usage of words and potential variations across translations. Moreover, n-grams were explored to identify possible patterns and associations among neighbouring words, potentially revealing recurring themes or linguistic choices.

In general, the aim of the chapter is to provide further evidence and support for the investigations conducted in the previous one, through the study of the semantic prosody, lexical choices and word repetitions.

### **5.1 A word list analysis of the three subcorpora**

As a starting point, it could be useful to analyse and compare the word lists, and the terms within them, of both the source text and its three translations.



Aleramo		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	di	64
2	e	46
3	la	43
4	il	41
5	che	40
6	una	33
7	mi	31
8	non	31
9	a	29
10	un	26
11	come	24
12	mia	24
13	mio	24
14	era	23
15	l	23
16	in	21
17	per	21
18	aveva	20
19	della	19
20	avevo	16
21	della	16
22	i	16
23	le	16
24	d	14
25	da	14
26	cui	11
27	io	11
28	ma	11
29	mi	11
30	con	110

(Figure 1a:  
Wordlist of top  
30 entries from  
Aleramo's  
source text)

Lansdale		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	the	138
2	of	118
3	to	87
4	In	76
5	my	68
6	a	58
7	and	57
8	had	50
9	in	45
10	was	31
11	me	30
12	that	28
13	as	25
14	which	24
15	for	22
16	he	19
17	but	17
18	it	15
19	with	15
20	at	14
21	his	13
22	and	12
23	were	12
24	all	11
25	by	11
26	from	11
27	her	11
28	own	11
29	this	11
30	been	10

(Figure 2a:  
Wordlist of top 30  
entries from  
Lansdale's  
translation)

Delmar		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	i	103
2	the	96
3	to	86
4	of	69
5	and	65
6	my	64
7	a	50
8	was	47
9	had	44
10	that	34
11	me	33
12	he	31
13	in	30
14	but	21
15	as	20
16	it	19
17	an	17
18	be	17
19	with	17
20	so	16
21	for	15
22	is	14
23	at	13
24	could	13
25	who	13
26	father	12
27	from	12
28	man	12
29	when	12
30	which	12

(Figure 3a:  
Wordlist of top  
30 entries from  
Delmar's  
translation)

Segre, Carnell		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	the	83
2	to	77
3	of	70
4	and	64
5	i	64
6	a	57
7	my	57
8	had	41
9	was	37
10	in	34
11	that	34
12	as	26
13	he	26
14	for	17
15	me	17
16	who	15
17	could	14
18	were	14
19	which	14
20	his	13
21	at	12
22	be	12
23	him	12
24	not	12
25	this	12
26	with	12
27	by	11
28	an	10
29	father	10
30	from	10

(Figure 4a:  
Wordlist of top 30  
entries from Segre  
and Carnell's  
translation)

Aleramo		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	padre	10
2	vita	8
3	amore	6
4	donna	6
5	giovane	5
6	casa	4
7	mondo	4
8	occhi	4
9	spirito	4
10	uomo	4
11	verità	4
12	anni	3
13	cristo	3
14	fabbrica	3
15	fronte	3
16	giorno	3
17	infanzia	3
18	libri	3
19	madre	3
20	nulla	3
21	parte	3
22	pensare	3
23	riflessioni	3
24	scienza	3
25	segreto	3
26	senso	3
27	sentivo	3
28	sociale	3
29	umanità	3
30	umano	3

(Figure 1b: Wordlist of top 30 entries from Aleramo's source text)

Lansdale		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	life	10
2	father	9
3	human	9
4	man	9
5	time	8
6	child	7
7	mind	7
8	alone	5
9	books	4
10	existed	4
11	eyes	4
12	humanity	4
13	love	4
14	old	4
15	sense	4
16	truth	4
17	woman	4
18	world	4
19	children	3
20	christ	3
21	class	3
22	creature	3
23	day	3
24	doctor	3
25	factory	3
26	force	3
27	ignorant	3
28	jesus	3
29	mother	3
30	natural	3

(Figure 2b: Wordlist of top 30 entries from Lansdale's translation)

What is important to note is that besides prepositions, conjunctions, verbs, and articles, there are no content words in the Italian text within the top 30 entries. This list can be compared to that of Lansdale's translation, where we see content words present in figures 3 and 4. In the case of Segre and Carnell (figure 4), the word "father" appears in position 29, while in Delmar (figure 3), there are two content words: "father" and "man", respectively in positions 26 and 28. These content words may begin to shape a quantitative analysis of the textual content of the chapter, according to the translator's approach. For this reason, a table showing the top 30 entries of content words can be useful in understanding Aleramo's source text and how it has been reflected in its three translations.

Delmar		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	father	12
2	man	12
3	people	10
4	women	7
5	life	6
6	social	6
7	thoughts	6
8	sister	5
9	think	5
10	time	5
11	young	5
12	books	4
13	christ	4
14	human	4
15	love	4
16	mother	4
17	sense	4
18	workers	4
19	believe	3
20	child	3
21	children	3
22	everyone	3
23	factory	3
24	house	3
25	ideas	3
26	ignorance	3
27	individual	3
28	intellectual	3
29	need	3
30	secret	3

(Figure 3b: Wordlist of top 30 entries from Delmarr's translation)

Segre, Carnell		
Entries	Wordlist	Freq
1	father	10
2	love	7
3	man	7
4	woman	6
5	women	6
6	life	5
7	sister	5
8	existence	4
9	factory	4
10	human	4
11	humanity	4
12	mind	4
13	mother	4
14	sense	4
15	social	4
16	time	4
17	truth	4
18	books	3
19	children	3
20	everyone	3
21	history	3
22	jesus	3
23	old	3
24	past	3
25	society	3
26	struggle	3
27	think	3
28	thought	3
29	weak	3
30	young	3

(Figure 4b: Wordlist of top 30 entries from Segre and Carnell's translation)

The first thirty content words of Chapter 12 in Aleramo's novel undoubtedly highlight the core themes, including social issues ("umanità", "umano", "sociale"), gender dynamics ("donna", "uomo", "giovane"), and the predominance of the father figure over the protagonist ("padre", "madre"). Notably, the words holding the first to fourth positions in terms of frequency, may suggest that the father is the central figure from which everything else in the narrative unfolds. Additionally, it is interesting to observe that the terms "humanity" and "human", although appearing towards the end, are still among the top thirty content words.

Found in fourth position in Aleramo's wordlist, it is possible to add that in the case of Segre and Carnell, the terms "woman/en" occupy the fourth and fifth positions in terms of frequency, thus placing more emphasis on the female figure. This is in contrast to Lansdale's translation, where the word "donna" [woman] used by Aleramo is bypassed,

and instead, the word “man” is highlighted, possibly to further stress the male figure as a leader.

Indeed, a similar process is carried out by Delmar, who places great emphasis on the male figure through the use of words such as “father”, “man”, which occupy the first two positions in terms of frequency, while the word “woman” follows closely in the fourth position, but is still found after the term “man”.

## 5.2 An analysis of the personal pronoun “I”

The analysis of the personal pronoun “I” is indeed an important element to consider in the lexical analysis. In the Italian novel, the personal pronoun “Io” [I] is found in the 27th position of the wordlist, indicating that the protagonist is undeniably the central character in the twelfth chapter, as previously stated.

This use of the pronoun “I” maintains a similar high frequency across all three translations, therefore, it is important to analyse the concordances that characterise this pronoun “Io” also to understand how it was used.

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Aleramo.docx	iore degli uomini, il maestro della sincerità e dell'amore, il martire della propria coscienza.	io	avevo chiuso in petto quel nome, ne avevo fatto l'occulto simbolo della perfezione, senza
Aleramo.docx	me conosciute, eravamo degli esemplari. E come un religioso sgomento m'aveva invasa.	io	avevo sentito di toccare la soglia della mia verità, sentivo ch'ero per svelare a me stessa il s
Aleramo.docx	on aveva mai attratto altro che la mia curiosità superficiale; senza esser superba né servile,	io	ero passata fra i due estremi poli dell'organizzazione sociale sentendome isolata. Non av
Aleramo.docx	adolescenza. La questione sociale invece non aveva nulla di pericoloso per la mia fantasia.	io	ero passata nella vita portando meco un'inconcepibile confusione di principi umanitari, s
Aleramo.docx	asti, mentre mi giungeva l'eco dei palpiti e delle aspirazioni degli altri uomini. Mercé i libri	io	non ero più sola, ero un essere che intendeva ed assentiva e collaborava ad uno sforzo coll
Aleramo.docx	tamente, ma figurava davanti alla mia fantasia come un arazzo, come una fantasmagonia.	io	non potevo quindi, in quel tempo, che riportarmi alla realtà immediata, e tutto m'era dive
Aleramo.docx	io la mia attenzione. Mi accorgevo con lento stupore di non essermi mai prima chiesta se	io	avessi qualche responsabilità di quanto mi urtava o mi impietosiva nel mondo circostante
Aleramo.docx	a priori; le idee vivevano, palpitavano nel giovane, ed ella non poteva distinguerle da lui.	io	discutevo, m'infervoravo. Lenta nell'espressione, per amor di sincerità e di esattezza, inesp
Aleramo.docx	elle inerti, delle rassegnate, il tipo di donna plasmato nei secoli per la soggezione, e di cui	io,	le mie sorelle, mia madre, tutte le creature femminili da me conosciute, eravamo degli ese
Aleramo.docx	nti alla mia anima, figura ideale che mi pareva di veder offuscarsi di tristezza ogni volta ch'	io	mi allontanavo dalla bontà e dalla verità. Dopo mesi, forse dopo anni di smarrimento, io r
Aleramo.docx	io mi allontanavo dalla bontà e dalla verità. Dopo mesi, forse dopo anni di smarrimento,	io	rivedevo il sorriso di Cristo su la mia strada, e mi rivolgevo a lui come a una fonte d'

(Figure 5: 11 collocations of the personal pronoun “Io”)

Firstly, it should be emphasised that in the Italian language, the personal pronoun “Io” [I] is not mandatory, but also that there is a substantial amount of descriptions and personal reflections, which are also reported in the three translations (see below).

Hit	KWIC	File
1	thers had an intrinsic grace that I admired as if I had seen them expr	Segre and C.
2	was the monster to be defeated. I also began to wonder whether a si	Delmar.txt
3	of subordination; the kind which I and my sisters and my mother, anc	Segre and C.
4	dn't distinguish them from him. I argued with him, growing passion	Delmar.txt
5	ot separate them from him. But I argued with him, becoming more a	Lansdale.txt
6	ificance, to attract my attention. I asked myself, with slowly awakeni	Lansdale.txt
7	ite of my husband's objections, I at once invited the young man to c	Lansdale.txt
8	think, to use my mind! How had I been able to go on for so long	Lansdale.txt
9	by all kinds of men and women. I began to compare these brave reb	Delmar.txt
10	the light of these larger issues. I began to feel the resonance of othe	Delmar.txt
11	tribute to a collective struggle. I began to feel that all human pain w	Delmar.txt
12	orate with a collective struggle. I began to feel that humanity suffer	Segre and C.
13	deas and quickly lost that sense. I began to think, like him, that soci	Delmar.txt
14	ed observer of life. Increasingly I began to think that my neglect of t	Delmar.txt
15	they sought to overthrow. Then I began to wonder if some share, an	Lansdale.txt
16	as they were pitted against. And I began to wonder whether a not ins	Segre and C.
17	challenged; in the first instance, I believe, as the result of an incident	Segre and C.
18	opposition to the class to which I belonged. He had studied in Germ	Lansdale.txt
19	ontation with the class to which I belonged. He had studied abroad, I	Segre and C.
20	ploited them- the class to which I belonged. His own family were wo	Delmar.txt

(Figure 6: Corpus of the 3 translations showing 20 concordances with the personal pronoun “I” )

As a possible example, the 20 concordance lines taken into consideration may reflect Aleramo’s choice of giving to the reader the idea that the protagonist is following her personal thoughts and emotions in a sort of silenced stream-of-consciousness. For instance, concordances such as “I asked myself” (line 6, Lansdale)<sup>40</sup> or “I began to compare” (line 9, Delmar)<sup>41</sup>, and even “ I began to wonder” (line 16, Segre and Carnell)<sup>42</sup>, may globally reflect the source text choice of considering the main character as a woman who can only speak with herself. Aleramo’s choice of depicting a female who cannot express her point of view and, thus, has to make room for silenced inner thoughts, may be seen in sentences such as:

<sup>40</sup> From the source text: “Mi accorgevo con lento stupore di non essermi mai prima chiesta se io avessi qualche responsabilità di quanto mi urtava o mi impietosiva nel mondo circostante” (Aleramo: .

<sup>41</sup> From the source text: “Indi avevo paragonato a quelle ribelli la gran folla delle inconsapevoli, delle inerti, delle rassegnate, il tipo di donna plasmato nei secoli per la soggezione, e di cui io, le mie sorelle, mia madre, tutte le creature femminili da me conosciute, eravamo degli esemplari”(Aleramo: .

<sup>42</sup> From the source text: “E incominciai a pensare se alla donna non vada attribuita una parte non lieve del male sociale” (Aleramo:

Aleramo: 85	Lansdale: 202	Delmar: 113	Segre, Carnell: 124
E <b>incominciai a pensare</b> se alla donna non vada attribuita una parte non lieve del male sociale.	Then <b>I began to wonder</b> if some share, and not a light share, either, of the evils of society were not to be laid at the door of the women.	<b>I also began to wonder</b> whether a sizeable portion of social evils might not be the responsibility of women.	And <b>I began to wonder</b> whether a not insignificant part of what was wrong with society might be attributed to women.

Aleramo: 85	Lansdale: 203	Delmar: 114	Segre, Carnell: 124
Dacché avevo letto uno studio sul movimento femminile in Inghilterra e in Scandinavia, <b>queste riflessioni si sviluppavano nel mio cervello</b> con insistenza.	Ever since reading a study of the feminist movement in England and Scandinavia <b>these reflections had been revolving persistently in my brain.</b>	After I had read a book on the women's movement in England and Scandinavia, <b>thoughts like these kept coming insistently to my head.</b>	Ever since I had read a study of the women's movement in England and Scandinavia, <b>these thoughts had been running insistently through my mind.</b>

Aleramo: 82	Lansdale: 215	Delmar: 110	Segre, Carnell: 121
<b>Mercé i libri io non ero piú sola</b> , ero un essere che intendeva ed assentiva e collaborava ad uno sforzo collettivo.	<b>Thanks to books I was no longer alone:</b> I was listening, and agreeing, and toiling in conjunction with a great collective force.	<b>Thanks to my books I no longer felt alone.</b> I felt that instead I was someone who could listen, sympathise, and contribute to a collective struggle.	<b>Thanks to books, I was no longer isolated,</b> I was someone who could understand, sympathize and collaborate with a collective struggle.

Sometimes it may be found that some translator's choices emphasised the perception of the society surrounding Aleramo, making the protagonist less self-assured. Indeed, if Aleramo manages to create a fine balance between her insecurity and the certainty she

had in her abilities, some verbs that the translators used convey a sense of doubt and insecurity that characterise the protagonist.

For instance, if we consider the source text, the pronoun “Io” within the lines of concordances 5, 6, 8, 10 (figure 4) collocates with the verbs: “non ero”, “non potevo”, “discutevo” and “mi allontanavo”. These verbs, though depicting a “lonely” woman, do not highlight any feeling of uncertainty.

On the other hand, the three translations sometimes fail to capture this equilibrium, resulting in a loss of balance. The lines of concordances 2 and 9 to 16 (figure 6) are characterised by “ I began to (compare, feel, think, wonder)”, a verb that is used by all the translators and that, perhaps, put further stress on the protagonist’s doubtfulness, done that Aleramo’s source text expressed more self insurance of the protagonist:

**Sentivo** che questa umanità soffriva per la propria ignoranza e la propria inquietudine [...] (Aleramo: 82).

Ed ecco che infine penetrava in me il senso di un’esistenza più ampia, il mio problema interiore **diveniva** meno oscuro, [...] (Aleramo: 82).

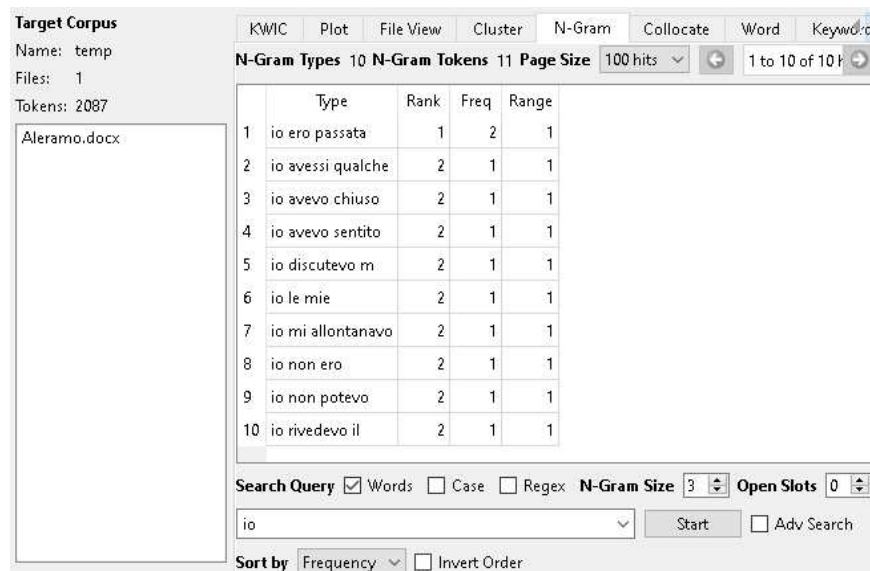
Indi **avevo paragonato** a quelle ribelli la gran folla delle inconsapevoli, delle inerti, delle rassegnate, [...] (Aleramo: 86).

For instance, “I began to ...”, may express the beginning of a feeling, as if even the protagonist herself was not sure of her emotions and sentiments. Indeed, even the sixth line of concordance, “I asked myself”, as Lansdale translated, may be useful to support this idea of insecurity, since the terms immediately subsequent are “[...] with slowly awakening wonder, if I were in no way responsible”.

That sense of self-doubt sets the foundation for further analysis of the personal pronoun accompanied by verbs that indicate the uncertainty the protagonist experiences.

As possible evidence for this hypothesis, the examination of n-grams in the twelfth chapter may be useful.





(Figure 7: N-grams with the pronoun “io”, within the twelfth chapter of Aleramo’s source text)

Based on the given phrases (figure 7) containing the personal pronoun “io” and referring to personal thoughts, actions, or perceptions, it could be possible to assume that the resulting n-grams might pertain to introspection or the inner world of the narrator. For example, one n-gram could be related to the author’s thoughts or personal reflections about herself, as indicated by phrases like “**io ero passata nella vita portando meco un’inconcepibile confusione di principii umanitari**”, “**Mercé i libri io non ero piú sola**, ero un essere che intendeva ed assentiva e collaborava ad uno sforzo collettivo”, etc. Another n-gram could highlight the actions performed by the narrator, as suggested by phrases like “io ero passata”, “io avevo chiuso”, “io avevo sentito”, “io discutevo”, etc., according to which the protagonist may be starting to perceive herself as a complete individual, and as a result, she undergoes a transformation into an adult woman who can think and express her own opinions.

### 5.3 Reflection on the content terms “father”, “mother”, “woman/en”, “man/en” in the novel and its three English translations

As the twelfth chapter seems characterised by a strong male presence, including the protagonist’s father, her husband, her brother-in-law, and various male figures surrounding her, a quantitative analysis of the content terms “father”, “mother”,

“woman/en”, “man/en” may reveal some important insight about which kind of role the male figure plays in Aleramo’s life and how the translators perceived it.

When examining each translation’s subcorpus, it is interesting to note that the word “father” ranks first in the scale of frequency (figures 13, 14 and 15) if compared to the other three terms: “mother”, “woman/en”, “man/en”.

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
31 ero	30	10	1	4791.567	1.000
32 padre	30	10	1	4791.567	1.000
33 alla	33	9	1	4312.410	1.000
34 delle	33	9	1	4312.410	1.000
35 gli	33	9	1	4312.410	1.000
36 m	33	9	1	4312.410	1.000

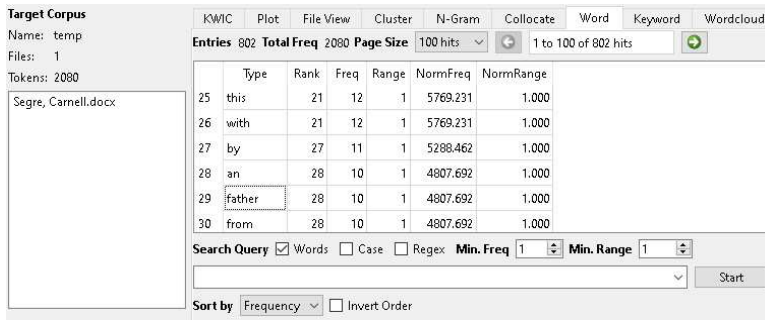
(Figure 8: position of the term “father” within Aleramo’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
29 this	24	11	1	4396.483	1.000
30 been	30	10	1	3996.803	1.000
31 life	30	10	1	3996.803	1.000
32 not	30	10	1	3996.803	1.000
33 father	33	9	1	3597.122	1.000
34 him	33	9	1	3597.122	1.000

(Figure 9: position of the term “father” within Lansdale’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
23 at	23	13	1	5412.157	1.000
24 could	23	13	1	5412.157	1.000
25 who	23	13	1	5412.157	1.000
26 father	26	12	1	4995.837	1.000
27 from	26	12	1	4995.837	1.000
28 man	26	12	1	4995.837	1.000

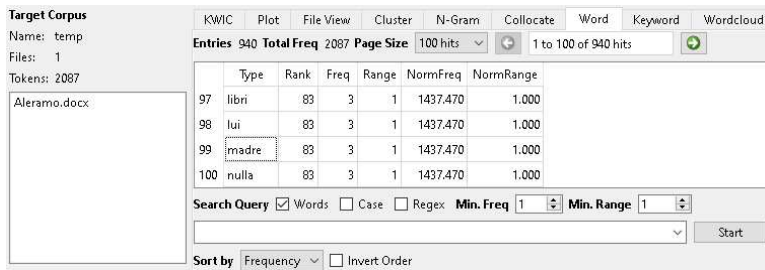
(Figure 10: position of the term “father” within Delmar’s twelfth chapter wordlist)



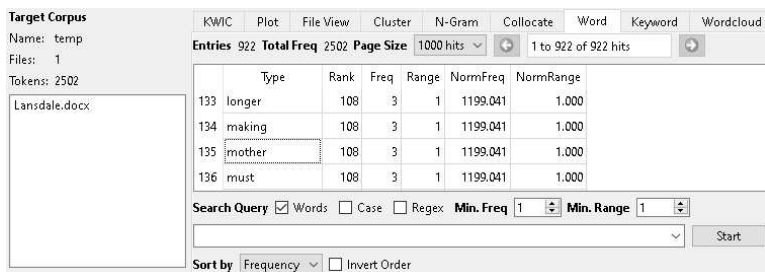
(Figure 11: position of the term “father” within Segre and Carnell’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

Looking at the 4 figures above, it is possible to see that Segre and Carnell (figure 11) faithfully respected the frequency of the term “father” found in Aleramo’s source text. Instead, the figure 10, shows that the term “father” is found at the 26th position of the rank scale and it is two times more than Aleramo’s text. Lansdale seems to be very similar to Aleramo’s choices (figure 9).

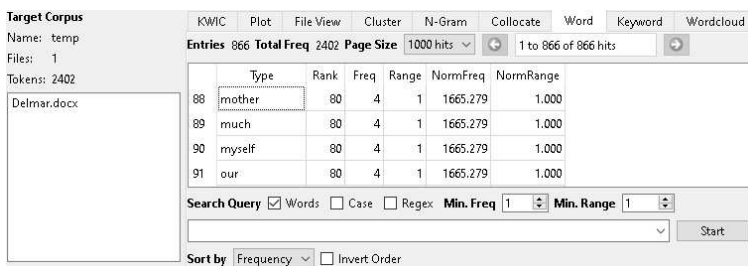
Additionally, the words “father” and “mother” may be compared.



(Figure 12: position of the term “mother” within Aleramo’s twelfth chapter wordlist)



(Figure 13: position of the term “mother” within Lansdale’s twelfth chapter wordlist)



(Figure 14: position of the term “mother” within Delmar’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

Target Corpus  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2080  
Segre, Carnell.docx

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
73 mind	64	4	1	1923.077	1.000
74 more	64	4	1	1923.077	1.000
75 mother	64	4	1	1923.077	1.000
76 myself	64	4	1	1923.077	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Min. Freq 1 Min. Range 1

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

(Figure 15: position of the term “mother” within Segre and Carnell’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

In general, it can be argued that the paternal figure is much more present than the maternal figure within the chapter. This could be reflected more broadly in the comparison between men and women, highlighting how the twelfth chapter does not centre the narrative around the protagonist but rather emphasises the overwhelming presence of the father and male figures in general. Indeed, a quantitative analysis of the terms “woman/en” and “man/en” could provide new insights.

Target Corpus  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2087  
Aleramo.docx

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
48 donna	47	6	1	2874.940	1.000
49 mai	47	6	1	2874.940	1.000
50 nel	47	6	1	2874.940	1.000
51 nella	47	6	1	2874.940	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Min. Freq 1 Min. Range 1

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

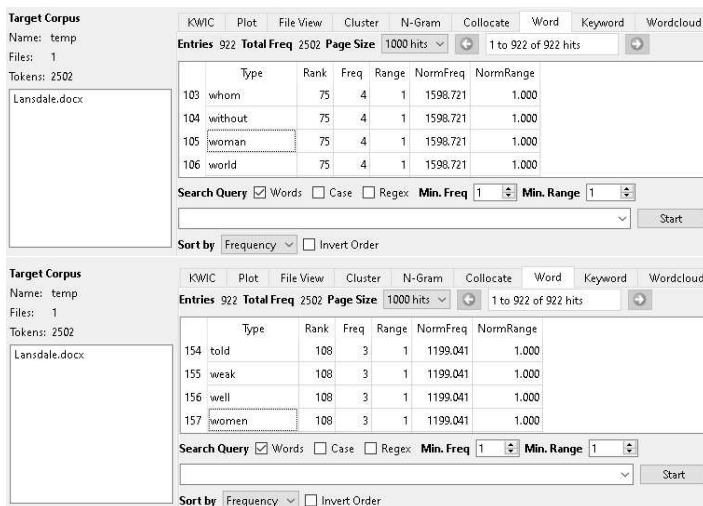
Target Corpus  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2087  
Aleramo.docx

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
410 divenuto	234	1	1	479.157	1.000
419 divinità	234	1	1	479.157	1.000
420 dolore	234	1	1	479.157	1.000
421 donne	234	1	1	479.157	1.000

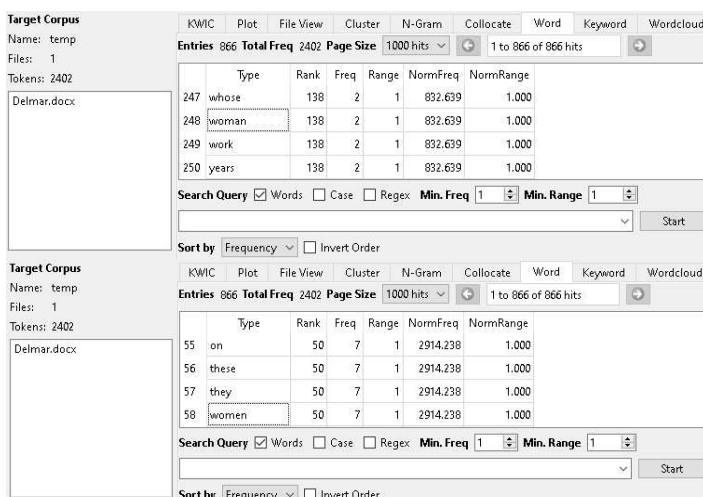
Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Min. Freq 1 Min. Range 1

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

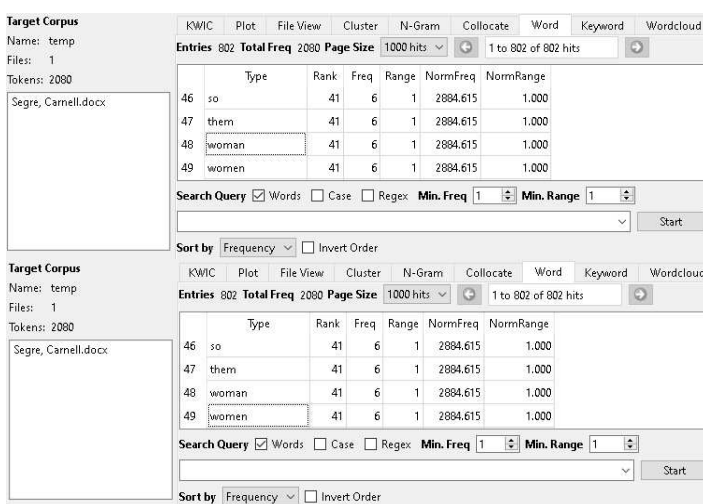
(Figure 16: position of the term “woman/en” within Aleramo’s twelfth chapter wordlist)



(Figure 17: position of the term “woman/en” within Lansdale’s twelfth chapter wordlist)



(Figure 18: position of the term “woman/en” within Delmar’s twelfth chapter wordlist)



(Figure 19: position of the term “woman/en” within Segre and Carnell’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

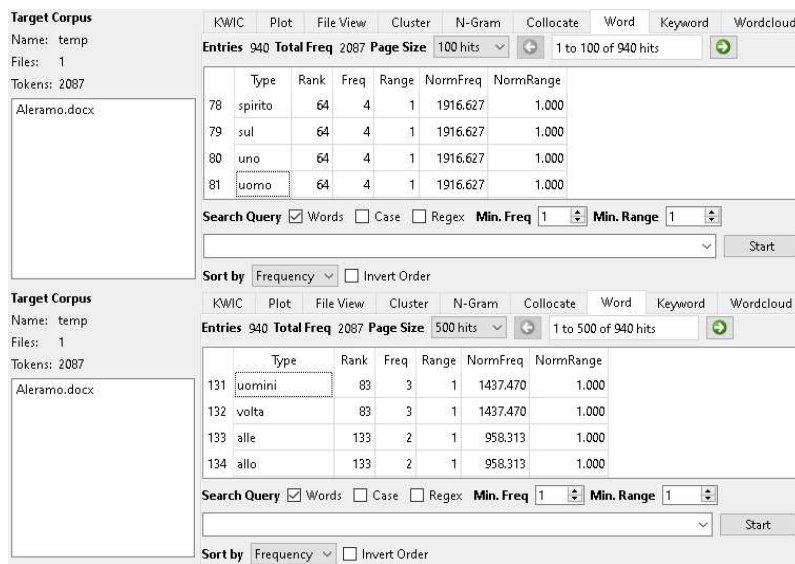
Although there are no significant differences among the three translators, the two most recent translations show that the word “mother” is used one more time (6 times in total)

than in the original (figures 18 and 19), which advances its ranking position, placing it within the top 90 positions. This is unlike Aleramo’s original text, where the word is in the 99th position of the rank scale (figure 16).

The combined frequency of the words “donna” [woman] and “donne” [women] in Aleramo’s original text is 7 (figure 16). While Lansdale’s translation faithfully preserves the total number of repetitions of these words (figure 17), and Delmar does not deviate significantly from the original text with only two additional repetitions (figure 18) the translation that draws more attention is Segre and Carnell’s.

In this particular case, while the word “woman” [donna] is repeated six times (figure 19), exactly like in Aleramo’s text, the word “women” [donne] instead, is used five times more in Segre and Carnell’s translation (figure 19).

The analysis can be further deepened by comparing the words “donna/donne” [woman/women] and “uomo/uomini” [man/men].



(Figure 20: position of the term “man/en” within Aleramo’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

The total usage of the words “uomo/uomini” in Aleramo’s text does not deviate from the total number of occurrences of “donna/donne”. It can be said that the terms are balanced within the chapter. However, it appears that Aleramo does not place particular emphasis on these terms. Instead, the terms “father” and “mother” may hold notable significance, according to their usage, emphasising the protagonist’s perception of the parent-daughter relationship.

**Target Corpus**  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2502  
Lansdale.docx

KWIC Plot File View Cluster N-Gram Collocate Word Keyword Wordcloud  
**Entries** 922 **Total Freq** 2502 **Page Size** 1000 hits 1 to 922 of 922 hits

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
man	33	9	1	3597.122	1.000
on	33	9	1	3597.122	1.000
so	33	9	1	3597.122	1.000
about	40	8	1	3197.442	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex **Min. Freq** 1 **Min. Range** 1 Start

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

**Target Corpus**  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2502  
Lansdale.docx

KWIC Plot File View Cluster N-Gram Collocate Word Keyword Wordcloud  
**Entries** 922 **Total Freq** 2502 **Page Size** 1000 hits 1 to 922 of 922 hits

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
meditation	265	1	1	399.680	1.000
melancholy	265	1	1	399.680	1.000
memory	265	1	1	399.680	1.000
men	265	1	1	399.680	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex **Min. Freq** 1 **Min. Range** 1 Start

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

(Figure 21: position of the term “man/en” within Lansdale’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

**Target Corpus**  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2402  
Delmar.docx

KWIC Plot File View Cluster N-Gram Collocate Word Keyword Wordcloud  
**Entries** 866 **Total Freq** 2402 **Page Size** 1000 hits 1 to 866 of 866 hits

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
who	23	13	1	5412.157	1.000
father	26	12	1	4995.837	1.000
from	26	12	1	4995.837	1.000
man	26	12	1	4995.837	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex **Min. Freq** 1 **Min. Range** 1 Start

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

**Target Corpus**  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2402  
Delmar.docx

KWIC Plot File View Cluster N-Gram Collocate Word Keyword Wordcloud  
**Entries** 866 **Total Freq** 2402 **Page Size** 1000 hits 1 to 866 of 866 hits

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
mass	138	2	1	832.639	1.000
meaning	138	2	1	832.639	1.000
men	138	2	1	832.639	1.000
most	138	2	1	832.639	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex **Min. Freq** 1 **Min. Range** 1 Start

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

(Figure 22: position of the term “man/en” within Delmar’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

**Target Corpus**  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2080  
Segre, Carmell.docx

KWIC Plot File View Cluster N-Gram Collocate Word Keyword Wordcloud  
**Entries** 802 **Total Freq** 2080 **Page Size** 1000 hits 1 to 802 of 802 hits

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
been	37	7	1	3365.385	1.000
how	37	7	1	3365.385	1.000
love	37	7	1	3365.385	1.000
man	37	7	1	3365.385	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex **Min. Freq** 1 **Min. Range** 1 Start

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

**Target Corpus**  
Name: temp  
Files: 1  
Tokens: 2080  
Segre, Carmell.docx

KWIC Plot File View Cluster N-Gram Collocate Word Keyword Wordcloud  
**Entries** 802 **Total Freq** 2080 **Page Size** 1000 hits 1 to 802 of 802 hits

Type	Rank	Freq	Range	NormFreq	NormRange
marriage	224	1	1	480.769	1.000
martyr	224	1	1	480.769	1.000
men	224	1	1	480.769	1.000
mere	224	1	1	480.769	1.000

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex **Min. Freq** 1 **Min. Range** 1 Start

Sort by Frequency  Invert Order

(Figure 23: position of the term “man/en” within Segre and Carnell’s twelfth chapter wordlist)

However, the lexical choice of Aleramo is not respected in the first two translations. While Segre and Carnell (figure 23) adhere as closely as possible to the source text, with just one additional repetition of the term, Lansdale (figure 21) and Delmar (figure 22) go further. As possible evidence, highlighting both their ideology and their gender, the two translators add 2 and 7 terms respectively compared to the original.

Based on the data provided, Delmar’s translation reflects a heightened focus on the female question. By significantly increasing the usage of the terms “man/men”, Delmar may have intentionally amplified the presence of the male figures within the chapter and potentially throughout the entire novel.

An illustrative example to reinforce the dominance of the male figure within the chapter, particularly the prevailing presence of the father, can be found in a comparison of verbs associated with the word “father”.

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 Aleramo.docx	o in segreto l'amore dei miseri, pur ascoltando le teorie autocratiche di mio	padre,	I miei componenti contenevano in proposito degli squarci retorici, che m
2 Aleramo.docx	one tutti tenevan tanto! Tutti si accontentavano: mio marito, il dottore, mio	padre,	i socialisti come i preti, le vergini come le meretrici: ognuno portava la sua n
3 Aleramo.docx	altri per spingere più innanzi la conquista. Un giorno della mia infanzia mio	padre	mi aveva parlato di Cristo. Mi aveva detto ch'era stato il migliore degli uomini
4 Aleramo.docx	sospetto mi riusciva umiliante. Ma come viveva egli scapolo? Il caso di mio	padre	mi faceva fermar l'attenzione sul fatto sessuale e ne traevo riflessioni amare.
5 Aleramo.docx	considerato seriamente la condizione di quelle centinaia di operai a cui mio	padre	dava lavoro, di quelle migliaia di pescatori che vivevano ammucchiati a poc
6 Aleramo.docx	a, un blasonato milionario. Questi aveva sfogliato una rivista alla quale mio	padre	era abbonato. La trovava bella, ma « troppo cara ». Ciò aveva ai miei occhi ir
7 Aleramo.docx	verno impegnato in una lotta che gli aveva alienato del tutto l'animo di mio	padre:	organizzava gli operai della fabbrica, li univa per la resistenza; il socialismo p
8 Aleramo.docx	a, li univa per la resistenza; il socialismo penetrava mercè sua nel paese. Mio	padre	proibì alle due ragazze di riceverlo più oltre in casa. La fidanzata era smarrita
9 Aleramo.docx	ricordavo d'aver sentito pronunciare nell'infanzia, una o due volte, da mio	padre	seriamente, e poi sempre con derisione da ogni classe d'uomini e di donne.
10 Aleramo.docx	imbata in paese incolto, avevo ben presto, sotto l'esclusiva influenza di mio	padre,	smarrito quel senso di larga fraternità che nei grandi centri è imperioso ed at

(Figure 24: concordances of the term “padre” within Aleramo’s twelfth chapter)



File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Lansdale.docx	g humiliating me. But why did he live a bachelor existence? The case of my	father	had opened up many questions to my mind, and I had deduced therefrom :
Lansdale.docx	that they might push forward the conquest. Once, when I was a child, my	father	had spoken to me about Christ. He told me that he had been better than an
Lansdale.docx	small provincial place, I came almost exclusively under the influence of my	father,	and soon lost that wide sense of brotherhood which, in the large centres, is
Lansdale.docx	ing towards the poor and wretched, while all the time I was listening to my	father	as he expounded his aristocratic theories. Occasionally my compositions we
Lansdale.docx	seriously of the circumstances of those hundreds of labourers to whom my	father	gave employment? Of that teeming population of fisher-folk who lived, cro
Lansdale.docx	initiated a struggle which was certain permanently to estrange him from my	father.	He had organised the workmen at the factory and had formed a defensive u
Lansdale.docx	nks to him, socialism made its first appear- ance in the neighbourhood. My	father	promptly forbade the girls to receive him; the little fiancée was crushed; wh
Lansdale.docx	us one day and was sitting turning over the pages of a review to which my	father	subscribed; he admired it but thought it "too dear." This, in my eyes, greatl
Lansdale.docx	" which I remembered to have heard uttered seriously once or twice by my	father,	when I was a child, and since then always in derision by every class of men

(Figure 25: concordances of the term “father” within Lansdale’s twelfth chapter)

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Delmar.docx	illiating even to think about it. All the same, how did he manage as a bachelor? My	father'	s affair had made me curious about people's sexual needs, but the conclusions
Delmar.docx	principles, which I had never felt the need to justify. Even as a child, listening to my	father'	s autocratic opinions, I had nourished a secret sympathy for the poor. To my pl
Delmar.docx	into a backward, rural environment I had become more and more dominated by my	father'	s ideas and quickly lost that sense. I began to think, like him, that society was d
Delmar.docx	surprise I had even been able to muster a few rhetorical phrases on the subject. My	father'	s smile had been indulgent as he listened. The education he had given me had
Delmar.docx	sister was now engaged to become involved in a struggle which finally turned my	father	against him: he was organising the workers in the factory into a trades union. T
Delmar.docx	h undermined it occurred when I was thirteen. The owner of the factory run by my	father,	an aristocrat and millionaire, came to lunch with us. He flicked through one of
Delmar.docx	d me. Had I ever seriously considered the condition of the hundreds of workers my	father	employed? Had I ever thought seriously about the thousands of fishermen and
Delmar.docx	would be called upon to suffer more intensely than the rest. When I was small, my	father	had talked to me about Christ. He explained that Christ had been the best of m
Delmar.docx	n it was gloomy and petty, that everyone capitulated: my husband, the doctor, my	father,	socialists as well as clergy, whore and virgin alike. Each resignedly contributed t
Delmar.docx	aire, came to lunch with us. He flicked through one of the magazines to which my	father	subscribed and commented that it was good but "very expensive." My parents
Delmar.docx	ion. Thanks to him, socialism was beginning to be a serious force in our town. My	father	told the girls not to have him in the house again. This upset my sister enormou
Delmar.docx	ay over the word emancipation. I remembered it from childhood, having heard my	father	use it once or twice very seriously; since then I had heard it used derisively by a

(Figure 26: concordances of the term “father” within Delmar’s twelfth chapter)

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Segre, Camell.docx	ving heard once or twice during my childhood, uttered seriously by my	father -	and spoken of with derision subsequently, by every class of man and wo
Segre, ...	y humiliating. Yet how could he live as a single man? The example of my	father	caused me to dwell on the sexual aspect of the question, and to draw bit
Segre, ...	ices, to suffer more intensely than the rest. One day when I was little, my	father	had talked to me about Christ. He told me that he had been the best of n
Segre, ...	become involved in a struggle which completely alienated him from my	father.	He'd organized the factory workers, uniting them into a body that could
Segre, ...	y child I had harboured a secret love of the poor, even as I listened to my	father	propounding his autocratic theories. My essays included rhetorical flouri
Segre, ...	o him the town was beginning to register the influence of socialism. My	father	responded by banning him from the house, leaving his fiancée distraugh
Segre, ...	uprised and gratified me, and that brought a smile of indulgence to my	father'	s lips. My education had been strangely compartmentalized. I had not be
Segre, ...	-having lunch at our house. He was leafing through a magazine that my	father	subscribed to, and which he thought was 'good but too expensive'. With
Segre, ...	rural environment, I had soon lost, under the exclusive influence of my	father,	that sense of belonging to a larger fraternity that comes naturally in urba
Segre, ...	to preserving! Everyone was compromised: my husband, the doctor, my	father;	the socialists as much as the priests, virgins as much as prostitutes: all we

(Figure 27: concordances of the term “father” within Segre and Carnell’s twelfth chapter)

In general, it could be stated that the figure of the father is strongly emphasised by the translators, although in different forms.

The source novel expressed the idea of the authoritarian father this way:

Mio padre proibí alle due ragazze di riceverlo piú oltre in casa (figure 28, concordance 8).

In the sentence above, the father is indeed portrayed as authoritarian. Associating the subject “mio padre” [my father] with the verb “proibire” [to forbid] allows Aleramo to give the father a peremptory character, while ordering the two daughters not to receive the young man (the older daughter’s fiancé) in their home because he was fighting for a different ideology than his own. The verb “forbid” indeed carries the idea of not allowing any objections or discussions. This verb, thus, depicts the protagonist’s father not only as authoritarian but also as an individual who demands obedience. Thus, it could be possible to see the “father” as, almost, any man of that era. Perceived as a “tyrant”, the male figure is often depicted as someone who has control over his own family and the will of others; in the case of Aleramo’s father, he exercises control over his daughters (figure 24, concordance 8).

My father promptly forbade the girls to receive him (Lansdale: figure 25, concordance 7)

My father told the girls not to have him in the house (Delmar: figure 26, concordance 11)

My father responded by banning him from the house (Segre and Carnell: figure 27, concordance 6)

There may indeed be emphatic differences in the translations that could stem from ideological and/or gender-based choices. In particular, it can be noticed that the first two translations, by Lansdale and Delmar, adhere to the grammatical elements of the Italian novel. It is possible to see both the subject “my father”, the verb, and the direct object “the girls”. On the other hand, Segre and Carnell choose to eliminate this object, effectively erasing the recipients of the message, i.e., “the girls”. With this choice, it could be inferred that the translators intended to accentuate the gender disparity prevalent during that period. By eliminating the intermediary role represented by the girls, who served as a connection between the two men, “the father” and “the young fiancé of one of the daughters”, Segre and Carnell potentially highlight how the father's categorical decisions were not even up for discussion by the daughters, to the extent of eradicating their presence.

Furthermore, it could be noticed another difference in the choice of emphasis placed on the father’s behaviour. While Aleramo used the peremptory and authoritarian verb “proibi” [forbade], only Lansdale respected this stylistic choice by combining the adverb “promptly” with the past tense verb “forbade”. On the contrary, Delmar chose not to emphasise the father’s order by changing the verb to a more neutral one, namely “told”. In the previous verb choice, there is no emphasis on the father’s peremptory nature and his obligation, which is further supported by the subsequent verb “to have him”, instead of the Italian novel’s use of the verb “ricevere” [to receive] accompanied by “più oltre” to provide emphasis (Baker 2011: 177-178).

Lastly, Segre and Carnell choose a strong verb, “to ban”, but eliminate the recipient, as mentioned earlier, and use the verb “responded” as if the father’s action was merely a response to a wrongdoing.

Further support for the previous hypothesis could be derived from analysing the word collocations of the term “mother”.

As observed in figures 12 and 16, the term “padre” [father] is used much more frequently by Aleramo compared to the term “madre” [mother]. Furthermore, it can be noted that none of the translators deviate significantly from Aleramo’s usage of the term “mother”; however, when it comes to the term “father”, different choices are highlighted among the translators. Specifically, Delmar (figures 10, 11) and Segre and Carnell (figures 11, 15) increase the usage of this word compared to the source text.

But what is important to underline is that the use of terms associated with the word “mother” reflects Aleramo’s different perception of the parents. This choice is faithfully respected by almost all the translators.

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 Aleramo.docx	non lieve del male sociale. Come può un uomo che abbia avuto una buona	madre	divenir crudele verso i deboli, sleale verso una donna a cui dà il suo amore, f
2 Aleramo.docx	ale verso una donna a cui dà il suo amore, tiranno verso i figli? Ma la buona	madre	non deve essere, come la mia, una semplice creatura di sacrificio: deve esse
3 Aleramo.docx	donna plasmato nei secoli per la soggezione, e di cui io, le mie sorelle, mia	madre,	tutte le creature femminili da me conosciute, eravamo degli esemplari. E co

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Results Set All hits Context Size 25 token(s)

madre| Start  Adv Search

Sort Options Sort to right Sort 1 1R Sort 2 2R Sort 3 3R Order by freq

(Figure 28: concordances of “madre” in the twelfth chapter within Aleramo’s source text)

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Lansdale.docx	be laid at the door of the women. How could a man who had had a good	mother	be cruel to the weak, disloyal to the woman he loved, tyrannical to his child
Lansdale.docx	of women fashioned by centuries of subjection, of whom I, my sisters, my	mother,	every female of my acquaintance, were examples- I had been seized by a sp
Lansdale.docx	k, disloyal to the woman he loved, tyrannical to his children? But the good	mother	must not, like my own, be simply an example of self-sacrifice: she must be

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Results Set All hits Context Size 25 token(s)

mother Start  Adv Search

Sort Options Sort to right Sort 1 1R Sort 2 2R Sort 3 3R Order by freq

(Figure 29: concordances of “mother” in the twelfth chapter within Lansdale’s translation)

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Delmar.docx	haped by centuries of conditioning, to whose ranks I myself, my sisters, my	mother,	and all the women I knew belonged. And I was filled with an almost religiou
Delmar.docx	e responsibility of women. After all, how could a man who had had a good	mother	be a bully, betray the women he claimed to love, tyrannise his children? But
Delmar.docx	ly, betray the women he claimed to love, tyrannise his children? But a good	mother	must not be simply a victim of self-sacrifice, as mine had been: she must be
Delmar.docx	ely because at one point, talking about my work, I referred to "our factory."	Mother	told me to be quiet, but the count remarked, "Oh, leave her alone. My coach

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Results Set All hits Context Size 25 token(s)

mother Start  Adv Search

Sort Options Sort to right Sort 1 1R Sort 2 2R Sort 3 3R Order by freq

(Figure 30: concordances of “mother” in the twelfth chapter within Delmar’s translation)

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
Segre, ...	d by centuries of subordination; the kind which I and my sisters and my	mother,	and all the women that I knew, were also examples of. And I experienced
Segre, ...	ety might be attributed to women. How could a man who'd had a good	mother	become habitually cruel towards the weak, unfaithful to the woman who
Segre, ...	: when speaking about my work I referred to 'our factory'. And while my	mother	intervened to correct me, the count had remarked: 'Never mind. I'm usec
Segre, ...	o has given him her love and a tyrant with his own children? But a good	mother	must not be, as I had been, a one-dimensional, self-sacrificing creature:

Search Query  Words  Case  Regex Results Set All hits Context Size 25 token(s)

mother Start  Adv Search

Sort Options Sort to right Sort 1 1R Sort 2 2R Sort 3 3R Order by freq

(Figure 31: concordances of “mother” in the twelfth chapter within Segre and Carnell’s translation)

Each translation, as can be observed, faithfully captures Aleramo’s feelings towards her mother and, more broadly, towards every woman who is a mother. In the case of Lansdale (figure 28), for example, the term “mother” is accompanied by words like “subjection” (line 2) and “self-sacrifice” (line 3). In Delmar (figure 30), we see terms like “conditioning”, “bully”, and “responsibility” (line 2), “victim of self-sacrifice” (line 3), and “to be quiet” (line 4). In Segre and Carnell (figure 31), terms such as “centuries of subordination” (line 1), “correct” (line 3), and “one-dimensional self-sacrificing creature” (line 4) are notable.

What could be concluded is that the common view among the translators almost entirely aligns with Aleramo’s perception of the maternal figure and possibly women in general. Instead, as previously examined, Aleramo’s choices regarding the paternal figure, and

potentially the male figure in general, set the translators a bit far from the source text, underlining diverging thoughts between the author and the translators themselves.

## Conclusion

The study conducted was based on a comparative analysis of the novel *Una donna* and its English translations, which spanned the years 1908, 1980, and 2020. The translations by Lansdale, Delmar, and Segre and Carnell played a significant role in the analysis and served as a central focus of the study.

The aim was to explore the various factors that could potentially influence the translation process. In particular, the study focused on three specific factors: time (both chronological and historical), the translator's ideologies, and their gender.

Taking into account studies on translation from ancient times to the present and various translation strategies, an attempt was made to apply these strategies to the practical example of the comparative analysis of the Italian novel and the three English translations.

The chosen corpus consisted of the twelfth chapter from each version, strategically positioned at the core of the novel. This chapter was selected due to its thematic significance, which proved crucial for the comparative analysis of all the versions, the original Italian text and its subsequent English translations. By focusing on this central chapter, the study aimed to capture the essence of the work and examine how it was rendered in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

However, it is important to specify that one of the main challenges encountered in the study lies in the composition of the corpus. Analysing only one chapter of the entire novel, the answers provided are not satisfying or definitive. A much larger corpus would have been necessary to obtain more conclusive answers to the questions posed by this study.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative analyses to explore and support the hypotheses put forward. Indeed, the qualitative analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of Aleramo's text and how it was translated by the different translators. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of the nuances, themes, and stylistic choices present in the original work and its subsequent translations. Through close reading and interpretation, the qualitative analysis provided valuable insights into the translators' approaches and the impact of their decisions on the target texts.

Complementing the qualitative analysis, the study also employed a quantitative approach using the AntConc software. This software facilitated the systematic analysis

of textual data, allowing for the extraction of quantitative information and patterns from the translations. By applying this method, the study aimed to provide empirical evidence to support and reinforce the hypotheses generated in the qualitative analysis.

It is also crucial to acknowledge that the corpus comprising the three translations is not perfectly balanced. With a temporal span of at least 40 years between each translation, it has been possible to offer a valuable opportunity to observe the evolving historical and socio-political contexts in which they were produced. On the contrary, it is important to note that the gender balance among the translators was not equal. Three of the translators, Lansdale, Delmar, and Segre, are women, while Carnell is the sole male translator who collaborated with Segre on their joint translation. Consequently, it became practically impossible to discern which specific sections or parts of the translation were influenced by a male or female translator.

While it would have been ideal to have a more balanced distribution of gender representation among the translators, the existing corpus still offered valuable insights into the translation process and the interplay between gender, ideology, and cultural factors.

It can be stated that most of the hypotheses are primarily supported by the information gathered from the texts under examination (lexical, semantic, syntactic choices). Indeed, it has been somewhat difficult to find comprehensive information regarding the social and cultural background of the translators. For instance, it should be noted that, especially in the case of Lansdale, it has been almost impossible to find reliable biographical information that could substantiate and support the hypotheses put forth by the study.

Through various hypotheses, research, and analyses at both the grammatical and lexical levels, an attempt was made to provide support to the points examined earlier. It was possible to argue that these elements worked together in influencing the translation process.

Specifically, the three translations could demonstrate that chronological time can influence how translation is approached. Taking into account factors such as the target text recipient and the cultural and linguistic background of both the translator and the reader, it could be possible to state that these factors can impact the translator's work and the linguistic choices made in the translation.

The translator, therefore, may find him/herself modifying the original text with changes that can range from subtle to more noticeable, depending on the translator's intentions

and choices. This process results in a target text that is more attuned to the “needs” of the reader belonging to a specific cultural context.

Indeed, the temporal element also has an impact on the cultural factor. In a source text, for example, it is not guaranteed that the culture it conveys aligns with that of the reader of the target text. Cultural contexts evolve over time, and what may have been familiar or relevant in the source culture during the time of writing may differ from the target culture at the time of translation. This misalignment of cultural references and nuances requires the translator to navigate and bridge the gap between the two cultures, making choices that ensure the target text resonates with the target readership.

Indeed, culture can influence the translation process and its outcome for two reasons. Firstly, the translator aims to respect both the source culture and the target culture, striving to strike a balance between the source text and what the author intends to convey, while also addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of the readers of the target text.

The cultural element, however, can give way to another factor, which is the influence of the translator’s gender on the translation. Through the study of these three translations, it was observed that gender is not the most significant factor during the translation process, although it can be argued that changes in stylistic emphasis and linguistic choices have been highlighted. In particular, it was noticed that the third translation, the most recent one and the only one where both a male and a female translator worked together, is closest to the author’s choices but also the most neutral in tone in the target text.

With subtle differences among them, it has been possible to argue that the three translations are not mere copies of the original, but rather new “semi-original” works. In fact, the comparisons and contrasts among them have also highlighted the role of the translator and how he/she is not just a worker constructing a bridge between two cultures and languages, but individuals who, while striving to remain as objective as possible, convey their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs into the translation process.

Indeed, as argued at the beginning of the study, it has been attempted to demonstrate how each translator or pair of translators has sought from the outset to follow a common thread that somehow regulated their choices and decisions. This underlying thread can be seen as a guiding principle or approach that influenced the translation process and shaped the final outcome. By identifying and examining this thread, it has become



possible to gain insights into the translators' intentions and strategies, as well as the overall coherence and consistency of their translations.

It is indeed possible to examine each translation and its respective translator(s) in detail. For instance, Lansdale's translation, through an analysis of her choices, reveals her desire to strike a balance between the source and target cultures. She employs oblique translation strategies aimed at capturing the essence of the source text's message while staying relatively close to the author's choices. However, it can also be argued that a significant portion of her choices was influenced by personal engagement with a theme (gender equality and women's freedom) that was particularly prominent in America during the period when she translated the work.

In the case of Delmar's second translation, it is possible to observe that the translation strategies used and lexical choices aimed at highlighting the translator's personal involvement in social issues such as gender equality, class divisions, and so on. This second translation thus emphasises Delmar's cultural background and showcases her ideology. It suggests that translation is not an isolated process but is significantly influenced by the translator's beliefs. As a result, the translation may not simply convey the author's choices but also intertwines them with the translator's own perspectives, potentially deviating from the original text.

In the case of Segre and Carnell's third translation, they strive to adhere as closely as possible to the original text, respecting Aleramo's choices as much as possible. However, due to the presence of a male translator, there may be a lack of noticeable emphasis or personal involvement that is reflected in the translation choices. On the contrary, an element that can be highlighted is the merging of the factors of time and ideology. There is a particular attention to the use of inclusive terms, which could reflect the translators' ideologies, possibly influenced by the historical period in which social issues are prominent topics of discussion.

Thus, time may be a significant factor that influences the translation process. Different historical periods bring about cultural, social, and linguistic changes that can impact translators' choices and their translations. However, it is important to note that time does not act alone; it interacts with other factors such as the translator's ideology and gender. The interaction between these elements can shape translation choices and lead to different outcomes. Therefore, while time can be an influential factor, it needs to be considered in relation to other factors to fully understand its impact on translation.

In conclusion, although the examined set of texts was limited, it has been fascinating to delve into how the themes addressed by Aleramo in 1906 have been respected and even emphasised in the various eras when the translators published their versions of *Una Donna*. Despite the temporal and cultural gaps between the original work and its translations, the translators have made efforts to convey and highlight the essence of Aleramo's themes across different time periods. This highlights the ongoing relevance and importance of the novel's themes and the efforts of translators to capture and preserve them in their respective translations.

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## Riassunto in Italiano

La scelta iniziale dello studio che si è deciso di affrontare deriva dalla volontà di mettere in luce Sibilla Aleramo, un'autrice del 1900 che ha rivoluzionato la letteratura Italiana. In particolare, si è scelto di esaminare come la Aleramo sia stata accolta all'estero, concentrando l'analisi sulle traduzioni in lingua Inglese della sua opera maggiore, *Una Donna*.

Nata il 14 agosto 1876 a Alessandria e morta il 13 gennaio 1960 a Roma, Sibilla Aleramo è lo pseudonimo di Marta Felicina (detta Rina) Faccio. La scrittrice, conosciuta principalmente per il suo romanzo semi-autobiografico *Una donna* (1906), che rappresenta uno dei primi e più influenti esempi di letteratura femminista italiana, scrisse molte altre opere, quali *Apologia dello Spirito Femminile* (1942) e *Lettere d'Amore* (1916) che, tuttavia, non arrivarono mai ad ottenere la fama del suo primo e miglior lavoro.

Vissuta in un ambiente oppressivo e conservatore, la Aleramo si trasferì insieme alla sua famiglia nell'Italia del Sud a causa di un'offerta di lavoro del padre e, nella stessa fabbrica in cui lui era il direttore, lei lavorava come contabile. All'età di quindici anni fu costretta a sposare l'uomo, suo collega, che la violentò e, dopo essersi trasferita in casa con lui, toccò con mano l'orrore della violenza domestica e della gelosia immotivata. Sin da subito cercò di ribellarsi alla società patriarcale che la circondava e che caratterizzava persino le mura di casa sua, ma il prezzo che dovette pagare fu molto alto.

All'epoca, in effetti, le donne non avevano nessun diritto sopra la propria prole, che era a tutti gli effetti "possesso" del padre. La Aleramo, desiderando allontanarsi dall'uomo violento che l'aveva costretta a un tentativo di suicidio non riuscito, dovette affrontare la dolorosa conseguenza di perdere ogni diritto sul suo unico figlio, che non ebbe mai più l'opportunità di rivedere. Questo tragico evento segnò profondamente la vita e l'opera della scrittrice, contribuendo a plasmare la sua narrazione e il suo impegno per l'autonomia e l'emancipazione delle donne. In effetti, fu anche la relazione con lo scrittore Giovanni Cena che permise al romanzo *Una Donna* di vedere la luce. Sicuro della sua bravura, Cena cercò in tutti i modi di convincere la Aleramo affinché scrivesse delle sue esperienze personali e le raccogliesse in un unico romanzo. Tuttavia, una volta

finita la stesura dell'opera, la novella scrittrice dovette piegarsi alla volontà dello scrittore di correggere alcune parti del testo e di eliminarne altre, comprendendo sin da subito che quel romanzo non sarebbe stato la vera trasposizione del suo dolore interno, ma un prodotto che potesse piacere soprattutto al lettore e a colui che aveva deciso la sua pubblicazione. Questo, dunque, fu il motivo della rottura della relazione tra Cena e la Aleramo, la quale comprese che, nonostante avesse ricevuto una discreta fama, era sempre stato un uomo a permetterle di ricevere tali acclamazioni. Decise quindi di proseguire una vita caratterizzata da relazioni fugaci e senza legami fissi che potessero rimpicciolire la sua individualità.

Il periodo storico durante il quale la Aleramo visse, a cavallo tra la fine del diciannovesimo secolo e la prima metà del ventesimo secolo, fu un'epoca piena di cambiamenti sia a livello politico che sociale per le donne. In particolare, è interessante, e al contempo sconcertante, notare che il suffragio universale femminile fu introdotto in Italia solo nel febbraio 1945; l'intera vita della scrittrice, quindi, progredì nella consapevolezza che la società considerava le donne come inferiori all'uomo, rendendole il loro subalterno<sup>43</sup>.

In questo contesto, il romanzo avanguardista della Aleramo, in cui temi come la maternità, la vita coniugale e la disillusione della favola amorosa vengono trattati senza censure, così come testimoniato dalla sezione di testo del capitolo 20 dell'opera *Una Donna*, citato sotto:

Perché nella maternità adoriamo il sacrificio? Donde è scesa a noi questa inumana idea dell'immolazione materna? Di madre in figlia, da secoli, si tramanda il selvaggio. È una mostruosa catena. [...] Allora riversiamo sui nostri figli quanto non demmo alle madri, rinnegando noi stesse e offrendo un nuovo esempio di mortificazione, di annientamento (Aleramo: 144).

Il romanzo, in effetti, fu un vero e proprio scandalo che portò a recensioni negative e aspre critiche da parte di molti scrittori e critici del tempo di sesso maschile e femminile, quali Pirandello e Lonzi. In particolare però, è interessante notare che vi furono anche degli scrittori illuminati, quali D'Annunzio, che sostennero la scrittrice

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<sup>43</sup> Spivak coniò questo termine per indicare i popoli poveri, sottomessi ai più potenti e ricchi. In generale, questo termine può essere utilizzato per indicare una posizione o un ruolo di sottomissione, dipendenza o inferiorità rispetto a qualcuno o qualcosa di superiore o dominante.

tramite critiche positive del romanzo *Una Donna* e antologie come *La Letteratura della nuova Italia* (1910), a cura di Benedetto Croce, che lodarono l'operato della Aleramo.

In generale, la scrittura femminile si può incastonare nella maglia delle molteplici modalità di lotta che le donne attuarono per affermare la loro identità; è possibile, infatti, creare una sorta di paragone tra la scrittrice Italiana Sibilla Aleramo, la scrittrice e filosofa francese Simone de Beauvoir e la scrittrice Britannica Virginia Woolf. Vissute tutte nella prima metà del XIX secolo, queste tre scrittrici hanno in comune la voglia di fare della scrittura un'arma che possa proteggerle dal mondo esterno. Spesso considerate come “il secondo sesso”<sup>44</sup>, queste donne si sono rivolte alla letteratura e alla scrittura per sfuggire alle grinfie della società maschilista e patriarcale che cercava di reprimerle, così com'è possibile notare nell'opera della Woolf *A room of one's own* (1929).

Tra le forme di lotta attiva del tempo, vi fu la creazione di organizzazioni e di gruppi femministi volti alla sovversione dei valori patriarcali e sessisti che minavano la società italiana da anni. I movimenti femministi, ad ogni modo, assunsero forme e obiettivi diversi a seconda del contesto e del periodo storico. La prima ondata del femminismo, che ebbe luogo alla fine del XIX e all'inizio del XX secolo, si concentrò sull'affermazione dell'idea di emancipazione. Questo concetto, particolarmente caro al “femminismo di uguaglianza”, è anche presente nel primo romanzo femminista italiano, appunto, *Una Donna*. Il “femminismo di uguaglianza” comprendeva le richieste e le lotte delle donne che miravano a ottenere pari diritti civili e parità sociale con gli uomini. È all'interno di questo specifico contesto storico e culturale che Aleramo scrisse *Una Donna*, affrontando sinceramente e dettagliatamente questi argomenti, con particolare attenzione alla rappresentazione delle donne come mogli e madri, alienate dalla vita sociale e subordinate ai loro mariti. In ogni caso, è importante osservare che il successivo movimento femminista fu definito “femminismo della differenza”, il quale mirava a rendere le donne “libere”, affermando un'identità femminile che era diversa da quella dell'uomo, ma non per questo doveva essere subordinata o assimilata a quest'ultima, al contrario, essa doveva essere riconosciuta e apprezzata per le differenze intrinseche a entrambi i sessi.

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<sup>44</sup> Vedi definizione e teorizzazione di Simone de Beauvoir sul sesso femminile visto come “l'altro, il sottomesso”, nella sua opera “*Le deuxième sexe*” [Il secondo sesso] (1949).

Il romanzo *Una Donna* di Sibilla Aleramo rappresenta un importante punto di svolta nella storia del femminismo italiano. La scrittrice sembra essere immersa nell'ideologia del "femminismo di uguaglianza", sottolineando la parità tra uomo e donna. Tuttavia, al contempo, Aleramo sembra essere una pioniera della seconda ondata del femminismo, il "femminismo della differenza". Nella seconda parte del romanzo, si evidenzia la presa di coscienza della scrittrice/protagonista, che si considera finalmente una donna completa e libera dall'ombra maschile. Questa nuova consapevolezza sembra farla entrare a far parte della nuova ondata del femminismo, che riconosce e valorizza le differenze tra i generi. *Una Donna* può essere considerato un romanzo di formazione, in quanto narra il percorso di crescita personale della protagonista, suddiviso in due fasi, con il dodicesimo capitolo come punto di svolta.

Sibilla Aleramo è stata tradotta in ben 18 paesi diversi, includendo non solo il romanzo *Una Donna*, ma anche i suoi diari personali e le lettere scritte con lo scrittore Giovanni Cena. Questo ampio numero di traduzioni potrebbe evidenziare l'interesse internazionale per l'autrice e la rilevanza della sua opera al di là dei confini italiani.

Nel contesto di questo studio, si è ritenuto fondamentale non limitarsi a esaminare solo il periodo storico italiano in cui Aleramo ha vissuto, ma anche fornire un contesto storico, politico e sociale più ampio per comprendere appieno il lavoro di traduzione svolto dalle traduttrici e dal traduttore. Questo approccio mira a contestualizzare il loro lavoro all'interno dei vari secoli e delle dinamiche sociali e culturali che hanno influenzato le traduzioni stesse.

In particolare, per comprendere meglio il periodo in cui è avvenuta la traduzione del romanzo *Una Donna* in lingua Inglese, è importante esaminare sia l'inizio del XIX secolo, quando avvenne la prima traduzione ad opera di Lansdale, sia la fine dello stesso secolo, quando Rosalind Delmar lavorò su una nuova traduzione dell'opera. All'inizio del XIX secolo, Lansdale visse un periodo in cui gli Stati Uniti stavano attraversando importanti cambiamenti politici e sociali. Durante questi anni, le donne stavano lottando per il diritto di voto, che ottennero solo nel 1920, e per l'uguaglianza di genere. La traduzione dell'opera di Aleramo in questo contesto testimonierebbe l'interesse della traduttrice per le questioni femministe e la volontà di portare avanti i principi di emancipazione delle donne anche negli Stati Uniti.

La fine dello stesso secolo, invece, vede Rosalind Delmar lavorare su una nuova traduzione dell'opera. Durante la fine del XIX secolo, gli Stati Uniti stavano vivendo un



periodo di crescita economica e di cambiamenti sociali; le donne potevano già contare sul diritto di voto ed avevano la possibilità di studiare e frequentare le scuole come la controparte maschile poteva già fare da tempo. La traduzione dell'opera della Aleramo da parte di Delmar non solo potrebbe evidenziare l'interesse della traduttrice nel far conoscere al pubblico statunitense un'autrice che era stata troppo a lungo trascurata, ma riflette anche il suo impegno nello studio delle questioni di genere e della parità sessuale. Delmar, infatti, si inserisce nel contesto sociale americano come una donna quasi contemporanea, la cui capacità di affrontare tali tematiche è resa possibile dal cambiamento storico e temporale che ha consentito alle donne di assumere una posizione più forte all'interno delle questioni sociali dell'epoca.

All'inizio del XXI secolo, invece, il contesto storico pare radicalmente mutato in Inghilterra. L'opera di Sibilla Aleramo continuò ad avere un impatto significativo e ad attirare l'attenzione dei lettori e dei critici. In questo contesto, una nuova traduzione dell'opera è stata realizzata da Segre e Carnell, diventando così la terza e ultima traduzione dell'opera in lingua inglese. Particolarmente significativa in quanto unica traduzione pubblicata in Inghilterra, questa versione è l'unica che comprende anche un traduttore uomo e che mostra il chiaro cambiamento storico-sociale in un'Inghilterra del XXI secolo, in cui movimenti femministi come il Me Too movement, si concentrano sempre più sull'eliminazione del gap nella percezione di uomini e donne.

Nell'ambito di questo studio, si è prestata particolare attenzione al ruolo delle donne non solo come membri della società, ma anche come scrittrici e autrici di opere che hanno influenzato e plasmato il periodo storico in cui hanno vissuto. È stato ritenuto importante analizzare e confrontare le esperienze delle donne in diverse regioni del mondo durante i secoli presi in esame: il XIX e il XX secolo per le donne italiane, il XX secolo per le donne americane e il passaggio dal XX al XXI secolo per le donne britanniche.

Sebbene sia importante sottolineare che il periodo storico non può essere considerato l'unico determinante del comportamento delle donne o della loro vicinanza alle questioni sociali, è stato ritenuto utile fornire un contesto storico per ciascuna delle figure prese in esame nello studio: Sibilla Aleramo, Maria Hornor Lansdale, Rosalind Delmar ed Erica Segre (separatamente dal traduttore Simon Carnell). Questo approccio consente di ottenere un quadro più completo delle loro vite e delle loro opere, e di

comprendere se e come la scrittura e la traduzione siano stati strumenti utilizzati da queste donne per affermarsi e, probabilmente, conquistare una posizione sociale.

L'analisi comparativa delle donne europee, americane e britanniche dovrebbe essere utile al rilevare le similarità e le differenze nelle loro esperienze e nelle sfide che hanno affrontato. Ciò potrebbe consentire di cogliere le specificità dei contesti culturali, sociali e politici in cui queste donne hanno operato, e di comprendere a pieno scelte stilistiche e traduttive in base a due diversi fattori, il genere e il contesto storico. In effetti, le tre versioni in lingua Inglese del romanzo *Una Donna*, potrebbero mostrare come l'elemento temporale abbia influito sul prodotto finale. Scritte rispettivamente nel 1908, nel 1980 e l'ultima nel 2020, le traduzioni hanno mostrato la via che questo studio avrebbe dovuto intraprendere.

Si è scelto, anzitutto, di creare una sezione dedicata allo studio sulla traduzione, con particolare attenzione a come la traduzione sia, da tempi antichi, il mezzo attraverso il quale comunità e società molto diverse tra loro hanno trovato un punto di incontro e sono riuscite a mettere da parte differenze e far risaltare, invece, i punti in comune. La parola "traduzione", in effetti, deriva dalla parola latina "translatio", che a sua volta deriva da "trans-", ovvero "attraverso" e "ferre", ovvero "portare o consegnare" (Vélez 2005).

Ed è proprio questa trasposizione del messaggio che pone in rilievo il ruolo del traduttore. Un testo da tradurre non è sempre vicino alla lingua e alla cultura d'arrivo; spesso si percepiscono differenze notevoli tra il testo di partenza e la sua trasposizione nella lingua d'arrivo, ecco perché l'abilità di un traduttore sta nel sapersi destreggiare tra somiglianze e differenze, cercando di rendere la versione tradotta del testo quanto più vicina all'opera di partenza. Il delicato lavoro del traduttore spesso si trova a dover superare varie difficoltà di diverso genere; in effetti, non è solo la lingua ad essere una possibile sfida per il traduttore, il quale può trovare diverse difficoltà nella traduzione di elementi intraducibili per definizione, quale un termine non lessicalizzato nella lingua d'arrivo, ma affrontano anche problematiche legate alla cultura da cui le due lingue, di partenza e d'arrivo, derivano e dall'ideologia dello stesso traduttore, che potrebbe modificare, smussare o enfatizzare un concetto perché mette in risalto più le sue credenze che il reale concetto che vuole trasmettere l'opera. Il traduttore ha dunque un obbligo morale verso l'opera che sta traducendo e deve sempre avere un giusto equilibrio tra un approccio oggettivo e uno soggettivo, per meglio interiorizzare l'opera,

ma sempre rispettando il testo di partenza. Si tratta di essere abbastanza aperto a nuovi orizzonti, al fine di trasporre fedelmente il messaggio del testo originale che, se fosse influenzato da fattori come ideologie personali del traduttore, non arriverebbe alla cultura d'arrivo come l'autore aveva pensato.

Ecco che il traduttore, seppur dovendo affrontare varie difficoltà durante il processo traduttivo, può trovare delle soluzioni per confezionare una buona traduzione finale, ovvero delle strategie di traduzione che cercano di limitare al minimo le modifiche e i cambiamenti dall'opera d'origine a quella d'arrivo. Gli studiosi della traduzione hanno sviluppato varie strategie per aiutare i traduttori nel loro lavoro, prendendo in considerazione sia l'aspetto sintattico che strutturale della traduzione. Queste strategie sono state suddivise in base alla tipologia di traduzione che si intende realizzare: diretta o obliqua.

La traduzione diretta è un approccio che si basa principalmente sulla traduzione letterale del testo sorgente. Il traduttore cerca di mantenere il carattere letterale delle parole e delle frasi originali, senza allontanarsi troppo dalla struttura grammaticale o dal significato letterale del testo. L'obiettivo principale, dunque, è quello di rendere il contenuto del testo sorgente in un'altra lingua, senza considerare necessariamente il significato nascosto o le sfumature presenti nel testo originale. Al contrario, la traduzione obliqua coinvolge una valutazione più approfondita del testo di partenza, andando oltre il significato letterale delle parole e delle frasi. Il traduttore cerca di catturare il significato sottostante, il messaggio globale e le sfumature linguistiche presenti nel testo originale. In questo caso, il traduttore può adottare diverse strategie, come l'uso di figure retoriche, la ridefinizione di espressioni idiomatiche o culturalmente specifiche, o l'adattamento del registro linguistico per adattarsi alla cultura di arrivo.

Tuttavia, tutto il lavoro del traduttore spesso non è considerato a dovere. Venuti parla "dell'invisibilità del traduttore" per indicare che il lavoro di quest'ultimo non viene quasi messo in risalto, tanto che molto spesso accade che il solo nome dell'autore venga posto sulla copertina dell'opera tradotta, tralasciando quello del traduttore che, in effetti, è colui che ha permesso che il lavoro fosse conosciuto da altre culture diverse da quella d'origine. Tuttavia, è possibile affermare che la visibilità del traduttore è evidenziata, nel testo d'arrivo, dalle scelte traduttive dello stesso. In effetti, è quasi impossibile far prescindere l'operato del traduttore dal traduttore stesso che, per quanto oggettivo

rimanga, introduce sempre qualcosa di personale nella traduzione, che sia un'ideologia o il riflettere il contesto storico del quale egli fa parte.

Negli studi di traduzione più moderni, si presta una particolare attenzione ai fattori temporali, ideologici e di genere, riconoscendo che essi possono influenzare il processo traduttivo. Mentre molti studiosi hanno da tempo riconosciuto il fattore temporale come un elemento che può influire sulla traduzione, ci sono nuovi studi che hanno individuato l'ideologia del traduttore e il suo genere come ulteriori elementi che influiscono sul processo traduttivo. Il genere del traduttore può influenzare la traduzione attraverso le esperienze, il contesto e la posizione sociale, apportando prospettive uniche. L'identità del traduttore solleva interrogativi sul prodotto finale e sull'approccio adottato verso un'opera, includendo considerazioni sull'identità di genere, orientamento sessuale e appartenenza culturale. Questa consapevolezza ha reso la traduzione una pratica culturale e sociale più complessa, che richiede una riflessione critica sulla molteplicità di influenze che interagiscono nel processo traduttivo.

A dire il vero, le traduttrici e le teoriche femministe hanno cercato di mettere in evidenza gli aspetti di genere della traduzione, esaminando il modo in cui il genere può influenzare il processo di traduzione e promuovendo una maggiore visibilità delle donne sia come traduttrici che come individui con voci e prospettive proprie.

In molti casi, traduttrici femministe hanno considerato il loro lavoro traduttivo come una forma di risposta alla società patriarcale. Attraverso scelte lessicali e stilistiche mirate, queste traduttrici hanno cercato di evidenziare il genere delle protagoniste femminili nei romanzi che stavano traducendo. Hanno fatto questo mettendo in risalto, tramite la traduzione, l'esperienza e la voce delle donne nel testo originale. Questo approccio ha permesso alle traduttrici di dare maggiore visibilità alle storie delle protagoniste donne e di enfatizzare la loro identità di genere. Le scelte linguistiche e stilistiche adottate hanno quindi svolto un ruolo significativo nel sottolineare l'importanza di tali personaggi femminili e nel contestualizzarli all'interno di un quadro più ampio di critica culturale e di genere.

Ciononostante, è importante notare che una tale enfasi, se evidenziata eccessivamente, potrebbe mettere in risalto le differenze di genere e non livellarle, come molte e molti studiosi sottolineano. Inoltre, si sostiene che il genere non sia innato, ma sia un costruzione sociale e dunque, il dubbio maggiore che molti studiosi cercano di risolvere è capire se queste differenze di genere che si notano nelle traduzioni, siano

un'ostentazione dei generi maschile e femminile, o un vero lascito dell'identità di genere del/la traduttore/traduttrice.

Proprio per cercare di dare un contributo a questi dubbi irrisolti, questo studio sul romanzo *Una Donna* e le sue tre traduzioni in lingua Inlgese, vuole porre l'accento sui tre elementi di: tempo, ideologia e genere. Lo studio comparatistico del romanzo Italiano e delle tre versioni viene evidenziato da un'analisi sia qualitativa che quantitativa di elementi strutturali, sintattici e lessicali del dodicesimo capitolo di ogni testo, le cui scelte sono state effettuate da tre traduttrici e un traduttore appartenenti a periodi storici differenti e che, per forza di cose, possiedono ideologie e credenze non sempre simili. Inoltre, se la prima traduzione viene pubblicata solo da una donna, la seconda comprende un'introduzione scritta da un uomo, mentre la terza traduzione è stata creata insieme da un uomo e da una donna; questo potrebbe, o meno, mettere in risalto differenze importanti a livello identitario dei traduttori e come questa componente possa avere influenze sul prodotto delle tre traduzioni.

In particolare, il dodicesimo capitolo mette alla luce importanti informazioni dell'intero romanzo che sottolineano la società del tempo e la condizione delle donne in quanto madri e spose ma, soprattutto, proprietà dell'uomo, come fossero oggetti. In questo senso, è importante notare che l'analisi condotta mette in risalto che vi sono due fattori che prevalgono su altri nelle traduzioni analizzate. Lansdale, ad esempio, pubblicando la sua traduzione solo due anni dopo l'edizione Italiana, nel 1908, potrebbe mostrarsi molto vicina alla condizione personale e sociale della protagonista/ scrittrice. Al contempo, Rosalind Delmar visse durante un periodo in cui le questioni sociali e della parità di genere erano temi molto dibattuti, quindi questo fermento si potrebbe evidenziare tramite la versione della traduttrice, la quale era personalmente coinvolta nello studio della condizione femminile all'interno della società.

L'ultima traduzione, infine, a cura di Erica Segre e Simon Carnell, è l'unica traduzione in lingua Inglese che comprende un traduttore uomo e una traduttrice donna; probabilmente dato dal contesto storico in cui si trovano, i due traduttori collaborano ad un lavoro femminista dell'inizio del XX secolo, cercando di riportare fedelmente il messaggio dell'autrice, ma possibilmente includendo dei dettagli comuni alla loro ideologia, è anche interessante notare se e come le loro identità di genere influiscano o meno sulla traduzione, e comparare quest'ultima alle due precedenti, in cui solo una donna ha lavorato al processo traduttivo.

La conclusione di questo studio sul romanzo *Una Donna* e le sue tre traduzioni in lingua Inglese evidenzia l'importanza dei tre elementi chiave: tempo, ideologia e genere. Attraverso un'analisi qualitativa e quantitativa degli elementi strutturali, sintattici e lessicali del dodicesimo capitolo, realizzata da tre traduttrici e un traduttore appartenenti a periodi storici differenti e con ideologie diverse, si sono evidenziate delle differenze significative nei loro approcci traduttivi. Inoltre, il coinvolgimento di traduttori di diversi generi nelle diverse traduzioni offre l'opportunità di osservare come le loro identità di genere possano influenzare il processo traduttivo e il prodotto finale.

Nel contesto delle traduzioni analizzate, emerge che due fattori predominano: l'esperienza personale e sociale del traduttore e l'impatto del clima sociale e delle questioni di parità di genere dell'epoca. Ancora un volta è importante sottolineare che questo studio, dunque, cerca di mettere in luce come il tempo, l'ideologia e il genere dei traduttori siano fattori rilevanti nel processo traduttivo. Le diverse prospettive, esperienze e credenze dei traduttori possono plasmare la traduzione e influenzare la rappresentazione delle donne nel testo. Questa consapevolezza sottolinea l'importanza di una riflessione critica sulla traduzione come pratica culturale e sociale, e invita a ulteriori approfondimenti sulla complessità delle dinamiche di genere nell'ambito della traduzione letteraria.