

Dracula's Italian Hosts

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This article investigates the first two Italian translations of *Dracula* as significant cases of manipulation of a classic of popular literature. It provides a brief survey of the malleable status of the text in its interlinguistic and intermedial translations in order to introduce the specificity of the Italian case. These two Italian translations represent two different, somewhat antithetical approaches to introducing gothic literature to early-twentieth century Italy. They show different strategies to overcome the deep-seated resistance of the Italian literary field by presenting the novel in very distinct ways. The Sonzogno edition highlights the novel's popular character and shocking features, and domesticates its most unsettling aspects by focusing on the ghastlier elements and through a systematic removal of all the novel's political and socio-anthropological references. In the Bocca edition, Fedi adopted a reframing strategy that linked the novel with occultist beliefs, thus turning it into a sort of fictional treatise on vampirism and emphasising its philosophical and mystical import. In order to make sense of these two cases, this article considers the interconnections between censorship and translation as a metonymic process, which can stimulate unorthodox readings that can ultimately be *productive* and grant books a more varied readership.

Keywords: Bram Stoker; Italian gothic; publishing history; literary translation; self-censorship; vampires

In this article I analyse the first two translations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) into Italian, taking into account their position within, and interaction with, the Italian literary system. The first two Italian translations of *Dracula* appeared in crucial years in Italian history: 1922 and 1945, the start of the fascist regime and the year of its final demise. Despite the dates, the fascist regime did not directly influence these translations, but it is worth noting that during the dictatorship, gothic literature was generally unwelcome in Italy, both due to the longstanding mistrust of the literary establishment and to its potentially subversive qualities,¹ and it had to find alternative ways to enter the literary

sphere. Therefore, I aim to look at these translations as exemplary and rather antithetical ways of introducing supernatural themes in Italy during the first half of the twentieth century in order to contrast the general resistance to fantastic and gothic literature in Italy. I will consider these translations as cultural facts that affect the receiving literary field: these translations are, to varying degree, 'proactive', as their aim is as much 'to create an audience as it is to find one' (Cronin, 1996, p. 153). I will also maintain that loose notions of authorship connected with popular literature can lead to profound rewritings and manipulative practices verging on self-censorship. In order to do so, I will illustrate some of the early interlinguistic and intramedial rewritings of the text as examples of the malleability of popular literature in general and *Dracula* in particular. Such practices can stimulate unorthodox readings that can ultimately be paradoxically productive and grant some works a more varied readership. Censorious practices can affect books prior to or after their publication, but, most importantly, can originate either in functionaries or in interpretive communities of peers; they can be imposed by institutions or self-imposed (Burt, 1994, p. xvi). The affinity between translation and censorship has often been addressed (Holquist, 1994; Billiani 2007c; Ní Chuilleanáin, Ó Cuilleánáin, & Parris, 2009) and recently by Piotr Kuhiwczak who stated that 'There is no doubt that the reluctance to admit the close adjacency of translating and censoring results from a popular conviction that censorship is an intentional act of explicitly political nature' (Kuhiwczak 2011, p. 363). Kuhiwczak's paper triggered an interesting debate that also involved Denise Merkle and Beate Müller, who maintained that regulative and constitutive censorship should be kept separated. In this article, I will consider censorship in a broad sense, as the array of practices ranging from suppressing portions of text to paratextual manipulations aimed to elicit a biased reading of it, irrespective of the agent carrying them out. While I am aware that focusing on so-called

constitutive or structural censorship ‘runs the risk of equating very different forms of control’ (Müller, 2004, p. 9), stressing the continuity between practices such as editorial decisions, literary criticism and canon formation at one end, and traditional top-down censorship on the other can shed new light on cognate activities of discursive regulation while better defining their respective domains. Moreover, Maria Tymoczko has pointed out that self-censorship practices are not just the result of passive compromises on the part of translators, but can also show their agency as ‘meaning makers’ (2007, p. 307). This is also true of other agents involved in the production and publication of translations, such as editors, publishers, and so forth, who affect the reception of certain texts by participating in the selection process at various levels. Therefore, in this essay I will use mediators as a hypernym for such discrete roles. I will show how different selection strategies were used by mediators in order to both downplay some constitutive aspects of Stoker’s novel and privilege the specific versions of gothic instantiated by the penny dreadful *Dracula* (1922) and the theosophical *Dracula* (1945) that are at the centre of this essay. In order to point out *Dracula*’s extreme suitability to occupy different positions in the system of gothic literature I will therefore start by focusing on the extraordinary variety of early rewritings.

Dracula in-between languages

Written by the Irishman Stoker and published in London by Archibald Constable in 1897, *Dracula* immediately reached all corners of the English-speaking world. While the fame of the novel was promptly acknowledged by the surge of translations that were published in the following years – Hungary in 1898, Iceland in 1901, Russia in 1902 (Dalby & Hughes, 2004; Berni, 2016) – it is widely acknowledged that the success of Count Dracula was assured by his theatrical and filmic adaptations. An acting manager of Henry Irving’s Lyceum Theatre in London since 1878, Bram Stoker was

unsurprisingly far-sighted in this respect, and organized a theatre reading of his own adaptation, titled *Dracula: Or the Un-Dead*, a few days *before* the novel was published, at the Lyceum. This was a mere five-hour long stage reading of an abridged version of the novel, but it achieved its purpose of securing theatrical (and consequently filmic) copyright protection.ⁱⁱ *Dracula's* conquest of both theatre stages and cinema screens ensured his incredible longevity. These first adaptations contributed to the profound re-interpretation of the novel that affected later re-writings and films, generally portraying Dracula as a cultured and charming foreign gentleman. This interpretation of Count Dracula was made famous by Bela Lugosi in Tod Browning's 1931 movie and dominates almost all of Dracula's cinematic re-incarnations down to the self-absorbed, angsty teenage vampires of the *Twilight* saga and their parodic counterparts in the mockumentary *What We Do in the Shadows* (2014). This path, however, was not followed by the first Italian rewritings: a study of such translations will therefore shed more light on both the hermeneutic potential of Stoker's work and the history of fantastic and gothic themes in Italy.

As Katy Brundan recently argued, translation, both inter- and intralingual, seems to be inscribed in *Dracula*: 'Bram Stoker's novel [...] represents one of the most intense engagements with polyglossia and translation in late nineteenth-century fiction, in essence anticipating its own translability.' (Brundan, 2016, p. 2). The very first page of the novel introduces Jonathan Harker annotating the names of foreign dishes on his journal and bragging about his ability to get by in the Carpathians thanks to his 'smattering of German' (Stoker, 1997, p. 9) and a very rich polyglot dictionary that includes a surprising amount of words concerning vampires and werewolves; moreover, his journal is in shorthand and therefore needs translating, and the novel will later present Mina as a crucial figure of translator and collator of messages of various kinds,

such as diaries, phonograph recordings, telegrams and so forth. This intertwining of languages and registers is foregrounded in the novel; the need for translation is one of the crucial aspects of *Dracula*, according to Brundan, who significantly ends her essay by claiming that *Dracula*'s 'many translations stand as a figuration of our own desire for the text' (p. 19). More to the point, *Dracula*'s polyphony (both linguistic and structural), as well as its constant indeterminacy seems to me key to the manifold deformations that the text goes through in its translations: *Dracula* is made of 'a mass of type-writing' in which 'there is hardly one authentic document' (Stoker, 1997, p. 326) but is presented to the reader as relating a real story, 'a simple fact' (p. 5); in such a multifarious text, it is easier for translators to focus on the *simple story*, on the specific elements they deem *acceptable* for their intended audience (Toury, 1995, p. 57). And it is through interlingual translation that *Dracula*'s literary afterlife better echoes its protagonist's protean qualities. To give but one example, the Icelandic translation, *Makt Mirkranna (Power of Darkness)* (1901), which came with Stoker's imprimatur in the guise of a preface,ⁱⁱⁱ presented profound changes to the plot and even linked Dracula's murders in the London fog with those of Jack the Ripper. *Dracula* naturally lends itself to re-writings not only for its being perceived as popular literature, or for formal and stylistic reasons, but also for its essentially ambiguous and contradictory plot.

According to Marigny (2000) and Senf (2010, pp. 54-85), this is a deliberate strategy and it is due to the novel's fragmented structure, but one of the reasons might also lie in *Dracula* being at the point of convergence of various traditions and versions of the vampire myth, both literary (Polidori and Le Fanu in particular) and folkloric (Emily Gerard). *Dracula* is a protean and malleable hypotext from which several versions of a multifaceted story naturally stem. As we will see in the next paragraph, these different traditions are mirrored in the rather scant Italian production of vampire stories.

Italian Vampires

It is generally accepted that Italian literature at the turn of the twentieth century could not boast a copious tradition of fantastic literature. Ever since the start of the nineteenth century, Italian literati manifested a certain resistance to some of the gothic and fantastic themes central to northern European romanticism: every “northern influence on Italian culture was ostracized in ways that were unparalleled in the rest of Europe” (Camilletti, 2014, p. 244). Nonetheless, despite a certain delay mostly due, according to Remo Ceserani, to Italy’s late modernization (2007, p. 43), in the second part of the nineteenth century a certain interest in gothic narratives starts seeping into Italian literature. With a limitation:

[i]n the nineteenth century especially but not exclusively, in fact, the fantastic and the gothic are often not present in Italian texts in their "pure" form, either structurally or thematically [...]. Rather, they intertwine with other narrative formats, such a realist, epistolary, *verista*, modernist, humoristic, or fairy-tale forms. (Billiani, 2007b, p. 16)

Furthermore, traditional vampires do not seem to occupy a central place in the construction of Italian fantastic and gothic narratives in the second half of the nineteenth century.^{iv} The political novel by Francesco Mastriani, *I vampiri (romanzo umoristico)* (1868), is a case in point, with its focus on greedy politicians rather than undead creatures. It can however be argued that a certain vampirist/occultist strain was present in Italian literature at the start of the twentieth century and readers were interested in mysterious tales when *Dracula* was eventually introduced to the Italian public. Testimony to this interest in gruesome and shocking accounts were works by such disparate writers as Marrama, Marinetti, Palazzeschi, Salgari and others.^v Luigi Capuana’s ‘Un vampiro’ (1904) is probably the most noteworthy result of such production and is especially symptomatic of a certain *realistic* strand in Italian fantastic

literature: the short story is dedicated to Cesare Lombroso and is a positivist account told by a scientist who refutes vampire matters as hallucinations and whose scepticism only falters when faced with indisputable facts: the otherworldly matters are explained and seen through the lens of experimental science, they do not lead to an ineradicable doubt, but to the, however hesitant, expansion of scientific knowledge. As we will see, the translation of *Dracula* released by Sonzogno in 1922 does not seem to be directly linked to this production, while the 1945 Bocca edition, albeit partly sharing Capuana's spiritualist attitude, took an essentially divergent path.

Sonzogno's Dracula: ghastly adventures and penny dreadfuls

Interest in fantastic and gothic stories at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century in Italy was mainly promoted by Sonzogno, a Milan-based publisher established in 1804. Sonzogno had been one of the most successful Italian publishers. At the start of the twentieth century, with its success on the wane, Sonzogno still managed to secure a certain position in the book market by concentrating on popular literature (Tranfaglia & Vittoria, 2000, pp. 149-151), mostly publishing popular versions of classics as well as Italian scandalous bestsellers (e.g. Pitigrilli and Mariani) and adventurous foreign novels such as Leblanc's Arsène Lupin series (Billiani, 2007a, p. 29). Moreover, it was also one of the first Italian publishers to conceive series entirely dedicated to crime and fantastic literature, such as 'I romanzi polizieschi'^{vi} and 'I racconti misteriosi' (*Mysterious tales*) (1919-1920 and 1922-1924) (Pezzotti, 2014, pp. 12-13). Both series included an overwhelming majority of translations and few Italian titles. In the years leading up to their first edition of *Dracula*, titled *Dracula. L'uomo della notte (Dracula. The Man of the Night)* and translated by Angelo Nesi in 1922, Sonzogno also published short-stories about vampires or loosely linked to Stoker's novel in its popular magazine *Il giornale illustrato dei viaggi* (Foni, 2007, pp.

169-171).^{vii} These short stories somehow paved the way for the arrival of their master, so to speak, the Count Dracula himself. Periodicals were an especially important channel of dissemination of popular literature in the years bridging the nineteenth and twentieth century (Foni, 2007). Such interplay, a sort of cultural alliance between literary magazines and books, could be conducive for the introduction of a new writer/genre: appearance in a periodical could often be the first step towards publication in book form. This also confirms that in the first decades of the century fantastic literature had its place among low-brow entertainment rather than canonical literature, which strongly affected the publishing circumstances of *Dracula* in Italy.

Nessi's translation of Stoker's novel is a severely manipulated edition, being half the length of the original novel, and is included in the 'I racconti misteriosi' series. The thresholds of the book, traditionally a crucial place for the communication between the publisher and the potential readers (Genette 1987), quite unmistakably suggest its expected readership: the cover is intended to present the novel as a shocking piece of fiction, quite distant from the sober beige cover with no illustration of the original Archibald Constable edition. It sports the name of the book series on the top-left corner and a full-page illustration of an old man, roughly corresponding to the initial description of Dracula, even though it softens his most disgusting traits. With his dignified appearance and threatening long fingernails wrapped around a gas-lamp, the Count seems to lure the reader into his home/novel. However, this is not an original image: it was taken from the first French translation, *Dracula. L'homme de la nuit*, published by L'édition française illustrée in 1920, one of the first foreign editions of *Dracula* that aimed to turn Stoker's late-Victorian gothic novel into a popular penny dreadful. This is not an isolated case; Sonzogno took considerable inspiration from some French publishers (namely, Méricant and L'Édition française illustrée) for its book

series (Foni, 2007, pp. 184-185). *Dracula. L'uomo della notte* is more than clearly dependant on the 1920 French edition, as suggested by the title: it is a direct translation of that text that bears no relationship to Stoker's English text. Not surprisingly for Italy at the time, the source text is not the original Irish novel, then, but its heavily abridged French translation. Even a cursory look at the translated text can prove it: the Italian *Dracula* presents clear signs of its dependence on the French version, from the odd revelatory Gallicism, down to both the subtitle and the misspelled name of the author (Brahm instead of Bram).

The first Italian translation of *Dracula* has a similar relationship with Stoker's novel as the various rewritings we have encountered so far, from the Icelandic *Makt Mirkranna* to Murnau's film, thus confirming the early development of the malleable myth of Dracula. It is worth noting, though, that the peritext does not acknowledge the interposition of the French text and presents the novel as descending from the 1897 novel. Like the collection it belongs to, the *Sonzogno Dracula* shows one of the possible ways of introducing a gothic novel to the Italy of the early 20th century: emphasising its low-brow character in order to have it accepted by a largely conservative literary field. A path that, as we have seen, was rarely taken by Italian writers.

Being based on the French text, the *Sonzogno Dracula* is far shorter than Stoker's novel, in compliance with the average length of the other issues of the same series. As a consequence, the polyphonic structure of the original novel is heavily simplified: fewer voices take part in the narration and many sections originally attributed to different narrators are combined together. This leads to fewer changes of perspective and to the virtual silencing of some of the voices, which, however, does not seem to be motivated by any overarching criterion, except the achievement of a short

and uncomplicated narrative. This is certainly confirmed by the drastic shortening of arguably every chapter of the source text and the consistent choice of loaded words in the target text. The following quotations will provide an example of what happens to the text in the passage from English to French and then Italian:

The strangest figures we saw were the Slovaks, who are more barbarian than the rest, with their big cowboy hats, great baggy dirty-white trousers, white linen shirts, and **enormous heavy leather belts**, nearly a foot-wide, all studded over with brass nails. [...] They are very picturesque, but do not look prepossessing. On the stage they would be set down at once as some old Oriental band of brigands. **They are, however, I am told, very harmless and rather wanting in natural self-assertion.** (Stoker, 1997, p. 11, emphasis mine)

Les Slovaques ressemblent à des barbares avec leurs grands chapeaux de cowboys, leurs amples pantalons d'un blanc sale et leurs **larges ceintures de peau** à fermoir de cuivre. [...] **On n'aimerait pas en rencontrer au coin d'un bois.** ["You wouldn't want to bump into one of them in the middle of the woods"] (Stoker, 1920, pp. 9-10, emphasis mine)

Gli slovacchi sembrano dei barbari con i loro gran cappelli da *cowboys*, gli ampi calzoni di un bianco sporco e le **enormi cinture di pelle** dai fermagli d'ottone. [...] **Non farebbe piacere incontrarne uno nell'angolo di un bosco.** (Stoker, 1922, p. 7, emphasis mine)

This excerpt, which is 'so thoroughly conventional as to parody the travel genre' (Arata, 1990, p. 636), is shortened and made more immediately threatening in the French translation and consequently in the Italian. While the majority of changes can be traced back to the French translation, which should be seen as the ST for the Sonzogno *Dracula*, the Italian version tends to even outdo it, for instance by replacing "larges ceintures" (large belts) with "enormi cinture" (enormous belts). While that very choice is surprisingly consistent with the "enormous" of the English text, it is unlikely that Nessi should collate both STs in order to produce his TT. Such choices rather seem to

confirm that the expressionist prose of the French and Italian texts activated elements that were already present in the original novel.

The aim of both the French and the Italian texts is arguably to present a text that is more thrilling, through editing or sheer exaggeration of existing details, while the zero translation of the historical, social and pseudo-scientific digressions undermines the novel's uncanniest aspects. This leads also to a certain simplification of the novel's generic complexity, as its adventurous and gothic elements are given more space than travel narrative ones, which also translates into a general impoverishment of its colonial concerns and political undertones. According to Maria Tymoczko, suppressing 'facets of a source text [...] might be viewed as a form of *strategic self-censorship*' that allows translators 'to further their own programmatics in translating' (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 257). The result of such mediating practices is a fast-paced adventurous novel with little or nothing to do with the troubling character of Stoker's story: dangers, in the French and Italian editions of *Dracula*, do not come, as in most late-Victorian gothic novels, from the inside (Riquelme, 2000, p. 586), but from the outside. This is incidentally confirmed by the very final pages of the novel: the note written seven years after the defeat of the Count by Jonathan Harker, in which the latter voices some doubts with regard to the veracity of the story, disappears in Sonzogno's text. Here there is no scepticism surrounding the adventure and, perhaps more importantly, no metaliterary hesitation. These choices should of course first and foremost be attributed to the French mediators, but it is safe to argue that Sonzogno's decision to publish such a heavily manipulated and rather simplified version is in line with the editorial collocation of the novel as well as with Sonzogno's overall aesthetic and cultural project.

Anti-materialistic Dracula. The Fratelli Bocca edition of 1945

The second Italian version of *Dracula* is the 1945 one published by Fratelli Bocca in Milan, translated by Riccardo Selvi and with a preface by Remo Fedi. Bocca was a very popular publisher with a strong inclination for books relating to spiritual matters and to the history of occultism.^{viii} Their *Dracula* is no exception. This edition was ostensibly aimed at an entirely different public to Sonzogno's, as its sober cover, illustrated only with a pencil-drawn bat, suggests. The novel is included in a series dubbed 'Romanzi occulti' (*Occult Novels*), along with now lesser-known supernatural novels by authors such as Gustav Meyrink and Mabel Collins. It is worth noticing that Bocca also published another series called 'Problemi dello spirito' (*Spiritual Problems*) comprising books on oriental religions, yoga, magic and occultism. This series is advertised overleaf from the half title page of Bocca's *Dracula* and can be considered 'Romanzi occulti's' theosophical counterpart. Fedi was a frequent collaborator of both series and he introduces *Dracula* less as a novel than as an account of vampirism, 'one of the most mysterious occult traditions' (Stoker, 1945, p. v). Fedi goes even farther and boldly claims that *Dracula* will help spiritualize the western world after its 'dark hour' (p. vii). It is worth quoting Fedi at large to give an idea of the tone and rhetoric of his preface:

The western world [...] continues to relegate 'vampirism' among the superstitions science has prevailed upon. Although its spiritual reawakening has started, the west does not believe in vampirism [...] because it still lies at an enormous distance from the understanding of both individual and collective psychic faculties.

[...]

As the men of today have started to realise how inane it is to deny the existence of supernatural reality to the last, even though [...] the materialistic and positivist wind is still blowing in the western world, reading a book like Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a great contribution to that effective spiritualisation for which the people feel an imperious need, after the past dark age. (pp. v-vii, translation mine)

Fedi's text is characterized by a strong oppositional rhetoric, whereby he calls for a spiritualistic reform in a time in which materialism is predominant. This short text calls attention to a series of axiologically charged oppositions: occidental materialism vs. oriental spiritualism; darkness vs. light; ignorance vs. awareness. Nonetheless, Fedi suggests that a conciliation of these oppositions seems possible and the awakening of the western world can be achieved thanks to eastern spiritualism. This is one of the aspects that make it possible to recognize in Fedi's words a view of modernity featuring elements of traditionalist theories in general, and of Julius Evola's thought in particular. The Italian exotericist too was a frequent collaborator of Bocca; for them, he notably translated and edited the works of Meyrink, Eliade, Bachofen and Weininger, but especially published some of his own works between 1927 and 1951.^{ix} According to Evola, '[m]odernity is the culmination of the temporary success of the forces of disorder, the Age of Darkness, a prelude to the return to the Golden Age and the re-emergence of the forces of tradition' (Furlong, 2011, p. 9). Fedi mentions the contemporary return to 'primitive animism' as 'a progress on the spiritual path' (Stoker, 1945, p. vi) as well as the need to recover collective forces and traditional beliefs. More decisively, the spiritualization of the west through the conflation of eastern and western traditions echoes Evola's conviction that the two principles had to be combined in order to return to the golden age. This also resonates with more recent readings of the novel such as Arata's, according to whom, '*Dracula* enacts the period's most important and pervasive narrative of decline, a narrative of reverse colonization.' (Arata, 1990, p. 623). Count Dracula is dangerous because, among other things, he threatens to conquer the weakened west (that is, the declining British empire) and he has already symbolically done so by absorbing British culture and by infiltrating England through both his money and his bonds with Mina, Lucy and Jonathan. Furthermore Dracula has

a composite nature that might have appealed to Italian traditionalists trying to combine Guénon's contemplative mysticism and Evola's vitalism: he is both primitive and an exponent of a new race of beings, a warrior aristocrat and a capitalist, an oriental man and an 'occidentalist'. 'A reading that emphasizes only the archaic, anarchic, "primitive" forces embodied by Dracula misses half the point. When Harker arrives at the end of his journey east, he finds, not some epitome of irrationality, but a most accomplished Occidentalist.' (Arata, 1990, p. 637).

This Bocca edition corroborates the publisher's attempt to focus a large part of its production on occult matters, through Evola, Fedi and other fellow occultists. A minority group within fascist mysticism, and even more so in recently liberated Italy, they worked in interaction with Bocca in order to influence the literary and spiritual domain through a series of targeted publications intended as the true alternative to materialist western society. Fedi and Evola were intellectuals whose scholarly, philosophical and artistic concerns guided their choices of texts to import into the Italian literary system. Remo Fedi was the author of several books on occultism and demonology, and he translated a number of exoteric works by the likes of William Walker Atkinson, who was also present in the 'Problemi dello spirito' series under his pseudonym Yogi Ramacharaka. Evola, on the other hand, was the leading exponent of Italian exotericism; a Dada artist and a satanist, the author of books on topics as diverse as Hermeticism, Tantra, sex magic, the Holy Grail and of course vampirism and demonology. Moreover, Evola was, along with René Guénon, one of the main exponents of the Traditionalist movement, and both were linked to Aleister Crowley, the leader of OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis) and a member of Golden Dawn, an occultist society that counted Bram Stoker himself among its members. While archival research has not provided any irrefutable evidence of this, it can be mooted that the editorial

decision to include *Dracula* in the 'Romanzi occulti' series (along with books written by other Golden Dawn members such as Gustav Meyrink), as well as the idea of presenting the novel as a theosophical text, were consistent with the mediators' occult beliefs and with the aim to influence its reception amongst Italians.^x The mediators position themselves not only through the choice of titles but through paratextual commentary and thus attempt to elaborate a common narrative in which both they and their intended audience are embedded (Baker, 2006, p. 133). Thanks to Fedi's introduction, the novel underwent a remarkable process of reframing^{xi} in order to be turned into a sort of fictional treatise on vampirism and spiritism, ultimately aimed at contrasting the public erasure of such supernatural aspects of life in post-fascist Italy.

This also participates in the country's long but erratic relationship both with the fantastic in general and with vampires in particular. While Fedi disparagingly rejects materialism, his attitude still relies on accepting vampirism and 'the occult traditions of primitive peoples' as, in the words of Bergson that he quotes, 'données immédiates' (Stoker, 1945, p. vi). His gnosiological realism has much in common with Capuana's: Fedi's vampires belong to the realm of metaphysics, but they are not hallucinations, they are 'facts' that contemporary materialism cannot make sense of. If Capuana (and Lombroso) relied on the flexibility of the positive method, Fedi seems more prone to exotic explanations, but he is nonetheless advocating for the possibility of investigating such manifestations of metaphysical reality.

In addition to this, it is worth observing that in the allegedly unabridged Bocca edition most sections are actually curtailed, despite Fedi's initial claim. These cuts are ubiquitous, they concern almost every paragraph and follow a distinct pattern, reducing the verbosity of Stoker's narration and doing away with redundant passages and explanations. This was still a common attitude in Italy with both low-brow and high-

brow literature at the time, even though the general attitude was changing and similar manipulations were becoming tolerable only for popular literature. A rather striking aspect is that the text's frequent references to literature or sociology (Shakespeare, H. C. Anderssen, Lombroso, Nordau and several others) are often omitted, while most of the references to occultism, afterlife and demonology (e.g. the school of black magic Scholomance at the start of chapter xxiii) are kept. The translation is not just aiming to simplify the text, but to specialize it. Fedi could focus on such a partial reading of *Dracula* because the possibility was already inscribed in the text. Stoker's novel is symptomatic of the years bridging the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries in its voicing of both the contradictions and the limits of positivism. One of the elements that make *Dracula* such a compelling novel is its representation of the dialectic between science and para-science, between Dr. Seward's unwavering belief in official science and Van Helsing's openness to unorthodox solutions. The Bocca edition gives the former short shrift in favour of the latter. Despite keeping the overall structure of the original novel, then, Bocca's edition is also a partial and metonymic version of Stoker's *Dracula*, in which the polyphonic and intertextual character of the source is sacrificed on the altar of the war on materialism. Bocca did not translate *Dracula* on account of its aesthetic qualities but principally as part of a broader project of anti-materialistic and spiritualistic reform.

Conclusions on the metonymic character of translation

Sonzogno and Bocca released two strikingly different versions of *Dracula*. Fantastic, and particularly gothic, literature was generally spurned by the cultural establishment in Italy: the prejudice against it dated back at least to the Classic-Romantic debate and had gained momentum in Crocean Italy. These two editions show different strategies to overcome the deep-seated resistance and censorious attitude of the Italian literary field

by erasing some of the novel's elements in order to find a suitable editorial position and audience for it in a literary sphere in which, as we have seen, gothic fiction rarely presented itself in its *pure* form. On the one hand, Sonzogno chose to publish the severely manipulated French edition of the novel, and in so doing highlighted the novel's shocking features while diluting its unsettling character by both focusing on its ghastlier elements and through a systematic removal of political and socio-anthropological references. Bocca, on the other, adopted a unconventional reframing strategy, thus at least partially ascribing the popular novel to a different genre and emphasising its philosophical and mystical import. This edition, perhaps unwittingly, shows the links between the novel and the theosophical Dublin society that contributed to its birth, while it downplays its fictional aspects. Dracula's lurid incarnations were to prove more successful than metaphysical versions of the story in the long run (especially in films), but such an original reading of the novel demonstrates both a process of restructuring which the Italian literary field underwent after Fascism and the malleable nature of this gothic novel. It confirms a constant undercurrent of Italian writers dealing with vampires: from the spirits of Capuana's short story, to the blood-sucking animals of Salgari's (1912),^{xiii} vampires are a mystery to investigate rather than a fantastic and inexplicable phenomenon. Despite the above-mentioned differences, Bocca's edition, unlike Sonzogno's, follows in the footsteps of this tradition. Along with the choice of two radically different source texts, this shows how different readings are inscribed in Stoker's hypotext and how malleable popular literature in translation can be, which in turn also teaches us something about the metonymic aspect of translation.

In a compelling and ground-breaking assessment of how a holistic approach to translation can ultimately empower translators, Maria Tymoczko considered translation

as a metonymic process. Since texts make ‘contradictory demands’ (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 211) on translators, it is impossible to convey all the possible meanings of an ST in a receiving system. Such impossibility does not mean that translators are bound to fail, but rather that such overdetermination of meaning empowers them and gives them the right to choose which aspect of a text they want to focus on and to censor everything else: ‘loss and gain of meaning are not necessarily terrible things. They are inevitable. [...] and constructivist interventions by translators are not only inevitable but ultimately desirable’ (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 308). Translations are hermeneutic exercises and thus can have political, ethical or, as in the case of the two Italian versions of *Dracula*, aesthetic and metaphysical connotations. ‘A metonymic approach to translation [...] is congruent with views of meaning in translation as multivalent, as constructivist, and as both overdetermined and underdetermined, thus taking many potential forms in target text renditions.’ (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 305). While Tymoczko focuses her study on translators, the examples above have shown how much such meaning-making strategies also involve other agents: i.e. editors, scouts, publishers, critics. It is by focussing on all aspects of the mediation process that we can assess the various forces involved in the afterlife of a text. In a reception studies approach, the holistic model proposed by Tymoczko can and should therefore be enlarged to include other agents and mediators in order to consider their respective agencies and how they affect the literary system. Both editions of *Dracula* specialize the source text particularly by not conforming to what Toury dubbed ‘matricial norms’ (1995, p. 57), namely those regarding the fullness of the translation and the distribution of the text. In so doing, they illustrate how importing literature is not only about *filling the gaps* in the receptor’s system, but mainly involves a process of constant rewriting and adaptation of foreign materials in order to pursue the mediator’s aesthetic (and/or political/philosophical) agenda.

Summary translations, translations that diverge markedly from the linguistic features of the source text, and translations that add significant contextual or supplementary materials are all examples of translation types that privilege transfer, manipulating the source text in different ways so as to transmit the contents to the targeted audience most effectively and most efficiently. (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 117)

The two translations examined here are 'efficient': they are the results of a metonymic process of selection of what the mediators wanted to convey into the target literary domain by complying with genre-specific constraints. They implement different self-censorious strategies in order to emphasize particular aspects of the source text and offer carefully tailored readings of the translated novel in order to facilitate its circulation in the receiving system. Like Roman censors, the translators' 'authority to prohibit can never be separated from [their] need to include' (Holquist, 1994, p. 14). The pre-publication erasure of some of the aspects of the text is here a constitutive part of the creative process of translation,^{xiii} testimony to a *proactive* attitude towards the transfer of literary artefacts, and one that grants the right of circulation within a certain literary domain: it allows the mediators to invest a text with a particular identity, and in so doing influence the expectations of the readers.

To conclude, it can be mooted that, while similar rewritings could of course affect virtually any literary text, the specific nature of *Dracula*, its literary status, its themes and its resulting from a compromise between conflicting attitudes towards the occult, made it a very suitable candidate for such manipulations. This is confirmed by the multifarious afterlife of Stoker's protagonist and, incidentally, by the unusual peculiarities of the Italian case. *Dracula's* first unabridged Italian translations were released in the second half of the twentieth century, but this did not stop publishers (Bocca and others) from reprinting Fedi's edition, often without the preface and ascribing the translation to Fedi himself, until the late 1970s, while Nessi's version was

recently republished and even recorded as an audiobook, testimony to a rather surprising resistance of two antithetical and extremely partial readings of *Dracula* that are apparently still with us.^{xiv}

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ⁱ It is nonetheless worth mentioning that Tommaso Landolfi started publishing his fantastic novels and short stories in the late 1930s (e.g. *La pietra lunare*, 1939).

ⁱⁱ Stoker himself, due to his death in 1912, never enjoyed the financial fruits of this cunning strategy, but his wife, Florence, was involved in several controversies. Most famously, Stoker's wife won her legal action against Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) and obtained the destruction of all copies of the film, which, luckily, was not fully carried out (Skal, 1997, p. 376).

ⁱⁱⁱ No evidence of the authenticity of this preface is available, but scholars tend to consider it part of the peritext of the novel. For a thought-provoking analysis of both the preface and Ásmundsson's Icelandic translation, see De Roos, 2014.

^{iv} Franco Mistrali's gothic novel, *Il vampiro* (1869) is one of the few exceptions (Tardiola, 1991, pp. 33-36).

^v Most of these texts can be read in Daniele (2011).

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- ^{vi} Started in 1914, the series was dubbed ‘biblioteca rossa’ – *red library* –, before crime novels were associated with the colour yellow in Italy.
- ^{vii} The *Giornale* (started in 1878) is the Italian version of the French *Le Journal des voyages et des aventures de terre et de mer*, started in 1877, the copyright of which Sonzogno had bought for publication in Italy.
- ^{viii} This is especially evident when the publishing house moved from Turin to Milan in 1936 (Tranfaglia & Vittoria, 2000, p. 328).
- ^{ix} The first book Evola published with Bocca was *Teoria dell'individuo assoluto* (1927). He then went on to publish *Lo Yoga della potenza* (1949) and the second revised edition of *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* (1951).
- ^x The effects of this are still visible today: *Dracula* is still interpreted as a spiritual text concerned with otherworldly and religious matters. The CESNUR (Center for Studies on New Religions) is a case in point. Incidentally, the works of its founder and director, Massimo Introvigne, are published by Sugar (later SugarCo), the same publisher that reprinted Bocca’s edition of *Dracula* in 1966 and 1979, surprisingly ascribing the translation to Fedi himself.
- ^{xi} Mona Baker defines framing as ‘an active strategy that implies agency and by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of reality’ (Baker, 2006, p. 106)
- ^{xii} The second edition of the short story was published by Sonzogno in 1935.
- ^{xiii} ‘Here creativity is not seen merely as a force or flow of energy which is channelled and formed by constraint but rather as something whose existence is indissolubly tied to the existence of formal constraint.’ (Boase-Beier & Holman, 1998, p. 7)
- ^{xiv} A compelling account of the reception of *Dracula* in post-war Italy is provided by Fabio Camilletti in his forthcoming book, *Italia lunare* (2018). I wish to thank the author for allowing me to read a preview of the relevant chapter.