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**Different Wor(l)ds:**
Pier Maria Pasinetti’s Self-Translation

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Le devoir et la tâche d’un écrivain sont ceux d’un traducteur.
--Marcel Proust
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Introduction

Pier Maria Pasinetti is not an author that you usually do not study in depth unless you are a student of the Italian Literature department. If you are lucky, you may read some paragraphs of Rosso veneziano in your Literature anthology. However, he could be defined as a niche writer. His books are difficult to be found due to the fact that they are not for sale anymore and, unfortunately, he is mostly famous for his teaching career at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) than for his novels.

When my Italian Literature Professor Silvana Tamiozzo decided to schedule a class at “Fondo Pasinetti” (Pasinetti Archive), I barely knew who this man was. I had a blurry memory from High School when I read an extract from Rosso veneziano, but that was all. Once at the archive, I was impressed by the amount of work he did and by what connections he had during his life. It was interesting to discover that Pasinetti worked as his own archivist. He used to collect pictures and letters in chronological order and he would also write short comments on the documents that he was organizing in folder. However, the staff of Centro Interuniversitario di Studi Veneti (CISVe)\(^1\) has been

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\(^1\) The Centro Interuniversitario di Studi Veneti (CISVe) was established in 1981 by Giorgio Padoan with the aim of supporting studies and researches regarding the geographic area of Veneto.
dealing with a huge amount of documentation: pictures, letters, his dissertations, drafts of his novels, recordings of his translations. The last type of documentation drew my attention. In fact, that day I discovered that Pier Maria Pasinetti self-translated three of his novels precisely on the first day I visited “Fondo Pasinetti” and that discovery inspired me the topic of this dissertation: Pier Maris Pasinetti and the practice of self-translation.

The phenomenon of self-translation is becoming a fairly common practice in scholarly publishing as all scholars are more akin to bilingualism. The new attitude towards bilingualism can be related to the developing of new socio-cultural circumstances of the role of the scholar in these years. Even though the practice of self translation is spreading there is little attention to it. It is certain that the spread of this phenomena would mean a step beyond the uncomfortable role of the translator as third interfering voice between writer and reader of a translated text.

The few available studies on this topic focus mainly on a world-wide famous self-translators: Samuel Beckett. What comes out from these researches is that Becket used self-translation “intentionally” (A.Hardenberg 159) to support his existentialism. On the other hand, “Beckett’s case is not the rule … he is more or less in a league of his own” (Grutman 20). Clearly, Beckett was trying to “juggle two traditions” (Grutman 18), respectively the French and the English ones. Pasinetti tried to juggle two different traditions through all his life, too. He was divided between Los Angeles and Venice, between Anglo-American and Italian (with some hints of Venetian in it).

Pier Maria Pasinetti was the image of an intellectual that was searching for something new and the projection of a future Italian academic career did not seem to be

The Universities of Venice, Padua, Verona, Udine, Trieste and Trento are active parts of this cultural institution.
enough for him or for his expectations. He was first enchanted by the Anglo-saxon and the American reality when he was a child: his aunt Emma Ciardi was a well-known painter with several British and American friends. It was thanks to his aunt that he left Italy for the first time in 1930s when he went to Great Britain.

Pasinetti was seeking new possibilities that America in the 1930s was promising to give. He followed the “American dream” but he kept with him his heritage as Venetian that in some pushed him to confront with two worlds. He was able to find a balance between two completely different world and he felt comfortable with them. This balance was represented by his novels. He was writing about his city, Venice, while he was in the United States, leading to several misunderstandings with the Italian critic. In fact, many Italian critics neglected his books basing on the fact that he was overseas. Pasinetti’s double life was welcomed with suspicion: Carlo Bo describes him as “uno scrittore dilaniato” and Francesco Bruni talks about “dilemma identitario” (Le parentele inventate 81). This hostility led to the fact that Pasinetti’s most famous romance Rosso Veneziano (Venetian Red) had more success in its English version at first.

His practice of translating is the core of this research project. It has been difficult to choose a good selection of his books to work on. My final decision was to focus on the translation process of Venetian Red and The Smile on the Face of the Lion. These two book well trace the path of Pasinetti as self-translator.

Venetian Red is the book that consecrated Pier Maria Pasinetti as an international writer. My analysis will focus on those details that differ between the Italian and the English version. I deal with problems that are shared by ordinary translation and self-translation such as the reproduction of foreign accents. I will discuss also changed that Pasinetti made mainly to ease the English reader.
The Smile on the Face of the Lion is a complex book with a far more complex publishing history, starting from his title. In fact, its original title was La confusione which became later The Smile on the Face of the Lion in the English translation and then Il sorriso del leone in the last-published Italian edition.

It is important to underline that I do not want to question Pasinetti as a translator, whom, on the contrary, I admire. This is an analysis on how he moved from Italian to English. I am trying to create capable hypothesis on what his final purposes were when he was crossing the limit between translation and rewriting. Nonetheless, despite the author’s skillful use of English, Pasinetti’s writing style changes significantly from a language to another, in his translation something gets lost. That something is to be recognized in Steiner’s idea that “the strength, the ingegno of a language cannot be transferred” (Steiner 253).
Chapter 1 – *America Blues*

*Bisognerebbe aver avuto alcune vite invece che una, e averne offerto una ciascuna di loro supponendo interesse in qualcuna almeno. Ma si ha una vita solo e allora si dovrebbe dire beh oramai è andata così e si dice invece no, sta ancora andando.*

--Pier Maria Pasinetti²

Ugo Rubeo’s book *Mal d’America* is a collection of interviews to Italian intellectuals on their American experience. Between 1983 and 1984 Rubeo had the chance to interview personalities like Michelangelo Antonioni, Alberto Moravia, Italo Calvino. Pier Maria Pasinetti’s interview is among them³. Rubeo’s intent was that of portraying what the United States meant for Italians and what their cultural relationship with the United States was.

Tra le prerogative, infinite, delle stelle, c’è quella – ben conosciuta agli astronomi – della mutevolezza: una costellazione ha infatti l’indiscusso privilegio di contraddirsi, ribaltarsi, invertire l’ordine dei propri astri, e continuare, ciò nonostante, ad essere se stessa, a mantenere intatto, cioè, il proprio potere di suggestione […]

In modo non troppo dissimile da quanto accade tra la costellazione e l’astronomo, l’America, com’è noto ha esercitato nei confronti dell’intellettuale Italiano un potere di suggestioni per certi versi inspiegabile. (Rubeo 9-10)

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² Pier Maria Pasinetti, *Fate partire le immagini*, p.101

³ See Rubeo, Ugo *Mal d’America*
As a matter of fact, the concept of the frontier and the new form of freedom were the first two features which contributed to the attractiveness of the United States. Rubeo compared this phenomenon to the attractiveness that constellations have on astronomers. According to Rubeo this phenomenon had not faded away even after the entire continent had been mapped and a frontier no longer existed, indeed he wrote “ciò che più stupisce di tale fenomeno è il suo curioso persistere […] di fronte all’America anche le mappe più particolareggiate servono a poco: ciò che conta è il sussulto, la promessa che […] quel nome continua ad evocare” (Rubeo 10). It is important to underline that Rubeo took into consideration a minority of intellectuals who experienced the American life just before and after World War II. Such group of people had lived during Fascism and had experienced its censorship, so that America appeared to them as a dream land because it offered freedom of expression and freedom of choice, which were almost impossible in those years in Italy. Marina Coslovi describes the United States as Italians’ dream land in the first decades of 20th century:

There comes a time when a certain foreign land becomes the country of young people’s dreams. The country changes, with the changing of young people’s aspirations. For twenty years, in the period separating the two world wars, for a group of promising young Italian intellectuals refractory to the doctrine of Fascism, the dreamland was called The United States of America. (Coslovi 67)

Three were the common elements which came up to surface from the collected interviews. First, their American experience was seen as an initiatory ritual to their career, each interviewees shared with Rubeo an epiphanic memory to be related to an aspect of the American continent, or of American society. A consequence of their epiphanic moment was the development of a romantic view of their American experience. For example, Dante Della Terza talked about “la poetica degli spazi aperti
Michelangelo Antonioni focused more on the sense of “rinnovamento senza sosta” (Rubeo 20) of the American society and Pier Maria Pasinetti recognized in “la naturale libertà degli animi” (Rubeo 127) the characteristic feature of American reality.

The title of Rubeo’s book comes from an idea of Pier Maria Pasinetti who recognized in the seeking of America, a kind of pathology or illness as he experienced it personally. In Rubeo’s interview, Pasinetti said that his relationship with the U.S.A. was born partly by chance and partly thanks to his family connections.

Pier Maria Pasinetti was born on June 26th 1913; his father, Carlo Pasinetti, was a physician and his mother, Maria Ciardi, was Guglielmo Ciardi’s daughter and Emma Ciardi’s sister. (Fig. 1-3) It was thanks to his aunt Emma that Pier Maria and his brother Francesco had their first “American experience” while they were children. They met the painter Giulio de Blaas, who was introduced to them as Lulo Blaas. Pier Maria

4 Pasinetti is quoting Guido Piovene, reporter of the Italian newspaper Il Corriere della Sera. He is famous for his reportage on his travel across America from Fall 1951 to Fall 1952. All his reportages were collected in a volume called De America which was published by Garzanti in 1953.

5 Guglielmo Ciardi (Venice 1842-1917) was an Italian landscape painter. He often took inspiration from The Macchiaioli, which was a movement famous for outdoor painting. He was able to put together naturalistic painting with the Veduta movement. For more details see F. Maspes, Guglielmo Ciardi protagonista del vedutismo veneto dell’ottocento. Treviso: Antiga Edizioni, 2013.

6 Emma Ciardi (Venice, January 13th 1879 – November 16th 1933) was the daughter of the landscape painter Guglielmo Ciardi. Her style took inspiration from both Landscape painting and Impressionism. Her art certainly was an influence on Pier Maria Pasinetti’s skill of description. Emma Ciardi had the chance to receive a good education, belonging to a wealthy family and this enabled her to learn English and French. Some of her painting were bought by English and American art collectors, having the chance to be known internationally. Recently, the volume Le splendeur de Venise et de l’Art Moderne has been published: it is a study on the relationship between the French sculptor Antoine Bourdelle and Emma Ciardi. Antoine Bourdelle was first intrigued by Ciardi’s personality, she was seen as a “Donna nobile at genius loci” (Le splendeur de Venise et de l’Art Moderne 18). According to Beltrami, she was considered the heiress of the Venetian School, which had been represented for years by artists like Francesco Guardi or Pietro Longhi. In those years Emma Ciardi’s paintings were everywhere and she took part to every Venice Biennale from 1903 to 1932, with the exception of 1926 (Le splendeur de Venise et de l’Art Moderne 27). For more details see Zerbi M., Bourdelle E.A., Beltrami C.. La Splendeur de Venise et de l’Art Moderne. Quinto di Treviso: Zel Edizioni, 2012.

7 Giulio de Blaas (Venice, August 11th 1888 – New York, May 15th 1934), called Lulo, was son of the painter Eugenio de Blaas who belonged to the academic classicism. Lulo’s production mainly consisted in portraits destined to private collections. For further details see A. M. Comanducci, I pittori italiani dell’Ottocento, Milano 1934, p. 182
Pasinetti remembers him in his last book, *Fate partire le immagini*, as the man who gave him his first shape of American culture:

Lulo era spesso a Venezia, trattava i moti transatlantici con disinvoltura. […] Inoltre sessanta o settanta anni prima dei telefonini, Lulo lasciava sempre il numero di dove potevano raggiungerlo; un giorno che era al lunch da noi, lo chiamarono e la disinvoltura del suo inglese al telefono mi fece effetto. Ma più effetto ancora mi faceva il modo come stava attento a che cosa mangiava e quanto. […] Abbiamo avuto così una primizia, debitamente americana, di quelle attenzioni a cibi e diete che oggi occupano da protagoniste tivù e Internet. […] Mori a New York. Le sue spoglie arrivarono a Venezia perfette. Anzi, ci fu qualche grido fra stupefazione e spavento. *Marria vergine, el xè ancora vivo. Amici Americani, come regalo agli amici veneziani, lo avevano fatto imbalsamare […]. State of Art. E così per me è arrivata quest’altra primizia Americana.* (*Fate partire le immagini* 12)

After Maria Ciardi, Pier Maria and Francesco’s mother, died in 1928; their aunt Emma took care of the children and almost became their second mother, up to 1933, the year of her death. There are few documents on both women, except for Emma Ciardi’s personal records, which she left to the Pasinetti brothers. Aunt Emma gave to Francesco and to Pier Maria the chance to travel to England in 1931. Pasinetti was 18 and he remembers that journey as his discovery of a new world beyond Venice. Pasinetti described that summer as a crucial experience which determined the path of his future years; he said “mia zia ci condusse in Inghilterra e fu un’esperienza decisiva” (Rubeo 117); it was the summer of 1931.
Pasinetti attended Marco Foscarini high school in Venice and he received his degree in English literature from the University of Padua. He said during an interview given to the academic journal *Italian Quarterly*:

Ho fatto quattro anni di lettere a Padova, mi sono laureato in letteratura inglese in un periodo in cui non c’era neanche veramente un professore proprio di inglese; l’ultimo anno di università sono andato ad Oxford a imparare la lingua e ho passato anche qualche tempo in Irlanda perché facevo la tesi su Joyce. (*Italian Quarterly* 8)

Indeed, he enrolled at the University of Padua and chose Italian Literature as his major but soon his interest in English literature inspired him to write his final dissertation on James Joyce. During the years Pasinetti was attending university Joyce was not so well-known in Italy. Indeed, *Ulysses* was translated and published in Italy only in 1960. The famous scholar of European and America Literature Mario Praz’s played an influential role in Pasinetti’s choice of the topic for his thesis. In fact, he was one of the few Italian intellectuals who were systematically doing research on Joyce, and he saw in young Pasinetti “il solo giovane di belle speranze che abbian gli studi inglesi” (*Le parentele inventate* 96) in those years in Italy. Pier Maria Pasinetti met Mario Praz in the summer of 1931 when on the Lido of Venice a woman said to young Pasinetti that “al suo Albergo c’è un signore, giovane ma evidentemente ‘già qualcuno’, proviene da Liverpool e studia certi libri con vecchie rilegature” (*Fate partire le immagini* 50). This young man was Praz. Pasinetti graduated in 1935. His final dissertation consisted of 127 pages.

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*The Italian Quarterly* was an academic journal founded by Carlo L. Golino, Dante Dalla terza, Lowry Nelson and Pier Maria Pasinetti in 1957. It welcomed critical contributions in English and Italian on Italian literature and culture, including film, artistic translations of works of merit. The issue no. 102 of fall 1985 was entirely devoted to Pier Maria Pasinetti in occasion of his retirement. Apart from Marta White’s interview to Pasinetti, there are four essay “Il Centro nella strategia narrativa di Pasinetti” by M.Cottino Jones, “Note su P.M.Pasinetti” by Michelangelo Antonioni, “Il dialogismo e il problema della Coscienza Storica nella narrativa di P.M.Pasinetti” by Lucia Re and “P.M.Pasinetti Criticus Doctus; ‘Life for Art’s Sake’” by Lowry Nelson Jr. Finally, there are two interventions by his colleague Fredi Chiapelli and Dante Dalla Terza.
pages and it was titled *L’artista secondo James Joyce*. Pasinetti focused on Joyce’s published works *Ulysses, Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist*. According to Pasinetti, Joyce was “sempre più coerente al programma della solitudine artistica” which forced him to be part of “l’assoluta, inderogabile presenza del personaggio” (*Le parentele inventate* 98).

Eight months after his graduation, he won a scholarship for a Master of Arts at Louisiana State University:

Mario Praz [mi consigliò] di fare richiesta per una borsa di studio in America. Ne ho vinta una e mi assegnarono all’università della Louisiana, nell’anno accademico 1935-36. Ricordo che quando arrivò la lettera della Louisiana State University, con mio fratello corremmo a prendere un atlante per vedere dove si trovasse esattamente. (*Italian Quarterly* 9)

While in Louisiana he had several contacts with Robert Penn Warren⁹, one of the main exponents of the New Criticism. Pasinetti met “Red” Warren at Baton Rouge, a headquarter of Louisiana State University. (*Fig. 6*) There, Pasinetti also met Warren’s Italian wife, and, as he wrote, at their house he had one of the best moments of his life as a student:

Mi ricorderò sempre una sera […] io ero particolarmente di cattivo umore – non mi ricordo il perché, allora Red […] dice a sua moglie “leggiamo il racconto di Pier” che lei aveva già letto in italiano. Allora lei glielo legge e glielo traduce simultaneamente. E’ stato uno dei moment più belli della mia vita. Warren girava per

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He published his first short story “Home Coming” in The Southern Review in 1937. It was followed by “Family History” in 1939. In 1940 “Family History” was included in the anthology The Best Short Stories edited in Boston by Edward J. O’Brien in 1940. The Southern Review was an important publication in those years, as it was publishing writers like Mary McCarthy and Eudora Welty. The friendship with “Red” Warren would be crucial in the following years, when Pasinetti, having returned to Europe, needed help to get back to the U.S.A.

Pasinetti concluded his Master of Arts with a final thesis entitled The Tragic Elements in Hawthorne’s Works, in 1936. After his experience at Louisiana State University, he won a second scholarship for a Master of Arts at Berkeley, where he stayed from fall 1936 to August 1937. Recollecting those years, he wrote:

Il caso vuole che io abbia trascorso l’anno accademico 1936-37 studente a Berkeley, la più vecchia tra le varie sedi dell’Università di California […] Vi arrivai dal Sud, dal Delta del Mississippi, ospite in un’automobile di amici attraverso stati come il Texas, l’Oklahoma, fino al Colorado e di là proseguendo il viaggio verso la costa pacifica in vagoni ferroviari più vicini nell’aspetto a quelli assaliti dal bandito Jesse James che ai moderni aerodinamici con torretta panoramic.

Non era un viaggiare comodo, tanto che alla Città del Sale […] mi sentii poco bene dalla fatica. Però, ore o giorni dopo, sceso a Berkeley, intraviste nell’alba quelle colline verde chiaro e sentito l’odore del Pacifico, ogni stanchezza cessò, cominciava

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10 The Southern Review is an American quarterly literary journal. It was founded by Robert Penn Warren and Cleath Brooks in 1935. Since its foundation, The Southern Review has been publishing fiction, non-fiction and poetry of contemporary and emerging writers. In particular, Pasinetti’s short story was included in the Autumn 1937 Issue of the journal. This issue contained also “Old Mortality” a short story by the Pulitzer-prize winning Katherine Anne Porter and a critical essay on Yeats by Francis Otto Matthiesen.
In August 1937 Pier Maria Pasinetti was back in Italy; Mario Praz offered him to teach at the University of Rome, but Pasinetti declined the offer. He decided to go to Germany and stayed there between 1938 and 1942. He was in Berlin during the Kristallnacht of November 9th 1938. That night was the beginning of the Nazis persecution of the Jews and it is worldwide known as the most famous pogrom during Nazism. Pasinetti described it as follow:

And Berlin was pleasant in the early Autumn. But then, November came, the November of 1938. [...] I saw even worse things later, but that was the first of its kind which I saw, therefore I remember those days and must recall them in my “biography” because it was in those days that my view on mankind changed substantially and some changes took place also in my own mind and morality. [...] Only by that time it was clear with me that those plump bastards [the Nazis] would call for war; and since all the facts exist for us in their personal reflections, I knew that nothing approaching mental equilibrium would ever be possible again for me unless one day I saw them all destroyed, and, what is even more important, humiliated.11 (Le parentele inventate 110)

The breaking of the war and the Italian declaration of war on the Allies was seen negatively by Pasinetti who decided to move to a neutral country like Sweden in 1942. He stayed there until 1946. In Stockholm Pasinetti worked as a professor at the University of Stockholm and became director of the “Istituto Italiano di Cultura”.

Pasinetti was able to return to the United States thanks to his friends Robert Penn Warren and Allan Seager. He obtained a short term job at Bennington College in 1946. It

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11 Here Pasinetti was writing in English to his friend Allan Seager from Stockholm in October 1944. He was expressing some ideas on what he had experienced in Germany some years before this letter was written. CISVe, archive “Carte del contemporaneo”, “Fondo P.M.Pasinetti”, cart. 73.
was thanks to this job that he was able to obtain a permanent work-visa. He sought an academic career because he wanted to be a writer, so he decided to apply for a Ph.D. at Yale in 1947. When he was accepted, he decided to attend the Comparative Literature school of Renè Wellek, who Pasinetti had met in Oxford when he was younger. Pasinetti obtained his Ph.D. in 1949 and his final dissertation *Life for Art’s Sake. Studies in the Literary Myth of the Romantic Artist* deserved the John Addison Porter Prize for that year. Such recognition allowed him to be hired as assistant professor at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in the Fall 1949. In 1951 he became associate professor. At UCLA he taught World Literature and was one of the founders of the Comparative Literature Department. Pasinetti taught at UCLA till his retirement in 1985.

Along with his work as professor, he contributed to some films scenarios; he wrote the screen play of Michelangelo Antonioni’s *La Signora senza camelie* (1952) and he served as a technical advisor in Joseph Leo Mankiewicz’s *Julius Cesar* (1953). (Fig. 10)

Another important fact in Pasinetti’s professional life was his role as co-editor, together with Maynard Mack, of *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*. He edited the Renaissance section and his most famous essays are that on Erasmus “Praise of Folly” and that on Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.

In the *Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* he is addressed as a writer, who “vividly renders the complexity of character and human relations. He employs a sinuously intellectual but direct spoken language that is unrivaled in modern Italian literature” (*Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* 598). He was “unrivaled” and he was unique, indeed he admitted to use “una mescolanza di ‘grandezza oratoria’, ma sempre su un fondo di humor […] certo ciò non mi giova
molto, visto che non è un tratto familiare in un clima letterario quale il nostro, dove [...] un grande assente è proprio la mescolanza di wit e high seriousness” (Rubeo 127). In his works, he tried to put together elements belonging to different traditions. He himself was rooted in two realities. He led a double existence between Venice and Los Angeles and he felt completely at ease with both. He would have loved to have the chance of a second life, indeed at the end of Fate partire le immagini he wrote “bisognerebbe aver avuto alcune vite invece che una”. His desire of a second life together with his double existence are to be considered the main reasons why he self-translated his novels. With his translations, Pasinetti created a connection between two different cultures and, in the meanwhile, he gave a second life to his fiction. Pasinetti’s approach to self-translation changed through the years. The differences which emerge from a comparison between Rosso veneziano and Venetian Red are signals of the process of re-writing which is a consequence of self-translation. This process becomes more evident from the comparison between La confusione and its English edition The Smile on the Face of the Lion. Moreover, the English title was translated into Italian when a second edition was published. In the years, the two worlds that Pasinetti tried to connect became closer. If Pasinetti’s self-translation had one direction from Rosso veneziano to Venetian Red, it had a double direction in La confusione, where the self-translation, in presenting several differences from the Italian edition, became a source of inspiration for its source text. The two worlds were not only connected but they started to collaborate and exchange information.
Chapter 2- Different Wor(l)ds

Language is the most salient model of Heraclitean flux.
It alters at every moment in perceived time.
--George Steiner

Translation is a world-wide debated topic and it is a phenomenon that cannot be strictly defined or confined to a simple and clear concept. Its definitions and its techniques have developed following the evolution of language and language has developed following the changes of the world different cultures and traditions. According to George Steiner “every language-act has a temporal determinant. No semantic form is timeless” (Steiner 24). Consequently, translation might be considered as a product of the culture and civilization of the time in which it is produced. In other words, source (that is the language/culture from which a translator starts) and target (that is the audience to which a translation is addressed) are crucial features of a translation. Referring to translation there is a distinction between ordinary translation, in which the author of the text and its translator are two different people; then there is self-translation, also called auto-translation, in which author of the text and translator are the same person. These two types of translation are considered as two different and opposite categories. According to Hardenberg “self-translation is often simultaneously placed above an ordinary translation and somewhat disqualified from the category” (Hardenberg 152). This is to say that in front of an author that self-translates his/her

12 See, George Steiner, After Babel p. 18
books, nobody is supposed to question his/her choices on the use of a word instead of another, because it is implicit that he/she already knows the communicative intention of the author, as it is the same person. On the contrary, it may be questioned whether communicative intention changes with the changing of the target, because the use of a word wakes “its entire previous history” (Steiner 24). It may be questioned where the limit between simple translation and new creation is, whether after the translation, a book should be considered as a bilingual work or as a new book. As a matter of fact, self-translation is a practice still in progress among writers, but it is becoming more common as there are more bilingual individuals. And if we consider the fact that translation has changed over time, following the development of language and society, can we argue that self-translation may be a result of globalized society? In other words, if globalization sees the arising of national integration, this process of integration includes people and their everyday life more often requires to be able to speak more than one language. Self-translation is spreading in this context and it may be recognized as a consequence of ordinary translations.

The practice of self-translation was still unusual when an author like Pier Maria Pasinetti self-translated his novels. In the field of self-translation there are few, but different approaches. In fact, a writer may write his book and produce a simultaneous translation (a translation executed while the original version is still in process) or he/she may produce a delayed translation (a translation executed after the publishing of the original version). Moreover, self-translation can be an exact transposition of the source text, but it can be also a new editing of it, or in other words an adaptation of the source text to the new audience. Pier Maria Pasinetti mainly produced a simultaneous
translation when he translated *Rosso veneziano* and *Il ponte dell’Accademia*, whereas he made a delayed translation for *La Confusione*.

In order to analyze Pasinetti’s self-translation, we need to trace the path of self-translation beginning from its so-defined opposite category of ordinary translation.

The term “translation” is defined in the *Mirriam-Webster Dictionary* as “the act of rendering from one language to another” but this definition represents only 10% of a translator’s work. Moreover, a translation may occur between a verbal sign and a non-verbal system of signs and vice-versa and there is no reference to the thoroughness of such an act of translating. Focusing only on translation between verbal languages, the process of translation is well described in the following scheme:

![Eugene Nida’s scheme on the process of translation](image)

This scheme (1) displays the process of translation following the ideas of Eugene Nida on the complexities of translation. That is to say that there is not only a simple

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13 Eugene A. Nida (November 11, 1914 – August 25, 2011) was an American linguist who conducted and published several studies on translation theory. For further details on his researches see Nida, Eugene and Taber, C.R., *The Theory and Practice of Translation* Brill, 1969. Print.; Nida, Eugene,
transposition between one language to another, but there is a selection that the translator is forced to make basing himself on the source text and on the target. Nida’s scheme is represented in Susan Bassnett’s *Translation Theories* and she applies it to the translation of the English word “hello” into Italian, French and German. She notices that “whilst English does not distinguish between the word used when greeting someone face to face and that used when answering the telephone, French, German and Italian all do make that distinction” (Bassnett 26). In front of these differences the translator’s task is not to be considered a mere equivalence among languages. Roman Jakobson would define this task as “interlingual translation or translation proper [that is to say] an interpretation of verbal sign by means of some other [verbal] language” (*Theories of Translation* 145). Going back to the transition of ‘hello’, if we consider Nida’s scheme, the process from English into Italian would be the following:

![Diagram](image-url)

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While translating, the translator has to consider not only the grammar. According to Jakobson he/she has to cope with the “cognitive function, [indeed] language is minimally dependent on the grammatical pattern because the definition of our experience stands in complementary relation to the meta-linguistic operations” (Theories of Translation 149). The social context is crucial, as it is one of the meta-linguistic features that should be considered while translating. The translator has to consider whether the greeting is formal or informal and, consequently, choose between an informal ‘ciao’ and a less informal ‘salve’. The task becomes more difficult when the translator takes into consideration the fact that there is a third greeting ‘pronto’, which Italians commonly use on the telephone. A translator has to recognize the register of the conversation and how the conversation has taken place, face to face or on the phone. All these features have nothing to do with grammar or languages, they have to do with the sensibility that a translator has in translating. To be more accurate, the passage from ‘hello’ to ‘ciao’ would be better defined with the concept of semiotic transformation. Susan Bassnett quotes Ludskanov’s definition on it

> Semiotic transformations (TS) are the replacements of the signs encoding a message by signs of another code, preserving (so far as possible in the face of entropy) invariant information with respect to a given system of reference. (Ludskanov qtd. in Bassnett 27)

We can apply these concepts to Pasinetti’s following example of translation. He translated the Italian expression “istupidirti di botte” (Rosso veneziano 230) into the English expression “hit you harder” (Venetian Red 203). ‘Istupidire’ means literally to become stupid. In this case it has hyperbolic meaning, indeed it is used by a little girl who is threatening her sister. Pasinetti chooses to translate it with the verb ‘hit’ and added the adverb ‘harder’ in order to render the hyperbolic effect of the Italian
expression. This example underlines that there is no full equivalence among languages. According to Jakobson, “each verb of a given language imperatively raises a set of a specific yes-or-no questions” (*Theories of Translation* 149), that is to say that a translation would be always questioned, no matter how accurate it may be. Jakobson adds

Only creative transposition[translation] is possible: either intralingual transposition—from one poetic shape into another, or interlingual transposition – from one language into another, or finally intersemiotic transposition – from one system of sign into another e.g., from verbal art into music, dance, cinema, or painting.

If we were to translate into English the traditional formula *Traduttore, traditore* as “the translator is a betrayer,” we would deprive the Italian rhyming epigram of all its paranomastic value (*Theories of Translation* 151)

Octavio Paz talks about “translation and creation [as] twin processes. [in fact] on one hand, as the works of Baudelaire and Pound have proven, translation is often indistinguishable from creation; on the other, there is constant interaction between the two” (*Theories of Translation* 160). The risk to define a translation as a creative production retrieves the discussion of whether a translation should be trusted or not.

George Steiner refers to the issue of trust:

All understanding, and the demonstrative statement of understanding which is translation, starts with an act of trust. This confiding will, ordinarily, be instantaneous and unexamined, but it has a complex base. It is an operative convention which derives from a sequence of phenomenological assumptions about the coherence of the world, about the presence of meaning in very different, perhaps formally antithetical semantic systems, about the validity of analogy and parallel. (Steiner 312)
Steiner, Jakobson and Paz express the same concept but in three different ways. It can be deduced that the problem with translation comes from the source. Any language would never be equivalent to another, no matter how good a translator might be. The “act of trust” that Steiner connects to the practice of translation is a natural consequence of the fact that there is no complete correspondence between different languages. Given this fact, when a translator finds him/herself in front of a specific idiom and there is no exact translation of it, from source to target language, he/she can only find another idiom in the target language, which conveys the same meaning. The translator is interpreting the source language in order to find a correspondence in the target language. Steiner would describe it as hermeneutic process:

the view of translation as a hermeneutic of trust (élancement), of penetration, of embodiment, and of restitution, will allow us to overcome the sterile triadic model which has dominated the history and theory of the subject. The perennial distinction between literalism, paraphrase and free imitation turns out to be wholly contingent.

(Steiner 319)

Josè Ortega y Gasset’s goes beyond the process of translation and focuses on the description of translation as one of man’s utopian task, in fact he says “I’ve become more and more convinced that everything man does is utopian. Although he is principally involved in trying to know, he never fully succeeds in knowing anything” (Ortega y Gasset in Theories of Translation 93); this is to say that he is willing to do something beyond his real capacity. The “enormous difficulty of translation” can be detected from what “one tries to say in a language precisely what that language tends to silence” (Ortega y Gasset in Theories of Translation 104).

Indeed, it may be deduced that all the discussions, which derive from the issue of translation, are the result of a false and incorrect concept of translation in general. The
translation theorists, quoted in the last paragraphs, share the fact that a perfect correspondence between the source text and the translated text is impossible. The focus should be moved on the effect a translation has when introduced in a different language from the source language. The result is a bridge between languages, and consequently between different societies. In fact, Ortega y Gasset says

Languages separate us and discomunicate, not simply because they are different languages, but because they proceed from different mental pictures, from disparate intellectual systems --- in the last instance, from divergent philosophies. Not only do we speak, but we think in a specific language. (Ortega y Gasset in Theories of Translation 107)

That is to say that the focus should be done on the “bridge” that a translation creates between two different cultures. According to Ortega y Gasset

Translation is not a duplicate of the original text, it is not – it shouldn’t try to be – the work itself with a different vocabulary. […] translation is a literary genre apart, different forms the rest, with its own norms and own ends. The simple fact is that the translation is not the work, but a path toward the work. (Ortega y Gasset in Theories of Translation 109)

Susan Bassnett defines it as a “rewriting of the original” (Reflections on Translation 42). It is clear that it is good to move beyond the idea that the translation must be the same as the original. What happens when the translator coincides with the author and his/her translation shows several differences from the source text? The issue of re-writing raises different questions.

The word self-translation refers to “the act of translating one’s own writings or the result of such an undertaking” (Grutman 17). What it is not specified in the Encyclopedia of Translation Studies is the opposite stand that self-translation seems to have if related to ‘ordinary’ translation. The main difference that must be recognized
between translation and self-translation is the different relation to the concept of source and target. In fact, the author/translator basically has roots in both source context and in target context, but it does not mean that translating becomes easier. A bilingual existence of the author/translator may not ease the task, especially when the aim is to move between two different traditions, two languages.

The phenomenon of self-translation started between 1924 and 1969. The first certain documentation of this practice involves five Flemish writers covering two generations. The elder generation, composed by Jean Ray/John Flanders, Roger Avermaete and Camille Melloy\(^\text{14}\), published a regionally marked French Dutch text after having written it entirely in French. The younger generation, composed by Marnix Gijsen\(^\text{15}\) and Johan Daisne\(^\text{16}\), behaved in the opposite way, firstly publishing the Dutch version and subsequently the French one. It is important to underline that in those years the official language of the Netherlands was French and writing in Dutch was considered a great

\(^{14}\)This group of Belgian-Flemish authors was active between the two World Wars. Jean Ray and John Flanders (8 July 1887 - 17 September 1964) were two pseudonym used by Raymundus Joannes de Kremer. He was mostly famous for his novel Malpertius published in 1943. Roger Avermaete (1893 in Antwerp - 1988) is mostly remembered for his participation to the creation of the Christophe Plantin Prize. Finally, Camille Melloy (Melle 1891-1941) was a prolific poet. His mostly famous poem collection is Parfum des Buis published in 1929 and Enfates de la Terre published in 1933. For further details see Van Clenbergh, Hubert. "Jean Ray and the Belgian School of the Weird". Studies in Weird Fiction, No. 24: 14-17. Winter 1999. Print.; Grutman, Rainier. “Auto-translation”. Encyclopedia of Translation Studies pp. 17-25.

\(^{15}\)Marnix Gijsen (20 October 1899 - 29 September 1984) was the pseudonym used by the Flemish writer Joannes Alphonsius Albertus Goris. He was part of the expressionist group called Ruimte. His most famous novel is The Book of Joachim of Babylon which was published in Flemish in 1947. For further details see "Belgian literature". Encyclopædia Britannica. London: Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2010. Web Jan 15 2014.

\(^{16}\)Johan Daisne (2 September 1912 - 9 August 1978) was the pseudonym used by the Flemish author Herman Thiery. He is famous for his Filmographic Dictionary of World Literature which was written in four languages. For more details see Kemp, Bernard. Johan Daisne, Antwerpen: Helios, 1974. Print.
goal even though Dutch was considered their mother tongue\textsuperscript{17}. Grutman says that “the switch in direction between source and target languages [here] can be linked to major socio-political changes” (Grutman 20). In fact, Flemings had the access to university education in their mother tongue only in 1930. What is interesting to notice is that considering this first episode of self-translation there is no change of territories. They are rooted both in source and target context.

Historically speaking, “auto-translators have often been writers […] who chose to create in more than one language” (Grutman 17). Beckett is an example. He was born in Ireland and along with his mother tongue he learned French and Italian and started to travel across Europe fairly young. On the other hand, Nabokov fled from the Soviet Union in 1917. He went to England, to Germany and he finally settled down in US around the forties. If Beckett’s use of self-translation is bound to have an intellectual purpose, in the specific case of Nabokov, considering his immigrant condition, he may have “felt obliged to adopt the language of [his] new country” (Grutman 19).

Samuel Beckett’s case of self-translation is not the rule, but deserves some attention. He used to produce his works in two languages, translating mostly simultaneously. What is interesting to notice is that Beckett was able to use the “embodiment of instability of meaning” (Hardenberg 159) between different languages, which is the translators’ main problem, in order to affirm the doctrine of existentialism.

Indeed, Beckett likely had particularly acute difficulties with translating his works – despite being bilingual and aware of precisely what he was trying to do with his characters’ enigmatic statements—since they are existentialist and actually intended not to have any kind of stable meaning or referent. (Hardenberg 159)

\textsuperscript{17} See Grutman, Rainier. “Auto-translation”. Encyclopedia of Translation Studies pp. 17-25
The lack of coordinates makes it hard to legitimate whether Beckett’s intentionality changed between the source text and the translation. And when he practices simultaneous self-translation, it is even harder to recognize which is the source text/original text and which is the translated text. But apparently he was able to create “the realist illusion of transparent language, the fluent translating that seems untranslated” (Venuti quoted in Hardenberg 160). Moreover, the non-referentiality which was so typical of his way of writing is reinforced by self-translation. The sense of unresolved duality of Beckett’s practice leads to two consequences. The first is related to the confirmation of the existence of the self through a successful self-translated text. In opposition, the second consequence confirms “the authorial suicide with every translation” (Hardenberg 160). In the production of two texts, Beckett “cut[s] adrift from any reality” and he “not only establishes his literary existentialism through his way of writing, he establishes it in himself—an author who systematically destroys his own authority” (Hardenberg 161). If Beckett uses the practice of self-translation purposefully to strengthen his existentialist poetic, the reasons that led Pasinetti to self-translations are not fully clear. Murtha Baca\(^\text{18}\) worked together with Pasinetti several times. They transalted together *Dorsoduro* and *Il centro*. According to Baca’s opinion a possible reason may be a financial one. In fact to hire a translator meant an important investment of money that Pasinetti did not have at the beginning of his career. Certainly, he craved for notoriety. A translation from Italian into English would have meant to have more chances to become a famous writer. Inasmuch as Pasinetti did not

\(^{18}\) See *Appendix* for the repartee with Murtha Baca. I would love to thank Mrs. Baca for the valuable anecdotes she told me during our conversation on Pasinetti, which took place in the enchanting atmosphere of Getty Center. Mrs. Baca was at first a student and later a colleague and friend of Pier Maria Pasinetti. Moreover, she donated great part of the documents that are currently collected at the “Fondo Pasinetti” at CISVe.
say anything official regarding his translations, some doubts have been raised on the real source of his translations. Massimo Ciavolella compares Pasinetti’s case of self-translation to Jerzy Kosinski’s one\(^{19}\). The latter was accused of having his romance *The Painted Bird* translated secretly and after that taking the credit of the translation\(^{20}\). Moreover, those who accused Kosinski underlined the fact that the translated version of his book was stylistically superior to the original one. This accusation was recognized as the main cause of the author’s depression and his consequent suicide. Pasinetti’s case is not so extreme, but Ciavolella hypotheses the presence of a secret editor or a *ghostwriter*. On Pasinetti’s book there is no reference to a third person as a translator. In front of Pasinetti’s self-translation it is unavoidable to think that he is writing in Italian and about Italian reality while he moves between the United States and Italy, Los Angeles and Venice. What makes his self-translation special is the fact that through this practice he portrays the dualistic reality of his life “di doppia vita, nonostante i suoi notevoli disagi, è stata la sola possibile” (*Dall’estrema America* 6). He practically moved between his source language and his target language. He was deep into American culture and language while he was translating his books and this fact should be enough to move Ciavolella from his doubts on Pasinetti’s self-translation. But in order to erase any doubt, it is good to provide more evidences. His English was perfect thanks to years of studies and practice of it, he spent several years abroad only with the


\(^{20}\) See *Le parentele inventate* pp.239-240
purpose of improving his English skills, his first stay in Oxford is an example. Moreover, Pasinetti was professor of Comparative Literature at UCLA and this means that he had highly-developed analytical skills which is a good advantage for an author who is bound to translate his own work. Finally, Pasinetti used to record his translation with a voice recorder. Those recordings alone constitute a good evidence of Pasinetti’s practice of self-translation.

Certainly, Ciavolella has been deceived by the different approach to self-translation than Pasinetti had in translating his books, in fact each translation presents precise peculiarities related to the contents of the book, but also related to the contemporary reality that Pasinetti was living and experiencing. *Venetian Red* was not the first work of self-translation he did (there are several short stories that he published during his first staying in US21), but it was certainly the first novel he translated and it appears as a literal translation which unfortunately loses “the vision” (*Le Parentele Inventate* 248) that is typical of Pasinetti’s way of writing. What Pasinetti did with his second book *La Confusione* is indeed a rewriting of it. In fact, *La Confusione* became *The Smile on the Face of the Lion*, a change of title which is related to a bridge between one culture to another. Ciavolella correctly relates this change of title to an adaption of the book to the American publishing environment, but again it is wrong to attribute this re-editing job to a third person different from the person of Pier Maria Pasinetti. These two books will be analyzed closely in the following chapters.

Let us get a closer reading of Ciavolella’s comparison between the Italian and the English version of *Il Ponte dell’Accademia*. He is perfectly right when he defines this self-translation as too literal. It would be good to add the adjective bookish too, as

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21 “Home Coming” was published in 1937 and “Family History” was published in 1939.
Pasinetti’s style of writing almost disappears and the English reader loses the nuance that is typical of his way of describing the scenes or of quoting famous passages. An example can be found at the beginning of this novel where the protagonist Gilberto Rossi is looking for a new house and as soon as he finds it he writes a letter to Professor Ceroni, quoting Carducci “Peggio era sposare te, bionda Maria” (*Il Ponte dell’Accademia* 15). In the English version we find:

I chose that nostalgic line of the patriotic Italian poet Carducci in which, dreaming of his youthful love, he says «marrying you, Fair Maria, would have been better!» Only instead of «better» I wrote «worse». (*From the Academy Bridge* 12)

In the English version Pasinetti explains the quotation that he does in the Italian version. In fact, few English and American readers would know Carducci. Ciavolella recognizes this intervention as belonging to an editor. Now, it is good to compare this intervention to the way Beckett modified his works while translating. For example, in his most famous *En attendant Godot*, he completely substituted the name of several characters: Voltaire became Berkley, Normandie became Connemara and Poinçon became Puncher. But this is not a proof that Beckett had an editor behind his translations. The problem is always related to the bridge that a translation can create between cultures, what a language can say compared to another. It is clear that for the English target it would have been more difficult to grasp a reference to Voltaire then one to Berkley, which is part of their culture. Pasinetti instead is to be praised because he kept the reference to the Italian poet. Unfortunately, his style paid the price. Ciavolella notices little adjustments now and then that occasionally permit the balance between the two versions. For example, in the Italian edition we find “le cose stavano a questo punto quando una sera Corso Gianfranchi pronunciò la frase: ‘Perché non ti faccio conoscere Halleck?’ fu così che si aperse per me il grande e stregato panorama
delle Fondazioni americane” (*Il Ponte dell’Accademia* 11). In the English edition the adjective “magic” is added “Things had reached this point when Corso Gianfranchi uttered the magic phrase one evening”, in order to balance the following expression “bewitching panorama of American foundations” (*From the Academy bridge* 5). Here Pasinetti balances the surprise effect of the English version; this is due to the fact that in the Italian culture the concept of foundation is not so common as in the American reality and there is no need to underline the protagonist’s feeling of surprise. As a term of comparison, Beckett in his translation of *Murphy* from English into French he has to underline several comic effects. In fact, English humor is subtler than the French which tends to be more explicit. For example, *Murphy*’s “My God how I hate the char Venus and her sausage and mash sex” is vulgarized in French with the addition of the word prostitute, indeed, “Putain de putain, ce que ça m’emmerde, la vénus de chambre et son Eros comme chez grand’mère”. Ruby Cohn says that “most of the changes that Beckett incorporates into the French translation of *Murphy* [...] serve to heighten its comic tone, [although] *Murphy* is already a funny novel” (Cohn 614). Beckett clearly had in mind his target audience and was acquainted with the fact that pure English humor would not have worked. The same deduction is to be made with Pasinetti’s alterations to his texts. Given the fact that he was craving for international success, he decided to make changes. The result was astonishing. Considering *Venetian Red* (1960), he had more success in France and United States than in his mother country. Along with *Venetian Red*, he self-translated *The Smile on The Face of the Lion* (1965), *From the Academy Bridge* (1970) and *Suddenly Tomorrow* (1972).
Chapter 3 – *Rosso veneziano versus Venetian Red*

*His book, far from an empty gesture,*

*is the kind of literary action*

*few writes trouble to take anymore.*

-- *Time*22

*Rosso veneziano* was first published by the publishing house of Carlo Colombo in 1959. Actually, this book was supposed to be published by Mondadori, but it was considerably long. Mondadori requested Pasinetti to reduce it, but Pasinetti refused. Consequently, he chose to publish *Rosso veneziano* with Colombo, which was less famous than Mondadori, but did not ask to modify his book23. A second Italian edition was published by Bompiani only in 1965. This second edition was consistently different from the first one, as the number of pages was reduced from 566 to 430. Then, Bompiani decided to publish a third edition in 1975. The year after *Rosso veneziano* was scripted for a 5-episode TV-show directed by Marco Leto.

*Rosso veneziano* was translated into English, French and German. Two English editions were published: the first one by Random House in the United States in 1960 and the second one by Secker & Wartburg in Great Britain in 1961. Pasinetti’s book


was published by Albin Michel and by Cercle du Nouveau Livre in France in 1963. Moreover, Albin Michel decided to publish a second edition of *Rouge vénitien* in 1990, which is still the most recent edition of the book. Finally, the two German editions of *Venezianisch Rot* were published: the first one by Biederstein Verlag in 1961 and the second one by Dt. Buch-Gemeinschaft in 1965. Referring to the publishing history of *Rosso veneziano* Pasinetti stated:

The history of *Venetian Red* was rather curious. When it first came out in Italy in 1959, for various reasons it passed largely unnoticed due also to the fact that the author was in faraway California. In the meantime, however, the Italian manuscript of the book was read at Random House […] Hailed by such publications as *The Saturday Review*, *Time*, *The New Yorker* the novel’s reputation somehow bounced back to Europe, where a French translation obtained considerable success.24 (*Le parentele inventate* 80)

*Rosso veneziano* did not have a great success when it was first published in Italy, indeed it is not by chance that six years passed between the first and the second edition of the book. The critics’ reviews gave conflicting opinions at first. For example, Aldo Camerino praised the book as “romanzo pre-Joyce” (Camerino 187) in the review he wrote for the Italian newspaper *Il Gazzettino* on August 27th 1959. On the contrary, Luigi Russo’s review was an example of the main attitude towards Pasinetti. Russo described the book as “un romanzo fiume” (Russo 566) in the first sentence, switching then his attention from the book itself to Pasinetti’s career, expressing hostility towards the American reality: “insegna ‘letteratura mondiale’ (*risum teneatis amici*?) all’università di Los Angeles […] il titolo è caratteristico dell’ambizione metastorica ed

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24 This is an extract from one of Pasinetti’s English *curricula*, which he personally wrote in English. These *curricula* are all kept in Fondo Pasinetti at CISVe. This extract comes from *CV-1* p.4. Pasinetti is writing about the publishing history of *Venetian Red*
Some hostility towards Pasinetti also developed owing to the fact that he was thought not to be aware of the reality of Italy of the years of *Rosso veneziano*, the years of Fascism and of World War II. According to Pasinetti, there were many critics who apparently forgot that he had grown up in Italy.

> credo che molti ritenessero che io fossi sempre rimasto in America, dove certi commenti per esempio di certi miei romanzi, tipo il grosso romanzo *Rosso veneziano*. Commenti e illazioni, completamente falsi: che io non ero lì, non ero presente. Completamente falsi, perché io quella Roma e anche quella Berlino le ho conosciute. (Rubeo 119)

As a matter of fact Pasinetti was in Italy, Pasinetti grew up in Venice, he had the chance to visit Rome several times and he studied in Berlin between 1938 and 1942.

Venice, Rome and Berlin are the cities of *Rosso veneziano*. The story starts in Venice during Elizabetta Partibon’s last days. During these days her nephew and niece, Giorgio and Elena, discover the existence of an uncle, Marco Partibon, whom they have not met or seen before. The fact that Marco is depicted as an unconventional intellectual intrigues Giorgio and Elena, who are determined to find him. Their quest brings Giorgio to Rome to get a visa to travel to Berlin, where Marco is supposed to stay. Giorgio travels with his friend Enrico Fassola, who is deeply in love with Giorgio’s sister Elena. In Berlin Giorgio does not find his uncle, but he has the chance to meet Marco’s daughter Manuela. His search ends once he returns to Venice. Here, Marco appears unexpectedly to Giorgio after his fight with Enzo Bolchi, a young Fascist and Giorgio’s personal enemy.

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25 'risum teneatis amici?' is used ironically with the meaning of ‘can you help laughing friends?’.
In the Italian edition, *Rosso veneziano* is introduced by the author’s preface which outlines what his characters’ challenges are:

Il romanzo pone questi personaggi di fronte alle solite grandi prove dell’esistenza, l’amore, la morte, l’aspettazione della Guerra, le tentazioni del successo; e mostra il loro vario modo di reagirvi e anche d’inserire così il proprio destino individuale nella società e nella storia di un paese e di un’epoca. (*Rosso veneziano* 6)

As the author underlines, the focus should be not on the challenges but on the characters’ different reactions to them. Characters’ reactions can be classified according to their family background, indeed a specific behavior belongs to a specific family of the story. For example, Elena Partibon leaves school to follow her aspiration for music, whereas Enrico Fassola tries to build his future following his father’s wishes. Elena has freedom of choice, Enrico is restrained by his father’s plans for him. The two Venetians families, the Partibons and the Fassolas represent the opposition between art and politics. Respectively, the Partibons are a family composed by non-politically-committed artists, the Fassolas are a family composed by rising personalities in the Italian Fascist hierarchy. In the essay “I colori narrativi di Pier Maria Pasinetti: ‘Rosso veneziano’” Ilaria Crotti describes the Partibons as “un manipolo di creativi, di artisti, di transfughi: individui, in altri termini, non funzionali socialmente come politicamente”\(^{26}\), whereas the Fassolas chase “successo, vittoria, virilità”\(^{27}\) (*Le parentele inventate* 188). Following Crotti’s idea, if the Fassolas represent masculinity, the Partibons represent femininity. Moreover, if femininity is connected to the concept of creativity, indeed art involves the process of creation; on the other hand masculinity is connected to

\(^{26}\) ‘a handful of artists and deserters: in other words, socially and politically unnecessary individuals’ translation mine.

\(^{27}\) ‘success, victory, masculinity’ translation mine.
destruction. As a matter of fact, the Fassolas are mainly public personalities and politicians connected to Fascism which is an example of how ideas can influence the history of a society. According to Crotti, femininity prevails on masculinity, in fact it connects two families, who otherwise have opposite lifestyles. Enrico Fassola is in love with Elena Partibon; Enrico’s brother Massimo Fassola, is in love with Elena’s and Giorgio’s cousin, Maria Partibon. According to Crotti, this set of relations constitutes a “ideale figura chiastica” (Le parentele inventate 191) where the feminine element allows the intersection of the two families.

Crotti underlines that Marco Partibon’s character may be the autobiographical element of the novel, indeed Marco’s life experiences are similar to Pasinetti’s. Marco’s biography is written in his notebooks of chapter eighteen. Marco and Pasinetti attend the same university, “after I finished my secondary school in Rome, my sister devised a plan for me to come back and live in the bosom of the family; it was suggested that I enroll at the University of Padua” (Venetian Red 426). They both go to Germany and the United States.

And, years later, my studies in Germany completed, one evening as we were gathered at La Pozzana, they started talking to me about America; and, full of joy for having brightened me with such an authentic spark of curiosity, they also planned immediately the way for me to go there. That was my first trip to America. (Venetian Red 432)

Finally, it is interesting to notice how Crotti describes the narration of Rosso veneziano

Ritengo che quel «sistema di scatole cinesi» […] possa alludere anche alla struttura narrativa profonda del romanzo. Una configurazione di non lineare definizione,
The Chinese boxes structure well describes how the reader discovers personal interconnections of the story. At the beginning of the narration there are Enrico and Elena, proceeding with the narration the couple of Massimo and Maria is revealed and the hidden love affair of Marco and Fausta Fassola is also finally revealed. The truth is unveiled step by step, opening box after box.

*Rosso veneziano* was not Pasinetti’s first work of self-translation, indeed he translated his two short stories “Home Coming” “Family History” for their publishing in *The Southern Review* respectively in 1936 and 1939. However, it is interesting to analyze his first novel as it is Pasinetti’s first complete expression of his talent as a writer. The short stories he wrote before *Rosso veneziano* are to be considered early works in which he was still developing his writing skills and of course his style. If we compare Pasinetti’s Italian version of *Rosso veneziano* to his respective English translation, it results that Pasinetti managed to recreate his style. Pasinetti’s narrative and writing style are complex and they go along with his “sinuously intellectual […] language” (*Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* 598) which is fully reproduced through his English translation of the book. It is important to remember that he was not an official translator but he was talented for languages. He may have not been aware that he was translating with a mixed source and target-oriented attitude. In fact, from a close analysis, it can be said that his source-oriented attitude can be found

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29 Murtha Baca stated during the short conversation we had that “Pasinetti was one of those people, who were really great with languages. His English was perfect, his French was perfect, his German was perfect. niente “accentaccio” and very colloquial”. See appendix for the whole repartee.
in some paragraphs which appear bookish and stilted. Indeed, some paragraphs maintain a syntax which is similar to the Italian one.

In the following pages we will analyze several samples from Pasinetti’s *Rosso veneziano* and *Venetian Red* and we will compare them. It must be stressed that an evaluation based only on the following samples and comparisons may give a distorted view of his self-translation. Indeed, the changes he makes are not fundamental or extensive and moreover they do not influence the book perception as a whole. By and large, Pasinetti’s English self-translation follows his Italian original text, which obviously, no one could have had a more profound knowledge than its author.

It has been said that Pasinetti has a mixed attitude while translating. If we consider the opening page of *Rosso veneziano* we can already find all the set of problems that can be related to the whole book: mixed source-target attitude which is the reason why some paragraphs appear stilted and unnatural, in the English translation.

Considering the opening paragraph of the book, in the Italian version we find

Quantunque fosse il primo pomeriggio del venerdi santo, Elena Partibon non era uscita a compiere il giro dei sette sepolcri; s’era appartata in un salottino a leggere, aspettando che il fratello Giuliano arrivasse d’improvviso dalla casa della nonna ad annunziarne la morte. (*Rosso veneziano* 7)

The English translation is

Although it was the afternoon of Good Friday, Elena Partibon had not gone to make the round of the seven sepulchers; she had retired to a sitting room to read and to wait for her brother Giuliano to arrive suddenly from the house of their grandmother and announce her death. (*Venetian Red* 3)

Here Pasinetti maintains his Italian syntax in his English translation. Indeed both versions present the same composition of dependent and independent clauses, which is quite common Italian language but results rather stilted in English, which prefers shorter
sentences. Perhaps if the book were translated by a translator, the sentence would have been cut in two, replacing the semicolon with a full stop and simplifying it by creating more independent clauses. Pasinetti’s choice to maintain the Italian syntax in the English translation is a hint of his source oriented attitude of translating. Another hint of his attitude is the use of specific vocabulary connected to Italian, which can be avoided in a translation as it does not imply crucial elements of the narration of the book. Indeed, in the story Elena stays at home instead of making “the round of the seven sepulchers”. Considering the American audience of 1960s, how many readers would have understood what Pasinetti was referring to when he wrote about “the round of the seven sepulchers”? In this case the word ‘sepulcher’ refers to the ‘altar of repose’ that Roman Catholic churches set up on Holy Thursday, indeed the host must not be consecrated on a different altar from that dedicated to the altar of repose. Usually, churches employ the altar of their chapels as altar of repose and they pay close attention on the decoration of them. Those altars are more frequently called ‘repositories’ in American-English\(^{30}\). This kind of altars is commonly known as ‘sepolcri’ in Italian, from which the literal translation comes. Moreover, the heterogeneous reality of religions in the United States must be considered; certainly non-Catholic readers read *Venetian Red* and they may have lost the concept of Elena visiting those altars delicately decorated with flowers, candles and bows. Another reason to underline is that this translation does not consider that “the round of the sepulchers” is a typical Italian habit of visiting the altars of repose of the churches in a city and it is not related to the rituals of the Holy Week.

If we go back to the analysis of the first page of the Italian version we read


And in the English version we find

Giuliano’s entrance would therefore be impressive. “Where is Father?” he would ask. And she would say, “Up in his studio, of course painting,” and Giuliano would come near her; perhaps he would take her hand in his own, which were big and suntanned, murmuring, “It’s finished, you know”. (Venetian Red 3)

These two extracts have the same syntax, apart from the use of a semicolon instead of a comma in the English version. Two elements deserve attention in these two samples: the use of the word ‘father’ and the use of the verb ‘murmur’. Starting from the analysis of the word ‘father’, it is important to keep in mind that this scene takes place in Italy in the 1920s. In those years Italian families were strongly patriarchal, therefore we expect formality from Giuliano when he talks about his father. On the other hand, Paolo Partibon, Giuliano’s father, is an atypical patriarchal figure, who has an easygoing relationship with his children. This explains the reason why Giuliano calls Paolo ‘papà’ which corresponds to the more affectionate English word ‘dad’. Nonetheless, in the English version we read that Pasinetti translated ‘papà’ as ‘father’, which corresponds to the more formal ‘padre’ in Italian. Pasinetti’s translation of Giuliano’s question “dov’è papà ?” into the English “Where is Father?” sounds stilted. First, there is no correspondence between ‘papà’ and ‘father’, because the first one is more affectionate than the second one. It is a subtle difference, indeed we must consider that the word ‘papà’ is as common as the word ‘father’ respectively in Italian and in English. Moreover, a native speaker would have add a possessive adjective in front of the
substantive ‘father’. Then, “mormorando a capo basso” was transalted as “murmuring”.

Here Pasinetti eliminated Giuliano’s body language; in doing so, Pasinetti eliminated Giuliano’s expression of grief for the loss of his grandmother. This change along with the use of the word ‘father’ gives to the scene of the English version a higher formality of what is supposed to be a more domestic scene. Pasinetti seems to modify tiny details in many descriptions. For example, the comparison between the Italian and English description of Ersilia’s house is interesting

Quella casa dove s’era ammucchiato tutto ciò che v’era di più scombinato e secondario del patrimonio di mobili e d’arte della famiglia, cui ella aveva aggiunto particolari ritenuti, nel silenzioso giudizio di tutti, puerili ed orrendi: le cornici di cuoio bulinato intorno a larghi ritratti di parenti senza interesse, i tappeti folkloristici da locanda alpina, i merli sui bracciali, i ferri battuti. *(Rosso veneziano 34)*

In the English edition we find

That house in which she had gathered all that was secondary and random in the art treasury of the family, to which she had added objects that in everyone’s silent judgment were childish and awful: huge leather frames around portraits of unremarkable relatives, rustic little carpets worthy of a mountain-resort inn, embroidered covers on the backs and arms of chairs, wrought-iron objects. *(Venetian Red 27)*

The description of Ersilia’s house becomes simple in the English version, indeed it loses some details which are given in the Italian version. The “huge leather frames” of the English translation are decorated with engravings made with a punch in the Italian version. Then, “the rustic little carpets worthy of a mountain-resort inn” of the English version are described as folkloristic and typical of an inn in the Alps in the Italian one. Moreover, the “embroidered covers” decorate chairs, but there is no hint of those in the Italian description, whereas tie-backs of the curtains are described to be finely decorated
with lace. If the change from ‘the Alps’ to a more general ‘mountains’ may be explained by the fact that the Alps are European and the reference may have not been understood by a non-European reader or may have sounded unfamiliar. There is no clear explanation on the change from “embroidered covers” of the English edition and the decorated tie-backs of the Italian edition. This change is an example of re-writing, Pasinetti overruns the limits of translation and modifies it with a completely different element.

Another description that is significantly different between the Italian and the English version is the one referring to professor’s Angelone’s office

In the English translation we find

From the comparison between these two descriptions only three differences can be noticed, but they modify the atmosphere of the office. First the verb “stipavano” is
translated into the English “covered” but the latter does not communicate the claustrophobic atmosphere that the verb ‘stipare’ conveys. This Italian verb corresponds to the English verbs to cram or to pack, in the sense of organizing objects in a small space with the result that it becomes full. A second difference is to be found in the description of the writing desk. In the Italian description the drawers form a simple construction indented on the top by a baluster, “l’alta costruzione di cassetti, frastagliata sull’orlo superiore da una specie di balaustra”. In the English version the construction formed by the drawers becomes “a bastion”, but there is no particular feature regarding the baluster on the top of them. And finally, the two quills of the Italian edition become “huge” in the English translation. In this case it is improper to talk about a simplification of the description, indeed Pasinetti chooses different words and adds some details, moving again from translation to re-writing.

The samples that have been considered show changes in vocabulary, the following extract displays a change in the syntax of the sentence that concludes the first chapter of the book. In the Italian version we read

Quando si fu fatta quieta, nel silenzio venne dal canale il suono dei remi d’una grossa barca che battevano l’acqua; urtava ogni tanto altre barche legate alle rive e si udivano cupi rimbombi. Sul soffitto chiaro e stuccato della camera l’acqua assolata del canale, smossa, si rifletteva come fiamme inquiete. (Rosso veneziano 37)

In the English version we read

When she became quiet, in the silence there came from the canal the sound of heavy oars beating on the water; every now and then a big boat bumped against other boats tied on the canal side, and deep wooden sounds were heard. On the white stuccoed ceiling of the room the sunlit ripples of the canal stirred. (Venetian Red 30)
In comparing these two extracts, we can see an example of re-writing, which is the expression of Pasinetti’s target-oriented attitude. First, the syntax from Italian to English changes. In the Italian version, we find a first compound-complex sentence composed by three independent sentences and two dependent ones; then we find a second simple sentence. If we compare the first Italian compound-complex sentence with the English correspondent one, we find two dependent clauses in the Italian version, respectively a temporal and a relative clause. On the contrary, we find only a temporal clause in the English version. The Italian temporal clause “quando si fu fatta quieta” is translated as “when she became quiet”, the Italian relative clause “che batteva l’acqua” disappears in the English translation. Moreover, in the Italian version Pasinetti uses the same subject of the relative clause in the sentence after the semicolon, but this is not possible in the English version, indeed the relative clause has been omitted. Therefore, Pasinetti introduces ‘a big boat’ in the independent clause after the semicolon in the English version, in doing so he balances the omission of the relative clause. Pasinetti’s translation choices of the last sentence of the extract we are examining are interesting too. We have noticed that at the beginning of chapter one Pasinetti has a source-oriented attitude by underlining the way he tries to maintain similar syntax between text and translation. It is curious that this statement is contradicted by the last sentence of chapter one (last sentence of the extract we are analyzing) “sul soffitto chiaro e stuccato della camera l’acqua assolata del canale, smossa, si rifletteva come fiamme inquiete” which corresponds to the English “on the white stuccoed ceiling of the room the sunlit ripples of the canal stirred”. Here not only does the subject change but also the composition of the sentence. In the Italian version we find the water hit by the sunlight which is mirroring on the stuccoed ceiling, and its
movement is compared to that of restless flames. The water disappears along with its comparison to restless flames in the English version. Pasinetti simplifies the sentence by omitting the comparison between water and flames. In doing so, he also deletes one moment of the book which refers to the color of the book title.\textsuperscript{31}

Pasinetti’s English translation seems not to be so accurate in reproducing his characters’ accent. For example, once Giuliano is back from the house of their grandmother, Giorgio asks him “Ti ha l’aria che sia l’ultima notte?” (\textit{Rosso veneziano} 25) translated into “does it look to you as though it’s going to be the last night?” (\textit{Venetian Red} 20). The English extract has lost the Venetian accent that is suggested with “ti ha” in the Italian extract. ‘Ti’ corresponds to the Italian personal pronoun ‘tu’, in Venetian dialect it is used in the conjugation of verbs in the second person singular. Then, ‘aver l’aria’ corresponds in meaning to the verb ‘to seem’, but Pasinetti uses ‘look like’ in his translation. The use of Venetian dialect expresses a sense of conviviality and familiarity of the scene which is lost in the English translation.

Pasinetti modifies also the speech of Manuela’s German friend, Eva. In the Italian edition we find

\begin{quote}
Questo io intendo quando io ti dico che tu sei entrato a un mondo di donne. Forse non è la più brutta maniera di conoscere questo paese. Hai veduto la nostra casa. Mia Madre per guadagnare si occupa con cosmetici, profumi, cose per la bellezza femminile, tu sai? Anche un poco massaggi. […] e nonostante tutto, io ti posso anche dir certamente, che una vita come la nostra è un poco meglio che un avita come Manuela ha. (\textit{Rosso veneziano} 359)
\end{quote}

In the English translation we find

\begin{quote}
31 Pasinetti refers several times to the color red in this book. He usually connects the color with a high emotional moment, may it be love, death or anger. In this case, the color red is associated to Elisabetta Partibon’s death. See \textit{Le parentele Inventate.}
\end{quote}
This I mean when I say to you that you have entered in a world of women. Perhaps it is not the worst way to know this country. You have seen our house. My mother, to earn money, occupies herself with cosmetics, perfume, things for feminine beauty, you see? Also massage, a little. [...] and in spite of all, I can also say to you certainly the life like ours is a little better then a life such s Manuela has had. (Venetian Red 318)

Here Eva is talking to Giorgio, she is German and consequently her mother tongue is German but here she is speaking in Italian. While she is speaking, in the Italian extract, she is doing some grammar mistakes which are typical for an non-Italian native speaker. For example she wrongly uses the preposition ‘a’ in “entrato a un mondo di donne” whereas the right preposition to be used is ‘in’. When she says “un poco massaggi”, there is no agreement between the article and the adjective, which are singular, and the substantive, which is plural. Moreover, an Italian fluent speaker would never use this kind of expression, he/she would say ‘fa anche massaggi’ (she practices massages, too). Another mistake, which may be recognized as typical of German people speaking a foreign language, is putting the verb at the end of a secondary clause, as it is a rule of the German grammar. Eva says “che una vita come Manuela ha” where the verb is at the end of the sentence. From the reading of the Italian extract it is clear that the character is not native speaker, on the contrary, Eva speaks fluently and without mistakes in the English extract. Her German accent is underlined only a few pages before her speech where he can read “she had a strong German accent” (Venetian Red 310). This difference may come from Pasinetti’s choice not to report Eva’s mistakes. In fact, he would have underlined Eva’s accent by using a wrong word order. He may have put the word ‘massage’ in italics, indeed the word has the same meaning and spelling both in German and English, but it has different pronunciation. The loss of Giorgio’s
Venetian accent is due to the process of translation, which inevitably cannot reflect the form of the source text. The loss of Eva’s German accent is due to Pasinetti and this loss is an example of where self-translation becomes re-writing translator in reading that the character, who is speaking, has a strong German accent would have recreated the effect, in order to be more faithful to the source text.

Pasinetti is not faithful to his source text when different accents are involved, the Venetian accent or the German one are only a couple of examples which do not change the perception of the narration as a whole. However, there are a couple of examples that question Pasinetti’s intention as a translator. In chapter 14, for example, we find Bolchi at Manuela’s house talking about her future in the United States “ma a Manuelita nostra, nonostante il cognome, le vogliamo bene, lei adesso se n’andrà oltreoceano, chissà, finirà magari stella di Ollivud” (Rosso veneziano 372) which is translated into English as “but in spite of that surname, we do love our Manuela here, and then now she’ll cross the ocean and, who knows, maybe some day she’ll be a start in Hollywood” (Venetian Red 329) Bolchi is using a diminutive to address to Manuela in the Italian version which disappears in the English one, creating a sort of distance between the two characters. Bolchi has clearly some feeling for Manuela and his use of a diminutive is a hint of that. What is interesting is that he uses the diminutive in the following pages, when Bolchi runs to Manuela’s house to check if the she was safe32. There he pronounces these words “Come son contento! Ho passato la notte a cercarvi! Tu e Manuelita siete lì vero? Aprimi Amore” (Rosso veneziano 373) which is translated into English as “How Happy I am! I spent the night looking for you! You and Manuelita are both there, aren’t you?

32 In chapter 14 of Rosso veneziano Pasinetti describes the historical event of the Kristallnacht, which was one of the pogrom that Nazis organized to persecute Jews. For further details see Friedlander, Saul. Nazi Germany and the Jews : Volume 1: The Years of Persecution 1933-1939. New York, NY: Perennial, 1998. Print.
Open up, my love.” (Venetian Red 330). In this case, Pasinetti maintains the diminutive. The reason why Pasinetti decides to erase it in the page before and keep it in the page after is unclear. Certainly, the diminutive changes the perception of the scene. Moreover, in the English translation we lose the comic effect of Bolchi’s Italian pronunciation of ‘Hollywood’, indeed in the Italian version Pasinetti writes it in the exact way an Italian would pronounce it: “Ollivud”. In the Italian version, Pasinetti misspells the name also to underline Bolchi’s ignorance, indeed he is part of the fascist movement. In the English version ‘Hollywood’ is written in the correct way, losing these secondary but interesting information on the character.

It would be a mistake to say that Pasinetti’s translation is not so accurate because for all the examples that we have analyzed of non-correspondence and rewriting phenomena, there are some brilliant passages that reveal all his ability in translating. In the following paragraph we find Professor Fagiani and Giorgio Partibon discussing about one of Giorgio’s sibylline sentences. In the Italian version we read

Allora ti rivolgesti a me: “Professor Fagiani, la ragione per cui si rimane assenti da scuola è quella di dichiarare, mediante il proprio atto, la ridicola vanità di qualunque forma di partecipazione”. Credo di ricordare le precise parole. Che volevi dire? In fondo, non l’ho mai capito. Una di quelle frasi sibilline per le quali avevi un gusto spiccato. Uno di quei tuoi atteggiamenti. (Rosso veneziano 23)

In the English version we find

Then you turned to me: ‘Professor Fagiani, the reason why one keeps away from school is to show by one’s action the ridiculous vanity of any form of participation.’ I think I remember your exact words. What did you mean? Actually, I have never understood it. One of those sibylline phrases of yours for which you had a distinct taste. (Venetian Red 18)
Giorgio’s character is famous for his sibylline sentences and “la ragione per cui si rimane assenti da scuola è quella di dichiarare, mediante il proprio atto, la ridicola vanità di qualunque forma di partecipazione” is one of those. It is perfectly rendered in English without losing its declarative strength. The only change that Pasinetti makes is related to the verb “dichiarare” which corresponds to the English ‘declare’ or ‘state’. Pasinetti substitutes it with ‘show’ in the English version.

*Rosso veneziano* was the first novel that Pasinetti translated and except for the extracts reported before, the translation is too literal but it generally respects the source text. These few examples of re-writing, however, must be considered as the origin of that process of self-translation and re-writing that is connected to his second novel *La confusione*, which will be closely analyzed in chapter four.
Chapter 4 – The Metamorphosis of *La confusione*

*Author Pier Maria Pasinetti proved himself a formidable fabricator of character and incident, mood and meaning.*

--- *Time*

*La confusione* was first published in Italy in 1964. It was translated into English and French the following year. The English edition was published by Random House in 1965 and the French edition was published by Albin Michel in the same year of the English edition. Interestingly enough, its title *La confusione* was changed in its translations, indeed it became *The Smile on the Face of the Lion* and *Le sourire du lion*. When Pasinetti edited a new Italian edition of *La confusione*, it was published with the new title of *Il sorriso del leone* in 1980.

The story focuses on Bernardo Partibon’s character who grew up in Venice and migrated to the United States where he became an art-dealer and decorator. After more than twenty years he decides to return to Italy to reunite with his family. Bernardo is surrounded by a complicated web of characters related to each other. There are his friend Clement Blumenfeld, “the cosmopolitan sculptor” (Della Terza 65); Genziana Horst, daughter of senator Horst; Tranquillo Massenti, journalist, whose vocabulary is often repeated in Genziana’s thoughts; and finally the journalist Ovidio Semenzato.

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33 See “Venice observed” Rev. of *The Smile on the Face of the Lion* Pasinetti, Pier Maria. *Time*, February 12th 1965.
According to Dante Della Terza “thanks to the felicitous invention [of Bernardo Partibon], Pasinetti has been able to write a moving story” (Della Terza 72). Indeed the narration follows his movements from Rome to Venice, from Venice to the Pacific coast and back. Bernardo’s movements trace a sort of interior geography in which, according to Della Terza Venice, Via Po, Rome and Topanga Canyon are “mere points of reference in a complex, interior geography” (Della Terza 64). All of Pasinetti’s characters are sensitive to the environment surrounding them. For example, Della Terza underlines that Clement is sensitive “to the disharmony of the world” because of his “blatantly distorting state of mind” (Della Terza 66) due also to the fact that he is an artist, a postmodern sculptor. For example he describes Rome “halfway between antiquity and neon lights, with elements of South America hotel style” (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 249). Della Terza recognizes in Genziana’s life “ a destiny of non-fusion with the world, a detachment from which is born [her] metaphysical bewilderment” (Della Terza 68). Indeed in the first scene of the novel we see her for not having “a vocabulary contemptuous enough to annihilate” the guests (Della Terza 68). In fact she thinks “was it possible that the Solmis did not know her caliber” (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 7). According to Della Terza, Pasinetti’s aim is “to meditate […] on the confusion of our time, [he] wished to avoid, in the richness and subtleties of his representation, the temptation of facile solution, of a message and panacea for the world” (Della Terza 75), giving in this way a clear meaning to the title he gave to his book.

“The confusion of our time” is represented by Pasinetti’s choice of narration, too. His previous book Rosso veneziano is a coral novel like La confusione, but the narration is quite simple. In fact there is a third person omniscient narrator, with the exception of
chapter 8 and 18 where the narration is interrupted by letters. The use of letters in chapter 8 is of course a hint of Pasinetti’s experimentation in his narrative trend. The use of letters not only slow down the narration but also introduces a new narrator: Marco Partibon as author of those letters. Marco, narrator with a strictly personal point of view, continues to interact with the reader in chapter 18 where letters are replaced by Marco’s private notebook. We sometimes face a double-narration in chapter 18, since Marco is narrating several episodes that have been previously narrated by the omniscient narrator, with the result that we read Marco’s feelings and ideas towards any fact related to the Partibons. Since his first novel Pasinetti “ha tentato nuovi modi di narrazione forse ancora senza ben precisi scopi narrativi” (Cottino Jones 23), a sort of experimentation that should be recognize, for example, in his creation of different perspectives on a same narrative episode. Pasinetti’s narrative experimentation reaches a higher level in *La confusione*, as the narration becomes more complex. This book displays a continuous clearly-organized exchange of narrating voices. Eight out of twelve chapters (1,3,4,6,8-11) are narrated in the third person by an anonymous narrator. Chapter 2,5,7 and 12 are narrated in first person by three characters. Respectively, Ovidio Semenzato is the narrator of chapter 2, Clement Blumenfeld narrates chapter 5 and Tranquillo Massenti is the narrator of chapters 7 and 12. According to M. Cottino Jone’s “dei narratori-personaggi, Clement Blumenfeld è decisamente narratore-protagonista, mentre gli altri due, specie Tranquillo Massenti, sono piuttosto narratori testimoni” (Cottino Jones 23). Cottino Jones underlines how the lack of connection between these multiple narrator-characters and the third-person anonymous narrator creates a sense of confusion. The continuous shifting among different points of view recreates “la complessità e imprevedibilità della vita umana”
Moreover, the complexity of reality is reproduced by the theme of travel; there are characters like Bernardo and Clement who move between Italy and the United States. By traveling they meet unpredictable people; this along with the randomness of events that occur on their journey reinforce the sense of confusion, which corresponds to the original title of the novel.

The history of the translation of *La confusione* seems to be complex, too. Its translation into English deserves a close analysis. In fact, many paragraphs were omitted during the process of translation. Consequently, it is questioned whether it was Pasinetti the person who decided these changes or not. According to Massimo Ciavolella, Pasinetti’s English edition of *La confusione* was edited by a ghost writer, he states that “la mia ipotesi è che i cambiamenti – che […] colpiscono non solo parole, espressioni, frasi, ma il ritmo narrativo stesso del romanzo – non sono opera di Pasinetti traduttore […] devono essere stati imposti dall’editor della Random House” (*Le parentele inventate* 247). It is important to notice that Pasinetti’s previous translation of *Rosso veneziano* displays only limited changes connected to some words or expressions, on the contrary Pasinetti’s English translation of *La confusione* shows significant changes in the rhythm of the narration due to the omission of several paragraphs. Massimo Ciavolella attributes these cuts to an editor, whereas my hypothesis attributes these cuts to the process of self-translation. Therefore, as it was said in chapter two, it is to establish where the boundary between translation and re-writing is when a writer self-translates his/her work. If we consider the fact that considered Pasinetti refused Mondadori’s request to shorten *Rosso veneziano*, preferring to publish it with a smaller publishing house, Ciavolella’s hypothesis of a ghost editor who significantly edited Pasinetti’s book appears unusual. Pasinetti dismissed Mondadori, which was an
important Italian publishing house when he was just at the beginning of his writing career; Rosso veneziano was his first book. This is the reason why it is curious that he might have accepted substantial changes like those between La confusione and The Smile on the Face of the Lion. Indeed, when he published The Smile on the Face of the Lion he had already been in the United States for nine years. He probably had more contacts with more than one publishing house, indeed he not only took part to the project of the Norton Anthology of World Masterpiecies as co-editor, but he was among the co-founder of the Italian Quarterly. Pasinetti was close to the American editorial reality and may have chosen to adapt the rhythm of his narration to the American standards of that time. Another reason that makes me question about the presence of a ghost editor is the information we obtain from a the comparison between the first and the second Italian edition. In some pages Pasinetti re-introduces the omitted paragraphs of the English edition and slightly improve them. For example, Clement is telling some aspects of Bernardo’s childhood in Venice in chapter 5 of La confusione:

Una specie di rivelazione del mondo, in negativo: tutta la realtà capovolta in un incubo. Queste descrizioni sono molto insufficienti e finiscono con l’avere un’aria pretensiosa. Forse la sua maniera di esprimere la cosa è proprio quella parola che dicevo ed è la meno sbagliata: l’umiliazione.

Si stava parlando dei Debaldè. Ora, credo sarebbe un errore supporre che persone come quelle accentuassero le malattie di Bernardo, anzi in certo senso è vero il contrario. Io piuttosto me lo immagino, Bernardo, gettarsi a testa basa e pugni tesi nella pensione Debaldè, proprio per cercarvi alimento alla nausea, come per scacciare una febbre con un’altra febbre. L’antidoto. La cura omeopatica.

“C’erano sere in cui potevo …” (La confusione 112)

Here Clement is describing Bernardo’s complex childhood, which was characterized by a sort of “cosmic nausea”. Here Clement defines it with the more proper definition of
humiliation. The corresponding paragraph in *The Smile of the Face of the Lion* is the following:

> A kind of revelation of the world, in reverse: all reality turned upside down into nightmare.

> “There were evenings…” (*The Smile on the Face of the Lion* 116)

It is easy to notice that this extract is considerably shorter than the Italian correspondent one. Indeed, Clement’s whole explanation on why humiliation is a more proper definition than “cosmic nausea” is deleted. In doing so, if we consider the fact that Clement is the narrator in charge in chapter 5, we might interpret this omission as a sort of censorship. Perhaps, censorship is a strong concept to be used, but it well defines the omission of Clement’s opinion on Bernardo’s childhood that, along with the humiliation concept, portrays Bernardo as a sort of precocious fighter. However, this omission does not influence the narration as a whole due to the fact that it refers only to a detail of Bernardo’s life which is not crucial to the main plot. If we compare the Italian and the English extracts with the correspondent one in *Il sorriso del leone* we find:

> Una specie di rivelazione del mondo, in negativo: tutta la realtà capovolta in un incubo. Queste descrizioni sono molto insufficienti e finiscono con l’avere un’aria pretensiosa. Forse la sua maniera di esprimere la cosa è proprio quella parola che dicevo ed è la meno sbagliata: l’umiliazione.

> Si stava parlando dei Debaldè. Ora, credo sarebbe un errore supporre che persone come quelle accen tuassero le malattie di Bernardo, anzi è piuttosto vero il contrario, io me lo immagino”. Bernardo, gettarsi a testa basa e pugni tesi nella pensione Debaldè, proprio per cercarvi alimento alla nausea, come per scacciare una febbre con un’altra febbre. L’antidoto. La cura umeopatica.

> “C’erano sere in cui potevo…” (*Il sorriso del leone* 90)

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34 My underlining.
Pasinetti not only retrieves all what he omitted in the English edition but he improves the flowing of the second paragraph. Indeed, we find “anzi in certo senso è vero il contrario. Io piuttosto me lo immagino” in *La confusione*. In *Il sorriso del leone* Pasinetti moves the adverb ‘piuttosto’ and deletes the expression ‘in certo senso’ as it is underlined in the extract above. This change does not occur by chance. This might prove that Pasinetti was the author of the omission generated in *The Smile of the Face of the Lion*. The passage from Italian to English could be seen as an intermediate step which leads to the final results which is *Il sorriso del leone*. We can imagine Pasinetti editing his book while translating it into English. Pasinetti did not spend any word on the translation of *La confusione*: in his interview published in the *Italian Quarterly* he only declared that “*Il sorriso del leone è la riscrittura della Confusione*” (*Italian Quarterly* 16). Therefore, *The Smile on the Face of the Lion* could be considered a sort of transition between the two books.

An additional proof that Pasinetti actually might have experienced this English translation as a sort of transition comes to surface by comparing the following extracts from the three different editions. Indeed, in *La confusione* we find:

> Qui bisognerebbe saper descrivere il viso, la testa, dell’uomo che Bernardo ed io ci fermammo a osservare: tonda, pallida e lucida, una scultura in sapone bianco, con capelli dritti all’indietro imbrillantinati sul cranio. (*La confusione* 128)

The same description is reported in English without any change:

> I wish I could describe the face, the head of the man whom Bernardo and I were observing: round, pale, and shiny, a sculpture in white soap, with straight hair combed back, glued to the skull with brilliantine. (*The Smile on the Face of the Lion* 131)

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35 My underlining.
Surprisingly, the change occurs in *Il sorriso del leone* where we find:

> Qui bisognerrebbe saper descrivere la testa\(^\text{35}\) dell’uomo che Bernardo ed io ci fermammo a osservare: tonda, pallida, lucida\(^\text{35}\), una scultura in sapone bianco, con capelli dritti all’indietro imbrillantinati sul cranio. (*Il sorriso del leone* 103)

Pasinetti keeps the two words ‘face’ and ‘head’ in *La confusione* and in *The Smile of the Face of the Lion*. Later, in *Il sorriso del leone*, he deletes the word ‘face’, which actually is an element of secondary relevance in this passage. Indeed, the description that follows this list of words focuses on the man’s head, no reference is made to his face. Moreover, the rhythm of the list of adjectives used to describe this man changes. The two adjectives ‘pale’ and ‘shiny’ are connected by the conjunction ‘and’ both in *La confusione* and in *The Smile of the Face of the Lion*. The conjunction ‘and’ is substituted by a comma in *Il sorriso del leone*. This change together with the omission of the word ‘face’ give fluency to the text.

Another example of this phenomena can be found in the following extracts. If we go back to the episode of the first chapter of *La confusione* in which Genziana wishes to leave the party, we find:

> “Oh Dio questo è Gianni Merlo che incomincia” disse Dora.

> La proposta della sconosciuta d’andarsene inosservati solleticava Genziana; si sentiva singolarmente attratta verso questo nuovo gruppo di persone. “Veneta anche lei?” chiese alla piccolo signora, con brio. Non ebbe risposta, anzi gli occhi della donna parvero brillare di sarcasmo.

> “Anch’io mi sto domandando come sono capitata qui,” Genziana tentò, “e non le nascondo che una fuga inosservata mi sorriderebbe alquanto.”

> Nessuno le dava retta. Allora lei fissò la piccolo signora e adottò un suo tono che poteva essere preso, a scelta, per cameratesco e per aggressivo: “Quando ci siamo presentate non ho afferrato il suo nome.”
“Mi ha domandato se son veneta,” disse l’altra lentamente, “bene, no. Sono Lombarda in origine” (La confusione 13-14)

In the English edition we find:

“Oh God, this is Gianni Merlo starting” Dora said.

“I am asking myself too,” Genziana said, “how I happen to be here, and I won’t deny that an unobserved escape appeals to me considerably”

Nobody bothered with her, then she looked fixedly at the little lady and adopted a tone which could be taken at one’s choice, for either camaraderie or aggressiveness:

“When we introduced ourselves I did not quite get your name. Are you Venetian too?”

“No, I am not. I came from Lombardy originally…” (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 10)

In the English edition Genziana evaluation of Cecilia’s idea of leaving as a good choice is omitted. Moreover, their conversation undergoes a slight change. In the original text, Genziana asks Cecilia if she is Venetian and then she asks to repeat her name. Then, Cecilia replies by underlining the fact that Genziana did not ask her name, she only asked from where she came from. In the English translation, the conversation between the two women becomes more direct. Genziana asks first Cecilia’s name and later she asks about her provenience, avoiding to recreate that embarrassing moment that occurs in La confusione. The omitted sentence regarding Genziana’s thoughts is retrieved in Il sorriso del leone, indeed we find

“Oh Dio questo è Gianni Merlo che incomincia” disse Dora.

La proposta della sconosciuta d’andarsene inosservati solleticava Genziana; si sentiva singolarmente attratta verso questo nuovo gruppo di persone. “Veneta anche lei?” chiese alla piccolo signora, con brio. Non ebbe risposta, anzi gli occhi della donna indovinò un lampo di sarcasmo.
“Anch’io mi sto domandando come sono capitata qui,” Genziana tentò, “e non le nascondo che una fuga inosservata mi sorriderebbe alquanto.”

Nessuno le dava retta. Allora lei fissò la piccola signora e adottò un suo tono che poteva essere preso, a scelta, per cameratesco e per aggressivo: “Quando ci siamo presentate non ho afferrato il suo nome.”

“Mi ha domandato se son veneta,” disse l’altra lentamente, “bene, no. Sono Lombarda in origine.” (Il sorriso del leone 12)

We can notice that there is a slight change between La confusione and Il sorriso del leone. Indeed, if in the first edition we find “non ebbe risposta, anzi gli occhi della donna parvero brillare di sarcasmo” (La confusione 13), in the second edition we find “Non ebbe risposta, anzi negli occhi della donna indovinò un lampo di sarcasmo” (Il sorriso del leone 12). The sentence of the first edition is descriptive, indeed Cecilia’s eyes seem to sparkle with sarcasm, whereas in the second edition Genziana seems to recognize sarcasm in Cecilia’s eyes.

We find a final example of this phenomena in chapter five, where Clement tells about his day with Bernardo in Venice


Passeggiavamo già da un pezzo quando … (La confusione 107)

In The Smile of the Face of the Lion we find

Evening 17 oct. --- Long walk today with Bernardo around Venice. He tells me very little about his trip from Rome and the night he spent at the Piglioli-Spadas’.

We had already been walking for a while… (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 111)
This is the first example in which a crucial reference regarding the plot is omitted. In fact, there is no reference of Bernardo trying to write to Genziana after her father’s death. Moreover, there is no direct reference of Bernardo being with her the night in which Senator Horst passed away. This references are retrieved in *Il sorriso del leone*, where we find


The only one difference between *La confusione* and *Il sorriso del Leone* is in Bernardo’s words “è da allora che cerco di scriverle una lettera” (*La confusione* 107). They become “è da allora che cerco di scriverle qualche parola” (*Il sorriso del leone* 87). The change from “scriverle una lettera” to “scriverle qualche parola” gives a more colloquial tone. Here Pasinetti could have change tone in order to convey a better idea of what kind of relationship there is between Bernardo and Clement, but this might be an hazardous interpretation of a change that Pasinetti did maybe because he liked this expression better.

If we try to classify the changes made among these three edition of *La confusione*, we can divide them all in two categories: a removal-modification and a removal-retrieval category. The removal-modification category corresponds exactly to the examples we have analyzed in the previous pages. Indeed, from a comparison among *La confusione*, *The Smile on the Face of the Lion* and *Il sorriso del leone* we can notice how Pasinetti removes some paragraphs from the first Italian edition to its English translation and we can see how he retrieves those same paragraphs making some
stilistic changes in the second Italian edition. On the contrary, the removal-retrieval category, which is also wider than the first one, can be divided in two subsets basing on the type of the omission we can find. The first subset corresponds to those omission related to connection between *La confusione* and Pasinetti’s previous novel *Rosso veneziano*. For example:

Partibon name piuttosto noto. Ramo secondario, di campagna, d’una famiglia veneziana illustre. Illustre ma non priva di irregolarità, di storie ambigue, di legami complicati.

Come se io non l’avessi saputo. La mia Ilse ed io eravamo appunto arrivati a Bernardo attraverso la lontana cugina nostra, Manuela, emigrata da Berlino a Hollywood… “Legami tanto complicati, mamma,” le dicevo, “che c’è qualcuno al mondo – una certa Manuela, attrice col nome di Manuela Bloom, figlia di un certo Marco Partibon – che in realtà porta accoppiati il cognome di Bernardo e quello che è il mio e che per un certo tempo è stato anche il tuo. È stato il tuo, per essere esatti, dal 1924 al 1929, visto che quando ti sei divorziata da mio padre il nome di Blumenfeld l’hai messo giù subito come una patata bollente.”

Su Bernardo, le sue frasi d’allora erano di questo tenore… (*La confusione* 104-105)

The narrator here is Clement and he is trying to recollect how he met Bernardo. In doing so, he describes the Partibons as a famous Venetian family whose happenings are always full of ambiguities. For example, Manuela Bloom, who is actually Manuela Blumenfeld, daughter of Marco Partibon seems to be the starting point of Clement’s friendship with Bernardo. All the references to Manuela disappear in The Smile on the Face of the Lion where we find as follow

Partibon, rather a well-known name. Secondary countryside branch of an illustrious Venetian family. Illustrious, but not without irregularities, ambiguous stories, complicated connections.
At that time her remarks about Bernardo were often of this tenor. (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 108)

The link to the story of *Rosso veneziano* remains, but it is less explicit. There are no names, there is no Manuela, there is no Marco. There is only a reference to the “ambiguous stories” and to the “complicated connection” that the Partibons have as heritage. This omission is not crucial to the trend of the narration, on the contrary the narration becomes faster because any reference to Manuela and Marco Partibon seem to be an unnecessary digression after having read the English edition. Surprisingly, Pasinetti retrieves the connection related to Manuela and Marco in *Il sorriso del leone*, in fact we find

Partibon nome piuttosto noto. Ramo secondario, di campagna, d’una famiglia veneziana illustre. Illustre ma non priva di irregolarità, di storie ambigue, di legami complicati.

Come se io non l’avessi saputo. La mia Ilse ed io eravamo appunto arrivati a Bernardo attraverso la lontana cugina nostra, Manuela, emigrata da Berlino a Hollywood… “Legami tanto complicati, mamma,” le dicevo, “che c’è qualcuno al mondo – una certa Manuela, attrice col nome di Manuela Bloom, figlia di un certo Marco Partibon – che in realtà porta accoppiati il cognome di Bernardo e quello che è il mio e che per un certo tempo è stato anche il tuo. È stato il tuo, per essere esatti, dal 1924 al 1929, visto che quando ti sei divorziata da mio padre il nome di Blumenfeld l’hai messo giù subito come una patata bollente.” (*Il sorriso del leone* 84)

These are the exact same words that we find in *La confusione*. The same phenomena happens later in the book where there is a reference to what has happened to Giorgio after the end of *Rosso veneziano*. In *La confusione* we read:

… questi parenti erano i famosi Partibon di Venezia, che conosco poco, fra cui c’erano sua cugina Elena, di leggendaria bellezza e Giorgio fratello di lei, specie di
genio. (Questo Giorgio pare abbia fatto cose bellissime durante la guerra ed ora deve essersi un po’ impertinente, a quel che mi risulta. Quantunque per non fargli torto io non possa forzarmi a credere a tali notizie, sembra che il dare conferenze, con quel che si dice brillante successo, alla Sorbona, susciti in questo Partibon scosse di soddisfazione e d’orgoglio. Una volta qui a Venezia lo vidi di spalle, nella nebbia di Piazza San Marco, vestito come un ministro degli esteri nordico; nella nebbia lo vidi allontanarsi verso due giovani che gli facevano incontro, ambedue in occhiali e dall’aria di suoi adepti politici, e concionarli a lungo, devotamente ascoltato.)

Bernardo mi dice che… (La confusione 108)

This is an entire paragraph connected to Giorgio’s academic career at Sorbona, which is entirely omitted in The Smile of the Face of the Lion:

…these relatives were the famous Venice Partibon, whom i don’t know very well, and among whom there were his cousin Elena, of legendary beauty, and her brother Giorgio, a kind of genius.

Bernardo tells me that… (The Smile of the Face of the Lion 111)

As it happened in the previous example, the link to Rosso veneziano is there but it becomes more implicit. The story of Giorgio is not developed in detail a in the Italian edition. Pasinetti retrieves the all story in Il sorriso del leone without changing any word:

… questi parenti erano i famosi Partibon di Venezia, che conosco poco, fra cui c’erano sua cugina Elena, di leggendaria bellezza e Giorgio fratello di lei, specie di genio. (Questo Giorgio pare abbia fatto cose bellissime durante la guerra ed ora deve essersi un po’ impertinente, a quel che mi risulta. Quantunque per non fargli torto io non possa forzarmi a credere a tali notizie, sembra che il dare conferenze, con quel che si dice brillante successo, alla Sorbona, susciti in questo Partibon scosse di soddisfazione e d’orgoglio. Una volta qui a Venezia lo vidi di spalle, nella nebbia di Piazza San Marco, vestito come un ministro degli esteri nordico; nella nebbia lo vidi
allontanarsi verso due giovani che gli facevano incontro, ambedue in occhiali e
dall’aria di suoi adepti politici, e concionarli a lungo, devotamente ascoltato.)
Bernardo mi dice che… (Il sorriso del leone 87)

Why does Pasinetti erase all the direct link to Rosso veneziano in *The Smile on the Face of the Lion*? Why does he retrieve the in *Il sorriso del leone*? It was said that *The Smile on the face of the Lion* could be considered an intermediate step but it must be considered also as a book that was originally conceived for a smaller editorial reality which is the Italian publishing market. All these omission symbolize Pasinetti’s publishing choice to shorten the book, giving speed and fluency to the narration, and to give the book a sort of independence from *Rosso veneziano*, which might have not been read by an hypothetical English reader.

A publishing choice might be a capable reason behind the omission related to Rosso veneziano, but also the reason behind those omission that are part of the second subset of the omission-retrieval category, which actually do not affect the plot but improves the flowing of the plot.

An example can be found in the first paragraph of the first chapter when Genziana arrives at Solmi’s house:

Attraversata l’anticamera ingombra d’impermeabili bastò a Genziana Horts entrare nel salotto dei Solmi e guardarsi intorno un attimo per capire che la serata sarebbe stata inutile: d’importante non c’era nessuno. Invitata per le nove e mezzo, Genziana arrivava poco prima delle undici accompagnata dall’alta figura di un giovane non noto nell’ambiente Solmi; era improbabile che la situazione potesse essere salvata dall’arrivo di nuovi ospiti; nulla ormai poteva mutare ciò che Tranquillo Masenti, suo amico giornalista superato da tempo ma I cui modi di dire le erano rimasti attaccati addosso, avrebbe chiamato “la composizione” o “l’impasto” del ricevimento. (*La confusione* 7)
In the English edition we find:

After crossing a vestibule crowded with raincoats, Genziana Horst had only to enter the Solmi’s living room and look around a moment to realize that the evening would be wasted. There was no one there of any importance, and it was improbable that the situation would be saved by the arrival of new guests; nothing by now could change what Tranquillo Massenti, a journalist friend long ago discarded but whose manner of speaking had stuck with her, would have called “the composition” or “the blend” of the reception. (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 3)

The English translation makes no reference to Genziana’s time of invitation, time of arrival and there is no reference to her partner. This passage is omitted, whereas in the Italian edition we read that Genziana arrives late, the reception starts at 9 pm and she arrives at 11, and we know she is going to the reception with a man, information that we grasp only in the fifth paragraph of the English edition. Pasinetti eliminates the anticipation on Genziana’s partner, eliminating also the suspense effect related to his at first anonymous identity, he is introduced in the fifth paragraph creating a sort of surprise effect.

Then, in the English edition the two sentences “there was no one there of any importance” and “it was improbable that the situation would be saved by the arrival of new guest” are connected in the same sentence with the coordinative conjunction ‘and’, whereas in the Italian edition they are separated by the omitted paragraph. Moreover, it is interesting to notice Pasinetti’s choice to translate the word ‘impasto’ into the English word ‘blend’. ‘Impasto’ refers to a combination of different things and it reminds of a concrete thing like a cake mixture or a concrete compound obtained in a chemistry experiment. On the contrary, the English word ‘blend’ refers precisely to a uniform mixture of different types of the same object, indeed Solmi’s reception is a compound of people of no importance, as Genziana remarks at her arrival. The chosen English
word seems to convey Genziana’s point of view more directly, giving the idea of a group of people belonging to a specific social environment.

We can find another example of omission when the narrator describes Genziana’s attitude to classify people basing on their assets and liabilities

Quarto Martelli non la capì. Quarto aveva avuto origine in campagne veneto-emiliane e non sempre si comportava in modo da far dimenticare questo ed altri punti a suo svantaggio. O invece che dire “punti a svantaggio”, parlando a se stessa Genziana diceva: liabilities. Specialmente dopo i mesi in America, aveva preso l’abitudine di elencare mentalmente le persone con due colonne a fianco come nei conti di banca, in una colonna i punti a favore o assets, nell’altra le liabilities. Però gli assets di Quarto alla fine la vincevano sulle sue liabilities, erano titoli solidi:

molto palesemente bello; molto ricco; devotissimo a lei. (La confusione 9)

The correspondent English translation is

Quarto Martelli did not understand her. Quarto was originally from the Northern and Central Italian countryside, and he did not always behave in such a way as to make one this and the other point against him. But rather than saying “point against him”, talking to herself Genziana would say, using the English world, “liabilities”. Especially after her months in America, she had taken to mentally list people with two columns, as in banking accounts. However, in the end Quarto’s assets won over his liabilities, his stock was solid: very evidently handsome; very rich; very devoted to her. (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 5)

In the English translation it is omitted the explanation on how an evaluation of assets and liabilities is made. An hypothetical explanation is that this method is recognized as originally belonging to the American banking reality and, consequently, there is no need to explain it.

A final example of omission can be the following extract:
Bernardo Partibon assentì con un cenno del capo mentre s’alzava altissimo e corpulento, e borbottando il proprio nome strinse la mano che Genziana gli offriva. Le fece posto accanto a sé in un suo modo pratico e servizievole senza mai toglierle gli occhi di dosso. Quando furono seduti continuò a fissarla in silenzio qualche momento. (La confusione 11)

In The Smile of the Face of the Lion we find:

Bernardo Partibon nodded as he raised himself, huge and corpulent, mumbling his own name, shaking Genziana’s Hand. He made room for her near himself, and when they were seated he kept staring at her in silence. (The Smile on the Face of the Lion 8)

Here the omission involve a change in Bernardo’s action in the scene. In the Italian extract he keeps looking at Genziana while he is making room for her and he keeps staring at her while she is sitting next to him. In the English extracts he starts staring at her only after she has sat. It seems that there is no eye contact while they are introducing themselves. Then, this difference disappears in Il sorriso del leone, where the words corresponds again to those of La confusione:

Bernardo Partibon assentì con un cenno del capo mentre s’alzava altissimo e corpulento, e borbottando il proprio nome strinse la mano che Genziana gli offriva. Le fece posto accanto a sé in un suo modo pratico e servizievole senza mai toglierle gli occhi di dosso. Quando furono seduti continuò a fissarla in silenzio qualche momento. (Il sorriso del leone 10)

There are many example from the removal-retrieval category which are similar to those listen above and all seems to follow the same path. First they are omitted in The Smile on the Face of the Lion, then they are retrieved in Il sorriso del leone. Their final result does not change: all the omission are connected to paragraphs that can be considered excessively overloading if translated into English. After all, Pasinetti’s writing style tends to be baroque; this is confirmed by the fact that in Il sorriso del leone not only he
retrieves all those paragraphs that were considered an extra, but he also adds a chapter ex-novo. This gives the idea that *La confusione* and *The Smile on the Face of the Lion* are only steps of a work in progress which reaches an end with *Il sorriso del leone*. Therefore, Pasinetti’s self-translation becomes a moment of close analysis which brings Pasinetti to the re-writing of some extracts of the book.
Conclusions

Pasinetti’s self-translation does not display constant features. In fact, my analysis related to Rosso veneziano and La confusione considers purposefully different aspects of the two books. In chapter 3 the analysis focuses on a detailed comparison between the Italian and the English translation of Rosso veneziano. The attention is on Pasinetti’s choices as a translator. In chapter 4 the attention is drawn to the cuts and modifications that Pasinetti did through the different editions of La confusione. What we can notice is that the way in which Pasinetti translated modifies through the years.

The points of non-correspondence are several between Rosso veneziano and Venetian Red and I attributed them to his target-oriented attitude. Indeed, the Alps of Rosso veneziano become anonymous mountains in Venetian Red, eliminating any geographical European reference. Moreover, Pasinetti dealt with problems and difficulties which are typical of translation. For example, he did not recreate his character’s accent (Giorgio’s Venetian accent or Manuela’s German accent). Moreover, Venetian Red sounds stilted in several paragraphs due to the fact that Pasinetti tried to faithfully reproduce his baroque way of writing. Therefore, self-translation represents a liability for this book. On the contrary, it represents an asset for The Smile on the face of
the Lion where Pasinetti seemed to manifest a new level of confidence that he developed through the years. In Venetian Red there are no omissions, whereas omissions constitute the big issue of chapter 4 and are considered the final product of self-translation. Indeed, Pasinetti reconsidered the flow of narration while translating into English and eliminated the exceeding excerpts. Nonetheless, his choice to retrieve those same excerpts in Il sorriso del leone is interesting, considering the fact that it passed 15 years between the publishing of The Smile on the Face of the Lion and Il sorriso del leone, which is the only edition which Pasinetti defined as a re-writing of La confusione. There were no studies on self-translation when Pasinetti decided to self-translate his books and there is still no clear definition of this phenomenon. Therefore, if there is no clear of it, who can we define its final products? Can we talk about translation or should we use the term re-writing? I think that The Smile on the Face of the Lion is half way in between these two definitions.

It would have been to have the chance to interview Pasinetti, to have his opinion on the topic and to discuss with him about all the comparison I did between the Italian and the English editions of his first two books. What I would have loved to ask him was whether he was aware of the originality of his choices.
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“Waiting for Marco” Rev. of Venetian Red, Pier Maria Pasinetti. Time, May 16th 1960. Print


Secondary Sources on Translation and Self-Transaltion


Appendix
Repartee with Murtha Baca\textsuperscript{36}

This is a transcription of a conversation I had with Prof. Murtha Baca on September 27 2012. It took place in her office at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, where she works as head of the Digital Art History Access program.

Murtha Baca met Pier Maria Pasinetti while she was a student at UCLA, where she attended one of his literature classes. They became not only good friends but also colleagues, indeed they worked together on several translations, in particular they translated together \textit{Il centro} and \textit{Dorsoduro}. This is one of the reasons why her words portray an interesting and effective image of Pasinetti.

\textit{Tatiana Campagnaro:} Would you like to introduce yourself? What have you been dealing with recently?

\textbf{Murtha Baca:} I got a Ph.D. in Italian literature and now I am Head of the Digital Art History Access program at the Getty Research Institute. I have recently written an article for the \textit{Getty Research Journal}\textsuperscript{37}. This article was about the challenges of translating historical archive texts. I have just finished to translate \textit{Mercanti Scrittori} by Vittore Branca, which is a book composed by diaries and it is harder to translate a bad writer than a good writer. Sometimes my English translation is better than the Italian.

\textsuperscript{36} Professor Baca speaks Italian fluently. During this conversation she sometimes switched from English to Italian. I have decided to keep this bilingual effect, which I consider connected to the topic my dissertation. Her Italian interventions are reported in Italics.

because certi autori di questi mercanti hanno un italiano completamente scassato, sgrammaticato.

**Campagnaro**: I decided to write about Pasinetti as self-translator when I read Massimo Ciavolella’s essay “Pasinetti in Inglese”, which is collected in *Le parentele inventate: Letteratura, cinema e arte per Francesco e Pier Maria Pasinetti*. His hypothesis is that Pasinetti’s translations were edited by a ghost translator. What do you think about it?

**Baca**: I haven’t made a careful study of that. *Non lo dico per vanità* but I am sure that the translations that he and I did together, which have never been published, would have been probably more successful than the ones he did by himself. Pasinetti was one of those people, who were really great with languages. His English was perfect, his French was perfect, his German was perfect. *Niente accentaccio* and very colloquial. One time, years ago I went with him to Paris and he was doing interviews on the radio in a completely fluent French. But he was a little bit bookish.

His house in Beverly Hills has just been sold. I saw it for the last time when I went to the farewell cocktail party. There’s a room downstairs where he and I would sit and translate. He would be sitting in an easy chair and I would be there with the typewriter, later with the computer, and we would talk about translation. One time, we were translating from one of his books (I think *Il Centro*) where someone was saying “è un coglione!” and it was a young person saying that. How would you translate that?

**Campagnaro**: I don’t know.

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38 This book is a collection of essays whose authors intervened during the international convention on Pier Maria and Francesco Pasinetti in Venice from December 3 to December 5 2009. For further details on this book see Bibliography.
Baca: It’s hard. Pasinetti ended up saying “he’s a jerk!” It is not quite as strong as “è un coglione!”, but that was what the character meant. There were a lot of different options and we went back and forth in trying to get the right tone. Pasinetti considered tone a crucial feature in a translation.

Campagnaro: This is the main difficulty of being a translator.

Baca: Yes, and another example comes from yesterday. I was translating an essay by a colleague of mine from Spain. Her Spanish is very contorted but I know what she is talking about. In fact, her essay is about digital archive history and how digitalization has changed the way we do research. While I was translating, I changed a lot of things, because I thought that even a Spanish person wouldn’t have understood at a first reading. I paraphrased in some points. I was even more free than that in order to render the idea that I knew she was saying, without using her exact words.

Campagnaro: Did Pasinetti read authors like Thomas Mann in the original language?

Baca: Pasinetti loved Thomas Mann and, of course, he read him in the original German. I don’t read German that well. So recently, I reread Death in Venice which is actually a very problematic story. I have the book that Pasinetti used at UCLA when he taught Death in Venice. It has his annotations, which sometimes reveal Pasinetti’s impatience at some of Mann’s mistakes on Venice. Sometimes he would get really angry, describing Mann’s point of view similar to that of a tourist in Venice. I have also his copy of The Magic Mountain.

Right after he died I was very upset, Pasinetti was like my father. I suffered from terrible insomnia for weeks and I reread The Magic Mountain which was in English. It was the copy that he used at UCLA with all his annotations, some in English, some in German, and some in Italian. I was like reading the book with him. But anyway, the
Mann’s book, which he used to use at UCLA, was translated by the classic translator of all Thomas Mann’s books in the early 20th century. She was H.T. Lowe-Porter. It was recently retranslated and I have read this translation and it is very different. I have to say that the modern Mann is better.

Campagnaro: What are the difficulties that a translator has? How do you deal with a book you are going to translate?

Baca: I can think about my two most recent translations: the academic article from Spanish and Mercanti scrittori. I usually follow this method: I sit down once, at first I read it and I just start to translate it. Then I go back over it again and again. At a certain point I put away the original text and I start working only on my translation, to make it understandable.

Campagnaro: Do you consider translation a kind of rewriting process, or is it just a sort of “equivalence” to render a book in another language?

Baca: I think it is half-way in between. I think I would say that I am interpreting it.

Campagnaro: This implies that unless you are not a native speaker, you cannot understand everything from a book.

Baca: That’s a good observation. I am not a native speaker of Italian, but I can understand Italian. For Example, with Mercanti Scrittori (let’s think that it is 14th century Italian, very difficult) and a couple of time I asked for help to an Italian colleague, who had a Ph.D. in Italian Literature from UCLA, now she is retired. Sometimes with Mercanti Scrittori there were parts, where I had no idea what that person was saying. Also because these are private diaries and sometimes when you write stuff in your private journals, no one would have an idea of what you are saying, because you have your own abbreviation, your own Esperanto. Anyway, I would show
to this friend and she told me “please don’t ever bring this here again, I can’t help you”. I can actually do it better by myself, because it is like a puzzle: you just keep going over and over and also you get used to the writer’s style. The Renaissance Italian is really complex and many times I had to make a research. For example I found “ufficio delle riformagioni” which used to be a chancellery office in Florence. And then I figured out what to say. In that kind of book you can put footnotes and explain, but when you are doing fiction you normally don’t use footnotes.

Campagnaro: If you are dealing with a book which was previously translated into other languages, do you do a comparative work with those translations?

Baca: Yes, sometimes I do. For example there was something from Siddhartha, where the English translations seems to me so weird in some points. So, I looked up the Italian translation and it was much better than the English one.

Campagnaro: When did you start to work with Pasinetti? When did you start to translate together?

Baca: I was originally his students, and he was a great professor (I am sure Silvana Tamiozzo can tell this too). I didn’t get my Ph.D. with him because I was doing Renaissance Literature, but he was the best professor I have ever had. Then, we started working together on the Norton Anthology of World Literature, so that was an editing job. I helped him with the writing and some of the research and then we decided to start translating two of his books that had never been translated. So I would say probably the 80s, because I was still using the typewriter.

Campagnaro: You have told me that the translations you did together with Pasinetti are slightly better than his self-translations.

Baca: I am just conjecturing, I have to look at them…
Campagnaro: Do you think that Pasinetti’s self-translations can be considered at the same level of a native speaker’s translations?

Baca: I think probably … that’s a good question. Do you remember that he wrote those three short stories, and among those, there was “Il soldato Smateck”, which was one of the earliest things he wrote. That translation was a little bit awkward. That short story recalls the years in which he first came to America. An interesting thing is that I have never read his books in English. I have those books Rosso veneziano and The Smile on the Face of the Lion at home but I have never read them in English. I looked at them and I think that a reader who doesn’t know him very well might think he was a native speaker. But some paragraphs in his texts are a little bit formal and stilted.

Campagnaro: According to you, which were Pasinetti’s difficulties while translating?

Baca: In Dorsoduro there was a character saying “che da ridere” which is an Italianized version of Venetian. He is trying to show that they are Venetian… and I am trying to remember how we translated this. How would you translate “che da ridere”? Now, I would say, if it were Giovanna Valmarin or someone young making fun of somebody, or if they are in some funny situation, I would translate “what a scream!” or in very modern American you would probably say “how hilarious!”. But at that time period, they would probably have said “what a scream!”. This is one of the things he and I talked about a lot, like, what time period is it? Rosso veneziano, takes place earlier in the 20s. Therefore, if the character were in Rosso veneziano, I would have translated it with “what a scream!” But if it were Il centro, I might have had the character saying “how hilarious!”, as the book takes place in the 60s. So, the time period is very important, too. When I do these historical translations, sometimes I look up the words in the Oxford English Dictionary to see when was the earliest a word was first used in
English, because for *Mercanti scrittori* I can use old fashion words, I wouldn’t use a modern word.

Have you ever read about that play *La venexiana*? It is an anonymous play from the 15th century. And Maurizio Scaparro, the director, came to UCLA and was organizing a performance of this and he also made a movie of this at a certain point. Don’t ask me how Pasinetti and I got involved, but we translated that together into English and of course we tried to make the language sound old fashion. It was never published, we just did it for the performance at UCLA. ³⁹

**Campagnaro:** Do you think that while he was writing in Italian, he had already meant to translate it into English and French? Or was it an idea that came to him later?

**Baca:** I am not sure. You may find this answer in the archive. At that time, he and Loredana Balboni used to write to each other. He wrote a lot, especially about *Venetian Red*. He dedicated this book to his brother Francesco, who died tragically. He could barely get the thing published. So, I am not sure, because Pasinetti always knew he was going to be famous. He wanted to be famous and he was kind of obsessed with that. I don’t know what he was thinking about it. He had some relationship with some translator, for example with the French one. His book always did best in France than they did in Italy. I remember that he worked with the French translator. He didn’t sit side by side like he and I did, but he would correspond with him.

I still have a picture which shows him sitting in his house sitting with the dictaphone, while he was dictating a translation. (Fig

**Campagnaro:** Do you think that his self-translations into English might be seen as re-writings of his books? Let’s think about *La confusione* for example.{}

³⁹ A copy of their translation of *La venexiana* can be found in Fondo Pasinetti at CISVe.
Baca: I think that in the case of this precise book this is what happened. It seems that in translating it, he decided he wanted to make some changes. He is unique in that way, seeing things from two different perspectives. You know the two authors he admired the most were Mann and Proust… and Mann and Proust never dreamt to translate their own works, and I believe Proust did know English but he never dreamt of translating his stuff into English.

Che peccato che è morto, you should have interviewed him instead of me.

I have never recorded him, this is one of my biggest regrets. I have known him for more than 30 years and he was one of my greatest friends.

When he still used to live in his house in Beverly Hills, he loved going to parties. He was a man about town. In his last few years of his life I used to go there every Saturday and make dinner for him and we just sat there and talked about everything. I have never recorded him and also I have never filmed him talking, he was one of the greatest talker I have known. Do you know the expression “chick-magnet”? He was a “chick-magnet”, even if, non era bello. Francesco Pasinetti was really handsome. Pasinetti was not that good-looking, but he was so brilliant. He could talk better than anybody and women just fell over him. At parties, he would drink and tell stories. He could recite all literature a memoria, he could recite Dante, Mann, Proust, and all of English literature. The women were enchanted by his personality.

Campagnaro: You have started working with him way after self-translation. According to you, why did he started translating together with a native speaker?

Baca: In his first years he was in Los Angeles, he was really lonely. This is funny, because he was a very social person. He loved cocktail parties but he also suffered from
loneliness. If you read some of his letters, you can tell that. And at the time he probably was the only one who could do it. Let’s just consider his most famous novel *Venetian Red*. He didn’t have the necessary money to have his novel translated by a translator. In that case, I think it was probably just a practical thing. Moreover, his linguistic skills allowed him to start translating with the advantage that he was the author of that book and he knew exactly what he wanted to communicate. You can find a good translation of Thomas Mann or Proust, but it is still an interpretation of the translator and they (the translators) are not able to communicate with these authors. As translator you never have complete knowledge. A translation is always an interpretation which gives birth to a new book.
Images

This is a small selection of images which portray some moments of Pier Maria Pasinetti’s life. Veronica Gobbato helped me in the selection, because Pasinetti collected hundreds of pictures which can be found at “Fondo Pasinetti”.
Fig. 1. Family picture: Carlo and Maria Pasinetti together with their children Pier Maria and Francesco. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 138. Venezia. Print.
Fig. 2. Family picture. Carlo and Maria Pasinetti with their children and some friends.

CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 142.

Venezia, Print.
Fig. 3. Family picture. Carlo and Maria Pasinetti together with Emma Ciardi and their children Pier Maria and Francesco. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 259. Venezia, Print.
Fig. 4. Pier Maria Pasinetti with Renè Wellek, Margaret Wimsett and Lowy Nelson.

October 1 1965. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti, 1374. Venezia, Print.
Fig. 5. Pier Maria Pasinetti with Renè Wellek. 1985 ca. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 1395. Venezia, Print.
Fig. 6. Pier Maria Pasinetti together with Robert Penn Warren at Baton Rouge. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 421. Venezia, Print.
Fig. 7-8. Pier Maria Pasinetti while recording his translation of Venetian Red with his dittaphone in his house in Beverly Hills. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 826 and 969. Venezia, Print.
Fig. 9. Pier Maria Pasinetti in his house of Beverly Hills. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 1099. Venezia, Print.
Fig 10. Pier Maria Pasinetti on the film set of Julius Caesar. CISVe, archive “Carte del Contemporaneo”, “Fondo Pier Maria Pasinetti”, 1414. Print.