

The Double in Late Nineteenth-Century Italian Literature:
Readings in Fogazzaro and His Contemporaries

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is organized around main axes: the literary and critical concept of the Double and the analysis of Antonio Fogazzaro's 1881 novel, *Malombra*, in which the Double plays a complex thematic role. In the first chapter, I address the concept of the Double as a critical category, assessing its meaning across three different levels of reality: in terms of the cultural specificity of the representation (the nineteenth century and Romantic literature), in terms of the theoretical approach (whether it is construed as a transcendental figure, as in Freudian theory, or a transgressive figure, as in Jungian theory, etc.) and in terms of its placement relative to the other themes in the text. In the second chapter, I take up the analysis of three Italian texts from the second half of the nineteenth century which privilege the theme of the Double and invest it with idiosyncratic meaning: *Uno spirito in un lampone* by Iginio Ugo Tarchetti (1867), *Due anime in un corpo* by Emilio de Marchi (1877) and *Le storie del castello di Trezza* by Giovanni Verga (1875). My reading of these texts draw on diverse psychoanalytic perspectives, namely those of Jung, Lacan and Abraham and Torok. In the third chapter, I carry out an extensive analysis of Fogazzaro's *Malombra*. The first part of the analysis, which focuses on the novel's two primary characters, Marina and Silla, shows how these characters' unconscious conflicts animate the narrative, shape its itinerary and anchor it in a phantasmatic past; the second part examines the ways in which the primary aspects of the plot work in tension with, and are offset by, the novel's two subplots; the third part looks at points of comparison between *Malombra* and the three texts discussed in the second chapter, both in relation to the theme of the Double and to more general literary signifiers.

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Introduction

Part I: The Double and *Malombra*

This dissertation is structured around two main axes: the first is the literary theme of the Double, as it came to be embodied in Italian literature from the second half of the nineteenth century and the second is the analysis of Antonio Fogazzaro's novel *Malombra*, a text which problematizes double-existence at the center of a vast and complex psychological intrigue. At the outset of this study, I would like to address a series of questions which may arise in relation to any prospective topic of literary inquiry: namely, what broader purpose is served by an investigation into the material at hand? Why the Double? And why Fogazzaro's *Malombra*? I will develop the rationale behind this specific line of inquiry with reference to three major areas of consideration: the significance of the Double as an instrument for literary analysis and comparison, the interdiscursive relationship between psychoanalysis and literature and the characterization of Marina—*Malombra*'s protagonist—as a crowning achievement of Fogazzaro's art.

The first consideration is the viability of the Double as a critical category and an instrument for literary analysis. The elusiveness and elasticity of the Double as a concept has led many specialists over the years to view it with skepticism, as Milica Zivkovic notes, citing the consensus articulated by Albert Guerard that "the word double is embarrassingly vague, as used in literary criticism"¹². That notwithstanding, I would argue that the Double remains an essentially useful category, provided one takes efforts to define it carefully relative to the reality

¹ Albert Guerard, "Concepts of the Double", in *Stories of the Double*, ed. Albert Guerard (New York: J.P. Lippincott, 1967), 3.

² Milica Zivkovic, "The Double as the 'Unseen' of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger," *Linguistics and Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (2000), 122.

of the text and the critical methodology. It is on this account that I have devoted the first chapter of this dissertation to excavating the concept of the Double and outlining some of the ways it has been interpreted across the fields of psychoanalysis, anthropology and cultural and literary studies. In addition to being useful as a critical category, however, the Double also posits a tool for comparing a vast number of nineteenth century European texts that represent themes ranging from the duality of being and double-existence to various scenarios of split consciousness and extreme instances of psychic division (themes generally subsumed under the rubric of the Double). Thus, by organizing this study around the theme of the Double, I hope to reinforce a sense of critical cohesion between the Italian texts analyzed and the broader European context, and in such a way, open productive avenues in the discourse of comparative literature.

A second consideration about the broader significance of this dissertation relates to the potential for psychoanalysis to elucidate literature and the complementary potential for literature to elucidate psychoanalysis. Little explanation is required for the first aspect of this interdiscursive relationship, which regards the potential for psychoanalytic concepts to enhance the understanding, appreciation and relatability of literary texts. The most prominent approaches to the Double in literature derive from the various strands of psychoanalytic thought, and the critical methodology of this study takes into account three specific theoretical orientations: Freudian theory, Jungian theory and the theory of Abraham and Torok. Above and beyond the question of the Double, the selective application of psychoanalytic methodologies to the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi, Verga and Fogazzaro throughout this dissertation generates practical insights into the scenarios depicted by shedding light on their psychological underpinnings.

The second aspect of this interdiscursive relationship, concerning the potential for literature to inform the psychoanalytic discourse, highlights a reciprocal channel whereby the

observations made and conclusions drawn in this dissertation may supplement the received knowledge of psychoanalytic concepts in the theoretical and clinical domains. In the same way that psychoanalytic concepts help to explicate scenarios in literature, literary representations of human experience have the capacity to enrich psychoanalytic understanding in the clinical context. Nowhere does this possibility appear more fully realized than in the writings of Franco-Hungarian psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, where technical insights and literary conceits appear seamlessly interwoven and where new concepts bearing names such as “crypt” and “phantom” are formulated in conjunction with literature and to the language of the patients themselves. Nicholas Rand gives an account of the interdisciplinary space navigated by Abraham and Torok in his introduction to the volume of their collected writings, *The Shell and the Kernel*:

One of the central features of Abraham and Torok’s work is a constant interchange between literature and psychoanalysis. This is a matter not simply of giving psychoanalytic interpretations of literature, but rather of transforming literature into a resource for clinical insight. New insights are possible because Abraham and Torok’s concepts are uncommonly versatile. For example, introjection, defined broadly as the psychic process of expansion, leaves entirely open the particular subject or problem under study. Thus literature can deepen psychoanalytic understanding by giving us nuance and artful accounts of situations that require or lead to introjection. For Abraham and Torok, the study of fictitious life-scenarios in literature parallels the psychoanalytic search for ever finer means of comprehending people and their joys or sufferings.³

...Abraham and Torok’s explorations move fluidly between the clinical and literary realms, suggesting that literature and psychoanalysis are two different contexts for similar methodological insights. Torok has written that “the clinical realm works toward a better understanding of hiding in texts, while the literary analysis of the avenues of textual concealment offers allegories of reading for clinical psychoanalysis.”^{4 5}

³ Nicholas T. Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 11-12.

⁴ Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, 19.

⁵ Rand goes on to illustrate the basic modalities underlying Abraham and Torok’s theory—the scenarios of successful and failed introjection—with reference to Maupassant’s story *Le mer* and Camus’s *L’etranger*, respectively.

In accordance with the premises outlined here, the readings that I propose for Tarchetti's *Uno spirito in un lampone* in the second chapter of this dissertation and for aspects of Fogazzaro's *Malombra* in the third chapter harness the potential for these texts to function as allegorical, if not simply stylized, literary portrayals of situations dealt with in Abraham and Torok's theory. For instance, in the case of Tarchetti's text, I raise the possibility of interpreting the Baron's adventure as an extended metaphor for impossible mourning, which Torok associates with primitive fantasies of devouring. Also, while examining Tarchetti's text, I utilize the techniques of cryptonymic analysis, a tool of linguistic analysis refined by Abraham and Torok through their work on Freud's *Wolf Man*, to uncover a hidden logic in the representation linking the titular premise of the "lampone" to the name of the murdered chambermaid, "Clara," uttered at the end of the tale. In the case of Fogazzaro's *Malombra*, I highlight the procedures of revealing/re-veiling implicated in the transmission of the d'Ormengò family secret, along with the scenario whereby Marina comes to re-embody her ancestor, Cecilia, for their capacity to illustrate Abraham's concept of the transgenerational phantom.

While Abraham and Torok's theory may be especially well-suited to gathering insights from literature, the prospect of using literary representations to reinforce methodologies and generate clinical intuitions also remains valid for psychoanalysis more generally. To that end, this dissertation is rich in observations which bear on the relationship between the two discourses and their capacity to inform one another. In the second chapter, for example, I propose an alternative reading for Tarchetti's *Uno spirito in un lampone*, wherein I interpret the Baron's adventure as an allegory for the Jungian process of anima conflict. In the third chapter, I draw parallels between the railway imagery Fogazzaro uses to depict the movements of Marina's

consciousness and the similar imagery (the rail-carriage analogy) Freud uses in teaching his pupils to free-associate⁶. In the second part of the third chapter, I call attention to a passage from Fogazzaro's ancillary writings which appears psychoanalytical *avant la lettre*, wherein the author admits to conceiving Edith's character as a "réaction de conscience" to the representation of Marina. These are but a few examples of the ways the psychoanalytic and the literary discourses intersect in this study. In listing them, I would also like to add the disclaimer that my selective, speculative and impartial deployment of psychoanalytic methodologies is aimed only at enhancing the critical discussion and not at constructing a uniform or exclusive code of interpretation.

A third consideration about the broader import of this dissertation pertains to its specific contribution to the critical discourse on Fogazzaro. Antonio Fogazzaro is arguably one of the most versatile and skilled Italian writers of the nineteenth century, though also one of its most underappreciated writers, at least from an international perspective⁷. One of my aims in producing an expansive analysis and discussion of *Malombra*, the first of Fogazzaro's seven novels, is to demonstrate the author's talent for constructing a highly nuanced and modern

⁶ Sigmund Freud, "On Beginning the Treatment" (1913), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974).

⁷ Giorgio Cavallini offers the following assessment of Fogazzaro's uniqueness vis-a-vis other European narrators: "A differenza di altri narratori europei, Fogazzaro non rappresenta oggettivamente la società del suo tempo, ritraendola in un vasto affresco o cogliendone gli aspetti più crudi. Non è lo scrittore onnisciente, che domina dall'alto o dall'esterno ma con occhio sicuro della realtà; al contrario, ne è coinvolto in prima persona (autobiografismo) cossiché la modernità, epperò anche il rischio, della sua arte consiste nell'impulso a realizzare una sorta di fusione fra poesia e vita, in chiave decisamente più soggettiva che oggettiva. I suoi romanzi, da *Malombra* a *Leila*, rispecchiano nelle vicende e nei problemi dei protagonisti le reazioni psicologiche e le idee morali ed estetiche dell'autore stesso: spirito tormentato e inquieto, ricco di vita interiore e, insieme, personaggio mondano a cui arridono la ricchezza e il successo." [Unlike other European narrators, Fogazzaro does not represent the society of his time objectively, depicting it over a vast canvas or capturing its rawest aspects. He is not the omniscient writer, who dominates reality from above or outside, but with a sure eye; on the contrary, he is involved in the first person (in an autobiographical sense) so that the modernity, but then also the risk, of his art consists in the drive to realize a sort of fusion between poetry and life, in a key that is decidedly more subjective than objective. His novels, from *Malombra* to *Leila*, reflect in the affairs and the problems of the protagonists the psychological reactions and the moral and aesthetic ideas of the author himself. A tormented and anxious spirit, with a rich interior life and, at the same time, a worldly character on whom smile prosperity and success]. Giorgio Cavallini, *Fogazzaro: ieri e oggi* (Naples: Loffredo, 2000), 10.

psychological drama. In recent decades, and especially since the publication of the critical edition by Vittore Branca in 1982, *Malombra* has received more attention from scholars than any of Fogazzaro's other works, and has been subject to critique from several different standpoints⁸.⁹ To offer just a few examples of the diverse approaches undertaken: in "Fogazzaro, la poesia e l'avvenire del romanzo," Raffaele Cavalluzzi analyzes the hybrid discourse of the novel in the context of Fogazzaro's evolution from lyric poet to prose narrator;¹⁰ in *Malombra e il fantastico: analisi del testo e dell'enunciazione*, Tiziano Sandroni examines novel's complex relationship to the literature of the Fantastic¹¹; in "Genesi di *Malombra*. Poesia e pensiero nel primo Fogazzaro," Fabio Finotti undertakes a comparative analysis of Fogazzaro's notes and drafts in order to retrace the novel's genesis and shed light on the author's writing process¹².

Within the body of scholarship centered on *Malombra*, one also finds several studies concerned specifically with fleshing out the psychological underpinnings of the novel. In his study "Letteratura ed evoluzionismo cristiano: per un'analisi di *Malombra*," Floriano Romboli proposes a psychological code for reading the interplay between darkness and light in the novel, where darkness signifies "l'ambito dell'oscurità psicologica, l'area delle istintività compresse e

⁸ Giorgio Cavallini, *Fogazzaro: ieri e oggi* (Naples: Loffredo, 2000). I have followed some of Cavallini's indications in my review of the critical literature on *Malombra*.

⁹ Vittore Branca, introduzione a *Malombra*, ed. Vittore Branca (Milan: BUR, 1982). Vittore Branca judges *Malombra* to be the masterpiece of the "romanzo nero e di narrazione metapsichica" [Gothic novel and metapsychical narration] in Italian literature, adding that it is "non solo la vitale e ribollente matrice dei romanzi fogazzariani ma anche una balenante anticipazione della narrativa contemporanea" [not only the vital and bursting matrix of Fogazzaro's novels but also a striking anticipation of the contemporary narrative].

¹⁰ Raffaele Cavalluzzi, "Fogazzaro, la poesia e l'avvenire del romanzo," *Annali della facoltà di lingue e letterature straniere dell'Università di Bari*, third series, IX (1988), nn. 1-2.

¹¹ Tiziano Sandroni, *Malombra e il fantastico: analisi del testo e dell'enunciazione* (Florence: Lalli, 1989).

¹² Fabio Finotti, "Genesi di *Malombra*. Poesia e pensiero nel primo Fogazzaro," *Lettere Italiane*, XLVII (1995), fasc. 2, 213.

celate”¹³ and light signifies the zone of the “coscienza vigile”¹⁴ which judges the goings-on of the darkness “con evidenti risultati di turbamento”¹⁵¹⁶. Fabio Finotti’s article, “L’inconscio in Fogazzaro,” also focuses attention to the psychological dimension of Fogazzaro’s novels by examining trends in the author’s attitude toward the representation of the unconscious¹⁷. More recent studies that take up questions of character psychology in *Malombra* include Ann Caesar’s article, “Sensation, Seduction and the Supernatural: Fogazzaro’s *Malombra*,” which parses out the nuances of Marina’s characterization and investigates the thematic link between eros and death, and Laura Wittman’s article “Fogazzaro tra occultismo e modernismo,” which examines

¹³ “the realm of psychological obscurity the area of the hidden and repressed instincts”

¹⁴ “waking consciousness”

¹⁵ “with a clearly tumultuous result.”

¹⁶ Floriano Romboli, “Letteratura ed evoluzionismo cristiano: per un’analisi di *Malombra*,” *Filologia e critica*, XIX (1994), fasc. III, 337-331. Quoted in Cavallini, *Fogazzaro: ieri e oggi*, 79-80.

¹⁷ Fabio Finotti, “L’inconscio in Fogazzaro,” in AA. VV., *Antonio Fogazzaro tra storia, filologia, critica*, ed. G. Pizzamiglio and F. Finotti (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1999).

the imprint of the contemporary (late nineteenth-century) psychological discourse on the characters of Silla and Marina¹⁸¹⁹²⁰.

One particular stroke of Fogazzaro's artistic mastery which I intend to illuminate in this dissertation is the representation of *Malombra*'s female protagonist, who is shown fluidly shuttling between the habitus of Marina and that of Cecilia. Marina's presence crystallizes on the page through a play of opposing forces: a play between two models of the feminine, between nature and culture, between the old world and modernity, between poetry and prose²¹. At its core, her character revolves around fundamental problem of double-existence. On the one hand, Marina is the orphaned Marchioness Crusnelli di Malombra, a product—in the world of the text—of French high society and culture, and an embodiment—in literary terms—of the heroine

¹⁸ Ann Hallamore Caesar, "Sensation, Seduction and the Supernatural: Fogazzaro's *Malombra*," in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 23-43.

¹⁹ Laura Wittman, "Fogazzaro tra occultismo e modernismo" (2013), 262. Wittman calls attention to the echoes of contemporary (late nineteenth-century) psychology—concerned in particular with ideas of suggestion and auto-suggestion—in the characterizations of Marina and Silla (262-263). "In particolare, tipico dell'epoca è il personaggio che cerca di ragionare con se stesso e non si rende conto di aver già perso la propria coerenza ed unità dando voce e corpo ad un altro sé. Fogazzaro echeggia ripetutamente le osservazioni della psicologia contemporanea, che considera la calma che subentra all'agitazione nervosa come particolarmente pericolosa, perché segno di auto-suggestione. Vediamo che prima di trovare il manoscritto di Cecilia, Marina è oppressa da un «fuoco interno», agitatissima (100); ma già dopo la prima lettura, prima che abbia il sospetto di riconoscersi in Cecilia, prima di dibattere con sé stessa questo sospetto, «le sue mani si movevano lentamente, non avevano più nulla di nervoso. La fisionomia era marmorea» (104). Questa calma eccessiva indica già il fascino «mesmerizzante» del manoscritto. Nel caso di Silla, troviamo qualcosa di simile prima del momento in cui accetterà di accomunare il suo destino a quello di Marina: «una lieve ombra fredda» diventa «certa stupidità fredda e lenta» per cui «un'amara energia gli corse le vene, ogni pensiero scomparve dalla sua mente» (350, 355). Da questo punto di vista, Marina e Corrado sono condannati per la loro «folie mystique à deux»." In particular, it is typical of the period to have a character who tries to reason with himself and does not realize that he has already lost his own coherence and unity, giving voice and body to an "other self." Fogazzaro repeatedly echoes observations from contemporary psychology, which considers the calm following a nervous attack as particularly dangerous, as a sign of auto-suggestion. We see that prior to finding Cecilia's manuscript, Marina is oppressed by an "internal fire," fiercely agitated; but already after the first reading, before she develops the suspicion of recognizing herself in Cecilia, before discussing this suspicion with herself, "her hands moved slowly, they no longer had anything nervous about them. She had a marble countenance." This excessive calm already indicates the "mesmerizing" fascination of the manuscript. In Silla's case, we find something similar prior to the moment in which he agrees to link his destiny to that of Marina: "a soft cold shadow" becomes a "sort of stupidity, cold and slow" on account of which "a bitter energy coursed through his veins, every thought disappeared from his mind." From this point of view, Marina and Corrado are condemned for their "folie mystique à deux."

²⁰ Cristina Mazzoni's book *Saint Hysteria* [Cristina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1996)] also contains a chapter on *Malombra*, as does Elena Landoni's *Antonio Fogazzaro e i cavalieri dello spirito* [Elena Landoni, *Antonio Fogazzaro e i cavalieri dello spirito* (Genova: San Marco dei Giustiniani, 2004)].

²¹Or else, to put it with Kristeva, between the socially-oriented symbolic and the drive-centered semiotic.

of the French Decadent novel. Increasingly, however, as though to signify her assimilation of her ancestor, Cecilia, she also becomes associated with an alternate set of traits, these bearing elemental and mythical connotations. The ever-changing nature of the relationship between Marina's two states of being is borne out through a constant redrawing of the parameters of her representation.

The fundamental problem of double-existence underpinning Marina's character also reverberates into the structure of the plot and the narrative. The interplay between Marina's status as a repressed woman, sustained on a diet of French Romantic-era texts and confined to the boundaries of her own peculiar reality, and her growing conviction that she is the reincarnation of Cecilia, returned to exact vengeance for a decades-old atrocity, is writ large in—to use Paolo Valesio's analogy—the tectonic shift between two contiguous formations in the text. If one of these formations is the metaphysical superstructure of the “dramma sovrumano”²² laid out in Cecilia's prophecy, the other is a more traditional and very human love story, the sort one finds embodied in Romantic novels such as Charlotte Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, where the lovers become swept up in the vicissitudes of each other's passions. The collision of these two structures is the source of a critical paradox in Marina's character, in the sense that on the one hand, the compulsion to murder Cesare in accordance with Cecilia's prophecy prevents her from realizing her love for Silla—the supposed reincarnation of Cecilia's lover, Renato—and on the other hand, being scorned by Silla drives her to kill her would-be lover in an act which seems to contradict her belief in the same prophecy. This dilemma, in turn, gives rise to a host of questions, such as: does Marina truly believe in Cecilia's cosmic scheme and kill her reincarnated lover as an afterthought, or does her zeal for the prophecy simply offer a pretense

²² “superhuman drama”

for acting out her hatred of Cesare—a sentiment which, in the chaos of exploding passions, she fails to distinguish from her love for Silla? Or is it perhaps that part of her—the immortal part, identified with Cecilia—operates in conformity with a “sovrumano” design, and part of her—the mortal part, identified with Marina—operates in conformity with an economy of worldly desires? The irreducibility of Marina’s motives in the face of questions like these is a hallmark of her complex characterization.

In another sense, as a pure creature of the author’s desire and a source of autobiographical consciousness, the twofold person of Marina/Cecilia centrally organizes the whole universe of character relations in *Malombra*. The theme of the Double, which originates with Marina in her relation to Cecilia, diffuses itself into Marina’s pairings with other characters and thereby carves out a variety of duplicative structures in the text. As I show in the first part of the third chapter, certain minor characters appear to function as extensions of Marina’s consciousness. For instance, the maid, Fanny, acts as an alter ego relative to the identity of Marina while the gardener’s son, Rico, acts as an alter ego relative to the identity of Cecilia. This tendency even expands to inanimate features of the landscape, with the result that Marina’s presence is diffused into features ranging from the scent of her *mown hay* perfume, to the books in her library, to the elemental forces of wind, rain and lightning, which offer a symbolic space for the elaboration of her affective states. On another level, as I demonstrate in the second part of the third chapter, the protagonists Marina and Silla function as dueling sources of autobiographical consciousness in the novel, in the sense that each personifies an aspect of Fogazzaro’s personality from an earlier point in his life. Finally, a system of literary foils unfolds relative to the protagonists in the text, so that like Silla and his mother Mina, who are foiled by

the characters of Nepo and Fosca, Marina and Cesare are foiled by the characters of Edith and Steinegge.

Part II: Overview of Contents

In the first chapter of this dissertation I set out to provide an overview of the Double as a critical category, first by tracing an intellectual history of the concept and then by establishing its significance in the context of literary criticism and analysis. My excursus on the literary importance of the Double focuses specifically on its manifestations in Romantic literature and the literature of the Fantastic, while considering different theoretical approaches to the topic, including the interpretations put forth by the Freudian and Jungian schools of thought. Also in the first chapter, I illustrate the different forms under which the Double appears in nineteenth-century texts, through reference to texts by Poe, Dostoevsky, James, Gautier and Andersen.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I turn my attention to the specific question of the Double as it appears in Italian literature from the latter part of the nineteenth century. I begin the chapter by recapitulating some indications about the Double from the critical discourse on the Italian Fantastic before proceeding with the analysis of three texts which deal centrally with scenarios of duality or duplication. The first of these texts is Iginio Ugo Tarchetti's *Uno spirito in un lampone*, a fantastic tale which thematizes the Double against a backdrop of spiritual possession. For the analysis of this text, I supply two distinct readings: one based on Jungian theory and the other based on the psychoanalytic theory of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. The second text analyzed is the novella *Due anime in un corpo* by Emilio de Marchi, a singular blend of crime thriller, sentimental novel and bildungsroman which recaptures the spiritual premise from Tarchetti's tale but adapts it to the figurative space of an ambiguously metaphorical conceit. The third text analyzed is Giovanni Verga's novella *Le storie del castello di Trezza*, which, at a difference from the first two texts, integrates the Double into the narrative apparatus through an elaborate technique of mise-en-abyme.

The third chapter of this dissertation, dedicated entirely to the analysis of Antonio Fogazzaro's *Malombra*, is divided into an introduction and three parts. In the introductory portion of the chapter, I address the issue of interpretive ambiguities in the novel and defend the artistic merit of such equivocations as the hallmarks of a writing at the intersection of poetry and prose. In the first part of the chapter, I move forward with an in-depth analysis of the novel's structure, focusing specifically on the psychological development of the two protagonists: Marina Crusnelli di Malombra, whose adventures serve as the primary space for the problematization of the Double in the text, and Corrado Silla, whose experiences become inextricably linked with those of Marina. I make selective use of psychoanalytic methodologies in conducting this analysis, placing special emphasis on Freudian concepts and on the concepts—which I refer to as “psycho-poetics”²³—developed by Abraham and Torok.

In the second part of the chapter, I utilize the Double to penetrate other aspects of the novel's construction. Starting, on the one hand, from indications in the theory of Michel Guimard, and on the other, from indications in Fogazzaro's ancillary writings and personal correspondence, I examine the ways in which the protagonists Marina and Silla reproduce aspects of the author's personality, and thus serve as his Doubles. From there, I argue that the secondary characters of Edith and Nepo function as foils to the protagonists Marina and Silla, respectively, and to illustrate this point, I explore the ways in which the Steinegge and Salvador subplots mirror and rewrite the corresponding strands of the main plot. In the final part of the third chapter, I take up the question of *Malombra*'s intertextual relationships with the other three

²³ What I term the psycho-poetics of Abraham and Torok corresponds to a particular mode of listening developed by these analysts in their work with “cryptophores”—that is, subjects/analysands suffering from pathological mourning and contingent afflictions (melancholia, manic-depressive psychosis, fetishism, neurosis of failure, certain conversion symptoms)—and subjects unconsciously bearing the weight of transgenerational traumas (evidenced in phenomena of thought transference, psychosomatic symptoms, phobias, obsessions, inexplicable pursuits and sublimating activities). In their writings, Abraham and Torok treat these subjects as texts whose discourse obeys a unique tropography, consequent to a blurring of boundaries between being and having, subject and object, figurative and literal, word and thing.

texts analyzed. After initially comparing Fogazzaro's mode of representing the Double in *Malombra* to the representations of Tarchetti and De Marchi, I broaden the scope of my investigation to consider some of the more general literary trends from the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Verga that also appear in *Malombra*, thus illuminating the mosaic of ideas contained in Fogazzaro's novel.

Chapter 1—The Double as a Critical Category

The literary concept of the Double serves as the organizing principle for this dissertation according to a twofold logic. In a broad sense, the Double—in its capacity as a literary trope—posits an area of thematic continuity between the four texts that I will analyze: Tarchetti's *Uno spirito in un lampone*, de Marchi's *Due anime in un corpo*, Verga's *Le storie del castello di Trezza* and Fogazzaro's *Malombra*. Then, for the analysis of *Malombra*, the Double will serve as a critical tool for exploring the relationships between different parts of that text. Suffice it to say, the Double is a notoriously difficult concept to circumscribe, given that it resides at the intersection of several disciplines—namely, anthropology, literary studies, psychoanalysis and psychology—and could be seen to designate virtually any instance of duality or duplication. My intent in the present chapter is to sketch an intellectual history of the concept, as well as to establish its significance for nineteenth-century European literature, both in thematic terms and as a critical instrument from the psychoanalytic standpoint. For this overview, I remain heavily indebted to Milica Zivkovic's 2004 article "The Double as the Unseen of Culture: Towards a Definition of the Doppelgänger,"²⁴ and above all, to her observations about the variability in the form and content of the Double as a function of the precise culturo-historical milieu in which it arises²⁵.

²⁴ Milica Zivkovic, "The Double as the 'Unseen' of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger," *Linguistics and Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (2000): 121-128.

²⁵ "Literature, more than either philosophy, religion, or the social sciences, presents a detailed account of mankind's chronic duality and incompleteness, as well as his attempts, which range from the noble to the ludicrous, to achieve integration. In reading prose fiction, it is not uncommon to discover that the double is a literary, and specifically a fictional, device for articulating the experience of self-division. Its variations in prose fiction most often include the phantasmal duplication of the individual, through likeness or affinity; and the division of a personality, by fantastic or rationally inexplicable means, or through the opposition or complementarity of separate characters who can be looked upon as different aspects of a sundered whole. In all its variations, the double arises out of and gives form to the tension between division and unity. It stands for contradiction within unity, and for unity in spite of division." Zivkovic, "The Double as the 'Unseen' of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger," 121.

The motif of the Double, as old as culture itself, has never ceased to stir the imagination in some form or other. Anthropological data, as well as data retrieved from myths, fairy tales and folk tales, testify to the pervasiveness of dyadic structures in ancient and primitive cultures. These sources show that many primitive belief systems were organized around the archetype of universal duality, a broad category that subsumes mythical motifs about twins, metamorphoses, soul-mates and conceptions of the mortal-immortal soul, and which ties into beliefs about the plurality of the sacred²⁶. While I stress the connection to antiquity here, it perhaps bears mentioning that, beyond their consensus about a fundamental relationship between the Double and conceptions of the sacred, not all theorists who write about the historical aspect of the Double are equally inclined to emphasize the difference between primitive and modern mindsets. Michel Guiomar, for instance, underscores the congruity between the Christian eschatological vision and ancient beliefs about transmigration, at least as concerns their capacity to inform cultural representations of the Double:

Le Christianisme lui-même, en admettant au Jugement dernier la reconstitution corporelle d'un autre nous-même au-delà de la Mort, n'en est pas si éloigné [des croyances anciennes]. Cet aspect religieux du Double est important; il commande peut-être secrètement les tendances par lesquelles il prend naissance dans le psychique et dans l'Art.²⁷

Nevertheless, the principal line of thinking remains that cultural attitudes toward the double have evolved significantly from ancient to modern times and that this evolution is highly consequential for representations of the Double in art. I will look at a few of the ways in which theorists have attempted to characterize this evolution.

²⁶ One classical variant of the Double is preserved in the myth of Amphytrion, which served as the basis for plays by Sophocles (now lost) and later by Plautus and Molière.

²⁷ Michel Guiomar, *Principes d'une esthétique de la mort* (Paris: Corti, 1968), 288.

Otto Rank asserts that between the primitive and modern worldviews, a drastic inversion took place: the Double, having once served as a salutary figure, a guarantor of immortality, as with the dual-soul conceptions prevalent in the ancient Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Persian cultures, has resurfaced in the modern era as a malefic force and a harbinger of death²⁸. In the second chapter of *Beyond Psychology*²⁹, Rank remarks how “such a complete reversal, as is borne out by my juxtaposition of folkloristic and literary traditions, betrays a fundamental change in man’s attitude towards life from a naïve belief in supernatural forces which he was certain could be influenced by magic to a ‘neurotic’ fear of them, which he had to rationalize psychologically.”³⁰ To account for this reversal, Rank offers the following rationale:

In confronting those ancient conceptions of the dual soul with its modern manifestation in the literature of the double, we realize a decisive change of emphasis, amounting to a moralistic interpretation of the old soul belief. Originally conceived of as a guardian angel, assuring immortal survival to the self, the double eventually appears as precisely the opposite, a reminder of the individual's mortality, indeed, the announcer of death itself. Thus, from a symbol of eternal life in the primitive, the double developed into an omen of death in the self-conscious individual of modern civilization. This reevaluation, however, is not merely due to the fact that death no longer could be denied as the end of individual existence but was prompted by the permeation of the whole subject of immortality with the idea of evil. For the double whom we meet after this completion of this developmental cycle appears as a "bad," threatening self and no longer a consoling one. This change was brought about by the Christian doctrine of immortality as interpreted by the church, which presumed the right to bestow its immortality on the good ones and exclude the bad ones. At a certain period during the Middle Ages this fear of being doomed on judgment Day...became epidemic in the cult of the Devil, who in essence is nothing but a personification of the moralized double.³¹

²⁸Otto Rank, *Beyond Psychology* (Mineola: Dover, 1958). In *Beyond Psychology*, Rank revisits and refines his theory of the double in the context of the relationship of the artist to his work. In that work, Rank crystallizes the idea of the double around man’s dual conception of his soul as physical and spiritual, mortal and immortal.

³⁰ Rank, *Beyond Psychology*, 68-69.

³¹ Almost certainly Rank has in mind of Ivan Karamasov’s words to the Devil, quoted in his 1914 study on the Double: “Not for a minute will I accept you as a real truth. You are a lie, a disease, a phantom. I only don’t know by what means I can destroy you. You are my hallucination, an incarnation of myself; but at that, only of one side of me.” See: Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1914), ed. by Harry Tucker Jr. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1971).

While Rank's reasoning here is tidy, it bears traces of overgeneralization and he quite possibly overstates the role of Christian doctrine for the moral "reevaluation;" just as an example, he overlooks the presence of the Devil in the Hebraic tradition (namely, in the Book of Job³²). On this account, perhaps Marie-Louise von Franz, who, writing in the Jungian vein, also talks about a polarization of values around religion, is more correct when she frames this phenomenon in terms of the Judeo-Christian tradition, more broadly:

The twin motif in mythology shows that there is always a double, one more introverted and the other extroverted...one more spirit and the other more animal—but one is not morally better than the other; and then you have myths where one is good and the other evil...where there is an ethical attitude in consciousness, then the attitude of the twins is ethically discerned, but if there is no ethical consciousness, this is not so...the Judeo-Christian tradition sharpened the ethical conflict, and therefore in our civilization there is a tendency to judge things in a moral way and not leave things blurred.³³

In her more recent account of the same developments, Zivkovic recapitulates the Rankian hypothesis to some extent (to the point of quoting from it directly), while at the same time imbuing it with a new layer of sophistication:

Literary criticism overlooks a very important aspect of the double: like many other mythical symbols it has preserved its forms but altered in character in accordance with changing notions of what exactly constitutes "reality" and "human identity". The increasing ideological polarization of the existential continuum into irreconcilable opposites – of body and soul, life and death, man and woman, good and evil – basically changes the character and status of the double in Christianity. The belief that the animate or spirit self, in part or whole, somehow departs and continues to exert an influence on the "host" while enjoying an autonomous existence has acquired an extremely negative meaning in Christianity, best defined in three categories: unclean soul, evil spirit and hell, and by three concepts: misfortune, evil, death, which, taken together, jeopardize not only the survival of an individual but of mankind itself... one must be struck by the fact that the very life force which animates a person in ancient myths returns in the form of an evil, haunting presence eager to do harm in orthodox Christianity.³⁴

³² In his *Answer to Job*, Jung characterizes the Devil as God's shadow aspect; here we must also consider that Hell is largely a New Testament innovation.

³³ Marie-Louise Von Franz, *The Shadow and Evil in Fairy-tales* (Boston: Shambhala, 1974), 35.

³⁴ Zivkovic, "The Double as the 'Unseen' of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger," 123.

Zivkovic's explanation ultimately reduces this large-scale paradigm shift to existential terms, as concerning the interrelations between the "I" and the "non-I," self and other:

The appearance of the demonic double as opposed to and irreconcilable with the guardian angel marks the moment in the history of western civilization when the archaic belief in the continuum of life and death and the exchange between man and nature was replaced by a sense of man as discontinuity leading to death and madness – a sense of man ultimately alienated from his own wishes, desires and fears, embodied in the figure of the double . . .therefore, in its broadest sense, narratives in which the double motif plays a central thematic role, from religious narratives to modern fiction, have always been concerned with revealing and exploring the interrelations of the "I" and the "non-I", of self and other. Their central thrust is an attempt to erase the distinction itself, to resist separation and difference, to re-discover a unity of self and other. However, these attempts reveal themselves differently in different periods.

Zivkovic makes a critical point in the last sentences of this passage when she stresses that the mode whereby self and other interrelate varies from one context to the next. How, it might be asked, does the specter of otherness—captured in pre-Christian and Christian times with the “demonic double”—translate into modern ways of knowing, in light of the seismic shift away from belief in the supernatural? Specifically, what does this understanding of the Double, as an absolute and negative quantity, come to signify under the increasingly secular auspices of the Enlightenment and Romanticism? Zivkovic addresses these questions on a general level:

A loss of faith in supernaturalism, a gradual skepticism and problematization of self to the world, introduced the double as something more disturbing and less definable but also as a crucial index of cultural limits: it returns us to an encounter with our own ‘heart of darkness’ - that area which has been ‘silenced by culture’.

In a broad sense, Zivkovic is arguing that the Double, in its demonic aspect, is not the exclusive province of Christianity civilization, but rather, a culturally coordinated idea whose existential validity supersedes the scope of any one belief system. By equating the Double with the “unseen” (as well as the unheard, unspoken, and unknown) of culture, Zivkovic contends that the prevailing notions of evil and the demonic are in fact ways of denominating and circumscribing everything that, by dint of its unfamiliarity, fails to be naturalized and thereby

poses a threat to the established order. This way of relativizing evil and the demonic resonates with Frederic Jameson's claim that "evil characterizes whatever is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a very real and urgent threat to my existence"³⁵.

Two trends of the post-Enlightenment fiction are essential to understanding of the Double as it comes to operate in Romantic literature. The first tendency is the psychologizing of motives, or to put it with Jameson, a reinscription of the narrative function of magic, the occult and the otherworldly "in the realm of psychology"³⁶. In the Age of Reason, natural laws eclipsed arcane notions of the supernatural while idealist philosophers taught that these laws were legislated by the human mind. Within this context, Rank asserts, "the underlying principle of self-determination was carried to its individualistic extreme by the romantic philosophers," for whom the "true object of knowledge could only be self-knowledge"³⁷. Pierre-Georges Castex summarizes the basic premises of Romanticism in art as follows:

Le romantisme européen a déclenché une révolution dont nous n'avons pas encore mesuré toute l'ampleur...les artistes et les écrivains, en se donnant comme domaine nouveau d'inspiration les désordres de la vie affective, les illusions des sens, les vertiges de l'imagination, ont renouvelé l'idée qu'on se faisait jusque-là de l'homme. La création esthétique, alimentée surtout par l'expérience subjective, s'oppose de plus en plus à un idéal d'universelle intelligibilité.³⁸

³⁵ Frederic Jameson, "Magical narratives: romance as genre", *New Literary History*, 7, no. 1, Autumn, 1975. See also Jameson's extended analysis of the political, social, cultural and historical subtexts which condition the ideological framing of "good versus evil."

³⁶ Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 132. Jameson conceives of the Romantic and fantastic texts of the nineteenth century from a (Marxian) historical-material standpoint as "[taking] their variously reactive stances against the new and unglamorous political institutions emerging from the political triumph of the bourgeoisie and the setting in place of the market system." Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, 148.

³⁷ Rank, *Beyond Psychology*, 71.

³⁸"European Romanticism set off a revolution, the breadth of which we have not yet finished measuring...artists and writers, in taking as their new domain inspiration the disorders of affective life, the illusions of the senses, the dizzying effects of the imagination, renewed the idea of man as he was conceived until that point. Aesthetic creation, nourished above all by subjective experience, opposed itself more and more to the ideal of universal intelligibility." Pierre-Georges Castex, *Anthologie du conte fantastique français* (Paris: Corti, 2004), i.

It is above all this anchoring of art in subjective experience that led “Romantic authors [to interpret] the theme of the double as a problem of the Self, that is, they first looked at it from a psychological point of view”³⁹. Hence the demonic, previously conceived of in supernatural terms, during the Romantic period comes to aligned with the workings of the unconscious.

The second tendency in post-Enlightenment literature that I would like to stress as key to understanding the Double in the modern context is the emergence of the fantastic as a distinct literary register, as an epiphenomenon of the broader Romantic current⁴⁰. Perhaps more than any other literary outgrowth of the late eighteenth century, the literature of the fantastic casts into relief the collision between Enlightenment values and the irrational and sentimental impulses championed by Romantic authors. An author in this trend is by definition a sort of prestidigitator, capable of engineering cognitive dilemmas, who according to Freud, “tricks us by promising everyday reality and then going beyond it” while we “...react to his fictions as if they had been our own experiences”⁴¹. The mechanism of the fantastic, according to Todorov’s definition, is founded on the fulfillment of three basic conditions:

First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural or supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus, the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work -- in the case of naive reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations.

³⁹ Rank, *Beyond Psychology*, 71.

⁴⁰ Todorov defines the historical boundaries of the Fantastic thus: “Il est apparu d’une manière systématique vers la fin du 18^{ième} siècle, avec Cazotte; un siècle plus tard, on trouve dans les nouvelles de Maupassant les derniers exemples esthétiquement satisfaisants du genre.” “It appeared in a systematic fashion towards the end of the eighteenth century, with Cazotte; a century later, one finds, in the short stories of Maupassant, the last aesthetically satisfying examples of the genre.” Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), 175.

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” (1919), in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McClintock, introduction by Hugh Haughton (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 157.

Todorov also stresses regarding the literature of the fantastic that it does not constitute a genre *in se*, but rather a provisional modality, in the sense that the narration is bounded by the time of this hesitation, doubt, indecision and therefore unfolds in a limitrophic space between reality and unreality. “Once we have decided between one or the other explanation,” he professes, “we leave the fantastic behind and enter into a neighboring genre, the uncanny⁴² or the marvelous”⁴³. Thus, in Todorov’s view, the fantastic forms the theoretical center of a generic continuum, represented below:

Pure uncanny	Fantastic-uncanny	Fantastic-marvelous	Pure marvelous
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Todorov also offers a few specific observations on the Double, given that the Double forms an integral part of the thematic inventory for the fantastic. Above all, the double might be understood, not only as a single theme, but as a point where themes operating outside of the rationalist discourse—themes such as madness, destiny, possession, reincarnation, and the conflict between material and spiritual—converge. Todorov goes on to note how, within a given work, the semantics of the double are often determined by its relationship with the surrounding themes. Depending on the context, the Double could signify any number of things, ranging from “la victoire de l’esprit sur la matière...” to “l’avant-signe du danger et de la peur,” from “un début d’isolement” to “la moyen d’un contact plus étroit avec les autres”⁴⁴.

⁴² Todorov’s use of the term *étrange* is not entirely congruent with the Freudian term *unheimliche* (uncanny), which Todorov qualifies as *étrangeté inquiétante*. In another connection, Todorov argues that the themes of the fantastic are linked to the principles of Freudian psychoanalysis through their mutual recognition of pan-determinism.

⁴³ Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, 19.

⁴⁴ “The victory of spirit over matter...” to “the harbinger of danger and fear,” and from “the beginning of an isolation” to “a more intimate means of contact with others.” Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, 151-152.

Apropos of the literature of the fantastic, it is interesting to note how, the Italian peninsula, due to a perception of alterity had stimulated the imagination of foreign authors, long before Italy could claim its own strand of fantastic literature (as I will discuss in the second chapter of this dissertation). During the eighteenth century, exoticized Italian locales became popular settings for Gothic novels (notably, those of Walpole, Radcliffe and Lewis), and during the nineteenth century, perceptions of Italian geography and customs influenced the likes of Hoffmann and Gautier, whose works exemplify German and French iterations of the fantastic. Two works by Théophile Gautier in particular—*La Jettatura* and *La Morte Amoureuse*—bear the influence of subalpine culture while at the same time exploring themes of the Double: the former work, centering on the superstition of the evil eye, employs the image of fragmented corporality as a metaphor for intrapsychic conflict, and the latter work crystallizes the theme of double-existence around a protagonist who, under the thrall of a vampire, lives one life by day and another by night.

I would now like to discuss some of the psychoanalytic approaches to the Double as a theme in modern literature. The emphasis on the Double as a category in literary criticism, psychoanalytic or otherwise, stems in large part from Otto Rank's 1914 essay, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*⁴⁵. Prior to the publication of that work, critics had satisfied themselves with superficial or *ad hoc* interpretations of the phenomenon⁴⁶. A striking detail about the genesis of the work is Rank's admission that his most immediate source of inspiration for pursuing the study was not literary at all, but rather, a silent film—Stellan Rye's 1913 *The*

⁴⁵ Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1914), ed. by Harry Tucker Jr. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1971).

⁴⁶ Harry Tucker Jr., introduction to *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1914), ed. Harry Tucker Jr. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1971), 12.

Student of Prague—which employed the Double as its central trope⁴⁷. If nothing else, the fact that Rank drew inspiration from a visual, filmic medium underscores the link between the twentieth-century preoccupation with the Double as a category, and the relationship between the visible and invisible areas of culture. Regarding the study itself, although some parts—namely, the parts where he uses texts to diagnose the pathologies of their authors—seem wildly speculative, other parts remain valuable from the perspective of comparative literature. For instance, I find generally useful his indications about the different forms under which the Double theme manifests and the literary norms or codes associated with it. I also find useful the interpretive codes sketched out in the work, whereby the Double in literature is always seen to represent an intrapsychic conflict, whether this be on a literal, metaphorical or thematic level.

The first variation of the Double theme that Rank discusses in his work is the so-called “double-projection” theme, a popular staple of Romantic literature, where the protagonist’s likeness, reflected in his shadow, mirror image or portrait, assumes an autonomous existence, and as such comes to signify an “independent and visible cleavage of the ego.” As Rank proceeds to show, the double-projection theme originates in the 1814 short story *The Lost Reflection* by E.T.A. Hoffmann and turns up in many other works by that author. The second variation of the Double that Rank discusses is the theme of the “second self,” which he understands to comprise instances of “actual figures who confront each other as real and physical persons of unusual external similarity, and whose paths cross,” and for which Jean Paul—who first employed the theme in his

⁴⁷ In Rye’s film, the protagonist Balduin sells his reflection to the mysterious Scapinelli in exchange for wealth and success in love, only to have his mirror-image return and persecute him. At the climax, Balduin kills slays his persecuting Double, though in doing so also kills himself. The plot of *The Student of Prague* combines elements of the Faust legend—namely, the pact with the Devil—as they are found in Adelbert von Chamisso’s *Peter Schlemihl* with the doppelgänger theme found in Poe’s *William Wilson*.

novel, *Siebenkäs* (1796)— famously coined the term “doppelgänger”⁴⁸⁴⁹. After surveying the early manifestations of the Double in Romantic literature, Rank turns to examine texts characterized by a heightened psychological realism, including those by Poe and Dostoevsky, in which “the figure of the Double is more or less clearly shaped but, at the same time, appears as the spontaneous subjective creation of a morbidly active imagination”⁵⁰. In these latter texts, the distinct themes of the projected ego and the doppelgänger are merged, resulting in a conception of the Double as the hallucinatory projection of an increasingly psychotic subject (the victim of a “fully-developed double delusion”⁵¹). In generalizing about the Double in nineteenth- century literature, Rank points out a few conditions which hold true for virtually every instance of its representation: the Double almost always works at cross-purposes with the subject⁵²; very often, a lethal confrontation between the subject and his Double comes about in the context of a relationship with or a rivalry over a woman; and in the event where the subject kills the Double, the apparent slaying of latter translates into the real death of the former (that is, in the destruction of the ego, and thus suicide)⁵³. Also throughout his study, Rank makes note of motifs and trends which frequently coincide with the Double and configure its expression, such as elaborate plays with mirrors and reflections and an emphasis on pathological dispositions, including paranoid ideas of persecution, extreme thanatophobia and the fear of aging. For Rank, the fact that the diverse manifestations of the Double in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature all anchor themselves to a thematic

⁴⁸ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 35.

⁴⁹ The doppelgänger theme is also featured in several of Hoffmann’s works, including the *Princess Brambilla*, *The Heart of Stone*, *The Choice of a Bride*, *The Sandman*, *The Doubles* and *Tomcat Murr*.

⁵⁰ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 43.

⁵¹ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 43.

⁵² Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 56.

⁵³ Rank, *Beyond Psychology*, 94.

nexus of specularity, rivalry, morbidity, persecution and death gives evidence of their common grounding in a paradigm of extreme regression, narcissistic fixation and impaired object-relations (“this erotic attitude toward one’s self, however, is only possible because along with it the defensive feelings can be discharged by way of the hated and feared Double”⁵⁴)⁵⁵⁵⁶.

One of the texts endowed with psychological realism which Rank singles out as a definitive articulation of the doppelgänger theme and a model for subsequent works is Poe’s 1839 short story, *William Wilson*. In *William Wilson*, Poe employs several techniques, including the use of a first-person narrator (the William Wilson from the title), to convince the reader that the Double is a real, physical person, before revealing at the very last minute that it is a psychological projection. The plot revolves around Wilson’s encounters with a shadowy figure who not only resembles him physically but also bears the same name. A single feature serves to distinguish the protagonist from his Double and that is the latter’s voice, which never raises above a whisper. Wilson crosses paths with his Double at sporadic times throughout his life, with the Double always seeming to thwart him in some debauched pursuit (furthering the impression that the Double personifies Wilson’s conscience⁵⁷). The fact that Wilson stabs his Double at the climax of the tale, only to realize that in doing so he has mortally wounded himself, illustrates the self-destructive implications of the protagonist attacking the Double. The used by Poe in *William*

⁵⁴ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 97.

⁵⁵ “In this subjective meaning, the double turns out to be a functional expression of the psychological fact that an individual with an attitude of this kind cannot free himself from a certain phase of his narcissistically loved ego-development.” Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 102.

⁵⁶ “So it happens that the double, who personifies narcissistic self-love, becomes an unequivocal rival in sexual-love; or else, originally created as a wish-defense against a dreaded eternal destruction, he reappears in superstition as the messenger of death.” Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 109.

⁵⁷Cf. Poe’s epigraph (attributed to Chamberlayne’s *Pharronida* though in fact paraphrasing a passage from *Love’s Victory* by the same author): “What say of it? what say CONSCIENCE grim, that specter in my path?” Edgar Allan Poe, “William Wilson,” *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe* (1850), ed. Rufus Wilmot Griswold (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1850): 417-436.

Wilson is taken up and reworked by later authors, notably by Dostoevsky in the 1846 novel titled *The Double*, which Rank celebrates for demonstrating the “clinical exactness of a study in paranoiac persecution and megalomania”⁵⁸. The same formula can be observed in Jean Paul’s *Titan* and in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), and it can be seen operating in reverse—where the double vanquishes the subject—in Henry James’s *The Jolly Corner*.

Outside the doppelgänger framework, another variant on the Double theme found in literature of the Romantic period involves the representation of two distinct states of mind or being within the boundaries of a single subject—a situation characterized in terms ranging from double-existence to [split-consciousness]⁵⁹ (or *dédoublement de la personnalité*). Rank deals only briefly the phenomenon of split-consciousness in literature, determining it to be the “representationally opposite form of expressing” the psychical constellation of the doppelgänger theme discussed above. This form of expressing the Double is highly consequential from the point of view of the texts I consider in this dissertation, and I will therefore consider it in more detail. The theme of double-existence refers to circumstances in which a character lives a double-life, and may cover a range of scenarios, with a notable—albeit extreme—example being Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Split-consciousness, on the other hand, connotes the pathological extension of double-existence, where the character alternates between different states of consciousness, and where typically the experience of each

⁵⁸ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 72.

⁵⁹ The term Rank uses is “double-consciousness” (from the French *double conscience*), following Freud’s understanding that “...in one and the same individual, there can be several mental groupings, which can remain more or less independent of one another, which can ‘know nothing’ of one another and which can alternate with one another in their hold upon consciousness.” Sigmund Freud, “Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis” (1910), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974): 2208. To avoid confusion with other critical-theoretic understandings of “double-consciousness,” for this dissertation, I have opted to use the term “split-consciousness” to designate a condition in which consciousness (or in a more nuanced sense, the ego) is divided or experienced as two. In psychoanalytic theory, the term “splitting of the ego” is used to denote the fracturing of psychical reality (into two or more parts) that results from a psychological trauma. According to Freud, different types and degrees of ego-splitting are implicated in the formation of neuroses, psychoses and perversions.

consciousness is separated by some degree of memory gap. It should be borne in mind that by contrast with the doppelgänger theme, where the aspect of the Double being stressed is the factor of similarity or specularity, in the themes of double-existence or split-consciousness, the aspect being stressed is above all the factor of difference or complementarity.

In this connection, there is still another variant of the Double in which two characters in a text, if put together, seem to form a single psyche. Such is the case, for instance, in *A Tale of Two Cities* with the complementary characters of Sidney Carton and Charles Darnay (who also happen to resemble one another physically). More generally, literature is filled with examples of situations where one character takes another's place—for instance, in substitutions, sacrifices (the so-called *don de soi*), quiproquos, mistaken identities and disguises—based on some profound connection or equivalence between the two. Michel Guiomar classifies this type of “doubling” as “affective doubling,” and sees it taking place on some level in virtually every work.

In addition to Rank, Freud also theorizes about the Double in literature, most notably in his essay titled *The Uncanny*. *The Uncanny*, in my opinion, consists of a brittle mosaic of illuminating conjectures. In it, Freud counts the Double “in all of its nuances and manifestations” among the common narrative devices which serve to induce a sense of uncanniness in a reader. Invoking Rank's study on the subject, Freud summarizes his colleague's perspective on the psychological underpinnings of the double by tracing it back to his theory of narcissism: “...these ideas arose on the soil of boundless self-love, the primordial narcissism that dominates the mental life of [the child], and when this phase is surmounted, the meaning of the double changes: having once been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death.” Freud goes on to hypothesize that “[the Double's] uncanny quality can surely derive only

from the fact that the double is a creation that belongs to a primitive phase in our mental development, a phase that we have surmounted, in which it admittedly had a more benign significance...the double has become an object of terror just as the gods become demons after the collapse of their cult—a theme that [Heinrich] Heine treats in ‘Die Gotter im Exil’.” He notably argues that “the pattern set by the motif of the double,” which involves “harking back to single phases in the evolution of the sense of self,” establishes a standard against which one might analyze other ego disturbances exploited for literary effect (Freud is referring specifically to those disturbances portrayed in the works of Hoffmann)⁶⁰. Hugh Haughton, in his introduction to the critical edition of Freud’s essay, singles out the importance of the paragraphs on the Double, claiming “...the essay [gives] the uncanny idea of the double an eerily central place in the whole experience of modern selfhood.”

The conceptual link between the Double and repetition, which Freud seems to treat as two sides of the same coin, bears further elaboration. According to Freud, unconscious repetition (the repetition compulsion), like the Double, has its origins in the pre-objectal stage of infantile development and is “is strong enough to override the pleasure principle and lend a demonic character to certain aspects of mental life”⁶¹. Apropos of the repetition compulsion, Freud adds that people behave as though pursued by a “malignant fate or possessed by a demonic power,” and notes how “anything that can remind us of this inner compulsion to repeat is perceived as uncanny”⁶². Ultimately, the relationship between the Double and repetition is implied to be the following: from the point of view of the ego, uncanny repetition posits a temporal correlate for

⁶⁰Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” (1919), in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McClintock, introduction by Hugh Haughton (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 143.

⁶¹ Freud, “The Uncanny,” 145.

⁶² Freud, “The Uncanny,” 145.

the Double, while both the Double and repetition point back to the same destructive impulses in the timeless space of the id⁶³. This is supported by Freud's tendency to conflate the two concepts, namely, when he lists as components of the Double in literature, "...repetition of the same facial features, the same characters, the same destinies, the same misdeeds, even the same names through successive generations." He adds in this connection that "[there] can be embodied in the figure of the double...all the possibilities which, had they been realized, might have shaped our destiny, and to which our imagination still clings, all the strivings of the ego that were frustrated by adverse circumstances, all the suppressed acts of volition that fostered the illusion of free will"⁶⁴. With this, Freud seems to be arguing that all these potentialities, all these "frustrated strivings of the ego and its suppressed acts of volition," stay fixed in a transcendental space.

The interpretations advocated by Rank and Freud, which set up the Double as a harbinger of death and reduce it in all its manifestations to the Freudian theory of narcissism, lay the premises for what Zivkovic calls a transcendental reading of the Double⁶⁵. Without completely

⁶³ To provide literary examples, Freud points the intricate weave of motifs found in Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir*. He illustrates the phenomenon of uncanny repetition by way of an autobiographical anecdote in which, while wandering the streets of an Italian town, he inadvertently returns to the same piazza over and over again. From the point of view of literature, a frightening experience of this sort is recounted by Georges Bernanos in *Sous le soleil de Satan*. Interestingly, the two phenomena of repetition and doubling are conflated in Hoffmann's *The Sandman*, which depicts the repeated encounters of the same person in different guises (i.e. the identification of Coppélius with Coppola, note the similarity in names).

⁶⁴ Freud, "The Uncanny," 143.

⁶⁵ From a structuralist standpoint, theoretical equipment for explicating the Double in its transcendental dimension may be found in Jacques Lacan's work on the splitting of the subject (into the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enunciated, upon its induction into the symbolic order [see the second chapter of this dissertation]). From a post-structuralist standpoint, theoretical equipment for explicating the Double as a transgressive concept may be found in Julia Kristeva's essay on abjection. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Unique perspectives on the splitting of the ego, conceived of in terms of a "secret identification," may be found in the works of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok [see the second and third chapters of this dissertation]. Zivkovic summarizes the (post-) Lacanian psychoanalytic approach to the Double in the following way: "Through the introduction of some modern psychoanalytic theories, it has been possible to recognize in the double motif an attempt to depict a reversal of the subject's cultural formation. Dualism becomes a symptom of the desire for the imaginary. If the symbolic is seen as 'that unity of semantic and syntactic competence which allows communication and rationality to appear,' the imaginary suggests all that is other, all that is absent from the symbolic and outside rational discourse. Unlike the symbolic, the imaginary is inhabited by an infinite number of selves preceding socialization, before the ego is produced within a social frame. These selves allow an infinite potential to emerge, one which a fixed sense of character excludes in advance. In this way the double offers an exclusive insight into the

refuting the merit of this reading, Zivkovic criticizes what she perceives to be its limitations—namely, its tendency to bind the Double to connotations of evil, madness, and death—and proposes supplementing it with additional frameworks of interpretation, based on other strands of psychoanalytic thought, which allow the Double to be conceived of in dynamic or transgressive terms. For instance, in drawing on Kristeva’s interrogation of the subject-in-process, Zivkovic configures the Double in terms of an “ideologically subversive literary device” geared toward transforming the relations between the symbolic and the imaginary. Zivkovic also points to the merits of the Jungian approach, both for its ability to configure the Double in more transgressive terms, and for its ability to recapture the ambivalence of the concept as it occurred outside the Judeo-Christian value system.

Before I discuss the Jungian approach, I would like to offer a few observations about the traditional link between the Double with the shadow. Rank describes how in some primitive cultures, the shadow was viewed as an immortal counterpart to the mortal body; as he puts it, “among the most primitive concepts of the soul is that of the shadow, which appears as a faithful image of the body, but lighter”⁶⁶. In Adelbert von Chamisso’s *Peter Schlemihl* and later in Hans Christian Andersen’s 1848 literary fairy tale, *The Shadow*⁶⁷, one may find the same motif where the shadow returns to persecute the subject, in a manner akin to the *doppelgänger* in Poe’s *William Wilson*. The kernel for both stories is a popular superstition which holds that a person without a shadow will be shunned by society. Anderson’s text is noteworthy because, as a literary fairy-

process of subject formation, suggesting possibilities of innumerable other selves, of different histories. It also directs attention to this area where we can perceive the ways in which the relations between society and the individual are fixed. The double denounces the categories and structures of the accepted and established social order, attempting to dissolve that order at its very base, where it is established and where the dominant system is re-produced – in the individual.” Zivkovic, “The Double as the ‘Unseen’ of Culture: Toward a Definition of *Doppelgänger*,” 127.

⁶⁶ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 109.

⁶⁷ E.T.A. Hoffmann’s 1815 story *A New Year’s Eve Adventure* employs the same motif, only instead of revolving around the loss of the shadow, it revolves around the loss of the mirror-image.

tale, it deviates from the fantastic's realistic mode of representing the world in order to explore the problem of the divided-self in a quasi-allegorical form, through an elemental grammar of symbols and archetypes. The following is a synopsis of the tale: a learned man, entirely occupied by "the good, beauty and truth," loses his shadow while traveling abroad; the shadow later returns to the protagonist in personified form, "wiser in the evil ways of the world," to admonish the learned man for his naïve and impractical ideals; over time, the shadow grows richer and fatter while the protagonist grows poorer and weaker, with the result that their roles become reversed, and the shadow acts as the master of the learned man, while the latter assumes the role of shadow; finally, the shadow decides to marry a princess and offers the man incentives to become its shadow permanently; when the man confronts the shadow and rejects this proposal, the shadow has him arrested and put to death.

The antagonism depicted between the learned man and his shadow in Andersen's tale speaks precisely to the *modus operandi* of the Shadow archetype in Jungian theory. Jung's work on the Shadow is critically valuable, insofar as it contributes to an understanding of the Double as a normal, culturally relative, dynamic, and potentially transgressive feature of the psychic experience. Jung defines the Shadow as the ensemble of psychic attributes which the conscious ego refuses to acknowledge and which it disavows through mechanisms such as denial and projection. The confrontation with the Shadow plays a central part in Jungian psychology, given that it represents the first step down the road to self-realization. In the ideal, such an encounter will lead to the integration of the Shadow content into the conscious ego, and thus bring about psychological unity. However, with the Shadow-confrontation, the ego also runs the risk of being dominated by the Shadow, and thus rendered weak and enslaved, as illustrated in Andersen's *The Shadow*. Although for the sake of comparison, the Shadow can be viewed as roughly equivalent

to the Freudian unconscious, there is a cardinal distinction in the fact that the Jungian Shadow can comprise both positive and negative traits. Furthermore, from Jung's perspective, every subject, and not just the "neurotic," is considered to have a Shadow side to his personality, with sensational cases of split or multiple personalities simply positing extreme manifestations of the normal psychical situation. Thus, when looked at through the lens of Jungian thought, the Double may be detached from connotations of pure evil, madness and abnormality⁶⁸, and read more terms of a natural desire or urge to redeem that which was lost or excluded in the cultural construction of the ego⁶⁹.

The understandings of the Double which I have outlined so far in this chapter have cut across two levels of reality. First, I described conceptions of the Double in the "pure" reality of a cultural context—nineteenth-century Romanticism—as embodied in its textual productions. Then, I discussed certain psychoanalytic conceptions of the Double which may be used to explicate that textual reality. Now, in recalling Todorov's observation that the Double's meaning in a text is determined by the surrounding themes, I would like to propose a further understanding of the concept, outside the scope of the textual and psychoanalytic reality, as a simple tool organizing the relationship between other themes in a text. As I go on to examine specific representations of the Double from the Italian tradition, it will be important to bear in mind these distinct levels of reality, as well as the porous boundaries between them.

The Double begins to appear as a central theme in the Italian Tradition starting with the authors of the Scapigliatura. In the second chapter of this dissertation, I will analyze Tarchetti's short story *Un spirito in un lampone* (first published in 1867 in *Storia di una gamba e altri*

⁶⁸ Marie-Louise Von Franz, *The Shadow and Evil in Fairy-tales* (Boston: Shambhala, 1974), 3.

⁶⁹ Zivkovic, "The Double as the 'Unseen' of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger," 127.

racconti and republished in the 1869 collection *Racconti Fantastici*) and De Marchi's novella, *Due anime in un corpo* (published in 1877 in the periodical *Vita Nuova* and again in the 1878 collection bearing the title *Due anime in un corpo*), both of which present variations on the theme of double-existence/split-consciousness. Also in the second chapter, I will look at how the Double operates as part of the narrative apparatus in Verga's 1875 novella, *Le storie del castello di Trezza*. In the third chapter, I will turn my attention to Fogazzaro's 1881 novel, *Malombra*, whose plot—among other things—features a protagonist with a double-personality. After analyzing the psychological intricacies of *Malombra*'s main plot in Part I of the third chapter, in Part II of the third chapter I will employ the Double as a critical tool to show how *Malombra*'s two subplots rewrite aspects of the main plot in alternate keys. Finally, in Part III of the third chapter, I will look at comparisons between *Malombra* and the three other texts analyzed, specifically around the question of the Double, though also around other thematic and generic points.

Chapter 2—The Double in Late Nineteenth-Century Italian Literature: Tarchetti’s *Uno spirito in un lampone*, De Marchi’s *Due anime in un corpo* and Verga’s *Le storie del castello di Trezza*

How are the themes such as intrapsychic splitting, duality and dissociation—in sum, the thematic inventory of the double—represented in nineteenth-century Italian literature? For Italy, like the rest of the European tradition, the literary exploration into problems of psychical disunity was inextricably bound up with the emergence of the fantastic genre. On a certain level, the Italian fantastic recapitulated the concerns of the genre at large: it engaged with the same themes and, structurally speaking, still followed the basic Todorovian formula, which grounds the genre’s *modus operandi* in the reader’s “own ambiguous perception of the events narrated” (that is, in a certain type of cognitive hesitation). However, without intending to dispute the overall cohesiveness of the genre, attention should be paid to the Italian fantastic in its capacity as a *sui generis* cultural phenomenon. The fantastic arrived in Italy later than its sister strands in other languages and owed its origin to a unique set of historico-cultural circumstances. It will be profitable, in view of these regional particularities, to amplify the Todorovian position with reference to the debate centered on the Italian fantastic.

One seminal contribution to the discourse on the Italian fantastic is the 1983 compilation of essays, *La narrazione fantastica*. In that volume, Lucio Lugnani enhances Todorov’s theory by extending it to cover any narrative with “an unsolvable incongruity of the real and of a

fracture in its paradigm”⁷⁰. An important corollary to this definition is the fact that what Lugnani calls the “paradigm of reality”—understood as “the set of norms or axioms one relies on in a given time to understand reality”—exists in a constant state of flux. By placing emphasis on the “historical determination of our paradigm of reality,” Lugnani’s approach liberates the fantastic from its grounding in genre-specific conventions⁷¹. In a related development, Lugnani dislodges the mechanism of the fantastic from the “story” -axis and relocates it on the axis of narration, arguing that “l’esito fantastico di un racconto non è mai predeterminato e la sottolineatura più o meno inquietante d’uno scarto irriducibile dipende sempre da come e non da ciò che si narra”⁷².

Remo Ceserani builds on Lugnani’s stance when he proposes that in lieu of a fantastic genre, we speak of a fantastic mode, with modes being defined as “rhetorical-formal procedures, cognitive attitudes, and thematic aggregations, elementary forms of the imaginary based on historical reality, which can be adopted by the different codes, genres and forms in the realization of literary and artistic texts”⁷³. On this subject, he writes that “the fantastic is a literary mode which has been produced and has been employed, in a particular historical juncture, to expand and broaden the array of internal and external psychological realities that can be represented through literary language”⁷⁴. Ceserani’s view helps explain how the fantastic appeared in Italy after the Unification, in the midst of the crisis of positivist thought, where it

⁷⁰Francesca Billiani, “The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: An Inquiry into the Notions of Literary and Cultural Traditions,” in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (2007), xix.

⁷¹ Billiani, “The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: An Inquiry into the Notions of Literary and Cultural Traditions,” xix.

⁷² “The fantastic outcome of a tale is never predetermined and the more or less unsettling underlining of an irreducible swerve always depends on the how, and not on the what, of the narration.” Lucio Lugnani, “Per una delimitazione del ‘genere,’ in *La narrazione fantastica*, ed. by Remo Ceserani et al. (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1983), 65.

⁷³ Remo Ceserani, “The Boundaries of the Fantastic,” in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 5.

⁷⁴ Billiani, “The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: An Inquiry into the Notions of Literary and Cultural Traditions,” xxx.

reprised on a smaller scale the subversive role it played in post-Enlightenment literary culture: “faced with the middle classes’ project of constructing a strong subjectivity through a new concept of the self and a program of *Bildung*,” he argues, “the fantastic responded by exploring themes of laceration, the double, and the fragmentation of experiences”⁷⁵⁷⁶. Reflecting on this thematic program, Francesca Billiani adds that “the fantastic not only expresses the fragmentation of temporal continuity [as the realist project had] ...but also...the disintegration of a subjectivity whose identity is shaped through a dialogue with its irrational side”⁷⁷.

Vittorio Roda ties the notions of fragmentation and disintegration to the theme of the mutilated body, a frequent staple of fantastic fiction. As he describes, the body, “freed from a centuries-old tradition linking it to a precise and relatively stable image of itself...becomes involved in unheard-of adventures, anomalous and transgressive experiences, undergoing a disturbing destabilization of its traditional equilibrium”⁷⁸. And yet, it is Roda’s contention that

⁷⁵ Ceserani speculates as to the reason that the fantastic arrived so late in Italy, citing as possible factors Italy’s late date of modernization, the peculiarities of Italian Romanticism, Christian disquiet, and the survival in some regions of pagan-magical traditions. Overall, the fantastic in its specifically Italian iteration, which is most closely associated with the Scapigliatura movement, may be treated as an epiphenomenon of an abbreviated Italian Romanticism. The belated emergence of the Italian fantastic relative to its English (Gothic), French and German counterparts allows one to speak of a trend wherein the former reterritorializes *topoi*, if not entire texts, from the latter (Tarchetti’s appropriation of material from Erckmann-Chatrion and Gautier may be cited as evidence of this trend). On another level, in Fogazzaro’s *Malombra*, the representation of Marina’s metamorphosis into Cecilia seems to dramatize this very process of appropriation. Ultimately, the question of what constitutes these texts’ “Italian-ness” carries with it a unique problem of reflexivity, (re)cognition and (re)discover, insofar as the Italian fantastic seeks to naturalize elements from foreign literatures which already signify Italian locales and customs in particular ways. Notably, the ways in which authors such as Tarchetti (and perhaps in a different sense, Verga) remap positional and logical binaries endemic to the fantastic—namely, those of familiar/unfamiliar, rational/irrational and self/other—onto the division between the Italy’s North and South call attention to the lack of a cohesive Italian cultural consciousness at the time of the Risorgimento and Unification. At the same time, when Fogazzaro presents his vision for the future of the Italian novel, complete with a strategy for appropriating elements of the gothic and fantastic, he does so with the precise aim of cultivating a unified cultural identity. Remo Ceserani, “The Boundaries of the Fantastic,” in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 1-9.

⁷⁶Ceserani, “The Boundaries of the Fantastic,” 4.

⁷⁷ Billiani, “The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: An Inquiry into the Notions of Literary and Cultural Traditions,” xx.

⁷⁸ Vittorio Roda, “The Eye that Kills: Notes on a Fantastic Theme,” in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis, (2007), 23.

behind all these grotesque dramas comprising extreme and graphic representations of the body, “the conflict between the whole and the part is an intrapsychic one”⁷⁹. This is to say that all the bizarre accounts of bodies in pieces, and more specifically, all the microdramas pitting the collective body against a single contumacious limb (the evil eyes in Gautier’s *La jettatura*, the nose in Gogol’s *The Nose*, the leg in Tarchetti’s *Storia di una gamba*), are in fact metaphors for a modern—if not modernist—crisis: a crisis in which the illusion of a unified subject is supplanted by “a plurality of needs in conflict...a homo duplex or multiplex”⁸⁰.

These preliminary remarks supply the cultural and theoretical framework for the present investigation. It is my aim in the present chapter to examine how assuming the Double as a critical option can open investigative pathways into three Italian texts from the second half of the nineteenth century. The first two texts—*Uno spirito in un lampone*⁸¹ by Iginio Ugo Tarchetti and *Due anime in un corpo*⁸² by Emilio de Marchi—explore the common premise of two beings occupying a single body. The third text—*Le storie del castello di Trezza*⁸³ by Giovanni Verga—develops the idea of the Double from the temporal and metanarrative points of view, in terms of repetition. For each of these texts, I will examine the way the Double works in the mise-en-scene, assess the peculiarities of the representation and discuss its potential implications from a psychological standpoint.

⁷⁹ Roda, “The Eye that Kills: Notes on a Fantastic Theme,” 25.

⁸⁰ Roda, “The Eye that Kills: Notes on a Fantastic Theme,” 25.

⁸¹ Iginio Ugo Tarchetti, *Racconti fantastici* (Milan: E. Treves & C., 1869).

⁸² Emilio De Marchi, *Due anime in un corpo* (Milan: L. Bortolotti E. C., 1878).

⁸³ Giovanni Verga, “Primavera e altri racconti” (1877), in *Verga: i grandi romanzi e tutte le novelle*, ed. Concetta Greco Lanza (Rome: Newton Compton Editori, 1992).

I will preface my analysis of *Uno spirito in un lampone* and *Due anime in un corpo* by outlining some abstract ways in which Tarchetti's and De Marchi's representations of the Double differ from the examples I surveyed in the previous chapter. Compared with the formula of the doppelgänger, which Otto Rank interprets as signifying an incompatible part of the psyche, split off and projected outward to preserve the integrity of the subject which it habitually returns to persecute, the Double appears in Tarchetti's and De Marchi's texts under what Rank calls "the representationally opposite form of expression," a form he applies to representations of double-existence and split-consciousness⁸⁴. In both texts, rather than manifest as a hallucinatory projection or outward physical entity, the Double is configured entirely within the boundaries of the subject, taking the form of a division between two states of consciousness, states of being or identities. Also in both representations, the passive-receptive experience of the two mental or existential states is simultaneous, meaning that they maintain awareness of each other, with only minimal traces of a memory gap (as I will discuss in greater depth in the coming pages). From a psychological standpoint, this sort of fragmentation of the self into separate identities or streams of consciousness, with or without the factor of amnesia, calls to mind the phenomena of pathological dissociation or hysteria, which Freud originally theorized as resulting from the activation of an unconscious trauma⁸⁵. Finally, it might be added that both Tarchetti and De

⁸⁴ Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 45.

⁸⁵ Sigmund Freud, "Studies on Hysteria" (1895), *The Standard Edition of The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 7.

Marchi attach spiritualistic connotations to the splitting of the subject by framing it in the language of spiritual possession or metempsychosis⁸⁶.

I will now proceed to examine each of the texts individually, starting with Tarchetti's *Uno spirito in un lampono*. An early exponent of the Italian fantastic, Tarchetti takes up the theme of the Double in many of his works, developing it under a combination of spiritualizing and somaticizing forms. Concerning somatization in the representation of the Double, as Vittorio Roda observes, several of the tales contained in Tarchetti's 1867 collection *La storia di una gamba* and his 1869 collection *Racconti Fantastici* exploit the image of corporeal disunity, images of the "body in pieces," as a metaphor for the experience of the divided self. Roda makes this observation in the context of a comparison between Gautier's *La jettatura* and Tarchetti's *I fatali*, two texts which, in his understanding, revolve around a common premise: the "confrontation and conflict between two different images of man, between the old anthropology of the unitary and centripetal subject and the new model which identifies a plural structure in the ego, by nature divided between contradictory impulses...doubled, divided, and through this division, homo duplex..."⁸⁸. In *I fatali*, this signature problem appears writ small in the character of the Barone di Saternez, who is portrayed as "a double man in whom good coexists with evil"⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ "In metempsychosis, a 'soul' or 'psyche' from a dead body takes up residence in another body, so the subject falls under the control of an [outside agency or force]." Ann Hallamore Caesar, footnotes to "Sensation, Seduction and the Supernatural: Fogazzaro's *Malombra*," in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 71-72.

⁸⁷ As Freud writes in his obituary of Charcot: "No one should object that a theory of a splitting of consciousness as a solution to the riddle of hysteria is too remote to impress an unbiased and untrained observer. For, by pronouncing possession by a demon to be the cause of hysterical phenomena, the Middle Ages in fact chose this solution; it would only have been a matter of exchanging the religious terminology of that dark and superstitious age for the scientific language of today." Sigmund Freud, "Charcot" (1893), *The Standard Edition of The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 281.

⁸⁸ Roda, "The Eye that Kills: Notes on a Fantastic Theme," 28.

⁸⁹ Roda, "The Eye that Kills: Notes on a Fantastic Theme," 28-29.

In the same comparative study, Roda discusses how stories featuring a body drama or the “body in pieces” theme tend to organize themselves around one of two trends: centrifugal or centripetal. The centrifugal trend, exemplified in *I fatali* and *La jettatura*, and characterized by dark and fatalistic connotations, typically revolves around a conflict which breaks out between the body and a single, seditious part, culminating in intra-corporeal destruction, while the centripetal trend typically shows a marooned body part undertaking a transgressive journey to reunite with its corporeal host (as in Tarchetti’s *Un osso di morto*, where a bone seeks burial with the rest of its skeleton). Interestingly, the centrifugal orientation of the body drama highlighted by Roda suggests a somaticized counterpart to the literary formula of the doppelgänger, due to the logic of self-aggression which underlies the relationship with the Double in both trends. Like Paul in *La jettatura*, who blinds himself in order to neutralize his malefic eyes, the protagonist of *William Wilson* strikes himself with a sword in order to extinguish his persecutory Double; the only difference is that at the end of *La jettatura*, Paul lives to celebrate his Pyrrhic victory⁹⁰. This dynamic contrasts with the one featured in *Uno spirito in un lampone*, a tale which hinges first and foremost on the division between body and spirit but which also contains elements of body fiction (for instance, with the import placed on bodily processes of ingestion and regurgitation). In terms of Roda’s categories, I would argue that *Uno spirito in un lampone* follows the centripetal model, and adopts its overtones of conciliation, in charting the journey of a spirit

⁹⁰ This psychosomatic representation of a self-to-self antagonism calls to mind the logic that Maria Torok ascribes to “internal hysteria.” According to Torok, “psychosomatics are positioned half-way between ‘melancholia’ and ‘paranoia.’” While the paranoid position entails outward projection (as seen with the physical double) and the melancholic position entails “endocryptic identification,” a sort of internal conflict suited to the domain of the psychical double, the psychosomatic position entails the conversion of the double into a deleterious bodily symptom (e.g. an ulcer). For the related analysis, see Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Self-to-Self: Notes of a Conversation on ‘Psychosomatics’” (1973), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 162-163.

through two consecutive reunions: the first with its spiritual complement in another's body and the second with its own body under the auspices of a Christian burial.

Tarchetti's brief, humorous and yet phenomenologically rigorous tale—a reworking of the 1853 story *Le bourgmestre en bouteille* by Erckmann-Chatrian—presents, on its face, an idiosyncratic thought-experiment on the prospect of split-consciousness⁹¹. The tale centers on the adventures of the Baron of B., who rules over an enchanted corner of Calabria. One day, while out hunting, the Baron eats some strange raspberries and becomes inhabited by an alien consciousness. The addition of this second consciousness—later revealed to be the spirit of the murdered chambermaid, Clara, whose killer, a local guardaboschi, has managed to elude justice—causes the Baron to experience himself as “un uomo doppio,”⁹² an experience encapsulated in the following description:

E questa strana duplicità incominciò da quel momento ad estendersi su tutti i suoi sensi; vedeva doppio, sentiva doppio, toccava doppio; e - cosa ancora più sorprendente! - pensava doppio. Cioè, una stessa sensazione destava in lui due idee, e queste due idee venivano svolte da due forze diverse di raziocinio, e giudicate da due diverse coscienze.⁹³

Caught between two equipollent centers of agency, the Baron proceeds through a series of antics which culminate in the incrimination of Clara's killer and the recovery of her body. At the end of the tale, the Baron takes an emetic, vomits up the berries and returns to his normal—which is to say, single—state of consciousness.

⁹¹ Émile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian, “Le bourgmestre en bouteille,” in *Contes Populaires* (Paris: Hetzel et Lacroix, 1866), 52-78. See further discussion in: Ann Hallamore Caesar, “Sensation, Seduction and the Supernatural: Fogazzaro's *Malombra*,” in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 23-43.

⁹² “a double man”

⁹³ “And from that moment on the strange doubleness spread to all his senses; he saw double, heard double, touched double, and – what was even more surprising - he thought double. That is to say, the same sensation provoked in him two ideas, and these two ideas were developed by two different faculties of reason and judged by two different consciences. In a word, he seemed to be living two lives, yet they were conflicting, segregated, by nature different; they could not be fused together, and they struggled in competition for dominance over his senses - hence the doubleness of his sensations.”

In considering the tale as a whole, I would like to point out some technical features which contribute to the uniqueness of the *mise-en-scene*. In the first place, it is worth noting that the arrival of Clara's spirit in the Baron's body does not dislocate the Baron's own consciousness, but instead allows the two consciousness' to coexist in passive and receptive terms while their respective volitional structures vie for control of the Baron's motor functions⁹⁴. This factor of simultaneity serves as the basis for a paradoxical subjectivity, which the narrator helps the reader to understand and visualize by way of a detailed empirical commentary, but which also frequently defies the power of language to explain (the narrator initially insists that narrating the Baron's adventure "comprenda essere cosa estremamente difficile l'esperta in tutta la sua verità e con tutti i suoi dettagli più interessanti;"⁹⁵ he later also declares his inability to "esprimere meno confusamente lo stato singolare in cui egli si trovava"⁹⁶). Importantly, the factor of simultaneity in the Baron's experience of the two consciousness' also grants him access to both his own and Clara's memories, although Clara's name and identity remain outside his awareness, cloaked in a sort of amnesia, until the climax of the tale. Another feature worth noting about Tarchetti's depiction is the degree of dissimilarity between the two persons juxtaposed inside the Baron's body. Clara's consciousness, far from mirroring that of the Baron, is predicated on a life lived under the sign of the opposite social class and gender, as well as on the essential sexual difference brought to light in the mystic union pictured near the end of the tale. The collapsing of

⁹⁴ "Queste due volontà incominciarono da quell'istante a dominarsi e a dominarlo con pari forza. Se agivano d'accordo, i movimenti della sua persona erano precipitati, convulsi, violenti; se una taceva, erano regolari; se erano contrarie, i movimenti venivano impediti, e davano luogo ad una paralisi che si protraeva fino a che la più potente di esse avesse predominato." [From that instant, the two wills began to control each other and him with equal power. If they worked in concert, his bodily movements were precipitate, convulsive, violent; if one will fell silent, they were normal; if the two wills were opposed, his movements were hindered and gave way to a paralysis that continued until the more powerful one prevailed.]

⁹⁵ "exhibiting it in all its truth and with all its most interesting details is an extremely difficult task"

⁹⁶ "Nor can I express with less confusion the singular state in which he found himself"

these contradictions on the body of the Baron marks it as a multiple space and primes it for the production of acts across the gender and class spectrums.

In the previous chapter, I spoke briefly to the possibility of interpreting the Double as a desire for that which has been suppressed, forgotten or deliberately silenced by the rational discourse. This aptitude for resurrecting culturally repressed content, for giving voice to the unsaid, for naming the unnamed (or unnamable) and for divining the will of the forgotten is thematically central to the drama of *Uno spirito in un lampone*. If in an abstract sense the tale follows a compensatory logic, based on the restoration of harmony from disharmony, of unity from division, in more precise terms, it dramatizes a nostalgic vocation in two parts, aimed first at a mystic fusion of spirits and then at a reunion of body and spirit. Considering these dueling narrative trajectories, I will propose two alternative grids for reading Tarchetti's text, each based on its own set of theoretical indications. The first reading, based on Jungian psychology, will focus on the mystic dimension of the Baron's adventure in conjunction with his *bildung*. The second reading, based on the psychoanalytic theory of Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, will focus on the problem of Clara's unresolved disappearance, and on the connotations of mourning from an individual and communal standpoint.

In proceeding with the first reading, based on Jungian psychology, I wish to expound on the Jungian understanding of the Double and to offer some reasons why this theoretical orientation might prove valuable for the critical enhancement of the text in question. Broadly speaking, Jung's system regards the Double a manifestation of desire "which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss and points to its main function: to compensate for a lack

resulting from cultural constraints”⁹⁷⁹⁸. Rather than attach the Double to a set of fixed moral coordinates, such as good and evil, or sane and insane, Jung merely defines it as “a replica of one’s unknown face,”⁹⁹ personified by such unconscious archetypes as the shadow and anima. As a transgressive and dynamic device, the Double perennially reaches into the unseen, unspoken and unknown regions of culture with the aim of restoring a primordial sense of unity and balance. My reasons for adopting Jungian principles for the reading of *Uno spirito in un lampone* are twofold. The first is that, in addition to exemplifying the literature of the fantastic, Tarchetti’s tale is fertilized with motifs and formulae from the fairy-tale genre (the “fiabesco”¹⁰⁰), starting with its fundamental structure of lack-and-renewal. In this sense, the tale opens itself to interpretation by Jungian archetypal analysis, which has been deployed to some advantage in the explication of folk-tales, fairy-tales and myths. The second reason is that, in a more specific sense, the events from the middle part of the tale closely emulate the procedures of the Jungian anima-stage, and as such, offer an allegory for—if not an exaggerated literary portrayal of—that particular phase of psychical development. Before I turn to the text itself, I will outline the Jungian concepts relevant to the analysis.

The cornerstone of Jungian thought, from the standpoint of individual psychology as much as for the purposes of interpretation, is individuation—the process of psychical growth and

⁹⁷ Zivkovic, “The Double as the ‘Unseen’ of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger,” 126.

⁹⁸ According to Jung, the “fundamental mistake regarding the nature of the unconscious is probably this: it is commonly supposed that its contents have only one meaning and are marked with an unalterable plus or minus sign...The psyche is a self-regulating system that maintains its equilibrium just as the body does. Every process that goes too far immediately and inevitably calls forth compensations, and without these there would be neither a normal metabolism nor a normal psyche. In this sense we can take the theory of compensation as a basic law of psychical behavior. Too little on one side results in too much on the other. Similarly, the relation between the conscious and the unconscious is compensatory.” C. G. Jung, *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 181.

⁹⁹ Zivkovic, “The Double as the ‘Unseen’ of Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger,” 126.

¹⁰⁰ Fairy-tale or folk elements include: the setting (qualified as “uno dei punti più incantevoli della Calabria” [one of the most enchanted corners of Calabria]), the identification of characters by social function rather than by name (the new and old Barons of B., the chambermaid and the guardaboschi) and the occurrence of elements in patterns of three (e.g. “della caccia, dei cavalli e dell’amore”).

integration across several stages. Within the framework of individuation, the problem of restoring unity from division and harmony from disharmony is coordinated by the regulatory principle of enantiodromia. According to Jung, enantiodromia “occurs when an extreme, one-sided tendency dominates conscious life;” eventually, as he notes, an “equally powerful counterposition is built up, which first inhibits the conscious performance and subsequently breaks through the conscious control”¹⁰¹. Jung further concretizes the stages of individuation with reference to specific archetypes—the ego, the shadow, and the animus/anima and the self—each of which symbolizes a milestone on the path to individuality and unified consciousness. Arguably the most important stage in this developmental sequence is the anima-stage, wherein the (archetypally masculine) ego is led back to the unconscious wholeness of self through a dialectical encounter with the (archetypally feminine) anima, the ensemble of unconscious irrational and affective traits. A successful completion of the anima-stage is heralded by a *coniunctio oppositorum*, a marriage of opposites, symbolizing the harmonious assimilation of the excluded affective and irrational contents into the conscious attitude.

I intend to use these Jungian concepts in the analysis of Tarchetti’s text from two different perspectives: the macrocosmic and the microcosmic. From the macrocosmic perspective, I will equate the different parts of the tale with different aspects of the psyche and assign archetypal roles to each character based on its functional relationship to the protagonist. From the microcosmic perspective, I will focus on the circumstances of the protagonist and follow the dynamics of his personal growth. I will begin my analysis by examining the problem of lack at

¹⁰¹ C. G. Jung, *Aspects of the Masculine*, ed. by John Beebe, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1989).

the macrocosmic level of the tale, and proceed from there to examine the way this conflict reproduces itself on the microcosmic level, in the person of the Baron.

Seeing as *Uno spirito in un lampone* is organized around a compensatory dynamic or a dynamic of lack-and-renewal, it is important, at the outset, to consider the way the problem of lack arises in the narration. An initial source of lack is established at the microcosmic level, in the description of the Baron's personal qualities: the Baron, who has only just inherited his position from his grandfather, is characterized as "onesto"¹⁰² yet lacking in both "sapienza"¹⁰³ and knowledge of the wider world, and wholly devoted to his three favorite pursuits: "caccia... cavalli e...l'amore"¹⁰⁴. The narrative focus then scales back to reveal another source of lack—this one affecting the barony at large—which threatens to offset the balance of the normally peaceful and harmonious place:

Un solo fatto luttuoso aveva, alcuni mesi prima dell'epoca a cui risale il nostro racconto, portata la desolazione in una famiglia addetta al servizio della casa e alterate le tradizioni pacifiche del castello. Una cameriera del barone, una fanciulla che si sapeva aver tenute tresche amorose con alcuni dei domestici, era sparita improvvisamente dal villaggio; tutte le ricerche erano riuscite vane; e benché pendessero non pochi sospetti sopra uno dei guardaboschi - giovine d'indole violenta che erane stato un tempo invaghito, senza esserne corrisposto - questi sospetti erano poi in realtà così vaghi e così infondati, che il contegno calmo e sicuro del giovane era stato più che sufficiente a disperderli.¹⁰⁵

Although the Baron's deficient wisdom and the chambermaid's disappearance appear as two distinct sources of lack in the narration, the two sources of lack are interconnected. Since the

¹⁰² "honorable"

¹⁰³ "wisdom"

¹⁰⁴ "hunting...horses and...love"

¹⁰⁵"A few months before the period in which our narrative is set, a single, doleful event brought grief to a family employed in domestic service and altered the peaceful usages of the castle. One of the baron's maids, a girl who was known to have had amorous intrigues with several servants, suddenly disappeared from the village; all the searches were in vain; and while not a few suspicions hung over one of the woodsmen - a young man with a violent temperament who had once taken a fancy to her, although without its being reciprocated-these suspicions were in reality so vague and unfounded that the young man's calm and confident demeanor was more than sufficient to dispel them."

Baron is responsible for keeping order in his realm, the inability to resolve the mystery of the chambermaid's disappearance, and bring the violent guardaboschi to justice, reflects a failure on his part to discharge his duty. From this point of view, the tale opens with a picture of a young ruler whose inexperience has placed the order of his realm in jeopardy. It is also noted how, after some time, the sad affair of the missing chambermaid has been forgotten and life seems to have returned to normal:

Questa sparizione misteriosa che pareva involgere in sé l'idea di un delitto, aveva rattristato profondamente l'onesto barone di B.; ma a poco a poco egli se n'era dimenticato spensierandosi coll'amore e colla caccia: la gioia e la tranquillità erano rientrate nel castello; le livree verdi erano tornate a darsi buon tempo nelle anticamere; e non erano trascorsi due mesi dall'epoca di questo avvenimento che né il barone, né alcuno de' suoi domestici si ricordava della sparizione della fanciulla.¹⁰⁶

Although the chambermaid remains lost, knowledge of the loss is excluded from awareness as the Baron directs attention toward other matters, prompting an illusory return to normalcy.

Ultimately, for the original lack to be compensated, a transformative encounter must take place between the conscious and the unconscious situations. Hence the problem with the Double is constellated, as a transgressive event aimed at restoring balance in the economy of the tale.

From the information provided thus far, it is possible to assign archetypal roles to each of the four dramatis personae in the tale. The Baron, as the hero of the adventure, personifies the ego; the paternal grandfather who bequeathed him the barony personifies the self; the murderous guardaboschi, whose deeds and traits diametrically oppose those of the Baron, personifies the shadow; and Clara, the highly sexualized chambermaid, personifies the anima. I will elaborate on

¹⁰⁶ "This mysterious disappearance, which seemed to suggest the idea of a crime, had deeply saddened the honorable Baron B. But gradually he forgot about it, distracting himself with love and hunting. Joy and tranquility returned to the castle; the green-liveried footmen resumed their pranks in the anterooms; and two months had not yet passed before neither the baron nor any of his servants recalled the girl's disappearance."

a few points concerning the nature of the relationships in this scheme. The first point to note is that in Jungian thought, the archetypes of ego and self are functionally correlated: the self is the centering principle of the psyche and the point at which opposites converge, while the ego is the embodiment of the conscious attitude. The ego takes the self as its model while also serving as a vehicle for the self's renewal. In this sense, the ego-self relationship suggests a fitting correlate to the relationship between the Baron and his paternal grandfather, or rather to the relationship between the old Baron and the new Baron in the tale. The second point is that the portrayals of the guardaboschi and Clara relative to the Baron in Tarchetti's text structurally echo those of the shadow- and anima-figures relative to the ego-figure in the Jungian reading of certain fairy- and folk-tales, a fact which seems to strengthen their archetypal associations¹⁰⁷.

Within this archetypal framework, I will review the events leading up to the Baron's eating of the strange berries, as these events pave the way for the transformative encounter between conscious and unconscious situations in the tale. The adventure begins with the Baron awaking from a bad dream and gearing up to go hunting by himself. At the outset, the mention of the nightmare points to a disturbance in the natural order of things (the uncanny placement of the berry plant will present further evidence of this disturbance) and sets a disquieting tone for the events that follow. Additionally, the Baron's decision to go hunting alone, without his usual train of valets, proves suggestive, since loneliness and isolation are folk-motifs "typical of the journey into the unconscious"¹⁰⁸. Thus, alone and in a state of perturbation, the Baron trudges some

¹⁰⁷ To list some of these connections: the fact that guardaboschi and the shadow are positioned at the bottom of the social ladder and cloaked in anonymity (the guardaboschi remains anonymous for the entire tale) reinforces the perception that the shadow and anima are lower parts of the personality; the guardaboschi's occupation as woodsman also strengthens his association with the dark part of the personality; like Clara, who is revealed to be a soul-mate of the Baron in Tarchetti's tale, the anima-figure often functions as the love-interest of the ego-figure in fairy-tales; like the guardaboschi vis-à-vis the Baron the shadow-figure often functions as an antagonist to the ego-figure, and a competitor for the attentions of the anima-figure. See: Marie-Louise Von Franz, *The Interpretation of Fairy-tales* (Boston: Shambhala, 1970), 90-100.

¹⁰⁸ Marie-Louise Von Franz, *The Interpretation of Fairy-tales* (Boston: Shambhala, 1970), 120.

distance through the damp fields, before stopping to marvel at the sight of a solitary raspberry bush, and, beset by thirst, sitting down to eat its berries. The reading I would like to propose for this scene, a scene so pivotal for the plot, is that of reestablishing contact with lost, suppressed, unconscious content. The emphasis on the Baron's thirst translates, in physiological terms, the psychical instinct to restore an unknown, missing quantity. In this connection, the image of the raspberry plant, which grows aboveground but has roots underground, may evoke a bridge between conscious and unconscious, while the devouring of the berries to achieve satiety suggests the formation of a vital link between the two regions of the psyche. These associations are strengthened by the fact that, unbeknownst to the Baron at the moment of devouring, the raspberry bush grows on the site of Clara's grave, taking root in her breast and channeling her spirit into its fruit. By eating the berries, the Baron internalizes Clara's spirit, and is led on a circuitous journey which culminates in the recovery of Clara's body. As I will show, this portion of the tale, in which Clara possesses the Baron and acts as his spirit-guide, exemplifies the dialectical movements inherent to the ego's confrontation with the anima.

I now intend to illustrate how the problem of opposites and dialectical procedures of the anima-stage are constellated relative to the person of the Baron. At the beginning of the tale, the Baron is presented as a stereotypical southern nobleman, who "come tutti i meridionali"¹⁰⁹ divides his time between three pursuits: hunting, riding and love. In themselves, these passions accentuate the Baron's youth and virility, while the fact that they monopolize his life suggests that he is anchored in a closed and predictable pattern of existence. On the particular November morning narrated in the tale, however, the Baron answers a spontaneous impulse to detach from his ritualized habitus, break custom, and go hunting alone; this gesture of striking out on his own

¹⁰⁹ "like all southern gentlemen"

symbolizes a first step down the road to a new individuality. After the Baron eats the berries and internalizes Clara's spirit, he becomes increasingly aware of an autonomous, inner personality, in many ways the opposite of his own. There thus ensues a conflict between indwelling personalities, organized in terms of such oppositions as the archetypally masculine versus the archetypally feminine, the rational versus the irrational, the cultivated versus the uncultivated (in the sense of a class distinction), and culture versus nature. In terms of imagery related to the opposition between the archetypally masculine and feminine, the Baron, the paternal grandfather's barony, the once fortified castle and the hunting rifle are closely grouped masculine images, while the autumn rains in the field ("le piogge dell'autunno"), the serenity, the berries and the flowers are all archetypally feminine images.

Initially, this complex of opposing traits manifests for the Baron in the form of an aesthetic sensibility, which causes him to appreciate the beauty of the rain-covered wood anemones and other, hitherto neglected aspects of the vegetation:

"Vorrei sapere perché questi anemoni mezzo fradici per le piogge, ai quali non ho mai badato in vita mia, adesso mi sembrano così belli e così attraenti... Che colori vivaci, che forma semplice e graziosa! Facciamone un mazzolino."¹¹⁰

Stopping to gather flowers serves no rational purpose, but rather brings the Baron into closer contact with the natural order, as well as with the irrational undercurrents of life. From here, he goes on to experience a profound empathy with the animal world, coupled with an awareness of the destructive potential of technology, to the point where he is unable to shoot the pigeons in his field, partly out of fear of his rifle and partly out of compassion for the birds. When he tries to sling his rifle over his shoulder, he once more becomes fearful, and carries the firearm away

¹¹⁰ "I would like to know why these anemone, still sopping wet from the rains, flowers to which I have never in my life paid much attention, now seem to me so beautiful and charming... What vivid colors, what a simple and graceful shape! Let us make a nosegay of them."

from his body “come avrebbe fatto un fanciullo timoroso”¹¹¹. These acts of consciousness and the accompanying emotions prove so foreign to the Baron’s experience that he struggles to recognize himself; as he expresses by way of an interior monologue:

“Io non comprendo più nulla di me stesso... sono ancora io, o non sono più io? o sono io ed un altro ad un tempo! Quando mai io ho avuto paura di sparare il mio fucile! Quando mai ho sentito tanta pietà per questi maledetti colombi che mi devastano i seminati? I seminati! Ma... veramente parmi che non siano più miei questi seminati... Basta, basta, torniamo al castello, sarà forse effetto di una febbre che mi passerà buttandomi a letto.”¹¹²

As he makes his way back to the castle under the influence of Clara’s spirit, the Baron continues to register anomalous affects and alterations of consciousness, often perceiving the world in a new light, noticing things that had previously gone unnoticed and evaluating objects based on a different set of standards:

Gli avveniva spesso lungo la via di arrestarsi a contemplare oggetti o persone che non avevano mai destato in lui il minimo interesse, e vedevali sotto un aspetto affatto diverso di prima. Le belle contadine che stavano sarchiando nei campi coll’abito rimboccato fin sopra il ginocchio, non avevano più per lui alcuna attrattiva, e le parevano rozze, sciatte e sguaiate.¹¹³

Though at one time, the pretty farm girls might have caught the Baron’s eye in his tireless pursuit of love, now he finds them unattractive. With the Baron’s withdrawal of attention from the sexualized farm girls, one is reminded of Jung’s indications about the projective and progressive qualities of the anima. The anima is projective in the sense that it becomes embodied in the image of the desired object; the anima is progressive in the sense that as ego progresses through

¹¹¹ “as a timid boy would have done”

¹¹² “ I do not understand a thing about myself any more ... Am I Still me, or not? Or am I me and someone else at the same time? When have I ever been afraid to fire my rifle? When have I ever had so much compassion for these damned doves that ravage my sown fields? My fields! But ... truly, they do not seem to belong to me any longer ... That does it, enough, let us return to the castle; it is probably the effect of some fever that will pass when I jump into bed.”

¹¹³ “Along the road, he stopped often to contemplate objects or people who had never before stirred the slightest interest in him, viewing them from a perspective entirely different from the one he had previously adopted. The beautiful farm girls hoeing in the fields with their skirts hiked up above the knee no longer held any attraction for him: they appeared coarse, untidy, vulgar.”

individuation, the image of the love-object will morph from a pure incarnation of sexuality into an individual with psychological depth. These same trends appear writ large in the gradual elucidation of Clara's character throughout the tale: at the beginning, she takes the form of an anonymous, promiscuous chambermaid ("Una cameriera del barone, una fanciulla che si sapeva aver tenute tresche amorose con alcuni dei domestici"¹¹⁴); toward the middle, she surfaces as a personality endowed with consciousness and memories, associated with both love and sin, or positive and negative attributes¹¹⁵; in the tale's climax, she appears as an individual bearing a name.

With the Baron's return to the castle, a sequence of events corresponding to the resolution of the anima-stage—theoretically predicated on compromissory adaptations of the ego and anima which lead to their dialectical synthesis (in a *coniunctio oppositorum*)—begins to unfold. In this case, the compromissory adaptations are denoted by parallel transgressions of social boundaries, one on the part of the ego-figure and the other on the part of the anima-figure. For the Baron, this transgression entails forgetting his aristocratic restraint and conferring intimately with his subjects and servants:

...baciò ad una ad una le sue cameriere; strinse la mano alle sue livree verdi, e si buttò al collo di una di esse che accarezzò con molta tenerezza, e a cui disse parole come di passione e di affetto.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ "one of the baron's maids, a girl who was known to have had amorous intrigues with several servants"

¹¹⁵ "Una nuova coscienza si formò in lui: tutta la tela di un passato mai conosciuto si distese d'innanzi a suoi occhi: delle memorie pure e soavi di cui egli non poteva aver fecondata la sua vita vennero a turbare dolcemente la sua anima. Erano memorie di un primo amore, di una prima colpa; ma di un amore più gentile e più elevato che egli non avesse sentito, di una colpa più dolce e più generosa che egli non avesse commesso. La sua mente spaziava in un mondo di affetti ignorato, percorreva regioni mai viste, evocava dolcezze mai conosciute." [A new consciousness was forming in him: the entire canvas of a past he had never known stretched out before his eyes; pure, gentle memories whose growth he could never have nurtured brought a pleasant disturbance to his spirit. There were memories of a first love, and a first sin; but a love more kind and lofty than he had ever felt, and a sin more sweet and generous than he had ever committed. His mind ranged through an unknown world of emotions, travelled through regions never seen, conjured up delights never experienced].

¹¹⁶ "...kissed each of his maids, shook hands with his green-liveried footmen, and threw his arms around the neck of one, whom he caressed with much tenderness as he spoke words of passion and affection."

For Clara, conversely, the transgression entails an elevation to enjoy the privileges of the nobility, as facilitated by her convenient placement in the Baron's body and symbolized by her free movement through the upper floors and rooms of the castle, with the proposition of going to sleep with the Baron:

Allora il barone di B. salì agli altri piani, visitò tutte le sale del castello, e essendo giunto alla sua alcova, si buttò sul letto, e disse: "Io vengo a dormire con lei, signor barone".¹¹⁷

At first, from a social standpoint, the Baron's displays of affection and other odd behaviors have an alienating effect: some servants, bewildered by their lord's familiar treatment of them, flee in terror and hide in their rooms, while the narrator qualifies the Baron as "disgraziato"¹¹⁸.

Nevertheless, the same conduct that undercuts the Baron's social formation and reduces him to an abject state before his servants also moves him further down the path toward spiritual expansion, as realized in the scene showing the mystic fusion between spirits:

E delle nuove memorie si suscitavano nella sua anima; erano memorie doppie, cioè le rimembranze delle impressioni che uno stesso fatto lascia in due spiriti diversi, ed egli accoglieva in sé tutte e due queste impressioni. Tali rimembranze però non erano simili a quelle che aveva già evocato sotto la pergola; quelle erano semplici, queste complesse; quelle lasciavano vuota, neutrale, giudice una parte dell'anima; queste l'occupavano tutta: e siccome erano rimembranze di amore, egli comprese in quel momento che cosa fosse la grande unità, l'immensa complessività dell'amore, il quale essendo nelle leggi inesorabili della vita un sentimento diviso fra due, non può essere compreso da ciascuno che per metà. Era la fusione piena e completa di due spiriti, fusione di cui l'amore non è che una aspirazione, e le dolcezze dell'amore un'ombra, un'eco, un sogno di quelle dolcezze. Né potrei esprimere meno confusamente lo stato singolare in cui egli si trovava.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ "Then Baron B. climbed to the other floors, visited every room in the castle, and having arrived at his bedchamber, threw himself on his bed and said, 'I come to sleep with you, Baron, sir.'"

¹¹⁸ "wretched"

¹¹⁹ "And new memories were aroused in his soul; they were double memories – that is, recollections of impressions that the same event leaves the two different spirits - and he welcomed both sorts of impressions in himself. Yet these recollections were not like the ones that had already been evoked under the trellis: those were simple, these complex; those left a part of his soul empty, neutral, impartial; these occupied it totally. And since they were memories of love, at that moment he understood the great unity, the immense inclusiveness of love, which, since the inexorable law make it a sentiment divided in two, can be comprehended only partially by any one person. It was the full and complete fusion of two spirits, a fusion towards which love is only an aspiration the delights of love no more than a shadow, an echo, a dream of those delights. Nor can I express with less confusion the singular state in which he found himself."

With the inward fusion depicted in the passage above, the two, separate personalities, along with their distinct memories, understandings and aspirations are brought into alignment, enabling the Baron to transcend his divided state and embrace a higher unity of consciousness. In Jungian terms, the spiritual dynamic in this passage suggests a literary representation of the anima's integration into ego-consciousness, and hence the successful resolution of the anima-stage. The connotations of restoring unity from division, brought fully into focus in this scene, are subsequently borne out in the denouement of the tale at both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. On the microcosmic level, these connotations are actualized in the Baron's newfound sense of individuality, and the self-knowledge he displays in examining his image in the mirror, interfacing the composite reflection with his own portrait and that of Clara, and from there, differentiating himself from both persons represented. On the macrocosmic level, these connotations are borne out in the reunion of Clara's spirit with her body, which the Baron oversees by eliciting a confession from her murderer, recovering her remains and allowing her to receive a Christian burial. Altogether, by securing justice for Clara—a compensation for the lack posited at the beginning of the tale—the Baron restores order to the realm and provides a positive outlook for the continuation of “le tradizioni pacifiche del castello”¹²⁰ under his reign.

I will now briefly synthesize my Jungian reading of *Uno spirito in un lampone*. The tale begins with the newly anointed Baron of B. lacking wisdom and the temperamental balance necessary to discharge his duties as ruler. His inadequacy becomes apparent when he fails to oversee justice for Clara, the chambermaid whose disappearance goes unsolved and unremembered. In order to remedy the situation, the Baron must submit himself to an inward

¹²⁰ “the peaceful usages of the castle”

process of dialectic, for only by descending to the underside of rationality and engaging with those things lost and excluded can he hope to resurface as a worldlier ruler. This process includes sinking to the level of his subjects and at times even disgracing himself through flagrant breaches of social protocol. Eventually, after breaking out of the ritual mode and recalibrating himself with the unknown and the irrational, the Baron succeeds in prosecuting the guardaboschi (“Il guardaboschi, tradotto in giudizio, ebbe condanna a dodici anni di lavori forzati”¹²¹), securing a proper burial for Clara and restoring the public faith in his ability to dispense justice.

While this Jungian reading of *Uno spirito in un lampone* has been useful for explicating the underlying dynamics of lack-and-renewal, the mystic fusion of the spirits and related subtexts, I have identified an alternative theoretical grid for reading the text, useful for explicating subtexts such as the equation of devouring and emesis with the spiritual processes of possession and exorcism. The grid I have in mind is based on the psychoanalytic theory of Abraham and Torok, a broadly Freudian orientation influenced by object-relations theory and geared toward the segment of psychical experience involving trauma, mourning and other difficult periods of transition. Abraham and Torok’s theory is founded on the cardinal distinction between introjection and incorporation, and their respective crystallizations in mourning and melancholia. Introjection may be abstractly understood as “the principle of gradual self-transformation in the face of interior and exterior changes,”¹²² while in the context of mourning, it indicates the normal process whereby a grieving subject comes to terms with a loss by assimilating it into the ego. Incorporation, by contrast, is a regressive fantasy which occurs when the consequences of mourning are unconsciously resisted; manifested in fantasies about eating

¹²¹ “The woodsman was brought to justice and sentenced to twelve years of hard labor.”

¹²² Nicholas T. Rand, editor’s note to “New Perspectives in Metapsychology: Cryptic Mourning and Secret Love,” in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 101.

the lost object and burying it alive, incorporation results “*from those losses which for some reason cannot be acknowledged as such,*” which cannot be spoken in words, wherein a subject denies the loss altogether, stashing it away in an intrapsychic “crypt”—a sealed-off part of the ego—and identifying with it secretly (that is, hiding it behind the “I”)¹²³¹²⁴. Imaginary scenarios involving ingestion and evacuation, whether or not centered on the buccal orifice, are all potential species of the incorporation fantasy, which serves as an instantaneous albeit hallucinatory substitute for the gradual process of introjection, and underwrites such conditions as the illness of mourning and melancholia. In the illness of mourning, where introjection is thwarted, the sufferer leads an apparently normal life, all the while becoming cut off from others as well as from his own emotions and grief¹²⁵. Reactivating the introjective processes in cases of interminable mourning is contingent upon opening the crypt, reworking of internal identities and putting the loss into words, in a communal or intersubjective setting¹²⁶¹²⁷.

Hence, whereas I previously suggested that the Baron’s adventure in *Uno spirito in un lampone* be read as a literary portrayal of a successful anima integration, I now intend to show how the same set of circumstances could be read in terms of the interplay between introjection

¹²³ “Because our mouth is unable to say certain words and unable to formulate certain sentences, we fantasize...we are actually taking our mouth the unnamable, the object itself.” Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation” (1972), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 127-128.

¹²⁴ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation” (1972), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 125-138.

¹²⁵ Nicholas T. Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 21.

¹²⁶ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “The Lost Object-Me” (1975), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 148.

¹²⁷ Abraham and Torok diverge from Freud in the way they understand introjection and incorporation (and mourning and melancholia), defining these concepts with reference to the writings of Sandor Ferenczi and Karl Abraham (no relation to Nicolas Abraham). For more on the complex genealogy of these concepts, see: Maria Torok, “The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse” (1968), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 107-124.

and incorporation, and more specifically, as a literary portrayal of interminable mourning stemming from “an unwitting, unfelt sorrow over a loss”¹²⁸¹²⁹. In abstract terms, the text itself may be divided into three parts, with each part privileging one of the two states of psychical functioning, introjection or incorporation. The portion of the exposition preceding the account of Clara’s disappearance, which contains details about the Baron’s formative experiences (“aveva appreso dal pedagogo di casa i primi rudimenti dello scrivere, e i nomi di tre o quattro classici latini di cui sapeva citare all’occorrenza alcuni distici ben conosciuti”¹³⁰) and his communal activities (“la passione della caccia, dei cavalli e dell’amore;”¹³¹ “sentivasi perfettamente felice...e non erano meno felici con lui i suoi domestici, le sue donne, i suoi limieri, e le sue dodici livree verdi”¹³²) represents a space of introjection, where the Baron’s psychical growth and self-fashioning proceeds without obstacle. By contrast, the part of the tale which runs from the account of Clara’s disappearance to the scene where the servants chant her name, insofar as it is characterized by motifs of loss, sorrow, uncertainty (due to the lack of Clara’s body), denial and solitude, images of ingestion and themes of self-division and secret identification, represents a space of incorporation, where the Baron’s inability to mourn the loss of Clara results in an internalization of the loss, as symbolized by the eating of her spirit in the berries. Finally, the denouement of the tale, which encompasses the naming of Clara by the servants, the reburial of her body and the Baron’s regurgitation of the berries, represents the reactivation of the

¹²⁸ One of the characteristics of “mourning illness” is an increase of libidinal energy around the loss of a love-object. Here, the Baron is portrayed alleviating his sorrows through “hunting and love.”

¹²⁹ Nicholas T. Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 19-20.

¹³⁰ “the family tutor taught him the rudiments of writing and the titles of three or four Latin classics, from which he could cite, as the need arose, well-known distichs”

¹³¹ “a passion for hunting, horses and love”

¹³² “the Baron B. found himself completely happy...and no less happy with him were his domestic servants, his women, his bloodhounds and his green-liveried footmen”

introjective processes, as manifested through a combination of public and private mourning rituals.

Hints that the Baron is grappling with a circumstance of impossible mourning appear throughout the tale, starting with the account of Clara's disappearance ("questa sparizione misteriosa che pareva involgere in sè l'idea di un delitto"¹³³), a tragedy which afflicts not just the protagonist, but also Clara's family ("una famiglia addetta al servizio della casa"¹³⁴) and the community at large. Already, the fact that Clara's body is missing presupposes an obstacle to the processes of mourning, since it leaves the community to contend with a sense of uncertainty and incompleteness. Thus, although the Baron is profoundly saddened by the event, rather than come to grips with his loss, he simply stops thinking about it ("a poco a poco egli se n'era dimenticato spensierandosi coll'amore e colla caccia"¹³⁵) and the community appears to do likewise ("nè il barone, nè alcuno de' suoi domestici si ricordava della sparizione della fanciulla"¹³⁶).

At the beginning of the adventure, a sense of social isolation is conjured up with the Baron's declaration, "voglio andare a caccia, io solo,"¹³⁷ in which he signals his intent to break custom and go hunting without his footmen. The same declaration also establishes the thematic importance in the tale of the "I"—the graphic embodiment of the ego—and sets the stage for the fracturing of its imaginary unity. After devouring the raspberries that house Clara's spirit, an act suggestive of the incorporation fantasy, the Baron begins to register discontinuities in himself: in addition to being socially isolated, he is detached from his own emotions and actions, or rather,

¹³³ "this mysterious disappearance, which seemed to suggest the idea of a crime"

¹³⁴ "a family employed in domestic service"

¹³⁵ "gradually he forgot about it, distracting himself with love and hunting"

¹³⁶ "neither the baron nor any of his servants recalled the girl's disappearance."

¹³⁷ "I want to go hunting, on my own"

caught between two equipollent centers of volition (where “le due volontà che parevano dominarlo, agendo su di lui colla stessa forza, si paralizzarono reciprocamente, resero nulla la loro azione”¹³⁸), between his own desires and the desires of Clara, with whom he unwittingly identifies. This secret identification and the trauma it bespeaks manifests in different ways throughout the Baron’s adventure. Inwardly, for instance, the painful but otherwise harmless cranial pressure that the Baron registers while still in the field (“qualche cosa di superfluo, di esuberante; una cosa che vuol farsi posto nella testa, che non fa male, ma che pure spinge, urta in modo assai penoso le pareti del cranio”¹³⁹) calls to mind the logic of somatic conversion, wherein a physical symptom appears as a substitute for a disavowed psychological tension¹⁴⁰. Outwardly, traces of the identification with Clara become perceptible to the servants after the Baron performs gestures reminiscent of Clara and replicates Clara’s speech patterns while speaking about himself in the third-person (for instance, in the encounter with Francesco: “oh! caro Francesco, godo di rivedervi; come state? come sta il nostro barone?”—e sapeva benissimo di essere egli il barone”¹⁴¹). Despite knowing “benissimo di essere egli il barone,” the Baron also articulates an awareness of his own decentering when he poses the question, “sono ancora io?”¹⁴², to himself and to the old woman, Caterina. By accumulation, the involuntary albeit tendentious gestures that the Baron performs in this communal setting constellate a spectacle of

¹³⁸ “the two wills that seemed to dominate him, working on him with the same force, were mutually paralyzing their action rendered useless”

¹³⁹ “there is something superfluous, overflowing, something that aims to make room for itself in my head. It is not harmful, but it nonetheless pushes, knocks very painfully against the walls of my skull...”

¹⁴⁰ The disruption in the integrity of the ego becomes reified, by way of somatization, in a disturbance of the bodily experience, forming the basis for what Torok labels a pseudo-hysterical, “self-to-self” affliction. Torok, “Self-to-Self: Notes of a Conversation on ‘Psychosomatics’” (1973), 162.

¹⁴¹ ““Oh! dear Francesco, I joy to see you again. How are you? How is our Baron?”—and he knew he was the Baron.”

¹⁴² “am I still myself?”

acted remembrance: they channel the idea of Clara, still unconscious to the Baron, into the present, conscious awareness of the spectators.

Like with the cases of thwarted introjection outlined by Abraham and Torok, the return of the Baron's self-possession at the end of the tale is contingent upon a reworking of identities (a differentiation of the "I" qua ego from the embedded object) and a conscious process of working-through the trauma of his loss. A few events at the end of the tale thematize the reignition of the introjective processes. One involves the community collectively acknowledging its loss by figuring it in language¹⁴³. When the Baron goes to contemplate Clara's portrait in the hallway, the servants, who have detected Clara's presence in his speech, his movements and his facial expression, gather in the corridor and collectively voice the missing girl's name. Another key event stems directly from this communal articulation: as the servants flee in terror, the Baron, speaking as Clara, cries "il mio assassino,"¹⁴⁴ causing the guardaboschi to faint, confess to the murder and disclose the location of Clara's body. Through this chain of events, the Baron and the community are made to confront the "accusatory" remains of their unresolved tragedy, in the form of a verbal and a physical reminder¹⁴⁵. The recovery of Clara's body for reburial in sacred ground marks a crucial step in the ritual of mourning; the funeral provides the Baron and his subjects with a context for socializing their loss, where the body itself serves as a "tangible token of what [they] had been and what [they] are now becoming"¹⁴⁶. In this connection, the account of the Baron liberating Clara's soul by vomiting up the undigested raspberries may

¹⁴³ Naming (formulating in words, assigning a "common-sense" meaning) is the "privileged instrument of introjection." Torok, "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse" (1968), 114.

¹⁴⁴ "my murderer"

¹⁴⁵ Nicholas T. Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 14.

¹⁴⁶ Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, 14.

evoke a fantasy of decorporation, an imaginary event in which the logic of incorporation is reversed, consistent with the ejection of the internal object and the reconsolidation of the ego.

From a linguistic standpoint, finally, I would like to call attention to a hidden logic in Tarchetti's representation, discernible thanks to the concepts of cryptonymy and cryptonymic analysis developed by Abraham and Torok in their studies on Freud's *Wolf Man*¹⁴⁷. In the linguistic branch of their theory, starting from clinical observations about the way repression "above all acts on words themselves," Abraham and Torok describe two unconscious ploys utilized by subjects ill from mourning (that is, subjects bearing crypts or "cryptophores") to express—in a disguised form—the words of their intrapsychic secrets: cryptonymy and demetaphorization¹⁴⁸. Under the laws of cryptonymy, the "unspeakable" word is converted into a (phonetically distinct) synonym of its alloeme, made into a thing and dramatized by the subject¹⁴⁹¹⁵⁰; with demetaphorization, a word is objectified in an edible form and thus made available for the fantasy of incorporation¹⁵¹. As I will demonstrate just below, these same procedures, combined and superimposed onto the reality of the text, may also be held to account for a semantic link between Baron's act of eating the raspberries ("lampone") and the etymology of the proper name, "Clara." The Latin root of the name "Clara" is the feminine form of the adjective "clarus," whose semic inventory includes the sememes "clear" and "bright." Since

¹⁴⁷ Concerning the linguistic implications of incorporation, Abraham and Torok specify that "the crucial aspect of these fantasies...is...their annulment of figurative language." A subject ill from mourning thus substitutes one mouth-work for another: rather than speak the untellable word, he objectifies it, in disguised form, and thus renders it edible. Abraham and Torok, "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation," 132.

¹⁴⁸ Rand, introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel*, 18.

¹⁴⁹ That is, a fetish word or "symbol-cover," capable of being staged. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "The Lost Object—Me" (1975), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 153.

¹⁵⁰ Cryptonymic analysis, conversely, aims at recovering the original sense of the trauma by pulling back the layers of the double-translation. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand, foreword by Jacques Derrida (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 20.

¹⁵¹ Abraham and Torok, "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation" (1972), 126; 133.

another Italian word that contains the sememe “bright” but remains phonetically distinct from “Clara” is the noun “lampo” (defined as “lightning” or “flash”), Clara qua “bright” may be marked as the privileged alloseme, while “lampo” may be selected as a synonym of the alloseme. From there, a subtle play on the idiom “in un lampo”¹⁵² may account for the extension of “lampo” into “lampone.” Though a speculative exercise, this excavation of a subterranean link between the terms “Clara” and “lampone” has at least a twofold value in the critical explication of the text. On a concrete level, it semantically underwrites the visual and conceptual logic in the image of the raspberry bush growing out of Clara’s corpse (“il cadavere di essa, dal cui seno partivano le radici del lampone”¹⁵³)¹⁵⁴. On a more abstract level, it opens a new avenue of textual concealment by offering the hitherto unavailable possibility of detecting the Clara’s presence in the title of the text¹⁵⁵. At the very least, then, this finding, which renders consonant seemingly disconnected or arbitrary features of the text, may work to insure (added) satisfaction on the part of the reader, who, to put it with Peter Brooks, seeks closure in the “metaphoric work of eventual totalization” in the reading of the text, just as the Baron and his subjects seek closure in their handling of a communal trauma¹⁵⁶.

With each of the proposed readings for *Uno spirito in un lampone*—the Jungian reading and the reading based on the theory of Abraham and Torok—I have sought to clarify a distinct constellation of subtexts and systematize those subtexts into a viable totality. What therefore

¹⁵² “in a flash”

¹⁵³ “her corpse, in whose breast the raspberry bush had taken root”

¹⁵⁴ The linguistic progression from Latin to Italian also complements the archaeological consciousness implanted at the beginning of the tale (“nel vecchio maniere della famiglia, che un tempo era stato un castello feudale fortificato” [in the old ancestral manor which was once a fortified castle]).

¹⁵⁵ The motif of post-mortem vegetalization also famously appears in Canto VIII of the *Inferno* and in Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

¹⁵⁶ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Vintage, 1984), 28.

emerges from the juxtaposition of these readings is a pair of potential realities, a pair of gestalts¹⁵⁷, equally viable though mutually exclusive in the explication of the work. At the same time, the two readings do come together around a common foundation, which is their mutual recognition of the transformative dimension of the Double in the text. Both readings show how the experience of the Double arises in the context of a difficult transition; both show how it compels a growth or healing of the self through contact with the unseen, unsaid and forgotten; and both show how the Double paves the way to a higher unity of self and consciousness. A similar premise to the one featured in Tarchetti's tale also appears in Emilio De Marchi's 1877 novella, *Due anime in un corpo*, a text I will now proceed to analyze.

De Marchi's *Due anime in un corpo* recounts an incident in the life of Marcello Marcelli, an unambitious seminary dropout who is still trying to find his place in the world. At the beginning of the story, Marcello, who also serves as its narrator, has just left the seminary, to the chagrin of his well-meaning and well-to-do parents, and befriended Giorgio Lucini, a traveling violinist and music instructor. One night, a badly wounded Lucini stumbles into Marcello's apartment, where he later dies. As Marcello tends to his dying friend, he seems to undergo a metempsychotic experience, a sort of soul-exchange, in which part of his soul dies with Lucini and part of Lucini's soul lives on in him:

Chi abbia vegliato appena due o tre notti di fila presso un malato e, senza scostarsi dal letto, se l'abbia veduto mancare a oncia a oncia fino all'ultimo, quando torna fra la gente, sente in modo molto confuso di non essere tutto quello di prima; un po' di noi se ne va, credo, col morto, e un po' di lui resta in noi, insieme a quel brivido, che filtra nelle ossa e a quei cerchi giallognoli, che fluttuano nelle pupille.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ That is, with each reading, specific elements come to the fore, forming a complex whole, while others recede into the background.

¹⁵⁸ "Anyone who has sat up for two or three nights straight with a sick person, without that person's bedside, and watched that person go ounce by ounce up to the last, will, in returning to the world, get the strange feeling of not being quite the same as before; I think a part of us goes with the dead and a part of the dead remains in us, along with that shiver that passes through our bones and those yellowish circles which fluctuate in our pupils."

Although the two men differ in many respects, with Marcello having enjoyed a sheltered existence and Lucini having lived as a vagabond, in the wake of this event, it becomes clear that they are also bound by a deep connection. Thus, while outwardly, Marcello begins to appropriate aspects of Lucini's identity, to gain access to the man's private world and solve his murder, he also begins to transform inwardly as his investigation carries him deeper and deeper into his friend's affairs. Marcello discovers that jealousy is the likely motive for the murder in a trove of letters, which reveal that Lucini—whose real name is Linucci—had been carrying on a secret liaison¹⁵⁹ with Marina, the wife of a shadowy businessman known as il Sultano. A series of adventures related to this tangled web of identities ensues, culminating in il Sultano's discovery that Lucini, whom he has in fact murdered, was his long-lost son. Il Sultano takes advantage of the fact that Marcello has been impersonating Lucini to frame Marcello for the murder, causing Marcello to be arrested and put on trial but ultimately vindicated. In the meantime, Marcello's growing fixation with Marina compels him to collaborate with the authorities, in an effort to rescue her from il Sultano. While the police apprehend il Sultano, Marcello tracks down Marina, but finds her too late, arriving only in time to see her die from a self-inflicted injury. Despite this tragic twist, the story ends with Marcello surmounting a wayward transitional period, having matured and gained in worldliness, before returning home to be appointed to "il capo ufficio del catasto"¹⁶⁰.

De Marchi's novella brings together features of the crime thriller or noir genre (in a way looking forward to De Marchi's 1888 novel, *Il cappello del prete*) and the *bildungsroman* with a hectic amalgam of narrative styles and forms, to depict a character's personal process of self-

¹⁵⁹The text remains vague on the question of whether this relationship is erotic or purely sentimental in nature.

¹⁶⁰ "the head office of the land registry"

discovery and identity-formation. On the surface, the central premise of *Due anime in un corpo* strongly resembles that of *Uno spirito in un lampone*, in the sense that it frames the problem of the Double in spiritualistic terms, positing a scenario of metempsychosis in which the disembodied soul or spirit of a murder victim is assumed into another person's body. The Double's relationship to the noir component of the novella also recalls the compensatory dynamic of Tarchetti's tale, in which the spirit of the murder victim takes an active role in solving its own murder and turning the wheels of justice. These similarities notwithstanding, however, I would like to call attention to some points on which the two representations of the Double diverge. Unlike in Tarchetti's narrative, where the Baron's dualization with Clara is clearly tied to a supernatural causality, in De Marchi's narrative, the true nature of Marcello's dualization with Lucini—namely, whether it refers to a metempsychosis or whether it is simply intended as a metaphorical conceit—remains a source of ambiguity. If anything, the fact that the dualization arises in the space of a subjective, first-person memoir, combined with the fact that the narrator offers multiple, discrepant accounts for the spiritual possession (first describing a soul-exchange and later reflecting that a “spirito fu disceso in me”¹⁶¹) but otherwise refrains from anatomizing the experience, seems to call for a rhetorical, rather than a literal, reading of the events narrated. Moreover, the experience that De Marchi takes up representing with this allusive, ambiguous and noncommittal language, appears broader in scope than Tarchetti's relatively brief thought-experiment on split-consciousness. In *Due anime in un corpo*, the problem of split-consciousness and the connotations of radical intrapsychic division give place to the existential dilemma of “duplice esistenza,”¹⁶² characterized by a more general

¹⁶¹ “a spirit [had] descended into me”

¹⁶² “double-existence”

problematization of identity; only in one critical episode, which I will discuss in the coming pages, does this problem of double-existence sharpen into a split between two alternate states of consciousness.

While it is worth noting that in *Due anime un in corpo*, the theme of the Double also reverberates beyond the titular scenario into relationships with other characters, my analysis will remain focused on the central question of Marcello's dualization with Lucini. Even more specifically, since the internal drama between Marcello and Lucini tends to unfold in the context of epistolary activity, I will focus on the dynamics of double-existence and split-consciousness relative to the acts of reading and writing letters. In an early scene, narrated in an analepsis, the ailing Lucini sends Marcello to retrieve papers, implied to be letters, from his apartment. To maintain the illusion that Lucini is alive and well, Marcello performs the task wearing Lucini's clothing ("suo mantello e...cappelletto verde, che saltava subito agli occhi"¹⁶³), engaging in this passive impersonation at Lucini's own request. This situation of passive impersonation subsequently takes on an active character when Marcello returns to the apartment, after Lucini's death, in the same disguise. Unexpectedly greeted by the concierge as "Signor violino"¹⁶⁴ and handed a letter addressed to Lucini, Marcello is forced to decide in an instant whether to keep up the ruse or face the potential consequences of posing as a murdered man. In this context, the decision to accept the letter in Lucini's name has a twofold signification: on the one hand, it shows Marcello assuming his dead friend's identity in a manner which is direct and public, and on the other, it symbolizes the growing uncertainty in Marcello's relationship to himself.

¹⁶³ "his cloak and...little green cap, which immediately caught the eye"

¹⁶⁴ "mister violin"

Initially, Marcello immerses himself in Lucini's world out of a desire to solve his friend's murder. In that sense, Lucini's letters and personal effects present a natural place to begin searching for clues. For Marcello, however, reconstructing Lucini's relationship with Marina from the letters found in Lucini's apartment sets the stage for an intense vicarious experience, far beyond the scope of a mundane investigative process. As the following passage demonstrates, reading the love letters causes Marcello to absorb Lucini's feelings and memories, and from there, to recreate Lucini's habitus:

Passavo alcune ore, muto, a contemplare lo spazio bianco fra le righe, dove erano passati senza posarsi i desideri di Marina, e frattanto davo ascolto a una voce non mia, che mi parlava dal fondo del cuore. Che uno spirito fosse disceso in me, quasi non era da dubitarne...divenni più agile e più delicato nei movimenti, più gentile nel tratto, più concitato nelle parole, e perfino nell'accento io contraffaceva sì bene il Lucini, che qualche volta io rideva di lui od egli di me o si rideva insieme...questa duplice esistenza, che dico, mi appariva specialmente quando io tornava per caso alla mia prima abitazione...Allora le anime si staccavano come certe fiamme, che si raddoppiano nello specchio...¹⁶⁵

Shown here are the dynamics of approximation and distancing that accompany Marcello's movements between his own sphere of existence and that of Lucini. For Marcello inside Lucini's world, Lucini's presence manifests itself by increments: after first emerging in a psychical form, as a "voce non mia"¹⁶⁶ speaking from Marcello's heart, it goes on to materialize in Marcello's newly adopted style of speech and mannerisms. As such, the two indwelling entities—souls, personalities, identities—become closely bonded in that environment. When Marcello reverts back to his primary sphere of existence, on the other hand, the bond is loosened; the souls detach

¹⁶⁵ "I spent some hours, silent, contemplating the white space between the lines, where Marina's desires had passed without settling, and in the meantime, I was listening to a voice other than my own, which spoke to me from the bottom of my heart. That a spirit had descended into me, there was almost no doubt about it...my movements became more agile and delicate, I all of a sudden became more gentle, more excited in my speech, and even in terms of accent I impersonated Lucini so well, that sometimes I laughed at him or he laughed at me or we laughed together...this double existence, which I speak of, became especially apparent to me when I returned home to my primary residence...Then the souls would detach from one another like certain flames do when they are duplicated in the mirror..."

¹⁶⁶ "a voice other than my own"

like “certe fiamme, che si raddoppiano nello specchio,”¹⁶⁷ signifying a disconnect between the immediate identification with and emulation of Lucini and the broader patterns of Marcello’s life. Also, even in the space of Lucini’s activities, the close alignment of the two souls does not preclude the occasional moment of friction, such as when Marcello goes to open a new letter from Marina and the inner voice returns to admonish him for his voyeuristic impulse:

Tremavo nell’aprire il foglio, perchè sentivo d’essere innanzi a un delitto, di cui io solo aveva la chiave e anche per la memoria del poverino, cui quelle parole era dirette e che mi gridava dal fondo del cuore: ‘Perchè mi tradisci?’¹⁶⁸

Just as reading Lucini’s letters provides Marcello with a window onto his friend’s private world, writing letters in Lucini’s name allows him to inject himself directly into his friend’s affairs. Marcello feels compelled to forge a letter from Lucini to Marina only after he learns that Marina is in danger and that by doing so, he might save her life. Although Marcello initially sets out to write an explicit warning to Marina, using his own name, he later abandons the idea, citing the following justification:

Il mio modo di scrivere per verità era goffo e selvatico, e anche le parole nere sul bianco avevano un non so che d’angoloso, che faceva orrore. Con quale autorità mi presentava a lei? Marcello in questo istante mi parve l’uomo più abietto del mondo; egli si era intromesso fra due anime innamorate, e raccolte le loro timide confessioni balzava oltre con un grido di morte.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ ““certe fiamme, che si raddoppiano nello specchio”

¹⁶⁸ “I trembled as I unwrapped the page, because I felt like I found myself before a crime, for which I alone held the key, and also for the memory of the poor man, to whom those words were addressed and who cried out from the depths of my heart: ‘Why do you betray me?’”

¹⁶⁹ “My style of writing, honestly, was crude and awkward, and even the black words on the white page had something coarse about them, which horrified me. Under what authority was I supposed to introduce myself to her? In this moment, Marcello seemed to me to be the basest man in the world; he had inserted himself in the midst of two souls in love, and having gathered together their timid confessions, was bursting forth with a cry of death.”

Realizing that his own name lacks a legitimate relation to this other pairing of souls (“due anime innamorate”¹⁷⁰), and further insisting that “Marina aspettava una risposta, almeno un addio”¹⁷¹, Marcello opts to write the letter in Lucini’s name, using Lucini’s past letters to reproduce his style. The process of mimicking Lucini’s style proves laborious at first, but the nature of the experience changes abruptly when Marcello goes to pen the words “vi amo Marina.”¹⁷² In this instance, the mere prospect of Marcello authoring this declaration of love drives up the tension between indwelling souls and produces hitherto unseen psychical consequences:

Marcello si arrestò innanzi a questa frase e si accorse veramente di due anime, che si accapigliavano dentro di lui... Il cuore di Marcello batteva davvero, come alla vigilia d’una battaglia, e io non sapeva più distinguere in nome di chi tenessi la penna. Sentivo un impulso ignoto che mi spingeva innanzi, la mente scopriva con sua meraviglia parole nuove, e concetti fantastici, che avevano del diabolico; i nervi fremevano per un piacere muto e indecifrabile e superbo della mia missione, gustando quasi l’acre sapore della violenza e della gelosia, scrissi senza levare gli occhi dalla carta...¹⁷³

Here, in a surprising turn, the “impulso ignoto”¹⁷⁴ surges up from inside Marcello to propel the writing, all the while eclipsing his consciousness and leaving him with only a partial recollection of the event:

Una lagrima cadde sul foglio e Marcello se ne spaventò, come se altri piangesse in lui. A mente fredda non so ricordare tutto quanto la mano scrisse senza posa in tre pagine fitte...¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ “two souls in love”

¹⁷¹ “Marina was waiting for a response, at least a goodbye.”

¹⁷² “I love you, Marina.”

¹⁷³ “Marcello came to a stop on this sentence and truly became aware of two souls, wrangling inside him... Marcello’s heart was beating rapidly, like on the eve of a battle, and I was no longer able to discern in whose name I was holding the pen. I felt an unknown impulse spurring me on, my mind marveled at the discovery of new words, and fanciful concepts, which had something diabolical about them; my nerves quivered from a pleasure which was silent and incomprehensible and proud of my mission, almost tasting the acrid flavor of violence and jealousy, I wrote without lifting my eyes from the page...”

¹⁷⁴ “unknown impulse”

¹⁷⁵ “A tear fell on the page and Marcello became frightened, as though someone else were crying inside him. In a lucid state of mind, I cannot remember everything that my hand wrote without stopping in three dense pages...”

Despite his amnesia, Marcello testifies to the indelible imprint left on his soul by this experience, proclaiming: “dovevo essere trasfigurato e ancora porto nell’anima i segni di quell’ora”¹⁷⁶. The incidence of amnesia, which envelopes Marcello’s experience writing the letter and detaches it from the normal field of consciousness, is unique to this scene in the novella and it calls attention to a significant point around which De Marchi diverges from Tarchetti in his approach to the problem of the divided self. Whereas Tarchetti shows the Baron of B. in an altered state of consciousness, without the factor of amnesia, for the better part of his adventure, De Marchi only shows Marcello undergo a profound psychical alteration in one instance: in the letter-writing scene discussed above. In that instance, Marcello’s altered state of consciousness (his feeling “trasfigurato”¹⁷⁷), characterized by the emergence of somatic symptoms (“il cuore di Marcello...batteva davvero,”¹⁷⁸ “i nervi fremevano per un piacere...”¹⁷⁹) and the delegation of agency to the writing hand (“la mano scrisse senza posa”¹⁸⁰), is disavowed by his ego (“io non sapeva più distinguere in nome di chi tenessi la penna”¹⁸¹) and is cognizable to his lucid mind (“a mente fredda”¹⁸²) only through traces (“i segni”¹⁸³).

The series of passages examined above serve to illustrate how dynamics of Marcello’s internal situation intensify around the intimate aspects of life. Whenever Marcello ventures into the delicate corners of Lucini’s existence, Lucini tends to resurface as an internal component of

¹⁷⁶ “I must have been transfigured and I still bear traces of that hour in my soul.”

¹⁷⁷ “transfigured”

¹⁷⁸ “Marcello’s heart was beating rapidly”

¹⁷⁹ “my nerves quivered from a pleasure...”

¹⁸⁰ “my hand wrote without stopping”

¹⁸¹ “I was no longer able to discern in whose name I was holding the pen”

¹⁸² “In a lucid state of mind”

¹⁸³ “traces”

Marcello's psyche. If the imposture is passive in nature—as with the reading of the letters—then Lucini appears in a moralizing capacity, as an embodiment of self-reproach, suggestive of the Freudian superego function. By contrast, if the imposture is active in nature—as when Marcello writes to Marina—then Lucini is identified with the unconscious agency driving the creative process. Concerning these trends, the former seems to reflect a simple conflict of ideas or impulses, while the latter, comprising a significant dissociation, with the induction of an altered state of consciousness, indicates a more profound disruption in Marcello's psychical life.

The vicissitudes of this psychodrama are also encoded in the structure of the narrative itself, in the peculiar way the narrator accounts for his own role in the events narrated. In narrating his adventures, Marcello shuffles between three distinct modes of self-reference, including the enunciated “I,” and third-person invocations of the names Marcello and Lucini, to specify which personality or identity experienced agency at a given time. The narrator's specific decision to assume a third position equidistant from Lucini and Marcello, rather than identify himself with the Marcello of the past, signifies that in certain instances—or even in most instances—Marcello and Lucini act in concert, minimizing their differences by way of internal dialogue. On a broader level, moreover, this technique encapsulates the logic of the protagonist's transformation, presenting the unitary “I” of Marcello-the-narrator, not as a continuation of the narrated Marcello, but rather as a dialectical synthesis of the two narrated subjects, Marcello and Lucini. Thus, abstractly, *Due anime in un corpo* seems to showcase a model of self-discovery wherein the self—or rather its central organ, the ego—graphically embodied in the personal pronoun “I,” is negotiated and developed through a combination of intimate connection with and differentiation from the “not-I.”

Marcello's experience of an altered state of consciousness in conjunction with the acts of reading and writing, where moral and creative agency are transferred to the "other" consciousness, and where a formal awareness of the event is retained while memory of its content is not, suggests a literary representation of the dissociative phenomena underwriting the practice of automatic writing (that is, "trance" or "somnambolic" writing). In a more specific connection, De Marchi's letter-writing episode also lends expression to a nuanced cultural type, based on the analogy between writer and the *somnambule*, which Angelo Mangini uncover in the lesser-known writings of Luigi Capuana¹⁸⁴. In the 1884 volume *Spiritismo?*¹⁸⁵¹⁸⁶ (published six years after *Due anime in un corpo*), a work which seems to cut across the ideological fabric of the veristic project, Capuana characterizes spiritualism as a "problema psicologico letterario"¹⁸⁷ and expounds on the relationship between spiritualism (the domain of the *somnambule*) and the creative process (the domain of the artist). As Mangini observes, Capuana's volume draws a comprehensive series of parallels between the alterations of consciousness that occur relative to spiritistic and spiritualistic phenomena and those that occur relative to the literary operation:

The difference between the hallucinatory state of mind of mediums and the state which characterizes the artist's creativity is quantitative rather than qualitative... (the very marked... analogy) linking... (the two hallucinations)—the artistic and the somnambolic—is based on the common origin of both experiences in a "quasi coscienza" (almost conscious state) or "mezza coscienza" (semiconscious state), that is, in a liminal psychical space on the border between the conscious and unconscious. Crossing this border, we can explore that crucial "punto della creazione" (point of creation) in which the "facoltà artistica"¹⁸⁸ acts, exactly like the medianic faculty, "con completa incoscienza" (entirely unconsciously). Thus it is precisely the eclipsing of

¹⁸⁴ Mangini, "The Portrait of the Writer as a *Somnambule*: Reflections on *Verismo* and the Phantasmagoria in Verga and Capuana," 44.

¹⁸⁵ The text in question is a letter, addressed to Salvatore Farina.

¹⁸⁶ Luigi Capuana, *Spiritismo?* (Catania: Niccolò Giannotta, 1884).

¹⁸⁷ "a psychological-literary problem"

¹⁸⁸ "artistic faculty"

the ego which allows both the writer and the medium to communicate with a world inhabited by autonomous phantasmatic entities.

Here, the notion that creativity springs from a liminal psychological space on the border of conscious and unconscious would explain why, in Marcello's case, the newfound capacity of expression that he discovers while writing to Marina carries with it a sense of self-distancing and in fact remains outside the regular stream of memories available to his fully conscious mind. Mangini further argues that the "‘portrait of the writer as a medium’... is interesting because it does not merely locate the source of artistic and literary creativity in the unconscious but also proposes...the manifestation of spectral presence...as the equivalent of literary writing, presenting an analogy capable of leading us to the discovery of the latter's most intimate nature"¹⁸⁹.

Another way that Capuana sets out to illustrate the connection between artistic creativity and spiritualist practice is by way of personal anecdotes. In one instance, he tells of how, after spending hours at the Galleria di San Luca in Rome gazing at Van Dyck's *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*, he began to glimpse the spectral contours of the unknown woman in the dark corners of his house. This appearance, frightening though it was, planted an idea in his head for a short story that he was unable to write then or later. Mangini comments on the episode, remarking:

...it remains extremely difficult both for [Capuana] and for us to establish whether he is telling—in the first person—the story of a writer seeking to turn his own disturbing experiences in real life into a *novella*, or the story of a writer who experiences in real life the frightening events he first imagined as the subject of his fiction... We might go so far as to say that Capuana's essay, with its *mise en abyme* of the dialectic between character and author, appears to transform the fantastic tale into a kind of self-reflexive parable which recounts its own making and opens up a

¹⁸⁹ Angelo M. Mangini, "The Portrait of the Writer as a *Somnambule*: Reflections on *Verismo* and the Phantasmagoria in Verga and Capuana," in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 46-47.

space of metadiscursive comprehension in which it is possible to appreciate the secret and intimate link between literary creation and the evocation of spirits...¹⁹⁰

In addition to providing this autobiographical anecdote, and through it problematizing the dialectical identification of character and author, Capuana posits an analogy between the activity of writing and the medianic practice of “obbiettivazione dei tipi”¹⁹¹, a phenomenon in which the spirit possesses and ventriloquizes the medium. In this sense, he likens the spiritual medium who takes on the personality of the possessing spirit, blurring the borders between interior and exterior, to the author who finds himself equal parts character and actor in his own drama. Finally, in another anecdote related to the same conceptual grid, Capuana describes performing activities under the influence of “un impulso interiore”¹⁹²—specified as “qualcosa fra il cosciente e l’incosciente, quasi uno sdoppiamento dello spirito per cui metà di esso sembra agire con pienissima libertà e l’altra far da semplice spettatrice”¹⁹³—in a scenario reminiscent of Marcello acting at the behest of the “impulso ignoto”¹⁹⁴. The full account of this experience, which Capuana describes in terms of an “intuitive mediumship,” is provided below:

Un altro giorno, assorto nella lettura di un libro di storia che m'interessava moltissimo, dovetti, tutt'a un tratto, smetter di leggere perchè una voce interiore mi diceva, insistente: Contro il peccato originale ecco un argomento perentorio. In quel libro non c'era proprio nulla che accennasse a tale questione; e il mio convincimento intorno alla origine mitica di quel concetto era così fissato da un pezzo, che non provavo nessun bisogno di rafforzarlo con nuove ragioni. Scrisi, celeramente, senza nessuna cancellatura, una cinquantina di righe; ma quand' ebbi terminato e il sangue mi diede un tuffo, e un rimescolamento da capo a piedi, vertiginoso, mi

¹⁹⁰ Mangini, “The Portrait of the Writer as a *Somnambule*: Reflections on *Verismo* and the Phantasmagoria in Verga and Capuana,” 49.

¹⁹¹ “mediumistic channeling”

¹⁹² “internal impulse”

¹⁹³ “something between conscious and unconscious, almost a doubling of the spirit by means of which half of it seems to act with the fullest liberty while the other half acts as a mere spectator.”

¹⁹⁴ “unknown impulse”

sconvolse tutto, provai tale e tanta paura, che non ebbi più voglia di ricominciare. Mi era parso di morire!¹⁹⁵

The autoscopic “sdoppiamento”¹⁹⁶ described in the passage contains a few salient parallels with the episode involving Lucini’s letters in *Due anime in un corpo*. In both cases, the experience with the Double arises in the context of a reading, where it takes the form of a moralistically-toned inner voice. Also in both cases, the introspective and self-divisive movement heralded by the intonation of the inner voice foregrounds a transition, whether eventual or immediate, from the act of reading to the act of writing. Lastly, for both subjects, the shift from reading to writing coincides with the activation of a mysterious, inner impulse and culminates in a temporary alteration of psychosomatic reality. Looked at in the abstract, De Marchi’s literary representation and Capuana’s personal anecdote are underwritten by a common notion of an unknown and unthought “other,” present in the most intimate and inward regions of the self, serving as a fount for creativity, production and self-expansion¹⁹⁷.

In returning to the main thread of my analysis, I would like to call attention to a common trend underwriting the representation of split-consciousness in *Uno spirito in un lampone* and the representation of double-existence and split-consciousness in *Due anime in un corpo*. The tendency in both texts to ascribe a fundamentally positive connotation to the Double, and more specifically, to frame the experience with the Double not just as a liminal phenomenon, but as a conciliatory movement and a precursor to higher unity, carves a distinctive niche for Tarchetti’s

¹⁹⁵ “Another day, I was absorbed in the reading of a history book which interested me greatly, when all of a sudden, I was forced to stop reading because a voice inside me was saying, insistently: here is a preemptory argument against original sin. There was nothing at all in that book that touched on that question; and my conviction about the mythical origin of the concept had been fixed for so long that I felt no need to reinforce it with fresh reasoning. I rapidly penned, without any erasures, some fifty lines; but when I had finished, my pulse gave me a start, and a dizzying shudder from head to toe, it caused everything to turn upside down, I experienced such and so great a fright, that I lost all desire to start up again. I felt as if I had died!”

¹⁹⁶ “doubling”

¹⁹⁷ This motif of self-construction is developed through language suggestive of an ontological transformation, such as the original proposition of the soul-exchange and the notion that the writing left “*segnì*” [traces] on Marcello’s soul.

and De Marchi's representations in the wider context of nineteenth-century literature. I have noted how in stories like Poe's *William Wilson*, which typifies the self-destructive trend in doppelgänger fiction, and in stories like Tarchetti's *I fatali*, which typifies the corresponding trend in body fiction, the psychical or somatic fragmentation signaled by the presence of the Double foreshadows the existential dissolution brought on by death. But while a portion of modern literature has marked the encounter or experience with the Double as a symptom of psychosis, of irreversible disintegration, and a harbinger of destruction, neither of the texts analyzed does the experience with the Double herald a self-destructive event; on the contrary, the metempsychotic adventures plotted by Tarchetti and De Marchi deviate from these subtexts and resignify the Double as a vehicle for reconciliation and *Bildung*. In their texts, the Double appears laced with humor, divorced from serious pathology, and suggestive of an up-building trajectory, and as such, comes to designate a space for pursuing personal growth, resolution and truth.

At this point in the analysis, I will turn my focus to Verga's carefully crafted and quietly haunting novella, *Le storie del castello di Trezza* (first published in 1875 in *Illustrazione italiana*, and republished in the 1876 volume *Primavera e altri racconti* [reprinted in 1877]) to investigate an altogether different approach to the Double. Verga's representation of the double diverges markedly from the approaches of Tarchetti and de Marchi in the sense that, rather than visualizing two autonomous centers of volition vying for dominance within the (more or less metaphorical) theater of the physical body, Verga plots a duel between the two autonomous levels of the narrative itself. Because the two narrative levels correspond to different temporalities—one to the present and the other to the remote (albeit legendary) past—and moreover, because the plot concerns itself with the obvious patterns of correspondence between

these temporalities, it seems thematically fitting to speak of Verga's double in terms of repetition.

Verga's novella unfolds in a contrapuntal fashion, with the frame narrative bookending and interlacing the embedded legends. The frame narrative focuses on a company of friends who pass their leisure time in the precincts of Aci Castello. While the young Signor Luciano charms Signora Matilde with lore about the old castle, Matilde's husband, Signor Giordano, plays cards and fraternizes with Signora Olani. Characteristically taciturn with respect to direct psychological insights, Verga's narrator employs linguistic and extra-linguistic cues to hint about his characters' motives. In this sense, it is implied that Giordano tyrannizes his wife, whereas Matilde grows fearful of her husband in light of her increasing attraction to Luciano. The first legend centers on Donna Isabella, the second wife of the brutish Baron Don Garzia d'Arvelo and recounts a series of ghostly disturbances that occur following her arrival at the castle. The second legend focuses on the tragic romance between Don Garzia's first wife, Donna Violante, and the young page Corrado. At the end of the frame narrative, Giordano, Matilde and Luciano are braving the precarious walk along the castle drawbridge. As Matilde furtively takes hold of Luciano's hand, Giordano—whose suspicions have been aroused—calls out his wife's name. Startled, she plummets into the abyss, taking Luciano with her¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁸ The following serves as a more detailed summary:

The first legend of *Le storie del castello di Trezza* centers on Donna Isabella, the second wife of the brutish Baron Don Garzia d'Arvelo (described variously as Isabella's "signore e marito," "signore e padrone"), who is said to have ruled Aci Castello-Aci Trezza centuries ago. Within a few nights of arriving at her husband's castle, Don Garzia's new bride has become convinced that the residence is haunted by the ghost of the Baron's first wife, Donna Violante. Although Don Garzia refutes the notion vehemently, the servants fuel Isabella's suspicions with tales of supernatural encounters. When Isabella inquires about the circumstances of Donna Violante's death she receives discrepant explanations. Grazia, Violante's former chambermaid, maintains that the lady had flung herself from the window and drowned in the sea; Don Garzia merely cites a transient illness. After Don Garzia berates his servants for their credulity, he, along with his gamekeeper Bruno, come face to face with a demon bearing Violante's form. Killing the demon, Don Garzia exacts an oath of silence from Bruno under penalty of death, but the precaution only stokes the gamekeeper's paranoia. The legend ends with Bruno killing Don Garzia during a hunting trip and Isabella returning to live with her family.

At first glance, *Le storie del castello di Trezza* appears to lack the sort of intrapsychic conflict problematized by Tarchetti and De Marchi and instead seems to concern itself with the relationship between present and past, or between reality and the collective imaginary. Still, without denying the relevance of these principles in determining the formal structure of the narrative, I would like to raise the additional possibility of reading the relationship between narrative levels in intrapsychic terms, based on the Lacanian notion of the subject split by language (that is, split through subordination to the signifier at the time of its introduction into the symbolic order)¹⁹⁹²⁰⁰. Lacan characterizes the relation of ego to unconscious in the context of linguistic and other signifying productions by positing a distinction between two types of subject: the subject of the enunciated (l'énoncé) and the subject of the enunciation (l'énonciation). In a given linguistic statement, the subject of the enunciated can be equated with the ego, the seat of consciousness, as embodied in the enunciated "I" of the statement, whereas

The second legend focuses on the story of Don Garzia and his first wife, Donna Violante. Their marriage is revealed to be a loveless one, the product of a political arrangement, and Don Garzia—a savage condottiere—sees little reason to alter his boorish ways before his seemingly meek and passive wife. As for the baroness, resigned though she may be to her position of subservience, there is one vice of her husband's that sparks her outrage and that is his shameless philandering. One night, Violante, desiring revenge, seduces the page Corrado, who falls head over heels for her. The next morning, she attempts to save Corrado's life by convincing her husband to discharge him, but despite being given orders to depart immediately, Corrado is smitten and he steals into Violante's bedchamber with the intention of dying honorably. There, Corrado and Violante profess their love for one another before Corrado—upon hearing Don Garzia approach—hastens to his death down a trapdoor. Two nights later, Don Garzia awakens to the sound of a piercing shriek, just in time to see Violante take her fatal plunge.

The events of the frame narrative conclude with Giordano, Matilde and Luciano braving the precarious walk along the castle drawbridge at night. As Luciano takes hold of Matilde's hand, Giordano—whose suspicions have been aroused—suddenly calls out his wife's name. Startled, Matilde lets out a shriek and falls into the abyss, taking Luciano with her.

¹⁹⁹ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 677-679. I have opted to translate "énoncé" as "enunciated" rather than "statement."

²⁰⁰ Lacanian ideas about the autonomy of language and desire in relation to the subject, and about the repetitive and destructive character of the drives, seem to dominate the mise-en-scene of *Le storie del castello di Trezza*. Also worth noting is the treatment of the real, which makes itself felt in verga's text on three different levels. In symbolic terms, it is designated by the abyss; in imaginary terms, it irrupts in the form of the demon-Violante; in real terms, it is signaled by the uncanny repetition that drives Luciano and Matilde to act out (and relive) the fates of Corrado and Violante (the novella opens with an account of Luciano studying Matilde's gaze, while the Matilde dwells fixedly on the abyss, reflecting its opacity in her eyes; the novella closes with an account of Luciano and Matilde being swallowed by the abyss, only to return as ghosts in the imaginary). For additional indications regarding these modalities for the expression of the real, see: Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Verso, 2012), 850-853.

the subject of the enunciation can be equated with the subject of the unconscious, which emerges through the signifiers produced in the act of enunciating. In Verga's novella, the force of the distinction between enunciating and enunciated subject is concentrated around the "I" which Luciano and Matilde assume for the purpose of narrating and discussing the legends, and which serves as a cover for the expression of their unconscious motives²⁰¹²⁰². I will expand on this thesis by examining two areas of psychological experience depicted in the text: eros-desire²⁰³ and anxiety-fear.

On the question of eros-desire, I would like to highlight the different means used in the text to express the orientation of desire relative to Giordano, Matilde and Luciano. Due to a general tendency toward concealment, suppression or repression in the frame narrative, one must often rely on indirect hints and inference patterns to establish a sense of the characters' motivations. The narrator issues a single, direct reflection on the state of affairs in the marital triangle when he opines near the end of Chapter VI that either "i due che s'amavano avevano saputo nascondere la loro febbre, o il marito avea saputo dissimulare la sua collera, o la signora Olani era stata più assorbente"²⁰⁴. Little is said concerning Giordano's relationship with signora Olani, except that he spends time with her instead of with his wife, that he dons a superficial mask in her presence but sheds it upon leaving her at the gate of her villa ("una maschera fosse imposta sino a quel

²⁰¹ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 677-679.

²⁰² Lacan maintains that the enunciated subject is the effect of his signifiers (verbal and non-verbal language), all of which originate from the place of the Other, from the unconscious. In this sense, all of the subjects who participate in the storytelling—including Luciano, Giordano and Matilde—are signified by way of a collective ritual of meaning-making. Beyond the acts of telling or listening to the legends, this meaning-making is a function of the way the legends are narrated, of the specific variants selected or invented, of the facts included or omitted and of the discussions which arise out of their telling.

²⁰³ I am basing my discussion of desire in Verga's text around a Lacanian definition of the concept.

²⁰⁴ "the two who were in love knew how to hide their fever, or her husband knew how to hide his anger, or signora Olani was more absorbing."

momento”²⁰⁵) and that in one instance, signora Olani contents herself with watching Giordano play cards (a fact which elicits an ambiguous “ah!...” from Matilde). Concerning the relationship between Matilde and Luciano, a sense of increasing erotic tension is established in the narration of their interactions through the proliferation of nonverbal signifiers, of gestures both performed and omitted, and of gazes exchanged, starting with the account of Matilde’s altered demeanor at the beginning of Chapter VI (“...il contegno di [Matilde], le sue risposte, furono così imbarazzate, che il giovane ne fu imbarazzato egli pure, senza saper perché”²⁰⁶)²⁰⁷²⁰⁸. Then, in the wake of Matilde’s departure, the text provides the following account of the lovers’ mutual, unspoken attraction:

Ella partì, nè seppe giammai quali notti ardenti di visioni egli avesse passato, quali febbri l’avessero roso accanto a lei, mentre sembrava così calmo e indifferente, quante volte fosse stato a divorarla, non visto, cogli occhi, e quel che si fosse passato dentro di lui allorchè sorridendo dovette dirle addio dinanzi a tutti, e quando la vide passare, rincantucciata nell’angolo della carrozza, colle guance pallide e gli occhi fisi nel vuoto, e qual nodo d’amarezza gli avesse

²⁰⁵ “a mask had been laid over it until that moment”

²⁰⁶ “...her demeanor, her responses, betrayed such awkwardness that the young man became awkward himself, without knowing why.”

²⁰⁷ Cf. “anche il marito avea cambiato maniere — senza che nulla nulla fosse avvenuto, senza che una parola fosse stata detta, senza che Luciano stesso sapesse ancora perchè ei fosse così turbato, perchè l’imbarazzo di lei rendesse imbarazzato anche lui, e perchè si fosse accorto del cambiamento del signor Giordano.” [her husband, too, was behaving differently—without anything having happened whatsoever, without a word having been said, without Luciano himself yet knowing the reason he was so shaken, the reason her embarrassment also made him embarrassed, and the reason for his having noticed the change in signor Giordano].

²⁰⁸ Matilde is described as being “sempre allegra, spiritosa ed amabile con tutti, ma con [Luciano] era cambiata” [still happy, witty, amiable with everyone, but with Luciano she was different]. It is mentioned that, while escorting Matilde home, “Luciano premette quel braccio delicato che s’appoggiava leggermente al suo, e che gli rispose tremante e gli si abbandonò confidente e innamorato, a lui che non avrebbe potuto proteggerla neppure dando tutto il sangue delle sue vene” [Luciano pressed that delicate arm that rested gently against his own, and that responded to him trembling and abandoned itself to him, confident and in love, to him who could not have protected her, even by giving all the blood in his veins]. At Matilde’s doorstep, “si volsero uno sguardo, uno sguardo solo, lucente nella penombra — quello della donna smarrita — e chinaron gli occhi” [they shared a glance, a single glance, sparkling in the half-light—the glance of the lost woman—and lowered their eyes]; however, “[Luciano] non osò stringerle la mano” [Luciano did not dare squeeze her hand]. Later, it is reported that “quando s’incontrarono di nuovo, dopo lungo tempo, parvero non conoscersi, non vedersi, impallidirono e non si salutarono” [when they saw each other again, after a long time, they seemed not to know each another, not to see each other, they turned pale and did not greet each other]; “Luciano e la signora Matilde stavano zitti da lungo tempo, ed evitavano di guardarsi” [Luciano and signora Matilde stayed quiet for a long time, and avoided looking at each other].

affogato il cuore allorchè rivide chiusa quella finestra dove l'avea vista tante volte. L'indovinò? indovinò egli stesso quel che avesse sofferto ella pure?²⁰⁹

Later, a chance meeting between Matilde and Luciano leads to a sexual encounter—as one may infer from the elliptical construction “E il domani si videro —”²¹⁰—after which Matilde (described as “balbettando come in sogno”²¹¹ with “l'anima ebbra di estasi, i polsi tremanti di febbre, e gli occhi pieni di lagrime”²¹²) asks Luciano: “perchè m'avete raccontato quella storia? [...] Era pentimento, rimprovero, o presentimento?”²¹³. This question, positing an equivalence between Matilde and Violante, signals an attempt by Matilde to make sense of her experience by referring it to the legal and moral discourse of the first legend. The implication is that Matilde and Luciano have come to relate to each other via their identifications with Violante and Corrado, the figures of legend.

The fact that this identification between Matilde and Violante is posited directly prior to the narration of the second legend also establishes the importance of the second legend's discourse for reflexively mapping motives and desires in the frame narrative. Concerning the intersubjective system of the second legend, one may observe how the structure of the relations between La Mena—don Garzia—Violante—Corrado approximately correlates to the structure of the relations between signora Olani—Giordano—Matilde—Luciano. This parallelism that

²⁰⁹ “She left, never knowing about the nights he had spent with burning visions, about the fevers that ate away at him when he was around her, while he seemed so calm and indifferent, how many times he had been ready to devour her, unseen, with his eyes, and what had happened inside him as soon as, smiling, he had to say goodbye to her in front of everyone, and when he saw her go by, hidden away in the corner of the coach, with her pale cheeks and her eyes staring emptily, and the knot of bitterness that had overwhelmed his heart when he saw that the window where he had seen her so many times was closed. Did he guess? Did he himself guess how much she also suffered?”

²¹⁰ “and the next day they saw each other—”

²¹¹ “stammering as though in a dream”

²¹² “her soul drunk with ecstasy, her wrists feverish and trembling, and her eyes full of tears”

²¹³ “Why did you tell me that story? [...] Was it penitence, reproach or presentiment?”

emerges between legend and reality invites one to view the former constellation of characters as a quartet of alter egos for the latter constellation. In the legend's exposition, the reference to don Garzia's extramarital activities with La Mena serves to explicate, in eroticizing terms, the indefinite relationship between Giordano and signora Olani. From here, the account of Violante and Corrado's doomed affair emerges as the locus of signification for the romance between Matilde and Luciano (who, by turning pale "qualche volta durante quel racconto che conoscevano"²¹⁴, reveal their captivation by and sense of complicity in the scenario narrated). In this context, the legend introduces at least two principles of cohesion for synthesizing the disparate events and experiences documented in the frame narrative. For one, the insistence on a causal link between the discovery of her husband's infidelity and Violante's adultery with Corrado offers a rationalization, or imaginary *raison d'être*, for the real-world transgression that Matilde has undertaken with Luciano²¹⁵. Also, whereas in the frame narrative Matilde and Luciano appear bound by a mutual, unspoken attraction, in the second legend, Violante is painted as the jealous seductress of Corrado and the clear instigator of the sexual encounter: "Ella gli afferrò il capo con gesto risoluto, con occhi ardenti e foschi, e gli stampò sulla bocca un bacio di fuoco"²¹⁶. By developing *en abyme* these models of causality and the dynamic of seducer-seduced (or of domination-submission), the second legend offers a synthetic and coherent framework for situating the unknown aspects of Matilde and Luciano's reality.

²¹⁴ "turned pale during the telling of that tale which they knew."

²¹⁵ "Per l'altera castellana Corrado non era altro che un domestico...Ella dunque parlava come fra sè, colla sua eco, perchè il suo cuore era troppo pieno, perchè l'amarezza non s'era sfogata in lagrime..." [For the haughty mistress of the castle, Corrado was nothing more than a servant, a young man whose coat of arms was embroidered on his velvet jerkin, and he was elegant, and had a head of blond hair, bejeweled to pay homage to the house. She thus spoke as though with herself, with her echo, because her heart was too full, because the bitterness had not been vented through tears...].

²¹⁶ "She grabbed hold of his head with a determined gesture, her eyes burning and somber, and planted a fiery kiss on his mouth."

The second aspect of Verga's narrative that I wish to consider in the scope of this reading is the segment of affective experience that encompasses fear and anxiety. Each of the two legends comprises a distinct discourse relating to the experience of these affects: the discourse of the first legend privileges an experience of primal fear, directed at unknown and unseen dangers and objectified in the apparition of the demon-Violante, while the discourse of the second legend privileges the experience of anxiety resulting from a sexual transgression and the fear of punishment under the household law. Unlike the primal fear thematized in the first legend, which spreads like a contagion to afflict even the most battle-hardened occupants of the castle, the anxiety-fear thematized in the second legend is limited to the person of Violante, for whom it appears mingled with desire and manifests in a concern for the wellbeing of another person (Corrado) in relation to the embodiment of the law (don Garzia). These combined discourses play a role in coordinating the articulations of fear and anxiety in the frame narrative, as demonstrated in the dialogue that takes place between Matilde and Luciano in Chapter VI. Speaking about the two legends in general, Matilde remarks that the single most frightening element is not the supernatural haunting, but rather, Don Garzia's sadistic disregard for Corrado wasting away in the oubliette. Matilde's fixation on this detail about Don Garzia's treatment of Corrado seems to translate a presentiment about Giordano's attitude toward Luciano, and by that same token, mark Giordano as a source of fear²¹⁷. When Luciano tries to comfort Matilde by claiming that the particular household dynamic between Don Garzia and Donna Violante "non sarebbe più possibile oggi che i mariti ricorrono ai Tribunali, o alla peggio si battono,"²¹⁸ Matilde becomes distracted and insists that they change the subject. Far from affirming

²¹⁷ Although this detail, which pertains to the second legend, is referenced outside the narrative and chronological order, one is given to understand that the characters' knowledge of the legends predates the events of the plot.

²¹⁸ "That would no longer be possible today now that husbands have recourse to the courts, or at worst there are duels."

Luciano's optimistic view of modernity, this gesture seems to reverse it, creating the impression that one ought to fear Giordano in the same way one does Don Garzia. This impression is sustained by the words "ho paura...ho paura di lui"²¹⁹ which Matilde speaks to Luciano at the gate of signora Olani's villa after noticing a change in Giordano's demeanor.

Expressions of fear also make up the content of a metaleptic reordering technique, realized in the final scene of the novella, where units of meaning produced in the legends are repeated and resignified in the frame narrative. The scene in question takes place following the recitation of the second legend, and opens with Luciano warning Matilde that Giordano is watching her; the realization that she is being surveilled (the seeing of herself being seen) causes Matilde to change color ("Ella si fece rossa, poi impallidì"²²⁰), which in turn prompts Giordano to ask: "avete paura?"²²¹ ("con un sorrisetto sardonico"²²²). What is noteworthy about this exchange is the way Giordano's question to Matilde, "avete paura?", mirrors, with a simple alteration of tense, the "avreste paura?"²²³ that Don Garzia asks Isabella in the scene where the latter turns uncharacteristically pale. The manner in which the same cluster of signifiers from the exchange between Isabella and Don Giordano at level of the narrated is recontextualized in the exchange between Matilde and Giordano at the level of the narration discloses traces, in the text, of a metadiscursive consciousness, an autonomous ordering principle which transcends formal narrative divisions and linearities.

²¹⁹ "I am afraid...I am afraid of him."

²²⁰ "She became red, then turned pale"

²²¹ "Are you afraid?"

²²² "With a sardonic smirk"

²²³ "you wouldn't be afraid, would you?"

I would like to conclude this discussion of *Le storie del castello di Trezza* with some further observations about the metadiscursive dimension of the text. As I have sought to establish briefly with the above analysis, Verga's novella explores the phenomenon of the oral legend in its capacity as a discourse that is told, heard, interpreted, remembered, forgotten, retold and beyond that, synthesized into experience and lived. Continuing in this vein, I wish to draw attention to some ways in which the phenomena of storytelling are actualized in the text, starting with the device of the raconteur, which comes to function in the frame narrative as the place of articulation for the legends. Signally, whereas in the telling of the first legend, the function of the raconteur devolves on Luciano, in the telling of the second legend, this function is attributed to an impersonal voice. By thus staging the articulation of the legends through multiple voices and showing the legends operating as a shared discourse, the narrative underscores the intersubjective and collective dimension of storytelling. At the same time, the narrator's acknowledgement at the beginning of Chapter V that there are as many versions of the first legend as there are storytellers ("questa era la leggenda del Castello di Trezza, che tutti sapevano nei dintorni, che tutti raccontavano in modo diverso, landovi gli spiriti, le anime del Purgatorio, e la Madonna dell'Ognina"²²⁴), also establishes a sense of the idiolectal variance that emerges from one telling to the next. In the space of the legends themselves, the privileging of certain oral discourses across a multiplicity of subjective viewpoints serves to develop the theme of storytelling on a more nuanced level. For instance, reports of ghostly sightings and encounters, compiled by the chambermaid Grazia and told to Isabella, play a crucial role generating suspense in the first legend, as the following passage demonstrates:

²²⁴ "this was the legend of the Castello di Trezza, known to everyone in the surrounding parts, which everyone told in a different way, putting in spirits, souls in Purgatory and the Madonna dell'Ognina."

Alcuni pescatori poi ch'erano andati sul mare assai prima degli altri, raccontano d'aver visto l'anima della baronessa, tutta vestita di bianco, come una santa che ella era, sulla porta della guardiola lassù, e passeggiare tranquillamente su e giù per la scala rovinata, ove un gabbiano avrebbe paura ad appollaiarsi, quasi stesse camminando su di un bel tappeto turco, e nella miglior sala del castello.²²⁵²²⁶

Also in the first legend, another oral discourse—the rumors circulating on the anniversary of Violante's death—proves instrumental in bringing about don Garzia's downfall: "...però, non si sa come, cominciavasi a buccinare al castello e fuori che la cosa fosse proprio avvenuta come sembrava, e come don Garzia non voleva che sembrasse..."²²⁷²²⁸. Finally, to the collection of passages that generate interest from a metadiscursive standpoint, one may add the last sentence of the novella, where it is suggested that Matilde and Luciano have themselves been absorbed into the lore of the place: "a Trezza si dice che nelle notti di temporale si odano di nuovo dei gemiti, e si vedano dei fantasmi fra le rovine del castello"²²⁹²³⁰. This final twist, evidencing the

²²⁵ "Some fishermen, having gone out to sea much earlier than the others, tell of having seen the soul of the baroness, all dressed in white, like the saint that she was, on the door of the lodge above, and walking calmly up and down the ruined staircase, where a seagull would be afraid to perch, almost as though she were walking on a nice Turkish rug, and in the best room of the castle."

²²⁶ Cf. The fishermen's accounts of Cecilia in *Malombra*: "e alla notte, neh, faceva dei versi e cantava delle ore e delle ore sulla stessa musica, che i pescatori di R... quando andavano fuori di notte la sentivano lontano un miglio" [well, this poor lady went mad, and at night she would write poetry, and sing for hours together, always the same air, and the fishermen at R—, when, they went out in their boats at night, could hear her a mile away].

²²⁷ "...but, without anyone knowing how, at the castle and elsewhere tongues set to wagging that the thing had happened just the way it seemed, and the way don Garzia did not want it to seem..."

²²⁸ Rumors also play an important role in the second legend, serving as the means by which word gets back to Violante about her husband's extramarital activities.

²²⁹ "At Trezza it is said that on stormy nights, new moaning can be heard and new ghosts can be spotted among the ruins of the castle."

²³⁰ Cf. the final paragraph of *Malombra*: "Ma le fontane, discorrendo tra loro nella notte quieta, dicevano che Marina era passata come Cecilia, il conte Cesare come i suoi avi, che nuovi signori verrebbero per passare alla loro volta e non valeva la pena di turbarsene. Quando, presso l'alba, uscì la luna e si posò sul pavimento della loggia, sulla pompa delle dracene e delle azalee che nessuno avea pensato a rimuovere, ella parve cercar là dentro, col suo sorriso voluttuoso, ciò che non si trovava ancora, quella notte, nel Palazzo, ma che la vicenda delle cose umane vi ha quindi portato: degli altri occhi da empir di chimere, degli altri cuori da muovere alla passione, invece di quelli che se n'erano appena liberati per sempre." [But the fountains, murmuring softly to one another in the stillness of the night, were saying that Marina had passed away like Cecilia, and Count Caesar like his ancestors before him, that new lords would come and would pass away in their turn, and that it was not worthwhile to trouble one's self about them. When, towards daybreak, the moon rose, and flooded the marble floor of the loggia and the rich masses of foliage plants and azaleas, which no one had taken the trouble to remove, she seemed, with her voluptuous smile, to be seeking for something which, that night, she did not find at the castle, but which the vicissitudes of human affairs have since then placed there; other eyes to dazzle with illusions, other hearts to stir with passion, in the place of those which had just been set free forever.]

subtraction of the protagonists from the space of the narration and their relocation in the space of the narrated, testifies to the legend's status as an autonomous, palingenetic and trans-subjective discourse—or in so many words, as a discourse of the drive, which writes itself anew in the lives of those who tell and hear it.

It has been the aim of this chapter to examine the way the theme of the Double is configured in three Italian texts published between 1869 and 1877. In the first two texts analyzed—Tarchetti's Fantastic tale, *Uno spirito in un lampone* and De Marchi's sentimental crime thriller, *Due anime in un corpo*—the respective problems of split-consciousness and double-existence are explored through the lens of spiritual possession. To be precise, in the former instance, the language of spiritual possession serves to denote a supernatural adventure while in the latter instance, the same language serves as a rhetorical flourish. Notwithstanding this distinction, however, the Double may be interpreted along the same lines in both instances: that is, as a bridge to a higher unity of character and as device for illustrating the protagonist's progress through a difficult period of transition. In the third text analyzed—Verga's *Le storie del castello di Trezza*—the Double is configured along the lines of historical and metanarrative repetition, and my analysis of that text took into special consideration the way the two levels of the narrative relate to one another like different levels of the psyche. Verga's text ultimately differs from those of Tarchetti and De Marchi, not only because of the unique approach it takes to splitting the unity of character, but also for the way it uses the Double thematically to produce a pessimistic statement about human nature.

Chapter 3—Fogazzaro’s *Malombra*

The experiences with inner duality, self-division and repetition, explicitly showcased in the works of Tarchetti, de Marchi and Verga, are also central to the thematic architecture of Antonio Fogazzaro’s *Malombra*²³¹. The present chapter will use the double as a critical instrument for understanding and unpacking the labyrinth of psychological motives in Fogazzaro’s text. My analysis of *Malombra* will occur in three parts. The first part will draw on the theories of Freud and post-Freudian thinkers (namely, Abraham and Torok) to analyze the psychical itinerary of the novel’s main plot. This part will focus primarily on the relations between the three primary characters (Cesare, Marina and Silla). The second part will examine the different ways in which ancillary characters and subplots serve as foils for the protagonists and aspects of the novel’s plotline. The third part, which will have a comparative focus, will concentrate on the relationship between *Malombra* and the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and

²³¹ Antonio Fogazzaro, *Malombra*, Biblioteca Economica Newton, 102 (Rome: Newton & Compton Editori, 1997).

Verga studied in the previous chapter. I will foreground this analysis with a brief discussion of interpretive issues.

There is, to be sure, a plurality of idiosyncratic codes for reading *Malombra*. In mentioning this, I mean to draw attention to an ambiguity that has sparked curiosity among the modern readership. The ambiguity in question concerns the true nature of the phenomenon whereby the heroine, Marina, gradually assumes the identity of a forebear, Cecilia. Tiziano Sandroni, in his analysis of the novel's narrative discourse, proposes two alternative ways of reading this transformation:

- 1) Marina is the actual reincarnation of Cecilia Varrega; or
- 2) Marina is subject to a powerful and highly systematized delusion²³².

Sandroni, whose stated purpose is to investigate *Malombra*'s relationship to the literature of the fantastic, arrives by way of a surgical analysis at a conclusion that many critics, starting with Croce, had already expressed intuitively: namely, that Fogazzaro's "fantastic" is mere window-dressing, an artifice designed to hold the reader in suspense. To put it in his own words:

Sembra che il narratore di *Malombra*, nel suo giocare a nascondino col lettore bari volutamente per creare attorno alla vicenda, in modo artificiale, un'aura di mistero che poi non trova fondamento concreto nell'effettivo svolgersi dei fatti...

...Le premesse dell'intreccio, teoricamente disponibile anche per una soluzione fantastica, non trovano poi adeguata e coerente risposta nell'atteggiamento del narratore. E' questa la ragione per cui *Malombra* lascia alla fine nel lettore un sottile senso di disorientamento dovuto alla sua incompiutezza in rapporto ad una potenzialità fantastica posseduta ma di fatto non estrinsecata...²³³

²³² Tiziano Sandroni, *Malombra e il fantastico: analisi del testo e dell'enunciazione* (1989).

²³³ "It seems that the narrator of *Malombra*, in playing hide-and-seek with the reader, deliberately cheats in order to artificially invest the scene with an air of mystery which nevertheless has no concrete basis in the actual unfolding of the facts... the premises of the intrigue, though theoretically open to a fantastic resolution, are not met with a suitable and coherent response in the narrator's attitude. This is why *Malombra*'s ending leaves the reader with a vague sense of disorientation, owing to its incompleteness relative to the potential for the fantastic which is in fact never expressed..."

Despite the thorough and meticulous nature of Sandroni's study, his findings do not represent a universal consensus.

In a later study, Ann Caesar implicitly rejects Sandroni's interpretation when she argues for the epistemological certainty of the supernatural element in the novel's plot²³⁴. According to Caesar's reading, "the supernatural expresses itself in the novel through metempsychosis, whereby the spirit of Marina's dead ancestor, Cecilia, passes into her after the discovery of the relics"²³⁵. The reading Caesar proposes moves beyond the two alternatives suggested by Sandroni (that either Marina is unstable or she is the [not specifically metempsychotic] reincarnation of Cecilia) to posit a third, more immanent scenario in which Cecilia inhabits Marina by way of spiritual possession. Caesar undoubtedly has the following passage in mind when she speaks of Cecilia's ghost "passing into Marina:"

La sua forte intelligenza e la sua volontà, chiuse nel cervello, fatto intorno a sé un gran silenzio, combattevano il fantasma uscito dallo stipo aperto davanti alla graziosa persona col truce proposito d'infiltrarlesi nel sangue, di avvinghiarlesi alle ossa, di suggerle la vita e l'anima per mettersi al loro posto...²³⁶

While on its face, this passage pictures a "fantasma" bent on ousting Marina's own soul and usurping its place, cues from the broader context cast doubt on the literality of the scenario. If anything, the very next sentence in the description situates the same "fantasma" in a vague metaphorical grid:

In altri momenti lo scetticismo che Marina teneva dall'uso del mondo non l'avrebbe nemmeno lasciata accostare da qualsiasi fantasma; ma quel sottile velo di scetticismo che copriva sempre il

²³⁴ Ann Hallamore Caesar, "Sensation, Seduction and the Supernatural: Fogazzaro's *Malombra*," in *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic: Encounters and Rewritings of Narrative Traditions*, ed. Francesca Billiani and Gigliola Sulis (2007), 23-43.

²³⁵ Sandroni, *Malombra e il fantastico: analisi del testo e dell'enunciazione*, 66.

²³⁶ "Her strong will, her powerful intelligence alone, amid the dismal silence of the room, fought with the hideous [ghost] that had seized on her young life and now sought to [infiltrate] her blood, [clasp onto her bones] and [suck out her life and soul], with a view to replacing her identity with its own."

pensiero in tempo di calma come una crittogama di acque stagnanti, si era squarciato e disperso nell'incomprensibile turbamento di spirito che l'aveva assalita tornando al Palazzo.²³⁷

What is more, interpreting this “fantasma” as a literal spirit raises contradictions elsewhere in the reading. To speak of: if Cecilia’s spirit only takes possession of Marina’s body when she discovers the relics, what is the significance of the *déjà vu*-type phenomenon that she experiences prior to that moment? If that occurrence is taken to represent an actual vision of a former life, it would follow that Marina was already Cecilia’s reincarnation (or already possessed by her), making a secondary spiritual infiltration—taking place at a literal level—appear gratuitous.

To prove that this type of questioning is not all pedantry, and that the open-endedness of the text does present the reader with an intellectual challenge²³⁸ that he may try in vain to master, I would like to draw attention to an idiosyncrasy in F. Thorold Dickson’s English translation of *Malombra*, dated 1896. For all practical purposes, Dickson shows attention to detail and does an admirable job recreating Fogazzaro’s sense, style and tone. The translation contains only a few errors and omissions, and yet there is one especially well-placed blunder which threatens to alter the code of reading and tilt the reader toward a predetermined judgment of the facts. The error in question, found at the beginning of Cecilia’s manuscript (a text within the text) appears directly after the passage where Cecilia wonders what her name will be in her second life:

‘Yes, I must remember, great heavens! If not, why enter a second existence? I have prayed to the Holy Virgin and Saint Cecilia to reveal to me the name by which I shall then be known. They

²³⁷ “At other times Marina’s worldly-wise skepticism would have prevented her from even allowing herself to be approached by any [ghost] from the other world; but that this veil of skepticism, which usually masked her thoughts like a [poisonous weed] upon a stagnant pool, had been broken up and dispersed by the strange anguish of mind into which she had been thrown as she returned to the palace.”

²³⁸ I disagree with Sandroni’s implication that this “disorienting” effect detracts from the literary quality of the work.

have not granted my prayer. Nevertheless, whatever be your name, you who have found and are reading these words, recognize that within you dwells my own unhappy spirit. Before you were born you had undergone immense sufferings' (these last two words were repeated ten times over in large letters) 'under the name of Cecilia.

'Remember *Marina Cecilia Verrega* di Camogli, the unhappy wife of Emanuele d'Ormengo.'²³⁹

Critically, where the first name should read "Maria," it reads "Marina." Marina, of course, is the name of the novel's protagonist and the person who, after reading the manuscript, becomes convinced she is Cecilia's reincarnation. It is also interesting that a second error—an "e" is substituted for the "a" in "Varrega"—should occur in such proximity to the first one, given the relative infrequency of orthographical errors. Since "Varrega," Cecilia's family name, appears two other times with its proper spelling, there can be no question of a deliberate modification by the translator. In its correct form, the line should read:

'Remember *Maria Cecilia Varrega* di Camogli, the unhappy wife of Emanuele d'Ormengo.'

Under other circumstances, a small orthographical error such as this might be imputed to a misprint or a misreading. However, unlike many accidental mistakes, this one does not mutilate the text or interrupt its flow in any way. On the contrary, for the English reader unfamiliar with the Italian text, the error camouflages itself perfectly, re-semanticizing the sentence to imply that Cecilia accurately predicts her future name. Little does the reader know that a single extraneous letter has subverted the original meaning in such a way that will bias his eventual understanding of the plot. This "accident" thus seems to serve a purpose, whether by endorsing one reading over the other, or simply by reducing epistemological uncertainty, and thus has the value of a

*lapsus calami*²⁴⁰²⁴¹, in the Freudian sense of an unconsciously motivated act. It is as though Dickson, noticing how cautiously Fogazzaro holds back judgment on the question of Marina's transformation into Cecilia, unconsciously devised a ploy to master the uncertainty²⁴².

In considering the differential interpretations of *Malombra*, it becomes clear that the ambiguity underlying the production of meaning in the text is of a twofold nature. On the one hand, the reader encounters instances of rhetorical uncertainty, where the line between literal and figurative is blurred, and on the other hand, the reader faces instances of hermeneutic and epistemological uncertainty, where the line is blurred between rational and irrational. However, instead of making a protracted attempt to disentangle these two axes, I am simply inclined to point out a critical option that they pose for the reader. The critical reader of *Malombra* has a choice between carving out a univocal code of reading that does not square with all the facts (or at least is never explicitly confirmed), and assigning an interpretive value to the factor of uncertainty itself. In my view, this final indeterminacy need not be regarded as a defect or a sign of incompleteness, and on the contrary, might be understood and even cherished as Fogazzaro's way of hollowing out a space in the text, for the unknown, the unknowable, the real—for that vague and ineffable quantity that he wrestles with time and again in his art.

I will now turn from this interpretive issue to the question of genre, with the aim of applying certain generic considerations—those regarding *Malombra*'s English Gothic heritage—toward the construction a critical mindset. In this connection, Anne Caesar once again proves to

²⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud, "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life" (1901), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974).

²⁴¹ Antonio Fogazzaro, *Malombra*, trans. F. Thorold Dickson (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906).

²⁴²For a wealth of theoretical indications about the psychodynamics of reading and narrative, see: Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Vintage, 1984). The impulse, on the part of the reader/translator, to implicate himself in the interpretive operation (outside the scope of his task as translator) bears witness to the "writerly" quality of the text.

be a valuable resource. In her article *Sensation, Seduction and the Supernatural*, Caesar (following the lead of Vittore Branca, who regards *Malombra* as the Italian tradition's only Gothic novel) investigates Fogazzaro's indebtedness to the English Gothic and Sensation traditions, both as influences for his own theory of the novel and as intertextual scaffolding for the composition of *Malombra*. Fogazzaro first advertised his predilection for English Gothic and Sensation novels in 1872—almost ten years prior to the publication of *Malombra*—when he delivered the lecture *Dell'avvenire del romanzo in Italia*, outlining his vision for the Italian novel. In that lecture, Fogazzaro mentions several English-language authors—including Walpole, Lewis, Radcliffe, Maturin, Saulie, Collins, Braddon, Wood, Reade, Poe and Charlotte Brontë—who together trace the essential lineage of the Gothic genre from its origins in the 1760s up through its diverse filiations in the Victorian period. Caesar probes Fogazzaro's relationship with these authors from an intertextual standpoint, focusing on the particularly rich nexus between *Malombra*, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Collins's *The Woman in White*.

In a preliminary sense, the fact that *Malombra*'s narrative edifice recaptures the fundamental themes of the originary Gothic novel (involving family secrets, silence and concealment, and the sense of an occult logic compelling the drama) moves me to coordinate my inquiry with a psychoanalytic methodology. My rationale for pursuing the study from a psychoanalytic angle stems from the conviction, echoed by several critics, that the Gothic and psychoanalysis represent two innately compatible discourses. Michelle A. Massé reaffirms this notion in her panoramic study on the history of psychoanalytic approaches in Gothic criticism when she asserts that “psychoanalysis and the Gothic are cognate historical strands made up of the same human hopes and anxieties and then woven into particular patterns by the movements

of sociohistorical change”²⁴³. The themes considered central to both discourses include the dynamic between manifest and latent, the role played by sexual taboos in the family or domestic sphere and the experience of the uncanny. As Massé also maintains, the Gothic remains “important to psychoanalytic critical inquiry not solely for its ongoing popularity and easily recognizable motifs, but for the affinities between its central concerns and those of psychoanalysis.”

I would like to single out one theoretical grid, that of Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, for the proximity of the language it employs to that of the Gothic text. This approach, highlighted in the previous chapter, is notable for its use of a psycho-poetic lexicon, fashioned out of Gothic-inflected metaphors (dealing with crypts, phantoms and family secrets). As Helene Moglen attests in her book *The Trauma of Gender*, the way these thinkers reorient the psychoanalytic terminology and field of operation creates a rare space where theory and fiction intersect, opening the door to exciting new perspectives and methods²⁴⁴.

Abraham and Torok’s theory revolves around two cardinal concepts—introjection and incorporation (or else non-introjection)—which they use to crystallize their understanding of situations such as trauma and failed mourning. Introjection designates the regular processes of psychological growth and self-fashioning, while incorporation designates the obstacles or breakdowns of these processes. As Torok explains, in the context of ordinary mourning, introjection is the mechanism that enables an aggrieved person to gradually work-through a loss. Occasionally, however, an aggrieved person is incapable of introjecting the loss due to a prior,

²⁴³ Michelle A. Massé, “Psychoanalysis and the Gothic,” in *A Companion to Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 308.

²⁴⁴ Helene Moglen, *The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the English Novel* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2011).

decidedly secret, conflict with the lost object. In these instances, the person will resort to fantasizing about incorporating the loss—through ingestion or otherwise—with the prospect of burying it alive in an intrapsychic “crypt” (also “vault,” “safe,” “tomb”). From a metapsychological perspective, the crypt forges a sealed-off space inside the ego where the object, along with the secret it conceals, may be preserved. Fantasmatic fulfillments of this sort supply the basis for an illness of mourning. Torok testifies to the bizarre and even hallucinatory consequences of the incorporation fantasy when she asserts that “sometimes in the dead of the night...the ghost of the crypt comes back to the haunt the cemetery guard, giving him strange and incomprehensible signals, making him perform bizarre acts, or subjecting him to unexpected sensations”²⁴⁵.

In a series of related insights, Abraham theorizes that a secret can be transmitted *sotto voce* from parent to child without ever being made conscious; he designates the phantom as the vector for this unwitting transmission. “The phantom is summoned,” Abraham explains, “when it is recognized that a gap was transmitted to the subject with the result of barring him or her from the specific introjections he or she would seek at present”²⁴⁶. According to Nicholas Rand, the postulate of the phantom “represents a radical reorientation of Freudian and post-Freudian theories...since...symptoms do not spring from the individual’s own life, but from someone else’s psychical conflicts, trauma or secrets” with the result that sons can indeed be held to account for the sins of their forebears²⁴⁷. By refashioning the psychoanalytic project

²⁴⁵ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation” (1972), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 130.

²⁴⁶ Nicolas Abraham, “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud’s Metapsychology” (1975), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 174.

²⁴⁷ Nicolas Abraham, “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud’s Metapsychology” (1975), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 176.

along transgenerational lines, Rand maintains, “Abraham and Torok’s work [on the phantom] enables us to understand how the falsification, ignorance, or disregard of the past...is the breeding ground of the phantomatic return of shameful secrets on the level of individuals and families,” as well as communities, societies and even nations²⁴⁸.

In sum, the crucial difference between the crypt and the phantom is that the crypt denotes a psychological phenomenon arising from an individual’s life experience, the phantom relates to the unknowing reception and transmission of another person’s traumatic secret (aptly called “nescience”)²⁴⁹. Abraham likens the phantom effect to a ventriloquism, counting among its mediums of expression “phobias of all kinds...obsessions, restricted phantasmagorias or ones that take over the entire field of the subject’s mental activities”²⁵⁰. He goes further to identify this effect with Freud’s death instinct, noting that “it has no energy of its own...it pursues its work of disarray in silence...[it] is sustained by secreted words, invisible gnomes whose aim is to wreak havoc, from within the unconscious, in the coherence of logical progression,” though most tellingly of all, “it gives rise to endless repetition and, more often than not, eludes rationalization”²⁵¹. He explains, finally, that it is possible to exorcise the phantom only if its radical heterogeneity with respect to the subject is recognized. By comparison, a displaced acceptance as part of the subject’s own libidinal life can lead to “delirious acts” which in extreme cases even mimic psychotic symptoms.

²⁴⁸ Nicholas T. Rand, editor’s note to “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud’s Metapsychology” (1975), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 169.

²⁴⁹ Rand, editor’s note to “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud’s Metapsychology,” 168.

²⁵⁰ Abraham, “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud’s Metapsychology,” 176.

²⁵¹ Abraham, “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud’s Metapsychology,” 175.

Part I: The Psychological Itinerary of *Malombra*'s main plot²⁵²

The main plot of *Malombra*, which is to say the structure of the novel, explores many of the psychological themes outlined in the work of Abraham and Torok, starting with the basic idea of a family secret that returns to haunt future generations. In the following pages, I will offer a broad summary and analysis of the way these themes operate in the novel. The secret driving *Malombra*'s plot concerns events that took place around the beginning of the nineteenth century—six decades before the narrative present—when the palace was occupied by Emanuele d'Ormengò (Cesare's father) and his first wife, Cecilia. According to sources presented in the text, including a hidden manuscript and popular legends circulated by the inhabitants of R.,

²⁵² For a systematic overview of the way the unconscious is represented in Fogazzaro's work, see: Fabio Finotti, "L'inconscio in Fogazzaro," in AA. VV., *Antonio Fogazzaro tra storia, filologia, critica*, ed. G. Pizzamiglio and F. Finotti (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1999). For a review of Fogazzaro-centered criticism and scholarship up through the year 2000, see: Giorgio Cavallini, *Fogazzaro: ieri e oggi* (Naples: Loffredo, 2000).

Emanuele had his wife immured in a room of the palace as punishment for a minor indiscretion with a soldier named Renato. Cecilia languished in this prison for five years and four months, during which time she lost her reason, and became known by the townsfolk as the “madwoman of the palace.” Importantly, just before dying, Cecilia penned a manuscript detailing her plight and stashed it away in a secret compartment.

Two events create the conditions necessary for this secret trauma from the past to wreak havoc on later generations of the d’Ormengo family. The first event is Cesare’s decision to adopt his orphaned niece, Marina, who happens to be the daughter of his half-sister and the granddaughter of Cecilia. No sooner does Marina arrive at her uncle’s palace than she begins to exhibit odd behaviors and experience unusual symptoms, all suggestive of phantom effects. Starting with an inexplicable fascination with the lake, and evolving to include nervous attacks, hallucinations, the performance of tendentious acts in a trance-like state, periods of delirium, and ultimately, a split personality, these effects seem bizarre and gratuitous when considered separately, yet they can be linked together to form a sort of occult itinerary. The second event tied to the return of the family secret is the discovery of Cecilia’s manuscript. Found by Marina while in a state of mental disarray, the manuscript proves subversive because in addition to telling Cecilia’s story, it attempts to persuade its reader that she is Cecilia’s reincarnation and exhorts her to exact revenge on a member of the d’Ormengo household. However far-fetched this idea may sound, it gains traction with Marina to the point where she assumes Cecilia’s identity, brings about her uncle’s death and publicly proclaims the “truth” behind her revenge.

The foregoing outline summarizes the scope of *Malombra*’s engagement with the themes of the traumatic secret and its disruptive effects on the lives of individuals, families and communities. An incident unassimilable into the course of regular experience and

understanding— namely, the sequence of events encompassing Cecilia’s sequestration, her descent into madness, and her funeral five years later—is demonstrated to have traumatic repercussions, not only for Cecilia herself, but also for her family (presumably her daughter, as well as Cesare and Marina) and for the community at large. It is interesting to note how, within this transgenerational and communal framework, the phenomenon of silence emerges as the critical force for shaping the secret and guiding its transmission from person to person. Silence, as it is understood here, does not refer to a literal absence of sound, but rather to a blind-spot in the official or public discourse with regards to a particular segment of experience. The case of Emanuele and Cecilia illustrates the implications of this kind of silence and the problems to which it gives rise.

The fundamental silence in Emanuele and Cecilia’s story concerns the total suppression of Cecilia’s voice by the social order at the time. In her manuscript, Cecilia expresses regret that her parents are dead and unable to lobby on her behalf, giving the implication that her parents represented her only legitimate avenue for speaking out about her husband’s mistreatment. This statement evidencing the lack of legal protection for women in domestic situations is entirely consonant with Commendatore’s suggestion, put forth in Book I.6, that Cecilia’s death consisted of a slow, “legal homicide.” The technical legality of the punishment to which Emanuele subjects his wife guarantees that no official record will be made of her suffering or the scandal surrounding it; instead, as Cecilia foresees when she writes of her jailer-husband mourning at her funeral, people will carry on with their lives as though nothing unusual had happened. Just because Cecilia’s experience is silenced over official channels, however, does not mean it is completely expunged from memory. On the contrary, silencing the event, denying it and leaving it unexplained leads to rampant speculation on the part of the community, which in turn leads to

Cecilia's immortalization in the space of the local lore. The tales featuring Cecilia, generally fantastic in nature, carry a certain stigma (demonstrated in Book I.6) and yet everyone seems to know them, with Marina hearing them told by Giovanna, Rico and Commendatore Vezza. In addition to being undermined from the standpoint of the community, the official silence regarding Cecilia's brutal treatment is also undermined from inside the d'Ormengò family itself; from this standpoint, of course, the instrument of sabotage is the manuscript which has been hidden within the walls of the family's ancestral home.

Comparisons may be drawn between the way Cecilia's story is swallowed up and silenced by the dominant social order, and the mechanism of incorporation as it relates to the crypt and the phantom effects. Like the mechanism of incorporation, the efforts to suppress Cecilia's voice and deny the legitimacy of her suffering in the official discourse works on the surface to preserve the status quo and to prevent family members, the family as a unit and the surrounding community from undergoing psychological reorganization. The measure is illusory, however, because beneath the surface, the silenced quantity circumvents the official discourse to express itself via alternative channels. At length, the secret navigates its way into the open through the interplay of these unofficial channels, the popular oral tradition and the manuscript. The specific trope of the secret manuscript transmitted from grandmother to granddaughter offers a symbolically fitting correlate to the procedures postulated by Abraham and Torok for the transfer of a psychological secret across multiple generations. In its final chapters, the text also dramatizes the abreaction of the historical trauma²⁵³ and the process of introjection which results. In this

²⁵³ The positing of a "historical" trauma gives rise to questions of progressive versus retroactive determination. For instance, to what extent is a trauma located in the past, and to what extent does it depend on the way the past is registered in the present (or more precisely, the way a past tension resists assimilation and signification in the ideology of the present)? Is Cecilia's story traumatogenic in itself or does it become that way only upon being assumed into Marina's libidinal economy (which is to say, her psychological value system)? On this, also see Jameson's discussion of the "good versus evil" ideologue in: Frederic Jameson, "Magical narratives: romance as genre", *New Literary History*, 7, no. 1, Autumn, 1975.

connection, two specific passages seem to be especially revelatory: the first is Marina's assault on Cesare at the end of IV.2 and the second is the proclamation made during the banquet dinner in Book IV.6. The text from the first passage is reproduced below:

Nella sua stanza, dove un fioco lumicino posato a terra spandeva nell'aria calda e greve certo chiarore sepolcrale, il conte Cesare supino, immobile, non vedeva la Giovanna seduta presso il letto con le mani sfiduciate sulle ginocchia, e gli occhi fissi in lui. Credeva invece veder la figura di sua nipote ritta in mezzo alla camera. Era sua nipote e un'altra persona nello stesso tempo, ciò gli pareva naturale. Si moveva, parlava, guardava con due occhi pieni di delirio; come mai se quella persona era morta e sepolta da lungo tempo? Egli lo sapeva bene ch'era stata sepolta, ricordava d'averlo inteso da suo padre; ma dove, dove? Tormentosa dimenticanza! C'era pure nella sua memoria quel luogo, quel nome; ve lo sentiva muoversi, salire, salire finché ne scattò su, in lettere visibili.

Credette allora cavar di sotto le lenzuola il braccio destro, stenderlo, appuntar l'indice a colei, dirle ch'ella mentiva e ch'era ben sepolta ad Oleggio, nella cappella di famiglia. Ma la donna lo minacciava ancora, lo sfidava, gli gettava un guanto; pareva Marina ed era la prima moglie di suo padre, la contessa Cecilia Varrega. Ella lo sentiva, parlava di antiche colpe, di una vendetta da compiere. Allora egli immaginava lanciarsi smanioso d'ira dal letto, e tutto si confondeva nella sua mente in una torbida visione a cui intendeva ansando, come se sulla porta della morte gli apparisse, al di là, un pauroso dramma sovrumano.

C'era un peggioramento improvviso, la paralisi minacciava il polmone.

Il Palazzo non era parso mai così cupo come quella notte, malgrado i lumi che vi vegliarono fino all'alba.²⁵⁴

A preliminary factor to consider in regard to this passage is the precise timing of Cesare's illness and the symbolic importance of this timing within the d'Ormengio family history. Cesare suffers

²⁵⁴ “[Count Caesar lay,] motionless, in his bedroom, where a small, dim lamp, placed on the floor, sent a certain sepulchral gleam through the hot, stifling air. He did not see Giovanna [sitting next to him,] with her hands [resting, discouraged,] on her knees and her eyes fixed upon him. [Instead,] he thought that he saw the face of his niece, who was standing upright in the center of the room. It was his niece and another person at the same time; that struck him as quite natural. She moved, and spoke, and gazed at him with two eyes filled with [delirium]; how could that be, since this person was dead and buried long ago? He knew quite well that she had been buried, for he remembered having heard so from his father; but where, where? Torturing forgetfulness! Somewhere in his memory there was that place, that name; he felt it stirring, rising, rising until it stood out in letters that could be seen. He believed that he then raised his right arm from beneath the sheets, pointing [his] forefinger at her, and that he told her she was lying, for she had been buried at Oleggio, in the family vault. But the woman [continued to threaten] him, [defy] him, [she threw] a glove at him; she looked like Marina, and she was his father's first wife, Countess Cecilia Varrega. He heard her voice, she spoke of crimes committed long ago, of a vengeance to be accomplished. Then he imagined that he sprang, mad with [rage], out of bed, and everything became confused in his mind in one vision of horror, on which he breathlessly dwelt, as though on the threshold of death there appeared to him beyond, a dread, superhuman [drama. There was a sudden worsening in his condition, his lungs were on the verge of collapsing. The palace had never appeared so somber as it did that night, even with the lights keeping watch over it until dawn].”

his initial stroke in the last days of April 1865; the events portrayed in this passage take place on May 1st, 1865; Cesare dies of his illness after a relapse on May 2nd, 1865. Seemingly by coincidence, the same date May 2nd—to be precise, May 2nd, 1802—appears on Cecilia’s manuscript where she reports being on the verge of death. It would thus seem, based on the repetition of the date May 2nd, that Cesare is struck ill on the (sixty-third) anniversary of Cecilia's death, with the circumstance of his affliction pointing to a sort of trans-subjective and transgenerational commemoration, effected at the boundary of the symbolic and the real. This passage—depicted through Cesare’s eyes—shows Marina threatening and taunting her uncle, presumably with the intent of inducing a lethal shock. At the same time that he recognizes Marina, Cesare seems to detect the alien presence dwelling inside her (“Era sua nipote e un'altra persona nello stesso tempo;” “pareva Marina ed era la prima moglie di suo padre, la contessa Cecilia Varrega”). Notably, although Marina’s attack consists entirely of verbal provocations and the throwing of the glove, her words—specifically, words connected to a secret trauma—ultimately prove sufficient to kill Cesare.

During the attack described above, in her harangue by Cesare’s deathbed and at the banquet dinner held on the loggia, Marina occupies herself with disclosing the traumatic family secret which drove her to commit violence against her own blood. Although at this phase of the novel, Marina identifies herself with Cecilia, her use of the third-person in referring to Cecilia during the banquet scene seems to expose discontinuities in her ego:

Sessant'anni or sono, il padre di quel morto là (all'appuntò l'indice all'ala del Palazzo) ha chiuso qui dentro come un lupo idrofobo la sua prima moglie, l'ha fatta morire fibra a fibra. Questa donna è tornata dal sepolcro a vendicarsi della maledetta razza che ha comandato qui fino a stanotte!²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ “Sixty years ago, the father of the dead man there (she pointed with her forefinger towards the wing of the palace) imprisoned in this house, like a [rabid wolf], his first wife, and did her to death by inches. This woman has returned from the tomb to avenge herself on the accursed race which has commanded here until tonight!”

By shifting from the first- to the third-person with this proclamation, is Marina disavowing Cecilia in a gesture tantamount to exorcism? Or is this only a momentary distancing? Whatever the case may be, the procedures of verbalizing the secret—that is, putting it into words—and disclosing it in the presence of others are held up as the privileged means for thematizing introjection. Together, they connote the successful conversion of the secret from an unspeakable, voiceless quantity into something that can be woven—by dint of language—into the fabric of common understanding.

In the novel's final twist, after uttering these words, Marina murders Silla and sails across the lake, never to be seen again. One way of reading this startling turn of events is in terms of Marina setting the historical record straight and purging Cecilia from her mind, only to disappear and take Cecilia's place in the collective imaginary. Such a reading is supported by the scene in the novel's final chapter, where the village gossips are shown in the process of speculating about Marina's fate. Various theories are put forth, though according to the dominant narrative, her body lies "still as a stone" at the bottom of the Pozzo d'Acquafonda, where it cannot be recovered. The inability to determine precisely what happened to Marina or to locate and retrieve her body prevents closure from being reached around this bizarre and shocking incident.

I would now like to take a closer look at *Malombra*'s main plot as it is seen through the eyes of the two protagonists, Marina and Corrado Silla. Before proceeding with that analysis, however, I feel compelled to provide a general outline of the way character psychology is handled in the narrative. To be sure, the representation of character psychology is fundamentally bound up with the idiosyncrasies of the narration itself: though formally speaking, the novel

employs an omniscient, third-person narrator, this narrator often plays off multiple, subjective (and at times conflicting) viewpoints to tell the story, while in the meantime obfuscating or avoiding the question of objective truth. Within this universe of subjectivities, even the most peripheral characters may display psychological interiority, while the narrator reserves the greatest depth of motivation for the portrayals of Marina and Silla. Whenever either of these characters appears in a scene completely alone, the narrator adopts an internal focalization and generally filters the action through that character's eyes, with the result that the fictional universe comes to bear the projections of Silla's and Marina's mental lives. On the other hand, in scenes where the two characters appear alone together, the narrative focus tends to rest explicitly with Silla, while Marina's inner conflicts and feelings are symbolically reflected in descriptions of the weather and the natural world. Silla also typically remains the focal character in scenes involving secondary characters, with or without Marina. Arguably for thematic reasons, the rules of focalization become more complicated in scenes where Marina is depicted alongside secondary characters but without Silla. In Book I.5, which is dedicated exclusively to the exposition of her character, and to a lesser extent in Books II.6 and II.7, the narration centers on Marina and provides direct access to her thoughts. By contrast, in Book II.4 and in parts of Book III, the narratorial perspective divests from Marina's inner world, possibly as a way of building up the mystique around her, and perhaps also because of the epistemological limits inherent to the representation of mental disorder.

I tend to regard Marina and Silla as the co-protagonists of *Malombra*, whose individual storylines merge to form the main axis of the plot. My analysis, rather than tackle the plot all at once, will begin with an examination of Marina's psychological development, which considers the events of the plot from her perspective. This will be followed by an examination of Silla's

relationship to events and an analysis of his psychological situation. In exploring the hidden dimensions, conflicts and motives of these characters, I will continue to rely on concepts and methods borrowed from psychoanalysis.

On a preliminary note, it bears mentioning that Silla's and Marina's storylines intersect around a key person and place. That person is Count Cesare d'Ormengo, the scion of a warrior dynasty and the place is his ancestral home—the palace of R.—which sits on the shore of an unnamed Lombard lake. Cesare is noted for living an austere lifestyle, espousing an aristocratic worldview and harboring eccentric religious beliefs (a sort of agnosticism-epicureanism hybrid), while abjuring music, literature, and other trappings of modern—specifically, French—culture. Despite his hard exterior and misanthropic tendencies, however, Cesare is an eminently decent person, driven by a sense of duty to other people, and a far cry from the Romantic literary villain that Marina perceives him to be. One may argue that in the story Cesare performs two salient deeds, both of which are aimed at fulfilling obligations to departed loved ones. First, he adopts Marina—despite her having attained the age of majority—after she is orphaned and ostracized by the rest of her family, all out of devotion to his dead sister. Then, out of devotion to Silla's dead mother, Cesare begins to follow and support Silla's career. When looked at this way, the entire intrigue of *Malombra* can be seen to turn on the consistency with which Cesare carries out his duty.

The basic premise of Marina's story is as follows: after a series of personal tragedies, including the deaths of both her parents (her mother when she was very young and her father, the Marquis Filippo Crusnelli di Malombra, from a sudden aneurysm around her eighteenth birthday) and the loss of her family fortune (squandered by her father and his mistress, Miss Sarah), the Marchioness Marina Crusnelli di Malombra reluctantly leaves Parisian and Milanese

society behind to live with her uncle in his remote palace; once there, her mind starts to come unhinged and she becomes increasingly bent on violence. From the standpoint of Marina's biography, the devastating traumata of her early life, compounded by the inopportune displacement and forced lifestyle change, lay a classic foundation for a future psychological disturbance. Even more important, however, are the discoveries made about her ancestor, Cecilia. The eerie parallels that emerge between Marina's odd behaviors and Cecilia's situation suggest that the logic of Marina's disturbance transcends her personal experience, and somehow issues from this other trauma embedded in her family history. The notion that Marina bears the effects of an inherited trauma is supported by the presence of fundamental discontinuities in her character.

It is possible to detect the discontinuities in Marina's character by studying the nuances of her portrayal. Even at the outset, Marina's personality can be divided into two distinct aspects, with each aspect reducible to its own descriptive system or system of representation. The first and initially dominant aspect of Marina's personality crystallizes around the "themes and feelings of French decadentism" and coincides in abstract terms with a culture-bound system of representation²⁵⁶. From this standpoint, Marina embodies all the traits one might associate with someone who has traveled in the most elite and rarefied social circles. She is exquisitely beautiful; she has an unquenchable passion for the arts, most notably French novels, piano music and letter-writing; she values aesthetic principles over moral ones, believing the former should serve as grounds for a separate religion exclusive to the aristocracy; and she espouses sophisticated views on romance despite not having found anyone worthy of her love. Though her voluptuous figure and "electric" sensuality constantly draw attention from members of the

²⁵⁶ Antonio Piromalli, *Introduzione a Fogazzaro* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1990).

opposite sex, she mainly uses it to toy with them, as she harbors a general contempt for men. She is also haughty and fickle, displaying a sarcastic smile that “makes her few friends” and a sphinxlike demeanor that perplexes her uncle while leaving the servants deeply unsettled. The passage in Book I.5 cataloguing the contents of Marina’s library offers insight into the way her ego is configured when she first moves into her uncle’s palace:

Nella stanza vicina [...] Marina fece collocare il suo Erard, ricordo del soggiorno di Parigi, e i suoi libri, un fascio di ogni erba, molto più di velenose che di salubri. D'inglese non aveva che Byron e Shakespeare in magnifiche edizioni illustrate, regali di suo padre, Poe e tutti i romanzi di Disraeli, suo autore favorito. Di tedeschi non ne aveva alcuno. Il solo libro italiano era una *Monografia storica della famiglia Crusnelli* pubblicata in Milano per le nozze del marchese Filippo, nella quale si facevan risalire le origini della famiglia a un signore Kerosnel venuto in Italia al seguito della prima moglie di Giovan Galeazzo Visconti, Isabella di Francia contessa di Vertu. C'era pure un Dante, ma nella tonaca francese dell'abate di Lamennais, che lo rendeva molto più simpatico a Marina, diceva lei. Non le mancava un solo romanzo della Sand; ne aveva parecchi di Balzac; aveva tutto Musset, tutto Stendhal, le *Fleurs du mal* di Baudelaire, *René* di Chateaubriand, Chamfort, parecchi volumi dei *Chefs d'oeuvre des littératures étrangères* o dei *Chefs d'oeuvre des littératures anciennes* pubblicati dall'Hachette, scelti da lei con uno spirito curioso e poco curante di certi pericoli; parecchi fascicoli della *Revue des deux Mondes*.²⁵⁷

This passage fulfills a twofold function for the exposition of Marina: in addition to mapping a literary and intellectual geography for her character inside the plot, it also functions reflexively by highlighting certain intertexts relevant to her character’s genesis. In terms of literary tastes, the fact that the better part of her collection consists of texts by Romantic-era French novelists and poets’ underlines Marina’s affinity for contemporary French culture, just as the absence of

²⁵⁷ “In the next room [...] Marina placed her Erard, a souvenir of her stay in Paris, and her books, [a sample, as it were,] of every kind of plant, and with more poisonous than health-giving specimens among them. English authors were represented [only] by Shakespeare and Byron in magnificent illustrated editions, [gifts from] her father, by Poe, and all the novels of Disraeli, her favorite author. Not a single German book was there, and the sole Italian one was a *Monograph History of the Crusnelli Family*, published at Milan on the occasion of her father’s marriage. The origin of the family was traced to a Signor de Kerosnel who came to Italy in the train of the first wife of Giovan Galeazzo Visconti, Isabella of France, Countess of Vertu. There was a copy of Dante, but in the French garb given him by the Abbé Lamennais, which rendered him much more pleasing to Marina. She had all George Sand’s novels, many of Balzac’s, all of De Musset, all of Stendhal; Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Chateaubriand’s *René*, many volumes of the *Chef d'oeuvres des littératures étrangères*, and the *Chef d'oeuvre des littératures ancienne* published by Hachette, [selected in a spirit of research, with little heed paid to certain dangers]. Bound volumes of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* completed her library.”

German-language texts speaks to her aversion to German culture (an aversion made explicit in her dealings with Steinegge). Also on the literary front, it should be noted that the dearth of Italian texts in Marina's collection is less of a reflection on the aesthetic merits of that tradition and more of a statement about its marginal status in the European culture of the 1860s. In terms of intellectual interests, the presence of "parecchi volumi dei *Chefs d'oeuvre des littératures étrangères* o dei *Chefs d'oeuvre des littératures anciennes...*" and "parecchi fascicoli della *Revue des deux Mondes*" in Marina's collection underscores her penchant for matters of the occult, while the fact that these texts have been chosen "con uno spirito curioso e poco curante di certi pericoli" suggests that her attitude toward these researches is cavalier, and perhaps even reckless.

This fairly cohesive portrait of Marina as a sensual, rebellious and highly cultivated product of her socio-cultural and historical environment is disrupted early on by a cluster of gratuitous traits which do not appear to assimilate with the culture-bound aspect of her personality. The other aspect of Marina's personality, hinted at in these discontinuities, crystallizes around mythical allusions and primitive associations with the natural world. Under this aspect, Marina seems to break free of civilizing forms: she is shown roaming the forest like a woodland deity, traversing the lake, scaling mountains and performing feats of rugged strength. The passage below offers an essential glimpse of this "other" Marina:

Dopo quest'impeti frenati a fatica, pigliava *Saetta* e partiva, ora sola, ora col Rico, si gettava a qualche riva solitaria e saliva rapidamente la montagna con un vigore cui nessuno avrebbe attribuito alla sua graziosa persona. I contadini che la incontravano ne stupivano. Gli uomini e le ragazze la salutavano, le donne no. Dicevano tra loro che colei andava sempre per demoni di boschi e di sassi, e a messa non ci aveva mai portati i piedi: ch'era un'altra scomunicata come la *Matta del Palazzo*, quella di una volta.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ "[After these bursts of passion, which took effort to restrain,] she unchained *Saetta*, and went off, sometimes alone, sometimes with Rico, tied up her boat alongside some lonely bank, and started off up the mountainside at a pace, and with an energy, of which one would have hardly thought her slight frame was capable. The peasants whom she met gazed at her in amazement. The men and boys [greeted her, the women did not]. They said among themselves that she went out in search of the evil spirits of the woods, and that she had never been known to set foot in church; and that she had doubtless been excommunicated like the 'Mad Woman of the Palace' of years gone by."

A critical detail in this passage is the proposition that seeing this slight and delicate woman perform what appear to be superhuman feats greatly unnerves the locals. Such accounts of the locals' reactions to Marina serve to problematize the incongruities in her character and thematically designate them as a locus of uncanniness in the story.

Both schemes just outlined are present in the representation of Marina from the outset, although the initial tendency is to privilege the complex of culture-bound traits in order to mark them as the dominant aspect of her personality. This representational hierarchy reverses gradually over the course of the novel, such that by the end Marina's personality is dominated by nature-complex. Thus, the interplay of these two systems of representation is exploited, not only as a means of signifying and underlining discontinuities in Marina's personality, but also as a means of abstractly alluding to the course of her mental disintegration.

The disintegration of Marina's personality can also be explored in concrete terms through the analysis of her salient experiences in the plot. For this analysis, I will divide the arc of Marina's development into two broad phases: the period leading up to the discovery of Cecilia's relics and the period following it. A prominent motif in this first phase of development revolves around Marina's estrangement from her own thoughts and deeds. Immediately upon arriving at the palace, she seems to fall under a mysterious spell and from that point forward, it is difficult to avoid the feeling that her actions are being steered toward the discovery of the relics by some unknown and invisible presence. To cast more light on this phenomenon, I will reconstruct the occult causality leading from Marina's arrival at the palace to the capital scene where she discovers her ancestor's relics.

On a preliminary note, the very name “Marina,” with its aquatic connotations, seems to contain the kernel of the entire psychodrama, given that the lake is the source of the mysterious spell cast over Marina and is linked to several of her other core activities. The lake also goes on to serve as a symbolic mirror of Marina’s inner world, as a reflector of her hidden passions and unconscious desires.

The significance of the lake is established on the stormy evening that Marina first crosses the threshold of her uncle’s palace. Upon her arrival, Cesare proposes to house Marina in one of the palace’s eastward facing apartments, but she refuses these arrangements (showing an utter indifference to the Count’s “fronte corrugata e gli occhi lampeggianti”²⁵⁹), instead demanding a room which overlooks the lake. In an uncharacteristic turn (“a grande sorpresa di [Marina]”²⁶⁰), the Count acquiesces to his niece’s demands with minimal protest and instructs the servant Giovanna to take Marina to the opposite wing of the palace. Marina remains undeterred in her desire to live near the lake, in spite of her uncle’s renewed proposal to lodge her somewhere more suitable, and Giovanna’s warnings that the rooms she wishes to occupy are haunted (“c’è dentro il diavolo, eccola; non so se mi spiego”) by the ghost of Emanuele d’Ormengo—a superstition which terrifies Marina’s maidservant, Fanny. As the servants proceed to outfit the chamber, Marina even experiences a vision of the secluded wilderness which seems to confirm that she is in the right place. In glancing, back over this episode, with its seemingly irrational procession of events, one is able to spot traces of a hidden causality, rooted in Marina’s lacustrine fixation. It can be said that this mysterious fixation has intersubjective consequences because it leads to alterations in the psychical and behavioral routines of Cesare as well as Marina. From Marina’s standpoint, it compels her to inhabit the remote wing of the

²⁵⁹ “lowering brow and flashing eyes.”

²⁶⁰ “to [Marina’s] great surprise.”

palace at all costs, and to that purpose, disinhibits her from opposing her strict uncle's will. From Cesare's standpoint, the interactions with Marina cause him to display an unheard-of degree of leniency—which Giovanna attributes to witchcraft—while also disconcerting him greatly. In retrospect, these acts appear tendentious because by installing Marina in Cecilia's former rooms, they move her into the necessary position to discover Cecilia's relics.

The lake again inspires the performance of tendentious acts on the evening that Marina discovers the relics. These acts derive from a *déjà vu*-like disturbance that Marina experiences while sailing back to the palace aboard her boat, *Saetta*. Banal though it may seem on the surface, this disturbance serves to induce an altered state of consciousness resembling a hypnotic or somnambulistic state which persists for her throughout the remainder of the episode²⁶¹. A few techniques are deployed in the narration of the events surrounding the discovery which serve to emphasize this altered state and to raise doubts about Marina's ownership of her actions. One such technique is the use of a language and imagery suggestive of spiritual or daemonic possession. For instance, Marina is depicted playing the piano “come se gli ardori delle peccatrici spettrali fossero entrati in lei, più violenti,”²⁶² as the internal fire feels “più forte di lei, la opprimeva, le toglieva il respiro”²⁶³ and her body erupts in involuntary spasms. Another technique involves the disavowal of Marina's actions through expressions which stressing their “unconscious” or “involuntary” character. The following passage, which depicts Marina's

²⁶¹ Marina is shown experiencing *déjà-vu*-like phenomena in at least two other instances. Freud links the phenomenon of *déjà vu* to the transfer of affects connected with a repressed wish or fantasy. Freud also speculates about the relationship between *déjà vu*, *déjà raconté*, de-realization and de-personalization, noting the hallucinatory character of these phenomena. Sigmund Freud, “The Psychopathology of Everyday Life” (1901), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974): 1336-1339.

²⁶²“as though the desires of the ghostly sinners had entered into her, only in greater strength.”

²⁶³ “too strong for her, seemed to overwhelm her and choke her.”

movements immediately prior to and during the discovery, serves to illustrate this effect (italics are mine):

Finalmente abbassò gli occhi sul pavimento, li posò *involontariamente* su qualche cosa che brillava a' suoi piedi. Guardò, *senz'averne coscienza*, quel punto brillante *che a poco a poco le venne fermando la fantasia*, finché lo vide e lo raccolse.

Marina, sorpresa, ritirò la mano in fretta; poi, rifrugando, trovò che, in fondo, la mano entrava più addentro di prima e che v'erano, in quella ultima cavità, degli oggetti.²⁶⁴

It may be noted that Marina continues her trance-like behavior even after she pulls Cecilia's relics (the mirror, the clump of hair, the glove and the prayer-book) out of the *escritoire*. Although the manuscript is hidden between the pages of the prayer-book, Marina somehow senses its existence and, "almost without knowing what she was about," proceeds to discover it. The contents of the manuscript itself are embedded into the text, consistent with the found-manuscript *topos* common in Gothic and Fantastic literature. Because the manuscript proves so vital for the rest of the plot, I have reproduced its full text below:

2 MAGGIO 1802
PER RICORDARMI

Ch'io mi ricordi, nel nome di Dio! Altrimenti perché rinascere? Ho pregato la Vergine e Santa Cecilia di rivelarmi il nome che mi sarà imposto allora. Non vollero. Ebbene, qualunque sia il tuo nome, tu che hai ritrovato e leggi queste parole, conosci in te l'anima mia infelice. Avanti di nascere hai sofferto TANTO, TANTO (questa parola era ripetuta dieci volte in caratteri assai grandi) col nome di Cecilia.

Ricordati! MARIA CECILIA VARREGA di Camogli, infelice moglie del Conte Emanuele d'Ormengo.

²⁶⁴ "At length, her glance fell on the floor at her feet, and chanced to light on a glistening object at which she now gazed almost unconsciously, it seemed to fascinate her. She stooped and picked it up. It was one of the rings she had thrown down on the *escritoire*. She looked for the other. It had disappeared from the lid where she had placed it. It was not in the desk, not on the floor. Marina began to be annoyed, and felt for it beneath the *escritoire*. It was not there. Thrusting her hand inside the desk, in a little space between two small drawers she came across a little hollow, just big enough for her finger to enter, and there she felt her ring. Being unable to introduce more than one finger, she endeavored to raise the ring by pressing it between her finger and the wood. To her astonishment, it remained fixed where it was, appearing to be held down by a little hook. While Marina was endeavoring to overcome this resistance, she suddenly heard the click of a spring, and the woodwork on which her hand was resting suddenly fell several inches lower. The ring fell with it, and Marina, in astonishment, hastily withdrew her hand, but then, feeling again, found that at the bottom of the secret drawer the hand entered into another receptacle containing various objects hidden away."

Ricordati la sera del 10 gennaio 1797 a Genova in casa Brignole; ricordati il viso bianco, il neo sulla guancia destra della santa zia, suor Pellegrina Concetta.

Ricordati il nome RENATO, l'uniforme rosso e azzurro, gli spillini e i ricami d'oro al collo e la rosa bianca al ballo Doria.

Ricordati il carrozzone nero, la neve e la donna di Busalla che mi ha promesso di pregare per me.

Ricordati la VISIONE avuta in questa camera, due ore dopo mezzanotte, le parole di fuoco sfolgoranti sulla parete, parole d'una lingua ignota e tuttavia chiarissime in quel punto alla mia intelligenza che vi intese il conforto e la promessa divina. Mi è impossibile trascrivere quei segni, non ne ricordo che il senso. Dicevano che rinascerei, che vivrei ancora qui fra queste mura, qui mi vendicherei, qui amerei Renato e sarei riamata da lui: dicevano un'altra cosa buia, incomprensibile, indecifrabile, forse il nome che egli porterà allora.

Vorrei scrivere la mia vita intera, non ne ho la forza: bastino quei cenni.

Cambiati nome! Che io torni a essere Cecilia. Ch'egli ami Cecilia!

Questo stipo era di mia madre, nessuno ne conosce il segreto. Vi pongo lo specchietto a cornice d'argento che la mamma ha avuto a Parigi da Cagliariostro. Mi vi sono guardata a lungo, a lungo: lo specchietto ritiene la fisionomia dell'ultima persona che vi si è guardata. Vi ho incisa la data con la pietra del mio anello.

Questi sono i miei capelli. Non li conosci? Pensa. Strana cosa parlare a te come se tu non fossi io stessa! Come son belli e fini i miei capelli! Vanno sotterra senza un bacio d'amore, senza una carezza. Come son biondi! Vanno sotterra.

Anche tu, piccola mano mia! Metto coi capelli un guanto per ricordarmi di te, piccola mano. Nota che il pollice del guanto mi è corto. Chi sa se avrò una manina così bella, così morbida? La bacio. Addio!

Ho pochi giorni a vivere. È la sera del 2 maggio 1802. Non so l'ora, non ho orologio.

Le finestre sono aperte. Ecco le mie sensazioni: un'aria tepida, un odor di bosco, un cielo verdognolo, così soave! E queste voci sul lago e queste campane e queste lagrime mie calde, possibile non le ricordi?

Anima mia, imprimi bene in te stessa questo. Il conte Emanuele d'Ormengo e sua madre sono i miei assassini. Ogni pietra di questa casa mi odia. Nessuno ha pietà! Per un fiore, per un sorriso, per una calunnia! Oh, ma adesso no! Adesso con la volontà, col desiderio immenso, son tutta sua, tutta!

Son cinque anni e quattro mesi che son qui, che essi non parlano a me e che io non parlo ad essi.

Quando mi porteranno in chiesa, ci verranno anche loro, forse. Saranno vestiti a lutto, mostreranno alla gente un viso triste e risponderanno ai preti: *lux perpetua luceat ei*. Allora, allora vorrei rizzami sul cataletto e parlare!

Madre mia, padre mio, è vero che siete morti, che non potete difendermi? Ah, d'Ormengo, vili, vili, vili! Almeno non soffrono.

Debbo arrestarmi un momento. I miei pensieri non mi obbediscono, si muovono tutti in una volta, si aggruppano qui in mezzo alla fronte, vi fanno una smania che non ha sollievo.

Addio, sole; a rivederci.

Porta nera, porta nera, non aprirti ancora!

Calma. Alcune regole per quel giorno.

Quando nella seconda vita avrò ritrovato e letto il presente manoscritto, m'inginocchierò immediatamente a ringraziar Dio; quindi, paragonati i miei capelli d'adesso a quelli d'allora, provato il guanto e, guardata la immagine nello specchio, spezzerò a quest'ultimo il vetro che

dev'essere rinnovato per poter servire un'altra volta, e riporrò tutto nel segreto. Poi converrà premere sull'uncino per far tornar su il piano orizzontale.
Aver fede cieca nella divina promessa: lasciar fare a Dio.
Sieno figli, sieno nipoti, sieno parenti, la vendetta sarà buona per tutti. Qui aspettarla, qui.

Cecilia.¹²⁶⁵²⁶⁶

The narrator offers no objective judgement about the claims made in the manuscript, and instead makes it a point to emphasize the subjective circumstances under which it is read. In this connection, a few remarks are offered to discredit Marina's faculties of judgment and interpretation following the hallucinatory moment on the lake:

²⁶⁵“2 May 1802. ' Yes, I must remember, great heavens! If not, why enter a second existence? I have prayed to the Holy Virgin and Saint Cecilia to reveal to me the name by which I shall then be known. They have not granted my prayer. Nevertheless, whatever your name [may be], you who have found and are reading these words, recognize that within you dwells my own unhappy spirit. Before you were born [you suffered so much, so much]' (these last two words were repeated ten times over in large letters) 'under the name of Cecilia. 'Remember [Maria] Cecilia [Varrega] di Camogli, the unhappy wife of Emanuele d'Ormengo. Remember the night of the 10th of January 1797, at Genoa, in the Villa Brignole; remember the pale face, with the mole on the right cheek, of your sainted aunt, Sister Pellegrina Concetta. 'Remember the name of Renato, the red and blue rose at the Doria's ball. 'Remember the big black coach, the snow, and the woman at Busalla, who promised to pray for me. ' Remember the vision which I had in this room two hours after midnight, the words of fire upon the walls, words in an unknown tongue, and yet clear to me in this one respect, that I gathered from them the comfort of a promise from heaven. I cannot repeat those words, I can but record their sense. They said that I should be born anew, that I should live again here between these walls, that here I should be avenged, that here I should again love Renato and be loved by him; they said something else, dark, incomprehensible, illegible, perhaps the name which he will then bear. 'I would fain write the story of my life, but the strength fails me; let the hints which I have given suffice. ' Change names with me. Let me return as Cecilia, let him love me under that name. 'This escrioire belonged to my mother; nobody knows the secret. I am placing in it the silver-mounted mirror which my mother got at Paris from Cagliostro. I have looked at myself in it long and fixedly; for the mirror retains the features of the last person who looks at herself in it. I have inscribed the date with my diamond ring. ' This is a lock of my hair. Don't you remember it? Just think. It is curious for me to be speaking to you as though you were not! How soft and fine my hair is. It is going to be buried without a kiss or a caress. How fair it is. It is going to be buried. ' And you, too, little white hand. Put a glove alongside my hair to remind me of you, little hand. Note that the thumb of the glove is a little short for me. Who knows whether I shall have so fine and soft a hand? One kiss, and farewell.

' I have but a few days longer to live. It is the evening of the 2d of May 1802. I know not the hour, for I have no watch. ' The windows are open wide, and this is what I feel. A soft mild air, and a greenish-blue sky, pleasant to gaze on. And the voices of the lake and the bells and these hot tears of mine, is it possible that you do not recall them? 'My soul, fasten upon this fact. Count Emanuele d'Ormengo and his mother are my murderers. Every stone in this house hates me. Nobody takes pity on me. And all for a flower, a smile, a calumny! But now no longer. For now, with heart and mind I am his, all his. ' Five years and four months have I passed here, without one word from them to me, or from me to them. When I am carried away to the churchyard perhaps they will come too. They will be in mourning, with grave faces, and will chant the responses: " Lux perpetua luceat ei." Oh! that at that moment I could rise from my bier and speak. * Mother! Father! Are you indeed dead and unable to defend me? Ah! vile d'Ormengo, they at least are free from suffering. ' Here let me pause a moment. My thoughts do not obey me, they move in a whirl, they all press close together here, in the middle of my forehead, in a wild hurly-burly from which there is no relief. and reread this manuscript, I shall at once kneel down and return thanks to God; after that, having compared my hair with the lock I have placed here, having put on the glove and gazed at my reflection in the glass, I shall shatter the mirror into fragments, for it will have to be renewed before it can serve me again. Then I shall replace everything in the secret drawer. After that the spring must be pressed to make everything go into place. ' Put all your faith in the Divine promise; leave the rest to God. ' Let there be sons, nephews, cousins; the vengeance will be good for all. Wait for it here, here. ' Cecilia.”

²⁶⁶ The situation of Cecilia's manuscript behind reified boundaries in the text suggests a textual and narrative correlate to the concept of the crypt, as a sealed-off space in the ego.

In altri momenti lo scetticismo che Marina teneva dall'uso del mondo non l'avrebbe nemmeno lasciata accostare da qualsiasi fantasma; ma quel sottile velo di scetticismo che copriva sempre il pensiero in tempo di calma come una crittogama di acque stagnanti, si era squarciato e disperso nell'incomprensibile turbamento di spirito che l'aveva assalita tornando al Palazzo.²⁶⁷

Marina's first inclination is to dismiss Cecilia's writings as the ravings of a madwoman, though after submitting the facts to scrutiny she begins increasingly convinced of their truth. This is ironic because, as one may note, the real-life procession of events contradicts the events prophesied in the manuscript. Might one not infer that Marina fails to notice these inconsistencies because she harbors a deep-seated, unconscious desire to believe in Cecilia's prophecy? Perhaps she sees the revenge as a legitimate way to be rid of her hated uncle. That Marina unconsciously wants the prophecy to be true would help explain some of the oversights she commits in processing the facts.

Marina overlooks several inconsistencies between the prophecy and real-life with regards to the handling of the mirror of Cagliostro, the lock of hair and the glove. Concerning the future handling of her personal effects, Cecilia prophesies that: "provato il guanto e, guardata la immagine nello specchio, spezzero a quest'ultimo il vetro che dev'essere rinnovato per poter servire un'altra volta"²⁶⁸. In reality, however, things happen a bit differently. First of all, while Marina does compare Cecilia's hair with her own (it does not match), when she goes to try the glove on, it does not even fit on her hand. Second of all, Marina does not gaze at her reflection in

²⁶⁷ "Her strong will, her powerful intelligence alone, amid the dismal silence of the room, fought with the hideous [ghost] that had seized on her young life and now sought to [infiltrate] her blood, [latch onto her bones] and [suck out her life and soul], with a view to replacing her identity with its own."

At other times Marina's [world-wise] skepticism would have prevented her from even allowing herself to be approached by any [ghost] from the other world; but that this veil of skepticism, which usually masked her thoughts like a [poisonous weed] upon a stagnant pool, had been broken up and dispersed by the strange anguish of mind into which she had been thrown as she returned to the palace."

²⁶⁸ "having compared my hair with the lock I have placed here, having put on the glove and gazed at my reflection in the glass, I shall shatter the mirror into fragments, for it will have to be renewed before it can serve me again."

the mirror before the mirror breaks²⁶⁹. Third of all, the aspects of these events that do come to pass do so outside of the order Cecilia prescribes for them. Using very deliberate wording, Cecilia prophesies that she will only shatter the mirror after the two preceding acts have been accomplished, but what in fact happens is that Fanny's intrusion causes Marina to break the mirror before she gets a chance to perform the prerequisite activities. In sum, there are numerous discrepancies capable of casting doubt over the prophecy as a whole, but the fact that one particularly dramatic prediction—the breaking of the mirror—does come to pass is enough to overshadow the minutiae.

But can even this event be taken at face value? The mirror breaks when Marina slams the lid of the *escritoire* shut, after hearing Fanny's footsteps in the hall. It is only natural that she would interpret this mishap as a fulfillment of the prophecy, given that it seems externally motivated, prompted by Fanny's unexpected intrusion. And yet, the discrepancies outlined above between events foretold in the prophecy and events unfolding in real life suggest that Marina's judgment is not inherently reliable, especially in an instance where the workings of fate could also be explained as a product of unconscious intentions. To begin with, Fanny's arrival seems like a dubious catalyst for a genuine surprise, given that Fanny is said to have footsteps like a cuirassier which can be heard from far away. It stands to reason that if Marina is able to listen to Fanny's steps retreating down the stairs, she should have also heard Fanny's steps coming up the stairs.

²⁶⁹ The prophecy says concerning the mirror: "I have looked at myself in it long and fixedly, - for the mirror retains the features of the last person who looks at herself in it." Had Marina looked in it, it would have reflected the image of Cecilia. Seeing as Cecilia's hair does not match Marina's, the reflection would have appeared different, and—provided it did not consist of a hallucination—would have legitimized Cecilia's prophecy. In all, the theory here seems to be that Cecilia would have retained the same outward appearance in her second life.

Another instance where Marina's deeds seem to align with the words of the prophecy is around Cecilia's decree: "Quando nella seconda vita avrò ritrovato e letto il presente manoscritto, m'inginocchierò immediatamente a ringraziar Dio"²⁷⁰. According to the logic of this passage, Marina is supposed to kneel and thank God, directly after she finishes reading the manuscript. Like the breaking of the mirror, however, this event occurs out of the anticipated sequence; only after Fanny leaves, and Marina has both compared the hair and tried on the glove, does she kneel and place her hands on top of the *escritoire*. Even then, Marina assumes the kneeling position purely as a reflex, without the conscious intent of "giving thanks to God." One can thus argue, based on the lack of conscious intent, that Marina does not pray in the manner prophesied, but rather performs a hollow gesture in the traditional prayer stance.

A substantial portion of this episode concerns Marina's thought-processes as she reads and interprets the manuscript. It shows Marina first systematically and rationally reviewing each fact, and then, after she fails to sustain this rigorous mode of thinking ("...In pari tempo le entrò prima nel cuore, poi per tutte le membra una agitazione sorda, un'alternativa di stanchezza e d'impaziente ardore, una cupa resistenza alla volontà"²⁷¹), passing from thought to thought by intuitive leaps and bounds. Out of the metaphors used to illustrate these mental procedures, there is a particularly striking one which compares Marina's inaccessible thoughts to sleeping travelers in the waiting-room of a train station:

Camogli? Nessuna eco, nessuna memoria. Genova? Silenzio. Suor Pellegrina Concetta, Renato? Silenzio. Palazzo Doria, palazzo Brignole, Busalla, Oleggio? Silenzio, sempre silenzio. Così talvolta, ad alta notte, in qualche sala d'aspetto ingombra di gente e male illuminata da un fumoso lume a petrolio, si grida una sequela di nomi di paesi e di città lontane; nessuno si move;

²⁷⁰ "When, in the second life, I shall have found and reread this manuscript, I shall at once kneel down and return thanks to God."

²⁷¹ "...an uneasy sensation began to take possession of her, weariness alternating with impatience, while her will seemed to be paralyzed."

nessuno risponde. Aspettano un altro treno. Ma chi sa se vi hanno viaggiatori per quella linea che non hanno udito perché dormono nei loro mantelli, laggiù all'altro capo della sala, seduti dietro la gente ritta?²⁷²

This passage shows Marina engaged in a pseudo-rational reflection, or what Jung might call “active imagination,”²⁷³ attempting to elicit sense from the proper names in the manuscript. In terms of imagery, the particular tendency here, also encountered in Book I.1, to liken the activities of the mind to aspects of rail travel, suggests parallels with the famous train-car analogy Freud uses to illustrate the technique of free-association²⁷⁴. To be sure, the waiting-room metaphor does not illustrate the mechanism of free-association—rather, it illustrates a deliberate and reflexive thought-process—while in the meantime, associative procedures are showcased in two other parts of this episode: in the manuscript’s stream-of-consciousness style and in Marina’s thinking once it veers away from a methodical examination of the facts. The following represents the course of Marina’s associations: remarking how the discovery was fortuitous, questioning Cecilia’s reliability, affirming Cecilia’s reliability, considering how all instances of déjà vu seem like tiny fragments of memories, objecting that her d’Ormengio blood must preclude her from being Cecilia’s reincarnation, determining that she “always hated her uncle” and revenge is more exquisite this way. Having reached this thought, Marina faints.

²⁷² “Camogli? No echo, no recollection. Genoa? Silence. Sister Pellegrina Concetta, Renato? Silence. The Doria Palace, Villa Brignole, Busalla, Oleggio? Silence, always silence. Thus it happens that in some railway waiting-room filled with travelers, and dimly lighted by a smoky petroleum lamp, an official calls out a long list of names of distant stations. Nobody responds. They are waiting for another train. But who can say that there are not travelers for this line, who have not heard because they are lying asleep on the benches behind, wrapped up in their long cloaks?”

²⁷³ For a discussion of Marina’s representation as seen through the eyes of contemporary (late nineteenth century) psychology, see note 14.

²⁷⁴ Freud would instruct his patients: “act as though, for instance, you were a traveler sitting next to the window of a railway carriage and describing to someone inside the carriage the changing views which you see outside.” Sigmund Freud, “On Beginning the Treatment” (1913), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974).

The fact that the last thought in this series relates to an exquisite revenge taken against a close family member lends credence to the idea that on some level, Marina hates Cesare and wishes him dead. Marina's hatred for the d'Ormengo family (as embodied in her uncle) is only one of a few salient parallels with Cecilia's life story that augurs for the fusion of the two identities. Namely, like Cecilia, Marina has lost both of her parents and in a manner of speaking, she also suffers confinement at the palace of R. (despite her technical independence, Marina is unmarried and has only a "meager" inheritance of eighty thousand francs)²⁷⁵. One image from this episode, that of the "hideous phantom" seizing Marina's "young life" and "encircling her form," ties into Abraham's discourse on the phantom, especially in the contingency where, rather than be exorcised, the phantom is displaced onto the subject's own libidinal life. Apropos of this contingency, Abraham adds that a displaced acceptance of radically foreign body can lead to the performance of "bizarre and even delirious acts."²⁷⁶ This is precisely what occurs when Marina, after being confronted with her ancestor's secret and failing to expel it as foreign to herself, enters a state of delirium²⁷⁷, during which time she makes cryptic allusions to the secret, simultaneously revealing and re-veiling it:

²⁷⁵ Based on the conversion rates of 1870, and adjusted for inflation, Marina's inheritance of 80,000 francs would be approximately \$460,000 today. Marina's marriage settlement of 400,000 francs, a sum which includes the 320,000-franc deed of gift from Cesare, would be equivalent to roughly \$2.4 million.

²⁷⁶ Abraham, "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology" (1975), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 176.

²⁷⁷ The semantics of the term "delirium" raise a further point of discussion. Abraham, who is writing in the French psychiatric tradition, uses the term "delirious" to denote a psychogenic delusion, whereas the "delirium" mentioned in *Malombra* (arising in connection with a "brain fever") may, and in fact should, also be understood in its technical sense, as referring to an organically caused syndrome (i.e. resulting from a viral infection). The convulsions that Marina experiences after delivering the harangue to Cesare in Book IV are consistent with this proposition of an organic illness. On a related note, both sides of Marina's family display a susceptibility to cerebral attacks: her father dies of a sudden aneurysm at a young age; her mother also dies young albeit from an undisclosed cause; Cesare suffers a stroke (called "apoplexy"). Overall, the possibility that Marina suffers from an organic illness introduces another set of considerations into the already complex causal structure of her behavior.

È quasi impossibile che l'inferma non si sia fatta sfuggire durante il delirio qualche allusione al fatto straordinario onde avea riportato impressioni sì gravi; ma quelle allusioni dovettero essere assai rade e vaghe, perché non fecero sospettare di nulla.²⁷⁸

Looked at in this light, at least one of Marina's eccentricities which initially seemed trivial may now be considered as evidence of haunting by a phantom. When Marina first arrives at R., she is subject to nervous attacks, which she and the doctor blame on the mountain air. Hardly serious, the attacks are actually convenient, since they provide Marina with a medical pretext to travel away from her uncle's palace (which she suggestively refers to as a "prison-house"). The symptoms vanish, however, after Marina discovers the relics and no longer desires to travel. Does this sudden acclimation not suggest that Marina's air-sickness is psychogenic rather than environmental? In addition to being subjective symptoms, exploitable for secondary gain, do Marina's sense of suffocation and use of incarceration language not play the role of phantom effects by dramatizing Cecilia's plight as a prisoner at the palace? If so, it is symbolically fitting that the symptoms should dissipate when Cecilia's secret is aired.

The knowledge obtained from the hidden manuscript gives a name and *raison d'être* to the invisible presence which has haunted Marina and sapped her autonomy from the moment of her arrival at R. On this account, it might be said that the first phase of Marina's development culminates in the circumscribing and labeling of an unknown region of the self. It also bears mentioning that this other part of the self, now known by the name "Cecilia," has begun to subvert the organization of her psyche. In the next part of my analysis, I will examine the course of events whereby Marina comes to assume Cecilia's identity and hatch a plot to murder her uncle.

²⁷⁸ "It is well-nigh certain that in the course of her delirium she must have allowed some allusion to the [extraordinary] cause of her overthrow to escape her; but such allusions must have been rare and vaguely worded, for they aroused [no suspicion]."

In the aftermath of the discovery, Marina suffers an acute brain fever that leaves her bedridden and delirious for more than a month. While in this state, she can scarcely tolerate her uncle's presence without becoming fiercely agitated. Afterward, even though she recovers her "vigore e bellezza,"²⁷⁹ it is nevertheless apparent to the discerning eye that something about her countenance has changed. And though this physiognomic shift (located in the eyes) may appear subtle, the corresponding characterological shift does not. Reading Cecilia's manuscript and contemplating its contents has forced hitherto censored feelings out into the open. Any pretense of discretion suddenly vanishes for Marina at the realization that to disguise her hatred for her uncle is tantamount to the basest hypocrisy. Now as never before she rails on the piano, leaves French novels strewn about the palace, opens and shuts windows at random, all in flagrant disregard of the Count's dictates. What is more, she adopts a set of new, cryptic behaviors (all predicated on words or phrases from the manuscript), embarking on more feverish jaunts across the lake, firing a pistol at the garden statues, and most startlingly of all, frequenting Church—where she had previously refused to set foot—at uncanny hours. Of course, these activities cause a stir among the locals, who continue to draw parallels between Marina and the Cecilia of legend.

Marina's personality shift also manifests inwardly in the form of an overexcited imagination, abounding with questions about supermundane topics. In an effort to keep her imaginary appetite sated, she puts in regular orders for French novels to the bookseller Dumolard. It is quite by chance that one day, approximately a year after the discovery of the relics, an Italian book (entitled *Un sogno*, "racconto originale italiano di Lorenzo"²⁸⁰) turns up

²⁷⁹ "Vigor and beauty."

²⁸⁰ "An original Italian tale by Lorenzo."

with the ordinary shipment. The text places a double emphasis on the arbitrariness of the circumstances that lead Marina to read *Un sogno*, first insisting that its inclusion was an accident (and that Marina does not care for Italian novels), and then suggesting that she only picks it up because Fanny mistook it for Sand's *L'homme de neige*. The mention of these accidents is interesting because it draws attention to potential gaps in the causal structure of the plot. Is it purely a matter of chance that Marina encounters Lorenzo/Corrado Silla in the space of letters, a short time before the same man turns up at the palace as her uncle's guest? Can there be any question of human intent or agency in bringing about these events? The first accident, concerning the mix-up at the post-office, seems to consist of a genuinely fortuitous occurrence, and on that point, the coincidence whereby Giulia de Bella later learns of Silla's location due to a mismailing of the same book later might be explained by invoking the Jungian principle of synchronicity²⁸¹. On the other hand, the second accident, which is superficially attributed to a misprision by Fanny, warrants further unpacking from the point of view of Marina's underlying motivation.

The apparent facts of the mix-up are these: Fanny mistakenly retrieves *Un sogno* instead of *L'homme de neige*, and Marina only becomes aware of the oversight after casting off aboard *Saetta*. Not wanting to return to shore, Marina resigns herself to suffering through the Italian novel by Lorenzo. The very fact that this scene is set on the lake, and “nella sua rada prediletta della Malombra,”²⁸² already suggests an association with the unconscious, owing to the symbolic

²⁸¹ In Jung's theory, synchronicity refers to a secondary logic in the structure of reality, outside the framework of cause and effect, which explains “temporally coincident occurrences of acausal events.” Synchronicity may also apply to the chance homonymy between Marina's family name “Malombra” and the “Val di Malombra,” which provides the setting for her reading of *Un sogno*. These names are linked, not in causal terms, but in terms of meaning, positing the respective vertices of Marina's character in culture and nature. See: C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle* (1960), trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

²⁸² “at [Marina's] favorite anchorage in the Malombra bay”

link established between the lake and the inner recesses of Marina's mind. Hence the question arises: does Marina have a motive to read *Un sogno*? And if so, why is this motive repressed? A possible answer to this question lies with Marina's conflicted feelings toward Italian texts. Consciously, Marina prefers French romances to texts in other languages, and she has a generally low opinion of Italian texts. She even opts to read Dante in French. It is nevertheless the case that on another, perhaps less conscious level, Marina has developed an unusual fascination with one Italian text in particular: the real-world romance of Cecilia's manuscript. Repression comes into play here by necessity, since the incident with Cecilia's manuscript has designated Italian-language texts as conduits of dangerous and forbidden knowledge, the type of knowledge that must be rejected outwardly and consumed in secret. Strangely enough, Marina picks up *Un sogno* on or near the anniversary of the day she discovered and read Cecilia's manuscript. By disavowing her intent and palming it off onto the hapless Fanny—incidentally, the same person blamed for the breaking of Cagliostro's mirror—might Marina not be devising an excuse to resume her occult researches? Does Fanny, who happens to be terrified of ghosts, not provide the perfect cover in this sense? If so, it may also help to answer Giovanna's question about Marina's patience for the "silly French girl."

This reading of *Un sogno* turns out to be a critical event because its story elaborates on some of the philosophical questions (about Fate, free will and reincarnation) raised with Cecilia's manuscript and this compels Marina to contact the author, Lorenzo, also known as Corrado Silla²⁸³. Marina's relationship with Silla, which forms the erotic vein of *Malombra*'s plot, moves across two levels of reality: the world of letters and the world of flesh-and-blood interactions. On

²⁸³ Marina is characterized as believing in Fate, even before moving to her uncle's palace. Deep down, Silla also appears to believe in Fate, despite his elaborate arguments to the contrary.

each of these successive levels, an event occurs to strengthen Marina's conviction that she is Cecilia reincarnated. Marina and Silla initially cross paths in the imaginary space of a literary correspondence, a masquerade-like ritual Marina devises for the covert purpose of interrogating the author of *Un sogno* on the philosophical problem of reincarnation. Marina formulates the rules for the literary correspondence in a letter to her friend, Giulia de Bella:

Non importa punto conoscere il nome né la persona dell'autore che ci si dice semplicemente Lorenzo. Potrebbe essere borghese, Matteo e biondo. M'è venuto invece il capriccio di una corrispondenza letteraria e ne posso avere tanto pochi dei capricci, che li soddisfo tutti subito. Y. che scrive a X.! Deve essere delizioso, specialmente se X. risponderà a Y. Potrebbe accadere che X. fosse una consonante di spirito; questa divertirebbe assai la povera Y. che si annoia come una regina. Ora X. non ha nemmeno a sapere di dove gli piova la mia lettera; vedi se non è una follia savia²⁸⁴!²⁸⁵

Using the name "Cecilia," Marina writes a letter to "Lorenzo," asking about his belief in destiny, about whether he thinks destiny can be avoided, and about the existence of malevolent spirits who trick the living by "rappresentandoci il falso colle apparenze del vero e rappresentandocelo in modo da colpire fortemente la nostra fantasia"²⁸⁶. The fact that Marina includes this last point suggests that she has recovered some of her old skepticism, absent at the time she read the manuscript. Finally, in the post-script of her eight-page letter, Marina adds a brief question about reincarnation, which despite its marginal placement represents the crux of her entire inquiry.

Although in his reply, Silla makes a passionate argument in favor of free will, his message gets warped in Marina's understanding, due to a few unforeseen factors. For one thing,

²⁸⁴ One may note the Erasmian echoes in the apparently oxymoronic proposition of a "wise folly."

²⁸⁵ "I take not the slightest interest in learning either the name or the identity of the author, who goes under the simple pseudonym of Lorenzo. He may be a bourgeois with fair hair who goes by the name of Matteo. The idea which I have formed is this: to engage in a literary correspondence! I am allowed so few whims that I give effect to those which I do have at once. Y writing to X! What fun, especially if X sends an answer to Y. It might happen that X is possessed of wit, which would afford amusement to poor Y, who is as bored as a [queen]. Meanwhile, X has no means of guessing from whence comes this letter; is it a folly not devoid of wisdom?"

²⁸⁶ "decking out falsehood with the semblance of truth, and so skillfully as to strongly influence our imagination."

Marina notes that at times Silla sounds like he is trying to convince himself, unconsciously betraying doubts about his own beliefs. For another thing, rather than focus on the cogent points in Silla's argument, Marina seems to home in and amplify peripheral details. This includes being strangely affected by the prospect of receiving a response addressed to "Cecilia," despite having signed this name on her original letter, and attaching undue significance to Silla's statements affirming belief in the plurality of terrestrial existences. On the latter question, Silla concedes belief in transmigration, but adds it is beyond the scope of human reason to grasp whether these lives were terrestrial or sidereal. Even though this answer is cautious and speculative, Marina reads it as an indication that Silla believes in the sort of reincarnation which Cecilia describes in her manuscript. In Book IV.4, when Silla claims not to have had any existence except the present one, Marina reproaches him for lying in the letter. In writing her second missive to "Lorenzo," Marina deviates from her philosophical inquiry to tease her correspondent about his pedantry and his bourgeois-sounding *nom de plume*. Clearly baffled by the contrast between this letter and the previous one, and insulted by the affront to his literary alter ego, Silla terminates the correspondence on his first evening at the palace (ironically posting his retort without realizing that his correspondent resides within the same walls). Ultimately, the brief correspondence with the author of *Un sogno* has the effect of plunging Marina deeper into a world of fantasy.

Marina's subsequent encounters with Silla in the real world, correspondingly, have the effect of stretching fantasy into delusion. Silla's visit to R. brings about mixed feelings in Marina: on the one hand, she finds him intriguing and refers to him the "principe nero"²⁸⁷ on account of his "contegno chiuso di personaggio misterioso,"²⁸⁸ while on the other hand, she

²⁸⁷ "Black prince."

²⁸⁸ the reserved demeanor of a mysterious personage.

avoids contact with him out of suspicion that he is Cesare's illegitimate son and an unwanted suitor. She thus resorts to spying on Silla from afar and when she does meet him face-to-face, she acts colder and haughtier than ever. Marina's impressions are reported in a letter to Giulia de Bella:

“...il giorno dopo la sua presentazione, si è dimenticato sino a stendermi la mano. Per verità mi ha inteso in aria e si è trattenuto prima di stenderla, ma ne cominciò l'atto. Una mano niente affatto borghese; simile a quella di mio zio che l'ha di razza. Dopo si è tenuto bene, orgogliosamente; debbo rendergli questa giustizia. Nota che gli ho fatto impressione, senza mia colpa. L'ho sentito fin dal primo momento e posso ben dirlo, perché la cosa è tanto poco lusinghiera! Io non sono come te, cara Giulia, che per cinque minuti civetteresti, sii sincera, con un commesso viaggiatore. Il principe nero, se vuoi saperlo, mostra una trentina d'anni; non è bello, ma neanche si può dir brutto; ha degli occhi non privi d'intelligenza; alla mia cameriera potrebbe anche piacere. A me è antipatico, odioso, odiosissimo. Bada bene, non per gelosia di ereditiera in pericolo; non so abbassarmi a queste cose, non le comprendo neppure. E basta.”²⁸⁹

First, the conspiracy Marina envisions, wherein her uncle desires to arrange her marriage with his illegitimate son, is not purely her invention—there are different, baseless rumors circulating about the Count's intentions—though her eagerness to embrace the sordid intrigue is evidence of a mind detached from reality and obsessed with the world of French Romance. Her ambivalent feelings about Silla are betrayed by the assertion that, despite his decent looks and eyes “non privi d'intelligenza,”²⁹⁰ she finds him completely odious, but suspects Fanny might like him. Here again, Fanny comes to function as a disavowed alter ego of Marina by embodying the

²⁸⁹ “...the day after he had been presented to me, forgot himself to the [point] of offering me his hand. As a matter of fact, he [understood what I was thinking] while [his] hand was in mid-air, and pulled it back before he had actually extended it for me to take; but he was on the point of doing so. It was not a vulgar kind of hand, I noticed, but resembled my uncle's, who [has it in the family. Ever since, his bearing has been acceptable], even haughty; I must [give him credit for this. Bear in mind that I made an impression on him through no fault of my own. I sensed this from the moment that we met, and can easily admit it, seeing as it is hardly flattering]. I am not like you, my dear Giulia, who, for five minutes, would flirt with a commercial traveler. Admit that you would! The Black Prince, if you wish to know, is about thirty years old, is not good looking, and yet one cannot call him plain; his eyes are not wanting in intelligence, and my maid might possibly think him nice. I cannot bear the sight of him, to me he is [unpleasant, odious, so odious. Mind you, I do not say this out of jealousy for my inheritance; I am unable to lower myself to consider such things, I do not even understand them. There is the end of it].”

²⁹⁰ “not wanting in intelligence”

desires Marina consciously rejects²⁹¹. It is interesting, in this connection, to note the scene just prior to Marina and Silla's chess game, where Cesare catches sight of Fanny and the doctor in the garden. The tendency to associate Fanny with Marina's unconscious transfers the erotic connotations of this vignette onto the following scene, where Marina mistakes Silla for the doctor.

Marina's first real conversation with Silla, taking place during a game of chess, represents a pivotal scene from the point of view of the overarching psychodrama. The chess game offers a fitting backdrop to what begins as an aggressive flirtation, characterized by sarcastic banter and wordplay on the language of power and domination. At one point during the encounter, Marina and Silla are shown to experience a profound, psychical connection:

Oh! esclamò Marina. Un lampo di sdegno le passò negli occhi. L'uno e l'altro pensarono in quel momento a un predisposto legame, fosse pure d'antagonismo, di inimicizia, nel loro futuro destino.²⁹²

Another defining moment occurs toward the end of the scene, when Marina quotes a passage from one of "Lorenzo's" letters. By speaking these words, she unwittingly reveals to Silla that she is the Cecilia from the letters, all the while remaining oblivious to the fact that Silla is Lorenzo. It is befitting that this disclosure should take place in the context of the chess game,

²⁹¹ The tendency to use servants and other minor characters to explicate or meditate on the motives of the primary characters comes into full focus in Book II.4, where Fanny and Catta are shown interacting in their respective capacities as the alter egos of Marina and Fosca. When Marina enters into the habitus of Cecilia, Rico functions as her alter ego in the place of Fanny. For example, during the trip to the Orrido, Rico appears to act out Marina's negative feelings toward Nepo by provoking the suitor and "ridendo come un matto del suo riso argentino, malizioso" [laughing like a madman with his silvery, mischievous laugh]. Here, Rico's "riso argentino" recalls the "riso argentino" of Marina in Book I.7, underscoring the continuity in the representations of the two characters (cf. "Marina era gaia. Nel riso argentino che saltava spesso dalla sua voce dolce e vellutata, come il sonaglio di un folletto nascosto, si udiva una nota trionfante. Qualche volta rideva anche lei come Fanny, senza ragione, distratta" [Marina was in high spirits. Her voice was soft and musical, but in the silvery laugh which frequently rang out could be heard a note of triumph, like the little bell of a hobgoblin lurking in a forest glade. From time to time she and Fanny laughed together from no apparent cause]).

²⁹² "Oh! ' exclaimed Marina. A look of scorn flashed from her eyes. At that moment, the same thought occurred to each of them, the thought of a bond linking their future destinies together, but linking them by a chain of antagonism and of enmity."

because it alters the power dynamic in Marina and Silla's relationship, a relationship built up around partial and fragmentary encounters. Before now, Marina had dominated Silla from a scopophilic²⁹³ and epistemophilic standpoint, by spying on him from a distance without allowing him to lay eyes on her. Thus, Silla could only know Marina from traces of her perfume and the sound of her piano playing. Now, with her literary identity exposed, Marina has inadvertently reversed the positions and granted Silla one-way access to her most intimate thoughts.

Incidentally, the mystery surrounding Silla's identity and intentions adds to Marina's paranoia and causes her to misinterpret his offhand remarks. Tensions between the two boil over at the palace gathering held that evening, when the discussion indiscreetly touches upon the scandal of Emanuele and Cecilia (jokingly referred to as "an official secret" by the municipal councilors). One can infer from the tenor of the discourse that this topic carries a stigma, and yet it remains a source of morbid fascination for many of the guests. For Marina, on the other hand, the topic has taken on a personal significance, and it is therefore only natural that she become agitated upon hearing it broached in a scandalizing context. The final straw comes when Silla—wary perhaps, as Marina herself had been, of falsehood appearing under the semblance of truth—calls Cecilia's victimhood into question. Hearing this stranger advocate for the patriarchal oppressor and question the legitimacy of Cecilia's suffering causes Marina to lash out, specifically by questioning Silla's own legitimacy and implying that he is a bastard. The seemingly unprovoked insult wounds Silla's pride to the point where he decides to quit R. without concluding his business with Cesare. While he is leaving, however, Silla encounters Marina on the lake aboard *Saetta*, and when a storm sets in, he heroically rescues her by steering

²⁹³ The fact that, following the arrival of the "Black Prince," Marina remains out of sight but continues to draw attention to herself through such activities as playing the piano at night and leaving out books intended to provoke Cesare betrays, on her part, a vague tendency toward exhibitionism.

the boat to safety. The episode culminates with Marina and Silla each performing a suggestive act. As Marina attempts to disembark *Saetta*, her foot catches in the chain, causing her to collapse into Silla's arms. This misstep leaves the two in a passionate embrace, whereupon Silla unexpectedly whispers the name "Cecilia." While neither of these acts is assigned a clear source of motivation in the text—Marina's loss of footing is portrayed as an accident and no intention is specified for Silla's utterance—the imagery of the scene consists of a closely woven inference pattern, enabling one to posit the activity of unconscious desire.

The connection between the adventure in the storm and the workings of the unconscious is apparent in several elements, starting with the lacustrine setting. The lake's established function as a mirror for Marina's inner world turns the impersonal forces of nature in this scene, including the wind, the waves, the darkness, the lighting, into a language of unconscious desire and conflict²⁹⁴. On the one hand, there are instances where the elemental phenomena highlight the psychical link between Marina and Silla, even suggesting some process of unconscious communication ("Anche nella voce di lei v'era una commozione, un'elettricità di tempesta." "nello stesso punto un lampo spaventoso divampò per tutto il cielo e pel lago biancastro, per le montagne di cui si vide ogni sasso, ogni pianta scapigliata... Marina sfolgorò davanti a Silla con i capelli al vento e gli occhi fissi nei suoi," "la notte, le voci della natura sfrenata, quel tocco bruciante, quell'inatteso sguardo gli gridavan tutti di esser vile," "e i lampi gliela mostravano ogni momento, lì, palpitante, col viso e il petto piegati a lui"²⁹⁵). On the other hand, by

²⁹⁴ The fact that this constitutes a Romantic *topos*—one formidably exploited in Charlotte Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*—does not diminish its efficacy.

²⁹⁵ "Even in her voice there was a tremor, an electric thrill in harmony with the storm;" "At the same moment a blinding flash of lightning shot across the sky...there flashed before Silla the apparition of Marina, with her hair floating in the gale and her eyes fixed on his;" "...the night, the voices of Nature at its wildest, that burning touch, that unexpected glance, all cried out to him that he was a miserable creature;" "the flashes of lightning showed her to him every moment, there before him, her bosom heaving, her face bending forwards towards his."

alternatively inducing and disrupting physical contact between Marina and Silla, these same phenomena (specifically the waves) simulate the struggle between desire and repression:

Saetta, spinta troppo vigorosamente, alzava la prua sull'onda, la spaccava cadendo a gran colpi sordi; entrava nelle più grosse come un pugnale; allora la cresta spumosa ne saltava dentro, correva sino a poppa. La prima volta, sentendo l'acqua, Marina alzò in fretta i piedi, li posò su quelli di Silla.²⁹⁶

E quei piedini premevano i suoi: premevano più forte quando la poppa si alzava; ne sdruciolavan quindi e vi si riappiccicavano.²⁹⁷

If these back and forth movements on the boat represent a tug-of-war between desire and resistance, the misstep that plants Marina in Silla's arms seems to indicate the ultimate triumph of desire. In this sense, the imagery of the scene supports reading Marina's slip not as an accident but as an expression of desire. Following the same inference pattern, one may also posit that Marina's loss of self-possession prompts Silla to utter the name "Cecilia," as a sort of *lapsus linguae*.

Silla's act of interchanging the name "Cecilia" for "Marina" carries far-reaching, dynamic consequences. Most generally, for Marina, being called "Cecilia" signals the passage from a rich fantasy life to a more or less delusional frame of mind. More particularly, hearing the name mentioned sets the stage for a twofold recognition. The immediate, natural effect of being called "Cecilia" is that it exposes the identity of her mysterious correspondent (Marina confirms the recognition in the following chapter when she writes to Giulia de Bella: "sospetto di aver indovinato il nome dell'autore di *Un Sogno*"²⁹⁸). The second and more insidious consequence of the naming is that it reinforces Marina's belief in the manuscript's prophecy. Akin to the way she

²⁹⁶"*Saetta*, urged forward too vigorously, rose at the bow above the waves and then splashed down into them with a dull, heavy thud...the first time this happened, Marina, at the sound of the rushing water, hastily raised her feet and rested them on Silla's."

²⁹⁷ "And the little feet were pressing his, pressing harder as the boat rose in the air, then slipping away and again pressing against his."

²⁹⁸ "I think I have guessed the name of the author of *Un Sogno*."

felt when she saw the letter addressed to “Cecilia,” Marina experiences an uncanny sensation upon hearing the name spoken, causing her to wonder if she is dreaming (“Non era un sogno, non c'era inganno, non c'era dubbio possibile; Silla aveva detto: ‘CECILIA.’”²⁹⁹) and ultimately leading her to conclude that Silla is the reincarnation of Cecilia’s lover, Renato. Marina’s thoughts and feelings on the matter are not viewed until Book II.7:

Ella si levò in piedi soffocata da un'oppressione senza nome, emise un lungo respiro, cercando sollievo; ma l'aria tepida, profumata, era fuoco. Ah lo amava, lo amava, lo invocava, lo stringeva nelle sue braccia! Spense in furia i lumi dello specchio, ricadde di fianco sulla poltrona e, abbracciatane la spalliera, vi fissò il viso, la morse³⁰⁰. Giacque lì un lungo quarto d'ora, tutta immobile fuor che le spalle sollevate da un palpitare forte e frequente. Si rialzò, infine, cupa; e pensò. Perché non aver trattenuto Silla dopo udito il nome terribile? Perché, s'ella aveva perduto in sulle prime e moto e senso e volontà, non s'era slanciata poi quella notte stessa dietro a lui, a caso ma con l'istinto della passione, dietro a lui ch'ella aveva amato, come dubitarne? al primo vederlo, malgrado se stessa, con dispetto e rabbia, dietro a lui che l'aveva stretta nelle braccia chiamandola Cecilia?³⁰¹

A few general statements can be made about Marina’s state of mind following the episode on the dock. Beneath her growing obsession with Cecilia’s prophecy, which dominates her thoughts and compels her to perform outlandish acts, Marina thrashes about between the poles of love and hate. On the one hand, she loves Silla and conspires by different means to bring him back to the palace. On the other hand, she hates Cesare (as well as Nepo) and awaits a sign from

²⁹⁹ “It was no dream, it was no illusion, there was no room for doubt; Silla had whispered ‘Cecilia.’”

³⁰⁰ The motifs of fire and orality which intertwine in this passage also appear together in the passage describing Silla’s sexual awakening (“...quell fuoco divorante gli scese intero ai sensi”).

³⁰¹ “She rose to her feet, suffocated by a stifling sensation, and took a deep breath, searching for relief; but the soft, perfumed air was like fire. Ah, she loved him, she loved him, she called to him, she held him in her arms! Furiously she blew out the candles on the looking-glass, fell sideways on to the chair, and, taking hold of the back, placed her face against it, and bit it. She lay there for over a quarter of an hour, motionless, but for her shoulders, which heaved quickly, violently. At length, she sat upright again, lost in gloomy meditation. Why had she not detained Silla when he uttered the dreaded name? Why, at the very outset, had she lost motion, and sense and will? Why had not she flung herself after him that same night, at hazard, perhaps, yet with the instinct of passion, after the man whom she had loved—how could she doubt it? at first sight; in spite of herself, in rage and disdain, after the man who had pressed her in his arms, [calling her Cecilia]?”

God telling her to go forward and claim her revenge. Her hope of somehow balancing these desires is projected onto the vague words in the concluding part of the manuscript:

Quelle ultime parole del manoscritto! Lasciar fare a Dio. Sieno figli, sieno nipoti, sieno parenti, la vendetta sarà buona su tutti. Qui, aspettarla qui. E i fatti non accennavano già confusamente da lontano com'ella potrebbe raggiungere insieme la vendetta e l'amore?³⁰²

Though her instinct tells her to leave her uncle's house in search of Silla, this command to "wait" keeps her tethered to the place. In this way, it actually impedes her erotic interests, subordinating them to a powerful thanatic exigence, the exhortation to steward Cecilia's revenge. Although the manuscript does not contain specific instructions about what form the vendetta should take, whom it should be taken against, and even whether action should be taken at all, these are questions left dangerously open-ended.

A few, scattered passages in Book II highlight the areas of ambivalence in Marina's character. Her affective states—highly mutable in the period following Silla's departure—are generally outlined in Book II.4:

L'umore di Marina era dei più mutabili. Da lunghe ore di calma taciturna passava ad impeti di nervoso brio. Civettava un momento con Nepo a segno di stordirlo, di levarlo da terra; poi non lo guardava più, non gli rispondeva. Viveva, si può dire, d'aria; e non era mai stata così bella. Sotto le due bende ondulate di capelli che scendevano curve fin presso le sopracciglia, quasi a nascondere un segreto pensiero, i suoi grandi occhi gittavano fuoco assai più spesso del solito. Nella sua persona, musica inesprimibile di curve armoniose dall'orecchio finissimo alla punta del piede arcuato, si vedeano alternarsi l'energia e il languore di una vita nervosa, esuberante. Insomma ella era come un nodo di ombra, di luce e di elettrico; che cosa chiudesse, nessuno lo sapeva.³⁰³

³⁰² "Those concluding words of the manuscript: 'leave things in God's hands. Be they sons, be they nephews, be they [relatives], the vengeance will be good for all. Here you must wait for it, here.' And did not all the circumstances give a confused, distant indication of how she could attain to both revenge and love?"

³⁰³ "Marina was in a state of ever-changing moods. Long hours of complete calm gave way to attacks of nervous excitement. She would flirt with Nepo and fill him with exalted hopes, and then would turn away from him and give no answer when he spoke. She seemed to live on air; and [she had never appeared so] beautiful. Beneath the two waving tresses of hair which curled over till they almost touched her eyebrows, [as though to hide a secret thought,] her large eyes flashed more brightly than ever. Her form displayed a harmony of curves from [her] fine little ear to the tip of her well-arched foot. The energy of a nervous exuberant life alternated with the languor which is its inevitable complement. She was, in fact, a nimbus of light, shade and electric force; what the nimbus contained within it nobody knew."

In Book II.6, during her conversations with Edith, Marina shows that she is subject to strange and powerful emotions on the issues of love in general and Silla in particular. For instance, when Edith says “(So che) non lo ama,” Marina only hears the word “ama” and the mishearing casts her into a deep reverie:

Marina si sentì afferrare il cuore da una mano fredda. Ella passava allora presso la cisterna. Buttò le braccia sul parapetto e porse il viso al fondo. Il solo suono della parola *ama* le riempiva l'anima. *Non lo ama* aveva detto Edith: ma la negazione era caduta inavvertita, non la magica parola *ama*. Avvenne allora di Marina come di una corda musicale inerte che chiude in sé la sua nota silenziosa, ma se una voce ignara di lei passa cantando nella stanza ove giace, e tocca tra l'altre questa nota, sull'istante tutta la corda vibra. *Ama, ama, ama!* In fondo al nero tubo della cisterna brillava un picciol disco sereno rotto da una scura testa umana. Marina chiamò involontariamente a mezza voce:

Cecilia!

La voce percosse l'acqua sonora e tornò su con un rombo sinistro. Marina si rizzò e riprese il cammino senza parlare.³⁰⁴

Judging from its musical quality and singular ability to captivate the listener, the word “ama” functions as one of the “pneumatic words” described by Steinegge in an early scene of the novel. According to his theory, “le parole pneumatiche vengono bell'e fatte dai polmoni, suonano come strumenti musicali, nessuno sa cosa vogliano dire e ubbriacano gli uomini”³⁰⁵. The fact that the mystic vibrations of “ama”³⁰⁶ are nullified by the sinister echo of an involuntarily issued “Cecilia” sets these two terms up in opposition: on the one hand, there is love, and on the other, there is Cecilia, hate, revenge, destiny.

³⁰⁴“Marina felt her heart gripped by an ice-cold hand. At that moment, she was passing the well. She rested her arms on the stonework and looked down into the water. The word 'love' was ringing in her ears. '[She] does not love him,' Edith had said, but the negation had fallen unheeded, not so the magical word, love. It was with Marina as with some musical chord enclosing a certain note, silent until a voice passing through the room touches that same note among others, and then at once the whole chord vibrates with *love, love, love*. At the bottom of the well's black tube shone a little white disc broken by a dark human head. Marina, in a low tone, involuntarily called out, - 'Cecilia.' The voice struck the echoing water, and travelled back again with a sinister booming sound. Marina stood up and resumed her way in silence.”

³⁰⁵ “pneumatic words are uttered by the lungs, sound like musical instruments, nobody knows what they mean, and all mankind is intoxicated by them.”

³⁰⁶ “love”

The conflict between love and hate comes to the forefront again when Marina tells Edith about her “friend” who married out of hate and contempt:

Per odio e per disprezzo insieme. Son due sentimenti che si possono incontrare benissimo nel tallone acuto d'uno stivaletto. Questa persona se ne servì per *fouler aux pieds* con quattro colpi suo marito e parecchie altre cose odiose e spregevoli.³⁰⁷

Although Marina presents this anecdote matter-of-factly, as though referring to someone else's experience, it consists of her own sadistic fantasy—a fantasy she seriously considers acting upon. In her mind, it is she who tramples her husband, along with other “cose,”³⁰⁸ under the sharp heel of a boot. The logic of the fantasy seems to revolve around correcting the injustice Emanuele inflicted on Cecilia: in this sense, Marina imagines herself dominating Nepo (her tentative fiancé) the way Emanuele dominated Cecilia, and thus collecting on a symbolic debt incurred six decades earlier. Subsequent events bring to light that Marina intends, at least provisionally, to realize the imagined scenario. After touring the Orrido with him, Marina agrees to marry Nepo under the stipulation that she does not love him, and their marriage will be a loveless one. Later, Marina tells Silla how she had originally planned to marry, cuckold and “trample” Nepo as a means of fulfilling Cecilia's vengeance (Nepo is an extended member of the d'Ormengo family).

From a narrative standpoint, throughout most of Book II, Marina's consciousness remains almost completely opaque. Only at the end of Book II.7 is the reader afforded access to her private thoughts in a manner comparable to the episode where she discovers the relics. At least in this instance, turning Marina's mind into a transparent surface is a way of signifying, in narrative terms, that Marina enjoys greater mental clarity inside the walls of her own room:

³⁰⁷ ‘Out of both together. They are two feelings which can very well find lodging in the same high heel of the same little shoe. The person I refer to made use of them to [trample underfoot]: her husband, and many other odious and contemptible creatures.’

³⁰⁸ “Things.”

Solo quando entrò nella propria camera, fra le pareti pregne de' suoi pensieri più occulti, della essenza di lei stessa, custodi di tante cose sue e delle segrete voci de' suoi libri prediletti, delle sue lettere, solo allora si sentì forte, e la sorda irritazione del suo cuore trovò un concetto, una via.³⁰⁹

The scene goes on to show Marina's thoughts take on two orientations: an intense longing for Silla's return and equally intense hatred and contempt for Cesare. Regarding the latter theme, the most recent flare-up of negative sentiment toward her uncle stems from a conversation earlier in Book II.7, where Cesare had actually tries to smooth over their relations. After Silla's departure, Cesare had angrily suggested that Marina move out of the palace; now, he regrets his words spoken in anger and expresses concern about the obviously ill-suited union with Nepo. Despite the attempted reconciliation, Marina confronts him with his earlier words, whereupon he simply remarks that she is entering a wealthy family and that she should do so with dignity. Privately, these remarks—which she interprets as an allusion to her dowry—infuriate Marina because to her they suggest that Cesare is “saldare a quel modo la partita di tante prepotenze, di tante offese oblique e dirette”³¹⁰ with a stream of “denaro...avvelenato d'inimicizia”³¹¹.

The nature of the love between Marina and Silla—the other theme occupying Marina's thought—remains a point of ambiguity in the text. On Silla's part, the adventure with Marina is not a question of genuine love but rather a question of furthering his amour propre. On Marina's part, the question arises as to whether her love has an intrinsic value or whether it is secondary to her obsession with the prophecy. Certainly, Marina's flashback to the embrace with Silla on the dock and her active efforts to locate him and draw him back to the palace, both of which exceed

³⁰⁹ “Not till she was inside her own room, inside the walls that guarded her secret thoughts, her secret life, her favorite books, her letters and keepsakes, not till then did she feel strong in her resolve, not till then did the dull anger smoldering in her heart find shape and method.”

³¹⁰ “Settling up the accounts of arrogance and slights, direct and indirect.”

³¹¹ “money...poisoned by hatred.”

the indications about a future romance between Cecilia and Renato in the prophecy, argue for the intrinsic value of her love. For instance, after Silla is located thanks to another fortuitous postal error, two of the factors which compel his return—the realization, through Giulia de Bella, “that Marina may have loved him” and the telegram from “Cecilia” informing him of Cesare’s illness—can be traced back to Marina’s agency. If loving Silla were simply a question of adhering to the prophecy, why would Marina not leave everything to God, the way the manuscript dictates? On the other hand, even if one grants that this love has value outside the scope of Cecilia’s prophecy, questions remain, such as whether this love constitutes an end in itself or whether it is contingent upon the vengeance against Cesare. One hypothesis is that the manuscript offers a pretext for Marina to act on her deep-seated hatred for her uncle, all the while stipulating conditions under which the act must occur; such a reading would explain why Marina takes steps to hasten the fulfillment yet insists on timing her revenge in accordance with Silla’s return to the palace. In the end, however, there is no way to fully disentangle the knot of motives formed around Marina’s hatred for Cesare, her love for Silla and questions relating to the psychological impact of the prophecy (to set aside the question of its metaphysical implications), as all of these components play off one another.

Marina’s brief meeting with Silla in the garden on the night of Silla’s return is interesting because while the dialogue seems to proceed smoothly, each character is grounded in a different frame of reference. When Marina insists on being addressed as “Cecilia,” it is because she is convinced of being Cecilia’s reincarnation, but Silla obliges because he interprets this name-change as a continuation of the amorous game started with the literary correspondence. Silla similarly misinterprets Marina’s question, “when did you remember?”—referring to the memory of his former life—to mean a more banal, “when did you remember your love for me?”

Throughout the exchange, both participants are described as “fever-stricken,” and Silla claims that his love for Marina has left him “half-mad.” Those who speak of Marina and Silla’s *folie à deux* may well be correct, with the qualification that Silla does not participate in Marina’s delusion so much as suffer a delusion of his own³¹²³¹³. The precarious nature of the bond forged around these reciprocal delusions becomes all too clear when Marina and Silla meet again on the following evening. On that occasion, Marina confuses Silla by calling him “Renato”—a name he has never heard and therefore disavows—before interrogating him about his memory of Cecilia in their previous incarnation. If at first Silla seems to play along by telling Marina what she wants to hear, this is only because his passions tune out the nonsense; he soon becomes irritated and confesses that he does not understand. Marina, meanwhile, continues to justify her beliefs in the face of Silla’s incomprehension by convincing herself that Silla simply does not remember his prior existence. More than anything, the scene has an anagnoritic value for Silla: as Marina parades her articles of “evidence”—first reminding him of his arguments made in support of reincarnation³¹⁴, then showing him the manuscript, and finally disclosing her role in Cesare’s murder—Silla realizes the truth about Marina’s situation and is forced to confront the devastating consequences of his seemingly harmless literary exaggerations, or as it were, his own

³¹² See: Ernest Charles Lasègue and Jules Falret, *La folie à deux* (Paris: Theraplax, 1877).

³¹³ The fact that Marina and Silla only reach an illusory consensus is consistent with the idea that each character perceives the world through the lens of a fantasied identification: Marina identifies with her ancestor, Cecilia, through the mechanism of the transgenerational phantom, and Silla identifies with his unmourned mother, to whom he unconsciously lends his flesh and subjects to degradation, through the mechanism of the intrapsychic crypt. Consigned by destiny to the phantasmic prisons built around their respective fixations, Marina and Silla can scarcely aspire to a genuine *sensus communis*. This scene presents a notable counterpoint to the chess-game scene, where Silla and Marina are joined by a common, intuitive experience.

³¹⁴ Marina accuses Silla of professing a belief in reincarnation, when in fact his belief had only been a fantasy. This is ironic because her judgment is essentially correct (regarding Silla) and yet now she holds a firm belief in reincarnation, having been persuaded in part by his argument in the letter. The implication is that he now thinks she is mad for subscribing to an idea he helped inculcate. From a thematic standpoint, this circumstance gives rise to two important considerations. On the one hand, Silla—who militates fervently against the hypocrisy of his time and generation—is forced to confront the unusually devastating consequences of his own little hypocrisy (that of arguing a point he finds convenient in spite of his underlying skepticism). The other consideration in this case concerns the question of where fantasy ends and belief, delusional or otherwise, begins.

“little hypocrisy”³¹⁵. With regard to Marina, one may note that she will not return Silla’s affections without his first believing he is someone else—namely, Renato—, that she readily suspends this love in order to resume her campaign of aggression against Cesare, and that she ultimately murders Silla when he refuses to assume the role she assigns him in her metaphysical scheme. There is, as Paolo Valesio has pointed out, an additional psychological ambiguity underlying all this: by killing Silla, Marina shows that on some level, she does not fully buy into her own metaphysical theory, because if she did truly believe that Silla is Renato, she would not destroy him. Rather, “*tout se passe comme si* Marina is to some degree conscious that her reincarnation ‘theory’ is just a fantasy, and the strongest component is her quite mundane love for Silla; when the latte proves unwilling to follow her in her ‘game,’ she feels she no longer has a soul-mate, and thus dispatches him.” To put it another way, when she delivers the harangue against Cesare and puts on the spectacle for the dinner guests, Marina is fully aligned with Cecilia, but almost immediately thereafter, when she kills Silla [with a coolly worded ‘bon voyage,’] Marina is only Marina, “the heroine of a very realistic story of passion and death.”

In the narration of these last two scenes, events are mediated primarily through Silla’s thoughts and perceptions. With respect to Marina’s psychology, apart from a few direct insights (for instance, the affirmation that “Ella era fissa nell’idea di Cecilia Varrega, che avrebbe ritrovato, nella seconda esistenza terrena, il suo primo amante”³¹⁶), meanings tend to be

³¹⁵ Of course, to call Silla’s literary posturing a hypocrisy is somewhat perverse, as Paolo Valesio has noted, insofar as Silla is “simply being a writer” and “it is not his fault that Marina (for quite understandable psychological reasons, to be sure) does not distinguish clearly...between literary fiction and reality.” On a more general note, it would be worthwhile to expand on the question of hypocrisy versus sincerity—a key thematic axis in the novel—from a psychological point of view. Significantly, the treatment that Silla gives hypocrisy in his essay in Book III.1, does not open itself to the possibility of an unconscious mind (Fogazzaro/the narrator shows he has an inkling of this dimension of being, even if Silla does not) or to existentialist considerations about the relationship between sincerity and authenticity. In the very least, a discourse on hypocrisy that takes these questions into account would reject as flawed the dichotomy of sincerity and hypocrisy—on the grounds that it is impossible to be absolutely sincere—and restate the problem, for instance, in terms of a more fluid distinction between conscious and unconscious hypocrisy, or in terms of hypocrisy’s relation to the discourse on sincerity versus authenticity. See: Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1971).

³¹⁶ “she had in her mind the fixed idea of Cecilia Varrega who had re-found, in her second existence on earth, her first lover.”

expressed on an implicit level via aspects of the imagery. Images used to convey the extreme vicissitudes of Marina's mental state include her "inerte mano prigioniera,"³¹⁷ (a *pars pro toto* given for "il braccio, la persona"³¹⁸); her voice which "gli pareva e non gli pareva di donna Marina;"³¹⁹ and her eyes which are "lucenti...di riso muto"³²⁰ in a manic celebration of Renato's return, before reflecting "una cupa espressione indefinibile"³²¹ when Silla denies being Renato.

The drama leading up to Cesare's death may be enough to shock Silla out of his delusion, but the same cannot be said for Marina. Having been physically yanked away from Cesare's bedside while delivering her final harangue, Marina descends into a state of delirium akin to the one she suffered after discovering Cecilia's relics. At this point in the story, Marina's consciousness becomes completely opaque³²², as denoted by the complete withdrawal of internal focalization from her character. Hence, the narration begins to mimic the style of a medical case-study in the sense that the situation must be pieced together from an odd assortment of observations and second-hand reports. For instance, Commendatore Vezza relays to Steinegge how after being expelled from Cesare's room, Marina suffered a seizure—she was found convulsing with her teeth clenched on Silla's coat—and that three people were required to subdue her and carry her upstairs.

The dinner banquet scene offers the reader a final opportunity to glimpse the goings-on of Marina's mental life, here personified in features of the décor and the natural environment. Here

³¹⁷ "lifeless, imprisoned hand"

³¹⁸ "her arm, her whole person."

³¹⁹ "sounded and yet did not sound like to him that of Donna Marina"

³²⁰ "sparkle with laughter"

³²¹ "an indescribable melancholy"

³²² Although Marina is depicted alone in her chambers when she writes the message in blood, no insight is offered into the content of her thoughts.

perhaps more than anywhere else, all the components of the representation work to expose the duality of Marina's being by positioning her at the very place where nature meets culture. The scene opens with a view of the waves and the wind raging outside the palace; these forces of nature are likened to unruly spectators who "mock at the old palace" and "howl madly" as they wait to witness more death and human suffering. Despite these tempestuous conditions, servants emerge on the loggia and begin to prepare the space for dinner, in accordance with Marina's instructions. When complete, the extravagant spread consisting of a large dark carpet, potted plants of different colors, yellowish grey Flemish table-cloths, and a gilt *jardinière* is presented as a reflection of Marina's own "immagine...un cuor nero, una fantasia accesa, una intelligenza scossa ma non caduta"³²³. In this scene, everything seems a bit unreal, owing to the uncanny influence Marina exercises over her surroundings, animate and inanimate. Animistic imagery and an atmosphere suggestive of the omnipotence of thoughts are employed here to signify Marina's regression to a primitive mental state. On the one hand, she gives orders to the servants "senza muovere un dito, indicando i luoghi e le cose col girar della persona e del viso"³²⁴. On the other hand, she appears to quell the waves and the wind by her very presence, leading Fanny to reflect that "ai signori e ai matti obbedisce anche il vento"³²⁵³²⁶.

It is evident from Marina's words and actions in this context that she still believes she is Cecilia's reincarnation, while more abstractly, the banquet marks the fulfillment of the transformation that had begun on the eve of her arrival at the palace. In a morbidly fitting touch, the conversation at the banquet revolves entirely around themes of death, death in life and life

³²³ "[image]; a black heart, a glowing imagination, an intellect shaken but not over turned"

³²⁴ "without raising a finger, simply indicating things and places by a turn and a look."

³²⁵ "to gentlefolks and mad people [even] the wind is obedient."

³²⁶ There seem to be echoes here of the black dinner scene in J-K Huysmans's novel, *A rebours*.

after death. At the beginning of the meal, Marina compares herself to Proserpine among the shades, prompting Vezza to reply that she “would bring all the dead back to life.” This comparison demonstrates the extent to which Marina’s zeal for scenes out of contemporary French novels has morphed into a preoccupation with the figures of ancient mythology. After comparing herself to the queen of the underworld, Marina alarms Vezza by suggesting that she poisoned the wine, only to laugh this off afterwards as “a jest of Proserpine.” Then her demeanor changes, and when Vezza questions the transition from “Proserpine to a Sphinx,” she speaks about a course of transformation (“to a Sphinx...to become stone, or colder still”) in which each consecutive step connotes a degree further removed from life. Marina’s subsequent statement, “but first let her speak and explain all,” stands out because a peculiar linguistic feature: whereas previously she had referred to herself using a first-person pronoun, she now begins to speak in the third-person. Implicit in this obscure mode of self-reference is the notion that Marina does not intend to speak on her own behalf, but rather that someone intends to speak through her, or even that she marks the site of an impersonal speaking. In the eyes of Abraham and Torok’s theory, a pronominal interchange of this sort taking place in a subject’s associations constitutes linguistic evidence of a foreign body—that is, of a phantom—operating in the unconscious. This phenomenon is magnified when Marina, with “flashing eyes” and a resounding voice, stands up to make the capital pronouncement: “sixty years ago, the father of the dead man there (she pointed with her forefinger towards the wing of the palace) imprisoned in this house like a [rabid wolf], his first wife, and did her to death by inches. This woman has returned from the tomb to avenge herself on the accursed race which has commanded here until tonight!” As Marina proclaims the truth about Cecilia’s ordeal before this official audience, her use of the impersonal voice, combined with other aspects of the spectacle (her tone of voice and pointing gesture),

confers a sense of authority on her words and gives the impression that she is abreacting a historical trauma. Two startling displays of violence—the deathbed harangue of Cesare on the prior evening and the forthcoming murder of Silla—bookend this pronouncement, highlighting its abreactive force.

In the case of Silla’s murder, the image of the single, almost casual shot being fired from the pistol seems to connote the discharge of surplus emotion such as occurs in the abreaction of a trauma. The combination of brutality and nonchalance (Marina playfully wishes him “bon voyage”) that go into extinguishing the young writer’s life harks back to the sadistic marriage fantasy in which Marina imagines herself trampling her husband with her boot: both scenarios depict Marina in an erotically charged environment using a phallic instrument to assert total dominance over a male counterpart. However, unlike the fantasy of trampling Nepo, which Marina dreams up as a possible way for taking revenge against the d’Ormengo family, the murder of Silla bears no connection to the prophecy, and as such can be deemed a pure and autonomous expression of her desire. In this sense, the inclination to dispatch Silla, whom she ardently loved, after he disavows the notion of a former life, testifies to the extreme volatility of her passions, where love and hate, eros and death exist in a constant state of flux.

The ambiguity surrounding Marina’s own fate at the end of the novel—namely, whether she perishes by drowning in the Pozzo d’Acquafonda or manages a miraculous escape—could be read as the ultimate expression of her character’s inner duality. Significantly, Marina is last spotted sailing toward the deserted gorge known as the Val di Malombra, a place she refers to in jest as “her last remaining estate in fee simple” due to its homonymy with her family name (Crusnelli di Malombra). I find it plausible to interpret the polysemy of the name “Malombra” in the text as a linguistic technique designed to stress Marina’s affiliation to two different worlds.

On the one hand, “Malombra” qua Marina’s family name, and the token of her connection to the fashionable nobility, connotes her affiliation to the world of French culture, literature and modernity. On the other hand, “Malombra” qua the name of the uninhabited wilderness connotes her affiliation to the world of nature, myth and antiquity. Ultimately, it can be said that there is a Malombra proper to Marina and a Malombra proper to Cecilia; Cecilia’s association with the Val di Malombra is cemented by the legend about the Devil carrying her through that place and down into the Pozzo d’Acquafonda. It is above all an interesting twist that the inhabitants of R. are shown speculating about Marina’s fate in the wake of her disappearance; the array of subjective theories put forth in lieu of a factual account hints at the process behind the formation of myth, and by that same token, guarantees Marina’s induction into the lore of the place.

As I have mentioned, the trajectory of Marina’s mental disintegration only represents one side of *Malombra*’s plot; it is now time to visit Corrado Silla, the thirty-year-old Milanese author and self-styled “inetto a vivere,”³²⁷ and examine the plot from his point of view. Marina’s co-protagonist, Silla, first appears under the metaphorical cloak of a “viaggiatore fantastico,” traveling to R. by train in the blackness of night. His essential biography, which paints him in the vein of the *scapigliato* struggling to reconcile himself with his time and society, is laid out in Book I.3 in the course of a dialogue with Count Cesare. The story of Silla’s youth is riddled with disappointments and tragedies, starting in his adolescence with the financial ruin of his once illustrious family. As a young man, Silla studied law at the University of Pavia but lacked the drive to continue in that career path. After returning home, he pursued his long-held dream of becoming a writer, only to fare miserably in that profession, causing further detriment to his family (his mother secretly pawned cherished heirlooms to finance his first novel, *Un sogno*).

³²⁷ “Unfit to live.” Silla’s tendency to qualify himself in this manner links him to the modern literary type of the “inetto,” epitomized by the protagonists of Pirandello and Svevo.

Still reeling from the failure of *Un sogno*³²⁸, Silla experienced his most devastating blow with the death of his mother. In the wake of this loss, he enlisted in the army, fighting for Italy in the Second War of Independence while his father defected to the German camp. Afterward, he received a lucrative offer to work in his family's spinning business but turned it down in favor of a teaching position at a private school, envisioning more dignity in the latter occupation. Unfortunately, the school went bankrupt a couple years later, leaving him in the wind. Embittered, Silla is living off the interest from his late mother's dowry when he receives a mysterious invitation from Count Cesare summoning him to appear at R.

At first glance, the intrigue surrounding Silla's journey to R. and his meeting with Count Cesare follows the basic formula of the family romance. Here is a young man who, after suffering the loss of his parents and the depletion of his family honor (due to debts and his father's defection), is whisked away on a mysterious errand to the court of an unknown³²⁹³³⁰ nobleman. At R., the count brazenly rehashes the most intimate details of Silla's biography before revealing himself to be a secret, (not quite) benefactor, acting out of affection for Silla's late mother, Mina Perneti. When it comes to explaining his connection to Silla's mother, the august figure's speech becomes guarded: he was her faithful admirer and lifelong confidant (the two having communicated via letters), nothing more, nothing less. Hearing Silla's mother recalled in this pseudo-fantastical locale naturally raises questions. Is this reclusive nobleman

³²⁸ Financed by Mina at great personal expense, Silla's novel *Un sogno* posits a literal and symbolic corollary to his mother's lack in the dynamics of the plot, where, abandoned to its own fortune, it takes on a fetish-like autonomy, predetermining Silla's significant interactions and setting him on a course for death. On another level, the peregrinations of *Un sogno*, which both anticipate the subjective dynamics of Silla's initial visit to R. and secure his return in Book IV, may be likened to the repetitive circuit of the drive and linked to the dimension of jouissance.

³²⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Family Romance" (1909), in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McClintock, introduction by Hugh Haughton (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 35-42. The element of family romance sketched out around Silla's character recalls the situation of Carlino in Nievo's *Le confessioni di un italiano*.

³³⁰ The insistence that Cesare is a "sconosciuto" also suggests parallels with the Oedipus myth.

perhaps Silla's father? Or is something else going on behind the veil of secrecy? If one event holds the key to this developing drama, it is Mina's untimely death six years prior. This tragic occasion is the sole event that Cesare, in forcing Silla to relive the disappointments of his early life, fails to express in words (rather, this fact must be gleaned from the context and from the discussion in the chapter "Conversazioni"). There are hints suggesting that the loss of Mina has led to a melancholic affliction for Cesare. For the sake of elaborating on this point, more needs to be said about the motifs of melancholia and illness of mourning, as they pertain both to Cesare and to the d'Ormengò family at large.

Abraham and Torok outline, in poetic terms, the genesis of melancholia:

Melancholics cherish the memory as their most precious possession, even though it must be concealed by a crypt built with the bricks of hate and aggression. It should be remarked that as long as the crypt holds, there is no melancholia. It erupts when the walls are shaken, often as a result of the loss of some secondary love-object who had buttressed them. Faced with the danger of seeing the crypt crumble, the whole of the ego becomes one with the crypt, showing the concealed object of love in its own guise.

Although Cesare does not embody the extremes of melancholia, there are signs scattered throughout the text to indicate that he grapples with unmet sorrow over a loss. In general, he behaves like an exile from life: he avoids most human contact and leads a celibate existence³³¹. Emotionally cut off from others, Cesare lives out this distance by living in relative isolation and rarely, if ever, straying from the confines of his ancestral dwelling. Notably, the spectrum of emotions he displays, ranging from a stoic or bitter calm to irritation and anger, does not include overt sadness; instead, traces of this sorrow manifest themselves over indirect channels.

The emotions Cesare does not recognize are recognized or felt by other characters in his place. For instance, in the case where Cesare speaks to Edith "con l'amarezza pacata che copre

³³¹ This is implied by Commendatore Veza.

dolori profondi, e le diceva di sentirsi scossa la salute ferrea goduta sin allora,”³³² his grief disguises itself both as a different emotion—bitterness—and as a somatic ailment. A language proper to sorrow and grief is also frequently used by characters when speaking about the palace (Marina calls it a “prigione odiosa;”³³³ the lawyer Mirovich calls it “quella casa della malinconia”³³⁴ after Cesare’s death; Silla is struck by the “melancholy hoot of an owl” in the environs of the palace; the “brillanti del getto d’acqua”³³⁵ of the palace fountain tell and re-tell its “storia monotona e malinconica”³³⁶; Silla’s “heart becomes full of melancholy regret for his mother’s noble-minded friend” as he returns to R. by nightfall; Silla compares the palace, “tetro, solenne, pieno di freddo e di silenzio, circondato dalle austere montagne”³³⁷ to “uno, a cui la morte portò via qualche persona cara, siede impietrato dal dolore fra gli amici muti;”³³⁸ and ultimately, Marina remarks on the “tempo triste”³³⁹ during the banquet dinner, prior to asking the doctor: “non è una malattia la tristezza?”³⁴⁰³⁴¹³⁴². Through the proliferation of allusions such as these, connotations of grief and solitude are deflected off the Count himself, and onto the surrounding environment.

³³² “with the calm bitterness of tone which covers deep hidden grief, and informs her that he felt that his once perfect health had been shaken.”

³³³ “odious prison-house”

³³⁴ “this house of melancholy”

³³⁵ “bright sprays”

³³⁶ “its monotonous and melancholy tale”

³³⁷ “gloomy, solemn, filled with a chilly silence, surrounded by rugged mountains”

³³⁸ “someone whom death has just robbed of his beloved, and who sits, petrified with grief, among his silent friends.”

³³⁹ “melancholy weather”

³⁴⁰ “[is melancholy not] a disease?”

³⁴¹ Cf. “la sepoltura del Palazzo dove il caso non poteva aiutare” [the sepulcher that was the palace] where chance could not come to her assistance].

³⁴² These descriptions establish an empathy between the external landscape and the affective life of Cesare.

The palace of R., the main setting of the novel, is critical to the subtext of melancholia. By virtue of its association, on the one hand, with prisons, death and nameless sorrow and on the other hand, with the d'Ormengo family, the building takes on a complex symbolic organization whose principle can be formulated thus: insofar as the palace itself symbolizes the d'Ormengo family, the rooms symbolize the family's unintrojected losses. Viewed in this way, the topography of the space can be seen to designate at least two zones of thwarted introjection—two family crypts—corresponding to different secrets buried by different family members. Obviously, one of these zones corresponds to Marina's room in the right wing of the palace, for that is the space where, through the act of immurement, Cecilia was “swallowed” and buried alive. The story attached to that space—about Cecilia being confined behind walls built on “hate and aggression” (Cecilia claims “every stone in this house hates me”)—illustrates, in a perversely literal fashion, the mechanism of incorporation which a subject may employ to deny the reality of a loss. By keeping Cecilia completely isolated from others, in a state of suspension between life and death, the practice of immurement simulates the preservative aims of the incorporation fantasy. Like the unspeakable words and sentences stashed away in an imaginary crypt, Cecilia's voice is silenced in her prison, forcing her to communicate her suffering by cryptic means: by writing it down and hiding it away in a secret compartment.

The second crypt in the d'Ormengo family history relates directly to the fantasy life of Cesare, and corresponds to the room outfitted with Mina's old furniture. Here again, a physical space serves as the symbolic manifestation of an emotional state. Returning thus to the question of Cesare's connection to Silla's mother, I would argue that Mina had been, and to some extent, continues to be the love-object buttressing the walls of Cesare's crypt. This proposition is supported by details in the history of their relationship. Three decades earlier,

Cesare had chivalrously sought Mina's hand in marriage, but the two were separated after Mina's father forbade the union. Despite their physical separation, Cesare and Mina remained in intimate contact, thus allowing Cesare to preserve his lost idyll in the space of letters. As a supplement to these preservative activities, Cesare objectified Mina's enduring presence by acquiring some of her possessions and keeping them in a sectioned-off part of the palace. When, on the occasion of Mina's death, the integrity of the crypt became threatened, Cesare shifted his efforts to cultivating the one person who bore Mina's name and likeness—her son, Corrado. He went on to cherish the son as the mother's living effigy (he tells Silla: "Io sono un vecchio amico della famiglia di Vostra madre, e Vi porto molt'affezione per la memoria di persone che mi furono assai care")³⁴³, keeping tabs on him, presumably securing his appointment at the private school, and finally offering him a commission in person.

By reinvesting his love for Mina into a tentative friendship with Silla, Cesare manages to avert the catastrophe associated with the crypt's rupture. The effect is only temporary, of course, and Silla's premature departure, which occurs under bad auspices (Cesare believes that this is caused by Marina's insult; Silla's true reason for leaving is to resist his growing desire for Marina) coincides with a downturn in Cesare's health. Only a short time after Silla leaves, Cesare discloses to Edith that "his once perfect health [has] been shaken." The psychosomatic progression of Cesare's sickness is consistent with Torok's postulate of self-to-self affliction, which manifests under circumstances where melancholic fantasies are taboo. For Cesare, the scion of a warrior race, there can be no question of staging the love-object's "affects and words" through public displays of grief. As an alternative, what take place are "conversional shifts...in [his] physiology," which materialize the identification with the other

³⁴³ " I am an old friend of your mother's family, and I bear you great affection for the memory of people who were very dear to me."

in the form of an internal bodily illness. The lethal consequences of this affliction (Cesare dies of a stroke within the year), suggest that in clinging to Mina, her possessions, and her offspring, Cesare is effectively clinging to life³⁴⁴.

To be sure, while Mina occupies a privileged position in Cesare's mental life, the very fact that she is Silla's mother means that she plays an even more fundamental role for his psyche, serving as a primary love-object and as an ego ideal. Silla, too, appears to grapple with an unresolved trauma connected to the loss of his mother, and this is the subtext I intend to investigate at present. As I go to investigate this subtext, I feel compelled to add that the melancholic component only accounts for one dimension of Silla's complex and multifaceted character.

The idea that Silla failed to introject his mother's loss is substantiated by a pair of psychological experiences reported in Books I.1 and I.3. Predictably, Silla's entry into the room containing his mother's furniture triggers a sequence of uncanny associations. As he stands in the room, peering at the bed by the candlelight, a tide of remembrance washes over him. The reason for this nostalgic reflex only gradually presents itself to consciousness:

Sul chiarore della candela, posata a terra di là dal letto, questo si disegnava come un gran dado nero. Se qualcuno vi fosse stato a giacere, non lo si sarebbe visto, e la fantasia di Silla poteva ben comporvi tal persona che vi aveva riposato un tempo, raffigurarvela malata, schiva del lume triste, sopita forse, ma viva. S'avvicinò al letto in punta di piedi, vi si buttò su a braccia distese.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Cesare does not display conventional signs of melancholia; rather, he appears as one who, despite suffering an interminable mourning, is denied recourse by force of taboo to melancholic fantasies, and whose destiny is therefore a hidden somatic illness. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Self-to-Self: Notes of a Conversation on 'Psychosomatics'" (1973), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 162-163. Cf. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917 [1915]), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974): 3043.

³⁴⁵ "Against the light of 'the candle placed on the floor on the other side of it, the bed stood out like a huge black cube. Had anyone been sleeping there one would not have seen him,' and Silla's imagination easily conjured up a woman's form that once

As soon as Silla perceives the figure of his ailing mother, what does he do? He throws himself onto the bed with open arms. In the reverie that follows, Silla shuttles between images of Mina lying entombed and sensations associated with her living face and voice:

Ella dormiva altrove, in una camera più angusta, sopra un letto più freddo, la madre sua pura e forte; ma a lui pareva sentirvela ancora; si sentiva tornare nel cuore la fanciullezza, tante minute memorie del letto e della stanza, l'odore di una cassetta di sandalo cara a sua madre, tante parole indifferenti di lei, della gente di casa, tanti diversi aspetti di quel viso scomparso. Quando si rialzò e, tolta la candela, si guardò attorno, gli parve impossibile non avere riconosciuto a prima giunta il quadro, le sedie, lo specchio, che lo guardavano tutti, ne lo rimproveravano.³⁴⁶

Returning to the *hic et nunc*, Silla realizes that the onrush of memories was triggered by an unconscious recognition of his mother's possessions. Anthropomorphic tropes—the inanimate fixtures coming alive and eyeing Silla reproachfully—are used here to convey a sense of anxiety, a sense of being watched and judged at the intersection of familiarity and strangeness. A similar motif to the one just pictured, involving the conversion of death into life, and of inanimate into animate, dominates the scene in Book I.3 where Silla receives, from Cesare, a letter bearing his mother's handwriting. While he struggles to open the posthumous communication, Silla imagines hearing his mother's voice speaking out from beyond the grave. In particular, the image comparing the unspoken words buried in the heart to Mina in her tomb symbolizes the annulment of unspeakable words that occurs as a result of incorporation:

had rested there, saw her lying there ill, shrinking from the [strange] light, motionless, perchance, but still alive. He approached the bed on tip-toe, and flung himself upon it with arms outstretched."

³⁴⁶ "She was sleeping elsewhere, that pure and noble mother, in a narrower chamber, upon a colder bed, and yet he seemed to feel her presence still, his childhood returned and made his heart feel young, bringing a flood of memories of his mother's room and of the bed, the scent of a favorite box of sandalwood, little things his mother had said to him, many different aspects of that vanished face. When he got up and, holding up the candle, looked about him, he could not understand how he had failed to at once recognize the picture, the chairs, the mirror, which now all looked down upon [him, reproaching] him [for] his forgetfulness."

Tremava così forte che poté a mala pena aprir la lettera. La voce cara di sua madre gli pareva venir dal mondo degli spiriti per dir parole non potute dire in vita e sepolte nel suo cuore sotto una pietra più grave di quella della tomba. Le parole erano queste...³⁴⁷

The mental associations triggered in the context of the mother's furniture and in the context of her letter are reducible to a common factor: they both betray an imaginal fixation, wherein powerful, contradictory emotions are concentrated around fragmentary impressions of the mother. According to Torok, the presence of a fixating imago—defined as “precisely all that resisted introjection and that the ego took possession of through other means”³⁴⁸—testifies to the inability to assimilate certain drives which could guarantee the cohesion of the internal world. In light of this theory, the question may be raised as to whether Silla's imaginal relation to his mother is the product of desires which were left unsettled at the time of her death. The element of contradiction is highlighted in another snapshot of Silla's mental life, which shows the internalized mother simultaneously alarming and encouraging him:

Immaginò un altro colloquio intimo con la propria madre. Ella gli diceva con indulgente calma tante cose savie che a lui non sarebbero mai venute in mente, lo sgomentava e lo rincorava insieme con la sua pacata scienza della vita, con l'elevato concetto del dovere e la ferma fede nella volontà umana e nella provvidenza.³⁴⁹³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ “He trembled so that he was scarcely able to open the letter. The well-loved voice of his mother seemed to him to have [transpired] from the world of spirits in order to utter words which in this life she could not speak, and which had remained buried in her heart, under a stone weightier than that of the tomb. [These were the words...]”

³⁴⁸Torok, “The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse,” 121.

³⁴⁹ “Then he [imagined] that he was talking to his mother. She [told him, with an indulgent calmness, so many wise things which would have never occurred to him] - she alarmed, and at the same time, encouraged him with the calm knowledge of life which she displayed, with her lofty ideal of duty and her firm faith [in the will of man and that of providence].”

³⁵⁰ As Elena Landoni has helped to establish, the obsessive attempt by Silla to discover some “doppio fondo” (“false bottom”) in the words of Cesare's letter, related in Book I.2, suggests an apt metaphor for the duplicity of the signifier and the problems of subjective interpretation which drive the action of the plot (a metaphor, moreover, which becomes literalized in Marina's discovery of the relics). See: Elena Landoni, *Antonio Fogazzaro e i cavalieri dello spirito* (Genova: San Marco dei Giustiniani, 2004). Silla's inability to take reality at face-value when confronted with signs directly or indirectly relating to his mother might also be cited as evidence of an archaic, contradictory mother fixation—a fixation which, being thus activated, obstructs transference and hinders object-relations while giving rise to equivocations and fantasy-projections. The mother fixation operative in Silla is complemented by the multiplication of maternal signifiers around the figure of Cesare, who, in addition to being the maternal uncle of Marina, adopts this same role symbolically in his relationships with Silla and Nepo. These symbolic and imaginary constellations, which make Silla, Marina and Nepo into siblings under the maternal project of Cesare, present Marina as an incestuous object for Silla (and Nepo) and help to build up a transgressive aura around her character.

The dichotomous logic of alarming and encouraging, inscribed in the maternal imago, asserts itself in experiential terms on the field of love, which Silla traverses in his vacillations between the unstable, abyssal Marina and the idealized, unattainable Edith.

The passage (in Book III.1) recounting Silla's ongoing struggle between mind and senses is highly instructive with regards to the role his mother plays in shaping his desires:

Era il demonio della voluttà tetra. L'adolescenza e la prima giovinezza di Silla erano state pure. La santa protezione di sua madre, le tendenze artistiche e la squisita nobiltà del suo spirito, la fatica degli studi, l'ambizione letteraria, lo avevano preservato dalle corruzioni grossolane che avvelenano quell'età. Aveva allora il sangue tranquillo, la mente illuminata di bellezze femminili ideali, sovrumane per l'intelligenza ancor più che per la perfezione delle forme. Di tempo in tempo si credeva innamorato. I suoi amori cercavano sempre lo sconosciuto e l'impossibile. Uno sguardo, un sorriso, una voce di qualche dama di cui non sapeva il nome, gli si figgevano in cuore per mesi. Allora il solo pensiero degli amori vili gli metteva orrore; tutto il fuoco della sua giovinezza bruciava nel cuore e nel cervello. Dopo le prime disillusioni letterarie, nell'abbattimento che ne seguì, quel fuoco divorante gli scese intero ai sensi³⁵¹. Egli vi ripugnò lungamente e quindi si gittò abbasso. Non cercò facili amori, gli era impossibile piegar l'anima alla ipocrisia di parole menzognere: volle il tetro piacere muto che si offre nelle ombre cittadine.³⁵²

This passage essentially presents a history of Silla's eros or libido. It explains how Silla spent his youth and early adulthood under his mother's tutelage, during which time he abstained from carnal relations and knew love only as a sublime concept. It was not until somewhat later that his

³⁵¹ Language proper to the fantasy of incorporation may be found in the reference to the "devouring fire" which overtakes Silla's senses at the time of his first literary failures (and which may also be linked to the period following his mother's death).

³⁵² "It was the demon of sensuality. The youth and early manhood of Silla had been pure. The saintly influence of his mother, the artistic tendencies and exquisite [nobility of his spirit], his arduous studies, his literary ambitions, had preserved him from the gross pleasures which too often corrupt youth. His blood was cool, his mind bright with ideals of [feminine] beauty, superhuman in their intelligence, still more in the perfection of their forms. From time to time he would imagine he was in love. His dreams of love lay ever in the direction of the unknown and the impossible. A glance, a smile, the soft voice of some fair woman whose name, even, was unknown to him, would remain buried deep in his heart for months. At this time the mere thought of low forms of love filled him with horror; all the fire of his youth centered in his heart and in his brain. After his first disappointments in literature, and during the subsequent dejection, that [devouring] fire spread to all his senses. He resisted long before he fell. He sought no facile intrigues, he would not lend himself to [the hypocrisy of] lying words, he turned to the silent haunts of vice in the by ways of great cities."

erotic desires awakened, whereupon, after some resistance, he gave way to temptation. Although the text explicitly links Silla's sexual awakening to the temporary frustration of a sublimating activity (his first literary disappointments), it should not escape notice that the sudden increase in eros also coincides with the fact of his mother's death. Although it only becomes apparent when the movements of Silla's libidinal history are synthesized with the concrete details of his biography, this confluence of circumstances—an untoward libidinal intrusion in conjunction with the loss of the primary love-object—stands out as the inaugural event in the illness of mourning. As Torok explains, “the illness of mourning does not result...from the affliction caused by the objectal loss itself, but rather from the feeling of an irreparable crime: the crime of having been overcome with desire...when it would behoove us to be grieved in despair.”³⁵³ In regards to these preliminary observations about Silla's psychology, it could be argued that the imago of the encouraging-alarming mother and the awakening of desire in the context of the mother's death conform with the first two stages in the aetiological sequence of melancholia. Now, while bearing in mind the theoretical indications about melancholia and the illness of mourning, I will investigate other trends in Silla's mental life—namely, the memories of his mother, his circular affects and the pain associated with object-loss—which tie in into the same framework³⁵⁴³⁵⁵.

³⁵³ Torok, “The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse,” 110.

³⁵⁴ The onrush of libido at the time of the loss activates the memory of the earlier fixation in accordance with the Freudian principle of deferred action, with the qualification that all associative links between the excitation and the exciting memory are subsequently repressed (hence the reason that in the present scenario, Silla's erotic awakening is drawn in connection with his professional disappointments and not with the incident of his mother's death). Cf. Freud's explanation of deferred action: “here we have an instance of a memory exciting an affect which it had not excited as an experience, because in the meantime the changes produced by puberty had made possible a new understanding of what was remembered.” Sigmund Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950 [1895]), 413.

³⁵⁵ Several theorists, including Abraham and Torok and Julia Kristeva, draw attention to structural affinities between impossible mourning/melancholia and perversion. As Kristeva observes, the two subjective structures are articulated “in a same [psychical] operation (that of denial)” and that “the various perversions appear...as the other facet of denial.” The scopophilic and

It is said that a subject ill with mourning will cherish a lost object as its most precious possession. That Silla cherishes the memory of his dead mother and struggles to safeguard it from external attacks, whether real or perceived, becomes apparent on several occasions. In Book I.3, Silla becomes defensive after hearing his own earliest memory—which happens to involve his mother’s kiss—told him by Cesare:

Avevate cinque anni. La sera di un giorno in cui vi era stato in casa Vostra un insolito affaccendarsi di servi, un trambusto d'operai e si eran portate montagne di dolci e di fiori, Vi posero a letto prima dell'ora solita. A tarda notte foste svegliato da un suono di musica. Poco dopo, l'uscio della camera si aperse. Vostra madre venne a chinarsi sopra di Voi, Vi baciò e pianse.³⁵⁶

In another instance, when Marina questions the legitimacy of his birth, Silla expresses outrage—not on his own behalf—but on behalf of his mother, whose honor is tarnished by the implication. He subsequently asks Steinegge, “...crede Lei che se vi fosse una macchia sulla memoria più sacra ch'io m'abbia, sarei rimasto qui a farne testimonianza?”³⁵⁷ and goes on to reproach himself, saying: “Vede, ho avuto una madre santa, l'ho adorata e sono io la causa che si oltraggi la sua memoria”³⁵⁸. Finally, Mina’s memory is invoked as an ideal held in common by Silla and Cesare in the scene where Silla, wrongly believing Cesare to be dead, expresses regret for “l'intemerato amico della madre sua...che gli aveva aperto le braccia in nome d'una memoria santa”³⁵⁹. In all these instances, it need only be remembered that Silla's conscious articulations in defense of his

epistemophilic tendencies that Silla displays in his interchanges with Marina might be considered from this point of view. Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 48-51.

³⁵⁶ “You were five years old. During the day, there had been an unwonted bustle among the servants, a coming and going of [workmen], [and a mountain confectionery and flowers had been brought in], you had been put to bed earlier than usual. Late that night you were awakened by the strains of music. Then the door of your room opened. Your mother came in, bent over you, kissed you [and cried].”

³⁵⁷ “do you believe that if there were a blot upon the most sacred of my memories that I should have stayed here to testify to it?”

³⁵⁸ “my mother was a saint whom I adored, and I am the cause of her memory being insulted.”

³⁵⁹ “his mother’s noble-minded friend...who had opened his arms to him in the name of a sacred memory.”

late mother's memory mask an unconscious yearning to reconnect with her in another time and place.

Another dimension of Silla's mental life, intrinsically bound up with the movements of his erotic energies or libido, is outlined in the passage below:

Ne uscì tosto stupefatto, palpitante, in ira a se stesso; ritrovò il calore perduto dell'ingegno e dell'affetto, ritrovò i suoi amori ideali, riprese la penna, afferrò il concetto del dovere verso Dio come una fune di salvamento. Ricadde quindi e si rialzò più volte, lottando sempre, soffrendo nella sconfitta incredibili prostrazioni di spirito, col presentimento angoscioso di un'ultima caduta irrimediabile, di un abisso che lo avrebbe finalmente inghiottito per sempre. Perché in lui l'antagonismo dello spirito e dei sensi era così violento che il prevalere di una parte opprimeva l'altra.³⁶⁰

Two interrelated trends are depicted in this passage. The more obvious of the two trends concerns the “antagonism of the mind and the senses,” for which “the predominance of the one [involves] the depression of the other.” What stands out in this respect is that for Silla, carnal and sublimated impulses are so violently opposed that these two orientations of desire fail to coexist practically. The other trend relates to the vicissitudes of Silla's affective states. For this, Silla tends to cycle between “the warm impulsiveness of a quick young brain,” when he feels intoxicated with “the idea of duty towards God as a rope of salvation,” and “frightful fits of melancholy,” which fill him “with the dread presentiment of a last fatal fall.” During these frightful fits of melancholy, Silla feels judged and mocked by God, Fate and the world at large (as he confesses to Edith: “[judgment] is a thing I have been accustomed to ever since I lost my mother. The fault is to a great extent mine, the result of my temperament; still, it is hard to bear”).

³⁶⁰ “Stupefied, shaken, in anger with himself, he emerged thence; [he found] once more the warm impulsiveness of a quick young brain, [he re-discovered] his early ideals, he took up his pen, and seized upon the idea of duty towards God as a rope of salvation. Again, he fell, again he raised himself, struggling ever, and suffering in the conflict from frightful fits of melancholy, which filled him with the dread presentiment of a last fatal fall, of an abyss which would engulf him forever. For in him the antagonism of the mind and the senses was so violent that the predominance of the one involved the depression of the other.”

Within these affective cycles, the onset of melancholia is precipitated by an external factor: namely, the loss of a (secondary) love-object. I will look in detail at how this factor is thematized in the context of Silla's relationship with Edith. From the perspective of Silla's life-narrative, the relationship with Edith figures as the third iteration in a series of romances based on the maternal prototype. Silla is said to have enjoyed the "estimable fortune" of being "loved as he desired, with all the fire of a human soul" twice before, although both loves were tragically cut short by fate:

Uno di questi amori fu troncato subito da necessità fatali e ineluttabili; l'altro scomparve misteriosamente, lasciando Silla pieno di terrore, come se avesse veduta l'ombra e udito il sarcasmo del destino.³⁶¹³⁶²

There are a few points worth noting about this passage. Though the text does not disclose the identities of Silla's two previous love-interests, there is some intimation that the first so-called romance described actually refers to the idyllic period with his mother. If so, it is also interesting that Silla should feel "terror-stricken," not directly after losing his mother, but rather after experiencing a secondary loss which bears some deep connection to the original event. Does the emphasis on the secondary loss not reflect an understanding of trauma as a cumulative and retroactive phenomenon (in conformity with the regressive procedures set in motion by the trauma of losing a secondary love-object)?

The reading I would like to propose for the arc of Silla's relationship with Edith is that of a salutary albeit doomed attempt to recapture the lost relationship with his mother. An initial

³⁶¹"One of these romances was cut short by fatal, [ineluctable necessity:] the other vanished mysteriously, leaving Silla terror-stricken, as though he had seen the shadowy form and heard the sarcastic laugh of destiny."

³⁶² One is reminded, in this connection, of the motif of the three Fates or three caskets. Cf. Sigmund Freud, "The Theme of the Three Caskets" (1913), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 2617-2629.

indication that Edith is symbolically a reincarnation of Mina comes with the image of the melancholy spirit fused to her own in Book III.1:

È strano come quegli occhi esprimessero intelligenza della vita reale, temperata di bontà: come nello scherzo, nel sorriso che li illuminava sovente, vi apparisse sotto all'iride un color di dolcezza triste; quale se un altro spirito infuso al suo, uno spirito malinconico si ravvivasse qualche poco nella gaiezza di lei.³⁶³

While this association is pointed out to the reader, it remains unnoticed—or rather, subliminal—for Silla. At a later moment, Silla compares talking with Edith to being in a dream—an image he uses elsewhere in reference to his childhood—and claims this feeling enables him to bare his soul to her. In turn, Edith suggests that Silla dreams he is talking to someone who died long ago and in whom he could trust. Judging from her response, it would appear that Edith accurately perceives her own role in Silla's nostalgia fixation. Not surprisingly, Silla rejects the implication that he longs for the return of someone he lost and describes the feeling in different terms:

No, faccio un sogno da notte di primavera, come ne potranno fare questi vecchi platani pieni di speranze, quando si alzerà la luna e la gente andrà via. Sogno di mettere anch'io una volta foglie e fiori, di parlar sottovoce, dopo tanto silenzio, con la primavera blanda, di raccontarle tutte le tristezze dell'autunno e dell'inverno, come se fossero passati de' secoli.³⁶⁴

This conceit dealing with the transition from autumn and winter to spring, and the idea of “new life budding,” carries connotations of rebirth and renewal of life. Hence, both Edith's and Silla's explanations turn around the concept of renewal, only, where Edith frames this renewal in terms of nostalgia for a distant past, Silla frames it in present and future terms. At the same time, the

³⁶³“It was strange how those eyes expressed her knowledge of life and its realities, a knowledge tempered by benevolence; strange how, when they were lighted up with mirth and laughter, as they often were, a [gentle] shade of sadness passed across them; as though another spirit dwelt with hers, and infused its melancholy into her mirth.”

³⁶⁴“No, I am dreaming a dream of [a night in springtime], [just as] these old plane trees— [full of hope]—will do when the people have all gone home and the moon has risen. I, too, [dream of a] new life budding within me, as though I were whispering, after a long silence, to the kindly spring, and telling her of all the sad experiences of the autumn and winter, as though it all happened years and years ago.”

image of Silla whispering to the spring, “la primavera blanda,”³⁶⁵ about the sadness of autumn and winter, places him in a distinctly liminal position, on the verge of coming into life.

Being rejected by Edith—or more accurately, the perception of being rejected—signals a major reversal for Silla and sends him spiraling into a deep depression. It bears mentioning, first and foremost, that what Silla interprets as rejection springs from a superficial and incomplete understanding of Edith’s treatment on the day following their walk in the city. It is striking how quickly Silla renounces the courtship after seemingly pinning his hopes for salvation on a future with Edith. As noted in the text, Silla exempts himself from two activities characteristic of a desperate lover: he makes no effort to “combattere, vincere Edith con lunga guerra”³⁶⁶ and he does not stop to consider that Edith may be hiding her true feelings (which she is in fact doing). Instead, he acts as though he had expected things to go badly and he openly questions whether he is capable of being loved at all (“Essere amato, lui? Impossibile”³⁶⁷). After bitterly renouncing his long-held belief in free-will (and conceding his belief in fortune), Silla is shown leaving the Steinegge residence “gonfia di ironia verso se stesso, come se godesse ad ogni scalino calcare qualcuna delle stolide illusioni, delle folli fantasie portate lassù pochi momenti prima”³⁶⁸. Morbid thoughts continue to fill his head—thoughts about how, for the third time now, God has dangled love in front of him and then withdrawn it—and he loses interest in things he used to care about. Notably, he shows indifference when a second-rate publisher who was supposed to

³⁶⁵ “The mild spring.”

³⁶⁶ “struggle...to win Edith by a long siege”

³⁶⁷ “To be loved? Him? Impossible”

³⁶⁸ “full of irony toward himself, as though it gave him pleasure to tread under foot, on each step, one of the stupid illusions, one of the wild illusions he had carried up the stairs but a few minutes before.”

read his manuscript rudely avoids him in the street. Thus, overcome with negative sentiment, Silla wanders the streets of Milan, before stopping in front of the Duomo.

The association between the loss of Edith and the trauma of his mother's death comes to the surface after Silla enters the Duomo, a place he used to visit with his mother. In trying to recapture the memories of these childhood visits, his mind encounters a barrier and simply turns numb:

Un senso di uggia pesante l'opresse. La sua volontà resistette inutilmente; non poteva scuotere quel mantello di piombo. Cercò ricordarsi del tempo passato, quando, fanciullo, veniva in Duomo con sua madre, immaginando al suono dell'organo i deserti di oriente, le palme, il mare, la vita contemplativa. Niente, niente, niente; la memoria era intorpidita, il cuore vuoto e senza eco.³⁶⁹

The notion that Silla's depression, which leaves him feeling empty, numb and emotionally vacant ("allora si fece dentro a lui un gran silenzio freddo come quello della cattedrale e più nero"³⁷⁰), reflects an inability to access his own feelings of sadness is supported by the imagery of Book III. Overall, the imagery in this part of the novel serves to create an atmosphere of vague sorrow and pessimism. Notably, even prior to the supposed rebuff by Edith, Silla hears the raindrops on the roof telling him to "weep, weep, she loves you not, she loves you not." Far from complying, Silla ignores the voice and takes to roaming the city absent-mindedly. After Edith's rejection, the rain falling in the Steinegges' courtyard can be heard making a similar exhortation to weep, which Silla similarly ignores. Later, at Giulia de Bella's party, Silla does not even weep

³⁶⁹ "A [heavy] sense of ill-omen fell upon him. His will struggled against it, but in vain; it could not shake off that cloak of lead. He endeavored to recall the years gone by, when, as a boy, he used to come to the cathedral with his mother, and the sound of the organ summoned up pictures of the far East, of deserts and palm trees and the sunny, peaceful sea. Nothing, nothing of all this remained; his memory had grown numb; his heart was empty and made no response."

³⁷⁰ "A deep chilly silence seemed to pass through his soul, like the silence of the cathedral, only gloomier."

when he listens to the “prime note insistenti dolorose”³⁷¹ of his hostess’ song, insisting that he is “little given to tears.”

The lowest point in Silla’s depression comes in the wake of Cesare’s death, after he realizes that the romance with Marina—the only thing protecting him from a final fall into the abyss—had been the fruit of a common delusion. Book IV.5 shows Silla alone in his room on the morning after this dire turn of events. His mental and physical state at this point might well be termed death in life. Images of frigidity and petrification, abundant at the beginning of the chapter, serve to convey a sense of his diminished vitality: his face appears “pietrificata, più pallida di quell'alba;”³⁷² his eyes “vedevano male;”³⁷³ his head is “grave più del piombo”³⁷⁴ and his heart “vôto d'ogni sentimento”³⁷⁵. Burdening his soul is the dismal prospect that “his dishonorable and treacherous conduct” have constrained him to marry Marina despite her mental disorder. By resolving to marry Marina under such conditions, Silla is not only conceding the loss of Edith and Marina (in the idealized form he had attributed to her), but indeed relinquishing any future hope of loving or being loved.

At the same time, above and beyond the resolution to “link his lot to Marina’s,” another set of thoughts weighs on Silla’s mind:

Sapeva ora che Marina non era nemmeno nominata nel testamento e che a lui il conte aveva legate le suppellettili appartenute a sua madre, una cassetta di lettere e diecimila lire a titolo di compenso per il lavoro scientifico incominciato l'anno precedente e da proseguire come e quando Silla crederebbe meglio.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ “melancholy notes”

³⁷² “cold as stone and paler than the dawn”

³⁷³ “see indistinctly.”

³⁷⁴ “heavy as lead”

³⁷⁵ “devoid of feeling”

³⁷⁶ “He knew now that Marina was not even mentioned in the will, and that the Count had left him the furniture formerly belonging to his mother, a box of letters and ten thousand francs in consideration of his assistance in the scientific work begun the year before, which he was to carry on when and how he might think best.”

Unlike Silla's thoughts about Marina, these thoughts about Cesare's bequests are not present to consciousness. No sooner has the information been relayed in the text than it is disavowed with the claim: "but he was not thinking about that"³⁷⁷. Associations formed in this region of the text, specially circumscribed and relegated to Silla's unconscious, tie in critically with the themes of delayed mourning and the loss of the mother. In addition to reinforcing the notion—previously discussed in connection with a passage in Book IV.1—that Cesare and Mina are symbolically connected in Silla's mind, this passage also hints at new evolution in the mourning process for Silla. Specifically, the passage draws attention to the peculiar set of circumstances whereby Silla comes to inherit his mother's possessions, not at the time of her death, as he otherwise might have, but at the time of Cesare's death, seven years afterward. First and foremost, the emphasis on the belated nature of this inheritance symbolically marks Cesare's death as a repetition of Mina's death. In a manner of speaking, by enabling Silla to take of possession of his mother's belongings, Cesare's death presents him with a symbolic avenue for repossessing Mina herself. The symbolic link between the two deaths is strengthened by the fact that both coincide with an awakening of erotic desire for Silla. Just as Silla's first sexual experiences are implied to concur with Mina's death, so the adventure surrounding Cesare's illness doubles as an erotic escapade: Silla takes the news of Cesare's "dangerous illness" as an opportunity to reunite with Marina, and at the same time the Count lay dying, Silla is in Marina's room attempting to consummate his desire.

At the beginning of Book IV.5, in addition to grounding Silla's subliminal thought-processes, the maternal principle is also recalled in various features of the imagery. Whereas

³⁷⁷ Cf. the principles laid out in Freud's paper on "negation." Sigmund Freud, "Negation" (1925), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 4138-4143.

elsewhere in the text, the sound of the rain is associated with tears and sadness, here it takes on a motherly aspect (along with the sky and the lake) as it “counsels” Silla to sleep. In this context, Silla’s longing to “to sleep, to forget,” seems to indicate something beyond ordinary tiredness; it connotes a desire to recover the serene repose of the womb. Mina’s bed, characterized as “softer and more yielding than ever...its pillow pleasant to caress,” appears womblike by association. The idea of return to the womb is subsequently brought to bear when—in an act reminiscent of the one performed on his first evening at the palace—Silla throws himself, fully clothed, onto the bed. Silla has all but achieved this state of prenatal tranquility when his room becomes the site of a ghostly visitation:

...desiderò dormire, dimenticare; si assopì e vide uno sconosciuto che lo guardava. Lo guardava placidamente, per qualche tempo; quindi alzando le spalle e le sopracciglia, porgendo le mani aperte, scoteva il capo quasi per dire: non c'è verso. Silla credette capire, come la cosa più naturale del mondo, che colui gesticolava sì, ma non poteva parlare perché era morto. Allora lo riconobbe tosto per un vecchio amico di famiglia suicidatosi quindici anni prima. Ne riconobbe la gran fronte calva, il mento raso, aguzzo fra due solini diritti, sopra una cravatta nera con la spilla di malachite. Meravigliò in pari tempo di non averlo riconosciuto subito; dovea saperlo che sarebbe venuto. Infatti il fantasma, leggendogli nel pensiero, gli sorrise. Quel sorriso fu per Silla un'altra rivelazione. Vide in se stesso tutta la occulta via di un pensiero, dai giorni dell'adolescenza sino a quel momento. Aveva cominciato da una dolce malinconia, dal desiderio vago di una patria lontana: era diventato poscia presentimento fugace, quindi sospetto sempre combattuto, sempre più gagliardo, sempre coperto di segreto come qualche lento male orribile che ci rode, di cui si vede il nome col pensiero e non vogliamo confessarlo mai; prevaleva finalmente, alla volontà, diventava un ragionamento irrefutabile, una sentenza opprimente in tre parole: **INETTO A VIVERE**. Silla se le vedeva dentro chiare queste tre parole, e il fantasma sorrideva sempre, si avvicinava, gli procedeva pesante su per la persona, con gli occhi sbarrati, mettendogli un gelo nelle ossa, fermandogli il respiro. Quando giunse al cuore, Silla non vide né intese più nulla.

Gli parve svegliarsi solo, provare una dolcezza infinita e dire fra sé: “adesso non sogno.”³⁷⁸³⁷⁹

The account of Silla’s encounter with the ghostly stranger calls to mind the literary *topos*, common in doppelgänger stories, where the subject comes face-to-face with a spectral replica of himself. As I discussed in the last chapter, such encounters are frequently interpreted in terms of a conflict between different factions of a common psyche. This code of reading also seems valid for the events narrated in the passage above, especially since the encounter is revealed to take place inside Silla’s dream. With regards to the scene’s narrative staging, the lack of an overt transition between the narration of waking- and dream-states helps to create an atmosphere of uncanniness through the proliferation of epistemological uncertainty (in accordance with Todorov’s laws for the literature of the uncanny). Within this space of epistemological uncertainty, two points of hesitation arise: the first concerns the sudden apparition of the stranger

³⁷⁸ “...he desired to sleep and to forget: he was beginning to feel drowsy when he noticed a stranger who was watching him. He watched him quietly for some time; then shrugging his shoulders, raising his eyebrows, and holding out his hands, he shook his head as though to say: there is no remedy. Silla seemed to feel, as the most natural thing in the world, that the stranger gesticulated thus and did not speak because he was dead. Then he suddenly recognized in him an old friend of the family who had committed suicide fifteen years ago. He recognized the large bald forehead, the clean-shaven, pointed chin, between the tips of a high collar, and the black tie and malachite scarf-pin. At the same time, he felt surprised that he had not recognized him at once; he might have known he would come. Indeed, the ghost, reading his thoughts, smiled at him. That smile was, [for Silla,] a second revelation. It made Silla trace back a certain thought to the time of his early manhood. It had begun with a pleasant melancholy, with the vague desire for a distant home; then it became a passing presentiment, then a suspicion, always combated but always stronger, always veiled in mystery, like some slow, hideous disease which gnaws our vitals, whose name we recognize but never admit. Finally, it overpowered his will and became an unanswerable dictum, a crushing sentence in three words—UNFIT TO LIVE. Silla, in his mind’s eye, saw those three words distinctly, and the phantom, always smiling, drew near, and, with [wild] eyes, began to press heavily upon him, chilling him to the bone, making his breath come short. When the hands reached his heart, he heard and saw no more. It seemed to him that he woke up alone, feeling an infinite pleasure in repeating ‘Now I am not dreaming.’”

³⁷⁹ Freud offers the following insight into dreams of this sort: “if someone dreams of talking to dead people or associating with them, and so on, this often has the meaning of his own death. But if he remembers in his dream that the person in question is dead, the dreamer is repudiating the fact that it signifies his own death.” Sigmund Freud, “Observations and Examples from Analytic Practice” (1913), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 2833. In a footnote added to the 1909 edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud offers the following remarks about the relevance of psychoanalytic dream-interpretation for dreams encountered in literature: “I found by chance in *Gradiva*, a story written by Wilhelm Jensen, a number of artificial dreams which were perfectly correctly constructed and could be interpreted just as though they had not been invented but had been dreamt by real people. In reply to an enquiry, the author confirmed the fact that he had no knowledge of my theory of dreams. I have argued that the agreement between my researches and this writer’s creations is evidence in favor of the correctness of my analysis of dreams.” Sigmund Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams” (1900 [1909]), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 601.

and the second concerns Silla's dubious identification of the stranger with "an old friend of the family who had committed suicide fifteen years ago." The second area of hesitation warrants a closer look. Silla expresses surprise that he did not recognize the stranger immediately, and this is arguably because the stranger represents more than one person at once. If on the one hand the stranger is an old friend of the family, on the other hand, it is Silla himself. The ghostly figure can be identified with Silla based on two overlapping pieces of apparel: a "scarf-pin" and a "dark tie." In Book III.1, the staples of Silla's attire are said to include dark ties, dark clothes and a "scarf-pin," this last item being a souvenir of his mother ("Tutta la sua eleganza brillava in una spilla, una grossa perla cinta di rose d'Olanda legate in argento, ricordo di sua madre. Portava sempre guanti scuri, cravatte scure, abiti scuri")³⁸⁰. Does this oneiric production conflating Silla with a victim of suicide not seem to suggest a death-wish on the part of the dreamer?

An equally significant component of Silla's dream is the sentiment conjured up by the so-called "revelation" of the ghost's smile:

Aveva cominciato da una dolce malinconia, dal desiderio vago di una patria lontana: era diventato poscia presentimento fugace, quindi sospetto sempre combattuto, sempre più gagliardo, sempre coperto di segreto come qualche lento male orribile che ci rode, di cui si vede il nome col pensiero e non vogliamo confessarlo mai...³⁸¹

The description of the crescendo starting with a "dolce malinconia"³⁸² (a sentiment roughly consistent with nostalgia) offers a new variant on the now familiar theme wherein Silla's life is envisioned in terms of a progression across ever-worsening periods of desperation. The terminal point in this melancholic saga, conceived of elsewhere as a "last, fatal fall into the abyss" and

³⁸⁰ "All his claim to fashion centered in a handsomely-mounted pearl scarf-pin, a souvenir of his mother. He always wore dark gloves, dark ties, dark clothes."

³⁸¹ "It made Silla trace back a certain thought to the time of his early manhood. It had begun with a pleasant melancholy, with the vague desire for a distant home; then it became a passing presentiment, then a suspicion, always combated but always stronger, always veiled in mystery, like some slow, hideous disease which gnaws our vitals, whose name we recognize but never admit."

³⁸² "pleasant melancholy"

rendered here in terms of a necrotic illness, is invariably death. On this note, I am inclined to point out the conceptual nexus with two of Freud's more abstract theories: the death drive and the compulsion to repeat. Notably, Silla's life is dominated by the repetition compulsion, not only in the sense that his contemporary dealings with women are informed by patterns in his early life, but also in the sense that he relives the trauma of his mother's loss by way of failed relationships. Specifically, as regards the tendency to relive trauma, this is not just a question of experiencing new losses, but—as the scenario with Edith would suggest—of unconsciously sabotaging any chance of success. It stands to reason that if Silla had looked past the surface of Edith's rejection, perceived her true feelings and tied up his love in a spiritual union with her³⁸³, he might have resisted the impulse to return to Marina and ultimately saved his own life. It is against the horizon of this possibility that the dictum “inetta a vivere”³⁸⁴ should ultimately be read. Though initially, in Book I, Silla uses the phrase “inetta a vivere” to mean that he feels “unfit to live in the world”—that he feels at odds with society and everyone around him—the fact that constant misprisions in the interpersonal and social arenas give rise to disastrous and lethal consequences suggests that being “unfit to live in the world” is a harbinger of being “unfit to live” at all.

Above all, the dream episode is important because it casts light on Silla's suicidal inclinations, and raises the question of his agency, direct or indirect, in bringing about his own death. For the first time after he awakes from the dream, Silla consciously contemplates suicide, though he abandons the idea following a somewhat upbeat conversation with Commendatore Veza (“Adesso l'idea del suicidio si era allontanata dalla sua mente. Non voleva ancora pigliare

³⁸³ Another consideration, raised by Valesio, is that perhaps Silla sabotages his prospects of a life with Edith because on some level he senses that she is already trying to constrain his “eros (beyond libido) and creativity in a tame, de-eroticizing kind of marriage that would keep him safely under the control of a subtle and slightly functional religiosity.”

³⁸⁴ “unfit to live”

alcuna risoluzione per l'avvenire: aspetterebbe di aver visto donna Marina, di averle parlato”³⁸⁵).

Even so, in the last hours of his life, Silla acts without firm resolve, as though his will is paralyzed; this lack of resolve, and the consequent indecision, is what places him in the path of a bullet. In the hours leading up to the murder, it is agonizing to see how many times Silla could have avoided death by simply following his instincts. Silla’s first instinct is to quit the palace immediately, though he remains behind at Vezza’s insistence to help with the funeral preparations. Then, (after he unknowingly sends Marina into a murderous rage) rather than depart before dinnertime as he intended, he allows Vezza to retain him and, what is more, convince him—against his own better judgment—to stay in the hall, near the loggia. When, at the end of the banquet scene, Marina summons Silla out onto the loggia, he approaches the door and remains there, listening, even after the eavesdropping servants flee in terror. He continues to linger, paralyzed, as Marina charges in and shoots him:

Silla stava sulla soglia del salotto. Vide Marina venire ed ebbe un momento d'incertezza. Non sapeva se farsi avanti o da parte o ritirarsi nel salotto. Ella fece due passi rapidi verso di lui, disse Oh, buon viaggio e alzò la mano destra. Un colpo di pistola brillò e tuonò. Silla cadde.³⁸⁶

Returning to the question of Silla’s motivation during these events, it seems reasonable to suggest that, beyond any death-wish or general indifference to life, Silla is motivated by concern for Marina’s wellbeing as well as by feelings of guilt at having exacerbated her illness.

Thus, far, in analyzing Silla’s character, I have focused on the “matrilineal” dimension of his psyche, and more particularly, on the thesis that a failure to properly mourn his mother’s loss has locked him in a cycle or spiral of self-defeat. Now, without diminishing the significance of

³⁸⁵ The idea of suicide had now left him. He did not wish to make any resolutions for the future; he would wait till he had seen and spoken to Donna Marina

³⁸⁶ “Silla was standing near the dining-room door. He saw Marina coming, and for a moment hesitated. He knew not whether to step forwards or on one side, or to withdraw inside the room. She took two rapid steps towards him, said, ‘Oh, 'bon voyage’ and raised her right hand. A pistol shot flashed and rang out. Silla fell.”

the mother-complex for coordinating Silla's motives, I would like to turn my attention briefly to the complementary aspect of his psychology—namely, the father-complex—as this too has an impact on his development. In this connection, it bears mentioning that only a dearth of information is provided about the elder Silla in the text (he is not even given a name), most if not all of which paints him in a negative light; in fact, the only direct judgment passed on the subject of Silla's father is the one offered by Commendatore Vezza when he speaks of the “vile cur of an Austrian, who made money in trade and then squandered it all on himself.” What therefore distinguishes the elder Silla in the text is not his presence so much as his conspicuous absence, and the palpable effect of that absence on the younger Silla's mental life.

A few hints about Silla's father may be gleaned from his conversation with Cesare in Book I.3. Cesare initiates that conversation by confronting Silla with some of his own memories. Whereas Silla's earliest memory is about his mother's kiss, another memory discussed relates to a severe punishment, presumably received from his father, which led the young Corrado to seek refuge in his mother's room. The severity of the punishment sticks out in Silla's memory even though he cannot recall the offense (Cesare reminds him that he had broken a vase). On this point, the most that can be said is that where Silla's mother is marked by connotations of affection, his father is marked by connotations of fear and reprimand³⁸⁷. Later in the conversation, the mention of Silla's father in the context of the war elicits a vehement objection from Silla, which in turn forces the Count to disclaim any intent of offending a father's memory before his son. This exchange, along with Cesare's remark that the elder Silla “had committed

³⁸⁷ As Valesio notes, the conjuration of Silla's childhood memory through eyes of a stranger represents an effective, and slightly perverse, literary maneuver. In this sense, “it is not idle to speculate whether the Count is describing a scene he actually witnessed, maybe standing in the window or behind the mother, or something he has been told by Mina in loving detail.” On the other hand, one might also be led to wonder to what extent this “memory,” retailed by Cesare and desperately claimed by Silla, consists of a genuine past recollection and to what extent its significance derives from an actual, mutual (or intersubjective) fantasy.

errors and incurred censure,” implies that Silla feels shame on account of his father’s defection, or at least that he feels compelled to defend his family’s honor.

Silla’s hostility toward his father may be inferred from his decision to publish his writings pseudonymously, given the posited link between practice of pseudonymous writing and the symbolic castration of the father (that is, a violent rejection of paternal authority)³⁸⁸. The logic is that by donning a fictitious name, an author obliterates the name inherited from the father, while installing in its place a figure crafted in the author’s own image. Since the imaginary identity is a source of personal, narcissistic currency, the author/subject will take special pains to shield it from criticism. This seems to accurately describe Silla’s motives when he publishes his novel *Un sogno* under the pseudonym, “Lorenzo,” and in the subsequent correspondence with Marina. It is as though the name “Lorenzo” provides Silla with a fantasied escape from the shame attached to his real name. This would explain why Silla responds avidly to Marina’s first letter and why he becomes so incensed when she mocks the name “Lorenzo,” calling it vulgar and bourgeois; the first letter compliments his amour propre while the second damages it profoundly. As he explains in his second letter:

...ora lo pseudonimo che sta in fronte a quel libro e a piè di questo scritto copre uno spirito non vano ma orgoglioso. Ebbi la Sua seconda lettera, e, come molte illusioni che hanno già tentato e deriso la mia giovinezza, anche quel sogno si è perduto davanti a me; io vedo vuota, squallida, senza fine la via faticosa. Noi non ci possiamo intendere e ci diciamo addio; Ella nascosta nel Suo domino elegante, Cecilia, io chiuso nel mio *Lorenzo*³⁸⁹ ch'Ella dice volgare e mi è caro per essere stato portato qualche giorno, cinquant'anni addietro, da un grande poeta che io amo. Per

³⁸⁸ As Jean Starobinski discusses in his study on Stendhal. Jean Starobinski, *L'oeil vivant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961). See also: Nicholas Rand, “The Red and the Black, Author of Stendhal, Pseudonyms and Cryptonyms of Beyle,” *Romanic Review*, 80, (May 1, 1989): 3.

³⁸⁹ The poet in question is Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827), who wrote under the pseudonyms Lorenzo Aldighieri and Lorenzo Alderani. Lorenzo Alderani is also the name of Jacopo Ortis’s correspondent in Foscolo’s epistolary novel, *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*. Silla elsewhere suggests that he is studying German in order to better understand Foscolo (whom he does not mention by name).

parte mia, nessuna curiosità mi pungerà mai, signora, a ricercare il Suo nome vero; Le sarò grato s'Ella non farà indagini per conoscere il mio.³⁹⁰

Intriguingly, it is not enough that the correspondence between “Lorenzo” and “Cecilia” should cease; Silla goes further to insist that Cecilia not try to discover his true identity. One gets the sense that by making this stipulation, Silla is reinforcing the separation between fantasy and reality. For him, the pseudonym “Lorenzo” is like a vestige of his shattered hopes and dreams which he strives to safeguard against the harsh, destructive influence of reality.

Over the course of the novel, Silla forges relationships with three different father-figures, each of which is transitory and underlines a different dimension of the paternal bond. Cesare, who emerges within framework of family romance, represents the first figure in this paternal triptych. Cesare, Mina and Silla may be seen to constellate a symbolic unit, a family based on the “way things could have been.” Broadly speaking, Cesare’s socio-political position and his hierarchical vision of society align him squarely with the dual template of the father as a figure who protects and prohibits. Cesare acts as Silla’s protector by watching over his career following his mother’s death, and ultimately engaging his collaboration on a political science treatise. At the same time, during the brief period in which the two men are acquainted, Cesare adopts a highly censorious manner toward Silla, chiding him for youthful dreams and fancies while challenging his social and political views. Ultimately, Silla identifies with Cesare based on two main factors, the first and most explicit being their shared love of Mina, and the second being a

³⁹⁰ “...[now] the pseudonym which stands on the frontispiece of that book and at the foot of this letter covers [a spirit] not wanting in self-respect. Your second letter reached me, and, like many other illusions which have tempted, and then mocked at, my youth, that dream also vanished; [I see stretched out before me a barren, squalid, never-ending] path. We can have no sympathies in common, and we therefore say farewell; You disguised in your elegant domino “Cecilia,” I retiring behind my “Lorenzo,” which you [consider] vulgar, but which is dear to me because it was borne [for a time], fifty years ago, by a great poet whom I revere. For my part, no curiosity will ever urge me to seek to know your real name; I shall be grateful if you will abstain from inquiries as to mine.”

common loathing of hypocrisy, which Silla considers endemic to modern society and to his own generation.

The fact that both men share affection for Mina leads them initially into a sort of oedipal rivalry, which plays out in terms of the power dynamics of awareness-unawareness. Cesare subjugates Silla by demonstrating a privileged knowledge of his life and memories, while at the same time retreating behind an impenetrable façade so that Silla fails to apprehend him in turn. The recital of this intimate knowledge has a disarming effect on Silla, especially because it touches on hitherto unknown and inconvenient facts—for instance, that Mina had helped finance *Un sogno* at a great personal cost—which requires him to re-conceptualize his relationship with his mother. Thrust into the spotlight and forced to undergo a disturbing rearrangement of his own reality, Silla can only respond by questioning his interlocutor's right to know these things. The power-struggle ultimately concludes when Cesare explains the nature of his relationship with Mina and how he came to know such personal details about Silla's life and family. Of course, even in making this conciliatory disclosure, Cesare divulges precious little information about himself, keeping knowledge concentrated on his side of the equation and preserving a sense of hierarchy in the relation.

A distinguishing feature of Silla's relationship with Cesare is that Silla is forced into the filial role by circumstances outside his control. Intriguingly, the same adventure that brings Silla into contact with Cesare also brings him into contact with another would-be father figure, namely, Steinegge. Working side-by-side with the affable German secretary, Silla begins to treat Steinegge as a confidant, and ultimately comes to revere him for his values and way of life. In general, Silla tends to idealize the preceding generation for what he perceives to be its superior values, he singles out Steinegge as the paradigm of that generation's sincerity (the antithesis of

the present-day hypocrite) and thereby raises him to the status of an ego ideal. At least with respect to the sincerity criterion, Silla strives to emulate Steinegge's mode of being, an aspiration paralleled in his brief courtship of Edith. Ultimately, however, when faced with the impossibility of reaching his ideal, Silla responds by rejecting it wholesale. Hence, after succumbing to Marina's temptation, Silla dismisses Steinegge angrily and the two become estranged.

The third and final iteration in this father/son series casts Commendatore Vezza in the paternal role. An ancillary character throughout most of the novel, Vezza comes to the forefront of the action following Cesare's death. The first significant encounter between Vezza and Silla occurs while Silla is caught between a duty to marry Marina despite her illness and the prospect of ending his own life. Learning of Silla's plan to remain with Marina, Vezza speaks to the much younger man in a fatherly tone and convinces him that the most reasonable course of action would be to politely take his leave and move on with his life. Vezza continues to demonstrate concern for Silla's interests later when he proposes to recommend him for a position at an elite private school in Milan. In these ways, Vezza serves as a source of practical support to Silla, guiding him through his present difficulties and helping get his life on track. By setting Silla on a path that—though not ideal—comports with the demands of the real world and augurs for a long-term stability, Vezza carries out the more concrete duties of fatherhood left unfulfilled by Cesare and Steinegge³⁹¹.

Before concluding this excursus on character psychology in *Malombra*, I would like to briefly point out two interrelated trends that influence the way themes of family, love and sexuality are represented in the text: the breakdown of the traditional family structure and the aesthetic devaluation of sexual love. In referring to the breakdown of the traditional family

³⁹¹ Silla's obsession with the problem of Fate could be seen as a projection of the father-complex.

structure, I am calling attention to the fact that all the major families that figure in the plot, including the Crusnelli-Malombra family, the D'Ormengos, Silla's family, the Salvadors and the Steinegges, have suffered some major upheaval or decline. The only families left standing at the end of the novel are the Salvadors and Steinegges, and of these two, only the Steinegge family—consisting of a father-daughter pair—is given a positive moral evaluation. Regarding the Steinegges' arrangement, Edith is idealized for her filial piety while her father is idealized for his simple virtue, such that it does not seem to matter that the family's worldly future is sacrificed in favor of spiritual aspirations. This particularity about the Steinegge family at the end of the novel casts light on the second trend mentioned above, relating to the devaluation of sexuality.

When I speak of an aesthetic devaluation of sexuality in the novel, I am not referring to a tendency to euphemize the sex act; I am talking about the fact that in virtually all the romantic relationships depicted, circumstances conspire to undermine the sexual component or distance it from the representation of love. To cite the main examples: Edith renounces marriage in order to carry out her filial duties; Cesare lives a life of celibacy, loving Mina in a courtly fashion; Silla—despite having occasionally frequented “haunts of vice”—avoids facile intrigues and spends his life chasing an unattainable ideal; and even Marina, with her highly-sensualized portrayal and ability to enchant men, never experiences romance beyond Silla's kiss. Also, relevant to this list is the historical personage, Cecilia, whose “illicit affair”—consisting of a furtive smile and glance—galvanizes the entire plot. To be sure, there is a strong current of eroticism in *Malombra*, concentrated around the relationship between Silla and Marina; what I find most striking, however, is the way this erotic energy ends up being diffused or diverted into other areas of the representation. I will take this occasion to discuss some of the pretexts adopted to explore and develop questions of sexuality.

At times, the eroticism of the main plot is displaced onto peripheral characters, whose interactions tend to be depicted in a more candid, almost naturalistic manner. I have mentioned, for instance, several scenes which show Fanny, Marina's promiscuous French maidservant, acting as a disavowed alter ego of Marina herself. A notable example is the scene where Cesare catches the doctor and Fanny in a compromising position in the garden (as he complains, "Pare impossibile... Quell'asino di dottore che fa la ruota intorno alla cameriera di mia nipote. In giardino come due colombi!"³⁹²). This rather humorous incident which directly precedes Marina and Silla's innuendo-laced conversation and shows Fanny and the doctor acting on the desires that Marina and Silla struggle to suppress, is exemplary of a broader tendency to employ Fanny as Marina's psychical double. The use of Fanny as Marina's double in this sense not only dissociates the sex act from the protagonists but also, by transforming it into a grotesque and ridiculous spectacle, detaches it from romantic sentiments altogether. And after all, what could be more absurd than seeing the snooty French maid and the old, owlish country doctor engaged in this sort of animal mating ritual?

Another instance of sexuality being rendered grotesque is found in the scene where Marina and Nepo tour the Orrido together. In the pages leading up to this scene, it is established that Nepo Salvador has a reputation for seducing women beneath his station ("dressmakers, milliners and servant girls"), though until now he has "drawn the line at platonic friendship" when it comes to ladies. This changes, however, during the trip through the Orrido, when Nepo tries to seduce Marina by groping and fondling her. The sexually explicit imagery in this scene is even more noteworthy if one considers how elsewhere in the text, the narrator constructs an inviolable aura around Marina's eroticized figure, voyeuristically studying her movements but

³⁹² "it is too absurd...that ass of a [doing cartwheels around] my niece's maid. [In the garden] like two doves."

setting her firmly out of reach. Nepo's attempted seduction violates the aura in a crude and graphic manner, and this crudeness is reflected in the language of the representation: his hand appears on Marina's bosom like "una branca di bestia immonda, fatta audace dalle tenebre,"³⁹³ while Marina appears "pallida, serrate le labbra"³⁹⁴ like "un'anima peccatrice, fuggita nello sdegno alle ombre dei fiumi infernali, mezz'irritata, mezzo stupefatta"³⁹⁵. During this uncomfortable scene, Nepo and Marina take on inhuman qualities suggestive, of the monstrous and the undead, respectively.

These last few reflections on the treatment of sexuality in *Malombra* form a convenient bridge between the first part of my analysis, where I examined the novel's main plot, and the second part, where I will examine the rewritings of Silla's and Marina's stories in the Salvador and Steinegge subplots.

³⁹³ "the claw of some impure animal gathering courage from the darkness"

³⁹⁴ "pale, with lips pressed together..."

³⁹⁵ "...some sinful soul, which in disdain had sought refuge in the shadows of these infernal regions, her nervous tension yielding place to stupefaction."

Part II: The Subplots of *Malombra*

Whereas in the first part of my analysis I investigated the affairs of Marina and Silla, I now wish to examine the novel's two subplots (both of which originate in Book II.1) and determine their thematic connections to the events of the main plot. The first subplot centers on the Salvador family and their scheme to arrange a marriage between Nepo and Marina. The second subplot centers on Steinegge's reunion with his daughter, Edith, and the latter's attempt to restore her father's faith. I will start this section by addressing some points about the work's genesis, as this will help give a sense of the thematic cohesion between the different parts of the plot.

Michel Guiomar surely has authors like Fogazzaro in mind when he suggests that in every novel, at least one character bears the traits of the author and functions as his double (for instance, as a *personnage-alibi*)³⁹⁶³⁹⁷. It naturally bears mentioning in this connection that Fogazzaro inserts a cameo of himself into Book III.3, in the person of the "poetaster"-translator seen standing around the piano at Giulia's party. The embedded lyric "Ho pianto un sogno,"³⁹⁸ credited to this seemingly gratuitous, blushing figure in the narration, is Fogazzaro's own interpretation of a poem by Heine. However, setting aside for the moment questions of literal cameos, many other traces of the author's life show up in the novel, and he talks at length in his letters and others writings about the autobiographical orientations of certain characters, including

³⁹⁶ Michel Guiomar, *Principes d'une esthétique de la mort* (Paris: Corti, 1968), 285-286.

³⁹⁷ Guiomar's position may ultimately be traced back to Freud's argument about the "tendency of the modern writer to split up his ego" between the different characters of his novel. See: Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1913), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956-1974), 1927.

³⁹⁸ Literally, "I cried a dream."

Silla and Marina³⁹⁹⁴⁰⁰. In an 1883 letter to S. Bastiano, Fogazzaro describes using his own youthful temperament and experiences as a model for Silla's consciousness, with all its moral and spiritual conflicts:

«Un passo della sua lettera mi fa credere ch'ella conosca qualche cosa di Malombra; non lo sapevo. Vorrei che i suoi occhi le permettessero di leggere poche pagine del capitolo in Aprile (verso la fine) dove è parlato delle tempeste morali che agitavano Silla. Invece di questo nome ella può mettere il mio in quelle pagine»⁴⁰¹

Obviously, these parallels with the life of the author complicate the reading and one must avoid the pitfall of too narrowly identifying Fogazzaro with Silla. Indeed, Fogazzaro takes measures to distance himself from his male protagonist in other respects, such as in the scene where Silla, in speaking with Steinegge, denies being a poet and insists he has only ever been a writer. Fogazzaro, by contrast, had grappled with numerous disappointments as a lyric poet prior to publishing his first novel, *Malombra*. In this sense, just as Silla's list of failures mirrors the disappointments of Fogazzaro's own early literary career, there is a cardinal difference between author and character over the specific nature of their artistic aspirations. The distinction here is noteworthy when considering that *Malombra* embodies the crossroads of Fogazzaro's poetic and novelistic careers: it is as though the author, on some level, wishes to isolate his past poetic endeavors in the figure

³⁹⁹ As Fogazzaro writes more generally about his sources of artistic inspiration: "nell'anima di ciascuno di noi sono in genere tutte le passioni, gli amori, gli odî, le invidie, le malvagità, gli slanci generosi, le cupidigie, le viltà, gli eroismi, le follie che muovono qualunque altra anima umana...io traggo il mio libro, parte da altri libri parte dal vero delle cose, parte dall'anima mia profonda: perché essa pure è un cielo pieno d'ombre e di astri che vi sorgono, tramontano e risorgono ancora senza posa e v'hanno abissi in fondo a lei che l'occhio interno non penetra." "In general, each of our souls contains all the passions, the loves, the hates, the envies, the evils, the generous impulses, the avarices, the cowardice, the heroisms, the follies which drive any other human soul...I derive my book, in part from other books, in part from the reality of things, in part from the depths of my soul: because this too is a sky full of shadows and stars which rise, set and rise again once more without stopping and there are abysses at its base which the inner eye cannot fathom." Donatella Piccioni and Leone Piccioni, *Antonio Fogazzaro* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1970), 157.

⁴⁰⁰ Both Silla and the poetaster serve as autobiographical figures; however, whereas the former commands a degree of pathos, the latter is presented in a purely contemptible light, as an object of (self-) deprecation. The contrast evident between the narratorial attitude toward Silla qua embodiment of Fogazzaro's youthful personality, on the one hand, and toward the poetaster qua embodiment of Fogazzaro's early lyric poetry, on the other, suggests a tendency on the part of the author to isolate this latter portion of his ego and submit it to harsher judgment.

⁴⁰¹ Letter to E. S. Bastiano, 5 Agosto 1883. "A passage in your letter has led me to think that you know something about Malombra; I had not been aware. I would ask that you pass your eyes over a few pages from the chapter "In Aprile" (toward the end) where it talks about the moral conflicts which moved Silla. You could replace that name with my own in those pages."

of the “poetaster,” while still holding up Silla as a token of what he had been and what he is becoming. Tommaso Gallarati-Scotti, a protégé of Fogazzaro and one of his early biographers, singles out the inward-looking tendency in *Malombra* when he writes:

Malombra, può dunque essere considerata da un punto di vista ben più interessante per gli scrutatori di anime che da quello puramente artistico. Essa non è solo un'opera d'arte. E' la storia poetica del momento più tempestoso e sensuale della sua vita... In Corrado Silla egli si è descritto nell'ora in cui si trovò solo, sull' orlo di una cupa voragine di morte.⁴⁰²

As Gallarati-Scotti claims, it is precisely this ability to know himself inside and out that makes Fogazzaro such a skilled painter of human psychology:

Se una qualità distingue infatti il Fogazzaro tra gli scrittori del suo tempo e lo mette tra i maggiori in Europa, è la potenza con cui afferra e fissa i caratteri umani. Egli conosce le anime che descrive in ogni loro ripiego, in ogni loro debolezza e esitazione, in ogni loro compromesso tra il bene e il male. Sa guardare fino in fondo ai loro cuori; misurare ogni moto dei loro nervi e del loro sangue, cogliere in essi il sublime o il ridicolo, le ombre e le luci del loro mondo interiore. Ebbene le pagine ascetiche che abbiamo pubblicato e che ci servono a comprendere il segreto della sua vita ci servono anche a scoprire il segreto della sua arte. In esse noi troviamo a quale scuola ha imparato a studiare i caratteri e le passioni degli uomini. L'artista ha descritto bene gli altri perchè ha conosciuto fino in fondo sè stesso.⁴⁰³

Marina, like Silla, is an autobiographical character who, according to Gallarati-Scotti, seems to reflect a different side of the author's soul⁴⁰⁴. In the preface to the French Edition of

⁴⁰²“*Malombra* could therefore be considered more interesting from the point of view of the soul-reader than from a purely artistic point of view. It is not only a work of art. It is the poetic retelling of the most tempestuous and sensual moment in his life...In Corrado Silla he has depicted himself at the time in which he found himself alone, on the brink of a gloomy chasm of death.” Gallarati-Scotti, *La Vita di Antonio Fogazzaro*, 79-80.

⁴⁰³ “In fact, if there is one quality which distinguishes Fogazzaro from the writers of his time and ranks him amongst the greatest in Europe, it is the power with which he grasps and fixes human characters. He knows the souls he describes in every fold, in all of their weakness and hesitation, in all of their compromises between good and evil. He knows how to plumb the depths of their hearts; to measure every movement of their nerves and their blood, to gather in them the sublime or the ridiculous, the shadows and the light of their inner world. And yet the austere pages which we have published and which help to understand the secret of his life also serve to uncover the secret of his art. In them we discover the school from which he learned to study the characters and passions of men. The artist described others well because he knew himself inside and out.” Tommaso Gallarati-Scotti, *La Vita di Antonio Fogazzaro* (Milan: Baldini e Castoldi, 1920), 246.

⁴⁰⁴ “...accanto alla figura di Silla è quella di Marina. E anch'essa sembra riflettere un altro lato dell'anima del Fogazzaro.” “...next to the figure of Silla is that of Marina. And she also seems to reflect another side of Fogazzaro's soul.” Gallarati-Scotti, *La Vita di Antonio Fogazzaro*, 83.

Malombra in 1895, Fogazzaro describes the exaltation he felt in conceiving of his female

protagonist:

Pas un mot du roman n'existait encore sur le papier et la belle, hautaine, fantasque Marina de Malombra me hantait déjà; j'en étais amoureux et rêvais de m'en faire aimer. Elle était pour moi la femme qui ne ressemble à aucune autre, et je l'avais pétrie d'orgueil pour l'inexprimable plaisir de la dompter. Marina a vécu dans moi avant Edith, elle est bien ce voluptueux mélange féminin de beauté, d'étrangeté, de talent et d'orgueil que je recherchais avec ardeur dans ma première jeunesse. Elle était devenue mon rêve, en souvenir d'une autre... d'une créature aérienne, d'une sorte de sylphide à la Chateaubriand, dont j'avais raffolé de douze à seize ans. Tout ce que j'ai depuis sur l'amour, tel que le conçoivent certains soi-disants adorateurs de la Beauté, me paraît bien froid et bien sot en comparaison des ivresses qu'une femme comme donna Marina aurait pu donner à un amant digne d'elle. Le personnage est donc une conception idéale, ayant un noyau de réalité. Elle est l'ainée des femmes dont j'ai souhaité fixer les traits dans mon œuvre, sans me soucier le moins du monde de l'effet qu'elles y produiraient, de ce que le public en pourrait dire.⁴⁰⁵

The way Fogazzaro describes being “haunted” by the imaginary figure of Marina, even before putting pen to paper, clearly resonates with Capuana’s experience of being haunted by the woman from the Van Dyck painting (described in the volume *Spiritismo*?⁴⁰⁶). Apropos of Marina, Fogazzaro grants that her character has some basis (“un noyau”) in reality, but explains that she is above all a product of fantasy, and speaks of her capturing, through a unique blend of beauty, exoticism, talent and pride, an ideal of femininity singularly capable of arousing his own desires. Thus, in one sense, Fogazzaro sets up Marina as an object of desire in the text whose eroticism is defined in part by her impenetrable mystique. At the same time, however, Fogazzaro also refers to the pleasure he takes in mastering this strange beauty, by which he means opening

⁴⁰⁵ “Not a single word of the novel existed yet on paper and I was already haunted by the beautiful, haughty, fanciful Marina; I was in love and I dreamed of being loved by her. She was for me a woman like no other, and I filled her with pride for the inexpressible pleasure of mastering her. Marina lived in me before Edith, she is precisely that voluptuous feminine mixture of beauty, strangeness, talent and pride which I arduously sought in my early youth. She became my dream, in memory of another...of an ethereal creature, something akin to the sylph of Chateaubriand, which I was mad about between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Everything that I have since read on love, as it is conceived by certain self-described worshipers of Beauty, seems cold and fatuous in comparison to the exhilarations that a woman like Marina might have given to a lover worthy of her. Her character is an ideal conception, with a “kernel” of reality. She is the first of the women whose traits I hoped to fix in my work, without worrying at all about the effect she would have on the world, about what the public could say about her.” Antonio Fogazzaro, “Malombra: Préface,” In *Minime, discorsi, studi, pensieri* (Milan: Baldini e Castaldi, 1908), 237.

⁴⁰⁶ Luigi Capuana, *Spiritismo?* (Catania: Niccolò Giannotta, 1884).

her consciousness, in private spaces of the narrative, and furnishing her with an interiority. To construct Marina's interior world, Fogazzaro uses his own psyche as a model, much as he had done with Silla, as a result of which he also becomes identified with Marina on some level. This identification with Marina, correspondingly, becomes a key site for the author to channel some of the darker aspects of his personality, and namely, his youthful fascination with the occult. In sum, it could be said that Fogazzaro relates to his female protagonist in a twofold manner, through the projection of desire on the one hand and through intellectual identification on the other.

The novel *Malombra* itself seems to typify Guiomar's claim that "chaque être de roman soit un reflet, une esquisse de Double de l'auteur et donc double de chacun des autres êtres de la même oeuvre"⁴⁰⁷. In one sense, this principle is reflected in the way Fogazzaro compartmentalizes his own worldview in the text by turning secondary characters into exponents of his ideas and feelings on various subjects (notably, with Steinegge's theory of languages, Don Innocenzo's views on spirituality and the self-reference in the "poetaster" at Giulia's party). This principle is also played out in the way that, with Marina and Silla serving as avatars of the author in the text, each protagonist forms the center of a universe of literary foils; correspondingly, the traits of each foil-character are determined on the basis of that character's role in the plot relative to the protagonist, such that the foil-character also comes to reflect the authorial personality, even if in an oblique and secondary manner. One example of the foil technique is the dynamic between Marina and Fanny. Acts and tendencies that would seem discordant with Marina's ego are relegated to Fanny, who, perhaps as a function of her lower birth, has fewer inhibitions with respect to emotions and sexuality (as Marina loses her inhibitions, Fanny ceases to function in

⁴⁰⁷ Guiomar, *Principes d'une esthétique de la mort*, 286.

this capacity). In a different connection, the way Silla relates to Steinegge, elevating him to the status of ego ideal, posits Steinegge as a foil for Silla. Another pair of foils is created for the two protagonists through the device of *mise-en-abyme*: the unnamed hero of *Un sogno* serves as a foil for Silla just as the Cecilia from the manuscript and local lore serves as a foil for Marina. The deepest and most complex examples of foils in the text, however, relate to the characters and events of the two subplots. Not only are the characters of Nepo and Edith presented as foils for Silla and Marina, respectively, but also in a broader sense, each subplot serves to rewrite—and provide a moral evaluation on—a given aspect of the main plot. I would argue that the adventures of Fosca and Nepo present a negative counterpart to the backstory of Mina and Silla, while the uplifting account of Steinegge and Edith’s reunion offers a positive counterpart to the story of Cesare and Marina. On a superficial level, the substitution of Nepo for Silla and Edith for Marina also lends itself to the unfolding of two love-triangles in the narrative, although this element is downplayed somewhat. The system of foils is traced out in the grid below:

Positive	Negative
Mina → <u>Silla</u>	Fosca → <u>Nepo</u>
Steinegge → <u>Edith</u>	Cesare → <u>Marina</u>

I will now proceed by analyzing the ways in which Nepo serves as a foil for Silla, and the ways in which Edith serves as a foil for Marina.

The Salvador subplot subverts the romanticized backstory of Mina and Silla by rewriting it along more cynical lines, corrupting its principal motifs and stripping them of their romantic

vener. These procedures can be observed with respect to numerous points of comparison between the two storylines.

Fundamentally speaking, the contrast between Silla and Nepo, or rather, the contrast between their respective sets of mores⁴⁰⁸, is organized around the question of hypocrisy. Silla, who regards hypocrisy as endemic to the present age, and to his generation in particular, is depicted writing an essay on the subject in Book III:

Inconscio seguace d'idee preconette e assolute, voleva dimostrarvi che la menzogna e la debolezza morale sono caratteristiche di questo tempo, salvo a dedurne in seguito che discendono dalle sue tendenze positiviste, ossia dall'essersi oscurato nelle anime il principio metafisico del vero; e che le verità conquistate nell'ordine fisico, infinitesimali raggi di quel principio, non hanno né possono avere il menomo valore di sostituirlo quale generatore di salute morale. Molto più grave gli pareva questo prosperare della menzogna in tanta libertà di parola e d'azione. Perché ne trovava infetta la vita sociale e politica, come le arti, le lettere e le industrie stesse, nelle quali discende a complice abietta d'inganno persino la scienza. Osservava ne' suoi conoscenti il fenomeno frequentissimo dell'ipocrisia a rovescio, ossia la dissimulazione dei sentimenti più retti e più nobili, delle opinioni più ragionevoli; l'opposto linguaggio che erano usi tenere sulle persone e le cose, secondo il numero e la qualità degli uditori. Ne induceva che se le vere opinioni umane avessero improvvisamente a scoprirsi, il mondo sbigottirebbe di trovarsi tanto diverso da quello che crede. Una sì larga infusione di falsità volontaria, corrompendo interamente le parole e le azioni umane, deve generare il falso, che è quanto dire il male, nell'organismo della società, poiché questo si modifica senza posa per le parole, per le azioni umane. Silla preferiva la sincerità, anche nell'errore, a qualunque men disonesta ipocrisia. Citava esempi in appoggio al suo assunto, e aveva ora per le mani il suo amico Steinegge.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ The polyphony that Fogazzaro creates, as a narrator, in registering together heterogeneous socio-cultural mores calls attention not only to synchronic stratification, but also to factors of diachronic sedimentation at work in his vision of society.

⁴⁰⁹“Unconsciously holding to fixed preconceived ideas, he endeavored to show that falsehood and moral weakness are characteristic of this age, but arrived at the conclusion that they spring from its positivist tendencies, [that is, from the darkening of souls to the metaphysical principle of truth]. Scientific discoveries in the physical world are but fragments of truth, and can never take its place as the source of morality. The prevalence of falsehood amid so much freedom of speech and action struck him as a singularly grave symptom. For it seemed to him to have infected the whole social and political life of the world, with arts, letters, and industry; and science itself seemed to act as a feeble, infatuated accomplice. Among his contemporaries, he often observed the phenomenon of hypocrisy upside down, that is to say, the suppression of noble and upright feelings and common-sense views, in order to suit the audience, they were addressing. Hence, he drew the inference that if men’s true opinions were to be suddenly made known, the world would be alarmed at discovering itself to be so different from what it believes it is. So much voluntary untruth, inwardly corrupting human words and actions, must give birth to falsehood, that is to say, to evil, in the organism of society, since the latter is modified unceasingly by human words and actions. Silla preferred sincerity, even in error, to hypocrisy of every shade. He supported his view by examples, and at the present moment had his friend Steinegge under examination.”

There is a touch of irony in the fact that Silla, in writing about hypocrisy, unconsciously starts from preconceived ideas. In a general way, intolerance of hypocrisy is a sentiment that binds Silla together with Cesare, Marina and Steinegge. Cesare's opinions on the subject are made known in Book I.2 when he speaks of the "sciocconi ipocriti davanti ad un quadro o a una statua,"⁴¹⁰ remarking that "se potessero levarsi la maschera tutti ad un tratto, udreste che risata,"⁴¹¹ while Marina's position comes to light in Book I.5 where she struggles with the hypocrisy of disguising her hatred for her uncle. Steinegge, for his part, decries the hypocrites in his own family for destroying the letters he wrote to Edith (in Book II.1). Though as a product of his generation Silla himself flirts at times with insincerity (hence the underlying irony of the hypocrite denouncing hypocrisy), in general, his words and deeds comport with each other, and thus substantiate his commitment to sincerity and truth. With the Salvadors, conversely, this element of conscious duplicity runs rampant and invades every aspect of their lives.

An abstract comparison of the Silla and Salvador family dynamics reveals three trends in common: a devaluation of paternal authority (both fathers were debt-ridden), an accession of maternal authority, and a rapprochement between mother and son. In both cases, the mother plays a prominent role in legislating the son's affairs. Following her death, Silla's mother continues to influence her son not only as a fixture of his mental life, but also as a source of financial support. In a direct sense, Silla supports himself with the interest generated by Mina's dowry, though he also ends up receiving material support from Cesare, thanks to Cesare's relationship with his mother. So far, these circumstances bear at least a nominal resemblance to the circumstances of the Salvador family. Like Mina, Fosca is a doting mother who appeals to

⁴¹⁰ "fools and hypocrites in front of a picture or a statue"

⁴¹¹ "If they could all simultaneously remove their masks, what a shout of laughter you would hear."

Cesare with her son's welfare in mind. Her plan is to provide for Nepo's financial security by arranging a marriage for him with the supposedly well-endowed Marina. Nepo, who like Silla is financially dependent on his mother and her connections, puts on an elaborate fiction about how he would never marry for money, all the while covertly subscribing to his mother's plan.

Letters, which for decades had served as the privileged space for Cesare and Mina's friendship, also play a key role in cementing the relationship between the Salvadors and Cesare. The difference, of course, between the two situations of correspondence turns on the sincerity of the discourse. Cesare's correspondence with Mina appears more genuine for the fact that, as the continuation of a long-standing relationship, it takes place within a discourse of privacy and intimacy. Fosca's communication, by contrast, caricaturizes in the most obsequious terms the formal discourse customary in exchanges between branches of a noble family. Cesare is Fosca's affinal cousin and yet the two barely know one another, having met only once, thirty years prior. Written only at the suggestion of Donna Costanza who alerts Fosca to Cesare's wealth, the letter vastly overstates the significance of the family ties in question and reeks of opportunism:

La contessa Fosca scrisse un capolavoro diplomatico. V'erano intarsiati non pochi errorucci di ortografia e di grammatica; ma nessuno si sarebbe atteso dalla contessa uno scritto così artificioso. V'era espresso il desiderio di rivedere il conte dopo tanti anni, di stringere con l'amicizia i legami del sangue. Non era egli, dopo tante disgrazie, il più prossimo dei parenti superstiti del povero Alvise? Tali erano pure i sentimenti di Nepo. Ella avrebbe voluto intrattenersi con lui dell'avvenire di questo suo figlio; e qui grandi elogi al medesimo. Lo vedeva disposto ad accasarsi. Ove cadrebbe la sua scelta? Certo sopra una famiglia degna, una fanciulla virtuosa; ma ella, come madre, doveva pur pensare a quello che i benedetti giovani non curano mai. Qui veniva un quadro né troppo scuro né troppo chiaro delle finanze Salvador. Insomma ell'aveva bisogno di amici autorevoli e prudenti. Verrebbe volentieri al Palazzo con Nepo, se però il tempo, se la salute, se questo se quello permettesse. Desiderava pure tanto abbracciare la

cara Marina di cui si ricordava sempre con tenerezza. Aggiungeva uno speciale bigliettino affettuoso, sulle generali, per essa.⁴¹²⁴¹³

The expository sketch of the Salvadors in Book II.2 offers some insights into Fosca and Nepo's lifestyle and worldview. Fosca herself is painted as a kindly arriviste⁴¹⁴ (the daughter of a fishmonger and widow of Count Alvisè), once known for speaking frankly, who has clumsily mastered the art of affectation. Her letter, through its selective account of events, succeeds in painting a rosier picture of her family's financial situation, which is in reality quite dire. Rather than disclose her and her late husband's culpability in the family's debt crisis (and risk exposing the opportunistic nature of the visit), Fosca merely provides a sketch of the damages, enabling her to later portray herself and Nepo as the victims of circumstance. The letter also contains a flattering portrait of Nepo—designed to ingratiate him with Cesare—which inflates his accomplishments and overwrites his flaws. Thus, Fosca proceeds to sanitize her family's image by distancing semblance from reality, while setting the stage for a relationship based entirely on pretense. In this respect, the spirit of her letter contrasts sharply with that of the original letter

⁴¹² "The Countess set to work and composed a diplomatic chef d'oeuvre. It was by no means free from errors of grammar and orthography, but no one would have expected from the Countess such an artful letter. She expressed a desire to see the Count once more, and to combine friendship and the ties of kinship. She had gone through much trouble, and was he not the nearest living relative of her late husband? Nepo was moved, she said, by similar feelings. She would be glad to consult with the Count about Nepo's future, - and here she spoke very highly of Nepo. He appeared anxious to settle down. Where would his choice fall? Certainly, on a noble family, upon a virtuous maiden; but she, as his mother, had to think of one consideration which the dear boys always disregard entirely. Here followed a sketch, neither too vague nor too minute, of the finances of the house of Salvador. In short, she felt the need of wise and authoritative counsel. She would willingly pay a visit to the palace with Nepo, if the weather and her health and a few other things were propitious. Meanwhile, she greatly desired to see Marina again, of whom she preserved the kindest recollections. She enclosed an affectionate little note to her, upon general topics."

⁴¹³ This passage showcases an interesting use of *discours indirect libre*.

⁴¹⁴ The two servants, the sharp-witted Catta and the dull-witted Momolo, embody the opposite extremes of Fosca's character and function as her alter egos in text.

Cesare sent Silla, the one whose tone reflects “la franchezza rude d'un gentiluomo antico”⁴¹⁵ and whose “grandi caratteri inclinati nell'impeto della corsa, spiravano sincerità”⁴¹⁶.

Almost immediately following Fosca and Nepo’s arrival at R., it becomes painfully obvious that apart from their common aristocratic origins and a few instances of inter-marriage over the past centuries, the D’Ormengos and the Salvadors have absolutely nothing in common. Later, in Book II.4, it is even noted how “con i Salvador, tanto agli antipodi della sua natura, il conte si mostrava paziente oltre il prevedibile.”⁴¹⁷⁴¹⁸ Still, this epic feat of patience notwithstanding, Cesare reacts with cynicism toward his cousins from the moment he lays eyes on them. It should be noted that whereas Cesare had welcomed Silla with a paternal air and lectured him about his life choices, he does nothing of the sort for Nepo. Instead, he listens, stultified, as Nepo vaunts his own accomplishments:

Ed ora, mentre la vena inesauribile della contessa Fosca gittava chiacchiere sul capo di Marina, [Nepo], dal canto suo, torturava già il conte Cesare con la propria biografia, con la relazione de' suoi studi, delle sue speranze. Il conte, che sapeva poco dissimulare, stava lì ad ascoltarlo, quasi sdraiato sulla seggiola, col mento sul petto, le mani in tasca e le gambe sgangherate; e alzava il capo a ogni tanto per dargli una occhiata fra l'attonito e l'infastidito.⁴¹⁹

Unlike these cousins, who disguise their motives behind incessant chatter and frivolities, Cesare has little experience with—or taste for—dissimulation. The fact that Cesare’s conversations with

⁴¹⁵ “with the rough frankness of a noble man of the old [guard]”

⁴¹⁶ “the large letters, leaning over as in the impetus of a race, breathed sincerity.”

⁴¹⁷ “with the Salvadors, who had nothing whatever in common with him, the Count showed himself more patient than could possibly have been expected.”

⁴¹⁸ During his original conversation with Silla, Cesare had expressed contempt for flagrantly opportunistic ventures, lauding the young writer for declining a position in his family’s spinning business. Cesare rearticulates his contempt for capitalist enterprise in Book II.5 when he suggests that the new paper mill will contribute little to the “hygiene and morality” of the region. Early on, the Count also professes “I can hardly broach business with a guest who has only just crossed my threshold.”

⁴¹⁹ “And now, while the unfortunate Marina had to listen to the endless flow of the Countess’s chatter, [Nepo], on his part, was [torturing] Count [Cesare] [with a] history of his life, of the course of his studies and the direction of his hopes. The Count, who was a poor hand at dissimulation, was listening to the narrative, lolling in his chair, his chin resting on his breast, his hands in his pockets, and his legs sprawling out before him; every now and then he raised his head and gave the speaker a look, half astonished and half bored.”

Silla lack these frivolities and are quite deep by comparison certifies that relationship as the more authentic of the two.

An important scene in this subplot revolves around question of Marina's dowry. Money, which had previously only played a peripheral role in the novel's plot, here surfaces as a central theme with complex implications. In the scene, Fosca tortures Cesare with a melodramatic sermon about the ills that have supposedly befallen her family, and the merits of her son's union with Marina, all to the purpose of discovering how much Marina stands to inherit from her uncle. Refusing to play Fosca's game, Cesare first cautions against the marriage, then plainly and unceremoniously proposes a sum of three hundred and twenty thousand francs. When Fosca pretends not to understand, Cesare exclaims:

Oh, voi capite perfettamente disse il conte con un accento inesprimibile. È un mistero pel quale non vi mancava né la fede né la speranza prima di parlare con me. Io ve ne ringrazio molto. Voi mi avete fatto l'onore di credere che provvederei con sufficiente larghezza al collocamento di mia nipote, benché non ne abbia alcun obbligo ed ella non porti il mio nome. Non è questo?'⁴²⁰⁴²¹

Cesare also ironizes that the finagling over Marina's dowry (which, including the eighty thousand francs from her father, totals to four hundred thousand francs) has turned the conversation into a business negotiation. As it is later revealed, the so-called betrothal could at best be called a business transaction and at worst a confidence scheme. Later, when Cesare suffers a stroke without signing the deed of gift (which Marina requests in lieu of a dowry), Nepo instructs the lawyer Mirovich to surveil the Count night and day, in the hopes of capturing a final moment of lucidity. Failing in that, the Salvadors resort to stealing Cesare's will after he dies and

⁴²⁰ "“Oh, you understand perfectly well,” said the Count, with curious emphasis. - “It is a mystery in regard to which you were lacking neither in faith nor in hope before you spoke to me. I return you my best thanks. You have done me the honor of believing that I should provide with sufficient liberality for my niece's settlement in life, although I am under no obligation to do so, and although she does not bear my name. Is that not so?””

altering it to benefit Nepo (the Salvadors, unconcerned that this alteration also disinherits Marina, depart the palace immediately afterward).

I would like to point out some interesting parallels between the Silla and Salvador families with regards to their dealings with money. Both apparently crippled with debts, and both leaning on Cesare for support, the two families differ tremendously with respect to their financial motives and to the way they go about fulfilling them. In the first place, one must wonder why the illustrious Salvador family—once ten times wealthier than the Crusnelli family—is so preoccupied with Marina’s dowry. The family’s financial decline, reported to have taken place in the years since Alvisè married Fosca, is not—as Fosca tells Cesare—the consequence of bad fortune or embezzlement, but of her and Alvisè’s prodigality. Two decades of reckless spending on the part of Fosca and her husband have left the newly-widowed Fosca up to her neck in debts and liabilities. Though clearly not destitute, Fosca now takes it as an imperative to repair the family’s broken fortunes, by whatever means necessary.

The Salvadors’ plan to sell off dusty antiques “degne...d'esser buttate in rio”⁴²²⁴²³ to the British Museum to pay off debts poses an ironic counterpoint to Mina’s selling furniture to Cesare out of necessity, and then pawning off cherished heirlooms⁴²⁴ in a state of near-destitution to finance Silla’s novel. On the one hand, Mina parts with her most precious possessions so that Silla can realize an ideal (a dream, *Un sogno*), while on the other hand, the Salvadors have valuable treasures laying around that they treat as garbage. Fortunately for the

⁴²² “fit for the rubbish heap”

⁴²³ One is reminded of the Gospel parable of the poor widow being praised by Jesus for her donation of two coins.

⁴²⁴ A sacrifice reminiscent of Emma Micawber’s in *David Copperfield*.

Salvadors, the lawyer Mirovich, an “antica fiamma”⁴²⁵ of Fosca’s—one who is “cortigianescamente devoto”⁴²⁶—assists them in stabilizing their financials, much as Cesare had done for Mina (pejoratively construed by Marina as his “antica amorosa”), in times of crisis. Another ironic twist revolves around the role money plays in each family’s dynamic with Cesare. Silla is living off a meagre income when he first arrives at the palace, though money is the furthest thing from his mind. That notwithstanding, Cesare, a benefactor of sorts, offers to pay for him ten thousand francs for his collaboration on a political science treatise. Even after Silla departs the palace in an indecorous manner without finishing the project, Cesare bequeaths him the full amount to complete the work as he sees fit. By contrast, the Salvadors, who arrive at Cesare’s doorstep in pursuit of liquid capital, are required to lie and cheat in increasingly depraved ways to achieve their goal⁴²⁷.

A third source of irony in the conversation about Marina’s dowry centers on the manipulation of family relations and the obligations associated with them. Much like she had done in her letter, in speaking to Cesare, Fosca treats him like a close relative despite barely knowing him, and places special emphasis on his blood ties with Nepo:

Ebbene, non dovrei parlar così a Voi che siete suo zio, il suo secondo padre, ma Vi ho già detto la confidenza che ho. Ecco, non so se si possa lasciar andare avanti questa cosa. Vedo il diritto, vedo il rovescio, vedo questo, vedo quello, vorrei e non vorrei⁴²⁸. Oh Dio, che *strucacuor!*⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ “old flame”

⁴²⁶ “slavishly devoted”

⁴²⁷ The marriage between Alvisé Salvador and Fosca is portrayed as having similar socioeconomic repercussions to the affair between Filippo di Crusnelli-Malombra and Miss Sarah: in both cases, a romantic liaison forged across class-lines endangers the economic and social standing of a prominent family.

⁴²⁸ Fosca is citing a verse from *Don Giovanni* Act I, scene 9: “vorrei e non vorrei; mi trema un poco il cor.” Earlier in the novel, Steinegge and Silla hear Marina playing music from the same opera on the piano.

⁴²⁹ ‘Well, am I not right to say all this to you, his uncle, his second father. I have told you what confidence I place in you, and now I don’t know whether the affair ought to be allowed to proceed. I see one side of the picture, I see the other; I see this, I see that; I like it, and I don’t like it. Oh, heavens, it is a heart-rending dilemma!’

During the conversation, Fosca goes from calling Cesare “dear cousin,” to calling him Nepo’s uncle, to finally calling him Nepo’s second father. Elsewhere, she stresses the fact that the Count is the “sangue [del suo] povero Alvisè,”⁴³⁰ whom she falsely credits with telling her to seek Cesare’s counsel. The incredibly forced attempt to characterize Cesare as Nepo’s second father is an oblique reference to the rumors suggesting that Silla is Cesare’s illegitimate son. In the meantime, the way that Fosca repeatedly insists on being “sincera” and speaking “candidamente,”⁴³¹ all the while doing precisely the opposite, adds to the irony of the scene.

One way of reading Fosca’s gesture of spilling the wine on the tablecloth is as a symbol of the assault being waged against Cesare’s courtly values⁴³²:

La contessa diventò scarlatta, e spinse via bruscamente il suo piatto su cui posava un calice pieno di barolo. Il calice si rovesciò sulla tovaglia, il conte trasalì, cacciò fuori tanto d’occhi e Sua Eccellenza esclamò:

Niente, caro. Nozze! Ecco.

Il conte sbuffava. Ci vollero tutte le tradizioni cavalleresche della sua casa per trattenerlo dal prorompere contro l’avventata cugina. Le macchie lo irritavano come se avesse avuto per blasone la pulitezza. Suonò furiosamente il campanello e gridò al servo: Via tutta questa roba! Subito.⁴³³

The mention of Cesare’s courtly traditions is noteworthy given that these traditions were instrumental in coordinating his relationship with Mina. Cesare had once sought Mina’s hand in marriage, and he remained Mina’s admirer and confidant even in the decades after she married Silla’s father. Insofar as he observed these high-minded concepts of love and marriage, and

⁴³⁰ “same blood as [her] poor Alvisè”

⁴³¹ “candidly”

⁴³² Tradition holds that the accidental spilling of wine is the harbinger of good luck.

⁴³³ “The Countess became scarlet, and hastily pushed away her plate, on which stood a glass full of Barolo. The wine was spilt over the tablecloth the Count started and glanced angrily across the table, and her Excellency exclaimed, — ‘It is nothing, dear cousin; a mere bagatelle’ The Count began to fume. It required all the courtly traditions of his house to restrain him from an outburst against his giddy-headed cousin. The stains irritated him as though his family motto had been ‘purity.’ He rang the bell furiously, and cried to the servant, ‘Clear away all those things at once.’”

consequently, lived a life of celibacy, his family motto might as well have been “pulitezza.” Perhaps Cesare is even thinking of this ideal sort of love when he tells Silla: “...se avete un ideale non lo voglio guastare, qualunque esso sia, perché senza ideale il cuore cade nel ventre.”⁴³⁴ While Cesare also expresses a pragmatic view that two people need not be head over heels to make a good match, it is understandable that he would feel uneasy about the proposed arrangement, given that Nepo and Marina seem incompatible, and that he has Marina’s happiness in mind.

Another aspect of the Salvadors’ manipulation is revealed in the episode of the “ventaglio rosso e nero,” when Fosca alerts Nepo to the outcome of the dowry discussion using an agreed-upon fan signal⁴³⁵. The inventory of possible signals is given as follows:

Se la contessa non era in loggia, voleva dire che non aveva potuto fare il gran discorso; se c'era, il ventaglio verde significava mala riuscita, il rosso e nero buona; il fazzoletto bianco voleva dire *Marina avrà tutto*.⁴³⁶

When Nepo sees, his mother waving the “ventaglio rosso e nero”⁴³⁷—signaling the promise of a substantial dowry—his entire demeanor changes; he goes from sulking and bullying Rico to publicly fawning over Marina. As noted in the narration, this change is anything but subtle:

Pareva un altro uomo. Aveva scosse le braccia per far scendere i manichini sino alle nocche delle dita e guardava sua cugina con un sorriso da trionfatore sciocco.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ “if you have an ideal I am the last person to wish to destroy it, for without an ideal all feeling is merged in sensuality.”

⁴³⁵ As Valesio notes, this color-coded signaling reminds one of the equivocation on the color of the sails in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. Other allusions to the Tristan and Isolde legend scattered throughout the novel include the scene where Silla and Marina play chess, and the citation of the verse by Marie de France, “La voix douce et bas li tons,” in reference to Madamigella Desclée’s voice (in Book III.3).

⁴³⁶ “If the Countess was not there at all it would mean that she had not been able to have the important conversation with the Count. If she was there the green fan signified ‘no luck’; the red-and-black one ‘good luck’; the white handkerchief would mean ‘Marina will have everything.’”

⁴³⁷ “red and black fan”

⁴³⁸ He seemed a different man. He had shaken his arms till the small [white cuffs fell down over his knuckles, and he looked at his cousin with a foolish air of triumph.

Concerning the ploy itself, in addition to pointing out the corruption of what is imagined to be a natural process, the very fact that it is deployed in the first place discredits Fosca's claim that Nepo has a romantic idea about love and is mortified by the thought of marrying for money. In talking with Cesare at breakfast, Fosca had made it seem as though Nepo would be appalled to learn that they were talking about the dowry:

Sentite, Cesare, io avrò tutti i difetti e tutti i torti del mondo, ma son sincera. Mi prenderete in mala parte se parlo schietto? C'è anche questa, che se *mio fio* lo viene a sapere che vi faccio certi discorsi, poveretta me, non ho più bene, non ho più pace. Mi raccomando, Cesare. Volete che ve lo dica? Questa cosa mi fa groppo in gola, stento a buttarla fuori. È una umiliazione grande, è una cosa contraria al mio carattere, ma i fatti sono fatti, il dovere è dovere.⁴³⁹

Love, as it happens, is another thematic point on which Silla and Nepo seem to differ widely, although a closer glance reveals some underlying similarities. It is learned that Nepo has a prolific history with the opposite sex, and sees himself as a Don Juan, with the qualification that hitherto all his affairs have been casual and unsophisticated. Consequently, he becomes awkward at the prospect of having a serious conversation with Marina:

Malgrado la sua vanità egli era imbarazzato. Non aveva tentato fino a quel giorno che sartine, modiste e cameriere, limitandosi con le dame e con le damigelle a colloqui fraterni. Il cuore non gli diceva nulla e la mente ben poco.⁴⁴⁰

The account of Nepo's dalliances with "sartine, modiste and cameriere" is consistent with other indications about his vanity and lack of refinement: he prefers anonymous trysts with servants and women of lower station who allow him to dominate them without a sophisticated courtship.

⁴³⁹“Listen to me, Caesar. I may have all the faults and failings in the world, but I am sincere. Will you take it in ill part if I speak frankly? Another thing is, that if my son gets to know that I have broached certain subjects to you, there is no more quiet or peace of mind for me, I can assure you, Caesar. Do you wish me to go on? The words seem to stick in my throat, and I have difficulty in getting them out. It is a great humiliation for me; the whole thing is contrary to my nature, but facts are facts and duty is duty.”

⁴⁴⁰ “In spite of his conceit he felt embarrassed. Hitherto he had only tried his hand with dressmakers, milliners and servant girls. With the ladies he drew the line at platonic friendship. His heart gave him no inspiration, and his mind but little.”

In fact, before turning his attention exclusively to Marina, Nepo even makes a few passes at Fanny. Though unlike Nepo, Silla, whose eros—anatomized in Book III.1—is shaped by forces of both nature (“la squisita nobiltà del suo spirito”) and nurture (“la santa protezione di sua madre”), tends to conceive of love in more sublime terms, more broadly speaking, his concept of love oscillates between spiritual and sensual poles, and after suffering rejection he is known to gratify sexual urges in urban “haunts of vice.” The fact that Silla pursues these intimate encounters in spite of himself suggests an approximation with Nepo, at least on a basic human level. Still, for Nepo such affairs consist of business as usual, whereas for Silla they serve as a last resort in moments of temptation and they always leave him consumed with guilt. Moreover, it is crucial to note that Silla regards haunts of vice as morally superior to facile intrigues, for which “gli era impossibile piegar l'anima alla ipocrisia di parole menzognere.” Ultimately, it could be said with respect to the question of love that despite his failings, Silla aspires to a higher ideal, while Nepo lacks this element of conscience and remains perfectly at ease with his current sexual mores.

For Nepo, the only true love is self-love, and this fact is all too apparent in the scene where he proposes to Marina. Nepo’s proposal, far from being a spontaneous gesture, is a deliberately calculated maneuver. The falseness of the circumstance is underlined by the fact that mere moments earlier, Nepo had sat brooding while Marina ignored him. His intent to propose is contingent upon the outcome of the dowry conversation, so he only approaches Marina after seeing Fosca on the loggia with the red and black fan. As to the proposal itself, it comes across as stiff and devoid of sentiment:

Sì, perché anch'io, che pure ho vissuto nella migliore società di Venezia e di Torino e vi ho stretto cordiali amicizie con una quantità di belle ed eleganti signorine, anch'io sin dal primo vedervi ho provato per Voi una simpatia invincibile.

...una di quelle simpatie che diventano rapidamente passioni in un giovanotto come me, sensibile alla bellezza, sensibile alla grazia, allo spirito, sensibile alle squisitezze più recondite e più delicate della eleganza... Voi potrete un giorno rappresentare con molto splendore la mia casa nella capitale, sia in Torino, sia in Roma; perché io finirò certo per avere alla capitale una posizione degna del mio nome, degna di Venezia...⁴⁴¹

As evidenced by the stream of first-person pronouns and possessives, Nepo's proposal speech is primarily a vehicle for self-aggrandizement, and perhaps for this reason, Marina seems to stop paying attention:

'Marina' diss'egli 'volete esser contessa Salvador? Io aspetto con piena fiducia la Vostra risposta.'

Marina guardava tuttavia il lago e taceva. Le voci della sala si spensero in quel momento; la contessa Fosca s'affacciò alla loggia. Ella si ritirò subito, rientrò in casa parlando forte; ma gli altri fecero irruzione in loggia.⁴⁴²

Before the end of the episode, any remaining assumptions about the sincerity of this marriage will be tainted by the fact that both parties consent to the arrangement due to ulterior motives, and they do so despite Marina's stipulation that she does not love Nepo.

Like his marriage proposal, Nepo's attempt to seduce Marina during their tour of the Orrido is highly forced, with the result that it appears vulgar and grotesque. At the beginning of this scene, Nepo is still waiting for Marina's response and Marina is considering the possibility of using the betrothal to lure Silla back to the palace. The situation of Marina and Nepo alone together aboard the boat, navigating the tumultuous waters of the Orrido in the dark, seems to

⁴⁴¹ "' Yes, for even I, who have moved in the best society of Venice and Turin, and have made warm friendships with many beautiful and charming ladies, from the first moment that I set eyes on you, have felt for you an irresistible sympathy — ...'One of those sympathies which rapidly become a passion in the case of a young man like myself, susceptible to beauty, [susceptible to grace], to wit, [susceptible] to the most exquisite and delicate refinements. For you, my cousin, possess all these things; you are a Greek statue brought to life in Italy and educated at Paris, as the English Ambassador remarked to me, with less reason, speaking of Countess C. You will one day be able to nobly represent my house in the capital, whether at Rome or at Turin; for I shall certainly finish my career with a position at the capital worthy of my name, worthy of Venice...'"

⁴⁴² "'Marina,' said he 'will you become Countess Salvador? I await with full confidence your reply.' Marina still looked out upon the lake and kept silence. At that moment, the voices in the next room subsided; Countess Fosca appeared in the entrance to the loggia. She quickly withdrew again and went into the sitting room, talking loudly; but the others now burst into the loggia."

recreate the adventure with Silla aboard the lake from Book I, all while reversing the dynamic between the characters involved. Whereas the earlier scene showed Silla and Marina attempting to combat their desires, but ultimately yielding when Marina collapses into Silla's arms, the present scene shows a disinhibited Nepo fondling Marina in the dark and an equally disinhibited Marina trying to wriggle free from him:

Nepo rallentò la sua stretta. Non comprendeva quel guizzo di Marina. Parlò. Gli era come parlare con la testa tuffata nella corrente; ma egli, sbalordito, parlava egualmente. E senti la vita di Marina ribattere indietro al suo braccio. Trasalì di piacere, allargò avidamente la mano che le cingeva il busto, come una branca di bestia immonda, fatta audace dalle tenebre; allargò le dita nella cupidigia di avvinghiare⁴⁴³ tutta la voluttuosa persona, di trapassar le vesti e profundarsi nella morbidezza viva.⁴⁴⁴

A brief anecdote offered in the context of the *Orrido* scene is useful for shedding light on Nepo's peculiar brand of inelegance:

I suoi modi con gl'inferiori, da gentiluomo maleducato, gli avevano già procacciato uno schiaffo a Torino da un garzone di caffè e potevano procacciargli altrettanto e peggio da Caronte...⁴⁴⁵

The qualification of "gentiluomo maleducato" interprets Nepo's conduct relative to specific social and moral coordinates. It suggests that the way he behaves with people of lower class, and by extension, with people in general, is indicative of someone who, despite their noble birth, has ignoble manners. The fact is, Nepo hails from a distinguished Venetian family but lacks the fundamentals of a moral education, and tends to lead a parasitic life. This question of social class

⁴⁴³ The verb "avvinghiare" ("to clasp"), used here in reference to Nepo's lustful grasp, also appears in the description of the ghost that escapes the compartment and infiltrates Marina's body. Cf. "Her strong will, her powerful intelligence alone, amid the dismal silence of the room, fought with the hideous [ghost] that had seized on her young life and now sought to [infiltrate] her blood, [clasp onto her bones] and [suck out her life and soul], with a view to replacing her identity with its own."

⁴⁴⁴ "Nepo released his embrace. He did not understand that sudden movement of Marina's. He talked to her; he felt as though he were talking with his head under water; but in his amazement, he went on talking. Then he felt Marina's waist again fall back against his arm. He quivered with delight, and eagerly spread out the fingers which lay across her bosom, like the claw of some impure animal gathering courage from the darkness; he spread out his fingers in the desire to [clasp] the whole of her voluptuous person, [to pass beneath her clothing and plunge into her living softness]."

⁴⁴⁵ "His [way of treating his inferiors, characteristic of an ill-mannered gentleman], had once got him a cuff on the head from a waiter in a café at Turin, and might have got him something worse from Charon."

in its connection to morality will serve to frame my remaining observations about the thematic relationship between Nepo and Silla.

Silla demonstrates a preoccupation with questions of class and social injustice in a variety of situations. At certain times, Silla is shown intellectualizing his social views, as they are channeled into philosophical arguments (with his stance on reincarnation as a way of justifying the unequal distribution of pain in the world) and political arguments (as in his argument favoring democracy). On two occasions, moreover, Silla becomes deeply offended by remarks made about his personal class affiliation. The first is when Marina, writing under the name “Cecilia,” pokes fun at the bourgeois-sounding pseudonym, “Lorenzo;” Silla becomes so incensed that he terminates the correspondence, though not before offering a critique of the aristocracy and its penchant for falseness. The second occasion is when Marina, upon hearing Silla express skepticism about Cecilia’s story, counters by questioning the legitimacy of his birth⁴⁴⁶. The tendency for Silla to become outraged when Marina, in her capacity as an aristocrat, insults his name, underscore the link between his social views and the crisis of paternity. As I discussed in the first part of this chapter, Silla’s estrangement from his father, which has left him in search of a consistent father-figure, is one of the factors contributing to his unstable subjectivity.

Whereas the particular intersection of social class and morality that Nepo occupies is captured with the label “gentiluomo maleducato,” the corresponding coordinates for Silla may be established with reference to the psychological profile provided in Book III.1. In that section, one of the factors credited, alongside his mother’s saintly influence, with guarding against the

⁴⁴⁶ “Chi è, Lei? Chi ci può dire neppure il Suo vero nome? S’indovina!” [‘And you?’ she cried in a voice broken with passion. ‘Who are you? Who can even tell us your real name? We [can] guess!’].

“corruzioni grossolane” of youth is his “squisita nobiltà dello spirito.” The labeling of Nepo as “gentiluomo maleducato”⁴⁴⁷ on the one hand and the reference to Silla’s noble spirit on the other sets up an opposition in the text between blood nobility and spiritual nobility, the logic being that blood nobility is nobility in name only, whereas spiritual nobility is a reflection of personal virtue.⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, what emerges through the interfacing of the Silla and Salvador families is an ideological statement about the likelihood, in contemporary society, of finding these two types of nobility functioning in negative correlation. Setting aside for a moment the issue of bloodline, it is interesting, in this connection, to note the parallels between Silla’s and Nepo’s upbringings. They were both raised in a wealthy environment; they both had fathers who squandered the family fortune; they both attended the University and developed political sentiments about the future of Italy. Nevertheless, Silla’s and Nepo’s life paths differ on two notable points. The first concerns the specific political opinions each man holds: Silla, who fought in the Second War of Independence, is an exponent of democratic and egalitarian principles, whereas Nepo espouses conservative views in support of the monarchy. The second point concerns the way each family goes about managing its financial difficulties: Mina and Silla leave behind their opulent settings and embrace a more modest lifestyle, while Fosca and Nepo attempt to recover their fortune by unscrupulous means, namely, by exploiting their relations. Naturally, this picture of moral decadence does not speak for the aristocracy writ large in novel—after all, Edith and arguably, Cesare, embody both blood and spiritual types of nobility—and in any case, the view of the world presented in *Malombra* tends to take into account the uniqueness of every character’s

⁴⁴⁷ “ill-mannered gentleman”

⁴⁴⁸ The relationship between blood and spiritual nobility is a *topos* at least as old as the poetry of Dante and the *Stilnovisti*.

background. On the other hand, the situation with the Salvadors argues strongly against the notion, professed by Cesare in Book I.6, that noble families are innately superior:

...la disuguaglianza degl'individui crea la disuguaglianza delle famiglie e che le grandi famiglie sorte per un potente impulso e tenute alte lungo i secoli, hanno una funzione organica nella società umana, sono in certo modo esseri superiori...⁴⁴⁹

This claim, whose speciousness is highlighted by the doings of Fosca and Nepo, forms a core part of Cesare's argument against the merits of a democratic society. Accordingly, by tying itself back to this earlier discourse and undermining Cesare's claim, the Salvador subplot works to problematize the corrupting influence of the old-world aristocracy within the political and social climate of Italy in the present-day.

At this point in time, I would like to shift my focus to the novel's other subplot, in order to examine the way Edith functions as a foil for Marina. In the preface to the 1898 French edition of *Malombra*, Fogazzaro describes the thoughts and feelings associated with each character's genesis. The passage reads like a frank bit of self-analysis. Marina, he confesses, was the first and more authentic creation, while Edith was fashioned as an afterthought, as a sort of "reaction formation" against the sensual and highly aestheticized portrayal of Marina:

Edith est aussi une créature idéale, mais il n'y a pas chez elle ce « noyau » de réalité. Edith n'est qu'une réaction de la conscience et du sentiment religieux: elle est née de la terreur d'un abîme. Comme toute réaction, elle est peut-être excessive, et je ne l'ai pas assez aimée pour adoucir les contours un peu rigides de cette figure. La femme noble, intelligente, aimante que j'ai glorifiée dans mes romans postérieurs s'est pourtant dégagée de cette enveloppe assez raide, de ce fantôme peu réel.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ "... the differences in the type of individuals creates the different types of families, and that the great families which have been pushed to the front by a mighty impulse, and have maintained their high position for centuries, play a leading part in the social system, and are, in a sense, superior beings."

⁴⁵⁰"Edith, too, is an ideal creature, but she lacks the "kernel" of reality. Edith is simply a reaction of conscience and religious sentiment: she was born out of the terror of an abyss. Like all reactions, she is perhaps excessive, and I did not like her enough to soften the somewhat rigid contours of her figure. The noble, intelligent, affectionate woman that I glorify in my later novels has, however, emerged from this rather stiff envelope, from this less than real phantom." Antonio Fogazzaro, "Malombra: Préface," In *Minime, discorsi, studi, pensieri* (Milan: Baldini e Castaldi, 1908), 237-238.

The author's insight into the moral dimension of his creative process helps clarify certain peculiarities about Edith's character. Namely, the fact that Edith is a compulsory production, an apotropaic measure divorced from genuine inspiration, would explain why her character appears one-dimensional when compared with Silla or Marina. It would explain why, from the moment she is introduced, she flaunts a superior virtue which is nonetheless bland and generic, and which allows little room for growth. Without meaning to sound too cynical, I would submit that the hollow representation of Edith works like a beacon to indicate the author's own brushes with hypocrisy—those hypocrisies which, after some reflection, he is able to consciously recognize.

The Steinegge and Edith subplot rewrites the backstory of Cesare and Marina in a more pious key, with an eye to redeeming the latter's mistakes. The same basic principle lies at the heart of both stories: a young woman undergoes a geographical displacement for the purpose of reuniting with an estranged father-figure. To distinguish fact from fiction in the information given about Cesare's relationship with Marina, the reader is required to sift through fragmentary accounts provided from multiple different viewpoints. Among the falsehoods to be discarded are the rumors—circulated by the locals and by Cesare's own friends—that the Count has adopted his niece with plans to wed her himself. To the extent that Marina distrusts her uncle, it is not because she suspects him of wanting to marry her, but because she suspects him of wanting to arrange a marriage for her. Surely this preoccupation is not so scandalous, given that it falls within the scope of Cesare's duties as a surrogate parent, and yet Marina's mind, fueled by the

sort of intrigue found in novels and plays, is bent on discovering conspiracies. As a case in point, nothing arouses her suspicions more than the arrival of Corrado Silla: she believes Silla is Cesare's illegitimate son, who intends to marry her in order to claim his inheritance. Marina's inclination to blur the line between reality and fantasy, knowledge and belief, is above all a function of her hatred for Cesare and the mode of life she feels he has forced upon her. By relocating Marina from Paris to R., Cesare strips her of her cultural identity, stifles her capacity for self-expression, and thus widens a rift in the family where perhaps he had sought to mend one.

As a foil to the story of Marina and Cesare, the Steinegge subplot also follows a family in crisis as it attempts to repair itself, in this case with a more auspicious outlook. Piero Nardi is correct in observing that the motif of nostalgia⁴⁵¹ is the organizing principle of this subplot⁴⁵². To understand the emotional significance of Edith's reunion with her father, it is necessary to retrace the circumstances that led to the family breaking up in the first place. As the daughter of Andreas Steinegge, a German political exile, and his aristocratic wife, Edith endured a turbulent childhood. Forced to flee Germany following the Revolution of 1848, the three took up living in Switzerland, and then in America, before Edith's mother fell ill with "nostalgia," and they were required to return to Europe. Steinegge recounts how, upon returning to his homeland, relatives on both sides of his family disavowed him:

Io scrivo a' miei parenti. Sono tutti reazionari e bigotti; io sono nato cattolico, ma non credo ai preti; non mi rispondono. Che importava loro se mia moglie moriva? Scrivo ai parenti di mia moglie. Cose da ridere, signor. Quelli mi odiavano perché avevan creduto dare la ragazza a un ricco e il poco che mio padre non aveva potuto togliermi era stato confiscato dal governo. ⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ As encapsulated in the German word "(heim)weh" (here: "homsickness") that appears at the end of the novel.

⁴⁵² Piero Nardi, *Antonio Fogazzaro* (Milan: Mondadori, 1938).

⁴⁵³"I write to my relations. They are all reactionaries and bigots. I was born a Catholic, but I don't believe in priests, so I get no reply to my letters. What did it matter to them if my wife died? Then I applied to my wife's relatives. It almost makes one smile,

By his own account, Steinegge had become an outcast two fronts: one religious and the other political. Shunned by his family, he continued to live in exile, while Edith and her mother went to live with her relatives in Germany. Edith's mother died shortly thereafter, leaving her in the care of her maternal grandfather. Steinegge recalls for Silla the wrenching scene of their parting:

Mia moglie partì con la bambina, sperando guarire presto e ritornare. L'accompagnai alla frontiera. Stava male; dovevamo lasciarci a mezzogiorno. Un'ora prima mi abbracciò e mi disse: Andrea, ho visto il paese da lontano: basta, restiamo insieme. Capite, signor? Voleva morire con me. Otto giorni dopo...⁴⁵⁴

Over the next twelve years, Steinegge made regular attempts to contact Edith, but his letters were intercepted by his wife's family and burned. His father in law (a man "imbevuto di pregiudizi che nessuno della famiglia si era mai curato di combattere"⁴⁵⁵) bore him extreme ill will and even prohibited the Steinegge name from being mentioned in his household. Consequently, Edith remained largely in the dark about her father until after her grandfather's death:

Fino alla morte del nonno essa non aveva ricevuto alcuna lettera di suo padre. Morto il nonno, ne aveva trovata per caso una direttale da Torino e aveva saputo in pari tempo che fino a due anni prima moltissime altre lettere erano arrivate per lei da vari paesi e che tutte erano state trattenute e distrutte.⁴⁵⁶

The discovery of this betrayal served to rupture Edith's already fragile ties with her mother's family, and thus, after claiming her modest inheritance, she set off in search of her father.

but they hated me because they had hoped to marry their daughter to a rich man, and the little money that my father was unable to deprive me of had been confiscated by the Government."

⁴⁵⁴"My wife went with him and the child, hoping soon to get well and to return to me. I accompanied her to the frontier. She was very ill, and at mid-day I had to tear myself away from her. An hour before I left her, she embraced me saying, " Andrea, I have seen my native land in the distance; it is enough, let us remain together." She wished to die where I was, you understand. Eight days afterwards —."

⁴⁵⁵"Brimming with prejudices which none of his family had ever taken the trouble to combat."

⁴⁵⁶ "Up to the time of her grandfather's death she had not received a single letter from her father. When her grandfather died, she came across one addressed to her from Turin, from which she learned that, up to two years before, many other letters to her had come from various parts of the world, and that all had been suppressed and destroyed."

One way of framing the backstory for the Steinegge subplot is in terms of an inversion on the Freudian model of the “family romance.” In a 1909 essay, Freud lays out the typical elements of the fantasy he calls family romance, claiming it tends to arise in the context of sibling rivalry and turns on a factor of upward social comparison. A classic variant, also prominent in myth, involves the subject’s discovery that his presumed parents are surrogates and that he is actually the offspring of more illustrious people, such as nobility or royalty. Some of these same elements, taken abstractly, can be recognized in Edith’s story. Edith lives with her grandfather up until his death, she knows little about her real parents, and she finds herself at odds with her extended family after discovering that for years they have been intercepting and destroying letters to her from her father. At the same time, Edith’s story also diverges from the Freudian model, insofar as her quest to reunite with her father entails a downward social movement. Rather than a king, her father, Andreas Steinegge, is a German political exile and in order to reunite with him, Edith must break from her noble family and become an outcast in her own right⁴⁵⁷. The structural relationship between the Edith/Steinegge storyline and the family romance of Freud’s theory may be clarified by considering two points. First, as Sandor Ferenczi observes, it is not at all unheard of for subjects—particularly those from aristocratic families—to experience reverse family romance, wherein they come to identify with a humbler parentage in dreams and in fantasies⁴⁵⁸⁴⁵⁹. In cases of reverse family romance, Ferenczi theorizes that subjects are drawn to the qualities of openness, simplicity and sincerity, which tend to characterize this

⁴⁵⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Family Romance” (1909), in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McClintock, introduction by Hugh Haughton (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 35-42.

⁴⁵⁸ The family romance is essentially nostalgic: as Freud states, it concerns an attempt by the older child or adolescent to recapture his original parental ideals.

⁴⁵⁹ Sándor Ferenczi, “The ‘Family Romance’ of a Lowered Social Position,” in *Further Contributions to the Theories and Techniques of Psycho-analysis* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 413-416.

other mode of existence⁴⁶⁰. Hence it could be argued that the precise orientation of the family romance for a subject is coordinated, at least in part, by factors in the broader social context. Second, Freud's way of envisioning an upwards social comparison takes for granted a materialist frame of reference, wherein the upwards orientation is equated with an increase in wealth, power and prominence. It is only natural, granting the materialist standpoint, that a movement upwards in society should be denoted by an ascension to the rank of nobility or royalty. However, if instead one were to consider the world from a spiritual standpoint, and stress the value of spiritual nobility over blood nobility, it stands to reason that an upwards movement would consist of precisely the sort of gesture Edith performs when, as an expression of filial piety, she breaks from her "hypocritical, bigoted" relatives. By renouncing her elevated position in the worldly hierarchy to embrace a lower, almost abject status, Edith willingly submits herself to the sort of transformation that Silla underwent by force of necessity and that Nepo avoided by way of a nefarious scheme.

The opposition between Marina and Edith is first brought into relief at the beginning of Book II.3, where the two women are shown celebrating St. Philip's Mass, along with Fosca and Nepo, at the local church⁴⁶¹. The scene begins with Edith arriving at the church early, only to be joined by Fosca shortly before the ceremony commences. Marina enters through a side door five minutes into the ceremony, with Nepo trailing behind her. The narrator proceeds to survey each character's thoughts, starting with Marina, who is summoned from her profane reflection by a burst of faith and gratitude toward an "unknown God:"

Ella ebbe uno slancio di fede e di gratitudine verso un Dio ignoto, certo diverso da quello che si adorava lì presso a lei: non così freddo, non così lontano: benefico e terribile come il sole,

⁴⁶⁰ Ferenczi, "The 'Family Romance' of a Lowered Social Position," 414.

⁴⁶¹ In this scene, Fogazzaro shows his skill in delineating several strands of Christianity, placing particular emphasis on the contrast between the picture rustic piety at R. and the rarified culture of worship in Nepo's Venice.

ispiratore di tutti gli ardori onde splende la vita. E si sentiva come presa in mano da questo Iddio, portata dal suo favore onnipotente. Teneva il viso tra le palme, si ascoltava il cuore batter forte, gustava le sensazioni acute, quasi dolorose, che le si destavano per tutto il corpo, pensando all'infallibile compiersi delle promesse divine, all'amore fatale che l'avrebbe esaltata tutta, anima e sensi, oltre alla torbida natura umana. Di questo non le entrava neppure un dubbio. Ripensava tutte le difficoltà da doversi superare per toccar la meta, le smarrite tracce di Silla, lo sdegno di lui, fors'anche l'oblio; la sepoltura del Palazzo dove il caso non poteva aiutare; la inimicizia dello zio, quel ridicolo Nepo. Provava un piacere acre e forte rappresentandosi questi ostacoli; tutti vani contro Dio, *Patrem omnipotentem*.⁴⁶²

It should be noted here the way Marina's provocative pose ("curva sul banco la flessuosa persona, pareva una Tentazione penitente"⁴⁶³) mirrors the profane orientation of her thoughts. As to the thoughts shown parading through Nepo's head during the Mass, they are less foreboding, but equally irreverent:

Nepo era alla tortura; si portava e riportava al naso il fazzoletto profumato, guardava sottocchi i suoi vicini colossali e, quando si buttavano ginocchioni con tutti gli altri fedeli, egli non osava stare ritto, calava adagio adagio, pieno di angoscia pei suoi calzoni color tortora. Che differenze dall'ultima Messa di S. Filippo, da quel giardino di *tote* e di *madame* eleganti, da quell'ambiente di cristianesimo depurato! Si consolava pensando alla cugina. Natura aristocratica diceva tra sé. Debbo essere il suo ideale, il suo Messia. Non vuole che me ne accorga troppo, è naturale.⁴⁶⁴

Nepo, forced to kneel and stand amongst the common people, spends the ceremony worrying about his fine clothing and longing for the comfortable surroundings of his customary place of

⁴⁶² "She felt a sudden burst of faith and gratitude towards an unknown [God], one certainly unlike him whom the worshippers near her were adoring; not so cold a God, not so far away; one beneficent and terrible like the sun, the source of all the warmth and splendor of life. [She felt as though] this God had taken her by the hand and was bearing her up with his Almighty love. She hid her face in her hands, and listened to the loud beating of her heart, while a keen, almost painful sensation traversed her frame as she thought of the unfailling fulfilment of Divine promises, of the [ineluctable] passion which would exalt her body and soul above the turbid stream of our dull nature. On this point, she entertained no doubt at all. She reviewed all the difficulties to be surmounted in order to reach the goal; Silla's disappearance without leaving a clue to his whereabouts, his contempt for her, perhaps his forgetfulness of her; [the sepulcher that was the palace] where chance could not come to her assistance; [her enmity toward her uncle, that ridiculous Nepo. She derived a strong, acrid pleasure from imagining these obstacles]; all of them of no avail as against God, *Patrem Omnipotentem*."

⁴⁶³ "With her lithe figure bending over the bench before her, she looked like a *Tentation Pénitente*."

⁴⁶⁴ "Nepo, in the meantime, was enduring agonies; he repeatedly buried his nose in his perfumed handkerchief, casting stealthy glances at his two big neighbors, and when the latter threw themselves on their knees in company with the other worshippers, he dared not remain standing, but slipped very, very gradually into a kneeling posture, in an agony of anxiety for his dove-colored trousers. What a difference between this scene and that last Mass at San Filippo, that fair circle of beautiful maidens and fashionable dames; that atmosphere of purified Christianity. He sought consolation in thinking about his cousin. 'An aristocrat by nature,' he remarked to himself. 'I must be her ideal, her Messiah. She does not wish to show it too clearly, that is only natural.'"

worship. He ultimately finds solace in the prospect that Marina, as a fellow aristocrat, surely worships him as her messiah. Finally, Edith's devotional attitude during the Mass differs fundamentally from those of Marina and Nepo, in the sense that rather than praying or thinking about herself, she prays on behalf of another person—her father:

Invece Edith non abbassò il viso. Era pallidissima, guardava davanti a sé con occhio grave e tranquillo. Solo un tremito delle mani tradiva il fervore dell'accorata preghiera che passava su tutte le teste chine, moveva diritto a Dio, gli diceva in faccia: Signore, Signore, tu che sai quanto l'hanno offeso, non sarai pietoso con lui? Il suo viso pensoso non esprimeva la rassegnazione ascetica, ma una volontà ferma e intelligente, velata di tristezza.⁴⁶⁵

The trip to the Orrido is a crucial episode to consider from the point of view of Edith's relation Marina, seeing as in that episode the two women are depicted side-by-side, interacting with one another. I will examine how the divergence between Marina and Edith is accentuated through the juxtaposition of their characters in two different phases of the episode: the conversation on the boat and their respective encounters with male companions inside the Orrido. Below I have reproduced salient portions of the dialogue between the two women:

“Qual sentimento prova?” le chiese Marina dopo un lungo silenzio.

“Non lo so; desiderio di piangere” rispose Edith.

“E io di vivere, d'esser felice.”

Edith tacque, sorpresa dal subito fuoco che brillò nel viso e sollevò il petto di Marina.

“Ho molta stima di Lei” soggiunse questa bruscamente.

Edith la guardò attonita.

“So benissimo” ripigliò l'altra “di esserle antipatica; fa niente.”

“Ella non mi è antipatica” rispose Edith con voce ferma e grave. Marina si strinse nelle spalle.

“Va come puoi” gridò al Rico, gettando i cordoni del timone e voltandosi a Edith per parlare. Ma Edith la prevenne.

“So” diss'ella “che non è stata gentile con mio padre, e per questo non posso essere affettuosa con Lei. Vorrei dire la cosa in tedesco, perché in italiano non so se dico bene. Ella tuttavia intenderà il mio sentimento; non ho nessuna antipatia.”

[...]

Dopo qualche tempo Marina uscì con quest'altra domanda:

⁴⁶⁵ “Edith, for her part, did not bend her head. She was very pale, and she looked straight before her with a steady and tranquil gaze. Only the trembling of her hands betrayed the fervor of the heart-felt prayer which, passing above all those bent heads, was winging its way direct to God himself: 'O God, O God, Thou Who knowest how grievously they treated him, wilt Thou not be merciful towards him?' Her face did not wear an expression of ascetic resignation, but of a firm, intelligent will under the chastening influence of sorrow.”

“Sua madre era nobile?”

“Sì.”

“Si capisce.”

Edith si fece di fuoco. I suoi occhi intelligenti lampeggiarono.

“Non conosco persona più nobile di mio padre” diss'ella.

“Che Le pare di mio cugino?” domandò Marina senza curarsi di quella risposta, come se non potesse pervenire all'altezza sua.

[...]

“Io non sono virtuosa” [disse Marina] “io non ridomanderò questo a Dio. Io non sono amichevole verso coloro che non amo, con il nobile fine di acquistare un biglietto pel paradiso.”⁴⁶⁶

A series of oppositions unfolding across these exchanges help put into evidence the contrast between the two personalities. A first area of opposition in the dialogue concerns the two women's feelings in relation to the landscape: Edith is moved to tears by her surroundings, while Marina claims to derive a sense of vitality. A second opposition arises around the question of how Edith feels about Marina. Marina assumes Edith dislikes her due to her history of abusing Steinegge, yet Edith maintains that she harbors no antipathy toward Marina. Viewed alongside Marina's inclination to project hatred onto Edith, Edith's disinclination to hate Marina may be

⁴⁶⁶ “ ‘What does it make you feel?’ asked Marina, after a long silence.

‘I hardly know; a desire to weep,’ replied Edith.

‘It makes me desire to live, to be happy.’

Edith remained silent; she was surprised at the sudden fire which flashed from the face [and heaved in the breast of] Marina.

‘I have a great respect for you,’ added the latter, brusquely. Edith looked at her in astonishment. ‘I know quite well,’ the other continued, ‘that you dislike me; that makes no difference.’

‘I do not dislike you,’ replied Edith, in slow, grave tones. Marina shrugged her shoulders.

‘Guide the boat as you can,’ she cried out to Rico, letting go the tiller-ropes, and, turning round towards Edith, was about to speak. But Edith anticipated her.

‘I know,’ she said, ‘that you have not been nice to my father, and for that reason I can feel no affection for you. I wish I could say what I want to say in German, because I can't express it well in Italian. However, you will understand what I mean; I do not dislike you.

[...]

After some time had passed, Marina came out with another question:

‘Your mother was of noble birth?’

‘Yes.’

‘Ah! I understand.’

Edith fired up, and her bright eyes flashed.

‘I know no person more noble than my father,’ she said.

‘What do you think of my cousin?’ inquired Marina, without paying any heed to this rejoinder, as though it failed to reach her on the lofty heights of her grandeur.

[...]

‘I am not a [virtuous] girl,’ said Marina. ‘I shall not expect this to be repaid to me by God. I don't make myself amiable to those I [don't like], with the noble object of acquiring a ticket to Paradise.’

read as a mark of Edith's moral superiority. A third opposition revolves around the semantics of the term "nobile." When Marina asks "sua madre era nobile?"⁴⁶⁷, she literally means to inquire about Edith's maternal lineage, as though to imply that the traits which confer nobility on Edith are those not held in common with her father, Steinegge. Given Marina's personal prioritization of aesthetics over morality, and also given the aversion she feels toward Steinegge because his ugliness, it seems reasonable to interpret her use of "nobile" as first and foremost an aesthetic judgment. When, by contrast, Edith responds that her father is the noblest person she knows, she employs the term exclusively in a moral sense.

At times the characterological contrast that plays out in the dialogue also carries over into the space of Edith's reflections.

Avrebbe voluto profundarsi in questi pensieri, e non poteva; si sentiva legata da una catena dura e fredda, comprendeva confusamente di soffrire della vicinanza di uno spirito umano affatto discorde dal suo, appassionato di altre passioni, chiuso e superbo.⁴⁶⁸

A Edith pareva impossibile che si avesse a tenere questo linguaggio là in alto, davanti alla innocenza solenne delle montagne. Pensò alla povera mamma sepolta lontano; se vedesse la sua figlioletta in tale compagnia, se udisse tali discorsi! Ma Edith non correva pericolo. Ella non ignorava il male, viveva sicura nella propria conscia purità. Lasciò che Marina continuasse a sua posta.⁴⁶⁹

Before moving forward with the analysis of Marina's and Edith's respective encounters in the *Orrido*, I would like to address a few points about the *Orrido* itself and the significance of this setting in Fogazzaro's art. The *Orrido* is depicted as a transgressive space, tucked away in the mountains, where the laws and codes of the human society are shattered against the jagged

⁴⁶⁷"Was your mother of noble birth?"

⁴⁶⁸ "Edith tried to pursue this line of thought but could not do so; she felt as though a hard, cold chain was wound about her. In a confused way, she discerned the disturbing influence of a human spirit close to her and antagonistic to her, stirred by other passions, haughty and reserved."

⁴⁶⁹ "To Edith it appeared impossible that such language should be used on this lofty spot, amid the solemn purity of the mountains. She thought of her mother in her distant grave; if she could see her daughter in such company, if she could hear these speeches! But Edith was in no danger. She was not ignorant of evil, but she lived secure in her own conscious innocence. She allowed Marina to go on talking as she pleased."

rocks or drowned out by the deafening roar of the stream. It is a place where outward appearances are stripped away, particularities annulled and desires reduced to drives. Here, more than anywhere else, the symbolic seems to fold under the crushing impersonality of the real:

L'acqua, il vento, le pietre stesse urlavano cento volte più forte, sempre più forte. Schiacciavano con la loro collera, con la loro angoscia colossale, la piccola collera, le spregevoli angosce umane. Schiacciavano, buttavano via sottosopra le parole come polvere. La brutale natura prepotente voleva parlar sola.⁴⁷⁰

The image of nature rising above human concerns is a *topos* of Fogazzaro's lyric poetry, and it resonates with the themes of the 1876 collection, *Valsolda*. *Valsolda* takes its name from the eponymous *comune* on the northern branch of lake Lugano, where Fogazzaro spent his summers and where he drew inspiration both for his early verses and for some of his novels (especially *Piccolo mondo antico*). In the preface to that volume, Fogazzaro depicts the titular locale as a natural enclave imbued with its own consciousness which firmly denies a foothold to civilization:

Sarebbe forse più cauto dire che sta fuori del mondo conosciuto; simile a quelle regioni iperboree, il cui nome, gittato a caso da una nave lontana, sta pure sulle carte e nei dizionari di geografia. I timidi paeselli son bene allacciati fra loro da una maglia di stradicciuole in gran parte pulite e comode; ma i giganti di pietra che stanno alle spalle ed a' fianchi di que' paeselli le troncano tutte per modo, che, quando il lago va sulle furie, soltanto gli uccelli e le onde posson toccare quest'isola. Nei mesi in cui si navigano i mari del polo un piccolo piroscavo esce ogni giorno dal promontorio di ponente, fugge sbuffando dietro la punta di levante e rifà quindi la via. Porta i manipoli della invasione barbarica che si versa ogni anno dalla montagna delle nazioni, il Gottardo. Armati degli alpenstock, stringendo il primo bottino di fiori e di frutta come se avessero in pugno la dolce Italia, questi uomini forti, che sentono tuttavia la cupidigia del mezzogiorno, si accampano sulla tolda del vapore colle lor donne, i bambini e le masserizie. Non guardano nè a destra nè a sinistra. Tra il gruppo silenzioso di fogge e di volti eteroclitici che passa velocemente a piè delle montagne, appena qualche bionda miss, dato uno sguardo alle acque di smeraldo, ai villaggi ridenti, alle rupi selvagge e pittoresche dove ho portato Cecilia, ne cerca il nome nel suo *Murray*.

Inutile, miss. Pure, tra il lago e quella gigantesca muraglia grigia cui è addossata la valle, si celano mille severe e graziose fantasie della natura, idilli placidi non senza maestà, liriche fiere non senza dolcezza; vivi gli uni e le altre di appassionata vita, che da mattina a sera li va

⁴⁷⁰ "The water, the wind, the very stones, shrieked a hundred times louder, ever louder and louder still. They crushed in their wrath, in their gigantic anguish, the petty anger, the contemptible troubles of humanity. They crushed the words and flung them away in confusion, like [dust.] Brutal, all-powerful nature wished to be heard alone."

illuminando diversamente. Appartengono al mondo dimenticato. Guardate altrove, gentile miss; è il loro destino! *Many a flower is born to blush unseen.*

A dir vero, i pionieri del progresso, rispettabile comitiva, son passati di qua. A piè della gigantesca muraglia grigia v'ha una miniera d'oro, abbandonata; in fondo a un burrone verde, pieno di voci d'acque, v'ha una miniera d'antracite, abbandonata. Pare che la valle abbia detto agli infaticabili pionieri: «Vedete? Niente, per voi! Lasciatemi stare.» Ed essi, nobilmente, se ne sono andati. Traccia di costoro è rimasto un silenzio più profondo di prima, una pace confidente di non essere interrotta pei secoli de' secoli. Perchè, se qualche poeta selvatico va frugando la valle in cerca di temi e d'immagini, ella se ne turba quanto delle lepri che frugano le sue fôrre e scherzano pe' suoi sentieri.⁴⁷¹

The nature that hides its fantasies from the blond-haired miss and chases away the pioneers of progress is the same superhuman force that demands its voice be heard inside the Orrido, and in so doing, pulverizes human meaning.

Edith and Marina take turns venturing into the otherworldly Orrido, each in the company of a different male companion. The first to enter is Edith, accompanied by Professor Ferrieri, the engineer commissioned to determine whether the stream has enough water power to sustain a paper mill. A forty-two-year-old bachelor and a serious man, Ferrieri harbors feelings for Edith

⁴⁷¹ “It would perhaps be more prudent to say that it remains outside of the known world; similar to those hyperborean regions, whose names, randomly thrown out from a far-away ship, nevertheless appear on maps and atlases. The timid little villages are tied together well through a tangle of little roads, for the most part clean and comfortable; but the giants of stone which stand on the shoulders and at the back of those roads cut them all off in a manner that, when the lake is in a passion, only the birds and the waves are able to touch the island. During the months when the polar seas are being navigated, a steamship leaves each day from the westerly promontory, disappears puffing beyond the eastern horizon and comes back along the same route. It carries the manacles of the Barbarian invasion which pours in from the mountain of the nations, the Gotthard. Armed with alpenstocks, taking in the first bundle of flowers and fruits as though they have sweet Italy in their fists, these strong men, who still feel greedy for the south, camp out on the bridge of the steamship with their women, their children and their furniture. They look neither right nor left. Amidst the silent group of shapes and anomalous faces which passes quickly at the foot of the mountains, just now some blond miss, having glanced over the emerald waters, the laughing villages, the wild and picturesque rocks where I had brought Cecilia, searches for the name in her *Murray*.

There's no use, miss. Also, between the lake and that gigantic gray rock wall against which the valley leans, there hide thousands of nature's stern and delicate fantasies, placid idylls not lacking in majesty, proud lyrics not lacking in sweetness; all live a passionate life, which from morning to evening illuminates them in different ways. They belong to the lost world. Look elsewhere, gentle miss; it is their destiny! *Many a flower is born to blush unseen.*

To tell the truth, the pioneers of progress, a respectable group, passed by here. At the foot of the gigantic rock wall there is an abandoned gold mine; at the base of a green gorge, full of watery voices, there is an abandoned charcoal mine. It appears as though the valley had said to the tireless pioneers: “Do you see? Nothing for you! Leave me alone.” And they went away, nobly. They leave in their wake a silence deeper than before, a peace confident of not being interrupted for centuries and centuries. Because, if some wild poet goes foraging through the valley in search of themes and images, she becomes as unsettled as when hares forage through her gorges and play about on her trails.” Antonio Fogazzaro, *Valsolda*, (Turin: F. Casanova, 1876), x-xii.

but has hitherto refrained from acting on them, out of a strict sense of propriety. Now, however, being with Edith in this strange place causes him to suddenly lose all inhibitions:

Sognava aver trovato una donna simile all'alta idea che portava in mente al di sopra degli opifici, delle macchine, delle ferrovie, de' suoi scolari, de' suoi maestri, della sua fredda scienza. Stimava che quell'incontro, a quarantadue anni, fosse l'ultima offerta della fortuna, e tutta la sua giovinezza inaridita rinverdiva. Aveva presso a che deliberato di parlare a Steinegge prima che a Edith. Nel buio dell'Orrido, stando presso a lei, smarrì il suo sangue freddo, le prese le mani con forza, le parlò e non poté, pel gran fragore, essere inteso. Comprese, prima dalla violenta ripulsa, poi dal volto di lei, quanto l'avesse offesa; comprese troppo tardi come in quel luogo una violenta dichiarazione d'amore potesse venir male interpretata.⁴⁷²⁴⁷³

Ferrieri's violent burst of passion, cut off from its proper meaning by the deafening sound of the water, exemplifies the twofold power the Orrido exerts over human experience: it exposes and it dehumanizes. For the engineer, the trip through the watery caverns amounts to a radical moment of truth because it lays bare his motives in a chaotic and impersonal fashion, without concern for order or understanding. It likewise reduces him to a creature of impulse, bereft of its higher nature. Unbeknownst to Edith (and to Marina, who, at the sight of the mortified Edith, quips that men are "tutti uguali"⁴⁷⁴), Ferrieri's intentions are honorable, and he goes on to redeem his honor in a candid conversation with Steinegge.

The Orrido has a similar expository value for the characters of Marina and Nepo, as these two take their turn braving the trip through the caverns. Nepo is emboldened by the darkness and

⁴⁷² "He began to dream that he had discovered a woman who resembled the lofty ideal which he cherished in a corner of his mind kept apart from artisans, machines, and railroads, apart from his pupils, his instructors, and his cold scientific learning. [He reckoned] that to have this girl thrown [his] way when he was forty-two was Fortune's last offer to him, and all his dried-up youth was revived and renewed within him. He had nearly made up his mind to speak to Steinegge before speaking to Edith. In the darkness of the Orrido, standing at her side, he lost his self-possession, seized her hands forcibly and spoke to her, and what he said [could not be heard on account of] the roar of the water. The violence with which she repelled him, and the expression on her face, made him understand how greatly he had offended her; too late, it dawned upon him how easily, in such a place, a violent declaration of love [could] be misinterpreted."

⁴⁷³ Taken altogether, the amorous misadventures that befall Edith, Marina and their respective companions during the visit to the Orrido seem to offer a critique—if not a parody—of the Stendhalian conception of falling in love (as "crystallization"), which Marina references in her correspondence with Giulia de Bella

⁴⁷⁴ "all alike"

takes the opportunity to fondle Marina, while Marina violently resists him. In this dusky environment, the low visibility and the rushing water's tendency to mute out other sounds draws attention above all to the tactile sense and places a corresponding emphasis on corporeality (as with the image of Marina's "caldo busto stringersi e dilatarsi ansante sotto la...mano [di Nepo]"⁴⁷⁵). Here also, the *Orrido* confers on each character an inhuman appearance reflective of that character's inner being. All Nepo's inner ugliness, including his vanity, arrogance and crude way with women is channeled through the depiction of him as a monstrous creature. With Marina, the fact that she is haunted by a ghostly presence—that of Cecilia—is reflected in the images comparing her to a soul on the banks of the Acheron.

Like with Silla and Nepo, Marina and Edith differ with respect to their perspectives on and experiences with love. The fact that, over the course of the novel, Marina and Edith take turns being Silla's primary love interest suggests that each woman embodies a different pole of his desire. The attraction Silla feels toward Marina is primarily sensual in nature, and as he confesses to Edith, it was never a question of love so much as a question of complimenting his *amour propre*. In the scene where Silla and Marina play chess, a sudden flash of insight occurring to them both simultaneously, suggests that a bond links their destinies together, but links them by a chain of "antagonismo, di inimicizia, nel loro futuro destino"⁴⁷⁶. Notably, Silla forgets about Marina as he gets to know Edith, and his thoughts only drift back to Marina after he senses that Edith has rejected him. As the following account demonstrates, Silla's friendship with Edith is founded on entirely different premises and develops along entirely different lines:

Si conoscevano oramai da oltre sei mesi; si vedevano spesso, non in un freddo salone di ricevimento, ma nella intimità violenta d'una stanza tepida di vita domestica; li univa una

⁴⁷⁵ "warm bosom heaving [breathlessly] beneath [Nepo's] touch"

⁴⁷⁶ "antagonism, of enmity, in their future destiny"

persona cara, benché in diverso grado, ad ambedue. Sin dai primi giorni della loro conoscenza Edith aveva parlato a Silla del Palazzo e dei suoi abitanti. Di Marina, conoscendo tutta la coperta storia delle relazioni loro, gli aveva toccato il meno possibile. Silla s'era ben avvisto di tale studio; né Edith poteva dubitare ch'egli non ne indovinasse la causa. Quel conscio silenzio serviva pure, in qualche modo, di occulto legame tra loro; essendo quasi un accordo ignoto a tutti, stretto senza la parola fra le anime, in argomento d'amore. Simili segreti fra due persone che si stimano e si vedono spesso, congiungono, in sulle prime, con qualche dolcezza; ma poi cresciuta la familiarità, l'amicizia ch'essi aiutano, il silenzio, in luogo di congiungere, divide, quella dolcezza diventa pena, desiderio inquieto; e il desiderio comincia a tradirsi con i discorsi che tentano obliqui l'argomento proibito. Allora come fra due gocce vicine sopra un piano liscio basta il tocco di un capello perché trabocchino l'una nell'altra, così il tocco di una parola sola rompe gli ultimi ritegni alla effusione del cuore e l'amicizia diventa piena. Ma Edith e Silla non parevano vicini a questo punto.⁴⁷⁷

Silla's first contact with Marina occurs by way of an anonymous correspondence, and their relationship develops in an environment of heightened erotic tension. His friendship with Edith, by contrast, develops gradually, within a context that is domestic and familiar. The factors of domesticity and familiarity are significant here because they reinforce the connotation that the relationship is rooted in transference and that Edith serves as a symbolic replacement for Silla's mother (by which extension Steinegge, Edith and Silla come to constellate an unusual oedipal triangle). Beyond the question of transference, Silla's bond with Edith seems to crystallize around two constants: the positive pole of their common regard for Steinegge, and the negative pole of their mutual silence about Marina. Given the content being silenced, the image of the two drops of water on the verge of flowing together recalls the watery scene where Silla and Marina join in a prolonged embrace.

⁴⁷⁷ "They had known one another for six months, and had often met; not in the cold atmosphere of a reception, but in the strong intimacy of a domestic circle; their bond of union was a person dear to both, although in varying degrees. Since the first day they met, Edith had often spoken to Silla about the palace and its inmates. Knowing the secret story of their relations, she had touched as lightly as possible on the subject of Marina. Silla noticed this, and Edith could hardly doubt that he guessed the cause. This [conscious silence served as a kind of hidden link between] them; being almost a silent understanding unknown to others, [an unspoken channel between the souls, proof of love]. Similar secrets between two people who have regard for each other and [see each other often] lead at first to a certain pleasant sympathy; [but] then with the growing familiarity, [the intimacy that they encourage, the silence divides rather than connect, that sympathy becomes irksome, an anxious desire]; and the desire to break through it shows itself in indirect allusions to the forbidden subject. As when two drops of water are close together on a wire, the touch of a single hair will cause them to flow together into one, so the sound of a single word breaks through the last restriction on the friends' true feelings, and the intimacy becomes complete. [But] Edith and Silla did not seem to have approached this stage."

Although Silla and Edith do come to a point in their friendship where they talk about Marina, and the final restrictions on intimacy are lifted, Edith withholds her true feelings from Silla out of concern that they will interfere with her filial duties. Far from opening her heart, she begins to act cold and distant, prompting Silla to seek solace once more in thoughts about Marina. Later, Edith brings her dilemma to Don Innocenzo, who responds with his ideas about a union between kindred souls:

‘Non so di queste cose’ diss'egli commosso ‘ma ho sempre avuta l'idea che invece di un legame di passione, santificato o no, vi possa essere fra due anime veramente nobili, veramente forti, un altro legame d'affetto, santo in se medesimo; un amore, diciamo pure questa parola tanto grande, interamente conforme all'ideale cristiano dell'intima unione fra tutte le anime umane nella loro via verso Dio. Arrivo a dire che non v'è sulla terra niente di più bello di un legame simile, benché il legame coniugale sia sacro ed abbia un significato augusto. Ella vuol fare questo sacrificio a suo padre: sia; ma perché svellersi dal cuore anche la memoria della persona che Le fu cara? Perché rinunciare a un sentimento vivificante che Le fa desiderare il bene temporale ed eterno di questa persona quanto Lei stessa? Perché l'altra persona non potrebbe serbare un sentimento simile verso di Lei, sì che ambedue, sapendo l'uno dell'altro, battessero vie diverse nel mondo e compiessero i propri doveri con questo gran vigore nel segreto dell'anima? Scriva così, scriva così.’⁴⁷⁸

As a qualification for entering into this genre of “legame d'affetto,”⁴⁷⁹ Don Innocenzo asserts that souls must be “veramente nobili”⁴⁸⁰ and “forti,”⁴⁸¹ implying that they must be mutually endowed with spiritual nobility, the particular quality that sets Edith and Silla (and in a different sense, Marina) apart from Nepo. It is important to underline that the idea of a spiritual bond

⁴⁷⁸ “[I know little of such things,’ he said, clearly moved,] ‘but I have always had the idea that instead of a bond of passion, sanctified or not, there might be, between two truly strong and noble natures, another bond, one of affection holy in itself; a love, to use that great word, in perfect conformity with the Christian ideal of the close union of all human souls in their journey towards God. I may observe that there is on earth nothing more lovely than such a union, although the conjugal union is sacred and has a deep significance. You wish to make this sacrifice for your father’s sake; [so be it] - but why root out from your heart even the memory of [who was dear to you]? Why renounce a life-giving sentiment which leads you to desire the temporal and eternal welfare of this person as much as your own? Why should [he not] entertain a similar feeling towards you, so that both, in the knowledge of this mutual feeling, may pursue your different paths in life, and fulfill your respective duties, fortified by the great secret buried in your hearts? Write accordingly, write accordingly.’”

⁴⁷⁹ “bond of affection”

⁴⁸⁰ “truly noble”

⁴⁸¹ “strong”

posited here runs counter to both the sensual bond connoted in Silla's fantasies of and interactions with Marina ("legame di passione"⁴⁸²) and to the bond of marriage ("legame coniugale"⁴⁸³), which, while not to be despised, can be seen perverted toward materialistic ends in the Salvador subplot. In Don Innocenzo's view, Edith's commitment to her father does not mean she must close her heart to Silla, because even if she and Silla embark on different life paths and never see each other again, their souls may nevertheless rejoice in their spiritual proximity as they make their journey back to God. By describing this "intima unione"⁴⁸⁴ in terms of a "segreto dell'anima"⁴⁸⁵—with "segreto" intended in a mystic sense—and by encouraging Edith to open her soul in a letter to Silla, Don Innocenzo seems to recapture the spirit that moved Cesare's correspondence with Mina. Edith follows Don Innocenzo's instructions and forwards this mystic sentiment to Silla in a letter, which he receives on the day following Cesare's death, around the same time he is contemplating suicide.

Although Marina, like Edith, is imbued with spiritual nobility, this ennoblement assumes different connotations in the context of her character. With Edith, spiritual nobility takes on a moral and religious connotation synonymous with Catholic virtue, a virtue outwardly manifested in her attractive appearance. In fact, Edith demonstrates such an exceptional degree of virtue that Don Innocenzo feels humbled in her presence:

⁴⁸² "bond of passion"

⁴⁸³ "marital bond"

⁴⁸⁴ "intimate union"

⁴⁸⁵ "secret of the soul"

Di Steinegge s'era innamorato di slancio; per Edith sentiva, specialmente dopo l'ultima sua lettera, un alto rispetto, misto però di soggezione. La fiducia di uno spirito così nobile lo sgomentava, quasi.⁴⁸⁶⁴⁸⁷

With Marina, on the other hand, the question of spiritual nobility is conflated with sensual and aesthetic considerations, in a manner consistent with her character's Decadent underpinnings.

The question of Marina's true nobility, as reflected in her beauty and intellect, is problematized in the space of her epiphany in Book II.7:

Un pugno d'oro nel viso; ecco le parole del conte; ecco il beneficio. Gratitudine per questo? Le pareva di levarsi da terra in un impeto d'alterezza, di scuotere da sé il denaro immondo, di scuoterlo addosso a Nepo Salvador. Li disprezzava egualmente l'uno e l'altro; li odiava; più dell'uomo, il denaro. Non ne aveva mai sentito come ora il tocco ributtante; era vissuta lungo tempo nel suo splendore senza vederlo, senza voler pensare che la luce intorno a sé fosse luce di una rapida corrente d'oro, versata da mille mani suicide e volgari, portata via da mille altre; e non luce della sua nobiltà, della sua bellezza, del suo genio elegante. V'era bene stata un'eclissi momentanea dopo la morte di suo padre ma più sul volto delle persone che su quello delle cose intorno a lei. Sapeva che nel mondo il denaro è un dio; è voluttuoso sprezzare un dio. Era voluttuoso per lei irritare con le sue freddezze di gran dama la borghesia opulenta, bene aristocratizzata nelle donne, male negli uomini. Pretendeva che a questa gente si vedesse negli occhi e sulla fronte il bagliore dell'oro, che la loro voce avesse un suono metallico, che lo strascico d'ogni signora borghese ripetesse una fila di cifre.⁴⁸⁸

The passage above, detailing Marina's revulsion at the mundane financial arrangements surrounding her betrothal to Nepo and at the corrupting power of gold in general, singles out the

⁴⁸⁶ "He had taken to Steinegge at once; while for Edith he felt, more especially after her last letter, a deep regard, mingled with a sense of inferiority. The confidences of so noble a spirit almost alarmed him."

⁴⁸⁷ This recalls the sense of alarm that Silla experiences in relation to his mother.

⁴⁸⁸ "A handful of gold in her face; that is what the Count's words meant; that was the obligation to be conferred. Gratitude for [this]? She felt as though she were rising haughtily from the ground, scattering from her the polluting gold, scattering it over Nepo Salvador. She despised them both, the one and the other; the gold more than the man. Never had she felt as she did now how its touch defiles. She had lived long in [its] splendor without observing, without caring to reflect that the light around her was the light from a rapid stream of gold, poured out from thousands of soiled and vulgar hands, carried away by thousands of others; and not the light of her own nobility, of her own beauty, of her own elegant mind. True, there had been a momentary eclipse after her father's death, but more in the appearance of the persons than of the things surrounding her. She knew that in this world money is a god; it is a luxury to despise a god. It was a luxury to her to annoy, with the cold reserve of a great lady, the wealthy bourgeoisie, whose women take the aristocratic polish well, the men badly. She imagined that in the eyes and on the brows of those people she could see the glitter of gold, that their voices had a metallic sound; that the rustling silk of each merchant's wife called out the figures of her bank account."

non-material brilliance “della sua nobiltà, della sua bellezza, del suo genio elegante,”⁴⁸⁹ which Marina has just learned to distinguish from the material brilliance “di una rapida corrente d'oro, versata da mille mani suicide e volgari”⁴⁹⁰. The image of Marina rising from the gold and revolting against the money-god echoes the logic of Lucifer’s fall, albeit in reverse, as though to underscore the terrible blow dealt to her pride by the thought of taking Cesare’s dowry. Marina’s hatred of money, her contempt for the haute bourgeoisie and her disgust toward its abject materialism inflame a desire to transcend these mundane surroundings and occupy a more ideal plane of existence. She goes on to articulate this desire in a symbolic sense when she refuses Cesare’s proposal of a dowry, requesting instead that he transfer the corresponding sum directly to Nepo in a deed of gift. With this stipulation, Marina succeeds in subtracting herself, in all her ineffable and unquantifiable radiance, from the world of transactions and quantity exchanges which she deems so vulgar.

The question of Marina’s and Edith’s spiritual nobility may be further elucidated by reviewing the arc of each character’s spiritual and religious development in the novel. Marina’s religious outlook evolves dramatically over the course of her years at the palace. Though not irreligious by nature, she initially lacks firm convictions, subscribing to a vague and decadent mysticism (comprising notions of fate), while refusing to attend Church and viewing the Catholic faith with a mixture of indifference and contempt. As a function of her decadent mindset, moreover, her religious views remain inextricably bound up with considerations of social class, and she envisions the aristocracy practicing a separate religion founded on aesthetic rather than

⁴⁸⁹ “of her own nobility, of her own beauty, of her own elegant mind.”

⁴⁹⁰ “of the light from a rapid stream of gold, poured out from thousands of soiled and vulgar hands, carried away by thousands of others”

moral values⁴⁹¹. The reading of Cecilia's manuscript, then, has the effect of honing Marina's vague mystic sentiment into a perverse, pseudo-Christian religiosity, founded on notions about reincarnation and God's sanctioning human revenge. After receiving these ideas, Marina begins to attend Church, in which context the account of her sensual pose (that of a "tentation pénitente") and the feelings of warmth she experiences in contact with an unknown god further strengthens her character's association with a decadent mysticism.

The arc of Edith's spiritual development differs from that of Marina in two major respects: from the outset, she adheres to a more orthodox strand of Catholicism, and apart from the sense of dogmatic loosening that comes about through her dialogues with Don Innocenzo, she does not undergo a religious awakening, such that the strength of her faith remains static from the time of her arrival at the palace through to the final scene of the novel. On another level, however, the journey that Edith undertakes in the name of her faith is fundamentally similar to Marina's journey, in the sense that both characters respond and commit themselves unflinchingly to vocations centered on redemption. Marina sets out to collect on a symbolic debt by avenging her ancestor and murdering her uncle, while Edith sets out to redeem her father, Steinegge, by steering him back to God. Perhaps it is banal to add that both women also remain virgins, despite prospects to the contrary: Edith turns down Commendatore Ferrieri's proposal of marriage after the trip to the Orrido just as Marina forbids Nepo to touch her (using their betrothal only as a pretense) and fends off Silla's advances on the night of Cesare's death. On the other hand, while lacking carnal knowledge, both women forge intimate but esoteric bonds with Silla, who becomes a source of conflict in their prescribed courses of action. In the end, Silla

⁴⁹¹ Concerning the moral aspect of Marina's religious development, it may also be relevant to consider how, as Ann Caesar observes, the tendency to passivize or impersonalize Marina's actions in the narration of the events leading up to her discovery of the relics works to deflect responsibility away from her character.

stands out against the backdrops of Marina's and Edith's missions like an excess quantity demanding to be reconciled with the greater plan. For Marina, who has failed to convince Silla that he is the reincarnation of Cecilia's lover Renato, the solution is to annihilate him with the residual force of the vendetta. For Edith, who cares for Silla yet remains unswervingly devoted to her father, the solution is to extend her vitalizing spirit to rescue him in an hour of need.

It only becomes known at the end of the novel, in the antepenultimate paragraph, that Edith's letter containing the proposition of a spiritual union carries a redemptive power for Silla:

Intanto nell'ombre sinistre del Palazzo, l'angelo del Guercino pregava senza posa per l'uomo gettato d'un colpo, a tradimento, nell'eternità. La sua vita era stata breve, povera di opere, macchiata di molte segrete miserie e, sulla fine, di errori già misurati dal duro giudizio umano. Tuttavia, egli aveva sostenute virilmente le battaglie dello spirito, cadendo a ogni tratto, ma rialzandosi, ferito, per combattere ancora; aveva amato sino alla febbre e alle lagrime divini fantasmi che non ha la terra, ideali di una vita sublime che intravedeva, tribolato e solo, nel futuro; era passato più volte con amaro cuore ma con fermo viso tra la noncuranza degli uomini e il silenzio di Dio, sentendosi sulla testa l'ombra di un nemico derisore; peggio ancora, sentendosi mal connesso nell'intima sua essenza, afflitto da dolorose contraddizioni, inetto alle opere grandi che vagheggiava, alle piccole che lo premevano, a farsi amare, a vivere; sospinto quindi ogni giorno un passo, dalla violenta malignità delle cose e dalle infermità della propria natura, a qualche paurosa rovina.

Scoprendogli il volto lo si sarebbe veduto placido. Forse lo spirito, deposti gli uffici del moto e del senso, sciolto da ogni legame vitale, vi posava ancora tranquillo; come chi è sul punto di lasciar per sempre, dopo lungo soggiorno, una casa onde pur desiderava partirsi, che sta sulla soglia contento, ma senza rancori ormai né impazienze, anzi con un'ombra di pietà per le camere chiuse, abbandonate al silenzio. Sapeva di andare alla pace, al sospirato riposo; e sapeva pure, nella chiara visione appena incominciata per esso, di essere finalmente amato, secondo i suoi sogni della vita terrestre, da un cuore tenero e forte che gli sarebbe fedele senza fine. Sulla faccia opposta di tante cose che guardate da questo nostro lato della morte gli eran parse iniquamente scure, ammirava un ordinato disegno, una luce di bontà e di sapienza.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹²“Meanwhile, in the dark shadows of the [palace], the angel by Guercino prayed unceasingly for the man flung suddenly, treacherously, into eternity. His life had been brief, [lacking in works], darkened by much secret anguish, and, at the close, by sins already condemned by the stern judgment of his fellow-men. Yet he had fought a manly fight [in the battles of the spirit], falling every now and again, but rising once more, wounded, to renew the contest,- he had loved feverishly, with tears, divine phantoms unknown to this world, ideals of a life sublime, which he, lonely sufferer, divined in the future,’ he had passed along with head erect, amidst the neglect of his fellows and the silence of his God, overshadowed by a derisive foe; [worse still, feeling badly connected in his intimate being], torn by conflicting impulses, [unfit] for the great tasks which he dreamed of, to the! small ones which pressed upon him: to make himself loved, to live! Thus, each day he was urged on, by the malignity of fate and the weakness of his nature, towards his ruin.

Had one uncovered his face, it was calm. Perhaps the spirit which had been freed from sense and motion and the bonds of life was now at rest there,’ like one who is about to leave, after long sojourn, a house which he desired to quit, and who stands at the threshold, happy indeed, but free from rancor, even with some shadow of regret for the deserted, silent rooms. He knew that he was [headed for peace], going to his longed-for rest; and he knew also, in that clearness of vision to which he was now attaining,

This flash of optimism, emanating from the idea that Silla has left the world “finalmente amato, secondo i suoi sogni della vita terrestre”⁴⁹³ and propitiated by Edith’s words toward a redemption of sorts, leads me back to the original premises of my argument in this section, regarding the autobiographical significance of the novel’s protagonists. The fact that, of the two characters most modeled closely on aspects of Fogazzaro’s personality from the time prior to his return to the Catholic faith in 1874, Silla is condemned to death and Marina is consigned to an uncertain fate somewhere between death and mythification, suggests possibilities not only for interpreting the novel’s ending, but for understanding the author’s own spiritual dynamics and the obstacles overcome.

I will thus conclude this section with a tentative sketch of how the different aspects of the novel come together to produce a message about the Fogazzaro’s spiritual development. I will start by identifying the young Fogazzaro with the protagonist Corrado Silla, based on Laura Wittman’s observation that “Fogazzaro accoglie dunque non solo nel suo romanzo ma nella voce di Silla sia un impulso mistico-decadente che la sua critica (e non una critica cattolica conservatrice), mostrando come essi coesistano nella stessa persona”⁴⁹⁴⁴⁹⁵. While these conflicting impulses are shown to coexist in the person of Silla, they are further cemented through the mystic ties which bind Silla to Marina and later, to Edith. In such a way, Marina comes to embody the realization of the author’s mystico-decadent impulse, along with the

that he was loved at last, in accordance with his dreams on earth, by a strong, tender heart, which would be true to him to the end. In the light beyond the grave, the injustice of this world yielded place to a vision of order and benevolence and wisdom.”

⁴⁹³ “was loved at last, in accordance with his dreams on earth”

⁴⁹⁴ “Fogazzaro thus gathers not only in the novel but in the voice of Silla a mystico-decadent impulse, along with a critique of that impulse (and not a conservative Catholic critique), showing how the two ideas coexist in the same person.”

⁴⁹⁵ Wittman, “Fogazzaro tra occultismo e modernismo,” 264.

fascination that characterizes it, while Edith embodies an increasingly liberal Catholic critique of the same impulse. It should be noted that in Book IV, Edith's religious thinking expands through her contact with Don Innocenzo (who serves to expound the ideal vision of Catholicism that Fogazzaro held at the time of the writing) in a way which does not diminish her exemplary display of Catholic piety but which enables her to overcome her diffidence toward Silla in time to offer him a crucial lifeline.

Within this framework, the death of Silla qua literary embodiment of the pre-1874 Fogazzaro signifies the transcendence of the dialectic inherent to his character (that is, the struggle between ideal and sense, for which he feels "mal connesso nell'intima sua essenza, afflitto da dolorose contraddizioni,"⁴⁹⁶ though it is asserted that "egli aveva sostenute virilmente le battaglie dello spirito, cadendo a ogni tratto, ma rialzandosi, ferito, per combattere ancora; aveva amato sino alla febbre e alle lagrime divini fantasmi che non ha la terra, ideali di una vita sublime che intravedeva, tribolato e solo, nel futuro"⁴⁹⁷). The reconciliation of the opposing impulses is foregrounded by a pair of complementary movements in the text: Edith's redemptive gesture (objectified in her letter which allows Silla "di essere finalmente amato, secondo i suoi sogni della vita terrestre,"⁴⁹⁸ and thus saves his spirit from the abyss) and the destruction of Silla's body by Marina, which counteracts the problem of sensuality through the negation of the flesh itself. Finally, the image of Silla crossing the threshold from a world of strife and disorder into a world of order and serenity reflects the author's rebirth in the Catholic faith, through a

⁴⁹⁶ "[badly connected in his intimate being], torn by conflicting impulses"

⁴⁹⁷ "Yet he had fought a manly fight, falling every now and again, but rising once more, wounded, to renew the contest, - he had loved feverishly, with tears, divine phantoms unknown to this world, ideals of a life sublime, which he, lonely sufferer, divined in the future"

⁴⁹⁸ "[of being] loved at last, in accordance with his dreams on earth"

more modern channel, as it occurred in 1874 with his reading of Gratry's *La philosophie du credo*.

Part III: *Malombra*'s Universe of Ideas

In this chapter, I set out to show the various ways the representation of the Double in Fogazzaro's *Malombra* overlaps and intersects with the representations of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Verga. From there, I will examine generic elements and signifiers from the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Verga that also appear in *Malombra*, and seek to establish the significance of those elements relative to the theme of the Double. This comparative analysis will shed light on three interrelated frameworks for interpreting the Double in Fogazzaro's text: as a site of metadiscursive (and metanarrative) and historical consciousness (cf. *Le storie del castello di Trezza*), as a platform for expressing the problem of a divided consciousness or psyche (cf. *Uno spirito in un lampone* and *Due anime in un corpo*), and as a platform for the more general problematization and deconstruction of identity (cf. *Due anime in un corpo*). I will begin my analysis here by considering certain themes and subthemes that also occur in one or more of the intertexts.

One prominent subtheme which links *Malombra* to *Uno spirito in un lampone* and *Due anime in un corpo* is the idea of metempsychosis, configured in terms of the protagonist's experience with spiritual possession. In *Uno spirito in un lampone*, spiritual possession is posited as the literal cause of the Baron's extreme and paradoxical subjectivity, while in *Due anime in un corpo* and *Malombra*, the question of supernatural causality is permanently shrouded in narrative silence. The experience of possession in *Uno spirito in un lampone*, represented according to the codes of body fiction, is shown to come about through an act of devouring: a spirit enters the body of the Baron of B. when he ingests some wild raspberries, commandeers his body to render justice on a worldly matter and departs from the Baron's body afterward by way of regurgitation. An additional consideration in the Baron's case is that the spirit that invades his body—the spirit

of Clara, the murdered chambermaid—opposes the Baron in terms of both gender and social rank.

By contrast with Tarchetti's representation, which lays as much emphasis on the corporeal implications of the possession as it does on the implications of the possession for the higher faculties, the representation of Marcello's possession in *Due anime in un corpo* focuses almost exclusively on the intellectual, sentimental and spiritual consequences of the experience. At an early point in De Marchi's novella, Marcello characterizes the ontological repercussions of tending to his ailing friend Lucini, as the latter crossed over the threshold of death, in terms of a soul-exchange: he felt as though part of his soul died with his friend, Lucini, and that part of Lucini's soul lived on in him. With the body fiction component, largely absent from De Marchi's depiction, the pairing of Marcello with Lucini could ultimately be read as a metaphor for Marcello's journey to overcome a life transition and solidify his identity, namely, by exploring the world from a perspective radically different from his own. Regarding this radical difference in perspective, it bears mentioning that unlike with the Baron and Clara, Marcello and Lucini are similarly gendered, although they do occupy different positions on the social spectrum.

Another important factor that distinguishes Tarchetti's approach to the theme of spiritual possession from De Marchi's is the nature of the relationship that develops between the indwelling spirits or souls and the consequences of this relationship for the position of the subject vis-à-vis the events narrated. In *Uno spirito in un lampone*, at least prior to the moment where the two spirits join in a mystic fusion, the Baron's consciousness remains clearly demarcated from that of Clara, and the two spirits interact in an adversarial fashion. Moreover, insofar as the entire adventure is narrativized under the aegis of the Baron's identity, the Baron, by default, persists in the position of self while Clara persists in the position of the other. In *Due*

anime in un corpo, by contrast, the narrator's tendency to distribute the "I" of the enunciation between two distinct subjects—Marcello and Lucini—creates a stronger impression of decentered subjectivity in the narration. This narrative technique proves effective for conveying the idea that while at times the souls become polarized, they generally tend to cooperate, divide their labor and strike an inner balance as they work to elucidate the circumstances behind Lucini's murder.

In *Malombra*, the representation of Marina's possession by the spirit of Cecilia reflects elements in common with the representations of Tarchetti and De Marchi, while at the same time investing the theme with new layers of complexity. According to one version of events, Marina becomes possessed by the spirit of her ancestor, Cecilia, after discovering and reading a secret manuscript. Marina's thought-processes at the time of the discovery, when her body is supposedly invaded by the unknown entity, are rendered in careful detail (much as they are for the Baron, only on a vaster scale). In the space of reflection opened around the discovery of the relics, Marina, whose judgment is impaired due to her experience of déjà vu earlier in the evening, does not report symptoms of a physical or intellectual transformation, but instead begins to interrogate herself on each claim raised by the manuscript. From there, the process whereby Cecilia actually comes to supplant Marina is depicted gradually and in ambiguous terms over the course of the novel, without ever being delineated as explicitly as the scenarios of Tarchetti and De Marchi.

There is a similar moral exigency propelling the metempsychotic adventures in *Uno spirito in un lampone*, *Due anime in un corpo* and *Malombra*, with the qualification that in the first two texts, this exigency concerns human justice, while in the third text, it concerns extrajudicial revenge. Whereas Clara and Lucini reach out from beyond the grave to solve their

own murders and bring their murderers to justice in accordance with the law in place, Cecilia reaches out through Marina to redress a decades-old inequity, referred to by Commendatore Vezza as a “slow form of legal homicide,” in accordance with an archaic code of *lex talionis*. A review of the penalties handed down in each case should suffice to illustrate the relative severity of Cecilia’s judgment against the d’Ormengo family: for the murder of Clara, the guardaboschi is sentenced to twelve years’ hard labor; for a vast array of crimes culminating in filicide, Il Sultano is handed a fairly light sentence with a fair outlook for his personal redemption (as provided for under the Manzonian moral system which operates generally in the text); for his father’s heinous, albeit legal, act of imprisoning his first wife, Cesare is condemned to a slow and agonizing death. Ultimately, Cecilia’s metempsychotic agenda proves subversive because rather than shed light on an unsolved crime and help enact justice within the parameters set by the law, it redresses a deed that was technically legal but morally abhorrent in a manner which transgresses the law. This propensity for subversion also prevents Marina’s situation from resolving itself, in the sense that, once her mission is accomplished, rather than be exorcised, like Clara, or assimilated, like Lucini, Cecilia continues to displace Marina’s personality and absconds with her body across the lake.

For the specific imagery used to convey the mechanics of spiritual possession, Fogazzaro, like De Marchi, tends to eschew the grotesque connotations of body fiction, while at the same time relying on corporeal metaphors to translate the ineffable movements of the spirit. One image which is accorded literal significance by Tarchetti, only to be taken up again by De Marchi and Fogazzaro under increasingly figurative auspices, envisions the spirit moving against or around the bones. In all three texts, this imagery, with its biblical overtones, is appointed to

denote the invasion by the foreign spirit or soul. In Tarchetti's text, one encounters it in the description of the unknown quantity putting pressure on the Baron's cranium:

“Non è possibile, sento nel cervello qualche cosa che si è disorganizzato, cioè... dirò meglio... è organizzato diversamente da prima... qualche cosa di superfluo, di esuberante; una cosa che vuol farsi posto nella testa, che non fa male, ma che pure spinge, urta in modo assai penoso le pareti del cranio...”⁴⁹⁹

De Marchi also refers to a physical sensation—although a vaguer one—connected with the skeletal system when he describes Marcello's experience of a “brivido, che filtra nelle ossa”⁵⁰⁰:

Chi abbia vegliato appena due o tre notti di fila presso un malato e, senza scostarsi dal letto, se l'abbia veduto mancare a oncia a oncia fino all'ultimo, quando torna fra la gente, sente in modo molto confuso di non essere tutto quello di prima; un po' di noi se ne va, credo, col morto, e un po' di lui resta in noi, insieme a quel brivido, che filtra nelle ossa e a quei cerchi giallognoli, che fluttuano nelle pupille.⁵⁰¹

This skeletal imagery appears again in Fogazzaro's depiction of the spirit invading Marina, where it is transposed onto a metaphorical grid⁵⁰²:

La sua forte intelligenza e la sua volontà, chiuse nel cervello, fatto intorno a sé un gran silenzio, combattevano il fantasma uscito dallo stipo aperto davanti alla graziosa persona col truce proposito d'infiltrarlesi nel sangue, di avvinghiarlesi alle ossa, di suggerle la vita e l'anima per mettersi al loro posto...⁵⁰³

It may be added that Fogazzaro's mode of depicting the invasion by Cecilia's spirit incorporates sinister and violent connotations not found in the representations of Tarchetti and De Marchi.

⁴⁹⁹ “...it is organized differently than before ... there is something superfluous, overflowing, something that aims to make room for itself in my head. It is not harmful, but it nonetheless pushes, knocks very painfully against the wall of my skull...”

⁵⁰⁰ “shiver that we feel passing through our bones”

⁵⁰¹ “Anyone who has sat up for two or three nights straight with a sick person, without leaving that person's bedside, and watched that person go, ounce by ounce, up to the last, will, in returning to the world, get the strange sense that he is not quite the same as before; I think a part of us goes with the dead and a part of the dead remains in us, along with that shiver that we feel passing through our bones and those yellowish circles which fluctuate in our pupils.”

⁵⁰² The representation is metaphorical; Fogazzaro did entertain the possibility that parapsychological phenomena, including phenomena of suggestion, have a spiritual basis.

⁵⁰³ “Her strong will, her powerful intelligence alone, amid the dismal silence of the room, fought with the hideous [ghost] that had seized on her young life and now sought to [infiltrate] her blood, [clasp onto her bones] and [suck out her life and soul], with a view to replacing her identity with its own.”

Also on the subject of spiritualistic phenomena, the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Fogazzaro are linked by the common tendency to represent two characters as soul-mates, which in the texts of Tarchetti and Fogazzaro is accompanied by the proposition of two kindred or complementary spirits coming together to forge a higher unity. In *Uno spirito in un lampone*, this idea is realized with the fusion that takes place between the spirits of the Baron and Clara:

E delle nuove memorie si suscitavano nella sua anima; erano memorie doppie, cioè le rimembranze delle impressioni che uno stesso fatto lascia in due spiriti diversi, ed egli accoglieva in sé tutte e due queste impressioni. Tali rimembranze però non erano simili a quelle che aveva già evocato sotto la pergola; quelle erano semplici, queste complesse; quelle lasciavano vuota, neutrale, giudice una parte dell'anima; queste l'occupavano tutta: e siccome erano rimembranze di amore, egli comprese in quel momento che cosa fosse la grande unità, l'immensa complessività dell'amore, il quale essendo nelle leggi inesorabili della vita un sentimento diviso fra due, non può essere compreso da ciascuno che per metà. Era la fusione piena e completa di due spiriti, fusione di cui l'amore non è che una aspirazione, e le dolcezze dell'amore un'ombra, un'eco, un sogno di quelle dolcezze. Né potrei esprimere meno confusamente lo stato singolare in cui egli si trovava.⁵⁰⁴

In *Malombra*, a proposition like the one realized in the passage above may be found in Don Innocenzo's idea of a bond between noble souls on their journey back to god:

'Non so di queste cose' diss'egli commosso 'ma ho sempre avuta l'idea che invece di un legame di passione, santificato o no, vi possa essere fra due anime veramente nobili, veramente forti, un altro legame d'affetto, santo in se medesimo; un amore, diciamo pure questa parola tanto grande, interamente conforme all'ideale cristiano dell'intima unione fra tutte le anime umane nella loro via verso Dio. Arrivo a dire che non v'è sulla terra niente di più bello di un legame simile, benché il legame coniugale sia sacro ed abbia un significato augusto. Ella vuol fare questo sacrificio a suo padre: sia; ma perché svellersi dal cuore anche la memoria della persona che Le fu cara? Perché rinunciare a un sentimento vivificante che Le fa desiderare il bene temporale ed eterno di questa persona quanto Lei stessa? Perché l'altra persona non potrebbe serbare un sentimento simile verso di Lei, sì che ambedue, sapendo l'uno dell'altro, battessero vie diverse nel mondo e

⁵⁰⁴ "And new memories were aroused in his soul; they were double memories – that is, recollections of impressions that the same event leaves the two different spirits - and he welcomed both sorts of impressions in himself. Yet these recollections were not like the ones that had already been evoked under the trellis: those were simple, these complex; those left a part of his soul empty, neutral, impartial; these occupied it totally. And since they were memories of love, at that moment he understood the great unity, the immense inclusiveness of love, which, since the inexorable law make it a sentiment divided in two, can be comprehended only partially by any one person. It was the full and complete fusion of two spirits, a fusion towards which love is only an aspiration the delights of love no more than a shadow, an echo, a dream of those delights. Nor can I express with less confusion the singular state in which he found himself."

compiessero i propri doveri con questo gran vigore nel segreto dell'anima? Scriva così, scriva così.⁵⁰⁵

While it could be said that *Uno spirito in un lampone*, *Due anime in un corpo* and in one of its aspects, *Malombra*, develop the theme of the Double primarily within the framework of the spiritualist discourse, each text also enters dialogue with the rational-positivist episteme by staging some type of inquiry into the protagonist's mental state and positing madness as a possible alternative to the irrational premise of spiritual possession. In Tarchetti's text, where the activity of the supernatural is ultimately disclosed, the Baron briefly questions his own sanity (exclaiming: "io sono impazzito, io sono impazzito"⁵⁰⁶), although this questioning amounts to little more than a rhetorical gesture. Conversely, in the texts of De Marchi and Fogazzaro⁵⁰⁷, questions about the protagonist's state of mind play a central role in the story, and as I have already noted, these matters remain a source of interpretive ambiguity. In *Due anime in un corpo*, Marcello's mental state is called into question after the judge asks his name and he responds that he is "un'anima doppia"⁵⁰⁸⁵⁰⁹. When Marcello's lawyer hears this ludicrous-sounding claim, he requests that the trial be postponed—a request the judge proceeds to grant—

⁵⁰⁵ "[I know little of such things,' he said, clearly moved,] 'but I have always had the idea that instead of a bond of passion, sanctified or not, there might be, between two truly strong and noble natures, another bond, one of affection holy in itself; a love, to use that great word, in perfect conformity with the Christian ideal of the close union of all human souls in their journey towards God. I may observe that there is on earth nothing more lovely than such a union, although the conjugal union is sacred and has a deep significance. You wish to make this sacrifice for your father's sake; [so be it] - but why root out from your heart even the memory of [who was dear to you]? Why renounce a life-giving sentiment which leads you to desire the temporal and eternal welfare of this person as much as your own? Why should [he not] entertain a similar feeling towards you, so that both, in the knowledge of this mutual feeling, may pursue your different paths in life, and fulfill your respective duties, fortified by the great secret buried in your hearts? Write accordingly, write accordingly.'"

⁵⁰⁶ "I've gone mad, I've gone mad!"

⁵⁰⁷ Fogazzaro tends to view the workings of the unconscious, which in the rationalist epistemology constitute the realm of depth psychology and psychoanalysis, as the domain of the spirit.

⁵⁰⁸ "a double soul"

⁵⁰⁹ When asked to give the name of his father, Marcello replies: "L'uno Graziano Marcelli, e l'altro non lo conosco che di vista, perchè in me sono due anime, due principii equipollenti" [One is Graziano Marcelli, and the other I only know by sight, because there are two souls inside me, two equipollent principles].

on the grounds that Marcello is “febricitante e non sa quel che si dice”⁵¹⁰. The reporter’s note, “l’ accusato sorride stupidamente,”⁵¹¹ and Marcello’s apparent non sequitur (“non lo so. *Cogito ergo sum.*”⁵¹²) reinforce the outward perception that he is delirious at the time of the hearing. In *Malombra*, finally, observations about Marina’s physical and mental health are put forth, both in opposition to and in conjunction with spiritualist propositions, thus offering alternative modes of accounting for her situation.

Tarchetti, De Marchi and Fogazzaro rely on some common trends in representing the technical aspects of the Double experience, and in particular, its implications for the faculties of cognition, memory and perception. Both Tarchetti and Fogazzaro stress the factor of mental confusion in relation to the onset of the experience. Tarchetti offers the following account of the disorder that enters the Baron’s thinking a half-hour after he consumes the berries:

“Vediamo, riordiniamo le nostre idee... Le nostre idee! Sì, perfettamente...perché sento che queste idee non sono tutte mie. Però... è presto detto riordinarle! Non è possibile, sento nel cervello qualche cosa che si è disorganizzato, cioè... dirò meglio... che si è organizzato diversamente da prima... qualche cosa di superfluo, di esuberante...”⁵¹³

Fogazzaro, for his part, illustrates by way of the following metaphor (referenced more than once in this dissertation), Marina’s state of agitation in the hours leading up to the discovery of the manuscript:

In altri momenti lo scetticismo che Marina teneva dall'uso del mondo non l'avrebbe nemmeno lasciata accostare da qualsiasi fantasma; ma quel sottile velo di scetticismo che copriva sempre il

⁵¹⁰ “Is febrile and does not know what he is saying”

⁵¹¹ “the accused smiles stupidly”

⁵¹² “I don’t know. I think therefore I am.”

⁵¹³ “... Let us see, let us reorganize our thoughts ... Our thoughts?! Yes, of course . . . because I feel as if these ideas are not all mine. Yet ... reorganizing them is sooner said than done! It is impossible; in other words, I feel something disorganized in my brain ... I shall be more precise ... it is organized differently than before ... there is something superfluous...”

pensiero in tempo di calma come una crittogama di acque stagnanti, si era squarciato e disperso nell'incomprensibile turbamento di spirito che l'aveva assalita tornando al Palazzo.⁵¹⁴

Of the three texts in discussion, *Uno spirito in un lampone* provides the most comprehensive account of the impact of split-consciousness on sensory experience. For the Baron, a duplicative effect initially characterized with respect to the visual sense (“vedeali come se vi fossero in lui due persone che guardassero per gli stessi occhi”⁵¹⁵⁵¹⁶) is described as spreading to the rest of the sensorium (“e questa strana duplicità incominciò da quel momento ad estendersi su tutti i suoi sensi; vedeva doppio, sentiva doppio, toccava doppio...”⁵¹⁷), with the result that every sensory event is registered twice, or in a twofold manner. De Marchi and Fogazzaro, who, by comparison with Tarchetti, tend to eschew these sorts of technical descriptions which anatomize the experience, nevertheless accord the eyes (whether as instruments for seeing or as objects to be seen) a central place in their representations. In *Due anime in un corpo*, one encounters the following description of Marcello’s experience with double-vision:

⁵¹⁴ “Her strong will, her powerful intelligence alone, amid the dismal silence of the room, fought with the hideous [ghost] that had seized on her young life and now sought to [infiltrate] her blood, [clasp onto her bones] and [suck out her life and soul], with a view to replacing her identity with its own.

At other times Marina’s worldly-wise skepticism would have prevented her from even allowing herself to be approached by any [ghost] from the other world; but that this veil of skepticism, which usually masked her thoughts like a [poisonous weed] upon a stagnant pool, had been broken up and dispersed by the strange anguish of mind into which she had been thrown as she returned to the palace.”

⁵¹⁵ “He saw them as though there were two people inside him looking out the same eyes”

⁵¹⁶ As Todorov observes, it is a characteristic of fantastic discourse for seemingly irrational or supernatural occurrences to be introduced through the literalization of figurative expressions: hence, the play on the “modo di dire più comune, non li vedeva più cogli stessi occhi.” The metaphor of seeing the world through different eyes (from a different perspective) serves as a mainspring for the other themes in the tale, which may be classed among what Todorov calls “les thèmes du je” (I/ego-themes). Concerning the other texts analyzed in this dissertation, *Le leggende del castello nero* also engages with “les thèmes du je,” whereas the first legend in *Le storie del castello di Trezza* engages with “les thèmes du tu” (you/object-themes). With *Due anime in un corpo* and *Malombra*, it has been my position that while these texts appropriate signifiers from the register of the fantastic, they do not, properly speaking, constitute fantastic tales.

⁵¹⁷ “The strange doubleness spread to all his senses; he saw double, heard double, touched double...”

Non solo, ma in me avveniva anche un conflitto fra due anime, che cercavano farsi posto, e alle quali la respirazione comune quasi non bastava più; le cose mi apparivano doppie, come se per ciascuno degli occhi guardasse un'anima diversa.⁵¹⁸

De Marchi also employs eye-imagery in the initial description of the soul-exchange between Marcello and Lucini, where the yellowish circles in Marcello's pupils are given as an outward sign of the profound alteration taking place within his being. The notion that Marcello's eyes should bear witness to this ontological transformation suggests parallels with the description of Marina, whose eyes are mentioned repeatedly to account for the change in her expression following the discovery of Cecilia's relics:

Era pallida, aveva gli occhi assai più grandi del solito e velati da un languore attonito. Si sarebbe detto che il vento dovesse curvarla come un sottile getto di acqua. Il vigore e la bellezza tornarono rapidamente, ma un osservatore attento avrebbe notato che l'espressione di quella fisionomia era mutata. Tutte le linee apparivano più decise; l'occhio aveva tratto tratto degli stupori insoliti, oppure un fuoco triste che non gli si era mai veduto.^{519 520}

The representations of Tarchetti and Fogazzaro both problematize the relationship between split-consciousness or double-existence for memory, although each text has its unique way of framing the problem. In *Uno spirito in un lampono*, Tarchetti envisions two discrete rolls of memory, unwinding concurrently in the Baron's consciousness (relative to two discrete centers of cognition and judgment). Unlike other literary representations of split-consciousness phenomena, where a character is shown alternating between two states of consciousness, and the two states of consciousness are separated by a memory gap, Tarchetti's tale envisions a scenario in which a character experiences two states of consciousness simultaneously, and by

⁵¹⁸“Not only that, but taking place inside me there was a conflict between two souls, which were trying to find their place, and for which breathing in common was almost no longer enough; things appeared double to me, as though I had a different soul looking out each eye.”

⁵¹⁹ Her face was pale, the pupils of her eyes were enlarged, and had a languorous and yet startled expression. She looked so fragile that one expected the wind to bend her form as it does a tiny jet of water from a fountain. Her vigor and her beauty soon returned, but a close observer could see that the expression of her face was changed. All the lines appeared sharper; her eyes had at times an unwonted dullness, or else a [sad] fire [unseen before now].

⁵²⁰ Cf. the description of Violante with “occhi ardenti e foschi” [eyes burning and sombre] in *Le storie del castello di Trezza*.

consequence, poses a form of thought-experiment for the reader. In *Malombra*, too, the relationship between Marina's double-existence and the question of memory is a site of paradox and contradiction. In the first place, the text proposes two contradictory accounts to explain the reincarnation of Cecilia in Marina's body. According to the theory of reincarnation outlined in Cecilia's manuscript, Cecilia's spirit would not have entered Marina's body at the time of the reading, but rather at the time of Marina's birth (hence Cecilia's exhortation to compare the hair and glove, based on the supposition that the form she will bear in her second existence will appear identical to her first incarnation). In this sense, by furnishing a host of details about her previous existence, the manuscript is intended to trigger an anamnesis. Later, in the scene where Marina confronts Silla with details about their lives as Cecilia and Renato, Marina acts as though she truly remembers these experiences (although she does not produce any additional recollections and remains fixated on the precise set of facts recorded by her ancestor). The fact that she neither produces additional recollections, which could certify an authentic connection to the experience, nor blatantly confabulates, creates the impression that Marina is operating under the influence of the manuscript itself, and that her "memories" are strictly the product of suggestion.

At the linguistic level, another technique that makes itself felt across the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Fogazzaro involves the play between first- and third-person modes of reference or address, as a means of undermining the sense of coherence in the subjectivity of a given character. In Tarchetti's tale, this technique may be observed in two of the utterances which the Baron produces while under the influence of Clara's spirit. The first is found in the scene where the Baron asks the servant, Francesco, "come sta il nostro barone?"⁵²¹ despite

⁵²¹ "How is our Baron?"

knowing “benissimo di essere egli il barone”⁵²². In this sequence, the contradiction between the “I” of the statement (which takes the Baron as an object) and the ego of the Baron’s conscious reflection is indicative of the fact that unconsciously, he identifies with the person of Clara. The second is when the Baron, upon reaching his chambers in the upper part of the castle, calls out, “Barone, vengo a dormire con lei;”⁵²³ here, the implications are fundamentally the same as with the first instance, with the exception that in this case, the utterance consists of direct address.

With respect to similar effects in *Due anime in un corpo*, I have noted how the pattern of reference engrained into the structure of the narrative itself creates the impression, on the most fundamental level, of a subject split between two centers of action and volition. In addition to using the pronoun “I” to recount his adventures, Marcello-the-narrator refers to his narrated self as either “Marcello” or “Lucini,” depending on which personality claims agency in the moment narrated. Finally, in *Malombra*, a linguistic phenomenon that exposes discontinuities in Marina’s subjective status are observable in the dinner banquet scene, toward the end of the novel. At the climax of that scene, Marina, who has been acting in the name of Cecilia, stands up and issues the following proclamation:

Sessant'anni or sono, il padre di quel morto là (all'appuntò l'indice all'ala del Palazzo) ha chiuso qui dentro come un lupo idrofobo la sua prima moglie, l'ha fatta morire fibra a fibra. Questa donna è tornata dal sepolcro a vendicarsi della maledetta razza che ha comandato qui fino a stanotte!⁵²⁴

⁵²² “he knew full well he was the Baron”

⁵²³ “Baron, I am coming to sleep with you”

⁵²⁴ ““Sixty years ago, the father of the dead man there (she pointed with her forefinger towards the wing of the palace) imprisoned in this house, like a [rabid wolf], his first wife, and did her to death by inches. This woman has returned from the tomb to avenge herself on the accursed race which has commanded here until tonight!””

Having pronounced these words, Marina charges into the hall where Silla has been working and casually utters the phrase “bon voyage,” before shooting him dead. Altogether, this sequence of utterances calls into evidence two disruptions in Marina’s subjectivity. First, the fact that Marina refers to Cecilia in the third-person, as “la sua prima moglie”⁵²⁵ and “questa donna,”⁵²⁶ indicates a break from her earlier statements spoken in the first-person but issued in Cecilia’s name. The gesture whereby Marina distances herself from the specific identities of Cecilia and Marina and adopts an impersonal mode of reference, imbues her words with a sort of apocalyptic gravitas, which renders even more striking the contrast with the subsequent utterance, “bon voyage.” Regarding these final words, the fact that they consist of a trivial French expression suggests that despite the “dramma sovrumano”⁵²⁷ unfolding all around, the subject behind the utterance is neither the impersonal voice of history nor Cecilia reborn, but rather Marina qua the heroine of the French Romantic or Symbolist novel^{528 529}.

So far, my analysis has focused almost exclusively on the theme of the Double as it relates to the adventures of the protagonists in the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Fogazzaro. I

⁵²⁵ “his first wife”

⁵²⁶ “this woman”

⁵²⁷ “superhuman drama”

⁵²⁸ In this context, there is another important distinction to be drawn between the circumstances of the two murders that Marina commits. During the sequence of Cesare’s murder, from the delivery of the initial shock (via suggestion) to the deathbed harangue, Marina remains entrenched in the habitus of Cecilia. Cesare’s death by a verbal attack, with its animistic undertones, anticipates the representation of Marina in the banquet scene, where she appears to command the forces of nature; it also recalls the final scene of *Le storie del castello di Trezza*, where the lovers are exposed and sent plummeting into the abyss at the mere mention of Matilde’s name. In turn, the sequence of Silla’s murder, initiated by Marina with the casual sendoff “bon voyage,” signals a reversion back to the habitus of Marina qua the product of Parisian high society, and a demystification of the circumstances surrounding Cesare’s killing. Relative to the *kairos* of that event, this second murder, which requires the mundane use of a pistol (a pistol gifted to Marina by her father, whose sudden death from an aneurysm foreshadows Cesare’s death from a stroke) seems to come about as an afterthought, as an intrusion of reality into the “dramma sovrumano.”

⁵²⁹ Marina’s harangue of Cesare suggests parallels with the scene at the end of *Uno spirito in un lampone* where the Baron publicly accuses the guardaboschi of Clara’s murder. Both scenarios revolve around speech acts, aimed at verbalizing a hidden or forgotten injustice and making it present to consciousness; they both involve a decentering of the “I,” with Marina haranguing Cesare in Cecilia’s name and the Baron denouncing the guardaboschi in Clara’s name; and they are both punctuated by spectacles of violence—Marina’s words induce a stroke for Cesare and the Baron’s cry of “il mio assassino” [my murderer] causes the guardaboschi to faint—underscoring the radical nature of the articulation.

would now like to examine the implications of this theme for secondary characters as well as for the plot at large. From this point of view, a type of situation that warrants special consideration—given that it occurs in virtually every kind of fiction and serves as the mainspring for both comedy and tragedy—is that of mistaken identity (and quidproquo). *Due anime in un corpo* contains numerous instances of mistaken identity, ranging from incidents that carry serious consequences to hijinks calculated for a comic effect. Two examples of the more serious type, which also prove consequential from the point of view of the plot, are Marcello’s decision to impersonate the dead Lucini and Il Sultano’s subsequent attempt to frame Marcello for Lucini’s murder. To counterbalance these serious intrigues, De Marchi also weaves in lighter episodes, such as the matter of Gioconda Tanelli, the woman whom Marcello is erroneously believed to have slighted by proposing marriage and then breaking off the engagement. Already at the beginning of the novella, Marcello finds himself embroiled in a neighborhood scandal because of Gioconda’s allegations that he whispered to her “paroline graziose,”⁵³⁰ including a promise of marriage. Later, during Marcello’s trial, it comes out that the promise had been made in earnest by Pietro Manganelli, whom, in the daily hustle and bustle, Gioconda mistook for Marcello. A parenthetical note inserted into the trial transcript stresses the comic implications of the incident, stating that “la tragedia per poco non si muta in commedia”^{531 532}.

Both *Uno spirito in un lampone* and *Malombra* feature repeated depictions of a certain type of mistaken identity phenomenon, focused on the subjective experience of dubious recognition, or in so many words, double-take. This phenomenon occurs at the border of

⁵³⁰ “sweet talk”

⁵³¹ “the tragedy narrowly avoided becoming a comedy”

⁵³² This error, of course, strains credulity and as Marcello remarks, “io credo invece che la barbolina non fosse in buona fede” [For my part, I believe that woman was not acting in good faith]. It is implied that the thirty-two-year-old Gioconda is trying to rope the much younger Marcello into marrying her.

familiarity and strangeness and posits a relationship between viewing subject and object viewed in which the latter appears recognizable and unrecognizable at the same time. The first experience of this sort depicted in *Uno spirito in lampone* occurs when the Baron, after noticing a general shift in his perspective on the world⁵³³, is forced to do a double-take toward his own dogs: “in mezzo a’ suoi cani ve n’erano taluni che gli sembrava di non aver mai veduto, e pure riflettendoci bene, li conosceva”⁵³⁴. A similar type of experience befalls the servants who witness the Baron performing uncharacteristic gestures: although they feel alarmed by his behavior, they also find it vaguely familiar, and ultimately recognize that he is embodying the mannerisms of Clara. Finally, the problem of (mis)identification is raised at the end of the tale in the scene where the Baron looks in the mirror, with his own gaze and reflection superimposed over those of Clara.

Malombra also contains several examples of double-take phenomena, which Fogazzaro effectively exploits to generate a sense of uncanniness in the narration of liminal experiences, such as illness and dream-states. This can be observed in the narration of Cesare’s perspective who, in a state of mental and physical impairment due to his illness, recognizes the figure standing in the middle of the room as Marina and Cecilia at the same time. It can also be observed in the narration of Silla’s dream, which detaches from the narration of reality around the appearance of a strange figure in Silla’s room. Over the course of the dream, Silla’s perception and knowledge of the ghostly visitor is shown to evolve from one end of the

⁵³³ Il cielo, l’orizzonte, la campagna non gli parevano più quelli; cioè non gli parevano essenzialmente mutati, ma non li vedeva più colla stessa sensazione di un’ora prima; per servirsi d’un modo di dire più comune, non li vedeva più cogli stessi occhi. [The sky, horizon, countryside no longer seemed the same to him; it was not that they seemed changed in some fundamental way, but that he no longer saw them with the same feelings as an hour ago. To make use of a more common figure of speech, he no longer saw them with the same eyes].

⁵³⁴ “Among his dogs were several that he felt he had never seen before, and yet as he thought it over more carefully, he recognized them.”

familiarity-unfamiliarity spectrum to the other: after initially viewing the ghost as a stranger, he goes on to recognize it as an old family friend and from there, takes up wondering why he had not recognized his friend sooner. The progressive dawning of awareness that characterizes Silla's encounter with the figure in the dream suggests a parallel with Silla's experience at the beginning of the novel, when, upon first arriving at the palace, he comes to recognize his mother's furniture out of his otherwise strange surroundings. Ultimately, all these instances of dubious recognition that Tarchetti and Fogazzaro characterize in relation to a variety of different circumstances, highlight the sense of anxiety or confusion that arises around the border between the known and the unknown.

I would like to take a closer look at the way mirrors function in these three texts, seeing as the mirror bears a fundamental connection to the themes of (mis)identification, recognition and the relation of the familiar to the unfamiliar. In the discourse of *Due anime in un corpo*, the mirror serves to underscore the feelings of internal discord that Marcello experiences when he returns to his primary residence after spending time immersed in Lucini's world:

Che uno spirito fosse disceso in me, quasi non era da dubitarne...divenni più agile e più delicato nei movimenti, più gentile nel tratto, più concitato nelle parole, e perfino nell'accento io contraffaceva sì bene il Lucini, che qualche volta io rideva di lui od egli di me o si rideva insieme...questa duplice esistenza, che dico, mi appariva specialmente quando io tornava per caso alla mia prima abitazione...Allora le anime si staccavano come certe fiamme, che si raddoppiano nello specchio...⁵³⁵

While some aspects of the passage above paint the picture of a double-existence in which the identities of Marcello and Lucini are balanced and equipollent, the indication about the

⁵³⁵ "I spent some hours, silent, contemplating the white space between the lines, where Marina's desires had passed without settling, and in the meantime I was listening to a voice other than my own, which spoke to me from the bottom of my heart. That a spirit had descended into me, there was almost no doubt about it...my movements became more agile and delicate, I all of a sudden became more gentle, more excited in my speech, and even in terms of accent I impersonated Lucini so well, that sometimes I laughed at him or he laughed at me or we laughed together...this double existence, which I speak of, became especially apparent to me when I returned home to my primary residence...Then the souls would detach from one another like certain flames do when they are duplicated in the mirror..."

existential rift becoming pronounced in Marcello's space suggests either that Lucini's identity is more stable than Marcello's, or simply that proximity to one existence entails estrangement from the other.

By comparison with the mirror in *Due anime in un corpo*, which appears inside a metaphorical discourse, the mirror in *Uno spirito in un lampone* takes on a more concrete role in the plot, where it is marked as a potential space for the irruption of the supernatural. The transgressive scenario depicted in the following passage shows the way in which this potential is realized:

V'era lì presso uno specchio e corse a contemplarvisi. Strana cosa! Non era più egli; o almeno vi vedeva riflessa bensì la sua immagine, ma vedeala come fosse l'immagine di un altro, vedeva due immagini in una. Sotto l'epidermide diafana della sua persona, traspariva una seconda immagine a profili vaporosi, instabili, conosciuti. E ciò gli pareva naturalissimo, perché egli sapeva che nella sua unità vi erano due persone, che era uno, ma che era anche due ad un tempo.⁵³⁶

In *Malombra* one again encounters a mirror that is marked as a potential space of the irruption of the supernatural. One of the objects that Marina retrieves from the secret compartment is the mirror of Cagliostro which, according to Cecilia, retains the image of the last person who used it, and thus should function as a time portal. However, unlike with the mirror in *Uno spirito in un lampone*, the supernatural potential of Cagliostro's mirror goes unrealized, and what is more, its realization is debarred by multiple layers of contradiction in the logic of the text. The most fundamental of these contradictions is the paradox that Cecilia, by exhorting her reader to try on the glove and match the hair, betrays the presumption that she will bear an identical form in both existences, and yet for Marina to be the exact replica of Cecilia would result in the mirror

⁵³⁶ There was a mirror nearby, and he ran to gaze in it. How strange! He was no longer himself, or at least he certainly saw his image reflected there, but he saw it as another person's image; he saw two images in one. Through the diaphanous surface of his body shone a second image whose contours were hazy, unstable, familiar. And it seemed very natural to him because he knew that this unity contained two people, that he was not just one person, but two at the same time."

functioning as an ordinary mirror. From there, additional layers of complexity arise from the facts that the hair and glove do not match, and that events occur outside of the order prophesied. The mirror then breaks before Marina has a chance to consult it, preventing a conclusion from being drawn one way or the other. From a narrative standpoint, this breaking of the mirror represents a necessary maneuver, since to show Marina consulting the mirror would require the narrator to render a definitive verdict either for or against the agency of the supernatural, and thereby defuse the main source of ambiguity in the text. It thus seems that the purpose of the mirror is to generate suspense by heightening the tension between the realistic trend of the narration and the underlying expectation of the supernatural. On the one hand, the mere mention of Cagliostro's mirror in connection with a tradition that confers upon it otherworldly powers, seems to pave the way for an imminent encounter with the supernatural, while on the other hand, the virtual impossibility imposed on the mirror's functioning by the conditions laid out in the manuscript helps safeguard the boundaries of reality against any such transgression.

At this point, I would like to widen the scope of my analysis to examine some of the broader literary trends that link *Malombra* to the texts of Tarchetti, De Marchi and Verga. I will begin this investigation by examining the links between *Malombra* and Verga's *Le storie del castello di Trezza*, the only text analyzed where the theme of the Double is not configured in terms of two beings occupying a single body. As I discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, in Verga's text, the Double manifests itself in the structure of the narrative itself, in the sense that the narrative is split into two levels, with the characters and events on one level mirroring those on the other. Two essential features characterize the intersection between *Malombra* and *Le storie del castello di Trezza*: the first is the metadiscursive trope whereby events of the past—whether recorded in a manuscript or transmitted orally—are held up as a

mirror for events in the present, and the second is the theme of the family secret which returns to haunt.

The idea of the past serving as a mirror for the present offers one code for reading Verga's *Le storie del castello di Trezza*, with its interplay between narrative levels. The events of the past, narrativized and channeled into the present by Luciano in his capacity as raconteur, place *en abyme* the rudimentary motives and tensions lurking beneath the surface in the frame narrative. Luciano himself, for his role in mediating between the world of the narrating and the world of the narrated, is marked as the principal fount of metadiscursive consciousness in the text. A metanarrative structure like the one described above can be found operating at a more complex level in Fogazzaro's novel. In *Malombra*, two distinct discourses are appointed for the transmission of knowledge of the past—and specifically, knowledge of the events surrounding Emanuele and Cecilia—to the present. One of these discourses is the secret manuscript, which constitutes a first-hand account of Cecilia's experience in written form, and the other is the local tradition, where knowledge of her story is repeated orally while being subjected to endless distortions and confabulations. Despite certain fundamental differences, these two discourses have in common the fact that they both fall outside the official rolls of history. In narrative terms, Cecilia's manuscript and the local legends are the competing sites of metadiscursive consciousness in the novel—one static and the other in flux—which come together to fulfill a role analogous to that of Luciano in *Le storie del castello di Trezza*.

In dealing with the question of orality, both Verga and Fogazzaro stress the regenerative power of legends by thematizing the process whereby new legends are born. In the second chapter of this dissertation, I looked closely at the question of orality in *Le storie del castello di Trezza* and examined the tendency for the legends to write themselves anew in the lives of the

people who hear and tell them. This tendency is writ large in the circumstances of Luciano and Matilde, who begin as narrating subjects and yet who by the end of the text have taken the places of Corrado and Violante and crossed over into the space of the narrated. In *Malombra*, a similar reflexivity characterizes the relationship between the legends about Cecilia's fate and the eventual fate of Marina. Notably, different accounts of Cecilia's fate circulate in the novel, with popular variants alleging that she was carried off by the Devil through a cave in the mountains or that she was flung by her husband into the Pozza d'Acquafonda, but the version Marina prefers is the one dreamt up by the "poeta"⁵³⁷ Rico, which holds that Cecilia simply dissolved into the ether⁵³⁸. This detail proves significant at the end of novel, when Marina, who is viewed by the locals as another incarnation of Cecilia, mysteriously vanishes across the lake. On the one hand, this final turn of events reinforces the perception that Marina has lived out Cecilia's legend, not purely in a manner preordained, but according to her preferred interpretation. On the other hand, the practical mystery of Marina's disappearance fuels intense speculation on the part of the locals, and thus provides fertile ground for the generation of new legends.

It is interesting to note that Verga and Fogazzaro deploy the metanarrative techniques described above in connection with the same constellation of themes. Both texts construct narratives around domestic situations, set in a violent past, involving a wife who feels trapped or neglected by her condottiere husband; both feature ill-fated romances between the wife of a brutal condottiere and a young man of arms (in one case a page, in the other a soldier); and finally, both raise questions about the law in its relation to the domestic sphere. In *Le storie del*

⁵³⁷ "poet"

⁵³⁸ More specifically: "l'infelice prigioniera usciva di notte dal suo carcere attorcigliata intorno a un raggio di luna e si dileguava nell'azzurro" [the unhappy prisoner issued forth from her prison at midnight, encircled with a ray of moonlight, and dissolved into thin air].

castello di Trezza, Luciano tries to reassure Matilde that the situation with Don Garzia and Violante would not repeat itself in an age when divorce is offered as a remedy for unhappy marriages (“i mariti ricorrono ai Tribunali, o alla peggio si battono”⁵³⁹). The tragic irony, of course, is that Giordano requires neither a tribunal nor a beating to do away with Matilde and Luciano, but merely the calculated utterance of a name. In *Malombra*, the law’s relationship to the domestic sphere is called into question from a different standpoint, when Commendatore Finotti characterizes Cecilia’s death in terms of “un omicidio lento e legale”⁵⁴⁰. Finotti’s way of framing the incident underscores the lack of legal protection afforded married women in Cecilia’s circumstances. The notion that this situation has improved in the present-day is supported by several indications, such as Father Tosi’s refusal to guarantee his silence on the issue of Cesare’s murder in Book IV.2 (the irony here being that in the murder Father Tosi investigates, Marina, the self-described “trapped woman,” is the aggressor and Cesare, her so-called jailer, is the victim).

It must be added that in course of harnessing some of the same themes, Verga and Fogazzaro use these themes to espouse very different views on matters related to progress and human nature. The bleak ending of *Le storie del castello di Trezza* leaves one with the impression that beneath the civilizing veneer of the modern day, the world remains the same barbaric place it had been centuries ago. In other words, despite the illusion of progress, people fall back time and again into the same patterns of behavior, and in that sense, history simply repeats itself. By contrast, the upheaval at the end of *Malombra* that claims the lives of the three central characters, rather than a question of history repeating or rewriting itself, is an affirmation

⁵³⁹ “husbands have recourse to the courts, or at worst there are duels.”

⁵⁴⁰ “slow form of legal homicide.”

of the violence inherent to progress and discovery, seeing as in this instance progress consists of overthrowing a regime of secrets and disclosing an unacknowledged side of history. In *Malombra*, if history appears to repeat itself, it is only from the point of view of the dangerous, alternative reality that Marina has come to inhabit by force of circumstance, repression and the influence of French novels. It also bears mentioning that a clear causal line is shown to link Marina's contact with certain subversive texts, including the oral tradition, Cecilia's manuscript, the novel *Un sogno* and the correspondence with Silla with her belief in and eventual execution of Cecilia's vendetta. Under the influence of these texts, Marina's mind and body are transformed into vehicles for social change, which, by toppling the d'Ormengo house and undermining its official discourse, succeed in installing a more equanimous model of history and memory.

I have also highlighted, as a point of overlap between *Le storie del castello di Trezza* and *Malombra*, the theme of the family secret that returns to haunt. This theme is organized along similar lines in both texts—in terms of a mystery surrounding the fate of a warlord's discarded first wife. In Verga's text, the secret concerns the circumstances of Violante's death and it is Donna Isabella, Don Garzia's second wife, who begins to investigate the matter after finding signs that the castle is haunted. The haunting, also witnessed by other members of the community, is traced by Don Garzia and the gamekeeper, Bruno, to a malevolent spirit that has taken possession of Violante's body. Fearing he will be judged a bigamist, Don Garzia exacts an oath of silence from Bruno, under penalty of death. Nevertheless, on the anniversary of Violante's death, rumors begin to spread that "...la cosa fosse proprio avvenuta come sembrava, e come don Garzia non voleva che sembrasse,"⁵⁴¹ and Bruno, fearing he will be blamed, kills

⁵⁴¹ "...that the thing had happened just the way it seemed, and the way don Garzia did not want it to seem..."

Don Garzia on a hunting trip. Thus, the secret of Violante's death returns by roundabout means, irrupts on a symbolic occasion and becomes memorialized in an act of violence (and notably, with the force to extinguish Don Garzia's bloodline). In Fogazzaro's text, the secret concerns Emanuele's immurement of Cecilia and Cecilia's subsequent madness and death. One factor qualifying the representation of secrecy in *Malombra* is the apparent paradox of the open secret, whereby most people have unofficial knowledge of the incident, but it is publicly silenced and relegated to such marginal discourses as the gossip amongst the servants, the superstitions of the locals and the stories Rico tells Marina, which, like the stories Luciano tells Matilde, serve to stimulate the imagination. The investigation into the d'Ormengo secret takes place largely from Marina's point of view: after first hearing the story from Giovanna, and casually questioning Rico about it, Marina is unwittingly led to the place where Cecilia's relics have been hidden. At length, Marina assumes Cecilia's personality and through the subtle art of suggestion administers a violent shock to Cesare, causing him to die on the sixty-third anniversary of Cecilia's death. In this sense, like the secret of Violante's death which—in a subtle and indirect fashion—wreaks ruin on the d'Arvelo house, the secret of Cecilia's death also returns by roundabout means and irrupts in a display of violence on a symbolically fitting occasion, to extinguish the last member of the d'Ormengo line.

I will now consider the ways in which Fogazzaro reclaims ideas and themes exploited by Tarchetti in *Uno spirito in un lampone*. On a preliminary note, I wish to call attention to the overall continuity between Tarchetti's volume *Racconti Fantastici*, whose five tales revolve around themes of the Double, reincarnation, spiritism, dreams, fate and the experience of

madness, and *Malombra*⁵⁴²⁵⁴³. The tale *I fatali* explores the theme of the jettatura; *La lettera U*, which takes the form of a found manuscript, offers a glimpse into the mind of a madman obsessed with the titular vowel; *Un osso di morto* explores the theme of the Double in conjunction with the practice of spiritism, through the premise of a marooned limb seeking to reunite with its skeletal frame; *Le leggende del castello nero* engages with the themes of reincarnation, understood as the transmigration of the soul in conjunction with the birth of a new body, and the premonitory dream; and finally, *Uno spirito in un lampone* explores the theme of the Double and reincarnation, understood in terms of metempsychosis or spiritual possession. It is my intent here to investigate the thematic nexus of the Double and reincarnation as it occurs in *Malombra* and *Uno spirito in un lampone*. Within the scope of this investigation, I will also consider Tarchetti's tale *Le leggende del castello nero*, to the extent that it takes up related themes.

Taking the form of a found-manuscript, Tarchetti's tale *Le leggende del castello nero* follows the adventures of the narrator-protagonist, Arturo, as he learns about past terrestrial existences through his dreams. Arturo, a fifteen-year-old boy living in a small Tyrolese village with his parents and elderly uncle, sees his ordinary life turned upside down when a two-volume manuscript detailing the ancient history of his family turns up in the courtyard of his home. Arturo's uncle, who recognizes the manuscript and appears deeply affected by the discovery, locks himself in his room with the two volumes. In the nights that follow, Arturo has a series of vivid dreams, both of which feature a black castle, a blind man and a beautiful woman, bound to

⁵⁴² Along with the five tales collected in the volume *Racconti Fantastici*, one may also consider Tarchetti's *La storia di una gamba*.

⁵⁴³ For further discussion of Fogazzaro's connection to the writers of the Scapigliatura, as well as prospects for comparing *Malombra* with Tarchetti's *Fosca*, see: Giulio Cattaneo, "Prosatori e critici dalla Scapigliatura al verismo," AA. VV. *Storia della letteratura italiana*, dir. E. Cecchi and N. Sapegno, Vol. VIII, *Dall'Ottocento al Novecento* (Milan: Garzanti, 1868).

him by “un affetto antico”⁵⁴⁴. In the second dream, the woman informs Arturo that he has had eleven prior existences and that he will be reunited with her at the time of his death, set to occur twenty years in the future. The woman also reveals that it was she who delivered the mysterious manuscript, which contains the riddle of their existences, but that the blind man—identified as Arturo’s uncle and implied to be the eternal nemesis of the couple—will try to prevent him from viewing it. Upon awaking, Arturo attempts to retrieve the manuscript only to discover that his uncle has burnt it, leaving behind scattered fragments, amongst which he recognizes an image of the castle from the dream. For nineteen years, Arturo dwells on the incident before finally traveling to France and locating the overgrown ruins of the black castle. At the end of the tale, the reader is alerted via a postscript that the author of the manuscript was murdered by a band of gypsies on the precise date foretold in the dream.

There are multiple dimensions to the representation of the Double in this tale. In one sense, the tale is split between the narration of two different states of consciousness, waking and dreaming, experienced in alternation. Though by day, Arturo is a fifteen-year-old boy who lives with his parents, at night he transforms is a twenty-five-year-old man who performs exploits in the valley of the black castle. The following account is offered of the transition from one state of consciousness to the other:

...nella mia mente si erano come agglomerate tutte quelle idee, tutte quelle esperienze, tutti quegli ammaestramenti che il tempo mi avrebbe fatto subire durante gli anni che segnavano quella differenza tra l’età sognata e l’età reale; ma io rimaneva nondimeno estraneo a questo maggiore perfezionamento, benchè il comprendessi. Sentiva in me tutto lo sviluppo intellettuale di quell’età, ma ne giudicava col senno e cogli apprezzamenti proprii dei miei quindici anni. Vi erano due individui in me, all’uno apparteneva l’azione, all’altro la coscienza e l’apprezzamento

⁵⁴⁴ “long-standing affection.”

dell'azione. Era una di quelle contraddizioni, di quelle bizzarrie, di quelle simultaneità di effetti che non sono proprie che dei sogni.⁵⁴⁵⁵⁴⁶

Along with the intellectual maturation described above, and the contradiction between the acting and observing self, the dream consciousness is defined by the protagonist's recourse to a peculiar way of knowing. Arturo explains that although he found himself in an unknown setting, "ciò era bensì naturale nel sogno,"⁵⁴⁷ adding: "vi erano degli avvenimenti che giustificavano il mio ristarmi in quel luogo, ma non sapeva quali fossero; non aveva coscienza del loro valore, della loro entità, non l'aveva che dalla loro esistenza"⁵⁴⁸. He describes how, in the "consapevolezza"⁵⁴⁹ of the dream, he is able to recognize the beautiful woman locked away in the castle as "*la dama del castello nero*,"⁵⁵⁰ and knows he is there to rescue her. He also expresses profound intuitions about the blinding of the man in the valley, stating that "a quel

⁵⁴⁵ "It was as if my mind were crowded with all the ideas, experiences, lessons that time would have made me endure over the years to mark the difference between the fantasies of adolescence and the waking reality of adulthood. Nonetheless, I remained alien to this process of maturation, even though I comprehended it. I felt in myself all the intellectual growth of that age, but I judged it with the discrimination and opinions proper to my fifteen years. There were two individuals in me, one belonging to action, and the other belonging to the consciousness and evaluation of action. It was a simultaneity of effect, one of those contradictions or oddities peculiar only to dreams."

⁵⁴⁶ From the point of view of Freudian dream analysis, Arturo's professed ability to mentalize the emotional and intellectual development of a twenty-five-year-old while maintaining the passive awareness of a fifteen-year-old could be interpreted as a displacement forward, in the dream, of a fixation acquired during his fifth year—that is, during the period of life associated with the onset of the Oedipus complex—and reactivated at the age of fifteen. The presence, in both dreams, of an oedipal configuration—itsself displaced onto a rivalry with the uncle—seems to support this interpretation. The hypothesis of regression to an oedipal-stage fixation could also shed light on Arturo's family romance fantasies and epistemophilic urges, which lead him to break into his uncle's room. Indeed, through a sufficiently liberal approach to the application of psychoanalytic theory, it becomes possible to explain even the most "marvelous" aspects of the tale with reference to the workings of the unconscious mind. To begin with, the fact that the claims put forth in the manuscript reflect a subjective account and cannot be independently verified leads one to wonder about the role played by fantasy in shaping Arturo's remembrance. Beyond that, the fact that Arturo dies on the date prophesied (as confirmed in the paratextual note) could be explained on the model of one or more unconscious complexes, namely, those provided by the "criminal from a sense of guilt," the obsessional and destiny neuroses and the Cassandra complex. A similar line of reasoning could be adopted toward the questions of fate and destiny in *Malombra*, both in relation to the plot of *Un sogno*—the novel-within-the-novel, about a character who escapes his prophesied fate—and in relation to the lives of Silla and Marina.

⁵⁴⁷ "it was natural in the dream"

⁵⁴⁸ "I knew that certain events had justified my stopping in that place, but I did not know what they were; I was not conscious of their value, their importance, only of their existence."

⁵⁴⁹ "[state of] awareness"

⁵⁵⁰ "the lady of the black castle"

fatto si legavano delle memorie di sangue, delle memorie di un delitto a cui io avevo preso parte. Fra me e lui e la dama del castello correvano dei rapporti inesplicabili”⁵⁵¹.

A secondary logic ordering the representation of the Double in *Le leggende del castello nero* is the idea of reincarnation, and more specifically, the idea of a plurality of terrestrial existences. As one may note, the concept of reincarnation in this tale is undergirded by a different set of metaphysical laws than those seen operating in *Uno spirito in un lampone*. In the metaphysics of *Uno spirito in un lampone*, reincarnation involves the continuation of the present existence following the death of the body, under transgressive forms (a raspberry and another person’s body), in accordance with the successive migrations of the spirit. In the metaphysical superstructure of *Le leggende del castello nero*, reincarnation occurs through the periodic rebirth of the soul in conjunction with the rebirth of the body (or the birth of a new body) and gives rise to a succession of discrete terrestrial existences, separated by a factor of amnesia.

These two distinct metaphysical propositions may be found superimposed in *Malombra*, in the problematization of Marina’s relationship to her ancestor, Cecilia. It hardly needs repeating that one of the images Fogazzaro employs in the construction of his supernatural premise—that of the ghost escaping the compartment—reproduces the logic of the metempsychosis in *Uno spirito in un lampone*, with a few slight modifications. One aspect of the formula that appears modified in *Malombra* is the route by which the foreign spirit enters the body: whereas in the Baron’s case, the spirit is ingested orally, in Marina’s case, the spirit is absorbed intellectually, presumably through the act of reading. At the same time, Fogazzaro’s representation does not completely discount the physical and physiological connotations of spiritual possession; these are articulated, for instance, in the scene near the end of the novel

⁵⁵¹ “bloody memories were linked to that deed, memories of a crime in which I had taken part. Inexplicable relationships joined me, him and the lady of the castle.”

where the doctor describes to Silla and Commendatore Vezza Marina's attempt to exorcise a spirit by piercing holes in her flesh. It also hardly needs repeating that the logic of the reincarnation expounded in Cecilia's manuscript reechoes the cosmic organizing principle of *Le leggende del castello nero*, based around the idea of multiple existences. Marina, like Arturo, learns via occult channels (in her case, Cecilia's manuscript and the correspondence with Silla) that she had a previous terrestrial existence. Adding to the list of parallels, the multiplication of existences postulated in *Malombra* takes place relative to the same family and centers on the same three essential players. Finally, one cannot overlook the significance in both texts of the found-manuscript, which in Tarchetti's text serves as a framing device for the narrative and which Fogazzaro's text is posited as the vehicle for Marina's possession.

By superimposing these two metaphysical schemata in the representation, Fogazzaro overdetermines the circumstances of Cecilia's reincarnation, and while he appears to do so in a contradictory manner, he also hints at a code of reading capable of reconciling these contradictions, in the context of the correspondence between Marina and Silla. In her first letter to Silla, Marina asks whether he believes in malevolent spirits that play tricks on the living by altering perceptions and cognitions of reality. Marina's question at least acknowledges the possibility that short of being Cecilia's reincarnation or possessed by Cecilia's spirit, she is led to believe these things due to the influence of a malevolent spirit. Silla responds in the following way:

Spiriti maligni che si pigliano giuoco di noi, proseguiva, ve ne hanno certo, e possono anche illudere con le apparenze della fatalità. Tutto fa credere che, come noi esercitiamo un potere sopra gli esseri che ci sono inferiori, così siamo soggetti, entro certi limiti, all'azione di altri esseri che ci superano in potenza. Siamo forse soliti attribuire al caso quello che è opera loro. I sogni profetici, i presentimenti, le subitanee ispirazioni artistiche, le illuminazioni fugaci della nostra mente, i ciechi impulsi al bene e al male, certe inesplicabili allegrezze e malinconie, certi movimenti involontari della nostra memoria, sono probabilmente opere di spiriti superiori, parte

buoni, parte malvagi. Tali considerazioni, scriveva Lorenzo, cadono tutte se non si ammette Dio. Esprimeva quindi la speranza che Cecilia non fosse atea, nel qual caso, avrebbe, a malincuore, troncato ogni corrispondenza con lei. Veniva in seguito alla pluralità delle esistenze terrestri. Lorenzo credeva alla pluralità delle esistenze. Lo stato dello spirito nel corpo umano è indubbiamente, diceva, uno stato di repressione, uno stato di pena, la quale non può riferirsi che a colpe commesse prima della incarnazione terrestre. I dolori degli innocenti e, in genere, la distribuzione ineguale del dolore e del piacere tra gli uomini, senza riguardo ai meriti e ai demeriti della vita presente; la sorte delle anime che escono pure dalla vita dopo un'ora della loro venuta ottenendo quel premio che ad altri costa lunghi anni di lotte durissime, non possono meglio spiegarsi che con l'attribuire alla nostra esistenza attuale un carattere di espiazione insieme a quello di preparazione. Ammesso il principio della pluralità delle esistenze, l'autore di *Un sogno* diceva che la ragione umana non può andare più avanti, e che il problema se le nostre vite anteriori sieno state terrestri o siderali va lasciato alla fantasia.⁵⁵²⁵⁵³

In considering Silla's views here, it is important to account for the context and subjective factors shaping their articulation. In espousing ideas about free will and reincarnation under the aegis of a heterodox Christianity, Silla seems driven by the desire to render his religious outlook consonant with his ideals about social equality. Hence questions arise as to which of these views constitute genuine beliefs and which constitute utopian fantasies. These issues aside, the spiritualist framework that Silla uses to interpret psychological and parapsychological phenomena offers a grid for reading the image of the ghost escaping the compartment, the

⁵⁵²“That there are malignant spirits which make a sport of us is certain, he proceeded; [and they] may even deceive us into a false notion of fatalism. Everything points to the belief that, [just as] we exercise power over the beings inferior to ourselves, so we ourselves are subject, within certain limits, to the action of other beings of attributes more powerful than ours. We fall into the habit of attributing to chance that which is, as a fact, effected by them. Prophetic dreams, presentiments, sudden artistic inspirations, sudden flashes of genius, blind impulses towards good or evil, inexplicable fits of high spirits and depression, the involuntary action of the memory, are probably all controlled by superior beings, partly good, partly bad. However, wrote Lorenzo, such considerations all [collapse] if we deny God. He then added the hope that Cecilia was not an atheist, for in that event he would be compelled, with great regret, to break off the correspondence. He next turned to the question of the [plurality of existences]. Lorenzo believed in the [plurality of existences]. The condition of a soul in a human body is undoubtedly [a state of] repression, [a state of pain], and this can only be explained by sins committed in a previous state. The sufferings of innocent creatures, the unequal distribution of sorrow and happiness, [without regard for the merits and demerits of the present life]; the fact that some souls quit this life unsoiled, within an hour of entering on it, thus obtaining that reward which costs others long years of bitter strife, all these phenomena can best be explained by attributing to our present life the character of a state of expiation and preparation. [Granting the theory of the plurality of existences], the author [of *Un sogno*] added that human reasoning can go no further, and that the problem, [as to] whether our previous [lives] were earthly ones or astral, is [best left to our imagination].”

⁵⁵³ Many of the phenomena that Silla addresses from a Spiritualist standpoint—notably, “blind impulses towards good or evil, inexplicable fits of high spirits and depression, the involuntary action of the memory”—also constellate the main field of inquiry in the “atheistic” project of psychoanalysis.

ultimate purpose of which is to illustrate the suggestive power of the manuscript in relation to Marina's suggestible to state of mind.

Also worth noting about Silla's response is his position on the plurality of terrestrial existences. The moral argument he uses to support his theory of reincarnation contrasts with the logic of the vendetta professed by Cecilia and more closely echoes the logic of penitence articulated by the lady of the black castle in *Le leggende del castello nero*. Silla, in holding up reincarnation as a counterbalance to the problems of social and existential injustice ("la distribuzione ineguale del dolore e del piacere tra gli uomini"⁵⁵⁴), describes existence as having a "carattere di espiazione insieme a quello di preparazione;"⁵⁵⁵ the lady of the black castle similarly uses the term "espiazione"⁵⁵⁶ when referring to Arturo's succession of terrestrial existences. Another metaphysical problem woven in with the idea of multiple existences in the texts of Tarchetti and Fogazzaro is the question of fate versus free will. In *Le leggende del castello nero*, the fact that Arturo dies on the exact date foretold in the dream calls attention to the mechanism of fate in the universe of the tale. In *Malombra*, the problem of fate versus free will is taken up from multiple perspectives. Marina, who retains a deep-seated notion of fate, adopts the fatalist worldview propounded by Cecilia in her manuscript, all the while remaining oblivious to the contradictions that arise between the prophecy and the actual events unfolding. In the meantime, Silla's philosophical novel, *Un sogno*, revolves around the idea that a person is responsible for his own destiny, despite any illusion to the contrary. Silla upholds this thesis in his correspondence with Marina, further arguing that malevolent spirits are responsible for

⁵⁵⁴ "The unequal distribution of sorrow and happiness".

⁵⁵⁵ "character of a state of expiation and preparation"

⁵⁵⁶ "expiation"

creating a false sense of fatalism. As it turns out, this very problem is writ large across the story of Silla's life: despite being able to choose between different possible courses of action, he is haunted by the presentiment of a fall in the abyss. Finally, there is a prevailing notion that Silla's and Marina's destinies are linked together in some occult way. The most fundamental evidence supporting this proposition is the series of postal errors, whereby chance mismailings of Silla's novel *Un sogno* repeatedly bring Marina into contact with Silla. As to these meaningful coincidences facilitating the encounters between the two protagonists, while they seem to disclose traces of an occult causality, they could also be explained in acausal terms, with reference to Jung's concept of synchronicity⁵⁵⁷.

From here, I move on to my final point of intertextual comparison. This concerns the common tendency in *Due anime in un corpo* and *Malombra* to borrow elements from the crime or noir thriller, and specifically, to construct episodes in which truth is extracted through procedures of interrogation and inference formation. In *Due anime in un corpo*, noir elements occupy a substantial portion of the narration, where they are found merged with elements of other genres, such as the sentimental novel and the *bildungsroman*. In *Malombra*, the noir elements appear at the culmination of the Salvador subplot, where they are organized around the thematic axis of hypocrisy versus sincerity. It might be added that in representing the mechanics of a criminal conspiracy, De Marchi concerns himself more generally with the procedural aspects of investigating and prosecuting the crime, while Fogazzaro focuses on the dramatic intervention by a shrewd detective-figure.

⁵⁵⁷ C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle* (1960), trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

Although the plot of *Due anime in un corpo* revolves around the crime of Lucini's murder, this event is presented in the context of a various other illicit activities, including crimes of extortion and the falsification of letters and documents. At a difference from the genre of detective fiction pioneered by Poe with the 1841 short story, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, De Marchi's text does not feature a detective with singular talents who steps in to solve the crime; instead, this role is filled by the protagonist, who unravels the mystery as part of his *bildung*, with the backing of a reasonably effective justice system. Two episodes from the middle part of the novella, are built around the technical application of investigative procedures. The first follows Marcello as he "forensically" reconstructs Lucini's life through the examination of letters and other personal effects and the second gives an account of Marcello's trial, in which he stands accused of Lucini's murder but is ultimately exonerated. Notably, the trial itself is accounted for through the transposition of salient excerpts, with the following preface from Marcello in his capacity as narrator-cum-editor:

Per quanto riguarda il mio processo, trascrivo alcuni brani dei giornali cittadini che l'hanno riportato, sopprimendo tutte quelle spiegazioni che per noi sarebbero di troppo. I lettori guadagneranno senza dubbio nella semplicità dello stile e della grammatica.⁵⁵⁸

The trial excerpts include portions of depositions and hearings in which the judge interrogates Marcello and the various witnesses; these are strung together in such a way as to construct a coherent line of reasoning, with each new excerpt containing a battery of questions that expands on the premises reached in the previous excerpt and thus peeling back another layer of truth.

⁵⁵⁸ "as to my trial, I am transcribing some excerpts from the city newspapers that reported on it, while suppressing all explanations that would be extraneous for us. The readers will no doubt benefit from the simplicity of the style and grammar."

The noir component in *Malombra* is principally concentrated in Book IV.2, which fittingly bears the title “Un mistero,”⁵⁵⁹ and scenes dispersed throughout IV.4. Two new characters are introduced at the beginning of Book IV: the lawyer Mirovich, a loyal friend of the Salvadors recruited to salvage the family finances, and Father Tosi, who has been called in to consult about Cesare’s illness and yet whose crime-solving appetites set the stage for a spectacle of ratiocination. Here, I will proceed with a close reading of the Father Tosi episode, as I believe such a reading will be productive for elucidating the scope of the novel’s borrowings from the detective and Sensation genres. In addition to being the doctor summoned to advise about Cesare’s illness, Father Tosi also professes to be an amateur sleuth whose penchant for discovering the truth is matched only by his refusal to mince words⁵⁶⁰. After determining the Count’s stroke to be the result of a deliberate shock, inflicted by a woman calling herself “Cecilia,” Father Tosi sets to interviewing the extended family in the hopes of identifying a culprit.

The Friar begins his inquiry by calling for a conference with the Salvadors, along with the lawyer Mirovich and Commendatore Vezza. At the outset, he shocks the group by declaring—in a dramatic fashion, to stress the power of the word itself—that Cesare has been murdered (only after registering the shock does he clarify: “dico assassinato perché sono

⁵⁵⁹ “A mystery”

⁵⁶⁰ As he tells Nepo: “non sa che io sono avezzo a cercare la verità, magari frugando con il coltello nelle carni e nelle ossa della gente, tanto d'una gran dama, quanto d'un facchino, colla stessa freddezza. Taglio e squarcio per trovarla e la trovo quasi sempre, sa, impassibile come un dio; poco m'importa, mentre cerco, che mi scongiurino o che mi bestemmino. E Lei pretende ch'io mi guardi dall'accennare anche da lontano a quello che può essere il vero, per non offendere una signora, i suoi parenti e i suoi amici, quando sono convinto che c'è di mezzo un ammalato che assisto? Ma Lei mi fa ridere, per Dio! Del resto, adesso, loro signori conoscono i fatti.” [‘you do know that I am in the habit of seeking for the truth, even if I have to take a knife and probe living flesh and bones, those of a grand lady as calmly as those of a railway porter. I cut and tear in order to find it, and I do find it almost always, unmoved as a deity, - it matters little to me that people swear at and abuse me. And you imagine that I shall abstain from ever hinting at the truth to avoid offending a lady, her relations, and friends, when I know that what I am doing is in the interests of a sick man. But you make me laugh, you do indeed. For the rest, ladies and gentlemen, you now know the facts’].

convinto che vi è nell'origine di questo male l'azione violenta d'una persona"⁵⁶¹). The friar's blunt and dysphemistic way of representing the facts, designed to elicit a strong reaction from his listeners, reflects a *topos* of detective fiction and harks back in particular to the tactics of interrogation utilized by Auguste Dupin in Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*⁵⁶². Perhaps tellingly, during the deliberate pause preceding the utterance of the word "assassinato,"⁵⁶³ Mirovich and Veza remain still, while Fosca and Nepo produce exaggerated reactions: "prima ch'egli compiesse la frase la contessa Fosca lasciò cadere il ventaglio...Nepo si alzò in piedi"⁵⁶⁴.

Despite having no culpability in or foreknowledge of the attack on Cesare, when questioned by Father Tosi, Nepo and Fosca both betray signs of guilt. The reason for this guilty behavior, exaggerated to the point of caricature, is that at the time of the attack on Cesare, the Salvadors are engaged in a parallel, unrelated deception. Behind the illustrious Salvador name, these cousins are at best shameless parasites⁵⁶⁵ and at worst fledgling criminals, who intend to make off with Marina's inheritance by whatever means necessary (hence the irony of the amateur sleuth facing off against the amateur criminals). Correspondingly, Nepo becomes increasingly adamant about deflecting suspicion away from his fiancée, since he realizes that to implicate Marina in the crime would mean jeopardizing his financial stake in the marriage. In attempting to cover for Marina, Nepo is outwitted and exposed time and again by the clever friar.

⁵⁶¹ "I call it murder, because I am convinced that the originating cause of the misfortune was an act of violence by an individual."

⁵⁶² Edgar Allan Poe, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," in *Tales*, 116-150 (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1846).

⁵⁶³ "murdered"

⁵⁶⁴ "Before he could finish the sentence Countess Fosca dropped her fan...Nepo rose to his feet."

⁵⁶⁵ It may be useful, here, to consider the socioeconomic underpinnings of Fogazzaro's own marriage: born into a bourgeois family, Fogazzaro married the wealthy aristocrat Margherita (dei conti) Valmarana. The countship of the Valmarana in Vicenza dates back to 1031.

It becomes evident at a relatively early point in the episode that, by a process of elimination, Father Tosi suspects Marina of being the attacker. Still, when he asks Nepo to identify the button found at the scene, a button torn from Marina's tea-gown, Nepo pretends not to recognize it and seems to have no trouble dissimulating. Unfortunately for Nepo, however, Fosca lacks the wherewithal to uphold the fiction when presented with the same piece of evidence, and is betrayed by her body language: "il frate non parlò né si mosse. La guardava sempre. Osservava come ogni curiosità fosse interamente scomparsa da quel volto mentre la bocca diceva: Non ho inteso"⁵⁶⁶. Noting the disconnect between Fosca's words and her body language, the friar perceives her to be the weak link and continues to surveil her for signs of deception.

Still on the question of the button, Commendatore Vezza's choice not to intervene between the Salvadors and the friar out of suspicion that the button "fosse stato riconosciuto,"⁵⁶⁷ renders more explicit the prospect that Father Tosi has been feigning ignorance to evaluate the truthfulness of Nepo's and Fosca's responses. For the friar to know beforehand the source of the button would undermine Nepo's claim, "se avessi veduti anche una volta sola bottoni simili addosso a qualche persona di casa, adesso riconoscerei questo,"⁵⁶⁸ by turning it against him (the logic being that if the button is known to belong to Marina and Nepo is absolutely certain to recognize a button he has seen before, it follows that he must recognize button in question; Nepo elsewhere diminishes his own credibility by protesting too strongly when he objects to Father Tosi's calling Cecilia's glove a glove, insisting instead that it is a "cencio scolorato,

⁵⁶⁶ "The friar did not reply and did not move. He kept looking at her. He noticed how completely curiosity had vanished from her face, while [her] mouth said, 'I do not understand.'"

⁵⁶⁷ "had been identified from the beginning"

⁵⁶⁸ "'If I had seen anyone in the house wearing buttons like this, if only for a moment, I should recognize it [now], shouldn't I?'"

ammuffito”⁵⁶⁹). Next, when Father Tosi recommends that Marina be questioned about what she might have heard in the right wing of the palace, Nepo replies: “s'Ella intende con tali parole insinuare sospetti poco leciti e niente affatto convenienti a carico di una dama che sta per appartenermi strettamente, Ella s'inganna a partito e offende le stesse persone alle quali parla”⁵⁷⁰. Nowhere does Father Tosi voice “sospetti poco leciti e niente affatto convenienti,”⁵⁷¹ and his suggestion seems perfectly logical considering the circumstances. By interpreting the Friar’s words as an accusation, Nepo thus succeeds in drawing even more suspicion on himself.

At the meeting’s conclusion, the lawyer Mirovich insinuates that Father Tosi should keep quiet about his discovery, but the friar flatly and indignantly refuses to “receive such instructions.” If with his admonition, Mirovich is invoking an aristocratic entitlement to legislate household affairs internally, the friar’s reply may be interpreted as a sign that unlike in the times of Emanuele and Cecilia, crimes occurring in the domestic sphere are not necessarily exempt from public jurisdiction. Absurdly, Father Tosi’s refusal to guarantee silence prompts Fosca to call him a “matto villano”⁵⁷² and to wonder “chi lo paga?”⁵⁷³. The irony of this accusation is that Father Tosi represents the antithesis of the partisan or corrupt official, and on the contrary, the ones who impute these motives to him are the real rogues.

The real criminal side of the Salvadors comes to light following Father Tosi’s departure. Mere moments after Cesare’s death, while Giovanna and Don Innocenzo are still making the

⁵⁶⁹ “moldy, faded rag”

⁵⁷⁰ ““If by such words, you intend to suggest unlawful and scandalous suspicions against a lady who is about to enter into the closest ties with me, you have mistaken your role and [are offending the very people to whom you speak].”

⁵⁷¹ “unlawful or scandalous suspicions”

⁵⁷² “[crazy] rogue”

⁵⁷³ “whose pocket is he in?”

prayers for the dead, Nepo begins rummaging through the Count's personal effects, searching for his will. Finding it, he makes some excuse and steals off to the dining-room with Mirovich. Shortly thereafter, Mirovich is viewed (from Steinegge's perspective) seated at the table with an inkstand to his side and the will laid out in front of him. It can be inferred from these indications that, unbeknownst to Steinegge or anyone else, the Salvadors take advantage of the commotion surrounding Cesare's death to falsify the will of the deceased. The fact that Nepo inexplicably inherits three hundred and twenty thousand francs, the precise amount Cesare intended to sign over in the deed of gift, while Marina inherits nothing, confirms that the falsification took place.

The Salvador subplot in general, and especially the episodes involving Father Tosi and the falsification of Cesare's will, have distinct echoes with Wilkie Collins's 1859 novel, *The Woman in White*, which Fogazzaro is known to have read and counted among the English exemplars in his theory of the novel. Not unlike the affair with Fosca and Nepo, the plot of Collins's Sensation Novel revolves around a confidence scheme, perpetrated by a debt-ridden (and illegitimate) nobleman, to defraud a wealthy heiress of her marriage settlement⁵⁷⁴. The conspiracy depicted by Collins also turns on the crime of falsification, deals centrally with the question of madness and is even masterminded by a shady Venetian Count named "Fosco," to list only the most significant structural parallels.

It remains unclear whether Father Tosi intends to bring charges against Marina for Cesare's murder, and in any case, Marina's actions a day later, when she unleashes a verbal assault on her death-bound uncle, render the question moot. By consequence, the episode ends up fulfilling a banal function plot-wise (it informs the Salvadors that Marina is mad), even while

⁵⁷⁴ Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1860), edited by Matthew Sweet (New York: Penguin, 1999).

it garners significance in thematic and narrative terms. On a thematic level, the confrontation between the disingenuous Salvadors and the plain-speaking friar represents another chapter in the ongoing struggle between hypocrisy and sincerity. The episode is particularly interesting from that standpoint because it thematizes the use of deception as a tool for drawing out truth, and thus supplies an optimistic footnote to the dire essay written by Silla. From the narrative standpoint, showing this detective-priest draw inferences about the cause of Cesare's illness is one of several techniques Fogazzaro uses to tease out consequential plot information in an indirect fashion (other techniques include second-hand narratives, accounts of idle chatter between peripheral characters, epistolary exchanges and embedded texts). Filtering the action through a multiplicity of subjective viewpoints—a practice further reminiscent of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*—enables the author to move beyond simple narration and to perform the actual process whereby knowledge is received. There are two points worth stressing in this connection. For one, it is quite conceivable that Fogazzaro, like Wilkie Collins, drew on his early legal training to formulate this narrative strategy, which consists of collecting testimonials and exploiting heteroglossia⁵⁷⁵. For another, this strategy of interposing multiple different viewpoints approximates the style of certain canonical noir narratives, ranging from Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (a style reproduced in De Marchi's *Due anime in un corpo*), which install, in the place of a narratorial consciousness, an editorial consciousness tasked with assembling documents to tell the story.

Still concerning the adaptation of noir techniques in *Due anime in un corpo* and *Malombra*, a final consideration worth raising is the way the procedures of criminal investigation

⁵⁷⁵ Fogazzaro mystifies the multiple-viewpoints technique by abstracting the function of the editorial consciousness from the assembly of material documents to the collection of testimony from the universe at large (and from such diverse, unconventional perspectives as the conversation between Vezza and Mirovich, the recollections of Giovanna and to the discourses of the fountain in the courtyard).

encountered in both texts counteract and dismantle the problem of the Double by submitting it to a program of individuation—a process aimed at the concrete circumscription of identity. Marcello’s trial, referred to in the chapter heading as “il processo delle due anime,”⁵⁷⁶ offers the most rigorous example of this process. At the beginning of the trial, Marcello’s identity is presented in complete disarray from his own point of view and from the point of view of others. Asked his name by the judge, Marcello declares that he is two people at once: Marcello, the vicarious adventurer, and Lucini, the victim of the murder for which Marcello stands trial. This internal dilemma is compounded by the fact that the police, as well as some of the witnesses called to testify, hold patent misconceptions about Marcello’s character and actions. Over the course of the trial, however, Marcello’s identity is clarified, stabilized, and reinforced on all sides: not only does he lose the equivocation in his being (at least publicly), but he is also properly differentiated from Pietro Manganelli in the eyes of his neighbors, and distinguished from the real perpetrator of the crime, Il Sultano, in the eyes of the police and the court.

In *Malombra*, the inquiry that Father Tosi undertakes vis-à-vis Marina fulfills, in the eyes of the Salvadors, the lawyer Mirovich and Commendatore Vezza, an individuating function not unlike the one exemplified in the “processo delle due anime.” Father Tosi launches his inquiry armed only with a forensic assessment and the knowledge that Cesare’s attacker—possibly a family member—bore the name “Cecilia,” yet through a combination of asking questions (asking the names of the women servants, asking who else resides in the right wing of the palace) and eliciting tell-tale reactions from Nepo, the friar paves the way for the true identity of the culprit

⁵⁷⁶ “the trial of the two souls”

to be derived, or in other words, for the mystery proclaimed in the name of “Cecilia” to recede, disclosing the contours of “Marina”⁵⁷⁷.

There is one other point that I would like to make regarding the relationship between Tarchetti, Fogazzaro, Verga and De Marchi. Although for the purposes of my present task I have considered the works of these four authors strictly from a synchronic perspective, two sets of chronological distinctions should be borne in mind. The first of these diachronic considerations concerns the chronology of the texts themselves, which appeared over the course of a fourteen-year period, from 1867 to 1881. The second of these diachronic considerations concerns the careers of the authors themselves and the distinct historical periods with which they became associated: most notably, whereas Tarchetti (who lived from 1839 to 1869) and De Marchi (who lived from 1851-1901) belong entirely to the nineteenth century, Fogazzaro (who lived from 1842 to 1911) and Verga (who lived from 1840 to 1922) already have a place in literary currents and debates of the early twentieth century (namely, those of *simbolismo*, *verismo* and *modernismo*).

⁵⁷⁷“Gli accosto l'orecchio alle labbra, mi par di capire: <famiglia>; io suppongo che desideri veder loro, gli rispondo qualche cosa, gli dico di star tranquillo. Egli seguita; io ascolto ancora, credo intendere un'altra parola, provo a dirgli: <Cecilia?>. Tace subito, e vorrei, signori, che aveste veduti quegli occhi come si dilatarono, come mi riguardarono, quale espressione prese il viso sfigurato di quell'uomo. Adesso un'altra cosa. Chi dorme nell'ala destra del palazzo, oltre il conte?’ ‘Perché domanda questo?’ disse Nepo. ‘Posto che una persona, oltre l'ammalato, dorma nell'ala destra del palazzo, questa persona...’ (il frate alzò la voce ed aggrottò le sopracciglia) «molto più se indisposta, deve avere udito, deve sapere qualche cosa. Consiglio Loro signori d'interrogarla bene.” [‘I place my ear near his lips, and it seems to me that I catch the word “family” I imagine that he wishes to see them, and I say something in reply, and tell him not to worry about them. He continues to murmur something. I listen again and seem to catch another word, and I try the effect of repeating it—Cecilia? ‘He is silent at once, and I only wish that all of you could have seen how his eyes dilated, how they looked at me, and the expression which passed over the convulsed features of the man. One thing more. Who, besides the Count, sleeps in the right wing of the {palace}?’ ‘Why do you ask that?’ said Nepo. ‘Assuming that some person besides the invalid sleeps in the right wing of the {palace}, that person (here the friar raised his voice and knit his brows), still more so if unwell, must have heard, and must know something. I advise you to closely interrogate her’].

Conclusion

At the beginning of this dissertation, I discussed how its content would be organized around two distinct axes: the literary theme of the Double and the analysis of Fogazzaro's *Malombra*. I would now like to reflect on the essential conclusions drawn relative to each of these areas of focus. In the first chapter, I traced an intellectual history for the Double and examined the shifting cultural attitudes toward the concept over time, showing how the fluid and ambivalent principle of duality envisioned by primitive cultures evolved, through contact with the Judeo-Christian tradition, into a stable and polarizing construct, which in the wake of rationalism and modernity, has continued to play a role in determining the dominant structure of reality. Within the context of Romanticism, a literary and artistic trend noted for its privileging of subjective experience and attention to psychological depth, I explored how representations of encounters with or experiences of the Double connote a breakdown in the unity of the subject, in terms ranging from simple internal conflicts or situations of double-existence to extreme situations of split-consciousness. In this connection, I discussed some common configurations of the theme in literature, and highlighted the doppelgänger, exemplified in Poe's *William Wilson*, as a prominent mode of problematizing the extreme and irreversible process of psychical dissolution. In addition to describing the conception of the Double in the reality of the text and the historico-cultural context, I expounded some psychoanalytic conceptions of the Double, drawing a basic distinction between the Freudian approach, which frames it in transcendental terms as a symptom of abnormal psychology, and the Jungian approach, which frames it in transgressive terms, as a universal feature of psychology, which sometimes manifests in extreme forms. Finally, citing Todorov, I touched upon a further conception of the Double—not

necessarily attached to the textual or to the psychoanalytic reality—as a simple tool organizing the relationship between themes in a text.

In the second chapter, I examined three Italian texts from the late nineteenth century which are centrally organized around the theme of the Double. The first text, *Uno spirito in un lampone* by Tarchetti, revolves around a situation of split-consciousness, in which two spirits occupy the same body. For my analysis of Tarchetti's tale, I produced two distinct psychoanalytical readings, each based on a different theoretical grid. In one reading, I demonstrated the possibility of interpreting the tale as an allegory for the Jungian process of confrontation with and integration of the anima and in the other, I demonstrated the possibility of interpreting the tale as a literary portrayal of delayed mourning, as laid out in the theory of Abraham and Torok. Ultimately, I observed that any reading of the text will generate a similar sense of the Double as belonging to a *telos* of reconciliation and thus serving as a precursor to a higher unity. From there I proceeded to analyze De Marchi's *Due anime in un corpo*, which features a similar premise to that of *Uno spirito in un lampone* but which frames the problem of split-consciousness against a more general backdrop of double-existence. I eventually concluded that, despite each text's distinctive approach to the theme, *Uno spirito in un lampone* and *Due anime in un corpo* are fundamentally similar because they both attach a positive outcome to the experience with the Double. In my analysis of the third text, Verga's *Le storie del castello di Trezza*, where the Double takes the form of a *mise-en-abyme* or a mirroring between the characters of the present and those of the legendary past, I showed how these factors of temporal and metanarrative repetition could also be understood in intrapsychic terms, with Don Garzia, Violante and Corrado serving as unrepressed alter egos of Giordano, Matilde and Luciano.

The third chapter was dedicated to the analysis of Fogazzaro's *Malombra*, an analysis carried out in three phases. In the first part, I analyzed the psychological itinerary of *Malombra*, concentrating on three specific aspects of the text: the theme of secrecy and the psychology of each protagonist. First, I considered the secret history of the d'Ormengo family, showing how knowledge of the Cecilia's horrific demise returns to wreak havoc on Cesare and Marina in a manner illustrative of the laws set out by Abraham for the transgenerational phantom. Following that, I charted the course of Marina's psychological development, tracing the fundamental duality in her character to the tension between culture and nature, and showing that while the dualization of her motives with those of Cecilia leads to some semblance of the two personalities acting in concert, the imperfect nature of the overlay between the two sets of motives also produces conflicts and discontinuities in her subjective constitution. Finally, I investigated the psychology of Corrado Silla, finding indications to suggest that the young writer's personal struggles stem, at least in part, from an unwitting yet interminable mourning of his mother, possibly in combination with the ongoing search for a father-figure.

In the second part of the third chapter, I went on to demonstrate how the subplots involving Nepo and Edith reconstruct, in alternative keys, the existential situations of Silla and Marina. Having traced Silla's relation to Nepo to the underlying question of sincerity versus hypocrisy, I showed the different ways in which the Salvador subplot rewrites the sentimental and idealized backstory of the male protagonist against a more realistic landscape of social artifice, corruption and deceit. Then, after considering Edith's function as a moral counterbalance to Marina in the text, I showed the ways in which the Steinegge subplot rewrites the turbulent backstory of Marina in a more pious key, centered on ideas of reconciliation and redemption. Ultimately, I discussed how the different facets of *Malombra*'s structure, brought

together on an abstract level, convey a message about Fogazzaro's own spiritual evolution, namely, about his return to the Catholic faith.

In the third part of the third chapter, I compared *Malombra* with the texts analyzed in the second chapter, first in terms of the way the Double is represented and then in terms of more general literary features. The first part of this comparison cast light on the textured nature of Marina's representation and the second part cast light on the variegated texture of the novel itself by drawing attention to its patchwork of ideas, narrative devices and generic trends. It was in this connection that I came to remark on the multidimensional scope of the Double in the structure of the novel, as a space of metadiscursive consciousness, a source of imagination- and thought-experiment and a space for the problematization of identity.

Fogazzaro's portrayal of Marina in *Malombra* has the potential to generate interest from a number of critical standpoints. From a comparative standpoint, the metamorphosis of Marina into Cecilia foreshadows the characterization of Piero Maironi, the protagonist of *Il Santo*, who in the course of that novel, undergoes a transformation from neurasthenic bourgeois into ascetic visionary (the eponymous "Saint," Benedetto)⁵⁷⁸. As Laura Wittman helps to show in her article, "Fogazzaro tra occultismo e modernismo," the portrayals of "Marina nella sua crescente allucinazione"⁵⁷⁹ in *Malombra* and "Maironi nella sua crescente vocazione"⁵⁸⁰ in *Il Santo* offer two, parallel variations on a common theme of radical transformation^{581,582}. Wittman, highlighting similarities between the textual strategies of the two novels—namely, their common

⁵⁷⁸ Antonio Fogazzaro, *Il Santo* (Milan: Baldini, Castoldi & Company, 1906).

⁵⁷⁹ "Marina in her increasing delusion"

⁵⁸⁰ "Benedetto in his increasing vocation"

⁵⁸¹ Laura Wittman, "Fogazzaro tra occultismo e modernismo" (2013), 271.

⁵⁸² There is a prima facie indication of these parallels in the similar phonetic structure of the names "Marina" and "Maironi."

use of projections (or “pathetic fallacy”) to construct the subjective reality of the protagonist’s experience and their use of certain images as *leitmotif*—remarks how “il linguaggio della discesa nella follia sembra essere lo stesso linguaggio dell’ascesa verso la santità”⁵⁸³⁵⁸⁴. The discernment of parallels such as these is important because it argues the relevance of the Double and *Malombra* to a broader discourse on Fogazzaro’s relationship to theological and literary modernism, and in that context, to the question of modern-day sainthood. In a more general sense, this dissertation has sought with its analysis of *Malombra* to open pathways for a dialogue with other manifestations of the psychological novel, both inside and outside the Italian tradition, from the stirrings of Romanticism in the early nineteenth century to the Modernism of the early twentieth century.

In a different connection, the representation of Marina in *Malombra* also signals a complex engagement with the question of feminine subjectivity, and notably, one that tackles the unique position of the feminine subject relative to history and memory. As my analysis has helped to show, the dualization of Marina’s subjectivity into the socially inscribed identity of Marina and the socially excluded Cecilia is predicated on a volatile asymmetry between paternal and maternal genealogies—between the officially recognized dynasties of Crusnelli-Malombra and d’Ormengo and the muted legacy of Cecilia Varrega—and rooted in the suppression of the mother-daughter relationship. The above-described asymmetry is fundamentally articulated in the polysemy of the patronymic “Malombra,” which doubles as the vernacular name for the deserted locale associated with Marina’s maternal grandmother, and experiences denoting the

⁵⁸³ “the language of the descent into madness seems to be the same as the language of the ascent toward sainthood”

⁵⁸⁴ Wittman notes that the textual strategy used to construct the subjective reality of the experience comprises, in both cases, “un fluttuare fra la natura come rappresentazione degli stati d’animo del personaggio, cioè proiezione, e la natura come fonte di cambiamento e rivelazione di una verità nascosta, cioè non più proiezione ma presenza” [a fluctuation between nature as representation of the character’s frame of mind, namely projection, and nature as a source of change and revelation of hidden truth, which is to say no longer projection but presence].

suppression of the mother-daughter bond, from the attempt by Miss Sarah to supplant Marina's deceased mother to the discovery of Cecilia's manuscript (which in turn, testifies to the violent separation of her mother from her grandmother), orient the narration of Marina's backstory. Thus, Marina emerges as a tenuous subject, laden with inconsistencies and "hypocrisies," cast from the paternal mold against a backdrop of tragic, unmourned maternal losses, while Cecilia arises as a powerful impulse, a personification of the gaps in Marina's historical and social formation, bent on reclaiming the maternal patrimony in a space outside of history⁵⁸⁵.

The lines of inquiry sketched above are but two of the many ways in which the research on Fogazzaro and the Double presented in the pages of this thesis may be carried forward and enlarged upon. That said, I have reached the end of my task, and I will close by simply reaffirming my optimism in what regards this dissertation's contribution to the field of Fogazzaro studies.

⁵⁸⁵One may consider the (re)mapping of Marina's subjectivity from different standpoints—for instance, as a function of the imbrication of French and Italian cultural signifiers/signs (that is, a movement from a French literary and cultural heritage to a properly Italian one, from Marina's "father"-land and lingua franca to her mother-land and mother-tongue) or in terms of a deterritorialization and reterritorialization, through the replacement of literary *topoi* with mythical and geographical *topoi*.

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⁵⁹² Fogazzaro produced this preface for *Figaro*, which published the French translation of *Malombra* in 1898.

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⁵⁹⁴ All English translations of passages from Sandroni's study are my own.

⁵⁹⁵ All English translations of passages from *Le leggende del castello nero* are my own.

⁵⁹⁶ All English translations of passages from Tarchetti's *Uno spirito in un lampone* have been taken from Venuti's edition.

⁵⁹⁷ All English translations of passages from Todorov's *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* are my own.

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⁵⁹⁸ All English translations of passages from *Le storie del castello di Trezza* are my own.

Appendix: A Selected Timeline of Late Eighteenth-, Nineteenth-, and early Twentieth-Century
Texts Featuring the Theme of the Double

1796	Jean Paul— <i>Siebenkäs</i> (novel)
1800	Jean Paul— <i>Titan</i>
1809	E.T.A. Hoffmann— <i>Ritter Gluck</i> (short story)
1814	Adelbert von Chamisso— <i>Peter Schlemihl</i> (novella)
1814	E.T.A. Hoffmann— <i>The Lost Reflection</i> (short story)
1815	E.T.A. Hoffmann— <i>Die Elixiere des Teufels</i> (novel)
1821	E.T.A. Hoffmann— <i>Die Doppeltgänger</i> (short story)
1828	Heinrich Heine— <i>Die Doppelgänger</i> (poem)
1828	Ferdinand Raimund— <i>The King of the Alps</i> (play)
1835	Alfred de Musset— <i>La Nuit de décembre</i> (poem)
1836	Théophile Gautier— <i>La Morte amoureuse</i> (short story)
1839	Edgar Allan Poe— <i>William Wilson</i> (short story)
1840	Théophile Gautier— <i>Le Chevalier double</i> (short story)
1843	Charles Dickens— <i>A Christmas Carol</i> (novella)
1846	Fyodor Dostoevsky— <i>The Double</i> (novel)
1847	Hans Christian Andersen— <i>The Shadow</i> (literary fairy tale)
1856	Théophile Gautier— <i>Avatar</i> (short story)
1856	Théophile Gautier— <i>Jettatura</i> (short story)
1867	Iginio Ugo Tarchetti— <i>Le leggende del castello nero</i> (short story)
1867	Iginio Ugo Tarchetti— <i>La storia di una gamba</i> (short story)

1867	Iginio Ugo Tarchetti—<i>Uno spirito in un lampono</i> (short story)
1869	Iginio Ugo Tarchetti—<i>I fatali</i> (short story)
1875	Giovanni Verga—<i>Le storie del castello di Trezza</i> (novella)
1877	Emilio De Marchi—<i>Due anime in un corpo</i> (novella)
1881	Antonio Fogazzaro—<i>Malombra</i> (novel)
1883	Guy de Maupassant—<i>Lui?</i> (short story)
1886	Robert Louis Stevenson—<i>Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (novella)
1887	Guy de Maupassant—<i>Le Horla</i> (short story)
1890	Oscar Wilde—<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (novel)
1904	Luigi Pirandello—<i>Il fu Mattia Pascal</i> (novel)⁵⁹⁹
1905	Antonio Fogazzaro—<i>Il santo</i> (novel)
1908	Henry James—<i>The Jolly Corner</i> (short story)
1909	Joseph Conrad—<i>The Secret Sharer</i> (short story)
1913	August Hoffmann von Vestenhof—<i>The Man with Three Eyes</i> (short story)
1913	Stellan Rye/Hanns Heinz Ewers—<i>The Student of Prague</i> (film)

⁵⁹⁹ I have limited the scope of this dissertation to cover a handful of Italian texts from the second half of the nineteenth century. The thematics of the Double have an important place in numerous Italian texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as those of Pirandello, which I do not include within the parameters of my study.