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Norman Douglas' *Old Calabria*: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the famous work *Old Calabria* written by Norman Douglas and published in 1915, in order to examine the influence of Calabrian culture of the 20th century on English literature.

The stimulus for this investigation comes mainly from articles on British and Italian travel literature which I read before writing this thesis to have a broader view of this topic. The literature review describes in detail theoretical issues with regard to the motivations of British writers to reach southern Italy, particularly Norman Douglas, according to whom he would find in the fascinating Calabria a source of inspiration and influence for his literary productions.

The present investigation also considers the experience of the contemporary Italian writer and hiker Francesco Bevilacqua who travelled throughout Calabria, even though he chose different itineraries in comparison with Norman Douglas, in order to search for the same beauty narrated in *Old Calabria*, and to trace a sort of balance between “old” and “new” after all these years.

The data gathering processes consist mainly of qualitative semi-structured interviews with two participants (the above-mentioned Italian writer and the Italian professor and writer Emanuele Lelli), interview transcripts and content analysis technique which I used to examine and interpret data collected.

Findings indicate that Calabria has directly entered into post-modernity, namely, into the Telematics and Information Technology era that developed between the middle and the end of the 20th century, bypassing industrialization and marked urbanism. As a result, recent data, such as the lower population density in addition to the lack of major industries and metropolises, as well as the population that still lives in rural and mountainous contexts, would characterize this marked “diversity” from the rest of Europe.

This analysis concludes that, although many years have passed since Douglas’ first visit to Calabria, Francesco Bevilacqua’s research seems to confirm a considerable permanence of the archaic and mythical influence. Hence, many people, particularly writers and artists from northern Europe, especially from England, seem to show a keen interest in southern culture and therefore reach Calabria for tourism, and in many cases, to change their “homeland” as well.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1 Focus of research

This investigation proposes a research project of comparative literatures (English literature and Calabrian culture and literature). In specific terms, the aim of this study is to analyze the famous work *Old Calabria* written by Norman Douglas and published in 1915, in which the author himself captured the intimate essence of Calabria, in order to examine the influence of Calabrian culture on English literature in the early years of the 20th century. This research takes into account the motivations of British writers, particularly Norman Douglas, who on the occasion of the *Grand Tour* of Europe between the 1800s and the early 1900s reached southern Italy, particularly the Calabrian region that was full of myth and history and drew inspiration from their travels for the creation of their most important works. Accordingly, this thesis makes continuous references to the following English writers: the illustrator Edward Lear (known for his limericks), George Gissing, Arthur John Strutt, the British writer and traveler Henry Swinburne and Richard Keppel Crafer, the English printer and observer who in 1821 published *A tour through the Southern Provinces of the kingdom of Naples*. However, particular attention is dedicated to Norman Douglas who seemed to find in the fascinating Calabria a source of inspiration and influence on his literary productions. Hence, *Old Calabria* can be regarded as the best travel literature book ever written and one of the successful travel books on Calabria. The author goes along the itinerary from Lucera to Crotona, via Venosa, Manfredonia, Taranto and Salento (the ancient Calabria) described by the French archaeologist François Lenormant in two previous travel reports as *La Grande Grèce* and also reported as *On the Ionian Shore (By the Ionian Sea)* by Englishman George Gissing.

Nevertheless, Douglas appears to be mainly interested in the exotic and lush landscape, and the inhabitants full of vitality, as a result, he often makes reference to the historical events of the classical age and archaeology. Moreover, in *Old Calabria* there appear to be also frequent considerations of the economic and

social conditions of southern Italy and particularly the hardships that characterized Calabria in the early 20th century.

As stated above, this inquiry takes into consideration the problems and the difficulties that southern Italy had to deal with in the past and still does in order to study the influence of local culture on English literature so as to make a thorough comparison between Calabria (with its critical issues) and northern Europe (especially England). At the same time, this research also considers the experience of the contemporary Italian writer and experienced hiker Francesco Bevilacqua, born in Lamezia Terme in 1957, who travelled throughout Calabria, even though he chose different itineraries in comparison with Norman Douglas, in order to search for the same beauty narrated in *Old Calabria*, so as to trace a sort of balance between “old” and “new” after all these years, and to gather material for the book *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* that he wrote and which was published in 2012.

Consequently, it appears that it is mainly the continuous search for beauty that unites these two men who are seemingly different from each other but in reality very similar. On the one hand, there is Norman Douglas who wandered around Calabria with his rebellious and free spirit, his nonconformity, curiosity and with extreme spirituality (despite his non-religiousness), and who did not judge the people he met nor the ignorance and poverty against which he clashed and had to deal with. Whereas, on the other hand, there is Francesco Bevilacqua who climbed the mountains with respect and passion, always ready to fight to protect and safeguard them from human havoc.

On balance, the focus of this study is to discover what happens when a brilliant writer as well as an eccentric and deeply intelligent man like Norman Douglas reaches a remote place characterized by wild nature, as Calabria was in the early 20th century and, above all, to investigate what remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria described by Douglas.

1.2 Rationale

The goal of the present thesis is to investigate on current beliefs of travel literature in order to make a sort of comparison between Norman Douglas' experience in southern Italy with the Italian contemporary writer Francesco Bevilacqua who, as well as producing an in-depth study about the British author and his famous work *Old Calabria*, has repeated Douglas' travels throughout Calabria in order to write the book *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*.

The stimulus to do this research project came from the readings of articles from academic journals on similar studies (e.g. Bevilacqua, 2008; Bevilacqua, 2012; Botton, 2002; Holloway, Douglas, 1976; Lear, 2009; Lelli, 2016; Valentini, 2001) which contributed to arouse my curiosity and prompted me to do a more in-depth research in this area.

Data collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews with the contemporary Italian writer and hiker Francesco Bevilacqua and the professor and writer Emanuele Lelli, provided valuable insights into the current beliefs of travel literature in Italy and what remains today of the Calabria described by Norman Douglas. Consequently, this led me to draw some conclusions about the influence that Calabrian culture has had on Douglas' literary productions and on possible further research to be done in this field.

The aim of this investigation was not to re-analyze former research about the experience of British writers who on the occasion of the *Grand Tour* reached southern Italy. I undertook this study in order to discover the perceptions of the writers Bevilacqua and Lelli also with regard to this area of research. I chose this topic because it appeared timely and interesting to me and I examined the participants' viewpoints with the perspective to contribute knowledge and understanding in my own professional context.

In particular, I wanted to interview Bevilacqua because, having read his book *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* before starting to write the present thesis, I wished to verify whether my perception was right or not. Hence, the questions that I asked at the interviews aimed to discover mainly what made the participant take a keen interest in Norman Douglas, and particularly to investigate what the main

reason was that made him decide to go along the same routes as Douglas almost ninety years later.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions that I wished to address include the following:

- What made English travel writers of the *Grand Tour* to come to southern Italy between 19th and 20th century and what did they expect to find in the *Mezzogiorno*, particularly in Calabria?
- What incited Norman Douglas who was a brilliant and eccentric writer to reach a distant and wild place such as Calabria not yet tainted by modernity?
- What influence did Calabrian and southern culture and literature have on Douglas' literary productions?
- What is the psychological introspection of Douglas' analysis in *Old Calabria* as an expression of his creativity?
- What prompted the contemporary Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua to take a keen interest in Norman Douglas and what are the similarities and differences between Bevilacqua and Douglas with particular attention to their works *Old Calabria* and *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*?
- What remains today of the archaic and mythical Calabria described by Norman Douglas?

1.4 Norman Douglas: life and works

Norman Douglas was born at about midnight between the 8th and 9th of December 1868, in Falkenhorst, Thuringen, Austria, in a province where several Scottish families had established themselves in the second half of the 19th century. Some of these families were descendants of Lord Forbes, the Fairholmes, the Kennedys came from Kirkcubrightshire and Manchester, whereas the Douglass came from Kincardineshire. The official name became George Norman Douglass, consequently, after the death of his father John Sholto Douglass caused by a hunting accident in the mountains, the second “s” was eliminated and the official date of birth then became 8th December. The family of his paternal grandfather, mainly landowners and professional people, came from Tilquhillie and boasted aristocratic origins. His maternal grandfather, Freiherr von Poellnitz, belonged to the German aristocracy, and his maternal grandmother was the daughter of Lord Forbes, a Scottish nobleman. Jane Kennedy, the paternal grandmother, was Scottish as well and belonged to a family that had had an important role during the Industrial Revolution.

Still today at Tilquhillie, there is a castle of modest proportions on the banks of the Dee which was built in 1567 and owned by the 17th laird of Tilquhillie, grandson of Norman Douglas. Hence, he owed his properties to the enterprise and the abilities of John Douglass, Norman’s grandfather, who was related to the Kennedys of Manchester.

Consequently, it was in Manchester, probably, that John Douglass had his first experiences in the cotton industry which he later used in his entrepreneurial activities in Austria.

John Sholto, his son and father of Norman, 15th laird of Tilquhillie, consolidated his family’s reputation in Vorarlberg. Indeed, he became a legendary figure because of his physical prowess, lively intelligence and, above all, his great passion for the mountains.

J. Sholto, a man of many interests, was not only interested in business and wrote about archaeological topics and other subjects, but was also fluent in English, German, and French and married Vanda von Poellnitz in 1864. After he got married, the Sholto settled in Falkenhorst at his parents’ house, who,

much to Vanda's relief, after a year decided to return to Scotland, even though he was still left in charge of the family's businesses.

Unfortunately, Sholto died in 1874 at the age of 36, owing to a hunting accident, a drama that Vanda had already experienced in a dream two years earlier. Sholto and Vanda had had four sons: John William Edward James (1865), Robert Ernest (1867), who died at the age of six months, George Norman (1868), who was five years old at the time of his father's accident, and Mary (1871).

John, the eldest son, enjoyed the privileges reserved for the first-born child, at least in terms of titles and possessions. On the contrary, Norman spent his youth with Mary who was his faithful playmate. References to these years can be found in *Together* and the Diary that Vanda wrote in the years between 1871 and 1874. Unfortunately, Mary died of tuberculosis in 1903 at the age of thirty-two. At the beginning of 1875, Norman began to study at the Bludesch School which was the same school that John had attended. Afterwards, the death of his father deeply influenced Norman's life, as a result, it was at this time that he began to reflect on the existence of God.

Additionally, at that time there was a rumor circulating of a relationship, which maybe started before Sholto's death, between Vanda and a certain painter whose name was Jakob Jehly.

This circumstance and maybe the need for John, a ten-year-old boy, to attend a more reliable school, led to the possibility of the two boys' relocation somewhere else. John and Norman spent the winter of 1876-'77 in London, guests of a distant Douglass relative, James Heywood, who lived at 26 Kensington Palace Gardens. They then attended Yarlet Hall, a school a few miles from Stafford, which left negative traces in Norman's memory (Holloway 1976).

In the meantime, the relationship between Vanda and Jehly strengthened, albeit amidst a thousand circumspections and petty deceptions due in part to prejudices attributable to the painter's different social background.

Subsequently, in January 1879, Vanda made the official announcement to the family. It was rather easy to guess what her father's reactions were and Vanda's answer:

Are you the Devil? You must be mad to think of marrying that clodhopper! It could never work." And Vanda: "And if you all tell me

you'll die if I marry him, I shall say ' Die, then! I will marry him (Holloway 1976:31).

As a result, old Jane Douglass (her mother-in-law) threatened to prevent her grandchildren from spending their vacations with their mother at Falkenhorst (Falcon's nest) the Georgian-style residence built by John Douglass near the Vorarlberg factory; an announcement that was greeted with great pleasure by Johnnie.

After these events Norman, too, left Yarlet with relief and was entrusted to the care of Reverend Mr. Green and his wife, who lived in the parsonage at Mowsley, not far from Uppingham which was the venue of the public school attended by Johnnie. In this new place, he was able to pursue his interests in Music and Natural Science thanks to Mrs. Green's help.

For the time being, on December 4th 1879, Vanda and Jakob got married. The happy outcome of his mother's marriage, with all the contrasts that preceded and followed it, left indelible marks on Norman's personality of which it is possible to find a reflection in his own system of life:

Do what you want to do, and be damned to everybody else (Holloway 1976:39).

In September 1881, Norman transferred to the same school that Johnnie attended and, gradually, after the birth of Margarethe (Grete), relations between Vanda and her own family began to improve.

In 1883, John was on the verge of leaving the school of Uppingham, and the idea of being left alone forced Norman to enact some threats (perhaps the use of illicit sexual practices), which led to his expulsion from the school.

In October 1883, the whole family moved to Karlsruhe where Norman was able to attend the high school until he was twenty years of age.

At this school, not only did he have the opportunity to study foreign languages such as Russian, Italian and French, but he also managed to take piano and dance lessons. More than anything, he became particularly interested in Zoology, Archeology and Geology. It was at the Karlsruhe high school that Norman made friends with Luigi Guerrieri-Gonzaga, a descendant of the Duke of Mantua, and it

was during a visit to Luigi in Italy that Douglas formed a romantic attachment with one of his sisters. Luigi died in 1895 after many difficult years that led him to be hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital. As a result, it is possible to find traces of this occurrence in *Nerinda*, in which the author tells how madness can destroy a man (Giacomantonio 1984).

During these years of study, Norman had the opportunity to approach the work of Gregorovius, a German historian who wrote a history of medieval Rome and whose sister Mary translated *Irisei Capri*.

Then, the last years that he spent in Karlsruhe, from which he moved in July 1889, were characterized by leisure and love affairs as well.

Above all, his interest in the Natural Sciences also received impetus, therefore, he went on continuous and frequent excursions to the countryside and to areas of geological and zoological interest.

In 1886, two of his short notes began to be published in a column of the journal *The Zoologist*, however, the 18th of March 1888 was an important date as he first fell in love with the Mediterranean which he regarded as his greatest and true love. The following spring, during a trip to Italy he visited Naples for the first time with his brother and was fascinated by the city and its gulf. There, he became acquainted with Dr. Anton Dohrn who was the director of the Zoological Station and began his explorations of the islands.

In July 1889, Norman was able to take the final exam at the Karlsruhe high school, then, in the following September he accepted the invitation from a friend he had met in Karlsruhe and went to Paris where he had the chance to improve his working knowledge of French.

Consequently, in France as well, he had the opportunity to make several scientific excursions that allowed him to visit the central-meridian region.

Correspondingly, he received a vivid and realistic impression from the “desolate appearance” of Langeac, a mining area near Clermont, of which it is possible to find a somber description in chapter X of *Siren Land*, a description that reveals all his Rousseauian spirit, of love for nature and his aversion to the negative effects of civilization.

In the early 1890s, Norman went to London where he was rather active in social relations and where he managed to deepen his interest in Zoological Studies. It was in this period that he published *Herpetology of the Grand Duchy of Baden*, *Avifauna* of Baden and the elaboration of his theory of sexual selection, which was then published in the autumn of 1896 with the title *On the Darwinian Hypothesis of Sexual Selection*.

After having read the work of Spallanzani on the Lipari Islands, in April and May 1891 Douglas went to visit those places in order to enrich his knowledge of Geology and Zoology.

In April 1892, he visited Malta and Greece via Brindisi, where not only was he attracted by the beauty of the landscape and the interest of the vestiges of the ancient civilization, but was also fascinated by the scientific curiosities. Around the middle of May of the same year, he had the opportunity to meet the family of his old schoolmate Luigi Gonzaga. It was at this time that Norman contracted a tedious venereal disease namely syphilis that deeply troubled him in the years to come and from which he struggled to recover for good.

In January 1893, he had to enter a competition for attaché in "His Majesty's diplomatic corps," and in March of that year he entered the Foreign Office. His first destination was Stalingrad and then went to Petrograd where he arrived in March 1894. During this period he studied Russian and visited Finland and Turkey.

It was during this same period that he completed a *Report on the Pumice-Stone Industry of the Lipari Islands*, published in the *Miscellaneous Series* of the Foreign Office in August 1895.

As could be said about Douglas' many other essays, pamphlets and articles, this was a work which, beyond its subject matter, clearly revealed his marked qualities as a writer. According to Holloway:

It is an illustration... of how a technical subject may be made intelligible and interesting to the layman. The prime ingredient in the author is curiosity, a lively and enquiring mind; the second, an intellect trained to observe and describe essentials and characteristic particulars with precision and economy.... Douglas has these ingredients, and could apply this style to anything. It is essentially a humane skill, not normally

found in those deficient in human sympathy or wide terms of reference. Douglas spent the first half of his life perfecting this skill, and it became the substructure, the skeleton, upon which the whole character of his writing was built (Holloway 1976:93).

In Russia he had some love affairs, however, there is no doubt that two essential facts determined a turning point in his life: one was the first non-scientific work *The Familiar Spirit*, whereas the second was characterized by the decision to leave his position as embassy secretary, albeit under the pretext of being put “*en disponibilité*” for two years, starting from the 15th November of 1896.

In 1897, Norman settled in Posillipo, in Villa Maya, which had been built on some Roman remains. It goes without saying that Italy represented for him a complete liberation and the beginning of a new life that was more suited to his inclinations. A premonitory sign of what would have been the course of his existence was given by the fact that he was able to manifest his homosexual tendencies without any reservations. He was also encouraged by the circumstances where such practices were certainly more tolerated than in puritan England which in those years, exactly in 1895, tried and condemned Oscar Wilde for homosexuality. In other words, in Italy he had the opportunity to create a new environment for himself where the ancient traces of tolerance and vitality of *Magna Græcia* culture allowed him to express himself without repressing his forbidden identity (Sette 2018). It was precisely in 1897 that he had an affair with a boy whose name was Michele, the first which is officially known, and Capri proved to be a free and tolerant place as it already had a large colony of homosexuals.

In July 1897, he visited Corsica and the island of Elba with the American writer Marion Crawford, and after this cruise he wrote *A Tale of Elba*, which represented his second attempt in the works of fiction.

On the 19th of December of the same year, he boarded a ship to India where he spent, perhaps, most of his time in Rawalpindi and where he probably conceived the idea of becoming a writer:

He has said that it was during those quiet weeks that his true knowledge and understanding of literature was born and that the idea of

himself becoming a writer first took shape in his mind (Holloway 1976:123).

The fifth and final version of *The Familiar Spirit* originated from this idea in Naples, Italy, in 1899, a work that was in reality regarded to be not very happy. On the 25th of June 1898, Norman attempted to adapt to conventional life by marrying his cousin Elizabeth Louisa Theobaldina FitzGibbon, generally called Elsa at the Fulham Register Office, but soon divorced her because of his wife's infidelity. Nevertheless, the marriage was not approved by Adèle, Elsa's mother and Vanda's minor sister. Some time later, the eldest son, who had been conceived before the marriage, was born on the 2nd of February 1899 at Villa Maya and was named Louis Archibald, or rather Archie.

Between the years 1899 and 1900 he visited Tunisia, India, and Ceylon, perhaps with his wife.

One year later, in 1901 he published *Unprofessional Tales*, under the pseudonym of Normyx written in collaboration with his wife; nevertheless, according to his confession, his own contribution consisted in the general revision of the work, in the short story *Nerinda*, that was inspired by the dramatic experience of his friend Luigi-Guerrieri Gonzaga and an anacreontic poem (Holloway 1976: 128-131).

Unprofessional Tales was dedicated to Marie Louise De La Ramée, otherwise known as Ouida, an English writer from Suffolk who was gifted with great narrative talent and, above all, author of works for children.

It is assumed that Douglas was fascinated by her ability with which she was able to express all her rebellion against the Victorian "prudery", behind her melodramatic sentimentality.

In July 1902, Vanda died (Jakob Jehly had already died on the 27th March of 1897), and on the 20th August his second son Robert Sholto, informally called Robin, was born in Vorarlberg.

By 1902, Norman became a frequent visitor to Capri and starting from the 2nd of February 1903, he established his house at Villa San Michele that belonged to Prince Caracciolo. Not only did Capri fascinate him because of the beauty of its

landscape, but also because it was an interesting place for his research. Unfortunately, his relationship with Elsa became increasingly difficult to the point that he was then forced to apply for a divorce. That being the case, Elsa was also attributed to extra-marital relations with Baron von Stengel and for this reason she was found guilty of adultery and finally the divorce was granted on the 18th of March 1904.

In February and April of the same year, two monographs on Capri, *The Blue Grotto and its Literature* and *The Forestal Condition of Capri*, were published separately. In 1905, Douglas had the good fortune to meet Joseph Conrad and his wife who had traveled to Capri for health reasons. This meeting developed into a lasting friendship that had great importance in Douglas's career since it was through Conrad's intermediation that Norman was able to get in touch with some English publishers.

In the same year, Norman chose sides: he decided to become a writer. As a result, this decision prompted him to entrust Archie and Robert to some English friends. Meanwhile, *Three Monographs (The Last Literature of Capri, Tiberius and Saracens and Corsairs in Capri)* were published in Naples in July 1906.

Starting from 1907, it was possible for scholars and researchers to have his diaries at their disposal, which provided them with timely, albeit concise annotations on his daily life. His first visit to Calabria was in August 1907 where he spent almost one week in Sila, with which he was magnificently impressed, as is evident from a description he made "on the spot" (Giacomantonio 1984).

In these years, he visited New York and began to take an interest in the dramatic poem the *Adamo Caduto* by the Calabrian poet Serafino della Salandra, published in Cosenza in 1647.

In January 1908, he traveled to London to personally follow the court case concerning obtaining a divorce. In April he returned to Capri and then moved to Ischia. It is interesting to recall that references to Norman and Elsa's adventures can be found in the German novel *Violet: the Story of a Mother* by Kurt Aram, published in 1910 under the pseudonym of Hans Fischer, with whom Elsa was in contact.

In 1908, Douglas settled in Nerano in the "Yellow House," also known as the

“haunted house,” due to the strange rumors circulating about it. It was in this place that on the 21st of May he started the composition of *Siren Land* and consequently met Amitrano, a young farmer, who assisted him and with whom he had a love affair.

At a later date, in 1909, J. Conrad helped Douglas to become a contributor to several literary journals. *Brigand's Forest*, which are later to be found in chapters XXVII and XXVIII of *Old Calabria*, appeared in the *English Review*, whose editor at the time was Ford Madox Hueffer, who, along with Conrad, could be regarded as a staunch supporter of Douglas. Moreover, in 1913, *Nelson and Sent: Love* (sentimental love?) were published in the same journal, which were later separately included in *Experiment and Man and Morals*. That being the case, Douglas became one of the most valued contributors to *Cornhill* and *English Review*.

In May 1909, he came back to Capri where he learnt about the dramatic conditions in which the people of Reggio Calabria and Messina found themselves in after the catastrophic earthquake which caused almost the total destruction of the two cities. Because of that, Norman promoted a subscription among the foreign people and managed to bring the sums collected to their destination. When he returned to Capri, he wrote an account of this experience which in September was published in the *Cornhill* and that later became the topic of chapter XXIX of *Old Calabria* (Giacomantonio 1984).

Afterwards, in September of the same year, Norman moved to Scanno in the Abruzzo Apennines and in December to Tunis as he was in search of material for *Fountains in the Sand*. During these excursions, he collaborated with a man whose name was Daniel who also provided him with photographs for the same work.

Nevertheless, he travelled frequently during this period, however, his new companion was Eric, a 13-year-old boy whom Norman tried to adopt and who was also close to him during a visit he made to Calabria.

In the early 1911 he completed *Fountains in the Sand*, a work that may have been influenced by Conrad's suggestions:

It had been Conrad's more than any other influence which had induced Douglas to make his descriptive writing carry a little fiction when it could (Holloway 1976:192).

However, these were crucial years for Douglas' productions. It was precisely in this period that he began a regular collaboration with the *English Review*, he then completed *Old Calabria* (1912-13) and, finally, he committed himself to writing *South Wind*. *Old Calabria* was published in February 1915 by Secker & Warburg and welcomed with interest by critics and reviewers. Later on, *London Street Games* was published in July 1916.

Unfortunately, on 12th September, Elsa died in a dramatic circumstance as she burned in her own bed by mistake.

On 23th October, Norman was arrested on charge of seducing a sixteen-year-old boy at the Natural History Museum in Kensington. Accordingly, He remained entangled in judicial proceedings until January 1917.

After having spent some time in London, he then returned to Italy and went to Siena, Pisa, Viareggio and Florence.

The experience in London left deep marks on Douglas: firstly, he considered the possibility of not writing his own name in the work *South Wind*, secondly in 1917 he started to think of the idea of writing a novel that was inspired by those events. Finally, *South Wind* was published in June 1917 and it was a great success even in the United States.

After *South Wind* he wrote *Alone* of which a manuscript copy was sent to John Mavrogordato, who evaluated it as a better work than *South Wind*.

During this period, there was a long dispute between Secker and Douglas as the latter believed that he had been defrauded of the legitimate earnings he was supposed to make from some publications, especially from *South Wind*. Hence, Douglas decided not to entrust Secker with the publication of *Alone*.

In 1919, Norman met another young man in Menton, René Mari, with whom he had a long relationship.

However, his literary activity knew no rest. In the same year, the Greek government offered him three hundred pounds for a work in the genre of *Old Calabria*. In 1920, he signed a contract with Chapman & Hall in order to publish *Theophilus*, through the mediation of writer Ralph Straus.

Towards the end of 1919, he settled in Florence where he met D.H. Lawrence and where he was later joined by René.

During this period, Norman also committed himself to study Greek culture and language, therefore, on the 25th March of 1920, he moved to the British School of Archaeology in Athens. In reality, he was very disappointed by this experience which prompted him to come back to Italy where he found accommodation in Sant'Agata in the Sorrento peninsula.

In September of the same year, *They Went* was published, and in 1921, after a brief stay in France, he returned to Florence where he met H.G. Wells, Rebecca West, Aldous Huxley and D.H. Lawrence. At a later time, the sultry August heat forced him to leave Florence to go to Vorarlberg with René.

Alone was then published in November 1921, and the following year he began a long friendship with Pino Orioli, a bookseller from London who had recently moved to Florence. Later, *Together*, a travel book with digressions on the History, Geology, Botany and Zoology of Vorarlberg, was published in September 1923. In actual fact, this book was the result of two visits that he made in René's company between 1921 and 1922. Furthermore, after *Together*, other works worthy of mention were *In the Beginning* which was written in 1925 and published in 1928 and *Looking Back* published five years later, in 1933.

Other works that he wrote and published in the following years include the following: *D.H. Lawrence and Maurice Magnus* (1924), *Experiments* (1925), *Birds and Beasts in the Greek Anthology* (1928), *How About Europe?* (1929), *One Day* (1929), *Three of Them* (1930), *Paneros* (1931), *Summer Islands* (1931 and 1934). The year 1924 marked the beginning of a deep rift with Robin who was in need of money and had inadvertently sold some of his father's letters to the publisher W. Town-ley Searle, with whom Norman had begun to collaborate. In that year, Douglas moved frequently to Calabria and Vorarlberg with an English boy in addition to another youngster from Capri and sometimes with René as well. Actually, he was waiting to leave for Africa where he was to meet his old partner Eric who had enlisted in the Tanganyika police. On the 18th of May 1925, he arrived in Mombasa but by the 22nd of July he was already in Genoa on his way back.

On the 13th of February 1926, the *New Statesman* published a review of the trade edition of *Experiments* (Chapman & Hall 1925). Between 1926 and 1927, he had new problems with the mother of a young man whose name was Luciano who had been his traveling companion during that period. In 1928, he visited Lebanon where he wrote a new novel entitled *Love among Ruins*. During this period, a reproduction of the *Report on the Pumice Stone Industry* by Nancy Cunard appeared, and there was a distribution of *Some Limericks* which took place entirely privately that Douglas defined in a letter of introduction as:

Extremely obscene and blasphemous-one of the filthiest in the English language... (cit. in Holloway 1976: 367).

In April 1929, Norman returned for a vacation to Calabria with Orioli; in the month of July of the same year, Nancy Cunard published *One Day*, which, as already mentioned above, had been commissioned to him in 1919 by the Greek government. By December he was ready for the distribution of *How about Europe?*, a scathing attack on Christianity, Western education and civilization, and war. Other works that followed in 1930 were *Three of Them* which were essays that included *One Day*, *Paneros* (1931), the latter was an essay written in the 17th century prose in which he displayed his philosophy of love and life.

Other important works include: *Summer Islands* (1931), a travel book devoted to Ischia and Ponza, and *Looking Back* (1933) that was published in two volumes. The second-mentioned was an autobiographical work in which he spoke with detachment even of personal experiences that could not always be confessed and that may have been the most representative moment of the last phase in his career as a writer.

In January 1933, Douglas went to Paris where he stayed for a few months and managed to edit a catalog of the Macpherson library.

He then visited Vienna where he had the opportunity to meet Freud, to appreciate his work and submit to his attention some of his writings, especially *How about Europe?* and *Old Calabria*.

In the spring of 1933, Douglas and Orioli visited Calabria once again. The experiences of that trip were described by Orioli in a diary of which all trace was lost, but which later became the famous work *Moving Along*, written with the collaboration of Douglas himself and published by Chatto & Windus in 1934.

Unfortunately, Norman's health condition worsened and, as a result, he was forced to go to Switzerland for a medical check-up. On the 2nd of March 1933, René, the young man with whom he had had a lifelong friendship, died of tuberculosis, and in the same month his half-sister Grete Gulbransson died of pneumonia.

Consequently, Douglas returned to southern Italy, especially to Sant'Agata and Ischia where he wrote *Adventures of a Bookseller* still in collaboration with Orioli, who also accompanied Douglas to India in the late 1934 as he needed to gather material for a new travel book that he was about to write.

Between 1935 and 1937 he continued to wander through Italy, he visited Tuscany, Emilia and Calabria together with Archie, Orioli and Greenlees, and finally stopped in Vorarlberg.

In the following years, he had to deal with new financial difficulties and, as usual, became involved in a scabrous affair on account of an eleven-year-old girl named Renata.

Although Orioli and the Italian lawyer Carrozza did their best to help him, Norman was forced to leave Italy in order to avoid being brought to trial.

On the 18th of February 1941, Douglas went to Lisbon where not only did he have to deal with financial difficulties once again, but he had to handle a further inconvenience caused by the renewal of his passport. In reality, he could have gone to America as he had been repeatedly invited by Robin, but had stubbornly refused:

The only way to get me to America would be to handcuff and chloroform me, and to keep me in an iron cage all the way across... (Holloway 1976:450).

On the 11th of January 1942, he flew to London where he tried to earn a living by giving private lessons. In London, he had the chance to see again many of his old friends, among them he met Nancy Cunard, Charles Prentice (publisher of Chatto & Windus), Dawkins, Hutton, Viva and Willie King, who later edited the publication of Douglas' posthumous works. In December 1942, there was a reprint of the second English edition of *South Wind* with an introductory note by the author which was then followed by reprints in 1944 and 1945 with the same introductory

note.

Norman went back to London in June 1944, when Hitler's secret weapons were beginning to bombard the city. He realized that London was not so safe and decided to move to Oxford, then to Chester and finally to Somerset, with the idea, however, of moving to France or Italy. In 1946, after vainly attempting to write to Emilio, he managed to plan his return to Italy. Notwithstanding the fact that Capri was an irresistible destination, its limited resources did not allow him to spend the summer on the island as the cost of living was high.

When he went back to Rome, he was the guest of his friend Ian Greenlees who accompanied him to Naples. In September and August he went to Positano where he met with David Jeffreys, he was expecting to be able to move to Capri and take advantage of the "off season" when prices were lower.

Norman hoped for concrete help from the Embassy in Rome which, unfortunately he did not receive. Nevertheless, he was then helped by the mayor of Capri Edwin Cerio, who provided him with a small house located in Unghia Marina and conferred him honorary citizenship.

As a result, Norman regarded it as the most welcome reward as he was almost eighty years of age and therefore wished to spend the rest of his life on the island. In April 1947, Kenneth Macpherson came to Capri accompanied by Emilio, with the intention of buying a villa to share with Norman, consequently, in the autumn of that year Macpherson and Douglas settled in Villa Tuoro, which was formerly Villa Olivella.

Subsequently, Norman's new companion was Hector, a ten-year-old "*scugnizzo*" whom he had met in Naples when he was staying at Unghia Marina.

Whilst Douglas was in Capri, he received a visit from Robin who came from the United States and this marked the final reconciliation between the two men which was sanctioned by a new will that provided for the equal division of the assets between Archie and Robin. In October of the same year, Douglas and Jeffreys visited Calabria again by car where they stayed for two difficult and exhausting weeks. Concurrently, Emilio managed to recover some of the books and personal items that Douglas had left in Florence, whereas the rest had disappeared along with several valuable manuscripts.

In February 1948, Douglas suffered a terrible blow: not only did Emilio die of injuries sustained in a plane crash on his return from Florence, but he was very disappointed when Hector left as he had been recalled to his duty by his mother. In that period, Douglas completed *Footnote on Capri*, a work that illustrated “the whole visible face of Capri... “(Holloway 1976:483) and was later published in 1952. He then signed a contract with the Lux film company which intended to use *South Wind*, and whose adaptation was entrusted to Graham Greene. In March 1950, Archie announced to his father that he was about to visit him with his family, in fact, he stated that he wished to settle in Italy, nonetheless, on the 11th March of the same year, Norman sent him a letter in which he advised against it.

Douglas spent his vacations in Sant’Agata, Amalfi and Ischia in the company of Hector and his mother, who were under suspicion, on the part of many of the writer’s friends, to exploit Norman’s good faith. For that reason, the relationship with Hector helped his mother earn four hundred pounds in almost three years. Finally, Norman was sick and tired of all his pains and the troubles that he had had to deal with. Unfortunately, his health deteriorated more and more and his sufferings later increased. The years of his adventures, travels and studies were far away, what remained, however, was the memory of an intensely lived and deeply loved life in which his spirit was still intact and his contact with the world was alive.

He passed away on February 7th 1952, assisted by his friends Islay Lyons and Kenneth Macpherson, who collected his last confused and indecipherable message in which they could distinctly hear the words “love, love, love”: perhaps this was the last farewell to an existence pervaded by a deep pagan feeling and sincere faith in his own aesthetic and Epicurean vision of life (Giacomantonio 1984).

1.5 Francesco Bevilacqua: life and works

Francesco Bevilacqua was born in Lamezia Terme, Calabria –Italy- in 1957 where he studied Classics at the high school and graduated in Law at the University of Florence in 1980. At present, he lives in Lamezia Terme where he works as a lawyer who specializes in Civil and Administrative Law.

Since 1980 he has been active in social and then in environmental volunteerism. In 1981, he organized the first public initiatives for the creation of protected areas in Calabria in collaboration with *Italia Nostra*.

From 1984 until 1999, Bevilacqua served as regional delegate for W.W.F. (World Wildlife Fund) in Calabria, where he continued and intensified the action of stimulating the creation of natural parks in Calabria. Hence, these initiatives gave the go-ahead to the creation of many parks, such as: the National parks of Pollino, Aspromonte and Sila, the Regional park of Serre, the state nature reserves of Lao, Argentino, Raganello and Fallistro, the marine reserve of Capo Rizzuto, the W. W.F. oasis of Lake Angitola, the reef of Isca and the chestnut trees of Cozzo del Pesco.

Furthermore, he has undertaken a long series of actions in which he has denounced environmental havoc and has opposed several projects, in collaboration with W.W.F., that resulted destructive to the environment and the landscape. Among these actions, worthy of note are the new ski slopes in Sila, the roads in the Argentino, Corvino, and Bonamico valleys, the coal-fired power plant in Gioia Tauro, and the bridge over the Strait of Messina. Additionally, not only has he served as consul of the Italian Touring Club, but he is an active member of C.A.I. (Italian Alpine Club) and F.A.I. (Italian Environmental Fund).

Apart from being a lawyer, Francesco Bevilacqua is also a publicist journalist, nature photographer, writer, mountaineer and a passionate walker who has traveled more than 43,000 kilometers on foot in the mountains of Calabria, from Pollino to Aspromonte, where he has identified hundreds of unpublished hiking trails.

At the same time, he has been doing an in-depth study and research about Calabria using a novel comparative method that combines Literature, Geography,

History, Anthropology and Sociology. Consequently, his articles and photos have been published on the following journals and newspapers: *Airone, Bell'Italia, Natura Oggi, Alp, Oasis, Panorama, Rivista del C.A.I., Rivista del Trekking, Ulisse, Gente Viaggi, Riflessi, Calabria, Quark, Paese Sera, Gazzetta del Sud, Calabria on web, Apollinea, Il Lametino, Il Gattopardo*. In addition, Bevilacqua has also been a programmer-director for *RAI* (Italian broadcasting corporation), for which he has written texts and other television productions. Moreover, he is the coauthor of two documentaries about Sila and Serre produced by *Quadro Film* for *RAI* and broadcasted by the Italian program *Geo*.

Besides, he has given lectures, lessons, and contributed with written reports on natural parks, Calabria's naturalistic geography and landscape, about Calabrian travel literature, at high schools, conferences, universities, particularly at Masters and refresher courses. He has also edited for the working group directed by Professor Pier Luigi Cervellati, the part on landscape aesthetics and culture in the Territorial Coordination Plan of the Province of Catanzaro.

All in all, Bevilacqua has written twenty-two books about the nature and landscapes of Calabria, travels in Calabria and the relationship between man, places and landscape, and, above all, about Calabrian literature. At the present time, he is the editor of *Rubbettino* the nature-based book series "*Gli scarabei*." Ultimately, he has written contributions for numerous other collective volumes published by *Mondadori, Club Alpino Italiano, Touring Club Italiano, De Agostini, Edizioni Ambiente, and Idea Montagna*.

The above mentioned writer has received prizes and awards for his work in social and environmental volunteering and as freelance journalist, including:

il *Premio speciale della Presidenza del Senato nell'ambito del Premio Letterario Feudo di Maida* (2005), il *Premio Calabria Mia* (2004), il *Premio La Città del Sole* (2008), il *Premio Franco Costabile* (2008), il *Riconoscimento Umberto Zanotti Bianco* (2010), il *Premio Anthurium* (2010), il *Premio Vincenzo Padula persone in Calabria* (2016), il *Premio Marcello Meroni* (2018)¹.

¹ the Special Award of the Presidency of the Senate in the Feudo di Maida Literary Award (2005), the *Calabria Mia* Award (2004), the *La Città del Sole* Award (2008), the Franco

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- 2- *Calabria verde*, Abramo, Catanzaro 1993, ISBN-88 8324-003-0.
- 3- *Sui sentieri dell'Orsomarso*, Il Coscile, Castrovillari 1995.
- 4- *Il Parco Nazionale della Sila*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 1999, ISBN 88-7284-619-6.
- 5- *Il Parco Nazionale dell'Aspromonte*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 1999, ISBN 88-7284-690-0.
- 6- *Elogio dello stupore. Estetica, etica, sacralità della natura*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2001, ISBN 88-498-0039-8.
- 7- *Il Parco delle Serre*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2002, ISBN 88-498-0108-4.
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- 9- *Montagne di Calabria*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2003. ISBN 88-498-0452-0.
- 10- *Gocce di rugiada. Pensieri per la natura* (a cura di), Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2004, ISBN 88-498-0619-1.
- 11- *Foreste di Calabria* (a cura di), Grafiche Ghiani/Regione Calabria, Cagliari 2004.
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- 13- *Aspromonte. La montagna incantata*, Laruffa, Reggio Calabria 2007, ISBN 978-88-7221-312-6.
- 14- *Il Parco del Reventino*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008, ISBN 978-88-498-2052-2.

Costabile Award (2008), the Umberto Zanotti Bianco Recognition (2010), the Anthurium Award (2010), the Vincenzo Padula People in Calabria Award (2016), and the Marcello Meroni Award (2018). The translation is mine.

- 15-***Calabria, viaggi e paesaggi*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008, ISBN 978-88-498-1881-9.
- 16-***Genius Loci. Il dio dei luoghi perduti*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2010. ISBN 978-88-498-2591-6.
- 17-***Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas. Avventure fra le montagne della Vecchia Calabria*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2012, ISBN 978-88-498-3205-1.
- 18-***Il Parco Nazionale del Pollino*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2014, ISBN 978-88-498-3821-3.
- 19-***Lettere meridiane. Cento libri per conoscere la Calabria*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2015, ISBN 978-88-498-4403-0.
- 20-***Le fantasticherie del camminatore errante*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2018, ISBN 978-88-498-5413-8.
- 21-***Turbare una stella. Spirito e materia. Storia e cammini*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2020, ISBN 978-88-498-6293-5.
- 22-***Alberi monumentali in Calabria*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2022, ISBN 978-88-498-6779-4.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this section of the thesis I am firstly providing some key research done on *Old Calabria* and other travel books in English literature, secondly I am exploring Norman Douglas as an artist and above all as a writer with particular attention to his sense of humour.

In order to contextualize this investigation according to the key elements that I have identified, I am studying the literature and theories around Calabria according to Douglas and inspiring themes and characters.

In addition, I am investigating the social context, analyzing key contextual factors which are relevant, such as Douglas and his views on the current events of the situation in southern Italy.

2.2 *Old Calabria*

If in the first decades of the past century Norman Douglas had come to the attention of critics and readers with the work *South Wind*, today, he deservedly owes his fame to *Old Calabria* as well. The first publication of the work, which dates back to 1915, was received with some interest by official critics, however, it cannot be said that it was generally accepted by the public as a success. Consequently, The artistic and documentary value of *Old Calabria* managed to arouse the scholars' curiosity and interest, therefore in 1920 there was a new edition followed by two reprints in 1925 and 1926 and a third edition (New Adelphi Library) in 1930. Nevertheless, it was not until 1955 that it was possible to have a new edition of the work, followed by a reprint in 1956. Hence, this new version was on the same wavelength as a new vision of the problems of southern Italy, thus, it helped to strengthen the positive judgment of the critics which managed to allow a wider and better planned dissemination of the work among the general public.

That publishing initiative soon had its effects: it seems that the work could be purchased from the “stalls” of Capri and it is likely that in 1962 it was possible to read the edition translated into Italian and published by the Aldo Martello publishing house. That being the case, there was also a posthumous recognition which made Douglas earn fame and praise in English literature. However, it could be noteworthy to think carefully about this circumstance in order to fully understand its meaning.

A first consideration should be made in relation to the collocation of the author in the culture of the period in which he lived. In other words, he was a scholar and a solitary writer who rejected the clichés and literary conventions of the time in which he was writing and who chose to follow the most difficult path that was still characterized by fascination and a free and autonomous research (Giacomantonio 1984). As might be expected, *Old Calabria*'s popularity came rather late and, not only can the reasons be attributed to the scarce and inexact knowledge of the most desolate and deserted region of Italy, but also to the great success that *South Wind* had when it was published, as it circulated in four editions starting from 1917 and was reprinted seventeen times until 1947.

South Wind managed to draw the attention of the general public as it seemed to be attracted by a creative and imaginative story which displayed in a resourceful style, with regard to the formal and substantial aspects, a rich cross-section of humanity in an unusual atmosphere of pathos and humor.

Thus, after the literary experiences of James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, ordinary readers were finally able to rediscover in *South Wind* the taste of amenable reading, which excluded the heavy psychoanalytic implications of the “inner monologue.” Accordingly, they could free themselves from a state of inner tension, alienation and fear, which had led Aldous Huxley to state in *Ape and Essence* “Fear is the basis and foundation of modern life” (cit. in Giacomantonio 1984:34).

At first, Douglas' work was identified with *South Wind*, which not only had dealt a severe blow to the cerebral and Freudian novel of the “stream of consciousness,” but had also induced disinterest on worthy works such as *Siren Land*, *Fountains in the Sand* and *Old Calabria*. For that reason, *Old Calabria* was reprinted in 1956

by the publishers Secker & Warburg and preceded by a valuable introduction by John Davenport. The purpose was to reintroduce the work to the attention of scholars and readers so as to seek a new and less hasty judgment of this edition. The result was that the publishers were right this time, as not only the critics but also the public discovered the merits of the work, perhaps this happened because the sad misery of the South along with the unspoiled beauty of its landscape and its emigrants had contributed to giving fame to this extreme strip of Italy.

2.3 *Old Calabria* and analysis of travel books in English literature

Old Calabria, as a travel book, takes its place among the foremost works of the last two and a half centuries; as a result, it has left significant marks in the history of English and European literature.

First and foremost, it is a tradition that has deep roots in English culture, however, the point of departure for an historical reconstruction is characterized by William Dampier's *Voyages* (1662-1715), published between 1697 and 1709, which encouraged Captain Woodes Rogers to write *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712).

Consequently, these early works were followed by *Voyage Round the World* (1748) by George Anson that was in reality the result of a long journey around the world which he made from 1740 until 1744.

Other significant milestones occurred with important contributions including the following: *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* written by Laurence Sterne, *the Tours* (1769) by Thomas Pennant, *the Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile* (1790) by James Bruce, *the Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa* (1816-24) by Edward Daniel Clarke, and *the Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Mecca* (1855-56) by Sir Richard Burton (Giacomantonio 1984:37).

Moreover, many were the works that were inspired by trips to Calabria, especially those of Edward Lear, Swinburne, R. Keppel Craven, A.J Strutt, Eustance, Brydone, George Gissing to whom Douglas' work seems to relate. Nevertheless, Norman Douglas gave the impression of finding his true precursors

in Samuel Butler, author of *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and Canton Ticino* (1881), and in the above mentioned Richard Burton and Gissing, the latter author of a successful book entitled *By the Ionian Sea* (1901).

Douglas may have in common with the former the conception of intuitive morality with a hedonistic basis, which is inspired by the observation of facts and by an existential experience closely connected to the developments of civilization. With this regard, Dawkins states that:

...their moral system is a deduction, and in the happiest cases an unconscious deduction, from the observed facts of life (Dawkins 1952: 51).

This judgment is partially shared by scholars since the “morality” for a convinced Epicurean, as Douglas professed himself to be, is a natural deduction from the reality of observed facts of life that cannot be defined “unconscious” as it is often expressed into lashing judgments about certain aspects of the southern condition. Therefore, it cannot be an unconscious intuition, but a pondered attitude which is corroborated by the results of a rigorous socio-historical analysis.

Ultimately, Douglas’ “moral system” seemed to be characterized by what he consciously constructed for himself through the scrupulous observation of the reality of life, since his hedonistic philosophy was carried out through this constant search which gratified his need to live and his love for the beautiful things that this life offered to him.

Accordingly, Norman and Richard Burton appeared to have common interests; what Douglas particularly shared with him was the cosmopolitan upbringing and a keen speculative sense that has always guided his observation.

However, it is important to remember that these are possible comparisons only on a general and justifiable level since these writers belonged to a common literary tradition.

Besides, particular attention should be dedicated to the analysis of the relationship between Douglas and Gissing for whom the author had a sincere admiration as can be deduced when reading chapter XXXVI of *Old Calabria (Memories of Gissing)*. The two authors went along very similar routes, but what really emerged was the way they penetrated and understood the world of the

South which appeared contradictory and desolate, and which seemed to give to the two works a feature of almost social inquiry.

That being the case, it can be noticed in both of them a compelling appeal to Classicism, of which only in *Magna Graecia* was possible to find certain values still intact and certain memories alive. In them there was also a rich positivistic experience that imposed a scientific rigor in the investigation which did not, however, generate forms of a fundamentalist pseudoscientific nature, since the literary and artistic contents as well as the matter of observation itself, fostered a perfect symbiosis between rationality and aesthetic content (Giacomantonio 1984).

Therefore, the positivistic matrix, which was best characterized in Douglas, made no difference between the ideal and the real, if anything, it allowed for a second reading of the history of the South and the rediscovery of dormant values, which were not lost yet, that were to be placed at the foundation of a model of life that was more modern and rationally constructed.

As a result, this made Douglas particularly sensitive to the processes of degradation of some fundamental values of existence.

Not only, but he seemed to be attentive to the typical dyscrasias of an underdeveloped society and to the pseudo-cultural mystifications and mores, which often legitimized the condition of isolation and backwardness. The result of the above was a kind of skepticism which, in reality, never became exasperated and was diluted in a taste for irony and humor that in Douglas, more than in Gissing, often managed to conceal an intimate feeling of bitterness. Apparently, between Douglas and Gissing there was an intellectual and human affinity that went beyond the marginal fact of a common travel experience and, above all, not only did it manifest itself in a significant artistic and cultural commitment, but also through a sincere love for men and truth (Giacomantonio 1984:40).

Research done on both authors generally has taken into account the scrupulousness they showed in the reconstruction of facts, their common interest which was predominantly for humble people, it analysed also the testimonial value of their research and the original way in which they approached the reality of the *Mezzogiorno* as well as their love for classical culture.

In the introduction to her Italian translation of *By the Ionian Sea*, Guiducci wrote the following:

Un temperament di umanista, naturalmente incline alla quiete e alla meditazione degli studi classici, fatto per vivere tra i libri, nella contemplazione di una bellezza autentica da secoli, al riparo delle brusche realtà della vita (cit. in Gissing 1957:9)²

This judgment referred to Gissing and suits Douglas as well. However, in this profile it was feasible to detect a commonality of culture, taste and moral tension that did not hinder the individual peculiarities. On balance, in both authors there was a resourceful and flowing style that made it possible to balance the natural inclination to search for a classical taste with the need to portray, as faithfully as possible, authentic situations and aspects of everyday life.

2.4 Calabria according to Norman Douglas

Old Calabria appears to be the result of a remarkable cultural commitment and an appreciable ability for analysis. The richness of observations and the interesting and pleasant philological and historical digressions that mainly characterize *Old Calabria* do not seem to disturb the atmosphere of comedy often pervaded by a kind of caustic and perverse humor and humanized by the one hundred authentic characters that move within a decaying civilization. Hence, only a deep interest in culture and in humanity can justify the spirit of sacrifice and the uncommon ability of adaptation which enabled the author to overcome the difficulties of a long stay in a poor land full of contradictions where the myth of the brigands of Sila and Aspromonte hovered.

² A temperament of a humanist, naturally inclined to quietness and to the reflection on classical studies, made to live among books in the contemplation of a beauty authenticated by centuries and sheltered from the abrupt realities of life. The translation is mine.

In the concrete case, not only did Douglas give the impression of showing a lively interest in historical-sociological investigation, but also a sort of fascination for the most authentic folk traditions and the pioneer spirit that is typical of the English people. It is in the far South of Italy that Douglas, traveler, writer and man of science, found fertile ground for his research, as the South had remained intact and isolated even after the unification of Italy.

The tragic isolation that characterized Calabria, allowed this region to maintain intact traditions, customs and a rich heritage of culture: at the beginning of the century, the South was nothing more than a precious resource for the scholars of History, folk traditions, Anthropology and Science. Instead of doing research in the cold halls of museums or spending long times among the dusty shelves of the libraries, scholars managed to gather findings for their studies from the streets, private houses, among the people that were at work or those who were lazily sitting in front of the doorway of their houses (Lelli 2016).

Douglas began his journey at the beginning of the 20th century in the period when the first and faint signs of improvement became visible. Such being the case, it was with the successful campaign against malaria and the construction of the Apulian waterworks, that it was possible to speak about the first experiments in land reclamation and agrarian reform. Nevertheless, Calabria was a region where the defense of the large landed estate and a medieval and narrow view of the private property represented the most exasperated manifestation of an absurd philosophy of individualism and where exploitation, emigration, and backwardness which, still today represent a substantial heritage that society is unable to get rid of, assume pathological proportions. As a consequence, all this gave rise to behaviors and situations that made the southern reality contradictory and atypical and placed obstacles in any kind of change that contrasted with the culture of underdevelopment (Bevilacqua 2008).

For this particular case, it is noteworthy to consider the numerous disputes and discussions on the development model that, in the Manichean contrasts between the supporters of industrialization, the supporter of agriculture and the defenders of the artistic and landscape heritage, reintroduced the limits of a culture referable to an ancestral form of organization of society and to a peasant-type civilization. Douglas lived his experience in the South through a painful and painstaking

search for the reasons behind the basis of the living conditions of southern populations: if he had not been triggered by this cultural commitment, he would not have gone on a journey full of hardships and uncertainties that in 1912 would have discouraged even the most adventurous traveler.

Under those circumstances, the rare times that the rail transportation allowed passengers to set foot on a train did not guarantee them that they managed to reach their destinations, besides, the journeys were notorious for the trains' long stops and the malodorous people that travellers had to share the carriages with (Bevilacqua 2008).

In actual fact, most of the towns in Calabria were located in a decentralized position from the railway station, and, on account of the above, it was Douglas' parliamentary friend who attempted to explain the reasons for this situation. According to him, local politicians were forward-thinking therefore they attempted to identify in advance the policies and the pace of the urban development of the smallest towns, as it was the case of Roccabernarda (a town and town hall of the province of Crotona), whose station that was at first 30 km distant from the town centre, later on found itself at the centre of the urban area (Giacomantonio, 1984:51).

2.5 Inspiring themes and characters

As we have said, *Old Calabria* is a book in which Douglas talks about the experience he had during his travels throughout the South of our peninsula.

He speaks about unforgettable and uncomfortable journeys which offered him the opportunity to write a pondered history of the South, without the constraints that the canons of the official historiography necessarily imposed.

In reality, what he produced was a faithful account of authentic circumstances and facts, which were described in a brilliant and essential style that, at the same time, became a refined and informed guide for the attentive and demanding traveler. Under the circumstances, *Old Calabria* can be considered as an interesting outline of the cultural, social, political and religious problems of the South that are not interpreted by an intellectual who lingered over the rigorous analysis of facts without necessarily living them, but by a man who was confident in the potential of

men and in their natural vocation to construct things, and therefore knew how to grasp the essence of a troubled reality often full of contradictions.

However, it seems that certain bitter considerations can lead readers to perceive that Douglas realized how difficult it was to pursue progress and change in a society that struggled to eliminate misery even though it defined itself as civilized. Not only, but they could not even avoid a humiliating Manichean conception of life, whereby, on the one hand, poor people seemed doomed to remain in a state of unhappiness for a long time, whereas on the other, the cultured class, who exploited them, did not know how to renounce its privileges.

Douglas' analysis of the southern condition and, above all, his investigation of the drama experienced by the people that lived there, revealed a perceptive political sensitivity which did not presuppose any proposition of solution, since the literary and artistic commitment seemed to downsize each observation with regard to any open and complex issue. The result is that in this book Douglas proved himself as a perceptive observer and great writer who was able to portray exemplary types and sketches of authentic southern life. Most importantly, he managed to put together his good qualities as a novelist and as a scrupulous scholar, which not only came from an innate taste for description and from an indisputable aptitude for introspective analysis, but also from a rich experience as a writer of scientific topics.

On the grounds of this, Douglas had devoted several years of his life to study Biology and Mineralogy, and had begun his activity as a writer of a few scientific essays (Holloway 1976). Afterwards, his classical studies, as well as his interest in humanity and his love of life, soon prompted him to direct his research toward cultural and human experiences that seemed more congenial to him.

He was in search of an intact and unspoiled environment and of people which he could blend in so as to study the true reasons that were rooted in its history. Given the preceding, what made him decide to wander through southern Italy, was especially the myth of *Magna Graecia* along with the roughness of the mountains of Calabria, its ancient civilization buried by an absurd desolation with its people who got inured to misery and suffering. Accordingly, the well-educated writer, as well as the aristocrat and former diplomat, gave the impression of seeking his world in the desolate Calabria among rough and uneducated people

who lived in the sunny South, perhaps because his disposition and his spirit were basically Mediterranean (Sandomenico 1996).

Hence, this could justify his nonconformity, his firm reaction against the Victorian age, his definitive withdrawal from a world where he was raised and educated. It goes without saying that his experience of life in South Italy, particularly in the old Calabria, represented the most relevant occurrence of his eventful existence, besides, it was also an occasion for long meditations and careful studies. For this reason, the most significant result of these studies and meditations was *Old Calabria* which was accomplished on a solid historical-scientific structure, wherefore it rose in value as it was regarded as a document of detailed and careful information on facts, places and people.

Nevertheless, it needs to be pointed out that *Old Calabria* is not a detached historical-scientific compendium of southern Italy. It is, above all, a work of art in which the interest for research is combined with a refined narrative technique and an innate taste for description which reached the highest level of expression in *South Wind*. (Holloway 1976)

Consequently, scholars tend to justify that playful tone of subtle irony that is typical of Douglas, which at times, seemed to put an almost paradoxical slant even on important facts and events, which found their *raison d'être* in the most ancient civilization and custom traditions.

Supposedly, *Old Calabria* takes its place among the foremost books inspired by their authors' travels, besides it represents a remarkable contribution to the knowledge of the South thanks to the author's deep respect for the truth.

Considering everything, it emerges that the work is the result of a long familiarity with places and people acquired during countless journeys,

In addition, *Old Calabria* is undoubtedly the work in which Douglas committed himself the most and for which he did a long and painstaking research in the British Museum, at the National Library of Naples as well as in many public and private archives.

As previously mentioned, *Old Calabria* was not an immediate success with the public when it was published, seemingly, it should have aroused the interest of scholars and of cultured circles even outside the national borders, as there followed several editions and reprints of it. Moreover, this work also gave

Douglas the possibility to earn three-hundred pounds from the Greek government which had commissioned him to write a similar novel. The result was an incomplete work entitled *One Day*, in which he spoke about the experiences that he had in the brief space of one day (Giacomantonio 1984).

Notwithstanding the fact that *Old Calabria* was not successful when it was first published in comparison with *South Wind*, it certainly could not go unnoticed to those who began to take an interest in the South of Italy and its problems. Above all, it could not be ignored due to some unconventional and unbiased analyses of the southern condition which was regarded as the consequence of an economic system firmly based on the landowner structure and rooted in the state of socio-cultural underdevelopment of the southern populations.

Additionally, not only was there the lack of preparation of the ruling class and the patriarchal structure of the family that made the situation worse, but also a dualistic conception of a socio-economic order that wanted the South poor, backward and tributary to the capitalist apparatus of an already rich and advanced North (Bevilacqua 2008).

Nevertheless, Douglas' investigation went beyond the current boundaries of Calabria, over the entire territory which appeared uniform in terms of morphology, history and culture, thus, it helped to better understand the complex existential problematic nature of the South, albeit from an unusual point of view in southern literature. In reality, Douglas' Calabria did not correspond to the current geographical area since the writer referred to the whole territory ruled by the Byzantines in the 11th century and especially to the two regions of Longobardia (present-day Apulia) and Calabria.

Consequently, one of the reasons that led him to choose this itinerary could be attributable to the commonality of history and tradition of these extreme regions of the peninsula which before the 6th century belonged to the Salentine peninsula and then extended to the Brutia.

Douglas made his long and arduous journey from Lucera "Saracen" to Catona, traveling along inaccessible roads and steep paths, almost always on foot and mules. However, the difficulties of his travels were not only limited to the precariousness of the circumstances and the lack of means of transportation;

what made the situation worse was the idea of having to deal with rough and often distrustful people who were absurdly bound to a conception of life full of moral prejudices and characterized by a kind of inherent religiosity of paganism and magic. I have provided a further account of this topic in chapter Four.

As mentioned in the introduction, Douglas devoted himself to the examination of places and reflection on people and facts with the diligence of the biologist. Resultantly, *Old Calabria* could be regarded as something more than an unenthusiastic and hasty collection of news, curiosities and data, as is often the case with works of this kind which are normally intended for the general public and consequently limit themselves to give generic information and suggestions about travel itineraries, often the most obvious ones.

Taking into consideration what stated above, it can be said that not only did Douglas have a natural disposition to historical analysis and scientific observation that were noticeable in all his works, but there was also a stimulating tradition of travel books in English literature, especially from the Romantic and Victorian periods, which was significant from an artistic and cultural point of view. Some of the works of the 18th century that can be mentioned include the following: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) by Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834); *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe (1660–1731); *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift (1667–1745); *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1755) by Henry Fielding (1707–1754); *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) by Laurence Sterne (1713–1768).

Whereas, some travel books of the 19th century include: *History of Six Weeks' Tour* (1817) by Mary Shelley (1797 – 1851); *A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas* (1847) by Herman Melville (1819–1891) and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879) by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) (Bertinetti 2004). Therefore, readers should not be surprised by the frequent cultural-historical references and the meticulous annotations on the customs, traditions, and legends of people who were characterized, and still are today, by the Arab, Norman and Byzantine influence.

In the end, what emerged from these observations were typical moral and religious problems that the author cleverly sifted through his caustic style, and a

scrupulous sense that eschewed hypocritical pietisms and did not succumb to philanthropic temptations (this is explained in depth in research question N. Four).

2.6 Norman Douglas: the writer

In order to better understand Douglas' works, especially *Old Calabria* in which the author managed to combine all his human, intellectual and artistic experiences, it can be useful to propose some reflections on *South Wind*, that was probably written at the same time as *Old Calabria* and in which the author predominantly developed his philosophy of life in a systematic way. *South Wind* seems, in fact, to help readers to better appreciate Douglas as a man especially as an intellectual and consequently to go over some of the itineraries of his thought and his explorations that often the objectivity of the situations described in *Old Calabria* did not clearly show, even though they were directly experienced by the author himself.

Specifically, in this work the novelist was able to freely express his inner world and his ideas through a work of fantasy in which the objective constraints were less demanding. As a result, the first publication of the work, which dates back to 1917, represented a milestone in the development of Douglas' thought and his artistic personality. When *South Wind* was published, the public was very enthusiastic about it and this surprised the author who, unexpectedly, could then win the fame like the one he had gained with *Siren Land*, consequently, this situation made him feel relieved from the economic worries that weighed on him. The work had the structure of a novel, but the social community that Douglas presented was far from imaginary and the physical environment was a magnificent mosaic constructed from thousands of fragments that he had been able to fix in his mind in the course of his travels through the South of Italy:

The social atmosphere of Nepenthe is distilled out of Capri as it always should have been and as it never has, alas! Yet was or will be. I have taken what liberties I pleased with the place. For example, I located it near Africa and made the soil volcanic, whereas it is limestone. The cliff scenery, over colored for literary purposes, is borrowed from that of

Ponza and nearly all the volcanic minerals named are such as can be found in the Ponza group (Douglas 1947:4).

This was the backdrop in which his characters moved and acted, however, they could not avoid the strange game of separation into parts and free recomposition that the author invented as if to match the landscape itself.

Maybe, it was this strange and bizarre way of proceeding that led the characters of *South Wind* to lose part of the vitality and the human warmth which characterized the personages of *Old Calabria* instead. Hence, this could be explained by the fact that the documentary nature of *Old Calabria* would have not allowed certain possible distortions in works such as *South Wind*.

However, beyond any consideration regarding the structural and formal aspects of the work, it needs to be pointed out that *South Wind* presented an exhaustive elaboration of the writer's philosophy and precise indications in connection to his conception of life (Giacomantonio 1984).

South Wind was written in Capri and in London and after its publication in June 1917 seven further editions were published which achieved startling large-scale success. Nevertheless, critics at the time claimed that this work lacked a well-constructed plot (Orel 1992). The story is set on an imaginary island called Nepenthe that is located off the coast of Italy in the Tyrrhenian Sea, a thinly fictionalized description of Capri's visitors and residents.

The book concerns twelve days during which Thomas Heard, a bishop going back to England from his diocese in Africa, yields his moral vigour to several influences. The South Wind of the title is the Sirocco which destroys the sense of morality and decency of the island inhabitants. Whereas, the name of the island Nepenthe represents a drug of Egyptian background that is also mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey*, which was able to eliminate troubles or grief from the mind (Orel 1992). Moreover, many natural details in the narrative are provided by Capri and other Mediterranean destinations that Norman knew very well.

Finally, taking into account that what characterizes much of Douglas' novel is the philosophical hedonism, it emerges that the continuous discussions of moral and sexual issues in the book were the cause of significant debate (Ousby 1996).

Douglas entrusted the task of manifesting his two ideas to Count Caloveglia and Mr. Keath, two of the main personages who, through their dialogues enunciated the following statement:

The philosophy of a temperate Epicurean, steeped in the classical tradition, a tolerant sceptic, a rationalist humanist (cit. in Greenlees 1957: 26).

This was the model of life to which Douglas was inspired: a philosophy that rejected all dogmatic temptations and became functional to the need for total liberation from the passions and the achievement of the condition of ataraxia that then drove Douglas to escapism and to the search for a world in which it was possible to escape the constraints of the industrial civilization.

Nevertheless, it was in South Italy that Norman was able to satisfy his intimate need of speculative inquiry and his aspiration for real happiness.

South Wind was exactly “the result of his craving to escape from the wearisome actualities of life “(Greenlees 1957: 26), and the attempt to construct “a society of such instability, such jovial immoderation and frolicsome perversity that even a respectable bishop could be persuaded to approve of murder” (Greenlees 1957: 27).

All this seemed to be consistent with his philosophical idea of life that implied a moral system based on the “subjective will”so as to achieve happiness through sensation, which, in the sensationalist definition, was the criterion of truth and good, the latter acknowledged as pleasure. Therefore, even murder was not considered as an infraction of a transcendent law, since it could remove certain obstacles that threatened the achievement of peace of mind.

In spite of everything, Douglas gave the impression of showing a deep love for life which did not consist in the pursuit of sensational experiences, but, above all “to ignore those (conventions) that might spoil his pleasure” (Holloway 1976:169).

His way of looking at things was a natural attitude toward life and consequently, his “recipe for happiness was to find everything useful and nothing indispensable, and everything wonderful and nothing miraculous” (Greenlees 1957: 28).

Most importantly, what he discovered among the Mediterranean people was the attempt to draw inspiration for his own model of life from the Greek virtue of moderation. In reality, this was reminiscent of the mitigated skepticism expressed

by D. Hume in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, in which men had to proceed within the realities that best suited “the narrow capacity of the human mind” (Inq. Cone. Hum. Underst., XII, 3), and overcome the constraints that could arise from the acceptance of a combination of absolute realities and metaphysical entities.

As a result, Douglas’ inquiry was accomplished through the observation of essential and authentic facts therefore it became particularly significant with regard to historical and anthropological reconstruction.

The setting for the events narrated in *South Wind* was the volcanic island of Nepenthe, where the indigenous population lived in close contact with a mixed colony of foreigners. The main idea of the work was that:

In a certain set of favorable circumstances, the severest views on moral conduct can be insensibly dissolved until the most unlikely person finds himself looking with toleration if not with actual approval on almost every possible variety of human conduct (Dawkins 1957:50).

As the skeptics themselves claimed, this was the result of the lack of a discernment criterion to distinguish the true from the false, moreover, following hedonism, pleasure became the foundation of moral life.

On that account, Douglas’ moral attitude was then to seek pleasure in moderation, but also in overcoming any convention that could have lessened his own pleasure (Ousby 1996).

In the above-mentioned work there was not a well-conceived plot, but rather a weak storyline along which the absurd and contradictory adventures of the people living in Nepenthe took place.

The Anglican missionary bishop of Bampopo was in Nepenthe for health reasons. He was a God-fearing man and of impeccable moral conduct.

He, inevitably, fell under the influence of the South Wind and became tolerant of the Nepenthe colony system of life to the point of justifying the brutal murder of Mrs. Meadows, which had led her husband Mr. Muhlen to plunge into an abyss. A hasty reading of the work may cast doubts on its narrative effectiveness, however, through a thorough analysis, it is possible to detect an element of

organicity and coherence in the spiritual and human story of the bishop who, in the end, managed to free himself from any religious and moral constraints in a sort of Epicurean catharsis that eventually represented Douglas' perception of life. Hence, the complexity of the events and the development of the work could be of great narrative value if they are interpreted in line with this central element (Orel 1992).

The author himself provided *Alone* with his own interpretation of the work:

It would be nearer the truth to say that it is nothing but a plot from beginning to end. How to make murder palatable to a bishop: that is the plot (Dawkins 1957: 51).

It was around this underlying theme that a series of situations and events took place that were in effect true, even though they were distorted by a persistent taste for irony which was often taken to the limit of paradox.

They presented some indisputably alive and predominantly human characters who moved in a polychrome background made of the images and colors that were dearest to the writer. Therefore, this humanity that moved and acted in an environment full of contradictions, mainly characterized by the humble people that were on the streets or in the countryside of southern Italy constituted the common substratum of many of Douglas' works.

Most importantly, a substantial difference between *Old Calabria* and *South Wind* could be that, in the former, Douglas' experiences seemed to be authentic opportunities to research and verify patterns of behavior which could justify his conception of life in an environment that still showed the indelible marks of the Hellenic civilization. Whereas, in the latter, the setting along with the characters and the various situations were put together beforehand like a mosaic, according to the author's ideological system. To further explain, what prevailed in *South Wind* was the moment of reflection on cultural contents and ideas.

Conversely, *Old Calabria* gave the impression of being less committed to these issues therefore it appeared more inspired and well supplied with regard to the documentary aspect since it had been conceived as a travel book.

Nonetheless, *South Wind* was introduced to a generation that had to face the nightmare of the war, consequently the work may have had the unexpected effect

of an authentic revelation which a contemporary critic has compared it to Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (Giacomantonio 1984). According to Dawkins:

South Wind is on the surface the more attractive; it contains perhaps more of Douglas' philosophy than its rival; it is the first book by which he really made his way with the public. The characters in the book are delightful; they are sublimated into types yet without forfeiting their interest for us as individuals....Yet of the two books I venture to think that *Old Calabria* is the better. I feel that it will be read when even the most brilliant pages of *South Wind* have begun to seem out of date and old-fashioned. In *South Wind* I cannot but see an author striving to amuse his readers: with infinite skill and wit and an almost boundless resourcefulness, but still striving; not quite at his ease. But in *Old Calabria* the same man is writing down what he has himself found interesting just for his own pleasure and for the pleasure of people who happen to like the same sort of thing that he does, and this is surely the way of excellence (Dawkins 1957: 69-70).

Although the study of *South Wind* became necessary for the reasons stated above, the parallel between *Old Calabria* and two other lesser-known works, which represented fundamental benchmarks in order to understand Douglas as a writer of travel books, was not less significant.

In 1925 *Experiments* was given to the press, a work in which the novelist drew inspiration from an essay on *Arabia Deserta* by Doughty and attempted to analyse the writer's intrinsic qualities of travel books. To indicate more specifically, the work *Experiments* is a collection of essays, fiction, and literary reviews which critics highly appreciated the appraisal of *Arabia Deserta* and his humorous response to D. H. Lawrence's introduction to *Maurice Magnus's Memoirs of the Foreign Legion*.

However, as reported by Douglas, it was not enough to portray landscapes with a wealth of details and colours and to describe with style and brilliance the habits, the situations and the behavior of the people; nor was it sufficient to study their traditions, history and culture (Holloway 1976). What was indeed necessary was to bring to life characters and situations that in travel books often came to be stereotypical, anonymous and banal, since they were conceived in terms of

documentary and illustrative purposes. Still, even though many travel books were exquisite works, they were unreasonably devalued to the level of tourist manuals and the cause could undoubtedly be attributable to the limitations of the psychological investigation and to the poor human and dramatic characterization of the characters. However, Douglas easily managed to combine the need to provide an objective account of his own travel experiences with the ambition to write a very fine work from an artistic perspective as well. The result was the great interest that *Old Calabria* aroused among the readers and the critics, even though, as mentioned earlier, this happened some time after its publication (Merlino 2004).

In the work *In the Beginning*, Douglas defined his position towards religion in which he narrated the sad events of human life with regard to the religious aspect that began with the bleak prophecy of its own end.

The narrative unfolded in an allegorical form; yet, there seemed to be no doubts about the real goals that might have raised the author who addressed, without false modesty, his bitter critique to the voluntary enslavement of men towards God. This God was tyrannical and distant from the world, as well as different from the Pagan Gods who mingled with men and lived their same human experiences, therefore he was the kind of God that Douglas liked.

Despite that, a man with a distinguished and flamboyant personality such as Douglas whose position was close to an aestheticism deeply steeped in rationalism could not rebel against the fideistic and sacramental theory of religion and could not regard faith as an act of impulsive renunciation of the independence of his own reason. On this account, Douglas' critique reached moments of extreme bitterness when the implications of supernatural and ascetic nature came to limit men's freedom and to influence their personality (Sandomenico 1996).

Yet, Douglas had a religion of his own that he manifested through the veneration of life and nature since the happiness from which he drew inspiration was a sort of earthly delight that terminated in the existential experience. In other words, Norman was neither an atheist nor a believer; he was above all a pantheist as he did not preliminarily reject the divine principle, on the condition that it represented an essential moment of life for the total realization of men in the world (Giacomantonio 1984). This explained his liking for the manifestations inclined towards Paganism of

the people living in the South who made God and the saints more humane and involved them in their own adventures:

The intense realism of their religion is what still keeps it alive for the poor in spirit. Their saints and devils are on the same familiar footing toward mankind as were the old gods of Greece. Children do not know the meaning of "Inferno"; they call it "casa del diavolo" (the devil's house); and if they are naughty, the mother says, "La Madonna strilla" - The Madonna will scold... I remember a woman explaining to me that the saints in Heaven took their food exactly as we do, and at the same hours. "The same food?" I asked. "Does the Madonna really eat beans?" "Beans? Not likely! But fried fish, and beefsteaks of veal" (Douglas 1956: 60-61).

In particular, the chapter that can help the reader to better understand the author's attitude as regards the religious problems is the one dedicated to St. Joseph of Cupertino (chapter X – *The Flying Monk*). Here Douglas' position found its rationale in his pragmatic and rationalistic vision that was in sharp contrast with the dogmatic and exclusivist theory of Anglo-Saxon Puritanism. Accordingly, Douglas' analysis went beyond superstition and fanaticism as he aimed to search for the cultural substratum of a religion that could be ascribable to the ancient pagan cults, at least for some manifestations of popular liturgies (Douglas 1956: 69-74). Thus, the trip to Calabria, which represented an important experience in Douglas' life, was not the outcome of an occasional stimulus.

The trigger came mainly from his keen interests for the classical world and Mediterranean civilization, especially from specific works such as Lenormant's *Magna Graecia*, G. Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea and* probably Henry Swinburne's *Travels in the two Sicilies* (Giacomantonio 1984).

To give a more thorough explanation of the above, it has to be pointed out that Charles-François Lenormant (1837 -1883) had a passion for exploration. Besides his early expeditions to Greece, he visited South Italy three times. Consequently, his travels in southern Italy were described in his travel reports such as *À travers l'Apulie et la Lucanie* and *Magna Graecia*. Hence, it was the latter work that was a

source of inspiration for Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea* and then for Douglas' *Old Calabria* as well. As a result, both Gissing and Douglas retraced the same itinerary as Lenormant in search of the places and characters described by the French archaeologist. Accordingly, the work *Magna Graecia* is characterized by its rich and varied diaristic narratives and is mainly dedicated to *Magna Graecia* antiquity. However, it also extends to the Byzantine and modern ages, up to the nineteenth century in Calabria and southern Italy and shows also a sensitive and acute attention to the anthropic space and the beauty of the landscape and to economic and social issues. The work is divided into three volumes and narrates in this first part, after Taranto, Metapontum, Heraclea and Siri, the crossing of *Magna Graecia* and Byzantine Calabria from Sybaris to Rossano and to the Neto Valley. The second volume is dedicated to Croton and Squillace; whereas the third regards the last part of the itinerary that is from Catanzaro to Nicastro, Pizzo, Monteleone and Mileto. The author's intelligent curiosity which is supported by the fluidity and charm of an exuberant writing style meant that the work quickly became a classic that was then used as a guide by the most important foreign travellers who visited Calabria between the 19th and 20th centuries, especially George Gissing and Norman Douglas (Lenormant 2021).

Secondly, Douglas took a keen interest in the Victorian novelist George Robert Gissing (1857-1903) since the latter undertook a brief but significant journey in the South of Italy in 1897. His itinerary took him from Naples to Reggio di Calabria, via Paola, Cosenza, Croton and Squillace, through the coastal region of Italy that had been colonized by the Greeks. Therefore, not only did this trip give him the opportunity to meditate on the vestiges of Greco-Roman civilization, but also to visit temples and tombs along with cathedrals and museums, in search of the imprint of classical past. The result was the work *By the Ionian Sea* that was first published in 1901. However, not only did Gissing's journey by carriage, train and boat reveal the ruined glories of antiquity, but also the hardships of rural life in Italy at the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, although he had to face the difficult situation caused by corrupt local officials and poverty-stricken peasants which led him to endure illness and discomfort in a remote corner of Europe, at the same time, he managed to appreciate the generosity and the warmth that the local people showed to him. Hence, some of the themes that characterize this work and which seem to

be present also in *Old Calabria* include the alternation of Paganism and Christianity, along with the combination of life and death and light and dark. Additionally, what mainly influenced Douglas was Gissing's description of Italy that took into account both its classical and contemporary dimensions which aimed at celebrating Calabria's beautiful landscapes and its rich cultural past while providing a truthful report of the region's poverty and hardship (Gissing 2003).

Thirdly, as anticipated previously, also the reading of Swinburne's *Travels in the two Sicilies* might have inspired Douglas to write *Old Calabria* as, also in this case, there is a parallel of the main themes addressed in both works.

Like Norman Douglas, also Henry Swinburne (1743–1803) was an English travel writer who was impressed with southern Italy when he visited it for the first time. It was in 1777 when he sailed to Naples with his family and travelled in the Two Sicilies where they stayed until 1779. However, what mainly incited the Swinburne family to visit Italy was their love of the arts and Roman Catholics (Lock 2016). Consequently, in 1783, as a result of this trip, the writer published the first volume of the work *Travels in the two Sicilies*. Subsequently, the second volume was printed in 1785 with plates from Swinburne's drawings.

Both volumes chronicle Swinburne's travels through the Two Sicilies region which included information about Italy and Sicily during the years 1777-1780.

Especially in the second volume, Swinburne provided an in-depth account of his observations and experiences during his expeditions. He covered a wide range of topics including the history along with the geography and culture of the people that lived in the region. Hence, what mainly seemed to interest Douglas was Swinburne's writing style as it was engaging and descriptive since it provided a realistic description of the architecture, landscapes and traditions of the Two Sicilies. Moreover, He added personal reflections and anecdotes so as to give readers a glimpse into his own thoughts and experiences during his travels (Swinburne 2008). Overall, this work can be regarded as a historical document that offered valuable insights into the society and the culture of the Two Sicilies region during the late 18th century.

Nevertheless, Douglas' personality, as well as his taste and culture were similar to those of the Mediterranean people and this could explain his determination to face the difficulties of a long and arduous journey that would have enabled him to

discover the innermost and most authentic motivations of his own values and sensibility.

His visits to South Italy were not incited by a mere feeling of adventure that was typical of the English people; on the contrary, his aim was to use the life experience he had in the places described in *Old Calabria* in order to reconstruct the history of a population which in the end developed as a rediscovery of his personality. The interesting aspect of *Old Calabria* which also shows Douglas' strong artistic disposition, is his ability to live such a committed experience from the cultural and investigative point of view, without sacrificing in the least the narrative tension that was not a secondary quality in his nature as a writer.

It needs to be pointed out that Douglas' human and cultural interests were numerous therefore the structure of *Old Calabria* was complex. Resultantly, it should come as no surprise to the readers that, alongside reflections on social issues and extensive historical references, it is possible to take note of in-depth scientific dissertations. Besides, it seems that acts of grotesque flavor depicting aspects of peasant life provided the basis for highly effective descriptions of landscapes full of lyrical tension. The result was a polychrome picture where the contrasts were never jarring as they had their own solution in the effective and sophisticated use of the language and in their intent. However, he seemed to be fascinated by the use of the Italian language, particularly by the local Calabrian dialects and he was captivated by the evidence of a semi-underground intellectual life in Calabria that he carefully documented. However, when he was immersed in the southern countryside he had the tendency to abandon his traditional restrained lyricism (Assunto 2005). This topic is thoroughly explained in the answer to research question N. Two.

In this regard, Douglas used all his resources as a novelist, and his ability to scrutinize the society with precision and sense of the real, resorting to his scientific culture and to a technique in which not only was it possible to recognize the signs of an acute realism and a noticeable sensitivity to the problems of society, but also a keen interest in the psychological introspection of the people that lived in the places that he visited. I have provided a deep analysis of this observation in the answer to research question N. Four.

Moreover, the philosophy of life that inspired him drove him toward the exaltation of beauty and pleasure.

Even when his irony became bitter and harsh and it was never to be ascribed to a sort of mistrust with no prospects, it seemed to be a symptom of a troubled consciousness, but not dissolved. Hence, his findings were extraordinarily interesting both in terms of formal aspects and of substance.

As said earlier, the author knew that he could deviate from his complex intercultural and human interests which were not an obstacle to the investigation of a popular world overflowing with small events and marginal facts.

To such a degree, Douglas succeeded in combining these seemingly antithetical aspects, thanks in part to a form of expression that was flexible but never neglected, which not only was it harsh and lyrical, as well as instinctive and measured, but also biting and dignified, as it was often the expressive vein of the Calabrian “rustic peasant.”

Through this technique, he gave the impression of compensating for the lack of unity in the work: an implicit limitation in the very definition of a travel book, but intensified by the fact that Norman did not pursue any goal intended to give unity to the complex and multifaceted main themes he addressed in *Old Calabria*. This explained the lack of logical consequentiality and the effort of readjustment and manipulation that could be found in many parts of the work. Holloway defined *Old Calabria* as:

An anthology of all the author’s notes and writings which can be justified by the title. Here and there he has written linking passages in an attempt to disguise this fact (Holloway 1976: 216).

Notwithstanding what formerly described and taking into account that the genre of the work would not allow homogeneity in either content or structure as Holloway specified, it seems possible to identify moments of cohesion in the effort that Douglas made to propose a vision of life in the insights of social inquiry that led to the identification of the fundamental lines of the structure of the society and the same could be said of *South Wind*.

The outcome was an outstanding work which showed many cultural interests whose human and social message made it an interesting text from a literary and artistic standpoint. In addition, it was essential in style as it never indulged in

concessions that were merely formal and meticulous rather than pedantic in its analyses of the human and social condition of the South characterized by poverty, backwardness, illiteracy, underdevelopment and organized crime (Giacomantonio 1984). With regard to the social condition of South Italy, Douglas maintained the following:

In 1900 was published a book called "La Quistione Meridionale" (What's Wrong with the South), that throws a flood of light upon local conditions. It contains the views of twentyseven of the most prominent men in the country as to how southern Italian problems should be faced and solved. Nearly all of them deplore the lack of justice. Says Professor Colajanni: "To heal the south, we require an honest, intelligent and sagacious government, *which we have not got.*" And Lombroso: "In the south it is necessary to introduce justice, *which does not exist, save in favour of certain classes*" (Douglas 2012: 276).

The chapter dedicated to St. Joseph of Cupertino (Chapter IX – *Moving Southwards*) could be considered as the main example of how Douglas managed to reconcile the humorous character of the narrative that sometimes was close to a subtle sarcasm, with the severity of certain themes which revealed a type of mentality and behavior rooted in the deepest swaths of Mediterranean culture and civilization, that, at the same time, manifested considerable signs of decadence and deviation as well. In the same way, the harshness of certain tones could be justified by the love that Norman manifested for the truth which did not allow him to accept any mystification, even when he was confronted with data that had been acquired through the awareness of common people's culture.

Contrariwise, on that account, there seems to be a sharper rejection that was expressed and hidden in any case since it showed unmistakable signs of involution. Given the case of St. Joseph of Cupertino and taking into consideration Douglas' views on religion, it seems rather easy to acknowledge what the writer' reaction was with regard to the idea of a man hovering in the air.

In point of fact, when Douglas had a pleasant and at the same time scathing conversation with the knowledgeable Neapolitan bookseller, he did not miss the opportunity to express his personal views on certain religious manifestations of the

poor and uncultured people of the South. It has to be pointed out that he included even the credulous occurrences that were undoubtedly unreliable.

Furthermore, behind the irony, it was possible to detect Douglas' rejection of the socio-cultural motivations which implied certain manifestations of beliefs and superstitions that were incompatible with the rationality of men and highly questionable on the level of faith, as the author himself stated:

He flew? I queried, my mind reverting to the much-vaunted triumphs of modern science. Why not? The only reason why people don't fly like that nowadays is because well, sir, because they can't. They fly with machines, and think it is something quite new and wonderful. And yet it's as old as the hills! There was Iscariot, for example. Icarus, I mean (Douglas 2012: 67).

It goes without saying that the image of a man suspended in mid-air was rather unusual and not so mystical, therefore it provoked laughter even from those who believed in prodigies.

Consequently, Douglas combined an innate sense of humor with an ill-repressed anti-Catholic attitude, so as to take the opportunity to manifest his personal views on religion without reticence, albeit behind the veils of subtle irony.

Conversely, his anti-Catholicism found its relief in a biting satire that was never blasphemous, which did summary justice to any religious manifestation pervaded with irrationality and fetishism. This could often be noticed in the popular subculture that in the South persistently resisted the incursions of the ideology of progress (Giacomantonio 1984).

On that account, Douglas took the satire to the limit of paradox, without making it an end in itself, because he had a sense of reality and did not know how to renounce his "profession" as an artist: the author did not lose touch with the most authentic sense of situations which became important data of judgment on culture and civilization. Besides, these became expedients in the outward manifestations which were effectively used for artistic purposes and resulted functional for the aims that the scholar-writer intended to pursue.

This could be proved by the rapid and incisive language that was perfectly adherent to the circumstances, which he puts into his personages' mouths and that

seemed to be used on purpose to formulate small and effective sketches normally placed in the context of the observed reality.

Although there are innumerable examples, the most representative could be the one in the closing lines of the chapter *Moving Southwards* dedicated to the negotiations for the purchase of a hagiography of the “flying friar”.

What came out then was a happy portrait of the typical Neapolitan merchant who not only appeared to be rather expert in his business dealings, but also sophisticated, knowledgeable and refined in his speeches.

Moreover, another distinguishing characteristic of *Old Calabria* is its author's continuous effort aimed at researching the most significant and emerging data of southern reality. This data was considered in a context of historical and socio-cultural analysis coinciding with a widespread need for reliable knowledge of the complex southern issues as a premise for a radical change of the degraded and backward conditions of the South (Merlino 2000). However, in the search for the historical, social and cultural reasons that constituted the basis of the southern condition, what sometimes emerged was the image of a human reality that seemed incapable of establishing an evolved model of life and in line with the times. Even so, the attentive reader managed to sense a sort of a tempered optimism and faith in a kind of “life force” which could emerge from a past of culture and civilization.

All this seems to explain why Douglas often enthusiastically experienced human adventures in which he was directly and indirectly involved and was faithful to an aesthetic conception of life; nevertheless, he did not lose his identity of a “humanist rationalist,” as Greenlees defined him.

Hence, these were the distinctive attitudes of the artist who could immediately detect the emotional aspects of situations. Yet, the hope for a renewal remained, at least for Norman, since he believed in the power of life and that the impulses for change could come from the rich traditions of culture and civilization. Moreover, he was also of the opinion that this stimulus for renewal had to come from the charge of humanity, as well as from the instinctive wisdom and the stubborn pride that southern people managed to express even in a state of deep desolation and expectation (Merlino 2004).

Douglas' hope in an existential reality that had the necessary resources to regenerate itself, seemed to be bolstered by the contact with a primitive world which suggested the state of nature of G. G. Rousseau and Wordsworth's naturalism. It was almost a mystical intuition that suggested a prenatal life overwhelmed by the materialistic civilization which then re-emerged in contact with nature.

Douglas seemed to reckon nature as a norm of judgment that was capable of steering the progress of society towards the recovery of original values. What appeared exemplifying in this case was the description of Longeac in the mining district near Clermont which concluded chapter X of *Siren Land – Our Lady of the Snow*:

Coal-dust had crept over houses and roads and trees, and a murky cloud hung in the sky as though some demon with outstretched wings were brooding over the land. Troubled in mind, I wandered about the streets. Uncouth buildings, with a thousand chimneys and projections, towered into the sky; everywhere Jay, in chaotic confusion, mountains of black mineral wealth, and carts, and iron contrivances of menacing aspect, whose purport I could not fathom. Pallid men and women straggling home from the pits, scowled at me. It was all gloomy and evil.... (Douglas 1923: 148).

In this regard, Holloway's comment was relevant:

Here one is made to feel some of the horror of industrial society as it impinged upon the senses of this country-born and country-bred young man: horror of the Blakean kind or such as Shelley knew. The strength of this impression must have confirmed, if it did not actually start, a lifelong disgust with such places and with the society which permits and actually creates them. The effects of such environments on those who had to live in them must have been immediately obvious, and must have contributed to his distrusts, which persisted through life, of town-bred people (Holloway 1976: 69).

However, the nature-progress relationship which emerged in Douglas through a spiritual attitude rather than a socio-philosophical inclination, was not corroborated by the historical reality that the typical contradictions of the capitalist model firmly characterized and, alongside moments of opulence, developed areas of exploitation and backwardness which made inequalities more noticeable and took the hope of redemption away even more.

Norman gave the impression of being spellbound by the peaceful wisdom and the instinctiveness of certain behaviors which caused despair and indignation when he realized that they were not the result of a catharsis produced by new forms of social relations, but rather the outcome of a progressive dissolution of the social order. Despite everything, Douglas did not know how to renounce his natural optimism and believed in southern people's spirituality that was still intact and guardian of the original values as it was a foundational element of any process of change and progress (Giacomantonio 1984:82).

Consequently, this had to be taken into account in order to interpret some of his critical reflections and to understand the political and sociological motivations that were at the root of his observation since they provided interesting elements of judgment for both historical and current analysis of southern society.

His criticism that was often pervaded with subtle irony and almost a sense of irreverence, stemmed from the fear that the state of frustration and isolation could become an irreversible fact. Besides, it was concealed by anachronistic prejudices in addition to suppressed wishes and passive reflux into its own tradition.

Likewise, it can be noticed that there is a connection between Norman Douglas and the Romantic poet William Blake (1757-1827) as both of them in their works denounced themes such as the consequences of industrialization, along with the injustices caused by materialistic attitude and the commercial exploitation of human beings. In point of fact, Blake stressed the importance of imagination over reason and believed that ideal forms did not have to be created from the observation of nature but from inner visions and this is noticeable in his works, especially in the collections of short lyrical verses such as *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794) (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017: 29). To complete the explanation, I have analysed the parallelism between Douglas and Blake in research question N. 3 which aims to explore the influence of English literature on Douglas' literary

productions.

However, Douglas' indignation seemed to increase when he realized that not even the most educated social classes were able to escape from these conditions of barbarization, decay and lack of education (Sandomenico 1996).

It was in this environment that an inept ruling class emerged which not only promoted paternalism as a political practice, but also defended its privileges with the practice of the most outdated nepotism through the misunderstanding of the destructive culture of underdevelopment (Lelli 2021). Still, there was a physiological process of growth that was to some extent increased by induced and marginal effects which could be contradictory, anachronistic and exasperatingly slow, but not completely avoidable.

Inevitably, this process enabled the transition from a typically peasant type of society to another type with a tertiary and sometimes, pre-industrial vocation by necessity, which through spontaneous germination could produce different and more complex socio-economic articulations, as it is happening at the present time. In reality, this transition did not take place painlessly; on the contrary, it was made possible by the people's renunciations and sacrifices, especially when they had to find the strength to abandon their land and their loved ones.

As a direct consequence, all this created new and serious problems for the *Mezzogiorno* in Italy and also produced effects that had repercussions on the limited and backward system of life (Lelli 2021).

This could be associated with the fact that Douglas' reflections made in the course of his travels often had their own historical-political importance.

In simple terms, they did not stop at a superficial observation of facts and people, but touched on even fundamental aspects of *La Questione Meridionale* that Douglas dealt with a critical spirit and an innate propensity to irony which, at times, seemed to go along with an unquestionable knowledge of the environment and the history of the South together with a genuine liking for the people.

For this reason, Norman compensated for particular excesses and sometimes it appeared that his causticity was meant to challenge the submissiveness and the spirit of renunciation of the common people that seemed to inevitably accept their own state, as if it were a nemesis, or rather, a reparative justice of previous blames.

In light of these points, Douglas' judgment acquired the value of a public denunciation of injustice and ineptitude on the part of those who should have promoted progress through political, cultural and moral commitment.

From this perspective, Norman's work held a remarkable position in the wide southern literature. As was the case of many southern writers, the author's main aim in *Old Calabria* was to provide an analysis of the problems of the South and not so much to indicate the solutions.

Nevertheless, as far as Douglas was concerned, the role of the artist seemed to be more important than that of the scholar of social issues. This may have been the perspective through which *Old Calabria* had to be analyzed, although one of the first impressions that the readers seemed to receive was almost a sense of disorientation due to the variety and multiplicity of information, considerations and judgments which seemed to convey to the work mainly a fragmentary and dispersive trait. On the contrary, any perplexity was dispelled on closer examination when considering that *Old Calabria* constituted, at least from a formal standpoint, a compilation of travel notes, or rather, a collection of essays summarizing the experiences that the author gained over the course of his many travels, as was the case of *Siren Land* as well.

On account of this, the attentive reader could not miss the opportunity to notice Douglas' awareness of the risks associated with this kind of work.

The formal unity of the novel was not a concern for the writer, but, as said before, it could not be ignored that the homogenizer element may have been identified in the attempt to trace an original history of the South and in the intelligent use of the resources of his rich and vigorous style that was forged on the classical tradition and made incisive and crucial by his original scientific knowledge.

For all these reasons, *Old Calabria* has a special consideration in the literature of travel books:

It is as granitic and sculptural as its author's head, not a conventional travel-book but grasping of what Goethe called that living life which shifts and fluctuates about us (In Times Literary Supplement 1956, cit, in Giacomantonio 1984: 84).

Even though *Old Calabria* had the structure of a travel book, the author wanted to provide a scrupulous survey without compromising the discursive tone and effectiveness of the expressive means which extraordinarily met the needs of the contents concerning the living conditions of southern people.

That was why he renounced any mystification and expedients that would have undoubtedly procured him an easier and more profitable commercial success. However, this would not have allowed him to gain the prestige that official critics recognize him at present.

This justified the harshness and the unconventionality with which Douglas described things seen and heard, that were brought to the reader's attention with the intention of seeking a complete and objective judgment. If it were not so, he could not have gone along the most remote regions of Calabria and would not have mingled with the shepherds of the Pollino. Not only that, but he would not have an animated discussion with the municipal guard and argued with the inefficient custodian of the Museum of Catanzaro (Chapter I –*Sarecen Lucera*). As reported by Douglas:

They have appointed a custodian to take charge of it; a worthless old fellow, full of untruthful information which he imparts with the hushed and conscience-stricken air of a man who is selling State secrets.

"That corner tower, sir, is the King's tower. It was built by the King."

"But you said just now that it was the Queen's tower."

"So it is. The Queen—she built it."

"What Queen?" "What Queen? Why, the Queen—the Queen the German professor was talking about three years ago. But I must show you some skulls which we found (*sotto voce*) in a subterranean crypt. They used to throw the poor dead folk in here by the hundreds; and under the Bourbons the criminals were hanged here, thousands of them. The blessed times! And this tower is the Queen's tower."

"But you called it the King's tower just now."

"Just so. That is because the King built it." "What King?" "Ah, sir, how can I remember the names of all those gentlemen? I haven't so much as set eyes on them! But I must now show you some round sling-stones

which we excavated (*sotto voce*) in a subterranean crypt" (Douglas 2012: 2-3).

On balance, in these places and among these people, the writer intended to plumb the darkest and innermost recesses of southern culture and civilization without relying on indirect and superficial knowledge (Sandomenico 1996).

2.7 Douglas: the man and the artist

First and foremost, not only was Douglas' dignity as a man and his intellectual intransigence reflected in the themes of his work, but also on the language and on the way of perceiving a popular world in which men identified themselves with nature in a pathological relationship governed by prejudices, solid traditions and paradoxical habits.

Norman was able to capture and reproduce that world by calling to mind the kind of realism that Francesco de Sanctis stated in a conference entitled "Zola and the Assommoir" that took place in 1879. This was a type of strengthened art in the languages of the people, it was closer to nature and which had more alive passions, immediate impressions, and did not derive its language from rules, but from impressions. It goes without saying that De Sanctis' judgment should be explained in *Old Calabria's* interpretation that was free of certain exasperations which characterized Zola's conception of a literature of analysis, and that was based on scientific principles requiring a truthful reproduction of even the most sordid aspects of reality. To indicate more specifically, Émile Zola, was a French writer, journalist, essayist, literary critic, philosopher and photographer that was considered one of the greatest exponents of naturalism since he managed to describe the society of the Second Empire in all its diversity, highlighting its harshness towards workers (*Germinale*, 1885), its vices and corruptions (*Nanà*, 1880), but also its successes (*Al paradiso delle signore*, 1883). In a quest for truth modelled on scientific methods, Zola accumulated observations and direct documentation on every subject. With his acute sense of detail and effective metaphor along with the rhythm of his sentences and his narrative constructions, he was able to create a powerful imaginary world that was inhabited by anguished questions about the human and social body. Consequently, he developed his

conception of the novel as an 'experimental work' in which he applied the scientific method to the observation of social reality (Christophe 1979).

However, it appears clear that Douglas' characters, situations and facts, which are often seen through the lens of a keen sense of humor, appear distorted at times, without being counterfeit. Yet, he never ceased to meticulously scrutinize with objectivity everything he happened to observe and describe.

It is interesting to notice that some descriptions in *Old Calabria* could be connected to the world described by the Calabrian writer Nicola Misasi, while taking into account the implicit limitations of the comparison. On the one hand, what these two authors had in common was the description of the colors, the social background, the peasant culture and their passion for local traditions, whereas, on the other hand, the macroscopic differences regarded their interests, and above all, Douglas' artistic style that was different from Misasi's fictional world (Rando 2006).

Nicola Misasi was born in Paterno Calabro, a small town on the outskirts of Cosenza and he devoted himself quite early to literary activity publishing works inspired by the style of French novelists such as Emile Zola and Honoré de Balzac and local writers, in particular Vincenzo Padula. In 1881, he published the collection *Racconti Calabresi (Calabrian Tales)*, composed of short stories inspired by Verga which retain the Romantic tones of the literature of the first half of the 19th century due to the excessive search for pathetic effects and local colour. From 1892 he began in Cosenza a decisive publishing activity through which he produced serialized novels and short stories along with travel reports and socio-economic and historical studies on Calabria (Rando 2006).

Although Misasi's works cannot be fully regarded as realist narrative, according to critics Nicola Misasi is considered the realist representative of Calabria. His stories that are generally characterized by Calabrian peasants, shepherds and brigands, who are united by a rather primitive sense of justice and honour, received a positive verdict from Benedetto Croce and Francesco Flora. On the contrary, Giulio Cattaneo regarded the plots of Misasi's works to be often conventional and monotonous (Cappelli 2011).

Most importantly, Douglas managed to portray Calabria in all its nuances and the villages perched on the hills formed the background to an inexhaustible gallery of characters, who seemed alive and authentic since he thoroughly described their sensibility, the way they dressed, their dialectal accent, their folk wisdom and their naivety. The writer portrayed them in their everyday actions that generally took place in the middle of the fields, before the statue of the patron saint, in the pharmacy or on the train, thus, he succeeded in capturing the deepest and truest meaning of attitudes, speeches and situations:

He keeps people he saw in their place (cit. in Giacomantonio 1984:88)³

As a result, *Old Calabria* can be regarded as a true and current work since the human and social interests as well as the sensitivity and the culture, are combined with the surrounding reality. Even though the author was directly and constantly involved in each adventure, he managed to avoid without difficulty the emotional implications and the exasperation of the positivistic inquiry.

If anything, he seemed to be able to show a sort of intimate consonance with an existential reality that was well-balanced and rather distant from the Anglo-Saxon real world. According to Giacomantonio:

It has become a classic (*Old Calabria*) because of the serene union of his habit of mind with his subject (Giacomantonio 1984: 89).

Moreover, Douglas scrupulously read reality with an intimate participation without morbid condescension, since he saw in it the history of humanity and he was deeply convinced that authentic knowledge of the sensible world was not only a fact that belonged to science, but rather an existential value to which man had to “conform.” On that account, his attitude inevitably led to a sort of hedonistic impression of life that characterized the distinguishing mark of the artist, the scholar and man as well:

Our author, we soon find, has a set of values entirely of this world; he believes in no other and seeks to adjust himself and his conduct solely to what he can see with his eyes - and they are very sharp ones - and to what he thinks that experience, his own and that of the human race,

³ In *the New Statesman and Nation*, March 10th, 1956

has taught him. He has looked at the nature of things as he sees it in the lives of plants, of animals, of man, and he finds it self-seeking, regardless of others and of their interests, and not a little cruel: to this nature in its general lines he proposes frankly to conform (Dawkins 1957:9).

Hence, his deep knowledge of the conditions of the South that he acquired without having to renounce his critical sense, guaranteed a genuine and disinterested participation. This way of approaching reality that was without hesitations, prejudices and distortion of the truth, often led him to express harsh and severe judgments. In spite of that, he seemed careful not to let the emotional tension overcome the reasons placed at the foundation of his commitment as a thorough observer and a cautious artist. At the same time, his criticism and his scathing irony derived from a deep sense of solidarity and of truth.

That is why his criticism was never a cause for disinterest and hostility, but rather of sympathy and painful participation in the tribulations of his fellow human beings. Besides, it was not passive and resigned, but caustic and instructive, as it was based on the hope that when misery and suffering did not become renunciation and isolation, there could be opportunities for regeneration.

It is on this occasion that it was possible to detect Douglas' originality and his intellectual autonomy: if, on the one hand, he often gave the impression of yielding to conventionality, especially in certain judgments on the conditions of the South, on the other hand, his true identity was never obscured and manifested itself in his innate sense of the art and respect for the truth.

Yet, the last-mentioned were cause for exaltation of man and his spirituality, therefore, they were often expressed into an impulse of passion that motivated his aesthetic theory of life (Sandomenico 1996). With this regard, I have provided examples in the answer to research question N. Five that focuses on the comparison between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua.

Reflecting on the preceding, the impression is that there is a sort of contradiction because it may be difficult to understand how it was possible to combine passion and objectivity, solidarity and irony, and also art and scientific accuracy.

In addition, the scientist, the scholar and the artist gave meaning to the man who immersed himself in the reality because he loved life, and the man who lived his

existential experience without totally adhering to the reality of things and who suppressed his inclinations and lived an incomplete life devoid of any purpose. Not only did his love for life, which was inseparable from this unitary idea of man, make him understand reality better, but it made him become a censor toward injustice and distortion of facts, and made him also realize that life could be fully lived by exalting his spirituality through the observation and the realization of what was around him. As a result, his Epicureanism and hope became love for others and especially a moment in which he managed to overcome his state of suspiciousness and distrust. It was Davenport who effectively captured this particular aspect by writing in the introduction of the most famous edition of *Old Calabria*:

The scholar, the scientist, the sceptic merge into the man who was a great lover of life, who could communicate his passion with a unique blend of high spirits and objectivity (cit. in Dawkins 1957: 36).

Seemingly, the narrative technique contributed in creating an atmosphere of a more intense participation. Additionally, it had the features of being essential, formally perfect and rich in resources that were never instrumental but rather indispensable to the faithful and vivid reconstruction of situations and a human environment. It follows that Douglas succeeded in using this strategy since he himself was personally involved in the events he described and in which he often became their protagonist. What corresponds to Douglas' excursions directed towards the South of the Calabrian territory, with some incursions into neighbouring areas (from Lucera to Manfredonia, Venosa, Taranto), is the narrator's movement into the temporal dimension of the past which can be considered as the evasion from the present reality. Consequently this influenced Douglas' style of writing which became an alternation between documentary-descriptive language that is typical of narrative and imaginary or structured language according to the logic of poetic vision.

Moreover, alongside diligent annotations concerning the novelties that he discovered in the life habits of the populations of southern Italy, it is possible to find in the pages of *Old Calabria* frequent fantasizing references to the classical past (Sette 2018).

Given the circumstances, Douglas' work can be worthy of merit since he used his keen sensibility in addition to his love of classicism, as well as his experience and a vigorous style, in order to transform travel notes into a work of art.

Besides, he organized it into a design in which the substance of the investigation and the resulting philosophical theory of life represented the unifying element. As frequently happens, official critics realized late of the validity of *Old Calabria*, and appreciated it when it was already successful among the readers. Likewise, it is also unusual that even at present there seem to be very few studies available on the writer and researchers had to wait until 1976 before they could read a thorough biography written by Mark Holloway (Giacomantonio 1984).

Thus, *Old Calabria* can be legitimately considered today as an important work because it is primarily a work of art. At the same time, it addressed themes which were and still are the object of a wide debate concerning *la Questione Meridionale*, although in a different way compared to the traditional literature that focused on the study of the economic and social problems of southern Italy. As a result, the discrete prestige that the work enjoys in Italy today is also due to this circumstance.

Furthermore, Douglas discarded the method and canons of socio-economic investigation that were typical of the first half of the twentieth century since he preferred to reconstruct the history of the South through the direct exploration of facts and events in the various social environments. Inevitably, the overall picture that emerged from this kind of analysis was certainly not encouraging considering the opinions and reflections on *Old Calabria*; yet, Douglas was not pessimistic and perhaps he personally believed in the possibility of a social, cultural and economic improvement of the South (Sandomenico 1996).

It follows that readers seem to detect in his anxiety that was slightly concealed behind the combination of irony and satire, the hope of a new humanism as a sort of awareness of the supremacy of man and the irrepressible need for a more widespread social justice.

Eventually, he hoped that from the state of marginalization, unhappiness and lack of education, there could emerge the willingness to rediscover its past civilization and culture in order to draw from it the reasons for edification and progress. Besides, he wished for a goodwill that was capable of resolving the Roussonian

antinomy between “the natural equality of men and their social inequality,” that was not according to a utopian logic, but in line with a reaffirmation of the dignity of men even in the inevitable stratification of society.

Considering everything, the credibility as well as the authenticity and the plausibility of many of his evaluations, could be attributable to the fact that Douglas did not live his experience as a detached passer-by, on the contrary, he mingled with the people sharing their sacrifices and joys, he suffered with them and then became aware of the ignorance and the prejudices that characterized southern Italy without judging them and reflected on the following:

It is not as a writer of prose but as a human observer, historian, master of dialects, wine-bibber, walker and botanist, that Douglas shines in Old Calabria:...He knew not only the languages but the dialects, he met people the hard way by walking and by being alone, he knew the vanishing world of priest, mayor, chemist and village schoolmaster...(In Sunday Times 1955, cit. in Giacomantonio 1984: 93).

2.8 Douglas’ sense of humour

The aim of Douglas’ sense of humour which is spread throughout the work is mainly to moderate the harshness of certain tones and to reward the readers who are often forced into reflections and analyses that generally only the most engaged readings elicit. However, even in this case the humor is never an end in itself and becomes eventually functional to situations that reveal clear implications of a cultural, political and social order. Even though quotations could be innumerable, what this paragraph mainly focuses on is the stratagems to which the author had to resort in several situations. An example could be represented by the subterfuges he had to make use of when he was in search of accommodation. According to Douglas’ words in chapter XV *Byzantinism*:

Where, then, do I generally go for accommodation?

Well, as a rule I begin by calling for advice at the chemist's shop, where a fixed number of the older and wiser citizens congregate for a little talk.

The cafes and barbers and wine-shops are also meeting- places of

men; but those who gather here are not of the right type— they are the young, or empty-headed, or merely thirsty. The other is the true centre of the leisured class, the philosophers' rendezvous. Your *speciale* (apothecary) is himself an elderly and honoured man, full of responsibility and local knowledge; he is altogether a superior person, having been trained in a University. You enter the shop, therefore, and purchase a penny worth of vaseline. This act entitles you to all the privileges of the club. Then is the moment to take a seat, smiling affably at the assembled company, but without proffering a syllable. If this etiquette is strictly adhered to, it will not be long ere you are politely questioned as to your plans, your present accommodation, and so forth; and soon several members will be vying with each other to procure you a clean and comfortable room at half the price charged in a hotel (Douglas 2012: 102-103).

It goes without saying that it was not an easy task in those times, even Gissing himself, although he was an expert of the South, did not travel southwards, without a solid “recommendation“ from some important people (Giacomantonio 1984).

Consequently, after the experience of numerous trips made to Calabria and after having experimented a variety of systems, such as directly addressing the innkeeper, or asking for hospitality by being introduced by some influential person, Douglas had to recognize that, under such circumstances, the first thing to do was to try to be in the locals' good books.

Therefore, not only did the approach need to be occasional and with due caution, but it was better that it took place in the right places, such as in the barber's shop or, preferably, in the pharmacy, where it was possible to meet the cream of the local society (Bevilacqua 2012). According to Norman, a good stratagem was to enter these places and try to take part in the discussions among the people as spontaneously and casually as possible. Additionally, another thing that Douglas found useful in order to make himself popular with everybody was not to lavish tips with too much generosity. With this regard, he also suggested that a good behavior was to ruthlessly discuss about the bills, as not only was this the only

way of showing common sense and shrewdness, but it also helped people to not being considered as “fool,” which, in the South, represented an unforgivable guilt (Giacomantonio 1984).

That being the case, it appears that such situations, described with taste and with a subtle sense of humor, could not be preliminary sketches otherwise Douglas' work would have not avoided the conventionality of travel books. On account of this, they commonly involved judgments and reflections on the culture and the way of being of the people who lived in the South.

A typical example of what previously described could be the writer's description of his visit to the Catanzaro public museum in chapter XXVIII – *The Greater Sila*, and especially his conversation with the ignorant museum attendant that stood at the entrance. According to Douglas she was an uncultured and incompetent widow who presumed to know everything about few relics preserved in two dusty rooms that came from “Stromboli” (in reality Strangoli, the ancient Petelia), which eventually became the “province”, after a disrespectful and impertinent remark by Douglas:

At its entrance stands the civic museum, entrusted, just now, to the care of a quite remarkably ignorant and slatternly woman. It contains two rooms, whose exhibits are smothered in dust and cobwebs; as neglected, in short, as her own brats that sprawl about its floor. I enquired whether she possessed no catalogue to show where the objects, bearing no labels, had been found. A catalogue was unnecessary, she said; she knew everything—everything!

And everything, apparently, hailed from “Stromboli.” The Tiriolo helmet, the Greek vases, all the rest of the real and sham treasures of this establishment: they were all discovered at Stromboli.

“Those coins—whence?”

“Stromboli!”

Noticing some neolithic celts similar to those I obtained at Vaccarizza, I would gladly have learnt their place of origin. Promptly came the answer:

“Stromboli!”

“Nonsense, my good woman. I've been three times to Stromboli; it is an

island of black stones where the devil has a house, and such things are not found there." (Of course she meant Strangoli, the ancient Petelia.)

This vigorous assertion made her more circumspect. Thenceforward everything was declared to come from the province—*dalla provincial* it was safer.

"That bad picture—whence?"

"Dalla provincial"

"Have you really no catalogue?"

"I know everything."

"And this broken statue—whence?"

"Dalla provincial"

"But the province is large," I objected.

"So it is. Large, and old" (Douglas 2012: 222-223).

Nevertheless, the writer seemed to have a human liking for his characters, since in their behavior, in their interests and in their somatic features, he managed to capture the signs of humanity, instinctivity, naivety and pride of the ancient Bruzia lineage. Thus, his irony could be represented concretely into a kind of historical-political judgment.

Consequently, the "inefficient" museum attendant became a pleasant companion for Douglas, who did not mind the gossip that his visits aroused.

In point of fact, Douglas' tours of the museum became scandalously frequent to the point of suggesting secret marriage plans plotted against the poor widow, with the sole purpose of taking possession of the relics she treasured.

According to Norman:

My visits to the provincial museum have become scandalously frequent during the last few days. I cannot keep away from the place. I go there not to study the specimens but to converse with their keeper, the woman who, in her quiet way, has cast a sort of charm over me. Our relations are the whispered talk of the town; I am suspected of matrimonial designs upon a poor widow with the ulterior object of appropriating the cream of the relics under her care. Regardless of the

perils of the situation, I persevere; for the sake of her company I forswear the manifold seductions of Catanzaro. She is a noteworthy person, neither vicious nor vulgar, but simply the *dernier mot* of incompetence. Her dress, her looks, her children, her manners—they are all on an even plane with her spiritual accomplishments; at no point does she sink, or rise, beyond that level. They are not as common as they seem to be, these harmoniously inefficient females.

Why has she got this job in a progressive town containing so many folks who could do it creditably? Oh, that is simple enough! She needs it. On the platform of the Reggio station (long before the earthquake) I once counted five station-masters and forty-eight other railway officials, swaggering about with a magnificent air of incapacity. What were they doing? Nothing whatever. They were like this woman: they needed a job (Douglas 2012: 224).

It emerges that in these situations, the writer cleverly made maximum use of a sort of natural humorous charge which managed to leave in the reader a deep sense of melancholy at all times. This happened because Douglas' secret purpose was mainly to detect the drama of the state of social dissolution, of isolation and cultural degradation that southern people had to endure. Ultimately, the justification given for the presence of the woman in the Museum was an unappealable political judgment that undoubtedly revealed Douglas' opinion on the subject:

We are in a patriarchal country; work is pooled; it is given not to those who can do it best, but to those who need it most... (Douglas 2012: 224).

Hence, these are still relevant truths that disclose the seriousness of situations that even today constitute a strong impediment to any process of improvement of southern regions.

2.9 Douglas and the current events of *La Questione Meridionale*

At the time Douglas visited Calabria, in the early years of the twentieth century, people began to talk about the first projects of industrialization and the damming of the streams of the Arvo and the Ampollino for the creation of reservoirs, which would have ensured the supply of electricity and the irrigation of the Silan Plateau. That was the time when Calabrians started to be hopeful of an adequate tourism policy for the enhancement of the natural heritage, later on, some of those ideas materialized. Then, the welfare civilization reached Calabria so as to create its myths and its alienates (Bevilacqua 2010).

However, it is not known to what extent Douglas would have been enthusiastic about it today, since this kind of progress also meant sacrificing moral and cultural values on the altar of consumerism.

Consequently, it seems that the physical isolation of Calabria and of the South of Italy has been partly overcome, yet, as it happened in Douglas' times, today there is still persistence of the moral, cultural, and economic isolation and of the numerous contradictions that have accumulated in the course of the history (Lelli 2021). Hence, good examples that corroborate this situation could be the lack of education and the underdevelopment throughout the region that still exist, as well as the depopulation of the countryside, the emigration, the abnormal and irrational expansion of the town centers and the building industry speculation which has finally increased imbalances and contradictions. Therefore, for this reason, *la Questione Meridionale* still remains a knotty problem in the life of the country since it has never come out from the limits of a regional logic to become a problem of the state (Lelli 2021). However, this is not a new topic of discussion as, according to Dorso, in Douglas' times the Neapolitan magazine *Il Saggiatore* was already addressing it:

Non esiste in realtà un problema meridionale, ma esiste un problema italiano da risolvere armonicamente (cit. in Dorso 1950:217).⁴

The condition of the pathological underdevelopment of the South has deep roots in the history of the state since it is the result of the compromise between the Piedmontese monarchy and the northern bourgeoisie, which developed at the time of national unification.

This compromise entailed the expansion of monarchical supremacy over the whole country and of strengthening the economic position of the conservative classes of the North. Besides, the rural southern bourgeoisie renounced an active involvement in the life of the emerging national state, since its “municipal feudalism” was guaranteed. With this regard, it could be enough to read the evidence given by many experts on the economic and social problems of southern Italy (Lelli 2021). Nonetheless, the conditions for a different North-South relationship were not idyllic at that time and still are not straightforward at present. Evidence of this was the tenor of the anti-southern propaganda of the arrogant northerner bourgeoisie which was criticized and denounced by Gramsci in an unusual essay - that was also the last one written before his arrest and reprinted in issue 2 of *Rinascita* in 1945:

Il Mezzogiorno è la palla di piombo che impedisce più rapidi progressi allo sviluppo civile dell'Italia; i meridionali sono biologicamente degli esseri inferiori, dei semibarbari o dei barbari completi, per destino naturale; se il Mezzogiorno è arretrato, la colpa non è del sistema capitalistico o di qualsivoglia altra causa storica, ma della natura che ha fatto i meridionali poltroni, incapaci, criminali, barbari, temperando questa sorte matrigna con l'esplosione puramente individual

⁴ In reality, there is not a southern problem, but rather an Italian problem to be solved peacefully. The translation is mine.

le di grandi geni che sono come le solitarie palme in un arido e sterile deserto (cit. in Dorso 1950:250-51).⁵

An absurd attitude that suggested a sort of conflict that a limited circle of intellectuals and politicians could not, and still today, are not able to solve. Besides, it diverted the attention from the underlying problems which cannot be connected to a partial strategy, but to a design of supra-regional and European development. In the immediate postwar period, southern policy was still vitiated by this reductive and conflicting conception. According to Dorso:

Il Mezzogiorno, quindi, oggi sa che il suo problema di primo piano – pari perciò soltanto alla questione istituzionale – è quello della saldatura economica Nord-Sud, perché, se questa avverrà in maniera tradizionale, cioè con il sacrificio degli interessi meridionali, sarà nuovamente inutile declamare sulla Questione Meridionale chissà per quanti anni; se invece, avverrà in maniera nazionale cioè meridionalista non soltanto le condizioni economiche del nostro Paese miglioreranno a più breve scadenza, ma, soprattutto si avvierà a soluzione la stessa parte tecnica della Questione Meridionale, della quale – è doloroso dirlo – nel Mezzogiorno tutti si disinteressano...

Se la saldatura economica Nord-Sud avverrà, come sta già avvenendo, con i criteri tradizionali, significa che gli industriali del Nord in genere, e quelli parassitari e protetti, in ispecie, riusciranno a conservare il Mezzogiorno come loro mercato riservato di vendita, escludendo la concorrenza mondiale, in una parola moda, continueranno a

⁵ The *Mezzogiorno* is the lead ball that prevents a more rapid advancement in the civil development of Italy; the southerners are doomed to remain biologically inferior than the semi-barbarians or complete barbarians; if the *Mezzogiorno* is backward, it is not a result of the capitalist system or any other historical cause, but rather the outcome of the nature that not only did it make the southerners incapable people, but also criminals and barbarians, who mitigate this cruel fate with the purely individual explosion of great geniuses that are like the solitary palm trees in a barren and sterile desert. The translation is mine.

considerare il Mezzogiorno come come loro “Spazio Vitale”. Il che comporta che i consumatori meridionali dovranno continuare a pagare, non a prezzo di mercato, ma a prezzo di monopolio, tutti i prodotti industriali e manifatturieri di cui hanno bisogno, mentre dovranno continuare a cedere a prezzo di mercato i prodotti agricoli. Dovranno, cioè essere ancora sfruttati come lo sono stati, per ottantacinque anni, prima col mito dell’unità, poi con quello della Nazione, poi infine con quello dell’Impero. E badi il lettore intelligente che un altro mito è in fabbricazione nei cantieri dei trivellatori nazionali: quello della ricostruzione (Dorso 1949:100-101).⁶

Hence, the reasons for the delays and dysfunctions that accumulated in the *Mezzogiorno* were not only structural in nature, since they had precise echoes in the history and the philosophy of the development in our country.

Accordingly, Douglas seemed to have understood the risks associated with a pathological state of underdevelopment which, for the reasons already stated, could not find adequate answers in a mere adaptation of productive mechanisms.

⁶ The *Mezzogiorno* knows that -like the institutional question - its main problem today is the North-South economic welding, because, if this takes place in the traditional way, that means sacrificing the southern interests, it will be useless to declaim against la *Questione Meridionale* for many years; if, on the other hand, it takes place in a national, i.e., southern manner, not only will the economic conditions of our country improve in the shorter term, but, above all, the very technical part of la *Questione Meridionale* the will be brought to a solution.... However, it is bitter to say that in the *Mezzogiorno* everyone is disinterested. If the North-South economic welding takes place, as it is already happening with traditional criteria, it will mean that Northern industrialists in general, especially the parasitical and protected ones, will be able to retain the *Mezzogiorno* as their reserved sales market, excluding world competition, consequently, in a vogue word, they will continue to regard the *Mezzogiorno* as their “Living Space.” The result is that southern consumers will have to continue to pay at the monopoly price, not at the market price, for all the industrial and manufacturing products they need, while they will have to continue to sell agricultural products at the market price. This means that they will continue to be exploited as they have already been for eighty-five years, first with the myth of unity, then with that of the Nation and finally with the illusion of the Empire. And mind the intelligent reader that another myth is in the making in the yards of national drillers: in other words, that of reconstruction. The translation is mine.

He knew that the discourse was far more complex, so he never made his evaluations as they were “political ones,” by resorting to political parameters, but through forms that were more congenial to him without betraying the conventional underlying objectives of a literary work. Moreover, it can be noted that throughout the work *Old Calabria* there were clear references to the endogenous responsibilities and very concerned judgments on the southern political class, even though they were concealed behind the veil of irony.

In reality, southern Italy and especially Calabria lacked a mature and advanced political class. What they basically lacked was an “intellectual elite” that would have been able to retrieve from the old “agrarian bloc”, certain and essential values of civilization and a valid culture for a general development project (Lelli 2021). Contrariwise, prejudicial paternalistic and polyarchic tendencies prevailed. This happened as a consequence of an anomalous and compromising relationship between the political class, the peasant bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy, which, over the years, not only accentuated the conflict between the classes, but also provoked degenerative processes concerning public and private areas and worsened the state of degradation of our society.

Most importantly, the crisis of bourgeois democracy did not discover in the *Mezzogiorno* an intellectual class capable of reworking, in cultural terms, the historical themes of underdevelopment and a political class capable to acknowledge the innovative stimulus expressed by society and to elaborate in society the strategies of progress and renewal.

Douglas’ lesson, which gave a reliable picture of the South and analysed how the lack of a suitable ruling class along with the appropriate political culture influenced the southern condition, remains still valid today. His philosophy of life, his love for the Classics together with a kind of anthropocentrism diluted in a vision of life leaning towards aestheticism, did not prevent Douglas from realizing that civilization and culture were preserved and developed in progress, when the latter found in them its own motivations (Giacomantonio 1984).

Taking into account Douglas’ education and his intellectual achievements, it emerges that he was not a revolutionary man, nevertheless, he could not accept a model of development that did not see men as the measure of things.

Therefore, he was referring to a sort of advancement that needed to be at the service of men and their values. For that reason, Douglas' attitude was not contradictory, although he was critical of the isolation and the underdevelopment of the South, he was unable to detach himself from the past, on the contrary, he clung to it with all his strength.

Hence, *Old Calabria* seems to display the author's presumably modern attitude with regard to the problems of society. It follows that there were clear rejection signs of capitalist philosophy, and evidence of the progressive annihilation of men's most authentic values and their cultural heritage.

Reflecting on these points, Douglas' attitude could be regarded as significant since he was fundamentally a conservative person, however, his aim was to detect the essential data of a social reality which did not want to sever its relations with a past that was a repository of inalienable values.

That being so, the attention that Douglas showed for the peasant world, the tradition and for the past in general, did not express antithetical positions with respect to the new problems of society; conversely, it seemed possible to feel the anxiety of those who feared that certain trends could jeopardize man's spiritual and cultural identity.

Norman did not imagine a return to the past, but rather the reclamation and the enhancement of a rich heritage of values which could offer higher contents of civilization and culture in a development of society that depended on men. The writer referred to a society in which man was the protagonist of his own future that was linked to everything he had been able to create in the past for his complete growth. Evidently, there were the aestheticizing indulgences that characterized Douglas. However, what really did matter was the emphasis that he gave to man as a whole and to his history.

All things considered, it follows that today there is a great need to give men back their complete dignity and there is also the necessity to think of society that could exalt men's spirituality, culture and works.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction to the Methodology: aims and objectives

In this chapter I describe the methods that I used to do this research and I also explain the rationale of these choices.

I then provide a detailed description of the data gathering process and the analysis of data. This section terminates with the discussion of important ethical issues and matters related to validity and reliability of this research.

3.2. Research Methods

Before starting this research project first I had to choose the most appropriate method of data collection to employ. According to Kumar (2014: 14) the chief research methods most commonly used in academic research are the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach and the mixed methods approach. Taking into consideration the fact that this thesis is not experimental and that its aim is to explore the perceptions of the Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua with regard to his travels in Calabria in comparison with Douglas' previous excursions and experiences in Southern Italy along with the perception of the Italian professor Emanuele Lelli regarding the theme mentioned above, I considered that the qualitative approach was the most appropriate methodology to use.

I discarded the hypothesis of using a quantitative approach because it is an experimental survey based on numbers and statistics (Jackson *et al.*, 2007: 22). This research method is in fact commonly considered suitable to explore facts and events that can be counted and measured, such as for example the analysis of frequencies and trends in different linguistic outcomes or examination results in educational surveys (Denzin and Lincoln 2013).

In other words, a quantitative study allows the gathering of data that can be standardized and compared and consequently lead researchers to draw conclusions that are generalizable. As the focus of this thesis is on people'

perceptions, it is therefore difficult to reach quantifiable information. The participants that I have decided to interview are distinct individuals who have had different experiences and consequently have contrasting views of the world. As a result, it is very difficult to obtain the precise measuring of cause and effect. Hence, for these reasons the quantitative research method was discarded. In addition, I did not take into consideration this approach because I figured that it was not going to be feasible due the fact that there seems to be a lack of empirical data in the Italian context about the topic that I wished to explore.

Contrariwise, the qualitative approach seemed to relate to the purpose of this thesis as it is an interpretative type of research based on a social inquiry whose aim is to explore people' perceptions and opinions on particular fields of investigation (Jackson *et al.*, 2007: 21-22).

Qualitative research is quite often defined as interpretivist or constructivist because researchers tend to encourage participants to freely express themselves in their own words in describing their experiences and beliefs. They then interpret what respondents say alongside other data gathered from questionnaires, observations and so on (Al-Busaidi, 2008).

However, the use of qualitative research in the area of literature can have both disadvantages and advantages. On the one hand, the upside of this approach is that the open-ended format typical of qualitative interviews can allow researchers to gather further interesting data, including elements that the researcher did not think of in advance (McDonough and McDonough 2014: 183).

Besides, interaction with people can help supply a better understanding of complicated phenomena (Robson 2011: 24).

On the other hand, the downside of this type of research is that it is highly context-specific as researchers generally collect the information that reflects only particular groups of people in specific places (Robson 2011: 24).

The results then cannot normally be generalized to other cases.

However, other researchers can use the same approach in other situations and discover new or similar information which can benefit the area of study that they are investigating (Al-Busaidi 2008). In addition, another factor to consider is that in a qualitative study the researcher is constantly present during the investigation as he/she necessarily participates in the phases of data gathering and data

analysis. Therefore a further disadvantage of this research method is that researchers' constant presence can create bias as they generally have their own personal views on the area which is being investigated and may, indirectly, influence the participants, or the analysis of the data (Brikci and Green 2007).

The second step was to think of a feasible qualitative method to use among focus groups, questionnaires and interviews that would have best helped me to collect interesting data to analyze. The positive side of questionnaires is that they facilitate anonymity, but they generally do not allow capturing detailed information and data processing on the part of the participants (Kumar 2005).

I decided not to use questionnaires because I considered that I was not going to have enough respondents for this enquiry.

I did not consider the idea of using focus groups either because I did not think they were appropriate for this type of research. These are qualitative semi-structured interviews that are generally done with groups of at least five participants up to twelve through which the researcher attempts to explore shared perceptions on facts and past experiences (Kumar 2014: 193).

This method was suddenly discarded because I considered that it was going to be very difficult to gather so many participants.

Hence, for these reasons I decided that doing qualitative interviews was the most appropriate method to use.

Face-to-face interviews can help to better explore people' perceptions, experiences and opinions on a particular area of study (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). In accordance with McDonough and McDonough (1997: 182) the three types of interviews mostly used by researchers are unstructured interviews, structured and semi-structured interviews.

Unstructured interview generally begins with the first question that the researcher asks and then it evolves into a more general conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee as it follows the respondents' answers rather than the order of questions set in advance (McDonough and McDonough 1997: 184).

Although this kind of interview has the advantage of offering more flexibility in choosing the questions that can be asked, I did not take into consideration this approach because its data analysis takes a lot of time (Breakwellm 2006).

Structured interview has almost the same structure and format of ordinary questionnaires with open-ended questions (Denscombe 2014: 185).

This type of interview generally provides well-organized data which can be easier to analyze (Kumar, 2014: 178), as the researcher asks each participant the same questions respecting the identical order. However the drawback of the structured interview is that it does not leave extra time for further comments (Buckingham 2015: 67).

On the contrary, semi-structured interviews give researchers major possibilities to interact with the participants and to probe questions (McDonough and McDonough 1997: 184). In addition, the positive side of this type of interview is that the interviewees' answers are generally flexible and detailed (Flick *et al.*, 2004). Hence, as I was planning on doing manageable and flexible interviews through which I could also ask follow up questions, I considered that doing a semi-structured interview was the most feasible and appropriate method to use for the type of investigation that I had in mind. I also opted for this approach because I was looking for a type of interview which allowed the participants to freely express their opinions and perceptions on the topics discussed and to be able to make links with their previous experiences.

In addition, the fact that I am a novice researcher has also influenced the choice of using semi-structured interviews. I figured that I would have felt more confident to have a pre-set succession of questions which I could use as guidance for the interview.

This type of interview has the advantage of giving the researcher the possibility to change the order of the questions, to modify and skip questions and to repeat them more than once when they are not very clear or have not been fully understood (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

However, this method has some drawbacks as well: the process of data gathering and data analysis is highly time-consuming and requires good abilities on the part of the interviewer which, together with the length of the interaction can be decisive factors in influencing the quality of the collected data (Kumar 2005: 131-132).

3.3 Data gathering process

As I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews, firstly I organized the interviews and I deliberately decided to interview firstly the Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua who had done previous research about Douglas' Old Calabria because I figured that it was going to be easier for me to think of good questions to ask.

Consequently, I emailed the above mentioned writer to ask him whether he would have been available to be interviewed (see Appendix 9 and Appendix 10). When I obtained the permission to proceed we then chose together the places, the modality and the times of the interviews that were more convenient to him.

Afterwards, in preparation for the interviews, I wrote two lists of questions (see Appendix 15 and Appendix 16) that were going to be used for the interview. I chose the questions to ask on the basis of the literary review that I collected so far. These questions were mainly influenced by articles on similar research that I read before starting to write this thesis in order to have a broader idea of this topic (e.g. Bevilacqua 2008; Giacomantonio 1984; Holloway 1976; Lelli 2016; Lelli 2021; Valentini 2001).

I decided to write in advance the list of questions to have a guide for the discussions and I have intentionally opted for open-ended queries to be able to ask follow-up questions (Turner 2010).

I interviewed Bevilacqua twice and both the interviews took place online but at different dates and times: the first interview was arranged in a friendlier atmosphere in which the interviewer could feel more comfortable to talk, and then after five months I organized the second and final interview.

Each interview lasted about 30/40 minutes. Before starting each interview I gave the participant all the necessary information about the research project that I was working on and then I asked him to read and sign the informed consent forms (see Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4). Then I asked the participant for permission to audio-record him, which I did using my smartphone that I placed next to my laptop. I decided to record the interviews and not to take notes during the discussions because this technique allows the interviewer to pay

full attention to the interviewees and capture in-depth perceptions through the brief answers given (Basit 2010: 115).

I did not use the Dictaphone because I realized that it had an inferior audio resolution and less practicality. Contrariwise, using my mobile as a voice recorder gave me the possibility of uploading the interview recordings on my laptop to make sure that I had them fully stored and, just in case one or some file could have been deleted by mistake as it happened in the past, I could easily retrieve them.

I started each interview by asking simple opening questions to make the interviewee feel at ease (Parker and Tritter 2006). As the interviews carried on, I prompted the participant to speak more and to give me his views on the topics discussed.

I conducted all the interviews in Italian as the participant felt more confident to express himself in his own language especially when he had to give detailed and articulated answers. Finally, I transcribed the interviews and then translated them into English. The questions asked at the first interview (see Appendix 8) ranged over initial information about his perceptions about what prompted a brilliant writer as well as an eccentric and intelligent man like Norman Douglas to reach a remote place not yet contaminated by modernity, as Calabria was in the early 1900s. Then, I asked specific questions about what influence might the Calabrian culture and literature have had on Norman Douglas' literary productions and on modern English literature.

The central core of the interview aimed to explore the writer's perceptions with regard to the main dilemma identified in this research that is to discover what remains, today, of that mythical and archaic Calabria described by Douglas.

This first interview terminated with closing questions which sought to investigate how Douglas would have been influenced by the classical culture present in Calabria (even at the level of popular beliefs) and whether southern Italian issues might have influenced Douglas' experience in Calabria.

Contrariwise, the topics that were discussed at the second interview (see Appendix 15 and Appendix 16) regarded firstly opening questions about what triggered the participant to become interested in Norman Douglas with a focus on what made him go along the same Douglas' route many years later.

The second part of the interview turned into a detailed discussion which mainly aimed to examine the similarities and differences between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua with a detailed analysis of their travels in Calabria and Southern Italy. Through this flexible interviewing style I could ask detailed questions which aimed to scrutinize the two writers' analogies and explore what had been the interviewee's responses and outcomes. Therefore, these two interviews contributed to supply valuable and very interesting data to analyze.

Afterwards, last February I decided to interview also the professor Emanuele Lelli as I had read his book *Sud Antico* and realized that he had some elements in common with Francesco Bevilacqua, moreover he had addressed some themes that echoed in Douglas' *Old Calabria* as well.

Regarding his interview I followed the same procedure described above which I did for Bevilacqua.

Hence, this method was very effective because it gave the participants the opportunity to structure the answers in their own ways and in addition, having the chance to ask follow up questions, I managed to obtain clarification and expansion of key and complex themes (Kumar 2005).

At the end of each interview I switched off the voice recorder of my smartphone and thanked the participants for their precious contributions and I started to transcribe them.

3.4 Data analysis

The two main methods largely used by researchers in examining and analysing qualitative data are the deductive and the inductive approach (Burnard *et al.*, 2008: 429). Through the deductive approach researchers examine data collected relying on a fixed framework, consequently in the process of interview transcripts analysis they then apply their theories. On the contrary, when the researcher analyzes the data using the inductive approach, he /she analyses it with little set theory and then uses it as a starting point to design the analysis framework.

Hence, I chose the inductive approach to analyse the data that I gathered for this thesis as it seemed to me to be the most appropriate method to use.

I examined the interview transcripts using thematic content analysis. Through this technique I managed to identify and analyse key elements and common themes that emerged during the discussions (Burnard *et al.*, 2008: 429). When I concluded all the interviews, firstly, I carefully transcribed all of them and then translated them into English. Secondly, I read them all and then double-checked them through “corrective listening”. This technique consists in reading the transcripts while simultaneously re-listening to the interviews to ensure that no transfer mistakes have been made (Flick *et al.*, 2004: 254).

I then wrote notes in the margins (see Appendix 20) to emphasize common viewpoints that the participants had on the topics discussed and the key points that sprang up during the debates.

Overall, the analysis of data was a long and time-consuming process as it took more than 25 hours to transcribe the three interviews and extra time had to be dedicated to the translation in English and to thematic content analysis.

3.5 Research ethics

There are some important ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when doing research that involves human participants.

First of all, researchers need to make sure that the questions on which the investigation is based are ethical (Noffke and Somekh 2009, Burns 2010). The first ethical issue that I considered before starting to write this thesis and conducting the three interviews was to obtain the participants’ informed consent through which they agreed to be involved in this research project.

In qualitative research it is indispensable to seek informed consent because each participant needs to be fully informed about the voluntary nature of his /her participation in it (Israel 2014: 79).

I want to specify that, due to technical and logistic issues, I decided to interview the participants online on Google Meet after having asked and obtained permission from them to participate at this research (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). Consequently, the second interview took place five months later than the first one which still took place online on Meet as, in that period I was doing research at the University of Malta within the framework of the Erasmus+ Project.

Finally, the third interview was done in February 2024. However, in all the interviews, the participants were ensured safety and privacy (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The form that I used to get informed consent for this thesis is the University of Brighton participant consent form template that I used when I did research for the M.A, (Degree of Master of Arts) that I attended in the U.K. (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). This form included information about the researcher (myself) and the type of investigation that I was doing (Denscombe 2014).

It also ensured that the participants' anonymity and confidentiality were going to be respected through the use of fictitious names and that no data collected from the interviews was going to be released at the end of the investigation (Kumar 2005; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Moreover, it distinctly declared that the participation of the interviewee was voluntary, it ensured that they were aware of the fact that they were free to withdraw from this analysis whenever they wished, and that they could leave out questions in which they did not feel confident to answer (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 245). This form also included seven further statements that the interviewees read and filled in before signing it. In addition, considering that my participants were Italian, I thought it was right to translate into Italian this consent document together with a concise description of the research project (see Appendix 2, Appendix 4 and Appendix 6) to let them have a full understanding of the goal of this thesis and their role in it. At the end of each interview I guaranteed the participants that I would have destroyed the data collected from the interviews after I had submitted the thesis. Finally the interviews were all anonymized as I did not write the participants' real name in the interview transcripts.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability refer to two scientific words that originated in quantitative research and which were then applied to qualitative study with distinct definitions (Golafshani 2003). In qualitative research, validity usually tends to attach to literatures and to the significances that individuals attach to them, consequently instead of being a matter of certitude, it is more a question of reliability of the research (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Hence, a crucial need for a researcher using a

qualitative approach is to acknowledge his/her role in the investigation and to contextualize the research within the socio-historical background (Neuman 2013: 20).

In qualitative research like this one, data collected from interviews is generally acknowledged to be rather subjective and may present contradictions which could lead to conclusions that remain unclear (Cresswell and Miller 2000). However, these inconsistencies do not tend to invalidate the investigation, on the contrary they show the intricacies of human understanding and supply valuable elements for further analysis and reflections (Wolcott 2001: 34).

In a qualitative study, reliability is not a matter of repeatability in other situations and environments. On the contrary, it aims to demonstrate the validity of the data gathered and the correctness and the equitableness of the conclusions that are reached from the analysis of this data (Coe 2012: 47).

Hence, in order to increase the reliability of this research project I have provided an accurate description of the research methodologies used together with a thorough recording and analysis of all data.

Although it may be argued that knowing very well the Southern Italian context and the participants could bring bias to this research or influence the interviewee, the positive aspect of this fact is that it made it possible for me to consider the likelihood of “socially desirable responding” (Paulhus 2002: 48) and similar types of bias.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this section I present the research findings and an in-depth discussion of the data analyzed. Data gathered for this research project takes the form of interview transcripts. I have transcribed all the interviews following the list of questions that I prepared before the interviews (see Appendix 15 and Appendix 16 as well as Appendix 17 and Appendix 18). In Appendix 19 and in Appendix 21 I instead provide the full transcripts of all interviews with Francesco Bevilacqua and Emanuele Lelli, whereas, in Appendix 20 and in Appendix 22 I add the translation into English of the full transcripts of the interviews. In this chapter I make several references to the interviews' content using italics. The six main research questions that I have selected for this thesis and that I mentioned in section 1.3 are the following:

- 1) What made English travel writers of the *Grand Tour* to come to southern Italy between 19th and 20th century and what did they expect to find in the *Mezzogiorno*, particularly in Calabria?
- 2) What incited Norman Douglas who was a brilliant and eccentric writer to reach a distant and wild place such as Calabria not yet tainted by modernity?
- 3) What influence did Calabrian and southern culture and literature have on Douglas' literary productions?
- 4) What is the psychological introspection of Douglas' analysis in *Old Calabria* as an expression of his creativity?
- 5) What prompted the contemporary Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua to take a keen interest in Norman Douglas, and what are the similarities and differences between Bevilacqua and Douglas with particular attention to their works *Old Calabria* and *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*?
- 6) What remains today of the archaic and mythical Calabria described by Norman Douglas?

The results that I present are based on the in-depth interviews which I did to gain insights into the participants' prevalent views on this topic in general with particular attention to their personal experiences in southern Italy. Some results are also corroborated by findings which consolidate the discussions.

I am discussing each research question separately analyzing the data collected analytically.

4.2 First Research Question

What made English travel writers of the *Grand Tour* to come to southern Italy between 19th and 20th century and what did they expect to find in the *Mezzogiorno*, particularly in Calabria?

First and foremost, the theme of the journey in literature seems to be recurrent since moving from one place to another is a *cliché* in the life and history of human beings. Regardless of the reason that drives men to move from one place to another, it follows that individual feelings of those who travel generally turn out to be united and eventually become collective ideas and impressions. However, every movement and the abandonment of the safe haven imply the contact with something different and the discovery of places never seen before. According to research, there are tales of unknown and distant lands already in Greek and Roman historiography; in fact, the traveller *par excellence* in Greek literature is Odysseus, the mythological hero, who bravely and cunningly faces a thousand dangers far from his own homeland in order to return to his Ithaca (Bellucci 2022).

Nevertheless, the journey in literature often represents an opportunity for education and growth. Generally, the challenges to reach the purpose (the goal) follow one another in an ever-increasing way and transform an ordinary man into a hero. For example, the *Argonautics* of Apollonius Rhodius whose protagonist Jason together with his companions, namely the Argonauts, begins his journey in search of the Golden Fleece. Besides, another example of Latin literature is Virgil. In fact, the first hexad of Virgil's *Aeneid* is centred on the journey of Aeneas, a war

refugee who together with his companions sets sail for the Mediterranean (Bellucci 2022).

Consequently, travels in Italy intensified during the Middle Ages and in this historical period the journey was acknowledged as a 'passage', therefore the need for purification through pilgrimages to places of worship developed.

Consequently, the 15th and 16th centuries were characterized by expeditions of erudition in which the privileged destination was Italy as it was considered as the cradle of civilisation and art, and in particular the South of *Magna Graecia* origins. Hence, It has to be taken into account that southern Italy, with the exception of the old capital of the Kingdom of Naples , a European city to all intents and purposes, was regarded as an "unknown land" since it lacked both straightforward communication routes and comfortable lodgings for travelers.

Complicating matters further, it physically consisted of coastlines infested with malarial swamps that were exposed to pirate raids, and of inaccessible and isolated mountains.

Besides, since the late 1500s, the Jesuits defined the South as "The Indies from down here," referring to its wildness and backwardness. Moreover, according to Benedetto Croce, the South was the "paradise inhabited by devils" for the educated and aristocratic classes of northern Italy and the rest of Europe (cit. in Liguori 2012). As a result, traveling South of Naples represented something completely different compared to the experience of the *Grand Tour*, albeit this always concerned the members of the wealthy and educated classes. In light of this, the scholar of travel literature Attilio Brilli defined the travel to the South as an "adventurous variant of the *Grand Tour*" (Brilli 2006). In order to understand the diversity of this type of travel, it is worth considering the anecdote told by George Gissing (the British writer who made a trip to Calabria in 1897) who was advised to make his will before leaving. Moreover, Gissing committed the common error of visiting South Italy during winter when, as maintained by Douglas:

Even if the weather will pass, the country and its inhabitants are not true to themselves. You must not come to these parts in winter time (Douglas 2012:296).

It follows that this air of mystery, of danger and of the archaic was going to add to the fascination of *Magna-Grecia* history and the search for the vestiges of its famous cities. Besides, the Calabrian earthquake of 1784 which had had wide resonance in Europe for its destruction also enhanced the geological and scientific interest.

Consequently, many people also showed genuine concern for the living conditions of the local populations, yet, part of the foreign travelers, who came to Calabria full of prejudices, especially concerning the geographical characteristics of the region, were then astonished by the landscapes that they found. It follows that the “invention” of the Calabrian scenery can be attributed to them since they were the first ones to really appreciate it and to describe it in their travel diaries.

Regarding Henry Swinburne, Arthur John Strutt and George Gissing’s intentions and beliefs when they reached South Italy, particularly Calabria between 19th and 20th century, it seems that their expectations were all negative since the region was characterized by poverty, backwardness, corrupt and incompetent institutions, as well as brigandage (it has to be pointed out that the exploits of the brigands during the French decade in Calabria spread in Europe through Napoleonic soldiers upon their return home) (Bevilacqua 2008).

It can be added that many travelers were also *ante litteram* anthropologists ahead of their times. It is very interesting what the British Craufurd Tait Ramage wrote in 1868 referring to his visit to Calabria in 1828:

When traveling in a foreign country, just to satisfy our curiosity, we are bound to respect the beliefs of the local people; therefore, if it is not possible for us to be present at their superstitious observances without testifying against them, then we had better remain at home (Ramage 1987).

According to Francesco Bevilacqua, this is the gist of modern anthropological discourse, from Lévi Strauss onward, besides, the curious thing is that no foreign traveler reported being robbed or assaulted by thugs and brigands (Bevilacqua 2008). The only exceptions seemed to be the British Arthur John Strutt (in May 1838) and the Frenchman Francis Wey (probably around 1840), who recounted in

their respective travel diaries that they were physically attacked by gangs of miscreants, while they were travelling through the countryside between Catanzaro, Caraffa and San Floro. However, they were immediately rescued by the local town guard and what had been stolen from them was eventually returned.

The two episodes ended in the same way, with the encounter of the hospitable and caring Don Domenico Cefaly, lord of Cortale. The surprising-coincidences between the respective tales led them to suspect that the later traveller committed plagiarism (Giacomantonio 1984).

Firstly, several British writers, in particular Henry Swinburne, Arthur John Strutt and George Gissing, visited southern Italy on the occasion of the *Grand Tour* of Europe between the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, as it was rich in myth and history.

The *Grand Tour* was an intellectual movement which originated in the 18th century, it was a journey of education, pleasure and adventure that cultured men undertook throughout Europe. However, Italy was the favorite destination and those that mainly undertook these expeditions abroad were young northern European men that had come of age (about twenty-one years of age) who belonged to the upper-class or that had sufficient means to travel. Moreover, these men tended to be accompanied by a guide or family members, nevertheless, these trips were significant for the enjoyment and the cultural education of these young Europeans. This movement inspired many writers, artists and travelers of that time and later Norman Douglas as well whose experience echoed in his works (Merlino 2000). Hence, his masterpiece *Old Calabria* inaugurated a new trend in travel literature that captured, in addition to landscape aspects, real human and social issues. Although at first the *Grand Tour* was associated with the wealthy landed gentry and the British aristocracy, it followed that similar trips were then made by wealthy artists and writers who lived in other protestant northern European countries, and afterwards, starting from the second half of the 18th century, this phenomenon interested some North and South Americans as well.

Subsequently, by the mid-18th century, the *Grand Tour* seemed also to have become a systematic characteristic of upper-class education in central European states, albeit it was limited to the higher aristocracy.

In spite of that, this tradition started to decline throughout Europe as soon as the interest for classical and ancient culture decreased.

Complicating matters further was the advent of steamship travel and accessible railways in the 1840s. Furthermore, in the 19th century, following the development of industrialization in the United States, American Gilded Age *nouveau riche* tried to adopt the *Grand Tour* among those of more advanced years of both sexes so as to obtain association with the worldliness and the refinement of the whole of Europe. Consequently, even the people of lesser means pursued in imitating the pilgrimage, as Mark Twain had satirized in his famous *Innocents Abroad* (Twain 1869).

In essence, the main value of the *Grand Tour* can be attributable to its exposure to the cultural legacy of the Renaissance and classical antiquity, along with to the noble and elegantly cultured European society. Besides, it also managed to provide the chance to examine certain works of art, and probably the opportunity to hear specific music.

In consequence, the *Grand Tour's* mindset was that the typical 18th-century studious observers who had the opportunity to travel through foreign countries managed to report their findings on human nature for unfortunate researches that remained at home instead. It was then considered as a sort of obligation to recount their close observations made on society in order to enhance its welfare. Above all, the *Grand Tour* could not be considered as a religious pilgrimage nor could it be regarded as a scholarly one. Catholic *Grand Tourists* went along the same itinerary as Protestant Whigs, then starting from the 17th century, an expedition to European countries was also considered as necessary for prospective artists in order to get to know and understand specific sculpture and painting techniques, nevertheless, the trappings of the *Grand Tour* seemed to be beyond their reach.

Most importantly, not only did the *Grand Tour* offer a liberal education, but also the right set of circumstances of acquiring things that were unavailable, therefore the result was that it could lend an air of prestige and accomplishment as well to the excursionists. Consequently, *Grand Tour* travellers generally returned home with containers full of scientific instruments, books, works of art and cultural artefacts,

generally fountains and statuary art that were then displayed in drawing rooms, gardens, galleries and libraries that had been built for that purpose.

Despite the preceding, critics of the *Grand Tour* denounced its lack of adventure. Bohls and Duncan claimed that: “the tour of Europe is a paltry thing, a tame, uniform, unvaried prospect” (Bohls & Duncan 2005: 3; cit. in Liguori 2012). Moreover, the *Grand Tour* was considered to corroborate the old prejudices and assumptions about national features, as Jean Gailhard’s *Compleat Gentleman* (1678) commented: “French courteous, Spanish lordly, Italian amorous, German clownish” (cit. in Liguori 2012). The British people who stayed at home feared that the English gentlemen’s experiences abroad in reality could undo them, thus their impressions of the *Grand Tour* manifested in the sarcastic nativist vision of the flamboyantly “cosmopolitan” macaroni of the 1760s and 1770s.

It is also worth noticing that not only did the *Grand Tour* foster stereotypes of the places that had been visited but it also produced an effective discrepancy between southern and northern European states. Even though Italy was constantly depicted as a “picturesque place”, at the same time, travellers unconsciously seemed to degrade it, especially southern Italy, maintaining that it was a backward place (Moe 2002). However, this unconscious sort of discrediting echoed in the notorious verses of Lamartine that depicted Italy as a “land of the past... where everything sleeps” (cit. in Wolfgang von Goethe 1982).

As far as the itinerary of the *Grand Tour* was concerned, it seems that it was subject to countless changes, depending on the tourists’ finances and interests. It goes without saying that Rome and Paris were commonly the most popular destinations for the majority of British travellers. Generally, the planned route tended to shift across generations, however, the English tourists usually started their journeys from Dover, England, then crossed the English Channel and reached Ostend in Belgium, or alternatively Le Havre or Calais in France (Towner 1985). As said earlier, the travellers were customarily accompanied by a tutor (colloquially known as a “bear-leader”), occasionally they brought with them a troop of servants and rented a coach that could be resold in any other place that was later visited (as it happened during Giacomo Casanova’s travels) or alternatively, it was taken to pieces across the Alps (Liguori 2012).

Since during the 17th and 18th centuries French was the predominant spoken language of the aristocracy throughout Europe, it was common for travellers to hire French-speaking tour leaders and to travel to Paris as well.

Besides, many tourists tended to take riding and dancing lessons in French. Hence, the interest for Paris and the French culture could be ascribable to the elegant and refined manners and to the language of the French elite.

The standard itinerary that travellers followed in Italy was to visit Turin first (sometimes Milan), subsequently they spent a few months in Florence that was characterized by a significant Anglo-Italian society to which British travellers “of quality” could easily have access and where the *Tribuna degli Uffizi* gallery managed to combine in one single place the paintings and the Roman sculptures along with the Renaissance art. After a side trip to Pisa, the travellers moved on to Padua, Bologna and Venice (Isaacs 1927). However, the English idea of Venice as the “locus of decadent Italianate allure” made it an epitome and cultural set piece of the *Grand Tour* (Redford 1996).

After Venice the tourists reached Rome so as to study the masterpieces of sculpture and painting, along with the ancient ruins and the Roman architecture during the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods.

Some travellers went to Naples instead in order to study music and to admire the archaeological sites of Herculaneum and Pompeii which had been discovered after the mid-18th century and eventually to complete their ascent of Mount Vesuvius (Vickery 2012). Nevertheless, the more adventurous places to reach might have been Sicily thanks to its Baroque architecture, the volcanoes and its archeological sites, as well as Greece and Malta (Freller 2009). Yet, Naples and Paestum further south had always been the regular terminus.

Under those circumstances, the British travellers in particular, followed a rather rigidly seasonal itinerary: they left in autumn for Genoa, then went to Lucca (according to the English travellers, in comparison to any other Italian city, it was the place where they could find more similar costumes to their own).

Afterwards, they went to Livorno, Pisa and Florence and arrived in Rome in November, so as to spend winter in Naples with occasional visits to Gaeta and its surroundings. However, by Carnival they were back in Rome and finally, as soon as the weather became warmer, they headed back North.

As just mentioned, Naples was the southern limit where they generally stayed for two weeks at most, conversely going further South not only would have meant an uncomfortable journey for them, but dangerous as well (Valentini 2001). In point of fact, in those years it was rather rare to reach the extreme South, especially Calabria. Goethe himself in his very famous trip to Italy (1786-88) went to Sicily, but ignored Calabria. Perhaps this was because Calabria lacked the formation of large centers of cultural life, such as the ones that were in Sicily, particularly in Palermo and Catania. Besides, after the earthquake of 1638 the region became impoverished and wild with small remote disconnected villages often without roads. In addition, it then became famous as the land of brigands which then inaugurated a new literary genre of Calabrian picturesque-brigandish literature (Valentini 2001).

However, some English travelers, such as Henry Swinburne (1777-80) and the writer and illustrator Edward Lear (1812-1888) who published on the 24th August of 1852 *Journals of a Landscape Painter in Southern Calabria*, managed to reach the deeper South. Nevertheless, it is relevant to observe that in his *Books of Nonsense* (1812) Lear revealed his experience of the world he encountered in Calabria that he described with caricatured accentuations of the simplicity and naivety that characterized the people he met.

In addition, George Gissing travelled to Calabria at the end of the twentieth century and had in common with Douglas the interest in classicism and a scientific rigor of inquiry dictated by positivist experience that produced an objective balance between rationality and aesthetic content.

Most importantly, his work *By the Ionian Sea* (1901) remained a point of reference both for Douglas, who dedicated a chapter to it in his *Old Calabria (Chapter XI - By the Inland Sea)*, and for southern literature as well. Nevertheless, the journey to southern Italy was associated with the research for Hellenic and Roman atmospheres that had to be found on the place itself, before it became, in the mid-nineteenth century, also the result of the stimulus of the Romantic mindset that found in these travels the antidote to their dissatisfaction (Valentini 2001). However, the temptation was often to modulate the tourists' knowledge of the South on pre-elaborated literary schemes, so as to see in the country other things that could be found. With this regard, Gissing declared:

Ogni uomo ha un suo anelito intellettuale; io ho quello di sfuggire alla vita che conosco e di tornare, per virtù del sogno, in quell'antico mondo che deliziò la mia immaginazione di fanciullo. I nomi della Grecia e dell'Italia mi attirano come nessun altro, mi fanno ritornare giovane e mi rendono vive le impressioni di quel tempo quando ogni nuova pagina di greco o latino costituiva una nuova percezione di tutto ciò che è bello. Il mondo dei greci e dei romani è la mia terra del romanzesco (Gissing 1905, cit. in Valentini 2001:316).⁷

After all, it appeared that there was a sort of desire to establish a human continuity between the Greeks of the past and the Calabrian peasants of the present time, or rather, the common indigenous and the Homeric personages. According to Norman Douglas:

In molti dei loro lineamenti [la gente che si incontra sulle coste e nell'interno del Sud ricorda] l'antica vita dei giorni odisseici (Douglas 1992:71).⁸

When travellers returned to northern Europe, they usually re-crossed the Alps going towards the German-speaking countries: they visited Innsbruck, Vienna, Berlin and Potsdam, where they occasionally spent a brief period of study at the universities in Heidelberg or Ingolstadt. Then, from these cities, the tourists had the opportunity to stop in Holland and in Flanders before going back to England across the Channel.

⁷ Every man has his intellectual yearning; mine is of escaping the life I know and returning, by virtue of dreaming, to that ancient world that delighted my imagination as a child. The names of Greece and Italy attract me like no other can do, they make me become young again and keep the impressions of that time alive when each new page of Greek or Latin constituted a new perception of everything that is beautiful. The world of the Greeks and Romans is my fictional land. The translation is mine.

⁸ In many of their features [the people that could be encountered on the coasts and the interior of the south evoke the ancient life of Odyssean days. The translation is mine.

Afterwards, around about 1825, steam-powered transportation developed, yet the *Grand Tour* tradition continued, however the result was a qualitative difference since it was safer, easier and also cheaper to undertake.

It was mainly during the 19th century that the majority of educated gentlemen undertook the *Grand Tour*. As far as women were concerned, part of the aristocratic women's education included a trip to Italy which had to be taken in company of a spinster aunt as companion as it was narrated by E.M. Forster in the novel *A Room with a View* (Bertinetti 2004).

Notwithstanding the fact that Italy was regarded as the "sink of iniquity", many tourists took the opportunity to record the activities in which they participated or the people they encountered, in particular the women they met.

According to the *Grand Tour* travellers, Italy appeared as an unconventional state for "the shameless women, especially those that lived in Venice and southern Italy made it unusual, in its own way" (Brown 2006).

However, southern Italian women of both the eighteenth and nineteenth century, with their unconventional routines and methods, were different from the western European women; therefore, their "foreign" ways contributed to the documentation of meetings with them which provided published reports of the *Grand Tour*. That being the case, in the 18th century, James Boswell courted Italian aristocratic ladies and recorded his relationships in his diary providing details of the events that took place during the *Grand Tour*.

On that account, Boswell described his involvement with Italian women that he encountered and with whom shared this experience in his written reports. The following is one of his most significant statements:

Yesterday morning with her. Pulled up a petticoat and showed whole knees... Touched with her goodness. All other liberties are exquisite (cit. in Brown 2006).

Afterwards, from the early 19th century Lord Byron's letters that he wrote to his mother regarding his travels started to be published as well. In his letters, Byron recounted of his first enduring Venetian love that was in reality his landlord's wife; he mentioned that he had fallen in love with a very pretty Venetian girl with great black eyes and stated the following:

She is married and so am I. We have found and sworn an eternal attachment...and I am more in love than ever... and I verily believe we are one of the happiest unlawful couples on this side of the Alps (cit. in Byron and Marchand 1994).

Moreover, many travellers had sexual relations while abroad on the Tour, however, for the most part, they seemed to be well-behaved, such as, for example, the scholars Richard Pococke and Thomas Pelham who wrote very long letters concerning their experiences during the *Grand Tour* (Black 2003).

To recapitulate, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, during the 18th and the 19th century, Italy became the favorite destination of the *Grand Tour* where rich and young northern Europeans managed to approach classical culture. In that period, the myth of Italy which had developed during the past centuries due to the heritage of the classical world and the flourishing of the Renaissance along with the mild climate that characterized the peninsula, seemed to strengthen. At the same time, among northern Europeans who were in love with Italy, Italians seemed to be deemed unworthy to live in that beautiful country. In light of the issues hitherto raised, it seems that British writers reached Calabria since they were mainly triggered by geographical and historical interests. Reggio Calabria, for example, has a strategic position as it is located on the tip of the boot where it overlooks the Strait of Messina and it prides itself of a very ancient history: without a doubt, it was the first Greek colony in South Italy. As evidence of its very old history, this city preserves important monuments like the Cathedral, the *Art Nouveau* villas on the seafront, along with the Aragonese Castle and the ancient Chiesa degli Ottimati. Nevertheless, what seems to be the city's main cultural attraction is the National Archaeological Museum, that is, in reality, the most characteristic cultural icon of *Magna Graecia* in southern Italy, above all, it houses the notorious Riace Bronzes, that has been counted among the most valuable sculpture masterpieces of the Greek art.

In view of this, many writers and artists have often and willingly made reference to the Calabrian region in different disciplines. For instance, in the field of painting and portraiture, the artist Edward Lear represented Calabria in the 19th century in some of his illustrations (Ruffo, 2022). In the literary area, the Italian writer and journalist Corrado Alvaro (1895-1956) mentioned the region of Calabria in the

collection of thirteen short stories namely *Gente in Aspromonte* (1930) (Morace 2021). Whereas, as far as the artistic and theatrical fields are concerned, it is noteworthy to mention that the theatre director and contemporary Italian avant-garde artist Gian Carlo Riccardi (1933-2015) referred to Calabria in the play and comedy “*Vita, morte e miracoli di un anarchico calabrese*” (1972) (Riccardi 2013).

4.3 Second Research Question

What incited Norman Douglas who was a brilliant and eccentric writer to reach a distant and wild place such as Calabria not yet tainted by modernity?

First and foremost, the exact reason that incited Norman Douglas to visit southern Italy seems to be unknown, nevertheless, research maintains that his love for Italy began very early (Bellucci 2022).

However, In order to conduct this investigation, it is important to consider the question that Douglas enthusiastically asked: “Who would not visit Calabria?” (Douglas 2010: 107). Another question to consider is “why should an Englishman fall in love with old Calabria?” A possible answer could be attributable to the need to be immersed in an uncontaminated landscape in which it was possible to encounter a telluricity of origins that led men to feel a sort of nostalgia. A second explanation could depend on the fact that Calabria was and still is the land of *Magna Græcia* with all the suggestions of a classical culture from which men can draw foundation. However, Douglas seemed to be attracted to southern Italy as it was permeated by the *ingens silva* vichiana, namely a world characterized by a sort of primitivism. On that account, he described the episode in which a villager swallowed six kilos of pig fat (‘a man swallowed six kilograms of the uncooked fat of a freshly slaughtered pig’) and another one who swallowed two live birds ‘with beaks, claws and feathers’ (Douglas 2010: 70). Consequently, what mainly triggered Douglas to reach Calabria was his great interest in discovering the rough and archaic primitive living conditions and especially the land of magic described by Ernesto de Martino where the most unbelievable ritual practices of superstition, of witchcraft and of amoral familism took place (Sette 2018).

Above all, Norman was in search of a personal identity which appeared to be estranged due to his socially unaccepted diversity that could then be rediscovered in the antiquities of a place, of a history, of a culture that had respect for nature in the multiplicity of its differences without the amputations of subsequent selective rationality.

According to Douglas:

The reason is that most of us come to Italy too undiscerning, too reverent; in the pre-critical and pre-humorous stages. We arrive here, stuffed with Renaissance ideals or classical lore, and viewing the present through coloured spectacles. We arrive here, above all things, too young; for youth loves to lean on tradition and to draw inspiration from what has gone before; youth finds nothing more difficult than to follow Goethe's advice about grasping that living life which shifts and fluctuates about us (Douglas 2012: 278).

However, the complexity of the world constituted by the rational and the Dionysian along with intellect and passion was still in the cultural vision of the ancient civilisation of *Magna Græcia*. This complexity was also in the cult of the Great Mother Earth that embraced everything as a vital force which animates nature, reconciling differences as distinctions of the same totality. Hence, this ancient culture fascinated Douglas and was the expression of both his poetics and his identity, beyond the contradictions of contemporaneity (Sette 2018).

Douglas' trigger to travel to Calabria assumed the metaphorical aspect of the ideal search for a place of the soul that was encouraged by the hope of achieving the realisation of his chimerical ambitions there. First of all, it was the search for a meta-space that was not considered as a simple descriptive space but rather as a place in which the spirit was objectified and the object was spiritualised. As a result it seemed to be charged with metaphorical and ideal values' (Cocco 2003: 12). This meta-space represented a place in which ideas and thoughts were objectivised, materialised and strongly connoted in an ethical-aesthetic sense (Cocco 2003: 12). Consequently, this representation of meta-space made possible a translational reading of landscapes along with a philosophy of the *genius loci* or, in the words of Diderot a *philosophie locale* (Diderot 1984), a knowledge instilled in nature appropriate to place and time.

In this sense, not only were the ruins of Calabrian landscape merely elements, but authentic symbols which became the manifestation of conceptual images, principles and fundamental truths that Douglas had to deal with (Sette 2018).

Secondly, Douglas' constitutive restlessness can be noticed in his constant and interminable travels, therefore his choice of literary form is that of the travel report which is ascribed to the dynamics of movement, along with the permanent exploration and the inexhaustible curiosity. Hence, *Old Calabria's* diegetic itinerary seems to dramatize the resistance to change on the part of an extremely aestheticising sensibility that is little inclined to recognise the signs of some human progress in the abrupt changes.

It is mainly the taste for environmental exploration that led Douglas to the discovery of anthropological, historical and traditional traits of local populations and cultures. On the one hand, there is a penetrating immersion in significant anthropic presences, such as that of the Albanian community along with its culture and its rituals, that is responsible for important settlements connected to an ancient migration which characterises an entire ethno-linguistic island. On the other, as mentioned above, the travels aimed to search the oldest traces of the civilisation of *Magna Græcia* which characterised so much of the art, customs and science in southern Italy and which still, in Douglas' exploration, appears as the 'Greek Sila' (Douglas 2010: 186), rich in vestiges of the classical world in its most authentic forms, even if now it seems to be in the form of latent traces (Sette 2018).

With regard to Albanian culture, Douglas stopped in San Demetrio Corone and described his stay in the Italo-Albanian country in two chapters of his book namely *The Albanians and their College* (chapter XXIII) and *An Albanian seer* (chapter XXIV).

San Demetrio Corone has ancient origins and is the most important cultural centre of the Albanians that live in Italy. This place is also the seat of the Italo-Albanian college of Sant'Adriano. Originally, it was called the Corsini college and was established by Pope Clement XII in 1732 in San Benedetto Ullano in order to prepare the Italo-Albanian clergy for the preservation of the Byzantine-Greek rite. Afterwards, in 1794, the college was transferred to San Demetrio Corone at the behest of Bishop Bugliari.

Hence, in chapter XXIII, Douglas spoke about the famous college in order to express his own opinion:

[...] la posizione del collegio (simile in ciò ai venerabili edifici di Oxford) è troppo bella, decisamente troppo bella per dei semplici giovanetti. Con la sua lontananza dal mondo, il suo paesaggio pastorale e la natura intorno così ispiratrice, è un luogo per filosofi, non per ragazzi; un luogo da riempire con quel senso di profondo appagamento tipico del saggio che ha superato ogni ambizione mondana [...] (Douglas 1992: 278).⁹

What mostly struck Douglas was the landscape that he described as a 'magnificent valley', so as to make his fellow Englishmen envious. Moreover, he was attracted by the beautiful colours of the clouds that, at sunset, could inspire great painters like Turner or Claude Lorraine. Douglas believed that the pride of St Demetrius was the college, according to his words:

Persone ben qualificate a giudicarlo, parlano del collegio come di un illuminato centro di studi, un'istituzione i cui scopi e risultati sono egualmente degni di alto rispetto (Douglas 1992: 276).¹⁰

The British writer recounted that there were twenty-five teachers and many servants, as well as about three hundred pupils who were preparing for non-clerical professions. He mentioned the recently refurbished classrooms and highlighted the presence of the gym together with a Physics laboratory and a natural history museum. Overall, not only did Douglas devote himself to aspects

⁹ The location of the college (similar to the venerable buildings of Oxford) is too beautiful, far too beautiful for mere youngsters. With its remoteness from the world, its pastoral landscape and the nature around it so inspiring, it is a place for philosophers and not for boys; a place to be filled with that sense of deep fulfilment typical of the wise man who has overcome all worldly ambition. The translation is mine.

¹⁰ People well qualified to judge it, they speak of the college as an enlightened centre of learning, an institution whose aims and achievements are equally worthy of high respect. The translation is mine.

of daily life, but also to the condition of the building and the laboratories. However, even though Norman had a good impression of this institution due to its splendid location, according to him it could not be compared to British colleges. Above all, Norman dedicated particular attention to the library which he described as 'once famous' because it had been despoiled of its best treasures, due to its destruction during the looting that followed the fall of the Parthenopean Republic. Consequently, after having stated that "la città è completamente Albanese"¹¹ (Douglas 1992:273), Norman provided the description of a wedding that he attended. His attention was immediately caught by the bride and he maintained that:

Scintillava di ornamenti e di ricami d'oro, al collo, alle spalle e ai polsi; un largo colletto di pizzo cadeva sopra il corpetto di seta purpurea; pure di seta, e del più smagliante verde, era la sottana a pieghe (Douglas 1992: 272).¹²

As he continued with the description of the wedding, he recounted the exchange of rings and the consecration of bread and wine. The strangest thing for Douglas was to see the crowning of the bride and the groom along with the exchange of their respective crowns from one to the other. That being the case, the exchange of crowns still takes place today in Italian-Albanian communities and symbolises the fact that each of the spouses receives the other as a crown, or better as a sign of glory (Bellucci 2022).

Considering that Douglas was a shrewd observer, he noticed that although the streets in the village were uneven and poorly paved, they had fascinating names such as *Termopili*, *Skanderbeg* e *Hypsilanti*.

¹¹ The town is completely Albanian. The translation is mine.

¹² She had glittering ornaments and gold embroidery on her neck, shoulders and wrists; a wide lace collar fell over her deep red silk bodice; also made of silk, and of the most glowing green, was the pleated petticoat. The translation is mine.

On this account he wrote the following:

[...] il “Corso Dante Alighieri” rammenta loro d’essere ospiti dell’Italia che ha ben compiuto qualcosa di grande a suo tempo [...](Douglas 1992:272).¹³

In the conclusion of chapter XXIII there is a sort of reflection of the writer as he spent a few days in that place and tried to draw a portrait of these Albanians, based on their customs and their literature that had the opportunity to discover. Nevertheless, his opinion of them did not change as it had remained the same he had already formulated when he rested in their villages in Greece.

On this matter, he explained that they reminded him of the Irish people since they had the same fighting spirit and the same frank hospitality: in fact, in the town of St. Demetrius he preferred to seek refreshment in a small inn where the hostess cooked him an excellent meal.

In chapter XXIV, Douglas recounted his visit to Macchia Albanese, which was a hamlet of San Demetrio Corone. He briefly described the houses as shabby but picturesque, but what interested the British writer most was the illustrious figure of Girolamo De Rada, Macchia’s own son. He was born in 1814 into a wealthy family and received a strict religious education as his father was a Greek Catholic priest. He studied at the college of San Demetrio Corone and later completed his studies in Naples. Douglas explained that De Rada was a man of firm faith who was thoughtful and a thorough reader of the Bible. When he was thirty-four years of age he decided to retire to his home town because he could no longer stand that worldly life of Naples where he even refused some important proposals that he had received. Moreover, in Macchia not only did he keep various correspondences with foreigners, but he meditated on the evils that afflicted Albania so that he consumed his entire assets for this cause.

Douglas read some of his works and compared him to Blake for his moral concepts and his “illuminata ispirazione”¹⁴(Douglas 1992:286) and he pointed out

¹³The ‘Corso Dante Alighieri’ reminds them that they are guests of Italy which has accomplished something great in its time. The translation is mine.

that the female characters in his poems retained their freshness and originality and claimed that: “anche per essere passati per il crogiolo del traduttore (Douglas 1992: 286).¹⁵

At the age of twenty-two he completed a collection of songs entitled *Milosao* that remains his best-known work and also the most translated writings into Italian.

In addition, Douglas stated that: “tutte le sue opere risuonano di patriottismo” (Douglas 1992: 286).¹⁶

Furthermore, not only was Girolamo De Rada successful as a poet but also as a journalist thanks to his *Fiàmuri Arbërit. La bandiera dell’Albania*¹⁷ which after some time became the banner of his compatriots (De Rada 1978).

Consequently, De Rada’s intellectual heritage attracted the attention of many philologists and linguists of the time and also the interest of all lovers of folklore and poetry. Additionally, Norman maintained that the Italo-Albanian poet was praised by many writers such as Cantù or Hermann Buchholtz, who compared him to Aeschylus. In 1892, he was given the chair of Albanian language and literature by Minister Pasquale Villari at San Demetrio Corone that had already been established in 1849 and suppressed three years later. He was also the director of the municipal schools in Corigliano Calabro where he established a small printing house. Consequently, in 1896 he organized in Corigliano the first Albanian language congress which aroused great interest and brought together delegates from all over Italy, however, the most important event of this occasion was the congratulatory telegram that he received from the Minister Francesco Crispi (Bellucci 2022). Subsequently, he travelled to Rome to take part in the 12th International Congress of Orientalists. Yet, his greatest love remained Macchia where he used to rest and walk in the country even though he was tired from the various misfortunes that befell him in his later years such as the loss of his dear wife and his children. Finally, he spent the rest of his life in San Demetrio where, in his spare time he cultivated a small plot of land and where he died in 1903.

¹⁴ Enlightened inspiration. The translation is mine.

¹⁵ Even for having passed through the crucible of the translator. The translation is mine.

¹⁶ All his works resonate with patriotism. The translation is mine.

¹⁷ *Fiàmuri Arbërit*. The Flag of Albania. The translation is mine.

At the end of the chapter Douglas defined him as “il Mazzini del suo popolo”¹⁸ (Douglas 1992:286). Norman would have liked to spend more time in this place that in reality was unknown to most Italians, but the great heat had begun to affect his physique and so he decided to go towards new places that he could discover. Based on the information provided, what emerges is that what mainly attracted Douglas to Calabria in the early 20th century is the absence of modernity. According to travel literature scholar Giuseppe Merlino, Norman was in reality an “anti-modernist” (Merlino 2004). It is no coincidence that the title of his work is entitled *Old Calabria*. As previously stated, what mostly incited Douglas to reach Calabria was his interest in finding relics of ancient mythical practices, behaviors, beliefs, traditions that were still full of mythical thought coming from the Greek-speaking areas of southern Italy of which this region was the birthplace and then prolonged its influence first under Roman rule and later under Byzantine, therefore Norman was attracted to classic culture for its fundamental harshness in which man was united with nature. It seems as if he wanted to see the “frontier” of Europe before it disappeared. This then explains why he devoted much of his travel time to the pedestrian exploration of the Calabrian territory, of which he preferred the inland, mountainous, inaccessible and isolated areas as well as the small remote villages. Moreover, It appeared as if he realized that modernity in Europe was erasing the past and of that more “authentic,” popular, uneducated part of the past he wanted to be a witness to preserve its memory.

That being the case, Calabria at that time was still archaic, almost completely connected to the ancient world, especially to the customs and traditions, along with ways of conceiving life that had been handed down from previous generations for centuries. In actual fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century the region and its people were still as they had been in the nineteenth century, or maybe as they had been in the eighteenth or seventeenth centuries.

This place was characterized by unknown lands with isolated, physically, morally and spiritually isolated people from the rest of the country who appeared to be lost in the fog of myth. Yet, Douglas did not intend to dispel this haze, on the contrary,

¹⁸ The Mazzini of his people. The translation is mine.

he was fascinated by it since he found himself immersed in a virgin environment (Bevilacqua 2008).

Accordingly, in *Old Calabria* there are several references to the Mediterranean and to the Greek myths which demonstrate that Norman fell in love with the South as he realized that there was a strong influence of the classical Greek culture which had been transplanted to southern Italy. What had been imported there was the Olympian religion of the gods who represented in the heavens the expression of the perfection of human virtues, for example Venus as the expression of feminine beauty to the highest degree. Thus a mythopoetic operation was accomplished as a projection of idealised and perfected human virtues which imagined them to be embodied in the god who had the power to rule the world.

This mythopoesis was the expression of the ruling classes aimed at idealising the sense of the virtues that made the nobles great who had in the Olympian religion the legitimisation of their power (Sette 2018).

According to Bevilacqua, Douglas might have been in love with the whole Mediterranean. After all, southern Italy was the South most within reach for him, and also the environment where all the elements of suggestion (especially the Greek myth) converged. Calabria managed to add to this the exoticism of proximity of which Bevilacqua has narrated in his work *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*, giving emphasis to the mountains, the forests, the isolation of inland areas, the relics of Paganism and the archaism as well (Bevilacqua 2012). On the grounds of this, what seems to confirm the permanence of the ancient way of thinking in southern Italy and, in particular in Calabria, is the contribution of the contemporary Italian philologist Emanuele Lelli who published the book *Sud Antico* in 2016. His work gives an account of his research in which he was able to discover the effective permanence of hundreds of “lemmas” (beliefs, customs, idioms) in the peasant culture of the *Mezzogiorno* that came from the Greek and Latin classics. Contrariwise, unlike Lelli, Douglas’ research in Calabria did not aim at producing catalogs or evidence as Lelli did, but had rather the exquisitely romantic intention of living an experience that would have shortly thereafter become impossible.

Regarding foreign travellers' first visit to Calabria, it has to be pointed out that during the twentieth century the travels towards the far South of Italy were not common: after the earthquake that took place in 1638, Calabria had become poor, wild and undeveloped. Nevertheless, Douglas managed to penetrate into the far South (Bevilacqua 2012), yet, before reaching Calabria, he had travelled extensively throughout the world as he had been in India and in Anatolia (also known as Asia Minor) for his profession as a diplomat. However, he chose Capri as his ideal homeland as it had been one of his favorite destinations during his travels, besides it was there that he spent most of his life and where he died. Moreover, he wrote about Capri in his *Siren Land* (1911) which was an essay in an anecdotal tone that combined his historic-naturalistic skills with an imaginative tension that was free from stereotypes.

Although Douglas was a writer of the 19th century, he strongly reacted to Victorian tastes and trends of which he disdained their hypocrisies, in point of fact, in his best-known novel *South Wind* that he wrote in 1917 and in which, as mentioned in chapter two (Literature review), he humorously narrated the vicissitudes of a group of foreigners, from which it emerged the figure of an Anglican bishop who was attacked for his puritanical rigor. However, this rigor disintegrated when it clashed with the intact Mediterranean Paganism in which Norman's joyful attitude that was absorbed by southern people, was visible.

As specified by research and critics, *Old Calabria* can be regarded as one of the best book that describes this Italian region, nevertheless, it has to be pointed out that Douglas' Calabria does not correspond to the current geographical area but rather to much of the southern territory that was ruled by the Byzantines in the 11th century, especially the present Apulia and Calabria.

At the same time, this work inaugurated a new genre of travel literature that not only did it capture landscape aspects but also real human and social problems; still, some critics instead accused Douglas of a certain superficiality that was mainly dictated by his refusal to be accompanied and thus 'guided' by locals (Giacomantonio 1984).

However, the result of Douglas' attraction towards the classic culture seemed to have also another interpretive key that consisted in acknowledging the *Mezzogiorno* as the expression of a motionless order, in whose feudalism and

Catholicism along with the aristocratic and peasant society, there survived an authentic society, an intact world that had not been ruined by the civilization of machines, in essence, a world that eschewed the myth of progress.

As a consequence, it is no coincidence that it was mainly Norman Douglas and his contemporary friend-enemy D.H. Lawrence to theorize this aspect, since they were both dissatisfied with the effects of modern civilization.

At the same time, Douglas was firmly critical of the Calabrian situation: he was skeptical of any possibility of change and had no faith in state intervention, which he considered as an unknown concept to the officials who were supposed to serve it. Moreover, his distrust lay also in the possibility of self-government by the peasants: he considered religion as a tangle of miracles and blasphemies and the ruling classes blameworthy. Furthermore, Norman (also Lawrence as far as Sardinia was concerned) seemed to be rather disappointed with some possibility of progress, especially with the attempt to improve education and making political currents more advanced, as he would have seen his *Mezzogiorno* lose all vestiges of the Middle Ages. Douglas was at heart a conservative since he despised socialists and drew the peasant masses closer to flocks of stupid animals (Mozzillo 1982). With regard to the early attempts of land reclamation, he observed the following:

[...] la spartizione [...] di grandi proprietà è stata seguita dalla distruzione del terreno boscoso e dalla scomparsa totale della selvaggina. È stata salutata come l'inizio di una nuova era di prosperità [...] ma il viaggiatore e l'amante della natura saranno lieti di lasciare parte di queste terre nelle mani dei ricchi proprietari, che non hanno alcun interesse a coltivare ogni dito di terra.[...] Esiste una prosperità che non è materiale. Qualche artista o poeta solitario, che abbia tratto ispirazione da scene come questa, potrebbe forse aver contribuito alla felicità della razza umana più di quanto non avrebbe potuto fare una legione di piantatori di pomodori di mentalità ristretta, sudici e litigiosi (cit. in Valentini 2001:318).¹⁹

¹⁹ The partition [...] of large estates was followed by the destruction of forested land and the total disappearance of game. It has been hailed as the beginning of a new era of prosperity [...] but the traveler and nature lover will be glad to leave some of this land in

The Calabrian peasant or shepherd became a kind of 'good savage' who avoided the dangers of progress and was idealized in an almost poetic aspect regardless of his social reality. Thus, on the one hand, with great indignation Douglas observed the injustices of the rich, the idiocy of the local press and of the tax system, along with the slowness of the courts and so on. On the other hand, Norman loved that *Old Calabria* allowed him to observe and describe places of a civilization that was doomed to disappear. It was a dualism, also a certain ambiguity that did not detract from the style (Bevilacqua 2012).

Regarding Norman's itinerary, the first stop of the long and adventurous journey was Luceria, the present Lucera, one of the main towns of Apulia that was the object of dispute between the Romans and the Samnites during the Second Samnite War. Today it is a large centre that makes a fine show on a hill overlooking the Tavoliere plain thanks to its many well-preserved medieval monuments which are still in good condition.

After Lucera Douglas went to Venosa and Taranto and afterwards reached Calabria where in Policoro he came to know the critical state of misery and backwardness of the region. In this place, it was highly noticeable that not only did the desolation of the land and the poverty of the peasants who still lived their absurd existence as serfs but also the whole socio-economic structure of Calabria as well as the patriarchal scheme of the family, constantly preserved the signs of a lifestyle still anchored in ideas, customs and systems of the past which persistently resisted any stimulus for change along with the first timid experiments of agrarian reforms that in those years were being implemented in the South (Giacomantonio 1984). I have investigated and deepened this topic in the answer that I provided for the final research question.

Accordingly, an idea of life deep-rooted in the consciousness of the humblest social strata which explains certain behaviors of southern people could be

the hands of the rich owners, who have no interest in cultivating every piece of land.[...] There is prosperity that is not material. Some solitary artist or poet, who has drawn inspiration from scenes like this, may perhaps have contributed more to the happiness of the human race than a legion of narrow-minded, filthy, quarrelsome tomato planters could. The translation is mine.

characterized by a widespread inferiority complex and frustration, but also by the lack of initiative, the passive acceptance of their state along with a stubborn spirit of preservation and a deep spirituality which found its significance in the ordinary life experience and in the environment as well. Not surprisingly, over the years this was the result of a combination of an incredibly complex social structure that was based on an urban bourgeoisie linked to the land rent and the building industry. In addition, it was determined from an urbanized farmer class, as well as a paternalistic and patronising ruling class with a conservative bureaucracy usually inclined to political power. Eventually, all these elements emerged in a medley of unproductive middle classes (Bevilacqua 2008).

At the same time, Douglas succeeded in capturing some essential elements of southern society and strove hard to provide a rather faithful account, albeit characterized by a subtle comic vein intended to emphasize anachronistic situations and atypical characters. In chapter XXVIII entitled *The Greater Sila*, he wrote:

Nearly all the cattle on the Sila, like the land itself, belongs to large proprietors. These gentlemen are for the most part invisible; they inhabit their palaces in the cities and the very name of the Sila sends a cold shudder through their bones; their revenues are collected from the shepherds by agents who seem to do their work very conscientiously. I once observed, in a hut a small fragment of the skin of a newly killed kid; the wolf had devoured the beast, and the shepherd was keeping this corpus delicti to prove to his superior, the agent, that he was innocent of the murder. There was something naive in his honesty-as if a shepherd could not eat a kid as well as any wolf, and keep a portion of its skin! The agent, no doubt, would hand it on to his lord, by way of confirmation and verification. Another time I saw the débris of a goat hanging from a tree; it was the wolf again; the boy had attached these remains to the tree in order that all who passed that way might be his witnesses, if necessary, that the animal had not been sold underhand (Douglas 2012: 218-219).

It emerges that behind these authentic accounts which seemed to come from folk literature, it could be possible to detect fundamental instants of the rustic Calabria

in the first half of the century. Nevertheless, even today these stories from the past are reflected in the culture and in the lifestyle of the most dispossessed classes.

Be that as it may, this first difficult contact with the “deep South” proved to be very stimulating since Douglas’ research took also into consideration the limits of his interests and culture and above all of the historical, social and cultural reasons that caused *la Questione Meridionale* (Giacomantonio 1984).

Consequently, all this led the writer to investigate the less accessible recesses of the region and to probe, with the observation and the curiosity of the thorough scholar, the more obscure phenomena that are still the key problems of the *Mezzogiorno* today such as poverty and organized crime which have been long-standing issues in southern Italy. Moreover, what seems to have been at the root of the South's problems is the lack of trust among citizens and between citizens and institutions along with the low level of regard for the law (Lelli 2021). What developed from what aforementioned, was an authentic and often exaggerated representation of reality along with an unbiased judgment on facts and circumstances which did not spare the ruling class, sometimes inept and with personal interests that failed to commit itself to some permanent values of culture and civilization and to the true reasons for progress. Besides, it was not able to break down all barriers of the most conservative and reactionary peasant tradition, around which it preferred to establish a political system strongly anchored in welfare mechanisms and paternalistic practices (Giacomantonio 1984:71).

In essence, this underdevelopment lay in the socio-economic structure, as well as in the patriarchal scheme of the family, besides all systems were anchored to a past from which it seemed rather difficult to escape as it was characterized by a paternalistic ruling class with a policy of patronage (Giacomantonio 1984:69). In view of all that, Douglas captured some essential elements and explained them with a certain humor. Not only were there collections of news, but rather frequent cultural-historical references and sometimes philological digressions (Weston 1993), that were directed to the search for the reasons that caused that situation. However, this aspect that was less related to ‘field’ of experience, since it was linked to the author’s personal erudition and subsequent reflections did not have to make readers believe that it was not possible to speak of reportage.

The credibility and authenticity of his considerations were the result of the fact that Douglas shared his experiences in Calabria with the local people and dealt with prejudices and suspicions. His behavior was therefore distinctive, almost as a “special envoy”.

The journey ended in Crotona, beneath the Greek column of Capo Lacinio, the only and lonely survivor of the Greek temple of Hera Lacinia, a melancholic witness of history and civilization in a desert of desolation and misery, at least in Calabria of the beginning of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, Cosenza represented one of the fundamental stages along Norman Douglas' itinerary. He arrived there after staying in the mountains of the Pollino, on the occasion of the celebrations in “devotion” of the Madonna, in the course of which the writer had the opportunity to experience *De Visu*. The latter was the primitive religiosity of southern people that was characterized by an instinctive devoutness which did not always adhere to the Christian orthodoxy as it was full of Pagan reminiscences and pantheistic mysticism.

It was therefore possible to detect the signs of a total spirituality that was in the very nature of the world in the primordial joys and in the dances, as well as in the sounds and songs that broke the silence of the night and in the colorful pilgrimage. As was customary, there seemed to be no lack of some sketches referring to dramatic action and movement. One outstanding example to mention could be the description of a night spent in a bed in the company of two prelates and a second practical demonstration concerned instead the attempt to avoid the unpleasant treatment of fumigation at the gates of Morano. This medical care was based on sulfur and had been prescribed by the local health authorities as a precautionary measure against cholera.

Subsequently, the stop in Cosenza was not casual since, as it is discussed at length in the next research question, the author hoped to find there the *Adamo Caduto*:

Una tragedia sacra del P.F. Serafino della Salandra Predicatore,
Lettore, Diffinitore della Provincia di Basilicata. Dedicata al

Reverendissimo Padre Fra Giovanni da Napoli di tutto l'Ordine di S.
Francesco Ministro Generale (De Pilato 1934).²⁰

This can be read on the title page of the work, preserved in the National Libraries of Naples and Rome and, today, a copy also in the civic centre of Cosenza. In point of fact, the *Adamo Caduto* was printed in Cosenza “Per Gio. Battista Moio, e Frãc: Rodella 1647 con Licenza de’ Superiori”²¹ (De Pilato 1934). Evidently, Douglas regarded his tour of Cosenza as very significant. Taking into consideration the fact that he was a sensitive and educated man, he could not fail to feel the irresistible fascination of the cultural traditions of one of the most scholarly and erudite towns of southern Italy and notorious for having many illustrious sons, among which Bernardino Telesio, the famous Italian philosopher and natural scientist. Notwithstanding the fact that his natural theories were later disproven, his attention to observation made him the “first of the moderns” who not only managed to develop the scientific method, but was later highly appreciated by Francis Bacon himself for boosting the new philosophical investigation with his empiristic naturalism.

That being so, it seemed that what made Douglas stop in Cosenza was also his secret hope of trying to find some manuscript or some old editions of Salandra’s work, since maybe he wished to make a personal contribution to the discussion on the sources of *Paradise Lost* (Giacomantonio 1984).

Yet, this did not seem to cause surprise since Douglas’ attention to cultural issues of Calabria has always been particular and consistent with the intention of writing a compendium of the southern civilization and its history.

In order to become convinced of this there was no need for a thorough analysis: it was enough to follow the general lines of development of *Old Calabria* and of the themes addressed in it which poorly fit into the scheme of a travel diary.

²⁰ A sacred tragedy of friar Seraph of Salandra Preacher, Reader, Diffinitor of the Province of Basilicata. Dedicated to the Most Reverend Father Friar John from Naples of the whole Order of St. Francis General Minister. The translation is mine.

²¹ For John Battista Moio, and Frãc: Rodella 1647 under License of the Superiors.

Contrariwise, they responded to the requirements of an ambitious project full of cultural motivations.

In consideration of that, there were at least two other reasons that justified an entire chapter dedicated to Salandra that, in the terms and the modality in which it was developed, could appear to be a disturbing element in the structure of the work. On the one hand, the first explanation could be sought in the variety of tones and topics which constituted a leading feature of travel books, when it was not characterized by a mere series of extemporaneous annotations.

Regarding *Old Calabria*, the variety which sometimes conveyed a certain fragmentary nature to the central development of the work, could also be ascribed to Douglas' use of the material already utilized on other occasions.

On the other hand, the second reason had to be identified with the peculiarity of the work, when compared to writings of the same genre of *Old Calabria* whose didactic and informative trait was entirely marginal in a broad design in which very little seemed to be left to improvisation (Giacomantonio 1984). I have provided a thorough explanation of this topic in the answer to the next research question.

Considering everything, it emerges that Douglas managed to find an affinity between his temperament and the Mediterranean peoples' nature; through his contacts with the South, he rediscovered in himself his hedonistic philosophy as an ideal of life. Thus, not only was his journey encouraged by a spirit of adventure, but also incited by a desire that drove him to reconstruct the history of the people through a directly lived experience that for him would have proved to be a rediscovery of his identity and his individuality. Hence, it was true for Douglas what was said about the mechanism of the journey as alienating and then cognitive or self-consciousness.

Consequently, J. Kristeva, the Bulgarian-French philosopher, semiotician, literary critic, psychoanalyst and novelist, in her *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*, at the conclusion of a long *excursus* on the effect of the foreigner in various historical epochs, wondered why Freud, in his famous essay *Das Unheimlich*, commonly translated into Italian as '*il perturbante*', and in French as '*inquiétante étrangeté*', never mentioned foreigners whilst, in the same way as other perturbing phenomena, the foreigner could have provoked that disturbing feeling that Freud described and which the Greeks called *xenos*. According to Kristeva:

Conclude Kristeva che Freud non ne parla, ma ci insegna a scoprire l'estraneità dentro noi stessi. Questo, aggiunge, è forse l'unico modo di non perseguirli fuori. Questa distrazione freudiana nei confronti del problema degli stranieri', conclude, potrebbe essere interpretata come un invito a "non reificare lo straniero [...] Ma ad analizzarlo analizzandosi [...]. A scoprire la nostra perturbante alterità" (Kristeva 1990:175).²²

It follows that, as previously described, Douglas' contact with southern Italian people that were foreign to him at first, made him discover in himself aspects that contributed to the definition of his new character. Resultantly, the concept of 'alienation' from which this section started can ideally relate back to Julia Kristeva's reflections.

All in all, on the trail of ancient Greek civilization, Douglas rediscovered its authentic individuality in the history, tradition and rituals of the deep South of the Italian peninsula. When he reached the 'Greek' Sila he discovered the Orphic rites that reconciled its polymorphous nature in the embrace of the Great Mother Earth which welcomed all diversity. Douglas' stimulus to go to Calabria then had the metaphorical aspect of the ideal search for a place of the soul that was triggered by the hope of obtaining there the fulfilment of his natural impulses.

Hence, as was anticipated at the beginning of this section, what mainly pushed Norman to reach Calabria was the search for a meta-space of sensual liberation, beyond the world of Victorian morality that was imprisoned in privileges, hypocrisies and prohibitions (Sette 2018).

²² Kristeva concluded that Freud did not talk about it, but he taught people to discover the foreignness within themselves. Besides, she added that this was perhaps the only way not to torment them on the outside. She concluded that this Freudian distraction to the problem of foreigners, could be interpreted as an invitation "not to reify the foreigners. But to analyze them by analyzing ourselves. To discover our perturbing otherness. The translation is mine.

4.4 Third Research Question

What influence did Calabrian and southern culture and literature have on Douglas' literary productions?

Old Calabria is part of a well-known tradition of travel books that began in English culture with Dampier's *Voyages* and Captain Rogers' *Cruising Voyage Round the World*.

Both texts could be regarded as a reportage documentary, since they are real travel accounts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Besides, they seemed to have laid the basis of the development of the English novel which notoriously initiated with the classic precursor Robinson Crusoe as a 'mock reportage' that drew from real reports such as Rogers Dampier's voyages the necessary details and information in order to give the impression of truthfulness. Hence, in the prose satire *Gulliver's Travels* or *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*, written by by Jonathan Swift in 1726, the author declared to have followed his cousin Dampier's example and that he entrusted the account of his travels to "some young gentleman of either University to put them in order and correct the style" (Swift 1985:37). Considering the above, the idea that developed was that the literary man helped the traveler, at the same time the journey became a subject to be told, as a result the more writers could demonstrate to be able to give an account of a real events, the more chances of editorial success they managed to have (Valentini 2001). However, there seems to be a strong connection between novel and reportage in English literature. As reported by Fasano in his *Letteratura e viaggio*, there is a sort of privileged relationship between writer and traveler:

la scrittura rende possibile la comunicazione a distanza nello spazio e nel tempo; la lettera, il messaggio, il diario garantiscono la trasmissibilità dell' esperienza di viaggio al di là della sua durata. Il viaggio per essere conosciuto deve essere narrato e narrato con arte, altrimenti è come se non esistesse; inoltre il procedimento artistico della scrittura viene dai formalisti russi inteso come atto di 'straniamento', nel senso che il componimento letterario ci allontana dai consueti

meccanismi percettivi e ci sottrae “all’automatismo del riconoscimento”, permettendoci di vedere cose nuove, diverse (Fasano 1999:10).²³

This statement is in line with the mechanism of travel that represents a sort of estrangement from what is already known and familiar, therefore through confrontation with the different it seems possible to achieve a new vision, even a conquest of the identity. In addition, the analogy is more significant when the journey takes place in the country that is already known by the reader (as in Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*): it then happens that what is known and familiar become foreign, seen through other eyes and thus also in this case the reader is subtracted from the automatism of recognition. A place can reveal aspects that have remained hitherto unperceived and virtually absent, consequently the foreign traveler in our country can eventually fulfill this function (Valentini 2001).

Regarding this research question, according to data gathered, Francesco Bevilacqua does not believe that there was a direct influence of Calabrian literature on the English writer’s literary productions (Bevilacqua 2023: interview). To further explain, Douglas was one of the English-speaking travelers that visited Calabria several times and that had read about Calabrian authors the most, as evidenced by the numerous citations of works about Calabria in the corpus of *Old Calabria*. As a result, he showed to know authors (mainly the scholars of the 1600s and 1700s, such as Tommaso Aceti, who wrote significant historical and geographical collections on the region), as well as works, places, geographies and histories.

²³ Writing makes distance communication in space and time possible; the letter, the message, the diary guarantee the transferability of the travel experience beyond its duration. The journey in order to be known needs to be narrated and told with art, otherwise it appears as if it did not exist; moreover, the artistic procedure of writing is acknowledged by the Russian formalists as an act of ‘estrangement,’ in the sense that literary composition distances us from the usual perceptual mechanisms and makes us avoid “the automatism of recognition,” then allowing us to see new and different things. The translation is mine.

Most importantly, as mentioned in the previous research question and thoroughly discussed below, according to a study done by Bliss Perry (1860-1954), the American literary critic, writer, professor of English at Princeton and the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* from 1899-1909, and taking into account Douglas' own personal opinions and findings, they both claimed that John Milton drew inspiration for his *Paradise Lost* from the *Adamo Caduto* written by the Calabrian poet Serafino della Salandra (Bliss 1902). Moreover, the writer's experience in southern Italy, especially in Calabria that had had a Greek influence for a long time, was for Douglas an occasion to evoke myths, etymologies, genealogies, in particular, this could be noticed when he talked about the symbolic meaning of the dragon ("drakon") in Greek literature. These were significant pages which the Italian writer and publisher Roberto Calasso made use of in his essay *La follia che viene dalle ninfe* (Calasso 2005).²⁴

However, the real influence on Douglas' writings seemed to come from Calabrian culture acknowledged in an anthropological sense, which mainly concerned the lifestyles and the customs of the common people. As discussed at length in the findings of research question N. Four that aims to analyse the psychological introspections of Douglas' characters in *Old Calabria*, this novel is constantly crammed with observations and considerations on these aspects. Besides, the nonconformist, libertarian and libertine Douglas, who came from a nation that was still under the Victorian influence, was deeply impressed by the ability of the Calabrians to preserve living spaces dedicated to the temporary irruption of the irrational into the ordinary normality of social life, as it occurred in the Dionysian rites of ancient Greece or in the Latin bacchanalia (Bevilacqua 2012). Moreover, as maintained by Bevilacqua, Douglas was among the first English travellers to notice the specific Christian festivals that he had the opportunity to attend in Calabria and Basilicata which were in reality panic rites rather than religious events and what mainly corroborated the English writer's statement was his description of the feast of the Madonna of Pollino. Consequently, in consideration of the concerns, the Italian contemporary writer claims that it was mainly southern culture deeply steeped in mythological elements to influence Douglas rather than the Calabrian literature (Bevilacqua 2012).

²⁴ The Madness that comes from the Nymphs. The translation is mine.

First and foremost, according to Douglas, one of the earliest and most important influence of the Calabrian writings on English literature could approximately date back to 1645 when the Calabrian poet Serafino della Salandra wrote the famous tragedy the *Adamo Caduto* from which John Milton seems to have drawn inspiration for his *Paradise Lost*.

As maintained by Douglas:

You may spend pleasant days in this city of Cosenza, doing nothing whatever. But I go there for a set purpose, and bristling with energy. I go there to hunt for a book by a certain Salandra, which was printed on the spot, and which I have not yet been able to find, although I once discovered it in an old catalogue, priced at 80 *gram*. Gladly would I give 8000 for it!

The author was a contemporary of that Flying Monk of whom I spoke in Chapter X, and he belonged to the same religious order. If, in what I then said about the flying monk, there appears to be some trace of light fooling in regard to this order and its methods, let amends be made by what I have to tell about old Salandra, the discovery of whose book is one of primary importance for the history of English letters (Douglas 2012: 155).

The following analysis aims to demonstrate that Douglas assumption was correct as there are several analogies and parallelisms in the verses of both poems. Serafino della Salandra was an Italian poet who was born in Salandra in 1595 and died in Naples in 1656. He was also an Observant Friar Minor who was educated in the convent of the Reformed Friars Minor, where he concluded his studies and afterwards devoted himself entirely to the study of poetry. In 1644 he was appointed Definitor of the Province of Basilicata, and in 1647 he was elected Guardian of the Province (Quadrio 1743:91).

He was a celebrated and esteemed poet and the author of the above-mentioned sacred tragedy the *Adamo Caduto*, from which John Milton is said to have copied much of the construction of his *Paradise Lost*, as was first stated by the Neapolitan scholar Francesco Zicari da Paola (Zicari 1844). Consequently, Norman Douglas

also addressed this issue chapter XXI of *Old Calabria – Milton in Calabria* (Lindeman 1965).

According to Douglas:

The matter is still unsettled, and in view of the number of recent scholars who have interested themselves in it, one is really surprised that no notice has yet been taken of an Italian article which goes far towards deciding this question and proving that the chief source of 'Paradise Lost' is the 'Adamo Caduto,' a sacred tragedy by Serafino della Salandra. The merit of this discovery belongs to Francesco Zicari, whose paper, 'Sulla scoperta dell' originale italiano da cui Milton trasse il suo poema del paradiso perduto,' is printed on pages 245 to 276 in the 1845 volume of the Naples 'Album scientifico- artistico- letterario' now lying before me. It is in the form of a letter addressed to his friend Francesco Ruffa, a native of Tropea in Calabria (Douglas 2012: 158).

The tragedy was composed between 1645 and 1646 and was published in Cosenza in 1647 (Da Venezia 1846: 746) and afterward was performed twice by the theatrical Company of the Academy of Harmonious Phœbians (Società Dante Alighieri 1997). As reported by Umberto Bosco:

It is a tragedy in more eloquent verses than elegant, which reveals in the author an uncommon faculty of psychological penetration and representation (Bosco 1975:293).

However, as reported by Douglas, research claims that it still seems to be an unsettled question what the main source of Milton's *Paradise Lost* was. Charles Dunster stated in his *Considerations on Milton's Early Reading* (1810), that the *prima stamina* of the work could be attributed to Sylvester's *Du Bartas* and many other older writers such as Vondel, Cedmon and Masenius. Nevertheless, the majority of the English commentators on Milton, as well as Tiraboschi and Voltaire, maintained that the prototype was "Adamus Exul" of Grotius or Andreini's sacred drama of "Adamo" which it is possible to consult in third volume of Cowper's *Milton* (1810). Although many scholars have a keen interest in this topic, it is surprising that no notice was taken of an Italian article which seems

to prove that the provenience of Milton's *Paradise Lost* could be ascribable to the *Adamo Caduto*, a sacred tragedy written by Serafino della Salandra.

It was Francesco Zicari that made the discovery whose manuscript, *Sulla scoperta dell'originale italiano da cui Milton trasse il suo poema del Paradiso Perduto*, was printed in the 1845 volume of Naples from page 245 to 276 "*Album scientifico-artistico-letterario*" which is now in the form of a letter addressed to Francesco Ruffa, a friend of his who was born in Tropea (Calabria) (Giacomantonio 1984:191). Consequently, although Salandra was named among the authors of sacred tragedies in Todd's *Milton* (1809, vol. ii: 244), and by Hayley as well, yet they both did not have the possibility to analyse his *Adamo Caduto*. Latest works, such as Moers' *De fontibus Paradisi Amissi Miltoniani* (1860), did not make any reference to Salandra at all, while, *Milton on the Continent*, (1903) seemed to hint at only some potential motives for *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

Hence, there seems to be no doubt regarding to whom the priority belonged. It goes without saying that the "Adamo" of Salandra was printed in Cosenza in 1647. According to Richardson, Milton began to write his *Paradise Lost* in 1654 and then he presented it, as completed, in 1665. This was confirmed by Masson who stated that the work was published two years later.

To describe in more detail, in the autumn of the same year Quaker Elwood paid Milton a visit and on that occasion the poet gave him the paper so that he could read it. Nevertheless, the two years' delay in publication could be mainly ascribable to the difficult situation of those years caused by the destructive fire of London and the spread of the great plague. According to Flavio Giacomantonio, even though Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* was a rather uncommon book that neither the Paris Bibliotheque Nationale nor the British Museum of London had a copy, it was not an imaginary work (Giacomantonio 2009).

In order to support his statement, Giacomantonio also remarked to have had this book in his hands and analysed it at the *Biblioteca Nazionale* in Naples. Based on his description, the manuscript appears rather small as it is an octavo of 251 pages (excluding twenty pages without numbers and the last one at the end of the book for correction of misprints). Besides, he added that it had been badly printed and bore all the signs of authenticity, with the poet's name and the place

and the year of publication clearly indicated in the first page. As reported by his words:

I have carefully compared Zicari's references to it, and quotations from it, with the original. They are correct, save for a few insignificant verbal discrepancies which, so far as I can judge, betray no indication of an attempt on his part to mislead the reader, such as using the word *tromba* (trumpet) instead of Salandra's term *sambuca* (sackbut). And if further proof of authenticity be required I may note that the "Adamo Caduto" of Salandra is already cited in old bibliographies like Toppi's "*Biblioteca Napoletana*" (1678), or that of Joannes a S. Antonio ("*Biblioteca universa Franciscana, etc.*", Madrid, 1732-1733, vol. iii, p. 88). It appears to have been the only literary production of its author, who was a Franciscan monk and is described as "Preacher, Lector and Definitor of the Reformed Province of Basilicata (Giacomantonio 1984:193).

In view of the preceding, we can state that Salandra was a real person, and in 1647 he published a mystery entitled the *Adamo Caduto*.

Giacomantonio extracted from Zicari's manuscript as much as could be enough so as to demonstrate the evidence of his contention that Milton's *Paradise Lost* was a transfusion of this same mystery.

According to Douglas:

It induces me to say that Salandra's 'Adamo Caduto,' though extremely rare—so rare that neither the British Museum nor the Paris Bibliotheque Nationale possesses a copy—is not an imaginary book; I have had it in my hands, and examined it at the Naples Biblioteca Nazionale; it is a small octavo of 251 pages (not including twenty unnumbered ones, and another one at the end for correction of misprints); badly printed and bearing all the marks of genuineness, with the author's name and the year and place of publication clearly set forth on the title-page. I have carefully compared Zicari's references to it, and quotations from it with

the original. They are correct, save for a few insignificant verbal discrepancies which, so far as I can judge, betray no indication of an attempt on his part to mislead the reader, such as using the word *tromba* (trumpet) instead of Salandra's term *sambuca* (sackbut). And if further proof of authenticity be required (Douglas 2012: 159).

Regarding the comparison between Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it can be observed that there are several parallelisms between the two poems. The principal theme in Salandra was the Universe that had been shattered by the First Man's disobedience which represented the origin of man's sins and unhappiness. Likewise, the same theme could be found in Milton. Salandra's main characters were God and his angels, along with the first man and a woman, the serpent, Satan and his angels. The corresponding personages were in Milton's *Paradise Lost* as well.

In the prologue of Salandra's poem, he presented his rationale and discussed at length about his works with particular attention to the Creative Omnipotence. The same did Milton. Afterwards, both Salandra and Milton described the council of the rebel angels, their discourses and their fall from heaven into a sulphurous and desert region (Douglas 2012:159).

In Salandra, Man's fall seemed to be designed as a means of stratagem that was then resolved to reunite in council in Pandemonium or the Abyss, in which it was possible to adopt measures so as man could become the prey of hell and the enemy of God. Yet, in Milton's *Paradise Lost* there was an analogous occurrence. In addition, Salandra seemed to personify Death and Sin, the former may have been the child of the latter. The similar observation was in Milton as well. Then, Salandra provided a description of Omnipotence in which he foresaw the consequences of temptation and man's fall; therefore, as a solution, he prepared his redemption. Again, an equivalent notion was in Milton's. Moreover, Salandra depicted the site of Paradise along with the happy life that man could have had there. Like the others, also this description could be found in Milton. Other corresponding themes that could be found in both Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* include the following:

Both writers described the extraordinary creation of the universe and of man, along with the morality of the forbidden fruit.

They both reported the dialogues between the Serpent and Eve; the scene in which the forbidden fruit was eaten and consequently our first parents' despair. Additionally, they provided a detailed description of the joy of Death after Eve's mortification and defeat, along with the description of hell's delight, Adam's grief and our first parents' flight characterized by their sorrow and shame. Besides, they seemed to anticipate the Redeemer's supplication and the defeat caused by Sin and Death. Particular emphasis was given to the topics concerning the wonders of the Creation, the killing of Abel by his brother Cain, Antediluvians' vices caused by the fall of Adam, the horrible gift of war and other evils of the world (Douglas 2012).

Finally, both the poets described the passion of Jesus Christ along with the support and the reassurance that Adam and Eve received from the angel who announced to them that the Messiah was coming, and eventually, their departure from the terrestrial paradise.

In addition to these analogies listed above that take into account mainly the general scheme of both poems, there seem to be also particular verbal points of resemblance.

Milton's Satan seemed to have many features that characterized his personage, such as vindictiveness, envy, impenitence and despair which formed that well matched whole, and the same characteristics already portrayed Salandra' Lucifero. Considering that Salandra was not writing for refined readers but mainly for lower-class theatrical spectators, it can be observed that Lucifero's speeches seemed to be like a caricature, yet the elements utilized by Milton were already there (Zicari 1844). The following citations show the main coincidences:

Here we may reign secure ... Better to reign in Hell than serve
in Heaven (Milton i, 258, cit in Zicari 1844).

...Qui propria voglia, Son capo, son qui duce, son lor Prence
(Salandra: 49, cit. in Battista 1647)²⁵

²⁵ Here proper willingness, I am the head, here I am the leader, I am lor Prence. The translation is mine.

And another:

...Whom shall we find Sufficient?... This enterprise None shall
partake with me. (Milton ii, 403, 465. Cit. in Zicari 1844).

A chi basterà l'anima di voi?

...certo che quest'affare

A la mia man s'aspetta²⁶ (Salandra: 64, cit. in Battista 1647).

Milton's Terror was in some measure taken from the Italian poet's Megera, the "hideous Terror" who threatened Satan (Battista 1647: 699). Consequently, in Salandra's drama, Megera's role coincided with Terror's since she also threatened and chastised the rebellious spirits, which she did in a dreadful way (Salandra:123-131, cit. in Battista 1647).

Similar mythical creatures of *Paradise Lost* such as Hydras, Cerberus and Chimaeras could be found in their respective abodes as well, however, Salandra was not satisfied with only these three monsters that he included a mixed combination of other creatures, namely dragons, crocodiles, basilisks, panthers, owls, bears, tigers and harpies. Terror moved with a dreadful velocity:

...and from his seat

The monster moving onward came as fast

With horrid strides (Milton ii, 675, cit. Zicari 1844).

so did Megera:

In atterrir, in spaventar son...

Rapido si ch'ogni ripar è vano²⁷ (Salandra: 59 cit. in Battista 1647).

²⁶ To whom the soul will be enough?...Certainly this business, to my hand, is waiting. The translation is mine.

²⁷ Here I am to frighten and terrify, so rapidly that every shelter is vain. The translation is mine.

Both Salandra and Milton used the names of the gods of the classical times for their monsters, however, Milton's epic narrative seemed to be of greater variety and prolixity in this regard (Giacomantonio 1984).

Besides, an interesting parallelism could be observed between Milton's Belial and Salandra's. They were both presented as extravagant, fearful, lazy, and at times ridicule, then it follows that there is no doubt that Milton may have drawn inspiration from the Italian poet.²⁸

The remark of Milton's Beelzebub (ii, 368 cit. in Giacomantonio 1984:197):

Seduce them to our party, that their god
May prove their foe ...

was copied from the Italian Lucifero's words (p. 52):

...Facciam Acciò, che l'uom divenga
A Dio nemico...²⁹

With regard to the creation of the world, Salandra asked (p. 11):

Qual lingua può di Dio,
Benché da Dio formato
Lodar di Dio le meraviglie estreme?³⁰

A similar expression was repeated by Milton (vii, 112):

²⁸ On this occasion Zicari seemed to have stretched a point so as to improve his case, since in the reference he provided, it was not Belial, but Behemoth instead who spoke of himself as cowardly. However, Lucifer applied this designation to Belial as well in another place.

²⁹ Let that man become an enemy of God. The translation is mine.

³⁰ What language can God, though formed by God, praise God's extreme wonders? The translation is mine.

...to recount almighty works

What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice?

It goes without saying that there is a significant resemblance between Milton and Salandra as regards their descriptions of Paradise with its joys. It can be observed that in both poems, Adam warned his partner of her weakness, besides, the scene in which Eve encountered the serpent presents about four verbal coincidences.

On the one hand, Salandra wrote (p. 68):

Ravviso gli animal, ch'a schiera a schiera
Già fanno humil e reverente inclino...
Ravveggio il bel serpente avvolto in giri;
O sei bello
Con tanta varietà che certo sembri
Altro stellato ciel, smaltata terra.
O che sento, tu parli?³¹

On the other hand, Milton rewrote these lines (ix, 517-554):

...She minded not, as used
To such disport before her through the field
From every beast, more duteous at her call...

³¹ I see an array of animals that
With a humble and reverent bow....
I see the fair serpent coiled in laps;
You are beautiful
With such variety that you certainly seem
Another starry heavens, an enamelled earth.
Or that I hear, do you speak?

Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve.
His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck...
What may this mean? Language of man pronounced
By tongue of brute?

On balance, Zicari observed that even though Rolli was not familiar with the *Adamo Caduto*, when doing his Italian translation of Milton, there were several occasions in which he unintentionally came across the same expressions that Salandra had written before him.

Moreover, both poets showed to have noted Eve's altered complexion soon after she had eaten the forbidden fruit:

Torbata ne la faccia? Non sei quella
Qual ti lasciasti contenta ...³² (Salandra: 89, cit. in Battista
1647).

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed (Milton: 886,
cit. in Zicari 1844).

It was only with this difference that the Italian Eve then added a half-lie by way of explaining the transformation:

... Forse cangiata (del che non mi avveggo)
Sono nel volto per la tua partenza. — (p. 89).³³

Another parallelism between the two poems is that Death and Sin appeared again on the scene following the act of transgression.

Besides, other images that Milton seemed to have copied from Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* include the following:

³² Torbata in the face? You are not that one. As I left you content. The translation is mine

³³ Maybe changed. I am in the face for your departure. The translation is mine.

The exciting desire which influenced Adam and Eve after the Fall; the flight of Innocence from earth; the league of Sin and Death to rule over the world from that moment forward and Adam's sorrow concerning his misery and the evils that were in store for his descendants.

Accordingly, Salandra made a comparison between Adam's state of mind after the fall with a boat that had been tossed by a fierce and violent gusts of wind (p. 228):

Qual agitato legno d'Austro, e Noto,
Instabile incostante, non hai pace,
Tu vivi pur...³⁴

Milton paraphrased it as follows: (ix, 1122):

...High winds worse within
Began to rise... and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent.

The following is another appreciable adaptation:

... So God ordains:

God is thy law, thou mine. (Milton iv: 636, cit. in Zicari 1844).

...Un voler sia d'entrambi,

E quel'uno di noi, di Dio sia tutto.³⁵ (Salandra: 42, cit. in Battista 1647).

As reported by Salandra, after the fall:

³⁴ What tossed wood of south wind is known. Unstable, inconstant, you have no peace. You live indeed ... The translation is mine.

³⁵ One will be of both of us, and that one of us, of God be all. The translation is mine.

vacillò la terra, gemè e pianse, rumoreggiano i tuoni
accompagnati da grandini e dense nevi³⁶(Salandra:138, 142,
218, cit. in Battista 1647).

Milton translated this sentence in the following way:

Earth trembled from her entrails, and nature gave a second
groan; sky lured and, muttering thunders, some sad drops
wept, the winds, armed with ice and snow and hail. (Paradise
Lost, ix, 1000, x. 697 cit. in Giacomantonio 1984:200).

The following is another translation:

... inclino il cielo
Giù nella terra, e questa al Ciel innalza
(Salandra: 242, cit. in Battista1647).

And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to
Earth (Milton vii: 160, cit. Zicari 1844).

According to Giacomantonio, his aim was not to do again Zicari's work, as this would have entailed the entire translation of his long essay that consisted of almost ten thousand words, On the contrary, he referred to those who wished to deepen the subject, warning them that they could have found the task of verification more difficult than it seemed, due to an irrelevant mistake made by Zicari.

On that account, in Giacomantonio's references to Milton, he stated (p. 252) to have used an 1818 Venice translation of the Rolli's *Paradise Lost*.

³⁶ The earth wobbled, it groaned and wept, the thunder rumbled, accompanied by hail and dense snow. The translation is mine.

Taking into account that *Paradiso Perduto* by Rolli is a notorious work that since the eighteenth century has been issued in many editions in Paris, London and Italy, Giacomantonio did not manage to find that particular one of Venice. Consequently, after having searched in many of the most important Italian libraries, he concluded that this specific edition did not exist and that it had to be a misprint for some other year (Giacomantonio 2009).

To indicate more specifically, this mistake would have been insignificant if Zicari had made reference to *Paradiso Perduto* by Rolli through the normal system of lines and cantos. Contrariwise, he referred to it by pages, and the numbering of pages was completely different in every Rolli's edition that Giacomantonio analyzed. Besides, notwithstanding Giacomantonio's effort in this research, he was not able to discover the exact one that Zicari had in mind.

However, the extracts analysed above attempt to demonstrate that *Paradise Lost* would have not been in circulation if it had not been for Salandra's "Adamo" and that Zicari made one of the most important discoveries for English letters.

Nevertheless, there seem to be some differences between the two works that can be attributable to the diverse feelings and tastes of an Italian Catholic and a republican Englishman, along with the contrasting conditions that a dramatic and an epic poem imposed.

Consequently, taking into consideration this last point, it has to be pointed out that Zicari had already realized that Salandra's scenic acts were automatically transcribed in the form of visions by Milton, who did not resort to the techniques of the drama for this aim (Zicari 1844: 270).

Milton was a man who had travelled throughout the world, a politician and a scholar; he seemed to have a high opinion of his talents.

Accordingly, imitation was then the most genuine form of flattery. Therefore, it could not be difficult to prove that Salandra might have taken those phrases and words from some previous writer and passed them on to the English poet.

Most importantly, one question that should be considered is to discover where Milton came to know this tragedy. As reported by Cowper:

It was in Naples that the English poet could have first developed the concept of "the loss of paradise as a subject peculiarly fit for poetry"

(Milton, vol. iii: 206, cit. in Zicari 1844).

He could have discussed sacred tragedies, like the ones written by Andreini, with the Marquis Manso. Yet, Milton had come back to England before Salandra's poem was printed. Resultantly, Manso could not have sent him a copy of it, because he died in 1645, two years before its publication.

It follows that Zicari made a mistake to assume that Milton got to know this tragedy in the Neapolitan nobleman's house (Zicari 1844: 245).

According to Giacomantonio, on the assumption that Manso was intimate with the Salandra, that he knew the majority of his literary compatriots and sent Milton a copy of the *Adamo Perduto* before it had been printed, or that Milton was familiar with Salandra, it could be concluded that the poem was sent to the English poet from Italy by some friends of his who was a member of the *Accademia degli Oziosi* that had been founded by Manso himself (Giacomantonio 2009).

As a result, the tragedy written by Salandra fell into Milton's hands which then assumed the epic form that he had developed for King Arthur, consequently, many years later, a chance question from Elwood led the English poet to write *Paradise Regained*.

Research maintains that there were not many handy models for this poem, however, Milton wrote too little to allow the readers to decide to what extent its inferiority to the earlier epic could have been caused by this fact.

That being so, *Paradise Regained* seems to lack the impressive *mise-en-scène* and the shifting magnificence of the greater epic; the extraordinary character of the rebellious archangel that was the real hero of *Paradise Lost*, was turned into a miserable, malevolent sophist in *Paradise Regained*,

From an artistic perspective, another defect is that the final issue of the later poem was never in doubt. Jortin maintains that its distinctive brilliance was due to the artful sophistry and a mystifying mode of argumentation which manifested itself in the most deceptive manner and that were discredited by the Son of God with honest and straightforward eloquence.

Many critics claimed that Milton could not accept that *Paradise Lost* was preferred to *Paradise Regained* on account of the latter's evident inferiority.

However, this prejudice could be explained by the fact that *Paradise Lost* was not

the creation of Milton's own imagination and ingenuity, as a result it was not so precious in his eyes as *Paradise Regained*.

Accordingly, there are some parts of *Paradise Lost* that come from other Italian sources, namely Ariosto, Boiardo, Sannazaro, Guarini, etc.

That being so, Zicari seemed to have achieved the best result from his study and claimed that the battles and the gathering of the evil and good angels had been copied from Valvasone's *Angeleide* which was published in 1590 in Milan (Giacomantonio 1984).

Nevertheless, Polidori, who reprinted the *Angeleide* in his Italian version of Milton (London, 1840), deepened this question and as a direct result had a different opinion regarding what discussed above. According to him, these angel-and-devil battles represented a prevalent theme at the time, so there was no reason why Milton should have copied writers from other nationalities in such descriptions that inevitably had a general similarity.

It is noteworthy to mention that the Marquis Manso was very close with both the poets Marino and Tasso, and all the passages of *Paradise Lost* were copied, *totidem verbis*, from these two poets' writings.

In point of fact, it appears that Manso's legendary enthusiasm for Tasso's belligerent epic could have diverted Milton from properly pastoral ideals and incited him to accomplish an equivalent deed that contained the first manifestation of such a proposal on his part.

Also the familiar invocation, "Hail, wedded Love" was taken from one of the letters written by Tasso (cit. in Newton's Milton 1773, vol. i: 312, 313).

Hence, it was rather usual to regard these literary appropriations as "imitations".

However, if they had to be compared with the originals it would appear that their translations seem to be more correct.

From a literary-moral perspective, the case is different concerning former writers and it would be pointless to accuse Milton of pilferings from Ovid or Eschylus as it was done in the past.

As maintained by Giacomantonio, there is no crime of theft when drawing from the classics: in reality they are our literary fathers and what they produced in the past is at present our traditional heritage; we can steal or borrow from them and adapt their verses as much as they suit our outcomes (Giacomantonio 1984).

Accordingly, the act of acknowledging such “thefts” could be considered as absolute ostentation and formalism.

Notwithstanding the fact that Salandra and the other poets and writers cited previously were Milton’s contemporaries, a noteworthy aspect is that no scholar similar to Thyer was familiar with the *Adamo Caduto*.

This seems to be relevant with regard to the isolation of England that in the period when poems centred on the themes of *Paradise Lost* were being published in Italy and especially in other European countries where the painful history of Adam and Eve echoed, Milton could have taken the liberty of speaking of his work as “Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme” an amazing verse which, by the way, is literally transcribed out of Ariosto (*Cosa, non detta in prosa mai, né in rima*) (Giacomantonio 1984:206).

Nevertheless, even at present the knowledge that the British public has of continental writers’ literary productions seems to be rather sporadic and superficial. Likewise, the English scholars of this earlier period gave the impression of having the same attitude, so that Birch claimed that Milton’s drafts showed his intent to write an opera (Giacomantonio 1984). At the same time, in 1776 the poet Mickle, despite Voltaire’s authority, raised doubts about Andreini’s existence, who had written thirty different pieces.

Besides, if scholars knew the precise date of the manuscript projects for *Paradise Lost* and other documents and articles which are preserved in Cambridge, it could be possible to put forward some hypothesis of the period in which the tragedy of Salandra had an impact on Milton.

According to Garnett the dates of these drafts could be approximately from about 1640 to 1642 (cit. in *Life of Milton* 1890: 129).

Regarding the structure of *Paradise Lost* which was particularly modelled upon Salandra’s “Adamo” of 1647, presumably, the date should be pushed forward.

Hence, what emerges from these pieces is that Milton’s main idea was not to write an epic, but rather a sacred tragedy like Salandra’s that centred on this theme.

Additionally, these drafts included a chorus as the one that Salandra’s drama contained, along with numerous mutes that did not figure in the English epic, but appeared again in the *Adamo Caduto* and in other similar tragedies.

At the same time, Satan was delineated in line with the Italian *Lucifero*; then and at the end of one of Milton's drafts, it was possible to read as follows:

At last appears Mercy, comforts him, promises the Messiah, etc., which is literally what Salandra's *Misericordia* (Mercy) did in the same place (Giacomantonio 1984: 207).

It follows that Milton had at his disposal several original and borrowed loose passages of poetry which were modified and elaborated into large verses and fragments that were finally included into *Paradise Lost* and which could have been complete before the *Adamo Caduto* was printed.

In accordance with Philips, Satan's address to the sun was written before the beginning of the epic. On the assumption that Philips was correct, Giacomantonio still raised doubts whether this invocation had been composed before the English poet's visit to Naples, or whether Milton regarded it suitable for his other works that his mind was conceiving, or alternatively for none of them in particular (Giacomantonio 1984).

De Quincey stated that it was Addison to convey the preconceived idea of a divine poem in favour of *Paradise Lost* to the English readers, which consequently shrank as Addison himself did, from an emotionless observation of its defects.

Reflecting on these points, earlier scholars also seemed to demonstrate that few imperfections that were in Milton's poem could be found in Salandra's as well.

Furthermore, other parallelisms that characterize both poems include the following: the same confusion of spirit and matter among supernatural characters; the similar personification of Sin and Death, along with the identical overabundance of allegory; the corresponding combination of Pagan and Christian mythology and the correlative banal and long-winded historic-theological commentary at the end of both poems.

After all, critics maintain that in a work characterized by pure imagination such as *Paradise Lost* there was nothing offensive and absurd in the pleasant combination of the Semitic and Hellenic deities according to the approved Italian procedure, at the same time there was nothing inappropriate in the use of the

long words about science or geography.

Moreover, it has to be pointed out that Milton was not writing for an uncultured public, therefore his sporadic demonstration of his knowledge and findings represented for the educated people some pauses for reflections in all epic poetry.

With reference to the kind of language that Milton used, it emerges that his poems were saturated with Italianisms and Latinisms as well, and this could be the consequence of the fact that his English could have not been good enough for his contemporary poets and writers.

As for his magnificent poetic style, that Matthew Arnold defined it as

Sustained pitch of kingly elaboration and fullness is not wholly an affair of high moral tone (cit. in Giacomantonio 1984:209).

In some measure, it seemed to be the result of the simple study of the words that had been opportunely selected from an appropriate amalgam of Saxon fervor and Mediterranean grace.

To conclude this section dedicated to the comparison between Milton and Salandra, it is noteworthy to mention that the colour-effects of mere words seemed to influence readers, whether consciously or not, and aroused in them indescribable states of mind.

Finally, it can be observed that Milton's turns of thought and the foreign phraseology in *Paradise Lost*, along with vigorous sprays of elegance and splendor that were characteristic of the distinctive lustre of the English poet's captivating and charismatic importations, enriched the Italian language.

Therefore, the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that not only did Calabrian writings exert influence on English literature starting from the seventeenth century, but at the same time English literary texts also seemed to have had an impact on the Italian language and culture as well.

Part Two

Despite the fact that Douglas came from a foreign country, he showed to be quite familiar with the problems of southern Italy. For example, In *Old Calabria*, the travel narrative is constantly enhanced by observations on the signs that human history has left on the landscape and, at the same time, on the living conditions of the people. Nevertheless, taking into account the influence of the *Mezzogiorno* culture on the English speaking travellers' literary productions, it has to be observed that the starting point was generally the comparison of the English literary texts with the Greek and Latin poetry. Swinburne was an exception as, instead of combining the landscape with his experience of classical poets and his own stereotypical image of the southern lands, he succeeded in making those places and faces help him to rediscover the classics. Besides, he claimed that it was not possible to understand the spirit of the classics without visiting Italy and Greece first (Swinburne 1785). However, as mentioned previously, it seemed that British travellers, especially Norman Douglas, were triggered by a desire to establish a human continuity between the Greeks of the past and the Calabrian peasants of the present time, namely the common natives and the Homeric personages. As reported by Douglas himself:

In molti dei loro lineamenti [la gente che si incontra sulle coste e nell'interno del Sud ricorda] l'antica vita dei giorni odisseici (cit. in Lanzillo 1967:71).³⁷

Besides, according to Holloway, Douglas' biographer, in *Old Calabria* there is lack of unity and at times logical consequentiality as the book represented "an anthology of all the author's notes and writings that could be justified by the title. It follows that in several parts of the narrative, he inserted passages of conjunction in an attempt to conceal this aspect (Holloway 1976).

³⁷ In many of their features [the people that could be encountered on the coasts and in the interior of the South evoked] the ancient life of Odyssean days. The translation is mine.

The cohesion may be the outcome of Douglas' philosophy of life and his attitude that was at times within the limits of satire which demonstrated that the author did not know how to renounce his profession as an artist, even in his faithful documentaries.

As mentioned in chapter Two –Literary Review, section 2.6, Norman Douglas: the writer, in his account of St. Joseph of Cupertino, the 'flying friar' (Chapter IX of *Old Calabria – Moving Southwards*), Douglas made use of the conversation he had with an informed bookseller in order to manifest his anti-Catholicism in a satire that never appeared blasphemous and in some ways justified irrational and fetishistic religious manifestations which he described through ironic style (Douglas 2012: 67).

In accordance with the fact, in *The New Statesman and Nation* (10th March 1956) it could be read the following line "He keeps people he saw in their place", in addition, Dawkins claimed that:

Old Calabria has become a classic because of the serene union of his habit of mind with his subject (Dawkins 1957:9).

These were two elements that characterized the expected necessities of the travel book or reportage which could be described as a need for objectivity that did not prevent the personality of the artist, of the writer and of the traveler as well from influencing characters and events.

As specified by Davenport, the author of the introduction to the most famous edition of *Old Calabria*:

Lo studioso, lo scienziato, lo scettico si amalgamano nell'uomo che era un grande amante della vita, e che seppe esprimere la sua passione con impareggiabile vigoria e obiettività (cit.XXI in Mozzillo 1982).³⁸

³⁸ The scholar, the scientist, and the skeptic are amalgamated in the man who was a great lover of life, and who knew how to express his passion with incomparable vigor and objectivity. The translation is mine.

Then, travel notes become works of art whose unifying element becomes the fusion of the substance of inquiry and the philosophical conception that informs it. All in all, the masterpiece *Old Calabria* made Douglas become part of an English literary tradition and in addition to the travel books already mentioned, he seemed to be influenced by the English literature itself, in particular by the Romantic poets as he evoked William Wordsworth (1770-1850) on account of his naturalism and the hope of regeneration through contact with the primitive world. Likewise, Holloway also observed that in *Old Calabria* there seem to be some references to English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and to the Anglo-Saxon poet William Blake (1757-1827) in the descriptions of the horrors produced by the industrial civilization. Moreover, in Douglas' reconstruction of the South which he did through direct observation of facts and circumstances that took place in the various social milieus, generally the most marginalized environments, it is possible to find some elements that refer to the Dickensian tradition of English fiction (Valentini 2001).

To explain in greater detail, Douglas seemed to have drawn inspiration from the early Romantic poets as they tended to use subjective, autobiographical material, thus marking a new trend towards the expression of a lyrical and personal experience of life, consequently the poetry at this time was essentially reflective. Most importantly, they reacted to the social changes taking place in the country with a re-evaluation of rural origins and a sense of melancholy and sadness. Accordingly, pastoral poetry expressed the idyllic pleasure and happiness of rural life in the works of William Cowper (1731-1800) who, in his main work *The Task* (1785), celebrated and praised country life for its simplicity and domesticity, free from the corruption of urban life. He also described landscape details and reflected upon them; Nature was to him a plaything, a source of innocence and delight. In his most famous aphorism: "God made the country, man made the town"(cit. in Spiazzi & Tavella 2017: 14) therefore he anticipated Wordsworth's conception of nature as friend and moral guide. As a result, these themes can be found in *Old Calabria* as well. At the same time, the cult of a simple and primitive life and a growing interest in folk tradition were also the main characteristic of Ossianic poetry, a cycle of poems by a legendary Irish warrior, called Ossian, that lived in the 3rd century in Scotland, namely James Macpherson (1736-1796)

who collected and published some of Ossian's works in *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) and who might have inspired Douglas. Not only were the poems successful in England but also all over Europe as their appeal was ascribable to the melancholy and suffering produced by war or by contrasted love and especially in the description of a wild, gloomy nature (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017).

Another influence from English literature seems to come from a group of poets known as 'the Graveyard School' because of their melancholy tone and the choice of cemeteries, ruins, stormy landscapes as the setting of their poems. The most important work of this school was Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

In addition, *Old Calabria* seems to suggest influential themes from Robert Burns's works (1759-1796) who exemplified the myth of the natural genius, able to create poetry from everyday experience. His best work was written in Scots, a northern dialect of English spoken by Scottish peasants.

His poetry revived the English lyric, especially it explored the literary forms and legends of folk culture and used the language spoken by the common folk. Furthermore, Douglas' work also gives the impression of having some elements of Gothic novels which developed in the second half of the 18th century as a new sensibility revealed itself in fiction, marked by a genuine impulse for freedom and escape from the ugly world and by the fear of the triumph of chaos over order. Developments such as these caused a reaction against the serenity, rationalism and realism of Defoe's, Richardson's and Fielding's novels. This phenomenon reached its climax in the production of Gothic novels, which flourished in Great Britain from about 1760 to 1820. Hence, Gothic literature can be considered the product of a world which was conscious of social inequity, since it had its origin in a period when the bourgeoisie began to understand its real conditions: the migration towards industrialized towns and industrial exploitation that had destroyed the importance of the single human being so man had become a slave to forces he could not control. Therefore this kind of literature can be regarded as a reaction against industrialization and Gothic symbols and characters, that are also recurrent in Douglas' work, represented a denunciation of social problems. It could also be seen as a description of a fallen world that could be experienced through all the aspects of the novel: plot, setting, characterization, and theme

(Spiazzi & Tavella 2017). One of the references to Gothic elements could be exemplified by the description of the monastery called Colorito that Douglas mentioned in chapter XIX – *Uplands of Pollino*. According to Norman:

On a shady eminence at the foot of these mountains, in a most picturesque site, there stands a large castellated building, a monastery. It is called Colorito, and is now a ruin; the French, they say, shelled it for harbouring the brigand-allies of Bourbonism. Nearly all convents in the south, and even in Naples, were at one time or another refuges of bandits, and this association of monks and robbers used to give much trouble to conscientious politicians. It is a solitary building, against the dark hill-side; a sombre and romantic pile such as would have charmed Anne Radcliffe; one longs to explore its recesses. But I dreaded the coming heats of midday (Douglas 2012: 141).

Additionally, the concept of the Sublime that is present in *Old Calabria* also characterized the Gothic novel through the work of Edmund Burke where the Sublime was linked to anything represented by obscurity, difficulty, magnificence, loudness, pain, power, and infinity. According to Burke, the individual had virtually limitless potential and fear was one way of realizing some of that potential. Nevertheless, not only could the rejection of constraints and limits be found in its preoccupation with intense feelings, but also in its concern with the exploration of forbidden or denied areas (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017).

Above all, based on the earlier mentioned, the Romantic poets William Wordsworth and William Blake had an enormous influence on Douglas as some of the themes that they both addressed in their works seem to echo in *Old Calabria*. Firstly, the parallel that can be noticed between Douglas and Wordsworth is characterized by their rediscovery of nature as a sort of physical pleasure and by the relationship between the natural world and the human consciousness. On this account, also for the Romantic poet the contact with nature which he had in Dorset where he went to live with his sister Dorothy in 1795, seemed to heal his despair and disillusionment caused by destructive developments of the revolution and the war between England and France. Most importantly, it appears that it was mainly Wordsworth's poetry to have an effect on Douglas since it offered a detailed account of the complex interaction

between man and nature, of the influences, insights, emotions and sensations which arose from this contact, rather than precise and objective observation of natural phenomena. Moreover it dealt with everyday situations or incidents and with ordinary people and it was characterized by a simple language that used common names. The reason for Wordsworth's choice was influenced by the fact that in humble rural life man was nearer to his own purer passions. Therefore the poet was not a man in an ivory tower, but a man among men who attempted to write about what interested mankind (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017).

On that account, Wordsworth believed that man and nature were inseparable as man did not exist outside the natural world but was an active participant in it. Then, in his Pantheistic view, Wordsworth saw nature as something that included both inanimate and human nature, each was a part of the same whole.

As a result, nature seemed to comfort man's sorrow as it was a source of joy and pleasure and could be considered as the seat of the mighty spirit of the universe. In addition, according to Wordsworth, nature also meant the world of sense perceptions as he exploited above all the sensibility of the eye and ear through which he could perceive both the "beauteous forms" of nature and the rounds of the winds or waters, or the silence of secluded places.

Consequently, sensations led to simple thoughts which could combine complex and organised ideas. In fact, Wordsworth was mostly interested in the growth of his relationship with nature, in the ways it influenced him at different points in his life and the ways in which his awareness of it changed. Hence, his task consisted mainly in drawing attention to the ordinary things of life, especially to the humblest people in which the deepest emotions and truths could be found (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017).

Taking everything into consideration, it can be noticed the analogy between Wordsworth and Douglas as for both of them the contact with nature had a strong impact on their lives. In point of fact, the Romantic poet claimed that he learnt more from natural elements such as flowers, hills, stars than from books and when he was immersed in the wild nature, he never felt lonely as he loved the solitary hours spent alone in the woods and fields. Moreover, while Burns, Keats and other pre-Romantic and Romantic poets described the outward aspects of nature, on the contrary, Wordsworth, like Douglas, described the feeling stirred

up in the man who went alone through the woods and the fields. However, not only did he recollect the joys of his childhood in the Lake District, but also his fears and pains. Hence, he broke with the tradition of the past speaking of the small happenings of country life, therefore his attempt to create a new poetical language was not by introducing the terms and the expressions of the popular language in literature, but by trying to interpret and express emotions in common and simple words (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017).

In addition, Douglas was inspired by William Blake since also the latter had witnessed the evil effects of industrial development on man's soul and it was probably this that led the poet to believe that the artist should have a new role and become the guardian of the spirit and imagination. With this regard, he maintained that ideal forms should not be created from observations of nature but from inner visions. Like Blake, also Douglas demonstrated to be concerned with the political and social problems of his time, in fact, the Romantic poet focused his attention on the evil consequences of the Industrial Revolution along with the injustices caused by a materialistic attitude and the commercial exploitation of human beings (Spiazzi & Tavella 2017). Yet, Blake retained an active interest in social and political events throughout his life, and social and political statements were often present in his mystical symbolism.

His poetry often embodied an attitude of rebellion against the abuse of class power as documented in David Erdman's major study *namely Blake: Prophet Against Empire: A Poet's Interpretation of the History of His Own Times* published in 1954 (Erdman 2013). With this regard, he published *America* in 1793 and *Europe* in 1794 in which he dealt with different aspects of political change. Above all, Blake's opinion on what he considered as restriction and oppression of freedom extended to the Church. His spiritual beliefs were evident in *Songs of Experience* (1794), in which he distinguished between the Old Testament God, whose restrictions he rejected, and the New Testament God whom he saw as a positive influence (Wilson 1978).

As far as religion is concerned, it can be noticed another analogy between Douglas and the Romantic poet: like Norman, Blake was hostile to the Church of England (indeed, to almost all forms of organized religion), therefore his Christianity was not liturgical or moralistic. He believed in the reality of a spiritual

world but regarded Christianity, and especially the church, as responsible for the fragmentation of consciousness and the dualism characterising man's life. Hence, his earlier works were particularly rebellious in character and could be regarded as a protest against dogmatic religion particularly noticeable in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in which the figure represented by the "Devil" was virtually a hero rebelling against an imposter authoritarian deity (Larrissy 2006). In general terms, he attacked the repression of human energies by conventions and laid violent emphasis on the need to experience freedom of thought and joy. For this reason, Blake is generally considered as a forerunner of the 19th century "free love" movement, namely an extensive reform tradition that started in the 1820s which regarded marriage as slavery and, as a consequence he aimed at the removal of all state restrictions on sexual activity such as prostitution, homosexuality and adultery. On that account, he published *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* in 1793, in which attacked the conventions of sexual morality, particularly those imposed on women (Worrall 2006).

A further reference to Blake is in chapter XXIV of *Old Calabria – An Alabanian Seer-* in which Douglas described Girolamo de Rada and compared him to the Romantic poet; according to his description:

He shares Blake's ruggedness, his torrential and confused utterance, his benevolence, his flashes of luminous inspiration, his moral background. He resembles that visionary in another aspect: he was a consistent and passionate adorer of the *Ewig-weibliche* (Blake 2012: 188).

Finally, regarding the influence of British writers on Norman Douglas, according to research, also D. H. Lawrence and Graham Greene seemed to have had an effect on Douglas' literary productions since both of them were bearers of common instances. Like Norman, also Lawrence was opposed in England because of his erotic vein of his narrative productions which appeared pornographic to English Puritan sensibilities and could only be published in Italy by the tolerant publisher Pino Orioli. Likewise, Graham Greene expressed his fantasy in journeys to unconventional places and archaic culture characterized by atmospheres full of mystery and erotic impulses that were considered deviant. It is no coincidence that the influence of Douglas exerted his fascination among *the intelligenzia* of circles,

such as the Bloomsbury Group which restored in intellectual virtue the diversity that was not accepted by the conformists (Sette 2018).

Given the circumstances, it has to be pointed out that during fascism in Italy (from 1922 until 1943) nobody dared to translate the books of Douglas, Lawrence and Gissing as the image of Italy that they depicted in their novels did not correspond to the taste of that time (Valentini, 2001).

Part Three

As discussed above, regarding the influence that Calabrian culture had on Douglas' literary productions, it goes without saying that what mainly interested and inspired him was the popular tradition which had been handed down from the ancient to the modern times that is characterized by proverbs and fables along with beliefs in fantastic figures and miraculous therapeutic practices. According to findings, it seems that this type of culture is still preserved in the memory of southern people that have been living in an ancient South and, consequently, this topic was deepened by the Italian writer Emanuele Lelli, the Italian professor of Latin and Italian literature at the University "La Sapienza" in Rome, he is also a scholar of Hellenistic poetry and of Greek and Latin scientific and technical literature. In addition, Lelli is a researcher of the paroemiographic tradition and an expert of ancient and modern popular culture to which he is devoting his current investigation with a 'demophilological' approach, as he combines Ethnography with classical Philology (Ancient and Modern Folklore, 2014). Hence, what I found interesting and helpful for the purpose of this thesis was his research for the publication of his work *Sud Antico, diario di una ricerca tra filologia ed etnologia* that he concluded in 2016.

Lelli began to undertake his research by investigating the subtle and intricate metaliterary allusions concealed in the incomplete papyrus fragments of the Hellenistic poets. According to him, his research that he recounted in his work *Sud Antico* was in reality the result of chance.

It all started when he went to study at the University of Florence where he started to attend the lectures on Petronius by Maria Salanitro, the last Roman student of Vincenzo Tandoi that in the 1980s had published some studies in which he suggested the possibility of 'comparisons' between ancient texts and modern popular traditions. A few years later, Lelli met Riccardo Marzucchini by chance, who was researching the presence of the proverbs in Greek poetry. Consequently, he began to notice many traits of ancient popular imagery that also lurked in the Hellenistic poets and in some fragmentary lyric poems as well, (e.g. in Hesiod and others, up to Homer, to arrive to Roman texts, from the archaic to the late ancient period). Moreover, the study of technical authors, particularly of agriculture and botany that he was analysing at the same time, provided him with further confirmation and new suggestions. Progressively, he realized that very little had changed from ancient to modern agricultural practices (Lelli 2014). Besides, he gradually became convinced that the popular culture of the ancients, along with their proverbs, their beliefs, superstitions with their folk songs and therapeutic remedies as well, constituted a fundamental basis of the Greek and Latin texts. Unfortunately, this culture was often ignored or misunderstood as it was almost always 'encrypted' or unreported by the authors, or worse, undervalued by modern studies.

As reported by Lelli:

Se la documentazione del folklore moderno fosse stata impiegata in un confronto critico aggiornato, avrebbe dato la possibilità di recuperare e portare alla luce quegli elementi popolari dei testi antichi e fornito l'opportunità di leggere i classici in modo diverso (Lelli 2016:6).³⁹

To further explain, what Lelli meant to say was to recover their indispensable popular facet which had to be placed next to the crystalline one that the Western classical tradition had delivered to people over centuries of idealization of Greco-

³⁹ If the documentation of modern folklore was employed in an up-to-date critical comparison, it would have given the possibility of recovering and bringing to light those popular elements of the ancient texts and provided the opportunity of reading the classics in a different way. The translation is mine.

Roman culture. However, the first aim of Lelli's investigation was to analyse Greek and Roman proverbial tradition: It has to be observed that proverbs, fixed expressions, figure of speech and sayings provided the opportunity of comparisons with the wide proverbial heritage of European culture.

What emerged from his investigation, in addition to the continuity of a scholarly and literary tradition which often concerned author's maxims and aphorisms, it was mainly the persistence of a more karst and deeper cultural tradition which concerned proverbial expressions centered on animals and everyday objects, namely that 'material' culture that often seemed to manifest itself unchanged over centuries. Lelli managed to recover these juxtapositions through the analysis of lesser-known and 'official' repertoires of Italian proverbs, such as the nineteenth-century collections of local folklorists and the wedding booklets of some twentieth-century scholars who listed the proverbs 'of the people' of their own town, particularly Calabria, Apulia and Sicily. It seems that those proverbs could clarify and explain passages of ancient authors that so far had been misinterpreted (Lelli 2016). Afterwards, he employed the same critical approach to examine another pre-eminently 'folkloric' field concerning beliefs and superstitions. This led him to notice that the contribution of comparison with modern folklore clarified many ancient texts and allowed traits of folk imagery to emerge even in 'unsuspected' works and authors.

His focus concerned the hypothesis of creating a repertoire of ancient folklore that took into account all the popular elements of Greek and Roman culture. He started this project by analyzing ancient beliefs and superstitions, consequently, examining lemma by lemma, he reviewed past accounts that explicitly described a practice, an attitude or a popular gesture that was typical of the farmers, or that was traditional and ancient.

He compared them with other former passages in which it seemed possible to discern the similar belief or superstition implicitly used by the author.

Finally, he juxtaposed ancient evidence with reports on modern European folklore with particular attention to the folklore of southern Italy as it is an area regarded by historians and linguists as one of the most conservative of ancient traditions (Lelli 2014).

Subsequently, he examined ancient sources which revealed many series of

reports that had been explicitly or implicitly regarded by the *auctores* as popular beliefs. These vestiges of ancient civilizations included about five hundred beliefs, sorted alphabetically, that constituted a repertory of about two hundred headwords identifying realia, which often belonged to the world of agriculture, along with animals, work objects and body parts, especially events and gestures.

Consequently, he compared the ancient material with the information found in the numerous documents and bibliography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and in the essays that had been published in specialized journals relating to the most conservative areas of Greco-Latin culture in southern Italy such as Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily.

The reference authors could not be ignored, as they were Pitré, Bronzini, Lombardi Satriani and La Sorsa. As reported by Lelli:

Il confronto evidenziò oltre 200 analogie tra antico e moderno: Pitré, La Sorsa, Lombardi Satriani avevano dunque appuntato la loro attenzione, in molti casi, sulle medesime pratiche e forme di cultura che già Varrone, Eliano o Plinio avevano archiviato come “popolari”. E lo avevano fatto, tutti, con le medesime ‘etichette’ critico-culturali, con il medesimo lessico, spesso con il medesimo pregiudiziale scetticismo. Ne risultava, innanzi tutto, una tradizione piuttosto marcata dei modi del pensare il ‘popolare’, propria della cultura dotta ed ufficiale antica e otto-novecentesca (Lelli 2016:7).⁴⁰

After having examined more than half the information about beliefs and superstitions provided by the ancient *auctores*, Lelli did not manage to find a match in the nineteenth and twentieth century folklorists of reference.

⁴⁰ The comparison revealed more than two hundred similarities between ancient and modern: in many cases, Pitré, La Sorsa, Lombardi Satriani had focused their attention on the same practices and forms of culture that Varro, Elianus or Pliny had already shelved as “popular.” All of them had done so with the same critical-cultural ‘labels,’ with the same lexicon and often with the same prejudiced skepticism. Above all, the result was a rather pronounced tradition of the ways of thinking about the ‘popular,’ that was typical of ancient and nineteenth-and twentieth-century scholarly and official culture. The translation is mine.

As a result, he then began a more detailed search for those works that were often unknown to the major scholarly circuits and which could provide other news about southern beliefs and superstitions. Hence, he analysed collections of local folklorists, celebratory booklets along with nineteenth-century prints and agricultural work calendars. Besides, he also undertook an investigation in the local libraries of southern towns, from Messina to Reggio, from Catania to Vibo Valentia (Lelli 2014).

As it happened with proverbs, the publications of more local realities allowed the writer to make further comparisons between ancient and modern culture. He was able to find confirmation of almost all the beliefs that had already been reviewed by the best-known folklorists, and to add several dozen more. Considering the preceding, he had come to understand that the ancient folk cultural tradition had continued to a great extent into the modern age, in what is generally regarded as European folklore, particularly in the folklore of southern Italy. Then, he realised that the research needed a radical change, or better still an ethnological breakthrough. The research questions that his work aimed to answer were whether it possible that these elements of ancient popular culture were still present (as in Pitrè's or La Sorsa's time), if not in practice, at least in the memory of the present elderly people. Notwithstanding an initial almost total skepticism of his philologist friends and anthropologist colleagues, he decided to escape from the local libraries and archives in order to explore the real ethnographic field (Lelli 2014).

The questions of this questionnaire were formulated with reference to ancient reports on Greek and Roman beliefs and superstitions. The expected answers concerned the presence or absence of certain beliefs, summarized by unsophisticated utterances, such as the following:

Quando canta la civetta porta male? Sì o no. L'alloro si usava per respingere il fulmine? Sì o no. E così via (Lelli 2016:8).⁴¹

⁴¹ "When the owl sings, is it bad luck?" Yes or no. "Was laurel used to repel lightning?" Yes or no. And so on. The translation is mine.

Then, he identified one of the most conservative areas for his field of research in the South, namely the southern Italian Greek community of Aspromonte. At the same time, he sent some questionnaires to his colleagues and friends in order to explore and study other southern places such as western Sicily, the Tyrrhenian Calabria, Lucania, Samnium and Salento, also known as *Terra d'Otranto*. Findings managed to provide interesting material to analyse. However, the mission in Aspromonte gave him the opportunity to gather valuable data for his research project. Lelli deliberately designed specific questionnaires in order to thematize elements of Greek and Roman civilization, such as beliefs and superstitions, along with folk songs, fables, legends and proverbs as well. This research method gave him the opportunity to discover that almost all of the ancient news is still present in the folkloric memory of men and women who were born in the first half of the twentieth century in several areas of southern Italy (Lelli 2014).

The people that he interviewed seemed to preserve in their memory sympathetic therapies and beliefs, the 'signals' of good or bad luck that plants and animals offered to men which have now become jokes or proverbs: a secularization of ancient folk culture that, in most cases, no longer has any functional aspect in everyday life or society. It should be noted that Lelli's interviewees referred to the above-mentioned gestures and ancient knowledge as "things of the past", that is to say, a sort of temporal dimension perceived with detachment, especially identified with the awareness of a world that no longer exists (Lelli 2016:116). However, during his travels he had also the opportunity to encounter special and interesting people, such as men and women who, alongside the memory of these beliefs and superstitions retained their spirit as well. This could be easily understood by analysing their words along with their gestures and their gazes which became serious when answering a question about an unfortunate event, then they became serene and relaxed while recounting to him a specific custom of good luck. As reported by Lelli himself, these were extraordinary people who in their simplicity set a good example of a profound humanity characterized by a life that was led in continuous relationship with the signs offered to men by nature that only a very ancient knowledge could decipher (Lelli 2016: 116).

Moreover, Lelli maintained that these long journeys have been more valuable than a scientific investigation as they gave him the opportunity to come in close contact with a popular world that has been marginalized by the contemporary cultural industry. In addition, they represented an itinerary of knowledge, especially the first trip to Aspromonte could be regarded as a journey into memory as it gave him the possibility of understanding the ancient people and culture through the folk traditions of South Italy.

Most importantly, it is noteworthy to observe that Lelli's study paved the way for the development of a new field of research which joined together two different subjects, namely Ethnology and classical Philology. As reported by Lelli himself:

Avevo scommesso che uscire dalle Biblioteche e andare a 'sporcarsi le mani' in una ricerca sul campo potesse offrire, alla comunità degli studiosi, importanti elementi di riflessione da entrambi i versanti: ai filologi, per scoprire interpretazioni nuove di tratti di civiltà greco-romana ancora oscuri; agli etnologi, per scoprire che in numerosissime zone del nostro Meridione si conserva ancora, almeno nella memoria, una cultura dalle radici antichissime che sarebbe doveroso archiviare. Queste scommesse hanno avuto successo (Lelli 2016:117).⁴²

The book *Sud Antico* presents more than two hundred ancient beliefs and superstitions that seem to be still present in the popular culture preserved by the memory of southern peoples. The survey that Lelli has conducted seems to be the only one in the last decades of Italian ethnography that has directly taken into account all the southern regions (from the Maiella to the Nebrodi, from the Murge to the Sabina and from Barbagia to the Val d'Agri), as a result it has highlighted a reality that raises questions of broad cultural scope (Lelli 2016).

⁴² I had bet that getting out of the Libraries and going to 'get my hands dirty' in a field research could offer to the community of scholars, important elements of reflection from both sides: it could lead the philologists, to discover new interpretations of still obscure traits of Greco-Roman civilization. Likewise, it could help the ethnologists to come to know that in very numerous areas of our South a culture with very ancient roots is still preserved, at least in memory, that it should be archived. It follows that these predictions have been successful. The translation is mine.

From studies done on the ancient texts and the documentary repertoires of Italian folklorists, it seems that more than five hundred of Greek and Roman beliefs and superstitions are still present in the current 'folkloric' memory.

It emerges that this is a contrastive comparison with repertoires of superstitions of non-Western (or non-Westernized) cultures, nevertheless, this clearly shows the absence of significant data. This quantitative data could reveal the unity and continuity of a popular culture that starting from Greco-Roman antiquity has been preserved in the most geo culturally isolated territories which have been less inclined to industrial development and anthropic emigration or immigration (Lelli 2023).

Many anthropologists disagree with this reconstruction. Some have often proposed, for similar cases of continuity with ancient culture, a far more circuitous route from the 'scholarly' recording, by a Pliny or a Celsus, of practices then considered popular, to the medieval Christian reception in the records of superstitions to be condemned, and then to the recovery of them, in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, as curiosities disseminated in popular almanacs, and finally to their re-appropriation by modern and, as we see, contemporary popular strata (Lelli 2023).

Nevertheless, Lelli's survey can be regarded as complete as it has taken into consideration all the regions of the South of Italy. Besides, it has been very interesting since it has attempted to explain the presence of similar beliefs in areas so geographically distant from each other. Moreover, it has analysed how news regarding the hominy practice that were contained in seventeenth or eighteenth century texts, have been put back into circulation in territories so distant from each other from a cultural and political point of view such as Aspromonte or Sardinia (Lelli 2014).

The historical-philological investigation has been essential in this work as it primarily aimed to explore what texts could have been present in the archives or libraries of the time in the cultural centers closest to the areas where the memory of these practices is still present today. The mapping of ancient and modern evidence which is often mentioned throughout the volume *Sud Antico* seems to be indicative of the continuity, or better still of the continuities between ancient and modern culture in the different areas of the South.

The overall picture appears consistent with the historical and cultural antecedents of each region and each area. Findings seem to demonstrate that, on the one hand, Greek beliefs and superstitions (e.g. the precepts attributed to Pythagoras or some taboos mentioned in Hesiod) seem to be particularly present in the Ionian arc of the South, from the Salentine Greek to Aspromonte and in Sicily as well. On the other hand, there seems to be a continuity of Roman beliefs and superstitions mostly in northern Campania, Abruzzo, Lazio, and Sardinia (Lelli 2023).

As reported by Lelli, one of the best examples that can demonstrate a sort of continuity of Greek culture and literature in Calabria is the following:

Uno dei brani più famosi del teatro greco è il brano della tragedia di Eschilo, una tragedia dedicata al mito degli Atridi, Agamennone torna a casa dopo la guerra di Troia, la moglie Clitennestra, regina di Micene, per tante ragioni lo uccide e però il Dio Apollo intima al figlio maschio di Agamennone e Clitennestra che si chiama Oreste di vendicare il padre uccidendo a sua volta la madre, e così dopo tutta una serie di vicende più o meno rocambolesche, Oreste riesce a tornare in patria perché era stato esiliato, sguaina la spada che sta per uccidere la madre, in quel momento Eschilo mette in scena un gesto particolare, ovvero la madre di Oreste, Clitennestra si scopre il seno e chiede, e chiede e dire poco, insomma intima al figlio di non ucciderla. Questo gesto praticamente da quando l'opera di Eschilo è tornata conosciuta in occidente insomma dal 1400, potremmo dire dal quindicesimo secolo, è stato sempre interpretato come un gesto di supplica, cioè i filologi, chiusi nelle loro biblioteche, hanno confrontato con altri testi questa scena teatrale che era indirizzata, non va dimenticato ai 20.000 spettatori del teatro di Dioniso di Atene, e l'hanno interpretato come un gesto di supplica. Già vedi, la madre fa vedere il seno che ha allattato il figlio e gli scongiura di non ucciderla. Non è così, non è così e non è così per tante ragioni, intanto che Clitennestra è un personaggio assolutamente duro assolutamente volitivo, insomma non si metterebbe a fare una supplica proprio in questo momento *clou*, culminante della tragedia. Nel mondo greco la regina Clitennestra, empia assassina del

marito Agamennone, è evocata come la donna più malefica tra tutte, falsa e vendicatrice, una donna cagna e vipera. Eppure negli ultimi decenni le sue ragioni sono state lette con sfumature diverse, e se n'è colto l'animo deluso e tradito. Inaspettatamente, questa scena ci è risolta da tante donne dell'Aspromonte, delle Murge, dei Nebrodi, delle Madonie che mi hanno riferito quando io le chiedevo se avessero mai sentito parlare di questo gesto di scoprirsi il seno da parte di una madre nei confronti del proprio figlio, mi hanno raccontato con lo sguardo impietrito che questa è una maledizione, se una madre riceve da un figlio un torto, uno sgarbo particolare, lo raggiunge in pubblico sulla strada o in piazza, si scopre il seno e lo maledice e toccandosi il seno dice: "tante gocce di latte io ti ho dato, tante gocce di sangue verserai". Chiaramente, Eschilo non aveva bisogno di spiegarlo ai cittadini ateniesi che assistevano alla sua rappresentazione perché tutti erano a conoscenza di questa gestualità apotropaica popolare, ma i filologi no e così hanno interpretato il testo in tutt'altro modo e ciò dimostra che esiste una continuità della cultura e della letteratura greca in Calabria (Lelli 2023: interview).⁴³

⁴³ One of the most famous passages of Greek theater is the tragedy by Aeschylus dedicated to the myth of the Atrides: Agamemnon returns home after the Trojan War, his wife Clytemnestra, queen of Mycenae kills him, then the God Apollo orders the male son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra whose name is Orestes to avenge his father by killing his mother, and so after a series of more or less adventurous and daring events, Orestes manages to return to his homeland as he had been exiled, he then draws his sword and when he is about to kill his mother, at that moment Aeschylus stages a particular gesture in which Orestes' mother, Clytemnestra uncovers her breasts and asks, or better still, intimates to her son not to kill her. Ever since the work of Aeschylus has become known in the West, since the 1400s, this gesture has always been interpreted as a pleading act. To better explain, the philologists, who were generally locked in their libraries, have compared this theatrical scene with other texts and have interpreted it as a gesture of supplication. The mother shows the breast that has breast-fed her son and begs him not to kill her. It is not as it was interpreted for many reasons: considering that Clytemnestra is an absolutely tough and strong-willed character, she would not implore her son in the moment when the tragedy reaches its climax. In the Greek world the queen Clytemnestra,

According to Lelli, a diriment factor is, above all, caused by the relationship between documentary and field findings with regard to ancient news: if the field evidence provides findings of more than five hundred items out of the ancient corpus of five hundred and fifty of them, the findings offered by the examination of the folkloric documentation seem to be less than two hundred and fifty. What mainly emerges from Lelli's investigation concerns ancient traditions that through the channel of oral heritage reach the present day, even without being included in the channels of learned documentary transmission that characterise distinctly conservative areas, at least in memory (Lelli 2023).

Several factors constitute a decisive role in such a diachronic line of development: first of all, the continuity of natural environments and working techniques in the same area cannot be underestimated: plants, animals and agricultural procedures have been the same for centuries in certain places.

the cruel murderer of her husband Agamemnon, is evoked as the most evil woman of all, depicted as a false and vindictive woman. Yet, in recent decades, this act has been interpreted with different nuances which have mainly detected her disappointed and betrayed soul. Surprisingly, this scene is resolved by several women from Aspromonte, the Altopiano delle Murge, the Nebrodi, and the Madonie who, when I asked them if they had ever heard of the gesture in which a mother uncovers her breasts to her son, they told me with a petrified look on their faces that this was a curse: "if a son does a wrong to his mother, in particular, if the mother is treated with disrespect, she then reaches out to him in public, on the street or in the square, she uncovers her breasts and curses him by touching her breasts she says, so many drops of milk I have given you, so many drops of blood you will shed." Evidently, Aeschylus did not need to explain this gesture to the Athenian citizens that were watching his play because everyone was aware of this popular apotropaic gesture, on the contrary, the philologists did not know it therefore they interpreted the text in a completely different way and this demonstrates that there is a continuity of the Greek culture and literature in Calabria. The translation is mine.

As reported by the historian Franco Cardini:

il senso delle tradizioni antiche accolte dagli agronomi trecenteschi sta nello studio del rapporto fra il “complesso delle tradizioni magico-folkloriche quali risultano da un ampio arco di fonti” e “il permanere di certe credenze studiato in quanto funzione del permanere di certe tecnologie. Che è anzi, quest’ultimo (...) l’elemento storicamente parlando fondamentale alla luce del quale si dovrebbero rimeditare i dati emersi da questo tipo di ricerche”. Proprio la continuità di tecniche (soprattutto) agricole è garanzia, in questo senso, di continuità di credenze legate a quelle tecniche (Cardini 1983: 41).⁴⁴

Furthermore, studies of historical demography regarding the population of southern Italy seem to provide data of significant continuity between the late antique and modern ages. It can be calculated that the estimated seven hundred thousand or so inhabitants of the southern regions in the 4th and 5th centuries corresponded to about one hundred and fifty thousand families that constituted unaltered cores until the 18th and 19th centuries, with no new and significant ethnic inclusion (after the Lombard incursion that was limited to some areas) in housing conditions of great dispersion and isolation in the most inaccessible areas of the territory (Lelli 2014).

Sud Antico also makes reference to the continuity of Greek culture in southern Italy, particularly in Reggio Calabria, represented by the Basilian monastic centers. The network of Basilian settlements runs pervasively on an unbroken timeline from the 4th and 5th centuries to the present with archaeologically and historically

⁴⁴ The meaning of the ancient traditions accepted by the agronomists of the fourteenth century lies in the study of the relationship between the “complex of magical- folkloric traditions as they result from a wide range of sources” and “the permanence of certain beliefs studied as a function of the permanence of certain technologies. The latter is indeed (...) the historically speaking fundamental element in the light of which the data emerging from this type of research should be reconsidered.” The continuity of (especially) agricultural techniques is a guarantee, in this sense, of the continuity of beliefs related to those techniques. The translation is mine.

indisputable evidence. Technical and practical codes from Greek and Latin sources that handed on ancient knowledge (and with it popular *remedia*) continued to be copied in these centers (Fois 2006). However, this did not represent a scholarly tradition as the Basilians constituted throughout the Middle Ages and until much of the modern age a concrete point of reference from a technical, therapeutic, and sapiential perspective for any area in which a monastery was located. The ancient culture that was handed down to posterity through texts was then combined with the practice and preaching of the monks who passed on those *remedia* through an oral tradition taking into account also their social functionality. Consequently, Numerous sacred sites which already in Greek and Roman times housed sanatoriums and healing centers dedicated to Asclepius were re-functionalized to monastic centers that were used for the care of sick people as well (Fois 2006).

Reflecting on these points, it goes without saying that the persistence of ancient farm techniques along with the monastic settlements, give evidence of cultural continuity of numerous areas of southern Italy, especially Calabria, with Greco-Roman culture and literature.

Regarding the linguistic aspect, it has to be observed that for many southern regions and places, it is possible to speak of real linguistic subcultures connected to geographical elements which over times have constituted a conservative force, such as valleys, river courses and mountains: Salentine Greek and southern Italian Greek Aspromonte, for example, constitute linguistic and cultural enclaves that have passed on elements of ancient Hellenism and ancient Roman traditions up to the present day.

In addition to the continuous religious and non-religious subliterate production, the greatest evidence is characterized by the epigraphic documentation of these areas. From ancient times to the last century, Greek funerary epigraphs continued to be produced uninterruptedly even for deceased people that belonged to the lower-class, therefore this trait says much about the cultural functionality of Greek culture and language in these southern territories (Lelli 2023).

All things considered, it seems that not only has Lelli's work emphasized the connection between material culture from antiquity to the modern age, but it has also demonstrated that there are other continuities of the ancient 'folk' traditions in

modern popular cultures, beliefs and superstitions, proverbs and songs, along with therapeutic practices and fables whose oral documentation can make a crucial contribution.

Accordingly, in addition to objects and techniques typical of the places that have been uninterruptedly inhabited from ancient times to the present day, oral tradition has preserved practices and beliefs in their functionality that are thousands of years old.

Finally, Lelli maintains that along with the high cultural tradition which has often been attacked or mocked, there is another popular tradition which has been handed down from the ancient to the modern times as well.

The latter is characterized by analogy and contrast and consists of disturbing fears, fables and proverbs as well as beliefs in fantastic figures and miraculous therapeutic practices. Hence, this type of culture is still preserved in the memory of southern people that have been living in the ancient South as described by the writer in his work *Sud Antico*.

4.5 Fourth Research Question

What is the psychological introspection of Douglas' analysis in *Old Calabria* as an expression of his creativity?

The focus of this analysis is to examine the relationship that Douglas had with his most significant work *Old Calabria* and his connection with the different behaviour of the people presented in the novel in order to subsequently reach the places that characterize the narrative.

To explain in further detail, the specific objectives of this research question attempt to recognize and analyze the creative element in the realization of Norman Douglas' literary work.

The purpose of this study is also the research of specific relevant themes present in *Old Calabria* and critical analysis of the characters in which the predominant feature is the subjectivity that belongs to one's own individuality.

This investigation also analyses the focus of the story in *Old Calabria* which is the search for Douglas' personal identity who, due to his socially disapproved diversity, lost his sense of belonging to the culture that shaped his personality. His character was influenced by the death of his father when he was still a child and his dismissal from the diplomatic service caused by a sexual libertinage scandal. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Norman turned his literary vocation into his main activity through which he found his authentic sense of himself in the creative and fictional world, using his travel experiences as an antidote to the harsh trials to which reality had subjected him (Sette 2018).

Regarding the research methodology used to answer and elaborate this research question, it needs to be specified that the study was conducted through the analysis of literary and psychological texts concerning past and contemporary artists and writers, with particular attention to the British writer Norman Douglas, examining the novel *Old Calabria* from a psychological perspective.

With respect to the landscape and the characters described within the book, documents and texts concerning the life of the writer were examined focusing mainly on the psychological and behavioral aspects.

Accordingly, critical-interpretive considerations and investigations on Douglas' novel were carried out as well, analyzing some characteristic moments of the narratives with particular focus on the typically psychological aspects and projections of the author's creativity.

In order to conduct this research, I started from the reflection of how often the fictional and sometimes real characters presented by writers within their novels can represent split parts of the author's personality that projects, at the unconscious level, its contents onto the narrating *ego*.

Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that the author who generally writes to accomplish his work can come into contact with his own inner world where, behind the curtain of defences he can encounter the chaos of desires, emotions pain and other mental contents that not always are they easily accessible to consciousness, which can then be progressively understood and processed. At the same time, all this can happen because writing, genuinely in the literary sphere, seems to assume a therapeutic function for the author himself as it unequivocally encourages self-reflection (Haruki, 2017).

As maintained by Ferrari, fictional characters represent the multiple portions of the writer's *ego*, not in the predictable sense according to which they would represent his desires and anxieties, but as representatives of the innumerable possibilities of explanation. Due to that, in addition to being the replica of the private and personal identifications of those who produce them, literature then leans towards freedom and the release from the private sphere as to become a game, pleasure and possibility (Ferrari 1994).

When Douglas visited Calabria for the first time he suddenly discovered to be in love with the wild landscape and the good nature of the rural population, therefore the trip meant a sort of both physical and a spiritual rebirth (Giacomantonio 1984). Douglas' words when he first saw the Calabrian landscape are as follows:

The Calabrian uplands are still visible in the gathering twilight; they draw me onwards, away from Taranto. It must be cool up there, among the firs and beeches. And a land, moreover, of multiple memories and interests – this Calabria. A land of great men. In 1737 the learned Aceti was able to enumerate over two thousand celebrated Calabrians –

athletes, generals, musicians, centenarians, inventors, martyrs, ten popes, ten kings, as well as some sixty conspicuous women. A land of thinkers. Old Zavarroni, born in 1705, gives us a list of seven hundred Calabrian writers (Douglas 2010: 106).

Although the Italian landscape gave him a feeling of peace and well-being, nevertheless Douglas did not neglect to include in his travel impressions the elements that his ill-concealed nature as an aristocrat suggested to him as disturbing. Therefore he did not fail to denounce the roughness of the features of certain characters he encountered, as well as the degraded and uncultivated condition of the landscape. Despite this, he still felt attracted to Calabria since what mitigated the indignation for the more sordid aspects of the reality that characterized southern Italy was the humble nostalgia for the remnants of ancient Greek and Roman culture.

These were rediscovered both in the language and customs of the ethnic minorities still present, in the famous place-names of *Magna Græcia*, as well as in the recollection of feats and virtues from ancient tales which found confirmation in the inscriptions and archaeological remains of decrepit civilisations that for this reason were capable of encouraging the melancholy of remembrance in a writer who had shown more than one example of Ossianic poetics.

Hence, this intimate adhesion of a melancholic soul to the surviving signs of ancient heroic presences justifies the title of the work which alludes to ancient Calabria, namely to its antiquity and to its consumption against the backdrop of vague memories of a buried greatness (Sette 2018).

Douglas' *Old Calabria* inaugurated the Great War drama that gave a description of the typical agitated and decadent atmosphere of the early twentieth century which was pervaded by dispossession of rationality and drawing on inner intimacy. It was in the form of a travel account that it brought about a return to the deepest origins of nature and life, even to the most brutal conditions in which the fullness of the soul's longing for the ideality of its immortal and limitless perfection developed. All this was typical of the religions of redemption along with punishment and subsequent happiness and that was what Douglas aspired to. As he did not wish to remain a prisoner of the conventions of the world to which

he belonged and to the conditioning that came with it, he aimed at regeneration through deep immersion in the cults together with the mysteries and archaic landscapes of old Calabria whose Greek cultural roots were not Olympian but Orphic.

Douglas' interpretative approach of the Calabrian land can be considered as synonymous with spiritual elevation. Late eighteenth-century inspiration seems to be present in the taste for ruins along with the vogue of autumnal scenery and for the 'awful' that materializes in gardens with black spruces and cypress trees that are incinerated by thunderbolts, caves, fallen buildings and even sepulchres (Baltrušaitis 1983: 142). It is in them or in similar landscapes that it is possible to search mournfulness in order to appreciate their visual stimulation with melancholic pleasure as exemplified by the contribution to the literature of melancholy such as Edward Young' *Night Thoughts* which owes its tribute to Milton's *L'Allegro e il Penseroso*⁴⁵. It is no coincidence that Milton is quoted in the first lines of *Old Calabria*, specifically in the section devoted to Douglas' impressions of his visit to Lucera:

Altogether, these public parks, which are now being planted all over south Italy, testify to nascent taste; they and the burial-places are often the only spots where the deafened and light-bedazzled stranger may find a little green content; the content, respectively, of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. So the cemetery of Lucera, with its ordered walks drowned in the shade of cypress – roses and gleaming marble monuments in between – is a charming retreat, not only for the dead (Douglas 2010: 17).

⁴⁵ Milton 1952-1955. The portrait of the 'divinest Melancholy' (v. 12) painted by the *Penseroso*, far from being merely the sublimated and contrasted version of the *Allegro*, is the reinterpretation in a positive transcendent sense of the nefarious signs of melancholic delirium. In the *Allegro*, the 'loathed Melancholy' is the embodiment of a depressing experience of hallucinated despair. The Christian Middle Ages had contemplated this condition of gloomy discouragement under the name of sloth and suggested the discipline of work as the supreme remedy.

What this means is that when men are in a depressed mood they have the chance to elevate themselves later, in other words, they afflict themselves so as to access the sublime beatitudes of the soul. As in Young's work, the naturalistic landscape of tradition is overcome by a backdrop of darkness which symbolizes the black humour and mourning that discourage the narrating *ego*. It also indicates the immensity that Douglas believes he discovers as the prerogative of every human being through pain and disheartenment.

The greatest richness consists in consenting to the negative that, being the condition of existence, cannot but be overcome. Accordingly, as it is also the case in Douglas' *South Wind*, the aesthetic canon of this work introduces in the resonances of the wind, the mysterious path of the soul's horizons in nature and in the discovery of the vortex where the *ego* is lost and rediscovered in the shadow from which light is accessed. Consequently, Douglas expressed the Philosophic Melancholy which, along the lines inaugurated by the Miltonian *Penseroso*, is associated with the sacred, with nobility of thought and morally elevated feeling. In simple terms, what this refers to is the ecstatic veneration of the divine and to dispassionate love for mankind, therefore Douglas' search is a Pagan rediscovery of the ancient gods in addition to the primordial voices of nature, of the heroic deeds of classicism and of archaic art.

Hence, the atmosphere described by Norman reveals itself as the visualisation of the *melancholic mood* and as the vehicle for ascending to a higher reality. However, even though it suggests a decadent and crepuscular feeling, it exemplified a dying action that led to new life. Consequently, through the death-rebirth theory, it is the lunar imagery that asserts itself as the symbolic correlative of a poetic practice that aspires to be a unifying agent.

As a result, Douglas' melancholy is presented as a two-sided figure whose antinomies are unified in the sign of a living for culture as an insistent inner act of authentication and rediscovery (Sette 2018).

Taking the above into consideration, it can be stated that Norman gave the impression of being a fearless and shrewd adventurer who was interested in everything he saw. In addition to geographical, religious and economic circumstances, he seemed to be also attentive to the psychological aspects that

characterized the places he visited. On the one hand, as a practical person he was objective and precise, on the other hand, he managed to convey his enthusiasm for life by his vigorous and entertaining style as a modern writer (Holloway 1976).

In reality, Douglas was a perceptive scrutinizer of everyday life in southern Italy, particularly in the region of Calabria. With this regard, he showed interest for the Calabrians who appeared to him to be full of vitality and interesting from a psychological perspective, therefore, he presented the numerous personages in the novel almost as if he possessed a paintbrush with which he carefully painted them immersed in the Calabrian scenery where the events and vicissitudes experienced by Douglas himself took place, like an artist who belonged to the current of Vedutism (as Canaletto would do) (Cottino 1991).

For this reason, Douglas' real talent seemed to be the evocation of the real world, as not only did he have the qualities of the novelist and the scrupulous scholar, but also an innate taste for description and a capacity for introspective analysis. This characteristic emerges also in the work *Experiments* that he wrote in 1925. As a result, Norman formulated a theory on the essential qualities of the travel writer: according to him, it was not enough to portray landscapes, to describe habits, behaviors of the people and to study the culture, the tradition and the history as well. Above all, writers needed to bring to life the characters and situations that usually in travel books seemed to be insignificant stereotypes since they were conceived only for documentary purposes (Holloway 1976).

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to point out that in *Old Calabria* there are also frequent considerations on the social and economic conditions of the South and in particular of Calabria in the early 20th century (e.g. malaria or the brigand Giuseppe Musolino in chapter XXXIII and chapter XXXIV) which unconsciously influenced the Calabrians' behaviour and their way of thinking (Giacomantonio 1984).

Furthermore, what can be noted from Douglas' descriptions is that the Calabrian environment, albeit harsh and difficult, contrasted in some way with the "pathological sadness of the men of northern Europe".

In view of the foregoing, Norman made several comparisons between England and southern Italy with particular emphasis on the characteristics of the people

that lived in both places: according to him there was a sort of discrepancy between these two locations. On the one hand, in the former it seemed that even the streets and the stones documented an innate love for order. Whereas, on the other hand, he noticed that in the latter, everything had remained unchanged over time as he could still encounter traditional people who had not been influenced by modernism and emigration (Bevilacqua 2012). As stated by Douglas:

How different from England, where the humblest cottages, the roadways, the very stones testify to immemorial love of order, to neighbourly feelings and usages sanctioned by time! (Douglas 2012: 177).

However, Norman focused on the distinguishing features that characterized both southern men and the English people; according to his words:

And what, I sometimes ask myself—what is now the distinguishing feature between these southern men and ourselves? Briefly this, I think. In mundane matters, where the personal equation dominates, their judgment is apt to be turbid and perverse; but as one rises into questions of pure intelligence, it becomes serenely impartial. We, on the other hand, who are pre-eminently clear-sighted in worldly concerns of law and government and in all subsidiary' branches of mentality, cannot bring ourselves to reason dispassionately on non- practical subjects. "L'esprit aussi a sa pudeur," says Remy de Gourmont. Well, this *pudeur de l'esprit*, discouraged among the highest classes in England, is the hall-mark of respectability hereabouts. A very real difference, at this particular moment...(Douglas 2012: 89).

Additionally, also the behavior and attitude that designated the people of both nationalities seemed to be different:

I calculated that no fewer than thirty thousand persons were abroad, taking their pleasure under the trees, in the bland air of evening. An

orderly, well-dressed crowd. We may smile when they tell us that these people will stint themselves of the necessities of life in order to wear fine clothes, but the effect, for an outsider, is all that it should be. For the rest, the very urchins, gambolling about, had an air of happy prosperity, different from the squalor of the north with its pinched white faces, its over-breeding and under-feeding (Douglas 2012: 229).

Likewise, Norman makes also a comparison between the attitude of southerners and the English people towards the law-system of both countries, according to him:

These people and their attitude towards life will remain an enigma to the traveller, until he has acquainted himself with the law of the land and seen with his own eyes something of the atrocious misery which its administration involves. A murderer like Musolino, crowned with an aureole of saintliness, would be an anomaly in England. We should think it rather paradoxical to hear a respectable old farmer recommending his boys to shoot a policeman, whenever they safely can. On the spot, things begin to wear a different aspect (Douglas 2012:276).

Moreover, Douglas maintained that there was also a difference in the behavior and in the appearance of the animals of the South compared to the ones that were in England or any northern country:

We are in the south. One sees it in sundry small ways—in the behaviour of the cats, for instance...

The Tarentines, they say, imported the cat into Europe. If those of south Italy still resemble their old Nubian ancestors, the beast would assuredly not have been worth the trouble of acclimatizing. On entering these regions, one of the first things that strikes me is the difference between the appearance of cats and dogs hereabouts, and in England or any northern country; and the difference in their temperaments. Our dogs are alert in their movements and of wideawake features; here they are arowsy and degraded mongrels, with expressionless expressionless

eyes. Our cats are sleek and slumberous; here they prowl about haggard, shifty and careworn, their fur in patches and their ears a-tremble from nervous anxiety. That domestic animals such as these should be fed at home does not commend itself to the common people; they must forage for their food abroad. Dogs eat offal, while the others hunt for lizards in the fields. A lizard diet is supposed to reduce their weight (it would certainly reduce mine); but I suspect that southern cats are emaciated not only from this cause, but from systematic starvation. Many a kitten is born that never tastes a drop of cow's milk from the cradle to the grave, and little enough of its own mother's (Douglas 2012: 116-117).

Another interesting aspect to notice is the writer's opinion regarding the center of a town, who maintained that it constituted the first center of the well-to-do class, therefore it followed that only by talking with a group of citizens gathered to converse could it be possible to "feel the pulse" of the country and gauge people's reception and personality as well (Giacomantonio 1984). As stated by Douglas:

Even when this end is accomplished, my connection with the pharmacy coterie is not severed. I go there from time to time, ostensibly to talk, but in reality to listen. Here one can feel the true pulse of the place. Local questions are dispassionately discussed, with ample forms of courtesy and in a language worthy of Cicero. It is the club of the *elite* (Douglas 2012: 103).

What seems to be very interesting is the moment in which the writer describes, from his point of view, the authentic Calabrian people with their fears and psychic insecurities. He explained that, in order to see the real Calabrian, people had to observe the peasants when they came back home in the evening from farm work. Thus, among them it was possible to find the indescribable mark of the "race", in features and characters. In reality Calabrian people were different from the Italians as they had Spanish origins. Douglas maintained that the typical Calabrian man was a sincere individual of few but orderly words, who was

indifferent to pain and suffering and had generally a sense of detachment from worldly things according to the conception he had of life (Giacomantonio 1984).



A scene of farm work in the Calabrian countryside

According to his words:

They call themselves Calabrians. *Noi siamo calabresi!* They proudly say, meaning that they are above suspicion of unfair dealing. As a matter of fact, they are a muddled brood, and considerably given to cheating when there is any prospect of success. You must watch the peasants coming home at night from their field-work if you wish to see the true Calabrian type—whiskered, short and wiry, and of dark complexion. There is that indescribable mark of *race* in these countrymen; they are different in features and character from the Italians; it is an ascetic, a Spanish type. Your Calabrian is strangely scornful of luxury and even comfort; a creature of few but well-chosen words, straightforward, indifferent to pain and suffering, and dwelling by preference, when religiously minded, on the harsher aspects of his faith. A note of unworldliness is discoverable in his outlook upon life. Dealing with such men, one feels that they are well disposed not from impulse, but from some dark sense of preordained obligation. Greek and

other strains have infused versatility and a more smiling exterior; but the groundwork of the whole remains that old *homo ibericus* of austere gentlemanliness (Douglas 2012: 106).

Moreover, Douglas identified a negative vice that characterized Calabrians' personality and feelings that he defined as "envy". At first he mentioned it (Douglas 2010: 191). Then he elaborated it taking into account mainly the behavioral and psychological aspect (Douglas 2010: 195). Nevertheless, he could not have imagined that this vice would be elevated to the rank of literary topos by Corrado Alvaro in the first short story of *Gente in Aspromonte*, the one that gives its name to the work (Alvaro 1987). Consequently, this discovery led Norman to make a further comparison with England:

In short, it seems to me that virtues and vices which cannot be expressed in physiological terms are not worth talking about; that when morality refuses to derive its sanction from the laws which govern our body, it loses the right to exist. This being so, what is the most conspicuous native vice?

Envy, without a doubt.

Out of envy they pine away and die; out of envy they kill one another. To produce a more placid race, to dilute envious thoughts and the acts to which they lead, is at bottom a question of nutrition. One would like to know for how much black brooding and for how many revengeful deeds that morning thimbleful of black coffee is responsible.

The very faces one sees in the streets would change. Envy is reflected in all too many of those of the middle classes, while the poorest citizens are often haggard and distraught from sheer hunger—hunger which has not had time to be commuted into moral poison; college-taught men, in responsible positions, being forced to live on salaries which a London lift-boy would disdain. When that other local feature, that respect for honourable poverty—the reverse of what we see in England where, since the days of the arch-snob Pope, a slender income has grown to be considered a subject of reproach.

And yet another symptom of the south (Douglas 2012: 124).

A passage of the novel that I consider particularly interesting for this analysis is the section in which Norman described his stay in the ancient town of Morano that did not offer much food and hospitality (Chapter XVII -*Old Morano*; Douglas 2012: 125-130). What especially attracted my attention is the description of the women's clothes in this place, and in particular the commentary on their red skirts and ribbons that were of the same color of their hair. As written in *Old Calabria*:

Quite a feature in the landscape of Morano is the costume of the women, with their home-dyed red skirts and ribbons of the same hue plaited into their hair. It is a beautiful and reposeful shade of red. Between Pompeian and brick-colour, the tint very closely resembles that of the cloth worn by the bedouin (married) women of Tunisia. Maybe it was introduced by the Saracens. And it is they, I imagine, who imported that love of red peppers (a favourite dish with most Orientals) which is peculiar to these parts, where they eat them voraciously in every form, particularly in that of red sausages seasoned with these fiery condiments (Douglas 2012: 127).

As stated by Douglas, the red color might have been brought there by the Saracens since they were the nomadic people who imported the craze for red pepper which was typical of those areas. On account of the above, it seems that it could be of great interest to pay attention to the single color and, in particular, to colors in general as the psychology of colors come into play since they can stimulate the human mind and consequently provoke particular emotions (Breakwell 2006).

In point of fact, each color seems to have its meaning and its precise connection with a part of the brain that determines specific emotions or moods.

In practical terms, this happens because the color does not exist as such in nature, yet human beings are able to perceive it as the eye absorbs electromagnetic radiation from light and the retina, depending on the wavelength and intensity of this stimulus, proceeds to send it to the brain to turn it into a particular color. For instance, the red colour identified by Douglas in the skirts and ribbons of the women of Morano could be linked, on a psychological level, to the

concept of strength, power and to nervous and vital activity as well. Under those circumstances, red seems to represent the color of passion and desire in all its forms, not only does it symbolize love but also economic desire or success, besides, this color stands for a sort of stimulus towards a revolutionary change. In line with studies in the psychological field, red conveys security and attention-seeking people are the ones that mostly wear this color (Grazzini 2019).



Norman Douglas, portrayed by Michael Ayrton (1921-1975)

Additionally, Douglas claimed that also the green colour could be regarded as characteristic of Calabrians as it seemed to represent disappointment and envy:

The most characteristic item in the above history is that about growing green. People are apt to put on this colour in the south from disappointment or from envy. They have a proverb which runs "sfoga o schiatta"—relieve yourself or burst; our vaunted ideal of self restraint, of dominating the reflexes, being thought not only fanciful but injurious to health. Therefore, if relief is thwarted, they either brood themselves into a green melancholy, or succumb to a sudden "colpo di sangue," like a young woman of my acquaintance who, considering herself beaten in a

dispute with a tram-conductor about a penny, forthwith had a "colpo di sangue," and was dead in a few hours. A primeval assertion of the ego...(Douglas 2012:126).

All in all, the impression that the British writer had of Calabria and of southern Italy in general seemed to be rather positive. However, he could not fail to notice also some negative aspects, such as the limitedness of the male population and the fact that the region was rather disordered.

Taking into consideration the themes previously discussed, it is interesting to observe that the set of clothes of these people in a style typical of southern Italy of the twentieth century, represented a feature that attracted the author's attention and that mostly characterized them within a stereotyped dimension that could be considered as fixed in time and which belonged to cultural and folkloristic traditions (as the costumes of the women of San Giovanni in Fiore happened to be as well).

The way I see it, it may seem that, by providing a detailed description of the characters within the text, the author gave the impression of inserting his personality subdivided into several parts and did, beforehand and unconsciously, an inner reading of his psyche. It follows that this journey can be regarded as a sort of exploration that the author started and continued in order to get to know himself better, thereby, this seems to establish a link with the Greek philosopher Aristotle's *gnōthi seautón*, or "know yourself" (Radice 2019).

It is worth mentioning the moment in which the writer entered a small village of Spezzano (Chapter XII- *The "Greek" Sila*) and then analyzed the relationship between the atmosphere of the countryside and the character with whom Douglas came into contact: in that peaceful place that he described as "deathlike in which stillness reigned" (Douglas 2012: 170), he was able to speak with a rather grumpy and bad-tempered inn owner. Afterwards, he entered a shop where he had seen signs of life and Douglas was favorably impressed by the shopwoman as she seemed to be affable and friendly since she had greeted him with a big smile and direct cordiality:

Despairing, I entered a small shop wherein I had observed the only signs of life so far—an Albanian woman spinning in patriarchal fashion. It was a low-ceilinged room, stocked with candles, seeds, and other commodities which a humble householder might desire to purchase, including certain of those water-gugglets of Corigliano ware in whose shapely contours something of the artistic dreamings of old Sybaris still seems to linger. The proprietress, clothed in gaudily picturesque costume, greeted me with a smile and the easy familiarity which I have since discovered to be natural to all these women. She had a room, she said, where I could rest; there was also food, such as cheese and wine (Douglas 2012: 170-171).

Hence, it can then be observed how Douglas's environment corresponded to his character and inevitably how the place could, in some cases, influence the personality of the individual as well.

Over and above that, another element to which Douglas referred and considered of great importance was the concept of home which, in agreement with the contemporary Italian artist Gian Carlo Riccardi, it seems to symbolize the family and, as follows, a direct return to the past, to childhood and to the memories of the individual's own roots (Spilabotte & Coccarelli 2022).

According to Norman:

They lack the sense of home as a fixed and old-established topographical point; as do the Arabs and Russians, neither of whom have a word expressing our "home" or "Heimat." Here, the nearest equivalent is *la famiglia*. We think of a particular house or village where we were born and where we spent our impressionable days of childhood; these others regard home not as a geographical but as a social centre, liable to shift from place to place; they are at home everywhere, so long as their clan is about them (Douglas 2012: 177).

As for southern customs and traditions in the times when Norman visited South Italy, the writer realised that there were still many superstitions that undeniably

proclaimed the superiority of men, even though most of the male population had emigrated to America. Notwithstanding that, Douglas claimed that it was still possible to find women who were nothing more than beasts of burden, slovenly and primitive, especially in the towns along the coast as in those areas men were the sole educated individuals (Bevilacqua 1993).

In regard to emigration to America, the British writer noted that although it brought a lot of money to the country and many new ideas, the inhabitants had not learnt yet to lead a life of ease and to enjoy a more modern standard of living as, apparently, they were still extremely anchored to their own archaic customs (Bodei 2008).

Nonetheless, Douglas' remarks and reflections during his travels in Calabria convey the impression of being fundamental in deepening the readers' knowledge of the customs and traditions of a large part of the Calabrian population.

From a stylistic point of view, it can be observed that Douglas maintained a narrative tension that, as mentioned in the introduction of this section, aimed to give emphasis to the psychological analysis of his characters. Yet, this technique seemed to be feasible since he reutilized some elements of the modern English novel, however, he did not rely on the literary techniques that were typical of Modernism in English literature, namely the interior monologue or the stream of consciousness. To indicate more specifically, he did not get himself entangled with the problem of the stream of consciousness and with the pessimistic temptations following inner conflicts, since this inner search was exploited in function of an objective knowledge of men and the reality around them (Valentini 2001).

With reference to the stream of consciousness, that is the literary technique that reveals the continuous flow of thoughts, feelings and ideas of the characters' consciousness through long passages of soliloquy, it seems relevant in this case to mention what Lungu stated in her research. According to her, it was regarded as the process through which the analysis of the individual's thoughts and the connections made between the objects with their symbolic value and specific situations, were emphasized (Lungu 2022).

Considering everything, this research question helped me to observe how the British author managed to produce a work that contains a plurality of subjects in the historical, cultural and literary fields, especially in the psychological sphere with regard to personages presented in relation to the environments and the different places that he described. Hence, the themes that particularly became evident from this investigation can be mainly attributable to the figure of the woman, to the colours, to the tradition and the culture of the region along with the concept of family and home which can undoubtedly stem from recollections and memories.

In reality, Norman was in love with the most beautiful things of the Earth such as nature, landscapes and sex (with the distortion that, as the years went by, became more and more an obsession, a sort of real psychic illness). According to some of his interlocutors, Douglas' personality seemed to exude an irresistible charm because of his manners of an English country gentleman. This peculiarity of his character was then strengthened by the fact that he was cultured, witty, mischievous and the tone of his voice that was manly and persuasive at the same time, was well modulated as to be almost hypnotic (Bevilacqua 2012).

Concerning the relationship he had with the opposite sex, women became for him an inverse obsession to that of boys, a danger of perdition from which to escape. The only exceptions were his closest female friends, preferably if they were homosexuals themselves and incapable of harm because they lacked marital or even sexual expectations of him. He never ceased to warn even his sons against this aspect that he considered almost witch-like about women, inciting them not to become romantically attached to anyone. This, too, remained an unsolved mystery of his psyche (Holloway 1976).

4.6 Fifth Research Question

What prompted the contemporary Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua to take a keen interest in Norman Douglas, and what are the similarities and differences between Bevilacqua and Douglas with particular attention to their works *Old Calabria* and *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*?

This research question aims to analyze the analogies and the differences between Francesco Bevilacqua and Norman Douglas whose variety of stylistic tones, together with a mixture of minute observations carried out by a deliberately “myopic” walker constitute the plot of *Old Calabria*.

However, it has to be pointed out that not only was Douglas’ work characterized by eccentric digressions which reflected the author’s solid and Germanic scientific culture and his admiration for the greatest Western poetical works, but also by the judgments and prejudices of free intellectual and militant anti-metaphysician.

First and foremost, Bevilacqua started to take a keen interest in Norman Douglas when he was only a young university student and showed a sort of disorientation toward a town and a culture that he felt alien, consequently he had a strong desire for roots and identity as well.

What fascinated him at the beginning was Norman’s speaking of his Calabria with the language that had some elements of magic, awe, and emotion even though the itinerary narrated by the British writer also covered parts of Puglia and Basilicata. Besides, he was surprised to read Douglas’ description of Calabria who, with the enchanted and often also disenchanted eyes of a foreigner, knew how to grasp an intimate and poignant beauty behind the backwardness, the immobility and the social disintegration of that land (Bevilacqua 2012).

In addition, Bevilacqua claimed that the choice to analyze Douglas’ *Old Calabria* was influenced by the fact that he was born and raised in Calabria and consequently knew this region and its ills better than anyone else.

Resultantly, when he finished his studies in Florence, he moved back to his birthplace where he still lives and fights for it. As a result, what initially appeared

to be only a practical need gradually became a wish of his heart.

Accordingly, he later discovered that by exploring the areas of southern Italy he was slowly making a journey within himself so as to reconnect the thread with a millenary history that no one, neither in his family nor at school, had ever attempted to teach him. In other words, he corroborates Ernesto De Martino' statement in which he maintained that he could not live without a homeland and without roots (De Martino 2015).

Like Douglas, what he mainly criticizes is the deficit of democracy, livability, hygiene and health care that have, so far, characterized this place.

Nevertheless, his idea of following Norman Douglas' pedestrian wanderings through the mountains of Calabria with the accounts of his excursions in the same areas where the British writer had been, was not meant to be a pedantic retracing of those routes (as generally it is often the case of many books of the genre). On the contrary, Bevilacqua's aim was mainly to recount how, unconsciously, he had been on Douglas' trail for years, taking into account also the other *Grand Tour* "daredevils" who, like him, long before the invention of trekking had ventured to places that were reachable only on foot.

Hence, what emerges in the book *Sulle Tracce di Norman Douglas* is Bevilacqua's complete freedom to cross the Calabrian mountains that relate to the areas visited by Norman Douglas choosing instead, for the most part of them, to go through different routes. This choice could be justified so as to give a current sense of hiking in the mountains of Calabria at a time when many new explorations had been conducted and can still be done. Moreover, his intention was also to explain and emphasize what an unusual heritage of beauty, culture and identity Calabrians still have around them (Bevilacqua 2012:20). Nonetheless, there are also some paths undertaken by Bevilacqua which have coincided with Norman's. Therefore, when the Italian writer went through the same itinerary chosen by Douglas he asked himself "which was Norman's perspective" and whether the British writer had really been in those places (Bevilacqua 2012:21). Besides, he has reflected on the fact that Douglas could have been really crazy to come to those locations a century ago when it took at least three or four days of walking to reach the nearest town.

It follows that Norman himself claimed to have a crazy personality and he blamed himself for it:

[...] maledicevo la mia follia di essermi arrampicato in quelle zone artiche, domandandomi, come spesso mi capita, quale demone irrequieto o perverso trascini un poveretto ad intraprendere escursioni così assurde (Douglas 2004: 225).⁴⁶

Likewise, Bevilacqua believed to be a crazy person as well. On the grounds of this, both the writers show to be in love with that old Calabria which has hardly changed at all, and, even today, contemporary travellers and writers seem to have the chance to enjoy its atmospheres as if they were epigones of that “adventurous variant” of the *Grand Tour* that Attilio Brilli talks about (Brilli 2006: 247-261) and which led several “fearless adventurers” of the journey to Italy to descend into the “unknown lands”, precisely in the South of Naples (Brilli 2006: 247), into that beyond “frontier” on which Atanasio Mozzillo has insisted (Mozzillo 1964, Mozzillo 1992), in search of adventure and of an authentic place that had not been spoilt by modernity yet.

Secondly, the purpose of Bevilacqua’s research was also to discover who Norman Douglas really was. The answer he has tried to provide in the work *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* does not seem to be arbitrary, nor is the result of his imagination or of his falling in love with the originality and depth of the character. On the contrary, it is the result of comparative reading of Norman’s writings and of his biographies along with the diary of the trip to Calabria that Giuseppe Orioli undertook with the British writer in 1933. Besides, the answer does not imply adherence to all Douglas’ theses which were rather paradoxical, provocative and often unacceptable (Holloway 1976).

⁴⁶ I cursed my madness of having climbed into those Arctic regions, wondering, as I often do, what restless or perverse demon drags a poor man to undertake such absurd excursions. The translation is mine.

With reference to these points, this is what can be defined as sympathy between different people. In actual fact, Bevilacqua has also developed a great interest in Douglas since he himself is the kind of person who shows curiosity and respect toward those who think differently from him. More than anything else, it is undoubtedly the common feeling toward the beauty of landscapes, of nature and of all that is authentic, pure, unspoiled and untouched that unites the two writers.

When Bevilacqua read *Old Calabria* for the very first time, he considered its author as a man of a free spirit, on the one hand he had doubts whether Douglas was a libertarian, on the other hand he was certain that Norman was a free-thinker and a libertine. Not only did he appear to Bevilacqua as a nonconformist, a man of multifaceted culture and phagocentric who rejected academic and university over-specialization, but also as a person that was intolerant of stupidity, respectability and religiosity, especially if these elements came from people culturally gifted. Moreover, he was careful not to judge the many poor people he encountered in the Calabrian villages and countryside who he sometimes found to be far more alive and authentic than the hypocritical northern European Puritans (Giacomantonio 1984).

Norman was in reality a cosmopolitan who loved the South, though, according to his biographers, only in appearance (Holloway 1976). As was anticipated in chapter One, he was born in Austria to a family that boasted mixed German and Scottish aristocratic ancestry and did not move to Britain until 1874.

What mostly had an effect on his personality were some sad events that characterized his family: his mother Vanda de Poellnitz began an affair with a painter and even though she was strongly opposed by her family, eventually she married him in 1879. In this confusing situation, it was the children who paid the price and particularly Norman, who was sent, along with his brother John, to a strict English Puritan school with tyrannical and cruel teachers. Evidently, it was there that his strong aversion to the Puritan mentality and more generally to Christianity developed (Holloway 1976).

Douglas' biographers state that Norman was in Calabria at least seven times: as mentioned in chapter One, after the first time he reached this region in 1907, he came back in 1909 to help the earthquake victims. Consequently, he returned in

1911, in 1912, in 1933 he travelled with Orioli, he then visited it again in 1936 and finally in 1947 he went back there for the fleeting car raid with Jeffreys (Holloway 1976). However, even though *Old Calabria* was written with reference to the first two trips, there is evidence of the 1933 trip in a volume by Orioli originally written in English and published in London in 1934 by Chatto & Windus entitled *Moving Along, Just a Diary* of which a new Italian edition was published for Rubbettino under the title *In viaggio* (Orioli 1990).

That being the case, regarding Norman's numerous travels throughout Calabria, research maintains that he carefully prepared his arrivals in this place. He consulted bibliographies and libraries, besides he procured volumes on the region, also rare ones, and read them thoroughly. It seems that among all the books he read, he mainly focused his attention on the writings of Alberti, Mazzella, Barrio, Da Fiore, Marafioti, Pacichelli, Capialdi, Lupi-Grisafi, Spano Bolani, Occaso, Fortis, Minasi and Leoni. However, as mentioned in chapter Two, he also read the volumes of travelers who had preceded him such as Lear, Swinburne, Ramage, De Tavel, Lenormant, Keppel Craven, Gissing (to whom he dedicated a special chapter on the writer's stay in Crotona (Douglas 2012: 294-300).

Accordingly, there are several other examples of in-depth analysis contained in *Old Calabria* that demonstrate how much Norman had read and studied before venturing into southern Italy. However, even though he included news about flora, fauna, geology, history, geography, literature, etc. and notwithstanding the fact that this technique was typical of the *Grand Tour*, to him the purpose of prior study was not meant as a demonstration of his knowledge but it aimed to get to know men and places more deeply (Mozzillo 1992).

Moreover, it was not enough for him to know what everyone already knew about Calabria. He did not trust commonplaces and stereotypes. Nor did he trust those conventional, repetitive images that emerged from the travel diaries of his forerunners and that he knew constituted, in the literature of the *Grand Tour*, a limitation, or better still an undeniable vice. To explain further, not only was there the tendency to repeat the same stages of other previous travellers but also to see and recount the same things and feel the same sensations (Brilli 2006).

Unlike other foreign travellers, Norman penetrated into the deep South accompanied by a genuinely exploratory spirit that seems to have characterized only Charles Didier, Henry Swinburne, Edward Lear and Craufurd Tait Ramage. More than them, Norman chose upward and inward routes as he was convinced that there he would have found the real old Calabria which had escaped the destruction that transformed its landscapes in history.

Hence, he ascended up the Pollino by impervious trails into the most secret heart of the Sila through forests that had never been touched by human hands, and he also went into the center of the Serre by climbing wild rivers and reached the tip of Aspromonte (Giacomantonio 1984).

What distinguishes Douglas from Bevilacqua and other walker writers is his imaginative description of the things he saw with his eyes.

For example, as a good investigator he was able to capture the panic aspects of the feasts along with the almost orgiastic worship of food, dance and music which counterbalances the emotion and piety of prayer. This is what generally happens in all rural Marian shrines located in South Italy especially in the shrines of Polsi and Aspromonte (Bevilacqua 2008).

This is the legacy of ancient pre-Christian rites propitiatory of fertility and rebirth in which men and women dancing wildly who swallow food, get drunk, sing and play to the point of exhaustion, are the epigones of the satyrs, or better still of the creatures possessed by madness who were allowed, in the classical Greco-Latin world, to let chaos, invasion and possession break into the habit of order, self-control and temperance (sophrosyne) on certain days consecrated to Dionysus (Bevilacqua 2010).

Moreover, Douglas' exploratory spirit was also noticeable in the psychological analysis that Douglas does in *Old Calabria* regarding the people that characterize the places he visited, which seems to be missing in *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*. As discussed at length in the answer to research question N.4, unlike the contemporary Italian writer, Norman managed to perceive the introspection and innermost feelings of the people he encountered in Calabria and that described in his book.

Considering the similarities between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua, what emerges from the analysis of *Old Calabria* and *Sulle tracce di Norman*

Douglas is that the main element that Bevilacqua has in common with Douglas is the sense of “adventure” which accompanies walkers who move within nature and which does not need either epic or exotic scenery to be accomplished. The walker writers seem to have transformed the semantics of adventure by giving priority to its strict etymology “that which is encountered” namely the irruption of a part of reality hitherto unknown or ignored (Bevilacqua 2012).

Like Bevilacqua, also Douglas loved to exhaust himself by walking on foot in order to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the Calabrian mountains with no other aid but his legs and maybe a mule or donkey to carry books and provisions, after all, there was no other way to reach the places that he wished to see. He knew that only on foot could he reach the most remote and wild locations, especially those that had remained most intact and virgin.

In reality, Douglas' exuberance had already manifested itself in his love of hunting and hiking which he practiced in Scotland and Austria as soon as he could. With this regard, his biographers declared that Norman had an exceptional physique and a formidable spirit of endurance for fatigue, consequently traveling was a real pleasure for him and he appreciated every attractive place he visited even in bad weather conditions. In other words, he was inspired by a true thirst for exploration and knowledge. As a result, what emerges in many pages of *Old Calabria* is an uncommon (especially for the time) ethical tension with regard to the fate of the nature of the places he traveled through (Holloway 1976).

However, Douglas' travels throughout Calabria may appear as a realization of memories and personal lucubrations that seem to be close to a whole post-Enlightenment and sentimental travel literature which through its descriptive impressionism and search for the *genius loci* tends to inseparably merge the concept of travel with that of human experience (Sette 2018). Yet, the motivations of the traveller Douglas are the same as those of eighteenth-century travellers whose artistic inspiration still has that sense of the mythical past that was so vivid in Gibbon on the road to Rome⁴⁷, or of the magical that Berkeley experienced and

⁴⁷ Edward Gibbon (Putney, Surrey, 1737 - London, 1794) set off on a journey through Europe in 1763 in search of a subject for a historical work which he soon abandoned on Swiss freedom. The formation of modern European nations and the dissolution of the great empire of Rome in the Middle Ages are extensively discussed in his work *The*

saw before his eyes in Puglia amidst tarantulas and Dionysian dances (Berkeley 1871: 512-597).

Likewise, as specified by Bevilacqua himself, taking the stereotypes into consideration, to him traveling is synonymous with restlessness together with creativity, nonconformity, absence of stable ties and thirst for knowledge. Resultantly, the archetype of this psychological type would be, according to Michel Onfray, author of *Filosofia del viaggio*, the biblical nomadic shepherd Cain (Onfray 2010).

Thirdly, like Douglas who did not travel throughout Calabria alone, also Bevilacqua has chosen to hike with people he could trust. According to Norman:

Calabria is not a land to traverse alone. It is too wistful and stricken; too deficient in those externals that conduce to comfort. Its charms do not appeal to the eye of romance, and the man who would perambulate Magna Graecia as he does the Alps would soon regret his choice. One needs something of that "human element" which delighted the genteel photographer of Morano—comrades, in short; if only those sages, like old Noia Molisi, who have fallen under the spell of its ancient glories. The joys of Calabria are not to be bought, like those of Switzerland, for gold (Douglas 2012:318).

Consequently, on his expeditions along Douglas' routes, Bevilacqua chose to be accompanied by his greatest friend Vittorio who is fifteen years older than him. Bevilacqua at first compared him to Douglas and realized that at Vittorio's present age Norman was already a bothersome person (Bevilacqua 2012).

He decided to travel with his friend as he has always shown an optimistic attitude and reassurance, besides his character was mild, without anxieties and welcoming like a well-warmed mountain hut high in the mountains. Moreover, Bevilacqua

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, a grandiose fresco of Europe from Augustus to the fall of Constantinople which sometimes traces as far as distant China the reasons for the upheavals of peoples that upset the geography of Europe; or as far as Arabia in order to recount the events of the Islamic empire on the basis of the success of 17th and 18th century Orientalism.

added that he felt safe with him as he gave the impression of having the ability to accept with gratitude all the things that the Good Lord had in store for them. As a result, Vittorio's presence seems to have influenced Francesco's personality.



Francesco Bevilacqua (fb page)- M.Altare, on the border between Sila Greca and Sila Grande, Calabria.

As Bevilacqua has declared:

Se anch'io la penso così - a parte quel po' d'ansia che la genetica familiare materna mi ha appioppato - lo devo anche a lui (Bevilacqua 2012: 191).⁴⁸

More than anything, what made them become friends was this passion for the mountains that they had in common and since they first met, they have done almost everything together. Nevertheless, even when they were not together because one of them was doing an individual exploration and the other was busy accompanying a CAI group, they thought about each other and kept in touch exchanging information and emotions. However, Bevilacqua specifies that he chose to be accompanied by Vittorio as his friend had more experience than him since he had been practicing mountaineering at remarkable levels as he had travelled extensively throughout Calabria in the past and also because he had had more time at his disposal to devote to excursions and expeditions.

In addition to an annual frequentation of the *Bianco and Rosa* groups where he learned to climb and proceed on ice, Vittorio has participated in three Andean expeditions: the first took place in 1988, in Peru on Huascaràn (6768 m), on Nevado Pisco (5762 m) and on Vallunaraju (5686 m); the second tour was in 1993, in Bolivia on Huayna Potosi (6088 m) and Illimani (6450 m); and finally the third one was in 1998, in Argentina on Aconcagua (6968 m).

The third excursion seems to be the most important one as it was done together with Bevilacqua and is described in the book *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*. The Italian writer also added that afterwards they did many other expeditions of this kind together and that they generally decided to set out alone when it came to choose difficult and dangerous itineraries that no other travellers would attempt to experiment and when they were in the mood for solitude and silence (Bevilacqua 2012).

⁴⁸ If I too feel this way - apart from that bit of anxiety that maternal family genetics has bequeathed me- I owe it to him as well. The translation is mine.

A final analogy between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua is based on the fact that also the former like the Italian writer showed preoccupations for ongoing environmental havoc and reproaches toward the incautious men who are committing it. Therefore, in his later years, he openly expressed his concerns about the damage that tourism was doing to the fragile environmental balance of the Sorrento Peninsula, Capri and other islands. After all, Norman was an ecologist ahead of his time (Greenlees 1957) rather than a pure hedonist who maintained that men's task was to create their own happiness on earth by loving life. Surprisingly, he made extraordinary altruistic gestures such as fundraising for earthquake victims and donations to friends and families who were in need, even though he was always short of money. On many occasions he also helped homeless people and was responsible for many voluntary acts, especially the reforestation of Capri. Based on the information provided, although his biographers described him as an individualist, he might have not been an egoist person (Holloway 1976).

Contrariwise, the first difference that can be noticed between Douglas' *Old Calabria* and Bevilacqua's *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* is that in his work Bevilacqua has summarized Norman's travels and his considerations of the Pollino, Sila, Serre and Aspromonte. The summary of Norman's expeditions is then followed by an account of Bevilacqua's excursions which he has chosen among the places previously visited by the British writer.

Through this technique it seems possible to have an immediate comparison between old and new, yet, as specified by Bevilacqua himself, Calabria has still remained an old and archaic place (Bevilacqua 2010).

However, the outcome of Bevilacqua's strange operation seems to have confirmed a common feeling that he has with Norman which would be corroborated by the words of John Ruskin who was another great lover of travel and beauty:

Nessuno spostamento a centocinquanta chilometri l'ora ci renderà di un solo briciolo più forti, più felici o più saggi. Nel mondo sono sempre esistite più cose di quante gli uomini riuscissero a vedere, per quanto lentamente essi camminassero, e certo non le vedranno meglio andando più veloci. A contare veramente sono la vista ed il pensiero, non la velocità (cit. in de

Botton 2002: 218).⁴⁹

A second distinction between the two writers concerns their personalities and with this regards Bevilacqua declared the following:

Se dovessi pensare a me come a un animale, mi paragonerei ad una specie stanziale, che so, a un lupo, per fare il fanfarone, o ad un cervo, per darmi arie nobiliari. Mia moglie direbbe forse: un orso, riferendosi alla circostanza che sono un po' permaloso (ma chi l'ha detto che gli orsi sono permalosi?). Il fatto è che sento di avere radici. Se, invece, dovessi definire, tramite lo stesso paragone zoologico, Norman (il che, credo gli farebbe piacere, visto che di zoologia era pure esperto), dovrei indicare un migratore, magari un grande veleggiatore, come il falco pescatore, così legato agli ambienti rupestri mediterranei, o il candido ed elegante avvoltoio capovaccaio, che ama anche lui le rupi ma si lascia affascinare dalle zone steppiche della Calabria ionica, dei cui paesaggi Norman fu impareggiabile, quanto solitario, mentore. Egli forse non sentiva di avere radici (Bevilacqua 2012:47).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ No movement at a hundred and fifty miles an hour will make us one iota stronger, happier or wiser. There have always been more things in the world than men could see, even though they walked slowly they certainly will not see them better by going faster. What really counts is sight and thought rather than speed. The translation is mine.

⁵⁰ If I were to think of myself as an animal, I would compare myself to a non-migratory species, I do not know, to a wolf, to brag about, or to a deer, to give myself noble airs. My wife would perhaps say: a bear, referring to the circumstance that I am a bit touchy (but who said bears were touchy?). The fact is that I feel I have roots. If, on the other hand, I were to define, by the same zoological comparison, Norman (which, I think, would please him, since he was also an expert on zoology), I would have to choose a migratory bird, maybe an osprey, so closely associated with Mediterranean rocky environments, or the white and elegant vulture which also loves cliffs but is fascinated by the steppe areas of Ionian Calabria of whose landscapes Norman was an incomparable as much as a lonely mentor. He perhaps did not feel that he had roots. The translation is mine.

However, the main contrast between Bevilacqua and Douglas is that the latter, unlike the contemporary Italian writer, was admittedly anti-Christian since he criticized Christianity for mortifying the individual and the body as it transferred all man's moral tension to an unlikely afterlife. Bevilacqua is not convinced whether he can define Norman as an atheist: on this account, in *Old Calabria* there are some provocative pages regarding this theme, e.g. the proposal for a new God (Douglas 2010: 270-273). Conversely, Douglas gave the impression of perceiving the appeal of Hellenic religion with its cyclical and non-eschatological time together with the sacralization of the earth and individual places, accompanied by the pervasiveness of the divine in every aspect of earthly life and with its passionate and human gods. Therefore, Bevilacqua believes that this may have influenced Norman and consequently led him to choose at the end of his life when and how to leave.

In view of the above, it follows that Douglas was strongly superstitious and feared the supernatural as if he sensed its indecipherability (or maybe, deep in his soul, he concealed some fear that he could not explain). He believed both in spirits or ghosts as well (Sandomenico 1996).

When Douglas reached Calabria, he discovered the religions of Calabrian *Magna Græcia* which were the Olympian religion of Achilles and the Orphic religion. The former complied with forms of English self-control in the consideration of the eternal repetitiveness of a conventional pattern of life and the Orphic religion, whereas the latter was the religion of the underground, namely the marginal classes and the peasants whose prayers received from the divine the tension to transform their suffering condition of life. In the Greek world, the poor, the peasants, the workers and the slaves could not identify themselves with Achilles, Ulysses and the other figures of the predominantly warrior aristocracy to which the ruling kings belonged. Therefore they did not embrace the Olympian religion, but rather the Orphic one which drew its origins from the myth of Orpheus, the storyteller of Thrace, a land of *ingens silva* far from refined and evolved Greece. According to the myth, Orpheus descended into the underworld out of love to bring his deceased wife Eurydice back to life. Orpheus' strength was in his singing. He did not have the dominating force of the warrior king, but the divinatory force that through artistic creativity came into contact with what was not visible, as a

result he managed to lead life to the visible from darkness to light, changing then the sad human fate towards the hope of redemption from the miserable conditions of everyday life. On the contrary, Olympus was solar and dominated by immutable fate, even if it was condemned to misery and death. Consequently, the gods, like the hero kings, were governed by the principle of fate, so they were not able to alter the condition of life, but if necessary they sacrificed themselves for it. The Orphic religion was characterized by a conception of the correlation among life/death, joy/suffering relationship that was the redemption of a subaltern life of the suffering heroes who aimed at eternity through pain. What this means is that Orphism was the religion of the lower classes who, even though they were in tragic conditions of life, they did not lose hope and managed to find the strength to rise again from their difficulties. Accordingly, not only did Norman discover these two religions in Calabria, but he also embraced the cult of the earth along with the veneration for the underground and the underworld that could, as in the case of Persephone, Demeter, etc., modify the conditions of life and the time of death and rebirth, which it seemed that it was the agrarian time renew and immortalize people's lives.

Based on the preceding, it is noteworthy to mention Nietzsche's reference to the serpent biting its own tail as a symbol of eternal return (Nietzsche 1976). To discuss in depth, it refers to the Dionysian possibility of renewal as the religion of hope, of superstitions and of archaic cults. This was not the religion of the Apollonian solarly of the Greek gods expressing the perfection of the deeds and virtues of the heroes, but rather it gave voice to the suffering, the alternating anxieties and illusions, the defeats and to the moments of crisis. It was the typical religion of mystery cults which marked the end of Olympian rationality and reached the deep roots of subjective intimacy. On that account, this represented the origin of the narrative of the emotions of Romanticism and of the immediate expression of the voice of interiority of Decadentism as was the case respectively in the Orphic cult and, in a more chaotic way, in Bacchanal (Sette 2018).

That being the case, also Christianity can be considered an Orphic religion for the humble and poor people as Christ brought Lazarus back to life and rose himself from death. In Orphic cults, a promise of eternal life is reserved for the poor, according to the rhythm of a circular time that defeats the naturalistic determinism of fate. What emerges is a religion of *renovatio*, of rebirth, of hope and of the belief

in the immortal soul in the afterlife, in which believers lived in the primitive *ingens silva* and were reassured by the great hope that could be an antidote to despair. Considering that Douglas' homosexuality was condemned in England by Puritan religion and the hypocrisy of the ruling classes as it was seen as a fatal punishment, equivalent to the need for an Olympian religion, therefore it was penalized by the Victorian morality which characterized a world crystallized by the immobility of privileges along with constraints, self-limitations and taboos. As a result, Norman wished to awaken to the new life that the Orphic religion seemed to promise him that was embodied by the telluricity and expressed in the culture and primitivism of the landscape of ancient Greek Calabria. The following quoted passage from *Old Calabria* emphasizes Douglas' relationship with the old Calabria where, on the one hand he discovered the Orphic religion and, on the other, he appreciated the meaning of the Olympic one:

Once you have reached the latitude of Naples, the word *grazie* (thank you) vanishes from the vocabulary of all save the most cultured. But to conclude therefrom that one is among a thankless race is not altogether the right inference. They have a wholly different conception of the affair. Our septentrional 'thanks' is a complicated production which gratefulness for things received and for things to come are unconsciously balanced; while their point of view differs in nothing from that of the beau-ideal of Greek courtesy, of Achilles, whose mother procured for him a suit of divine armour from Hephaistos, which he received without a word of acknowledgement either for her or for the god who had been put to some little trouble in the matter. A thing given they regard as a thing found, a hermaion, a happy hit in the lottery of life; the giver is the blind instrument of Fortune. This chill attitude repels us; and our effusive expressions of thankfulness astonish these people and the Orientals.

A further difference is that the actual gift is viewed quite extrinsically, intellectually, either in regard to what it would fetch if bartered or sold, or, if to be kept, as to how far its possession may raise the recipient in the eyes of other men. This is purely Homeric, once more – Homeric or primordial, if you prefer. Odysseus told his kind host Alkinoos, whom he was never to see again, that he would be glad to receive farewell

presents from him – to cherish as a friendly memory? No, but ‘because they would make him look a finer fellow when he got home’. The idea of a keepsake, of an emotional value attaching to some trifle, is a northern one. Here life is give and take, and lucky he who takes more than he gives; it is what Professor Mahaffy calls the ‘ingrained selfishness of the Greek character’. Speaking of all below the upper classes, I should say that disinterested benevolence is apt to surpass their comprehension, a good-natured person being regarded as weak in the head (Douglas 2010: 136-137).

The outcome is that Douglas could find in Calabria a homeland of new choices where the rigidity of English customs disappeared and that was characterized by a sort of fluidity that promised hope of rebirth in order to be someone else and find his own authenticity like the tarantulas studied by De Martino discovered it in their exhilaration. To rephrase, through the bite of the tarantula men can die from the poison, but, at the same time, it is also possible to heal since the tarantulas dance, and in their magic that is similar to the rites of the animistic world of Africa, they access an Orphic trance that promises rebirth, as in Olympian Greece in which the Orphic myth of telluric Thrace penetrates (Sette 2018).

However, Orphism stems from a cultural structure that includes Pythagoreanism established in the Calabrian *Magna Græcia*. Then, not only is Pythagoreanism a scientific sect, but it is also a religious community that conveys a message of eternal life because man is capable of thinking the number that is series infinite and *eidos*, the perennial form that is heir to Platonism. From the Platonic perennial form it seems possible to deduce the existence of the soul from which the persuasion of immortality originates. Consequently, men deal with the labours and the misfortunes of this earth with the hope of eternity and salvation.

Then, Orphism, Pythagoreanism and Christianity are vehicles of the same salvific message, namely the regeneration after the fall into the cave of darkness. With this regard, Douglas dedicated Chapter IV of *Old Calabria* to the cave cult that was widespread in southern Italy. Although the reference was to the Archangel Michael who, like a ray of light, penetrated the darkness of a cavern as a warrior destroyer of Pagan forms in the name of Christianity, Douglas was aware that the immortal soul of Demeter, the great underground Mother, rather than Olympic Jupiter, had a

strong heritage in this Christian cult. Based on the foregoing,

Douglas' words are as follows:

[T]his cave-worship is older than any god or devil. It is the cult of the feminine principle – a relic of that aboriginal obsession of mankind to shelter in some Cloven Rock of Ages, in the sacred womb of Mother Earth who gives us food and receives us after death. Grotto-apparitions, old and new, are but the popular explanations of this dim primordial craving (Douglas 2010: 37).

Hence, Norman's inspiration is enhanced by the cult of the feminine principle of Mother Earth as greater depths are discovered in the darkness of the cave rather than in solar worship. This ritual that reverses the horizon of meaning between light and darkness, connects Douglas' inspiration to the dimensions of the developing Decadentism as the source of the search for latent depths was also the presupposition of Postmodernism at the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, If modernity could be associated to the Olympian brightness of the ideas of reason from Descartes to the Enlightenment, *Old Calabria's* Orphism represents an access to Decadentism since, as in the paradigmatic case of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*, it seems to be beyond the dimensions of disclosed reason which, more than psychoanalysis, leads into the dark depths of consciousness when Douglas penetrates the sense of the earth of which man is kneaded because he is body, albeit in the salvific tension to the immortal soul (Sette 2018).

In light of the issues hitherto raised, considering the comparison between Douglas and Bevilacqua as far as the religious influence on their lives and works is concerned, it emerges that, on the contrary, Bevilacqua's expeditions are characterized by a sense of religiosity. To complete the explanation, it was the presence of the divine, of the numinous and of the sacred in nature that radically influenced the sense of his walking. To him it was as if he had returned to the origin of travelling on foot which was, especially in the Middle Ages, the pilgrimage to places in the Holy Land that maybe were never reached, or to the great European places of worship (Bevilacqua 2010). However, for the Italian writer there is something even more special because in addition to the sense of

pilgrimage, especially when he finds himself in company of his friends, his walking becomes a prayer and his excursions come to be a ritual. This happens as not only does he sometimes find himself saying his prayers as he walks, but also because the rhythm of his steps, of his breathing and of his panting have the effect of an Ejaculatory prayer, of a litany, of that rosary which until not so many years ago he looked at with arrogance and that today he observes with respect and participation, the same respect and participation that he has always felt for the mantras of the Eastern tradition (Bevilacqua 2010).

In accordance with Bevilacqua:

Una volta, un maestro buddista mi disse con semplicità disarmante che tutte le religioni avevano per loro pari dignità e che il Dio pregato da tutti non poteva che essere lo stesso del loro, qualunque nome gli si desse. Anche da quell'insegnamento di tolleranza, di fratellanza, di ecumenismo vero e non ciarlatano, ho imparato a riconciliarmi con la mia religione, quella cattolica, che mi era stata imposta sin da piccolo e che avevo rifiutato come un insegnamento proditorio, improntato sulla mia ingenuità, sui miei sensi di colpa inconsci. Quel che rifiutavo - e che in parte rifiuto ancora oggi - è la pretesa di una verità assoluta, universale e rivelata da imporre, anticamente con le crociate, oggi con la cultura, con l'economia, con una pretesa razionalistica, con la superiorità tecnologica dell'occidente (Bevilacqua 2012:197).⁵¹

⁵¹ A Buddhist master once told me with disarming simplicity that all religions had equal dignity for them and that the God prayed to by all could only be the same as their own, whatever name they gave him. Also from that teaching of tolerance, of brotherhood, of true and non-charlatan ecumenism, I learnt to reconcile myself with my religion, the Catholic one which had been imposed on me as a child and which I had rejected as a prodigal teaching, based on my naivety and on my unconscious guilt. What I rejected - and in part still reject today - is the claim of an absolute, universal and revealed truth to be imposed, in the past with the crusades, today with culture, with economics, with a rationalistic claim, with the technological superiority of the West. The translation is mine.

Finally, the last distinction between Douglas and Bevilacqua is based on the fact that the former transformed his literary vocation into his main career through which he found his authentic sense of himself in the creative and fictional world using travel experiences as an antidote to the harsh trials to which reality subjected him (Sette 2018). Contrariwise, the latter does not write (literally) as a profession, nor is this passion remunerative. His job is completely different as he is a lawyer, however he says that he loves writing because it gives him the opportunity to say and do what he likes and what he does not like.

Furthermore, for thirty years he has been a volunteer for the environment and not only has he been fighting for parks and nature reserves to be established in Calabria, but also for environmental havoc to be prevented. Yet, when he finally succeeded in this activity after hard work and endless polemics, he categorically refused to take positions in the management of the parks that were built throughout Calabria (Bevilacqua 2010).

4.7 Sixth Research Question

What remains today of the archaic and mythical Calabria described by Norman Douglas?

The main question that Francesco Bevilacqua asked to himself before going along Douglas'itinerary throughout Calabria was to what extent Norman's old Calabria still lived in modern times.

Apparently, he asked this question to himself many times over the past thirty years of wanderings in every part of Calabria while experiencing environmentalist battles, inner adventures, along with geographical and literary discoveries of landscape and unintentionally tropological explorations.

Bevilacqua's discoveries seemed to demonstrate that Calabria, particularly that old Calabria that Norman loved so much, had hardly changed at all, and, even today, it seems to be possible for visitors and tourists to enjoy its sublime atmospheres, namely that "adventurous variant" of the *Grand Tour* that Attilio Brilli recounted (Brilli 2006: 247-261).

Nevertheless, the sublime that characterized this area is an aesthetic category different from the beautiful that can be applicable to various branches of knowledge, from rhetoric to landscape and even to religion and politics as it was explained by Bodei (cit. in Bevilacqua 2012). Taking into account the area of this analysis, it needs to be pointed out that there is a difference between a sublime landscape and a beautiful scenery. In other words, while the latter can be represented by a natural picture dominated by harmony of form, symmetry, pleasantness, and a sense of serenity, the former could generally be a coruscating, looming landscape, a vision that disquiets and consequently leads human beings to feel small and helpless before the grandeur of a stormy sea, an enormous alpine glacier and an immense cathedral of rocks.

Hence, the Romans made distinction between *loci amoeni* (pleasant places), such as well-ordered countryside and parks, and *loci horridi* (horrid places) such as deserts, mountains and wild forests (Bevilacqua 2012: 88-89).

According to Francesco Bevilacqua, the sublime hiking can be regarded as a sort of pilgrimage, a form of walking prayer and a kind of ecstatic contemplation of

mystical toil. This atmosphere leads hikers where the mountain along with its landscapes and its creatures seem to be wonderful guests that welcome them with a smile quietly and benevolently like distant brothers (Bevilacqua 2012: 94).

Considering the aesthetics of the landscape, according to research it appears that those places of southern Italy, particularly of Calabria, have given names and conveyed intimate and symbolic meanings. It follows that southerners have recognized themselves and their culture in those places; as Eugenio Turri maintains:

Nel paesaggio ogni cultura si identifica, trova rispecchiata se stessa: il paesaggio parla, comunica concretamente all'uomo, attraverso l'insieme dei segni, ciò che egli ha voluto imprimere in esso. È come uno scambio mutuo di messaggi che corrisponde al realizzarsi del rapporto tra condizioni locali e adempimento culturale, rapporto che si instaura nel dialogo tra paesaggio vissuto, strumentalmente inteso, e paesaggio contemplato, visto e interpretato culturalmente (Turri 1979/1983:139).⁵²

And again Turri:

Sia pure in misura diversa, tutte le culture esprimono o hanno espresso una certa totalità dell'immersione umana in un ambiente specifico, ripetendo nelle proprie opere e nelle proprie istituzioni il profondo peculiare adattamento all'ambiente locale. Con ciò non solo nel senso di un adattamento materiale alle condizioni della morfologia, del clima, delle formazioni vegetali, ma anche come adesione spirituale, estetica,

⁵² In the landscape every culture identifies itself and finds itself reflected: the landscape speaks, communicates concretely to man, through the set of signs, what he wanted to establish in it. It is like a mutual exchange of messages that corresponds to the realization of the relationship between local conditions and cultural fulfillment, a relationship established in the dialogue between lived landscape, instrumentally understood, and contemplated landscape, culturally seen and interpreted. The translation is mine.

religiosa, indotta dal paesaggio e dalle sue forme, dai suoi messaggi (Turri 1979/1983:139:104).⁵³

Hence, Bevilacqua claims that If only Calabrians understood these basic concepts of the relationship between man and landscape which to most local administrators seem to be the poetic abstractions of some good-hearted person, they would have found the only possible way toward a recovery of their identity and real civil and economic progress (Bevilacqua 2012: 104).

As maintained by Bevilacqua:

Riconoscere la bellezza in un paesaggio della Calabria, ad esempio, significa comprendere chi siamo, capire quanta originalità, quanta identità, quanta cultura vi è nel nostro essere qui, nel nostro dimorare in questa terra. State pur certi che chi riconosce quella bellezza, e sa vederla anche dentro se stesso, lotterà perché nessuno la sfiguri. E questo non può essere tollerato da chi vuole che le cose, in Calabria, restino come sono. Ecco perché la Calabria brucia negli incendi, viene brutalizzata dal cemento e dall'asfalto, è invasa dai rifiuti (Bevilacqua 2012:154).⁵⁴

⁵³ Albeit to varying degrees, all cultures express or have expressed a certain totality of human immersion in a specific environment, repeating in their works and institutions the profound peculiar adaptation to the local environment. Not only does it happen in the sense of a material adaptation to the conditions of morphology, climate, and plant formations, but also as a spiritual, aesthetic and religious adherence induced by the landscape with its forms and its messages. The translation is mine.

⁵⁴ To recognize beauty in the landscape of Calabria means to understand who we are, to acknowledge how much originality, identity and culture there is in our being here, in our dwelling in this land. Rest assured that those who recognize that beauty and can also see it within themselves will fight so that no one disfigures it. And this cannot be tolerated by those who want things in Calabria to remain as they are. That is why Calabria burns in fires, is brutalized by cement and asphalt and is full of garbage. The translation is mine.

Today there are about 700,000 to 800,000 hectares of mountains in Calabria that can be hiked, largely without marked trails, from Pollino to Aspromonte. Bevilacqua's research aimed to discover what else there could be among these places that could be so important. However, what he discovered was that from a scenic point of view, he noticed that these places were characterized by forests, grasslands and vast valleys. Consequently he questions Douglas' remark in which he declared to know Sila. In reality, his investigation aimed to demonstrate that Norman did not know it at all as this place was hiding hundreds of peaks, forests and monumental trees, gorges, canyons, waterfalls, glades, lithic formations, which are still today the real wonders of Sila.

What remains essentially untouched today of that immense wilderness is preserved in the famous beloved primeval forest of Bialowieza, in northeastern Poland, that has been saved along with its precious fauna, headed by the extremely rare European bison thanks to the Nazis' obsession with the sites of the myth of the Aryan race (Bevilacqua 2012:157-158). Moreover, today the growth of trees on the slopes of the knoll is making this view more and more restricted. This is one of the problems of reforestation in Sila: what used to be the panoramic points have not been taken into account, consequently, the plantation of a few dozen trees have completely erased them. Bevilacqua claims that it is essential to preserve the possibility of observing a landscape in a wild region with scarce uncovered places like Sila therefore it would be necessary to act quickly to remedy the mistakes that have been made (Bevilacqua 2012).

However, the archaic civilization that so far has characterized the whole Calabria seems to be disappearing. Ragonà, for instance, could be the example of the decay and disintegration of its microcosm where there still are the typical families which consist of a tyrannical father and a mother who perceives religion in a magical and totalizing sense consciously going towards a tragic death to expiate their sins. Nevertheless, Douglas' *Old Calabria* could be regarded as a depiction of this archaic civilization that is slowly disintegrating. It describes the same world and the same places where people are still immersing today which are disappearing. Consequently, along with its collapse that civilization is about to be swallowed up as well.

According to Bevilacqua, the Calabrian territory is mostly characterized by its mountains which have not changed since Douglas' visit to Calabria, besides these

mountains help people and particularly hikers to understand and recognize their beauty. With this regard, he claims the following:

L'andare in montagna educa a riconoscere la bellezza, a sopportare la fatica, a riappropriarsi dell'istinto, a fare buon uso della ragione. Ma, per quanto mi riguarda, ce un altro aspetto dell'andare in montagna che ha segnato questi 31 anni di escursioni. È la condivisione delle emozioni (Bevilacqua 2012:190).⁵⁵

Conversely, what remains today of the ancient St. Mary's Forest described by Norman, is only a small strip of land around the church of St. Mary of the Woods. The rest seems to have been industrially exploited and has lost its aura since it no longer has its atmosphere of sacredness. While that same aspect can be found in a forest not far away that has an indecipherable name, namely the Bosco Archiforo which lies on the western slope of the ridge of Monte Pecoraro (1423 m) and Pietra del Caricatore (1414 m) that descends toward the basin of Serra San Bruno. However, all these forests seem to have amazed the Swiss military doctor Horace Rilliet who passed through them in 1852 after a Bourbon battalion that reminded him of Switzerland in general and the Oberland and Valais in particular (Rilliet 1852/2008: 241).

During his excursions in Calabria, several times Bevilacqua makes references to the radical changes in the landscape that have taken place since Douglas' visit. According to him, the main transformations that could be noticed concerned the areas around the Eastern edge of the Serre, beyond the territory of summit forests of beech and fir trees. He maintained that the terrain lines had changed as well. Unexpectedly, they have become steep and oblique, the valleys appeared deep and recessed, and in the distance it could be seen the rocky trihedron of Mount Consolino, behind which Stilo and the Ionian coast were hidden, therefore, everything gave the impression of being plunged into the

⁵⁵ Going to the mountains educates people to recognize beauty, to endure fatigue, to reacquaint oneself with instinct and to make good use of reason. But, as far as I am concerned, there is another aspect of going to the mountains that has marked these 31 years of hiking. It is the sharing of emotions. The translation is mine.

abyss. Consequently, Bevilacqua and his tour companion descended into the holm-oak grove, through a path that soon moved to the left of the conduit so as to find the ancient suggestive mule track where they had always walked with excitement over the years.

What they noticed on the side of the Vallone Ruggiero was that the terrain had slid down where also the penstock had split. Resultantly, this change of the landscape allowed them to enjoy a full view of the Marmarico Falls, whose toponym was supposed to mean “slow”, “crude”: more than a hundred meters of overhang filled with a considerable flow of water especially in winter-spring, which until the mid-1980s no one knew about and which today thousands of people visit which keeps the town legacy going to then bring tourism to restaurants, guides and off-road vehicle drivers (Bevilacqua 2012; 199-200).

It is especially in Bivongi that it can be noticed the difference that there is in Calabria between the natural environment and what man has done in recent years. Like so many others, this village seems to be an anonymous overlay of concrete boxes, nevertheless, its name gives the impression to evoke ancient and suggestive stories. Taking this into consideration, it is worth mentioning what Milani wrote about the aesthetic culture of the landscape:

In Europa, in questi ultimi decenni, campagna e città si assemblano in uno spazio misto, ibrido, senza anima, quell'anima che invece hanno sempre avuto. È la fine dell'identità dei luoghi, tutti uguali ovunque, dall'Europa al Nord America, dall'Africa all'Oriente. Si è affermata, tra il degrado, l'indifferenza e lo stile uniforme, la rinuncia alla bellezza, quella bellezza fatta di cultura materiale, di lavoro umano costruito per secoli sul riconoscimento simbolico, visivo, tecnico del paesaggio in un incrocio tra etica ed estetica. Le antiche bellezze non erano soltanto espressione dell'arte e della filosofia. Perdere la memoria dei luoghi vuol dire perdere la memoria della bellezza che è connaturata allo spirito della terra (Milani 2001: 75).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ In Europe, in these last decades, the countryside and the city are assembled in a mixed, hybrid space without a soul, that soul they seem to have always had. It is the end of the identity of places that are all the same everywhere, from Europe to North America, from Africa to the East. What has asserted itself among the degradation, indifference

With reference to the preceding, Turri maintained the following:

Il paesaggio di ieri mostrava il segno umano dentro spazi agricoli e naturali che facevano emergere con forza le corrispondenze tra azione antropica e condizioni naturali, tanto che il segno umano aveva qualcosa di trepido, di sperduto e commovente nel suo aderire ai dettami naturali, mostrando una leggibilità legata alla elementarità stessa dei suoi contenuti; oggi, nel dominio della complessità post-industriale, l'azione antropica sembra sommergere o escludere ogni condizione naturale, sembra libera di esprimersi come e dove conducono i suoi interessi contingenti, legati alle grandi organizzazioni territoriali, che escludono ogni legame con i luoghi fisici, talché l'uomo si direbbe incamminato verso atopia, verso un mondo senza luoghi, senza legami topografici (Turri 2004: 135).⁵⁷

Hence, Turri added that the deep fascination of places like this touched hidden and perhaps suppressed chords in people. Moreover, the sight of these human-

and uniform style, is the renunciation of beauty, that beauty made of material culture, of human labor built for centuries on the symbolic, visual, technical recognition of the landscape in a cross between Ethics and Aesthetics. Not only were ancient beauties an expression of Art and Philosophy as to lose the memory of places means to lose the memory of the beauty that is inherent in the spirit of the land. The translation is mine.

⁵⁷ Yesterday's landscape showed the human sign within agricultural and natural spaces that made the correspondences between anthropic action and natural conditions emerge forcefully, so that the human sign had something trepid, lost and moving in its adherence to natural dictates. It showed a sort of legibility linked to the very simplicity of its contents. Today, in the domain of post-industrial complexity, anthropic action seems to submerge or exclude all natural conditions, it seems to be free to express itself how and where its contingent interests lead that are linked to large territorial organizations, which exclude any kind of link with physical places, so that man would be said to be on the road to atopia, namely to a world without places and without topographical ties. The translation is mine.

nature ties that today appear unimaginable to those who reside in the city and live substantially in urban areas, reawakens pieces of a past that also must have left a genetic trace in men' unconscious (Turri 2004).

Consequently, on Sunday, October 2nd 2005, Francesco Bevilacqua accompanied by his friends Emilio, Nina and Ivana decided to retrace the same route that took Norman to the summit of Aspromonte, Montalto (1956 m). In particular, they planned to reach the part of the route that is still hiking relevant today, with the exception of the stretch between Delianuova and the Piani di Carmelia. Regarding the noticeable differences since Douglas' visits, they realized that, in reality, many things had changed since then. The first evident transformation was characterized by the building of paved roads which had been constructed in order to reach the flat land from the villages located on the western flanks of the massif that overlooked the plain of Gioia Tauro and Rosarno. Today, this area consists of a series of plateaus of marine origin which have been produced by the flattening-erosion action of the wave motion of the seas and the cyclical uplift of the earth that stand in series, at various heights all around Aspromonte. In addition, there is a paved road that goes horizontally in a South-North direction, from the southernmost Piano di Carmelia through the entire series of northern Aspromonte plateaus to the Limina Pass and divides the massif from the Serre massif. Furthermore, forest trails have increased disproportionately therefore the agrarian and forest landscape has changed as well (Bevilacqua 2021).

Fortunately, some changes have also been positive. Apart from the establishment of the National Park of Aspromonte which concretely took place in 1994 (after years of controversy), that comprises 37 municipalities, the most interesting and surprising thing is that a number of sustainable development initiatives, mostly related to tourism, have advanced spontaneously thanks to the resourcefulness of groups of young people largely linked to environmental and volunteer associations. Nonetheless, one of the first initiatives was organized by the WWF of Reggio Calabria whose project was *Cadispa* that was simultaneously accomplished in other underdeveloped regions of southern Europe. It promoted on the Eastern slope of Aspromonte the enhancement of typical products along with the environmental education, the hospitality in the villages and a trek called "The Englishman's Path," after the traveler Edward Lear who in 1847 wandered

the length and breadth of Aspromonte (Lear 1852/2009).

Today several organizations that provide guide services in the places of naturalistic interest and associations for the dissemination and protection of mountain culture such as CAI are emerging in Calabria. Moreover, there are many initiatives to welcome mostly foreign visitors that have developed recently. One of the most known is the project at *Piani di Carmelia* which has been proposed by Antonio Barca, the greatest lover of Aspromonte who has dedicated his life to this activity. His lovely refuge is called "The Hawthorn" which Norman would have loved.

Conversely, Douglas gave the impression that he would have preferred to rest in another pleasant place that was at the farm tourism *Il Bergamoto* in Condofuri Marina whose owner namely Ugo Sergi was also attached to the Park's natural vocations. It is from here that donkey trekking starts all around the large and picturesque Amendolea valley which help to rediscover the Hellenic-speaking enclave of Calabria that is an ethnic community formed by small villages lost in the most inaccessible and secret heart of Aspromonte. Nevertheless, it has survived for centuries especially thanks to the geographic isolation with its original language along with its traditions, its customs and its places among the most inaccessible and spectacular massif. That being the case, it is noteworthy to mention that an interesting contribution to the understanding of the problems regarding the local development and how can the establishment of the National Park deal with these problems comes from the book *Aspromonte, i parchi nazionali nello sviluppo locale* (2002) written by sociologist Tonino Perna in 2002 who was also the president of the park as well (Bevilacqua 2021).

Among the places visited and described by Douglas in *Old Calabria* there is Polsi which can be regarded today as the paradigm of Aspromonte.

In reality it is a place that seems to include thousands of areas of the collective imagination of the people of Aspromonte. Moreover, it appears to be the topographical and psychic archetype of the people who inhabit or have inhabited the villages, the farms, the precarious shelters of those who travel or have traveled its roads, paths, and sheep-tracks. It is also the psychic archetype of the individuals who observe or have observed the great stones together with the waterfalls, the mountains and the trees. However not only does Polsi seem to be the psychic prototype of the people who live in the villages up to the present time,

but also of those who are now far away, generally abroad or in the cities of the North whose hearts are still filled with nostalgia and homesickness.

Staying at Polsi gives the impression of being immersed into a fairy-tale world that has remained unchanged for centuries where myths, memory, reality, spirituality, and nature merge and mingle. This place seems to evoke a world that still desperately tries to keep out of the way the standardization that reigns despite the obvious precursor signs of a devastating tide of incoming pseudo-modernity. Therefore, it is precisely in numinous places like this that the living memory of the past is unlikely to die. Hence, it is here that not only do the people of Aspromonte return on pilgrimage to the Madonna, but also to rediscover their own souls and identity (Bevilacqua 2012).

Given the foregoing, Umberto Zanotti Bianco (1889 - 1963), also known by the pseudonym Giorgio D'Acandia, the famous Italian archaeologist, environmentalist, philanthropist, anti-fascist and politician, elected Calabria and, in particular, the province of Reggio, as his second homeland. It was in this region of Italy that he had the opportunity to experience firsthand the misery of a small remote town in southeastern Aspromonte with the strangely assonant name, Africo. He noticed that the people that lived there were mainly all shepherds and peasants and resided in real “dens” as the parish priest of the time wrote to Zanotti Bianco, describing them as unhealthy and unhygienic caves that had been made even more dilapidated by the earthquake that took place in 1908. Consequently, these houses were never repaired or rebuilt in which people lived in single rooms along with domestic animals such as chickens, donkeys and pigs. During winter, these people used mainly fireplaces and stoves to keep themselves warm. Nevertheless, the main problems were caused by the lack of light and running water and the situation was made even worse by the fact that the use of meat and grain products was very limited.

What remains of Africo are eloquent and dramatic photographs taken on the occasion of the first visit of Zanotti Bianco and later after Tino Petrelli's arrival in 1948 for *L'Europeo*, in which it is possible to see children dressed in dirty rags living with animals (Zanotti, Petrelli 1990). Zanotti Bianco succeeded in bringing to Africo (which at the time did not even have a road) the solidarity of Italy even though at a later time, fascism sent him into exile preventing him from continuing his work. However, the situation of those people soon worsened as after World

War II a colossal landslide that took place in 1951 caused the evacuation of the town and the relocation of all the inhabitants to a cluster of anonymous houses more than fifty kilometers away on the Ionian coast between Brancaleone and Bianco (despite the opposition of most of the people). Soon after, they found themselves far away from their farms, their only possessions and the places of their ancestral memory. The result was that these dispossessed people were thus defrauded even of their dignity (Bevilacqua 2012).

According to studies done on the changing realities of the places in southern Italy, it emerges that anthropologists, as good speculators of thought, try to convince researchers that the boundary between places and non-places is blurred and that these tend to establish themselves as new places. What seems certain is that the “new places” can never have the symbolic value along with the history, the density of lived experience and the load of meaning that the “old places” still have. However, if the new places can contribute to the formation of a new identity, only the old places can make people achieve a complete identity that is responsive to the events experienced by those people and the environment that has hosted them for centuries (Bevilacqua 2021).

The result is that Calabrians must resign themselves and to get used to the ugliness.

Unfortunately, it seems that there is no way out: by now the unattractiveness caused by everything man has done in recent decades to the land, especially buildings and asphalt, is indelibly inscribed in the beauty of the landscape. Consequently, there is a counter-demonstration of that beauty as the observer usually says: “look how ugly that building or village is compared to the valley around it!” In order to change things, it would be necessary to do the impossible such as to raze everything, or almost everything, and rebuild it again with order, style and respect for the aesthetic identity of the places (Bevilacqua 2012: 243).

In addition, Vito Teti, the Calabrian ethnologist and the author of important studies concerning the region and its inhabitants, researched for his work *// senso dei luoghi* written in 2004, the ambivalent relationship between Calabrians and their land, starting from the abandoned ghost towns which seemed apparently dead and yet extraordinarily alive in the collective memory (Teti 2004). Consequently, his investigation demonstrates that in Calabria, particularly among the ruins, the sense of places remained protected by the

silence and the solitude, especially from that effect of apparent amnesia or removal that has already been mentioned in the introduction. It follows that the sense of places remains among the mountains of the interior, particularly where the homogenizing effect of “non-place” that makes everything anonymous and the same, could not arrive. Moreover, it appears that the mountains do not exist for most ordinary people: in Locride, for example, ninety-nine young people out of one hundred youngsters have never seen Mount Penticudi and may probably be not aware of its existence, while, on the contrary they might have been to McDonald's in Siderno hundreds of times. This is exactly what makes them largely indifferent to what is happening around them. As a result, they can be just as comfortable in Calabria as anywhere else because they are no longer part of those places and those locations do not belong to them anymore (Bevilacqua 2012: 243).

Such being the case, Pasolini warned that a real anthropological mutation, namely a real cultural genocide, was taking place in Italy, therefore he made repeated and scandalous interventions on the pages of major Italian newspapers, particularly on the *Corriere della Sera*. As far as the peasant world and its millennia-old values were concerned, what was happening was that they were falling under the furious hammer of the consumer society and hedonistic mentality. He claimed that the idea of progress that also took into account the culture with the quality of life, the integrity of the environment and social justice was being replaced by the idolatry of development which was based only on profit that aimed to increase gross domestic product and on an endless growth which was leading to an indiscriminate consumption of resources (Pasolini 1975/2010). Even though Pasolini's intuition had been mocked and branded as conservatism, not only did it result to be as premonitory of the globalization effect, but also of the absolute triumph of mass consumerism-hedonism to which Calabrians are helplessly being exposed to. In other words, this is a phenomenon that in South Italy and in Calabria, in particular, has its greatest victims.

All in all, what happened after Douglas's visits to Calabria was characterized by colossal landslides and mudslides which caused evacuations of entire villages and radical transformations of the appearance of the landscape. Even today, by observing any valley of Aspromonte, apart from the hanging beds of the torrents

which have risen and widened as a result of the contribution of aggregates that slid down from the mountains, it is possible to see dozens of white tongues of debris cutting vertically across the slopes. However, as Mario La Cava recounted in his *I fatti di Casignana*, it emerged that a matter of contention has always been characterized by the issue relating the forests to be cut and cleared (La Cava 1974). Yet, on closer inspection, there appear noticeable signs of man's intervention such as notches made with an axe on the trunks to mark the path and branches that had been cut off. Moreover, other notable signs include the trimmings of trees and bushes made with an axe so as to clear the trail along with short sections of dry stone walls and remnants of small shelters. All this then seems to convey a sense of the ancient, the original, the inviolable and above all an atmosphere of unfathomable mystery (La Cava 1974).

Unfortunately, as mentioned in chapter Two, in the past one of the main problems of Calabria was caused by brigandage which had essentially three major phases of development. The first dates back to the XVI century and was a consequence of poverty and social injustice that took place under Spanish rule.

On the one hand there were the so-called "barons" who were the noble landowners and often usurpers of the state properties that hired criminals to defend their estates. On the other hand, there were those who were persecuted by the barons themselves, especially poor peasants and fugitives, who were exhausted by debts and consequently organized themselves into bands. The second phase occurred after the French conquest of Naples in 1806.

Finally, the third explosion of brigandage occurred after 1860 subsequent to the Unification of Italy. What worsened the situation in Calabria regarding brigandage was caused by the unfulfilled promises of profound social reforms along with the chimera - which remained a chimera - of seeing the agrarian question resolved once and for all as from fiefdoms they had passed to latifundia (large landed estates), with systematic usurpations of state land and land destined for the civic uses of the populations. Consequently, the state of prostration of the regional economy that was deprived of the duties and protections in force under the Bourbons and abandoned to the ruthless competition of that of the North, along with the compulsory conscription for the Savoy army produced discontent and misery. The result was that groups of dispossessed people went into hiding, attacking wealthy landlords and engaging in skirmishes with Savoy army

detachments.

Ultimately, this phenomenon assumed such alarming proportions that a special law, the so-called *Pica* law of 1863, was necessary, thanks to which brigandage was slowly eradicated. However, this law entailed a sort of mass slaughter that consisted of executions even of old men, women and children who were simply suspected of conniving. It follows that Aspromonte remained famous for the case of the brigand Giuseppe Musolino who, after all, had nothing to do with the historical phenomenon of brigandage either chronologically as Musolino was born in 1876 and died in 1956, or because his being into hiding and the chain of crimes that characterized it stemmed from an unjust conviction suffered by Musolino with the complicity of a local member of the 'ndrangheta criminal organization.

A disappearing civilization

As mentioned in the research question N.Two, the writings of the greatest Calabrian storytellers namely Corrado Alvaro, Francesco Perri, Mario La Cava, Fortunato Seminara and above all Saverio Strati, generally focus on Aspromonte and their people and tend to address the main issues connected to them. Alvaro revealed to twentieth-century Europe an archaic peasant-pastoral culture where the colts still rode along the secular path in which the oxen carried from the high mountain the tree trunks tied to a rope dragging them on the ground without a cart. Nonetheless, it was a fact that the geometric notion of the wheel was missing there, but not for a long time. Yet, that kind of life seemed to pulverize as it happened when mummies were in contact with air.

With this regard, Alvaro maintained the following:

È una civiltà che scompare, e su di essa non ce da piangere, ma bisogna trarre, chi ci è nato, il maggior numero di memorie (Alvaro 1987: 9).⁵⁸

⁵⁸ It is a disappearing civilization, and there is no need to cry for it, however, we must draw the greatest number of memories, especially those who were born into it. The translation is mine.

According to Bevilacqua, what the Calabrians, especially their ruling class, seem to be missing is memory except, maybe, that kind of rhetorical and melodramatic memory that often appears in tourist advertisements or in convention reports and in political meetings. It seems that the immigrants who lived for decades away from Calabria, give the impression to have more memory than the residents. Taking this into account, an emigrant in a novel by Francesco Perri wonders:

Io quando sono qui vorrei essere in America, e quando sono in America tutte le notti sogno la mia casa. Questa terra bruciata ci perseguita e non ci lascia dormire fino in capo al mondo. Cosa avevo lasciato qui io? (Perri 2001: 31-32).⁵⁹

And the novel's narrative voice continues further on after having described aspects of the landscape:

Che cosa aveva, dunque, in sé quella terra per conquistare il cuore, per essere ricordata e rimpianta in ogni angolo del mondo, dove si trovavano errabondi i suoi figli in cerca di lavoro e di pane? (Perri 2001: 31-32).⁶⁰

Moreover, Perri added:

In quella terra così varia e pittoresca, piena di contrasti, apparentemente povera e intimamente ricca, saporosa, grave e soave, c'era una certa rispondenza con la vita e l'anima dei suoi abitanti (Perri 2001: 33-34).⁶¹

⁵⁹ When I am here I wish I were in America and when I am in America, every night I dream of my home. This scorched earth haunts us and does not let us sleep to the ends of the earth. What had I left here? The translation is mine.

⁶⁰ What, then, did that land have in it to win the heart in order to be remembered and regretted in every corner of the world, where its wandering children were found in search of work and bread? The translation is mine.

⁶¹ In that land that was so varied and picturesque, full of contrasts, seemingly poor and

Bevilacqua claimed that, on the one hand, the immigrants tend to regret their land with its past, whereas, on the other hand, the present residents generally ignore it. The latter seem to feel completely disconnected from their backgrounds as they believe they no longer have a past and the consequence is that they are systematically and obsessively erasing traces of it since the ones who look for those traces are considered to be crazy.

However, the situation in Calabria seems to be worse than that which characterized the other end of the peninsula. In the area around the Alps, for example, as stated in Annibale Salsa's book *Il tramonto delle identità tradizionali Spaesamento e disagio esistenziale nelle Alpi* (Salsa 2007), it appears that people have tried, at the very least, to give answers to the phenomenon of globalization, of cultural homogenization.

Nevertheless, there are still small oases in the desert. From this perspective, Bevilacqua during his excursions in Calabria stopped at one of the Calabrians' house whose name was Rocco and recounted that the place where he lived with his family looked like a proper oasis in the desert:

Al rientro dall'escursione, sporchi, sudati, inzaccherati, ci fermiamo a salutare la famiglia: anziani genitori (lui occhi cerulei e capelli chiari, segni, forse, di un'antica discendenza normanna), moglie e figli di intelligenza vivissima. L'affetto che ci dimostrano è sempre enorme. Ogni volta sono felici di ricevere la nostra visita in questo sperduto angolo di mondo, dove la vita scorre con molta più autenticità che non nelle nostre artefatte esistenze cittadine. Rocco ha scelto di continuare l'attività del padre, di rimanere a presidio del suo podere, di abitare tra le sue montagne (Bevilacqua 2012: 253).⁶²

intimately rich, savory, momentous and sweet, there was a certain correspondence with the life and soul of its inhabitants. The translation is mine.

⁶² On the way back from the hike, we were dirty, sweaty and drenched, so we stop to say goodbye to the family: elderly parents (he has sky-blue eyes and fair hair, maybe these are signs that remind of an ancient Norman origin), besides, his wife and children had a vivid intelligence. The affection they show to us is always enormous. Each time they are

In connection with the above, Franco Arminio stated:

Per un perverso ribaltamento la gente abita luoghi (le metropoli) che dovrebbero essere usati solo per fare commissioni e vacanze e va in vacanza in luoghi che invece dovrebbero essere usati per abitare tutti i giorni. I più avveduti sono coloro che stanno vicino alla natura: chi abita in montagna pare che abbia nello sguardo un senso di gratitudine verso il mondo, non ha le arroganze cittadine. Chi coltiva la terra esprime già un amore, e può ancora credere in un mondo sano e salvo (Arminio 2008: 89).⁶³

Finally, regarding the research question discussed in this section, it is noteworthy to mention that in 2010, Prof. Renato Guzzardi together with his collaborators, including Prof. Michelangelo La Luna, started filming *'The Return of Norman'* that was directed by Guzzardi who intended to retrace the journey undertaken by the British writer. This film is divided into two parts: there is a historical section in which the protagonist visits Calabria in 1911 and a modern part in which Douglas makes a temporal leap and wakes up a hundred years later so that he then sees with new eyes the people and events described in his travel diary. It is a docu-fiction in which focuses on the comparison between the old Calabria and the modern one with particular emphasis on the culture and traditions of the Arbëreshe.

delighted to receive our visit to this remote corner of the world where life flows with much more authenticity than in our artificial city existences. Rocco has chosen to continue his father's business, to guard his farm and to live among his mountains. The translation is mine.

⁶³ Through a perverse reversal, people inhabit places (metropolises) that should be used only for running errands and vacations and generally go on vacation to places that should instead be used for everyday living. The shrewdest ones are those who stay close to nature: those who live in the mountains seem to have a sense of gratitude to the world in their gaze; they do not have the city arrogances. Those who cultivate the land already express a sort of love and can still believe in a healthy and safe world. The translation is mine.

Land of Horace

One of the towns that particularly attracted Norman Doulgas was Venosa as it was considered the land of Horace and therefore influenced by Greek culture and literature (Berto 1973/2003). Today this place lies off the beaten track. There are only three trains a day from the little junction of Rocchetta which take about an hour to traverse the sparsely inhabited land that is mostly an uphill journey as Venosa lies at a good elevation.

According to research, it seems that German professors who were doing research on Horatian studies periodically travelled on these worn-out old railway carriages to reach Venosa. However, the ordinary travellers are both commercial gentlemen and peasants from the North of Italy. In addition to brigandage and malaria, this place was in the past and is still today characterized by the presence of dreadful people along with the empty-headed peasants which were considered as the terror of the South. As a result, it stands to reason that only the most disagreeable and incapable people are sent away to places like Venosa (Bevilacqua 1993).

A good research question that is in line with the aim of this analysis is to investigate whether this town has greatly changed since Roman times. It goes without saying that domestic calamities and earthquakes (such as the terrible one which took place in 1456) seem to have altered its territory. The amphitheatre that seated ten thousand spectators is merged into the earth, whereas, all the buildings that date back to Roman times have become a pile of stonework which were designated as the tomb of the Marcellus who was killed there by Hannibal's soldiers. Moreover, there still remain some reticulated walls of the second century that are known as the "House of Horace" which are regarded as genuine as that of Juliet in Verona or the Mansion of Loreto (Augè 1993).

Yet, the tradition seems to be rather old therefore the builder of the house might have displayed some poetic taste in his selection of a fine view across the valley. Additionally, it is possible to see an indifferent statue of Horace in the market-place, conversely, a previous one, described as Horace as well, was afterwards found to be the effigy of somebody else (Augè 1993).

It is noteworthy to mention that there are ancient inscriptions everywhere which were worked into the brickwork of the buildings. It follows that Mommsen collected many of them in his *Corpus*, and subsequently some sixty new ones were discovered.

It can be noticed that the majority of the stone lions of Roman days that are mostly on the street corners, on the fountains and in courtyards seem to have broken jaws and noses and miss legs and tails. For this reason, Venosa is notorious for having mutilated antiques of this species (Giacomantonio 1984).

The country around must have looked different in the old days. Horace described it as covered with forests, and a manuscript of the early seventeenth century which was printed at a later date, maintained that the surrounding regions were full of foxes, wild boars, hedgehog, hares, wolves, roe deer, tortoises, porcupines and rabbits, along with wood loving creatures. Today, there are still several stretches of oak left at the back of the town and the main lines of the land seem not to have changed. Further on, there are the Horatian Forense and Acherontia's nest on the glades of Bantia (the modern Banzi).

The prolonged Garganian Mount, on which the poet's eye must often have rested, emerges above the plain of Apulia like an island (and such it is: an island of Austrian stone, stranded upon the beach of Italy) (Alcaro 2006).

Monte Vulture still dominates the landscape, even though at this nearness the crater seems to be losing its shapelly conical outline and assumes a serrated edge. On its summit it is possible to perceive a gigantic cross which is one of the symbols that the clerics erected at the time of the recent rationalist congress in Rome (Giacomantonio 1984).

Studies done in the South of Italy claim that Venosa was not malarious at the time when the author was there. He described it as a healthy place and added that the only complaint from which the inhabitants suffered was "*ponture*" (pleurisy). It is now within the infected zone and this was the consequence of the deforestation of the country which prevented the downflow of the rivers. Since the river beds were choked up with detritus, this produced stagnant pools which caused the breeding of the mosquito and consequently led to spread of the plague in many parts of Italy.

In Horace's days Venosa was immune, although Rome and certain rural districts were already malarious (Shama 1997).

Ancient votive tablets to the fever goddess Mephitis (malaria) have been found not far from there, in particular in the plain below the present town of Potenza. Yet, it is in Venosa that a great deal of old Roman blood and spirit seem to have survived. After the noise of the Neapolitan provinces in which chattering takes the place of thinking, it becomes a sort of relief for people to find themselves in the company of these grave individuals who give the impression to converse like the Scotch in an impersonal fashion without interests. Their attitude towards religious matters does not convey the impression of active scepticism, but rather a mediocre understanding or better still a sort of indifferentism and submission to acts of worship and all other usages that were consecrated by time such as the *pietas*—the conservative, law-abiding, Roman spirit (Bevilacqua 2010).

Accordingly, it is through walking at sunset along any of the roads which lead to the country that it is possible to meet the peasants riding home from their field labours accompanied by their goats along with their dogs and pigs.

It is among them that many types of Roman physiognomies can be recognized: about one third of the population appears to be of dark-fair complexion with green or sky-blue eyes. Yet, even though the town takes its name from Benoth (Venus), the women do not seem to be beautiful. Research shows that some authentic Roman families managed to survive and have continued to exist to the present day, such as that of Cenna (Cinna). One of them was the author of the narrative mentioned above, besides, there is an old bas-relief worked into the walls of the Trinita abbey which depicts some of the members that belonged to this local family (Turri 1979).

Studies suggest that literature has extended at a large degree around this small place, it follows that the monographs that deal with every one of these little Italian towns, especially the Calabrian ones, lead the readers to continuous surprise and astonishment. Moreover, below the surface, it seems possible to find in all of these people an implication of committed spirituality that characterizes knowledgeable and thoughtful men who manage to foster the best tradition of the mind that are unlikely to be found in the town council or at the cafe.

No learned societies have come to their assistance so far and no newspapers seem to praise their labours, nonetheless, even though typography is cheap in this country, they often deprive themselves of the necessities of life so as to produce these agreements of calm research. The outcome is that in this part of

Italy there is a sort of deep gulf between the mundane and the intellectual life. According to Giacomantonio:

These men are retiring in their habits and one cannot but revere their scholarly and almost ascetic that survives like a green oasis amid the desert of "politics" roguery and municipal corruption (Giacomantonio 1984: 105).

The City Fathers of Venosa are considered to be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Yet, their town is by no means a clean place as it is twice as dirty as Lucera: a reposeful dirtiness vulgar or chaotic, but testifying to time-honoured neglect to a feudal contempt of cleanliness:

You crawl through narrow, ill-paved streets, looking down into subterranean family bedrooms that must be insufferably damp in winter and filled during the hot months with an odour hard to conceive (Giacomantonio 1984: 105).

In Venosa there is electric lighting as a paternal government made the price of petroleum so prohibitive that the use of electricity for street-lighting became quite common in the lowliest places. However, the rudimentary glare serves mainly to reveal the general squalor. One explanation for this state of affairs is that there are no quarries for adequate cobblestones in the surrounding area.

Besides, another reason for this situation is that Venosa has no large citizen class: generally its inhabitants are mostly peasant field labourers and peasant proprietors who leave the town in the morning and return home late at night with their beasts and have then learned through bad experiences to reside in the towns rather than in the countryside which was still in an unsettled state and infested with brigandage. Consequently, a sort of Cincinnatus attitude seems to dominate in this area which is mostly based on an agricultural population therefore it cannot be kept clean. However, Venosa has an advantage over Lucera and most Italian towns that is the lack of octroi. Naples, for example, is

surrounded by an outstanding Chinese wall, it also has a complex equipment of alarm-bells and is patrolled day and night and by numerous armed customs officers. It seems that the presence and the tasks of these official loafers is not appreciated by the majority of people as these officials are seen as those who contribute to infest the land and would be far better employed themselves in planting onions on the many uncultivated terrains of Italy (Petruszewicz 1989). Today, the council of Naples, even though it is extensive, is merely a local charity. Every attempt at innovation in agriculture, as in industry as well, is immediately discouraged by new and devious impositions.

As might be expected, there is a prohibitive duty on every article or utensil that is manufactured abroad. Moreover, there is the octroi that is a relic of medievalism regarded as the most unscientific, useless and inefficacious and, above all the problematic aspect of taxes. Finally, not only are there municipal dues that have to be paid on animals bought and animals sold, but also on animals killed and animals kept. In addition there are municipal dues on every object that the country people manufacture or require for their existence such as vine-props, milk and wine and building materials such as bricks and timber for scaffolding together with lead and tiles.

It seems that the physiognomy of the municipal employees who extort these tributes reflects their miserable jobs. The impression that they convey calls to mind the militarism of Germany and the bureaucracy of Austria. Nevertheless, it is awful to see honest Italian peasants at the mercy of these disrespectful savages, real barbarians whose only explicit expression is characterized by malice striving to break through a crust of congenital cretinism (Giacomantonio 1984: 108). Research concerning South Italy often refers to the great artists and speculative philosophers of old Italy. It follows that the artists of modern Italy are her bureaucrats who delineate and elaborate the taxes, whereas her philosophers are instead the peasants who pay them (Bevilacqua 1993).

In point of fact, there is nothing to choose between the exactions of the municipal and governmental criminals. Likewise, the waste of time caused by the red tape alone tends to lead to a revolution anywhere carried out especially by men inured by long abuses to this particular form of tyranny. The consequence is that the wisest old men regard the paternal government as a lucrative organized deception in which it is the citizen's indisputable duty to get something back

whenever possible.

Based on the information provided, the regulations on the matter of imported products in legal fashion seems to be simple enough on paper, when, on the contrary, it takes no account of that “personal element” which is everything in the South of the perturbed tempers of those inert employees who are disturbed in their rest and consequently may keep people waiting half a day while they fumble menacingly over some dusty scrap of paper. As a result, even Englishmen discover that law-breaking in Italy becomes a necessity, or better still a rule of life and this is especially what Norman Douglas himself realized after his visits in southern Italy (Holloway 1976).

At the same time, even when the travellers that are new to Borneo are offered a durian-fruit, they suddenly feel at first a sense of disgust caused by its odour which changes later as, after a few mouthfuls, they generally consider it to be the apple of Paradise and wonder how they could have survived so long in the friendly lands where such heavenly fare is not.

In view of all that, Giacomantonio maintained that:

Even as the true connoisseur who, beholding some rare scarlet idol from the Tingo-Tango forests, at first casts it aside and then, light dawning as he ponders over those monstrous complexities, begins to realize that they, and they alone, contain the quintessential formulae of all the fervent dreamings of Scopas and Michelangelo; even as he who first, upon a peak in Darien, gazed awestruck upon the grand Pacific slumbering at his feet, till presently his senses reeled at the blissful prospect of fresh regions unrolling themselves, boundless, past the fulfilment of his fondest hopes (Giacomantonio 1984: 110).

Consequently, the domesticated Englishmen that reach the South of Italy seem to be amazed to discover that they have in their possession a sense hitherto unrevealed which suggests a new taste in life, together with a new horizon and the sense of law-breaking as well. The phases seem to be the following: as they are generally honest men, they seem to be surprised at the thought of such a thing, afterwards they may find themselves in the situation to be reconciled to the inevitable since they are, for the most part, sensible individuals. Finally, they

manage to learn to play the game so well that the shocked officials disdainfully acknowledge (which is in reality their highest praise):

Inglese italianizzato— Diavolo incarnato⁶⁴.

It follows that gradually the charm of law-breaking develops in the Italianated Saxon at a slow and steady pace and the outcome is that there emerges a sort of neo-barbarism that is not only in matters of art (Douglas 2012:34).

⁶⁴ Italianized English- Devil incarnate

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

All things considered, findings seem to demonstrate that there are several similarities and differences between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua as well as in their respective works *Old Calabria* and *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*.

As mentioned in the answer to research question N. 5, like Douglas, also Bevilacqua went in search of that old and mythical Calabria described by the British writer at the beginning of the 20th century. Ever since he returned to Calabria in 1980 when he finished his studies at the University of Florence, he decided to stay and work in his birthplace and this decision triggered him to learn everything that no teacher and no school had ever taught him about his land. Consequently, he has been doing research for more than forty years while hiking throughout Calabria and studying in depth its history and origins along with its main problems.

Like Douglas, his walking can be considered as a sort of excavation, a thorough research and a kind of archaeology. He maintained that when he first went to study in Florence, he was very surprised to find on the shelves of the Feltrinelli Bookstore the book *Old Calabria* and to read about a foreigner who knew so many things that Calabrians completely ignored.

Likewise, Bevilacqua seems to resemble Douglas with regard to his cultural eclecticism as like the British writer, he is interested to know and study in depth whatever topic he finds himself interested in. Besides, according to findings, the contemporary Italian writer claims that he needs eclectic knowledge in order to decode reality without prejudice and without having to surrender to the inviolable barriers of specialisms. Yet, he could not say in what ways he feels dissimilar to Douglas, nevertheless it is rather difficult for Bevilacqua to perceive Norman as a foreigner, maybe because *Old Calabria* represented one of the means through which he managed to reconcile with Calabria.

In other words, the encounter with Norman Douglas and his travel narrative in Calabria represented for Bevilacqua the discovery of Calabria itself.

Hence, Douglas became for him the genius, the daemon that led him to the physical, moral, spiritual exploration of this southern region and therefore of himself as well.

Considering that Bevilacqua read *Old Calabria* in Florence before going back to Calabria, the result is that his intellectual and material research is mostly based on a continuous comparison with Douglas' text. However, it needs to be pointed out that his investigation can be regarded as more material than intellectual since it was mainly characterized by his walking in the mountains in a region where forty years ago only shepherds, farmers, lumbermen, charcoal burners and hunters managed to reach).

Nevertheless, even though the Italian writer chose a different itinerary, he says that whenever he set out towards the mountains of the Pollino, the Sila, the Serre and Aspromonte, he still had Douglas' descriptions in mind. Resultantly, that is how he decided to dedicate a book which gave an account of the places that Douglas visited on foot through an actualized narrative.

Concerning the differences between the two writers, it emerges that they produced two dissimilar texts. The only connection between them concerns the places visited by both of them. In other words, Douglas' book is the account of a "foreigner" coming to Calabria, whereas Bevilacqua's work is mainly a report of an "insider" (with this regard he has used the terminology coined by Denis Cosgrove in *Realtà sociali e paesaggio simbolico* (Cosgrove 2004). As a result, the respective points of view are different: Douglas' standpoint is a disenchanting vision (which is at times ironic and scathing as well) even though it is always participative. On the contrary, Bevilacqua's perspective is a fully materialized view of a person that not only has tried to reveal through his reports what is not known about such an ignored and misunderstood region namely Calabria, but he also aims to protect and enhance its "heritage."

A further distinction regards the literary style that characterizes both works: Bevilacqua has never drawn inspiration from Douglas' type of narration as he has chosen to write in his own style.

Finally, as mentioned above, most of the itineraries chosen by the two writers do not coincide. However, even though Bevilacqua recreated his own travel arrangements, albeit in the same places that Douglas visited, after walking for a

long time for his purposes of knowledge and protection of the environment he realized that Douglas had always been with him and that it was worth talking about this interesting author with emphasis on his life, his works along with his travels in Calabria and, at the same time, to give an account of what remained of the old and archaic Calabria.

Regarding this last point, findings suggest that today this region has directly entered into post-modernity, even though this was not the result of the industrialization and the marked urbanism. The lower population density, in addition to the lack of major industries and metropolises, as well as people that still live in a rural and mountainous environment may have contributed to this significant “diversity” in comparison with the rest of Europe.

Bevilacqua also maintains that Calabria has skipped “modernity” as a cultural fact if by referring to modernity he means that epochal change in the ways of representing society and the world that presented itself with capitalism, industry and modern urbanism (Bevilacqua 2012).

In point of fact, Calabria has completely lacked capitalism, industry and urbanism: a good portion of the population experienced modernity by emigrating elsewhere. Consequently, those who returned generally re-immersed themselves into a significantly archaic world that, especially in the countryside and in the villages, has persisted and endures to this time.

The Italian writer does not mean to say that changes did not occur in Calabria, on the contrary, he maintains that there was a process of imitation, or moving aimlessly in the absence of those elements earlier mentioned that are the substratum of “modernity.”

Thus, after years of “suspension” in time, Calabrians have found themselves catapulted into post-modernity, or rather the era of globalization, information and technology, new media, the Internet and the Net. As a result, this phenomenon has produced and is still producing a sort of cultural homogenization, especially in young people who no longer differ from their counterparts in northern Italy or the rest of Europe.

Yet, in spite of this realignment of Calabria with changes in social history, he has noticed the persistence of the archaism that he described in the book *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas*, albeit in complex and still fragmented forms (Bevilacqua 2012).

Nevertheless, although certain customs along with established lifestyles and the use of materials have changed, it seems to be basically the ancientness as encountered by Douglas that continues to characterize this southern region of Italy.

In addition, there is a sort of radicalism, a moral choice and an ethos in the choice to live in the villages and countryside of Calabria which makes Bevilacqua think of the attempt of a part of Calabrian society to settle in “the lost places” (as Bevilacqua defines them). Yet, this does not concern only Calabrians since many foreigners have chosen to move to the small towns of Calabria for years. What this means is that these places appear to be neglected by the dominant economy and culture and lost in the memory of their communities. Hence, this is exactly what Douglas’ *Old Calabria* refers to since his work rises from its smoking ashes, under which the embers never stopped burning. Accordingly, in the first interview the Italian writer defined the “neo-exotic of Calabria” as follows:

La Calabria è attraente perché rappresenta un esotico di prossimità, ai confini meridionali dell’Europa, perché è profondamente diversa da ogni altra regione d’Europa, nel male ma anche nel bene, nell’ombra come nella luce. La Calabria offre a piene mani esperienze “autentiche” o neo-autentiche. E non intendo solo a fini “turistici” o di viaggio. Intendo come un modo dell’abitare, del vivere nei luoghi, che a qualcuno può apparire antiquato, ma che piace a quella parte degli Europei che sanno, come scrive il filosofo francese Thierry Paquot in *Elogio del lusso*, che i nuovi lussi dell’Occidente opulento non sono auto di grandi marche, ville con piscina, orologi famosi, gioielli, ma sono invece “spazio, tempo e silenzio” (Bevilacqua 2023: interview).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Calabria is a picturesque place because it represents an exotic of proximity on the southern borders of Europe, as it is completely different from any other region of Europe, for better or worse, in the shadows as well as in the light. Calabria offers “authentic” or neo-authentic experiences galore. And I do not just mean for “tourist” or travel purposes, I mean as a way of dwelling, of living in places which may seem old-fashioned to some people, but instead are liked by that part of Europeans who know, as the French philosopher Thierry Paquot writes In *Elogio del lusso* that the new luxuries of the opulent

In Douglas' *Old Calabria*, it can be noticed that there is a continuous comparison between Calabria and England. It often emerges from his descriptions of the Calabrian landscape, especially from his observations of some disconnected villages and the mountains (e.g., Sila) which call to mind some sceneries of Great Britain, particularly of Scotland. However, this juxtaposition takes into account also the attitude, the beliefs along with the aspect and the behavior of people and animals of both places. Therefore, it could be noticed that what distinguished Calabria from England and other northern European countries was the irruption of that irrational and a magical and mythical world without-order that was completely different from the Victorian and industrialized England since it had lost all these characteristics.

All in all, it seems that even though some time has passed since Douglas' first visit in Calabria, Francesco Bevilacqua's investigation yielded an outcome of substantial permanence of the archaic and the mythical. Besides, it conveys the idea to have discovered a "concealed form of modernity" only with regard to the consumerist aspect as well as the proliferation of land plunder. Nevertheless, the rest appears to have remained intact, almost reshaped neo-authentic. Consequently, based on the information provided, this would explain why many people from northern Italy and central and northern Europe, particularly from England, have so far been interested in visiting Calabria and reached this region either for tourism or to change "homeland."

Above all, the ones that have shown interest mostly in Calabrian culture and territory have been mainly travelers, writers, artists and storytellers.

Still today, it appears that many people are tired of hyper-postmodernity, therefore, they migrate in the opposite direction in search of archaism and ancientness acknowledged as authenticity and the cult of memory (Bevilacqua 2012).

Considering everything, what mostly remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria is the substratum, namely the background and influences of Calabrian culture which can be referred to as the popular culture in the anthropological

West are not big luxurious cars, villas with swimming pools, famous watches and pieces of jewellery, but are instead "space, time and silence".

sense. Accordingly, as mentioned in the answer to research question N. Three, Emanuele Lelli's investigation has demonstrated that many beliefs and traditions that come from the Greek and Latin world are still present in Calabria, especially among the common peasant people who continue to hand them down orally from father to son for centuries (Lelli 2016).

Hence, it is noteworthy to cite Ernesto De Martino's anthropological research in southern Italy which maintained that even though, in the end the effects of an inevitable modernity came to Calabria, albeit not in the usual terms that is through active capitalism and a widespread industrial network, the region seems to be still characterized by that kind of antiquity that Douglas was looking for (De Martino 2015).

In agreement with Bevilacqua, this can be easily noticed when going in the countryside and towards the interior of the small towns. To indicate more specifically, what he means to say is that the present Calabria could be considered as a neo-authentic, neo-exotic, neo-primitive and even neo-magical place where all its villages and towns which have changed since the beginning of the twentieth century, still have managed to retain their memories maybe in an unconscious way.

Limitations

This research project has some limitations, for example the modalities in which I conducted the interviews could be an example. As I mentioned in the introduction I chose to interview the two participants in a friendly atmosphere in order to create a comfortable environment to let them feel more at ease. Fearing that the interviews would have turned into informal conversations, I deliberately chose to write in advance the list of questions so that I could have a sort of guidance to help me maintain the debates on track.

However, although I conducted the interviews following the structure of the pre-prepared lists of questions and I also recorded them, I realized that this procedure was not conducive to a naturalistic investigation, but on the contrary, it gave the debates a clinical emphasis (Hay 2010).

The interview itself could be considered another limitation for this research as generally participants could perceive one-to-one debates with personalized questions as an invasion of their privacy and consequently might feel intimidated or uncomfortable to share personal information about their lives or their previous experiences.

The fact that I already got acquainted with the participants before the interviews, somehow, compromised the outcomes of this research as they could not have always felt free to speak, particularly when they had to give accounts of their research and the modality with which they conducted all the investigations. Consequently, this circumstance might have not given them full freedom to externalize what their real perceptions were regarding some topics as instead they would have done with an unknown interviewer.

A further limitation was determined by the small sample size of the survey: because of time constraints, only two writers were interviewed. The involvement of a larger number of similar participants could have provided more common elements to analyze and identified further interesting patterns and themes and in addition it would have also given the opportunity to draw better analogies and comparisons of the findings.

Finally, this area of investigation constitutes a limitation itself as there was not enough empirical data and research done on both writers, especially on Francesco Bevilacqua, consequently there was limited material available concerning their

works and the outcome is that it was not simple and straightforward to gather useful data.

All in all, this study reflects the perceptions of two subjects in a very specific context and its aim was not to generalize the findings and results.

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APPENDIX 1

Informed consent form

My name is Federico Valente and I am studying for the PhD in *Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea* at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio.

I wish to invite you to participate in a research project that I am doing for this thesis that I have to write in order to complete the PhD. The title of the thesis that I would like to write is "*Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.*"

In order to collect data for this research, I would like to invite you for an interview that should last around about thirty minutes which is then going to be recorded.

During this project your anonymity will be ensured. The recordings of the interview will be deleted as soon as this project has been handed in. Your names will not be written in the transcriptions and your school will not be identified in any way. You are free to withdraw at any time before 15th December 2022 without giving reasons, the data collected from you will be destroyed and will not be used.

If you have further questions, please contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher:

Supervisor: Prof. Maria Valentini m.valentini@unicas.it

Please read carefully each of the following statement and, only if you agree to participate, tick the boxes and sign at the bottom.

I agree to take part in this research which is to investigate "*Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.*"



The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the principles, aims and procedures of this project and the probable risks involved.



I have read the information sheet and I understand the principles, procedures and probable risks involved.



I am aware that I will be required to answer questions during an interview that will last around 30 minutes



I agree that the interview will be recorded



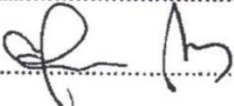
I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will normally be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.



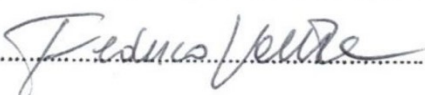
I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving reasons and without incurring consequences from doing so.



Participant Name..... FRANCESCO BEVILACQUA

Signed  Date 15/12/2022

Researcher name..... FEDERICO VALENTE

Signed  Date 15/12/2022

APPENDIX 2 Translation Informed consent form into Italian

Modulo di consenso

Il sottoscritto Federico Valente, iscritto al corso di dottorato di ricerca in Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea presso l'università degli studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale, chiede alla S.V. la possibilità di essere intervistata al fine di rendere un contributo al progetto di ricerca per la stesura della tesi finale dal titolo: *Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.*

Al fine di raccogliere informazioni e dati utili per il suddetto progetto di ricerca, è richiesta la sua partecipazione ad un'intervista che durerà all'incirca 30/40 minuti che sarà, altresì, registrata.

Il presente modulo assicura il pieno rispetto della privacy nelle varie fasi di progetto: i suoi dati non saranno divulgati a terzi e la registrazione dell'intervista sarà cancellata al termine del lavoro. Inoltre, il suo nome non verrà utilizzato nella trascrizione dell'intervista né, tantomeno, verrà identificato il nome della sua scuola.

Ad ogni modo, può ritenersi libero e non vincolato al presente progetto: è sua facoltà di rinunciare ad offrire il suo contributo entro il 15 dicembre 2022 senza rendere alcuna motivazione circa la sua scelta. Si precisa, ulteriormente, che il contenuto audio registrato sarà cancellato e non utilizzato dopo la consegna della predetta tesi.

Per ulteriori informazioni, può contattare il sottoscritto oppure la mia tutor /relatrice Prof.ssa Maria Valentini al seguente indirizzo email: m.valentini@unicas.it

Sono d'accordo di partecipare al progetto di ricerca in merito a: *Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.*



Il ricercatore mi ha reso noto delle relative informazioni in merito alle procedure e gli obiettivi del presente progetto nonché ai possibili rischi consequenziali.



Confermo di aver letto le informazioni in merito al presente progetto di ricerca e di essere a conoscenza dei principi, delle procedure e dei possibili rischi consequenziali.



Sono consapevole che mi verrà richiesto di rispondere a diverse domande durante l'intervista e che il colloquio durerà all'incirca 30/40 minuti.



Sono d'accordo che l'intervista sarà registrata.



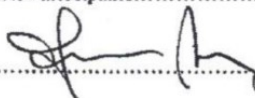
Sono a conoscenza delle modalità di uso dei dati raccolti e del fatto che nel caso informazioni riservate dovessero, in qualche modo, emergere durante l'intervista, verranno considerate solo ed esclusivamente dal ricercatore e non rivelate a terzi.



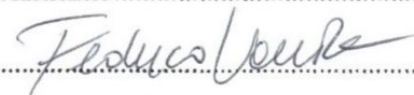
Sono consapevole che la mia partecipazione al detto progetto di ricerca è volontaria e che mi viene riconosciuto il diritto di poter abbandonare l'intervista qualora lo ritenessi più opportuno senza dover dare motivazioni oppure incorrere in conseguenze di qualsiasi tipo.



Nome del Partecipante..... FRANCESCO BEVILACQUA.....

Firma  Data 15/12/2022.....

Nome del Ricercatore..... FEDERICO VALENTE.....

Firma  Data 15/12/2022.....

APPENDIX 3

Informed consent form

My name is Federico Valente and I am studying for the PhD in *Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea* at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio.

I wish to invite you to participate in a research project that I am doing for this thesis that I have to write in order to complete the PhD. The title of the thesis that I would like to write is *"Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua."*

In order to collect data for this research, I would like to invite you for an interview that should last around about thirty minutes which is then going to be recorded.

During this project your anonymity will be ensured. The recordings of the interview will be deleted as soon as this project has been handed in. Your names will not be written in the transcriptions and your school will not be identified in any way. You are free to withdraw at any time before 4th May 2023 without giving reasons, the data collected from you will be destroyed and will not be used.

If you have further questions, please contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher:

Supervisor: Prof. Maria Valentini m.valentini@unicas.it

Please read carefully each of the following statement and, only if you agree to participate, tick the boxes and sign at the bottom

I agree to take part in this research which is to investigate *"Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua"*.



The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the principles, aims and procedures of this project and the probable risks involved.



I have read the information sheet and I understand the principles, procedures and probable risks involved.



I am aware that I will be required to answer questions during an interview that will last around 30 minutes



I agree that the interview will be recorded



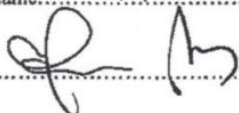
I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will normally be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.




I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving reasons and without incurring consequences from doing so.



Participant Name..... FRANCESCO BEVILACQUA

Signed  Date 4/05/2023

Researcher name FEDERICO VALENTE

Signed  Date 4/05/2023

APPENDIX 4 Translation Informed consent form into Italian

Modulo di consenso

Il sottoscritto Federico Valente, iscritto al corso di dottorato di ricerca in Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea presso l'università degli studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale, chiede alla S.V. la possibilità di essere intervistata al fine di rendere un contributo al progetto di ricerca per la stesura della tesi finale dal titolo: *Norman Douglas'Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua*.

Al fine di raccogliere informazioni e dati utili per il suddetto progetto di ricerca, è richiesta la sua partecipazione ad un'intervista che durerà all'incirca 30/40 minuti che sarà, altresì, registrata.

Il presente modulo assicura il pieno rispetto della privacy nelle varie fasi di progetto: i suoi dati non saranno divulgati a terzi e la registrazione dell'intervista sarà cancellata al termine del lavoro. Inoltre, il suo nome non verrà utilizzato nella trascrizione dell'intervista né, tantomeno, verrà identificato il nome della sua scuola.

Ad ogni modo, può ritenersi libero e non vincolato al presente progetto: è sua facoltà di rinunciare ad offrire il suo contributo entro il 4 maggio 2023 senza rendere alcuna motivazione circa la sua scelta. Si precisa, ulteriormente, che il contenuto audio registrato sarà cancellato e non utilizzato dopo la consegna della predetta tesi.

Per ulteriori informazioni, può contattare il sottoscritto oppure la mia tutor /relatrice Prof.ssa Maria Valentini al seguente indirizzo email: m.valentini@unicas.it

Sono d'accordo di partecipare al progetto di ricerca in merito a: *Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua*.



Il ricercatore mi ha reso noto delle relative informazioni in merito alle procedure e gli obiettivi del presente progetto nonché ai possibili rischi consequenziali.



Confermo di aver letto le informazioni in merito al presente progetto di ricerca e di essere a conoscenza dei principi, delle procedure e dei possibili rischi consequenziali.



Sono consapevole che mi verrà richiesto di rispondere a diverse domande durante l'intervista e che il colloquio durerà all'incirca 30/40 minuti.



Sono d'accordo che l'intervista sarà registrata.



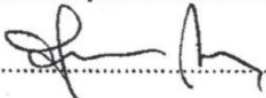
Sono a conoscenza delle modalità di uso dei dati raccolti e del fatto che nel caso informazioni riservate dovessero, in qualche modo, emergere durante l'intervista, verranno considerate solo ed esclusivamente dal ricercatore e non rivelate a terzi.



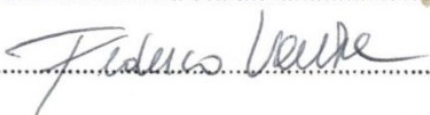
Sono consapevole che la mia partecipazione al detto progetto di ricerca è volontaria e che mi viene riconosciuto il diritto di poter abbandonare l'intervista qualora lo ritenessi più opportuno senza dover dare motivazioni oppure incorrere in conseguenze di qualsiasi tipo.



Nome del Partecipante..... FRANCESCO BEVILACQUA.....

Firma  Data 4/05/2023.....

Nome del Ricercatore..... FEDERICO VALENTE.....

Firma  Data 4/05/2023.....

APPENDIX 5

Informed consent form

My name is Federico Valente and I am studying for the PhD in *Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea* at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio.

I wish to invite you to participate in a research project that I am doing forth thesis that I have to write in order to complete the PhD. The title of the thesis that I would like to write is "*Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.*"

In order to collect data for this research, I would like to invite you for an interview that should last around about thirty minutes which is then going to be recorded.

During this project your anonymity will be ensured. The recordings of the interview will be deleted as soon as this project has been handed in. Your names will not be written in the transcriptions and your school will not be identified in any way. You are free to withdraw at any time before 4th February 2024 without giving reasons, the data collected from you will be destroyed and will not be used.

If you have further questions, please contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher:

Supervisor: Prof. Maria Valentini m.valentini@unicas.it

Please read carefully each of the following statement and, only if you agree to participate, tick the boxes and sing at the bottom.

I agree to take part in this research which is to investigate "*Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.*"



The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the principles, aims and procedures of this project and the probable risks involved.



I have read the information sheet and I understand the principles, procedures and probable risks involved.



I am aware that I will be required to answer questions during an interview that will last around 30 minutes



I agree that the interview will be recorded



I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will normally be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.



I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving reasons and without incurring consequences from doing so.



Participant Name..... EMMANUELE LELLI

Signed..... Emm. Lelli Date..... 4.2.24

Researcher name Federico Valente.....

Signed..... Federico Valente Date 04/02/2024.....

APPENDIX 6 Translation Informed consent form into Italian

Modulo di consenso

Il sottoscritto Federico Valente, iscritto al corso di Dottorato di ricerca in Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea presso l'università degli studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale, chiede alla S.V. la possibilità di essere intervistata al fine di rendere un contributo al progetto di ricerca per la stesura della tesi finale (TE730) dal titolo: *Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua*.

Al fine di raccogliere informazioni e dati utili per il suddetto progetto di ricerca, è richiesta la sua partecipazione ad un'intervista che durerà all'incirca 30/40 minuti che sarà, altresì, registrata.

Il presente modulo assicura il pieno rispetto della privacy nelle varie fasi di progetto: i suoi dati non saranno divulgati a terzi e la registrazione dell'intervista sarà cancellata al termine del lavoro. Inoltre, il suo nome non verrà utilizzato nella trascrizione dell'intervista né, tantomeno, verrà identificato.

Ad ogni modo, può ritenersi libero e non vincolato al presente progetto: è sua facoltà di rinunciare ad offrire il suo contributo entro il 4 febbraio 2024 senza rendere alcuna motivazione circa la sua scelta. Si precisa, ulteriormente, che il contenuto audio registrato sarà cancellato e non utilizzato dopo la consegna della predetta tesi.

Per ulteriori informazioni, può contattare il sottoscritto oppure la mia tutor /relatrice Prof.ssa Maria Valentini al seguente indirizzo email: m.valentini@unicas.it

Sono d'accordo di partecipare al progetto di ricerca in merito a: *Norman Douglas' Old Calabria: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua*.



Il ricercatore mi ha reso noto delle relative informazioni in merito alle procedure e gli obiettivi del presente progetto nonché ai possibili rischi consequenziali.



Confermo di aver letto le informazioni in merito al presente progetto di ricerca e di essere a conoscenza dei principi, delle procedure e dei possibili rischi consequenziali.



Sono consapevole che mi verrà richiesto di rispondere a diverse domande durante l'intervista e che il colloquio durerà all'incirca 30/40 minuti.



Sono d'accordo che l'intervista sarà registrata.



Sono a conoscenza delle modalità di uso dei dati raccolti e del fatto che nel caso informazioni riservate dovessero, in qualche modo, emergere durante l'intervista, verranno considerate solo ed esclusivamente dal ricercatore e non rivelate a terzi.



Sono consapevole che la mia partecipazione al detto progetto di ricerca è volontaria e che mi viene riconosciuto il diritto di poter abbandonare l'intervista qualora lo ritenessi più opportuno senza dover dare motivazioni oppure incorrere in conseguenze di qualsiasi tipo.



Nome del Partecipante..... *EMANUELE LOU*.....

Firma..... *Emmanuel*..... Data..... *4.2.24*.....

Nome del Ricercatore.....

Firma..... *Federico Valente*..... Data..... *04/02/2024*.....

APPENDIX 7 The participants

The first participant is Francesco Bevilacqua, the contemporary Italian writer and lawyer who specializes in Civil and Administrative law.

In addition to being a lawyer, he is also a publicist journalist, nature photographer, mountaineer and a keen nature trail-goer.

Most importantly, Bevilacqua has dedicated much of his time to study in-depth the region of Calabria and its culture using a novel comparative method that combines Literature, Geography, History, Anthropology and Sociology. Moreover, he is the coauthor of two documentaries about Sila and Serre produced by *Quadro Film* for *RAI* and broadcasted by the Italian program *Geo*.

On balance, Bevilacqua has written twenty-two books about the nature and landscapes of Calabria, travels in Calabria and the relationship between man, places and landscape, and, above all, about Calabrian literature.

Bevilacqua's book that has been mainly analysed for the present research has been *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* which was written while the Calabrian author has been going along Douglas' itinerary in order to find the archaism and wild nature that Douglas described in his *Old Calabria*.

The second participant is Emanuele Lelli who is a professor of Italian and Latin at the *Liceo Classico "Tasso"* in Rome and at the University "La Sapienza" in Rome. He is a scholar of Hellenistic poetry and of Greek and Latin scientific and technical literature.

In addition, not only is he an expert of the paroemiographic tradition (*The Proverb in Greek Poetry*, 2006; *Greek Proverbs*, 2007), but he is also a researcher of ancient and modern popular culture to which he is devoting his current investigation with a 'demophilological' approach, as he combines Ethnography with classical Philology (*Ancient and Modern Folklore*, 2014).

For years he has been coordinating groups of young scholars in publishing initiatives on the ancient world (e.g. *L'agricoltura antica* 2009; the journal *Appunti Romani di Filologia*, since 1998). Whereas, he has written for the publishing house

“Bompiani” the following books: *Quinto di Smirne*, in 2013, that is the sequel to the Iliad; *Erasmus* and *Adagi* in 2013; *Ditti di Creta* and *L'altra Iliade* in 2015; and finally, *Sud Antico, diario di una ricerca tra filologia ed etnologia* in 2016.

APPENDIX 8 – Francesco Bevilacqua’s publishers’ contact details

Abramo Editore: loc. Difesa zona industriale, 88050 Caraffa, phone: +390961/900001, fax 0961/954000, email: info@abramo.com, website: www.abramo.com.

Il Coscile: c.so Garibaldi n. 114, 87012 Castrovillari, phone: +390981/22632, e.mail: segreteria@ilcoscile.it, website: www.ilcoscile.it.

Rubbettino: viale Rubbettino, 88049 Soveria Mannelli, phone: +390968/66641, fax 0968/662055, e.mail: info@rubbettino.it, website: www.rubbettino.it.

Laruffa: via dei Tre Mulini, Città Universitaria, 89124 Reggio Calabria, phone: +390965/814954, e- mail: segreteria@laruffaeditore.it, website: www.laruffaeditore.it

Francesco Bevilacqua’s contact details:

Francesco Bevilacqua, Via A. Anile n. 3 – 88046 – Lamezia Terme (law firm), phone: +390968/21087 (also fax), e-mail: francescobevilacqua@libero.it, cell. +39393/9736908

APPENDIX 9 – First email to the interviewee (Bevilacqua)

Gentile dott. Bevilacqua,

Il mio nome è Federico Valente, sono uno studente iscritto al corso di Dottorato di Ricerca in “Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea” presso l'Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale.

Le scrivo poiché il mio progetto di ricerca esamina l'indagine da Lei condotta su Norman Douglas ed, in particolare, la monografia *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* che ha redatto nel 2012.

Le preciso, inoltre, che il titolo della tesi di Dottorato è il seguente: Norman Douglas' *Old Calabria*: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua; e che la mia tutor è la Prof.ssa Maria Valentini.

A questo proposito, in considerazione di quanto sopra e al fine di raccogliere dati per la presente ricerca, Le chiedo, cortesemente, se sarebbe possibile poterLa intervistare, naturalmente nelle modalità e nei tempi a Lei più comodi.

Ad ogni modo, si tratterebbe di una intervista che dovrebbe durare circa quaranta minuti e che sarà registrata.

RingraziandoLa in anticipo per la Sua cortese disponibilità, l'occasione mi è lieta per porgerLe cordiali saluti.

Federico Valente

APPENDIX 10 – Translation of the first email to the interviewee into English

Dear Dr. Bevilacqua,

My name is Federico Valente, I am a PhD student in “Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea” at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio.

I am writing to you because my research project takes into account your investigation on Norman Douglas and analyses the book *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* that you wrote in 2012.

The title of the research is: Norman Douglas' *Old Calabria*: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua, and my Supervisor is Prof. Maria Valentini.

In view of the above and in order to collect data for this research, I would be grateful if I could interview you.

Please note that the interview should last around about forty minutes and it is then going to be recorded, however, we can arrange the interview any time and modality that is convenient to you.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Kind regards,

Federico Valente

APPENDIX 11 – Second email to the interviewee (Bevilacqua)

Gent.mo Dott. Bevilacqua,

Con la presente, Le scrivo per chiederLe, cortesemente, se Le risulta possibile effettuare una seconda intervista, poiché avrei altre domande da porgerLe in merito alla ricerca: “Norman Douglas’ *Old Calabria*: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua”.

Le chiedo, inoltre, se è possibile intervistarLa nella stessa modalità della prima intervista, ovvero su Google Meet poiché, fino al 9 giugno 2024 sarò a Malta per ricerca. Naturalmente, nei tempi a Lei comodi.

RingraziandoLa in anticipo per la Sua cortese disponibilità, l’occasione mi è lieta per porgerLe cordiali saluti.

Federico Valente

APPENDIX 12 – Translation of the second email to the interviewee into English

Dear Dr. Bevilacqua,

I am writing to you to ask you whether it could be it is possible to interview you for the second and last time since I have a few more questions regarding the research: “Norman Douglas’ *Old Calabria*: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archaeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua.”

I would be grateful whether I could conduct the interview in the same modality as I did the first time I interviewed you, that is on Google Meet since, until June 9th, 2024 I will be in Malta to do research. It goes without saying that we can arrange the interview any time that is convenient to you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks in advance for your contribution.

Best regards,

Federico Valente

APPENDIX 13 – Email to the interviewee (Emanuele Lelli)

Gentile Professore,

Sono un dottorando di ricerca in Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea (curriculum Studi storico-letterari, filologici e linguistici italiani ed europei) presso l'università di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale.

Il mio progetto di ricerca è: Norman Douglas' *Old Calabria: a literature of memory and a love contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua* (cfr. Scheda di Dottorato).

A tal proposito, Le scrivo per chiederLe, cortesemente, se posso contattarLa telefonicamente, oppure su Meet al fine di poter concordare con Lei un'intervista al fine di chiederLe maggiori informazioni in merito al Suo libro *Sud Antico*; naturalmente, nelle modalità e nei tempi a Lei più comodi.

RingraziandoLa in anticipo per la Sua cortese disponibilità, l'occasione mi è lieta per porgerLe distinti saluti.

Cordialmente,

Federico Valente

APPENDIX 14 – Translation of the email to the interviewee into English

Dear Prof. Lelli,

My name is Federico Valente, I am a PhD student in “Fonti, testi e contesti dall'antichità all'età contemporanea” (Chosen Curriculum: Italian and European historical-literary, philological and linguistic studies) at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio.

The title of the research is: Norman Douglas' *Old Calabria*: for a literature of memory and a contemporary archeology in the narrative vision of Francesco Bevilacqua, (see PhD personal file encl.)

I would be grateful if I could contact you by phone, or on Meet in order to arrange an interview with you so as to ask you for more information about your book *Sud Antico*; needless to say, in the modality and time frame that is convenient to you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Best regards,

Federico Valente

APPENDIX 15 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Structure of the interview with the participant (Francesco Bevilacqua)

1-Inizio: informazioni in merito alle motivazioni secondo le quali Norman Douglas abbia deciso di raggiungere il Sud d'Italia, in particolare la Calabria, e come questa esperienza abbia influenzato la sua produzione letteraria;

- Cosa spinge un brillante scrittore nonché un uomo eccentrico e profondamente intelligente come Norman Douglas, ad approdare, nei primi del Novecento, in un luogo remoto contraddistinto da una natura selvaggia non ancora contaminata dalla modernità, così come era la Calabria di allora?
- Quale influenza ha avuto la cultura e la letteratura calabrese sulle produzioni letterarie di Norman Douglas?
- Qual è l'influenza che la letteratura calabrese ha sulla letteratura modernista inglese?
- Cosa ha spinto gli scrittori inglesi del secolo scorso e contemporanei in particolare Edward Lear, George Gissing, Richard Keppel Craven, Craufurd Tait Ramage, Henry Swinburne e Arthur John Strutt ad approdare in Calabria?
- Cosa si aspettavano di trovare e quale influenza ha avuto la cultura calabrese sulle loro produzioni letterarie?
- Cortesemente, potrebbe darmi un Suo riscontro sulla seguente disamina: Douglas mostra interesse per l'indagine psicologica dei suoi personaggi richiamando in qualche modo alcuni aspetti del romanzo inglese ma non di quello propriamente modernista che appunto in quegli anni andava affermandosi (stream of consciousness, monologo interiore, ecc.), poiché questa indagine interiore è sfruttata in funzione di una conoscenza oggettiva dell'uomo e della sua realtà.

- In che modo Douglas sarebbe influenzato dalla cultura classica presente in Calabria anche a livello di credenze popolari?
- Le problematiche del Sud Italia influenzano l'esperienza di Douglas in Calabria?

2 Nucleo centrale: il confronto tra Norman Douglas e Francesco Bevilacqua

- Cosa accomuna e cosa distingue Norman Douglas da Francesco Bevilacqua?
- Cosa spinge lo scrittore Bevilacqua ad interessarsi a Norman Douglas?
- Cosa ha spinto lo scrittore italiano contemporaneo Francesco Bevilacqua a ripercorrere il sentiero precedentemente battuto da Norman Douglas?
- Qual' è la differenza sostanziale tra le opere *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* di Francesco Bevilacqua e *Vecchia Calabria* di Norman Douglas?
- Quali sono le differenze e le similitudini delle personalità di Douglas e Bevilacqua?
- Cosa accomuna e cosa distingue Douglas nella redazione delle opere *Vecchia Calabria* e *Sulle Tracce di Norman Douglas*?

3 Cosa rimane oggi della Calabria mitica e arcaica descritta da Norman Douglas

- Potrebbe, cortesemente, offrirmi un Suo riscontro sulla seguente affermazione: La Calabria sarebbe entrata, direttamente, nella *post-modernità*, non certo con l'industrializzazione e con l'urbanesimo marcato. La minor densità di popolazione, la mancanza di industrie di rilievo e di metropoli, gente che vive ancora in contesti rurali e/o montani, avrebbero consentito questa "diversità" marcata rispetto al resto d'Europa.

- Dove e in che modo si evince il confronto che Douglas pone tra la Calabria e l'Inghilterra?
- In *Old Calabria* ci sono diversi riferimenti ai miti mediterranei, greci laddove Douglas si innamora del Sud perché c'è ancora presenza mitologica. L'autore elegge, inoltre, a sua patria ideale Capri. A questo proposito, volevo chiederLe se risulta qualche riferimento nella sua biografia oppure nelle sue opere all'isola di Malta?
- I viaggi nell'estremo meridione, prima del nostro secolo, non erano comuni: a seguito del terremoto del 1638, la Calabria si era immiserita e inselvaticata, con piccoli paesini sperduti spesso senza strade. Divenne poi famosa come paese dei briganti pertanto andare più a Sud avrebbe significato un viaggio non solo poco comodo, ma pericoloso. A tal proposito, cosa spinge Douglas ad addentrarsi nel profondo sud?
- Douglas richiama, oltre ai libri di viaggi, anche per alcuni versi un Wordsworth, per il suo naturalismo, per la speranza di un rigenerarsi con il contatto con il mondo primitivo, ma anche, c'è qualcosa di Blake nelle descrizioni degli orrori prodotti dalla civiltà industriale, o anche di Shelley. Nella ricostruzione del Sud, operata attraverso l'osservazione diretta dei fatti colti nei vari ambienti sociali, spesso i più emarginati, ritroviamo elementi presenti in uno dei maggiori filoni della tradizione della narrativa inglese di stampo dickensiano. Oltre agli scrittori romantici inglesi e Charles Dickens, ci sono altri autori della letteratura inglese che influenzano Douglas? Ed ancora, ci sono altri autori cui fa riferimento nella stesura di *Old Calabria*?
- Potrebbe, cortesemente, offrirmi un Suo riscontro sulla seguente affermazione: nonostante fosse trascorso del tempo dal primo viaggio di Douglas, sembrerebbe che la verifica dello scrittore Francesco Bevilacqua abbia dato un esito di sostanziale permanenza dell'arcaico e del mitico. La stessa avrebbe registrato una "larvata forma di modernità" solo in riferimento alla parte consumistica nonché alla proliferazione dei saccheggi del territorio. Ad ogni modo, il resto è rimasto quasi intatto, forse riplasmato, forse neo-autentico. Di qui l'interesse delle tante persone del nord Italia e del centro-nord Europa, particolarmente dell'Inghilterra, che raggiungono la Calabria per turismo o per cambiare "patria". Fra questi,

soprattutto, viaggiatori, descrittori e narratori. Molte persone sono stanche dell'iper-postmodernità e, per questo, migrano all'inverso in cerca di arcaicità, intesa come autenticità e culto della memoria.

- Potrebbe essere utile per la presente ricerca intervistare anche gli scrittori membri fondatori dell'Anglo-Italian Club della Calabria?
- Cosa resta, oggi, di quella Calabria mitica ed arcaica descritta da Douglas?
- Infine, volevo chiederLe, cortesemente, se c'è qualche altro scrittore italiano e/o europeo, oltre a Bevilacqua, che ha ripercorso il sentiero precedentemente battuto da Douglas in Calabria finalizzato a ricercare la stessa bellezza ed arcaicità?

4 Chiusura dell'intervista: congedo

APPENDIX 16 TRANSLATION OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS INTO ENGLISH

Structure of the interview with the participant (Bevilacqua)

1-Opening: information about why Norman Douglas decided to reach the South of Italy, particularly Calabria and how this experience has influenced his literary productions

- What incited a brilliant writer as well as an eccentric and deeply intelligent man like Norman Douglas to reach in the early twentieth century a distant and isolated place whose wilderness had not been contaminated by modernity yet? That was how Calabria was presented at that time.
- What influence did Calabrian culture and literature have on Norman Douglas' literary productions?
- What influence did Calabrian literature have on English modern literature?
- What prompted English writers of the twentieth century in particular Edward Lear, George Gissing, Richard Keppel Craven, Craufurd Tait Ramage, Henry Swinburne, and Arthur John Strutt to reach Calabria?
- What did they expect to find and what influence did Calabrian culture have on their literary productions?
- Could you please share your viewpoint with regard to the following statement: Douglas shows interest in the psychological investigation of his characters, suggesting in some ways some aspects of the English novel, not, however the features that characterized the typical modern novel that in those years had become popular such as for example the stream of consciousness, the inner monologue, etc., since this inner investigation is exploited in function of an objective knowledge of man and his reality.
- In what way would Douglas be influenced by Calabrian classical culture even as regards popular beliefs?
- Did southern Italian issues influence Douglas' experience in Calabria?

2 Central core: comparison between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua

- What does Norman Douglas have in common with Francesco Bevilacqua and what makes them different?
- What prompted the writer Bevilacqua to take an interest in Norman Douglas?
- What prompted the contemporary Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua to choose to go along Norman Douglas' itinerary?
- What is the main difference between the works Francesco Bevilacqua *Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas* by Francesco Bevilacqua and *Old Calabria* by Norman Douglas?
- What are the differences and similarities in the personalities of Douglas and Bevilacqua?
- What do Douglas and Bevilacqua have in common in writing respectively *Old Calabria* and *Sulle Tracce di Norman Douglas* and, on the contrary, what distinguishes them?

3 What remains today of the mythical and archaic Calabria described by Norman Douglas

- Could you please comment on the following statement: Calabria seems to have directly entered into post-modernity, albeit this was not the result of industrialization and marked urbanism. The lower population density, along with the lack of major industries and metropolises, as well as people that still live in a rural and mountainous environment, would have characterized this significant "diversity" in comparison with the rest of Europe.
- Where and in what way does the comparison that Douglas draws between Calabria and England become evident?
- In *Old Calabria* there seem to be several references to the Mediterranean, as well as to the Greek myths, therefore Douglas falls in love with the

South because there is still a mythological presence. The author also chooses/regards Capri as his ideal homeland. Based on the information provided, I wish to ask if there is any reference in his biographies or in his other works to the island of Malta?

- During the twentieth century, the travels towards the far South of Italy were not common: after the earthquake that took place in 1638, Calabria had become poor, wild and undeveloped, with small isolated and distant villages often without roads. It then became famous as the region of brigands, therefore going further south meant starting a journey that not only was uncomfortable, but dangerous as well. In light of these points, what prompts Douglas to penetrate into the far South?
- In addition to travel books, Douglas seems to refer to Wordsworth with regard to his naturalism and the hope of regeneration through contact with the primitive world. Moreover, there is something of Blake, or even of Shelley, in the descriptions of the horrors produced by industrial civilization. In the reconstruction of the South which he did through direct observation of facts that occurred in the various social milieus, often the most marginalized ones, it is possible to find elements that belong to the Dickensian tradition of English fiction. With that being said, apart from English Romantic writers and Charles Dickens, are there other writers of English literature who influenced Douglas? Furthermore, are there other authors he referred to when he wrote *Old Calabria*?
- Could you please provide additional information or explanations about the following remark: Even though some time has passed since Douglas' first travel, it seems that the writer Francesco Bevilacqua's investigation yielded an outcome of substantial permanence of the archaic and the mythical. Besides, it seems to have indicated a "concealed form of modernity" only with regard to the consumerist aspect as well as the proliferation of land plunder. Nevertheless, the rest remained almost intact, perhaps reshaped and neo-authentic. Consequently, taking into account the above, this would explain why many people from northern Italy and central and northern Europe, particularly from England, have so far been interested in visiting Calabria and reached this region either for tourism or to change "homeland." Above all, the ones that have shown interest the

most in Calabrian culture and territory have been mainly travelers, writers, artists and storytellers. Still today, it appears that many people are tired of hyper-postmodernity, therefore, they migrate in the opposite direction in search of archaism and ancientness acknowledged as authenticity and the cult of memory.

- Could it also be useful for the present research to interview the writers who founded the Anglo-Italian Club in Calabria?
- What remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria described by Douglas?
- To conclude, I wish to ask you whether there is any other Italian and/or European writer, in addition to Bevilacqua, who has gone along Douglas' travel plan once again in Calabria so as to seek the same beauty and archaism that Douglas described in *Old Calabria*?

4 Closing the interview: summarize

APPENDIX 17 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Structure of the interview with the participant (Emanuele Lelli)

1-Inizio: informazioni in merito al testo *Sud Antico* con particolare attenzione alla letteratura greca e raffronto con l'opera *Old Calabria* di Norman Douglas;

- Preliminarmente, considerando che non è calabrese e che non aveva gli strumenti per penetrare l'Aspromonte, vorrei domandarLe come ha trovato le chiavi di lettura per entrare in empatia con le persone del posto, e soprattutto come è riuscito a restituire un mondo così genuino in modo chiaro (peraltro, così come fece Norman Douglas, nella sua famosa opera *Old Calabria*). Con l'occasione, Le chiedo, altresì, se può raccontare un aneddoto relativo a qualche incontro *in loco*.
- Considerata la Sua formazione filologica, cortesemente può spiegare qual è il legame che sussiste tra filologia ed etnografia?
- A tal riguardo, può cortesemente offrire un esempio?
- Qual è l'interpretazione corretta del gesto di Clitennestra nella tragedia di Eschilo ed in che modo la spiegazione può essere collegata alla Calabria?
- Può, cortesemente, offrire un altro esempio dei classici della letteratura greca che trova riscontro nella cultura popolare calabrese?
- C'è, a tal proposito, un aneddoto particolare relativo alla cultura calabrese?

2-Nucleo centrale: influenza della letteratura classica dei testi greci e latini che ha un riscontro nella cultura calabrese (argomento oggetto di ricerca e di analisi da parte di Norman Douglas durante il suo soggiorno in Calabria)

- Qual'è, a Suo avviso, il riscontro della cultura classica, dei testi greci e latini nella Calabria odierna?
- Quando ho letto la Sua opera *Sud Antico*, ho avuto modo di riscontrare che questo tipo di ricerca è resa possibile grazie ad una nuova disciplina,

ovvero l'etnoarcheologia che riparte dall'etnografia. Qual'è la Sua opinione in merito?

- C'è un altro proverbio calabrese che, a Suo avviso, proviene dai testi classici della letteratura greca?
-

3-Cosa rimane oggi della Calabria mitica e arcaica descritta da Norman Douglas

- Qual'è, secondo Lei, la terra, o meglio la cultura, più conservativa della Calabria, e che lo sarebbe stata anche per Norman Douglas?
- Cosa resta oggi, a Suo avviso, di quella Calabria mitica ed arcaica descritta da Norman Douglas in *Old Calabria*?
- Come potrebbe essere possibile tutelare e conservare la cultura immateriale dell'Aspromonte?

5 Chiusura dell'intervista: congedo

APPENDIX 18 TRANSLATION OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS INTO ENGLISH

Structure of the interview with the participant (Emanuele Lelli)

1-Opening: information about the text *Sud Antico* with particular attention to southern Italian Greek literature and comparison with Norman Douglas' *Old Calabria*

- To begin with, considering that you are not from Calabria and that you did not have the means to go through Aspromonte, I wish to ask you how you managed to find the research key in order to empathize with the local people, and especially how you succeeded to convey such a genuine world in a clear style (as did Norman Douglas, in his notorious *Old Calabria*). Besides, I would be grateful if you could also provide an anecdote related to some encounters in Calabria.
- Taking into account your Philological studies, could you please explain what is the connection between Philology and Ethnography?
- Regarding what was previously discussed, could you please give an example?
- What is the correct interpretation of Clytemnestra's gesture in Aeschylus' tragedy and how can the explanation be related to Calabria?
- Could you please quote another example from the classics of Greek literature that is reflected in Calabrian popular culture?
- Considering what was discussed before, is there a particular anecdote related to Calabrian culture?

2 Central core: influence of the classical literature of Greek and Latin texts that has a resonance in Calabrian culture (a topic researched and analyzed by Norman Douglas during his stay in Calabria).

- What is, in your opinion, the influence of classical culture of Greek and Latin texts in the present Calabria?
- When I read the book *Sud Antico* I realized that this kind of research is made possible by a new subject, namely Ethnoarchaeology which restarts from Ethnography. What is your opinion concerning this issue?
- Is there another Calabrian saying that, in your view, comes from the classical texts of Greek literature?

3 What remains today of the mythical and archaic Calabria described by Norman Douglas

- What do you think is the most conservative land, or rather culture, in Calabria, which would have been so for Norman Douglas as well?
- From your personal standpoint, what do you think remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria described by Norman Douglas in *Old Calabria*?
- How could it be possible to protect and preserve the intangible culture of Aspromonte?

2 Closing the interview: summarize

APPENDIX 19 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCESCO BEVILACQUA

Interview Transcript	Notes
<p>Inizio: informazioni in merito alle motivazioni secondo le quali Norman Douglas abbia deciso di raggiungere il Sud d'Italia, in particolare la Calabria, e come questa esperienza abbia influenzato la sua produzione letteraria;</p>	
<p>1- Cosa spinge un brillante scrittore nonché un uomo eccentrico e profondamente intelligente come Norman Douglas, ad approdare, nei primi del Novecento, in un luogo remoto contraddistinto da una natura selvaggia non ancora contaminata dalla modernità? Quale era la Calabria di allora?</p>	
<p>È proprio l'assenza di una modernità che attrae Douglas nella Calabria dei primi del '900. Douglas è infatti un "antimoderno", come ha opportunamente scritto lo studioso di letteratura di viaggio Giuseppe Merlino. Non è un caso che il titolo del suo diario di viaggio si intitolò <i>Old Calabria</i>. A Douglas interessava trovare relitti di antiche pratiche mitiche, di comportamenti, credenze, pratiche intrise ancora di pensiero mitico proveniente dalla <i>Magna Graecia</i> di cui la Calabria fu culla, prolungandone poi l'influenza prima sotto il dominio romano e successivamente sotto quello bizantino. È come se egli volesse vedere la "frontiera" d'Europa prima che scomparisse. Ecco perché dedicò molto del suo tempo di viaggio (fu in Calabria a più riprese) all'esplorazione pedestre del territorio, prediligendo le zone interne, montagnose, impervie, isolate, i piccoli paesi sperduti. È come se egli si fosse avveduto che la modernità in Europa stava cancellando il passato e che di quella parte del passato più "autentica", popolare, non colta abbia voluto essere testimone per conservarne il ricordo. Ed in effetti, la Calabria di allora era ancora arcaica, quasi completamente legata al mondo antico, a</p>	

<p>pratiche e modi di concepire la vita che si tramandavano da secoli. A conferma della permanenza del pensiero antico nel Sud Italia e, in particolare in Calabria, qualche anno fa, il filologo Emanuele Lelli ha pubblicato <i>Sud Antico</i>, un libro in cui dà conto di una sua ricerca nella quale ha potuto constatare la permanenza effettiva nella cultura contadina del Sud Italia di centinaia di “lemmi” (credenze, usanze, modi di dire) tratti dai classici greci e latini. Ecco, Douglas ricercò tutto questo con i suoi viaggi in Calabria. Non con l’intento di produrre cataloghi o prove come ha fatto Lelli, ma con quello, squisitamente romantico, di vivere egli stesso un’esperienza che di lì a poco sarebbe divenuta impossibile.</p>	
<p>2- Quale influenza ha avuto la cultura e la letteratura calabrese sulle produzioni letterarie di Norman Douglas?</p>	
<p>Non credo si possa parlare di influenza della letteratura calabrese su Norman Douglas. Anche se Douglas fu uno dei viaggiatori anglofoni venuti in Calabria che più lesse autori calabresi, come dimostrano le ripetute citazioni di opere sulla Calabria nel corpo di <i>Old Calabria</i>. Egli dimostra di conoscere bene autori (principalmente gli eruditi del ‘600 e del ‘700, come Tommaso Aceti, che scrissero corpose compilazioni storiche e geografiche sulla regione), opere, luoghi, geografie, storie. Una curiosità: Douglas ipotizza – sulla base di una ricerca di Bliss Perry e sulla base di sue personali constatazioni – che John Milton si ispirò, per il suo <i>Paradiso perduto</i>, all’ <i>Adamo caduto</i> del calabrese Serafino della Salandra. Inoltre, l’incontro con la Calabria che fu a lungo greca è per Douglas occasione continua per evocare miti, etimologie, genealogie, come quando parla del significato simbolico del drago (“drakon”) nella letteratura greca: pagine memorabili che sono state riprese da Roberto Calasso nel suo <i>La follia che viene dalle ninfe</i>. Ma la vera influenza sugli scritti di Douglas venne dalla cultura calabrese intesa in senso</p>	

<p>antropologico, ossia dai modi di vivere, dalle consuetudini del popolo minuto. Il suo <i>Old Calabria</i> è continuamente infarcito di osservazioni e considerazioni su questi aspetti. Il Douglas anticonformista, libertario e libertino, proveniente da una nazione ancora sotto l'influenza vittoriana, rimase, ad esempio, profondamente colpito dalla capacità dei calabresi di conservare spazi di vita dedicati all'irruzione temporanea dell'irrazionale nell'ordinaria normalità della vita sociale, come avveniva nei riti dionisiaci della Grecia antica o nei baccanali latini. Tant'è che s'accorse fra i primi di quanto certe feste cristiane che ebbe modo di osservare in Calabria ed in Basilicata più che eventi religiosi erano in realtà dei veri e propri riti panici: memorabile la sua descrizione della festa della Madonna del Pollino. Direi, quindi, che più che la letteratura calabrese è la cultura profondamente intrisa di elementi mitologici ad influenzare Douglas.</p>	
<p>3- Qual è l'influenza che la letteratura calabrese ha sulla letteratura modernista inglese?</p>	
<p>Su questo non saprei risponderle. Presumo che non ne abbia avuto almeno in apparenza.</p>	
<p>4- Cosa ha spinto gli scrittori inglesi del secolo scorso in particolare Edward Lear, George Gissing, Richard Keppel Craven, Craufurd Tait Ramage, Henry Swinburne e Arthur John Strutt ad approdare in Calabria?</p>	
<p>Dobbiamo tener conto che il Sud Italia, ad esclusione della vecchia capitale del Regno, Napoli – città europea a tutti gli effetti – era considerata “terra incognita”, sia perché priva di agevoli vie di comunicazione e di comodi alloggi per i viaggiatori, sia perché costituito, fisicamente, di coste infestate da paludi malariche e soggette a incursioni piratesche e di montagne impervie ed isolate. Non dimentichiamo i gesuiti, sin dalla fine</p>	

del '500, definivano il Sud "Le indie di quaggiù", riferendosi alla sua selvatichezza ed alla sua arretratezza. E non dimentichiamo neanche che, come riporta in un suo saggio Benedetto Croce, per le classi colte ed aristocratiche del Nord Italia e del resto d'Europa, il Sud era un "paradiso abitato dai diavoli". Dunque, viaggiare a sud di Napoli costituiva qualcosa di profondamente diverso dall'esperienza del *Grand Tour*, sebbene a praticarlo fossero sempre appartenenti a classi agiate ed acculturate. A tal proposito lo studioso di letteratura di viaggio Attilio Brilli definisce il viaggio al Sud come una "variante avventurosa del *Grand Tour*". E per comprendere la diversità di questa forma di viaggio, valga l'aneddoto narrato da George Gissing (lo scrittore britannico che compì un viaggio in Calabria nel 1897), secondo cui gli fu consigliato di fare testamento prima di partire. Ora, tutto questo alone di mistero, di pericolo, di arcaico andava a sommarsi al fascino della storia magno-greca ed alla ricerca delle vestigia delle sue famose città e, dopo il terremoto delle Calabrie del 1783, che aveva avuto vasta risonanza in Europa per le sue distruzioni, anche all'interesse geologico e scientifico. Questo è il quadro d'insieme. Bisogna tener conto però che molti nutrivano anche una sincera preoccupazione per le condizioni di vita delle popolazioni ed anche che buona parte dei viaggiatori stranieri, giunti in Calabria pieni di pregiudizi, anche geografici, rimasero poi stupiti dinanzi ai paesaggi che si trovarono dinanzi. "L'invenzione" del paesaggio calabrese si deve a loro: furono loro i primi ad apprezzarlo ed a descriverlo nei loro diari di viaggio.

5- Cosa si aspettavano di trovare e quale influenza ha avuto la cultura calabrese sulle loro produzioni letterarie?

Le aspettative erano tutte di segno negativo: povertà, arretratezza, brigantaggio (le gesta dei briganti durante il "decennio" francese in Calabria furono propagate in Europa dai soldati napoleonici al loro ritorno a casa), istituzioni corrotte e

incapaci. Possiamo dire che molti viaggiatori furono anche degli antropologi ante litteram. È molto interessante quel che scrive il britannico Craufurd Tait Ramage nel 1868 ricordando il viaggio fatto in Calabria nel 1828: Viaggiando in un paese forestiero, semplicemente per soddisfare la nostra curiosità, siamo tenuti a rispettare le credenze della gente del luogo; e se non ci è possibile assistere alle loro superstiziose osservanze senza testimoniare contro le medesime, allora faremmo meglio a restare a casa nostra". È il succo del discorso antropologico moderno, da Lévi Strauss in avanti. La cosa curiosa è che nessun viaggiatore straniero riferisce di aver subito furti, rapine, assalti da malviventi e briganti. Uniche eccezioni quella del britannico Arthur John Strutt (nel maggio del 1838) e quella del francese Francis Wey (probabilmente intorno al 1840), i quali raccontano, nei rispettivi diari di viaggio, di essere stati assaliti da bande di malintenzionati, entrambi nel mentre percorrevano le campagne tra Catanzaro, Caraffa e San Floro e di essere stati però subito tratti in salvo dalla locale guardia urbana e di aver avuto restituito il maltolto. I due episodi si concludono, in modo identico, con l'incontro di un ospitale e premuroso don Domenico Cefaly, signore di Cortale. Le sorprendenti coincidenze tra i rispettivi racconti fanno sospettare il plagio da parte del viaggiatore più tardo.

6- Cortesemente, potrebbe darmi un Suo riscontro sulla seguente disamina: Douglas mostra interesse per l'indagine psicologica dei suoi personaggi richiamando in qualche modo alcuni aspetti del romanzo inglese ma non di quello propriamente modernista che appunto in quegli anni andava affermandosi (*stream of consciousness*, monologo interiore, ecc.), poiché questa indagine interiore è sfruttata in funzione di una conoscenza oggettiva dell'uomo e della sua realtà.

<p>Su questo non saprei proprio.</p>	
<p>7- In che modo Douglas sarebbe influenzato dalla cultura classica presente in Calabria anche a livello di credenze popolari?</p>	
<p>Le ho risposto con quanto ho detto rispondendo alle domande 1 e 2.</p>	
<p>8- Le problematiche del Sud Italia influenzano l'esperienza di Douglas in Calabria?</p>	
<p>Douglas dimostra di conoscere piuttosto bene i problemi del Sud Italia, pur essendo uno straniero. In <i>Old Calabria</i>, ad esempio, il racconto di viaggio è continuamente impreziosito da osservazioni sui segni che la storia umana ha lasciato sul paesaggio e nello stesso tempo sulle condizioni di vita delle popolazioni.</p>	
<p>Nucleo centrale: il confronto tra Norman Douglas e Francesco Bevilacqua</p>	
<p>9- Cosa accomuna e cosa distingue Norman Douglas da Francesco Bevilacqua?</p>	
<p>Anch'io sono andato alla ricerca della "Old Calabria". Sin da quando rientrai in Calabria nel 1980 dopo l'esperienza universitaria a Firenze, la decisione di rimanere a lavorare in Calabria mi spinse ad apprendere tutto ciò che nessun insegnante, nessuna scuola mi avevano mai insegnato sulla mia terra. Un grave complesso di inferiorità collettiva – come intuirono Carlo Levi (durante il suo confino in Basilicata), Pier Paolo Pasolini, Giuseppe Berto – colpì i meridionali e, in</p>	

particolare, i calabresi nel momento in cui raffrontavano la loro civiltà contadina con quella industriale del Nord Italia. Un complesso che fece perdere valore a qualunque aspetto di quella civiltà. Al contrario io ero avido di conoscere luoghi e storie di cui mai nessuno mi aveva parlato e per più di quarant'anni non ho fatto altro che cercare, sia studiando che camminando. In questo senso sono anch'io un anti-moderno ed un camminatore. Come per Douglas, il mio camminare è uno scavo, una ricerca, una sorta di archeologia. Può immaginare che effetto mi fece trovare sugli scaffali della Libreria Feltrinelli, mentre ero all'università a Firenze, *Old Calabria* e leggere di uno straniero che sapeva così tante cose che un calabrese, seppur giovane, ignorava quasi completamente. Somiglio anche a Douglas sotto il profilo del mio eclettismo culturale: mi piace conoscere ed approfondire qualunque argomento mi capiti a tiro. Perché il sapere eclettico mi serve a decodificare la realtà senza pregiudizi e senza dovermi arrendere ai recinti inviolabili degli specialismi. Non saprei dire, invece, in cosa mi senta dissimile da Douglas. Faccio fatica a percepirlo come un estraneo. Forse perché *Old Calabria* ha rappresentato uno dei grimaldelli per riconciliarmi con la Calabria.

10- Cosa spinge lo scrittore Bevilacqua ad interessarsi a Norman Douglas?

Come ho detto, per me l'incontro con Norman Douglas e la sua narrazione di viaggio in Calabria è stato per me l'incontro con la Calabria. Sino a quel momento, ripeto, ignoravo quasi tutto della terra dove sono nato e dove avevo deciso di vivere anche da adulto. Scoprendo il mondo di Douglas ho scoperto anche un po' il mio mondo. Douglas è stato il genio, il daimon che mi ha fatto incamminare alla scoperta fisica, morale, spirituale della Calabria; e quindi anche di me stesso.

<p>11- Cosa ha spinto lo scrittore italiano contemporaneo Francesco Bevilacqua a ripercorrere il sentiero precedentemente battuto da Norman Douglas?</p>	
<p>Considerato che ho letto <i>Old Calabria</i> a Firenze, durante la mia esperienza universitaria, prima di tornare in Calabria, tutta la mia ricerca sia materiale (il camminare in montagna in una regione dove, quarant'anni fa, frequentavano la montagna solo pastori, contadini, boscaioli, carbonai, cacciatori e pochi folli come me) che intellettuale si misurava con il testo di Douglas, che è un grande scrigno di itinerari, traversate, informazioni, riflessioni sulla Calabria e sul Sud Italia (di cui egli comunque si occupò anche negli altri suoi libri). Se poi per sentiero intendiamo proprio la via, l'itinerario pedestre, allora dirò che ogni qual volta mi incamminavo nelle montagne del Pollino, della Sila, delle Serre, dell'Aspromonte, avevo ben presenti le descrizioni di Douglas. Ed è così che ho deciso di dedicare un libro a raccontare i luoghi visitati a piedi da Douglas attraverso una narrazione attualizzata.</p>	
<p>12- Qual' è la differenza sostanziale tra le opere <i>Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas</i> di Francesco Bevilacqua e <i>Vecchia Calabria</i> di Norman Douglas?</p>	
<p>Sono due testi molto diversi. L'unico legame sono i luoghi. Innanzitutto quello di Douglas è il racconto di un "outsider" che viene in Calabria, mentre il mio è quello di un "insider" (uso la terminologia coniata da Denis Cosgrove in <i>Realtà sociali e paesaggio simbolico</i>). Dunque i rispettivi punti di vista sono differenti: quello di Douglas è uno sguardo disincantato (a volte anche ironico e sferzante) anche se sempre partecipe; il mio è uno sguardo completamente incarnato, di una persona che attraverso la scrittura ha provato non solo a far conoscere ciò che non si conosce di una regione così ignorata, malfamata, fraintesa come la Calabria, ma anche a tutelare e valorizzare il</p>	

<p>suo “patrimonio”. Per il resto, non mi sono in alcun modo ispirato al modo di raccontare di Douglas, ma ho scritto nel mio stile. Anche gli itinerari non sono esattamente, pedissequamente quelli di Douglas. Tutt’altro: sono itinerari completamente ricreati da me, seppure negli stessi luoghi visitati da Douglas. Non ho percorso degli itinerari per ricalcare quelli di Douglas. Solo dopo aver camminato a lungo per i miei scopi di conoscenza e tutela, ho capito che Douglas era stato sempre con me e che valeva la pena di parlare di lui, della sua vita, delle sue opere, dei suoi viaggi in Calabria e nello stesso tempo narrare quello che è rimasto della <i>Old Calabria</i>.</p>	
<p>13- Quali sono le differenze e le similitudini delle personalità di Douglas e Bevilacqua?</p>	
<p>Ho già detto, rispondendo alla risposta n. 10.</p>	
<p>14- Cosa accomuna e cosa distingue Douglas nella redazione delle opere <i>Old Calabria</i> e <i>Sulle Tracce di Norman Douglas</i>?</p>	
<p>Anche qui credo di aver già risposto.</p>	
<p>Cosa rimane oggi della Calabria mitica e arcaica descritta da Norman Douglas</p>	
<p>15- Potrebbe, cortesemente, offrirmi un Suo riscontro sulla seguente affermazione: La Calabria sarebbe entrata, direttamente, nella <i>post-modernità</i>, non certo con l’industrializzazione e con l’urbanesimo marcato. La minor densità di popolazione, la mancanza di industrie di rilievo e di metropoli, gente che vive ancora in contesti rurali e/o montani, avrebbero consentito questa “diversità” marcata rispetto al resto d’Europa.</p>	

A me sembra che la Calabria abbia saltato a piè pari la “modernità” come fatto culturale, se per modernità intendiamo quel mutamento epocale nei modi di rappresentarsi la società e il mondo intervenuto con il capitalismo, l’industria e l’urbanesimo moderno. Alla Calabria, capitalismo, industria ed urbanesimo sono mancati completamente. Una buona fetta della popolazione la modernità l’ha vissuta emigrando altrove. E coloro che sono tornati, generalmente, si sono reimmersi in un mondo sostanzialmente arcaico che, soprattutto nelle campagne e nei paesi, è perdurato e dura ancora oggi. Non intendo dire che in Calabria non si siano verificati mutamenti, ma si è trattato essenzialmente di un processo di imitazione, di trascinamento, in mancanza di quegli elementi che dicevo sopra che sono il substrato della “modernità”. Ci siamo ritrovati così catapultati, dopo anni di “sospensione” temporale, nella post-modernità, quella della globalizzazione, dell’informatica, dei nuovi media, di Internet e della rete. Essa sì che ha prodotto e sta producendo una omologazione culturale, soprattutto nei giovani, che non si distinguono più dai loro omologhi del Nord Italia o del resto d’Europa. E tuttavia, nonostante questo riallineamento della Calabria con i cambiamenti della storia sociale, noto ancora oggi la persistenza, in forme complesse e ancora frammentate, dell’arcaismo di cui parlavo e che è in fondo – pur cambiando certi costumi, certi modi di vita, l’uso dei materiali – lo stesso che incontra Douglas. C’è una radicalità, una scelta morale, un ethos nella scelta di vivere nei paesi e nelle campagne della Calabria, che mi fa pensare al tentativo di una parte della società calabrese (e non solo calabrese, perché da qualche anno molti stranieri scelgono di trasferirsi nei piccoli paesi della Calabria), di rifugiarsi in quelli che io chiamo “luoghi perduti” (nel senso di perduti all’economia ed alla cultura dominante, alla memoria delle loro comunità). Ed è esattamente l’ *Old Calabria* di Douglas che rinasce dalle sue ceneri fumanti, sotto cui la brace non ha mai smesso di ardere. È quello che io chiamo il “neo-

<p>esotico della Calabria” o la “Calabria neo-esotica”: la Calabria è attraente perché rappresenta un esotico di prossimità, ai confini meridionali dell’Europa, perché è profondamente diversa da ogni altra regione d’Europa, nel male ma anche nel bene, nell’ombra come nella luce. La Calabria offre a piene mani esperienze “autentiche” o neo-autentiche. E non intendo solo a fini “turistici” o di viaggio. Intendo come un modo dell’abitare, del vivere nei luoghi, che a qualcuno può apparire antiquato, ma che piace a quella parte degli Europei che sanno, come scrive il filosofo francese Thierry Paquot in <i>Elogio del lusso</i>, che i nuovi lussi dell’Occidente opulento non sono auto di grandi marche, ville con piscina, orologi famosi, gioielli, ma sono invece “spazio, tempo e silenzio”.</p>	
<p>16- Dove e in che modo si evince il confronto che Douglas pone tra la Calabria e l’Inghilterra?</p>	
<p>In Douglas vi è certamente un confronto ideale tra la Calabria e l’Inghilterra. Esso emerge spesso dalle sue descrizioni. E capita non solo quando, mentre egli osserva alcuni paesaggi delle montagne (ad esempio la Sila) gli vengono in mente paesaggi della Gran Bretagna (ad esempio la Scozia). Il confronto emerge anche tutte le volte che egli trova nei comportamenti dei calabresi, così perfettamente “simili” al paesaggio selvaggio, complicato, asimmetrico, pieno di contrasti della regione, l’irruzione di quel mondo irrazionale, senza ordine, magico, mitico che l’Inghilterra vittoriana ed industrializzata aveva perso. È un tema questo – anche se non ricavato dalla Calabria – che ritroviamo in un amico-nemico contemporaneo di Douglas, D.H. Lawrence e che è evidente in <i>L’amante di Lady Chatterley</i>.</p>	
<p>17- In <i>Old Calabria</i> ci sono diversi riferimenti ai miti mediterranei, greci laddove Douglas si innamora del Sud perché c’è ancora presenza mitologica. L’autore elegge, inoltre, a sua</p>	

<p>patria ideale Capri. A questo proposito, volevo chiederLe se risulta qualche riferimento nella sua biografia oppure nelle sue opere all'isola di Malta?</p>	
<p>Capri è l'approdo finale, dove Douglas verrà accolto, accudito e forse anche mantenuto da amici italiani e non. Capri era stata anche una delle sue mete preferite durante i suoi viaggi. Ma credo che egli fosse innamorato di tutto il Mediterraneo. Il Sud Italia è in fondo il Sud più a portata di mano per lui, ed anche quello dove tutti i motivi di suggestione (primo fra tutti il mito greco) convergono. La Calabria aggiunge a questo l'esotismo di prossimità di cui ho detto: le montagne così disambientate rispetto alla sua peninsularità, le foreste, l'isolamento delle zone interne, i relitti di paganesimo, l'arcaismo.</p>	
<p>18- I viaggi nell'estremo meridione, prima del nostro secolo, non erano comuni: a seguito del terremoto del 1638, la Calabria si era immiserita e inselvaticata, con piccoli paesini sperduti spesso senza strade. Divenne poi famosa come paese dei briganti pertanto andare più a Sud avrebbe significato un viaggio non solo poco comodo, ma pericoloso. A tal proposito, cosa spinge Douglas ad addentrarsi nel profondo sud?</p>	
<p>Mi pare di aver abbondantemente già risposto.</p>	
<p>19- Douglas richiama, oltre ai libri di viaggi, anche per alcuni versi un Wordsworth, per il suo naturalismo, per la speranza di un rigenerarsi con il contatto con il mondo primitivo, ma anche, c'è qualcosa di Blake nelle descrizioni degli orrori prodotti dalla civiltà industriale, o anche di Shelley. Nella ricostruzione del Sud, operata attraverso l'osservazione diretta dei fatti colti nei vari ambienti sociali, spesso i più emarginati, ritroviamo elementi presenti in uno dei maggiori filoni della tradizione della narrativa inglese di stampo dickensiano. Oltre agli scrittori romantici</p>	

<p>inglesi e Charles Dickens, ci sono altri autori della letteratura inglese che influenzano Douglas? Ed ancora, ci sono altri autori cui fa riferimento nella stesura di <i>Old Calabria</i>?</p>	
<p>Non ho colto influenze di altri autori britannici. Quelli che Lei ha citato mi pare siano pertinenti.</p>	
<p>20- Potrebbe, cortesemente, offrirmi un Suo riscontro sulla seguente affermazione: nonostante fosse trascorso del tempo dal primo viaggio di Douglas, sembrerebbe che la verifica dello scrittore Francesco Bevilacqua abbia dato un esito di sostanziale permanenza dell'arcaico e del mitico. La stessa avrebbe registrato una "larvata forma di modernità" solo in riferimento alla parte consumistica nonché alla proliferazione dei saccheggî del territorio. Ad ogni modo, il resto è rimasto quasi intatto, forse riplasmato, forse neo-autentico. Di qui l'interesse delle tante persone del nord Italia e del centro-nord Europa, particolarmente dell'Inghilterra, che raggiungono la Calabria per turismo o per cambiare "patria". Fra questi, soprattutto, viaggiatori, descrittori e narratori. Molte persone sono stanche dell'iper-postmodernità e, per questo, migrano all'inverso in cerca di arcaicità, intesa come autenticità e culto della memoria</p>	
<p>Mi pare di aver già risposto.</p>	
<p>21- Potrebbe essere utile per la presente ricerca intervistare anche gli scrittori membri fondatori dell'Anglo-Italian Club della Calabria?</p>	
<p>Non sono mai informato su questo. Se ci sono, perché no? Mi faccia sapere chi sono.</p>	
<p>22- Cosa resta, oggi, di quella Calabria mitica ed arcaica descritta da Douglas?</p>	

<p>Resta il sostrato, il fondo della cultura calabrese. Attenzione: parliamo sempre della cultura popolare in senso antropologico. Ho già detto della ricerca di Emanuele Lelli, che dimostra come molte credenze e modi di vedere il mondo provenienti dal mondo greco e latino siano ancora presenti a livello del popolo minuto contadino, tramandati oralmente, di padre in figlio per secoli. Ma potremmo citare le ricerche antropologiche di Ernesto De Martino nel Sud Italia. Sebbene, alla fine, gli effetti di una certa modernità sia giunta in Calabria – sia pure non nei termini consueti, ossia attraverso un capitalismo attivo ed una rete industriale diffusa – la regione è ancora molto legata a quell'antico che Douglas cercava. Basta recarsi nei piccoli paesi dell'interno, nelle campagne per rendersi conto di questo. Direi che quella di oggi può essere considerata una Calabria neo-autentica, neo-esotica, neo-selvaggia, neo-pittoresca e persino neo-magica, ossia un insieme di luoghi che pur essendosi "rinnovati" rispetto al passato, ne hanno conservato, forse in modo inconsapevole, memoria. È esattamente quel che voleva dire Corrado Alvaro, quando nella prima novella di <i>Gente in Aspromonte</i> lancia il suo monito "È una civiltà che scompare, e su di essa non c'è da piangere, ma bisogna trarre, chi ci è nato, il maggior numero di memorie".</p>	
<p>23- Infine, volevo chiederLe, cortesemente, se c'è qualche altro scrittore italiano e/o europeo, oltre a Bevilacqua, che ha ripercorso il sentiero precedentemente battuto da Douglas in Calabria finalizzato a ricercare la stessa bellezza ed arcaicità?</p>	
<p>Non ricordo di aver letto testi di viaggiatori successivi a Douglas che citino espressamente lui ed abbiano fatto riferimento a lui.</p>	
<p>Chiusura dell'intervista: congedo</p>	

APPENDIX 20 TRANSLATION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS INTO ENGLISH

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCESCO BEVILACQUA

Interview Transcript	Notes
<p>Opening: information about why Norman Douglas decided to reach the South of Italy, particularly Calabria and how this experience has influenced his literary productions</p>	
<p>1- What incited a brilliant writer as well as an eccentric and deeply intelligent man like Norman Douglas to reach in the early twentieth century a distant and isolated place whose wilderness had not been contaminated by modernity yet? That was how Calabria was presented at that time</p>	
<p>What attracts Douglas to Calabria in the early 20th century is exactly the absence of modernity. According to travel literature scholar Giuseppe Merlino, Douglas is in reality an “anti-modernist.”</p> <p>It is no coincidence that the title of his travelogue is entitled <i>Old Calabria</i>. Douglas was interested in finding relics of ancient mythical practices, behaviors, beliefs, traditions that were still full of mythical thought coming from Magna Graecia of which Calabria was the birthplace and then prolonged its influence first under Roman rule and later under Byzantine dominion. It is as if he wanted to see the "frontier" of Europe before it disappeared. That is why he devoted much of his travel time (he was in Calabria on several occasions) to the pedestrian exploration of the territory, preferring the inland, mountainous, inaccessible and isolated areas as well as the</p>	<p><i>Reasons that led Norman Douglas to reach a distant and wild place such as Calabria not yet tainted by modern changes</i></p>

<p>small remote villages. It seems as if he realized that modernity in Europe was erasing the past and of that more “authentic,” popular, uneducated part of the past he wanted to be a witness as to preserve its memory. Consequently, Calabria at that time was still archaic, almost completely connected to the ancient world, to traditions, customs and ways of conceiving life that had been handed down for centuries. In order to confirm the permanence of the ancient way of thinking in southern Italy and, in particular in Calabria, a few years ago, the philologist Emanuele Lelli published <i>Sud Antico</i>, a book that gives an account of his research in which he was able to discover the effective permanence of hundreds of “lemmas” (beliefs, customs, idioms) in the peasant culture of southern Italy, that came from the Greek and Latin classics. On the contrary, Douglas researched all this through his travels in Calabria, not, however, with the intent of producing catalogs or evidence as Lelli did, but rather with the exquisitely Romantic intention of living himself an experience that would have shortly thereafter become impossible.</p>	
<p>2- What influence did the Calabrian culture and literature have on Norman Douglas' literary productions?</p>	
<p>I do not think we can speak of the influence of Calabrian literature on Norman Douglas. Although Douglas was one of the English-speaking travelers that came to Calabria who had read about Calabrian authors the most, as evidenced by the repeated citations of works about Calabria in the corpus of <i>Old Calabria</i>. He shows to know authors (mainly the scholars of the 1600s and 1700s, such as Tommaso Aceti, who wrote significant historical and geographical collections on the region), as well as works, places, geographies, and histories. A curiosity: according to a research by Bliss Perry and taking</p>	<p><i>Influence of Calabrian culture on British writers</i></p>

into account his own personal opinions, Douglas assumes that John Milton drew inspiration for his *Paradise Lost* from the *Adamo Caduto*, written by the Calabrian writer Serafino of Salandra.

Moreover, the encounter with Calabria, which was Greek for a long time, is for Douglas a constant occasion to evoke myths, etymologies, genealogies, in the same way when he talks about the symbolic meaning of the dragon ("drakon") in Greek literature: outstanding pages that were taken up again by Roberto Calasso in his *The Madness that comes from the Nymphs*.

However, the real influence on Douglas' writings came from Calabrian culture acknowledged in an anthropological sense, that is, from the lifestyles and the customs of the common people.

His *Old Calabria* is constantly crammed with observations and considerations on these aspects. The nonconformist, libertarian and libertine Douglas, who came from a nation still under the Victorian influence, was, for example, deeply impressed by the ability of the Calabrians to preserve living spaces dedicated to the temporary irruption of the irrational into the ordinary normality of social life, as it occurred in the Dionysian rites of ancient Greece or in the Latin bacchanalia. Besides, he was among the first ones to notice that certain Christian festivals that he had the opportunity to observe in Calabria and Basilicata were in reality panic rites rather than religious events: it is noteworthy his description of the feast of the Madonna of Pollino. Therefore, what I mean to say is that more than Calabrian literature it is the culture deeply steeped in mythological elements that influenced Douglas.

3- What influence did Calabrian literature have on English modern

literature?	
I am not able to answer to answer to this question. I assume that seemingly it did not have any influence.	
4- What prompted English writers of the twentieth century in particular Edward Lear, George Gissing, Richard Keppel Craven, Craufurd Tait Ramage, Henry Swinburne, and Arthur John Strutt to reach Calabria?	
<p>It has to be considered that southern Italy, with the exception of the old capital of the Kingdom of Naples - a European city to all intents and purposes - was considered an “unknown land” because it lacked both straightforward communication routes and comfortable lodgings for travelers. To make matters worse, it physically consisted of coastlines infested with malarious swamps that were exposed to pirate raids, and of inaccessible and isolated mountains. We do not have to forget that, since the late 1500s, the Jesuits defined the South as “The Indies from down here,” referring to its wildness and backwardness. Moreover, we should not have to forget that, as Benedetto Croce states in one of his essays, the South was the “paradise inhabited by devils” for the educated and aristocratic classes of northern Italy and the rest of Europe. As a result, traveling South of Naples represented something completely different from the experience of the <i>Grand Tour</i>, albeit this always concerned the members of the wealthy and educated classes.</p> <p>In light of this, the scholar of travel literature Attilio Brilli defines travelling to the South as an “adventurous variant of the <i>Grand Tour</i>.”</p> <p>In order to understand the diversity of this type of travel, it is worth to consider the anecdote told by George Gissing (the</p>	<i>Influence of Calabrian culture on British writers</i>

<p>British writer who made a trip to Calabria in 1897) who was advised to make his will before leaving.</p> <p>It follows that this air of mystery, of danger and of the archaic atmosphere was going to add to the fascination of <i>Magna Grecia</i> history and the search for the vestiges of its famous cities. Besides, the Calabrian earthquake of 1783 which had had wide resonance in Europe for its destruction, it also enhanced the geological and scientific interest.</p> <p>This is the overall picture. It has to be considered that many people also showed genuine concern for the living conditions of the populations, furthermore, part of the foreign travelers, who came to Calabria full of prejudices, especially geographical ones, were then astonished by the landscapes that they found. Consequently, the “invention” of the Calabrian landscape is due to them: they were the first ones to really appreciate it and describe it in their travel diaries.</p>	
<p>5- What did they expect to find and what influence did Calabrian culture have on their literary productions?</p>	
<p>The expectations were all negative: poverty, backwardness, corrupt and incompetent institutions, as well as brigandage (the exploits of the brigands during the French “decade” in Calabria spread in Europe when Napoleonic soldiers returned home). We can say that many travelers were also <i>ante litteram</i> anthropologists ahead of their times. It is very interesting what the British Craufurd Tait Ramage wrote in 1868 referring to his journey to Calabria in 1828: “When traveling in a foreign country, just to satisfy our curiosity, we are bound to respect the beliefs of the local people; therefore, if it is not possible for us to be present at their superstitious observances without testifying against them, then we had better remain at home.”</p>	<p><i>Influence of Calabrian culture on British writers</i></p>

<p>This is the gist of modern anthropological discourse, from Lévi Strauss onward. The curious thing is that no foreign traveler reports being robbed or assaulted by thugs and brigands. The only exceptions are the British Arthur John Strutt (in May 1838) and the Frenchman Francis Wey (probably around 1840), who recount in their respective travel diaries that they were assaulted by gangs of miscreants, while they were travelling through the countryside between Catanzaro, Caraffa and San Floro. However, they were immediately rescued by the local town guard and what had been stolen from them was eventually returned.</p> <p>The two episodes end in the same way, with the encounter of a hospitable and caring Don Domenico Cefaly, lord of Cortale. The surprising coincidences between the respective tales lead them to suspect that the later traveler committed plagiarism.</p>	
<p>6- Could you please share your viewpoint with regard to the following statement: Douglas shows interest in the psychological investigation of his characters, suggesting in some ways some aspects of the English novel, not, however the features that characterized the typical modern novel that in those years had become popular such as for example the stream of consciousness, the inner monologue, etc., since this inner investigation is exploited in function of an objective knowledge of man and his reality.</p>	<p><i>Psychological introspections of Douglas' characters in Old Calabria</i></p>
<p>I genuinely do not know what to say regarding this question.</p>	
<p>7- In what way would Douglas be influenced by Calabrian classical culture even as regards popular beliefs?</p>	<p><i>Influence of Calabrian culture on British writers</i></p>
<p>I have already answered you by replying to questions 1 and 2.</p>	

<p>8- Did southern Italian issues influence Douglas' experience in Calabria?</p>	
<p>Despite the fact that he comes from a foreign country, Douglas shows that he is quite familiar with the problems of southern Italy. For example, In <i>Old Calabria</i>, the travel narrative is constantly enhanced by observations on the signs that human history has left on the landscape and, at the same time, on the living conditions of the people.</p>	<p><i>Influence of Calabrian culture on British writers</i></p>
<p>Central core: comparison between Norman Douglas and Francesco Bevilacqua</p>	
<p>9- What does Norman Douglas have in common with Francesco Bevilacqua and what makes them different?</p>	
<p>I went in search of the “old Calabria” too. Ever since I returned to Calabria in 1980 after my university experience that I had in Florence, I decided to stay and work in Calabria and this decision incited me to learn everything that no teacher, no school had ever taught me about my land.</p> <p>A serious collective inferiority complex as it was noticed by Carlo Levi (during his confinement in Basilicata), Pier Paolo Pasolini and Giuseppe Berto, affected southerners and, in particular, Calabrians the moment they compared their peasant civilization with the industrial civilization of northern Italy.</p> <p>A complex that made any aspect of that civilization lose value. On the contrary, I was curious to know places and stories that no one had ever told me about, and for more than forty years I did nothing but doing research, both studying and walking.</p> <p>From this perspective, I am also an anti-modernist and a</p>	<p><i>Douglas vs Bevilacqua: differences and similarities</i></p>

<p>walker as well. As it is for Douglas, my walk is an excavation, a research and a kind of archaeology. You can imagine what effect it had on me to find on the shelves of the Feltrinelli Bookstore, while I was at the University in Florence, <i>Old Calabria</i> and read about a foreigner who knew so many things that a Calabrian ignored almost completely.</p> <p>I also resemble Douglas with regard to my cultural eclecticism: I like to know and study in depth whatever topic crops up. Besides, I need eclectic knowledge in order to decode reality without prejudice and without having to surrender to the inviolable barriers of specialisms. However, I could not say in what ways I feel dissimilar to Douglas. It is rather hard for me to perceive him as a foreigner. Perhaps, it is because <i>Old Calabria</i> represented one of the pick locks to reconcile me with Calabria.</p>	
<p>10-What prompted the writer Bevilacqua to take an interest in Norman Douglas?</p>	
<p>As I said, for me the encounter with Norman Douglas and his travel narrative in Calabria represented the encounter with Calabria itself. Until that moment, I repeat, I ignored almost everything about the land where I was born and raised and where I had decided to spend the rest of my life. By discovering Douglas' world, I also managed to find out a bit of my own world. Douglas was the genius, the daemon that led me to the physical, moral, spiritual discovery of Calabria, and therefore of myself as well.</p>	
<p>11-What prompted the contemporary Italian writer Francesco Bevilacqua to choose to go along Norman Douglas' itinerary?</p>	
<p>Taking into consideration that I read <i>Old Calabria</i> in Florence,</p>	<p><i>Old Calabria vs</i></p>

<p>during my university experience, before coming back to Calabria, the result is that all my research, both material (walking in the mountains in a region where, forty years ago, only shepherds, farmers, lumberjacks, charcoal burners, hunters and a few fools like crossed the mountains) and intellectual was in comparison with Douglas' text. The latter is a great treasure chest of routes, traverses, information, reflections on Calabria and southern Italy (which he also talked about in his other books).</p> <p>Then, if by path we mean the route, the pedestrian itinerary, then I can say that whenever I set out towards the mountains of the Pollino, the Sila, the Serre and Aspromonte, I had Douglas' descriptions in mind. Consequently, that is how I decided to dedicate a book which gave an account of the places that Douglas visited on foot through an actualized narrative.</p>	<p><i>Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas</i></p>
<p>12-What is the main difference between the works Francesco Bevilacqua <i>Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas</i> by Francesco Bevilacqua and <i>Old Calabria</i> by Norman Douglas?</p>	
<p>They are two different texts. The only connection between them regards the places. First and foremost, Douglas' book is the account of a "foreigner" coming to Calabria, whereas mine is a report of an "insider" (I use the terminology coined by Denis Cosgrove in <i>Realtà sociali e paesaggio simbolico</i>).</p> <p>As a result, the respective points of view are different: Douglas' standpoint is a disenchanted vision (which is at times ironic and biting as well) even though it is always participative. On the contrary, mine is a fully materialized look of a person who not only has tried to reveal through the reports what is not known about such an ignored, infamous, misunderstood region as Calabria, but also to protect and enhance its "heritage."</p>	<p><i>Douglas vs Bevilacqua: differences and similarities between Old Calabria and Sulle tracce di Norman Douglas</i></p>

<p>Apart from that, I never drew inspiration from Douglas' type of narration, yet, I chose to write in my own style. Even the itineraries are not exactly, slavishly Douglas'. Quite the opposite: I completely recreated my itineraries, albeit in the same places that Douglas visited. I did not go along some itineraries so as not to return to Douglas' routes. It was only after walking for a long time for my purposes of knowledge and protection of the environment, that I realized that Douglas had always been with me and that it was worth talking about him, his life, his works, his travels in Calabria and, at the same time, to give an account of what remained of <i>Old Calabria</i>.</p>	
<p>13-What are the differences and similarities in the personalities of Douglas and Bevilacqua?</p>	
<p>I have already answered by replying to question N. 10.</p>	
<p>14-What do Douglas and Bevilacqua have in common in writing respectively <i>Old Calabria</i> and <i>Sulle Tracce di Norman Douglas</i> and, on the contrary, what distinguishes them?</p>	
<p>Again, I think I have already answered this question.</p>	
<p>- What remains today of the mythical and archaic Calabria described by Norman Douglas</p>	
<p>15-Could you please comment on the following statement: Calabria seems to have directly entered into post-modernity, albeit this was not the result of industrialization and marked urbanism. The lower population density, along with the lack of major industries and metropolises, as well as people that still live in a rural and mountainous environment, would have characterized</p>	

<p>this significant “diversity” in comparison with the rest of Europe.</p>	
<p>It seems to me that Calabria has skipped “modernity” as a cultural fact if by modernity we mean that epochal change in the ways of representing society and the world that presented itself with capitalism, industry and modern urbanism.</p> <p>Calabria has completely lacked capitalism, industry and urbanism. A good portion of the population experienced modernity by emigrating elsewhere. And those who returned generally re-immersed themselves in a significantly archaic world that, especially in the countryside and villages, has persisted and endures to this time.</p> <p>I do not mean to say that changes did not occur in Calabria, but in reality it was a process of imitation, of dragging along (moving aimlessly), in the absence of those elements I mentioned above that are the substratum of “modernity.” Thus, after years of “suspension” in time, we have found ourselves catapulted into post-modernity, or rather the era of globalization, information and technology, new media, the Internet and the Net. Consequently, It has produced and is still producing a sort of cultural homogenization, especially in young people, who no longer differ from their counterparts in northern Italy or the rest of Europe.</p> <p>And yet, in spite of this realignment of Calabria with changes in social history, I still notice the persistence of the archaism I was talking about albeit in complex and still fragmented forms. Besides, although certain customs, established lifestyles and the use of materials have changed, it is basically the ancientness as encountered by Douglas.</p> <p>There is a sort of radicalism, a moral choice, an ethos in the choice to live in the villages and countryside of Calabria, which makes me think of the attempt of a part of Calabrian society (and not only Calabrian, since many foreigners have chosen</p>	<p><i>Norman Douglas’ Calabria vs modern Calabria: changes that have taken place since Douglas’ Old Calabria</i></p>

<p>to move to the small towns of Calabria for years), to take shelter in what I call “lost places” (by saying “lost” I mean to say lost to the dominant economy and culture, to the memory of their communities).</p> <p>And it is exactly Douglas’ <i>Old Calabria</i> that rises from its smoking ashes, under which the embers never stopped burning. It is what I call the “neo-exotic of Calabria” or the “neo-exotic Calabria”: Calabria is a picturesque place because it represents an exotic of proximity on the southern borders of Europe, as it is completely different from any other region of Europe, for better or worse, in the shadows as well as in the light.</p> <p>Calabria offers “authentic” or “neo-authentic” experiences galore. And I do not just mean for “tourist” or travel purposes. I mean as a way of dwelling, of living in places, which may seem old-fashioned to some people, but which appeals to that part of Europeans who know, as the French philosopher Thierry Paquot writes in <i>Elogio del lusso</i>, that the new luxuries of the opulent West are not big brand cars, villas with swimming pools, famous watches and pieces of jewellery, but are instead “space, time and silence.”</p>	
<p>16-Where and in what way does the comparison that Douglas draws between Calabria and England become evident?</p>	
<p>In Douglas there is certainly an ideal comparison between Calabria and England. It often emerges from his descriptions. This usually happens while he observes some landscapes of the mountains (e.g., Sila) and then some sceneries of Great Britain (e.g., Scotland) occur to him.</p> <p>The comparison also emerges whenever he finds in the behaviors of the Calabrians, that were so perfectly “similar” to the wild, complicated, asymmetrical and full of contrasts</p>	<p><i>Comparison between British culture and southern Italian heritage and way of life: their respective influences</i></p>

<p>landscape of the region, the irruption of that irrational, without-order, magical and mythical world that Victorian and industrialized England had lost. Even though this theme does not derive from Calabria, it can be found in Douglas' contemporary friend-enemy D.H. Lawrence and is particularly evident in "Lady Chatterley's Lover."</p>	
<p>17-In <i>Old Calabria</i> there seem to be several references to the Mediterranean, as well as to the Greek myths, therefore Douglas falls in love with the South because there is still a mythological presence. The author also regards Capri as his ideal homeland. Based on the information provided, I wish to ask if there is any reference in his biographies or in his other works to the island of Malta?</p>	
<p>Capri is the final place that he reached, where Douglas is welcomed, looked after, and perhaps even supported by friends from Italy and elsewhere. Capri had also been one of his favorite destinations during his travels. But I think he was in love with the whole Mediterranean.</p> <p>After all, southern Italy is the South most within reach for him, and also the environment where all the elements of suggestion (especially the Greek myth) converge. Calabria adds to this the exoticism of proximity of which I have spoken: the mountains that were out of place compared to its peninsularity, the forests, the isolation of inland areas, the relics of paganism and the archaism as well.</p>	
<p>18-During the twentieth century, the travels towards the far South of Italy were not common: after the earthquake that took place in 1638, Calabria had become poor, wild and undeveloped, with small isolated and distant villages often without roads. It then became famous as the region of brigands, therefore going further south meant starting a</p>	

<p>journey that not only was uncomfortable, but dangerous as well. In light of these points, what prompts Douglas to penetrate into the far South?</p>	
<p>I think I have already answered this question at full length.</p>	
<p>19-In addition to travel books, Douglas seems to refer to Wordsworth with regard to his naturalism and the hope of regeneration through contact with the primitive world. Moreover, there is something of Blake, or even of Shelley, in the descriptions of the horrors produced by industrial civilization. In the reconstruction of the South which he did through direct observation of facts that occurred in the various social milieus, often the most marginalized ones, it is possible to find elements that belong to the Dickensian tradition of English fiction. With that being said, apart from English Romantic writers and Charles Dickens, are there other writers of English literature who influenced Douglas? Furthermore, are there other authors he referred to when he wrote <i>Old Calabria</i>?</p>	
<p>I did not notice further influences from other British authors. The ones you mentioned seem to me to be relevant.</p>	<p><i>Influence of English literature and culture on Douglas as a writer</i></p>
<p>20-Could you please provide additional information or explanations about the following remark: Even though some time has passed since Douglas' first travel, it seems that the writer Francesco Bevilacqua's investigation yielded an outcome of substantial permanence of the archaic and the mythical. Besides, it seems to have indicated a "concealed form of modernity" only with regard to the consumerist aspect as well as the proliferation of land plunder. Nevertheless, the</p>	

<p>rest remained almost intact, perhaps reshaped and neo-authentic. Consequently, taking into account the above, this would explain why many people from northern Italy and central and northern Europe, particularly from England, have so far been interested in visiting Calabria and reached this region either for tourism or to change “homeland.” Above all, the ones that have shown interest the most in Calabrian culture and territory have been mainly travelers, writers, artists and storytellers. Still today, it appears that many people are tired of hyper-postmodernity, therefore they migrate in the opposite direction in search of archaism and ancientness acknowledged as authenticity and the cult of memory.</p>	
<p>I think I have already answered this question.</p>	
<p>21-Could it also be useful for the present research to interview the writers who founded the Anglo-Italian Club in Calabria?</p>	
<p>I did not make inquiries about this further detail. If it could be interesting to interview them, if they are available.</p>	
<p>22-What remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria described by Douglas?</p>	
<p>What remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria is the substratum, the background and influences of Calabrian culture. Please note that we are talking about popular culture in the anthropological sense. I have already mentioned Emanuele Lelli’s research which shows that many beliefs and ways of seeing the world coming from the Greek and Latin world are still present among the common peasant people, and are handed down orally for centuries, from father to son.</p>	<p><i>Norman Douglas’ Old Calabria vs modern Calabria: changes that have taken place since Douglas’ travels in Calabria</i></p>

<p>Yet, we could cite Ernesto De Martino's anthropological research in southern Italy. Although, in the end, the effects of an inevitable modernity came to Calabria - albeit not in the usual terms, that is, through active capitalism and a widespread industrial network - the region is still very much characterized by the antiquity that Douglas was looking for. This can be easily noticed by going to the small towns in the interior and in the countryside. What I mean is that what we have today can be considered a neo-authentic, neo-exotic, neo-primitive and even neo-magical Calabria, that is, a set of places that, although they have “renewed” from the past, they have retained its memory, perhaps in an unconscious way. This is exactly what Corrado Alvaro meant, when in the first short story of <i>Gente in Aspromonte</i> he launches his warning “It is a disappearing civilization, and there is no need to feel sorry for it, on the contrary, it is necessary to bring out those who were born there, as well as the greatest number of memories.”</p>	
<p>23-To conclude, I wish to ask you whether there is any other Italian and/or European writer, in addition to Bevilacqua, who has gone along Douglas’ travel plan once again in Calabria so as to seek the same beauty and archaism that Douglas described in <i>Old Calabria</i>?</p>	
<p>I do not recall reading any texts by travelers subsequent to Douglas that specifically mention him and have referred to him.</p>	
<p>Closing the interview: summarize</p>	

APPENDIX 21 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

INTERVIEW WITH EMANUELE LELLI

Interview Transcript	Notes
<p>Inizio: informazioni in merito al testo <i>Sud Antico</i> con particolare attenzione alla letteratura greca e raffronto con l'opera <i>Old Calabria</i> di Norman Douglas;</p>	
<p>Con il presente questionario, intervisto il Professore Emanuele Lelli al fine di sottoporli alcune domande in merito al suo straordinario testo <i>Sud Antico</i>.</p> <p>Si tratta di un libro di sostanza, in quanto, oltre alla narrazione delle vicende relative al viaggio, attenziona profili inerenti alla ricerca di memoria e di emozioni.</p> <p>Lelli scava nella memoria di un patrimonio etnografico eccezionale, come quello del Meridione, inserendosi in un percorso già affrontato da De Martino.</p> <p>Un aspetto interessante discende dalla circostanza secondo la quale il Lelli medesimo riesce a cogliere anche quel piacere offerto dalla quotidianità di questi posti: in questa sua ricerca etnografica, infatti, riesce a restituire anche un'atmosfera fatta di profumi e di sorrisi.</p> <p>Inoltre, questi riesce ad entrare in empatia con il suo pubblico, con l'intervistato e pertanto ricavava moltissimo materiale.</p> <p>A mio avviso, la grande forza di questa opera discende dalla considerazione secondo la quale Lelli entra nell'Aspromonte, in molte zone del sud Italia laddove manipola questa eccezionale miniera di beni materiali con i guanti.</p> <p>Di qui, riesce, poi, a trasportarla sulle pagine del suo testo in un modo delicato, così come si dovrebbe fare con i predetti beni che, purtroppo, solo di recente hanno acquisito il titolo di bene culturale.</p>	

<p>1- Preliminarmente, considerando che non è calabrese e che non aveva gli strumenti per penetrare l'Aspromonte, vorrei domandarLe come ha trovato le chiavi di lettura per entrare in empatia con le persone del posto, e soprattutto come è riuscito a restituire un mondo così genuino in modo chiaro (peraltro, così come fece Norman Douglas, nella sua famosa opera <i>Old Calabria</i>). Con l'occasione, Le chiedo, altresì, se può raccontare un aneddoto relativo a qualche incontro <i>in loco</i>.</p>	
<p>Grazie, sono molto felice di poter riparlare di <i>Sud Antico</i>, prima di dare un aneddoto così come mi hai chiesto, mi fa piacere ricordare che questo libro non è nato per essere un libro come spesso avviene con quello che si scrive con un'intenzione di pubblicare un libro non riesce benissimo come a volte può riuscire più emozionante, più sorprendente, forse anche più partecipato, uno scritto che non si era programmato, che è venuto in modo così naturale, ecco, questo è un diario che io ho cominciato a tenere due o tre giorni dopo essere arrivato per la prima volta proprio in Aspromonte. Questa fu la prima campagna etnografica che io sono andato a fare nel Meridione. Era il 2010 l'idea di partenza era stata giudicata addirittura folle, perché quando avevo bussato alle porte di etnologi e antropologi di diverse università, di cui non facciamo il nome, e avevo detto che mi avrebbe fatto piacere sviluppare, come linea di ricerca, il tentativo di comparare le tradizioni popolari scritte nei testi antichi greci e latini con le tradizioni popolari orali conservate nella memoria degli anziani del Meridione, beh devo dire che qualcuno mi aveva detto: "ma cosa vai a fare, sei un pazzo, insomma, queste cose al massimo ha provato a farle De Martino negli anni sessanta, ma poi adesso non c'è più nessuno, chi vai a incontrare?".</p> <p>Insomma, per farla breve, io che sono un po' testardo ero comunque partito nel luglio del 2010 per l'Aspromonte con un questionario cui avevo tematizzato proverbi, credenze, figure</p>	

della fantasia popolare, superstizioni, e dopo tre giorni, devo dire, che avevo riscontrato una percentuale enorme di continuità di ricordi, di emozioni, a volte anche con la sorpresa dei miei intervistati che certamente non sapevano che questo loro immaginario, superstizioso, magico, apotropaico proverbiale di medicina popolare, di racconti di fiabe, non sapevano che fosse antico a volte 2000 anni 3000 anni che ci fosse addirittura già in Omero. Molti anziani non sapevano neanche chi fosse Omero, ovviamente, poi si emozionavano nel raccontarlo e qui c'è stato l'aspetto più bello, più sorprendente, ovvero l'aspetto umano.

Ancora ricordo per esempio gli occhi di un anziano di Bova il signor Condemi, se non ricordo male, che quando io cominciai a chiedergli se avesse sentito mai parlare di alcuni proverbi e detti di sapienza attribuiti a Pitagora, ci pensò e poi dopo un po', con gli occhi azzurrissimi, mi guardò fisso e mi disse: "sì, sì è vero mia madre mi diceva sempre queste cose" e si emozionò perché per lui era tornare indietro nella memoria, la memoria di un ottantenne del 2010 a quando era bambino e aveva 5, 6 anni, quindi capiamo a quale livello cronologico siamo arrivati, e la madre gli faceva risuonare nelle orecchie questi precetti che i greci avevano attribuito a uno dei loro più grandi e più straordinari sapienti, appunto Pitagora.

Questo è uno degli aneddoti, ma come occorre frequentare le persone del Meridione per capire la ricchezza che hanno nel loro interno, nelle loro tradizioni, nella loro memoria, sono persone che a volte ancora oggi non sanno leggere e scrivere.

Questa è un'altra cosa che mi ha stupito, ho intervistato tra il 2010 il 2016 ancora persone che sapevano fare solo la loro firma però sapevano suonare, sapevano raccontare a memoria decine e centinaia di storie senza averle mai lette con quella memoria orale che li faceva in qualche modo diventare dei rapsodi omerici in grado di raccontare storie sempre diverse.

Oppure ho incontrato anziane donne che, soprattutto, non avevano mai visto il mare; questa è un'altra cosa che mi ha fatto

venire i brividi: anziane donne a Bova a Galliciano o sui Nebrodi che mi hanno detto:” ma no professore io non sono mai scesa da queste alture, da questo mio paese e sono novanta anni che vivo in questa realtà”.

Queste realtà sono come dei fossili viventi che ci restituiscono una ricchezza culturale immateriale che è straordinaria perché è incontaminata, ha superato i secoli, ha superato le dominazioni straniere, ha superato i cambiamenti di lingua, ha superato i regimi politici, in confronto ai nostri 66 governi della repubblica sembrano nulla rispetto alla ricchezza di questi anziani che hanno superato i secoli e i millenni e ricordano delle cose, degli elementi di cultura, dei tratti di società che nessuno ha potuto ricordare perché il problema è proprio qui: la Sicilia la Calabria la Puglia anche la Lucania e tante altre regioni del Meridione.

In particolare queste tre Sicilia, Calabria e Puglia hanno avuto tra 800 e 900 dei grandissimi personaggi, delle delle grandissimi figure di studiosi del mondo popolare Giuseppe Pitre, il noto scrittore, medico, letterato ed etnologo, noto soprattutto per il suo pionieristico lavoro nell’ambito del folklore siciliano, la museografia e la cultura materiale; La Sorza, Eugenio D’Orza, l’antropologo e politico Luigi Lombardi Satriani, insomma sarebbe inutile fare un elenco che risulterebbe sempre comunque lacunoso, tuttavia questi studiosi, questi grandissimi studiosi andavano in giro nelle campagne a chiedere delle informazioni agli anziani in modo aperto: “raccontateci che cosa si faceva durante il Natale, raccontateci quando una donna doveva partorire che cosa accadeva in casa” e via discorrendo.

Questa narrazione che è stata preziosissima per le informazioni che questi grandi folkloristi ci hanno lasciato, tuttavia aveva un punto debole, cioè non costruiva ponti con il passato.

Quello che io ho cercato di fare è stato proprio andare a colmare questo aspetto perché i folkloristi non partivano dall’antico e quindi quello che chiedevano lo chiedevano alla contemporaneità del tempo.

<p>Io ho cercato appunto di istituire, costruire dei ponti tra la tradizione della memoria popolare ancora di oggi ed il passato greco e romano e questo ponte magicamente ha preso vita.</p> <p>Ecco, forse non mi aspettavo neanche io di trovare così tante cose ma è un continuo capire, una continua scoperta.</p> <p>Tutti gli anni io vengo nel Meridione, vengo a fare domande, campi, questionari e ogni anno si scopre qualcosa in più, si scopre un tassello in più di questa antichissima memoria.</p>	
<p>2- Considerata la Sua formazione filologica, cortesemente può spiegare qual è il legame che sussiste tra filologia ed etnografia?</p>	
<p>Sì, allora in questo senso la ricerca ha costruito un ponte tra due mondi che troppo poco spesso si sono parlati, ovvero il mondo dell'antropologia e della storia della cultura popolare moderna e il mondo della filologia, la filologia classica.</p> <p>A me, intanto, questo aggettivo non piace, classico è un aggettivo non inclusivo, diciamo, ecco molti filologi ci sono affezionati e tuttavia io sono più incline a parlare di cultura antica, non di cultura classica, perché l'antico è un approccio, secondo me, più storicizzato e i filologi classici, appunto, proprio perché classici spesso sono rimasti troppo chiusi nelle loro biblioteche di filologia, sono rimasti troppo ancorati ad una metodologia testuale che dava ai confronti testuali il 100% delle chiavi di lettura di un brano, di un opera, di un autore di un periodo.</p> <p>Noi dobbiamo aprirci invece, parlo da filologo, la filologia deve aprirsi a nuove suggestioni e la suggestione di contaminare gli studi filologici con quelli etnoantropologici deve essere presa in seria considerazione.</p> <p>Io ho cercato di dimostrare un seta scientifica con un linguaggio tecnico e scientifico, in seta divulgativa, con libri come <i>Sud Antico</i> che raccontano un'esperienza umana e di ricerca, a tal proposito, ho cercato di dimostrare che la comparazione</p>	

<p>culturale, in questo caso la comparazione con le tradizioni popolari del nostro Meridione italiano, riesce a spiegare decine e decine di brani di autori antichi che fino ad oggi non erano stati compresi, o peggio, erano stati interpretati in modo strampalato del tutto simbolico, in modo assolutamente fuorviante, mentre invece bastava chiedere all'anziano di Bova o all'anziana dei Nebrodi perché un personaggio del mito greco dice una determinata cosa in una poesia o in un brano di un' opera antica e l'anziano avrebbe svelato, avrebbe risposto e ti avrebbe chiarito il perché di esempio come questo, di questo tipo.</p> <p>Diciamo che il libro è pieno e alcuni sono anzi veramente sorprendenti perché risolvono in 10 secondi, proprio come un Uovo di Colombo, quello che generazioni e generazioni di filologi non sono riusciti a risolvere.</p>	
<p>3- A tal riguardo, può cortesemente offrire un esempio?</p>	
<p>Stavo aspettando che tu me lo chiedessi perché, per esempio, uno dei brani più famosi del teatro greco è il brano della tragedia di Eschilo, una tragedia dedicata al mito degli Atridi, Agamennone torna a casa dopo la guerra di Troia, la moglie Clitennestra, regina di Micene, per tante ragioni lo uccide e però il Dio Apollo intima al figlio maschio di Agamennone e Clitennestra che si chiama Oreste di vendicare il padre uccidendo a sua volta la madre, e così dopo tutta una serie di vicende più o meno rocambolesche, Oreste riesce a tornare in patria perché era stato esiliato, sguaina la spada che sta per uccidere la madre, in quel momento Eschilo mette in scena un gesto particolare, ovvero la madre di Oreste, Clitennestra si scopre il seno e chiede, e chiede e dire poco, insomma intima al figlio di non ucciderla. Questo gesto praticamente da quando l'opera di Eschilo è tornata conosciuta in occidente insomma dal 1400, potremmo dire dal quindicesimo secolo, è stato sempre interpretato come un gesto di supplica, cioè i filologi, chiusi nelle</p>	

<p>loro biblioteche, hanno confrontato con altri testi questa scena teatrale che era indirizzata, non va dimenticato ai 20.000 spettatori del teatro di Dioniso di Atene, e l’hanno interpretato come un gesto di supplica.</p> <p>Già vedi, la madre fa vedere il seno che ha allattato il figlio e gli scongiura di non ucciderla. Non è così, non è così e non è così per tante ragioni, intanto che Clitennestra è un personaggio assolutamente duro assolutamente volitivo, insomma non si metterebbe a fare una supplica proprio in questo momento <i>clou</i>, culminante della tragedia. Nel mondo greco la regina Clitennestra, empia assassina del marito Agamennone, è evocata come la donna più malefica tra tutte, falsa e vendicatrice, una donna cagna e vipera. Eppure negli ultimi decenni le sue ragioni sono state lette con sfumature diverse, e se n’è colto l’animo deluso e tradito. L’ultimo verdetto su quest’affascinante e controversa figura del mito rimane perciò a chi legge.</p>	
<p>4- Qual è l’interpretazione corretta del gesto di Clitennestra nella tragedia di Eschilo ed in che modo la spiegazione può essere collegata alla Calabria?</p>	
<p>Questa scena ci è risolta da tante donne dell’Aspromonte, delle Murge, dei Nebrodi, delle Madonie che mi hanno riferito quando io le chiedevo se avessero mai sentito parlare di questo gesto di scoprirsi il seno da parte di una madre nei confronti del proprio figlio, mi hanno raccontato con lo sguardo impietrito: "professore, professore questa è una maledizione, se una madre riceve da un figlio un torto, uno sgarbo particolare, lo raggiunge in pubblico sulla strada o in piazza, si scopre il seno e lo maledice e toccandosi il seno dice: "tante gocce di latte io ti ho dato, tante gocce di sangue verserai".</p> <p>Quando per la prima volta un’anziana della Lucania mi disse, mi raccontò questa cosa confermata poi da decine di altre anziane</p>	

<p>del meridione, mi vennero i brividi, andai a rileggere il testo di Eschilo e infatti pochi versi dopo cui Clitennestra si scopre il seno dicendogli testuali parole: “non hai timore del seno della madre Clitemestra, se tu compirai questo gesto le cagne, che sono il simbolo della vendetta, le mie le mie cagne ti verranno a colpire” e quindi questa è una maledizione, lei sta maledicendo il figlio.</p> <p>Chiaramente Eschilo non aveva bisogno di spiegarlo ai cittadini ateniesi che assistevano alla sua rappresentazione perché tutti erano a conoscenza di questa gestualità apotropaica popolare, ma i filologi no e così hanno interpretato il testo in tutt’altro modo.</p> <p>Ecco, gli anziani la memoria folklorica degli anziani del Meridione ce lo hanno riportato nel loro, nel suo aspetto fondamentale che poi è il vero aspetto del teatro tragico, la maledizione di Clitemestra non la supplica, la paura e questo è uno degli esempi.</p>	
<p>5- Può, cortesemente, offrire un altro esempio dei classici della letteratura greca che trova riscontro nella cultura popolare calabrese?</p>	
<p>Allora, dunque un altro esempio può essere quello di un’altra gestualità che forse molti calabresi hanno visto fare spesso; poi questo è un altro aspetto del libro e di questa ricerca, quando vado in giro a presentare <i>Sud Antico</i> spesso vedo che quando racconto queste credenze, questi proverbi queste superstizioni, nel pubblico c’è sempre, ci sono sempre tante persone che dicono: “sì sì è vero è vero me lo diceva mia madre, me lo diceva mia nonna l’ho fatto anch’io, l’ho visto fare”.</p> <p>Ecco, dicevo è una caratteristica interattiva di questo tipo di ricerche è uno dei modi di attualizzazione del mondo antico anche no, si parla sempre tanto di attualizzazione dei classici, però lo si fa spesso sulla fascia alta della cultura, sulla fascia</p>	

<p>della cultura d'autore e allora appunto Brex che riprende Eschilo, Sofocle insomma un grande autore lirico che riprende Omero o Saffo, questo invece è un altro canale, è un canale volendo a cui possono accedere tutti, è un canale della cultura popolare, è un canale quindi interattivo perché consente a tutti noi di avere una maggiore interattività con la cultura antica.</p>	
<p>6- C'è, a tal proposito, un aneddoto particolare relativo alla cultura calabrese?</p>	
<p>L'altro aneddoto è avvenuto a Bova, secondo giorno delle mie interviste, primissimo viaggio in Meridione, arrivo dopo essere stato già annunciato per le due del pomeriggio, faceva molto caldo, io in realtà mi ero andato a fare un pisolino.</p> <p>Arrivo dopo due ore, con due ore di ritardo, ad una casa di un anziano che si era disposto a rilasciare la sua intervista. Mentre arrivo, vedo che mi osserva già dalla finestra di casa, scende giù ad aprirmi e mi aspetta a un tavolino nel suo saloncino. Appena arrivo lui prende un posacenere lo rigira in modo repentino e mi dice: "professore votammo na cosa da capo sotto", adesso mi scuso per il dialetto che ho fatto anche male, e ho detto: "mi può ripetere quello che ha detto?" e lui mi fa: "no perché sa professore quando arriva qualcuno inaspettato che noi aspettavamo da tanto tempo, noi diciamo di prendere un oggetto e rivoltarlo- vota na petra" perché non l'ha mai sentito?"</p> <p>Dico io: "no io a Roma non l'ho mai sentito, però le devo dire che lei mi ha risolto un problema filologico che per oltre cento anni aveva attanagliato, diciamo così, gli studiosi di un poeta greco antico che si chiama Eronda, o Eroda, nato ad Alessandria e fu attivo soprattutto nell'isola di Kos, di cui ci sono rimaste alcune poesie, una di queste iniziava proprio con una scena di questo tipo e siccome i filologi non avevano capito il testo greco, c'è un'amica che va a trovare l'altra e quella che dice in greco gira qualcosa.</p>	

Pensate, i filologi avevano proposto di correggere il testo greco antico.

Sapete la congettura, la correzione del testo antico perché quando il filosofo/filologo si arrabbia talmente tanto che non è riuscito a capire il testo antico, dice con un comportamento forse psicologicamente quasi infantile che è sbagliato il testo antico, “siccome non lo capisco è sbagliato il testo antico e quindi lo correggo”. Lì, in quel brano di questo poeta greco, pensate i filologi avevano continuamente provato a correggere il testo.

Invece, il testo è giusto e non solo è giusto, è giusto ed è un testo ricco, pregnante, interessantissimo perché ci rivela che già 2500 anni fa esisteva questa gestualità scaramantica e tutti i filologi da Oxford, da Cambridge, da Berlino non avevano capito. L’ha invece capito quell’anziano dell’Aspromonte che quel pomeriggio me l’ha rivelato così senza nemmeno sapere chi fosse quel poeta greco .

Stupenda questa cosa, no? Eccezionale, e posso pure dirvi che quando io sono tornato a Roma, già quella sera avevo telefonato a qualcuno a dirgli: “ma non sai che cosa ho risolto qui, che io poi non c’entro niente, che cosa mi hanno risolto gli anziani dell’Aspromonte” mi avevano detto: “ma no ma veramente non mi avevi preavvisato, registralo perché hai visto mai che poi torni a Roma non ci credono, pensano magari che te lo sei inventato”.

Quando poi cominciai a parlare con qualche collega filologo, infatti mi chiese se avevo documentato questa cosa “l’hai registrata perché è talmente una bomba che è questo perché purtroppo spesso che cosa accade che la cultura alta, o potremmo dire, che si ritiene alta, in cui i grandi studiosi che parlano in televisione che hanno difficoltà ad ammettere che un elemento di cultura popolare possa risolvere un problema che loro non sono riusciti a risolvere.

Questo accade perché non è aperta al dialogo o è meno aperta, ecco, intende far passare il messaggio che la sua metodologia sia quella insostituibile, invece no, non è così. A volte, le

<p>persone comuni con la loro ricchezza, con la loro cultura popolare, ci dicono tante più cose di quante ce ne dicano le enciclopedie ed i libri su studi filologici, tecnici ecc.</p>	
<p>Nucleo centrale: influenza della letteratura classica dei testi greci che ha un riscontro nella cultura calabrese (argomento oggetto di ricerca e di analisi da parte di Norman Douglas durante il suo soggiorno in Calabria)</p>	
<p>7- Qual'è, a Suo avviso, il riscontro della cultura classica, dei testi greci e latini nella Calabria odierna?</p>	
<p>Tra l'altro, in questo momento noi abbiamo un enorme bisogno di questo tipo di ricerca, penso che questa cosa traspare anche nelle pagine del testo, purtroppo non viene più tramandata perché manca nelle nuove generazioni l'interesse, ma mancano i giovani, diciamo chiaramente, cioè l'emigrazione ha veramente dissanguato le regioni del sud.</p> <p>Pertanto manca la materia prima e quindi si sta interrompendo, così come più volte nel testo vengono menzionati questi passaggi, pertanto tutto il sud ha bisogno poi di conservare perché tra l'altro, al di là della grande materia che può offrire a livello culturale, per una rinascita del sud, non si può fare a meno di queste cose, perché sono la parte più interessante, più genuina, così come dimostrato in <i>Sud Antico</i>, cioè è tutto materiale che va ristudiato con un nuovo approccio.</p>	
<p>8- Quando ho letto la Sua opera <i>Sud Antico</i>, ho avuto modo di riscontrare che questo tipo di ricerca è resa possibile grazie ad una nuova disciplina, ovvero l'etnoarcheologia che riparte dall'etnografia. Qual'è la Sua opinione in merito?</p>	

<p>Si, come hai detto tu, c'è questa nuova disciplina, che è l'etnoarcheologia che appunto riparte dall'etnografia.e poi fa dei paragoni, purtroppo, nel sud sono mancate delle facoltà dove queste discipline hanno avuto modo di sperimentare poi sul campo, pertanto io mi auguro in un secondo volume, un best seller che continui, perché capisci bene che il patrimonio immateriale del sud è quasi impossibile da definire perché è tutta una cosa che rimane nella memoria quindi va scavata, va ricercata, va stimolata e noi purtroppo abbiamo però il problema del tempo perché insomma questi anziani non sono eterni. Io mi rendo conto che ci troviamo di fronte a delle vere e proprie biblioteche, gli anziani sono delle biblioteche, però a differenza insomma delle biblioteche materiali, abbiamo bisogno di personaggi, ricercatori che riescono poi a trovare quella chiave per aprire queste casseforti.</p>	
<p>9- C'è un altro proverbio calabrese che, a Suo avviso, proviene dai testi classici della letteratura greca?</p>	
<p>Un altro esempio è il proverbio "Scambiare l'oro con il piombo" che mi viene spesso ripetuto da persone che vivono in Calabria; quando ho letto l'origine ero rimasto stupefatto.</p> <p>Esattamente l'origine è nel testo più antico della nostra civiltà occidentale, era già in Omero, quando due guerrieri si incontrano e uno chiede all'altro chi sia e l'altro gli risponde, e quando si scoprono parenti di persone che si sono date un tempo ospitalità reciproca, abbandonano le armi e non combattono e si scambiano le armi, però, appunto, qualcuno ha un dono più importante dell'altro e il poeta dice appunto che si sono scambiati il piombo con l'oro usando questa stessa metafora. Il contesto proprio è interessante perché ci riporta ad un'altra delle ricchezze del Meridione che è l'ospitalità; se questi due nemici rinunciano a combattere perché non loro, ma i propri antenati si erano dati reciproca ospitalità, l'ospitalità è sacra.</p>	

Qui potrei raccontare un altro episodio, se posso, che mi ha veramente commosso e forse ancora adesso mi commuovo nel raccontarlo. L'episodio riguarda un altro territorio fantastico eccezionale, la Sardegna che spesso rimane fuori persino da questi itinerari di nicchia culturali di cui abbiamo parlato perché è più distante, però è una terra spettacolare anche la Sardegna.

Nel mio primo viaggio in Sardegna arrivo ad un paese del nord in provincia di Sassari della Gallura e devo andare a cercare il mio contatto che non conosco, ci ho solo parlato una volta al telefono non so come sia fatto, non so chi stia, ma mi metto in piazza e chiedo appunto del signor Paris, cognome sardo. Anche lì chiedere del signor Paris in Sardegna e come chiedere di un Esposito a Napoli, insomma il rischio era che non lo trovassi, guarda caso mi si avvicina un ragazzo che ha sentito la mia richiesta ad un gruppo di uomini che sedevano lì a leggere del giornale e mi dice: "sì è mio padre" ed io gli rispondo: "ah bene allora forse in qualche modo" lui mi interrompe e mi fa: "ma da dove venite voi?" e dico: "eh vengo da Roma sono sono arrivato con la nave a Olbia questa mattina e in cerca di vostro padre perché..." mi interrompe un'altra volta e mi fa: "prima andiamo a fare colazione offro io".

Mi conduce in un bar e mi fa mangiare e mi dice: "dopo parliamo di mio padre e la porto a casa"; io sono rimasto sorpreso e insomma, mi ha trattato come fossi un eroe omerico, entrano in casa di qualcuno, quando arrivano in una città e prima ancora di chiedere chi sono, che cosa vogliono, perché sono arrivati, gli si dà da mangiare perché sono ospiti e per prima cosa bisogna offrire. Questo ragazzo che neanche mi conosceva mi ha accolto come un principe omerico, come se si nascondesse un Dio dietro un viaggiatore. E' un fatto straordinario, basterebbe questo per capire la ricchezza di una terra.

<p>Cosa rimane oggi della Calabria mitica e arcaica descritta da Norman Douglas</p>	
<p>10- Qual'è, secondo Lei, la terra, o meglio la cultura, più conservativa della Calabria, e che lo sarebbe stata anche per Norman Douglas?</p>	
<p>Molti credono che la risposta sia i Nebrodi, ma in realtà la terra più conservativa è l'Aspromonte, questo indubbiamente, perché poi c'è tutto il problema se i greci hanno ricolonizzato l'Aspromonte, oppure se i greci sono sempre rimasti in Aspromonte che è un problema falso è secondo me, lo dico ma da questo punto di vista storicamente è un problema falso perché quando i greci sono fuggiti dalle ultime aree greche conquistate dagli ottomani potevano andare da qualunque altra parte, anche, mi scuso se lo sottolineo, da qualunque altra parte più ricca dell'Aspromonte del 17° secolo, o prima. Sono andati nell'Aspromonte perché sapevano che lì c'erano ancora i loro lontanissimi cugini, i loro antenati, ed è chiaro che sia così, è chiaro dall'onomastica è chiaro dalla toponomastica, dalle credenze perché se confrontiamo le credenze popolari greche, cretesi, cipriote, con quelle greche antiche non c'è lo stesso tasso di continuità che c'è con le credenze calabresi è questo che cosa vuol dire? Vuol dire che i greci ciprioti, o cretesi che sono tornati in Calabria nell'età moderna non hanno potuto riportare quelle cose perché quelle cose già c'erano.</p>	
<p>11- Cosa resta oggi, a Suo avviso, di quella Calabria mitica ed arcaica descritta da Norman Douglas in <i>Old Calabria</i>?</p>	
<p>Per la conformità del territorio calabrese, questo dovrebbe essere anche chiaro, insomma, ecco, lì ci sono veramente dei territori che sono rimasti delle enclave e mai si sono contaminati con altro. Si è cristallizzata praticamente all'interno di un mondo</p>	

agropastorale un'economia chiusa che ha permesso insomma questa cultura immateriale, per cosa passa questa cultura?

La cultura immateriale, ovvero le pratiche, le rappresentazioni, espressioni, sapere e capacità, come pure gli strumenti, artefatti, oggetti e spazi culturali associati, che la comunità, i gruppi, e in alcuni casi anche i singoli individui, riconoscono come parte integrante del loro patrimonio. Questa passa per la cultura materiale perché ogni credenza, ogni superstizione, ogni proverbio, è legato ad un oggetto, ad un animale, ad un gesto agricolo, ad un lavoro, ad un'attività e quindi è chiaro che io ricordo il proverbio, finché faccio quell'operazione, quell'attività.

Certo, che il grande problema, insomma, della sopravvivenza della lingua greca nel senso che l'unica formula, a mio avviso, è quello di sostenere questa economia agropastorale perché è una lingua che si conserva in questo contesto pertanto voi immaginate che nella lingua grecanica, nel greco calabro manca la parola albero proprio perché ogni albero ha un nome quindi non era importante avere la parola albero dato che c'era un nome proprio per ogni pianta.

Così succede poi per ogni tecnicismo e ogni elemento specifico di questo mondo agro pastorale. Quindi noi, sostenendo una agricoltura moderna, quando dico moderna intendo proprio quella di tipo tradizionale, quella di tipo biologico che riesce a creare modernità nelle tradizioni, riusciamo a conservare poi questi termini tecnici del mondo grecanico che sicuramente poi possono essere volano per il turismo perché noi oggi possiamo veicolare questa lingua attraverso l'etichetta del vino, attraverso il nome del b&b, attraverso questi proverbi.

Questo testo è veramente importante, tu considera che c'è una copia anche nella biblioteca Mosino di Reggio Calabria, all'Archivio di Stato, in cui sono stato anche partecipe di un lavoro eccezionale di questa biblioteca e per fare proprio che le letture e veicolarlo poi nelle scuole, perché poi a noi serve

<p>ripartire con questo tipo di approccio è proprio fondamentale nella riscoperta di una sensibilità diversa.</p>	
<p>12- Come potrebbe essere possibile tutelare e conservare la cultura immateriale dell'Aspromonte?</p>	
<p>La cultura materiale che deve poter continuare a lavorare in biologico in un certo modo con certe tecniche, con i suoi tempi a coltivare quello che c'è di stagionale per realizzare i prodotti stagionali e poterli mettere sul mercato a prezzi concorrenziali perché lo stato si deve impegnare a valorizzare questi prodotti, questi territori, e questi oggetti e questi cicli agricoli e umani; solo in questo modo potranno continuare ad alimentare la tradizione, la memoria e quindi la cultura immateriale che potrà essere poi eventualmente archiviata anche in formato audio video in un nuovo tipo di museo più interattivo che accanto al progetto fa parlare l'anziano e lo descrive. E questa è la chiave di un nuovo sviluppo, io ci credo bisogna crederci questa è la chiave di un nuovo sviluppo di tante aree marginali, marginalizzate della Sicilia, della Calabria, della Lucania della Puglia e di tante altre regioni.</p> <p>voglio ribadire proprio questo di veicolare questo testo anche all'interno del mondo della scuola perché è veramente utile di veicolare quanto più possibile questo testo anche al territorio del turista culturale perché è un passaporto per scoprire un altro sud che non è insomma il classico sud di cui si deve parlare e io rinnovo, ovviamente, l'invito a tornare a Bova, un invito magari ad organizzare qualcosa fra Nebrodi e Aspromonte perché fa sempre bene incontrare queste culture che poi nel tempo si sono separate. Dobbiamo, inoltre, ricordare che poi Messina, in qualche modo, ha sempre fatto da collante dal medioevo in poi tra queste due sponde, da questo stretto che è più unito, quindi magari cercare anche i punti di contatto che si sono sfilacciati nel tempo, queste trame che si sono sfilacciate. Quindi, il mio è</p>	

<p>un augurio a rivederci per poter parlare ancora di questa grecità che come abbiamo visto non è perduta ma si trova in queste due montagne gemelle. Che poi, alla continuazione, sappiamo bene che l'Aspromonte continua con i Nebrodi.</p> <p>Ecco, aggiungo che è in fase di ultimazione il sequel di <i>Sud Antico</i> che si chiamerà <i>Atlante Meridionale antico e moderno</i> e ci saranno cento luoghi di interesse culturale storico ambientalistico di cultura immateriale così di tutto il meridione proprio per consentire percorsi sempre nel racconto di tutti gli altri viaggi e di tutte le altre scoperte straordinarie che queste terre ci offrono e quindi sarà pronto credo per la fine dell'anno.</p>	
<p>La ringrazio.</p>	
<p>Grazie a te.</p>	
<p>Chiusura dell'intervista: congedo</p>	

APPENDIX 22 TRANSLATION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS INTO ENGLISH

INTERVIEW WITH EMANUELE LELLI

Interview Transcript	Notes
<p>Opening: information about the book <i>Sud Antico</i> with particular attention to southern Italian Greek literature and comparison with Norman Douglas' <i>Old Calabria</i></p>	
<p>I am using this questionnaire to interview Professor Emanuele Lelli in order to ask him a few questions regarding his outstanding book <i>Sud Antico</i>.</p> <p>It is a work of substance, since, in addition to the narration of events related to the journey, it addresses the search for memory and emotions.</p> <p>Lelli digs into the memory of a remarkable ethnographic heritage, such as that of the <i>Meridione</i>, continuing the studies already started by De Martino.</p> <p>Besides, an interesting aspect to observe is that Lelli manages to detect that pleasure offered by the daily nature of these places: in fact, in his ethnographic research, he also manages to restore an atmosphere made up of scents and smiles.</p> <p>Moreover, he succeeds in empathizing with his audience and with the interviewees as well, as a result he has gathered valuable data for his research.</p> <p>From my personal standpoint, I would say that the effectiveness and the robustness of this work could be ascribed to the consideration according to which Lelli enters Aspromonte and many areas of southern Italy where he manipulates this peculiar mine of material goods with kid gloves.</p> <p>Hence, he succeeds in transporting his findings to the pages of his text in a delicate way, just as it should be done with these goods that, unfortunately, only recently have acquired the title of</p>	

<p>cultural and artistic heritage.</p>	
<p>1-To begin with, considering that you are not from Calabria and that you did not have the means to go through Aspromonte, I wish to ask you how you managed to find the research key in order to empathize with the local people, and especially how you succeeded to convey such a genuine world in a clear style (as did Norman Douglas, in his notorious <i>Old Calabria</i>). Besides, I would be grateful if you could also provide an anecdote related to some encounters in Calabria.</p>	
<p>Thank you, I'm very happy to be able to talk again about <i>Sud Antico</i>, before I give an anecdote as you asked me, I'm pleased to mention that this work was not meant to be a book as it often happens when you write something with the intention to publish it which could not be as successful, exciting and surprising, maybe even more participatory, as a piece of writing that you had not planned in advance and came so naturally.</p> <p>This is a diary that I started to write two or three days after I first arrived in Aspromonte. This was the first ethnographic campaign that I did in southern Italy. It all began in 2010 and the starting idea had been judged crazy, because when I had knocked on the doors of ethnologists and anthropologists from different universities, I'd rather not mention their names, and I told them that my intention was to undertake an investigation that attempted to compare the folk traditions written in ancient Greek and Latin texts with the oral folk traditions preserved in the memory of the elderly people who lived in southern Italy, I have to say that some of them had said to me: " what are you going to do there, you are a fool, I mean, De Martino tried to do these things in the sixties, you are not going to find anything and anyone, who are you going to meet?"</p> <p>To make a long story short, I am a bit stubborn so I left in July 2010 for Aspromonte with a questionnaire in which I had</p>	<p><i>Particular traits of southern Italian culture and literature that mainly attract writers and which influenced Douglas during his stay in Calabria.</i></p>

thematized proverbs, beliefs, figures of folk fantasy and superstitions.

I must say that after three days, I had found a huge percentage of continuity of memories, of emotions, sometimes even to the surprise of my interviewees who certainly did not know that this imaginary, superstitious, magical, apotropaic proverbial of folk medicine, of fairy tales was ancient about 2000/3000 years and that it already existed in Homer.

Many old people didn't even know who Homer was. It goes without saying that they got excited in telling it, and in that circumstance the most beautiful and most surprising aspect emerged, that was the human aspect.

I still remember, for example, the eyes of an elderly man from Bova whose name was Mr. Condemi, if I am not mistaken, who when I asked him whether he had ever heard of some proverbs and sayings of wisdom attributed to Pythagoras, he thought about it and then after a while, he stared at me with his blue eyes and answered, "yes, yes it's true my mother used to tell me these things," and he got excited because for him it was like going back in time, in the memory of an eighty-year-old person to when he was a child and he was five or six years of age. Then we can understand what chronological level we have arrived at, and his mother was ringing in his ears these precepts that the Greeks had attributed to one of their greatest and most extraordinary wise men, namely Pythagoras.

This is one of the anecdotes, however, it is important to stay in contact with the people of the South in order to understand the richness they have inside, in their traditions and in their memory, these are people that, in most cases, still do not know how to read and write.

Another thing that surprised me is that between 2010 and 2016 I interviewed people who only knew how to write their signature, but at the same time they could play musical instruments, they knew dozens and hundreds of stories by heart, even if they had

not read them, thanks to that oral memory that made them become Homeric rhapsodes able to tell different stories all the time. Besides, I met elderly women who had never seen the sea; this is another thing that gave me the shivers: elderly women in Bova in Galliciano or on the Nebrodi who told me: "but no professor I have never come down from these altitudes, from my village and I have been living in this way for ninety years."

These realities are like living fossils that give us back an extraordinary intangible cultural wealth that is uncontaminated since it has overcome centuries, it has prevailed over foreign dominations, it got the better of language changes and political regimes. In comparison to our sixty-six Republic governments they seem nothing compared to the wealth of these elderly people who have overcome centuries and millennia and remember things, elements of culture, traits of society that no one has been able to remember because the problem is right here: Sicily, Calabria Apulia also Lucania and many other regions of southern Italy.

In particular, these three regions, namely Sicily, Calabria and Apulia, between the nineteenth and twentieth century, had great scholars of the popular world, such as Giuseppe Pitrè, the notorious writer, doctor, man of letters and ethnologist, who was especially well-known for his pioneering work in the field of Sicilian folklore, museography and material culture; the anthropologist and politician Luigi Lombardi Satriani, in reality it may be useless to make a list that would always turn out to be incomplete.

However, these great scholars used to go around in the countryside and ask information to the elderly people in a frank way of speaking; they used to ask: "tell us what happened at Christmas time, tell us what happened in the house when a woman had to give birth," and so forth. It follows that the information that these great folklorists left us has made the narrative invaluable. Nevertheless, it had had a weak point, that

<p>is to say, it did not build bridges between the present and the past.</p> <p>What I tried to do was to fill this gap as the folklorists did not start from the ancient and consequently what they were asking was addressed to the contemporaneity of time.</p> <p>Then, I tried to build bridges between the tradition of folk memory that is still present today in the Greek and Roman past, as a result this bridge magically materialized.</p> <p>Maybe I didn't expect to find so many things, but there is a continuous discovery and a constant understanding as well.</p> <p>Every year I go to southern Italy in order to ask questions, I ask them through very detailed questionnaires, and every year I discover something more, I find out one more element of this very ancient memory.</p>	
<p>2- Taking into account your Philological studies, could you please explain what is the connection between Philology and Ethnography?</p>	
<p>Yes, in this sense the research has built bridges between two worlds that very little have communicated with each other, namely the world of Anthropology and History of modern popular culture and the world of Philology, or rather classical Philology.</p> <p>To be honest, I don't like this adjective, classical is a non-inclusive adjective, let's face it, many philologists are fond of it, whereas I am more inclined to talk about ancient culture rather than classical culture, because, in my opinion, ancient is an approach viewed in a more historical perspective.</p> <p>On the contrary, classical philologists have spent too much time closed in their libraries full of books of Philology, they remained too anchored to a textual methodology that gave textual comparisons a hundred percent of interpretations in a passage, of a work and of an author that belonged to a specific period.</p> <p>We have to open up instead, I speak as a philologist; Philology</p>	

<p>needs to open up to new suggestions, and the suggestion of contaminating philological studies with ethno anthropological research has to be seriously taken into consideration.</p> <p>I have tried to demonstrate a scientific eagerness using a technical and scientific language, in popular craving, with books such as <i>Sud Antico</i> that tells a human and research experience. In this regard, I have tried to demonstrate that cultural comparison, in this case a comparison with the folk traditions of southern Italy, manages to explain dozens of passages from ancient authors that until now had not been understood, or worse, had been interpreted in a bizarre way that was completely symbolic, in a totally misleading way.</p> <p>In reality, all you had to do was ask the elderly people from Bova or from the Nebrodi why a character from the Greek myth says a certain thing in a poem or in a passage from an ancient work and the elderly person would have answered to your questions and clarified what had not been understood providing examples as well.</p> <p>Let's say that the book is full of examples and some of them are remarkable as they can solve problems in ten seconds, just like a Columbus Egg which generations and generations of philologists have failed to explain.</p>	
<p>3- Regarding what was previously discussed, could you please give an example?</p>	
<p>I was waiting for you to ask it to me, as, for example, one of the most famous passages in Greek theater is the tragedy by Aeschylus dedicated to the myth of the Atrides: Agamemnon returns home after the Trojan War, his wife Clytemnestra, queen of Mycenae, for many reasons kills him, then the God Apollo orders the male son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra whose name is Orestes to avenge his father by killing his mother, and</p>	<p><i>Analysis of some of the contents of the book Sud Antico which demonstrate the link between Greek literature and southern Italian culture.</i></p>

<p>so after a series of more or less adventurous and daring events, Orestes manages to return to his homeland as he had been exiled, he then draws his sword and when he is about to kill his mother, at that moment Aeschylus stages a particular gesture in which Orestes' mother, Clytemnestra shows her breasts and asks, or better still, intimates to her son not to kill her. Ever since the work of Aeschylus has become known in the West, since the 1400s, we could say since the 15th century, this gesture has always been interpreted as a pleading act. To better explain, the philologists, who were generally confined in their libraries, have compared this theatrical scene with other texts and have interpreted it as a gesture of supplication, however, it should not be forgotten that this scene was addressed to about twenty thousand spectators of the Dionysus theater in Athens.</p> <p>The mother shows the breast that has breast-fed her son and begs him not to kill her. It is not as it was interpreted for many reasons: considering that Clytemnestra is an absolutely tough and strong-willed character, she would not implore her son in the moment when the tragedy reaches its climax.</p> <p>In the Greek world the queen Clytemnestra, the cruel murderer of her husband Agamemnon, is evoked as the most evil woman of all, depicted as a false and vindictive woman, a bitch and viper as well. Yet, in recent decades her reasons have been interpreted with different nuances which have mainly detected her disappointed and betrayed soul. That being the case, the final verdict on this mesmerizing and controversial mythological figure is therefore up to the reader to be reached.</p>	<p><i>This is a topic analysed by Norman Douglas in his Old Calabria.</i></p>
<p>4- What is the correct interpretation of Clytemnestra's gesture in Aeschylus' tragedy and how can the explanation be related to Calabria?</p>	
<p>This scene is resolved for us by so many women from Aspromonte, the Altopiano delle Murge, the Nebrodi, and the</p>	<p><i>Influence of Greek literature</i></p>

<p>Madonie who, when I asked them if they had ever heard of the gesture in which a mother uncovers her breasts to her son, they told me with a petrified look on their faces: “yes professor this is a curse, if a son does a wrong to his mother, in particular, if the mother is treated with disrespect, she then reaches out to him in public, on the street or in the square, she uncovers her breasts and curses him by touching her breasts she says, “so many drops of milk I have given you, so many drops of blood you will shed.”</p> <p>When, for the first time an elderly woman from Lucania told me this happening that was later confirmed by dozens of other elderly women of southern Italy, I shuddered, then I read again Aeschylus’ tragedy especially the verses in which Clytemnestra uncovers her breasts and says to her son the following words: “you are not afraid of your mother Clytemnestra’s breasts, if you kill me, then the bitches, that are the symbol of vengeance, my bitches will come and strike you” so, it goes without saying that this is a curse, she is cursing her son.</p> <p>Evidently, Aeschylus did not need to explain this gesture to the Athenian citizens that were watching his play because everyone was aware of this popular apotropaic gesture, on the contrary, the philologists didn’t know it therefore they interpreted the text in a completely different way.</p> <p>Consequently, the folcloric memory of the elderly people from southern Italy brought it back to us in its fundamental aspect which is the real feature of tragic theater that was the curse of Clytemnestra rather than the pleading.</p>	<p><i>on southern Italian culture. This is a topic analysed by Norman Douglas in his Old Calabria.</i></p>
<p>5-Could you please quote another example from the classics of Greek literature that is reflected in Calabrian popular culture?</p>	
<p>Another example can be represented by a different gesture that perhaps many Calabrians have often seen being done. Then, this is another aspect of the book, particularly of this research,</p>	<p><i>Influence of Greek literature on southern Italian culture.</i></p>

<p>therefore when I go around to present <i>Sud Antico</i>, especially when I tell these beliefs, these proverbs and these superstitions, I realize that there are always many people that say, “yes, it’s true, my mother told me, my grandmother told me, I did it too, I saw it being done.”</p> <p>As I was saying, this is an interactive feature of this kind of research, it is one of the ways of actualizing the ancient world, there is always a lot of talking about actualizing the classics, however it is often done considering high-end culture, particularly high-end author culture and the result is that Brex draws from Aeschylus, Sophocles, the great lyric author, draws from Homer or Sappho. On the contrary, this is another channel that everyone can access, it is a medium of popular culture which can be regarded as interactive as it allows all of us to have greater interactivity with ancient culture.</p>	<p><i>This is a topic analysed by Norman Douglas in his Old Calabria.</i></p>
<p>6-Considering what was discussed before, is there a particular anecdote related to Calabrian culture?</p>	
<p>The other anecdote occurred in Bova on the second day of my interviews, it was my first visit to South Italy, I arrived at two o'clock in the afternoon after having already been announced of my arrival, it was very hot, in reality I had gone to take a nap.</p> <p>I arrived two hours later to an elderly man’s house who had been willing to give me his interview. When I arrived, I could see that he was already watching me through the window of the house, he then comes down to open the door and waits for me at a small table in his small living room. As soon as I entered he picks up an ashtray, he turns it over abruptly and says to me, “professor let’s turn something upside down,” now I apologize for the dialect which I said it in the wrong way: “can you please repeat what you said?” and he says: “you know professor, when someone unexpected that we have been waiting for a long time</p>	<p><i>Influence of Greek literature on southern Italian culture. This is a topic analysed by Norman Douglas in his Old Calabria.</i></p>

comes to see you, we generally say to take an object and turn it over: "have you ever heard this expression?"

I answer: "no, in Rome I have never heard it, however I have to tell you that you have solved for me a philological problem that for over a hundred years had afflicted scholars of an ancient Greek poet named Eronda, or Herod, who was born in Alexandria and was active mainly on the island of Kos, of whom we have some poems left. One of them began with a similar scene and since the philologists had not understood the Greek text in which there is a woman who goes to see her friend and she says in Greek to turn something upside down.

The philologists had proposed to correct the ancient Greek text. You know the conjecture, the correction of the ancient text because when the philosopher/philologist gets so angry that he couldn't understand the ancient text, he says with perhaps a psychologically almost childlike behavior that the ancient text is wrong: "as I don't understand it it, the ancient text is wrong therefore I correct it." Accordingly, many philologists had continually tried to correct the text of this Greek poet.

In reality, the text is right and not only is it right, but it is a meaningful and interesting text because it reveals to us that as early as two thousand and five hundred years ago there was this gestural expressiveness to ward off ill-luck and all the philologists from Oxford, Cambridge and Berlin had not understood it. Conversely, that old man from Aspromonte who revealed this expression to me that afternoon without even knowing who that Greek poet was, did understand it. This thing is surprising, isn't it? Outstanding, and I can also tell you that when I came back to Rome, that evening I had phoned someone to recount what I had discovered, I said: "don't you know what I have solved here, that I had nothing to do with this field, what the elderly people from Aspromonte have solved for me" I was then told:, "really? But you didn't inform me in advance, don't forget to record it because it could happen that you come back

<p>to Rome and no one will believe it, or worse, they might think that you made it up.”</p> <p>When I then started to talk to some fellow philologist, in fact he asked me whether I had documented this thing, he said: “did you record it because it’s such a bombshell”. Unfortunately, what often happens is that high culture, or better still, that it considers itself as high is characterized by great scholars who appear on television that generally have difficulty admitting that an element of popular culture can solve a problem that they have failed to solve.</p> <p>This happens because it is not open to dialogue or is less open to it, that is to say, it intends to convey the message that its methodology is irreplaceable. Yet, it is not like this. Sometimes, ordinary people with their wisdom and their popular culture can tell us so much more than encyclopedias and books on philological studies and technical findings do.</p>	
<p>Central core: influence of the classical literature of Greek and Latin texts that has a resonance in Calabrian culture (a topic researched and analyzed by Norman Douglas during his stay in Calabria).</p>	
<p>7- What is, in your opinion, the influence of classical culture of Greek and Latin texts on the present Calabria?</p>	
<p>In reality, right now we need this kind of research, I think this can also be noticed in the pages of the text, unfortunately it is no longer being handed down because there is a lack of interest in the new generations, above all, there is a lack of young people; let’s say it frankly that emigration has really bled the southern regions white.</p>	<p><i>Norman Douglas’ Calabria vs modern Calabria: changes that have taken place since Douglas’ Old Calabria</i></p>

<p>For that reason, the raw material is lacking and therefore it is being interrupted; several times this topic is mentioned throughout the text, therefore the whole South needs then to preserve these things which, beyond the great material that it can offer on a cultural level the rebirth of the South, they cannot be ignored as they are the most interesting and genuine part. Accordingly, as it is mentioned in <i>Sud Antico</i>, it is all material that needs to be studied again using a new approach.</p>	
<p>8- When I read the book <i>Sud Antico</i> I realized that this kind of research is made possible by a new subject, namely Ethnoarchaeology which restarts from Ethnography. What is your opinion concerning this issue?</p>	
<p>Yes, as you said, there is this new subject, which is Ethno Archaeology that starts again from Ethnography and then it makes continuous comparisons. Unfortunately, in the South there has been a lack of potential through which these subjects have had the opportunity to test their efficacy in the field. Therefore, I hope that a second volume, a best seller, could continue, because you understand well that the intangible heritage of the South is almost impossible to define since it is something that remains in the memory, consequently, it has to be dug, researched and stimulated. Unfortunately, we have the problem of time as these elderly people are not eternal, I realized that these elderly people can be regarded as real libraries, however, unlike these material libraries, we need characters, researchers who can then find that key to open these safes.</p>	
<p>9-Is there another Calabrian saying that, in your view, comes from the classical texts of Greek literature?</p>	
<p>Another example is the proverb "Trading gold for lead," which I</p>	<p><i>Influence of</i></p>

have often heard from many people who live in Calabria; when I read the origin I was very surprised.

It goes without saying that the origin is in the oldest text of our Western civilization, it was already in Homer: when two warriors meet and one of them asks the other who that person is and when they find out they are relatives of people who have once given each other hospitality, they lay down their weapons and do not fight anymore, or better still, they exchange their weapons. This gesture refers to someone that has a more important gift than the other and the poet says that they exchanged lead for gold using this same metaphor. The context is interesting because it leads us to reflect on the source of wealth of the South, which is hospitality; if these two enemies give up fighting because their own ancestors had once given each other hospitality and hospitality is sacred to them.

Moreover, I could recount another episode, if I may, that really touched me and perhaps even now it will make me feel emotional while I'm recounting it. The episode is about another exceptional and fantastic region that is Sardinia, which often remains outside from these cultural niche itineraries that we have been talking about, because it is a more distant place. Nevertheless, Sardinia is a picturesque region as well.

On my first trip to Sardinia I arrived at a northern town in the province of Sassari of Gallura and then I started to look for my contact that I didn't know, I've only talked to him once on the phone I don't know what he looks like, I don't know who he is. So I reach the central square and ask for Mr. Paris, a Sardinian surname. It has to be observed that asking about Mr. Paris in Sardinia is like asking about an Esposito in Naples, that being so, the risk was that I could have not found him. Afterwards, a guy who had heard my request to a group of men who were sitting there reading the newspaper, approaches me and he says: "yes he is my father" and I answer: "well then maybe somehow" he interrupts me and says:"but where are you from?"

Greek literature on southern Italian culture. This is a topic analysed by Norman Douglas in Old Calabria.

<p>and I say: “ I’m from Rome, I disembarked this morning at Olbia and I’m looking for your father because...” he interrupts me one more time and says: “first let’s go and have breakfast, it is on me”.</p> <p>He takes me to a café to have breakfast and says: “we’ll talk about my father later and then I’ll take you home”; I was surprised because he treated me as a Homeric hero; from this behavior it can be deduced that when unknown travellers arrive there, before even asking who they are, what they want, why they came, they are first given food because they are guests and the first thing to do is to let them have something to eat or drink. This guy who didn’t even know me greeted me as an Homeric prince, as if there was a God hiding behind a traveler. This is an extraordinary fact that makes us understand a country’s tradition.</p>	
<p>What remains today of the mythical and archaic Calabria described by Norman Douglas</p>	
<p>10- What do you think is the most conservative land, or rather culture, in Calabria, which would have been so for Norman Douglas as well?</p>	
<p>Many people believe that the answer is the Nebrodi, but it goes without saying that the most conservative place is Aspromonte because of issue regarding whether the Greeks recolonized Aspromonte, or whether the Greeks have always been in Aspromonte, which I think that it is a wrong question. I think that from an historical point of view, it is an incorrect dilemma because when the Greeks fled from the last Greek areas conquered by the Ottomans they could have gone anywhere else, even, I apologize if I emphasize it, anywhere richer than Aspromonte of the 17th century, or before. They went to</p>	

<p>Aspromonte because they knew that there they would have found their distant cousins and their ancestors as well and this becomes apparent when observing their onomastics along with the toponymy. Moreover, if we compare the Greek, Cretan, Cypriot folk beliefs, with the ancient Greek ones, we can notice that there is not the same continuity as there is with the Calabrian beliefs. So, what does this mean? It means that the Cypriot or Cretan Greeks who came back to Calabria in modern times could not bring back those things as they were already there.</p>	
<p>11- From your personal standpoint, what do you think remains today of that mythical and archaic Calabria described by Norman Douglas in <i>Old Calabria</i>?</p>	
<p>For the conformity of the Calabrian territory, this should also be clear that there are areas which have remained enclaves and have never been contaminated by anything else. A confined economy has crystallized itself within an agro-pastoral world that has allowed this intangible culture, then how is this culture regarded?</p> <p>It is regarded as intangible culture, that is characterized by the practices, the representations, the expressions, the knowledge and the skills, as well along with the associated tools, the artifacts, together with the objects and the cultural spaces that the community, the groups, and in some cases even the individuals, recognize as part of their heritage. This can be considered material culture because every belief, superstition and proverb, is linked to an object, an animal, an agricultural gesture, a job and an activity, therefore it follows that people remember the proverb as long as they keep on doing a specific procedure or activity.</p> <p>As might be expected, in my opinion, the big problem of the</p>	<p><i>Norman Douglas' Calabria vs modern Calabria: changes that have taken place since Douglas' Old Calabria</i></p>

<p>survival of the Greek language is to encourage and give strength to this agro pastoral economy as the language can be preserved in this context. For example, you imagine that in the Greek dialect spoken in southern Italy, or better still in Calabrian Greek, the word tree is missing because every tree has a name so it was not important to have the word tree since there was a proper name for every plant.</p> <p>Consequently, the same happens with every technical expression and every specific element of this agro-pastoral world. Therefore, by supporting and encouraging a modern agriculture, when I say modern I mean the traditional type, the organic kind that manages to create modernity in tradition, we manage to preserve these technical terms of southern Italian Greek that surely could be a driving force for tourism because today we can spread this language through the wine label, the names of the b&b and by means these proverbs as well.</p> <p>This text is really important, we have to consider that there is also a copy in the Mosino library in Reggio Calabria, in the State Archives, where I also took part at an exceptional work organized by this library whose aim was to spread the readings of this text to local schools because we need to restart with this kind of approach which is fundamental in the rediscovery of a different sensibility.</p>	
<p>12- How could it be possible to protect and preserve the intangible culture of Aspromonte?</p>	
<p>The material culture needs to be able to continue to work organically in a certain way following certain techniques, considering its times to grow seasonal products and put them on the market at competitive prices because the state has to commit itself to enhance these products, these territories, along with these objects, these agricultural and human cycles as well.</p>	

Only in this way can they continue to enhance tradition, memory and above all intangible culture that could also be archived in an audio video format in a new type of museum which is more interactive as it would give elderly people the possibility to speak and to describe themselves. This is the key to a new development, I believe in it and so should you, it this is the key to a new development of many marginal, marginalized areas such as Sicily, Calabria, Lucania, Puglia and many other regions.

I want to reassert this thing of making this text being known also within the schools because it is really useful, besides it should also be spread as much as possible to the territory of the cultural tourist because it is a passport to discover another southern Italy that is not the classic South. I renew, of course, the invitation to come back to Bova, this is an invitation maybe to organize something between the Nebrodi and Aspromonte because it is always good to get to know these cultures that then over time have separated. Moreover, we have to remember that Messina, in some way, has always held these two seashores together from the Middle Ages onward. From this strait that is more united, so maybe it is possible to look for the points of contact that have come apart over time, these wefts that have frayed. So, my wish is to see each other again so that we can speak again about this Hellenism that as we have seen is not lost but can be found in these twin mountains. As we know very well, Aspromonte continues with the Nebrodi.

To conclude, I would like to add that the sequel of *Sud Antico* is being finalized which will be entitled *Atlante Meridionale antico e moderno*. The latter will take into account about one hundred areas of cultural historical environmental interests concerning intangible culture of the whole South of Italy so as to allow journeys and excursions always in the narrative form and other extraordinary discoveries that these places can offer us, I think that the sequel will be ready by the end of the year.

Thank you very much.	
You are welcome.	
Closing the interview: summarize	