Perché LANG matters diventa LANG MAG?

Il rispetto per la diversità linguistica e culturale rappresenta uno degli elementi costitutivi dell'Unione europea, e tale principio è sancito dall’articolo 22 della Carta europea dei diritti fondamentali. Le lingue aprono le porte alle altre culture e arricchiscono la nostra capacità di beneficiare dei contatti culturali quando viaggiamo o lavoriamo in altri paesi dell’Unione. Per questo tutto il mondo europeo si è da tempo attivato per garantire l’apprendimento di più lingue straniere nella realtà scolastica. È la scuola che contribuisce alla crescita globale della persona, di un giovane integrato nella società e responsabile di una capacità interpretativa che è alla base di ogni confronto culturale.

Considerando che l’Unione europea è composta da un gran numero di nazioni e comunità linguistiche diverse, il pluralismo linguistico diventa il fondamento per il rispetto della diversità culturale. La scuola italiana ha finalmente avviato, con la riforma del 2004 nella scuola secondaria di primo grado, lo studio di almeno due lingue straniere, e si appresta a estendere lo studio dell’inglese e di una seconda lingua comunitaria nella scuola superiore, con una riforma annunciata per il 2010.

LANG matters diventa LANG MAG per condividere e diffondere la scelta europea del plurilinguismo, perché sa che i temi dell’educazione linguistica sono trasversali alle diverse lingue, e che tutti i docenti di lingua straniera possono ricevere beneficio da una più ampia cultura e pratica linguistica.

Perché dedicare questo primo numero di LANG MAG alla letteratura?

Esiste una relazione ontologica tra lingua e letteratura, poiché la letteratura si realizza attraverso la lingua e la lingua si realizza e acquisisce forza attraverso la letteratura. Ogni popolo trova e conserva la propria identità in un racconto, e il racconto letterario è per sua natura universale, trasversale e intertestuale, fonte di sapere, di bellezza, di emozione.

Anna Fresco
Direttore editoriale Lingue Moderne
LANG Edizioni

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CONTINUITIES BETWEEN CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY

A STEP-BY-STEP INTERTEXTUAL APPROACH TO LITERATURE

BY DERMOT HEANEY

It can be difficult for literature teachers to reconcile the need to cover classic works of the past and the desirability of introducing students to significant contemporary authors, as time runs out for the completion of their programme. The following article considers a way of striking this balance with a method that uses a great renaissance author as a platform for introducing an important contemporary writer in some depth. The method that is described here is a step-by-step intertextual study route revealing the vital link between Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and *The Collector*, a novel by the contemporary novelist John Fowles. On the way, it is hoped students will also be alerted to the indebtedness of modern authors to the masters of the past, and become aware of the strong continuity that exists between different genres of literature in different periods. Interest could be initially aroused by juxtaposing one of the many images of Shakespeare’s Caliban with a still of Clegg taken from the film adaptation of his novel *The Collector,* and then by inviting them to think about what kinds of continuities might exist between the images. The ideal starting point for textual analysis would be after students have studied a passage of *The Tempest* in their anthology. This would provide them with detailed knowledge of the major characters, the plot, and the principal themes. They could then be asked to read the following short passage.

‘Caliban’s Challenge to Authority’

CALIBAN I must eat my dinner. This island’s mine by Sycorax, my mother, Which thou tak’st from me. When thou camst first Thou strok’d me and made much of me; wouldst give me Water with berries in’t; and teach me how To name the bigger light and how the less That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee, And showed thee all the qualities o’th’ isle: The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile. Cursed be I that did so! All the charms Of Sycorax — toads, beetles, bats — light on you, For I am all the subjects that you have, Which first was my own king; and here you sty me In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me The rest o’th’ island.

PROSPERO Thou most lying slave, Whom stripes may move, not kindness; I have used thee (Filth as thou art) with human care and lodged thee

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1 *strok’d*: caressed;
2 *brine pits*: pits with very salty water (*saline*);
3 *light on you*: descend on you;
4 *sty me*: make me live like a pig (*mi tieni rinchiuso come un maiale*);
5 *stripes*: beatings (*che obbedisce solo con le frustate*);
6 *filth*: disgusting dirt (*essere immonda*);
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate The honour of my child.  
CALIBAN O ho, O ho! Would’t had been done;  
Thou didst prevent me, I had peopled else7  
This isle with Calibans.  
PROSPERO Abhorred slave,  
Which any print of goodness wilt not take8,  
Being capable of all ill; I pitied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
A thing most brutish9, I endowed thy purposes  
With words that made them known. But thy vile race (Though thou didst learn) had that in’t which good natures  
Could not abide to be with10; therefore wast thou  
Deservedly confined into this rock,  
Who hadst deserved more than a prison.  
CALIBAN You taught me language; and my profit on’t  
Is I know how to curse. The red plague11 rid you  
For learning12 me your language.  

(From The Tempest, Act I, Scene II, W. Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare, Methuen & Co., 1971.)

This is the moment to focus on the central relationship between Prospero and Caliban and how it reflects the theme of ‘nurture’ (education and civilization) versus ‘nature’ (the original natural state of man). Students will remember how Prospero fails to ‘nurture’ Caliban above his original ‘nature’, and has to protect his daughter from him. They will also remember that Shakespeare’s ambivalent treatment of the theme reflects the Jacobean’s interest in issues involved in colonization, especially conflicting ideas about the nature of the native peoples caught up in this process, and the nature of the Europeans’ relationship to them. One of the questions raised by The Tempest is: ‘if a European fails to nurture a savage like Caliban, is that the savage’s fault or does the blame lie with European?’

Now it is time to move on to the contemporary work. The teacher can provide a short biography of the novelist and stress how intertextuality has been a defining feature of his work (see below).

The next step is to supply details of the plot, which can be summarized as follows: an apparently ordinary young bank clerk, Frederick Clegg, has won the pools, and is suddenly provided with enough money to realize his desires and hidden obsessions. Clegg is a collector of butterflies, which he hunts and kills. The book describes how he now adds a beautiful girl to his collection. The object of his desire is a young art student called Miranda. He kidnaps and imprisons her in the isolated house he has been able

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7 else: in another way (altrimenti);  
8 print... take: who will never learn goodness;  
9 When thou... brutish: When you were unable to speak, and could only make strange noises;  
10 But thy vile race... abide to be with: You were able to learn, but in your inherited vile nature there were elements which cannot coexist with virtue (anche se tu imparavi, nella tua spregevole natura c’era ciò con cui le nature virtuose non possono convivere);  
11 red plague: peste rossa;  
12 learning: teaching.

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**John Fowles (1926-2005)**

After graduating from Oxford University, John Fowles spent a period teaching on the Greek island of Spetsai. The success of his first novel The Collector (1963) allowed him to devote himself exclusively to writing. His most famous other works are The Magus (1966) and The French Lieutenant’s Woman (1969). Fowles’ name is closely associated with intertextuality, because his works often deliberately highlight the derivative nature of literature.
Having considered the works in isolation, students can be helped to see the strong continuity between them. The most obvious evidence of this are the strong similarities between the characters’ names and the sexual threat of the debased creature represented by Shakespeare’s Caliban and Fowles’ Clegg. A further similarity is thematic, because Fowles poses a question very like Shakespeare’s, though with a modern emphasis. Through Miranda, he seems to ask, how is it possible that Clegg has degenerated into a monster. Is it because of a defective nature, or does it indicate the inadequacy of contemporary culture and society because it has failed to ‘nurture’ his human spirit sufficiently? Continuity also takes the form of reversals of Shakespeare’s play. While Caliban is a slave on Prospero’s island and is in Prospero’s power, Fowles’ Caliban figure has now siezed power over Miranda and threatens her sexually, which was the very thing Prospero acted to prevent. Another particularly modern reversal is the

However, when she succeeds in humiliating Clegg by exposing his sexual impotence, he allows her to die, and turns his attentions to another young woman, a shop assistant, who should not prove so intimidating. At this point the students can be asked to recognize intertextual elements from the plot summary and how Fowles reverses the situation in The Tempest. In his Clegg embodiment, Caliban is now the master of the situation, and has succeeded in confining the Miranda character, although he still admires her because of her accomplishments. Students are now ready to analyze an extract from Fowles’ novel. The passage is taken from Miranda’s diary and provides a description of her captor and her feelings and thoughts about him.

‘Caliban’s England is Fouler’
Another bad day. I made sure it was a bad day for Caliban, too. Sometimes he irritates me so much that I could scream at him. It’s not so much the way he looks, though that’s bad enough. He’s always so respectable, his trousers always have creases, his shirts are always so clean. I really think he’d be happier if he wore starched collars. So utterly not with it! And he stands. He stands. He’s the most tremendous stander-around I’ve ever met. Always with that I’m-sorry expression on his face, which I begin to realise is actually contentment. The sheer joy of having me under his power, of being able to spend all and every day staring at me. He doesn’t care what I say or how I feel – my feelings are meaningless to him – it’s the fact that he’s got me.

I could scream abuse at him all day long; he wouldn’t mind at all. It’s me he wants, my look, my outside; not my emotions or my mind or my soul or even my body. Not anything human.

He’s a collector. That’s the great dead thing in him. What irritates me most about him is his way of speaking. Cliché after cliché, and all so old fashioned, as if he’s spent all his life with people over fifty. At lunch-time today he said, I called in with regard to those records they’ve placed on order. I said, Why don’t you just say, ‘I asked about those records you ordered?’

He said, I know my English isn’t correct, but I try to make it correct. That sums him up. He’s got to be correct, he’s got to do whatever was ‘right’ and ‘nice’ before either of us was born. I know it’s pathetic, I know he’s a victim of a miserable non-conformist: suburban world and a miserable social class, the horrid timid, copycatting: genteel in-between class. I used to think D and M’s: class the worst. All golf and gin and bridge and cars and the right accent and the right money and having been to the right school and hating the arts (the theatre being a pantomime at Christmas and ‘Hay Fever’ by the town Rep – Picasso and Bartok dirty words unless you wanted to get a laugh). Well, that is foul. But Caliban’s England is fouler.

fact that Fowles’ Miranda is allowed to speak and voice her deepest feelings and thoughts, something which Shakespeare’s character does only very superficially, evidence of the way the woman’s viewpoint enjoys a centrality absent in Shakespeare’s work.

Students may be helped towards a more structured understanding of the interplay between these two works by a series of questions and related activities. The following are offered as guidelines.

a. What aspects of human nature do Miranda and Caliban represent? Miranda would seem to represent finer aspects, she is associated with self-expression, perception and sensitivity and, as an artist, with a feel for beauty; Clegg is the antithesis: he embodies a squall kind of conformity; he is unable to express himself (except in a monstrous form), he does not want to understand but simply to possess and he has no sense of natural beauty, as his awkward use of the language shows.

b. Miranda depicts her Caliban as a base creature. In what way does she feel he is inferior? How is the situation in _The Tempest_ reversed in _The Collector_? Firstly, Miranda feels he is the embodiment of lower-middle class conformity, and that he is not in touch with the spirit of his times — the 60’s was, after all, a period of revolution and more liberal attitudes; secondly, she also feels he is mentally and culturally inferior.

c. In Shakespeare’s play, the clash between Caliban and Prospero can also be interpreted as a clash of civilizations. In Fowles’ novel the conflict is also seen as a cultural one. Describe this cultural conflict. It is a conflict between a lower-middle-class conformist vision and a more modern liberated outlook.

d. Can you think of any other aspects involved in this clash? It is also a clash between art (Miranda) and a philistine, materialist outlook (Clegg/Caliban).

e. Do you think the events in _The Collector_ reveal the author’s worries about trends and changes in society? Open answer. Students may be aware that this passage seems to reveal a divided society, but it also seems to suggest that it is a society in which finer spirits like Miranda are particularly vulnerable and where philistine materialism, as represented by Clegg, will triumph in the end.

Alternatively, students can be helped to clarify the interplay between the original work by Shakespeare and the inventiveness of the contemporary novelist, by completing a grid showing some of the main parallels and reversals covered in the course of this study route. The following is an example:

Next to your answers put ‘R’ for a reversal and ‘S’ for similarity. Then use the grid to write a brief description of the similarities between the two works and the deliberate reversals Fowles introduces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Tempest</th>
<th>The Collector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main characters</strong></td>
<td>Miranda, Caliban (Ferdinand) — ‘S’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation</strong></td>
<td>Miranda, a captive in the power of Caliban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td>Miranda cannot make any real impression on Clegg and release him from his limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>A comedy ending on a note of harmony and restored order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final stage of this Teaching Unit would entail an overview that summarizes the works compared and the textual and thematic strands that bind them together over the centuries. The following is offered as an example.

**Overview**

Shakespeare’s great play, its main characters and themes have also provided the inspiration for an important contemporary British novel. At the centre of John Fowles’ _The Collector_ stand two characters called Miranda and Caliban, and their relationship is seen as a modern-day continuation of the clash between Prospero and his servant Caliban. At a distance of 350 years, Fowles revisits the conflict between the forces of civilization and culture, as originally represented by Prospero and Miranda, and savage resistance to them, as embodied by Caliban. In Shakespeare’s work, once Prospero understands that Caliban cannot be raised to the same level as Miranda, the savage is dominated, controlled, and exploited. Fowles’ novel, however, imagines what would happen if a modern day Caliban was ‘magically’ put in a position of power, not through his own personal merits, but by a stroke of incredible luck.

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Per un approccio enunciativo all'analisi testuale

COME SINTONIZZARSI CON LE INTENZIONI DEL TESTO
DI JEAN-MICHEL CARRIÉ


Distinguere, in ogni messaggio verbale (o in ogni testo), l'enunciazione dall'enunciato equivale a distinguere dal messaggio «risultato» sia l'intenzione comunicativa che il messaggio decodificato e ricostruito dal ricevitore. Sono due piani dell'analisi resi necessari dalla differenza di natura esistente tra l'atto enunciativo e il suo risultato.

L'enunciazione è infusa nell'enunciato (si dice che l'enunciato tramandi i segni dell'enunciazione) ed è riconoscibile attraverso i suoi marqueurs o termini indicati, che sono delle risorse della lingua adatte a questo scopo. Non c'è significato dell'enunciato senza la percezione della «struttura enunciativa» che consente di sintonizzarsi con le “intenzioni del testo”. Inoltre, distinguere questi due livelli consente di individuare fenomeni come il sorgere del soggetto nell'enunciato, la relazione che il locutore stabilisce con l'interlocutore tramite il testo, l'atteggiamento del soggetto locutore nei confronti del proprio enunciato. Enunciazione ed enunciato non sono creazioni metafisiche e nemmeno i mostri di una nuova scolastica medievale. Sono invece in grado di esplicitare il linguaggio – qualsiasi tipo di linguaggio, verbale o non verbale (Barthes, 1964 b.) – in quanto realtà concreta. Il concetto di enunciazione è quello più chiarificatore per rendere conto di fenomeni come l'uso dei deittici, l'uso dei tempi verbali, l'esclamazione, l'interiezione, l'intonazione, il ruolo di alcuni avverbi che qualificano l'enunciazione da cui risulta l'enunciato.

(ad es., «sincèrement», «entre nous», ecc.) (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980).

Ignorarlo comporterebbe la necessità di usare perifrasi senza fine, per di più molto meno chiare (a meno che si ritenga inutile studiare e descrivere fenomeni di creazione e di funzionamento del discorso testuale). Ci rende consapevoli dei modi di funzionare del linguaggio che ognuno di noi, quando comunica con gli altri, oralmente o tramite lo scritto, adopera inconsapevolmente. Allo stesso modo in cui Monsieur Jourdain, il ridicolo bourgeois gentilhomme di Molière, un bel giorno si accorge, meravigliato, di aver sempre parlato in prosa senza saperlo, ogni parola che proferiamo è comunicabile agli altri solo per la sua conformità al codice enunciativo condiviso dai locutori. Gli enunciati più banali che ci scambiamo ogni giorno diventano carichi di un significato solo perché avvertiamo almeno in modo intuitivo la loro intenzione enunciativa. Se ti si chiede «Puoi dirmi l'ora?», la risposta prospettata non è «sì» o «no», ma sarà del tipo: «sono le dieci meno cinque» o «mi dispiace, non ho l'orologio», ecc. (Ducrot, 1984).

La pragmatica del linguaggio, altro
potente metodo di analisi dei nostri scambi verbali, si può comodamente innestare, a livello didattico, sulla teoria dell’enunciazione (Bianchi, 2003) che è in grado di chiarire fenomeni e funzionamenti come l’intenzione comunicativa, la performatività del discorso, l’ironia, l’implicatura (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1986).

A maggior ragione, l’analisi testuale fondata sulla teoria dell’enunciazione è il metodo più adatto alla comprensione dei testi letterari. Se prendiamo, ad esempio, gli *Exercices de style* di Raymond Queneau (1947), l’interesse non consiste certamente nel contenuto, un mini-racconto volutamente banale, aneddotico, insignificante, che viene qui declinato sotto 99 forme diverse, bensì, lasciando da parte le varianti stilistiche, nelle variazioni della struttura enunciativa che, diventando matrici concettuali di una creazione letteraria, illustrano in modo emblematico l’importanza dell’enunciazione rispetto all’enunciato, a livello morfologico della scena, e che reciprocamente i codici della lingua e della comunicazione parlano tramite lui. Il grande vantaggio della distinzione enunciativa è di richiamare l’attenzione su questi fenomeni del linguaggio e della produzione del testo, che sono i soli aspetti contenutistici, che spesso vengono travisati perché isolati superficiali, della comunicazione mediaistica; eppure neanche queste forme impoverite possono fare a meno dell’enunciazione!


En 1986 il a épousé Elisa Lucarelli avec qui il a produit plusieurs manuels scolaires de français à l’usage des lycées et collèges, et, dernièrement, le manuel de littérature Cité des lettres, publié chez LANG Edizioni.

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**Bibliografia**

Una collana di letture originali o tratte dai classici ideata per la scuola secondaria di primo grado e per la scuola superiore.
La vivace componente visuale contribuisce a coinvolgere le ragazze e i ragazzi nella lettura e favorisce la comprensione dei passi linguisticamente più complessi. Per incentivare la lettura autonoma degli studenti e per proporre corretti modelli di pronuncia e intonazione, ogni volume è corredato di un CD audio, che riproduce integralmente il testo, drammatizzato da attori professionisti madrelingua. Organizzati su livelli graduali di difficoltà, i volumi presentano un ricco apparato didattico mirato all'apprendimento del lessico, delle strutture grammaticali e degli aspetti culturali specifici di ogni racconto.

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