



universität  
wien

# MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Venice in contemporary Juvenile Literature“

verfasst von / submitted by

Dott.ssa Donatella Zeni

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme code as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

A 066 870

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Christine Ivanovic



# **Venice in contemporary Juvenile Literature**

The image of Venice in contemporary Juvenile Literature in four different languages through a quantitative analysis: an imagological approach



## **Index**

Acknowledgments	p.7
Abbreviations and acronyms	p. 9
0. Introduction	p. 11
1. Definitions	
1.1 Imagology	p. 15
1.2 Stereotype and Ethnicity	p. 19
1.3 Juvenile Literature	p. 23
2. Imagology and Juvenile Literature	p. 29
2.1 The Child as ‘the Other’: a case study	p. 36
3. The image of Italy and Venice	p. 41
4. Quantitative analysis	p. 51
4.1 Looking for Venetianity’s words in the novels	p. 54
4.2 Venetianity’s words that are present only in one or two novels	p. 67
4.3 Venetianity in percentage	p. 72
5. Analysis of the results	p. 75
6. Conclusion	p. 87
7. Appendix	
7.1 Plots of the novels	p. 91
7.2 Opening Chapter Pictures in <i>Herr der Diebe</i>	p. 97
Bibliography	p. 101
Abstracts in English and in German	p. 105



## **Acknowledgments**

I miei ringraziamenti vengono dal cuore e, per questo, non posso che scriverli in italiano.

Grazie all'Univ.-Prof. Dr. Christine Ivanovic per la collaborazione.

Un caloroso ringraziamento va alla mia famiglia, lontana, ma sempre con me. Grazie ai miei genitori che hanno creduto e investito ininterrottamente nella mia educazione. Mamma, papà, Nico e nonna...siete il miglior fan club che si possa desiderare!

Grazie ad Armin e a tutti gli amici che mi hanno ascoltata e supportata (o sopportata) con grande pazienza.

Un ringraziamento speciale va a Thomas, Adriana e Patrick: senza di voi non ce l'avrei mai fatta.





## Abbreviations

Novels' titles:

*La bambina* = *La bambina della sesta luna*

*Once upon* = *Once upon a time in Venice*

*Kafka i la nina* = *Kafka i la nina que se'n va anar de viatge*

Other abbreviations:

fem./f. = feminine

masc. = masculine

s. = noun (from Italian: *sostantivo*)

sing. = singular

pl. = plural

## Acronyms

DLE = Diccionario de la Lengua Española (by Real Academia Española – RAE)

CL = Children Literature

YA = Young Adult Literature



## 0. Introduction

In my thesis I will analyze Venice's representation in contemporary German, Italian, English<sup>1</sup> and Spanish juvenile literature. My research will be focused on four novels written in the different languages mentioned above: *Herr der Diebe* by Cornelia Funke (2000), *La bambina della sesta luna* by Moony Witcher<sup>2</sup> (2002), *Once upon a Time in Venice* by Monique Roy (2007) and *Las eternas* by Victoria Álvarez (2012). I chose these novels because they have all been published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they all have Venice as setting of the plots and all main protagonists are juvenile figures<sup>3</sup>. Thus, my research is based on four novels set in Venice taken from four different linguistic, geographical and cultural regions, I will use them to exemplify juvenile literature in four different countries and cultures, but I am not assuming to describe a general picture of the whole juvenile literature in the four countries, at all. In my thesis I will compare these four novels on the basis of their common setting and genre.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I will start explaining what Imagology is and what it aims, and why I chose it as theoretical basis for my work. Then, I will define 'Stereotype' and 'Ethnicity'. Afterwards, I will focus on the definition of 'Juvenile Literature', and I will explain why I use this term instead of the already existing definitions of 'Children's Literature' and 'Young Adult' literature. My definition of juvenile literature is also connected to the reading target of the books, that includes young readers aged from 9 to 13-14 years.

In the second chapter, I will illustrate the possible connections offered by the application of the imagological approach to juvenile literature. The debate regarding 'the Other' in children's and, generally, in juvenile literature is still open. As an example of my thesis, I

---

<sup>1</sup> I use here the term "English" referring to the literature originally written in English and not only from British authors.

<sup>2</sup> Moony Witcher is Roberta Rizzo's pen name and I will use it all along my thesis.

<sup>3</sup> The plots of all novels can be found in the appendix 7.1.

will use the Catalan short novel *Kafka i la nina que se'n va anar de viatge* (2008) written by Jordi Sierra i Fabra and Premi Nacional de Literatura in 2011. Unlike the other texts chosen as primary literature, Venice is not the setting of this novel. However, the city is mentioned along the narration in a way that will reaffirm my statements presented in the previous part of my thesis. The main point of the novel is the focus on the child as 'the Other'. Through the plot, the Catalan juvenile novel does not present the child as something negative or brutal, but as something out of adults' normal perceptive world. Here the process of otherness does not take place by making the unknown element devilish, but by making the known element, i.e. the adult, unable to react to the child. In this case "the logic [...] of positive self-valorization highlighted by representing other peoples negatively" (Beller and Leerseen 6) is not considered.

In the third chapter I will make a short excursus of how Venice has been represented in literature from the Grand Tour's period on and which image remains in our contemporary culture from these descriptions. From an imagological point of view, I find images of cities captivating, because they "are proving to be a more and more intriguing imagological working ground" (Leerssen 2016: 28) than 'national' images.

I will then start, in the fourth chapter, with the quantitative analysis searching the number of encounters (terms frequency) of a list of words that are typically used in the representation of Venice and are closely and only connected with the Venetian<sup>4</sup> city. Using a definition coined by myself, I will name these terms "Venetianity's words". In order to find the term frequency of the Venetianity's words, I will use the digital version of my primary texts and I will use a digital counter. This tool is particular useful in recording frequency, but it obviously has its limitations. Counting and reporting the term frequencies

---

<sup>4</sup> The English adjective used to refer to Venice and/or the region of Veneto is the same. It is from here still clear that Venice is the most important and relevant city in the imaginary of Veneto.

of the novels would be almost impossible without digital tools, which make the search and the counting itself much easier. As Hoover writes in 2013: “Quantitative approaches to literature represent elements or characteristics of literary texts numerically, applying the powerful, accurate, and widely accepted methods of mathematics to measurement, classification, and analysis” (517). In my research the quantitative approach represents numerically the term frequency of given words.

In the fifth part on my thesis, I will analyze my results, and in the sixth chapter I will conclude my research.

My thesis does not include a methodological chapter, because I work with four juvenile novels and I use them as a sample probe for my research, applying an ‘embedded methodology’, derived from a more open writing practice in the humanities (Ballhausen 2017).

My research tries to depict how a quantitative approach can help in the literary analysis from an imagological point of view of a limited sample of texts, that are chosen on the basis of the common genre, readership and setting. My analysis starts from the idea that stereotypes play a fundamental role in the representation of ourselves and of the Other. Stereotypes influence the vision we have of a city, as well: The image of a city we have in mind, before we even see it or read about it, comes from an unconscious cultural and social construction that we ‘inherit’ from our society. If this image of a group of people or a place becomes fixed, often repeated, and its connotation represents a social, moral or cultural charge, then it is possible that it turns into a stereotype.

Based on this opinion, the digital tools used in literary quantitative analysis can offer an extensive range of possibilities for investigation, such as applying the imagology in the interpretation of juvenile literature. My research aims to be a possible prototype for a literary quantitative analysis in contemporary juvenile literature with an imagological

approach. Through this quantitative analysis, my thesis explores how digital tools can help to understand if a text uses stereotypes and/or stereotyped images in the descriptions of a city.

## 1. Definitions

In this chapter I will define the terms ‘Stereotype’ and ‘Juvenile Literature’. I will define imagological stereotypes and in order to clarify that, I will first define imagology and its work field(s), briefly. In the second paragraph, I will then define ‘stereotype’ and in the third one, I will refer to Children’s Literature and Young Adult literature’s theories in order to present my definition of juvenile literature and to connect it to the already existing nomenclatures.

### 1.1 Imagology

As the very name of the theory anticipates, imagology<sup>5</sup> in a general sense deals with the image. In *Imagology: the cultural construction and literary representation of national characters; a critical survey* edited by Manfred Beller und Joep Leerssen in 2007, we find this definition of image:

The mental or discursive *representation* or reputation of a *person, group, ethnicity* or ‘*nation*’. This imagological usage is not to be confused with the generally current meaning of “pictorial or visual depiction”. [...] Images specifically concern attributions of *moral* or *characterological nature* [...] images are *mobile* and *changeable* as all discursive constructs are.<sup>6</sup> (342-343)

Here we find all the basic elements that allow us to define this academic discipline, which investigates the literary representation of national and ethnical groups. According to Beller and Leerssen, the representations that Imagology studies, have a moral and/or a characterological nature, i.e. they depict the features and characteristics of the members of a certain national or ethnic group. They are also meant as personal and singular

---

<sup>5</sup> In the past years it has also be called “image studies”. (See e.g. Emer O’Sullivan et al.)

<sup>6</sup> The emphasis is mine.

characterizations, which can be applied both to a person or to a group. The images are also variable and they depend on the political, social and cultural sympathies, which nations and groups establish towards each other in a specific period of time. The two contemporary leading scholars in the imagological field write that “literary works unambiguously demonstrate that national characterizations are commonplace and hearsay rather than empirical observation or statements of facts” (Beller and Leerssen xi). Having no direct and “empirical” experience of an ethnical group or of people coming from a given nation, and following an idea expressed by a stereotype, we categorize *a priori* a group of people. Accepting that, we are modelling a fixed idea of the Other, we are mentally imagining the other.

In his “The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey” in 2000, Leerssen writes that imagology investigates “the complex links between literary discourse, on the one hand, and national identity constructs, on the other” (270). In the 2007 survey edited by Beller, we read that “[t]he term [imagology] is a technical neologism and applies to research in the field of our mental images of the Other and of ourselves” (xiii) and that “imagologists will have particular interest in the dynamics between those images which characterize the Other (*hetero-images*) and those which characterize one’s own domestic identity (*self-images* or *auto-images*)” (xiv). Imagologists, then, divide images in those two main groups, depending on the ‘spectant’ and the ‘spected’, that are “usually categorized in national or ethnic terms” (Beller and Leerssen xiv).

In the quote mentioned above, the fundamental element of “the Other” is presented in the imagological self-definition. This is significant because even though the national characteristics are always included in imagological research, the scholars enlarge the field



of analysis to aspects even more intimately connected with the identity building process<sup>7</sup>. As Melis Menent points out in her paper “On Meaning: The Self and The Other in Relational Terms” presented in Milan in September 2017 at the 28<sup>th</sup> AISNA Conference, a person’s identity

has an introverted component, which is the selfhood, and an extroverted component, which is the social. [...] Thinking about the Self and the Other has different directions too. Social thinking has mostly focused on the self, while politics has an angle that focuses on the state. [...] Identity helps to define: the self and the other. (in print<sup>8</sup>)

This connection underlines the parallelism and the interconnection between the identity building process and imagology.

In 2009, Leerssen and Hoenselaars define imagology as an academic discipline

based on, but not limited to, the inventory and typology of how nations are typified, represented, and/or caricatured in a given tradition or corpus of cultural articulation. On the basis of the analysis of text or cultural artefacts, it raises questions about the *mechanism of national/ethnic ‘othering’* and its *underlying self-images*.<sup>9</sup> (251)

In this last definition, we see that imagologists have gained a sort of self-confidence and they trust themselves to be more specific and probably accurate in their definitions, too. The image of nations is always present, whether it is stereotyped or caricatured. The word “nation” is now introduced as almost a synonym of the term “ethnic”. I will explain this point later in the next paragraph of this chapter more specifically, however I underlined it here as well, since it is a fundamental change in people’s and scholars’ point of view about themselves and about other populations, that could be defined, in this case, as ‘the Others’.

---

<sup>7</sup> In the last decades a tendency in imagological studies is to focus on migration literature, where the national borders no more correspond to the sense of belonging, and also, from an imagological point of view, on post-colonial literature, usually in conjunction with Bhabha’s *Third Space*’s theory. (see H. Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, pp. 36-39).

<sup>8</sup> The author gave her approval to quote her paper in May 2018.

<sup>9</sup> The emphasis is mine.

In all these definitions of imagology the image is always the center of the theory and it focuses on different types of images: auto/self-image or hetero-image. Depending on the power relations between the spectant and the spected, the self-image can generate a hetero-image or vice versa. All these images, together with the *counter-images*<sup>10</sup> and the *meta-images*<sup>11</sup>, create an *image* (Beller and Leerssen 344), that could be defined as a mental, cultural and social space where all the mentioned images coexist.

The image has been studied in many fields and from many points of view. It is also important in Anderson's sociological studies, where he writes that the national community "is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the *image* of their community"<sup>12</sup> (6). By what Anderson says, we realize that we unconsciously give meaning to an image, but the process works also in the opposite direction, i.e. the image gives *us* a meaning, too. Likewise, a text gives meaning to a fixed idea of a stereotype, but the stereotype also frames and influences the text in return. Therefore, literary imagology should focus on this relationship between texts and stereotypes: "[A]nalyzes of literary texts must focus on their specific literariness which means, thus, not to focus solely on practices of stereotyping *in* the text but analysing *the way* that a stereotype is shaped *by* the text and does shape the text in return" (Weilandt, Maria: "Towards a Critical Imagology", paper presented in the conference "New Perspectives on Imagology" in Vienna, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> April 2018, in print<sup>13</sup>).

---

<sup>10</sup> In imagology, the counter-image is the opposite image a pre-existing image can spread over time. It does not annulate the meaning or effect of the previous image, but on the contrary, counter-image and image coexist in the collective imaginary of, e.g., a group of people. For instance, Germans are usually seen as very accurate people and also as people who drink beer and have fun doing it. The two images coexist in the German *image*, which is a mental, social and cultural space where all imaginary is stored.

<sup>11</sup> In imagology, the meta-image is the image a group of people think the others have of themselves, i.e. how a group of people *believes* they are perceived by others.

<sup>12</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>13</sup> The author gave her approval to quote her paper in May 2018.

## 1.2 Stereotype and ethnicity

As explained before, the image is the fundamental focus of imagology. An image, a national one as well, is created by repetition, therefore it creates a fixed thought pattern about the Other. The stereotypes are also fixed thought patterns and they “are a means of constructing social groups and producing knowledge about them” (Weinladt, in print). They created meaning using easy and basic formulas, or in other words: “The stereotype combines minimal information with maximum meaning” (Beller and Leerssen 8-9).

The definition we find of the lemma ‘stereotype’ in the Oxford Online Dictionary is: “A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing”. When we look at the etymology of the term, we find that ‘stereotype’ is composed by two Greek words: ‘solid’ and ‘impression’. The word has first been used in typography in order to define a solid printing plate. Lippmann uses the term in his *Public opinion* (1922) referring to fixed pictures we have in our minds. “The formation of stereotypes”, according to Beller, “is strictly speaking a *mental* and *cognitive* rather than a *literary* process: nonetheless it is obvious that stereotypes [...] have become *literary stereotypes* as result”<sup>14</sup> (429). This passage is of importance, since it underlines the interconnections of our reality, our mental perception of it and our literature; whether as readers or authors. This topic would actually deserve an entire thesis in order to be researched deeply.

I will now try to differ the definition of ‘stereotype’ from ‘cliché’, ‘prejudice’ and ‘commonplace’. The prejudice can be perceived separately from the other terms, since it envisages a clearer personal matrix, but ‘commonplaces’ and ‘clichés’ are more or less synonyms of the word stereotypes. In *Imagology* (2007) we read:

---

<sup>14</sup> The emphasis is mine.

[T]he word “prejudice” has become a key concept for any preconceived and unsupported opinion and attitude that influences *our perception*, description and judgement of others. The many social-psychological definitions and the phraseology of most recent handbooks show an *alternating and interchangeable use* of prejudice, stereotype and cliché. Literary scholars may be well advised to distinguish between ‘prejudice’ as a *moral* judgement or attitude, ‘stereotype’ as that *attitude’s fixed expression*, and ‘cliché’ as a stylistic turn of phrase.<sup>15</sup> (404)

As confirmation of the blurry edges among these terms, I refer to the synonyms that we find in the second edition of the Oxford Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms [1999] (2006) for the lemma ‘stereotype’: “conventional idea, standard image, *cliché*, formula”<sup>16</sup>. Here the word ‘cliché’ is mentioned as mere synonym of ‘stereotype’.

As said above, I find that the limits of those definitions, in particular, of ‘stereotype’ and ‘cliché’ are unclear. Along my thesis, I will use the term ‘stereotype’ as I find it more appropriate for my research focus, considering its etymology, as well.

The stereotype is strictly linked to the image, the latter being the very seed of the former. According to Melis Menent’s paper “Image as a cluster of meaning” presented on the conference “New Perspectives on Imagology” (Vienna, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> April 2018): “An image is both an abstract and a concrete phenomenon at the same time. The abstraction of the image is embedded in its communicative aspect” (in print<sup>17</sup>). The image, in all of its abstraction, is the origin of the stereotypes and there finds also a development, thanks to a “practice approach [...] that conceives stereotypes to be stable *and* flexible at the same time” (Weinladt, in print).

Before deciding to use the term ‘ethnicity’ in my research, I thought of writing about Italian ‘national stereotype(s)’ presented in the four juvenile novels I chose. Personally, I find the use of the term ‘national’ a bit controversial nowadays. In these latest years we assist to a coming-back of many nationalistic ideas and, even more frightening, of xenophobia.

---

<sup>15</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The author gave her approval to quote her paper in May 2018.

Leerssen points it out in 2016 as well, writing that “xenophobia and nationalism (both in the form of patriotic self-celebration and xenophobic stereotyping) are as strong as they have ever been, and in the current ethnopopulist climate gain new political virulence” (29). The binary discourse of ‘the Other’ as ‘the one who is not us’ is now a popular subject. As Ruthner explained well using a photographic metaphor: “the negative of the Other is used to develop one’s own positive” (147). I am aware of the fact that ‘national’ and ‘nationalist’ are two different words, although I find both connotations similar and, therefore, controversial.

Thus, I use the term ‘ethnicity’ in my thesis, i.e. when I write about Italian ethnicity, by the term ‘ethnicity’ I mean “stereotypical attributions of national character” (Leerssen 2016: 13). Nevertheless, I will mention stereotypes too, since they are fundamental elements in presenting ethnicity. As Leerssen explains, nowadays the “nation-state is no longer the self-evident category it used to be. We are now intensely aware that states and “nation” or ethnicity almost never map congruently onto each other, and this awareness is also opening new research questions and perspectives for imagology” (2016: 28). The definition of ‘national’ stereotype is therefore inadequate, being the ‘nation’ a political construction, but we will see in the third chapter of my thesis how the Italian ethnicity is divided into North and South Italy and into regional differences. Likewise, the same example can be made with Spain: the image of Spain as ‘national’ should be actually turned into an image based on ethnicities as e.g. the Catalan, Andalusian and Basque one.

In this sense, I will use the term ‘ethnicity’ instead of ‘national’ character because the former is very much connected to the identity building process and more detached from political ideology. As Leerssen underlines in 2016, “Imagology is as ongoing a concern as literature and cultural production itself, and particularly urgent in the world of

contemporary identity politics” (29). The imagology deals with this exact matter of ‘identity building process’, both for our own identity and for ‘the Other’.

### 1.3 Juvenile Literature

In my thesis I use the definition of “Juvenile Literature” to refer to my primary texts. I am actually moving in an intersectional space in-between Children’s Literature (CL) and Young Adult literature (YA).

A leading scholar in CL, Emer O’Sullivan contributed in 2007 in the writing of *Imagology*, edited by Beller and Leerssen, and defined CL as “a specific and distinct segment of the general literary system with its own fields of production, distribution and reception. It is not determined by special textual figures, but by various social authorities [...] as suitable for children and young people” (290). I find the application of the word “young” problematic because it needs a clarification in order to present a universal meaning and not to have a subjective matrix. If we look up for the term ‘young’ in the Oxford Online Dictionary, the first meaning we are given is: “Having lived or existed for only a short time”, with the possible nuance of the significance of: “Not as old as the norm or as would be expected”<sup>18</sup>.

According to the first meaning presented by the Oxford Online Dictionary, if we speak about literature for children, or CL; books for kids are also included. In this sense, I will not analyze children books, because they can also be books for the children younger than 9 years old. Moreover, the majority of the books for kids are written to be read aloud by a parent, an adult or by someone who can already read fluently. Books for kids can be also picture books or, at least, books rich in pictures or illustrations. The kid, in these cases, listens to what an adult reads to him/her aloud and looks at the pictures at the same time. In many cases, the pictures accompanying the text, supply textual information gap. On the illustrated book *A snowy Day* written by Ezra Jack Keats (1962), Nodelman says that

---

<sup>18</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

“[w]hile the texts does not say what the snow looked like, the accompanying illustration shows it, which not only fills in the information but also provides the mood lacking in the text on its own” (2008: 10).

In my analysis I focus on four books in which, if at all present, pictures appear in scarce amount. When present, the illustrations have primarily a decorative scope, and I take them in account of decorations, not as elements conveying extra pieces of information lacking in the text. This is in contrast to CL for younger children, where kids usually listen to and do not read the story. Therefore, their reading experience is totally different to the one I take in consideration in my thesis. Considering the almost absolute absence of pictures in the books I analyze and also the first-hand reading experience I assume for the four juvenile novels in my research, the definition of ‘Children Literature’ does not match *in toto* with the texts I will analyze.

Also the definition of YA does not fit entirely here because of the age target I considered. A child who is 11, the average age in my range, is usually not defined a ‘young adult’ in the Western culture. If we look up the word ‘adult’ in the Oxford Online Dictionary we will find this meaning: “A person who is fully grown or developed”<sup>19</sup> which confirms my point; a 11 years old boy/girl is usually not “fully grown or developed”. The definition of the Oxford Online Dictionary is also unclear, because of the use of the adverb “fully”. How can it be possible to define a person “*fully* grown or developed”<sup>20</sup>? I find it personally difficult to answer this question, but I would in any case not define an 11 years old boy/girl an adult. In the Treccani Online Dictionary we find this definition for the lemma *adulto*: “[dal lat. *adultus*, part. pass. di *adolescĕre* «crescere»]. – 1. Cresciuto, di persona che ha

---

<sup>19</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>20</sup> The emphasis is mine.



raggiunto il completo sviluppo fisico e psichico”<sup>21</sup>. Here we are also given the etymology of the term. It comes from the Latin past particle of the verb “to grow”. In the Italian definition we are also told that the term ‘adult’ refers to a “person who has gained the complete physical and *psychic* development”<sup>22</sup>. I should underline the inclusion of the psychic element in the Italian definition, even if I cannot take it in account to the demarcation for my analysis for practical reasons. Therefore I have to unfortunately set some limits here and define the possible readership of the four juvenile novels I chose according to age range, which includes, as already said, young readers aged between 9 and 13-14 years.

The definition and delimitation of CL and/from YA is still an open debate and as Caroline Hunt pointed out already in 1996:

Theorists in the wider field of children's literature often discuss young adult titles without distinguishing them as a separate group and without, therefore, indicating how theoretical issues in young adult literature might differ from those in literature for younger children. Important critical books of the 1980s take it for granted that young adult books and books for younger children are essentially alike. (4)

In her article, Hunt suggests a different study of “adolescent literature” (4) from the CL in general. The definition of ‘adolescent literature’ is nowadays hard to find and it has already been replaced with YA. But where does the definition of YA actually derive? It is revealed in 1980, in Donelson and Nilsen’s *Literature for Today’s Young Adult*. The genre re-titling, according to Hunt, is “an effort to reduce the supposed stigma of the word ‘adolescent’” (7). I am not attending to argue, whether the word ‘adolescent’ can really generate a stigmatization of a genre, if applied in literature, instead I am to underline Hunt’s suggestion to speak about YA as different from CL. I agree with her, since a kid has

---

<sup>21</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Free translation made by me. The emphasis in mine.

different interests from an elder child or a teenager, and consequently the former will read different types of literature than the latter. Literary scholars should take this difference into account, as well. However, I feel the need to define the literature that is created between CL and YA, either. The latter is usually defined as literature “intended for teenagers” (Nodelman 1996: 191) or for even older readers “young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four” (Pattee 219). The last quotation subsumes the same problematic point explained before, i.e. the unclear definition of the term ‘young’. Regarding the definition of ‘teenager’, according to the Oxford Online Dictionary, a teenager is “a person aged between 13 and 19 years”<sup>23</sup>. Thus, YA is not the appropriate definitions for the book I analyze in my thesis.

Going back to Hunt’s article “Young Adult Literature evades the Theorists”, we find the description of the debate originated by the different points of views of scholars. Some of them, according to Hunt, speak of CL including YA in it “When I refer to “children’s literature” in this book, consequently, I include both children’s literature and literature for young adults” (Nodelman 2008: 6); while others, included Hunt, do differentiate the two literatures. I think that the problematic intrinsic part of the debate is defying the limits of CL and YA. In fact, where do CL and YA begin and where do they end? I have already shown how inconsistent the usage of the term ‘adult’ is and I also already mentioned that the teenage era begins when the child turns 13. We could then conclude that a child is a person, who is younger than 13 years old, and consequently suggest CL to end when the target readership turns 13. This explanation could logically be useful to delimitate CL, but it does not entirely help with the delimitation of YA. The problematic point is still in the definition of ‘adult’. Is a 14 years old boy/girl considered as an adult? I do not think so.

---

<sup>23</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

I personally suggest another definition, that can cover the writings for young readers aged between 9 and 13-14: Juvenile Literature. Proposing that, I do not want to denigrate CL and YA as definitions or genres at all, but I want to offer a definition that intersects with CL and YA at the same time. I suggest this definition also on the basis of the main themes of CL and YA. On one hand, books for children can be, as said before, also books for kids where a theme can be e.g. learning to use the potty. On the other hand, YA books starts speaking about deeper themes as e.g. sexuality. None of those themes are mentioned in the four juvenile novels I chose. The reading target is, indeed, too old to be interested in reading about a kid that learns to use the potty, and too young in order to question themselves about their sexuality. In both cases, the identification of a 9-14 years old reader with the character of the story will fail. Considering the themes, the targeted age, and the primarily written nature of the books I chose, I will define them in my analysis as belonging to Juvenile Literature.

In short, I focus on books that are aimed from young readers aged between 9 and 13-14 years. In this age, the readers are supposed to have already automatized the process of reading; it implies, that the goal of their reading experience is to comprehend and follow a story, hopefully, enjoying it, and not decodifying words. Nevertheless, there will be some new words in text that the reader does not know. My constrained target is to read those books in their own native languages and to face no problems of dyslexia or cognitive delay<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>24</sup> It would be very interesting to investigate if the texts I chose can be considered books with high readability, i.e. if they would be suitable for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). But, as before, this theme would deserve an entire thesis alone. To find out more about SEN (in Italy it is also possible to find the wording of DSA and BiLS, but they are not all synonyms!) see: Daloiso Michele, *L'educazione linguistica dell'allievo con bisogni specifici*, UTET, Torino 2015.



## 2. Imagology and Juvenile Literature

In my research I will analyze four juvenile novels, and it is important to underline the possible connections that Imagology, on the one side, and juvenile literature, CL and YA, on the other side may have<sup>25</sup>.

Emer O’Sullivan, one of the main voices in CL research, has been one the first scholars to show the interconnection between CL and Imagology. In 2011, in her article “Imagology and Children Literature”, O’Sullivan writes that CL “provides young readers with their earliest images of a world into which they are gradually venturing, as well as the vocabularies they need to read that world” (6) and continues that:

Children’s literature is the branch of literature read and shared by the greatest numbers of members of most communities and a sanctioned location of communication about what it means to belong to that specific group. In this respect it functions as a reservoir for the collective memory of a nation. As a site for tradition of information, beliefs, and customs, it overtly or latently reflects dominant social and cultural norms, including self-images and images of others. (6)

Here many aspects of CL are pointed out. Firstly, O’Sullivan underlines the educational function of CL, a fundamental element she mentioned in her article “Comparative Children Literature” (2011a). This element was already considered as fundamental by other scholars several years before. For example, Janet Towslon explains in an article of 1995 the educational role that books have on children: “Children are powerful language users [...]; it is learning based in social and cultural contexts” (93). Towslon points out an important fact in CL, but she does not, however, connect CL with imagology.

Coming back to O’Sullivan quotation: She underlines, secondly, the feeling of belonging to a certain group that CL can create. Indeed, CL is present all over the world and every

---

<sup>25</sup> In this chapter I will not divide juvenile literature from CL and YA, because this theoretical part fit all three genres. According to that and only in this part if my thesis, writing CL or YA or juvenile literature, I always refer to books for young readers: children and teenagers.

CL author puts some personal aspects in his/her stories. That means he/she will include cultural and social facts he/she knows as well, and in this way, CL can also function as memoirs of cultures, societies, and habits. According to this point, CL also transmits the values of a particular culture and society, and also its internal power relations and norms.

Thirdly, O'Sullivan underlines the function of CL as a culture conveying means: By reading of books, children and young readers in general, on one hand, unconsciously draw an image of themselves in their minds, and identify with the main characters, and on the other hand sketch an image of 'the Other', the one which is usually recognized as unfamiliar or simply exotic. As we can see, CL is a fertile field for imagological research. Nevertheless, "children's literature is one of the least researched corpora in comparative imagology and children's literature research has, with few exceptions, paid little attention to this approach" (O'Sullivan 2011b: 6). Here, again, the scholar invites us implicitly to research CL with an imagological method, considering the connections between the two fields.

The connection between the almost automatic creation of self- and hetero-images and CL is, thus, not so new. O'Sullivan and Immel depict how Imagology and CL can be linked referring to CL of the eighteenth century:

Systematic representation of foreigners in books for children started to occur around the late eighteenth century. Friedrich Justin Bertuch's twelve-volume *Bilderbuch für Kinder* (Picturebook for Children 1792-1830), the most celebrated comprehensive pictorial encyclopedia for children, contains short articles on zoology, geography, and anthropology. The section entitled "Menschen und Trachten" (People and Costumes) shows how clothing was the primary means to identify people from other countries [...]. (O'Sullivan and Immel 54)

Here we are given evidence of how children have been exposed to the categorization of people from the very young age in the eighteenth century. There were fixed and stereotyped

images of ‘the Others’, and they were such socially and culturally accepted, that they actually entered the educational field for children without problems or oppositions.

The Europeans shown [in the table “Costumes of Nations, for Infant Schools” from the Rudimental Box (1834?), were a man and a woman for every of the 12 nationalities represented are depicted – only in the English and Laplandic representations children appear] also happen to represent countries on the itinerary of the Grand Tour undertaken by upper-class young British men in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in order to expose them to the cultural legacy of classical correspond to what they could expect to see and learn: music and classical architecture in Italy, dancing in France, and so on. (O’Sullivan and Emer 60)

This representation of ‘the Others’ in pictorial and, consequently and automatically, mental images underlines the human tendency and the urge to think and to apprehend per categories. Learning by categorization is a fundamental part of all information gaining and ordering process of the human being. Martina Thiele explains that:

Menschliche Wahrnehmung und somit auch wissenschaftliche Arbeit basieren auf der Bildung und Verwendung von Kategorien. Kategorisierungen beruhen auf Vergleichen: Wahrgenommene Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede führen zu Einteilungen in Kategorien. Kategorien fassen demnach Eigenschaften von Objekten, *Personen*, Ergebnissen zu Klassen zusammen. [...] Kategorien gelten so gesehen als hilfreiche Einteilungen, die Ordnung und Übersicht schaffen, Systematisierung erleichtern und neue Informationen in bereits vorhandene Wissensstrukturen einordnen. Sie sind Grundlage jeglichen Lernens und Verstehens.<sup>26</sup> (15-16)

As said before, categories help us to understand and to order new pieces of information. Speaking about children, we can easily understand that they need some categories in order to assimilate and give a place to all the new information they get, bombarded to them every day by new inputs and experiences. Jean-Claude Deschamps explains in 1984 that “the process of categorization certainly testifies to the effect of contrast between elements belonging to two distinct categories” and “[a]s it deals with psychological process, there is no reason to suspect that this effect will not play a role in a more social domain, in evaluations, representations and intergroup behavior” (543).

---

<sup>26</sup> The emphasis is mine.

Leerssen explains this point in an interview with Julia Grillmayr for *Der Standard* using these words: “Es gehört zur menschlichen Handhabung der Komplexität der Welt, dass wir uns *Musters* kreieren. Wir brauchen *Vereinfachung*, aber die muss man auch auf Schritt und Tritt durchbrechen”<sup>27</sup> (published: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018). Leerssen tells us that it is human to create patterns, that we need simplified structures, but, at the same time, we also have slowly to deconstruct them. From a psychological and social point of view, stereotypes, categories and, generally, images play a very important role. They have great influences on the power relations as well, since categories are not neutral (Thiele 17).

The question of the power relations in CL has been, and still is, an open debate among scholars. According to O’Sullivan, “the communication in children’s literature is fundamentally asymmetrical. [...] Adults act on behalf of children at every turn” (2002: 38). This is a very important point of view because the spectant is, in imagology, equally as important as the spected. If we assume that the viewer is an adult and he/she conveys his/her view to the child who reads or listens to the story, we are as a matter of fact accepting that children do not read what they prefer or what they actually need. On the contrary, children are reading and are conveyed with “the ideas that producers and consumers [adults] have about those audiences [children]” (Nodelman 2008: 5). Adults are then, according to O’Sullivan and Nodelman, modelling children’s views and their hetero- and self-images.

Marah Gubar has another opinion, and she opens an article of hers in 2013 with these lines: “If the last thirty years of children’s literature studies have taught us anything, it’s that talking about actual children is a very risky business” (450). She then continues that the theorists quoted above, who underline the asymmetrical dimension of CL, assume “that

---

<sup>27</sup> The emphasis is mine.



adult discourse that claims merely to describe what children are like can in fact exert a prescriptive effect. In other words, it can function as a self-fulfilling prophecy” (451) and adds however, that:

[I]t’s actually hubristic to suggest that any of us can wash our work completely clean of our own assumptions, feelings, and beliefs about what children are like. [...] Theories of childhood that adhere to this model stress the *radical alterity* or *otherness of children*, representing them as a separate species, *categorically different* from adults. [...] Underlying this statement is the assumption that children and adults are *categorically different* from one another: adults are involved in the production of children’s literature; children are not.<sup>28</sup> (451)

Summarizing what Gubar says, an author is not expected to explain or write about any subject without introducing some ideas or thinking patterns of him/herself in the plot of his/her story. Thus, this imposition to the audience, which is implicitly considered to be weaker and somehow passive, is for Gubar wrong and dangerous, because “viewing children as deficient—as unable to grasp certain concepts or skills—can help *produce* the very incapacities we claim merely to describe” (Gubar 451). The children are, in a sense, according to some theorists, considered to be like little adults lacking consciousness or active agency in the children’s books production, distribution and reception. In 2006 Nodelman writes that “we adults may well be teaching children how to be childlike—encouraging them to think in the ways we expect and, presumably, approve of for children” (265-266). Gubar warns us that it “is dehumanizing and potentially disabling to say that a human being has no voice, or no agency” (453) and offers, in her article, some examples of children’s active agency in books production of American writers like Ruth Krauss and Jill Krementz.

Considering the child as ‘passive’ and ‘weak’ in the book production, automatically means to consider the adult ‘active’ and ‘strong’ in the same field. There is, actually, “a long

---

<sup>28</sup> The emphasis is mine.

history of stories that make no bones about inviting children to identify with equally repressed and therefore repressive objects” (Nodelman 2006: 268). This binary opposition that occurs almost unconsciously in our minds can be very dangerous. In 2002 O’Sullivan writes:

The attribution of binary opposites (active/passive, rational/irrational), often in a *hierarchical relationship* as ‘positive and normative’ versus ‘negative and deviant’, is seen as a central mechanism in the construction of gender, with male/female being the fundamental opposition. The mechanism can be seen to apply similarly to the construction of *national images in literature*, depending on the current state of social, political, cultural and especially economic relations between the group portraying and the group being portrayed (the spectant and the spected).<sup>29</sup> (42)

She points out the mechanism of this binary opposition system, which creates power relations both in children-adult relation system and also in the gender one. The same function pattern can be found in the building of ethnicities images, according to the spectant and the spected and their political, cultural and economic situations<sup>30</sup>. O’Sullivan writes also in 2002: “National stereotypes are clearly utilized in this branch of literature [CL] to impart the currently appropriate gender-specific modes of thought and behavior” (45). Here again, the very will of the adult author to issue a given behavior model and a given thinking pattern is underlined. This idea is expressed, again, in 2017 as well:

Narratives produces by a culture are models by which a society both conceives and articulates a view of itself [...]. These ideas are particularly pertinent to children’s literature, which belongs to the signifying systems that enable the young to take on identities. (O’Sullivan and Immel 7)

In their introduction of 2017, O’Sullivan and Immel go even further in the analysis of the connections between CL and imagology and write that:

While there is generally a marked tendency to see one’s own group, society, or culture as rich as diverse, the predisposition is to see the “others” as monolithic, with their representatives reduced to

---

<sup>29</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>30</sup> The binary opposition used as a cluster in meaning creation process is a very simplified one, and it can be very dangerous as well, being it the basis of all xenophobic perception musters.

a few typical and “different” features. As a part of the discourse of national belonging, children’s literature tells readers about their place in the world. (8)

By telling the children “their place in the world” we come back to the power relations O’Sullivan and Nodelman have been pointing out since long. I do not want to enter that debate, but I found it crucial to mention, in order to have a better perspective to the research panorama of CL and its theoretical debate.

In conclusion, the branch of CL includes many power relations: children-adult, male-female and ‘we’-Others. According to some scholars, CL gives children already-made thought patterns and behavior models, including self- and hetero-images, and power relations. Therefore, these characteristics make CL a very fertile field for imagological research.

In 2006 Nodelman underlines an interesting point, that could be seen as the convergence between CL and imagology:

[L]iterature can be about people unlike ourselves and still be entertaining, can give us rich insights into the lives of others as well as confirmation of ourselves. Furthermore, taking pleasure in depictions of The Other is something young children can learn— and the sooner, surely, the better. (266)

## 2.1 The child as ‘the Other’: a case study

I will now give a brief case study of how the child could be represented as ‘the Other’, which will clearly illustrate the already referred theories. As already mentioned in the introduction, I will use the book *Kafka i la nina* by Sierra i Fabra<sup>31</sup>.

In juvenile literature we see a tendency according to which, the narrator is defending the child and the majority of the adults are the villains. I will take Roald Dahl’s *Matilda* (1988) as an example, as it is a very famous text for young readers. In this novel, Matilda has many adult antagonists in her family as well as in school, and the only nice adult to her is her teacher, *nomen omen*, Miss Honey. Here we see in which way the adults are ‘the Others’, even if they treat Matilda as the strange, different and insignificant one and not the contrary. If we accept what Nodelman says: “Children’s literature is not so much what children read as what producers hope children will read” (2008: 4), then, all books for children and young readers are written by adults, and according to their definition of what a child is and should be.

In the four juvenile novels I am analyzing in the empirical part of my thesis, the situation is not very different from the one presented in *Matilda*. In *Herr der Diebe* we find adult antagonists, as for example Prosper and Bo’s aunt and uncle. In *Las eternas* the situation is the same, Silvana’s father does not let her free. In *La bambina* adults are directly cut out from Xorax’s world and they do not play an important role, except for Karkon Ca d’Oro who is, also in this book, Nina’s more powerful antagonist. The other adults mentioned are far away as Nina’s parents, dead as Nina’s grandfather, or very marginal as Meringa and aunt Andora. In *Once upon* the situation is different because the young protagonist has, firstly, a very good relationship with his grandfather, and secondly, he has actually no

---

<sup>31</sup> The plot of this novel can be found in the appendix 7.1 as well.

contacts with children all along the story. Samuelle is growing up in an adults' world and the friends he makes in Venice are also adults. Consequently, they are not his antagonists, but his friends and helpers in the narration. According to this point, we can say that the English text confirms what Nodelman wrote in 2008.

Fabra's book deals with the sick Franz Kafka going to the Steglitz park in Berlin and there meeting Elsi, a little girl, who cries because she has lost her doll Brígida. The narration is omniscient third-person, and Kafka is the focalizer. That is to say that we, as readers, are told Kafka's thoughts and impressions, and not the child's ones. In this way, the usual child's point of view is reversed. According to this new model, the child, and not the adult, is characterized as 'the Other'. The narrator seems to be very aware of his position of an omniscient voice telling the story, and he seems also to know that he cannot enter Elsi's world and perceptions because he is not a child anymore.

We are told, for example, that Kafka cannot even estimate Elsi's age: "La nena *devia tenir* pocs anys. Feia de mal calcular quants. L'edat de les nenes petites era un *misteri*. Sí, exacte, precisament *l'edat indefinible* en què continuen sent el que són malgrat trobar-se al llindar del pas següent"<sup>32</sup> (13). Here we read that Kafka cannot say how old Elsi is, because it is not easy to calculate the age of children, and it remains, At any rate, a *mystery*. Elsi is of that *indefinable age* in which, according to the narrator, children are who they are and, at the same time, they are crossing the next age's border.

Kafka decides to help the little girl, but he has problems in communicating with her, because he does not know how he should speak to a child: "No sabia com parlar a una nena" (19). The narrator tells us that Kafka does not fear anyone but this *sketch* of a woman smaller than a meter who can cry with such a sadness and look at him such directly.

---

<sup>32</sup> The emphasis is mine.

“[Kafka] No tenia por de res ni de ningú, però sí d’un *esquitx* de dona que no s’alçava ni un metre de terra i era capaç de plorar amb aquella tristesa o mirar-lo amb la intensitat d’aquells ulls”<sup>33</sup> (33). Kafka’s fear is contrasted but Elsi’s very lack of fear against a stranger: “[Elsi] No li mirava amb por. Pura innocència” (17). The narrator tells us that Elsi always looked at Kafka without fear, her eyes were only filled with pure innocence.

Elsi’s direct gaze is often underlined throughout the novel and it is presented as a characteristic property of childhood. Indirectly, this means that coming into the adults’ world, people lose this ability to look directly at other people and trust them without questioning. “Els ulls d’Elsi continuaven fits en ell. Uns ulls *transparentes*, bonics, plens de *sincera* devoció”<sup>34</sup> (61) and “[Elsi] va repetir un dels gestos més característics de la seva *jove* personalitat: clavar aquells ulls fermes i dotats d’una intensitat especial en els seus”<sup>35</sup> (69). Elsi’s way of looking at Kafka is described as transparent and sincere, and it underlines her young age and personality.

The small size of the child is also often underlined, as if it would be an indicator of vulnerability and weakness. But, in the novel, we are told the contrary: even if Elsi is very young and seems fragile, she is very powerful and firm in her young life: “La va veure allunyar-se [Elsi] per la seva esquerra, sense pressa, pas a pas, amb el cap cot, *petita i fràgil*. Un alè de vida. Però tan poderós”<sup>36</sup> (33). Kafka, looking at Elsi, who is going home alone, sees a small and fragile child, who, in spite of this, gives him, an impression of a powerful explosion of life.

---

<sup>33</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

From a theoretical point of view, this representation of the child confirms what Gubar writes in 2013: “Whereas the deficit model<sup>37</sup> portrays children as universal novices who must overcome an across-the-board array of incapacities, the kinship model maintains that development is not always linear, meaning children sometimes have abilities that adults lack” (454). The focus is here on what a child can do, and not what he/she can’t. In Fabra’s novel we see the incapacity of an adult to react to a child; an adult who, as well as all the other adults, is not able to remember who he was as a child and to enter the childhood’s world again. We find this element in Funke’s introduction to her novel as well, in which we read: “Erwachsene erinnern sich nicht daran, wie es war, ein Kind zu sein. Auch wenn sie es behaupten. Sie wissen es nicht mehr. [...] Sie haben es vergessen. [...] Vergessen. Sie wissen es nicht mehr. [...] Sie träumen sogar davon, wieder eins zu sein” (5).

We find the aspect of the dream and of the wish to be a child again in the Catalan text as well, in the novel’s dedication: “Per a Franz, de l’escarabat que un dia es va despertar convertit en nen” (5). From the very beginning the author plays with the common way to say “one day I woke up and I was an adult”, where the development is chronologically marked from the childhood to the adulthood. Here Fabra inverts the order and plays with the writing of the real Franz Kafka as well, referring to his *Die Verwandlung*, where the protagonist wakes up one day and finds himself transformed into a scabbe: “Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheueren Ungeziefer verwandelt” (5).

The narrator in Fabra also increases the value of childhood saying that childhood is the time to believe in the existence of living dolls and in the possibility of happy endings. Thus, the

---

<sup>37</sup> The “deficit models” Gubar speaks about are the ones depicted by Nodelman and O’Sullivan (see previous part of this chapter).

narrator continues, it is even more important to believe, with a pinch of craziness, in fantasy and positive possibilities in the adulthood. We read:

La infantesa és el temps de creure en les nines. I durant la infantesa existeixen els *finals feliços*. Però són *molt més necessaris en la maduresa* els carters que envien cartes que tan sols un boig és capaç d'escriure. Un boig. *Finals feliços*.<sup>38</sup> (132)

---

<sup>38</sup> The emphasis is mine.



### 3. The image of Italy and of Venice

In this chapter I will analyze the image of Italy and of Venice. I will analyze both in a common chapter, since the two images are interconnected.

The city of Venice has been depicted in many literary writings. In fact, the Serenissima<sup>39</sup> has enchanted lots of artists throughout its existence, and still remains one of the most charming cities in the world.

Italy was a travel destination already in the Middle Ages. A swarm of pilgrims crossed Italy in order to reach Rome, heart of the Christian community. The pilgrims' routes were important to fix a first image of Italy and its landscape, and equally important were also the stops and the cities seen before arriving in Rome. From the beginning of the mid-sixteenth century Italy sees again the arrival of travelers: There were many young gentlemen, sons of the European elites, travelling across the 'Bel Paese'. They were not only moved by religious feelings, but also by an educational scope. The middle-age pilgrims and the travelers of the sixteenth century had, however, a fundamental common basic idea: they considered Italy a final destination for their personal and intellectual development. Travel to Italy was, then, a unique and unavoidable stage in their literary and educational paths. However, the purpose of the journey changed: the religion centered medieval pilgrim became an erudite laic young gentleman in search of the humanistic origins in Rome, but also, and at the same importance's level, in Florence, Venice, Milan and Padua (De Seta 1982: 130-134).

One of the most productive times for descriptive writing is, then, the era of the Grand Tour, that became a real institution in the seventeenth century, and its main destination was Italy

---

<sup>39</sup> This was the appellation for the Venetian Republic or San Marco's Republic which Venice was the capital city of. Nowadays, the appellation is referred to the city of Venice.

(De Seta 1982: 137). The sons of the European upper-class families, in particular the English ones, were sent to this educational long trip along Europe as boys, in order to come back home as men, ready for starting a career and getting married (Reford 15). From the mid-sixteenth century and even more from the beginning of the seventeenth century, the tour usually lasted three years, but almost at the end of its big tradition, not long before Napoleon's arrival to Italy, and in general from the mid-eighteenth century on, the Tour was drastically reduced its time lasting (De Seta 1982: 139, 209).

The literary tradition of the Grand Tour began with the *Voyage or a Compleat Journey Trough Italy* (1670) by Richard Lassels, where the term appeared, in French transcription, for the first time (De Seta 2007). The theme of the Grand Tour would remain current in the literary production for a very long time and also gives origin to the current term 'tourist'.

Even though the spectrum of the Grand Tour was the whole of Europe, it was indisputable that the very center of the voyage was Italy, with all its architecture and pieces of art, and consequently, the most important destination of the Tour was Rome, as it had been for the medieval pilgrims, as well. We find literary confirmations of the fundamental role of Italy in the Grand Tour in many diaries and journey's accounts, in particular written by British tourists. One of the most famous examples from the German-speaking area is Goethe's *Italianische Reise* (1813-17). In Goethe's travel diary, Italy is, as said already in the title, the main and only goal of the author's journey. Another example, in fictional narrative, also belonging to the late period of the Grand Tour is Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady* (1881).

From the beginning of the Grand Tour as mass phenomenon, the image of Italy as a whole became double: we find, on the one hand, the image of 'the' Italy experienced by its inhabitants, and on the other, the image of those who have traveled across Italy and have lived there as foreign tourists. Even if it may seem strange, the representation that will

imprint the later image of Italy is the latter, i.e. the tourists' one. It is in the Grand Tour time that Italy starts to develop a sort of self-confidence, mostly coming from the travelers' writings, and at the same time, from the establishment of the *Vedutismo* as one of the main streams, defining, in this way, the stereotyped pictorial image of every Italian city of the Grand Tour (De Seta 1982: 134-135). Also in the portraits of the gentlemen painted during the Grand Tour, which were a very important aspect of the journey, and a sort of tourists' must-do as well, we find, in particular in the Roman tradition, fixed elements that make us clearly and quickly recognize the city in which the traveler is depicted (Redford, ch. 4).

During the Grand Tour, every Italian city had a specific key strength, that helps the young man to develop some important abilities he should master in his adulthood. As already said and as in the pilgrims' tradition, the Grand Tour's main destination was Rome, "where the traveler completed his transformation into gentleman-classicist, possessor of the past" (Redford 9). In Rome, the traveler became an expert in classical art and history, while in Venice he would exit the classical pattern in order to enter the more modern and contemporary political, cultural and sexual life.

Venice by contrast helped to form the gentleman as contemporary cultural leader; it taught modern art, politics, economics, and sexuality. Venice also gave a local habitation and a name to the ambivalence that surrounded the Tour in eighteenth-century culture, which viewed it as a phenomenon both deeply necessary and deeply dangerous, a prop of the hierarchical status *qui* and a subversive force within it. (Redford 9)

We clearly see the double significance of Venice: in the Venetian city, order and subversive forces coexist, at least politically. Redford continues saying that "the Tour would have failed had not the traveler returned with ways of testifying to his raining as lover as well as antiquarian" (15). Redford tells us that "[t]he milordi who stopped there [in Venice] on the way to or from Rome went to see what they had already imagined – and the fantasies through which the city was filtered came not from reality but from a potent set of pre-

existing myths” (51). Here we see how the tourists based their images of Venice on “pre-existing myths”, i.e. a stereotyped image of the city was already very present and widespread, at least in the British upper-class. Redford identifies three potent pre-existing myths: “Venezia-stato-misto”, “Venezia-città-di-libertà” and “Venezia-città-galante” (ch. 3) and explains that, with his *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* (1543), Gasparo Contarini, already before the middle of the sixteenth century:

codifies the “stato-di-libertà” myth and its companion, “Venezia-stato-misto”, by arguing that the Venetian constitution most perfectly embodies [...] the ideal polity [...] which distributes power amongst the elements of the one [the Doge], the few [the Senate], and the many [the Great Council], thereby achieving a harmonious blend of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Such a combination guarantees stability and longevity because it reflects the most basic principle of natural order, a balance among potentially competing forces. [...] This system allows the Republic to steer a middle course between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy, and to resist potentially destructive forces from without. [...] Venice was superior even to Rome in her record of survival. (51-52)

Again, we see the coexistence of Rome and Venice as two very important cities of the ‘collective imaginary’ of the British upper-class. We also see their coexistence in the Tour and their two sides: the love for the classical art the tourist should apprehend in Rome, and the love for the licentiousness he should learn in Venice, “the gaudiest stop on the grand tour” (Cosgrove 148), along with the fundamental political teaching of Venice.

From the beginning of the Grand Tour, Rome and Venice have been strictly connected. The tourists who wanted to travel to Jerusalem, bringing back a religious matrix in the Tour, had to start their journey from Venice. We also find a related evidence in the Spanish literature. In 1523 Ignazio Loyola, a Catholic knight, obtains the permission of the Pope Adriano VI to travel to Jerusalem, after having been in Rome. “Venezia era un soggiorno obbligato per chi, come Ignazio, desiderava compiere un viaggio in Terra Santa: il porto della Serenissima era, infatti, il più usato per tali viaggi” (Corrain 73). The pier of Venice

was, indeed, fundamental for everyone who wanted to travel to Jerusalem or in general to the East.

Coming back to the subject of young boys who became real lovers in Venice. This British stereotype about those tourists is depicted, in a patriarchal and ironic way, by Frederick A. Pottle in his *James Boswell: The Earlier Years* (1966): “Every well-born Englishman who went south of the Alps in that era seems to have assumed that a really complete tour included at least one Italian countess” (199-200). This perspective leads obviously to satirical observation of the tourists’ fame too, and “by the 1730s the syphilitic alumnus of the Grand Tour had become a standard target of satire” (Redford 21).

The licentious note attached to Venice during the Grand Tour has become, as synecdoche, a part of the image of the whole Italy nowadays as well. As Beller points out in 2007, “the hetero-image of Italians is determined, even nowadays, by the travel writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries [...]. The basic modality is the contrast between the aesthetic beauty and immortality” (197). This ambivalence in the Italian hetero-image reflects itself in its self-image as well, which is clearly divided into South and North.

Despite political unification in the nineteenth century, the image of Italy remains strongly differentiated by regions (Venice, Tuscany, Naples, Sicily etc). The Italian auto-image stresses socio-economic differences between North and South in a country that stretches from the Alps to Africa. (Beller and Leerssen 194-195)

Also in English literature we see that “despite the attenuating Italomania of the Romantic period, traces of which are to be found in current stereotypes [...] the Italophobia expressed in these distortions of Machiavelli’s doctrines has never left the Italian stereotype in English letters.” (Halliday 354). The image of Italy, as a whole, is definitely an ambiguous one, and it is strongly affected nowadays, by the travel literature of the Grand Tour, as well. As Beller underlines “[f]rom a Central- or North-European perspective, as expressed in the *traditional travel literature* and clichés of *tourism*, Italy, again as a whole, is the land of

Mediterranean Southerners”<sup>40</sup> (195) and goes on pointing out the travel literature as “one of the main sources of the image of Italy in ethnographical, artistic and political representation” (195).

But let us go back to the image of Venice. The Romanticism marks the image, which Germans have had of Venice. “Venezia, che sempre godette di grande popolarità presso i tedeschi, diventò il simbolo degli ultimi splendori di ogni grande romanticismo dopo la scoperta che di questa città fece Richard Wagner”<sup>41</sup> (139) tells us Rovagnati. Here we see how, in the German image of the Italian ethnicity, the element of music is linked with Italy and in particular with Venice. As Beller points out as well, “Goethe was to sample the singing of *godolieri* in the Venetian canals (*Italienische Reise*, October 1786), which consolidated a tourist attraction of more than two centuries’ standing” (196). Nevertheless, the splendid and licentious city of Venice is often depicted in fiction writings as the center of decadency. The most famous example in the German literature is undoubtedly Thomas Mann’s *Der Tod in Venedig* (1912), in which Aschenbach arrives to Venice on a grey and gloomy day, which reflects his interior state. 12 years earlier appeared *Il fuoco* by Gabriele D’Annunzio, whose novel seems to celebrate the decadent and fading atmosphere of the city of Venice. Cosgrove tells us, referring to the dual coexistence of Rome and Venice in the spectrum of the Grand Tour, that in the English literature, in particular:

In *Childe Harold* Byron perceived Italy above all through the medium of its two eternal cities: Rome and Venice. Italy was a sacred landscape, replete with history and art [...]. The themes of the Venetian myth: liberty, duration, privileged centrality and splendor, serve to focus Byron’s attention on the significance of Venice’s decline. (154)

---

<sup>40</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>41</sup> Free translation made by me: “Venice, which always enjoyed a great popularity among the Germans, became the symbol of the last sparkling moments of every big romanticism after the Richard Wagner’s discovery of this city”.

In short, the image of Venice has been forged mainly by travelers of the Grand Tour and it includes two sides: the licentious Venice, and the decadent one.

In my research I am working on juvenile literature, in which death is mentioned, but it is not, usually, a main theme or a characteristic element of the atmosphere of the city, in which the four novels are set. For this reason, we do not find the decadent air of the city in the juvenile novel. In the same way, the dissolute image of the city is not to be found in connection with sexuality, which is, as said before, a possible theme in YA, but not in juvenile literature. The licentious atmosphere, i.e. the possibility to go beyond boundaries in Venice, becomes in juvenile novels very important, when describing the climate in the city. Indeed, we can see the transgression of boundaries in the process of reaching the freedom the young protagonists conquer in Venice. In the Venetian city, they do not enter the sexual active life, as the tourists did, but they enter the emancipated life having a sort of initiation ritual in Venice. All young characters arrive in Venice with many doubts about their future and Venice gives them the tools to emancipate themselves and to take their young lives in account. At the end of the novels, they will all find their place in the world and they will achieve a balanced point of freedom despite their young ages. Venice gives them the perfect stage in which they can enter the emancipated and ‘adult’ scene, in the same way the city has given the tourists the possibilities to break the rules.

Going beyond what is permitted and breaking the rules, was the very center of Carnival, maybe the most important festival in Venice. In the Grand Tour as well, it was almost a tradition to arrive in Venice before Carnival, in order to follow all the festivals there (De Seta 1982: 145) and then it was also important to be in Venice in spring, after the Ascension. In fact, in this period the *Sposalizio al Mar* took place. Redford tells us that “the Sposalizio acted as a magnet for foreign visitors, who came for the ceremony and stayed on for the spring theater season and the fifteen-day “Fiera della Sensa”, which transformed

the Piazza San Marco into an alluring bazaar” (58-59). He continues: “Though its appeal was by no means limited to the British, the Sposalizio held a particular fascination for the Grand Tourist [... and there was] a widespread conviction that *no Tour was complete without the experience of the Festa* in all its variety”<sup>42</sup> (59). The Carnival and the Sposalizio with its Festa were, therefore, some appointments the Tourists, those with the capital “t”, could not miss. The Festa della Sensa and the Sposalizio served as demonstration and confirmation, in a sort of sense, of the three myths regarding Venice explained before.

Interpreted as a whole, the Festa della Sensa both epitomized and conflated the three [myths ...] by allowing the essence of the Republic to be observed, interpreted, and enjoyed. In sumptuously symbolic form, the marriage ceremony illustrated the special nature of Venice’s political and commercial achievement. Moreover, the Fair and “other Diversions” that followed the Sposalizio showed off the full range of the “città-galante”. (Redford 63)

Venice loses its centrality after becoming part of the Hapsburg empire. With Goethe, Gibbon and others, the focus of the ‘Italianity’ and of Italian travel in general, turns towards South, i.e. starting from Rome or Naples (De Seta 1982: 253).

Leerssen writes in 2000: “Images of powerful nations will foreground the ruthlessness and cruelty associated with effective power, while weak nations can count either on the sympathy felt for the underdog or on that mode of benevolent exoticism that bespeaks condescension” (276-277). According to Leerssen there are two ways to approach a nation on the base of its ‘powerfulness’. Italy inspires, in a stereotypical way, a feeling of sympathy in most of European and Western people. That is to say, that Italy has been, and still is, seen as a weak nation.

If we look at the specific case of Venice, the city is seen as part of a weak nation and feminine, as well. Even if Venice was historically powerful and defeated Genoa (Liguria) in 1381, which was Venice’s rival in the maritime commerce and in the Mediterranean

---

<sup>42</sup> The emphasis is mine.



hegemony, the Venetian city has been seen, also in the Grand Tour, as feminine and the 'benevolent exoticism' has been always a part of its representation. The origin of this exoticism is to be found in Venice's history: Venice, the most powerful Italian maritime city for a long time, has had long connections and contacts with the East and with the Sea Peoples. The city was an important strategic point for merchants, but not only, and it functioned as a window to the world, as it was known in that time. Being the connection between Europe and the East, after the defeat of Genoa, meant that Venice was the leading force in the international commerce of that time, which required both commercial and economic organizations. When the national states were born, the maritime commerce slowly moved from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic one. Venice lost part of its importance, but, until Napoleon's reign, it became crucial again during the Grand Tour. As already said, Venice was known in this period for its festivals and its Carnival. The latter lasted six months: people wore masks that allow them to do what they wanted during six crazy months. During Lent and Christmas time, the Carnival craze was replaced by holy music, private concerts and Sung Masses (Braudel [1949] 1985: 157-262).

Venice is now, on one hand, a very important city for the mass and also cultural tourism, and on the other hand, it is also the city which is facing many problems due to tourism. The ambiguous image of the city remains, so to say, in its present days as well, while the majority of inhabitants run away from the city and its prohibitive costs of living, the tourists from all over the world invade Venice's squares and *calli*.



#### 4. Quantitative analysis

In this chapter I will digitally analyze the four novels as a sample. First, I briefly describe the method I have followed in my research, in order to get the results.

I started my research by digitalizing the texts I had in paper format. I scanned all the texts, which had to be then filtered in a digital reader that automatically reads the texts. I used the software ABBYY Fine Reader 6.0, but there are also other programs available. The automatic reading has often problems in the decoding of some letters or types, which is why, the problematic parts are signalized by the program itself and have to be corrected manually by a human reader/decoder. Only afterwards, the texts can be saved, usually in plain text format, and used as the digital source of analysis. I have undertaken the latter using the software AntConc<sup>43</sup>. This software is useful in the quantitative analysis and usable for literary scholars without the need of support of some computer programmers.

This part of my thesis is centered on the quantitative analysis of common words, obviously connected with Venice all along the four juvenile novels. I define them as *Venetianity's words*, because they have a direct and strong connection with Venice. Along my analysis, I speak about term frequency of the novels and I will list it according to the chronological order of publication of the books. Therefore, the first number will refer to *Herr der Diebe*, the second to *La bambina*, the third to *Once upon* and the last one to *Las Eternas*. The term frequency indicated in my analysis refers to words found in the central narration of the four novels, i.e. words that belong to glossary or further appendixes of the texts are not counted. Having the texts in digital version makes the process of searching and counting words easier. The digital tool helped me in my analysis, but it is not an autonomous one, which makes it a method and not a product, it cannot be let worked without human filtration and

---

<sup>43</sup> I use the version 3.3.4.w (2014).

decoding of the gained information. However, once the computer has access to the digitized text and can read it properly, the machine is undoubtedly faster in counting given words. The digital tool I used, like any other program, has its limits. For instance, not being able to recognize the possible variants of a word. Therefore, the words we are searching for have to be given in all their variants: for Italian words I had to look for four variants: masculine singular, feminine singular, masculine plural and feminine plural; or the user has to create a 'Lemma Form(s) Words' list in order to "teach" the software which are the possible variants of a word. After AntConc has counted the words, they must be read in context and this process, as the one in which words are chosen and inserted in the searching tool, can only be made by a human. Saying so, I do not want to underestimate the usability of this digital tool at all, but rather to point out its limits.

The presence of Venetianity's words in the novels is an evidence that the texts work with stereotyped images of Venice. The higher the term frequency of Venetianity's words is, the more stereotyped is the image of Venice, which text gives. However, the term frequency must be analyzed and interpreted taking in account to the length of the four novels. For this reason, in the third section of this chapter, I will quantify the amount of Venetianity's words in percentage to have a more accurate and homogeneous data sample.

Using the digital tools in literary quantitative analysis could be helpful and even fundamental, when the scholar is to analyze a wide corpus. In my case, the sample probe is relatively small, but already it would be virtually infeasible to perform the whole quantitative analysis manually. It can be also difficult, for literary scholars, to release one's research from the close reading or from the more traditional ways of investigation, but once tried, the digital method can help in many different ways. If applied properly, it can also make a difference in the view of some patterns in the novels: many patterns are not visible at first sight, or maybe we are not able to count and recreate them systematically without

the help of a digital tool. The field of literary digital analysis has still many opportunities to offer and will offer even more possibilities in the future.

#### 4.1 Looking for Venetianity's words in the texts

The words I firstly chose are: *laguna*, *gondola*, *Venezia*, *canale*, *ponte*, *piazza san Marco*, *leone*, *vaporetto*, *calle*, *San Michele*, *Lido*, *Murano*, *piccione* and *fondamenta*; in both Italian and, when different, in the original language in which the novel is written.

The first searched word was “lagoon”, in Italian *laguna*. Before starting my analysis, I want to make an excursus on the term *laguna*. In the Italian Treccani Online Dictionary we find this first definition for the lemma *laguna*:

Bacino acqueo costiero, poco profondo e con acque salate, nel quale emergono spesso formazioni insulari: si forma nelle regioni di deltazione dei grandi fiumi o negli arcipelaghi costieri con bassi fondali, ed è separato dal mare da un cordone litorale interrotto da bocche d'accesso: *la l. di Venezia* o assol., per antonomasia, *la laguna*.<sup>44</sup>

The connection of the word *laguna* with Venice is perfectly described in the example, that links “per antonomasia”, i.e. quintessentially, the lagoon to the Venetian city. This word is directly and completely connected with the city of Venice and its essence. Indeed, Venice is often depicted as ‘the lagoon city’ and/or the ‘floating city’. This aspect underlines the importance that the sea has in Venice cultural and historical reality. The word *laguna* comes from the Latin *lacūna*. The term *lacuna* exists nowadays in Italian as well, but it means gap of information or knowledge.

In Spanish, in the Online DLE, we find both the meaning of the Italian *laguna* and *lacuna* as definition of the Spanish lemma *laguna*, coming from the Latin term mentioned before as well. In German, in the Online Duden Dictionary, we find the word *Lagune* with the meaning of a part of the sea that is divided from it by a piece of earth or by a sandbank, but we do not find the significance of lack of information. In English we find the same meaning that I have already explained for the German language and, in the Oxford Online Dictionary, we are also told that the term entered the English language in the 17<sup>th</sup> century,

---

<sup>44</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

taken from the Italian and Spanish, with the common Latin origin. The word “lagoon”, in the different languages, appears in all four novels with a term frequency of 28-13-6-13.

It is interesting to see the Venetian co-existence with the sea in *Il Mediterraneo* by Fernand Braudel (1985). The French historian constructs his work around the concept of the Mediterranean Sea as a “space-movement”<sup>45</sup>(51). The sea is here described as a system of cultural and commercial exchange and an enormous source of moving possibilities. For a city facing the sea meant and means to be connected to the rest of the world<sup>46</sup>. Braudel informs us that Venice was connected to the world thanks to its position; the city was in the center of the wider circulation system of its time that embraces all the sea (51).

The second word which is firmly connected to the city of Venice is “gondola”, the same in Italian. As for the word “lagoon”, I refer to the linguistic meaning of the term before enumerating the frequency of it in the different texts. In the Online Treccani Dictionary we find as first meaning of *gondola* a long description:

s. f. [*voce venez.*, forse dal gr. Mediev. [...] tipo di barca]. – 1. Speciale imbarcazione di legno a remi, *in uso nella laguna di Venezia* per il trasporto delle persone e per servizi varî, di colore tradizionalmente *nero*, lunga nel tipo classico m 10,75, larga m 1,75, con scafo elegante e slanciato a estremità molto rialzate, carena a fondo piatto, fine e dissimmetrica per consentire la propulsione con un solo remo, disposto di fianco a poppa. Fu anche, in passato, nome di altre imbarcazioni *veneziane*, a remi, di dimensioni più grandi.<sup>47</sup>

We see, from the very beginning of the meaning’s description, the mention of Venice in “Venetian voice/lemma”. According to this definition the gondola is a “special wooden rowboat used in the Venetian lagoon”<sup>48</sup>. The reference is very clear, and it strictly connects the gondola with the lagoon, which is, as seen before, connected *per antonomasia* to Venice.

---

<sup>45</sup> In the Italian version that I take as reference appears “spazio-movimento”.

<sup>46</sup> The role of airports and rail stations have probably nowadays more importance than the role of maritime ports, but the latter were fundamental in earlier time.

<sup>47</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>48</sup> Free translation made by me.

In the Online DLE we find this explanation as first definition of the lemma *góndola*: “f. Embarcación pequeña de recreo, sin palos ni cubierta, por lo común con una carroza en el centro, y que se usa *principalmente en Venecia*”<sup>49</sup>. Here the reference is also very clear. The interesting part of this definition is that the gondola is described as a small boat for “recreational use”<sup>50</sup>. This element underlines the almost ludic aspect of the gondola, nowadays very famous among tourists.

In the German Online Duden Dictionary the first meaning of the word *Gondel* is: “langes, schmales [zu einem Teil überdachtes] *venezianisches Boot* mit steilem, verziertem Vorder- und Achtersteven, das im Stehen auf einer Seite gerudert wird”<sup>51</sup>. The use of the adjective ‘Venetian’ here is, again, significant. We see the same thing in the Oxford Online Dictionary, where we find as first definition of the term “gondola”: “A light flat-bottomed boat *used on Venetian canals*, having a high point at each end and worked by one oar at the stern”<sup>52</sup>.

It is interesting also to notice that the word has graphically not changed very much from the Italian *gondola*. In English the term is written exactly in the same way. In Spanish we find an accent on the first “o” because of the rules of accentuation<sup>53</sup>. In German, there is a slight change, but the Italian origin of the word is still very clear.

The word “gondola” appears 7 times in singular form and 8 times in plural in its German version in *Herr der Diebe* and twice in Italian. Strangely, the term never appears in *La bambina*, and in *Once upon* it appears 13 times in singular form and 9 times in plural form (in total 22 times) in English, and we find it 21 times in singular form and 12 times in plural

---

<sup>49</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>50</sup> Free translation made by me.

<sup>51</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> In order not to change the Italian tonic vowel in Spanish, an accent has to be written on the first “o” because the word is a proparoxytone.



form (in total 33 times) in Spanish in *Las eternas*. In short, the term frequency is 17-0-22-33.

Another word that builds the Venetianity of the texts is the word “Venice” itself and the adjective “Venetian”, referred to the city and to the region of Veneto. In *Herr der Diebe* the term “Venice” appears 63 times in German (*Venedig*) and 3 times in Italian (*Venezia*). At any rate, the author never uses the adjective referred to the city. In *La bambina* the city is mentioned 35 times (obviously always in Italian) and the adjective, in all of its four possible forms (masculine singular, feminine sing., masc. plural and fem. pl.), appears only 4 times. In *Once upon* the word “Venice” appears 114 times in English and twice in Italian. We find the adjective, in the two possible forms in English (sing. and pl.) 14 times. In *Las eternas* the word “Venice” appears 91 times in Spanish and the city is never referred to in Italian. On the contrary, the adjective appears more often in the Spanish text than in the others. We find the term in its four possible variants 18 times. In short, the term frequency is 66-39-130-109.

The other Venetianity word is “canal”, in Italian *canale*, and the direct mention of the *Canal Grande*, that is the main canal of the city of Venice. In *Herr der Diebe* the word appears 41 times and only once in Italian, and “Canal Grande”, in Italian, appears 16 times. In *La bambina* the word “canal” appears only 8 times, always in Italian, and the *Canal Grande* is never mentioned in the narration. In *Once upon* the word “canal” appears 57 times in English and 19 of them are referred to the “Grand Canal”, which is indeed never mentioned in Italian. In *Las Eternas* we find the Spanish word *canal* 51 times and the corresponding Italian word appears 10 times. Also in this text the Grand Canal is never mentioned. The term frequency is, then, 58-8-57-61.

An element that is connected to the canal is the bridge. In *Herr der Diebe* the German word *Brücke* in its sing. and pl. forms appears 41 times, two of which refer to the “ponte di

Rialto”, a specific bridge of the most ancient Venetian district, and also twice, “bridge” appears in combination with the name of Accademia, “Accademia-Brücke”, referring in this way to the only Venetian wood bridge existing nowadays. In *La bambina* we find the word *ponte* 10 times only in its sing. form and only once in combination with “di Rialto”. In *Once upon* we find the word *bridge* 16 times in both sing. and pl. forms, four times of which refer to the Rialto Bridge and only once it appears in Italian “ponte di Rialto”. In *Las eternas* the Spanish word *punte* appears 16 times in its sing. and pl. forms. It never refers to the Rialto Bridge, but to the “Ponte Marcello”. It is nominated 12 times and always in Italian. The frequency is then 41-10-16-28.

Another symbolic element of Venetianity is San Marco Square. In *Herr der Diebe* we find the reference 4 times, two of which are in the Italian version “piazza san Marco”. In *La bambina* the word *piazza* is used 11 times and 9 of them refer to San Marco Square, always in Italian. In *Once upon* we find the English version “St. Mark’s Square” 9 times and twice the Italian one “Piazza San Marco”. In *Las eternas* we find 12 times the Spanish word *plaza*, only 4 of which refer to “Plaza de San Marcos” and it never appears in the Italian version. The term frequency of *piazza san Marco* is therefore 4-9-11-4.

San Marco Square is connected to the image of the winged lion, symbol of the city, that dominates the main square from above its column. The German word “lion” in its sing. and pl. forms appears in *Herr der Diebe* 55 times. The term never appears in Italian and only 10 times of the 55 mentioned, the word “lion” is connected to the San Marco’s lion. In *La bambina* the term *leone* appears only in its sing. form 41 times, obviously, only in Italian. 20 times of them the term appears in combination with the adjective *alato* (in English: winged) and all these times both the words lion and winged appear with the initial letter written in capitals. Writing “Leone Alato” is a very clear reference to the symbol of the city of Venice, but Moony Witcher underlines even more the connection with the city adding to

the mention of the winged lion “di Venezia” or “di San Marco” 3 times. Other 3 times the author writes “Leone di Venezia” or “Leone di San Marco” leaving out the adjective “winged”, but the reference is transparent anyhow. In *Once Upon* the word “lion” appears in its sing. and pl. forms 5 times in English and once in Italian, but they come in combination of “winged” or “Venice”. In *Las eternas* the term “lion” appears only twice in its sing. form in Spanish and once of the two times it refers to the lion of the city. The term frequency is therefore 55-41-6-2.

The term *vaporetto* is also strictly connected to Venice and it eventually entered other languages as a loan word. If we look up in the Treccani Online Dictionary we find this definition of the lemma: “Piroscafo di piccole dimensioni, spec. se destinato a servizi pubblici in porti, canali, laghi, ecc.”<sup>54</sup>. There is actually no direct reference to Venice, even if the word *canali* is used. In the Duden Online Dictionary we find this explanation for the term *vaporetto*: “Dampfboot, kleines Motorboot (in Italien)”<sup>55</sup>. Here we can see a clear reference to Italy, but Venice is actually not mentioned yet. The only definition that is explicitly related to the Venetian city is the one we can find in the Oxford Online Dictionary, where *vaporetto* is explained as “a motorboat used as a passenger bus along a canal in Venice, Italy”. Here the reference is very clear, and it is also explained how to build the plural form, with the possibility to follow both the Italian and the English morphology. In Spanish, the term has not been accepted in the Online RAE Dictionary. However, interestingly the Italian word is in use in German and in English with exactly the same spelling and meaning of the original term.

In *Herr der Diebe* the word “vaporetto” appears 7 times in its sing. form and twice in its pl. one. In *La bambina* it appears 5 times in both its possible forms and in *Once upon* it

---

<sup>54</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

appears only once. In *Las eternas* it appears 7 times (5 times in its sing. form and twice in its pl. form), always in Italian. This last data is particularly interesting because the term “vaporetto”, as said before, is not actually accepted in the Spanish most normative dictionary, but Victoria Álvarez has decided At any rate to put it in her novel, giving the reader a useful extra piece of information about the city of Venice. The term frequency is therefore 9-5-1-7.

Since Venice is known as the “floating city”, I found it strange that the frequency of “vaporetto” was so low. Therefore, I decided to look for other words of watercrafts in the texts in their original languages. In *Herr der Diebe* we find different German words that refers to watercrafts: we encounter the word *Schiff* in its sing. and pl. forms 9 times, the term *Boot* in its sing. and pl. forms 89 times and the lemma *Segelboot* 4 times only in its sing. form. In *La bambina* we find the word *barca* 21 times only in its sing. form and the term *imbarcazione* 3 times in its sing. and pl. forms. In *Once upon* we find the word “boat” 43 times in its sing. and pl. forms and “watercraft” appears twice in its sing. form. In *Las eternas* the Spanish term *barco* appears once in its sing. form and the Spanish word *embarcación* appears both in its sing. and in pl. forms 18 times. Interestingly, the Italian word *barca/barche* also appears in the Spanish text. We can find it in its sing. and pl. forms 24 times. Creating a frequency for these words is not easy, as they are different in languages and do not correspond exactly one to the other. I list the words here, since I found the results significant: It underlines the literal connection between Venice and the water and it shows that this connection is present in all four juvenile novels<sup>56</sup>.

There are words that are connected to the boats, that do not appear in any of those novels. ‘Pier’ is one of these words. The term *imbarcadero*, the pier, is used twice in Italian in *La*

---

<sup>56</sup> I will use these words in the moment of presenting the percentage of Venetianity in the texts, but as I explained, it does not have sense to create a term frequency for these lemmas.

*bambina* and 13 times in Spanish in *Las eternas*. In *Herr der Diebe* the German word *Ufer* appears 16 times, and in the English novel it never appears. The term frequency is, then, 16-2-0-13.

Another word that is closely connected with Venice is *calle* (the sing. form of *calli*). It is actually the specific Italian word used to describe the small streets of Venice. In the Treccani Online Dictionary, looking for the lemma *calle* we will first find a definition that refers to an ancient use of the term, that means narrow streets or path, with examples taken from Dante, Manzoni, Leopardi and Ariosto's texts. As a second meaning, used nowadays too, we find this definition: "s. f. Nome comune delle vie nel Veneto e *spec. a Venezia*"<sup>57</sup>. Again, a pure Venetianity's word. The term itself appears in Italian only twice in *Herr der Diebe*, and both times is referred to a specific *calle*, *Calle del Paradiso*, which is not far away from the Ponte di Rialto. At any rate, the author reflects the main characteristic of the Venetian *calli* naming them with the German word *Gasse*, that in the Duden Online Dictionary is defined as: "*schmale* Straße zwischen zwei Reihen von Häusern"<sup>58</sup>. Preference of the German term instead of the Italian *calle* is actually stylistic and does not affect the degree of stereotyping of the text. The word *Gasse* appears in its sing. and pl. forms 55 times in the German juvenile novel.

In *Once upon* the word "alley" appears 5 times in both sing. and pl. forms and the Italian word *calle* appears only once in the singular form. The term *calle* appears 44 times in *Las eternas*, but it is always used with the Spanish meaning of the term. Indeed, the word *calle* means 'street' in Spanish.

In *La bambina* the word *calle* appears only in its pl. form three times and always in combination with the word *campielli* (the sing. form is *campiello*), another very typical

---

<sup>57</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

term of Venetianity<sup>59</sup>. The word *campiello* is never used in the other three books. We have then a term frequency, for the word *calle* and synonyms in the other languages, of 57-3-6-0.

One particular island is mentioned 39 times in *Las eternas* and in both *La bambina* and *Herr der Diebe* it appears only once: San Michele island. There we can find, also nowadays, the Christian cemetery of the city, and the term frequency in the Spanish novel is undoubtedly due to and connected with the plot of the text. The general term frequency is, then, 1-1-0-39.

The cemetery of San Michele accommodates the Catholic, Evangelist and Orthodox remains, while the Jewish cemetery is on the Lido island. The Lido appears in both *Herr der Diebe* and *La bambina* only once, it is mentioned twice in *Las eternas* and it never appears in *Once upon*. It is pretty strange that the Lido never appears in *Once upon*, since the protagonist's family and himself are Jewish and the grandpa dies of cancer in Venice. The general term frequency of the Lido island is, then, 1-1-0-2.

Another island that is mentioned in three books is Murano, the island where the famous glass comes from. Murano appears 4 times in the narration of *Herr der Diebe*, 5 times in *Las eternas* and once in *Once upon*. We can argue now that Moony Witcher does not mention it intentionally, in order to avoid linking Venice with the tourists, which means, also with the stereotyped image of the city. The general frequency of the term Murano is, then, 4-0-1-5.

Another term that is connected to Venice and its tourists' image is "pigeon". The word never appears in *La bambina*, which reinforces my interpretation of the will of the author not to give a stereotyped image of the city in her novel. The term "pigeon" appears 56 times in its sing. and pl. forms in German in *Herr der Diebe*, 8 times in pl. form in English in *Once*

---

<sup>59</sup> Being a word of Venetianity that appears only in one book, *campiello* is listed in the next part of this chapter.

*upon* and 7 times also only in pl. form in Spanish in *Las eternas*. These animals are actually a problem in Venice, but at the same time they are also an attraction for tourists<sup>60</sup>. The general term frequency is, then, 56-0-8-7.

The last but not least, is the word *fondamenta*, which can only be found in Italian in all novels, since it has no translation in English, Spanish and/or German. The term is defined in the Treccani Online Dictionary as follows: “s. f. [lat. fundamenta, pl. neutro; v. fondamento] (pl. -e). – *A Venezia*, nome dato alle strade che costeggiano un rio o un canale al piede dei fabbricati”<sup>61</sup>. The word, existing only in Italian, appears, as a consequence, only in the Italian dictionary, that underlines its unique connection with Venice. The term *fondamenta* appears only once in *La bambina* and once in *Once Upon* as well. In *Las eternas* it appears 42 times and in *Herr der Diebe* 7 times. The term frequency is, then, 7-1-1-42.

The results of the term frequency of the Venetianity’s words<sup>62</sup> listed up to this point, are summarized, in Table 1.

---

<sup>60</sup> This matter is described very clearly in *Herr der Diebe* when Victor, in order to make Bo come closer to him, buys some pigeons food in San Marco Square and puts it on his arms and his hands, attracts a lot of pigeons. Doing that, Victor attracts people’s and also Bo’s attention, who is particularly enchanted by the amount of these flying animals in Venice. Bo goes close to the detective without seeing his face because of the amount of the birds on Victor’s arms, and the investigator can ask Bo about his staying and the place where he is living in Venice.

<sup>61</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>62</sup> In order to make the table clearer to understand I listed the Venetianity’s words only in English and only in their sing. form. But, in the numbers written in the boxes, obviously, all the possible variants in genre, number and case are included.

	<i>Herr der Diebe</i>	<i>La bambina</i>	<i>Once upon</i>	<i>Las eternas</i>
lagoon	28	13	6	13
gondola	17	-	22	33
Venice / Venetian	66	39	130	109
Canal / Grand Canal	58	8	57	61
bridge	41	10	16	28
San Marco Square	4	9	11	4
lion	55	41	6	2
vaporetto	9	5	1	7
pier	16	2	-	13
calle	57	3	6	-
San Michele	1	1	-	39
Lido	1	1	-	2
Murano	4	-	1	5
pigeon	56	-	8	7
fondamenta <sup>63</sup>	7	1	1	42

Table 1: Venetianity's words

Having these pieces of information, we see that some values of term frequency are very different in some novels. The first big difference in values is to be found in the term frequency of the word “gondola”, that is 17-0-22-33. In the Italian text the word *gondola* is never mentioned. This is a little odd, since almost the whole book is set in Venice. The

---

<sup>63</sup> The term has been inserted in Italian, since it has any English translation.



absence of this word throughout the novel, that is, as explained before, strictly connected with the Venetian city can have different explanations.

From an imagological point of view, it is fascinating that the author has maybe deliberately avoided using the word in her novel. That could mean that the author does not want to give a completely stereotyped image of Venice. This hypothesis is supported by the rare use of the word *canale* in the Italian juvenile novel. In fact, the term frequency of *canale* is 58-8-57-61. The values of the German, English and Spanish texts are very similar, even if the length of the three books are different. This confirms my hypothesis about the will of the Italian text not to give a completely stereotyped image of Venice.

It is possible to find another confirmation of my hypothesis in the term frequency of the word “Venice”, that is 66-39-130-109. Considering the frequency of mentioning Venice in the Italian text (39 times) as a basis of comparison among the four novels, the direct reference to Venice appears almost twice as much in the German book (66 times), more than twice as much in the Spanish novel (109), and more than the triple in the English book (130 times), although the latter is the shortest text. This observation confirms that the Italian text is built less on stereotyped ideas of the city, but also that the English text contains many of the stereotyped ideas about the city and also more words of Venetianity as the other texts, being the shortest novel I analyze.

The term “lion” is also interesting, because it seems that the American author does not give so much importance to the symbol of the city and never mentions the lion in relation to its emblematic charge.

The term *fondamenta* is also interesting, since it is used very often (47 encounters) by the Spanish author, even if it is not accepted as word in the Dictionary of the Real Academia Española. The Italian and the American authors use it only once and the German author 7

times. In the English text the term *fondamenta* is used, but not explained, and on the contrary, in the German glossary, we find a definition of the lemma.

We must see the table in percentage, counting the total words of the novels that refer to Venice, which will be illustrated in the third section of this chapter.

#### 4.2 Venetianity's words that are present only in one or two novels

I will now list some other words I found in only one or two of the four juvenile books that are the center of my analysis. They are words that are closely connected to the city of Venice, but they do not appear in more than two books. In other words, they appear only in the half of those books or even less.

The term *campiello* appears 3 times in *La bambina* and once in *Once upon*. It is clearly a Venetianity's word, since it refers to the Venetian small squares. In the Treccani Online Dictionary, indeed, we read: "s. m. [lat. mediev. campitellum, dim. di campus «campo»]. – *A Venezia e nelle città istriane e dalmate di impronta veneziana, piazzetta ristretta*"<sup>64</sup>.

The word *Doge* is mentioned only in *La bambina* and in *Once upon*. In the Italian text the term appears 15 times and it is always related to a room in the villa of the protagonist. In the English text the word *Doge* appears 18 times and it refers to the Venetian historical and political figure. In this sense, we can argue that the use of the term in the English text increases the stereotyped image of Venice, but the use of the same term in the Italian one does not. In calculating the percentage of Venetianity's words presented in the Italian text, *Doge* will not be then included.

The mention to the *Doge* in *Once upon* is related to the reference to a historical boat, the *Bucintoro*, that appears once in the novel. The word *Bucintoro* appears 18 times in *Las eternas* as well, but here it is the name of the little boat of the male protagonist of the story: the name of the *Doge*'s boat is transferred in the Spanish text as the name of the boat of the protagonist, so as the *Doge*'s name is used for a room in Nina's villa. In this way, the Italian and Spanish authors are mentioning two elements that are connected to the city, but they are not using them to refer the city itself. In this way, it is possible to say that Moony Witcher and Victoria Álvarez are re-elaborating elements that are 'pre-connected' with

---

<sup>64</sup> Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

Venice, but they are not using them to confirm the *image* of the city in their texts. On the contrary, in the English novel, the term “Bucintoro” and also the mention to the Doge are used as elements that increase the stereotyped and imaging fixed material about Venice. One famous island of Venice is the Giudecca, and it is mentioned 11 times only in *La bambina*.

An important festival in Venice is Carnival. As already said in the previous chapter of my thesis, during the Grand Tour, it was crucial to spend the Carnival time in Venice.

The term “Carnival” appears 27 times in *Las eternas*, 3 times of which are combined with the word “mask”, that is mentioned, both in its sing. and pl. forms 24 times in the Spanish text. In English, the word “Carnival” is mentioned only once, used as an adjective “a carnival-like atmosphere” (Roy 20). The word never appears in both *Herr der Diebe* and *La bambina*. On the contrary, the term “mask” appears 27 times in German in both its sing. and pl. forms in *Herr der Diebe*. This term frequency is strictly connected with the plot of the German novel. In fact, Scipio, one of the main characters, always wears a black mask to cover his face. At any rate, I will put this term frequency in the final count for the percentage, because it would be strange, even for a child, always to wear a mask around the city. Living in Venice, Carnival’s home town, this fact is easier to accept. In this sense, I consider this aspect as one that is clearly connected with the city of Venice. The term “mask” never appears in *La bambina*, and it appears only 3 times in *Once upon*, always as verb. Moreover, in the English text, the word “mask” is never used in connection with the city of Venice, and for this reason I will not insert it in the Venetianity’s term count. Its complete extraneousness from the categorization of “Venetianity’s terms” allows me to put it in this chapter’s paragraph and in Table 2. If the term would have a strength connection with Venice, I would insert it in Table 1, since it appears in three of the four analyzed novels.

I will write all the terms that are not counted in the percentage in the table (Table 2), but I will mark them with an \*<sup>65</sup>. Table 2 summarizes now the results of this part of my research.

	<i>Herr der Diebe</i>	<i>La bambina</i>	<i>Once upon</i>	<i>Las eternas</i>
campiello <sup>66</sup>	-	3	1	-
Doge	-	15*	18	-
Bucintoro	-	-	1	18*
Giudecca	-	11	-	-
Carnival	-	-	1	27
mask	27	-	3*	24

Table 2: Venetianity's words present only in one or two novels.

Two of the four novels, *Once upon* and *Herr der Diebe*, have a glossary at the end of the book, where some Italian words or expressions are defined. Bolstering the text with a brief dictionary or linguistic explications is not a direct assurance of the fidelity or accuracy of the usage of the words in the text itself. Indeed, in the glossary of *Once upon*, we find a lot of Italian words that are misspelled. We find, for example, the term “linguini”, that was probably confused by the author with the Italian word *linguine*, that refers to a special kind of pasta. We also find “trattorias”, explained as “place to eat, pizzeria” (Roy 55). The Italian word would be *trattoria* and in pl. form *trattorie*, and it means rustic restaurant. Roy includes the word “café” that does not exist in Italian. The author explains it by saying that it is a coffee house. In Italian exists the word *caffè*, that means coffee, and *bar*, taken from the same English word, and it means coffee house or bar. Moreover, the very name of the

<sup>65</sup> With this sign, I underline the use of a term in one of the novels, that has, initially, a strong connection with the city of Venice, but that loses its link to the city in the narration because of the use the author makes of the term. That means also that the numbers accompanied by the \* are not counted as Venetianity's terms for the novel.

<sup>66</sup> I insert this word in Italian, since it does not have any English translation.

protagonist is pretentiously Italian, but it is wrongly written. The Italian variant of the name would be Samuele; Samuelle does not exist in Italian.

The only linguistic meritocratic element in *Once upon* is the use of the terms, that I have already explained before, of *calle* and *campiello*. Thus, these words are each used only once. However, it cannot be denied that the author has no idea of how a “calle” really looks like because she writes: “A quiet calle opened onto the Grand Canal” (29). Samuelle and Grandpa Leo arrived in Venice of occasion of the “Regata Storica”, the principal manifestation of the “Voga di Venezia”<sup>67</sup>, a particular rowing sport practice performed in the Venetian lagoon, that takes place usually in September. In *Once upon* the regatta is taking place in September too and, as we all can imagine, in September and moreover in the days of such a festivity, Venice is full of tourists. In this way, it is very unlikely that the protagonists find a “quiet calle”, and even more unlikely is that he finds one near the Grand Canal.

It is also easy to find oversimplification in the English text, for instance, when we read about food, “the vibrant aroma of Italian foods” (5) or “the smell of robust Italian meals” (12). The name of Italian cooking is very famous, and it is also known that the Italian food tradition is very different from region to region. The ‘typical meal’, e.g., in Naples, will be very different for the ‘typical’ one in Florence. Speaking about “Italian meals” is, in this sense, an oversimplification.

Anyhow, I must mention that some explanations that Monique Roy expresses through Grandpa Leo are correct. For example, the Historical Regatta is opened by some particular rowboats, the *bissone*<sup>68</sup>. In *Once upon* we read: “It [the Regatta] takes place on the Grand Canal. It begins with a pageantry of beautiful period boats, the *bissone*” (12).

---

<sup>67</sup> This piece of information does not appear in *Once upon*. I took it from the official website: [www.regatastoricavenezia.it](http://www.regatastoricavenezia.it). Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Info from: [www.regatastoricavenezia.it](http://www.regatastoricavenezia.it). Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

The glossary presented at the end of the German novel, on the contrary, is very accurate. It includes definitions built 1:1 translations, as e.g. “*isola*-Insel” (390), but also the direct translation accompanied by the pronunciation as well, if it can be problematic for German natives, as e.g. “*riccio*-Igel (Aussprache: Ritscho)” (391), or by the plural form as in the case of *gondola*, where the definition says “Gondel; Mz. *gondole*” (390), or by a cultural/social explanation: “pronto bereit, fertig; ital. Begrüßungsformel am Telefon” (391). Some other definitions are longer, and they also explain the symbolic charge an object has for the city of Venice. In the definition of ‘lion’ we read:

Das Hoheitszeichen der Herrschaft Venedigs ist ein geflügter Löwe, der an vielen Stellen der Stadt und des Landes Venetien zu finden ist. Der Markuslöwe hält in seinen Vorderpfoten eine Tafel. Die Inschrift „Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus“ bedeutet „Friede mit dir, Markus, mein Evangelist“.  
(391)

The pieces of information given by Funke in her glossary are much more accurate and also interesting from a cultural, historical and social point of view.

As said before, the Spanish text does not contain a glossary, but the narrator explains clearly and correctly the meanings of Italian words, when used. The Italian novel does not include any glossary, because the Italian native speaker and reader does not need a glossary in order to read *La bambina*.

### 4.3 Venetianity in percentage

In this part of my thesis, I analyze the Venetianity's terms of the novels in percentage. Using the software AntConc, I first count the word tokens of every novel, i.e. I count how many words any novel has, not dividing them in word types. Firstly, I make an example to make my point clearer. In the sentence "The cat is chasing the mouse", we have 6-word tokens (every word is a token) and 5-word types because "the" is repeated twice, but it is the same word type.

In order to make my counting analysis more accurate, I will use a stop word list for each language<sup>69</sup>. The stop words are function words that have little lexical and semantical meaning. I took stop word lists in which also the main verbs are included in their different forms and I added also the name of the characters of the story to the lists. This process makes my research more accurate because it allows me to take into account only the important semantic and lexical words.

Coming back to the example sentence used before, by applying the stop word list, the result will be: 3-word tokens: cat, chasing, mouse. "The" is a function word and will not be counted applying any stop word list, and "is" appears also in the stop word list I chose, and for this reason will not be counted as well.

In *Herr der Diebe* 94518-word tokens appear all along the novel. Applying the German stop word list, the word tokens become 34544, and the first ten are, in order of term frequency: "Kopf, fragte, Gesicht, antwortete, stand, Tür, murmelte, rief, Stadt, zog"<sup>70</sup>. The 11<sup>th</sup> word is "Diebe", that means thieves, and it can be explained also on the basis of the plot of the novel. At any rate, the ten most frequent tokens, are not connected with Venice.

---

<sup>69</sup> I use the stop word lists in English, Italian, German and Spanish taken from <https://github.com/stopwords-iso>.

<sup>70</sup> In English: head, asked, face, answered, stood, door, muttered, called, city, pulled.



The Venetianity's words in *Herr der Diebe* are in total 549, that is to say, they represent the 1,5% of the word tokens in the novel.

In *La bambina* we find in total 74643-word tokens and applying the Italian stop word list they become 32636, where the first ten are: “luna, sesta, bambina, disse, nonno, occhi, Xorax, bambini, mano, Taldom”<sup>71</sup>. The Venetianity's terms in the Italian novel are 171, i.e. they are the 0,5% of the tokens in general.

In *Once upon* we find 14599-word tokens in total, and applying the word stop list they become 4861, of which the first ten are: “grandpa, Venice, canal, grandfather, boats, day, grand, family, city, Italian”. The second term per frequency is the name of Venice itself, and also the words ‘canal’, ‘boats’ and ‘Italian’ are present in the first ten. It is predictable that the percentage of this text will have a higher number than to the other ones explored before, also from this first data about the first ten words. The Venetianity's words in the English text are in total 330, i.e. they are the 6,7% of the total word tokens, that confirms the proper estimate.

In *Las eternas* we find 116135-word tokens in general, applying the stop word list they become 40986, and the first ten terms are: “ojos, cabeza, mano, parecía, manos, voz, padre, casa, podia, hermano”<sup>72</sup>. The Venetianity's words in the Spanish text are 458, i.e. they are the 1,1% of the total word tokens. The results of this research can be seen in Table 3.

---

<sup>71</sup> In English: “moon, sixth, child, told/said, grandfather, eyes, Xorax (the name of an imaginary planet), children, hand, Taldom (the name of a magic tool)”.

<sup>72</sup> In English: “eyes, head, hand, seemed/looked like, hands, voice, father, house, could, brother”.

	Total word tokens	Word tokens (with stop words list)	Term frequency of Venetianity's words	Venetianity's term frequency in %
<i>Herr der Diebe</i>	94.518	34.544	549	1,5%
<i>La bambina</i>	74.643	32.481	171	0,5%
<i>Once upon</i>	14.599	4.861	330	6,7%
<i>Las eternas</i>	116.135	40.986	458	1,1%

Table 3: Venetianity term frequency in percentage

## 5. Analysis of the results

In the final part of the previous chapter, I counted and created percentages of the Venetianity's words in the four juvenile novels I chose. According to my thesis, these are marks of stereotyping patterns in the text.

Before starting with the analysis of the results I would like to explain briefly about the quantitative analysis. The quantitative method I have used, requires a lot of time that is not directly visible from the results it gives. The bigger the corpus of analysis is, the more time the research needs. As Franco Moretti, leading scholar in digital analysis of (comparative) literature and founder of the Literary Lab at the Stanford University, writes in 2005, “ci vuole un’eternità per raccogliere i dati” (11), ‘it takes you an eternity to collect all the data’<sup>73</sup>. The quantitative method requires also a crystal-clear focus in the search, otherwise the results won’t be truthful. Moretti writes that the quantitative analysis does not create a new meaning of what we are analyzing, but it makes possible to glimpse and distinguish the “ritmo nascosto” (2005: 42), the ‘hidden rhythm’<sup>74</sup> of some motif or theme present in the novel, and it also helps to focus on “alcune domande su quella che chiamerei la ‘forma interna’ di tutto il processo” (2005: 42), some questions about the so-called (by Moretti) ‘internal form’<sup>75</sup> of the whole process. In the same way, by looking for the Venetianity's words and by counting them, it is possible to see the hidden rhythm of the representation of Venice and it is also possible to question the general process of the Italian and/or Venetian ethnicity building in the novels.

Moretti adds as well, that what makes quantitative data interesting is that sometimes they require an interpretation that goes beyond the means of quantitative methods, literally,

---

<sup>73</sup> Free translation made by me.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

universe<sup>76</sup>: “a volte [i dati] esigono un’interpretazione che fuoriesce dall’universo quantitativo” (43).

As already said, I will base my interpretation on imagology. In this sense, I am also interpreting my quantitative data in a way that goes beyond the mere quantitative method. Thus, I analyze my results starting from the idea that stereotypes are a fundamental fixed structure that helps in the formation of self- and hetero-images, i.e. they also influence the ethnicity’s – in this case the Italian and/or Venetian one – mental, social and cultural building.

Homi K. Bhabha writes in his *The Location of Culture* (1994):

Fixity [...] is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and *daemonic repetition*<sup>77</sup>. Likewise *the stereotype*, which is its *major discursive strategy*<sup>78</sup>, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that *must be anxiously repeated*<sup>79</sup> [...]. It is a process of *ambivalence* [...] or it is the force of this ambivalence that give the [...] stereotype its currency [...] for the stereotype, must always been in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed. (66)

If we accept that the stereotypes “have to be constantly reproduced to become a stable norm” (Weinladt in print) – i.e. that stereotypes need to be repeated in order to become fixed patterns of thoughts – it means that repetition is also needed in the literary production. In novels, and writings in general, both real and fictive authors are working with words. Through the used words, they are creating worlds and they possibly confirm or negate the readers’ fixed commonplaces or stereotypes, as well. Because of this, a quantitative analysis based on Venetianity’s words makes sense in order to find out if a text is built on stereotyped ideas of the city if Venice or not.

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

According to the results in percentage, visible in Table 3, the novel that has the little amount of Venetianity's words (0,5%, i.e. one Venetianity's word in every 200) is the Italian *La bambina*. The result is not unexpected, since the author is Italian, and she comes from Venice<sup>80</sup>. Since the author is Venetian, she has empirical experience of Venice and that means that it is more difficult that her representation of the city turns out to be stereotyped.

The novel with the second lowest ratio of Venetianity's words is *Las eternas* with 1,1%, which is already double the value of the Italian novel. From biographical info, that we acknowledge in the brief presentation of the young author on the internal cover of *Las eternas*, we acknowledge that Victoria Álvarez can speak, among various languages, Italian fluently. In the presentation, we are also told that she lived in Rome, as well. Her knowledge of Italy and of the Italian language is visible in the correct use of some Italian words that are perfectly written and explained. In her Blog, we read as well, that she likes “los largos paseos por Londres, París y Venecia”<sup>81</sup>.

The third book is then (with an 1,5% of Venetianity's words) *Herr der Diebe*. Cornelia Funke adds as appendix to the novel a glossary, where some Italian names and expressions used in the novel are explained in German. At the end of the book we find also a map of the city of Venice, an element that appears only in the German text, even if all the four juvenile novels have the same setting. In the case of Cornelia Funke, it is unclear if she lived or travelled in the city before writing her novel. In any case, she took part in October 2004 at the presentation of the Italian version of her book *Herr der Diebe* in Venice<sup>82</sup>. Thanks to this info we know that Cornelia Funke was in 2004 in Venice and her visit was strictly connected with her book. Through an interview in 2005 for the *Tagesspiegel* we

---

<sup>80</sup> Info available in: <http://www.moonywitcher.com/biografia/>. Last seen: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and in her personal Facebook page.

<sup>81</sup>Free translation made by me: “long walks across London, Paris and Venice”. Info: <http://elblogdevictoriaalvarez.blogspot.co.at/>. Last seen: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>82</sup> Info: <http://www.fantasymagazine.it/1953/il-signore-dei-ladri-a-venezia>. Last seen: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

acknowledge that she was in the Venetian city the year after her book's presentation, as well<sup>83</sup>.

The English *Once upon* is the book that has the highest percentage of Venetianity's words: 6,7%. That is to say, for every 100 words in the texts, we will find almost 7 Venetianity's words. The English value is higher than 13 times the Italian one. It is not easy to find many pieces of information about Monique Roy, but we know from her website that she "was born in Cape Town, South Africa, and her grandparents were European Jews who fled their home as Hitler rose to power"<sup>84</sup>. Considering her Jewish origins, the choice of Venice as a setting of the story makes sense, and also the familiar emigration background we see in the protagonist, can be partly attribute to an autobiographical reference<sup>85</sup>. At any rate, the spelling or the use of Italian words are very often wrong. Samuele, a male name used in Italy, becomes in *Once upon*, Samuelle. The Italian *caffè*, is written with only one 'f', the Italian *linguine*, becomes 'linguini' and the *trattorie*, becomes 'trattorias'. In addition to these spelling errors, we can also read in the glossary that *gelato* means "Italian ice cream" (54), as if another word in Italian referring to other, non-national ice-cream would exist. I would say that Roy has never learned Italian or even looked the words up in an Italian dictionary before writing her book. I could not find any information that clearly tells us if Roy has been, at least once, in Italy or in Venice, but it is not fundamental in the case of her book. She describes the "Regata Storica" (23) in which the Bucintoro appears. Since the last Bucintoro had been destroyed during the Napoleonic occupation of the city, and the new reconstruction of the Bucintoro is stopped from 2016 because of lack of founding<sup>86</sup>.

---

<sup>83</sup>Info: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/interview-mit-cornelia-funke-kinder-finden-das-boese-cool/10788228.html>. Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>84</sup> From: <http://www.monique-roy.com/resume.html>. Last seen: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>85</sup> Monique Roy has published *Across Great Divides* in 2013, which is inspired by her own family experience flying away from Nazi Germany and arriving in South Africa divided by the apartheid.

<sup>86</sup>Info: [https://www.ilgazzettino.it/pay/venezia\\_pay/nuovo\\_bucintoro\\_meglio\\_un\\_progetto\\_meno\\_faraonico-1977979.html](https://www.ilgazzettino.it/pay/venezia_pay/nuovo_bucintoro_meglio_un_progetto_meno_faraonico-1977979.html). Last seen: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

Therefore, it seems pretty unrealistic that Samuelle or some other contemporary tourists has seen the Bucintoro sailing in the lagoon. The Bucintoro has been depicted by many painters (see Figure 1<sup>87</sup>) and it can be seen as the origin of Roy's mention to the boat in the novel.



Figure 1: *Il ritorno del Bucintoro al molo nel giorno dell'Ascensione* by Canaletto (Royal Collection)

Now, according to the quantitative analysis, the Italian self-image is different from its hetero-image. However, there are also elements in common; in this case, the words that appear in Table 1, even if they differ in frequency in the four languages. The plurality of languages is, indeed, a very interesting point: the four languages have four very different values of percentage, and that leads us to confirm the theory that the image of Venice changes according to the spectant. “In the interaction between self-image and alterity, such image myth and stereotype, constitute the semiotic system of the culture of origin, an *imaginaire* which in its specific instances is expressed as single stereotype” (Beller and Leerssen 8). The stereotype building process is different according to the language used for the description, but the main idea that all texts convey is the same: Venice is the magical

<sup>87</sup> The view of Venice presented in Canaletto's *veduta* is very typical. The framing is the famous one: the viewer looks at Piazza san Marco from the lagoon full of black gondolas. San Marco's bell tower and the column with the winged lion on the square dominate the scene, in which the viewer can glimpse, behind san Marco's Basilica, the Palazzo Ducale

city where everything is possible. The young protagonists, as already mentioned, emancipate themselves in all four novels coming to Venice and live their adventures in the Venetian city. Venice is, therefore, very important for the plots of the novels as well. As Moretti writes in 1998 [1997]: “As style is indeed correlated to space, so space is correlated to plot [...] the crossing of a spatial border is usually also the decisive event of the narrative structure” (46). So, in the four juvenile novels I analyzed, the crossing of the Italian national border and the arrival to Venice starts the real action. But let’s see in detail how Venice is firstly mentioned in the four novels.

In *La bambina*, Venice is presented from the very beginning as the most magical and enchanting city in the world. “Misha, padre della mamma di Nina, era russo ma ora viveva nella città più *magica e incantevole* del mondo: Venezia”<sup>88</sup> (8). In *Once upon* we read:

It is so difficult to describe to you what a fascinating city you were born in. It's *charming* and *dreamy*. Do you remember? *There is no place like it on the earth*. Venice created many fond memories for us. It was our home and it shaped our lives in many ways. For me, the Jewish ghetto will always remain a *special* place. It was my first home.<sup>89</sup> (3)

This description is also about a “charming” and “dreamy” city, a special and unique place in the world. As I already mentioned, in the English novel Venice is connected to its Jewish element and its ghetto. But, that is an autobiographical element of the author, and it obviously gives a particular connotation to the Venetian city.

In *Herr der Diebe* we find, as in the German literature with Thomas Mann, an ambiguous first description of Venice.

Es war Herbst in der *Stadt des Mondes*, als Victor zum ersten Mal von Prosper und Bo hörte. [...] Manchmal träumte Victor nachts, dass das Haus *in den Wellen versank*, mitsamt der ganzen Stadt. Dass das Meer den Damm fortspülte, mit dem *Venedig am Festland hing* wie eine Kiste Gold an einem dünnen Faden, und alles *verschluckte*: die Häuser und Brücken, Kirchen und Paläste, die die Menschen dem *Wasser* so frech aufs Gesicht gebaut hatten.

---

<sup>88</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



Aber noch stand alles *fest auf seinen hölzernen Beinen*, und Victor lehnte an seinem Fenster und blickte durch die staubige Scheibe nach draußen. *Kein anderer Ort auf der Welt* konnte so *unverschämt* mit seiner *Schönheit* prahlen wie die Stadt des Mondes.<sup>90</sup> (7)

In Funke's novel we see the double image of Venice: the terrifying extremely beautiful city. We cannot forget that we are speaking about juvenile literature, and for this reason we will not find a description of Venice as in Thomas Mann or D'Annunzio, where the decadent and gloomy aspects are underlined. Thus, Funke's representation is interesting because it combines the magical atmosphere present in all the four juvenile novels with the more dangerous element of high water. In other words, what makes Venice so beautiful and special, makes it also instable and fragile. This is actually the problem in the real Venice nowadays: the very famous Lorenzo Quinn's sculpture titled "Support" testifies it (Figure 2) since its installation in May 2017<sup>91</sup>.

---

<sup>90</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>91</sup> Two enormous hands appear from the Grand Canal, and they support, as the artwork's title announces, the building of a very famous and chic hotel in the city center. The building, known with the name of Ca' Sagredo, is now 'decorated' with these 9 meters Carrara-marble hands, that symbolize the beauty and the fragility of Venice. In the picture here presented only the two hands are new elements. Besides them, the red flag with the winged lion is present, directly driven in the lagoon with a red pole, gondolas are floating in the Grand Canal and a gondolier, in his striped shirts is arranging something in his gondola. A very stereotyped image of Venice, with the artwork's call of the city's forthcoming danger.



Figure 2: "Support" by Lorenzo Quinn

The water, i.e. the Mediterranean Sea has been the very source of richness for Venice, that was, from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century, in the center of the biggest circulation system of the era. Being in a strategic point in this maritime system, Venice became the richest city in Italy, and maybe in Europe, as well (Braudel 1985: 51). Braudel, too, expresses his concern about the danger of water in Venice, but it seems to him that even if Venice is drowning from the very beginning of its existence, the city is resisting to its destiny from the same moment (1984: 31).

In *Las eternas* we see this as first mention of Venice:

La juguetería se encontraba en uno de los canales más alejados del centro. Nunca darías con ella si no pasaras en Venecia más que una semana, porque el distrito de Santa Croce no tenía nada que ver con las calles más populosas por las que transitaban a todas horas los turistas. (25)

This may lack magical and charming elements but finds a realistic mention of the center of the city. At any rate, we read then: “La rara alquimia que solo aquella ciudad era capaz de realizar convertía poco a poco la superficie de la laguna en un espejo de oro y fuego, surcado por las sombras de las gaviotas que alzaban el vuelo por encima de los arcos apuntados del Palazzo Ducale” (94). Here we find all the enchanting descriptions of Venice,

and again, water is a very important element in its existence. In this quotation, Venice is described through its rare chemistry that is created by its shadows, reflections and its mirroring water surfaces. The element of the danger of the water for the Venetian city is mentioned in *Las eternas*, in a bittersweet tone. In fact, we read:

[L]a auténtica naturaleza de Venecia: una ciudad asentada sobre troncos de maderas que se pudrían noche y día bajo los palacios saturados de risas y de bailes. Una especie de pacto con el Diablo que les había concedido parte de la laguna a cambio de una condena para toda la eternidad. (202-203)

The narrating voice describes here the dangerous coexistence of mainland and water in Venice as a pact with the devil, that lets people live in the lagoon and lets the city exist, but at the same time, condemns the city for eternity. In this case, the condemnation is the proper coexistence of the city with the water, that consumes the city from its founding.

Water is very important in all the four novels. Nina, in *La bambina*, escapes from Karkon, her antagonist, always through waterways and canals.

Nina si sentiva mancare le forze, il respiro si faceva sempre più difficoltoso, la testa le girava e le gambe non la reggevano più. [...] Dodo e Cesco la sollevarono, uno dai piedi e l'altro dalle spalle, e la caricarono in una *barca* che avevano attraccato nel *canale* vicino. Una volta saliti bordo, Roxy impugnò la manetta del piccolo motore e la *barca* partì. [...] Le *onde* s'infrangevano sui fianchi dell'*imbarcazione* e gli *spruzzi* bagnavano i bambini che non vedevano l'ora di arrivare alla villa, *gocce di acqua salata* segnavano il viso di Nina [...] per fortuna, quella sera di giugno, il *traffico nautico* era scarso.<sup>92</sup> (99-100)

Here is one example, among many, of how Nina and her friends manage to escape from difficult situations through waterways. The alchemic laboratory of Nina's grandfather, which is the only connection to Xorax, is also under the lagoon, completely under the water and protected by mirrors that let you look outside from inside of the lagoon, but you cannot see the laboratory from outside (Witcher 111-113).

In *Herr der Diebe*:

An seinem Ufer drängten sich die Menschen, und auf dem glitzernden Wasser wimmelte es von Booten. Riccio zerrte Prosper zu einer Vaporetto-Haltestelle, wo sie sich zwischen den Leuten versteckten, die dort auf das nächste Boot warteten. Prosper musterte jeden, der vorbeikam, aber ihr

---

<sup>92</sup> The emphasis is mine.

Verfolger tauchte nicht auf. Als endlich ein Vaporetto anlegte, ließen die jungen sich von den Wartenden mit an Bord schieben, und während die anderen Fahrgäste zu den wenigen Sitzplätzen drängten, die im überdachten Teil des Bootes noch frei waren, lehnten Prosper und Riccio sich an die Reling und ließen das Kanalufer nicht aus den Augen. (52)

The children can run away from Victor thanks to a vaporetto. Here, we also see the presence of masses of tourists, that allows the children to hide themselves among the crowd. In the German novels, the chapters are introduced by images drawn by Funke herself. In total, there are 12 images that repeat themselves at the beginning of every chapter, with a text box containing the title of the chapter<sup>93</sup>. Interestingly, water plays a fundamental role in Funke's drawings, as well. Indeed, all images are connected to Venice and 9 of them are images that include the lagoon, i.e. water is visible both in the background and the foreground of the drawings. Moreover, in one picture the winged lion is depicted and it is a very clear reference to the city of Venice, even if the sea is not present. The other two pictures are urban partial views, but there is no detail that marks the clear reference to the Venetian city or its clear negation: Venice can be the city depicted or not.

In *Once upon*, the water is very important as well. Samuelle actually enters the city in a gondola. We read, indeed, that "they sat in a gondola and floated down the lagoon and into canals" (19). But, the description is then spoiled by the sentence: "It was so peaceful as they traveled down the Grand Canal" (19). We know that Samuelle and his grandfather arrive in Venice in September (Roy 18) and it is very unrealistic to describe the Grand Canal as a peaceful place to travel through in September. At any rate, the water has an important role in all the four novels, even if in some of them its role is more clearly underlined as in the English one.

This excursus about the first mention of Venice in the four novels confirms that also Moony Witcher, the Italian author who uses the fewest Venetianity's words, still was influenced by

---

<sup>93</sup> The twelve images are visible in the appendix 7.2.

the stereotyped image of Venice. It means that images, in imagological sense, whether self- or hetero-image, do affect our perception of a city in such a high grade, that it transpires in literature, as well. Entering then in a vicious circle, the image represented in literature<sup>94</sup> confirms the still socially and culturally present image, which itself reaffirms again the literary one.

The representation of Venice, is then, an ambivalent image: a magical city, that could disappear in a short time, where everything can happen. Venice is a world half-dreamed, a city between reality and irreality, maybe because it seems coming from the nothing, between water and sky (Braudel 1985: 243-244). The city seems not to belong to the real world, it is immersed in an unreal atmosphere (Braudel 1984: 23).

This unreal atmosphere is to be found in the four juvenile novels I analyzed as well, and in this sense, the *imagine* of Venice has not changed from the Grand Tour, or even before. Venice is an island, a world aside, which is there for adult people or, in other words, for too grown up children who can still dream (Braudel 1985: 243). We find the presence of this dreamy atmosphere and of this magical image of the city in *Kalkfa i la nina* as well, where Venice is mentioned only once: “Venècia, sí, meravellós, una ciutat *perfecta per deixar volar la imaginació*”<sup>95</sup> (81). Venice, the perfect city in which we can let our imagination fly freely, nowadays as well.

---

<sup>94</sup> Saying ‘literature’, in this case, I also think about the film adaptation of some novels. For example, *Herr der Diebe* became a movie in 2006, and in the German trailer Venice is referred to as “eine verzauberte Stadt” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtTonKtuOv4> min. 1:48), and in the English one appears in the first seconds the writing: “Somewhere in a city of magic” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFQvMHUU3ko> min. 0:16 and 0:24) and “... and mystery” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFQvMHUU3ko> min. 0:24).

<sup>95</sup> The emphasis is mine.



## 6. Conclusion

In my thesis I analyzed the representation of Venice in four contemporary juvenile novels in four different languages. The stereotyped image is found in every book, even if it is present in various intensities in each novel. The self-image, i.e. the image of Venice represented in the Italian novel, is the one which works least with stereotyped images. In my research, they are embodied by the share of Venetianity's words present in the text. Since texts work with words and stereotypes need to be often repeated, the repetitions of Venetianity's word can be understood as a sign for stereotyped images in the texts. The text that uses least stereotyped images after the Italian one is the Spanish novel. The third the German one and the one that uses the most Venetianity's words is the English one, with a value that is more than 13 times higher than the Italian one. The exact counting of term frequency in the novels has been possible thanks to a digital tool, in combination with manual filtration, e.g. the exclusion of the encounter of a term that is listed in the novel's glossary.

My analysis shows that the stereotyped images that have been literary fixed about Venice during the Grand Tour are still present. They emerge in juvenile literature as well, and the readers take them unconsciously as thought patterns about themselves and 'the Other(s)'. These images are working, even nowadays, as fixed ideas that create meaning without requiring empirical experience. The presence of these images demands, in literature and the writing process in general, the application of particular words and, by entering a vicious circle, the mere presence of these particular words confirms, at the same time, the pre-existence of stereotyped images.

It can be argued that these images come from the categories we need in order to organize our thoughts, information and knowledge. Accepting that, we have to keep in mind the very dangerous result of the process if the self- and hetero-images are connoted in a morally and

national way. Through this connotation and their repetitions, they can become stereotypes. This can be problematic if they are used to exclude a determined group from a specific society. We have to be aware of the necessity of categories for our brain and our thinking modus, but at the same time we have to pay attention to the effect the fixed images can have on readership. Being the target group of the four chosen novels in a stage of personal and cognitive development, the use of these images should be made even more carefully. These fixed images are the embryonal forms of stereotypes and when the stereotypes are national connotated, they are called ethnicities, and they can be dangerous because they can result in xenophobia.

What your readers read matters, and what they can experience during the reader of a book matters, as well. Literary scholars should deal with what young people read and also give a proper name to it. In juvenile literature stereotypes are present, and, as Leerssen said in an interview for *Der Standard*, in April 18<sup>th</sup> of this year, the very point of imagology is to fight again stupidity<sup>96</sup>.

According to my research, we see that the digital tools can be a very useful instrument in quantitative analysis of stereotyped images in a text. In fact, providing the digital tool with a list of words that are connected with, e.g., a city, in my case Venice, and limiting the research with a stop-word list, it is easy to find out the percentage of, in my case, Venetianity's words used in the text. This model can be applied to all types of novels, but I consider that it is important to check the stereotyped images in juvenile literature because of its target. Reading books where stereotyped images of a city or of people are presented, does not help the young reader to be open to the world's self-discovery. In this sense, I consider the digital analysis very helpful as first check of juvenile literature.

---

<sup>96</sup> Originally: "Wenn die Wissenschaft als Beruf und Berufung irgendeinen Sinn hat, dann ist es der, dass man die Dummheit bekämpft".



One can even extend this check to a bigger corpus of juvenile novels in order to fix different ranges of stereotyped images, based on the percentage given on the texts and also based on the original language in which the novels are written. In my sample probe, the multilinguistic aspect has had a role, but it is strictly connected with the life of the authors. Analyzing a more widespread corpus constructed on a homogenizing basis (e.g. juvenile novels written in Spanish by Latin American authors or juvenile novels written in Italian by immigrants or juvenile novels written in German after 1989) will give the chance to leave out accidental influences as autobiographical aspect and, at the same time, to have a more extended view on the pattern.



## **Appendix 7.1: Plots of the novels**

### **7.1.1 *Herr der Diebe* by Cornelia Funke (2000)**

The novel narrates the adventures of Prosper and his younger brother Boniface, called Bo. They run away in order to escape Esther, their rich aunt, and Max, her husband. After the death of Prosper and Bo's parents, the two relatives want to adopt the two boys, but they are actually only interested in Bo because of his mild-mannered character and his angelic look. According to Esther and Max's will, Bo, who is five years old, will stay with them and Prosper will get a place in an orphanage. This plan generates the rebellion of the two brothers, who run away together to Venice and there they join a group of orphan young thieves and live with them in the abandoned cinema "Stella". In the meanwhile, Esther and Max hire a detective, Victor, to find out where Bo is and then take him back home. The street children's band are led by Scipio, a proud orphan who always wears a black mask. No one knows where he lives and where he steals his treasures from. Every now and then Scipio brings food and precious objects to the children in the movie theater. The band sells the robbed valuable wares to Barbarossa, a sly shopkeeper, who, one day, tells them that one of his costumes, the Conte, has asked "the Thief Lord" to steal for him a wooden lion's wing from Iva Spavento's house. The children accept the task and break during the night into the lady's place. Once arrived, they find there Scipio as well, who also wants to steal the wooden wing. Ida Spavento, awakened by the voices of the band, discovers the children and after finding out what the children's plan was, she decides to give them the wooden lion's wing with one condition: she will go with them, the night after, to the place of encounter with the Conte. Before letting the children go, Ida explains the wing's story and

tells the children that the wooden object is part of an old magical carousel that has the power of change a person's age.

Victor, in the meanwhile, discovers where the band hides itself and goes to Dottor Massimo, a rich man, who owns the movie theater Stella. In his house he sees Scipione Massimo, the Dottor's son, and recognizes in him the Thief Lord. Now Victor knows his secret: during the day, Scipio is the son of a serious and rich man, and at night he becomes suddenly the Thief Lord.

The night after the conversation with Ida, all the band (except Bo and Hornet<sup>97</sup>), Scipio and the lady meet the Conte and his sister on a secret island and sell them the wooden wing. At their coming back to the Stella, the street children do not find Hornet and Bo in the cinema. The children search for the two missing members and they find Hornet in an orphanage. They manage to take her out of it, but no one knows where Bo could be. The children understand that the cinema is not a safe place anymore and they stay for some days at Ida's place. Prosper, very worried about Bo, wanders in the street of Venice during the night and bumps into Scipio. The two decide to go back to the strange island where they last saw the Conte and his sister. They find them there, very happy, transformed in children thanks to the carousel's magic power. Scipio then decides to use it in order to become an adult and the carousel works successfully with him too. Barbarossa uses the carousel on the secret island as well, but he becomes younger than he has wanted to and, doing that, damages irreparably the magical merry-go-round. Prosper, Scipio and the rejuvenated Barbarossa go back to Venice, where they find Bo at Iva's place. Indeed, Esther managed to find the young boy, but he escapes, again, from his aunt. At the end of the novel Ida adopts Prosper, Bo and Hornet. The grown-up Scipio starts working as a detective with Victor and the Conte

---

<sup>97</sup> In the original version the young girl is called "Wespe".

and his sister eventually disappear from the secret island. Esther and Max adopt the young Barbarossa, but when she discovers the seven-year-old boy stealing her jewelry, she sends him to a boarding school, where he becomes a bully and obliges the others to call him “The Thief Lord”.

### **7.1.2 *La Bambina della Sesta Lluna* by Moony Witcher (2002)**

The story narrated in the *La bambina della sesta luna*<sup>98</sup> is also adventurous and it is centered in a young heroine called Nina. The girl, a young orphan who is living in Madrid with her two aunts, has to go to Venice with her dry nurse, her dog and her cat after the mysterious death of her grandfather, who left her a villa as heritage. Nina inherits also his grandfather’s laboratory, in which she discovers that her grandfather Misha was one of the best Alchemist in the world and that he sacrificed himself during a battle against an evil wizard, Karkon Ca d’Oro. Misha was defending the Xorax planet, that is the sixth moon of the Alchemical Galaxy, which contributes to the harmony of the Universe. Karkon wants to conquer Xorax in order to dominate the whole Universe. Now that her grandfather is dead, Nina has to take his place and protect Xorax with her alchemical power. Together with her friends, the ten-year-old girl will travel in different continent in order to destroy Karkon’s plan and defend Xorax. The end of the first book does not match with the end of Nina’s story. In fact, the book is the first of a series of seven fantasy novels, which can be clearly divided in two parts. The first part, composed by the first four books, is about Nina’s decoding of the four enigmas and her search of the four elements that let the thoughts of children freely fly to

---

<sup>98</sup> The work has not been translated into English, so that I freely translate from Italian the definitions and the names that appear in the novel.

Xorax. The second part, which the last three books belong to, is about the girl's looking for the numbers that compose the Gold Code, which assures the universal harmony.

### **7.1.3 *Once Upon a Time in Venice* by Monique Roy (2007)**

The short novel *Once upon a time in Venice* tells us the story of Samuelle<sup>99</sup>, a ten years boy who is living in the US with his grandfather Leo. The old man suffers of cancer and he wants to go back to his native city in Italy with his grandson. They arrived in Venice, and for Samuelle it means to arrive in a fantastic world. The young boy likes everything that has to do with his grandfather's Italian roots and origins and he feels happy and satisfied in Venice. But one day he finds out that his grandfather is seriously sick, gets angry with him and runs away from home. During his wandering, Samuelle meets a Venetian Jew and speaks with him about their common religion and the story of the city. They become friends and, in the evening, Samuelle goes back home, where Leo is waiting for him anxiously. One day, strolling in the lagoon city, Leo bumps in a beautiful lady, Isabella, who has been the love of his youth. They recollect their true love and start living together with Samuelle in Isabella's house, where the young boy stays during his grandfather's therapy and after his death as well.

---

<sup>99</sup> The right Italian name's spelling is "Samuele".

#### **7.1.4 *Las Eternas* by Vicitora Álvarez (2012)**

*Las eternas* narrates the apparently impossible love story between Mario and Silvana. Mario and his brother own and work in a toy-shop in Venice and they earn the minimum for living from their business. One day an old man, Montalbano, comes in town with her daughter Silvana and they open a big toy-shop with the newest toys and dolls directly in front of Mario's shop. Mario is attracted by Silvana not only from her beauty and her long blond hair, but also from her intelligence and her ability in constructing mechanism for moving toys. Mario and Silvana fall deep in love, but the coming back of Gina, Mario's ex-wife, destroy Silvana's trust in him. Some years before Gina had left Mario to run away with an illusionist and now she comes back with a little daughter, whose paternity is quite ambiguous. Mario, in the meantime, has discovered that Silvana is not a real human being. In fact, she is a human-sized doll, created by Montalbano, her fictive father but not her biological one, from a corpse. Silvana and Montalbano are obliged to change city every couple of years because, being a doll, she does not grow older and the people usually start to become suspicious after some years. The doll-girl tells Mario that his father wants to create a complete family, following the image of the family he once had, before his wife and his four daughters' death. Montlbano poisons, strangles and kills three young girls in order to create other three dolls/androids like Silvana and complete his family. One of the girls killed was Marina, Gina's daughter. When it happens, Mario starts to make inquire and he finds out the truth about Marina's death. After some time he gets also the help of Silvana, who want to be freed from Montalbano. Silvana sabotages the mechanisms that should function as heart for the three dolls, so that they collapse soon after being activated. She also defeats Montalbano eventually killing him. During the fight with him, Silvana wounds her mechanism and Mario brings her to his toy-shop to repair it. After days and nights passed working on it, Mario manages to repair the mechanism. Silvana wakes up

again, but she cannot remember anything. The novel closes with the promise of Mario to stay always by Silvana's side and to spend their life together.

#### **7.1.5 *Kafka i la nina que se'n va anar de viatge* by Jordi Sierra i Fabra (2008)**

*Kafka i la nina* tells the story of the sick Franz Kafka strolling in the Steglitz park in Berlin and bumping in Elsi, a little girl who is desperately crying. He asks her why she is so sad and Elsi explains him that she has lost her doll Brígida and she feels very humble. So, Kafka invents a story and tells Elsi that her doll is not gone lost, but that she is travelling around the world. Indeed, he is the doll's mailman and he actually has a letter for Elsi from Brígida, but he has forgotten it home. He promises to bring it to the park the next day and the little girl goes home relieved. From that day Kafka starts writing every day a letter as if he were Brígida and reads it then, every day, to Elsi in the park. The doll travels all around the world and tells the little girl about her visits to Paris, Venice, Moscow, Spain, Greece and she also narrates her adventurous experiences in Africa and Asia. Elsi never questions how Brígida can move so fast through the globe, or how Kafka can be the doll's mailman. At any rate, Kafka understands he cannot continue with the letters forever and decides to write the last touching letter, in which Brígida informs Elsi that she has found the love of her life and wishes Elsi to find one in the future, too. Brígida bids farewell from Elsi, wishing her a happy life full of love and serenity. Elsi accepts Brígida's farewell and Kafka decides then to gift Elsi with a new doll. The novel ends with Elsi embracing with enthusiasm the new doll.



Appendix 7.2: Opening Chapter Pictures in *Herr der Diebe*









## Bibliography

- Álvarez, Victoria. *Las eternas*. Versatil, Madrid, 2012.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. Verso, New York, [1983] 2006.
- Ballhausen, Thomas. “Vignetten. Aus den Vorarbeiten zu einer Archivpolitik der Sorge“. In: *Zur Gegenwart der Geschichte. Österreichische Archivquellen in europäischer Perspektive*. Zwerger, Veronika (et al. eds.). New Academic Press, Vienna, 2017, pp. 56-69.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, London, 1994.
- Beller, Manfred and Leerssen, Joep (eds.). *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey*. Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2007.
- Braudel, Fernand. *Venezia*. Translated by Gemelli, Giuliana. Il Mulino, Bologna, 1984.
- Braudel, Fernand. *Il Mediterraneo*. Translated by De Angeli, Elena. Bompiani, Milano, [1949] 1985.
- Corrain, Lucia (ed.). *Venezia e la Spagna*. Electa, Firenze, 1988.
- Cosgrove, Denis. “The myth and stones of Venice: an historical geography of a symbolic landscape”. In: *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 8, n° 2, 1982, pp. 145-269.
- Deschamps, Jean-Claude. “The social psychology of intergroup relations and categorical differentiation”. In: *The Social Dimension*. Herni Tajfel (ed.), Vol 2, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 541-559.
- De Seta, Cesare. “L’Italia nello specchio del ‘Grand Tour’”. In: *Storia d’Italia. Annali 5: Il paesaggio*. De Seta C. (ed.), Einaudi, Torino, 1982, pp. 125-263.
- De Seta, Cesare. “Il Grand Tour e il fascino dell’Italia”. In: [https://web.archive.org/web/20131225202434/http://www.treccani.it/scuola/tesine/viaggio\\_e\\_arte/5.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20131225202434/http://www.treccani.it/scuola/tesine/viaggio_e_arte/5.html) March 2007, last seen: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2018.
- Funke, Cornelia. *Herr der Diebe*. Oetinger, Hamburg, [2000] 2015.
- Gubar, Marah. “Risky Business: Talking about Children in Children’s Literature”. In: *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 38, n° 4, Winter 2013, pp. 450-457.

- Halliday, Iain. "Base and basic instincts: Italians in English letters". In: *Beyond Pug's Tour. National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*. C.C. Barfoot (ed.), Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1997, pp. 351-365.
- Hoenselaars, Ton and Leerssen, Joep. "The Rhetoric of National Character: Introduction". In: *European Journal of English Studies*, vol.13, n° 3, 2009, pp. 251-255.
- Hoover, David L.. "Quantitative Analysis and Literary Studies". In: *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Siemens, Ray and Schreibman, Susan (eds.). Blackwell, Chichester, 2013, pp. 517-533.
- Hunt, Caroline. "Young Adult Literature Evades the Theorists". In: *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 21, n° 1, Spring 1996, pp. 4-11.
- Kafka, Franz. *Die Verwandlung*. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/22367> , last seen: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018.
- Leerssen, Joep. "The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey". In: *Poetics Today*, vol. 21, n°2, 2000, pp. 267-292.
- Leerssen, Joep. "Imagology: On using ethnicity to make sense of the world". In: *Iberic@l, Revue d'études ibériques et ibéro-américaines*, Numéro 10 – Automne 2016, pp. 13-31.
- Moretti, Franco. *Atlas of the European novel 1800-1900*, Verso, London, [1997] 1998.
- Moretti, Franco. *La letteratura vista da lontano*. Einaudi, Torino, 2005.
- Nodelman, Perry. *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*. Longman, New York, [1992] 1996.
- Nodelman, Perry. "Becoming what you eat". In: *The Horn Book Magazine*, vol. 82, n° 3, 2006, pp. 265-271.
- Nodelman, Perry. *The Hidden Adult. Defining Children's Literature*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2008.
- O'Sullivan, Emer. "Comparing children's literature". In: *GFL German as a foreign language*. No. 2, 2002, pp. 33-56.
- O'Sullivan, Emer. "Comparative Children's Literature". In: *PMLA*, Vol. 126, No. 1 (January 2011), pp. 189-196. [2011a]
- O'Sullivan, Emer. "Imagology and children literature". In: *International Research in Children's Literature*, vol. 4, n°1, 2011, pp. 1-14. [2011b]



- O'Sullivan, Emer and Immel, Andrea (eds.). *Imagining Sameness and Difference in Children's Literature. From the Enlightenment to the Present Day*. Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2017.
- Pattee, Amy. "Between Youth and Adulthood: Young Adult and New Young Adult Literature". In: *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 42, n° 2, Summer 2017, pp. 218-230.
- Pottle, Frederick A. *James Boswell: The Earlier Years*. Heinemann, London, 1966.
- Redford, Bruce. *Venice and the Grand Tour*. Yale University Press, Hong Kong, 1996.
- Rovagnati, Gabriella. "Venezia: una leggenda. Declinazione di un paesaggio nella letteratura tedesca". In: *I paesaggi d'Europa tra storia, arte e natura*. Colantonio Venurelli, Rita (ed.), Villa Vigoni, 2008.
- Roy, Monique. *Once upon a time in Venice*. Universe, Lincoln, 2007.
- Ruthner, Clemens. "Between Aschen and America. Bhabha, Kürnberger and the Ambivalence on Imagology". In: *Imagology Today: Achievement, Challenge, Perspectives / Imagologie heute: Ergebnisse, Herausforderungen, Perspektiven*. Dukić, Davor (ed.), Bouvier, Bonn, 2012, pp. 137-160.
- Sierra i Fabra, Jordi. *Kafka i la nina que se'n va anar de viatge*. Estrella Polar, Barcelona, [2008] 2016.
- Thiele, Martina. "Kategorien, Stereotype, Intersektionalität". In: *Vor der Reflexion zur Dekonstruktion? Kategorien, Typen und Stereotype als Gegenstand junger Forschung*. Metzler, Barbara et al. (eds.), Danzing und Unfried, Wien, 2017, pp. 15-32.
- Towlson, Janet. "Up and Up: Young critical Readers". In: *Greater Expectations: Children Reading Writing*. Bearne, Eve (ed.), Cassell, New York, 1995, pp. 92-106.
- Witcher, Moony. *La bambina della sesta luna*. Giunti, Firenze, 2002.

#### **Texts in print:**

- Menent, Melis. "On Meaning: The Self and The Other in Relational Terms". Presented: 28<sup>th</sup> AINSA Conference, Milan, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

- Menent, Melis. “Image as a cluster of meaning”. Presented: “New Perspective on Imagology” Conference. Vienna, 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018.
- Weilandt, Maria. “Toward a Critical Imagology”. Presented: “New Perspective on Imagology” Conference. Vienna, 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018.



### **Abstract in English**

In my thesis, I analyze the image of Venice in four contemporary juvenile literature written in German, Italian, Spanish and English. Funke's *Herr der Diebe*, Witcher's *La bambina*, Álvarez's *Las eternas* and Roy's *Once Upon* have been published in the twenty-first century and they have been chosen on the basis of their common setting and genre.

Applying digital tools, the thesis is centered on a quantitative research for words, which are closely connected to the city of Venice and from an imagological point of view the analysis aims to explore how the digital tool can help to understand if a text uses stereotyping and/or stereotyped images in the descriptions of a city.

### **Abstract in German**

In meiner Arbeit analysiere ich die Darstellung (das *Image*) Venedigs in der zeitgenössischen deutschen, italienischen, spanischen und englischen Jugendliteratur. *Herr der Diebe* von Funke, *La bambina* von Witcher, *Las eternas* von Álvarez und *Once Upon* von Roy wurden im einundzwanzigsten Jahrhundert veröffentlicht und sie wurden wegen ihres gemeinsamen Schauplatz und Genres für diese Arbeit ausgewählt.

In Zentrum meiner Arbeit steht die quantitative Analyse von Wörtern, die mit Venedig verbunden sind. Diese wurde mittels digitale Instrumente durchgeführt. Unter einer imagologischen Betrachtungsweise soll diese Analyse zeigen, wie digitale Instrumenten helfen festzustellen, ob ein Text stereotypierte und/oder stereotypierende Bilder (*Images*) in der Stadtbeschreibung verwendet.