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Introduction

Anglistica has been online for three years, now. It is possible, therefore, to look back on the first three years of this new life and reflect on the potentialities of its electronic medium, also in connection with the critical stance of the journal.

The interdisciplinary nature of the cultural approach which has shaped *Anglistica* since its first appearance in 1974, and which was further articulated in its 1997 restyling, has always invited us not only to take into account cultural phenomena and traditions belonging to the Anglophone world in a very wide sense, but also to focus on cultural representations which engage with the visual, the cinematic, the aural. Going online with a double issue devoted to *The Other Cinema/The Cinema of the Other* (11.1-2, 2007), we immediately realized we were in a position to publish a number of illustrations which were not just a pleasant addition to the verbal text but a compelling way of speaking 'of' the visual 'through' the visual. Stills from films, reproductions of installations and photos from various media made the 2007 and 2008 issues aesthetically more appealing, but also (we hope) conceptually more convincing. The 12.2 (2008) issue, devoted to *Indiascapes*, made large use of illustrations, in an effort to allow its subject to make its own impact on the readers without overloading it with authorial intrusions by critical voices, and to try not so much "to speak about", as to speak "nearby", following Trinh.T. Minh-ha's celebrated statement from her film *Reassemblage* (1982).[1]

In the last two issues, dedicated to music, visual images have still been quite important in hinting at the material conditions of production of the matters dealt with, including the physical, architectural settings in which the different forms of music came to life – as in the case of the baroque spaces inhabited by the poignantly frenzied visions exemplified by Caravaggio's paintings and Bernini's marbles as well as by Frescobaldi's music analysed by Susan McClary in the previous issue, or of the shabby urban surroundings which were central to the life (musical and otherwise) of working-class Italian-American youths in 1950s Bronx, revisited by Alessandro Buffa. In some cases, however, images provide a (somewhat uncanny) visual correlative to the argument expounded, as happens with the rather dizzying illustrations Wayne Koestenbaum takes from very factual voice manuals and guidebooks, but which become strangely evocative of suppressed sexual discourses, of the deep though negated nexus between the pleasures of music and sexual desire.

[1] The script can be found in *Framer Framed* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992).

With our first 2009 issue on *Voicings: Music Across Borders*, however, we also started exploring the new, exciting possibility of including video and audio inserts and exhibiting original materials produced by the authors and artists discussed, alongside examples of music retrievable from the Internet through the links provided in the notes. I hope our readers took the same pleasure as we did in watching and hearing the effect of the sonorous installation discussed by Danilo Capasso and Iain Chambers in their conversation published on the 13.1 (2009) issue as well as listening to the attractive, slightly husky voice of Romaine Moreton who chants the poems discussed by Katherine E. Russo in the same issue – and especially the possibility of listening to it while scrolling down the lines of her poems, just by a click of the mouse.

More opportunities to enjoy a multimedia experience are offered by the present issue, not only thanks to the fascinating musical examples retrievable through the links provided by Freya Jarman-Ivens in her article on vocal identification, but also through the welter of audiovisual examples offered by Vito Campanelli's review of digital musical experiences, the audio clip from the moving performance of *The Woman Who Refused to Dance* composer Shirley Thompson generously permitted us to link to Manuela Coppola's article on music and resistance, as well as the audio cameos from a couple of his performances Ernesto Tomasini authorized Serena Guarracino to publish together with their interview.

Apart from these technical possibilities made available by the new digital form, I would like to comment on some conceptual features of our critical stance which have become more and more evident in the journal, and which have, perhaps, deepened in the last few years. I am referring to the special local-global nexus which characterizes the critical approach of the journal and which mainly depends on the Neapolitan location from which it speaks, from its Southern cultural place of origin. We have come to see more and more clearly the open-ended meaning of our title, *Anglistica*, which has never confined the interests of the journal to the geographical limits of the Anglophone world as an object of enquiry, but has always been alert to the cross-cultural features of its interrogations, to the Southern perspective from which that object was perceived and 'made strange', denaturalized and problematized.

Quite recently, we had the opportunity of discussing this question at length with a group of British scholars with whom we have entertained a long-standing research dialogue – a "story or tale of three cities, Birmingham, Naples and London", as our host, Mark Nash called it in his introduction to a seminar held last December at the Royal College of Art (London). The seminar, entitled *From the South: Italian Cultural and Postcolonial Studies*, was centred on *Anglistica* as a developing platform. Starting from the work of the journal, the seminar discussed the critical

reformulation and reconfiguration of English Studies taking place in Italy, and addressed the significance of cultural and postcolonial studies in the present-day Italian and European context. The main point that emerged from the discussion was not so much the existence of a long established Italian school of Cultural Studies, but its distinctive 'Southern', or 'Mediterranean', character. Which does not simply mean that a group of intellectuals – more or less closely tied to the general theoretical framework of what is usually identified with the Cultural Studies project initiated in Birmingham a few decades ago – set about doing Cultural and more recently Postcolonial Studies in Naples, as if they were spreading 'the word'. This would have been impossible anyway, because concepts and theories do not travel without actively translating themselves in the process. And the cultural hybridising of theories, traditions, languages, and so on, which is becoming more and more rich and complex in the present globalized world, does not necessarily imply that something gets 'lost in translation'. Much more is gained, in fact, in certain instances of cultural naturalization, as the felicitous re-birth of Gramscian theory in India and its translation into such a momentous intellectual movement as the Subaltern Studies clearly show.

As many Italian or Italian-based scholars remarked at the London seminar, it is the Southern and Mediterranean positioning of the journal and of the group 'organically' linked to it, that strengthens a critical and self critical re-elaboration of cultural and postcolonial notions of intercultural relations which – often, if not always – tend to posit the 'Other' outside the West. In her presentation of the recent history of *Anglistica*, Jane Wilkinson touched upon the intersections between the local and the global typical of its interdisciplinary, culturalist and postcolonial focus, which have always been favoured by the Southern location of the journal and by its vicinity with the three-century long tradition of Oriental studies carried out at "L'Orientale" of Naples and by its eighteenth-century precursor, the "Collegio dei Cinesi". This had been founded with the declared intention of providing technical linguistic and cultural tools to the European (commercial and religious) 'civilizing' mission fostered by the short-lived Ostend Company under the auspices of Emperor Charles VI of Austria and Pope Clemente VI. The fraught vicinity with this tradition has often offered us a reminder of the problematic heritage of Orientalism with which Postcolonial Studies must constantly settle its accounts, bringing about a critical crisis, the interruption of a tradition of thought which cannot be simply erased or forgotten.

The need to locate ourselves critically on a cultural-geographical map has become more and more imperative. It had already dictated the title of the first issue of the "New Series" directed by Lidia Curti, which opened in 1997 with a double issue on *Geographies of Knowledge*, and it has been

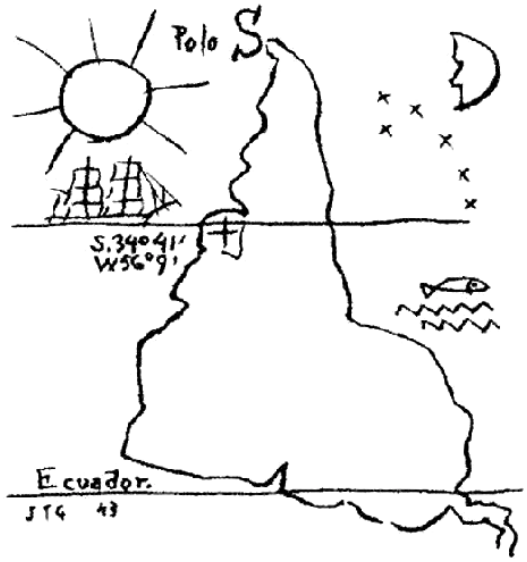

Fig. 1: Joaquín Torres García, *Inverted America*, 1943, drawing, Museo Torres García, Montevideo, Uruguay.

confirmed by the constant effort of the group to problematize its own positioning. This effort has sometimes been conveyed by referring to artistic interrogations of Western geopolitics and of received representations of the world. Rossella Ciocca and Maria Laudando's Introduction to the recent issue of *Anglistica* devoted to *Indiascapes* opened with the reproduction of a print by Neapolitan artist Francesco Clemente, which offers a visionary map of a complex and multi-layered imaginary homeland, an assemblage of geographical and topographical elements suggesting the United States and India, which syncretically surround the Mediterranean, displacing and rearticulating our common sense understanding of the world. In a similar perspective, the illustration chosen to publicize a seminar on *The Challenge of Cultural Studies Today* held at "L'Orientale" last year was Joaquín Torres García's famous 1943 drawing of *Inverted America*, offering a view from the South which inverts the spatial hierarchy between North and South traditionally imposed by Western culture.[2]

The importance of the local-global nexus was also invoked by a number of participants outside the editorial group, like Jean Fisher, former co-editor of *Third Text*, Paola Di Cori from the University of Urbino – who pointed at the centrality of the transnational networking of Cultural and Postcolonial Studies, especially in the present disheartening situation of Italian Universities, calling for an engagement with travelling concepts (without dependence and mimicry) – and Paola Bono, from the University "Roma Tre" – who specifically referred to the urgent necessity that Italian public opinion overcome its blindness to its own colonial past and settle accounts with it. Lidia Curti further motivated the imperative, for a group operating in Naples, to hybridise English and Italian Cultural Studies by paying attention to Italy and its postcoloniality and, as she put it, "coming home while looking elsewhere".

The question of whether there is an Italian School of Cultural and Postcolonial Studies and whether it is its subject of study, its particular theoretical and intellectual imprint, or its cultural location that makes it 'Italian', was posed by Mara De Chiara and various other participants. It

[2] The idea behind this illustration was elaborated in the 1930s and found expression in various prints and drawings by the Uruguayan artist, identified with the so-called "School of the South".

was argued that doing Cultural and Postcolonial Studies in a Southern context, with an awareness of the relations of power implied in the North-South connection, and an undeniable, though critically inherited, tradition of thought which has posited and still posits the South (of Europe as well as of the world) as an object and not as a subject, obliges us to rethink our theoretical framework and make it vulnerable. In doing Cultural and Postcolonial Studies from the South, it is necessary to re-elaborate the critical language, models and frameworks established elsewhere, translating them, as Iain Chambers insisted, and shifting one's own perspective into thinking 'from' and 'with' the South, as a process of cultural, critical and historical appropriation. He spoke of this critical step, or threshold, as a step into "maritime criticism", amounting, as he said, to "taking history, our sense of belonging, our criticism offshore; renegotiating thought from being offshore; setting criticism afloat; rendering critical formations vulnerable to unexpected winds".

This is certainly a formidable, though inescapable, agenda. Looking back over the last few years of activity of *Anglistica*, and in particular to the last two issues that Serena Guarracino and myself have edited, we are not sure we have succeeded in complying with it. But we have certainly tried.