



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**ITALIAN
TEACHERS' RESOURCES**
TEACHING FILM AND LITERATURE
FOR AS AND A2

STUDYING:

LA VITA È BELLA (LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL)
DIRECTED BY ROBERTO BENIGNI

NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO (CINEMA PARADISO)
DIRECTED BY GIUSEPPE TORNATORE

LA GRANDE BELLEZZA
DIRECTED BY PAOLO SORRENTINO

IL GIORNO DELLA CIVETTA (THE DAY OF THE OWL)
LEONARDO SCIASCIA

IO NON HO PAURA (I'M NOT SCARED)
NICCOLÒ AMMANITI

SENZA SANGUE
ALESSANDRO BARICCO

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INTRODUCTION AND RESOURCE RATIONALE

These resources have been developed in response to changes in the content of the AS/A2 curricula for Italian and Russian, which are effective from September 2017. They have been designed to give support and guidance to MFL teachers in selecting and teaching the film and literature content of the curricula.

There are five sections to this resource:

1. Why teach this text?

This section explains the relevance and benefits of teaching this text/film for teachers and their students. It also describes how the text/film fits in to the A-level as a whole, as well as its links with other A-level subjects.

2. Ways to read this text

This section briefly describes the different critical lenses for reading a text/film, as well as outlining different themes. This section will be particularly useful for the A2 exam questions, which are theme-based. Topics from previous exam questions have been integrated into this section.

3. Students

This section suggests how this text/film can appeal to certain students, according to interests, studies and background. For example this film will appeal to students who may be interested in studying social policy.

4. Useful passages/sequences

This section highlights specific sequences/passages from the film/text that are especially rich and point towards the ways in which these can be used for teaching.

a. Characters

This sub-section highlights a passage which would be useful in the teaching of characterisation and character relationships in the text/film. This sub-section is particularly useful for the AS exam questions, which focus on character analysis.

b. Themes

This sub-section highlights a passage which would be useful in the teaching of a major theme in the context of the whole text/film. This selected sequence/passage is normally an effective inroad for the discussion of the wider concerns/themes of the text/film. This sub-section is particularly useful for the A2 exam question, which is based on wider analysis of themes/context.

c. Language

This sub-section highlights a linguistically rich and/or interesting passage/sequence in terms of grammar, style, tone, genre, register, dialect, pronunciation etc. This sub-section is not exam-focused but teachers may find it useful for other focuses i.e. themes, characterisation, genre.

d. Cinematography/form and genre

The cinematography sub-section focuses on directorial and cinematographic technique in films. It aims to guide teachers who may not be familiar with teaching film. This sub-section is particularly useful for AS and A2 exam questions that deal with colour, sound, directorial technique, etc.

The form and genre sub-section focuses on the structure, form and genre of literary texts in order to guide the teaching of certain kinds of texts (novels and plays).

5. Further reading

This section provides links to websites, useful sources, articles and online books in English and each target language that can be used as pedagogic resources and/or preparatory material.

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LA VITA È BELLA (LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL)
DIRECTED BY ROBERTO BENIGNI

LA VITA È BELLA (LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL) **DIRECTED BY ROBERTO BENIGNI (1997)**

La vita è bella is set in 1939 in Arezzo. It is a fun family comedy and a delightful love story, which is brutally interrupted when the protagonist is deported with his wife and young son to a concentration camp. Luckily, thanks to his imaginative mind, he comes up with an idea to protect his son from the horrors they are witnessing.

Guido, played by Roberto Benigni, manages to convince his 5-year-old son that the whole thing is a just an elaborate role play. The child believes this white lie and is persuaded that the camp is actually a theme park, where the guards are paid actors and the prisoners are players.

Why teach this text?

The award-winning film *La vita è bella* successfully mixes romance, comedy and tragedy. The moving performances of the actors, the scenography and beautiful music, but most of all the humorous dialogue, made the film one of the milestones of Italian cinema.

Ways to read this text

The topics addressed are anti-Semitism, fascism and persecution, but the film also deals with the issue of coping with traumatic events without losing hope.

The film gives an insight into the effects of the rise of nationalism and anti-Semitism on the daily life of Jewish people, and shows the efforts of a father in preserving his child's innocence in appalling circumstances.

Benigni takes a bold approach to sensitive subject matter, choosing to write an amusing comedy of errors in the historical setting of the Holocaust. Had anyone else handled a story with such an absurd premise it could have been a disaster, but *La vita è bella* makes fun of a taboo topic without being disrespectful towards the victims.

The optimism that drives Guido is inspiring, as he laughs in the face of fear when the world is against him. He marries the woman he loves despite society not approving of their union, he starts a family during a war, and he faces the horrors of the Holocaust.

Students

The film may appeal to students who study history, politics, social studies or film studies. It could be a very effective way to help students to familiarise themselves with this delicate topic, since related films may not be an easy watch or are often quite graphic. The humour and the performance of Roberto Benigni makes it accessible for everybody. The historical setting is recreated faithfully (it is a sanitized version) and costumes, scenic design and soundtrack have been crafted in meticulous detail. Students can reflect on the rise of fascism, life under a dictatorship, social division, and the socio-political situation in the country during that historical period.

Useful passages

1. Themes

40:00 - 41:23 'Quanto si risparmierebbe eliminandoli'

Dora (Nicoletta Braschi) is attending her engagement party with her wealthy fiancé's relatives and friends, all of whom are all fascist sympathisers to some extent. One of the guests explains a maths problem given to primary school students.

The maths problem expects students to calculate how much money the government could save if all disabled people were exterminated. The guests are shocked, but for very different reasons. While Dora finds the idea of the slaughter disturbing, the other guests seem to have a problem only with the difficulty of the calculation.

The film could be read as a critique of Italian society in that period and a reminder of something that is often forgotten. The crimes carried out by the dictatorship could not have been possible without the indifference or the active participation of a considerable part of the population. On multiple occasions throughout the film, dialogue between different characters shows the escalation of hate, gradually creeping into daily life and social interactions.

The short dialogue at the party is the first example of this phenomenon. Throughout the first part of the story, the way people interact with the Jewish community changes. The small gestures and attitudes become increasingly hostile to the point of becoming violent. The hostilities start with pranks such as rude messages on the walls, escalate to racial profiling by the institutions and end in deportation and mass murder. The film will give students many issues to reflect on. Why are people accepting the situation as if it was normal? What led to this? What was the socio-political situation in that period and can parallels can be drawn to the present?

At this point, it might be wise to address some controversies surrounding *La vita è bella*. The film has been criticized not only because it is humorous, but also because of the allegedly misleading representation of Holocaust and the role that Italians played in it. While the film acknowledges the fact that there were individuals supporting anti-Semitic and Nazi ideology, it only shows violence perpetrated by the Germans, portrayed as evil.

The incorrect notion that Germans are solely responsible for the Holocaust seems to be rooted in opinion of a large part of the Italian population, who believe that the Italian fascist regime had no choice but to follow their German allies' lead. The Italians are represented as victims, not as oppressors, and some authors propose that this is due to Benigni's father influence, a man with biased views influenced by his firsthand experience of war (see further reading). This promotes the simplistic view that all Italians are warm and nice people. Moreover, the film has been criticised for the banal representation of the Holocaust. Concentration camps are sanitised and in general there is an arguably confusing mix of fiction and reality, of history and fairy tale. All of this risks the consolidation of a distorted Italian popular memory. The 'Holocaust on ice' video in the further reading list could start an in-class discussion on the way the Holocaust is represented by the media. One more important discussion topic might be the role of Italy in WWII and how Italians cope with the memory of it.

2. Language

29.20-32.44 *'Due giri di Waltzer'*

In this passage Guido (Roberto Benigni) uses his sharp wits to take advantage of the opportunity to flirt with Dora (Nicoletta Braschi). Dora speaks a high register Italian, using long sentences and different tones of voice to express her feelings. Guido decides to speak standard Italian in a higher register than usual, but his heavy Tuscan accent is still present. At one point he uses the *passato remoto* to describe an event that hasn't happened yet, as if he could foresee the future.

This rich dialogue exposes students to different kinds of accents, registers and a few useful idioms: *guarda come mi sono ridotta, quello che succede succede, lei ha preso proprio una brutta cotta per me*, etc.

In addition to that, this passage is important to remind us we are watching a film that is considered a 'comedy of errors', a recurring element in Benigni's films. This romantic scene is one example of the many tricks that Guido uses to fool and surprise Dora to make her fall in love.

3. Characters

1:06:39 - 1:09:40 *'Comincia il gioco'*

This moment is crucial, as Guido has to resort to his improvisation skills to fool his son into thinking he is in a game. The Nazi officer is looking for someone who can act as an interpreter from German into Italian to explain the rules of the concentration camp. Guido does not understand a word of the language, but he volunteers for the role. He conveys the message with confidence and fluency, convincing both the soldiers and his five-year-old son that he is giving a faithful interpretation. He proceeds to explain the rules of the role play, what is the first prize and how many "points" they need to score to "win" the game. At the end of the speech, once the officer has left, the other prisoners ask for Guido's friend, who can actually speak German, for an explanation, while the child is completely unaware of what has just happened and is really excited to begin the game. The whole scenario is funny and clever. It's also a twin scene to the one in the school in the first half of the film when Guido pretends to be a minister and improvises a speech on the 'Aryan race'. Students can reflect on the way humour is used in the film and the impact on the audience. When the film was still in the making (before anyone had the chance to see it) some journalists and politician criticised it. Is it morally questionable to make fun of certain topics?

4. Cinematography

47:45 - 49:46 *Flash forward*

After having escaped on a horse together, Guido and Dora, finally reach a small greenhouse in Guido's garden. Guido is still wearing his waiter uniform while Dora wears a lavish ball gown. She walks ahead of him into the greenhouse full of colourful flowers. Once they have disappeared inside, among the bushes, the director (Benigni himself) surprises the audience with a trick. The camera stays on the entrance of the greenhouse for a few seconds and then in the same shot, without any visible cuts, a child appears from the same bushes. It's their son, already five years old, which means that a flash forward was used without warning the viewer. In such cases a director might typically use a fade effect and an onscreen title saying "five years later" or would use a montage showing the noteworthy events in that time span, but Benigni likes to surprise the viewer, and chose this original approach. This passage is also a turning point. While in the first part of the film we have seen Guido using tricks and pranks to impress or entertain Dora, from now on he will have to use all his creativity and intelligence to protect his family from terrible dangers. Moreover, we also see Giosuè playing with his favourite toy for the first time. It is a small tin tank, which will be a recurrent element in the film. In fact, his father tells him that the first prize of the "role play" is a real tank! How could a child resist?

Author biography

Roberto Benigni is an Italian intellectual, actor, comedian, writer and director. He is mostly known abroad for his 1997 film *La vita è bella*, which won the Academy Award for Best Actor and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. He has also been nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature and has hosted TV shows where he read and explained to the general public Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the Italian Constitution. His fierce political satire has often antagonised important Italian politicians and institutions. Most of his films have had a widespread success, to the point that some of his most famous gags have become part of popular culture and the everyday language of many Italians.

Further reading

- Giacomo Lichtner, 'La Vita è Bella ad Auschwitz: luogo della memoria e dell'amnesia', *Cinema e Storia: rivista di studi interdisciplinari*, 2 (2013), 69-84
- Luhn, A. 2016, "'Holocaust on ice' dance by wife of Putin official causes uproar" *The Guardian*, 28 November, accessed 21 April 2017,
- Luhn, A. (2016). 'Holocaust on ice' dance by wife of Putin official causes uproar. [online] *the Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/27/wife-of-putin-official-performs-in-concentration-camp-ice-dance> [Accessed 10 May 2017].
- Millicent Marcus, "'Me lo dici babbo che gioco è?": The Serious Humour of *La vita è bella*', *Italica*, 77: 2 (2000), 153-70
- Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 'The Secret Histories of Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14: 1 (2001), 253-66
- Robert S.C. Gordon, 'Real Tanks and Toy Tanks: Playing Games with History in Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella/Life is Beautiful*', *Studies in European Cinema*, 2: 1 (2005), 31-44
- Youtube video: *Eyes On Cinema* (1997). Behind the scenes of Roberto Benigni's *LA VITA È BELLA* (1997). [online]



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NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO
(CINEMA PARADISO)
DIRECTED BY GIUSEPPE TORNATORE

NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO (CINEMA PARADISO) DIRECTED BY GIUSEPPE TORNATORE (1988)

Nuovo Cinema Paradiso tells the story of Salvatore Di Vita, a child passionate about cinema.

The film is set in the period between WW2 and the 1980s and starts by showing Salvatore as a middle-aged adult, when he hears the news that Alfredo, a man from his hometown, has just died. Still awake in the middle of the night, he thinks about his childhood and adolescence, shown in flashback.

Giuseppe Tornatore is a Sicilian director and writer, awarded a 'David di Donatello', the Italian Oscar, four times (for *The Star Maker*, *The Legend of 1900*, *La sconosciuta* and *The Best Offer*). He often collaborates with Ennio Morricone, who was in charge of the music for *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*. Childhood, memory and nostalgia are recurring themes in his films, which are often set in Sicily.

Why teach this text?

Nuovo Cinema Paradiso is a powerful and emotional film and Tornatore is considered an influential Italian director. The film touches on many of the themes of the Italian A-level: the Italian family; the brain drain (from the South to the capital Rome in this case); Italian customs and traditions; and, the development gap between the North and South. It is also useful to expose students to a different accent and the colloquial expressions of the Sicilian language.

The film touches on issues that most will experience at different point in their lives, showing as it does three separate phases of the life of Salvatore. Please note that there are multiple versions of the film. The most popular and positively reviewed is the one that lasts 155 minutes, which is the one discussed here. In the scenes cut, there is more focus on Elena, who has the chance to meet again the protagonist for the last time.

Ways to read this text

The protagonist leaves the small Sicilian village where he was born and moves to Rome, where he has better career prospects. The theme of emigration is still present in today's Italy, with the only difference that while at the time the exodus was towards the North (as well as to destinations like the United States), today young people tend to seek their fortunes abroad. The phenomenon of the brain drain is one of the main issues of contemporary Italian society, and the film portrays the range of emotions felt by a migrant/expatriate.

The initial urge to leave and the dislike of one's hometown are replaced later on in life with nostalgia and affection. One more important theme in the film is love and how it evolves in different stages of life. The protagonist is forced to choose between staying with his family (and the woman he loves) and his career.

Students

This film is a must-see for students interested in film studies, as it conveys the passion of someone who dedicated his life to cinema and shows the progress of technology in cinema in a forty-year time period. The universal themes of childhood, love and coming of age will certainly speak to a young audience. Moreover, it is possible to observe the changes in Italian family and society across the years. Some have even identified an expression of disappointment in the film with how Italy has progressed (or failed to) in the post-war period.

1. Themes

00.48.12 – 00.53.53 'Al fuoco!'

In Giancaldo, the parish priest attends private previews and rings a small bell each time he observes a scene that he considers sinful. As a result, all scenes containing partial nudity or even kisses are cut from the films. This creates dissatisfaction among the inhabitants of Giancaldo, who protest at the censoring of the scenes.

The sequence takes place late at night and the villagers want to see more films, but the priest pushes them out of the cinema, denying them once again the pleasure of entertainment. Alfredo decides to move some of the components of the machinery so that the image will be projected outdoors, in the public square. This is his gift to the villagers and makes the films no longer a service to be purchased but a public event to be shared and enjoyed with the rest of the community.

Unfortunately this small miracle is abruptly interrupted. At the time, films were printed on celluloid, a highly flammable material, and the projected reel catches fire. The flames severely injure poor Alfredo, as if he were receiving a divine punishment for committing the sin of bringing the magic out of the Paradiso.

This event is important because it allows Salvatore to take the place of Alfredo, and the man who won the lottery has the chance to use the money for rebuilding the cinema. This passage, combined with other scenes set in the theatre, shows how people used to live the film experience. The director portrays the sense of belonging of all members of the small community and how everyone has a specific role in it.

Inside the Paradiso all sort of things happens. People smoke, eat, drink wine, socialise, breastfeed and even make use of the services of a prostitute inside the theatre. For this reason, it becomes an important place for collective memory.

2. Characters

01.37.00 – 01.42.16 'Tu sei giovane, il mondo è tuo'

Since Salvatore's father died in WWII, Alfredo has become a father figure for him. Salvatore, who has just come back from military service, has a conversation with Alfredo at the seaside. In this conversation they talk about nostalgia, regret and the importance for young people to live their life and develop their potential, far away if necessary. Salvatore spends the night thinking about Alfredo's advice but also about Elena, the girl he is in love with, who lives in Sicily. For a few seconds the scene cuts to Salvatore in his bedroom decades later, still tormented by his choice.

In the passage that follows, his family (and Alfredo) gather at the train station to say goodbye. Alfredo whispers something in his ear. He orders him, with rage in his voice, that he has to forget about them and never contact anyone again. Alfredo has taught Salvatore everything he knows about cinema and life. As a child, working in the cinema operator's booth in Giancaldo was his greatest ambition. Now, thanks to Alfredo, he is starting to realize that life is not as simple as in the films: it's much harder than that and he will need to make sacrifices. He leaves the village, heading for Rome, where he will become a successful director.

An in-class discussion could focus on issues of contemporary Italian society (e.g. the North and South divide, economy, the brain drain etc.) and compare them with the situation during the time period in which the film is set. Love is also an important theme in the film, as the protagonist is forced to choose between love and his career. What is the role of love in the film?

3. Language

01.53.00 – 01.58.00 'Qua ci sono solo fantasmi'

In this scene the characters are speaking standard Italian instead of Sicilian, and with idiomatic expression in abundance. After decades of exile, it is time for Salvatore to face his mother and have an honest conversation with her. 'Ho sempre avuto paura di tornare,' admits Salvatore. 'E tu mamma... ti ho abbandonata. Sono scappato come un bandito'; 'Non ti ho mai dato una spiegazione.' Salvatore is filled with nostalgia and regret and tries to apologize for leaving the village and seeking fortune elsewhere.

'E io non te l'ho mai chiesta, non mi devi spiegare niente'; 'Hai fatto bene. Sei riuscito a fare quello che volevi.' His mother forgives him and understands him. She knows that life in his hometown did not have anything else to offer him. 'Ma finora non ho sentito mai una voce che ti ama veramente . L'avrei capito sai? Eppure mi piacerebbe vederti sistemato.' The main regret his mother seems to have is that he has never settled down with a partner. It seems that he hasn't really found a stable girlfriend after Elena.

There is a variety of tenses students can practice with, such as past perfect subjunctive and conditional:

'Come se fossi rimasto sempre qui'; 'Io l'avrei saputo.' The scene exposes students to a clear, well written dialogue that summarizes the themes of the film.

NB. Alfredo and Salvatore (as adults) are played by French actors who have been dubbed, although Italian dubbing meets high standards, so the mismatch of lips and dialogue is not that evident.

4. Cinematography

01.01.00 - 01.03.00 'cose più importanti'

Salvatore has achieved his dream, having taken over as operator, but Alfredo is telling him to continue his studies. He knows the boy is destined for big things and does not want him to follow in his footsteps. While Alfredo is talking to Salvatore and touching his face, the director fast forwards a few years ahead and when he removes his hand, the viewers see that Salvatore has become a young adult.

This shows how much time the two have spent together in the operating booth and how Alfredo has had a key role in different stages of Salvatore's life.

Further reading

- Baaria (2/11) Film CLIP - Four Bites (2009) HD. Baaria is a 2009 film by Giuseppe Tornatore set in Sicily. Most of the dialogue is in the Sicilian language. Many clips are available on youtube with varying subtitles: YouTube. (2015). Baaria (2/11) Film CLIP - Four Bites (2009) HD. [online]
- Camilleri, A. (2004). *La forma dell'acqua*. Pan Macmillan. The book, set in Sicily, tells the adventures of inspector Montalbano.
- Chubb, J. (1982). *Patronage, power and poverty in southern Italy: a tale of two cities*. Cambridge University Press.
- Galt, Rosalind (2002). 'Italy's Landscapes of Loss: Historical Mourning and the Dialectical Image in Cinema Paradiso, Mediterraneo, and Il postino'. *Screen* 43 (2), pp. 158-173
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- *I cento passi*. Dir Marco Tullio Giordana, Istituto Luce, 2000. Film. Influential film about Mafia.
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LA GRANDE BELLEZZA
DIRECTED BY PAOLO SORRENTINO
(2013)

LA GRANDE BELLEZZA, DIRECTED BY PAOLO SORRENTINO (2013)

Paolo Sorrentino's award-winning film is a unique and sophisticated depiction of the beauty and contradictions of the city of Rome.

Toni Servillo plays the part of a retired best-selling writer who is going through an existential crisis of life and starts looking for answers.

La grande bellezza won Best Foreign Language Film Academy Awards, the BAFTA award and a Golden Globe. Many critics consider it as one of the most significant Italian films of the 21st century. It was viewed as a beacon of hope in the endeavour of rejuvenating Italian cinema, which was struggling to exert international influence.

Why teach this film?

This film could be considered as a cross-section of the Italian upper class and its frivolous lifestyle, and a critic of the superficiality of its members. Life and death, art and religion, complacency and nostalgia are among the profound themes discussed in the film, presenting real-life conversations in a wide range of scenarios, covering different registers and conversing styles. All these unique traits make it valuable pedagogical material that is hard to come by.

Ways to read this film

The themes could be seen from a political perspective and philosophical one.

The strength of the director and cowriter Sorrentino lies in exposing the decadence and political plagues of the Italian society, either in a subtle, delicate way, with allusive allegories and metaphors, or simply explicitly hitting the nail on the head. The superficiality of people working in the show business, gerontocracy, debauchery, and the Catholic Church are just a few examples of the depictions which, like pieces of mirrors, reflect the hidden ego of Rome and form a profound background for the story.

Philosophically, beauty and death are discussed as the cornerstones of the film. Jep Gambardella, the protagonist of the film is a writer who wrote a successful bestseller several decades ago and has rested on his laurels ever since. Everyone adores him, but he starts to realise that he has been a false idol living a society that is falling apart. This is his personal process of self-evaluation and self-discovery. Feeling that most of his life has passed by without generating anything meaningful, he embarks on a journey in search of beauty.

Students

The film may be of interest for students because of the unique cinematography, the rebellious way of recounting, artistic presentation and scintillating conversations. They will also become familiar with Rome's iconic landmarks which could be particularly valuable for those who may visit Rome.

Students interested in art or film studies will appreciate the variety of shots of monuments and the fascinating discussions about art. As the protagonist works part time as an art critic, students will be able to see a variety of modern art exhibitions through his eyes.

The film implicitly raises the questions of what art is and what role an artist plays in today's society. The language is often quite witty, but can set you thinking at the same time. The soundtrack and a wide range of eccentric characters and unpredictable situations make the story even more compelling.

Useful sequences

1. Themes

05:20–09:20

The transition between the scene with the opera choir and the party scene creates a strong contrast—the peaceful, intelligent and artistic context and the excesses of the wild nightlife where everyone is indulged in sensual pleasures, having a good time, or at least pretending to do so. The party takes place on the rooftop in the city of Rome, where everybody wears expensive, outrageous clothes, drinks alcohol, takes drugs and dances like there is no tomorrow. Jep, our guest of honour, is smiling at the centre of the dance floor. But as the protagonist stares straight into the camera, facing us, looking into our eyes, everything starts to slow down. The volume fades away and everything fades into darkness while the camera does a close-up of his face which is slowly changing expression and losing enthusiasm.

The party could be interpreted as a metaphor of the contradictions of contemporary Italian society, where the wealthy, especially those who work in the show business, idle their life away by partying, oblivious to the culture and beauty of the country.

Brain drain, creation of false idols and lack of respect for real beauty and intelligence pave the way for untalented and dishonest people to climb up to the top of the pyramid.

The majestic monuments and ruins of Rome are constantly presented in the background throughout the film. They are witnesses of the past glories of Italy that is now decadent. This decaying glory is also noticeable in Jep's life. Many years have passed since his last successful novel and he now owes everything he has to that single success at the beginning of his career. With time passing by, he starts to feel the urge to find new purposes in, and look for the meaning of, life. The dissipation of Italy, life and death, and existential crisis are among the issues touched upon in this profound film.

2. Language

46:12–52:00

“Questi giovani mi fanno orrore...” Some old friends are enjoying the night, sipping cocktails on a luxury terrace with a view of the coliseum, when two of them start to argue. The wit, insight and sophistication of the protagonist are fully showcased in this particular conversation.

Stefania uses a very high-register of language. Actually, it is so high-register that it quickly starts sounding pompous. During the discussion, she pours scorn on young people who have abandoned the country in search of a better life abroad, comparing their questionable lifestyle with her own allegedly successful life, boasting about her remarkable career, her perfect family and her devotion to political and social campaigns

Provoked, Jep decides to ruthlessly point out several reasons why she should tone down her misplaced sense of superiority. Stefania is a typical self-appointed expert in politics who likes to stay in front of the cameras but totally loses contact with the real world. She has never worked a day in her life but always lectures others. While others who know the truth just keep silent, Jep decides to point out everything in front of everybody with a long monologue that creates an extremely awkward situation.

In terms of use of language, Stefania enunciates each word clearly in good standard Italian with a wide vocabulary and a pompous, floral style, and Jep talks at a faster pace in a high-register way, with many subtleties, double meanings and a few intrusions of Napolitan dialect, spicing up the snappy speech even more. Although this passage could be slightly challenging for non-native speakers, it is useful in exposing them to different registers, accents and styles.

3. Characters

2:06:00 - 2:08:00

This sequence is about revelations. We may assume that the enigmatic figure, the 100-year-old nun in the movie is only a joke, but she turns out to be a rather important character. She inspires Jep and shows him a way to live what is left of his life in serenity and beauty.

This part is brief but crucial. It is a stimulating discussion about life and how to live it. The nun, who may remind us of today's Mother Theresa, leads a frugal life and has a strong devotion to her cause. This character is in juxtaposition with nearly every other character in the story. The contrast is even stronger when we compare her with other members of the Catholic Church, depicted here in a negative light. The nun helps Jep reach an epiphany, leaving him with a lesson about the importance of being true to oneself and finding one's own roots.

4. Cinematography and style

00:00–05:30

As the film does not have a clear storyline, the way it is shot and presented acquires more attention. Most shots throughout this part demonstrate perfect symmetry. Famous landmarks of Rome are presented in a fresh way, from unexpected angles. Every shot has been meticulously crafted, with each element in the right position, fulfilling a specific purpose. Students may reflect on the themes of life, the search for beauty and questions concerning death. Also, there are some interesting questions open for discussion: Why did the Japanese tourist die? What is the message the director is trying to convey and how does this scene relate to the following one where everyone parties?

Further reading

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

IL GIORNO DELLA CIVETTA
(THE DAY OF THE OWL)
LEONARDO SCIASCIA, 1961

IL GIORNO DELLA CIVETTA (THE DAY OF THE OWL) BY LEONARDO SCIASCIA, 1961

Leonardo Sciascia was an Italian intellectual who worked as a writer, novelist, author and politician.

He also had a role in the parliamentary committee for the investigations to the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, an important cornerstone in the history of the Prima Repubblica. His novels, written under the guise of detective stories, are critiques of Italian society and tackle issues such as patronage, corruption and the links between politics and the Mafia. A few of his books have been made into film adaptations, including *Porte Aperte*, *Cadaveri Eccellenti* and *Il giorno della civetta*.

Why teach this text?

It is an influential text not only for literature but for politics as well. The date is not specified but it is probably set in the same period as its publication in the 1960s, at a time when the very existence of the Mafia was denied, even by many members of the institutions. Sciascia could be considered as a pioneer of writing books and essays on the topic, raising awareness among the general public. In this light, the book acquires an important historical role. The story is inspired by true events and it gives a realistic overview of how politics often interferes with law enforcement. Unfortunately, despite being written decades ago, some of the themes addressed are still current.

Ways to read this text?

The book not only denounces corruption, but also acquires the function of an essay at times, explaining how the author thinks certain issues should be tackled in real life.

The book focuses on the connections between organised crime and institutions. Questions for an in-class discussion could be: how did this relation influence the history of the country? Why did so many people deny the existence of the Mafia despite the evidence?

A historical perspective would emphasise the elements of the Mafia and fascism, and the relation between the two. A feminist perspective could highlight the fact that women do not have a major role in the story. This may not reflect the author's view on women but rather the patriarchal society in Sicily in the 1960s. Moreover, the reader will often come across the concept of *delitti passionali*, when some of the characters try to imply that the motive of a violent crime is usually related to adultery. What is the role of women in the book?

Students

Many of the themes of the A-levels curriculum are addressed, such as Italian society, fascism, and politics. Students of history or politics-related studies will certainly be interested in learning more about the relationship between organised crime and politicians. Students interested in linguistics will be interested in the use of the Sicilian language and Latin sentences present in the book that are usually explained by the writer translating them into Italian, so they do not hamper the understanding of the text. Politics aside, the book is also a compelling detective story per se.

Useful passages

1. Themes

Page 423–426 'era nato sbirro, così come si nasce sbirri o cornuti'

An anonymous character is sharing his life experience and wisdom with his young apprentice (or accomplice?), giving him valuable advice. This passage is useful to guide understanding of the dynamics among members of the Mafia and law enforcement, religious figures and common citizens.

There is some form of respect towards all *sbirri*, a derogatory term applied to police officers which is divided into two further categories. The first includes those who is possible to reason with (to bribe) and they are referred to as *galantuomi* (423) (gentlemen). The latter includes those who are incorruptible, never forgetting what their role is.

'*lo ci ho rimesso vino e sigari*' (423) is the translation of a Sicilian proverb that means there is nothing to gain by becoming friends with cops, and as a confirmation of this, the speaker tells about his personal experience. The criminal tried once to become friends with a *maresciallo*, and even succeeded in getting their respective families to spend time together. He thought he might gain something from this friendship but the only thing he got was a warrant of arrest.

'il popolo cornuto era e cornuto resta'. The word *cornuto* is a derogatory word used often in the Sicilian language with different meanings depending on the context, usually intended to mean someone who has been cheated by his/her partner. Here it means that the Sicilian people must accept the idea that they are always going to be taken advantage of, regardless of who is in charge of the Island.

'La differenza e' che il fascismo appendeva una bandiera sola alle corna del popolo e la democrazia lascia che ognuno se l'appenda da se, del colore che gli piace, alle proprie corna...' (425)

An interesting discussion could develop around the origins of the Mafia in the 19th century and the consolidation of its power during the last days of the fascist regime. Students could also speculate on who the characters are.

2. Language

Page 466–469

There are two important elements in this passage. The first one is the detailed explanation of the investigation procedure. Once again, the book becomes more similar to an essay, in which the author explains his reasoning in detail, in a way that shows competence of the subject matter.

As a result, the text acquires a practical function, explaining how police work should be done and which tools the government should provide to law enforcement for a crackdown on crime and corruption.

The second element is the Mafioso perspective. Don Mariano explains the way he sees people:

'[...] cinque categorie: gli uomini, i mezz'uomini, gli ominicchi, i (com rispetto parlando) piglianculo e i quaquaraqua' (466, 467)

There is a mix of word play, Sicilian language, swear words and neologisms. *Quaquaraqua*, for example, is a word made popular by this novel, which was later used in many books, gangster movies and real life, and means "snitch". The pages that follow are rich in meaning and poetic expressions.

'La verità è nel fondo di un pozzo: lei guarda in un pozzo e vede il sole o la luna; ma se si butta giù non c'è più né sole né luna, c'è la verità.' (469)

The Captain, confronting the criminal, is intrigued to learn that his enemy actually has some sort of twisted moral values and philosophy by which he lives.

On this point, journalists and authors criticised Sciascia for idealising the figure of Don Mariano. This could be the topic for an in-class discussion. What are the intentions of the writer? In what kind of context does the Mafia operate and why does it seem to have an "institutional" role?

3. Characters

Page 404–409 '*Ho lasciato la giacca all'Ucciardone*'

Despite the murder happening on a crowded bus, nobody admits to having seen anything. For this reason, the Captain decides to find other sources elsewhere. In the interrogation scene, the readers learn more about the way the Captain works and the *confidente*, a character disliked both by the police and criminals alike, is introduced.

'*Ho lasciato la giacca all'Ucciardone*' (405) Students will certainly need clarification when it comes to this elusive sentence. *Ucciardone* is the name of a prison in Palermo, so saying casually "I left my jacket there" implies that he is familiar with the place, like a second home, and he is ready to go back there if one gives him a reason to. This line is used by the informant as an empty threat.

The character, who likes to instill fear in others, is actually a two-faced coward and in this situation is particularly nervous, as we can infer from the detailed description of his emotions. He has no intention of talking about this case, but the Captain knows how to manipulate him, so he uses a polite, formal register and a calm tone of voice when asking pressing questions. This catches the *confidente* off guard and leads him to make a mistake (he says a name) that will eventually cost him a lot.

4. Form and genre

Page 409–411 '*Voi ci credete alla Mafia?*'

In this passage, two anonymous characters are discussing the murder case. It is not stated clearly who they are but the readership can guess they are politicians who are trying to interfere with the case.

'*Imma summis mutare*'. This Latin sentence implies that they need to find a way to turn the situation to their advantage. From a linguistic point of view, the use of high register and Latin entails that they are from a highly educated background.

Strikingly, a few characters in the book stay anonymous for whole story. This choice is explained only after the end of the book, in a shocking note at the end of the novel, which casts a completely different light on the book and blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality. '[...] Non l'ho scritto con quella libertà di cui uno scrittore [...] dovrebbe godere (482, 483)' It seems that the writer received political pressure to censor a few names and passages that could have offended the authorities. Quite ironic, considering that something similar happens in the story too.

Further reading

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

IO NON HO PAURA (I'M NOT SCARED)

NICCOLÒ AMMANITI

EINAUDI, 2001

IO NON HO PAURA, (I'M NOT SCARED) BY NICCOLÒ AMMANITI (EINAUDI 2001)

Niccolò Ammaniti is a popular writer who won the prestigious Strega prize for his fourth novel, *Come Dio comanda*. His books are often bestsellers with a dark atmosphere and written with a twisted sense of humour. They address the themes of childhood, adolescence, friendship in a context of social hardship. *Io non ho paura*, *Come Dio comanda* and *Io e te* have been adapted into films by directors Gabriele Salvatores and Bernardo Bertolucci.

Io non ho paura, set in 1978, is a coming-of-age story about Michele, a nine-year-old who lives in the fictitious district of Acqua Traverse, somewhere in the middle of the countryside of the South of Italy, probably in Apulia. On a hot summer day, while riding his bike in the middle of a wheat field, he finds a hole in the ground. Trapped inside is a young boy in chains covered in mud. Who put the child there and why?

Why teach this text?

Io non ho paura deals with themes of family, childhood, friendship and (more obliquely) history. The book touches on some of the themes across the Italian AS and A-level, for example the *Questione meridionale*. Still today, there is a wealth gap between the North and South of the country, due to inefficient governance and the corruption of politicians, and also to more complex socio-historical factors that are important to analyse and discuss in class to understand this key issue in Italy.

Another interesting aspect is the way criminal characters are depicted in the book, which is far from the stereotypical romanticised gangster that non-Italians may have known from influential films such as *The Godfather*.

Ways to read this text?

Michele's narration gives an overview of family life in rural areas of the South in that period. The story is narrated from the point of view of a nine-year-old child, who is trying to make sense of the world around him, using the information made available to him by parents and peers. As the title suggests, it is a tale of self-discovery in which Michele tests himself to overcome his fears.

Crime and *omertà* (community silence about criminal activities) are also recurrent themes in the book. It may not be obvious to the protagonist, but an Italian readership can guess from the start the reason that a boy might be imprisoned in a hole in the ground: he is being kept hostage for a ransom. Beginning in the 1960s, the phenomenon of kidnapping became increasingly frequent in the South and it continued for some decades. Several hundred kidnappings of wealthy individuals or their relatives took place, especially in the regions of Sardinia or Calabria.

In the book, it becomes more and more evident that a considerable number of the inhabitants of Acque Traverse are involved to some extent in the crime. In real life, one of the main challenges for law enforcement is indeed the code of silence adopted by the local communities. It is obviously difficult to report a crime if the perpetrators are friends or relatives or if you are afraid of the consequences. In this case, Michele's family tells him to turn a blind eye.

Students

The universal themes of childhood, friendship and family will appeal to a variety of students while the themes of poverty and family dynamics may interest students of social sciences. The book is compelling and easy to read, and if students enjoy it they may also like to watch the film adaptations of Ammaniti's books.

Useful passages

1. Themes

Page 201–207 'Bisbigli nelle tenebre'

We are approaching the epilogue and Michele rides his old bike in the dark towards the farm to rescue the child in the hole. After a moment of hesitation, Michele chooses to use his old bike, instead of using the brand new flaming 'Red dragon' his family has just bought him. The new bike is obviously better and represents something he has desired for a long time, but it also represents a bribe. They bought it so that he will keep his mouth shut. At this point of the story Michele is mature and independent and he values friendship and loyalty more than materialism. He does not want to be bought or helped by adults, so he grabs his old bike, the 'Scassona', and starts racing through the darkness.

All the "monsters" that have been mentioned before in the story are manifesting themselves now, trying to catch him and preventing him from achieving his goal, but he is not going to stop – he has to move forward to save his friend, as he promised. There are both imaginary monsters, such as the small creatures with red eyes and giants living in the hills, but also real ones, such as the fierce pigs and the evil farmer. Among the real monsters we also find a toad, which may represent his father, as it has been compared to him when he gets angry 'occhi da rospo' (54). To gather the courage necessary he takes inspiration from fictional heroes (e.g. Lazzaro, or his favourite comic book characters). This passage condenses the themes of the tenacity of children, the value of friendship and the overcoming of one's fear to reach maturity.

2. Language

Page 167 – page 169 ‘Red dragon’

This passage is important because Michele had expected a different kind of reward, namely the liberation of the child in the hole. Previously, Felice became angry when he found out that Michele knew about the hostage and a violent argument erupted with Michele’s parents. This resulted in a brawl. The event was distressing for Michele, who sustained a bruise to his head. In order to make up for the injury and to make sure that the boy keeps the secret, his family bought him a present.

In this passage there are a few idioms – ‘Che c’è, non ti piace?’, ‘è un affare’ – as well as changes in register reflecting the age of the character who is talking.

The language used is tailored around the characters, who are a bit stereotypical in this section. A few sentences may sound familiar to the reader – such as ‘La bicicletta in casa? Fa le strisce’; ‘Aspetta! La carta è buona, la teniamo’, typical of what a mother might say in this sort of situation. Michele’s father, who is not able to translate from English Red dragon, also says something typically father-like ‘Lo sa tua madre’. The children, on the other hand, have lines such as ‘Non è giusto. Tutto a Michele e a me niente!’

It is important to point out that they also make two grammar mistakes, typical of children, namely

1) ‘A te non ti è piaciuto il regalo?’

Ti already includes to you, so this is a repetition. Correct sentences could be ‘Non ti è piaciuto il regalo?’ or ‘A te non e’ piaciuto il regalo?’

2) ‘Pensavo che era’ instead of using the subjunctive ‘Pensavo che fosse’

As an in-class activity, it could be useful to test the students, asking them to spot the mistakes in the text. This part can help students to familiarize themselves with the imperfect form and present perfect.

3. Characters

Page 87 – page 95 ‘È stato come se mi avessero dato una coltellata in un fianco’

Most of the adult characters are gathered in the room in front of the TV, smoking and drinking. Michele is spying on them, waiting for a good moment to sneak into the toilet. We learn a bit of the shady background story of Sergio, as well as his unpleasant physical appearance and his rude manners. The situation is quite tense. The group is having a heated argument with lots of swear words, and Sergio is insulting and criticizing everyone, while Michele’s father is trying to calm him down. ‘Sei un imbecille,’ says Sergio, insulting him and shutting him up.

‘Papa’ ha cercato di rispondere poi ha ingoiato il boccone e ha abbassato lo sguardo.’ (88)

Michele is shocked by this scene. Up to that point, he had always put his father on a pedestal, and considered him an unquestioned authority in the village. As mentioned before, this is a coming of age story and this is the point when Michele starts questioning his parents integrity and changing his perspective about the world.

Things are about to get worse. The TV is broadcasting the news and silence falls in the room. Everybody listens to the plea of a woman on screen, who is begging for the life of her son. From a picture, Michele recognises the child in the hole and learns his name: Filippo. From the comments overheard, it becomes evident that everybody is involved in the kidnapping, including his parents. ‘Due orecchie gli tagliamo.’ says Michele’s father. They plan to cut an ear off Filippo and send it in an envelope to the family to solicit the payment of the ransom, a common practice for kidnappers. ‘Papa’ era l’uomo nero.’ Michele’s mother often scares him with stories about the bogeyman who snatches children at night. Now he is starting to realize that his father is the bogeyman.

The passage that follows this scene is also important as it shows how the protagonist has to take over the function of the adult, to take care of his sister. In order to distract her from the noise coming from the other room and making sure she does not understand what is happening, he tells her a fairy tale. There are multiple examples throughout the story when Michele protects his sister (94), his friend Barbara (23), or Filippo in the epilogue. In ‘Io non ho paura’, children are portrayed most of the time as more noble than the adults, especially in the case of the protagonist whose compassion and sense of loyalty always make him protect his loved ones.

4. Form and genre

Page 146 – page 149 ‘Le volpi volanti’

This part of the book takes the form of reported speech. Filippo has spent a long time confined in the hole and this is causing him to lose his mental and physical health. The passage is crucial, because Michele and Filippo don’t have many occasions to meet each other. Some of the speech is utter nonsense but Michele tries to keep the conversation going because he wants to learn more about Filippo. After these quick exchanges of information, Michele realises that Filippo is in fact a normal boy, quite similar to him, and not a scary creature as he thought at the beginning. He decides to feed him, clean his face and carry him on his shoulders outside of his prison, to show him the wheat fields and the sky.

Their meeting is interrupted by Felice who is now pointing a rifle at them. It becomes evident that Salvatore, Michele’s best friend, has told on them, since he was the only one to whom he confessed his secret. An in-class discussion could focus on childhood or on the effect of traumatic events or abuse on a child’s development.

Further reading

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

SENZA SANGUE
ALESSANDRO BARICCO
RIZZOLI, 2002

SENZA SANGUE BY ALESSANDRO BARICCO (RIZZOLI, 2002)

Alessandro Baricco is a popular Italian writer and director whose novels are translated into many languages. *Senza sangue*, one of his most popular novels, is a short but intense book that tells a story that covers a period of more than 50 years. A woman called Nina, was traumatised by a terrible event that unfolded during the war. Decades later, as an elderly lady, she decides to confront one of the men who ruined her life when she was a child. She invites him to a cafe for a drink and the two have an honest, emotional conversation about what happened that night.

Why teach this text?

The novel is an emotional rollercoaster and conveys effectively the feelings of all those involved, showing how a traumatic event can change people. The book deals with themes of politics, war and its long term effects on people. It also deals with the themes of pain, hate and forgiveness. Since the story takes place during a civil war, a parallel can be drawn with the situation of WWII and the division between fascists and members of the resistance.

Ways to read this text?

It is important to point out that in a footnote at the beginning, the author states that he does not know when and where the story takes place. The Spanish sounding names and the descriptions of the locations may induce to think that the story develops in Latin America right after the end of a civil war, but the location doesn't really matter. The writer's intention could be to convey the message that war never changes, there are always two sides committing atrocities to each other and innocent people lives are destroyed on both sides. In this way, the book can be read with historical lenses, but the reader can choose the setting.

The book only has two chapters, simply titled 'Uno' and 'Due'. The first part talks about the horrors of war, the second part is about its long term consequences and how people live with them. Death is also a recurring theme and it is interesting to note its role in the story. It always manifests itself in the form of murder, as a way to obtain a long-awaited revenge or to end someone's suffering. In both cases, it is seen as a way to cure your own, or someone else's, pain. Questions for an in-class discussion could be: How does war change people? What is the role of death in the story?

Students

The book is short enough to be read in one sitting, it is pleasant to read and hooks the attention of the reader right from the beginning. It starts in the middle of the action, like a thriller, then in the second part the action slows down and becomes a bittersweet and deeper reflection on the choices made by the characters. The novel may appeal to history, politics, psychology and humanities students in general. Questions for boosting an in-class discussion could be the following: Are the actions of the characters justifiable? Is there a good and evil side in each war or is this dichotomy too simplistic? What kind of socio-political situation leads to a war and how does war change a country in the long term?

Useful passages

1. Themes

Page 84–88 'Eravamo soldati'

In this important passage, Tito explains the reasons why he did what he had to, while Nina forces him to notice the logic flaws in his ideas. Tito is an idealist with noble motivations, but on the path to reach his ideals he committed horrible crimes. War is often justified and described as a necessary evil that can help to achieve the greater good. Nina is much more pragmatic and the war made her stronger and cynical. 'Spaccavamo la terra' (87); 'chi avrebbe tollerato piu' dolore avrebbe vinto' (86) Tito explains that sometimes to create, one must first destroy and he uses the metaphor of the farmer breaking the ground with a hoe. No matter how cruel the actions of a soldier can be, the end justifies the means. Nina argues that his ideals are just a utopia and his revolution did not help in creating a better world but only ruined people's lives. Moreover she points out that her father was brutally murdered after the end of the war. No matter what kind of person her father was, he was still a human and what they did was not administering justice but only seeking revenge.

- Stavamo combattendo una guerra
- Quale guerra? Era finita la guerra!
- Non lo era per noi. (84)

Not only does Tito pretend to be sure of his actions and denies having any regrets, but he also seems to be quite patronizing, and keeps repeating 'lei non può capire' (89) to Nina. However, telling her that she can't possibly understand is mostly a way for him to cut the discussion short and to avoid doing any form of self-evaluation. In front of him there is the living proof of how a life can be twisted by war and this scares him. The reason why she invited him to the cafe is to look him in the eye and face the truth: 'Questo le sembra un mondo migliore?' (87). Questions for the students could focus on how people refuse to challenge their political ideologies or systems of belief even in the face of evidence. They could also discuss the theme of war and the kind of narrative that is proposed to the people to try and justify war. Then a discussion could look at the long-term effects on society, individuals and children. What is the meaning of the sentence 'Abbiamo rivoltato la terra così forte da risvegliare la ferocia dei bambini' (66)?

2. Language

Page 88–94 *'il solo farmaco che ci sia contro il dolore'*

Nina continues to press Tito into admitting his mistakes, to make him realise that he is a hypocrite. In the past, she also made actions that were quite questionable, but she always stayed true to herself and she admits that what she is seeking, and what all men at war are seeking, is revenge. The next passage is rich in idiomatic expressions. There are both dialogues and a detailed description of the scene as well as well as profound sentences: 'vendetta [...] il solo farmaco che ci sia contro il dolore' (88). Tito claims that he did what was necessary and he takes pride in taking action to change the world through revolution 'Non siamo rimasti a casa ad aspettare che passasse' (89). As mentioned before, repeating several times 'Non mi pento di nulla'; 'Cosa vuole saperne lei' (89) is some sort of defence mechanism for Tito, and it becomes more obvious as Nina, who is increasingly more assertive, keeps challenging him e.g. 'Mi spieghi lei, io capirò' (89). As far as grammar is concerned, students can familiarize themselves with *passato remoto* and the conditional form.

3. Characters

Page 26–31 *'Ho sparato solo due volte'*

This passage is a plot twist, in the sense that it forces the reader to change their point of view and start to question the morality of Manuel Roca who, up to that point, was nothing more than a loving father protecting his family from a group of assassins. Hearing Salinas' version of the story from his own lips, described in vivid detail and finding out the motivations of his actions, sheds a completely different light on Manuel Roca. He appears to be not only a simple farmer and a loving father but also a war criminal. On the other hand his antagonist, who has been described as evil up to that point, tells a story that makes it easier to empathize with him. The characters of this story are quite different from one another, but they all have something in common – they are all grey characters. The reader will find himself in a moral dilemma throughout the whole story. Which side is the right one? What would I do in a similar situation? What is the difference between revenge and justice? An in-class discussion could develop around the topic of death penalty.

4. Form and genre

Page 10–15 *'Non era questo quello che volevo'*

The writer uses inverted commas only when he wants us to "hear" the voice of the character. He does not use them when the line is less important or when he wants to keep the distance between the character and the reader. In this case it serves the function of making the protagonist more sympathetic and to present the antagonist as evil, as the lines uttered by Salinas are not in inverted commas (they are reported speech). On the other hand, most of Manuel Roca's lines are direct quotations, so that it's possible to hear directly from him what he says to his children. The only times when we can hear Salinas is when he is shouting at and threatening Manuel Roca, and its lines are reported in capital letters. The way the character is described also contributes to making him unlikable (his expensive white suite, the French cigarette and his scary henchmen) as it implies he is a wealthy man who does not like to get his hands dirty. All of this is slightly misleading for the reader, who will jump to the conclusion that the protagonist is good and the antagonist evil, up until page 26 when Salinas starts his monologue.

Further reading

- Baricco, A., 2007. *An Iliad: a story of war* (Vol. 21). Canongate Books.
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- Merritt, Stephanie. “Observer Review: Without Blood By Alessandro Baricco”. *the Guardian*. N.p., 2017. Web. 9 May 2017.
- Resnick, Heidi S., Dean G. Kilpatrick, Bonnie S. Dansky, Benjamin E. Saunders, and Connie L. Best. “Prevalence of civilian trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in a representative national sample of women.” *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology* 61, no. 6 (1993): 984.
- Tarantino, E., 2007. Sailing off on the Adel: Alessandro Baricco’s metaliterary trilogy (Part 2). *Romance Studies*, 25(4), pp.323-337.
- *The legend of 1900*. Movie inspired by *Novecento*, a monologue by Alessandro Baricco. Tornatore, G., Roth, T., Vince, P.T. and Williams, C., 1999. *The legend of 1900*. Fine Line.
- *Moby dick, uno spettacolo di alessandro baricco*. Some of Baricco’s work is best enjoyed when read out loud. There many clips online in Italian, withouth subtitles. YouTube. (2009). *MOBY DICK, uno spettacolo di Alessandro Baricco*. [online]
- Interview with Alessandro Baricco. An intellectually stimulating Interview in Italian with English subtitles. YouTube. (2013). *Interview with Alessandro Baricco (1)*. [online]