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Testimony and Transmission: Proposed Translation of "Una Bambina in Fuga – Diari e lettere di un'ebrea mantovana al tempo della Shoah"

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Without memory, our existence would be barren and opaque, like a prison cell into which no light penetrates; like a tomb which rejects the living.

(Elie Wiesel, 1986)

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Introduction

Through the years, texts by victims and survivors of racial persecution during Nazism and Facism have been produced, rewritten, recovered and also translated in a large variety of languages and cultural contexts. Thanks to the process of translation, those written works have also been able to make extraordinary border-crossing journeys and reach new and sometimes unexpected audiences. This thesis specifically aims to present how Shoah testimony is tackled from a human and linguistic point of view, providing a distinctive perspective on the issues of translation and transmission. The central focus is placed on Lidia Gallico's book *Una Bambina in Fuga – Diari e lettere di un'ebrea mantovana al tempo della Shoah*, translated into English as "A Little Girl on the Run – Diaries and letters of a Jewish Italian girl living through the Shoah", which represents an interesting case study that well exemplifies many of the difficulties that translating testimony poses.

The thesis is developed in three different sections, each one adding a piece to the overall argument. The first chapter presents a more theoretical insight into what testimony as a genre entails and what role translation plays when confronted with survivor-witness writing. It also illustrates crucial elements that are then discussed later in the thesis, such as the issue of voice and persona and the importance of transmitting a story and a traumatic experience from the past to the present. The second chapter then introduces Gallico's memoir *Una Bambina in Fuga* and provides a proposed English translation of its first four chapters, the original Italian version of which can be found in the Appendix. The translation's underlying objective is to highlight and call attention to a wide range of features that are illustrative of the testimony genre and that give emphasis to the issue of transmission. These aspects are subsequently analysed and discussed in the third and final chapter of the thesis which, by means of a translation commentary, is thus able to further demonstrate how Shoah testimony and its translation are unique vehicles through which memory is preserved and transmitted. By translating Gallico's testimony and by concentrating on the transmissive issues of persona and Jewishness, it is then evident that memories of the Shoah are not a monolithic entity, but rather a ferment of residues and stratifications of individual and collective imaginations.

1. Testimony, transmission and translation

1.1 Holocaust Literature

Holocaust Literature as a concept was first introduced in the 1980s, when it was proposed by the literary scholar and Shoah survivor Susan Cernyak-Spatz, and it broadly encompasses all literary works that deal with the persecution and extermination of European Jews. These include texts written during the Holocaust, such as diaries, chronicles and letters, but also works that reflect back on those times, like memoirs and post-war testimonies[1]. Overall, the main focus of Holocaust Studies, and consequently Holocaust Literature as well, is to recall what happened during the Shoah not only by looking at mere historical events, but especially by centring the victims' experiences. As a matter of fact, it is their stories that have allowed people to come into contact with the horrors of the Shoah and, over the years, those texts have actually largely become the 'privileged medium for knowledge about and discussion of the Holocaust' (Davies, 2014: 172), also reaching a wide recognition as legal evidence and historical proof.

1.1.1 The intertwining of history and story

The relationship between history and personal experience as told through literature is especially important to analyse within the context of Holocaust Literature, as the lines that divide these two entities are rather blurred. These are, at first glance, different contexts and mediums, and if they are examined separately, what emerges is that:

> If history has sought objectivity, a dispassionate assemblage of the facts of when, where, and how the events unfolded, literature has been shamelessly subjective, offering ardently personal perspectives on what transpired. Emotion [is] not to be avoided, but rather intensified. In a related sense, if history has generally concerned itself with the macro level – the group, the institution, the movement – literature has focused on the individual.
>
> (Rosen, 2013: 2)

Historiography and historians have actually often failed the narrative surrounding the Shoah, as one of their main limits remains the frequent use of a mode of exposition that does not pose questions on the nature of such events, but rather presents them as if they were inherently evident (Rossi-Doria, 2010: 14). Literature, on the other hand, tends to

[1] See https://www.holocaust.org.uk/holocaust-literature (Accessed February 27, 2020).

report matters in a more vivid and striking way, with authors often admitting that those tragic events cannot be understood, but nonetheless keeping them, and the questions that consequently emerge, alive. However, even though history and literature tend to acquire different roles in writing, when considering Holocaust Literature in more detail, it has to be noted that the divide between these notions is not to be 'sharply drawn', and what often emerges is actually a 'fruitful interplay between the two' (Rosen, 2013: 4). These two spheres actually coexist in the text and create an invisible thread that is able to interweave both historical and personal events, so that both knowledge and empathy are brought to the fore. History and story are, indeed, bound to influence each other, for the primary aim of Holocaust Literature is to be factually accurate *by means of* the unprecedented and unique perspective of the victim. To a very high degree, history becomes story, and vice versa. In point of fact, 'history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation' (White, 1978: 122). It is precisely from the blending of the rational (history) and the irrational (story) that the idiom of Shoah witnesses is sculpted, which in itself lays the foundations for numerous other theories.

1.1.2 A new literary genre

The discourse surrounding Holocaust Literature is one that is inevitably inseparable from the debate about the uniqueness of the Shoah, and many scholars have therefore felt that such unequalled trauma must, by definition, produce texts that are *sui generis*. As a consequence, there is a perceived need to outline a new literary genre that is intrinsic to that individual – often extreme – experience of suffering. Along with the key concepts of 'trauma' and 'truthfulness', Holocaust Literature is therefore defined through the valued and imperative feature of 'testimony'. The genre discussion around the notion of testimony takes its initial cue from Elie Wiesel, who, in one of his most famous statements, claims that the Shoah and its victims 'invented a new literature, that of testimony' (Wiesel, 1977: 9). Holocaust Literature has thus been approached by many scholars through the lens of this new understanding and, especially in the last few decades, victim testimony has managed to establish itself as a key locus for testing and developing the general public's awareness of the Shoah. The definition of testimony as an independent genre has significantly shifted the focus and aim of Holocaust Studies and, overall, it must be observed that:

> A discourse that defines testimony as a genre is intended to clarify the relations between certain texts, to define the kinds of knowledge that are produced in these texts, to give this knowledge legitimacy in a cultural context that was for a long time unwilling to grant it legitimacy, and to support the efforts of victims to gain recognition in the uniqueness of their experience and their right to speak from a subject-position which they themselves define.
>
> (Davies, 2014: 183)

Above all, it is fundamental to note that testimony can only be produced – and, arguably, truly understood – by those who experienced the traumas of the Shoah and of the persecutions that came with it. Testimony is, maybe controversially, a genre that is generally 'unavailable' to anyone else but the witnesses and, even when the first-person narration seems to invite it, identification with the victim is often discouraged. This might sound unfavourable at first, but it is actually through its alienation that testimony has proven to be an essential and valuable tool in shaping the cultural, sociological and ethical discourse around the Shoah. It is also important to note that testimony as a genre is not intrinsically and strictly defined only through its textual features, but it is indeed a 'mode that arises from the social role and status of the figure of the survivor-witness, and from the cultural position of the texts' (Davies, 2014: 171). A given text is, then, marked as a testimony primarily by the presence of extra-textual components – namely visual or documental material connected to the victim or the historical situation – and by the author's explicit or implicit identification with a very specific social and performative role, that of the survivor-witness (Lezzi, 2001: 147).

1.2 Testimony and translation

Over the years, the process of establishing what a testimony is and of outlining what different criteria would make it possible to label a given piece of writing as such has inevitably relied on translated texts, whether they be in English or other languages. Canons of Shoah memory have often been constructed from translated texts and, in point of fact, many new possibilities can arise when Translation Studies and Holocaust Studies are brought together (Davies, 2014: 161). Drawing attention to the work of translators and to the challenges they face when tackling witness writing can actually prove to be a rather useful tool to define the outlines of what a testimony is and to discuss some of its intrinsic linguistic, cultural and social features. This is possible

particularly because one of the most compelling aspects of translation is the transmission of a given text into a fresh social and linguistic context which, in the framework of Holocaust Literature, is still governed by the generic expectation of testimony as a genre. The translation, in fact, does not gain legitimacy on its own terms, but rather through the 'translator's participation in the authority granted by the witness' (Davies, 2014: 182) and, thus, through the embodiment of the survivor-witness's experience as they originally wrote about it. A thorough examination of the complex connexions between the source and the target texts and the process of translation as a whole also have the momentous potential to open up unexplored areas of literary understanding and uncover new vantage points on the Shoah itself. Most importantly, where translation is commented on, it is always done in ways that confirm the overall specificity of testimony, which is why transposing a text from one language to another has shown itself to be an additional medium through which witness writing can be theorised.

1.2.1 The Shoah and its double translation

Undoubtedly, the most powerful tool survivors have in their hands when testifying is language. In point of fact, it is by means of language that they are able to tell, to remember, and to narrate. Scholars have argued that this language can only come *after* the Shoah, not necessarily in the sense that the silent event is waiting to be told, but rather because in the case of testimony a distinction needs to be drawn between occurrence and word, between *during* and *after*. What lies in between and what connects these seemingly polar-opposite entities is always translation. To better explain this concept, it is crucial to move beyond from the central and stricter definition of translation as we know it and, instead, consider a more figurative interpretation of the word. Our understanding of testimony through translation should thus be informed by the notion of *translatio*[2], which implies the 'carrying of meaning from one zone of cognition to another' (Insana, 2009: 5). As a matter of fact, the survivor-witness 'translates' from event or experience to written word, and from the temporal and

[2] Meaning, as the Oxford Latin Dictionary puts it, 'the action of moving (a thing) from one place to another,' […] 'the (imaginary) shift of a situation from one time to another,' and finally 'translation (from one language to another).'

geographical space of the racial persecutions (*during*) to a linguistic and literary dimension (*after*). In the context of Holocaust Literature, this transit – or *translatio* – from one system to another is, of course, affected by a number of factors that are intrinsic to the Shoah traumatic experience. Painful and ineffable events such as the Holocaust are, in fact, characterised by the incapacity to give expression to what happened and by the impossibility of processing both psychologically and cognitively. Communication, especially to an audience of readers, is therefore an extremely wearying task and survivors are often faced with a two-sided dilemma: the intense need to tell of their brutalizing past, and profound confusion over how to tackle and represent its unspeakable circumstances. Indeed, survivors have to deal with an original experience that is almost non-communicable and, as Primo Levi states in his most famous book, *Se Questo è Un Uomo*, 'language lacks words to express this offence'[3] (Levi, 1947: 18, my translation). It is therefore arguable that, even before the subject of interlinguistic translation becomes an issue, Shoah testimony is 'always a translation into another language' and that conveying such experiences is bound to entail a 'translation différend', or a moment in which the victim is confronted with the impossibility of recounting the damage and oppression that were inflicted upon them (Glowacka, 2012: 63). The survivor, of course, has to keep on trying, in spite – or perhaps precisely because – of the difficulties of the task.

By adding the further layer of interlinguistic translation to the structuralist notion of *translatio* in original testimonial texts, it is clear that what the translator has to face is an unusual task. The challenges of testimony and the utter arduousness of the witnessing task actually mirror the essential difficulty of translation and underline that to interpret something, whether it be reality or a text, is bound to be complicated. Hence, translation has proven to be an appropriate – and, indeed, necessary – metaphor for Shoah testimony and a 'point of entry into and figure for semiotic exchanges of all kinds' (Insana, 2009: 11). In a certain sense, it can also be said that translating testimony means producing the translation of a translation. It is, indeed, a kind of 'double translation', in that there are two consequent acts of transposal: first, from experience to language

[3] See Levi, P. (1947: 18). 'Allora per la prima volta ci siamo accorti che la nostra lingua manca di parole per esprimere questa offesa.'

(*translatio*) and, only after that, from language to language (interlinguistic translation). Translation in the context of witness-writing therefore develops into a complex and dynamic multifaceted act that is able to build a bridge between life and language, experience and expression, trauma and testimony. The task of the interlinguistic translator is, then, to transmit the meaning that lies in the site of the void, the in-between, since it is precisely there that the thinking begins. The priority should therefore always be to focus on a linguistic production that, in the complex interweaving of semantic and moral models, maintains the focus on the author-witness as a figure who travels across the 'boundary between then now' (Insana, 2009: 61), from the racial persecutions of the Shoah to the present time.

1.2.2 Altered ways of reading

In the context of Holocaust Literature and testimony, it is crucial for translators to be able to tackle and, ultimately, transmit hardships and traumas that are bound to be unknown to the average person. A genre is not, in point of fact, solely a way of narrating and writing, but also of reading: it is where 'reading and writing meet' and, arguably, Shoah testimony implies 'altered ways of reading', often putting the reader in non-conventional positions (Eaglestone, 2004: 38). As testimony tends to disrupt normative ways in which literary texts are consumed, the framework within which translators of testimony operate is one that already goes beyond common understanding and, as a result, the process of interpreting a text through the lens of translation represents an even harder task than usual. This issue cannot be discerned from the specificity of genre and it is precisely because 'what happens between reader and text around the site of trauma is unknown' that 'hermeneutics becomes complicated' (Morris, 2002: 5). In point of fact, one will inevitably be placed before something that to them is surely 'unfamiliar' and difficult to understand, as testifying texts 'do not simply report facts, but in different ways, encounter – and make us encounter – *strangeness*' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 7). In consequence, the role of the translator under these circumstances has to be that of a conveyor of this intricate meaning and skilled examiner of a series of events that are bound to be hard to grasp for the average reader. Translation is, indeed, a site in which to explore survivor testimony in all of its nuanced emotions and it also

entails discovering aspects of the text that would probably go unnoticed to an untrained eye. As a matter of fact, as Levi points out in his essay "Tradurre ed Essere Tradotti":

> [T]he translator is the only one who truly reads a text, reads it in depth, in all its nuances, weighing and appreciating every word and every image, or perhaps uncovering its voids and untruths.[4]
>
> (Levi, 1997: 734, my translation)

Translation, then, demands a continual reading 'in excess' (Davies, 2014: 116) and, especially in the case of Holocaust Literature and testimony, one should always try to look for and pinpoint aspects of the original that are essential and indispensable for the overarching purposes of transmission.

1.3 Translation and transmission

Transmission is perhaps the most pivotal process in the theorisation of Holocaust Literature, and it especially takes on a fundamental role when it comes to the translation of testimony as a genre. Indeed, a question that scholars, authors and translators have asked themselves through the years is: How can the Shoah be transmitted across time, space, language, and the wounds of trauma? An absolute and definite answer to this burning question is very unlikely to exist, however, most agree that survivors should always be placed at the centre of discourse, for it is their story that is being transmitted. In the specific of the translating process, this results in a foregrounding of the witness's agency and a focus on the translator's ability to figure the victim's mediating role in transmission.

1.3.1 Voice and persona

As the autonomy of testimony as a genre is ultimately dependent on extra-textual guarantors – among which establishing and transmitting the figure of the survivor-witness is the most crucial one – for a translator it is then key to maintain the original author's 'essence' and to still let them speak authentically through the writing, even if the language system has changed. In particular, the *voice* and the *persona* of the survivor-witness cannot get 'lost in translation' and, when transposing from one

[4] See Levi, P. (1997: 734). '[I]l traduttore è il solo che legga veramente un testo, lo legga in profondità, in tutte le sue pieghe, pesando e apprezzando ogni parola e ogni immagine, o magari scoprendone i vuoti e i falsi.'

language to another, one should always establish the dependence of the text on these two fundamental aspects, given that they are arguably the main distinguishing features of the source text. This process therefore entails the ability of the translator to embody the survivor's perspective and thoughts, consequently transmitting their true and authentic self in the same way that the original does. Testimony translation is, in fact, a way of 'going into the body, into the skin of another'[5] (Dentice, 1983: 117, my translation) and, thus, of preserving the spirit of the source text and its creator. As a consequence, in order for a translation to be successful, the translator's renounces their own personal identity, embracing that of the survivor-witness, keeping this divestment constant throughout the translated work (Insana, 2009: 180). For instance, the collection *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust: A New History in the Words of the Men and Women who Survived*[6] – which comprises a series of statements translated into English from people of different nationalities but does not specify the language of the original – has been praised for the work of its team of translators, as they have showcased the ability to grant unimpeded access to the voices of the witnesses and have therefore been successful in conveying and transmitting their testimony. Ideally, this is what always ought to happen and the translator 'disturbs the [original] writer as little as possible' (Robinson, 2002: 229) so that the transmission of experience and meaning is able to be the most authentic and truthful. Another excellent example in which the subject of voice is highlighted is that of Rosette Lamont, the English translator of Charlotte Delbo's Auschwitz trilogy. In the preface to the second edition of *Auschwitz and After*, the translator immediately establishes herself as a conveyor of meaning and suffering, and explicitly states that her most fundamental task is to mirror the role that the survivor-witness holds in the source text. She clearly stresses her intuitive understanding of the author and affirms that, as the Shoah experience is spoken through Delbo in the original, the same has to happen by extension through the translation of her testimony (Lamont, 1995: vii). It is also particularly important to note that the transmission of voice and

[5] See Dentice, F. (1983: 117). '[S]i ha l'impressione di scavare una galleria, per entrare nel corpo, nella pelle di un altro.'

[6] See Smith, L. (2005). *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust: A New History in the Words of the Men and Women who Survived.* London: Ebury Press.

persona is not necessarily a matter of reducing oneself to invisibility, but rather a way of showing that the translating process is also one that diligently invests in the interpretation of the survivor-witness's experience. This strain of translation theory therefore stresses, once again, the fundamental notion that the source text, as part of the testimony genre label, issues a demand for interpretation, and thus translation.

1.3.2 Amplifying the audience

The underlining will to transmit and bring Shoah memory to the surface that characterises testimony is, then, part of an interactive model whereby each member of the target audience is able to become an active witness. In point of fact, by testifying, the survivor does not only create a witness out of themselves, but also out of the listener and, in the case of Holocaust Literature, the reader. As a consequence, the weight of responsibility is distributed among writers and readers alike and the victim's experience therefore has the prospect of being repeated numerous times, which can prove to be a rather significant act with respect to the testimonial aim of memory and remembrance. As writing allows testimony to repeat itself over and over again, translation is consequently able to amplify this repetition by creating new witnesses. In a sense, through translation, the source text is able to gain 'testimonial immortality' and a 'theoretically infinite transmission [...] of testimony from witness to witness' (Insana, 2009: 159). For the purposes of testimony, it is then important to consider translation as a vehicle of expression and as a performative act, in that it accomplishes 'an action that generates effects' (Parker and Sedgwick, 1995: 3), such as the forming of a new community of reader-witnesses and the projection of a given text onto various audiences and contexts. As translation has proven to be a meaningful tool in representing and transmitting victims' experiences, it is especially important to note that:

> The creation, conservation, and transmission of knowledge about (including memory of) the Holocaust form one of the most significant translation projects in Western history. Without the work of translators, there would be no Holocaust in the sense that we understand it, that is, no international, border-crossing, interdisciplinary concept that can be employed in historical, ethical, and philosophical arguments, and no common stock of literary reference points for discussion and re-use.
>
> (Insana, 2009: 162)

Thus, translation of testimony should arguably be recognised as an overarching and global process of transmission, one that is able to create new knowledge about the Shoah and to expand its intermediary spaces. This concept is especially important because it challenges hegemonic discourses and, overall, it is in stark contrast to most preceding translation models, which have a tendency to present source and target texts as products whose values are always and essentially hierarchically situated. Conversely, the translated text is no longer seen as inferior to the original, but it is instead enhanced as a valuable tool with which the source text can come to a new life and reach new audiences. As a matter of fact, the shift between languages serves as an amplifier for the survivor-witness's story and allows it to reach a new linguistic and social context where testimony can prosper. The translated text can therefore be seen as marking a 'stage of continued life' (Benjamin, 2019: 13) and it contributes to the endless reproduction of the Shoah experience as expressed by the author. Indeed, translation has proven to mirror the survivor's mission of continuous and consecutive transmission of testimony, which is why, eventually, a translated text has the potential to be read as a testimonial utterance in its own right.

2. Una Bambina in Fuga

2.1 An Italian Shoah testimony

When observing the specific case of Italian Holocaust Literature, it is clear that only a few names stand out and that, overall, the stories of Jews as people who were persecuted during Fascism *in* Italy are often left behind and go unnoticed. It is in this very context that it is indeed important to analyse testimonies written by survivor-witnesses who had to live through the racial laws and the Fascist anti-semitic persecutions. *Una Bambina in Fuga – Diari e lettere di un'ebrea mantovana al tempo della Shoah*, written by Lidia Gallico in 2016, is an instance that embodies this concept perfectly, as it poses itself as a sort of micro-story that is able to focus on an unconventional narrative and at the same time exemplifies the experience of many Italian Jews during Fascism. In particular, the testimony revolves around the vicissitudes of a Jewish family that fled to Switzerland to escape deportation as told from the perspective of a little girl. In point of fact, Gallico is only six years old when,

in 1938, the racial laws come into force, and she has just turned eleven when the armistice that sanctions the Italian withdrawal from World War II is signed on 8th September 1943, resulting in the mass deportations of Jews all around the country. In her book, the history of those painful and dramatic events often seeps through the pages, as she is able to recount both her personal family's story and that of Italian Jews as a whole. Gallico's memoir does not necessarily embody an account of great events or terrible suffering, but it rather offers food for thought for those who seek to read about a child's mechanisms of resistance in the face of persecution and war.

The Shoah is for Gallico a 'constant thought that will never leave'[7] (Gallico, my translation) and it does indeed live through her, even though her story does not always fit the standard Holocaust Literature narrative that the public is used to. The direct memory of her persecuted childhood establishes a sort of breeding ground for a myriad of thoughts that are much bigger than her personal experience and end up being something that relentlessly torments her. What continuously haunts her mind is the extermination of her people – relatives, schoolmates, friends, as well as millions of unknown Europeans who were Jews, just like her – and the awareness that her own chronicle is an integral part of that collective memory, and always will be. Gallico's story is constantly set on this ridge between her 'micro' experience, that of a difficult and troubled Jewish childhood during Fascism, and the 'macro' history of the genocide, an abyss into which, only thanks to a series of favourable circumstances, she and her parents did not fall. She was, indeed, a direct witness of the Fascist anti-Semitic persecutions and after that, when in Switzerland, a witness from afar of one of the most tragic and atrocious events of modern history.

2.1.1 Silence and the need to testify

Gallico, like many others, realises the actual nature of the persecutions that targeted Italian and European Jews only upon return to her hometown, Mantua. She often recalls the distressful silence that reigned supreme and the almost empty synagogues, where one could only take note of who was no longer there:

[7] See Gallico, L. Personal interview, conducted by Maria Bacchi. 28 May 1997. '[A] venticinque anni di distanza… quindi un pensiero costante, che non mi lascerà mai.' The recording of the complete conversation is kept in the archives of the Mantuan Institute of Contemporary History.

> When we found ourselves at the Israelite Community, none of us spoke, and we did not say a thing to each other. After all, words did not matter. We looked at each other, pale and dismayed, and counted. We counted those who had returned and commemorated those who were no longer there.[8]
>
> (Gallico, 2016: 118, my translation)

After the war, in fact, many Italian Jews withdrew into silence and did not speak of their experiences with persecution, in some cases because of trauma and in others because they felt like their grief could not be expressed properly. The painful truth is that, for decades, no one really let victims tell their story and survivors were asked to numb their suffering and forget about the trauma that those persecutions had inevitably brought. In point of fact, the main focus at the time was on Italy's rebirth after the twenty years of Fascism, and Jews were often told to keep a positive attitude and not dwell in the past. The initial memoirs that appeared in Italy after the war were actually written, for the most part, by those who were involved in the Partisan movement, and the stories of persecution and racial injustice were often left out, with deportation and genocide hardly getting mentioned (Bravo, 2005: 314). Like Paul Celan evokes in his most famous poem "Death Fugue", Jews had to drink the 'black milk of dawn'[9] every morning for a very long time, and kept to themselves as if their suffering did not matter, not realising that silence was actually poisonous and would do no one any good.

For Gallico, the main shift that finally breaks the silence happens in December 1989, when she finds the small diary she had written forty-four years earlier. Then, at the age of thirteen, she was still in exile in Switzerland and had yet to realise what the Shoah was and would be. Finding the diary and reading it is striking at first, but it also represents what abruptly motions Gallico to start writing a more structured story of what happened to her and her family during the Fascism period in Italy. She therefore starts writing her testimony in the form of a memoir, also following the broad trend that sees the 1980s as the decade marked by a strong resurgence of public discourse surrounding

[8] See Gallico, L. (2016: 118). 'Quando ci ritrovammo alla Comunità israelitica nessuno di noi parlò, non ci dicemmo nulla: del resto, ogni parola era inutile. Ci guardavamo l'un l'altro, pallidi e sbigottiti, a contarci, anzi, a contare quelli che erano tornati e a commemorare quelli che non c'erano più.'

[9] See Celan, P. (1948). "Death Fugue," translated by Pierre Joris. https://poets.org/poem/death-fugue (Accessed February 27, 2021).

the Shoah. In point of fact, after almost forty years of silence, many survivors feel the need to add their own personal tile to the composite mosaic that was taking shape. As Primo Levi states in the preface to *Se Questo è Un Uomo*, '[t]he need to tell our story to 'the others' and to make 'the others' participate in it had become for us [...] an immediate and violent impulse'[10] (Levi, 1947: 5, my translation). In the introduction to *Una Bambina in Fuga*, Gallico expresses this same need to write and testify by saying:

> Some people say that no one cares about those historic facts anymore and that we should close that chapter of our history forever. But no, it does matter. All those people of my generation who suffered injustice should write, again and again, and they should flood bookshops with the sad and bitter, sometimes tragic, stories of their and our experiences during that truly dramatic period [...] It therefore seems to me that it is my unavoidable duty to give my testimony, however unimportant it may be. This is precisely the reason why I am writing: to give my testimony.[11]
>
> (Gallico, 2016: 77, my translation)

2.2 Proposed translation

The need to testify also inevitably becomes to need to translate, for literary translations constitute their own mode of testimony, creating both a 'shield of the source text' and a 'position of agency from which to explore issues relevant to the survivor's condition' (Insana, 2009: 129). This is the invisible thread that runs along the proposed translation of the first four chapters from Gallico's book *Una Bambina in Fuga*, a burning need to tell and remember, and therefore translate. The impetus that comes with this sometimes transposes into a narrative that can appear to be discontinuous, as past trauma is often difficult to recollect. As a matter of fact, this specific story is not always told in chronological order, but it rather presents itself as an inner flow that stems from Gallico's discovery of her long-lost diary. Gallico's reader, whether it be in the original or in the translation, needs to especially take this into consideration:

[10] See Levi, P. (1947: 5). 'Il bisogno di raccontare agli "altri", di fare gli "altri" partecipi, aveva assunto fra noi, prima della liberazione e dopo, il carattere di un impulso immediato e violento.'

[11] See Gallico, L. (2016: 77). 'C'è chi dice che a nessuno importa più di questi fatti e che bisogna chiudere quel capitolo della nostra storia per sempre. E invece no, ha importanza. Tutti quelli della mia generazione che hanno subito ingiustizia dovrebbero scrivere, scrivere e ancora scrivere, dovrebbero inondare le librerie di racconti tristi e amari, a volte tragici, come sono state le loro e nostre esperienze durante quel periodo veramente drammatico. [...] Mi sembra quindi mio dovere imprescindibile rendere la mia testimonianza, per quanto poco importante essa possa essere. Ecco, il motivo per cui scrivo è solo e semplicemente questo: rendere la mia testimonianza.'

> My narrative may seem fragmentary and broken at times and, indeed, these memories were written at different times, in some cases even years apart. My story does not begin at the beginning, but rather with a fortuitous event: the discovery, at the bottom of an old drawer, of a tiny notebook from a long time ago...[12]
>
> (Gallico, 2016: 78, my translation)

2.2.1 Chapter I: The diary

It is 27th December 1989 and, with great emotion, I found at the bottom of an old drawer a tiny notebook from a very long time ago: my diary from 1945. Many years have passed, forty-four to be precise. I was not yet thirteen, I was at boarding school in Switzerland, and things were going really badly. According to what I read in the diary, I often cried thinking of the faraway homeland, and my beloved city, and the relatives I had left and whom I did not know if I would find still alive. The tempest of war was passing over us, and we did not know what damage and what mourning it would have brought us. A fixed thought, a tormenting nightmare, a grey shadow accompanied my days and especially my nights. However, I was a little girl, almost still a child, and therefore my thoughts, worries and distractions were those of a twelve-year-old, even though what I was going through had made me more mature than my peers.

At boarding school, the little things and the occurrences that would have otherwise been irrelevant had I been in a different place and under different circumstances, seemed of great importance. For instance, a nun being sick and her consequent absence from lessons made the whole class anxious and upset. The girls would be very worried about the health of their favourite teacher and would say things like: 'Bless her, look how pale she was...'Another time, it was the replacement of the Head Nun that brought great dismay to all the 'convent schoolgirls' – which is the expression I use in my diary to talk about the girls that lived with me at boarding school – and the diary entry describing the farewell party is filled with exclamation marks and expressions such as 'dear', 'dearest', 'unforgettable'. Everything is carried to excess, almost to exasperation, I would say. So, the affection between friends becomes an exaggerated emotion and the thought of not seeing your best friend again feels truly unbearable.

[12] See Gallico, L. (2016: 78). 'Il mio modo di raccontare può sembrare frammentario e spezzato, e in effetti lo è, perché questi ricordi sono stati scritti in tempi diversi, a distanza perfino di anni. La mia storia non inizia dal principio, ma da un fatto accidentale: il ritrovamento in fondo a un vecchio cassetto di un minuscolo quaderno di tanto tempo fa...'

Meanwhile, the days went by slowly but peacefully between lessons and homework, tears and laughter, games and meditations. In May 1945, however, we were overcome by the great joy of the end of the war and by the prospect of returning to Italy. At that time, I was not even saddened by the thought of having to leave the Institute, the nuns, the classmates and the places that had become dear to me: I was too gripped by the enthusiasm of the 'great return'.

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For a while I stayed with my parents in Castagnola di Lugano and then, finally, at the crack of dawn of 13th July 1945, we crossed the border on a military lorry that took us to Como. From there, we boarded another lorry that left us in Milan. The city was full of stragglers like us, people who did not know where to go or what to do, people who were coming from all over Europe in search of a place to stay. In all likelihood, they were people like us who were returning to their home country from a forced exile or evacuees who were trying to go back to their respective cities, soldiers and partisans who wanted to go home. In a way, we all represented Italy: a country that was trying to get back on its feet after the tragedy of the war and after the twenty years of hateful Fascist dictatorship. We were part of that humiliated and frustrated, bombed and decimated Italy which, despite everything, was lifting up its head and wanted to forget its sad past to get back to normal, to rebuild, to live a dignified, honest and 'democratic'– which in itself was a whole new concept for us – life.

Walking through the streets of Milan, we would sometimes come across a heap of rubble or buildings that were partly destroyed due to the terrible bombings. There were too many houses to count which, even though they had not fallen down, bore the marks of bombs and grenades. Although people were in a state of ferment and had that passion for living I have mentioned before, Milan was still hurt, just like a wounded animal: it was gazing around to take fresh heart and, most importantly, to decide what to do next. A very pressing matter for us was to find a means of transport that would get us to Mantua. During those chaotic days, when it seemed to me as though everyone wanted to go somewhere other than where they were, there were no trains nor coaches. Nevertheless, on the same day we arrived, I no longer remember how, we found a lorry that was going to Mantua to deliver some goods and, after an extensive bargaining, we

got on the back, in the open air, where we barely managed to find room between the piles of crates. There were other people besides us, but I do not remember anything about them except their pale, tired faces. Maybe I fell asleep. After all, it had been a long day full of emotions, and I was only thirteen years old. It was a never-ending journey; at times I would wake up and feel the lorry jolting on the bumpy road to then see a cloud of dust and all of our drawn and tired faces. It was already night-time and the summer afternoon sultriness we had found in Milan was long gone. Now the air was fresh and brisk, almost pleasant, had it not been full of the heavy and obnoxious smell of fuel.

God willing, at dead of night we arrived in Mantua. A tremor of emotion still floods over me remembering that long-awaited but also deeply dreaded moment. Yes, our dear and beloved city, although wounded in several places, was still standing. But… what had happened to our relatives, my old grandmother, my uncles and aunts, and what about our house? In order to find the answer to these tormenting questions, we decided to head towards grandma's house. Without saying a word, we grabbed our simple suitcases and set off in the dark night, father, mother and child.

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The light of the stars guided us through the streets of our city. Every now and then we would see a pile of rubble. Here, too, just like in Milan, houses were bombed and destroyed. In silence, we quickened our steps and, with our hearts beating fast, we took the street where my grandma lived. Finally, there it was, there was the house. The house was actually there, and it was intact. To us it almost felt like a miracle, like it was there for us, waiting, a safe haven after such distress and uncertainty.

We stopped for a moment, out of breath, and we exchanged a glance of both relief and concern. We then rushed to ring the bell. After a wait that to us felt like an eternity, but that was actually only a couple of minutes – bear in mind that it was the middle of the night and that people were sleeping – grandma's white head poked out of a window above our heads, and we heard a voice asking, 'who's there?' My dad, his voice broken with emotion, replied, 'Mum, it's us, we're back.' An exclamation of joy, then, after a further wait, the door opened, and we were all united in a long, never-ending embrace. Crying and laughing at the same time, we told each other the main things that had

happened, and then we finally laid in the makeshift beds that had been prepared for us. Ultimately, that was the happy ending of that memorable day, the day of my thirteenth birthday.

2.2.2 Chapter II: Jew!

I would now like to take a trip back in time to remember the series of events that had led me to that lorry which, bumping along the bombed road with its load of people and goods, was taking me back to my city after almost two years of forced exile. It all started in 1938, when I was six years old. My life was moving along smoothly and peacefully, like that of any Italian middle-class child. My father, who was a doctor, worked in the city and had a large number of devoted patients. My mother took care of the house, helped by a resident maid. Every day, immediately after lunch, my mum and I would go for a walk in the sun along the avenues lined with plane and lime trees and we would then go to the public gardens, where I would play and have fun with my friends. In the period between February and March – when Mantua's patron Saint Anselm is celebrated – we would change route and, instead of walking towards the public gardens, we would go to the funfair. It was set up in a huge space in front of Palazzo Te and there were amusements and marquees of all kind: human cannonballs, distorting mirrors, etc. It was great fun, and we children would look forward to this time of year that brought us novelty and joy.

I know I said that my life was moving along smoothly and peacefully like that of any child my age, but I was wrong. I had never realised that I was actually very different from my peers: I was a Jew. What does this mean? In fact, what did this mean *for me*? That I did not go to church on Sundays, that there were no holy pictures around the house, that I did not know any priests... Yes, it meant this, and much more. But I did not realise that and, again, I was only six years old and I considered myself to be exactly like all the other children: I had a mum, a dad, I had my house, my room with toys, my routine, and I was happy. Nevertheless, trouble began before the end of 1938, when the so-called 'racial laws' were issued. As perhaps not everyone knows, they were issued on two consecutive dates and consisted of heavy restrictions to which Jews were subjected. You could not own a house or land, you could not be the manager of a shop, you could not keep a radio at home, you could not have a Christian maid, and many

other regulations along these lines. These restrictions were already a blatant violation of citizens' rights, but much worse were the measures that banned Jewish students from attending state schools – from primary school to university – and those that decreed the dismissal of all Jewish employees from public and state bodies.

In order to understand what all this meant for us, I will give some real-life examples. There were some young people who, no matter how intellectually gifted, could no longer continue their studies after primary school solely because they were not able to attend public or Jewish school. In small Jewish Communities like that of Mantua there were none, and these young people therefore saw their dreams for the future shattered. Many families sent their children to study abroad. Two cousins of mine, for instance, enrolled at the University of Lausanne, and eventually graduated there. But of course, not everyone could afford such expenses, which is why so many young people stopped studying and started looking for a job. However, finding employment was extremely difficult for young Jews and, in most cases, it did not even meet their expectations and needs anyway. To this day, more than fifty years later, these people, who are no longer young, still bitterly regret what they were not able to do then. Even today, they still suffer the pernicious consequences of those iniquitous laws that effectively ruined their lives.

Even worse for many Italian families – yes, Italian, although Jewish – was the dismissal decree that fired all public and state employees. Highly esteemed teachers who had already been tenured in state schools for years, prestigious university professors, senior officials, highly decorated officers who served in World War I and the African campaign were all sent home from one day to the next. These men supported their families with their jobs, and they therefore had to frantically look for other sources of income. My father had to leave his job at the Mutua – the Italian state health service of the time – but he was quite lucky because his private patients, or most of them, did not abandon him, at least until things came to head. My father's brother, a science teacher in a *Liceo Scientifico*, found employment in a lye factory. Other teachers, who had been kicked out of their schools, made do with translating or giving private lessons, unofficially and often under false names, of course. These are just some examples that I saw first-hand, and just some of the material consequences of those infamous laws.

But let us pause for a moment to think about how those people must have felt, and let us reflect on the humiliation and moral suffering of all those families. Soldiers who had served their country with honour, scientists who had worked in laboratories and universities, labourers and clerks who were fond of their job, merchants highly regarded for their honesty and freelancers were all of a sudden held in public scorn. The Italian Jewish citizens, who constituted a small minority but had been perfectly integrated for years and were respected everywhere for being industrious and honest, suddenly saw the world collapse beneath their feet. Even some friends no longer greeted them, and acquaintances turned away so as not to see them.

Now, what I ask myself is: how could all this have happened? Why did Italians, 'other' Italians, Christians, not rebel against those iniquitous laws – and I use this heavy adjective again on purpose – that were totally devoid of a scientific basis, let alone one of justice and humanity? Why do Italians always accept everything without a shred of critical analysis? Why did priests and bishops not bellow from their pulpits against this lack of charity and love? Today, God willing, we live in a democratic country – although heavily damaged – and people talk and discuss amongst themselves, they protest and take to the streets. How is it possible that then no one had the courage of their convictions and that no one had an ounce of moral and critical sense?

Once, when I read about what Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands did during those years, I was very impressed. When the Nazis invaded her country and, among other oppressive measures, made Jews wear the yellow star on their clothes and coats as a badge of shame, she personally went out in the streets of her capital with a flaming yellow star on her coat. It was an act of great courage and solidarity that was undoubtedly very much appreciated by Dutch Jews, although unfortunately the Queen was unable to save them either from persecution or from deportation. In addition, Dutch workers also played their part by organising solidarity strikes. Thanks to all this, Dutch Jews realised that they were not alone and that their Queen, too, stood by their side. But the circumstances were different. In the Netherlands, the persecution of Jews was carried out by an enemy who had invaded the country and was therefore hated by all the people. In Italy, on the other hand, the racial laws had been promulgated by the 'legitimate' government and signed by the King. Yes, I will say it again, by the King,

whose first and foremost duty should have been looking after the welfare of 'his' people, all of them, regardless of religion, political views, rank or class, and who therefore should have – as it was in his power to do – defended the Jews from this infamy. If we think about it, even considering what the situation in Italy was like at the time, it proved to be an act of great cowardice – to say the least – that a King worthy of his title should never have committed. And yet, despite all this and despite the tragedy that followed, the vast majority of Italian Jews who survived the Shoah waited for the storm to pass – as their ancestors had done many times over the centuries – to then return and start again. They withdrew into a dignified and painful – but never hostile or vindictive – silence, and healed their moral and material wounds. They reopened the shops, the clinics, the offices, and they resumed the social relations that had been ruptured. In short, they rebuilt their destroyed lives. And, above all, they continued to love Italy. It is truly incredible. If I had not personally witnessed it, and indeed taken part in this 'rebirth', and if my family had not done the exact same thing, I would not believe it.

A young friend of mine, who ten years ago managed to emigrate from Lithuania – her native country – to Israel, and now lives in Italy, once asked me, 'After everything Italy did to you and your family, why did you come back? Why didn't you move to another country?' And she was genuinely surprised. She could not understand why we had returned to a country that had treated us as enemies, that had persecuted us in the worst of ways, eventually handing us over to the Germans, when by then everyone – everyone except us – knew the tragic fate that awaited us and the ghastly end we were destined to in the extermination camps. Even now, many years later, I cannot give a precise answer to this difficult question and to many other questions. Why? Why? Why? These whys will remain unanswered.

I could perhaps answer my friend's question like this. Maybe because of laziness, maybe because of custom or maybe because of the feeling that for us there would never have been a country free of such recurrent persecutions. And, of course, we believed and hoped that, after the fall of Fascism, everything would go back to the way it was before. The only thing I am certain of is that, when I was in Switzerland, I never saw my parents and the other Italian refugees doubt whether they should return to Italy or not, and neither did I ever hear them questioning this truth: Italy was our homeland,

where we were born, where our dead were buried, where our relatives, brothers, parents, children were waiting for us. It seemed natural and logical to all of us to 'return home' and start over.

After a first period of disorientation and reorganisation, our life gradually went back to an almost normal pace. We moved house because our flat had been occupied by other people, we regained possession of most of our furniture, my father got back in touch with his old patients and reopened the clinic. I was sent to Latin lessons because the subject was not offered in the school I had attended in Switzerland. I passed the exam in October and was promoted to seventh grade without ever having attended the sixth. Thus, in mid-October 1945, only three months after our repatriation, I started my new life as a schoolgirl and as an Italian citizen just – or almost – like any other.

2.2.3 Chapter III: School

I have come to realise that I have interrupted my story to linger over personal considerations about what happened. This was not my intention, but I was carried away by the emotion that I still feel today when I think back to those sorrowful times and those painful experiences. So, I pick up the threads and I see myself as a six-year-old on my first day of school. This is an exciting moment for every child in the world, one that the whole family experiences with trepidation. For we Jewish children, the anticipation of that day was fraught with anxiety and fear. We had been expelled from state schools, which meant we could no longer attend classes with Christian children. However, we still had to go to school of course, which is why we were all put together in one class: boys and girls – at the time this was not the norm in Italian schools – of all grades, from first to fifth. I was afraid, or rather, without exaggerating, I was terrified. I knew almost none of the other Jewish children and I had a thousand questions, as I am sure my parents did too. Where would we go to school? How many of us would there be? Who would be the teacher?

When the time finally came, we all gathered in the small square in front of the school and we were then ushered into the old, dilapidated building. The large corridor was covered with grey and red tiles, many of them ruined and uneven. Our classroom was the first one on the right. It was large and quite bright, but the grey concrete floor and the old dark wooden desks created an atmosphere of depressing melancholy. The

teacher was a nice, young woman who welcomed us with great kindness, accompanied us to our seats, divided us into different rows of desks according to the grade we were in, and reassured our worried parents. Once they left, she spoke to us gently and told us that she would have loved us and that we would have loved her. She was moved, and her eyes were filled with tears. That was surely the most mixed and strange class she had ever had to teach, and she must have felt very sorry for us frightened children. I adored my teacher from day one and, henceforth, the idea of either school or the other children would no longer scare me anymore. Even the classroom stopped feeling grey and sad to me, and I learned and did my homework with enjoyment. The girl sitting next to me in class was smart and nice, and she would go on to be at my side for all five years of primary school.

Everything went well until, on the eve of the Christmas holidays, word got out that our schoolteacher was to be replaced by another teacher whom, of course, we did not know. This was another time of apprehension and fear. Our teacher was to leave us, and her place was to be taken by someone else, who also happened to be a man. Men felt intimidating to me, or rather, they scared me, and I feared that this new instructor would be much stricter than our dear teacher. My head waltzed from one fear to another. But there was no point in being afraid or fighting or asking for explanations. It was just the way it was. We had to comply and obey. When we went back to school after the Christmas holidays, we found our new teacher, a quiet and kind man who to us seemed old because of his white hair. He, too, spoke to us gently, and soon won our trust and affection. He was very good, and to this day I still wonder how he managed to run a class like ours, which was not particularly large, but consisted of pupils from five different grades! I later learned that he had been a highly respected primary school headmaster, who was then ‘demoted’ to a teaching position because he was of Jewish origin. He ended up being my teacher for five years and I always respected and esteemed him. Later on, my mother became friends with his wife and I with his daughter, and we spent a lot of time together for many years, until life separated us.

The five years of primary school were not without moments of tension and fear for us Jewish children. On the way to school, towards Piazza Sordello – the magnificent square where Palazzo Bonacolsi and Palazzo Ducale are located – Christian children

often mocked us with stupid and cruel remarks, as only children can do. Some of them knotted the corners of a handkerchief to make it look like pig ears and then waved it under our noses. Others threw stones at us and shouted: 'Down with the Jew, down with the Jew!' Once we got to the safety of our classroom, however, everything ran smoothly following the daily routine. We looked at our homework, gave oral presentations, and listened to the teacher explaining. All in all, we did everything calmly. Despite this, there were still moments at school that were very distressing for us, like playtime, for instance.

Playtime is a moment of enjoyment and fun for any primary school child and, overall, it is a very important moment, both physically and psychologically. First of all, you can get up from your desk, move around, run, then you can take your mind off things, not think about class, play with your classmates, and these are all things that children are very much in need of. However, for us, playtime was not just a way to have a break from a long school morning, but it was also a moment of humiliation and anger, and I will explain why. If my memory serves me right, there were two separate playgrounds for the Christian children's classes, one for boys and one for girls, or perhaps there was only one playground, but the boys' and girls' classes had playtime at different times. On the other hand, we all went together – boys and girls – to the boys' playground, at the same time of the other Christian boys. At first, I found this to be very upsetting, but I eventually got used to it. We all did, and we too began to play tig, hopscotch, and so on. Nevertheless, our group always remained separate from the other children, and this is how we spent playtime during the first three years of primary school. In the two years that followed, we would go to the top floor of the school building, to a kind of long veranda or covered balcony from which, through a net, we could see the other children playing...

To conclude on the topic of 'school', I must honestly admit that for me, who started first grade in October 1938, it was not so difficult and distressing after all to start attending the 'Jews-only' school in Piazza Seminario, despite all limitations and discriminations I have already described considered. Much more bitter and traumatic, however, was the impact on the older children, who had already started school in 'standard' classes and were therefore forced to abandon their teachers and classmates,

to suddenly find themselves in a very different environment from the one they had been expelled from: a more sorrowful, constricted and confined environment. I never talked about this with my classmates from the grades above of me, not even after the end of the war. After all, at that time we had other matters to worry about…

Once I finished fifth grade, in June 1943, I took the entrance examination for secondary school at the Scuola Maurizio Sacchi in Via Ardigò. I was the only Jewish girl and I was shown to a small desk at the back of the class, far from the other students. I remember that the headmaster came up to my desk and kindly smiled at me, as if to give me courage and tell me that to him I was a pupil just like the others. The first part of the exam was an Italian test that consisted of a dictation without punctuation, which I performed quickly and with no hesitation. Overall, the examination went well, and I was therefore admitted to secondary school.

2.2.4 Chapter IV: After 8th September 1943

But destiny evidently did not want me to attend sixth grade in Italy, because in a short time, events came to a head. The 25th July came, with its false hopes, and the 8th September came, with the German troops invading Italy... From 8th September onwards, the situation of Jews in Italy became similar to that of Jews in Germany and in any country occupied by the Nazis, which means that a systematic 'Jew hunt' began. Jews were arrested and sent to internment camps, which then became the point of departure for the Nazi *lagers*. Many families managed to save themselves, either because they were warned in time by friends and relatives or by pure chance.

I remember that one night, a few days after 8th September, we heard such loud knocks on the door that all three of us woke up. I do not know who it was because I went right back to sleep, but the following morning when I got up, I saw my father with a bandage around his head. What happened that night remained a mystery to me, and I never knew who did it. I did know it was a warning though, so much so that my father left the next day. He took refuge in the countryside, near Castellucchio, where a large family who used to be my mother's tenants lived. They had always been fond of us and welcomed my father with generosity and understanding. A few days after my dad left – the only ones at home were now my mum, our devoted maid and eleven-year-old me – a German soldier rang the doorbell. He was well-mannered and, as he spoke good Italian, asked

for my father. When he heard that my dad was not there, he said that our house would be requisitioned and, because of the adjoining clinic, put at the disposal of a German medical officer. Since the house was very big, we could still live there with the officer, which was something that for the three of us would *surely* constitute the 'greatest guarantee of safety' because, *obviously*, 'nothing compares to having a German officer in the house,' he said. And so, after informing us that he would return the next day with the medical officer who was going to take possession of the house, he left. I was not present at the conversation, but when my mum told us about it, she was terrified. We had to leave immediately, as soon as possible. We hurriedly packed some crates with paintings and valuables, which our maid took to her house in a small town in the province of Mantua where they would be safe. Everything else got left behind. In the suitcases, we packed some underwear and some clothes, and we then prepared to leave our house for good.

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I remember that the following day one of the tenants' sons from Castellucchio came to pick us up at dawn and took us across town on a horse-drawn cart. A thin fog enveloped us, and the usual landscape appeared to my childish eyes as blurred and transformed into something different, something that along the way gradually turned into a sad ominous sign. Thus began our pilgrimage which, after several stops, would eventually lead us to safety in Switzerland.

Our stay in Castellucchio lasted a little over a week and I have very vague memories of it. Games in the barn, running through the fields, afternoons spent with the women in the farmyard 'husking' corn… There is only one episode that is deeply rooted in my memory and that has proven to be truly unforgettable. Every morning, at the same time, a train loaded with Italian soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Germans would pass through Castellucchio, and so I would go with the farmers' daughters to bring them some food, water and cigarettes. We would walk across the fields to avoid being seen from the road and stop at a fixed point where the train drivers, who evidently had orders not to stop at stations, would slow down just enough for us to hand out what we had and for the prisoners to reach out their hands and collect it. One morning I had a packet of cigarettes in my hand and I gave one to each of the soldiers pressing against the

windows, until I eventually ran out. So, the last soldier, the one to whom I could not give a cigarette, said to me, ‘Give me the empty packet, I will keep it as a souvenir.’ Then, he looked at me with a sad smile and asked, ‘Child, how old are you?’ I answered, ‘I’m eleven.’ But, in the meantime, the train had already passed by. Two days later, the train passed through Castellucchio without slowing down along the fields where we were waiting with our bags full of provisions. Indeed, it actually sped up, and we thought we saw German soldiers in the driver’s cab. Even this was denied to us – the chance to give a little relief to those who at that moment were worse off than us.

Fascists and Germans began to comb through the countryside and the courtyards in search of food, clandestine butchers, partisans, soldiers who had escaped capture, and Jews. It was then that we realised our presence could constitute a great danger for those who had opened the doors of their homes to us without asking for anything and probably without understanding the reason behind that absurd persecution. Their eyes alone, full of ancient wisdom, expressed compassion for us who had to hide for no fault of our own. So, we left Castellucchio and joined one of my father’s cousins, who had ‘evacuated’ from Milan to a small town called Albino, in Val Seriana.

Travelling by public transport – namely trains and coaches – was extremely dangerous for Jews, as Fascists could get on at any time, ask for our identity papers, and arrest us on the spot. We did not have false documents, but since we could not do otherwise, we tried our luck anyway. My father left for Brescia on his own, while my mother and I got on the next coach. Our faithful maid came with us, but we pretended not to know her so as not to involve her in a possible arrest. The journey went well and, when we got to Brescia, we met my father at the railway station. Our maid bid us farewell in tears and returned to Mantua, promising that she would try to recover other things from our house as soon as possible.

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We got on the Val Seriana train and continued our journey. I was with my mum, while my dad was on his own in another compartment. The atmosphere was very tense. It seemed to me that the other travellers, too, had something to hide or were secretly fleeing like us. We kept looking at each other, but no one dared to say a word.

Everything went well this time too, and we arrived in Albino. There we were greeted by our cousins, who then took us to a hotel.

My story is maybe too full of details that are not very relevant to the development of my story. However, in showing the thousands of daily difficulties, the perhaps trivial entanglements of politics and small misdemeanours, the sacrifices, the help that was offered or denied, the looks full of either compassion or prejudice and contempt… In showing all this, I mean to underline the atmosphere of extreme discomfort, sorrow, fear and suspicion in which we moved during that period. Even shopping for groceries was a problem and, while it was an issue for everyone in wartime, it was especially tricky for us. An old proverb says: 'You cannot live on bread alone' and, though it is true, you also need bread to live, and if you do not have a 'ration card', how do you buy bread? How do you live? Eventually, you resort to the 'black market', which means spending much more than in the shops, managing to get in touch with the right people who will not betray you, travelling long distances on foot or by bicycle to find some flour, some meat, butter or sugar. And all this with the constant threat of a roadblock, of a chance encounter with a Fascist, perhaps a former friend of yours, who tells you to stop, arrests you, then hands you over to the Germans. I myself was not so nervous, because I was with my parents and perhaps also because I did not fully realise how dangerous our situation was, so I ended up adapting easily.

In the first period we spent in Albino, we did not have any problems because the hotelkeeper, who knew everything, had taken us under his wing. Alas, this protection did not last long, and after a few days, no more than a week, the hotelkeeper himself was warned that there would soon be a Fascist roundup. What were we going to do? Once again, we had to change accommodation, and find somewhere else to go. The hotelkeeper put us in contact with a cattle dealer and clandestine butcher who, a short time later, told us that his brother-in-law was willing to put us up in his house, a hut in the hills above Albino. So, one morning we set off for the hut. We travelled along the first stretch of road on a cart pulled by a small horse, then the narrow dirt track became even narrower, until it became a steep and difficult path. We continued on foot, each of us carrying a suitcase or a package. Since we were not used to mountain trails, we

arrived at our destination tired and weary, but the kind welcome we received from the Nicoli family warmed our hearts.

'Barbù' – as the villagers called the mountain dweller who would host us – was waiting for us at the top of the path with his wife and children. The family, who had never seen us before, opened the doors of their house to us with great humanity and generosity, as if we had been dear friends. We who had been persecuted, we who had fled, we who had been expelled from 'our' home, exiled from 'our' town, and disowned by those whom we considered to be 'our' true friends.

3. Testimony, transmission and translation in Una Bambina in Fuga

3.1 Translation commentary

The translation commentary of the first four chapters of Gallico's memoir *Una Bambina in Fuga* aims to shed light on the main topics that have already been introduced in the first chapters of the thesis – namely testimony and transmission – and analyse them through the lens of specific translation choices. The linchpins for this discussion are, arguably, the concepts of voice and persona and of the individuality of the survivor-witness's figure, which are both key elements of testimony as a genre and are largely developed in Gallico's writing through a variety of linguistic expedients. These include the particular use of both lexis and sentence structure, but are above all reflected in grammar, as it is observed through the preponderant use of first person pronouns, whether they be singular or plural.

Another key feature that is analysed in the translation of *Una Bambina in Fuga* is then the issue of Jewishness and how it specifically plays a central role in the process of transmitting the Shoah experience, for 'Jewish identity formation [...] is inextricably tied to the ways in which we think through the Holocaust' (Morris, 2002: 5-6). In consequence, the second part of the commentary focuses precisely on the subject of transmission and of preserving the language choices that draw attention to the central concept of Jewish identity. Thus, the translator's role in shaping and transmitting a faithful version of the original becomes an essential concern and, as the challenges of recreating a personal account are discussed, it becomes more and more evident that

being able to represent the Jewish Shoah experience as truthfully as possible is, first and foremost, a matter of semantics.

The underlying strategy for the translation is, then, to enhance the original testimony in such a way that the target English audience is consequently brought closer to the tragic reality of Jews in Fascist Italy, something that without translation would not be possible. This is inherently linked to the issue of bridging the gap between the past and the present and to the crucial need to transmit those tragic events. In point of fact, the translator establishes themselves as a conveyor of difficult meaning and, ultimately, provides access to Gallico's individual and unique vantage point within the Shoah, creating a new – but nonetheless authentic and true – version of testimony. Indeed, translating *Una Bambina in Fuga* proves to be an amplifying act that enables the survivor-witness's story to reach a new linguistic and social context, therefore contributing to the overarching goal of preserving Shoah memory and making Gallico's testimony 'live' beyond its domestic context (Folkvord, 2014: 256).

3.2 Testimony and translation

Translating a text within the genre of Shoah testimony, contrary to more conventional translation processes, is not simply a matter of avoiding the traps with which the source text is laden or of overcoming the linguistic challenges that the original sets; it is, indeed, a matter of transferring the expressive force of witness writing and of recreating a narrative that is, first and foremost, truth-telling. Translating Gallico's testimony is, then, 'an *arduous* task' (Insana, 2009: ix), but an essential one nonetheless, for it is always important to bear in mind that where there is a need to testify, there is also a need to translate. In point of fact, translation of testimony is inherently tied to the genre label, which is something that the translator can never overlook. *Una Bambina in Fuga* is therefore translated by keeping in mind that the final product will ultimately embody the testifying function of the original.

3.2.1 The importance of 'I'

The central focus of testimony is always the individual and, in the specificity of Holocaust Literature, what it means to be a Jew during the Shoah and its persecutions. This is reflected in language in particular by the use of the first personal singular

pronoun 'I' and of other grammatical particles such as 'me', 'my' and 'mine', which all denote a profound personal sphere that, through Gallico's writing, proves to be prevailing. The translator then becomes the willing interlocutor who allows the victim's story to be transmitted, projecting a sense of self whose principal performance is the act of testimony. Bearing this in mind and knowing what the genre label of testimony entails, translation can sometimes resort to changing the subject of a sentence to prioritise the individual and further enhance the key figure of the survivor-witness. This concept is expressly shown through this example from Chapter I:

> Allora anche il pensiero di dover abbandonare l'Istituto, le suore, le compagne, i luoghi divenuti cari non rattristano più molto *la giovane educanda*, ormai tutta presa dall'entusiasmo del "grande ritorno".
>
> At that time, I was not even saddened by the thought of having to leave the Institute, the nuns, the classmates and the places that had become dear to me: *I* was too gripped by the enthusiasm of the 'great return'.

In the source text, Gallico chooses to use the third person subject 'la giovane educanda' to refer to herself, which is definitely an interesting expedient but, since this is the only instance where this happens in the text, it makes more sense to use the 'I' in the target version, to enhance the personal and individual dimension. This is also achieved through the rearranging of the sentence structure and the insertion of the expression 'dear to *me*' at the end of the first part of the sentence, so that 'me' and 'I' are closer together, thus creating a stronger sense of *pathos*. A similar example of this translation process can be found later on in Chapter I, when Gallico talks about her grandma, who she first calls 'la vecchia nonna' and then 'la nonna'. It would possibly work to keep this more detached way of referring to her grandmother in the English translation, but at the same time it is evident that saying '*my* old grandmother' and '*my* grandma' is much more effective and emotional. It creates, indeed, a tighter perception of a personal story and, ultimately, it brings back the focus to the individual, which is something that testimony calls translation to do.

3.2.2 The duality in voice and persona

One of the most striking features of *Una Bambina in Fuga* is the issue of voice. As previously mentioned, this is a key element of the testimony genre, which makes it even more crucial to analyse how it specifically unravels in Gallico's writing and,

subsequently, in its translation. Gallico's case is peculiar because her voice does not stay constant throughout her testimony, but changes and fluctuates between two almost polar opposite personas: the child and the adult. In point of fact, the way she builds her own self-narration and self-representation is strictly tied to the idea of being able to blend and intertwine the innocent child persona with the more conscious adult persona, creating a sort of back-and-forth that guides the reader through what it means to have survived the Italian Fascist persecutions. It is, then, remarkable how, through testimony and its translation, Gallico's reader is able to access both the *in medias res* voice and the *post* voice, which seem to bridge the gap between the *during* and the *after* and create a complete picture of what testifying means: preserving and transmitting – through what has previously been defined as the process of *translatio* – the memory of past traumatic events that would otherwise be erased. Translation has this exact duty and, as testimonial texts pose the question of remaining faithful to the voice(s) and persona(s) of the original, becomes the vehicle for Gallico's testifying position.

By means of the linguistic and translational analysis of the distinction between the voice of the adult and that of the child, it is clear that, in the context of Gallico's testimony, a parallel can be drawn to the difference between history and story. In point of fact, the adult persona appears to be more detached and distant, intervening in the text every now and then to reflect on significant historical events, whereas the child persona is more focused on telling its story, therefore appearing as emotional and approachable, at times almost naive. This duality is also reflected in the language used throughout the testimonial text, with a clear contrast in sentence structure, grammar and lexis. For instance, the adult voice is shown, both in the source and target text, through the use of more complex syntax and longer sentences, as well as through the preponderant presence of the third person and of specific word choices that a child would never make. Regarding vocabulary, more specifically, terms that are associated to the adult persona tend to be translated into English with words that have a Latin origin, so as to create a sense of sophistication and wisdom. Some examples from Chapter II and III are:

> conseguenze nefaste (*pernicious* consequences), inique leggi ('*iniquitous* laws'), infami leggi (*infamous* laws), vessazioni (*oppressive* measures), infamia (*infamy*),

viltà (*cowardice*), silenzio dignitoso (*dignified* silence), spezzati (*ruptured*), ambiente ristretto e chiuso (*constricted* and *confined* environment)

The child's voice, on the other hand, is characterised by the use of shorter and more fragmented sentences – which appear to follow a sort of stream of consciousness – as well as by the employment of the first person and of direct speech. Language as a whole tends to be more detailed and descriptive, which allows the reader to see the world through Gallico's '*childish* eyes', as the author herself points out in Chapter IV with the Italian expression 'occhi di *bimba*'. The lexis is also much simpler and juvenile, if compared to the adult's voice, which is a factor that needs to be taken into careful consideration when translating. Four significant examples from Gallico's testimony that show this translational process are 'strada *dissestata*' in Chapter I, '*signora* giovane' in Chapter III and 'fuggissero *in incognito*' and '*scrutavamo* l'un l'altro' in Chapter IV. As a matter of fact, 'dissestata' could be translated with both 'bumpy' and 'uneven', 'signora' with both 'woman' and 'lady', 'in incognito' with both 'secretly' and 'in incognito' and 'scrutavamo' with both 'looking at' and 'scrutinising'. At first, these expressions all appear to be either actual synonyms or at least equivalents, which is why the translator is faced with a choice, one that can only be resolved by considering the matter of voice. By analysing the passages that these specific terms are taken from and by identifying that they are mostly characterised by the presence of the child persona, it is then evident that the better translation choices are the less complicated and artificial ones ('*bumpy* road' and '*secretly* fleeing'), and that it is preferrable to opt for words that convey a sense of innocence ('*looking at* each other') or warmth ('young *woman*').

3.3 Jewishness and transmission

There is, however, a voice that never fades and that is always present in Holocaust Literature and, naturally, in Gallico's testimony as well. This persona is perhaps the most crucial and delicate one – both from the audience and the translator's point of view – and it is that of the Jewish survivor-witness. In point of fact, as is common in the genre of testimony, Jewishness is placed at the centre and is therefore a constant throughout the whole narrative. The original would not be the same without the predominant sense of Jewish individual and collective identity, and so the translation has the unavoidable task of preserving that same essence of truth and self. This can prove to be harder than

expected because of the complexity that the Shoah as a topic poses, which is why the process of translating Gallico's testimony has to be dedicated to working 'sensitively and diligently to keep the difficult, difficult' (Morris, 2002: 7).

3.3.1 The importance of 'us' and 'we'

As previously stated, the use of the first person calls for a focus on the victim's personal experience and creates pathos, which is an important aspect of testimony writing and therefore represents a key point to consider when translating. Whereas the first person singular pronoun 'I' creates a sense of personal reality, the first person plural pronoun 'we' adds an additional layer and is able to establish an idea of community, to which the lyrical 'I' intrinsically belongs. Gallico is, for instance, very meticulous in choosing when to use first person plural verbs – as in Italian subject pronouns do not always need to be made explicit – and when to use third person ones, which is why it is then essential to translate those sentences accordingly, using the 'we' in English too. The same goes for the use of 'noi' and 'ci' as direct or indirect object pronouns, which translate to 'we' or 'us' depending on the grammatical and logical context, and of the possessive adjective 'nostro', 'ours' in English. When analysing Gallico's testimony, it is especially important to note how first person plural pronouns and adjectives are almost always an indicator of Jewish identity. She does not, for example, need to specify that the pronouns 'we' and 'us' stand for 'Jews' when, in Chapter II, she writes '*eravamo rientrati* in un paese che *ci* aveva trattati come nemici' ('*we* had returned to a country that had treated *us* as enemies') or 'la sensazione che *per noi* non ci sarebbe mai stato un paese esente da tali periodiche persecuzioni' ('the feeling that *for us* there would never have been a country free of such recurrent persecutions'). Keeping the translated version within the same framework of the original and not adding 'Jews' after the first person pronoun therefore prove to be effective ways of preserving the original's intention to transmit an authentic identity reality that sees the victim's voice as a collective one. This is especially exemplified at the end of Chapter IV, where we see the clear difference between the personal 'noi', referring to Gallico's family, and the collective 'noi', referring to Jews as a whole:

> Essi, che non *ci* avevano mai visto prima, *ci* aprirono le porte della loro casa con grande umanità e generosità, come se *fossimo stati* amici carissimi, *noi* perseguitati,

> *noi* in fuga, *noi* cacciati dalla "*nostra*" casa, dalla "*nostra*" città, da quelli che *noi* consideravamo i "*nostri*" veri amici di sempre.
>
> The family, who had never seen *us* before, opened the doors of their house *to us* with great humanity and generosity, as if *we* had been dear friends. *We* who had been persecuted, *we* who had fled, *we* who had been expelled from '*our*' home, exiled from '*our*' town, and disowned by those whom *we* considered to be '*our*' true friends.

In the translation, the decision to divide the original sentence into two distinct ones enhances this very difference and makes it clear that, even though grammatically 'noi' and 'we' stay the same, semantically they do not always carry the same meaning. In the second sentence, the use of first person plural pronouns and adjectives is indeed more meaningful – also as a result of the powerful repetition – and overall it corresponds to a much broader persona. The translation magnifies this and enables the transmission of a sense of belonging to something that not only characterises Gallico's micro-story but is actually common to all Italian Jews. This is particularly remarkable because, precisely through translation, the reader is able to understand that within the context of Holocaust Literature and testimony the personal is always an integral part of the collective, therefore creating a sense of shared trauma and suffering that is very specific to the Jewish Shoah experience.

3.3.2 The issue of 'otherness' and 'sameness'

This feeling of belonging to a tight collective identity is not always so straightforward though and, especially through the eyes of a child, it comes with its own specific struggles. In point of fact, as the narrative progresses, it is possible to trace how the witness-survivor's persona puts more and more pressure on herself to define what Jewishness means to her. In this respect, it is therefore crucial to analyse Gallico's writing through the lens of testimony as a means of transmitting her experience as a Jew and as an object of systematic persecution. These are two aspects that find a linguistic counterpart in writing too, which is why a nuanced approach to translation is essential in order to unveil this complex identity matter. More specifically, it is important to note that Gallico always tends to relate to her Jewishness as part of a confrontation with Fascist ideology and the sense of 'otherness' that she feels because of it. Indeed, the inner dialogue that guides the reader through the writing reaches its peak when she

realises that being a Jew makes her different in the eyes of society and other people. This is exemplified in Chapter II, when Gallico writes:

> Dicevo che la mia vita scorreva tranquilla e serena come quella di tutti i bambini della mia età; ma mi sbagliavo; non mi ero mai resa conto di essere diversa dai miei coetanei, *invece* lo ero, *eccome*: io ero ebrea.
>
> I know I said that my life was moving along smoothly and peacefully like that of any child my age, but I was wrong. I had never realised that I was *actually very* different from my peers: I was a Jew.

As this is such a pivotal moment in the text, the translation inevitably takes on a rather delicate responsibility, and it therefore becomes of utmost importance to follow the line of thought that explains this sudden shift in how Jewishness is perceived by Gallico herself. This is the reason why in English the second sentence is isolated with the use of a more definite full stop instead of a semicolon and why the colon is, on the other hand, kept as in the original, thereby maintaining a sense of abruptness. This creates a parallel version of the original that can appear to be slightly different at first, but that actually conserves the truthfulness of the source text and is able to transmit the sudden feeling of 'otherness' that Gallico, as a Jew, felt.

Another significant issue that this selected citation presents is the contrast between the feeling of 'otherness' ('I was actually very *different*') and that of 'sameness' ('*like that* of any child my age'). In point of fact, throughout the text, the concept of 'otherness' does not stand on its own, neither conceptually nor linguistically, and it specifically exists in Gallico's testimony also by means of its juxtaposition, that of 'sameness'. Jewishness is, in fact, not only lived through the feeling of being different, but also through the innocent perception of being a normal child living a normal life. Even if that turns out to be a lie, the feeling of 'sameness' that Gallico feels is striking and it proves to be an important theme throughout her testimony. This idea is especially exemplified in the source text by the use of expressions such as 'assolutamente *uguale* a tutti gli altri bambini', 'cittadina italiana *uguale* a tutti gli altri' in Chapter II and 'un'alunna *come* le altre' in Chapter III. Whereas the latter has a more straightforward translation in 'a pupil *just like* the others', the former two are more complex to tackle from a linguistic and transmission point of view, given that the word 'uguale' in Italian has various possible equivalents in English. Amongst the options, 'equal' seems to be

the most obvious one at first, but upon closer inspection it is clear that it does not convey the same meaning as the original. The idea of 'sameness' in Gallico's writing is, in fact, much simpler and more existential than the more articulate concept of 'equality', which is why the proposed translations for the passages in Chapter II are as follows: 'exactly *like* all the other children' and 'an Italian citizen *just* [...] *like* any other'. The choice of translating 'uguale' with 'like' also creates a link between the two chapters that was not present in the Italian text, which enriches the translated version with a sort of leitmotif and therefore weaves a unifying thread through the writing.

3.3.3 Why?

Another key element of transmission that is present in the text and that is inherently linked to Gallico's persona as a Jew who survived the Shoah is the matter of rhetorical questions and, more specifically, of the pressing 'why?' that accompanies her through adulthood. For instance, in Chapter II, the author powerfully expresses her thoughts and denunciations, phrasing them in the form of polemical questioning:

> *Perché* gli italiani, gli "altri" italiani, i cristiani, non si sono ribellati a quelle leggi "inique" […]? *Perché* gli italiani accettano sempre tutto senza un briciolo di senso critico? *Perché* i parroci e i vescovi dai loro pulpiti non hanno tuonato contro questa mancanza di carità e di amore?
>
> *Why* did Italians, 'other' Italians, Christians, not rebel against those iniquitous laws […]? *Why* do Italians always accept everything without a shred of critical analysis? *Why* did priests and bishops not bellow from their pulpits against this lack of charity and love?

Gallico employs the anaphoric repetition of the question 'why?' to further state her point, also voicing an internal struggle that has haunted her for years after what happened to her and Jews as a whole during Fascism. Unanswered 'whys' are recurrent in Jewish Shoah testimonies[13], which further denotes their crucial role in Gallico's writing, as they become a meaningful way of transmitting an implicit sense of Jewishness. Even through translation, it is clear that the question 'why?' is not necessarily one that will be answered, but it is nonetheless essential to provoke more questions and to serve as a warning. In this very case, the survivor's persona acts, in fact, as both witness and judge, condemning the actions of 'other' Italians, while also establishing a clear and almost

[13] See, for example, Chencinski, R. (2002). *Here There Is No Why.* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem Publications.

painful sense of self as someone who has been, and arguably will always be, the victim of persecution. The questions themselves and the almost interminable 'why?' provoke thought in the reader but also discomfort, which therefore calls the translation to faithfully reproduce the critical and almost harsh tone of the original, paying close attention to terms such as 'un *briciolo* di senso critico' ('a *shred* of critical analysis') that actually recur in the testimony, as we see later on in the paragraph with the similar expression 'un *minimo* di senso morale e di senso critico' ('an *ounce* of moral and critical sense').

It is also interesting to note how tenses are used in the passages that pose the question 'why?' and how they mirror the interminable nature that they entail. There is, indeed, a preponderance of the past tense with verbs like 'non si *sono ribellati'* and 'non *hanno tuonato'*, which in English are translated to '*did* not rebel' and '*did* not bellow'. However, in perhaps the most important and pivotal sentence of the paragraph, the present tense is used: '*accettano* sempre tutto' ('always *accept* everything'). The translation needs to acknowledge the role that this stylistic choice has and, even though it would make sense to change it to the past tense to make the paragraph more homogenous, the present tense needs to be maintained. In point of fact, its use here emphasizes the potential transformative power of testimony, in that it underlines how the Jewish survivor struggles to understand the nature of the events that lead to the Shoah and to come to terms with the fact that the past is also bound to be present. Keeping the same tense dynamic in the translated version is actually the medium through which the reality of survivorhood is enhanced and amplified. The translator is thus able to shed light on the cross-over, or *translatio*, that takes place when Gallico actively carries her writing persona over the boundary between then and now, from the racial persecutions to the present time. Most importantly, to suggest that the Shoah is not only a matter of the past also clearly asserts that 'the past is present in the here and now and continues to get re-played, re-lived and re-worked' (Morris, 2002: 1). The delineation of Gallico's identity as a Jew and a witness-survivor is therefore reinforced by the translation of her testimony which, starting from language and translational choices, is in fact able to create a transmission netting that further contributes to the extraordinary richness and individuality of the source text.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to address the issue of translating testimony and to show how a target text is produced when working within the framework of Holocaust Literature. It has thus been demonstrated that translating a Shoah survivor-witness text entails, first and foremost, making it recognisable as truth-telling and personal, with an imperative focus on the individual that translation cannot fail to observe. In *Una Bambina in Fuga*, it is particularly compelling to analyse how the source text projects a 'self' whose primary aim is the act of testimony and whose sense of identity is inherently linked to childhood and Jewishness. The story is, in all respects, that of a child immersed in the storm of Shoah history, which is why the translator's duty is to bring the reader as close to those tragic events as possible, granting access to Gallico's individual vantage point. In doing so, the translation is able to uncover and explore new areas of human and literary understanding, establishing new positions of agency from which the victim's experience can be transmitted. The translation's task is, then, not strictly linguistic, and the translator rather utilises language as a predominant means of transmission, creating a new context in which the source text can thrive. This is exactly why it is so essential to translate Gallico's testimony, a 'micro' Italian Shoah story, for it makes what happened to Jews during Fascism known and enhances a narrative of such events that would otherwise be almost unimaginable to an English audience. This thesis, then, demonstrates that translation is an extremely valuable tool through which witness writing can be theorised, precisely with relation to the issues of transmission. The translator becomes, indeed, a custodian of Shoah individual and collective scenarios of history and memory, taking on a performative testimonial role and thus building a semantic bridge between source and target text that is able to convey and amplify the victim's voice. As discussed in the translation commentary of *Una Bambina in Fuga*, this is done in complete deference of the source text and the translator proposes a target version that is able to recreate and transmit the writer's unique persona(s), which ultimately proves to be the most distinctive and permeant element of Gallico's memoir. It is then evident that the process of translating testimony cannot prescind from the issue of transmission and vice versa, for translation is most effective when centring its transmitting value, and transmission of memory is only enhanced through translation.

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