BOOK REVIEW: MASTROPIERRO, L. (2018). CORPUS STYLISTICS IN *HEART OF DARKNESS*... LONDON: BLOOMSBURY.

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Lorenzo Mastropierro's volume *Corpus Stylistics in Heart of Darkness and its Italian Translations* joins a growing body of research applying corpus stylistic methods to the study of literary texts and translations. This new approach departs from a combination of the more widespread corpus-based translation studies and the application of corpus linguistics to literature in the form of corpus stylistics. Beginning, among others, with research carried out by Bosseaux (2004, 2006), Winters (2005) and Mahlberg (2007), this field has recently been championed by researchers such as Čermáková and Fárová (2010), Čermáková (2015), Huang (2015) and Mastropierro and Mahlberg (2017).

Setting the base for this volume in which, as stated in its introduction, the author aims to apply a corpus stylistics perspective to the analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and four of its Italian translations, Mastropierro offers a new approach to the study of the texts. His objectives are threefold: firstly, to understand the role of textual patterns as building blocks of fictional worlds; secondly, to explore the effect that translation has in the relationship between those textual patterns and the literary world, and finally, to establish a 'methodological synergy' (p. 2) between corpus stylistics and translation studies which will enable researchers to understand the relationship between shifts in translation and changes in the construction of the narrative world. The choice of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as the object of study stems from its central position in the English literary canon, which provides the project with extensive previous literary criticism.

The volume is organised in seven main chapters, followed by the author's conclusions and a series of appendices with information about the texts included in the reference corpora employed in the study, as well as a reproduction of the word plots analysed in the final content chapter of the book. Chapter 1 sets the theoretical ground for the research: after a succinct introduction to stylistics and the use of corpus techniques within this area, Mastropierro presents a thorough review of recent developments in the field, followed by a brief summary of the strands within translation studies that have been applied to this project. He finishes the chapter with a discussion of the notion of translation manipulation and its use within this volume, before going on to chapter 2, where he presents an in-depth exploration of *Heart of Darkness* and the specific themes that he has analysed in this monograph. In the first half of the chapter, Mastropierro contextualises Conrad within the English canon and introduces postcolonial approaches to his work, which he will use in

subsequent chapters. After discussing different general approaches to *Heart of Darkness* as a whole, Mastropierro focuses on previous academic criticism about the two topics he has cleverly identified as primarily relevant for the stylistic study: 'Africa and its representation' (p. 48) and 'Race and Racism' (p. 50). Not only are these two fertile areas for discussion which have become foregrounded with recent readings of the text, but they are also particularly suitable for a discussion based on linguistic features that can be investigated through the analysis of local, concrete textual elements.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological framework that underpins Mastropierro's research and discusses the advantages of using a corpus stylistics approach. The author clearly indicates his research questions at the start of the chapter, linking them with the sections in the book in which answers to them are offered. He then continues to explaining the process of construction of the corpus: again, the reasons for the choice of the object of analysis are discussed, along with the process of text and translation compilation, including selection, digitisation and copyright management. Along with this, Mastropierro carefully explains the use of reference corpora as a basis for comparison in the analysis. In this case, two reference corpora are employed to obtain a solid body of data; the first one, *RC*, represents the English fictional written language contemporary to Conrad, and allows the researcher to understand 'the differences between *HoD*-specific language and the more general literary language used in that period' (p. 60); the second, *CC*, contains Conrad's fictional works and enables the comparison between language in *Heart of Darkness* and Conrad's fictional language in his other works. The final sections of the chapter deal with the specific methods used for this research, that is, keyword analysis and principal component analysis, which are explained in detail: first, the keyword analysis is used to link lexis to content and develop a better understanding of the major themes in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. These are then analysed in depth in order to showcase their textual functions and the way in which they contribute to the construction of the fictional world in both the original and the translations, analysing shifts and potential manipulative effects in the latter. Secondly, principal component analysis (PCA) compares the differences between the translations as whole texts to counterbalance the specific, local approach of the keyword method. With the use of both approaches, Mastropierro aptly combines qualitative and quantitative aspects of corpus-based research, also creating a 'methodological circle' (p. 85) which enables the researcher to move from whole texts to individual features not only once, but as many times as considered appropriate.

In chapters 4 to 6, the author presents the first part of the analysis, based on the keyword method. Chapter 4 serves as a brief but thorough introduction to this methodology, which aims to identify words related to the representation of Africa and Africans in the novel. After describing the process of generation of the keyword lists, Mastropierro introduces his classification method, based on Mahlberg and McIntyre's (2011) model, specific to the analysis of literary works. By classifying the keywords identified into keyword categories, Mastropierro shows the relationship between the lexical level of the text and the themes studied in the volume. In Chapters 5 and 6, the results of the analysis are presented. Chapter

5 focuses on the representation of the African jungle: the selected *Africa words* (`forest`, `jungle`, `wilderness` and `darkness`) are identified in context in the original text to showcase how they, through their lexico-semantic patterns, contribute to the building of the fictional world. In his findings, the author argues that not only are the three first words connected, but also, and perhaps more interestingly, `darkness` seems to be described in similar terms, thus 'strengthening the relation between the metaphorical understanding of *darkness* and the actual depiction of Africa' (p. 118). In the analysis of the translations, he discovers that the lexical cohesion between the patterns present in the English text is altered, thus potentially changing the readers' perception of the representation of Africa. Chapter 6 focuses on the representation of the *African natives*, based on the keyword analysis of the identified 'African words' (`nigger/niggers`, `negro`, `savage/savages`, `native/natives` and `black/blacks`). Through a careful choice of examples of the words in context, Mastropierro showcases the dehumanisation of Africans in the novel, using Conrad's lexical choices to, again, linguistically exemplify previous literary criticism. In the second part of the chapter, the translations are discussed to show how the translator's choices can affect the construction of a text and intensify or mitigate the racist elements in the original novel.

Chapter 7 takes a different approach to the exploration of the texts and presents the results of the second methodology used in the study, PCA. This statistical method, which explores a much larger portion of the total text than the keyword method allows the author to balance the mostly local nature of the keyword analysis and include an overview of the translations 'in their overall degree of difference, rather than focusing on specific stylistic features' (p. 175). Mastropierro is thus able to visually present the degree of variation between the translations by focusing on the words that had been excluded from the analysis in chapters 4 to 6, that is, high-frequency, function words. The results of the PCA analysis corroborate what the previous chapters had highlighted and suggest a clear interplay between the content (keywords) and the structural (PCA) levels of analysis, closing the first cycle of questioning devised in his methodological approach. Finally, chapter 8 summarises the author's conclusions, stressing the importance of textual patterns as building blocks of the fictional world, the impact of translation in these textual patterns on the construction of the literary world, and the interrelation between the different methodological levels of comparison, the keyword method and the principal component analysis.

Corpus Stylistics in Heart of Darkness *and its Italian translations* is a well-achieved volume that brings a new, innovative approach to the study of a literary text and its translations and succeeds in extracting new meanings from a well-known literary work. The author has developed a solid and balanced methodological cyclical process that combines the qualitative study of local features in context with a more quantitative, statistical approach in order to give a thorough overview of the object of study. Mastropierro has done a thorough literature review of new developments in both corpus stylistics and corpus-based translation studies and has opened a new avenue for research furthering a productive dialogue between the two disciplines. As he argues in his conclusion, this promising interdisciplinary approach to

research in literature and translation is an excellent area of growth for researchers interested in integrating insights from other research approaches, be it through engagement with the readers or a more direct focus on the target texts (p. 205) or, I would add, through the exploration of the combination of corpus work with other theoretical frameworks that bring more of the cultural and sociological approaches to the study of literature and translation. In any case, this volume will be, no doubt, a central reading and a productive point of departure for researchers who want to investigate the possibilities of corpus stylistics for the analysis of literary works and their translations.

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