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Translingual Memory and Resilience: A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Anne Pia's Narratives of the Italian Scottish Diaspora

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how translingualism functions as a major aesthetic tool for memory and resilience within the Italian Scottish diaspora, specifically through the autobiographical narratives of Anne Pia. Grounded in Critical Stylistics, the study examines Pia's strategic use of code-switching within her multifaceted linguistic repertoire to recollect both collective and personal traumas. By analysing the thematic domains of ancestral lore, matriarchy, food and music, the research demonstrates how translingual writing facilitates the author's reconciliation with her ancestral Italian heritage as well as the construction of a hybrid, resilient identity as a woman, mother, educationist, and artist within a broader European context.

Il presente contributo indaga il modo in cui il translinguismo opera come strumento estetico privilegiato per la memoria e la resilienza nella diaspora italo-scozzese, attraverso le narrazioni autobiografiche di Anne Pia. Nel quadro della Critical Stylistics, lo studio esamina l'uso strategico del code-switching all'interno del variegato repertorio linguistico di Pia per rievocare traumi sia collettivi sia personali. Attraverso l'analisi delle aree tematiche del sapere ancestrale, del matriarcato, del cibo e della musica, la ricerca mostra come la scrittura translingue favorisca la riconciliazione dell'autrice con le proprie radici italiane e la costruzione di un'identità ibrida e resiliente come donna, madre, educatrice e artista in un più ampio contesto europeo.

KEYWORDS: Translingualism, Italian Scottish diaspora, Code-switching, Anne Pia, Critical Stylistics.

1. Introduction

Global events, including mass migrations, wars, and decolonisation, have radically increased human mobility, fundamentally altering the linguistic landscapes of the modern world. The



resulting linguistic blend should be regarded not as a deficiency, but as a valuable artistic opportunity for authors to explore and convey ideas using multiple languages or languages other than their native tongue. Defined by Steven G. Kellman (2000: ix) as literary translingualism, this phenomenon refers to "authors who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one". Crucially, translingual writing often emerges from experiences of migration, exile, and displacement (Kellman 2020: 2). Within this framework of adversity, it may serve as a major aesthetic tool, facilitating the recollection and resilient processing of both individual and collective traumas.

Originating at the end of the 19th century, largely from the mountainous areas of southern and central Italy (Colpi 1991: 50), the Italian Scottish diaspora represents a notable example of migration, displacement and cultural adaptation. This historical experience has only recently begun to be explored through artistic and literary works (D'Amore 2023: 5). In this transnational context, Anne Pia (1949–) stands out as a remarkable yet often overlooked author. After a distinguished career in education, Pia is recognised as a prominent figure in the contemporary Italian British literary canon. She is the author of three non-fiction books, two poetry collections, and a poetry pamphlet. Her family roots lie in Viticuso, a remote mountain village in the Comino Valley (southern Lazio), which her grandparents, Emilio and Maria, left to migrate to Edinburgh at the beginning of the 20th century.

Like many individuals of their generation, Anne's grandparents were drawn to the improved employment prospects and living conditions offered by Scottish urban areas. By the early 20th century, Edinburgh had become home to the largest community of migrants from Anne's grandparents' region outside Italy (Colpi 2015: 105), quickly evolving into a centre for Italian migrants who, like most Italians in Scotland, worked mainly in catering, running cafés, ice-cream parlours, and fish and chip shops for local customers (Audrey 2000: 34–35). Initially, Italian migrants integrated relatively smoothly into Scottish society; however, tensions escalated during World War II, particularly due to the politicisation of Italian communities abroad under Mussolini's regime (Petrocelli 2025: 4–5). The harshest consequences of this shift were the classification of Italians in Britain as enemy aliens, the looting of their businesses, and the internment and overseas deportation of Italian men (Chezzi 2014: 376–377). Central to the collective memory of the Italian diaspora in Britain is the tragic sinking of the *Arandora Star* on 2 July 1940, which claimed the lives of over 400 Italian deportees bound for Canada (Colpi 2024: 250). In Scotland very few Italian families remained untouched by this tragedy (Antinucci 2025: 376). Although families were eventually reunited and reintegrated after the war, the

trauma of internment and an enduring sense of displacement continued to shape the community's collective experience.

As a third-generation Italian Scottish woman, Pia's artistic life and career reflect the burden of the diaspora, a condition commonly defined by dispersion, an orientation toward a real or imagined homeland as well as the maintenance of a distinct identity in the host society (Brubaker 2005: 5–6). While the diasporic condition is a collective experience, Pia's writing is also shaped by a deeply personal life trajectory, which is mirrored in her expansive linguistic repertoire: a blend of English, Scots, standard Italian, French, and the Viticusar dialect of her grandparents.

Given this layered linguistic background, it is unsurprising that Pia writes translingually in both her poetry and prose. Her writings share key features of Italian British diaspora literature, which "[…] aim to provide encouraging models of resilience in difficult times" (D'Amore 2023: 279). This is particularly evident in two of her non-fiction works: her memoir, *Language of My Choosing. The Candid Life-memoir of an Italian Scot* (2017), and her hybrid autobiography-cookbook, *Magnaccioni. My Food… My Italy* (2023). This article argues that Pia employs translingualism, a hallmark of diasporic writing, for two main reasons: first, to reflect on her family's roots, thereby reclaiming and celebrating her Italian heritage; and second, to foster resilience, as writing across languages helps her understand and express a blended sense of self that transcends Scottish or Italian identities, reaching towards a broader European identity.

To this end, the article presents a critical stylistic analysis of these two works to illustrate how translingualism, and specifically code-switching, serves these two purposes. Grounded in Critical Discourse Studies, this analytical framework facilitates the examination of linguistic choices within literary texts to discern the ideologically charged nature of stylistic devices (Jeffries 2010: 6). While the focus of this study remains primarily linguistic, its findings are intended to contribute to research on literary multilingualism by offering a fine-grained description of how multilingual choices operate in the text.

2. Translingualism as a Mnemonic and Aesthetic Tool for Resilience in Diaspora Writing

Translingualism can be situated within the broader field of literary multilingualism, which investigates how more than one language coexists and interacts within literary texts (Vlasta 2025: 2–3). The prefix 'trans-' captures the essence of this practice: a constant movement across linguistic boundaries (Hugueny-Léger 2024: 2), through which authors do not merely switch codes but negotiate and reshape their life experiences and worldviews. One of its primary



motivations is the pursuit of *ostranenie*, the estrangement or defamiliarisation theorised by Russian Formalism (Kellman 2000: 28–29). By weaving several languages into a text, authors disrupt the reader's expectation of fluency and signal deeper layers of meaning that call for conscious reflection. What might seem like interference between languages is therefore better understood as a strategic and creative choice through which writers convey particular social meanings (García and Li Wei 2014: 24).

Translingual writing often arises from a sense of fractured identity, mirrored in the friction between languages (Kellman 2020: 17). Yet, especially in diasporic contexts, this tension can also foster reconciliation, as moving across languages creates a form of aesthetic detachment. This effect does not require writing in a foreign language, since defamiliarisation may also affect one's native tongue (Hugueny-Léger 2024: 8). Pia, for instance, writes in her native English while allowing Italian and dialect to surface within it. The resulting distance offers a safe linguistic space in which traumatic memories can be voiced without the painful associations embedded in a single language.

Writing across languages also allows authors to put themselves 'in someone else's shoes' and to adopt cultural structures that may be distant from their own (Burns and Duncan 2022: 5–6). In this sense, translingualism can help mend this fracture and shape a hybrid identity, understood here as a dynamic construct continually negotiated through language and narrative. This process resonates with Boris Cyrulnik's (2011: 4, 13) view of the healing power of narrative. For Cyrulnik, trauma is a wound that cannot be processed as soon as it occurs. Only later, when the sorrow of traumatic memories is turned into a story, it can be integrated and resilience emerge.

Resilience, in turn, is not simply survival, but the capacity to thrive and progress positively in the face of adversities that would normally lead to negative outcomes (Vanistendael 1996: 9). Any work of art can itself be regarded as a sign of resilience (Mallett 2024: 3). While writing may not fix the scars of the past, it remains "[…] one of the most powerful tools we have to give voice, distance and emotionally experience human suffering in order to overcome or prevent traumatic events" (Antinucci and Grafe 2024: 21–22). This is especially evident in Italian British diaspora literature, where several former WWII internees have turned to autobiographical writing, often decades later, to come to terms with the trauma of alienation and detention (D'Amore 2024: 113–114).

Memory, the active and selective reconstruction of the past, is central to this transition from trauma to resilience. In Jan Assmann's (2011: 62) words, storytelling is the "most preferred form" through which groups define and strengthen their collective identity. Literature,

in particular, has been described as "the mnemonic art par excellence" (Lachmann 2008: 301), as it provides the aesthetic and discursive resources needed to turn events into meaningful, shareable structures (Rigney 2016: 69–70).

Among the fictional devices of memory, translingualism plays a central role in migrant and diasporic storytelling. In oral narratives, formalised materials such as proverbs, songs, and formulas signal the emergence of a collective viewpoint, while dialect tends to surface in digressions and anecdotes, marking the narrator's personal involvement or the intrusion of collective memory (Portelli 2016: 51–52). Comparable markers can also be found in migrant narratives, where stories are retrieved and shared through phrases, songs, jokes, and sensory details that evoke the homeland (Bönisch-Brednich and Meyer 2024: 192). Although these observations stem from oral storytelling, they are equally relevant to autobiographical writing, which often reproduces the voices and oral genres of family memory, as Pia does in her narratives. Far from being ornamental, these elements anchor individual stories in collective memory. Such heterogeneous linguistic landscapes are a hallmark of Italian British diaspora literature, which encompasses standard and non-standard varieties of English (including Cockney), Scots, Welsh, and standard Italian, alongside regional varieties such as Neapolitan, southern *Laziale* and Tuscan, and other European languages such as French or German (D'Amore 2023: 147–148).

In Pia's narratives, as in much diasporic writing, translingualism is primarily realised through code-switching, traditionally defined as the alternation between two or more languages or dialects within a single interaction (Holmes 2022: 35–36). The analysis of code-switching in literary texts falls within the domain of stylistics, the "integrated study of language and literature" (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018: 1), which examines how specific linguistic forms are deployed to achieve distinct aesthetic effects. More precisely, this study adopts Critical Stylistics, an approach that combines the analytical tools of stylistics with the concerns of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to assess the ideological significance of an author's linguistic choices (Jeffries 2010: 3). Within this framework, code-switching is a fundamental semiotic resource. Authors may use it to achieve heightened social realism, signalling characters' or authors' background and identity, or linguistic accommodation, adjusting language to the communicative situation being narrated (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018: 142).
For diasporic writers, code-switching is also a means of maintaining a connection with their ancestral heritage, which remains integral to the formation of multilayered identities, as shown in Italian Canadian diaspora literature (Casagranda 2010; Baldo 2019). Far from being spontaneous, it functions as a "fictional device, a calculated, non-spontaneous and creative tool"



(Baldo 2019: 52), through which authors can promote their heritage culture while validating the hybridity produced by the diasporic experience. Through the lens of Critical Stylistics, code-switching thus emerges as a site of agency where the translingual diasporic author negotiates the tensions of displacement, turning a fictional device of memory into a testimony of resilience. This provides the linguistic foundation for analysing Pia's exploration of the collective and individual traumas of the Italian Scottish community in the following sections.

3. Anne Pia and the Experience of the Italian Scottish Diaspora

Although the history of the Italian Scottish diaspora is often narrated in terms of economic success and social integration, for third-generation Italian Scots like Anne Pia this heritage is also marked by internal contradictions and identity conflicts. As outlined in the Introduction, WWII turned a hardworking community into enemy aliens, and it is therefore necessary to examine how these collective traumatic events intersected with Pia's individual life.

Pia's life and writings reflect both this collective trauma and deeply personal adversities. Her grandfather died in the sinking of the *Arandora Star*, a loss that remains an open wound and symbolises the sacrifice of the entire Italian Scottish community. This intergenerational tragedy fuelled a sense of double alienation: on the one hand, a feeling of rejection from post-war Scottish society; on the other, a detachment from a heritage culture perceived as oppressive. For Pia, therefore, the diaspora was experienced not as a nostalgic longing for home, but as a condition of liminality.

Pia's life thus departs from diaspora narratives, moving from a radical break with her Italian past to a non-linear reconciliation with her roots. Her childhood, marked by patriarchal violence and her parents' divorce, initially led her to reject her Italian identity entirely, although her primary caregiver during this period was her grandmother, whose house served as the domestic centre for the family and their catering businesses. Seeking liberation from this repressive environment, Pia distanced herself from the community through education and a professional life within the broader Scottish world, as a teacher of French and Italian, Director of Glenrothes College, and, lastly, Her Majesty's Inspector of Education[1].

The turning point came with motherhood. Raising three children, including one with a physical disability, triggered what she felt as a rapprochement with her roots. Moving away from the negative models of her childhood, she adopted nurturing values modelled on women

[1] The biographical information in this section is drawn from Pia's memoir (Pia 2017), from D'Amore's profile of the author (D'Amore 2023: 277–281), and from an interview with Anne Pia conducted by the author in Edinburgh on 19 March 2025 (Vitale 2026).

she had observed in Italy and France and came to embrace her Italian identity on her own terms, balancing her heritage with her career, her queer identity, and, eventually, her conversion to Buddhism, within a broader European horizon.

Her literary career extends this journey of self-discovery, which is reflected in her multilingual repertoire. As a child, Pia spoke both English and Viticusar, which she regards as her two native languages. She learned the dialect mainly from her grandmother, and it remained for her the "language of familiarity and home" (Pia 2017: 60). She later studied Italian and French at university, refining her Italian in Florence and mastering French during an extended period in France. In addition, Pia speaks and writes in Scots, a choice that reflects her deep cultural roots in Scotland and her position as a contemporary European artist.

Since translingual writing is often bound up with the exploration of an identity fractured by past traumas, memoirs occupy a privileged place in this process. If "all autobiographical writing is in effect a reconstruction of the self" (Kellman 2020: 121), translingual memoirs are the most visible site of the narrator's negotiation with identity and linguistic displacement and have become "a major contemporary genre of life writing" that "probes the emotional and psychological lives of migrants between languages and cultures" (Besemeres 2006: 34).

The first work considered is Pia's debut memoir, *Language of My Choosing: The Candid Life-memoir of an Italian Scot* (2017). Translated into Italian in 2018, the memoir traces the journey outlined above, from a childhood within a predominantly female Italian household to her integration into broader Scottish and European society, also recounting her marriage to an Italian Scottish lawyer and her mother's death. Through these experiences, Pia constructs her voice as a woman, mother and writer. Translingualism is the memoir's primary narrative strategy, allowing her to explore her membership in Edinburgh's Italian community while negotiating a transcultural identity that transcends common stereotypes, especially those about southern Italy.

The second work, *Magnaccioni. My Food… My Italy* (2023), takes its title from a Roman dialect term for someone who loves good food and drink. More experimental than the memoir, it blends personal stories with a collection of Pia's favourite Italian recipes, gathered from her family and her travels around Italy, and includes a playlist of Italian popular music from the 1950s to today. Cookbooks of this kind are an important part of Italian British literature (D'Amore 2023: 117), as national dishes hold deep significance for migrant communities, connecting them to shared memories and heritage while also offering a wider readership access to that heritage. Linguistically, *Magnaccioni* continues the blend of English, Italian, and



Viticusar found in the memoir, offering an energetic tribute to Italy, its food and music, which Pia presents as embodying simplicity and authenticity.

Together, these works provide a rich corpus for examining how memory and language intersect, and how both the diasporic experience and the individual quest for self-affirmation are negotiated through code-switching, as the following analysis shows.

4. The Language of Memory and Resilience: A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Code-switching

As shown in the previous sections, code-switching is a primary stylistic device in translingual autobiographical writing. This section examines how Pia uses it in *Language of My Choosing* and *Magnaccioni* to fulfil the two interconnected functions outlined in the Introduction: recalling pivotal moments of her personal life and of the recent history of the Italian Scottish community and fostering resilience through self-reflection and self-affirmation.

Instances of code-switching are classified following Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken (1995: 8), who distinguish between inter-sentential switching, occurring between sentences, and intra-sentential switching, occurring within a single sentence. The latter type predominates in Pia's narratives. Muysken (2000: 3) further identifies three processes of intra-sentential switching: the insertion of material from one language into the structure of another; the alternation between the structures of two languages; and congruent lexicalisation, in which material from different lexical inventories is inserted into a shared grammatical structure.

In addition to this structural classification, the instances are grouped into three thematic areas: popular wisdom and folklore; femininity and motherhood; and the sensory dimensions of food and music.

4.1. Popular Wisdom and Folklore

The first thematic area comprises instances of intra-sentential code-switching in which fixed expressions and sayings from Pia's family background evoke family members and the values she inherited from them. These switches occur mainly into Viticusar, the variety of *Laziale* spoken in Viticuso, and, to a lesser extent, into Italian, serving a mnemonic function that reconstructs episodes from Pia's family history. Pia herself describes the dialect as "a means of connection, an acknowledgement of roots, blood and ancestry" (2017: 83). Her code-switching therefore does not merely decorate the text with folk proverbs: by adopting the speech of her ancestors, she shows how deeply these sayings have shaped both her portrayal of her family and her own linguistic identity.

Most switches into Viticusar evoke the most influential figure of Pia's childhood: her grandmother, Maria Rossi. In *Language of My Choosing*, Maria is portrayed as an authoritative woman, deeply Catholic, scrupulously observant of religious rituals, and fearful of divine punishment and misfortune. To portray her, Pia relies on direct speech: a mode of speech presentation that stylistics associates with characterisation, since speech is "a revealing indicator of character" (Leech and Short 2007: 137).

As Pia recalls, "Religious belief, for Grandma, was fear and fate, appeasement, retribution and the sense of an all-seeing eye. She had her own favourite curse, of course: *'Te pozze schiatta'* (May you burst)" (Pia 2017: 62). By switching to Viticusar within her grandmother's speech, Pia reproduces an idiolect rather than a dialect, capturing the linguistic 'thumbprint' of a specific individual (Leech and Short 2007: 134). The switch suggests that her grandmother played a decisive role in Pia's early religious education, leaving a lasting imprint on her perception of Catholicism as a faith grounded in fear, fate, and "'*gle mal'oiche*'" (Pia 2017: 62), invisible malevolent forces believed to govern human lives. This portrayal does not imply a rejection of religious faith as such, but rather Pia's distance from certain beliefs and rituals of the Catholicism dominant in the Italian Scottish community, a distance later reflected in her conversion to Buddhism.

Pia also inherited from her grandmother a distinctive attitude towards the Scots. As the owner of *The Copper Kettle Café*, a well-established Italian restaurant in 1950s Edinburgh, her grandmother interacted daily with Scottish customers, developing an observant and at times ironic perspective on their habits, which Pia recalls in *Language of My Choosing*:

> It was with amusement that we sold chocolate to our Scottish customers, those enormous 'selection boxes' to guilt-ridden husbands, a peace offering for their wives, as they wended their way home after a Friday or Saturday night in the pub. 'They can't get enough of it', we said. *Magn'cioccolad*, chocolate eaters, was my grandmother's label for someone she considered unmanly; such an attachment to biscuits and sweet things! (Pia 2017: 69)

Through the stylistic technique of naming (Jeffries 2010: 20), *Magn'cioccolad* does more than describe the shop's Scottish customers: it functions as a category-building device that establishes an 'us vs. them' rhetoric deeply rooted in migration discourse (van Dijk 2018: 241). By naming the 'other' in dialect, the grandmother, and by extension Pia, claims a position of observant authority. The irony of the phrase also serves as a social deictic marker (Jeffries 2010: 149), distancing the Italian domestic sphere, with its own norms of masculinity and taste, from the perceived unmanliness of the Scottish public sphere. Pia's narrative suggests, however, that this linguistic othering was not an act of hostility, but a strategy of resilient integration: by



reducing the dominant culture to a humorous nickname, the migrant community achieves a form of psychological parity. What appears derogatory thus becomes a tool for managing the tensions of displacement, allowing Pia to reconcile herself with her dual heritage through a critical but respectful detachment.

Beyond this interpersonal stance, Pia also attributes to her family a way of behaving and expressing emotions that she frames as distinctly Italian: "I have truly felt that diplomacy was a waste of time; less than honest, in fact. My family practice of *na buon sfogad*, getting it off your chest, has always seemed to me best" (Pia 2017: 71). In her account, this emotionally direct way of responding to situations stands in contrast to the restraint she associates with Scottish culture. In doing so, Pia draws on, and partly reproduces, familiar cultural stereotypes of Italian expressiveness and British reserve, yet she mobilises them strategically to reclaim a family practice as a positive marker of identity.

In Critical Stylistics, this instance of code-switching functions as a replacive opposition (Jeffries 2010: 55), whereby one term is presented as preferable to, or in place of, another. By setting the Viticusar expression against diplomacy, which she dismisses as "less than honest" (Pia 2017: 71), Pia reverses the positive value commonly attached to tact and restraint, presenting *na buon sfogad* as the more authentic option. The dialectal expression thus becomes an indicator of social and emotional authenticity, and the migrant's heritage is positioned as a distinctive moral asset.

Pia also inherited a central family ritual: *la domenica*. In *Magnaccioni*, she writes, "*La domenica* is still a day of celebration in many homes across Italy" (Pia 2023: 171). By switching to Italian, Pia shifts the 'deictic centre' of her narrative (Jeffries 2010: 148): readers are invited to leave the Scottish present of the narrator and to project themselves into an idealised Italian Sunday, marked by calm, relaxation and a focus on food.

Overall, Pia's grandmother emerges as a foundational figure through whom Pia acquired not only linguistic resources but also religious attitudes, values, traditions, and a worldview. While Pia has distanced herself from some elements of this inheritance, most notably Catholicism, she has retained others, encapsulated in Viticusar expressions, social codes such as "*bella figura*" (Pia 2017: 28), and rituals like *la domenica*, which she continues to recall with longing, in an enduring negotiation with heritage and identity.

4.2. Femininity and Motherhood

Many Viticusar and Italian expressions also contribute to a nuanced portrayal of family dynamics, particularly those concerning Pia's grandmother and, more broadly, her relationship

with womanhood. These instances are grouped within a second domain: femininity and motherhood.

While her grandmother served as a primary educational role model, often acting as a surrogate father figure after Pia's parents separated, she also held highly critical attitudes toward other women, including her own daughter Cristina, Pia's mother. A notable example of intra-sentential code-switching in *Language of My Choosing* highlights this friction: "He [my uncle] and my grandmother were suspicious, always watchful of my mother because of her glamour, her makeup and free spirit... *na puttan*, slut, were words I knew well" (Pia 2017: 19). Here, code-switching performs a naming function (Jeffries 2010: 20), as it involves the deliberate choice of a specific noun to characterise a referent. The dialectal insult does more than describe: it reconstructs an intergenerational conflict and a derogatory view of femininity, showing how the patriarchal Catholic values of Pia's family were linguistically enforced as the only acceptable social reality in her early life.

Paradoxically, Pia's grandmother was equally disdainful of women she perceived as overly submissive: "She was equally scornful of wifely, domesticated women who were dominated by their men, calling them *'na pecora appress a n'om'*, sheep trailing behind their men" (Pia 2017: 48). This Viticusar expression also performs a naming function, capturing a cultural paradox whereby both the libertine woman and the submissive one were rejected. Taken together, these expressions show how the ideology of her grandmother's world, as Pia presents it, permeated her formative years, shaping her understanding of what it meant to be a woman and a mother in a diasporic context.

Despite these harsh characterisations, Pia also inherited a more nurturing archetype of femininity: the *mammissima*, which Pia describes as the superwoman of the Italian community. In *Magnaccioni*, her grandmother embodies this role within the domestic sphere, particularly through the ritual of feeding, which Pia recalls through a Viticusar saying from her childhood:

> To feed me back to health when I wasn't well and more generally to make sure that through her food I became robust and healthy, was her main focus. So, *Magne mamma, ca te fa' ross'!* (Eat and you'll grow up healthy!). (Pia 2023: 121)

Beyond nutritional care, her grandmother's most enduring legacy was the emphasis on education as a vehicle for resilience. Despite her own illiteracy, she encouraged Pia to pursue a different path, away from the catering trade commonly associated with the Italian Scottish community. Once again, Pia gives her grandmother a direct voice:



> Remembering her struggling to write her own name on her pension book at the post office every month, I know now that hers were the values that formed and fired me. *'Fatte' maestr' mama'* (Be a teacher) she used to say, and I did begin a career in education as a teacher. (Pia 2017: 61–62)

By eventually becoming a teacher and earning a PhD in Education, Pia fulfilled this mandate, transforming her grandmother's ancestral wisdom from a source of conflict into a celebrated facet of her hybrid identity.

These instances of code-switching show how Pia negotiates the contrasting female archetypes she encountered: the slut, the sheep, and the *mammissima*. The result is a hybrid femininity that respects the nurturing qualities of her forebears while rejecting the restrictive moral standards of her family's rural background. In this context, translingual writing serves as a resilient tool, enabling Pia to reshape the concepts of womanhood and motherhood and to reframe her childhood figures as the foundation of her professional and personal empowerment.

4.3. European Flavours and Melodies

The remaining thematic areas, food and music, are grouped together because both are closely tied to the symbols of Pia's transnational heritage and to her grandmother's influence. As Radmila Švaříčková Slabáková (2021: 1) argues, the family is the "most important memory community", the foundational site for shaping identity before an individual engages with broader society. Beyond the rigid beliefs discussed above, Pia remembers her grandmother for her nurturing presence and culinary expertise, and while *Language of My Choosing* confronts the traumas of her past, *Magnaccioni* celebrates a full reconciliation with her Italian roots and culinary heritage.

This celebration of food is deeply rooted in the history of the Italian Scottish community. During the so-called 'golden era' of Italian migration (1920s–1930s) (Colpi 1991: 71), nearly every Italian family in Scotland had at least one relative in the food trade, which provided employment to family members and fellow villagers through a consolidated system of chain migration. Despite the hardships of WWII, these businesses remained integrated into Scottish society and have since become a significant part of its social and economic fabric, now largely associated, as in other English-speaking countries, with prestige and charm (Bombi and Orioles 2019: 64).

Unlike the previous thematic areas, food-related switches occur predominantly into standard Italian and, notably, French. While most of Pia's recollections of her grandmother are linked to Viticusar, in *Magnaccioni* she switches to Italian to recall Italian cuisine: "It is in home kitchens where *la cucina povera, la cucina di terra*, a style of cooking that is basic, culled from

peasant fare, based mainly on vegetables and pulses, often on leftovers too, is at its very best" (Pia 2023: 17). The Italian phrases *la cucina povera, la cucina di terra* serve as a precise naming tool (Jeffries 2010: 20) to highlight the simplicity of Italian culinary heritage. The choice of *povera* (poor) and *di terra* (peasant) reveals Pia's intention to reinterpret Italy's rural and peasant traditions not as deficiencies, but as sources of gastronomic excellence. This reflects both her individual effort to reconcile with her family's history and the growing prestige of Italian food culture abroad.

Pia also turns to French when recalling food memories, drawing on the period she spent in France in her early adulthood to learn the language:

> As I set about my *bol* of coffee for breakfast, my *tartines au beurre*, country bread with butter, and *confiture aux abricots*, apricot jam, fruit from the garden and cooked in that wonderful house, I can easily say that I began to live my life, the one which I had been preparing for in my last years at school but without those constraints or impositions. (Pia 2017: 106)

Here, the French culinary terms *bol*, *tartines au beurre*, and *confiture aux abricots* shift the deictic centre of the narrative to one of Pia's most joyful and formative moments: experiencing independence in another country, away from her family. It was in France that Pia first experienced an identity beyond her two national affiliations: "I was not Italian, not Scottish, but culturally open and growing" (Pia 2017: 106). French thus became a vital tool for liberation and self-discovery: immersed in "the rhythms and dynamics of a new language", she felt that "this was a truer me" (Pia 2017: 106), and her "enduring love" of the language and its people has remained ever since (Pia 2017: 110). This attachment is also evident in her creative work, from the poems written directly in French in *Transitory* (Pia 2018) to her English versions of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* in *The Sweetness of Demons* (Pia 2021). This openness marks the beginning of the broader European identity that would later shape both her life and her writing.

Music constitutes another significant thematic domain in Pia's translingual writing. Like food, music has long served as a symbolic marker of Italian identity abroad. Many early Italian migrants arrived in London as street musicians, often under the supervision of a *padrone*, working as organ grinders for minimal pay, a situation especially common among children (Smart 2019: 38). Over time, music continued to bridge the gap between Italy and its diaspora: phenomena such as the Sanremo Festival provided emigrant families with a shared repertoire of popular songs, strengthening their ties to contemporary Italian culture, while dialectal folk songs preserved local roots within the domestic sphere.



A passionate music lover and mandolin player, Pia uses code-switching in both books to incorporate lyrics from Italian songs of her childhood, recalling people and events of personal significance:

> Her voice was still sweet in her seventies and she used to sing a little ditty that brought sunshine and the carefree days of her youth into that Edinburgh bedroom; a song that I can still almost remember *'com'è bello far l'amore, la domenica mattina... chi a letto a riposar'*, how wonderful to make love on a Sunday morning. (Pia 2017: 75–76)

Although the source of these lyrics cannot be precisely identified, the switch functions like direct speech, reconstructing the grandmother's voice and creating a moment of polyphony within the narrative. The deictic centre shifts to the domestic space of post-war Edinburgh, and the grandmother appears not only as the stern, devout figure of Pia's childhood but also as a vital, sweet, and influential presence that continues to shape her translingual consciousness.

Finally, music often intertwines with food, as when Pia switches to Neapolitan, a dialect geographically and linguistically related to her own Viticusar, quoting a signature line from Aurelio Fierro's 1966 song *'A pizza*:

> Italy must surely be exceptional too in the number of songs that exist about food... songs about pizza for instance... about the girlfriend who whenever she went out, whether to fine dining restaurants, or indeed when choosing her wedding cake, insisted on demanding nothing but *pizza 'colla pomarola n'goppe* (topped with tomatoes). (Pia 2023: 139)

Although Fierro's original lyrics have been slightly altered (*Cu 'a pummarola 'ncoppa*), this switch to Neapolitan again shifts the deictic centre of the narrative. While the reference to a song about pizza might appear stereotypical, Pia uses it to point towards a specific song and dish that reside in the collective consciousness of the global Italian diaspora, situating her narrative within an Italy that largely exists as a preserved memory among those living abroad. The shift reveals a profound nostalgia for an idyllic time and place, which Pia weaves into her multifaceted Italian Scottish identity.

5. Concluding Remarks

The critical stylistic analysis of Anne Pia's *Language of My Choosing* and *Magnaccioni* shows that her translingual practice serves not only as an aesthetic device, but also as a sophisticated tool for engaging with the complexities of third-generation diasporic identity. By exploring the thematic areas of popular wisdom and folklore, femininity and motherhood, and the sensory domains of food and music, the analysis has shown how code-switching operates both as a mnemonic anchor and as a site of psychological resilience in Pia's autobiographical narratives.

The analysis also reveals the complex and highly individualised nature of Pia's linguistic repertoire. Although fully integrated into Scottish society, Pia continues to preserve the Viticusar dialect of her grandparents. Maintaining this variety is itself an act of resilience in the face of the challenges posed by the post-WWII Italian Scottish community and her conservative Catholic household. The dialect thus serves as an important mnemonic device, enabling the reconstruction of personal and collective histories fragmented by the traumas of World War II, displacement, and subsequent assimilation pressures. From the perspective of Critical Stylistics, Pia's translingual choices carry considerable ideological implications. By reproducing her grandmother's idiolect through direct speech, she gives an authentic voice to a woman who was illiterate, transforming her Viticusar folk wisdom into influential life lessons. Pia now regards these lessons as pivotal to her development, personally, professionally, and in her roles as a mother, woman, educator, and artist. Her grandmother's sayings about social status, the nurturing *mammissima* values, her ironic view of Scottish customers, and the practice of *na buon sfogad* have all shaped Pia's self-identity as a third-generation Italian Scot.

Ultimately, this study illustrates that translingualism serves as an important mechanism for resilience. Through the integration of English, Italian, French, and Viticusar, Pia achieves what Kellman (2000: 28) describes as the "emancipatory detachment" of translingual writing. This linguistic distance allows her to address a restrictive and patriarchal past, supporting processes of healing and self-acceptance. Each language represents a distinct aspect of her identity: Viticusar the intimacy of home and family memory, Italian the reconciliation with her heritage, and French the liberation that first allowed her to see herself beyond her Italian and Scottish affiliations. It is this openness that enables Pia to embrace a complex identity encompassing Italian, Scottish, and broader European elements, transcending traditional national boundaries.

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