

The Sagarana website: an online project on “contemporary literature in the Italian language”

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ABSTRACT

Questo articolo discute la centralità del mezzo online nel progetto Sagarana (fondato dallo scrittore Julio Monteiro Martins) come caso di studio per analizzare la divulgazione della produzione letteraria di scrittori e scrittrici translingui in lingua italiana su Internet. L'articolo discute le motivazioni che hanno spinto Monteiro Martins a valorizzare il mezzo internet all'interno di un complesso progetto culturale ed editoriale, che comprende una Rivista online e nove edizioni dei Seminari organizzati tra il 2001 e il 2009. La riflessione critica di Monteiro Martins sull'uso di Internet parte da una ricerca di nuovi mezzi di pubblicazione che rendano accessibile il prodotto letterario, e in particolare opere inedite o poco conosciute. Monteiro Martins definisce Internet un mezzo “aperto e democratico”: in questo contesto, le trascrizioni delle sessioni dei Seminari – un corpus di documenti unico che rispecchia le tendenze critiche di quegli anni e raccoglie voci critiche e letterarie diverse – e la loro pubblicazione all'interno del sito Sagarana contribuiscono alla ricchezza del progetto online. L'articolo sottolinea la direzione politico-culturale data dalle scelte fatte da Monteiro Martins nell'ideazione del progetto in termini di presenza online, e gli aspetti critici e creativi del suo contributo.

KEYWORDS

Italia, migrazione, Sagarana, Julio Monteiro Martins, online, translingue

Introduction

This paper discusses the centrality of the online medium in the Sagarana, a literary and cultural project promoted since the mid-nineties by writer Julio Monteiro Martins until his death in December 2014. The critical framework of analysis is provided by a range of studies on the literary production by translingual writers in the Italian language, which offer some context to Monteiro Martins' contribution both as a prolific writer and as a literary critic. In particular, the article has been conceived within a wider research that looks at the work of cultural intermediaries active in the dissemination of the literary production by translingual writers in the Italian language, considering elements such as the audiences that they targeted, the narratives that they produced to engage with them, and the media that they explored. In this sense, the work of Monteiro Martins is particularly meaningful when considering that, thanks to the Sagarana, he created a multifaceted, online-based cultural project («mondo Sagarana», as he defined it highlighting its wideness and complexity) that included, amongst other initiatives, an online journal (2000-2014) and nine editions of the Seminari (2001-2009).

This paper is organized into two main sections. The first one introduces Internet as a key medium that has been employed in the dissemination of the literary production by translingual writers in the Italian language, with a focus on the Sagarana. Interestingly, Monteiro Martins has discussed the benefits of online platforms on multiple occasions, making it a central element of the initiatives that he promoted, as well as a distinctive feature of the Sagarana project as a whole. Over the years, these online initiatives gathered a diverse set of writers, poets, scholars, and activists, who enriched the critical debate on this literary production and disseminated it through the platform provided by Sagarana.

The second section explores a specific initiative of the Sagarana – the Seminari – with a focus on their online transcripts to stress the attention paid to the availability of their content beyond the physical participation in the events themselves. This example shows how the values of the Sagarana – «un contenuto di libertà e democrazia», to put it in Monteiro Martins' words (Sagarana, “Transcripts of the second Seminario – first session”) – have been expressed by its online form. Over the years, the Seminari offered an open, transcultural perspective on contemporary narratives in Italian; in terms of dissemination, the use of Internet has been a key feature of the Seminari, considering that the publication of their transcripts on the Sagarana website has been identified, since their second edition, as a fundamental element of the way in which the event has been conceived. The section concludes with an analysis of some limitations of the mode of publications of the transcripts, and mentions the project La Macchina Sognante, which has been promoted by some collaborators of the Sagarana.

1. Translingual writers in the Italian language and their cultural intermediaries: online initiatives

A first question to pose is about the extent to which the means of Internet has contributed to the shaping of initiatives aimed at promoting translingual writers in the Italian language. When the «mass of cultural activity» (Burns, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 200) that was produced in the organization of such initiatives included the online medium, it took various forms – from repositories of information, to regularly-updated

platforms for publication, to social media accounts facilitating the interaction with the public. The example of the Sagarana is particularly representative as it combines a wide variety of online-based resources targeting different needs, as the next sections will show. In general, online resources have proven to be an important pool of materials by and about translingual writers in Italian between the 90s and the 2000s. The presence of translingual writers in Italian on Internet starts with more static webpages, such as authors' personal pages, websites of publishers, associations, and literary prizes, which function as repositories of their activities – see for example the websites of Kossi Komla-Ebri and Gabriella Ghermandi; the website of the Concorso letterario nazionale Lingua Madre and the Associazione Eks&Tra; the website of the Compagnia delle poete (see Bibliography).

Looking at the dissemination of the literary production by translingual writers in Italian with a focus on online initiatives is particularly productive considering that a close connection to a specific territory in Italy is a recurring pattern when analysing examples of dissemination contexts. In this sense, the local dimension of an initiative needs to be seen in parallel to its potential global dimension, which is granted by the online presence. An example is the Centro Culturale Multietnico La Tenda in Milan, which since 1993 has organized a series of book launches, *Narrativa Nascente*, to respond to the needs of an area with a high percentage of immigrants. On the one hand, presenting and disseminating recent literary production by translingual writers in Italian was identified as a means to promote cultural understanding among the different communities living in the area (Centro Culturale Multietnico La Tenda, *Statuto*). On the other hand, La Tenda and the writers that were invited to present their books also constituted a fertile environment for the birth of the online journal *El-Ghibli*, in 2000, which has played a pivotal role in the publication of primary and secondary texts by translingual writers in Italian and has made them available to a larger audience.

It is also important to highlight that some initiatives have been conceived as being online-based only. The database Basili – Banca dati sugli Scrittori Immigrati in Lingua Italiana – functions as the main repository to access data on both primary texts and critical contributions. Founded in 1997 by Armando Gnisci, it has been off-line for a few years; its management was recently taken over by *El-Ghibli* in April 2017 and the database has been renamed Basili&LIMM – Banca dati degli Scrittori Immigrati in Lingua Italiana e della Letteratura Italiana della Migrazione Mondiale. As Gnisci explains in his Introduction to the new edition, «chiediamo agli amici del nuovo database di farci conoscere dati di scrittori/opere che non sono presenti nella banca dati, insieme a idee e domande» (Basili&LIMM, “Ritorna la banca dati BASILI nella nuova versione BASILI&LIMM”). This invite shows that the database itself does not exhaust the purpose of the Basili&LIMM project, which is also meant to facilitate an interaction with the public and – as the rest of the Introduction states – raise awareness of this literary production. Interestingly, the new edition of Basili&LIMM also invites users to send a copy of their work to the Fondo Armando Gnisci in Lanuvio, stressing a link between an online project and a physical space. All in all, this example shows that Internet has offered a non-physical space that not only played an essential role in promoting this production through the web, but – most importantly – it has also become the medium through which a narrative of these initiatives is created and transmitted.

In this sense, the role played by the agents involved has been mentioned and recognized at different levels in scholarly contributions, and it has been the object of a study that centres specifically on the input provided by cultural intermediaries active in the dissemination of the literary production by translingual

writers in the Italian language (Panzarella, “Disseminating Migration Literature: A Dialogue with Contemporary Italy”).¹ Considering the range of figures of the cultural industry that were involved and referring particularly to the Nineties, Mengozzi states:

il numero delle pubblicazioni in italiano degli “immigrati” aumenta considerevolmente grazie alla sensibilità e all’impegno di alcuni critici letterari, dell’associazionismo e della piccola e media editoria. Critici, editori e associazioni non si sono limitati a “dare spazio e voce” [...] ma hanno promosso, incoraggiato e sollecitato queste pratiche di scrittura, creando al tempo stesso le cornici e i contenitori entro i quali circoscrivere un fenomeno che loro stessi contribuivano a tenere in vita e indirizzare (*Narrazioni contese*, 26).

As Mengozzi explains, not only did critics, cultural associations, and small and medium publishers actively encourage and promote writers, but they also urged new projects and publications that could fit the frames they had created. Mengozzi also suggests that the relationship between the organizers of such initiatives and the writers is characterized by power dynamics, which emerge clearly in terms of the expectations to be met by authors in order to be part of such a network, especially in the case of emerging authors. Mengozzi pushes this idea forward and highlights that these agents were giving directives on the developments of this production, stressing the active role that they have played at decision-making level. This is particularly relevant in Sagarana project, in which Monteiro Martins acted as editor-in-chief of the project, which highlights the prominent role that he played in the selection and production of content by using the online medium (see next sections).

An element that Internet encourages is that of collaboration and contact. Interestingly, Sinopoli refers to these agents as «critici “compagni di strada”», identifying teachers, «operatori interculturali», and journalists as the first figures who contributed to the publishing and dissemination of this production in a variety of forms (Sinopoli, “Prime linee di tendenza della critica sulla letteratura della migrazione in Italia”, 89). Despite the range of contexts that Mengozzi and Sinopoli illustrate, these initiatives should not be seen as being disconnected from each other, but rather as part of a lively cultural industry whose protagonists are involved in a range of «forms of activity in which various products and practices co-exist» (Burns, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 200). Burns stresses the co-existence of such initiatives that do not necessarily share aims, target the same audience, or follow the same social and political agenda. To put it in Burns’ words:

such forms of cultural production and dissemination perhaps achieve significant cultural capital and potential impact in the national public arena by virtue of the ways in which different kinds of cultural associations, cultural and political activists, community groups, and organs of production collaborate or simply co-exist in such a way as to generate a mass of cultural activity (200-201).

All in all, the notion of cultural intermediaries helps discuss the wide range of initiatives that were promoted and highlights the creative contribution made by these agents (Smith Maguire and Matthews, “Are We All Cultural Intermediaries Now? An Introduction to Cultural Intermediaries in Context”); Smith

¹ For an introduction to the literary production of translingual writers in Italian - in addition to the critical studies mentioned elsewhere in this article - see Parati 1999; Gnisci 2003; Sinopoli 2004; Moll 2008; Mauceri and Negro 2009; Comberiat 2010; Brancato 2011; Pezzarossa 2011; Orton 2012; Polezzi 2012; Bond 2014; Lombardi Diop and Romeo 2014; Bond et al. 2015; Mauceri and Niccolai 2015; Bond 2018 (see Bibliography).

Maguire and Matthews, “Introduction: Thinking with Cultural Intermediaries”; Wynn, “Guides through Cultural Work: A Methodological Framework for the Study of Cultural Intermediaries”). The choice of using Internet, as well as the specific modes of use, are key elements when considering the narratives that have been transmitted. This framework suggests a set of questions that will guide this line of investigation of the Sagarana project: what has been the rationale behind the choice of using Internet as a main platform of dissemination? Which specific online platforms have been used, and what are their strengths and limitations? To what extent is there a link between local initiatives and a global-scale audience?

1.1 An «open and democratic» means. Monteiro Martins and the use of Internet

Monteiro Martins played a key role in the context of the literary production of translingual writers in the Italian language. Most notably, his work as a novelist has been at the centre of a monograph by Rosanna Morace, and a section of Lecomte’s study on transnational Italian poetry is dedicated to Monteiro Martins (Morace, *Un mare così ampio*; Lecomte, *Di un poetico altrove*, 226-235). In addition to the numerous texts that he published on the online journal Sagarana over the years, contributions by Monteiro Martins have been published amongst other journals on *El-Ghibli* (sixteen texts over the first 42 issues, as the Archivio of *El-Ghibli* shows); when Monteiro Martins passed away, Morace and Taddeo edited a Supplemento, a special issue of *El-Ghibli* that collects Monteiro Martins’ short stories, critical contributions by him and on him, as well as interviews (Morace and Taddeo, “Supplemento Julio Monteiro Martins”). When referring to Monteiro Martins’ work as a literary critic, Lecomte stresses that «tutta l’opera narrativa e poetica di Monteiro Martins in Italia è accompagnata da una costante e lucidissima riflessione critica – dedicata perlopiù alle questioni inerenti le dinamiche dell’esilio e della migrazione e alla produzione transnazionale che ne risulta» (Lecomte, *Di un poetico altrove*, 229). In relation to the use of Internet in the context of publishing and promoting literature, Monteiro Martins’ reflection revolves around the search for new means of publication linked to a decline of print literature and the accessibility and distribution of literary products. These considerations explain why the Sagarana has used Internet as a privileged means of communication, publication, collaboration.

The political aspects of the choices made when designing a project that relies so consistently on online presence have been explored by Monteiro Martins, as well as the impact of these choices on the intended audience of the «mondo Sagarana». In his writing, Monteiro Martins engaged with issues related to online aspects of Sagarana, describing Internet as a «veicolo aperto e democratico, attraverso il quale [Sagarana] riusciva ad arrivare ovunque, istantaneamente e a costo zero per il lettore» (“Il 10° anniversario della rivista”). In this excerpt, he considers key elements (space, time, cost) that may affect the prospective reader’s ability to access the literary products and critical discussions that Sagarana promotes. The focus on «democratic» also stresses the strong political vocation of the project, and openness to grant access to as many readers as possible, considering that the virtual dimension of Sagarana allows access from all over the world.

Another point that Monteiro Martins stresses concerns the distribution industry. The use of Internet and its importance in the context of dissemination of this literary production also needs to be considered in view of a wider spread of online publications in the literary panorama in those years, as well as a general trend that sees print paper decreasing in the Nineties. «La morte delle riviste cartacee», explains Monteiro

Martins, «che ha coinciso con la diffusione di Internet, ha aperto spazio alla nascita delle pubblicazioni online come Sagarana, Carmilla, El-Ghibli, Golem, Bollettino 900 e altre. La distribuzione mancante nelle librerie è stata superata da una super distribuzione informatica, immediata, democratica e globale» (De Palma, “Intervista a Julio Monteiro Martins”). In this sense, the political choice of Internet as an effective means of distribution for the literary production by translingual writers in Italian provides a clear willingness to embrace the benefits granted by the online medium. Despite the limitations that this carries – in addition to what is explained in the last section of this article, a more general point about which demographics in which areas of the world have actually access to Internet should be considered – it facilitates the access at a potentially global scale.

Amongst the benefit of using Internet, Monteiro Martins also highlights the importance of a level of independence from mainstream information:

Senz'altro Internet ha un ruolo decisivo [...] È evidente a questo punto che la rete è diventata – magari a scapito dei suoi creatori – il grande, e forse unico vero sistema di informazione alternativa a quella “ufficiale” [...] Questo accade soprattutto perché la produzione e l'emissione d'informazione attraverso Internet, almeno per ora, ha dei costi relativamente bassi, e quindi sopportati da quei gruppi sociali e culturali che non possono contare sulle abbondanti sponsorizzazioni dei loro detrattori. (Carrer, “Multiculturalità e rete: voci migranti in Italia”)

The specific reference to the contrast between different kinds of «gruppi sociali e culturali» that use Internet as a means to promote translingual writings reflects the wide use of this medium that has been pursued in initiatives such as the Sagarana. In a sense, the availability of online, often open-source resources seems to balance the difficulty in sourcing some publications in this area that have been produced by small publishers in a limited number of copies, for example those that after a first edition were not often reprinted (see Camilotti, *Lingue e letterature in movimento*).

To sum up, this analysis helps highlight elements of Monteiro Martins' political views on the use of Internet that have informed the project of Sagarana. In addition, looking at his work through the lens of the role of cultural intermediary stresses the creative nature of his conception, as well as the creative input that this role entails.

1.2 Sagarana as an online space

In terms of global and local dimension of the Sagarana project, Monteiro Martins stated: «da sede della Sagarana è virtuale come la Sagarana stessa. La sua sede è www.sagarana.net. Abbiamo anche degli indirizzi postali, chiaramente, e per gli incontri troviamo degli spazi adeguati, ma sempre diversi. Esistiamo veramente, e con forza, però, in questo territorio telematico che a volte sembra non esistere e invece esiste oggi più degli altri; che sembra non essere da nessuna parte, e invece è ovunque» (Pancamo, “Intervista a Julio Monteiro Martins”). This point about the non-existence of a space takes on a meaningful connotation when considering the omnipresence of Internet and the virtual dimension in our everyday life. It is also significant considering what Carrer reports: the Sagarana website counts «850 visite giornaliere, 80.000 visite per numero, +30% di visite ogni numero» (Carrer, “Multiculturalità e rete: voci migranti in Italia”), which shows the powerfulness of this initiative.

The website serves as a means to build each strand of the Sagarana project within a wider structure. A first strand revolves around Monteiro Martins' interest in creative writing. The Scuola Sagarana offered courses in creative writing, which were organized both in shorter workshops and in longer educational courses, called Master. The link between the school and the Rivista is stated explicitly by Monteiro Martins, when he launched «la sua prima edizione on-line, parte integrante ed essenziale del progetto più ampio della Scuola Sagarana» (“Benvenuti alla rivista Sagarana”). Monteiro Martins also defines the Rivista as «un progetto estetico e didattico», as it provides a platform for the students of the Scuola to see their work published. In addition, it granted them the possibility to make their work accessible not only to the other students, but also to a wider readership. When discussing his selection criteria, Monteiro Martins specifies that «la rivista Sagarana prende in considerazione la qualità specificamente letteraria, e la «leggibilità» dei racconti o dei brani che offre» (“Una rivista in continua evoluzione”). Monteiro Martins highlights its interest in the literary text despite other factors, in a way that justifies the choice to include both published and unpublished texts, as well as texts that were newly translated into Italian. To put it in Monteiro Martins' words, the Rivista publishes «(opere) rimaste ancora inedite, poco conosciute o difficilmente accessibili» (Ibid.). A «rivistabiblioteca», as Morace effectively defines it (“Le storie infinite della Macchina sognante”). Accordingly, the Rivista was open to both well-known and emerging writers, some of whom were the students of the Scuola Sagarana. Monteiro Martins' selection process is the trait d'union between these works and allowed such different literary products to be published on the same platform. As he points out, «le scelte sono fatte da me, e anche certe traduzioni e certe ricerche di materiale inedito» (“Lo spirito della Sagarana”).

This element of concentrating decision-making processes in the figure of Monteiro characterizes the Sagarana project, in a way that makes the cultural project inseparable from its creator. In this sense, Sagarana can be described as a laboratory that Monteiro used as a base for his activities, as well as to nurture the network of contacts that he developed over the years. Accordingly, the structure itself of the project defines it as a cultural product that, despite the many collaborations, centres on Monteiro Martins' artistic and intellectual figure. For example, some of the issues of the Rivista are introduced by an editorial article by Monteiro Martins, in which he reflects on his own selection of the articles often referring to current affairs. In terms of cultural intermediation, the role of Monteiro Martins is connected to the existence itself of the editorial and cultural projects that he produced. For this reason, the creative side of his intermediation is particularly visible because of the strands of the Sagarana, the many connections that he builds between them, and the fact itself that these are established as being part of a comprehensive, cohesive, and long-term project.

The website of Sagarana has served as a means to publicize the activities of Sagarana and, in general, to interact with the potential audience of Sagarana's initiatives. For example, the announcements of the following sessions of the creative writing workshops can still be accessed through the old issues of the Rivista (Sagarana, “Sommaro 2”). The website has also been used to collect donations: as one page states, despite the partnerships that the project has established over the years, it did not have access to public funding and it could only survive thanks to the voluntary work of Monteiro Martins and his collaborators (Sagarana, “Sostieni il progetto Sagarana”). Moreover, as the Rivista was issued quarterly, Monteiro Martins used the newsletter and the “Lavagna del sabato” to update the readers on the latest activities of Sagarana. The latter was a weekly publication, defined as an «aggiornamento settimanale dal mondo Sagarana». This shorter-term publication followed the same selection criteria as the Rivista and granted

Sagarana's readers some extra material between one issue and another. Since its first post in 2009, it reached the huge amount of 627 texts published (Sagarana, "Lavagne dal 2010 in poi"). These strategies established a loyal relationship with the readers, who could therefore receive weekly updates on the «mondo Sagarana» and were encouraged to check the website regularly.

Finally, a central section of the website, *Il direttore*, gives access to an overview of Monteiro Martins' own publications, with details of his books and access to reviews (Sagarana, "Il direttore"). If compared to the websites of other writers, Sagarana expands the idea of a personal website, as it links it to a wider project: it incorporates Monteiro Martins' artistic profile into his activity as organizer of events, journal editor, and educator. In this sense, and despite the presence of collaborators working on the *Rivista*, the *Seminari* and the delivery and organization of the creative writing courses, Sagarana elaborates and transmits the figure of Monteiro Martins considering the many aspects of his activities.

This short overview summarizes some of the main concerns that the Sagarana online project addresses: firstly, the idea of literature as a practice, which needs to be encouraged and shared; secondly, the emphasis on a vision of literature as an act which could not be «isolato» and «solitario», but on the contrary could benefit from opportunities, like the *Seminari*, when people who practise it could have the chance to discuss it, and – through Internet – make it available to a wider public.

2. From “Scrittori Migranti” to “Letteratura contemporanea in lingua italiana”: transcripts to access the debates and the values of the Sagarana project.

The transcripts of the *Seminari* constitute a valuable source to engage with how their participants – writers, scholars and activists – discussed the production of translingual writers in Italian between 2001 and 2009 as the events offered a moment of discussion in which ideas could be developed together. For the purposes of this article, it is important to highlight that the online transcripts of the sessions of the *Seminari* constitute a unique corpus of documents that mirrors not only the critical trends of those years, but also how some positions evolved in the first decade of the millennium. As an archive of materials – whose nature between oral and written shows these tensions – they can be used to source information across the years and the experiences of several writers (see for example Panzarella, "L'italiano degli scrittori migranti").

Firstly, the transcripts show that the *Seminari* promoted the idea that translingual writers in Italian constitute a ground-breaking change within contemporary literature in Italian, with a focus on issues of belonging and non-belonging. This point was supported in various ways and more or less explicitly not only by the theorists and scholars who took part, but it can also be inferred considering the questions and answers amongst the participants. The title of the *Seminari* is somehow emblematic of an evolution in defining a corpus of texts by engaging with its critical significance: from the *Scrittori migranti* of the first editions, the title of the events changed to *Scrittori e scrittrici migranti* in the sixth, accompanying but also anticipating the rise of critical works that year after year started to focus on the specificities of women writers and poets (Camilotti, *Lingue e letterature in movimento*). In the eighth edition, the name changed again to *Seminario della Sagarana: realtà e prospettive della letteratura contemporanea in lingua italiana*, where the keyword *migranti* disappears, probably to highlight a new sense of belonging or anyway a wider framework to be

considered, for example because of a lack of consecration of «migration writers» as such within the Italian contemporary literary industry. The reasons behind this choice can also be traced back to the fact that some of the speakers of the Seminari were not translingual writers, but Italian-born authors who have addressed the topic of migration in various ways. The fact that these writers took part in the events prevented Sagarana's Seminari from becoming a self-referential moment in which only translingual writers and scholars would consider only a portion of contemporary literature in Italian. This choice can be linked to the Rivista Sagarana, which did not use translingualism or criteria other than the «leggibilità» of the texts to publish them. Although the specific aim of the Seminari is to discuss translingual authors – or as Monteiro Martins also defined it, «il fenomeno della migrazione letteraria e artistica» – the choice was to include voices of authors who were not necessarily part of this circuit (see Sagarana, “Transcripts of the second Seminario – first session”).

The transcripts also prove to be a useful source to investigate a progressive loss of meaning of the category of scrittore/scrittrice migrante for writers themselves, who perhaps perceived it to be generic and abstract to mirror such a complex group of people with different backgrounds, motivations and aspirations. In his answer to the question “why have the Seminari ended”, Monteiro Martins gave two reasons, one of a practical and economic nature – the Regione Toscana stopped providing funding and the venue for the event – and the other reason was more «letterario», as he defined it. He explained that, in the years that preceded the end of the Seminari, many writers had lost interest in participating in an event that highlighted their being migrant, as if, through this filter, their individuality could not be properly perceived. Identifying themselves as «migration writers», as Monteiro Martins points out, helped them – for some time at least – to feel part of a group, and for nine years they prioritized the need to meet to discuss and work together and share their thoughts. However, as Monteiro Martins stated,

negli ultimi anni avvertivamo un lento ma chiaro esaurimento dello “spirito di gruppo”, dell'identificazione degli scrittori migranti – ora più numerosi, più diversi tra di loro e con un'opera di maggior spessore e ampiezza – in una categoria generica, quella degli scrittori migranti, per diventare, come insisteva sempre Bozidar Stanisic' e molti altri, scrittori e basta. Avevo capito che l'abbandono di questa categoria generica e astratta da parte di questi autori era un passo fondamentale del loro processo di affermazione, e non aveva più senso insistere a conservare un tipo di seminario che non corrispondeva più ai loro interessi e alle loro aspirazioni. Il problema è che questa crescente aspirazione al riconoscimento individuale non ha avuto fino ad oggi una risposta né dal mercato editoriale né dalla stampa culturale o dell'ambiente accademico. Così, senza più il collettivo e ancora senza una percezione delle individualità, questi autori rimangono in un limbo senza alcuna espressione o visibilità nel contesto culturale, nonostante il grande valore dell'opera di alcuni di loro (Panzarella, “Intervista con Julio Monteiro Martins”).

Following Monteiro Martins' analysis, it has to be highlighted that following the end of the Seminari there has still been a vibrant community of writers, scholars and activists. From this perspective, the example of the Compagnia delle poete is particularly significant: this artistic project – founded in 2009, interestingly, the same year as the last edition of the Seminari – shows that there is still the will and need to collaborate, to work together and collaborate by exploring the common feature of being translingual and transcultural writers, and the group has been vital and active since then (Compagnia delle poete, Website).

2.1 The Seminari's online transcripts: strengths and limitations

In the context of this article, the importance of the choice of making the transcripts available is not only in terms of their content, as the previous section highlighted, but more interestingly considering that this online dimension has been presented as a key value that the initiative pursued. In this sense, it is important to stress the attention paid to the availability of the content of the initiatives beyond the physical participation in the events themselves. Monteiro Martins describes the Sagarana's online audience as composed of «studiosi di letteratura italiana, soprattutto dagli USA, dall'Australia e dall'Argentina, ci seguono con interesse, e ci sono numerosi lettori che spesso si collegano alla Sagarana dalla Svizzera, dall'Albania, dalla Macedonia, dal Brasile, dall'Inghilterra, dalla Serbia, dal Giappone, dalla Francia, dalla Spagna e dall'Arabia Saudita, i paesi stranieri con più presenze. Solo Internet è in grado di offrire una tale ampiezza di comunicazione» (Treves, "Intervista a Julio Monteiro Martins"). This list outlines the participation of a range of writers and scholars, as well as the awareness that one of the aims of the Sagarana project was to include in the conversation a larger community of people to foster. In terms of the «physical» audience, the Seminari hosted contributions from the following writers, amongst others: Ron Kubati, Sandra Clementina Ammendola, Gezim Hajdari, Amara Lakhous (2001); Mia Lecomte, Anilda Ibrahim, Amor Dekhis, Brenda Porster (2002); Helene Paraskeva, Barbara Serdakowski, Tahar Lamri (2003); Candelaria Romero, Artur Spanjolli, Gabriella Ghermandi (2004); Cristina Ali Farah, Melita Richter, Jadelin Gangbo, Pap Khouma (2005); Kossi Komla-Ebri (2006); Barbara Pumhösel, Hamid Barole Abdu, Livia Bazu, Eva Taylor (2007); Mihai Mircea Butcovan, Jarmila Očkayová (2008); Karim Metref (2009); among the scholars and critics: Armando Gnisci, Andrea Sirotti, Sonia Sabelli, Davide Bregola, Sandra Ponzanesi Carmine Chiellino, Raffaele Taddeo, Fulvio Pezzarossa. It is also important to consider that, thanks to the Seminari, the collaborators of Sagarana (some of which are listed above) were offered the chance to meet and speak in person once a year.

The Seminari began as a moment of discussion for specialists and later switched to a more open forum that a wider audience could attend, as well as have access to on Sagarana's website thanks to the transcripts. This change in the policy of sharing their content online can be interpreted as a change in the conception of the event, which can be linked to the institutional collaborations that supported the event. All nine editions of the Seminari took place in Lucca and were organised by Sagarana with the Provincia of Lucca and Porto Franco, a project carried out by the Regione Toscana and presented during the fourth seminar (see Porto Franco, website). Only the first edition was organised in collaboration with La Sapienza University in Rome, and specifically with the scholar Armando Gnisci. Following the aims of Porto Franco – and in particular its idea to start a dialogue with the «società civile» – it is significant that one of the characteristics of the Seminari was its aim to promote a dialogue between authors, scholars, and the general public. In Monteiro Martins' words: «si tratta di un seminario aperto al pubblico: studiosi, studenti, ricercatori e cittadini comuni» ("Second seminario, first session"). However, the first Seminario (2001) was publicized in the fourth issue of the Sagarana online journal with a stress on the fact that there would be an «incontro aperto al pubblico», implying that the other sessions of the event were only devoted to a limited group of specialists. Whilst the transcripts of the first Seminari are not available on the website, those of all other editions are freely accessible online. As Monteiro Martins pointed out at the inaugural speech of the second seminar, «quando si pensa di trasmettere un contenuto di libertà e democrazia, bisogna cominciare dalla forma stessa con cui si organizza un evento che propone questi valori» ("Second seminario, first session"). In this sense, the initiative takes into account the organizers'

willingness to disseminate this literary production to a wider public, justifying this decision with a reference to the «values» that the event intends to pursue. Similarly to other events, the participation of external people, who are non-specialists, may or may not have included the authors' readership, as well as an audience that had any background in the field. In this sense, one of the concerns of the series of events was the need to balance the purpose of addressing specialists with wider dissemination purposes.

Limitations in the choice to publish the transcripts can be identified considering the language in which these documents are available and the choice to make available transcripts (as opposed to, for example, recordings). The reason why the transcripts of almost all the sessions of the Seminari were published online is because they were seen as a tool that makes the Seminari accessible to scholars and students from all over the world who are interested to know more about the sessions. However, it has to be pointed out that the transcripts are available only in Italian, and although specialists in contemporary Italian literature abroad are used to reading texts in the source language and not necessarily in translation, it is clear that the circulation of the transcripts would be different if they were translated, as a wider audience could be targeted. Considering the topic of the Seminari, scholars working on the literary production by translingual writers in other languages might be interested in accessing them, for example in a comparative perspective.

It is interesting to point out that Monteiro Martins argued that his aim for the transcripts was that «(gli) interessati o studiosi di altri paesi e dell'Italia, che non potevano venire a Lucca, potessero informarsi direttamente delle discussioni» (Panzarella, "Intervista con Julio Monteiro Martins"). Following the analysis of the nature of the transcripts, it may be objected that readers cannot, by definition, access the content of the Seminari «direttamente»: the intermedial translation – from a recorded spoken language into a written text – makes the transcripts a partial version of what the Seminari were. Suffice to mention the pragmatic elements of language, which are lost in the written text, or the fact that punctuation has been added, arguably modifying the nuances of the oral text through the intervention of a third person, namely the one who translated the records into a written form. However, it is clear that even taking into account these objections and losses, the transcripts constitute an invaluable source of information.

All in all, the interest of the organizers to prioritize for nine years meeting, discussing, and working together, as well as sharing their thoughts and spreading them through the Internet, needs to be contextualized within these two tensions of the Seminari – their being small events with an audience of specialists in the literary production of translingual writers, but open to the general public; their ability to reach people everywhere through Internet, but limiting the access to Italian-speaking readers.

3. Conclusion

This article shows how analysing the organizational aspects of the online project Sagarana intersects with the content of the project itself, stressing in what ways the role of the organizers has creative, but also political relevance. The Sagarana project concluded at the end of 2014 when Monteiro Martins passed away, but the presence of Sagarana was maintained, as the website is still online, although not updated. This choice reflects the central role that Monteiro Martins played in the existence of the project, which could not continue without his guidance.

Following the event “Tenere accesa La macchina Sognante” held at the Biblioteca Casa di Khaoula in Bologna in 2015, a new website and online journal was launched by some of Monteiro Martins’ collaborators, *La macchina sognante*. Contenitore di scritture dal mondo, and with an explicit reference to his work and the stated aim to continue what Sagarana had started. As the description of the new project states, *La macchina sognante* needs to be seen not only as a homage, but also as a statement of recognition of the efforts made by Monteiro Martins to promote literature:

Per far continuare a vivere un’eco dell’opera di Julio Monteiro Martins lo scrittore brasiliano recentemente scomparso abbiamo battezzato questo spazio aperto “La macchina sognante”, prendendo a prestito il titolo del suo ultimo libro di riflessioni, pubblicato postumo a marzo 2015. Ci siamo ritrovati con entusiasmo ad essere l’equipaggio di questa “macchina sognante” che è la letteratura; una letteratura attorno alla quale ha ruotato la stessa vita dell’autore, che mai ha fatto della scrittura un atto isolato e solitario, ma si è sempre esposto pubblicamente per renderla pratica attiva, bene pubblico (*La macchina sognante*, *Riflessione*).

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