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***Habitus* and Embeddedness in the Florentine Literary Field: The Case of  
Alberto Carocci (1926-1939)**

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## ***Habitus* and Embeddedness in the Florentine Literary Field: The Case of Alberto Carocci (1926-1939)**

This article intends to show how the notion of embeddedness, a concept derived from network theory, can improve our understanding of how a journal's reliance on regional and national intellectual networks impacts the journal's performance. The study takes as test case Alberto Carocci's editorship of *Solaria*. It also discusses — to a more limited extent — Giacomo Noventa (*La riforma letteraria*), and Berto Ricci (*L'Universale*). The study shows how uneven distribution of social capital (connections, links, etc.) across the members of the editorial board affects the journal's embeddedness in existing networks. The article closes by arguing the need to focus on how journal editors develop their networks as a reaction to political pressure and in order to sustain competition in the marketplace.

Keywords: Alberto Carocci, *Solaria*, *Habitus*, Paradox of Embeddedness, Berto Ricci, Giacomo Noventa.

The activity of Alberto Carocci (Florence 1904-Rome 1972) as a periodical editor spanned from 1926 to the late 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Carocci's interventions in the cultural field led to the launch of some of the most important journals of the Italian twentieth century, with *Nuovi argomenti* — founded in 1953 together with Alberto Moravia— continuing to this day. The journals he

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<sup>1</sup> See Giorgio Luti, *Cronache letterarie tra le due guerre 1920-1940* (Bari: Laterza, 1966), pp. 77-142; Alberto Moravia, 'Ricordo di Alberto Carocci', annex to *Nuovi Argomenti* 26 (March-April, 1972); Giovanni Todini, 'Alberto Carocci', *Belfagor*, 28.4 (1973), 325-42; Ernesto Ragni, 'Alberto Carocci', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1977), vol. 20, 509-11. Information on Carocci's role as periodical editor can be extracted from the epistolaries surrounding *Solaria* such as *Lettere a Solaria*, ed. by Giuliano Manacorda (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1975) and *Solaria ed oltre*, ed. by Riccardo Monti (Florence: Passigli, 1985). In this volume, 'Bibliografia di Alberto Carocci' (pp. 31-34) includes Carocci's creative fiction and a list of contemporary appreciations of his work. Silvio Guarnieri, 'Da *Solaria* a *La riforma letteraria* a *Argomenti*', *La nuova rivista europea*, 18.4 (1980), 119-28, contains useful biographical recollections.

founded staked out particular positions in the cultural debate of their time. Such is the case of *Solaria*, a journal that came to represent disinterested artistic engagement at the height of Fascist hegemony in the 1920s-30s. With their ambitious programme of cultural regeneration, *La riforma letteraria* (1936-1938) and *Argomenti* (1940-1941) aimed to mobilise intellectual forces against Fascism before and during the war.

Despite the outstanding achievements marking his career, which also include, in the immediate post-war period, a collaboration with RAI and his election as MP for the Communist Party in 1963, Carocci remains one of the less studied *éminences grises* of the Italian twentieth century. This under-exposure can perhaps be explained by the fact that Carocci's uneven and limited artistic production placed him uneasily in the company of the more creatively established *letterati editori*.<sup>2</sup> His collections of poetry and short stories, and his novel *Un ballo dagli Angrisoni* —composed in 1932 but published in 1969, a chronological distance that contributed to its cold reception— were quickly forgotten by the critics of the day.<sup>3</sup> Some of the journals he founded, however, have attracted —as in the case of *Solaria*— substantial critical attention.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For this category see Alberto Cadioli, *Letterati editori* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1995) and in particular 'Carocci e Bonsanti editori per la "civiltà delle lettere"', pp. 89-110.

<sup>3</sup> *Quattro tempi. La confessione* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1923); the poetry collection *Narcisso* (Florence: Edizioni di Solaria, 1926); *Il paradiso perduto* (Florence: Edizioni di Solaria, 1929); *Un ballo dagli Angrisoni* (Milan: Bompiani, 1969). Carocci translated M.me de La Fayette, *La principessa di Clèves* (Florence: Chessa, 1943).

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the editors' rich introductions to *Lettere a Solaria* and *Solaria ed oltre*, see at least Sandro Briosi, *Il problema della letteratura in Solaria* (Milan: Mursia, 1976); *Gli anni di Solaria*, ed. by Gloria Manghetti (Verona: Bi&Gi, 1986); Roberto Ludovico, '*Una farfalla chiamata Solaria*' tra *l'Europa e il romanzo* (Pesaro: Metauro, 2010) and the bibliography cited therein.

This study has two equally weighted objectives. One objective is to restore the depth and complexity of Carocci's evolving cultural mission in the Italian intellectual field, and to contribute to rediscovering a neglected and yet central figure in Italian twentieth-century print culture. This article will, however, not examine Carocci's cultural action in its entirety. I intend to illuminate the essential characteristics of his practice and bring to more systematic scrutiny Carocci's role as journal editor within a manageable scope characterized by a unity of time (1926-1939), place (Florence) and action (a focus on how he organized his networks of contributors). There is very little scholarship on how Carocci organized the intellectual forces that coalesced around his journals and on the type of structure his journals embraced to face the challenges of the regional and national literary markets. I will examine Carocci's performance as journal editor to highlight how he took advantage of existing network links and how he set out to grow new links in order to support his journals' action further. My second objective, therefore, is to contribute to the ongoing conversations in periodical studies around the application of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (a set of 'durable and transposable dispositions' including taste, sense of self, skills and practical mastery).<sup>5</sup> In this study I will assess the applicability of the paradox of embeddedness, as developed in organizational and economic sociology, to evaluate the way journals' over-reliance on established networks can become a liability for their performance and how editors react to this occurrence by modifying their dispositions. To understand how journal editors manage the tension between the need for depth and breadth in their networks, so as to maintain and consolidate existing links and develop new ones, I will focus on the journals Carocci launched during the Fascist period: *Solaria* and *La riforma letteraria*. To highlight divergences and commonalities, I will also discuss the dialogue that Carocci's journals

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<sup>5</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 53.

entertained with Alessandro Pavolini's *Il Bargello* and Berto Ricci's *L'Universale*. I will do so to ascertain how embeddedness affected these journals' performance in a political and institutional context characterized by a high degree of clientelism.

### ***Habitus and Embeddedness***

In recent years, the editorial role has been the object of increasingly sustained analysis. The periodical editor has been seen as incarnating 'the principle of mediation' between a varied set of agents populating the complexities of the marketplace (authors, publishers, printing houses, distribution chains, etc.).<sup>6</sup> In an attempt to respond to Sean Latham and Robert Scholes's call for 'the creation of typological descriptions' of periodical activity,<sup>7</sup> a growing number of scholars have embraced the tenets of Bourdieu's cultural sociology for their 'ability to articulate the mediating ground between textuality and social history, symbolic value and material production'.<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu's notion of 'field', intended as a nexus of dynamically changing discursive and non-discursive practices that both condition and are specific to a particular activity, has gained traction in periodical studies. Bourdieu's conceptualization allows scholars to analyze the context of production and distribution while

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<sup>6</sup> *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*, ed. by John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', *PMLA*, 121 (2006), 517-31 (p. 519). See also Peter McDonald, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); Stephen Parker and Matthew Philpotts, *Sinn und Form* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009); Mark Morrison, 'The Myth of the Whole: Ford's *English Review*, the *Mercure de France*, and Early British Modernism', *ELH*, 63 (1996), 513-33; Id., *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001); John B. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> McDonald, p. 20.

also placing a strong emphasis on the mutually dynamic and symbolic relationship between literary worth and economic value. While I share the call for ‘new scholarly methodologies adequate to the task’ of charting the forces influencing the life-cycle of the journal,<sup>9</sup> I am no longer convinced that Bourdieu’s envisioning of the literary marketplace can *alone* carry the theoretical infrastructure of scholarly inquiries attempting to respond to the challenge posed by the composite and collaborative nature of periodical communication.

This study presents an empirically-based but theoretically articulated historical analysis which exerts pressure on the Bourdieusian model, and specifically on the notion of *habitus* as an explanatory concept that both describes and predicts the development and consolidation of a unique set of competencies employed by the periodical editor in her action. In Bourdieu’s theorization, *habitus* is linked to the individual’s social and economic capital, and it functions as a matrix of ‘perceptions, appreciations and actions’, a generative mechanism that engenders predictable behavioural patterns, including *prises de position* in a variety of domains.<sup>10</sup> Recently, this notion has been integrated with Bernard Lahire’s critique of individual dispositions,<sup>11</sup> to identify three recurrent editorial typologies (charismatic; bureaucratic; mediating) arising when editors negotiate between personal dispositions and the journal’s identity and cultural agency.<sup>12</sup> This study will try to address some of the more process-related features of the current application of *habitus* that, in my view, fail to explain some aspects of the life-cycle of a periodical, with the aim of breaking away from the deterministic bias that *habitus* has attracted in the current sociological debate. Much has been

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<sup>9</sup> Latham and Scholes, p. 529.

<sup>10</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> On this revision of *habitus*, see Bernard Lahire, ‘From the Habitus to an Individual Heritage of Dispositions: Towards a Sociology at the Level of the Individual’, *Poetics*, 31 (2003), 329-55.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Philpotts, ‘The Role of the Periodical Editor: Literary Journals and Periodical Habitus’, *Modern Language Review*, 107.1 (2012), 39-64.



achieved in integrating Bourdieu's key concepts with the methodology of *histoire croisée* in an attempt to highlight how the periodical editor manages the transnational networks supporting the periodical's action.<sup>13</sup> However, there is comparably very little conceptualization of the mechanisms orchestrated by the editor to navigate local and national clusters and networks, what makes these mechanisms effective, how and why these change over time, and how and why these affect or determine the cultural journal's performance. These questions can be answered by productively connecting Bourdieu's cultural sociology with advances developed by organizational sociologists engaging with network theory. The aim is to assess how the social capital of individual agents, and agents' embeddedness in clusters, affect the journal's performance.<sup>14</sup>

As we shall see in the following section, in the years of my scrutiny (1926-1939), Florence makes a valuable case-study for the density of its knowledge economy. Like Rome, Turin, Milan, and to a lesser extent Naples, Florence was a prime destination for internal intellectual migration as well as for its established publishing industry and seats of learning.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, and significantly for my inquiry, since the early twentieth-century, the Florentine literary field had been polarized by the experience of the avant-garde and the

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<sup>13</sup> See in particular Birgit Van Puybroek, 'The Age of a Mistaken Nationalism: *Histoire Croisée*, Cross-National Exchange and the Anglo-French Networks of Periodicals', *The Modern Language Review*, 107.3 (2012), 681-98.

<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu defines an agent's social capital as 'the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and of the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected'. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. by John Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 241-58 (p. 249).

<sup>15</sup> For more granular (but incomplete) data on the size of the publishing industry in Rome, Milan, Florence, Turin, and Naples see the 1926 and 1927-1928 volumes of *Annuario della stampa italiana ed europea* (804-14 and 773-84, respectively). Florence's main higher education institution, the Istituto di Studi Pratici e Perfezionamento, was granted University status in 1924.

cultivation of traditional values and aesthetic norms.<sup>16</sup> With the ‘Disposizioni sulla stampa periodica’ issued on the 31 December 1925, the Fascist government imposed on the Italian publishing market a series of political constraints. As a result of these, the regime forced the closure of periodicals that openly criticized Fascism, such as Piero Gobetti’s *Il Baretto* and *Rivoluzione liberale*, which were deeply influential in promoting a model of anti-Fascist intellectual engagement.<sup>17</sup> Conversely, through the release of financial support to key journals and publishing firms, the Fascist state started a patronage structure that, to an extent, systematized clientelism and the role of non-economic kinship.<sup>18</sup> There is ample evidence to suggest that the Fascist state supported various journals and intellectuals, directly and indirectly.<sup>19</sup> The interventions of the Fascist state forced intellectuals in Florence (and elsewhere) to develop strategies that maximized the opportunity for their work to be published.

The notion of embeddedness can be very useful to bring into sharper focus the type of relationship that intellectuals establish with institutions within ‘the structure of the overall

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<sup>16</sup> Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 15-51.

<sup>17</sup> On Gobetti’s intellectual circle in Turin, his journals, and their role in fostering a more engaged interpretation of Benedetto Croce’s distinction between intellectual autonomy and politics see David Ward, *Piero Gobetti’s New World: Antifascism, Liberalism, Writing* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2010) and Niamh Cullen, *Piero Gobetti’s Turin: Modernity, Myth, and Memory* (London: Peter Lang, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> For the concept of state patronage in the arts see Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). See also Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 20-28.

<sup>19</sup> Giovanni Sedita, *Gli intellettuali di Mussolini. La cultura finanziata dal Fascismo* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2010). In particular see ‘Appendice documentale’, pp. 187-244, for a comprehensive list of writers, journalists, and journals funded partially or entirely by MinCulPop.

network of relations’.<sup>20</sup> Since its early formulation in the work of Karl Polanyi and Clifford Geertz, embeddedness has been refined and deployed, especially in the field of economic sociology. Journals, contributors and journal editors — like any other individual or institutional agents — develop their decision-making processes in a social, cultural and economic context that is structurally embedded in ‘patterns of ongoing interpersonal relations’, and one which is ‘shaped by a struggle for power that involves economic actors and nonmarket institutions’.<sup>21</sup> It is a truism that periodical editors, like other entrepreneurs, exploit interpersonal ties to attract copy, maintain contracts, and obtain influence. However, empirical observation suggests that this action does not continue *ad infinitum*. Periodicals rise and fall, all the time.

The work of Brian Uzzi on the role of competition in interfirm networks is especially significant in understanding the impact that embeddedness in established networks has on the life-cycle of firms and complex organizations such as periodicals. Uzzi observed that embeddedness in ongoing social ties has a positive effect in facilitating economic action, but after a certain threshold, and in conjunction with other factors, it can derail exchange and growth in firms by making them vulnerable to shocks.<sup>22</sup> Uzzi termed this shift from positive to negative in the effect of embeddedness on firms’ performance as ‘the paradox of embeddedness’. The scholar developed this concept further by looking at the impact of the ‘paradox of embeddedness’ on the creative industries. He observed that affiliation networks

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Granovetter, ‘The Old and the New Economic Sociology’ in *Beyond the Market Place*, ed. by R. Friedland and A. F. Robertson (NY: De Gruyter, 1990), pp. 89-112 (pp. 98-99). See also Id., ‘Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 91.3 (1985), 481-510.

<sup>21</sup> Sharon Zukin and Paul di Maggio, ‘Introduction’, in *Structures of Capital*, ed. by Sharon Zukin and Paul di Maggio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 18 and p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Brian Uzzi, ‘Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness’, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42 (1997), 35-67 (p. 35).

‘occur whenever invention is based on team-work [...] they constitute fully connected cliques and at the global level, they create a network of dense overlapping clusters joined together by actors who have multiple team memberships – or classic small world networks’.<sup>23</sup> I argue that Uzzi’s paradigm can be usefully employed in periodical studies to investigate how editors select their collaborators and under what conditions they may seek to develop relationships with new partners. Journals are first and foremost social organizations that are the result of an orchestration of economic and cultural synergies. One of the periodical editor’s essential tasks is to develop a network of embedded links which can supply good quality copy reliably, with the aim of increasing organizational performance and specialization. However, embedded ties can limit the journal’s reach or its ability to interpret a new position in the literary field.<sup>24</sup> While embeddedness can reduce risk and uncertainty, create an environment of mutual trust, foster information sharing routines, and joint problem solving, it can also reduce, in the long run, the journal’s adaptability and versatility. Uzzi observed that firms and creative teams alike face an embeddedness paradox as they have a simultaneous need for depth and breadth in their network of partners. When embedded collaborators produce unoriginal material, editors may decide to sever or reduce collaborations and, as a consequence, may be more inclined to embrace risk and experiment with new partners.

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<sup>23</sup> Brian Uzzi, ‘Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 111.2 (2005), 447-504 (p. 493).

<sup>24</sup> An example of how embeddedness can constrain the development of journals, is for instance Francesco Flora’s *Aretusa* (1944-1946). Founded in Naples, it relied on copy-supplying clusters linked to Benedetto Croce and did not adapt to the political and cultural concerns of a literary field that was quickly influenced by the Communist Party. See Daniela La Penna, ‘*Aretusa*: Continuity, Rupture, Space for Intervention 1944-1946’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 21.1 (2016), 19-34.

Periodicals are collective entities, yet research on editors has so far overwhelmingly focused on individual periodical editors, favouring an emphasis on ‘charismatic’ editorship.<sup>25</sup> Carocci’s interpretation of periodical editorship, however, can hardly be considered ‘charismatic’, as this adjective qualifies the action of an editor with considerable symbolic capital often derived from quantifiable success in the creative arts. The journals founded by Carocci shared one single characteristic: a team that shouldered financial and political responsibility and negotiated a shared aesthetic vision. Carocci started *Solaria* with the support of Bonaventura Tecchi and Raffaello Franchi. Giansiro Ferrata joined him at the helm in 1928-1929 and then Alessandro Bonsanti in 1930-1932.<sup>26</sup> When *Solaria* collapsed, Carocci founded *La riforma letteraria* with Giacomo Noventa in 1936 and in 1941 he launched *Argomenti* with Raffaello Ramat. Shared leadership is not an uncommon occurrence in the Italian periodical landscape. However, when we observe such assembly mechanisms in greater detail, it appears that capital (whether financial or social) is often unequally distributed across the editorial board, thus determining managerial specialization and in some cases differing degrees of influence on the direction of the enterprise.

Once again, the research conducted by Uzzi and his colleagues provides insights into how uneven distribution of social capital within a team affects team performance. By differentiating participating agents in creative enterprises into ‘newcomers’ and ‘incumbents’ (established people with talent and track-record), Guimerà, Uzzi and Spiro identify four possible types of link within a team: (i) newcomer-newcomer (ii) newcomer-incumbent (iii)

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<sup>25</sup> In the Italian context, a good starting point is Cadioli, *Letterati editori*.

<sup>26</sup> See Stefania Salustri, *Giansiro Ferrata e gli anni di Solaria* (Florence: Atheneum, 1993), and *Alessandro Bonsanti scrittore e organizzatore di cultura*, ed. by Paolo Bagnoli (Florence: Festina Lente, 1990).

incumbent-incumbent and (iv) repeat incumbent-incumbent.<sup>27</sup> These structures reflect the social capital diversity in the team and each formation is linked to differing degrees of embeddedness in a given network. In the sections to follow, I will lay out the industrial and cultural context surrounding Carocci's action during his shared editorship of *Solaria* first and then *La riforma letteraria*. I will use Uzzi's formulations to evaluate the strategies put in place by Carocci and his collaborators to exploit and consolidate embeddedness in local clusters close to the Fascist authorities and look at how and why they developed medium-distance networks with a more diversified alignment.

### ***Solaria* and Embeddedness**

When Carocci penned the foreword to the 1959 anthology of *Solaria* edited by Enzo Siciliano, he did so with tangible unease. Now at the helm of *Nuovi argomenti*, he looked at the 'heroic' phase of his editorial activity with a sense of distance. In his words, *Solaria*—the journal he founded at the age of twenty-two and directed for ten years—did not have an 'atteggiamento organico e coerente [...] fu essa stessa l'espressione di una piccola "polis" letteraria [...]. D'altronde il titolo stesso della rivista volle indicare che essa era una città [...] non una scuola di pensiero'.<sup>28</sup> Carocci depicted a literary city virtually isolated from, if not ignored by, the dominant cultural and political discourses of the day: 'I lettori di *Solaria* furono sempre quattro gatti; la sua tiratura non raggiungeva le 700 copie; né ricordo che essa ricevesse mai l'onore di essere citata dai giornali del tempo'. Carocci deemed *Solaria*'s engagement with the political forces of the day not to exceed the 'funzione di obiettore di

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<sup>27</sup> Roger Guimerà, Brian Uzzi, Jarrett Spiro, Luís A. Nuñez Amaral, 'Team Assembly Mechanisms Determine Collaboration Network Structure and Team Performance', *Science*, 308 (2005), 697-702 (p. 698).

<sup>28</sup> Alberto Carocci, 'Introduzione', in *Antologia di Solaria*, ed. by Enzo Siciliano (Milan: Lerici, 1959), pp. 9-11 (p. 9).

coscienza', implicitly undermining the Fascist rhetoric of 'genio italico' because it promoted the idea that 'la letteratura italiana contemporanea non era che una provincia della più vasta letteratura europea, e neanche la provincia più splendida'.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the negative value judgement on *Solaria*'s political disengagement, Carocci's introduction displays a remarkable closeness to the journal's mission statement, published in the opening issue in January 1926. In it, the lack of a 'programma preciso' neither undermined the ambition to acquire an 'originale fisionomia nel campo della cultura' nor hindered the display of a 'coscienza di alcuni fondamentali problemi dell'arte' or the possibility for *Solaria*'s constitutive members to be recognised as a 'gruppo'.<sup>30</sup> This 'gruppo' came together in hubs of sociability ('ci siamo avvistati nei caffè'), by decoding affinities in an increasingly dangerous political environment.<sup>31</sup> The community *Solaria* intended to represent drew on and emerged from Florence's dynamic and competitive literary field, which attracted the best talents 'convenuti da luoghi diversi'. With several cultural publications fighting for visibility and recognition, and all of them striving for survival, it is no surprise that *Solaria*'s birth act also contained a reference to the 'inevitabili leggi naturali' regulating the 'campo della cultura'.<sup>32</sup>

To assess the plausibility of this characterization, it is essential to evaluate the local publishing context from which *Solaria* emerged. In the biennium 1925-1926, a total of 79

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<sup>29</sup> Carocci, 'Introduzione', p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Anon. (Alberto Carocci), [Nota], *Solaria*, 1.1 (1926), 1.

<sup>31</sup> As is well known, the Solariani congregated in Le Giubbe Rosse café. See Ernesto Livorni, 'The Giubbe Rosse café in Florence: A Literary and Political Alcove from Futurism to Anti-Fascist Resistance', *Italica*, 86.4 (2009), 602-22.

<sup>32</sup> Anon. (Alberto Carocci), [Nota], 2.

Florence-based periodicals emerged (37 in 1925 and 42 in 1926 respectively).<sup>33</sup> With the exclusion of publications of a popular character such as *L'eco dello schermo*, or sectorial and scientific periodicals, a few cultural journals stand out which, in turn, fall into the following categories: aesthetic magazines, protest periodicals, and hybrid periodicals combining commercial information, op-ed pieces, and cultural journalism.<sup>34</sup>

These journals—with their positioning and self-fashioning—help us to understand the type of mediamorphosis that was taking place at the time of *Solaria*'s launch, and the underpinning sociomorphosis of the metropolitan, regional, and national reading publics with which the journals intended to engage.<sup>35</sup> In a city rapidly saturated by Fascist discourse, the predicament of *Non mollare!* (which was closed down after ten months of activity in October 1925) is emblematic of a dramatic reduction of visibility for political dissent. Launched by Gaetano Salvemini, together with Carlo and Nello Rosselli, and others animating Florence's Circolo della Cultura (1923-1925), the political mouthpiece of Florentine anti-Fascism was

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<sup>33</sup> This data can be sourced from Benvenuto Righini, *I periodici fiorentini (1597-1950): Catalogo ragionato*, 2 vols. (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1955). With regard the so-called 'crisi del libro' which engulfed the Italian publishing industry till at least 1929, Turi observes that Fascist subventions might have favoured a 'processo di concentrazione aziendale' but did not obliterate the small publishing firms which the regime considered more difficult to control. See Gabriele Turi, 'Lo spazio di *Solaria*', in *Gli anni di Solaria*, pp. 79-100 (p. 85).

<sup>34</sup> I borrow this tri-partition from Kirsten MacLeod, 'American Little Magazines of the 1890s and the Rise of the Professional-Managerial Class', *English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (2015), 41-68 (p. 42).

<sup>35</sup> Roger Fidler defined mediamorphosis as 'the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and social and technological innovations' in his landmark *Mediamorphosis: Understanding New Medias* (Thousand Oaks Cal: Pine Forge Press, 1997), p. 15.



pulverized and its editors either arrested or exiled.<sup>36</sup> At the other end of the political spectrum, Florence (like many other major Italian cities) quickly became a fertile ground for Fascist periodicals which continued to embrace the rhetorical stance of the protest periodical, despite now being the expression of the political *status quo*. These exploited the link to the local and regional Fascist university associations (which would soon turn into GUFs) from which they often sourced talent and to which they appealed.<sup>37</sup> In 1926, the same year as *Solaria*'s launch, *Aristocrazia* and *L'Avventuriero* — both lasting a year — emerged with *I figli d'Italia* outliving these publications (1926-1943). The local Fascist party partially supported these ventures. Other Fascist cultural outlets such as *L'Universale* (1931-1935), and *L'Orto* (1931-1939) because of their strident interpretation of Fascism did not enjoy party support and suffered increasing isolation and then closure.<sup>38</sup> The fact that state support would not guarantee journals' survival tells us how quickly saturated and intensely competitive (for funding, visibility, and readership) was the market segment occupied by Fascist journals. It also explains why the closest journal to the Fascist Party in Florence, Alessandro Pavolini's *Il Bargello* (1929-1943), would ultimately outlast its competitors. This journal enjoyed a direct relationship to the high-ranks of the PNF (via Galeazzo Ciano and Franco Ciarlantini) and the local Istituto di Cultura Fascista, while counting on the quality support of one of Florence's finest publishing firms, Vallecchi. A broad-based journal, *Il Bargello* was printed both as large street posters (political highlights mainly) and as the

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<sup>36</sup> On *Non Mollare!* see Enzo Ronconi, 'Antifascismo borghese 1922-30', *Italia Contemporanea*, 140 (1980), 19-38; Carlo Francovich, 'Il Circolo della Cultura: l'ultima espressione di vita democratica a Firenze', *Quaderni del Circolo Rosselli*, 11.1 (1991), 80-84.

<sup>37</sup> See Luca La Rovere, 'Fascist Groups in Italian Universities: An Organization at the Service of the Totalitarian State', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34.3 (1999), 457-75.

<sup>38</sup> On *L'Universale*, its campaign against Giovanni Gentile, and its repercussions see Alessandra Tarquini, *Il Gentile dei Fascisti: Gentiliani e antigentiliani nel regime fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), pp. 180-201.

journal proper.<sup>39</sup> The use of two media formats reflected the hybridity of *Il Bargello*'s message, stretched between political intervention and cultural commentary. *Il Bargello*'s strategy aimed to engage its readership, encompassing the urban-based professional-managerial class, the intellectual class, and the rural middle class with practical concerns. Furthermore, and significantly, Pavolini's journal managed to attract a stream of talent because sales and financial support generated a cash-flow which funded contributors' pay.<sup>40</sup> For these reasons, *Il Bargello* can be considered Florence's most important journal of the time, and the most significant market threat and 'interfirm' competitor to *Solaria* and other cultural journals.

The market segment populated by aesthetic magazines, at the height of 1926, was characterized by diverging aesthetic trajectories. In 1926, Mino Maccari's *Il selvaggio*, the *strapaese* mouthpiece, moved its headquarters from Colle Val d'Elsa to Florence (in 1929 the *redazione* would move to Siena and then to Rome). Alongside the journals and 'fogli' interpreting a *strapaese* discourse, several journals engaged in dialogue with the national and international community of artists.<sup>41</sup> Massimo Bontempelli and Curzio Malaparte's *900: Cahiers d'Italie et d'Europe* registered a *redazione* in Florence (which lasted a year). Ugo Ojetti's *Pègaso* (1929-1933, published by Sansoni and then Treves from 1931) and *Pan* (1933-35, based in Florence but published by Rizzoli) in turn cultivated a dialogue with a readership interested in aesthetic distinction. This is the market segment that Carocci's *Solaria* tried to penetrate. Florence also supported reviews combining a dominant scholarly

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<sup>39</sup> For *Il Bargello*'s co-option strategies and cultural politics see Peter Hainsworth, 'Florentine Cultural Journalism Under Fascism: *Il Bargello*', *The Modern Language Review*, 95.3 (2000), 696-711.

<sup>40</sup> Sedita, pp. 57-60.

<sup>41</sup> On *Strapaese* see Lara Pucci, 'Remapping the Rural: The ideological Geographies of *Strapaese*', in *New Film, Art, New Media*, ed. by Angela delle Vacche (London: Palgrave, 2012), pp. 178-195.

profile with cultural commentary, such as Ernesto Codignola's *Civiltà moderna* (1929-1943), Enrico Lucatello and Piero Bargellini's Catholic journal *Il frontespizio* (1929-1940)—both published by Vallecchi—and Luigi Russo's *La Nuova Italia* (1929-1943, published by the eponymous firm).

What distinguished these journals' life-cycle from the common mortality rate for ventures of this kind (roughly two years) was the support of established firms, approved by the regime, and that could draw on deals secured with the chain bookshops that controlled distribution and sales nationwide. Furthermore, these journals could count on copy-producing talent that worked with the regional universities (Florence, Pisa, and the Scuola Normale Superiore), the Gabinetto Vieusseux, the Accademia della Crusca, and the newly established Istituto di Cultura Fascista. In addition to these learning centres, the established national firms Olschki, the popular Salani, *La Nuova Italia*, the Catholic LEF, and the firms that would be controlled both financially and intellectually by Giovanni Gentile from 1926 to 1932—Bemporad, Vallecchi, Sansoni, and Le Monnier—acted as the key drivers of the local white-collar economy and offered precarious employment to many *letterati* with national ambitions.<sup>42</sup>

In the light of the intricacy of such a market-place, how likely was it that *Solaria* would be read by 'quattro gatti' and never exceed the circulation of '700 copie'? The ledgers of Carlo Parenti, *Solaria*'s publisher, confirm that the initial print run (1000 copies) decreased to 600 in the later years. The circulation rates were less than half those of *Solaria*'s

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<sup>42</sup> For more details on Gentile's involvement with the Florentine publishing industry, see Gabriele Turi, *Giovanni Gentile: Una biografia* (Florence: Giunti, 1995). For a survey of the cultural institutions in Florence see Francesco Dei, 'I luoghi della cultura nella Firenze degli anni Trenta' in *Atlante della letteratura Italiana: Dal Romanticismo ad Oggi*, ed. by Domenico Scarpa (Turin: Einaudi, 2012), pp. 559-75.

arch-competitor, *Il Bargello*, which reached 1500 copies per issue.<sup>43</sup> As far as the readership was concerned, *Solaria* fitted the paradigm of many aesthetic magazines. Like Margaret Anderson's *Little Magazine*, it was 'the magazine that is read by those who write the others' and, like Willard Huntington Wright's *The Smart Set*, it was 'the magazine that other magazine editors read'.<sup>44</sup> With a membership list of 207, which included many regular contributors, in *Solaria*'s case, writers and editors working for the competition would also write for Carocci's journal. A case in point is Alessandro Pavolini who, together with his brother Corrado, published pieces in Carocci's journal before founding *Il Bargello*.<sup>45</sup> While Carocci did not reciprocate, he did, however, consult the Pavolinis for advice on bookshop chain distributors,<sup>46</sup> and he petitioned Corrado for the *Solaria* membership to be made available to 'enti [della cultura fascista] o a quelle biblioteche o uffici stampa che esistono nelle varie città'.<sup>47</sup> The Milanese Alpes, a member of the Associazione Librai Italiani which controlled distribution, disseminated *Solaria* and the early volumes published for the Edizioni di Solaria. However, it is possible that it was thanks to the Pavolinis' mediation that the Gentile-controlled Bemporad agreed to publicize *Solaria* in its catalogue and distribute the

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<sup>43</sup> Carlo Parenti had worked for Spinelli, the publisher of Borgese's *Hermes* and Papini and Prezzolini's *Leonardo*. See Carlo Maria Simonetti, 'Le edizioni di Solaria', in *Gli anni di Solaria*, pp. 101-18 (104-06), for more granular data on the *Solaria* imprint.

<sup>44</sup> These were the title captions on the cover page of these magazines and their publicity materials.

<sup>45</sup> Corrado Pavolini published the following texts: 'Eco', 1.2 (1926); 'Dafne', and 'Siringa', 2.2. (1927); 'Un sogno' and 'Un ricordo', 5.7-8 (1930); 'Frammento di un inno alla poesia', 6.11 (1931); the article 'Odor della terra', 4.6 (1929). Alessandro Pavolini contributed 'Giro d'Italia', 4.1 (1929); Id., rev. to Leo Ferrero, *La chioma di Berenice*, 1.5 (1926); 'Un giorno a Batavia', 2.5 (1927); 'A mare bianco', 7.2 (1932). Edizioni di Solaria published Corrado Pavolini's *L'elixir di vita* in 1929.

<sup>46</sup> *Lettere a Solaria*, p. 151.

<sup>47</sup> Letter dated 13 November 1929 cited in Ludovico, p. 26.

journal and volumes through its nation-wide chain.<sup>48</sup> While most of Carocci's creative work was published either in *Solaria* or by its imprint, the exceptions are quite significant: in 1929 he published 'Racconto di Natale' in Giovanni Battista Angioletti and Malaparte's *L'Italia Letteraria* and in 1933 'Delfini e isole' in Luigi Federzoni's *La nuova antologia*, both based in Rome.<sup>49</sup> Carocci's dialogue with journals and cultural figures officially linked to the Fascist regime was not the exception confirming the rule of non-engagement. In fact, it was the norm for most of *Solaria*'s contributors.

A useful source to measure the level of *Solaria*'s embeddedness in and reliance on copy-supplying networks also used by other journals is the 1937 *Antologia di Solaria*, edited by Carocci and Bonsanti. A veritable 'swan song' for the deceased journal, this anthology is an ignored source in scholarship on *Solaria*. This is all the more surprising considering that the anthology displays a remarkably different vision of the review compared to Siciliano's 1959 edition which — through careful selections and exclusions sanctioned by Carocci himself — accentuates the journal's role as a vehicle for European modernism.

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<sup>48</sup> In 1931, the Accademia d'Italia, directed by Paolo Emilio Pavolini (father of Alessandro and Corrado), awarded *Solaria* a 5000-lire prize. For more on Carocci and *Solaria*'s link to the Fascist authorities see Ludovico, pp. 21-38; Bonsanti's '*Solaria* e il fascismo', *Il Mondo*, 9.7 (1957), pp. 9-10 is useful to understand the reasons why Bonsanti, Franchi and Carocci decided to take out the membership of the Fascist party in 1933. This decision only partially undermines Giuseppe Langella's definition of *Solaria* as a 'rivista dell'Aventino': Id., *Il secolo delle riviste* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1982), pp. 92-93.

<sup>49</sup> Until 1926, *La nuova antologia* was the *organon* of the Gabinetto Vieusseux. From 1932 to 1943 it moved to Rome. Luigi Federzoni transformed it into the official publication of the Fascist Accademia d'Italia. Umberto Fracchia's *La fiera letteraria* changed leadership in 1928 when it was taken over by Angioletti and Malaparte who moved the *redazione* from Milan to Rome and in 1929 changed its title to *L'Italia letteraria*. Corrado Pavolini and Massimo Bontempelli shared the leadership of this journal.

During its life-cycle, *Solaria* published 136 authors who contributed 429 critical articles and creative pieces. Of these authors, 58 were listed into the 1937 anthology (including Gianna Manzini, Natalia Levi, and Eckart Peterich, the only non-Italian, but a *Toscano d'adozione*): for each contributor biographical data, main works, and 'collaborazioni principali' were listed. Of these 58 contributors, 32 regularly published with *L'Italia letteraria*, ten with *La nuova antologia*. With regard to publications with a more explicit engagement with Fascist discourse, it is interesting to note that seven contributors collaborated with Telesio Interlandi's *Quadrivio*, six with Leo Longanesi's *L'Italiano*. Only three contributors published with *Il Tevere*, *Il Bargello* (the Pavolini brothers and Elio Vittorini also listed this journal as a 'collaborazione'), while only two authors (Riccardo Bacchelli and Giuseppe Ungaretti) listed Florence-based antagonizers *L'Universale* and *L'Orto*.

These cultural journals represent the full spectrum of alignment with Fascist politics, ranging from the high-culture posturing embodied in *L'Italia letteraria* and *La nuova antologia*, to the most aggressive Fascist rhetoric incarnated by *Il Tevere* and *L'Universale*. Several authors also listed collaborations with broadsheet dailies that since 1925 were all uniformly and vocally supporting Fascism (*L'Ambrosiano*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, etc.).

The connectivity of this select corpus of *Solaria* contributors in the 1937 anthology also highlighted concurrent 'corridors' linking *Solaria* to other journals and underpinning regional clusters over time. Milan was well-represented, with nine historical collaborations with *La fiera letteraria* and eleven to *Il Convegno*; Genova (through Eugenio Montale) was represented by 18 active collaborations with the poetry journal *Circoli*, led by Adriano Grandi, and the broadsheet *Il lavoro*. Nineteen collaborations with Ojetti's *Pègaso* first and then 18 with *Pan* highlighted *Solaria*'s embeddedness within Florence-based clusters. As previously mentioned, this data pertains to a robust and representative selection of the total

number of creative writers working for Carocci's journal. The coefficient of embeddedness in the Florentine field increases when cross-referencing, for instance, the 70 authors who published only once (55% of the total), and the 17 authors who published twice in *Solaria*'s creative section (12,6%), with the tables of contents of *Il Bargello*, *Il Selvaggio* on the one side, and *Pègaso and Pan* on the other. These cross-checks show that 39% of the authors published in all these journals, and 26% published in *Il Bargello* and *Il Selvaggio* only. It is important to stress at this point of my analysis that the higher coefficient of embeddedness rests on the non-repeated nature of the interaction of arm's-length ties linking Carocci and his closest associates to a rich plethora of 'market relationships'. This data tallies with Uzzi's observations according to which arm's-length ties are regularly used in interfirm relationships and that 'arm's-length ties may be greater in frequency but of lesser significance than close ties in terms of company success and overall business volume'.<sup>50</sup> As we shall see in the next section, it is, however, 'special relations'—typically fewer in number—that define the journal's (or firm's) identity and performance and characterize its critical exchanges.

### **Strong Ties and Weaker Links**

Twenty-two-year-old Carocci founded *Solaria* with the help of Raffaello Franchi (1899-1946) and Bonaventura Tecchi (1896-1968), and the support of ambitious typographer Carlo Parenti. The financial capital was put together by Carocci, the scion of respected Florentine family with a significant legal practice, and Mattia Azzurrini, a fellow lawyer with literary ambitions. The first managerial structure in place was one that brought together a newcomer (Carocci) with two incumbents (Tecchi and Franchi) with considerable experience in

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<sup>50</sup> Uzzi, 'Social Structure and Competition', 42.

periodical leadership and team management.<sup>51</sup> The members of this team were linked to marginally overlapping but complementary intellectual clusters. Franchi brought to the table his editorial experience with *Italia futurista* (1916-1918) and the experimental *Enciclopedia* (1920-1923), both linked to the futurist *Pattuglia azzurra*. He also contributed numerous contacts affiliated to the *Corporazione delle arti decorative* he co-founded in 1922. Tecchi added instead his social assets consolidated through the headship of the Gabinetto Vieusseux (1925-1929), which brought him close to the city authorities and in dialogue with the Fascist intelligentsia. The Germanist Tecchi and arts commentator Franchi contributed their strong and arm's-length ties to the burgeoning periodical. Tecchi secured links to translators and commentators who facilitated the European outlook of the journal, including Eugenio Montale,<sup>52</sup> while Franchi procured *ad hoc* support of local visual artists and critics who made *Solaria* distinct.<sup>53</sup> In 1928, Edizioni di Solaria was registered with the local chamber of commerce: majority shareholders Carocci and Parenti were joined by Alessandro Bonsanti, Leo Ferrero, Bonaventura Tecchi, Giacomo Debendetti, and Arturo Loria as investors with

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<sup>51</sup> On Franchi see Briosi, *Il problema della letteratura in Solaria*, pp. 18-28, 295-99 and on Tecchi, *ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

<sup>52</sup> Only eight translations were published in *Solaria*. Engagement with European literatures (mainly French and English) happened through critical commentary. See Raffaele Donnarumma, 'Solaria e il canone della narrativa modernista' and Luca Cristiano 'Le traduzioni di *Solaria*' in *La rete dei modernismi europei. Riviste e canone (1918-1940)*, ed. by Raffaele Donnarumma and Serena Grazzini (Perugia: Morlacchi, 2016), pp. 161-96.

<sup>53</sup> The development of a distinct visual dimension must be attributed to Franchi's leadership in the *Corporazione delle arti*. Art critic Baccio Maria Bacci assisted Franchi in this role, to which Montale also contributed by offering his links to De Pisis and Morandi. Most of the 26 artists who collaborated with *Solaria* recruited were linked to the local Accademia di Belle Arti with some also linked to the local Futurist experience. *Solaria* published drawings and xylographies from inception and indeed the 1926 volumes were richly illustrated, hosting 27 of all the illustrations published in the review (a total of 71 drawings). *Solaria*'s engagement with photography was more limited in comparison, with only four instances of portrait photography.



limited risk. In 1930, Aldo Capasso officially joined the team with Giansiro Ferrata entering the shareholders' board after his resignation as joint senior editor.<sup>54</sup> While Carocci appeared as the front man of the journal, he orchestrated a complex team of editors whose exchanges mirror Uzzi's view according to which 'embedded relationships have three main components that regulate the expectations and behaviours of exchange partners: trust, fine-grained information transfer, and joint problem-solving arrangements'.<sup>55</sup> Alongside Carocci, the shareholders were responsible for copy procurement from localized and medium-distance clusters.

As Carocci's sprawling correspondence testifies, the early years of his directorship were dedicated to managing reliable supply-chains and recruiting trusted sources that would enable differentiation and specialization (a preference for fiction), internationalization (engagement with high modernism), and commercialization.<sup>56</sup> From its inception, Tecchi and Franchi helped *Solaria* to keep good relations with the Fascist intelligentsia and then —after 1929—by regularly contributing to *Il Bargello*.<sup>57</sup> But they also helped *Solaria* differentiate itself from the local offering by facilitating trusted contacts embedded in networks linked to the Turin-based intelligentsia (especially Giacomo Debenedetti). Carocci's family friends Guglielmo Ferrero (an eminent historian who had married Cesare Lombroso's daughter Gina) and his son Leo Ferrero further enhanced this action. After his move to Florence to work for Bemporad, Montale also contributed to consolidate this reliance (he had published with Gobetti). Carocci however needed to diversify the journal's reliance on Gobetti's former

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<sup>54</sup> These and further details can be sourced from Simonetti, 'Le edizioni di *Solaria*', pp. 109-12.

<sup>55</sup> Uzzi, 'Social Structure and Competition', 47.

<sup>56</sup> *Lettere a Solaria*, pp. 23-47 and 56-68.

<sup>57</sup> Franchi and Tecchi's close relationship to the Pavolinis helped broadcast *Solaria*'s 'italianismo' when the journal was accused of being too philo-European. See Raffaello Franchi, 'Polemica', *Il Bargello*, 20 April 1930, 10-11.

networks by also connecting with local intellectuals such as Piero Burrelli and Aldo Capasso. This and other similar recruitments helped define the message of the journal and differentiate it from Gobetti's journals by adding accents of aesthetic refinement derived from the local experience of *La Ronda*, also captured in Florence by *Pègaso* first and then *Pan*. Carocci tasked Leo Ferrero with developing contacts with foreign writers and intellectuals, a task that he performed from Paris where he migrated in 1927 to escape Fascist persecution. Ferrero was instrumental in linking *Solaria* to *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, *Nouvelle Revue Française (NRF)*, and *Notre Temps*.<sup>58</sup> The focus on French modernism and the reference to the *NRF* as a model became more accentuated after Giansiro Ferrata's appointment as senior co-editor, and even more pronounced with the new incumbent Alessandro Bonsanti in 1930.<sup>59</sup> Ferrero shared his copy procurement tasks with Nino Frank, who was also based in Paris, but unlike Frank, he also conspicuously figured as cultural commentator.<sup>60</sup> In Florence, Loria, Capasso, Debenedetti also produced commentary focusing on French culture (notably Proust and Valéry). Arm's-length broker Roberto Bazlen helped coordinate copy supply from Triestine writers such as Italo Svevo, Virgilio Giotti, Umberto Saba, and Giani Stuparich, while facilitating links with James Joyce and his Paris-based coterie.

*Solaria*'s creative section acquired its distinctiveness through the literary journalism and creative writings of a small number of authors who also figured at various points in time as *redattori*. Interestingly, excluding the introductory Nota, Carocci appears only as a

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<sup>58</sup> On Leo Ferrero see Id., *Il muro trasparente. Scritti di poesia, di prosa, di teatro*, ed. by Manuela Scotti (Milan: Scheiwiller, 1984) and for his role in *Solaria*, Anne Kornfeld, *La figura e l'opera di Leo Ferrero* (Verona: Gutenberg, 1993), pp. 45-58.

<sup>59</sup> Ludovico, pp.129-152.

<sup>60</sup> On Nino Frank see Carla Gubert, 'Il ruolo di Nino Frank nella mediazione culturale tra Italia e Francia e il tentativo mancato di *Bifur*', in *Le riviste dell'Europa letteraria*, ed. by Massimo Rizzante and Carla Gubert (Trento: Editrice Università di Trento, 2002), pp. 201-20.

creative writer, penning only eleven creative pieces, as many as Carlo Emilio Gadda and Aldo Capasso. Vittorini authored 21 pieces (including the serialization of *Il garofano rosso*), Alberto Consiglio 14 pieces, Arturo Loria 12, Tecchi 11. Ferrero (18) and Franchi (29) together wrote more than 11% of the total creative and critical output of the journal that was more fragmented across a significant number authors, some contributing only one piece during its life-cycle.

A more pointed concentration of copy can be observed when parsing the ‘Zibaldone’ section, where review articles sustained the journal’s intellectual engagement with issues of the day. The most recurrent ‘Zibaldone’ contributors, therefore, shaped *Solaria*’s interventionism in the arts, with the debate led by Franchi, who contributed 67 articles (almost 20% of the 343 reviews published by *Solaria*). Ferrata followed suit with 42 (12.2%), Leo Ferrero with 31 (9.04%), Consiglio with 24, Alberto Capasso with 25, Umberto Morra with 19, Baccio Maria Bacci with 12, and Bonaventura Tecchi with ten. Special issues enhanced a strategy of cultural interventionism. In March 1927, with the special issue dedicated to Cinema, Carocci inaugurated the *inchiesta* (a list of questions addressed to a wide number of writers). This was a way to mobilize intellectual interest, transform *Solaria* into a catalyst for cultural debate, but also a mechanism aimed at widening and diversifying the copy-supplying clusters.<sup>61</sup>

Carocci’s close collaborators helped the growth and reputation of the journal, while establishing the expectation that non-binding exchanges would be reciprocated and by offering the opportunity to share resources (and risks). A case in point is Carocci’s exchange with Mario Gromo, director of the Turin-based firm Ribet and then Buratti, who published

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<sup>61</sup> The use of *inchiesta* was sparse but strategic as it galvanised interest around the launch of carefully prepared special issues that defined the *Solaria* brand: notably on Italo Svevo (March 1928), Umberto Saba (May 1928) and Federigo Tozzi (May-June 1930). In terms of diversification, it is worth noting that the Svevo special issue has the highest number of foreign contributors.

several volumes of *Solariani* (Montale, Loria, Stuparich, to mention a few), which benefited from puff pieces in Carocci's journal. An example, instead illustrating conflict arising from a perceived lack of reciprocity, is Ferrero's reaction to Carocci's refusal to publish a review of *Une génération réaliste* by Jean Luchaire, the director of *Notre Temps* and a close Parisian tie of Ferrero's. Carocci envisaged a more prominent role for the 'Zibaldone' section ('deve crescere in estensione e in importanza. Devono d'ora in avanti esservi dei veri e propri articoli') while Ferrero highlighted the role played by his strategic reviewing of foreign literature and criticism ('quelle recensioni hanno servito a *Solaria* più che non paia. Se oggi, in Inghilterra e in Francia c'è un gruppo *importantissimo* di gente che legge *Solaria*, e che un giorno potrà essere un aiuto preciso per *tutti* i solariani è anche grazie a quelle recensioni').<sup>62</sup> This exchange with Ferrero was symptomatic of the way in which Carocci was becoming sensitive to the risks inherent in feelings of obligation and camaraderie. Preserving space for friends would reduce space for fresh talent, and enhance the perception of a club promoting recruitment from strong embedded ties (homophily).

Uzzi observed that three conditions transform embeddedness into a liability: (1) sudden exit of a core network player (2) institutional forces rationalizing the market (3) over-embeddedness characterizing the network.<sup>63</sup> *Solaria*'s collapse can be mapped against all three conditions. To start with, beginning in 1929, Fascist authorities exerted more capillary checks on the press by forcing the exit of non-fully aligned or compliant agents. Furthermore, despite securing distribution deals with Bemporad in the same year, journal sales did not increase, forcing the editorial board to make regular financial contributions, while Carocci and Parenti absorbed the vast majority of losses with their capital.

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<sup>62</sup> Ferrero, *Il muro trasparente*, pp. 226-27.

<sup>63</sup> Uzzi, 'Social Structure and Competition', 58-59.

Beginning in 1933, a number of core contributors either exited or distanced themselves from *Solaria*. This emphasized *Solaria*'s over-reliance on established networks, and forced Carocci to seek new talent through different clusters. This move exposed *Solaria* to risk and triggered internal conflict. Tecchi and Franchi's progressive entrenchment in Fascist politics led to disagreements with Carocci which were exacerbated around 1932 when Carocci intensified his relationship with Turin's anti-Fascist circles. Leo Ferrero, the core agent for internationalization, died in a car accident in 1933 and his passing provoked a dip in good-quality copy covering international literary affairs. Since 1932, Carocci had entertained the idea of transforming *Solaria* into a hybrid aesthetic journal with a more European outlook:

Ho intenzione di portare in *Solaria* delle modificazioni radicali [...] La mia intenzione consisterebbe nell'avvicinarla al tipo di rivista come *La revista de Occidente* di Ortega y Gasset, la *Neue Rundschau* [...]. Togliere a *Solaria* il carattere strettamente letterario in senso libresco e quasi tecnico; pubblicare anche degli articoli di storia (il nostro 'risorgimento' per es.: una storia tutta da rifare), di economia in senso più largo, di sport, di cinema, di architettura e di urbanistica, perfino di scienza per quel tanto che la scienza può avere di commune con la speculazione filosofica.<sup>64</sup>

This change in dispositions fuelled internal disagreements on the editorial line. Bonsanti, 'tenace assertore delle possibilità autonomistiche della letteratura', was more in favour of engagement with local talent, while Carocci was increasingly more attracted by an intellectual model that openly critiqued the structures of power.<sup>65</sup> Carocci's friendship to anti-Fascist intellectuals Leone Ginzburg, Cesare Pavese, and charismatic newcomer Giacomo

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<sup>64</sup> The missive to Ferrero is dated 19 September 1932: Ferrero, *Il muro trasparente*, pp. 233-34.

<sup>65</sup> Giorgio Luti, *Cronache letterarie tra le due guerre* (Bari: Laterza, 1966), p. 111. On Bonsanti, see Francesca Billiani's contribution to this special issue.

Ca' Zorzi (Giacomo Noventa) exacerbated the conflict.<sup>66</sup> Against Bonsanti's advice, Carocci recruited Nicola Chiaromonte and Noventa, and supported Umberto Morra di Lavriano's more political commentary. Facilitated by Debenedetti in 1934, the relationship between Carocci and Noventa, a wealthy anti-fascist intellectual close to Adriano Olivetti, is one deserving more detailed study. Noventa contributed one review article—published in 1934—where he criticised *Solaria*'s long-time collaborators Umberto Saba and Montale and Debenedetti's role in diffusing contemporary French literature. Furthermore, in two long articles entitled 'Principio d'una scienza nuova', he confusingly highlighted the essential unity between Croce's idealism and Gentile's actualism.<sup>67</sup> Noventa set out to destroy *Solaria*'s marks of distinction and, by doing so, he destabilized an already weakened editorial board whose members were worried about repercussions. To an extent, the 1934 censorship orders for the last instalment of Vittorini's *Il garofano rosso* and Enrico Terracini's 'Le figlie del generale' did not initiate *Solaria*'s crisis. Facilitated by Carocci, Noventa had accelerated a process of internal disintegration.

From 1931, *Solaria* had also become more vulnerable to public attacks. Berto Ricci's Florence-based Fascist journal *L'Universale*, a new entrant in the field in 1931, deliberately targeted *Solaria*'s intellectual posture with a mocking piece entitled 'Solariani', published in its second issue.<sup>68</sup> Lambasted for importing 'nuova letteratura venuta di Francia, e non dal

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<sup>66</sup> In 1933 Ginzburg acted as *trait d'union* with Einaudi who was keen to distribute *Solaria*. Carocci decided to continue his collaboration with Parenti. See Simonetti, 'Le edizioni di *Solaria*', pp. 114-16.

<sup>67</sup> Giacomo Noventa, 'A proposito d'un traduttore di Heine', 9.3 (1934), 49-62; 'Principio d'una scienza nuova I', 9.4 (1934), 37-97, and 'Principio d'una scienza nuova II e III', 9.5-6 (1934), 17-51.

<sup>68</sup> On Ricci's non-conformist interpretation of Fascism and his editorial experience see Paolo Buchignani, *Un fascismo impossibile. L'eresia di Berto Ricci nella cultura del ventennio* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

tronco sano francese ma dalle impurità di quella nazione’,<sup>69</sup> and ridiculed by co-founder Dino Garrone for being ‘snobboni da quattro soldi che vivono sul pack, senza odio, senza amore, senza cuore’, the *solariani* became the target of a significant portion of *L’Universale*’s op-ed pieces. In line with the aggressive tone of the mission statement, Ricci and Garrone issued a declaration of war against ‘la filosofia regnante’ of Giovanni Gentile, the most influential Fascist intellectual of the time, ‘la rampogna strapaesana’, and any philo-European proclivities.<sup>70</sup> *L’Universale*’s editorial team articulated a cultural universalism that extolled Italy’s literary ‘primato’. Ricci and Garrone’s attacks focused on the interpreters of Fascist cultural politics in the era of normalization (1932 was marked by the celebrations of the Decennale of the March on Rome). State-supported reviews that had adopted a fairly successful co-opting strategy (*Il Bargello*, which they left following a disagreement with Pavolini) and reviews such as *Solaria* that had ostensibly maintained a disinterested outlook became his polemical targets. Ricci’s explicit aim was to establish *L’Universale* as the intellectual forum for Fascism’s permanent revolution: he wished for the journal to act as the guardian of Italianness and gatekeeper against cultural cosmopolitanism. *Solaria*’s marks of distinction made the journal and its members vulnerable to Ricci’s anti-Semitic, anti-European, anti-Modernist rhetoric.

This antagonism also acquired a territorial dimension since the hubs of sociability frequented by *Solariani* and *Universalisti* (Le Giubbe rosse and Paskowski) were located in the same square (Piazza della Vittoria, now Piazza della Repubblica) and opposite one another. This spatial confrontation led to physical abuse, as had happened when members of *Il Selvaggio* physically attacked Ferrata and other *Solaria* affiliates in 1928-29.

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<sup>69</sup> Berto Ricci, ‘Solariani’, *L’Universale*, I.3 (1931), 5-6 (5).

<sup>70</sup> Dino Garrone, *Lettere*, ed. by Berto Ricci and Romano Bilenchi (Florence: Vallecchi, 1938), p. 218. See also Dino Garrone-Edoardo Persico, *Epistolario*, ed. by Marco Valsecchi (Forlì: Pattuglia, 1943). Berto Ricci, ‘L’Universale’, *L’universale*, 1.1 (1931), 1-2 (1).

Despite *L'Universale*'s confrontational and deriding rhetorical posturing, however, several links connected it to *Solaria*. For instance, Vittorini—a *Solaria* collaborator since 1929—and Garrone entertained a lengthy correspondence over the years. While Vittorini did not collaborate with *L'Universale*, other *Solaria* authors did publish in Ricci's 'foglio'. A case in point is Ferdinando Agnoletti, one of the most prolific writers for *L'Universale*. He collaborated with *La Voce*, *Lacerba*, *La Brigata*, *Il Selvaggio*, *Il Bargello*, *Antieuropa*, *L'assalto*, *Circoli*, *l'Orto*, and—under the pseudonym of Calandrino—had published 'Sospiri di Calandrino' and 'Supercinema-poesie' in the first issues of *Solaria*. Antonio Rapisarda (who contributed to *Solaria* in 1932),<sup>71</sup> Ugo Betti, Giannotto Bastianelli, illustrator Giuseppe Cesetti (also a regular contributor to Interlandi's *Quadrivio*), Romano Romanelli, Eugenio Galvano, Alberto Luchini, Giacomo Lumbroso, Corrado Pavolini (director of *Italia Letteraria* from 1932 to 1934), Romano Bilenchi, and Giuseppe Ungaretti, had all at least once published in *Solaria*.

This shared pool of talent illustrates the high cohesiveness and intense connectivity characterizing the Florentine field as well as the horizontal mobility of contributors even across ideological boundaries. *L'Universale* ceased publication in 1935 when charismatic editor Berto Ricci decided to enlist in the Ethiopian campaign. *Solaria* closed down in 1936. Was it possible for an interconnected field characterized by short global separation and high local clustering such as Fascist Florence to support a hybrid journal, a forum for intellectual exchange, that would succeed where journals based on disinterestedness and ideological warfare had failed?

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<sup>71</sup> Rapisarda published the short story 'Consalvo e Candida' in *Solaria*'s June 1932, under the pseudonym Antonio Aniante. A member of the Italian intellectual diaspora in Paris after WW1, Rapisarda worked closely with Anton Giulio Bragaglia and collaborated with him on several scripts between 1926-1930.



### The Importance of Friends: *La riforma letteraria*

Carocci's joint venture with Giacomo Noventa, *La riforma letteraria*, intended to respond positively to this question but failed miserably in delivering a unifying and distinct cultural stance.<sup>72</sup> Launched in November 1936, at the height of the Fascist colonial campaigns, the journal intended to make a strong intervention in the Italian cultural field. As the programme detailed, the journal would help the foundation of a 'classe [intellettuale] continuamente rinnovantesi perché continuamente aperta a individui di tutte le classi'. Only if intellectuals spoke the language of the people, could a new reformed patriotic stance emerge and bolster the 'primato civile e morale degli italiani nell'universo e per l'universo'.<sup>73</sup> These statements were the galvanized reaction to the Ethiopian campaign which Noventa approved, like many other intellectuals including Vittorini, Vasco Pratolini and others writing in *Il Bargello*.

Parenti agreed to publish the journal as an elegantly bound review rather than the more cheaply produced six-page 'foglio' which would have ensured a wider circulation amongst the 'individui di tutte le classi' but also increased the interest of the Fascist censor. A long instalment of Noventa's 'Principio d'una Scienza Nuova', sandwiched between Giuseppe Bottai's 'Guerra fascista' on the war in Ethiopia and Carocci's 'Da una fotografia' dominated the opening issue. The number closed with a series of brutal reviews, which undermined the *construens* mission enunciated in the opening statement with a pronounced *destruens* attitude.

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<sup>72</sup> On this journal see Giorgio Manacorda, 'Antiermetismo fiorentino degli anni Trenta: *La Riforma letteraria* di Noventa e Carocci', *Italianische Studien*, 3 (1980), 59-67; Luca Lenzini, 'La "semplicità che ci minaccia"'. Appunti su Noventa e *La riforma letteraria*', in *Le letterature straniere nell'Italia dell'entre-deux-guerres*, 2 vols, ed. Edoardo Esposito (Lecce: PensaMultimedia, 2004), II, pp. 421-32.

<sup>73</sup> Alberto Carocci and Giacomo Noventa, 'La riforma letteraria', *La riforma letteraria*, 1.1 (1936), 3-5 (pp. 3-4).

The journal quickly turned into a vehicle for Noventa's statements (sanctioned by Carocci) articulating his firmly anti-hermetic poetics. In his theoretical pronouncements, Noventa developed an almost obsessional polemic with Croce, arguing that Fascist culture and Croce's idealism shared the same ideological platform. Ironically, however, this anti-Croce polemic was launched from an outlet that shared more than one feature with Croce's own journal *La Critica*.<sup>74</sup> As with the initial phase of *La Critica*, *La riforma letteraria* was mostly self-funded through the editors' assets, and it acted as a broadcasting tool for an individual's philosophical thought and theory of literature. Parenti and Carocci worked very hard to disseminate the journal (at some point in the Noventa correspondence, Carocci mentions 800 copies being dispatched to as many addresses).<sup>75</sup> 'I naufraghi di *Solaria*'—as defined by Noventa—who had gathered around Bonsanti's new journal *Letteratura*, met *La riforma letteraria* with disdain. Fascist intellectuals mocked it, but it was not ignored by Fascist authorities who had already arrested Noventa twice before for subversive activities.<sup>76</sup> Carocci invested considerably in this journal, and not only financially. He published three of his short stories, but the printed face of the journal resolutely displayed Noventa's cultural politics. Out of 213 items, Noventa authored 70 outputs (corresponding to 32.9% of the total contributions; to these one may add twelve anonymous reviews and eight editorial pieces), including his centrepieces 'Principio d'una scienza nuova', 'Manifesti del Classicismo' and 'I

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<sup>74</sup> On this aspect of Noventa's cultural politics, see Augusto del Noce, 'Giacomo Noventa e il "vuoto della cultura"' in Id., *Il suicidio della rivoluzione* (Milan: Rusconi, 1978), pp. 19-120; Luisa Mangoni, *L'interventismo della cultura. Intellettuali e riviste del Fascismo* (Turin: Aragno, 2002), pp. 430-59; Valentino Cecchetti, *Una polemica degli anni Trenta: Saggi comparativi su Giacomo Noventa* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2014).

<sup>75</sup> Letter dated 24 April 1936, in *Solaria e oltre*, pp. 183-84.

<sup>76</sup> Giacomo Noventa, 'I calzoni di Beethoven', *La riforma letteraria*, I.10-12 (1937), 12-34 (p. 21).

calzoni di Beethoven'.<sup>77</sup> The journal attracted a small number of authors, including intellectuals who would be hailed for their anti-Fascist credentials in the post-war period such as Guido Ludovico Luzzatto, Geno Pampaloni, Franco Fortini, Giorgio Spini, Mario Soldati, and Carocci's brother Giampiero. As in *La Critica*, foreign literature was limited to classics carefully selected to support Noventa's desire to voice the spirit of nations (Heinrich Heine, Michel de Montaigne, Wilhelm Goethe, Arthur de Gobinau) with Antonio Machado and Gabriela Mistral the only contemporary foreign poets welcomed in the pages of the review.

The experience of *La riforma* concluded with Noventa's arrest and confinement in 1939, but its brief trajectory can illustrate how crucial embeddedness is to supporting a journal's impact in the field. Relationally speaking, the network supporting *La riforma letteraria* quickly became 'small wordly', with connections to intellectual clusters made up of repeated ties and third-party ties linked mainly to the two editors: the repeat-incumbent Carocci and the newcomer Noventa.<sup>78</sup> This was the result of abrupt tie-severing contrasts with the core *Solaria* group who gravitated around *Letteratura*, Bonsanti's safest interpretation of cultural agency, and of Fascist surveillance. Noventa's ties were limited due to his arrests, and periods of residence in France. In essence, he was not embedded enough. The copy-sourcing links were mainly affiliations connected to Carocci, but limited his action by Bonsanti's ostracism. Furthermore, Noventa's charisma accentuated the perception that *La riforma letteraria* acted as a vehicle for an emerging school of thought with paradigm-shifting ambitions, which in turn were considered either unintelligible or too politically dangerous to be publicly espoused. *La riforma letteraria*'s trajectory also mapped a mode switch for Carocci's navigation of the Florentine field: he had mastered the orchestration of a

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<sup>77</sup> Noventa's contributions to *Solaria* and *La riforma letteraria* are now collected in '*Nulla di nuovo*' e *altri scritti. 1934-1939*, ed. by Franco Manfriani (Venice: Marsilio, 1987).

<sup>78</sup> Uzzi, 'Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem'.

global network with *Solaria*, which was all-in-all a noteworthy achievement considering the magnitude of the institutional forces interfering with the literary marketplace. But with *La riforma* he had to manage the organization of a severely constrained ego-centred network with limited strong ties and even more limited arm's-length ties. Increasing difficulty in keeping a regular monthly periodicity and Noventa's domination of the printed page were therefore also a consequence of the constraints on copy-supply chains.

## Conclusions

While organically linked to Carocci's cultural activity and his small but well-connected circle of friends and associates, *Solaria* and *La riforma letteraria*'s trajectories are examples of two distinct interpretations of the role of shared editorship. Each embodiment is characterized by the specific configurations of the editors' social capital that, in turn, shaped the journal's relationship to its networks. On the one hand, *Solaria* managed to thrive across the 'small worlds' that interlocked, enmeshed and dynamically contributed to defining each other's spheres of action, as well as political and aesthetic concerns, as long as it kept its action within the arcadic confines of disengaged art. *Solaria*'s collapse was less a result of police interference than the outcome of the internal fractures provoked by Carocci's decision to diversify his links, to nurture new ideas, and to flex the journal in a new direction. This change of disposition or *habitus* and his dissatisfaction with an increasingly predominant model of distance from potentially transformative intellectual engagement led him to break away from the binding reciprocity expected by his close collaborators. On the other hand, the comparably rapid demise of non-conformist *La riforma letteraria* highlighted the strategic imperative for editorial structures characterized by unequal social capital to grow, maintain, and diversify strong and arm's-length ties to support the trajectory and, ultimately, the survival of the journal.

My argument has been that journals establish themselves by initially accessing distinctive copy from trusted collaborators through strong embedded ties. Embedded relations can shield journals from crisis, help share the risk, develop shared coping mechanisms and problem-solving strategies. Especially in a political context where fear of persecution induces social hypocrisy, false consciousness and betrayal, trust in close and arm's-length ties becomes an important factor in supporting a non-aligned journal's performance. It is not only crucial to evaluate how a journal links to its networks: one must also assess the composition of the network to which the journal is linked. Strategic decisions aimed at preserving a distinct position in the field may require diversification of links and clusters, and concomitant cultivation of embeddedness with representatives of the dominant power structures in a field characterized by a kinship-type of leadership. *Solaria*'s modest growth and fragile relevance in the field—actively contested by local journals more closely aligned with Fascism—was the result of an indirect engagement with Fascist intelligentsia as well as embeddedness in clusters that nurtured *Solaria*'s distinctiveness. However, as I have observed in the empirical part of this study, these local and medium-length clusters (Turin, Genoa, Trieste) sourced multiple journals over time. This shared reliance eroded *Solaria*'s position in the field. Crucially, it was conflict on how to diversify links and branch out to other clusters that affected *Solaria*'s ability to change course without changing 'brand'. The observation of the effect of the 'paradox of embeddedness' on *Solaria* and the impact of the lack of embeddedness on *La riforma letteraria* has brought into sharper focus the interaction between Carocci's *habitus* and the contingencies of the networks in which journals operated. Carocci's (indeed any editor's) interpretation of the editorial function can be fully understood only through a substantial evaluation of how the editor identifies the opportunities and troubleshoots the risks deriving from embeddedness in existing ties. Whether and how an editor survives the conditions producing the 'paradox of embeddedness' is connected to the

adaptability of her practical mastery. The ability to exploit for the journal's benefit the relational nature of disciplined commitment, the expectations of reciprocal benefit, and the symbolic drivers for personal and financial decision-making processes, should go hand in hand with the ability to offset excessive cohesion, and turn a new page when it is time to do so.

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