

# L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE  
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

1

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'LUI' AND 'EGLI' IN *IL GATTOPARDO*

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A semiotic, discourse-based linguistic hypothesis that bypasses the syntactic category subject and proposes instead contrasting meanings for the pronouns *lui* and *egli* provides empirical support for the critical interpretation of the novel *Il Gattopardo* as being anti-teleological. The hypothesis, which applies to a large body of twentieth-century Italian literature, is that *egli* but not *lui* bears a linguistic meaning that ties its relevance to a verb. This linguistic hypothesis reveals a significant difference in Tomasi di Lampedusa's portrayals of the novel's two characters Don Fabrizio and Don Calogero: one as a character defined by who he is, the other as a character defined by what he does.

*Keywords:* linguistics, Gattopardo, Lampedusa, pronoun, *egli*, *lui*.

## 1. Introduction

A semiotic linguistic hypothesis concerning the meanings signaled, respectively, by *lui* and *egli*, both glossed 'he' in English as grammatical subject, can illuminate the idiosyncratic nature of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's 1958 novel *Il Gattopardo*. These signaled meanings which, respectively, free *lui* from the orbit of its verb and tie *egli* in a particular way to the orbit of its verb, yield insights into the unusual role played by the novel's main character as a relatively passive witness to events rather than an agent of them.

The linguistic hypothesis, based on data from a variety of twentieth-century texts – not just from *Il Gattopardo* – takes the form of innovative semantic categories that reflect the forms' communicative function in discourse. The hypothesis does not assume canonical categories of the sentence or of formal linguistics such as subject, disjunctive, or nominative versus oblique. The hypothesis does not concern the status of *lui* and *egli* in sentence grammar but rather in discourse. And the study does not analyze the separate distributional problem of preverbal versus postverbal position. In this approach, the analytical point of departure is the forms themselves, not the various syntactic positions in which they may occur. That is, it is assumed (subject, of course, to refutation) that each form has a unified communicative function. The form-meaning hypothesis arises within the tradition of the Columbia School of Linguistics<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For a critique of the similarities and differences between a Columbia School (CS) analysis and syntactic treatments, see E. Contini-Morava, *And Now for Something Completely Different: Reid on English Verb Number*, "Natural Language and Linguistic Theory", 29, 2011, pp. 1147-1162. For additional critique of CS *vis-à-vis* other schools, see R. Otheguy, *Saussurean Anti-nomenclaturism in Grammatical Analysis: A Comparative Theoretical Perspective*, in *Signal, Meaning, and Message*, W. Reid – R. Otheguy – N. Stern ed., John Benjamins,

This paper applies that semiotic hypothesis to a close analysis of one aspect of *Il Gattopardo*. The data are the observed distribution of *lui* and *egli* in that text. This paper does not concern the centuries-long discussion of the relative roles of *lui* and *egli* in Italian literature but only their documented usage in *Il Gattopardo*, as ultimately determined by its author. This paper is not a literary analysis of the general style of *Il Gattopardo*; rather, it applies a particular linguistic hypothesis to one question of interpretation of that text. And this paper does not address differences in register, such as conversation versus popular or erudite literature, but takes into account only the one text in question.

*Lui* and *egli* signal the same meanings of grammatical Sex, Number, and Deixis (demonstrative strength) but differ in the following way: *Egli* but not *lui* bears a meaning having to do exclusively with the differential degrees of Focus (attention) on the participants in an event in a narrative. This Focus meaning ties the relevance of a token of *egli* to its verb, while a token of *lui* is independent of a verb and so is free to suggest a larger relevance. Thus, *egli* is useful for advancing the events in a narrative, while *lui* is useful for suggesting connections to other elements in a narrative.

Empirically, one thing that makes *Il Gattopardo* unusual is that its principal character, Don Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, tends to be referred to by *lui*, not *egli*, while a secondary character, Don Calogero Sedàra, is referred to exclusively by *egli*. This distributional idiosyncrasy concretizes the well-known interpretation that the main character in this novel, unlike most texts with a single principal character, passively experiences the actions taking place around him rather than actively performing the actions himself.

## 2. The linguistic hypothesis

Twentieth-century literary Italian has two pronouns that routinely translate into English as ‘he’: *lui* and *egli*. (In traditional terms, *lui* is disjunctive, and *egli* is nominative.) To the naive reader of Italian literature, or to some extent to anyone encountering a sentence-based linguistic analysis, these two pronouns appear to be largely interchangeable as grammatical subject.

Lui lo disse.

He said it.

Egli lo disse.

He said it.

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Amsterdam 2002, pp. 373-403, and see A. Huffman, *Introduction: The Enduring Legacy of William Diver, in Language: Communication and Human Behavior. The Linguistic Essays of William Diver*, A. Huffman – J. Davis ed., Brill, Leiden 2012, pp. 1-20. For previous CS work linking form-meaning hypotheses to literary effects, see W. Diver, *The System of Relevance of the Homeric Verb*, in *Language: Communication and Human Behavior. The Linguistic Essays of William Diver*, A. Huffman – J. Davis ed., Brill, Leiden 1969/2012, pp. 135-159; W. Diver, *Spheres of Interaction*, in *Ibid.*, pp. 161-176; W. Diver, *The Subjunctive Without Syntax*, same volume, in *Ibid.*, pp. 183-193; W. Reid, *The Human Factor in Linguistic Analysis: The passé simple and the imparfait*, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York 1977; R.J. Gorup, *The Semantic Organization of the Serbo-Croatian Verb*, Otto Sagner, München, 1987; Y. Tobin, *Semiotics and Linguistics*, Longman, London 1990; A. Huffman, *The Categories of Grammar: French lui and le*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 199-205; J. Davis, *The Semantic Difference Between Italian vi and ci*, “Lingua”, 200, 2017, pp. 107-121; and J. Davis, *The Substance and Value of Italian si*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2017.

In terms of the sentence, *lui* and *egli* are said to ‘share syntactically certain positions,’ but only *lui* appears in positions of isolation or accentuation<sup>2</sup>.

Here is the linguistic hypothesis that accounts for the distribution of *lui* and *egli* in texts: *Lui* and *egli* have in common that both are signals of the meanings Number ONE, Sex MALE, and Deixis (or level of attention) LOW (i.e., attention-worthy but not highly demonstrative)<sup>3</sup>. *Lui* and *egli* differ in the following way: *Egli*, but not *lui*, bears a meaning from an additional semantic domain, that of Focus on participants in an event. In that system, *egli* ‘he’ signals the meaning CENTRAL Focus, as opposed to the meanings PERIPHERAL and OUTER. The meaning PERIPHERAL is signaled by the oblique dative and accusative *gli*, *lo* ‘him.’ The meaning OUTER is signaled by the so-called partitive *ne* ‘of [etc.] him’; it refers to mere bystanders to events, not true participants in them. The hypothesis is from Davis<sup>4</sup>.

Diagram 1 presents the system that involves *egli* but not *lui*.

Diagram 1 - *The system of Focus on Participants*

CENTRAL	<i>egli</i>
PERIPHERAL	<i>gli</i> , <i>lo</i> <sup>5</sup>
OUTER	<i>ne</i>

Diagram 2 summarises the relationship of relative semantic load between *lui* and *egli*, showing that *egli* has a heavier semantic load.

Diagram 2 - *The relative semantic loads of Italian lui ‘he’ and egli ‘he’*

<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>
Number: ONE	Number: ONE
Sex: MALE	Sex: MALE
Deixis: LOW	Deixis: LOW
---	Focus on participants in an event: CENTRAL

<sup>2</sup> D. Vedovato, *Categorizzazione dei pronomi personali in italiano: risultati di un’attività didattica*, in *Atti delle Giornate di Studio*: ‘Quale grammatica per la didattica linguistica’, P. Benincà – N. Penello ed., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> To these meanings, contrast, respectively: Number MORE, signaled by *loro* ‘they’; Sex FEMALE, signaled by *lei* ‘she’; and Deixis HIGH, signaled by *costui* ‘that guy’. Following Columbia School practice, formally hypothesized, signaled grammatical meanings are indicated here with all capital letters (ONE, MALE, LOW). The names of the semantic substances, or domains, which those meanings exhaustively categorise, are indicated in regular font with initial capital letters (Number, Sex, Deixis).

<sup>4</sup> J. Davis, Italian *egli* and *lui*: *Grammatical meaning and inference*, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York 1992, summarized in J. Davis, *Italian Pronouns and the Virtue of Relative Meaninglessness*, in *Meaning as Explanation: Advances in Linguistic Sign Theory*, E. Contini-Morava – B. Sussman Goldberg ed., Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin 1995, pp. 423-440.

<sup>5</sup> The two signals of PERIPHERAL Focus differ by a separate measure, Degree of Control.



All of the pronouns in the network of semantic oppositions in which *egli* participates – e.g., *gli*, *lo*, *ne* – are ‘satellite’ to (i.e., in the semantic and morphological orbit of) verbs. And, consequently, the interpretive import of any one of these pronouns, including *egli*, is limited to its referent’s participation in a given event. By contrast, *lui* bears no meaning of Focus at all but is completely unmarked for Focus. *Lui* can be used not only for the main (the central) participant in an event – in traditional terms, the verb’s subject (glossed ‘he’ in English) – but also for a less important (a peripheral) participant – a verb’s direct or indirect object (glossed ‘him’) – or even for a male who is not directly associated with an event at all – e.g., in absolute position (*Lui!*) or prepositional position (*una lotta contro lui*). In other words, *lui*, in all its syntactic manifestations, is the same linguistic signal: a weakly demonstrative reference to ONE MALE. In traditional terms, *egli* is limited to being the nominative case in relation to a particular verb, while *lui* is a disjunctive, not particularly associated with any verb at all; it may or may not be<sup>6</sup>.

This semiotic hypothesis is not, however, equivalent to labeling the two forms *lui* and *egli* disjunctive and nominative, respectively, as has long and uncontroversially been done. This hypothesis does not dispute those labels. But morphological labels are not meanings; they say nothing about how a form is (to be) used in communication. As is well known, what is, for instance, morphologically singular can refer to a plural entity (*la famiglia*), what is morphologically a present tense can refer to a past action (*Lampedusa scrive*), what is morphologically of feminine gender can refer to a male (*una persona*), and so forth. Likewise, the morphological labels disjunctive and nominative say nothing about what *lui* and *egli* mean, nothing about how writers use them in communication. By contrast, a semiotic linguistic hypothesis such as the present one – that *egli* but not *lui* is a signal of the meaning CENTRAL Focus on a participant in an event – is made precisely in order to account for observed distribution in communicative texts; it is not a label that leaves distribution unaccounted for.

Schematically, the different effects of *lui* and *egli* in a narrative text can be represented by Figure 1.

Figure 1 - *The narrative effects of lui and egli*



*Lui* constitutes a reference unto itself (attention to one male). Its relevance can encompass anything deemed appropriate by the reader: the man’s personality, a comparison to another

<sup>6</sup> There do exist in texts rare instances of *egli* without a verb (*egli* is not morphologically clitic but is separable from its verb.) In all of these instances, however, the meaning CENTRAL Focus is still signaled by *egli*, and the inference of a particular event seems to be quite easy, given context.

character, or an event in the narrative. By contrast, *egli* moves the action forward. Its relevance is signaled to pertain to just the event in which its referent is involved.

The potential for greater discourse relevance, as opposed to strict syntactic subject, has been noted before<sup>7</sup>, but only descriptively, while the present hypothesis ties the communicative effect specifically to the differential linguistic status of *lui* and *egli*.

Empirical tendencies found in texts support this analysis rather starkly. For instance, in twentieth-century literature generally, *lui* tends to occur physically farther from a verb than *egli* does<sup>8</sup>. One measure of this tendency is the difference in proportions of *lui* and of *egli* that occur in a text separated by either zero (as in *egli lo alzò*) or more (*Lui, il Principe, intanto si alzava*) orthographic words from the verbal complex<sup>9</sup>. *Lui* tends to occur separated from its verbal complex, while *egli* tends to occur adjacent to its verbal complex. *Il Gattopardo* is not unusual in this respect. In *Il Gattopardo*, the odds of *lui* occurring separated from its verb are over seven times as high as the odds of *egli* occurring separated from its verb<sup>10</sup>. This tendency represents perhaps iconically the wider relevance of *lui*, as opposed to *egli*.

Also in general, *lui*, versus *egli*, more commonly appears in texts in compound subjects joined by the conjunction *e* (as in *Angelica e lui ballavano soli*)<sup>11</sup>. In *Il Gattopardo*, three tokens of *lui* appear in compound constructions; no tokens of *egli* do. This tendency, like the next two, involving *stesso* and *anche*, represents the relevance of *lui* to some other character.

In general, *lui* occurs far more commonly than *egli* with the intensifier *stesso* (as in *lui stesso non mutava nulla*)<sup>12</sup>. In *Il Gattopardo*, there are nine tokens of *lui stesso* but only one of *egli stesso*.

And *lui* generally occurs far more commonly than *egli* with *anche* (as in *si calmò anche lui*). In *Il Gattopardo*, there are eleven tokens of *anche lui* but only two of *anch'egli*.

The signal-meaning hypothesis accounts for the total distribution of *lui* and *egli* in a wide variety of literary texts. The hypothesis was in fact created in order to account for that observed distribution, not in order to contribute to, or account for, literary criticism. It will now be applied, in one way, to literary criticism.

### 3. *The hypothesis yields an insight into Il Gattopardo*

The following empirical tendency is more germane than the preceding four to the point of the present paper, if far less obvious to a casual reader of an Italian text. The relative

<sup>7</sup> F. Sabatini, Accademia della Crusca, referring to *lui* and *egli* as more than syntactic subject: "nell'ambito dell'intero discorso che si sta svolgendo, cioè con riferimento al senso dell'intero messaggio prodotto in una determinata situazione, lo stesso elemento indica più ampiamente il cosiddetto 'tema', sul quale si viene a dare una nuova informazione", [www-old.accademiadellacrusca.it/faq/faq\\_risp.php%3Fid=8676&ctg\\_id=93.html](http://www-old.accademiadellacrusca.it/faq/faq_risp.php%3Fid=8676&ctg_id=93.html) (last accessed February 24, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> J. Davis, *Italian egli and lui*, p. 292.

<sup>9</sup> Defined as the verb and its clitics: *mi, gli, lo, si, ne*, etc.

<sup>10</sup> The numbers are: *lui* separated 17, *lui* not separated 26, *egli* separated 4, *egli* not separated 44. OR > 7.

<sup>11</sup> J. Davis, *Italian egli and lui*, pp. 295-296.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

distribution of CENTRAL-Focus *egli* and Focus-neutral *lui* in a text relates to a character's status as prime mover, or not, of the action in the narrative. This tendency can be revealed through quantitative study of a text and can then inform one's understanding of the text itself.

A bit of linguistic-literary context, and then *Il Gattopardo* as an exceptional case:

In a typical text with a single principal character, that character will tend to be referred to by *egli*, while secondary characters will tend to be referred to by *lui*. This is because, in a typical text with a single principal character, it is that person who primarily moves the action of the narrative forward, while secondary characters get introduced often only because they relate in the narrative to someone (e.g., the main character) or something else. Such texts include: Giuseppe Berto's novel *Il Brigante* with its hero, the brigand Michele Rende; Italo Calvino's novel *Il Visconte Dimezzato* with its (anti-)hero, the Viscount Medardo; Indro Montanelli's history *Italia in Camicia Nera* with its anti-hero Benito Mussolini; Franco Russoli's essay *Il Sogno della Ragione Produce Mostri* in a treatment of the Spanish painter Francisco Goya; and Alessandro Ronconi's essay *Lucrezio nel Bimillennario* in a volume of *La Natura* by the ancient Roman poet Lucretius. In each of these texts, the main personage tends statistically to be referred to by *egli*, relative to lesser personages, who tend to be referred to by *lui*<sup>13</sup>. In these texts, taken together, the odds of a principal character being referred to by *egli* as opposed to *lui* are over twice as high as the odds of a secondary character being referred to by *egli* as opposed to *lui* (odds ratio greater than 2.5<sup>14</sup>). See Table 1.

Table 1 - Subject *lui* and *egli* and character status, excluding *Il Gattopardo*

<i>Character Status</i>			
	<i>secondary</i>	<i>principal</i>	<i>prop. secondary</i>
<i>lui</i>	100	145	.41
<i>egli</i>	79	296	.21

OR > 2.5

In contrast with such typical main-character texts, *Il Gattopardo* might be called a 'quirky text'<sup>15</sup>. In this novel, the undisputed principal character (the hero), Don Fabrizio, the Prince of Salina, tends – empirically, measurably – to be referred to not by *egli* but by *lui*, while, collectively, the other male characters tend, relatively, to be referred to not by *lui* but by *egli*. See Table 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 312-316.

<sup>14</sup> Unlike a test of statistical significance, such as chi square, the odds ratio does not require the assumption of a representative sample from some large population, nor the mutual independence of tokens in the data set. See J. Davis, *Rethinking the Place of Statistics in Columbia School Analysis*, in *Signal, Meaning, and Message*, W. Reid – R. Otheguy – N. Stern ed., John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2002, pp. 65-90. The null value for an odds ratio (even odds, so to speak) is 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

Table 2 - Subject *lui* and *egli* and character status in *Il Gattopardo*

	Character Status		
	<i>secondary</i>	<i>principal</i>	<i>prop. secondary</i>
<i>lui</i>	29	39	.43
<i>egli</i>	31	22	.58

OR < 0.6

In *Il Gattopardo*, the odds of the principal character being referred to by *egli* as opposed to *lui* are only three-fifths as high as the odds of a secondary character being referred to by *egli* as opposed to *lui* (odds ratio less than 0.6)<sup>16</sup>.

In fact, the overall preponderance (56%) in *Il Gattopardo* of *lui*, versus *egli*, for reference to male characters (Fully half of such references are to Fabrizio) is consonant with the nature of the plot of the novel: that the plot “consists more of a sequence of moods and meditations than of specific actions”<sup>17</sup>. The novel is ‘anti-teleological’ and cyclical<sup>18</sup>.

This reversal of the usual correlation ( $0.6 < 1$  in *Il Gattopardo*, but  $2.5 > 1$  elsewhere) reflects empirically a well-known but otherwise impressionistic exceptional characteristic of this text: In *Il Gattopardo*, the main character is *not* the prime mover of the action but instead the exclusive locus of “la coscienza”<sup>19</sup>. In *Il Gattopardo*, the main character, Don Fabrizio, is no typical action figure but instead a “passive witness”<sup>20</sup> to history as the Risorgimento overtakes Sicily. Don Fabrizio “is present” – not active – “watching” stoically and fatalistically the disappearance of his world. He is unable to “find in himself the will to give refuge” to his vanishing social class<sup>21</sup>. Don Fabrizio is a thinker among men of action. He is a nobleman living in a time of revolution, a Sicilian watching northern Italians sweep over his land, an ivory-tower intellectual bemused by the advent of soldiers, mayors, and senators. An astronomer, he is a kind of lodestar around which other flashy bodies move, pursuing their historical goals. In his devotion both to his hereditary class and to his science, he finds an escape from the march of time<sup>22</sup>. It is not that Fabrizio *does* things; it is that things happen ‘around’ him and the main protagonists in his world<sup>23</sup>. Fabrizio’s world is ‘insular’ and ‘inert’ relative to the larger world, which includes the new Italy<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> The distribution of pronouns referring to female characters is not analyzed here, since some writers, including Lampedusa, do not use the nominative *ella* ‘she’.

<sup>17</sup> R.H. Lansing, *The Structure of Meaning in Lampedusa’s Il Gattopardo*, “PMLA”, 93, 1978, 3, pp. 409-422.

<sup>18</sup> R. Palermo, *Il Gattopardo: Una rivoluzione senza fine perché tutto rimanga com’è*, “Carte Italiane”, 2, 2009, 5, p. 159 et passim.

<sup>19</sup> V. Spinazzola, *Il Romanzo Antistorico*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1990, p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> R. Palermo, *Il Gattopardo*, p. 162.

<sup>21</sup> S. Nezri-Dufour, *Il Giardino del Gattopardo: Giorgio Bassani e Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa*, Editori Unicopli, Milano 2014, pp. 7-18.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> R. Palermo, *Il Gattopardo*, pp. 159-180.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

In *Il Gattopardo*, the people who get things done – who move history along – are secondary characters: bureaucrats and ‘emissaries’ who bring news of the outside world<sup>25</sup>. Chief among these movers-and-shakers is the town’s bourgeois mayor Don Calogero Sedàra, about whom more momentarily. These are the kinds of characters who get referred to by *egli*, with its association to its verb.

For instance, the following passage (in Part III), with *lui* for the Prince, Don Fabrizio, is particularly telling:

Vespe numerose e pungenti assalirono Don Fabrizio. Anzi tutto, come si conviene ad ogni uomo non ancora decrepito, quella della gelosia carnale: [...] Dopo, un senso di umiliazione sociale, quello di trovarsi ad essere l’accusato invece che il messaggero di buone nuove. Terzo un dispetto personale, quello di chi si sia illuso di controllare tutti e che invece trova che molte cose si svolgono senza che *lui* lo sappia<sup>26</sup>.

Various metaphorical ‘wasps’ surround the helpless Don Fabrizio, and they make him feel like ‘every man,’ not unique the way he has always seen himself: carnal jealousy, social humiliation, and annoyance at himself for not knowing, despite his own illusions, what is happening around him (‘many things are happening that he [*lui*] doesn’t know about’). This passage, like so many, is not about what Don Fabrizio *does* but about what kind of man he *is*.

On the other hand, consider this passage (in Part II) concerning a wily move by Don Calogero, the mayor, an “affarista spietato”<sup>27</sup>, a greedy, vain, and coarse man devoted to “il culto del profitto”<sup>28</sup>.

Poi vennero le notizie private che si adunavano attorno al grande fatto dell’annata: la continua rapida ascesa della fortuna di don Calogero Sedàra: sei mesi fa era scaduto il mutuo concesso al barone Tumino ed *egli* si era incamerata la terra<sup>29</sup>.

The mayor is the agent of the act (‘*he [egli]* confiscated the land’); nothing else need be implied here, as the act of aggression speaks for itself. The Prince (*lui*) is not a doer; the mayor (*egli*) is.

The pattern of distribution of *lui* and *egli* in *Il Gattopardo* provides empirical support for the verdict in literary criticism that, in this unusual novel, the main character is not the prime mover of the action but instead a witness to what others accomplish. Thus, linguistics supports literary criticism. At the same time, literary criticism provides both the basis and the validation of the linguistic hypothesis. No linguistic analysis of *lui* and

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>26</sup> G. Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo*, Edizione conforme al manoscritto del 1957, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore, Milano 1984, p. 85.

<sup>27</sup> V. Spinazzola, *Il Romanzo Antistorico*, p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> S. Nezri-Dufour, *Il Giardino del Gattopardo*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>29</sup> G. Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo*, p. 44.

*egli* in constructed sentences in isolation, out of context (*lui lo disse, egli lo disse*), could possibly have revealed the essence of the grammatical difference between them: that a token of *egli* is semantically tied to its particular verb in the sequence of a narrative's events, while *lui* is free to imply wider associations. And no sentence-based linguistic analysis (such as the statement that either *lui* or *egli* can be subject of a sentence's verb) would have revealed the correlations that support the linguistic hypothesis of Focus for *egli* versus its absence for *lui*.

So literary criticism is bolstered by a text-based semiotic grammatical hypothesis. But linguistics goes further: It can suggest insights that might otherwise be missed in a literary criticism. For instance, the mayor, Don Calogero Sedàra, often gets mentioned in criticism only in passing. And it is understandable that one should pay less attention to Calogero than to the far more intriguing Fabrizio, who is the 'Leopard' himself. But an analysis of the distribution of *lui* and *egli*, as grammatical subject, with respect to individual characters and numbered parts of the novel reveals something interesting about Calogero and his role in the novel. Diagram 3 presents a summary of that distribution with respect to the novel's eight parts and: the main character, Fabrizio; the secondary characters Tancredi (his favourite nephew), Padre Pirrone (his confessor), and Don Calogero (the mayor); and other, more minor, characters<sup>30</sup>. Angelica is the beguiling daughter of the mayor; she becomes the fiancée of the nephew, and she enchants Don Fabrizio himself.

Diagram 3 - Summary of the distribution of *lui* and *egli* in *Il Gattopardo*

<i>Part I: Fabrizio &amp; his world</i>			<i>Part II: The family's sojourn</i>			<i>Part III: Fabrizio &amp; his people</i>		
Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>	Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>	Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>
Fabrizio	6	5	Fabrizio	9	6	Fabrizio	7	8
Tancredi	1	0	Tancredi	2	4	Tancredi	0	1
Pirrone	2	0	Pirrone	0	1	Pirrone	1	1
Calogero	0	0	Calogero	0	3	Calogero	0	2
others	2	1	others	0	1	others	1	1

  

<i>Part IV: Angelica's visit</i>			<i>Part V: Pirrone's sojourn</i>			<i>Part VI: The ball</i>		
Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>	Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>	Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>
Fabrizio	0	1	Fabrizio	0	0	Fabrizio	11	2
Tancredi	5	0	Tancredi	0	0	Tancredi	1	1
Pirrone	0	0	Pirrone	2	0	Pirrone	0	0
Calogero	0	6	Calogero	0	0	Calogero	0	1
others	4	5	others	2	2	others	3	1

<sup>30</sup> Dialogue is omitted. Subjects of non-finite verbs are omitted. Absolute position is omitted. Double subjects (noun plus co-referential pronoun) are included. Verb order in Italian being variable, predicate nominatives are included. Appositives to subject are included, since this writer does not consistently separate appositives with punctuation and so these are not consistently distinguishable from double subjects.

<i>Part VII: Death of Fabrizio</i>			<i>Part VIII: Post-mortem</i>			TOTALS		
Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>	Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>	Character	<i>lui</i>	<i>egli</i>
Fabrizio	6	0	Fabrizio	0	0	FABRIZIO	39	22
Tancredi	0	0	Tancredi	0	0	TANCREDI	9	5
Pirrone	1	0	Pirrone	0	0	PIRRONE	6	2
Calogero	0	0	Calogero	0	0	CALOGERO	0	12
others	2	0	others	0	1	OTHERS	14	12
							68	63

What this distribution reveals is that, with regard to the distribution of *lui* and *egli*, it is not the main character, Don Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, the ‘Leopard,’ who is exceptional but instead a secondary character, Don Calogero Sedàra, the mayor. Consider first the totals: Overall, Lampedusa uses approximately equal proportions of *lui* and *egli* as grammatical subject (68/63). (Ratios vary greatly by writer and work, from the prototypically popular, with nearly all *lui*, to the prototypically literary, with nearly all *egli*.) For reference to Fabrizio, the distribution of *lui* and *egli* (39/22) is essentially like that for reference to the two secondary characters Tancredi (9/5) and Pirrone (6/2), and even to the very minor characters (‘others’) (14/12): In this text, these all mostly get *lui*. By contrast, the only major exception to the pattern is Don Calogero Sedàra, the mayor (0/12). Remarkably, all references to Calogero as grammatical subject are with *egli*, none with *lui*.

In terms of the suggested relationship between linguistic hypothesis and literary interpretation, the following interpretation of the results can be put forth: In *Il Gattopardo*, the Prince and the people in his circle – his nephew, his confessor, and his common subjects – are present in the novel not so much because of what they *do* but because of who they *are*: Each is one particular man deserving of some attention on account of his identity. In the Prince’s vanishing Sicilian world, it is not actions so much as persons that count. By contrast, the mayor, Don Calogero Sedàra, is present in the novel not so much because of who he *is* but because of what he *does*: Calogero represents the forward – if cyclical on a grand scale – march of history, the transition from pre- to post-Risorgimento Italy. Calogero personifies change. Calogero is the modern man of action. (In this respect, Calogero is the local representative of Garibaldi on the national stage, of whom Fabrizio muses, in Part VII on his deathbed, that Garibaldi has ‘won.’)

In addition to varying by character, the distribution of *lui* and *egli* varies greatly too by part of the novel. The one part of the novel (cf. Diagram 3, above) in which *egli* edges out *lui* for reference to Fabrizio is Part III. There, Fabrizio confronts two local manifestations of the impending historical unification of Italy: He reads a letter from Tancredi concerning rapid developments in Tancredi’s love for Calogero’s daughter Angelica (Thus the old world in a way meets the new, in Fabrizio’s eyes) and about Tancredi’s role in the Risorgimento. And he works out his observations of a recent local plebescite for the unification of Italy. As for other parts of the novel, Fabrizio – as measured by references to him by subject pronoun – figures hardly at all in the parts of the novel having to do with Angelica’s visit as fiancée to Tancredi (IV), with Padre Pirrone’s sojourn to his native village (V), and with the post-mortem disposition of Fabrizio’s descendants and effects (VIII). Otherwise (I, II,

III, VI, VII), the novel is, as is widely recognised, about the Prince as a person and – now we see – his intimates as persons. The novel is a picture of the Prince's world; it is not a history of the Risorgimento. As for Don Calogero, his biggest burst of focus-worthy activity (signaled by *egli*) comes in Part IV, concerning the engagement of his daughter to the Prince's nephew, an engagement that secures Calogero's place in high society as that society moves into a new era.

#### 4. *Conclusion*

When linguistics and literary criticism meaningfully inform each other, each is the stronger: Linguistics gains a rich source of authentic language-use data and a valuable arena for the validation of semiotic hypotheses; literary criticism gains empirical support for its insights regarding the significance of a text. Together, linguistics and literary criticism stand poised to further our understanding of the nature of human language. The collaboration between linguistics and literary criticism reveals how the elements of the structure of a language function as tools that a writer uses in constructing the large message he wishes to communicate to his readers.





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