

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present report is to offer a synthesis of the contribution to the project “*I giovani del '99 raccontano la Grande Guerra*” carried out by our class 5ALS during the first term of the school year 2017-2018.

The project was aimed at improving our knowledge of the events of the First World War on the occasion of its centenary.

As the title says, it was addressed to students born in 1999 to draw them closer to the ones born in 1899 who were sent to fight in World War I a hundred years ago.

Our class focussed on “The English point of view” on the First World War. The project aim was to read and analyse the war reports collected in “The War in the Mountains” to gather information on the R. Kipling’s impressions of the Italian soldiers.

The reports were written in 1917 at the invitation of British Ambassador Sir Rennel Rodd. Mr. Kipling visited the Italian battlefield as a war reporter and wrote the five articles quoted below:

- The Roads of an Army
- Podgora
- A Pass, a King, and a Mountain
- Only a few steps higher up
- The Trentino Front

STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

The project was carried out through personal reading activities and in-group work. Collaborative practices were organised following the steps illustrated below:

- **STEP I:** Gathering data on R. Kipling, his work and the war’s context.
- **STEP II:** Textual analysis of each war report (focussing on the use of language and its effects)
- **STEP III:** Comparative analysis between the English and the Italian version with reference to aspects considered relevant to judge the Italian soldiers
- **STEP IV:** Considering R. Kipling’s idea of the soldiers
- **STEP V:** Drawing a conclusion
- **STEP VI:** Writing the present report

MOTIVATION

After a class discussion, about the different options below

1. Who was Rudyard Kipling was and what is “The Jungle Book” ?
2. What is Kipling’s attitude towards war?
3. How are the war and the Alpines characterized in The War in the Mountains
4. What is the effect of The War in the Mountains which is a collection of R. Kipling’s war reports
5. How does English censorship alter the reports

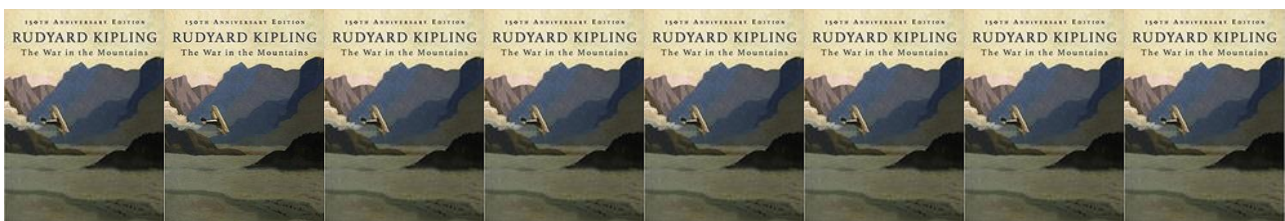
we decided to focus on the fourth option.

The reasons for our choice are manifold. First, we were interested in learning what Kipling thought of soldiers and war directly from his texts. The setting of the reports represented an additional reason: being the events reported set in our region, we were curious to discover a foreigner’s perspective about our people and territory.

However, the main reason of our choice was to better understand the way and the conditions in which the soldiers were called to fight, live and deal with a trench war especially considering that they were mainly young people of our same age.

Our perception of the war mainly depends on movies, history books or on our old relatives’ tales. Therefore, we expected our research to provide us a wider perspective about the First World War as well as about the contemporary perception of the conflict. Finally yet importantly, the profile of the Italian soldiers seen from a point of view different from the one of Italian people was one of our privileged interests and curiosity. Indeed, the main aim of our research was to read and analyze R. Kipling’s collection of war reports in “The War in the Mountains” to gather information on the reporter’s impressions of the Italian soldiers. Our collaborative effort brought to the production of the present report and of a digital presentation to document the results and conclusions of our work.

5ALS students



METHODOLOGY

THE LEARNING PROCESS: A TEACHER'S REFLECTION

From the pedagogical point of view **the work was meant to create occasions for the students**

- to learn how to learn
- to adopt a scientific method in the learning process
- to collect, classify and select relevant information in view of carrying out a task
- to report the findings both orally and in written forms
- to exchange, compare and negotiate information and points of view to reach a shared point of view or argumentation
- to mobilize competences through the creation of a concrete product
- to reflect, revise, evaluate and improve the products of one's learning process
- to improve foreign language skills
- to learn more about English culture and history
- to make comparative analysis between the data collected and be ready to identify, explain and interpret differences
- to write summary documents
- to generate presentations in power point or different multimedia formats
- to become gradually more aware of the importance of negotiation processes and peace education
- to carry out forms of self-assessment

Methodology

COMPETENCES AND ABILITIES

Along the research, the students have practiced integrated study skills and mobilized the European competences below

STUDY SKILLS	ABILITA' DI STUDIO
Listening Comprehension	Ascoltare e comprendere
Reading and inferring	Leggere e inferire
Recovering, finding	Individuare e riconoscere
Telling	Narrare
Discriminating or differentiating	Distinguere e differenziare
Note-taking	Prendere appunti
Organizing	Organizzare
Deducting, decoding	Dedurre, codificare
Analysing and interpreting	Analizzare ed interpretare
Synthesising/summerizing	Sintetizzare
Arguing	Argomentare
Writing or representing	Realizzare o rappresentare
Translating	Tradurre
Communicating in different languages	Comunicare in lingua straniera
Generating media presentations	Generare presentazioni in format multimediale

EUROPEAN COMPETENCES	COMPETENZE EUROPEE
Communication in foreign languages	Comunicazione in lingua straniera
Digital skills	Competenze digitali
Learning to learn	Imparare ad imparare
Social and civic competences	Competenze sociali e civiche
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	Senso d'iniziativa e l'imprenditorialità
Cultural awareness and expression	Consapevolezza e espressione culturale

SECTION 1.

RUDYARD KIPLING

R. Kipling was an English poet, journalist and short stories writer. He was born in 1865 in Bombay. After studying in Great Britain, he went back to India when he was 17 and travelled all around the country as a journalist. In this way, he was able to understand and discover the different cultures he came across in India. Mr. Kipling's experiences during this time formed the backbone for a series of stories he began to write and publish. They were eventually assembled into a collection of 40 short stories called Plain Tales From the Hills, which gained wide popularity in England.



A decade later, R.Kipling married Caroline Balestier and settled in Brattleboro, Vermont.

In 1907 he won the Nobel prize for literature for *“his absolutely unique power of observation, capable of reproducing with astounding accuracy the minutest detail from real life.”*¹, and his *“marvellous power of imagination that enables him to give us not only copies from nature but also visions out of his own inner consciousness.”*²

In the Presentation speech for the prize, R. Kipling is said to be *“eminent essentially for the profundity of his thought or for the surpassing wisdom of his meditations.”*³ However, he is as well praised for being *“invigoratingly direct and ethically stimulating”*⁴ with a direct style without *“abstractions”* and *“circumlocutionary descriptions”* and always with a *“manly ideal before him”*⁵

In particular, this ideal has been often found in the figure of the soldier, always a relevant one in his works. Indeed, Mr. Rudyard Kipling often used expressions, words, references to war, and armies in his articles and stories.

An interesting example of such figure is surely found in the collection of war reports in The War in the Mountains. They were written in 1917, after the British Ambassador, Sir Rennell Rodd, had invited Rudyard Kipling to Italy. He was concerned about the lack of information of the new front, so he wanted Mr. Kipling to visit it and write about his response. Indeed, the objective of the present work is to report the way the writer has characterized the profile of the Italian at the front resorting to the textual analysis of The War in the Mountains.

¹ The Nobel Prize

² Ibidem p.

³ Op. cit. p.

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Mr. Rudyard Kipling died in 1936 in London.

SECTION 2.

APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION

The following section will provide a table synthesizing the result of the textual analysis approach carried out during the class group work in collaborative activities.

It has been arranged in table format to better organize and illustrate data.



Column 1 refers to the **aspects of the soldier profile** Mr. Rudyard Kipling has illustrated to characterize the Italian soldiers at the three fronts (the Isonzo, the Trentino and the Julian Alps front).

Column 2 provides the **quotations supporting our research results**

Column 3 offers our **interpretation of the data collected** and the **critical analysis and reflection** on the effects of Rudyard Kipling's narrative strategies in the reports.

Elements of the setting will be considered too, since it is strictly connected with the soldiers' attitude and their determination in carrying out the tasks encompassed in their duties. In addition, a comparison between Italian soldiers and other troops of soldiers has enlarged the perspective from which our conclusions about the profile of the Italian soldiers has been drawn.

Among the overall aspects of characterization considered, the sense of duty, strictly connected to soldiers' ideal values, shared religious code and personal education have proved to be also particularly relevant.

Further categories taken into consideration to better put into focus the Italian soldiers' profile have been the condition of war, the soldiers' dressing style, the tasks and actions they had to carry out together, their use of language as well as the nature of their relationships, to end with the influence played by the war for the development of their personality.

It goes without saying that, as it happens with everybody's personal development, also age and origin have been taken into consideration since they play a relevant part in supporting one's growth.

The idea conveyed in the reports has also been affected by narrative technique and the choice of specific point/s of view in narration. Indeed, telling and showing alternate according to the effect and the message Mr. Rudyard Kipling wanted to communicate to an English as well as an international readership.



SECTION 3

ANALYSIS OF WAR REPORTS

WAR REPORT I - THE ROADS OF AN ARMY

CHARACTERISATION ASPECTS	QUOTATIONS	IMPLIED MEANING
Skills and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "The Italian fronts were explained with a clearness that made maps unnecessary." – "They are hard people habituated to handling hard stuffs, and, I should imagine, with a sense of property as keen as the Frenchman's." – "The innumerable grey-green troops in the bright fields moved sympathetically among the crops and did not litter their surroundings with rubbish." 	<p>The reporter illustrates the soldiers' <i>skills</i> and <i>actions</i> in order to create a positive image of the Italian soldiers, which are characterised as strong people and hard workers right from the beginning of the report.</p> <p>They are also defined by a great spirit of organisation and teamwork, and their knowledge about their lands.</p>

Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “A stranger’s eyes could make out nothing except one sheer rampart of brooding mountains - ‘like giants at hunting’ – all along the northern horizon. – – “The glass split them into tangled cross-chains of worsted hillocks, hollow-flanked peacks cleft by black or grey ravines, syreches of no-colored rock gashed and nicked with white, swavage thumbmails oh hard snow thrust up above cockscombs of splinters, and behind everything an agony of tortured crags against the farthest sky.” – “Higher mountains showed streaks of snow in their wrinkles.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The setting of the war report underlines Italian soldiers’ skills because they have to overcome all the difficulties due to the hostile conditions of work that mountain areas implies.
Comparison with other troops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “They are hard people habituated to handling hard stuffs, and, I should imagine, with a sense of property as keen as the Frenchman’s.” – They seem supple in their collective movements and less loaded down with haberdashery than either French or British troops.” – “If the Matoppos had married the Karroo they might have begotten some such abortion of stone-speckled, weather-hacked dirt.” 	<p>The comparison between Italian soldiers and other troops (such as British and French ones) has the purpose of characterize them. It is about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land → in Italy there are river-beds where people extract gravel, solid mountains and stones, while French soil and British one are less hostile. 2. Skills → They differ from the other troops because of their strength, flexibility, teamwork and sense of duty.

Sense of duty	-“There were many fights. Whole regiments lie there- - and there – and there. Some of them died in the early days when we made war without roads, some of them died afterwards, when we had the roads but the Austrian had the guns. Some of them died at the last when we beat the Austrian.”	Italian soldiers are also characterised by their sense of duty and their attitude towards their job.
Condition of war	-“The mines exploded in orderly line, and it being impossible to run away over the stones, one had to watch them with the lively consciousness that those scores of thousands of dead beneath and around and behind were watching too. A pneumatic drill chattered underground, as teeth chatter.” -“It was the first obstacle Italy found at her own threshold, after she had forced the broad uneasy Isonzo, ‘where troops can walk, though the walking is not good’. It seemed enough.”	Italian soldiers have to face difficult situation not only because of the environment, but mostly because of what war implies: precarious living conditions, fear, pain and death are commonplace but nevertheless, Italian soldiers are willing to sacrifice for their country and they never give up.
Clothes	“The innumerable grey-green troops in the bright fields moved sympathetically among the crops” “They have their own pattern of steel helmet, which differs a little from ours, and gives them at a distance a look of Roman Legionaires on a frieze of triumph.”	Their clothing makes possible to distinguish Italian soldiers from the others and allows to understand how they protected themselves from the attacks of enemies and the weather.
Credits: Luca Bertoli, Martina Cadenaro, Aurora Della Torca, Nicolò Sorato		



WAR REPORT II – PODGORA		
CHARACTERISATION ASPECTS	QUOTATIONS	IMPLIED MEANING
Tasks and Actions	“It's rather a fresh road. Altogether we have about four thousand miles of new roads - and old roads improved - on a front of about six hundred kilometres. But you see, our kilometres are not flat.”	In the report, the writer underlines soldiers must carry out whatever work in order to survive. Besides, they have to improve transports to carry the necessary goods to war sites That is why they build paths and roads and carry out whatever necessary to fight in war.
Conditions of war	“Lie out under the bitter skyline, for this was war among the mountains where the valleys were death-traps and only heights counted.”	Mr. Kipling underlines soldiers must face several difficulties since they are fighting a mountain war: therefore they must climb mountainous areas to make a rush, and in case they might fail they will lie out under the skyline.
Language and relationship	<p>“‘Oh! Congratulations!’ it cried. ‘Then you dine with us to-night, and you’ll pay for the wine.’ Everyone laughed.”</p> <p>“‘[...] He will have to climb up here to the artillery Mess tonight and stand drinks on his promotion.’ [...] So you see, youth is always immortally the same.”</p>	R. Kipling reports a dialogue between some soldiers: they use clear and simple words as required by military conversation. When soldiers are together in break-times, their young spirit comes to life: they are young guys who want to have fun so as to celebrate a promotion.
Skills	“No,’ he replied. ‘But we, too, have been at the game a long time. I expect all the bad chauffeurs have been killed.”	In some sequences, the reader can easily perceive the soldier’s skills: they have learnt how to hide in the mountains, how to escape the enemies and how to drive lorries to speed up transports and communications.
Comparison	“There are several hundred civilians in the city who have not yet cared to move, for the Italian is as stubborn in these things as the Frenchman.”	Italian people are compared to French people, maybe well known to be stubborn to English readers.
Credits: Luca Contin, Alice Danielis, Gabriele De Losa, Alessia Ongaro		

WAR REPORT III - A PASS, A KING, AND A MOUNTAIN

CHARACTERISATION ASPECTS	QUOTATIONS	IMPLIED MEANING
Qualities	<p>Kindness - "The usual roughly paved caravan track led over it between justice over it."</p> <p>Tenacity – "But if you make a road, you must make a road."</p>	<p>To communicate how soldiers appear to him, the writer underlines the kindness with which they turn to him. Indeed, they patiently explain him the position of the mountains (Montenero) and the line of the Italian trenches. They also "kindly offer" him a coffee.</p> <p>Kipling construct an idea of the soldiers that reveal their positive willfulness and motivation.</p>
Skills	<p>Territorial knowledge - "A falcon swooped off the hill-top and hung.. thousand feet below"</p> <p>Endurance "It is the infinite labour imposed on you by your mere surroundings that impresses me most of all. Everything you handle seems to end in a two-hundred-pound package taken up the side of a house, and yet you have heavy artillery on the edge of glaciers. It's a new convention."</p>	<p>The soldiers are characterize by their extraordinary knowledge of the territory and ability of keeping it under control, indeed "their eyes were set to views of very distant horizons" and "we looked down as the falcons do". So he characterizes them with the metaphor of "falcon": great volatile that are able to reconnoiter and hunt, to bring out their preparation and their endurance.</p>

The King's values	<p>"Many pleasant tales are current in his armies..in stark simplicity among his men and full hazards of war"</p>	<p>Kipling praises the popular general, that is "very much of a man as well as a statesman", and "moves temperate, loyal, keen, in stark simplicity among his men and full hazards of war". So he outlines the qualities that a great general must have.</p> <p>The king's characterization has the function to convey the reader the Italian soldiers' abilities, like temperate and loyal.</p>
Actions	<p>"True. But these are our surroundings, and our people are used to them. They are used to getting load up and down hill; used to handling things and straps and gears and harness and beasts and stones all their lives; besides, we've been at it for two years. That is why the procession moves."</p>	<p>The reporter tells about soldiers' actions in order to give a good image of them. At first, he refers to the Italian soldiers' attitude, and then, he tells about soldiers' actions and skills in war.</p>
Setting and condition of war	<p>"Believe me; we do not lay one stone more than we have to. You are seeing the roads in spring. We make them for winter in the mountains. They must be roads to stand everything."</p>	<p>The territorial description has the purpose to underline Italian soldiers' conditions in war and abilities in work.</p> <p>The writer makes the reader understand the soldiers' conditions with metaphors, indeed he says that the enemy "hunted" them, as if they would be animals searched and hunted. In the Italian translation, the word "hunted" is translated with "snidarli" that refers to them as birds and their land as their home.</p>

<p>War influence</p>	<p>“The officer spoke without emotion. He and a few million others had been goaded out of their known life to achieve the incredible. They had left the faculty of wonder”</p> <p>“But these are our surroundings, and our people are used to them”</p> <p>“Love has gone out of this huge basin of the Dolomites now, and the mountaineering is done by platoons in order to kill men, not by individuals who read papers before Alpine Clubs.”</p>	<p>The writer underlines how war changed the soldiers. War take them away emotions, they are used to seeing so many tragedies that they are not surprised anymore. As if now they are insensible, indeed in the Italian version soldiers are compared to a machine.</p> <p>Lots of times Kipling refers to the changes war take with it. He wants make the reader understand the break of the quotidian life and the traditions.</p>
<p>Credits: Ester Bergantin, Giacomo Cum, Daniele Zuliani</p>		



WAR REPORT IV - ONLY A FEW STEPS HIGHER UP

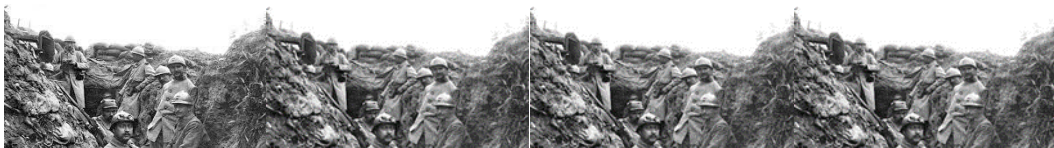
CHARACTERISATION ASPECTS	QUOTATIONS	IMPLIED MEANING
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “For a special job, specialists, but for all jobs, <u>youth</u> above everything!” – “the genuine, <u>boyish</u> kindness, will remain with me.” – “said these <u>joyous children</u>.” 	<p>The reporter underlines the soldiers’ youth with the repetition of words connected with youth.</p> <p>In particular, the reporter calls the Alpines joyous children four times in the report and refers many times to them as “young”</p>
Origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “That portion of the Italian frontier where men must mountaineer as well as climb is held with the Alpine regiments. The corps is recruited from <i>the people who inhabit, and know what is in the mind of, the mountains</i> - men used to carry loads along eighteen-inch paths round thousand foot drops. <i>Their talk is the slang of mountains, with a special word for every mood and state of snow, ice, or rock,</i> as elaborately particular as a Zulu's talk when he is describing his cattle.” 	<p>The reporter relates the Alpines’ skills with the knowledge of their homeland.</p> <p>Since they have “<i>a special word for every mood and state of snow, ice, or rock</i>”, they are familiar with difficult environments. This underlines their hard character and their skillfulness. This is underlined by the personification of the mountain underlining their deep knowledge of the land they are fighting on.</p>

Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “That portion of the Italian frontier where men must <i>mountaineer as well as climb</i> is held with the Alpine regiments. The corps is recruited from the people who inhabit, and <i>know what is in the mind of, the mountains - men used to carry loads along eighteen-inch paths round thousand foot drops</i>. Their talk is the slang of mountains, with a <i>special word for every mood and state of snow, ice, or rock</i>, as elaborately particular as a Zulu's talk when he is describing his cattle.” 	<p>The soldiers’ skills along with their age, is one of the values praised by R. Kipling especially in the case of the Alpines.</p> <p>Right from the start they are characterized as hard working, strong boys that know everything about the mountains.</p>
Physical appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “They wear a smash hat <u>adorned</u> with one eagle feather (worn down to an <u>honourable</u> stump, now); the nails upon their boots <u>resemble, and are kept as sharp as, the fangs of wolves</u>; their eyes are like <u>our airman's eyes</u>; their walk on their own ground suggests the sea; and a more cheery set of hard-bitten, clean-skinned, steady-eyed young devils I have never yet had the honour to meet.” 	<p>The reporter magnifies the Alpines by glorifying their clothing style. This can be seen in the use of words such as “<i>adorned</i>” and “<i>honorable</i>” and of comparisons such as “<i>nails as sharp as fangs of wolves</i>” that recall aggressiveness and boldness.</p>

<p>Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “But I recalled that it was Dante himself who says how <u>bitter</u> it is to climb up and down <u>other people's</u> stairs. Besides, their work was of no interest to any one except the enemy round the corner. It was just the <u>regular routine</u> of these parts. They outlined it for the visitor. - <u>You</u> climb up a fissure of a rock chimney [...] And when <u>you</u> emerge from your chimney [...] <u>you</u> find either that you command the enemy's post on the top, in which case you destroy him, [...] or <u>you</u> find the enemy commands you from some unsuspected cornice or knob of rock. Then you go down again - if you can - and try elsewhere. And that is how it is done <u>all along</u> that section of frontier where the ground does not let you do otherwise. <p>Special work is somewhat different. You select a mountain [...] You effect a lodgment there with your teeth and toe-nails; you mine into the solid rock with compressed-air drills for as many hundred yards as you calculate may be necessary. When you have finished, you fill your galleries with nitroglycerine and blow the top off the mountain. Then you occupy the crater with men and machine-guns as fast as you can. Then you secure your dominating position from which you can gain other positions, by the same means.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “before we'd finished with the Castelletto we were miners and mechanics and all sorts of things we never expected to be. <u>That is the way of this war.</u>” 	<p>The soldiers’ tasks are expressed in the central part of the text. This is visible in the reporter’s use of telling. In this sequence, the reporter tells of the Alpines’ work using the impersonal form “you”, thus making the reader emphasise with the soldiers.</p> <p>The narrator also underlines the soldiers’ tasks’ difficulty in the quote by Dante which highlights the soldiers’ exceptional profile using the expression “other people”.</p> <p>The same idea is also underlined by the expression “regular routine” that connotes the soldiers’ attitude towards their job. They see their daily fight only as their simple job similar to others because of the war. One can see it in as a soldier’s words “we were miners and mechanics and all sorts of things we never expected to be. That is the way of this war.”</p>
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<p>Working conditions</p>	<p>– “‘We are working <u>a few steps</u> higher up the road. It is <u>only a few</u> steps.’</p> <p>They took me by car above the timber-line on the edge of the basin, to the steep foot of a <u>dominant rock wall</u> which I had seen approaching, for hours back, along the road. Twenty or thirty miles away the <u>pillared mass</u> of it had looked no more than <u>implacably hostile</u> - much as Mont Blanc looks from the lake. Coming nearer it had grown steeper, and a wilderness of wrathful crags and fissures had revealed itself. At close range from almost directly below, the thing, one perceived, went up sheer, where it did not bulge outward, like a ship' side at launching. Every <u>monstrous</u> detail of its face, etched by sunshine through utterly clear air, crashed upon the sight at once, overwhelming the mind as a new world might, wearying the eye as a <u>gigantically</u> enlarged photograph does.”</p>	<p>Soldiers have to face the difficulties of the environment. Bad weather conditions, difficulties in transport and communication are particularly conveyed by the quote, where the reporter compares the mountain to a monster using hyperbolic language.</p> <p>The comparison is juxtaposed to the Alpines’ language. Recalling the article’s title, the Alpines seem to be using language totally in contrast with the reporter’s. Theirs are simple words like “a few”, “only” and “steps” that sound as if they wanted to downside R. Kipling’s emphasis.</p> <p>This underlines once more the Alpines’ courage and humbleness: they deal with a particularly dangerous environment without seemingly caring of it. Juxtaposing the two different uses of language, the reporter underlines the soldiers’ heroism.</p>
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<p>Sense of duty</p>	<p>– “The last I saw of the joyous children was <u>a cluster of gnome-like figures a furlong overhead, standing</u>, for there was no visible foothold, <u>on nothing</u>. They separated, and <u>went about their jobs as single dots, moving up or sideways on the face of the rock, till they disappeared into it like ants.</u> [...] <u>Those rounds must be taken in every weather and light; that is, made at eleven thousand feet, with death for company under each foot, and the width of a foot on each side, at every step of the most uneventful round.</u> Frosty glazed rock where a blunt-nailed boot slips once and no more; mountain blasts round the corner of ledges before the body is braced to them; a knob of rotten shale crumbling beneath the hand; an ankle twisted at the bottom of a ninety-foot rift; a roaring descent of rocks loosened by snow from some corner the sun has undermined through the day - <u>these are a few of the risks they face going from and returning to the coffee and gramophones at the Mess, 'in the ordinary discharge of their duties.'</u> “</p>	<p>This category can be found in more parts of the text, but is particularly underlined in the last part, where R. Kipling tells about the Alpines going to work.</p> <p>Kipling underlines their heroism by using a hyperbolic language to tell about their risks and dangers, done “in the ordinary exchange of their duties”.</p> <p>This is underlined by the use of comparisons between them and gnomes, ants and dots, making them seem as a great number of unstoppable workers.</p> <p>This message is also conveyed in the third sentence, where R. Kipling exposes the conditions of their job. This creates a climax that underlines their work’s danger.</p> <p>The last quote reproduces the Alpines’ talk, underlining their selflessness and their lack of awareness about it, seeing as ordinary something that the reporter finds heroic.</p>
<p>Credits: Sofia Baldan, Ilaria D’Agostinis, Anna De Paoli, Cristina Tecovich</p>		



WAR REPORT V - THE TRENTINO FRONT

CHARACTERISATION ASPECTS	QUOTATIONS	IMPLIED MEANING
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “explained frankly” 	<p>The reporter highlights the seriousness and sense of duty of Italian soldiers. Indeed, they are connoted only with positive adjectives.</p> <p>They fight for their homeland, in extreme conditions and carrying out actions that according to R. Kipling make them one of the best armies. Their positive attitude is closely linked to the actions they perform.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “Always awaiting troops”, – “Our men fought for a week – mostly without water”, – “Labour battalions dealt with the stuff”, – “Other gangs mended shell-holes with speed; the lorries do not like being checked”, – “The population was up the hill digging and blasting”, “they do everything without noise” – “down to the wayside muleteer, white with dust [...] winking the ladder-like mountain”, – “or the single sentry lying-out like a panther” 	<p>The narrator tells about their actions thus adding value to their activities at the front. He states they fought “without water” and moved to hard and dangerous places like the top of the mountains. Therefore, R. Kipling exalts Italian soldiers and portrays Italian soldiers like hardworking people willing to face whatever conditions for a common and shared purpose. All that consider one can understand how Italian soldiers are endowed with strenuous tenacity and sense of duty.</p>

Origins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “the natural temperateness and open-air existence of the people” – “when one looks at the faces of their generals, chiselled out by war to the very cameos of their ancestor under the Roman eagles, one inclines to the second” 	<p>R. Kipling characterized the Italian soldiers also referring to their “origin”. In order to do this, he reminds the “<i>Roman eagles</i>” of the Roman Empire thus magnifying their tasks and underlining their determination, temperance, and nobility.</p>
Comparison with different nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “Italy, too, has a larger number than most countries of men returned from money-getting in the Western republics, who have settled down at home again” – “like the French, they are logical and face facts to the end” 	<p>The first quote compares Italian soldiers ‘return to their homes with the ones of other people in their countries. From the comparison, one can understand Italian soldiers are really perceived as patriotic. Indirectly, R. Kipling is also convinced in Italy there are few opportunities to make money when you compare them to the ones of other nations. From the second quote, the intelligent reader also understands R. Kipling considers Italians to have rational and persevering intentions, like the French.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mist wrapped the plateau we were climbing. The mountains had changed into rounded, almost barrel-shaped heights, steep above dry valleys. The roads were many and new, but the lorries held their pace [...] – [...] Scotch moors, red uplands, scarred with trenches and punched with shell-holes, a confusion of hills without colour and, in the mist, without shape, rose and dropped behind us. They hid the troops in their folds - always awaiting troops - and the trenches multiplied themselves high and low on their sides. 	<p>The setting is characterized as a romance picture. To tell the truth, the presence of “mist” conveys a so sense of mystery to the scene. The idea is reinforced when the narrator adds the mist removes colour and shape from the hills. In addition, the choice of the word “confusion” makes the difficulty of finding a direction in such a setting clear and straightforward.</p>

Credits: Paolo Bragagnini, Alessio Mauri, Mattia Romano, Erik Scolaro

SECTION 4.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing a conclusion about the object of our research is not particularly complex. Indeed R. Kipling's shows his extremely positive opinion of Italian soldiers.

The image of Italian soldiers conveyed in all the reports analysed convey the image of of strong, brave, young, hard working guys and really proud of their nationality. The latter element can be found especially in the last report, where R. Kipling's guide refers to G. Garibaldi and the War of Independence. The references justify war and patriotism and give an image of the Austrians and Prussians as invaders (*"Garibaldi's volunteers were in full possession of it in our War of Independence. Prussia was our ally then against Austria, but Prussia made peace when it suited her [...] and we had to accept the frontier that she and Austria laid down."*)⁶

In particular, R. Kipling underlines Italian soldiers' sense of duty by describing their difficult tasks and the hard landscape they have to cope with. An frequently makes reference to "mist" or earlier in the third report. There he makes several references to "cold". In addition, the reporter often underlines the mountains' hostility. All the elements mentioned so far are juxtaposed to the recurring reference to *"Italian roads"*, that seem to *"civilize"* the landscape.

All the ideas discussed so far are brought to life through the reporter's use of language. Indeed, the reporter uses a specific language. He especially refers to weapons, and makes a dense use of alliterations that help recreate the noise of the war battle field appealing to hearing. The reader is therefore involved by a narration that brings the situation of war into life on the sound level. This device, together with many others makes the reader empathise with soldiers. Indeed especially in the fourth report the use of hyperbolic language adds to the effect. To tell the truth, the reporter uses it mostly to refer to the landscape, to underline its waste and difficult land thus bringing the soldiers' ability to surface.

The same effect is given by the use of the narrative technique of telling, which prevails over showing. Telling is mostly used to describe the landscape and the soldiers and make all the context alive. Vice versa, showing is used to make R. Kipling's guide describe the fronts and to bring to life the soldiers' conversations. Indeed, showing gives voice to the soldiers' typical expressions of youth and the guide's ability to recognize the fronts (*"He picked up the peaks one after another with the ease of a man accustomed to pick up landmarks at any angle and any change of light. A stranger's eyes could make out nothing except one sheer rampart of brooding mountains - 'like giants at a hunting' - all along the northern horizon"*).⁷ Showing also makes the reader deeply empathise with the soldiers making the scene more vividly sketched.

The comparison between the English and the Italian version of the reports also brought to surface the relevance of nationalism in Italian culture. Indeed, the Italian translation shows several changes in lexis choice to magnify it more. Idealisms seems also to supply for the lack of affection and comforts that the life during the war necessarily neglects.



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Such glorification may have been useful to tighten bonds between England and Italy, that had just become allies during the war.

Nonetheless, the reader still emphasises with the soldiers and, especially in the fourth chapter. Their youth moves the reader more than their heroic gestures. Their incredible strength and sense of duty exhorts them but at the same time makes the reader perceive them as “distant”. On the other hand, reading familiar scenes like the band scene in the fourth article makes the reader perceive their youth and determination to survive a war described realistically and with all the damages it involves.

The collection of reports makes the reader perceive the complex situations that soldiers had to overcome, making him or her feel empathy for them despite the chronological distance.



THE PERCEPTION OF THE ITALIAN SOLDIER

