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From Song to Poem: Bridging Students' Listening Habits and English Literature

A Comparison between Traditional and Multimodal Teaching in the Foreign Language Classroom

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Agli alunni del liceo Andrea Maffei di Riva del Garda coinvolti in questa ricerca
e ai miei figli, Alba e Giulio,
con l'augurio di trovare sempre insegnanti curiosi,
e la voglia di esserlo a loro volta.

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Abstract

This thesis asks whether songs can help upper secondary students engage with English literature without replacing textual analysis. Many students in the Italian *liceo linguistico* perceive literary texts in a foreign language as distant and complex; the study tests songs and multimodal materials as a bridge between their everyday culture and the literary text. A teaching unit on English Romantic poetry (Blake's *London* and Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*) was carried out in a *liceo linguistico* with one experimental class and two comparison classes. Songs, images, group work and short podcasts led gradually to the reading and comparison of the poems. Data were collected through two questionnaires, one before and one after the unit, a final comparative essay assessed with a rubric aligned with the *Esame di Stato*, and classroom observation. The essays showed no clear improvement over the comparison classes. The questionnaires, however, showed that most students found songs useful for grasping the atmosphere, themes and context of the poems and felt more involved in the unit. Songs, then, did not raise written performance, but they changed how students approached the texts. Within the limits of a small-scale classroom study, the thesis argues that songs work as a bridge to literature when placed in a guided path towards analysis, interpretation and argumentative writing.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1. Literature in Foreign Language Teaching: The Regulatory Framework and Its Role in Italian *licei linguistici*

The research presented in this thesis was carried out in a *liceo linguistico*. In this type of school the study of a foreign language cannot be separated from its cultural and literary dimension, and this link is established by law.

The organisation of the *licei* is defined by Presidential Decree (D.P.R.) no. 89 of 15 March 2010. The decree was signed by the then Minister of Education Mariastella Gelmini and was part of a wider reform of upper secondary education (Law 133/2008). Article 6, paragraph 1, states that the *liceo linguistico* "è indirizzato allo studio di più sistemi linguistici e culturali" and that it guides the student "a maturare le competenze necessarie per acquisire la padronanza comunicativa di tre lingue, oltre l'italiano, e per comprendere criticamente l'identità storica e culturale di tradizioni e civiltà diverse" (D.P.R. 89/2010, art. 6, c. 1).

The decree includes, as an annex, the *Profilo educativo, culturale e professionale dello studente*, which describes what a student must be able to do on graduating. For the *liceo linguistico* it requires the student to "conoscere le principali caratteristiche culturali dei paesi di cui si è studiata la lingua, attraverso lo studio e l'analisi di opere letterarie, estetiche, visive, musicali, cinematografiche, delle linee fondamentali della loro storia e delle loro tradizioni" (D.P.R. 89/2010, All. A).

The *Profilo* is then turned into subject-specific objectives by the *Indicazioni nazionali per i licei*, the national guidelines that teachers use to plan their teaching. In the section on the *liceo linguistico*, they state that in the third and fourth year the student "legge, analizza e interpreta testi letterari con riferimento ad una pluralità di generi" and "analizza produzioni artistiche di varia natura provenienti da lingue/culture diverse (italiane e straniere) mettendoli in relazione tra loro e con i contesti storico-sociali" (D.M. 211/2010, 25). Work on literary texts, therefore, can also go through other artistic productions, connected to the texts and to their context. This is what the present research does with songs.

After 2010, other documents pointed in the same direction. In 2018 the Council of the European Union updated its Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, that is, the competences every citizen should have in order to keep learning throughout life. The first version dated from 2006; the update takes into account the social and technological changes that had taken place in the meantime. A recommendation is not binding: it does not impose obligations on schools, but it sets out a common framework to which member states are invited to align their policies. Italy had already done so with the 2010 reform, whose *Indicazioni* declare that they incorporate the European recommendations on lifelong learning. Among the eight key competences is the competence in cultural awareness and expression, which "implica la comprensione e il rispetto di come le idee e i significati vengono espressi creativamente e comunicati in diverse culture e tramite tutta una serie di arti e altre forme culturali" and includes the ways in which ideas are communicated "nei testi scritti, stampati e digitali, nel teatro, nel cinema, nella danza, nei giochi, nell'arte e nel design, nella musica, nei riti, nell'architettura oltre che nelle forme ibride" (Consiglio dell'Unione europea 2018, 11).

In addition, at national level, Law no. 92 of 20 August 2019 introduced civic education (*educazione civica*) in all schools. It is not an extra subject entrusted to a single teacher: it is a cross-curricular subject, with at least 33 hours a year, to which all the teachers of the class council contribute (L. 92/2019, 1)[1]. For those who teach literature, this opens up further room. Literary texts often deal with social and political themes, such as the condition of children, life in industrial cities or the relationship between people and institutions, and can therefore become the starting point for civic education paths built together with colleagues of the class council. The connection is not merely organisational. Luperini argues that interpreting a text teaches students to see truth "come processo e dialogo, non come dogma o norma precostituita", and at the same time to support their own argument and to respect that of others; in this he sees "la ricchezza del nesso che unisce democrazia a interpretazione, didattica della letteratura e formazione del cittadino" (Luperini 2002, 62). This is the case of the English Romantic poetry at the centre of the

[1]The guidelines adopted with Ministerial Decree (D.M.) no. 183 of 7 September 2024, which entirely replace those of 2020 and came into force from the school year 2024/2025, justify the cross-curricular nature of the subject by observing that its learning objectives and expected competences are not "ascrivibili ad una singola disciplina e neppure ad ambiti disciplinari delimitati" (D.M. 183/2024).

teaching unit described in Chapter 4, where the London of Blake and Wordsworth is also read as evidence of the changes brought by industrialisation. Finally, in 2026 the new *Indicazioni nazionali per i licei* were adopted; they will come into force in the school year 2027/2028, starting from first-year classes. The study described in this thesis took place in the school year 2025/2026 and therefore refers to the 2010 *Indicazioni*, which still apply to the classes involved.

For those who teach English language and culture in upper secondary school (teaching class AB24), all this involves a double task: giving students the linguistic tools to deal with complex texts and, at the same time, teaching literature properly, in a way that does not stop at historical and biographical facts but leads students to read and to argue.

In everyday practice, however, language and literature often remain separate. One reason is historical. Until 2010 schools worked with ministerial syllabi (*programmi ministeriali*), which listed the contents to be covered; the reform replaced them with learning objectives, which each school adapts within its own autonomy (D.P.R. 275/1999). The change is deep, but practice moves more slowly than the law. Spaliviero observes that the historicist method, in which teaching literature means teaching the history of literature, is the longest-lasting in Italy and "continua ad essere presente nella prassi didattica, seppur in forma ridimensionata" (Spaliviero 2020, 42). In this method the lesson is frontal and transmissive, attention goes to the context, the literary movements and the author's biography, and the reading of the works is given secondary space (Spaliviero 2020, 42-43); even the textbooks based on the hermeneutic method, which give more space to the reading of the works, remain organised chronologically (Spaliviero 2020, 65-66). Students are thus left with little room to read, analyse and interpret texts, which is what the *Indicazioni* require (D.M. 211/2010, 25). What it means to interpret a literary text, and what role the reader plays in it, is discussed in Section 2.3. It is from this gap between the law and practice that the interest arises in tools that make literature in a foreign language more accessible without losing the rigour of the *liceo* curriculum: the next section examines, in this light, the role of songs.

1.2. Songs as a Teaching and Motivational Tool for English Literature in a Foreign Language

In recent decades, educational research has increasingly questioned purely transmission-based models of teaching and has stressed the central role of the student's active involvement in learning. Hansen (2023, 3), one of the researchers of the Danish KiDM project discussed below, describes the transmissive pole as a lesson in which the teacher presents results that are already established — settled interpretations, genres, biographies, movements, periods — while the students' work is "of a receptive, reproductive, training and acquiring nature". Magirius, Scherf and Steinmetz (2023, 2), who work on dialogic teaching in the literature classroom, are more direct: in such lessons, "when it comes to interpreting literary texts, students do not learn how to do so but how to guess the teacher's interpretation". Jansky (2026, 1), writing on the teaching of English literature in secondary schools, notes that skills-based practices focused on the structure of the text "flatten the multilayered complexity of literature into tidy, formulaic interpretations". In the Italian debate, Luperini points to a second version of the same problem: not the transmission of ready-made interpretations, but the reduction of literature teaching to technical analysis. For too long, he writes, teaching literature has been reduced to "l'esibizione di modelli descrittivi e di gergo tecnico, a formule, a schemi e schemini fatti di frecce e di freccette, che dissezionano il testo disseccando la ricchezza e la polivalenza dei suoi messaggi esistenziali e ideologici" (Luperini 2002, 30-31). These are studies of literature teaching in the mother tongue — Danish, German, English, Italian — not in a foreign language, but the mechanism they describe is the same.

A similar shift has been described in foreign language education. As Paran observes, "more recent theorising has shifted away from a limited, isolating perspective […] to more holistic perspectives which take different aspects of the learner and the context of learning into account" (2008, 469). This matters for approaches that try to combine textual analysis with student engagement, personal response and the context of the classroom. In the specific case of literature teaching in a foreign language the difficulties are even more evident, and they concern not only the linguistic complexity of the texts or the perceived cultural distance, but also the way literature is presented. Caon and Spaliviero (2015, 79) locate the cause of the crisis of literary education in Italy in the fact that it has remained

“legata spesso in modo fermo alla tradizione, sia sul piano dei contenuti sia sul piano delle modalità didattiche (legate ancora a un modello trasmissivo che ha nel testo cartaceo e nella storia della letteratura la sua centralità), mentre i suoi destinatari, cioè gli studenti, sono cambiati in maniera rapida e profonda”. In their reconstruction of the methods of teaching literature from Benedetto Croce onwards, the same authors describe the transmissive mode as one in which “continua a essere richiesto un apprendimento mnemonico e la successiva ripetizione acritica delle informazioni”: while acknowledging some positive aspects, they identify its limit in the “mancanza di rielaborazione critica dei contenuti da parte degli studenti che ne inficia il percorso verso il raggiungimento di un’autonomia di giudizio” (2015, 22). Against this approach they set the hermeneutic perspective, established from the 1980s, in which “il lettore-studente è coinvolto attivamente nella costruzione del significato dell’opera, diventando così il protagonista dell’educazione letteraria” (2015, 25).

One of the most studied alternatives is classroom discussion: “Meaning in such classrooms is co-constructed rather than transmitted” (Jansky 2026, 5). Schrijvers et al. (2019) assessed, in a quasi-experimental study, the effects of Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching (TDLT) on 15-year-old students, comparing 166 students who took part in the intervention with 166 who received regular literature teaching (RLT) focused on the analysis of literary texts. The six TDLT units were centred on short stories about “justice and injustice”, and students were encouraged to engage in internal dialogues with the stories and in external dialogues with their peers about the stories and their reading experiences. The dialogic approach “fostered students’ insight into human nature, eudaimonic reasons for reading, reported use of strategies to deal with difficulties in literary texts, and motivation for literature education, whereas RLT did not” (Schrijvers et al. 2019, 1). The authors conclude that “being given the opportunity to explore their authentic responses and feeling free to express these in class may be a crucial factor in students’ motivation for literature education” (Schrijvers et al. 2019, 12). Results in the same direction come from the Danish KiDM project, carried out in lower secondary schools with 86 schools, 265 classes and 5,531 students, with random assignment in 72 schools (Hansen 2023, 2). The intervention replaces the transmissive lesson with exploratory teaching in which “wonder, challenges, assumptions and hypotheses are used

to open a field of inquiry and establish an interest" (Hansen 2023, 3). Students read the text before receiving information on author, genre and period, because "the intention is to avoid fixing their understanding of the text by presenting them with instructional goals, theme, formal genre features, technical language, and historical knowledge of the author and period prior to reading the text" (Hansen 2023, 18); the exploration is guided by seven strategies "fleshed out in a task-based teaching that scaffolds the students' exploration" (Hansen 2023, 16). The model was "tested in a large-scale RCT-study with positive statistically significant effects on students' competencies to interpret aesthetic texts" (Hansen 2023, 1).

These studies, however, do not allow text analysis to be replaced by free conversation. Magirius, Scherf and Steinmetz (2023, 4) list the risks of unguided dialogue: the text is lost sight of, the conversation drifts from one point to the next, important insights are mentioned and then dropped. Mordenti (2013, 121-122) warns of the same danger, the "ritorno di una critica di pura chiacchiera". Luperini, who argues for the centrality of the reader, is equally clear about the limits of that position. Theoretical positions of this kind, he writes, may also have negative consequences in the classroom: the fact that the interpretations of a text are infinite may be taken to mean that they are unlimited and that any arbitrary reading is legitimate, and the emphasis on the subjective may encourage "una lettura destoricizzante, condotta esclusivamente sulla base di impressioni ed emozioni soggettive" (Luperini 2002, 62-63). His condition is explicit: "l'interpretazione va condotta sotto il controllo del commento e attraverso il possesso degli strumenti storico-filologici e storico-letterari", and "nella prima fase dell'approccio, il testo deve mantenere una propria temporanea centralità" (2002, 63). Hansen (2023, 4) states the condition for exploration to work: it must be supported by "instruction, framing, and support in the form of task-based scaffolding", with the support gradually withdrawn as students become autonomous. Schrijvers et al. (2019, 14) are equally explicit: in their model, the analysis of literary devices does not disappear but becomes "a means to reason about reading experiences, themes, characters, and moral implications". Dialogue, in other words, produces understanding only if it stays anchored to the text and supported by the teacher's guidance.

As Fredricks et al. (2004, 61) put it, engagement "is presumed to be malleable. It results from an interaction of the individual with the context and is responsive to variation in environments". Teaching practices and the organisation of the learning environment therefore have a direct effect on students' participation, interest and cognitive investment. In this scenario, the traditional approach to literature teaching — and more generally to the teaching of culture in the foreign language — based mainly on lectures and on the chronological presentation of canonical authors, risks being unengaging for students who have grown up in highly digitalised environments (Caon and Spaliviero 2015). As Byram and Kramsch (2008) observe:

> After three decades of communicative language teaching, students favor and, indeed, give higher evaluations to language teachers who foster lively interaction in their classrooms and who give them an opportunity to discover things on their own, rather than just feed them facts of grammar or history (Byram and Kramsch 2008, 33).

Similarly, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, 26) state that "motivation in the short-term may be influenced by specific features of the instructional context such as task and materials design, or evaluation practices and grouping structures". These considerations do not imply abandoning established models, but suggest integrating them with strategies that can make learning more meaningful and participatory.

The students themselves, as Caon and Spaliviero note, have changed. Spaliviero clarifies in what sense: the book "è stato progressivamente affiancato dai nuovi mezzi di comunicazione e di consumo estetico (fumetti, film, canzoni ecc.)", and students now live in "una realtà comunicativa che ha nella simultaneità multimodale, nella partecipazione attiva e nella varietà delle fonti di informazioni disponibili le sue forme privilegiate" (Spaliviero 2020, 126). In these conditions engagement tends to decrease and motivation to become mainly extrinsic (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2021): Ryan and Deci (2020, 6) recall that Grolnick and Ryan (1987) experimentally studied the effect of grading on a school task "and found that grading was associated with decreased intrinsic motivation and lower conceptual learning".

Music occupies a central place in adolescents' lives, and several studies document it. In his review of this research, Miranda (2013, 10) notes that "On average, adolescents listen to music for up to three hours daily and accumulate more than 10,000 hours of active music listening throughout adolescence", and that this exposure "opens a critical window in which music can influence at least seven major areas of development: aesthetics; identity; socialisation; emotion regulation and coping; personality and motivation; gender roles; and positive youth development" (2013, 10-11). North, Hargreaves and O'Neill (2000), in a survey of 2,465 English 13- and 14-year-olds, conclude that "music is of central importance in the lives of most young people, fulfilling social and emotional as well as cognitive needs" (2000, 269); the reasons their respondents gave for listening grouped into three factors, "creating external impression", "fulfilling emotional needs" and "enjoyment" (2000, 263). They also note that "the central importance of music in the lives and identity of many teenagers seems to develop outside rather than inside the classroom" (2000, 269). Across studies, "emotion regulation is the primary motive for listening to music, especially in youth" (Miranda 2013, 13-14). Hallam (2010, 269) specifies, however, that this impact is not unconditional, since "the positive effects of engagement with music on personal and social development only occur if it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience", which "has implications for the quality of the teaching". Although these studies refer to music as an autonomous field, the principle that culturally familiar languages foster engagement and participation can be extended to the teaching of literature in a foreign language. It is precisely because these studies highlight the central role of music in adolescents' lives that, within this theoretical framework, songs are considered here as a tool for the teaching of English literature.

Songs are not proposed as a replacement for the literary text, nor as a merely recreational element, but as a possible tool for enriching teaching. Recent evidence supports this broader view of song-based teaching. In a quasi-experimental study with 200 elementary-level EFL learners in private language institutes in Iran, Wang, Jabrealy and Izadpanah conclude that "songs contribute beyond simple motivational support, creating a learning context that combines multiple modes and emotional engagement, which may encourage greater cognitive involvement and support sustained academic development" (2026, 14). Their study used simple children's songs chosen by the teacher, and measured

perceived rather than tested progress, so it cannot be read as direct evidence for the use of songs in the teaching of literature. It does, however, support the link between songs, motivation, multimodality and cognitive engagement.

As authentic and, ideally, culturally familiar texts, songs can offer a first emotional and cognitive hook to the themes addressed in literary texts, helping to reduce the perceived distance and to stimulate students' motivation without replacing the analytical work required by the study of English literature in the last three years of the *liceo linguistico*. Songs also connect what happens in class with what students already do outside it. Research on out-of-school exposure to English as a foreign language suggests that "listening to music is always among the most common activities EFL learners engage in" (Mannarelli and Serrano 2024, 2). Mannarelli and Serrano, who worked with two grade-8 classes in an Italian school, note that "since students naturally listen to songs in their free time, their use in classroom activities could potentially encourage a connection between in- and out-of-class contexts, which would allow for continuity and consolidation of what is learned in class" (2024, 2). Yet songs "are still considered as a one-off treat that teachers give students, rather than a regular activity" (2024, 2). In the light of these considerations, and of the problems found in the teaching of English literature in Italian upper secondary schools, this research aims to verify whether and to what extent the integration of songs into a literature teaching unit can affect students' motivation and learning outcomes. To this end, the thesis adopts an experimental approach carried out in three classes of a *liceo*, organised in a theoretical part and an empirical part devoted to the design, implementation and analysis of the teaching intervention.

1.3. Research Questions and Aims of the Study

This research grows out of direct experience of teaching English literature in *licei linguistici* and of the difficulty described in the previous sections: engaging students in a stable and meaningful way in the study of literary texts in a foreign language. Starting from the writer's own classroom observation, the thesis investigates whether the systematic integration of songs as a teaching tool can help make the study of English

literature more accessible and motivating, without giving up the rigour of textual analysis and the curricular aims of the *liceo linguistico* and of teaching class AB24.

The research addresses the following questions. How can the use of songs, integrated into an English literature course, affect students' motivation, engagement and perception of literary texts? What relationship emerges between motivation and learning outcomes in the study of English literature? What differences in learning outcomes emerge between the class involved in the intervention and the classes used as comparison groups, and how can they be interpreted in the light of the different teaching experiences?

On the basis of these questions, the study first aims to observe the motivation and perceptions of students taking part in an English literature course that combines traditional teaching practices with the guided use of songs and other multimodal materials, used as an alternative to the adopted textbook, *Amazing Minds* (Spicci, Shaw and Montanari 2021). In parallel, it compares the learning outcomes of the experimental class with those of two other classes used as comparison groups, through written tests assessed with shared criteria consistent with the curricular aims, in order to detect any differences in performance. Finally, it aims to understand whether and to what extent motivational engagement goes hand in hand with a better quality of student performance in text analysis.

Methodologically, the research adopts a setting consistent with a real school context. The study was carried out at the Liceo "Andrea Maffei" in Riva del Garda (Trento), where the writer teaches English language and literature. The experimental class is 4AL, the fourth year of the *liceo linguistico*; the comparison groups are 3AL, also from the *liceo linguistico*, and 5AM, the fifth year of the *liceo musicale*. As discussed in the following chapters, the three groups are not fully equivalent in age, school track and previous experience, so the comparison must be interpreted with caution. Students' perceptions and motivation are explored through an initial questionnaire, used as an analysis of needs and preferences, and a reflective questionnaire administered at the end of the intervention. The two instruments have different purposes and therefore do not constitute a perfectly symmetrical pre/post measurement. Learning is instead assessed through a comparative written task, modelled on the typical requirements of the *Esame di Stato* and centred on comprehension, analysis and argumentation.

In this sense the study belongs to the tradition of action research in language teaching, which "is related to the ideas of 'reflective practice' and 'the teacher as a researcher'" and "involves taking a self-reflective, critical and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching context" (Burns 2010, ch. 1); "the central idea of the action part of AR is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice" (2010, ch. 1). Its aim is therefore not to demonstrate the superiority of one method over another, but to offer a reflection grounded in experience and observable data, useful for assessing whether and to what extent the use of songs can be a sustainable and transferable teaching resource in the everyday practice of teaching English literature.

Chapter 2 - Motivation and Learning

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework of the intervention described in the following chapters. Its starting point is that learning depends not only on cognitive factors but also on how far students are involved and on the value they attach to what is proposed in class. Balboni, writing about language learning, explains what is at stake in the notion of *apprendimento significativo*:

> non significa solo che i contenuti devono essere percepiti come significativi (o psicologicamente rilevanti, come dicono altri psicodidatti) per il progetto che lo studente ha del suo sé presente e futuro e del ruolo che la lingua può rivestire in tale progetto, ma anche che l'apprendimento avvenga in quella che Bruner chiama una 'relazione significativa' tra docente e studente, costruita attraverso l'attenzione *esplicita* dell'insegnante ai bisogni dello studente e una negoziazione *esplicita* sulle modalità della didattica (Balboni 2015, 45)

Although Balboni is writing about language teaching rather than about literature, the two conditions he sets out apply just as well to the literary text: the content should be perceived as meaningful for the students' own sense of who they are and want to become, and the way of working should be discussed openly with them. It is on these two conditions that the intervention described in this thesis rests, and they matter all the more when the literature is read in a foreign language, since the linguistic difficulty of the texts and their cultural distance make involvement the condition of access to the text rather than its result. Because motivation therefore depends in large part on what the teacher chooses to do, it becomes the theoretical premise of this research, and the chapter follows accordingly: the motivational models developed by research on second language acquisition (Section 2.1), the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation applied to the study of literary texts (Section 2.2), the disciplinary framework of literary education and the role assigned to the reader (Section 2.3), the multimodal perspective (Section 2.4) and finally the studies on the classroom use of songs and their motivational implications (Section 2.5).

2.1. Motivation as a System: From the Socio-Educational Model to the L2 Motivational Self System

The models discussed in this section were built by research on second language acquisition rather than by research on the teaching of literature, and they are used here because they help to answer a question this study had to face before anything could be designed: where does a student's willingness to work on a difficult text come from? Robert Gardner distinguishes between integrative and instrumental motivation, and defines the *integrative motive* as "a motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings toward the community that speaks that language" (Gardner 1985, 82-83). Gardner is useful here not for the answer he gives but for the way he frames the question, since he treats motivation as a relation to something outside the learner rather than as a quality that some students happen to have and others lack.

For many students in a *liceo linguistico*, English is not the language of a country they intend to visit but the language in which a wider world becomes reachable. It operates for them as a *lingua franca*: the means by which one may study at a university abroad, work for a company whose offices lie in three different countries, or simply speak with people met online who share neither nationality nor mother tongue. This promise carries a particular force in adolescence, a stage at which the town one lives in, the school one attends and the family one belongs to are frequently experienced as constraints rather than as choices, and at which the prospect of moving beyond them acquires a value of its own. In Gardner's terms a community these students wish to belong to does therefore exist, however loosely defined: not a national community of native speakers, but an international one whose membership is granted by competence in the language itself. Kanno and Norton describe communities of this kind as "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination", and argue that they are no less real than the communities learners belong to every day (Kanno and Norton 2003, 241). Their point bears directly on the question raised here. Kanno and Norton's own example is a young Japanese student of fashion design who, in his imagination, is "a recognized member of an international fashion community, and English is seen as one of the important means of gaining this future affiliation"

(Kanno and Norton 2003, 242), and they conclude that investment in a language "can be best understood in the context of future affiliations and identifications, rather than prevailing sets of relationships" (2003, 243). It follows that a learner who imagines a future in an international professional community may invest heavily in English, while a learner whose imagined community is local and monolingual may see little reason to invest in a language that seems to have no place in that future. The difficulty is that this motive attaches to the language and not to its literary canon. Students know perfectly well that they can travel, study and work abroad without ever having read Blake, and a teacher of both language and literature in a *liceo linguistico* has to reckon with the fact that a student who is strongly motivated in English may be wholly indifferent to the literature written in it. Gardner's model was built to explain the first kind of motivation, and it does not distinguish between the language itself and the literature written in it. Zoltán Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System keeps the idea that motivation depends on something the learner is drawn towards, but that something is no longer a community of speakers: it is the image learners build of themselves. The system has three dimensions (Dörnyei 2005, 105-106). The first is the *Ideal L2 Self*, "referring to the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self: If the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the Ideal L2 Self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves" (2005, 105). The second is the *Ought-to L2 Self*, "referring to the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e., various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes" (2005, 105-106): in Al-Hoorie's summary (2018, 722) it represents "the expectations projected by significant others".

The system has a third component, and it is the one that matters most here. Unlike the first two, it does not describe a future self-image: it concerns the learning experience in the present. As Al-Hoorie puts it, "the L2 learning experience is concerned with attitudes and evaluations of the present learning environment rather than a future-oriented self-guide" (Al-Hoorie 2018, 725). Dörnyei himself, returning to this component years later, describes it as "the perceived quality of the learners' engagement with various aspects of the language learning process" (Dörnyei 2019, 25). The perceived quality of the learning

experience is therefore not a minor variable beside the two self-images, but one of the three components that shape how hard a student is prepared to work.

This component is the reason the present study is designed as it is. Since the way students experience a lesson is itself part of their motivation, the two questionnaires administered before and after the unit, which recorded their expectations, their perception of the texts and of the materials used, and their own account of how they had worked, do not constitute a soft addition to the measurement of learning but a direct observation of one of the three components of the model, and they therefore carry as much evidential weight in this study as the final written test. It also marks out what a teacher can realistically change, because an ideal self is built over years and mostly outside school, whereas the learning experience is made of the texts chosen, the tasks set and the way a lesson is run, and it is on this ground alone that the unit described in the following chapters operates.

2.2. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in the Study of Literature

Studying literature in a foreign language puts students in front of a double difficulty: the text is linguistically complex, and it is distant from their own experience in time, in culture and in feeling. For this reason motivation is understood here not as a general interest in the subject but as a willingness to approach the text, to stay with its difficulty, to discuss it and to build an interpretation of one's own. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021, 4) describe motivation through three dimensions: "why people decide to do something; how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it". The second and third of these matter as much as the first in a literature classroom, because reading and interpreting a poem in English asks for time, concentration and a sustained effort rather than for initial curiosity alone. Understood in this way, the definition allows this study to observe how students approached the unit and what sense they gave to the work done on the texts. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation offers further guidance when an activity has to be designed, since it concerns not how much students are prepared to work but for what reason. Ryan and Deci note that "motivation is hardly a unitary phenomenon" and that people differ not only in how much motivation they have

but in the kind of motivation that moves them (Ryan and Deci 2000, 54). They define intrinsic motivation as doing something because the activity is "inherently interesting or enjoyable", and extrinsic motivation as doing something because it leads to "a separable outcome" (Ryan and Deci 2000, 55). A student, in other words, may work on a text because the work itself means something to them, or because it is attached to a mark, a test or an examination.

Applied to literature in a foreign language, this distinction helps to see what actually moves a class. Some students work on a text because they find it interesting, because they recognise a connection with their own experience, or because the theme involves them personally; others work because the text will be assessed, because they want a good mark, or because literature is simply part of what a *liceo* expects of them. Extrinsic motivation is not in itself a bad thing. Ryan and Deci observe that many of the tasks teachers set are not inherently interesting, so that "knowing how to promote more active and volitional (versus passive and controlling) forms of extrinsic motivation becomes an essential strategy for successful teaching" (Ryan and Deci 2000, 55). It sustains study and often produces good results. Where the relation to the text stops at school duty, however, the personal involvement tends to be thinner, and the same authors insist on the value of the other kind: "intrinsic motivation results in high-quality learning and creativity" (2000, 55). This is what allows the present study to look at two different things at once. The final essay shows the quality of what students were able to write, but it says nothing about how they experienced the work that led to it, whereas their answers to the closing questionnaire speak of involvement, of confidence, of how they perceived the texts and of the value they gave to the materials. The distinction becomes, in this way, a tool for reading the relation between school performance and personal participation. Balboni approaches motivation in language learning through a three-part model, which identifies duty, need and pleasure as the causes of human action. It is pleasure in particular that "può motivare il ragazzo di cui sopra ad appassionarsi allo spagnolo se il docente usa metodologie che inducono piacere" (Balboni 2014, 171). He also recalls that emotions "sono risposte adattive (in senso darwinistico, cioè finalizzate alla sopravvivenza e all'adattamento) della mente alle pressioni esterne: quindi è fondamentale tener conto delle emozioni, cioè delle reazioni psico-fisiologiche a eventi quali un corso di lingua […]" (Balboni 2014, 167). This bears

directly on the unit described in the following chapters, which sets aside the frontal, transmissive lesson in favour of approaches that ask students to take an active part in the work. Songs and multimodal materials are used there precisely to act on pleasure and to make the first encounter with a literary text less abstract and closer to what students already know. In doing so they may also act on the emotional dimension to which Balboni draws attention, a dimension that, on his account, accompanies any learning situation and can therefore be taken into account when activities are planned. Pleasure, however, is not the whole of it: for a student to invest energy in a task, the task must also look manageable. This is the relation described by expectancy-value theory, according to which "individuals' choice, persistence, and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do on the activity and the extent to which they value the activity" (Wigfield and Eccles 2000, 68). With literature in a foreign language, a student is more willing to commit when the task appears within reach and when the text carries a value that is not only scholastic but personal, cultural or emotional. The aim of this research is therefore not to set intrinsic against extrinsic motivation, nor to remove assessment, which is an integral part of the Italian school system; it is to examine whether songs and multimodal materials can place a more personal form of involvement alongside the sense of school duty. This is what makes it necessary to look more closely at what is specific to the teaching of literature in a foreign language, and at the means by which it can be made more accessible.

2.3. Literary Education and Language Education: The Literary Text in the Classroom

The motivational models discussed so far were developed in research on language learning. The teaching of literature has a disciplinary framework of its own, which defines both the nature of the literary text in the classroom and the role assigned to the reader. In the Italian upper secondary school, however, the two are never separate fields: the teaching qualification AB24 assigns the teaching of a foreign language and the teaching of its literature to the same person, so that language education and literary education are not distinct fields in the classroom but are entrusted to the same teacher, planned within the

same hours and assessed within the same subject. Within the teaching of English in this school context, therefore, any proposal concerning literature is also a proposal concerning language teaching, and it has to work within the constraints of an actual classroom. A literary text in a foreign language also presents a linguistic obstacle, and one that does not disappear as proficiency grows. Paran observes that "even at a later stage of language learning, students need linguistic support when reading literature, as well as specific support in using the language of literary argumentation and criticism" (Paran 2008, 485). The relation works in both directions, since literature "does have something very special to offer to language learning", in that "it combines attention to meaning with attention to form" (2008, 490). In the unit described in Chapter 4 the activities that lead up to the poems do not replace close reading: they build the vocabulary and the concepts students need in order to read the poems closely.

The same disciplinary framework also defines the role of the reader. In this framework the reader is not the passive recipient of a meaning already fixed. Luperini reverses the usual formula: in the encounter with a work one should speak of the centrality of reading rather than of the centrality of the text, because "affermare la centralità della lettura significa riconoscere che i protagonisti sono due — il testo e il lettore — e che fra loro si istituisce un rapporto dialogico" (Luperini 2002, 30). One consequence bears directly on teaching: "noi non leggiamo un testo per descriverlo, ma per coglierne il significato di verità che scaturisce dal nostro vivo rapporto con esso" (Luperini 2002, 30). This dialogic relation should not override the specificity of the text, since for Luperini "il confronto con la letterarietà deve darsi a partire dall'incontro con la concreta individualità testuale, con l'unicità e la specificità dell'opera", and the work has to be dealt with as a living individual, in "un rapporto dialogico in cui il lettore partecipi attivamente" (Luperini 2002, 29). Fäcke (2003, 32) starts from an observation that every teacher of literature will recognise: "Discussions with students about literary texts often show that they react quite differently". The practical implication concerns the teacher, who acts as a mediator and who, in exercising this function, "non considera gli studenti come tabula rasa, ma indaga le preferenze, scopre le aspettative e valorizza le preconoscenze" (Spaliviero 2020, 30). The needs analysis carried out before the intervention and described in Section 3.2 answers precisely to this indication.

If the teacher is to start from what students already bring, the order in which content is presented cannot be taken for granted. Caon argues that “la riflessione sull’autore abbia significato pieno quando si presenta come coronamento della lettura e dell’analisi di alcuni suoi testi, non come premessa che orienta la lettura” (Caon 2013, 286). The unit described in Chapter 4 follows this principle: students do not begin from Blake’s biography and from the historical frame of Romanticism, but from images, songs and personal reactions, and arrive at historical and literary contextualisation as an outcome of the work on the texts rather than as its premise. The comparison classes, by contrast, followed the usual sequence, in which the presentation of the author and of the historical and literary context precedes the reading of the texts, so that the difference between the two paths lies not only in the materials used but in the very order in which content was presented.

2.4. Multimodality and the Teaching of Literature

The intervention described in this thesis does not use songs alone, but materials of different kinds: photographs, the reproduction of a nineteenth-century engraving, a music video with the sound removed, simulated WhatsApp exchanges, podcasts produced by the students themselves. A text, in other words, can be built out of several means at once, words, images, sounds and music, and this is what studies of multimodality are concerned with (Sindoni 2022). The underlying idea is a simple one: when several means act together, meaning does not reside in each of them taken separately, but in what Sindoni calls “l’orchestrazione delle risorse” (Sindoni 2022, 28). One practical consequence follows, and is worth making explicit: removing one of the means does not subtract a portion of the meaning, it changes the whole. The activity on *History* by The Verve described in Chapter 4 rests on this principle. The video was shown without its soundtrack, and once deprived of the song the sequence of images obliges students to build their own hypothesis about the tone and the story, and brings into view a piece of interpretive work that usually remains implicit. The case of *History* suggests a further consideration. Giusti describes as transmedial or crossmedial a narrative world able to cross the different means of communication “in modo tale da far perdere rilievo al ‘punto

di entrata' da cui l'utente accede all'esperienza narrativa" (Giusti 2020, 52). Giusti develops the notion for the large story worlds of contemporary culture, those that run at once through books, films, videogames and merchandise, but the same principle can be applied to the case described here: the students entered Blake's London through a song of 1995 that takes up its lines and its structures, and the point of entry did not determine the quality of the interpretive work that followed.

That multimodality is not an automatic solution is shown by the study Cortiana carried out in two fourth-year classes of a *liceo scientifico*, where the same thirty students produced, on the same assignment, both a multimodal product on a digital platform and a traditional short essay. The result is clear-cut: "solo l'8% delle risorse utilizzate nei prodotti multimediali viene ripreso attraverso citazioni o riferimenti all'interno dei saggi tradizionali" (Cortiana 2017, 75). The students went back to verbal sources and neglected visual ones, and they kept the two pieces of work separate and independent of each other, treating the multimodal part as a recreational interlude with no effect on their attitude towards school writing (Cortiana 2017, 75). The risk, in other words, is not that multimodal materials fail to appeal to students, but that they appeal while remaining extraneous to the work of the discipline.

For this reason, in the unit described in Chapter 4 the passage from the approach activities to the reading of the text was not left implicit. As the booklet reproduced in Appendix C shows, at Stage 5 the notions introduced by the multimodal materials, the atmosphere of a place and the point of view of the person observing it, the relation between industrialisation and urban life, the condition of the individual within the city, return in the guided analysis questions that accompany the reading of *London* stanza by stanza. The hypotheses the students formulated while listening and watching thus become the material on which textual analysis is exercised, rather than an activity complete in itself.

2.5. The Classroom Use of Songs in the Study of English Literature: Motivational Implications

Introducing songs into the teaching of literature in a foreign language can be read as the search for a meeting point between the literary text and the cultural experience of the students. Its possible motivational value does not come from the idea that a track makes a lesson more enjoyable. It lies rather in the possibility of starting from a listening practice that is already meaningful for many adolescents and of directing it towards activities of comparison and literary interpretation. Giusti points to a further reason for bringing such materials into the literature classroom.

> la classe che, attraverso la messa in comune di opere della letteratura, diventa comunità di pratiche narrative, è una comunità reale, fatta di persone che parlano e ascoltano, ed è anche una comunità mediata, fatta di storie, avvenimenti e personaggi che esistono solo nei mondi narrativi che sono stati attivati, nella mente degli interlocutori, dalle parole lette o ascoltate. Anche per questo — e non solo per motivare gli alunni o per stimolarli attraverso l'uso della vista — possono essere utili la visione di spezzoni di film, l'ascolto di canzoni o audiolibri. Tutto vale, purché il risultato finale sia la piena inclusione degli alunni in una comunità, purché gli alunni abbiano, a posteriori, la possibilità di ricordarsi chi sono e perché stanno insieme anche attraverso la memoria delle opere lette (Giusti 2020, 96-97).

The familiarity of musical material can in this way favour a first approach to works perceived as distant in language, period or cultural reference. The same direction is indicated by what Giusti draws from Rico: building connections between texts and other areas of knowledge and, above all, between texts and the life of each student, presenting literature as something of use, part of life in the same way as play or going out with friends (Rico 2009, 257-258, cited in Giusti 2020, 50).

That the teacher's choices affect motivation is not merely a hypothesis. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), in a study of 40 ESOL classrooms in South Korea involving 27 teachers and more than 1,300 learners, found that the teachers' motivational practice was linked to increased levels of the learners' motivated learning behaviour and motivational state: "language teachers can make a real difference in their students' motivational disposition

by applying various motivational techniques and strategies" (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei 2008, 71-72). Among the strategies they observed is "establishing relevance", defined as "connecting what has to be learned to the students' everyday lives (e.g., giving grammatical examples with references to pop stars)" (2008, 63).

If relevance is established by connecting what is learned to students' everyday lives, it becomes necessary to ask what place music actually occupies in those lives. North et al. (2000) investigated this question in a study of 2,465 English students aged thirteen and fourteen, attending Year 9 in twenty-two secondary schools in North Staffordshire. Through a questionnaire, the authors examined the participants' involvement in musical activities, the importance they attached to music in relation to other activities, and the reasons they associated with listening to and performing music. What is relevant for the present research is not instrumental practice, since the teaching intervention rests on listening to songs and analysing them, but the part that listening to music plays in adolescents' daily lives. Participants reported listening to music for an average of 2.45 hours a day, and the authors concluded that music allowed adolescents to "portray an 'image' to the outside world" and to "satisfy their emotional needs" (North et al. 2000, 255). The present study therefore starts from the assumption that, for many adolescents, listening to music is a daily practice connected with emotion, with the construction of identity and with self-representation. In the classroom the song thus enters teaching practice as a language students already feel close to, and to which they have attached personal meanings bound up with social belonging. The teacher's task is to use this familiarity in order to bring them closer to the literary text.

The need for such mediation becomes particularly evident when students deal with works from distant periods. Andrea Manganaro contests the idea that texts "parlino da soli, al di là e al di fuori di ogni possibile mediazione", which he considers an excessive simplification (Manganaro 2014, 67). Between the context in which a work was produced and the context of its reception there intervene historical distance, changes in language and in cultural codes, and "il mutare degli orizzonti di attesa" (Manganaro 2014, 67). The meaning of the text has to be reactivated through an interpretive process that respects its historical dimension and at the same time makes clear its importance for the present. The question is closely bound to school motivation, since students are not necessarily already

interested in the works the syllabus proposes. Manganaro further observes that in the teaching of literature it is necessary to justify "l'importanza dei testi che si chiede di leggere" (Manganaro 2014, 68). The teacher's task does not consist only in reconstructing the historical and literary context of the work, but also in the capacity to put to it "le domande urgenti per il nostro presente" and to release from it "il suo significato per noi" (Manganaro 2014, 68). Motivating students to study literature is therefore not a matter of making it generally more enjoyable, but of building the conditions in which they can understand how a distant text may still be meaningful to them.

This operation can be described through the concept of transduction, which Citton takes from Simondon and applies to literary interpretation. Writing of Diderot, he argues that reading an author in a literary way means "condurre la sua parola attraverso tutto ciò che ci separa da lui, per permettere a questa stessa parola di parlarci ancora oggi, producendo risonanze ricche di suggestione nel cuore stesso della nostra contemporaneità" (Citton 2011).

Within this framework, the classroom use of songs can be one of the means through which what Manganaro calls for is put into practice. Bringing a contemporary song into the classroom can bring out images, themes, atmospheres or conflicts that are also present in the literary work, and can offer students a first ground on which to develop interpretive hypotheses. The connection does not necessarily require a direct intertextual relation: a song may be set beside a poem for the way in which it represents the city, nature, identity, the relation between the individual and society, or a particular emotional state.

Beyond thematic affinity, in songs words combine with voice, rhythm and melody, and the lyrics may use metaphor, symbol, repetition, shifts of register, narrative elements and references to other texts. Spaliviero, drawing on the work of Fiori, La Via and Ciabattoni, observes that in songs "si utilizzano figure retoriche, si ricercano particolari effetti prosodici e si ricorre ad un uso figurato del linguaggio" (2020, 131). The value of songs in this context therefore concerns not only the themes they address but also the way those themes are constructed through words, rhythm, voice, images and expressive choices. While listening, students already perform some interpretive operations, in so far as they recognise a particular emotional atmosphere, attribute meaning to the images evoked and form hypotheses about the speaking voice, relating the words to what they hear. These

operations do not yet amount to literary analysis proper, but they can be its starting point. The teacher's mediation has the task of guiding them and making them more systematic, directing attention towards the construction of atmosphere, the identification of point of view, lexical and rhetorical features and the relation between text and music. Spaliviero includes among pre-reading activities "l'ascolto di canzoni e la visione di film o spezzoni di film legati al testo letterario" (2020, 136). Such activities make it possible to activate students' prior knowledge and to prompt them to form hypotheses about the content they are about to meet. The song thus takes on a preparatory function: it creates a space of warm-up in which students can mobilise their own cultural repertoire and form connections to be tested afterwards through literary analysis. In more general terms, this openness towards students' cultural habits may help to ensure that "si riducano le contrapposizioni tra le letture extrascolastiche e quelle scolastiche" (Spaliviero 2020, 129).

The classroom use of songs does not, however, produce an automatic motivational effect, since the outcome depends both on the track chosen and on the teacher's mediation. Caon identifies a difficulty connected with the generational distance between teacher and students, who "potrebbero non accettare di buon grado che un adulto appartenente a un'altra generazione scelga quale 'poesia cantata' si debba ascoltare e manipolare a fini didattici" (2023, 5). Choosing a track solely on the basis of the teacher's own preferences or cultural repertoire may therefore prove counterproductive for intrinsic motivation. There is also the range of tastes within a single class: a song that some students love and find meaningful may strike others as uninteresting. Caon further points to an objective difficulty, concerning the distance between the tracks proposed and students' listening habits. Referring to the habit many teachers have of using songs from repertoires now remote from those of the young, he observes that "il rischio è che […] questa musica risulti obsoleta e noiosa" and that such tracks may "non motivare, ma demotivare" (2023, 5). The problem does not necessarily lie in the song belonging to another generation, but in the reasons for the choice not being shared with the class and in the absence of any connection with the students' experience and with the aims of the unit.

These difficulties show that motivation does not coincide with simply liking the material, and that a positive effect is built in the interaction between the track, the

activities proposed and the context of the class. So that listening is not perceived as an interlude detached from the literary work on the texts set by the syllabus, the initial involvement that may come from using songs in pre-reading activities needs to be sustained by tasks that start from students' personal reactions and lead them gradually towards the text and towards grounded interpretations. Spaliviero observes that through listening to songs connected with the work "è possibile elicitare le preconoscenze degli studenti, stimolarli a formulare delle ipotesi sui contenuti che studieranno" (2020, 136). The question, then, is not to find a song that necessarily suits everyone's taste, but to make clear to students the role the chosen track can play within the sequence of work. The different reactions that listening provokes can become the starting point for sketching interpretive hypotheses, identifying themes and establishing connections.

In the present study, songs were used with precisely this function. They did not replace the reading and analysis of the texts by Blake and Wordsworth, but helped students to approach gradually the themes and atmospheres of the poems examined. In the case of Blake, the comparison with the songs made it possible to introduce the representation of the city, the sense of oppression and the condition of the individual within society; for Wordsworth, it favoured an approach to the impact of industrialisation on the environment and on the relation with nature. The songs thus offered a starting point closer to the students, before moving on to the analysis of the poetic texts themselves. Starting from individual perceptions, forming connections and discussing them within the class was intended to draw on the interpretive competences students already possess and to direct them towards a more deliberate analysis. The hypothesis was not that the presence of songs would necessarily produce better results in the final test, but that it would affect the way students approached the texts and perceived them as meaningful for their own experience.

The studies drawn on in this chapter lend support to the expectation from which the present research starts, namely that songs can act on involvement and motivation. Engh notes that "the literature supports the use of song and linguistic play in the language classroom […] to increase individual language-learner motivation" (Engh 2013, 117), and Murphey (1992, 771) explains the linguistic mechanism that makes songs appropriable: pop songs' "highly affective and dialogic features, and their vague references (ghost

discourse), allow listeners to use them in personally associative ways". Both studies concern motivation and involvement, which is one of the dimensions this research sets out to observe. They are conducted within language teaching rather than literature teaching, however, and they leave open what happens once students turn to the literary text. They do not tell us whether those who felt more involved also read the poem more attentively, whether they support their reading with evidence drawn from the text, or whether they write a better argued comparison between two poems. It is this that the present research sets out to examine, and it is the reason why the collection of students' perceptions is accompanied by a comparative written test: the two instruments together make it possible to ask whether an advantage in motivational terms is also visible in what students are able to do with the text.

Chapter 3 - Methodological Framework and Assessment Tools

3.1. The Teaching Unit as an Object of Observation

In accordance with Stenhouse's view of curriculum research, the teaching unit presented in this study was not conceived as a strict scientific experiment. Stenhouse defines curriculum as

> an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice (Stenhouse 1975, 4)

This idea is relevant to the present research because the teaching unit was not intended as an abstract model, but as an educational proposal to be tried out, observed and discussed in a real classroom context. This approach is in line with Cohen, Manion and Morrison's view of educational research. The authors state that social research should be conducted in "natural, uncontrived, real-world settings" and that "the processes of research and behaviour are as important as the outcomes" (Cohen et al. 2018, 289). These two ideas are particularly important for the present study, since the teaching unit, which used song-based pre-reading activities in the English literature classroom, was carried out under the ordinary conditions of an Italian *liceo*, and its aim was not simply to compare students' final written results, but to examine their learning experience in a more comprehensive way.

The study can therefore be understood as a small-scale classroom-based investigation. Its aim was not to demonstrate that one method is always better than another, but to observe what happens when songs and multimodal materials are used in the teaching of English literature. The focus was on students' motivation, participation and perception of literary texts, together with their ability to produce a final written essay comparing two Romantic poems. This perspective connects the theoretical framework of the thesis with the practical work carried out in class. The ideas discussed in the previous chapter,

especially regarding motivation, students' involvement and their relationship with literary texts, provided the basis for the teaching intervention. The classroom work then made it possible to observe how these ideas could be translated into actual teaching practice. Many factors may have influenced the outcomes, such as students' previous competence, learning habits and attitude towards assessment. The study is therefore presented as the observation of a specific teaching experience. The following sections present the instruments used to collect and interpret the data.

3.2. Investigating Students' Motivation and Perceptions: Pre-Unit Questionnaire and Post-Unit Reflection

In order to gain a clearer understanding of students' starting point and their relationship with the study of literature in English, a preliminary needs analysis was carried out in order to better design the teaching intervention. Through a free-writing task, students were asked to reflect on their experience of studying literature in the three foreign languages included in their school curriculum, namely English, German and Spanish. They were invited to express their perceptions, difficulties, suggestions and preferences, in order to identify their learning needs and grasp how they usually experience literature lessons. This initial stage revealed students' preference for interactive, multimodal and engaging learning experiences as opposed to teacher-led lectures. In particular, students expressed interest in collaborative work, contextualisation and the use of audiovisual materials to support literary comprehension. These initial observations provided the basis for the design of a more structured questionnaire, needed to investigate students' motivation and their preferences in terms of teaching methods. This sequence, from open answers to a structured instrument, follows a familiar logic: as Varisco observes with reference to Gattoni, the usefulness of open questions "è quella di rappresentare un'analisi preliminare dalla quale prendere l'avvio per l'elaborazione e la presentazione di questionari più specifici; a volte, inoltre, vi sono casi in cui questa sembra rappresentare l'unico strumento per ottenere informazioni" (Varisco 2000, 82). Not only was the questionnaire conceived as a tool for data collection, but also as a way to better understand students' expectations, motivation and learning preferences before planning the

experimental teaching unit. This attention to students' perspectives is consistent with Bloemert et al.'s large-scale study of 635 Dutch secondary-school EFL learners, which stresses that "it is all the more valuable to include the voice of those who experience the curriculum first hand" (2019, 371). In Varisco's terms, "oltre alla *raccolta di informazioni* (dati) i questionari (e le interviste) vengono usati come *supporto alla valutazione* – anche educativa – di caratteristiche individuali, quali personalità, attitudini, conoscenze e abilità di un soggetto" (Varisco 2000, 82). Varisco also recalls the distinction drawn by Meschieri and Pirami (1998, cited in Varisco 2000, 82) between three types of questionnaire, *preliminare, di approfondimento* and *di controllo*; in the present study the pre-unit questionnaire performs the preliminary function, while the post-unit questionnaire may be read as a control instrument, although its purpose was reflective rather than evaluative. In particular, it focuses on the research questions of the study, especially the question concerning students' motivation, engagement and perception of literary texts. These research objectives are reflected in the structure of the questionnaire, which includes questions focusing on students' level of motivation, the impact of the different teaching strategies, the role of multimodal materials, the comparison between teacher-centred and more student-centred approaches, students' learning priorities, and the role played by literature in the students' personal experience and everyday life. The pre-unit questionnaire, entitled *Students' Perceptions of Literature Lessons*, was administered through a Google Form and included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire is organised into four sections, the first of which collects background information, including class, age and self-assessed (or certified) CEFR level, in order to contextualise the data. The second section focuses on general motivation and interest; it includes Likert-scale items investigating students' interest in English as a school subject, their perception of literature lessons and the perceived difficulty of literary texts. The third section examines the perceived effectiveness of different teaching practices as students were asked to identify which activities they considered most useful to understand literary texts (teacher lectures, class discussion, group work, visual materials, videos and songs etc.). They were also asked to evaluate the usefulness of contextual information, like the historical background of the period, biographical information about the author and references to their main works, as well as traditional

lecture-based teaching. The fourth section explores learning preferences and engagement. It investigates what students consider most important when studying literature, the importance of a personal connection with texts and which different forms of classroom interaction students prefer, including guided group work, open discussion and teacher explanation. There is also an item on the use of multimodal materials and an open-ended question on how literature lessons could be improved. It was administered to the three classes involved in the study and completed by 34 students: 14 in 4AL, 17 in 3AL and 3 in 5AM. The very small number of respondents in 5AM should be kept in mind when reading the pre-unit results in Chapter 5, where the answers of this class can only be read as indicative. The full questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

In addition to the pre-unit questionnaire, the research included a final reflective questionnaire (the post-unit questionnaire) administered at the end of the teaching unit to the experimental class, 4AL, which was the only class that followed the unit. This second instrument had a metacognitive function: it was used once the teaching unit was over in order to collect students' reflections on the learning experience they had just completed. It was not intended as a further test, nor as a request for students to assign themselves a numerical grade: its purpose was to give students the opportunity to reflect on their motivation, participation, comprehension and personal engagement with the activities. Varisco, drawing on Shepard, recalls that "il pensiero intelligente coinvolge la 'metacognizione' o self-monitoring" (Shepard 1992, 313-314, cited in Varisco 2000, 143), and describes metacognition as a set of "processi di autoconsapevolezza di alto livello come l'abilità di distribuire efficacemente i propri sforzi mentali, di pianificare, monitorare, sovrintendere, orchestrare e controllare il proprio apprendimento" (Varisco 2000, 143). In this sense, the questionnaire was used as a tool to help students think about the way they had experienced the teaching unit, rather than only about the final result. This perspective is also coherent with Caprara et al. (2008, 526), who observe that models of self-regulated learning generally include "self-assessment through self-monitoring, instrumental cognitive and metacognitive guides, goal setting, and self-motivational strategies". The post-unit questionnaire was presented to the students immediately after the completion of the final comparative essay. This timing was important because students had already experienced the whole teaching unit and had also completed the final

written essay. They could therefore reflect both on the classroom activities and on their perceived ability to approach literary interpretation and argumentative writing. The structure and methodological approach of the questionnaire were inspired by Graziano Serragiotto's research presented in *Cosa ti hanno insegnato al liceo? La percezione di studenti di Lingue sulla loro formazione linguistica* (2012). In his study, Serragiotto explains that the purpose of the questionnaire is not simply to measure how much students have learned, but rather to understand what actually happens in the classroom and how learners perceive their educational experiences. Similarly, the questionnaire used in the present research did not aim exclusively to evaluate literary knowledge or essay writing performance. It was designed to explore students' emotional involvement, motivation, perception of classroom methodology and personal relationship with literary texts. Moreover, several questions examined students' responses to the use of songs and other multimodal or collaborative activities in the experimental class, with particular attention to their perceived impact on motivation, participation, emotional engagement and understanding of literary texts.

It included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were used to identify recurring tendencies in students' answers, while open-ended questions allowed students to express more personal and detailed reflections on the activities, their difficulties and their perceived learning. Another methodological aspect inspired by Serragiotto's work regards the organisation of the questionnaire. The sections moved gradually from more general questions about students' experience of literature lessons to more specific and reflective questions about songs, multimodal materials, emotional involvement, self-assessment and personal interpretation. This structure was intended to guide students from simple description towards a more reflective evaluation of the teaching unit. Finally, the questionnaire was administered electronically, again through a Google Form, in order to provide students with a more relaxed environment and allow them to reflect carefully on their answers. It was administered to the experimental class only and completed by 21 students. The final reflective questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

3.3. Assessment Tools: Written Task, Rubric and Evaluation Criteria

The summative assessment within the present experimental project was mainly carried out through a final written task consisting in a comparative essay in which students were asked to reflect on different representations of London, drawing on the poems studied during the teaching unit: Blake's *London* and Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*. The choice of a comparative essay served two purposes. On the one hand, it was consistent with the objectives of the curriculum, as students had to show their knowledge of Blake's and Wordsworth's poems, compare their representations of London using an appropriate writing standard and develop a coherent interpretation supported by references to the texts. On the other hand, it gave students practice for the second written examination (*seconda prova*) of the Italian State Examination, which requires *liceo linguistico* students to understand and interpret texts and produce an informed response in English. This type of final task can be connected to the classification proposed by Vertecchi (1984, cited in Tessaro 2004) as a *stimolo aperto–risposta aperta* activity. In this type of assessment, students are not expected to provide predetermined answers, but are required to combine their knowledge, interpretative abilities and argumentative skills to write a coherent and personal response. As previously said, the decision to use a comparative essay was also linked to the practical reality of the school context. Since the project was carried out in classes belonging to the *triennio*, the final three-year cycle of the *liceo* that leads to the State Examination, it was considered important to prepare students for the type of task they would tackle in the *seconda prova*. The requirements are set out in the *Quadro di riferimento per la redazione e lo svolgimento della seconda prova scritta dell'Esame di Stato* [*Reference Framework for the Preparation and Administration of the Second Written Examination of the Italian State Examination*] for the *liceo linguistico* (D.M. 769/2018). The ministerial document states that students should be able to "comprendere e interpretare testi scritti di diverse tipologie e generi" and to "produrre testi scritti efficaci e adeguati al genere per riferire, descrivere o argomentare" (D.M. 769/2018, 2).

These indications were relevant to the present study because the final essay required students to understand and interpret two literary texts, compare them and organise their ideas in a text. The official evaluation grid provided by MIUR was therefore an important

benchmark when designing the correction rubric used to assess students' final essays in the present study. It identifies four main assessment areas: "Comprensione del testo", "Interpretazione del testo", "Produzione scritta: aderenza alla traccia" and "Produzione scritta: organizzazione del testo e correttezza linguistica" (D.M. 769/2018, 3).

These categories helped outline the general structure of the assessment, especially because students were asked not only to show comprehension of the poems, but also to develop an interpretation and express it clearly in written English. Within this institutional framework, the rubric used for the present research was adapted to the specific aims of the teaching unit. The first two indicators were kept unchanged; the third was extended to include argumentation, and the fourth, which the ministerial grid treats as a single area, was divided into two separate indicators, organisation and coherence on the one hand and linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness on the other. The resulting rubric has five indicators, each described at four levels of performance, from *insufficiente* (below 6) to *eccellente* (9-10). The task did not ask students to simply reproduce information about Blake and Wordsworth. Students had to compare two different representations of London, select relevant textual evidence and organise their interpretation in a coherent essay. For this reason, the assessment considered both literary understanding and written production. When designing the rubric, D'Annunzio and Serragiotto's reflections on evaluation were taken into account. According to them, "La valutazione è dunque anche un'interpretazione" (D'Annunzio e Serragiotto 2007, 4). All the essays were marked by the teacher-researcher, who taught English in all three classes, using the same rubric and the ten-point scale of the school register. The comparison therefore rests on a single assessor applying identical criteria to the three groups. Ellerani, Gentile and Sacristani Mottinelli set out a taxonomy of performance tasks, which they distinguish from exercises that ask students only to fill in a worksheet or repeat a procedure. Their taxonomy is proposed for lower secondary school, but the authors note that it can be adapted to younger or older learners. The final essay of this unit corresponds to what they call *compiti di approfondimento*, tasks that require students "di approfondire temi con lo scopo di cogliere uguaglianze e differenze, riuscendo, poi, a comunicare le diverse implicazioni fra queste", taking some distance from what they have heard or read, adopting different points of view and arriving at conclusions of their own (Ellerani et al.

2007, 64-65). In this respect, some aspects of the concept of “authentic assessment” were useful when reflecting on the design of the final task. In Winograd and Perkins’s account, authentic assessment is one in which students have a personal purpose, a reason to engage and a genuine audience beyond the teacher (Winograd and Perkins 1996, I-8:2, cited in Giannoli 2018, 42). Although the final essay remained a formal school assessment, this perspective helped support the idea of a task in which students were asked to use literary knowledge in a meaningful way: they had to interpret two poems, compare different representations of the city and organise their ideas in a coherent text. Comoglio’s reflections on authentic assessment point in the same direction. Drawing on Wiggins’s criteria, he notes that authentic assessment “richiede giudizio e innovazione” and asks students to “costruire la disciplina”, rather than simply reproduce previously memorised notions (Wiggins, cited in Comoglio 2002, 95).

Chapter 4 - The Teaching Intervention

This chapter presents the teaching intervention carried out during the experimental phase of the research. Chapter 3 discussed the methodological framework of the study, including the questionnaires, the assessment tools and the evaluation criteria. For this reason, the following pages focus mainly on what was actually done in class, describing the activities used with the experimental group and the way they prepared students for the final comparative essay. The intervention was planned within the ordinary curriculum of the *liceo linguistico* and was carried out in a fourth-year class. The teaching unit focused on Romantic poetry and, more specifically, on two different representations of the city: William Blake's *London* and William Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*. The reasons for this choice are discussed in 4.2.

4.1. Participants and Research Design

The experimental group was class 4AL (see 1.3), which followed the song-based and multimodal teaching unit on Romantic poetry, with a particular focus on the relationship between place, emotion, social context and literary representation. Classes 3AL and 5AM did not follow the same teaching unit and were used to provide a point of comparison with students who had approached literary analysis and essay writing through more traditional or different classroom experiences. Both comparison classes studied the same two poems, Blake's *London* and Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*, and sat the same final comparative essay; the difference lay in the teaching path, since in 3AL and 5AM the literary content was presented according to the usual sequence, in which the author and the historical-literary context precede the reading of the texts, and without the song-based and multimodal activities. The time devoted to the two poems also differed: the unit took about one month of lessons in 4AL, whereas in the comparison classes the poems were covered in five to six lessons (3AL has four hours of English a week, 5AM three). This asymmetry is taken into account in the discussion of the results in Chapter 5. The comparison groups were not perfectly equivalent to the experimental group. Class 3AL was younger, while class 5AM belonged to a different pathway. At the beginning, the

research project was meant to compare the experimental group with another fourth-year class of the same school. However, this was not possible in practice, because the teacher of the parallel class was not available to collaborate in the project. This is an important point to mention, because it shows one of the limits of classroom-based research. In the Italian school system, collaboration between teachers cannot simply be taken for granted, especially when a project involves shared activities, common assessment and changes in the usual teaching method.

The two comparison groups were considered meaningful within these limits. Class 3AL, although younger than the experimental class, belonged to the same *liceo linguistico* pathway and included students with strong linguistic and interpretative abilities. Class 5AM, although part of the *liceo musicale*, had an English level broadly comparable to that expected in a fourth-year *liceo linguistico* class. Moreover, in the previous school year (2024-2025) this class had taken part, together with the experimental class 4AL, in a classroom intervention on English essay writing connected to the research project *The Impact of Integrated Peer and Teacher-led Feedback on English Essay Writing Tasks*, run by CRELLA (Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment, University of Bedfordshire) and promoted in Trentino by IPRASE. The intervention followed a teacher-training course held between February and May 2024 and involved a dedicated preparation of the students on peer feedback, regular essay-writing practice during curricular lessons and the integration of teacher-led and peer feedback on the essays produced, managed through a Google Classroom created for the purpose. The format practised was that of the IELTS essay. Only 3AL had not received comparable training. This previous experience made the students of 4AL and 5AM more familiar with argumentative writing, with the structure of the essay and with the revision of their own texts, and it has to be kept in mind when reading the results.

4.2. Literary Content and Teaching Intervention

The teaching unit focused on Romantic poetry and on the representation of the city. William Blake's *London* and William Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge* were selected because they present two very different visions of London. Blake

describes the city as a place of suffering, control, poverty and injustice. Wordsworth, on the other hand, presents London in a moment of silence, beauty and harmony. This contrast made the two poems particularly suitable for a comparative task. Students could see how the same city may be represented in completely different ways depending on the speaker's point of view, emotional attitude, lexical choices and ideological position. The unit therefore focused not only on the historical context of Romanticism, but also on a broader question: how can a place be transformed by the way it is perceived and represented? This is not a question that belongs to this unit only. In a *liceo* it keeps coming back across the whole curriculum: how a place is seen, and what it makes people feel, is essential to understanding how Romanticism developed in the different European literatures and in art history. It also helps students read the present, since today most places reach them through photos, videos and posts made by someone else, each with its own point of view. The teaching path was organised gradually; the complete student booklet used in the unit is reproduced in Appendix C, and Table C.1 summarises its seven stages. The organisation of the unit partly follows the model proposed in *Percorsi letterari con l'apprendimento cooperativo* (Caon et al. 2021) for teaching literature through cooperative learning, which structures the work on a literary text into activities before, during and after reading. The volume is designed for lower secondary school and for Italian literature; its organisation was adapted here to English literature in a *liceo linguistico*. Students did not start immediately by reading the poems. Before reading Blake and Wordsworth, they worked on preparatory activities about place, mood, personal perception, songs and industrial society. These activities helped them build the ideas and vocabulary they would later need for the proper literary analysis.

4.2.1. Avvicinamento al testo: Place, Mood and Personal Perception

The first stage of the unit was conceived as an *avvicinamento al testo*, a preparatory phase meant to bring students closer to the main ideas of the poems before reading them. Since both Blake and Wordsworth describe London through a very personal perspective, the unit started with a reflection on the relationship between places, emotions and individual perception.

The first activity (Appendix C, Stage 1) was based on a set of images representing different kinds of places: students were shown images of a lakeside landscape at sunrise in Riva del Garda, the school building, a mountain path, a polluted or industrial urban landscape, and a cityscape where natural and urban elements coexist. Some of these images were connected to places familiar to the students (namely, Riva del Garda and the school building), while others anticipated the urban and industrial atmosphere that would later become central in the analysis of Blake's *London*. Students first worked individually. They observed the images and wrote two or three adjectives describing the mood of each place. They also connected one sensory detail to each image, such as something they could see, hear or feel. This simple task helped them move from immediate impression to verbal description. It also got them to notice that the atmosphere depends on the details we choose and on the words we use. After this first step, students worked in pairs. They compared their impressions and used a given "mood bank" collecting words useful to describe feelings and sensory details to select two words (they had to negotiate the choice) that best described each image. They also had to choose one word from the bank that did not fit the image at all and explain why. This made them discuss vocabulary and negotiate interpretation. It also showed that the same image can create different reactions in different people. The activity then moved to small-group work. Each group received an emotional situation, such as: wanting to be alone, looking for a romantic place, escaping noise and crowds, meeting new people, or thinking about an important decision. Students had to choose which place best suited the situation, explain the mood created by that place and justify their answer. To make the group work more organised, students had different roles, such as moderator, note-taker, decision-maker and spokesperson.

The final part of this phase was a short writing task called "Caption Challenge: Two Moods, One Place". Students imagined sending a photo of one of the places to a close friend on WhatsApp. Working in pairs, they had to write two different captions for the same place: one student was tasked with writing from a positive, peaceful or inspired point of view, and one from a sad, lonely or overwhelmed point of view. The aim was to make them understand that the same physical place can create opposite reactions depending on the emotional perspective of the observer. In practice, the captions became short messages that students posted in the class WhatsApp group, and the negative

versions were often deliberately exaggerated. Writing about the mountain path, one student complained: “I can’t do this anymore!! This mountain path is endless! It’s full of flies and mosquitoes here, I’m very afraid a bear might come out, I’m sweating and my head is spinning, it’s not even sunny, I’m so unlucky! I want to go home and never leave the house again.” Their partner described the same place as “such a peaceful and quiet place”, adding: “I could spend every day here.” Another student invited a friend to share this “amazing experience”, a walk on the Ponale path taken “against my will”, and went on: “The place is hidden, isolated and I’m feeling like I’ve been surrounded by the mountains, it’s soo suffocating and oppressive. I feel so anxious, I’m terrified of heights. Let’s not mention those ugly and annoying insects.. I just want to go home!” Writing these messages, and reading them again in the final class discussion, turned the task into something close to a game: students were clearly enjoying themselves while using English, which is precisely the kind of involvement the unit set out to encourage. As Tisza and Markopoulos observe, “once the person is less self-conscious, he/she is becoming less engaged with him/herself, is less afraid of rejection, and more open for others, which ultimately results in the breakdown of social barriers” (Tisza and Markopoulos 2023, 1951). The final shared class discussion helped students compare the captions and identify recurring mood words, selected details and emotional perspectives. This led naturally to one of the main ideas of the unit: places are not represented in a neutral way, but are filtered through the emotions felt by the viewer, the language employed to describe them and the subjective point of view. This idea prepared students for the comparison between Blake and Wordsworth, who both write about London but create two very different versions of the city. From a methodological point of view, this phase followed a student-centred and experiential approach. Students were not immediately asked to analyse a literary text. Instead, they started from familiar places and personal perceptions. This made the interpretative problem more accessible and created a connection between their own experience, from WhatsApp messages to mood swings, and the literary representation of a given place.

4.2.2. A Preliminary Song-Literature Connection

Before moving to the core of Romantic poetry, students completed a first activity on songs and literature. As homework, they were asked to choose a song they liked or knew and connect it to a literary text, author, character, theme or situation. The aim was to show that songs may contain stories, characters, images or themes that are close to literature. The activity started from students' own musical experience. This was important because the first step was not an abstract literary concept, but something familiar to them: a song they already knew or liked. In this sense, the activity can be connected to Nunan's experiential view of learning, according to which "this approach takes the learner's immediate personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience" (Nunan 2004, 12). The students' personal choices were quite different from one another, and this was one of the most useful aspects of the activity. Some students focused on authors or literary periods, while others on characters, themes or atmospheres.

One particularly relevant example was Taylor Swift's *the lakes.* The song explicitly refers to the Romantic poets and to the Lake District, and the student who chose it connected it to the idea of nature as a place of escape, retreat and emotional intensity. This made it a useful starting point for approaching Wordsworth, especially before working on his representation of London in *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*. In this case, the connection was not only thematic, but also cultural: a contemporary pop song helped students recognise that Romantic imagery and the figure of the poet can still reappear in present-day music.

Other students chose songs connected to mythological or literary figures, such as Suzanne Vega's *Calypso*, linked to Homer's *Odyssey*, and *Penelope* by Achille Lauro, connected to the themes of waiting and emotional distance. Other examples included *The Music of the Night* by Nightwish, connected to Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*, and songs linked to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and to *La coscienza di Zeno*. The aim was not to analyse every song in depth, but to help students see that the contemporary music that they liked and deliberately chose may contain images, voices and situations that are not so distant from literature. This activity drew from Caon's (2023) reflection on the use of songs in teaching. In *La canzone nell'educazione linguistica*, Caon warns that songs chosen only by the teacher may not always be motivating for students, especially

when there is a clear generational distance between the teacher's musical references and the students' own tastes. A song that the teacher considers meaningful or poetic may sound old, distant or simply boring to the class (Caon 2023, 5). This issue is particularly relevant when working with adolescents, since "teenage musical preferences […] are notoriously susceptible to rapid changes in fashion" (Hargreaves, Comber and Colley 1995, 249). For this reason, students were invited to choose songs themselves. This gave them a more active role and made the use of music more authentic, because it started from their own musical references rather than from a playlist imposed from the teacher. This activity, in which the students were asked to justify their choices and explain the connection between the song and the literary element, had a preparatory function. In this way, the activity anticipated the more specific song-based work that would later be connected to Romanticism, the Industrial Revolution and the representation of the city. By asking students to explain why a song could be connected to literature, the activity encouraged them to think of music as a possible bridge between contemporary culture and literary study. Their musical preferences were not treated as a distraction from literature, but as a possible starting point for literary reflection. This is the attitude Mordenti asks of teachers: to recognise that students are "portatori *di una cultura*, non di una mera negatività o naturalità o bestialità", and to make themselves "disponibili *all'ascolto* di una tale cultura" (Mordenti 2013, 124). Asking students to connect a song they like with a literary theme is a first, simple form of what Luperini calls *attualizzazione*: reading a text of the past by asking what it means for readers today. Luperini notes that literary criticism usually leaves this step implicit, while in the classroom it should be made explicit: "nella didattica della letteratura esso deve venire allo scoperto" (Luperini 2002, 31). Doing so keeps the text alive, instead of presenting it as a fixed and untouchable model, "togliendolo dalla fissità atemporale di un dogma canonico, scolastico e normativo" (2002, 31).

4.2.3. A Song-Based Bridge to Blake: The Verve's History

A further step in the *avvicinamento al testo* phase was based on selected elements from the song *History* by The Verve. This song was chosen because it echoes Blake's *London*, especially through repetition and through some linguistic patterns that directly quote and

rework Blake's poem. For this reason, it worked as a bridge between a contemporary song and the literary text that students would later analyse. The activity was carried out while students watched the video of the song without sound. This choice was deliberate. Without the music, students could not rely on the emotional impact of the song itself. They were asked to focus on images, atmosphere, gestures, setting and the possible identity of the speaker. In this way, the activity encouraged them to infer meaning from visual clues before reading the poem. Students worked on a worksheet (Appendix C, Stage 3) containing only a few selected patterns shared by the song and the poem, especially the repeated structure "I *am …-ing*" and "i*n every … in every … in every … I see …*". In their worksheet, they had to fill in the gaps with what it was that they thought the character in the video was actually experiencing. Their answers often moved towards a negative emotional field. For "I am …-ing", students proposed verbs such as walking, looking for someone, observing, thinking, losing myself, fading, dreaming or drowning. For "in every … I see …", many students chose words connected to misery, loneliness, failure, sadness, fear, confusion or pain. This activity helped students approach some of the central themes of Blake's poem before reading it: movement through the city, subjective perception, suffering, alienation and the link between what is seen and what is felt. The class discussion that followed allowed students to compare interpretations and notice recurring images and emotions. In this way, the song-based activity did not replace the literary text, but prepared students to read it with greater awareness of atmosphere, repetition, point of view and emotional perception. The activity can also be read in terms of scaffolding as P. David Pearson, quoted in Graves et al. (1996), describes scaffolding as what "allows us, as teachers, to intervene in an environment and provide the cueing, questioning, coaching, corroboration, and plain old information needed to allow students to complete a task before they are able to complete it independently". This idea also draws from Hammond's principle of "high challenge, high support" (Hammond 2006): students are still guided towards a complex objective, but the teacher provides temporary support that makes the task accessible. This is what happened in this activity. Students were not immediately exposed to the full difficulty of Blake's language. They first worked on the video of *History*, on simpler fragments, repeated structures and visual clues that anticipated the poem's atmosphere. The support did not remove the complexity of

London, but created a gradual path towards it. Moving from a contemporary song to Blake's poem helped reduce the distance between students' everyday cultural references and literary study, while preparing them to recognise central elements of the text, such as wandering, observation, repetition and the perception of suffering.

4.2.4. Student-Selected Songs and the Shared Song Bank

After the first, broader pre-reading activity on songs and literature, the use of songs became more focused and was connected directly to the historical and social context of the poems to be read in the teaching unit. Students were asked to create a shared song bank related to the Industrial Revolution, Romanticism and the representation of urban life. This task was assigned after the historical context of the Industrial Revolution had been covered in the students' history lessons, including the changes brought by industrialisation, such as urban growth, pollution, factory work, social inequality and changes in everyday life. In their search for the song that best mirrored the Industrial Revolution, students were guided to focus on three main themes: alienation, pollution[2] and social inequality. These categories helped them select songs more purposefully and avoid too general or vague connections with the Industrial Revolution. They also anticipated some of the central ideas that would later emerge in Blake's *London*, especially the representation of the city as a place of suffering, oppression and social injustice. Each student had to choose a song that, in their opinion, could be connected to one or more of the three themes. To make the task clear and organised, each student contributed to creating a shared Google Form with the title and artist of the song, a link to the video, a short explanation of the connection with the topic, and one significant line from the lyrics. This structure helped students move beyond a purely personal choice. They had to justify their selection and support it with thematic and textual evidence. The song bank included different musical genres and historical periods. Some students chose songs connected to urban decay and industrial landscapes, such as *Dirty Old Town* by Ewan MacColl. Others selected songs that focused on loneliness, anonymity and

[2] The term *pollution* is used here as it was used with the students, that is, as a present-day lens. In Blake's time the word referred above all to moral or religious defilement, and its environmental meaning is later. What the poems record is the coal smoke and soot of the city, visible in Blake's "black'ning Church" and implied by the "smokeless air" that Wordsworth describes as exceptional. Reading that phenomenon through a contemporary category was a deliberate choice, in line with the *attualizzazione* discussed in 4.2.2.

disconnection in the modern city, such as *People Are Strange* by The Doors. Other choices highlighted social inequality, exploitation and loss of individuality, for example *Everything Counts* by Depeche Mode, *The Factory Girl* performed by Lisa O'Neill, *Working Class Hero* by John Lennon. Although the songs were very different, the students' explanations showed some recurring ideas. In some cases, students chose songs that were already part of their own musical world. In other cases, they asked their parents for suggestions, and this brought into the classroom artists such as The Doors or Depeche Mode. Other students carried out a more deliberate search for songs connected to the topic, as in the case of *The Factory Girl*. This aspect is worth noting because the activity did not simply confirm students' existing musical tastes. It also created a small intergenerational exchange and encouraged students to look for cultural materials beyond their usual listening habits. Instead of receiving the historical context of Romanticism and the Industrial Revolution only from the teacher, students had to search for them, discuss them and recognise them in different musical contexts. In this way, the activity supported personal involvement while keeping a clear connection with the objectives of the unit. Caon describes a very similar procedure, starting from the observation that popular music sung in English is "pervasiva" in the world of children and teenagers, so that students often know far more songs than their teachers do. On that basis the teacher announces the cultural themes and the linguistic features around which the unit will be organised and asks students to recall song lyrics, ask their classmates or search online, so that the class quickly assembles a supplementary bank of lyrics with the corresponding audio or video material (Caon 2008, 108). Caon proposes this in the section devoted to the most able students, where the aim is "la costruzione di una banca dati usufruibile (e integrabile) da tutta la classe", so that the strongest students are not isolated but put their competence at the service of the others (Caon 2008, 109). In the unit described here the same device was extended to the whole class, with every student contributing one entry to the shared form.

4.2.5. Cooperative Selection and Song Contest

The shared song bank was then used for a cooperative classroom activity. Since the number of songs was quite high, it would not have been useful to ask every student to present their song individually. The activity was therefore organised in two stages: first in

pairs, and then in small groups. In the first stage, students worked in pairs and briefly presented their chosen songs to each other. Each pair discussed the two songs and selected the one they considered more representative of the themes of the Industrial Revolution and Romanticism. This first selection already required negotiation, because students had to explain their choices, compare the efficacy of the connections and decide which song best represented the Industrial period. In the second stage, pairs were reorganised into larger groups. Each group discussed the songs that had survived the first selection and chose one final song to present to the class. At the end of this stage, four groups remained, each with its own song, and these four songs went forward to the final presentations. Again, the discussion was guided by three main categories: alienation, social inequality, and criticism of industrial society or urban life. The groups then prepared a short presentation of their ultimate choice. During the collective class presentations, they did not simply play the song. They explained the connection between the lyrics, the atmosphere of the song and the themes of the Industrial Revolution. Some groups also used visual materials, such as factory landscapes, smoky cities, dark urban spaces or contrasts between rich and poor.

At the end of the presentations, the class voted for the song that best represented a gloomy, dark and critical vision of the city and society. The winning group received a print of a Gustave Doré engraving of nineteenth-century London, with its smoke, poverty and overcrowded streets. This small prize made the contest more engaging, but it also had a didactic function: the engraving worked as a visual bridge towards Blake's *London* and helped students enter the dark urban atmosphere of the poem. The selection phase required students to move from simple collection of materials to interpretation. After choosing their songs, students could not simply report what they had found or say that they liked a song. They had to explain why it was relevant, compare it with another proposal and agree on which of the two songs was more closely connected to the Industrial Revolution and to Romanticism. This phase corresponds closely to what Comoglio identifies as the interpretative moment of group work. According to Comoglio and Cardoso, "la ricerca non è un 'riportare' ciò che è stato letto"; rather, after gathering information, students must "confrontarsi e negoziare il significato delle conoscenze che hanno raggiunto" (Comoglio e Cardoso 1996, 37). This is exactly what happened in the

song-selection activity: students discussed, evaluated, interpreted and judged the different proposals before reaching a shared decision. In this sense, negotiation became part of the interpretative process. The activity did not simply ask students to present a song, but to use literary and historical criteria in order to construct a common interpretation.

The following step of the unit moved from preparation to direct textual analysis. Students were now ready to work on Blake's language, images and historical references, using the ideas that had emerged during the song-based activities as a support for reading the poem itself. The songs selected by the students had already introduced themes such as alienation, poverty, oppression, pollution, social inequality and the dehumanising effects of urban life. These themes are central to Blake's poem. As a result, when students later approached *London,* they were already prepared to recognise its dark atmosphere and its critical representation of the city.

4.2.6. Guided Analysis of Blake's London

The reading phase of Blake's London began with a worksheet specifically designed to guide students into the poem (Appendix C, Stage 5). The worksheet did not simply ask students to answer comprehension questions. It first invited them to look back at the activities completed before the reading — the video of *History,* the repeated structures from the song, the work on place and mood, the captions written from different emotional perspectives, and the songs selected around alienation, pollution and social inequality. This initial step was useful because it helped students understand that the previous activities were not separate tasks, but had prepared them to approach Blake's representation of *London.*

The main part of the worksheet then focused directly on the poem. It isolated some of the most important words, images and expressions in the different stanzas and asked students to interpret them gradually. Students worked on elements such as "wander", "chartered", "marks", "mind-forged manacles", the "black'ning Church", the "Palace walls", the figures of the chimney-sweeper, the soldier and the harlot, and the final image of the "Marriage Hearse". In this way, the worksheet helped students move from general atmosphere to textual evidence, and from first impressions to more precise literary interpretation.

This part of the activity was carried out in class rather than assigned as homework, so that students' reasoning, doubts and interpretative choices could be observed while they were taking shape. Now that generative AI tools are easily accessible, a written task completed at home no longer allows the teacher to see how an interpretation has actually been built: as Feng et al. observe, "unfettered access to tools that can be used by students to solve exercises with minimal effort threatens the integrity and effectiveness of take-home assessments" (Feng et al. 2024, 2), and educators have responded by relying more on in-person tasks and on criteria that assess the process rather than only the product. Students worked in pairs.

During the activity, the teacher moved around the classroom, listened to the pairs, asked questions and gave small prompts when students needed help. The role of the teacher was not to provide the interpretation in advance, but to help students make their own ideas clearer and more accurate. After the preparatory work done in the previous lessons, it was interesting to observe that many interpretative steps came quite naturally: students were already able to connect Blake's language to ideas of wandering, observation, suffering, oppression and social injustice.

4.2.7. Jigsaw Analysis of Wordsworth's Composed upon Westminster Bridge and Podcast Production

After the guided analysis of Blake's *London*, the class moved to Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*. Since students had already worked in depth on Blake's dark and critical representation of the city, Wordsworth's poem allowed them to encounter a completely different vision of London as the same city is not presented as oppressive or corrupt, but as silent, beautiful and almost natural, observed in a moment of calm before the beginning of daily activity. The analysis of Wordsworth's poem was carried out through a cooperative activity (Appendix C, Stages 6 and 7). Instead of analysing the whole sonnet through a teacher-led explanation, students were divided into groups and each group focused on a specific section or aspects of the poem. The aim was to make students responsible for one part of the interpretation and then ask them to share their findings with the rest of the class. Students were asked to pay attention to tone, imagery, lexical choices, the relationship between city and nature, the speaker's emotional response

and the atmosphere created by the poem. This organisation encouraged close reading, but also made the task more manageable. Each group worked on a limited part of the poem before contributing to the collective interpretation. This choice was connected to the jigsaw method, not simply as a way of making students work in groups, but as a structured form of cooperation. The official Jigsaw Classroom website stresses that "a jigsaw classroom is not a loose, 'anything goes' situation" but a highly structured method in which "interdependence is required" (Aronson s.d.; cfr. Aronson e Patnoe 2011). This point was important in the analysis of Wordsworth's poem, because students were not just divided into groups and left to work separately. Each group had a specific section or aspect of the poem to focus on, and the class needed all the different contributions in order to build a complete interpretation. The outcome of this collective work was a podcast: each jigsaw group had to produce a short recorded explanation of the sonnet, based on the interpretation built through the expert and jigsaw phases and intended as revision material for the whole class. In this way, each group became "a valuable resource for the others" (Aronson s.d.), while the teacher's role was mainly to guide the process and help students connect the different parts of the analysis. Since each original group had worked only on one section or aspect of the poem, the following step was to reorganise the students into new jigsaw groups. In each new group, there was at least one student coming from each previous group, so that every member could bring a different part of the analysis. Students then shared their findings with one another and completed the missing information through the contributions of their classmates. In this way, the activity did not remain a simple division of the poem into separate parts. The meaning of the whole sonnet was reconstructed through exchange: each student was responsible for one part of the interpretation, but also needed the others in order to understand the complete text. This is an important element of the jigsaw method: in this case, the final interpretation of Wordsworth's sonnet depended on the combination of all the different contributions. The choice of this format is not incidental. Giusti notes that podcasting lends itself particularly well to the teaching of literature, "alla valorizzazione della voce e dell'ascolto", and that producing a podcast makes students aware of the whole production process, "dalla scelta del format alla scrittura, dalla sceneggiatura alla registrazione, dal montaggio alla distribuzione" (Giusti 2020, 82). He also observes that a literary podcast always involves

group work by people with different specialisations who collaborate at the different stages of production (Giusti 2020, 82), which is precisely what the expert groups of the jigsaw provided here. The podcast did not simply require students to fill in gaps or complete a worksheet. They had to transform the interpretation developed through the expert-group and jigsaw activities into a clear and coherent explanation that could be used by their classmates. The task therefore had an authentic dimension. Wiggins argues that authentic assessments should present students with "the full array of tasks that mirror the priorities and challenges found in the best instructional activities", including "providing an engaging oral analysis" and "collaborating with others" (Wiggins 1990, 2). Although the podcast was not the final assessment of the unit, it worked in this direction: students had to select textual evidence, organise their ideas and communicate a literary interpretation to an audience.

Only one student from each group ultimately recorded the podcast, acting as spokesperson for the interpretation developed collectively during the jigsaw activity. This was mainly a practical decision and did not mean that the other students had not contributed to the analysis or preparation of the script. Nevertheless, in retrospect, involving every group member in the recording would have made the connection between the jigsaw structure and the final product more explicit. Each student could have presented the stanza previously examined in the expert group, thus making individual contributions audible within the collective podcast. The adopted arrangement therefore preserved the cooperative nature of the preparation, but limited direct participation in the oral production stage. In a future implementation of the unit, the recording could be divided among all group members so that each student would be responsible for communicating the part of the analysis in which they had acquired particular expertise. Despite this limitation, the podcast still had a concrete purpose. It became revision material for the class in preparation for the final comparative essay. The explanation therefore had to be useful not only to the teacher but also to classmates, who would later rely on it when revising Wordsworth's sonnet and organising their written comparison.

4.3. From Teaching Activities to Final Assessment

The final assessment was a comparative essay, assigned both to the experimental class and to the comparison groups. This was important because the aim was not only to see how 4AL responded at the end of the unit, but also to compare its results with those of students who had not followed the same teaching path. The task was therefore the same for all groups, even if the work done before it was different. In all three classes the essay was written in class in a single 50-minute lesson, with the texts of the poems and a monolingual dictionary available, and with a minimum length of 300 words, in line with the IELTS essay format (the task is reproduced in Appendix D). One student in 5AM, with certified special educational needs, wrote it on a computer, as provided for by the school; no other accommodation was needed in the three classes.

The same rubric, described in Chapter 3, served for the essays of all three classes. It was built by the teacher-researcher after the task itself, so that the criteria would match what the task asked, and it was modelled on the ministerial grid for the *seconda prova*. This helped make the evaluation more consistent and transparent. The correction grid, reproduced in Appendix D, considered both the literary content and the quality of the written English through five indicators: text comprehension, text interpretation, adherence to the task and argumentation, organisation and coherence, and linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness. In this way, students were not simply asked to give a personal reaction to the poems, but to write a structured comparison.

As explained above, the rubric was also connected to the kind of work required in the *seconda prova* of the *Esame di Stato* for the *liceo linguistico*. Even though the experimental class was a fourth-year class, these skills need to be built gradually before the final year. Students have to learn how to read a text carefully, select relevant details, organise an argument and support their ideas in English. The final essay was therefore also a way of practising this kind of competence. As for the experimental group, the activities described in this chapter were meant to prepare students for this final task. The work on images, songs, mood and urban atmosphere helped them start thinking about place, perception and emotional response. The analysis of Blake gave them more direct support in reading poetic language and recognising social criticism and symbolic images. The jigsaw and podcast activity on Wordsworth then asked them to use some of the same

tools with a little more independence. For this reason, the final essay was not just a written test placed at the end of the unit. It was connected to the work done in class. By the time students wrote it, they had already approached the two poems through discussion, close reading, group work, oral explanation and revision materials. The essay asked them to bring these elements together in a more formal written form. Songs, images and podcasts were not used instead of literary analysis. They were used to help students get there. The aim was not to make literature easy in a superficial way, but to provide students with a more accessible way to interpret the texts before asking them to compare the poems in a structured, evidence-based essay.

4.4. Methodological Strengths and Limitations of the Intervention

The teaching intervention had several strengths. The first is methodological: it was carried out in a real school context, within the normal curriculum, timetable and assessment practices, and with whole classes rather than selected volunteers. This means that what was observed is what can actually happen in an Italian upper secondary literature class, and other teachers can read the results against their own classrooms. The same choice, however, limited the control that could be exercised over the conditions of the comparison, as the limitations discussed below make clear. The others concern the design of the unit, and they go in the direction indicated by the research discussed in Chapter 1. The activities proposed to the experimental group were designed to connect students' personal experience with literary interpretation, and they were used as steps in a gradual process leading towards literary analysis and comparative writing. The intervention thus tried to make the work more engaging without losing sight of close reading, which is the balance that studies on dialogic literature teaching recommend: exploration and personal response, but anchored to the text and supported by the teacher (Hansen 2023, 4; Magirius, Scherf and Steinmetz 2023, 4). The unit also gave students an active role in the construction of meaning. They selected songs, negotiated interpretations, worked in groups, produced written analyses and shared oral explanations through podcasts. This is the dimension that Schrijvers et al. (2019, 12) point to as a possible key factor for motivation: the opportunity for students to explore their own responses to literary texts

and to express them in class. At the same time, the intervention also has clear limitations. The most important one concerns the comparison sample. The initial idea of using a parallel fourth-year class as a comparison group could not be carried out because the teacher of that class was not available to collaborate. As a result, the comparison groups were not perfectly equivalent to the experimental group. Class 3AL and class 5AM differed from 4AL in terms of school year, educational pathway and previous learning experiences. The comparison is still useful, but it has to be read with these limits in mind. Since the classes were different in age, school year and school pathway, the results can suggest some interesting tendencies, without claiming to be generally valid. Another limitation concerns the role of the teacher-researcher. Since the intervention was designed, carried out and evaluated by the same teacher, a certain degree of subjectivity is inevitable. The use of questionnaires, student products and common assessment criteria helped reduce this limitation, but it cannot be completely ruled out. On the limits of designs of this kind, the systematic review of sixty intervention studies on the classroom use of songs by Hamilton et al. is explicit: quasi-experimental studies "certainly signpost important findings for teachers and researchers, but these studies should be viewed in the context of their own methodological limitations, rather than cited as widely applicable evidence of an effect" (Hamilton et al. 2024, 30). The present study asks to be read in those terms: as a documented account of what happened in one class, not as evidence of an effect that can be generalised. A further limitation concerns the thematic organisation of the unit. Grouping texts around themes such as the city, industrial life and alienation makes them more accessible, because a song written today and a poem written in 1794 can be discussed side by side. Luperini, however, warns that thematic reading carries "effettivamente il rischio di una impostazione destoricizzante" (Luperini 2002, 63): if a contemporary song about alienation and Blake's London are read as saying the same thing, the historical distance between them disappears. His answer is not to give up the theme but to historicise it, so that it becomes "l'occasione di un confronto passato-presente in cui agli elementi di continuità si aggiungeranno quelli di discontinuità che caratterizzano in modo specifico un momento storico" (2002, 63). Applied to this unit, this means recognising both what the songs and the poem share, such as the experience of the city as a place of oppression, and what belongs only to Blake's time, such as the

chimney-sweepers or the “charter’d” streets. In the unit described here that step was largely taken outside the English lessons. The Industrial Revolution had been covered by the history teacher of the same class before the unit began, and the sequence was arranged with him so that the poems could be read against a background the students already had. The agreement was an informal one between colleagues and no record of it was kept, but it made it possible to spend the English lessons on the poems themselves rather than on setting the scene. This solution, however, is not one a teacher can count on. It depends on the colleagues one happens to work with and on how far they are willing to plan across subjects. Reviewing forty empirical studies of interdisciplinary teaching in secondary schools, Tonnetti and Lentillon-Kaestner report that such approaches benefit students in several respects, from motivation and critical thinking to achievement on summative assessments, but they also observe that “the didactic construction of interdisciplinary sequences is undoubtedly more difficult than that of traditional sequences”, since it “requires more time because it forces teachers from different subjects to organize and meet more often” (Tonnetti and Lentillon-Kaestner 2023, 11). Schaeffer points to a deeper reason. Writing about the human sciences, he observes that “ogni disciplina costruisce la propria piccola casa, o il proprio piccolo villaggio, e cerca di stabilirvisi riducendo il più possibile i contatti con le discipline che vivono nelle valli vicine. Ognuna coltiva il proprio piccolo giardino, sviluppa il proprio idioletto e si occupa essenzialmente della propria autoriproduzione” (Schaeffer 2014, 25). His remark concerns academic research, but the same enclosure can be recognised in school subjects, and it explains why an agreement between two teachers remains the exception rather than the rule. A unit of this kind would therefore have to be designed differently in a class where that willingness is not there. Finally, the time available for the intervention was limited by the normal rhythm of the school year, curricular requirements and assessment deadlines. Some activities could not be developed as much as they might have been in a longer project. However, this limit is also part of the reality of classroom research, where teaching innovation must coexist with timetables, institutional constraints and exam preparation. Overall, the intervention should be read as an attempt to test a realistic teaching proposal rather than as a perfect experiment. Its value lies precisely in its connection with the real classroom: the project shows how songs and multimodal materials can be integrated into

the teaching of English literature without losing sight of its main objectives: textual analysis, teacher guidance and preparation for institutional assessment.

Chapter 5 - Analysis and Discussion of the Results

This chapter presents the results of the teaching intervention and discusses what emerged from the final essays and from the responses of the experimental class, 4AL, to the post-unit questionnaire. As explained in the previous chapters, class 4AL followed the song-based and multimodal unit described in Chapter 4, while the comparison groups approached literary analysis and essay writing through a traditional, teacher-led classroom experience. The final comparative essays did not favour the experimental group: as Section 5.2 shows, 4AL obtained the lowest mean of the three classes and the highest share of insufficient marks, while the younger 3AL obtained the best results. The marks discussed here are the official marks recorded in the electronic register, expressed on the ten-point scale prescribed for Italian secondary schools (DPR 122/2009), in which six is the pass mark and any mark below six is insufficient; the descriptors used to assign them are those of the correction grid reproduced in Appendix D. This result is not necessarily surprising. The students involved in the study belonged to *liceo* classes where school performance is usually taken seriously. Many of them are used to studying carefully, preparing for tests and trying to obtain good results. For this reason, even a more traditional or teacher-led lesson can lead to very good outcomes, because these students tend to work with diligence when they know that a task will be assessed. For this reason, the most interesting part of the results is not only the comparison between essay scores, but also the way students reacted to the teaching unit. The post-unit questionnaire, administered to 4AL only, becomes particularly important here, because it helps understand whether students found the activities useful, engaging or helpful in approaching literary texts. In other words, the value of the intervention may not lie in a better performance in the final written product, but in the way students felt and worked during the teaching unit that led to that outcome. The following sections therefore consider both the final essays and the questionnaire responses.

5.1. Analysis of the Pre-Unit Questionnaire

Before the design of the teaching unit, the questionnaire described in Section 3.2 was administered to the students of the three classes involved in the study. Varisco describes the questionnaire as a standard instrument used to collect information. In the words of Manganelli Rattazzi, its aim is to "tradurre gli scopi e gli interessi della ricerca [o indagine] in *domande* le cui risposte dovrebbero consentire di raccogliere *informazioni* sul tema [questione o fenomeno] che si vuole esplorare" (Manganelli Rattazzi 1990, 18, cited in Varisco 2000, 80). Because all the students answer the same questions in the same form, the answers can be compared and counted (Varisco 2000, 80). The purpose of the pre-unit questionnaire was not to measure learning but to document the starting point: how students related to English as a subject, how they experienced literature lessons, and which classroom practices they considered helpful. This section reports those results, so that the answers given after the intervention can be read against what the students thought before it.

Class	*Respondents*	*Students in the class*
4AL (experimental)	14	22
3AL	17	21
5AM	3	7
Total	34	50

Table 5.1 - Respondents to the pre-unit questionnaire, by class. Source: pre-unit questionnaire.

As Table 5.1 shows, thirty-four of the fifty students of the three classes completed the questionnaire. The response rate was uneven: only fourteen of the twenty-two students in the experimental class took part, against seventeen of twenty-one in 3AL and three of seven in 5AM. There are two reasons for this. The questionnaire was anonymous, so it was not possible to know who had not answered and to remind them. Taking part was also voluntary: the teacher-researcher did not want to put pressure on the students, since the questionnaire was not part of their assessment. The students who answered therefore chose to do so, which is a known limit of voluntary questionnaires. The figures reported below describe the sample of respondents rather than the three classes as such, and the

sub-sample for 5AM is too small to be treated separately. All the figures in this section refer to these thirty-four students.

Mean scores on the Likert items (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

Item	*All respondents (n = 34)*
Interest in English as a school subject	4.35
Interest in English literature lessons	3.79
Perceived difficulty of the literary texts	2.53
Usefulness of the historical background explained before reading	4.06
Usefulness of a traditional lecture	2.88
Texts are more meaningful when connected to real life or contemporary culture	3.82
Lessons are more engaging when materials other than the textbook are used	4.32

Table 5.2 - Mean scores on the Likert items of the pre-unit questionnaire. Source: pre-unit questionnaire.

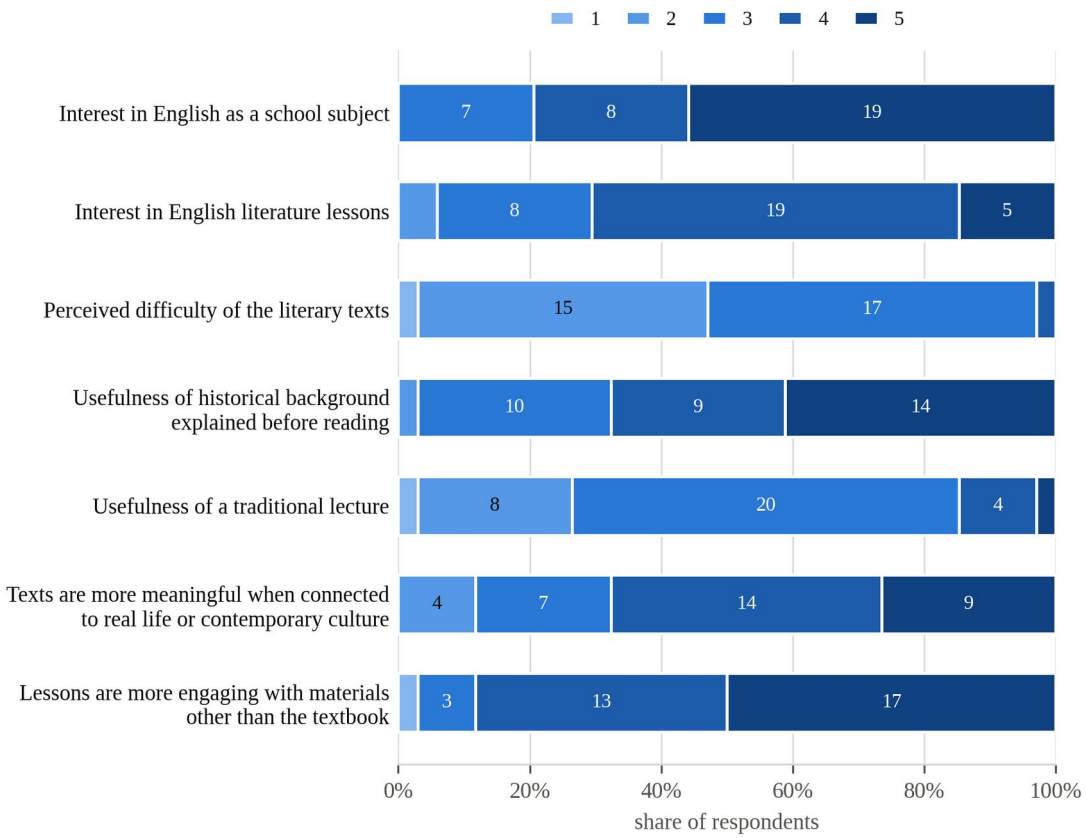

Figure 5.1 - Responses to the Likert items of the pre-unit questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree; n = 34). The label inside each segment indicates the number of students. Source: pre-unit questionnaire.

Three tendencies emerge from Table 5.2 and Figure 5.1. First, interest in English as a subject is high (4.35) and clearly higher than interest in literature lessons (3.79): the gap is small in absolute terms but consistent, and it locates the difficulty in the literary component rather than in the language. Second, the literary texts are not perceived as particularly demanding (2.53, with thirty-two of thirty-four respondents at 2 or 3): the obstacle students describe is not linguistic difficulty but a weaker interest. This deserves a comment, because the studies discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 describe literary texts in a foreign language as potentially demanding in linguistic terms and culturally distant, while these students do not describe them in that way. The reason is known to the teacher-researcher, who taught English in all three classes: the literary texts these students meet in class always reach them already mediated. They are read aloud, translated, glossed and commented on before the students are asked to work on them, and the textbook itself presents themes and historical background in an already simplified form, so that much of

the difficulty has been removed before they encounter it. Read together with the gap between interest in English as a subject (4.35) and interest in literature lessons (3.79), the low score for difficulty suggests that the weaker side is interest rather than comprehension, although no item asked students directly how willing they were to read literary texts. Third, and most relevant to the design of the unit, the statement that lessons are more engaging when materials other than the textbook are used received the second highest mean of the whole questionnaire (4.32), with thirty of thirty-four respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Almost all the students in the three classes agree on this point. This is also one of the reasons why songs were used in the unit. Caon sees limits in the idea that songs are useful simply because they are authentic material: for him the strongest reason is a cultural one, since songs bring real culture into the classroom. He writes that "la motivazione culturale – di cultura e civiltà autentiche – per l'uso glottodidattico della canzone è, a nostro avviso, la più convincente" (Caon 2023, 9). In this study songs were not used to teach the language, but to help students enter the literary texts. It should also be said that the textbook used in the three classes, *Amazing Minds*, had been chosen by the teacher-researcher because it is less traditional than other course books: the students are therefore not reacting against an old-fashioned anthology. Two values are missing from the figure because no student chose them. Nobody selected 1 or 2 for interest in English as a school subject, and nobody selected 5 for the difficulty of the literary texts.

The answers change, however, when students are asked which activities actually help them understand a literary text, as Figure 5.2 shows.

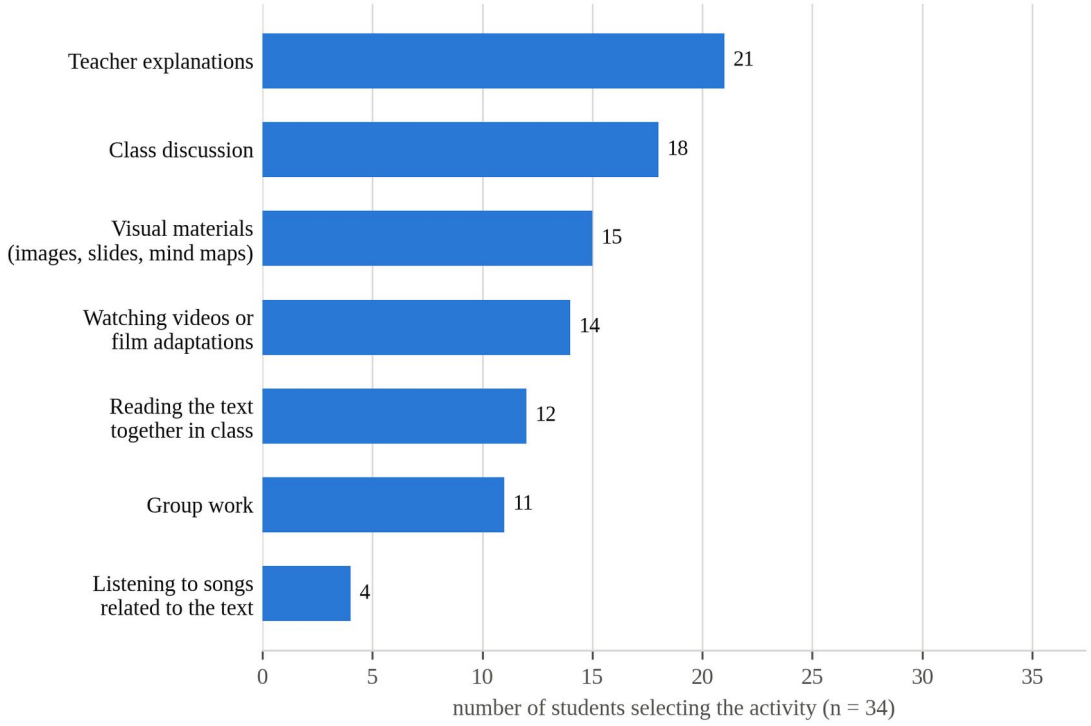

Figure 5.2 - Activities that students considered helpful for understanding literary texts. Multiple answers were allowed (n = 34). Source: pre-unit questionnaire.

The ranking is instructive. Teacher explanations were the most frequently selected activity (21 of 34), followed by class discussion (18) and visual materials (15). Listening to songs related to the text came last, selected by four students out of thirty-four; within the experimental class, it was selected by one student out of fourteen. It should be added that none of the three classes had ever worked on a literary text through songs before: the low ranking reflects the absence of any previous experience of the activity rather than a negative judgement on it. In other words, before the intervention the respondents declared a clear preference for multimodal materials in general terms, but did not associate songs in particular with the comprehension of literary texts, and continued to attribute the greatest explanatory value to the teacher.

This finding matters for the interpretation of the whole study, because it means that the teaching unit was not designed to confirm an existing expectation. The activity placed at the centre of the intervention was the one the students themselves ranked lowest as a comprehension aid. Any change that appears in the post-unit questionnaire therefore starts

from a position in which students did not expect songs to help them understand a text, and not from an attitude that already favoured them.

A last point concerns the role of the teacher. In Table 5.2 the traditional lecture, in which the teacher explains the text while students mainly listen and take notes, received the lowest mean among the items written in positive terms (2.88), just below the middle of the scale. In Figure 5.2, however, the explanation of the teacher is the activity students chose most often. The two answers are not necessarily in contrast: perhaps the students do not question the help of the teacher, but the passive role they are given while the teacher explains. This is only a possible reading, and the data collected here cannot confirm it.

Question and options	*Students*
What is most important when studying English literature?	
Understanding the themes and message of the text	22
Learning historical and cultural information	8
Learning the information needed to pass a test	2
Analysing language and literary techniques	1
Expressing personal interpretations	1
Which approach do you prefer when analysing a literary text?	
An interactive class discussion in which students may contribute	18
Working with classmates on activities proposed by the teacher	10
The teacher explaining the text to the class	6

Table 5.3 - Students' priorities and preferred classroom approach before the intervention (single answer; n = 34). Source: pre-unit questionnaire.

Table 5.3 completes the picture. A large majority of respondents (22 of 34) identified the understanding of themes and message as the most important aim of literary study, while only one student chose the analysis of language and literary techniques and one the expression of personal interpretations. Two students selected the acquisition of the information needed to pass a test, which suggests that a purely instrumental view of literary study was rare in this sample. As for classroom organisation, an interactive discussion was preferred by eighteen students and collaborative work by ten, against six

who preferred a teacher-led explanation. This preference is one of the points the unit was built on. If what students expect from a literary text revolves around its themes and its message, songs can open a way in, because they carry similar themes in a cultural form the students already know: this is again the usefulness of authentic material for cultural reasons recalled above (Caon 2023, 9).

Two further elements should be noted. Twenty-eight of the thirty-four respondents declared that they engage with English-language cultural content outside school often or very often, which confirms that the cultural materials used in the unit were not extraneous to their everyday experience. At the same time, the explanation of the historical background before reading was judged useful (4.06), a preference that the unit deliberately did not follow in 4AL: the biographical and literary background of Blake and Wordsworth was not presented before reading but reached at the end of the work on the texts, in line with the sequence discussed in Section 2.3, and the historical framing of the Industrial Revolution was approached through the students' own song selection, building on what they had already studied in their history lessons. In 3AL and 5AM the usual order was kept: through the textbook the students were given an idea of the period and of the lives of the two poets before reading the poems. The unit did not follow what the students expected. It started from songs, the activity they had ranked last as a help to understanding a literary text (Figure 5.2), and it left the background to the end. This is also what an experimental unit is for: to try in class something the students have never done before. The poems had to come first, so that the students could build their own reading of them, and the historical and biographical background had to come afterwards, as an answer to the questions the texts had already raised.

5.2. Analysis of the Final Essay Scores

The first data considered in this section are the marks recorded in the electronic register for the final comparative essays. The experimental group was class 4AL. This class followed the song-based and multimodal unit described in Chapter 4, which lasted approximately one month in which the students worked on literary texts through songs, lyrics, visual materials and guided classroom activities. The results of the final essay used

to assess their ability to discuss literature in a structured and comparative way, were quite uneven in 4AL. Out of 22 students with a recorded written mark, the average score was 6.74. The lowest mark was 4 and the highest was 9.25. Ten students obtained a mark below 6. At the same time, the class also included some very good performances: five students were between 8 and 8.99, and two students reached marks above 9. This means that the experimental group cannot be described as uniformly weak, but neither can it be presented as clearly successful in terms of final written performance. Some students responded very well to the task, while others continued to show difficulties in essay writing. The song-based unit did not therefore correspond to an impressive improvement in the marks of the class as a whole. The comparison with class 3AL is especially interesting. 3AL was one year younger than 4AL and did not receive any specific training on IELTS-style essay writing. The preparation for the essay was also much shorter, as the work was completed in about five or six lessons (it took one month in 4AL). Despite this, 3AL obtained very strong results. Out of 21 students, the average score was 7.67; the lowest mark was 5.5 and the highest was 10. Only two students obtained a mark below 6. This result is important because it shows that good essay performance was not connected only to the experimental unit. In fact, the younger class obtained a higher average and fewer insufficient marks than the experimental group. If the analysis were limited to the marks recorded in the register, 3AL would appear stronger than 4AL in the final written task. This does not mean that the experimental unit had no value. Rather, it suggests that the final essay marks mainly captured students' ability to perform in a formal assessment. The teacher-researcher taught all three classes and can add something the marks do not show: the two groups were different. 3AL was a hard-working class, while 4AL included several students with a difficult school history. In 3AL many students knew the task would be assessed and worked hard to get a good mark. In motivational terms, this points to the role of extrinsic motivation, connected to grades, school expectations and final results. The case of 4AL may be different. The marks do not show a clear advantage, but the unit was also designed to work on students' relationship with literature, not only on their final written product. As discussed in Chapter 2, motivation is not limited to performance. It also concerns interest, engagement, participation and the way students experience the learning process. For this reason, the possible impact of the song-based

unit may emerge less clearly from the official marks and more clearly from the responses of the students of 4AL to the post-unit questionnaire, where their perception of the activities can be observed more directly. The third group considered was 5AM. This class was older than both 3AL and 4AL and, like 4AL, had previously received specific training on IELTS-style essay writing, with integrated teacher and peer feedback, through the CRELLA-IPRASE project described in Section 4.1. At the same time, 5AM was a *liceo musicale* class, where English does not hold the same central position as in the *liceo linguistico*. The class therefore represents another useful point of comparison, but with its own specific background. The marks recorded for 5AM were based on a smaller group of seven students. The average score was 7.21. The lowest mark was 5.5 and the highest was 9.5. Two students obtained a mark below 6. Although the number of students is limited, the results again show that 4AL did not obtain the strongest final essay scores among the classes considered. The comparison between the three groups can be summarised as follows. The results show that the experimental group did not outperform the comparison groups in the final essay. Class 3AL obtained the highest average, followed by 5AM, while 4AL obtained the lowest average and the highest number of insufficient marks. Even though the grades do not show a direct improvement in the written essay performance as a result of the song-based experimental unit, the comparison opens up a more interesting question. The strongest marks were obtained by a younger class that had worked on the task for a shorter period of time, probably in a more compact and assessment-oriented way. This suggests that good written results may depend not only on the type of teaching material and methodology but also on the students' previous competence, their attitude towards assessment, their familiarity with school expectations and their resolve to get a good mark (namely, extrinsic motivation). It is also worth noting that the only class without previous training in essay writing with integrated feedback, 3AL, obtained the best results, whereas the two classes that had received it, 4AL and 5AM, did not: previous training in the format does not, by itself, explain the differences between the groups. For this reason, the final essay scores cannot be considered the only significant outcome of the intervention. Since the project was also concerned with motivation, participation and the possibility of making literature more accessible through songs and multimodal materials, the questionnaire data become essential. The next

section therefore considers the students' responses, in order to understand whether the intervention had an effect on their engagement and perception of literary study, even if this effect was not directly visible in the final essay marks.

The figures discussed above are summarised in Table 5.4, which reports the marks of the three groups, and are represented graphically in Figure 5.3, where each dot corresponds to one student.

	4AL (experimental)	*3AL*	*5AM*
Students with a recorded mark	22	21	7
Mean	6.74	7.67	7.21
Lowest mark	4.00	5.50	5.50
Highest mark	9.25	10.00	9.50
Marks below 6	10	2	2
Share of marks below 6	45.5%	9.5%	28.6%

Table 5.4 - The final comparative essay marks, by class. Source: marks recorded in the electronic register.

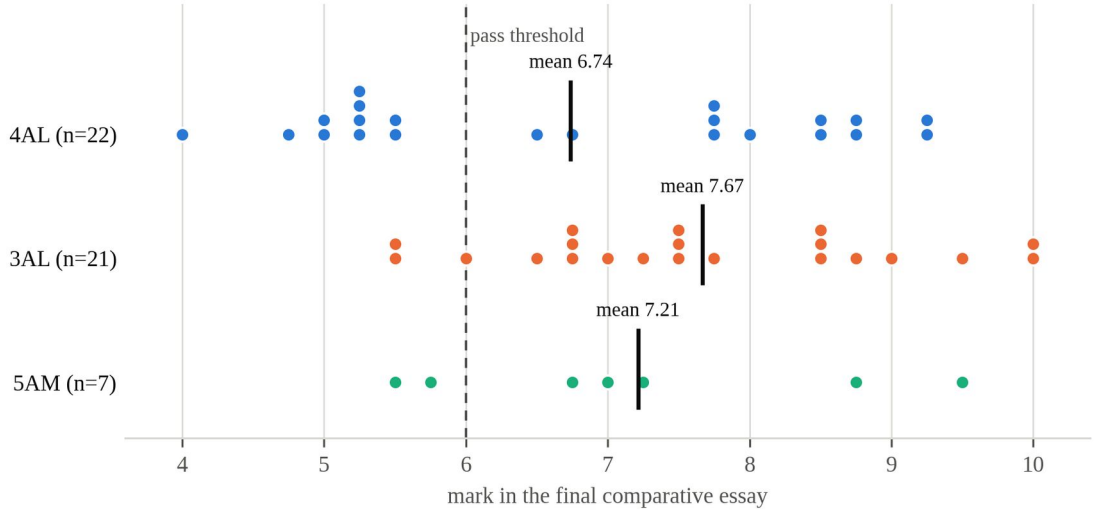

Figure 5.3 - The individual marks in the final comparative essay. Each dot represents one student; the vertical bar indicates the class mean. Source: marks recorded in the electronic register.

Table 5.4 shows something that the averages alone hide. In 4AL the marks are much further apart from one another than in the other two classes: they go from 4.00 to 9.25, the widest distance of the three groups. Almost half of the class did not reach six, but seven students out of twenty-two obtained 8 or more, about the same share as in 3AL. 4AL is therefore not simply a weak class: it is a class divided in two.

This split is set out in Table 5.5 and visible in Figure 5.4, which compares the three groups by mark band. In 3AL and 5AM the marks are spread quite evenly across the bands, while in 4AL they gather at the two ends: the largest group is below 6 and the second largest between 8 and 8.99, and the middle bands are almost empty. The experimental class was therefore not weaker as a whole: it was divided.

Mark band	*4AL*	*3AL*	*5AM*
Below 6	10 (45.5%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (28.6%)
6 - 6.99	2 (9.1%)	5 (23.8%)	1 (14.3%)
7 - 7.99	3 (13.6%)	6 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)
8 - 8.99	5 (22.7%)	4 (19.0%)	1 (14.3%)
9 and above	2 (9.1%)	4 (19.0%)	1 (14.3%)
Total	22	21	7

Table 5.5 - The final essay marks by band. The figure in brackets is the share of the class. Source: marks recorded in the electronic register.

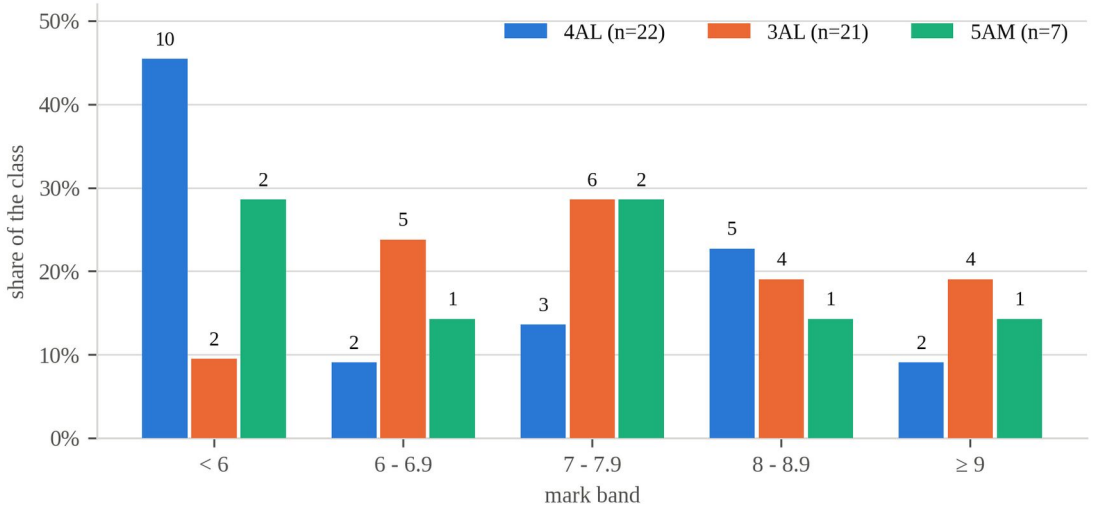

Figure 5.4 - Share of students in each mark band, by class. The label above each bar indicates the number of students. Source: marks recorded in the electronic register.

This observation should be read keeping in mind the size of the groups: with seven students, one single mark in 5AM counts for more than fourteen per cent of the class, so its percentages change a lot with one student.

The same unit produced both the highest number of insufficient marks and a good group of strong results, which suggests that the activities may have worked better for the students who were already stronger than for those in difficulty. The answers to the questionnaire, examined in the next section, help to look at this, because they show how differently individual students experienced the same activities. The marks, in any case, were given a few days after the unit and say nothing about what remains of it. A follow-up that this study could not carry out would be to go back to the same students after some months and ask what they remember of Blake's and Wordsworth's poems, in the experimental class and in the comparison classes alike, and to compare the two.

5.3. Analysis of the Post-Unit Questionnaire

After considering the final essay scores, it is now possible to turn to the post-unit questionnaire administered to the experimental group (4AL). As explained in Chapter 3, this questionnaire had a different purpose from the pre-unit questionnaire. The first questionnaire was administered before the intervention in order to explore students' initial

relationship with literature lessons, the difficulties they experienced and their preferences when it comes to how literature is taught. The post-unit questionnaire, by contrast, was administered at the end of the teaching unit, after the final comparative essay, and asked students to reflect on the activities they had just carried out and aimed at understanding how they engaged in the activities and if anything at all had changed in their perception of literature in English as a subject.

The decision to give weight to the findings of the questionnaire is consistent with the theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapters. Caon (2005) emphasises the importance of adapting teaching to students' interests and needs, arguing that "il docente dovrebbe innanzitutto rendere vivo il suo insegnamento, adattando gli aspetti astratti della disciplina agli interessi, ai bisogni e ai progetti dei suoi studenti". This choice also recalls a principle associated with humanistic education according to which learners should be considered as individuals capable of reflecting on their own learning experience. Rardin (1982, 62), for example, argues that educators should recognise "an inner capacity [...] in each learner to gain insights and make choices appropriate to his/her own learning process". In the present study, the post-unit questionnaire gave students the opportunity to express how they had experienced the literature unit and to reflect on the role played by songs and multimodal activities. Their experience was therefore considered parallel to the evidence provided by their final written performance.

The importance of students' perceptions becomes even more significant when literary education is considered within the changing cultural environment in which contemporary learners encounter texts. In *Letteratura. Teorie, metodi, strumenti*, Bertoni (2018, 19) speaks of an "esplosione centrifuga dello spazio letterario", involving an "inevitabile perdita di specificità, prestigio e primogenitura culturale". What Bertoni describes is also a loss of standing: literature can no longer count on a prestige that once made the study of it self-evident. The consequence for teaching is that a teacher has to give students a reason to read, rather than take it for granted. On the following page, he explains that literature is no longer at the centre of the cultural system but has become one of the many elements within a much broader discourse on culture. It now interacts with "altri saperi, arti, codici e mezzi espressivi" and is received within a context shaped by major social and economic changes and by the growth of cultural consumption (Bertoni 2018, 20). He later adds that,

as technologies develop, a defensive withdrawal is “la peggior risposta possibile”: literature does not exist in an isolated or sacred space but “circola attivamente nel mondo, in questo mondo” and is therefore inevitably affected by the transformations taking place around it (Bertoni 2018, 27). In other words, literature still plays an important role, but it cannot be treated as separate from the cultural and technological context in which students live. This observation is relevant to the present research because the use of songs, images and videos in literature lessons should not be seen simply as a way to make traditional content more entertaining. It also tries to bridge the gap between texts that were written a long time ago and the cultural world in which students already live, where literary texts coexist with music, images, videos and other forms of communication. Students are immersed in a multimodal environment characterised by different sources and forms of participation. From this perspective, using songs in literary education does not mean reducing the value of literature or defending it from other media. It can instead help students see literature as something that still circulates in the present and connects with other languages and forms of expression that are already part of their everyday experience. A similar emphasis on the learner’s experience is found in Moskowitz (1978, 24), who stresses the importance of creating “a warm, supportive, accepting, and nonthreatening climate”, adding that “building on the positive strengthens growth and can help students overcome some of their shortcomings” (Moskowitz 1978, 25). From this perspective, asking students how they experienced the activities was not an additional or secondary component of the research, but part of an approach that takes seriously the emotional and relational conditions in which learning takes place. The same holds for literary education. Caon and Spaliviero (2015, 31) point out that “un’ulteriore finalità dell’educazione letteraria ha a che vedere con l’apertura al confronto sul testo per la crescita e la maturazione etica dello studente”. This dimension is not an addition to literary study but part of it: working on a text means meeting a point of view that is not one’s own and taking a position towards it. Blake’s *London*, where the chimney-sweeper, the soldier and the harlot turn the poem into a judgement on a society, asks exactly that of a reader. It is also one of the things a written mark cannot record, and one of the reasons why the answers of the students are examined in the following section: what they say about the connection between the texts and their own experience shows more of this side

of literary education than their essay scores do. Literary understanding, in other words, cannot be reduced to the acquisition of historical information or terminology. It also depends on the relationship that readers are able to establish with a text and on their capacity to interpret it through their own cognitive, emotional and cultural frameworks.

For this reason, the post-unit questionnaire was used primarily as a reflective tool rather than as an additional test. Its purpose was to collect evidence concerning motivation, participation, emotional involvement, perceived comprehension and students' personal responses to the activities. These data complement the essay scores by offering information about aspects of the learning experience that cannot easily be measured through formal or summative assessment alone.

The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. A first group of questions investigated whether songs had supported students' understanding of literary texts and, if so, in what ways. Students were asked whether songs had helped them understand themes, emotions and atmosphere or the social and cultural context of the texts. Other options concerned memory, involvement and the possibility of connecting literature with contemporary experience.

Students were also asked to identify the phases of the activity in which songs had been particularly useful, whether it was the introduction to the topic, textual analysis, group discussion etc. These questions aimed to determine if the perceived usefulness of music was limited to its initial motivational function or whether students also considered it relevant during more content-based phases of the process.

A second group of questions focused more broadly on multimodality. Students were asked whether the combination of songs, images and videos had made literature lessons more engaging, easier to understand, more memorable, more personal, more motivating or more enjoyable. They were also invited to compare the experimental unit with more traditional literature lessons and to consider whether songs could facilitate students' approach to poetry and literature more generally. In light of Bertoni's description of the contemporary literary space, these questions acquire particular significance: they explore how students respond when literary texts are placed in relation to other cultural stimuli.

The questionnaire then addressed the personal and emotional dimensions of the experience more directly. Students were asked whether, during the unit, they had felt

more motivated, more emotionally involved, more confident, more interested in literature, more willing to participate or more comfortable expressing their own ideas. They were also invited to reflect on the circumstances in which literary interpretation had seemed easier.

Another section focused on students' perception of their own literary skills. They were asked to reflect on their ability to understand poetry, identify themes and atmosphere, compare two literary texts, express personal interpretations, take part in literary discussions, write a comparative essay and use appropriate quotations from the texts. The responses to these questions do not provide any objective or measurable data but they do provide useful information about students' perceived competence and confidence, both of which are connected to motivation and willingness to engage in learning activities.

Finally, the questionnaire included a number of open-ended questions intended to give students greater freedom to describe their experience in their own words. They were asked which activity they had enjoyed most, whether there had been a moment when literature had felt particularly meaningful or emotionally powerful, what they would change or improve in the unit, and whether the activities had made them think differently about places, emotions or situations in their own lives.

The responses to the three single-answer questions are reported in Table 5.6 and represented in Figure 5.5; the remaining items are summarised in the tables and figures that follow. All twenty-one students of the experimental class who completed the questionnaire answered the closed questions.

Question and options	*Students*
Did the use of songs help you understand the literary texts better?	
Very much	1
Quite a lot	10
A little	7
Not really	2
Not at all	1
Compared with more traditional literature lessons, this teaching unit felt	
Much more engaging	2
More engaging	14
Similar	3
Less engaging	2
Much less engaging	0
Do you think songs can help students approach poetry and literature?	
Definitely	3
To some extent	10
Only occasionally	8
Not really	0
Not at all	0

Table 5.6 - Responses to the three single-answer questions of the post-unit questionnaire (n = 21). Source: post-unit questionnaire.

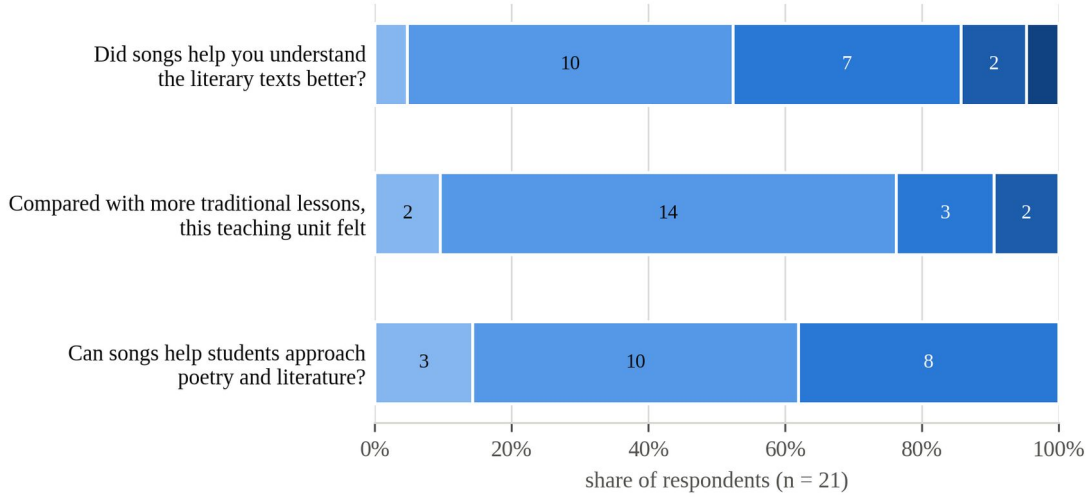

Figure 5.5 - Responses to the three single-answer questions, as a share of the twenty-one respondents. Source: post-unit questionnaire.

These answers can be read against the starting point described in Section 5.1, and they show a clear change. Before the unit, one student out of fourteen in the experimental class had chosen songs as an activity that helps to understand a literary text; after the unit, eleven students out of twenty-one said that songs had helped them quite a lot or very much, and nobody chose the two most negative options when asked whether songs can help students approach literature in general. The comparison can only be indicative, because the two questionnaires used different wordings and were answered by partly different groups of students, but all three items point in the same direction.

The second question is less positive. Sixteen students out of twenty-one found the unit more or much more engaging than a traditional lesson, but three found it similar and two less engaging: the unit was not an improvement for the whole class. The third question says something similar. No student rejected the idea that songs may help, but only three chose the strongest option, while eighteen chose the two middle ones. The general attitude is therefore one of moderate agreement rather than enthusiasm. One possible reason should be added. In the experience of the teacher-researcher, teaching in the other school subjects is still largely traditional, and the students are used to it. A different way of

working may therefore meet a certain resistance, or at least some scepticism, before it is accepted.

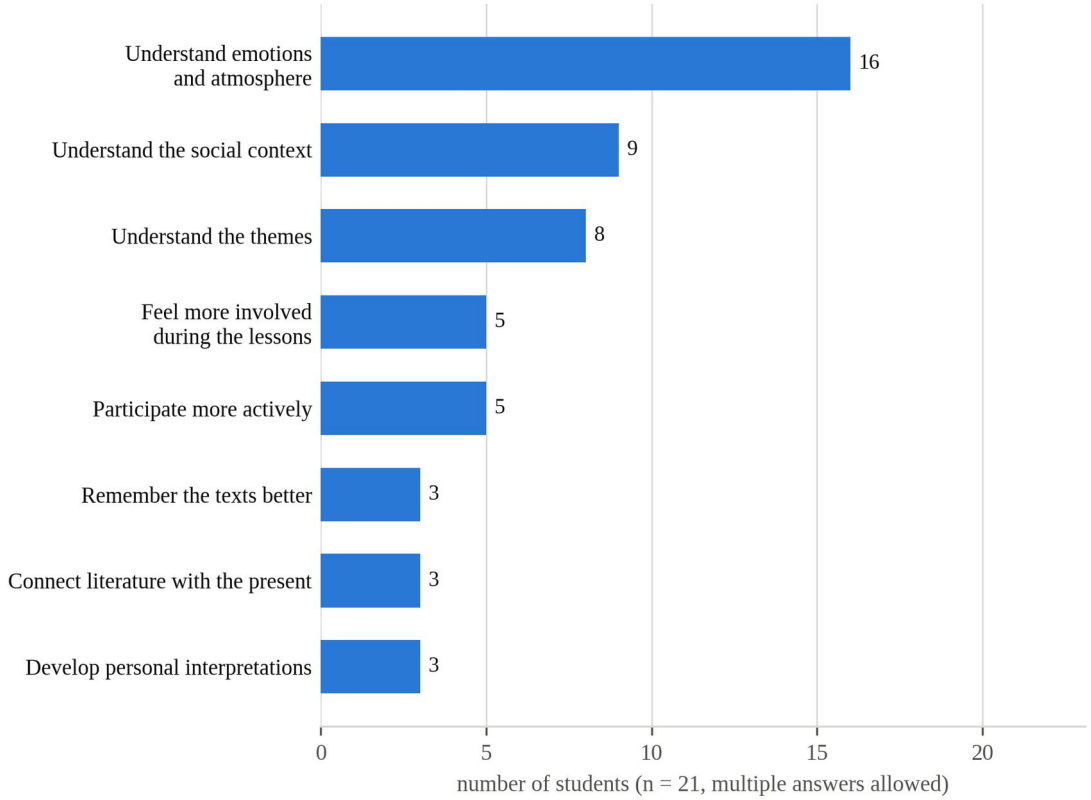

Figure 5.6 - What the songs mainly helped students to do. Multiple answers were allowed (n = 21). Source: post-unit questionnaire.

Figure 5.6 identifies where that help was located. The most frequently selected option by a wide margin was the understanding of emotions and atmosphere (16 of 21), followed by the social context (9) and the themes (8). The options concerning the outcomes of literary work proper were selected far less often: developing personal interpretations and connecting literature with the present were chosen by three students each, and remembering the texts better by three. The songs, in the students' own account, operated on the affective and contextual dimensions of the text rather than on its interpretation.

Option	*Students*
In which phase of the lesson were songs most useful?	
Introduction to the topic	9
Understanding the text	6
Group discussion	6
Revision	5
Writing activities	1
They were not particularly useful	2
Multimedia materials made literature lessons	
Easier to understand	13
More engaging	11
More enjoyable	11
More memorable	9
More emotionally involving	6
More motivating	4
More confusing	2
More personal	0

Table 5.7 - Phases of the lesson in which songs were considered useful, and perceived effects of the multimedia materials. Multiple answers were allowed (n = 21). Source: post-unit questionnaire.

Table 5.7 confirms this reading and specifies it. Songs were considered most useful in the introduction to the topic (9), then in the comprehension of the text and in group discussion (6 each), and least useful in writing activities, selected by a single student. Two students reported that they had not been particularly useful at any stage. The distribution corresponds closely to the function assigned to the songs in the design of the unit, where they were placed in the pre-reading phase, and it is consistent with the outcome of the final essay: the phase in which the students perceived the least benefit is precisely the one measured by the written test.

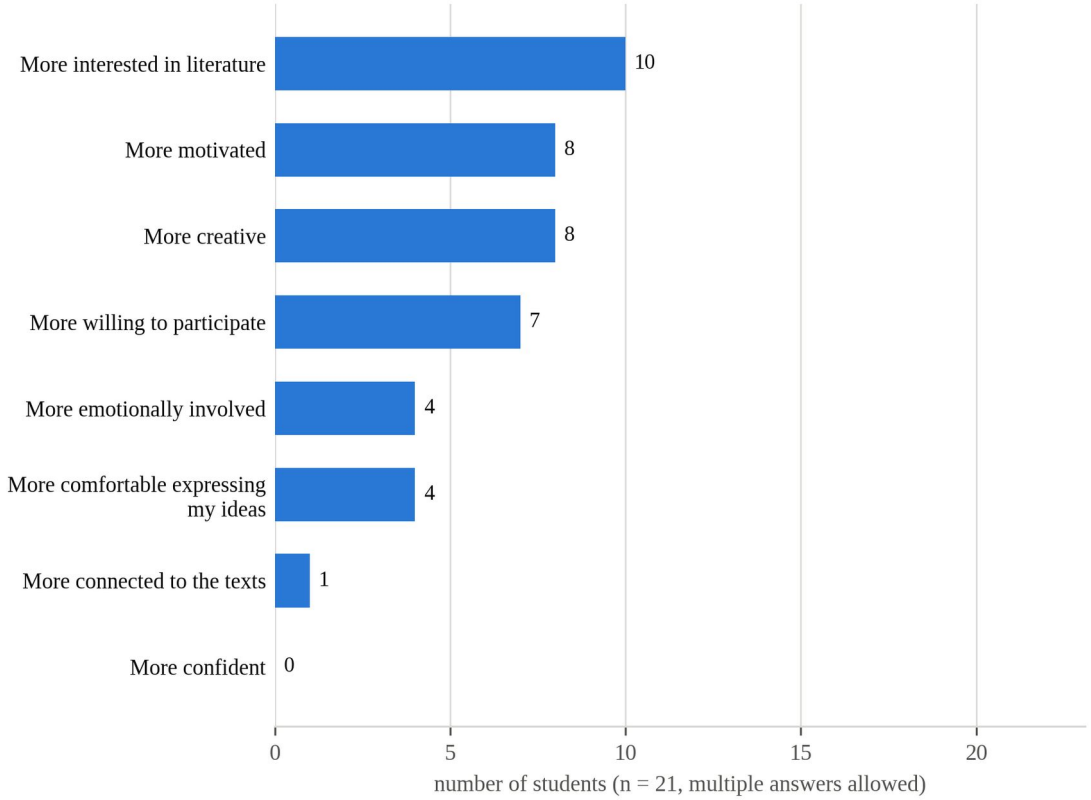

Figure 5.7 - Dispositions reported by students with reference to the teaching unit. Multiple answers were allowed (n = 21). Source: post-unit questionnaire.

The same asymmetry appears in the students' account of their own dispositions, reported in Figure 5.7. Interest in literature (10) and motivation (8) were the most frequently reported effects, together with a sense of greater creativity (8) and a greater willingness to participate (7). At the opposite end, no student selected the option concerning greater confidence, and only one reported feeling more connected to the texts. The intervention appears therefore to have acted on interest and participation without producing, in the students' perception, a corresponding growth in self-confidence.

5.3.1. Perceived Comprehension and the Role of Songs

The first relevant result concerns students' perception of comprehension. Out of 21 students, eleven answered that songs had helped them understand the literary texts "quite a lot" or "very much", seven selected "a little", while three reported little or no benefit.

The overall tendency is therefore positive, but not uniform. Songs appear to have helped many students, although their usefulness varied clearly from one learner to another.

The open-ended answers help explain what students meant by “useful”. The most frequent references concerned emotions and atmosphere. Students also mentioned themes, social context, memory, participation and the possibility of connecting literature with the present. One student wrote that the activities had encouraged them “to read poems and get their deep meanings”, while another said that songs and group work had helped them “understand better the topics and memorize the lessons”. A further response explained that the method helped students understand “how poets and normal people felt”. These comments suggest that songs were especially useful in helping students enter the emotional and historical world of the poems.

The answers concerning the phases of the lesson confirm this interpretation. Songs were most often considered useful during the introduction to the topic, the understanding of the text, group discussion and revision. Writing activities were mentioned less frequently. This suggests that songs worked mainly as a preparatory and interpretative tool. They helped students approach the subject, recognise atmosphere and themes, and make connections, but their role was less evident when students had to turn these ideas into a formal comparative essay.

This distinction is important when the questionnaire results are compared with the final written marks. Students may have felt more involved and may have understood some aspects of the poems more clearly without necessarily improving all the skills required for essay writing. A comparative essay also requires organisation, linguistic accuracy, argumentative control, cohesion, consistency and the appropriate use of textual evidence. These abilities need explicit and repeated practice and cannot be expected to improve automatically through greater motivation alone.

5.3.2. Motivation, Engagement and Multimodality

The questionnaire also explored the effect of songs, images and videos on students’ experience of literature lessons. Most responses described the lessons as more engaging, easier to understand, more enjoyable, more memorable or more emotionally involving. Some students explained that multimodal materials made abstract or historical content

feel more concrete. One respondent wrote that the historical context felt “very real and more emotional”, especially when the class discussed child labour and working conditions during the Industrial Revolution.

When students compared the experimental unit with more traditional literature lessons, the majority described it as more engaging. Some associated this with the familiarity of music in everyday life. One student wrote that students already have a “connection” with music because they listen to it every day, while another said that “modern songs feel closer to students’ lives than old books”. These comments support the idea that familiar cultural forms can reduce the initial distance between students and literary texts.

However, the responses were not all positive. One student described the unit as “more engaging” but also “more confusing”. Another considered frontal lessons “more capable of engagement”, while some students reported that they would not want this kind of approach in every lesson. These answers are important because they show that multimodality is not automatically motivating. For some students, variety supported comprehension and participation; for others, it may have made the lesson feel less focused.

The students’ comments therefore point towards a mixed approach rather than the replacement of traditional teaching. One respondent wrote that songs can be useful, but that “classical literature still needs deeper study”. Another explained that the usefulness of a song depends on the topic and on the clarity of its lyrics. The general pattern is therefore not a rejection of teacher explanation or close reading, but a preference for variety and for a balance between familiar materials and more demanding literary analyses.

5.3.3. Participation, Interpretation and Personal Connection

Another clear tendency concerns participation and the way students approached interpretation. Many students reported feeling more motivated, more interested in literature, more willing to participate, more emotionally involved or more comfortable expressing their own ideas.

Class discussion emerged as particularly important. Students often reported that literary interpretation felt easier when they could compare different perspectives, test their ideas and listen to other interpretations. One student appreciated “the moment in which

we confronted each other for the poems' analysis", while another valued group work because it allowed the class to compare "different meanings and also different perspectives". These answers suggest that the collaborative dimension of the unit was as important as the songs themselves. This is precisely the function that Caon and Spaliviero assign to literary education, which "attraverso lo studio del testo letterario […] può condurre gli studenti a confrontarsi sui temi morali in esso presenti, con il fine di sviluppare un dibattito equilibrato fondato sull'ascolto delle idee diverse, sul rispetto delle opinioni altrui e sulla curiosità nei confronti dei differenti punti di vista" (Caon e Spaliviero 2015, 31).

Personal experience also played a role. Some students stated that the texts became easier to interpret when they could connect them with emotions, places or situations from their own lives. One respondent wrote that the activities had helped them understand that "places are strictly connected with our feelings". At the same time, teacher guidance remained essential. Several students selected step-by-step support as one of the factors that made interpretation easier, and some explicitly asked for more direct explanation. This is a useful result because it shows that a student-centred approach did not remove the need for the teacher. On the contrary, students often seemed to value the combination of personal interpretation, peer discussion and clear teacher guidance.

5.3.4. Self-Perceived Skills and the Limits of the Intervention

What can be said about students' perception of their own skills comes from the other items and from the open answers. The effects most frequently reported concern interest, motivation, creativity and willingness to participate (Figure 5.7), and the help provided by the songs was located in the understanding of emotions, atmosphere and context rather than in interpretation or writing (Figure 5.6). Two students explicitly linked the unit to their interpretative skills: one wrote that they had become "better at giving my personal interpretation about poems", while another said that the unit had encouraged them to look for the "deeper meaning of poetry".

Writing was also the phase in which the songs were felt to be least useful (Table 5.7): a single student selected it. The intervention may therefore have supported students' interest in approaching, discussing and interpreting poetry more clearly than their ability

to produce a formally successful comparative essay, which is consistent with the final essay scores.

The open answers also show that the most appreciated activities were not only the musical ones. Many students enjoyed searching for songs connected with the Industrial Revolution, discussing them in groups and voting for the most representative choices. Others preferred the guided analysis of *London*, the comparison between Blake and Wordsworth or the verse-by-verse discussion. This is significant because it suggests that engagement did not depend simply on making the lesson more entertaining. Some students particularly valued activities that were intellectually demanding when they were clearly guided.

The critical responses must also remain visible. Some students found particular activities confusing or unnecessary, some preferred pair work to larger groups, and some asked for more traditional explanation. One student reported little involvement in the project as a whole. These answers prevent the results from being interpreted too positively and confirm that no single methodology is equally effective for every learner.

Overall, the questionnaire presents a positive but fragmented picture. Songs and multimodal materials were felt by many students as useful for understanding atmosphere, emotions and historical context, and for making literature feel less distant. Songs seemed to be more useful in helping students approach the poems than in improving their final written work. They appeared to be most effective when they were clearly connected to the literary text and used as preparation for close reading.

5.4. Discussion of the Results

Taken together, the results of the final essays and the post-unit questionnaire provide a more complex picture than a simple comparison of marks. The experimental group did not obtain better final essay results than the comparison groups. At the same time, many students reported that songs and multimodal materials made the literary texts easier to approach, more engaging and more connected to emotions, historical context and personal experience. The main finding of the present research is therefore not that songs

automatically improve academic performance, but that they can influence the way students approach literary texts and participate in the learning process.

This result is consistent with the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2. Ryan and Deci (2000) distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation, while Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011; 2021) stress that motivation is influenced by the learning context, the materials and the tasks proposed to students. The present study suggests that a more engaging teaching design can increase interest, participation and perceived accessibility without necessarily producing higher marks in formal written tasks of the kind required by the State Examination. Enhanced motivation did not translate into better written performance in this study, and the data do not show a direct relationship between the two.

Students frequently referred to greater emotional involvement, easier access to themes and atmosphere, stronger participation in discussion and greater willingness to express personal interpretations. These results support the idea that the relationship between text and reader is an important part of literary learning.

The questionnaire responses suggest that songs worked best when songs were used as a bridge rather than as an end in themselves. Students generally found them more useful in the introduction to a topic, in understanding atmosphere and context, and in classroom discussion than in the final writing phase. This is consistent with Spaliviero's view of songs as a preparatory resource that can "elicitare le preconoscenze degli studenti [e] stimolarli a formulare delle ipotesi" before reading the literary text (2020, 136). The positive responses to guided analysis also show that students did not want teacher explanation to disappear. The most effective pattern appears to be a mixed one, in which personal response, discussion and multimodal materials are combined with explicit teacher guidance and close textual analysis.

The results can therefore be discussed in relation to the three research questions of the study.

The first research question asked whether the use of songs in English literature lessons could influence students' motivation compared with a more traditional approach. The data suggest a generally positive effect on perceived motivation and engagement. Many students described the unit as more engaging, more accessible and more closely connected

to their own experience. However, this effect was not shared by all students, and the study does not provide a direct quantitative pre/post measure of motivational change. The conclusion should therefore remain cautious: the intervention appears to have supported motivation for many students, but it cannot be said to have increased motivation in a measurable or universal way.

The second research question concerned the relationship between motivation and learning outcomes. The results do not show a direct or linear relationship. Students in the experimental group often reported positive motivational effects, but this did not translate into stronger final essay scores. This suggests that motivation may support participation, confidence and willingness to engage with a text, while formal written performance also depends on other factors.

The third research question asked what differences emerged in learning outcomes between the experimental class and the comparison groups, and how they could be interpreted in the light of the different teaching experiences. The differences run against the experimental class: 4AL obtained the lowest mean and the highest number of insufficient marks, while 3AL, younger and with a shorter preparation, obtained the best results. In terms of final written performance, therefore, the study provides no evidence that the song-based unit was more effective; the most plausible reading, developed in Section 5.2, is that the marks reflect previous competence, an assessment-oriented attitude and, in the case of 3AL, a more compact preparation more than the teaching unit itself; previous training in the essay format, which 4AL and 5AM had received and 3AL had not, does not account for them. In terms of perceived accessibility, participation, emotional involvement and willingness to interpret literary texts, however, the questionnaire suggests a positive contribution. The mixed approach therefore appears most useful not as a replacement for traditional teaching, but as a way of supporting the initial and interpretative stages of literary learning.

Overall, songs did not produce a clear improvement in formal assessment results, but they often helped students enter the literary text with greater involvement. Their value seems to lie mainly in mediation: they can reduce the initial distance between students and literature, activate personal and emotional responses and create opportunities for discussion. These effects become educationally meaningful when they are followed by

close reading, teacher guidance and explicit practice in analytical writing. This is consistent with Paran's conclusion that "providing adequate direction and clear scaffolding is vital", and that this scaffolding "more often than not … is provided by the teacher", both in how the task is set up and in how the teacher reacts to the way the discussion is going (2008, 490): the effectiveness of literary teaching depends not only on the text itself, but also on the pedagogical approach through which students meet it. The most useful conclusion of the study is therefore not that songs are more effective than traditional methods, but that they can become a useful part of a varied and carefully structured approach to literary education.

Chapter 6 - Conclusions and Future Developments

6.1. Conclusions

This study aimed to understand whether the use of songs in a unit on Romantic poetry could influence students' motivation, participation and perception of literary texts in a fourth-year *liceo linguistico* class. It also aimed to establish whether this possible effect could be found in the quality of students' written interpretation.

As regards motivation and participation, the results are generally positive. Sixteen students out of twenty-one described the unit as more engaging than a usual lesson, and eleven students said that the songs had helped them to understand the poems better. The results concerning written performance are different. The experimental class obtained the lowest average result among the three groups and also had the highest number of marks below six. For this reason, the data do not show an improvement in written performance. As for the third question, concerning the possible causes of the differences between the classes, the data do not allow them to be attributed to the teaching unit. They seem to depend more on previous competence and on the students' attitude towards assessment. Previous training in essay writing does not seem to explain these differences either, since the class with the best results had never received specific training in this format.

The contribution of this study is therefore limited but specific. Previous research on the use of songs in language teaching has mainly focused on vocabulary learning, motivation and engagement. Less attention has been given to what happens when students move from language learning to the more complex tasks involved in the study of literature in a foreign language, such as interpreting a poem and expressing an interpretation in writing. In this study, the greater involvement observed during the unit did not lead to better results in the final written task. Motivation seemed to be influenced, especially in relation to what Dörnyei defines as the learning experience, while written performance remained more stable. This is understandable, since writing and literary interpretation are competences that are developed over a longer period of time and cannot easily be changed through one teaching unit.

In this sense, the warning from Cortiana discussed in Chapter 2 is particularly relevant: multimodal activities may remain only a pleasant experience if they are not clearly

connected again to the disciplinary task. In this unit, this connection was attempted through guided analysis worksheets. The students generally understood the songs as a preparation for the literary texts and not simply as a moment of entertainment. However, the final marks suggest that this kind of preparation does not automatically lead to better performance in a complex written task.

Some practical indications can also be drawn from this experience. Songs seem to be especially useful in the phase before reading, which is also the moment in which the students themselves considered them most helpful. Another important element was the possibility for students to choose the songs themselves, within criteria established by the teacher and with the obligation to explain their choice. In this way, listening became part of the interpretative process. Finally, the connection between the song and the literary text should remain clear throughout the activity. The students seemed to appreciate variety, but they also needed structure and guidance. In fact, some of the activities they valued most were not necessarily the easiest ones, but those in which the task was demanding and clearly organised.

There are also aspects of learning that the instruments used in this study could not fully capture. Some of them are easier to measure, such as lexical learning or written performance, while others concern the way students participate in the literary experience, share interpretations and gradually become more active readers. Giusti argues that sharing literary works can transform the classroom into a "comunità di pratiche narrative" and that songs, films and audiobooks can help to create this community, not only to motivate students (Giusti 2020, 96-97). In 4AL, students created a shared song bank, discussed their interpretations in groups and recorded podcasts for one another. Giannoli expresses a similar idea when she writes that "non si tratta dell'utilizzo di questa o quella tecnologia o metodologia, ma soprattutto di cambiare l'approccio degli studenti nello stare a scuola: non più come spettatori 'zitti ed attenti', ma da attori protagonisti" (Giannoli 2018, 44). These aspects are more difficult to reduce to marks or questionnaire answers, but this does not make them less relevant to the learning process.

The experience also changed the position of the teacher. Planning a unit in order to observe what happened in it, rather than to cover a portion of the syllabus, meant taking the position Stenhouse describes when he writes that "it is not enough that teachers' work

should be studied: they need to study it themselves" (Stenhouse 1975, 143). Stenhouse associates this stance with what he calls the extended professional, whose outstanding characteristic is "a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures" (1975, 144). Seen in this light, the unit described here was not only a teaching proposal but also a way of testing ideas in a classroom, and the work proved more congenial than a traditional sequence of lectures on Romanticism would have been.

What can be said is that, in one real classroom, songs chosen by the students and included in a structured teaching path made the first approach to two demanding poems easier and more engaging. Their main value seems to lie precisely in this first phase of contact with the literary text.

6.2. Limitations and Future Developments

This study has a number of limitations, which also suggest how a similar unit could be designed and studied more effectively on another occasion. First of all, the comparison would have been more reliable with a parallel class of the same year and pathway as the experimental group, which was not possible in the present context for the reasons explained in Section 4.1.

The measurement of motivation could also be made more precise. The two questionnaires used in this research did not have exactly the same purpose. The initial questionnaire was mainly intended to identify students' needs, preferences and previous experiences of literature lessons, whereas the final one encouraged them to reflect on the activities they had completed. This provided useful qualitative information, but did not allow for a direct comparison of motivation before and after the intervention. A future study could therefore include a limited number of identical questions in both questionnaires. Three items, for instance, could be repeated word for word on the same five-point scale: "Literature lessons in English are interesting", "I find the literary texts we read in English difficult" and "Songs can help me understand a literary text". The third would be the most informative, since before the unit songs were ranked last among the

activities that help comprehension. This is the procedure followed by Schrijvers et al. (2019), who measured students' motivation for literature education before and after the intervention with the same instrument. Open-ended questions should nevertheless be retained, as they gave students the opportunity to explain their responses in their own words. Another limitation concerns how many students answered. Both questionnaires were anonymous and voluntary, and only fourteen of the twenty-two students of the experimental class completed the first one. The starting point described in Section 5.1 is therefore based on the students who chose to answer, and the comparison between before and after should be read with this in mind.

Time was another important limitation. The unit lasted approximately one month, which was long enough to observe how students reacted to the activities, but probably too short to identify meaningful changes in a complex ability such as literary essay writing. A longer project could follow the same students across several literary units. It could also combine song-based activities with more regular and systematic writing practice, making it easier to understand whether the initial engagement produced by the songs eventually affects written performance. Schaeffer criticises the two exercises that dominate writing at school, the essay and the commentary, because neither of them "mette in relazione la scrittura con la vita vissuta (o immaginata) dell'individuo", and because both are designed "per premiare il virtuosismo nel maneggiare certe regole e il carattere brillante delle argomentazioni, e non per valorizzare l'atto di scrittura e la sua stessa capacità di trasformazione esistenziale e sociale" (Schaeffer 2014, 58). The final task of this unit belongs to that family. The format was not a free choice: in the final years of the *liceo* the written work is shaped by the examination the students will sit. In the first two years that constraint does not yet apply, and there the kind of writing Schaeffer defends could find more room. The unit therefore worked on one thing, the personal involvement of the students, and the final task measured another, their ability to organise a written argument; the questionnaires were the only instrument that looked where the unit was working.

A further limitation concerns the role of the teacher-researcher, who designed the unit, taught all three classes and assessed all the essays. The shared grid and the questionnaires limit, but do not remove, the subjectivity involved; a future study would benefit from a second, independent assessor for the final essays.

One question this study can only raise concerns the classes themselves. A class changes from one year to the next, in its composition and in its attitude to school work, and two classes are never fully comparable. Research carried out in real classrooms therefore has to balance two requirements: keeping the conditions of the intervention as similar as possible, and taking into account differences that belong to the groups and not to the teaching.

This experience also suggests a practical development within the school itself. The regulation on school autonomy establishes that schools, "singolarmente o tra loro associate", exercise their autonomy in research, experimentation and development, which includes "l'innovazione metodologica e disciplinare" and "gli scambi di informazioni, esperienze e materiali didattici" (D.P.R. 275/1999, art. 6). Materials of this kind are in fact produced in many schools by groups of teachers working together in the subject department, and a unit like the one described here could be documented and shared in that way, so that other teachers of English could adapt and test it in their own classes.

Another possible development concerns *Educazione civica*, the cross-curricular civic education introduced in Italian schools by Law 92/2019 and now regulated by the guidelines adopted with Ministerial Decree no. 183 of 7 September 2024. These guidelines organise the subject around three areas, *Costituzione*, *Sviluppo economico e sostenibilità* and *Cittadinanza digitale*, and set national learning outcomes for each type of school. They also state that these areas are "già impliciti nelle discipline previste nei curricoli dei diversi percorsi scolastici", and among their examples they include the contribution of the "dibattito filosofico e letterario" to education in legality and in the rights of the person (D.M. 183/2024, 6). Literature, in other words, is expected to take part in civic education, and not as an external addition.

A unit of the kind described here lends itself to that work. Songs and literary texts often address social issues that continue to be relevant, including inequality, working conditions, discrimination, migration, environmental problems and individual rights. In the unit described in this study, the work on Blake and the Industrial Revolution led quite naturally to discussion of poverty, child labour and social inequality, while the same texts also open onto the second area of the guidelines: the transformation of the landscape, the exploitation of land and resources, and the relation between a city and the people who

move through it. Wordsworth's sonnet is written at dawn, when London lies "silent, bare" and its air is "smokeless", and the description of an empty city can be read today against overcrowding and mass tourism, a question these students meet in their own town, since Riva del Garda is a major tourist destination in the summer months. Since the subject is taught across the curriculum by the whole class council, within the thirty-three hours established by Law 92/2019, a foreign language teacher can contribute a specific part of the shared plan: the reading of the texts and the discussion carried out in English, while history, philosophy or law cover the institutional side of the same theme. The songs chosen by the students would also bring into that work the way these questions are voiced today, outside the classroom. Song-based activities may therefore help connect literary and civic education, provided that the connection emerges from the texts themselves and is tied to the outcomes set by the guidelines.

On the didactic level, a natural continuation of the unit would be a second one built on student agency. Having explored, through Blake and Wordsworth, how a city can be experienced as a place of suffering or of harmony depending on circumstances and point of view, students could be asked to move from interpretation to action through a compito di realtà, an authentic task in which they document a place of their own town as it is lived by those who find it hostile and propose how it could be changed. The unit described here would then become the reading phase of a longer path, in which the literary text is not only understood but used.

Literary analysis remains central, but students can also be helped to recognise that literary works still provide ways of thinking about problems that affect contemporary society.

The most realistic development of this project would therefore be the creation of small and flexible teaching proposals rather than a fixed method. Teachers could adapt them to different texts, classes and learning objectives. The experience described in this study suggests that songs are most useful when they form part of a broader teaching path. They allow students to bring their own voices and cultural experiences into the classroom, making literary works more meaningful and relevant not only as objects of academic study, but also as resources to better understand their own lives and the world around them.

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Appendix A. Pre-Unit Questionnaire

A.1. Section 1: Background Information

1. Class. Please write your class.

[Short open answer - required]

2. Age. Please write your age.

[Short open answer - required]

3. What is your approximate CEFR level in English?

[Single choice - required]

- B1
- B1+
- B2
- Higher than B2
- Mothertongue

A.2. Section 2: Motivation and Interest

4. How interested are you generally in English as a school subject?

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

5. How interesting do you usually find English literature lessons?

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral

- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

6. How difficult do you usually find the literary texts studied in class?

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

A.3. Section 3: Perceived Effectiveness of Teaching Practices

7. Which activities help you understand literary texts better?

[Multiple choice - required]

- Teacher explanations
- Class discussion
- Group work
- Watching videos or film adaptations
- Visual materials (images, slides, mind maps)
- Reading the text together in class
- Listening to songs related to the text

8. Outside school, how often do you engage with English-language cultural content (songs, films, TV series, books, podcasts or social media)?

[Single choice - required]

- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

9. How much does it help you understand a literary text when the teacher explains the historical period or background before reading it?

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

10. How helpful is it when the teacher explains a literary text through a traditional lecture while students mainly listen and take notes?

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

A.4. Section 4: Learning Preferences and Engagement

11. What do you think is most important when studying English literature?

[Single choice - required]

- Understanding the themes and message of the text
- Learning historical and cultural information
- Analysing language and literary techniques
- Expressing personal interpretations
- Learning the information needed to pass a test

12. Literature lessons are more meaningful for me when I can connect the texts to real-life experiences or contemporary culture.

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

13. Literature lessons are more engaging when materials other than the textbook are used (videos, images, music, etc.).

[Likert scale 1-5 - required]

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

14. When analysing a literary text in class, which approach do you prefer?

[Single choice]

- Working together with classmates to complete activities proposed by the teacher
- An interactive class discussion where students can speak and contribute if they want

- The teacher explaining the text to the class

15. In your opinion, what could make literature lessons more interesting or more effective for students?

[Long open answer - required]

Appendix B. Post-Intervention Questionnaire

B.1. Introductory Text of the Form

Introduction: This questionnaire is anonymous and is part of a research project about the teaching of English literature in Italian upper secondary schools. The aim of this questionnaire is not to evaluate your grades or language level, but to understand your opinions, feelings and perceptions about the activities carried out during the literature module on the city of London in Romantic poetry. Please answer honestly.

B.2. Questions

1. Did the use of songs help you understand the literary texts better?

[Single choice - required]

- Very much
- Quite a lot
- A little
- Not really
- Not at all

2. The songs mainly helped me to:

[Multiple choice - required]

- Understand the themes
- Understand emotions and atmosphere
- Understand the social context
- Remember the texts better
- Feel more involved during the lessons
- Participate more actively
- Connect literature with the present
- Develop personal interpretations

3. In which phase of the lesson were songs most useful?

[Multiple choice]

- Introduction to the topic
- Understanding the text
- Group discussion
- Writing activities
- Revision

- They were not particularly useful

4. Multimedia materials (songs, images and videos) made literature lessons:

[Multiple choice]

- More engaging
- Easier to understand
- More memorable
- More personal
- More motivating
- More enjoyable
- More emotionally involving
- More confusing

5. Compared to more traditional literature lessons, this teaching unit felt:

[Single choice - required]

- Much more engaging
- More engaging
- Similar
- Less engaging
- Much less engaging

6. Do you think songs can help students approach poetry and literature?

[Single choice - required]

- Definitely
- To some extent
- Only occasionally
- Not really
- Not at all

7. Explain your answer.

[Short open answer]

8. During this teaching unit, I felt:

[Multiple choice - required]

- More motivated
- More emotionally involved
- More confident
- More interested in literature
- More willing to participate
- More comfortable expressing my ideas
- More connected to the texts
- More creative

9. I found it easier to interpret literary texts when:

[Multiple choice - required]

- I could connect them to my personal experiences
- We discussed them together in class
- Songs or images were used
- The teacher guided us step by step
- I could compare different perspectives
- The themes felt relevant to modern life

10. This teaching unit made the English literature classes feel:

[Multiple choice]

- Slightly more interesting
- More meaningful
- More connected to real life
- More emotionally powerful
- Easier to understand
- Less distant

11. After this teaching unit, do you feel more confident in:

[Grid, single choice per row]

Competenza	*yes*	*partly*	*no*
Understanding poetry			
Identifying themes and atmosphere			
Comparing two literary texts			
Expressing personal interpretations			
Participating in literary discussions			
Writing a comparative essay			
Using textual evidence			

Table B.1 - Grid for question 11 (transposed with respect to the original).

12. Which activity from this teaching unit did you enjoy the most? Why?

[Long open answer - required]

13. Was there a moment during the lessons when literature felt particularly meaningful or emotionally powerful to you? Why?

[Long open answer - required]

14. Is there anything you would change or improve about this teaching unit? What? Why?

[Long open answer - required]

15. Did this teaching unit ever make you think differently about places, emotions or situations in your own life? Explain please.

[Long open answer - required]

Appendix C. Teaching Materials: Student Booklet for the Unit *From Song to Poem*

The booklet reproduced in this appendix is the material distributed to the students of 4AL during the teaching unit described in Chapter 4. It is reproduced in full, with only typographical adaptations to the layout of this thesis.

C.1. Structure of the Unit

From Song to Poem. Places, songs and two visions of London. A learning journey towards William Blake's *London* and William Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

No.	*Stage*	*Content*
1	NOTICE	Places, mood and sensory details
2	CONNECT	Songs and literature
3	PREDICT	The Verve's *History*
4	INVESTIGATE	Songs and the Industrial Revolution
5	READ	Blake's *London*
6	COOPERATE	Wordsworth: expert groups and jigsaw
7	COMMUNICATE	Create a revision podcast

Table C.1 - The seven stages of the teaching unit.

C.2. Stage 1 - Places, mood and perception

Look closely before you interpret

For each photograph, write two or three adjectives and add one sensory detail: something you could see, hear or feel.

Figure C.1 - A. Lakeside at sunrise, Riva del Garda. Source: HolidayCheck.

Mood: _____

I can see / hear / feel: _____

Figure C.2 - B. Our school, Liceo “Andrea Maffei”. Source: Manelli Group.

Mood: _____

I can see / hear / feel: _____

Figure C.3 - C. A mountain path in Trentino. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Mood: _____

I can see / hear / feel: _____

Figure C.4 - D. A polluted industrial landscape. Source: EcoKroki.

Mood: _____

I can see / hear / feel: _____

From impression to language

Figure C.5 - E. Nature and the city. Source: Unsplash.

Mood adjectives: _____

One sensory detail: _____

> *Mood bank:* peaceful - inspiring - welcoming - free - hopeful - romantic - nostalgic - lonely - tense - oppressive - polluted - crowded - noisy - alienating - threatening - overwhelming

Pair challenge: negotiate your interpretation

Compare your first impressions. For each image, agree on two words that fit best and one word that does not fit at all. Be ready to explain why.

Image	*Two words that fit best*	*One word that does not fit*
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		

Table C.2 - Grid for the pair negotiation of mood-bank words.

C.3. Stage 1 - Choose, justify, reframe

Small-group challenge

Your group will receive one emotional situation. Choose the most suitable place, explain the mood it creates and justify your decision with visual and sensory evidence.

> *Situations:* wanting to be alone - looking for a romantic place - escaping noise and crowds - meeting new people - thinking about an important decision

Role	*Task*
Moderator	keeps the discussion moving
Note-taker	records the group's ideas
Decision-maker	helps the group reach a choice
Spokesperson	presents the final decision

Table C.3 - Roles assigned within each group.

Our situation:

The place we chose and the mood it creates:

Evidence from the photograph:

Caption Challenge: Two Moods, One Place

Imagine sending the same photograph to a close friend on WhatsApp. Write two captions that create opposite versions of the place.

Caption 1 - positive, peaceful or inspired point of view:

Caption 2 - sad, lonely or overwhelmed point of view:

C.4. Stage 2 - A song meets literature

Homework: start from your own music

Choose a song you like or already know. Connect it to a literary text, author, character, theme, setting or situation. The aim is not to find the “correct” song, but to make a convincing connection.

> *Possible directions:* story - character - conflict - atmosphere - place - historical period - symbol - emotional situation

Song title and artist:

Link to the song or video:

Literary text / author / character / theme:

Explain the connection in your own words:

One significant lyric (a short quotation only):

Why did you choose this song?

C.5. Stage 3 - Watch first, listen later

The Verve - History

> *Band profile:* Who are The Verve? The Verve were an English alternative-rock band formed in Wigan in 1990. Led by singer Richard Ashcroft, they became one of the best-known British bands of the 1990s. *History* was released in 1995 on the album *A Northern Soul*. You may also know their later songs *Bitter Sweet Symphony* and *The Drugs Don't Work*.

> *Official video:* The Verve, *History* (official music video). First viewing: your teacher will play the video without sound.

Who might the central figure be? Where is he?

What is he doing? Does he seem to have a clear destination or purpose?

Which visual details create the atmosphere?

What emotions seem to emerge? Choose three words and support them with visual evidence.

What might the song be about? Formulate a first hypothesis.

Build the speaker's voice: complete the patterns

Use what you observed in the muted video. At this stage, different answers are possible: make your choices consistent with the images and atmosphere.

I am _____ -ing.

I am _____ -ing.

In every _____

In every _____

In every _____ I see _____

Compare and notice

Which verbs and emotions recur across the class?

How does repetition affect the voice and atmosphere?

Does the central figure merely observe the city, or does he also interpret it through his emotions?

> *Keep this pattern:* Save your answers. You will meet a related pattern when the literary text is introduced.

C.6. Stage 4 - Songs, industrialisation and urban life

Build a shared song bank

Choose a song that you can connect to one or more of these themes: alienation, pollution, social inequality, criticism of industrial society or urban life. Your choice may come from your own listening, a family suggestion or a deliberate search.

> *Shared Google Form:* Each student submits one entry. Check the link and spelling before sending your response.

Song title and artist:

Video link:

Theme(s): alienation / pollution / social inequality / criticism of urban or industrial life:

Explain the connection:

One significant lyric (short quotation):

What evidence makes this song a strong choice?

Song contest: from choice to judgement

Round 1 - work in pairs. Present your two songs to each other. Compare the strength of the connections and select one song to take into the group round.

Criterion	*Song 1*	*Song 2*
Clear link to at least one key theme		
Specific evidence from lyrics, sound or imagery		
Convincing representation of industrial or urban life		
Ability to explain the choice clearly		

Table C.4 - Criteria for the pair selection of the song.

The song selected by our pair:

Why is its connection stronger?

Round 2 - join another pair. Compare the songs that survived Round 1. Negotiate one final choice and prepare a short presentation for the class.

> *Your presentation:* Introduce the song - identify the main theme(s) - quote or describe evidence - explain the atmosphere - justify why it deserves the class vote.

Our final song:

Our central claim:

Evidence we will use:

Present, listen and vote

Do not vote only for the song you like best. Vote for the most convincing representation of a gloomy, dark and critical vision of the city and society.

Group / song	*Main theme(s)*	*Evidence and atmosphere*

Table C.5 - Class listening notes: grid for listening to the presentations.

My vote and reason:

Across the song bank, which images, words and themes recurred most often?

> *Visual prize:* The winning group receives a print of a Gustave Doré engraving of nineteenth-century London. Observe how smoke, crowds, poverty and architecture construct a particular vision of the city.

C.7. Stage 5 - From preparation to close reading: Blake's *London*

> *Look back first:* Recall the muted video, repeated structures, captions and song bank. Which ideas might help you read a poem about London?

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

William Blake, *London*, in *Songs of Experience* (1794).

First reading

Underline repeated words or structures. Circle verbs of movement and perception. Box words connected with institutions or power.

What did you recognise from the earlier activities?

Write three words for the poem's atmosphere.

Guided analysis - stanza 1: movement, control and visible suffering

The speaker uses the verb *wander*. What does this suggest about his destination or purpose compared with the people he meets?

Blake repeats *charter'd* in the first two lines. What does this reveal about the streets and even the River Thames?

The speaker *marks* faces that carry *marks*. Explain the two meanings. What do they suggest about the city's impact on its citizens?

Guided analysis - stanza 2: restrictions and invisible chains

The speaker hears a *ban* in every voice. What legal or social restrictions might this word represent?

Are the *mind-forg'd manacles* physical or psychological? How are these chains created and maintained?

Guided analysis - stanza 3: institutions, victims and warning

Explain the double meaning of *black'ning Church*. How can it connect industrial pollution with Blake's criticism of organised religion?

The soldier's blood runs down the Palace walls. Which major event in France in 1789 might Blake be evoking as a warning? Who is responsible for the soldier's suffering?

Look at the first letter of each line in stanza 3. What word do they spell? Why is this hidden word important?

How does sound become a form of evidence in this stanza?

Guided analysis - stanza 4: private life inside a damaged city

Identify the chimney-sweeper, the soldier and the harlot. Which institution or social failure does each figure represent?

Explain the oxymoron *Marriage hearse*. How does it connect a celebration of life with death? Consider women's legal position and the spread of disease.

What does the final image suggest about the way suffering passes from one generation to the next?

Critical reflection

Blake's poem has a rigid structure, an ABAB rhyme scheme and a steady, repetitive rhythm. Could this formal control reflect the control imposed on the city and its inhabitants? Explain.

C.8. Stage 6 - A different London: Wordsworth's sonnet

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear

The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:

Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

William Wordsworth, *Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802*.

What is your immediate impression of this London?

Which details contrast most strongly with Blake's city?

Which words make the city appear close to nature?

> *How the jigsaw works:* 1. Join your expert group and investigate one part of the poem. 2. Prepare clear notes and textual evidence. 3. Move into a new

> mixed group. 4. Teach your section and learn from the other experts. 5. Reconstruct the whole poem together.

> *Your responsibility:* Become the group's specialist. Use precise quotations, agree on an interpretation and prepare to teach this part to classmates who have not analysed it.

Expert group A - lines 1-4: first vision and personification

What does the opening statement suggest about the speaker's attitude?

Why would a person who passes by be "dull […] of soul"?

How is the city personified through the image of a garment?

Choose two words that establish the tone. Explain their effect.

Expert summary (two or three sentences): what must the mixed group understand about your section?

Evidence card - key quotation:

_____

What it shows: _____

Expert group B - lines 5-8: the city opens to nature

How are the buildings listed? What impression does the list create?

Explain “silent, bare”. Does “bare” seem negative here?

How do “fields”, “sky” and “smokeless air” change the identity of London?

How does this section contrast with Blake’s polluted, controlled city?

Expert summary (two or three sentences): what must the mixed group understand about your section?

Evidence card - key quotation:

_____

What it shows: _____

Expert group C - lines 9-12: light, calm and the river

How does the morning sun transform the urban landscape?

Why does the speaker compare London with “valley, rock, or hill”?

What is unusual about the depth of calm he experiences?

Explain “The river glideth at his own sweet will”. How does this Thames differ from Blake’s “charter’d Thames”?

Expert summary (two or three sentences): what must the mixed group understand about your section?

Evidence card - key quotation:

_____

What it shows: _____

Expert group D - lines 13-14: sleeping city, mighty heart

Why do the houses “seem asleep”?

Explain the metaphor of London as a “mighty heart”.

Why is the stillness striking in such a large city?

What final emotional response does the speaker communicate?

Expert summary (two or three sentences): what must the mixed group understand about your section?

Evidence card - key quotation:

_____

What it shows: _____

Jigsaw: reconstruct the whole sonnet

In the new mixed group, each expert teaches their section. Ask questions and record the essential information. Your goal is not four disconnected answers, but one interpretation of the complete poem.

Section	*Expert*	*Key points and textual evidence*
A		
B		
C		
D		

Table C.6 - Grid for reconstructing the sonnet in the jigsaw group.

How does the poem move from visual observation to emotional response?

How are city and nature brought together?

Write one sentence that captures the group’s overall interpretation.

C.9. Stage 7 - Turn the jigsaw into a podcast

A revision resource for your classmates

Transform the interpretation developed by the group into a clear, connected oral explanation. The final recording will be used as revision material before the comparative essay.

> *Important:* The whole group contributes to the analysis and script. One spokesperson will make the final recording and give a coherent spoken form to the group's shared interpretation.

Item	*Content*
Podcast title	
Group members	
Spokesperson	
Audience	Our classmates
One-sentence thesis	

Table C.7 - Podcast production sheet.

Section	*Instructions*
Opening	Introduce the poem and your main interpretation.
The movement of the poem	Connect the four sections; do not list them mechanically.
Textual evidence	Use short quotations and explain their effects.
Connection	Explain city, nature, atmosphere and the speaker's response.
Closing	Summarise Wordsworth's vision of London.

Table C.8 - Structure of the oral explanation.

Script / speaking notes:

Listen, revise, compare

Listen actively. Record ideas that will help you prepare the final comparative essay on Blake's and Wordsworth's representations of London.

Element	*Blake's London*	*Wordsworth's Composed upon Westminster Bridge*
Atmosphere		
Speaker's perspective		
City and nature		
People and society		
Movement / stillness		
Key textual evidence		

Table C.9 - Comparative listening grid for the podcasts.

The most important similarity:

The most important contrast:

A possible comparative thesis:

C.10. Image and Material Credits

Photographs: sunrise on the lakeside of Riva del Garda, HolidayCheck; *Liceo* “Andrea Maffei”, Manelli Group; mountain path near Malga Tassulla, Wikimedia Commons; polluted industrial landscape, EcoKroki; urban park and skyline, Unsplash. Video: The Verve VEVO, YouTube.

Appendix D. Task and Marking Grid for the Comparative Essay

D.1. Task

You have 50 minutes. You can use the text of the two poems and your monolingual dictionary. Write at least 300 words, following the IELTS essay standard.

Compare the representation of the city of London in William Blake's *London* (1794) and William Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802* (1807). Discuss how the two poets construct their visions of the city, considering the speaker's point of view, the atmosphere, the imagery and the language used, and relate these choices to the Romantic sensibility and to the historical context. Support your analysis with relevant references to the texts and organise your essay into an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion. Write at least 300 words.

D.2. Marking Grid

Indicatore (MIUR)	**Dimensioni e descrittori di qualità**	**Livello eccellente (9-10)**	**Livello buono (7-8)**	**Livello sufficiente (6)**	**Livello insufficiente (<6)**
Comprensione del testo	Capacità di comprendere e interpretare testi poetici cogliendone temi, atmosfere, prospettive soggettive e riferimenti storico-culturali, mobilitando conoscenze letterarie e competenze interpretative.	Lo studente comprende in modo approfondito come Blake e Wordsworth costruiscano due rappresentazioni profondamente diverse della città e dell'esperienza umana. Riconosce il ruolo della percezione soggettiva, dell'atmosfera poetica e del rapporto tra uomo e natura,	Lo studente comprende con chiarezza le principali differenze tra le rappresentazioni poetiche della città nei due testi. Riconosce il diverso atteggiamento di Blake e Wordsworth nei confronti della realtà urbana e coglie alcuni aspetti del critica sociale e della sensibilità romantica presenti nei	Lo studente comprende i contenuti essenziali dei testi e riconosce alcune differenze fondamentali tra le rappresentazioni della città proposte da Blake e Wordsworth. Individua in modo semplice alcuni elementi legati alle emozioni, alla soggettività romantica o al rapporto con la	Lo studente mostra una comprensione parziale o superficiale dei testi e fatica a riconoscere le differenti rappresentazioni della città proposte dai due autori. L'analisi risulta frammentaria o prevalentemente descrittiva, con difficoltà nell'individuare temi romantici, elementi di critica

Indicatore (MIUR)	Dimensioni e descrittori di qualità	Livello eccellente (9-10)	Livello buono (7-8)	Livello sufficiente (6)	Livello insufficiente (<6)
		collegando i testi ai valori e alle tensioni del Romanticismo e al contesto storico-sociale della Londra industriale.	componimenti, anche se non sempre in modo approfondito o pienamente equilibrato. Individua inoltre il ruolo delle emozioni, della percezione soggettiva e del rapporto con la natura nella costruzione delle due prospettive poetiche.	natura, ma l'analisi risulta prevalentemente descrittiva e poco approfondita. I riferimenti al contesto storico-sociale o agli aspetti critici presenti nei testi sono limitati o solo parzialmente sviluppati.	sociale, il ruolo delle emozioni o il rapporto tra uomo, natura e realtà urbana. I riferimenti al contesto storico-letterario sono assenti, errati o poco pertinenti.
Interpretazione del testo	Capacità di elaborare interpretazioni personali, mobilitare conoscenze letterarie e analizzare criticamente il testo.	Lo studente elabora interpretazioni personali, coerenti e approfondite delle due rappresentazioni poetiche della città, sostenendo l'analisi attraverso riferimenti testuali e citazioni pertinenti. L'interpretazione collega efficacemente immagini, atmosfera, critica sociale e sensibilità romantica alla prospettiva soggettiva dei due autori.	Lo studente confronta in modo chiaro le diverse rappresentazioni della città proposte da Blake e Wordsworth, sostenendo le proprie osservazioni con riferimenti testuali pertinenti. Riconosce come immagini, tono e atmosfera contribuiscano a costruire due visioni differenti della realtà urbana: più critica e oppressiva in Blake, più armoniosa e contemplativa in Wordsworth. L'interpretazione mostra una buona comprensione della soggettività romantica e del rapporto tra emozione, paesaggio	Lo studente riconosce alcune differenze fondamentali tra la rappresentazione della città in Blake e in Wordsworth e utilizza occasionalmente riferimenti al testo per sostenere le proprie osservazioni. L'analisi tende però a rimanere descrittiva o semplificata: vengono individuati elementi evidenti, come il tono negativo di Blake o la visione più positiva di Wordsworth, senza sviluppare pienamente il rapporto tra emozione, percezione soggettiva, paesaggio urbano e sensibilità	Lo studente fatica a distinguere le differenti rappresentazioni della città presenti nei due testi e tende a limitarsi a osservazioni generiche o poco pertinenti. I riferimenti al testo sono assenti, scarsi o utilizzati in modo improprio. L'analisi non riesce a collegare atmosfera, emozioni, prospettiva soggettiva o critica sociale alla visione romantica dei due autori, mostrando una comprensione superficiale o frammentaria dei componimenti.

Indicatore (MIUR)	Dimensioni e descrittori di qualità	Livello eccellente (9-10)	Livello buono (7-8)	Livello sufficiente (6)	Livello insufficiente (<6)
			e percezione individuale, pur senza sviluppare tutti gli aspetti in modo approfondito.	romantica.	
Produzione scritta: aderenza alla traccia e argomentazione	Capacità di sviluppare un comparative essay coerente con la traccia proposta, costruendo un'argomentazione chiara e sostenuta da riferimenti testuali pertinenti, evitando osservazioni soggettive non argomentate o giudizi personali estranei al registro accademico richiesto.	Lo studente sviluppa un confronto organico e approfondito tra i due testi, mantenendo costantemente il focus sulla rappresentazione della città nella poesia romantica. L'argomentazione è chiara, ben strutturata e sostenuta da riferimenti testuali efficaci. Le osservazioni personali vengono integrate in forma analitica e critica, senza scivolare in commenti soggettivi o impressionistici estranei alla tipologia del comparative essay.	Lo studente sviluppa un confronto chiaro e pertinente tra *London* e *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*, rispettando generalmente la traccia proposta. L'argomentazione risulta comprensibile e sostenuta da riferimenti testuali adeguati, anche se alcune osservazioni possono risultare più descrittive che analitiche. Eventuali commenti personali non compromettono il carattere argomentativo dell'elaborato.	Lo studente affronta la traccia in modo essenziale, proponendo un confronto semplice tra i due testi. L'argomentazione risulta lineare ma poco sviluppata e i riferimenti testuali sono limitati o utilizzati in modo non sempre efficace. L'elaborato tende talvolta a scivolare verso opinioni personali ("I prefer…", "I like…") o commenti generici, mostrando una comprensione parziale delle convenzioni del comparative analytical essay.	Lo studente non sviluppa un confronto coerente con la traccia oppure si limita a descrizioni generiche dei testi senza costruire una vera argomentazione. I riferimenti testuali sono assenti, scarsi o non pertinenti. L'elaborato assume frequentemente la forma di opinioni personali, preferenze soggettive o commenti non supportati, senza rispettare le caratteristiche richieste dal comparative analytical essay.
Produzione scritta: organizzazione e coerenza	Capacità di strutturare il comparative essay in modo logico, organico e coeso attraverso un uso efficace di introduction, body and conclusion,	L'elaborato presenta una struttura chiara, organica e pienamente coerente. Introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion risultano ben bilanciati e collegati in modo	L'elaborato è organizzato in modo chiaro e generalmente coerente. La struttura del comparative essay è riconoscibile e i connettori vengono utilizzati in modo	L'elaborato presenta una struttura semplice ma comprensibile, con una parziale distinzione tra introduction, body and conclusion. I connettori sono limitati, ripetitivi o talvolta usati	L'elaborato appare disorganizzato o frammentario, privo di una chiara struttura argomentativa. Introduction, body and conclusion risultano assenti, confusi o poco

Indicatore (MIUR)	Dimensioni e descrittori di qualità	Livello eccellente (9-10)	Livello buono (7-8)	Livello sufficiente (6)	Livello insufficiente (<6)
	connettori testuali appropriati e un registro linguistico adeguato al contesto argomentativo e accademico richiesto.	fluido attraverso un uso efficace dei connettori testuali. Le idee si sviluppano progressivamente e con coerenza logica, mantenendo un registro appropriato al comparative analytical essay.	adeguato, anche se non sempre vario o pienamente efficace. Il registro risulta complessivamente appropriato e il discorso si sviluppa con sufficiente linearità.	in modo poco efficace. La progressione delle idee risulta essenziale e il registro non sempre è pienamente adeguato al contesto del comparative analytical essay.	distinguibili. I connettori sono assenti o utilizzati impropriamente e il registro risulta inadeguato o troppo informale rispetto alla tipologia richiesta.
Correttezza linguistica ed efficacia comunicativa	Correttezza e complessità grammaticale, varietà e appropriatezza lessicale, uso del registro formale e capacità di esprimere interpretazioni e argomentazioni in modo chiaro ed efficace all'interno del comparative analytical essay.	Lo studente utilizza strutture grammaticali corrette e articolate, mostrando sicurezza nell'impiego di forme sintattiche complesse. Il lessico è ampio, preciso e appropriato all'analisi letteraria, con un uso efficace della terminologia critica. Il registro è costantemente formale e adeguato al comparative analytical essay. Eventuali errori risultano minimi e non compromettono in alcun modo chiarezza ed efficacia comunicativa.	Lo studente utilizza generalmente strutture grammaticali corrette, mostrando un discreto tentativo di varietà e complessità sintattica. Il lessico risulta appropriato e sufficientemente vario, con alcuni riferimenti al linguaggio dell'analisi letteraria. Il registro è prevalentemente adeguato al contesto argomentativo, pur con occasionali semplificazioni o imprecisioni linguistiche che non compromettono la comunicazione.	Lo studente utilizza strutture grammaticali prevalentemente semplici e ripetitive, con limitati tentativi di complessità sintattica. Il lessico risulta essenziale ma generalmente comprensibile, anche se talvolta poco preciso o non pienamente adeguato all'analisi letteraria. Il registro alterna formulazioni appropriate a espressioni troppo semplici o vicine al linguaggio informale. Gli errori grammaticali e lessicali possono essere frequenti, ma non impediscono la comprensione generale del testo.	Lo studente mostra un controllo limitato delle strutture grammaticali, con errori frequenti che compromettono chiarezza e comprensione. Le strutture sintattiche risultano semplici, ripetitive o incomplete, senza tentativi significativi di complessità linguistica. Il lessico è povero, impreciso o poco appropriato al contesto dell'analisi letteraria. Il registro risulta spesso informale o incoerente con la tipologia del comparative analytical essay, rendendo la comunicazione poco efficace o frammentaria.

Table D.1 - Marking grid for the comparative essay on Blake and Wordsworth, by indicator and band.

Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

The undersigned Arianna Zandonati, Matriculation Number 887969, enrolled at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in the Master's Degree programme in European, American and Postcolonial Languages and Literatures (English Studies), author of the final thesis *From Song to Poem: Bridging Students' Listening Habits and English Literature. A Comparison between Traditional and Multimodal Teaching in the Foreign Language Classroom*, supervisor Prof. Fabio Caon, aware of the penalties provided for by Article 76 of the Consolidated Act, Presidential Decree (D.P.R.) no. 445 of 28 December 2000, in the event of false or misleading declarations, and of the forfeiture of benefits provided for by Article 75 of the same Act, under her own personal responsibility pursuant to Articles 46 and 47 of D.P.R. no. 445 of 28 December 2000,

DECLARES

☐ that she has NOT used generative artificial intelligence technologies to support aspects of the research and writing of her final thesis;

☒ that she has used generative artificial intelligence technologies to support aspects of the research and writing of her final thesis, in particular:

- Tool: Claude Opus 5 (Anthropic), accessed through the claude.ai web interface, in September 2026. No other tools were used.
- Use of the tool:
  - ☒ revision and optimisation of texts to improve clarity and coherence;
  - ☒ generation of charts and diagrams for the presentation of data;
  - ☐ support in the automatic writing of sentences;
  - ☐ production of illustrative images to supplement the methodological part;
  - ☐ other (please specify).
- Sections/chapters concerned: Chapters 1–6 and the introductory notes to the appendices (revision and optimisation of texts); Chapter 5 (charts and diagrams).

- Verification of correctness, quality and reliability: every passage revised with the support of the tool was checked by the author against her own drafts, notes and research data and revised where necessary; all quotations and bibliographic references were verified against the original sources; charts and diagrams were checked against the data collected in the study.

FURTHER DECLARES

that all material generated by AI has been carefully checked, revised and reworked by the author, who takes full responsibility for the quality, accuracy and scientific integrity of the work.

Venice, 24 September 2026

Signature