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# Transnational Perspectives, Gender and Storytelling. Elena Ferrante, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Margaret Atwood<sup>1</sup>

**Tiziana de Rogatis**

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## Introduction

This paper is divided into this brief introduction, four sections and a conclusion. The first section (*Transnationalism, Gender and Primordialism in the Contemporary Historical-Political Context*) articulates the link between transnationalism, gender and the contemporary «primordialism»: <sup>2</sup> a historical-political category of our global context. The second section (*My «Brilliant Friend» cycle, «Americanah» and «The Handmaid's Tale»*) will examine texts by Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood, and the transnational and transmedia criterion with which they are presented. The third section (*Ferrante's, Adichie's and Atwood's posture towards storytelling and feminism*) reintroduces the link between transnationalism, gender and primordialist issues and it examines it in the texts of the three women writers. The main focus will be on their transnational «posture» <sup>3</sup> in relation to storytelling and feminism. The fourth section (*Ferrante's, Adichie's and Atwood's posture towards transnational reception and national canon*) will focus on the writers' posture towards transnational reception, which is also going to be

- 1 This article re-elaborates a keynote lecture I gave for the *Gender and Transnational Reception online conference. Mapping the Translation, Circulation and Recognition of Women's Writing in the 20th and 21th Century* (26<sup>th</sup> march, 2021), edited by Dr. Alberica Bazzoni (ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry) and Dr. Caterina Paoli (University of New England) with the support of the Institute of Modern Languages Research/Centre for the Study of Contemporary Women's Writing-CCWW, London). Together with my fellow keynote speaker Prof. Cláudia Pazos Alonso (Oxford University), who presented a talk entitled *The Transnational Dissemination and Reception of Portuguese Poetry. Florbela Espanca, Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, and Ana Luisa Amaral*, here I would like to thank Dr. Bazzoni and Dr. Paoli once again for this project, which is part of an important and broader research they have been conducting. All the links included in this essay have last been accessed on October 26, 2022.
- 2 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public Words, Minneapolis-London 1996, p. 140.
- 3 J. Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Slatkine, Genève 2007, p. 7.

analyzed from the perspective of their official websites, and towards national canons. In the conclusion, I will go back to the first section focusing on the contemporary issue of global primordialism against women's and lgbtqi+'s rights, and on the urgency to face this primordialist «backlash»<sup>4</sup> with anti-relativist and unifying links of gender and transnationalism. I will then identify these connections in three different aspects shared by Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood: the dynamic balance between storytelling and feminism; their diversified (yet in any case relevant) transmedia use of personal websites; the dynamics of rooting, circumventing and transforming the national context through the transnational dimension.

### 1. Transnationalism, gender and primordialism in the contemporary historical-political context

Transnationalism can be defined as an energy and a movement that radiate within and beyond the borders of nations. Transnationalism is a geographic, cognitive and stylistic network that intercepts and highlights positions of discontinuity, border or margin inside and outside the nation and between nations, and connects them to each other. In Vertovec's perspective, transnationalism is referring to the «multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states».<sup>5</sup> Transnational Studies model a new idea of modern languages not as an inquiry into separate nations but as the study of languages, cultures and their interactions. According to Burdett, Polezzi and Spadaro, «a transnational and translational approach» refutes «the container model of national cultures» and «stresses processes of communication within and across political boundaries».<sup>6</sup>

Transnationalism subverts both the dualism and hierarchy between disciplines, center and periphery (in a geographical and symbolic sense), as well as the dualism between high and low culture. Transnationalism also questions the dualism and hierarchy between subject and object, and its dimension and framework are therefore against false universalism. Transnational scholars cannot forsake any impersonal scientific status of knowledge, and they place themselves rather in the symmetrical and

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4 S. Faludi, *Backlash. The Undeclared War Against Women*, Vintage, London 1993.

5 S. Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, Routledge, London-New York 2009, p. 3.

6 C. Burdett, L. Polezzi, B. Spadaro, *Introduction. Transcultural Studies*, in *Transcultural Italies. Mobility, Memory and Translation*, eds. C. Burdett, L. Polezzi, B. Spadaro, Liverpool UP, Liverpool 2020, p. 8.

porous position of translators in front of the text. Scholars who create transnational networks and connections are encouraged to specify their own position and mobility on the map and what is their degree of belonging and involvement in the nation or nations from which the transnational movement under consideration originates.<sup>7</sup> Transnationalism starts with a rooting in the nation and a questioning of that same rooting. However, transnationalism is also the crucial «articulation of sameness and difference».<sup>8</sup> For these reasons, transnationalism constitutes itself as a barrier to extreme relativism and to complementary extreme identity politics. Taking up Gilroy's lesson, transnational analyses go beyond any form of purism and intercept «roots» in «routes».<sup>9</sup> Transnationalism is, as a matter of fact, a form of cosmopolitan rootedness, or – if one shifts the perspective – of «rooted cosmopolitanism»,<sup>10</sup> that means an ability to create new frames shared between nations and new forms of unhomely belonging or displaced homing within nations.

By being a structurally anti-essentialist perspective, transnationalism finds a decisive and privileged axis in subjectivisations, and in female authorial and fictional points of view.<sup>11</sup> In *Stories of Women*, Elleke Boehmer underlines that transnational feminism expresses «constant negotiations between and across boundaries, and between the particular and the universal, in order to address the dissymmetries of power that impact on women's lives».<sup>12</sup> The link between feminism and transnationalism revolves around an important question, which Françoise Lionnet had already asked in 1995 as she opened her seminal work, *Postcolonial Representations. Women, Literature, Identity*. The question is: «Can feminist theory articulate common questions for a multicultural practice?». Françoise Lionnet highlights «the nature and function of feminism as a global process and the social construction of femininity within different cultural contexts».<sup>13</sup> From this perspective, today it is vital

7 In order to specify my location in the transnational space, I will define myself as a Mediterranean (Italo-Neapolitan) female scholar in Comparative Literature. Because of my Italo-Mediterranean roots, I belong to a transnational borderline marked by both geography and modernity: Italy, along with its historical hybrid mobility between advanced changes and regressive backwards. Ferrante and her transnational and national reception have been the starting point of my inquiry.

8 S.R. Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*, Routledge, London-New York 1993, p. 1.

9 P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Verso, London 1993, p. 190.

10 U. Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, eng. trans. by C. Cronin, Polity Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 11.

11 E. Boehmer, *Beside the West. Postcolonial Women Writers in a Transnational Frame*, in *Stories of Women. Gender and narrative in the postcolonial nation*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2005, p. 190.

12 *Ivi*, p. 191.

13 F. Lionnet, *Postcolonial Representations. Women, Literature, Identity*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca-London 1995, p. 2.

to hold together both feminism and intersectionality with complementary issues and unifying urgencies. These shared frames are necessary tools in order to face the contemporary «global contestation of women's and gender's rights».<sup>14</sup> This contemporary politics of contestations can be synthesized throughout the following emergent features: the feminization of poverty (due to the widening of the gender pay gap and of any other form of economic inequality between men and women); the increase of worldwide cuts in welfare and family support policies; the strengthening of neo-patriarchal laws, procedures and practices in many States of the world (for example, the withdrawal of Turkish Government from the Istanbul Convention, the ongoing withdrawal of Poland and the questioning of Bulgaria, Slovakia and Hungary); the efforts to implement new anti-abortion laws in the United States and in many other Western countries; the rising rates of femicides (particularly in the United States, in several Southern American States, and in some former Socialist republics); the failure of judicial systems to defend women and women's rights, as highlighted by the MeToo movement; the misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic attacks against the so-called «gender ideology».<sup>15</sup> In short, in Western countries, in various emerging countries, as well as in a lot of areas in the Global South, we are facing «glocal»<sup>16</sup> forms of «primordialism», that converge in contesting women's and gender's rights. In Appadurai's perspective, «primordialism» is referring to «all group sentiments that involve a strong sense of group identity, of we-ness», «ideas of collective identity based on shared claims to blood, soil, or language»: a «primordialist bug» also spreading now all over the West and in Western movements as a reaction to the many different global dynamics of «deterritorialization». As Appadurai underlines, «right-wing racist, fascist and fundamentalist movements in Europe and in the United States certainly appear to be more primordial in their behaviour than the racial minorities they openly abhor».<sup>17</sup> In this dimension, the claim for a so-called natural order and natural/biological destiny of women is embedded within modernity and neoliberal crises, rather than being chronologically

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- 14 A. Scheele, J. Roth, H. Winkel, *Introduction*, in *Global Contestations of Gender Rights*, eds. A. Scheele, J. Roth, H. Winkel, Bielefeld UP, Wetzlar 2022, p. 21.
- 15 See S. Walby, *Crisis*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2015; J. True, *The Political Economy of Violence against Women*, Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York 2012; *The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of the #MeToo Movement*, eds. G. Chandra, I. Erlinsgdóttir, Routledge, Oxon-New York 2021.
- 16 R. Robertson, *Globalisation or Glocalisation?*, in «The Journal of International Communication», 2012, 18, 2, pp. 191-208; see also *Negotiating the Global and Local Production of Normativities*, final section of *Global Contestations of Gender Rights*, cit., pp. 279-344.
- 17 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, cit., pp. 140, 143, 37-40, 141.

eccentric or exceptional to it.<sup>18</sup> It is one of the many cyclical forms of backlash moved by modernity against female emancipation which, in other respects, it was precisely modernity itself that initiated.<sup>19</sup> And yet, the quantitatively accelerated and entropic interdependence typical of neoliberal globalization makes this particular reaction more dangerous and radical than others.

## 2. *My Brilliant Friend* cycle, *Americanah* and *The Handmaid's Tale*

In this and in the following two sections, Italian Elena Ferrante, Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Canadian Margaret Atwood will be presented in a chronological order established determined by a transnational and transmedia criterion. Texts, chronologies and transmedia translations are the followings: Italian Elena Ferrante with her *My Brilliant Friend* cycle (Italian edition 2011-2014; English edition 2012-2015, translated by Ann Goldstein) and the homonymous TV series (2018-2022, three seasons directed by Saverio Costanzo, Alice Rohrwacher and Daniele Lucchetti), *Americanah* (2013) by Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) by Canadian Margaret Atwood, regaining a new global attention in 2017 because of the homonymous TV series (five seasons aired between 2017 and 2022, directed by Bruce Miller).

This order of presentation is motivated by the entry (in Ferrante's case) or by the return (in Adichie's and Atwood's case) on the scene of the global imaginary. In the context of primordialist emergency (see paragraph 1), these three best-seller novels – written in the immediate contemporaneity and/or relaunched by transmedia translations – occupy an important place. In a relatively short time span, the three writers have established or proposed themselves again on the international scene, while often receiving similar awards from one year to the next. This is the case, for example, of «Time Magazine's» *100 Most Influential People in the World* list, which featured Ferrante in 2015, Adichie in 2016 and Atwood in 2017 respectively.<sup>20</sup> The

18 «Here two different poles of irrationality collapsed. One pole, which holds the greatest appeal to our common sense, is the pole of group violence, ethnocide, and terror. The other pole is constituted by any form of behavior that appears antimodern, whether it involves sluggish participation in election, corruption in bureaucracy, resistance to modern educational techniques, or refusal to comply with modern state policies, ranging from birth control to monolingualism» (*ivi*, p. 140).

18 This is the main topic of Faludi (Faludi, *Backlash*, cit.).

20 R. Jones, *Conjurer of Character*, in «Time», April 16, 2015, <https://time.com/collection-post/3823296/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-2015-time-100/>; L. Groff, *The Bard of Naples*, *ivi*, April 21, 2016, <https://time.com/collection-post/4299844/elena-ferrante-2016-time-100/>; A. Patchett, *Margaret Atwood*, *ivi*, 2017, <https://time.com/collection/2017-time-100/4736275/margaret-atwood/>. Margaret Atwood is located in the section «Icons», whereas Ferrante and Adichie in the section «Artists».

great success of their novels relies primarily on the fact that each story elaborates primordialism in a figural and symbolic way, according to three variants of the historical crisis of patriarchy and the emergence of the female universe as «the Unpredictable Subject»<sup>21</sup> (in *My Brilliant Friend* cycle, the novel and the TV series), racial supremacism (in *Americanah* and in the blog featured in it) and dystopian neo-patriarchy (in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the novel and the TV series). At the center of all three novels and the two TV series there is indeed a primordialist nucleus – differently declined from the point of view of the female protagonists – of physical and symbolic violence exerted on women, which simultaneously shapes the plot and their inner lives: in *My Brilliant Friend* this nucleus is the disappearance of Elena's and Lila's dolls in the cellar, an archetype of the innumerable collapses of female destinies narrated over a historical time that stretches throughout six decades; in *Americanah*, it is the sexual and racial abuse suffered by Ifemelu at the beginning of her migration to the United States; in *The Handmaid's Tale* it is Offred's forced transformation from a free and emancipated woman to a reproduction female slave in the Theocratic Republic of Gilead.<sup>22</sup> The allegorical and figural forms of the primordialist trauma can be displaced in the past (this is the case, for example, of the generational narrative of *My Brilliant Friend*, started in the fifties of the twentieth century), in a stratified postcolonial present (this is the case of *Americanah*), or in an apocalyptic future (as is the case with the dystopian narrative of *The Handmaid's Tale*). Among the three novels, the one that most reworks transnational primordialism is *The Handmaid's Tale*, because it is the one that shows the most evident refraction between its dystopian writing and its reactivation, almost four decades after its first publication (1985), within the visual, political and media discourses of contemporary primordialism. Over these past decades, *The Handmaid's Tale* has already been enjoying a notable fame. In 1985, the novel got the «Governor General's Award», and in 1987 the first «Arthur C. Clarke Award». It has been translated for the screen, as well as in operatic, choreographic, radiophonic and even graphic versions and, in 2019, it has even inspired a sequel: *The Testaments*.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it was only thanks to the TV series directed by Bruce Miller that the novel has conquered a definitive global relevance

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21 «il Soggetto Imprevisto» (C. Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel. E altri scritti*, Et al., Milan 2020, p. 47).

22 This analysis is broadly articulated in T. de Rogatis, *The Global Novel, Gendered Trauma and Transmedia Perspectives*. «My Brilliant Friend», «Americanah» and «The Handmaid's Tale», forthcoming in «Comparatismi», 2022, 7.

23 *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), directed by V. Schlöndorff, screenplay by H. Pinter; cast: N. Richardson, R. Duvall and F. Dunaway; M. Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale. The graphic novel*, art and adaptations by R. Nault, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto 2019; M. Atwood, *The Testaments*, Penguin, London 2019.

and sold in the last years more than 8 million copies worldwide,<sup>24</sup> to the point that we can consider 26 April 2017 – the first shown of the TV series – as the definitive transnational date of the novel itself. The reason why the TV series brings into the contemporary canon this novel, published 37 years ago, lies in the many analogies between its dystopian dimension and an important political and media contemporary event: Donald Trump's election campaign, his election as President of the United States, his entire term (20 January 2017-20 January 2021) concluded by the US Capitol attack (6 January 2021). With his fundamentalist and supremacist policies inspired by «normalization»<sup>25</sup> of misogyny, homophobia and xenophobia, Trump's campaign and presidency can be considered one of the main events of contemporary primordialism. On 21 January 2017, the day after Trump's presidential inauguration, a written slogan appeared at the Women's March in Washington: «Make Margaret Atwood fiction again» (an evident remaking of Trump's slogan «Make America great again»). The slogan was certainly connected to the fact that even four months before the TV series was aired, on 26 April 2017, *The Handmaid's Tale* had already reappeared on a bestselling books' list.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, a month before the broadcast of the TV series, some visual symbols of the novel made their appearance in another demonstration for women's rights in the United States,<sup>27</sup> inaugurating a political use of the novel's symbolic codes, which would eventually spread more and more all over the world. The inclusion of Atwood in the «Time» list (20 April 2017) is explicitly motivated by *The Handmaid's Tale* and its being «especially timely in 2017»,<sup>28</sup> with a clear allusion to the connection between Trump's election and the novel's dystopia. The TV series, also announced in the short text of

24 C.A. Howells, *Introduction*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood*, ed. C.A. Howells, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York, 2021, p. 1.

25 L. Cortés-Selva, S. Martínez Guillem, *Blessed be the Flight. Mysoginism ad Anti-feminism in «The Handmaid's Tale»*, in *Hate Speech and Polarization Society*, eds. M. Pérez-Escolar, J.M. Noguera-Vivo, Routledge, London-New York, 2022, p. 87.

26 R. Mead, *Margaret Atwood: The Prophet of Dystopia*, in «The New Yorker», April 10, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/margaret-atwood-the-prophet-of-dystopia>.

27 On March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, a group of feminist activists dressed as handmaids demonstrated in front of the Texas State Capitol in Austin against the abortion restrictions approved by the Texas state legislature (D. Canfield, *Activist Dressed as Characters from the «Handmaid's Tale» to Protest Texas' Anti-Abortion Measures*, in «Slate», March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, <https://slate.com/culture/2017/03/texas-women-gathered-dressed-as-characters-from-the-handmaid-s-tale-to-protest-anti-abortion-measures.html>. Starting from this demonstration, the clothes of the handmaids (a long, red tunic and a white cap with side flaps) have become an integral part of global demonstrations in defense of abortion rights.

28 «Atwood is especially timely in 2017 for *The Handmaid's Tale*, which she published in 1985 about the government's ownership and subjugation of women's bodies, proving just how far ahead of us she is. The novel (now a Hulu series) described what seemed impossible. Today it stands as a warning. How do we know we must fight for our rights? Margaret Atwood showed us what could happen if we don't» (Patchett, *Margaret Atwood* cit.).

«Time», would be aired for the first time only six days after the publication of the list. The 81 awards of high international importance, along with the 249 nominations received by the TV series<sup>29</sup> can be explained not only by its undisputable high quality, but also by its intersection with a much broader range of white primordialism. This intersection has generated a series of feminist political recognition practices, born from the TV series aesthetics and translated in many cultural icons,<sup>30</sup> to the point that we can define the whole phenomenon as a «Gileadverse».<sup>31</sup> The contemporary negotiation between real and fictional is therefore one of the fundamental aspects of the global success of the novel, throughout the TV series.<sup>32</sup> The triple lens of the TV series, the American political frame and its transnational media refraction inevitably changes not only the transnational reception of the novel, but also the political and collective awareness of primordialism: we are confronted with a «remediation», a «reform» in the sense that media reform reality itself».<sup>33</sup>

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### 3. Ferrante's, Adichie's and Atwood's posture towards storytelling and feminism

«Posture» can be defined as a set of practices, which include discursive ethos and non-verbal self-presentation behaviors. For Meizoz, this authorial stance refers to the game that is played «on the scene of literary enunciation and to the mask that is attached to the author».<sup>34</sup> Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood express in the most complete and diversified way a «posture» of transnational feminism (see section 1), which is strongly connected and unified by their being female storytellers who narrate epic or choral or multi-layered stories, shaped by female perspectives and

29 Internet Movie Database (Imdb), <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5834204/awards>.

30 A. Mascio, *Tra fiction e realtà. L'uniforme di «The Handmaid's Tale» come icona culturale*, in «Ocula», 21, 22, 2020, pp. 253-263. See also M. Gámez Fuentes, R. García, *Nostalgia and the Dialectics of Contemporary Feminism in «The Handmaid's Tale»*, in «Science Fiction Studies», 2021, 48, 1, pp. 77-93; H. Latimer, *Reproductive Acts. Sexual Politics in North American Fiction and Film*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston 2013, p. 40.

31 A. Howell, *Breaking Silence, Bearing Witness, and Voicing Defiance: the Resistant Female Voice in the Transmedia Storyworld of «The Handmaid's Tale»*, in «Continuum», 233, 2, 2019, pp. 216-229.

32 I adopt from Dusi the category of TV series as a space for negotiation between reality and fiction (N. Dusi, *Introduzione. Universi seriali, ecosistemi, forme di vita, semiosfere*, in Id., *Confini di genere. Sociosemiotica delle serie tv*, Morlacchi, Perugia 2019, p. 9). The context in which the producers of the film version worked was instead quite different: «Wilson would take the Pinter's script in every studio in Hollywood, encountering a wall of ignorance, hostility and indifference» (S. Teitelbaum, «*The Handmaid's Tale»*, in «Cinefantastique», 1990, 20, 4, p. 19).

33 J.D. Bolder, R. Grusi, *Remediation. Understanding New Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge 1999, p. 61.

34 Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, cit., p. 7.

destinies and underlined in their narrative dimension by their titles themselves.<sup>35</sup> The adhesion of the three authors to storytelling is also strengthened by the fact that *My Brilliant Friend*, as well as *Americanah* and the currently rediscovered *The Handmaid's Tale*,<sup>36</sup> are all inscribed in the Global Novel, a vast field of transnational fictional narratives that can be roughly placed between the nineties of the twentieth century and the current contemporaneity. This narrative constellation is united, among other things, by a rediscovery of the density of stories and an original and diversified reuse of fictional realism.<sup>37</sup>

I will now group together these three postures, introducing each distinct analysis of each woman writer with her pronouncement on storytelling, then showing the implicit fulfilment of this pronouncement in their postures towards feminism. By performing their postures as storytellers who deconstruct the «danger of a single story»<sup>38</sup> and who feature themselves as speaker of a community much more than as a writer addressing an audience, they locate the narrative turn<sup>39</sup> of the last thirty years inside a long-lasting feminist tradition of storytelling. The neuro-cognitive discoveries of the last thirty years attribute a new primacy to narratives. By taking them out of the grammatical and syntactic space of writing, narratives are valued in the first instance as «training grounds conceived to train us in order to interpret the world according to agreed

Tiziana  
de Rogatis

35 As well as *The Handmaid's Tale* and its title referring to Offred's tale (an oral account recorded on tapes), three of the four volumes of Ferrante's quadrilogy show in the title the word «story»: *The Story of a New Name*, *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay* that in the Italian edition is *Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta* (*Story of Who is Escaping and Who is Staying*), and *The Story of the Lost Child*.

36 As I have already argued in another contribution of mine (T. de Rogatis, *The Handmaid's Liberation. Bewitched Worlds, Underground Stories, Dystopian Narratives in Elsa Morante, Elena Ferrante and Margaret Atwood*, in *Female Filiations – A Festschrift for Adalgisa Giorgio*, a special issue edited by C. Horvath and E. Maestri, forthcoming in «Romance Studies», 2021, 39, pp. 1-20), although *The Handmaid's Tale* came out in 1985, and therefore in a phase slightly before the Global Novel, it may be considered – together with other novels of that chronological area, such as Elsa Morante's *History* (1974) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) – a precursor text of global traumatic realism. In other words, they are novels unrelated to the postmodern season, because they propose a radically different form of emplotment, based on the documentary consistency of the narrated materials, and on the tragic and affective consistency of micro-stories intertwined with the chronology of a great historical or dystopic turning point.

37 On the Global Novel and its abundant bibliography, on the reuse of realism in these three novels and on the transfer of this realism into the cinematic language of the two TV series on *My Brilliant Friend* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, I refer to my essay *The Global Novel* cit.

38 C. Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, TED talk, July 2009, [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story).

39 On the narrative turn see S. Calabrese, *Neuronarrazioni*, Bibliografica, Milano 2020; D. Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative*, Wiley-Blackwell, Maiden-Oxford 2009; D. Meneghelli, *Storie proprio così. Il racconto nell'era della narritività totale*, Morellini, Milano 2013.

expectations, or to allow us to readjust these expectations to the changes occurred in reality».<sup>40</sup> The feminist storytelling insists precisely on this intertwining of the textual form with an antecedent anthropological repertoire of gestures and words, handed down by the storyteller and expressed by a community. Strong elements of performed orality can also be identified with the fact that in the three novels the storytelling is constructed on one side as a counter-story, a vision emerged from the «re-vision»<sup>41</sup> of patriarchal narratives, while on the other hand it is modelled on «relating narratives», on the narrative acknowledgments of the other and of her uniqueness through the plural and ambivalent story of her life and/or of her traces.<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, *Americanah* indeed takes shape as a public digital counter-story that rewrites the private, secret and unspeakable history of the sexual abuse of the white tennis coach on the blog; on the other hand, both *My Brilliant Friend* and *The Handmaid's Tale* are narratives of hybrid recognition, formulated by a woman who delineates her own identity as she relates herself – albeit expressing ambivalence or at times envy or doubt – to another woman's life story or to the mark left by her.<sup>43</sup> Through these «shared forms of life-narrative accounts»<sup>44</sup> Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood achieve a narrative counter-power endowed with a dynamic balance between feminist recognition and creative freedom.

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- 40 Calabrese, *Neuronarrazioni*, cit., p. 8, t.m. «The current transformations of lifestyles must be treated above all as a cognitive variation and a change in perception» (*ivi*, p. 63, t.m.). Calabrese's essay articulates the stages of this new neuro-cognitive statute, according to which what «distinguishes our species in a unique way from others is not so much the intellect – or at least not exclusively –, but our *instinct* to narrate» (*ivi*, p. 9). On empathy – an «heterocentric» dimension generated by fiction, and parameterized by various ToM (Theory of Mind) tests, as well as on its limits, *ivi*, pp. 64 et seq.
- 41 On «re-vision» as an act of «survival» and defiance see A. Rich, *When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision* [1972], in *Lies, Secrets and Silence. Selected prose (1966-1978)*, Norton & Co., New York 1979, p. 35. See also B. du Plessis, *Writing beyond the ending. Narrative strategies of Twentieth Century Women Writers*, Indiana UP, Bloomington 1985.
- 42 See the category of «polyphony» of female storytelling identified by Adriana Cavarero as originated from the historical practice of feminist consciousness-raising (A. Cavarero, *Relating Narratives. Storytelling and Selfhood*, eng. trans. by P.A. Kottman, Routledge, New York 2000). On female and feminist storytelling see also C. Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter. The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*, Duke UP, Durham-London 2011.
- 43 As her founding source of inspiration of her *My Brilliant Friend* cycle, Ferrante explicitly takes up the idea of Cavarero's «narrative self» (Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, cit.; E. Ferrante, *In the margins*, eng. trans. by A. Goldstein, Europa Editions, New York 2022). On self-recognition as a narrative recognition of the other's life and written traces in *The Handmaid's Tale* see de Rogatis, *The handmaid's Liberation*, cit.
- 44 S. Calabrese, *Égalité e fraternité anche per le narrazioni? Un sogno infranto*, in Id., *Storie di vita. Come gli individui si raccontano nel mondo*, Mimesis, Milan 2018, p. 9, t.m.

### 3.1. Ferrante's posture towards storytelling and feminism

In this excerpt, Ferrante underlines the oral primacy of storytelling («telling stories») and its value as a counter-power, as revision of male narratives.

There is one form of power that has fascinated me ever since I was a girl, even though it has been widely colonized by men: the power of storytelling. Telling stories really is a kind of power, and not an insignificant one. [...] Storytelling, in other words, gives us the power to bring order to the chaos of the real under our own sign, and in this it isn't very far from political power.<sup>45</sup>

If Elena Ferrante performs herself as a female and feminist storyteller, this posture must be understood also as a strong root of her pseudonymity. The name of the real author (or authors) has never been revealed publicly<sup>46</sup> but this pseudonym is dense of implication in the author's poetics, to the point that it has been defined as an «hyper-heteronym». <sup>47</sup> This position has raised various criticisms and also some attempts at personal, stylistic and thematic unmasking<sup>48</sup> in order to bring Ferrante back to the category of «impostors», i.e. authors that «pose as people they are not, in order to (mis)represent a foreign, ethnic or *other* culture or class». <sup>49</sup> The writer's deception would involve, in particular, being the daughter of an underclass Neapolitan mother (this is how the author presents herself on several occasions in her collection of essays, *Frantumaglia*). Ferrante would therefore falsely represent herself as a woman with subordinate ancestry both by gender and class, as well as by family and regional roots. But we could easily reverse this perspective observing that she has used the pseudonymity as a way to play with the identitarian cage, in order to underline and elude the expectations of authenticity often linked to

45 E. Ferrante, *A Power of Our Own*, in «The New York Times», May 17, 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/opinion/elena-ferrante-on-women-power.html>.

46 In many interviews, Ferrante has provided reasons for her absence from the public stage, connected to an idea of authorship as utterly disentangled from the empirical individual (E. Ferrante, *Frantumaglia. A Writer's Journey*, eng. trans. by A. Goldstein, Europa Editions, New York 2016, pp. 85, 299, 355).

47 T. de Rogatis, *Global Perspectives, Trauma, and the Global Novel. Ferrante's Poetics between Storytelling, Uncanny Realism, and Dissolving Margins*, in *Elena Ferrante in a Global Context*, a special issue edited by T. de Rogatis, S. Milkova, K. Wehling-Giorgi, in «Modern Language Notes», 2021, 136, pp. 6-31: p. 22.

48 With questionable investigative tools, Gatti's investigation hypothesized a potential identity of the anagraphic author in the translator Anita Raja (C. Gatti, *Elena Ferrante: an Answer?*, in «The New York Review», October 2, 2016, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/10/02/elena-ferrante-an-answer>). According to Cortellazzo's and Tuzzi's statistic and stylistic research, the anagraphic author would be instead the writer Domenico Starnone, Anita Raja's husband (M.A. Cortellazzo, A. Tuzzi, *A chi assomiglia Elena Ferrante? Un profilo stilometrico aggiornato*, Italice, Milan 2020).

49 C.L. Miller, *Impostors. Literary Hoaxes and Cultural Authenticity*, Chicago UP, Chicago-London 2018, pp. 1-2.

women's and ethnic writing.<sup>50</sup> Ferrante's pseudonymity strategy can be connected to the Gorilla performances of the Guerrilla Girls, whose ironic manifesto – *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist* – was chosen to characterise the online conference in which a first draft of this paper was delivered as keynote talk.<sup>51</sup> If we were to take the many far-fetched rumours to their extreme, we might go so far as to say that Ferrante is both man and woman, transvestite and/or transgender, heterosexual and homosexual, a single living being, a couple, a threesome, a collective. We cannot know her anagraphic identity. But we do know something truer: choosing to perform as a woman during her two decades of writing in seclusion – from her first novel, *Troubling Love* (1992), to the publication and success of the first volume of the quartet *My Brilliant Friend* (2011-2014), she chose to make herself less prominent,<sup>52</sup> not more. In a country like Italy, where many male journalists, publishers, and professors consistently undermine women writers and their visibility, Elena Ferrante has chosen to stand with those women. Not only in her novels but also in the many interviews and letters included in *Frantumaglia*, Ferrante has chosen to fashion the world from a woman's point of view. On the literary, social, and communicative (pronominal, syntactical, linguistic) plane, she has asserted and demonstrated that a woman's perspective is decisive. As in the case of the *Guerrilla Girls*, Ferrante's pseudonymity has the effect of defending and enhancing female creativity in a form of «global avatar».<sup>53</sup> Thanks to this phantasmatic strategy of present absence or absent presence, Ferrante has in fact solicited various practices of global female visibility. The female friends who celebrate the friendship plot of *My Brilliant Friend* by going in pairs to buy the four volumes of quadrilogy, the women translators called to discuss their translations and interpret Ferrante's writing, the remarkable number of female scholars allied in a mutual recognition of each other's work: they are all women who have creatively interpreted an identitarian space that the author has left partially

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50 G. Huggan, *The Post-Colonial Exotic. Marketing the Margins*, Routledge, London-New York, 2001, pp. 29-31.

51 See the first footnote of this paper. Guerrilla Girls is an anonymous group of female political artists who has been exposing gender bias and discrimination in art since 1985. To remain anonymous, members wear gorilla masks and use pseudonyms that refer to deceased female artists, such as Frida Kahlo, Käthe Kollwitz, and Alice Neel. «They wore the mask [...] in order to focus attention not on who they were but rather on the issues of female equality» (Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls. The Art of Behaving Badly*, Chronicle Book, San Francisco 2020, p. 110). The manifesto *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist* lists 13 ironic reasons why a woman would have an advantage in being an artist.

52 Also one can realize by the editorial notes in *Frantumaglia*, in the ten years between *Troubling Love* (1992) and *The Days of Abandonment* (2002), some of her replies to letters and interviews were either never sent or variously sabotaged, before being released to the public in the first edition of *Frantumaglia* (2003) (Ferrante, *Frantumaglia*, cit., pp. 47, 51, 57, 69, 74).

53 de Rogatis, *Global Perspectives*, cit., p. 21.

open.<sup>54</sup> The *Guerrilla Girls* manifesto states ironically that – among the advantages of being a woman artist – there is the benefit of «not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius».<sup>55</sup> By choosing *L'amica geniale* (literally *Friend of genius*) as the title of the first volume of the quadrilogy, and by building the entire plot on a female friendship, Ferrante has cracked the patriarchal and male right to genius.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, while subtracting her face and body from public contexts, Ferrante intervenes anyway in the cultural debate with great frequency throughout her interviews and collaborations with newspapers and magazines. She has not only repeatedly referred to the Italian feminist theory of difference and to Melanie Klein's categories, but she has also dialogued with a complex transnational constellation of feminist philosophers and essayists: «Firestone, Lonzi, Irigaray, Muraro, Cavarero, Gagliasso, Haraway, Butler, Braidotti».<sup>57</sup> However, her emphasis is always placed on a hybrid and anti-ideological position («I sum up even distant positions together»), inspired by her creative perspective on the «tangle of existence», as in this excerpt:

I have loved and I love feminism because in America, in Italy and in many parts of the world it managed to provoke complex thinking. [...] I am a passionate reader of feminist thought and I sum up even distant positions together. Yet I do not consider myself a militant. I am incapable of militancy. [...] I prefer to think myself as being inside a tangled knot; tangled knots fascinate me. It's necessary to recount the tangle of existence [...]. Seeking to unravel these things is useful, but literature is made out of tangles.<sup>58</sup>

Although from this hybrid and anti-ideological perspective, Ferrante does not hesitate to establish a close connection between her own storytelling and feminism. In her most recent non-fiction collection *In the Margins*, Ferrante explicitly connects the genesis of her *My Brilliant Friend* cycle with *Relating Narratives* by the feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero. By linking the birth of the story of *My Brilliant Friend* to the practice of feminist consciousness-raising and narrative polyphony, Ferrante has expressed a form of internal recognition not only to her own

54 T. de Rogatis, S. Milkova, K. Wehling-Giorgi, *Friendship and Scholarship*, in *Elena Ferrante in a Global Context*, cit., pp. 3-5; S. Milkova, *Elena Ferrante as World Literature*, Bloomsbury, New York-London 2021, pp. 16-18; I. Pinto, *Elena Ferrante: Poetiche e politiche della soggettività nella scrittura del sé di Elena Ferrante*, Mimesis, Milan 2020, p. 141.

55 *Guerrilla Girls*, *Guerrilla Girls* cit., p. 20.

56 N. Setti, *Il genio dell'ambivalenza*, in *Dell'ambivalenza. Dinamiche della narrazione in Elena Ferrante, Julie Otsuka e Goliarda Sapienza*, a cura di A.M. Crispino, M. Vitale, Iacobelli, Guidonia 2016, p. 111.

57 Ferrante, *Frantumaglia*, cit., p. 322.

58 *Ivi*, pp. 322-323.

poetics but even, more specifically, to the evolution of her narrative laboratory.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.2. Adichie's posture towards storytelling and feminism

As well as in Ferrante, also in Adichie's following excerpt the emphasis lies on the posture of oral storyteller, underlined also by the fact that this pronouncement comes from a TED talk – *The Danger of a Single Story* – never published in a book form in English. In Adichie's perspective, the plurality of stories is the antidote to the «danger of the single story», that is the narrative monologic foundation of colonial discourse. Here the feminist storytelling is intertwined in a postcolonial one:

I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call «the danger of the single story». [...] It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. [...] Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. [...] Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity).<sup>60</sup>

As declared on the first page of Adichie's website, she «has delivered two landmark TED talks: her 2009 TED Talk *The Danger of A Single Story* and her 2012 TEDx Euston talk *We Should All Be Feminists*, which started a worldwide conversation about feminism and was published as a book in 2014».<sup>61</sup> I'm now connecting these two viral TED talks from the perspective of oral storytelling and feminism. In *We Should All Be Feminist* (2012) – delivered as a TED talk just one year before the publication of *Americanah* – the woman writer defines a space of transnational feminism, built by weaving small and simple stories: narrative parables set either between Lagos and Nigeria, or in the United States. This transnational space is actually expanded further when African-American singer Beyoncé sampled a central piece of the lecture, and of Adichie's voice, in the third verse of *Flawless*, one of her songs, strengthening even more the oral posture of Adichie's words:

We teach girls to shrink themselves to make themselves smaller. / We say to girls: «you can have ambition / but not too much. / You should aim to be

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59 «Cavarero extracted those pale figures of women from the two pages or so that concerned them [...]. She wrote about the 'narrative character of female friendships' [...] I was enthusiastic. [...] It's probably starting here that the relationship between Lenù and Lila, and between their writing, became clear to me» (Ferrante, *In the Margins*, cit., pp. 56-59).

60 Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, cit.

61 «About», in «Chimamanda.com», <https://www.chimamanda.com/about/>.

successful, but not too successful / Otherwise you will threaten the man». / Because I am female I am expected to aspire to marriage. / I'm expected to make my life choices / Always keeping in mind / That marriage is the most important. / Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support / But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage / And we don't teach boys the same? / We raise girls to see each other as competitors, / Not for jobs or accomplishments which I think can be a good thing / But for the attention of men. / We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings / In the way that boys are. / Feminist: a person who believes in the social, political / And economic equality of the sexes.<sup>62</sup>

The transnational dimension returns in *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), a 15-point guide addressed by Adichie to, a Nigerian mother, for the education of an Igbo daughter. Adichie is here depicting another glocal space, able to revise any temptation about cultural purism. In this guide, feminism emerges indeed as a constant negotiation between rooting in tribal identity and questioning this belonging in the global horizon of equal rights between men and women.

Let her grow up to think of herself as, among other things, a proud Igbo woman. And you must be selective – teach her to embrace the parts of Igbo culture that are beautiful and teach her to reject the parts that are not. [...] Igbo culture also teaches that a woman cannot do certain things just because she's a woman and that is wrong.<sup>63</sup>

In a 2017 interview, Adichie challenged the idea – supported by some areas of contemporary postfeminism – that the battle for feminism has now become «redundant», since it can be engulfed in a broader battle for gender identity. A specific part of this interview, related to the interaction between transwomen and ciswomen,<sup>64</sup> has been the subject of much

62 Beyoncé, *Flawless* (2014) featuring C. Ngozi Adichie. Adichie's excerpt is inserted as a sort of "rap" segment in the song, as confirmed by an online transcription: <https://www.songtexte.com/songtext/beyonce/flawless-2b5d70de.html>.

63 C. Ngozi Adichie, *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*, Knopf, New York 2017, pp. 72-73.

64 While being openly committed to defending Lgbtq+ rights in Nigeria (A. Flood, Nigerian authors condemn country's new anti-gay law, in «The Guardian», February 27, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/feb/27/nigeria-anti-gay-law-critic-adichie-kay-habila>) and despite having been recognized by «Fortune» in 2017 as one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders in her being a «fearless political and cultural critic» (*The World's 50 Greatest Leaders*, in «Fortune», March 23, 2017, <https://fortune.com/worlds-greatest-leaders/2017/chimamanda-adichie/>), Adichie was accused of transphobia for a sentence contained in the interview («transwomen are transwomen» 2.31), and for the subsequent controversial argument. From her point of view, transwomen – lived for a certain part of their lives as men and therefore «with the privileges accorded to men» (2.38) – would not experience the same condition of structural asymmetry of ciswomen (E. Crockett, *The Controversy over Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Trans Women Explained*, in «Vox», March 15, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/3/15/14910900/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-transgender-women-comments-apology>).

controversy over the years, to which the writer reacted in 2021 by denouncing on her website a certain «social media sanctimony», a climate of mediatic censorship and hypocrisy:

We have a generation of young people on social media so terrified of having the wrong opinions that they have robbed themselves of the opportunity to think and to learn and to grow. I have spoken to young people who tell me they are terrified to tweet anything, that they read and re-read their tweets because they fear they will be attacked by their own.<sup>65</sup>

### 3.3. Atwood's posture towards storytelling and feminism

In the following excerpt, Atwood's attention is focused on an inclusive idea of storytelling, in which writers are first of all «story transmitters as well as storytellers». As Offred in *The Handmaid's Tale*, who does not write but records her voice on cassette tapes, the storytelling is born out of a testimonial posture: a gesture of hope in the emblematic values of the story.

The next time somebody asks you why you write, the short answer is, 'Because I'm human'. [...] All humans are storytellers by nature. Writers who write stories down are story transmitters as well as storytellers. We are the stories we tell, we have told and have written. And yes, the stories we write, write us in their turn. [...] And we are also the stories that are told about us, and eventually not much more. But writing down a story is always a gesture of hope. Why? Because you are assuming there will be someone alive who will be interested in it and who will read it later in time. That's a truly hopeful thing.<sup>66</sup>

Margaret Atwood has been a representative figure of world feminism since her earliest fictional writing, particularly since *The Edible Woman* (1969), considered as a cult novel by the female readers of that generation. However, Atwood has always claimed her own, original position towards feminism, by emphasizing her role as a precursor to the second-wave feminist generation, dating back to the Seventies.<sup>67</sup> In more recent times, she has also repeatedly expressed her deep intolerance towards the most ideological tendencies of contemporary North American feminism. She

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65 C.N. Adichie, *It is Obscene: A True Reflection in Three Parts*, in «Chimamanda.com», June 15, 2021, [https://www.chimamanda.com/news\\_items/it-is-obscene-a-true-reflection-in-three-parts/](https://www.chimamanda.com/news_items/it-is-obscene-a-true-reflection-in-three-parts/).

66 M. Atwood, *We Are What We Tell. Stories As Human*, lecture delivered at Notre Dame University, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, <https://ndsmcobserver.com/2014/04/margaret-atwood-explores-forms-storytelling/>. Storytelling is a main theme in the last Atwood's collection of essays *Burning Questions. Essays and Occasional Pieces 2004-2021*, Vintage, London 2022.

67 M. Atwood, *Introduction* [1979], in *The Edible Woman* [1969], Virago, London 2013, p. 3; F. Tolan, *Margaret Atwood. Feminism and Fiction*, Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York 2007, pp. 9-15.

has therefore provocatively and publicly asked in 2018: «Am I a bad feminist?». A burning question, as the title of the recent book in which this paper is now collected suggests.<sup>68</sup> The following passage is an Atwood's response to the controversy raised by her signing of a public letter, together with many North American intellectuals and artists. The letter questioned the improper investigative and legal methods of the University of British Columbia<sup>69</sup> towards Steven Galloways, a professor accused of sexual harassment and bullying. Atwood firmly points out that her critique of feminist fanaticism forms is argued from the perspective of the female storyteller, of the one who «write about human beings» and their «ambiguity», a perspective always suspicious of all fanaticisms.

The #MeToo moment is a symptom of a broken legal system. All too frequently women and other sexual-abuse complainants couldn't get a fair hearing through institutions – including corporate structures – so they used a new tool: the Internet. Stars fell from the skies. This has been very effective, and has been seen as a massive wake-up call. But what next? The legal system can be fixed, or our society could dispose of it. Institutions, corporations and workplaces can houseclean, or they can expect more stars to fall, and also a lot of asteroids.

If the legal system is bypassed because it is seen as ineffectual, what will take its place? Who will be the new power brokers? It won't be the Bad Feminists like me. We are acceptable neither to Right nor to Left. In times of extremes, extremists win. Their ideology becomes a religion, anyone who doesn't puppet their views is seen as an apostate, a heretic or a traitor, and moderates in the middle are annihilated. Fiction writers are particularly suspect because they write about human beings, and people are morally ambiguous. The aim of ideology is to eliminate ambiguity.<sup>70</sup>

That feminism is a crucial but entangled issue for Atwood is demonstrated also by the distance she always tried to put between *The Handmaid's Tale* and the label of feminism. In 2012, Atwood clarifies that the term «feminist dystopia» for *The Handmaid's Tale* «is not strictly accurate». She makes a distinction between «a feminist dystopia pure and simple» – a two-layered structure in which «all of the men would have greater rights than all of the women» – and the «pyramid» structure of *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which power and status are much more disseminate between men and women.<sup>71</sup> It is not by chance that the TV series

68 M. Atwood, *Am I a bad feminist?* [2018], in Ead., *Burning Questions*, cit., pp. 335-339.

69 On the unlawful inquisitive methods of some US campuses see L. Kipnis, *Unwanted Advances. Sexual Paranoia on Campus*, Harper, New York 2017.

70 Atwood, *Am I a bad feminist?*, cit., p. 338.

71 M. Atwood, *Haunted by the Handmaid's Tale*, in «The Guardian», January 20, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jan/20/handmaids-tale-margaret-atwood>.

cast has assumed an analogue position, insisting on the transversal and politic quality of the dystopic narration.<sup>72</sup> Speaking again about *The Handmaid's Tale* after Trump's election, Atwood openly underlines that she is not interested in «an ideological tract in which all women are angels and/or so victimized to the point that they are incapable of moral choice».<sup>73</sup>

#### 4. Ferrante's, Adichie's and Atwood's posture towards transnational reception and national canon

I will now aggregate the transnational reception and posture of each author together with their posture towards the national canon. In this area, my transnational analysis will be constituted also by a brief analysis of the three authors' websites and of their «automedias»,<sup>74</sup> a technological variant of autobiography or self-presentation as it is analysed in *Persona Studies*. Being mostly constituted by a visual apparatus and strategy, this «enactment of a life story in a new media environment»<sup>75</sup> can be indeed very helpful in order to focalize the non-verbal part of the postures and their transnational reservoirs.

##### 4.1. Ferrante's posture towards transnational reception

Ann Goldstein's English translations (2012-2015) for the independent publishing house Europa Edition<sup>76</sup> grant Ferrante's quadrilogy its first international visibility, which is eventually sanctioned officially in 2013 by the review of well-known critic James Wood in «The New Yorker».<sup>77</sup> *The Story of the Lost Child*, the fourth volume of the quadrilogy, was one of

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72 E. Zuckerman, *Elisabeth Moss doesn't see «The Handmaid's Tale» as a feminist story*, in «AVclub», April 22, 2017, <https://www.avclub.com/elisabeth-moss-doesn-t-see-the-handmaid-s-tale-as-a-fem-1798261012>; C. Grady, «*The Handmaid's Tale*» cast has resisted calling it feminist. So did Margaret Atwood once, in «Vox», April 25, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/25/15407972/handmaids-tale-margaret-atwood-feminism>.

73 E. Kalorkoti, *Margaret Atwood on What «The Handmaid's Tale» Means in the Age of Trump*, in «The New York Times», March 10, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/books/review/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-age-of-trump.html>. For an analysis of the series, please see de Rogatis, *The Global Novel*, cit.

74 J. Rak, *Life Writing versus Automedias. The Sims 3 game as a Life Lab*, in «Biography», 2, 2015, 38, pp. 155-180: p. 155. *Persona Studies* analyse «how the formation of contemporary self is now constructed and displayed through technologies and forms of expressions that resemble media forms» (P.D. Marshall, C. Moore, K. Barbour, *Persona Studies. An Introduction*, Wiley Blackwell, Maiden-Oxford 2020, p. 12).

75 Rak, *Life Writing versus Automedias*, cit., p. 155.

76 This independent publishing house was founded in 2005 by Sandro Ferri and Sandra Ozzola Ferri, who are also the founders of Edizioni E/O, where all Ferrante's works in Italy have been published.

77 J. Wood, *Women on the Verge. The Fiction of Elena Ferrante*, in «The New Yorker», January 13, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/21/women-on-the-verge>.

«The New York Times»' 10 best books of 2015.<sup>78</sup> These are only the first two steps of a *Ferrante Fever*, which will lead to the translation of the quadrilogy into 50 languages and will infect about 20 million readers worldwide.<sup>79</sup> In particular, in the English-speaking world, *Ferrante Fever* will be followed by the *Ferrante Effect*, i.e. the tendency to re-evaluate Italian women writers through a significant increase in their translations and readings.<sup>80</sup> Ferrante has twice won the Italian «Elsa Morante Prize» (1992 and 2017), the «Belle van Zuylen Prize» of the International Literature Festival in Utrecht (September 23, 2021) and the «Sunday Times Award for Literary Excellence» (October 9, 2021). She was also included among the five finalists of the Italian 2015 «Strega» Prize, as well as being shortlisted for the 2016 «Man Booker International Prize». Comparing her with Adichie and Atwood, she has therefore won very few awards. One of the reasons is that prizes often require the author's presence in a series of preliminary events and in the final ceremony, as a participation clause. A condition that Ferrante clearly cannot comply with.

In 2020, the writer proposed her own online personal canon of contemporary female writers with a strong transnational imprint (*Elena Ferrante's Recommended Reads*). Among the texts of her featured forty women writers is also Adichie's novel *Americanah*. It is important to underline that she published her list on «Bookshop.org», the online store recently launched in the UK. At the beginning of the list, one can read the following statement by Ferrante, focusing on the keyword «story»: «Stories of women with two feet, and sometimes one, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Elena Ferrante».<sup>81</sup>

Europa Editions has dedicated an interesting Anglophone site to the writer («Elena Ferrante – Author of the Neapolitan Quartet»)<sup>82</sup>. The website's sections are: home, news, works, reviews, read now, TV series, reviews in other languages, contacts. The online website does not suggest any Ferrante's presence or interaction in the website content. At the opening of the site, Elena Ferrante's name stands out against a landscape

78 *The 10 best Books of 2015*, in «The New York Times», December 3, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/12/02/books/review/best-books-of-2015.html>.

79 These updated data have been provided by the e/o press office, written notice by email, April 8, 2022.

80 See for example Goldstein's translation of Anna Maria Ortese's *Neapolitan Chronicles* (New Vessel Press, New York 2018) and Elsa Morante's *Arthur's Island* (Liveright, New York 2019).

81 «Elena Ferrante's Recommended Reads», in «Bookshop.org», <https://bookshop.org/lists/elena-ferrante-s-recommended-reads>.

82 «Elena Ferrante – Author of the Neapolitan Quartet», <http://elenaFerrante.com/>. At this date, on Google.it, the link to the site appears only on page 5. A reference to the site is on the e/o online pages dedicated to the writer (*Elena Ferrante*, «edizioni e/o», <https://www.edizionieo.it/author/61/elena-ferrante>).

of Vesuvius and the city of Naples. To signal the glocal quality of the image, there is a quote in English: «Elena Ferrante may be the best contemporary novelist you have never heard of» – *The Economist*.

**4.1.1. Ferrante's posture towards the Italian canon** Ferrante's transnational success acts as a bulwark against her controversial Italian reception. The quadrilogy has enjoyed a great success among the Italian public, with more than 2 millions of copies sold,<sup>83</sup> but it has been rejected by part of the Italian academic circles and journalism. The arguments against Ferrante intertwine patriarchal postures against the «sentimental» writing with the prejudicial aesthetic rejection of the realistic and melodramatic poetics of the quadrilogy. Even when written by scholars who teach in the English-speaking world, none of these interventions have ever been published in English, remaining therefore in a national area that is more condescending towards their positions.

The controversial academic reception of the quadrilogy and its great success outline a dynamic similar to that of another famous Italian historical novel and best seller, *History. A Novel*, published by Elsa Morante in 1974. In the Italian literary canon, Morante occupies a paradoxical position, by being the only contemporary female writer who actually managed to achieve a widespread recognition, yet always from a marginal position due to her poetics of experimental realism. If one considers, at the same time, the level of poetics, the dualism between academic/journalistic receptions vs the public reception, and the dichotomy of marginality/centrality, Ferrante stands as the most accomplished heir of Morante. In the months and years immediately following the publication of *History*, Morante had to deal with an almost compact front of oppositional criticism,<sup>84</sup> which still determines an exclusion from, or, in any case, a marginal positioning of her extraordinary novels within the Italian canon. Ferrante, on the other hand, has brought together a large group of Italian scholars (not only female), who have contained the prejudicial positions taken by many other critics, both inside university institutions and in the media. The vitality of Italian research itself on Ferrante also depends on its ability to intercept and intertwine with transnational critical research. Indeed, this transnational area has a strongly connective element thanks to the Anglophone dimension of the same transnational studies that are being developed by several Italian and comparative literature academic departments based in English-speaking countries.

83 According to the e/o press office, written notice by email, April 8, 2022.

84 See A. Borghesi, *L'anno della «Storia» (1974-1977). Il dibattito politico e culturale sul romanzo di Elsa Morante*, Quodlibet, Macerata 2019.

#### 4.2. Adichie's posture towards transnational reception

In 2013, the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie publishes the first edition of *Americanah* in English – the official language of post-colonial Nigeria – with New York-based publishing house Alfred A. Knopf. The publisher already reports that this edition is in itself a structurally transnational project: one that is part of Adichie's more comprehensive educational formation in the USA. Because of her exile from Nigeria (see par. 4.2.1), since her first, important and award-winning writing experiments (the novel *Purple Hibiscus* published in 2003, when Adichie was 26 years old), she takes part in the educational process of all young American writers, while dealing with both the dynamics of the publishing world, and the strategies to achieve a recognition within the US literary field.<sup>85</sup> As a sign of this rooting, her website highlights in the first page that «she is a member of both the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences».<sup>86</sup> *Americanah* became immediately a best seller in the United States.<sup>87</sup> The novel won the 2013 USA «National Book Critics Circle Award» and the 2017 New York city's «One Book, One New York» initiative. In 2019, the Kenyan-Mexican actress Lupita Nyong'o announced her intention to turn the novel into a 10-part limited TV series for HBO Max.<sup>88</sup>

Adichie's solid transnational posture can be observed through several factors: the translations of her works into 30 languages, the considerable amount of international awards and recognitions, the online presence of two different websites: one of them («Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie») explicitly promoted by Adichie herself, while the other («The Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Website») is edited by the scholar Daria Tunca. Not only are both sites most carefully articulated, but they also boast a diversified strategy. Furthermore, they are connected thanks to an explicit report in Adichie's first page website.<sup>89</sup> The independent website by Daria Tunca is characterised by a more essential approach and meticulously documents the reviews of Adichie's works. It is therefore aimed at a more restricted

85 H. Hewett, *Coming of Age. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the Voice of the Third Generation*, in «English in Africa», 1, 2005, 32, pp. 75, 90.

86 *About*, in «Chimamanda.com», <https://www.chimamanda.com/about/>.

87 «The novel, since its 2013 release, has been a certified bestseller, landing on *The New York Times'* bestseller list and shifting 500.000 copies by February of 2015» (O. Obi-Young, *As Sales Approach the Million Mark, Is «Americanah» Now Adichie's Signature Novel?*, in «brittle paper», March 27, 2017, <https://brittlepaper.com/2017/03/sales-approach-million-mark-americanah-adichies-signature/>).

88 B. Marine, *Lupita Nyong'o's Adaptation of «Americanah»'s Is Finally Happening*, in «Wmagazine», December 18, 2019, <https://www.wmagazine.com/story/lupita-nyonggo-americanah-hbo-series-danai-gurira>.

89 «For a detailed bibliography, please see the independent *The Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Website* maintained by Daria Tunca» (*About*, in «Chimamanda.com»).

audience of scholars, or rather attentive readers.<sup>90</sup> Adichie's website has eight main sections (home, about, books, media, news & events, read online, contact and – at a certain distance – Ifemelu's blog), and it functions as a launch platform of Adichie's past and present acknowledgments and contributions in the press. Its graphic quality is very attentive to the writer's global promotion and female aesthetic appearance. For example, the access to the website is inaugurated by a gorgeous photo of Adichie (one of many on the website) with a glamorous African hairstyle.<sup>91</sup> This is not a merely decorative image, if we consider that African hairstyles are at the center of a racial question in *Americanah*. More widely, this aesthetics is inspired by «Afropolitanism» and «Nigeropolitanism», two terms referring to a merging of African or Nigeria and cosmopolitanism: «a state of cultural hybridity», «to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time». This hybrid dimension is connected «to knowable African communities, nations and traditions» but also to «life divided across cultures, languages and states».<sup>92</sup> Like many Afropolitans and Nigeropolitans, Adichie underlines in this website presentation her belongings to a diasporic «Third Space»,<sup>93</sup> in which her roots are in two specific Nigerian cities (Enugu, where she was born, and Nsukka, where she lived) and in a campus family legend («her father was a professor and her mother was the first female Registrar»), while her writer's life is set «between the United States and Nigeria». Her recognition comes from prestigious transnational/postcolonial, national, as well as gendered awards, such as the «Commonwealth Writers' Prize» for the novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), the «National Book Critics Circle Award» for *Americanah* (2013), and the «Orange Prize» for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006).<sup>94</sup> In an explicitly metamedia dimension, starting from 2014, the website also incorporates within it, and in a form that cannot be accessed by the public,

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90 The link to the website edited by the scholar Daria Tunca is <http://www.cerep.ulg.ac.be/adichie/index.html>. Dr. Tunca expresses a very interesting transnational strategy in which academic highly specialized research on Nigerian writers is supported by her online bibliographies of works by and about Nigerian writers Chris Abani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ben Okri, and Chika Unigwe (*Bibliographies, ibi*).

91 *Home*, in «Chimamanda.com».

92 S. Gikandi, *Preface*, in *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on Borders and Spaces in Contemporary African Literature and Folklore*, eds. J. Wawrzinek, J.K.S. Makokha, Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York 2011, p. 9. See also A. Mbembe, *Afropolitanism*, in *Africa Remix. Contemporary Art of a Continent*, ed. S. Njami, Jacana Media, Johannesburg 2007, p. 25.

93 H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, New York 1994, p. 56.

94 *About*, in «Chimamanda.com». On the cultural and marketing strategies of prizes in the anglophone area see Ponzanesi (S. Ponzanesi, *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry. Icons, Markets, Mythologies*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2014). Ponzanesi underlines that the «Orange Prize» «with its system of long and short lists has certainly helped to increase the visibility of female writers and to scout new postcolonial talent such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie» (*ibi*, p. 68).

*The Small Redemption of Lagos*: the blog created by Ifemelu, the protagonist of *Americanah*, when she returns to Nigeria as a Nigerpolitan, at the end of the story. This is a further extension of the narrative development, since the posts refer to exchanges of which there is no trace in the novel.<sup>95</sup> On the website, the illustration used in the blog masthead perfectly mirrors a photo that is already verbally described in the novel: «Ifemelu was full of sanguine expectations for *The Small Redemption of Lagos*, with a dreamy photograph of an abandoned colonial house on its masthead».<sup>96</sup>

Tiziana  
de Rogatis

**4.2.1. Adichie's posture towards the national canon** Adichie grew up during the dramatic Nigerian political-economic crisis, which developed over twenty years between 1980 and the end of the century.

I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.<sup>97</sup>

For this reason, in 1996, after finishing secondary school in the university city of Nsukka, she decides to go to college in the United States. Her choice was shared by many artists of the so-called «third generation» of Nigerian writers, following national independence: a generation involved with «nomadism, exile, displacement, and deracination».<sup>98</sup> Thanks to this diasporic edge, Adichie's posture towards the Nigerian canon is extremely mobile and plastic. On the one hand, Adichie explicitly refers to the poetics, narrative and linguistic strategies of Chinua Achebe, father of Nigerian literature, whose 1958 novel – *Things Fall Apart* – is considered a great classic of African and Anglophone literature. However, on the other hand, she makes this influence undergo a completely original process of revision and re-appropriation. Adichie also neutralizes the authoritarian position of a male genealogy and, in general, of the Nigerian patriarchal literary field in its entirety, through the search for female descendants (such as Yvonne Vera and Tsitsi Dangarembga) of the African «third generation», and of the transnational black's women literary

95 For an analysis of the interaction between the two blogs created by Ifemelu and the sexual trauma she experienced, see de Rogatis, *The Global Novel*, cit.

96 «Ifemelu's Blog», in «Chimamanda.com» (<https://www.chimamanda.com/ifemelus-blog/>). C. Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*, 4th Estate, London 2013, p. 421.

97 Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, cit.

98 P. Adesanni, C. Dunton, *Nigeria's Third Generation Writing. Historiography and Preliminary Theoretical Considerations*, in «English in Africa», 1, 2005, 32, pp. 7-19: p. 16.

tradition (such as Maya Angelou).<sup>99</sup> The Nigerian patriarchal tradition is then resized by a malleable adoptive posture, in which the great father Achebe is put in relation with a «wide range of forefathers, foremothers, and sisters».<sup>100</sup>

#### 4.3. Atwood's posture towards transnational reception

Atwood's monumental transnational position is documented on the «Margaret Atwood Society» website, «an international association of scholars, teachers, and students who share an interest in Atwood's work»<sup>101</sup> and on her austere personal website in which Atwood's presence is certified at the opening by a welcoming phrase.<sup>102</sup> The Atwood's website main sections are: go to, learn & apply, books, FAQs, A/V, News, Events. From the FAQs one can get the hilarious impression of a writer who is rather overburdened by her own fame.<sup>103</sup> Through the website, any reader or scholar can easily reconstruct the enormous amount of awards and recognitions that Atwood's writing has achieved over 55 years of experimentation with all genres, including poetry, novel and short stories. The prizes awarded are divided into chronological spans of nine years each, starting from 1960 until 1999, and eventually segmented into decades for both periods 2000-2010, and 2010-2020. These divisions also allow to detect at a glance that the chronological range awarded with the highest number of prizes is the period going from 2010 to 2020, and that, in particular, 2017 was the year when Atwood received overall 9 awards, i.e. the highest number ever granted to her work so far: this was a clear recognition of the reuse of *The Handmaid's Tale* in a transmedia and political key.<sup>104</sup> A quick look at the full bibliography also helps to realize, for example, that a woman writer famous throughout the world for her fictional storytelling made her debut, in 1961, with a collection of lyrics, *The Double Persephone*, and that the Poetry section is as rich as the Novels section.<sup>105</sup> The site also has a section where it is possible to purchase the

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99 Hewett, *Coming of Age*, cit., pp. 83, 87.

100 *Ivi*, p. 89.

101 «Margaret Atwood Society», <https://atwoodsociety.org/>. On the transnational character of the «Margaret Atwood Society» website, founded in the United States in the mid-1980s, see Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic*, cit., pp. 217, 225.

102 «Welcome to Margaret Atwood website. I hope this site helps you find what you are looking for. Happy readings!» (*Home*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca», <http://margaretatwood.ca/>).

103 FAQ number 8: «What is your favourite book? Colour? Food?» «Margaret Atwood: I receive an alarming number of requests for my list of favourites. I generally do not answer to this question, as I have a hard time deciding» (*FAQs*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca»).

104 Many of them are extremely relevant, as the «Franz Kafka International Literary Prize» and the «PEN Center USA Lifetime Achievement Award» (*Awards and Recognitions*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca»).

105 *Full bibliography*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca».

writer's works online,<sup>106</sup> but significantly there is no link to the TV series (which is, on the contrary, featured in Ferrante's website, alongside a selection of the TV series' reviews). The short biography is not placed at the opening of the website as on Adichie's website, but in a marginal position inside the FAQs section. From this short biography (only eight lines), one can learn very interesting information on the selective principle that Atwood herself has applied to her long life. For example, there is a significant stress on her Canadian roots, which are highlighted in the first two lines with the mention of the place of birth (Ottawa), early life (Northern Ontario, Québec, Toronto), and with her major steps in education («undergraduate degree from Victoria College at the University of Toronto»), whereas the references to her American education («master's degree from Radcliffe College») are not further specified as being connected with the prestigious Harvard University.<sup>107</sup> The first two mentioned works out of only seven are *The Testaments* (with the co-won Booker Prize 2019), and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

**4.3.1. Atwood's posture towards the national canon** The following excerpt is a brief ironical Atwood's self-portrait, an interesting posture-plot in the context of the national canon:

[...] Other things I've been accused of since 1972, such as climbing to fame up a pyramid of decapitated men's heads (a leftie journal), of being a dominatrix bent on the subjugation of men (a righty one, complete with an illustration of me in leather boots and a whip) and of being an awful person who can annihilate – with her magic White Witch powers – anyone critical of her at Toronto dinner tables.<sup>108</sup>

The 2020 documentary on Atwood – *A Word after a Word after a Word is Power* (by Nancy Lang and Peter Raymond) – provides a more consecrated image of the writer, reconstructing the strong centrality that Atwood has held since the beginning of her career. This centrality starts with an early year, 1966, when she received the «Governor General's Award», a very important Canadian award, for *The Circle Game*, her second poetry collection. Other steps in this direction are: her solid collocation in multiple genres and sub-genres, her institutionalized and transnational pattern of reception (such as the «Margaret Atwood Society»; see paragraph 4.3), and her «role of the troublemaking public

106 *Shop*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca».

107 *Biography*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca».

108 Atwood, *Am I a bad feminist?*, cit., p.335.

intellectual». <sup>109</sup> However, Atwood's centrality inside the canon does not depend only on the highest quality of the writing, on her many awards, on the audience recognition since the beginning of her writing career (despite the context of a strongly patriarchal world), or even on her intense and public connection with Canadian writer Alice Munro, who received the Nobel Prize in 2013. <sup>110</sup> Her centrality also derives from the fact that her posture can be defined by an absolute equivalence with the Canadian canon, which she invented herself publishing in 1972 *Survival. A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. As she constructed a first framework of a national literary canon in this guide, Atwood represented herself as the mother of Canadian literature. The volume had a considerable and unexpected success (30,000 copies sold in the first year alone), yet it also raised much criticism, because with a direct and anti-academic style it frees Canadian culture from both British and American hegemony. <sup>111</sup> Furthermore, Atwood's perspective in *Survival* is profoundly transnational, since «survival», the thematic key of the canon, refers to a characteristic trait of Canadian culture, which originated in its position on the extreme borders (even geographical ones) with other cultures. In further confirming Atwood's transnational posture, *Survival* also describes the Canadian nation as a mosaic of victims and of ethnic survivors, that is, one constituted by colonization, migrations and pluriliguisms from other worlds (a theme that recurs in her narrative, for example in the historical novel *Alias Grace*, as well as in the corresponding TV miniseries).

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## 5. Conclusion

This conclusion is connected to the first section, to the contemporary emergence of global primordialism, and to the urgency to face these primordialist backlashes with unifying and anti-relativist frameworks of gender and transnationalism. From this perspective of new shared frames, I read the postures of these three authors as a unifying repertoire of gender and transnationalism pursued thanks to 1) the dynamic balance between storytelling and feminism, 2) the diversified yet in any case relevant use of the authors' websites, and 3) the dynamics of rooting, circumventing and transforming their national contexts through the transnational dimension.

109 A. Macleod, *The Canadian Short Story in English. Aesthetic, Agency, Social Change and the Shift in the Canon*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature*, ed. C. Sugars, Oxford UP, New York 2016, p. 437.

110 *Ivi*, pp. 437-439.

111 C. Sugars, *The English-Canadian Novel: Counter Memory and the Claims of History*, *ivi*, p. 455; S. Chivers, *Survival of the Fittest: CanLit and Disability*, *ivi*, p. 878-879.

### 5.1. The dynamic balance between storytelling and feminism

As I demonstrated in the second section, the link between feminism and storytelling inspires the poetics of all three writers. Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood express in the most complete and diversified way a posture of transnational feminism (see section 1), that is strongly connected to storytelling and to its double perspective. On the one hand, storytelling is a way to achieve counter-power and recognition throughout gender-based forms and themes, which are deciphered by a global feminist reception and its shared language. On the other hand, precisely because it passes through storytelling and therefore through a creative dimension, the posture of these women authors towards feminism turns out to be more problematic and dynamic than one might think. All three women writers have in fact developed a posture that oscillates between the centrality in relation to some fundamental issues of feminisms and an autonomy of judgment towards more rigidly ideological arguments. In Adichie's and Atwood's cases, this creative independence has also led them to hold sometimes positions of open conflict.

### 5.2. The diversified website strategies

Comparing the websites, three diversified strategies emerge. Ferrante's website has a pleasant graphic, connected to the glocal quality of an international Naples. The website grants the reader also a considerable amount of information, but the author's absence is quite explicit: one will not find, for example, a FAQs section as in Atwood's website. Adichie's website shows instead an impressive graphic and photographic quality, inspired by an Afropolitan and Nigeropolitan aesthetics. Her choice to include «Ifemelu's blog» on the website is also significant, because the operation consists in transcending national borders by mixing localities and globality through the use of cyberspace and wider accessibility.<sup>112</sup> By reporting Daria Tunca's website address on her website, Adichie also shows that she wants to enhance the layering of her works and the ability to hold together a popular reception with a more cultured one. The much more intense communicative effect of Adichie's website must be read throughout the historical connection between «electronic mediation and mass migration»,<sup>113</sup> extensively globalized in the past twenty years. Comparing the three websites, Atwood's website graphic quality is deliberately austere. Her whole strategy expresses an openly unaesthetic

112 L. Losambe, *Post-Hybrid Conjunctive Consciousness in the Literature of the New African Diaspora*, in *A Companion to African Literature*, ed. O. George, Wiley, Hoboken NJ 2020, p. 374.

113 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, cit., p. 9.

criterion: a conscious «resistance to the pressure to “connect”» and an aim to «distance the author».<sup>114</sup> This choice does not depend on the fact that she is unaware of mediatic culture. As a famous author who, for example, habitually communicates with other people on twitter, Atwood is profoundly aware of social strategy. On her website she also provides a guide to an «online presence», issuing a warning about the many channels, possibilities and dangers of media culture.<sup>115</sup>

### 5.3. The dynamics of rooting and circumventing the national context throughout the transnational dimension

In the structure of this paper, I have chosen to put the transnational before the national. The intent is to see to what extent the dynamics of recognition or marginalization between feminist postures, texts and national canons are underlined or circumvented by transnational reception. The transnational is often constituted as an alternative and intertwined network, one that is capable of giving Adichie and Ferrante not so much an extra space or guarantee within their respective national canons, but rather a position and a strength of recognition such as to redefine the very national space in which they are located. The fact that, thanks to *Survival*, Atwood has posed herself as a mother and a pioneer of the Canadian national canon must not mislead us. Between the Sixties and Seventies, Atwood dealt with a no less patriarchal context, precisely one of survival, which, however – compared to Adichie’s Nigerian space and, even more, to Ferrante’s Italian context – was more easily neutralized by the structurally transnational dynamics of Canadian culture.

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114 E. Maguire, *Home, About, Shop, Contact: Constructing an Authorial Persona via the Author Website*, in «M/C Journal», 3, 2014, 17 <https://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/821>.

115 *Your online presence*, in «MargaretAtwood.ca».

Riassunti

**Valentina Sturli**, «*Ma perché, proprio ora, un maggiolino morto?*». *Pensiero simmetrico e logica dell'inconscio in Bestie di Federigo Tozzi*

- L'articolo propone un'analisi di *Bestie* di Tozzi a partire dalla sovrapposizione, all'interno del testo, di elementi semantici che siamo abituati a concepire come distinti: animato e inanimato, attivo e passivo, inorganico e antropomorfo. La deliberata confusione di questi piani mostra come all'interno del testo sia a lavoro un tipo di logica che non riconosce il principio di identità e non contraddizione. Nella seconda parte dell'articolo si procede all'analisi stilistica di un particolare uso tozziano della congiunzione avversativa *ma*: si dimostra come in una consistente serie di casi la congiunzione non serva a contrapporre due frasi in contrasto, ma piuttosto a disarticolare i più comuni nessi logici per infiltrare la prosa di elementi che rimandano a un diverso tipo di logica, che Matte Blanco definirebbe "simmetrica" e che è tipica del funzionamento psichico inconscio.
- The paper proposes an analysis of Tozzi's *Bestie* starting from the superimposition, within the text, of semantic elements that we are used to conceiving as distinct: animate and inanimate, active and passive, inorganic and anthropomorphic. The deliberate confusion of these semantic layers shows that a kind of logic is at work in the text which does not recognize the principle of identity and non-contradiction. The article then proceeds with the stylistic analysis of a particular "tozzian" use of the adversative conjunction *but*: the author shows how in a significant series of cases the conjunction "but" does not imply the contraposition of two contrasting sentences, but rather it disarticulates the most common logical connections to infiltrate the prose with elements that refer to a different type of logic, which Matte Blanco would define as "symmetrical" and which is typical of the unconscious psychic stream.

**Marzia La Barbera**, *Il culto della virilità: insicurezza, violenza e conflitto di genere nel post-patriarcato di Katharine Burdekin*

- Muovendo da una prospettiva profondamente radicata nel campo degli studi culturali, l'obiettivo di questo saggio è quello di tracciare un confronto tra due opere di fantascienza dell'autrice inglese Katharine Burdekin, al fine di evidenziare come una prospettiva femminile e femminista possa arricchire il discorso sul genere e fare luce sulla necessità di controllo e supremazia che ancora oggi influenza il conflitto di genere. A questo scopo, la nostra analisi si concentrerà sulla creazione della principale distopia di Burdekin e proporremo una definizione che ne possa descrivere in modo appropriato l'assetto sociale, riflettendo al tempo stesso sulle strutture e sui temi della letteratura utopica per sottolineare la critica mossa dall'autrice alla società. Il fulcro dell'analisi, tuttavia, si potrà ritrovare nella caratterizzazione dell'identità maschile in opposizione a quella femminile, con una particolare attenzione ai modelli della fantascienza e alla creazione dello pseudonimo maschile della stessa Burdekin.
- Moving from a perspective deeply rooted in cultural studies, this paper aims to draw a comparison between two science fiction works by English author Katharine Burdekin to highlight the way a female, feminist perspective can enrich the discourse around gender identity and has been able to shed light on the need for male supremacy that still fuels gender conflict. For this purpose, in this analysis, we will focus on the creation of Burdekin's main dystopia and we will propose a definition to describe its society as we reflect on the structures of utopian and dystopian literature to underline the critique the author leveled at her contemporaries and at society as a whole. Throughout the paper, however, the focus will remain on the characterization of male identity as opposed to female, with particular attention to the models of science fiction and the creation of Burdekin's own male pseudonym.

**Margherita Quaglino**, *La rappresentazione del lavoro nelle varianti di Tre operai di Carlo Bernari*

- L'articolo esamina le varianti delle tre principali redazioni del romanzo *Tre operai* di Carlo Bernari: la prima, intitolata *Tempo perduto* e poi *Gli stracci*, datata alla fine degli anni Venti e rimasta inedita fino al 1997; la seconda pubblicata nel 1934 e la terza nel 1951. L'opera, considerata il primo romanzo industriale in Italia, si colloca in un momento composito, sia dal punto di vista culturale (tra l'eredità delle avanguardie di inizio secolo e l'avvio di un ampio e variegato ritorno al realismo) sia da quello sociale e politico. Le varianti documentano il progressivo affiorare di un deciso interesse sociale nell'edizione del 1934 (la condizione operaia e l'inerzia dei sindacati) e delineano apertamente, nel 1951, il percorso di formazione politica del protagonista, attraverso le frazioni all'interno del partito socialista e la nascita del partito comunista, rileggendo le lotte operaie del biennio 1919-20 nel drammatico controllo dell'ascesa del fascismo.
- The paper analyses the variants of the three main drafts of Carlo Bernari's novel *Tre operai*: the first, entitled *Tempo perduto* and then *Gli stracci*, dated the late 1920s and remained unpublished until 1997;

the second published in 1934 and the third in 1951. The work, considered the first industrial novel in Italy, is set in a composite moment, both from a cultural point of view (between the legacy of the avant-gardes of the beginning of the 20th century and the start of a broad and varied return to realism) and from a social and political point of view. The variants document the progressive emergence of a decisive social interest in the 1934 edition (the condition of the workers and the inertia of the trade unions) and openly delineate, in 1951, the protagonist's path of political formation, through the fractions within the socialist party and the birth of the communist party, rereading the workers' struggles of the two-year period 1919-20 in the dramatic backlight of the rise of fascism.

**Davide Dalmas**, *Temerari come serpenti. Commento di un saggio "imprendibile" (Franco Fortini, Astuti come colombe)*

- *Astuti come colombe*, pubblicato sul «menabò» nel 1962 e inserito nel volume *Verifica dei poteri* a partire dal 1965, è forse al tempo stesso il saggio di Franco Fortini più citato (ma solitamente soltanto per alcune frasi particolarmente memorabili) e più difficile. A sessant'anni di distanza, l'intervento lo affronta nella sua interezza, come un classico, a fini didattici e come uno dei testi che si collocano alla base del lavoro collettivo del Gruppo di ricerca su lavoro, industria, tecnologia e scienze umanistiche (GRILITS). Il commento si concentra in particolare sugli aspetti macrotestuali, sulla *dispositio* dell'argomentazione e sul sistema delle immagini e delle citazioni, nell'intento di evidenziare le motivazioni e i caratteri di una specifica forma di difficoltà, che discende da una netta interpretazione politica e morale rispetto a un preciso contesto storico.
- *Astuti come colombe*, published in the «menabò» directed by Italo Calvino and Elio Vittorini in 1962 and included in the book *Verifica dei poteri* (1965), is perhaps both Franco Fortini's most quoted essay (but usually only for a few particularly memorable phrases) and his most difficult. Sixty years on, the commentary deals with it in its entirety, as a classic, for didactic purposes and as one of the texts that form the basis of the collective work of the Research Group on Work, Industry, Technology and the Humanities (GRILITS). The commentary focuses in particular on the macro-textual aspects, the *dispositio* of the argumentation and the system of images and quotations, with the aim of highlighting the motivations and characters of a specific form of difficulty, which derives from a clear political and moral interpretation with respect to a precise historical context.

**Eleonora Anselmo**, *Dioniso ovvero Cristo? Echi cristiani nella traduzione sanguinetiana di Le baccanti*

- La traduzione di Edoardo Sanguineti di *Le baccanti*, rappresentata sulla scena e pubblicata in volume nel 1968, si contraddistingue fin da subito per la patina cristiana che investe e traveste i versi di Euripide. Dopo aver analizzato le ragioni che supportano la scelta sanguinetiana, il presente contributo offre un'antologia di specifici passi in cui il *modus operandi* del poeta viene sistematicamente applicato, per cercare di capire, in margine a un'ampia discussione sull'autorità e sui limiti del ruolo di traduttore, fino a che punto l'operazione dell'autore sia lecita.
- Edoardo Sanguineti's *Bacchae* translation, represented on stage and published in a book in 1968, is characterized by a Christian patina that invests and dresses up Euripide's lines. After an analysis of the reasons that support Sanguineti's choice, this essay offers an anthology of specific textual samples, in which the poet's *modus operandi* is regularly applied, to see, aside from a large discussion on the authority or on the limits connected with translator's role, how far the operation is legitimate.

**Antonio Galetta**, *La preistoria di Gomorra*

- L'articolo propone una lettura di *Gomorra* alla luce di quanto Roberto Saviano ha pubblicato prima dell'esordio con Mondadori. Nella prima parte si riconsidera la storia redazionale di *Gomorra*, contestando l'idea di un percorso unitario e problematizzando le discontinuità. Nella seconda parte si analizza il modo in cui Saviano si serve degli scritti precedenti e si discute la postura "della vittima a venire", rivelatrice dell'*habitus* dello scrittore anche se poi dismessa in *Gomorra*, e interpretabile come un compromesso tra un'intenzionalità autoriale forte e una posizione ancora marginale nel campo letterario. Nella terza parte si pone il problema della verifica delle fonti utilizzate da Saviano. Nel complesso, l'articolo si concentra sui tratti specificamente letterari di *Gomorra* e prova a dare basi filologicamente più precise al discorso critico su un testo dibattuto ma senza dubbio capitale per la narrativa italiana recente.
- This paper proposes a reading of *Gomorra* starting from each text published by Roberto Saviano before the literary debut with Mondadori. In the first part the editorial history of *Gomorra* is reconsidered by contesting the idea of a unitary path and by problematizing discontinuities. In the second part we analyze

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the way in which Saviano uses the previous writings, and we discuss the posture “of the victim to come”, then abandoned in *Gomorra* but revealing of the writer’s *habitus*. This posture can be read as a compromise between a strong authorial intentionality and a still marginal position in the literary field. In the third part we focus on the problem of the verification of the sources used by Saviano. Overall, the article focuses on the specifically literary features of *Gomorra* and tries to give a philologically more exact basis to the critical discourse on a debated but doubtlessly crucial text for recent Italian literature.

**Tiziano Toracca, «Noi non facciamo la tua cattiva letteratura»: su *Pausa caffè*, il libro d’esordio di Giorgio Falco**

- Il saggio si concentra su *Pausa caffè* (2004), il romanzo d’esordio di Giorgio Falco e una delle opere fondative della letteratura postindustriale, sul presupposto che la sua ricezione abbia finito col condensarne i contenuti e che si tratti perciò di un romanzo molto citato, ma poco letto e studiato. Dopo aver mostrato l’efficacia di alcune formule critiche emerse nel dibattito, il saggio si concentra sulla raffigurazione del carattere totalitario del linguaggio aziendale e sul nesso tra la rappresentazione del lavoro (non necessariamente precario) e lo squalore generalizzato della società italiana, considerandoli due aspetti che ampliano e problematizzano notevolmente l’oggetto di rappresentazione del libro. Il saggio cerca inoltre di mostrare come *Pausa caffè*, nonostante la sua eccentricità, contenga già inequivocabilmente alcuni elementi tematici destinati a diventare delle costanti nella narrativa dell’autore. In questa prospettiva, il contributo propone ad esempio un confronto tra il più lungo frammento del testo, *Transizione*, e alcuni capitoli di *Ipotesi di una sconfitta* (2017) e riflette su una sigla (*tmc*, cioè “tempo medio di conversazione”) destinata ad assumere un valore epocale in *Flashover* (2020).
- The paper focuses on *Pausa caffè* (2004), the beginning novel of Giorgio Falco and one of the most significant works of the post-industrial literature, on the assumption that its reception has condensed its contents and, therefore, that this novel is very often quoted, but not really read and studied. After showing the usefulness of some critical formulas emerged in the debate, the essay focuses on the representation of the totalitarian character of the business language and on the link between the representation of work (not necessarily precarious) and the spread desolation of Italian society, by considering them two aspects that considerably broaden and problematize the object of representation of the book. The essay also aims for showing how *Pausa caffè*, despite its eccentricity, already unequivocally contains some thematic elements destined to become constants in the narrative production of the author. In this perspective, the article proposes, for example, a comparison between the longest fragment of the text, *Transizione*, and some chapters of *Ipotesi di una sconfitta* (2017), and it reflects on an acronym (*tmc*, “average conversation time”) which will acquire an epochal value in *Flashover* (2020).

**Tiziana de Rogatis, *Transnational Perspectives, Gender and Storytelling*. Elena Ferrante, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Margaret Atwood**

- Questo saggio articola il legame tra transnazionalismo, gender e «primordialismo» (Appadurai) contemporaneo, una categoria storico-politica del nostro contesto globale. Questo nesso sarà poi utilizzato per esaminare la scrittura di Ferrante, Adichie e Atwood. Il focus principale sarà sulla loro «postura» (Meizoz) in relazione allo storytelling, al femminismo e alla loro ricezione nazionale e transnazionale. Queste tre «posture» saranno analizzate anche dal punto di vista dei loro siti ufficiali. Nella parte finale del saggio, tornerò sulla questione contemporanea del primordialismo globale contro i diritti delle donne e dei mondi lgbtqi+, e sull’urgenza di affrontare questo «contraccolpo» primordialista (Faludi) con legami antirelativisti e unificanti di genere e transnazionalismo. Identificherò quindi queste connessioni in tre diversi aspetti condivisi da Ferrante, Adichie e Atwood: l’equilibrio dinamico tra narrazione e femminismo; il loro uso transmediale diversificato (ma comunque rilevante) dei propri siti ufficiali; le dinamiche di radicamento, aggiramento e trasformazione del contesto nazionale attraverso la dimensione transnazionale.
- This paper articulates the link between transnationalism, gender and the contemporary «primordialism» (Appadurai), a historical-political category of our global context. This link will be then used to examine texts by Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood. The main focus will be on their «posture» (Meizoz) in relation to storytelling, feminism and national and transnational reception. These three «postures» will also be analyzed from the perspective of their official websites. In the final part of the essay, I will go back on the contemporary issue of global primordialism against women’s and lgbtqi+’s rights, and on the urgency to face this primordialist «backlash» (Faludi) with anti-relativist and unifying links of gender and

transnationalism. These connections will be identified in three different aspects shared by Ferrante, Adichie and Atwood: the dynamic balance between storytelling and feminism; their diversified (yet in any case relevant) transmedia use of personal websites; the dynamics of rooting, circumventing and transforming the national context through the transnational dimension.

**Andrea Gialloredo, *Di formaggi e fantasmi. Michele Mari e la narrazione breve***

- L'articolo propone una disamina delle ultime raccolte di racconti di Michele Mari, *Fantasmagonia* e *Le maestose rovine di Sferopoli*, a partire da una riflessione sulla predominanza delle forme brevi, declinate secondo un'ampia gamma di soluzioni espressive e di registri stilistici. La varietà tipologica della raccolta – che contempla lo scambio epistolare, la parodia della guida di viaggio, la prosa memoriale, la *ghost story*, il diario onirico, la serie di variazioni, lo zibaldone di citazioni – risponde al carattere enciclopedico e all'estetica del frammento che alimentano l'autobiografismo trasfigurato dello scrittore milanese. In linea con alcuni tratti della poetica del postmodernismo (esperita nella chiave ironico-tragica della nostalgia per le esperienze capitali della modernità: da Kafka a Céline), la scrittura citazionista di Mari plasma racconti "paralleli" che, attraverso il richiamo a celebri scrittori e artisti, indagano il rapporto insieme conflittuale e simbiotico tra la maniera e la tradizione da un lato e il segno, spesso traumatico, dell'ossessione personale e privata dall'altro.
- The paper provides an analysis of Michele Mari's latest collections of short tales, *Fantasmagonia* and *Le maestose rovine di Sferopoli*, starting with a reflection on the predominance of short forms, declined according to a wide range of expressive solutions and stylistic registers. The typological variety of the collection – which contemplates the epistolary exchange, the parody of the travel guide, the memorial prose, the ghost story, the onirical diary, the series of variations, the zibaldone of citations – responds to the encyclopedic character and the aesthetics of the fragment that nourish the transfigured autobiographism of the writer. In line with certain traits of the poetics of postmodernism (experienced in the ironic-tragic key of nostalgia for the capital experiences of modernity: from Kafka to Céline), Mari's citationist writing shapes 'parallel' tales that, through references to famous writers and artists, investigate the relationship, at once conflicting and symbiotic, between *maniera* and tradition on the one hand and the often traumatic mark of personal and private obsession on the other.

**Federico Francucci, *Trockij con Góngora e Wyatt. Prime osservazioni su Lettere a Valentinov di Gabriele Frasca***

- Il saggio analizza il libro più recente di Gabriele Frasca, *Lettere a Valentinov*, concentrandosi sull'intreccio tra storia e immaginazione, tra politica e forma artistica, che l'autore costruisce, portando l'opera a un livello di impegno sulla scena storico-sociale finora per lui inedito. Toccando alcuni degli eventi più importanti del XX e dell'inizio del XXI secolo (la rivoluzione russa e la sua degenerazione nel terrore staliniano, l'epidemia di spagnola del 1918-19, la rivalità tra USA e URSS per la conquista dello spazio, il movimento del Settantasette e il suo fallimento, il trionfo del capitalismo liberista), Frasca stabilisce con i lettori, attraverso una complessa rielaborazione della forma epistolare, un dialogo che vuole attraversare la letteratura per metterla in contatto con il suo fuori.
- The essay analyzes the latest book of Gabriele Frasca, *Lettere a Valentinov*, focusing on the interweaving of history and imagination, politic and artistic form, built by the author. The engagement of the artwork with social and historic issues reaches in this book a new level, that Frasca had never attained before. Touching upon some of the most crucial events of the 20th and the first quarter of the 21st Century (the Russian revolution and his degeneration in the stalinian terror, the Spagnola pandemic of 1918-19, the rivalry between USA and URSS about the conquest of space, the triumph of liberist capitalism), Frasca creates a dialogue with the readers through a complex reworking of the epistolary writing, a dialogue designed for crossing the literary space and connecting it to his outside.

**Ornella Tajani, *Leggere oggi le Memorie di un baro di Sacha Guitry***

- *Memorie di un baro (Mémoires d'un tricheur, 1935)* non è solo il romanzo di Sacha Guitry sul quale si basa il ben più celebre e quasi omonimo film (*Le roman d'un tricheur*, considerato da Truffaut un capolavoro): è una collezione di ricordi raccolti sotto il nome dei vari luoghi in cui il baro narratore soggiorna, da Caen a Parigi, dal Calvados alla Normandia, inframezzati da eccentriche teorie sul denaro o sui valori della vita, e accompagnato da disegni dell'autore; e, soprattutto, è un gustoso assaggio dell'*esprit* che ha reso celebre colui che è stato più volte definito «il Molière del XX secolo». Questo testo, tradotto oggi per la prima volta in italiano, consente di riportare l'attenzione critica sull'attore, scrittore e regista che ha attraversato la prima metà del Novecento, salendo e scendendo dalla giostra del successo e lasciando senza dubbio un segno importante nel panorama

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artistico francese.

- *Memorie di un baro* (*Mémoires d'un tricheur*, 1935) is not only Sacha Guitry's novel on which the far more famous and almost eponymous film (*Le roman d'un tricheur*, considered by Truffaut to be a masterpiece) is based: it is a collection of memories gathered under the names of the various places where the cheat narrator stays, from Caen to Paris, from Calvados to Normandy, interspersed with eccentric theories about money or life values, and accompanied by drawings by his author; and, above all, it is a tasty glimpse of the *esprit* that made «the Molière of the 20th century» famous. Translated today for the first time in Italian, this text allows us to bring critical attention back to the actor, writer and director who spanned the first half of the 20th century, rising and falling from the merry-go-round of success and undoubtedly leaving an important mark on the French artistic scene.

**Marianna Marrucci**, *La poesia nella scuola della civiltà digitale*

- A partire da una ricostruzione del dibattito teorico più recente sulla poesia, il saggio esplora i punti di contatto e gli elementi di inconciliabilità tra l'espressione poetica e il nuovo orizzonte della civiltà digitale, formulando infine l'ipotesi che la poesia possa svolgere un ruolo centrale e propedeutico nella didattica della letteratura.
- By retracing the most recent theoretical debate on poetry, the essay investigates the relationships between poetry and the horizon of the digital civilization, finally claiming the hypothesis that poetry can play a central and preliminary role in the literature teaching and learning.

## Biografie

### Eleonora Anselmo

- si è formata presso l'Università di Genova, approfondendo gli studi delle letterature classiche e quelli della modernità letteraria italiana. Si è occupata e si occupa dell'opera di Edoardo Sanguineti, in particolare in rapporto al problema della traduzione e dei rapporti tra l'attività del traduttore e quella poetica.
- graduated from the University of Genova, exploring Classical Literature and Modern Italian Literature. Her research interests focus on Edoardo Sanguineti's poetry, especially on the issue of translation and on the relationship between Sanguineti translator and Sanguineti poet.

### Davide Dalmas

- è professore associato di Letteratura italiana all'Università di Torino e coordinatore del Gruppo di ricerca su lavoro, industria, tecnologia e scienze umanistiche (GRILITS). La sua attività di ricerca è dedicata soprattutto a intellettuali, saggisti e critici del Novecento e alla cultura letteraria tra Quattro e Cinquecento (in particolare la letteratura cavalleresca da Boiardo a Ariosto e i rapporti tra letteratura e Riforma). Ha pubblicato le monografie *Il saggio, il gusto e il cliché. Per un'interpretazione di Mario Praz* (duepunti 2012), *La protesta di Fortini* (Stylos 2006), *Dante nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento italiano* (Vecchiarelli 2005) e curato *Franco Fortini. Scrivere e leggere poesia* (Quodlibet 2019) e *Poesia '70-'80: le nuove generazioni. Geografia e storia, opere e percorsi, letture e commento* (San Marco dei Giustiniani 2016, con Beatrice Manetti, Sabrina Stroppa e Stefano Giovannuzzi).
- is Associate Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Turin and coordinator of the Research Group on Work, Industry, Technology and the Humanities (GRILITS). His research activity is mainly devoted to twentieth-century intellectuals, essayists and critics and to literary culture between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (in particular, chivalric literature from Boiardo to Ariosto and the relations between Italian literature and the Reformation). He published the books *Il saggio, il gusto e il cliché. Per un'interpretazione di Mario Praz* (duepunti 2012), *La protesta di Fortini* (Stylos 2006), *Dante nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento italiano* (Vecchiarelli 2005) and edited *Franco Fortini. Scrivere e leggere poesia* (Quodlibet 2019) and *Poesia '70-'80: le nuove generazioni. Geografia e storia, opere e percorsi, letture e commento* (San Marco dei Giustiniani 2016, with Beatrice Manetti, Sabrina Stroppa and Stefano Giovannuzzi).

### Tiziana de Rogatis

- è professoressa associata di Letterature comparate all'Università per Stranieri di Siena. È redattrice della rivista di teoria e critica della letteratura «Allegoria» ed è socia della SIL (Società Italiana delle Letterate). La sua ricerca include saggi, volumi e monografie su Eugenio Montale e T. S. Eliot, su Derek Walcott, Kym Ragusa e Jhumpa Lahiri, su Elena Ferrante ed Elsa Morante. Ha presentato le sue ricerche su Ferrante per il mondo, dalla Svezia alla Cina. Ha lavorato sulle figurazioni della identità femminile, del mito antico e dei riti cerimoniali nella letteratura italiana e mondiale moderna e contemporanea. Le sue ricerche più recenti vertono sul rapporto tra il trauma e le strutture narrative nella letteratura italiana e nella *World Literature*, con una specifica attenzione alle scrittrici e al *Global Novel*.
- is currently Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University for Foreigners in Siena. She is the editor of the journal for literary theory and criticism «Allegoria» and a member of SIL (Italian Society of Literate Women). Her publications include numerous articles, edited volumes, and several monographs on Eugenio Montale and T. S. Eliot, Derek Walcott, Kym Ragusa, Jhumpa Lahiri, Elena Ferrante and Elsa Morante. She has presented her research on Ferrante around the world, from China to Sweden. She has worked on figurations of female identity, ancient myth and ceremonial rites in modern and contemporary Italian and world literature. Her most recent research focuses on the connection between trauma and narrative structures in the modern and contemporary Italian literature and in the World Literature, with a specific attention to women writers and the Global Novel.

### Federico Francucci

- insegna Letteratura e cultura visuale e Letterature comparate all'Università di Pavia. Ha pubblicato *La carne degli spettri. Tredici interventi sulla letteratura contemporanea* (O.M.P. 2009), *Il mio corpo estraneo. Carni e immagini in Valerio Magrelli* (Mimesis 2013), *Tutta la gioia possibile. Saggi su Giorgio Manganelli* (Mimesis 2019). Per l'Edizione nazionale delle opere di Luigi Pirandello ha curato l'edizione critica di *Uno, nessuno e centomila* (Mondadori 2021).

## Biografie

- Federico Francucci (1974) teaches Literature and Visual Culture and Comparative Literature at the University of Pavia. He wrote *La carne degli spettri. Tredici interventi sulla letteratura contemporanea* (O.M.P. 2009), *Il mio corpo estraneo. Carni e immagini in Valerio Magrelli* (Mimesis 2013), *Tutta la gioia possibile. Saggi su Giorgio Manganelli* (Mimesis 2019). He edited the critical edition of *Uno, nessuno e centomila* as part of the Edizione nazionale delle opere di Luigi Pirandello (Mondadori 2021).

### Antonio Galetta

- è dottorando in Studi italianistici presso l'Università di Pisa ed ex allievo della Scuola Superiore dell'Università degli Studi di Udine. È stato redattore della rivista «Il Chiasmo», ospitata da Treccani, e ha scritto saggi, interviste e racconti per «Digressioni», «Il primo amore», «La letteratura e noi», «L'indice dei libri del mese», «Singola», «Ticontre. Teoria testo traduzione». I suoi interessi di ricerca riguardano principalmente il romanzo contemporaneo e la teoria del romanzo. Si è occupato di Thomas Pynchon, Roberto Saviano, Giorgio Falco, Antonio Franchini, Giuseppe Marrazzo, Antonio Moresco, Giulio Mozzi, Antonio Pascale, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Tiziano Scarpa, Vitaliano Trevisan. Il suo romanzo *La pace sotto gli ulivi* ha ricevuto la Menzione speciale del direttivo alla XXXIV edizione del Premio Italo Calvino.
- is a PhD student in Italian Studies at Università di Pisa and alumnus at Scuola Superiore dell'Università degli Studi di Udine. He has worked as an editor for the review «Il Chiasmo», hosted by Treccani, and has written essays, interviews, and short stories for «Digressioni», «Il primo amore», «La letteratura e noi», «L'indice dei libri del mese», «Singola», «Ticontre. Teoria testo traduzione». He is member of «Lo spazio letterario», a collective based in Bologna. His main research interests are contemporary novel and the theory of the novel. He has focused on Thomas Pynchon, Roberto Saviano, Giorgio Falco, Antonio Franchini, Giuseppe Marrazzo, Antonio Moresco, Giulio Mozzi, Antonio Pascale, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Tiziano Scarpa, Vitaliano Trevisan. His novel *La pace sotto gli ulivi* received the «Menzione speciale del direttivo» from the Premio Italo Calvino (34<sup>th</sup> ed.).

### Andrea Gialloredo

- è professore associato di Letteratura italiana moderna e contemporanea presso l'Università «G. d'Annunzio» di Chieti-Pescara, dove ha insegnato anche Letterature comparate. È membro del comitato direttivo della rivista «Studi Medievali e Moderni», della redazione della rivista «L'illuminista», del comitato scientifico delle Edizioni Studium e di diverse riviste e collane di saggistica. È componente del NECLIT (Núcleo de Estudos Contemporâneos de Literatura Italiana – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina). È membro del Comitato Nazionale per le celebrazioni della nascita di Mario Pomilio. Tra le sue pubblicazioni più recenti, i volumi *Le rivelazioni della luce. Studio sull'opera di Giorgio Vigolo* (Studium 2017), *Tra fiction e non-fiction. Metanarrazioni del presente* (Cesati 2017), *Allegorici, utopisti e sperimentali. Bonaviri, Lombardi, Lunetta, Malerba, Manganelli, Pomilio, Rosso, Spinella* (Cesati 2022).
- is Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Italian Literature at the «G. d'Annunzio» University of Chieti-Pescara, where he also taught Comparative Literature. He is a member of the board of directors of the journal «Studi Medievali e Moderni», of the editorial board of the journal «L'illuminista», of the scientific committee of Edizioni Studium, and of several journals and collections of essays. He is a member of NECLIT (Núcleo de Estudos Contemporâneos de Literatura Italiana – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina). He is a member of the National Committee for the celebrations of Mario Pomilio's birth. His most recent publications include the volumes *Le rivelazioni della luce. Studio sull'opera di Giorgio Vigolo* (Studium 2017), *Tra fiction e non-fiction. Metanarrazioni del presente* (Cesati 2017), *Allegorici, utopisti e sperimentali. Bonaviri, Lombardi, Lunetta, Malerba, Manganelli, Pomilio, Rosso, Spinella* (Cesati 2022).

### Marzia La Barbera

- è laureata in Teorie della Comunicazione presso l'Università di Palermo. La sua tesi di laurea è uno studio che intreccia la critica letteraria e la filosofia politica per approfondire il legame tra utopia, distopia e comunicazione politica attraverso un approccio eminentemente comparatista. Iscritta alla Società Italiana delle Letterate, è un membro attivo della EASLCE (European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture, and Environment) con sede presso la Universidad de Granada e collabora con alcune associazioni impegnate nell'ambito delle politiche di genere. I suoi interessi di ricerca comprendono le prospettive utopiche e distopiche di transumanesimo e postumanesimo in un'ottica eco-culturale e gli studi di genere e postcoloniali, con una particolare attenzione alle interazioni tra ecocritica, realismo magico e fiction speculativa.

- graduated in Theory of Communication from the University of Palermo. Her thesis joins literary criticism and political philosophy in order to explore the relationship between utopia, dystopia, and political communication through the lens of comparatist analysis. She is a member of the Società Italiana delle Letterate and of EASLCE (European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture, and Environment), based at Universidad de Granada. She is also involved with several associations engaged in the field of gender politics. Her research interests include the study of utopian and dystopian perspectives on transhumanism and posthumanism seen from an eco-cultural point of view; gender studies and postcolonial studies with particular attention to the interconnections between eco-criticism, magic realism and speculative fiction.

#### Marianna Marrucci

- insegna nei corsi online dell'Università per Stranieri di Siena. Si è occupata soprattutto di poesia contemporanea, dei rapporti tra letteratura e canzone d'autore e di didattica della letteratura. Insieme a Valentina Tinacci ha curato l'edizione dell'opera a testimonianza mista (cartacea e digitale) *Un giorno o l'altro* di Franco Fortini (Quodlibet 2006). È autrice di libri di testo e di strumenti didattici per la scuola.
- teaches online at the University for Foreigners of Siena. Her main research fields are contemporary poetry, the relationships between literature and popular music and literature teaching. With Valentina Tinacci, she edited the paper and digital work *Un giorno o l'altro* (Quodlibet 2006) by Franco Fortini. She writes books for the schools and has elaborated educational materials and tools.

#### Margherita Quaglinò

- insegna Storia della lingua italiana all'Università di Torino. È codirettrice della collana «In forma di parola» della casa editrice Dell'Orso di Alessandria e della rivista «Leonardiana» in uscita presso l'editore Fabrizio Serra; è membro del comitato di redazione della rivista «Cuadernos de filología italiana» dell'Universidad Complutense di Madrid. Una parte della sua attività di ricerca riguarda la storia dei lessici settoriali antichi, in particolare dell'ottica, della prospettiva e della pittura. Ha organizzato convegni e pubblicato una monografia e saggi su Leonardo, Vasari, Armenini; è membro fondatore dell'Équipe *Génétiq ue et histoire des arts* presso l'ITEM (Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes) di Parigi e coordinatrice, insieme a Anna Sconza, del progetto *ArTerm. La terminologie artistique (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle), France-Italie*. Un secondo ambito di ricerca è dedicato all'evoluzione del dialetto senese nei primi secoli: ha pubblicato saggi sull'epistolario di Caterina da Siena e sulla questione della lingua nel Cinquecento. Lavora infine sulla lingua del lavoro nel Novecento e sulla filologia d'autore: è membro fondatore del GRILITS (Gruppo di ricerca su lavoro, industria, tecnologia e scienze umanistiche) e membro dell'unità locale del progetto PRIN (2017) *Amargine – Archivio digitale dei libri postillati di poeti italiani del secondo Novecento*; ha pubblicato saggi su Banti, Pavese, Ottieri, Caproni.
- teaches History of the Italian Language at the University of Turin. She is co-editor of the series «In forma di parola» published by Dell'Orso in Alessandria and of the journal «Leonardiana» published by Fabrizio Serra; she is a member of the editorial board of the journal «Cuadernos de filología italiana» of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. Part of his research activity concerns the history of ancient sectorial lexicons, in particular optics, perspective and painting. She has organised conferences and published a monograph and essays on Leonardo, Vasari, Armenini; she is a founding member of the Équipe *Génétiq ue et histoire des arts* at the ITEM (Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes) in Paris and coordinator, together with Anna Sconza, of the *ArTerm project. La terminologie artistique (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle), France-Italie*. A second area of research is devoted to the evolution of the Sienese dialect in the early centuries: she has published essays on the epistolary of Catherine of Siena and on the question of language in the 16th century. Lastly, she works on the language of work in the 20th century and on author philology: she is a founding member of GRILITS (Research Group on Work, Industry, Technology and the Humanities) and a member of the local unit of the PRIN (2017) project *Amargine – Digital Archive of Annotated Books of Italian Poets of the Second Twentieth Century*; she has published essays on Banti, Pavese, Ottieri, Caproni.

#### Valentina Sturli

- formatasi alla Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, all'Università di Padova e a Sorbonne Université, è attualmente ricercatore senior (RtdB) in Letterature comparate presso il Dipartimento di Lettere, Arti e Scienze Sociali dell'Università di Chieti-Pescara. Si occupa di teoria della letteratura e di letterature comparate, con particolare riferimento all'ambito italo-francese contemporaneo. Ha scritto saggi sulla letteratura fantastica, sul cinema

## Biografie

horror e sulla serialità televisiva; ha pubblicato due monografie: *Figure dell'invenzione. Per una teoria della critica tematica in Francesco Orlando* (Quodlibet 2020) ed *Estremi occidenti. Frontiere del contemporaneo in Walter Siti e Michel Houellebecq* (Mimesis 2020). È tra i curatori del volume postumo di F. Orlando, *Il soprannaturale letterario* (Einaudi 2017) e di *Vecchi maestri e nuovi mostri. Tendenze e prospettive della narrativa horror all'inizio del nuovo millennio* (Mimesis 2019). Sta ultimando, per l'Edizione Nazionale dell'opera omnia di Federigo Tozzi, l'edizione critica di *Bestie*, attesa per la primavera 2023.

- studied at Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, at Padua University and at Sorbonne Université, and is actually senior researcher (RtdB) in Comparative Literatures at the University of Chieti-Pescara, Department of Lettere, Arti e Scienze Sociali. Her main research interests are theory of literature and comparative literatures, with particular attention to the contemporary French-Italian context. She wrote essays on fantastic literature, horror cinema, and tv seriality, and published two volumes: *Figure dell'invenzione. Per una teoria della critica tematica in Francesco Orlando* (Quodlibet 2020) and *Estremi occidenti. Frontiere del contemporaneo in Walter Siti e Michel Houellebecq* (Mimesis 2020). She is co-editor of the posthumous volume by F. Orlando, *Il soprannaturale letterario* (Einaudi 2017) and of *Vecchi maestri e nuovi mostri. Tendenze e prospettive della narrativa horror all'inizio del nuovo millennio* (Mimesis 2019). In the context of the National Edition of Federigo Tozzi's Works, she is currently curating the critical edition of *Bestie*, coming Spring 2023.

### Ornella Tajani

- è ricercatrice di Lingua e traduzione francese all'Università per Stranieri di Siena. Si occupa prevalentemente di critica della traduzione del testo letterario e di letteratura francese contemporanea; ha dedicato una monografia alla traduzione del pastiche (*Tradurre il pastiche*, Mucchi 2018) e una alla critica della traduzione dal francese all'italiano (*Après Berman. Des études de cas pour une critique des traductions littéraires*, ETS 2021). È membro del direttivo del CeST Centro Studi sulla Traduzione, del collegio docenti del Dottorato di ricerca in Filologia e critica (Unisi) e del corpo docente del Master in Traduzione letteraria (Unisi). Dal 2018 è abilitata alle funzioni di professoressa di II fascia per il settore concorsuale 10/H1. Ha tradotto opere di Cocteau (premio di traduzione Monselice «Leone Traverso» per *L'aquila a due teste* nel 2012), Jouhandeau, Desjardins, Proust, fra gli altri; nel 2019 è uscita la sua traduzione dell'opera completa di Rimbaud per Marsilio (éd. O. Bivort).
- is currently Lecturer in French Language and Translation at the University for Foreigners of Siena. She mainly deals with translation criticism of literary texts and contemporary French literature; she has devoted a monograph to the translation of pastiche (*Tradurre il pastiche*, Mucchi 2018) and one to translation criticism from French to Italian (*Après Berman. Des études de cas pour une critique des traductions littéraires*, ETS 2021). She is a member of the CeST board (Center for Translation Studies), of the doctoral board in Philology and Critics and of the teaching board of the Master in Literary Translation (University of Siena). In 2018 she obtained the National Scientific Qualification to function as associate professor (French Language, Literature and Culture). She has translated works by Cocteau (Monselice «Leone Traverso» translation prize for *L'aquila a due teste* in 2012), Jouhandeau, Desjardins, Proust, among others; in 2019 her translation of Rimbaud's complete works was published by Marsilio.

### Tiziano Toracca

- è professore associato di Critica letteraria e letterature comparate presso il Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici e del Patrimonio Culturale dell'Università di Udine e Visiting Professor presso il Department of Literary Studies della Ghent University. È autore dei saggi *Il romanzo neomodernista italiano. Dalla fine del neorealismo alla seconda metà degli anni Settanta* (Palumbo 2022) e *Paolo Volponi. «Corporale», «Il pianeta irritabile», «Le mosche del capitale» una trama continua* (Morlacchi 2020). È co-autore di *A Theory of Law and Literature. Across Two Arts of Compromising* (Brill 2020). Ha scritto saggi sul modernismo e sulla letteratura italiana contemporanea, sulla rappresentazione del lavoro e sul rapporto tra diritto e letteratura.
- is Assistant Professor of Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature at the Department of Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the University of Udine and Visiting Professor at the Department of Literary Studies of Ghent University. He is the author of *Il romanzo neomodernista italiano. Dalla fine del neorealismo alla seconda metà degli anni Settanta* (Palumbo 2022) and of *Paolo Volponi. «Corporale», «Il pianeta irritabile», «Le mosche del capitale» una trama continua* (Morlacchi 2020). He is co-author of *A Theory of Law and Literature. Across Two Arts of Compromising* (Brill 2020). He wrote papers on modernism and contemporary Italian literature, on the representation of work, and on the relationship between law and literature.

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