

Chiasmi 2018

Perspectives on Italian Difference Italian Differences in Perspective

Expressions and Repressions of Hybridity and Otherness

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Book of Abstracts

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PANEL 1.

GENDERING DIFFERENCE / DIFFERENTIATING GENDER

1.

Forme dell'alterità e dinamiche del matricidio: Goliarda Sapienza e il pensiero della differenza

Gloria Scarfone
University of Pisa

L'opera di Goliarda Sapienza, l'ormai nota autrice dell'*Arte della gioia*, è stata negli ultimi anni terreno fertile per studi attenti alla questione del gender che, in un'ottica lato sensu queer, hanno prevalentemente posto l'accento sui processi di decostruzione degli stereotipi e di superamento del binarismo sessuale rintracciabili nella sua opera. Ponendomi in una prospettiva alternativa a questa, nel mio intervento vorrei mostrare il legame – diretto e non – di Sapienza col pensiero della differenza sessuale, l'evoluzione di esso nel corso della sua produzione e i risvolti simbolici che esso assume nel romanzo *L'arte della gioia*. Da una parte è evidente e dichiarato un rapporto diretto con *Il secondo sesso* di Simone de Beauvoir, antesignana di quel pensiero della differenza che, in opposizione a una visione universalista dell'essere umano cui vengono attribuite caratteristiche storicamente proprie del sesso maschile, afferma l'irriducibile alterità della donna rispetto all'uomo. Dall'altra Sapienza supera la visione prettamente esistenzialista di quest'ultima anticipando con sorprendente pionierismo numerosi temi del femminismo post anni '70 – Luce Irigaray, Luisa Muraro, Adriana Cavarero – che, rivendicando in modo molto più radicale l'alterità della donna rispetto all'uomo, arriva ad essenzializzarla.

Fil rouge di queste mie osservazioni sarà un evento centrale del romanzo di Sapienza: il triplice omicidio che l'eroina dell'*Arte della gioia*, Modesta, compie nei confronti di donne che l'una dopo l'altra – in inconsapevole conformità al concetto di continuum materno di Muraro – assolvono manifestamente il ruolo di madre. Partendo dalle ragioni che spingono la protagonista al gesto matricida, cercherò di mostrare perché l'uccisione di queste donne è necessaria per annullare il dominio maschile che ostacola il potere simbolico della donna in nome della lacaniana Legge del Padre. Come smantellare la società patriarcale e ristabilire l'ordine simbolico della madre (concetto chiave del pensiero di Muraro) è infatti uno dei temi centrali dell'*Arte della gioia*.

2.

Writing out of Bounds: Marginality and Marginless-ness in Elena Ferrante's L'amica geniale

Maria Florence Massucco
Stanford University

Elena Ferrante's tetralogy *L'amica geniale* has been described as 'addictive', consistently topping charts in popular fiction. Add to this popularity the mystery of the author's identity and the divisive critical response and we have a work that defies categorization, from its characters to its *copertine*. In this paper, I argue that Ferrante's tetralogy does more than defy compartmentalization as a publication; at the narrative level, it also probes and prods at the patriarchal structuring of space and power. This paper calls on the works of Adriana Cavarero, Toril Moi, and Gayatri Spivak as it works through the characterization and movements of the tetralogy's two protagonists. These theorists' overlapping ideas of marginality and narrative reciprocity help articulate what I understand as the tetralogy's feminist, polemical undercurrent. In the work *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi argues that a truly productive work of writing will not attempt to shift power dynamics while subscribing to the same spatial structures that lie at the center of the masculinist norm; it will challenge not only the positions of the players but the very rules of the game. In Ferrante's narrative, the exploration of margins and the repeated experimentation with ways of imposing or eliminating boundaries and borders highlights the notion of the female self outside masculinist centrism.

The divergent experiences of the two protagonists offer multiple permutations of the consequences of a center-less spatial structure. This paper looks at marginality and marginless-ness in *L'amica geniale* and considers the function of these elements within the plot, the narrative temporality, and the spatio-structural politics of the fiction's world – but it settles on *multiplicity* rather than resolution as the work's ultimate expression of a marginless alternative to masculinist centrism. Zooming out in the end, the paper muses on Ferrante's own boundary-blurring defiance of authorial authority as an absent pen which shares her narrator's name.

3.

Leon Battista Alberti's Sofrona: Female Eloquence and the Volgare

Chiara Girardi
The Johns Hopkins University

My presentation seeks to analyze Leon Battista Alberti's *Sofrona*. This work, a satirical dialogue in the vernacular that portrays the author conversing with a woman,

seems to contradict much of Alberti's production, as well as the Quattrocento conventions of the genre. *Sofrona* differs from Alberti's satirical dialogues because he usually composes them in Latin, while he employs the vernacular for his Ciceronian texts. Additionally, it differs from the Quattrocento tradition of the dialogue because Alberti presents a female interlocutor, at a time when the dialogue and the art of oratory are considered male fields. Looking in particular at the innovative role played by the vernacular as an artistic medium in the fifteenth century dialogue, my talk aims at exploring the ways in which the female voice and gendered identity are constructed in opposition to male eloquence.

PANEL 2.

LITERARY HYBRIDS

4.

Forme di poesia in prosa. Per una definizione di genere

Davide Murari
University of Pisa

L'argomento del mio intervento, coerentemente con le linee tematiche della conferenza, è la forma ibrida per eccellenza del contemporaneo panorama poetico italiano, ovvero la poesia in prosa. Lo scopo è innanzitutto fornire una genealogia della forma, soffermandosi sia sulla sua nascita e sulla sua affermazione – innanzitutto novecentesca –, sia soprattutto fornire degli indirizzi utili alla identificazione e alla definizione del genere. In tal senso, occorre innanzitutto distinguere tra elementi interni al testo ed elementi esterni ad esso. Nel primo caso si porrà attenzione all'eventuale presenza di artifici metrici più o meno esibiti – versi incapsulati, ritmo e prosodia del dettato – così come a quelli di natura sintattica, retorica e semantica – in generale stilistici. Nel secondo, occorrerà prestare attenzione agli aspetti cognitivi riguardanti il fruitore: in tal senso sarà importante capire come agisce il contesto in cui il testo è inserito e, più in generale, comprendere come l'orizzonte di attesa del lettore influisca sulla percezione della forma ibrida e come questo aspetto sia velatamente tenuto in considerazione dall'autore. Ad esempio, è chiaro che una prosa a sé stante non avrà lo stesso valore, agli occhi del lettore così come a quelli dell'autore, di una prosa inserita in un contesto lirico.

Basando le mie considerazioni teoriche sui lavori di N. Frye e di P. Giovannetti, la tenuta delle stesse sarà confortata da una campionatura di esempi che abbracciano il secondo Novecento italiano: da Montale – la cui Bufera è in tal senso uno snodo storicamente imprescindibile – agli autori contemporanei a noi più vicini – Giampiero Neri, Guido Mazzoni per citarne solo un paio.

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5.

***L'ibrido finzionale primoleviano:
il caso di “Piombo” e “Mercurio”***

Bibiana Tangari
University of Chicago

Un caso particolare della complessa relazione di Primo Levi con la propria opera di finzione è costituito dai racconti “Piombo” e “Mercurio”, parte de *Il Sistema Periodico*. Fino allo scorso anno, quando fu pubblicata l’intervista-conversazione all’autore condotta da Giovanni Tesio (*Io che vi parlo*, Einaudi), i due racconti sono stati avvicinati come scritti giovanili, unico “campione” anteriore all’esperienza del campo; e lo stesso autore, nel Sistema, li presenta come tali. Purtuttavia, per stessa ammissione di Levi, quella intorno a “Piombo” e “Mercurio” era stata un’operazione simulata: l’autore aveva arbitrariamente retrodatato i racconti che, dunque, non erano opere giovanili. La nuova e recente indicazione permette di intraprendere una lettura micrologica dei due racconti ai fini non solo di provare che in essi esistono elementi che provano la loro appartenenza ad un periodo successivo a quello del campo, ma anche che essi non possono dirsi prosciolti dal carico di tensione etica che grava su tutta l’opera leviana: “Piombo” e “Mercurio” non sono solo mondi bizzarri della liberalità, ma due altre prove dello statuto ibrido della finzione dell’autore, recluso nel limbo di autore e testimone.

Se nell’intervista le ragioni della manomissione non sono esplicitate, i termini dell’ammissione, se non altro, autorizzano a leggervi un’impasse. L’espeditivo di ascrivere i due racconti al remotissimo passato avrebbe potuto legittimare a Levi la trasgressione dell’*inventio*: in quel tempo lontano, infatti, la finzione non si sarebbe posta come problema etico. E, però, se anche le ragioni furono queste, “Piombo” e “Mercurio” non sono dei veri e propri a parte: nemmeno quando Levi prova a scrivere due “sogni di evasione” manomettendone il dato compositivo, il risultato è il libero volo della fantasia. I tesi movimenti interni di “Piombo” e “Mercurio” non ci permettono di leggere i due racconti come divertissements: la finzione leviana è, difatti, una strana creatura, profondamente insidiata dall’esperienza del campo.

PANEL 3.

INETTI AND CORSARI: THE MISFITS IN THE ITALIAN TRADITION

6.

Addiction all'italiana: Reading Italo Svevo's La coscienza di Zeno (1921) as 'drug literature'

Gianna Albaum
New York University

Drug literature originates with De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* (1821), and then proceeds as a sort of alternate canon, composed of minor works of major authors: Baudelaire's *Les paradis artificiels*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*, Freud's *Über coca*, Jack London's "John Barleycorn," Benjamin's *Über haschish*, and so on. Although the texts included in these 'drug canons' vary, there is a near-total absence of Italian literature. Several Italian works merit a place in these surveys, but the most surprising omission is Italo Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno* (1923), which recounts Zeno's addiction and his struggle to kick the habit.

Svevo viewed the human as an 'unfinished' creature, capable of infinite transformation, and strongly opposed any standardization of human experience, including prescriptions of what constitutes 'health'. Health, he believed, was best nurtured by a generous helping of error, failure, and even pathology, all rich fonts of future growth and creation.

Svevo's valorization of transformation without telos resonates with much of drug literature: drugs are often portrayed as an anti-social and unproductive 'solitary pleasure', and countless authors have mused on the 'aimless' and 'wandering' pleasures of intoxication. "[H]ashish persuades Nature to permit us that squandering of our own existence that we know in love." Benjamin writes. "For if, when we love, our existence runs through Nature's fingers like golden coins that she cannot hold and lets fall so that they can thus purchase new birth, now she throws us, without hoping or expecting anything, in ample handfuls toward existence."

Although many scholars have interrogated Zeno's interminable stream of 'last cigarettes,' surprisingly few have taken the protagonist's addiction at face value and read the novel as a work of 'drug literature'. That is the task of this paper: to examine the addict in Svevo's novel along with the complex structures of desire, compulsion, failure, and indecision that drive Zeno's compulsive chain-smoking, and to locate the novel in relation to the larger constellations of drug literature in the Italian tradition and in the Western canon.

7.

***The Contagion: the evolution of borgatari
from Pier Paolo Pasolini to Walter Siti***

Simone Calabro
University of Edinburgh

The question of *borgata* has always been central in all Pier Paolo Pasolini's works. During the last years of his life, he expressed in many artistic forms his preoccupation for the evolution of *borgatari* in *piccolo borghesi*, intercepting an anthropological mutation that, in his view, was the result of the economic *boom* experienced in Italy during the sixties, and the consequent irradiation of bourgeoisie's values and lifestyle based on consumerism and competition. However, Walter Siti, one of the most important living Italian writers, and most eminent Pasolini's scholar, in his 2008 novel *Il Contagio* proposed to overturn Pasolini's analysis positing that nowadays 'non sono le borgate che si stanno imborghesendo, ma è la borghesia che si sta, per così dire, *imborgatando*' (Siti, 2008, p. 313).

Siti's one is certainly an ambitious change of paradigm and it immediately raises a number of questions: to what extent, according to Siti, in recent times bourgeoisie embraced kind of values and behaviours usually associated to *borgatari*? Is it possible to posit a new anthropological mutation in Italy successive to the one theorized by Pasolini? Is this mutation, this *contagion* related to certain late capitalist marketing strategies?

In this paper, I will try to analyze the environmental, economic, political and anthropological causes that led to this change of paradigm and its possible future implications related, for instance, to the recent economic crisis. I'll try also to investigate on how the perception of *borgata* – is that a limit or a *protection*? – has evolved during the recent years and how it has been constructed by mass media in the collective imaginary. To reach these aims, I will closely analyze the concepts of *borgata* and *borgatari* in Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita* and Siti's *Il Contagio*.

8.

***Lives Against Culture, Thoughts Against Doctrines.
Pier Paolo Pasolini, Carmelo Bene and the Italian Difference in Cinema***

Riccardo Antoniani
Sorbonne Université – University of Padua

Posthumously published in 1992, Pasolini's unfinished novel *Petrolio* is a "summa of all my experiences and memories" and at once a fresco of the post-WWII Italian political, economic and anthropological landscape. The corsair narrative was conceived as a mosaic of quotations, rewritten or plagiarized texts and images, organized on the whole as an "impure poem". *I mal de' fiori* is Carmelo Bene's last work, a poetic composition

written in different Italian dialects and in several foreign languages, “a polyphonic journey at the end of the language and therefore the self,” in which the author-cum-actor – celebrated by Klossowski and Deleuze – gave voice to the “sud al sud dei santi” and shaped what Cassano called Southern thought. Both of these *Gesamtkunstwerke* offer a critique of normative models of modernization derived from Northern European paradigms in an attempt to restore agency and dignity to the heritage of Southern civilizations and cultures. Contaminating literary codes, disarming narrative structures and turning the text into a mechanism of resistance to (bio)power, both works are exemplary, for Agamben and Esposito, of the Italian difference: “an impure and non-philosophical reason that takes into account the conditions, imperfections and possibilities of the world and whose core consists in a civil vocation, taking as its objects of investigation life, history and politics”, in search of what Machiavelli called “la verità effettuale”.

This paper proposes a comparative analysis of these two works and intends to explore the nexus of difference and hybridization in light of the poetic and political affinities shared by the authors since their work together on *Oedipus Rex* in 1967. Exploring what Esposito calls the unsustainable in Pasolini beside what Agamben calls the unproductive in Bene will reveal these two masterpieces of postmodern Italian literature as dispositives of minoritization, leveling “becomings against History, lives against culture, thoughts against doctrines, graces or disgraces against dogma.”

PANEL 4.

MARGINALITIES: NEGOTIATIONS OF IDENTITY

9.

Killing Animals: Zoomorphic murder(er) in Giovanni Verga's "Jeli il pastore"

Bristin Scalzo Jones
University of California, Berkeley

The term anthropomorphism presupposes clear and definite knowledge about what is uniquely human: not only that there is a clear difference between human and animal but also that we already know precisely what this difference is. Given the research into animal behavior and communication in recent decades, today this assumed difference is more problematic than ever. My paper presents a close reading of Giovanni Verga's novella "Jeli il pastore" and investigates how this canonical 19th century verismo text undermines human/animal difference through its zoomorphic protagonist and its violent conclusion. Throughout the text, the narrator overtly characterizes Jeli in zoomorphic terms, and while Jeli's bestial kinship initially permits him success in his line of work, it eventually makes him an outcast in the rural Sicilian community in which he lives. Southern, poor, orphaned, cornuto, animal: Jeli epitomizes the marginalized subject. In the novella's dramatic conclusion, Jeli slits the throat of his rival Don Alfonso in a manner directly analogous to the killing of a non-human animal: "gli tagliò la gola di un sol colpo, proprio come un capretto."

This human murder parallels animal killings that Jeli witnessed in the past, encouraging us to question not only the humanity of the zoomorphic protagonist but also the humanity of killing non-human animals in the first place. Drawing from extensive archival research conducted at the Fondazione Verga in Catania this past summer, I bring to light passages from early unpublished "Jeli il pastore" drafts which directly confront the question of non-human animal communication and which, I argue, provide a key to unlocking Jeli's seemingly unexpected final act. By examining the inherent liminality of human/animal difference, this paper sheds light on the relevance to animal studies and posthumanist theory of Verga's famed verismo.

10.

The Search for Identification in/with a City on the Margins in Umberto Saba's Trieste e una donna

Molly O'Brian
Princeton University

Umberto Saba continuously struggled with his hybrid identity as a bisexual writer divided by his Catholic and Jewish origins in the liminal space of Trieste. Like his native city that was majority Italian but lied outside Italy's borders until 1920 (and remained disputed territory until 1954), Saba always desired but never felt included in not only Triestine and literary society but humanity in general, instead finding himself identifying with animals who shared a universal suffering with him. As Giuseppe Carimandrei, Saba's alter-ego, writes in *Storia e Cronistoria del Canzoniere, Trieste e una donna* (the most famous section of the *Songbook*) is "a tre personaggi" with the poet, Lina, and Trieste forming a trio of protagonists, suggesting a melodrama constructed out of the psychological events following a conjugal betrayal. However, looking deeper, we find a love triangle involving these three characters; Saba describes Trieste like one of "his" fanciulli, raising the question of the role of them in the collection. This talk explores the role of the fanciullo in *Trieste e una donna*. I will show how this figure and the city become one and how they provide a source of pleasure and pain for the narrator at a time of emotional strife. I see this cohesion of identities as indicative of the non-normative identity of the poet himself, a form of intersectional difference ("ero fra lor di un'altra specie") that is further explored in the third volume of the *Canzoniere* and in the novel *Ernesto*. The desiring poet looks upon the city-as-desirous-young-boy and the young-boy-within-the-city in search of identification, making the work a space in which an identity of the margins is worked through and articulated at a time when the very identity of Trieste (and of Italian modernism) is in question.

11.

Il Da(d)do e l'Iguana. Incontro con l'altro in Anna Maria Ortese

Julia Okołowicz
University of Warsaw

Ne *La principessa dell'isola*, un commento a *L'Iguana* di Anna Maria Ortese, Pietro Citati definisce l'autrice uno scrittore-animale, la cui solitudine "non è la solitudine di un essere umano", ma è "la solitudine senza gesto e senza parola dell'animale condannato, che si chiude nella sua tana e non vorrebbe più uscirne". La narrativa dell'autrice rivela non di rado un riferimento al mondo animalesco, rappresentato in chiave allegorica attraverso una notevole presenza degli esseri ibridi e fantastici, al confine tra l'umano e l'animale. *L'Iguana*,

romanzo pubblicato per la prima volta nel 1965, racconta la storia di un viaggio e di un innamoramento. Il protagonista principale, un giovane architetto e conte milanese, parte per l'Ocaña, un'isola portoghese che non risulta sulla carta, con lo scopo di acquisto del terreno. Ma la metafisica di Ortese precede la topografia. È l'incontro con l'altro, in questo caso una servettaiguana, il vero pretesto per comporre una favola profondamente etica, e raccontare il peccato dell'Occidente: la cultura dell'oppressione coloniale e la dignità perduta del creato.

L'Iguana, una dei pochi abitanti impietriti di un Eden abbandonato e l'incarnazione della Natura stessa, diviene oggetto di una redenzione impossibile, visto che, come scrive Citati, "basterebbe il dolore di una sola creatura perché appaia chiara la malvagità dell'Universo". Cercando di salvare l'amato animale e morendo nel pozzo, Daddo si rivela non solo una figura cristologica, ma anche un demiurgo platonico, creatore della storia "primitaria e anormale", che apre, tra i vari riferimenti all'opera di Manzoni, di Stevenson o di Leopardi, un discorso metaletterario, che va oltre qualsiasi spazio. L'idea di analisi de *L'Iguana* consiste in lettura del testo in chiave etica dell'epifania del volto, proposta da Emmanuel Levinas ne *L'umanesimo dell'altro uomo*, e nella risposta alla questione di "Ho scelto il niente", frase che rende la figura di Daddo il dado nell'*espacement* mallarmeiano di *Un colpo di dadi mai abolirà il caso*.

PANEL 5. RE-IMAGINING THE SPACE OF THE OTHER

12.

Spaces and Representation of ‘Otherness’ in Grazia Deledda’s fictional works

Silvia Pulinas
University of Kent

In the centuries preceding the unification of Italy, Sardinia suffered from an enduring situation of subalternity. That this condition persisted well into the twentieth century is clearly shown in the fictional works of Grazia Deledda (1871–1936). In her novels, Deledda displays her desire to “to portray with my words a country unknown to many” (1938: 236). Deledda’s desire to write about Sardinia implied describing its semi-colonial and/or postcolonial culture to both an Italian and international reading audience (Hopkins 2007: 258). My aim is to show the different ways in which cultural differences shape the characters’ perceptions of themselves, and thus of otherness, in Deledda’s work. I will examine how her ‘internal look’ (Wagner) has used representations of spaces and movements within (or beyond) to depict her characters’ sense of ‘being other’. More specifically, through close readings of the selected texts,

I will show how processes of acknowledgement and acceptance of one own’s individuality and/or alterity are linked to the spatial settings in which those processes take place—which are implicit but all-important factors of inclusion/exclusion. The spaces where many of Deledda’s protagonists live are shaped by dreams and ambitions, thus related to how they perceive their own identities. Therefore, it seems that only through a process of detachment from their origins, can characters attain awareness of both their identity and their alterity with respect to what they have left behind. Related to this is also the theme of the journey, frequently featuring the liminal space of the sea. Drawing on Brathwaite’s notion of ‘tidalectic’, which suggests a ‘movement of the water backwards and forwards as a kind of cyclic motion, rather than linear’ (1999:44), I will show that some of Deledda’s protagonists can eventually embrace their ‘otherness’ through detaching themselves from the island in a separation that often – though not always – also implies a return.

13.

Dall’ “isola-mondo” al “mondo attorno all’isola”: processi di ibridazione e prove di identità complessa nella letteratura sarda degli anni Zero

*Carola Farci
University of Padova*

La letteratura sarda ha da sempre goduto di una certa autonomia rispetto al resto della letteratura italiana. Dice Brevini, trovando grande approvazione, che “difficilmente la Sardegna, a causa della sua posizione decentrata e della sua peculiarissima storia, segnata dall’incontro con diverse culture, può essere integrata in un discorso di storia letteraria rigorosamente italiana”. Gli fa da contraltare Marci, che, addirittura, parla di “separatezza che deriva dal dato geografico e si trasforma in un elemento della psicologia”

Caratteristiche tradizionali che hanno però dovuto fare di recente i conti con la globalizzazione e con un sistema di mezzi di comunicazione tali da permettere di oltrepassare agevolmente il limite marino, apendo così l’isola al mondo. Processo che ha lasciato tracce importanti nella letteratura contemporanea, tanto che, nell’ultimo ventennio, si può parlare del tentativo di colmare questa separatezza, partendo dalla propria identità e diventando ibrido, complessità.

Quest’intervento si prefigge di riflettere sulle due tendenze che si sono venute a formare nella letteratura sarda degli anni Zero: da un lato la tendenza più tradizionale, di forte ispirazione novecentesca, che potremmo definire “isola-mondo”, dove elementi testuali e paratestuali sinergono nella rappresentazione di un mondo i cui confini sono marcati, geograficamente e identitariamente, dal perimetro della Sardegna; dall’altro il filone più innovativo di “mondo attorno all’isola” in cui autori dell’ultimissima generazione rappresentano un sistema aperto, in cui è possibile entrare ed uscire dall’isola con estrema facilità e in cui i momenti narrativi preposti al viaggio sono stati eliminati, in conformità con un senso di continuità identitario. Quest’ultimo filone, entro i quali troviamo autori di una certa fama come Flavio Soriga e Alessandro De Roma, apre la barriera geografica ad una condizione identitaria più ampia, multipla e complessa, che denota un nuovo tipo di sguardo sul mondo e sulla propria italianità.

14.

Writing Diasporic Places: Rome and Mogadishu in Somali-English and Somali-Italian Literature

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My project aims to compare the representation of Mogadishu through novels written in English and Italian by Somali authors. The specific case of Somalia is productive for a multilingual approach and this project highlights this peculiarity by bringing into

dialogue novels by Nuruddin Farah (*Links*, *Crossbones*) and by Italophone authors (*Lontano da Mogadiscio* by Ramzanali Fazel, *Il latte è buono* by Garane, *Madre piccola* by Ali Farah, *Oltre Babilonia* by Scego). I propose a comparative perspective, which has never been conducted before on Somali literature, and presents a new direction for Postcolonial Studies more generally, by crossing the monolinguistic approach of analysis and by focussing on the representation of spatiality in the particular Somali context. My research method consists of relating the different modes of Somali self-representation through the trope of spatiality, since all the novels display a decentred and dislocated sensibility of the subject due to his or her diasporic condition. In particular, I will focus on the urban setting –dominant in the novels– and its role in the Somali context both in the colonial and postcolonial period to disrupt the hierarchized dichotomy of centre vs. periphery.

Therefore, I aim to compare the representation of Mogadishu and Rome, both fundamental for multiple reasons: the former embodies a place of both collective and individual loss, and a city spoiled by the margin-building practice of colonialism; the latter is seen, for the very first time thanks to Italo-Somali postcolonial writers, as the emblem of the colonial past, a liminal space between colonial discourse and a new de-colonised identity. To this end, I will analyse colonial maps, photography books, and engage with theoretical works from the fields of literary theory, geography and urban studies. The wide range of studies I take into consideration, using a comparative approach, seems necessary in order to give the most accurate account of the complexity of diasporic representations of places.

15.

Popping the (Southern) Question: On the Political Potential of a Trans-Mediterranean Avant-Garde

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In post-1968 Italy, many conservatory trained musicians abandoned classical, jazz, and avant-garde pursuits for more popular vernaculars found in folk and rock music, giving birth to perhaps the greatest prog-rock tradition anywhere (Rock Progressivo Italiano, or RPI). There was also a counter-movement, as musicians trained in the idiom of pop music migrated (in some cases temporarily) towards more challenging territories. Labels such as Bla Bla, which began releasing fairly standard pop singles, went on to release some of the most important, if obscure, records of Italian minimalism, distinct from both American minimalism and from the “kosmische” music of their German contemporaries (though with obvious affinities to both). The broader scene of Italian composers and musicians at the time often drew on ancient and global musics, in addition to the folk traditions of Italy and the across the Mediterranean, utilizing non-Western techniques as well as contemporary research in electronic and electroacoustic music, both composed and improvised. This was in part a reaction against the disinterested, cerebral music that

characterizes much academic composition and new music, often by figures associated with the Italian Communist Party. I find in these records a movement towards fostering links, musical political and symbolic, across the Mediterranean and the Global South. Walter Maioli, for instance, made his career playing with musicians from Tunisia, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Argentina. His groups Aktuala and Futuro Antico suggest an affinity with the radical black music tradition of Art Ensemble Of Chicago, the improvised folk of Third Ear Band, and the German collective jazz-rock of Embryo.

Through musical cues, Maoili's groups suggest an Italian identity that acknowledges its historical connections which extend across the Mediterranean and beyond and trouble the received notion of what constitutes a "European" identity. Drawing on Cesare Casarino's critical recuperation of Pasolini's universalist sexual Orientalism, I argue that the incorporation of cross-Mediterranean musical traditions (southern Italian, Arab, African) into avant-garde music aligned with the extra-parliamentary Left during the 1970s might be understood as an earlier manifestation of the "tactical blackening" that Joseph Pugliese has identified in the Neapolitan hip-hop of the '90s.