Beyond

n.5

The ISI Florence & Umbra Institute
Studies in International Education

The diversity issue

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Index

Inclusion, Diversity, and Education

"Inclusion and diversity." We often hear this expression in university settings and beyond. However, what does it really mean? From a broad point of view these concepts refer to the variety of unique individuals that make up a group of people and the environment that allows them to interact together as equally valued contributors. An inclusive and diverse setting consists of (and welcomes) different identities in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, national origins, abilities, or disabilities, just to mention a few examples. Furthermore, all individuals have the opportunity to contribute to an environment like this (regardless of their differences); in doing so, they enrich it.

When we combine diversity, inclusion, and education the results at stake are even higher. What students learn in university courses goes well beyond the classroom walls; it impacts our future also in terms of societal progress. In other words, if students do not hear women's names in their courses, how can we reach gender equality? If black writers are the exception rather than the norm in the classroom, how can we overcome racism? If sexual orientation is not discussed, how can we reach equal rights for all humans?

Inclusion and diversity in the curriculum, from general education to doctoral studies, should be of primary importance. As Adrian Asham suggests: "When schools cater for diverse learners, they develop structures and approaches that benefit all learners" (43). In other words, this has a positive impact on society as a whole. Furthermore, as Nancy Chick and Holly Hassel remark: "[the] highest goal is that these connections will instil in students a sense of responsibility beyond themselves and to the wider communities, and that this sense of responsibility or connectedness will lead to social action, activism, and engaged citizenship" (211).

Feminist pedagogy has been educating students on diversity and in-

clusion since the 1980s. In her 1987 publication, Carolyn M. Shrewsbury notes that feminist pedagogy "begins with a vision of what education might be but frequently is not" (6), thus suggesting that it attempts to bring changes to the status quo. Feminist pedagogy is a "continuing reflexive project" (6), engaged with the materials studied, movements for social changes, issues of sexism, classism, sexual orientation, racism, ableism, and others, while aiming to reach gender equality, foster diversity, and practicing inclusion in the classroom and beyond. As Shrewsbury adds, the environment thus created is "a place to utilize and develop all of our talents and abilities" (6) where all voices matter and where the diversity of these voices enriches the learning outcome. In other words, feminist pedagogy has been one of the first steps in the educational curriculum to create a more inclusive and diverse university setting and – in turn – a less unequal society.[1]

In the past, feminist pedagogy and principles of diversity and inclusion have often been applied to courses in women, gender, and sexuality. Today, however, they should be applied to all disciplines; addressing them is paramount to improve, for example, the gender gap and raising awareness against homophobia, lesbophobia, and transphobia. In this context, it is necessary to remark that women in the United States have been granted entry to public universities late in comparison with other western countries, such as Italy and France. As a consequence, issues of gender and pedagogy were also addressed at the same time. For example, the University of Virginia accepted undergraduate women only from 1970 onward.[2] The Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972, which states that discriminating on the basis of sex in U.S. education programs is illegal, helped to change the

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1. As suggested recently in the Vanderbilt University's guide to feminist pedagogy: "it is an over-arching philosophy—a theory of teaching and learning that integrates feminist values with related theories and research on teaching and learning".

2. "By 1970, when the first officially co-ed class enrolled and 450 women arrived on Grounds to take their seats in UVa classrooms, over 30,000 women had already made their mark on UVa, pursuing –and earning –their diploma, certificate, or degree (bachelor's, master's, medical, law, and doctoral). Their presence is recorded in the archives. The existence of women on Grounds is a fact hiding in plain sight. To borrow McIntire alumna Margot Lee Shetterly's (Com 1991) formulation, they are UVa's hidden figures – some hidden once for their gender, others hidden twice for their gender and their race". See https://womenscenter.virginia.edu/history-women-uva for a list of resources on women at UVa.

system nationwide. However, white male-dominated and male-centered education is still a concern of the twenty-first century on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond.

The fifth issue of *Beyond* focuses on diversity, inclusion, and education. This includes the 'voyages' that scholars and teachers accomplish while using feminist pedagogy, active citizenship, and global citizen education in their classroom and research. In her article, Roberta Trapè aims to explore the (hitherto neglected) role of foreign language pedagogy in educating learners for global citizenship. This is particularly true of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. Alice Pomodoro analyzes how in the last few years, feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements have been trying to raise awareness of inclusive language as one of the mediums that can be used to compensate the negative consequences linked to sexist language. Caroline Lippers's contribution concerns personal cultural preference: why we behave the way we do when we are confronted with another culture and how to strengthen our cultural agility. Susan Lee Pasquarelli uses her experience as the leader of a faculty-led program in Sicily to uncover insights beneficial to international faculty while designing and implementing culturally responsive, field-based learning experiences. Stefano Baldassarri's review of Johnny Bertolio's textbook *Controcanone* suggests that materials to change the status quo have been created and educators now have the chance to participate in active and inclusive changes. Federico Damonte's article focuses on his course *Diversity in Italy* and in particular on the classes where he discusses with students how migrants are represented in the media in Italy. Finally, the interview with Lucia Schiatti gives readers the opportunity to see how diversity and inclusion can be applied to STEM subjects too.

As Paulo Freire already suggested in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) educators have the power to change the status quo or to continue to perpetrate injustices. With this issue of *Beyond* we would like to contribute to create:

"a classroom environment of mutual respect where both teacher and all students take active, responsible, and shared roles in the learning

process. This dynamic is achieved through classroom relationships that don't hide or gloss over the differences in experience and perspective within a community of learners. Within this community, students care about others' learning and well-being as well as their own, and they feel free to use their sites of authority – where they already stand and what they already know – to help contribute to the knowledge of the course (Chick and Hassel, 197-198)".

Join us in the quest for inclusion, diversity, and gender equality in education.

Francesca Calamita & Nina Peci, guest editors of *Beyond*

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Deviant Bodies

The Representation of Migrants in the Photographs of "*La Nazione*" Newspaper

Federico Damonte

Abstract

There is by now a vast literature on the representation of migrants in Italian media, with the specific aim to establish if such a representation is prejudiced, and in case, how is that prejudice conveyed. In particular, there is a consensus that much of the media's discourse on migrants in Italy is based on the notion of *social deviancy*, and the implicit *threat* it represents. To demonstrate this, more analytical studies of Italian media take a quantitative approach in which evidently prejudiced and hostile statements about migrants are carefully extracted and counted. What such an approach misses, though, is the fact that the media routinely use several subtle methods to add "implicit meaning" to the way they report about migrants. These methods involve both verbal and visual communication, and apparently neutral ways to generalize negative features. The result is that a clear hostile and prejudiced view of migrants is produced through images and statements that cannot in themselves be labeled prejudiced. In this preliminary study I use Multi-modal Discourse Analysis to classify a set of pictures of migrants taken from *La Nazione* newspaper, based in Florence, to show how the overall representation clearly depicts migrants as being socially deviant, and therefore, menacing.

Keywords: migration, representation of migrants, migrants in Italy, Italian media, social deviancy, discourse analysis, multi-modal discourse analysis

Introduction[1]

The aim of this article is to contribute to the study of the way in which

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migrants are represented in Italian media, through an analysis of the use of images of migrants in some issues of La Nazione newspaper, based in Florence. I must immediately point out that this is very much a preliminary, programmatic work, and a much larger empirical investigation is needed in order to reach wider and more solid conclusions. I thought it might be useful, though, to present this research here in this initial state as it focuses on one aspect of anti-migrant discourse, which is not much discussed in the public debate on migration in contemporary Italy. This aspect refers to the apparently neutral, scarcely noticeable use of specific communication methods, both verbal and visual, in order to build a negative representation of migrants, especially those who are not white. As shall be described in more detail below, this representation is transmitted, verbally, through words and phrases that are not offensive in themselves. Crucially, this representation is then reinforced and amplified through a very specific use of pictures of migrants that is far from "journalistic" or "realistic" and only shows them in a limited set of contexts, and doing an even narrower set of activities. Together, the linguistic and visual communication methods paint a very precise picture of the non-white migrant, one that is clearly negative and hostile.

As we shall see, much literature on the topic, as well as the attention of anti-racist organizations, is understandably focused on the more shocking and serious violent speech, which is tragically a common occurrence in political and public discourse on migration in Italy today. This runs the risk, though, of obscuring the fact that a deeply negative and hostile view of migrants is constructed daily by some media, that are otherwise careful to avoid using more violent speech themselves. In practical terms, though, the evidence needed to establish these communicative patterns is necessarily large indeed, and not always easily accessible, so that establishing their bias as a matter of fact is often a challenging enterprise[2]. This

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2. In the case of this research, for instance, back issues of *La Nazione* are not systematically available online, and when they are, they do not necessarily appear in the original context in which they were printed, with accompanying photos and articles. Furthermore, even printed collections of *La Nazione* in public Florentine libraries are often incomplete, with sometimes only the last years being available, or with several issues missing because they were not delivered.

article, then, intends to contribute to a growing literature that analyses the discourse on migration in qualitative, and not only quantitative, terms and that crucially takes into account visual representation.

Finally, I also need to point out that this work was borne out of the pressing and practical needs of teaching a course on *Diversity in Italy* to American study abroad students at the International Studies Institute, Florence. In the same way in which I try to introduce students to the "everyday diversity" which is part of Italian culture and society, I try to describe to them the underlying, constant negative discourse about migrants and persons of color in Italy. My original goal, therefore, was not so much to analyze in depth the portrayal of migrants in the Italian press, but rather to make visible to my students some well established patterns of discourse with which I was only too familiar. This has turned out to be a daunting task, and the need for good teaching material in English on the topic remains severe, in my opinion. It is my hope that this preliminary work will help some colleagues who want to tackle these urgent issues.

Racist and anti-migrant discourse in Italy

Before proceeding to introduce the topic and goals of this preliminary work, it is necessary to make some distinctions and define clearly its empirical scope and methodology. In the Italian context, anti-migrant and racist public discourse against non-white persons often overlap, so that the two issues – prejudice against migrants and prejudice against people of color – are often treated as being largely the same phenomenon. Consequently, the attention of scholars and NGO organizations that study migration is often focused on cases of violent aggression and explicit racist language. The problem is compounded by an incomplete survey of racist speech and acts in Italy. Monitoring projects such as "Il Barometro dell'odio", sponsored by Amnesty International Italia, do not offer a comprehensive database and rely on the judgment of volunteers. Furthermore, several monitoring efforts of this type are only active during periods of intense public debate, such as electoral campaigns. Here I assume it is important to keep the two issues separate, and especially to bring other

categories to the study of anti-migrant discourse. In particular, I will follow more recent literature on the topic and use the category of deviancy to describe the specific form of prejudice found in Italian media.

A related problem is that much work on migration is done by sociologists and thus employs mainly quantitative methods. Considering that in Italy we do not have yet a large comprehensive database of racist and hate speech against migrants, quantitative analyses are necessarily applied to relatively small datasets. Apart from this intrinsic limitation, I will argue that in order to describe the communicative patterns studied here quantitative methods are necessary. In this work we are going to use *multi-modal discourse analysis* (Kress 2011), which includes both verbal and visual communication. The crucial advantage of this approach, as we will see, lies in the fact that it successfully captures de-humanizing strategies that are expressed through words and images that do not by themselves convey hostile or racist attitudes towards migrants. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, rely on counting words and statements with explicit negative connotation, and miss the underlying communicative strategy completely[3].

The case study: representation of migrants in *La Nazione* newspaper

La Nazione is the main newspaper of the city of Florence, and it is easily available in the whole Tuscan region, and beyond. As in the case of other local newspapers in Italy, *La Nazione* is easily available in most bars and other establishments and has a readership which is much wider than the number of copies it sells. Its political orientation is center-right and it often comments and reports on migration and especially on social problems connected to migrants. The original idea of this work, indeed, was borne out of the author's familiarity with the tone and perspective of the newspaper's reporting on migrants and the curiosity of finding out

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3. A more comprehensive survey of the literature on the topic and methods is beyond the scope of this preliminary article. The reader is referred to the works in the Bibliography and the references quoted there for a more thorough introduction. For the Italian context, the reader is specifically referred to the essays in Simoni and Lombrado (2022).

the patterns used in this reporting.

The original research plan was to sample articles about migrants and analyze them through the tools of Discourse Analysis (DA, Gee 2010), a qualitative method to study the structures, patterns and methods through which linguistic texts can convey meaning. The photographs accompanying these articles would then be studied in their own terms and in comparison with the results of the DA analysis, to see whether they are indeed instrumental in amplifying the articles' portrayal of migrants. In a survey of the existing research I found that a DA analysis of *La Nazione*'s reporting on migrants had already been meticulously done by Eleonora Garosi (2005), confirming this author's working hypothesis. In this preliminary work, then, I will summarize Garosi's results and then proceed to a first analysis and classification of the pictures of migrants published in the newspaper under study.

A Discourse Analysis of *La Nazione*'s representation of migrants

Garosi's careful analysis shows that in the articles published by *La Nazione*, migrants are clearly associated with a specific set of *topics*, all related to social deviancy, such the following.

Topics related to migrants in *La Nazione* articles[4] (*La Nazione*, 2003, from Garosi 2005)

- Drugs	15.6%
- Illegal immigration	15.1%
- Robberies	11.3%
- Undeclared work	10.8%
- Murder	9.9%
- Illegal selling and counterfeiting	7.0%
- Aggression and street fights	6.6%
- Public drunkenness and disorderly conduct	4.2%

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4. See Garosi (2005) for a complete list. Numbers indicate the percentage of articles about the given topic out of all the articles on migration in the sample.

It is important to underline that the articles for each topic are not dry factual reports, but contain several "implicit meanings", which are not based on fact but are nonetheless introduced into the narrative through several mechanisms. The reader is referred to Garosi's work for a fuller presentation of these mechanisms. Here I will just mention two of them that are relevant also in the study of images.

The first is the method of *association*: describing a confrontation between migrants and the police as a "Far West scene" (a phrase often used in the titles of articles), clearly transfers all the negative connotations of lawlessness and violence from the Far West to the event being reported, whether such transfer is justified by facts or not. Another powerful mechanism is *implicit generalization*. For example, if an article reports about the arrest of North-African drug dealers with several previous convictions, in journalistic discourse this state of affairs is often summarized through the use of the phrase "per l'ennesima volta" (for the umpteenth time), as in the following hypothetical newspaper title:

> "Marocchini arrestati in piazza per l'ennesima volta per spaccio di droghe"
> *Moroccans arrested in the public square for the umpteenth time for selling drugs*

The fact that neither the number of people involved nor the number of previous convictions is specified, frees the reader to imagine the quantity of drug-dealers and convictions. Crucially, this is not a precise number, but an amount large enough to cover all the relevant informational context, namely the whole activity of "selling drugs". Informally, this example is saying that many people sell a lot of drugs, but Moroccans are involved most of the time. This is, naturally, a logically unfounded conclusion, but it is strongly implied by the absence of a specific number of subjects and the presence of a vague quantifying adjective ("ennesima"), which projects the situation in a much larger context.

The reader is referred to Garosi's work for a fuller analysis and de-

scription of the data. For our present purposes, we will take this study as clear confirmation that the articles of *La Nazione* newspaper make use of a specific linguistic communicative strategy that associates migrants with themes of social deviancy, and does so "silently", through associations and implications.

A preliminary analysis of *La Nazione*'s visual representation of migrants

In this study I will assume that images must be included in the analysis of how media depict migrants. This is, I think, necessary for several reasons. In the first place, most media include photos in their articles on migrants. Furthermore, images are more memorable as depictions of specific groups than linguistic texts. They can also trigger powerful emotional responses and thus shape public opinion. Finally, the repetition of specific types of images on print and digital media can reinforce social bias against specific groups (Urman et al. 2022).

My goal in this preliminary work was that of establishing a list of analytical features that could be used in categorizing the images I was collecting. In particular, I used the list of features proposed by Urman et al (2022):

Analytical features used in the categorization of images of migrants (Urman et al 2022, Table 2)
-Facial visibility
- Individual vs group representations
- Race
- Sex and age
- Religious symbols
- Border crossings
- Working activities
- Protest activities

Of these I did not use the feature "border crossing" (i.e. pictures of migrants crossing a border illegally) as it created a strong overlap with the representation of refugees. Similarly, the feature "religious symbols"

would select a large number of pictures of women wearing a *hijab* (Islamic veil), again shifting the focus away from migrants.

I used the remaining features to organize the images into different categories. While I have looked at some 80 pictures in total, all published in the last 10 years, the goal of this preliminary survey was to see whether a categorization like the one adopted here could be fruitfully applied to my sample. The few photos discussed here were retrieved from *La Nazione*'s website, but also appeared in the printed version of the newspaper. As we shall see, this preliminary survey does indeed show that the images under study fall into the categories discussed above and, more significantly, that they do paint an overall negative picture of migrants. The next step of the research will then be to create a more balanced sample and label all the pictures in it.

Group versus individual representation

The first thing that strikes the observer, when we focus our attention on patterns in the way migrants are shown in the photographs of *La Nazione* newspaper, is the strong tendency to show migrants in crowded *groups*. Indeed, this is the only way African migrants are shown when trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe: a large group of human bodies where individuals are barely discernible. These pictures cancel migrants' individuality in different ways but in our preliminary hypothesis the most common is that of showing migrants on boats from a distance, or even from above, as shown in Picture 1, a famous shot taken by Massimo Sestini.

Other photos in this by now well-established genre choose to focus on those cases in which migrants are leaning off the boats and/or cover the entire surface of their means of navigation. In this case it seems difficult to describe the persons on the boat as a group, in that they more closely resemble a *mass*, an undefined amalgamation of non-completely-human bodies in which no individuality can possibly be discerned.

In another common pattern, photos focus on just a part of the mass of migrant bodies, thus implying an even larger mass beyond the photograph's borders. Exactly as in the case of the "umpteenth crime" case dis-

cussed above, this implied mass is undefined, but large enough to spread over any contextual ground. This makes the mass of bodies even less human, and therefore more threatening.

If these type of images were the inevitable result of the special context of photographing migrants while attempting the Mediterranean crossing, one could expect pictures of migrants taken *after* they have been rescued to

Top: Picture 1: *La Nazione*, 20 June 2019
Bottom: Picture 2: *La Nazione*, 7 September 2015 (but the photo "di repertorio", a stock photo, is dated 2 July 2014)

show a more individual representation, but this is the opposite of what we find. Migrants on rescue boats are again shown as a group, from a distance, only this time covered in blankets or heat sheets that turn them into *things*.

Working activities

Moving on to the representation of migrants in urban contexts in

Top: Picture 3: *La Nazione*, 2 May 2021 (Foto di repertorio)
Bottom: Picture 4: *La Nazione*, 18 October 2021

Italy, another striking feature of the photos surveyed here is that they almost completely fail to show migrants engaged in any kind of work. This is particularly amazing in the case of the Senegalese community, for example, since a high number of Senegalese men work as non-uniformed security guards in many shops and bars in Tuscany. Indeed, in my informal preliminary survey, I could not find a single picture of a Senegalese man working as a security guard. The situation is slightly better in the case of the very large Chinese community in Tuscany, with some pictures showing Chinese migrants in front of their shops or workshops, but even in this case it is surprising how many photographs show Chinese people walking the street, even when the news being reported concerns the economic activities of the Chinese community.

In the photographs under study, migrants simply do not work: they spend their time on the streets, looking at their smartphones. Instead of working, they *loiter*. The connection with social deviancy, as discussed by Garosi above, is in this case very clear, and sometimes made explicit. Picture 5 shows a "posteggiatore abusivo", that is, a person that asks for some coins after having pointed you to a free slot in a parking lot. The presence of a group of African migrants doing this in the parking lot of the main hospital in the city was reported several times in *La Nazione*, with the language needed to emphasize the danger posed by this criminal activity ("Nothing stops them!", "Turn of the screw against illegal parking attendants!", "The police arrive, they flee").

The picture chosen to illustrate the threat posed by unofficial parking attendants is practically identical to all the other pictures that show migrants in an urban context in Italy: they show people not working, loitering around, often looking at their smartphones. It is therefore significant to note that Picture 5 is a stock photo: it does not represent – to the best of my knowledge – one member of the parking "gang." In a sense, though, all pictures of migrants in urban context show social deviancy, so any picture of an African man will do.

When they do not loiter around, migrants engage in an even more deviant and threatening activity: they sit down in public places. It is sadly

a well-known feature of the public debate on migrants in Italy that many citizens and local administrators have taken steps to remove benches from parks and other public areas in order to prevent exactly this kind of activity, which is clearly perceived by some as wrong and threatening. In this case, though, it is simply not possible to call sitting on a bench "illegal"; therefore a whole array of verbal expressions is used to convey nega-

Top: Picture 5: *La Nazione*, 13 January 2020, (stock photo)
Bottom: Picture 6: *La Nazione*, 1 November 2016

tive connotations, the most common being the word *bivacco*, "improvised camp-site". It clearly conveys the message that this activity, though legal, is not *appropriate*, and that migrants are abusing their access to public spaces. Visually, the deviancy of this behavior is underlined by – again – showing migrants in groups, obscuring individual features and showing them from a distance, as in Picture 6, used to illustrate a *bivacco*.

Exactly as in the case of the picture of the illegal parking assistants, which is actually a stock photo, the deviancy of sitting on benches is underlined by the fact that photos like Picture 6 are interchangeable with those of real pushers selling drugs in public parks.

Violent protest

Images do not necessarily describe static representations; they can convey actions and dynamic sequences of events quite effectively. In the photos we examined, this is clearly visible in the only activity migrants are shown to be engaged in: violent protest. As discussed above, violent collective protests, especially when they are not officially organized, are a marker of social deviancy, and are often associated with migrants.

Many articles I surveyed do indeed make this connection, as made clear by the negative qualifiers employed. Thus, any confrontation by migrants with the police is "tense", and in the worst case leads to "a Far West scene" or "total chaos". If the police are not involved, migrants do not protest; instead they "march" through the city and "invade it". The violent chaos of migrants' protests is also clearly conveyed through photos. Contrary to the strategy of not clearly showing migrants' faces and facial expressions (as it would individualize and humanize them), photos of protests involving migrants show clearly enraged facial expressions, and take care to include people lifting things or agitating their arms, as in Picture 7.

Picture 7 puts in the foreground a large African man, wielding a stick, clearly enraged. The picture is taken at an angle, which underlines the abnormal nature of the event being photographed. By implication, it is clear that the man has used, or is about to use, his stick against somebody.
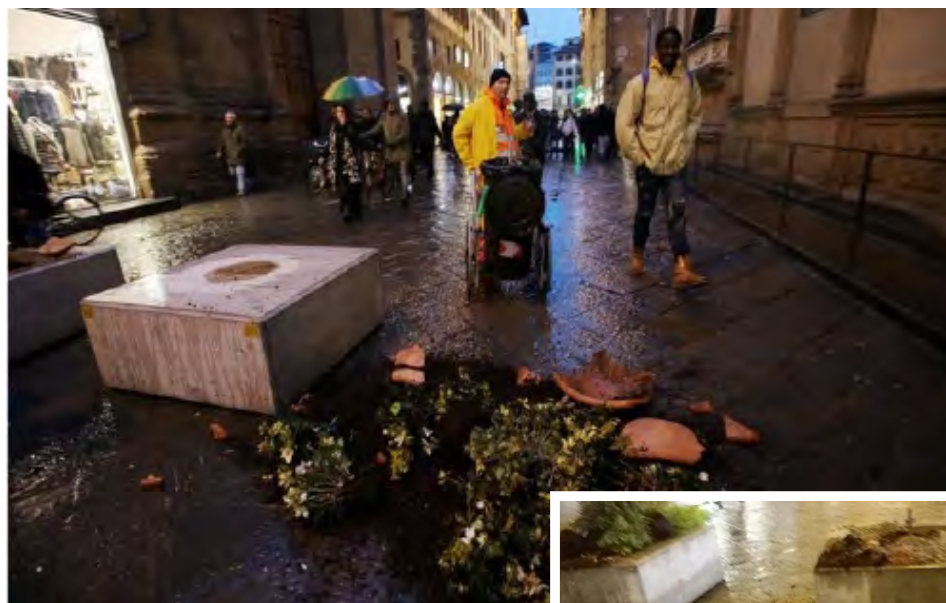
Top: Picture 7: *La Nazione*, 6 March 2018
Bottom: Picture 8, *La Nazione*, 6 March 2018, and
Picture 9, *La Nazione*, 6 March 2018

In reality, though, this picture refers to the largely peaceful protests by the Senegalese community on the occasion of the cold-blooded murder of Idy Diene, a street vendor (the "illegal" qualifier was not used in this case), on 5 March 2018. The murder profoundly shocked the city and the Senegalese community, that had suffered another lethal aggression seven years before, in which a far-right extremist had shot several Senegalese men in a public square, killing two and wounding three. Several spontaneous protests occurred the same day, involving many non-Senegalese, as well as many Senegalese men and women, who were understandably upset. Despite the protesters' legitimate rage, nobody was hurt or attacked, and damage to property was minimal. The following day, though, local media reported about "the invasion" of the city center, and "the moments of panic" experienced by passers-by. Indeed, a statement by the city's mayor the day of the murder had authorized such a view of the events, saying the "violent protest" was unacceptable and announcing that the "violent people" responsible for it would be "consigned to justice".

In this memorable case the problem of establishing a connection between the migrants' protests and violence was clear: the only serious damage suffered by the city consisted of two large flower pots. The local media's visual communication, though, took care to underline the completely violent, and therefore unacceptable, nature of that destruction.

All pictures of the famous flower-pots put the "victims" in the foreground, where they occupy a large part of the picture. There are no people close to the "remains" of the flower pots, and in some cases people are not shown at all, making it difficult to evaluate the actual size of the destroyed objects. The flower pots were located right in the historic city center, and the shards and soil spread on the ground clearly communicate a scene of disorder and uncleanliness. The implication is clear: someone strong and furious committed this act of public violence, for no other reason than to litter and soil "beautiful Florence". Indeed, Picture 9 could be changed with several other pictures of the same type (shards of broken objects, soil, litter) used to convey the urban *degrado* (disrepair, neglect) usually associated with the presence of migrants.

Pictures 8 and 9 are the only ones discussed in this preliminary work that are not generic in nature, that is to say, they could not be used to describe migrants in general, as opposed to most of the photographs I surveyed. I thought it was useful, though, to include them in this discussion, as a really blatant case of constructing the "migrants' protest = violent protest" equivalence out of very thin evidence – as shown by (at least part of) the public's reaction, which mocked the "victimization" of the flower pots.

Facial visibility and facial expressions

As pointed out several times so far, in many pictures I surveyed migrants do not have faces, and therefore do not have facial expressions. This in turn makes them not fully human, since human beings are expected to convey their emotions through their faces. Vice versa, it makes it impossible to ascertain the migrants' emotional state, which in turn makes them threatening. One way in which migrants' facial expressions are not shown is by photographing them from a distance. Another one is even

Picture 10: *La Nazione*, 11 September 2015

more striking in its brutal visual content: migrants are photographed from the back.

   This type of visual representation is rather common in the photos I surveyed, and seems to be the preferred method to portray smaller groups, including families with children. The reason why this type of photos is completely unexpected on the pages of a newspaper is their evident contradiction of the basic principle of photographic journalism, namely being *informative*. We expect pictures of people to tell us something about them. Some close-up pictures of migrants' and refugees' faces have won awards and become famous, but here we have a case where journalistic principles seem to renege themselves: what is the picture of the back of a person supposed to tell me?

   In this regard, it is highly significant that the only other case in which human beings are routinely photographed from the back is that of photos showing the police dealing with the suspected authors of a crime. Of course also in this context, it is often the case that the suspects are non-white migrants.

Race and age

   It is a largely unsurprising result of this preliminary survey that looking for news about "migrants" or "immigrants" in the pages of *La Nazione* mostly results in articles about African people (both North-African and Sub-Saharan). Asian migrants are found under the label "Chinese" or "Philippinos", whereas other migrant communities, such as the large one from Perù, are not frequently present in the newspaper's photographs. Again unsurprisingly, most migrants in the photos of *La Nazione* are male and relatively young.

Conclusions and future prospects

   The most important conclusion of this preliminary stage of the research is that the analytical categories proposed in the literature on the visual representation of migrants, and summarized in the table above, can indeed be fruitfully applied to our case study. It is also sufficiently

clear that the overall representation of migrants that emerges is highly co-
herent, and cannot be described in terms of separate negative stereotypes
and generalizations. So, for instance, the visual representation of young,
male migrants systematically shows them unemployed, even if the issue
of "migrants stealing our jobs" figures prominently in the public debate
on migration. Sadly, it is also clear that this overall representation is a neg-
ative one. This is of course unsurprising, but our survey seems to indicate
that this negative view conveys a subtle and deep de-humanization of mi-
grants and especially migrant bodies. Closely analyzing scores of photos
has left me with the strong impression that they are trying to send a clear
message: *these people are deviant, their bodies themselves are deviant*. Again,
such a message, if confirmed, would fit in a larger discourse on migration
that has been prevalent in Italy for many years now.

      I would nonetheless like to finish this preliminary work on a more
optimistic note. In 2020 *La Nazione* launched a new web site on the issues
of "Diversity, Inclusion and Cohesion". The site is called *Luce* (light) and
the editors claim that it is a new "editorial project, innovative and col-
orful", that will look at current events to understand "a fluid society".
The website (http://luce.lanazione.it) is colorful indeed, and the focus is
clearly on positive, uplifting stories. An analysis of this very interesting
website is beyond the scope of this short work, but it is worth pointing
out that my subjective impression is that of a rather image-centric site,
with the type of news that might appeal to the generation who grew up
on the hearts of Instagram, rather then the bitter fights of Facebook. More
relevant for our research, the website also features photos of migrants that
do not follow the features discussed above.

       On this site, the topic of migration is still visualized through the
categories that we examined above (and especially the use of crowded
groups of people as a kind of image of migration itself), but there is clearly
a conscious effort to depict migrants in a different light. Picture 12 shows
a smiling African man engaged in active work, and the image within the
image shows a diverse group of people looking straight at the viewer. The
name of their association is displayed on a sign, and the overall impres-

Top: Picture 11: *La Nazione*, 10 October 2019
Bottom: Picture 12: Luce, 26 May 2021

sion is one of active engagement and inclusion. You can see the faces of the people in the picture and read their facial expression. You feel you can talk to these people. Whether this will be the main (or one of the main) ways to look at migrants in the future remains of course to be seen.

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About the author

Federico Damonte earned his Masters degree in English (1998) and then his Ph.D in Linguistics (2004) at the University of Padua. His linguistic research focuses on language variation, dialectology and comparative syntax. He has done original research on European and African languages, and published extensively on these issues in academic refereed journals. He was a visiting scholar at the University of Leiden and led his own two-year Marie Curie-funded project at the University of Cambridge. He has taught extensively at several Italian and European Universities, including the University of Padua, Bologna, Cambridge and Frankfurt.

In his later research he focuses on the relationship between language variation and identity in Italy. After relocating to Florence 10 years ago he started working at American Study Abroad Programs (ISI Florence, Accademia Europea di Firenze, and CET), where he teaches courses related to Intercultural-Communication, and the relationship between identity and culture in Italy. He also designed the course "Diversity in Italy" which he teaches at ISI Florence. He was part of the founding team of ISI Florence journal "Beyond", devoted to International Education.

Faculty-Led, Short-Term Study Abroad Programs:
Stories and Dilemmas of Practice
Susan Lee Pasquarelli

Abstract
This first-person narrative unifies one professor's experiences in applying best-practices to implement faculty-led, short-term study abroad programs in Sicily and Rome. Building on published scholarly work, the article uncovers insights to benefit international faculty while designing and implementing culturally responsive, field-based learning experiences. This narrative focuses on the dilemmas and challenges to realize student learning outcomes given unavoidable quirks of the abroad site and inevitable unexpected issues that arise while shepherding college students from the culturally familiar to the strange.

Keywords: faculty-led study abroad, student abroad issues, study abroad

Midnight, May 27, 2010, Ortygia, Sicily

Under a full moon, on the fifth day of our faculty-led study abroad program, my university colleague, Stephan, and I were savoring traditional Sicilian cannoli at an outdoor café in Piazza Duomo when we were approached by a pair of our students. This was my fourth short-term, faculty-led program in Sicily, and so far, this year's curriculum was moving along as well as could be expected. Jet-lag behind us, we were settling into the routine of study first, play later, when the first complication arose. Later, we referred to this health event as 'The silent confession.'

> In an apprehensive tone, Heather began:
> "Dr. P., Olivia has something to tell you."
> With my trepidation mounting, initiated by Heather's tone and the
> body language of the two students, I calmly responded:
> "Sure. Olivia?"
> "It's better if I show you, Dr. P.," rasped Olivia.

Heather rushed in:

" She should have shown you three days ago but was afraid you'd send her home!"

The 'silent confession' came next…

Olivia picked up the table candle, held it up to her face, opened her mouth, and said: "Ahhhhh."

Stephan and I, both descendants of Italian immigrants and parents of grown children, nearly swooned when Olivia's throat came into our extended view. We saw tonsils interwoven with thick red veins threaded throughout. We saw tonsils swollen to such extreme, they were smack up against her uvula. Needless to say, we packed up and headed straight to the all-night pharmacy. In Italy, pharmacists are allowed to dispense antibiotics if they see a looming disaster.

Back at the apartments, I took Olivia's temperature –104 degrees– called her mom and in a tempered tone, described the situation. With Olivia's input, we decided that I would administer analgesics and antibiotics that I had just procured at the pharmacy, settle her into my apartment for the night, and call the designated program physician in the morning.

The next day at 6AM, Olivia was continuing to run a high fever and her overnight labored, raspy breathing was now dragon-like. For the first time, I found myself in a mild panic. We were, after all, responsible for this 19-year-old student. While we waited for an appropriate time to call the program physician, Stephan and I divided up the day's events. I would ask the doctor for a home visit, and depending upon the diagnosis, Stephan would stay with Olivia during the day while I would lead the other fifteen students on our walking classroom slated for 8 AM that very day.

First! Call the doctor!

I remember the scene perfectly. Stephan, who speaks fluent Italian, was standing in the foyer of my apartment as I faced him, phone in hand. When the telephone connected to the physician, even though I was quite confident in my ability to explain the symptoms, when I began to unfold the situation in measured Italian, I mixed up the proper wording

for UVULA with UTERUS. As my co-worker stood there with his hand-to-neck making the gesture for CUT, I heard the physician snorting in laughter over my blunder.

Within 45 minutes, Dr. Mendocino arrived and diagnosed Olivia with acute strep throat and injected her with the first dose of rapid acting antibiotics to relieve the infection. Stephan stayed with her for the day, and I, humbled from my Italian misstep and worn-out from fitful sleep on the uncomfortable couch, accompanied the other 15 students three hours away to Agrigento, the Valley of the Temples, to teach pagan mythological worship practices. Olivia? Due to the swift actions of our program physician, she rejoined the group in two days.

My Experience with Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs

Since 2006, I have conducted faculty-led study abroad programs in Sicily and Rome. As Huxley (1942) suggested: *The more you know, the more you see*,[1] I envision study abroad programs to first and foremost be knowledge building. A few years ago in Rome, one astute student remarked: "Oh, look, there is a sculpture of Michael, the Archangel, sheathing his sword after ridding Rome of the plague." When I asked her how she knew this beloved Roman story, she quoted Huxley's adage, and told her peers that she had been reading well beyond the books and articles selected as program texts. Learning from an astute student, I have relied on Huxley's principle, as my students and I walk through the streets of Italy only 'seeing' when we have the knowledge base to aid our understanding of:

> …an intricately carved Roman mythological creature adorning a building;
> …a deer with a black iron cross thrust in its head embellishing the spire of a church; or

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1. Although Huxley is widely quoted for saying, 'The more you know, the more you see,' I was not able to find this direct quote in Huxley (1942). Instead, on page 19, Huxley implies these words when, among other examples, he describes how a naturalist's knowledge provides him with the opportunity to see more in a forest than a layperson is capable of seeing.

> … a cultural custom enforced by a disbelieving waiter, "You would like a cappuccino? In Italy, we do not drink cappuccino in the afternoon. Milk after lunch is very bad for the digestion."

Most study abroad experts agree that a faculty-led study abroad program curriculum needs to be grounded in knowledge building, which includes learning the content of the domain being studied as well as the *relevant* historical, philosophical, political, sociological, and most importantly, the cultural aspects of the intended site; however, this article is not about rigorous curriculum development. As my opening anecdote suggests, it is about everything that happens before, during, and after one delivers the promised curriculum. In this article, I make every effort to answer the following questions:

- What can a faculty member expect from students while abroad?
- How does one prepare for inevitable site interruptions to the perfectly planned program?
- What personal dispositions does a faculty member need to be successful teaching abroad?

In 2018, with two co-editors and many authors, I published a book entitled, *Passport to Change: Designing Academically Sound, Culturally Relevant Short-Term Faculty-Led Programs* (Pasquarelli, Cole & Tyson, 2018). Chapter 11 of that volume contains some of the information I am relating here, but includes more extensive advice to assure a safe, productive program.

Ask faculty members who have just returned from leading college students abroad about their experiences and they will probably tell you everything but the realization of student learning outcomes. I know that when I return, my colleagues, family, and friends are eager to hear my wayward stories, such as lizards coming in from the cold exterior walls of ancient buildings to the warm interior padding of students' beds, and the subsequent SCREAMS echoing through thin walls in the middle of the night.

Following are my stories. Stories that may help you prepare for the unexpected that occurs during every faculty-led study abroad program no matter how diligent you are to take preventative measures. I end each story with advice that I hope you find helpful.

Navigating Student Dilemmas

The Small Matters

As I mentioned before, be prepared for the unexpected. A few years ago, in a rented Rome apartment building, after telling students repeatedly, NOT to leave their apartment doors wide open while visiting their friends' apartments, the inevitable happened. No, thankfully not a robbery. Rather, "Lo Scirocco," the Italian wind, blew one group's outside apartment door shut, locking out three women in their pajamas at midnight. Frantic calls to us only yielded our pitiful response: "Oh, well. You must wait until the housekeeper comes at 11 AM tomorrow to have access to your apartment. We do not have a spare set of keys." Fortunately, they were able to sleep in their friends' apartment. Unfortunately, they could not attend the next day's walking classroom in their pajamas and had to stay behind to wait for the housekeeper.

Advice: Be flexible when holding students accountable for the small stuff.
For your students, in this new context, the concurrence of the 'familiar' and the 'strange' is well beyond their comprehension, especially for those on a first trip abroad. In this scenario, three students missed a major learning opportunity and had no material to fulfill the course assignment connected to the day's walking classroom. Instead, we designed a different assignment to assure the students' grades were not affected.

The Big Matters

One could only hope for unfavorable student behavior to begin and end with being locked out of apartments. A few years ago, in Sicily, I received a call at 2 AM from an Italian friend who was at a bar observing several of our students. What she had to relate was not a pretty sight and

required us to get dressed and rush down to the bar. There we heard the tale that two students were allegedly lying on tables while others in the bar were plying them with shots of liquor. Our students were inebriated and did not recognize us, nor their surroundings. We called a cab, ushered them back to our apartments, and the next morning, called them in for 'the reckoning.' We would have sent them home that very day, but since the program was over in 36 hours, we decided to allow them to stay with an evening curfew in place until departure. Upon returning stateside, we reported the incident to the university and the students endured the university's judicial consequences.

Advice: Hold students accountable for infractions that put them or their peers in danger.

The Life-or-Death Matters

There is a middle ground with student dilemmas. In this section, I focus on the medical because, as a first-time faculty-leader, you will discover that most of the student issues are health-related. Beyond swollen tonsils, there are a myriad of health issues that require faculty attention. I have accompanied or sent students to pharmacies and emergency services for antibiotics and analgesics. For rash creams. For cooling pads to ease 105 fevers derived from sunstroke. For gauze, ointments, and bandages to relieve blistered feet and elastic wraps to protect twisted ankles and knees. Common ailments aside, the most important preparation faculty must attend to pre-departure is the dreaded FOOD ALLERGY.

One time in Ortygia, Sicily, a region known for its seafood cuisine, a frantic student called the faculty phone around 2 AM. He managed to bark out the message that his roommate was in anaphylaxis from eating shellfish, and he was afraid to inject the roommate's EPI PEN. I dropped the phone and ran to their apartment where I was indeed greeted by a very distressed young woman and equally distressed room-mate. Since I had kept careful medical records on a clipboard, I knew this student had a shellfish allergy. I also had her spare EPI PEN in a bag attached to the clipboard.

My first action was to break open the EPI PEN. My second was to

pause, breathe, and ask questions:

> Me: "When did you eat?"
> Room-mate: "7 PM."
> Me: "Did she eat anything since supper?"
> Room-mate: "Vanilla gelato from an outdoor window."

I determined in under three seconds that this student was not going into anaphylactic shock but was hyperventilating. I put away the EPI PEN, grabbed a paper bag from the table, and whispered: "Just breathe. In and out. Just breathe." Panic subsided and the student was back to normal within two hours, telling the story about how she woke up in a cold sweat and thought she was having a shellfish reaction, so she worked herself into a full panic attack.

Making a life-or-death judgment call is one of the most terrifying events faculty must make while abroad. Inject the pen and then spend the next 24 hours in an unfamiliar hospital? Call the paramedics? Take the 105-degree fevered sun-stroke student to the emergency room or treat it yourself? Call the parent for advice even though the student is an adult? Call the study abroad office to go on record that you are troubleshooting a serious medical issue? (YES!) Have students handle the medical issue on their own even if they can't speak the language? (NO!) These are the types of questions one must be prepared to answer or act upon.

Advice: Gather your own evidence after students report a health incident.

Advice: Be prepared! Have students' medical information on a clipboard for easy reference. Know the local medical emergency phone numbers. If possible, identify and place on stand-by a local physician for house calls.

Advice: If you are not comfortable making the medical judgment-call, seek expert opinion even if the program must be disrupted.

Advice: For students with life-or-death food allergies, before leaving home, prepare laminated cards written in the local language that describe the food allergy. Students can then show the card to waiters while ordering.

During one program, six students had food allergies – that was <u>SIX</u>

students with EPI PENS in their pockets and SIX spares in my apartment! The laminated cards describing the food allergy in Italian gave us all peace of mind.

Navigating Site Dilemmas

Terrorist Attacks

June 2, *La Festa Della Repubblica*, is a national holiday in Italy, commemorating the day the Italian people voted to form a republic. Since my study abroad programs fall between late May- mid June, I usually schedule the holiday as a free day or plan a relaxing field trip into the program schedule.

On one particular Italian holiday, the participants of our mythology / travel writing program, *Rome: Art and Culture Through a Traveler's Eye*[2], were eagerly anticipating a much-needed day off, leaving the stifling hot city for a day playing in and around the countryside. We were headed to the UNESCO World Heritage site--Villa d'Este in Tivoli --to feel the relief from the 500 gravity fountains built in the 16th century as well as to view mythological statuary paying homage to pagan gods. Even on a day off, I chose a venue that focused on the mythological program content, knowing that we would see the elaborately decorated villa décor, such as one wall depicting the Garden of the Hesperides, as well as another depicting the 11th labor of Hercules. Hydras, griffins, and Sirens abound in statuary, window shutters, and concrete fountains. All in all, we were looking forward to eating boxed lunches and having a day where *study* was not the main menu item. We left the apartments at 7AM in a parade of private vans to the smaller of the two main train stations**,** *Stazione Tiburtina*, where we would board an east-north-east train and spend the holiday away from the rigors of our studies.

When the vans arrived right in front of the station, we disembarked

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2. I would like to acknowledge my Roger Williams University writing studies, travel writing professor and brilliant colleague, Dr. Kate Mele, co-curriculum developer of the study abroad program, *Rome: Art and Culture Through a Traveler's Eye*.

and took attendance. As is my custom, we had arrived an hour before our scheduled train to accommodate students' personal needs before boarding. I remember noting that the group was relaxed and enthusiastic about the promise of a day of discoveries.

All was well, and then it wasn't.

Just as we were about to enter the station, we heard the familiar ear-splitting sound of Italian rescue vehicles before we spotted at least 20 blue and white imposing vans headed our way. All came to a skidding halt right where we were standing and 50 *poliziotti* descended upon us, Uzis out and ready.

My faculty colleague and I made a quick decision. She would move students away from the fray and soothe their panic as I approached a solitary policeman. In simple Italian, I inquired about the disturbance. In response, the Armani-clad *poliziotto*, voiced a long story about the Pope and his retinue and an anonymous tip of a terrorist attack on the very train line for which we had tickets.

Walking classroom canceled! Fortunately for us, my colleague and I had a perfect day's replacement, held as an alternative in case of cancellation of the main event. Instead of a walk through glorious gardens, our little band took a walk among the hills of Rome, visiting one artisan studio after another. While viewing the artists in the act of creation, students purchased leather purses & pen cases, hand-made bracelets & necklaces, water-colors of Rome, and miles of marbled paper & hand-crafted journals. A fine holiday was had by all.

Advice: Have a substitute activity planned in case of forced cancellation.

Demonstrations

One of my favorite stories about interrupted programs included a walk to a museum in Rome on an auspiciously beautiful day. As we emerged from our apartments near the Pantheon and approached a major intersection, we heard bullhorns, loud applause, and the steady hum of raised voices. We turned the corner, and there it was! A large float covering the flatbed of a Mercedes truck sporting a colossal, intricately

painted world globe with a water faucet jutting from the middle of the Indian Ocean as if it were about to dispense water. Banners flew overhead screaming in every language: CLEAN WATER FOR ALL.

My students and I paused to observe and take in the sights and sounds. I love a good demonstration to impart cultural experiences of place and time. This one, however, was on a scale that was beyond my usual experience. Try as I might, I could not move students around the chaos of crowd- masses and crowd-control vehicles to enter the small museum at the appointed hour of our tickets. Another walking classroom changed. One opportunity lost, but another gained!

Transportation Strikes

On my first faculty-led study abroad program, I relearned the term, *lo sciopero*, which means a strike or temporary work stoppage. A transportation strike in Italy might be announced in advance, or not announced until the moment it occurs; most commonly, it lasts for 2 hours, 4 hours or a day. These unannounced transportation strikes are guaranteed to bungle your planned curriculum and possibly throw your syllabus into a deep spin, especially if your program centers around an experiential approach and you are building student knowledge step-by-step. This is further complicated in short program designs of two-three weeks.

One day in Siracusa, Sicily, the students set their alarms for 4 AM, hastily dressed in the clothes they had laid out the night before, wolfed down *cornetti* and *cappuccini* that I had pre-arranged for that hour, and bleary-eyed, met fellow travelers in front of our apartment house for a walk to the bus parking lot. In Ortygia, the old town of Siracusa, most of the roads were built for horse and carriage and are juxtaposed in between and among the maze of stone-connected homes and businesses. A favored photoshoot of my students is to stand in the middle of one of the impossibly narrow streets and touch adjacent walls with both hands.

The large pullman I had rented to take us across Sicily had to park outside the city, which meant a 2.5 kilometer walk to the rendezvous point. If you ever had to rouse college students out of their precious slum-

ber at that hour of the morning, you might be able to predict their reactions when we arrived at the rendezvous and viewed an empty parking lot. After a few unanswered calls to the bus company, I walked to the local petrol station, the only business awake at that hour, and learned from the sleepy owner that there was a province-wide sciopero for public transportation, but the private drivers were 'sympathy striking.'

Stranded!! with 16 college students expecting to view the mosaics at *Villa Romana del Casale*, in the Sicilian town of *Piazza Armerina*. The villa, built in the 4th century, is thought to have been the hunting lodge of a wealthy Roman patrician and is known for the exquisite mosaic floors and walls.

The tricky part of canceling this particular field trip? If the students did not have the experience plus a lecture on the great art of mosaics, they would be ill prepared for tomorrow's walking classroom, designed to build on that knowledge. Our only solution was to change the student learning outcome as well as the course assignment designed to evaluate that outcome.

Advice: Don't chase buses or trains (Cole, 2020) and maintain a 'live' syllabus.

Live Syllabus

Go with the flow (!) is the best advice I was given before embarking on my first faculty-led study abroad program and it remains my advice to all new study-abroad faculty. Transportation woes, terrorist attacks in Europe, museums and venues closed without notice, student illness, injury, or just plain fatigue, call for a change in the syllabus or even the curriculum if necessary.

Prior to setting off abroad, we put our syllabus in a Google drive and label it: LIVE SYLLABUS. Every night, my colleague and I adjust the syllabus and course assignments to fit the latest change.

Advice: Be prepared to alter the syllabus to fit reality, even if it means changing student learning outcomes to match the experiences they are having.

Serendipity

A few years ago, at the end of a Rome program, my colleague and I found ourselves with extra money because the euro-dollar exchange dipped significantly from the time we submitted our budget to the university finance office to the time we went abroad. Because our end-of-the program daily schedule was not as tight as the beginning, we found a half day where we could arrange an additional walking classroom. The students were interested in visiting the ruins of an ancient Roman seaport town, Ostia Antica, about which we faculty leaders knew <u>not</u> a thing. We explained to the students that we were willing to learn with them, and after buying a local guidebook to the ancient seaport, we set off on public transportation, paid our entrance fees, and entered the still standing gates marked by a headless statue of Minerva.

The minute we stepped beyond the gates, it was clear that this was an in-tact ancient town, albeit in various levels of ruin. After walking a few minutes down a dusty pathway, one student turned to the group and suggested: "Let's try to determine the purpose of each area. For example, this area on the left has a mosaic of Neptune on the floor and it is sunken lower than the rest of this area. I predict this was the communal baths, evident by the god of the sea mosaic." Following his lead, we played this inquiry game in the light rain for three hours, only consulting the guidebook after we decided that this area was perhaps the fish market, and this area was perhaps where the laundry was done. Upon reflection and discussion on the train ride back, every single student was able to make connections between the culture of Rome today with the culture of Rome yesteryear. We faculty also learned a valuable lesson that day: we do not have to choose our abroad sites by what we know, rather we *can* learn alongside our students.

Advice: Grab the teachable moment!

Faculty Hidden Roles

In 2005, I traveled to Siracusa, Sicily on a pre-site visit to investigate whether the old town of Ortygia, known for its meandering medie-

val streets and Greek origins, was a suitable site for my first faculty-led program focused on pagan mythology. After meeting with the Dean and Social Science faculty at the close-by University of Catania, surveying the UNESCO world heritage sites, including museums displaying the distinctive orange and black pottery that vividly depicts mythological stories, and the renowned Greek temples and amphitheaters, I knew it was the right place to situate my first short-term, faculty-led program.

My gracious Sicilian hosts helped plan for faculty and student residences, classroom space, guest professors from the local university, and English language translators for the part of the program that would be delivered in the Italian language. While there on this pre-site visit, I also charted the walking classrooms associated with my developing curriculum and attempted to predict what was needed to hit the ground running upon arrival with students. I returned home eight days later with my luggage stuffed with maps, UNESCO flyers, applications for students to volunteer in local schools, Italian contracts, Italian contacts, and stacks of other useful ephemera to prepare the university faculty-led program proposal and to make the logistical arrangements to teach in Sicily the following summer.

Ten months later, I arrived back in the old town with 13 students and one faculty colleague who had never visited Sicily. Following are factors I did not even begin to think about before setting off with college students who were strangers in a strange land. It addresses the skills and dispositions one must have in order to lead a band of 18–21-year-old students through the familiar and the strange.

First Aider

Because this topic was discussed at length in other sections, I will merely reiterate here that faculty must be prepared to handle <u>any</u> medical emergency.

*A*dvice: *Before taking students abroad, engage in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, and EPI PEN injection training.*

Mentor

No matter how hard we try by setting the tone of the program as one which fosters independence with orientation wording such as this:

"Just as we are on our home campus, we oversee your <u>academic</u> lives. Think of us as professors, not your care-takers."

"This is a study abroad program. The operative word is STUDY."

"We don't involve ourselves in personal drama between and among people."

I have learned that we do indeed have to handle student personal issues. No matter how hard we try to have students maintain their own independence, something emerges that just cannot be ignored. For example:

- The parents who call and ask us to tell their daughter that her dog must be euthanized in her absence;
- The parents who call to inform their child that her/his/their grandfather passed away;
- The students who are homesick and cannot face two more weeks away;
- The student who knocks on the faculty apartment door at 1AM and says: "My boyfriend just broke up with me and I think I should fly home tomorrow to fix things between us;"
- The students who pretend they are not hungover and try to stay in 'sick bay' to nurse their aching heads instead of participating in class. (As if we can't tell the difference between hung-over and ill).
- The students who have sudden epiphanies about their own identities, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, and more.

Advice: Depending upon the issue, there is always a choice of how much faculty engage in students' personal agendas.

Innkeeper and Problem-solver

Depending upon your living situation, there is opportunity to engage in a very practical way. We rent apartments that are not as well stocked as a typical Airbnb. In Sicily and Rome, one of our first errands is shopping for paper products, dishwashing and handwashing soaps, kitchen cooking utensils, and other articles to prepare apartments for students' arrival. The cost of these items is built into the budget because we know they are needed for both sites.

When students arrive, my colleague and I split up and go from apartment to apartment to orient students to the unfamiliar kitchens and baths.

- We explain what a bidet is and what it's not (someplace to wash your feet).
- We demonstrate how to turn on the propane tank to supply hot water and to fuel the stoves.
- We help them manage their electronic devices with unfamiliar plug adapters and converters.
- We teach them how to use a fire extinguisher to put out the little fires caused when they forget to use a converter and blow up their 115-watt appliances in the 220-watt outlet. This phenomenon is always proceeded with a loud pop resounding throughout the building, followed by a complete shut-down of electricity to all apartments.
- We teach them how to make coffee in a Moka pot.

Students usually learn these adjustments quickly and only need fleeting demonstrations. This is the easy part of practical considerations. The hard part is when expected household conveniences, like toilets, are not functional. Americans are used to speedy fix-ups to life's minor problems. For Europeans, wait time is expected.

I have had to:

- Fix WI-FI connections, crawling up ladders to repair splin-

tered wiring;
- Fix toilets that just won't flush even after the plumber comes and suggests all is well even though there is obvious visible sludge build-up;
- Rehang shower doors that fall off hinges;
- Replace lost apartment keys;
- Bail out bathrooms because students just do not understand how to work the unusual showers;
- Etcetera, etcetera.

Recently I returned to Sicily with my immediate family. When we went to the local hardware store, the shop-keeper, Massimo, greeted me as if I were a long-lost friend. When we exited, my son-in-law asked why the shopkeeper knew me so well and I began the tale:

> "Well, there was a time when two of the student apartments had toilets that wouldn't flush, and the plumber told me they were fixed, and they weren't, so I decided to evaluate the situation myself. That led me to purchase new parts from Massimo, who also drew me a diagram of the proper engagement of the parts. Oh! And I fixed the shower in one apartment so it would actually deliver water to the person within as opposed to out the adjacent window."

> *Advice: Leave the plumbing to professionals.*

Guardian

Unlike the previous topic, this one is <u>very</u> serious. Upon arrival in Rome with 14 students for our first study abroad program in the eternal city, the owner of our rental apartments, asked a friend, who spoke fluent English, to explain the recent death of a college student studying abroad in Rome. The story was short. The young man was too inebriated to notice he was crossing train tracks on his way back to his dormitory. After the sad story was told, we sat down with our students to discuss alcohol con-

sumption and had honest conversations about how much is enough. We reminded them that that includes being sober enough to remain aware of their surroundings.

Situational awareness, in general, whether alcohol is involved or not, is a training that must occur before leaving state-side and reiterated again upon arrival at the abroad site. In busy cities, like Rome, that includes paying attention before stepping off the curb to cross to the other side of a four- lane avenue even though they are beholding the Colosseum for the very first time.

I have already related the story about a potential terrorist attack while the students were with us, but what happens if there is a terrorist attack or other city-wide emergency, such as an earthquake, and our students are out enjoying independent time?

Although student safety regulations are highlighted in our pre-departure seminars, it is judicious to review them again at the beginning of the abroad phase of the program. I find students are more apt to pay attention once they are immersed in the unfamiliar environment.

Advice: Arrival at the abroad destination is an opportune time to hold community engagement forums to develop additional safety protocols.

These protocols range in topic from what to do when room-mates do not return to the residence as expected to what to do in case of a city-

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ICE
In Case of Emergency

ROME PROGRAM
COMMUNITY STANDARDS

1. Set up an emergency group text thread that faculty and staff can access from American cell phones. This thread can ONLY be used in case of a city-wide emergency.
2. Keep USA cell phone always charged fully.
3. Carry USA cell phone and ID card (with apartment address) at all times.
4. In case of emergency, turn on cellular data and send location through the group text.
5. Head back to the apartments immediately.
6. If a group cannot get back to the apartments, seek safe haven, and send new location to group text.
7. If no cell service is available and you are not able to move through the streets, seek safe haven, and follow the directions of city or national emergency service personnel. As soon as possible, contact faculty and your family.

(Pasquarelli, 2018)

wide emergency. Following is a facsimile of community standards we developed during one Rome program in case of city-wide emergency.

See Pasquarelli, (2018) for more safety prototypes such as: Student Identification Cards, Parent Refrigerator Magnets with emergency contact information, Allergy cards written in the local language, and more.

Final Thoughts: A Professor Professes

A few years ago, I was leading a group of students through *Villa Farnesina*, a Renaissance suburban villa in the hamlet of Trastevere located on one of the hills of Rome. Villa Farnesina is noted for its Raphael frescoes, depicting the myth of Cupid and Psyche, in addition to several other frescoes painted by Raphael's contemporaries. Students have marveled over the frieze decorating the circumference of a room, depicting a breath-taking visual of Hercules' 12 labors, as well as another depicting the sad Polyphemus, mourning his love for Galatea. My custom is to have students stand in the room with the Cupid and Psyche ceiling and ask them to observe and interpret the artist's depiction of the myth while comparing it with their own visual interpretation summoned when they read the myth state-side. We usually complete the walking classroom in the garden with an all-group discussion of our reflections.

It was during one of these discussions that a family approached our group in a friendly manner and spoke directly to me: "We listened to you in the museum, and you know SO much more about mythology than the guide we had today. We would like to hire you to be our tour guide for the rest of our travels in Rome." I smiled in response to the compliment and asked students to explain our study abroad program to this eager family.

That night I reflected upon my euphoria of standing in an important museum imparting knowledge while learning more and more about mythology at every turn of my head. First and foremost, I am indeed a fortunate professor to have the opportunity to teach my craft, off campus in a European city, far from previous expectations conceived long ago during my doctoral program.

I end with one final story and a piece of advice.

It is our custom during the Rome Program to include a one-day round trip to Florence on the 1.5-hour high speed ferry to view the mythological wonders in the world-class museums as well as in outdoor settings. The night before, I typically conduct a special seminar on the origin and artists of the paintings and sculptures the students will view. I also orient them to Florence and suggest activities for their free half day, such as climbing to the top of the Duomo or pausing at cafés to compare daily life in Florence tourist areas versus in Oltrarno, where the Florentine locals live.

I remember one field excursion to Florence, the train was late, making us behind schedule for a walking classroom I had arranged with an art historian, museum lines were longer, crowds were thicker, museum guards more impatient. I recall thinking that I was looking forward to completing the formal part of the program, and, with my colleague, after our student luncheon, savor some down time.

I had reserved my favorite restaurant, *Trattoria Anita*, where many local business owners and workers gather for midday sustenance. Because this was an early event in the program, students still needed a hand with ordering Italian food. This often becomes a taxing experience as students deliberate their choices as if it were their last meal.

> Dr. P! Ask them if we can share a small plate of spaghetti.
> Dr. P.! Do you think they make their tomato sauce with onions? I hate onions!
> Dr. P.! Do you think the focaccia has gluten?
> Add food allergies to the mix and I'll leave the rest of my haggard state to your imagination.

When one student called me over to help him order roast chicken, <u>white-meat only</u>, in my exhaustion, I informed the waiter that this student would like "seno di pollo." If you are unfamiliar with the Italian language, then you may not know that words describing human and animal body parts are distinctly different. When I heard the chuckles of the

local people at surrounding tables as well as watched the waiter's face crumple, I realized my error. I had just ordered a human breast for my student's lunch entrée. "Petto di pollo" is the proper term.

Advice: Be humble and allow students to see you laugh at your own mistakes to model how to laugh at their own cultural blunders.

Yes, faculty-led study abroad is a rewarding vocation, but requires personal resilience and flexibility. At the end of every program, when my faculty colleague and I watch the airport vans pull away from the apartment building with teary-eyed students safely aboard, we breathe a sigh of relief. Later, over a well-deserved Negroni in that year's favorite haunt, we remind each other that we successfully imparted cultural knowledge and an irreplaceable experience for our students to connect to a world beyond themselves. Perhaps for some of them, the strange had become familiar enough to invoke their desire for further world travel and cultural learning.

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Colors, Fabrics, and Textile:
African Fashion Between Inspiration and Identity Affirmation

Dr. Francesca Passeri

Abstract

Fashion has often been treated in a rather superficial way, and still today it is perceived and considered inferior to other forms of self-expression. An authentic understanding of the role of fashion in defining and shaping individual and collective identities is a first step to give respect and dignity to this field. People want to be seen, heard but also represented, and fashion is taking important steps in the direction of being more inclusive. African designers have appropriated the fashion of their continent, becoming points of reference and inspiration for designers from Italy and beyond; Africa no longer as a recipient of merchandise, but as a source of inspiration in the luxury and fashion industries. Fashion therefore becomes a tool to combat the stereotype associated with Africa as a tribal and ethnic land. The essay will aim to bring cases of designers who find colors, fabrics, and prints as a source of inspiration, and who contribute to a greater awareness of the crucial role played by this continent in communicating its identity.

Keywords: Cultural appropriation; fashion; diversity; hybridization; cultures; identity affirmation.

Introduction[1]

For centuries, fashion has been treated – in a rather superficial way – as a frivolous matter, in the shade of the so-called "major arts." Only in the second half of the 19th century fashion did first have the possibility

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1. This preliminary work is based on a speech given at ISI Florence in February 2020 as part of the Institute's initiatives within the Black History Month.

to exit this world of anonymity, in particular thanks to Charles Frederick Worth, the harbinger of that group of *maîtres et créateurs* who managed to give dignity and respect to this discipline.[2]

Despite this breaking point with the past, still today fashion is considered inferior to other forms of self-expression such as writing or painting; so much so that people often question the legitimacy of its presence within the artistic panorama. An explanation for this is that fashion often happens to be associated with consumerism and mass market, thus overlooking its original, intrinsic value as a means of expression, a way of re-inventing the self. Fashion can serve as a language to communicate how people feel about themselves and their identity

Clothing is one of the three basic necessities of life; by extension, this makes fashion one of the most sought-after industries. This also means that, by default, every human being uses some kind of clothing. However, fashion often seems to be one of the industries currently lacking when it comes to inclusion and diversity, catering only towards a select group of people.[3] People want to be seen, heard, and – most of all – represented. An authentic understanding of what representation truly means, and how it relates to the struggle for inclusion and diversity, is a first, major step that fashion must take to become more inclusive.[4]

African designers have appropriated the fashion of their continent, becoming points of reference and inspiration for Italian designers and beyond. Consequently, Africa is no longer seen as a mere recipient of goods, but a source of inspiration in the luxury and fashion sectors. This shows how fashion can be a tool to combat the stereotype linked to Africa as a tribal and ethnic land, paving the way for a deserved celebration of Africa and the economic importance it is assuming in global scenarios.

Within this context, and from the perspective briefly outlined above,

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2. See F. Fabbri, *La moda contemporanea: arte e stile da Worth agli anni Cinquanta*, Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2019, pp. 3-4.

3. www.3dlook.me/inclusivityinfashion

4. www.3dlook.com

my article aims at bringing cases of Florentine stylists who find a source of inspiration in traditional African colors, fabrics, and prints. In doing so, they contribute to a greater awareness of the crucial role played by this continent in communicating its many peoples' identity.

Identity and Fashion

There are several elements to be considered in attitudes to fashion; first the globalization process. Globalization doesn't correspond to westernization. At least, this is no longer the case. Emerging countries, "other countries", are becoming prominent and – as such – pushing for a different kind of globalization through their cultural influence all over the world. The popularity these countries are gaining is due to several economic and, especially, cultural tools. Among emerging countries, we can find African countries; among specific cultural tools, we can find fashion. This new process of globalization (or, we should say, *glocalization*) is an ongoing trend, whereby globalizing effects come from a variety of sources, that is, different countries and different cultures.

Contemporary globalization processes are primarily related to the following phenomena:

New transnational or global cultural patterns, practices and flows, and the idea of 'global culture(s)';
The unprecedented multidirectional movement of peoples around the world involving new patterns of transnational migration, identities, and communities.

These two sets of phenomena (broadly speaking, "cultural" phenomena) have acquired economic meaning; as a result, specific sectors of the market (the global market) have begun to work on them to the point of turning them into specific "assets".

Another feature of the debate around the notion of "identity" tends to take on new perspectives. At the basis aspect of every identity (such as religion, nationality, class, race, culture, and gender) we posit the existence

of a common thread linking all its actors together. Yet, in most cases, this is not true in today's society.[5] As Kwame Anthony Appiah has highlighted in a recent book: "Much of our contemporary thinking about identity is shaped by pictures that are in various ways unhelpful or just plain wrong." In this respect, Appiah points out that "we are living with the legacies of ways of thinking that took their modern shape in the nineteenth century, and that it is high time to subject them to the best thinking of the twenty first."[6]

The re-birth of local cultures against a stereotyped interpretation of fashion

Another aspect that could help us better understand the increasing importance of emerging countries (including African ones) in the contemporary world, is that globalization processes have allowed the re-birth of local cultures. Simply put, local/national identities arise to affirm their role in a world ruled by global players. This means that, thanks to new possibilities offered by the advancement of new communication systems (e.g., the Internet, e-commerce, and social media), national -- once colonized (politically, socially and culturally) -- countries have been able to promote their own local cultures, their own "tastes", their own fashion (in a wider sense) to "the others". These "others" are the very people who had always seen them from a stereotypical perspective. Fashion has thus become a peculiar and distinctive cultural tool to help "export" local and national cultures on a global scale.

For this reason, we should talk about fashion not only as a sector of the globalized market, but also as one of the most powerful cross-cultural tools of communication we can rely on today. Fashion is a tool of self-expression; as such, it can serve to convey personal identities. In the case of African style, which has been adopted and reinterpreted by some Florentine and Italian creative designers, fashion has become

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5. Pozzo B., *Fashion between inspiration and appropriation*, in Laws, February 2020

6. Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2018. The Lies that Bind. Rethinking Identity. Creed, Country, Colour, Class, Culture. London: Profile Books.

a cultural tool of representation of collective identities. Also, fashion, has become a strategic tool to hybridize different cultures and different tastes. If we talk about hybridization, it means that fashion can act as a cross-cultural mediator, capable of mixing different tendencies from different cultural identities. So, the process of hybridization of African styles and (European) Italian/Florentine styles correspond to a form of intercultural dialogue. It can be regarded as a metaphorical bridge between Italy and Africa that is characterized by symbols. Symbols are a cultural representation of reality; clothing is a symbolic manifestation of a specific culture. Each culture cultivates its own symbols; for this reason, each culture uses clothing (fashion) as a symbolic tool to express its own identity. Fashion, as a symbol, is thus able to favor human communication and produce better intercultural understanding, since it goes beyond stereotypes (oversimplified and superficial representations of a community, group or nation) and is capable of creating metaphoric "bridges" across cultures. So, we can also say that fashion may help us avoid prejudice and discrimination.

Far from being something intrinsically negative, a stereotype is a set of assumptions which assign specific characteristics and behaviors to a group of people. Stereotypes are thus used by marketers to create commercial messages capable of aligning themselves with society's cultural norms. Despite its involving outdated and potentially offensive stereotypes, this technique is still widely used in modern advertising.[7] It is not unusual to see campaigns that misrepresent African identity through the typical tribal world in the attempt of increasing consumer awareness towards issues like diversity, inclusion, and race.

This issue is strictly linked to the distinction between cultural appropriation and authenticity, where the appropriation does not mean that it represents a substitute for diversity. Cultural appropriation takes place

7. M. Eisend, J. Plagemann, J. Sollwedel, *Gender roles and humor in advertising: The occurrence of stereotyping in humorous and nonhumorous advertising and its consequences for advertising effectiveness*, Journal of Advertising 43, no. 3, 2014

when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way. To fully understand its consequences, though, we need to make sure we have a working definition of *culture* itself.[8] The problem is – particularly perceived in the fashion system nowadays – on one hand, is a constant balance between the need of innovation and change intrinsic to fashion, and on the other, inspiration, the tension between commercial reasons, and preservation and respect of local cultures

This creates a kind of free-for-all for 'design inspiration' and 'borrowing'. Contributor Jennifer Ayres defines appropriation as 'an umbrella term that encapsulates different degrees of borrowing, ranging from inspiration to theft', thus highlighting the contradictory nature of a term like 'borrowing', when 'returning' or 'giving back' (or even citation / recognition) is never intended. Critiquing 'inspiration' and 'borrowing' from the past, Ayres encourages readers to question, "what degree of borrowing is ethical in order to claim original design"(Green, Kauser 2017).

The constant desire to innovate with original and effective solutions led Western designers to incorporate other cultures' distinctive looks, reinterpreted by the designer's creativity and sensitivity to other cultures. This cannot be considered a novelty, as influences from far away cultures were present in European fashion since the opening of the silk trade, dating back to the fourth century (Geczy 2013). Together with spices, fabrics were among the products provided through the first routes of commerce (Segre Reinach 2006). In this sense, textiles began to travel between countries even before people did, almost in their place, and since ancient times. On the other side, beyond the exchanges and hybridizations, which constitute the essence of the textile product, there are specific traditions that closely reflect the culture in which they were born. For this very reason, textiles have always been a perfect vehicle to establish, express, and maintain people's cultural identity (Segre Reinach 2006).

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8. www.britannica.com

Cultural Appropriation in Modern Fashion Systems

According to Dr. Benedetta Morsiani (research fellow in the department of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Westminster, London), cultural appropriation should be defined as follows:

> "The act through which specificities of a given culture, such as symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies, are used by members of a different culture. This phenomenon now mainly refers to the exploitation of marginalized cultures by more dominant, mainstream cultures. […] The younger generation is more aware and vocal about cultural appropriation due to the cultural diversity in metropolises, and their awareness of the lack of representation for specific groups of people. I believe it is especially this need [to represent the marginalized] that encourages people to want to protect the cultural specificities of their racial and ethnic groups." (Morsiani, 2017).

> "Therefore," Morsiani concludes, "people become vocal on matters of cultural appropriation as a means of maintaining and protecting their own cultural identity, which is already marginalized". (Morsiani, 2017).

In the world of fashion, designers have always taken inspiration from other cultures: textiles, patterns, fabrics, and designs. In recent years, higher attention by consumers to the ethical aspects of fashion has led to a reassessment of the appropriation of cultural values and symbols in the fashion marketing strategies. In 1997, for instance, John Galliano (Dior creative director) launched a collection inspired by the Masai people. In 2016 Valentino defined one of his own collections as "Africa Tribale e Selvaggia." In 1993 Gianfranco Ferrè was inspired by the "African Warriors", while in 1967 African fashion reached the catwalk thanks to Yves Saint Laurent's famous Bambara collection. To quote from Young and Haley: "Ideas flow and are reinvented, in fashion as in law as in other fields of human activity, as 'nothing comes from nowhere' " (Young and Haley 2012). All the examples

referenced above show that designers can be inspired by a foreign culture and are able to re-elaborate it in a "new fashion" (Pozzo, 2019). In other cases, the use of religious symbols has often served as a form of cultural appropriation and has been regarded as such.

The debate is also on the risk of producing creations that are a replica of the original, or that, even worse, simply try to mimic African culture, in the attempt of producing "new" hybridized types of clothes and collections. This shows how, when it comes to the fashion industry, the debate on cultural appropriation revolves around very different topics, expressing various kinds of worries. While the use of textiles, images, and patterns from other cultures might be, sometimes, at the basis of some transcultural creativity and lead to appreciation of cultural diversity (Pozzo 2019), it can also be considered inappropriate to cultural or religious symbols to produce fashion. Eventually, this may harm the community where the appropriated items come from (Sharoni 2016). This is exactly the case when religious or cultural symbols of other ethnic groups are borrowed for commercial purposes, disregarding the values they express. Fashion may also become offensive when items reproduce stereotyped representations of culture, race, or gender (Pozzo 2019). Finally, borrowing patterns, motifs, or design features can lead to a violation of cultural heritage with negative economic consequences. As Sharoni remarks, we should always remember that one of the main critiques addressed to cultural appropriation is that it often implies a lack of compensation to the source community for the use of their cultural product (Sharoni 2016).

Fashion between innovation, diversity, and creativity

The contradictions that the fashion system experiences are linked to how designers opened the doors of their fashion houses to cultural exchange and the appropriation of symbols, values, and rituals used by different cultures. Many cases of cultural appropriation had severe consequences on consumers' perception of brand personality as well as the lack of multicultural approach that often leads to stereotypes and discriminations. For instance, Gucci was accused of racism because of a $890

black-knit women's balaclava that could be pulled up over the lower half of the wearer's face. The sweater included bright red lips with an opening for the mouth, a detail widely denounced on social media as evoking blackface imagery (Hsu and Paton 2019). This led Gucci to apologize for the offense caused by the balaclava's design. Gucci further released a statement declaring that "We consider diversity to be a fundamental value to be fully upheld, respected, and at the forefront of every decision we make. We are fully committed to increasing diversity throughout our organization and turning this incident into a powerful learning moment for the Gucci team and beyond." Gucci removed the image of the sweater from its e-commerce site and withdrew the item from all of its physical stores. (Hsu and Paton 2019).

Another famous case occurred in 2018, when Dolce & Gabbana made three videos for the Chinese fashion market. Those videos showed a young Asian model having trouble eating Italian food such as pizza, pasta, and cannoli with chopsticks. Playing on a bad double entendre characterized by sexual innuendos in the video featuring cannoli, a male narrator asked the model "is it too big for you?" (Pan 2018). The end result was that Dolce & Gabbana were forced to cancel the fashion show already scheduled in Shanghai, while their products were removed from several Chinese online retailers (Pozzo 2019).

Some selected cases, however, indicate the importance of implementing multicultural approaches in fashion. For instance, fashion designer Gioia Bini was born in 1989 and spent her early years among the nomadic Tuareg in Sub-Saharan Africa. The desert jewels of the Tuareg and the draped Dutch wax patterned cloth worn by women in Africa colored Gioia's earliest experience of dress. Moving from Africa to her new home in Florence, Gioia became a 'child' of this Renaissance capital, retaining her African past while living in the city of Leonardo and Michelangelo. Gioia's creativity is marked by a world of beautiful objects from near and far; they are put side by side so as to highlight both contrasts and affinities. The artists, photographers, models, creatives, and travelers who populate Gioia's surrounding are a stream of style and love of life,

namely, her friends and collaborators, whose lives and stories are shared in the fabrics of the dresses they inspire her to create.

This is just an example showing that designers can present a different image of the African continent; an image characterized by innovation, diversity (as an added value) and creativity. Likewise, it is an image of the African continent projected into the future; by representing its potential, it contributes to a greater awareness of the crucial role that this continent plays, also when it comes to communicating its own, true identity.

A new generation of creatives claim their own identity, presenting collections that compete with the most important European designers. In a sense, one could claim that – in the world of fashion -- the African continent is starting to stand on its own two feet, thus redefining the geographical hierarchy of style. For many years Africa has inspired European designers; now the continent wants to be a partner on the global fashion scene, affirming its own identity. Africa is no longer satisfied with serving as a source of inspiration that often hides lack of multicultural awareness. From "inspired by Africa" to Made in Africa is more than a terminology shift: it indicates the importance of also protecting traditional cultural expressions with a clear attribution of values to the continent, avoiding the exploitation of local traditions often reflected in fabrics, textiles, and designs.

Conclusions

Appropriation is a complex ethical issue in fashion; in today's fashion industry, taking inspiration from other cultures' designs has become a norm. Together with an increasing awareness by consumers on ethical issues, the analysis of the above cases indicates the importance of a multicultural approach to fashion; the consequences of ignoring all this are the perpetuation of stereotypes and reputational issues. In a mass-produced world, the affirmation of African fashion also represents the protection of local cultures and traditions against the exploitation of symbols in collections and designs. In many cases where traditional art or knowledge is exploited, the communities derive no economic

benefits; if they do gain something, such benefits often pale in comparison to the huge profits made by the exploiter*s* (Kuruk 1999). Aesthetics, identity, and appropriation reveal the ambiguity of the fashion system, in balance between the search for inspiration and innovation on the one hand and the need to maintain the integrity of local values and cultural authenticity on the other.

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Language Effects on Gender Perception and Discrimination:
Language Inclusivity as a Compensation Tool

Alice Pomodoro

Abstract

In the last few years, feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements have been trying to raise awareness of inclusive language as a medium that can compensate for the negative consequences of sexist language. On one hand, it is easy to introduce new idioms and neologisms in genderless or natural-gender languages such as English. On the other hand, it is difficult to suggest and establish new expressions in that direction in Italian since it is a gendered language. That means that Italian is composed of words and phrases that ascribe gender-based attributes or feature an inclination to one sex. This characteristic already makes it difficult to introduce changes in everyday language. Moreover, Italian socio-political culture plays intrinsically an "obstacle" role for the everyday language modifications that awareness-raising movements pursue.

Keywords: gender, language, inclusion, LGBTQIA+, culture

It is common knowledge that, in the linguistic field, language and its structure can influence how we view, understand, and interpret society. Two scientists are mostly known for studying this topic: Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. In the 1930s, Sapir and Whorf worked together on the "Sapir-Whorf theory", explaining how language shapes the way we think (Whorf, 2018). Indeed, according to the Sapir-Whorf theory, language as a means of expression and its symbolism condition all our thinking, affecting how we speak and perceive many aspects of the world.

This theory was and still is useful for subsequent studies on the relationship between language and gender perception, which has gone

on to demonstrate how the use of the *unmarked generic masculine*[1] (Henley, 1989; Cameron, 1985), the use of the unmarked pronoun "*he*"[2] *(Cole et al., 1983; Khosroshani, 1989)*, the phenomena of *connotative asymmetry* and *semantic derogation*[3] (Schulz, 1975; Robustelli, 2000) make language a medium for gender stereotypes and discrimination.

Like many other gendered-languages, the Italian language uses the masculine gender as an unmarked gender or "false neutral" (Robustelli, 2000). An example would be "*physician*" (to refer to men and all physicians - both men and women - in a generic conversation) and "*female physician*" (when we refer to someone who is not a man).

Although it is not easy to determine how much the use of unmarked masculine causes certain discrimination effects, many argue that our language inappropriately leads to the conclusion that "all people are male until proven otherwise" and promotes "male dominance in our culture" (Cole et al., 1983). Many are therefore in favor of language reform. There are two different currents of thought regarding language change (Cole et al. 1983): on one hand, several individuals believe that the approach that needs to be taken is to change language patterns in an attempt to actively implement social change; on the other, some people argue that social change creates language change, not the other way around.

Language is at the center of human interaction, of our identity. It is no wonder, then, that people feel accused when their spoken language is described as unfair and the need for change is presented (Henley, 1989).

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1. Language ignores women. We can see it with the use of the masculine form as a generic form (Henley, 1989), as in *chairman, spokesman,* and **men** *of goodwill*. The unmarked masculine in these cases is used because it is generally more appreciated than the equivalent feminine terms. Any attempt to place terms such as chairwoman or spokeswoman alongside the generic masculine has been vain (Cameron, 1985).

2. The pronoun "he" is frequently used to refer to an unspecified unknown human being. This means that the masculine form is unmarked, while the feminine is marked (Henley, 1989).

3. In the phenomenon of "semantic asymmetry", we find equivalent terms that in the masculine form connote power, independence, and freedom, while in the feminine form they refer to sexual promiscuity (Robustelli, 2000). In this regard, Schulz (1975) describes as *"semantic derogation of women"* the process by which the connotation of originally neutral words is devalued when associated with women, often by correlating them with "negative" sexual activities.

However, the evidence adds specific grounds for concern about the use of sexist forms (Henley, 1989). In light of this, several proposals have been made over time to make languages more inclusive.

Inclusive language can be used to compensate for these effects caused by sexist language expressions. Indeed, speaking from a gender perspective contributes to spreading awareness against discrimination and is directed towards enhancing the roles that women and men have in contemporary society (Guadagnini and Bosi, 2021).

Inclusive language

Inclusive or representative language is characterized not only by increased use of the appropriate feminine declensions of professional and non-professional terms but also by the introduction of neologisms and new linguistic formulae.

"Recommendations for a non-sexist use of the Italian language" (Sabatini and Mariani, 1993) was one of the first Italian reflections on linguistic sexism and how it could be contained through a series of instruments. The *Recommendations* aimed to "*give linguistic visibility to women and equal linguistic value to terms referring to the female sex*" (Sabatini and Mariani, 1993:97) so as to establish a relationship between the symbolic values of language and shared **values** in everyday life.

Sabatini suggests avoiding the use of the masculine as a non-marked gender when we are referring to a generic **universal concept**. The use of the words "man" and "men" in nouns such as "mankind" can be avoided by using "human", for example.

Expressions such as "*brotherhood*", "*fraternity*", and "*paternity*" can be avoided too, especially when talking about two people who are not men. In Italian, it is very common to say "*the **paternity** of this work is attributed to Jane Austen*", even if she is a woman and it would be best to say "maternity".

Moreover, one should avoid mentioning women as a separate category after having drawn up a list of generic categories. An example might be "doctors, students, athletes, and women" as if they were not included in those generic expressions.

Likewise we should avoid referring to a woman with her first name if we are using the first name and surname to refer to a man. It is not right to say "Miss Angela" (Merkel, female politician) and "Mister Adinolfi" (Matteo Adinolfi, male politician).

Sabatini (1993) also suggests abolishing the use of expressions such as "young lady" and similar expressions in Italian language, since they are used to refer to young women who are not married. Women who are married are called "madam". Men do have similar expressions but with different meanings. "Young boy" refers only to young boys (usually not eighteen years old yet) without acknowledging their marital status. "Mister" is commonly used for all men, whether married or not.

A new tool for inclusive language

In the last few years, a new inclusive language tool has been introduced. The International Phonetic Alphabet letter "schwa" (graphically "ə") was established in Italy in 2015 by Luca Boschetto, curator of the website "Inclusive language" (Sofri, 2021). This letter is used by linguistic researchers and in a few Italian dialects but it is not present in the Italian alphabet.

It is used to unmark gendered nouns and adjectives. This is very useful when talking about a group of people composed of both men and women or a non-binary person.

It is very important to highlight that this tool needs to be used sparingly. Italian is a language rich in expressions and linguistic possibilities, meaning we do not need to use the letter "ə" now and then. "ə" is to be used when the language in use does not offer any other solution to make a discourse inclusive.

Because the new tool is not very common at the moment, there are still a few obstacles to using it: indeed, not all electronic devices have the letter "ə" on their keyboard; moreover, it can be a problem for dyslexic or blind people because screen readers are not coded to read it yet.

How people react to inclusive language

At the beginning of the XXI century, ten years after Sabatini's es-

say (Robustelli, 2000), her suggestions were still scarcely accepted. The non-marked masculine form is still used, partly because a percentage of women prefer the male title when referring to a specific profession. This decision stems from the belief that it indicates the function of the profession without referring to the person who exercises it (Robustelli, 2000). The rejection of a linguistic form that has not yet entered into everyday use probably reflects the feeling on the part of women themselves that the profession is not yet well defined and accepted when exercised by the female gender (Robustelli, 2000).

Indeed, language use reflects stereotypes and traditional social roles that discriminate against women. The fluctuations we witness today in common communication situations are testimony to the difficulty with which language modifies itself on command: it takes decades for deeper changes to take hold (Robustelli, 2000).

There is also an opposition movement (Sofri, 2021) that claims that these new linguistic usages are "imposed" and "unnatural". People mainly claim that the letter "ə" erases the differences between men and women (Somma and Maestri, 2021). These opinions tend to push attention toward more "pressing" battles (Somma and Maestri, 2021:20) such as those for equal rights and wages. Just to clarify, fighting for equal rights and wages does not mean abandoning other mobilizations, such as language inclusivity, and vice versa.

Moreover, language reform initiatives such as the use of "ə" are often promoted by activist movements and therefore receive negative reactions. Historically, activist movements have provoked and demanded sudden changes, especially at a socio-political level, often subverting pre-existing social hierarchies (Sczesny et al., 2016).

Individuals' reactions to these forms of language are not only due to their novelty but also to their attitudes towards gender equality and certain political views associated with both less openness to novelty and greater support for traditional gender structure and hierarchy (Sczesny et al., 2016).

Another factor related to inclusive language usage is the gender of

the person who is communicating. Indeed, women are generally inclined to have a positive attitude towards inclusive forms of language. However, some studies have shown that there are no gender differences in the use of inclusive language (Sczesny et al., 2016).

Before these suggestions had been introduced to Italy, there had been other studies that were not welcomed. At the end of the 80s, in the US and the United Kingdom linguists tried to introduce language reforms but these attempts were seen as a threat to free speech by its detractors, who used the expression "*political correctness*" to denounce the imposition of new linguistic forms. Feminist activists affirmed that the use of the phrase "politically correct" was an attack against the movement itself and the anti-sexist linguistic reforms.

Conclusions

It is important to reform language because the use of one term instead of another entails a change in the thinking and attitude of those who use it and thus of those who listen to it. If we want to bring a different attitude toward women, this must also transpire through thoughtful and non-discriminatory linguistic choices (Sabatini and Mariani, 1993). Language is a dynamic structure. Nonetheless, most people are wary of linguistic changes because they "disturb" their habits. Indeed, faced with the crossroads of accepting or not accepting a new word, people often adopt a moralistic attitude in defense of the "correctness" of language, seen as a kind of "sacred, untouchable thing" (Sabatini and Mariani, 1993:97).

Innovating language allows "a more correct representation of reality" (Somma and Maestri, 2021:29), which is fundamental as a possible medium for civilizational achievements and equality. However, linguistic reforms are seen as limited and limiting (Robustelli, 2000). In the lexicon, it is easy to find innovations through neologisms, but when we speak of morphology and syntax, we must be aware of how much these "are reluctant to change" (Robustelli, 2000).

It is important to remember that many linguistic changes that have occurred over time have not been spontaneous and unhindered. Indeed,

they are the result of precise socio-political actions.

"Nig*a", and "fag*ot" became "black person" and "homosexual person" with time passing because people got used to it. These changes, indeed, show how important words are to society. Moreover, the fact that they have been assimilated means that the problem has truly become common sense or that, at the very least, people are now ashamed at the mere thought of being accused of being "racist", "homophobic" or generally discriminatory (Sabatini and Mariani, 1993).

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About the author

Alice Pomodoro earned her bachelor's degree in Corporate Communication and Public Relations from IULM University (Milan, Italy) in July 2022. Her final thesis is on how language shapes the way we think and its effects on gender perception. She is currently studying to become a sex educator.

A New Worldview:
Innovative Bioengineering Techniques and Diversity Today

Irene Schiatti[1] interviews Lucia Schiatti

Lucia Schiatti (M.Sc. in Mechatronic Engineering and Ph.D. in Bioengineering and Robotics) is currently a postdoc researcher at the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab (CSAIL) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in Boston. Her research focuses on exploiting advanced machine learning methods to develop novel assistive technologies for the visually impaired. After completing a PhD program at the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia (IIT) in Genoa, Italy, she joined the IIT Unit for Visually Impaired People (U-VIP), led by Dr. Monica Gori, where she worked as a postdoc researcher on the topic of multisensory development and visual rehabilitation of visually impaired children, in collaboration with the clinical partners Istituto Casimiro Mondino, in Pavia, and Istituto Chiossone, in Genoa. In 2020 she was awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (MSCA) Global Individual Fellowship under the Horizon 2020 Program with the project TIRESIA (896415) "Technology for visual Impairments Rehabilitation on Early-life through Social Information Augmentation", developed in the framework of a collaboration between the IIT Unit for Visually Impaired People and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In September 2021, she started working within the MIT Infolab group, taking care of the TIRESIA project under the supervision of Dr. Boris Katz and Dr. Andrei Barbu. TIRESIA's main goal is to implement a novel visual assistive technology that augments the residual sight of visually impaired individuals (especially children) to enhance their access to socially relevant visual information.

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1. Irene Schiatti is the Coordinator for Custom Programs at ISI Florence

How did your collaboration with the MIT start?

To make a long story short, I am at MIT thanks to a Marie Curie fellowship, which is an individual grant awarded by the European Commission in the framework of a research program dedicated to postdoctoral researchers. I opted for a version of this program that allows me to write a three-year project involving stays in two institutions, one within the EU framework (in my case the IIT, Italy) and the other in an extra-EU country (in my case the MIT, US).

The long story, on the other hand, is built upon a combination of interconnected (sometimes wrong) choices, meeting inspiring people, and exploiting good opportunities. In 2013, after completing my Master's Degree in Mechatronic Engineering in Trento, I understood that the engineering job itself was not meaningful to me without a human factor. So, I re-oriented my interests towards the field of assistive technologies. In 2014 I applied for a PhD position at the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, in Genoa, with a proposal about assistive Brain-Computer Interfaces (more precisely, interfaces allowing to control a PC or an external device only through brain signals). On being granted a scholarship, I joined the Biomedical Robotics Lab, which was then led by Leonardo Mattos. In those years I worked on a nationally funded project (TEEP-SLA) whose aim was to develop alternative communication interfaces -- based on gaze and brain signals -- for motor impaired people, specifically Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) patients. During the third year of my PhD, I applied for a summer school organized by the MIT Center for Brains, Minds and Machines (CBMM). I thus spent one month in the US, precisely in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The CBMM is a multi-institutional NSF Science and Technology Center dedicated to the study of intelligence, both human and artificial, combining approaches from the disciplines of computation, neuroscience, and cognitive science. Here different research groups investigate how the brain produces intelligent behavior and how intelligence can be replicated in machines. In this context, I met my current supervisors at MIT, Andrei Barbu and Boris Katz. I was intrigued by their work

about modeling social interactions among artificial agents and -- in general -- by their research interests, spanning from artificial intelligence to neuroscience.

Before getting to my current position though, I had another important crossway. After completing my PhD, I met Monica Gori during a postdoc position interview (which led me to join her group, the Unit for Visually Impaired People, at IIT). Her work on the impact of visual impairments and sensory deprivation (especially when arising at an early age) on the brain and the overall child's development inspired me. The time spent working side by side with rehabilitators and children with visual issues, led me to develop and write a research proposal putting together my experiences in the fields of machine learning and assistive technologies. The project linked MIT and IIT, thanks to Boris and Monica, who accepted to support and supervise my project from the two sides (EU and extra-EU). Our proposal was finally awarded by the European Commission, and that's how my current experience at MIT started.

How important is the idea of inclusion in your projects and in your job?

Both my PhD project and my current work are related to exploiting advanced technological and machine learning tools to promote inclusion and better quality of life for impaired individuals. Foreseeing a potential useful application for people suffering from disabilities keeps me motivated and willing to continue, despite the failures or dead ends that one often experiences when doing research.

In particular, the TEEP-SLA project (to which I contributed during my PhD) aimed at providing alternative communication technologies for people with severe motor impairments. In some degenerative diseases, such as ALS, the communication between brain and muscles is interrupted. This makes it impossible for the patient to perform almost any voluntary movement, even if brain cognitive functions are working perfectly. This condition, where the mind is "trapped" inside a paralyzed body, is

known as "locked-in syndrome." For these patients, it is crucial to find an alternative way to communicate with those around them and to restore – at least to some extent – the ability to autonomously control the environment they are in. While working on this project, I met a woman affected by ALS, who communicated with me and other researchers through a speller. She was able to select letters by gazing at them on a special screen provided with an eye-tracking technology; the final phrase that she composed was then reproduced by a synthetic voice. I was impressed by discovering how important it was for her to be able to autonomously send WhatsApp messages to her teenage daughter. Indeed, she felt that this spontaneous kind of communication was crucial for her to maintain a good relationship with the girl. Unfortunately, while technology exists that could potentially help people in this condition, effective aids are either still scarcely available on the market of assistive technologies or they are very expensive and not easy to use for impaired individuals. I believe that research can be a key factor in making things evolve. Research projects in this field can push the development of usable and accessible assistive technologies forward, which can make a true difference in the daily lives of impaired people.

In a similar vein, the TIRESIA project aims at pushing forward the field of visual assistive technologies by exploiting advanced expertise in computer vision, neuroscience, visual rehabilitation, as well as solid scientific and clinical collaboration networks. During my collaboration with Ospedale Mondino in Pavia and Istituto Chiossone in Genoa, I had the chance to meet many children with different kinds of visual impairment. I realized how important it is to prevent as much as possible any vision or sensory impairment from affecting the children's quality of life and their relationships, thus helping them to feel self-confident and have fun when they play and interact with other people despite their visual issues. Most people with such problems still retain some degree of vision; our goal is to use advanced machine learning methods to enrich (or, in other words, to augment) their residual vision. Vision is our main source to retrieve any kind of information from the surrounding environment, in-

cluding information useful to understand others and interact with them. For this reason, the lack of vision or an impairment of the visual system can seriously impact the development of important skills, such as the perception of space, orientation, and motor capabilities. This also applies to social behavior, which impacts the patient's quality of life significantly. Visual rehabilitation is therefore essential to help a person suffering from visual impairments to correctly develop all important functional skills, especially during childhood, when such skills are developing, and the brain's plasticity is maximal. Despite its fundamental role, still today the field of visual rehabilitation often relies on qualitative more than quantitative paradigms, and the standard training protocols do not fully exploit the potential offered by novel technological tools. With TIRESIA, we are trying to develop a special application of "augmented reality" that facilitates visually impaired people's access to socially relevant information in what they can still "see". The objective that this kind of technology aims to achieve is twofold. On the one hand, it intends to provide an assistive function by increasing the saliency of socially relevant visual information. On the other, it pursues a rehabilitative function by training children with visual deficits to pay more attention to visual information that is useful for their social interaction. In doing so, it improves these children's long-term social skills.

Can you tell us more about the Marie Curie program, which allowed you to work and study abroad?

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) is one of the most important research funding programs within the European Union. It is part of the wider program Horizon Europe (previously included in Horizon 2020), and it supports doctoral education and postdoctoral training of researchers. MSCA aims to enhance Europe's capacity for research and innovation by investing in the long-term career of excellent researchers. To this purpose, MSCA funds the development of excellent doctoral and postdoctoral training programs and collaborative research projects

worldwide. The main principles underlying the selection for funding include the projects' potential for equipping researchers at all stages of their careers with new knowledge and skills, and to promote their mobility across countries, sectors, and disciplines.

For researchers already holding a PhD, there's the possibility of applying for Postdoctoral Fellowships by submitting an individual research project, supported by a Host Institution. These include two types of fellowships, either European or Global. European fellowships are open to researchers of any nationality moving within Europe or coming to Europe from another part of the world to pursue their research career; they last either one or two years. Global fellowships are open to nationals or long-term residents of the EU; they can last two or three years, and they allow researchers to travel and live outside Europe for one or two years, respectively.

Proposals are evaluated in terms of the excellence of the scientific ideas, the impact of the project on the researcher's individual career, the research field and on society. In my case, I applied for a three-year Global fellowship, with a mobility of two years to the US. What I really liked about the MSCA is that it gave me the opportunity to work on my own project. This allowed me to grow as a more independent and autonomous researcher. Furthermore, I truly believe this program can foster an effective transfer of competences, and that I will go back to IIT with a significantly richer and interdisciplinary wealth of knowledge, which I could successfully transfer to my work with clinical partners and visually impaired children.

What would you tell students who have not started a post-doc program yet and may feel discouraged?

In general, I think that it is important for students who want to pursue an academic career to try and clearly define their long-term goals. Research can be at the same time a very exciting and frustrating path. I would not suggest students to enroll in a post-doc program unless they

are sure about how it fits their personal and professional goals.

When choosing an academic career, it is important to develop the ability of handling failures. Likewise, one should learn to re-design or modulate her/his own professional direction and goals, being aware that also the time eventually yielding bad results is not wasted time. On the contrary, it is very useful to generate knowledge. Bearing in mind the deepest reason why you chose to work in that precise field helps a lot, and not to lose motivation when things don't seem to work as expected.

Another tip could be to give yourself a deadline. In my case, for example, I would have probably abandoned academia if I had not received this fellowship. I felt it was important for me, at that stage in my professional development, to start working on my own project. It is important not to get discouraged easily, but also to give yourself a timeline to honestly evaluate if you are progressing or not and see if it's better to consider alternative and more rewarding career options.

One last suggestion is to exchange views with people already working in the same or other research fields and learn from their experience. Among the most enriching aspects of working in research is the possibility of developing a wide network of professional and personal relationships with other researchers, allowing to exchange and discuss ideas, often establishing fruitful collaborations in the process. Besides the topic's relevance to your personal interests, having a good feeling and integration within your research group is even more important, and can truly change one's own experience. The many difficulties in keeping and establishing social connections that we all experienced during the Covid pandemic reinforced my awareness about how best achievements come from the synergy established among people who share the same purpose, more than relying on individual strengths. And this applies to both our personal and professional life.

Virtual Exchange and the Role of Foreign Language Pedagogy in Educating Learners for Global Citizenship
Gender Equality and Diversity

Roberta Trapè

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the (neglected) role of foreign language pedagogy in educating learners for global citizenship, and in particular for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. I begin by pointing out the necessity of authenticity in foreign language pedagogy, of the development of intercultural communicative competence, and of the adoption of an intercultural/global citizenship pedagogy. Approaches integrating foreign language education and intercultural/global citizenship education bring real cogent contemporary issues into the classroom, promoting community engagement and active citizenship. In this context Virtual Exchange could have a fundamental role for developing self-regulated language learning, creating communities of inquiry and extending learning beyond the classroom. A Virtual Exchange project between the University of Virginia, United States, and an upper-secondary school in Pavia, Italy is presented. Centered on the question of gender equality, it took place over four years (2018–2022). The project aims to create a virtual space where students' social participation and engagement is stimulated, and formally valued.

Keywords: virtual exchange, intercultural citizenship, global citizenship, active citizenship, gender equality, foreign language pedagogy.

The (neglected) role of foreign language pedagogy in educating learners for global citizenship: intercultural competence, intercultural citizenship and active citizenship.

This paper aims to explore the (neglected) role of foreign language pedagogy in educating learners for global citizenship, and in particular for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. A premise to this study is a reflection of the condition of foreign language teaching in the era of globalization:

Through its mobility of people and capital, global technologies, and global information networks, globalization has changed the conditions under which foreign languages are taught, learned, and used. It has destabilized the codes, norms and conventions that foreign language educators relied upon to help learners be successful users of the language once they had left their classrooms. These changes call for a more reflective, interpretive, historically grounded, and politically engaged pedagogy than was called for by the communicative language teaching of the eighties (Kramsch, 2014, p. 296).

Most communicative methods in foreign language pedagogy are based on artificial dialogues, artificial question/answer interactions: "[a]uthenticity in the classroom is hard to design and often simply reduced to the use of so-called authentic material, without engaging students as a whole person, with their feelings, interests and culture" (Jaccomard, 2016, p. 2). Meaningful interaction is needed, that is, the students' motivation and engagement to create meaningful learning.

Interacting is a semantic activity, a process of making meanings. As we take turns in any interaction, we negotiate meanings about what we think is going on in the world, how we feel about it, and how we feel about the people we interact with. This process of exchanging meanings is functionally motivated: we interact with each other to accomplish a wide range of tasks. Very often *we talk to other people to accomplish quite specific, pragmatic tasks*: [...] to pass on knowledge, to make appointments, to get jobs and to *jointly participate in practical activities* (Eggins and Slate, 1997, p. 6; my emphasis).

Using a foreign language involves interlinguistic and intercultural acts: "developing the capacity to 'move between' linguistic, cultural and knowledge systems, participating in and understanding communication as an act that involves reciprocal exchange of meaning […] creating and exchanging meaning in diversity" (Scarino & Liddicot, 2016, p. 21).

I have begun by pointing out the necessity of authenticity in the interlinguistic and intercultural acts constructed by foreign language pedagogy. In order to create reciprocal exchange of meaning in foreign

language acquisition, the development of intercultural communicative competence is fundamental. It relies crucially on the ability to interact 'with people from another country and culture in a foreign language', which entails appropriate levels of language competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence (Byram, 1997, p. 71). Michael Byram (1997) was one of the first researchers to define intercultural competence. He argued that when people from other languages and/or cultures interact in a social context, they contribute with what they know about their own country, but also with what they know of people from other cultures. In this sense, both knowledge and attitude are important and they are affected by the processes of intercultural communication, which, in his words, refer to "the skills of interpretation and establishing relationships between aspects of the two cultures" and "the skills of discovery and interaction" (1997, p. 33). In order to organize the intercultural dimension, which consists of sustaining interaction and building communication for the development of intercultural skills, we need to offer students the opportunity to build relationships and develop communicative skills through the exchange of information, thus helping them to reflect on different ways of doing things and to be capable of accepting different views and opinions, as well as negotiating difference.

Intercultural competence consists of a "set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2008, p. 97). From this perspective, critical cultural competence is conceived of as "an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 53). Fostering intercultural competence entails the development of an intercultural speaker, who "acquires a deeper understanding of the relationships of languages and cultures" (Wagner & Byram, 2017, p. 2). It is apparent how the often-limited time and space of traditional face-to-face classes are insufficient; therefore, they must be expanded through opening up and negotiating further spaces for intercultural and interlinguistic interaction to foster intercultural competence.

In 2008 Byram introduced the concept of "intercultural citizenship", postulated as a learning outcome to guide curriculum designers and teachers in schools and higher education. It is parallel to other concepts such as "global citizenship", "intercultural competence", or "cultural awareness", which are commonly used in education (Wagner & Byram, 2017, p.1). In particular, Byram's concept of intercultural citizenship entails: learning more about one's own country by comparison; learning more about 'otherness' in one's own country (especially linguistic/ethnic minorities); becoming involved in activities outside school; making class-to-class links to compare and act on a topic in two or more countries (2008, p. 130). Intercultural citizenship "occurs when people who perceive themselves as having different cultural affiliations from one another interact and communicate, and then analyze and reflect on this experience and act on that reflection by engaging in civic or political activity" (Barrett, 2017, p. 9).

A key dimension of Byram's recent construct is active citizenship, which implies "being involved in the life of one's community, both local and national" (Wagner & Byram, 2017, p. 3). In this light intercultural citizenship is instrumental in promoting the development of foreign language speaking citizens who are able to act in multilingual and transnational spaces effectively, that is, global citizens ready to act and interact in multilingual and international contexts through active citizenship (Wagner & Byram, 2017, p. 3) implemented through civic actions in their own national communities (Porto, Houghton & Byram, 2017, p. 6). Wagner and Byram's most recent definition of intercultural citizenship is as follows: causing/facilitating intercultural citizenship experience, which includes activities of working with others to achieve an agreed end; analysis and reflection on the experience and on the possibility of further social and/or political activity; thereby creating learning that is cognitive, attitudinal, behavioral change in the individual; and a change in self-perception, in relationships with people of different social groups (pp. 3-4).

The essential difference between global competence and global citizenship or intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship lies in

the importance attributed to active engagement in society. […]. So, while intercultural or global competence refer to the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to communicate and act effectively and appropriately in different cultural contexts, global or intercultural citizenship borrow from models of citizenship education to refer to the application of these competences to actively participating in, changing and improving society (O'Dowd, 2019, p. 17).

When we consider intercultural/global citizenship in foreign language acquisition we aim at introducing concepts such as: to believe in a shared humanity; to respect and value diversity; to foster interdependence, empathy and reciprocal help; to foster social justice, equality and inclusion; to sustain the environment; to engage in active citizenship in order to act out these beliefs.

In 2019 Byram gave the opening keynote speech at the international conference on global citizenship 'Educating the Global Citizen. International Perspectives on Foreign Language Teaching in the Digital Age', which took place in Munich in March 2019. He referred to the 'Norway Aims for language Teaching' highlighting four main ideas:

1. Foreign languages are both an educational subject and a humanistic subject. This area of study shall give opportunities for experiences, joy and *personal development*, at the same time as it opens greater possibilities in the world of work and for study in many language regions.
2. Competences in language and culture shall give the individual the possibility to *understand, to 'live into' and value other cultures'* social life and life at work, their modes and conditions of living, their way of thinking, their history, art and literature
3. The area of study (languages) can also contribute to developing interest in tolerance, *develop insight in one's own conditions of life and own identity,* and contribute to a joy in reading, creativity, experience and *personal development*.
4. Good competence in languages will also lay the ground for

> *participation in activities which build democracy* beyond country
> borders and differences in culture.
>   (Byram's translation, and numbering added – my emphasis)

The idea introduced by "live into" is related to the notion of decentering, of putting oneself in the perspective of the other, to understand their way of thinking, to be physically, mentally and socially involved, that is to say exposing oneself to newcomers and new interests.

Byram argued that foreign language education can be enriched by reference to citizenship education and related this idea to the Council of Europe's *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* to show how language teaching can become part of an interdisciplinary approach to intercultural dialogue; the values in the models are the values adopted by the Council of Europe and the member states. He focused on the definition of competences as "the ability to mobilize and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and / or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given context" (RFCDC 2018, Vol. 1, p. 32). Competences are made of: Values, Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge and Critical Understanding.[1] Foreign language educators might argue that it is complex to include the indicator "Values" in competences; however, it must be considered that students using other languages in an intercultural environment need resources, "values" which can be "activated, organized and applied through behavior in order to respond appropriately and effectively in democratic and intercultural situations" (RFCDC 2018,

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1. Values (Valuing human dignity and human rights; Valuing cultural diversity; Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law), Attitudes (Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices; Respect; Civic mindness; Responsibility; Self-efficacy; Tolerance of ambiguity), Skills (Autonomous learning skills; Analytical and critical thinking skills; Skills of listening and observing; Empathy; Flexibility and adaptability; Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; Cooperation skills; Conflict-resolution skills), Knowledge and critical understanding (Knowledge and critical understanding of the self; Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication; Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, laws, human rights, culture, cultures, religion, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability).

Vol. 1, p. 33). Taking into consideration this model of competences in foreign language acquisition we can help students to realize their potential, to reflect on what it is to be human. This process brings the human being to the center of attention.

Values are also at the core of Emiliano Bosio's work on intercultural/global citizenship: he proposes a "values-based" curriculum (2019, 2021):[2]

I propose that higher education should adopt a 'values-based' curriculum. A values-based curriculum engages the learner on multiple levels. Lessons emanating from a values-based curriculum should foster in our learners at least five areas:

1. an understanding and acceptance of their *obligations to all humanity*;
2. a belief in *the possibility of making a difference in the world*;
3. looking inwardly to assert a *compassion* that begins with the local communities they will interact with;
4. *multicultural respect* with a view that students should become socialized into living successfully in a global society;
5. *civic commitment and global consciousness*, including participation in community development and involvement in work that has public meaning and lasting public impact, with students coming to realize that their own choices can make a difference.

Education is not complete, however, until students have not only acquired knowledge but *can act on that knowledge in the world*. Bridging the gap between learning and participation is essential […] (Bosio 2019, 2; my emphasis).

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2. Emiliano Bosio's list of publications can be accessed at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emiliano-Bosio. His interview series on global citizenship education is available at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClO23p1xFQDsrlQcAaKNrBQ.

In a recent online conference in 2021[3] Bosio proposed a values-based curriculum which, like the one previously defined, focuses and promotes social justice but also emphasizes the need for an ecological perspective in education. He identified six key elements:

1. decolonialism to fight injustice and inequality: certain preconceptions and ideas are based on prejudice, whereas we need to be inclusive (*multicultural respect*);
2. caring ethics, to care for individuals and human rights (*compassion*);
3. an eco-critical perspective and an eco-ethical consciousness, to create interconnectedness between humans, animals and plants: education for a true ecological justice;
4. global moral consciousness, humanistic consciousness as an awareness of others' perspective, that is, a consciousness to act for the good of the world and of humanity (*civic commitment and global consciousness*);
5. autonomy and carefulness involve educators in cultivating the students' relationships with others, to improve the students'responsibility and human potential (*obligation to all humanity*);
6. empowering humanity to achieve collective emancipation; in other words, humanity empowerment (*the possibility of making a difference in the world*).[4]

Such a values-based curriculum introduces an interpersonal dimension which recognizes human drive as essential: this way students become active citizens taking action in their community. The issues we have

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3. An international conference organized by ATEE (The Association for Teacher Education in Europe) in August 2021, "What's Happening: Assessing the Health and Well-being of Students, Teachers and the Environment".

4. The words in italics refer to the five areas of the 'values-based' curriculum Bosio proposed in 2019.

in our local community are perceived as a global phenomenon.[5] Global citizenship education is presented as an educational imperative to combat growing inequality and foster inclusion. Knowing without acting is insufficient; educators should make it possible for the students to become themselves active agents taking action in their community.

The discussed approaches – integrating foreign language education and intercultural/global citizenship education – bring real cogent contemporary issues into the classroom, promote community engagement, and can introduce dimensions of Education for Sustainable Development; they could work towards reducing inequality on the premise of the 2030 agenda. Behind the 17 goals there are 169 very precise targets. This leads to a curriculum that integrates values among its competences, relying on the connections and the degrees of interdependence between the various goals and using the 2030 agenda in an integrated way.

A reconsideration of foreign language pedagogy through global citizenship-focused Virtual Exchange

A reconsideration of foreign language pedagogy is needed, placing the development of the above mentioned competences at its center. In doing so, I call for a revision of pedagogic priorities, a re-evaluation of the role of the foreign language classroom and an exploration of new means that may complement it. In this context the so-called Virtual Exchange could have a fundamental role in developing self-regulated language learning, creating communities of inquiry, and extending learning beyond the classroom.

Virtual Exchange is an umbrella definition used to refer to the different ways in which groups of learners are engaged in online intercultur-

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5. Bosio's reflections on global citizenship education can be also found in *Conversation on global citizenship* (2021), a volume he edited where a pedagogy of global citizenship is outlined. The volume brings together the narratives of a diverse group of educators who share their unique experiences in global citizenship education. The conversations focus on why and how educators' theoretical and empirical perspectives on global citizenship education are essential to achieve an all-embracing curriculum, which underpins global peace and social justice.

al interaction and collaboration with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of course work and under the guidance of educators (O'Dowd, 2018; O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016). Over the past two decades different models or applications of Virtual Exchange have emerged in the field of foreign language education. Current debates on the economic and environmental cost of study abroad programs, as well as the challenges to physical mobility posed by global pandemics (White & Lee, 2020) have made Virtual Exchange an attractive option for institutions as they search for sustainable and low-cost models of international learning, which can serve as an alternative or be complementary to physical mobility programs (de Wit, 2016). Virtual Exchange can contribute to overcoming students' stereotypes, gaining confidence as communicators in their foreign language and reconceptualizing English as a tool for communication rather than as an abstract academic activity. The available data[6] demonstrates that Virtual Exchange offers the greatest scope for the qualitative shift that is required for a foreign language pedagogy preparing learners to become global citizens.

Virtual Exchanges aim to foster the development not only of foreign language skills but also of intercultural competence through culture-based activities. Besides promoting language learning, telecollaborative tasks need to foster the intercultural analysis of the practices and values of the cultures of the groups involved. Virtual Exchange design can help "learners in moving between cultures and reflecting on their own cultural positioning and the role of language and culture within it" (Liddicot & Scarino, 2013, p. 112). A challenging objective of Virtual Exchange projects is the development of intercultural/global citizenship, which envisions learners as working actively to deal with world issues (Leask, 2015, p. 17) while tackling them in context specific settings (Porto & Byram, 2015, p.

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6. Data to illustrate these arguments is drawn from the EVALUATE project, an Erasmus-funded European Policy experiment (2019), which was the first attempt to apply a randomized controlled trial method to measure the effectiveness of Virtual Exchange in developing digital literacy, intercultural competence, and foreign language competence in participants. https://sites.google.com/unileon.es/evaluate2019/. See also O' Dowd (2021).

24). "There is a challenge […] about how to make linguistic-competence oriented courses not only intercultural but also citizenship-oriented" (Porto, Houghton & Byram, 2017, p. 237). In Porto's words intercultural citizenship "integrates the pillar of intercultural communicative competence from foreign language education with the emphasis on civic action in the community from citizenship education" (2014, p. 5).

The increasingly intercultural citizenship-related dimension of Virtual Exchanges envisions learners as active global agents able to address world challenges (Leask, 2015, p. 17). Here, telecollaborative tasks are expected to foster not only students' foreign language skills and intercultural awareness but also learners' engagements with global problems tailored to local contexts: "intercultural citizenship education […] mean[s] […] that learners would be encouraged to act together with others in the world and that those others would be in other countries and other languages. The purpose would be to address a common problem in the world" (Porto & Byram, 2015, p. 24).

While engaged in intercultural citizenship-focused Virtual Exchange, partner groups analyze together topics related to their own societies within an intercultural framework; as a result of the co-participated analysis, each national group plans and carries out a form of civic action in its own community to foster social changes (Porto, Houghton & Byram, 2017, p. 6): "[language] learners […] would decide on a project of significance in their community, share ideas and plans with each other, critically analyze the reasons/assumptions in their plans by comparison with the plans of the other group, carry out and report to each other their projects" (26). This is done by taking students past their comfort zone and engaging them in real-world tasks through a project that has direct relevance to their own communities.

The adoption of an intercultural citizenship pedagogy is thus emerging as a new challenging dimension of telecollaborative instructional design. As such, the objectives of our virtual space are learning beyond the classroom walls through Virtual Exchange, intercultural communicative competence, working in a transnational team, motivation and

engagement (meaningful learning), community engagement, and active citizenship.

O'Dowd used two models of intercultural/global citizenship education to lay the foundations of a transnational model of Virtual Exchange for global citizenship education (O'Dowd 2019: 15), which engages students with different and alternative worldviews within a pedagogical structure of online collaboration, critical reflection, and active contribution to global society (Leask 2015). These two models are the above mentioned *Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (2018) – based on a culture of democracy that refers to values common in Western societies – and Byram's *Framework for Intercultural Citizenship* (Byram 2008, 2011; Wagner & Byram 2017). Byram's intercultural citizenship construct, which is strictly connected to foreign language learning, has evolved (Wagner & Byram 2017, p. 1) since his first articulation; the subsequent evolution is adopted in O'Dowd's transnational model of virtual exchange for global citizenship education. Although the idea of "democratic culture" is still central, Byram interprets it as connected with what is inherently human, that is, a "common core of values"; however different in detail, there are "universal values to live a really human life in dignity and respect", valuing human dignity and human rights, cultural diversity, justice and equality, as in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). This "core of values" – he argues – can be taught, not so much to give answers but to ask questions about ethical issues and responsibilities in this world. This leads to a discussion that makes learners reflect on the notion of decentering in order to put themselves in the perspective of the other, to understand other societies' way of thinking, and to find a logic in different perspectives. This encourages learners to go beyond their national perspective, to respect and value diversity, to be aware of our shared humanity and interdependence, and – finally– to engage and take action.

In his new intercultural citizenship construct Byram argues that in the contemporary world language teaching has the responsibility to prepare learners for interaction with people from other cultural back-

grounds, teaching them skills and attitudes as well as knowledge. In this perspective, the word "democracy" is expanded, and related to political engagement and participation. "Democracy" is intended as living together more than as a form of government, a mode of associated living, involving citizens in order to create a better society where everyone participates. As O'Dowd affirms, the model proposed by Byram understands democracy and political education as the development of "transnational communities", which are made of critical thinkers who engage in social and political activity together to improve their own personal lives and the societies they live in (O'Dowd 2019, p. 20).

Intercultural or global citizenship approaches involve learners either instigating change in their own societies based on their collaborations with members of other cultures or actually working with members of other cultures as a transnational group in order to take action about an issue or problem which is common to both societies (O'Dowd 2019, p. 21). The transnational model of Virtual Exchange for global citizenship education proposed by O'Dowd creates opportunities for rich intercultural interaction, which can include but is not limited to bicultural/bilingual comparison.[7] In a recent article O'Dowd engaged in a qualitative content analysis of learning outcomes across multiple exchanges. A theme which was identified in the data is how Virtual Exchange led learners to reconceptualize their foreign language learning experience: "For many students the online interactions and their relationships with their partners moved the foreign language from being an abstract, text-based academic activity to being a communicative and social activity involving people who were genuinely interested in what the students have to say. It also gave many

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7. It establishes partnerships across a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds using a "lingua franca" for communication with these partners; it encourages learners to engage with themes that have social and political relevance in both partners' societies; it enables students to work with their international partners to undertake action and change in their respective local and global communities; it includes ample opportunities for guided reflection on intercultural encounters in the classroom; it is an integrated and recognized part of course work and institutional academic activity; it increases awareness of how intercultural communication is mediated by online technologies and how social media can shape the creation and interpretation of messages (O'Dowd 2019).

students their first experience of using English for an authentic communicative purpose outside of the classroom context. Their perceived success in communicating with international partners gave them confidence and an impetus to continue their study of the foreign language" (O'Dowd 2021, p. 9).

Gender equality focused Virtual Exchange projects: "Gender equality through toponymy. Urban landscape in Charlottesville and Pavia" and "Language & Gender"

Professor Francesca Calamita (Italian Studies, University of Virginia, who coordinates the research group on the "Language Forward Initiative", Institute of World Languages) and I co-designed a foreign language acquisition project focused on cultural learning, based on Virtual Exchange between students studying Italian at the University of Virginia, United States, and students studying English at an Italian upper-secondary school, Liceo Adelaide Cairoli (Pavia, Italy). Centered on the question of gender equality, the project has been realized over four years (Autumn 2018–Spring 2022), and, since 2019, with direct reference to the transnational model of virtual exchange for global citizenship education proposed by Robert O'Dowd (2019). As an integrated part of the language learning curriculum, this project consistently blends face-to-face foreign language lessons with Skype-mediated digital learning. We have created a virtual space which parallels the space-time of traditional class tuition, which students can inhabit with a significant degree of autonomy. Through these projects students could develop global citizenship through real-world tasks. The structure and scope of the course aimed to foster the development of both foreign language skills on the one hand and intercultural competence and global citizenship on the other.

In the project's second academic year (Autumn 2019 and Spring 2020) a challenging objective was the development of Virtual Exchange focused on intercultural citizenship. To this purpose, both groups of students in Charlottesville and Pavia were required to plan and carry out some form of "civic action" in their local communities; more precisely,

they were encouraged to become global citizens ready to interact effectively in multilingual and international contexts through active citizenship (Wagner & Byram, 2017, p. 3).

I will specifically refer to the project's second academic year, a Virtual Exchange focused on intercultural citizenship. The project was developed in twelve weeks from October 2019 to February 2020; each semester included six Skype meetings. The project's main objective was to plan a civic action to foster gender equality in the students' respective communities. This form of civic engagement in the community involved research, reflection, and co-creating a formal proposal. We chose to address the question of gender equality; so, the title of the project was "Gender equality through toponymy. Urban landscape in Charlottesville and Pavia". The goals were: learning beyond the classroom walls through both Virtual Exchange and contact with local organizations concerned with equality and gender-based violence; community engagement and active citizenship; intercultural communicative competence, including linguistic gender equality; working in a transnational team; motivation and engagement (meaningful learning).

Thirty North American students were partnered with twenty Italian upper-secondary school students to discuss (in dyads or triads) via desktop videoconferencing the theme of gender equality. Using Skype as a synchronous video communication tool, students met weekly to speak for 20/30 minutes in Italian and 20/30 minutes in English. The students did the Skype component privately (tandem learning set up) using both languages, and chose their favorite day/time within the week.

First off, even before introducing themselves to their partners, students engaged in pre-virtual exchange activities, which guided them in the discussions that could then start. For example, to activate students' prior knowledge of the theme, "ice-breakers" and brainstorming activities centered on gender equality took place in face-to-face lessons and on the university/school platforms. They were targeted to introduce key vocabulary items and/or concepts necessary for students to discuss the theme in Skype meetings, which were introduced by means of matching

activities implemented through digital noticeboards (Padlet). Students were required to match vocabulary with definitions and images presented in sticky notes on a wall-like space. Secondly, articles and short authentic videos between five and ten minutes long on the question of gender equality were made available on the university and school platforms (for instance articles about the imbalance in main European cities between numbers of streets named after men and those named after women).

In their first Skype meeting students introduced themselves and their school/university to their international partners in North America or Italy in the target language. As Carloni and Zuccala point out "task-based learning seems especially suitable to online intercultural exchanges. […]. In screen-based learning environments, tasks (such as problem solving, decision making, opinion-exchange, and jigsaws) can thus promote dialogical interaction focusing on real-world issues effectively" (2018, pp. 419-420). Consequently, three main types of tasks were used in this kind of Virtual Exchange: "information exchange, which 'involves learners providing their telecollaborative partners with information about their personal biographies, local schools or towns or aspects of their home cultures' (O'Dowd & Ware, 2009, p. 175); comparison and analysis, which 'requires learners not only to exchange information, but also to go a step further and carry out comparisons or critical analyses of cultural products from both cultures (e.g. books, surveys, films, newspaper articles)' (p. 175); and collaboration and product creation, which 'require […] learners not only to exchange and compare information but also to work together to produce a joint product or conclusion (178)'" (Carloni & Zuccala, 2018, p. 424). The objectives were to promote the analysis of the chosen issue, i.e., gender equality; to enhance dialogical interaction in the target language; to foster intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship.

In their second online meeting students discussed articles and videos uploaded to the University/school platforms. The task was to read and watch the materials individually before discussing them within the class face-to-face and with the students' respective international partners on line. In the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth Skype meeting with their in-

ternational partners, students reflected on the creation of a transnational group, whose aim was to consider the issue of gender equality and plan civic action. To begin this phase of the project, the student dyads/triads planned to seek information about a woman who – although not well known – happened to be relevant to the history/life of their town and its community. Each dyad/triad chose a woman in Pavia and one in Charlottesville. The students then planned to organize a written proposal to name after these women new or unnamed streets/places in their respective towns. The last phase of the project consisted of writing down proposals in English and Italian (in dyads/triads) to be presented to the mayors of Pavia and Charlottesville.

The final discussion of this civic action and its contents was organized in the form of a group-to-group video conferencing session, in which both groups of students (in Italy and in the USA) were involved. Through this group-to-group discussion the Italian and North American students narrowed the final selection to six women (three for Charlottesville and three for Pavia and Milan) and to a final version of the written proposal (both in English and Italian) to be presented to the respective city mayor. We decided to include the city of Milan since one of the most interesting names of women selected by the Italian students was that of Bianca Ceva (intellectual, teacher, and translator who fought as a Partisan in the Resistance groups that were active throughout northern Italy in the war against Italian Fascism). Born in Pavia, Ceva worked extensively in Milan, the capital of Lombardy, the region where the Italian high school involved in this project is located.

The development of intercultural citizenship-focused exchange in the final phase of the project took students out of their comfort zone and engaged them in real-world tasks. Seeking others' perspectives and advice, the students proposed change, and finally acted together to instigate change in their local communities (Byram 2008; O'Dowd 2019). We assisted students during in-class face-to-face activities in considering the value systems underlying the Italian and North American cultural practices in relation to gender equality. In the classroom, the students'

learning was continuously supported by guided reflections concerning the intercultural encounters and questions made possible by the virtual exchange: "Video conferencing [was] seen as developing students' abilities to interact with members of the target culture under the constraints of real-time communication and also elicit, through a face-to-face dialogue, the concepts and values which underlie their partners' behavior and their opinions" (O'Dowd, 2018, p. 11). The Skype meetings and other means of exchange and collaboration increased the students' exposure to spoken Italian/English. Also, they fostered the development of the students' speaking/interactional skills (especially in the target language), allowed them to experience authentic language use (thus enabling access to meaningful interactions), and increased their motivation, sense of agency, and autonomy. Finally, those same Skype meetings allowed students to cultivate active citizenship.

As regards the part of the project developed in Italy, the mayors of Milan and Pavia immediately answered the students' requests in Spring 2020, expressing great appreciation for the project. Eventually, they showed sincere willingness in considering the candidates after whom the students proposed that new streets be named. Due to the Covid-19 emergency the procedures and celebrations to name new streets were drastically slowed down; in fact, they came to a complete halt. Yet, the city council representatives in Milan reassured students that their proposal would be considered, and that Bianca Ceva was on the list of names to be examined for new streets. On 3 and 4 October 2021 municipal elections took place in Milan, to elect the mayor and the 48 members of the city council. Mayor Giuseppe Sala was reconfirmed, and soon after the election the students wrote to the new city councilor for cultural affairs (Tommaso Sacchi) and his colleague in charge of international relationships (Antonella Amodio), who had kindly followed the students' request through the whole process since its initial stages. On 13 December 2021 the students and I received a message from her, on behalf of councilor Sacchi, saying that a new street in the Milanese urban area of Bisceglie would be named after Bianca Ceva sometime in 2022. It took time and patience, but in the

end the students got the result they had aimed for: one of the names they chose (Bianca Ceva) was to be given to a new street in Milan, thus finally commemorating her brave and significant life. It is also very important to note that during the three years in which the Virtual Exchange was being developed, the students presented their project to younger schoolmates. By doing so, they raised awareness about such crucial issues as gender equality and women's invisibility/visibility in toponymy (and, consequently, within Italian society as a whole). They also wrote articles on the project, which appeared in local newspapers.

In Spring 2022 the North American and Italian classes involved in the most recent phase of the Virtual Exchange project dealt with the issue of Language and Gender. Their transnational project focused on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in both the Italian and the English language. Its complete title was "A Gendered Wor(l)d: Grammar, Sexism and Cultural Changes in Italian and English Language and their Society".[8] The students met online to talk 20/30 minutes in Italian and 20/30 minutes in English for 6 times over the semester/term. As in the other projects of this kind, students could choose their favorite day/time; the topics assigned to work on had to be discussed within the assigned week. The aim of this course component was to assess the connections between gender equality on the one hand and the Italian/English language on the other, so as to foster reflections on gender-inclusive language. The latter is a language that avoids using certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people, especially gender specific words (e.g., mankind and masculine pronouns whose use might be considered to exclude women). Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate or perpetuate stereotypes against any given sex, social gender or gender identity. Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using

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8. I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to Prof. Francesca Calamita for allowing me to use the topics and the materials of her most valuable course on Language and Power ("A Gendered Wor(l)d: Grammar, Sexism and Cultural Changes in Italian Language and its Society", which she taught at the University of Virginia) for our Virtual Exchange project.

gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias.[9]

Students were required to close-read and analyze a number of newspaper headlines (previously uploaded on the school and university websites by the educators) and rewrite them in such a way that their language would not reflect any gender stereotypes. Students also read articles on gender equality before discussing and analyzing them with their respective international partners. Foreign language acquisition was carried out through discussion on gender equality, inclusion and diversity. The students posted their entries on the meeting (school/university platforms) after consulting with their international partners. This task enabled our students to strengthen and advance their proficiency in Italian and English, while thinking critically about a socio-cultural issue animating current debates in Italy, in North America, and – more broadly – around the world.

The best way for me to describe the project in a nutshell is to quote what two students of mine (Sam Pavia and Huijie Zhu) wrote about it. Sam's virtual exchange partner was Katherine Shelton, from the University of Virginia. Going over the project, this is what Sam wrote:

> During our first calls we discussed […] articles that underline the importance of research into the way a language evolves when wanting to master a foreign language. They also state that inclusive linguistic variations are needed when trying to transmit to students messages of gender equality and social justice, with the aim of discussing modern day issues. […] We also discussed the issue of pronouns for the LGBTQ+ community in romance languages, such as Italian: Katie said that in North America they use the third person plural in school emails, which is pretty inclusive. In my opinion, Italian would also need a genderless pronoun for this aim and also for some transgender people to use. […].

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9. See the "Gender-inclusive language" section (in particular the chapter titled "Background and purpose") on the United Nations website at www.un.org.

In the following call we conversed about how women were treated during the pandemic, and Katie noted that in the US women quit their job to homeschool their children instead of making them do online school. This is very similar to the article we read about how -- when deciding who had to go back to work -- men decided to do so and women stayed home instead.

Another topic in our calls was the invisibility of women during the pandemic in Italy: women scientists were treated as though they knew less than men in the same field, and were excluded when making decisions about the pandemic. They were absent from the task force set up to deal with the emergency.

In the fourth call we made, we changed the title of the articles uploaded to our platform objectifying women in politics and science. [10]

In my personal opinion gender equality is still a current problem in our society, as some of us face inequality in our day-to-day life. Also, in advertisements women only appear to be sexualized, whereas

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10. Sam Pavia wrote: "We changed the title of the first article "Hanno riesumato Nilde Iotti" to "L'onorevole eredità di Nilde Iotti: una figura di grande importanza nella politica italiana" ["They exhumed Nilde Iotti" to "The honorable legacy of Nilde Iotti: a figure of great importance in Italian politics"]. The article continues saying: "Era facile amarla perché era una bella emiliana simpatica e prosperosa come solo sanno esserlo le donne italiane. Grande in cucina e grande a letto. Il massimo che in Emilia si chiede a una donna" ["It was easy to love her because she was a beautiful emiliana (a woman from Emilia Romagna, an Italian region), lovely and voluptuous as only Italian women can be. Great in the kitchen and in bed. One could not hope for more from an Emilian woman."]. We commented that the original title and this part of the article were problematic because the journalist objectified Nilde Iotti and based her whole identity around her cooking and sexuality, which is horrible. In the fifth call we changed the second article's title "Gli angeli della ricerca, le due scienziate che hanno isolato per prime il coronavirus" to "Le due scienziate italiane il cui lavoro è stato fondamentale nella ricerca sul coronavirus" ["The angels of research: the two women scientists who were the first to isolate the coronavirus" to "The two Italian scientists whose work was fundamental in the research on coronavirus"]. We said that the original title was problematic because it emphasized as extraordinary for women to achieve this sort of accomplishments, especially if they come from Southern Italy. We thus found that title to be wrong. Likewise, we eventually changed the title of the third article from "E per gradire nella capitale arrostiscono una ragazza di 22 anni" to "Ennesimo femminicidio: ragazza di 22 anni trovata morta a Roma per mano del suo fidanzato" [from "And for good measure a 22-year-old girl has been roasted in the capital" to "The latest feminicide: a 22-year-old girl found dead in Rome killed by her boyfriend"]. What we found problematic in the original title was, first of all, the inappropriate attempt to be humorous when talking about a tragedy and the act of objectifying the deceased woman as though she were some kind of food".

male figures are used to gain the customers' trust. We see the same
dynamic in the lack of female representation in history, science, arts
and literature in school programs. […] In conclusion, from this expe-
rience I gained not only a friend with whom I can talk about wom-
en's daily struggles without being wrongly contradicted, but also
greater awareness about gender based discrimination.

I will conclude this section on the 2022 Virtual Exchange with an-
other student's perspective, that of Huijie Zhu. Huijie did her calls to-
gether with Antea Galli, and their international partner was Isabella Lag-
azzi Rogazy.[11] I believe student remarks like these best serve to prove how
the project worked:

[…] I found the discussions, sparked by the articles we had to read,
very interesting, because even though the places we come from are
quite different, and many of our habits are very different, some ex-
periences are universal. For example, the objectification of women
which we encountered while reading the articles; in the articles in
Italian we saw women as important as Nilde Iotti being considered
just for their bodies and their cooking, as objects. This, however,
doesn't only apply to high profile figures; it's a widespread view
of women, a view that is engrained in our patriarchal society, and
which lives on through an outdated education.
We often don't realize how much our education and our culture in-
fluence the way we think and what values we have acquired through
our entire lives. A lot of sexism and misogyny can be detected in our
language, even in the arts. While reading the articles and talking to
our partner, I realized that in certain subjects (such as Art History,
Italian and Spanish Literature) we study countless male artists and
writers, but no female counterparts, even though there have been

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11   I wish to express my gratitude to students Sam Pavia and Huijie Zhu for giving me permission to publish
their comments on the 2022 Virtual Exchange project.

many of them throughout the centuries. Moreover, we do study the idea of 'woman', but always from a man's point of view. This can sometimes be a positive or empathetic representation, but it is still filtered. Just recently, for instance, we have studied Gustav Klimt's paintings of *femme fatales* and read descriptions of lovers or wives, but we never hear from them; they are objects with the only purpose of being observed, represented, and judged.

Not only in our culture, but in our language as well, as we reflected with Isabella on the Italian and Spanish languages in particular, our thinking is influenced in a very subtle way; in both these languages the masculine dominates over the feminine, both in grammar and lexicon. Also, there are many words that exist exclusively in one gender or the other (e.g., 'casalinga' in Italian or 'nanny' in English are only in the feminine form). This enforces how we perceive these roles, as roles bound to women and inappropriate for men. As the French philosopher Michele Foucault once said, as our culture influences our language, the opposite is true, our language influences our culture, since it shapes the way we think, giving us prejudices and restricting our view. What we can do, is to address this issue (the flaws of our modern day society, the roots of ideas which lead to discrimination and injustice) through education.

When we learn a language or when we come in contact with different cultures, we realize how absurd some traits are. I noticed this, for instance, while trying to explain to our partner some of the expressions used in those articles. This is one of the reasons why it is so important not only that we study other languages and cultures different from our own, but that we do so in a certain way. When we pick up a language or we start studying any given subject we should always have a critical approach, instead of passively assimilating the information we are given.

I think projects like the Virtual Exchange are opportunities to do this, as we have the freedom to talk about these topics without the limitations we usually encounter in school, where – in most cas-

es – we don't feel free to contradict speakers or to start a debate. Also, this project (where we get to talk to students our age, without any adults passing judgment on us) gave us the chance to exchange ideas and express our thoughts honestly and freely.

For educators like us, who designed this project, our students' words are the best evidence that initiatives of this kind are urgently needed. Students' voices, experiences, and background knowledge have been central to discussing gender equality within an intercultural framework; students have been encouraged to examine phenomena and experience their own cultural reality while seeking to enter a different culture. It has required an act of engagement in which learners have compared their own cultural assumptions, expectations, practices, and meanings with those of others, and have reflected on the many ways in which women are made invisible in both societies. We thus put emphasis on the importance of using an inclusive language in Italian and English (avoiding the generic masculine) to address issues of identity, inclusion, gender equality, and diversity in order to make women more visible and better represented.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the urgency of discussions and actions in Italy, North America, and – more broadly – in the whole world both to foster gender equality and inclusion on the one hand and to increase women's visibility and representation on the other, projects like the one I have just described could be among the tools to make students aware and active on this issue. Our projects aim to create a virtual space where students' global social participation and engagement is stimulated, facilitated, and formally valued. Regular virtual exchange between transnational teams allows the students to address an urgent socio-political issue, which should be brought to the fore in foreign language learning. It is important that while studying languages young people be empowered to actively reflect on their role in a democratic society and how to become active contributors (in other words, intercultural and global citizens).

Higher education institutions and schools should promote spaces where the students' social participation and engagement are both stimulated and officially evaluated, and where links with the community are created. The above mentioned Evaluate Findings seem to justify a more sustained and systematic work in a 'third space' situated between the university, the school, and the community. This might help educators to build up their confidence and integrate global citizenship into their knowledge and teaching practice.

A critical and social perspective in the design of Virtual Exchange projects within a global citizenship approach will result in the enhancement of intercultural competence through community engagement. From the students' comments we realized that the project increased their desire to learn foreign languages: learning beyond the classroom's walls and connecting universities and schools to society through citizenship initiatives promotes an authentic use of language and meaningful learning. This effective collaboration of global teams – in an effort to address real current social problems in innovative ways – could restore confidence in young people who believe that only inclusion, gender equality, and the richness of diversity can make the world a better place.

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About the author

Roberta Trapè is Honorary Fellow of the School of Languages and Linguistics at The University of Melbourne, Australia. She has worked extensively on Australians traveling to Italy in contemporary Australian fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Her research has shifted between theory – travel writing, notions of space and movement in contemporary society, including migration experiences, notions of space in narrating history and postcolonial studies – and close communication with contemporary Australian writers who have written about Italy in the last three decades. Her ongoing research explores transnational digital learning spaces (Virtual Exchange) and intercultural citizenship/active citizenship (gender equality) in foreign language education.
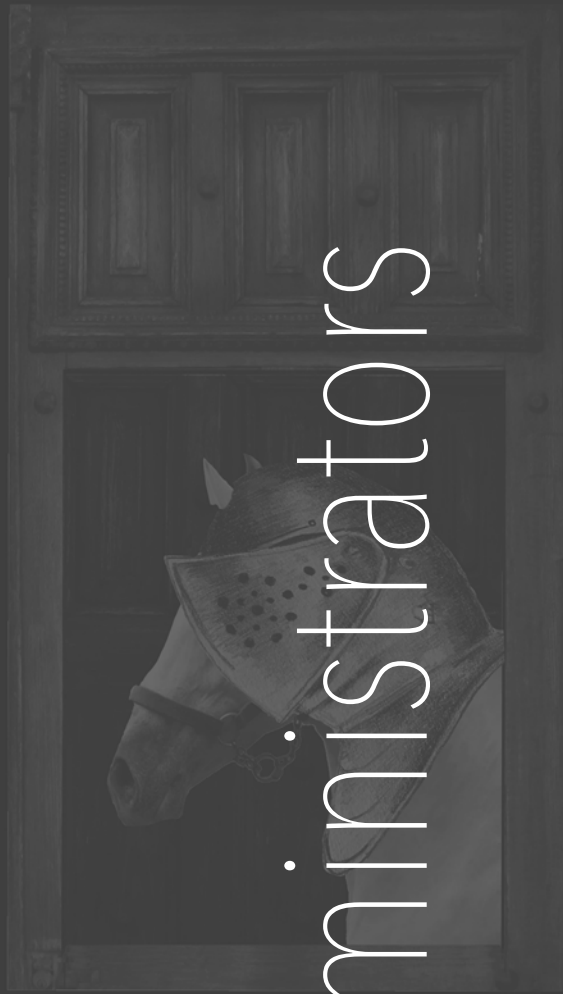
administrators

Strengthen Your Agility Abroad:
How to Be Successful in a Multi-cultural Environment
Caroline Lippers

Abstract

Have you like me chosen to live, study or work with people from other cultures? Then you know the fascination as well as frustration, the fun and the 'I just want to give up' feeling it brings. It is not only the language barrier; there is so much more behind possible misunderstandings and conflicts based on our cultural values and beliefs.

In this article you can read more about how we develop our personal cultural preferences, why we behave the way we do when we are confronted with another culture and how to strengthen our cultural agility.

Living and working abroad is a great way to widen perspectives and learn about other cultures. To really become culturally agile there is a lot of work to be done; it is about self-awareness. In the next few pages I'd like to share some theories, methods, and tools for you to become more culturally agile and thereby be more successful and fulfilled working, studying, and living in a multi-cultural environment.

Keywords: culture, intercultural competence, decision-making, ability

Knowing yourself as the starting point

I would like to begin by telling you a story. A couple of decades ago, when I started as a manager in Florence, I came with a clear idea about my leadership style, which had been successful for many years and was in line with the company's expectations and values.[1] I defined my style as

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1. After I had already been living in Italy (precisely, in Turin) for some time, I was asked to become manager of the IKEA Store in Sesto Fiorentino, in the outskirts of Florence. I thus moved to this city with my family. I had the pleasure to be the Managing Director of that store in Sesto Fiorentino from 2011 to 2016.

built on shared responsibility, consensus in decision-making, a universalistic view on rules as well as equality. I had been successful as a manager for years in Sweden and the Netherlands, always working for the same company. I thus felt confident and strong in taking on this new challenge in Italy. As preparation from the company, I had received some books to read about Italy but nothing more than that. How different could it be, considering that it was the same organizational culture?

Well, it turned out to be quite different. I remember one of my early meetings with my Italian management team. Until that day they had always had Italian managers. So, I happened to be not only their first non-Italian manager but their first female manager too. One of the agenda items on this meeting was to make a decision on an investment regarding the company's stores; it was something I considered nothing more than a common responsibility. Everyone expressed their functional point of view and while I was trying to get consensus through further discussion the members were looking at me and I sensed a kind of expectation. Of course, my limited Italian and the scarce English of the team was a big hinder but there was something else going on underneath. After some time, the meeting ended and we were all confused; no decision had been made, and everyone left the room with a strange atmosphere hanging in the air.

I unconsciously jumped into "judgement mode" and considered the managers both inexperienced and unable to take responsibilities on the level that I expected. Why did they not step up and start leading together with me? Then I blamed the managers who had been there before me as being too hierarchical and micromanaging, instead of leading the team members to take responsibilities. Soon after I blamed my own leadership capabilities for not being able to get the team to a consensus decision. In sum, I felt like I had failed. Time passed and I had other similar experiences where I felt that managers did not take responsibilities on the level that I expected them to. It seemed like they wanted me to make all decisions. This was neither my kind of leadership nor what the company's values stood for.

In the end, I decided to pick up the phone and talk to a colleague who also was from Sweden but who had lived and worked as a manager in Italy for several years. She gave me the key to understand the cultural gap I was experiencing, which opened my eyes. She told me it had taken her years to figure out and adapt her leadership style to be successful in Italy. The firm had completely different expectations about me as a manager than when I worked in Northern Europe. In Italy, such cultural values as hierarchy, formal and high context communication played a big role. From a hierarchical point of view, the team expected me to make most decisions, as I was their manager. Their high context communication meant that they were sending me messages that I did not understand through my low context perspective. I did not pick up messages that were implicit in their body language and their tone of voice. Also, I underestimated the importance of the context we were in, that is, the official meeting room.

My friend's comments made me aware of what went wrong at that first meeting. Although this sense of awareness was somehow relieving, at the time I lacked the cultural understanding that would make it possible for me to re-elaborate that experience and articulate it in words. I was thus faced with two main options: either work on my team to learn what I expected from them or to adapt my own leadership style to meet their expectations. I ended up choosing a middle course, whose initial stage implied asking everyone to express their expectations and talk about our differences.

What do we mean by 'culture'?

Among the many definitions of culture that are available today I prefer the one by Geert Hofstede (1980): "Culture is a collective programming of the mind influencing the way we think and act in a certain social group." According to the most thorough research done on national culture by Geert Hofstede, Jan Trompenaars, and Edward T. Hall our cultural preference is developed during childhood. By the age of about 12 we have a clear cultural preference, and we know the dos and don'ts of the social group we (want to) belong to. Before we move into puberty, we have developed our preferred view on how to interact with others and

our values (determining, to a large extent, how we perceive the world around us) have taken form.

Culture is passed on from older people in our surroundings; their showing us what behavior is acceptable and what not creates our belief system. We copy behavior from our parents and that is the fastest way to learn. In addition, we are influenced by other adults in our surroundings, like grandparents, teachers, trainers, and official community representatives. History, religion, symbols, heroes, and politics all play an important role, as they impact the social and educational systems, the rules within society, its traditions etc.

Human beings are driven by the strong need to 'fit in' to the social group in which they live. Psychological studies on conformity have come a long way since Solomon Asch developed his famous experiments on social pressure in the 1950s. They show us that conformity is not just a learned behavior; it is innate and much more pronounced in humans than in other primates. The feeling of belonging gives us a sense of security and calmness. As psychiatrist Joanna Cannon writes: "As a society, we struggle to deal with the unusual and the unknown. We choose the ordinary over the extraordinary. In the quest for familiarity and reassurance, we reject those who highlight our differences, because those differences question our own choices and our own sense of belonging that we've been working on since the playground."[2]

The more we stay surrounded by the same cultural perspective our frame becomes confirmed and grows stronger. As you can imagine it becomes natural to see a different behavior as 'strange' and we easily jump to judgment of what is 'right' or 'wrong'. This can lead to a binary view ("us versus them") and who belongs and who does not. It is a way of perceiving the world that unfortunately leads to unconsciously judging others, thus breeding stereotypes. In this article I focus on some of the national cultural preferences that drive our behavior when inter-

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2. Joanna Cannon is an NHS psychiatrist and author of the bestselling novel *The Trouble with Goats and Sheep* (see Bibliography at the end of this article), which she wrote during lunch breaks and those few moments of the night when her patients were all asleep.

acting with others in professional settings.

There is no right or wrong in culture

When working with cultures it is very important to come from a perspective that there is no right or wrong if the behavior is in line with the International Human Rights Law. It is also crucial to be aware that what people usually read into cultural preferences has more to do with what they perceive than what they actually see. For this reason, people with limited cultural agility easily tend to use stereotypes. In other words, they have a defined perspective of a national culture, which only takes in information that confirms that view. When new information is received, for instance by meeting a new person from that culture, the tendency is to confirm their beliefs and use words like 'always', 'never', 'everyone' and 'all'. This limits the possibility to learn and develop as it keeps the world in a kind of status quo. It is an easier and faster approach but very limiting, too. However, culture evolves and, as we all know, there are cultural nuances in every country, based on personality, experiences, education, social background etc.

On the contrary, using generalizations (instead of prejudice) in cultural work gives us the possibility to compare cultures and thereby learn from both differences and similarities. By keeping an open mind when we meet someone new, we give that person a chance to be seen as who he or she really is. Generalizations use such words as 'most', 'often', 'generally' and 'many'. Comparing cultures is a way to be able to understand them in relation to other cultures; investigating the gap between cultures can provide valuable insights. For instance, we can evaluate which cultural behavior is most effective, in what situation and with what kind of people.

When working with culture we connect a culture with a country; this process makes it easier for us to compare and, consequently, work with greater cultural agility. I want to underline that within each country there are many different cultural aspects and big differences to be found. US citizens, for instance, may want to consider various forms of behavior on the east and the west coast, north versus south or big cities versus rural areas. Of course, we should forget that exceptions always exist. Above all,

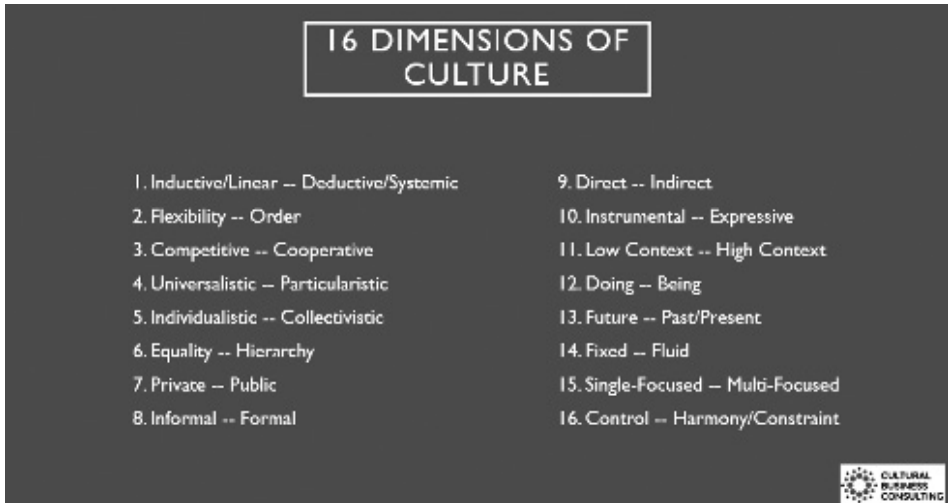everyone is unique, having a set of cultural preferences and personality traits that impact their behavior.

Knowing your own cultural preference is the first step towards becoming culturally agile and is the key to being more successful when working in an international environment. In the next pages I will explain in more detail how we can develop our cultural agility.

Knowing your unique cultural preference

As I explained earlier in this article we are grown up with a set of cultural preferences. You can consider it the "eyeglasses" through which we see the world. These glasses have given us a key to our own interpretation and smoothly move within our specific culture. We know the informal rules, the unspoken expectations and how to navigate in such a way as to belong and be accepted. What we often are not aware of is that we see others through these "eyeglasses" and thereby unconsciously judge others, how they speak and act and the way they appear. This behavior is unconscious for most people, which is why the first step is to create deeper self-awareness.

As a Culture Mastery Coach,[3] I work with the 16 cultural dimensions (based on the research by Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hall) that have been developed by Cultural Business Consulting. These dimensions provide information about cultural preferences related to communication, power, conflict management, action time and environment. By knowing your personal preference on these dimensions, you get very valuable insights into how your unique cultural "eyeglasses" influence your worldview. Each dimension has two values on separate sides of a spectrum from left to right (again neither is right or wrong). Your preference is somewhere on this spectrum. If it is all the way to the left or right of the spectrum it means that it is important to you and a part of your identity. If you are in the middle of the spectrum, it means

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3. Cultural Business Consulting (CBC) provides coaching in cultural competency to enable globally diverse corporate work teams to function harmoniously with a deep appreciation of the dimension of culture, thus enhancing productivity and profitability. Master facilitators leading CBC programs study the link between culture, business, politics, and current events to provide the most up-to-date insights about the people, places, and values that influence borderless global commerce.

16 DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

1. Inductive/Linear -- Deductive/Systemic
2. Flexibility -- Order
3. Competitive -- Cooperative
4. Universalistic -- Particularistic
5. Individualistic -- Collectivistic
6. Equality -- Hierarchy
7. Private -- Public
8. Informal -- Formal

9. Direct -- Indirect
10. Instrumental -- Expressive
11. Low Context -- High Context
12. Doing -- Being
13. Future -- Past/Present
14. Fixed -- Fluid
15. Single-Focused -- Multi-Focused
16. Control -- Harmony/Constraint

CULTURAL BUSINESS CONSULTING

that it is less important and that you are more flexible in your behavior. Adding the information where other cultures are on each spectrum enables a gap analysis to start looking at the biggest differences between your own preference and the cultures you interact with. At the end of this short article I am going to tell you more about how to compare your preference to other cultures and what that means when it comes to behavioral change.

Understandably, reasons of space make it impossible for me to write about all 16 dimensions here. Consequently, I will only highlight some of them. In the beginning of this article, I shared a story on the equality-hierarchy dimension, that is, our views on social stratification impacting how we look at power, responsibility, status, etc. Let us now look at an example of individual versus collective oriented cultures and how we view the notion of time. The examples are simplified to make the point as clear as possible; obviously, in real life there are many more layers of complexity when it comes to interaction of people from different cultures.

When going to a job interview in cultures with an individualistic orientation (such as the US and the UK), candidates are expected to be assertive and bring forward their personal successes. To this end, they often use superlatives to explain their personality. The "I" language predominates and em-

phasis is put on personal accomplishments; the desire to come across from a positive angle leads candidates not to mention either failures or weaknesses.

On the other side of the spectrum of this cultural dimension you find a collective oriented culture, for example the Netherlands, Japan, and Scandinavian countries. During a job interview in those countries, candidates are expected to highlight their ability to cooperate and reach results together with others; therefore, the "we" language is key to success. Team performance comes before personal results. Likewise, interdependency is important as well as the ability to speak about failures and personal weaknesses, which is seen as a sign of self-awareness.

This explains why an individualistic oriented candidate in Sweden would be seen as too self-focused, unable to cooperate, and unaware of his or her development areas. For the same reasons, in the US a collective oriented candidate would be perceived as too dependent on the team, not assertive enough and focusing too much on his or her own weaknesses.

Let me share another example when it comes to how we perceive time. In some countries (for instance, China, Italy, and Singapore), time is perceived as impossible to control. So, emphasis is put on the 'here and now'; the prevailing tendency is to solve problems when they show up and to adopt short-term solutions. What is good about this cultural approach is that people tend not to worry too much about the future and are more focused on the present instead. If we fail to reach certain results within the set deadlines the general belief is that things were beyond our control.

In other countries (for instance, Japan, Germany, and Sweden) the prevailing notion is that we can control time. According to those cultures, to plan and think long term is crucial, as time is a resource that we can manage. Long term planning and strict follow-ups are key methods to reach success and expected results. Failing to reach results within a given time is attributed to people's inability to manage time.

As I said before, there is no right or wrong in this "debate"; it is all about being aware of cultural differences and under what circumstances a certain kind of behavior will prove successful. This ties in with the ability to appreciate a different perspective and learn about ourselves, that is, our de-

sires, our needs, and what we should do in order to adapt to changing circumstances, thus performing better in (or with) another culture. When you read the above examples, you probably recognized yourself in one perspective or the other. I now suggest that you take a moment to see the benefits of the opposite perspective. What does it add in terms of value? How does it impact the people working there and the firm's structure? What skills would you have to develop in order to succeed and be happy in the "opposite" cultural perspective, that is, not the one you were born and raised in?

In the diagram above, these 16 dimensions are separated so as to better compare cultures. In real life, however, they are interconnected, influencing one another. An individualistic culture is often more direct in the way it communicates while a collective culture tends to be more indirect. A future oriented culture is often also more action oriented whereas a present or past oriented culture is more focused on the notion of being. Clearly, these are mere generalizations. However, they come from years of research and – as such – can be regarded as tools allowing us to draw useful comparisons.

Develop your own cultural agility

As I wrote earlier, the first step is about self-awareness. Knowing what your preferences are and being curious about other cultures is a great start. There are many ways to develop your self-awareness; for instance, living, studying, or working in another culture. Also useful is asking for feedback on your behavior.

In my work supporting individuals, teams, and organizations I use the trademarked Individual Cultural Blueprint Indicator™, ICBI.[4] It measures one's own cultural preferences as well as gaps in comprehension of other cultures. The ICBI tool provides a framework for narrowing these gaps and promoting improved intercultural interaction. Individual reports from this assessment give a lot of information and

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4. The ICBI, Individual Cultural Blueprint Indicator is a digital cultural assessment that takes 20 minutes to fill in. The personal report is then sent to your email address. It covers your profile, a gap analysis towards the countries you chose, and a description of each one of the 16 dimensions. It can also serve as a great team development tool.

advice on how to strengthen cultural agility.

In this respect, it should be remembered that the stronger your preference for one side of the spectrum is, the more important this cultural dimension turns out to be for you. This dimension is then connected to your values and beliefs, of which we often happen not to be aware; hence the difficulty in changing them. Secondly, the bigger the gap between your preference and the comparing culture the more complicated it is to understand each other's perspectives.

If, instead, a cultural dimension is not so important to you, you see advantages in both approaches and are willing to change, we call these features 'negotiable'. If a dimension is negotiable to you, it means that you are ready to compromise, to try out different ways and learn a new behavior to be successful in meeting another culture. However, this is easier said than done; changing behavior is a process born of self-awareness and the intense desire to break old habits.

Then we have the so-called 'non-negotiable' dimensions, that is, those cultural preferences that are particularly important to us and to our identity. As they are connected to our strongest values and beliefs we usually hesitate to change them. The way forward in an intercultural situation is to build alliances. In other words, agreeing on how we want to work together based on sharing our preferences. No less important to this end are being curious and open about other people's preferences.

For further development and to go from theory to practice I would recommend hiring a coach. His or her guidance will help to deepen self-insights and be successful in behavioral change. The coach will serve as someone who can hold up a mirror to you and support you in your journey. "You always have a choice on how you react, and the first step is to become aware of how you react when you meet a person from another culture" says Julien S. Bourrelle, who has done very successful cultural work in Norway. His advice is to learn about our natural behavior and then challenge it. According to Bourrelle you have three different ways to relate to a different culture when you are abroad. You can **confront** that culture, holding that your way of living is the only right one. As a

consequence, you believe that the 'others' should change and adopt your beliefs. In most cases, this strategy fails, for the simple reason that the 'others' are so many. Another option is to **complain** about the others and what you find to be 'strange'. By complaining you isolate yourself and end up in a social bubble that strengthens your self-imposed segregation. The third chance is to **confirm** the other culture and see to what extent you are willing to adapt to it. This will give you the opportunity to truly benefit from the other culture. By observing and understanding you will learn and adapt, which is the basis for benefiting from diversity.

So, be curious and open your mind to what is different. Reflect on what benefits you can get from other perspectives. Ask and learn from other countries by talking about different approaches, beliefs, and values. Also, try to challenge yourself when living in another culture; it is a great opportunity for personal development that should not be wasted. In a different cultural setting, the starting point for a good relationship is always to treat others the way they want to be treated, not the way you want to be treated.

If you want to share your thoughts and ideas and talk further, please connect with me via LinkedIn or visit my website for more information about my work to build bridges between people and cultures.[5]

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5. https://www.linkedin.com/in/carolinelippers/ | www.carolinelippers.com
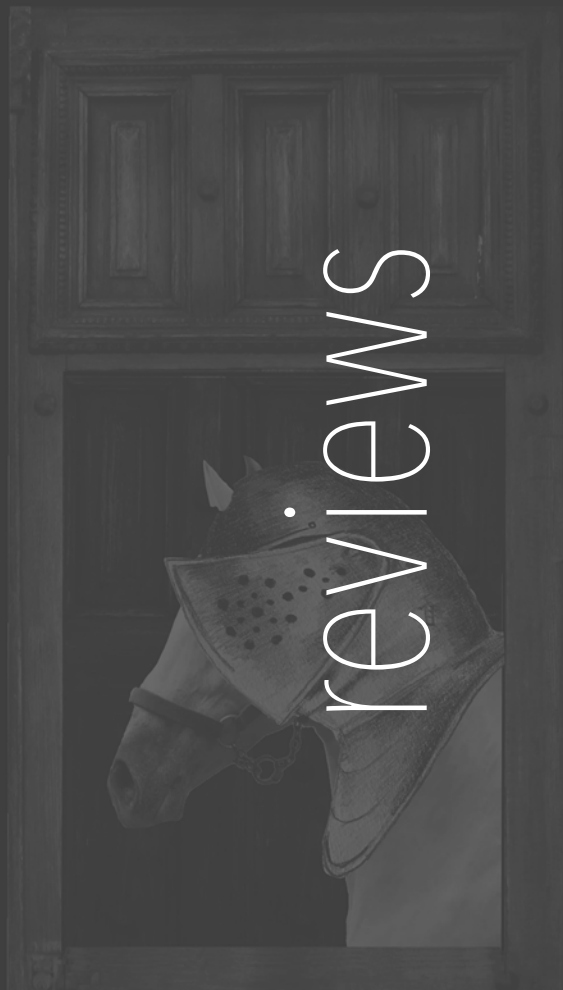
Johnny L. Bertolio
Controcanone. La letteratura delle donne dalle origini a oggi
Turin: Loescher Editore, 2022. ISBN 978-88-58-34476-7. €13,00
Review by Stefano Baldassarri

This is the kind of textbook that I wished my Italian literature professor had chosen for her class when I was in high school some forty years ago. Unfortunately, a manual like this did not exist back then. If so, I think I would have read it almost with as much interest and pleasure as I did in the last few weeks to write this review. The author is Johnny Bertolio, who holds a Master's Degree in classical studies from the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa and a Ph.D. in Italian literature from the University of Toronto. After finishing his studies in Canada, about five years ago, Bertolio started working for Loescher Editore, thus putting his knowledge in classical studies and comparative literature at the service of one among the oldest and most prestigious publishing houses in Italy. Luckily, his rich academic and international background shows in this book; I am glad to say that the effect is most positive for the readers. The latter, in this case, are mostly (but, indeed, not exclusively) Italian teenagers and their teachers, as this is a textbook conceived for Italian high schools. More specifically, *Controcanone* – which opens by reporting the seventeen goals making up the United Nations 2030 Agenda –[1] is designed for the so-called "licei", where the humanities still take center stage in their interdisciplin-

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1. This "global statement of purpose" is thus the first text in Bertolio's anthology or – if I may play with etymologies for a second – in his new 'legenda' (i.e., from Latin, something that must be read). I find it appropriate to list here, in a capsule form, the seventeen objectives that 193 UN member states intend to achieve in less than ten years from now: 1. Eliminate poverty 2. Erase hunger 3. Establish good health and well-being 4. Provide quality education 5. Enforce gender equality 6. Improve clean water and sanitation 7. Grow affordable and clean energy 8. Create decent work and economic growth 9. Increase industry, innovation, and infrastructure 10. Reduce inequality 11. Mobilize sustainable cities and communities 12. Influence responsible consumption and production 13. Organize climate action 14. Develop life below water 15. Advance life on earth 16. Guarantee peace, justice, and strong institutions 17. Build partnerships for these goals.

ary curriculum, which is established by the Italian Ministry of Education for the whole peninsula. This textbook is also designed to help students prepare for their "esame di maturità", that is, the final (or comprehensive) exams that they all must take at the end of their fifth year in high school, when they are either 18 or 19. As such, an editorial project like this can have a remarkable impact on Italian high school students, should many of their teachers decide to adopt it. I hope this is going to happen, for the reasons I wish to explain in the next few pages.

First off, I would like to emphasize that in Bertolio's case – as he makes clear in the preface to the book – "inclusivity" is inevitably paired with "skepticism"; that is, a critical attitude (which, far from a superficially polemical spirit, is synonymous with intelligence) to whatever choices editors make when they put together an anthology of texts. Bertolio is not trying to replace a traditional canon with another (supposedly original and, therefore, better) canon. Rather, he wants to stimulate his readers to consider what educational choices have been made in Italian schools for several decades in a row, understand the underlying criteria, and try to think of new ones. That is why (to quote from the one-page preface, entitled *Presentazione: canone e 'controcanone' letterario*) Bertolio sums up the contents of this anthology as follows: «[…] il volume presenta autrici e autori di solito esclusi dal canone, facilmente integrabili nella didattica tradizionale: un 'controcanone' al femminile dalle origini al Novecento […] con opere incentrate sull'esperienza della deportazione, dell'esilio e della migrazione e sulle declinazioni dell'alterità e della diversità» («[…] this volume presents female and male authors who are usually excluded from the canon, although they may be easily added to the traditional teaching curriculum: a female 'counter-canon' from the origins to the twentieth century […] with works focused on such experiences as deportation, exile, and migration and on all possible forms of otherness and diversity»).

Bertolio further illustrates his method and main goals in the closing paragraph of this short preface, where his philological training surfaces in the first statement (on the surprising survival of some of these documents): «Sono parole dure le loro, salvate, talvolta fortunosamente, dal silenzio a

cui furono condannate, e non smettono di interrogarci nel presente, quando ancora si vedono operanti le stesse dinamiche di potere del passato. Il *controcanone*, beninteso, mira non tanto a sostituirsi al canone, quanto a incoraggiare lo studio della letteratura e della storia dalla prospettiva dell'inclusività, dell'accoglienza, della variegatezza.[2] Non una norma uniformante, non una serie di capolavori geniali e intoccabili, bensì una sinfonia di parole tutte degne di essere ascoltate e, se necessario, ridiscusse» («Their words are harsh; they have been saved – sometimes fortuitously – from the silence to which they had been condemned and they don't stop asking us questions, in our present time, when we still see the same power dynamics at play as in the past. Clearly, the *counter-canon* does not aim at replacing the canon; rather, its goal is to promote the study of literature and history from the perspective of inclusivity, acceptance, and variedness. Not a levelling norm, therefore, or a series of unparalleled, untouchable masterpieces; rather, a symphony of words, every single one of them worthy of being listened to and, if necessary, reassessed»).

To pursue these objectives Bertolio resorts to a variety of means, thus proving to be proactively inclusive also for what concerns the students' cognitive approaches and the many learning tools offered by today's technology. The book (also available in digital format) is provided with QR codes in each chapter for multimedia activities to be done either in class, under the teacher's supervision, or individually by the students. Among the didactic materials accessible through QR codes are texts in their original language, which is not always Italian but sometimes – especially when dealing with medieval and Renaissance literature – Latin and regional dialects instead. Such is the case, for instance, with the first four texts: three are in Latin (St. Clare of Assisi's rules for her own religious order, Leonardo Bruni's suggestions on what books learned women should read, and Isotta Nogarola's letter to Pope Pius II supporting his call for a new crusade against the Turks) and one in Sardinian (an excerpt

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2. To distinguish it from "diversity" or "diversification" and because of its etymology, I chose to translate this rare Italian noun as "variedness" in English.

from Eleonora of Arborea's legal code); all of these sources date from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century.

Ch. 2 (*Il Quattrocento*) tackles one of the time periods that a consummate philologist like Bertolio knows best, having published on such authors as the famous humanist Leonardo Bruni.[3] The later Middle Ages and the early Renaissance saw the beginning of the so-called *querelle des femmes* (the "woman question"), with works like Giovanni Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* (*Famous Women*) and Christine de Pizan's *La cité des dames* (*The Book of the City of Ladies*) paving the way for it.[4] This section of Bertolio's book plays a crucial role, as the debate he assesses here lasted several centuries and laid the foundations for an approach to the social status and the potential of women that would continue well into the modern era. Among other famous humanists, Bruni is mentioned (pp. 24-25) for his *De studiis et litteris* (*The Study of Literature*), the educational treatise that around 1424 he dedicated to Battista di Montefeltro, duke Galeazzo Malatesta's wife. As said above, an excerpt of this text is made available in Latin to the readers, who can access it by using the QR code next to its title on p. 26, while the corresponding Italian translation is provided in the book.[5] As for female writers in this section, Bertolio rightly connects Isotta Nogarola's pioneering opus with the development of pro-feminist humanism in the XVI century thanks to the expansion of the book market in Italy. The latter phenomenon was primarily due to the invention of the printing press and the much wider use of the vernacular language in literature. In Bertolio's anthology this early modern trend stands out when he discusses the works of such authors as Moderata Fonte and Lucrezia Marinelli (pp. 57-66). Significantly, in recent times these two Venetian

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3. See, for instance, his excellent critical edition of Bruni's seminal treatise on translation theory and practice entitled *De interpretatione recta* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2020).

4. Bertolio duly devotes a section to Christine de Pizan (1364-1429), despite her having written most of her works in French. As is well known, Christine was born into a distinguished Italian family; when only five years old, she moved to France, spending the rest of her life there.

5. In this case, too, Bertolio proves to be a careful editor as he uses Paolo Viti's precise Italian translation in the latter's anthology of Bruni's writings entitled *Opere letterarie e politiche* (Turin: UTET, 1996, with facing Latin original) instead of other – less accurate – versions.

writers have attracted more attention from English-speaking than Italian scholars.[6] In this case too Bertolio's anthology may help both students and professors (also at university level) to understand the value of authors whose writings are often much more insightful and stimulating than one may think at first.

Another prominent genre in the first chapters of Bertolio's anthology is religious literature. This is far from surprising, knowing what kind of education was reserved for women well into the XIX century. To the readers' relief, Bertolio manages to make this kind of literary production interesting by contextualizing it properly. For instance, when quoting and commenting on poems by such authors as Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Antonia Giannotti or Vittoria Colonna he connects those writings with the culture of their time. To this purpose, Bertolio stresses links between these writers' works on one hand and art, folklore, and social history on the other. His strategy shows also in the many images (miniatures, paintings, frescoes, and portraits) surrounding the texts as well as in the exercises that students are expected to do after each reading.

Bertolio applies the same careful contextualization to the homoerotic literature that accompanied the spread of Petrarchism throughout Europe in the XVI century and the reactions to it, which included pornographic poetry and prose by such authors as Pietro Aretino (1492-1556). When discussing female writers, though, Bertolio duly emphasizes another important feature: how those texts were collected, preserved, and – sometimes – published. A classical philologist by training, Bertolio knows that the first issue an editor should consider is why and how any given text has come down to us. So-called "paratexts" are a key factor to understanding this; Bertolio makes his readers aware of their importance on page 44 in a short yet most informative paragraph significantly entitled *Una circolazione variegata* (*A Varied Circulation*), discussing – among other things – Renaissance prefaces addressed to female patrons.

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6. See, for instance, the section (Chapter 3) on these two writers in Meredith K. Ray's monograph *Daughters of Alchemy. Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA – London: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 73-105 and the bibliography reported therein.

As one would expect, the Counter-Reformation, the 'scientific revolution', and the *commedia dell'arte* make up the backdrop to the chapter (pp. 76-91) on the Italian *Seicento* (the seventeenth century). All these topics perfectly fit the scholarly interests and the editorial projects of the north American academia that Bertolio frequented from 2012 to 2017. In those years he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto, studying and collaborating with such scholars as Konrad Eisenbichler and Virginia Cox (both internationally acknowledged as leading authorities in early modern gender studies). As for that Canadian university's press, suffice here to recall the following series, where one can find a good number of the writers and all the genres discussed in Bertolio's *Controcanone*: Emilio Goggio Publication Series, Lorenzo Da Ponte Italian Library, Renaissance Society of America Reprint Text Series, and Toronto Italian Studies. Clearly, in making this textbook Bertolio has also relied on several editorial series (either digital or printed ones) and anthologies, which – from at least the 1980s onwards – have contributed to reshaping our perception of the "Western canon". I am alluding, for instance, to *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, The Victorian Web, and «The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe». Launched in 1996 and originally under the aegis of The University of Chicago Press, this series has had a rather complex publishing history; from Chicago it "migrated" to the Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies (University of Toronto), the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and eventually Iter Press. Divided into no fewer than nine categories depending on the language in which the original text was written,[7] the latest volumes in the Italian series provide editions (with a facing English translation) of works by the Venetian nun Arcangela Tarabotti (1604-1652). In his anthology, Bertolio devotes considerable attention to Tarabotti, discussing her and publishing an excerpt from her *Monastic Life as Inferno* on pp. 77-83.

Tarabotti's unfortunate destiny makes all Italian readers think of

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7. That is, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese. For the complete catalogue see https://othervoiceineme.com/

"la monaca di Monza" (the nun of Monza), that is, one of the best-known characters from Alessandro Manzoni's masterpiece *I promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*). Fully aware of this, Bertolio highlights such similarities in a specific section within this chapter. The long-lasting practice of forcing young women to take monastic vows thus serves as a sad yet fitting topic to usher in the following century, that is, *Il Settecento*. Both this chapter and the one immediately after it (*L'Ottocento*) discuss, at length, Italian women's increasing involvement in politics, that is, their contribution to the movement known as "Risorgimento," which culminated in the unification of the peninsula under the royal house of Savoy in 1861. After quoting and commenting on a long passage by Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel (1752-1799) in the section on the short-lived Neapolitan republic at the end of the XVIII century, Bertolio starts the following chapter by stressing the crucial role that women played in the Risorgimento. His first paragraph reads as follows (p. 114): «La presenza delle donne nelle vicende dell'Unità nazionale è troppo spesso trascurata, a fronte di un resoconto all'insegna degli eroi. La triade Cavour-Mazzini-Garibaldi, che si è imposta nonostante le profonde divergenze, ha finito per oscurare le tante anime del Risorgimento» («The presence of women in the events that led to Italy's unification is too often neglected, to the advantage of a narrative focused on male heroes. Eventually, the Cavour-Mazzini-Garibaldi triumvirate – largely accepted despite the deep contrasts among them – has overshadowed the many other features that made the Risorgimento possible»). In the same page Bertolio discusses the creation – during the so-called "century of the bourgeoisie" – of a wider book market that catered to the needs of an increasing female readership. This was also linked to another growing phenomenon at the time, which Bertolio assesses in this same chapter on the Ottocento: literary salons. Often hosted by distinguished ladies, literary salons had started playing a relevant cultural role in the previous century, when the Enlightenment took center stage, that is, from the 1770s onwards. In Italy, one of the first "salotti letterari" was the one that Isabella Teotochi (1760-1836) started hosting in Venice in 1782. Local governments often (and with good reason) considered Italian literary salons hotbeds for political dissent. This

happened to be true especially during the Napoleonic Wars. In regard to literature, Bertolio properly emphasizes the most significant publications that stemmed from those gatherings of intellectuals, including newspapers, journals, and books such as Teotochi's *Ritratti*; a series of biographical sketches of renowned – and often politically engaged – figures who frequented Teotochi's literary salon, those "portraits" provided informative and semi-popular accounts of the life and works of (among others) Vittorio Alfieri, George Byron, Antonio Canova, and Ugo Foscolo, upholding them as role models to the readers. Even more directly involved in the Italian Risorgimento was Cristina Trivulzio, princess of Belgioioso (1808-1871), who authored writings in both Italian and French. A perfect example of those patriotic heroines usually overlooked by scholars that Bertolio alludes to in the opening paragraph of this chapter cited above, in 1830 Trivulzio fled to France to avoid being imprisoned by the Austrian authorities ruling over Lombardy and the Veneto. In Paris she made a living as a journalist, became an internationally renowned advocate of Italy's independence, and befriended a host of celebrities, including Balzac, Chopin, La Fayette, and Thiers. Once back in Italy, she participated in the major insurrection known as "Le cinque giornate di Milano" ("The Five Days of Milan", March 18-22, 1848); a year later, Trivulzio organized medical support for the soldiers of the short-lived Roman republic who were being attacked by the pro-papal French army. The passage that Bertolio excerpts in this chapter (p. 120) is taken from Trivulzio's plea to her fellow-citizens (entitled *Ai suoi concittadini*) that she penned during the Milanese 1848 revolt, urging them to support a constitutional monarchy, though fully aware that a democracy would be – ideally speaking – the best form of government. If the whole nation – she writes – is not well-educated and imbued with certain virtuous ideals, a true republic cannot be realized; and, she must admit, mid-nineteenth century Italy is still far from attaining that goal.

        Understandably, the interdisciplinary character of Bertolio's anthology becomes even more overt in this and the following chapters (7-9), which are entitled *Il Novecento* (*The Twentieth Century*, pp. 138-189), *Percorsi tematici: storie di deportazioni e di migrazioni* (*Reading by Topic: Stories of*

Deportation and Migration, pp. 190-219), and *Percorsi tematici: variegatezza e inclusività* (*Reading by Topic: Variedness and Inclusivity*, pp. 220-250, with a closing section on suggested movies and songs), respectively. Photographs of the authors being cited punctuate the pages, alongside pictures of their book covers, some of which became either best-sellers or long-sellers, even inspiring – in the case of novels – movies based on their plots. The section entitled *Storie di deportazioni e di migrazioni* discusses texts by concentration camp survivors, Italians who were born of immigrant parents (e.g., Igiaba Scego, b. Rome 1974) or authors who migrated to Italy (e.g., Amara Lakhous, b. Algiers 1970). The one following it (*Variegatezza e inclusività*) focuses on queer studies (citing, among other texts, two poems by Giovanna Cristina Vivinetto) and social forms of marginalization in recent Italian history; the latter include mental asylums, which provide the setting of writings – either in prose or verse – by authors like Italo Calvino, Alda Merini, Amelia Rosselli, Mario Tobino, and Sebastiano Vassalli.

The authors cited in the paragraph above show how up to date Bertolio's anthology is, featuring writers (like Vivinetto) who were born in the 1990s. More importantly, Bertolio's innovative approach relies on the seminal work of such Italian scholars and writers as Franco Buffoni. It is hard to find a "label" to classify Buffoni; born in Gallarate (near Varese) in 1948, Buffoni is a poet, an essayist, a translator, a literary critic, a former university professor (after serving for many years as dean of the Comparative Literature Department at the Università di Cassino), and the founder of a journal («Testo a Fronte») that since the late 1970s has stood out as a "beacon" – so to speak– of translation theory and practice in Italy. Probably, he is one of the few people on the Italian peninsula today who deserves to be called "intellectual" (also in the original, militant sense of this word). Among his most recent publications is a volume on famous Italian authors (that is, famous enough to make up the nation's literary canon) whose biographies have been traditionally told in such a way as to hide or neglect their homosexuality.[8] We should all be grateful to coura-

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8. See F. Buffoni, *Silvia è un anagramma. Per giustizia biografica* (Milan: Marcos y Marcos, 2020).

geous, intelligent, and knowledgeable authors like Buffoni for paving the way to what Bertolio and other Italian colleagues are doing today. Thanks to them it is now possible to look at this country's history, literature and – more generally – its culture from a different perspective, thus promoting a more inclusive and respectful society. Yet, I wish to stress one more time, in this closing paragraph, both the originality and the value of Bertolio's *Controcanone*. His book is accurate, convincing, and sensitive (that is, aware of all the nuances making up the texts he cites and comments on) because it is the product of a long, sincere, and zealous commitment. His previous anthology (that would also be a perfect text to review for this issue of *Beyond* on diversity, equity, and inclusion)[9] made another significant step in this direction, that is, the goal that – in my opinion – all educators today should pursue, wherever they work, either at home or abroad, from kindergarten to university. This would finally make it normal for everyone – students and teachers alike – to welcome and appreciate, as a (gay) poet once wrote, «all things counter, original, spare, strange».[10]

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9. See J.L. Bertolio, *Le vie dorate: un'altra letteratura italiana da san Francesco a Igiaba Scego* (Turin: Loescher Editore, 2021). Toward the publication of this textbook Bertolio was awarded the 2021 Renaissance Society of America Grant in Support of Innovative Teaching of Renaissance Studies to High School Students.

10. Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Pied Beauty*.

Beyond

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