

The translation of American radical feminist literature in Italy.
The case of *Donne è bello*.

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Signature:

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the role played by the translation process in the diffusion of some North American radical feminist concepts in Italy and, in particular, focuses on *Donne è bello*, a volume which has been selected as a case study because of the particularly important role it played within the Italian feminist movement and also because of the particular circumstances of its creation.

The introduction (chapter one) states the research questions and briefly explains the reasons that led to the focus on this specific volume. Chapter two focuses on the methodology adopted, which was inspired by Toury's descriptive translation analysis but was also adapted to the needs and characteristics of this research. Chapter three provides some basic historical information regarding the Italian and North American feminist movements. Particular attention is devoted to the second wave of feminism in both countries and to the characteristics that they had in common. Subsequently, chapter four focuses on the *Anabasi* movement and on the volume *Donne è bello*, which constitutes the focus of this research. This chapter also provides some unpublished information about the *Anabasi* collective and about *Donne è bello* provided by Serena Castaldi, the founder of this group. The second half of this thesis (chapters five, six and seven) concerns the textual analysis of some features of *Donne è bello* in order to reconstruct the translation process and assess the reception of the translation by Italian readers. In particular, the aspects analysed include the sexual revolution, the role traditionally played by women in society and the practice of consciousness-raising, which had great importance for Italian feminists. Finally, chapter eight summarizes the results of the research and provides answers to the research questions raised in the introduction.

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1. Introduction

This research aims to study the role played by translation in the diffusion of the North-American radical feminist message in Italy. In particular, the case study selected for this analysis is *Donne è bello*, a volume that had a great influence in the early 70s. Translations of foreign feminist works were particularly popular in the 70s because, as Passerini explains “Gli editori si resero conto del fatto che le donne costituivano un mercato importante anche per i libri fortemente radicali” (Passerini 2005: 183). In particular, Passerini points out that in the early 70s, important books by Eva Figes, Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, Juliet Mitchell and Germaine Greer were translated into Italian, and considers this tendency a consequence of the important works (such as *The Second Sex*, which was translated into Italian in 1961 and *The Feminine Mystique* translated in 1968) translated into Italian in the 60s, because they contributed to direct and support women in the creation of a feminist movement in Italy (Passerini 2005: 194).

The influence of translation on the development of Italian feminist thought, however, was not limited to the 60s and early 70s. In fact, both Guerra, and Bono and Kemp (Guerra 2005: 54; Bono and Kemp 1991: 8) have stressed the great importance of the translation of Irigaray’s work *Speculum* by Luisa Muraro in 1975, but also of Rich’s *Of Woman Born* in 1977 for the development of Italian feminist thought, and Bono and Kemp also underlined the fact that both works were translated into Italian only one year after their publication in their respective countries. This interest in foreign texts might be considered a symptom of provincialism but, actually, as underlined by Bono and Kemp, ideas from foreign countries have always been further developed in Italy in relation to its culture and with the Italian social and political agenda (Bono and Kemp 1991: 8). In fact, this attention to the local priorities is evident in the strategies adopted in the translation of *Donne è bello*, and they will be further examined in chapters five, six and seven. This attitude is evident also in the way in which Italian women developed their relationships. In fact, while the early 70s were characterized by a strong interest in some of the topics of the American radical movement, from the mid-70s, Italian feminists established an intense relationship with some French feminists and groups that helped them to develop some topics that had already arisen within the Italian feminist movement and that

became the trademark of Italian feminist thought. According to Guerra, the meetings between Italian and French feminists in La Tranche-sur-Mer and in Vieux-Villez in 1972 were particularly important, because Italian feminists met the group *Psychanalyse et Politique* and started to develop an interest in psychoanalysis, which helped them to deepen the analysis of the self that they were already carrying out in their consciousness-raising groups (Guerra 2005: 51-52). This relationship, in particular, deeply influenced the activity of the women of Milan's *Libreria delle Donne*, who in 1974 published an edition of their publication *Sottosopra* focused on psychoanalysis, named "Pratica dell'inconscio e movimento delle donne". Similarly, the women of the *Libreria* greatly contributed to the success that Irigaray's thought achieved in Italy after the translation of *Speculum* into Italian, and Irigaray helped Italian women to further develop Lonzi's notion of "differenza sessuale" and: "to overcome a 'static separatism' – the idea of a separate women's world as a haven of peace – in favour of a 'dynamic separatism', at play in the social arena" (Bono and Kemp 1991: 12). However, although not as deeply as Irigaray, Adrienne Rich also inspired the women of the *Libreria* and helped them to develop the idea of "separatism". Therefore, although some critiques have underlined the similarities of French and Italian feminist thought evident in the work of important scholars such as Luisa Muraro, Teresa de Lauretis and Adriana Cavarero (Parati and West 2002: 16), the attitude of Italian feminists is more correctly described by Bono and Kemp as a 'mix and match' of ideas from different sources that helped them to develop their own understanding of the subject (Bono and Kemp 1991: 13).

This focus of this thesis is *Donne è bello*, a volume constituted of a selection of texts published in 1972 by the Milanese collective *Anabasi*. Although a few texts are of Italian provenance, the majority of these texts (thirty-eight out of forty-nine) are translations of texts written in English by famous American radical feminists, which were collected and translated into Italian by Serena Castaldi, the founder of the *Anabasi* collective. *Donne è bello* shows very evidently the influence played by US feminism in Italy. Apart from the provenance of the texts, another important element that shows the influence of American feminism emerges from the analysis of the main topics discussed in *Donne è bello* that, as underlined by Sapegno (see page 90), are typical of the American radical feminist movement. In fact, as will be explained in more detail in chapter four, most of these American texts were sourced from *Notes From the Second Year*, an important collection of feminist texts

belonging to the radical strand of American feminism, and the reasons behind this very specific choice will occupy an important position in this research.

The reason why *Donne è bello* has been selected as the focus of this thesis is the particularly important role it played in the development of Italian feminism. In fact, it belongs to a very specific group of translations that Passerini calls “traduzioni di movimento” to stress the fact that they were planned and carried out by women belonging to the feminist movement and aimed at all the members of the many feminist groups and collectives spread throughout Italy. The main works belonging to this group are, in her opinion, *Per un movimento politico di liberazione della donna* by Lidia Menapace, the first edition of the periodical by the members of the Women’s Bookshop of Milan *Sottosopra*, and *Donne è bello*, by the *Anabasi* women. Passerini explains that the volume by Menapace was composed of translations from different languages, but the translations of texts by US feminists had a more prominent role,¹ and that the first *Sottosopra* is mostly composed of accounts of the experiences of the Italian groups, but there are also thirty pages of translations and reviews and, again, half of the material present is from the United States (Passerini 2005: 184).²

Some other translations carried out by Italian feminist groups (but not mentioned by Passerini) are *Note*, the supplement to a periodical by the *CR* (or *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie*) group, a Turinese collective (more information will be provided on page 57), which provided the left wing party with translations of material from American underground magazines and other publications related to the New Left. Another important translation carried out by a Turinese collective is *Noi e il nostro corpo*, the Italian edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* by the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective (see page 57). If we consider the provenance of the texts translated in the early 70s it is evident that the large number of translations of American texts is not accidental but, as pointed out by Passerini, it proves that from 1969 Italian feminists established a very important relationship with US feminists that contributed to the establishment of a feminist movement in Italy.

The translations carried out by feminist groups played a particularly important role in Italian society because they were supposed to support the activities of the feminist

¹ Passerini points out that one text was translated from German, four from French, three from Spanish, six texts are essays by women from different nationalities regarding women’s history and eight are by feminists from the United States.

² In particular, this edition of *Sottosopra* contains one translation from France, two from Great Britain and three from the United States.

collectives and to spur women's creativity. In fact, Italian women selected the texts to translate by paying particular attention to the issues that they considered more relevant to Italian women, and since this research will focus on the impact of translation on society, it is evidently important to study a work that was specifically designed to influence Italian women.

Donne è bello has been selected as the focus of this research because it occupies a special position in the "traduzioni di movimento" since it is the only volume³ entirely composed of texts selected, translated and edited independently by a feminist collective⁴ with the purpose of supporting the activities of other feminist groups. Therefore, by analyzing the translation strategies and the editorial choices of the *Anabasi* members we will obtain a deeper understanding of the issues that Italian feminists considered important and, therefore, we will deepen our knowledge of the Italian feminist movement.

Since the purpose of the volume and the process that led women to its creation are focal for this research, these have been investigated not only by means of the secondary literature on this topic but also by interviews with the translator and founder of the *Anabasi* group and other members who have contributed to this research with important unpublished information on this topic.

Moreover, the context for the volume's reception is fundamental to our understanding of its role as translation. In this particular case, Italian society was characterized by a great variety of political extra-parliamentary groups and party, which were very popular and deeply influenced the students and workers protests that took place in the late 60s and 70s. Of course, this political background had an influence also on Italian feminists, and in this research we will also analyze its presence in *Donne è bello*.

Finally, *Donne è bello* is important not only because of the particular circumstances of its creation, but also because its influence on the Italian feminist movement has been recognized by important researchers in this field, such as Passerini (2005: 184) and Sapegno (1989: 99). However, although translations (and those in *Donne è bello* in particular) were of vital importance for the development of

³ With the exception of the volume by Menapace, the translations were published in magazines or periodicals and never formed a volume with a clear structure and purpose.

⁴ In fact, the volume by Menapace was not created by a group of women but only by herself and, hence, it reflected her personal views and stands.

the Italian feminist movement, the role of translation in the spread of radical feminist ideas has never been studied. In fact, Passerini stated the need to employ new methodologies to the study of topics such as the international relationships of the Italian feminist movement and the reception of the translations carried out by Italian feminists (Passerini 2005: 183-184). This research will also provide an answer to Passerini's questions by means of a methodology based on translation analysis.

This work aims to achieve a better understanding of the influence of the translation strategies adopted by the translator in the spread of American radical feminist ideas. This will be achieved by means of analysis of the translation process, which will allow us to understand how society influenced the translator's actions, to assess the main goals that the translator intended to achieve, to determine the reception of these texts and to investigate how it has been influenced by the translation strategies. Finally, we will also study the position of the volume within the Italian feminist movement.

As far as translation analysis is concerned, this thesis will study a selection of features of several translations from *Donne è bello* by means of a methodology based on a descriptive and target oriented approach (that will be explained in depth in the next chapter). The descriptive approach will allow us to observe the translation strategies without formulating rules or judgments (prescriptive approach), but simply by describing what can be observed and by studying the impact of translation on Italian history and culture. The target-oriented approach will allow us to focus our analysis on the culture in which this phenomenon has taken place, in order to understand the implications of Italian culture on the translation strategies and to assess the reception of the translated texts. Finally, polysystem theory will allow us to study the role played by the target texts in the Italian feminist movement.

The chapters of translation analysis will be preceded by an historical overview of the American and Italian radical feminist movement in the early 70s, focusing on the differences and similarities of these movements, and by a section on the *Anabasi* group and *Donne è bello*. The historical contextualization will provide an important background that will support the translation analysis by showing how the history of feminism influenced the translations. The section on the *Anabasi* group and *Donne è bello* will explain the history of the group and the purpose of the volume, which had a strong influence on the translation strategies adopted by the translator.

The recurring features constituting the focus of our analysis pertain to three main topics: sexual revolution, the most common American female characters and stereotypes, and consciousness-raising. These three areas have been selected because they constitute important elements “imported” from American radical feminism, because they are very common in several texts present in the volume and because they most evidently show the difficulties encountered by the translator.

In particular, chapters five and six will mainly focus on the analysis of a selection of textual features that can be found in several texts in *Donne è bello*. In these two chapters the analysis will focus on the strategies adopted by the translator in order to understand the reasons behind them and to assess the reception of the target texts. This will be carried out by means of a comparison with the target literature, which in this case is composed of a selection of feminist publications common in the early 70s and, when possible, by comparing Castaldi’s translations with other versions of the same texts circulating in feminist collectives. While these two chapters will deal with textual features, chapter seven will mainly focus on two important texts about consciousness-raising in order to understand the purpose behind the strategy applied and to assess its effect on the target readers. In this case, the reaction will mainly be assessed by means of the large amount of information present in secondary sources. Because of the important link between the translator and the society in which she operates, each of these chapters will be preceded by an historical excursus relating to the topics discussed in the chapter.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this research is innovative in many different respects. First of all, it takes into consideration the influence of translation on the Italian feminist movement, an important aspect of Italian feminism that, as pointed out by Passerini, historical research has never studied in depth. Secondly, this research will be carried out using a method that will allow us to obtain new insights into the Italian feminist movement in the early 70s. In fact, translation analysis is not an end in itself, but intends to obtain a deeper understanding of society. Therefore, the original aspects of the Italian feminist movement constituting the purpose of this research will provide a new perspective and therefore make a great contribution to the field, which has been investigated so far only by historians and sociologists.

2. Methodology

The following section will focus on the methodology and the approach that will be adopted in this research. As already explained in the previous chapter, this research focuses on the analysis of a selection of translations published in *Donne è bello* and aims to shed some light on the relationships between those translations and Italian society by analysing the translator's choices and the reception of the texts. This chapter will describe the characteristics of the descriptive approach to translation research, explain the reasons why it has been adopted and show how it has been adapted to this project. This research will also take advantage of theory developed by non-descriptivist researchers. In fact, some of their approaches, although not typically regarded as compatible with the descriptive approach, can actually help to investigate some aspects of the texts related to the research questions more thoroughly. The way in which they will be taken into consideration for this research will be explained in this chapter.

First of all it is necessary to consider why it is important to study Italian feminist texts by means of an approach based on translation studies. As already pointed out in the introduction, in the 70s Italian feminists had close connections with the international (especially North American and French) feminist groups, and the most important testimony of this network is the way in which texts travelled. As Bracke points out:

A great deal of power lies in the hands of the translator: those who translated (linguistically and culturally) and recontextualised what they encountered abroad. The process of local recontextualisation, reinterpretation and appropriation – in other words, the politics of local reception – is of central importance. Non-Italian texts and encounters were used strategically and eclectically (Bracke 2014: 18).

In fact, by means of the selection and the adaptation of the texts, Italian feminists: “turned foreign texts and events into tools that might speak to their own, immediate situation, thereby, to some degree, divorcing them from their original context” (Bracke 2014: 18). It is evident that translators had a very precise political agenda in mind that can be discovered only by means of an analysis of the texts translated and

of the translation strategies adopted. Therefore, by analyzing *Donne è bello* by means of a translation studies approach we will add very important insights to knowledge. The methodology used in this research is specifically tailored to the purpose of exploring the political ideas and the ideology of the early Italian second-wave feminist movement.

This research will be carried out through a descriptive approach. This was first theorized in the 60s by an American researcher based in the Netherlands, James Holmes,⁵ whose contribution according to both Hermans (Hermans 1999: 25) and Toury (Toury 2012: 3) must be considered particularly important. In fact, in his famous essay “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”⁶ he explained the reasons why translation studies should not only provide guidelines for translators (since this was the most popular approach at that time), but also focused on the description of existing translations (Hermans 1999: 28-29). Moreover, Holmes, together with Gideon Toury and Itamar Even-Zohar, is one of the main contributors to the “descriptive paradigm” of Translation Studies, consisting of an innovative approach to the study of translation and, as Hermans remarks (Hermans 1999: 35-36), including a strong critique of the traditional approach, which mainly aimed at providing translators with some guidelines able to help them to provide “adequate” translations. “Descriptivists” also reacted against the “negative heuristic”, that is, the habit of judging existing translations on the basis of criteria such as “accuracy” (Hermans 1999: 17-19). The descriptivist approach aims to study existing translations and their related secondary sources in order to achieve deeper knowledge of the impact of translation in various periods of history (Hermans 1999: 35-36).

Several models of analysis have been developed on the basis of this new approach. Particularly important for this research will be Gideon Toury’s *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, which was first published in 1995 on the basis of his previous work *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, and reprinted in 2012.⁷ The

⁵ More information about the history of descriptive translation studies is provided by Hermans in Hermans, Theo. 1999. *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained*, (Manchester: St Jerome), pp. 11-12.

⁶ Holmes, James. 1972. *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies* (Amsterdam: Rodopi), pp. 67-80.

⁷ The version used for this research is mainly the most recent one.

main characteristics of his method, the reasons why it is considered suitable for this research and how it will be used are described below.

Toury's theory is based on Holmes' map of the discipline, which divides the discipline into two different parts: "pure" and "applied". For this research the only part that will be taken into consideration is "pure", which is composed of two sections: a "theoretical" and a "descriptive" branch. According to Toury, the results of each study conducted in the field of Translation Studies always have an effect on the theory that researchers adopt, because: "they contribute to the verification or refutation of general hypotheses, and to their modification in particular" (Toury 2012: 8). Toury also stresses the importance of the descriptive branch, which consists of three sections: function, process and product oriented. The function-oriented division aims to investigate the translation's position within its target culture, while the process-oriented element focuses on the process of translation and the product-oriented section studies the features characterizing the translation and its relationship with the source text (Toury 2012: 5). Toury explains that these three functions are closely related: the translator's need to fulfil a certain gap in his culture determines the choice of the material to translate and therefore also the strategies to adopt (Toury 2012: 7). Moreover, Toury strongly stresses the importance of the "function" over the other two divisions of DTS (Descriptive Translation Studies), and explains that it should have "at least *logical* priority" over the other sections (Toury 2012: 7-8). In fact, Toury shows that translators work in order to fill a very specific gap in their culture, and this need governs all the choices they make during the process of translation. Toury's point of view regarding the role played by these three divisions coincides with the approach that will be adopted in this research. The relationships between process, product and function have great importance for this research and will be carefully studied in the three chapters dedicated to textual analysis.

Particular attention will be devoted to function, to which Toury assigns priority. The reason why it is so important is effectively explained by Hermans: "Without taking account of the function which the translation is meant to serve or the problem it is trying to solve, the translator's choices appear whimsical, or pointless, or wholly idiosyncratic" (Hermans 1999: 39). In this research, the function of the translations will be assessed by considering the intentions expressed by the translator during her interview and in the editorial, by analysing the main topics present in the translations and in feminist literature in the 70s and by evaluating the textual and linguistic make

up of the text. Another important way to assess the function of a translation is by studying the style selected by the translator. This will be carried out on the basis of Nord's distinctions between "documentary" and "instrumental" translations (Nord 1997: 47-52). Although Nord's theory pertains to the functionalist current, which has a purpose very different from that of descriptivism, in this case Nord's distinctions will be very useful for this research because they will further support the assessment of the translation's purpose, which plays a great role in this research.

First of all, it is necessary to investigate the status of the texts to be studied. This is possible owing to at least three postulates: the source-text, the transfer and the relationship postulates (Touy 2012: 29-30). According to these postulates if there is a translation there must also be a source text, the creation of the target text must have involved a transfer of information and there must be a relationship between these texts (Touy 2012: 31). Subsequently, the researcher should identify the assumed source text and proceed to the comparison: some segments of the target text should be compared with the assumed source text in order to establish the relationship between these texts or elements. For Touy this is just a preliminary phase that will lead to the assessment of the concept of "translation underlying the text as a whole", which will take place through the concept of a translation's equivalence, a key concept to which Touy gives a new meaning. In fact, traditionally, "equivalence" was the relationship of successful representation between target and source texts, which replaced the notion of "faithful" and, as explained by Catford, it served as a principle to judge the quality of a translation: "The central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence."⁸ Touy gave a new meaning to this key term, which became a postulate that automatically follows when a text is considered a translation by the target system: "A descriptive study would always proceed from the assumption that equivalence exists between an assumed translation and a text assumed to be its source" (Touy 2012: 113). This important change to the meaning of "equivalence", one of the basic concepts of translation studies, has triggered much criticism. In particular, Hermans points out that the idea of "equal value" conveyed by this term

⁸ The quotation from John Catford's *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* is quoted by Snell-Hornby, Mary. 1988/1995. *Translation Studies: an integrated approach* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company), p. 15.

clashes with all those cases (especially in the fields of postcolonial studies and gender studies) in which the power relationship between the position of the author and that of the translator is very evident (Hermans 1999: 97-98). Moreover, the concept of “equivalence” is deeply embedded in our culture because of its relationship with the role of the “faithful” translator, who produces a text that is supposed to be only a mere reproduction of the original text. Therefore, considering that “cultures construe translation as an ideological category” (Hermans 1999: 98) and that the concept of “equivalence” is part of that construction, such a radical transformation of this key term does not correspond with the characteristics that society still assigns to a translation.

A very important characteristic of Toury’s model is its being “target oriented”, which means that it is focused on the translation, and that all the considerations regarding the analysis of the translation process should start from what can be observed in the target text. Toury justifies his approach by highlighting the important set of relationships between a translation and the target culture. First of all, a translation belongs to the target culture, and while it will never have any contact with the source text or culture, it will influence the target culture. Moreover, even the reason why texts are translated is related to need for a certain cultural debate within the target culture (as explained also by Even-Zohar in his essay “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem”) (Toury 2012: 20-22). For these reasons, Toury states that it is important to start the analysis of the relationship between target and source texts from the translation, although this does not mean that analysis of the source text should be neglected, or that exceptions to this method cannot be allowed (Toury 2012: 31).

The main reason why Toury’s method will be used in this research is its focus on the target culture, which is the most convenient choice for research focusing on the analysis of a target text. In fact, as Hermans powerfully explained: “Looking for answers to the question *why* translations turn out as they do means inquiring into their function, or their intended function. As a rule, this also means starting the investigation at the receiving end, the target pole” (Hermans 1999: 39). Moreover, a target-oriented approach allows us to study a translation without considering it a mere reproduction of another text. Finally, by analysing the target text first it will be easier to understand the point of view of Italian readers and to detect those elements that they might consider difficult to understand.

Another important reason why it is convenient to start this analysis from the translation is related to the availability of the source texts. In fact, while *Donne è bello* is available in some Italian archives, the sources of the originals are not clearly indicated in the table of contents (only the names of the authors are known) and, because of the great amount of feminist material published in the United States in the early 70s, it is in some cases very difficult to locate the source texts.⁹ The advantage of Toury's method in this case lies in the possibility of studying these texts simply on the basis of the three postulates, which are all grounded in the position of the target text in the receiving culture and do not provide any proof of the real existence of the source text (Toury 2012: 28-31). Therefore, this method allows us to include in this analysis even those translations whose source texts are unknown because, since the target audience has considered them as translations, they have somehow influenced the target culture and it is not necessary to analyse the source text in addition.

As far as the basis of the comparative analysis is concerned, the most relevant suggestion provided by Toury on how to define the characteristics and the length of the unit to analyse is: "whatever units are chosen would be relevant to the operations which would then be performed on them" (Toury 2012: 116). This means that the choice of the features to analyse depends solely on the purpose of the research. Then, he explains that although the researcher should start the comparison from the target text and then proceed to the original text, it is also important for the two units to "be defined simultaneously, **determining each other**". (Toury 2012: 117) As far as the specific characteristics of these units are concerned, Toury explains that they do not need to have any prerequisites, but that simply: "beyond the boundaries of a target segment no leftovers of the 'solution' to a certain 'problem', posed by a corresponding segment of the SL text, will be present" (Toury 2012: 117). In order to explain Toury's rather cryptic concepts of "problem", "solution" and "leftover" an example of a coupled pair is provided: in the Italian translation of "Freedom is a Long Time Comin'" we find the expression "un tipo vivace e in gamba", which is the translation (the "solution") of "hip groovy chick" ("the problem"). The Italian expression is evidently much longer than the one in English, but it could not be shorter because all its components contribute to define a very specific meaning.

⁹ An example of translation whose source text could not be localised is given in chapter seven.

Toury's method leaves the researcher a great freedom in the selection of the text units that are supposed to illustrate the strategy applied by the translator, but it is strongly criticized by Hermans, who underlines the difficulty of defining the "boundaries" and the "leftovers" (Hermans 1999: 69-70). However, in his review of some descriptive models, Hermans does not suggest any perfect model, but simply explains that "schemes and procedures can help and offer hints and pointers, but they remain ancillary. In the end it will be the questions to which the researcher seeks answers, on whatever grounds, which focus the attention" (Hermans 1999: 71).

The method of comparison used in this research is inspired by Toury and, as suggested by Hermans, adapted to the needs of this research. In fact, although it is certainly true that, as stated by Hermans, Toury's method of comparison is slightly vague, it is also very flexible and allows the researcher to adapt the selection of the segments to analyse to the needs of the research. On the contrary, Kitty van Leuwen-Zwart's model is described by Hermans as one of the most substantial and precise models developed in the field of translation analysis (Hermans 1999: 59), but it could not be used for this research for several reasons. First of all, while van Leuwen-Zwart's model focuses on the analysis of micro-shifts and on their effects on the narrative of the target text, this research focuses on norms because they allow us to study the links between a text and the society in which the text was produced. Focusing on shifts would not be productive for this research because, as affirmed by Toury, it is important not to give shifts too much importance in order not to focus on what the translation fails to convey (Toury 2012: 111). In this research, shifts will be carefully assessed but, instead of focusing on the shades of meaning that the translator failed to convey, the analysis will rather analyse the meaning of the target text segments in order to understand whether Italian women could possibly understand the translations and to determine the translator's abidance by norms. Moreover, the difficulty of defining Toury's "boundaries" and "leftovers" may become a problem if the focus of the research is constituted by whole texts. Considering that this research will take into consideration only very short sections of both source and target texts, the "vagueness" highlighted by Hermans in Toury's method cannot have any bearing on it. In fact, this research will mostly analyse single words, words plus adjectives or very short sentences and, in order to fully understand the meaning these units convey in every specific context, part of the paragraph in which they are present will be fully quoted. This attention to the context in which words are used will

allow us to take into consideration what Toury defined as, “leftovers of the ‘solution’ to a certain ‘problem’” (Toury 2012: 117). Finally, another reason why the use of Kitty Van Leuven-Zwart’s model would not be productive for this research lies in the role played by target and source texts. In fact, while, according to Kitty Van Leuven-Zwart, source and target texts should be given the same importance, considering that this research is focused on the target culture it is evidently more advantageous to start the analysis from the target texts and to select the segments on the basis of their acceptability (in Toury’s terms). Therefore, the target texts will be analysed first, and this analysis will allow us to detect those elements that target readers might not consider acceptable. However, full attention will also be dedicated to the source texts in order to identify those parts that have been omitted in the translation.

The main purpose of the textual comparison of the texts forming a volume is the identification of translation norms, which play an important role in our analysis because they will provide some important information regarding the relationship between the target system and the target text. The idea of translational norms was developed in the structuralist tradition by Levý and Popovič and further developed by Toury. Norms are described by Toury as “socio-cultural constraints” that have a profound influence on the translator’s performance and on the final product because they correspond to the “translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what would count as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate - into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations” (Toury 2012: 63). Norms play a very important role in Toury’s approach because they constitute the main “tool” through which society influences the translator’s choices. In fact, Toury describes the translator as a “person-in-the-culture” who works in order to fill a specific gap present in that culture, and obviously has to abide by specific “rules” originating in that culture, which Toury calls “norms”. Active norms manifest themselves when the translator has several different choices available but regularly tends to prefer one solution to the others. In terms of regularity, norms are located between rules (more objective) and idiosyncrasies (more subjective) and, therefore, they occupy the most important and larger position in the category of the explanations of human behaviour (Toury 2012: 65). Norms may change in strength, and these shifts are related to their change of importance over time and to the struggle among norms within the same system (Toury 2012: 66).

As far as Toury's classification of norms is concerned, the first and most basic choice for a translator is whether to abide by the norms of the source or of the target culture. This choice, which is governed by what Toury calls the "initial norm" is closely linked to the traditional categories of adequacy and acceptability, and it exerts a strong influence on the text: if the translator adheres to the source norms, the translation might be considered difficult to understand by the target readers (acceptability), while if the translator chooses to abide by the target norms, the translation will have some shifts (adequacy) (Toury 2012: 79-80). Then, we have the "preliminary norms", which concern the very first decisions that the translator has to take before starting to translate. For instance, translation policy takes into consideration the choice of the texts to translate, but Toury mentions also that similar policies may take into account the choice of the publishing house or of the type of text (Toury 2012: 82). Finally, there are the "operational norms", which regard all the decisions taken during the translation process. These deeply influence the material that forms the target text, the way in which it is distributed and the relationship between the target and the source text. Toury distinguishes two sets of norms: "matricial" and "textual-linguistic" norms. The "matricial" norms regard those decisions that affect the source-text material and its organization in the target text. Therefore, these norms concern, for instance, the translator's decision to translate the whole source text or to make abridgments, the paratext and the way in which the target text is structured. Finally, the "textual linguistic" norms govern the material that the translator chooses for the target text and its disposition. This entails, for instance, the choice of words and their disposition (Toury 2012: 82-83).

By means of the analysis of a corpus of translations we will identify the norms that play a very important role in this research because they will allow us to locate the translator's strategies in the wider socio-cultural context to which the translator of *Donne è bello* belonged. In fact, norms can be considered a mediation between what the translator intends to do and the customs of the society in which the act of translation takes place (Hermans 1999: 80). In particular, in this case, the study of norms will provide important information regarding some characteristics of the language of Italian feminist literature in the early 70s. Moreover, since abiding by rules involves rewards (and the failure to abide by rules involves sanctions), the study of norms will support the assessment of the reception of *Donne è bello*'s translations by Italian feminists.

As far as the “preliminary norms” are concerned, the fourth chapter analyses the similarities and differences between *Donne è bello* and *Notes From the Second Year*. The latter is an important volume published in the United States in 1970, composed of texts written by the most famous feminists, and it aimed to represent the most recent developments by American radical feminism. This publication has great importance for this research because it is the source of the majority of source texts of *Donne è bello* and it also inspired the general layout of the Italian work. A comparison between the two volumes will allow us to consider not only which texts have been selected, but also which have been discarded. These considerations are of great importance because they are closely related to the purpose of this publication which, as already stated, is deeply connected with the process and with the product. Moreover, this selection is also related to the initial norm, because it regards the translator’s choice between source norms (determining the translation’s adequacy) or the target norms (which govern the acceptability). Unfortunately, only a few details regarding the production of *Donne è bello* are available. These details have been provided by the translator and a few members of the *Anabasi* collective in interviews carried out in May 2011. Although Toury considers “partial and biased” extra textual sources of information, such as statements by people involved in a publication (Toury 2012: 88), these interviews (and the interview with Serena Castaldi in particular) have been very important for this research because they have provided important information regarding the purpose of the publication (according to the translator), the reception of the translations and the translator’s intentions, a topic that, as pointed out by Hermans, descriptivism tends to ignore (Hermans 1999: 154-155). In this case, by obtaining the translator’s views about the purpose of the volume we will have the opportunity to study the function of the ideology in some of the translator’s choices and strategies. Moreover, considering the scarcity of information regarding the *Anabasi* collective available in the existing literature, they also constitute invaluable information that will provide additional support to what is available in secondary and historical sources.

My interview with Serena Castaldi was carried out in May 2010 with the purpose of discovering more information about the history of the *Anabasi* group and, in particular, about how *Donne è bello* was conceived, created and distributed. In fact, the only detailed information about the *Anabasi* collective we had consisted of the short excerpts from the interviews carried out by Calabrò and Grasso, which mostly

focused on how the group evolved but did not tackle *Donne è bello*. The interviews with Bruna Felletti and Michela Gusmeroli have not been included in this research because, although they provided interesting insights regarding the atmosphere in the feminist groups, they did not have any relevant memories about the process of creation of *Donne è bello*.

This interview was important not only because it allowed us to discover important previously unknown elements relating to the Italian feminist movement but because, as pointed out by Abrams, only through interviews we can discover personal points of view. The following quotation by Portelli explains very well the complexity that only oral sources can provide us with: “Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did” (Abrams 2010: 22).¹⁰ In this case, by obtaining the translator’s views about the purpose of the volume we will have the opportunity to study the function of the ideology in some of the translator’s choices and strategies.

Therefore, although it is evident that, as stated by Toury, oral sources are partial and biased, they provide us with information that allows us to create a wider picture of a particular historical context. Moreover, even the partiality of the accounts we obtain during interviews tell us important information about the past. In fact, in her description of how memory works, Abrams states that our memory is influenced by many different elements, such as our feelings or our interest in some specific issues. Therefore, gaps are also important elements to take into analysis (Abrams 2010: 83). In this specific case, for instance, the fact that Castaldi could not remember in detail the process of translation of the texts tells us that she considered the purpose of those texts more important than the translation strategies.

As far as the organization of the interview is concerned, I sent Serena Castaldi the list of the questions I would ask prior to the interview.¹¹ There are several reasons why I have decided to do so: first of all, considering the time elapsed between the period of time discussed in the thesis and the present time (about forty years), I

¹⁰ Quotation from Portelli’s “What makes oral history different?”

¹¹ The questions are the following: 1) Perché ha deciso di intraprendere il suo viaggio negli Stati Uniti? Con quali gruppi e’ venuta in contatto negli Stati Uniti, e che tipo di contatto ha avuto con loro? 2) Potrebbe fornirmi qualche dettaglio sul criterio con il quale ha scelto gli articoli? Ha tradotto da sola i testi o con qualcun altro? E’ stata influenzata in alcun modo da qualcuno nelle sue scelte? Quali sono state le maggiori difficoltà incontrate nella traduzione (e nella selezione) degli articoli e come le ha superate? 3) Quali sono le sue impressioni riguardo la diffusione di *Donne è bello* in Italia (tra le donne appartenenti al movimento femminista e non)?

intended to give the interviewee enough time to recall the events and to put them in chronological order. Secondly, as suggested by Abrams, by giving the interviewee the opportunity to produce her own narrative the researcher can obtain more information from the interview (Abrams 2010: 108). In particular, I intended to give my interviewee the opportunity to include in her story any element that she considered relevant. Thanks to this technique, for instance, my interviewee told me about her relationship with Carla Lonzi, an important element that was not included in my questions.

Abrams also points out that many different elements have an influence over the interview. The most evident one is “the filtering process over the intervening years between the experience and the interview” (Abrams 2010: 55). Therefore, the present has an influence on our past memories because it can influence the way in which we recollect and retell them. In this specific case, the awareness of the important role played by *Donne è bello* might have influenced the narration. Moreover, the influence of the present on the narration is evident in the language used by the interviewee. In fact, although the interview was mainly conducted in Italian, Serena Castaldi often used terms and expressions in English (which I reported in italics). This is a consequence not only of the fact that my interviewee has been living in the United States for many years. In fact, some of these terms and expressions (such as “male chauvinism”) reflect her knowledge of the history of feminism and, therefore, are another sign of the experience gathered between the experience and the interview.

Finally, Abrams points out that intersubjectivity plays an important role in the interview process because the interview is influenced by several different factors characterizing the encounter between interviewer and interviewee (Abrams 2010: 60). In this case the interview might have been facilitated by my being a young woman, which might have added a pedagogical function related to the wish to pass down memories through generations. Moreover, I also stated beforehand that the purpose of this interview was academic research, and the awareness that the history of the feminism movement is often neglected in the mainstream press and important elements (such as *Donne è bello*) have never been studied might have favourably predisposed the interviewee.

After having considered the “preliminary norms” we need to focus on the “operational norms”, which will be mainly assessed in the three chapters specifically

dedicated to textual analysis. As far as the “matricial norms” are concerned, the analysis will pay particular attention to the abridgments and focus on the possible reasons that caused the translator to make such choices. The importance of these details is explained by Toury, according to whom the reason why certain features of the source text are preserved or erased in the target text is related not to their innate importance but to the role that, according to the translator, they might play in the target culture (Toury 2012: 6). In order to detect these abridgments it will be necessary to temporarily invert the schedule of the analysis, and to map the source text against the target text. However, this does not affect the priority role given to the target texts in this research.

When possible paratextual items are also taken into consideration. *Donne è bello* is characterised by images that can often be found alongside the texts and are often present in translations. A picture relevant to this research will be analysed and, as suggested by Delabastita (Delabastita 2007: 239), the analysis will be based not only on the text it contains but also on some visual features that strongly support the meaning conveyed by the text in the cartoon.

In some cases, the translations of *Donne è bello* (or just excerpts of them) have been published in Italian feminist magazines or circulated in other collectives. These cases correspond to what Pym defines as “passive retranslations”,¹² and their analysis constitutes an important source of information regarding the evolution of the target culture (Pym 1998: 82-83). These cases are very important because the presence of several passive retranslations shows the difficulty Italian women had in creating a recognized canon of translated texts. Moreover, considering the short space of time between the different versions, a comparison of different target texts will allow us to deepen our knowledge of how the target culture evolved (Pym 1998: 82-83).

Finally, additions (such as footnotes or notes within the text) made by the translator will also be assessed in order to explain the meaning of some words strongly linked with North-American culture. In particular, their analysis aims to elucidate why the translator decided to add this information, how it was positioned (whether in the footnotes or in the text) and the possible consequences of these

¹² Retranslations are defined as “passive” when since there is no evidence of any interference between the versions. On the contrary, “active retranslations” are characterised by some interference (usually negative) between the different competing versions

additions with the help of some relevant theory on this topic.¹³ Moreover, the reasons why the translator is generally a very invisible presence in the volume will also be investigated. Some possible explanations, as Pym suggested, are related to what the translator considers a good or bad translation, “A good/bad translation is one where we cannot see the translator” (Pym 2004: 68) or to the fact that the translator might not want to be recognized. Another possible hypothesis is related to a custom typical of feminist collectives where women, in order to stress their belonging to a group, tended not to sign any publication with their full name but to indicate only the collective’s name.

As far as the “textual-linguistic norms” are concerned, they will be analysed in detail in chapters five and six. The analysis will focus on the features related to a small selection of topics and will highlight whether the translator’s lexical choices have been determined by the social and cultural conditions of the target culture. In this part of the analysis, the impact of each translation on Italian women and feminist groups will be evaluated by assessing the presence (or absence) of these target text features in the Italian feminist literature, together with their meaning and context of use.

An important role in the assessment of norms and, in general, in the analysis of the target text will be played by comparing the features selected in the translations of the most relevant feminist literature of the early 70s. This will allow us to assess the influence of the target culture on translational norms, to determine the acceptability of the texts from the point of view of the Italian readers and to understand the position occupied by the texts in the target system. One of the most important sources of information and means of communication for the early feminists was *Sottosopra*, an occasional publication created in 1973 by a group based in Milan and sold in bookshops. It welcomed texts from the members of all Italian collectives, with the only exception being politicized and mixed groups, and had the purposes of encouraging Italian women to communicate their feelings and of providing Italian feminists with an effective tool of communication that could favour exchanges among the different groups. The first two issues (1973 and 1974) are particularly important for this research because they are rich in texts about consciousness-raising and the

¹³ These are mainly represented by Hermans, Theo (1996) “The Translator’s Voice in Translated Narrative”, *Target: international journal of translation studies*, Vol. 8, and by Nord’s analysis of the functional typologies of translation (pp. 47-52).

problems of working women. *Effe*, on the contrary, was a monthly magazine created in 1973 whose editorial office was based in Rome but, since it was the only feminist magazine available on newsstands, it could easily reach all the feminist groups of Italy. This thesis focuses on the first three years of this magazine, which constitute a mine of information regarding the most burning issues discussed in Italian feminist collectives. Of course, a particularly important position in the target system identified for this research is occupied by *Al femminile*, a pamphlet published by the Anabasi women in the same year as *Donne è bello*, and *L'Almanacco*, a volume created after the Paestum meeting of 1976 which provides a collection of material from the main Italian feminist collectives since 1972. All these volumes and publications are a great source of information regarding the most popular debates, the presence of elements from North-American culture and the language common in Italian feminist groups. Since this research focuses on a past time in Italian history, the reception of these texts can hardly be assessed through more "direct" tools such as interviews and questionnaires, and this corpus constitutes important evidence to support the findings. When dealing with specific topics, other sources less related to the feminist movement will also be taken into consideration, such as *Sorelle d'Italia* (especially dealing with the topic of sexuality), and the magazine of the homosexual community of Turin, *F.U.O.R.I.*, which published an excerpt from *Donne è bello* followed by a comment on it. Finally, an important position in the target system is occupied by the works by Carla Lonzi, who has played a prominent role in Italian feminism and written some texts that occupy a primary position in the system of Italian feminism. In fact, not only did she found one of the earliest and most important Italian feminist groups with branches in several cities, but she was also a particularly prolific writer, whose works became very common among feminists. Carla Lonzi was influential on the *Anabasi* members, which is evident if we consider the presence of several texts by Lonzi in *Donne è bello*, the similarities between the two groups and also the personal relationship between Serena Castaldi and Carla Lonzi. By comparing the main characteristics of Lonzi's style with those of the translations of *Donne è bello* this thesis aims to understand the relationships between original and translated texts in Italian feminist literature.

Finally, if such information is available, the basic characteristics of the source text will also be tackled, such as the background of its author, her readership and the message she intended to convey with her text. Although this procedure is not

suggested by Toury, it is considered very important by Nord, who states, “the priority of the target-text purpose does not mean that the source text is completely irrelevant” (Nord 1997: 62). Although this procedure belongs to the functionalist approach, which considers the analysis of the source text as an indispensable preparatory activity that will guide the translator’s assignment, it is also an important step in the descriptive approach. In fact, although this research mostly focuses on the analysis of the target text and culture, by taking into consideration the source text and culture and the message that the author of the original text wanted to convey we can highlight the important social and historical differences and similarities between the United States and Italy. These, as will be shown in the conclusion, constitute one of the reasons for the success (or failure) of these translations among Italian readers.

As far as the source texts are concerned, the majority of the texts of North-American origin present in *Donne è bello* (twelve out of thirty-two texts from the United States) were sourced from *Notes From the Second Year*, a collection of radical feminist texts published in 1971 in New York by Anne Koedt and Shulamith Firestone. Some texts, however, were sourced from some minor publications,¹⁴ and have been retrieved through online research in some North American university archives. In a few cases, however, the absence of the source text’s author or the translator’s decision to manipulate the source text rendered the retrieval of source texts particularly difficult.¹⁵ In these cases, thanks to the information provided by the translator during the interview, the research of the source text was carried out by focusing on the feminist documents available in New York between the end of 1969 and the first months of 1971. In a few other cases in which the source text has been published several times (such as “Love”, by Shulamith Firestone), the translation has been compared with the source texts and the appropriate original selected on the basis of the number of elements in common with the translation.

The differences and similarities between the United States and Italy will also be analysed by means of historical contextualization which, according to Toury: “is a must not only for a diachronic study, [...] but also for synchronic studies” (Toury 1995: 64). In this research, every chapter dealing with translation analysis will be

¹⁴ For instance, the text by Virginia Blaisdell “Freedom is a Long Time Comin’” was published in *View From the Bottom*, a North American underground publication.

¹⁵ For instance, a section of Sarachild’s text “A Program for Feminist Consciousness-raising” was partially abridged by the translator, and the missing section was replaced with a text whose author is not mentioned in *Donne è bello*.

introduced by a section providing a historical background and comparing the social conditions of Italy and the United States in the 60s and 70s. This historical background will inform the textual analysis, allowing us to determine how the translator used the norms and it will also support the conclusion of each chapter. In fact, it is evident that the history of each country deeply influences its literary output, the translation of foreign works (especially in terms of the choice of the texts to translate) and also their reception.

Although Toury devotes much attention to the description of how norms influence the translator's choices, he does not take into consideration the fact that the person translating a text might not be a professional translator, and tends to ignore the fact that, although society surely has a deep influence on the translator's strategies, translators might also act according to their own beliefs. Hermans criticized this tendency and pointed out that norms are not only constraints, but also "ready-made solutions" in contrast with the intentions of the translator (Hermans 1999: 79). This specification is very important because this research deals with a situation that has characteristics very different from those assumed by Toury. In fact, Serena Castaldi (like Angela Miglietti and many other women who carried out similar duties in feminist groups) was not a professional translator and, since she was not expecting any recognition from this work,¹⁶ she was not conscious of translation norms and of the possible consequences of a "non-normative behaviour" in the field of translation (Toury 2012: 87). The selection of features that will be analysed in this research includes several elements clearly showing that the translator sometimes does not abide by norms. In these cases, the role played by ideology in her choices will be considered.

In order to understand the role played by ideology in this research, the debate about gendered language and feminist translation that emerged during the second-wave feminist movement and has been developed by many international scholars will now be briefly introduced. This concerns the need to take possession of language, which feminists considered a product of patriarchal society and therefore were not able to describe women from their own point of view. An example of this action is in the work by Mary Daly, where she explains that the meaning of words

¹⁶ This aspect emerged from the interview, but is also evident if we consider that the name of the translator is not mentioned in the volume.

such as “hag” and “crone” was once positive, and became negative because of patriarchal oppression (Von Flotow 1997: 10). Feminist women have not only described this phenomenon but also tried to actively intervene in it by means of experimental writing. An example is Nicole Brossard, whose works present topics related to femininity developed in a style rich in puns, neologism and innovative metaphors (Von Flotow 1997: 14-15). The same unconventional approach can be seen in the practice of translation. In fact, in the past (as powerfully described by Lori Chamberlain) translating was considered a passive (and therefore feminine) action in contrast with writing, which was seen as active and masculine (Chamberlain 1988: 454-472). Since the 70s, several translators, such as Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood have decided to intervene in patriarchal language by means of translation, according to the view that “translation in the feminine is a political act, and an act of women’s solidarity”.¹⁷

Von Flotow identified three main techniques used by feminist translators: supplementing, “hijacking”, prefacing and footnoting (Von Flotow 1991: 74). Supplementing is a stratagem used by a translator who, in order to compensate for the difference between languages, decides to intervene in the text (Von Flotow 1991: 74-75). For instance, since in many cases feminist writers play with puns and with grammar, feminist translators have tried to reproduce similar effects by focusing on the reaction that the authors intended to trigger in their public. In some other cases, such as in the translations by Carol Maier and Suzanne Jill Levine of the work of Cuban and South American male writers, translators have decided to “hijack” a text that they consider sexist by denouncing women’s absence or by attempting to rectify them (Von Flotow 1997: 26-27). Finally, in order to help the readers to understand the intention of the original text, feminist translators often add several prefaces and footnotes focusing on the translation process (Von Flotow 1991: 76-77).

In the translations of *Donne è bello* we usually cannot see the strategies just mentioned. In fact, since all the source texts were already feminist, Serena Castaldi did not feel the need to rectify or to “feminize” anything. When needing to “transfer” puns and games into Italian, the translator of *Donne è bello* often does not seize the opportunity to use Italian language creatively. For instance, although in Italian past

¹⁷ Quotation of Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood mentioned by Von Flotow (*Translation and Gender: Translating in the ‘Era of Feminism’*, Manchester: St Jerome, p. 19).

participles agree in gender and number when used with the auxiliary “to be”, she often translated them in the masculine form instead of taking the opportunity to stress the fact that authors, translator and readers are women, and men are completely excluded from this communication. In another case (that will be developed in chapter six), the translator decided not to find a creative translation for the key word “bitch”, but simply explained its meaning with a footnote. However, while for instance the German translator of *Gyn/Ecology* provided many footnotes in order to explain to her public the meaning of the puns in English, this short footnote fails to convey the meaning of “bitch” in English (Von Flotow 1997: 40). Finally, in feminist translations the translator usually claims great visibility by means of frequent interventions in the text and, in general, by reference to the translator’s identity (Von Flotow 1997: 40-41). On the contrary, Serena Castaldi only rarely intervenes in her translations with footnotes or other additions, and the identity of the translator is not stated in the volume. Although the translator of *Donne è bello* often managed to find some great solutions for the translation of key words that mirror the language used by Italian feminists,¹⁸ we cannot find in *Donne è bello* a consistent approach focused on the critique of patriarchal language, and this may be a consequence of the fact that, as already mentioned, she was not a professional translator, and the possibility of using translation for political and feminist purposes had not yet developed in Italy.

Although in *Donne è bello* we cannot find most of the techniques of intervention described by Von Flotow, we can affirm that this volume draws more generally on the theories that have since supported the feminist approach to translation. For instance, Von Flotow explains that the deconstructionist and post-structuralist theories helped translation to become a creative activity. Then, second-wave feminists helped translators to change their approach to authorship and patriarchal language and, finally, Chamberlain uncovered the power relationships between translation and gender roles which have always supported the idea that the translator has only a “passive” role (Von Flotow 1991: 80-81). Therefore, although the translator of *Donne è bello* rarely intervenes dramatically in her translations, we can assert that her translations pertain to the field of feminist translation because, in order to better serve the purposes of her volume, the translator often creatively used or manipulated the original material. Moreover, it should also be pointed out that the

¹⁸ An example is the term “massaia” used to translate the English “housewife” (chapter six).

feminist ideology of the translator influenced the choice of the texts to translate and in some cases also the lexical choices. First of all, the choice of the texts to translate constitutes an important part of the role of a translator, and Serena Castaldi made this choice with a very specific purpose in mind (which will be explained in depth in the second chapter): favouring the spread of feminist ideas in Italy. Secondly, the decision to limit her interventions is very likely to be related to the debate about gendered language in Italy. As explained by Rosa Rossi, often the slogans created by Italian feminists were counter-productive because (as in the cases of “*Donna è bello*” and “*La pancia è mia e ne faccio quel che mi pare*”) they were not based on deep reflection about the meanings of the words commonly used to describe women (Rossi 1978: 23-37), and this suggests that Italian feminists were probably less conscious of sexism in language than their foreign sisters. Moreover, although also Italian feminists started to think about the sexist use of language, we can rarely find in Italian feminist publications the same degree of creative language that we can find in foreign publications.¹⁹ Finally, the translations in *Donne è bello* sometimes show some interesting examples where we clearly see that the translator was aware of the importance of using the right lexis in order to achieve the expected function.²⁰ Therefore, although very different from most of the examples provided by Von Flotow, gender plays an important role in the act of translation of *Donne è bello*'s texts and the role played by this ideology in the translator's strategies will be carefully taken into consideration.

Finally, Polysystem Theory will now be introduced, a theory developed by Even-Zohar in the 70s. This theory is important for this research not only because of its close link with the descriptive approach, but also because its focus on the position of a literary work in a system can help us to understand the position of *Donne è bello* within its cultural system. Polysystem Theory has much in common with the descriptive approach. In fact, as Hermans points out, this theory “legitimized research into translation as part of literary studies” (Hermans 1999: 103) because it took into consideration the role played by translated literature in the evolution of literature. Moreover, this interest in Polysystem Theory for translation and the development of the descriptive approach in Translation Studies took place almost at

¹⁹ More information will be provided in chapter six.

²⁰ Such as the choice of the word “*massaia*” to translate “*housewife*” (chapter six).

the same time and, in one case, also in the same place, since Gideon Toury (one of the main theorists of the descriptive approach) collaborated with Even-Zohar at the University of Tel Aviv (Hermans 1999: 103).

Polysystem Theory derives from system theory, which was first developed by the Russian Formalists and the Czech Structuralists in the first half of the twentieth century. A particularly important source of inspiration for Even-Zohar was Yury Tynjanov, the first to have considered literature as a system, and from his work on the evolution of literature (Hermans 1999: 104). Tynjanov's theory of literary evolution limits the importance of history in the evolution of literature and explains that "the main concept for literary evolution is the *mutation* of systems" rather than "tradition", which constituted "the basic concept of the established history of literature" and was according to Tynjanov "an unjustifiable abstraction" (Tynjanov 1927: 67). Even-Zohar strongly stresses the importance of the formalist concept of system and of the dynamism characterising such systems in opposition to Saussure's theories which, according to Even-Zohar, perceive a system as static and too strongly focused on historical change. Even-Zohar further develops this theory by transforming the "system" into a "polysystem", which he defines as:

A multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent (Even-Zohar 1990a: 11).

The main difference between the formalist idea of system and Even-Zohar's polysystem is the structure of these entities and therefore the possible movements of elements within the polysystem:

With a polysystem one must not think in terms of *one* centre and *one* periphery, since several such positions are hypothesized. A move may take place, for instance, whereby a certain item (element, function) is transferred from the periphery of one system to the periphery of an adjacent system within the same polysystem, and then may or may not move on to the center of the latter (Even-Zohar 1990a: 14).

This emphasis on the relationships between the different systems has a great advantage for researchers because it allows them to take into consideration semiotic objects that have always been ignored or rejected. An example of such phenomena

is translated literature, which should be considered in the relationship with the cultural literary production of a country. Therefore, it is evident that Polysystem Theory has great importance for Translation Studies. For instance, Lambert explains that Polysystem Theory had a great impact on Translation Studies not only because of its stress on norms, but also because, although it is a theory, “its aim is not to theorize but to provide models and methodologies for research” (Lambert 1995: 110). Moreover, the relationships between translated literature and the target system will also play a leading role in this research, which aims to understand the influence of the translated texts collected in *Donne è bello* on the Italian feminist movement.

The evolution of literature, which also encompasses translated literature, plays a very important role in Even-Zohar’s theory. In his opinion, literary change is provided by the universal and eternal struggle between “canonized” items (texts and models), which are praised and preserved by a community, and “non-canonized” ones, which are usually rejected by the dominant circles of a culture and forgotten (Even-Zohar 1990a: 15). This struggle is represented by Even-Zohar as “centrifugal vs. centripetal” motion between the centre of the polysystem, where the canonized items are located, and the periphery, where we can find the non-canonized elements (Even-Zohar 1990a: 14). The tensions between non-canonized and canonized features are essential for a vital culture because they help it to evolve and therefore to be alive. Similar to this struggle is that between “primary” and “secondary” types (representing the innovatory and conservative elements of the system, respectively), which determines the evolution of the system. Even-Zohar explains that a canonical item is not automatically also a primary type, although this has commonly been the case since the Romantic Age (Even-Zohar 1990a: 21-22). As far as the concept of “canonicity” is concerned, Even-Zohar distinguishes between two different meanings: “static”, which governs the introduction of a text in a canon, and “dynamic”, because it tackles the introduction of a literary model in a system (Even-Zohar 1990a: 19). According to Even-Zohar, this second canonicity is the most important because it provides dynamism to the system and therefore contributes to the formation of a canon.

Even-Zohar’s theory is partly challenged by Rakefet Sheffy, whose critique mainly focuses on the concept of “canon”. In fact, while we normally identify canons as the most valuable works of a country, the description of “canonicity” provided by Even-Zohar strongly stresses the struggle between “canonized” and “non-canonized” items,

and “canon” seems to describe what literary elites consider in fashion (Sheffy 1990: 513). However, the problem highlighted by Sheffy is not only related to the terminology. Her critique mostly criticizes the focus on dynamism, which ignores the fact that there are several examples of texts that, once they have entered the canon, “survive shifts of taste throughout history and are never totally deprived of their literary value” (Sheffy 1990: 515). Sheffy stresses the importance of considering that literary evolution does not take place only because of shifts in the position of the various elements present in a system, but is also a result of the formation and preservation of canons, which work as a source of inspiration (Sheffy 1990: 519-520). Sheffy’s theory is important for our research because it points out that literary evolution might be not only be based on a struggle, but also on the creation of a canon. In fact, her model, as will be explained in the final section of this thesis, can be easily adapted to the situation of feminist literature in the early 70s.

Even-Zohar explains that Polysystem Theory can provide a support for research in the field of Translation Studies and, in general, in every case in which “a certain literature may be interfered by another literature, as a result of which properties are transferred from one polysystem to another” (Even-Zohar 1990a: 25). In fact, in some cases, translation “is by and large an integral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary history while these are taking place” (Even-Zohar 1990b: 46), simply because it favours the introduction into a repertoire of new elements. It is evident that Polysystem Theory can greatly contribute to the methodology that will be adopted for this research. In fact, *Donne è bello*’s translations are non-canonical texts that have been introduced into a system (Italian feminist literary production) where the canon is composed, for instance, of the works of Carla Lonzi and the manifesto of the Trento collective. Although these translations occupy an important place in that specific system, this does not mean, as pointed out by Sheffy, that they have replaced the existing canon. By taking into consideration the characteristics of *Donne è bello*’s translations and of some “canonical” Italian feminist publications, this research aims to understand the position *Donne è bello* occupies in its system and to assess its influence on the other elements of the system.

The only way to determine whether translated literature occupies a central or peripheral position within the system is to analyse the translation norms, which are “constraints” that govern the choices made by a translator on the basis of what a

community considers appropriate (Toury 2012: 63). According to Even-Zohar, if the translator has adopted many innovations, the translations will occupy a central position. Otherwise, if the translation is rich in canonized forms, then the work will remain in a peripheral position (Even-Zohar 1990a: 50-51). The analysis of translational norms will play a very important role in this research and will allow us to assess the position occupied by some of *Donne è bello*'s translations in Italian feminist literary production.

Furthermore, Even-Zohar states that the conditions favouring the introduction of new elements into a system through a translation depend on the target system, and are classified by Even-Zohar as follows:

- a) when a polysystem has not yet been crystallized [...]; b) when a literature is either "peripheral" (within a large group of correlated literatures) or "weak" or both; and c) when there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums in a literature (Even-Zohar 1990b: 47).

Even-Zohar further explains that this "importation" of foreign material takes place when a younger generation feels the need for a profound renovation of its models, which creates a "vacuum" favouring the immigration of foreign models through translation (Even-Zohar 1990b: 48). This possibility evidently shows great similarities with the cultural conditions in Italy in the early 70s, and this research will investigate whether it provides further information regarding the reasons behind the creation of *Donne è bello*.

By considering the characteristics of the canonical texts in the target system and those of the translations some explanations regarding the choice of the texts to translate will be provided and it will be explained which of the possible situations listed by Even-Zohar can be applied to this research. In fact, while Even-Zohar focused on the influence of target-system literature, in this case many different factors influenced the search for and the translation of foreign material. Of course, some canonical literature such as Lonzi's writings "*Manifesto di Rivolta Femminile*" and "*Sputiamo su Hege*" influenced the choice of the topics of the texts to translate. However, as will be further explained in chapter three and four, *Donne è bello* did not aim to influence Italian literature, but to trigger a cultural revolution. Therefore, the choice of the texts was mainly influenced by a "cultural" rather than a "literary"

vacuum, which will be assessed by exploring the important socio-cultural evolution which took place in Italy in the late 60s and early 70s.

In conclusion, it is evident that the method employed in this research drew critically on Toury's descriptive approach but, in order to give the highest priority to the research questions, it was often necessary to supplement this basis with other approaches or to find creative solutions to research problems. For instance, since assessing the reception by the public constitutes one of the goals of this research, the few comments by some Italian historians and researchers regarding the popularity of *Donne è bello* present in secondary sources were taken into great consideration. In fact, as stated by Munday: "Reviews are also a useful source of information concerning that culture's view of translation itself" (Munday 2008: 154), and the role played by translation in the feminist movement is one of the targets of this research. Similarly, because of the difficulty in finding essential information about *Donne è bello*, it was necessary to take into consideration also extratextual sources of information (Toury 2012: 87-88). Finally, another important problem to overcome was the difficulty of finding the source texts, a consequence of the little data available about the sources of several texts. This search was mainly carried out using online library catalogues and other North American online archives, and was guided by the general information we have regarding the place and time when the source texts were collected.²¹ Therefore, it is evident that, as stated by Hermans, models can only provide some useful suggestions but "In the end it will be the questions to which the researcher seeks answers, on whatever grounds, which focus the attention" (Hermans 1999: 71).

²¹ Such as <https://archive.org/>

3. The radical feminist movement in Italy and in the United States

In order to help us to understand how the translation of the texts was influenced by the historical context, this chapter will provide very important information regarding the historical context in which the authors and the translator of the texts in *Donne è bello* operated.

In particular, the first section will focus on the first wave of the Italian feminist movement in order to investigate the historical reasons that led its birth and the condition of Italian women in the first half of the twentieth century. Then we will explore the historical context in which the second-wave feminist movement was created, and particular attention will be given to the extra-parliamentary political groups because they strongly influenced the creation of feminist groups. Subsequently, we will deal with the Italian second-wave feminist movement but, considering the great dimension reached by the movement, we will focus on the feminist groups created in Milan in the early 70s and on those that developed relationships with the *Anabasi* group, because these relationships favoured the spread of *Donne è bello* and some of their characteristics might indicate the influence of this volume. Finally, in the last section of this chapter the second-wave feminist movement in the United States will be introduced and, in particular, the focus will be on the characteristics of the radical strand, because of the evident influence it had on the Italian feminist movement and especially on the *Anabasi* group. Moreover, the similarities and differences between the Italian and the American second-wave movements will be highlighted and the elements that favoured the migration of radical feminist issues and practices to Italy will be briefly described.

3.1. The Italian first-wave feminist movement and the conditions of Italian women during both World Wars.

The first examples of demonstrations and political activity carried out by women in Italy took place at the end of the 19th century and, according to Buttafuoco, a particularly important moment is the first Sunday in December 1880, when Anna

Maria Mozzoni and her German assistant Paolina Schiff founded the *Lega Promotrice degli Interessi Femminili* in Milan, which focused on different topics such as the right to vote and the equal pay (Willson 2010: 7).

The feminist movement at the end of the nineteenth century consisted of several different groups. Apart from the already mentioned league by Anna Maria Mozzoni, there were many other smaller organizations such as the *Società delle Sorelle del Lavoro* and the *Unione delle Lavoranti*, that focused on equal pay and legal rights, and were mostly formed by lower class and working class women (Willson 2010: 25). As Willson states, these groups differed in terms of target and were often associated with other organizations, such as socialist feminists and catholic feminists (Willson 2010: 25-26).

Differently from 70s feminists, first-wave Italian feminists did not want to change their role in the family: they still thought that women had a duty to care for their families, but they demanded the right for women to be educated and a reform of the Pisanelli code, that allocated women a subordinate position in the family (Willson 2010: 7). Another important difference between the first and the second-wave feminists in Italy lies in the characteristics of the members of the organizations. In fact, although some feminists such as Argentina Altobelli (who actively fought for the rights of women employed in agriculture) were working class women, many Italian feminists at the beginning of the twentieth century belonged to the upper or middle classes and lived in cities, but they actively campaigned for the rights of workers and peasants. Moreover, while the second-wave feminists were generally young and often had taken part in the student revolts, the first-wave feminists were in general middle aged and had decided to campaign moved by a will to do something good for the whole society instead than to focus their political activity on their own personal experiences (Willson 2010: 24-25).

At the beginning of the century working class women played an important role in the economy. Many were employed in factories, especially in silk spinning mills and in the tobacco industry. According to Willson the great majority of working women were peasants, who actively contributed to their households by carrying out a variety of duties that varied according to many factors such as their age, the area and the local customs. Some women (mostly young) were seasonal workers: particularly famous were those who picked olives and the *mondine* who worked in rice fields, whose professions were strongly criticized and considered “promiscuous” because

girls worked with male supervisors (Willson 2010: 19). Many peasant women also moved to large cities to work as servants, a job that in Italy and in Europe was very common since, as Willson states, in 1901 83.2 per cent of servants were women (Willson 2010: 19). Finally, like in other western European countries, the most popular profession for women was the primary teacher, because it did not challenge the idea that women were destined to focus on the education of children. According to Willson, in 1901 35.344 women worked in this sector (Willson 2010: 22).

Interestingly, this impulse to create a women's movement was inspired and supported by foreign thinkers. In fact, Willson points out that Anna Maria Mozzoni was inspired by Charles Fourier and, in particular, by John Stuart Mill, since she translated into Italian his work *The Subjection of Women*; but also social feminists were inspired by the German sociologist August Bebel and even those feminists belonging to catholic groups were inspired by foreign Catholic groups. This flow of information from abroad influenced Italy thanks to the foreigners living in Italy and to the presence of news regarding foreign feminist movements in the press. Many women paid close attention to the foreign feminist movements and had the opportunity to travel abroad to attend feminist meetings and conferences (Willson 2010: 24-25).

As far as political parties were concerned, according to Willson only few women joined political parties and, in particular, the Socialist Party, which was at the beginning of the twentieth century the largest party providing some support for women. However, women were very active in trade unions and other organizations inspired by the socialist ideology with the purpose of improving their working conditions. As Kaplan points out, socialist ideology in Europe was closely linked with capitalism and industrialization and, since northern Italy like most European countries started the process of industrialization in the second half the nineteenth century, there was a strong interest in the international working movement. Italian trade unions became very powerful and, at the beginning of the century, started to organize the first strikes with the purpose of controlling the political action of the government, which was in difficulties due to the great social and economic differences between the various parts of the country. In fact, Italy had its first strike in 1904, well before the other western countries (with the exception of Australia) (Kaplan 1992: 233). This particular attention to the needs of workers is evident also in the great number of organizations for the rights of women workers that were

created in the country (Kaplan 1992: 232) and in the fact that in 1904 women took part in the first general strike organized in Milan and were involved in the protests of the “fasci”, which started in Sicily in 1893 and then moved to the cities of the north (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 23-24). The most important socialist who campaigned for the rights of women was the Russian doctor Anna Kuliscioff, who stated the importance of work and of the right to vote for women, but also supported a law that limited the duties that women could carry out at work. Since this law had actually the effect of leaving many women without their job, Kuliscioff’s position was criticized by feminists, and historians often debate about whether she should be considered a feminist (Willson 2010: 29-30).

Also in the 20th century Italian women constantly tried to have their say on many different areas concerning the political situation, and they were also involved in the debate between “interventisti” and “neutralisti” during World War I. In fact, in 1914, the Italian government was facing the difficult decision of whether to join the war and, although most feminists were against it, some feminists such as Teresa Labriola, Anna Kuliscioff and Anna Maria Mozzoni actively promoted the intervention of Italy in the war because they considered it part of the Risorgimento. Many women thought that they could play an important role in the war and, in fact, as soon as Italy joined the war, even those feminists who were against it became involved in social welfare activities (Willson 2010: 47-48). In World War I many women (about 4,000 in 1915) worked as Red Cross nurses (“crocerossine”), while many others joined the labour force. Willson points out that only very rarely did women actually replace those men who were at front: often women simply took advantage of new job opportunities such as in the production of uniforms or weapons. At the end of the war, all those women who were working for the war industries had to resign, but the image of the working woman had already become very popular and was harshly opposed by socialists who stated that “a woman’s place was in the home” (Willson 2010: 58-59).

According to Mark Mazower, one of the most evident effects of World War I throughout Europe was a deep crisis of the patriarchal family. In fact, the death of over six thousand people during the conflict had important consequences on those who survived: the presence of many widows, orphans and veterans who struggled to reintegrate into society was effectively described with the expression “fatherless community” (Mazower 1998: 80). Moreover, during the war women and children had learned to survive without the help of their fathers and husbands, and their new

behaviour affected society. According to Mazower there was much talk about 'youth running wild' (Mazower 1998: 80), and also women managed to have an emancipated style of life that they never had before. The emblem of this emancipated woman was the "flapper", a figure describing an independent woman that became common in many different countries and was considered a consequence of Bolshevism. In fact, thanks to the Bolshevik revolution that limited the power of the Church, in Russia women could emancipate in a way impossible anywhere else in Europe (Mazower 1998: 81). These new independent women were considered a threat to the public order and in the 20s most European countries decided to restore the role of the traditional family by means of a new focus on the role of the family and of the institution of motherhood. In Italy, supported by the general idea that women had taken men's jobs during World War I, Fascism fought particularly harshly against women's employment by means of a strong propaganda that stressed women's role as mothers and wives and of discriminatory laws especially aimed at limiting the number of women teachers and workers in public administration (Willson 2010: 72-73). Mussolini's views were supported by the Church, which had always been strict and intransigent: in 1909, Pius X stated that women are not equal to men, and must be under male authority (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 35) and in 1930, Pius XI with his encyclical *Casti connubi* stated that since women's natural roles are those of wives and mothers, working outside of the home is a "perversion" (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 37-38).

The second instrument that helped European governments to restore the public order is the ideology of motherhood that, as explained by Mazower, was already present in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, but acquired more importance at the end of World War I (Mazower 1998: 82-83), when this topic reached the limelight in all European countries, where most governments encouraged the population to have more babies by means of campaigns that have many characteristics in common throughout Europe. In fact, Mazower points out that some of Mussolini's and Hitler's propaganda ideas are very similar to those applied in France, where the most productive mothers received medals, while in England and in France the government encouraged young women to take courses of "domestic science" and "puericulture" (Mazower 1998: 84).

Another way to encourage women to have more babies was that of regulating abortion. According to Mazower, catholic countries have always strongly opposed

contraception and abortion, but in the 30s the Fascist government introduced heavy sanctions for abortions. Similarly, also France introduced a law against abortion and this tendency influenced also a non-Catholic country such as Britain, which issued in 1929 the Infant Act punishing abortion with life imprisonment (Mazower 1998: 85). Similarly, Catholic countries strongly opposed the spread of contraceptive methods, while in European non-Catholic countries (such as Britain and Germany) some birth control movements managed to campaign for women's awareness (Mazower 1998: 86). However, despite all these efforts to regulate women's lives, in all European countries the number of working women did not change much, nor did the birth rate. According to Mazower, this is a result of the fact that the economic supports provided by governments to prolific mothers could not compensate the great costs involved in raising children in a society where children were no longer a "unit of production" but had to be educated, and this had an important economic impact on the family (Mazower 1998: 88).

Towards the end of World War II (during the "Resistenza"), a great number of women again had the opportunity to actively support the liberation of Italy by working as partisan women or simply hiding and helping the partisans. Despite the great importance of women's support, the Resistance has been traditionally portrayed as a "male movement" (Willson 2010: 102) and women's roles have been considered less important than those of men (Willson 2010: 105).

In several countries women had the opportunity to carry out new tasks and new roles in their families and in society during World War II. When the war ended in France and in Italy women could vote for the first time but, similarly to what had already happened after World War I, governments also encouraged women to leave their jobs in order to help men returning from the war service to find a job and to have babies. Mazower points out that this phenomenon was considered by left wing parties a characteristic of capitalist societies (such as Italy) but, since it also took place in noncapitalist environments such as in Yugoslavia, the "reassertion of patriarchy" must have deep causes (Mazower 1998: 212). Apart from the focus on the birth rate, which is a typical stage at the end of a war, one of the reasons behind this event is according to Mazower due to the fact that "the desire to retreat from the world of ideological strife contributed to an idealization of domesticity" (Mazower 1998: 212). Therefore, although women were strongly encouraged to leave their jobs

at the end of the war, many actually wished to focus on their roles as mothers and wives and were willing to leave their employments to men (Mazower 1998: 213).

The connection between the first and the second-wave feminism in Italy is the *UDI*. It was founded just after the liberation of Rome in September 1944, when the communication between women living in the South and partisan women in the North was finally possible, and it was formed by women belonging to the *PCI* (*Partito Comunista Italiano*, the Italian communist party) such as the partisans in the North, but also by socialist and catholic women. During the war the main concern of the *UDI* was the fight against fascism, but they also worked on women's problems and campaigned for the right to vote, salary equality and benefits for working women. At the end of the war, when there was no longer a common enemy, many catholic women left the *UDI* and joined the *CIF* (*Centro Italiano Femminile*), the women's organization coordinated by the Catholic party *Democrazia Cristiana* (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 48).

After the war, during which *UDI* women had contributed to the liberation, they returned to the traditional tasks women have always carried out, such as nursing and taking care of their families. Chiavola Birnbaum gives some examples of the most common topics treated by *Noi Donne*, the *UDI* magazine, which explain very well the style of the organization. In fact, *Noi Donne* was very similar to the American magazine *Woman's Day*, and the private sphere was mostly addressed by means of articles relating to recipes and sewing patterns. In some cases there were stories describing problems in marriage (such as violence or betrayal), but only in 1961 it published the first story about abortion, a taboo topic. According to Chiavola Birnbaum, the line of *Noi Donne* mirrored the party line: since *PCI* intended to establish good relationships with the *DC* party, also *Noi Donne* had to support the traditional role of women (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 57-58).

In conclusion, Passerini asserts that although *UDI* was very different from the feminist groups formed in the early 70s, it actually had some influence on them because it constituted for the second-wave feminists not only an emblem to criticize, but also an example of political practices. On the contrary, despite the fact that the work by Franca Pieroni Bortolotti *Alle origini del movimento femminile in Italia* about the history of the Italian feminist movement was published in 1963, the Italian first-wave feminist movement had very little influence on the second-wave movement,

and only in 1976 with the creation of *DonnaWomanFemme* did the feminist movement start to research its history (Passerini 1991: 154).

3.2. The historical context of the Italian second-wave feminist movement.

Between 1969 and 1971, the first signs of the second-wave feminist movement, which were already evident at the international level, also became visible in Italy.²² This section will describe the main characteristics of the Italian second-wave feminist movement, its relationship with the international feminist movement and with the historical context and the characteristics of the most important Italian second-wave feminist groups with particular focus on the feminist collectives in Milan and Northern Italy, which established a network of relationships that played a role in the spread of *Donne è bello*.

3.2.1. Overview extra-parliamentary organizations and students' movement.

The student movement in Italy started in 1967 with the occupation of the university of Trento, followed by that of the Università Cattolica of Milan and the University of Turin in November. Between December 1967 and February 1968 the students' movement spread everywhere in Italy, and even in small universities in the south students challenged their teachers (Ginsborg 2003: 409-410). As Bracke points out, that generation of students was characterized by a variety of different ideas, such as:

The rediscovery of early Marxism, postwar philosophy including French existentialism, avant-garde aesthetics such as Situationism, religious renewal, Freudo-Marxist authors such as Herbert Marcuse, the civil rights and black power movements in the United States, anti-totalitarian movements in communist Eastern Europe, and anti-imperialist discourse (Bracke 2014: 45).

While these characteristics were common of the young people protesting also in other European countries, some characteristics typical of the Italian 1968 were:

²² Anna Rossi Doria dates the beginning of feminist collectives in Italy between 1968 and 1972, (2005: 14) while Elda Guerra dates it rather between 1970 and 1973 (2005: 36).

[...] the frontal critiques of and attacks on the state (whereby the movement's most radical currents did not shy away from police confrontation), and the greater rootedness in a Marxist, class-based understanding of social conflict (Bracke 2014: 46).

Finally, another important characteristic of the Italian students' movement was the rejection of the consumerism typical of historical period (the "economic miracle") during which they were born (Bracke 2014: 46).

Officially, the students organized the revolts because unsatisfied with the services and facilities provided by the university, and because of the unsuitable quality of teaching and the authoritarian behavior of most university teachers (Ginsborg 2003: 405-406). However, the students' revolts were actually a protest against a social system that young people considered unacceptable and a revolt against their actual and symbolic parents. Bracke points out that "generational identity" was different for men and women: while men blamed their fathers for having betrayed the ideals of the Resistance, women rejected the female models and the patriarchal family (Bracke 2014: 46-47).

In the same years also workers organized some protests. The first fights took place in April 1968 at the textile factory Marzotto in Valdagno, where workers complained about the unsustainable working pace and the decrease in wages. Since their complaints had been completely ignored, they first devastated the offices and then they pulled down the statue of Count Marzotto, the founder of the factory, which was standing in the main square of Valdagno (Ginsborg 2003: 422-423). In the summer of 1968 at the same time young workers were attracted by the anti-authoritarianism of the students, and university students decided to join the young workers in their fight. Similarly to what had already happened in the universities, the revolt rapidly spread and had its peak between September and December 1969, a period of time which is commonly known as the *autunno caldo* (Ginsborg 2003: 423).

At this point it is important to consider whether there is a relationship between the students' and workers' revolts and the creation of the Italian second-wave feminist movement. Although the most important feminist groups were not affiliated to political parties, the students' riots of 1968 and the feminist movement are closely connected. The first evident connection is the fact that although many women (students and workers) took part in the riots, their contribution to these events was ignored by the male organizers. Therefore, although the movement aimed to

challenge society, the traditional gender roles were confirmed within the groups (Bracke 2014: 50).

Passerini suggests that an evident link between the feminist movement and the students' riots is the idea of a political action based on their life conditions (Passerini 1991: 155). Often feminists harshly criticized the students' movement because although they claimed their intention to radically change the social system and to fight against authoritarianism, students actually embodied the authoritarian role that they wished to cancel. This excerpt from Lonzi's *Sputiamo su Hegel* very clearly explains the reasons why from the point of view of the fight against authority the students' movement must be considered a failure:

Nell'angoscia dell'inserimento sociale il giovane nasconde un conflitto col modello patriarcale. Questo conflitto si rivela nelle istanze anarchiche in cui viene espresso un no globale, senza alternative: la virilità rifiuta di essere paternalistica, ricattatoria. Ma senza la presenza del suo alleato storico, la donna, l'esperienza anarchica del giovane è velleitaria, ed egli cede al richiamo della lotta organizzata di massa. La ideologia marxista-leninista gli offre la possibilità di rendere costruttiva la sua ribellione affiancandosi alla lotta del proletariato a cui è delegata anche la sua liberazione. Ma così facendo il giovane viene risucchiato in una dialettica prevista dalla cultura patriarcale (Lonzi 2010: 21).

This excerpt, as stated by Passerini, shows that by deciding to adopt a Marxist-leninist ideology, the students' movement chooses not to fight against "patriarchal culture" (Passerini 1991: 155). Moreover, as Passerini explains, the disenchantment of women over the students' movement is not only a result of its failure to take into consideration women's needs, but mostly a consequence of the unequal relationship between boys and girls within the movement (Passerini 1991: 156). However, women indirectly benefited from the students' movement. In fact, Passerini maintains that those women who took part in the students' movement learned from that experience to consider themselves as political subjects. Also those women who were not members of the students' movement benefited from it, because after 1968 the mentality changed and, in particular, the perception of personal rights and of authority changed (Passerini 1991: 158-159). Moreover, as Ergas explains, in those

organizations women had developed skills and expertise that would then become very useful in the political actions of the feminist groups:

Grazie alla militanza nella nuova sinistra, queste avevano infatti acquisito competenze specifiche e generato capacità di leadership; si erano integrate nelle reti associative create dai gruppi della nuova sinistra, potendo tra l'altro intervenire anche sui mezzi di comunicazione degli stessi; ed, infine, avevano assunto un'ideologia che poteva ampiamente motivare la loro ribellione (Ergas 1986: 64).

The ideology of the left wing groups is very important for Ergas: although feminists had constructed their new identities according to the feminist associations they belonged to, the left wing ideology is evident in the topics and even in the lexicon adopted:

[...] una ricerca sulla condizione femminile che echeggiava i temi e le tesi della nuova sinistra, richiamandosi quasi puntigliosamente allo "sfruttamento" delle donne come oggetti sessuali e come casalinghe, "all' imperialismo" ed "allo sciovinismo" dei valori maschili, all' "autoritarismo" del rapporto uomo-donna, alla natura "strutturale" della contraddizione fra i sessi, all' "anticapitalismo" ed alla valenza "rivoluzionaria" insiti nei movimenti femministi (Ergas 1986: 64).

During both the students' and workers' protests many extra-parliamentary groups were created with the purpose of helping these revolts to favour a deep change in society and in factories. The most important ones were *Lotta continua* (LC), *Avanguardia operaia* (AO) and *Potere operaio* (Potop) (Bracke 2014: 52). According to Bracke, since several feminists had been members of such groups these extra-parliamentary associations played an important role in the development of the political strategies of the feminist groups. Then, because of the conflicts between men and women within these organizations, several women left these groups in the mid seventies (Bracke 2014: 52). Subsequently, the extra parliamentary organizations dissolved: after 1976 they were no longer able to involve large numbers of people belonging to different social classes, and traditional parties took the role that these associations had occupied (Ergas 1987: 17).

Potop, for instance, was important for the feminist movement because the women members of this group campaigned for equal salaries but, especially, because according to Bracke feminist groups demanding wages for housewives were strongly influenced by the actions of the *Potop*. The women in AO and LC (founded respectively in Turin and in Milan) focused their political action mostly on the wages, and they had an important influence simply because thanks to their campaigns in the streets and in workplaces they obtained great visibility on the mainstream press (Bracke 2014: 52-53).

Another group with a strong link to the civil rights movement was the one of the newspaper *Il Manifesto*. It was composed of people who had belonged to many different organizations (both parties and extra parliamentary groups), feminists and students, and it managed to have a great influence on the whole left wing. Particularly important figures for feminists were Lidia Menapace and Ida Dominijanni, who constantly discussed and challenged the different stances of both national and international feminists (Bracke 2014: 52).

Finally, we also need to mention the group of the *marxisti-leninisti*, which played a particularly important role in the students' movement. In fact, some of the women who formed the first feminist groups were students and, in particular, Serena Castaldi (the founder of the *Anabasi* group and the translator and editor of *Donne è bello*) before her travel in the United States had been a member of a Marxist-Leninist group at the Statale University in Milan. Tobagi in his detailed account of the story of the Marxist-Leninist extra-parliamentary group explains that it was created as a result of a break in the international communist party. In fact, in 1956 Khrushchev started the process of De-Stalinization and approach of western democracies, which caused a rift with the People's Republic of China. Since the leaders of the PCI decided to follow Khrushchev in this move, the most extremist groups within the communist party formed an extra-parliamentary group, which initially was not a proper organization but it was simply composed of small groups of people that used to meet in cultural clubs. In 1964 the different Marxist-leninist groups were finally ready to establish a connection with one another, and created a new group which founded a monthly magazine (the *Nuova Unità*) with the purpose of communicating its political stances (Tobagi 1970: 19-25). In 1967, as already explained on page 48, students organized protests in many universities first in the North and then all over Italy. Tobagi explains that at first students belonged to many different students

groups and associations, but in 1968, after having obtained the right to organize assemblies and a different examination system, most students decided to carry on their fight both inside the university (in order to make sure that teachers carried out a real and permanent change of their programs and teaching methods) and, most of all, outside the university (in order to boost a cultural change in society) (Tobagi 1970: 69-70). The dissatisfaction towards the traditional parties favoured the success of the Marxist-leninist group, which soon became the larger and most influential group within the students' movement (Tobagi 1970: 70). Tobagi also mentions the most important cultural myths of the communist university students. Mao was obviously the main source of inspiration for the Marxist-leninists,²³ but the other emblems of their revolution were the Vietcong fighters and Ho ci min because of their fight against capitalism and, for similar reasons, Camilo Torres and Ernesto Guevara (Tobagi 1970: 69).

After having briefly explored the most important extra-parliamentary organizations in the 60s, we will now start the description of the most important feminist groups of the early 70s. As maintained by Bracke, these groups distanced themselves from the political actions typical of the late 60s and from traditional political groups, and started to explore new political practices on the basis of their own life experiences (Bracke 2014: 64).

3.2.2. Analysis of the main Italian second-wave feminist organizations

In this section we will analyse the main Italian second-wave feminist organizations. Particular attention will be devoted to the characteristics of the groups and to the relationships intercurring between them. In fact, these relationships are particularly important for this thesis because, as pointed out by Passerini: "I materiali arrivavano il più delle volte grazie a persone che li avevano tra-sportati o tra-dotti attraverso reticoli di varia natura" (Passerini 2005: 187). These "reticoli" are the intense network of relationships established by the feminist groups and, therefore, if we know more about them we will develop an understanding of the spread of *Donne è bello* and of the influence it had on the Italian feminist movement.

²³ In his account Tobagi explains that Mao was for Italian Marxist-Leninists not only the most important source of inspiration but also a supporter, since Italian Marxist-Leninists also received funding from China (Tobagi: 21).

The earliest feminist group in Italy was *Demau* (or “gruppo demistificazione autoritarismo patriarcale”), which was founded in Milan between December 1965 and January 1966 by Daniela Pellegrini. Although some men were involved, women constituted its main driving force. Their principles, published in 1969 in their manifesto, consisted of opposition to the concept of the integration of women in society, the demystification of authoritarianism, the search for female autonomy and, finally, male emancipation (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 145). In an early phase, the group also focused its activities on the discussion of the Bosco law which, according to the group, instead of helping working women, encouraged discrimination against them. However, after a harsh debate with the *UDI* members regarding this law, the *Demau* collective abandoned any social action and focused on the study and analysis of key western texts such as Freud, Lacan and the sacred texts. Although they wanted to continue, in 1968 and 1969 many members of the group decided to leave and to join student protests because they were attracted by the possibility of influencing the political situation more directly, and the group was left with only four members (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 146-147). The situation improved in 1970, when news about a small consciousness-raising group arrived from the United States and two new groups were founded: *Rivolta femminile* and *Anabasi* (more attention will be devoted to the *Anabasi* group in the next chapter). The *Demau* women took part in the meetings of these new groups and this sharing of information gave a new lease of life to *Demau*, which reached twenty members in only a couple of years (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 148-149).

While the importance of the *Demau* lies in its being the first Italian feminist group, *Rivolta Femminile* is one of the most important Italian collectives in terms of publications, numbers of participants and actions undertaken. It was founded by Carla Lonzi in Rome in the summer of 1970 when, with the contribution of Carla Accardi and Elvira Banotti, she wrote the *Manifesto of Rivolta Femminile*. Then, in September of that year, Carla Lonzi returned to Milan and created the Milanese group, and in 1971 she went on to form groups in Turin, Genoa, Florence and Lugano (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 158). In Milan, the group met with great success and, in only a few weeks, many women from different social backgrounds decided to take part in it. The point of departure for this experience was the rejection of male culture; the resetting of all pre-existing cultural models, in order to let women rediscover themselves; and *autocoscienza* was the tool that would make this

process possible. Consciousness-raising played a particularly important role for *Rivolta femminile*: it was not simply a “training” but a long and difficult process that could not be taught or described and that required much time and concentration. For these reasons, in 1971 the members of *Rivolta femminile* decided that they could no longer accept new members in the group and that they would not take part in meetings and conferences, but would communicate their ideas only by means of individual exchanges and writings. In 1970, the group founded its own publishing house, which allowed the writings of Carla Lonzi and (to a lesser degree) the other members of the group to be published and to spread in Italy and abroad (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 168). An important characteristic of these texts is their focus on the individual: since consciousness-raising is a process of self-discovery, the focus of these texts was not the text itself but the person who wrote it. For the same reason, while most feminists used to sign writings and pamphlets only with their names in order to stress their belonging to a group, in *Rivolta femminile* women signed their writings using their full name in order to stress that consciousness-raising allows each woman to discover herself (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 169-170).

Another very important feminist group was *Lotta Femminista*, which had characteristics very different from those of the groups just mentioned. This group was founded by Maria Rosa della Costa in Padua in 1970 in accordance with the theories of Selma James and in line with the tradition of British feminism. It was partly composed of women coming from *Potere Operaio* (a left-wing extra-parliamentary group very active between 1969 and 1973), and analysed the position of women in a capitalist society and their exploitation (Guerra 2005: 37). From Padua and Ferrara (the first bases of the collective) the group spread to other cities and regions, and finally arrived in Milan in 1972. The stances of these women were evidently completely different from those of many other collectives: instead of concentrating on separation from men and on the need for self-analysis, these women condemned the failure of the riots of 1968 to bring about real change, but did not reject Marxist ideology. They campaigned for a housework salary, and their political activity was based completely on taking a practical and visible stand against institutions (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 183). The group in Milan distinguished itself from the others by deciding to organize consciousness-raising sessions first in their homes and then in the *Cherubini* collective. However, although they were sharing space with other collectives, their relationships with other groups were never easy

because while *Cherubini* women intended to discuss existential problems, for the *Lotta Femminista* members the core of the problem was always economic (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 185-186).

The *Cherubini* collective was formed at the end of 1972, with the purpose of creating a common place for all those women or groups in Milan who were interested in *autocoscienza* (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 188). In 1971, after the diffusion of translations from American feminism, women with very different social and political backgrounds belonging to different feminist groups started to meet in private houses, to seek information and to share points of view. In that period, women used to attend the meetings of different groups in order to gather more information about feminism, and they also organized meetings in which different feminist groups could share their ideas and debate. When the growth of numbers made meetings in private houses no longer possible, they started to meet at the *Umanitaria*, an association promoting social and cultural activities (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 189-190). Considering the great success of this initiative, in 1972 some groups of women decided to collect money and to hire a room in *Cherubini* Street in order to give all women a place to meet, whether they belonged to groups practising *autocoscienza* or not. Apart from the women of *Rivolta femminile* and *Anabasi*, who decided to carry on with consciousness-raising on their own, the location in *Cherubini* Street became an important landmark for all those women who were interested in consciousness-raising but did not belong to any group and it soon became very popular (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 191-192).

Another very important group in Milan was the *Libreria delle donne*. In 1974, inspired by the *Librairie des Femmes* in Paris, a group of women belonging to the *Cherubini* collective decided to open a place where women could not only talk about their problems, but also work together. In particular, the founders of this bookshop wanted to create a place where people could discover the rich literary work by women. Moreover, this library also worked as a window for feminism, supporting communication between the feminist movement and all those women who were interested in it (Calabrò and Grasso: 232-233). A group of women belonging to the bookshop also started to publish the magazine *Sottosopra* in 1974 (more information provided in the preceding chapter) and *Via Dogana* in 1991 (Codognotto and Moccagatta 1997: 25).

Finally, the most important collective in Turin will be briefly mentioned. Its story is important because it is entangled with that of the feminist movement in Milan, but also because relationships with the American movement played an important role in it. In fact, most of the women who took part in the movement started their political experience in the *CR* collective (*Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie*), which was a group related with the left wing party composed of people from both genders aiming to provide information relating to the revolutionary struggles in the United States (such as the Black Panthers, the Vietnam war, etc.). Many of its members were women, who worked mainly on the translation of documents from the American new left. Starting from September 1970, these women also produced a supplement related to the American women's movement called *Note*, which contained articles about topics considered useful to promote discussion in Turin, such as abortion and the trade unions (Zumaglino 1996: 60-61). In 1972, the differences within the group became unbearable and several women, who felt that their opinions were not taken into consideration, decided to leave the *CR* collective and to create a new group composed only of women called *Collettivo delle Compagne* (Zumaglino 1996: 114-115). This decision was also supported by Maria Teresa Fenoglio, who in 1971 had the opportunity to spend some time in Boston, where she lived in a commune and took part in consciousness-raising sessions. When she came back she told her friends everything about her experience in the United States, and the other members of the group were so thrilled that they decided to start practising consciousness-raising and to create a commune in Turin following the model of the American ones (Zumaglino 1996: 120-123). In order to overcome their feeling of isolation, the members of this new collective decided to build a great network of relationships with other feminists: they often attended the meetings at the *Umanitaria* in Milan and they took part in national and international meetings and holidays (Zumaglino 1996: 125).

Another very important characteristic of the feminist movement in Turin was the attention to women's health. In fact, in 1971, Maria Teresa Fenoglio brought back from her stay in the United States the first edition of Boston Women's Health Collective's volume *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which was just a very short pamphlet. Angela Miglietti immediately understood its importance and, although the other members of the group refused to help her, she started to translate it. In the meantime, she contacted the authors of the volume and in 1973, when the Boston Women's Health Collective published it as a book, she obtained a copy of this new

edition and decided to translate this as well (Zumaglino 1996: 298). Then, in 1974, Feltrinelli offered to publish her translation because the authors had agreed on the condition that the translation was by Angela Miglietti (Zumaglino 1996: 299). Several scholars have stated the great importance of this translation, which had an impact on the Italian feminist movement and became particularly common in those groups practising consciousness-raising (Signorelli 2006: 62; Passerini 1991: 182). Another signal of the importance that women's health had in Turin was the creation in 1975 of a network of "consultori" coordinated by feminist groups and some left-wing associations where women could obtain important information regarding their bodies and sexuality (Zumaglino 1996: 299).

Finally, it is necessary to mention two other women's organizations with objectives and characteristics quite different from the collectives just mentioned: the *UDI* (Unione Donne Italiane) and the *MLD* (Movimento di Liberazione della Donna). As already mentioned on page 47 the *UDI* was founded in Rome in September 1944, just after Rome had been liberated by the allies. Initially, *UDI* was formed by both communist and catholic women, but at the end of the war catholic women felt the need to fight against communism and founded other women's organizations (such as the *CIF*, or *Centro Italiano Femminile*), while *UDI* remained associated with the Italian communist and socialist parties (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 54). The main targets of *UDI* have always been women's everyday concrete problems, such as the need to accommodate maternity with a full-time job. It is evident that although both *UDI* and the collectives fought for women's rights, their approach was very different, and this explains the reaction that the young members of the collectives had towards the members of *UDI*.

One final group to mention is the *Mld*, or *Movimento di liberazione della donna*, an organization with strong similarities to the Italian Radical Party founded in Rome with the purpose of connecting the many small collectives present and to promote demonstrations on a variety of different topics such as the abortion law, for which a referendum was promoted by the *Mld* in 1971 (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 87-91).

Most of these groups were often in contact with members of other groups because they took part in meetings and conferences or, simply, they were friends with women in other groups and attended consciousness-raising sessions by other groups. Particularly important for the development of this "feminist network" was the Cherubini collective (see page 56).

This analysis of the main characteristics of the most important feminist groups created in northern Italy in the early 70s shows that these groups generally (some exceptions are *Lotta Femminista* and *Rivolta femminile*) did not manage to expand outside the borders of the city in which they were created but, nevertheless, they established a network of relationships that favoured the circulation of the ideas and the growth of the movement. Another important characteristic of Italian feminist groups emerging from this analysis is the great variety of different approaches, showing us that Italian feminists always developed the practices and techniques they learned from other groups (either Italian or foreign) according to their personal needs and priorities. These two characteristics have great importance for this research because they provide important information regarding Italian women's approach to "foreign" information and how the information included in *Donne è bello* spread.

3.2.3. Main characteristics of the Italian second-wave feminism

The start of the second-wave movement in Italy almost coincided with the strikes and riots organized in many cities by the workers, who wanted better wages and working conditions, together with university students, who demanded a more satisfactory and modern style of teaching (Lussana 2012: 45). For many women these strikes were an important occasion for emancipation because they gave them an opportunity for personal growth, but they soon discovered that also in the *PCI* (Italian Communist Party) and in the other new left worker groups such as *Potere Operaio* and *Lotta Continua* involved in these strikes there was not much room for women, as all the most important decisions were taken exclusively by men (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 80). Although, as pointed out by Anna Rossi-Doria, the great majority of those women who became involved in the feminist movement had not taken part in the protests of 1968, those involved in the student and political movements played an important role because, similarly to what had happened in the United States, they noticed that in their groups they were treated exactly as women were treated in society (Rossi-Doria 2005: 3). As a reaction to this many women realized that they could not fight for an improvement of their lives with men, and they

decided to carry out “separatismo”: they formed their own groups from which men were completely excluded.²⁴

According to Bracke, the “separatism” was not only a consequence of the limiting role that women played within the politicized groups, but it was also a strategy and the result of a reflection about the nature of women’s oppression. Together with *Rivolta Femminile* the Trento group *Il cerchio spezzato* was one of the first groups to adopt “separatism”. The reasons behind this choice were explained in their manifesto, where the Trento group states the similarity of women to black people and the fact that their oppression is based on their biological difference rather than on their social role. Therefore, before fighting for the freedom of the proletariat, women must fight for freedom on their own (Bracke 2014: 65). Similarly, Lidia Menapace in an article written for *Il Manifesto* in 1971 strongly criticized the American women’s movement because of their assertion that women constituted an oppressed group. Her analysis is embedded in the Marxist doctrine according to which, as she explains:

ogni forma di discriminazione tra le persone, motivata dalla razza, dal sesso, dalla religione, dalla lingua è inaccettabile, l’unica che ha un fondamento reale è quella che si richiama alla collocazione nei rapporti di produzione e nei modi di produzione, cioè la discriminazione di classe (Menapace 1972: 425).

In her work *Per un movimento politico di liberazione della donna* Menapace hosts this article and also several letters she received with comments and critiques about it.²⁵ Particularly important are the letters from the *Demau* and from other feminist groups stating that women’s oppression is completely different from class oppression, and that “Il rifiuto del confronto col maschio è una conquista tattica fondamentale” (Menapace 1972: 431).²⁶

Another important consequence of the presence of many women in left wing groups is the “doppia militanza”. While some women who had been members of right wing parties or extra parliamentary organizations decided to opt for the separatism,

²⁴ The only Italian feminist group which initially accepted men was the *Demau*.

²⁵ The exchange of letters between Menapace and the feminist groups is quoted by Bracke (Bracke 2014: 66).

²⁶ The letter bearing this title is signed “Due gruppi di Milano”.

many others decided not to leave the extra-parliamentary groups, but to engage in both fights (against capitalism and against patriarchy) at the same time. Both Anita Pasquali and Grazia Zuffa state that the contrasts between women and men within extra parliamentary groups soon led to a break, so that the “doppia militanza” was mostly experienced by the members of political parties (Pasquali 1989: 147; Zuffa 1987: 42). Anita Pasquali explains that it is due to the fact that the extra-parliamentary groups were smaller than parties and in the early 70s (when women started to join feminist groups) of recent formation, therefore women did not have enough time to develop a sense of belonging. Another important difference lies in the fact that extra parliamentary groups were so deeply focused on Marxist analysis that there was simply no space to acknowledge the problems of women: “Il problema della doppia militanza, quando esplode il femminismo, non trova, nei gruppi della cosiddetta sinistra extraparlamentare, canali e sedi nei quali comunque “rielaborare” il conflitto che si affaccia” (Pasquali 1989: 147). On the contrary, the larger dimension of political parties²⁷ had given women more possibilities to debate issue concerning feminism during assemblies or groups such as the “cellule femminili” within the *Pci* and the “gruppi femminili” in the *Psi* (Pasquali 1989: 150-151). In conclusion, Pasquali also mentions that leaving a political group was for many women very difficult because the communist ideology had played such a great role in their lives, that it was very difficult for them to leave the class struggle aside in order to focus on feminist liberation (Pasquali 1989: 148).

Similarly to the students’ and workers’ movements in the late 60s and early 70s, the women’s movement was also characterized by different phases and by an intense political debate. The first phase of the Italian feminist movement (early 70s) was dominated by *autocoscienza*,²⁸ a practice that, as stated by the women of the Milan’s *Biblioteca delle donne*, contributed to turning the Italian women’s movement into a mass movement (*Non credere di avere dei diritti* 1988: 32). The practice of *autocoscienza* met its objective, which consisted in raising women’s consciousness about their gender and their oppression, but in the mid 70s because of the difficulty of talking about their personal experiences women decided to interrupt this practice

²⁷ “pensiamo soltanto alla consistenza del Pci: le iscritte, un po’ di più un po’ di meno, sono sempre oscillate intorno alle 400000. Se “uscivi”, perciò, non è che lasciavi 500 compagne, ma 400000, cioè una solida casa, nella quale ti sentivi forte e rassicurata” (Pasquali: 150).

²⁸ More information about *autocoscienza* will be provided in chapter seven.

(*Non credere* 1988: 39). At two meetings organized in 1972 (one at La Tranche and another one near Rouen) Italian feminists met the French group *Politique et psychanalyse*, which played a very important role in the evolution of Italian feminism because, while consciousness-raising was focused on the discovery of the differences between men and women, during both meetings Italian women had the opportunity to be surrounded only by women and to learn what women had in common:

Il rapporto della donna con l'altra donna è impensato della cultura umana. Lo strumento femminile trasformatore del mondo è la pratica di rapporto tra donne: questa è, ridetta in breve, l'invenzione delle francesi di *Politique et psychanalyse* (*Non credere* 1988: 43).

As a result of these meetings in most groups women decided to focus less on the analysis of the relationship between women and men, and more on the relationships between women (*Non credere* 1988: 47). This resulted in a new practice that replaced consciousness-raising between 1974 and 1975 in few groups in Milan, Turin and Rome. This aimed to achieve a deeper knowledge of the relationship between women by means of the analysis of their behaviour and fantasies (*Non credere* 1988: 48-49).

Then, in 1976, women's political practices evolved again into a new practice that they called "pratica del fare". As pointed out in *Non credere di avere dei diritti*, the Italian women's movement evolved its practices very quickly: "Sia per tentare un approccio nuovo a un vecchio problema sia per l'insorgere di un problema impreveduto" (*Non credere* 1988: 57). This shows that the movement was characterized by a very active debate. The *pratica del fare* is an evolution of the intense relationships that women had established with one another, and was aimed at creating even more places where women could carry out their political practices, such as libraries, bookshops, publishing houses and clubs. This practice was characterized by a new attention given to the material aspects of the movements, such as the places where women used to meet. From the point of view of the content of the debate, the already present topics were preserved and expanded. A document by the *Sottosopra* groups states that women's lives must be analyzed on many different levels ("biologico-sessuale, inconscio, ideologico ed economico"), and that the political

action of the movement must take into consideration entirely these levels from all their different points of view:

la nostra pratica politica deve affrontare e coinvolgere tutti questi livelli e darsi il tempo, i mezzi e di luoghi per trasformare la realtà del nostro corpo espropriato (nella sua attività procreatrice, nella sua sessualità) per trasformare la realtà sociale, politica e ideologica (*Non credere* 1988: 93).²⁹

Although it is evident that Italian feminists were very eager to undertake political practices, a consistent part of the feminist movement refused to join the campaigns against divorce and abortion. As far as the referendum on divorce is concerned, the Roman *MLD* and the *Lotta femminista* group campaigned in support of the Law 898 (which allowed the divorce), and they were supported by the Radical Party and by the *PSI* while the *PCI*, although sharing the same position of the feminists, decided not to support them. However, most feminist groups decided to refuse the “traditional politics” and decided to keep their focus on the political practices within their groups (Bracke 2014: 74). Similarly to the case of the divorce, also with the referendum against the abortion law the feminist movement was split between the groups that decided to campaign (such as the *UDI*, the *MLD*, the Radical Party and women in the trade unions) and those that decided to discuss this topic in a different place. In fact, the women of the Cherubini collective organized in 1975 the conference “Sessualità, procreazione, maternità, aborto” and released a special edition of *Sottosopra* (named after the conference),³⁰ in which they pointed out that instead of demanding free abortion, they rather intended to analyze sexual practices and the relationships between sexes (Bracke 2014: 84-85).

As far as the theoretical thought of the Italian feminist movement is concerned, the theories developed by Italian thinkers show that they drew inspiration from international thinkers (mainly American and French) but, at the same time, (as already mentioned in the introduction) they were always closely related to the political debate within the Italian feminist movement. The first important contribution to the Italian feminist thought came from Carla Lonzi, who in the early 70s explained

²⁹ From the document called *Scrivere, pubblicare, fare un giornale e la pratica politica delle donne* by the group of *Sottosopra*. The document is undated but, according to the writers of *Non credere*, it was released in 1975.

³⁰ In the article *Noi sull'aborto facciamo un lavoro diverso: perchè non partecipiamo alle manifestazioni*.

that in order to achieve liberation women should not fight for equality, but be proud of their “difference”, which they discovered by means of consciousness-raising. In the 80s Italian feminist groups were in a crisis due to the lack of common goals and to the fact that all the practices they tried already exhausted their scopes. Muraro, together with the women of *Diotima*, a group of philosophers founded in the university of Verona, found a way to give a new lease of life to the feminist movement. Although similarly based on the refusal of equality and the evaluation of women’s “differenza”, Muraro’s theory, inspired by the theories of the French philosopher Luce Irigaray and of the American poet Adrienne Rich, gave the key term “differenza” a new meaning. Instead of defining difference as “psychological, social, or cultural differences” (as Lonzi did), difference became “a process of differentiation from the universal” (Lazzaro-Weis 2002: 40). This new turn, as explained by Bracke, is also the consequence of women’s political practices: despite the fact that all the practices developed had helped women to establish intense relationships with one another, the differences among women (such as social and cultural differences) still needed to be addressed, and this new concept of “difference”:

would positively value differences among women as the basis for a feminist politics, focusing on how sexual difference operates socially (rather than emerging from the subject) and intersects with other forms of difference and on how the system of oppression and privilege created by it interacts with other such systems (Bracke 2014: 193).

The political practice that could allow women to discover their own values and differences was “affidamento”, which required a “stronger” woman (who symbolically corresponds to a “mother”) to help a “weaker” woman (a “daughter”) to achieve her *liberazione* and discover her *differenza*. As pointed out by Bracke, this theory was strongly criticized because, while feminist groups had always strongly opposed any hierarchy, this new theory required an unequal relationship between two women (Bracke 2014: 195). The ultimate goal of this relationship between “mothers” and “daughters” was the discovery of the “ordine simbolico della madre”: a female alternative to the Lacanian symbolic order through which women discover new “non patriarchal” language and cultural aspects (Restaino Cavarero 1999: 106). The first publication with this new turn was the text *Più donne che uomini*, which was

published in the green issue of *Sottosopra* in 1983 and then, this theory was further expanded in *Diotima. Il pensiero della differenza sessuale* (1987), composed of texts written by all the members of *Diotima* (Restaino Cavarero: 105-106).

By analyzing the story of Italian feminism it is evident that it has intense relationships with the international feminist movement. The most noticeable feature is the presence of several issues and practices (such as the students' movement, the fight for the abortion and consciousness-raising) in most western societies. More specifically, Italian feminists have constantly looked for connections with foreign organizations and thinkers, which have inspired their practices and theories. According to Bracke, this is partly due to the initial difficulty to establish relationships with other groups in other regions, but it is also a consequence of the fact that when many feminists left their civil rights groups they felt isolated in the new political scene (Bracke 2014: 16). Some examples are the close connections that Italian feminists established with French feminists in the second half of the decade, and the important influence of the philosophers Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva. The British socialist feminists Sheila Rowbotham and Juliet Mitchell were also popular, especially in those areas characterized by an important influence of socialism such as Turin and Bologna. The North American influence played a predominant role in the early 70s both in terms of thought and practices (Bracke 2014: 17). Then, as mentioned in the introduction, foreign feminists had an impact on Italian feminists also thanks to the translations of their writings: according to Bracke the most important texts are Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*, Anne Koedt's *Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* and *Our Bodies, Ourselves* by the Boston Women's Health Book Group (Bracke 2014: 69). However, the history of Italian feminism always shows that Italian feminists always carefully selected foreign inputs according to their national agenda, and constantly adapted them to the characteristics and needs of the members of each group. In fact, another important characteristic of Italian feminism pointed out by Bracke is the influence that the regional and local divisions play on every aspect of Italian culture. Therefore, foreign inputs had different impacts in different areas and were adopted in different ways according to the area (Bracke 2014: 19).

At the same time, Italian feminism also had an influence on the international movement. According to Bracke, for instance, texts by Lonzi were widely read in France and in West Germany (Bracke 2014: 16), but the most influential Italian

feminist theory abroad is without doubt *Diotima's* "pensiero della differenza sessuale" (Lazzaro-Weis 2002: 32). Lazzaro-Weis explains that the Italian feminist thought became popular abroad only in 1990 with De Lauretis' English translation of *Non credere di avere dei diritti*. The purpose of this volume, as stated by De Lauretis in its introduction, was that of helping the American feminist thought to shift its focus from the analysis of women's essential characteristics to the consideration of the differences among women (Lazzaro-Weis 2002: 33). Although according to Lazzaro-Weis *Diotima's* thought did not get the expected success in the United States, the theory of the *affidamento* met with both interest and criticism in the international community, and allowed Italian feminist thought to be mentioned in the international genealogy of feminism (Lazzaro-Weis 2002: 31-45).

3.3. Main characteristics and strands of feminism in the United States.

As previously mentioned, the early Italian feminist movement found support and inspiration in American second-wave feminism. It is therefore necessary to fully understand the main characteristics and strands associated with the American Women's Liberation movement because this discussion will also help us to understand the cultural background at the base of many articles present in *Donne è bello*.

Second-wave feminism started in the United States in the late 60s and developed because of many factors. According to Barbara Ryan, one of the roots of the feminist movement is the dissatisfaction of women in the 50s. After World War II, women were persuaded to leave their paid jobs (which they had taken during the war in order to replace the soldiers) and to resume their domestic roles. Even if the participation of women in the labour force continued to rise during the post-war period, it was only with their shame and psychological constriction. The limits and consequences of this situation on women are described very effectively by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (Ryan 1992: 41-42). According to Friedan, the "feminine mystique" is the idea that women can have a happy and satisfactory life with the traditional roles of mother and housewife. The protagonists of Friedan's book were suburban middle-class white housewives, and the solution offered by

Friedan to their “problem that has no name” was a full-time job. On the other hand, according to Friedan women should not choose their careers over their roles and mothers and wives. In her opinion, women do need a family in order to fulfill their lives, but the care of their family is simply not enough to express their creativity (Tong 1995: 22-24).

According to Friedan gender justice should be achieved by means of political actions in the major state institutions. In 1966, a group of women activists belonging to the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and to the National Woman’s Party promoted in the Congress the debate about the Title VII, a section of the Civil Rights Bill regarding employment equality. Although thanks to their effort the Title VII was discussed, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission decided not to carry out any amendment in the section regarding sex discrimination. In June during the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women, a group of delegates met Betty Friedan and wrote a resolution asking the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) to end sex discrimination. When they understood that the resolution was not allowed to be discussed they decided to create an organization designed to work for social change on gender issues, and they called it NOW, or National Organization for Women (Ryan 1992: 43-44). This organization is commonly considered the basis of liberal feminism, one of the main feminist strands whose thought follows that of the eighteen and nineteen century theorists Mary Wollstonecraft, Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor. In spite of the obvious differences relating to the historical context, the current founded by Friedan (similarly to her predecessors) considers emancipation the main goal, to be achieved by means of social reforms. Therefore, women should be given the same opportunities as men to pursue a career in every field, and not just in the traditional “feminine” sectors of teaching and nursing (Tong 1995: 28). Together with Betty Friedan, the most important feminists belonging to this tradition in the twentieth century were Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and Ti-Grace Atkinson, although she left NOW because she did not agree with the leadership structure.

Second-wave feminism, however, also evolved from civil rights movements, which were numerous in the United States at the beginning of the 60s and helped many women to start their experience with feminist activism. The most important movements (to which many of the most important second-wave feminists belonged) were the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), founded by black

students in 1960, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). SNCC organized demonstrations in the South in order to challenge the establishment, but had disintegrated by the end of the decade because of the difficulty of developing a partnership. SDS was founded in 1960 as the youth group of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), an old left-wing group, and tried to build an “interracial movement of the poor” by constructing the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) (Echols 1989: 25). Even if their expectations were not fulfilled, ERAP acted as the basis of the welfare rights movement.

As Echols points out, the relationship of women’s liberation to the social movements of the 60s was very complicated: even though both the civil rights and the new left movements were dominated by men, these movements gave women the opportunity to develop political skills and to break out of traditional roles (Echols 1989: 25). In fact, in the black community, women were as effective as men, and white women found in them new role models. The new left contributed to the development of feminist consciousness by encouraging female activists to define personal concerns as political issues. However, the racial contrasts within these movements became stronger and exploded after the Freedom Summer,³¹ when many white volunteers noticed that they exerted little influence on the decisions taken. The situation in the SDS was quite similar, and during the National Convention in 1967 and the National Conference for New Politics (NCNP), it became clear that women did not have any possibility of discussing their topics within the new left, and separation from men became inevitable.

The radical feminist strand was created by a group of women who had been members of various civil rights movement and had decided to leave them when they realized that the liberation of women could not become a subject of discussion within the new left groups. Despite the division between new left groups and radical feminist groups, left wing ideologies played an important role also within the feminist groups. In fact, Willis points out that: “Those of us who first defined radical feminist took for granted that “radical” implied antiracist, anticapitalist, and anti-imperialist.

³¹ A campaign launched in June 1964 by the SNCC in order to register a high number of black voters in Mississippi.

We saw ourselves as radicalizing the left by expanding the definition of radical to include feminism” (Willis 1984: 93).

Radical feminism is defined by Willis as a “political movement to end male supremacy in all areas of social and economic life” (Willis 1984: 91). In fact, radical feminists devoted their attention to a wide range of different both public and private issues. In fact, together with public issues such as the liberalization of abortion, they also demanded: “total equality in the so-called private sphere – equal sharing of housework and child care, equal attention to our emotional and sexual needs” (Willis 1984: 92).

The first radical movement in the United States was the New York Radical Women (NYRW), which was founded by Pam Allen and Shulamith Firestone in 1967, and included a number of the movement’s most significant women, such as Kathie Sarachild, Shulamith Firestone, Anne Koedt, Kate Millett and Ellen Willis. It peaked in the autumn of 1968, when meetings were attended by about one hundred women (Echols 1989: 73-74). From the beginning, NYRW was divided along politico-feminist lines, and this schism grew bigger as the two factions started to discuss the causes of women’s oppression (men for feminists, capitalism for the politicized) and about the best strategy to adopt (actions for politics, consciousness-raising for feminists) (Echols 1989: 76). According to Ellen Willis, “feminists” started to call themselves “radical feminists”, and fiercely opposed any relationship with the left or leftist men, at least until they started to consider feminism as an issue (Willis 1984: 93). Although radical women opposed the left, Willis points out how the influence of Marxism was evident not only in “politics”, but even in “feminist” groups:

Despite its oppositional stance toward the existing left, radical feminism was deeply influenced by Marxism. While many w.l.m. “politics” tried to fit women’s liberation into pre-existing Marxist categories, radical feminists appropriated certain Marxist ideas and assumptions (specifically, concepts of class interest, class struggle, and materialism) and applied them to male-female relations. Maoism, especially, was instrumental in shaping radical feminist ideas about the nature of power and oppression (Willis 1984: 94-95).

An important innovation undertaken by the NYRW was the practice of consciousness-raising, which later became highly relevant also for the Italian

movement. The group began consciousness-raising when Anne Forer said during a meeting that women had no idea about the ways in which they felt oppressed, and therefore they needed to “raise their consciousness”, to understand. This practice, however, was not an invention of this group, as Sarachild in a 1973 speech explained that some women had learned this practice in the civil rights movement in the early 1960s, and it was common also among peasants during the Chinese revolution and guerrillas during the revolutionary struggle in Guatemala (Echols 1989: 84). The debate over consciousness-raising as well as the structure of the sessions became quite important in NYRW: while for some (such as Pam Allen), consciousness-raising needed to be well structured and was important for its psychological benefits, for Sarachild it needed to be unstructured, and it was mainly a way to obtain more information about women’s lives (Echols 1989: 83).

Ellen Willis explains that consciousness-raising was an important tool to discover more about gender relations and about women’s subordination, which is common in every social class and race. However, she points out how more attention to social differences would have attracted more women (especially black and working-class women) to the movement, which was mostly composed of white middle-class women. Considering gender as the most important oppression was, in her opinion, the result of the conflict with the left which, on the contrary, considered class as the primary form of oppression (Willis 1984: 95-96).

In 1969, Sarachild and Willis created a new radical group named Redstockings, a spinoff from NYRW. One of its features was a strong defence of the pro-woman line, according to which women’s behaviour is the result of external conditions and not of their conditioning. The manifesto also named men (all men) as the main cause of women’s oppression and, in order to unite all women despite their economic and racial differences (which had been the main source of controversy in the civil rights movements), repudiated all “economic, racial, educational or status privileges that divide us from other women” (Echols 1989: 145). According to Willis, an important merit of Redstockings was its focus on the everyday lives of women, who were encouraged to think about their personal experiences and to take from there their desire to act in order to change their situation. However, the group simply considered male supremacy the main problem in the family, and therefore failed to make a deeper analysis of the family structure based also on biological differences and on the institution of marriage (Willis 1984: 97-98).

One of the most radical groups was The Feminists, founded by Ti-Grace Atkinson, an upper-class educated woman who became strongly involved in NOW but resigned in 1968 because she did not approve of the structure of the organization which, in her opinion, did not allow all the members to state their opinions freely. Soon after leaving NOW she founded the October 17th Movement, which in 1969 she renamed The Feminists (Echols 1989: 168-169). This new group slowly gathered a consistent number of women who were, for the great majority, disaffected members of Redstockings, such as Koedt and Kearon. Their positions were often very far from those of Redstockings, as they strongly refused to adopt the practice of consciousness-raising, took an elitist and vanguard stand and adopted the style and rhetoric of the New Left (Echols 1989: 170). Willis points out that another important difference between Redstockings and The Feminists was the emphasis given to lesbianism, as many women became lesbians solely for political reasons (Willis 1984: 104). This point evidently shows that some feminist groups (such as Cell 16) developed a very aggressive and extreme political agenda, which probably misinterpreted women's legitimate requests.

The last of the radical groups founded in New York was the New York Radical Feminists (or NYRF) group, the result of the success of the Women's Liberation movement. In fact, thousands of women in New York wanted to be involved in the movement, but the existing groups did not seem ready or willing to organize them (Echols 1989: 186). Therefore, in 1969, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt launched a new group which aimed to be open to all those women of every class and race, and distant from the ideological and administrative conflicts of the other groups. Consciousness-raising was fundamental to the organization, and compulsory for the formative period of all new members, who also needed to fully understand feminist theory and history.³² However, not all the women involved were as radical as Firestone and Koedt, and this rigid organization was not able to avoid tensions, which exploded only six months after the group's foundation and caused the dissolution of one of the brigades.

As Echols points out, by 1973 radical feminism was beginning to give way to liberal feminism and cultural feminism (Echols 1989: 243). Liberal feminism was probably favoured because of the new importance given to the personal sphere:

³² More specific information about the organization of this group will be provided in chapter six.

even if Betty Friedan often described consciousness-raising as a form of naval gazing, (Ryan 1992: 47) some chapters organized consciousness-raising groups as a prelude to political activism. Another aspect that probably failed to benefit the movement was separatism. At first it was essential in the radical groups but, later on, its meaning changed to the adoption of a separatist lifestyle, and this excluded all married women from membership. In contrast, even if the role of men in NOW was marginal, it never promoted separatism and made it clear that its name was the National Organization for Women, not 'of' women (Ryan 1992: 59). Therefore, NOW attracted women because it appeared more open and friendly to those with no past feminist experience (Ryan 1992: 199-200).

Moreover, Willis explains that radical feminism slowly disappeared also because of the unfavourable political and economic situation of the 70s. In fact, while the most "practical" issues (such as abortion) raised by radical feminists became reforms, it became more difficult to demand more rights in the private sphere because, as Willis explains:

the expansive prosperity and utopian optimism of the 60s succumbed to an era of economic limits and political backlash. The conservative retrenchment of the 70s had a critical negative impact, not only in strengthening political resistance to feminist demands but in constricting women's personal choices, making rebellion of any sort more difficult and risky, and undermining faith in the movement's more radical possibilities" (Willis 1984: 92).

Finally, as Echols maintains, in 1975, cultural feminism seemed to be a good solution to the movement's impasse. In fact, its insistence upon women's similarity and their differences from men seemed a solution able to solve one of the most important problems of the movement, the great number of divisions. Also, the problem with the role of lesbians in the movement found a solution in cultural feminism: male values were criticized, not men, so that lesbianism had value without creating conflicts with heterosexual feminists. (Echols 1989: 243-244).

As Willis explains, although cultural feminism developed from radical feminism, the two currents are very different. In fact, while radical feminists rejected the idea that there are "female values" in opposition to "male values" (Willis 1984: 91), cultural feminists made a clear distinction between such values and praised those who are

traditionally considered feminine. Willis gives us very clear examples of such diverging characteristics:

Once again we were alleged to be loving, nurturing, in tune with nature, intuitive and spiritual rather than genital in our eroticism, while men were violent, predatory, alienated from nature, committed to a sterile rationalism and obsessed with genital sex (Willis 1984: 112).

Therefore, while radical feminism considered such distinctions sexist, cultural feminism reevaluated the feminine (Willis 1984: 112). Another important difference between radical and cultural feminism is the relationship with politics. While radical feminists was rooted into Marxism and intended to carry out a social revolution, cultural feminism considered politics a “male domain” not to take into consideration (Willis 1984: 107).

Moreover, in her analysis of cultural feminism Alcoff explains that for Daly and Rich, two of the main cultural feminists, one of the keys of cultural feminism is the discovery of the female essence, which is based both on the spiritual and the biological characteristics of women (Alcoff 1988: 410). This rediscovery of women’s essence is according to Rich more transformative than the Marxist revolution supported by radical feminists: “the repossession by women of our bodies will bring far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers [...] Sexuality, politics, intelligence, power, motherhood, work, community, intimacy will develop new meanings; thinking itself will be transformed (Alcoff 1988: 410).³³

This stress on women’s biological difference is also present in *Mother Right: A New Feminist Theory*, one of the most important cultural feminist texts by Jane Alpert, a former left-wing activist. In her article she gives importance to the biological differences of women: “...female biology is the basis of women’s powers” and affirmed that motherhood is a “potential which is imprinted in the genes of every woman” (Echols 1989: 250) and “motherhood cuts across economic class, race, and sexual preference”; therefore, in a society where motherhood is given the right importance there can be no divisions between women.

³³ Quotation from Rich’s *Of Woman Born*.

This brief overview of the main characteristics of the Italian and North-American second-wave feminist movements has shown us that these movements had several characteristics in common. The most evident lies in the origin of the movements: in both cases, feminist groups developed from social movements, which gave women the illusion of having the opportunity to change society. However, in both cases, women discovered that their opinions were not considered relevant within their movements, and in both countries, most feminist groups decided to opt for separatism. Another relevant similarity is the split between those women who still wanted to be involved in politics, and those who believed that men (and not capitalism) were the main source of women's oppression. Finally, it is evident that American and Italian feminists shared the same goal: they wanted to carry out a thorough analysis of women's role in society. This explains why consciousness-raising, the instrument used for this investigation, had such great success in Italy: from our analysis of the history of Italian feminism it emerges that several groups (such as *Demau* in Milan and the *CR* in Turin) were already interested in this kind of analysis, but they did not know how to do it. The great success of consciousness-raising in Italy shows that despite the obvious social and economic differences between women in Italy and in the United States (more on this will be explained in the textual analysis), Italian and American women had some similar experiences, and this favoured the great influence that American feminism had on Italian feminists.

Although the American and the Italian feminist movements have many elements in common, it is evident that because of the close connection between the feminist movements and society there are also differences. In particular, Passerini points out that it is important to make a distinction in the use of the key terms defining the different feminist currents. As Passerini maintains, in Italy we commonly define as "femminismo radicale" the current to which *Rivolta Femminile* and other groups (mostly in Turin and Milan) belonged. This current developed in the early 70s and was characterized by the focus on consciousness-raising. Passerini defines as "liberal-radical" the strand focusing on sexuality and contraception to which the MLF and the radical party belonged, and finally "marxista-economicista" the tradition of those groups such as *Lotta Femminista* focusing on the housewives' wages (Passerini 1991: 178). Passerini points out that it is very important not to identify the Italian "femminismo radicale" with the American "radical feminism" (Passerini 1991: 179). In fact, our analysis has shown that despite the presence of many common

elements such as the importance of consciousness-raising and sexuality, the Italian radical feminism has always been strongly focused on “differenza”, therefore we can also find some elements from cultural feminism in it.

In conclusion, it is important to briefly discuss the relationship between Italy and the United States. It might be surprising that Italy shared so many similarities with a country characterised by many differences from social and cultural points of view but, actually, the influence of the United States in the 70s was not something completely new. In fact, according to several historians, since the 40s, American culture had played a major role in Italy. For instance, Gundle has pointed out that Italy in the 50s was the European country in which the influence of the United States was most evident (D’Attorre 1991: 30) and, according to Eco,³⁴ this presence was visible in the everyday lives of all Italians, especially through products and TV (D’Attorre 1991: 29). Of course, Italians did not passively accept this “americanization”: D’Attorre explains that the American lifestyle was still not available to the great majority of Italians and that this great influence of American culture even boosted some “antiamericanismo” and some elements of conservatism that dated back to the 30s. (D’Attorre 1991: 32-33).

Finally, the openness of Italian people to American culture is evident if we consider (see the introduction) the great number of American books and journals that were translated into Italian very soon after their publication in the United States, and that became very successful in Italy (Bono and Kemp 1991: 8). However, as already explained on page 10, this positive approach of Italians to foreign culture was counterbalanced by the influence of their own culture. A powerful example of this approach is provided by Bono and Kemp, who explain that consciousness-raising, the most important feminist element imported from the United States, was not only immediately renamed in Italy, but was also given a different meaning by Carla Lonzi which “moved away from the mere analysis of oppression to envisage the autonomous production of interpretative categories of reality” (Bono and Kemp 1991: 9). This example shows very well the independence and autonomy that characterized Italian feminists.

³⁴ Both Gundle and Eco have been quoted by D’Attorre.

4. The *Anabasi* collective and *Donne è bello*

4.1. History and main characteristics of the *Anabasi* group

In the previous section the most important Italian collectives founded in the 70s were briefly described, and particular attention was dedicated to the situation in Milan. As this research is focused on the *Anabasi* collective, it is important to devote more attention to this group and to focus on its characteristics. The information about this collective is partly sourced from the existing literature, from the documents present at the Badaracco Foundation in Milan³⁵ and from Serena Castaldi (the founder of the group) who kindly agreed to be interviewed in May 2011.³⁶ The interview has been fundamental to this research because it provided important information regarding the history of the collective and the process of creating *Donne è bello*. This information, as already explained in the methodology section, plays an essential role in this research because the purpose has a strong influence on the translator's strategy and on the product.

In 1969, Serena Castaldi went to New York with the purpose of finding some material about the Black Panthers and the civil rights movement for her doctoral thesis on philosophy. At that time she still belonged to a Marxist-Leninist group within the university and did not know much about the feminist movement, which was still unknown in Italy. In New York, by chance she met a man who was a member of the Turin *CR* collective and whose wife was a feminist, who told her that the feminist movement was becoming very important in the United States. Then, she met another student who suggested using the feminist movement as the potential subject of her PhD thesis. Therefore, she started to visit some feminist groups in New York, but only those open to all, in order to collect material. As she explained during the interview, she did not immediately embrace this movement, but rather adopted it slowly: "Il mio processo di avvicinamento al femminismo è stato molto graduale.

³⁵ The documents relating to the *Anabasi* group can be found at the Badaracco Foundation in folder number 25, file number 4. Unless otherwise specified, these documents have not been classified individually.

³⁶ The interview can be found in the appendix section.

Innanzitutto perchè il mio background ideologico non poteva favorirlo, e poi perchè non ero consapevole di cosa stava accadendo”.³⁷

When she came back to Italy she became aware of things she had never noticed before, and realised that she was no longer able to play a role within the Marxist group to which she belonged:

Quando sono tornata mi sono trovata “fuori dal piatto”. In quei gruppi di femministe negli Stati Uniti avevo preso coscienza e imparato un linguaggio concetti relativi al sessismo e al *male chauvinism*,³⁸ e quando vedevo queste cose le percepivo. In Italia ero nel gruppo³⁹ dei miei amici attivi nel movimento studentesco, che erano quasi tutti maschi. Anche se nel frattempo il movimento studentesco era morto, ci si trovava ancora all’università. In Italia il mio gruppo era principalmente composto da uomini, e accadeva spesso che mentre stavo parlando con una persona, un altro arrivava e mi interrompeva. Prima non l’avrei notato, ma a questo punto questi comportamenti mi saltavano all’occhio. Ma cosa potevo dire? Non c’era il background concettuale e culturale a cui fare riferimento.

Castaldi’s description of her return from the United States shows very well the difference between the reality within the left-wing groups and feminism, which also explains why most Italian feminist groups refused the “doppia militanza”.

Subsequently, she started to talk about feminism with other female students and friends at the university, and decided to invite them home in order to demonstrate consciousness-raising and how groups in the United States were organized. This is how the situation was further explained in the interview published by Anna Rita Calabrò and Laura Grasso:

[...] Ho dovuto creare qualcosa che tenesse conto della mia nuova realtà anche sul piano esistenziale. Non ho cercato di agganciarli alla situazione del Movimento studentesco, perchè

³⁷ The interview with Serena Castaldi was conducted almost entirely in Italian. The presence of English words during the interview is signalled by footnotes.

³⁸ In English during the interview.

³⁹ She referred to the Marxist Leninist group to which she belonged while studying at university.

capivo che sarebbe stato più difficile. Intanto perchè le associazioni erano più maschili che femminili, le persone con le quali lavoravo erano più uomini che donne e anche se conoscevo delle donne non mi sembrava appropriato partire da lì. E poi c'era già un'ideologia e partire dal confronto con un'altra ideologia mi sembrava che mi mettesse in una posizione di stress e di confronto sul piano ideologico che non mi interessava come punto di partenza: preferivo partire con una specie di vuoto, sull'esperienza soggettiva. Per cui le persone sono venute veramente passandosi la voce, non so nemmeno io come. Io andavo in giro e trovavo della gente che era interessata alla mia esperienza e passava parola. Finchè abbiamo cominciato a dire: 'Troviamoci' (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 172).

After learning about the American feminist movement, they started to form consciousness-raising groups. Castaldi's account shows that consciousness-raising was not imposed on Italian women but immediately interested them because it gave them the opportunity to realise and analyse their problems:

Le prime volte ci siamo trovate dicendo: "Io vi racconto di questa esperienza". Poi, una volta che eravamo riunite lì, mi sono resa conto che invece di raccontare l'esperienza americana era più interessante applicare quel modello che avevo visto usare lì, di dare la parola successivamente a ciascuna e vedere cosa veniva fuori... Ognuna diceva la motivazione che l'aveva portata lì, e ora della fine della riunione era chiaro che c'erano tanti di quei problemi che tutte erano interessate a ritrovarsi. E così è nato il gruppo (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 172).

As far as the characteristics of these first meetings are concerned, Castaldi points out that they were formed by a wide variety of women belonging to different social backgrounds who did not have a definite purpose in mind, but just wanted to talk: "Non avevamo un obiettivo particolare in quel momento, volevamo soltanto parlare. C'erano donne single e altre sposate, studentesse e non, persone di età molto diverse".

Although all these women were very enthusiastic about this new experience, at first they had to face several problems, one of which was the distrust of feminism by their families, since many feminists' husbands and sons perceived these groups as a potentially very dangerous and destabilizing element. This is clearly expressed in an interview:

[...] Mi ricordo di una di noi che aveva due figli e diceva che la famiglia cominciava a vacillare... Il fatto che lei veniva alla riunione una volta alla settimana, e quindi magari le frullava qualcosa per il capo... Già i figli cominciavano a chiedersi "Oddio cosa succede?!" (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 174).

A second important source of fear was isolation, since the *Anabasi* members did not know whether there were other groups in Italy. After the summer of 1970 the situation improved, and more women had the opportunity to discover the movement. The account of an *Anabasi* member obtained by Calabrò and Grasso gives us a clear idea of the situation:

All'inizio, prima dell'estate, c'erano state poche riunioni, ed era una roba da... l'angoscia, la paura... perchè nessuno sapeva niente, non si sapeva se esistesse un altro gruppo in Italia; io non lo sapevo e nemmeno le altre... E invece poi nell'estate è uscito il libro della Kate Millet, e c'è stato il primo sciopero delle donne americane, per cui tutti i giornali sono usciti con titoli grandi così!... Questo tema era diventato pubblico e allora era stato molto rassicurante per le donne avere un punto di identificazione, per quanto lontano. Era una specie di realtà fisica che era riconosciuta, perchè prima era sulla mia parola che io dicevo che c'erano delle altre (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 173).

In my interview, Castaldi further explained what happened:

Il mio gruppo è iniziato in giugno. Durante quell'estate (era il '70) il movimento delle donne americano è stato scoperto dai media sia lì che qui. I media anche a New York non ne parlavano, ma con l'uscita di *Sexual Politics* Kate Millett era sulla copertina del *Time*, e i giornalisti italiani hanno cominciato a scrivere articoli deliranti... "le donne americane bruciano i

reggipetto”, questo era il tenore, però c’era...prima era questa cosa misteriosa, noi ci trovavamo a casa mia a Milano senza sapere che altre facevano la stessa cosa, e ci sembrava di essere tipo i cristiani nelle catacombe. Quello ha cambiato il feeling: c’era la coscienza di essere parte di qualcosa che si muoveva a livello più grande. A settembre andai a Roma per vedere cosa aveva fatto Margie dei suoi documenti, e mentre ero lì ho scoperto che esisteva Rivolta femminile.

According to Calabrò and Grasso, the presence of other similar groups greatly helped women to overcome this isolation: contacts were particularly common among *Demau*, which was going through a difficult period, *Rivolta femminile* and *Anabasi*. The bond with *Rivolta femminile*, in particular, was very strong: during my interview, Serena Castaldi said that she met Lonzi by chance in Rome and lived for some months in her house together with a small group of women. They shared many views and had the same understanding of the feminist movement, which had to lay the foundations for a cultural revolution. After all, many collectives were quite homogeneous: they promoted constant exchanges among themselves, and they also shared the same aims and topics, so that they differed more in their work style than in their theoretical points of view. This is clearly explained in an interview with a member of a group:

A me, per esempio, Rivolta piaceva... il Manifesto, quello che scrivevano... e infatti fino a quando c’è stato il gruppo aperto, ci andavo volentieri. Però non sentivo nessun bisogno di smettere di avere un altro gruppo per andare lì. [...] Quindi penso che ogni gruppo abbia sviluppato un suo stile, e che però questo vada visto più in termini personali che necessariamente ideologici (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 174).

The ideological inheritance of the student movement, political practice and the Marxist ideology were important differentiating elements in the collective. Even if for a certain amount of time the group tried to mitigate the different perspectives, the differences led to a division, and those willing to be engaged in action left the rest of the group, which wanted to focus on consciousness-raising (in Italian *autocoscienza*). An important element emerging from the interviews collected by Calabrò and Grasso

is the fact that those asking for public action usually had very little political experience, while those who had experienced the student movement, such as Serena Castaldi, were completely disillusioned with that ideology and no longer wanted to be involved in demonstrations (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 176).

The group was therefore more united in the practice of consciousness-raising, and on consideration of their problems, women decided to share them: in January 1972, three women belonging to the group decided to go and live together with their sons and one husband in *via Caccianino*, which became the base of the *Anabasi* group.

A feature of this specific group was the intense relationship among the women, which they describe as something deeper than friendship, as there was solidarity and also perfect understanding:

In quasi tutti gli altri gruppi che ho visto io, c'era sempre la figura di una leader. Anche tra di noi, certo, c'era magari chi era più preparata nel teorizzare le cose; chi parlava di più e chi parlava di meno. Però –e questo lo sentivo– c'era una certa omogeneità, una parità, insomma (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 178-179).

The excellent relationship that the members of the group established was also, according to Castaldi, a result of the way in which they raised consciousness:

Era un piccolo gruppo, non più di 12 persone, e c'era questa cosa di sedersi in circolo... che era molto importante per noi! E poi nei piccoli gruppi si poteva mantenere la comunicazione autentica e personale. Si andava in giro facendo parlare tutti a turno senza che gli altri interrompano per un tempo più o meno uguale. Questa cosa già era di per sé rivoluzionaria: nei gruppi di sinistra c'erano quelli che parlavano sempre, e poi si interrompevano in continuazione.

For the same purpose, finding true pleasure in staying together as women, they often organized holidays and extended the invitation to other collectives, and took part in conferences.

In the meantime, the group started to work on two volumes, *Donne è bello* and *Al femminile*, which were published in the same year (1972), and on this occasion it named itself *Anabasi*. Here is how Castaldi portrayed the events:

La prima iniziativa, arrivando dall'America, era stata quella di raccogliere i documenti che avevo portato, con l'idea di farne un libro. E mi ero messa a fare questo lavoro con una tizia che non conoscevo prima... solo che a un certo punto la divergenza con lei è stata tale che non me la sono sentita di continuare... Intanto, era iniziata questa esperienza del gruppo che per me era più importante, perchè era quello che volevo. Per cui i documenti che avevo tradotto nel frattempo li abbiamo ciclostilati e li facevamo girare a livello sempre personale. Poi, più avanti, abbiamo pubblicato questi documenti. Li abbiamo raccolti e li abbiamo pubblicati come gruppo in *Donne è bello* (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 177).

This excerpt from the interview carried out by Calabrò and Grasso is very important not only because it provides important information regarding the process of translating the texts and creating *Donne è bello*, but also because Castaldi strongly stresses the role played by the group in this process.

Donne è bello is composed of forty-nine texts of different provenance: the great majority of the articles were collected in the United States, but there are also articles from Great Britain, Italy and Argentina. The volume is divided into seven sections, and the most common topics are women's psychological oppression, women's work and housework, sexuality, the women's liberation movement, consciousness-raising and politics. These typically radical topics are discussed in a great variety of styles, from the serious and academic to the ironic. There are also images, drawings and funny comic strips, added by the members of the *Anabasi*.

Although apparently feasible, the "importation" of topics and cues that would foster the debate in the Italian feminist movement also had some drawbacks, which are expressed in a letter written by a member of the Liberation News Service,⁴⁰ an American underground news service, to Liliana Caruso in 1970. In this letter, which was translated and circulated among the *Anabasi* members, the author described her experience of the movement and expressed her doubts about importing feminist material from abroad:

⁴⁰ The letter is simply signed "Nina". It is very likely that the author of this letter was Nina Sabaroff, a member of the editorial staff of Liberation News Service.

E' molto entusiasmante sentire che in Italia si stia lavorando per la liberazione delle donne, e che qualcuno si interessi di mettere insieme un libro. Il solo vero problema è importare il materiale americano sul WL in un paese che è naturalmente molto diverso dall'America, con le sue particolari forme di oppressione, le sue istituzioni (come la Chiesa Cattolica per esempio). Sono convinta che le donne in tutto il mondo condividono un certo denominatore comune di oppressione e che molte nostre sensazioni possono essere simili. Ma mi sembra che la particolare forma di risveglio che sentiranno le donne italiane, il genere di stimoli al quale possono reagire debbono essere stimoli italiani.⁴¹

In the postscript, her sentiment is even clearer: "I migliori articoli potete scriverli voi su ciò che sentite". This statement by Nina is very important because it shows that importing foreign texts in order to foster feminism in Italy created some doubts, not only in Italian feminists (more details will be given in chapter five), but also in American feminists. These doubts expressed by Nina lead us to the question of whether it is possible by means of the right translation strategies (such as the choice of the right texts and the ability to adapt them to the Italian context) to overcome the evident cultural gap and to make the translations "relevant" for Italian women. This problem will be carefully analysed in the textual analysis (chapter five, six and seven) and answers to these questions will be provided in the final chapter.

Five years after the foundation of the *Anabasi* group, its members felt that the practice of consciousness-raising was exhausted. Inspired by the initiatives by the *Cherubini* collective, they decided to form smaller groups and to work on projects such as the body, dance and personality. The focus of these projects was the irrational: they intended to start from where consciousness-raising stopped and to explore the potential of the body and of speech from an irrational point of view. As in most feminist collectives, the groups split up, but the members kept on meeting, maybe just very informally, for several years, and some of them continued their experiences in other collectives (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 180-181).

⁴¹ Nina's letter can be found in the archive of the Fondazione Badaracco in folder 25, envelope 4. A copy (and a trascrizione) of it is included in the appendix section.

4.2. *Donne è bello*

After analysing the historical period and the characteristics of the feminist groups that created *Donne è bello*, we can finally focus on the analysis of this volume. In particular, after having briefly described the circumstances in which the volume was created and how it was sold, the analysis will focus primarily on assessing the purposes behind the creation of *Donne è bello*, which will mainly be determined by means of the interview carried out with Serena Castaldi, and by analysis of the editorial and topics present in the volume.

As already described in the preceding section, Castaldi first tried to publish *Donne è bello* through a publishing house, but soon she decided to leave the project because of conflicts with the woman she was working with; therefore, she sent her cheque back to the publishing house and did not think about the project for a while. Later on she decided to fund the volume personally and to publish it with her group, which helped with the drawings, and her roommate, who helped with the layout. They decided not to advertise their “creation” via mass media channels, because the traditional press often presented a distorted image of the movement.

As far as the spread of this volume is concerned, effective data are not available, because since the *Anabasi* women decided to publish and sell the volume independently, it is not possible to know the exact number of copies sold. Castaldi said that that they sold copies throughout Italy at conferences, meetings and on the occasion of the first “feminist holidays” they organized, and that the volume always received a warm welcome: “In occasione delle prime conferenze tutte ne parlavano... era diventato una sorta di ‘libro misterioso.’ Anche perchè c’era solo lui e i libri della Lonzi”. Of course, the selling method chosen by the group had some disadvantages. These were, for instance, the lack of advertisement via media channels and the fact that the format they chose did not favour sales in those few bookstores which agreed to sell the volume: “...era anche un oggetto unico: non era un libro, non era una rivista, aveva le figure però era politico. Questo ci ha creato problemi con la distribuzione, perchè le librerie non sapevano dove metterlo: alcune librerie come Feltrinelli lo tenevano altre no.” In spite of these problems, we know from Serena Sapegno that it was very successful, and all the copies sold out in a short time, as only some years after its publication it was impossible to find a copy (Sapegno 1987: 244).

The title of the volume shows the close bond between Italian and American new feminism: *Donne è bello* is a translation of *Black is beautiful*, the slogan of the American black separatist movement, from which the American second-wave feminist movement drew inspiration. During her recent interview, Castaldi explained that the first difficulty encountered in the publication of the volume was the title, which caused some discussions with the first publisher because he considered the Italian public not ready for any style innovation. In fact, this title openly breaks the rules of Italian grammar: the adjective *bello* (masculine singular) does not agree with the subject *donne* (feminine plural) and, furthermore, the verb is in the singular form, while the subject is plural.

Regarding the analysis of the purpose of the volume, the first and most evident characteristic of *Donne è bello* is the important role played by the North American radical feminism (already explained in section three). In fact, *Donne è bello* includes some of the most important principles of radical feminism as well as many texts written by feminists who belonged to radical groups.⁴² The reason for this “radical” approach was explained by Serena Castaldi in her interview as follows:

I testi che ho scelto provenivano soprattutto dal movimento radicale americano perchè io penso, e al riguardo sono perfettamente d'accordo con Carla Lonzi, che noi avessimo bisogno di una profonda rivoluzione culturale, non *equal pay for equal job*⁴³ o l'aborto. Certo, queste erano questioni importanti, ma erano diritti civili, non riguardavano strettamente il femminismo! Noi cercavamo di scoprire noi stesse, di fare un lavoro di scoperta individuale. Il processo di l'autocoscienza non è una rivendicazione che si fa all'esterno, è un lavoro che si fa insieme su di sé ed è profondamente *transforming*, quello era uno dei focus del mio interesse. E se una trasformazione avviene in questo modo poi c'è un *empowerment* che porta a un cambiamento che si trasmette all'esterno.

This statement shows that the *Anabasi's* views were similar to those of Sarachild, because they both wanted to make consciousness-raising the fulcrum of their

⁴² Joreen, Shulamith Firestone, Pat Mainardi, Anne Koedt, Ti-Grace Atkinson, Roxanne Dunbar, Pam Allen, Kathie Sarachild, Irene Peslikis, Carol Hanisch, Pam Kearon and Ellen Willis.

⁴³ In English during the interview.

activities (see page 70). However, while for Sarachild consciousness-raising was the necessary preparation for action (see chapter seven), the *Anabasi* women completely rejected action. Moreover, while the American radical feminist groups also campaigned for the liberalization of abortion (which is one of the topics present in *Notes From the Second Year*), the *Anabasi* group (together with most of Italian “radical” groups) did not carry out this battle nor did they tackle this topic in their volume. As already pointed out in the previous chapter (see page 74), we should not identify Italian “femminismo radicale” with American radical feminism. In fact, despite the presence of several common elements such as consciousness-raising and the debate about the “private sphere”, the Italian radical feminists selected and developed American feminist stances in an independent and original way.

Another important element for our analysis of *Donne è bello* is the principle that led to Castaldi’s choice of the texts to translate. Here is another excerpt from the interview:

Avevo letto molto materiale e avevo un criterio ben preciso in mente: non volevo che i testi fossero ideologizzati o di sinistra! Avevo messo completamente da parte la mia formazione marxista-leninista e avevo visto i danni dell’ideologia persino su di me, perchè ti rende ottusa come se avessi i paraocchi. Certamente ho trovato documenti sulla sinistra negli Stati Uniti, ma io ero interessata in tutto ciò che aveva a che fare con l’autocoscienza, e nella possibilità di usare le esperienze personali delle donne per una elaborazione teorica. Lo scopo di *Donne è bello* non era quello di dare informazioni sul movimento femminista americano, o avrei messo tutte le voci. Volevo fare un collage che rappresentasse una proposta politica per noi e per tutte le altre!

Although Castaldi stated that her total rejection of left-wing ideology was one of the principles that led to her selection of the texts to translate, *Donne è bello* contains not only texts presenting harsh critiques of the New Left (such as *Them and I*, written by a member of Redstockings), but also articles such as *The Myth of Women’s Inferiority* by Evelyn Reed, with a Marxist background. This is evidently a consequence of the important role played by politics in Italian society in the early 70s (as discussed in the previous chapter) and, considering how popular the Marxist

ideology was amongst Italian women, it is actually one of the reasons behind its success. In fact, she describes the readers of *Donne è bello* as: “giovani donne così refrattarie alla forma e così rassicurate dal mettere sotto i denti citazioni di Marx ed Engels, infarcite di “classe, sfruttamento, oppressione, rivoluzione” (Sapegno 1987: 244). The second reason why the Marxist-leninist influence boosted the impact of *Donne è bello* on Italian feminist is the use in many texts (particularly in the section relating to “experiences”) of a “Marxist-inspired methodology” which is applied to new areas such as housework, the concepts of oppression, revolution and class. This is how Sapegno explains why this stratagem has been so effective:

Questo livello di ragionamento funzionava a due livelli: da una parte garantiva la continuità con la propria visione del mondo, la “correttezza” dell’analisi e la sua rilevanza per tutti, uomini e donne, ma dall’altra permetteva per la prima volta alle donne di far proprie quelle categorie, di capirle davvero una volta che fossero applicate a qualcosa che conoscevano bene, e infine di usarle in modo creativo (Sapegno 1987: 244-245).

The choice of texts containing Marxist ideology shows that the translator knew very well the social context to which both she and her public belonged, and operated with a clear political agenda in mind. In fact, this helped the texts to be understood and considered relevant for Italian feminists, but it also helped Italian feminists to leave that ideology behind and served as an introduction to radical thought.

In fact, Sapegno explains that the reflection about matriarchy (in “Il mito dell’inferiorità della donna”) and about the African-American civil rights movement (in “Donne nere povere”) “aiutarono a uscire dalle strettoie di un’analisi che contemplava solo la classe” (Sapegno 1987: 245). Moreover, also texts about sexuality such as Anne Koedt’s “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” (the translation of which is included in *Donne è bello*) had the purpose of helping Italian women to overcome the debate about emancipation and to focus on sexual difference, which represented for them a revolution and also constituted one of the “trademarks” of Italian feminist thought:

La sessualità entrava di diritto nella politica [...]. L’effetto di questo evento doveva essere ben più profondo di quanto potesse apparire allora a chi riteneva che il cuore della questione fosse che “non c’è rivoluzione senza liberazione

della donna”, perchè è da lì che trae le sue origini quello sviluppo di ragionamento che porta al salto dalla politica dell'uguaglianza alla politica della differenza sessuale (Sapegno 1987: 245).

Marxist analysis is then finally overcome in the section about consciousness-raising, a political practice that completely replaced the “old” Marxist politics and that was its opposite. In fact, Marxism evidently clashed with the discussion of topics strongly focused on the self, such as sexuality, which require a language able to describe this process of self-discovery. Moreover, as Sapegno explains, consciousness-raising differs from the political practices common in Marxist groups also because of its being focused on a self-discovery rather than on the indoctrination:

si contrapponeva alla coazione abituale della sinistra che era quella di indottrinare gli altri, di far prendere coscienza semmai alle altre, visto che per definizione chi discuteva di forme politiche la coscienza ce l'aveva già (Sapegno 1987: 245).

Therefore, although *Donne è bello* is clearly influenced by the Marxist thought which had such an important role in Italian society in the 60s and 70s, the volume helped Italian women to creatively use that ideology for their feminist purposes and, finally, to overcome it in order to promote a reflection on women's role in society and a cultural revolution.

The influence of Marxist ideology on the Italian feminist movement is explored also by Valeria Boccia. In her analysis of the language of the Italian feminist movement Boccia identifies two distinct kinds of lexicon: a Marxist vocabulary and a vocabulary derived from psychoanalysis (Boccia 1987: 134). The Marxist vocabulary is typical of those texts written in the early 70s and, similarly to what stated by Sapegno about *Donne è bello*, was now applied to new areas:

In essi, oltre a una massiccia presenza del lessico consolidato dalla sinistra, tradizionale o rivoluzionaria, si ritrovano molte caratteristiche proprie del discorso politico. Un linguaggio fortemente assertivo, permeato di giudizi di valore, spesso rivendicativo: preoccupazione principale sembra quella di adattare categorie già note a una nuova situazione (Boccia 1987: 135-136).

Then, in the texts written by the first Milanese groups such as *Rivolta femminile*, *Col di Lana* and *Via Cherubini*, Boccia notices an evolution of this language: “E’ ancora un discorso fortemente assertivo e rivendicativo, ma cambiano gli orizzonti linguistici in cui si muove: il più importante è costituito dal discorso psico-analitico. Categorie psico-analitiche, o fenomenologiche, tendono a sostituire quelle storico-sociologiche” (Boccia 1987: 136). The analysis of *Donne è bello* by Sapegno has shown that both these two different tendencies described by Boccia are present in *Donne è bello*, in which we can find an important evolution of the Italian feminist movement.

The radical influence in *Donne è bello* is evident if we consider the source of the texts: *Donne è bello* is composed of forty-nine texts, of which thirty-eight are of American provenance, and eighteen were sourced from *Notes From the Second Year*, a collection of articles written mostly by radical feminists and edited by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt. This section will show that this volume was an important source of texts and inspiration for *Donne è bello*, and the similarities and differences between these two volumes will be compared. First of all, it is necessary to start this analysis by considering the purpose of these publications in order to understand why the translator and editor of *Donne è bello* decided to choose *Notes From the Second Year* as a source of inspiration.

The purpose of these publications is slightly different and obviously mirrors the different stages of the feminist movement in the United States and Italy. *Notes From the Second Year* was published in 1970 and follows *Notes From the First Year* (1968): at that time (as already explained on page 69) the feminist movement had already reached its peak in the United States, and the editors wanted a periodical that would represent the voice of the feminist movement and provide some clarity regarding the official views and stances of the radical feminist movement. This is how the purposes of *Notes From the Second Year* are presented in the editorial:

[...] it became clear that we urgently needed a radical feminist periodical in which to debate, a forum in which to present the proliferation of new ideas and to clarify the political issues that concerned us. We needed a movement periodical which would expand with the movement, reflect its growth accurately, and in time become a historical record, functioning

politically much as did Stanton and Anthony's *Revolution* exactly a century ago.⁴⁴

In order to be an effective organ of the radical feminist movement and to counteract the distorting views offered by the main press, *Notes From the Second Year* was also published outside the movement: "we have made it easily available outside the movement because we are sick and tired of having our views presented for us to other women by usually distorting intermediaries."

The situation in which *Donne è bello* (as already explained in the preceding section) was created was quite different: in 1972, the first collectives had just been created and, as explained by Castaldi, the purpose of the volume was to provide women with some basic material that could support their discussions and the consciousness-raising meetings. This purpose is stated also in the editorial:

Li abbiamo raccolti [questi scritti] da giornali, riviste e documenti che donne di vari paesi occidentali han cominciato a scrivere; rappresentano la loro testimonianza, una possibilità di scambio tra di noi, e han costituito un contributo fondamentale alla nostra presa di coscienza e alla nostra comprensione della condizione della donna nelle società contemporanee.⁴⁵

In spite of its different purpose, *Notes From the Second Year* constituted an important source of inspiration for *Donne è bello*, mainly because of its content: as already mentioned (page 86), Castaldi considered that Italian women needed radical feminist ideas, and the organ of the American radical feminist movement simply was the most exhaustive source of information.

Considering the great number of impressive analogies between *Notes From the Second Year* and *Donne è bello*, it is evident that the American volume was not only the source of many texts but also inspired many other editorial choices. The comparison of these volumes will start with the editorial, which shows similarities not only in the content, but even in the choice of words used to convey it. In order to make those similarities more evident, the English and Italian texts will be compared directly.

⁴⁴ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 3.

⁴⁵ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, editorial. The volume I have analyzed can be found in the Fondazione Badaracco in Milan in folder 25, envelope 4.

Notes From the Second Year

Donne è bello

- 1) “[...] sick and tired of having our views presented for us to other women by (usually distorting) intermediaries.”
“[...] this, then, is the first overground publication by radical feminists rather than about them”
 - 2) “We have done this not only to retain the authenticity of the content but for another (equally political) reason: anti-professionalism.”
 - 3) “For many of us this has been the most liberating thing of all: the freedom to think, say, do, and be anything *we decide*.”
 - 4) “There is [...] no longer a fear of being called “unfeminine” or worse, no more “style”- unless by that is meant courage to say what you mean however you choose as clearly as you can.
- “...diciamo no agli intermediari, agli interpreti”.
- “Vogliamo scritti *delle* donne, non *sulle* donne”.
- “...lasciar fluire i veri pensieri e sentimenti in favore dall’autenticità, dell’antiprofessionalismo.
- “Per alcune è stata la cosa più liberatoria: la libertà di pensare, dire, fare ed essere ciò che *noi decidiamo*”.
- “Non più la paura di essere definite “non femminili”, o peggio “fuori moda”.⁴⁶

This comparison clearly shows that some sections of the editorial of *Donne è bello* are almost literal translations of the editorial of *Notes From the Second Year*.⁴⁷ The first example shows that both the *Anabasi* collective and the American radical feminists refused any intermediary in their communication with women. The need for women to avoid intermediaries was considered very important by Castaldi, who had already noticed that journalists often cheated women by publishing only distorted

⁴⁶ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, editorial.

⁴⁷ Both these editorials can be found in the appendix section.

versions of their interviews: “Insieme a *Rivolta Femminile* volevamo essere indipendenti dalla stampa e dai media in generale. Avevamo già avuto delle esperienze negative con la stampa, che ha distorto completamente il contenuto di una intervista che avevamo concesso”.⁴⁸ Therefore, in this case, American and Italian feminists evidently faced the same problems with the traditional press, but they reacted in a different way. In fact, while American feminists made their volume easily available outside the movement in order to thwart the distortions of the traditional press, the *Anabasi* women decided to sell their volume mainly within the feminist movement. Another interesting feature of the Italian version is the slightly contradictory use of the term “interpreti” (which in this context carries a negative meaning): in fact, since the volume (and even the editorial) is composed of translations, it actually constitutes an interpretation of the words of someone else.

In the second point, the *Anabasi* women discuss a feature peculiar to Italian feminism: the refusal of professionalism. Adler carefully explains the characteristics of this feature and gives a very powerful example of women’s refusal of any kind of intellectual mediation: in 1984, an editor of *Noi Donne* —a famous feminist magazine— decided to stop publishing minutes of *UDI* meetings because it was “no longer possible to perform the role of a journalist in these encounters” (Adler Hellman 1987: 200). This happened after the editorial board was accused of promoting some women’s stances and not others and of “interpreting”⁴⁹ events along its own lines. The problem of representing women’s views in the main press was, however, also a consequence of the lack of hierarchy and leaders in women’s groups. Adler explains that the media decided to provide space for the writings of only some women (often intellectuals and writers) to the detriment of all the other members of the feminist movement, who could not attract the attention of the main press (Adler Hellman 1987: 200). Therefore, also in this case it is evident that Italian feminists had not “imported” a radical stance, but they rather noticed in Italy the same approach of the press in the United States.

The stress on the necessity to express oneself freely is again present in the third example, where the Italian text is almost a literal translation of the English (even the italics have been faithfully reproduced in the translation). This point was particularly

⁴⁸ This opinion was expressed by Castaldi during her interview.

⁴⁹ Again, the verb “to interpret” carries a negative meaning. The quotation can be found in Adler Hellman, Judith. 1987. *Journeys Among Women: Feminism in five Italian cities*, Oxford: Polity Press, p. 201.

important for Italian women because, as pointed out by Nina (see page 83), Italian women needed to start thinking and acting independently. This idea is further stated at the end of the editorial, where women are strongly invited to express themselves: “Aspettiamo ora con ansia la vostra collaborazione (impressioni, testimonianze, poesie, disegni, canzoni...); parlatene con le vostre amiche, incontratevi con le vicine di casa.”

Finally, the fourth example expresses the refusal of the traditional stereotyped concept of femininity. The editor in this case faithfully translates most of the sentence and adapts the noun “style” to the Italian “fuori moda”, an expression describing style as an imposition. Also in this case, the fact that the *Anabasi* members decided to translate this section is very relevant to this project, because it shows that similarly to what had already happened in the United States, Italian women also wanted to abolish their limiting stereotypes. The only problem was that, as we will discover in chapter four, the stereotypes afflicting Italian women were often not the same as those experienced by American women.

These four examples clearly show that the women of the *Anabasi* group used *Notes From the Second Year* as their source of inspiration. The similarities highlighted are particularly important because the editorial is composed of a description of the main stances of the group and the purposes of the volume and also because the editorial is supposed to carry only the ideas of the collective whose signature is at the bottom of the page. However, although several parts of *Donne è bello*'s editorial are actually translations, these sections concern views (such as the refusal of professionalism) that were the subject of much debate in the Italian feminist movement. In this sense, therefore, we can state that the editors wanted to express their own opinions, but used others' words.

The similarities between these texts are not limited to the editorial, but can also be found in other paratextual items. The most evident elements are the size and shape of the volume, its graphics and its structure. These items always play an important role from the point of view of communication. In fact, paratexts are, according to Genette and Maclean, “...the privileged site of pragmatics and of a strategy, of an action on the public in the service, well or badly understood and accomplished, of a better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies” (Genette and Maclean 1991: 261-262). Paratexts are not only pictures but, in Genette's definition, are “a certain number of productions,

themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations" (Genette and Maclean 1991: 261). Each fringe element therefore has to be considered an important carrier of meaning.

Considering the large number of similarities between these volumes, the fact that the editors never mentioned their source of inspiration is quite surprising. Of course, it could be a coincidence, but an explanation might be provided in the last paragraph of the editorial:

La scoperta che il nostro problema era quello di tutte ha portato al movimento. E' stata l'identità della situazione a permettere l'avviarsi del movimento anche qui; non ci sentiamo figlie delle donne americane, ma sorelle di tutte le donne. Finalmente e per la prima volta abbiamo a disposizione uno spazio in cui parlare, e quello che ciascuna dice è importante ed accresce il livello di coscienza proprio e delle altre.⁵⁰

In this section, the *Anabasi* collective affirms its independence from American feminists and its aim of carrying on the movement as sisters, not daughters, of American women. This wish for autonomy may also be the consequence of the editors' awareness that they had to link the feminist ideology and practices strongly to the Italian situation; as a mere "importation" of the American movement to Italy would not have been successful.

This need for independence can be explained by comparing *Donne è bello* with *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, another publication written by the feminists of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (already mentioned on page 57) and translated into many different languages throughout the world by women belonging to feminist collectives. Davis explains that although some of the translators referred to the authors as their 'US sisters' "it was not the notion of 'global sisterhood' which travelled [...]. On the contrary, what travelled was *how* the original collective wrote the book" (Davis 2002: 240). The case of *Donne è bello* is, from this point of view, very similar to that of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*: although the women of the *Anabasi* collective believed in sisterhood, they stressed the importance of knowledge sharing and expressing each individual's opinion, which is something they learned from *Notes From the Second Year*. In fact, as the differences among women (particularly

⁵⁰ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, editorial.

important in the case of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which crossed the borders of the Western world) could not be ignored, women belonging to different countries had the opportunity to adapt the original book to their own situation: “feminist knowledge is not simply transferred from one context to another. It invariably requires reworking and contextualization. What is empowering or disempowering in one context is not necessarily so in another” (Davis 2002: 240-241). What happened with *Donne è bello* is quite similar: the women of the *Anabasi* collective drew inspiration from *Notes From the Second Year*, but felt free to adapt that model to the context of the Italian feminist movement.

In fact, there are not only similarities between these works, but also differences. For instance, although some paratextual items are very similar, while *Notes From the Second Year* is generally lacking in images, *Donne è bello* has a variety of illustrations including, for instance, short comic strips translated from foreign publications (we will examine one of these in chapter five), photographs, drawings (made by hand by the members of the collective), and even statistics. These elements represent forms of intervention in the texts and, as already suggested, might have influenced its reception by the public. These additions are usually linked to the topics of the articles they are placed alongside, and show a variety of styles: they can be ironic, informative, or resentful and critical of patriarchal society. They are often of foreign provenance, and their message (if written) is usually translated into Italian. In some cases, however, the message is closely linked to American culture and cannot be translated: this is the case, for instance, of the emblem of American radical feminism,⁵¹ which is often reproduced in *Donne è bello*, although its meaning and origin are never explained. By adding these elements, the *Anabasi* women have evidently tried to help Italian women to interpret the texts (a significant example will be provided in chapter four), to provide visual support to the views expressed in the text and, finally, to make these texts more personal by adding images that carried for them a special meaning.⁵² Therefore, from the decision to add visual elements to the texts we can clearly see that the purpose of *Donne è bello*

⁵¹ The emblem of radical feminism was a clenched fist in a Venus sign, probably inspired by the Black Power emblem.

⁵² Bruna Felletti, one of the members of the *Anabasi*, said that she proposed the use of Matisse’s “Blue nude IV” as a background for the text “Donna prendi i tuoi figli” because it was very meaningful to her.

was instrumental,⁵³ and that *Anabasi* women intended to use their creativity in order to stress the fact that these texts belonged to them too.

Another significant difference lies in the term “radical”, which is so often repeated in the introduction to the American pamphlet, and is completely absent from the Italian. The most probable explanation lies in the lack of Italian terminology at that stage of feminism: Italian women were just about to discover the meaning of “feminism”, and did not know what “radical feminism” was. Moreover, in Italy, the term “radicale” might have been interpreted as somehow related to the “partito radicale”, a political party which in the 60s and 70s was conducting a very active pro-abortion campaign.

We have already mentioned that although some sections of *Donne è bello*'s editorial are translations, the source of these sections is not quoted. There is a similar lack of information regarding the authors of the texts in the Italian volume. In fact, both works (*Notes From the Second Year* and *Donne è bello*) are composed of collections of texts previously published elsewhere, but Firestone and Koedt provided for each text exhaustive information relating to its “story” (provenance, year of publication and, when necessary, omissions), its author, her works, her political activities and even the copyright. It is important that below the title we can find the name of the author, as this information allows the public to link the ideas to their current of thought. In *Donne è bello*, in contrast, we find the name of the authors (sometimes only the surname and an initial) only in the table of contents, together with the translation of the title of the article and its geographical provenance. Therefore, Italian readers were not given enough information regarding the author or feminist strand represented, and the source text is never mentioned. These choices, of course, did not foster a critical approach by the public, and suggest that *Donne è bello*'s editor did not want to underline the provenance of the texts. However, *Donne è bello* does not lack only information about the foreign sources and authors, but also about the editors and translators of the volume. In fact, we only know that the volume was published by the *Anabasi* group because of the signed editorial, but the names of the editor and translator are not stated. This is in line with the typical custom shared by several Italian feminist groups (already mentioned on page 55)

⁵³ For more information on the distinction between instrumental and documentary see page 17.

that preferred to use only the name of the group or just their first names (not surnames) in order to stress their belonging to a group.

A possible reason for this lack of information about the sources might be the already mentioned wish for independence of the *Anabasi* women, but Chamberlain's analysis of the metaphor of translation suggests another possible interpretation of the lack of information by authors. In fact, she states that translating has always been considered a derivative (and therefore feminine) activity, opposed to writing, which is original, and therefore masculine. The connection between author and translator is a power relationship, regulated through the concept of fidelity. Therefore, omitting the authors' details may be considered a way to change the power relationship, and to claim the right to be creative instead of re-creative (Chamberlain 1988: 465-466). However, in the examples provided by Chamberlain and Von Flotow (Von Flotow: 1997), this right is usually wielded through the refusal to translate "faithfully", whereas in this case, Castaldi is generally very faithful to her source texts, even to the point of affecting the acceptability of the Italian text. The lack of information about translators and editors, contrast, is a typical feature of early Italian second-wave feminism. In fact, in order to stress their belonging to a group, Italian feminists refused to sign books or fliers with their names but used only the name of the collective. When signing a pamphlet was essential, they omitted their surnames: this is evident in the pamphlet "*Donne è bello party*", printed and distributed in order to promote the volume.

If the choice of the articles is important, we should also consider why Castaldi decided not to include in *Donne è bello* some articles present in *Notes From the Second Year*. In fact, nineteen out of the thirty-four texts that form *Notes From the Second Year* were translated and were in the first four and the last section of the American volume.⁵⁴ The texts contained in the section called "Organizing" were completely excluded. This is very likely to be a consequence of their content, which the editor considered inappropriate for an Italian public because it was not related to their everyday life. In fact, the main topics were: abortion ("On Abortion and Abortion Law" by Lucinda Cisler and "An Abortion Testimonial" by Barbara Susan); the Miss America protest ("A Critique of the Miss America Protest" by Carol Hanisch) and

⁵⁴ They are in part one ("Women's Experience"), part two ("Theories of Radical Feminism"), the first two sections of part three ("Founding a Radical Feminist Movement" comprises the sections "The Left Debate" and "Consciousness-Raising") and in the last section "Manifestos".

some other topics very closely related to the American feminist movement (such as “What Women Want. For Starters” by Congress to Unite Women; or “The Founding of the New Feminist Theatre” by Anselma dell’Olio).

The abortion topic, however, was not completely excluded, but it was discussed together with maternity and contraception in a French text (“Una lotta di donne: a proposito della maternità”), and in “Donne nere povere”, an American text discussing the need for contraception for black and poor women; however, this was not a popular item of discussion in the *Anabasi* collective, which rather focused on patriarchal society, sexuality and consciousness-raising. While some collectives aimed at the liberalization of abortion, many others (and the *Anabasi* among these) decided not to deal with the topic and even criticized its liberalization. It is evident that Castaldi chose the texts to translate according to a specific political agenda in order to focus the debate within her group on certain topics. In fact, in her description of the process of the internationalization of feminist texts, De Lima Costa points out that texts can travel only thanks to a system organizing their translation, publication, circulation and reception, and this affects the choice of the texts to translate and all the changes (such as omissions) made in order to make the texts fit with the local needs (De Lima Costa 2006: 67).

Although Castaldi selected the texts to translate according to the experiences of Italian women in order to allow them to understand and recognize themselves in the descriptions of the experiences lived by American women, the cultural gap persists in some elements present in the texts. In fact, almost all the articles of American provenance have some references to the United States, but these often do not limit the understanding of the texts by a foreign (in this case Italian) audience. In fact, the mere presence of the adjective “americano/a” (for instance “Il maschio americano ideale...” in “La donna e la sua mente: storia della vita quotidiana”) does not prevent Italian women from empathising with their American sisters. However, in some other cases, understanding might become more difficult because some elements are strongly linked to American culture. In the following three chapters, the analysis will focus on elements that were part of the “radical” message that Castaldi wished to import, but that were often very difficult to translate because of the cultural gap.

5. Sexuality and sexual revolution in *Donne è bello*.

5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to assess a selection of aspects of women's sexuality present in *Donne è bello* through the analysis of some key terms and expressions. Sexuality played a very important role in the Italian feminist movement, which is evident from the great number of translations of American material published in Italy soon after their publication in the United States,⁵⁵ and by the importance given to this topic during consciousness-raising meetings and in magazines published by Italian feminist collectives.⁵⁶

This chapter will focus on the Italian translation of some excerpts discussing sexuality, on the shifts of meaning that occurred during the translation process and on the possible influence of these translations on *Donne è bello*'s readers. This topic is addressed in "Freedom is a Long Time Comin'" ("La libertà è lunga a venire") by Virginia Blaisdell, "The Politics of Housework" ("La politica del lavoro domestico") by Pat Mainardi, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" by Anne Koedt ("Il mito dell'orgasmo vaginale"), "The Personal is Political" by Carol Hanisch ("Ciò che è personale è politico") and "The Institution of Sexual Intercourse" by Ti-Grace Atkinson ("L'istituzione del rapporto sessuale"). All these texts have in common a harsh and often explicit critique of the sexual revolution and of some typical terms related to the counterculture. In fact, while discovering sexuality, American feminists also resolutely rejected the sexual revolution, a radical change in women's expectations about sexual behaviour that occurred in the late 60s and gave women the illusion that equality had finally been attained.

⁵⁵ The first publications that helped Italian women to learn more about their sexuality and bodies were *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* by Alfred Kinsey (published in English in 1953 and translated into Italian in 1955) and the famous *Human Sexual Response* by William Masters and Virginia Johnson (published in English in 1966 and translated into Italian in 1967).

⁵⁶ In particular *Effe* and *Sottosopra* (which even dedicated a special edition in 1975 to the discussion of sexuality and abortion).

5.2. Sexuality and sexual revolution in the United States and in Italy.

Before starting our analysis of sexuality and sexual revolution it is necessary to understand the role played by sexuality in society. In his work *The History of Sexuality* Foucault takes into consideration how society approached sexuality through the centuries and highlights some interesting recurring features. Some aspects of his analysis will also help us to deepen our analysis of the debate about sexuality, which took place in Italy in the 60s and 70s.

Foucault explains that sexuality is always linked with power, which should not be understood as a “system of domination” perpetrated by a specific group of people over another group, or a mechanism of subjugation. On the contrary, according to Foucault:

power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system (Foucault 1976: 92).

Foucault further explains that “power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared [...] power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault 1976: 94). This point can be noted also in our analysis of the language of sexual revolution, where we will see how both men and women use a specific vocabulary in order to exert some power over the opposite group.

Power, according to Foucault, rules over sexuality like a law prescribing what is accepted and what is forbidden, and is always “negative”: “Where sex and pleasure are concerned, power can ‘do’ nothing but say no to them; what it produces, if anything, is absences and gaps” (Foucault 1976: 83). This power is exerted by means of language and, as Foucault specifies: “through the act of discourse that creates, from the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law” (Foucault 1976: 83). For instance, one of the ways in which power uses discourse is by naming a group. This is what happened, as Foucault explained, with homosexuals, a category which was

defined for the first time by the nineteenth-century psychiatrists who, simply by studying their sexuality, believed to have discovered also their nature:

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality (Foucault 1976: 43).

As a result of that, once a specific group is identified and named (for instance homosexuals) it is possible to keep under control this “area of ‘perversity’” (Foucault 1976: 90). However, this rule has an unexpected result because at the same time “homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or ‘naturalness’ be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified” (Foucault 1976: 101). Therefore, through the acknowledgment of his nature, the homosexual can obtain his legitimation and even start campaigns for his emancipation. This example shows us that power is not integral to one word, since the same term can serve different ideologies. This explanation of the way in which power relationships work will help us in this chapter to understand the impact on women of some key expressions defining women’s sexual preferences.

Another very important discourse related to sexuality is according to Foucault the confession. Foucault outlines the history of this practice, which started in the sixteenth century as religious practice and became in the nineteenth century a therapy:

Beginning in the sixteenth century, this rite gradually detached itself from the sacrament of penance, and via the guidance of souls and the direction of conscience – the *ars artium* – emigrated toward pedagogy, relationships between adults and children, family relations, medicine, and psychiatry. In any case, nearly one hundred and fifty years have gone into the making of complex machinery for producing true discourses on sex: a deployment that spans a wide segment of history in that it connects the ancient injunction of confession to clinical listening methods (Foucault 1976: 68).

Confession is also characterized by a power relationship. Foucault explains that it is the result of an urge that resides within the person wishing to reveal his secrets and, although the listener is in a position of domination, confession has an effect on the person who speaks, who is supposed to benefit from this act (Foucault 1976: 62). Foucault's description of the characteristics of a confession perfectly describes also the consciousness-raising process because, although sexuality was not the only topic debated, it was one of the most important topics debated both in Italian and in North-American feminist groups (consciousness-raising will be tackled in chapter seven). Therefore, although Foucault does not mention sexual revolution, his historical analysis shows that the interest in sexuality is a constant element in history and the ways in which society deals with it are characterized by similar phenomena, which are adapted to the different periods of human history and are also present during the sexual revolution and the early feminist movement.

Sexual revolution occurred in the late 50s in the United States as the result of many factors. The reasons for this trend can be identified in the influence of research and theories of Alfred Kinsey, Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, and Norman Brown. Also, the emergence of civil rights movements such as student anti-war movements, the counter-culture, black civil rights movements and women's movements had an impact (Escoffier 2003: XIII-XIV), as did the changes brought in by the Supreme Court regarding the legal meaning of obscenity (Gerhard 2001: 86). This important change led to the outbreak of many underground publishers and to an unprecedented amount of sexual literature.

During the sexual revolution, for the first time in history, many theorists dedicated their attention to sexuality. One of the most important theorists was Reich, who deeply influenced the sexual revolution and its impact on social institutions, which he considered a limitation of sexual fulfilment and mental health. For him, sexual revolution was an indispensable change, which would also be beneficial to women by ending the double standard (Gerhard 2001: 86).

Kinsey's reports also played an important role in the sexual revolution. These are two volumes on human sexuality based on an empirical study of human orgasms, published in 1948 (*Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*) and 1953 (*Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female*). Particularly influential was the report concerning female sexuality, because it anticipated some of the most popular debates of the women's liberation movement, dismissing many myths relating to women's sexuality

and finally turning orgasm into a mere physiological event.⁵⁷ American public opinion was struck by Kinsey's research because it highlighted the difference between what was considered acceptable and what really happened during everyday sexual activities. Although the reports were welcomed with outrage and hypocrisy, they were widely advertised and discussed (Escoffier 2003: XIX).

The theories of Herbert Marcuse and Norman Brown also fuelled the sexual revolution. In particular, Marcuse stressed the link between psychology and society ("psychological problems... turn into political problems")⁵⁸ while, according to Brown, civilization is based on the repression of sexuality, and the only way to radically transform society is to interrupt this repression. Both their theories gave unprecedented importance to "selfhood" and to unrestricted sexuality, and they became prominent theorists in Europe and in the United States (Gerhard 2001: 83).

Although all these theorists created the background for the sexual revolution, Masters & Johnson's *Human Sexual Response* originated in part from the Kinsey reports and was the most influential work on the American radical feminist movement. The points in common between their research are in the approach, which considered men and women sexually similar, and ignored any racial differences. However, while Kinsey also intended to study the sociological implications of sexuality, Masters & Johnson's research was based only on the study of the biology of both women and men and on their reaction to sexual stimulation (Gerhard 2001: 65-66). Their findings helped American radical feminists as they allowed women to understand the importance of the clitoral orgasm and to refute Freud's theories. In particular, Anne Koedt's text "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" is mostly based on Masters and Johnson's theories.

Women's sexuality in the United States was also deeply influenced by the attack on the double standard and the spread of the birth control pill, which became legal in all states in 1965 for married women, and in 1972 for unmarried women. The Pill allowed women to have sexual experiences without any commitment and encouraged them to take active part in the sexual revolution. However, as both

⁵⁷ Escoffier, Jeffery (2003) *Sexual Revolution*, Thunder's Mouth Press: New York, pp. XIX-XX and Gerhard, Jane (2001) *Desiring Revolution: Second-wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920 to 1982*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Quotation from *Eros and Civilization* by Herbert Marcuse (1955) found in Gerhard, Jane. 2001. *Desiring Revolution: Second-wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920 to 1982*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 83.

Escoffier and Gerhard assert, not all feminists had the same reaction to sexual revolution. In fact, while some, such as Germaine Greer, actively promoted sexual liberation, other feminists, such as Dana Denmore, Roxanne Dunbar, Anne Koedt and Ti-Grace Atkinson, considered the sexual revolution just another type of exploitation (Gerhard 2001: 109-110). Therefore, while articles such as “The Sexual Revolution Isn’t Our War” published in *Ms.* magazine in 1972 labelled sexual revolution “a male invention” (Escoffier 2003: XVII), at the same time there were also books promoting sexual revolution among young women. Some examples are *Valley of the Dolls*, the history of a girl who leaves her small village and goes to New York looking for more sexual adventures, and *Sex and the Single Girl* (Ehrenreich 1987: 39-40). The latter in particular is a very powerful example: published in 1962 (only one year before *The Feminine Mystique*), it showed a radical approach: while Betty Friedan criticized the Kinsey reports and considered women’s “sex hunger” a problem related to a lack of emotion, in *Sex and the Single Girl* the happy woman was single with a good job and a satisfactory sexual life (Ehrenreich 1987: 56-58).

The impact that the sexual revolution had on society was very important as it profoundly changed the values and lifestyles of young people: because of the new focus on selfhood and spontaneity, behaviour that in the past could be considered “immature” was now completely acceptable. Marital duties had to be considered a potential obstacle to self-realization, and a new “single culture” developed very quickly: entire areas such as New York’s Upper East Side became ghettos with night clubs just for singles and, through magazines such as *Playboy* and *Cosmopolitan*, the traditional figure of the married couple was replaced by the single man and his occasional woman (Ehrenreich 1987: 56-58).

Although, of course, some of these American trends and ideas reached Italy, the sexual revolution had a very different impact on Italian society. This analysis will start by taking into consideration the role played by the Kinsey reports in Italy. In fact, since they were translated into Italian in 1955, they should have helped to lay the foundation of the sexual revolution in Italy. However, in Italy, the reports triggered a great variety of negative reactions. An interesting source of information is the article “Che cosa pensano del rapporto Kinsey”, a collection of opinions by a wide range of professionals (including doctors, priests, academics and actors) published in 1953 by the popular magazine *Oggi*. As Penelope Morris underlines, a significant area of criticism simply considered any public discussion of such private matters wrong: for

instance, the gynaecologist Piero Malcovati stated that these reports should not have been published because these kind of investigations are proper only in a confessional, or, according to the “well-known bibliophile and man of culture” Marino Parenti, should at least have been published only in Latin, in order not to violate “that sense of modesty and reserve which are so much part of the family tradition of our society” (Morris 2013: 21). Other critics instead simply criticized Kinsey’s methodology: Padre Alfonso Orlini objected that a sample of five thousand people cannot be considered representative, and the Jesuit Padre Rotondi suggested that only immoral women would take part in such research. Other critics thought that, because of the difference between the United States and Italy, such research could not be applicable to the Italian context. In her article, Morris outlines an interesting picture of the United States emerging from many critics’ considerations of the Kinsey reports: “America is seen as either absurdly puritan or shockingly libertarian” (Morris 2013: 24). Some contrasted the “immature” United States of America with educated Europe, where women are moral and love is not a sin (as in the United States), but occupies a rather “natural” place in society (Morris 2013: 25). In general, the majority of commentators focused only on sexuality in America and avoided commenting on the Italian situation simply because sex was either considered an inappropriate topic to discuss in public or there was nothing new to discover in the matter. Only in 1958 did Gianni Corbi and Enrico Rossetti in their book *The Unhappy Latin* discuss the lack of an Italian Kinsey report and the reasons why such research could not take place in Italy, and dismantled the myth of the sexual happiness of Italian people (Morris 2013: 29-30).

According to Penelope Morris, several reviewers identified an Italian version of the Kinsey reports in *Le italiane si confessano*, published in 1959 by Graziella Parca.⁵⁹ This work had three editions, was widely translated and even inspired the movies *Le italiane e l’amore* by Cesare Zavattini and *Comizi d’amore* by Pier Paolo Pasolini (Morris 2006: 109). It is a collection of letters written mostly by young women to the *fotoromanzi*, magazines whose readership is defined by Parca as “working class women, housewives, peasant women, servants, seamstresses, secretaries and students” (Morris 2006: 110). From those letters we learn that the lives of Italian women were completely dominated by the need to find a husband and get married,

⁵⁹ Morris quotes, for instance, articles on *Corriere Lombardo*, *Giornale del Mattino* and the *Sunday News*.

as this was for them the only way to improve their social status. This process, however, was very difficult because of the strict code of morality imposed on women by the male members of their families. Furthermore, these women showed very poor knowledge of their bodies and ignored not only sexuality, but even basic anatomy (Morris 2006: 114).⁶⁰ In the 60s and early 70s, many magazine and newspaper critics considered some of the situations and behaviours described in *Le italiane si confessano* as still present. In fact, probably in order to exercise again the shocking power of the book, a new edition was published in 1973, just before the referendum on divorce. However, Morris points out that analysis of the later reviews clearly shows that “there has been a sufficient change in the moral climate – aided by the book itself – at least to mean that the book can no longer be considered scandalous” (Morris 2006: 120).

Another important source of information regarding the sexuality of Italian women is provided by a study carried out by Lieta Harrison in 1969 (and published in 1972)⁶¹ based on interviews with middle-aged and young women (labelled as “mothers” and “daughters”) in Palermo, Rome and Milan. Although this research focuses on marriage, it actually provides many important details regarding the sexual habits of Italian women even before marriage. The first important element seen in this research is the different attitude of young women. In fact, while sex for older women was a mere duty and having some sexual experience before marriage was not recommendable, younger women considered some sexual experience before marriage to be very important and the majority of those interviewed (82.7%) claimed to have experience, while only 52% of older women had had sexual experiences before marriage. These data evidently show that the sexual revolution had some influence on Italian women, who had always apparently considered it just a disagreeable duty and now started to consider sex an essential part of their lives. Also, according to Margherita Pelaja, in the late 60s there was a profound change in the relationship between the sexes and in the expectations of marriage as an institution. Although this change took place very slowly and was strongly affected by factors such as social class and geographical position, it caused a drop in the

⁶⁰ Quotation from “Il cambiamento dei comportamenti sessuali” by Margherita Pelaja. 2001. Found in Morris, Penelope “The Harem Exposed: Gabriella Parca’s *Le italiane si confessano*” in Morris, Penelope (ed.). 2006. *Women in Italy: 1945-1960*, London: Macmillan, p. 114.

⁶¹ Harrison, Lieta. 1972. *La donna sposata: mille mogli accusano*, Milano, Feltrinelli.

number of marriages, which was very high in the 60s (the same as it was at the beginning of the century) and in the 70s and 80s it became one of the lowest in Europe (Pelaja 2001: 202).

The descriptions provided by Morris and Harrison evidently show that the Italian sexual revolution was very different from the American revolution. In fact, while in the United States (see page 106) sexually liberated women were not married and had sex with many different men, according to Harrison the great majority of those who had sexual intercourse before marriage had it with their future husbands.⁶² Moreover, Pelaja's statements also suggest that the change in the role of the marriage in Italian society took place over two decades (70s and 80s). Therefore, this research clearly shows that a form of sexual revolution had taken place in Italy, but it was very different from the American revolution described, for instance, by Barbara Ehrenreich.⁶³

Some other elements show the impact of the American sexual revolution in Italy. For instance, in 1972 the American magazine *Playboy* was for the first time published in Italy. Although the first issue involved a great variety of Italian personalities, it showed a typical American progressive style and most of the material was foreign. The first Italian playmates appeared only in 1975 and, although the first nudity caused some scandal, it was evident that the concept of immorality had changed. This step was, according to Gundle, a consequence of the promotion of the liberation of Italian morals supported in the 1960s by a group of writers and journalists such as Milena Milani (Gundle 2007: 193).

Also, *Sorelle d'Italia* provides some examples relating to the unprecedented presence of sexual images in Italian magazines in the 70s.⁶⁴ Tornabuoni depicts this "revolution" with the help of images (such as those in *Playboy*), provocative advertisements, excerpts from erotic literature (such as "Emmanuelle", published in 1972) and scenes taken from movies (such as the famous "Malizia" by Samperi). Also, according to Tornabuoni, sexuality was more present than in the past in the mass media, but it is evident that it could still scandalize public opinion. An example is the famous movie "Last Tango in Paris", which was released in 1972 but

⁶² 58% of "daughters" and 71.5% of "mothers".

⁶³ See page 104.

⁶⁴ Tornabuoni, Lietta and Reggiani, Stefano. 1977. *Sorelle d'Italia: l'immagine della donna dal '68 al '78* (Milano: Bompiani).

immediately withdrawn, and the director convicted of indecency. This information shows that the perception of what could be considered morally acceptable changed, but we cannot assume that people's sexuality also automatically changed, because the diffusion of pornographic and sexually explicit material is not linked to the role of sexuality in everyday life.

Another source of information about sexuality in the 60s is the famous article "Che cosa pensano le ragazze d'oggi?" published in February 1966 by "La Zanzara", the Parini high school magazine. A group of students conducted a survey among their female schoolmates about sexuality, and the results were shocking: with only a few exceptions, the great majority of girls no longer believed in the institution of marriage, were in favour of abortion and considered sexuality to be no longer linked to marriage. These interviews show strong conflicts between young girls and their families and parents and harsh critiques of the Catholic doctrine, which is often described as limiting their freedom. This publication was followed by a huge scandal: three underage students together with the Parini headmaster and the owner of the printing house were charged with inciting corruption and publishing obscenity. The case became very popular in the Italian media and split both public opinion and the political parties in two factions: progressives (backed by the Communist party) against conformists (represented by the Catholic party *Democrazia Cristiana* and the extreme right-wing party *Movimento Sociale Italiano*) (Lussana 2012: 53). This story demonstrates the turmoil present in Italian society because of the coexistence of progressive and traditional stances and, since all the defendants were discharged, proves that in Italian society the concept of "obscenity" was slowly evolving.

This evolution from the shy and moderate women described by Parca's collection of letters to the daring girls of the Parini school can be easily understood if we take into consideration how dramatically Italian society changed. According to Willson, this evolution was already evident in Parca's letters: much of the girls' suffering was the result of the conflict between traditional morality and the girls' guilty desire for a different sexuality. In fact, in the 60s, women were given the opportunity to move around more than in the past, and they could mingle at school or in their free time (Willson 2010: 126). Moreover, we need to consider the great cultural and social gap existing between the almost illiterate girls who wrote letters to agony aunts and those enrolled in Parini High School, one of the most prestigious high schools in Milan. It is

very likely that the great majority of Italian women in the 60s could not enjoy the same level of sexual freedom as that of the Parini students.

While many young Italian women had already started to develop a less moralistic approach to sexuality, in the early 70s the feminist movement allowed them to rediscover their bodies and develop a new approach to sexuality. As pointed out by Passerini, the interest in sexuality is a characteristic that appeared almost at the same time in different feminist movements. For instance, the discussion about the vaginal orgasm is present both in Anne Koedt's "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" (published in 1970), in the French text by Christiane Rochefort "Le mythe de la frigidity feminine" (written in 1970-1971) and in Lonzi's "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale" (written in March 1971). Passerini points out that all three texts mention the latest scientific discoveries about sexuality, but while Rochefort is clearly inspired by Koedt, Lonzi's text independent from the other two texts and strongly focused on Italian specificity (Passerini 2005: 186-187).

Another important source of information for Italian women was *Noi e il nostro corpo* (translation and adaptation of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, published in 1974). Both *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and Lonzi's "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale" contain some information relating to women's biology and sexuality but, while *Noi e il nostro corpo* is a type of instruction manual discussing from the women's point of view not only sexuality, but also the whole process of child-bearing, Carla Lonzi focused on the two existing typologies of women (the "vaginale" and the "clitoridea") and their possible relationships with men. In particular, with the support of Masters and Johnson's theories, Lonzi explained in detail that the different sexual approaches influence not only sexuality but even everyday relationships between men and women. In fact, while the "vaginal" woman accepts her subjugation, the "clitoral" woman is the result of the consciousness-raising process: she is now conscious of her difference and demands autonomy from men. This unprecedented interest in sexuality was evident also from the great amount of information present in the magazine *Effe* which, from its foundation in 1973, devoted great attention to

sexuality,⁶⁵ and in the publication by the Women's bookshop of Milan *Sottosopra*, which even devoted an entire issue in 1975 to sexuality and abortion.

This interest in sexuality also favoured the debate about different sexualities, and the topic of lesbianism started to be discussed. According to Bracke, this topic came into the limelight only in the late 70s through the journal *Differenze* (based in Rome), which aimed at exploring different female experiences, and in the Rome group *Pompeo Magno*. For the first time in the early 80s there were also conferences and meetings about lesbianism (the first was organized in Rome in 1981), lesbian collectives were formed in Catania and Tiaso (Bologna), a column about lesbianism started to be regularly hosted in *Quotidiano donna*, and the Italian Lesbian Union (CLI) was created (Bracke 2014: 192).

Before then, lesbianism had already been discussed in feminist groups, but was not a popular topic. In fact, according to Bracke, one of the influences of the meeting with the French women of *Psychanalyse et Politique* (described in chapter three) was that of having triggered the discussion of lesbianism. In particular, the discussions about lesbianism concentrated in Turin, favoured by the fact that many lesbian members of the homosexual group *F.U.O.R.I.* (also mentioned in chapter six) had decided to leave their group because they felt that it was dominated by men, and founded the women-only *Sappho Brigade*. This group, together with the *Via Lombroso* collective, attracted many women wishing to share their experiences about being lesbians (Bracke 2014: 137). Despite the presence of these groups, several sources confirm the fact that lesbianism was not a popular topic in the Italian feminist movement. Willson explains that "lesbianism was much less visible in the Italian movement than in some other Western feminisms" (Willson 2010: 154) and Bracke (through Maria Schiavo, a lesbian member of the Turinese *Via Petrarca* collective) points out that lesbians felt ignored in society and rejected by the feminist movement (Bracke 2014: 137).

The reasons given for this rejection are similar across several sources. Pomeranzi (a lesbian member of the *Pompeo Magno* group) explains that many feminists did not want their collective to support lesbians because they feared that this might further divide the group, and rather preferred to focus on those topics shared by all

⁶⁵ Particularly important was the first issue of the magazine (1973), because of a section entirely dedicated to American radical feminism and to the available translations of American works relating to sexuality and feminism in general.

women (Pomeranzi 1987: 210). A very similar stance is referred by Zumaglino, who tackles the meeting between lesbian members of the *F.U.O.R.I.* and Turinese feminists of the *Via Petrarca* group and maintains that at the end of the meeting feminists decided that it was better to focus on the majority of women who cannot be represented by a very small group such as lesbians (Zumaglino 1996: 157).⁶⁶

Finally, Calabrò and Grasso point out that although sexuality was widely discussed during consciousness-raising sessions within the group, lesbianism was very rarely tackled. This was mostly a consequence of the composition of the group: since their discussions were based on their personal experiences, and none of the *Anabasi* women was lesbian, the topic of lesbianism has been ignored. Another reason why Italian feminists decided not to discuss lesbianism during their meetings is related to some extreme political practices. In fact, Italian feminists had the opportunity to learn that some French and American feminist groups considered becoming lesbian a goal. In particular, one of the *Anabasi* women interviewed by Calabrò and Grasso explains that she learned that from a document of the French *Féministes Révolutionnaires* (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 180). Similarly, the Turinese Emmeti Fenoglio had the opportunity to meet the American group *radical lesbians*, where many women practised what she defines “omosessualità politica”: they became lesbians for revolutionary and political reasons (Zumaglino 1996: 161-162). From both interviews we learn that Italian women were surprised by this practice and did not feel ready for such a radical stance.

However, sexuality was not discussed only from the feminist point of view: also in Italy a restricted number of young people experienced the “American” sexual revolution, which reached Italy also thanks to *The Sexual Revolution* by Wilhelm Reich. This volume was translated into Italian in 1963 and became very popular among university students (Zumaglino 1996: 153); however, this phenomenon in Italy was limited to those girls who lived far from their families and took part in the student revolution in 1968. This can be inferred, for instance, from the personal account by the Turinese feminist Emmeti Fenoglio, who in an interview explained how the way in which girls perceived sex changed profoundly when they had the opportunity to leave their families:

⁶⁶ This opinion is expressed by Emmeti Fenoglio, a member of the *Via Petrarca* group.

Rispetto alla sublimazione totale precedente, poter andare a letto, fare l'amore era una conquista incredibile, enorme. Andavamo fuori e, quando tornavamo la sera in collegio, ci raccontavamo le nostre esperienze... (Zumaglino 1996: 145-146).

Fenoglio's account shows very well that the spread of the "American" sexual revolution in Italy was not homogeneous, but it mainly reached those few girls who experienced the student revolution of 1968. Very soon, these Italian girls also realized that this revolution did not improve the relationships between men and women and, according to Zumaglino, this disillusion fostered the creation of the first small consciousness-raising groups, which served as a safety valve for those women who were disenchanted with men's behaviour (Zumaglino 1996: 146).

Another important testimony is by Maria Teresa Battaglino, who provides a shocking account of an encounter with women in a working class suburb of Turin:

Non dimenticherò mai quell'incontro, che è stato una grossa esperienza, anche se un pò traumatica. Noi, gira e rigira, eravamo tutte un pò perbeniste. Avevamo un modo tutto mediato di affrontare le tematiche sessuali. Da una parte, c'era l'autocoscienza [...] dall'altra, l'ideologia della politica, e il dato della realtà scompariva. Invece lì alla Falchera non esistevano nè l'autocoscienza, nè la politica, ma il dato di realtà nudo e crudo. C'era la donna che si tirava giù le mutande e ti presentava la figa, come il fiore messo in mostra su un vassoio d'argento in una casa bella. [...] Era già qualche anno che c'era stato il movimento studentesco, si parlava già di sessualità. Pensavamo di esserci ormai "liberate" e, invece, scoprivamo che non era vero niente (Zumaglino 1996: 149).

Maria Teresa Battaglino's account shows us the difference between feminists and working class women in terms of sexual problems (psychological for feminists, physical for others) and methods of communication (indirect for feminists, very direct and even shocking for others). This excerpt also shows the limits of the sexual revolution in Italy: although the protagonist and her friends used to consider themselves "sexually liberated", they were still conformist and had problems talking

about sexuality, so the encounter with the women from the suburb of Falchera made them understand that they were not “liberated” at all. In another section of Battaglini’s interview she recounts her first dialogue about sexuality with working class women, which took place in one of the recent opened *centri di medicina della donna* in Turin. On this occasion, she also discovered that working class women did not know anything about contraceptive pills and were very eager to know more about them and to spread the news amongst their friends: “[...] ma allora ‘ste pastiglie esistono davvero! E ha chiamato le sue amiche per parlare della pastiglia...E’ così che abbiamo fatto la prima riunione” (Zumaglino 1996: 148).

In the already mentioned “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale” Carla Lonzi also contributed to the debate about sexual revolution. In fact, this text also contains a very harsh critique of Reich, who is accused (together with Freud) of deceiving women with the liberalisation of a sexual approach, which constitutes an advantage for men only. Therefore, Lonzi firmly rejects the sexual revolution, which she defines as “il disinibirsi che porta a un rinnovato prestigio del coito nella coppia, nel gruppo, nella comunità o nell’orgia universale” (Lonzi 2010: 113) and, in *Significato dell’autocoscienza nei gruppi femministi* as:

In questo senso la rivoluzione sessuale maschile è stato l’ultimo atto con cui il patriarcato ha cercato di rendere rivoluzionaria un’oppressione: “Il sesso è bello! Il coito è bello!” inganna ancora una volta la donna su ciò che è bene per lei (Lonzi 2010: 119).

By using the expression “rivoluzione sessuale maschile” Lonzi underlines that this model of sexuality is an advantage only for men.

Unfortunately, Lonzi does not give any details regarding the diffusion of this phenomenon in Italy or about the social categories that adopted this new lifestyle. We just know that she identifies “hippies” (but, as the conjunction “anche” suggests, not only them) as one of the social categories that adopted the sexual revolution:

La delusione che il femminismo ha avuto anche sui movimenti hippies deriva dal fatto che il giovane che non fa la guerra, ma l’amore finisce per ristabilire suo malgrado quel funzionamento che lo conferma difensore del nucleo primario del patriarcato. [...] L’invito all’amore è una formula

pericolosamente affascinante perchè attribuisce nuovo valore, candore, alone taumaturgico al modello sessuale maschile, rafforzando così il mito della bontà arcaica della coppia e dei relativi ruoli (Lonzi 2010: 106).

In this case, Lonzi harshly criticizes the “hippy movement” because it fails to understand that, by promoting sex, it simply supports the male approach to sexuality. This critique contrasts with what she had stated only one year before in *Sputiamo su Hegel*:

La cultura patriarcale mantiene l'azione falsificatrice dei suoi schemi anche all'interno dei modi in cui si articola la ribellione dei giovani: interpretando il movimento hippy come un movimento religioso gli studenti impegnati si servono di una etichetta politicamente screditabile per fare del paternalismo. [...] L'irrisione di questa gerarchia è avvenuta con gli hippies, giovani e ragazze, i quali hanno attuato una comunità di tipo non virile, sulle spoglie esautorate dei comportamenti aggressivi e violenti. [...] La ricomparsa della donna ha dato l'avvio a una volontaria emarginazione della gioventù che manifesta in tutti i modi possibili, distruttivi, ma pacifici la sua convinzione di dover ripartire da zero (Lonzi 2010: 33-34).

In this text, Lonzi strongly supported hippies because, in her opinion, they were the only group able to encompass both masculinity and femininity and therefore, this was the only way to fight patriarchal oppression in society. Only one year later Lonzi changed her opinion about hippies because they embraced free love, which in her opinion was a trap for women and a validation of patriarchal values.

Lonzi's comments shows that the counterculture was not completely unfamiliar to Italian women, who could learn about it from the great amount of material (such as music, books and movies), which reached Italy in many different forms. Some examples are Fernanda Pivano's 1966 translation of Ginsberg's *Hydrogen Jukebox* (Echaurren and Salaris 1999: 22), and the emergence of some small underground

publications of American inspiration, such as *Pianeta Fresco*⁶⁷ and *Mondo Beat*.⁶⁸ The Italian counterculture promoted young people's creativity and had some distinctive peculiarities but it did not last. In fact, in 1968, it clashed with the student protests and slowly dissolved. This was not only due to the opposition of public opinion, but also because of the many strands (Trotskyist, Marxist, Leninist, etc.) present within the movement, which marginalized the more anarchist groups (Echaurren and Salaris 1999: 12).

It is evident that Italy in the late 60s and 70s provided a fertile breeding ground for many American trends, such as the sexual revolution and counterculture, and translation played a leading role in this process of internationalization. However, because of the important social and cultural differences between Italy and the United States, these movements developed some distinctive characteristics and never reached the same popularity in Italy as they had in the United States.

The following section will show how this cultural difference influenced the translation of some of *Donne è bello*'s texts into Italian. In fact, although similar to the United States, in Italy many feminists, such as Carla Lonzi, also rejected the sexual revolution, so the corresponding key vocabulary is often quite different.

5.3. “Donna liberata”: analysis of this term with reference to the American and Italian contexts of use

This analysis will start with one of the most recurrent expressions that is used to refer to women's relationship with sexuality in many texts throughout *Donne è bello*: “*donna liberata*”. As this research aims to give insight into the Italian representation of American feminism, we will first see what meaning is generally inferable from the translations, and then examine its possible interpretation by Italian women. Then, the original meaning of the texts will be assessed.

In “La politica del lavoro domestico”, the expression “*donna liberata*” is accompanied by a brief description of the term. This is an excerpt from the translation in *Donne è bello*:

⁶⁷ Inspired by the *San Francisco Oracle*, it contained translations of texts originally published in the American alternative press, such as poems by Allen Ginsberg and texts by Timothy Leary. Echaurren, Pablo and Salaris, Claudia. 1999. *Controcultura in Italia: 1966-1977*, Bollati Boringhieri: Torino, pp. 83-86.

⁶⁸ Published in Milan in 1966, *Mondo Beat* was the first Italian underground publication. It supported antimilitarism and the refusal of consumerism.

Donna liberata, molto diverso da Liberazione della Donna. La prima vuol dire tutti i tipi di delizie per riscaldare i cuori (per non menzionare altre parti) degli uomini più rivoluzionari; Liberazione della Donna vuol dire lavoro domestico. La prima vuol dire sesso prima del matrimonio, sesso senza matrimonio, facili accomodamenti per il ménage familiare (sai, vivo con una), la soddisfazione personale di sapere che non sei il tipo d'uomo che vuole uno zerbino al posto di una donna. Per questo ci sarà tempo.⁶⁹

In this excerpt of the translation, the difference between “donna liberata” and “Liberazione della Donna” is clearly explained. With very biting and explicit language, the author describes the “donna liberata” as a sexually uninhibited woman who is now “freed” (“liberata” is the past participle of the verb “liberare”, and therefore is the result of an action) from the limited roles of mother and wife. However, her liberation is only apparent because she is now exploited by men who wish to avoid any commitment with a woman. This contrasts with the preoccupation of women’s liberation, symbolized here by the fight to make men share the housework.

By analysing the source text we can better understand what the author intended to convey and reconstruct the translation process:

Liberated women – very different from Women’s Liberation!

The first signals all kinds of goodies, to warm the hearts (not to mention other parts) of the most radical men. The other signals – HOUSEWORK. The first brings sex without marriage, sex before marriage, cosy housekeeping arrangements (“I’m living with this chick”) and the self-content of knowing that you’re not the kind of man who wants a doormat instead of a woman. That will come later. After all, who wants that old commodity anymore, the Standard American Housewife, all husband, home and kids. The New Commodity, the **Liberated Woman**, has sex a lot and has a Career, preferably something that can

⁶⁹ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 21.

be fitted in with the household chores like dancing, pottery, or painting.⁷⁰

By comparing the source text with the target text, the most striking element that emerges is that part of the source text has not been included in the translation. This section, which corresponds to the last sentence of the section shown above, plays a very important role in the text: it provides a definition of the “liberated woman”. In fact, while in the first part the author compared the “liberated woman” with “women’s liberation”, in the second part she shows the differences between the “liberated woman” and the “Standard American Housewife”. It is evident that in the target text we only have a very partial portrait of the “liberated woman” and that, unless the Italian public has a clear idea of what a “*donna liberata*” really is, it might be difficult for the reader to understand the meaning of this expression.

At this point it is important to delve into the meaning of “*donna liberata*”. This is a loan translation of “liberated women”, an expression used by Koedt and Mainardi that, according to Jane Gallop, dates back to around 1965, the peak of the sexual revolution. Later on, in the late 60s and early 70s, the second wave of feminism started and called itself Women’s Liberation (Gallop 2005: 91). Jane Gallop accurately states the difference between the terms used to define feminists in the United States: “Women’s Libbers” clearly referred to feminists and alluded to their being anti-male and unsexy, while “liberated women” was an expression used to refer to those women who embraced the sexual revolution. Gallop’s interpretation of this expression perfectly coincides with what we can infer from some of the texts in *Donne è bello*: “the sexual freedom offered women from the sexual revolution was not in itself but for men. It freed women to be totally available and perfectly responsive to men’s desire for them” (Gallop 2005: 92). Also, Jane Gerhard gives a very similar interpretation of the sexual revolution:

‘Free love’ stood for sexual pleasure freed from deadening conformity, monogamy, and possessiveness [...]. At the same time as feminists participated in the values and rituals of the counterculture, they also rejected much of it as sexist, male-centred, and oppressive to women. They absorbed and

⁷⁰ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 28.

refashioned the liberated (male) body of the 1960s revolutions, with its free orgasms and unregulated pleasures, and specified it for women (Gerhard 2001: 7).

As Gerhard points out, women did not reject the whole counterculture, as the celebration of sexual pleasure and harsh critiques of the institution of marriage are common in both American and Italian (especially those by Carla Lonzi) feminists texts. Rather, feminists intended to transform the sexual revolution into a “women’s revolution”.

“Donna liberata” is also present in the translation of the famous text by Carol Hanisch “Ciò che è personale è politico”. Here is an excerpt:

Nei gruppi ai quali io mi sono unita non ci si è posta l’alternativa al modo di vivere, e non ci si è chiesto quello che vuole dire essere una donna “liberata”. Si è rapidamente concluso che, nelle condizioni presenti, tutte le alternative sono sfavorevoli. Che noi si viva in coppia o sole o in comunità, che si sia o no sposate, che si viva con altre donne, che si sia per l’amore libero, per il celibato, per il lesbismo o per qualsiasi altra situazione, ci sono solo cose buone o cattive riguardanti situazioni negative. Questo è l’inganno del parlare di situazione “più liberata”. Ci sono solo alternative sfavorevoli.⁷¹

In this excerpt of the translation the author mentions the “donna liberata”, but the characteristics of this woman are not clearly expressed. In particular, what confuses the reader is the recurrent use of the word “alternativa”: in fact, the author presents a wide number of different “alternatives”, but does not clearly say which one of them corresponds to the choice of the “donna liberata”. The comparison of the target text with the source text clearly shows that Carol Hanisch used very specific vocabulary belonging to the sexual revolution:

The groups that I have been in have also not gotten into “alternative life-styles” or what it means to be a “liberated” woman. We came early to the conclusion that all alternatives are bad under present conditions. Whether we live with or without a man, communally or in couples or alone, are married

⁷¹ Gruppo Anabasi, 1972, *Donne è bello*, p. 107.

or unmarried, live with other women, go for free love, celibacy or lesbianism, or any combination, there are only good and bad things about each bad situation. There is no “more liberated” way; there are only bad alternatives.⁷²

The key to understanding the text is in the expression “alternative lifestyles”, which was very common during the sexual revolution. In fact, as Barbara Ehrenreich explains, the sexual revolution brought a new set of words into American vocabulary, such as:

“relationship,” to accommodate both marriage and “affairs” (at the same time “affair, with its permanent image of marginalization, became archaic); “lifestyle,” to accommodate singleness as well as marriage (and eventually homosexuality as another “alternative”); and “singles” itself as an adjective which might pertain to a neighborhood or a lifestyle (Ehrenreich 1986: 60).

We should also note the use of inverted commas, which is typical of many texts of this period (both American and Italian) and is a way of highlighting that some words belong to “masculine language” and are often used to cheat women. By putting these words in inverted commas, feminists help the reader to think about these words and about their current use.

In particular, Hanisch was clearly addressing those unconventional lifestyles which became popular during the counterculture period, and being a “liberated woman” is one of these. Therefore Hanisch’s message is clear: feminist groups refused to consider the “liberated women” lifestyle a solution to the problems of women. In this case, the translator failed to understand and convey the proper meaning of “alternative lifestyles”, and the result of this problem is the evident difficulty an Italian speaker will have when reading this translation.

Finally, “*donna liberata*” also appears in the translation of “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” by Anne Koedt.

Le donne sono state così definite sessualmente nei termini di quello che piace agli uomini. La nostra biologia non è stata

⁷² Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 77.

propriamente analizzata: invece noi siamo state nutrite con il mito della donna liberata col suo orgasmo vaginale, che è un orgasmo che in effetti non esiste.⁷³

In this text, we can find yet another negative example of “donna liberata”. Anne Koedt describes the vaginal orgasm as a myth that allowed men to subjugate women. While Mainardi and Hanisch focused on the lifestyle of the “liberated woman” and described her illusory emancipation, Koedt describes in detail her sexuality as a myth.

Radical feminists distanced themselves from the idea of freedom represented by the “liberated woman”, which is always treated negatively in their texts. From the previously analysed texts it is possible to infer that the expression “donna liberata” always carried a negative meaning for second-wave feminists and represented an illusory solution to women’s problems. In fact, Mainardi stressed the illusion of equality, Hanisch the illusion that alternative lifestyles promoted by the counterculture could be successful, while Koedt linked it with the illusion of the vaginal orgasm.

“Donna liberata” also appears in a paratext, a small cartoon at the end of “L’istituzione del rapporto sessuale” by Ti-Grace Atkinson. In this case, the topic covered in the corresponding text (sexual intercourse) and the scene shown, which depicts an instance of sexual harassment, further stresses the link between the term “donna liberata” and women’s sexual exploitation.

While the status of the translation of many texts present in *Donne è bello* is clearly stated, the provenance of the pictures is not indicated. Therefore, in order to analyse the images and comic strips in *Donne è bello*, it is necessary to determine their status, and this will be carried out with the help of a model of analysis which was developed by Dirk Delabastita on the basis of Toury’s tripartite model (system, norms and performance). Delabastita explained how texts can be categorized as translations on the basis of the analysis of even small visual details (Delabastita 2007: 239). This system can be applied not only to pseudotranslations (texts that are presented as translations in the target system, but may be original texts), but also to the cases in which a text is not labelled as a translation, but analysis of its features shows strong similarities with other texts (Delabastita 2007: 244). Delabastita also

⁷³ Gruppo Anabasi, 1972, *Donne è bello*, p. 48.

explained that it is very important to study the links among these three levels because “these interconnections are likely to reflect certain cultural constraints (level of *norms*)” (Delabastita 2007: 235). In this research this image will be analysed in order to study how it helped the text it accompanies to convey a specific meaning.



Donne è bello is rich in images and comic strips accompanying short texts. These play a very important role, as they might provide new insight or give more strength to the enclosed text. As already mentioned,⁷⁴ we know that they were added by the *Anabasi* women but, while the texts are clearly identified as translations, the provenance of the pictures is not mentioned in the editorial. However, in this specific case we can argue the provenance of the image (and also its status of translation) by analysing features such as the clothing of the male protagonist (bell-bottomed trousers, fringe vest) and other details such as the necklace with the peace symbol and the flowers in the girl's hair. These elements are very important because they were commonly used to depict hippies, and can help readers (even Italian) to identify the protagonists of the picture and its message. Therefore, this picture plays a role

⁷⁴ *Notes From the Second Year* had very few pictures, while *Donne è bello* has many. From a comparison of the two texts it is evident that the images have been added by the *Anabasi* women.

comparable to that of a footnote, as it provides further explanation of a term (“donna liberata”) that, as already explained, is a loanword and therefore might not be easy to understand by the Italian public. Moreover, we can infer that this picture is a translation because *Donne è bello* contains many pictures with many features in common, such as the design and the situations described, which can all be identified as typical of North American culture.

At this point it is important to understand whether the meaning of “donna liberata” was present in the Italian feminist vocabulary and can be considered univocal and understandable. “Donna liberata” was quite a rare term in the vocabulary of Italian feminism and, because of its similarity with the keyword “liberazione”, its meaning does not seem clear. An example is evident in Lietta Tornabuoni and Stefano Reggiani’s volume *Sorelle d’Italia*, published in 1977. This is one of the few cases in which the “donna liberata” is not only mentioned but also described. It represents Italian women by means of pictures and short texts, and divides them into five categories: “La militante”, “La consumata”, “La liberata”, “La creativa” and “La tradizionale”. However, Lietta Tornabuoni’s liberated woman was not the counterculture ideal woman, but derived from the “liberazione”, the dream of Italian feminists. In fact, the corresponding section in *Sorelle d’Italia* is completely dedicated to the role of the feminist woman and contains interviews with some famous feminists, such as Manuela Fraire and Emma Bonino, talking about the main goal of the Italian Women’s liberation movement.

Similarly, we find “donna liberata” in Carla Lonzi’s text “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale” and, again, her use of the term is positive and seems to derive from “liberazione”: “La donna clitoridea non è la donna liberata, né la donna che non ha subito il mito maschile – poiché queste donne non esistono nella civiltà in cui ci troviamo...”. In this passage the “donna liberata” is compared to the “donna clitoridea” and considered a utopia, similarly to the woman that “was not subjected to the masculine myth”.

We also find this expression in an article published in *Effe*, the most common monthly magazine among Italian radical feminists. In her article, “Il piccolo gruppo: fine dell’isolamento”, Daniela Colombo gives this expression a very different meaning:

Le italiane cominciano dunque ad avvertire che il femminismo non è un movimento di donne dure, fredde, senza

sentimenti, capaci solo di urlare, che odiano gli uomini, che prendono in giro le altre donne “non liberate”.⁷⁵

A few paragraphs later she describes what happened when, during consciousness-raising sessions, they started to deal with the topic of sexuality:

Era la prima volta che ci trovavamo a parlare direttamente delle nostre esperienze sessuali, e che non ci limitavamo solo a leggere, su documenti americani, quelle delle altre donne. Per quanto fossimo apparentemente “liberate”, la sessualità – dovemmo riconoscerlo – era ancora un tabù.⁷⁶

From the first excerpt we learn that “donne liberate” identified with feminists, those who took part in the “Women’s Liberation” movement. The second example shows that Italian feminists belonging to disparate movements (Daniela Colombo was a member of the Movimento Femminista Romano, not an *Anabasi* member) were familiar with feminist documents from the United States, but in terms of sexuality they were not “liberated” at all. Therefore, the term “donna liberata” had for them a meaning quite different from “liberated woman”. Daniela Colombo was a permanent member of *Effe*’s editorial staff, and the way she uses the expression “donne liberate” is particularly interesting because she probably knew very well the latest news from the American feminist movement. In fact, the first *Effe* (1973, number 1) includes an extensive section regarding the American radical feminist movement, and an exclusive article containing the details of her journey to Washington and an interview with a woman who had just had an abortion. Moreover, the already mentioned *Effe* released in 1974 contained two translations taken from *Donne è bello* (“Resistenza alla coscienza” and “Guida alla presa di coscienza”), both originally written by American feminists.

Finally, we can find the expression “donna liberata” in *Il prigioniero del sesso: i miti e i pregiudizi della “donna liberata”*, the Italian translation of Norman Mailer’s work *The Prisoner of Sex*, published in 1971 and translated in the same year. A comparison between the original and the Italian titles clearly shows that, in order to help the readership to understand the content of the book, a subtitle has been added to the translation. In fact, while the anti-feminist approach of Mailer (who wrote this

⁷⁵ Daniela Colombo “Il piccolo gruppo: fine dell’isolamento”, *Effe* (1974), n.1, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Daniela Colombo “Il piccolo gruppo: fine dell’isolamento”, *Effe* (1974), n.1, p. 4.

book as a reaction to Millett's *Sexual Politics*) was well known in the United States, the Italian public needed some further clarification. Moreover, this is another example showing that the "donna liberata" was identified in Italy as a member of the feminist movement.

However, we cannot exclude the possibility that some women knew the American meaning of "donna liberata". We can find an example in the interview with Maria Teresa Battaglini (already mentioned on page 114) but, since it occurred in 1987, we can state that in the literature of the early 70s, the expression "donna liberata" does not carry the same meaning as "liberated woman".

Now that the connotation of "donna liberata" is clear, we can see that it was not an inescapable choice for the translator. In fact Koedt's, "Il mito dell'orgasmo vaginale" was not translated only by Serena Castaldi, but also appeared in the volume *Per un movimento politico di liberazione della donna*, edited by Lidia Menapace. We will now briefly look at different translations of the same passage:

Le donne sono state dunque definite sessualmente in funzione di ciò che fa godere gli uomini; la loro fisiologia non è stata propriamente analizzata. Si è invece affibbiato loro il mito della donna emancipata con il suo orgasmo vaginale – un orgasmo che di fatto non esiste.⁷⁷

The translator in this case chose the word "emancipata", rather than "liberata". Although the terms "emancipata" and "liberata" might seem absolutely equivalent because they both refer to the state of the slave who is given freedom, they have different relationships with the sexual revolution and the feminist movement. In fact, while in Italy the term "liberata" is linked with "liberazione" (the goal of radical feminists), the term "emancipata" —together with "emancipazione"— belonged to the language of another part of the Italian feminist movement (the *Unione Donne Italiane*), and therefore had a negative meaning for radical feminists.

A comparison of the different choices of the translators clearly shows that they had a very different approach to translation, and this is particularly evident in key expressions such as "donna liberata", whose understanding might compromise the reception of the whole text. The translator's behaviour can be explained by the

⁷⁷ Menapace, Lidia (ed.). 1972. *Per un movimento politico di liberazione della donna* (Verona: Bertani editore), p. 234.

concept that Venuti (quoting Barthes)⁷⁸ calls *interpretant*: “A pattern of use in cultural practice that is performed and regulated within a social institution” (Venuti 2008: 32). Venuti distinguishes two different types of *interpretant*: the *formal* and the *thematic*. While the *thematic* is a code of meaning deriving from research and experience in a certain field, the *formal* tends to imitate the sound or structure of the source text or to preserve the semantic correspondence by providing a current dictionary definition of the item that needs to be translated.

Evidently, in this case, Serena Castaldi used a *formal interpretant* and provided a translation that resembles the original text in terms of the signifier but not of the signified. In contrast, in the translation published in the volume edited by Lidia Menapace there is a *thematic interpretant*, a “code or meaning formulated by the translator on the basis of research or experience” (Venuti 2008:34). Of course, these two terms carry different shades of meaning, but it should be considered that “translating effects a more radical break than a relatively simple iteration such as a quotation because it simultaneously decontextualizes and recontextualizes the foreign text in terms that are variously linguistic, literary, and cultural” (Venuti 2008: 33). Of course, the term “emancipata” does not convey all the shades of meaning of “liberata” as, for instance, the reference to the American sexual revolution is lost. However, Venuti points out that:

translating unavoidably produces shifts and variations that not only inflict a substantial loss of form and meaning upon that text, but entail an exorbitant formal and semantic gain in the translation, the release of effects that may have nothing to do with the foreign language and culture and work only in the receiving situation (Venuti 2008: 33).

In this case, by using the word “emancipata” the translator might have linked this text with the debate that was going on in Italy in the 70s about the meaning of this term.

In fact, as already mentioned, the terms “emancipazione” and “liberazione” were considered by Italian feminists as corresponding to very different ideas. Manuela Fraire in an interview obtained by Lietta Tornabuoni and published in *Sorelle d'Italia* clearly explains the meaning of “liberazione”:

⁷⁸ Barthes, Roland. 1968. *Elements of Semiology*, New York: Hill & Wang, pp. 31-32.

[...] Per “liberazione” io intendo liberazione di tutta l’umanità, uomini e donne. [...] si è pensato che alle donne bastasse emanciparsi, diventare cioè *come* l’uomo, per esprimere se stesse. [...] Ecco, la parola “liberazione” vuol dire per le donne progetto che tiene conto del fatto che il nostro destino è legato innanzi tutto alla nostra identità sessuale. Quando poi è riferita anche agli uomini, “liberazione” vuol dire una revisione totale del rapporto con la realtà e con la natura.⁷⁹

Fraire’s opinion perfectly coincides with Firestone’s considerations: while “emancipation” means aiming to become like men, “liberazione” is a cultural revolution, which also includes men. Perry Wilson further explains that for Italian feminists “emancipazione” was embodied by the *UDI*, a para-political association which aimed to achieve gender equality without challenging the power structure (Willson 2010: 157). Adler shares the same stances and further explains that in the early 70s “emancipation” was embodied by left-wing political parties and the trade unions, while a radical revolution (“liberation”) was strongly supported by the collectives and the other small organizations established during the late 60s (Adler Hellman 1987: 47). Anna Rossi-Doria points out that for the young members of the collectives, the difference between “emancipazione” and “liberazione” was probably also generational. This emerges quite clearly from an interview she obtained: “We fought against *uguaglianza* not for its own sake but because it had been in particular the banner of the mothers (*UDI*)”.⁸⁰ However, by the mid-70s this distinction had become blurred and the two terms had become synonymous.

“Emancipata” and “emancipazione” were key terms for the Italian feminist movement and are common throughout *Donne è bello*’s translations. In order to explain this further, their meaning will now be described in context. In the translation of Shulamith Firestone’s text (“Love”), the author, after having focused on how the sexual revolution favoured men and damaged women, explains how “le donne emancipate” found out that their emancipation was just an adaptation to men’s desires. This is the translation in *Donne è bello*:

⁷⁹ Tornabuoni, Lietta and Reggiani, Stefano (eds.). 1977. *Sorelle d’Italia: l’immagine della donna dal ’68 and ’78* (Milano: Bompiani), p. 118.

⁸⁰ Quotation from Anna Rossi-Doria’s *Ipotesi per un storia che verrà* from Willson, Perry. 2010. *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*, London: Macmillan, p. 157.

Le donne di elevati ideali che credevano l'emancipazione possibile, le donne che hanno cercato disperatamente di sbarazzarsi delle "nevrosi" femminili [...] sono state crudelmente prese in giro. [...] Le donne "emancipate" scoprirono che l'onestà, la generosità e il cameratismo degli uomini era una menzogna. [...] Le donne "emancipate" scoprirono che gli uomini erano ben lontani dai "bravi ragazzi" da emulare; scoprirono che imitando i modelli sessuali maschili [...] non solo non ottenevano la liberazione, ma cadevano in qualcosa di molto peggio di quello a cui avevano rinunciato. Stavano imitando.⁸¹

In this passage, sexual revolution is not clearly mentioned because the source text has been abridged, but we can infer that it is still the main topic from the description of the unequal relationship between men and women, which is one of the main points feminists raised against sexual revolution. Here both the terms "emancipazione" and "emancipate" carry a negative meaning and convey the idea (also thanks to the inverted commas) that emancipation was just an illusion.

The source text provides us with more information regarding the characteristics of these "donne emancipate" that are not available to the Italian reader. In fact, Castaldi did not translate an excerpt from *Mosquitoes*, a novel written in 1927 by William Faulkner, quoted in "Love". Although the term "emancipated" is not mentioned in the short excerpt, Firestone introduces this quotation as a still valid description of the "emancipated" woman. Here is an example that constitutes a particularly powerful description:

[...] certainly no woman would, and few women could, demand less of their men as she did. She never made arbitrary demands on their time, never caused them to wait for her nor to see her home at inconvenient hours, never made them fetch and carry for her; she fed them and flattered herself that she was a good listener. [...] ⁸²

⁸¹ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, pp. 17-18.

⁸² Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 25.

From this description we learn that the “emancipated woman” aimed at achieving equality and independence but, actually, was completely subjugated to men’s desires.

At this point it is important to point out that the picture of the emancipated woman that emerges from “Love” describes women only from the point of view of their relationship with men. A similar description of the “*donna emancipata*” is found in Lonzi’s “*La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale*”, which was published in the summer of 1971:

Diffidiamo dell’ottimismo di alcune donne emancipate che mettono avanti come esempio da seguire il loro accordo sportivo e senza drammi con l’uomo. [...] La donna emancipata dà all’uomo il confort di regolare la sua emotività su quella di lui, la sua esigenza su quella di lui, la sua versione dei fatti su quella di lui, e così uccide la sua autenticità nell’illusione di non essere sconfitta.

Emancipated women are therefore those who think they have achieved equality by imitating men but, actually, they have just submitted themselves to men’s rules. As is evident from the text, Firestone’s “emancipated woman” perfectly corresponds with Lonzi’s “*donna emancipata*”.

We can find the same meaning of “*donna emancipata*” in a short text signed by the *Anabasi* collective and published in the special edition (dedicated to sexuality and abortion) of *Sottosopra*, the publication of the Milanese *Libreria delle donne* group:

La “*donna emancipata*” deve essere all’altezza della sua pretesa di uguaglianza, ostentare le sue nuove libertà: ha iniziativa sessuale, orgasmi (meglio se multipli), autonomia, mobilità, indipendenza affettiva e, beninteso, una professione. Naturalmente ha imparato a separare la funzione riproduttiva da quella sessuale. Per questo c’è la pillola. Oppure lo IUD. Oppure altri contraccettivi più o meno moderni e funzionali la mettono in condizione di presentarsi all’uomo come una partner ideale, senza problemi psicologici nè conseguenze spiacevoli.

Lei ha già preso tutte le precauzioni atte a lasciare libero sfogo all'irresponsabilità di lui. Ma noi siamo altrove.⁸³

Although this text was written three years after the publication of *Donne è bello*, it shows us that the “donna emancipata” corresponds for the *Anabasi* members to the “liberated woman”. In fact, it carries not only the meaning of equality, but also of a fake sexual revolution, which actually allowed men to exploit women even more. Therefore, this short text (together with that by Carla Lonzi) shows us that either the members of the collective were aware of the meaning of “donna emancipata” or that they became aware of it after the publication of *Donne è bello*, where they preferred to adopt the term “donna liberata”.

From this analysis we can clearly see the great variety of meanings attributed by Italian feminists to the key terms of the movement. In fact, both Lonzi and the *Anabasi* women identify the “donna emancipata” as an independent woman, but they both strongly stress the sexual aspect. For others, such as the already mentioned Fraire and Anna-Rossi Doria, fighting for “emancipazione” meant aspiring to the same position occupied by men in society. The same stance is shared by the members of the feminist groups in Turin whose accounts have been reported in *Femminismi a Torino*. In fact, in some of their interviews the terms “emancipazione” and “donna emancipata” are mentioned repeatedly and are always related with women’s aspiration for a professional career. Piccirillo provides two important examples. In the first case, she explains women’s fear of talking about work during consciousness-raising sessions because: “Lavoro, o ambizioni di realizzazione sul lavoro, “puzzavano” di emancipazione. Emancipazione che, concettualmente, per il femminismo, era inconciliabile con liberazione” (Zumaglino 1996: 363). In an interview obtained by Piccirillo we see the conflict between a feminist who has always fought hard in order to succeed professionally and the other members of the collective, who explain to her that this behaviour will force her to compete with men in the working world, whose rules have been created by men:

Per te, la donna emancipata è il tuo modello. Tu vuoi far carriera per conto tuo, vuoi arrivare ad essere alla pari con gli

⁸³ *Sottosopra* (Sottosopra Rosso). 1975. Fascicolo speciale “Sessualità contraccezione maternità aborto”, Milano, pp. 48-49.

uomini... Questo è un atteggiamento competitivo, funzionale ad un certo tipo di sistema (Zumaglino 1996: 363).

In conclusion, this analysis shows that Italian feminist collectives gave two slightly different meanings to the terms “emancipazione” and “donna emancipata”. Therefore, although Italian women might have misunderstood the expression “donna liberata”, “donna emancipata” was not easy to understand either, since it had more than one meaning. However, this analysis has shown that an expression able to convey the same shades of meaning of “liberated woman” simply did not exist in Italian.

5.4. The use of offensive vocabulary in the critique of the sexual revolution.

Donne è bello contains an interesting selection of key words which are characteristic of the American sexual revolution. However, the differences between the American and Italian sexual revolutions have obviously influenced the translation of such key words. The analysis will start with the translation of Shulamith Firestone’s “Love”, which explains in detail how women’s situation had evolved in the previous fifty years, and how women were persuaded to change their behaviour towards men in order not to be considered puritanical:

Ma la retorica della rivoluzione sessuale, se non ha portato alcun miglioramento per le donne, si è dimostrata molto utile per gli uomini. Convincendo le donne che i consueti giochi femminili erano spregevoli, sleali, puritani, fuori moda, repressivi e autodistruttivi, si è creato un nuovo serbatoio di femmine disponibili, per aumentare la scarsa offerta di beni sessuali disponibili per il tradizionale sfruttamento, disarmando le donne perfino di quel poco di protezione che avevano così dolorosamente conquistato. Le donne, oggi, non osano fare le vecchie richieste per timore di sentirsi tirare in testa tutto un nuovo vocabolario creato proprio per questo scopo: “rompiballe”, “frigida”, “repressa”, “nevrotica”, ecc. L’ideale è essere una “in gamba”.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 17.

The importance of this passage lies in the emphasis that the author gives to definitions. In the first half of the passage, the author defines women's behaviours (here defined as "giochi") in former times as "spregevoli, sleali, puritani, fuori moda, repressivi e autodistruttivi". In this section it should be noted that all the adjectives carry a strong negative connotation in Italian. The adjective "puritani" deserves special attention: in Italian, it is commonly used to define moralistic behaviour, but probably only a few women also knew its other meaning (related to the religious trend).

The second half of the passage focuses on specific vocabulary created in order to define those women who do not accept the new sexual revolution's rules. All of these adjectives also have negative meanings, with the exception of the last, "in gamba", here used to define the perfect woman. However, "in gamba" is an Italian expression normally used to define a particularly clever, professional and hardworking person (either male or female); therefore, this expression does not seem appropriate in this context. We find this expression again in "La libertà è lunga a venire" by Virginia Blaisdell, and also in this case, the "in gamba" woman is ready to adhere to the model of femininity promoted by the sexual revolution.⁸⁵

At this point it is important to understand precisely what kind of message Shulamith Firestone wanted to convey, and in order to do so we need to check the source text:

But the rhetoric of the sexual revolution, if it brought no improvements for women, proved to have great value for men. By convincing women that the usual female games and demands were despicable, unfair, prudish, old-fashioned, puritanical, and self-destructive, a new reservoir of available women was created to expand the tight supply of sexual goods available for traditional exploitation, disarming women of even the little protection they had so painfully acquired.

Women today dare not make the old demands for fear of having a whole new vocabulary, designed just for this purpose,

⁸⁵ "Dopo tutto lei non vuol essere un tipo vivace e in gamba? E quelle in gamba non dimostrano la loro vivacità saltando nei letti dei giovani in gamba e dicendo sempre di sì?"

hurled at them: “fucked up,” “ballbreaker,” “cockteaser,” “a real drag,” “a bad trip,” etc – to be a “groovy chick” is the ideal.⁸⁶

In the translation, the adjectives only partially correspond in terms of meaning to those in the source text. First of all, while in the source text there are five adjectives, the target text has only four. Secondly, apart from “rompiballe”, which is a literal translation of “ballbreaker”, the Italian versions of the other adjectives only vaguely convey the original meanings. In fact “frigida” carries a sexual meaning, and is probably an attempt to translate “cockteaser”, “repressa” probably translates “fucked up” and “nevrotica” could correspond to “a real drag”. In this case, Serena Castaldi could not translate literally; therefore, she tried to find words able to carry at least part of their original meaning. However, these translations belong to a different register and are generally less offensive than those in the source text. The term in the list that has not been translated, “a bad trip”, was commonly used by LSD consumers to describe unpleasant feelings of anxiety provoked by the consumption of drugs.

Finally, in the source text, men define the ideal sexually available woman as a “groovy chick”. “Chick” is a slang word very common in American English: it describes a young and attractive woman, and is used only among men,⁸⁷ while “groovy” is an adjective which was common in the United States in the mid- to late 60s,⁸⁸ used to describe something pleasing. Therefore, while a “groovy chick” is a sexually available woman, its translation, “in gamba”, conveys a totally different idea, as this is a very positive term usually used to address very capable and smart people of both sexes. This Italian expression contains no sexual allusion and, as in the preceding examples, no counter-cultural connotation. We cannot infer that Castaldi did not know the meaning of “chicks” because, towards the end of the text, this word is present again with a very different translation. In fact, the source text: “Or else – be consigned forever to that limbo of “chicks” who mean nothing or at least not what mother meant” has been translated as “Altrimenti essere relegate per sempre in quel limbo di “bambole” che non significano niente o almeno non quello che diceva la

⁸⁶ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 25.

⁸⁷ The definition of the word “chick” is drawn from: Dalzell, Tom (senior ed.) and Victor, Terry (ed.) (2005), *The new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English*, London: Routledge.

⁸⁸ The Partridge dictionary (see footnote 40) considers it such a common adjective that it has subsequently been used to mock the attitudes of the 60s.

mamma". "Bambole", although not related to the counterculture, at least conveys the meaning of "sexually available woman" and therefore can be considered as a better translation rather than "in gamba".

From the examples provided we can infer that the translation has two main problems: it does not refer to the counterculture and, as it is less offensive, it probably fails to recreate in its readers the same effect the source text had on its public. Conveying in the target text the same countercultural allusions would have been very difficult for the translator: in fact, we need to consider that although some key words such as "trip" were known in Italy, only a very limited number of people could understand them.

In the translation of "Love" we find many different adjectives used to define the way in which women were considered during the sexual revolution. The comparison between the target text and the source text shows some very interesting features.

In fact, the section:

[...] le donne sono state persuase a gettare la loro armatura. La donna moderna ha orrore di essere considerata una **puritana**, mentre sua nonna se lo aspettava come cosa naturale.⁸⁹

was originally:

[...] women have been persuaded to shed their armor. The modern woman is in horror of being thought a **bitch** where her grandmother expected that to happen as the natural course of things.⁹⁰

What is surprising here is that "puritana" is not the translation of "puritan" (as we supposed during the target text analysis), but of "bitch". This popular insult is quite common throughout the text and it is always translated with different words that have in common their being slightly offensive. For instance, when explaining that the emancipation provided by sexual revolution is only an illusion, we find:

For much as men were glad to enjoy their wit, their style, their sex, and their candlelight suppers, they always ended up

⁸⁹ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 17.

⁹⁰ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 25

marrying **The Bitch**, and then, to top it all off, came back to complain of what a horror she was.⁹¹

which was translated as:

Perchè anche se gli uomini erano contenti di godere del loro spirito, il loro stile, il loro sesso, e le loro cene a lume di candela, finivano sempre per sposare una **donna all'antica**, e poi, per coronare il tutto, tornavano per lamentarsi di che orrore era.⁹²

In both examples, a “bitch” is an old style woman who has not adapted to the new trend promoted by the sexual revolution.

In order to analyse the translation process it is important to define the meaning of the word “bitch”. According to a specialized dictionary,⁹³ in the 60s it had many different connotations, and often simply carried the meaning of “woman”, as explained by some examples taken from the popular literature of the time: “Bitch involves many connotations. Sometimes it is used insultingly or as a curse, but often it is used casually and without malice”,⁹⁴ and “Hey, baby, how many times do I have to tell you that bitch is a term of endearment? It depends on the tone of the voice the person used”.⁹⁵ Kenneth Hudson⁹⁶ shares the same view, but relates this shift of meaning with the emergence into the limelight of the Hell’s Angels in the 1950s.⁹⁷

According to what we can learn from the source text, the word “bitch”⁹⁸ did not have any sexual allusion but was used to define negatively those “traditional women” who did not take part in the sexual revolution. It is also important to note that the word “bitch” is repeated four times in the text, which means that it must be considered as a key word that Shulamith Firestone used in order to trigger a very specific reaction in the audience: revulsion and anger. The word “bitch” has not

⁹¹ Firestone, Shulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 26.

⁹² Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 18.

⁹³ Dalzell, Tom (senior ed.) and Victor, Terry (ed.) (2005), *The new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English*, London: Routledge.

⁹⁴ Example taken from Milner, Christina and Milner Richard (1973), *Black Players*, Boston: Little Brown.

⁹⁵ Goines, Donald (1974), *El Dorado Red*, Los Angeles: Holloway House Pub Co.

⁹⁶ Hudson, Kenneth (1983), *A dictionary of the Teenage Revolution and its Aftermath*, London: Macmillan.

⁹⁷ Group of illegal riders who became famous for their violent behaviour.

⁹⁸ In the examples provided, “bitch” refers to the context of the sexual revolution and is translated as “Moglie Pestifera”, “puritana” and “donna all’antica”. On other occasions in the same text, “bitch” is also translated as “tiranna” and “megera”.

always been used with the same meaning within the feminist movement. In “The BITCH Manifesto”,⁹⁹ for instance, Joreen turns the offensive word “bitch” into the name of an organization of women who are different from “normal” women and proud of their difference: basically, all feminists are “bitches”.

By giving the term “bitch” four different translations within the same text (“Love”), Castaldi probably failed to recognize it as a key term that was supposed to trigger outrage in its public. This reaction was originally obtained also through the use of a great number of rude and often offensive words, expressions and parentheses describing women from the point of view of men. By omitting some of these parentheses and changing the connotations of words and expressions, the translator has created a text that may not completely serve the same function as the source text.

In order to assess whether different choices were actually available, it is necessary to consider another translation of “Love” performed and published by Lucia Personemi in 1971. This translation can be found in *La dialettica dei sessi: autoritarismo maschile e società tardo-capitalistica*, which is an unabridged version of Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970). A close comparison of the two translations shows that Serena Castaldi was not inspired in her work by this previous translation which, as should be remembered, corresponds to a slightly different version of the source text.¹⁰⁰

As far as the first section is concerned, Personemi’s version is quite different from Castaldi’s:

[...] le donne sono state persuase ad abbandonare la loro armature. La donna moderna ha orrore dell’idea che la si consideri una **bisbetica**, mentre sua nonna si aspettava che succedesse come un fatto naturale.¹⁰¹

In this case our attention should be focused on the word “bisbetica”. This quite old-fashioned word has been traditionally used to translate the English “shrew”,¹⁰²

⁹⁹ The meaning and translation of “bitch” in that specific case will be tackled in chapter five.

¹⁰⁰ As already explained, the *Donne è bello* version of “Love” corresponds to that published in *Notes from the Second Year*, and not to that in *The Dialectic of Sex*.

¹⁰¹ Firestone, Schulamith. 1970. *La dialettica dei sessi: autoritarismo maschile e società tardo-capitalistica*, trans. by Lucia Personemi (Bologna: Guaraldi editore), pp. 152-153.

¹⁰² Shakespeare’s play *The Taming of the Shrew* is traditionally translated into Italian as *La bisbetica domata*.

and evidently its shades of meaning are different from those of “puritana”, Castaldi’s choice. In fact, while “puritana” addresses mainly the moral characteristics of a person, “bisbetica”¹⁰³ focuses on the behaviour. It is also interesting to notice that, while Castaldi translated “bitch” with four different terms, Personemi used the word “bisbetica” twice in the same text,¹⁰⁴ and this allowed the readers to identify this term as a key word in this text.

Finally, we need to analyse the section dedicated to some common insults that usually refer to women. Personemi’s choices are quite different from Castaldi’s:

Le donne al giorno d’oggi non osano avanzare le vecchie richieste per paura di sentirsi buttare addosso tutto un nuovo vocabolario, creato proprio per questo scopo: “lagna”, “rompiballe”, “guastafeste”, “peso morto”... essere una “bella pupa” è l’ideale.¹⁰⁵

As far as the first four words of this excerpt are concerned, although still less offensive than the originals, Personemi’s translations are evidently closer to the source text than Castaldi’s. The fact that neither translator translated “a bad trip” clearly shows the difficulty of conveying typical countercultural expressions in Italian. Personemi’s version of “groovy chick” (“bella pupa”) succeeds in conveying at least part of the meaning of the original. In fact, although not linked to counterculture, “bella pupa” is a suitable word to describe a beautiful and sexually available woman: it literally means “doll”¹⁰⁶ and is commonly used to describe a kind of woman completely devoted to her external appearance and often subjugated to a man’s will. This term should have been popular in Italy in the 60s, if we consider the number of movies (often American) that have the word “pupa” in the title,¹⁰⁷ and conveys at least part of the meaning of “chick”.

¹⁰³ Castaldi’s version is “Ha ottenuto non amore e riconoscimento, ma possesso e controllo. Questo è il punto in cui lei si trasforma da Sposa Felice in Moglie Pestifera”.

¹⁰⁴ “She has gotten not love and recognition, but possession and control. This is when she is transformed from Blushing Bride to Bitch” is translated by Personemi as “Non ha avuto amore e riconoscimento, ma un padrone e un controllore. A questo punto si trasforma da Pudica Sposa in Bisbetica.”

¹⁰⁵ Firestone, Schulamith. 1970. *La dialettica dei sessi: autoritarismo maschile e società tardo-capitalistica*, trans. by Lucia Personemi (Bologna: Guaraldi editore), p. 153.

¹⁰⁶ “Pupa” derives from the Latin “pūpa(m)”, meaning “doll”.

¹⁰⁷ “Pupe calde e mafia nera” (“Cotton Come to Harlem” 1970), “Bulli e pupe” (“Guys and Dolls” 1955), “Pugni, pupe e pepite” (“North to Alaska” 1960), and many others.

Sexuality is, again, a central topic in “La libertà è lunga a venire” by Virginia Blaisdell. In this short excerpt she describes the power relationship between the genders through the analysis of some terms carrying sexual connotations:

Se questa sembra un'affermazione un pò pesante, proviamo un attimo a considerare alcuni dei termini che usiamo per parlare del sesso. Sono comuni di tutti i giorni termini come “fregare” e “fottere” “sono stato fottuto” “vai a farti fottere” “completamente fottuto”.

Siamo cresciuti sapendo che queste parole significavano *dominare, sopraffare, distruggere e umiliare* e noi dobbiamo *imparare* ad usarle bene in senso strettamente sessuale. Anche così, qualcosa tipo “fottiamo” manca di una certa tenerezza. Altre parole sono simili nel riflettere il fondamentale rapporto di potere. “Egli l’ha posseduta” “è stata posseduta”. Se un uomo dice “sono stato posseduto” prende in prestito un termine che è fatto per l’uso delle donne; puoi star sicura che non vuol dire che una donna l’ha messo giù e fottuto; e di solito non implica nemmeno che sia stato un altro uomo a farlo.¹⁰⁸

The purpose of this excerpt is to show through an analysis of the words that sexuality is a power relationship, and that women are doomed to lose. The first paragraph uses the terms “fregare” and “fottere”. In Italian, both terms carry the meaning of cheating, while only the second also has a sexual meaning. “Fottere” also has a strong negative connotation for women, as it usually describes their passive subjugation to men’s domination and violence. Then, the author gives some examples of sentences that we use in everyday communication. It is interesting to observe that, apart from “Egli l’ha posseduta” and “è stata posseduta”, in all the remaining cases (such as “sono stato davvero fregato” or “siamo cresciuti”), the past participles take a masculine ending, although the author is a woman and is expressing the opinions of other women. This is probably due to the fact that, in Italian, the past participle must agree in gender and number with the subject of the sentence, while in English this does not happen. However, it should be noted that

¹⁰⁸ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 19.

the translator could have used this opportunity given by Italian grammar in order to establish a closer link between herself and her public.

In the second paragraph, the key verb that the author uses in order to describe the power relationship between men and women is “possedere”. When used to convey a sexual meaning, this verb usually implies the woman’s passive role while, if used with a masculine agreement (“sono stato posseduto”) it carries a totally different meaning: it commonly means “being possessed by something”, commonly a devil or a feeling, and it no longer carries any sexual allusion.

In order to understand whether the message has been conveyed it is necessary to observe the source text:

If this looks like a pretty rash statement, let’s consider for a minute some of the terms we use to talk about sex. Just common everyday terms like “screw” and “fuck.” “I really got fucked over.” “Screw you.” “Fuck off.” “All fucked up.” “Motherfucker. “We grow up knowing that these words mean *dominate, give the business to, overpower, destroy, humiliate*, and we have to *learn* to use them nicely in a strictly sexual sense. Even so, something like “Let’s fuck” lacks a certain tenderness.

Other words are similar in that they reflect the fundamental power relationship. “He laid her,” “she was had.” If a man says “I got laid” he’s borrowing a term a woman is supposed to use. You can be pretty confident he doesn’t mean a woman laid him down and fucked him and he usually doesn’t mean to imply that a man did either.¹⁰⁹

By analysing the first paragraph of this short excerpt it can be noted that the target text is slightly less vulgar than the source text. In fact, the Italian term “fregare” does not carry the sexual allusion of “screw” (in the third line), and “motherfucker” has not been translated. In the second paragraph of the source text we find two different expressions, while in the Italian version these have been translated with the same verb (“possedere”). Finally, the author shows that the verb “to lay” does not hold the same (negative) meaning in the passive if referring to a man. Unfortunately, in this

¹⁰⁹ Blaisdell, Virginia. 197?. “Freedom is a Long Time Comin’”, reprinted from *View From the Bottom*.

case, the target text does not have the same meaning because the expression “sono stato posseduto” means being possessed by something (usually by a spirit). The problem of this translation is not only that, as shown, some expressions may have different meanings, but that the intentions of the author are probably not shown in the translation. In fact, Virginia Blaisdell intended to make women aware that men have created language in order to deceive women and to shock women by using very vulgar language, but the Italian version is less likely to provoke a reaction of revulsion in the reader.

In the last few paragraphs of Virginia Blaisdell’s “Freedom is a Long Time Comin’” we can find some problems related to its translation that are quite similar to those already analysed in Firestone’s text regarding the language of the American sexual revolution:

[...] e se una dicesse “no”?; e se dicesse che il suo uomo era senza considerazione e incapace, e non sapeva che cosa la eccitava? occorrerebbe un bel pò di coraggio a una donna per dire così: equivarrebbe a dire che lei è diversa da tutte quelle altre mitiche donne che gli han detto che ci sapeva fare. Dopo tutto lei non vuol essere un tipo vivace e in gamba? E quelle in gamba non dimostrano la loro vivacità saltando nei letti dei giovani in gamba e dicendo sempre di sì?¹¹⁰

In this passage we find again “in gamba”, an expression already seen in the translation of “Love” by Shulamith Firestone. The context clearly shows that the author intended to trigger a reaction in the reader by using some typical countercultural terms that second-wave feminists considered offensive, but neither “vivace” nor “in gamba” can be considered offensive. In order to carry out an in-depth analysis it is necessary to consider the source text:

What if a woman said “no”? What if she said her man was inconsiderate and undisciplined and didn’t know what turned her on? It would take an unusual amount of courage for a woman to say this: she would be saying in effect that she was different from all those mythical other woman who told him he was such a good lay. After all, doesn’t she want to be a hip

¹¹⁰ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 20.

groovy chick? And don't hip groovy chicks demonstrate their grooviness by jumping into the sack with hip groovy guys, digging every minute of it?

What's happening now with the Aquarian Children is a subtler version of the '50s back-seat-of-the-car syndrome that went something like "Do you love me? Prove it!".¹¹¹

By comparing the source text with the target text, it is possible to see that this translation is unlikely to have provoked in its audience the same reaction that Virginia Blaisdell intended to trigger in her audience. As already noted in the same text, the translator often failed to use an appropriate register in the translation. In this excerpt this is evident from the translation of "such a good lay", which is definitely more vulgar than the expression "ci sapeva fare".

This text contains also many countercultural expressions, such as "hip groovy chick", which has been translated as "un tipo vivace e in gamba". While "groovy chick" was already present in Firestone's text, here there is also the adjective "hip", a term which meant "being in tune with the sexual revolution".¹¹² The translation of this expression (which, with some slightly different variations is repeated three times in this text), fails to convey the same meaning as the source text and cannot trigger in the target text reader the same reactions as the source text reader. A similar problem lies at the end of the same paragraph, with the expression "jumping into the sack with hip groovy guys, digging every minute of it", whose translation "saltando nei letti dei giovani in gamba e dicendo sempre di si" fails to give the correct meaning to the slang verb "dig", which from the 50s meant "to appreciate",¹¹³ and not "to always say 'yes'".

Moreover, a paragraph present in the source text has not been translated¹¹⁴ probably because of its strong link with the American counterculture. In general, conveying the counterculture in Italian could have been quite difficult for the translator and would not be useful for achieving the same reaction in the Italian

¹¹¹ Blaisdell, Virginia. 197?. "Freedom is a Long Time Comin'", reprinted from *View From the Bottom*.

¹¹² The Partridge dictionary provides an illuminating example from a text by Norman Mailer (*Advertisements for Myself*, 1957): "One is Hip or one is Square (the alternative which each new generation coming into American life is beginning to feel), one is a rebel or one conforms [...]"

¹¹³ Dalzell, Tom (senior ed.) and Victor, Terry (ed.) (2005), *The new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English*, London: Routledge.

¹¹⁴ "What's happening now with the Aquarian Children is a subtler version of the '50s back-seat-of-the-car syndrome that went something like "Do you love me? Prove it!"".

public, most of whom had probably never experienced the counterculture or even read about it.

5.5. Conclusions

A discussion of the features relating to the sexual revolution present in the translations analysed in this chapter allows us to draw some conclusions regarding the norms that affected the choices of the translator.

The first consideration regards the translation of “liberated woman”. In this case, we see that Serena Castaldi has translated literally a concept (the sexually uninhibited woman typical of the sexual revolution) that, as shown by the excerpt from *Sottosopra*, the translator proved to know very well but under a different name (“*donna emancipata*”). A possible reason for this strategy is the translator’s wish to keep the translation as close as possible to the original. The tendency to translate literally, which can often be observed in *Donne è bello*, can therefore be considered as a norm that influenced the strategies chosen by the translator. Of course, it is not possible to state with certainty the reason why the translator adhered to this norm, but it is very likely that she simply wished to be as “loyal” as possible to the source text and, helped by the assonance of the expressions “*donna liberata*” and “liberated woman”, she simply applied what seemed to her the most obvious choice. However, as already shown, “*emancipata*” would not have been the perfect choice either, because this term held two slightly different meanings for the various Italian feminist groups. Therefore, in this case, the translator’s strategy perfectly mirrors the fragmentation of views typical of Italian feminism and the difficulty of dealing with topics (such as the sexual revolution) that were not familiar to Italian women.

The second part of this chapter showed the translator’s difficulty in translating some very offensive terms. The first case is that of “bitch”, which is translated into Italian using a variety of different solutions that, unfortunately, do not have the same meaning as the original: they are a lot less offensive and therefore less likely to provoke a similar reaction. This tendency to “mitigate” offensive terms is particularly evident in the translations of “Love” and in “Freedom is a Long Time Comin’”, and is present both in Castaldi’s and in Personemi’s versions, which shows that they both decided to abide by a norm of the target system.

Finally, this analysis has also taken into consideration various terms and expressions typical of American counterculture that have no corresponding terms in Italian. The translator of *Donne è bello* only rarely omitted part of this specific lexicon and mostly tried to convey these expressions in Italian, but the result is often very distant from the original in terms of meaning and the relationship with the sexual revolution is inevitably lost.

Finally, it is important to understand the reasons behind the choice of the texts to translate. In fact, if the translator has neglected the translation of the lexicon of the sexual revolution, this is probably because that was not the topic that Serena Castaldi wanted to “import”. For instance, it is very likely that Serena Castaldi selected the text “Love” by Shulamith Firestone because the topic of love was extremely popular in the 70s in Italy. Penelope Morris analysed the presence of this topic in *Effe* and stated that its editors dedicated several very long articles to the debate about love over a decade. Moreover, although other topics are more common “the impression is that the editors continued to see it as an unresolved question that needed to be explored” (Morris 2013: 385). In particular, Morris devotes her attention to the article “Innamorarsi”,¹¹⁵ which contains a long quotation by Shulamith Firestone and a debate among some members of the editorial team (Morris 2013: 385). Although Firestone’s views have been dismissed in later years because of her focus on the suppression of sexual differences and artificial reproduction, the editors of *Effe* on that occasion considered Firestone “an authority on love”. In fact, this is evident from a quotation (from the same section of *The Dialectic of Sex* selected by Serena Castaldi) focusing on the relationship between love and power. This is followed by a discussion among some *Effe* journalists about the fact that love is not simply an emotion, but it also has social and economic consequences, and it forces women to consider a relationship with a man indispensable (Morris 2013: 386-387). Sexuality is also often (more often than love) discussed in *Effe*, whose articles often focus on the necessity of making a distinction between love and sexuality in order to encourage women to focus more on what they desire rather than only on the couple (Morris 2013: 389).

It is evident that what is stated by Morris about *Effe* can be easily applied to *Donne è bello*. The reason why Castaldi selected most of the texts analysed in this

¹¹⁵ “Innamorarsi”, *Effe*, December 1973, pp. 12-16. Participants are identified only by an initial letter.

chapter is mainly because she intended to persuade Italian feminists to give more importance to their own needs in their relationships with men. The authors of the texts analysed in this chapter¹¹⁶ when addressing this topic dedicated some attention to the sexual revolution in order to state that it did not have any benefit for women's situation. It is very likely that, because of the translation process, this reference to the sexual revolution has not been conveyed in the target text. However, although the lexis of the sexual revolution could provoke only a mild reaction in Italian women, these texts might still have fulfilled the intention of the translator, whose attention was directed towards encouraging women to focus on their needs. In fact, the rejection of the sexual revolution's values is a quite marginal topic in Italian feminism, and this might be due to the different priorities of Italian feminists and to the strong role played by the traditional family in their lives.

Finally, this analysis has shown that the rejection of sexual revolution is present in some works by Carla Lonzi. However, the difference between the translations of *Donne è bello* and the texts by Lonzi is remarkable. Although Lonzi's analysis is strongly inspired by American literature (in particular, by Koedt and Masters & Johnson), it is always focused on the Italian situation. For instance, when she criticizes the "cultura maschile" and those women who embraced it in order to be emancipated, she clearly refers to the "angeli del ciclostile", a role that many feminists experienced in the late 60s and that was for them much more familiar than that of the "liberated woman".¹¹⁷

Il sapore dell'inganno può essere testimoniato da quelle di noi che, godendo nella cultura maschile, prima del femminismo, di qualche risonanza a un livello sentito come proprio, sono state riportate bruscamente alla coscienza della loro condizione subalterna col femminismo. Infatti, quando queste di noi hanno cominciato a porre nel loro ambito un punto di vista femminista, si sono rese conto che, nella migliore delle ipotesi, l'uomo pretendeva di assumere il controllo anche su questa loro operazione (Lonzi 2010: 116).

¹¹⁶ Anne Koedt, Shulamith Firestone, Ti-Grace Atkinson and Virginia Blaisdell.

¹¹⁷ Those women who took part in the 1968 student and worker protests are usually called "angeli del ciclostile".

Lonzi's language is very different from the ironic and provocative style of many *Donne è bello's* translations: it is often very formal, rich in quotations from philosophical works and from Marxist literature. The criticism of Lenin and his "male revolution" is a very powerful way for Lonzi to encourage women to achieve their liberation. In fact, she knew that many feminists, such as Serena Castaldi, had a Marxist background and some experience of student groups or political parties, and she was conscious that this apparently difficult language was actually very familiar to them and therefore was an excellent tool to achieve her purposes. Therefore, in this case, we can see that the suggestion provided by the member of the American feminism, Nina, to the *Anabasi* women (see page 83) was actually correct: topics, even if they were originally conceived abroad, are more successful in Italy if they are presented to Italian women by taking into consideration the history of Italian women, their personal experiences and their culture. Therefore, the limited impact that the topic of sexual revolution had on *Donne è bello's* readers is a consequence both of the limited importance that this topic had for Italian women, but also of the difficulty of making it relevant for Italian women by linking it to their everyday lives.

In conclusion, this chapter also shows that, as explained by Foucault (in the introductory section of this chapter), the lexicon relating to sexuality contains a power relationship. In this case, "liberated women" is apparently a positive term for women but, actually, it has been created by men in order to exert their power over them. In the texts mentioned in this chapter American feminists uncover the real function of this expression in order to make this power relationship evident and hence empower themselves. Very similar are the cases of "bitch" and "groovy chick". The power relationship hidden in sexual terms should be taken into consideration also in the translation process in order to preserve the function of the target text, but translating these terms in foreign languages is particularly challenging, because they require the presence of a similar expression (bearing a similar power relationship) in the source culture. This also explains why the work by Lonzi was so successful. In her work she explained the characteristics of the "donna vaginale", the woman who endures male domination, revealed the power relationship of this expression, and with her "donna clitoridea" she aimed to reverse it and to empower women. In conclusion, it is evident that key expressions play a particularly important role in feminist texts of this period, and for this reason texts originating in the target language are more likely to have an influence over the target culture.

6. North American feminine figures in *Donne è bello's* texts.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the analysis of a selection of North American figures that can be found in several texts in *Donne è bello*. These characters are a very powerful tool in feminist texts because they are supposed to help women to realize their condition and trigger a reaction. In fact, similarly to what happened during consciousness-raising sessions, these labels allowed women to see the role they played (or were supposed to play) in society and to react to patriarchal society. In particular, in the analysed texts there is a very powerful set of labels characterized by being very popular and often offensive. Due to the obvious cultural differences between the United States and Italy, those labels might not elicit the same reaction in Italian women. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse how the translator has translated and adapted these texts for the Italian public, and to assess the context for their reception in Italy.

The first section of this chapter will mainly analyse “Uso e abuso delle donne americane”, the translation of “American Women: their use and abuse”, a text written by Lyn Wells in 1969. This analysis will focus on some labels that exemplify women’s circumstances in many different situations, such as during the Industrial Revolution, during World War II and in modern times. The second section of the chapter will analyse “Manifesto di Bitch”. This text also describes women’s circumstances but, instead of merely criticizing society, it provides a powerful picture of feminists, whose characteristics and ambitions are described in detail. Although very different, these two texts have in common an important characteristic: they are based on labels and characters deeply rooted in North American culture. In “American Women: their use and abuse” the analysis will focus on the differences and similarities between the labels commonly used in the United States and in Italy to address women, and aims at understanding whether an Italian woman could recognize herself in the characters described by Lynn Wells. The point of view of Italian women will be assessed by analysing some Italian feminist magazines such as *Sottosopra* and *Effe*. Similarly, in order to assess how Italian women received the translation of “The BITCH Manifesto” the style of the manifesto and the descriptions of “bitches” provided by Jo Freeman will be analysed. Finally, these descriptions will be compared with those that could

be found in feminist magazines and the publication of an extract of “Manifesto di Bitch” in *F.U.O.R.I.*, a magazine of the Italian homosexual community, will also be taken into consideration as it provides us with some important information regarding the reception of this text in Italy.

6.2. American and Italian women at home and at work.

In order to assess the reception of the translation of Lyn Wells’ text into Italian it is necessary to compare the living conditions of American housewives and factory workers (who are the protagonists of Wells’ text) with those of Italian women. This section will pay particular attention to the description of the working conditions of women since World War II, because it is important to understand whether Italian women were able to recognize their situation in the description by Lyn Wells.

An important emblem of the exploitation of women provided by Wells is “Rosie the Riveter”, a character symbolizing those women who started working in factories during World War II in order to help their country, but who were forced to leave their jobs at the end of the war when they were no longer needed. In Italy, an individual with exactly the same characteristics as “Rosie the Riveter” never existed. In fact, fascism established some basic rules regarding the duties of women: they were encouraged to work at home as housewives (or in the fields as farmers) and to have many children (Ascoli 1979: 86), since they believed that working in a factory could increase their independence and persuade them not to have children (Chiavola Birnbaum 1986: 36). Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Casti connubi* further encouraged this view by stating that work outside the home was a “corruption of the role of wife and mother and a ‘perversion’ of the family” (Chiavola Birnbaum 1986: 36-37). It is also necessary to mention that the dictatorship constantly supported the development of agriculture and only started to also develop industry in the 30s. However, women were never encouraged to find a job in a factory: the regime enacted many laws that provided benefits only for male workers in order to favour the population increase, and regulated women’s access to jobs in both the public and the private sectors (Ascoli 1979: 90). Willson points out that one of the reasons why the Fascist regime prevented women from working was because many were influenced by the press claiming that women had taken men’s jobs during the World War I (Willson 2010: 71).

Although Italian women were not given the opportunity to take active part in World War II by working in factories, Italian women had other occasions to help their country during the war. In fact, Willson explains that there are a large number of oral testimonies describing the large number of duties carried out by women in the Resistenza: these were more often “female” duties such as feeding, nursing and transporting information (*staffetta*), but they sometimes even took part in battles (Willson 2010: 104). The important difference between the role of “Rosie the Riveter” and that of Italian “partigiane” is that the Italian Resistance was celebrated as a “male” event by the historiography, and female partisans did not claim recognition for their important contribution. An important example is the case (according to Willson, very common) of the communist partisan Tersilla Fenoglio, who could not take part in the parade at the end of the war but was happy about it: “I didn’t take part in the parade [...] Mamma mia, thank goodness I wasn’t. People were saying they were whores... The comrades did the right thing not to include us. They were right” (Willson 2010: 102).¹¹⁸

Then, Wells dedicates particular attention to the role of housewives, and her description of their living conditions seems to mirror those of the women interviewed in 1957 by Betty Friedan for the research that led to her book *The Feminine Mystique* (published in 1963). In fact, both Friedan and Wells describe the frustration and dissatisfaction suffered by many American housewives, whose roles in society were limited to those of mother and consumer. The similarities and differences between the lives of Italian and American housewives are compared because they might have affected the reception of the translation of Lyn Wells’ text by Italian women.

In the United States the categories of families that in the 50s and 60s could enjoy the “consumerist lifestyle” were the middle class and the wealthier part of the lower class. As described by Balbo, they could afford a suburban house, one or two cars, household appliances, holidays and private education for their children (Balbo 1976: 42). These families relied mostly on private consumption not only because of the social pressure to conform to the standards of that period (as described by Wells), but also because the public services, as described by Balbo, were inadequate (Balbo

¹¹⁸ The personal account of Tersilla Fenoglio is from Farina, Rachele and Bruzzone, Anna. 2003. *La resistenza taciuta. Dodici vite di partigiane piemontesi* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri), p. 173.

1976: 43). Also in Italy the conditions of many families improved, and the description of the aspirations of the “American housewife” provided by Betty Friedan partly corresponds with that of the Italian “casalinga” of the period between 1958 and 1963, which is traditionally known in Italy as an “economic miracle”. However, while in the industrialised areas in the north living standards reached those of the other capitalist countries, in the rural areas and in the south of Italy the situation did not change (Balbo 1976: 69). Of course, this tendency widened the gap between Northern and Southern Italy: while the upper class in Northern Italy fulfilled this “American dream” and were strongly encouraged to buy more cars and appliances, in the South, most of the population (56.9%) in the mid-50s still worked as farmers and could not afford such commodities (Lussana 2012: 28-29). In regard to the services, until the mid 60s 85% of Italian families had access to public services. However, in the mid 60s the public services such as public transport, schools and hospitals, become obsolete and inadequate to supply the needs of the population (Balbo 1976: 73).

After having analysed the impact of the “American lifestyle” on American and Italian families, we should focus on the role played by women in the job market. From Balbo’s analysis and comparison of American and Italian data emerges that in both countries the most important role for women is that of mother and housewife, and all women (belonging to all social classes) have to arrange their work according to that primary duty.

The most important difference between these countries is the fact that in the same time period (between the late 50s and the early 70s) the number of American women who joined the workforce rose, while in Italy it decreased. However, Balbo further explains that if we consider the data regarding part or full-time employment, than we discover that in the United States only the number of women in parttime employment rose (Balbo 1976: 45-46): they constitute two thirds of working women in the States, and they mostly are women in their thirties and forties with school age children (Balbo 1976: 46). In Italy, on the contrary, according to Balbo the number of women employed is one of the lowest in western countries and has constantly decreased. Balbo points out that although few studies assert that Italian women have actually chosen to dedicate themselves to their families, they were actually forced to leave their employment from the recession of 1964 because, due to their primary roles as mother and wives, women are often regarded as less productive than men (Balbo 1976: 65).

However, similarly to the United States, also in Italy married women tried to contribute to the household budget but, instead of obtaining part-time jobs, most of them had to work from home (Balbo 1976: 66). This is the “gray labour”, a characteristic of the Italian labour market that was not seen in the United States. Balbo and May explained that this kind of labour was considered an “archaic form of production” (Balbo and May 1975/1976: 89) that was supposed to disappear with the development of capitalism; however, it did not disappear, and during the period between 1968 and 1972 it even spread. Women constituted the great majority of people working from home and, although they often had to work more than in factories, they were paid a lot less and enjoyed no benefits or social security (Balbo and May 1975/1976: 89). This comparison between the condition of housewives in the United States and Italy shows that, similarly, when needing to support their families, in both countries women started working part-time, but Italian women were at a disadvantage compared to American women.

Another important difference lies in the reason why most women decided to become housewives. According to Friedan, American women were not prevented from finding a job or pursuing a career: they simply chose (or were persuaded to do so by their husbands) to be housewives in order to comply with the customs of American culture:

It is more than a strange paradox that as all professions are finally open to women in America, ‘career woman’ has become a dirty word; [...] that as so many roles in modern society become theirs for the taking, women so insistently confine themselves to one role (Friedan 1963: 49).

In Italy, choosing to work was more difficult for women also because of legislation, which failed to support women workers. For instance, in 1950, the communist Teresa Noce introduced a new law that extended maternity leave for a wide range of jobs and forbade employers from firing women for at least a year after the birth of the child. Although this law was supposed to help women, it actually further persuaded employers not to hire married women (Willson 2010: 120). Another similar example of a practice against women is the “dimissioni in bianco”, a clause in a women’s contract stating that if they decided to get married, they had to agree to leave their job. Although this practice became known after the publication of an article in 1958 in

the communist newspaper *L'Unità* about 400 workers at Piaggio, this was far from being an isolated case.¹¹⁹

In her text, Lyn Wells underlines that one of the essential roles of an American housewife is that of consumer. This pressure on American women is well explained by Lyn Wells in this example:

Many middle-class women increase pressures on the man, by pushing the social status code of the day (cars, coats, homes, etc). Men in return, want their women to adopt certain social patterns --- dress, make-up, etc.--- that fit into his materialistic aspirations (and that means more consumer money!).¹²⁰

Similarly, Friedan dedicates a chapter (“The Sexual Sell”) to the description of how marketing targeted housewives and moulded adverts in order to take advantage of their feeling of dissatisfaction, which Friedan calls “the problem that has no name”. In her opinion, motivational researchers capitalized on housewives’ needs and, by promoting the role of the American housewife, they also further contributed to the glorification of this myth (Friedan 1963: 166-189).

Piccone Stella remarks that, although we know that in Italy in the 50s the sales of goods increased, only the upper classes started to enjoy the same goods, such as household appliances, that characterized the descriptions of the typical facilities of American modern houses. Similarly, Perry Wilson states that the life of the “modern” Italian housewife improved, but for most women these technological advances were American detergents (instead of homemade soap), electricity and indoor taps. The evident discrepancy between the production growth and the consumption of goods is explained by Ginsborg: between 1958 and 1963 the development of Italy was led by exports; therefore, most of the goods produced in Italy were marketed in foreign countries where incomes were a lot higher, while in Italy unemployment was still high and wage rates very low (Ginsborg: 2003: 214-215). Therefore, these emblems of the “American lifestyle”, as Perry Wilson reminds us, were not recent inventions, but in Italy only the upper class could afford them in the 50s (Willson 2010: 122). Therefore, although in Italy women also became the target of an advertising

¹¹⁹ Perry Willson (*Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*) quotes a statement by Dau Novelli from *Sorelle d'Italia*, p. 120.

¹²⁰ Wells, Lyn. 1969. *American Women: their use and abuse* (Boston: New England Free Press), p. 11.

campaign considering consumption as the emblem of modernity, only a minority could afford the lifestyle of American middle-class families.¹²¹

Another revolution taking place in Italian families regarded the person in charge of buying goods. Wilson points out that purchasing goods for the family became one of the primary occupations of women (Willson 2010: 121). Although this is a point in common between American and Italian women, there is an evident difference in the nature of such goods.

Finally, we need to consider the problems of Italian housewives who constituted part of the readership of *Donne è bello* in the early 70s. Their problems are shown, for instance, in *Almanacco*,¹²² a collection of texts written by Italian women belonging to feminist groups and published by the feminist publishing house Edizioni delle Donne in 1978. Here we learn that instead of having many household appliances and much free time, the work of an Italian housewife was very demanding, physically tiring and humiliating. In fact, according to the feminist collective *Lotta Femminista* the family was for women:

la prigioniera in cui le donne lavorano senza fine e senza autonomia di nessun genere, serve senza paga, sfogo dei malumori dei familiari, bambinaia e baby-sitter, spesso infermiere senza orario, sempre domestiche senza un soldo.¹²³

This short passage from the *Almanacco* contains some of the most common complaints of Italian housewives. This excerpt stresses (“serve senza paga” and “domestiche senza un soldo”) the financial problems of housewives, which explains why campaigns for a housewives’ wage became a very important issue in the late 60s and early 70s.

The issue of women’s unpaid housework was first raised in Italy by Mariarosa Dalla Costa.¹²⁴ However, she did not promote wages for the work of housewives, since this could further contribute to women’s isolation, but stressed the issue of

¹²¹ For instance, Willson states that in 1956 only 2.81% of Italian families had a washing machine, and 8.31% a fridge. By 1965 these percentages had risen to 23% and 41.8%, respectively.

¹²² *L’Almanacco: luoghi, nomi, incontri, fatti, lavori in corso del movimento femminista italiano dal 1972* is a collection of texts from other feminist publications and magazines (“Sottosopra”, “Donnità”, “Effe”, “Donne è bello”...), registrations of debates, pamphlets, letters and bibliographies.

¹²³ VV.AA. 1978. *L’Almanacco: luoghi, nomi, incontri, fatti, lavori in corso del movimento femminista italiano dal 1972* (Roma: Edizioni delle donne), p. 75.

¹²⁴ *Potere femminile e sovversione sociale con “Il posto della donna” di Selma James*, written by Dalla Costa and published by Marsilio Editori in 1972.

women's unpaid housework because this could promote housewives' solidarity and help them to consider themselves as a social class. The issue of wages for housework became a popular topic in the Italian feminist movement, and in Padua the *Collettivo Internazionale Femminista* actively promoted an international movement for wages that, however, did not succeed. According to Chiavola Birnbaum, this topic did not gain popularity in the United States because American feminists preferred to improve women's situation in the current system and to promote more equal power sharing rather than a radical revolution (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 135). Similarly, Susan Bassnett believes that the reason why this campaign became so successful in Italy lay in its being in contrast with the image of the ideal family supported by the Catholic Church and many political parties (Bassnett 1986: 114). Another reason for the lack of interest in this topic by US feminists could be the different economic conditions of many women. In fact, both Friedan and Wells portrayed a country where women were unhappy, but their issue was not economic dependence on their husbands. On the contrary, according to Italian supporters of wages in Italy, this was an important cause of unhappiness since it prevented many women from divorcing (Chiavola Birnbaum 1988: 136-137).

Although Italian housewives could have difficulties identifying themselves in Lyn Wells' description of the housewife because of the cultural and social differences described, Italian working-class women could easily see their problems on display in the section "At work".¹²⁵ In the first part of this section, Lyn Wells focuses on the North-American situation, presents some data concerning the percentage of women employed in factories since the end of World War II and explains that the difference between men's and women's salaries grew bigger. While the information in this first part would have little impression on Italian women because it was unrelated to their everyday life, the rest of the section discusses problems that were also common among Italian working-class women. These issues, often present in all the main Italian feminist publications,¹²⁶ are the poor quality of women's jobs, the lack of support from the trade unions, the gender pay gap, the difficulty of gaining a promotion and exploitation. For instance we can find these topics in a document by a

¹²⁵ The section "At work" is the first of the two sections in which "The new woman" is divided ("At work" and "At home").

¹²⁶ In particular, these issues were noted in "Sottosopra", in "Effe" and in *L'Almanacco*, which even dedicates a section to discussing the problems of working women.

feminist collective in Verona published in the 1974 edition of *Sottosopra*, where Italian women complained about their position in the labour market as follows:

[...] il padrone può manovrare a suo piacimento la monodopera femminile, assumendola quando ha bisogno di braccia [...]: le donne sono considerate cioè una “riserva” da usare in caso di bisogno e di cui liberarsi con tutta facilità quando non servono più.¹²⁷

Wells devotes some attention to the same topic using very similar terms:

[...] They use the feminine mystique to hold women into “their place” in industry, the place of the reserve labor force. They can be thrown in or out of the labor market at will, used as part-time or temporary workers, kept in the lowest paying jobs with a minimum of resistance, and their rate of exploitation is the highest [...].¹²⁸

By comparing these two excerpts it can be clearly seen that Italian women describe a situation of exploitation very similar to that suffered by American women, since they both feel like “reserves”. These examples show that despite the cultural differences between the United States and Italy¹²⁹ the situation of women in the workforce in Italy and the United States was very similar, and that working women in both countries claimed very similar rights.

The topic of work was very important for Italian women. This clearly emerges, for instance, from the remarks published by the *Anabasi* collective in their pamphlet *Al femminile* about a conference by feminist groups, which took place in Milan in 1971. That document shows that almost all the feminist collectives included this topic in their debates, and some groups even specifically focused on this issue, such as the women working for Rank Xerox.

Another proof of the importance of this topic for Italian women is the first issue of *Donne*, a pamphlet published by the Turinese collective *Comunicazioni*

¹²⁷ *Sottosopra*. 1974. “Esperienze dei gruppi femministi in Italia”, Milano, p. 61.

¹²⁸ Wells, Lyn. 1969. *American Women: their use and abuse* (Boston: New England Free Press),

¹²⁹ An example of cultural difference is Wells’ use of the expression “Rosie the Riveter” which, as already explained in this chapter, would hardly affect Italian women.

Rivoluzionarie.¹³⁰ This issue contains three articles written by American workers belonging to three different ethnic groups (white, Afro-American and Mexican) and translated by the members of the collective. In a short introduction, these accounts are described as very significant for Italian women because: “certamente nella situazione che ogni giorno esse affrontano, le compagne qui non troveranno niente di ‘importato’”. According to the members of the *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie*, these foreign accounts perfectly mirror the everyday life of the members of the Turinese collective and do not seem “imported” at all. These accounts are very different from Lyn Wells’ article: instead of introducing the topic with an historical background of the United States and using labels (such as “Rosie the Riveter”) to enrich the description of women’s problems, they contain raw accounts of the personal experiences of women. Another important characteristic of these texts is the importance given to the social class: the pamphlet constitutes an explicit critique of the bourgeoisie and states the importance of considering women as a caste. It is evident that this issue triggered the expected reaction in many Turinese women (and especially in those working in large factories such as Fiat) because in the accounts of these American women many Italian workers could see a description of their everyday lives.

These examples show that the topic of women’s work was of great interest to Italian feminists, and we can argue that this is the reason why Serena Castaldi selected the text “American Women: their use and abuse”. The following sections will focus on some of the labels used to address women that can be found in Lyn Wells’ text.

6.3. The limiting role imposed by society on women: ladies, workers, housewives and slaves.

This section focuses on “Uso e abuso delle donne americane”, the translation of an American text written in 1969 by Lyn Wells. This text contains several myths and labels referring to women that the author uses in order to describe how these are offensive and, above all, misleading. Since the translation of these lexical items into Italian could be very difficult because of the cultural gap, this analysis will take into

¹³⁰ “Il movimento di liberazione delle donne” (supplement of *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie*) issue n. 1 (15th September 1970).

consideration the translation strategies and the possible reception of these words by Italian women.

“Uso e abuso delle donne americane” is the translation of just a small section of “American Women: their use and abuse”, written by Lyn Wells in 1969 and published by the New England Free Press. In fact, the source text is composed of several sections called: “Women, power and the economy”, “The early days”, “Industry on parade”, “The new woman” (further divided into two sections: “At work” and “At home”), “Battles for social and political progress”, “Goals”, “Strategy” (further divided into “analysis” and “groupings”) and “Tactics”. The translated part corresponds only to the sections “Industry on parade” (translated as “L’industria di marcia”) and “The new woman” (“La donna nuova”) but, since the target text does not provide any information about the source text, the reader might consider it an unabridged version of an American text.

It is evident that the reason why only part of the source text was translated is related to the translator’s intention to provide Italian feminists with a text discussing problems relevant to them. In fact, the introduction and the first two sections of the source text are particularly rich in quotations of facts belonging to the history of the United States.¹³¹ Since the examples provided in those sections are strongly linked with the United States, it is likely that the translator excluded them because they would not be relevant to Italian women. Of course, the translated sections also often include details typical of American culture and society, but they also tackle work, a topic that (as already explained in the introduction to this chapter) was very important to Italian women. In fact, although the American Industrial Revolution was very different from that in Italy, Italian women could easily understand the problems of American women during the Industrial Revolution and in modern times.

As already mentioned, the target text is permeated by references to American culture, and there are several words and expressions which could have been difficult for Italian women to understand. Some significant examples are shown below.

6.3.1. The Victorian stereotype of the “lady”.

The first section of “Uso e abuso delle donne americane” describes the role played by women in the Industrial Revolution and how this experience completely

¹³¹ For instance, Lyn Wells explains how the United States were created, the living conditions of women at that time and what happened during the Revolutionary war.

changed women: “Come operaie fuori dalla casa, le donne seppellirono lo stereotipo vittoriano della “lady” sotto una montagna di realismo”.

The stereotype of the “lady” is very complex to understand not only for Italian women, but probably also for some American women: this is why it is necessary first to outline the meaning that the author intended to convey. The literature of the Victorian period provides some very telling examples. For instance, we know that a ‘lady’ does not have to be of noble birth (although this often happens), that she is usually quite wealthy and educated (according to the standards of education of that time) and that, according to the *Alexandra Magazine*: “words, dress and manner are but accessories, and merely come into account as the accompaniment of sterling, moral worthiness” (Rees 1977: 11).

Although the moral characteristics of a lady of course help to define her, in this case (since the topic discussed in this text is the work) Wells wanted to refer to the fact that one of the most important characteristics of ladies’ lives was idleness: “A lady, to be sure, must be a mere lady and nothing else. She must not work for profit or engage in any occupation that money can command [...]”, and “[...] if a woman is obliged to work, at once she (although she may be a Christian and well bred) loses that peculiar position to which the word *lady* conventionally designates” (Holcombe 1973: 4). Finally, Crow also states that the life of a lady was idle, and the only occupations considered acceptable for a “lady” were sewing, light reading and sometimes sketching and singing (Duncan 1971: 60-61).

This stereotype plays an important role in the text because it describes women’s exploitation. In fact, while during the Victorian age society stressed the moral qualities of ladies and did not allow them to work, according to Wells, with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the preservation of those qualities was no longer important. In this case, the word “lady” is used in order to underline the hypocrisy of society and to show that labelling women favours their exploitation.

The reason why the translator decided to leave the English word in the translation might be related to the difficulty of finding an adequate translation. In fact, although “signora” conveys the meaning of elegance and moral qualities typical of a “lady”, it is commonly used to address all married women. Therefore, while the status of “lady” is something unachievable for most women, every woman can become a “signora” simply by getting married. Another possible option is “dama”, a word of French origin

usually used to describe aristocratic women who usually were part of the retinue of noblewoman.¹³² Although able to describe a woman present in a social environment very similar to that of a “lady”, the term “dama” is strongly related to the court and, therefore, is unable to describe a Victorian lady. This analysis shows us that conveying the meaning of this expression by using Italian terms was very challenging.

At this point we need to consider what meaning this expression conveyed to Italian women. It is likely that many Italian women learned about the life of English “ladies” from novels and movies, such as: *Portrait of a Lady*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *A Room with a View*, which have all been translated into Italian. However, the protagonists of these novels cannot be considered “true ladies”, as they all rebelled against the customs of their age, which they found oppressive. Moreover, in all these novels the plot focuses on the difficult sexual and sentimental affairs of the female protagonists and the description of these women’s everyday lives takes second place. Furthermore, only in the case of *L’amante di Lady Chatterley* could those Italian readers who could not access the original version in English easily identify the protagonist as a “lady”.

We do not have any information about the number of copies sold that might help us to determine the reception of *L’amante di Lady Chatterley* in Italy, but this can be easily inferred from the history of this publication in Italy. In fact, it was first published in Italian and, while in Great Britain the full unexpurgated edition could be published only in the 60s, in Italy it was first published in 1945 as a censored edition by Manlio Lovecchio Musti. Then, in 1946, a more accurate edition translated by Giulio Monteleone was published and, although the Vatican tried to seize the work, most of the press was against this and a magistrate fully acquitted the publisher (Ceramella 2007: 101-102).

The presence of uncensored editions well before the 60s suggests that this work became quite popular in Italy, but its popularity cannot allow us to infer that Italian women were familiar with the figure of the “Victorian lady”. In fact, although influenced by the Victorian age, the plot is set after World War II and the protagonist does not show any of the qualities that were considered “ladylike”. For this reason, it appears that most Italian women simply knew that a “lady” was a woman belonging

¹³² The word “dama” is often associated with the expression “dama di compagnia”, (“lady-in-waiting”).

to a privileged social class, but the specific characteristics of that position must have been unknown to the majority of Italian readers.

6.3.2. Women as slaves: the translation of racially offensive terms into Italian.

One of the negative labels present in “Uso e abuso delle donne americane” is actually present in other *Donne è bello*'s translations: women are often compared to blacks in order to exemplify their marginal position in society. An example is in the above-mentioned text, where the author states that: “Le donne, come i negri ed altri settori identificabili della popolazione (come i montanari quando migrano al Nord) sono gruppi che possono essere facilmente *separati* e *sfruttati*”. Similarly, in “Manifesto di Bitch” (target text), Freeman explained that the insult “bitch”:

E' un insulto popolare per screditare le donne, che fu creato dagli uomini e adottato dalle donne. Come il termine “nigger” (peggiorativo di negro) “bitch” assolve alla funzione sociale di isolare e screditare una categoria di persone che non è conforme ai modelli di comportamento socialmente accettati.¹³³

These two examples have in common the fact that both authors intend to compare women's situation with that of blacks, and both translations contain the term “negro”. In the first example “negri” is the translation of “blacks”: in this case the author does not want to offend blacks, she just intends to compare these two social categories. In the second example, “bitches” are compared to “niggers”, another offensive term used to define black people. Interestingly, since the translator could not find a similar offensive term in Italian, she decided to leave the term in English and to intervene in the text with a comment in brackets “(peggiorativo di negro)”. The reason for this choice is explicable if we consider that before the 70s the adjective “negro” was not offensive but, on the contrary, it was commonly used in dictionaries to describe a human race. Only in the 70s, when the actions and ideas spread by civil rights movements in the United States reached Italy, translators started to prefer the terms “nero” and “di colore” to “negro” although, at least until the late 80s, this term was still

¹³³ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 7.

commonly used in newspapers.¹³⁴ An example of this use of the word “negro” can be found in the second issue of *Effe* (1973), in which we find an article describing the difficult relationship between white and black women (translated as “negre”) in the American Women’s Liberation.¹³⁵ In the same issue there is even a translation of the poem “A Black Woman Speaks” by Beulah Richardson in which, again, the word “black” is translated as “negra”. These examples show that Castaldi adhered to the norms common in the early 70s regarding the use of the term “negro” and that, instead of translating an offensive word into Italian, she rather preferred to explain that shade of meaning.

A very similar problem occurred in another text in *Donne è bello*: “Donne nere povere”,¹³⁶ which is a written communication between the male and female members of the Black Unity Party of Peekskill (New York). In the translation of the women’s reply we find a very interesting word: “Biancaccio”, which is a neologism created by the translator in order to translate “whitey”, a derogatory term used by members of the African-American community to address a white person or the whole white community.¹³⁷ Unfortunately, the Italian language does not have any idiomatic expression from the point of view of the black community, and this explains why the translator decided to create a neologism with the stem “bianc-” and the pejorative suffix “-accio”, in order to allow the reader to understand its negative connotation. However, this was not the only possible solution, since a different translation of the same text is present in the previously mentioned issue of *Effe*, and in that case, “whitey” was translated as “l’uomo bianco”. However, this choice conveys the idea that the “white man” does not belong to the same racial group as the speaker, but it does not specify the white man as an enemy. This proves that translating derogatory terms related to ethnicities, such as “whitey” into Italian, is challenging, and that Castaldi tried to preserve all the shades of meaning in her translations.

However, the analysis of this text also shows that the translator applied different strategies to very similar challenges throughout *Donne è bello*. In fact, in “Donne

¹³⁴ Faloppa, Federico “Nero, negro e di colore”, *Crusca per voi*, (2006) n. 43. <<http://www.academiadellacrusca.it/it/lingua-italiana/consulenza-linguistica/domande-risposte/nero-negro-colore>>

¹³⁵ Daniela Colombo, “Negre e femministe”, *Effe*, December 1973, p. 17.

¹³⁶ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 82.

¹³⁷ “Whitey” is a diminutive form of “white” which suggests the “smallness” of white people. Herbs, Philip (1997) *The Color of Words*, Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, p. 233.

nere povere” the adjective “nere” (in all its different declensions) is used instead of “negre” to translate not only “black”, but also “nigger” (“In questa società i **veri neri** eravamo noi”). The use of the adverb “veri” and the context should allow the reader to understand that black women are using whites’ scale of values in order to explain their feelings, but the message is undoubtedly less powerful than in the source text.

These examples show that translating terms related to ethnicity was difficult because a suitable vocabulary was not present in Italy yet. Although not familiar with the best politically correct terms to use to address black people, Italian feminists in the early 70s became familiar with civil rights movements and, even in their texts, they started to compare the situation of the “caste” of women with that of blacks in the United States. Vincenza Perilli¹³⁸ shows that the analogy between “sex” and “race” was very popular in the United States, where feminists created several slogans from the black movement’s slogans, such as “Women Power” from “Black Power” and even “sexism” from “racism”. This analogy managed to influence even the Italian feminist movement. Perilli provides several examples of famous works that have been translated into Italian and inspired Italian feminists: *The Dialectic of Feminism* by Shulamith Firestone and a famous number of *Partisans* (Libération des femmes. Année Zéro). This analogy was seized by the Italian feminist movement: one of the most popular examples is *La coscienza di sfruttata*, one of the most popular texts of early Italian feminism, which has on the cover a stylized picture of the black feminist Angela Davis wearing handcuffs (Sapegno 1989: 98). Although the content of the book focuses on the exploitation of women, the connection between the word “schiava” that often appears in the book and the cover is evident. Finally, Perilli mentions the title of the volume by the *Anabasi* collective *Donne è bello* (inspired by “Black is beautiful”, the motto of Black Power), and she hypothesizes that this “black” influence on the Italian feminist movement is also due to the translations by Maria Teresa Fenoglio and Serena Castaldi. Fenoglio cooperated with the communist group *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie* and contributed to the creation of a supplement dedicated to Women’s Liberation, in which there were often translations of articles regarding the problems of black women and their role within the Black Panthers. Also, Serena Castaldi, according to Perilli, played an important role in the diffusion of

¹³⁸ Vincenza Perilli, “L’analogia imperfetta. Sessismo, razzismo e femminismi tra Italia, Francia e Stati Uniti”, *Zapruder*, n. 13, May-August 2007.

this connection between women and blacks with the publication of the already mentioned article “Donne nere povere” (Perilli 2007: 12-13).

Besides the already mentioned texts about the Afro-American community, in *Donne è bello* we can also find the famous manifesto of the Trento Collective “Il cerchio spezzato” (1971), which compares the process of emancipation of blacks with that of women: “Il processo di liberazione del popolo nero ci ha fatto sempre più prendere coscienza della nostra reale situazione e delle strettissime analogie che esistono tra loro e noi.” This excerpt shows that Italian feminists were informed about the African-American struggle for freedom and, despite the considerable differences between the two countries, were willing to find similarities between their fights. The correlation between gender and race in the Italian feminist texts of the early 70s is, according to Vincenza Perilli, quite common but also heterogeneous. In fact, Perilli shows that while in some cases (such as in the already mentioned letter by the female members of the Black Unity Party of Peekskill) women refused to join men in their fight,¹³⁹ according to the Trento collective there was an analogy between the situation of blacks and those of women. Perilli explains this heterogeneity of views with the concept of “difference” which, although already present in the 70s (in particular in Carla Lonzi’s works), it became more prominent in the 80s thanks to the works by the Women’s Library of Milan and the Diotima group of Verona (Perilli 2007: 21).

Therefore, we can assume that although Italy was not a multicultural country, the latest news from abroad (and especially from the United States) had an impact on Italian women and in particular on feminists, who were ready to see similarities (rather than differences) in the fights of other oppressed groups. However, this analysis has shown that despite the influence of the civil rights movement in Italy, Italian feminists struggled to find a language suitable to translate the relationship between blacks and whites. For this reason, some key words, such as “nigger”, would still be challenging to understand for Italian women.

6.3.3. “Rosie la chiodatrice”: women at work

The section called “La donna nuova” provides an exhaustive description of the most common methods of the exploitation of women after the World War II. In order

¹³⁹ Another similar example is from Carla Lonzi’s work *Sputiamo su Hegel*: “l’uomo nero è uguale all’uomo bianco, la donna nera è uguale alla donna bianca”.

to persuade women to react against this situation, Wells provides a great amount of data, such as the percentage of unemployed women (which is higher than that of men), the average wage (still inferior to that of male colleagues) and the description of how women's exploitation takes place every day. A great example of exploitation is the propaganda that persuaded many women to start working in factories during the war, and forced them to leave their jobs just after the war because too many men were unemployed. The symbol of this propaganda is a character traditionally called "Rosie the Riveter", who is mentioned by Wells in her text and translated as "Rosie la chiodatrice".¹⁴⁰

In this case, the analysis will not focus on the translation strategy but on the meaning related to this expression. In fact, although the version "Rosie la rivettatrice" is nowadays more common in the Italian mainstream press and slightly more appropriate,¹⁴¹ the two terms ("chiodatrice" and "rivettatrice") have almost the same meaning.

"Rosie the Riveter" is a fictional character that can be identified in two different posters made during World War II. The first poster carried the phrase "We can do it!", was made by Howard Miller in 1942, commissioned by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, and displayed in its factories from February 1943. The second poster was painted by Norman Rockwell and became the cover of the Saturday Evening Post in May 1943. Only this last poster carried the words "Rosie the Riveter", which was probably inspired by a song about a young female worker very popular on radio networks in the early 40s (Kimble 2006: 535).

In his article, James Kimble explains that these two posters have very little in common, but they have both been labelled "Rosie the Riveter", although this was only the name of the second poster. In fact, the aim of the two posters was very different: while Norman Rockwell's intent was that of persuading women to work in factories, Howard Miller's poster simply wanted to encourage those women who were already employed in factories (and, in particular, for the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company) to carry out even the hardest duties (Kimble 2006: 545).

¹⁴⁰ "Durante la seconda guerra mondiale le mani oziose erano "strumenti del demonio" e Rosie la chiodatrice era la dinamica eroina patriottica".

¹⁴¹ The Italian translation of "rivet" is "rivetto" and not "chiodo". In fact, while rivets were an important part of many war products (such as aircrafts, vehicles...), nails ("chiodi") are mostly for domestic use.

Unfortunately, we do not know to which poster Lyn Wells was referring with her quotation, since both posters have been mistakenly given the same name and subsequently associated with the same message: women should be encouraged to work in factories. It is evident that the term “Rosie the Riveter” is strongly linked not only with American culture but, most of all, with the two posters that carry that name, and that this term evokes in the mind of the American reader the image of the poster (either or both of them). This, unfortunately, could not happen with Italian readers, since in the 70s most Italian women were not acquainted with those images. Therefore, it is evident that without the necessary support of the image, Italian readership could not understand the meaning of “Rosie la chiodatrice”.

As already explained in the introduction to this chapter and on page 46, Italian women were never given the opportunity to play an important role in factories during World War II, and the industrial sector in Italy was not very developed. Some women had the opportunity to work in factories only during World War I but the little independence they managed to achieve was completely erased by fascism. Therefore, while in the United States the “national heroine” was “Rosie the Riveter”, in Italy, as pointed out by Fiamma Lussana, this role would have been played by the “crocerossine” (nurses of the Red Cross) and the “staffette partigiane” (dispatch riders for the Partisans) and, similarly to the destiny of American factory workers, Italian heroines were completely forgotten at the end of the war (Lussana 2012: 21).

However, the role of these “heroines” is very different from that of factory workers. Therefore, since an Italian emblem directly comparable with “Rosie the Riveter” never existed, it is quite unlikely that Italian women would understand the meaning of this expression in the translation.

6.3.4. “Casalinghe” and “massaie”: how housewives are labelled

The last part of the target text is completely dedicated to the life of housewives. This topic is introduced by some quotations from *After Nora slammed the door* by Eve Merriam, whose title is in English in the target text and linked to the footnote: “Dopo che Nora sbattè la porta. Il riferimento è al personaggio del drama di Ibsen *Casa di bambola* [N.d.T.]”. In this case the translator had to add a note in order to explain the meaning of the book title, because no translation was available in Italian. Nora, the protagonist of Ibsen’s play, is present again in the following quotation:

Ciò che sorprende nel paesaggio sociale dell’America d’oggi non è che tante Nore (casalinghe) delle generazioni successive vadano a casa, ma che tante restino ancora a casa come “massaie totali”, anche dopo che i loro figli sono cresciuti e hanno finito le scuole.

In this quotation, Nora clearly embodies all housewives who, as in Ibsen’s play, leave home when they understand that they have been exploited. Fortunately, the character of Nora was quite familiar to Italian women: in fact, Ibsen’s play had already been performed several times¹⁴² in Italy and her story is told even in an article in *Effe*¹⁴³ and in *Al femminile*, the pamphlet published by the *Anabasi* women immediately after *Donne è bello*. In the short article named “Nora, Nora, Nora: 1...2...3...molte Nore”, Liliana Trizio (a member of the *Anabasi* collective) explains that she recently watched “Casa di bambola” on television and that, since her mother had loved it, she initially thought it would be a tearful and boring story but, while watching the movie, Liliana discovered that Nora embodies the aspirations to freedom of all feminists. The short article also contains some quotations from the play that show Nora’s wish for freedom, since she challenges her husband, who considers her mainly a wife and a mother. At the end of the article we learn about the impact that the character of Nora had on most of the female viewers: “Alcune amiche hanno visto il dramma e hanno pensato a me perchè mi dichiaro femminista”. This shows that for Italian women (and not just feminists) Nora embodied the values of feminism and, therefore, that her quotation in Wells’ text could be very significant.

Another important expression referring to housewives that we can find in the target text is “massaie totali”. It is the literal translation of “total housewife”, an expression describing a woman who does not carry out a job other than her household duties. Unfortunately, the adjective “totali” does not allow the Italian reader to understand the dedication of this woman to her family. On the contrary, the term “massaia” is an interesting translation of “housewife”. In fact, the English “housewife” can be translated into Italian by at least two different terms: “casalinga”

¹⁴² The first Italian performance took place in Milan in 1891 by the Eleonora Duse theatre company. Moreover, in 1968, the RAI produced a TV serial based on this work and, in 1973, two different movies (one by Patrick Garland and the other by Joseph Losey) were released in Italy.

¹⁴³ *Effe* (November 1973) contains a long article (*Femminismo USA: battaglie, sconfitte, conquiste*) about American feminism where it is explained that the story of Nora is actually the story of many modern housewives.

and “massaia”. These carry two slightly different shades of meaning: while “casalinga” is quite neutral, “massaia” evokes a woman working in a traditional and rural environment and, in the 70s, it was considered quite offensive. This negative connotation is evident, for instance, in the following editorial of *Effe* (n. 4-5, 1974):

Ci hanno chiamate [...] “comari” e “massaie” [...]. [...] ora è chiaro ad ognuna di noi perchè il 12 maggio dobbiamo votare NO. Sarà, tanto per incominciare, un gesto di autodifesa, per la nostra dignità di persone; non basterà ad assicurarcela, lo sappiamo, ma servirà almeno a battere chi ancora ama rappresentarci - perché gli conviene - come soggetti sub-folkloristici (la massaia fanfaniana, quanto ci ricorda le massaie rurali del ventennio littorio...) [...].¹⁴⁴

This editorial, signed by the *Effe* editorial board, refers to the harsh political debate that preceded the referendum about divorce and, in particular, to a speech given by Amintore Fanfani (head of the Christian Democracy party) in Bologna in 1974, in which he addressed women as “comari” and “massaie”. Evidently, Italian feminists considered the word “massaia” no longer able to describe women’s role in society, and it also reminded them of the marginal role to which they were confined during fascism (“ventennio littorio”). Another example that shows the close relationship between the term “massaia” and fascism is the work by Paola Masino, *Nascita e morte della massaia*. Written in 1938 and 1939 but rejected by fascist censorship, this novel tells the story of a curious girl who is turned by her mother into the perfect “massaia”, obsessed by household chores and by the approval of society (Passerini 1992: 383).

By using the term “massaia”, Castaldi has conveyed the author’s revulsion towards this role and its being an old “myth”, something deeply rooted in the culture of a country. Moreover, considering the reaction of Italian feminists to Fanfani’s speech, the term “massaia” perfectly serves the purpose of the text: triggering a reaction in readers. However, it is evident that it is not equivalent to “housewife” and, in particular, that its characteristics do not correspond with those of the North-American housewife described in the source text: a white middle-class woman who lives in a city, has all the latest household appliances and also much free time.

¹⁴⁴ Editorial, *Effe*, April-May 1974.

Although the expression “total housewife” is generally translated as “massaia totale” in the target text, we can find also other terms, such as “casalinga” and “donna di casa”. This variety of expressions, probably adopted in order to avoid repetitions, helped the Italian reader to understand the meaning and the context that Wells intended to describe.

Finally, another interesting feature of the text is in the sentence:

Perciò bisogna ogni volta convincere da capo le donne che il loro posto è a casa, perchè, francamente, non c'è molto spazio per loro altrove. [...] Proprio come se la mogliettina potesse essere resa felice nella sua casetta.¹⁴⁵

In this case, it is particularly interesting the use of the words “mogliettina” and “casetta”, diminutives of “moglie” and “casa”. Diminutives, common in fairy tales and children’s language, are supposed to convey the idea of smallness and prettiness. In this case, however, they are clearly used in an ironic way and the actual message conveyed to readers is that the role of a wife is a limitation of woman’s freedom, and the house is an oppressive place. The comparison of the target text with the source text shows some interesting features: “Therefore, women must be convinced all over again that their place is in the home, because, frankly, there isn’t much room in any other place for her. [...] Now if the little lady can just be made happy at home!”. First of all, the connotation of smallness was originally only related to “lady” (and not to “home”) and, by adding the diminutive also of “home”, the translator has created a very significant link between these two entities: by using a language that recollects fairy tales, the translator ironically stressed the fact that the life of a housewife was considered ideal by society, but not by women themselves.

Moreover, the expression “little lady” is very different from “mogliettina”, because it simply describes the age of the woman and not her marital status. In this section of the source text, marriage is not the source of women’s problems: Wells describes women as “mothers” and “consumers”, not as “wives”. Of course, the author also considered marriage one of the causes of women’s oppression, but this is rather implicit in the source text: “Mother also soothes and comforts her working husband (even if she works) when he returns from work”. This example shows that even when clearly describing the relationship between a husband and wife, Wells chose to

¹⁴⁵ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 29.

address the woman as a mother. Therefore, in her translation, Castaldi has suggested to the reader the idea that it is not motherhood but rather the institution of marriage that constitutes a source of oppression for women.

6.4. “Manifesto di Bitch”: how feminists described themselves.

This section will analyse “Manifesto di Bitch” and, in particular, some key words that the author used to define “bitches” and to describe how society insulted them. In order to understand the meaning conveyed through the translation, it will also be considered how the message has been affected by some changes, such as abridgements and additions.

“Manifesto di Bitch” is the translation of “The BITCH Manifesto”, a text written by Jo Freeman in 1968 and first published in *Notes From the Second Year* in 1970.¹⁴⁶ We can consider this version as the source text because it is the first version ever published (it was later reprinted as a pamphlet by the publishing house KNOW, Inc.) and because the target text has strong similarities with the source text, even from the point of view of the page layout.

Before analysing the translation it is necessary to consider the manifesto genre and to understand the position occupied by the source text in its system. In both the United States and Europe, many early feminist groups and collectives wrote manifestos in order to state their views on feminism. Some examples are those in the last section of *Donne è bello*, which is entirely dedicated to manifestos: “Politica sessuale: manifesto per una rivoluzione”, “Manifesto di redstockings”, “Manifesto per una nuova organizzazione a New York” and “Manifesto di Rivolta Femminile”. All these texts have many aspects in common: they describe the characteristics of a certain association, explain the reasons why a change is needed, and encourage the members of a given group to undertake actions that will change society. Jo Freeman’s manifesto is different: it does not contain a list of actions to undertake, but it is mainly composed of a detailed description of “Bitches”, of their qualities and of their lives. Moreover, while the other manifestos represent existing organizations,

¹⁴⁶ Jo Freeman is an important American activist and author. In 1967 she helped to found the first women’s liberation group in Chicago, called *Chicago Westside Group*, together with Shulamith Firestone. She wrote many books and articles, but only four under the pseudonym of “Joreen”, her movement name. These texts analyse her experiences in the women’s liberation movement, and are: “The Tyranny of Structurelessness”, which discusses the potential of the lack of hierarchy in groups; “BITCH Manifesto” (more information will be provided below).

this is the manifesto of a non-existent organization. This is clearly expressed in the first sentence: “BITCH is an organization which does not yet exist. The name is not an acronym. It stands for exactly what it sounds like” and in the first sentence of the final paragraph:

The bulk of this Manifesto has been about Bitches. The remainder will be about BITCH. The organization does not yet exist and perhaps it never can. Bitches are so damned independent and they have learned so well not to trust other women that it will be difficult for them to learn to even trust each other.¹⁴⁷

In this excerpt, Freeman states that “The BITCH Manifesto” is different from other manifestos simply because it represents an organization which does not yet exist. This explains why it has not been included in the section dedicated to the manifestos of *Donne è bello*.

Although quite different from many feminist manifestos, Freeman’s text has some important features in common with a very famous feminist manifesto, the “SCUM Manifesto”. This was written and self-published by Valerie Solanas in 1967, who initially sold it in the streets of Greenwich Village in New York. It was later reprinted and translated into many different languages, and the first Italian edition was a translation by Anne Marie Boetti, published in 1976 by Edizioni delle Donne, a small publishing house created in Rome by a group of feminists.¹⁴⁸ However, the Italian translation of SCUM is very different from that of “The BITCH Manifesto”. The most important difference is the presence of some paratextual elements that may influence the readers’ reception of the text. In fact, the manifesto is followed by an explanatory section which helps the reader to understand the cultural context of the source text: it explains who Valerie Solanas is, her point of view and, most importantly, the purpose of this text. Furthermore, the translator has included a glossary explaining the meaning of SCUM and of the other key terms in the text. These characteristics are typical of documentary translations and, in particular, of what Nord addresses as “philological or learned translation” (Nord 1997: 49). It is

¹⁴⁷ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ A short translated excerpt regarding the difference between male and female creativity had already been published in 1974 in the feminist magazine *Effe* (July–August, pp. 5-6). This excerpt was not sourced from the translation published in 1976.

interesting to note that, according to Nord, this form of translation is commonly used to translate ancient texts, the Bible or “texts from distant cultures” (Nord 1997: 49) because this shows that although SCUM was a contemporary text from another Western country, the translator considered it necessary to provide some further information in order to help the reader to understand the text. In contrast, in *Donne è bello* the interpretation of the text is left entirely to the reader and no information about the author is provided. This, in fact, can be considered an instrumental translation, since it aimed to achieve the same function as the original (Nord 1997: 50). However, these important differences can be explained by taking into consideration the different purposes of the publications: while Boetti conceived the translation of SCUM as a book which should trigger reflections but also be considered as a work of art, *Donne è bello* was an instruction book for Italian feminists, and the aim of the translator was social change, not the analysis of a work of literature.

The BITCH and SCUM manifestos have in common their aggressive tone, which is extreme in Solanas’ text (as she even encourages women to kill men). Moreover, Solanas also promotes rebellion not only against men, but also against weak women who embody the ideals of femininity. Another similarity is the style of the texts: although the SCUM manifesto is longer and more aggressive, both texts are structured in sections, and descriptions are often long lists of terms. The most evident common feature, however, is the stratagem used by both authors in the titles of their texts, which both contain very offensive insults (“bitch” and “scum”) written in capital letters. The use of these words in the title serves the purpose of attracting the readers’ attention, but also gives the impression of being an acronym and therefore of having a hidden meaning that needs to be discovered. This conveys the idea that the key words “bitch” and “scum” in that context convey “unusual” meanings. Then, the readership will discover that these words (“bitch” and “scum”) are not acronyms,¹⁴⁹ and that the author is even asking them to identify themselves as something usually considered negative. By doing this, the readers will twist those meanings into something positive.¹⁵⁰ This shows that the title plays a key role in “The

¹⁴⁹ Solanas’ text has often been considered an acronym for “Society for Cutting Up Men”, but she has always denied this interpretation [Dexter, Gary (2007) *Why not Catch-21?: the Stories behind the Titles*].

¹⁵⁰ “BITCH does not use this word in the negative sense. A woman should be proud to declare that she is a Bitch, because Bitch is Beautiful.”

BITCH Manifesto” because it helps the reader to think critically about the meaning of words.

Jo Freeman describes “bitches” as strong unconventional women who reject all the traditional feminine characteristics and who actively fight in order to fulfil their dreams, irrespective of what society expects them to do. It is evident that for Freeman, “bitches” clearly embody feminists, who reject all values and behaviours that society conventionally relates to femininity. The word “bitch”, which is in the title of the text and is often repeated throughout the text, must therefore be considered a key term. For this reason, it is interesting to consider the reasons why the translator left it in English in the Italian translation and how this might have affected the reception of this text.

The original title “The BITCH Manifesto” was translated as “Manifesto di Bitch”.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, the translator decided not to translate the term “bitch” into Italian, but explained its meaning to the Italian public by adding a short footnote: “Bitch = cagne; usato correntemente come insulto “femminile”, corrisponde press’a poco al nostro megera, troia; l’insulto al maschile è son of a bitch = figlio di ... [N.d.T.]”. In this footnote, the translator initially provides the literal translation (“cagna”), then she explains that this insult is used only when referring to women and, in order to help the Italian reader to understand how this term was currently used in the source language, provides two more examples (“megera” and “troia”). In the final example (“Son of a bitch = figlio di...), the offensive word has been replaced by an ellipsis, as if the translator intended to censor herself.

Footnotes are, according to Theo Hermans, one of the very few cases in which the voice of the translator becomes evident and the illusion that there is only one voice (that of the author) disappears (Hermans 1996: 27). In particular, most of the translator’s notes that we find in *Donne è bello* belong to the category that Hermans classifies as “cases where the text’s orientation towards an Implied Reader and hence its ability to function as a medium of communication is directly at issue” (Hermans 1996: 28). *Donne è bello*’s texts perfectly correspond to this category: although the readership is not “temporally removed” from that of the original text, it is very different in linguistic, cultural and geographical terms (Hermans 1996: 28).

¹⁵¹ There are two different versions of the translated title. While the title in the table of contents is mainly in lower case (“Manifesto di Bitch”), the version that precedes the text is in capital letters (“MANIFESTO DI BITCH”).

Moreover, the vast majority of these articles are strongly embedded in North American culture and, as Hermans explains, the translator's voice needs to provide some indispensable information in order to guarantee effective communication with its public (Hermans 1996: 28-29).

Unfortunately, footnotes do not favour the communication between the reader and the writer. In fact, their position in the page layout and the type used (smaller than the rest of the page) puts them in a marginal position, and they may not be noticed. Moreover, footnotes are not commonly used in manifestos: they aim to add some details to the text, and their purpose is clearly in contrast with that of manifestos, to communicate with the reader in the clearest and most direct way possible.

It is interesting to note that the term "bitch" is not present only in "The BITCH Manifesto". It was also common in Firestone's text "Love" (whose translation is also included in *Donne è bello*), and in that case it was translated with different words, such as "puritana" and "megera" (see page 135). This different approach to the translation of the term "bitch" can be understood by considering the different characteristics of the two texts. In fact, in "Love", the term "bitch" simply had an offensive meaning. Therefore, the translation of this term was evidently less problematic, because the Italian reader could easily understand its negative connotations from the text. "Manifesto di Bitch" presents a completely different situation: in this case, the meaning of "bitch" is not evident from the text; therefore, readers should be fully aware of the meaning of the word "bitch", because it will be completely reversed in the text. This explains why the translator decided to leave "bitch" in English and to explain its meaning with a footnote.

Another possible reason that justifies the translator's strategy is related to the use of "bitch" in the American everyday language, which makes this word very difficult to translate. In fact, most of the possible Italian equivalents for "bitch" suggested by Castaldi in her footnote carry a strong sexual meaning, which is not what the author wanted to express. The contemporary meaning of "bitch" is powerfully described by Sutton,¹⁵² who believes that a "bitch" describes:

the domesticated animal that has gone wrong, that bites the hand that feeds it. A female dog in heat or protecting her young

¹⁵² Quoted by Karin Vasby Anderson in "'Rhymes with Rich': 'Bitch' as a Tool of Containment in Contemporary American Politics".

will growl, threaten, or even bite her owner; she has reverted to her wild state, she is a *bitch*, uncontrollable (Vasby Anderson 1999: 602).

Karrin Vasby Anderson further explains that: “When the “bitch” metaphor is invoked in popular culture it unleashes the myth of women’s power as unnatural and threatening”. Whaley and Antonelli¹⁵³ shared the same stance: “Men flee from bitches because they have reverted to wild animals, usurped the master’s control, and taken over his territory” (Vasby Anderson 1999: 620). These examples clearly show that a “bitch” is aggressive and nonconformist.

Although these examples regard the connotations of the current use of the word “bitch”, it is evident that its meaning perfectly fits with the unconventional women described by Freeman, who selected this term because it describes the behaviour of those who do not fulfil the expected role of women in society. On the contrary, the Italian “cagna” (literal translation) is completely unsuitable for this translation because it has opposite meanings: a “cagna” is usually faithful, docile and sexually available. Moreover, in 1978, Rosa Rossi states that this term, originally used to describe sexually available women, was no longer in common use (Rossi 1978: 82).

By leaving the word in English, the translator has created an interesting effect. In fact, the reader is not often reminded of the texts’ status of translation: the name of the author is present only in the table of contents and there are only a few translator’s notes. Therefore, the translator has foreignised the text and also reminded her readers of its provenance. According to Venuti, some foreign elements in a text are very positive, since they allow the reader to realise the cultural distance between the source and target languages and to realise that through the translation process some shades of meaning inevitably get lost. (Venuti 2008: 264) In this case, the foreignisation of the text is achieved also through one of the variants in which the term “bitch” is present in the translation. In fact, the translator has even decided to keep in the Italian text the English plural “bitches”, while in Italian, the plural form of foreign words is obtained by changing the article.

At this point it is important to take into consideration the common negative labels used in Italy to address unconventional women. In a 1975 issue of *Effe*, we can find

¹⁵³ Quoted by Karin Vasby Anderson in “‘Rhymes with Rich’: ‘Bitch’ as a Tool of Containment in Contemporary American Politics”.

the article “Donna sola: caccia alle streghe”, whose content has some similarities with “The BITCH Manifesto”. It is an account of the life of four single women who are not married and have pursued their careers. For these reasons, those women are considered strange and potentially dangerous people by society or, as suggested by the title of the article, “witches”. In particular, the description of how society judges them is very similar to what is described by Jo Freeman:

La nostra società [...] punzecchia queste donne, le giudica continuamente relegandole in un ghetto di riserva mentale che spesso scoraggia anche le più agguerrite portandole per disperazione a “regolarizzare la loro posizione”.¹⁵⁴

This short excerpt describes how society deals with those women who reject their gender role, and is very similar to that explained in greater detail by Jo Freeman in her text.

While their role in society is quite similar, their labels are slightly different. In fact, Joreen uses the labels “freak” and “outsider” to describe how society considers these independent women. In Graziella di Prospero’s article, these independent women are labelled by society as “non coniugate, libere, diverse, svincolate da cliché non collaudati” and again “marziane – nubili – zitelle – emancipate – libertine”. By comparing the American with the Italian labels we clearly see that in both cases they stress their differences, but while American “bitches” are excluded from society because of their determination to pursue a career, the main reason why Italian “streghe” are criticized is because they have decided not to have affairs with men. Another similarity is in the titles of the texts: although the word “strega is probably less offensive than “bitch”, both terms describe a woman who does not behave according to her gender role.

While Italian “streghe” and American “bitches” are negatively labelled in a similar way, “The BITCH Manifesto” has a characteristic that we cannot find in Italian texts: Joreen describes her “bitches” by using a large number of negative adjectives and expressions. This powerful stratagem perfectly conveys the idea that feminists want to drift away from women’s traditional gender role, and in order to do so, they transform the meaning of insulting words into a description of their differences.

¹⁵⁴ “Donna sola: la caccia alle streghe”, *Effe*, March 1975, p. 41.

It is useful to further investigate the great similarity of connotations between the key word of Italian feminists “strega” and the American “bitch”. Susan Bassnett points out that the most famous slogan shouted by Italian feminists during rallies was “Tremate, tremate, le streghe son tornate”, and explains the reasons why this slogan was so successful. First of all, witches embodied “evil” for the Catholic Church (as opposed to the traditional figure of the “Madonna”), and feminists were opposed to the Church mainly because of the fight for abortion and divorce. Then, identifying themselves with an offensive term was for Italian feminists “part of the conscious attempt [...] to reshape the language and re-evaluate terminology and categories” (Bassnett 1986: 96). Finally, Italian feminists wanted to associate themselves with “the traditional idea of the power of witches and the fear inspired by the idea of that power”, since they were clearly attracted by the opportunity to subvert the traditional power relationships (Bassnett 1986: 96). Susan Bassnett’s analysis clearly shows that the term “strega” carried a very similar meaning to that of “bitch” and, most importantly, had the same purpose. This might lead us to the conclusion that, by using the term “strega” to translate “bitch”, Italian women could perfectly identify themselves with the protagonists of this text and the impact on them could have been stronger. However, we need to consider that “strega” was a term so intimately connected to the history of Italian feminism that, if used by the translator, it would have partially erased the status of translation from this text and created a displacement. This problem can be more easily understood if we consider a case in which the translator’s strategies have completely changed the basic characteristics of the text. In his description of the relationship between translation and a community, Lawrence Venuti provides the example of Creagh’s English translation of Tabucchi’s novel *Sostiene Pereira*, and shows that the translator’s incredible effort to use the colloquial American English current in 1938 actually “displaced the historical dimension of Tabucchi’s novel” (Venuti 2004: 487). Venuti then quotes MacIntyre, who explains that the language spoken by a certain community is closely linked to the beliefs of that community, and that the translation process often erases the link between a text and the history of the country to which it refers.¹⁵⁵ Finally, Venuti explains that the poor success of the English edition of *Sostiene Pereira* is a

¹⁵⁵ Quotation by Lawrence Venuti found in *The Translation studies reader* (p. 486) from MacIntyre’s *Whose Justice, Which Rationality?*

consequence of the relationship between the novel and the history of the author's country. Therefore, it is thought that if Castaldi had translated the word "bitch" with the Italian "streghe" she would have created a displacement similar to that explained by Venuti, which would not have improved the reaction of Italian feminists.

Concerning the meaning that "bitch" has for Joreen, the first lines of the target text provide the reader with some contradictory information: "BITCH è una organizzazione che non esiste ancora, Il nome è una sigla". This contrasts with what we have learned in the footnote and may puzzle the reader, who is aware of the meaning of the word but does not know what the single letters stand for. This doubt is easily solved by checking the source text: "BITCH is an organization which does not yet exist. The name is not an acronym". It is evident that a small omission (the negative particle "not") has completely changed the meaning of the sentence.

A similar problem is present at the end of the first paragraph of the target text: "...una bitch è aggressiva, e quindi femminile". Femininity and aggressiveness are usually considered conflicting qualities; therefore, it is difficult to understand why the author relates them. Also, in this case, analysis of the source text reveals the problem: "...a Bitch is aggressive, and therefore unfeminine (ahem)". Analysis of the source text shows that the meaning has not been correctly conveyed, and that the interjection "ahem" in brackets has not been translated. Also, this interjection plays an important role: it is a sarcastic exclamation which underlines that bitches do not adhere to the traditional canons of femininity set by society.

Bitches' characteristics are first described according to three main points: personality, physicality and orientation. In the first two points, bitches are described by means of long strings of adjectives whose analysis shows that, when possible, the translator tried to translate the original text literally. Some examples are "stridenti" for "strident", "dogmatiche" for "dogmatic" and then "aggressive" and "assertive". Although a literal approach, which we have already seen in the previous chapter, can provide appropriate translations of the adjectives, it cannot be considered advisable for the translation of expressions. In fact, "Non accetta merda da nessuno"¹⁵⁶ (referring to a bitch) is an expression that, although intelligible, is not commonly used in Italian. In some other cases, a literal approach can create a misunderstanding. An example is "Sono inclinate alle professioni" (translation of "professionally inclined"),

¹⁵⁶ Translation of "A Bitch takes shit from no one".

where the use of the verb “incline” conveys the idea of a physical rather than a professional inclination.

Bitches are constantly described throughout the text as people who fail to adhere to what is considered appropriate for women in both physical and behavioural terms. By doing this, they trigger negative reactions from conformist people, such as: “Né uomini né donne possono affrontare la realtà di una bitch [...]. Così la rifiutano considerandola ‘suonata’” and “Eppure per tutta la vita si senton dire che sono matte”. Both “suonata” and “matta” are adjectives used to describe a state of craziness, which does not exactly correspond to what Jo Freeman intended to express. In fact, both adjectives are translations of the word “freak”: “[...] So they dismiss her as a freak” and “Thus, all their lives they have been told they were freaks”. The term “freak” was traditionally a pejorative term used to address a person with physical abnormalities. In the 60s and 70s, the usage of this term changed and it became commonly used to address people with an unusual appearance or behaviour. In particular, it became a term used to address “hippies” and all members of the Alternative Culture who refused to fall in line with bourgeois values and decided to express themselves freely.¹⁵⁷ As far as the translation of this term is concerned, although both “matta” and “suonata” appropriately convey the idea of deviation carried by “freak”, they fail to render some other shades of meaning. The most important lies in the fact that while a mad person suffers from an illness, a “freak” could have consciously decided his or her condition. This term also alludes to the 60s “freak” trend,¹⁵⁸ but it is evident that Freeman did not compare “bitches” with “hippies”, as the text shows that bitches consider the word “freaks” offensive: “[...] all their lives they have been told they were freaks. More polite terms were used, of course, but the message got through”. Therefore, the word “freak” stresses that these women have been isolated not because of their “craziness”, but because of their “difference”, and both the words used in the target text can only partially convey that meaning. From the source text analysis it clearly emerges that “difference” is the key to this text: in fact, Freeman tells us that “bitches” have always been offended

¹⁵⁷ Marwick, Arthur (1998) *The Sixties: cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 480, Hudson, Kenneth (1983) *A dictionary of the Teenage Revolution and its Aftermath*, London: Macmillan, pp. 80-81 and Dalzell, Tom (senior ed.) and Victor, Terry (ed.) (2005), *The new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English*, London: Routledge, p. 796.

¹⁵⁸ In this case, a possible Italian translation of the term would be “fricchettone”, a loan word from the English “freak” commonly used to address nonconformist young people in the 60s.

because of their “difference”, but they have learned to be proud of this characteristic. Therefore, “freak” forms with other words expressing similar meanings (such as “nigger” and “deviant”) an “underlying network of signification”, a sort of network that needs to be preserved in order to convey the meaning (and the purpose) of the text (Berman 2004: 284-285). In this case, as already shown, some of the words that form this network have not been translated (such as “bitch”) or have been translated in a way that did not allow the concept of “difference” to emerge (“freak”).

The particular connotation of “freak” also emerges from Anne Marie Boetti’s commentary¹⁵⁹ on the “SCUM Manifesto”. In that case, she used the word “freak” followed by a short explanation of its meaning: “freak o essere stravagante, rifiutata dalla società benpensante”. This shows us that the term “freak” was not completely unknown in Italy, but Boetti decided to add “essere stravagante” to her documentary translation in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding and to make her readers aware of any shade of meaning present in the text.

Finally, in order to understand whether the message carried by the source text might have been influenced by the translation, it is necessary to consider that many parts (usually indicated in the target text by means of an ellipsis) have been omitted. In some cases, these omissions are short sentences whose absence does not influence the message delivered by the text: the translator might have decided to exclude some passages simply because they contained some terms that she considered particularly difficult to translate. These are some variations of “bitch”, such as: “Bitch Goddess”, “Bitch’s Bitch” and “bitchy”. In some other cases, however, the omissions slightly change the meaning of the text. For instance, in the following excerpt (which was not included in the translation), Jo Freeman explained what happens when a bitch fails to react:

Occasionally she crashes her way through. Or she uses her ingenuity to find a loophole, or creates one. [...] Like other women her ambitions have often been dulled for she has not totally escaped the badge of inferiority placed upon the “weaker sex”. [...] ¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ As already mentioned on page 135, Annemarie Boetti’s translation is followed by an explanatory section and by a glossary.

¹⁶⁰ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism, p. 170).

This passage is very important because it teaches us that bitches are not completely immune to cultural conditioning against women. In the second part of this long omitted section Freeman clearly makes reference to those women who have acquired important positions but fail to recognize their superiority:

[...] Because she has been put down most of her life, both for being a woman and for not being a true woman, a Bitch will not always recognize that what she has achieved is not attainable by the typical woman. A highly competent Bitch often deprecates herself by refusing to recognize her own superiority. She is wont to say that she is average or less; if she can do it, anyone can.¹⁶¹

In this case, Freeman describes bitches as women who are never really aware of the importance of their role and of their superiority. By saying this, Freeman probably alludes to the typical behaviour of men who fill important positions, and states that a bitch will never behave like that. Therefore, this section probably helped the reader to understand that “bitches” reject the typical characteristics of femininity, but are different from men.

Also, the second major omission in this text hides the human characteristics of “bitches”. In this short excerpt (included in the translation), Freeman stresses again the fact that “bitches” do fail: “Not all Bitches make it. Instead of callouses, they develop open sores. Instead of confidence they develop an unhealthy sensitivity to rejection”. The missing part (shown below) further explains the pain suffered by some bitches and also how this might turn them into spiteful people:

Seemingly tough on the outside, on the inside they are a bloody pulp, raw from the lifelong verbal whipping they have had to endure. These are Bitches that have gone Bad. [...] These Bitches can be very obnoxious because they never really trust people.¹⁶²

Similarly to the previous example, this omission has partially changed the picture that the target author intended to give us. In fact, while Jo Freeman intended to show

¹⁶¹ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism, p. 7.

¹⁶² Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism, p. 8.

that these are normal women, the target text's omissions contribute to create a heroic picture of a "bitch", which probably does not correspond to Freeman's intentions.

The translator intervened in the target text not only by omitting sections, but also by adding a small part. This is the section in brackets ('("sorellanza" l'ha chiamata il WL)') that we can find in the following section:

Molte non sceglierebbero di essere coloro che preparano il terreno per la massa delle donne verso cui non nutrono sentimenti di solidarietà ("sorellanza" l'ha chiamata il WL), ma non possono evitarlo.¹⁶³

This section corresponds to the source text: "Many would not choose to be the groundbreakers for the mass of women for whom they have no sisterly feelings but they cannot avoid it". By comparing the target text with the source text it is evident that the translator has added a comment in brackets in order to explain the expression "sentimenti di solidarietà" (in the source text "sisterly feelings"). The purpose of this addition which, differently from the previous case, is not marked as a translator's note, is that of linking the expression "sentimenti di solidarietà" with the feminist notion of "sorellanza", which in English is usually expressed by the term "sisterhood". Certainly, "sisterly feelings" is not easy to translate into Italian because Italian does not have an adverb whose meaning perfectly translates "sisterly". A possible translation is "sentimenti di fratellanza" but, because of the similarity between "fratellanza" and "fratello" (implying a relationship in which men are involved), the most suitable solution is "solidarietà femminile". It is likely that Jo Freeman did not use the term "sisterhood" because she did not intend to address that topic on this specific occasion. "Sisterhood", translated by Italian feminists as "sorellanza", was a key word created by women's liberationists in order to stress that all women should unite and fight together because of their common oppression.¹⁶⁴ In the "BITCH Manifesto" we do not clearly see that type of "sisterhood": according to Freeman, women are divided into bitches (who call themselves "sisters" and have sisterly feelings) and "nonbitches" (who often oppress bitches). Inevitably, all women will benefit from the fight of just a few, but this does not abolish the deep differences

¹⁶³ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 9.

¹⁶⁴ This is a belief very common in the Women's Liberation Movement explained, among others, by Robin Morgan in the introduction (p. XI) of *Sisterhood is Powerful*, the collection of texts she edited in 1970.

between them. On the contrary, the “sisterly feelings” of the members of the *Anabasi* collective seem to address all women, as the *Donne è bello*’s editorial states: “[...] non ci sentiamo figlie delle donne americane, ma sorelle di tutte le donne”, and also:

Alle divisioni create dagli uomini fra le donne, abbiamo sostituito una solidarietà nuova, da cui vogliamo escludere antagonismo, concorrenza, sopraffazione e smania di comando; tutti costrutti basilari della cultura maschile.¹⁶⁵

From this excerpt, we clearly see that the *Anabasi* women intended to promote solidarity and sisterhood among all women and rejected any division. This is evident also in some of the drawings by the members of the collective in *Donne è bello*, and in some articles from *Al femminile* (the second publication by the *Anabasi* collective) where feminists stress the need to unite in order to achieve a revolution. For instance, in the already mentioned text about Nora (mentioned on page 166), Liliana stresses that: “Nora ha il coraggio di intraprendere la strada della liberazione, ma da sola non ha fatto molto. Ci vogliono migliaia, milioni di Nore affinché la liberazione diventi reale”.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, if we consider the importance given to the idea of “sorellanza”, it is very likely that the translator added the term “sorellanza” because she considered it a synonym of Freeman’s “sisterly feelings”.

“Manifesto di Bitch” is one of those few texts that have also been published in other magazines, and this gives us the opportunity to know more about its reception by the Italian public. In fact, only five months after its publication in *Donne è bello*, an excerpt from “Manifesto di Bitch” was published in *F.U.O.R.I.*, the monthly magazine of the first Italian gay and lesbian association. This text was due to be published in the first issue of *F.U.O.R.I.*, which dates back to June 1972, but in this edition we can find only an introduction to the text, which was actually published in the second issue (July/August 1972), preceded by some lines of apology for the mistake.

This introduction provides useful information and comments about the reception of this translation. Its author, Stefania Sala, defines herself as a “Bitch di Fuori”. She directly addresses the *Anabasi* members and compliments them on both that year’s publications, *Donne è bello* and *Al femminile*, but particularly for the last, and even asks them to dedicate a section of it to lesbians, who are both women and feminists.

¹⁶⁵ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, editorial.

¹⁶⁶ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Al femminile*, p. 18.

Finally, she invites the members of *Anabasi* to get in touch with them in order to maybe start a correspondence between the two groups. An important feature of this introduction is the way Stefania Sala defines herself and her group: she first introduces herself as a “cerbiatta” (“doe”), and later explains that “Bitch” and “Biche” (French for “doe”) do not always correspond to the same person, although she is both:

Potremmo bizantineggiare alla maniera di un linusiano sul passaggio semantico da Bitch a Biche. La cagna rompiscatole non sempre è una cerbiatta, e questa non sempre è una cagna: come la mettiamo? Io sono le due cose insieme e ho voluto una pagina tutta per me.¹⁶⁷

In this postscript, Stefania Sala plays with the term “Biche”, which had become a way to address lesbians since the release of the movie *Les Biches*.¹⁶⁸ Her comment clearly intends to say that she is at the same time a feminist (represented by “cagna” since this is one of the translations of “bitch” offered by Castaldi) and a lesbian (“cerbiatta”) and that these two groups of women should unite in their fight. She concludes her comment by saying that: “Alcune di noi sono sempre state Bitch ma se ne vergognavano: ora sanno che Bitch è femminismo e sono felici.” This comment focuses our attention on the word “bitch”, which is sometimes translated as “cagna” by Stefania Sala, but the very important footnote provided by Serena Castaldi in *Donne è bello* was not included in the *F.U.O.R.I.* version. It is evident that this apparently small omission could actually jeopardize the comprehension of the text by the *F.U.O.R.I.* public. However, some other important details were not omitted: the name of Joreen (pseudonym of Jo Freeman) is printed at the bottom of the page, and in another very small introduction just before the text, Stefania Sala clearly states that this is only an abridged version, and the unabridged version can be found in *Donne è bello*.

At this point, it is necessary to analyse the differences between the *Donne è bello* and the *F.U.O.R.I.* versions. The first difference is in the length, since the *F.U.O.R.I.* version is much shorter than that in *Donne è bello*. The sections that have been published are the beginning, which describes “bitches” from the physical and

¹⁶⁷ “MANIFESTO DI BITCH”, *F.U.O.R.I.*, July-August 1972, p. 16.

¹⁶⁸ “Les Biches” is a 1968 French movie which depicts a difficult lesbian relationship between its protagonists. The title contains a word play, since it both means “the does” and “lesbians”.

behavioural points of view, followed by a section describing “bitches” as androgynous people who violate the behaviour which is traditionally considered appropriate for their gender. Finally, “bitches” are described as heroes determined to pursue their dreams and to be isolated and misunderstood by society. Although the text might have been cut for space reasons, it is evident that the choice of the sections to include has been carefully planned in order to provide the reader with a very specific message. In fact, in the excluded part, “bitches” were described from their childhood and adolescence, and much attention was dedicated to how society tries to turn them into “perfect women”. Those descriptions were very important, because they made it clear that “bitches” are different simply because they do not accept the traditional role destined for women by society. By removing those sections, the editor has given much more importance to the introduction, which describes “bitches” as a strange mixture of “feminine” and “masculine” characteristics, and this change also affected the identity of “bitches”. It is evident that the abridgments in the *F.U.O.R.I.* version have a very specific function: they help *F.U.O.R.I.*'s readers (lesbians and homosexuals) to identify themselves as the protagonists of the text. In fact, while for Joreen “bitches” were feminists, the *F.U.O.R.I.* “bitches” can easily be identified as lesbians. The identification of “bitches” as lesbians is openly stated by Stefania Sala¹⁶⁹ in a short introduction to “Manifesto di Bitch”, where Sala repeatedly defines herself as a “bitch” (in English), and addresses the text as “our manifesto”. This shows us that *Donne è bello*'s texts were read not only by its intended public (feminists), but also by people with a very different background, who could interpret the texts in a different way and, as in this case, even manipulate them in order to convey a specific message.

6.5. Conclusions

This analysis has shown that both texts (“American Women: their use and abuse” and “The BITCH Manifesto”) contain some elements that were very difficult to translate, and that the translation might have affected the reception of the texts by Italian feminist readers.

¹⁶⁹ Stefania Sala was a lesbian member of *F.U.O.R.I.*'s editorial staff. She signed many articles in *F.U.O.R.I.*, and she also edited “Manifesto di Bitch” and signed its introduction.

In the first text analysed, the cultural gap is particularly evident in some expressions such as “Victorian stereotype of the ‘lady’” and “Rosie the Riveter”. In these cases, a translator’s intervention in the text by means of a note or a picture could have helped to bridge the gap, but could also have created an abundance of information unsuitable for an instrumental translation like *Donne è bello*. Moreover, the lack of translator’s notes or comments is constant in the volume and therefore a characteristic of Castaldi’s translation style: with only the few exceptions mentioned in this and in the following chapter, the translator can be considered quite an invisible presence.

Further difficult jargon to translate is that relating to ethnic derogatory terms. In those cases, the translator decided to apply very different strategies, such as explaining the meaning of a term (“nigger”) or creating a neologism (“Biancaccio”). All these solutions have in common the intent of conveying the original meaning of the original term, but could also be misunderstood by the reader. Moreover, the analysis has shown an interesting contradiction: although Italian women were informed about the latest news regarding civil rights movements and even liked to compare the women’s liberation movement with the American civil rights movement, a deeper analysis of the problems of black women, which is what the women of the Black Unity Party of Peekskill aimed to do, was very hard to carry out in Italy because of the limitations of the Italian language, which was completely lacking a lexicon able to describe the conflicts between different ethnicities. Therefore, despite the amount of information regarding the United States available in Italian mainstream media, many readers could still have problems understanding the translations of texts on this topic.

Another important topic discussed in the first part of this chapter regards the problems of housewives and workers. The introduction showed that the problems of the American housewife did not completely correspond to those of the Italian housewife, who still considered her economic dependence on her husband as a major problem, generally worked harder and often had no choice but to become a housewife. When needing to translate key vocabulary, Serena Castaldi translated “total housewife” literally, but she also used the term “massaia”, which brilliantly served the intention of the author.

If we take into consideration the labels present in this first text we clearly see a consistency in the strategies used by the translator, who avoided translating them or,

if this was not possible, translated them literally. The labels taken into consideration are deeply rooted in North American culture and history and do not have any correspondent in Italian culture. It would have been possible to adapt the text by replacing them with some similar Italian heroic figures (such as the “partigiana” or “crocerossina” instead of “Rosie the Riveter”) but such a result, as explained, would have created a displacement. Another possible solution was to provide the readers with a many paratextual items that could further explain the meaning of the source text and overcome the cultural gap. However, this would have turned this translation into a documentary translation, which has a very different impact on the public. In fact, while an instrumental translation aims to pursue the same functions of the original text, a documentary translation focuses on the text or on some particular characteristics of the text (Nord 1997: 47-50).

Therefore, although the difficulties of conveying in Italian some key “labels” of this text might have prevented readers from identifying completely with the women described by the text, it is thought that this translation could still be very successful among Italian readers. In fact, it is considered that the main reason why Castaldi selected this text was the description of women’s problems at work. Topics such as unequal pay and working conditions in factories were present also in other texts in *Donne è bello* (for instance in “Lotta per la liberazione della donna”, the translation of a text by the French author Monique Wittig) and constituted an important topic discussed during consciousness-raising sessions and meetings in general. For instance, Bruna Felletti (a member of the *Anabasi* collective I interviewed) stated that the topic of factory work was particularly interesting to her because she was a factory worker and also a member of a trade union, and she had to fight against these inequalities very often. It is evident that in spite of the difficulty of understanding the characteristics of some American characters, the situations described by Lyn Wells could still trigger a reaction in women such as Bruna Felletti, because they were part of their everyday lives.

Attention will now be devoted to the second text analysed, “The BITCH Manifesto”. First of all it is important to focus on Castaldi’s translation strategy for the term “bitch”. A reason why the translator decided to leave it in English in the text might be its complex meaning and use of the term in the source culture. However, another problem could be the different approaches of Italian and American feminists to offensive terms. In fact, while American feminists managed to change their meaning

by using them to address themselves, Italian women reacted in a different way. The only example of an offensive term used by Italian feminists to name themselves is “streghe”, common in magazines and in slogans. In fact, an analysis of some feminist magazines published in the early 70s shows that, rather than changing the meaning of offensive terms, Italian women rather preferred to refuse all their existing labels, and an example is the famous slogan “Non puttane, non madonne, solo donne!”. Therefore, it is evident that Italian women could have serious difficulties recognizing themselves in a text that defines them as “puttane” or “stronze”, which are two possible translations of “bitch”.

In order to understand the reason behind Castaldi’s choices in the translation of “bitch”, we need to understand whether she abided by a specific norm. From the analysis of the translations in *Donne è bello* it is clearly seen that when needing to translate an offensive term, Castaldi generally adopted two strategies. An example of this strategy is in “Love”, where “bitch”, which in that case expressed men’s opinion, was translated using “milder” terms such as “megera”, “tiranna” and even “puritana”. The other solution adopted was to leave the word in English in the target text. This happened in “Manifesto di Bitch”, where the word “bitch” was left in English and the meaning explained by means of a footnote which, however, was partly censored (“figlio di ...”). Of course, this behaviour can be explained by considering that the cultural situation in Italy in the early 70s was very conservative, and any innovation in terms of style or communication was considered shocking,¹⁷⁰ but it was also related to the language used by Italian feminists. The communicative style of Italian feminists has also been commented upon by the Italian journalist Natalia Aspesi, who considered the language used during speeches old and meaningless, and the slogans shouted “carichi di una volgarità non liberatrice”.¹⁷¹ A very similar opinion is stated by Maraini, who in an interview gave her opinion about feminist language:

Il nodo resta il linguaggio espressivo, oggi ancora molto embrionale perchè il linguaggio è una creazione collettiva. Oggi il linguaggio femminile non è ancora diverso da quello maschile, i contenuti sono specifici, il linguaggio no. Scritti, manifesti, volantini femministi non si distinguono molto da quelli compilati

¹⁷⁰ During the interview, Castaldi stated that the publisher Mazzola nearly refused to publish *Donne è bello* simply because of the grammatical mistake in the title.

¹⁷¹ Natalia Aspesi, “Diciamo basta alle parolacce”, *La Repubblica*, 9th April 1976.

nel gergo della Nuova Sinistra (Tornabuoni e Reggiani 1997: 163).

The point expressed by both Aspesi and Maraini is a critique of feminist language, which did not manage to develop in an independent way, but simply used male language to express feminist concepts. In fact, the marches of Italian feminists were rich in vulgar slogans, but what Aspesi considers “liberating” (and what is lacking in Italian marches) is the ability to repossess language by changing the meaning of offensive terms. This, which corresponds to what Jo Freeman did in her feminist manifesto, happens only very rarely in Italian feminism.¹⁷²

Boccia, similarly to what was stated by Aspesi and Maraini, points out that only very rarely did feminists coin new words. Feminists usually adopted the same politicized language of the New Left and put it in a new context in order to adapt it to their needs. They also used “patriarchal” language, but only in order to help women to realize its real meaning and demystify it. Moreover, the language used by Italian feminists usually lacks both irony and ambiguity, which are evidently present in Joreen’s text (Boccia 1987: 136). These elements explain that the translator’s attitude towards the translation of derogatory and ambiguous terms is in line with the sociocultural norms in the Italian feminist movement.

Finally, we need to consider the readership’s reaction to this target text. In spite of the difficulty of translating some key terms and of the few mistakes, the Italian translation of the manifesto was read and appreciated even outside the feminist community to which it was destined. In particular, analysis of the version in *F.U.O.R.I.* clearly shows that Castaldi’s translation could be easily adapted and is one of the keys to the success of this text. In fact, since the term “bitch” was in English and there was no footnote, the average Italian reader did not know its meaning and, by comparing it to the French “biche”, she managed to change its meaning completely: “bitches” were feminists for Joreen and became lesbians for Stefania Sala. Therefore, the absence of a translation could have also positive effects on the reception: since the reader does not know the meaning of a term, this stimulates him/her to make a personal interpretation.

In conclusion, this analysis has clearly shown that icons such as those analysed in this chapter cover an important role in feminist texts. Their secret lies in being deeply

¹⁷² An example is Italian feminists’ use of the noun “strega”.

rooted in the culture and history of a country: although they might be quite static (such as “Rosie the Riveter”) or exaggerated (such as “Bitches”), they help women to visualize what they need to fight or to achieve. In the translation of these labels, Serena Castaldi understood that these figures were too closely related to the history of the United States to attempt to translate them, and she generally opted for some solutions that, although sometimes difficult to understand, still preserved the status of the translation of the text. This analysis also took into consideration the reception of these texts by Italian feminists, and showed that the obvious difficulty that Italian women had to understand a foreign character and to identify with it did not prevent them from understanding the general message conveyed by the text. On the contrary, in one case, the presence of a “mysterious” figure (the “bitch”) even helped them to further develop the message by Jo Freeman by adapting it to the readers’ personal life experiences.

This analysis has shown that the translation of American texts into Italian was a challenging practice but it did not constitute an inevitable loss of meaning, since it also allowed translators and readers to use their creativity and to create new meanings. Therefore, although (as already explained in chapter two) in *Donne è bello* we cannot find most of those techniques that according to Von Flotow characterize translation in the “Era of Feminism”, in this volume we often find the intention to make translation not a passive but an active practice, and this is a typical feminist characteristic.

7. Feminist practices

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on consciousness-raising, a practice that played a pivotal role in the Italian feminist movement in the early 70s. In fact, although all the texts collected in *Donne è bello* had an influence on the Italian feminist movement, those regarding consciousness-raising were particularly important for Italian feminism because they influenced the practices of the collectives and the way in which the groups developed their activities.

The purpose of this chapter is to discover whether the strategies adopted by the translator in the translation of some texts regarding consciousness-raising had any influence on the way in which Italian women organized their meetings. In particular, the reception of these texts will be addressed by taking into consideration the accounts of historians and feminists who took part in these *autocoscienza* meetings.

After introducing consciousness-raising and the main characteristics of this practice in the United States and in Italy, the translation of Kathie Sarachild's "A Program for Feminist Consciousness-raising" will be analysed. This text constituted a very important guide for the early Italian consciousness-raising meetings. This analysis will focus on the translator's strategies in order to understand the reasons behind her choices and their possible effects on the first Italian consciousness-raising groups.

Subsequently, attention will focus on the translation of "The Personal is Political". This text is not a guide to consciousness-raising but it is rather an account of the importance of this practice. However, similarly to Kathie Sarachild's text, it had a influence on the Italian feminist movement with the famous slogan "il personale è politico". After providing some significant examples of this, the analysis will focus on the strategies adopted by the translator in order to understand whether they facilitated the success of the text. Then, the characteristics of this influence will be described, such as the meaning that "the personal is political" had for Italian women and whether it differentiates from the meaning it had for American feminists.

Therefore, this chapter is characterised by the focus on consciousness-raising which, because of the great impact it had on the lives of the members of Italian

feminist groups, constitutes one of the most important elements of radical feminism that were imported from the United States.

7.2. Consciousness-raising: An analysis of the American influence of this practice on Italian collectives.

The practice of consciousness-raising constitutes the most important point in common between the American and Italian feminist movements.

It was developed in the New York Radical Women group by Kathie Sarachild from an idea by Anne Forer, who said that women were not conscious of their oppression and suggested that the other members of her group should describe how they felt oppressed (Echols 1989: 83). This technique was inspired by a practice very common in civil rights movements since the 60s (Echols 1989: 83-84) and, according to Sarachild, was aimed at obtaining what she defined as “common pool of knowledge”: a bank of information regarding women’s oppression based on their feelings and experiences (Sarachild 1978: 149). Subsequently, this knowledge would allow women to develop theories and actions based on their actual experiences. In fact, Sarachild’s aim for consciousness-raising was that of analysing society in order to change it, not to “make ‘internal changes’ except in the sense of knowing more” (Sarachild 1978: 149).

According to Sarachild, the process of consciousness-raising also constituted the necessary preparation for action,¹⁷³ which is necessary but should always follow the discussion and be carefully explained:

By the very logic of the idea no action can be required ahead of time in consciousness raising unless a group is using consciousness raising specifically to brainstorm for an action. The idea is to study the situation to determine what kind of actions, individual and political, are needed. [...] Action must be taken, but often it must be planned, and delayed (Sarachild 1978: 150).

Although Sarachild does not clearly state what kind of action she considers necessary, this excerpt shows that consciousness-raising was for her not just a

¹⁷³ In her text “A Program for Feminist ‘Consciousness Raising’” Kathie Sarachild stated, “Our feelings will lead us to our theory, our theory to our action, our feelings about that action to new theory and then to new action”.

preparation for action, but was the most important step to take in order to achieve liberation. Similarly, Carol Hanisch (another member of the New York Radical Women collective) also stated in her famous text “The Personal is Political” that consciousness-raising is already a form of political action.¹⁷⁴

As far as action is concerned, the most famous case is the Miss America Protest, which resulted in a split between the two factions composing the group, the “politico” and “pro-woman”. While “politicos” believed that the main cause of women’s oppression was capitalism and women’s liberation should be part of the left-wing movements, “feminists” (the supporters of the pro-women line) considered men, rather than capitalism, the source of women’s oppression (Echols 1989: 52). The contrasting views of these two factions and the tensions originating after the action at the Miss America Protest in September 1968 caused a division inside the NYRW, and the “politicos” decided to leave the group and to found another organization called WITCH (Echols 1989: 96).

The Italian practice of *autocoscienza* is commonly considered a consequence of the influence of the American radical feminism. In particular, it was “imported” by a few Italian women who in the early 70s had the opportunity to spend a period of time in the United States¹⁷⁵ and to take part in some consciousness-raising sessions. Serena Castaldi played a particularly important role in this process. In fact, while others (such as the Turinese Maria Teresa Fenoglio) simply encouraged this practice in her group (Zumaglino 1996: 354), Castaldi included many texts describing consciousness-raising in *Donne è bello*, thus allowing not only her group, but Italian feminists in general to learn about consciousness-raising (Zumaglino 1996: 354).

Although *autocoscienza* developed in Italy thanks to the influence of American radical feminism, it is also in continuity with some elements typical of Italian culture, such as the old custom of meeting in the market square or in the washhouse in order to gossip and to confide secrets (Passerini 1991: 173-174). As mentioned in chapter five, consciousness-raising is also similar to the practice of confession, which has always been part of the Italian culture. In fact, similarly to the confession, consciousness-raising entails a power relationship between two or more people, and the person who reveals her secrets will benefit from this act.

¹⁷⁴ Notes From the Second Year, p. 76.

¹⁷⁵ As already mentioned in chapter three, consciousness-raising started being practised in 1967 in the New York Radical Women group.

With regard to the members of these groups, they are described by Passerini as mostly in their thirties and mainly belonging to the middle and upper-lower class. Of course, there were many exceptions (much younger or older women, and some lower class women), but most of the members belonged to that age range and had a good education. The group members chose each other on the basis of affinity and, as in the case of the *Anabasi* members, also developed intense relationships of friendship. Usually groups were small and autonomous: some women might leave and others join, but this did not happen regularly (Passerini 1991: 168).

Passerini explains that consciousness-raising rapidly spread in Italy and, while in the early 70s it was extremely popular and concentrated in few larger centres, in the second half of the decade it became less prominent but also more widespread. In particular, according to both Anna Rossi-Doria and Paola di Cori *autocoscienza* was the most popular feminist political practice in Italy until 1974.¹⁷⁶ Then, from 1974 the debate about abortion had an influence on the whole feminist movement (even on those groups who did not take part in demonstrations), and in the groups discussions shifted on women's repossession and discovery of their own bodies (Passerini 1991: 180-181).¹⁷⁷ In general, 1975 is considered the year in which most groups interrupted their *autocoscienza* sessions because they seemed no longer able to bring results and, as mentioned in chapter three, while some groups split up, others evolved thanks to other practices.¹⁷⁸

As stated by Passerini, the beginning of Italian radical feminism is commonly considered to coincide with the formation of the groups *Rivolta Femminile* in Rome and the *Anabasi* in Milan, whose activities were strongly focused on the practice of consciousness-raising. Passerini also points out that consciousness-raising had such an important role for Italian groups that the *Demau*, one of pre-existing groups, cannot be considered feminist simply because the type of analysis they were carrying out could not be considered consciousness-raising (Passerini 1991: 179). In fact, as some *Demau* members state in an interview with Calabrò and Grasso, they had already started to read texts on anthropology, sexuality and psychology and to

¹⁷⁶ Quotations by Passerini from Paola Di Cori *Il movimento cresce e sceglie l'autonomia 1974-1979* (1989), and Paola Rossi-Doria *Lezione a Cambridge* (1988).

¹⁷⁷ In the interviews collected by Grasso and Calabrò emerges that the topic of the body was popular also in the *Anabasi* group, whose members in 1975 started organizing massage and dance sessions.

¹⁷⁸ This tendency is stated by Bracke (2014: 77), but it also common in several interviews to members of Milanese groups collected by Grasso and Calabrò (2004).

discuss these topics, but the discovery of consciousness-raising gave a new lease of life to the group because that procedure they learned from the American documents helped them to tackle the same topics in depth (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 148). In fact, in an interview a *Demau* member states that they had already debated sexuality and the relationship with the mother before the start of *autocoscienza* but they did not manage to get to the heart of the matter: “era stato come girare teoreticamente intorno a problemi che sono stati poi affrontati solo in autocoscienza” (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 151).

Although it is unlikely that the only source of information available to all the feminist groups which practised consciousness-raising was *Donne è bello*, it is evident that the volume by the *Anabasi* collective had a key role in the diffusion of this practice because of the important theoretical background to this practice it contained. In particular, Aida Ribero (Ribero 1999: 157-158), Agnese Piccirillo (Piccirillo 1996: 353) and Maria Gabriella Frabotta (Fraire 1978: 127) attested the important influence of “Il processo al piccolo gruppo” (by Pam Allen), “Piccolo gruppo” (by Lynn O’ Connor) and “Sorellanza e piccolo gruppo” (by Roy Lichtman), which are all texts present in *Donne è bello*. These texts focus on the “piccolo gruppo”, which for Italian women became synonymous with the consciousness-raising group.

A particularly important text was Sarachild’s “Un programma per le femministe: prender coscienza”, because it contained the only practical guide to consciousness-raising present in *Donne è bello*, an indispensable tool for the sessions. In fact, although feminists carefully read all the available theoretical literature on the matter before starting their meetings, a list of questions was an important support, at least for the first sessions, when most women were unfamiliar with the procedure and frightened to speak. Another reason why the translation “Un programma per le femministe: prendere coscienza” is so important is its diffusion. Luisa Passerini states that, according to her memory, it was one of the most popular texts translated which circulated among the collectives in two different versions: one was sourced from Tanner’s book *Feminist Consciousness Raising and ‘organizing’*, and one was from *Donne è bello* (Passerini 2005: 185). Passerini does not state the differences between these two versions, but she describes the reaction to this translation as follows:

Se si legge quel testo oggi si ha una certa impressione di rigidità, ma allora ebbe una funzione scatenante. Bisogna

riconoscere nel processo una parte di apprendimento, ma come consegna di spunti che diede origine a gruppi autonomamente creativi, perchè ciascun piccolo gruppo elaborò le cosiddette istruzioni in modi molto diversi (Passerini 2005: 185).

Passerini points out that this text encouraged Italian women to talk about themselves and to be creative, and that they all interpreted those instructions in different ways.

Another important characteristic of *autocoscienza* is its being in contrast with the traditional political practices of the left wing organizations. For instance, Passerini explains that most feminist groups within the trade unions (for instance in Emilia-Romagna) refused consciousness-raising, while in those groups (such as the Florence group *Rosa*) that started consciousness-raising after a period spent analysing Marxist texts, this practice interfered with the organization and the hierarchy of the group (Passerini 1991: 172). According to Passerini, this is due to the fact that consciousness-raising aims to question people's convictions in order to promote a renewal, and such an action (which had already taken place in the late 60s) could no longer be accepted in the seventies, when the structure in the trade unions was already defined (Passerini 1991: 172).

Bracke also underlines the presence in the Italian feminism of two very different approaches that she calls "social" and "existential", respectively characterized by the focus on campaigns and social action, and the practice of consciousness-raising. The history of the Italian feminism shows very clearly that these two approaches always created harsh conflicts. An example is evident in the history of the group *Lotta femminista*, an organization founded in Padua (already mentioned in chapter three) characterized by its strong adherence to the Marxist ideology and focused on campaigns. Its branch in Milan, influenced by the Milanese background where the "existential" debate dominated the scene, decided to start practising consciousness-raising, and this created irreconcilable conflicts within the organization, which caused the dissolution of the group in 1974 (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 187). While in Milan most groups adopted the "existential" approach, in other cities there were tensions between these two opposite approaches. For instance, in Turin the collective of *via Petrarca* chose to focus on consciousness-raising, but the Turinese feminists struggled to overcome their leftist political background. Similarly, also in Florence, Bologna and Modena the *Collettivo Femminista Bolognese* was formed by women

who had previously been members of *Potere operaio* and student activists. In this case they chose to focus on existential feminism precisely because of the past experience within the Left of several members, but their background still influenced the debates (Bracke 2014: 71).

These contrasts were sometimes even present within the groups. In fact, while the majority of the *Anabasi* members (as already explained in chapter four) wanted to focus on consciousness-raising, others intended to undertake social actions, and this created a conflict that led the minority group to leave the group (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 176). A reason for this conflict is (as already mentioned in chapter four), explained by Sapegno: while consciousness-raising was a process of self-discovery conducted by means of questions, the left-wing political practices were grounded on the indoctrination:

Quella pratica politica si contrapponeva alla coazione abituale della sinistra che era quella di indottrinare gli altri, di far prendere coscienza semmai alle altre, visto che per definizione chi discuteva di forme politiche la coscienza ce l'aveva già (Sapegno 1987: 245).

These examples show that the success of consciousness-raising in Italy was also favoured by the particular social and political context of the early Italian second-wave feminist movement. In fact, in other countries consciousness-raising was not so successful. For instance, Fougeyrollas-Schwabel points out that consciousness-raising groups were present in France too. However, differently from what happened in the United States, in France most consciousness-raising groups were strongly influenced by psychoanalysis and the analysis of the unconscious (Fougeyrollas-Schwabel 2003: 673). Although for very different reasons, also in Great Britain consciousness-raising groups spread less than in Italy. According to both Thornham and Bassnett, in Britain the liberal current dominated the movement and the most important issues were the debate about equal pay and the social classes (Bassnett 1986: 2-3; Thornham 1998: 291).

The great variety of different stances and perspectives of the Italian feminist movement is visible also from the fact that the groups differentiated not only according to their decision to practice consciousness-raising or to focus on social actions, but also to the particular meaning they gave to this political practice. In fact, as Adriana Perrotta suggests, for some groups, such as for the *Anabasi*, this practice

constituted a process of self-discovery: by reflecting on themselves and their personal experiences, women realized the position they had in society and, thanks to the help provided by the rest of the movement, they started to challenge their traditional gender roles (Perrotta 1989: 90). For the women of *Rivolta Femminile*, consciousness-raising was also a form of self-discovery, but it mainly constituted a way to challenge male roles in society and the traditional female gender roles. Finally, other women simply considered it as way to break out of their isolation and to communicate their feelings and problems. Another important distinction developed by Maria Luisa Boccia lies in the fact that while a few groups, such as *Demau* and *Rivolta Femminile*, intended to develop a theory regarding the position of women in society based on the experiences discussed by the group, other groups, such as *Anabasi*, did not develop their own theory, but simply started this practice with the purpose of allowing women to communicate their feelings (Boccia 1990: 81-82).

This analysis shows that similarly to what stated by Kathie Sarachild, the *Anabasi* group considered consciousness-raising a way to discover more about their position in society. However, the two groups differed in terms of “actions”, because the only initiatives that the *Anabasi* members decided to undertake had the purpose of facilitating the communication among the groups. Some examples are their publications (*Donne è bello* and *Al femminile*), the organization of the “Soccorso femminista” (a help centre for feminists) and the organization of dance workshops (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 179).

The importance of *autocoscienza* for *Rivolta femminile* is described by Carla Lonzi in her 1972 text “Significato dell’autocoscienza nei gruppi femministi.” In her opinion, women had been deprived of “space” and “autocoscienza” would help them to reconquer the space that belongs to them. In the following quotations from “Significato dell’autocoscienza nei gruppi femministi”, Carla Lonzi explains what should be, in her opinion, the purpose of consciousness-raising:

[...] non è uno spazio fisico quello di cui si parla— sebbene esista anche lo spazio fisico di cui siamo private— ma uno spazio storico, psicologico e mentale.

Noi di Rivolta Femminile lo occupiamo poco a poco con l’autocoscienza nei gruppi di donne (Lonzi 2010: 118).

[...] i gruppi femministi di autoscienza [...] operano per lo scatto a soggetto delle donne che l'una con l'altra si riconoscono come esseri umani completi, non più bisognosi di approvazione da parte dell'uomo (Lonzi 2010: 119).

Therefore, according to Carla Lonzi, consciousness-raising helps women to gain their independence from men and to become conscious of this domination. As far as the "action" is concerned, *Rivolta femminile* chose to focus entirely on "autoscienza" and on its own publishing house, which they considered the best way to communicate the results of their analysis (Calabrò and Grasso 2004: 162).

If we consider the similarities and differences between consciousness-raising in the United States and in Italy, it is evident that Italian feminism tended to elaborate in a personal way the practice of consciousness-raising and to adapt it to the Italian context. This is particularly evident in the case of *Rivolta femminile*, whose members developed the knowledge obtained through this practice into a theory, which they collected in the "libretti verdi", a collection of booklets published by their own publishing house.

The most evident difference, however, is in the purpose of this practice. In fact, although both the American and the Italian radical feminist groups carried out consciousness-raising in order to obtain a deeper understanding of their own oppression, this knowledge would then lead in the United States to public actions and campaigns. In Italy, on the contrary, feminist applied a very different strategy, and thanks to consciousness-raising they replaced public demonstrations, which represented for them a legacy of the left wing organizations. In her analysis of *Donne è bello* Sapegno points out that apparently this process of self-analysis has no purpose, but actually its aim was simply creating strong bonds between women, and this had an impact on the public opinion:

[...] l'unico progetto che emerge chiaramente e che si offre alle donne contemporaneamente come mezzo e come fine è il movimento stesso, e naturalmente non è poco [...] Quel massiccio apparire di tante donne organizzate che sceglievano non solo e non tanto di protestare quanto appunto di stare tra loro, di darsi se stesse come fine, ebbe un impatto nell'immaginario collettivo che nessuna mera questione femminile poteva mai avere (Sapegno 1987: 245).

The following section will analyse the text “Un programma per le femministe: prender coscienza” and assess the influence of this text on the Italian feminist readership.

7.3. Kathie Sarachild’s guide to consciousness-raising

According to the information provided by *Donne è bello*’s table of contents, “Un programma per le femministe: prender coscienza” should be the translation of Sarachild’s text “A Program for Feminist Consciousness raising”, but the comparison between source and target texts showed that the target text only partially corresponds to its supposed source text. However, the composition of the target text is not stated by the translator who, in contrast, indicates Katie Sarachild as the only author and provides a title (“Un programma per le femministe: prender coscienza”), which corresponds only to the first of the three texts that form the translation. The target text is divided into two parts: the first is discursive and explains why consciousness-raising is important. It also highlights the fundamental role that feelings play in this process of self-discovery. The second part is a list of points that are supposed to constitute a guide to consciousness-raising sessions. The third section is a list of ten questions similar to those of the preceding section but focused on marital status.

By comparing the target text to what was initially supposed to be its corresponding source text,¹⁷⁹ it was discovered that only the first part corresponds to Sarachild’s text, while the second part, although similarly characterised by a list of bullet points, is considerably different. After carrying out research of the online archives of historical documents from the United States, it was discovered that the source of this practical guide is a document distributed by the New York Radical Feminists (or NYRF), presumably in 1971,¹⁸⁰ which is likely to belong to the considerable number of documents that Castaldi had the opportunity to collect during her stay in New York. Since the translator decided to replace Sarachild’s guide with the NYRF guide, the differences between these two texts will be analysed in order to understand the reasons behind her choice.

¹⁷⁹ “A Program for Feminist Consciousness raising” by Kathie Sarachild, published on page 78 of *Notes from the Second Year*.

¹⁸⁰ The document was downloaded from <https://archive.org>. Although it does not show any date according to this website, it was distributed in 1971.

Sarachild's text has quite a complicated structure. The topics are divided into several different levels of generalisation, which force the members of the group to analyse in great detail every possible aspect of their personal experiences. Although the variety of topics and levels selected by Sarachild aimed at a very thorough discovery of all the different aspects of patriarchal oppression, Sarachild's list does not provide any examples based on the true personal experiences of women, which could help women to realise the oppression present in their everyday lives. This is evident, for example, in the section "ongoing consciousness expansion, which is divided into three main parts that are further composed of several statements. This is the one of these parts:

- 1) Personal recognition and testimony:
 - a) Recalling and sharing our bitter experiences;
 - b) Expressing our feelings about our experiences both at the time they occurred and at present;
 - c) Expressing our feelings about ourselves, men, other women;
 - d) Evaluating our feelings¹⁸¹

It is evident that women who have never taken part in any feminist meeting might find it very difficult to use such an undetailed guide because, for instance, they might have difficulties identifying a relevant experience to mention.

The structure of the NYRF guide is quite different. It is divided into twenty-five basic sections, which are:

- 1) How I came to women's liberation, what it means to me now, what I expect from it;
- 2) First awareness of your role as a woman;
- 3) Childhood training for this role;
- 4) Early childhood sexual experiences;
- 5) Puberty;
- 6) Dating and social life with girls as well as boys;
- 7) Adult sexual experiences;
- 8) Love;
- 9) Fantasies;
- 10) Work;
- 11) Education;
- 12) Marriage;
- 13) Pregnancy and childbearing;
- 14) Motherhood;
- 15) Aging;
- 16) Family;
- 17) Fashion;
- 18) Politics;
- 19) The media;
- 20) Women;

¹⁸¹ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 79.

21) Homosexuality; 22) Men; 23) Rape; 24) Race; 25) Therapy.¹⁸²

If we compare this basic list of topics with the short example from Sarachild's guide we can clearly see that in this case, women are provided with more concrete examples of experiences based on their everyday life and on their past.

Another important difference between these two guides is the language used. In fact, the NYRF guide is rich in examples taken from the everyday life of women that are supposed to help them to realise their oppression. For instance, we can find some expressions in inverted commas that perfectly serve this role such as: "Little girls don't do that", "Don't be too smart, dear, you'll never have any dates" and "She's showing her age". Moreover, also, the use of direct questions is a good way to encourage the participants in these sessions (especially the most reluctant) to talk about themselves. Some examples of very effective questions are: "Were you treated differently from your brothers?" and "Do you love yourself?" Finally, the use of expressions common in the mass media such as "'real' woman" is a very effective way to help women realise their oppression. Finally, it is thought that the layout of the documents was more effective because, instead of an intricate structure based on multiple levels, the different aspects of oppression relating to each single topic are simply listed on the same line. In fact, the structure of Sarachild's guide conveys the idea that consciousness-raising is a difficult path composed of a large number of compulsory steps to take. In contrast, with its easier structure, the NYRF guide gives the idea that this process does not have to be hard, but can be adapted to the life experiences of each woman.

At this point it is necessary to mention Sarachild's opinion regarding methods. In her 1973 text, "Consciousness Raising: a Radical Weapon", she explains that there is no substantial difference between her guide and other guides distributed by other groups: "New knowledge is the source of consciousness raising's strength and power. Methods are simply to serve this purpose, to be changed if they aren't working" (Sarachild 1978: 149). However, although in her opinion the purposes of all guides should be the same, the comparison between these two shows important differences that are a consequence of the different situations and purposes for which they have been created.

¹⁸² "An introduction to the New York radical feminists", p. 4 (downloaded from <https://archive.org/>).

The first important difference is the group itself: while the New York Radical Women was quite a small group¹⁸³ composed mostly of women with some previous experiences in left-wing parties and in civil rights movements, the NYRF group was created in order to find a way to involve the thousands of New York women who wanted to join the feminist movement but could not find any group ready to accept them (Echols 1989: 186). In order to find a solution to this problem, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt launched the NYRF, an umbrella group composed of brigades of about fifteen women each who, in order to become official members of the NYRF, had to pass a six-month probation period composed of consciousness-raising practice and discussions of feminist literature, and finally they had to sign the group's manifesto, "Politics of the Ego". The document from which the translator of *Donne è bello* excerpted the guide to consciousness-raising is one of the pamphlets providing all the information the new groups needed, such as a description of radical feminist philosophy, some information regarding the structure of the group, an introduction to consciousness-raising sessions, a list of questions and finally a rich bibliography that all the neophytes were supposed to read. The different and easier structure of the guide is closely related to the structure of the NYRF: since women with no previous experience had to organize their consciousness-raising sessions without any external support, questions had to be very direct and easy to understand, and were intended to refer to women's everyday life.

At this point we can shift our attention to the target text. By considering the characteristics of the three sections present in the target text we can clearly understand what were, according to the translator, the main purposes of consciousness-raising and the needs and issues that Italian women needed to discuss. The first section (sourced from Kathie Sarachild's "A Program for Feminist Consciousness Raising") focuses on feelings and has the function of encouraging women to talk about themselves. This constitutes a great introduction to the practice because it encourages women not to hide their feelings but to let themselves be guided by them. Moreover, this part contains the purposes of this practice, which is according to Kathie Sarachild the basis of consciousness-raising. As already explained in the introduction section, Sarachild's views were shared by most Italian

¹⁸³ Alice Echols states different estimates: according to Hanisch there were twenty to thirty regulars and fifty to sixty women in each session, but others suggest that about a hundred women attended the meetings in 1968 (Echols 1989: 74).

radical groups, which considered consciousness-raising the first (and most important) stage of a process which should lead to some sort of action. As far as the second section is concerned, the comparison between the two source texts and the analysis of the different characteristics of the groups clearly shows the reasons why the translator replaced Sarachild's guide in the Italian translation: she considered Italian feminists completely unaware of the restrictions imposed on them by society and in need of a solid support structure that only the NYRF guide could provide. In fact, the situation of the Italian groups and, in particular, of the *Anabasi* group, in the early 70s was very similar to that of the NYRF. When Italian feminists started to form their groups they knew very little about feminism and consciousness-raising and were intrigued but also understandably scared by the idea of having to talk in public about their private lives, and therefore they needed a guide rich in examples that could easily provoke a reaction. In this case, the translator's strategy shows once again that, as stated by Castaldi in her interview (see page 87), the purpose of this volume was not documentary. In fact, the evident manipulation of Sarachild's text is an exception in *Donne è bello*, whose translations (apart from few short abridgments and translator's notes) usually correspond to the source text indicated in the table of contents. Therefore, it is evident that the translator judged Sarachild's guide to be unable to lead the consciousness-raising sessions of the Italian groups, and considered the reception of this text so important as to justify a heavy manipulation of the source text. Another important characteristic of this manipulation is its being hidden from the public, which is not explicitly told the composition of the target text. As already explained in the second chapter, *Donne è bello* is characterised by the shortage of information about the source texts and their authors, but what happens in this case is particularly important because, instead of giving only a little information to her readers, the translator does not communicate that there is more than one author. If we consider that, as already explained, the translator has manipulated the text in order to obtain a better reception of the target text, I think it is very likely that the guide by the NYRW was not mentioned simply because Kathie Sarachild was more famous, and therefore her guide would be considered more reliable by Italian women. Moreover, explaining (and justifying) the composition of the target text would have been very difficult for the translator and could have diverted the attention of the readers from the guide.

The target text contains also a third section which is not present in either of the already analysed source texts by Kathie Sarachild and the NYRF, and is composed of a series of questions based on the marital status of a woman. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to locate the source text corresponding to this third section but, considering that Serena Castaldi always used the original material she collected, it is thought very unlikely that this section is a personal creation. In fact, in this and in the previous chapters it has been clearly shown that the translator of *Donne è bello* sometimes made some changes to her source text by adding explanatory notes or abridging some sections, but all the texts so far analysed in *Donne è bello* are translations. Moreover, as already explained in the methodology chapter, Toury states that: “Target-language texts can be studied as (assumed) translations even in the absence of corresponding source texts” because “it is precisely the ear-marking of *another* text as its assumed translation which is necessary for admitting it into such a study” (Toury 1995: 71). Therefore, since this analysis is focused on the target text and is strongly inspired by Toury’s approach, this small excerpt will be considered a translation, although in this case it is impossible to prove the existence of a corresponding source text.

This section is composed of some questions¹⁸⁴ that should be put to women of both marital statuses and some questions just for one category,¹⁸⁵ and it aims at helping women to think critically about their situation. In order to understand women’s expectations in terms of direction and purpose, this section ends with three more questions about the women’s movement. This clearly shows that, according to Serena Castaldi, Italian women were under a lot of pressure from their families to get married, and marital status was a source of problems for both married and unmarried women.

As far as the influence of this text is concerned, it was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter that Italian feminists creatively interpreted those instructions. Similarly, in *Storie di donne e femministe*, Passerini states that:

Le “istruzioni d’uso” che vennero pubblicate dal gruppo
Anabasi su *Donne è bello* nel febbraio 1972 hanno valore di

¹⁸⁴ Such as “Enumera tre vantaggi e tre svantaggi dell’essere nubile.”

¹⁸⁵ For instance, unmarried women were asked “Puoi immaginarti nubile tra 10 anni? Ti piace quello che immagini?”, while married women were asked “Quante donne nubili hai invitato a cena nell’anno passato? Non hai mai dato una mano a combinare un matrimonio?”).

comunicazione tra gruppi e paesi diversi, più che di vere e proprie indicazioni di come procedere (Passerini 1991: 168-169).

According to Passerini, Italian feminists did not strictly follow that guide, but it rather played an important role in the communication among the various Italian groups, because it provided some basic instructions that all groups could adapt to their needs.

The influence of this translation is evident, for instance, in the article by Daniela Colombo “Il piccolo gruppo: fine dell’isolamento” published in *Effe*.¹⁸⁶ In this text, its author recounts how her groups started: after having spent some time within the political group *Movimento di liberazione della donna*, she realized that before planning political actions women needed to become conscious of their problems. Therefore, together with some female friends, she decided to organize meetings in order to discuss women’s oppression, but the first meetings were unsuccessful:

[...] il risultato è stato soltanto una gran confusione. Nessuna di noi aveva la minima esperienza di piccolo gruppo. Le nostre prime discussioni erano goffe: nel nostro entusiasmo saltavamo da un argomento all’altro seguendo tutte le nuove idee. Ci rubavamo le parole l’una con l’altra; non riuscivamo a darci un metodo per discutere.¹⁸⁷

At first they had difficulties in structuring their meetings. Then, they discovered the “small group” and learned how to plan and deliver successful sessions: “Dovevamo parlare assieme della nostra vita: infanzia, famiglia, uomini, mariti, sessualità, carriera”.

Although Daniela Colombo does not mention how her group learned about the “small group”, her article is followed by two texts from *Donne è bello*: the already mentioned guide “Un programma per le femministe: prendere coscienza” and “Resistenza alla coscienza”. The version of the guide published in *Effe* does not contain the whole text, but only the second part, and also the title is different: instead of “Un programma per le femministe: prendere coscienza” the title is “Guida alla presa di coscienza”, as if the editor of *Effe* knew that the guide did not correspond to

¹⁸⁶ “Il piccolo gruppo: fine dell’isolamento”, *Effe*, January 1974, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ “Il piccolo gruppo: fine dell’isolamento”, *Effe*, January 1974, p. 4.

the text by Sarachild. Similarly, the article which follows (“Resistenza alla coscienza”) is also a translation from *Donne è bello*, and in this case the editor indicates not only the name of the author (Irene Peslikis) but also the source text (“note II anno, pag. 81”), a detail that is not present in *Donne è bello*. These details suggest that the editors of *Effe* did not simply copy from *Donne è bello*, but they either contacted Serena Castaldi or carried out research regarding the provenance of the source texts. It is considered very likely that Daniela Colombo knew this text so well because the women of her group had used it as a guide in their first meetings, and then she subsequently decided to publish it together with her article because she considered it useful for those groups that were starting their consciousness-raising sessions. This hypothesis is also supported by a statement by Maria Serena Sapegno, a member (like Daniela Colombo) of the feminist movement in Rome, who asserted that *Donne è bello* was one of the canonical texts that all feminists used to read in the early 70s (Sapegno 1989: 98).

In Turin, the situation was very similar. In her essay, Agnese Piccirillo provides some useful information about the most common topics discussed:

E, quindi, i temi sono: la sessualità, le cui modalità sono riconosciute soprattutto orientate al soddisfacimento dei bisogni maschili; l’infanzia, come luogo dei condizionamenti e dell’interiorizzazione dei ruoli che competono al femminile; la mancanza di reale libertà di movimento in un mondo che prevede, come spazio per le donne, fondamentalmente lo spazio casa-famiglia (Piccirillo 1996: 361).

Then, Agnese Piccirillo further explains that sexuality was one of the most debated topics, followed by women’s bodies and some related problems such as pregnancy and abortion (Piccirillo 1996: 362-363). According to Piccirillo, Turinese women had particular difficulties in discussing their career ambitions because “work” was a topic usually related to emancipation, and they feared to be judged by the other members of the group as being anxious to obtain emancipation, rather than liberation.¹⁸⁸ The account by Agnese Piccirillo is another example that shows how Italian feminists used the instructions in *Donne è bello*: although they tried to follow them (all the

¹⁸⁸ The difference between emancipation and liberation is explained on page 123.

topics mentioned by Piccirillo are also on the list in *Donne è bello*), their development was inevitably affected by the personal experiences of the members of the group.

If we compare the topics mentioned in these two examples (by Agnese Piccirillo and Daniela Colombo), we notice that, although their authors belonged to two different groups very far away from each other (Piccirillo talks about the feminist movement in Turin, while Colombo about Rome), the most common topics during consciousness-raising sessions were almost identical and belonged to that list provided by the guide in *Donne è bello*. Therefore, it is evident that although Passerini stated that the guide in *Donne è bello* mainly favoured communication between very distant groups, it also provided the first meetings with a basic layout to follow.

As already mentioned, the version published in *Donne è bello* was not the only version available to Italian women. Apart from the version mentioned by Passerini sourced from Tanner's book *Feminist Consciousness Raising and 'organizing'*, Italian women had access to a third version of Sarachild's text, which was published in "Per un movimento di liberazione della donna", the collection of feminist texts by Lidia Menapace. In that case, the whole target text corresponds to Sarachild's text "A Program for Feminist Consciousness Raising". According to Luisa Passerini Menapace's volume circulated in the collectives (Passerini 1991: 183-184), *Donne è bello* was evidently more popular among feminists. In fact, in the articles she wrote for "Il Manifesto" Lidia Menapace harshly criticized American radical feminism and its "pro-woman" line. This caused protests by some feminist collectives (such as the Milanese collective *Demau*), and explains why her work *Per un movimento di liberazione della donna* is quoted in the list of feminist literature in *Sottosopra* 1974, but is described as a work very distant from the practices and ideas of the Italian radical feminist collectives because it was heavily influenced by communist ideology.¹⁸⁹ In fact, the purpose of Menapace's translation was that of providing information about the international feminist movement and not, like the publications by feminist collectives, that of supporting feminist activities and practices.

In conclusion, it is evident that Serena Castaldi manipulated Sarachild's text "A program for Feminist Consciousness-Raising" in order to provide Italian feminists

¹⁸⁹ "L'autrice introduce questa raccolta di traduzioni di articoli apparsi sulla rivista Partisan e su riviste del movimento americano secondo una ottica decisamente di sinistra senza alcuna concessione ad una lotta di sole donne".

with a guide based on their problems and the needs of their first sessions. In this case, this choice proved successful, since this text (as shown by the comments by Luisa Passerini) had an important influence on small Italian groups.

7.4. “The personal is political”

The analysis will now focus on “Ciò che è personale è politico”, the translation of Carol Hanisch’s text published in *Donne è bello*. The purpose of this section is to analyse the translator’s strategies and, through the analysis of secondary sources and of the feminist literature of the early 70s, to assess the influence of this text on the Italian feminist movement. In fact, the famous American text “The Personal is Political” might well have inspired the famous feminist slogan “il personale è politico”. This analysis aims to understand whether the translator’s strategies could have influenced the reception of the text and to assess the influence of this translation on the Italian feminist movement.

In an introduction to a recent edition of her text, Carol Hanisch explains the historical context in which this paper originated.¹⁹⁰ Like many other members of the New York Radical Women, Hanisch started her career working for civil rights movements such as the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and, when she moved to New York, she decided to join the SCEF (Southern Conference Educational Fund) because it seemed more progressive than many other groups. The staff of SCEF allowed Hanisch to organize the first consciousness-raising meetings in her office, but they strongly criticized these gatherings and labelled them as “personal therapy”, in opposition to “political therapy.” Hanisch’s strong critique of the New Left movement is an important characteristic of the source text that has been partly hidden by the translation. This is evident, for instance, in the first part of the target text:

In questo articolo desidero riferirmi il più possibile a uno degli aspetti del conflitto della sinistra di cui si parla comunemente e che si esprime col termine di “terapeutico” in opposizione a quelli della “terapeutica politica”. Si potrebbe più

¹⁹⁰ Hanisch, Carol “The Personal is Political: The Women’s Liberation Movement’s classic with a new explanatory introduction” <<http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>>

precisamente parlarne come di “personale” in opposizione al “politico”.¹⁹¹

The first element of this text which strikes the reader’s attention is probably the expression “terapeutica politica”, which is a philosophical term that is very difficult to understand. On the contrary, in the source text, the key terms are easier to understand and clearly describe the difference between the solution of a private problem (“therapy”) and that of a public issue (“therapy and politics”).

For this paper I want to stick pretty close to an aspect of the Left debate commonly talked about—namely “therapy” vs. “therapy and politics.” Another name for it is “personal” vs. “political” and it has other names, I suspect, as it has developed across the country.¹⁹²

Considering the easier language used by Carol Hanisch, it is evident that, in this case, “terapia” would have been a more obvious solution.

Similarly, in her text, Carol Hanisch continues her critique of the Left wing group to which she belonged by describing how she was supposed to behave as a member of the civil rights movement. If we compare the target text with the source text we notice that the translator added some details that were not present in the source text. This is an excerpt from the target text:

Ma come militante del “Movimento” (dominato dai maschi) ero obbligata ad essere forte, orientata verso gli altri, capace di sacrificarmi ed equilibrata. [...] nel senso del “Movimento”, io volevo essere una donna forte.¹⁹³

Attention should be drawn to the term “Movimento” in inverted commas and capitalized, and to the comment “(dominato dai maschi)”, which follows. In fact, these details are different in the source text:

As a movement woman, I’ve been pressured to be strong, selfless, other-oriented, sacrificing, and in general pretty much

¹⁹¹ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 107.

¹⁹² Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 76.

¹⁹³ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 107.

in control of my own life. [...] So I want to be a strong woman,
in movement terms.¹⁹⁴

This comparison shows that, in order to draw the attention of the reader to the term “movimento”, the translator has decided to add inverted commas and a comment in brackets. In the source text, the term “movement” actually means “civil rights movement”, while “group” defines the feminist collective. The translator was evidently afraid that this distinction would not be evident in the translation and tried to underline it. Inverted commas are actually a common device used by Italian feminists to highlight the influence of patriarchal society on language. For instance, we can find them in the text “Femminismo: processo di involuzione o di apertura” by the Italian feminist Julianne Travers, which contains a great number of words in inverted commas whose meaning is explained by the author in a footnote as follows:

Metterò tra virgolette tutte le parole in cui c'è un giudizio di valore ideologico nascosto, tutte le parole usate per inculcare certi atteggiamenti e non altri, oppure le parole-slogan che mistificano il fenomeno a cui la parola si riferisce veramente.¹⁹⁵

This explanation (especially in its second part) can be easily applied to the word “Movimento”, which should highlight the fact that left-wing parties are not real movements aimed at improving society. Another device used by the translator to highlight the sexism of political parties is the addition in brackets of “dominato dai maschi”. In this case, the translator has added a detail that was not present in the source text explicitly or implicitly, but that perfectly corresponds to what actually happened in the Italian politicized groups. This addition slightly differs from the message that Carol Hanisch wanted to convey: in her text she criticizes the civil rights movement not because it was dominated by men, although she briefly mentions this aspect in the last paragraph, but because it failed to recognize the importance of women's personal problems. This aspect is evident in the following excerpt, which clearly shows that “political” women are involved in her critique: “I think “apolitical” women are not in the movement for very good reasons, and as long as we say ‘you have to think like us and live like us to join the charmed circle,’ we will fail.”

¹⁹⁴ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 76.

¹⁹⁵ *Sottosopra*. 1974. “Esperienze dei gruppi femministi in Italia”, pp. 49-52.

Another important element that characterizes this translation is the absence of references to American places and events, which are present in the source text. In the following case, the translator removed a sentence and partly “reshaped” the paragraph in order to convey a similar meaning:

Another name for it is “personal” vs. “political” and it has other names, I suspect, as it has developed across the country. I haven’t gotten over to visit the New Orleans group yet, but I have been participating in groups in New York and Gainesville for more than a year. Both of these groups have been called “therapy” and “personal” groups by women who consider themselves “more political.”¹⁹⁶

This whole paragraph was summarized in Italian as: “Si potrebbe più precisamente parlarne come di “personale” in opposizione al “politico”. Suppongo che questo aspetto del conflitto si sia sviluppato un pò in tutti i paesi.” By mentioning New York and Gainesville, Carol Hanisch wanted to communicate to her audience (the women’s caucus of the Southern Conference Educational Fund) that all groups (both in the north and south) had the same problems. It is likely that the translator decided to omit this information because she considered that only a few women were aware of the locations of those cities, and reworked the sentences in order to convey the same meaning without mentioning American locations.

In the last few paragraphs of the text, Carol Hanisch also mentions the Miss America Protest, one of the most famous actions undertaken by feminists in the United States that allowed the mainstream press to realise their presence, but also contributed to the negative labelling of feminists as “aggressive women”. This action is mentioned twice, but this example is the most relevant:

We had a lot of conflict in our New York group about whether or not to do action. When the Miss America Protest was proposed, there was no question but that we wanted to do, it. I think it was because we all saw how it related to our lives. We

¹⁹⁶ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 76.

felt it was a good action. There were things wrong with the action, but the basic idea was there.¹⁹⁷

This time the reference to the Miss America Protest has been deleted from the translation, but the text has not been adapted, and this has resulted in a section which fails to convey a clear meaning:

Abbiamo avuto molte discussioni nel nostro gruppo per decidere se fare o no delle “azioni”. Io credo che fosse perchè, tutte quante, vedevamo come riguardasse le nostre vite. Abbiamo sentito che era un’azione valida. Ci furono degli errori, ma l’idea fondamentale era giusta.¹⁹⁸

This excerpt shows an important communication problem: in fact, by removing the reference to the action (Miss America Protest), the reader is unable to understand what action the text is talking about, and this inevitably affects the acceptability of the target text, whose meaning in this case is not clear.

The abridgement of the references to the Miss America Protest together with the section mentioning some North American locations tells us a lot about the intention of the translator and about her knowledge of the target text readers. If we take into consideration the source text, we clearly see that, as explained by Nord, the author has written her text by taking into consideration aspects such as “presumed interests, expectations, knowledge and situation constraints” of her readers (Nord 1997: 34). The translator, in order to carry out effective communication, should similarly take into consideration the needs and knowledge of her public and, since obviously source and target text readers belong to different cultures, it is evident that the characteristics of the information provided by the translator will differ from what is present in the source text (Nord 1997: 35). However, in this case, instead of adapting the text to her public, the translator has decided to omit some details. The reasons behind such a radical choice are quite difficult to understand because in the previous chapter we saw that the translator often left some cultural features typical of American culture in the translation. Therefore, it is very likely that the translator considered the purpose of this text particularly important and that, in order to

¹⁹⁷ Firestone, Schulamith and Koedt, Anne (eds.). 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism), p. 77.

¹⁹⁸ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, p. 108.

improve the reaction of Italian women to this text, she decided to give her readers the illusion of not reading a translation, but an Italian text addressing their situation.

At this point it is necessary to take into consideration the influence of Hanisch's text on the Italian feminist movement. The analysis will start with the first two years of issues of *Effe* (1974 and 1975), where we can find the slogan "il personale è politico" in two important circumstances. In January 1974, Alma Sabatini in her article "Il piccolo gruppo: struttura di base del movimento femminista" (pp. 2-3) explains that thanks to small groups, women have started to discuss topics that have always been considered "private" (and therefore not communicable) and to get organized in fighting for their own rights. In June 1975, another article by the Collettivo Femminista Comunista of Rome ("Femminismo oggi: esperienza di un gruppo") explains that the slogan "il personale è politico" is the basic principle that led to small group meetings of the collective. In this case, the article explains that most of the members of this group had taken part as students in the riots in 1968, and that they decided to start practising consciousness-raising because they realized that women's oppression is not only a consequence of capitalism. In this case, the slogan "il personale è politico" simply stresses the importance for women to gather and to communicate their needs and feelings.

In *Lessico politico delle donne*, published in 1978, we can find a section by Manuela Fraire entirely dedicated to this slogan, where she points out that it had many different meanings for Italian women (Fraire 1978: 91). In the first section, named "antiautoritarismo patriarcale" (Fraire 1978: 93), she explains that the student revolts of 1968 were a consequence of society's failure to take into consideration the needs of young people, and that women decided to carry on with this fight in order to change the family, which is considered by Fraire the place where oppression takes place:

Con il 'personale è politico' le donne intendono dunque mettere all'ordine del giorno la critica alla famiglia e con essa tutto un modo di concepire i rapporti tra vita pubblica e vita privata, tra bisogni individuali e bisogni collettivi, tra famiglia e società (Fraire 1978: 99).

In the section “La critica del privato” (Fraire 1978: 99), Fraire better explains the meaning of “privato”,¹⁹⁹ and maintains that thanks to small groups, women have started to break the barrier between personal and political. Finally, in the section “La scoperta dell’inconscio” (Fraire 1978: 102), Fraire states that analysis of the subconscious is an important step in the dialectics between “personal” and “political” because it could render the consciousness-raising sessions even more fruitful by allowing women to face a great variety of problems that are hidden in their subconscious and relate, for instance, to their relationship with other male members of their family or with their mother (Fraire 1978: 105-106). Therefore, for Fraire, “il personale è politico” does not relate only to consciousness-raising, but it is the reason behind the student riots in 1968, the rise of the feminist movement and also of the interest in the subconscious that Italian feminists developed in the late 70s. Similarly, Passerini also gives this motto a different meaning. For her it highlights the importance of this mixture of the once very distant categories of “personal” and “political”, which in her opinion influenced the creation of the “political body”,²⁰⁰ the emblem of this deep transformation carried out by Italian women, who had the opportunity to discover not only their wishes and problems but also to improve their relationship with their bodies.

Finally, this slogan is also the title of a pamphlet published in 1972 by the communist feminist group *Lotta femminista*. This pamphlet is divided into five parts²⁰¹ analysing the role of women in the family, the debate about prostitution, abortion, lesbianism and the problems of working women, and one final part consisting of a collection of leaflets and manifestos distributed by the collective. In this case, the slogan “il personale è politico” is unrelated to the practice of consciousness-raising: the women of *Lotta femminista* are just claiming a political debate on a variety of issues that have always been considered private. The topic of consciousness-raising is very marginal in this pamphlet: it is only mentioned once in the final section with a document by female workers at ENI who want to discuss a variety of topics mainly related to their work.

¹⁹⁹ “i rapporti che si svolgono tra le quattro mura, ma più in generale tutti i problemi connessi con l’essere donna in una società dominata dagli uomini”.

²⁰⁰ “Il corpo politico è costituito dalla fisicità interrelata delle donne che materialmente danno vita al movimento.” (Passerini 1991: 164)

²⁰¹ 1) La società per mogli; 2) Le mogli di tutti; 3) L’aborto; 4) Lesbismo e femminismo; 5) “...mamme, bidelle, maestre...”; 6) Documenti di intervento.

At this point it is necessary to assess the relationship between the popular Italian slogan “il personale è politico” and the text by Carol Hanisch “The Personal is Political”. In spite of the evident connection, none of the afore-mentioned examples, which are only the most relevant examples, mentions Hanisch’s text and the provenance of this slogan. This is particularly strange if we consider that all the works and magazines mentioned contain quotations from *Donne è bello* and, in the case of Passerini and Fraire, even acknowledged the important contribution by *Donne è bello* to consciousness-raising. The only exception is the more recent version by Agnese Piccirillo, who considers Hanisch’s text an important source of information for Italian feminists and even provides a quotation from Hanisch (Piccirillo 1996: 360). This quotation, however, was not sourced from *Donne è bello*, like several other quotations by Piccirillo, but directly translated from *Notes From the Second Year* by Piccirillo.

If we compare the message conveyed by Hanisch with the variety of meanings that the slogan “il personale è politico” had in Italy, we can clearly see that Italian feminists creatively developed this message in order to adapt it to the issues that arose in the feminist movement. Carol Hanisch’s message was mainly composed of a strong critique of the civil rights movement she belonged to and a defence of feminist consciousness-raising meetings. In particular, the focus of Hanisch’s article seems to be a redefinition of the key term “political”, which occurs several times throughout the text and is often associated with the terms “action” and “therapy”. Hanisch wants to urge her and other civil rights movements to end the division between personal and political problems and to start considering the personal problems of women as political problems. In her introduction to this text (see footnote 190), Hanisch clearly explains the meaning of her critique:

They could sometimes admit that women were oppressed (but only by “the system”) and said that we should have equal pay for equal work, and some other “rights. But they belittled us no end for trying to bring our so-called “personal problems” into the public arena—especially “all those body issues” like sex, appearance, and abortion. Our demands that men share the

housework and childcare were likewise deemed a personal problem between a woman and her individual man.²⁰²

In her text, Hanisch does not criticize only civil rights movements but also women who failed to organize successful campaigns because, instead of focusing on the “personal” problems of women, they decided to work on “political” problems. Finally, she concludes that the reason why many women have left the movements and several political actions have not been successful lies in this failure to take into consideration the needs of “apolitical” women.

If we compare the message conveyed by Hanisch with the variety of different meanings attributed to the slogan “il personale è politico” by Italian feminists, we clearly see that Italian feminists adapted it to their needs and ignored the exhortation to political groups to take into consideration the personal problems of women. This is the consequence of the fact that although also in Italy many members of feminist groups had been involved in political groups, with the exception of those few women who practiced “doppia militanza”, the great majority of Italian feminists refused to cooperate with political parties. This explains why for Italian women “il personale è politico” simply meant that it was necessary to attract the attention of public opinion to the personal problems of women and to persuade members of consciousness-raising groups to debate their personal problems. In short, instead of referring to political parties, for Italian women, the term “politico” simply meant that some topics are closely related to the lives of all members of society.

At this point, after considering the great role played by the slogan “il personale è politico” in the Italian feminist movement, it is important to understand whether the translation of Hanisch’s text in *Donne è bello* facilitated this success. Of course, it is not possible to exclude that there were other versions of “The personal is political” circulating in Italy in the early 70s but, considering that it is not present in any other collection of translations (such as Menapace’s *Per un movimento politico di liberazione della donna*), and it has not been possible to discover any other version of this translation in the Italian archives visited, we can deduce that at least part of this great success is a result of Castaldi’s translation. Her translation strategies influenced its reception in two different ways. In fact, at the same time, they

²⁰² Hanisch, Carol “The Personal is Political: The Women’s Liberation Movement’s classic with a new explanatory introduction” <<http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>>.

contributed to the success of the slogan by helping Italian women to identify themselves in the situation described by the protagonist, and they also helped Italian women to forget that that text was actually a translation, which explains why the name of the author is generally not quoted in the feminist literature of the early 70s. Finally, also in this case, what is evident is the spirit of independence and creativity that dominated Italian feminists who, as already observed in other cases, tended to elaborate any suggestion in a personal way by attributing new and original meanings to feminist material from overseas.

7.5. Conclusions

The texts analysed in this chapter share not only the main topic, but also the strategy adopted by the translator. In fact, the analysis of the texts carried out in this chapter (“Un programma per le femministe: prendere coscienza” and “Ciò che è personale è politico”) shows that the translator has strongly manipulated the source text. Such an approach is surprising. In fact, in the previous chapter it was noted that, with the sole exception of a few notes and abridgments, the translators of *Donne è bello* generally did not intervene in the texts. The different approaches adopted for the texts concerning consciousness-raising might be related to the important role played by this practice in feminist groups. In fact, before the publication of *Donne è bello*, the *Anabasi* members had already started to practice consciousness-raising, and this practice had already developed in the members of the collective (and in Serena Castaldi) an awareness of their needs that perfectly corresponds to the knowledge that, as already mentioned, a translator should have of her public. Therefore, the translations analysed in this chapter might have been “tested” more than the others present in *Donne è bello*, and this might have helped the translator to make her translations more effective for her public.

In particular, in the case of “Un programma per le femministe: prender coscienza” the reasons for this manipulation are evident and, as already explained, they are related to the intention to help Italian women to overcome the difficulties encountered during the first consciousness-raising meetings. This analysis has shown that, considering the characteristics of Sarachild’s text and those of the NYRW version, this change can be considered one of the causes of the success of this text and, to a lesser degree, of consciousness-raising in Italy.

In the second case (“Ciò che è personale è politico”), in contrast, the reasons behind the translator’s strategies are less obvious. In fact, in similar circumstances, such as in the translation of “American Women: their use and abuse”, the translator adopted radically different choices and decided to preserve in the target text all the cultural features belonging to the source culture. The opposite choice made in “Ciò che è personale è politico” shows that the approach of the translator is not consistent throughout all the texts that form the volume. A possible explanation for this inconsistent strategy is related to the fact that these translations were carried out over a long period of time and their purpose was initially only their circulation in the collective, not the publication of a volume. Moreover, we also need to consider the different purposes of the two texts: while “American Women: their use and abuse” was supposed to help readers to realise their condition, “Ciò che è personale è politico” had a much more important function, since it had to support the activities of the groups.

However, it is surprising to see that the translator considered some cultural features, such as the Miss America protest, as an obstacle for the success of the text in Italy. This recalls a situation that was analysed in the previous chapter when, while assessing the presence of the topic of women’s work in Italian feminist literature, we found the sentence “certamente nella situazione che ogni giorno esse affrontano, le compagne qui non troveranno niente di ‘importato’” in the supplement of the magazine by the Turinese CR collective. Although we do not know the approach chosen by the translator in that specific case, that comment added in the introduction clearly shows that the translator/editor was afraid that her readership might consider “imported” texts less relevant for them than “original” texts, and wanted to reassure her readers. Similarly to that case, it is thought that the deletion of important sections regarding American culture was led by the same fear about “non-authentic” texts. Therefore, we can see that during the process of translating the texts that form *Donne è bello*, the translator abided by two different and opposed norms: while in some cases she decided to limit interventions in the texts and to make the characteristics of the text evident, in the case of “Ciò che è personale è politico”, the translator focused her interventions on those features that could label the text as translation, thus claiming authorship of the text.

In conclusion, the reactions of Italian feminists to the texts assessed in this chapter show that Italian women appreciated the texts about consciousness-raising

because they supported a practice that could actively change their life. It was also discovered that, as far as the translator's strategies are concerned, strong manipulation of the source text contributed to the increase of the translations' popularity among Italian feminists. Finally, also in this chapter, the creativity and the independent spirit of Italian feminists were noted, who constantly demonstrated their will to adapt what they learned from foreign texts to the Italian context and to their lives.

8. Conclusions.

In conclusion, I will provide an overview of the most significant norms highlighted in the three chapters of textual analysis, and assess the position of *Donne è bello* within the Italian feminist movement along with the influence of the translator's strategies on the reception of the volume. These conclusions will be based on the norms that I have highlighted in the textual analysis, which can be inferred from the strategies resorted to by the translators in *Donne è bello*. These norms are characterised by being very consistent throughout the volume. Of course, there are some exceptions but, as already mentioned in the methodology, norms are located between general and more objective rules and less objective idiosyncrasies, and some inconsistencies do not undermine their validity (Toury 2012: 65).

First of all, the preliminary norms will be summarised, particularly the translation policy, which governs the selection of material from the source culture. As far as the selection of the texts to translate is concerned, we know that the material translated was carefully selected on the basis of the political strategy developed by the *Anabasi* members. As already discussed in chapter three, the translator selected the texts to translate according to her personal beliefs, such as the rejection of all left-wing ideologies and the strong interest in all those subjects that could promote a "cultural revolution" in Italy.²⁰³ As Sapegno points out, the reason behind the success of the book is the combination of topics: the association between the oppression of blacks and that of women (which was already present in the manifesto of the Trento collective), the analysis of women's exploitation from a Marxist angle ("un punto di vista teorico e spesso con una visione strettamente economicistica"), the first texts about sexuality and finally the first accounts of consciousness-raising (Sapegno 1989: 99). As already explained on page 89, *Donne è bello* helped Italian women overcome their Marxist background and to shift the focus of their analysis from equality to the evaluation of their differences (Sapegno 1987: 245).

This analysis underlines that the translator tried to enhance the success of the volume among Italian readers not only by carefully selecting the topics, but also by means of the translation strategies. An important "tool" that further helped the translator to focus the translations on the target readers is abridgment, which was

²⁰³ This information was provided by the translator during the interview. For more information see page 85.

used for different purposes. For instance, by avoiding translating some parts of “Love” by Shulamith Firestone and “American Women: Their Use and Abuse” by Lyn Wells, the translator intended to help her readers to focus their attention on very specific topics present in the source texts, such as love (in the first case) and the exploitation of women at work (in the second case), and to put other topics that she considered less relevant for Italian women in the background.

Abridgment can also help the translator to give readers the illusion that they are the only addressees of the message. This happened in “Ciò che è personale è politico”, where all references to the United States were removed and, in order to further help Italian readers to identify with the situation described, the translator added some explanatory notes. This strategy is a consequence of the mistrust of “imported” theories that we have seen for instance in the translations of the Turinese collective *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie* mentioned in chapters six and seven.²⁰⁴ This feeling is evident also in the editorial of *Donne è bello*,²⁰⁵ and is a consequence of the desire for independence of Italian women, who wanted to express their problems and emotions freely and did not accept having someone else (not even other women) teach them what they were expected to do. Therefore, *Donne è bello* was not supposed to be an “importation” of foreign feminist ideas, but a source of inspiration that would encourage Italian women to express their own feelings and develop their own ideas.

Finally, another effect of abridgment is the creation of new and unexpected meanings. This was observed in chapter six in the translation of “The Bitch Manifesto”, where Castaldi deleted a few descriptions of the pain suffered by “bitches”, and this partly transformed the protagonists from normal women into heroic figures. Subsequently, the editors of *F.U.O.R.I.*, the magazine of the homosexual community in Turin, further abridged the text and managed to transform “bitches” into lesbians.

These procedures of selection and abridgment of the texts were supposed to help Italian women to “take possession” of the texts and this, as Tymoczko and Gentzler explain, is one of the purposes of translation:

²⁰⁴ “Certamente nella situazione che ogni giorno esse affrontano, le compagne qui non troveranno niente di ‘importato’”, from “Il movimento di liberazione delle donne” (supplement of *Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie*) issue n. 1 (15th September 1970).

²⁰⁵ “E’ stata l’identità della situazione a permettere l’avviarsi del movimento anche qui; non ci sentiamo figlie delle donne americane, ma sorelle di tutte le donne”.

Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002: XXI).

Tymoczko and Gentzler's description of how translators can foster a change in the target culture also perfectly describes the approach used by Castaldi in the translation of Sarachild's text "A Program for Feminist Consciousness-Raising". In this case (described in chapter seven), Castaldi did not simply abridge the text, but translated only the first half of the original text and replaced the list of questions for a consciousness-raising meeting (which constituted the second and most important part of the text) with two other lists of questions without mentioning the manipulation or the source of these texts. As already shown in chapter seven, the translator used her knowledge of the needs of Italian women in order to create a text that could provide strong support for Italian women during their first consciousness-raising meetings. This procedure shows that, as already stated in the methodology, the purpose of translation influences the strategies and inevitably also the final product. In this case, the translator did not intend to inform Italian women about the latest feminist theories from the United States, but rather wanted to provide them with a guide suitable for their needs, and being "faithful" to the originals could jeopardize the success of this text.

While in the choice of the preliminary norms the translator took into great consideration the needs of the target readers, the operational norms she adopted often showed a slightly different intention. This analysis showed that most of the texts in *Donne è bello* were translated quite literally and, in some cases, we can even find terms in English. Although this literal approach is evident in several texts, the textual analysis did not focus on the fluency of the texts but on certain terms and expressions, proving the difficulty of overcoming cultural barriers such as "donna liberata", which translates "liberated woman" (chapter five), but fails to convey a clear meaning in Italian.

There are many possible reasons why the translator abided by this norm. This approach might be a consequence of the fact that Castaldi was not a professional translator. In fact, Tirkkonen-Condit's research based on the think-aloud protocol shows that although the literal approach is a common tendency for both professional and novice translators, these two categories react differently when facing a difficult decision. In fact, when professionals translate, a mechanism called "monitoring" helps them to realize when a solution is not equivalent²⁰⁶ and to correct themselves, while this does not happen with novice translators (Tirkkonen-Condit 2005: 408-409). However, although the reason why the texts are sometimes not fluent might be the limited experience of the translator, it is unlikely that this is the only reason why several key words were translated literally or not translated at all. In fact, since these key terms are often repeated in the text, the translator had several opportunities to think about their meaning and to find a suitable solution. Therefore, we can reasonably consider that this tendency is also a consequence of the translator's difficulty in conveying some very specific terms in Italian, which is due to the considerable cultural differences tackled in the introductions to chapters five, six and seven. Although in most of the examples provided the consequence of a literal approach is the poor acceptability of a text, it is necessary to point out that calques and word loans should not be considered only negatively. In fact, in the case of "Manifesto di Bitch", this literal approach actually had a positive effect on readers, because it allowed them to creatively interpret its meaning and favoured their "appropriation" of the text.

At this point it is necessary to analyse the consequences that Castaldi's translation strategies had on the reception of the texts in Italy and therefore on the spread of radical feminist ideas in the Italian feminist movement. We will start this analysis with "Un programma per le femministe: prender coscienza" and "Ciò che è personale è politico", which are considered very influential translations by experts on this topic (more details are provided in chapter seven), and were both manipulated considerably by the translator in order to adapt them to the target culture. If we consider that the two texts where manipulation is more evident are also the most successful texts, it is evident that the translator's interventions in the texts had a positive effect on their reception and, consequently, on the impact of the texts on the

²⁰⁶ This case refers to the traditional meaning of "equivalence", not to that offered by Toury.

target culture. In particular, the success of these texts lies in the fact that by focusing on the needs of women and on the situations that they had to face in their everyday life, the translator managed to establish a particularly effective communication with Italian women.

Another fact that this research has discovered is the impact of foreign elements on the reception. This information is particularly important because it shows that translation might be a useful tool for the spread of ideas across national borders, but its effectiveness is enhanced if the foreign origin of the texts is not evident, because this gives the readers the illusion that the material they are reading is original and directed at them. The reason behind this does not lie in the difficulty of welcoming foreign cultural input because, as already explained on page 75, American culture played a prominent role in Italy. In fact, research carried out in 1959 by the Office of Research and Analysis of the United States Information Agency regarding the impression that Europeans had of the United States shows that Italians (and in particular those with a secondary education) had in general a very good opinion of American culture despite the obvious differences between the two countries, especially in terms of religion and moral values. Particularly relevant for this research is the fact that most Italians considered the expression “freedom of the individual” as closely linked with the United States, and they had a very good opinion of American books and libraries (Cassamagnaghi 2007: 303-308). Therefore, considering the good relationships between these two countries, it is thought that the reason why texts by Italian feminists had a greater impact does not lie in a rejection of American culture, but is rather related to the nature of the cultural revolution that they wanted to promote. In fact, as powerfully explained in the letter by Nina to the *Anabasi* women (page 83), it is unlikely that foreign input alone can promote a movement which focuses on women’s self-analysis and the study of their role in Italian society. This explains very well why, in some cases, foreign elements have been erased from texts and also why Italian texts (and Lonzi’s in particular) played a more important role for Italian women.

After taking into consideration some successful examples of translation, we will focus on some less fortunate cases in order to understand what might have influenced their reception. Of course, one of the reasons is related to the topic, and this is very evident in the case of sexuality. As stated by Serena Sapegno, sexuality

had great importance for Italian feminists but it was also very difficult to understand at first:

Ci sono i primi discorsi sulla sessualità, che cadono veramente come fulmini a ciel sereno dopo il periodo della “liberazione sessuale”, le prime pubblicazioni che parlano di “orgasmo clitorideo” e “orgasmo vaginale”, cose di cui non capivamo bene neanche il significato (Sapegno 1989: 99).

One of the reasons why understanding these texts was so difficult was because “sexual liberation” in Italy did not have the same importance or popularity as it had in the United States, and because Italian women on the whole (as described in the introduction to chapter five) had less access to this kind of knowledge about sexuality and their own bodies. Another reason why readers had difficulty in understanding the texts is a consequence of the translation process and, in particular, of the already mentioned tendency to translate literally, which caused some problems in accepting the translations in the target language. Finally, the comparison of the source texts with the target texts has shown us that the translator often mitigated the meaning of offensive terms and expressions in the target texts in compliance with the norms of the target culture. In fact, if we take into consideration the success of Lonzi’s “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale”, which tackles the same topic as Koedt’s “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm”, we can easily understand that refined language and a link with the situation faced by Italian women were what Italian women needed.

This analysis has also shown that the presence of several references to aspects of the American culture and to typical American characters often constituted an obstacle to the reception of the texts. This was not only due to the difficulty of understanding the characteristics of popular American figures such as the “Victorian lady” or “Rosie the Riveter”, but was also related to the fact that, in spite of the apparent cultural similarities between Italy and the United States, Italian women could not always identify with what was explained in the texts. For instance, they could not recognize their own situation in the life of the rich middle-class American housewife, and the emancipated woman was also quite a rare presence in their lives. Therefore, even if Castaldi had provided more explanations regarding some aspects of American culture, the complete identification of Italian women with what was described by American feminists would still have been very difficult.

Finally, if we compare the decisions taken by the translator in terms of translation policy with the operational norms, it is evident that the translator took two very different approaches. In fact, while translation policy takes into consideration the point of view of the target language readers, the tendency to translate literally and not to add any explanatory note sometimes compromised the acceptability of the texts. However, another important fact observed in the textual analysis is the presence even in some successful texts, such as “Manifesto di Bitch” and “Ciò che è personale è politico”, of some mistranslations that influenced the acceptability of the texts. Therefore, it is evident that the information provided to Italian readers by some texts was so relevant that it allowed them to overcome the problems relating to the form.

At this point we know the main norms that the translator abided by in her work and how they influenced the reception, but we still do not know whether in a similar situation a different approach would have been possible. We will therefore briefly analyse a very similar case: the translation and adaptation of the American feminist work *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. This comparison is important because *Donne è bello* and the translations of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* share several points in common: they were both translations of feminist texts which needed to be adapted to a different cultural context in order to be able to communicate with women of another cultural background and to support the transnationalisation of feminist ideas. In her work, Davis explains that “the translation of *OBOS* was rarely straightforward and inevitably involved a certain amount of “betrayal” of the U.S. text” (Davis 2007: 192). In particular, she provided some examples taken from the Bulgarian and the South American versions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, showing how translators adapted the source text to the needs of the women’s community in their own countries. In both versions, the translators abridged several parts of the book and replaced them with sections based on the personal experiences of the target readers. For instance, the translators of the Latina edition published personal accounts by South American women, changed the pictures and added some sections regarding spirituality and women’s activism in their own countries (Davis 2007: 177-179). The Bulgarian translators also adapted the text: they removed several sections regarding Western medicine simply because the medicines and procedures mentioned were not available in Bulgaria. Similarly to the South American version, in the Bulgarian version all the pictures were replaced with “original” material but, differently from the

other version, all the accounts were deleted because the translators thought that “the ‘voices’ of Bulgarian women would have sounded awkward in a text that was not ‘Bulgarian made’” (Davis 2007: 186). In both these cases we can clearly see that translation can become what Tsing called a “faithless appropriation”: “a rewriting of a text in which new meanings are always forged by the interaction of languages” (Tsing 1997: 253). Davis points out that this mechanism of “appropriation” is more evident in the Latina version, while the decision by the Bulgarian translators not to include the personal experiences of Bulgarian women in the translated volume shows us that it can be very difficult to help target readers to recognize themselves in a text and, at the same time, to be somehow “loyal” to the source text.

If we compare Castaldi’s strategies with those by the Latina and Bulgarian translators of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* we can identify some similarities but also several differences. The most evident similarity is the important role played by the selection of the material to translate. However, the translators of both the Latina and Bulgarian versions did not only abridge the source text, but they also replaced those sections with authentic local material. From the point of view of the lexical choices we can identify quite different behaviour. In fact, South American women dedicated much attention to the fluency of the text and, on the basis of a theory developed by several Chicana feminists, they even added several poems because they thought that poetic language could help the reader to understand the texts in depth (Davis 2007: 177). Bulgarian women tried to make the text more accessible to readers by means of a strategy of “thick translation”, composed in this case of several explanatory footnotes and glossaries (Appiah 2004: 389-401). In both the cases described by Davis the translators tried to help the reader to understand and to engage with the text by means of footnotes and explanations, while in *Donne è bello* the translator only rarely intervened in her text.

This different behaviour was not only the personal choice of the translator but was also related to the power relationships between target and source cultures. In fact, the Latina translators of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* manipulated the source text in order to react against “the ‘imperialistic’ tendencies of U.S. feminism”, which is clearly stated in the introduction to the Latina edition:

Many times the ‘experts’ of the United States think that their knowledge of the ‘first world’ [involves] concepts which are superior and which can be used to elevate the ‘Third World’

from a primitive state to a superior level. We are quite clear on the fact that for our sisters in Latin America, their social and political relationships are a source of richness, in contrast to the United States, which is an individualistic country where everything is for sale, including social relationships which you must buy or reinvent. In words, we have a lot to share and a lot to learn together (Davis 2007: 180).²⁰⁷

The comparison between the strategies of the translators of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and those adopted by Serena Castaldi shows that the translator acted not only in relation to the needs of the target system, but also to her personal relationship with the country of provenance of the source text. In fact, for the Latin American and Bulgarian translators, translation became an empowering tool that allowed them to criticize the unequal relationships between the United States and “Third World” countries. It is evident that Serena Castaldi had no such need: although willing to focus the debate on those topics that she considered most interesting to Italian women, the United States was actually for her, and for Italian women in general, not an “imperialist” country but an important source of inspiration.

Finally, Davis points out that the purpose of the strategies enacted by the translators of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was that of making this volume “accessible and ‘culturally relevant’ to readers with histories, circumstances, and political locations different from those of U.S. readers” (Davis 2007: 192). Along the same lines, Spivak explains that we cannot assume that all women have something in common, but it is necessary to take into consideration their different language, culture and history (Spivak 2004: 407). However, both Spivak and Davis focused only on the cultural differences between First and Third World countries and strongly stressed the need for a translator from a Third World country to carry out an important revision of the text in order to make it meaningful and significant also for women living in her country. On the contrary, this project has shown that, although to a lesser extent, the translation of American feminist works into a European language also requires the ability to overcome important cultural and historical differences. In fact, although in this case there was no need to make the text “oppositional” to the original text, the cultural differences between Italy and the United States could still jeopardize the

²⁰⁷ Extract from the 2000 edition of *Nuestros Corpos, Neustras Vidas*.

comprehension of the texts, which is what partly happened with some translations in *Donne è bello*. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the texts translated in *Donne è bello* were more challenging to adapt to the target culture than those of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* simply because, while *Our Bodies, Ourselves* mainly focused on a woman's relationship with her body, the texts translated in *Donne è bello* aimed to describe women's position in society, and the cultural differences between Italian and American societies played a more significant role in the reception.

As far as the Italian system is concerned, this research has underlined that in the early 70s the Italian feminist movement was composed of a variety of different scattered groups and that, in spite of frequent meetings and the friendships that the members of the different groups managed to establish, there were evidently some problems of communication. An example of this problem is the presence of several passive retranslations (see page 27): some translations by the *Anabasi* women and, after 1972, some parts of *Donne è bello* circulated within the system (the Italian feminist movement) and were modified or adapted to the needs of a different public. This phenomenon evidently shows the difficulty of Italian feminists to access the same information. *Donne è bello* and the works by Carla Lonzi tried to overcome this communication difficulty by providing all Italian feminist groups with background knowledge that constituted the basis of many discussions and the creative development of feminist practices.

With regard to the impact of *Donne è bello* on the development of the Italian feminist movement, we have already mentioned that it promoted the communication between the different groups scattered across the country and their creativity, but it also played other important roles. For instance, we have to consider that the Italian feminist movement originated from a highly politicized social background, and *Donne è bello* cleverly managed to use the Marxist ideology for feminist purposes. Then, particularly thanks to the texts about consciousness-raising (the role played by *Donne è bello* in the spread of the instructions for consciousness-raising is described in chapter seven), *Donne è bello* helped Italian feminists to focus on their role in society in order to promote a cultural revolution. Finally, it also promoted innovation in the language of the feminist movement. These important functions served by *Donne è bello* are proved by the several testimonies by Italian feminists and researchers I quoted in this thesis, which testimony that *Donne è bello* has given an essential contribution in the transmission of information about the American radical

feminism in Italy. Moreover, excerpts from *Donne è bello* are present in a relevant feminist publication of the 70s such as *Effe* and, finally, *Donne è bello* is present in the bibliography of all the most important works about Italian feminism. For instance, it is quoted in contemporary works such as Frabotta's *Femminismo e lotta di classe in Italia (1970-1973)*²⁰⁸ and in the *Almanacco*²⁰⁹ containing all the most important works by feminist groups, but it is also mentioned in more recent works. For instance, it is quoted by Passerini in her volume *Storie di donne e femministe* (published in 1991) and by Bracke in *Women and the Reinvention of the Political* (published in 2014).

Regarding the position occupied by *Donne è bello* within the system, it is known that feminist literature in the early 70s was composed of many very different typologies of texts carrying out different functions. Of course, a very important position was occupied by the writings of Carla Lonzi. First published in 1970–1971 and then republished in 1974 by the publishing house owned by Lonzi's feminist group, her writings played a major role in the Italian feminist movement. According to Restaino, her feminist texts must be considered one of the most important Italian avant-gardes of the twentieth century because they theorise in an innovative way (and grounded in the Italian context) the main points that constituted radical feminism (Restaino 2002: 269). The popularity of her texts and the important role she played in the Italian feminist movement are common knowledge: copies of her texts were read and discussed during the meetings, most feminists collected all her books and her visits to other collectives constituted a unique event for Italian feminists.²¹⁰ However, the works by Lonzi were not the only texts common in Italian collectives. An important position was occupied by the translations carried out by the groups, and within this field *Donne è bello* played a pivotal role because of the number of translations present and, most of all, because while other groups just printed short pamphlets or circulated the copies among their members, the *Anabasi* group decided to collect them into a volume with a specific purpose, a structure, and with the addition of drawings and images which supported the topics. The *Anabasi*

²⁰⁸ Frabotta, Biancamaria. 1973. *Femminismo e lotta di classe (1970-1973)* (Roma: Giulio Savelli Editore).

²⁰⁹ VV.AA. 1978. *L'Almanacco: luoghi, nomi, incontri, fatti, lavori in corso del movimento femminista italiano dal 1972* (Roma: Edizioni delle donne).

²¹⁰ Paola Zumaglino in *Femminismi a Torino* (pp. 79-80) says that the creation of one of the Turinese feminist groups was a consequence of a few women interested in feminism meeting Carla Lonzi. Zumaglino describes Carla Lonzi as a "magnete", and her influence on the other women "illuminazione".

group and *Rivolta* were established in the same period, they were linked by a similar purpose (and by a friendly relationship between their members), and *Donne è bello* even contained a few texts by Lonzi. However, Lonzi's works are very different from most of the translations in *Donne è bello*: they are characterised by elevated language, they are often rich in highbrow quotations and they are always strongly grounded in the Italian context. In contrast, most texts of American provenance in *Donne è bello* are characterised by an ironic style, which is further emphasised by funny cartoon drawings added by the members of the *Anabasi* group, and by the presence, as already highlighted in this conclusion, of several references to American culture. Finally, the purpose of these works was also different: while Lonzi intended to foster a profound debate about the position of women in society, *Donne è bello* aimed to provide more concrete cues for debate and political action by focusing women's attention on their everyday life and to promote exchanges among the groups. Also, from the point of view of the diffusion of these works there is an evident difference: *Donne è bello* was mainly sold during feminist meetings and, although it became quite famous (Sapegno 1989: 99), it obviously cannot be compared with the diffusion of Lonzi's works, which were sold in bookshops. In conclusion, it is evident that *Donne è bello* played a complementary role: although it did not have the depth and originality of Lonzi's works, it gave women the support they needed at the beginning of their "feminist experience". Therefore, differently from what Even-Zohar hypothesised, there was no clash between the canonical texts and the translated texts, because they both occupied important roles within the system. Finally, Even-Zohar stated that the norms used by the translator can help us to define the position of the text within the system and, in particular, affirmed that if the translator has adopted many innovations, the translation will occupy a central position. What has actually emerged from this research is that, in the short term it is not innovation but rather a determined adaptation to the needs and to the environment of the readers that is the key to helping the texts to achieve a central position in the target system. However, while the works by Lonzi are still in print in Italy and her ideas debated, when the needs and priorities of the target readers evolved, the position of *Donne è bello* within the system also changed, and other texts (such as the translations by Irigaray and Rich mentioned in the introduction) took a central position. Therefore, we can argue that while innovative texts attain a

more immediately steady central position in the system, by adapting the texts to the needs of the public, their long-term position will inevitably be less stable.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the purpose of *Donne è bello* was not only the diffusion of American radical feminist ideas. In fact, the volume was also supposed to foster the creativity of Italian women and to help them to break out of their isolation. This intention is clearly stated in the editorial:

Finalmente e per la prima volta abbiamo a disposizione uno spazio in cui parlare, e quello che ciascuna dice è importante ed accresce il livello di coscienza proprio e delle altre. [...] Aspettiamo ora con ansia la vostra collaborazione (impressioni, testimonianze, poesie, disegni, canzoni...); parlatene con le vostre amiche, incontratevi con le vicine di casa. Anche loro hanno bisogno di te.²¹¹

This message is very important because it focuses on the two main problems that affected communication among women: isolation and the fear that women's personal accounts and creative expressions have no value.

The *Anabasi* women not only encouraged other women to write about themselves, but they also showed very practically what they meant: soon after the release of *Donne è bello* they published *Al femminile*, a pamphlet which was an important example for Italian women of the importance of expressing their own opinions. This message was evidently received: after 1972, many collectives from all over Italy started to publish their own pamphlets, and several (such as *Differenze* and *Sottosopra*) aimed at promoting communication among the different collectives and were based on the rule that all women's personal accounts were important and could not be judged or rejected.

In conclusion, this research has highlighted a great gap in knowledge in the study of Italian feminism. In fact, in spite of the essential role played by translation in the diffusion of radical feminism in Italy, its implications have never been studied, and this research constitutes the first attempt to shed some light in this unexplored area of research. While carrying out this research, some fields were identified that are considered particularly interesting and that are briefly explained. Some interesting cues were provided by Passerini, who explained that there are evident relationships

²¹¹ Gruppo Anabasi. 1972. *Donne è bello*, editorial.

between Christiane Rochefort's text "Mythe de la *frigidité* feminine", Anne Koedt's "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" and Lonzi's "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale" and stated that it would be very interesting to compare the three texts and to analyse the individual and group relationships that the members of *Rivolta femminile* developed with foreign groups and authors. The other cue by Passerini concerns the networks of personal relationships among groups and individuals that favoured the spread of the texts (Passerini 2005: 187-188). This type of research has been partly carried out in this thesis, since my interview with Serena Castaldi highlighted her relationships with the Turinese *CR* group and with Carla Lonzi; however, it would be interesting to further explore these networks by means of interviews and of extensive research in Italian archives. Along the same lines is a suggestion by Bruna Felletti during her interview. In her opinion, the frequent meetings and exchanges with women from other Italian collectives contributed to the spread of *Donne è bello* and inspired women to write about themselves. Therefore, it would be very interesting to investigate how *Donne è bello* inspired these women to write about themselves and, by studying this network, understand how the volume spread in Italy.

Another very important example of the knowledge gap regards *Noi e il nostro corpo*: although it was the first foreign edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (more information on page 57), it has never been studied or analysed in depth, and the only information we have about the translation process is from an interview with its translator, Angela Miglietti, by Stefania Voli, which was published in *Zapruder*.²¹² It would be very interesting to investigate the translation process because, as shown in this research, textual analysis based on norms and the reception allows us to greatly expand our knowledge of society in a certain historical period.

Such research would not only allow us to fill in a gap of our past, but would also provide important answers relating to our present time. In fact, in recent years, feminism has gained prominence in mainstream discourse by means of the very successful event organized by the movement "Se non ora, quando?" in February 2010 and by the documentary by Lorella Zanardo, *Il corpo delle donne*, which was released in 2009 not only on the author's blog but also on TV, and soon became very popular. This sudden resurgence of feminism in the mainstream media appears

²¹² *Zapruder*, n. 13, May–August 2007, pp. 108-115.

totally unconnected with the great Italian feminist production of the 70s, and the reason behind this is, according to Zanardo, a problem of language:

Questo è un po' il problema di alcune femministe storiche: è un femminismo d'élite, che si rivolge solo a una nicchia di donne in Italia, molto informata, molto colta, che fanno riferimento ai testi di Carla Lonzi. Purtroppo però l'Italia è quella descritta da Tullio De Mauro: quindi io temo che il femminismo non si stia diffondendo anche per un problema di linguaggio. Un'altra ragione è che femminismo è per molti una brutta parola. [...] All'estero di questa parola non si ha così paura. Qui, si associa il femminismo a una specie di iena nemica delle donne.²¹³

In this interview Zanardo refers to the difficult philosophical language characterising Lonzi's writings and states that in order to better communicate with students and middle-class people it would be useful not to use the term "femminismo", which has for them many negative associations. While Zanardo points out that the main difference between "her" feminism and "elite" feminism is about the language used and the kind of public they address, we can easily see that a more important difference is the system of communication adopted: while in the 70s the women of the feminist collectives rejected all the mainstream media compromises, Zanardo has chosen to take advantage of the mainstream media in order to promote her work. Furthermore, this research has clearly shown that the members of radical feminist collectives in Italy belonged to all social classes and that all feminist publications (even those by Carla Lonzi, which were rich of philosophical references) were addressed to all women, not only to a closed elite of very educated women. Therefore, in order to avoid any misleading theories about Italian feminism, it is now particularly important to understand the reasons why most of the great heritage of the feminist movement has been forgotten by the mainstream and to find a way to restore the true meaning of the word "femminismo" for younger generations.

In spite of Zanardo's reluctance to establish a link between her "feminist" projects and the Italian feminist movement of the 70s, some famous works published in the 70s have made a comeback. In fact, in the last few years all the works by Carla

²¹³ <http://www.softrevolutionzine.org/2013/lorella-zanardo-intervista/>

Lonzi have been republished, and other important feminist works of the early 70s, such as *Dalla parte delle bambine*, were republished in 2013, together with Loredana Lipperini's *Ancora dalla parte delle bambine*, which aims at providing more recent examples of the same topic. Therefore, in this historical period it is particularly important to establish a link between the past and present feminism, and research focusing on language can actually help us to understand the reasons behind this problem and help mainstream feminist groups to rediscover and reclaim the great production of the early 70s.

9. Appendiix

This section contains some documents mentioned in the thesis that are particularly important and, for this reason, deserve to be inserted in full. Because of the poor condition of the originals, some documents (the letter from a member of the American Women's Liberation Movement to the *Anabasi* members and the editorials of *Donne è bello* and *Notes From the Second Year*) are present in two versions: the original and a transcript.

This section also contains a partial transcription of the interview I carried out via Skype with Serena Castaldi on 11th May 2011. Some sections, indicated by the symbol [...], have been excluded because not pertinent to this thesis. Some sentences have partly been changed in order to improve the fluency of the text, but the content has not been manipulated. The expressions in English (written in italics) have been mentioned in the interview and have not been translated.

Editorial of *Donne è bello* (Transcript)

Noi donne non abbiamo mai comunicato veramente fra noi.

Abbiamo deciso di rompere il cerchio della timidezza che ci separa. La prima reazione automatica è di sentire questa difficoltà come un fatto personale. Proprio a questo dobbiamo reagire: alla violenza che vien fatta da sempre alle donne in modo che, isolate e infelici, vedono i loro problemi come una menomazione personale, invece che come un fatto sociale e politico.

Per questo abbiamo deciso di presentarvi questi scritti. Li abbiamo raccolti da giornali, riviste e documenti che donne di vari paesi occidentali han cominciato il scrivere; rappresentano la loro testimonianza, una possibilità di scambio tra di noi, e han costituito un contributo fondamentale alla nostra presa di coscienza e alla nostra comprensione della condizione della donna nelle società contemporanee.

Siamo sicure che molte di voi saranno rimaste perplesse di fronte al modo in cui la battaglia femminista è stata presentata dalla stampa. Vi domanderete come sia possibile che le donne si siano mosse in tutto il mondo per scopi così ridicoli come quelli che si son voluti far credere: evidentemente si cerca di nascondere i motivi reali della lotta. Sembra che neanche l'uomo più aperto sia disposto ad abbandonare il pregiudizio della pretesa inferiorità biologica della donna, dei ruoli che le sarebbero connaturati. E nessun uomo è disposto a rivedere fino in fondo l'attuale assetto sociale che gli garantisce il monopolio del potere.

In realtà a noi non interessa affatto arrivare a spartire questo potere di tipo complitivo, a noi non interessa diventare generali, perchè questo significa aderire a uno dei più nefasti modelli maschili che sono del tutto estranei ai nostri interessi. Non vogliamo scimiottare gli uomini, al contrario ci è gradito essere nate fernmine. E vogliamo poter vivere il piacere di questa condizione pienamente. Senza dover sottostare al giogo della soggezione e dell'oppressione che tutte ci affligge. Se c'è frustrazione, ne ravvisiamo la causa nella società, non nelle nostre caratteristiche biologiche.

Diciamo no agli intermediari, agli interpreti. *Non crediamo più a quello che gli uomini, politici o giornalisti, scienziati o mariti, dicono su di noi*, sul nostro destino; sui nostri desideri e i nostri doveri. Sappiamo che ogni donna ha qualcosa da dire, ha dei pensieri inespressi, dei sentimenti che è stata costretta a trascurare, delle capacità che non ha nemmeno sperimentato.

Vogliamo scritti *delle* donne, non *sulle* donne.

Siamo convinte che le cose più interessanti sono quelle che potranno venire da voi stesse; offriamo questa raccolta come un invito ad esprimersi, un aiuto a superare le inibizioni iniziali. Dobbiamo provare a fare le cose da noi stesse, o nessuno le farà per noi.

Ci sembra davvero che una delle proposte più entusiasmanti dei movimenti femminili sia il nuovo coraggio, la volontà di abbattere strutture e assunzioni inaccettabili, per lasciare fluire i veri pensieri e sentimenti: in favore dell'*autenticità*, l'*antiprofessionalismo*.

Non c'è più una opinione giusta cui le donne si devono adeguare, non più la paura di essere definite « non femminili », o peggio « fuori moda ». Per alcune è stata la cosa più liberatoria: la libertà di pensare, dire, fare ed essere ciò che *noi decidiamo*. Compresa la libertà di sbagliare.

La greve cappa di modelli che la cultura maschile ha creato per noi, ha covato nella solitudine della vita delle donne, recando il senso di essere delle spostate, delle asociali, delle nevrotiche, isteriche, pazze. La scoperta che il nostro problema era quello di tutte ha portato al movimento. È stata l'identità della situazione a permettere l'avviarsi del movimento anche qui; non ci sentiamo figlie delle donne americane, ma sorelle di tutte le donne. Finalmente e per la prima volta abbiamo a disposizione uno spazio in cui parlare, e quello che ciao scuna dice è importante ed accresce il livello di coscienza proprio e delle altre. Alle divisioni create dagli uomini fra le donne, abbiamo sostituito una solidarietà nuova, da cui vogliamo escludere antagonismo, concorrenza, sopraffazione e smania di comando; tutti costrutti basilari della cultura maschile. Aspettiamo ora con ansia la vostra collaborazione (impressioni, testimonianze, poesie, disegni, canzoni...); parlatene con le vostre amiche, incontratevi con le vicine di casa. Anche loro hanno bisogno di te.

L'Anabasi

Editorial of *Donne è bello* (Original)

EDITORIALE

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L'Anabasi

Editorial of *Notes From the Second Year* (Transcript).

Notes From the First Year (196B) was the first feminist journal put out by the new Women's Liberation Movement. Almost impossible to get hold of even within the movement - one dare not leave one's tattered copy unguarded even now - its impact was nevertheless profound. It became clear that we urgently needed a radical feminist periodical in which to debate, a forum in which to present the proliferation of new ideas and to clarify the political issues that concerned us. We needed a movement periodical which would expand with the movement, reflect its growth accurately, and in time become a historical record, functioning politically much as did Stanton and Anthony's *Revolution* exactly a century ago.

Notes From the Second Year attempts to fill these needs. At the same time we have made it easily available outside the movement because we are sick and tired of having our views presented for us to other women by (usually distorting) intermediaries. This, then, is the first overground publication *by* radical feminists rather than *about* them. We have been cautioned that to present our ideas undiluted to the public might be a mistake that some if not all the writing we have included might scare off women unfamiliar with the movement. In the long run doing it a disservice. Our answer is that we give women more credit than that; that this movement belongs to all and every woman and they don't need a sales pitch; that women are smart enough to recognize their own interests; *that we are tired of being talked down to*. Our editorial policy is only this: authenticity. We have tried in a simple way to show women not yet in the feminist movement what is going on in it and how they might fit in, on the assumption that if they see it directly and honestly - firsthand - they can decide for themselves how they feel about it.

It is not easy to portray without categorizing, so young and vital a movement as this. In the last year the movement has grown and changed so as to be virtually unrecognizable: where before everyone knew, or knew of, almost everyone else, now we are lucky even to be able to identify most of the groups. And if those of us in the movement since the beginning are having trouble, new women are overwhelmed. There are no road maps, and though an amazing number of women flounder through to find their niche, the movement cannot demand this from all women. The "roadmaps" we have set up in this journal (see contents, opposite) are meant to be flexible; the overlap to be found is the healthiest sign of all. Nor are the articles we

have selected meant to cover comprehensively all aspects of the category in which they are found, but rather to open up that category for further debate. In each, we have chosen those articles we felt to be important and/or influential in political terms during the "second year" (roughly the year 1969), imposing no political criteria of our own other than that they fall roughly within "radical feminism". Where necessary we have chosen an unpublished over a much-circulated article on a given subject; we apologize for all omissions articles we would like to have gotten in - but couldn't for lack of space. We have done our best to present the spectrum of current thinking on radical feminism: we do not necessarily endorse all the idea as they stand - in fact contradictions are apparent - but we have let them stand, uncut and only minimally edited,

We have done this not only to retain the authenticity of the content but for another (equally political) reason: anti-professionalism. One of the most exciting things to come out of the women's movement so far is a new daring, a willingness-eagerness - to tear down old structures and assumptions and let real thought and feeling flow. There is no longer a right (stylish) opinion for women to have (like all those ads and quizzes encouraging women to read the newspapers in order to improve their cocktail chatter and thus keep up with-keep-their husbands), no longer a fear been called "unfeminine" or worse, no more "style" - unless by that is meant courage to say what you mean however you choose as clear as you can. For many of us this has been the most liberating thing of all: the freedom to think, say, do, and be everything *we decide* including freedom to fail. To unsmile. *To dare to be bad.*

And because we have dared to be had - to throw away our safety nets - we end up doing better than we ever have before. The kind of thinking and writing going on in the women's movement now is so mind blowing because it grown directly and organically from a real need for it - a functionalism rare these days. In the last two years we have seen the beginning of a much needed merging of intellect and emotion, thoughts and sensibility, the personal and the political. All leading for deep and genuine politics, The Women's Liberation Movement is not just an idea dreamed up by a smart ad man; within the next few years we expect feminism to become a central issue in American life. For women this is just the beginning.

Editorial of *Notes From the Second Year* (Original)

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Shulamith Firestone / Editor
Anne Koedt / Associate Editor

Cover Photos: David Ruben Balliol

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P. O. Box AA
Old Chelsea Station
New York, N.Y. 10011

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Letter from a member of the American Women's Liberation (Transcript)

Questa lettera che ho ricevuto da una compagna del Women's Liberation americano avrebbe potuto essere rivolta ad ognuna di noi. Ve la mando perchè vorrei che avessimo la possibilità di parlare insieme di questi problemi.

Liliana Caruso Trizio.

LETTERA DI UNA COMPAGNA DI L.N.S.

New York, 5 giugno 1970

Cara Liliana,

E' molto entusiasmante sentire che in Italia si stia lavorando per la Liberazione delle donne, e che qualcuno si interessi di mettere insieme un libro. Il solo vero problema è importare il materiale americano sul WL in un paese che è naturalmente molto diverso dall'America, con le sue particolari forme di oppressione, le sue istituzioni (come la Chiesa Cattolica per esempio). Sono convinta che le donne in tutto il mondo condividono un certo denominatore comune di oppressione e che molte nostre sensazioni possono essere simili. Ma mi sembra che la particolare forma di risveglio che sentiranno le donne italiane, il genere di stimoli al quale possono reagire debbono essere stimoli italiani.

Io sono stata nel Women's Liberation per circa un anno. Molto è incominciato sulla West Coast. Io credo che si stia espandendo così in fretta perchè la nostra oppressione è molto reale, e una volta che si gratta la superficie, ogni donna può cominciare a vedere alcuni problemi, e quanto profonde siano le radici della supremazia maschile (come il razzismo). L'oppressione delle donne è economica, psicologica e sociale. Proprio come il razzismo entra in tutti gli aspetti della vita del popolo nero, il sessismo entra in tutti gli aspetti della vita delle donne (e naturalmente degli uomini, l'intera società, forse l'intero globo sono infestati dei valori oppressive della supremazia maschile). Guardiamo la storia, le donne vi sono difficilmente menzionate! Eppure la ricerca dimostra che hanno fatto delle cose.

L'aspetto più evidente della nostra oppressione è quello biologico: dato che le donne hanno la capacità fisica di avere dei bambini, esse vengono addette ad avere bambini, allevarli, prender cura di loro e, per estensione, occuparsi della casa, dell'uomo ecc. L'uomo va fuori nel mondo, prende decisioni, è aggressivo. La donna

è passiva, una specie di organizzazione di servizio. Oltre a tutto questo lei deve essere bella, attraente, sexy. Fin da molto presto è sospinta entro questo ruolo, proprio come gli uomini sono sospinti nei loro ruoli, di quello che agisce. Gli uomini devono fare le donne essere. Ora che la tecnologia ha messo le donne in gradi di controllare la maternità (decidere quando vogliono rimanere incinte) sembrerebbe che questo obbligo di generare e di essere considerate come “ventri” invece che come persone, dovrebbe cambiare. Ma questo non è avvenuto. E naturalmente le donne vengono fatte sentire colpevoli (dalla Chiesa, ma anche in ogni senso sociale) se non si sposano e hanno dei bambini. Se non accettano con grazia e gratitudine il ruolo “femminile” di servire un uomo, allevando i suoi bambini, tenendo la sua casa, occupandosi della sua testa. E il controllo delle nascite, la cura dei bambini e gli asili nido sono ancora poco sviluppati e gli uomini controllano ancora la ricerca e le leggi e controllano la medicina. Cioè di fatto le donne non hanno l’auto controllo sulla loro vita. Il concetto di ruolo è la chiave. Donne e uomini vengono educati ad avere personalità completamente diverse, sono costretti ad avere queste personalità, questi caratteri. I ragazzi devono essere fin da piccolo disubbidienti e rumorosi. Le ragazze devono essere pulite e graziose e aiutano la mamma in cucina. I ragazzi possono fare l’amore prima di sposarsi, ma le ragazze non devono mai farlo. Se lo fanno, fan meglio a non restare incinte ecc. Le donne vengono pagate la metà di un uomo per lo stesso lavoro. Le donne non diventano dirigenti, gli uomini sì. Le donne sono infermiere, gli uomini dottori. Le donne tengono gli archivi, gli uomini scrivono i libri. Le donne fanno corsi di dattilografia, economia domestica ed entrano nell’“educazione”, gli uomini studiano scienze e matematica e vanno a legge e medicina.

Certamente uomini e donne della classe operaia hanno lavori più alienanti che uomini e donne della classe dirigente; uomini e donne nere generalmente prendono lavori peggiori dei bianchi. Ma di fatto in questo paese gli uomini bianchi sono quelli che, in media, prendono più soldi; gli uomini neri sono i prossimi più pagati; le donne bianche sono terze; le donne nere quarte. Questo sorprende molta gente che crede che le donne bianche probabilmente guadagnino di più perché sono bianche. No, gli uomini guadagnano più delle donne, di qualsiasi colore (naturalmente questa è soltanto la “media”). Questa statistica si dovrebbe fare anche in Italia. Quale ruolo ha un uomo? E le donne? Nella società capitalista son fregati, ma poi gli uomini tornano a casa e fregano le mogli, dopo una giornata di lavoro. Dicono: almeno l’uomo è re

nella sua casa. Eppure le donne sono condizionate a credere che essere schiava è una cosa meravigliosamente femminile. Vien detto loro che alle donne piace essere al servizio, che le donne sono fatte così, che alle donne piace lavare i piatti, che alle donne non importa quanto ai loro mariti avere l'orgasmo, che alle donne piace dar da mangiare ai bambini e pulire i pavimenti. Che quando alle donne non piace fare queste cose hanno bisogno dello psichiatra. La psicologia e la scienza hanno mentito alle donne e han detto loro che esse sono costruite diversamente, hanno bisogni diversi, diversi desideri. Che esse sono intrinsecamente passive, mentre gli uomini sono intrinsecamente attivi. E' semplicemente falso! Questi tratti, chiamati comunemente mascolinità e femminilità, la gente li ha dentro di sé in tutte le diverse combinazioni. Ma gli uomini sono forzati a dimostrare e sviluppare le caratteristiche chiamate maschili, mentre le donne sono forzate a sviluppare e mostrare le caratteristiche chiamate femminili. Ognuno perde in questa transazione. Le donne perdono di più perchè non sono considerate esseri umani, sono considerate donne in primo luogo, esseri umani in secondo. La parola per tutta la gente è umanità (menkind).

La società è dominate dal maschio. Gli uomini prendono le decisioni che controllano tutti gli aspetti della vita del popolo.

Alle donne si insegna a gradire la compagnia degli uomini più che quella della donna. Si insegna a disprezzare le altre donne, che sono "sciocche" o "artificiali" o "civette" o "ottuse". Alle donne si insegna a comperere per l'uomo, catturare un uomo o conservare un uomo e averlo e sposarlo e tirare su i suoi bambini, innazitutto e soprattutto, e la sua stessa vita sarà un fallimento. Dal momento della pubertà, questo è quanto devono fare. Non c'è da meravigliarsi se le donne sono nevrotiche: questo è vero per le donne sia ricche che povere.

Quando i neri si misero insieme e cominciarono a parlare del potere nero, i bianchi erano spaventati. Avrebbero volute che i neri risolvessero i loro problemi uno per uno, come singoli individui. Quando si misero insieme acquistarono potere, e questo faceva paura, perchè i bianchi sono al potere e vogliono conservarlo. Vogliono ciò che hanno. Quando le donne si misero insieme, gli uomini si spaventarono. Hanno paura di perdere i loro privilegi, le loro domestiche, le loro amanti. Han paura di perdere il loro potere. Gli uomini sono molti minacciati dalle donne che vogliono essere esseri umani in primo luogo. Una donna che decide di per sé che cosa vuole dalla vita, chi é, e come sviluppare le sue capacità, senza

pensare prima e principalmente al suo ragazzo, e marito, è una vera minaccia per quell fidanzato o marito. Una donna che decide che è per lei irragionevole lavorare altrettanto duro tutto il giorno e poi venire a casa e fare la cena, i piatti, il bucato, stirare e anche badare ai bambini, mentre suo marito legge il giornale e guarda la TV e beve birra o va fuori a riunioni politiche... E' assurdo. Questa lettera appare molto inadeguata, soltanto un inizio. Io credo che il fatto che le donne si mettano insieme a discutere e trattare di ciò che hanno in comune, e scoprire che sono adeguate, che contano, che hanno cose da dire, che le loro sensazioni sono vere, che i loro problemi sono condivisi da altre donne è molto liberatorio. L'unirsi delle donne può essere un processo molto salutare, e vitale. Sono convinta che è rivoluzionario, e che è una parte importante della rivoluzione alla quale tutti stiamo assistendo. Senza la rivoluzione delle donne gravi mali continueranno a perpetuarsi. Le donne sono metà dell'umanità! Senza di noi non ci sarà rivoluzione!

Con affetto

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P.S. I migliori articoli potete scriverli voi su ciò che sentite.

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Interview to Serena Castaldi.

Il viaggio negli Stati Uniti

Il viaggio negli Stati Uniti l'ho fatto per motivi molto personali: mia cognata, che era anche la mia migliore amica, era stata invitata ad andare a trovare suo fratello che abitava là in quel periodo. Era il '69, e gli Stati Uniti non erano "alla mano" come sono ora, le persone andavano in vacanza d'estate con la famiglia. A casa sua abbiamo tirato fuori una cartina e leggendo i nomi delle strade abbiamo iniziato a pensare "Ti immagini noi a camminare per queste strade?". Da questa fantasia è nato il desiderio.

Poi lei è partita non mi ricordo se in ottobre o in novembre, io stavo facendo gli esami all'università ed era la sessione autunnale. Poi, dopo che lei è partita, io non volevo restare da sola a Milano, e sono partita per Parigi, che era un pò la mia seconda casa in quel periodo. Mentre ero a Parigi sono andata con alcuni amici a vedere uno spettacolo di danza moderna e ho conosciuto una ballerina che stava per partire per New York, che mi ha chiesto di andare a fare housesitting a casa sua perchè doveva partire per una tournée. A dicembre dopo aver finito gli esami sono andata a New York: sono stata un pò a casa del fratello di mia cognata, un pò in albergo, e a gennaio sono andata a casa di questa ballerina. Così sono rimasta a New York non un mese ma sei mesi, che era la massima estensione disponibile del mio biglietto.

La scoperta del movimento

Durante questo periodo avevo incontrato per caso alla Casa della cultura italiana un ragazzo italiano della sinistra che lavorava là (io ero stata coinvolta nel movimento studentesco italiano con la sinistra maoista). Questo ragazzo lavorava con un collettivo che si chiamava Comunicazioni Rivoluzionarie: loro prendevano materiali dalla sinistra rivoluzionaria, li traducevano e li mandavano in Italia (e gli italiani facevano lo stesso con loro). Lui mi ha fatto conoscere altri ragazzi dello stesso gruppo, che si erano resi conto che il movimento delle donne era *the happening thing*, ma loro erano tutti ragazzi e non potevano andare a procurarsi informazioni. Così mi hanno chiesto di dare loro una mano a trovare informazioni sul movimento delle donne: io ero curiosa, ma non capivo come si situava questo movimento. Poi ho conosciuto sua moglie che era una femminista e mi ha invitata ad

andare in autobus all'inaugurazione di una mostra a Philadelphia di Kate Millett, che era sposata con uno scultore. Prima di salire sull'autobus ho conosciuto Alselma Dell'Olio e un'altra donna che si chiamava Diana. Insieme ci siamo messe a parlare di femminismo, e abbiamo iniziato a chiacchierare intensamente di femminismo. Io e Diana abbiamo continuato anche nei giorni successivi a parlare di femminismo. Lei era stata prima nel movimento dei neri e poi in quello delle donne, e mi ha aiutata a capire che mentre nei movimenti dei neri negli Stati Uniti e dei lavoratori in Italia il soggetto della lotta è il gruppo, nel movimento delle donne tu sei il soggetto della lotta. Io dovevo ancora scrivere la mia tesi di dottorato, e pensavo di farla sull'educazione perchè pensavo fosse un argomento interessante, quindi pensavo di fare la tesi sulle scuole nel movimento di liberazione dei neri. Però mi sono accorta che la separazione era totale, e per raccogliere informazioni sarei dovuta andare ad Harlem, e tutti mi dicevano che era molto pericoloso perchè non si vedevano bianchi e neri in giro insieme e nemmeno i taxi mi avrebbero portato in certe zone. Ho visto che era una prospettiva impraticabile. Questa ragazza stava lavorando al suo PhD, e mi ha suggerito di fare una tesi sul movimento delle donne. Questo suggerimento mi ha intrigato e la prospettiva di fare una tesi su questo argomento è stata la cosa che più mi ha spinto a frequentare i gruppi. Il mio processo di avvicinamento al femminismo è stato molto graduale. Innanzitutto perchè il mio background ideologico non poteva favorirlo, e poi perchè non ero consapevole di cosa stava accadendo.

Sono andata in questi gruppi a raccogliere materiale insieme a una donna americana che si chiamava Margie: ovviamente nei gruppi di autocoscienza chiusi non ci facevano andare, ma c'erano sempre gruppi che iniziavano. Sono tornata con una valigiata di documenti.

Il ritorno in Italia e la nascita del gruppo

Quando sono tornata mi sono trovata "fuori dal piatto". In quei gruppi di femministe negli Stati Uniti avevo preso coscienza e imparato un linguaggio concetti relativi al sessismo e al *male chauvinism*,²¹⁴ e quando vedevo queste cose le percepivo. In Italia ero nel gruppo²¹⁵ dei miei amici attivi nel movimento studentesco, che erano quasi tutti maschi. Anche se nel frattempo il movimento studentesco era

²¹⁴ In English during the interview.

²¹⁵ She referred to the Marxist Leninist group to which she belonged while studying at university.

morto, ci si trovava ancora all'università. In Italia il mio gruppo era principalmente composto da uomini, e accadeva spesso che mentre stavo parlando con una persona, un altro arrivava e mi interrompeva. prima non l'avrei notato, ma a questo punto questi comportamenti mi saltavano all'occhio. Ma cosa potevo dire? Non c'era il background concettuale e culturale a cui fare riferimento.

Per cui ho cominciato ad indossare il bottone che avevo portato con la statua della libertà e il pugno e la scritta "Women's Liberation". Questo suscitava conversazioni, e allora con le donne quando capitava raccontavo: "Questo sta succedendo negli Stati Uniti...". Dopo un pò ho pensato: invece che continuare a raccontare individualmente posso invitare gente a casa mia e raccontare a tutte insieme. Così ho invitato a casa mia delle persone che hanno espresso interesse e altre che non erano del movimento ma che conoscevo. Poi ho pensato: invece di raccontare facciamo in pratica quello che ho visto fare a queste donne americane quando si trovavano in questi gruppi. Era un piccolo gruppo, non più di dodici persone, e c'era questa cosa di sedersi in circolo... che era molto importante per noi! E poi nei piccoli gruppi si poteva mantenere la comunicazione autentica e personale. Si andava in giro facendo parlare tutti a turno senza che gli altri interrompano per un tempo più o meno uguale. Questa cosa già era di per sè rivoluzionaria: nei gruppi di sinistra c'erano quelli che parlavano sempre, e poi si interrompevano in continuazione. Questa pratica ha funzionato bene: le persone hanno parlato, e la domanda iniziale era "Cosa ti ha spinto a venire qui oggi?". Ora della fine della riunione era chiaro che c'era un *women's issue*...non era chiaro che cos'era, ma c'era. Questa cosa era stata evocata non da me ma dalle parole di tutti: c'era un altro senso di appartenenza, era la loro comunicazione e il loro confronto che aveva portato questa cosa, non un suggerimento ideologico. Così abbiamo deciso di ritrovarci, e così è nato il primo gruppo femminista a Milano. Noi non sapevamo che nello stesso periodo di tempo era nato Rivolta a Roma e il Cerchio Spezzato a Trento. Così ci riunivamo per parlare tra donne. C'erano studenti e non, donne sposate e non, persone di tutte le età [...].

Una cosa importante che succedeva era la paura... la grande paura che si stava sviluppando nelle persone e nelle famiglie. In queste famiglie l'idea che la mamma andava a questa misteriosa riunione di donne era palpabile, si sentiva. Era un segno di come questa figura di mamma era fondamentale: solamente un piccolo *what's going on here*... creava il panico.

Il mio gruppo è iniziato in giugno. Durante quell'estate (era il '70) il movimento delle donne americano è stato scoperto dai media sia lì che qui. I media anche a New York non ne parlavano, ma con l'uscita di *Sexual Politics* Kate Millett era sulla copertina del *Time*, e i giornalisti italiani hanno cominciato a scrivere articoli deliranti... "le donne americane bruciano i reggipetto", questo era il tenore, però c'era... prima era questa cosa misteriosa, noi ci trovavamo a casa mia a Milano senza sapere che altre facevano la stessa cosa, e ci sembrava di essere tipo i cristiani nelle catacombe. Quello ha cambiato il feeling: c'era la coscienza di essere parte di qualcosa che si muoveva a livello più grande. A settembre andai a Roma per vedere cosa aveva fatto Margie dei suoi documenti, e mentre ero lì ho scoperto che esisteva *Rivolta femminile*. [...]

La creazione di *Donne è bello*

Quando sono tornata a Milano volevo far qualcosa per promuovere queste idee e ho pensato di pubblicare qualcosa. Attraverso un amico ho conosciuto l'editore Mazzotta... sono stata invitata a discutere delle mie idee e poi l'ho convinto. L'ho convinto anche sul titolo *Donne è bello*, anche se lui aveva grandi resistenze perchè la grammatica non funziona... e nel '70 la cultura era molto *straight*, in Francia forse era meglio ma in Italia no. Però si è convinto. Mi ero data delle date con lui che però non erano realistiche. Ho conosciuto intanto una studentessa di medicina che faceva professionalmente traduzioni, e lei era interessata a collaborare. Io le ho detto "lavoriamo insieme!", e l'ho unita al contratto.

Però io avevo una chiara idea di cosa fare. Avevo letto molto materiale e avevo un criterio ben preciso in mente: non volevo che i testi fossero ideologizzati o di sinistra! Avevo messo completamente da parte la mia formazione marxista-leninista e avevo visto i danni dell'ideologia persino su di me, perchè ti rende ottusa come se avessi i paraocchi. Certamente ho trovato documenti sulla sinistra negli Stati Uniti, ma io ero interessata in tutto ciò che aveva a che fare con l'autocoscienza, e nella possibilità di usare le esperienze personali delle donne per una elaborazione teorica. Lo scopo di *Donne è bello* non era quello di dare informazioni sul movimento femminista americano, o avrei messo tutte le voci. Volevo fare un collage che rappresentasse una proposta politica per noi e per tutte le altre!

Questa donna traduceva qua e là, e io non ero disposta a bruciare questa opportunità. Per uscire da questa impasse ho deciso di rinunciare e gli ho mandato

indietro l'assegno che aveva mandato a entrambe. L'editore si è molto arrabbiato perchè si era convinto dell'importanza del femminismo, e poi ha pubblicato il libro del Cerchio spezzato.

Io ero rimasta convinta che questa cosa era molto importante, e quindi avevo fatto poco per volta tutte le traduzioni che volevo fare. Però intanto era nato il gruppo, ed era momentaneamente venuto meno l'interesse. Poi il gruppo insieme a Rivolta femminile aveva maturato una grande determinazione a essere indipendenti dalla stampa, perchè avevamo già visto le distorsioni della stampa [...]. Con Rivolta avevamo capito che *the medium is the message*, e quindi non volevamo parlare con i media nè comunicare attraverso i canali tradizionali. Io avevo un pò di soldi che avevo ereditato e avevamo deciso di pubblicare il volume in modo indipendente. Io e la mia *roommate* architetto abbiamo stampato le colonne, altre hanno fatto disegni ricavati dal mio materiale, e lo abbiamo pubblicato. Questa scelta ha avuto il limite di non avere la distribuzione che avrebbe avuto se fosse stato un libro di Mazzotta, però era anche un oggetto unico: non era un libro, non era una rivista, aveva le figure però era politico. Questo ci ha creato problemi con la distribuzione, perchè le librerie non sapevano dove metterlo: alcune librerie come Feltrinelli lo tenevano altre no. Un'altra difficoltà era nel fatto che dopo averli consegnati bisognava andare a prendere i soldi perchè non ce li compravano, li prendevano in deposito. La distribuzione è sempre il punto più difficile... anche questo formato, che abbiamo fatto come volevamo, ha rappresentato un ostacolo, ma noi ci tenevamo a mettere le figure. Intanto il movimento si è sviluppato, a Milano c'era un collettivo a cui alcuni di noi andavano, anche se la qualità della comunicazione nei collettivi non era buona, c'erano convegni nazionali e le vacanze femministe...in queste occasioni ci si passava il materiale. In occasione delle prime conferenze tutte ne parlavano... era diventato una sorta di 'libro misterioso'. Anche perchè c'era solo lui e i libri della Lonzi. Intanto ero andata a Trento a parlare con loro, a Roma per parlare con quelle di Rivolta... tra di noi c'era molta comunicazione.

L'obiettivo di *Donne è bello*

I testi che ho scelto provenivano soprattutto dal movimento radicale americano perchè io penso, e al riguardo sono perfettamente d'accordo con Carla Lonzi, che

noi avessimo bisogno di una profonda rivoluzione culturale, non *equal pay for equal job*²¹⁶ o l'aborto. Certo, queste erano questioni importanti, ma erano diritti civili, non riguardavano strettamente il femminismo! Noi cercavamo di scoprire noi stesse, di fare un lavoro di scoperta individuale. Il processo di l'autocoscienza non è una rivendicazione che si fa all'esterno, è un lavoro che si fa insieme su di sé ed è profondamente *transforming*, quello era uno dei focus del mio interesse. E se una trasformazione avviene in questo modo poi c'è un *empowerment* che porta a un cambiamento che si trasmette all'esterno.

Non ero interessata a portare in Italia questo tipo di rivendicazioni. Altri temi come il salario alle casalinghe erano giusti ma non era il tipo di lavoro che mi interessava, e le voci che ho scelto di tradurre trasmettevano questo interesse mio personale in un processo di trasformazione personale e globale.

²¹⁶ In English during the interview.

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