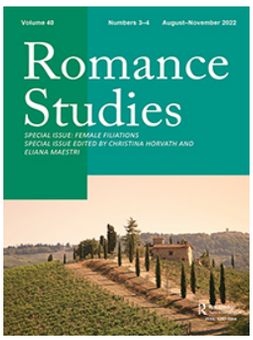

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Romance Studies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/yros20

# Mothering, Migration and Intercultural Mediation in Anna Maria Dell'oso's *Songs of the Suitcase*

Eliana Maestri

**To cite this article:** Eliana Maestri (2022) Mothering, Migration and Intercultural Mediation in Anna Maria Dell'oso's *Songs of the Suitcase*, Romance Studies, 40:3-4, 209-232, DOI: 10.1080/02639904.2022.2133463

**To link to this article:** https://doi.org/10.1080/02639904.2022.2133463



Published online: 22 Dec 2022.

ROMANCE STUDIES
2022, VOL. 40, NOS. 3–4, 209–232
https://doi.org/10.1080/02639904.2022.2133463

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group



# Mothering, Migration and Intercultural Mediation in Anna Maria Dell'oso's *Songs of the Suitcase*

Eliana Maestri

Languages, Cultures and Visual Studies, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

**ABSTRACT**

This article explores representations of mothering practices in *Songs of the Suitcase* (1998) by second-generation Italian Australian writer Anna Maria Dell'oso. This collection of short stories devotes special attention to the interlinks between mothering and mediation among culturally diverse groups in modern Australian society. Theoretical frameworks provided by scholars in translation, interpreting and child language brokering are used to shed light on how Dell'oso succeeds in voicing Italian Australian women migrants' abilities to negotiate and mediate between various cultural groups, ethnicities and generations, especially when it comes to mothering and maternal care. How does Dell'oso configure mothering as the most invaluable caregiving practice, vis-à-vis global mobility and circulation of values? How does she represent and problematize the role of mothers and daughters in modern Australia? How does she challenge families' views on how to mother? How does she interpret the role of the mediator of cultural memories and family beliefs? By displaying the author's fictional alter egos as the most privileged sites of exploration, Dell'oso reflects on the impact of migration upon mothering practices and the mother-daughter dyad. Finally, she offers thought-provoking views on how Italian Australian mothering practices, as social values, are confronted with and fashioned by ever-changing communities of migrants.

**KEYWORDS**

Migration; mothering; mediation; intermediation; filiation; mother-daughter dyad; second generation; translation; interpreting; child language brokering

## Introduction: Mothering in Migratory Contexts. Filling a Gap in Research

Migration, uprooting, displacement and relocation are life-changing events. While they generate multiple opportunities for migrants to design and redesign their relational identity, they present obstacles and challenges. These events do not normally obliterate the significance of origin and legacy, either biological or cultural, but they test the strength of family ties and, in particular, the role that mothers and mothering play across borders. As stated by sociologist Anastasia Christou and literary critics Adalgisa Giorgio and Gill Rye: 'Motherhood and migration have life transformative potential and this is clearly manifested in the destabilizing and conflictual impact that transnational mothering has for gender and family relations' (2015, 50). Being homemakers and transmitters of

**CONTACT** Eliana Maestri e.maestri@exeter.ac.uk Languages, Cultures and Visual Studies, Streatham Campus, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4QH, UK

All of the data and the analysis produced are contained within this publication.

cultural heritage, mothers manage significant pressure when families are relocated transnationally. They adapt their mothering practices to respond to the new environment while striving for emotional and practical family stability amidst tensions.

Recent research (Herrero-Arias et al. 2021; Rorato 2018; Smith Silva 2014; Schans and de Valk 2011; De Tona 2011; Bode 2010; Schultermandl 2009) has highlighted the challenges that migration poses to families and the ensuing tensions and conflicts that these challenges create within the family setting, turning mothering into a demanding role to play. However, the role that mothers play transnationally and the dynamics of their social repositioning — vis-à-vis the challenges that they rise to in migratory settings — need to be made more visible and have not been fully explored to date (Christou, Giorgio, and Rye 2015). As Christou, Giorgio, and Rye claim, the connection between mothering and migration offers invaluable data, raising multiple questions on how mothers suffer and cope in migratory contexts. In particular, Giorgio (2015) stresses the need to investigate the mother-daughter bond within Italian communities and how this bond survives conflicting situations triggered by migration to Wellington, New Zealand. These situations arise from the conflict between the desire to embrace a more liberal lifestyle in the host country and the need to comply with outmoded practices still in place in the country of origin. Investigating intergenerational relations enables Giorgio to reflect on how Italian women negotiate gender roles and mothering practices and how they create alternative models of family and motherhood to the traditional ones brought over from Italy. As Giorgio confirms: 'Motherhood may be a conflicted experience for recent, emancipated migrants who are expected to act like their mothers in order to respect the community's values' (2015, 54). What is important for Giorgio is to demonstrate how parents and children and, in particular, mothers and daughters, interact and resolve differences and tensions, contributing to processes of transculturation as well as to the modernization of the host country.

Drawing inspiration from Giorgio's enlightening research on the Italian communities, this article explores representations of intergenerational relations and, in particular, female filiations in female-authored Italian Australian literature. Just like New Zealand (Giorgio and Houkamau 2019, 28), Australia has been one of the favourite destinations of transcontinental migrants, including Italians (Marino 2020; Ricatti 2018; Vasta 2008; Rando and Turcotte 2007; Vasta 1994; Castles 1991), epitomizing to date a multicultural context of transnational migration. Due to its ethnic diversity which, as Helen Lee states (2008, 23), 'led to the development of a policy of "multiculturalism" in the 1970s', Australia has offered a range of opportunities as well as challenges to its composite population, including Italian Australian women (those who migrated to Australia from Italy and/or born in Australia of Italian parents). As sociologist Ellie Vasta maintains: 'Italian women [arriving in Australia before and/or after the Second World War] have experienced severe discrimination in the workplace, in the community and through the racist practices embedded in Australian policies and institutions' (1994, 406–407). Vasta also explains that, despite the implementation of more ethnic-oriented social policies since the 1970s, the second generation born in Australia of Italian migrants have found themselves 'in contradictory cultural and class locations' (1994, 413). Exposed to difficult scenarios to navigate through, they have had to make sense of clashing ideologies (Maestri 2014), including the one of multiculturalism whose 'convenient' interpretations have ignored gender issues (Vasta 1994, 416). The situation has been even more challenging for

mothers and daughters who, as social anthropologist Loretta Baldassar argues, have lived amidst 'opposing views and tensions' within the domestic space and have had to devise strategies to 'bring about change' (1999, 15).

In light of the above, this article aims to shed light on particular challenges faced by female members of the Italian diaspora in Australia. It also aims to gain insight into the complexities and tensions posed by migration to Italian Australian mothers and daughters and the coping mechanisms adopted by them to manage stressful situations in an unfamiliar environment. In order to do so, this article analyses the literary reflections of the impact of migration on mothering practices, including practices of tenacity and conflict resolution, thus contributing to 'the existing and still limited literature on migrant mothering' to date (Christou, Giorgio, and Rye 2015, 49). Special attention will be paid to the literary representations of the strategies devised to shape mothering practices and resolve the tensions unsettling the core of Italian migrant families in Australia. Representations are 'key to raising awareness of the complexity and difficulty of mothering as well as of its social importance' (Jeremiah quoted in Rye et al. 2018, 6). Following Gender Studies scholar Emily Jeremiah's recommendations, this article seeks to demonstrate how literature can further our understanding of migrant mothering, a topical issue requiring academic attention and reflection (Christou and Michail 2015, 75). It also responds to the call for the need to investigate the diasporic legacy inherited by the children of Italian migrants in Australia — a legacy which has not been fully explored to date (Maestri 2020) — and brings to the fore the social strengths of this legacy, including the maternal one. Finally, inspired by Giorgio (2015) and the inestimable feminist values I have learned from her, I aim to see whether and how literature brings to light Italian mothers' and daughters' contribution to the advancement of Australian society, a contribution which has often been neglected or forgotten (Vasta 1994). These key points will be explored through the prism of Italian Australian writer Anna Maria Dell'oso's fiction as part of a growing body of migration literature.[1]

## Studies on Dell'oso's Representations of Intergenerational Tensions

Born in Melbourne in 1956 of Italian migrant parents from the Abruzzi region in Italy, Dell'oso claims to write 'invented autobiography' or 'invented oral history' (quoted in Wilson 2008, 100). She 'narrates both her own stories and those of other hybrid subjects' (Wilson 2008, 100) whose modes of engagement in a complex multicultural and multilingual environment are signified by the writer's translation of the experiential and factual into fiction. Dell'oso's fiction offers representations of multi-ethnic Australia from the perspective of an adult child of Italian migrants. This adult child is a middle-aged woman reflecting on the meaning of growing up 'Italian' in Australia, before and after the implementation of multicultural policies. In so doing, these representations create a space to reflect on the impact migration has on intergenerational relations and the mother-daughter dyad. In particular, the seven stories published in her 1998 collection *Songs of the Suitcase*[2] depict challenges faced by generations of women in Australia, including tensions and conflicts similar to the ones mentioned above and described by Vasta (1994) and Baldassar (1999). However, unlike the studies conducted by these scholars focusing mainly on the challenges presented to Italian Australian women, Dell'oso's collection offers opportunities to reflect on how mothers and daughters face

these challenges and how mothering practices are adapted to respond to difficulties experienced within and outside the domestic space. Each short story is centred on specific aspects of the mother-daughter bond between different, yet psychologically similar, female characters who find the way to overcome differences, resolve conflicts and navigate successfully through cultural clashes in a country often appearing hostile to migrants. *Songs of the Suitcase* deserves critical attention because it offers a reflection of the same 'ordinary people' as the real-life interviewees approached by Giorgio (2015) as well as Anastasia Christou and Domna Michail (2015, 71): people 'who led lives that remain extraordinary' but that 'are not always made readily available'. For these reasons, while contributing to a growing body of literature on Italians in Australia, this article aims to redress the neglect of *Songs of the Suitcase* by academic critics. Unlike other works by Dell'oso — such as *Cats, Cradles and Camomile Tea* (1989) — and despite its 1999 Arts Queensland Steele Rudd Australian Short Story Award (listed on the AustLit website), *Songs of the Suitcase* has never been the full focus of any academic scholarship to date.

In his various appraisals of the literary productions of Italian Australian writers from a second-generation background (born of Italian migrant parents), literary scholar Gaetano Rando (2003, 2015) identifies transnational themes and patterns, from the quest for multicultural identity and reflection on intergenerational contrasts to appropriation or denial of Italianness and assimilation to the Australian environment. Within the narratives produced by Australian writers of Italian descent and featuring Italian Australian youngsters as protagonists, Rando identifies some of the conflicts and tensions affecting generations of migrants in Australia. However, his appraisals (2003, 2015) are too brief to offer in-depth analyses of how the literary representations of the second generation portray conflict resolution in the form of harmonious reconciliations of cultural values and beliefs. In addition to this, Rando's general reflections do not delve into the distinctiveness of the female characters and the support networks offered by mothers, daughters and grandmothers. Excluded from Rando's 2003 overview of the creation of a corpus of Italian Australian literature since 1965, Dell'oso's fictional production, populated by eclectic female characters, is mentioned, even if only in passing, in his 2015 review. Two features distinguishing Dell'oso's female characters are likewise cited by Rando: one relating to old women as transmitters of customs and traditions and one to young women as advocates of new habits and modes of seeing the world. The pictures offered are relatively clichéd and no processes of transculturality characterizing the female protagonists are brought to light. Finally, despite their being semi-autobiographical and experiential, none of Dell'oso's works is listed among the Italian Australian life writing samples analysed by literary scholar John Gatt-Rutter in his 2014 monograph *The Bilingual Cockatoo*.

Unlike the scholars mentioned above, Susanna Scarparo and Rita Wilson (2004) and Wilson (2007, 2008) shed light on a number of Italian Australian women writers, including Dell'oso, by explaining how they negotiate cultural complexities and tensions across generations. Scarparo and Wilson belong to a generation of literary scholars who celebrate the 'transcultural' appeal of Australian literature, produced by ethnic minority writers from a non-English-speaking background, not just as 'migrant' but also as 'transnational' and 'translational'. As part of this 'transcultural turn' in Australian literary criticism, Scarparo and Wilson develop Sneja Gunew's earlier views (which she expands upon with Wenche Ommundsen in 2018) and propose a more nuanced approach to the cultural

complexity of generations of Italian Australian writers (including the second generation) and their critical engagement with global and local realities. In particular, Wilson (2007, 2008) reflects on the transnational identity of Italian Australian women writers by locating their imaginary constructions of place and home simultaneously within and beyond geopolitical borders. Despite the fact that these studies bring to light the mutual traits — such as transnational spatiality and multipositionality — characterizing generations of Australian women writers of Italian heritage, including Dell'oso, they do not sufficiently explore the matrilineal legacy that these female writers leave behind or inherit. Nor do they investigate the strength arising from motherhood and mothering practices within and/or beyond the private and the familial represented in their works. Wilson's study addresses home as a synonym of homeland, not as a domestic space where female traits and drives are played out.

## Intercultural Mediation as a Response to Tensions: Examples from the Literature on Australian Culture and Society

Despite their limitations, the studies carried out by Scarparo and Wilson (2004) and Wilson (2007, 2008) are enlightening and pave the way for more detailed explorations of Italian Australian writers. As Wilson states: 'It is argued that the role of the hyphenate writer has changed over the decades and across generations, from that of a *raconteur* of what took place, a role that may lean more toward nostalgia than analysis, to that of cultural mediator and, more recently, cultural examiner'[3] (2008, 98, italics in original). In applying the different stages of the 'hyphenate writer' — a graded concept proposed by Daniel Aaron to frame generations of writers with a migrant background — these scholars (Scarparo and Wilson 2004, 170; Wilson 2008, 99) identify the transition, enacted by Australian writers of Italian descent, to writing practices modelled on cultural mediation and the ability to move comfortably among ethnicities and power dynamics. For example, Scarparo and Wilson claim that Dell'oso represents the third-stage hyphenate writer 'travel[ling] from the margin (ethnic culture) to the mainstream (dominant culture), viewing the latter no less critically but more knowingly than the first- or second-stage writer' (Scarparo and Wilson 2004, 170; Wilson 2008, 99). This article furthers the studies carried out by Scarparo and Wilson and investigates representations of intercultural mediation in *Songs of the Suitcase* as a way to engage skilfully and knowingly between culturally and ideologically diverse groups. Instances of intercultural mediation, as a within-cultural and across-cultural act of translation, will be identified, not to discuss Dell'oso's politics of belonging and expanding concepts of home, but to explore fictional representations of nonconflicting modes of interaction. This will be done with a view to demonstrating representations of intergenerational collaboration and strategies devised by women to resolve tensions in *Songs of the Suitcase*.

Intercultural mediation, including 'negotiation[s] and reconciliation[s] of difference' (Katan 2013, 85), is indeed one of the main communication skills developed by second-generation migrants. 'Since children, through scholarization, tend to become proficient in a new language and to adapt to the new culture more quickly than their parents, they [the children of migrants] are very often asked to take on the role of the linguistic and cultural mediator' (Antonini 2015, 97). They often end up serving as informal or official translators and interpreters (Cosmini-Rose and Belperio 2015, 107). In an attempt to provide

a definition of the Italian second generations in Australia, mental health professional Michele Sapucci states that these generations are 'cultural hybrids' whose 'balance between the two cultural landscapes defining their belonging [...] raises them to a status of cultural mediators in a constant attempt to combine both cultures to get the best out of them' (2007, 224). Vasta also maintains that 'the adult second generation have become the "cultural brokers" within the Italian-Australian community [...] provid[ing] the link into Anglo-Australian institutions for the older generation and for themselves' (1994, 421). While defining the Australian generation of Italian background in terms of in-betweenness and liminality (a concept also used by Simone Marino 2020), social anthropologist Baldassar (2011a, 2011b) sheds light on their mediational activities. She compares the second generation to 'a bridge that links the first generation to the new, host society and vice versa' (Baldassar 2011a, 269, 2011b, 109), 'a window on cultural transmission' (Baldassar 2011a, 269, 2011b, 109), 'a vehicle for integration into the host country' (2011b, 107) and 'a beacon of integration potential' (2011a, 269, 2011b, 108). Baldassar concludes that 'most researchers today [...] highlight the repertoire of "cultural competences" available to members of the subsequent migrant generations as they negotiate their lives in plural cultural contexts' (2011b, 112). One of the first cultural competences of an intercultural mediator, as Katan (2009, 2013; [1999] 2014, 2015) highlights, includes the ability not only to interpret for others, allowing both parties to access information and feelings that are not necessarily self-evident, but also to foster mutual understanding and an environment of respect for what is seen as other (Katan 2015, 373) and, potentially, a source of tensions. These competences are, according to Baldassar, specifically demonstrated by Italian Australian second-generation women, whose 'well developed relationships [...] with their female friends, relatives and especially their mothers enable the *mediation of tensions* between generations and genders' (1999, 15, author's italics).

I will, therefore, take up the intercultural mediation line of enquiry by addressing the following questions: how is intercultural mediation played out in *Songs of the Suitcase*? Is intercultural mediation a female core value and practice in Dell'oso's *œuvre*, and, if so, why? What kind of acts of mediation do the female characters born of Italian migrants perform? Finally, seeing that some of the major themes in the book are related to female filiation, matrilineal legacies and mothering practices, is there a connection between these themes and the acts of mediation depicted in the book? Are these acts represented as beneficial to a healthy, multicultural development of Australian society? In order to answer these questions, I will avail myself of studies on intercultural mediation by David Katan, language brokering by Sarah Crafter and Humera Iqbal and mothering and migration by Christou, Giorgio, and Rye. In the words of Taft (quoted in Katan [1999] 2014, 17), 'a cultural mediator is a person who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture'. Communication is facilitated and misunderstandings or tensions resolved, when the mediator 'manipulates the discourse to account for what is hidden, lost or distorted due to culture' (Katan 2013, 84). To act as mediator, one has to possess or acquire a range of competences, including knowledge about society, communication skills and the ability to interpret 'the expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of each cultural group to the other' (Taft quoted in Katan [1999] 2014, 17). Some of the intercultural mediators that I will analyse here are informal interpreters and child language brokers. Child language brokers are children required to serve as interpreters/translators

for those family members who are unfamiliar with the sociocultural and linguistic landscape hosting them. As these brokers and informal interpreters need to do mediation to guarantee the success of their 'service', Katan's take on cultural mediation including but not limited to translation and interpreting as professional activities will prove illuminating. In addition to this, the literature on mothering and migration and, especially, the studies carried out by Giorgio (2015) and Christou and Michail (2015) will help me to investigate the transformations of mothering practices within contexts of migration and the female characters' response to tensions within and outside the domestic realm — a response which, in this article, centres on mediation. In so doing, I discuss Dell'oso's representations of mediation and mothering practices as ways to face challenges arising from migration and ethnic diversity. Finally, in light of the emphasis placed by a number of feminist scholars on the significance of 'mothering [...] with a central transformative potential for larger social structures and society' (Christou and Michail 2015, 77), this article contributes to shedding light on the sociocultural potential of motherhood, mothering and female filiation.

## Intercultural Mediators and Child Language Brokers in *Songs of the Suitcase*

Mediation, an act of interlingual and intralingual translation bridging cultural gaps and handling cultural clashes, is displayed in 'Love by Arrangement', the opening chapter of *Songs of the Suitcase*. While informing the nature of the female narrator's profession, mediation represents the key to her success: 'I am a researcher into arranged love, a kind of private love detective specializing in the marital relations of minorities' (*Songs*, 3). Assisted by the ability to navigate between genders and ethnicities, the researcher intends to unpack the significance of heterosexual unions as cultural constructs and capture the problematic effect that culture has on gender dynamics and inequalities: 'I take marriages home and prise them apart and try (perhaps unwisely) to shake the religion and culture from them and see what's left' (*Songs*, 3). Her goal is to unveil the cultural downsides of love and save women's lives from conflicting relationships, especially those negatively affected by the shortcomings of arranged or voluntary marriage. Taking into account class and ethnicity, the narrator investigates marriage 'not just [as] a simple matter of the "oppressive patriarchal institution"' but also 'as a bloodline into the family, which is the bloodline of culture and identity' (*Songs*, 21). In an attempt to find suitable solutions for women amidst cultural clashes, the researcher-detective practises mediation, as Liddicoat and Scarino would say, as 'an active engagement in diversity' and 'a meaning making activity' (quoted in Akbari and Darani 2017, 60) put in place to resolve tensions and help the vulnerable.

Considering that 'Love by Arrangement' is the opening story (and a 50-page one), one is led to think that, despite being different in terms of tone and style, this story, along with its emphasis on intercultural mediation, is instrumental in framing the other stories contained in the book. This preliminary assumption is grounded on the premise that, usually, beginnings and endings (as Italo Calvino [1988] 2011 claims) are emblematic, encapsulating valuable keys to the interpretations and readings of a piece of work at hand. And just like the female narrator operating in the opening story, her reader needs to be an equally skilled researcher and detective specializing in critical reading and intercultural mediation. However, unlike other short stories, 'Love by Arrangement' has no real

or rounded character at play apart from fragmentary and disconnected constellations of personal stories collected from conversations with women from non-English-speaking backgrounds married to men from dominant cultures. There is no plot or mother either, apart from the narrator's own, who is briefly mentioned as the protagonist of a marriage 'by proxy shortly after the [*sic*] World War II' (*Songs*, 6). Readers are invited to identify with the narrator-detective in 'Love by Arrangement' and reflect on the validity and applicability of practices of intercultural mediation among culturally diverse groups. If they fail to do so, they cannot find the link between 'Love by Arrangement' (on intercultural mediation) and the remaining stories (on mothering practices) or fully appreciate the value of the book.

I will now focus on where readers come across specific instances of intercultural mediation in *Songs of the Suitcase*. Dell'oso's literature is interspersed with acts of intercultural and interlingual translation. Scarparo and Wilson, for example, claim that Dell'oso sees herself as a 'double agent' (Dell'oso quoted in 2004, 172) whose 'self [...] embarks on an undetermined journeying practice, having constantly to negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture, or more creatively speaking, between a here, a there, *and* an elsewhere' (Trinh T. Minh-ha quoted in Scarparo and Wilson 2004, 172, italics in original). However, Scarparo and Wilson (2004, 173, 175) limit their analysis to one translation act, the one that features in Dell'oso's first book entitled *Cats, Cradles and Camomile Tea*. This is when a young child, Dell'oso's fictional alter ego, acts as mediator among a number of unofficial child translators operating in hospitals to help women in need of treatment: 'The doctors didn't know how to cure them [the women] because they didn't understand how losing a homeland can become a sickness' (Dell'oso quoted in Scarparo and Wilson 2004, 175). Child language brokering, even if in an elementary and tentative mediational form, also appears in 'Song of the Suitcase', the second and eponymous story in the 1998 collection. Here, the female narrator introduces readers to the practice of mediation, exercised by young and inexperienced mediators as an intuitive response to tensions and anxieties triggered by intercultural clashes and conflicts. She then takes readers through a fictional exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of intercultural mediation, especially in relation to mothering practices.

In 'Song of the Suitcase', Ninetta, the younger version of the narrating 'I', is asked to act as an intermediary and interpret for her family following migration and her mother's mental illness, an illness triggered by the hostility of the migrant environment, as was the case for many Italian women in Australia (Ricatti 2008). Temporarily fostered by convent nuns, Ninetta is faced with her first language brokering situation, which requires her to mediate contradictory understanding of childcare practices rooted in distinct cultural contexts. Instead of talking directly to the nuns and making sure that those with caring responsibilities follow his childcare instructions, Ninetta's father talks to his young daughter and tells her how to look after her little brother. In addition to this, the conversation between the two happens in the Abruzzese dialect, a language used specifically by the man to leave out the other interlocutors (*Songs*, 71). The recommendations received by Ninetta place her in a difficult mediational position as her father's actions disclose a considerable degree of scepticism about the nuns' ability to mother his children in his absence, or even apply his instructions. Mediators are often resorted to in order to resolve tensions or a controversy. This is applicable, Katan (2015, 367) argues, not only to commercial or legal scenarios, but also to intercultural ones, populated by groups with

'non-converging world-views or maps of the world' (Katan [1999] 2014, 16). For this reason, cultural mediators are expected not only to 'serve as a link' between parties (Taft quoted in Katan [1999] 2014, 17), but also to act as 'arbitrator[s]' or peacemakers able to 'bridge differences' and appease frustrations (Katan [1999] 2014, 17). This is what is implicitly expected from Ninetta who is then forced to handle a potential cross-cultural conflict between a Southern Italian man (her father) and the Australian convent nuns. In an effort to comply with her father's request, Ninetta 'manipulates' the situation by hiding information. She conceals the instructions obtained from him and translates them tacitly into action against the nuns' will, avoiding conflicts and unnecessary arguments. Not only does she become mindful of herself and her father as others in the English-speaking community of nuns in a position of authority, but she also starts to appreciate her position as cultural mediator and arbitrator, liaising between disputing parties. In the opening story, the female narrator (now an adult) comfortably inhabits her mediational space, a space that allows her to reflect on the catalysts contributing to the female subaltern position in Australia; in this story, the female narrator maps out the early stages of her mediation practice, a practice that leads her to perceive herself as other as well as peacemaker.

## Mothering Roles Performed by Child Language Brokers and Freelance Mothers as Mediators

In 'Song of the Suitcase', the mediation performed by Ninetta as child language broker is representative not only of the marginal condition of Italian migrants in post-war Australia — racialized, poorly protected by the Australian government and forced to rely on family resources as unofficial mediators (Chesher 1997, 281–282) — but also of a new family arrangement and distribution of maternal responsibilities. Crafter and Iqbal, for example, highlight the fact that 'migration to a new country can present not previously experienced challenges that require new role distribution within families' (2021, 3). Loaded with responsibilities, the child language broker experiences a 'role reversal' becoming a 'parentified child' (2021, 2), taking charge of the emotional and cross-cultural labour that would normally be expected from a parent. As these scholars maintain, brokering and mediation situate the migrant child in a challenging position, as she is led to 'take on roles and responsibilities that are perceived to be associated with adults' (2021, 2). This challenging position heightens the child's understanding of herself as an active supporter of her family members (2021, 3) and bearer of the responsibility to care for them (McPhaul 2005, 56). In the above-mentioned scene, Ninetta listens carefully to her father's guidelines in dialect, because 'this was family talk, this was our stuff, speaking in Abruzzese' (*Songs*, 71), and then conscientiously mothers her brother following his advice, a piece of advice which translates verbally what Ninetta's mother used to do before becoming ill. As soon as the nuns' behaviour seems to run counter to it, Ninetta's sense of loyalty to her family causes her to express dissent: 'I go crazy; [...] as I foam at the mouth with fury' (*Songs*, 73). When both parties are present, she acts as a peacemaker avoiding tensions; when they are not or when the required mothering practices are not complied with, she lashes out. In other words, Ninetta's family duties and maternal responsibilities come first in her eyes.

Ninetta's expression of dissent translates a strong sense of 'family togetherness' that child language brokering usually triggers in contexts of transnational migration and that Crafter and Iqbal (2021, 2) speak about. The strength of Ninetta's Italian family ties — also typical, as Giorgio (2015, 53) and Daniela Cosmini-Rose and Irene Belperio (2015, 103) state, of Italian migrant communities — pushes Ninetta to mediate other care practices, mothering not only her brother, but also her 'mysterious[ly]' sick mother. She states: 'We'd run down to the chemist's and rush back, like Little Red Riding Hoods with a basket of cakes, anxious to make it better for all the mothers of the world lying pinned to their beds, wrestling with their wolves' (*Songs*, 75–76). In her analysis of vulnerable people, trauma therapist Denise J. Gelinas confirms that 'the parentified child internalizes her role of responsibility and gradually develops her identity around taking care of others' (1988, 26). Ninetta is often described as the one looking after others and worrying about others. This sense of maternal care and responsibility for others does not stop once her childhood is over. Looking back at her childhood, the narrating 'I' (now an adult) sympathizes and empathizes with all 'the immigrant mothers of the 1960s who still lie exhausted on their beds full of pain in rooms with drawn curtains, waiting for their daughters to bring back the healing medicines from the world' (*Songs*, 76). In addition to this, being the only female child, Ninetta ends up 'shoulder[ing]' — as Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla (2014, 7) would say — 'a far greater burden of care'.[4] Despite playing fairy tale characters, Ninetta behaves like an adult mothering her own mother, 'prepar[ing] the bed, flinging across the heavy silk brocade for the visits of *il dottore*' and, generally, taking care of '*la famiglia* turned in on itself' (*Songs*, 75, italics in original). Living in Australia, far away from the rest of her Italian family, she understands that she has to mediate maternal caregiving, be selfless and act as a grown-up.

Maternal care practices, including love, support, assistance and help (Jeremiah 2006; Barlow and Chapin 2010), can be identified throughout *Songs of the Suitcase*, in various shapes and forms. In all the stories, mothers and grandmothers look after their children fiercely. Those who are not biological mothers step in as foster or adoptive mothers, or 'allomothers' as Kathleen Barlow and Bambi L. Chapin call them (2010, 326), bringing someone else's children up as if they were their own (*Songs*, 76). In this context, mediation, namely the negotiation of mothering roles, is performed by 'many angel families' (*Songs*, 79–80), contributing to the raising of children and, as Mielle Chandler would say, 'proliferations of maternal practices' (quoted in Jeremiah 2006, 28). In migratory contexts, the mediation and proliferation of maternal caregiving come with all sorts of affective dispositions including adjustments. In order to chart the adjustments undergone by migrant mothering, Christou and Michail (2015, 75) encourage us to frame mothers' livelihoods and narratives of migration in terms of transition and transformation, which are often the outcome of mediation. Migrant mothers mediate (or negotiate) and, as a consequence, transform and adapt various modes of 'doing' mothering (Rye et al. 2018, 4) as a response to challenging and unfamiliar environments. For instance, they are able to revisit concepts of the nuclear family or traditional gender roles so as to entrust, in their temporary absence, other family members (such as husbands, grandparents, relatives and, even, children of both sexes) with caring responsibilities (Christou and Michail 2015, 78; Giorgio 2015, 60, 61). They are also able to wear different hats and play different roles as and when needed. They can be 'sensible' mothers, 'tiger' mothers or 'lone wolf' mothers like Danielle, the protagonist of the short story 'Unravelling' (*Songs*,

135). In 'Song of the Suitcase', because of the mother's illness and, then, unsociable working hours, Ninetta's family experiences a clear transformation. Ninetta is mothered by a series of women or 'freelance mothers', who, being wary of the challenges posed by migration, 'did not mind an extra daughter tagging along' (*Songs*, 76). They offer to take her on temporarily, educate her and mediate maternal attentions through commitment. Mothering is not relinquished altogether by Ninetta's mother. Being Italian, with 'the underlying belief' — as Giorgio (2015, 60) would say — 'that care of young children is still best performed by mothers rather than by institutions and non-family', Ninetta's mother is well aware that looking after Ninetta is her duty and responsibility. However, under extraordinary circumstances, maternal care and labour circulate through other channels and among various community members who take it in turns to share caring responsibilities and assume the maternal role, including Ninetta.

As seen above, in 'Song of the Suitcase', mothering practices are mediated and redistributed along the mother-daughter spectrum. This redistribution reframes not only the dynamics of the mother-daughter bond, but also the meaning of 'doing mothering', traditionally conceptualized within the remit of biological mothers and fashioned by culture, as Jeremiah (2006) and Rye et al. (2018) maintain. Even before fulfilling her immediate infant needs, Ninetta provides her brother and mother with maternal care, protection and support, asserting a new politics of care originating from maternal relationality and voluntary acts. Ninetta's attentions overthrow traditional concepts of mothering practices grounded in dichotomous intersections between biological mothers and maternal instinct (Rye et al. 2018, 8). She is not the biological mother of anyone, let alone of her own mother or brother. Yet she is happy to mother them, mediating mothering practices in order to care for them. The proliferation of these mothering practices, conventionally shaped by tradition and then tailored to meet culture-bound needs, is also revisited by Ninetta. In the convent, Ninetta goes against the nuns' practices by protecting her brother's little head from the 'Australian' sun (*Songs*, 72–73) — seen as dangerous only by his Italian father. At home, when she is not mothering her ill mother, she acts as the angel of the hearth, 'polish[ing] each piece of my mother's wedding China, especially the *tazze di caffè*' (*Songs*, 74, author's italics) and replicating her mother's attention to detail and Italian traditions. But when she finally moves out of her family home, she experiences new ways of caring for herself and others, ways devoid of her mother's traditional precepts: 'From my new room, I threw everything out — ethnicity, papers, clothes, outdated ambitions [...] I looked around, feeling light and virtuous' (*Songs*, 79).

These politics and ethics of care, founded upon the breaking of a 'generational contract, where parents care for their young, who in turn care for them when they age' (Baldassar and Merla 2014, 7), assert Ninetta's process of adultification as well as a non-hierarchical and atypical — yet beneficial — mediation of maternal care. This is important to note, especially with regards to Ninetta's role as a child language broker. Through mothering and brokering, Ninetta partakes in the redistribution of caregiving practices within her family household, contributing to a 'caregiving continuum' which encompasses responsibilities and everyday support. Crafter and Iqbal confirm:

> When language brokering is viewed as part of the role distribution of family responsibilities, this activity can be framed as a care practice [...] that is part of the everyday support a young

> person might provide for family [...]. In the context of migrant family households and the wider community, it may be framed as part of the 'caregiving continuum', subject to shifts and changes as brokers grow up. (2021, 4)

Ninetta's role as child language broker and mother, therefore, enacts caregiving dynamics and mediation practices, performed by her almost interchangeably along the lines of a continual trajectory which reinforces and authorizes their validity and applicability.

## Representations of Intercultural Mediation as a Form of Mothering and Solidarity

Dell'oso's portrayal of the proliferations and transformations of mothering practices are particularly revealing when mediation intersects with the protection of vulnerable characters. Following 'Song of the Suitcase', where the female characters mediate mothering practices, the short story 'Homeland' offers enlightening anecdotes relating to mediation as a form of mothering and protection, founding bonds of solidarity between Italian Australian women. Here, Angela, an eighteen-year-old female character 'living the dutiful life of a good Italian girl at home' (*Songs*, 175) in Melbourne becomes fond of her extroverted and neurotic aunt, Zia Pina, who lives in the granny annexe at the back of the girl's parents' house. Zia Pina, a unique character with a distinctive personality and 'a constitution of a vampire' (*Songs*, 176), amuses Angela and softens her heart: 'She was the architect of an intricate scaffolding of illness around her that was nurturing, secretive and perfectly balanced' (*Songs*, 176). Here, Angela, Ninetta's teenage version, starts looking after vulnerable Zia Pina, contributing to the circulation of maternal care and extending her adult-level duty of care beyond her nuclear family. Angela satisfies her aunt's needs, offering practical and emotional attention similar to the attention paid by young Ninetta to her sick mother and infant brother or, even, by Zia Pina, as a child, to her siblings when 'her mother worked like a man in the fields' (*Songs*, 180). Angela makes sure Zia Pina has food on the table, deals with her dinner trays, rings the doctor at night on her behalf and visits her at the hospital when she is unwell. She also takes an interest in Zia Pina's pastimes, including the TV shows and soap operas watched by the old woman and regularly commented on in a broad Italian dialect (*Songs*, 176). As Baldassar and Merla would say, Angela's caregiving encompasses 'a wide variety of care exchanges, from the direct provision of support described as "hands on" or "caring for" that can only be delivered when people are physically co-present, to the more emotional support of "caring about"' (Baldassar and Merla 2014, 12).

Angela's intercultural mediation, which she continues to practise once she has reached adulthood, as a number of child language brokers do (Chu 1999; Cline et al. 2011), leads her even more purposefully to mother Zia Pina, showing solidarity and migrant support. Firstly, she appreciates those who care for Zia Pina, including Dr Patel whose name signals another migrant and whose 'profound belief in Zia Pina' (*Songs*, 175) and her half-imaginary illnesses seems to go beyond any scientific interpretation of the old woman's physiology. The doctor's care is testimony, instead, to his intercultural understanding of Zia Pina's temperament, a temperament typical of a patient happy to self-diagnose and display 'unusual faith in someone who wasn't Italian' (*Songs*, 175). Secondly, Angela capitalizes on her mediational skills, acquired at a young age and developed amidst

family tensions, to help and support Zia Pina in addition to her everyday care work. Just before Zia Pina's story, thirteen-year-old Angela is portrayed in the middle of interlingual negotiations and tensions between her mother and '*l'inglese*' (*Songs*, 170, italics in original), namely Angela's teacher. Here '*l'inglese*' has been asked by the girl, against the mother's will (because the teacher is not Italian), to be her Catholic godmother at the third sacrament confirmation ceremony, an important cultural icon among the many religious events responsible for the maintenance of the Italian ethnic identity in Australia (Papalia 2008; Baldassar 1999). The negotiations and translations from English to Italian and back performed by Angela make evident, as we shall also see later, the girl's ability to navigate through cultural clashes and potential conflicts diplomatically and tactfully. The story does not tell us explicitly how impactful Angela's experience is. One can, however, infer that, despite her mother's firm dissent but confident of her powers of mediation, Angela decides to take Zia Pina to her favourite TV show, a show 'which brought out the extroverts, the ambitious, the comic' (*Songs*, 177), such as Zia Pina, and act as her cultural mediator. The mediation she plans to provide is not a simple act of interlingual liaison interpreting. It is an act of 'intervention' aimed to mobilize the power that Angela has acquired as a language broker and parentified child: the power to care for others and safeguard difference with the same unconditional conviction as the one nurtured by a mother.

As explained earlier, intercultural mediation entails a certain degree of manipulation which is necessary when interpreters translate other people's words across cultures. As articulated by Katan, 'intercultural mediation is a form of translatorial *intervention* which takes account of the impact of cultural distance when translating or interpreting' (2013, 84, author's italics). Such interventions entail strategizing and participation in the communicative act on behalf of a mediator responsible for the success of a linguistic interaction. A mediator actively manipulates, rewrites or recreates part of the message so as to apply cultural filters and avoid misunderstandings or frustrations (Katan 2013, 84) between the parties. The aim is to 'coordinate the non-converging world-views, allowing the participants to communicate to mutually acceptable levels' (Katan 2013, 85). In 'Homeland', thirteen-year-old Angela enacts translatorial interventions almost intuitively, resolving familiar tensions. At the end of the confirmation ceremony, Angela's parents are ready to drive back home to party with family and friends. While walking to the car, they 'gesticulated [...], smiling and bowing' (*Songs*, 173). Not being of Italian background, Angela's godmother cannot interpret the parents' body language and looks to Angela for help. Angela does not replicate their gestures, leaves out what might come across as unfamiliar or discouragingly strange and recreates her parents' implicit message in simple and kind words: '"I think Mum and Dad want you to come back to our place for a party", I translated' (*Songs*, 173). She proves she can be a good intercultural mediator by reading and translating verbal and non-verbal signs plausibly (see Katan 2015, 371). Just like Ninetta in the convent, Angela understands what should be left out (or hidden) in conversation so as to avoid confusions or tensions. Her success as a mediator/diplomat is also evidenced by the fact that she manages to resolve the tensions with her mother and persuade her to welcome '*l'inglese*' (*Songs*, 170, italics in original) into their house, despite her initial reservations.

Years later, a more skilled and experienced eighteen-year-old Angela deliberately applies translatorial intervention to her mediational practices even before attending the intercultural event she has prearranged, namely Zia Pina's participation in her much-loved Australian TV game show. Being aware of Zia Pina's interest in this show, Angela suggests that the old woman should attend it and buys her the ticket. Angela's intention is to accompany Zia Pina, with 'her mangled English' (*Songs*, 182), to the studios and encourage her to sing a memorable Italian folk song. This song is connected to Zia Pina's teenage memories and, generally, to Italian culture and, therefore, is particularly meaningful to both women who, just like many Italian women in Australia, cherish folk culture and what it represents (Maestri and Wilson 2017). Angela offers Zia Pina emotional support, helping her to practise her performance so that her talented voice and traditions are appreciated, despite her age and the 'complex bio-system of everything that could go wrong' (*Songs*, 175). As Zia Pina can only remember fragments of this song, Angela plans to 'intervene' by rewriting the lyrics and the music to it before the event. In order to meet the Australian show's expectations and help her aunt to perform well, Angela spends days looking for the exact words of the song in various libraries (*Songs*, 179). She does not want to alter the folk song's lyrics completely, but to improve them so as to be culturally original and interculturally appealing. Planning to act upon Zia Pina's folk song represents a genuine example of mediation as translatorial intervention aimed to promote the mediator's visibility, raise intercultural awareness and, to borrow Anthony Pym's words, foster 'cooperation between cultures' (quoted in Katan 2013, 85). This is also an opportunity for Angela to give visibility to her Italian heritage and female legacy reminiscent of 'countless black-veiled crones [...] s[inging] over the boiling pasta' (*Songs*, 179).

Angela's mediational practice is nowhere near common concepts of linearity, neutrality and impartiality, seen by Translation Studies scholars as non-existent and 'at best "naïve"' (Katan 2013, 87). Firstly, Angela cannot go back to the source and find the exact words or music to the song because, being a folk song and part of the oral tradition in Italy, as Eliana Maestri and Rita Wilson would argue (2017), its words are lost in translation. Secondly, like Ninetta, Angela consciously chooses to side with Zia Pina, namely the vulnerable, the marginal and the migrant, so as to 'ensure that their voice is heard and that their differences and rights are respected', as Katan (2013, 84) would claim. In the words of Katan, Angela would be seen as 'the community agent [who] advocates for the minority (migrant) norms and values' (2013, 87). Her advocacy leads her to be strategic, a prerogative of child language brokers, as Crafter and Iqbal (2020, 2021, 11) explain. And for this reason, her approach to mediation is similar to the one applied by Ninetta in the convent. Despite their young age, both Ninetta and Angela act as 'professional' mediators 'seeking a "solution" rather than "an outcome"' (Katan 2013, 86). They are not professionally trained mediators, but they have their family's interest and the community's peace at heart and this leads them to develop mediational skills. 'Even when frustrated with their language brokering, young people endeavour to get the best outcome for their parents, and they take into account *the best route* to get there' (Crafter and Iqbal 2021, 12, author's italics). Not only do they shift between cultures, they also intervene strategically by adding necessary explanations or omitting unpalatable information, which could jeopardize the effectiveness of the

interaction or compromise the management of the conflictual situation. Ninetta, for example, does not openly disclose her father's instructions at the convent. When the nuns undo the remedial action put in place by the girl to improve the care of her brother, Ninetta does not reveal who the source of her instructions is and prefers to deal with her father on the side. This is because 'managing the parent or appeasing the authority figure is less risky than being confrontational because there is more at stake if they fail' (Crafter and Iqbal 2021, 12).

Ninetta's and Angela's mediation actions are always presented in positive terms even when their intercultural mediation does not completely come to fruition, as in Angela's case. Its unsuccess demonstrates its complexities and limitations but also its potential when practised by women as caregivers. As stated above, Zia Pina's folk song cannot be traced back to its original source, to Angela's disappointment. In addition, Angela translates the fragments she has into English, while 'w[riting] down the guitar chords on a scrap of paper' (*Songs*, 183), but decides against sharing her work with Zia Pina prior to the show. Her translation is not necessary on this occasion, as Zia Pina's version of the folk song is sufficient to do justice to her cultural memories. As a skilled mediator and translator, Angela understands it is important to give Zia Pina centre stage. Once at the show, however, Zia Pina is not given the time and space she deserves to shine. Despite this partial failure, Angela's efforts are implicitly commended. The preparation done in view of the TV show is testimony to Angela's mediation skills, caregiving attitude and solidarity. She accompanies Zia Pina to the show because she wants to help her celebrate Italian values and traditions on Australian TV. Also, she attends to Zia Pina's physical and emotional needs uncompromisingly, offering her time and initiatives: 'Zia Pina was finally taking an interest in something other than pills and doctors' (*Songs*, 178). Her help and support for the old woman is not the simple outcome of filial responsibilities and obligations to care, which, as Cosmini-Rose and Belperio (2015) maintain, are typical of second-generation Italian women's relationships with their parents in Australia. Like many second-generation Italians, Angela might well be required to comply with unspoken expectations of Italian cultural maintenance in relation to homecare arrangements for the elderly, finding herself almost by surprise 'taking Zia Pina down to Dr Patel's clinic [...] nearly every day' (*Songs*, 175–176). 'Care of [...] the elderly is still assumed to be primarily their [of Italian working women] responsibility', as Giorgio (2015, 54) confirms. As Angela is not an adult child yet, but a parentified one, the impact of her acquired sense of responsibility to care about her identity formation and social relations is considerable at various levels. Just like Ninetta, Angela wants to protect her family and the marginal from those in a position of power and authority. Despite the fact that she fails to find the right music for Zia Pina's folk song, she accompanies her to the studios in the hope her aunt enjoys the experience and acquires an appreciation of Italian traditions. Once at the studios, she notices with sadness that Zia Pina is not given the opportunity to show her frail, yet beautiful, self. Upon reflection, the narrator claims: 'I would have liked to have seen the cameras closing in on her old cheeks, her trembling fingers clutching the baskets, her voice, cracked with the grit of the mountains, singing harsh above Gordon's Yamaha chords' (*Songs*, 182–183). The disappointment conveyed at the end of Zia Pina's story is clearly noticeable. Yet the trip to the TV show and the effort made to prepare Zina Pina for it are not pointless. The preparation work done in view of the show becomes an opportunity for Angela to side with cultural difference and intensify the physical and emotional care offered to Zia Pina.

## Mediating Mothering Practices among Intergenerational Tensions

Ninetta and Angela are not the only Italian Australian characters with mediation skills. Whether they are children or adults brought up in between generations and ethnicities, Dell'oso's characters of Italian background display similar traits and abilities to recreate messages, omitting or adding information when needed. Trained by practice, they revert to mediation as a necessary step to resolve tensions and bridge the cultural and emotional distance between people from various backgrounds. Like all the professional mediators theorized by Katan, they 'gauge cultural distance in terms of connotations, beliefs, values, and in general *affect*' (Katan 2013, 86, italics in original) and intervene to instate harmony and mutual understanding.

In 'Harbour', for example, Tony, 'an independent man, as a lover, as an artist and as a rebel from the trap of *parenti e paesani*' (*Songs*, 192, italics in original) and his mother Loretta mediate between Rose and Nonna Giovina. Rose is Tony's Australian wife and a Jewish former hippy with little cultural understanding of the Italian older generation and Nonna Giovina is Tony's Sicilian grandmother, 'the razor-tongued matriarch of the clan [...] brought out to Australia in the sixties by her eldest son, Gaetano' (*Songs*, 190). The story revolves around conflicts, arguments and 'cross-cultural family war[s] [...] between two very strong characters' (Dell'oso in Cafagna et al. 2000, 818), too far from one another emotionally to be in each other's space and with very little patience to interact with one another peacefully. Despite Rose's lack of appreciation of/for Nonna Giovina's good nature and Nonna Giovina's reluctance to welcome a '*puttana*' (*Songs*, 191, italics in original) into her family, Tony and Loretta continue to mediate between the two, showing conflict management skills and forbearance even under provocation. Tony, for instance, tries to clarify misunderstandings, by explaining his grandmother's non-threatening intentions with humour and patience, even when Nonna Giovina kidnaps his baby to be secretly baptized: '"What's the big deal?" Tony had said, unable to stop laughing as he comforted his firstborn, howling from her baptismal adventure. "A dago took my baby. So what?"' (*Songs*, 192). On a par with child language brokers operating in conflictual situations (Crafter and Iqbal 2020), Loretta omits information or any 'rich explicatory procedures' (Kwieciński quoted in Katan 2009, 80), by avoiding translating into Italian lengthy explanations of comfort-suckling, despite Rose's requests. To Loretta's mind, these explanations would be a gratuitous insult to the old woman's intelligence and maternal subjectivity (*Songs*, 208). Whether by adding or omitting information, Tony and Loretta manage to eschew considerable disagreements or the breaking of family ties.

Most of the clashes between Rose and Nonna Giovina are caused by the female characters' opposing views about how and when to mother. These views are linked to polarized views about the world, views which, as discussed earlier, have often been represented in Italian Australian literature as the cause of unsolvable intergenerational clashes. This is when mediation, as a way not only to provide care but to explain the value of care, becomes not only truly challenging but essential. Whereas Nonna Giovina wants to mother Rose and Rose's children, especially when she is sick and pregnant, Rose is too independent and emotionally self-sufficient to welcome the old woman's help and be part of the circulation of care regulating Nonna Giovina's family for generations. Rose does not want to be mothered or negotiate mothering approaches with the old woman whose caregiving is seen as intrusive, invasive, suffocating and controlling. Rose is too

culturally distant to appreciate the rationale behind Nonna Giovina's mothering practices, which come from a place of poverty and lack of resources other than the ones generated by the strength of her female body. 'Independent. Independent' — repeats the incredulous Nonna Giovina (*Songs*, 193–194) — 'What's this stupid thing, independent? Do you think I don't know what it's like to try to push out a baby from between my legs? With nobody to help me but my own still breastfed infant, God save me?'. Nonna Giovina wants to care for Rose, not just because she is used to caring for others (in Australia 'mothers and sisters were a ready source for babysitting and any other help required' [Vasta 1994, 410]) but because mothering has allowed her to validate her role as a caregiver and her position as a woman in society. As she claims, she has mothered children and grandchildren through wartime and migration, contributing to her family's endurance of hardships over the years (*Songs*, 197). She now expects Rose to capitalize on her experience and be helped. In Rose's eyes, Nonna Giovina is too traditional to understand that mothering practices, as sociocultural constructs, change and evolve and too inflexible to learn from Rose's 'maternal attitudes' (Ruddick quoted in Jeremiah 2006, 24). Nonna Giovina repeats: 'In my country we no do this. No woman does what you does' (*Songs*, 207). Tony and Loretta mediate at their best across conflicts and accusations, navigating between misunderstandings and misconstructions. Tony responds to the women's differing world views not just by supporting his grandmother's maternal attentions, but by contextualizing and translating the old woman's 'invasive' caregiving into endearing and plausible explanations: 'She [Nonna Giovina] only wants to help. [...] Come on, babe. We're talking about an old woman here. An old lady who doesn't understand. She's thinking that you hate her or something. [...] Nonna's done a lot of good things for our family' (*Songs*, 199–200). With little success, Tony also tries to persuade Rose to accept Nonna Giovina's 'intrusions': 'If it makes her happy to come over and cook you some *brodino* and help you with the kids or whatever, what's wrong with that?' (*Songs*, 200, italics in original).

Only Loretta's calm demeanour can succeed in managing the conflicts between Rose and Nonna Giovina. Loretta never expresses judgment and applies a non-confrontational approach to mediation, which Tony does not seem to possess, especially when he loses his temper, shouting at Rose: 'For Christ's sake get over this superwoman bullshit before we all go under' (*Songs*, 200). Loretta absorbs the women's anxiety and agitation with grace, letting her discomfort transpire only occasionally as the arguments escalate. She is the only one who can 'reason with the old woman' (*Songs*, 215), despite her complaints, and who is welcomed by Rose 'to give her a hand with the kids' (*Songs*, 192). She sits in the middle, understanding both women's viewpoints. She appreciates Nonna Giovina's practices, even if they are outdated, but she adapts to other ones too. Her mediational skills, therefore, stem from her being a migrant mother brought up between generations and modes of performing mothering, modes which are incompatible yet equally valuable. Her patience and empathy — typical of skilled mediators (Katan 2015, 378) — with the women's affective responses to each other's accusations are rewarded in the end, leading to a mediational success, especially when Rose is about to give birth: 'Rose took the old woman by the hand. For almost a full contraction they leaned on each other' (*Songs*, 220).

## Conclusion: Mothering and Mediation as Enabling Practices among Italian Australian Second-generation Women

Despite various debates on its effectiveness, the term generation 'continue[s] to have a high currency in different discourses, including feminism' (Giorgio and Waters 2007, 5). It is for Julia Kristeva a 'signifying space' (quoted in Giorgio and Waters 2007, 5), a space populated by women's reflections on their lives and experiences. In Dell'oso's work, each generation, and the second generation in particular, is a porous space, not a static one, incorporating intergenerational negotiations as a response to tensions. As discussed above, these negotiations are modelled on intercultural mediation and language brokering, namely strategizing moments of cultural and linguistic translation performed by Australians (children and adults) of Italian backgrounds. Thanks to these acts of intercultural mediation, this generation does not just sit in the middle of tensions but devises strategies to resolve them, allowing for dialogue and change. In so doing, they respond to Giorgio and Waters' understanding of 'generation' as 'a potential source of cohesion and change, solidarity and conflict' (2007, 5). As demonstrated here, the Italian Australian second generation portrayed by Dell'oso is a permeable space inhabited by women who construct their identity in relation to older generations and younger ones and are happy to shape who they are by helping others. Not only does investigating Dell'oso's work bring to the fore the conflicts characterizing the much-debated second generation, but it also offers insight into its participation in conflict resolution as well as provision of care. Contrary to some discursive representations depicting the second generations in Australia as 'being responsible for social conflict' (Baldassar 2011a, 269), Dell'oso demonstrates that the Italian Australian second-generation women express care by drawing on a plurality of voices and approaches to mediation across languages and cultures. In so doing, Dell'oso responds to the solution proposed by Stanford Friedman — invoked by Giorgio and Waters (2007, 6) — according to which we should describe the position of each generation by looking at 'the multiplicity of generational voices rather than the silencing of one by another'.

Mediation, as language brokering, marks the upbringing of Italian Australian children. Their lives, similar to the ones led by other second-generation migrants, should be seen as 'ordinary', contrary to the claims of some scholars (in Crafter and Iqbal 2021). Dell'oso helps us see that child language brokering is not an anomalous or irregular activity, even if it triggers an 'accelerated transition to adulthood' (Crafter and Iqbal 2021, 4). It is part of migrant families' normalcy, where 'mothering is often dispersed among female kin and others [...] including fathers [...], siblings [...], grandmothers, sisters and friends' (Barlow and Chapin 2010, 326). Crafter and Iqbal (2021) explain that childhood is a cultural construction, which has different connotations in different contexts. This does not mean that some configurations are abnormal or that children are subjected to irregular treatment. In migratory contexts, childhood might be experienced in a different way, a way which enables them to partake in the 'caregiving continuum' and cultivation of 'attentive love' (Ruddick quoted in Jeremiah 2006, 24). Rachele Antonini (2015) and Crafter and Iqbal (2021) clarify that even if child language brokering might occasionally cause stress, it also offers positive and constructive opportunities to experience care. Care, love and the protection of the marginal are essential qualities to the advancement of a multicultural society, as Dell'oso tells us. No wonder the female narrator in 'Love by Arrangement',

working as a researcher and detective, employs her mediation skills to save women's lives. Care is also a value that children inherit from their Italian migrant parents with the same intensity as that observed by Giorgio (2015, 60) among Italian families in New Zealand. The attention paid by Dell'oso to represent the second generation as a 'bridge' between culturally diverse groups is commendable and needed, as it could encourage young people, who do not seem to consider interpreting a career option (Cho 2016), to appreciate the value of interculturality and mediation. Finally, by placing mediation at the centre of the cross-cultural communicative act, Dell'oso affords to it the same weight as the one given by Katan (2015, 367) who stresses the need for governments and experts to acknowledge the vital role played by mediation in the interpretation profession (2015, 367). As Meyer et al. claim: 'Outcomes are most likely to improve if interpreters are assigned a role of not only translating [intended as a mere linguistic activity] but also of acting as cultural brokers, mediators, and advocates' (quoted in Hale 2007, 45). A number of Interpreting Studies experts, in favour of a non-mediator approach to interpreting, are still sceptical, maintaining that this is a 'bold' statement that 'needs to be explored and substantiated' (Hale 2007, 45).

Through the mediation lens, Dell'oso shows 'the reciprocity of cultural exchanges', to borrow Francesco Ricatti's (2018, 3) words, and, especially, the power of mothering practices, practices which are still very attractive to women including migrant and working ones (as demonstrated by Giorgio 2015). In *Songs of the Suitcase*, mothering is shared, exchanged and circulated between the female characters, comprising mothers and daughters. As Jeremiah (2006) claims, it is more accurate and realistic to say that one mothers instead of claiming that one is a mother, thus including a multiplicity of agents. In Dell'oso's work, these agents, and in particular the female agents, fashion, negotiate and mediate mothering practices to respond to the challenges posed by migration to Australia. Mothers and daughters are co-responsible for the enactment of motherly care which fosters mediation, as relational as mothering, and the protection of the marginal and the weak. Dell'oso's work, intended to project a positive appreciation of intercultural mediation, also shows that women and, in particular those who mother, are better at mediating than men (such as Tony) who struggle to perform such a function. As the female narrator of 'Harvest Day' declares: 'Becoming a mother means walking around seeing everybody with new eyes, even mass murderers, dictators and torturers. It is astonishing to realise that everyone in the world was once new, wet, helpless and hungry, with a mouth straining for milk' (*Songs*, 113). Conversely, mediating allows the female interpreter with mothering roles not just to liaise between parties in bodily proximity, but to act 'as' them and, therefore, to embody their world view (Cronin 2006, 88), developing empathy and emotional intelligence. Capable of embodiment and part of a 'caregiving continuum', Ninetta spends her pregnancy envisioning her mother's bodily feelings as a pregnant woman and shortening the emotional and cultural distance from her, especially after escaping from her. Ninetta's ultimate reflections on mothering practices (applied to children and received by a mother) are facilitated by her ability to mediate, namely to be in someone else's shoes, enacting an incessant role-playing and promoting perceptions of 'equity' and a non-hierarchical relation between mothers and daughters.[5] Quoting Carl Jung, the female narrator concludes that 'every mother carries her daughter in herself and every daughter her mother, and every woman extends backwards into her mother and forward into her daughter' (*Songs*, 60–61). In Dell'oso's work, mothering and mediation are enabling practices. Performed by

female characters, they help them to understand one another, promote an ethics of care and contribute to harmony and solidarity.

## Notes

1. I use the expression 'migration literature' following Sandra Vlasta's (2016) conceptualization of it. According to Vlasta, 'migration literature' refers to texts produced to represent experiences of migration. These texts have not necessarily been written by migrants.
2. In citations, *Songs of the Suitcase* is abbreviated to *Songs*.
3. Daniel Aaron says that the 'hyphenate' writer is a writer who comes from a 'minority' culture and is kept at 'hyphen's length' from a dominant culture (quoted in Scarparo and Wilson 2004, 170). This view has been supported by other scholars, such as Anthony Julian Tamburri (1991). In this article, the adjective 'Italian Australian' has intentionally no hyphen, following Aaron's and Tamburri's rationale.
4. Baldassar and Merla (2014) look at the 'circulation of care' among all family members, but they do not deny the fact that care is provided mainly by women in many contexts (2014, 25). This article uses their framework to shed light on the circulation of care primarily among those who carry 'the burden' of it, namely women and girls.
5. I use the term 'equity' as Louise K. Martell (1991) uses it to refer to the relations between pregnant women and their mothers and assess whether these relations are based on fairness and equal treatment.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Department of Languages, Cultures and Visual Studies, University of Exeter, and especially the colleagues who have read this article and have given me precious feedback. I have particularly appreciated my colleagues' engagement with my interpretation of Nonna Giovina (whose personality is 'intense' - to say the least! - but also adorable) and my reading of Italian Australian literature vis-à-vis theories of mediation and translation. I would like to thank my colleagues for sharing their thoughts with me, their experiences of translation and their visions of motherhood. Our online and in-person conversations have helped me to reflect on why it is important to discuss acts of translation and mothering practices in migratory contexts. Finally, my colleagues' time is testament to their academic generosity and, more generally, the intellectually stimulating community which our Department continues to nurture.

## Disclosure Statement

All of the data and the analysis produced are contained within this publication. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes on contributor

*Eliana Maestri* is Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies and Director of the Centre for Translating Cultures, University of Exeter. Her research focuses on the interplay between translation, mobility, gender, and visual culture. Maestri is the project lead of *12 Stories for 12 Days of COP27* supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England (2022-23) to translate stories on climate change into artwork. She was also the recipient of a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award to co-organize the 2019 Exeter Translation Festival and of a 2019 Europe Network Grant (Global Partnerships, Exeter) with KU Leuven, Belgium, to study street art. Other previous awards include a EUOSSIC Erasmus Mundus Post-Doctoral Fellowship in European Studies, University of Sydney and University of Bath (2011-2012), and a MEEUC Research Fellowship, Monash

University, Melbourne (2014). Together with colleagues from KU Leuven, the University of Exeter and IUAV University of Venice, Maestri is one of the core faculty members of the Venice International University Summer School: *Linguistic Landscapes: Using Signs and Symbols to Translate Cities*. She has published on interpretations of Europe among migrants in Australia, on translations of mobile traditions into Italian Australian folk music (with Rita Wilson), on street art in anti-mafia contexts (with Inge Lanslots and Paul Sambre) and on translations of languages and cityscapes into the visual arts, with particular attention to prominent artist Jon Cattapan. Her monograph *Translating the Female Self across Cultures* appeared in the 2018 John Benjamins Translation Library.

## References

### Primary sources

Dell'oso, Anna Maria. 1998. *Songs of the Suitcase*. Sydney and London: Flamingo.

### Secondary sources

Akbari, Alireza, and Parviz Ahmadi Darani. 2017. "The Status of Intercultural Mediation in Translation: Is It an Absolute Licence?" *Topics in Linguistics* 18 (1): 59–70. doi:10.1515/topling-2017-0005.

Antonini, Rachele. 2015. "Unseen Forms of Interpreting: Child Language Brokering in Italy." The Intercultural Question and the Interpreting Professions, *Cultus: The Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication* 8: 96–112.

AustLit. 2002. "Anna Maria Dell'oso." St Lucia: University of Queensland. Accessed 29 January 2022. https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A22492

Baldassar, Loretta. 1999. "Marias and Marriage: Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality among Italo-Australian Youth in Perth." *Journal of Sociology* 35 (1): 1–22. doi:10.1177/144078339903500101.

Baldassar, Loretta. 2011a. "Italian Migrants in Australia and Their Relationship to Italy: Return Visits, Transnational Caregiving and the Second Generation." *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 20 (2): 255–282.

Baldassar, Loretta. 2011b. "Second Generation Incorporation and Inclusion in Australia." In *Immigration in the Financial Crisis: The United States and Australia Compared*, edited by John Higley, John Nieuwenhuysen and Stine Neerup, 105–124. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Baldassar, Loretta, and Laura Merla. 2014. "Introduction: Transnational Family Caregiving through the Lens of Circulation." In *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life*, edited by Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla, 3–24. New York; London: Routledge.

Barlow, Kathleen, and Bambi L. Chapin. 2010. "The Practice of Mothering: An Introduction." Mothering as Everyday Practice, *Ethos* 38 (4): 324–338.

Bode, Rita. 2010. "Mother to Daughter: Muted Maternal Feminism in the Fiction of Sandra Cisneros." In *Textual Mothers/Maternal Texts: Motherhood in Contemporary Women's Literatures*, edited by Elizabeth Podnieks and Andrea O'Reilly, 287–301. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Cafagna, Josephine, Teresa Crea, Anna Maria Dell'oso, Melina Marchetta, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, and Virginia Trioli. 2000. "Panel Discussion on Exploring Identity and Community through the Arts and Culture." In *In Search of the Italian Australian into the New Millennium*, edited by Piero Genovesi and Walter Musolino, 797–840. Melbourne: Gro-Set Pty.

Calvino, Italo. [1988] 2011. "Appendice: Cominciare e finire." In *Lezioni americane: Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio*, 123–142. Milan: Oscar Mondadori.

Castles, Stephen. 1991. "Italians in Australia: Building a Multicultural Society on the Pacific Rim." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1 (1): 45–66. doi:10.1353/dsp.1991.0000.

Chesher, Terry. 1997. "Rhetoric and Reality: Two Decades of Community Interpreting and Translating in Australia." In *Interpreters in the Community: Papers from the 1st International Conference on Interpreting in Legal, Health and Social Service Settings* (Geneva Park, Canada, 1–4 June 1995), edited by Silvana E. Carr, Roda P. Roberts, Aideen Dufour and Dini Steyn, 277–289. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Cho, Jinhyun. 2016. "Would You Mind if Your Child Wanted to Become an Interpreter?" *Language on the Move*. Accessed 15 July 2021. https://www.languageonthemove.com/would-you-mind-if-your-child-wanted-to-become-an-interpreter/

Christou, Anastasia, Adalgisa Giorgio, and Gill Rye. 2015. "Mothering and Migration: Interdisciplinary Dialogues, European Perspectives and International Contexts: Introduction." *Women's Studies International Forum* 52: 49–52. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2015.07.001.

Christou, Anastasia, and Domna Michail. 2015. "Migrating Motherhood and Gendering Exile: Eastern European Women Narrate Migrancy and Homing." *Women's Studies International Forum* 52: 71–81. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2015.06.005.

Chu, Clara. 1999. "Immigrant Children Mediators (ICM): Bridging the Literacy Gap in Immigrant Communities." *The New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship* 5 (1): 85–94. doi:10.1080/13614549909510616.

Cline, Tony, Sarah Crafter, Lindsay O'Dell and Guida de Abreu. 2011. "Young People's Representations of Language Brokering." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 32 (3): 207–220. doi:10.1080/01434632.2011.558901.

Cosmini-Rose, Daniela, and Irene Belperio. 2015. "Intergenerational Caring Roles: Caregiving Practices and Filial Responsibilities among Second Generation Italian Women in South Australia." In *Ageing between Cultures: The Experiences and Challenges of Italian Migrants in South Australia*, edited by Daniela Cosmini-Rose, 101–123. Kibworth, Leicester: Troubador.

Crafter, Sarah, and Humera Iqbal. 2020. "The Contact Zone and Dialogical Positionalities in 'Non-Normative' Childhoods: How Children Who Language Broker Manage Conflict." *Review of General Psychology* 24 (1): 31–42. doi:10.1177/1089268019896354.

Crafter, Sarah, and Humera Iqbal. 2021. "Child Language Brokering as a Family Care Practice: Reframing the 'Parentified Child' Debate." *Children & Society* 00: 1–15. Online first. 10.1111/chso.12485.

Cronin, Michael. 2006. *Translation and Identity*. London; New York: Routledge.

De Tona, Carla. 2011. "Mothering Contradictory Diasporas: Negotiation of Traditional Motherhood Roles among Italian Migrant Women in Ireland." In *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World*, edited by Loretta Baldassar and Donna R. Gabaccia, 101–112. New York: Fordham University.

Dell'oso, Anna Maria. 1989. *Cats, Cradles and Chamomile Tea*. Hornsby: Random House Australia.

Gatt-Rutter, John. 2014. *The Bilingual Cockatoo*. Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers.

Gelinas, Denise J. 1988. "Family Therapy: Characteristic Family Constellation and Basic Therapeutic Stance." In *Vulnerable Populations: Evaluation and Treatment of Sexually Abused Children and Adult Survivors*, edited by Suzanne M. Sgroi, 25–49. New York: Lexington Books.

Giorgio, Adalgisa. 2015. "The Italian Family, Motherhood and Italianness in New Zealand. The Case of the Italian Community of Wellington." *Women's Studies International Forum* 52: 53–62. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2015.06.002.

Giorgio, Adalgisa, and Carla A. Houkamau. 2019. "Flexible Identities: Narratives of Māori Italians in New Zealand." *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 48 (2): 27–40.

Giorgio, Adalgisa, and Julia Waters. 2007. "Introduction: Gender, Generation, Legacy." In *Women's Writing in Western Europe: Gender, Generation and Legacy"*, edited by Adalgisa Giorgio and Julia Waters, 1–19. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Gunew, Sneja, and Wenche Ommundsen. 2018. "From White Australia to the Asian Century: Literature and Migration in Australia." In *Immigrant and Ethnic-Minority Writers since 1945: Fourteen National Contexts in Europe and Beyond*, edited by Wiebke Sievers and Sandra Vlasta, 9–42. Boston: Leiden.

Hale, Sandra Beatriz. 2007. *Community Interpreting*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Herrero-Arias, Raquel, Ragnhild Hollekim, Haldis Haukanes, and Åse Vagli. 2021. "The Emotional Journey of Motherhood in Migration: The Case of Southern European Mothers in Norway." *Migration Studies* 9 (3): 1230–1249. doi:10.1093/migration/mnaa006.

Jeremiah, Emily. 2006. "Motherhood to Mothering and Beyond: Maternity in Recent Feminist Thought." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8 (1–2): 21–33.

Katan, David. [1999] 2014. *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*. London and New York: Routledge.

Katan, David. 2009. "Translation as Intercultural Communication." In *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, edited by Jeremy Munday, 74–92. London: Routledge.

Katan, David. 2013. "Intercultural Mediation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies*, edited by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, 84–91. Vol. 4. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Katan, David. 2015. "La mediazione linguistica interculturale: Il mediatore culturale e le sue competenze." *Lingue e Linguaggi* 16 (special issue): 365–391.

Lee, Helen. 2008. "Second Generation Transnationalism." In *Ties to the Homeland: Second Generation Transnationalism*, edited by Helen Lee, 1–32. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Maestri, Eliana. 2014. "Quale Europa? In Italia o in Australia? Percezioni e visioni europee degli italiani australiani di seconda e terza generazione." In *Cultura e costruzione del culturale: Fabbriche dei pensieri in Italia nel novecento e verso il terzo millennio*, edited by Ilona Fried, 263–298. Budapest: Ponte Alapítvány.

Maestri, Eliana. 2020. "Visualizing Spatialization at a Crossroads between Translation and Mobility: Italian Australian Artist Jon Cattapan's Cityscapes." In *Transcultural Italies: Mobility, Memory and Translation*, edited by Charles Burdett, Loredana Polezzi and Barbara Spadaro, 179–206. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Maestri, Eliana, and Rita Wilson. 2017. "Singing Translators and Mobile Traditions: Cross-Cultural Performances of Italian Folk Music in Contemporary Australia." *LEA: Lingue e Letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente* 6: 141–156. doi:10.13128/LEA-1824-484x-22334.

Marino, Simone. 2020. *Intergenerational Ethnic Identity Construction and Transmission among Italian-Australians: Absence, Ambivalence and Revival*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martell, Louise K. 1991. "Perceptions of Equity by Mothers and Daughters during Daughters' First Pregnancy." *Family Relations* 39 (3): 305–310. doi:10.2307/584876.

McPhaul, Terence. 2005. *The Psychology of Hip Hop*. New York: iUniverse.

Papalia, Gerardo. 2008. "Migrating Madonnas: The Madonna Della Montagna Di Polsi in Calabria and in Australia." *Fulgor* 3 (3): 57–71.

Rando, Gaetano. 2003. "La narrativa italoaustraliana tra prima e seconda generazione." *AltreItalie: International Journal of Studies on the Peoples of Italian Origin in the World* 27: 133–139.

Rando, Gaetano. 2015. "La narrativa italoaustraliana della seconda generazione." *AltreItalie: International Journal of Studies on the Peoples of Italian Origin in the World* 50: 133–141.

Rando, Gaetano, and Gerry Turcotte, eds. 2007. *Literary and Social Diasporas: An Italian Australian Perspective*. Brussels: Peter Lang.

Ricatti, Francesco. 2008. "Histories of Madness: The Abject Perspective of Italian Women in Australia." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 54 (3): 434–449. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8497.2008.00508.x.

Ricatti, Francesco. 2018. *Italians in Australia: History, Memory, Identity*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rorato, Laura. 2018. "Narratives of Displacement: The Challenges of Motherhood and Mothering in Semi-fictional Works by Laura Pariani, Mary Melfi and Donatella Di Pierantonio." *International Journal of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies* 6 (1): 75–82. doi:10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.6n.1p.75.

Rye, Gill, Victoria Browne, Adalgisa Giorgio, Emily Jeremiah, and Abigail Lee Six. 2018. "Introduction: Motherhood in Literature and Culture." In *Motherhood in Literature and Culture: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from Europe*, edited by Gill Rye, Victoria Browne, Adalgisa Giorgio, Emily Jeremiah and Abigail Lee Six, 1–13. London: Routledge.

Sapucci, Michele. 2007. "Dealing with Second Generations." In *Literary and Social Diasporas: An Italian Australian Perspective*, edited by Gerry Turcotte and Gaetano Rando, 219–227. Brussels: Peter Lang.

Scarparo, Susanna, and Rita Wilson. 2004. "Imagining Homeland in Anna Maria Dell'oso's Autofictions." In *Across Genres, Generations and Borders: Italian Women Writing Lives*, edited by Susanna Scarparo and Rita Wilson, 169–182. Newark: University of Delaware Press.

Schans, Djamila, and Helga de Valk. 2011. "Filial Obligations among Immigrants and Native Dutch: A Comparison of Perceptions and Behaviour among Ethnic Groups and Generations." In *Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration*, edited by Albert Kraler, Eleonore Kofman, Martin Kohli and Camille Schmoll, 99–120. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Schultermandl, Silvia. 2009. *Transnational Matrilineage: Mother-Daughter Conflicts in Asian American Literature*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Smith Silva, Dorsía. 2014. "Representing and Transforming Latina/Chicana Mothering." In *Mothers, Mothering and Motherhood across Cultural Differences: A Reader*, edited by Andrea O'Reilly, 229–254. Bradford: Demeter Press.

Tamburri, Anthony Julian. 1991. *To Hyphenate or Not to Hyphenate. The Italian/American Writer: An* Other *American*. Montréal: Guernica Editions.

Vasta, Ellie. 1994. "Cultural and Social Change: Italian-Australian Women and the Second Generation." The Columbus People: Perspectives in Italian Immigration to the Americas and Australia, *Center for Migration Studies* 11 (3): 406–425.

Vasta, Ellie. 2008. "L'emigrazione storica della Sicilia all'Australia: Le ultime generazioni ed il loro legame con la terra di origine." *Neos: Rivista di storia dell'emigrazione siciliana* 2 (1): 107–116.

Vlasta, Sandra. 2016. *Contemporary Migration Literature in German and English: A Comparative Study*. Leiden, Netherlands; Boston, Massachusetts: Brill Rodopi.

Wilson, Rita. 2007. "Cultural (Re)locations: Narratives by Contemporary Italian Australian Women." In *Literary and Social Diasporas: An Italian Australian Perspective*, edited by Gaetano Rando and Gerry Turcotte, 147–164. Brussels: Peter Lang.

Wilson, Rita. 2008. "Excuse Me Is Our Heritage Showing? Representations of Diasporic Experiences across the Generations." *Fulgor* 3 (3): 98–112.