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Panel: Bridges of Meaning: Italian Literature from the Canon to Contemporary Voices

Title

Negotiation of Meaning in Post-Migrant Narratives: African-Italian Perspectives

Abstract

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This paper examines the concept of negotiation of meaning as a literary strategy adopted by authors often classified as “migrants,” with particular reference to three works *fuga dalle tenebre* by Jean-Paul Pougala, *Il mio viaggio della speranza dal Senegal all'Italia in cerca di fortuna* by Bay Mademba, and *Ama il tuo sogno. Vita e rivolta nella dell'oro rosso* by Yvan Sagnet. The first part of the article introduces the concept of negotiation of meaning, a term borrowed from interactional linguistics and conversational analysis, in order to explore its potential applications in the literary domain.

The analysis highlights how negotiation of meaning, understood as a process of explicative “transactions,” becomes a textual practice through which authors clarify, redefine, and contest cultural categories. In Pougala’s and Mademba’s narratives, terms such as *fratello* acquire shifting values, sometimes marking solidarity, at other times irony, and at times exclusion, thus exposing the precariousness of shared semantic ground. These strategies often rely on citation, reported dialogue, and paratextual markers such as italics and quotation marks, which guide the reader in recognizing the contextualized nature of meaning. Likewise, when dealing with traditional practices—such as mourning rituals, accusations of witchcraft, or hierarchies of kinship—the authors explicitly clarify, distance themselves from, or reframe these cultural codes, thereby positioning themselves as critical observers.

Short Biography

Jovana Karanikij Josimovska is Assistant Professor of Italian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Philology, Goce Delcev University, Stip, North Macedonia. She obtained her M.A. in “Culture and Languages” from the University of Perugia with a thesis on identity construction in Italian migrant literature, and holds a Master’s degree in “European Literature” from the University of Bologna. Her main research interests include Italian literature and culture, the didactics of Italian as a foreign language, translation studies, and intercultural communication. She has published numerous scholarly articles in international journals and edited volumes, focusing particularly on literary translation, autobiographical writing, and the reception of authors such as Calvino in Macedonian. She is co-author of the student manual *Italian Literature of the Baroque, Enlightenment and Neoclassicism* and has participated in several research projects in the humanities.

She is also an experienced literary translator, with several notable translations from Italian into Macedonian, including *L'Arminuta* by Donatella Di Pietrantonio, *La scienza del mangiare bene* by Pellegrino Artusi, and *Abel* by Alessandro Baricco. In addition, she works as a sworn translator for Italian–Macedonian and vice versa.

Her academic excellence and dedication to Italian studies have been recognized by national and international institutions, such as the Italian Government, which included her among former Italian students worldwide for her contribution to the promotion of Italian language and culture, and the Goce Delcev University, Stip, North Macedonia which awarded her Acknowledgement for Scientific Contribution in November 2023.

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