

RECENSIONI

Maria Gabriella Canfarelli,

Provi di lingua matri. Mascalucia: Edizioni Novecento, 2019.

La raccolta *Provi di lingua matri* di Maria Gabriella Canfarelli invita il lettore, attraverso il dialetto, a riconoscere un mondo ormai lontano. Un mondo che è tuttavia fondativo della complessiva personalità poetica dell'autrice catanese.

Il testo in lingua dialettale o meglio neo-volgare – come si usa dire oggi da poeti e critici impegnati in questo settore – si iscrive nel percorso artistico della Canfarelli quale esperienza unica e originale in quanto la poetessa aveva già pubblicato alcune raccolte poetiche nondimeno in lingua italiana ed altre se ne sarebbero aggiunte in seguito.

Ma come s'è detto più sopra, quel suo lavoro in dialetto è stato fondamentale per lei. Tanto che i curatori del volume *Dalle carte dell'isola. Libro della poesia neo-volgare siciliana* (2021), Gualtiero De Santi e Renato Pennisi, impressa per i tipi della Collana Poetica della Nuova Carabba, hanno ritenuto di doverla accogliere accanto ad autori di lunga tenuta e più riconosciuta fama antologizzando le composizioni nelle quali la sperimentazione linguistica poteva orientare il lettore verso una “forma di poesia sensibile e reale” (p. 186) importante in questo tipo di scrittura. “Il mito delle radici primordiali,” – scrive

appunto Gualtiero De Santi – “che appartiene a tanti poeti del nostro tempo, mantiene la propria forma nelle linee cadenzali di trasmissione nel dialetto e in una visione agonistica e conflittuale dei legami sociali e interpersonali” (p. 185).

La musicalità della parola presente nei versi di Cantarelli crea un tempo iniziale che consente di entrare in empatia con l'autrice. Le sillabe cullano chi legge nella dolcezza delle parole che descrivono infanzia ed adolescenza. La voce della poetessa è somigliante a un sibilo del vento che il lettore deve saper cogliere e ascoltare perché egli diventi l'interlocutore di queste storie ambientate in Sicilia. Una delle quali racconta come la lingua, che si impara a scuola, sia distante dal linguaggio della vita quotidiana. “Quann'èru nica, / sicca 'nte robbi, ca ci puteva / natari comu'n pisci, / m'abbuffuniavi arrirennu / picchè parravu taliànu. Fossi / ppi t'addumannavi cu era / dda figghia ca jeva a scola / e s'inznigava a lèggi e scriviri / e nenti sapeva da vita” (p. 14)¹.

I versi fanno emergere le emozioni che lei sente dentro di sé, specchio dei sentimenti che affiorano attraverso flash narrativi che compongono un autoritratto della scrittrice, nella cui lingua si conserva una memoria che si fa nitida grazie al pensiero e allo sguardo continuo sul passato; ciò che favorisce la formazione di immagini che danno vita al verso.

La parola materializza le idee e i ricordi dei personaggi cari alla poetessa come la madre e la nonna. Ma, particolarmente, nella prolungata soggettività con cui lei dialoga con il mondo esterno, compare a volte la figura della Madre che le parla in dialetto. Le parole materne sono impresse nella mente e sono trasferite su fogli di carta per raccontare una situazione di vita.

Maria Gabriella Confarelli descrive per accumuli emotivi, sovrapposizioni di immagini, utilizzando specifiche costruzioni linguistiche: “Provu, nun pozzu fari autru / ca pruvati a pigghiarilli / che manu 'noto funnu, / annijati 'nto scruru, spirduti / - appoi taliari” (p. 16)². Frasi che si ripetono, come elementi ossessivi, per sottolineare l'importanza della memoria. Inoltre, la poetessa

¹ “Quant'ero piccina, / secca nei vestiti, che ci potevo / nuotare come un pesce, / mi schernivi ridendo / perché parlavo italiano. Forse / per questo non ci capivamo / forse ti chiedevi chi era / quella figlia che andava a scuola / e imparava a leggere e scrivere / e niente sapeva della vita” (p. 15).

² “Provo, altro non posso fare / che provare a prenderle / con le mani sul fondo, / annegate nel buio, disperse / - poi guardare” (p. 16).

sembra immersa nella solitudine che è esternata per divenire una condizione per scrivere.

Si tratta di un dialogo intimo e psicologico, che lei sa raggiungere grazie alla “guarigione dell’anima”. Poche parole nate dalle suggestioni della natura che infondono in lei un senso d’appagamento poi trasferito nei tornanti della poesia e in quelle esercitazioni di lingua madre che la spingeranno al dialetto, attraverso composizioni accompagnate da tioletti che introducono l’argomento.

La riflessione della poetessa è in forma di frammento e viene inquadrata all’interno di un arco temporale dove il lettore ritrova i diversi momenti della giornata. Parole e ricordi viaggiano sulla stessa lunghezza d’onda. Inoltre, gli oggetti della casa e la natura creano la memoria involontaria che stimola l’autrice in quel suo dialogo continuo con sé e con il mondo circostante.

Le molte e puntuali percezioni sono ordinate da riflessioni, da accostamenti di immagini e da ricordi che si mescolano ai momenti più recenti. La nominazione degli oggetti crea una sorta di mappa degli ambienti della casa dove l’autrice è vissuta da bambina. Così Canfarelli rivive infinite volte quei momenti impressi nella sua memoria: “Parru u dialettu / ppi fàrimi sèntiri / picchi s’accapu a vuci, sugnu vacati / cascia di lignu / ca un voli altri jorna / appinnuti ‘nto filu, / nun nni voli sapiri” (p. 17)³. L’io narrante – perché anche di questo si parla – acquista un insolito spessore temporale e psicologico, in un racconto che si distingue dal personaggio di un romanzo in quanto prevede solo la coscienza intima di sé e del proprio valore.

Il mondo descritto dalla Canfarelli è sempre denso di emozioni che sovrastano il pensiero logico dell’autrice. Così la poetessa si chiede se il turbinio delle emozioni debba essere stemperato dalla ragione. Nella quotidianità, si presentano situazioni che interrompono il dialogo interiore con la parola. L’aurea poetica è allora immaginata come condizione di vita sublunare – dove le nuvole rappresentano la creatività: di “chiddi ca spaccunu u cori / e u dannu nun si viri. I me’, che manu nzirradi / can un u volunu fari passari” (p. 18).

Come si riesce a cogliere da questo passaggio, la scrittura descrive il processo creativo con cui lei arriva alla parola in versi. Attraverso la visione onirica, espressione di una natura sensibile, Canfarelli introduce nel racconto

³ “Parlo il dialetto / per farmi sentire / perché la voce è finita / sono vuoto / baule di legno / che non vuole altri giorni / appesi sul filo, / non ne vuole sapere” (p. 17).

elementi soggettivi per chiarire il suo rapporto con il mondo dell'arte: "Chiangi, jetti ruluri e schigghiunu / i to' anni picciriddi / tuppuliuunu / co sangu 'nte manu, foggia / ca trema e voli l'abburu" (p. 19)⁴.

C'è infine, nelle parole di Canfarelli, una sacralità immanente al mondo che viene descritto. Ma occorre dire che la parola sacra è paragonata alla parola materna, primordiale e popolare come se nella cultura della casa e dell'esistenza quotidiana si rinvenisse e rivedesse la luce divina che illumina gli spazi domestici.

Andrea Carnevali
andrea.carnevali37@gmail.com

⁴ "[...] di quelli che spaccano il cuore/e il danno non si vede. / I miei, con le mani serrate / che non vogliono farlo passare" (p. 18).

Maria Minnis,

Tarot for the Hard Work. An Archetypal Journey to Confront Racism and inspire Collective Healing. Newbury Port, MA: Weiser Books, 2024.

Tarot for the Hard Work is a provocative exploration of the Major Arcana. Maria Minnis lives in Los Angeles, where she runs a community program called the “Antiracist Tarot Society”. Her aim is to cultivate a more equitable and empathetic planet, and to this end she proposes Tarot as a tool to combat and dismantle racism in all its forms.

The striking innovation of this book is its multifaceted nature. It is not just a breaking news in terms of Tarology: on the contrary, it is above all a powerful essay against stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes, and racism. And a precious guide for everybody. No cards appear – no drawings, nor photos, nor magic formulas – but all the Major Arcana are introduced one by one and thoroughly analyzed. And the bibliography is an amazing list of essays and books about ethnicity, oppression, othering, disability, decolonization, sex criminalization, black womanhood, and social justice. Something you do not usually find on the shelves of card-reading books. The reason? This book – in its author’s words – is “a tool for passionately demolishing structural oppression” besides being a “tool of self-discovery” (pp. xiii, 1). According to the author, it is fundamental (today more than ever) to fight against internalized racism. For this reason, she includes tragic episodes of racism in the various sections of the book, alternating the archetypal figures of traditional Tarot with the real persons we are or would like to become – whether white or black.

The text opens with the Fool (0), “a trouble-maker, a risk-taker, someone who doesn’t [...] have the answers” (p. 7). The Fool defies the status quo and welcomes the unknown like a child. Still more – the Fool is ready to be a stranger in a strange land, which includes listening to others’ narratives of oppression and respecting the victims. The Magician (1) follows: this person is skilled in planning actions, in visualizing a completely equitable society, and in creating magic because they believe real change is possible. The next one is the High Priestess (2), who disseminates knowledge in the name of collective healing. This character, just like the Empress (3), is traditionally female, but

Minnis is extremely accurate in treating all figures according to a non-binary paradigm. The Empress – whatever their gender may be – is both a protector and a fighter and is particularly sensitive to the interconnectedness of all things. Similarly, the Emperor (4) is not necessarily a male. It is just a leader who cares for the collectivity and can give shape to creative ideas. Utopistic as it may sound, this is a leadership without patriarchy.

The Hierophant (5) – an uncommon definition that refers to someone who can understand and explain sacred things – is at once student and teacher, a nonconformist able to keep archives and to help us develop faith in learning and growth. The card of the Lovers (6) does not only celebrate love, but the difference between people, and though it traditionally shows a young man and a young woman, it “can actually queer the idea of love” (p. 71). This card is also called “Choice”. The next one, the Chariot (7), tells us that excessive baggage can decelerate and overcomplicate our journey. We must choose from many roads. To do so we need Strength (8), by which we shall be able to face such big planetary problems as – for example – climate change.

The Hermit (9) represents further reinforcement and purification through introspection, symbolized by a lantern that shines not only on himself, but on the whole community. The Wheel of Fortune (10) “is reminiscent of the universe’s unpredictability” and “embodies the reality that everything changes” (p. 114). It invites us to take advantage of new opportunities, motivates us when there are difficulties, and helps combat fear, anxiety, and self-doubt. The next card, Justice (11), advocates for fairness, integrity, and honesty. It admits oppression and symbolizes the necessity of remedying the harm done. Racism, capitalism, and hegemony must be fought and deconstructed. The Hanged One (12) means that sometimes we need to look at the world from a radically different perspective. We must be flexible enough to change our worldwide view. A dramatic example is violence against the Black. Death (13) follows, but it can just mean the necessity of a radical clearing; it is “an alarm-clock, a call to awaken” (p. 150), a change that is a bridge to something better.

Temperance (14) is also called the “art card”: Temperance and the Magician are both alchemists, and in particular the former combines, extracts, and balances elements. It also encourages social change and reinforces values and ideas. The Devil (15) wants power and gratification, but sometimes this card

orders us to try harder – e.g. have we really become (thanks to Temperance) good anti-racists? The Tower (16) asks us an even more crucial question: do we want to return to the Devil's chain or prefer the Star? Sometimes one must destroy (i.e. break a friendship, leave a job, move to another city) to move on. "Tower moments include the crisis of realization and the responsibility of repair [...] When the Tower falls, there's no going back" (pp. 185-86). The Star (17) rises from the Tower's ashes: "Our past biases and adverse behaviors no longer obscure our innate shine. [...] The Star is a reminder that we are on the right path, even if the road is dimly lit" (p. 195). Thanks to the Star we appreciate that everything is interconnected. The Moon (18) or 'night card' fully reveals our inner selves before we return to the outer world. It also reminds us that we live under the same moon as our ancestors. Also, the Moon helps marginalized people to fight oppression and gives comfort to troubled souls. The Moon shines more brightly on those who have 'diverted' from the 'norm'. It speaks to our subconscious and our primal feelings.

The Sun (19) reminds us that all life on the planet depends on its light. The Sun builds, supports, and sustains systems and decision, be they individual or collective. It gives way to Judgement (20), which announces that it's time to begin a new stage of life. This does not mean to repudiate our past – we did our best. But this is a time of reflection and self-evaluation: "Judgement meets us at a crossroads and reminds us of our volition. We can choose to stay or to move toward a more liberated world" (p. 233). The World (21) concludes the cycle: all endings are also new starts. We must remember that we are part of something bigger.

All chapters include exercises, meditation, and a page where to write one's experiences with, and reactions to, privilege, implicit bias, cross-cultural interactions, and so on. What we can learn from this text is that beside literary theory, cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology, there exists a dimension which is sometimes neglected, but participates in the debates and hot topics of our time. Prejudices, racism, oppression, inequality can be tackled with many instruments, among which even popular wisdom can find its place. Tarot has undoubtedly a cultural and historical relevance as an ancient method of divination. However, by dealing with ethnicity, gender issues, and climate change, it can also become an unconventional, up-to-date political tool. This

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book, as we have seen, certainly goes beyond mere cartomancy and reveals the major issues we are called to deal with as human beings and citizens.

Alessandra Calanchi
alessandra.calanchi@uniurb.it

Enrica Rossi,

New Perspectives for Language Education: From Global English to Global Citizenship. Genzano di Roma: Aracne, 2024.

In her book *New Perspectives for Language Education: From Global English to Global Citizenship*, Enrica Rossi investigates with a keen and perceptive eye the intricate connections between the global dominance of the English language, globalization, and the need for sustainable and fair language education that nurtures Global Citizenship. The work employs the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to illustrate how integrating sustainable education with language teaching can effectively promote intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

As such, at a time when perhaps too many educators are concentrating solely on the challenges of new technology, in particular AI, this book comes as a welcome reminder of the potential that language teachers and educators in general have to work alongside their students to bring about positive changes that affect the world beyond the classroom. The idea of preparing learners not merely to pass tests but to become citizens, not just of their own country, but of the world, the planet, is gaining traction among teachers, educators, and policy makers but many may be confused about how to translate such ideas into action.

It is clear that Rossi is both passionate about her goals, but has thought hard about how to achieve them. This book can be recommended to anyone who is looking for ways to turn good intentions into good, decisive actions. In other words, this work is not merely an idealistic manifesto of the role that language education might play in a better world someday, somehow, but is also pragmatic, offering a wealth of practical strategies that a teacher may start to use the very same day to implement the SDGs and global citizenship values into their classroom. From Community-Based Language Learning (CBL) to Gamification, Rossi discusses a vast array of tools that educators can use to make their teaching more impactful and relevant to the global challenges of today.

New Perspectives for Language Education: From Global English to Global Citizenship is a well-written and concise work. It is well informed and authoritative, while at the same time being open and inclusive, engaging even. It offers a comprehensive, up-to-date, and insightful examination of the interplay between the global spread of the English language, the forces of globalization, and their collective impact on language education, while also looking at the positive ways in which language teaching may promote sustainable development and the idea of Global Citizenship.

As a whole, the book is organised around three stages, each building upon the last to create a robust framework for understanding the evolution of English as a global language and its implications for education. Phase one evaluates the development of the English language, tracing its roots from colonial expansion to its current status as a lingua franca. Phase two analyses the impact of global English on language education, while phase three proposes a framework that supports ELT pedagogies that may promote Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

There are five chapters, many of which provide interesting material that could be used with advanced language learners or students studying Academic English for specific purposes in subjects related to international politics, international development or international cooperation, to name but three.

The first chapter looks at the historical roots of English as a global language, analysing the sociolinguistic dynamics and geopolitical factors that have transformed it from a language spoken in a cluster of small islands in the north west Atlantic into a global means of communication. Chapter 2 gives a tour d'horizon of the contemporary landscape of English language usage, addressing who speaks English today and the implications of this for language education. It emphasizes the importance of promoting fair language education, fostering intercultural communication and competence, and integrating sustainable development goals into language curricula. In Chapter 3, there is a thought-provoking discussion on the role of education in achieving sustainable development, particularly in the context of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. It discusses aligning education with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and explores practical strategies for incorporating SDGs into foreign language

curricula and research. Chapter 4 looks in depth at the concept of global citizenship education, highlighting its significance in promoting social responsibility, intercultural understanding, and active engagement with global issues. Finally, Chapter 5 provides practical guidance for designing teaching units for university students, with a specific focus on integrating the SDGs and global citizenship principles into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Rossi's suggestions have been forged by real world classroom experience and her expertise as a language educator and as scholarly researcher are very much in evidence in this part.

As a whole, this book addresses the critical nexus between the global spread of the English language, the phenomenon of globalization, and the imperative for sustainable and fair language education. Rossi's work is not merely an academic examination but a call to action for educators and policymakers to rethink language education in the context of global citizenship and sustainable development. Her approach is both interdisciplinary and forward-thinking, drawing on linguistics, sociology, international relations, pedagogy, and education to provide a holistic view of the complex interaction between language spread, a world that is rapidly becoming globalized, and language teaching. Her discussion is focused on the present and the future yet rich in historical context; her aims are idealistic, but her approach pragmatic.

One of the most compelling aspects of this book is its emphasis on the role of language education in nurturing and fostering global citizenship. Rossi argues convincingly that language educators have a unique opportunity to cultivate a sense of global responsibility and intercultural competence among their students. The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into language education is presented as a means to achieve this, with practical suggestions for innovative teaching methodologies that engage students in meaningful learning experiences.

In conclusion, *New Perspectives for Language Education: From Global English to Global Citizenship* is an essential read for anyone involved in language education who is interested in how their role in the classroom can have an impact on the world beyond, and on how they and their students can be given a voice in the global debates that will shape all of our futures.

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Rossi's work is a testament to the power of education to shape a more sustainable and equitable world. It is a call to action for educators to embrace their role as agents of change, using the English language not only as the bulldozer for globalisation (as it is often portrayed) but as a vehicle for promoting global understanding, respect, and responsibility. This book is highly recommended for its comprehensive analysis, practical applications, and its vision for a future where language education is a catalyst for global and inclusive citizenship.

Thomas Wulstan Christiansen
thomas.christiansen@unisalento.it