

## Call for Papers

### *Between Italy and the U.S.: A New Paradigm for Cultural Exchanges*

**Rome (Italy), Centro Studi Americani, 3-4 June 2025**

While the balance of cultural exchanges between Italy and the United States tended to favor the latter in the 20th Century, today it seems that Italian literary products (but also films and series) are also capable of exerting a certain impact on American audiences. An Italian novel, *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante (2012), was placed first in “The 100 Best Books of the 21st Century” by the New York Times in the Summer 2024. The Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri has been writing in Italian since 2018. New translations of modern Italian classics – Morante, Montale, Pavese, de Céspedes – are underway in the United States.

Although these examples do not yet constitute a pattern, they have important theoretical implications. On the one hand, Ferrante’s novels seem to support David Damrosch’s claim that world literature “gains in translation.” On the other hand, Lahiri’s choice of writing in Italian contradicts Pascale Casanova’s claim about the use of central languages to tap into literary capital (e.g. Emil Cioran and Samuel Beckett’s choice to write in French; or Vladimir Nabokov’s choice to write in English). Starting from Franco Moretti’s reconstruction of a hierarchy of centers (Paris-London) and peripheries as it relates to the circulation of the novel form, is it possible to recognize an alternative direction of circulation of forms between Italy and the United States?

Guido Bonsaver has recently reminded that a change of cultural centers from the European axis (Paris-London) to an American one (NYC-Hollywood) starting in the 1930s had allowed for the circulation and appreciation of both “high” cultural products as well as “mass culture.” Aside from the reception and translation of literary masterpieces by Elio Vittorini, Cesare Pavese, Mario Praz, Fernanda Pivano and, later, the founder of Americanistica in Italy Agostino Lombardo – to name a few –, hardboiled novels, swing, movies, and comics coming from the United States circulated in Italy under Fascism. How, why, and for what purpose did American cultural products find their way into European and Italian culture? How can today’s cultural exchanges help us reevaluate a long history of mutual transatlantic influences? From Dante to Petrarch, from architecture to painting, from the Italian culture that

filtered through the works of Edith Wharton and Henry James until the representations of Italy in Ernest Hemingway's books, the dialogue has always been fruitful. Is this a new paradigm or the resurfacing of a forgotten practice?

Panelists are invited to present papers reflecting on the mutual, bi-directional exchanges characterizing the cultural relationships between Italy and the United States. In this perspective, it may be relevant to analyze not only literary products and their audiences, but also other forms of cultural products at large, which are nowadays part of an international mass market, like movies and TV series, both original and as adaptations of books (again, *My Brilliant Friend* represents a very good example of this trend), comics, and others. The papers presented by the panelists during the conference will be published at a later stage in volume.

The participants will receive a contribution for their travel and accommodation expenses.

**Organizers:**

Luca Abbattista (Columbia University)

Sara Antonelli (Università Roma Tre)

Iuri Moscardi (The Graduate Center, CUNY)

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### **Areas of Interest**

We invite submissions from graduate students, PhD candidates, faculty, and junior faculty. Possible areas of interest include (but are not limited to):

- 1) American studies
- 2) Cultural Studies
- 3) Italian Studies
- 4) Italian and American Literatures
- 5) Comparative Literature
- 6) Media Studies
- 7) Translation Studies
- 8) Sociology of Literature
- 9) World Literature
- 10) Gender Studies
- 11) Postcolonial Studies
- 12) History of Publishing (including publishers and series of books; journals and reviews focused on translation and intercultural exchanges)
- 13) Film Studies (including adaptations and cultural exchanges)
- 14) TV and Screen Studies
- 15) Archive Materials
- 16) New Trends in Translations of Italian and American Books
- 17) Redefinition of the Literary Canon
- 18) Comics Studies

## Proposal Submission

All submissions must be sent via email in a single Word document to the email address [newparadigmconference@gmail.com](mailto:newparadigmconference@gmail.com) **no later than January 31st, 2025** and include the following items:

- 1) an abstract (250 words max)
- 2) a short bio (100 words max)
- 3) your full name, email address, and affiliation.

Presentations can be both in **Italian and English**.

## Reference Bibliography:

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