

## Rethinking the Change

### Italian Feminism Between Crisis and Critique of Politics

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Rethinking radical Italian thought, displacing it in a context other than the Italian one, can help us to better discern its qualities, but also its limits. It should provoke us to ask ourselves questions about its reception and its exportability; to ‘provincialize’ it, as Brett Neilson writes in this issue of *Cultural Studies Review*. This can be achieved by identifying both its possibilities of contagion with other theories and practices, and its shortcomings in responding to questions and problems that are foreign to the Italian context. The displacement of our object of analysis should also involve a displacement of our own way of thinking as Italians. Speaking personally, I can’t help asking myself about the subjective motivations and relations that took me to Australia and Sydney twice in one year.<sup>1</sup> I think of the kinds of questions that I’ve heard female researchers and students ask of Italian feminism in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland too. I think of a certain ease of dialogue between men and feminists that is less suspicious than what we’re used to in Italy. There is an openness to the other and to otherness, which might derive from Australia being a multicultural society. The relativisation of Europe, and even more so of Italy, happens spontaneously when looked at from Australia with Asia in between. All this adds up to an ‘Australian Effect’ that has profoundly changed me and that in turn changes my way of talking about the ‘Italian Effect’.

I am therefore writing from within a relationship to this context that already marks me, questions me and dislocates me, and my intention is to yield not so much a *thought* as a *practice of thought*, born and bred in close proximity to a political practice.

In his introduction to this issue, Brett Neilson points out that what distinguishes radical Italian thought is not so much its theoretical corpus, which has developed in parallel with other contemporary international trends, but more its entrenchment in the political struggles that have characterised the 'Italian laboratory' for decades. This is even more the case for the thought of sexual difference, which was also born and developed in constant dialogue with other trends in international feminism, but which is also radically distinguished by its entrenchment in political *and* theoretical practice, indeed for the very notion of 'practice' that it adopts. In other words, the theory of sexual difference was not only born out of the political practices of feminism—such as self-awareness, the so-called 'practice of the unconscious', the practice of relations between women—but is in itself a theoretical practice.<sup>2</sup> It is a style of thinking that is characterised by the method of beginning from oneself, by the metonymical relation between what we experience and what we say, and by a privileging of the reference to female genealogy rather than accredited and institutionalised traditions, disciplines and schools.<sup>3</sup>

This style of thinking means that there is neither a split between theory and experience, thinking and action, ends and means, nor between the enunciated and the subject of enunciation, the transformation of reality and of the self, as is usually the case in movements of transformation and revolutions. Rather there is a coming together in a virtual loop, which makes it possible to keep alive the original distinguishing feature of feminism as a movement of sexed subjectivity that cannot be reified into an objective 'female question' or crystallised into a female collective identity.

The movement of sexual difference can be understood as a theoretical, linguistic and political practice that works in context and that measures its results, gains, losses and displacements as a function of the transformation of this context. Precisely because of these defining traits, the thought of sexual difference refuses to lend itself to being summed up as a finished, abstract 'corpus', but exists as a thinking-in-progress. It is linked to the practices that generate and regenerate it in the historical contexts where it operates. It is thus a thinking that doesn't really lend itself to being 'transferred' elsewhere, but rather—again, metonymically—it enters into contact with and infects other contexts.

—II

Naturally, contact and contagion are not always easy or 'soft' and do not necessarily lead to mutual comprehension, more often they lead to misunderstandings and mistranslations. This is why I like them. I don't believe in the wondrous forces of Habermasian communicative action and democratic understanding. We were all born in the post-psychoanalytic era and we know that

communication is never transparent. It often functions, when it does function, not so much *thanks to* but *'in spite of dialogue'*, to use a felicitous expression of the Italian philosopher Giacomo Marramao.<sup>4</sup> This is also true of the relationship between the thought of sexual difference and what is here referred to as 'radical Italian thought', and more generally to the relationship between feminism and radical movements in Italy from 1968 onwards. It must be stressed that this relationship is anything but linear. Contrary to popular belief on the left, which considers feminism to be a sort of derivative of '68, born from '68 like Eve from Adam's side, feminism was born before '68 and grew up—as Carla Lonzi wrote—*despite* '68 (and in Italy, *despite '77 and Autonomia*).<sup>5</sup> It traumatised the whole 'new left' in the 1970s with the exodus of women who denounced the limits and the violence of masculine theories and practices, and it developed in the 1980s and 1990s when other movements were on the decline. It is not a part to the whole of other movements; rather it interacts with them from an *asymmetrical* position.<sup>6</sup> It moves, as Carla Lonzi would say again, *on another plane*, where male radicalism is not very inclined to follow.<sup>7</sup>

Thirty-five years later, however, the time is right to reconsider the 'season of movements' in a long-term perspective, putting forward a more general historical-political question. In Italy as in other Western countries from the end of the 1970s onwards, three events can be observed simultaneously: the crisis—or the end, as the Italian philosopher Mario Tronti claims,<sup>8</sup> and I agree with him—of the paradigm of modern politics; the birth of movements and of a new antagonistic thought; and the explosion of feminism that lead to the crisis—or the end, as some Italian feminist thinkers claim—of patriarchy.<sup>9</sup>

What is the relationship between these three events? In Italy as in other Western countries, the generation that had access to politics in the season of '68 was—and still is—more of a *generation*, a generation marked by the cut carried out by women within its ranks. What were the consequences of this cut in the public sphere and how can we capitalise on them today? In other words, what is the relationship between the end of modern politics, the end of patriarchy, and the search for a new political anthropology? And what are its implications for a new practice of transformation that the tragedies we are witnessing every day urgently demand of us?

—III

I will soon return to this question. But first let us ponder a little bit longer the thought of sexual difference, in order to dissipate some of the suspicions that still surround it in its Anglo-American reception, and also in Italian feminism itself. The main suspicion is that it is an essentialist way of thinking that accounts for neither the difference between sex (understood as an irreducible biological reality) and gender (understood as a cultural construction and social norm) nor the overcoming of this distinction (in the sense of the discursivity of both sex and gender) elaborated in the American debate.<sup>10</sup>

This suspicion is without foundation. It stems from a basic miscomprehension of the expression 'thought of sexual difference', in which sexual difference is not an object but a subject; not a signified but a signifier. The object of the thought of sexual difference is not the social condition of women, nor the identity, and much less the essence of woman. Its subject is a sexed singularity that considers her/himself, the other and reality freely, outside of the prescribed and prescriptive definitions of sexual identity that the symbolic order transmits to us. It is not just an analysis of how sex and gender are constructed and performed by language—an analysis that allies us with much contemporary international feminism. It is, above all, a practice of the inscription of sex and gender in language, in the play, which is always a political play, of significance—a practice that distinguishes us from the panorama of international feminism. It is—once again—a cut. In Luisa Muraro's words, it is the metonymical cut that speech linked to the body and to experience introduces into the metaphorical drift of political discourse, which is traditionally a discourse abstracted from the body and from experience.<sup>11</sup>

Historically, the thought of sexual difference is a thought of female difference because it was women who saw and politicised the nexus between sexuality and the socio-symbolic order. It was feminist practices such as self-awareness that showed us how acquiring a voice can change the material reality of a subject who has historically been excluded from language or has been obliged to speak in the language of the other. But the bid of the 'politics of the symbolic', as we Italian feminists synthetically refer to a politics that wants to have an impact on the relationship between the social and the symbolic order and that is based on the contact between language and experience, can be recast for everyone.<sup>12</sup>

The current transformations of the political anthropology of globalised societies (and the tension between the logic of identity and difference that runs through them) confer an unprecedented topicality to the paradigm of change elaborated by the thought of sexual difference. The same is true for the centrality of the linguistic dimension in bio-political production, the importance of the mobilisation of the imaginary and the unconscious in mass-mediated politics. I will now try to explain why.

—IV

The necessity for a new political anthropology—or according to some of a new political ontology—is emerging today in all the most acute analyses of the crisis of politics in the era of globalisation.<sup>13</sup> These analyses correctly attribute this crisis not only to the waning of the state form, but also, more profoundly, to the mutation that involves the modern individual, the basic structures of social relations, cultural and trans-cultural codes, the configuration of work, the forms of bio-power, the cognitive societies connected to new communication technologies. The central point is the exhaustion of the paradigm of modern politics and the anthropology it was founded on. In other words, the collapse of that powerful construction based on the individual-

Leviathan couple that reigned uncontested over the West from the seventeenth to the end of the twentieth century. The contribution that the thought of sexual difference brings to political theory needs to be situated at this level.

The introduction of sexual difference into political discourse is not the same thing as the introduction of the female question, with its relative demands, in the cartography of complex societies. It is not a question of adding women to the catalogue of the oppressed, as the emancipationist tradition of Marxist descent used to think, or even of adding them to the plural composition of the multitude, as the new antagonist thought is tempted to suggest. It is a question, rather, of considering from the very beginning the status of the subject and of the political subject, and its modes of constitution and mobilisation. The sexed subject is a subject that is no longer one, an individual that is no longer undivided; therefore, if we want to be exact, it is no longer an individual (in fact the lexicon of difference has long replaced the term 'individual' with that of singularity). The modern subject was neutral, sovereign in its rationality, a voluntary actor of the social contract, an independent atom amongst other independent atoms. The subject of difference is embodied, marked by sexuality. He/she is not born of pure reason but of tensions between reason and drives, between the conscious and the unconscious, between will and desire. He/she has no illusions about sovereignty but is aware that he/she depends on relationships to others, and first and foremost on the relationship to the mother who is the matrix of life.<sup>14</sup>

This reconfiguration of the subject reverberates on all the key words of modern politics founded on the notion of the individual: equality, liberty, fraternity, power, authority, representation, right, rights. Indeed, in the light of sexed singularity the consideration of difference has revealed the fiction of equality and its homologising effects. It has revealed the abstract character of a liberty modelled on the atomised, sovereign individual and the exclusionary character of a fraternity that erases women from the social pact.<sup>15</sup> It has made evident the abstract character of juridical mediation and the depoliticising character of rights.<sup>16</sup> It has exposed the problematic confusion between power and authority and the secret connections between the totem of power and male sexuality.<sup>17</sup> It has revealed the complicity between the order of political representation and the order of linguistic representation.<sup>18</sup>

Each of these points would merit serious consideration but there's not space for that analysis here. I limit myself to pointing out that, as a whole, the critique that Italian feminist thought addresses to the conceptual constellation of modern politics introduces a healthy element of diffidence towards the democratic optimism that informs the war-mongering propaganda of governments in the West (and has also seduced wide swathes of antagonist thought). The history of the original exclusion and the later inclusion of women into citizenship teaches us that the democratic paradigm, entirely constructed to suit the modern individual and its logic of identity and seriality, is undermined from its very beginnings by the disavowal of sexual difference and of difference tout court. It is therefore not endlessly flexible. The democratic paradigm does not

tolerate the movement of difference and tends either to reduce it to the logic of homogenisation, or to bring it back into the logic of identity. In effect, when women are included into citizenship it is either at the price of their homogenisation with men, or otherwise at the price of a translation of sexual difference (which concerns singularity and symbolic exchange), into a gender identity (that is, into a collective identity that can be reduced to contractual relationships between diverse social groups). In the first case, the principle of equality demonstrates its neutralising tendency; in the second case, the logic of identity is reconfirmed under the mask of a pluralism of differences.

As we know from postcolonial feminism, the paradox becomes even more complicated when social, ethnic and cultural differences, which are not dealt with coherently by the grammar of rights, are added to gender identity. The result is the ungovernability of differences, both in the Anglo-Saxon model that leads to a sum of self-referential communities, and the assimilationist French model that came up with the law against the Islamic veil at school in an effort to avoid the risks of communitarianism.

There is also the danger that, within this scheme, women run the risk of once again becoming the passive object of a conflict between universalism and communitarianism which in reality is a conflict between men.<sup>19</sup> This is clear both in the case of the French law against the veil and the American legitimisation of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the first instance, it is the value of secularism that is mobilised to liberate women from Islamic patriarchy, while in the second it is the value of freedom. Two pillars of Western democracy, both marked by a male history, are brandished as universal values. In both cases, Muslim women are caught in an unsustainable double bind between the patriarchal injunction of their communities and the assimilationist injunction of our democracies. In both cases, Western feminism runs the risk of being split between a solidarity with 'other women' that doesn't go beyond cultural relativism and the extension to 'other women' of Western female emancipation. In both cases, these paradoxes can only be avoided by reorienting the question on the basis of female subjectivity and freedom and relations between women.<sup>20</sup>

Only a first person account of the motivations that might lead a woman to wear the veil or refuse it, often endowing it with another meaning, can stand as a criterion of justice, and not the abstract application of the universalistic principle of secularism or communitarian religious obligation. Only the relationship between women can creatively reinvent and recombine cultural differences otherwise doomed to non-communication, uncovering the isomorphisms not only between forms of sexual oppression but also between the forms of female freedom that run through the hybridism of the postcolonial world. Once again, what is at play here is an unexpected cut in the prevailing order of discourse: female freedom is the litmus test of the unsustainability of conflicts that are badly posed and at an impasse, from the conflict between universalism and communitarianism to that which goes under the inauspicious name of the clash of civilisations.

Naturally, it is necessary to be clear about the terms used. The female freedom referred to has nothing to do with the advertising of freedom broadcast every day by the American and European neo-conservatives, and is not a development but rather a radical critique of both liberal democratic theory and Marxist theories of liberation. It is not the freedom of an atomised individual, nor the project of a collective liberation from domination that can always be postponed. Rather it is freedom in action, lived in the present, of one singularity in relation to others. It is not the delusion of omnipotence by a rational, independent and sovereign subject, but a continuous negotiation between autonomy and dependence, learnt from working through the relationship to the mother. It is not a freedom founded on and guaranteed by formal rights, but an experience exposed to risk and open to the unpredictable. It is an event that is renewed each time a displacement in relations of power takes place, a decentering of phallogentrism, an opening of new spaces of sense and signification. It is therefore a freedom that opens up in the present and modifies the present. Its aim is to empty power rather than to seize it, and it has no need for a general project or subject of subversion.<sup>21</sup> The freedom won by women all over the world in the last three decades, under whatever constellation and configuration of power, is the concrete and living demonstration that another world is not only possible but is already real and operative in our present.

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What remains of this freedom in the paradigms of radical and antagonistic thought? What remains of the subject of sexual difference in the figure of the multitude? What remains of the feminist mode of transformation in the subversive projects of the cognitariat? If we try to respond to these questions we find ourselves faced with a clear case of the kind of contagion between the thought of sexual difference and radical thought which was mentioned earlier. Such contagion makes it difficult to distinguish between the translation and mistranslation of respective categories and practices. And it also reshuffles the proximities and points of friction between the two perspectives.

Certainly, the political lexicon has become more uniform, but beneath the common use of many words—singularity, difference, desire, materiality, biopolitics, politics of affect—crucial divergences remain and continue to present themselves. In the passage from the traditional individual–collective pair to the singular–common pair, and in the emphasis put on the hybridisation of difference, the figure of the multitude outlined by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt in *Empire* and *Multitudes* seems to incorporate many elements of the feminist critique of the modern notion of the individual.<sup>22</sup>

But a closer look suggests that this is not the case. The authors write, for instance, that the multitude is ‘living flesh’,<sup>23</sup> and yet—in the best tradition of Western political thought that from ancient Greece onwards has transformed the body into a metaphor in order to rid itself of real

bodies—it does not have a body.<sup>24</sup> It is not a ‘political body’ and it does not wish to be so. It ends up ridding itself even of the biological body (in fact the authors claim a philosophy of linguistic performativity *against* the body).<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the multitude is not sexed. The difference between the sexes appears in the old form of the social condition of gender, not in the form of a sexed singularity, and the project is to neutralise its relevance rather than to give it significance in social, symbolic and political exchange.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the multitude constitutes itself in the movement between the singular and the common, but between the singular and the common there is neither the intermediate passage nor the patient labour of constructing an inter-subjective and interdependent language. Lastly and most importantly, the multitude moves, like capital, in a linear and progressive temporality, ignoring the obstacles of regression. It is animated by a desire that is only positivity, excess, the life drive, and never lack, ambivalence, the death drive. In short, it is neither traversed by the negative nor by negative feelings such as fear, anxiety and dependence. Thus, in one gesture it eliminates all the work done by feminist practices to reintroduce into the constitution of subjectivity the mass of material that has been disavowed by political rationality—stumbling blocks, lapsus, repetitions, depressions, all that is unconscious in political discourse—that has always impeded subversive projects on the threshold between imagination and the compulsion to repeat.

An analogous critique can be made of the theory of the cognitariat and the utopias of communication of the last twenty years, which have rightly emphasised the centrality of the linguistic dimension in the transformation of the real, while forgetting to anchor language in corporeality and relational communication.<sup>27</sup> Two images will suffice to illustrate the point: the image of a ‘general intellect’ without a body, and the image of connection without relationship that characterises the use of the net. Even in this instance radical thought runs the risk of reproducing the split between body and language that is typical of Western epistemology. Again, the advantage of the thought of sexual difference comes into sharp relief. It is an advantage which lies in having thought through the connection between the body and language: a body that doesn’t exist without signification and a language that means nothing if abstracted from the body.

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This disavowal of the body in the paradigm of the multitude and the cognitariat should be easily taken as a clear symptom of the disavowal of the feminist trajectory by radical Italian thought, since the disavowal of corporeality has always been associated with the cancellation of female genealogy from the political scene in Western political thought. However, current political events are calling us to push both male and the female radical thought toward other necessities: reports of global war, talk about the tortures in Abu Ghraib jail, the Beslan massacre, the hostages beheaded and the Italian pacifist women kidnapped in Baghdad. The number of American soldiers dead in Iraq is now more than one thousand. This news and these images are added to the naked



bodies that three and a half years ago flew down from the Twin Towers in New York and to kamikaze cyborg bodies exploding here and there.

What happens, in this landscape, with the end of modern politics, with the subversive imagination of Italian radical thought, with female freedom and the end of patriarchy? The events of the past decades, both in regard to the crisis and critique of politics, now have to face an anthropological catastrophe that includes sadism, fear and religious wars. Our perspective is in danger of becoming more Hobbes than Spinoza. But before delivering ourselves into the hands of a new global Leviathan, which nevertheless does not appear to be on our horizon, we must save the image of politics of desire from mirroring conflict between the dying monster of the modern state and the emerging monster of postmodern terrorism.

The line between the possibility of change and the certainty of catastrophe has become extremely thin. We are faced with a bio-power which controls naked life and a bio-terrorism which responds with the practice of naked death: we are obliged to question once again the biological substratum of the human that is the 'rock bottom'—to quote Freud—of the political community; we must bring back to naked life the language that turns the wild and mute social body into a speaking body politic. We are faced with a policy of affects which uses TV networks to colonise, manipulate and mobilise the individual unconscious and social imaginary, making us cold viewers of sadistic shows such as the torture in Abu Ghraib and the massacre of Beslan. We must invent affective mobilising practices and refined signifying practices that make it possible to keep together the cognitive and the sensible, the rational and the imaginary, in order to divert daily the fold of significance that power attributes to events, and in order to modify the limits of the visible and the invisible, the speakable and the unspeakable, which mark the borders of the democratic public sphere. We are faced with a war where sexuality is explicitly at stake, a war that divides women between passive hostages of a male conflict and zealous torturers. We must reply with the female freedom we have gained, with the relationships among women that can make order from social disorder, with the cut of the sexual difference on the order of dominant discourse.

Despite all this, I still believe that in this landscape the politics generated by feminism has the advantage. This is said with no sense of triumph: the photograph of Lyndie England with an Iraqi prisoner on a leash destroyed any remaining illusion of women's moral superiority. It shows that even female sexuality can be prey to racist sadism and the desire for revenge. In the place of triumphalism there is, in my belief, the experience of a political practice of negativity, melancholy and depression. I agree with a recent proposal by Judith Butler for a 'politics of mourning' to juxtapose the violent manipulation of mourning displayed by the American government after 9/11.<sup>28</sup> This politics of mourning supposes a new ontology of globalisation, based on fragility, loss, extreme precariousness and interdependence in which we all live today. Because of our ancient history, as women we know what it means to be vulnerable, exposed, and potential objects of

nullifying violence, as well as subjects of happily destabilising and dispossessing passions and desires. Due to a recent and uncertain citizenship, as women we know how to create politics 'without believing we have rights' and without counting on the sovereignty of the individual, of the citizen, of the state.<sup>29</sup> From this condition more self-consciousness can be developed, leading to a political practice, a public discourse which is an alternative to the reiteration of strength by a wounded nation. And perhaps, after many decades spent in thinking about only conflict, it is now time to think of the twin of the politics of mourning, that is, a politics of love, the only potency we know able to translate the precariousness implied in the exposure to the other not in a devastating violence, but in a positive energy.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 2003 October, just one year before the Sydney conference on the 'Italian Effect', I had the opportunity to visit some universities in Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland and to discuss Italian feminism with teachers and students. I thank Susanna Scarparo, Brett Neilson, Paolo Bartoloni, Bernadette Luciano for this opportunity.

<sup>2</sup> These are the most important political practices in Italian feminism of sexual difference. See Libreria delle donne di Milano, *Non credere di avere dei diritti*, Rosenberg e Sellier, Torino, 1987 (Libreria delle donne of Milan, *Sexual Difference. A Theory of Social Symbolic Practice*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1991); Lia Cigarini, *La politica del desiderio*, Pratiche, Parma 1995. See also Susanna Scarparo, 'In the Name of the Mother', in this issue of *Cultural Studies Review*. For the notion of 'practice', see my introduction 'Il desiderio di politica' to Cigarini, pp. 19–25.

<sup>3</sup> For the method of beginning from oneself see Diotima, *La sapienza di partire da sé*, Liguori, Napoli, 1996. For the metonymical relation between speaking and experience see Luisa Muraro, *Maglia o uncinetto. Racconto linguistico-politico sull'inimicizia fra metafora e metonimia*, manifestolibri, Rome, 1999, and my introduction, 'La parola del contatto' to this same volume. For the notion of female genealogy with regard to institutionalised tradition, see Diotima, *Approfittare dell'assenza: Punti di avvistamento sulla tradizione*, Liguori, Napoli 2002, in particular Wanda Tommasi, 'Di madre in figlia', pp. 7–25. Diotima is the name of an important feminist community of philosophers at the University of Verona <<http://www.diotimafilosofe.it>>.

<sup>4</sup> Giacomo Marramao, *Passaggio a Occidente*, Bollati-Boringhieri, Torino, 2003, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> In a letter written to the weekly *L'Espresso* in the decennial of '68, quoted in Maria Luisa Boccia, *L'io in rivolta: Vissuto e pensiero di Carla Lonzi*, La Tartaruga, Milano 1990. Carla Lonzi was one of the earliest and most important Italian feminist thinkers.

<sup>6</sup> For this interpretation of the relationship between feminism and 1968–77 see my 'Le donne oltre la critica della politica', in Aa.Vv., *Millenovecentosettantasette*, manifestolibri, Rome, 1997; Maria Luisa Boccia, 'Il patriarca, la donna, il giovane: La stagione dei movimenti nella crisi italiana', in Aa.Vv., *L'Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta, vol. II: Culture, nuovi soggetti, identità* (a cura di Fiamma Lussana e Giacomo Marramao), Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2003. For the relationship between workerism and feminist groups which developed in the 1970s from within Potere Operaio, see the classical Maria Rosa Dalla Costa, *Potere femminile e sovversione sociale*, Marsilio, Padova, 1974 and Lucia Chisté, Alisa Dal Re, Edvige Forti, *Oltre il lavoro domestico. Il lavoro femminile fra produzione e riproduzione*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1979. For a rethinking of that relation today, see the interview with Alisa Dal Re nel cd-rom allegato al volume di Guido Borio, Francesca Pozzi e Gigi Roggero *Futuro anterior: Dai 'Quaderni Rossi ai movimenti globali: ricchezze e limiti dell'operaismo italiano'*, Deriveapprodi, Rome, 2002.

- <sup>7</sup> Carla Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel*, Scritti di Rivolta Femminile, Milan, 1974, p. 54.
- <sup>8</sup> Mario Tronti, *La politica al tramonto*, Einaudi, Torino, 1998. Mario Tronti is the author of *Operai e capitale* (Einaudi, 1966) and is considered the founder of workerism.
- <sup>9</sup> Aa.Vv., *E' accaduto non per caso*, *Sottosopra*, Milano 1996.
- <sup>10</sup> On the supposed essentialism of Italian thought of sexual difference see Teresa De Lauretis's introduction, 'Taking Essentialism Seriously', in Libreria delle donne of Milan.
- <sup>11</sup> Luisa Muraro, pp. 91–104. On the thought of sexual difference as a cut, see also Paola Bono and Federica Giardini, 'Crisis and Adventure', *Signs*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2000, pp. 1027–32.
- <sup>12</sup> See my 'La parola è la nostra politica', in Annarosa Buttarelli, Luisa Muraro, Liliana Rampello (eds), *Duemilauna*, Pratiche, Milan, 2001.
- <sup>13</sup> See among others Mario Tronti; Carlo Galli, *La guerra globale*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2002; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Impero*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2001 (*Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2000); Judith Butler, *Vite precarie: Contro l'uso della violenza in risposta al lutto collettivo*, Meltemi, Rome 2004 (*Precarious Life: The powers of Mourning and Violence*, Verso, London, 2004).
- <sup>14</sup> See, among others, Diotima, *Il pensiero della differenza sessuale*, La Tartaruga, Milano, 1987; Rosi Braidotti, *Dissonanze*, La Tartaruga, Milano 1994; Luisa Muraro, *L'ordine simbolico della madre*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1991; Adriana Cavarero, *Dire la nascita*, in Diotima, *Mettere al mondo il mondo: Oggetto e oggettività alla luce della differenza sessuale*, La Tartaruga, Milan, 1990; Elena Pulcini, *L'individuo senza passioni*, Bollati-Boringhieri, Torino, 2001.
- <sup>15</sup> For the feminist critique to the 1789's triad liberty, equality, fraternity, see Maria Luisa Boccia, *La differenza politica*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 2002; Adriana Cavarero, *La libertà come bene omune*, in Eugenia Parise (ed.), *La politica tra natalità e mortalità*, Esi, Napoli, 1993; Gabriella Bonacchi e Angela Groppi (eds), *Il dilemma della cittadinanza*, Laterza, Rome-Bari, 1993.
- <sup>16</sup> See Diana Sartori, 'Ma non affidare il futuro ai diritti', in Aa.Vv., *Globalizzazione e dritti futuri*, manifestolibri, Rome, 2004.
- <sup>17</sup> See Diotima, *Oltre l'uguaglianza. Le radici femminili dell'autorità*, Liguori, Naples, 1995.
- <sup>18</sup> See my 'La parola del contatto'.
- <sup>19</sup> See Etienne Balibar, 'Dissonances dans la laïcité', in Charlotte Nordmann (ed.), *Le foulard islamique en question*, éditions Amsterdam, Paris, 2004, pp. 23–4.
- <sup>20</sup> See my 'Corpo e laicità. Il caso della legge sul velo', in Geminello Preterossi (ed.), *Le ragioni dei laici*, Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2005.
- <sup>21</sup> For the notion of (female) freedom in the theory of sexual difference see my 'L'eccedenza della libertà femminile', in Ida Dominijanni (ed.), *Motivi della libertà*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2001.
- <sup>22</sup> See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Impero*, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Moltitudine*, Rizzoli, Milano 2004 (*Multitude*, Penguin Press, 2004).
- <sup>23</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Moltitudine*, pp. 221–4.
- <sup>24</sup> See Adriana Cavarero, *Corpo in figure*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1995.
- <sup>25</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Moltitudine*, p. 233.
- <sup>26</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Moltitudine*, p.125. I had the opportunity to discuss these points with Antonio Negri at a session of Università Nomade, Padova 29–30 January 2005, available at <<http://www.globalproject.com>>
- <sup>27</sup> See Franco Berardi in this issue of *Cultural Studies Review*.
- <sup>28</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life : Powers of Mourning and Violence*, Verso, London, 2003.
- <sup>29</sup> To quote the title of Libreria delle donne di Milano.
- <sup>30</sup> I developed this meaning of a politics of morning and a politics of love as twins in a conference organised in December 2004 by Diotima at the University of Verona, which will be published in the net-journal 'Per amore del mondo', available at <<http://www.diotimafilosofe.it>>.