

The Publishing History of bell hooks in Italy

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Abstract

The essay reconstructs the publishing history of bell hooks in Italy, showing the link between her works and the progress of the country. After a period of silence, in the last few years, her name has returned to the fore. Some topics which, at the end of the Twentieth century, seemed futuristic, for instance that of ‘intersectionality’, had visibly been proposed within Italian society. This different Italy, no longer white or aware of being no longer populated only by productive white males, was finding its own words and its own theoretical benchmarks. bell hooks had finally met her public.

Keywords: bell hooks; publishing history; Italy; public; feminism.

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Journalist, essayist, editorial consultant and translator, she writes about theatre, cinema, art, culture and society. Among her most recent publications: *Sesso & Genere* (Mimesis 2022); *Scrivere al buio* (Tamu, 2020); *Prove d’ascolto* (edizioni dell’asino, 2011); *Necrologhi. Pamphlet sull’arte di consumare* (il Saggiatore, 2015); *La speranza, nel frattempo. Una conversazione tra Arundhati Roy, John Berger e Maria Nadotti* (Casagrande, 2010); *Riga 32 - John Berger* (Marcos y Marcos, 2012) and, in collaboration with John Berger e Selçuk Demirel, *What Time Is It?* (Notting Hill Editions, 2019). Italian curator and translator of Berger’s works, in 2021 she conceived the podcast “Per John B.” <https://www.oktafilm.it/podcast/>.

1 A Chronicle

I would like to start this reconstruction with the dates and titles of bell hooks' texts published in Italy from 1998 until now. Sometimes the publishing history, and any gaps therein, tell us more about the reception of an author's work than any rationale, as they are the link between that work and the historical progress of the country where they are published, and therefore of the transformation of the readers they are intended for.

And, as we will see, what changes is inevitably also the language in which the work is translated. Is perhaps language not one of the most transparent symptoms of the mood of an era, the attempt of some 'minorities' to shift the needle of the social and political compass not towards greater inclusion but rather towards the awareness that the majority is by nature variegated, unstable, polymorphic? The translation work—never finished, never definitive, mercurial like all facts of communication and interpretation—would damage precisely that living, lively and constantly changing organism that is the mother and father language, if it insisted on standardizing, normalizing, reducing to the identical, but also if it wanted to establish new, binding rules.

To maintain the rhythm, the temperature, the discordant subjectivity of a voice as it is ferried from one language/culture to another, it is certainly not enough to adopt new rules and new prohibitions. Encrusted as it is by the class, race, sex, age and vicissitudes of the writer, but also by that which comes before the word, a past that precedes us, language is tight in any normative cage.

But here is the list and its timeline. For the sake of completeness and to place the texts within the framework of their transatlantic voyage, readers will also find the title, publisher and year of the first US edition of each book.

bell hooks, *Elogio del margine: Razza, sesso e mercato culturale*, trans. Maria Nadotti (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1998). This anthology of hooksian works was created by me with bell's approval and therefore does not have an American equivalent.

Maria Nadotti, *Scrivere al buio: Maria Nadotti intervista Bell Hooks* (Milano: Tartaruga, 1998).

bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 2000); Maria Nadotti, ed., *Tutto sull'amore: Nuove visioni*, trans. Lucia Cornalba (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000).

bell hooks/Maria Nadotti, *Elogio del margine/Scrivere al buio*, new joint edition (Napoli: Tamu Edizioni, 2020).

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994); *Insegnare a trasgredire. L'educazione come pratica della libertà*, trans. Feminoska (Milano: Meltemi Editore, 2020).

bell hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 2000); *Il femminismo è per tutti. Una politica appassionata*, trans. Maria Nadotti (Napoli: Tamu Edizioni, 2021).

bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); *Insegnare comunità. Una pedagogia della speranza*, trans. Feminoska (Milano: Meltemi Editore, 2022).

bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2004); *La volontà di cambiare: Mascolinità e amore*, trans. Bruna Tortotella (Milano: il Saggiatore, 2022).

bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 2000); *Tutto sull'amore. Nuove visioni*, new edition, trans. Maria Nadotti (Milano: il Saggiatore, 2022).

bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, Routledge, London and New York, NY 2000; *Da che parte stiamo: La classe conta*, trans. Marie Moïse (Napoli: Tamu Edizioni, 2022).

bell hooks, *Communion: The Female Search for Love* (New York: William Morrow, 2002); *Comunione: La ricerca femminile dell'amore*, trans. Maria Nadotti (Milano: il Saggiatore, 2023).

bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*, (New York: Routledge, 2010); *Insegnare il pensiero critico*, trans. by feminoska (Milano: Meltemi, 2023).

I also refer to the interview in the television studios of the University of Florence in 1998 for the series “Archivio della scrittura delle donne in Toscana dal 1861 ad oggi,” curated by Liana Borghi, Maria Teresa Caciagli Fancelli, Ernestina Pellegrini (Department of Modern Philology). Available in the original language at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=B-oNSX94g2k>, and soon to be available with Italian subtitles on the website <https://www.oktafilm.it>

2 In Translation

Some books are truly like karstic rivers: they disappear below ground and resurface elsewhere, at a later date, with paths that may seem mysterious and yet always have a specific necessity, indeed sometimes even an urgency. What prevents us from predicting this is our unwillingness to observe and pick up the early signs. We could also define it as a voluntary, interested unwillingness to allow those signs to enter our field of view. That which we do not want to see can only surprise us.

A while back, a reader asked me which were the greatest difficulties I encountered in translating bell hooks' texts, and I answered without thinking: finding an Italian publisher willing to publish her texts.

It may seem like a joke, but in fact it really isn't. To clarify this, we have to work backwards and reconstruct bell's publishing history in our country. First of all, it must be said that the book the Neapolitan publisher Tamu wished to start its publications with in November 2020 is the sum of two books published in Italy in 1998: *Elogio del margine: Razza, sesso e mercato culturale* (Feltrinelli) and *Scrivere al buio* (La Tartaruga). The first is a collection of ten essays chosen by me and translated from the then-already significant production of an African American feminist theorist who moved easily between academic teaching, activism and the critique of high and low culture. The second is an all-encompassing dialog between her and myself.

At the time, I had produced a small collection of interviews for the publishing house La Tartaruga: a woman before another woman, a precise I and an equally precise you inquiring about ourselves in the world, about work, love, friendship, sexuality, writing, family ties, the practices and utopias that accompany those who have decided to spend the time of life in an unconfused manner, the possible alliances, pain, failure, loneliness, hope, the desires and inventions that every one of us is capable of both individually and when we unite with other women. Four of those precious books were produced: *Cassandra non abita più qui: Maria Nadotti intervista Robin Morgan* (1996); *Andare ancora al cuore delle ferite: Renate Siebert intervista Assia Djebar* (1997); the aforementioned *Scrivere al buio* (1998); *Come una foglia: Thyrsa Nichols Goodeve intervista Donna Haraway* (1999).

The two books by and with bell caused a discreet political echo among women, and in fact shortly afterwards bell was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Ferrara; and in 2000, for Feltrinelli, another of her works was successfully published, *Tutto sull'amore: Nuove visioni*.

Then, nothing more. A sinkhole. Silence. Until, in the last six or seven years, her name, or rather it would be correct to say some crucial points of her thought, returned to the fore, if somewhat quietly. More and more often, I would meet women (and some men) much younger than myself, who spoke gratefully to me of those texts that quite clearly had been formative for them. Some topics which, in Italy in 1998, seemed futuristic, for instance that of 'intersectionality'—an unfortunately too jargonish word used to say that racism, sexism and classism cannot be separated and fought separately and in different times, as they are part of a unique script that consists of a dominant and a dominated, an above and a below, and which stubbornly reproduces them—had visibly been progressively clarified, and especially proposed within the fabric of Italian society.

This different Italy, no longer white or perhaps simply aware of being no longer populated only by productive, well-off white males and not willing to make the rest invisible—the cancellation of a large

part of the society in which we live is not perhaps the prototype of all the other cancellations?—was finding its own words and its own theoretical benchmarks, in part due to direct experience and in part through that subtle work of self-analysis and digging that is the analog method.

bell hooks, Black American feminist of lowly origins, had finally met her ‘public’¹ here too. That *Elogio del margine/Scrivere al buio* returned to the bookshops precisely in the same period in which the publisher Meltemi printed another of her formidable essays, *Insegnare a trasgredire: L’educazione come pratica della libertà*, was not a coincidence but a confirmation.

After the publication of *Il femminismo è per tutti* (Tamu 2021), a provocative book that was published in the United States in 2000, the hooks case exploded also in Italy. Today both large and small publishers vie for her texts. 2022 saw the practically simultaneous publication of *Insegnare comunità: Una pedagogia della speranza*, the second volume in the so-called hooksian pedagogic trilogy (Meltemi), *La volontà di cambiare: Mascolinità e amore* (il Saggiatore), the new and rethought edition of *Tutto sull’amore: Nuove visioni* (il Saggiatore) and *Da che parte stiamo: La classe conta* (Tamu). While a number of other titles are being prepared for 2023—from *Comunione: La ricerca femminile dell’amore* to *Teaching Critical Thinking* and *Writing Beyond Race*—which will finally shed full light on bell hooks’ vast and generous production.

3 Hypothesis

Why is bell hooks necessary in our country today? I believe that this is what we must ask ourselves, without making do with the current commercial and critical success of her books. Otherwise, we cannot explain why, from the first “Italian” titles to today, almost twenty-five years of what we could call latency have passed. Her books had not disappeared, they were merely out of print, but continued to circulate covertly, in the form of photocopies, handed from person to person in universities and within the ranks of the movements. This is what the Neapolitan bookshop Tamu must have intercepted in 2020, when it chose bell as the first author for its newborn publishing house of the same name. There was a young public of women and men who had grown up in that wilderness which became Italian political and intellectual life, certainly in search of thoughts, ideas, words that allowed them to formulate non-repetitive, resigned and depressing analyses of a present to be fully investigated, and which, above all, allowed them to adopt non-inertial practices, in step with the complexity of the historical time we are in.

Meanwhile, Italian society had become decentered, certainly not due to less local cultural consumptions, travels and studies abroad for the well-off, package holidays beyond the national boundaries, but because, as James Baldwin wrote in the 1950s, “This world is white no longer, and it will never be white again.”² Here, this reality had taken on the sad, classist face of many migratory waves that had been pushed back, decimated, forced into clandestinity, exploited or the even more desolating discrimination extending on to the second and third generations, putting the integration and identity of the children of migrants and mixed couples at risk. Invisible among the invisible, and yet so lively, precisely because of their awkward, denied and unvalorized position, the racialized young people of our country were in any case clearly impacting the discursive and political practices that were taking hold here too. Feminism plus antiracism plus class struggle, because—as Flavia Dzodan well states, cited by Sarah Ahmed in her splendid *Living a Feminist Life*, “Feminism will be intersectional or ‘it will be bullshit.’”³

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1. The term ‘public’ here is one of those words that can’t be used with a light heart, inflated by its banalization as a synonym of a group of persons who consume certain goods or use certain services. While bell hooks’ readers ‘purchase’ her books, this cannot be identified merely within a ‘market’ segment or niche, as their reading of them makes them totally political, active, seeking to understand in order to change. Some texts cannot simply be read, as they produce a residue of awareness and consciousness that cannot be reduced to information or cultural consumption.
 2. James Baldwin, “Stranger in the Village,” *Harper’s Magazine*, October 1953, 42–48.
 3. Quoted in Sara Ahmed, *Vivere una vita femminista*, trans. Marta D’Epifanio, Bea Gusmano, Serena Naim, Roberta Granelli (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2021), 27

4 Practices

To measure the reliability of the previous theories, I would like to try and explain a very recent ‘setting’ of *Tutto sull’amore*, bell hooks’ book that, in late October 2022, was published in a new version. Here are the facts, and a few pictures.

On 15 January 2022, in the midst of the Covid lockdown, I received this e-mail from Emilia, the co-founder of ‘Compost’, a group of women and men from Palermo interested in the practices of active thought. The name of their digital chat is, quite significantly, ‘Assemblea delle lucciole’ (“Assembly of the Fireflies”).

Hello everybody,

I’m writing to invite you to the next ‘compost’ (or seminar, or study group, or however you wish to call it)

FRIDAY 4 FEBRUARY, 3.30 pm

online (I’ll send you the link a few days beforehand)

In recent days, not only did I receive the e-mail with the gift of *Tutto sull’amore* from Caterina, but I also discussed some wonderful ideas, firstly in the mountains with Alberto, and then with Maria, Gisella and Ilaria at the sea.

It turns out that there is still a desire for opportunities for reflection and theory.

It turns out that the circle has widened.

It turns out that bell hooks is important to us, that we still want to read her and we are so lucky that Maria Nadotti, whom I know very well (and who from now on will receive our e-mails) is with us.

For me, right now, in particular, when I feel bonds and ties in my body that end up wrapping the mind in repetitive, stale, monochrome and monothematic thoughts, the joy of learning and discovering that what we can know and explore is inexhaustible, fills me with giddy vitality.

Doing this together is even more joyful.

I have learnt from the previous composts that a whole book is too much to discuss in one meeting, so having leafed through it I propose that we read only a few chapters, in addition to the introduction:

1. Clarity: give love words
2. Justice: childhood love lessons
4. Commitment: let love be love in me
6. Values: living by a love ethic

I think it is necessary to start from the first two, in order to enter the topic with her, with the words she chooses to say it.

In the second there is childhood, perhaps we ourselves as girls and boys, but also our way of being with children, as we see them.

The third poses unobvious questions about us, about how we feel or how we felt.

The fourth broaches the issue of power and domination of the other.

Other chapters intrigue me greatly, but they seem very dense, it’s better to read less, in order to investigate more.

(Obviously everyone is free to read whatever more they want, of this book and others, and to introduce into the conversation anything they feel can be part of our discourse).

Moreover, as in compost there was already a desire for discussion starting from texts in different languages, we suggest you watch, or watch again, ROMA by Alfonso Cuarón, you’ll find it on Netflix.

Finally, tomorrow or in the next few days we will propose another reading in addition to the chapters of *Tutto sull'amore* by bell hooks.

Hugs, Emilia

There will be online meetings and more and more people will join. The digital 'compost' in Palermo will open up and welcome women and men from other parts of the world, launching a far-reaching collective discussion on love, its promises and its doubts in a time dominated by fear, social distancing, solitude, diffidence, and above all a bizarre removal of bodies and the cancellation of the emotions that accompany the senses. In hindsight, it is clear that those virtual and yet very loving meetings were a lifeline in all the frost that covered our lives in those months.

Meanwhile, I'm devoting my time to the practically complete reworking of the original translation of *Tutto sull'amore*. The new publisher asked me to review it, and rather distractedly I agreed, thinking it would just be a matter of moving a few commas and changing a few words. But I find myself facing an interpretative challenge: in the old translation, bell hooks is perfectly present in terms of contents, but was made invisible in syntactic and lexical terms. She was betrayed in what is most apparently dear to her: the linguistic closeness to the rhythm of speech and the experience of life, the unwillingness to accept the doubtful theoretical 'fluidity' of high/academic jargon. As she herself states several times, the language in which she writes is, OK, American-English, in other words "the language of the oppressor," but it is also a potential "place of resistance." This is why, in the translation too, the structure she chose must be defended. Her simple, yet never simplifying, parataxis cannot be turned into hypotaxis.

As the author chooses an 'oral', measured, repetitive, enunciative, never explanatory rhythm, that rhythm must be maintained at all costs. Not doing so would be like rewriting John Coltrane in the language of Claudio Baglioni. And that is what I attempt to do. Little by little, before my eyes, *Tutto sull'amore* regains its disarming clarity, its political urgency, its ability to stand out from the sentimental treacle of the New Age texts that bell is so out of tune with.

And here, to offer greater clarity, I would like to offer the words of the author, in her precious interview in the summer of 1994 with Lawrence Chua:⁴

LC I was curious how your own critical language is developing, with which strategy in mind.

bh I've been trying to use different languages for different settings, and it's hard. One of the things I'm trying to do is break with the traditional essay format, which has been an exhilarating and exciting format for me. But it also takes time. I'd like to do work that is more mixed media and pastiche. But when you want to make a shift, then you come up against an industry that doesn't want you to because they've already got a proven product. This has been very harmful to African American writers in general. I am constantly working to shift my voice and to try to use it differently.

LC Have editors become more receptive to that linguistic transgression?

bh I went through this period where I would try to use more street language and it would all come back to me, completely edited back to standard English. These few months that I've been living in New York, I've really been overwhelmed by the degree to which there is no racial integration in publishing in our society. I'm awed by the lack, not just of the concrete visible presence of people of color, but also the failure to have progressive white people. We should be able to have spaces in this society where people of color are not present, but where antiracist perspectives will inform how things are organized and what takes place. No wonder the wheel has to be invented again, and again, and again. We're being told by the publishing world that our major buying audience is a white audience. The presumption is of an unenlightened white audience, and when everything you write should be pitched to that audience, it becomes a really troubling question of

4. "bell hooks by Lawrence Chua," interview by Lawrence Chua, *BOMB* 48, July 1, 1994, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/bell-hooks/>

what voice you use, and what space you can occupy. We're not just talking about the straight publishing world, we're talking about those vehicles in our culture that claim to represent some kind of alternative. That says that we have a lot of work to do to truly create a culture of resistance, that's not just occupied by people of color individually knocking on the door for change, but that's really occupied by lots of people who see the necessity for having a more complex intellectual artistic life in this culture.

LC Debates around representation have focused almost exclusively on who is in the frame, as if it were separate from how the narrative unfolds. That's made it difficult for Black writers whose work refuses that separation between truth and beauty to publish.

bh If your perspective isn't "I'm negating Blackness, in the interest of writing more experimentally," but, "I'm affirming Blackness and I still want to write experimentally," that's when you have trouble selling your product. The question I'm asked most often about my writing is: Who is the perceived audience? There's this sense that if you really want to have that crossover audience, you've got to simplify, you've got to translate, you've got to make everything clear. But we know that there are a lot of interesting books by white writers that don't simplify, that don't make everything clear, and people presume that they will have an audience. There's a myth about artistic freedom, that it resides with the individual writer, and not that artistic freedom has to be mirrored in the publishing practices of a culture, or when you're talking about art, the practices of galleries and museums.

But let's go back to Palermo and take a leap forward. In June 2022, sitting around a table in Piazza Marina with the now self-defined "friends in a circle"—Emilia, Ilaria, Gisella, Alli, Cristina, Fernanda—we discuss what to do. When I announce that at the end of October the new and re-worked edition of *Tutto sull'amore* will be published, Ilaria makes a proposition: "Let's take bell's words of love to the squares of Palermo, let's fill the city with thoughts of love." And that's it. In mid-September, while the book is being printed, we start to meet up on Zoom every other Monday evening and ... we plot. Other voices and other hands begin to join us: Guido, Letizia, Carolina from Milan and Bologna, Stefania, Silvia, Andrea, Caterina, Vivian, Lara, Claudia, Anna, Chicca, Costanza, the friends from booq in Palermo.

We end up with a packed, far-reaching program: "l'inondazione d'amore" ("*the inundation of love*")—the name suggested by Cristina, who manages the city's 'Mare Memoria Viva Urban Ecomuseum'—took shape and Vivian drew a map and inventoried the many locations:

The horizontal way in which we worked, with mutual generosity and passion, with no hierarchies, vested interests or conflicts, are the sign that the loving discourse proposed by bell, so un-private, so radically political and communal, is joyfully infectious. And we realized that not only we can, but we must rebel against that passivity and fragmentation that everything seems to lead to. Ours is real weaving, indeed it's a quilt. And what is most thrilling is that today, now that it is over, it still continues, branches out and we have no idea where it will lead in future.

At ZEN 2⁵ having read and discussed the pages of her book in their group, the women of Handala⁶ made a bell hooks doll, they printed out and affixed to the walls in the neighborhood a poster with

5. Still today, ZEN2 is an area that represents an unsolved issue in the field of urban regeneration of the Italian suburbs. A district with a strong physical and social identity lying in the northern part of Piana dei Colli in Palermo, the result of the city's northwards expansion, which has profoundly transformed the landscape. It was developed following the competition launched by the Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari (IACP) in 1969 to extend the Zona Espansione Nord, won by the design of Franco Amoroso, Salvatore Bisogni, Vittorio Gregotti, Franco Purini and Hiromichi Matsui. Although arousing considerable interest in the national and international architectural debate, the project was subject to several variants that betrayed the designers' intentions, and was never completely developed. (Andrea Sciascia, *Tra le modernità dell'architettura. La questione del quartiere Zen 2 di Palermo* (Palermo: L'Epos, 2003).
6. The Handala voluntary association was set up in Palermo in 2008 by a group of social workers who had been working for years in the degraded neighborhoods of the city of Palermo, particularly ZEN, Kalsa and Albergheria. The main purposes of the association are: promoting the respect and full exercise of human, political and social rights of unemployed and/or marginalized persons using methods that foster active participation and citizenship; fighting educational poverty by creating cultural and educational opportunities for children, young people and families; fighting gender violence through female empowerment and emancipation. Their website is <https://associazionehandala.org/>.

inondazione d'amore a palermo
10 novembre-6 dicembre 2022

10 novembre, ore 19.00
ecomuseo mare memoria viva
via messina marine 14
presentazione del programma inondazione d'amore

12 novembre ore 18.00
ecomuseo mare memoria viva
via messina marine 14
broncio ringhio ruggito, cattivo umore garantito
violenza d'amore

15 novembre
26 novembre
3 dicembre 10.00 - 13.00
sede accademia villa filippina
piazza s. francesco di paola, 18
trasporti d'amore (seminario a numero chiuso)

16 novembre 19.00
piazza magione
punti d'amore

18 novembre ore 10
spazio donna zen-associazione handala
le parole dell'amore
incontro intimo
maria nadotti e le donne dello spazio donna zen

18 novembre ore 18.00
boog - biblioficina di quartiere
via santa teresa 3 (angolo piazza kalsa)
fermenti d'amore
incontro intorno a tutto sull'amore di bell hooks

20 novembre ore 10
spazio donna zen
via agesia di siracusa
(di fronte al civico 13)
fili d'amore
letture e ricamo collettivo

24 novembre 16.00 - 19.00
accademia di belle arti di palermo
aula magna palazzo fernandez
via papireto 1
trasporti d'amore,
incontro con maria nadotti
a cura di stefania galegati

26 novembre ore 10.30
mercato ballarò
punti d'amore

29 novembre 20.00
ecomuseo mare memoria viva
via messina marine 14
mente d'amore
incontro di pratica sull'insegnamento
di bell hooks
a cura del sangha di Palermo
nella tradizione zen del maestro
Thich Nhat Han

30 novembre ore 16.00
piazza bologni
punti d'amore

1-2 dicembre ore 20.30
cinema de seta - cantieri culturali alla zisa
via paolo gli 4

1 dicembre
Die Geträumten
Ruth Beckermann
Austria 2016 / 90' / v.o. sott.it.

2 dicembre
Mutzenbacher
Ruth Beckermann
Austria 2022 / 100' / v.o. sott.it.
sarà presente la regista

2 dicembre
radici piccolo museo della natura
via antonio gagini 23
ore 17 bambine danzano semi d'amore
(radici con diaria)
ore 18 furti d'amore

4 dicembre ore 13.00
via venezia
nutrimenti d'amore
pranzo di quartiere

6 dicembre ore 15.30
parrocchia sant'agnese
piazza danisinni
gesti d'amore

bell hooks tutto sull'amore

Fig. 1: *Inondazione d'amore a Palermo*

the phrase that most struck them: “Love is as love does,” and the same words were embroidered on a large banner that, on 25 November, they took to the streets of Palermo in the protest march against violence against women.

Another group of women, working in the Sant’Agnese parish of Danisinni, a city district considered off-limits, chose another material and another dynamic for making the words of love in bell’s book—read thoroughly and carefully during a series of afternoon meetings—their own. They extrapolated the phrases that spoke most to the participants, each one re-writing them in their own way, with more intimate and pertinent words, painting them on small ceramic tiles to be laid in the local nursery, closed in 2007 and planned to be reopened in late 2023. A priority for the population of a neighborhood counting over six thousand inhabitants, with many children, the love tiles of hooks—who hated the cold-footed theory of those who make do with words—will cover the façade.

And here, to end this brief insight into an extraordinary adventure that we hope to be able to tell in more detail in a podcast mixing bell’s words with those of the many people who have been at her side in Palermo a year after her death, is the work that a group of students from the city’s Fine Arts Academy decided to create together with one of their professors, the artist Stefania Galegati. In this case the words are not bell’s, but they relate to her in the passion and conscience of what we have in common and that makes us human. They were written by John Berger, an author who was dear to hooks, at the end of his *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*.⁷ The chosen location is the peak of Mount Pellegrino, looking over the sea and the Santa Maria dei Rotoli cemetery,⁸ where for some time now there has been no room even for those who die.

7. John Berger, *E i nostri volti, amore mio, leggeri come foto*, trans. Maria Nadotti (Milano: il Saggiatore, 2020).

8. Santa Maria dei Rotoli cemetery lies in the Vergine Maria district of Palermo, and is the city’s largest cemetery. It was built on the slopes of Mount Pellegrino in 1837 when, following a cholera epidemic, the Sant’Orsola cemetery could no longer cope with all the corpses. Since 2019, the situation in this large cemetery looking over the sea has reached emergency levels: due to a lack of space, today there are one thousand and ten corpses waiting to be buried.



Fig. 2: The bell hooks doll with Concetta and Mariella, two of the women who designed and made her



Figg. 3, 4: Palermo, ZEN 2, 25 November 2022

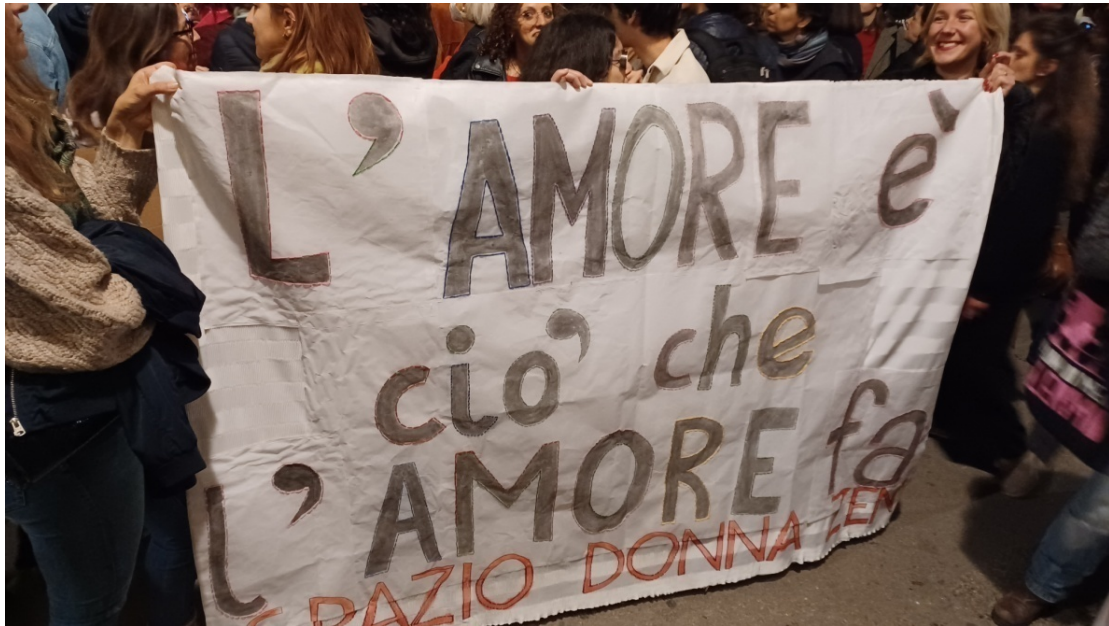


Fig. 5: 25 November 2022, at the protest in Palermo



Fig. 6: 6 December 2022, Danisinni



Fig. 7, 8: Milan, 20 December 2022



Figg. 9, 10: Milan, 20 December 2022