

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF
WOMEN'S ACTIVISM AND SCHOLARSHIP**

SITE: ITALY

**Transcript of Antonia Peressoni
Interviewer: Bruno Grazioli, Lauren Duncan**

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Antonia Peressoni was born in San Daniele del Friuli in 1978. After graduating with a degree in Public Relations (advertising) she moved first to Piedmont and shortly after to Bologna. She works as the press office manager for a record company and also freelances. With her arrival in the capital of Emilia Romagna, she dedicated herself to activism in the LGBTQ world, first as a volunteer for Pride in 2008, organized by the Arcigay “Cassero” and then within the Bologna Arcigay association. In 2012 she created Indie Pride, a live event with the intention of involving the musical world in saying NO to homophobia, bullying, and sexism. After four years Indie Pride became an independent organization sponsoring its annual festival, and also satellite events like talks, workshops, meetings, and awareness campaigns. In recent years she has collaborated with national and international networks, like Equally and Keychange, which deal with gender equality and the gender gap within the music market.

Bruno Grazioli is the Resident Director of the Italian Studies Program for Dickinson College in Bologna (Italy). He has studied in Italy and the UK, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and French, an M.A. in Pedagogy and Promotion of Italian Language and Culture at the University Ca’ Foscari of Venice, an M.A. and Ph.D. in Italian Studies. For over a decade he was faculty in Italian at Smith College and twice served as academic director for study-abroad programs in Florence (Italy). Since 2018 Bruno directs the Italian Studies Program in Bologna where Dickinson students deepen their knowledge of the Italian language and culture. He developed and taught a course on Italian Activism combining traditional instruction in class with volunteering/community engagement work in local organizations. He has published “Social activism Italian style: building a community of practice through language immersion and civic engagement while studying abroad” for Routledge (2021) and co-authored “Crisis as Opportunity: Reimagining Global Learning Pathways through New Virtual Collaborations and Open Access during COVID-19” for *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* (2022). Currently Bruno is co-writing a book chapter titled “Building A Practice of Hope in International Education” for a two-volume publication for Cornell University Press.

Lauren Duncan is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Psychology at Smith College, in Northampton, MA. She obtained her Ph.D. in Personality Psychology and a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She teaches courses in the Psychology of Women and Gender, Political Psychology, and the Psychology of Political Activism. Her research focuses on individual motivation for participation in collective action, particularly among women and LGBTQ+ individuals. While at Smith, she began studying the Italian language and culture (Dr. Grazioli was her first teacher, who became her friend and collaborator) and was able to extend her research on the psychology of activism to conduct oral histories with Italian feminist and feminist LGBTQ+ activists. She has recently written about “Better policy interventions through intersectionality” (*Social Issues and Policy Review*, 2022),

the childhood origins of Gloria Steinem's feminist activism (Journal of Personality, 2022), "Psychology and political participation" for The Oxford Handbook of Political Participation (2022), and "Power, gender, and collective action" for The Palgrave Handbook of Psychology Power & Gender (2023).

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Lauren Duncan: I would like to begin with a conversation about your childhood. First of all, with your family. What does/did your parents do?

Antonia Peressoni: Both of my parents have been retired for a year. My dad designed window frames, he worked for different companies; since I was little, I remember that he was doing this work. Before, if I'm not wrong, he worked as a laborer in one of the most important iron and steel factories in Friuli;¹ work that gave him so much, but he decided to change jobs because it was a bit dangerous. He had done his studies in a technical institute called "Malignani,"² so after his experience as a laborer he started looking for another job and then he began to designing doors and windows for various companies, something that he did until last year when he retired—retired in a manner of speaking because he is continuing to work, but you know that the Friulani are fierce workers, they never stop working even when they could.³ My mom, in contrast, had started a course of study at the university to become a social worker but after I was born, she had to interrupt her studies. She has always worked for the Municipality of Majano, a Friulian town, first she started in the registry office, then she moved to the administrative office, then she worked as the director of the senior center, then she ended up in the registry again and last year she went, with immense joy, into retirement.⁴ My mom and dad gave me a sister named Martina and we are 8 years apart (she's younger). I don't know, can I tell you about my sister?

LD: Yes.

AP: Martina graduated from college, she did a course of study relevant to medicine but more technical, in the sense that she goes to construction sites and checks that, if there was an injury or something, that everything is in order. She is a specialist in this but could also do inspections with regards to restaurants in such a way that all the regulations regarding cleanliness but also safety regulations and so on are respected. To date, my sister has worked for some years in a healthcare company, first in Monfalcone,⁵ now in Gemona with

¹ Friuli is a northeast region in Italy that has an area of about 3,000 square miles. ("Friuli—Venezia Giulia." Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Friuli-Venezia-Giulia>. Accessed 4 April 2022.)

² Malignani institute is a vocational school in Udine, Italy. Malignani is a secondary school. ("Istituto Tecnico Industriale 'Arturo Malignani'." North Wind / South Sun. <http://www2.malignani.ud.it/WebEnis/NorthWind-SouthSun/malignani.htm>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

³ "The Friulani" refers to the people of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy. ("The Italian Friulani—A Hardened Bunch?" We Blog the World. <https://weblogtheworld.com/formats/featured/the-italian-friulani-a-hardened-bunch>. Accessed 4 April 2022.)

⁴ Majano is an Italian town located in Friuli-Venezia Giulia. ("Majano." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majano>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁵ Monfalcone is a town in Friuli Venezia Giulia. The city is located on the Gulf of Trieste. ("Monfalcone." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monfalcone>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

responsibilities (she isn't happy with this job because she has a boss who busts her balls a bit).⁶ This is my family.

Bruno Grazioli: To answer your question "Can I tell you about my sister?" the goal is to understand what is behind the activists and to understand the motivations that brought you to be who you are today. Did you come directly to Bologna from Friuli?

AP: No.

BG: Tell us something about—start with how it was living and growing up in your family.

AP: Okay. I have to say that I consider myself a very lucky person in the sense that I have a family who loves and makes itself loved, where maybe even when you are younger you don't understand much about the value, you are a bit rebellious—I was always a bit of a rebel, someone who went a bit against the mainstream—but there always was, I never lacked affection. Growing up I was also aware that I wanted more discussion, which is there as a matter of fact, something that maybe from a young age, even with my sister, among sisters, even maybe because of the age difference there wasn't much, but with adulthood this awareness grew but maybe also this necessity. After high school, I had a period of rebellion, so I went to London for a while, after I returned because anyway in high school I did my studies at the psycho-pedagogy high school which would then lead me to teaching especially of small children, then while I was in London I received this telephone call saying "If you want to, you can start working at the nursery school in San Daniele"⁷ so I returned (the experience lasted few months) and this led me to work in a factory.

I worked in a factory for six months, in the factory I said "This isn't what I want to do"—because I was 20/21 years old—"I'm not doing what I want to with my life" and so I enrolled at the university and I did, within the foreign language and literature school, there was this new specialization called "public relations" and I specialized in advertising. From there, I saw that a thesis had to be completed, there were two roads that I wanted to travel: one more dedicated to social issues (I had this idea, "Go to Palestine") something that wasn't done because I followed the other idea; I have always loved music, so I tried to do a thesis on music. I compared two festivals, their promotional strategies, one Friulian called

⁶ Gemona is a town in the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, located in the Province of Udine. ("Gemona del Friuli (Friuli Venezia Giulia)." Italy Magazine. <https://www.italymagazine.com/gemona-del-friuli>. Accessed 4 April 2022.)

⁷ San Daniele is a commune or municipality in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy. This area is known for its prosciutto, history, and art. ("San Daniele del Friuli: Prosciutto, Renaissance Frescoes and a Mighty River." Italy Magazine. <https://www.italymagazine.com/dual-language/san-daniele-del-friuli-prosciutto-renaissance-frescoes-and-mighty-river>. Accessed 5 April 2022.)

Folkest⁸ and another itinerant one called Tora! Tora!⁹ organized by a Piedmontese¹⁰ label called Mescal and there,¹¹ once I did the thesis and once I had the copies, I said "I will bring one to the people who enabled me to do this thesis" so I returned to Piedmont, I deposited the thesis with the head of the press and communication office of Mescal and I proposed to them "Can I do an internship here?" and she looked at me and said "Well, if you can begin in two weeks" and I said, "Shoot, all right," so in two weeks, in a frantic rush I got organized, I left for Piedmont to Nizza Monferrato¹² in the province of Asti,¹³ it was supposed to be a 3-month long internship, after one month they told me "If you want, stay" because the girl that was doing the radio and television promotions had resigned and so—how lucky! — four months after I graduated I was working.

This experience caused me to spend two years in Piedmont, after which in any case I didn't have a work contract, things at the label weren't going so well and anyway I had moved, escaping from one little town to find myself in another little town, now I needed a city. I had always liked Bologna, famous little rebellious Bologna, a little revolutionary, with the counterculture and everything, and this label also had an office in Bologna, a booking office and then finally I was able to be transferred there.¹⁴ A short time after I was here in Bologna my work contract ended. I did a year with different situations, a couple especially from Milan going back and forth,¹⁵ then I began to work at Irma Records,¹⁶ a Bolognese label, but which has always worked mainly with foreign countries, and I worked for seven

⁸ Folkest is an annual international Folk festival held in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy each summer. ("Folkest 2022." Folkest. <https://www.folkest.com/en/folkest-2022/>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁹ Tora! Tora! was an alternative music festival hosted in the summers of 2001 through 2005. It traveled around Italy hosting shows. ("Tora! Tora!" Wikipedia. https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tora!_Tora!. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹⁰ 'Piedmontese' refers to something coming from the northern region of Italy called Piedmont. ("Piedmontese." Dictionary.com. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/piedmontese>. Accessed 12 April 2022.)

¹¹ Mescal is an Italian record label founded in 1993. They have produced more than 120 albums since their establishment. ("A bit of history..." Mescal. <https://www.mescalmusic.com/mescal-music/>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹² Nizza Monferrato is a town in the Province of Asti, Italy. ("Nizza Monferrato." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nizza_Monferrato. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹³ The Province of Asti is located in northern Italy, within the Piedmont region. ("Province of Asti." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Asti. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹⁴ Located in northern Italy, Bologna is a city with over one million residents. ("Bologna." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹⁵ Milan, a city in northern Italy, is the second largest city (by population) in Italy. ("Milan." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹⁶ Irma Records is a record label based in Bologna, Italy that specializes in publishing dance music and alternative music. ("Irma Records." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irma_Records. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

years with them.¹⁷ After that, I registered for a VAT number¹⁸ and now for five years I have been a freelancer in the field of communication, always in the press office since I started in Mescal up until now, this path bringing me here to Bologna where I've lived now for fifteen years.

BG: You're asking for trouble!

AP: Yes, let's say that on certain things I am rather straightforward, I am very convinced about what I want and about how I want it. With the passing of the years maybe I am smoothing out the edges, I am calmer than I was ten years ago.

LD: I would like to return to your childhood, in particular, how did you learn the political and social values of your family?

AP: Ah, good question! In my family there wasn't ever strong political activism, in any case we always talked a bit about situations that we encountered, also in the history of our family, but there wasn't ever a stance, that is I cannot say "My parents were leftists" or "My parents were strictly right," that is, I knew that my parents gravitated toward a left-center position. There were times when we chatted because in youth my grandparents weren't like that; my mom told me, not very convincingly, that grandma voted FMI, that they supported the "national right..."

LD: Was it your mom's mom?

AP: Yes, she talked about it like saying "Anyway, he made some mistakes, but they can be fixed." On the other hand, on my father's side, I'm sorry because only when I had gone away from Friuli, my grandpa—my grandpa hadn't ever talked about his childhood with his children, that is he never talked about the Second World War. He started to talk to my cousin, who unfortunately died one month after my grandpa died, in a motorcycle accident. Those times that I return to Friuli and go to see him, I saw that he wanted—he had recounted a bit of the period of the war so the fact that he had been a part of the Balilla and so he was with the oppressors.¹⁹ Afterward, he had to have a sudden change of heart, he deserted and ran away and hid himself. He never joined the resistance, but I understood that he had understood that he'd better not side with the oppressors, but these are just bits

¹⁷ 'Bolognese' describes topics from or relating to Bologna, Italy. ("Bolognese." Cambridge Dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/bolognese>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

¹⁸ A VAT number identifies an individual for tax purposes. ("VAT Identification Numbers." European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vat-identification-numbers_en. Accessed 12 April 2022.)

¹⁹ Opera Nazionale Balilla was a Fascist organization in Italy that aimed at school-age boys and attempted to both indoctrinate them and in some ways recruit them into paramilitary activities from 1926-1937.

and pieces, so I don't have the truth, maybe there was a bit more, but my cousin passed away and he took them with him, but this made me think a lot: knowing that my father and his sisters never knew anything gives you food for thought. More than anything else I associate politics with my dad and his rock records from Pink Floyd²⁰ to Jethro Tull²¹ and Deep Purple,²² for me his way of doing politics was listening to these records; sometimes he understood what they were singing, sometimes not, but I associate it with this.

As a girl, my parents didn't ever refuse to let me go to the demonstrations, that is, I went to the G8,²³ I went to all the demonstrations, student and otherwise, that were there during my adolescence or late-adolescence; they never forbid me from going. When I went to the G8, I wanted absolutely to go there, I had an exam to take and they told me, "Go, just do the exam, that is, take the exam, then do what you want" but they never forbid nor clearly said to me—maybe more than anything else concerns like "Be careful," not "Where are you going, those people there are bad"—it was more, "Go, but be careful because you don't ever know, something can always happen" in fact for the G8 they were right because what happened in Genoa at that event is history. I associate my political memories with these memories. Nobody restricted my freedom to be able to express myself and to talk about myself.

BG: Did you talk about politics in your house or not?

AP: Yes, but it was a subject like "Today it's sunny, how nice!" That is, there weren't political discussions, it wasn't that we sat around a table maybe during lunch or dinner and discussed that; it was a subject like any other, but very casual.

BG: Did you talk about subjects more related to sexual life since you needed to establish a conversation on this topic with them?

AP: When I became an adult, we did this a little more.

BG: What were the messages about gender that were passed on consciously or not?

²⁰ Pink Floyd is a rock band from London, England that gained popularity in the late 1960s. ("Pink Floyd." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pink_Floyd. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

²¹ Jethro Tull is an English rock band created in 1967. ("Jethro Tull (band)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jethro_Tull_\(band\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jethro_Tull_(band)). Accessed 2 August 2022.)

²² Founded in 1968, Deep Purple is a British rock band famous for pioneering heavy metal styles. ("Deep Purple." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep_Purple. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

²³ The Group of 8 (G8) was a group of government representatives from eight countries: the USA, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia. The G8 met to discuss economics. Russia was removed from the group in 2014, making it the G7. ("Group of 8." Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Group-of-Eight>. Accessed 12 April 2022.)

AP: Regarding gender, being three women in a family where there is only my dad—my dad is a very good man—for me, it was natural that an awareness about being a woman was born, at least in me it was born, also for my mom; my mom is a woman all of a piece²⁴ and also her mother is a woman with two ovaries like this,²⁵ that is, it isn't necessary that they express explicitly their being women but it is their presence, how they behave, how they talk and the things that they said, how they approached each other and approached life that led me to understand the value of being a woman and how important it is to make all the others also understand it. Maybe this thing was passed on a bit less to my sister, but I think that it is also a question of character traits, because my sister on this front here is a bit more docile, but even she has the awareness, she simply expresses it in a calmer way than maybe I can do. So yes, if I responded to the question, it is this, it isn't an explanation but something more implied in the relationship within the family. In my family there are really a lot of women if I think about it also outside the nuclear family, my aunts: my dad has two sisters, even there two women, especially the youngest, Eleonora, straight, strong, also due to what she went through (a divorce, then you lose your only son at age 21, shortly before you had lost your partner) that is a strong woman who was put before tragedies because to lose one's child is a tragedy, it is a drama. I've always had these examples. The other (aunt) on the other hand—my mom has one brother and one sister—her sister was more present than her brother, even in my life. In my life I see more women than men, and all women of character, in their own way, but all women of character.

BG: And your grandmothers?

AP: I never met my maternal grandfather because he died two years before I was born, so on my mom's side I always and only had my grandma; on my dad's side, though, I had both grandparents. My maternal grandma is a very—how do you say—practical woman: a woman who got her hands dirty, worked in the garden, did everything herself. My paternal grandma, on the other hand, had both a farmer side, like the other, and also a gentlewoman side; I remember that she used to go every Saturday to get her hair done at the hairdresser, it was always impeccable, that is—was she going to garden? Yes, she was sweaty, but she didn't have a hair out of place. Besides, even my grandpa was a gentleman: they had a style, no small amount of elegance, very refined even though they were very down to earth.

LD: Did you receive messages about sexuality or sexual orientation?

AP: Me?

²⁴ Translator's Note: with moral integrity

²⁵ Translator's Note: female equivalent to having "big balls" or lots of courage/nerve

LD: Yes, from your family.

AP: No, not from my family. I came out to my parents very late, but also because as a girl I didn't understand very well what I was, who I was, what I was doing, "Oh yeah, sure, let's have fun." The awareness arrived after I left Friuli, probably being much more by myself and dealing with a different reality than the one I used to experience where I had grown up, I understood a little more, that is I understood a bit more. From there a whole journey began and I have to say that my arrival in Bologna gave it a further push. In Friuli, not knowing well who I was, what I was doing, I wasn't even interested in the resources that I could call on, to lean on; when I arrived in Piedmont, anyway, I was working a lot in a small town so, even there, there wasn't the possibility of talking about it; when I arrived in Bologna, there was Cassero,²⁶ hurray! So, I began there, but—with my parents when I was a girl there wasn't ever this type of nod to the possibility of different sexual orientations—at that time only thinking of the difference between identity and orientation, total emptiness.

It is an awareness that doing activism here in Bologna has developed and now I am slowly teaching it to my parents, too. I came out to my parents very late. My mother had intuited it, my dad not at all (mothers are always cleverer, more attentive); when I told them initially it was difficult because even when I was a girl we talked about sex but more than anything else "Be careful, there are diseases, be careful not to get pregnant too soon, consider how to avoid this risk" so from that point of view we talked about sex, with my mom we talked about sex, not in the specifics but understanding what it was, how you do it and how you protect yourself, yes. You would always talk in a very detached way about sex and when I came out the first thing my mom asked me was "But how do you have sex?" F*ck, I was left like this [her jaw drops]. I made a joke that she didn't understand and from there it was a rather slow path because I had come to this point after many years here and so by then I had developed an awareness, my parents no: they were newly discovering their daughter without having the tools to be able to understand me, so initially it was just a bit difficult. I remember that I had a girlfriend who I brought home to Friuli, my parents met her and everything, calmly, serenely, but maybe it was last year's Pride in Bologna and here we had a model that unfortunately we no longer have, Flavia Madaschi,²⁷ who is more than 70

²⁶ Cassero is a LGBTQ+ community and advocacy center located in Bologna, Italy. The center hosts events to promote community and campaigns for LGBTQ+ acceptance. ("Chi Siamo." Cassero. <https://www.cassero.it/chi-siamo/>. Accessed 12 April 2022.)

²⁷ Flavia Madaschi was an Italian activist known as the mother of the gay movement in Bologna. She spent most of her adult life advocating for gay rights and passed away at the age of 72 in 2015. ("Addio Flavia Madaschi, "mamma" del movimento gay Bolognese." La Repubblica. https://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/01/07/news/addio_flavia_madaschi_mamma_del_movimento_gay_bolognese-104465388/. Accessed 15 April 2022.)

years old, president at that time of Agedo, the association of parents, relatives, and friends of homosexual people.²⁸

BG: The person that the Documentation Center is named after where Sara De Giovanni works?

AP: Yes. In that Pride Flavia took the stage after the demonstration and made a powerful speech aimed at parents, saying "You have to join your children in these demonstrations, you have to be by your children's side because you have to fight for their rights," that is, she made a very heartfelt speech because in any case Flavia had fought for women's rights in the Seventies, afterwards she became pregnant and she had a gay son and started to fight for his rights, so a very active woman, very pragmatic, but also very straight-forward. When I made them listen to the speech that Flavia had given, my parents were affected because maybe they saw it as a bit of aggression; my father, I remember that he told me "We understand that there is this world, but we don't understand you and we don't understand why this happened to you." You can imagine—desperation! After some months my girlfriend left me, I returned home devastated; my mom noticed it, even my dad did. The thing that hit me more was that before going to sleep my dad looked at me and told me "Did Jessica leave you because she isn't homosexual like you?" The fact that you use the whole word "homosexual" like that means you've taken a step forward. Then he looked at me and told me "I'm so sorry because you were happy, and we want you to be happy" so then and there he overcame his prejudice. As I was saying before, I am lucky because in my family there is love, we give love and we receive love; I think that it is the important thing in a family, that is, affection, love that binds you, that is you are happy knowing that who you have near, blood of your blood, your children, your parents, are happy. Perhaps you don't understand immediately why that type of happiness is there, but it is happiness.

BG: You already told us almost all of your story... This project takes a comparative approach: trying to understand how things work differently here than in the United States where they seem to be far ahead. In the American culture there is an attachment to one's personal history, a narrative that you construct individually to manage, to take ownership of, to have the right to share it and control it in a way that isn't monopolized by others from a political point of view. You have told us what happened. What is missing in your coming out story? To explain myself better, seeing that you said earlier that now you are looking to teach your parents a certain vocabulary rather than a type of communication, we imagine that in your activist

²⁸ Agedo is an association that connects parents of gay children, founded by Flavia Madaschi. ("Addio Flavia Madaschi, "mamma" del movimento gay Bolognese." La Repubblica. https://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/01/07/news/addio_flavia_madaschi_mamma_del_movimento_gay_bolognese-104465388/. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

activity you interact a lot with people that haven't yet done this work. So, what is missing in your story that you want to share with these people to encourage them?

AP: Oh God, good question, very difficult! First of all, don't be afraid. The thing that holds us back most, that has also personally held me back, is the fear of the reactions of those before you, whether it is a parent, a friend, a work colleague, a relative; it is the fear of not being understood and maybe, above all, of not being accepted, but I also see it as an exercise in freedom, an exercise in strength in the sense that if we let the fear stop or hold it back, it is the biggest obstacle and the greatest restraint on doing anything. If we allow the fears to win, every day we build a fence, a cage around ourselves, which will always take us further from those who we would rather have nearby. Then, it is true, you have to be patient because once you come out it means starting over and growing a bit at a time and so having the patience to explain and to recount your story to those close to you because many times we are not aware that a large number of people ignore everything in the LGBT world, but that's because we aren't explaining how things actually are, that is even the example of explaining "No, coming out is a thing, outing is another, now I'll explain it to you; you say "un trans"²⁹ or "una trans",³⁰ I'll explain it, I'll tell you the difference."

Maybe they are things that we already know but we have people before us who don't know it and only by explaining to them and having this patience, then after that there is, slowly, two roads that seem parallel beginning to get closer, merge, then we take a journey together. For me, it's this: trying to win and overcome the fears. Then it is true, there can also be completely negative reactions, so the fear of rejection, of non-acceptance, once said, having come out, once you have opened up, unfortunately one of the possibilities can even be this. It is better to always keep a secret or to have safety, the certainty that "Okay, it didn't go well," but living all my life without knowing how it is... At least I told my parents, my friends, my colleagues, they know who I am; don't they want to accept me? Unfortunately, it is a fact but at least now I know and will react accordingly.

BG: Were there times when you decided not to make your story explicit?

AP: I've been wanting to tell it for a while because one of my aunts knows it, the other two don't.

BG: Did they talk?

²⁹ Translator's Note: trans, masculine version

³⁰ Translator's Note: trans, feminine version

AP: The youngest, the craziest one, in my opinion, mentioned it to the other two, I don't know. I am certain that my aunt on my mom's side doesn't know because I think that my mom left it to me to tell, but even there, we are in the social media era, not that I keep silent on my Facebook profile;³¹ they may have guessed it a little, I imagine, but it wasn't made explicit and here I go a bit against what I said earlier because I am putting off something that instead has to be done and has to be told to my two aunts, who may have guessed, but it is one thing to sense it, it's another to hear it from me.

LD: And in the work environment?

AP: Very peaceful, that is now it is easier for me because eight years ago—related to activism—I began to do this event called Indie Pride in 2008—no, 2012—on the occasion of National Pride done here in Bologna.³² Unfortunately, the newspapers reported a bunch of stories about cases of homophobia and homophobic bullying; it was the year the little boy with pink pants was referred to as homosexual even though he wasn't and after this he was harassed with messages. He took his own life. There I said "Shoot, there is Pride here in Bologna" and I proposed to the committee "Let's do a concert where we put together several musicians to 'say no to homophobia'" and so it was. From that year I have proposed it every year. Four years ago, Indie Pride became an association that in addition to homophobia is "independent against homo- and transphobia, sexism, and bullying" which have the same roots in hate. Bringing about this thing in the world of music, as a homosexual and someone who works in the industry it is impossible that my colleagues don't know it [that she is a lesbian].

Now I am not anymore but, until a few months ago I was president of the association, so I don't need to make it explicit anymore: we have talks, I say that I have combined what I am with what I do and there is absolutely no problem whatsoever. Maybe more than other things, the problem of this last period is the fact that now in the music world there is a bit of raising the consciousness of women who work in music and we're creating a movement going a bit against this insistent machismo, that is this real machismo in the music world, like in all the work sectors where if you go to see the festival line-ups, 80-85% are men, 10-15% are women; like female music-industry executives and managers at high levels, women are very rare, they are almost all roles occupied by men. The only music sector where women predominate is the one where I work, in communication, but even at the technical level they are mostly men, so in this last year there is—let's call it activism—right

³¹ Facebook is a social media platform that allows users to share photos and video and message contacts. ("Facebook." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

³² Indie Pride is a one-night festival hosted by queer activists in Bologna, Italy. The event combines indie music and LGBTQ+ activism. ("Tales from Indie Pride in Italy." Bi.org. <https://bi.org/en/articles/tales-from-indie-pride-in-italy>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

within my sector, we are trying to buck up women a bit by making the men understand “We are also here, we are many, consider us.”

LD: We are interested in your first political action.

AP: Uh! Maybe my first political action... I was the class representative at university for three years and [the action] was encouraging my classmates to occupy the school, so including a school strike, to protest because—now I don’t remember exactly—it was a protest against school reform and so we participated in this occupation for some days; not everyone participated, the nerdier ones went to class, but the majority of the group didn’t go to class to protest—now I don’t remember exactly, but there was a reform at the national level that damaged the scholastic system a little, in our opinion—there were these types of protest a bit in all of Italy.

BG: Were there “guides” like literature or other things, even people, maybe that you didn’t know personally but who helped you along the way?

AP: I read a lot but, after a year, “What did you read?” I don’t remember. Unfortunately, I have a memory—for me a priest, Fr. Maurizio, was significant. During my adolescence he was very revolutionary to me because he knew that in our group we were in so much doubt about our faith, we really doubted the existence of God. He was young, while we were going through adolescence, he was following the path to deacon and then he became a priest. He always told us “It doesn’t matter to me if you believe or not, it’s important to me that you love, love.”³³ The thing that he put in our head is this passage from the Gospel, which I had never read but I remember this passage, and it says, “There is nothing more beautiful than to give one’s life for one’s friends.” He was revolutionary for me because in any case, even though after growing up I rejected the Catholic-Christian religion, I distanced myself, I have to say that Fr. Maurizio was a revolutionary figure because in adolescence to have a priest that really does for you what a priest should do, be a guide, a spiritual guide... The only thing that was important to him is that we had a feeling of love and that is revolutionary to me, especially thinking about what some priests still say, still preach, everything but words of love, they are words of hate.

BG: Are you still in contact with this person?

AP: Unfortunately, no.

BG: Did you come out to him?

³³ Translator’s Note: she uses two different words for love: the first one platonic, the second romantic

AP: No, because it is almost twenty years since—I saw him, maybe the last time, at the wedding of two of my friends, but more than fifteen, eighteen years, had already passed. It was a time in which I was still in the process of understanding myself, so I could not ever come out because I hadn't come out to myself.

BG: Is it something you would like to do?

AP: I don't know, because I don't even know where he is now, so I wouldn't even know how to reach him, how to contact him, that is some of my friends had remained in contact with him, but they haven't heard. He was moved a thousand times and now I really don't know where he lives.

LD: How did you find the LGBTQ community?

AP: I told you earlier that I moved to Bologna but before I moved to Bologna, at that point I was living in Piedmont, I was close not to the community but more than anything to the lesbian experience because there was *The L Word*,³⁴ the American TV series set in Los Angeles if I remember correctly,³⁵ that was broadcast in the late night on La7³⁶ and within the La7 site on *The L Word* page there also was a chat where you could talk with other girls, other women; the world opened up there, I began to meet some people then had some exchanges and when I came here to Bologna there was a group of women from Emilia-Romagna who,³⁷ in addition to connecting with them in the chat, also dated in real life and I approached Cassero thanks to this group; I went to one of the Cassero evenings finding myself with these girls and after that I started to get closer to Cassero and in 2008 I became a volunteer for Pride and that's when I started my path to activism, after which we began to organize some transgressive evenings called "Omonioia."³⁸ After a bit I distanced myself, in order to grow, like one leaves the family, I grew up within Cassero after which I said, "Enough, I'll do what I want" and I began my journey with Indie Pride.

BG: So do you identify as an activist?

³⁴ *The L Word* is a TV show that aired in the United States from 2004 to 2009. The main characters are lesbian and bisexual women. The show's title references the word 'lesbian.' ("The L Word." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_L_Word. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

³⁵ Los Angeles is the second largest city in the United States. It is located in the state of California, in the western US. ("Los Angeles." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

³⁶ Translator's Note: TV network

³⁷ Emilia-Romagna is a region of northern Italy. Its capital is Bologna. ("Emilia-Romagna." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emilia-Romagna>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

³⁸ Translator's Note: homo-paranoia

AP: Yes, yes, absolutely.

BG: And do you know a lot of other activists?

AP: Yes.

LD: It's a network.

BG: But they have different stories.

AP: Yes, I imagine yes, absolutely.

BG: Do you find similarities between your story and those of other people who do activism? Are you able to explain why other women aren't interested in doing activism? What is the difference?

AP: You know that I am also asking myself this, I wonder what is the difference between those who decide to take a path of activism and those who don't. Honestly not—

BG: Try to tell us why you identify as an activist.

AP: Why do I identify? For me there is a need to know things. If people don't know things, and at the same time when things aren't going well, people won't be able to change things or in any case there aren't tools to be able to understand how to act. There is passivity and activity. I don't want to live a passive life or in any case passively put up with things; today even more than when I started I realize that I don't like things like this, that is I don't feel represented by certain words, by certain representatives, but also by how this society is evolving or devolving and the only way to be able to attempt to change it is to do something, which can be... Also, like in ecology, the environment, that is if I say "Shoot, but why is there climate change... Why is it that yesterday it was 40° [Celsius] and today it's 28° [Celsius]?" Here, maybe I start in my small way to do something because not turning on the air conditioner, a stupid example, or only use glass cups and try not to use plastic, so—if I answered—it is this.

Then also for me to be active means also to discuss. For me we are not used to discussions, which could turn into disputes, but I mean that it's better to have an exchange than not; if instead you put up with it and that's it, you don't have the tools, you don't even have a way to understand. I don't know why... This is the answer that I give to myself: it is also a need to be able to have my say and to be able to have the tools to make it possible to say it but also because others can say it. I don't understand... I think that it is a character thing or

given by experience, maybe someone can be an activist up to a certain point and then something can happen in their life that makes them brutally interrupt this thing or maybe someone, in contrast, gets enlightened on the road to Damascus³⁹ and decides to start to do activism. I don't know. This is what I want to be able to know to say and to have the awareness to have my say about certain things. The nice thing, now with Indie Pride, we are a group of seven women: two of us are lesbians, the other all are heterosexuals, and there are also some really young girls (one of whom is 22 today) and it is really great to deal with girls who are 18 years younger than me (I could almost be their mother) and to see this want, this awareness that there are some things in this situation that we don't like and ensure that they have the tools and the awareness to try to change things, at least to make attempts to change.

BG: Does your family know this aspect?

AP: Yes, certainly. Sometimes they laugh. For my mom initially there is this basic concern because she used to say to me "If you are in the spotlight too much, you could also be the target of those who foment hate against the LGBT community or even just because you are a woman." She fundamentally had this concern, then I also told her "Mom, you are talking without understanding the city of Bologna; before Indie Pride, there are so many other much bigger organizations, so when they target me, they target the last loser."⁴⁰ They have always accepted all this; there is always this type of concern because they are also well aware of how the world is and so they also realize that those who do things can also be targets of adversaries. I have a need to tell them, I tell them everything that we do with Indie Pride, I really want them to know; then last year they came for the first time to an event that we had organized, they were very happy for me, and it was a joy.

BG: What is it?

AP: Every year we do an event in October in collaboration with TPO⁴¹ which is our festival, that also funds us. This summer, we're moving around. Next week we will be in Otranto for a festival where we'll do two talks: one entitled "The power of music and the responsibility that comes with it;"⁴² the other, instead, with a network of women who work in the music world called "shesaid.so,"⁴³ we'll talk about women in music and the difficulty that many

³⁹ Damascus is the capital of Syria and is one of the oldest cities in the world. ("Damascus." Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Damascus>. Accessed 21 April 2022.)

⁴⁰ Translator's Note: meaning she's not very important.

⁴¹ Translator's Note: Laboratory of Art, Culture, and Politics in Bologna

⁴² Otranto is a city on the eastern shore of Italy, on the Salento peninsula. ("Otranto." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otranto>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁴³ shesaid.so is an international community of women and people of gender minorities within the music industry. The organization hosts workshops and events to empower members, and ultimately fight for gender

times you face, both as musicians and as others in the industry, when you occupy roles or even just play music, in one festival rather than in another.

LD: Could you talk a bit about the importance of relationships with other feminist activists?

AP: It is fundamental, in the sense that we are just trying to make a network. I believe that those who do activism in a certain way have to unite in such a way that a single voice with more voices makes a choir and you can be heard more, but also what I was saying earlier, for the exchange. Now we will collaborate with this Bologna festival called “Some Prefer Cake,” which is a lesbian film festival;⁴⁴ they have a completely different language than ours, apart from the fact that they speak with film and we speak with music, so they are two artforms that have two different languages that we want to bring together, but then they also speak especially to lesbian women; we turn to the larger heterosexual world, even homosexual, but mainly to the heterosexuals and it is nice because it is just a different approach. So, it is fundamental to collaborate and to influence each other, to cross-contaminate. The same thing with other organizations, too, not only locally, that is we have tried to network with other organizations outside the region: we are always in Bologna, Bologna is a happy island, but facing for example the situation in Bergamo,⁴⁵ where the Sentinelle in Piedi⁴⁶ were born. Bergamo is difficult, it has always had a more or less Lega Nord administration,⁴⁷ that is it is another environment where the Bergamo LGBT associations work. The nice thing is that they work—always on activism—with LGBT and other organizations so they collaborate with the social centers so with Pacì Paciana of Bergamo,⁴⁸ so they are two different worlds that talk to each other, first of all just sharing a common physical space, but also having a space to interact. Yes, it is fundamental because the language is always different, different approaches and only by talking about it we get to know each other and add to the tools to be able to then send a message and to work in one direction.

BG: Give us your idea about how the LGBT associations, on the one hand, are integrated with politics and institutions, on the other.

equity within the music industry. (“About.” shesaid.so. <https://www.shesaid.so/our-story>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁴⁴ “Some Prefer Cake” is a lesbian film festival hosted in Bologna, Italy. The event was first held in 2007. (“Some Prefer Cake.” Some Prefer Cake: Bologna Lesbian Film Festival. <https://someprefercakefestival.com/en/>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁴⁵ Bergamo is an Italian city located in the mountainous region of Lombardy. (“Bergamo.” Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bergamo>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁴⁶ Translator’s Notes: The Watchmen, a reactionary group organized to protest anti-homophobic activism

⁴⁷ Translator’s Notes: a right wing political party

⁴⁸ Translator’s Note: a social center

AP: Always by talking, first of all with discussion. Here in Bologna, we are very lucky, for example those of us with Indie Pride have signed a collaboration pact with other local associations with the city office for equal opportunities and so we have our own table in the local government where we talk with the city official in charge of social services. In other cities it is more difficult, I imagine—indeed, it is so. I come from Friuli and unfortunately since the last elections Friuli completely changed its flag, both the city of Trieste⁴⁹ and the city of Udine and the Friuli Venezia Giulia regional government have become Lega Nord administrations and the first thing the Lega Nord administration did when they took office was to cut the Ready Network. What is it? It is a network of local administrations, city/provincial/regional, which decided to chart a course together to fight against discrimination, any discrimination. At the very moment when the first thing you do getting into your region's administration is saying "We don't want to take part anymore in these networks here" the dialogue between associations, activist organizations—which tend to a certain type of politics—and institutions becomes very difficult because you are sending me a very clear message, so it means that it will always be a rocky road to work with you.

It is also true that, just in these cases, for me it is even more necessary to fight and speak out, shouting your own rights, the need to have your own rights. A different thing that happened recently in Ferrara, which after more than seventy years of center-left government passed to Lega; however, the Lega Nord mayor came down to the Ferrara Pride parade, with one whole part of his electorate who sent letters to him saying "You've betrayed us" but this for me is an intelligent administrator, in the sense that he is aware of who lives in his constituency and talks with them; then he says "I don't recognize gay marriage but I know that you are there and I don't turn away pretending that you don't exist, no, I will come, have a conversation with you, maintaining my ideas, saying that for me homosexual couples mustn't have children," but at least it's a conversation.

LD: What is the relationship between the movements within the LGBTQ world and also with respect to the feminist movement?

AP: Here in Bologna, it seems to me that there are many convergences, they come together. The reality of Non una di meno⁵⁰ about Bologna dialogues with the LGBT organizations and beyond. I repeat what I was saying before, that is Bologna is a very lucky city: there are connections, there are intersections between the different groups; yes, there's dialogue, there is a real discussion.

BG: Where are we in Italy with LGBTQI+ rights?

⁴⁹ Trieste is a city in northern Italy. It is located on the Gulf of Trieste. ("Trieste." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trieste>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁵⁰ Translator's Note: 'not one less'

AP: “LGBTQ” is enough for me and I don’t understand why a letter is added every time. Some would say, “Good, but not great.” Yes, two years ago we had the Cirinnà bill,⁵¹ the civil union law, that was approved but anyway it’s an incomplete law because, first of all, civil union is one thing, marriage is another, it’s never that the two things... The union between couples of the same sex is a civil union, which is absolutely not a marriage, an institution only for heterosexual couples. This distinction already creates a difference, that is “You are good, you a bit less” and so this is a missing right, a half right, not to mention the fact that this law is lacking the regulation of adoption rights for homosexual couples. We are saying that there are children in Italy who are “lesser children” than others because they have only one parent even though they grow up with two. Then we have an enormous gap, Indie Pride was born because of this in 2012 when the bill against homotransphobia was being discussed in parliament, the bill died there in 2012. It hasn’t been revived, repropounded, it’s there. Let’s say that in Italy, even when there are laws, they aren’t followed, for example the famous Mancino law: it affects the aggravating circumstances based on discrimination (race, gender, religion) in cases of violence (aggressions, etc.); I think that this law has never been applied.⁵²

BG: And it’s old!

AP: And it’s old. In Italy we have a bunch of gaps, both at the national and regional level. On July 24 here in Bologna we will finally adopt this law against homo- trans- lesbo-discrimination which they’ve been discussing for two years. In part this is also a half law, because there is a need to please everyone a little, both the opposition and the majority where in any case there are Catholic groups, who imposed some amendments or anyway some changes in the law that diluted the initial intentions. In Italy they make a bunch of compromises at the expense of some people.

BG: Is it a city regulation?

AP: Regional.

⁵¹ The Cirinnà bill was passed in Italy in 2016. The bill legalizes civil unions for same-sex couples. The law allows for a parent’s partner to legally adopt their biological child. (“Italian Senate Passes Civil Unions Bill.” America: The Jesuit Review. <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/italian-senate-passes-civil-unions-bill>. Accessed 21 April 2022.)

⁵² The Mancino law, passed in the mid-1990s, protects Italians against racist or religious hate crimes. It does not protect LGBTQ+ people from homophobic or transphobic hate crimes. (“Italy Towards Its First Law on Hate Crimes Against LGBT People.” Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/irenedominioni/2020/06/30/italy-towards-its-first-law-on-hate-crimes-against-lgbti/?sh=6188eb584e38>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

BG: I would like to ask you a question that isn't written here, given that you talked about half measures in Italy or that in any case we are a bit behind: is there a myth about the American movement from 50 years ago, Stonewall?⁵³

AP: Surely there is and always will be the myth of what happened at Stonewall. The U.S. LGBT community has done so much, even artistically-culturally. There is no doubt that we are influenced by what happened. I don't know about what because I don't know the U.S. administration very well. Right now, in my opinion, we are all bit in the same boat; even in the U.S., it seems to me that from the point of view of laws or in any case the taking of political positions, over there you hear lots of stuff, so from that point of view I don't think so. Also, we live in Italy: we have to try to understand what is happening here, why it's happening. I think that there are two very different ways to live and to do politics, I cannot do politics like it's done in the U.S. because the U.S. is different from Italy and Italy is different from the U.S. We have to see here why there are certain things that don't work and try to make them better here. Certainly, from the point of view of the achievement of rights, the U.S. has been a model to which we aspire for the past 50 years and the fabulousness with which the activists of that time fought for their rights is a fabulousness that we want to have, and we also have here.

LD: If you had to choose an important point from your story that other people could learn from, what would it be?

AP: Bah! I don't know, maybe the most important point is talking with your family, that is coming out to my parents, with my sister; with her just zero problems, actually when I told her "Look I have to tell you something important" she looked at me—she says "Oh god, you're pregnant, you had an abortion and you don't want to tell mom and dad!" And I say "No, I'm just gay" and she says "Ah, all right." The important thing is to talk about yourself with your parents and in any case the people you are close to, not being afraid of telling them and living as you really are. I believe that this is the most important thing.

BG: Earlier you spoke of the encounter between different languages, film and music. Today we speak in a language that allows us to understand each other, with some degree of difference, even if it isn't always well understood outside. We are talking of the terms "activism" and "activist" which typically have a different meaning, often referring to the Montessorian pedagogy, whereas in the United States it is better understood what these terms mean. In Italian we need to use other words to shed

⁵³ The "Stonewall Uprising" began on June 28, 1969 at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City, US. Participants led a rebellion against police raids of gay bars and violent treatment of queer people. ("1969: Stonewall Uprising." Library of Congress. <https://guides.loc.gov/lgbtq-studies/stonewall-era>. Accessed 2 August 2022.)

light on this or that aspect: “militancy” or “active democracy” or “volunteering.” Have you ever thought about it?

AP: You know what—no! Now that you say it, it makes a big impression on me.

BG: It’s even difficult to find articles that talk about activism about civil rights. In this regard, have you ever found yourself in front of people who didn’t understand what you were talking about?

AP: Actually, I never thought about it; it just comes so naturally to me... It is difficult to try to talk in these terms. I do what I am, I am what I do, I don’t need to make it explicit, I don’t need to underline that mine is activism or militancy, it goes without saying. It is true that these words always come out when we deal with other groups who are pro something: pro-movement, pro-rights, pro-resistance; outside, effectively, it comes out a little less maybe because it isn’t discussed. It happened to me recently talking with a girl, who until recently hung out in the world of Cassero—now she is completely distanced from it—and she told me, “You know, now I live outside of Bologna, I am completely disinterested in a whole series of things, even the homosexual world.” We talked about it on the day that she married her girlfriend, then in the following days she told me “I realize only now that mine is not a true marriage; that is for me, it is, but according to the law Valentina and I aren’t married, we are civilly united.” I told her “You understand, Marta, if you don’t know these things you live passively and, once it happens to you, you realize it.” She told me “Actually I am losing interest in it too much though this is my life.” Maybe many times there isn’t the right occasion, an occasion for discussion and talking about activism or militancy or even just to trying to inform ourselves, to understand a bit more.

BG: What you say makes me think that it isn’t possible to be an activist alone.

AP: Ah, no, absolutely.

BG: If you are an activist there are other people who share our goals, also where there is a receptive community from this point of view. I can ask you another question: explain to me the difference, because your friend realized that she is united⁵⁴ but not married, what is the real difference? It seems to me that in the law there aren’t many differences apart from the obligation to be faithful.

AP: I know that there are two or three articles diverging from marriage, but it is really a question of formality, of words, in the sense that when there are those who declare you

⁵⁴ Translator’s Note: in a civil union

“wife and wife” or “husband and husband” read a series of articles and never the word “marriage” is never cited; “civil union, civil union, civil union” is always repeated. This thing here, even if the laws diverge in few articles, it is very important at the semantic level, in the sense that to me you understand at times going to read comments to the newspaper articles—which means doing hara-kiri⁵⁵—many highlight the fact that “You are not married, yours is not a marriage, yours is not a true marriage, yours is only a civil union” that is belittling it, saying “Your thing is worth less than mine.”

BG: It becomes a weapon.

AP: It becomes a weapon. Yes, at a concrete, practical level, there aren’t many differences, but the word is fundamental, that is they are two institutions that are defined with two different words, and they have two different social weights.

BG: Compared to the only other interview that we did yesterday, with a person active in one of the associations, we are also interested in your opinion to see if there are any differences. Among many things, always with a comparative lens, on the point of the situation of LGBT rights and the public discourse in Italy with respect to these topics, the use of certain words is also included, for example: to remove the weight of gender from the language, in a language that doesn’t have gender (English) there are some tricks which—

AP: Like they say "tuttu"⁵⁶ for example. I don’t like this one bit because the Italian language, even with its flaws, is a beautiful language, and it seems to me crippling to be forcing it in a way that isn’t necessary. What is so bad about saying “everyone (feminine) and everyone (masculine)?” What is "tuttu?" It is the tutu that you put on to dance... On this I am very uncompromising.

BG: It is a cause for conflict with your colleagues?

AP: It is discussed, but for me “You want to express yourself like this?” Okay, but don’t ask me to express myself the same way because it doesn’t represent me.” It’s true, by now there are different genders, different ways of being, different identities, but I don’t understand why you feel more yourself because you say "tuttu?" No, you’re always you. The Italian language is like this: "tutti," if you don’t want to have a feminine declination with "tutte," it

⁵⁵ Hara-kiri was a ritual suicide performed by Japanese samurai. (“Hara-kiri.” Collins Dictionary. [https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/hara-kiri#:~:text=suicide%20or%20any%20suicidal%20action,*para\)%20%2B%20kiri%20cut%5D](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/hara-kiri#:~:text=suicide%20or%20any%20suicidal%20action,*para)%20%2B%20kiri%20cut%5D). Accessed 2 August 2022.)

⁵⁶ Translator’s Note: “u” is a gender neutral ending for the word “everyone”

is very broad. It would be much more pleasant for me, especially in the LGBT world, now that one almost always uses the feminine declination, because we are all fabulous (whether you are a man, a woman, trans) then why not use the feminine “everyone”? “We are all fabulous, we all are beautiful, wonderful,⁵⁷ uau!” This “tuttu” is a stretch that otherwise those who aren’t activists don’t understand, indeed it bothers them, and they say, “What language are you speaking?” Instead I have to go to these people, make me understood and then maybe say “Yes, I want to say ‘tuttu’ for this and this other reason” but I have to explain it to them, otherwise they see that I am imposing myself, my way of seeing, because they are people that don’t have the tools; I have to take off for a moment my hard activist persona to say “Wait, I’m taking a step back and trying to find your language, because you won’t ever have the tools to understand mine.”

LD: What does the word “feminism” mean to you?

AP: The word “feminism” has changed since it was born because we are in another era. There is a need for feminism because, even though years have passed, still many things aren’t good and, if we look at the data, in addition to what I was saying before—how many women are working at a prestigious level—or if we look at how many women still maybe have problems at work because they are asked “You don’t have intentions of becoming a mother soon, right?” or even just seeing the data, even worse, that a woman is raped every three days: there is a need for feminism, but there is a need for a feminism that isn’t Seventies feminism. It is always a type of conversation, first of all with the other women because the first ones to go against women are other women, and then the men; there are those who will never understand but they are stubborn, okay, with those people there can’t be a conversation. But for me the argument to still bring forward the feminist demands as if we were fifty years ago, forty years ago doesn’t make sense because it was another historical period, it was another way of—there were rights to be conquered: divorce, abortion; now there are rights to be maintained and equality to be emphasized and made real.

At times there are youths who define themselves as feminists, but I see the difference between those who are 40 years old like me (40-50 years old) and the girls who—they come to a party and they see that, maybe at a certain point, the others become naked, they show their tits, breasts and all, the 20-25 year old girls go like this [she makes a shocked face] and they don’t understand because for them, apart from the fact that there is a lot more modesty, so they say “But is it necessary?” For me it is up to us, to those who lived—don’t force—it’s okay even to show this [she makes a gesture to her vagina] it’s right but I have to also explain it to those who didn’t live in that period there, to those who didn’t have

⁵⁷ Translator’s Note: using the feminine for each adjective.

certain teachings, to make them understand because I make this gesture here and because I can bring it back today to 2019. Feminism exists and there is a need to say that you are a feminist, to say there is feminism and it has to be there, because the words are important and they have a value, they have a significance.

BG: Do you want to add anything else?

AP: No, I'm not a person who stays silent [laughs], maybe I talk too much. I would like, once the research is finished, I would be very curious to know what the other Italian activists say but also and especially what comes from the United States because it would be very interesting.