

Abstract
Doctoral Thesis

The force of writing in Giose Rimanelli with a textual criticism of the manuscript (unpublished)

The Paranoiac Machine

My Doctoral Thesis is about Giose Rimanelli, a Molisan writer from Casacalenda, the force of his writing and the textual criticism of his manuscript (unpublished) *The Paranoiac Machine*. Giose Rimanelli “is one of the most interesting writers of emigration of the years after the Second World War”(Fontanella Luigi, *The deserter word. Italian writers in America*, Florence, Cadmo, 2003), a successful author, tenaciously attached to his homeland and, at the same time, cosmopolitan who points out his own experimental vocation by mixing the Italian language, the Molisan dialect and the English language. He communicates the universal themes using the language that is more suitable to his play in that moment, because his literary culture surpasses geographical borders. But who is Giose Rimanelli? Giose Rimanelli is not only a writer, but also a poet, a journalist, a painter, a musician, an essayist, a Professor and his books are now at Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library of the University of Toronto. He was Professor Emeritus of Italian Literature and Comparative Literatures (now on leave) at Sarah Lawrence, Yale, British Columbia, UCLA, SUNYA universities. Generations of students have been educated by Professor Rimanelli to the understanding and love of Italian language culture and literature. Rimanelli’s literary career extends over a period of more than fifty years of fruitful writing of narrative, poetry, and musical compositions integrated into his prose and poetic discourse, as well as literary criticism. Without doubt Giose Rimanelli has shown, as Camus demanded, “courage in life and talent in plays”. He was born at Casacalenda, a village in central Italy on November 28, 1926 of an Italian father, Vincenzo Rimanelli and a Canadian mother, Concettina Minicucci. Both of them were the son and the daughter of Molisan immigrants. Tony Dominick Minicucci, his maternal grandfather, was a witness of the massacre of eleven Italian immigrants in 1891 in New Orleans, the massacre passed to history as “New Orleans lynching”. Rimanelli’s mother was a fervent Roman Catholic and she desired his son became a missionary. In 1935, a ten years old native of Molise entered a Catholic Franciscan seminary in Puglia, not very far from his native village with the intention to devote himself to religion and becoming a missionary. It’s there that the young Giose will have the possibility to acquire that fund of knowledge that will decide forever his future as a writer. He never became a missionary, but a writer and a voyager of the world and of the mind. In 1943 he entered the terrible adventure of a soldier of World War II. He was made prisoner and saved by the Allies Forces. *Pigeon shooting*, his first novel published in 1953, a few years after the war, represents the

personal history of Giose Rimaneli during the Second World War and the devastation of the Italian Civil War which played a huge role in his novels. His first novel was published in the U.S.A. in 1958 with the title of *The Day of the Lion*. When it first appeared, *The Day of the Lion* created a sensation because it was the only book that described the war from the point of view of the losing side. His second novel was *Original sin* published in 1954. The background is still Southern Italy and he uses the third person, instead of the first used in *The Day of the Lion*, and more intricate language patterns. Rimaneli describes an environment, a fatalistic world and the struggle of some characters to achieve something worthy of human dignity. His third novel, *Ticket of third class*, is a travel diary published in 1958 in Italy, which narrates Rimaneli's first Canadian voyage. *Ticket of third class* is part of Canadian Literature by rights as well as *Modern Canadian Stories*, published in 1966, for which he wrote not only the introduction, but also he chose the selection of the best short-stories writing by established authors in the living English –Canadian tradition. Talent, memory and structure are important elements of these novels which indicate a maturity not only as a writer but also as a man. Rimaneli's literature takes transnational traits that are reflected not only in his thematic choices, but especially in the language utilized. His condition of 'a sui generis immigrant and traveller' allows him to build stories through which the writer expresses himself essentially through the languages of the 'worlds' he has experienced and lived in first person (Italian, English, Molisan dialect, Provençal, French,..). The use of more languages permits him to introduce atmospheres that would be unreachable through the exclusive use of the Italian language. Giose Rimaneli's literature is characterized by transnational elements reflected not only in the thematic choices, but overall in the language (multilingualism or code-switching). Rimaneli speaks, in fact, by the use of languages whose worlds belong to him for birth or for acquisition. Along the never-ended travel of his life that goes on also after the expatriation to America, he will use the language as a homeland and a cradle of self. For the Molisan writer the words 'home' and 'writing' match (Fontanella Luigi, *The deserter word. Italian writers in America*). The languages reveal his personal history, from his juvenile studies (Latin, Greek, Hebraic, French with the old Provençal) to those ones spoken from his family emigrated first to Canada and after to the U.S.A.(English with French/Canadian and with the Molisan dialect) and those of the characters whom he meets in his everyday life and he revives in his plays.

They are the languages of literatures which cross the border in 'an unlimited cultural horizon', which is the natural habitat taken by Rimaneli's plays'(Bonaffini Luigi, *Rimaneli and the dialectal poetry in America* in *Rimaneliana* edited by Sebastiano Martelli), a continuous *telling to find himself* because the writer, as an expatriate deals with the theme of 'travel' as a means and research of his own identity. His is without doubt a language which is enriched by the migratory

experience and memories, a language changed by emotions and memory. A writer, Giose Rimaneli, transplanted himself first in Canada and after definitively in the U.S.A., who learnt to write and do literature through texts as *The Paranoiac Machine*, which are telltales of his life, of his job, of his thoughts, and a more astonishing thing, the writer is able to argue his own linguistic and literary choices and explain them to the common reader, of whom he has respect. Identifying with the reader, explaining him step by step the story, taking him by the hand to the comprehension of the birth of the written word, introducing him to the most different types of expression linked to reality or fantasy is a thing that a few succeed to do. It's the autobiographic significance to feed a total writing which grasp the story crossed by the author in his long Sternian travel : from Molise, place-time of the father to the immersion in the ravaged Italy of the war and of the years after the Second World War, to the escape to America, in a different world where to begin to find and tell himself again in other languages and in other places. Rimaneli carries on the effort to give life to simple abstractions, to give vitality to the word and to the language. This is Giose Rimaneli's *force writing*, the ambition of the absolute Beauty which permeates his primary and vital passion through an experimentalism that reached points of real innovation and that can be considered in the crossroads of the most open and courageous literary researches.