

Emotional habitus through media: toxic romance and the rise of “malaise” in intimate relationships

Brigida OrriaUniversità degli studi di Napoli Federico II ✉ <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/cgen.102253>

Abstract: This study investigates the role of emotional habitus in contemporary media, focusing on the portrayal of toxic masculinity in the Italian TV series “Mare Fuori” and its influence on digital culture, particularly on TikTok. Emotions, rather than being solely individual experiences, are examined as socially constructed phenomena embedded within gendered power structures. Through an analysis of the “malaise” (*malessere*), a character romanticized for his dominance, jealousy, and possessiveness, this research reveals how patriarchal norms are reproduced and legitimized via popular culture and social media trends. The emotional habitus of “malaise” is shaped by emotions such as jealousy and anger, manifesting in control and dominance, key traits of hegemonic masculinity. Meanwhile, the women associated with this figure internalize emotions of suffering and fear, reinforcing narratives of submission and affective dependence. Moreover, the study underscores the heuristic and practical value of the concept of emotional habitus in understanding the intersection of social norms, emotions, and power dynamics in intimate relationships.

Keywords: emotions, toxic masculinity, love, violence, media studies, gender inequality

ESP El habitus emocional en los medios contemporáneos: romance tóxico y la figura del “malestar” en las relaciones íntimas

Resumen: Este estudio analiza el papel del “habitus emocional” en los medios de comunicación contemporáneos, centrándose en la representación de la masculinidad tóxica en la serie televisiva italiana “Mar Afuera” y su influencia en la cultura digital, particularmente en TikTok. Las emociones, lejos de concebirse como experiencias meramente individuales, se examinan como fenómenos socialmente contruidos e inscritos en estructuras de poder generizadas. A través del análisis de la figura del “malessere”, un personaje romantizado por su dominación, celos y posesividad, esta investigación muestra cómo las normas patriarcales son reproducidas y legitimadas mediante la cultura popular y las tendencias en redes sociales. El habitus emocional del “malessere” se configura a partir de emociones como los celos y la rabia, que se expresan en formas de control y dominación, rasgos clave de la masculinidad hegemónica. Al mismo tiempo, las mujeres vinculadas a esta figura interiorizan emociones de sufrimiento y miedo, reforzando narrativas de sumisión y dependencia afectiva. Asimismo, el estudio subraya el valor heurístico y práctico del concepto de habitus emocional para comprender la intersección entre normas sociales, emociones y dinámicas de poder en las relaciones íntimas.

Palabras clave: emociones, masculinidad tóxica, amor, violencia, media studies, desigualdad de género

1. Introduction

In decision-making processes, time management, and interpersonal relationships, we experience the impact of emotions and feelings (Damasio 2001). However, the significance of emotions¹ extends beyond their subjective value or their manifestation

as individual psychological phenomena; it is embedded in social constructions that reflect power dynamics and gender structures within a given society. Consequently, in the observation of social action, it is essential to consider emotional norms and the prevailing modes of emotional expression within the

¹ The terms “emotions” and “feelings,” although representing distinct concepts, will be used interchangeably in this text. This choice reflects the convergence in everyday discourse and acknowledges their overlapping use in digital and cultural analysis, though their theoretical distinction remains valid.

corresponding context (Thoits 2004; Hochschild 1979).

Emotional habitus² (Illouz 2007) constitutes the invisible matrix that shapes how individuals perceive and experience emotions, aligning with the behavioral codes prescribed by the social environment. Building on feminist theories of emotion (Ahmed 2004; Illouz 2017), this study examines how romantic love is not a neutral or private feeling, but a gendered construct embedded in patriarchal emotional regimes associated with control, jealousy, and possessiveness. The analysis aims to reveal how emotional normativity sustains inequality, and how alternative emotional grammars rooted in autonomy and reciprocity can provide counter-narratives.

This study examines emotional habitus through examples drawn from the collective imagination, encapsulated in the figure of “malaise” (#malessere³), a phenomenon originating from the character of Edoardo in the television series “Mare Fuori”. “Mare Fuori” (Sea Beyond) is a popular Italian television drama set in a juvenile detention center in Naples. The show explores the lives of incarcerated youth, weaving themes of love, violence, loyalty, and systemic marginalization. The term “malessere”, popularized by fans of “Mare Fuori” on TikTok and musical narratives, refers to emotionally dominant male characters that blend criminality, charm, and possessiveness.

The primary objective is to describe and analyze characteristics of the emotional habitus of “malaise”, a media figure that embodies toxic masculinity through attitudes of dominance, violence, and possessiveness. Simultaneously, the study explores the emotions and behaviors of the female characters associated with this figure, often marked by affective dependence and the acceptance of subordination. Finally, these models are compared with emotional habitus that prioritize empathy, reciprocity, and autonomy, proposing less violent gendered relational alternatives.

Through a critical media analysis, the study employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates cultural studies and digital ethnography (Caliandro & Gandini 2019). The TV series “Mare Fuori” serves as a narrative platform for exploring emotional archetypes, while TikTok functions as a social laboratory for observing how these archetypes are received, transformed, and disseminated.

Emotional habitus forms the link between individual emotional experiences and social structures. In the case of “malaise”, it reveals how emotions are shaped and exploited to perpetuate unequal gender

norms. Furthermore, the concept proves valuable in understanding the conflicts that arise when individuals interact with divergent emotional habitus, such as in interclass relationships or in narratives that seek to challenge patriarchal norms. Thus, this study contributes to the debate on how emotions can serve as both instruments of oppression and catalysts for social transformation.

Through a critical perspective, this work invites reflection on the power dynamics embedded in emotions and the ways in which they shape human relationships, influencing not only the private sphere but also broader social and cultural structures.

2. Love and patriarchy

The relationship between emotions and patriarchy has been widely discussed in sociology, psychology, and gender studies. This study aims to analyze emotional habitus (Illouz 2007) as an invisible structure that shapes romantic behavior and reproduces inequalities in gender relations. Emotions⁴, far from being mere expressions of individuality, respond to social norms that dictate their appropriateness in both feeling and expression (Cerulo & Scribano 2022; Jacobsen 2019; Cerulo 2024; Harris 2015; Stets & Turner 2014; Turner & Stets 2005). Research has shown that emotions are constructed in an intersectional manner with gender dynamics (Beyer 2022; Piazzesi 2021; Stets & Turner 2014, chap. 19; Fischer 2000). In our society, emotional norms regulate emotional expression, perpetuating a system of domination that includes both symbolic and material violence, often limiting the freedom and psychological well-being of both men and women⁵ (Wirtz et al. 2020).

Love is one of the key domains where emotional capital is deployed most significantly. While often presented as an altruistic sentiment, love is socially constructed in a way that renders the dynamics of giving and receiving asymmetrical, reinforcing female subordination (Illouz 2017). In this sense, love should be understood not only as a feeling but as a practice encompassing social and political dimensions (Guerra 2021; hooks 2000; Beyer 2022). This perspective extends love beyond the private sphere, framing it as a social act capable of influencing, and at times subverting, power structures and social conventions.

This “emotional capital” (Illouz 2017) manifests itself through an emotional habitus, a concept that extends Bourdieu’s framework to emotions, shaping how individuals experience and manage them within their social positioning. The concept of emotional de-

² In this article, I will apply Illouz’s theoretical articulation of emotions, which, drawing on Bourdieu’s theory (1989), refines specific concepts: emotional field (the social context in which individuals act, governed by its own rules, objects, and boundaries), emotional competence (an individual’s ability to navigate within the emotional field), emotional dominance (the power held by a subject within a relationship), and emotional capital (the accumulated knowledge a subject develops regarding the management of emotions, behaviors, and resources). For Illouz, emotional habitus consists of a set of internalized dispositions that shape how individuals perceive, express, and regulate emotions within a given social and cultural context (Illouz 2007; 2017).

³ The original word is “malessere”; in the article, it will be used interchangeably with its English translation, “malaise”.

⁴ Emotions constitute themselves as social objects and as subjects of sociological analysis (Mead 1982; Cerulo 2024; Turnaturi 1995). A vast body of literature addresses their aspects related to intimate or romantic relationships (Pratesi 2024; Denby & van Hooff 2024; Singly 2016; Bauman 2013; Giddens 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2018), as well as those concerning sexuality (Bergström 2022; Rinaldi 2017; 2016; Piazzesi 2021; Plummer 2002).

⁵ Gender-based violence constitutes a system rooted in a power imbalance between genders, closely tied to patriarchal cultural norms and founded on male dominance and female subordination. This hierarchical relationship is learned through the socialization process and sustained by social and cultural structures (Magaraggia & Cherubini 2013). It reflects a social construction of differences (Piccone Stella & Saraceno 1996), which, however, can also be negotiated and transformed by individuals through social practices (Butler 2004; Connell 2009).

viance (Thoits 1985; 1990), alongside that of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu 1998), provides an additional interpretative lens for understanding the dynamics that influence emotions and their perception in different social contexts. The ability to regulate emotions and effectively mobilize emotional capital becomes a distinctive indicator of both class and gender, as emotional habitus varies according to access to social and economic resources. This concept allows us to understand how emotions are shaped by social and class norms, serving as both a tool for control and a means of reinforcing existing structures (Illouz 2017). This study observes the ambivalence of emotional habitus, particularly how interactions between genders and social classes generate tensions between the experience of freedom (in departure) and the sense of obligation (in return) within relational norms.

Within this framework, love is transformed into both an indicator of personal happiness and identity and a mechanism of social classification. Modern love is characterized by an increasing emphasis on individual autonomy and a pervasive integration of economic models into the ways people construct their identities and expectations (Illouz 2007). Romantic relationships today are increasingly shaped by market logics and self-help culture, which frame emotions as resources to be rationally managed. In this “market” of emotional and affective resources, inequalities are reinforced between those who are able to compete in managing them and those who are not.

Contemporary love is marked by a fundamental ambivalence: while modernity has brought about sexual liberation and the affirmation of gender equality, it has also generated profound uncertainty (Bauman 2013; Giddens 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2018). The ideal trajectory, driven by feminist cultural transformations and the economic and technological shifts of post-industrial society, has given rise to a techno-utopia of post-romantic love (Bandinelli & Gandini 2022). This perspective envisions a risk-free, painless, and efficient form of intimacy, devoid of the complexities characteristic of embodied romanticism, what we might call “post-romantic love” (Bandinelli 2024), an idealized interaction stripped of emotional turmoil and the weight of passion. This type of love seeks to eliminate the painful effects of emotional intensity, the dramatic burdens of sentimentality, and the tragedy of solitude. It aspires to an “optimized self”, where love should never cause one to “fall” dangerously, exposing them to the risk of heartbreak. This post-romantic ideal, while seemingly emancipatory, coexists with affective capitalism, where emotional detachment becomes a marketable trait. The tension between romantic optimization and patriarchal nostalgia is particularly evident in youth content creation on TikTok.

At the same time, there is an opposing cultural narrative of “toxic love”, a term borrowed from the psychoanalytic discourse prevalent in contemporary discussions on relationships. This concept frames certain relationships as inherently harmful, where

emotional well-being is not prioritized but rather its opposite is normalized and even sought after. Gender inequality is often depicted unfiltered on digital platforms, particularly on TikTok, where it is continuously reproduced and reinvented through new visual and performative languages (Abidin 2021; Banet-Weiser 2018). This process amplifies masculinist cultural dimensions, legitimizing their impact. Narratives of “toxic love” and dysfunctional relationships, frequent in viral content, reinforce the notion that male dominance and control are both normal and even desirable. In this way, digital platforms serve as echo chambers for cultural archetypes of unequal gender dynamics, complicating efforts to deconstruct and reformulate new relational models.

Romantic relationships almost always place the responsibility of emotional management on women, both in intimate and professional contexts (cfr emotional work and labour in Hochschild 1979), in order to maintain harmony. Feelings of gratitude and guilt are instilled in women to legitimize their roles as caregivers and their sacrifices (Ahmed 2004), while suppressing expressions of anger and disgust (Ahmed 2017). Patriarchy and capitalism have historically regulated both sexuality and reproductive labor by leveraging emotions such as fear (of deviance) and transforming love into a form of obedience (Federici 2020).

On the other hand, men, in their pursuit of hegemonic masculinity, are encouraged to alienate their emotional dimension, suppressing emotions such as fear, sadness, and compassion, while being incentivized to display strength, dominance, and self-control (Connell 1995; Jeleniewski Seidler 2007). Hegemonic masculinity is built upon a combination of repressed emotions, replaced by anger and violence, traits often normalized as desirable in patriarchal cultures (Kupers 2005). The concept of toxic masculinity⁶, merging emotional deviance with the so-called male identity crisis, is deeply embedded in patriarchal violence⁷ (Pettyjohn et al. 2019). Popularized in the wake of the #MeToo movement, it highlights the double jeopardy of patriarchal norms: they harm both women and men by restricting their ability to express emotional complexity and identity, while also perpetuating symbolic references, categories, and attitudes that sustain these practices.

The contexts in which hegemonic masculinity develops foster a culture that legitimizes violence as a reaction to the crisis of traditional gender roles, a phenomenon often observed in pop culture and far-right, alt-right, and incel rhetoric (Dordoni & Magaraggia 2021). The masculinity crisis is tied to broader societal anxieties, as evidenced by the rise of antifeminist reactionary movements that perceive female emancipation as a threat. The reproduction of patriarchy thus relies on an emotional culture fueled by frustration, fear, and anger, emotions that sustain gender-based violence and integrate it into male identity. As Mélanie Gourarier notes, “historically, the fear of male decline is a bottomless pit” (with Benveniste 2017). This recurring anxiety serves a social and political function: the continuous claim that mas-

⁶ For a discussion of the concept, see Botto et. Al. 2022.

⁷ A portion of the tweets analyzed in the study specifically referred to men who exhibited active hostility toward change, displaying sexist and hostile attitudes and opposing feminism, often accompanied by racist sentiments inspired by Trump's rhetoric.

culinity is at risk due to women and the dissolution of gender binaries reaffirms its dominance under the guise of protecting it, ultimately reinforcing differentiation and asymmetry between men and women while resisting gender equality.

While discourses on gender equality and anti-violence advocacy are gaining traction in certain cultural enclaves of Italian society, the counterpoint represented by “malaise” appears to embody a reactionary faction that echoes numerous government-backed anti-gender narratives (Dietze & Roth 2020). These narratives oppose the redefinition of gender roles in a truly egalitarian framework and instead seek to reaffirm the status quo as the only legitimate perspective. The negotiation of gender definitions, within a context of unequal power relations, becomes increasingly precarious as one moves away from gender binarism and heteronormativity.

The current political and social landscape in Italy, as reflected in data from anti-violence centers and ISTAT reports, shows a rising number of reported cases of abuse and mistreatment (ISTAT 2023; Bermúdez & Meléndez-Domínguez 2020). Symbolic, verbal, emotional, and psychological violence within heterosexual relationships, primarily perpetrated by men, remains a form of abuse that is less frequently recognized and reported by women compared to physical and sexual violence. Research examining this form of violence, particularly its sociocultural roots and communicative dynamics, remains scarce, as do studies on its media representation, especially in cinema (Rossi & Capalbi 2022).

Adopting a feminist sociolinguistic perspective, this study also explores how language can contribute either to reinforcing or challenging gender roles and stereotypes in intimate relationships. Language, while often reflecting gender inequalities, can also serve as a tool for emancipation and resistance (Nodari 2021).

Furthermore, this study critically revisits the patriarchal framing of romantic love, which naturalizes unequal relational dynamics by romanticizing pain, jealousy, and emotional dependence, and deconstructing the emotional scripts attached to romantic love, it may help challenge its idealized, yet oppressive, forms.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative mixed-methods approach, integrating cultural studies and critical media analysis to examine various media contents. This methodology combines the analysis of scenes from the TV series “Mare Fuori”, the lyrics and videos of neomelodic and trap songs, and digital ethnography on TikTok to investigate the cultural construction of “malaise”.

The first category of media materials is drawn from the TV series “Mare Fuori” and its related mockumentary “Le Confessioni”, which provide a narrative corpus on affective dynamics and behaviors associated with “malaise”. “Le Confessioni”, structured as fictional interviews with incarcerated characters, offers insight into the psychological and emotional motivations of the protagonists. Through their self-narration, these characters themselves contri-

bute to outlining implicit and explicit logics of romantic relationships.

The study then examines a selection of songs dedicated to “malaise”, released between 2023 and 2024, primarily in Neapolitan dialect. A subset of ten of these songs, selected basing on shared emotional codes and popularity metrics (views, shares, audio reuse), are identified as particularly representative of a shared emotional framework. Most of them are contemporary productions and few are revisited version of more ancient songs, adhering to most popular music genres like trap and neomelodic styles. Among these, recurring musical backdrops include: “Malessere” by Rosy Rey – 35.9K views; “Malessere” by Fabiana – 27.3K views; “Tu malavita io criminale” by Marco Calone – 65.9K views.

Following this, the analysis shifts to user-generated content on TikTok, employing digital ethnography to observe and interpret users’ communicative and cultural practices. A targeted sampling method is applied (Amaturo, Punziano, 2016), following the “follow the users” principle (Caliandro & Gandini, 2019) and incorporating the perspective of “machine habitus” (Airoldi, 2023). This approach allows researchers to track relevant users within the platform, examining how their content and interactions contribute to the collective meaning-making process. It also conceptualizes the interaction between individuals and algorithms as co-productions of dominant culture, framing TikTok as a cultural environment where trends and user behaviors are shaped by algorithmic codes.

A selection of videos related to “malaise” in romantic relationships was identified using keywords such as “relationships, couple, malessere, Neapolitan love”, yielding 98,700 posts in TikTok as of October 2024. A thematic saturation point was reached after coding an initial sample of 50 posts per category (female or male individuals, couples, commercial, music clip, TV serie repost), manual coding was conducted based on discourse patterns. The dataset includes individual user videos, couple skits, and commercial posts, with some shops even promoting the “#malessere” aesthetic as a distinctive consumer style. Ethical considerations were addressed by anonymizing user data and excluding any private or harmful content, in accordance with platform terms of use and academic standards for digital ethnography.

4. Analysis

4.1. Brief story of the “#Malessere” prototype: Edoardo in “Mare fuori”

The narrative surrounding Edoardo, Carmela, and Teresa offers a portrait of relationships where toxic love, symbolic violence, and control are either normalized or challenged, depending on each character’s social and cultural experiences. Each of them embodies a distinct emotional habitus, shaped by their background and relational expectations.

From the storyline, we learn that Edoardo and Carmela meet through their best friends, Rosa and Ciro Ricci, siblings from a Camorra family that adopts Carmela after she becomes orphaned. Edoardo, a criminal affiliated with the Camorra, has been imprisoned multiple times. His role in the relationship re-

flects a dominant masculinity: overbearing, irresponsible, and incapable of managing complex emotions. For Edoardo, “Carmela is someone who solves problems”⁸, a role reduced to traditional domesticity: the devoted wife, the reliable mother, the emotional anchor. She represents stability but requires no introspection or emotional commitment from him. This relationship dynamic is built on gendered emotional work, where the practical and affective burdens are entirely placed on the woman.

Carmela, in turn, accepts this role and rationalizes it as part of her identity and destiny. She states: “He gave me a family, a mother, a home”, forms of security in her orphan condition, emphasizing how her concept of love is rooted in material security and social stability in the absence of alternatives. Carmela’s subordination is also evident in her response to Edoardo’s infidelity: “He can forget me as a partner, but he cannot forget that I am the mother of his child.” She accepts suffering as inevitable, sacrificing her well-being for the sake of her child and the preservation of a predetermined family structure. Her emotional habitus aligns with rigid gender norms, where submission is not only normalized but idealized as a feminine virtue and a necessary sacrifice.

A contrasting emotional habitus is embodied by Teresa, a ceramics workshop volunteer in the prison, with whom Edoardo falls in love. Teresa comes from an upper-class background and initially succumbs to Edoardo’s advances but later distances herself upon recognizing his violent tendencies. Her emotional habitus is fundamentally different: she has internalized emotional self-regulation, rationality, and autonomy. Initially intrigued by Edoardo’s exuberant demeanor, she experiences internal conflicts stemming from class incompatibility. However, once she discovers he has a partner and child, she reverts to her original habitus, prioritizing self-respect and loyalty. Her statement: “I know my worth, and I didn’t deserve the way he treated me,” marks the turning point of her emotional detachment. Teresa’s decision to leave Edoardo underscores a stark contrast to Carmela’s submission, her emotional habitus prioritizes self-respect, rational emotion management, dialogue, and consent over impulse and passion.

Carmela is aware of her emotional subordination to Edoardo, yet she does not perceive it as unjust or as a form of symbolic violence. Her role as a “woman” in the relationship, which she herself describes as inevitably subordinate, reflects an emotional habitus in which a woman’s identity is tied to being an “object of love” and a mother. She states: “All it takes is a ring... and the promise of a lifetime together, and I break down,” highlighting how love and emotional stability are her only avenues for fulfillment, in alignment with the social expectations of her subculture.

Edoardo, conversely, is fully aware of his position of power, a man for whom everything is permitted and forgiven. His emotional habitus, shaped by street life and criminal dynamics, normalizes emotional deviance within his subculture, where male infidelity and parental disengagement are not insurmountable conflicts, but ordinary relational behaviors. His ability to maintain parallel relationships with Carmela and Teresa, without apparent remorse, constitutes a form

of symbolic violence, not only toward the women involved but also toward himself, as it perpetuates his emotional detachment and lack of accountability.

In this section, I will elaborate on how the mentioned character embodies emotional habitus archetypes. Edoardo, a member of the subaltern deviant class, exhibits emotional habitus traits of dominance and control manifested in ambivalence between detachment and jealousy. He identifies his gender role in hegemonic masculinity. Carmela, also from the subaltern class, possesses emotional habitus traits of submission and sacrifice, which are evident in self-blaming and suffering. She identifies her gender role in maternity and affective dependence. Teresa, belonging to the upper dominant class, embodies emotional habitus traits of reflexivity and rationality, characterized by autonomy and detachment. She identifies her gender role in emancipated femininity.

4.2. “Malaise” in music

The immense popularity of “Mare Fuori”, particularly on TikTok, has transformed characters like Edoardo and Ciro into icons. In viral videos, they are labeled as “malaises” (#malessere): charismatic, handsome, jealous, and possessive, traits that are often romanticized. In the music industry, artists such as Fabiana, Matteo Paolillo, Guè, Tony Effe, and Baby Gang have capitalized on the theme of “malaise”, generating millions of views. The song “M’piace o’ malessere” (I like the malaise) by Fabiana (2.6 million views on TikTok) has influenced musical and cultural trends, reinforcing the desirability of the *malessere* figure.

An accurate depiction of this cultural archetype is provided by Fabiana in her song “Malessere”, where she glorifies the “bad boy”: tall, muscular, tattooed, ignorant, rude, potentially violent, possessive, jealous, and capable of making his partners suffer, but loved precisely for these traits.

“I want him to show up on a motorcycle / Under my balcony, even at one in the morning / To get jealous, even in front of people / If another man looks at me / I like the ‘Malessere’ / That guy who causes trouble at night / Then leaves to go dancing / I want the ‘Malessere,’ with tattoos and a long beard—hot! / But what can I do? I like the ‘Malessere’ / The kind of guy who starts fights / If I go out with my friends” (author’s translation)

The appeal is directed toward the guy who is willing to “create drama”, who resorts to violence over a mere glance, positioned in opposition to the “boring” good boy: “Too polite? No, I don’t care / If he brings me flowers, I won’t follow him / If he doesn’t notice how I dress, no—he’s not my type” (author’s translation). By explicitly rejecting the “educated” boy as unattractive, the song highlights the dissonance between young women who adhere to this emotional habitus and those who conform to different relational expectations.

Both in its lyrics and visual aesthetics, the song centers around an idealized notion of “virile” masculinity, characterized by possessiveness, obsessive jealousy, control, and symbolic violence. These beha-

⁸ This and the following dialogues are taken from the mockumentary “Le confessioni”.

vivors are romanticized and framed as desirable traits, blurring the boundary between love and abuse.

The term “Malaise” is emblematic: it does not signify emotional distress to be resolved but rather a set of characteristics that embody toxic and dominant masculinity. The man described in the song controls what the woman wears, dictates where she can go, and reacts violently to any interaction she has with other men. This model is further reinforced through visual aesthetics in the music video, which draws inspiration from the 1950s American housewife archetype, evoking female subordination within an idealized system of male dominance. Symbols such as long beards and tattoos, commonly associated with criminal subcultures and “system boys”, add another layer of cultural identification, linking attraction to power, danger, and rebellion (Ravveduto 2023). These elements construct a cultural framework in which women do not seek emancipation from a mafia-influenced context but rather actively support, desire, and sustain men who represent, protect, and enforce it.

Fabiana’s song builds a narrative where violent behaviors are reframed as symptoms of love, such as jealousy and possessiveness. She is not alone in this: similar themes appear in other songs like “Malesere” by Matteo Paolillo (who plays Edoardo in “Mare Fuori”) featuring Guè:

“I made you understand that I was the malesere / We go out late, so the streets are empty / You know when we pass by, everyone turns to look, I look like a Saracen / A cigarette in my mouth, hands in my pockets / Swaggering through the city / Some people come out just to meet me / And their heart stops if they see me walk by” (author’s translation)

Similarly, “So’ nu malesere” by Crocy Sarchiello describes malesere as an untamed, rebellious, and violent figure, who attracts through transgressive charm: “I am a malesere in the soul / I am the devil / A carnal malesere / But this time you’ve fallen, and there’s no way out / I’m here because you’re nervous, and that makes it even better.” This type of masculinity is constructed around dominance and deviance: the malesere is swaggering, smoking, exciting those around him, and defying social norms. Crocy Sarchiello’s song reinforces the carnal and predatory nature of this identity, portraying it as something that dominates and possesses women.

Many of these songs intertwine love and violence, portraying relationships that oscillate between extreme passion and absolute control. For instance, “Si o malesere mij” by Benny G includes references to murder out of jealousy: “I tell everyone you’re mine / I’ll kill you if you lie to me / I’ll do like Rosa Ricci / This is a criminal love.” (Rosa Ricci is a criminal character of “Mare fuori”). Similarly, Carmine di Tommaso’s “O’ Malesere” states: “I am a criminal for this love / For you, I am a malesere / You think you’re the only one suffering, but I suffer for you too / You are mine and no one else’s / I would steal the moon to make you happy.”

Songs also incorporate elements of ghosting, social media control, and unpredictability, as in “Malesere” by Renato Biancardi, where the man blocks his

partner on WhatsApp, watches her Instagram stories without following her, never calls, likes other women’s posts, and then suddenly contacts her at 4 AM. The music video contains references to “Mare fuori”, reinforcing the connection between these themes and the malesere archetype.

A notable song revival is “Malesere” by Rosy Rey, a cover of the original track by Mauro Nardi. In Nardi’s version, the man addresses his “malessere” woman, describing her as a source of suffering and desire. Rosy Rey, however, inverts the perspective, portraying a woman who accuses the man of causing her pain while confessing her inability to leave him. The lyrics compare him to a disease, a toxic and inescapable bond: “You put me on the cross like Jesus Christ / You are both sugar and poison.” The music video portrays a violent gendered relationship marked by frequent fights and emotional tension, with a domestic setting that highlights the intimacy and inescapability of these conflicts, framing them as an emotional (and physical) prison. Many artists openly link love to crime, often declaring a willingness to die, go to prison, or kill for love. For example, in “Everyday” by Geolier featuring Anna, Shiva, Takagi & Ketra, the lyrics state: “I’ll kill you just because you talk to her / And you’ll kill me just because I talk to her.”

Some songs, like “Femmena Bugiarda” (Lier women) by Franco Ricciardi, introduce the female counterpart of the malesere: the “malessere woman”, depicted as manipulative, jealous, unstable, yet irresistible. Similarly, Joka Dablo’s “Malesere” presents this woman as dominant and destabilizing, triggering jealousy and conflict while fostering intense emotional dependency. The “malessere woman” is simultaneously an object of fear and desire, aligning with the femme fatale archetype, a patriarchal stereotype that reduces women to either angels or demons, limiting their complexity as social subjects (Kristeva 1980).

Across popular, trap, and neomelodic music, emotional norms reinforce the glorification of jealousy, control, and violence as expressions of love and masculinity. This perpetuates the idea that men must be dominant while women must accept control as proof of love. The emotional habitus portrayed in these lyrics and videos normalizes male aggression and delegates emotional labor to women, who are expected to be understanding, nurturing, and emotionally self-sacrificing. For men, this emotional habitus suppresses emotions like vulnerability or fear, promoting strength, control, and jealousy as desirable traits linked to patriarchal masculinity. The romanticization of toxic relationships and female devotion to suffering reinforces a collective imaginary where pain, jealousy, and violence are rebranded as passionate love. Within commercial popular music culture, jealousy and possession are equated with authentic love, reinforcing patriarchal models where male control is normalized and female emotions are dismissed as unstable and subordinate. Passion-driven love is thus framed as an excuse for violent or controlling behavior, presenting it as natural and inevitable.

4.3. The influence of TikTok

TikTok has emerged as a globally accessible and inclusive digital space, enabling popular participation and amplifying marginalized voices, particularly

those who previously lacked access to cultural production (van Dijck 2013; Zuo & Wang 2019; Boffone 2022). The dominance of Gen Z (born 2000–2014) in both content creation and consumption (Doyle 2022) has transformed TikTok into a narrative space for intimate relationships, where users document their experiences, reflections, and expectations, offering a window into contemporary social dynamics.

Among the curated TikTok content, songs, couple skits, and ads for the *malessere* aesthetic reveal how this archetype has evolved into a consumer style. A dataset of 70 high-engagement profiles (men, women, and heterosexual couples aged 20–30) highlights self-celebration, branding strategies (Arvidsson 2005), viral trend exploitation, performative attitudes, and scripted couple scenarios.

For male users, the *malessere* prototype is built on rigid gender norms, portrayed with detailed irony: stylized haircuts, specific fashion choices, and physical fitness are linked to sexual desirability and dominant masculinity. TikTok reinforces a male emotional habitus where virility is associated with control and dominance, emphasizing aggression and jealousy as attractive traits. The settings of the videos include intimate narratives of romantic relationships and take place in everyday contexts such as cars, homes, streets, shops, and even bedrooms. Partners record themselves exchanging kisses, getting ready to go out, and, in some cases, simulating sexual acts, sometimes without dialogue and with trap music playing in the background.

As declared in TikTok videos, many women explicitly express a desire for relationships with the *#malessere*. This aspiration, shared through monologues or ironic confessions, is linked to a feminine emotional habitus that normalizes violent relational dynamics: young women idealize jealous and possessive men, interpreting these traits as signs of care and love, in a pattern resembling emotional dependence.

Couple profiles narrate everyday scenes that alternate between intimacy and tension, addressing themes such as economic violence and possessiveness. Some recurring trends emerge: for instance, control over women's clothing and, more broadly, their bodies. In one video from the selection, a partner rips up his girlfriend's clothes, deeming them too provocative, while shouting aggressive orders: "che rè stu cos? stracc stu cos! straccia! jamm a vrè! mo mittatil accusi!" (What is this? Tear it up! Tear up this thing! Let's see, now put it on like this [torn]).

Another recurrent trend is the "Can I do this?" format, in which a girl asks her boyfriend what she is allowed to do in his absence: e.g., sleeping over at a friend's house, borrowing a hoodie from a male friend, posting a picture in a swimsuit, going out dancing with her friends, only to receive consistently negative responses.

In some videos, women react aggressively to oppressive behaviors, a response that is also perceived as acceptable within a dynamic that, in practice, does not alter the fundamental structure of the relationship.

On TikTok, the prototype of the *#malessere* man becomes a recognizable stereotype, which can be described through a behavioral decalogue. Some TikTokkers illustrate this relational model through lists: the partner who initially pursues and then disappears,

who gives extravagant gifts, offers luxury but ultimately controls his partner in every aspect, from clothing (not too provocative or seductive, to the point of tearing apart prohibited outfits) to friendships and even monitoring private messages on her phone. Within this context, the "malaise" represents a toxic relationship characterized by a continuous cycle of promises and disillusionment, generating insecurity, anxiety, and emotional dependence.

5. Discussion of results

5.1 "The Beautiful and the Damned" archetype

Media both reflect and actively shape social reality, constructing power relations and cultural dynamics. Studying the collective imagination means analyzing narrative and visual flows, influenced by the meaning-making process of media texts, and driven by non-rational and sensory engagement, which mediates the interaction between individuals and the collective (Ragone 2015).

Through a critical analysis of *Mare Fuori*, one of Italy's most popular TV series in recent years, and the viral TikTok *#malessere* trend, this study examined the mediatized representation of a recurring cultural topos: the beautiful and damned. It investigates how a media phenomenon can be both a reflection of reality and a space where reality is actively constructed and negotiated, either reinforcing or challenging existing social dynamics, shaping how people relate and express emotions (Hall 1980). The beautiful and damned figure, rooted in literary and cinematic traditions from Narcissus, Don Giovanni, and Faust to Heathcliff, Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*, and James Dean (Fitzgerald 2011; Dal Monte 2021), problematizes men's attraction to destruction. This archetypal hero, both charming and self-destructive, embodies ambiguous, rebellious, and dangerous traits, symbolizing hegemonic masculinity and the enduring association between power, deviance, and attraction. This type of media representation often reinforces toxic masculinity, characterized by aggression, dominance, and the rejection of emotions considered "feminine", positioning such behaviors as integral to romantic relationships and traditional gender roles (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Banet-Weiser 2018). Cinema and television frequently depict male aggression as a sign of strength and virility (Harris 2015).

5.2 Emotional violence and the *#Malessere* narrative

Emotional and psychological violence in heterosexual relationships, primarily perpetrated by men, remains underrepresented in the media compared to physical forms of abuse. However, it persists precisely because it is embedded in cultural archetypes and reinforced through dominant discourses (Bettaglio et al. 2018, p.10). Desire and attraction are also shaped by patriarchal emotional habitus.

For instance, the *#malessere* archetype in "Mare Fuori" and TikTok is built on an emotional habitus that centers romantic relationships around jealousy and anger, exercised through control and possessiveness over the female partner. These traits are so

normalized and accepted that they become markers of desirability.

In “Mare Fuori”, romantic relationships are a significant narrative element and are frequently intertwined with organized crime dynamics. The emotions linked to #malessere include symbolic and physical violence, which is justified as part of a passionate love where control and dominance are central. These emotions are intrinsically tied to an archetypal patriarchal masculinity, where vulnerability is repressed, and strength becomes the primary mode of emotional expression.

This behavior manifests in a cycle of ghosting, social media surveillance, and overt aggression, reinforcing the idea of a “strong” yet ultimately dysfunctional man, incapable of processing complex emotions. Through Edoardo’s character and his “damned” aesthetic, emotional deviance is transformed into a culturally diffused and idealized phenomenon, supporting a cultural framework that encourages violence as a marker of virility and dominance.

The success of this narrative is not solely tied to the engaging plot and complex characters of the series. Instead, it is also linked to the virality of TikTok content, which has transformed “Mare Fuori”’s male characters into cultural symbols of an ideology as problematic as it is appealing.

5.3 Emotional habitus

Applying the concept of emotional habitus to the study of media phenomena, examining “Mare Fuori”, music trends, and TikTok videos, reveals how the collective imagination constructs and diffuses social norms and emotional hierarchies through diverse communication languages.

The male *malessere* emotional habitus is structured around a relational model that links strength and control to desirability, transforming dysfunctional emotions and behaviors into idealized traits of masculinity. The key emotional patterns in this habitus include: jealousy as proof of love and passion, expressed through obsessive and possessive behaviors; irritability and anger, triggered by real or imagined threats, reinforcing the image of a passionate, impulsive man; contempt for vulnerability, where emotional fragility is repressed and replaced by displays of strength, often through aggression; frustration, often resulting from an inability to sustain stable relationships, leading to self-sabotaging behaviors such as ghosting or infidelity. The behaviors associated with this habitus revolve around control as an assertion of dominance, manifesting in surveillance of the female partner, including control over her body, clothing, and social interactions and emotional manipulation, fostering dependency through cycles of affection and rejection. Conversely, the emotional habitus of women involved with #malessere men is rooted in affective subordination and the normalization of suffering as part of love. The key emotional patterns include humiliation and submission, where control and jealousy are interpreted as signs of care and attention; idealization of sacrifice, viewing personal suffering as proof of authentic love, normalizing tolerance toward symbolic or physical violence; guilt, making women feel responsible for relationship conflicts or failures; hope for change, which sustains toleran-

ce toward patriarchal behaviors; internal conflict, between the desire for freedom and the emotional bonds that keep them in the relationship.

This affective dependency leads women to remain in toxic relationships despite abuse or lack of reciprocity.

5.4 The ambivalence of emotional habitus

An intriguing aspect of emotional habitus is its ambivalence: it functions both as an implicit guide for social action and as a constraint that limits individual possibilities, yet it also creates marginal spaces—liminal moments—when an individual is temporarily pushed outside their habitual framework. This occurs, for instance, in interclass interactions or during the transient adoption of different lifestyles.

The two protagonists, Edoardo and Carmela, embody an emotional habitus in which masculinity is synonymous with control and dominance, while femininity is defined by submission and self-sacrifice for the family. In contrast, Teresa represents an opposing character, expressing an emotional habitus that prioritizes autonomy and self-respect. However, she momentarily deviates from this norm when she explores a relationship with Edoardo. This deviation is temporary, as Teresa ultimately reverts to her original emotional habitus in response to Edoardo’s betrayal and deception.

Edoardo and Teresa’s storyline symbolically narrates an experience of “temporary deviance” from one’s original habitus, which may generate a sense of freedom. However, this sensation remains superficial and ephemeral. Ultimately, individuals remain anchored to their internalized dispositions, and their return to their original habitus, often unconsciously, results in a forced realignment with the roles and norms imposed by their social environment.

This dialectic between perceived freedom and social obligation reflects the broader structures of gender, class, age, ethnicity, and other privilege categories, providing a key analytical lens for understanding the tensions that pervade intimate relationships.

Although fictional, this relationship triangle mirrors real dynamics of power and affective dependence, offering insights into contemporary sentimental phenomena.

The analyzed songs encode the love-suffering binary into music and lyrics, often employing a direct, non-poetic, and non-metaphorical language. Neomelodic and trap music articulate the emotional habitus characterized by jealousy, possessiveness, impulsivity, and passion. Fabiana celebrates *malessere* as a masculine ideal, reinforcing control and jealousy as signs of passion and devotion. Rosy Rey, on the other hand, reverses the perspective, depicting a woman’s internal conflict as she suffers for love yet remains unable to leave a toxic relationship.

On TikTok, through a mix of performativity and self-narration, the analyzed videos reveal distinct gendered portrayals of *malessere*: male profiles construct the *malessere* archetype through codified aesthetics (clothing, tattoos, arrogant behaviors) and relationship dynamics based on jealousy and control; female profiles, through ironic dialogues and personal confessions, express a desire for the *malessere* type, thus normalizing subordination as a sign of love;

couple profiles stage arguments, domestic skits, or humorous interactions, often masking dynamics of control and symbolic violence under the guise of entertainment.

Applying the concept of emotional habitus allows for a critical analysis of media as tools of symbolic construction, demonstrating how fiction and digital content contribute to either legitimizing or challenging existing power dynamics.

Here, emotional habitus intersects with algorithmic culture, engaging in a co-production process between social norms and technological structures (Airoldi 2023). The viral nature of TikTok content rapidly establishes a recognizable and replicable cultural grammar, reinforcing (dysfunctional) relational models.

A key finding of this study is the active role of women who choose subordination, having internalized and thus reproduced narratives that oppose feminist or progressive models. These individuals embrace dynamics that exalt corporeality, aggression, and control, rejecting relationships based on reflexivity, consent, dialogue, or equality.

Relationships with the *#malessere* archetype echo elements of patriarchal romanticism, still deeply rooted in the collective imagination, where passion and conflict intertwine with power and submission.

Irony emerges as a powerful yet dangerous tool: it numbs the brutality of these dynamics, contributing to a framework in which toxic and violent relationships become culturally acceptable models (Bainotti & Semenzin 2021).

6. Conclusions

Emotional habitus connects social norms to individual emotions, revealing how gender inequalities manifest within the affective domain.

Through viral trends and multimedia content, emotional habitus is expressed and renegotiated dynamically within new media environments. This opens spaces for critique of existing norms and the construction of alternative relational models. Emotional habitus thus provides a critical lens for understanding how emotions are instrumentalized to reproduce or challenge gender inequalities.

In the examples analyzed, the normalization of female subordination and male control reflects patriarchal ordinal norms that perpetuate power hierarchies. Feminist critique illuminates the growing commodification and repackaging of traditional gender roles through digital platforms, as well as the rearticulation of patriarchal ideals through individualistic and consumer-driven empowerment narratives. Within TikTok, the romanticization of possessiveness and jealousy frequently manifests under ironic tones or self-aware captions, effectively concealing the perpetuation of patriarchal logics through aesthetically mediated performances of agency. This phenomenon is situated within a “choice feminism” framework (Ferguson, 2010), wherein subordination is presented as a personal preference rather than structural oppression. Nevertheless, spaces for resistance and transformation also emerge, as evidenced by profiles that actively deconstruct stereotypes and renegotiate their roles within relationships.

These dynamics should also be considered within the context of affective capitalism, where emotions (particularly romantic suffering, jealousy, and dependency) transform into forms of cultural and economic capital (Illouz, 2017). Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram monetize intimate suffering by converting it into viral content, thereby embedding structural gender asymmetries within the architecture of platform economies.

As a work of fiction, *Mare Fuori* constructs a mediated reality—a narrative that, while not an absolute truth, reflects the concerns, interpretations, and sensitivities of its creators and the cultural contexts in which it is produced and distributed.

Fictional narratives function as symbolic spaces where historical and social processes are explored in mediated yet powerful forms (Jameson 1981). The evocative power of fiction, its interpretative and symbolic function, underscores how media are not mere reflections of reality but sites where reality is actively negotiated and constructed (Hall 1980).

In this sense, *Mare Fuori* both reflects and shapes the collective imagination and social perceptions, influencing discourses on justice, marginality, and youth experiences. The series becomes part of a broader process of social reflection, offering a lens through which to examine social conflicts, class struggles, and youth inequalities.

The representation of gender in the media analyzed portrays men and women in distinctly different ways, reinforcing gender stereotypes through media language (Robustelli 2020). This mirrors the divisive nature of gender discourse in contemporary society, where popular and conservative sectors emphasize biological differences between men and women.

The “malessere” phenomenon has idealized the stereotype of the possessive and jealous man. The social media trend has disseminated content that dangerously associates possession with love, portraying violence in a romanticized manner.

The *malessere* archetype embodies all the traits of a manipulator, as described by women themselves, who define such relationships as toxic. These relationships are marked by a cycle of attention and rejection, generating insecurity, anxiety, and desire, ultimately fueling what is termed “affective dependence.”

Male control over women manifests in multiple ways, from monitoring their clothing and friendships to surveilling private communications.

According to ISTAT data (2023), in Italy, nearly 50% of respondents still endorse at least one stereotype about sexual violence, and among young people aged 18 to 29, 16.1% accept male control over their partner’s communication channels (mobile phone and social media).

The persistence of patriarchal stereotypes, embedded in the cultural landscape, continues to blur the distinction between possession and love, reinforcing a narrative in which control and domination are normalized within intimate relationships.

This “damned possessive adjective,” as Galimberti (2023) defines it, transforms the other’s freedom into property to be controlled. In the song, jealousy is portrayed as a desirable behavior: the man who creates “tarantelle” to show interest is celebra-

ted, while the polite or respectful man is mocked. This logic completely overturns the concept of consent and mutual respect, reinforcing the equivalence between love and control.

If the fundamental distinction between sex and rape, which lies entirely in the word consent, is not recognized—along with the tragic statistics underlying this extreme possessiveness—then what we see trending on social media will remain credible: the idea that love and possession are synonymous, when in reality, they could not be more opposite.

The intersectional approach, beyond discussing how power dynamics shape love and intimate relationships, also questions hierarchies of power not only between genders but also between species, nature, and technology. Human relationships and practices, including affective and romantic ones, cannot be reduced to purely private or intimate dimensions, as they carry profound social and political implications (Haraway 2015; Guerra 2021).

Relational practices can thus be understood as tools of resistance and transformation against dominant power structures. I envision a political and revolutionary eros, rooted in reciprocal care and freedom, embracing Haraway's philosophy of "affinity" rather

than identity, weaving a network of relationships in which individuals are not defined solely by fixed or binary affiliations.

In light of this, any analysis of emotional habitus in digital culture must remain critically attuned to how feminist values are not only diminished but instrumentalized by affective capitalism. What appears to be empowerment often obscures the systemic conditions under which inequality persists. Taking a distance from neoliberal feminism, a more intersectional and materialist approach to relational practices is necessary, one that emphasizes collective resistance and reimagines care beyond market logic.

This study is limited by its focus on Italian media and TikTok, suggesting further comparative studies across platforms and cultural contexts. Future research could benefit from a comparative transnational approach, examining whether similar "malesse-re" archetypes exist in other media ecosystems and how they intersect with local gender norms. Investigating how these dynamics differ across age groups, sexual orientations, and class positions would enrich our understanding of emotional habitus in its full intersectional complexity.

References

- Abidin, C. (2021): "Mapping internet celebrity on TikTok: Exploring attention economies and visibility labours", *Cultural science journal*, 12 (1), pp.77-103.
- Ahmed, S. (2004): *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, New York - London, Routledge.
- Ahmed, S. (2017): *Living a Feminist Life*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press.
- Airoidi, M. (2023): *Machine Habitus: Towards a Sociology of Algorithms*, Cambridge, John Wiley & Sons.
- Amaturo, E., & Punziano, G. (2016): *I Mixed Methods nella ricerca sociale*, Roma, Carocci.
- Arvidsson, A. (2005): Brands: A critical perspective, *Journal of consumer culture*, 5 (2), pp. 235-258.
- Bainotti, L., and Semenzin, S. (2021): *Donne tutte puttane: Revenge porn e maschilità egemone*, Andria, Durango edizioni.
- Bandinelli, C. (2024): *Le post-romantiche: Sui nuovi modi di amare*, Bari, Laterza.
- Bandinelli, C., & Gandini, A. (2022): Dating apps: The uncertainty of marketised love, *Cultural Sociology*, 16 (3), pp. 423-441.
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2018): *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*, Durham, Duke UP.
- Bauman, Z. (2013): *Liquid love: On the frailty of human bonds*, New York, John Wiley & Sons.
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2018): *The normal chaos of love*, New York, John Wiley & Sons.
- Bermúdez, M. P., & Meléndez-Domínguez, M. (2020): Epidemiological analysis of gender violence in the European Union, *Anales de psicología*, 36 (3), pp. 380-385.
- Bettaglio, M., Mandolini, N., & Ross, S. (2018): *Rappresentare la violenza di genere: Sguardi femministi tra critica, attivismo e scrittura*, Milano, Mimesis.
- Beyer, M. (2022): "«Listen to your fear»: how fear discourse (re)produces gendered sexual subjectivities", *Emotions and Society*, 4 (3), pp. 323-340.
- Boffone T. (ed.) (2022): *TikTok Cultures in the United States*, Routledge, London.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998): *Practical reason: On the theory of action*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Botto, M., Filippi, D., Farci, M., Ciccone, S., & Virtù, L. (2022): "Maschilità tossica: potenzialità e limiti di un concetto diffuso", *AG About Gender-International Journal of Gender Studies*, 11 (21), pp. 346-372.
- Butler, J. (2004): *Undoing gender*, trad. it. *Fare e disfare il genere*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis, 2014.
- Caliandro, A., & Gandini A. (2019): *I metodi digitali nella ricerca sociale*, Roma, Carocci.
- Cerulo, M. (2024): *Sociologia delle emozioni. Autori, teorie, concetti*, Bologna, il Mulino.
- Cerulo M. & Scribano, A. (a cura di) (2022): *The Emotions in the Classics of Sociology. A Study in Social Theory*, London-New York, Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (1995): *Masculinities*, Berkeley Los Angeles, University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2009): *Gender*, trad. it. *Questioni di genere*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2011.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005): "Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept", *Gender & society*, 19 (6), pp.829-859.
- Dal Monte, L. (2021): *Belli e dannati. Vivere e morire nella F1 degli anni Settanta* (Vol. 1), Napoli, Giunti.
- Dietze G. & Roth J. (2020): *Right-Wing populism and gender*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Damasio, A. R. (2001): "Emotion and the human brain", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 935 (1), pp.101-106.

- Denby, A., & Hooff, J. V. (2024): "‘An emotional stalemate’: cold intimacies in heterosexual young people’s dating practices", *Emotions and Society*, 6 (2), pp. 171-187.
- Dordoni, A., & Magaraggia, S. (2021): "Modelli di mascolinità nei gruppi online Incel e Red Pill: Narrazione vittimistica di sé, deumanizzazione e violenza contro le donne", *AG About Gender-International Journal of Gender Studies*, 10 (19), pp. 35-67.
- Doyle, B. (2022): *TikTok Statistics - Everything You Need to Know*. Wallaroo Media. Retrieved 22 November 2024, from <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>
- Federici, S. (2020): *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction, and feminist struggle*, San Francisco, PM press.
- Ferguson, M. L. (2010): Choice feminism and the fear of politics, *Perspectives on politics*, 8(1), 247-253.
- Fischer, A. (Ed.). (2000): *Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives*, Cambridge University Press.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (2011): *Belli e dannati*, (93), Roma, Newton Compton Editori.
- Galimberti, U. (2023): intervista a *L'aria che tira* del 22 novembre 2023, estratto <https://www.instagram.com/ariachetirala7/reel/Cz8zOrUt0yu/> (consultato il 20 novembre 2024).
- Giddens, A. (1992): *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Stanford University Press.
- Gourarier, M., & Benveniste, A. (2017): "Alpha mâle, Séduire les femmes pour s'apprécier entre hommes?", *Chimères*, 2, pp. 175-178.
- Guerra, J. (2021): *Il capitale amoroso: Manifesto per un eros politico e rivoluzionario*, (6), Milano, Bompiani.
- Hall, S. (1980): "Encoding / Decoding", in: Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, and P. Willis (eds). *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 1972-79. Londra, Hutchinson, pp. 128-138.
- Haraway, D. (2015): "Anthropocene, capitalocene, plantationocene, chthulucene: Making kin", *Environmental humanities*, 6(1), pp. 159-165.
- Harris, S. (2015): *An Invitation to the Sociology of Emotions*, London-New York, Routledge.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1979): Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure, in *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 85, n. 3, pp. 551-575; trad. it. *Lavoro emozionale e struttura sociale*, Roma, Armando, 2013.
- hooks, b. (2000): *Feminist theory: From margin to center*, London, Pluto Press.
- Illouz, E. (2007): *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, London, Polity Press.
- Illouz, E. (2017): *Introduction: emodities or the making of emotional commodities. In Emotions as Commodities*, London-New York, Routledge.
- ISTAT (2023): *La misurazione della violenza contro le donne e delle disuguaglianze di genere*. <https://www.istat.it/it/files/2023/12/Muratore-GENere2023.pdf> (consulted on 20/10/2024)
- Jacobsen, M. H. (eds) (2019): *Emotions, Everyday Life and Sociology*, London-New York, Routledge.
- Jameson, F. (1981): *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Cornell University Press.
- Kristeva J. (1980): *Desire in language: a semiotic approach to literature and art*, Columbia University Press.
- Kupers, T. A. (2005): "Toxic masculinity as a barrier to mental health treatment in prison", *Journal of clinical psychology*, 61(6), pp. 713-724.
- Magaraggia, S., & Cherubini, D. (2013): *Uomini contro le donne? Le radici della violenza maschile*. Torino, De Agostini-Utut.
- Nodari, F. (2021): *Donne e Shoah*, Milano, Mimesis.
- Orria B., Graziano R., Bellafronte S. (2024): "Malessere TikTok: misoginia e violenza, che dicono i dati", *Quaderni di Agenda digitale*, 17, pp 117-127.
- PettyJohn, M. E., Muzzey, F. K., Maas, M. K., & McCauley, H. L. (2019): "# HowIWillChange: Engaging men and boys in the# MeToo movement", *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 20(4), pp. 612-622.
- Piazzesi, C. (2021): "Sentirsi bene, sentirsi bella: emozioni e contraddizioni nell'esperienza femminile della bellezza", *SocietàMutamentoPolitica*, 12(24), pp. 83-92.
- Piccone Stella, S., & Saraceno, C. (1996): *Genere. La costruzione sociale del femminile e del maschile*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Ragone, J. (2015): "Radici della sociologia dell'immaginario", *Mediascapes journal*, 4 pp. 63-75.
- Ravveduto, M. (2023): interview in "Malessere e polemica" https://napoli.corriere.it/notizie/cultura-e-tempo-libero/23_novembre_10/malessere-e-polemica-sul-brano-della-neomelodica-fabiana-che-spopola-tra-le-ragazzine-mortifica-la-donna-nega-la-sua-emancipazione-2ce23969-2cfe-47f7-9242-18aea5b2cxlk.shtml (consulted 20/10/2024).
- Rinaldi, C. (2016): *Sesso, sé e società. Per una sociologia della sessualità*, Milano, Mondadori.
- Rinaldi, C. (ed) (2017): *I copioni sessuali. Storia, analisi e applicazioni*, Milano, Mondadori.
- Robustelli, C. (2000): "Lingua e identità di genere. Problemi attuali nell'italiano", *Studi italiani di linguistica teorica e applicata*, 29, pp. 507-527.
- Rossi, E., & Capalbi, A. (2022): "La rappresentazione mediale della violenza verbale, emotiva e psicologica nella comunicazione intima. Analisi delle matrici culturali e delle interazioni in alcuni film", *AG About Gender*, 11(21), pp. 258-294.
- Jeleniewski Seidler, V. (2007): "Masculinities, bodies, and emotional life", *Men and masculinities*, 10(1), pp. 9-21.
- Singly, F. (2016): *Le soi, le couple et la famille*, Paris, Armand Colin.
- Stets, J. E., and Turner, J. H. (2014): *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, Berlino, Springer.
- Thoits, P. (1985): "Self-labeling Processes in Mental Illness. The Role of Emotional Deviance", *American Journal of Sociology*, 92, pp. 221-249.

- Thoits, P. (1990): *Emotional Deviance: Research Agendas*, in Kemper [1990, 180-205]; trad. it. *Devianza emozionale: futuri obiettivi della ricerca*, in G. Turnaturi (a cura di), *La sociologia delle emozioni*, Milano, Anabasi, 1995, pp. 124-154.
- Thoits, P. (2004): "Emotion Norms, Emotion Work, and Social Order", in Frijda N.H., & Fischer A.H. (eds), *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Turnaturi G. (1995): "Introduzione", in Id. (ed), *La sociologia delle emozioni*, Milano, Anabasi, pp. 7-24.
- Turner J.H. e Stets, J.E. (2005): *The Sociology of Emotions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijck, J. (2013): *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*, Oxford , Oxford University Press.
- Wirtz, A., Poteat, T., Malik, M., & Glass, N. (2020): "Gender-based violence against transgender people in the United States: A call for research and programming", *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(2), pp. 227-241.
- Zuo H., Wang T. (2019): "Analysis of Tik Tok User Behavior from the Perspective of Popular Culture", *Frontiers in Art Research*, 1(3), pp 1-5.

Songs

- Benny G (2023). *Si o malessere mij*. Seamusica
- Biancardi R. (2023) *Malessere*. Universal Music Italia Srl
- di Tommaso C. (2023). *O' Malessere*. Ferrante
- Crocy Sarchiello (2024). *So' nu malessere* . GA.DA RECORD
- Fabiana (2023) *Malessere*. FR PRODUCTION
- Joka Dablo (2023). *Malessere*.
- Nardi M. (2014). *Malessere*. Zeus Record srl
- Ricciardi F, ft. Guè Pequeno (2017). *Femmena Bugiarda*. Cuore Nero Project, distributed by Universal Music Italia srl
- Rosy Rey (2023). *Malessere* (Cover). Ncstudiorecording
- Paolillo, M & Guè (2024). *Il Malessere* . ADA/Warner Music Italy
- Takagi & Ketra feat. Shiva, Anna, Geolier (2023). *Everyday*. Flexin Media Team Production